

would you rather **drive** innovation or **hitchhike**?



Any company that loses control of its product roadmap will be destined to hitchhike — continually seeking work-arounds and paying patent royalties to those that planned ahead.

Critical to technology companies, patents provide an exclusive monopoly over key inventions and control over key markets. Well-planned patent filings, tightly coupled to a forward-looking product roadmap, enable a company to control its own destiny and often greatly impact the future of its competition. “Strategic Patenting” is a process that analyzes a company’s patent portfolio and product roadmap against those of key competitors. Questions asked during this process include:

- * What are the key technologies needed to extend the life of your company’s current products?
- * How can your company control these technologies and prevent others from hijacking its roadmap?
- * What are the key products planned by the competition?
And, the most important question that is often overlooked:
- * How can a company use its patents to block the competition’s progress where roadmaps intersect? Strategic Patenting will secure the right-of-way for a company’s unhindered product evolution, forcing the competition to travel on side streets and toll roads.

John Ferrell is a patent attorney and intellectual property (IP) strategist with the 40-attorney, Palo Alto law firm of Carr & Ferrell LLP. Mr. Ferrell counsels many of Silicon Valley’s most successful companies on a wide range of patent and IP matters including Strategic Patenting, litigation planning, patent opinions, portfolio licensing and handling, and avoiding accusations of infringement.