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Össur Case Study

Image-based patent search

Search beyond words: How Össur utilizes IPRally's image search to find what external partners miss

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Anna Valborg
Gudmundsdottir
Patent Manager, Össur

“IPRally saves me time, my sanity, and the endless scrolling through irrelevant hits.”

Key highlights

- + Image search surfaces prior art that external partners overlooked
- + Time freed up for high-value work and analysis
- + Greater confidence in search completeness
- + Projects that once took days now finish in hours
- + Bringing research in-house, and freeing up time in the process

Össur Case Study

Less tedious screening, more analysis

As a global leader in innovative medical devices, Össur specializes in prosthetics, neuro-orthotics, and bracing solutions that improve mobility and quality of life for patients world-wide. Headquartered in Iceland with global operations, the company combines cutting-edge technology with world-class clinical care. As a lean, focused IP team, Össur’s IP department sought ways to maximize their strategic impact and efficiency.

“We used to rely on Boolean search methods, which are very labor-intensive,” explains Anna Gudmundsdottir, Patent Manager at Össur. “We wanted to spend less time on the tedious work no one likes and focus our full potential on substantial matters like actual analysis.”

The solution came through an industry colleague’s recommendation. After an evaluation of IPRally, the decision was clear.

Confidence, efficiency, and strategic focus

IPRally and in particular its image search function quickly became Össur’s secret weapon. It evolved into a strategic tool that now supports everything from early-stage R&D screening to due diligence portfolio assessments.

“We use it proactively across many search projects, from FTO and patentability to M&A,” explains Anna. “If we’re analyzing competitor products for example, we just screenshot the product of the website, and then IPRally gives you hits which cover similar technical features or that particular product. You just put the picture in and you don’t have to use your own words to describe it.”

A breakthrough moment came during a critical freedom-to-operate search. Using a simple prototype photo, Anna uncovered a key document that had eluded both text-based searches and experienced external partners.

“The most critical patent showed up only through the image search,” Anna recalls. “It bypassed all the terminology mismatches. This particular search was outsourced as well and the external partners did not find it either – they were actually quite interested to know how we found it. We were fortunate to discover it early in the project, which allowed us to guide the R&D and avoid any issues.”

A patent-savvy co-pilot

Over time, IPRally has enhanced the confidence in search completeness, according to Anna. “When you’re doing searches you always have that uncertainty in the back of your mind and you wonder if you really managed to catch everything. I think every patent attorney can relate to this. But with IPRally I feel more confident in the results because you can combine different search methods within a project,” she says.

Though Össur still outsources some searches during peak periods, reliance on external providers has decreased significantly.

“Despite being a small team with a large portfolio, we now handle most patent intelligence in-house,” Anna notes. And there’s now more time to focus on what’s important. “IPRally saves me time, my sanity, and the endless scrolling through irrelevant hits,” Anna concludes. “The search results are fewer and of higher quality, and the AI assistants make the review a lot easier. Projects that used to take days now take hours. It’s like having a patent-savvy co-pilot that actually enjoys the heavy lifting.”

Össur is a global leader in innovative medical devices headquartered in Reykjavik, Iceland. The company specializes in prosthetics, neuroorthotics, bracing and support solutions that improve mobility and quality of life for patients worldwide. Össur combines cutting-edge technology with world-class clinical care through its international network of orthotic and prosthetic facilities, helping people live without limitations.