



# “Building a World-Class Patent Quality System”

PPAC Quarterly Meeting

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**UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

An Agency of the Department of Commerce



# Patents Quality Team

Lead: Peggy Focarino

- Debbie Cohn (TMs)
- Sarah Harris (OGC)
- Fred Steckler (OCAO)
- David Chiles (OCIO)
- Andy Faile (Patents)
- Bruce Kisliuk (Patents)
- Drew Hirshfeld (Patents)
- Mark Powell (Patents)
- Ajay Kundaria (Office of the U/S)



## Leading in Quality Excellence: *“Every Interaction Counts”*

### *Unique opportunity to increase dedication to quality excellence:*

- America Invents Act (AIA) creates a sustainable funding model that allows us to set fees and recover costs with an ability to keep in place and plan long-term initiatives
- We are approaching optimal steady state pendency
- Users want their fees to fund investments in system improvements
- Increased visibility and recognition of the importance of Intellectual Property (IP) to our economy and a growing global IP focus

*Intellectual property (IP)-intensive industries support at least 40 million jobs and contribute more than \$5 trillion dollars to, or 34.8 percent of, U.S. gross domestic product (GDP)*



## Leading in Quality Excellence: *“Every Interaction Counts”*

There are three main areas of focus:

- I. Provide the best work products and services at every stage of the patent process
- II. Improve the customer experience with an emphasis on excellent customer service
- III. Engage the public in partnership to educate and seek input



# **I. Provide the best work products and services possible**

- A. Expand and refine Examiner training and guidance
- B. Enhance search for and access to Prior Art
- C. International Work sharing & Improvements to Application Submissions
- D. Measuring Quality
- E. Leveraging “Big Data” and Analytics
- F. Other new initiatives responsive to idea brainstorming sessions





## **II. Improve the customer experience with an emphasis on excellent customer service**

- A. Deliver customer service training to all Patent employees
- B. Explore customer service best practices
- C. Improve handling of customer questions and complaints
- D. Improve customer service support for under-resourced users
- E. Other new initiatives responsive to idea brainstorming sessions



### **III. Increase Education and Outreach to the Public on USPTO Quality**

- A. Hold road shows to educate the public on quality improvement initiatives and seek input on quality measures and systems
- B. Expand stakeholder partnerships/outreach efforts at each of the Satellite Offices
- C. Enhance the USPTO.GOV website to include more quality-related statistics and information



# Opportunities/Outcomes

## **Build Confidence in Patent System**

- Improve perception of patent quality
- Customers feel they are treated promptly, fairly, consistently and professionally

## **Promote Transparency**

- Increase Stakeholders' understanding of both the USPTO and the IP system as a whole

## **Provide Access to the Patent System**

- Assure the patent system is understood and usable by all inventors
- Stakeholders play an active role in patent quality





# Issues

- Effort has a large scope
- Broadening our perspective on what quality means
- Shifting our approach regarding resources



# Process Plan /Next Steps

- Step 1 - Formulate Scope of Project & Develop Message (June 2014)
- Step 2 - Outreach to Employees/Stakeholders with Message (In Progress)
- Step 3 - Identify On-going Initiatives and Those Already in the Planning Stage (In Progress)
- Step 4 - Outreach to Gather Employees/Stakeholders Input/Ideas (Oct.-Nov.)
- Step 5 - Analyze Ideas and Develop New Initiatives
- Step 6 - Outreach During Implementation of New Initiatives



## Questions and Answers