

How Managers Can Encourage Invention and Innovation

Managers and supervisors are often removed from patent pursuits, but their behaviors may dramatically shape how the company's innovators participate. Here are some actions that a manager may take to promote patent pursuits:

- **Educate.** Inform team members of:
 - Types of ideas of interest
 - Basics of patent protection and dispel myths
 - Corporate process for capture of patent ideas
 - Reasons for program and any available innovation incentives
- **Inform.** Develop and maintain knowledge of inventor's technologies and capabilities. An inventor may not realize that an advancement is potentially patentable. Schedule regular individual or team meetings to discuss innovation. Be aware of any upcoming disclosures, presentations or product releases, as these may bar patent protection with delay.
- **Encourage.** Encourage creative thought about current and future problems.
 - Consider how team members may have complementary skill sets or ideas that may suit a collaborative brainstorming session.
 - Allocate time for inventors to participate in patent brainstorming session and review of draft patents that will take effort from your best innovators.
- **Support.** Should another team member identify an idea to you as being potentially patent-worthy, spend time discussing and digging into the idea.
 - **Help draft** any document needed to submit an idea for patent consideration and patent applications.
 - **Mentor the inventor** through the process and accompany new participants to any patent committee meeting.
 - **Share your opinion** if you believe that the idea is important or creative, as your added experience may be particularly valued by decision-makers.

