



# 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**

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**Richard  
Cahoon**



## 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



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# The Technology Transfer Office: An Overview



**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”**

# The Tech Transfer Office: Basic Elements






- **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**



# TT Organization: Key Role of Tech Manager

**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”**

# TT Organization: Key Role of Tech Manager

**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**

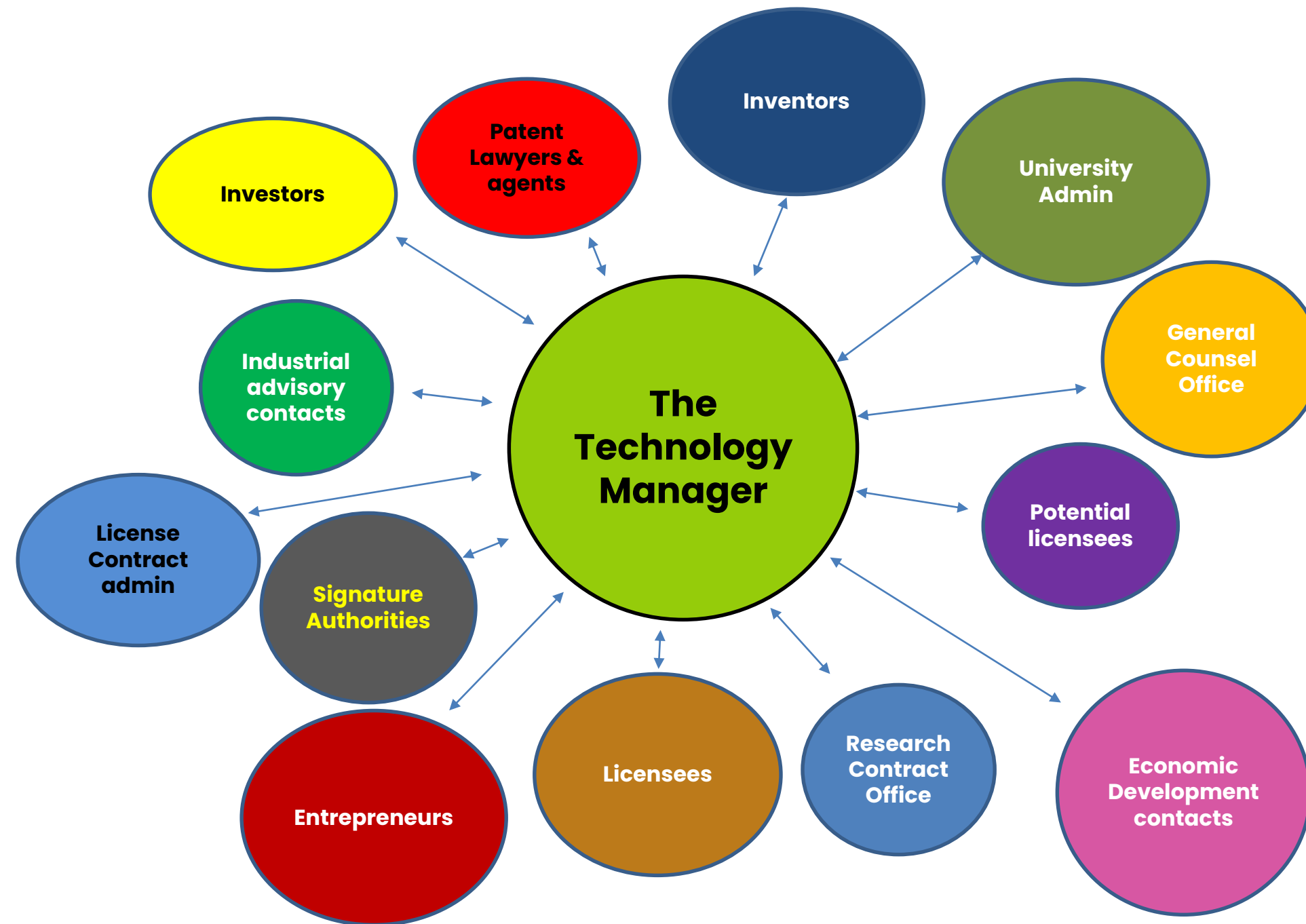
**Tech Managers are CAN DO and WILL DO people**



# TT Organization: Key Role of Tech Manager

**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**

# The Technology Manager

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

» **More like a symphony conductor.... or**

**Impresario**

**Initial entrepreneur**

**Champion**

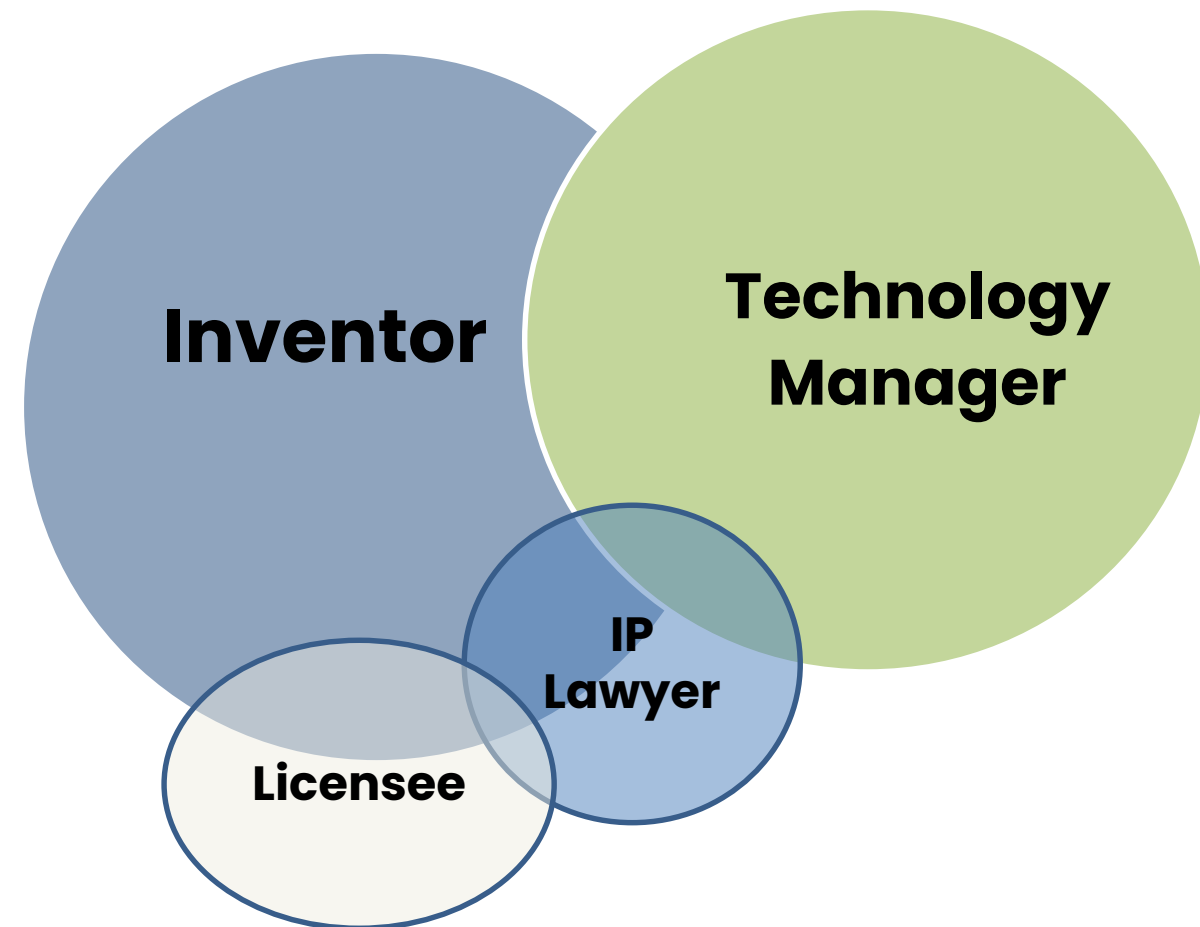
**Catalyst**

**Initiator**

**Facilitator**

**Architect**

**Creator**






**Tech Manager orchestrates these relationships**

# The Art of Managing a Technology




**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**

# TTO Organization

**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

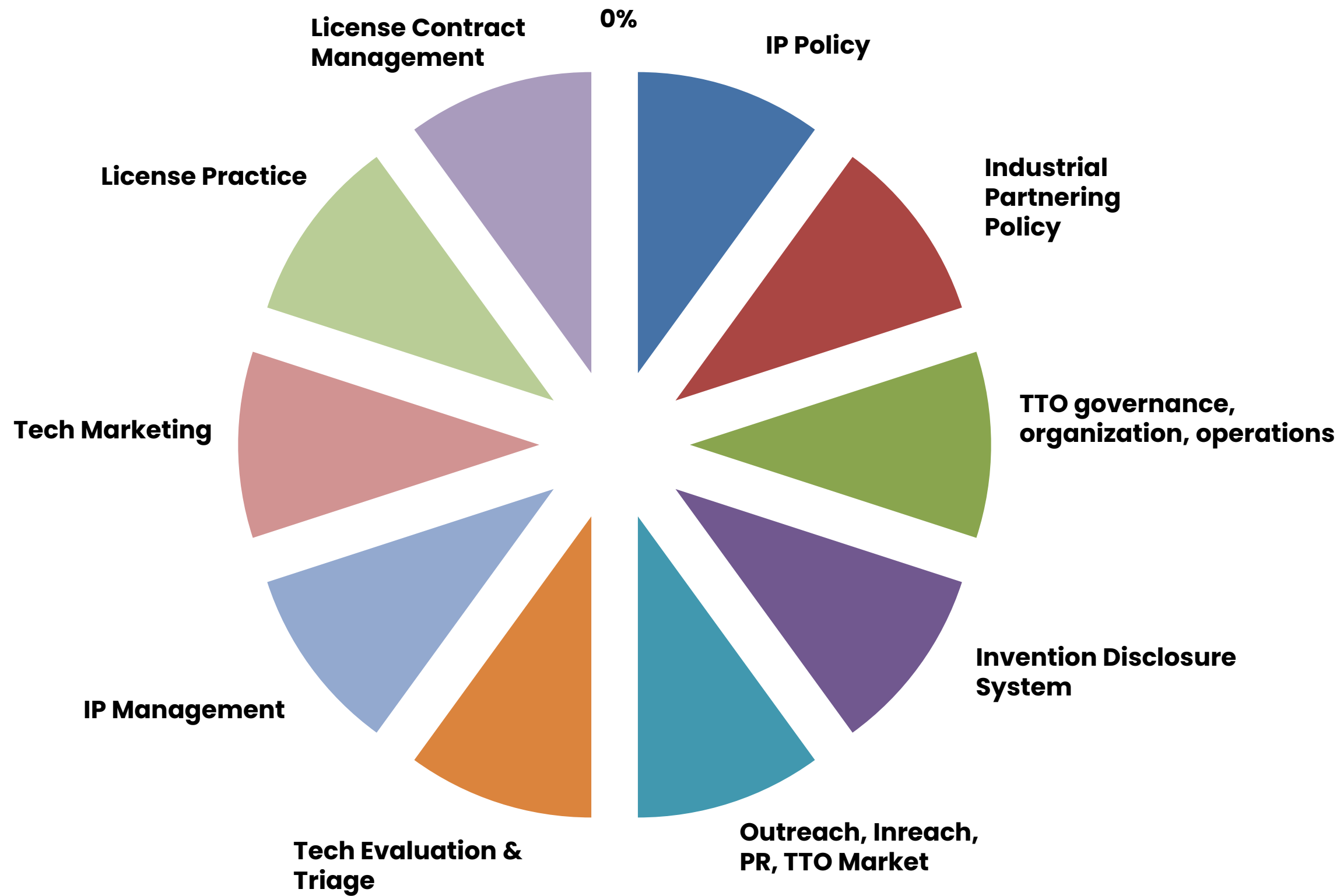
» In each portfolio, certain inventions naturally take some precedence:

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

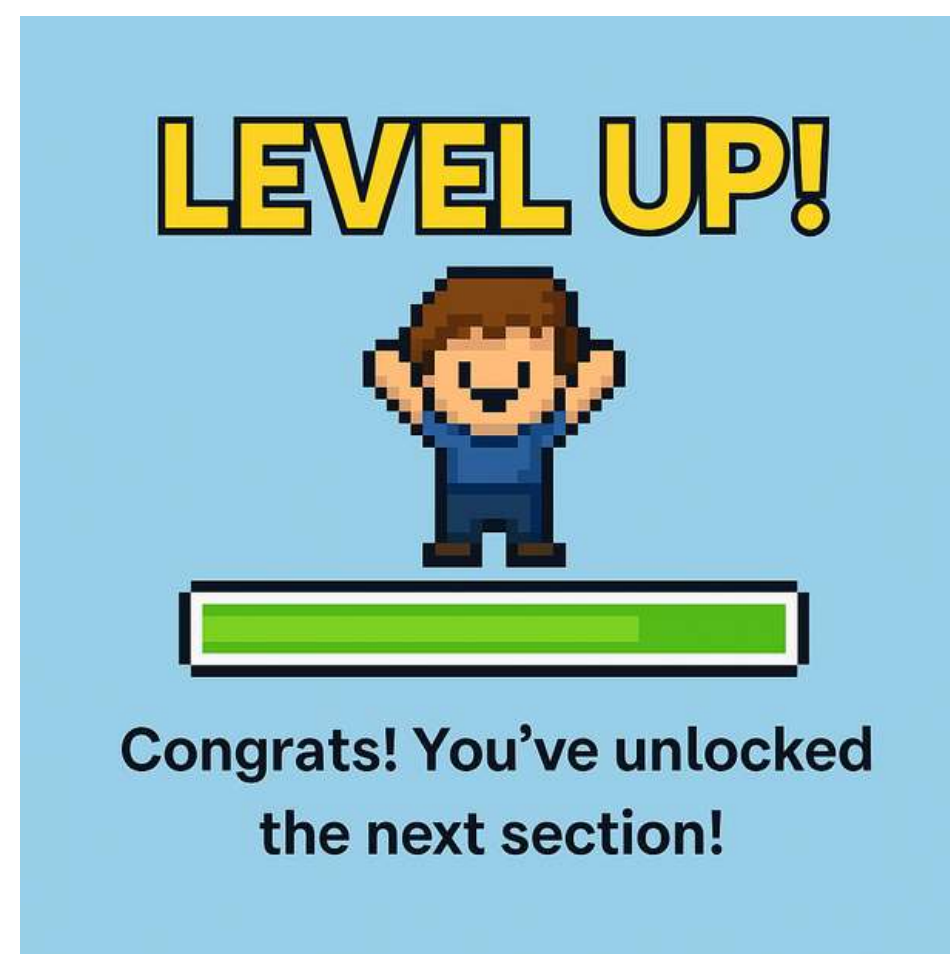
» In each portfolio some technologies are more valuable and deserve more time



# IP/ Technology Transfer System

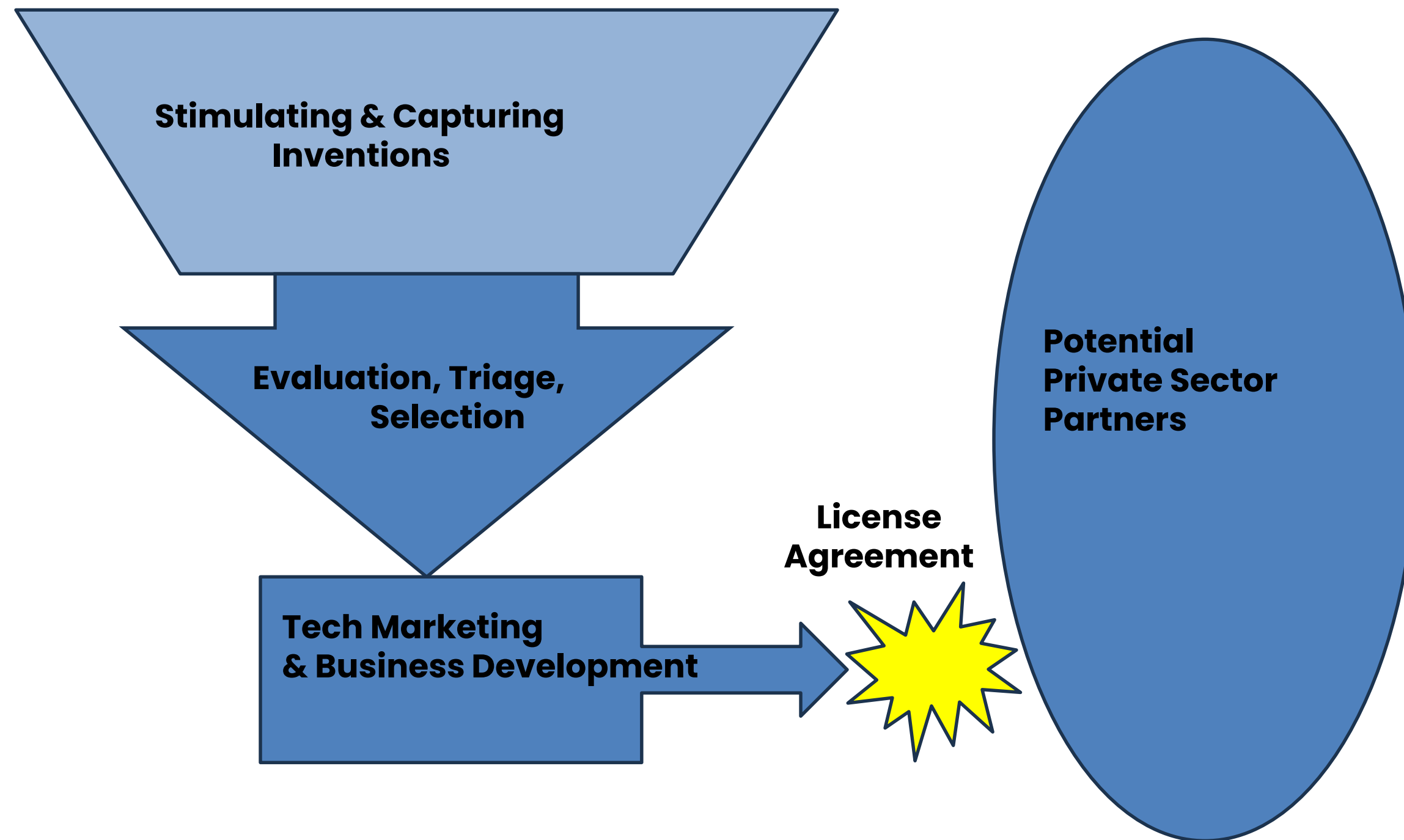


# TT Office : Functions & Activities

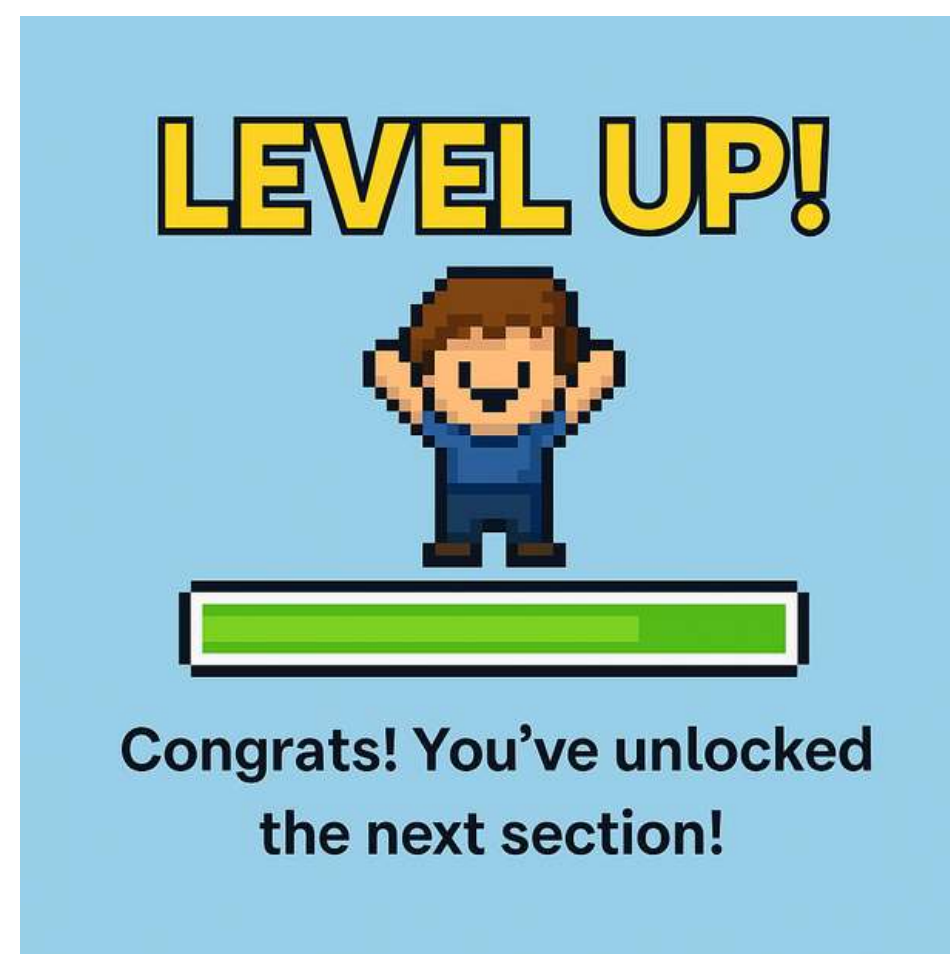


# The Tech Transfer Office: Functions & Activities

-  **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”**

# Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech Transfer Office

## 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

# Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech Transfer Office

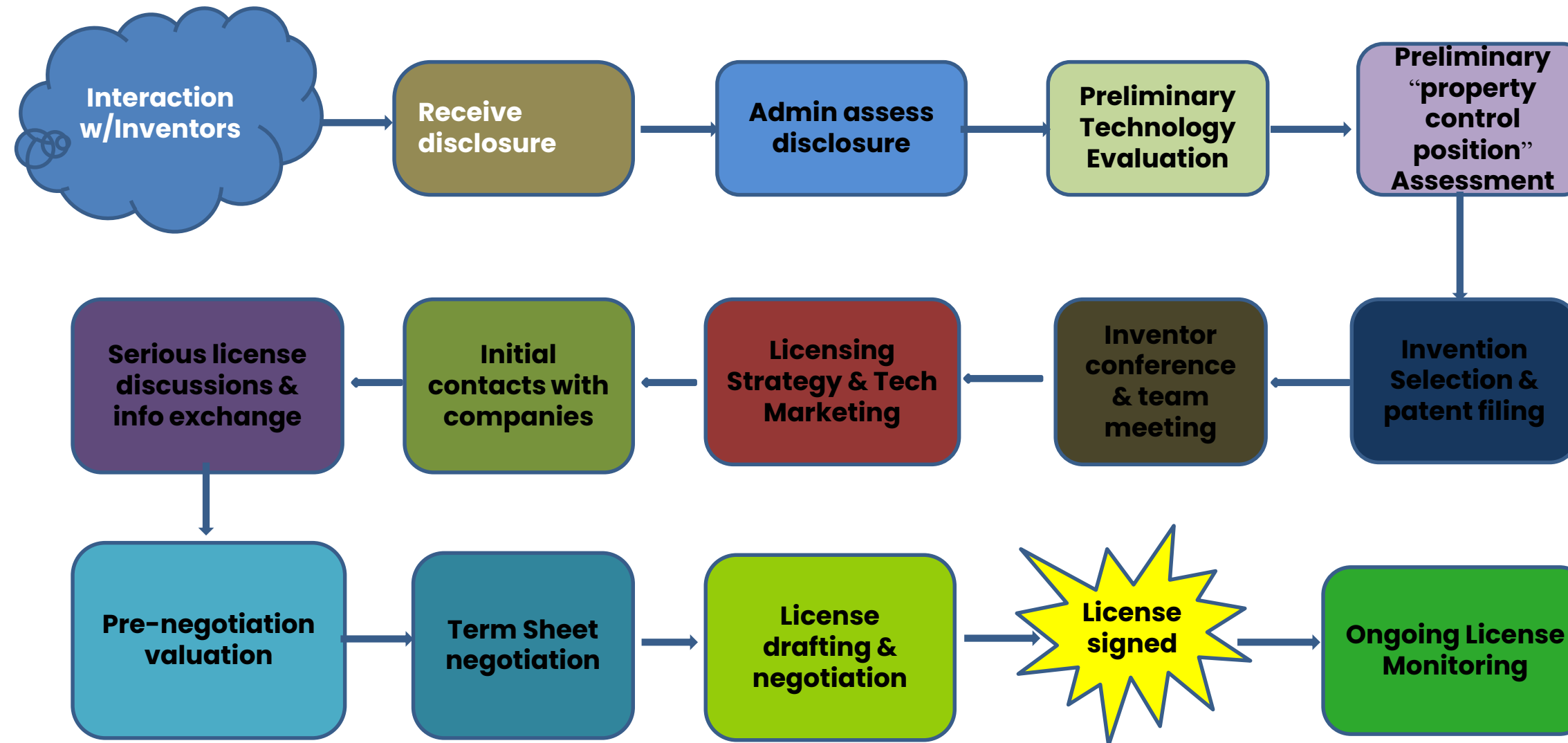
## Pre-negotiation Valuation

- **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)**

# Establishing & Building a Sustainable Tech Transfer Office

## 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

# 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**

# Managing a Technology Portfolio

**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

# 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**

# Small Office Perspective

- » **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**



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# Contact Us

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