

March 14, 2008

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Asentinel Secures Patent

On March 13, Asentinel announced it secured a comprehensive system and methodology patent. The patent includes 56 claims on four key areas:

- importing telecom billing data at the USOC and call detail level into its system, auditing, and performing cost allocations
- auditing by exception
- inventory and asset management
- reporting on telecom expenses

The patent was originally filed in February 2003 after Asentinel's founding in 2002. It has filed several patent continuation applications for additional claims and is now seeking to advance earlier patent applications that have been filed in Canada and Europe. At its core, Asentinel is a software company that licenses its technology to address telecom expense management. Its web-based Asentinel 5.0 software is deployed as a Customer-Hosted or Asentinel-Hosted solution. Now it has the patent to secure its position.

Securing this patent is a coup for Asentinel. This is formal recognition that Asentinel has developed software that is novel, useful, and not of an obvious nature. This patent and the partnership that Asentinel has established with CA, are important milestones for Asentinel. The company is making some big advances in the market.

What the Patents Mean to Customers

While Asentinel had technology protection clauses in their contracts, the patents provide an added measure of confidence that the software they are using is sheltered from competitors. Customers and prospects can take comfort in the fact that Asentinel had the foresight to file for patent protection and that its software is built on a comprehensive patent. These are the marks of a well-run company with a strong roadmap for its future.

What the Patents Mean to the Industry

Asentinel's co-founder and chief software architect, Jason Fisher, stated, "Most people think of patents as swords that are wielded, but a patent is really a shield that protects a company's intellectual property." As larger suppliers and solutions integrators enter the TEM market, these patents provide Asentinel with protection and continued freedom to operate.

Asentinel joins a select group of TEM suppliers Symphony SMS, Tangoe, and Avotus that have patents. Symphony SMS has a patent that covers more than 90 claims for telecom expense management intellectual property, including data collection, processing carrier data (invoice and usage), adjudication methods for invoice reconciliation, inventory methods, costing methods, financial allocation, and reporting. Tangoe secured its patent in September 2006 for technology and processes relating to the management and control of service provider agreements for voice, data, and wireless resources and their associated costs. Avotus has a patent for call accounting.

These patents show the Telecom Expense Management (TEM) market is maturing. The TEM offering has become more complex. To meet this challenge, TEM Suppliers must make significant investments in technology and seek to protect the investments with patents. It will be interesting to see how the future unfolds. As the future unfolds, will Asentinel and others use their patents as swords or as shields?

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Market News

*Industry Research
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Research Analyst Profile

Joe Basili

Vice President Research, AOTMP

Joe Basili is Vice President of Research for AOTMP and a recognized thought leader with more than nine years of experience in telecommunications networks and IT asset management. Joe has conducted research, written extensively and keynoted conferences on a range of topics that include telecommunications expense management, wireless cost management, network performance, unified communications, and Electronic Invoice Presentment and Payment (EIPP).

Experience

Drawing on a career that includes work in marketing, sales, operations, and management, Joe offers market insights, trend analysis, and customer research. His recent experience includes Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), professional service consulting, SaaS hosted and licensed software, invoice management, billing and e-media, SAS 70 Type II processes, Sarbanes-Oxley compliance, and payment automation.

Education

Joe holds a B.A. with a double major in Economics and Political Science from Vanderbilt University. He continues his education with an active interest in technology's application to business problems.

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