

Spain

Topic:
Intellectual Property

Achievement:
Resilience through Intellectual Property

Sector:
Performing Arts

A story behind the success: BlackBinder

BlackBinder revolutionizes musical performance by creating a digital music score system that automatically scrolls sheet music, enabling musicians to play hands-free while protecting intellectual property through strategic patent protection.

Challenge

BlackBinder aimed to revolutionize live music performance by solving a long-standing issue: page-turning during performances.
While their automatic scrolling solution was innovative, the ease of reverse-engineering presented a major risk to their business model. Competing apps began mimicking the concept, challenging BlackBinder to find a way to protect and monetize their technology effectively while sustaining R&D and maintaining competitive advantage in a rapidly digitizing music industry.

Solution

BlackBinder protected its invention using a dual IP strategy: patenting the core scrolling and synchronization technology and keeping its digital music notation format as a trade secret.
They also registered trademarks for brand protection. Licensing became their core business model, targeting developers of score-reading apps. Collaborations with ensembles like the Spanish Radio Television Symphony Orchestra allowed ongoing development in a real-world "living lab" environment.

Impact

BlackBinder's patented scrolling technology has enhanced live music performance by enabling hands-free interaction with digital scores.
Its IP portfolio, extended across Europe, the USA, Russia, and China, covers over 90% of top music schools and 80% of leading orchestras. By licensing this technology to score-reading app developers, the company has built a sustainable business model while continuing to collaborate with musicians and ensembles.

Milestones & Learnings

Recognizing the value of IP early led BlackBinder to adopt a dual protection strategy patenting core technology and keeping format expertise as a trade secret.
Engaging directly with users (musicians and orchestras) provided real-world feedback, shaping product development through a "living lab" approach.
Failing to license early on was a learning moment. After identifying infringement, they realized the importance of being ready to offer licenses proactively.
Viewing investors and IP as strategic assets helped them transition from product development to a scalable licensing business model.

Key Takeaways

- Patenting is not only a protection method but also a tool to support your business strategy
- Easy to-be-reverse-engineered technologies can be protected by patents

Learn more about BlackBinder:
- Check the European IP Helpdesk website for the full case study
- BlackBinder's official website