
Application of the analytic hierarchy process for assessing the significance of technical know-how

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At the moment, due to increased patent wars in the markets of high technology products, leading companies actively use an alternative way to protect intellectual property — trade secrets (know-hows). Unlike the patent rights, which reveal the essence of the technical solutions for public and at the same time prohibit their unauthorized use, know-hows are used privately and have value because of being unknown to third parties. The advantage of this method is that the know-how can protect the intellectual property of virtually any level of complexity: stand-alone inventions, utility models or software products and integrated technologies that contain a variety of different interrelated technical solutions. This makes it necessary to develop reliable methods for evaluating the technical know-hows in the early stages of their creation, when the forecast of implementation costs and commercialization revenues is limited, which prevents the use of the existing methods based on the cash flow forecasts or market comparisons. This paper proposes a method to assess the significance of technical know-how, based on the analytic hierarchy process by T. Saaty, which allows to assess the know-how in terms of its originality, technical complexity and competitiveness, as well as to compare some know-hows with each other on these parameters.

Keywords: *trade secret, know-how, intangible assets, analytic hierarchy process, criteria, weights.*

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