

**PANEL DISCUSSION – PATENTING VERSUS OPEN-SOURCE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER
PERSPECTIVE
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Abstract

Patents provide crucial technological and financial advantage for a manufacturing company in its marketplace. Patents are commonly developed interorganizational, as is most often the case with Lummus Corporation. Frequently, technology is licensed by the owner of a patent and can even be sold by the owner. Commercial agreements provide patent opportunity for the manufacturers, thereby establishing a “compelling economic reason” for participation. A compelling economic reason is what motivates successful manufacturers to make products and develop product lines. Most have a benevolent side to help keep them grounded, but if they do not make money, they will not be successful and ultimately will not survive. Regardless of how a technology comes to fruition, or who eventually owns the technology, time is a key component of a successful technology transfer. One can conversely say time is the enemy of a successful technology transfer. One way for research from the public sector to successfully reach the private sector in a timely manner is to delay the patenting process until after the technology has been prototyped and tested. One notable example is the current USDA-ARS, Bratney Companies and Lummus Corporation collaboration to develop a commercial contamination detection and removal system. Another successful case in point is the USDA-ARS/Lummus Corporation high speed roller gin collaboration. Both technologies have one thing in common; they are the result of open-source cooperative efforts between the public and private sectors.