

Session Outline

Day 3 : 23 Apr 2025

1730 - 1930



Session 03: An overview of TTOs

- Overview of functions and activities of a TTO.
Building and operating an effective technology transfer office

Richard Cahoon

Session 3:

Overview, Functions & Activities of

Tech Transfer Offices

**Richard
Cahoon**

Who's Speaking



Richard Cahoon PhD

Richard Cahoon, Adjunct Professor at Cornell University, specializes in technology transfer, IP management, and commercialization. With over 30 years of experience, he has advised governments, universities, and global organizations on innovation ecosystems, IP strategy, venture creation, and technology-driven economic development in over 25 countries.

Affiliation

- Past Association of University Technology Managers, USA (AUTM) Board of Directors
- President, BioProperty Strategy Group, Inc.
- Head of Tech Transfer, Cornell University





The Basic Elements Functions and Activities Building and Operating an Effective and Sustainable TTO

TTO Organization: the typical model

TTO responsible for

- 
- All IP Policy implementation**
 - Manage Invention Disclosure process**
 - Relationship management with inventors**
 - Invention evaluation & triage**
 - Patent filing, prosecution, maintenance**
 - Other IP management**
 - Technology Marketing, proactive “partnering”**
 - License negotiation, drafting, signing**
 - Contract monitoring and management**
 - Revenue collection and distribution**
 - IP Policy “troubleshooting”**

-  **Sound IP Policy provides the foundation**
-  **TTO Personnel – positions/responsibilities/skills
finding/keeping the right people; sizing the staff**
-  **The Director**
-  **Tech Managers**
-  **Administrative & infrastructure management**
-  **Operations (invention disclosure system, IP management,
tech marketing, license negotiation, contract monitoring)**
-  **Good management practices**

The person responsible for shepherding an invention through the tech transfer process

Typically:

- **Science/engineering education & background**
- **Business experience a big plus
entrepreneurial, big company,
business development**
- **Good “people skills”**
- **Analytical & Creative**
- **Optimistic, proactive, doer, “makes things happen”**

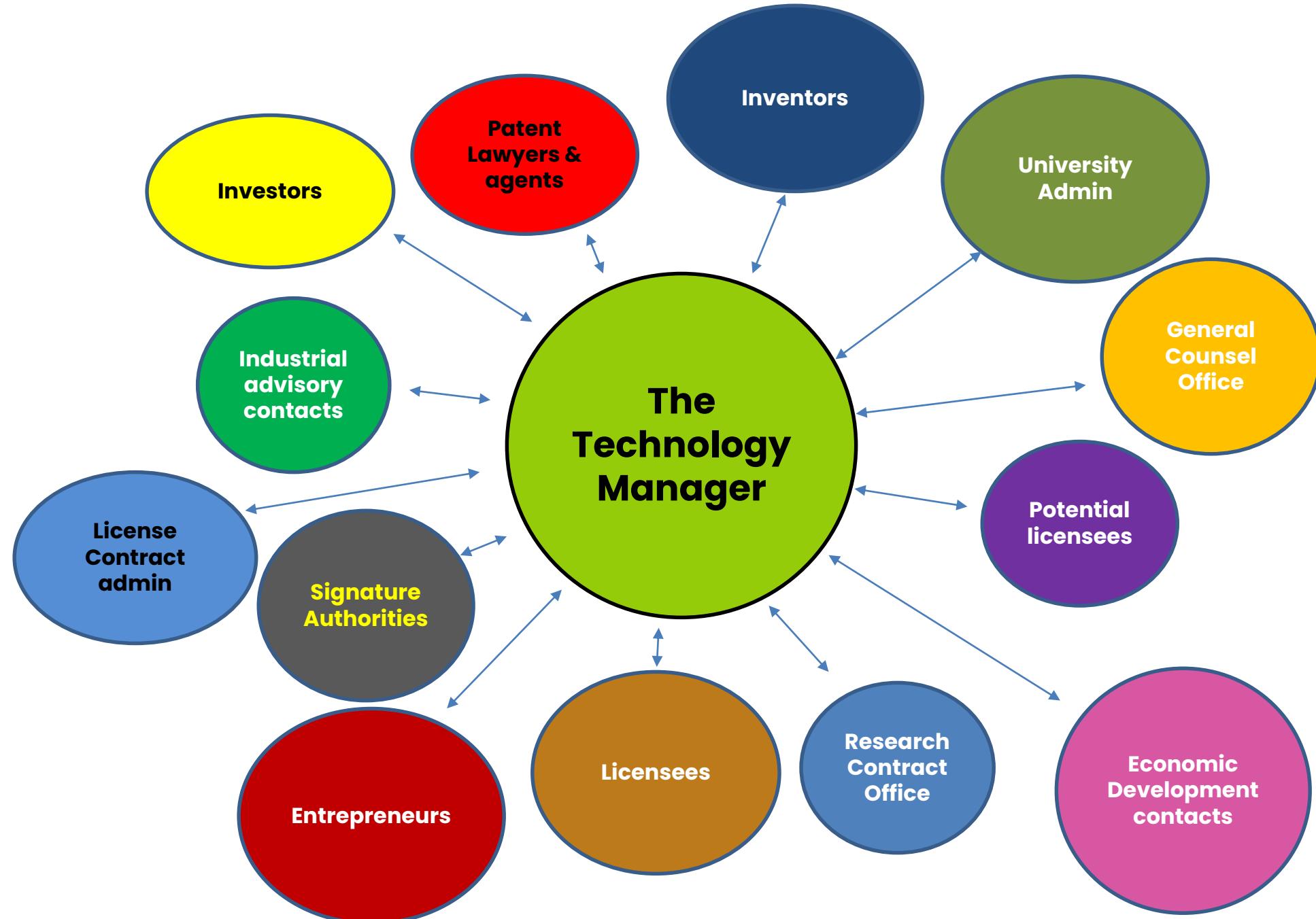
**There are two kinds of people in the world:
those who CAN DO
and those who CAN'T DO**

**There are two kinds of CAN DO people in the world:
those who CAN DO
and those who WILL DO**

Tech Managers are CAN DO and WILL DO people

In a typical model, the Technology Manager:

- Has “turn-key” responsibility for each assigned invention disclosure**
- Responsible for shepherding invention through entire process**
- Primary relationship with inventor(s)**
- Actively markets technology**
- Primary contact with potential licensees**
- Negotiates and drafts license contract**
- Remains “ombudsman” for relationship and contract**



The typical model:

Tech Manager has “turn-key” responsibility for each assigned invention disclosure

Other models and variations



“Committee” approach (not recommended)



Tech Transfer Team (Tech Manager as QB, Dir. as Coach)



Tech Manager “deputy” in a Dept or Center

In small TTOs, Director is also a Tech Manager

In large TTOs, Director is not a Tech Manager



“Manager” doesn’t fully convey the creative, visionary, entrepreneurial aspect of the role



More like a symphony conductor.... or

Impresario

Initial entrepreneur

Champion

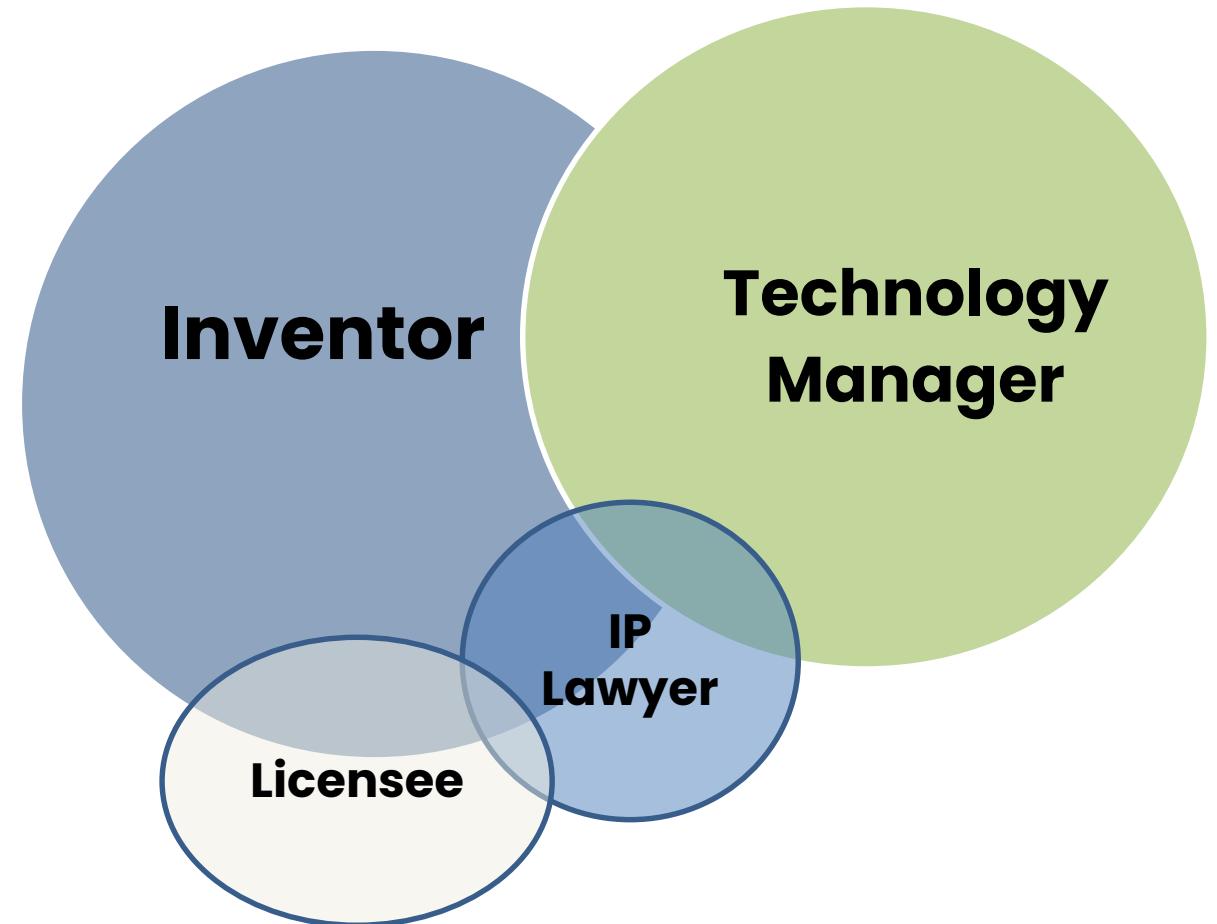
Catalyst

Initiator

Facilitator

Architect

Creator



Tech Manager orchestrates these relationships

Remember your true client:

The Technology



Its success is your goal



If you fail, it can't help the world



Always look out for its best interest

Some recent trends:



**Tech Marketing Assistants
(an acknowledgement of Tech Marketing importance)**



Start-up Specialists



**Outreach to “non-traditional” sources of inventions
(arts, architecture, music, design, etc.)**

In-house legal?

Authority to retain and manage outside lawyers?

**What is focus of Tech Mgrs time?
(analysis, marketing, CRM, entrepreneurship, etc)**

**A budget for business development/tech
marketing?**

What is the funding mechanism for TTO?

**TTOs often share admin infrastructure with other
departments**

Hire, train, retain the right people for the job

Hire people with demonstrated will-do track record

**Tech Mgrs: *Attitude* as important (maybe more?) as aptitude
business development mindset;
proactive, creative,
interpersonal skill, high EQ
optimistic
resilient and resourceful
sense of humor**

Since there's never enough staff:

-  **Requires careful thought about where/how time is invested**
e.g., invention analysis vs. marketing;
more good deals – rather than fewer “perfect” deals
-  **Work towards efficiency**
-  **Never forget key relationships**
(inventors, potential/existing licensees – make them feel valued)
-  **Evolve to task differentiation**
-  **Don't lose responsiveness (use efficient communication)**
-  **Don't neglect PR, outreach, promotion**
inspire and tell the TTO story

How to manage this situation: Never enough time

-  **Triage and select only viable technologies
(with a reasonable chance to be licensed)**
-  **Support systems – administrative staff to help with
disclosures, IP management, contracts**
-  **Manage your time – it is your most valuable asset
– do not waste it**
-  **Understand your role: facilitator, promoter**
-  **Remember your role as catalyst**
-  **Leverage your efforts by getting others to help
(inventors, department staff)**
-  **Have a reference number system for managing the
cases (e.g., a docket system)**

How to manage this situation: Never enough time

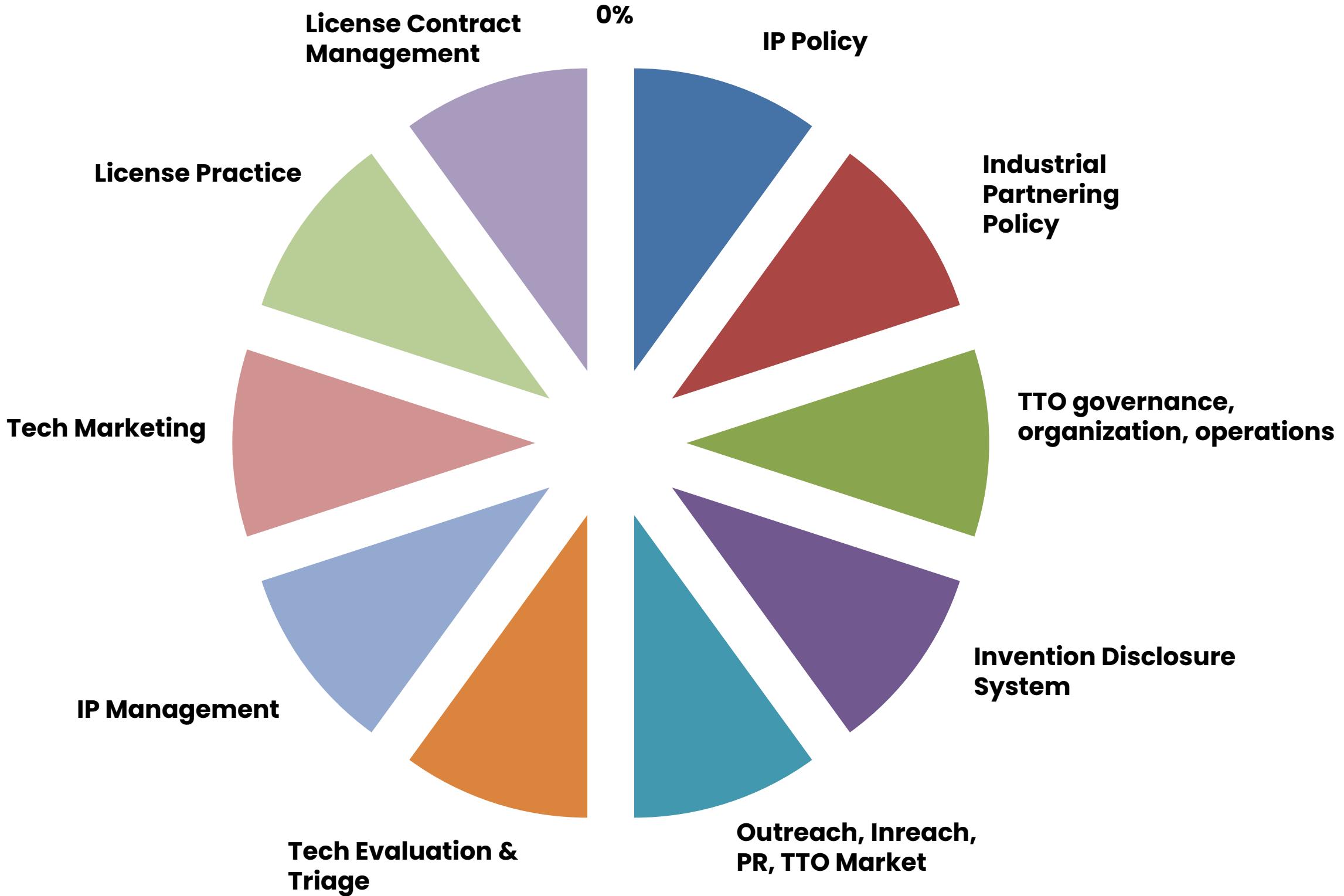


In each portfolio, certain inventions naturally take some precedence:

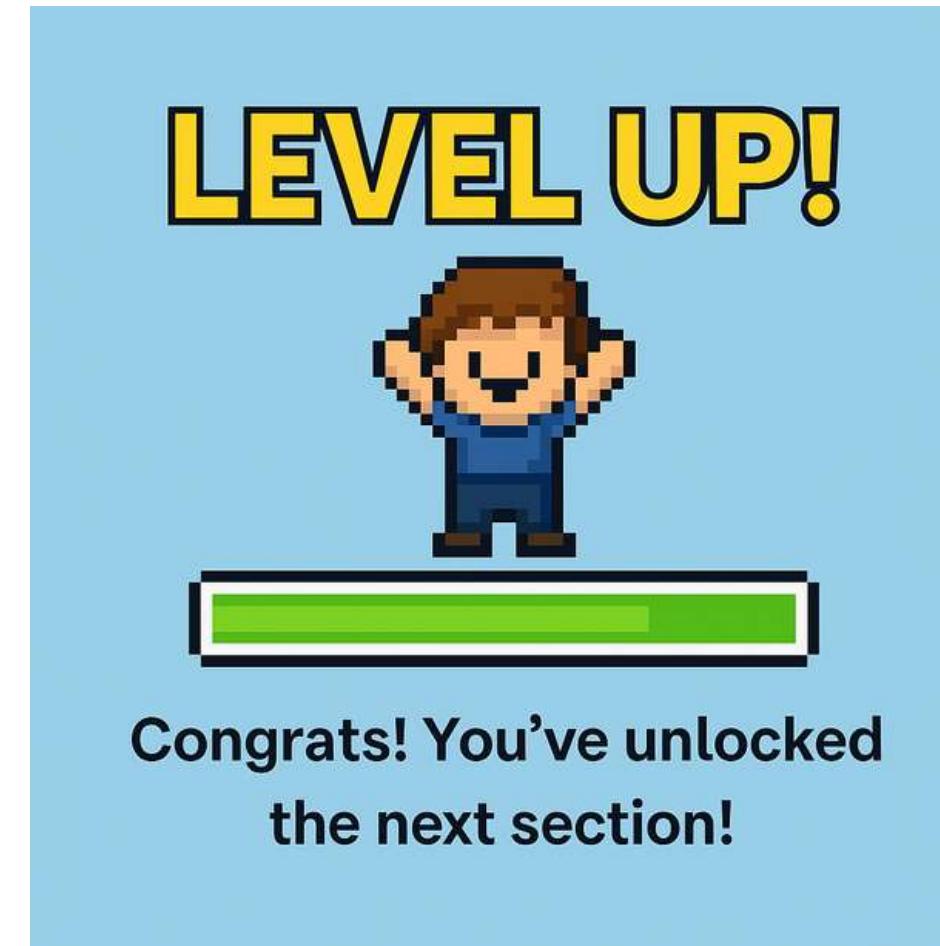
New Invention Disclosures – priority
Filed, not licensed – highest priority
Filed, licensed – low priority



In each portfolio some technologies are more valuable and deserve more time



TT Office : Functions & Activities





Implementation of Institutional IP Policy

**Build awareness of IP/tech transfer:
benefits & process**

Establish/maintain Invention Disclosure system

Advice and counsel on IP/tech transfer issues

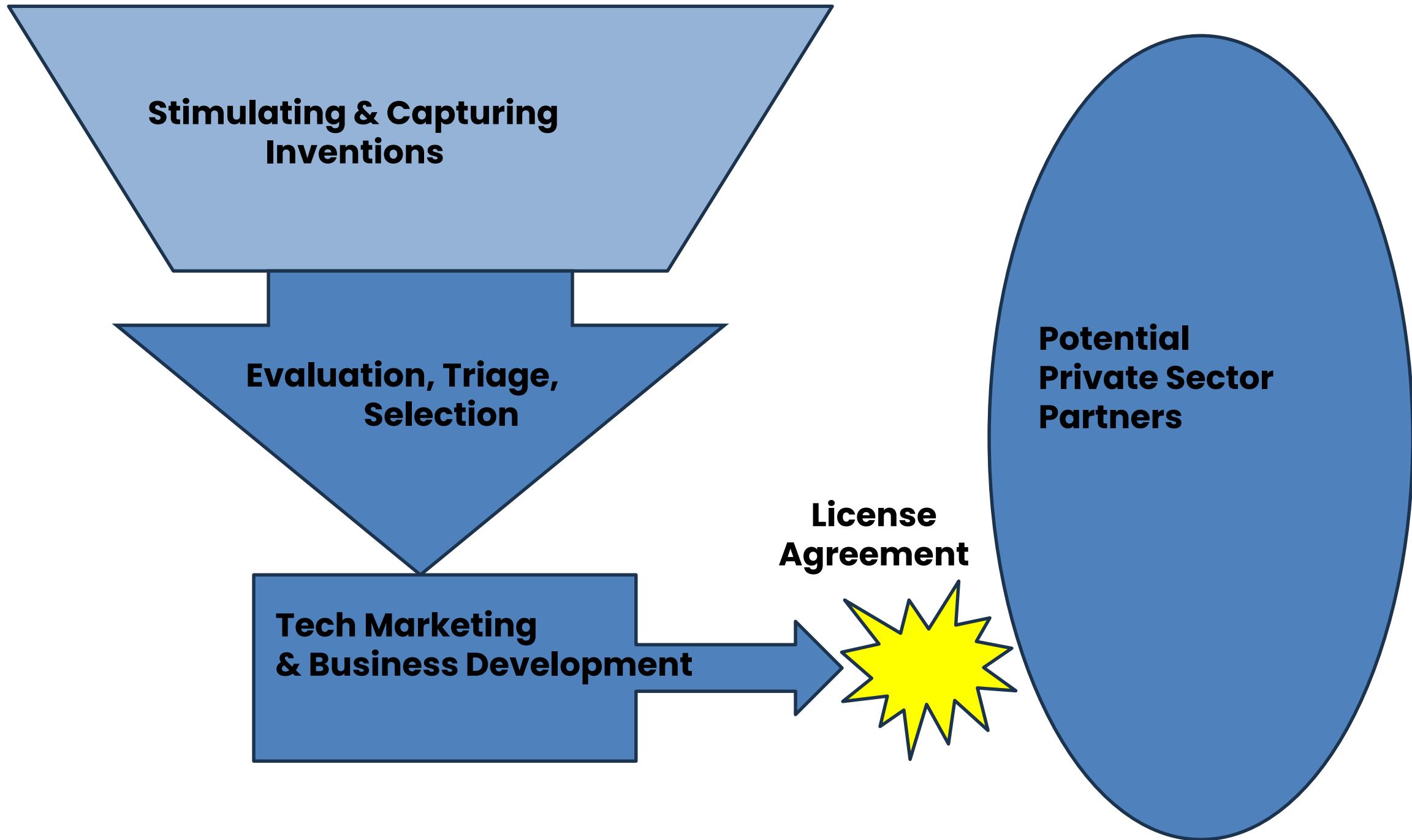
Triage & Selection of Inventions

IP Management

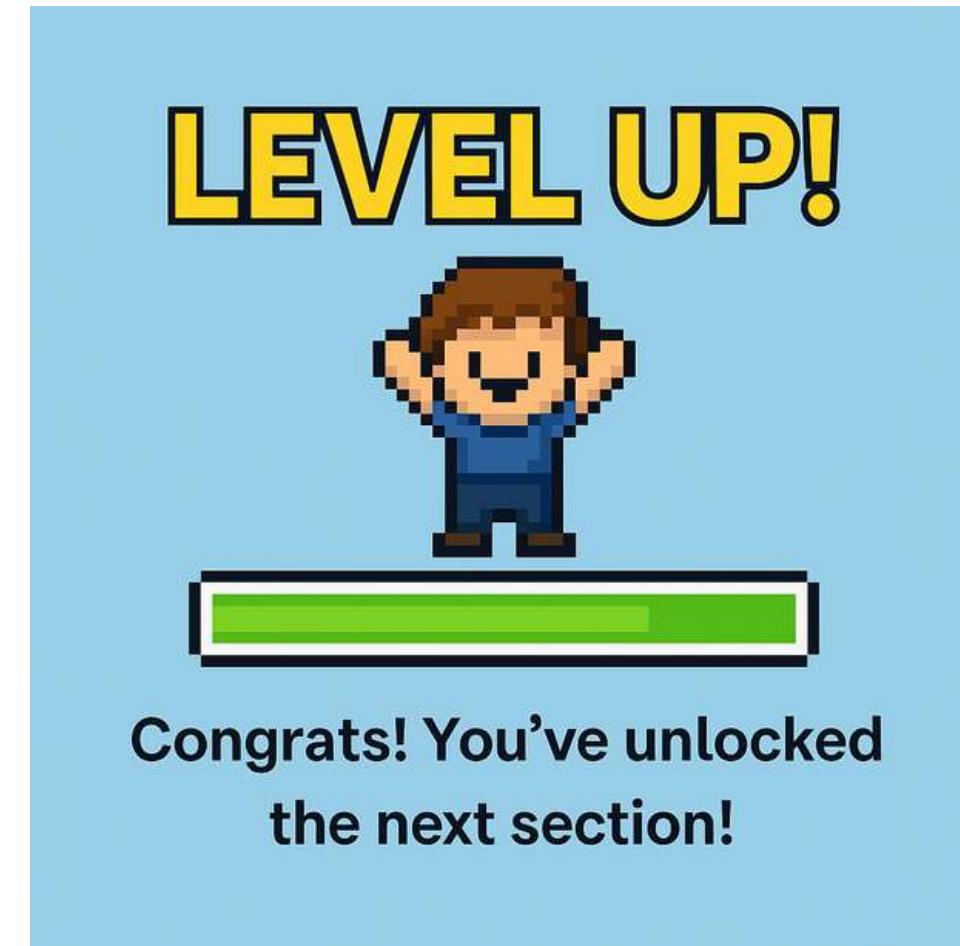
Tech Marketing & Business Development

License Negotiation & contract monitoring

Legal issues



Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech transfer Office



Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech Transfer Office

-  **Director's working relationship with Senior Institutional Leadership**
-  **Budgeting Staff, IP, marketing, legal, proof-of-concept funding**
-  **Sustainable funding: license income sharing – key to TTO sustainability**

Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech Transfer Office

-  **On-campus promotion of tech transfer**
-  **The importance of the Public/Private Partnership
and the TTO's role**
-  **Active participation in the “innovation ecosystem”**

Invention Triage & Selection



The importance of triage



Selection of inventions: criteria



**The triple convergence:
inventiveness**

**IP “quality” (aka Property Control Position)
market relevance/value proposition**



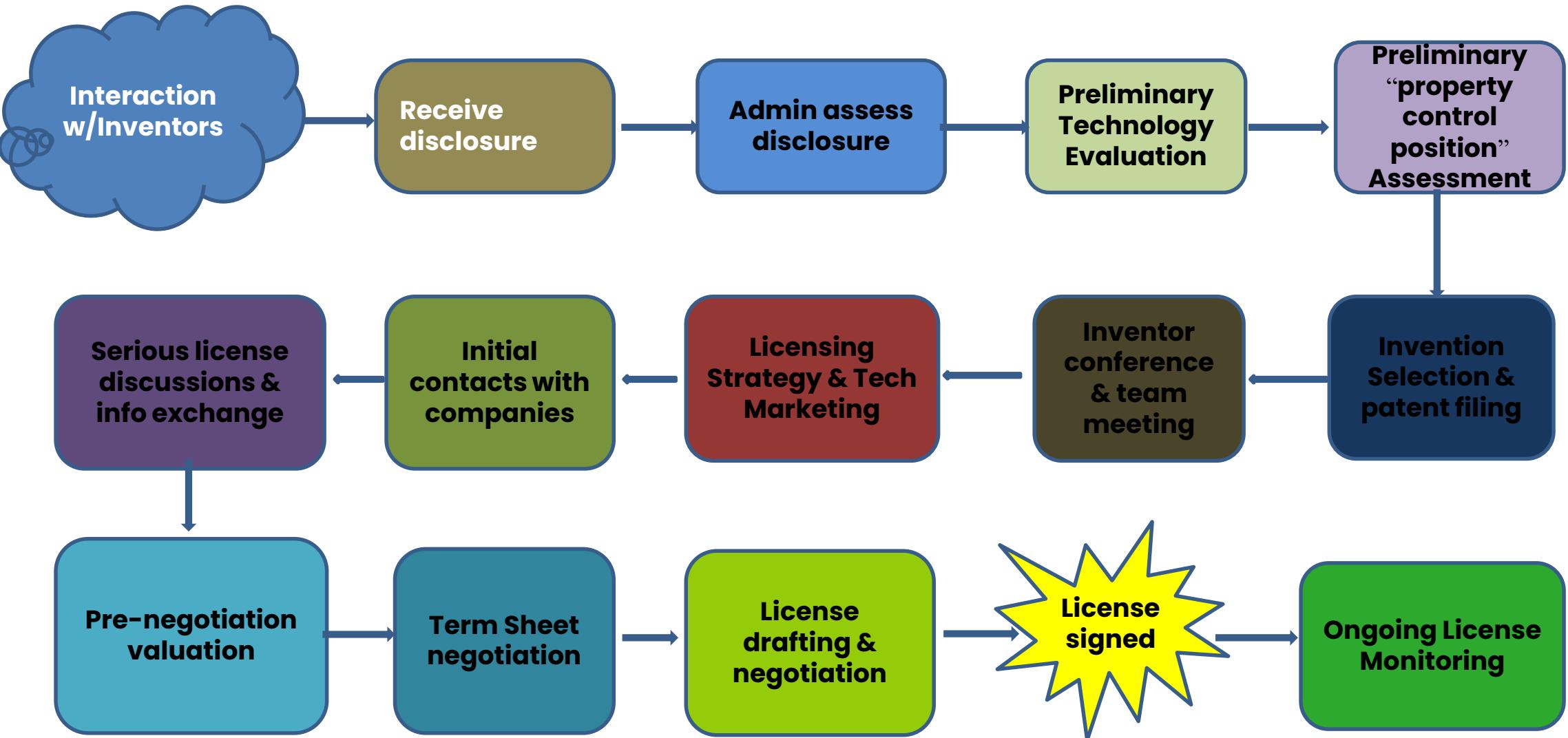
Managing invention rejection & inventor relations

Pre-negotiation Valuation

-  **New technology/IP Valuation
vs. Pre-negotiation Valuation**
-  **Establishing opening positions for negotiation**
-  **Building the Risk-sharing/Value-sharing system
(i.e., designing the license agreement & mechanisms)**

License Drafting & Negotiation

-  **Term Sheet design & implementation**
-  **Establishing License Templates**
-  **Signature Authority**
-  **Signing and hand-off to contract management**



Two fundamentally Different Approaches

-  **Managing individual technologies**
-  **Managing a technology portfolio**

MANAGING A TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO

The first key question: how many cases are you managing?

- 1-5**
- 5-15**
- 15-30**
- 30-50**
- 50-100**
- 100+**

How you manage your portfolio depends entirely on how many you are managing

The first key question: how many cases are you managing?

1-5: Each technology receives 100%-20% of a Tech Manager's time (40hrs/wk – 8 hrs/wk)

15-30 Each technology receives 7%-3.5% TM's time (2.8hrs/wk – 1.4hrs/wk)

50-100 TM's time (2%-1%) (48mins/wk – 24mins/wk)

100+

How you manage your portfolio depends entirely on how many you are managing

How to manage this situation: Never enough time

 **In each portfolio, certain technologies naturally take more time:**

Invention disclosures – priority

Filed, not licensed – highest priority

Filed, licensed – low priority

 **In each portfolio some technologies are more valuable and deserve more time**

How to manage this situation: Never enough time

-  **Maintain tech marketing tracking logs**
-  **Consider using students to help with technology marketing**
-  **Don't create problems – solve them**
-  **Keep things simple**
-  **Look for opportunities to market multiple technologies in same effort**
-  **Do periodic reviews of your whole portfolio
(do it in a team setting?)**
-  **Establish “trigger events” for each technology
(patent filing, office action)**

THE LARGE OFFICE PERSPECTIVE

Large Office Perspective

-  **Director should focus on TTO strategic management**
 -  **not tech management**
 - budgeting for sufficient staffing; marketing**
-  **Hire good Tech Mgrs – then stay out of their way**
-  **Align admin to support Tech Mgrs**
-  **Consider specialization by discipline**
-  **Invest in promoting the TTO and its function**
 - host and participate in relevant events**
-  **Start-up specialists can be a good direction**
-  **Strive for a very early stage tech development fund**
-  **Engage in the local/regional innovation ecosystem**
-  **Develop an Advisory Committee**

THE SMALL OFFICE PERSPECTIVE

-  **Director has dual focus on TTO strategic management – and tech management**
-  **Hiring good Tech Mgrs is critical – self starters, generalists, business development mindset (right attitude is essential)**
-  **Requires development of good working relationship with inventors**
-  **Triage & Selection of viable technologies of utmost importance**
-  **Know the art: each inventor perceives that their invention is your most important one; don't spend too much time on any one invention**

-  **Seek admin support outside the TTO (VP Office?)**
-  **Be on the lookout for allies across campus**
-  **Strive for a very early stage tech development fund**
-  **Engage in the local/regional innovation ecosystem**
-  **Be a good colleague**

The Tech Transfer Office: an Overview

Dr. Richard S. Cahoon

Thank you



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Contact Us



<https://www.low-carbon-innovation.org/>



<https://www.venturecenter.co.in/>



<https://www.techtransfer.online/>



ttonline@venturecenter.co.in