

Vincent Shier in Alt-Meat Magazine: Why Plant-Based Food Companies Need Patent Protection

June 3, 2024

PRACTICES Patents, Life Sciences

Haynes Boone Life Sciences Partner Vincent Shier was featured in the most recent issue of [Alt-Meat](#) magazine, discussing the benefits of patents for companies producing plant-based foods.

Read an excerpt below.

In 2023, one company – Impossible Foods – held more than half of the plant-based, meat-related patents in both the U.S. and E.U., according to a Stanford University Investigation.

This begs the question: What does Impossible know that hundred of other plant-based alt-meat companies seem to have missed when it comes to intellectual property rights?

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Vincent Shier: I have a Ph.D. in biological chemistry, so I focus across the broad spectrum of life sciences and chemistry – including companies in the alternative meat space, mostly on the startup side. I also work with venture capital groups doing IP due diligence and growing startups' IP portfolios.

It is important to identify, at the early stages, legal counsel who can be your partner and work with you to develop a plan for how to protect your technology in a way that fits with your goals, whether you want to be an acquisition target or commodity provider or something else.

The IP game plan can be married with fundraising, with corporate structuring or licensing schemes, but more importantly, with the way patents are built out. The game plan can also guide answers to questions about trade secrets, things that we want to keep out of the public domain.

The art in the development of IP is a patent portfolio – not just a single patent, but a whole way of looking at things in terms of, “What can I do, and what have I prevented other people from doing?”

I think about it in terms of my neighborhood. I have my house, my idea. I need to protect my house, so I put a fence around it. That's a patent. But in a lot of ways, that's not good enough, especially as the industry becomes more crowded. At some point, I'm not content with just protecting my yard. I want to live in a gated community. That's where I think about licensing and a broader portfolio of patents as a broader protective net, which allows us to expand that boundary further, so that others cannot encroach on my space or put me at a competitive disadvantage.

Click [here](#) to read the full article starting on page 12.