

Case Study

Navigating the Cocoa Alternative Space:

FTO and Patent Landscape
Decoded



Client's Objective

The client wanted to comprehensively understand the patent landscape and freedom-to-operate (FTO) scenario in the cocoa alternative space. Their focus was to analyze innovation trends, the geography of protection, competitive dynamics, and white space for R&D, as well as identify critical patents to mitigate potential infringement risks and prioritize strategic opportunities.

Our Strategic Approach

To address the client's objectives, Ingenious e-Brain (leB) conducted a comprehensive patent analysis, focusing on innovation trends, geography of protection, competitive dynamics, filing intensity, and white space for R&D.

Innovation Trends and Filing Intensity

- Analyzed the evolution of patents in whole bean alternatives, cocoa powder substitutes, and cocoa butter replacements.
- Identified filing peaks and innovation hotspots across key geographies.

Geographical and Competitive Dynamics

- Mapped patent filings to regions with high protection activity, aligning findings with the client's target markets.

White Space and R&D Opportunities

- Identified unexplored R&D areas to highlight potential innovation opportunities and competitive advantages.

Critical Patent Identification

- Prioritized patents critical to the client's freedom-to-operate goals by analyzing claims, expiration timelines, and IP strength.

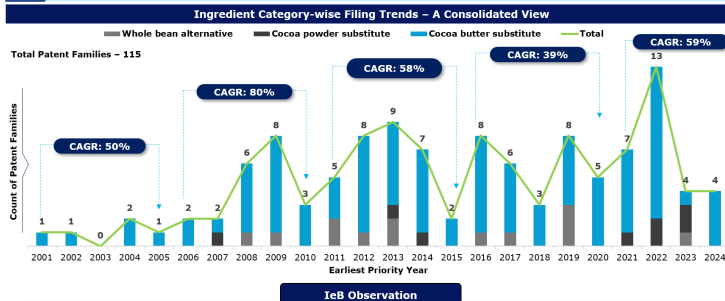
Ingredient-Application Mapping

- Mapped key ingredients to applications and developers, offering a detailed view of the technology landscape to guide strategic innovation.

Snippet

Executive Summary - Temporal Evolution of Innovations

Analyst Commentary: Innovations in the cocoa alternative domain have grown at a CAGR of 23% over the past 23 years, driven by challenges in cocoa supply and price volatility due to the swollen shoot virus and soil degradation, and as a result, innovators are increasingly seeking substitutes that are healthier, more sustainable, and place less strain on the supply chain.



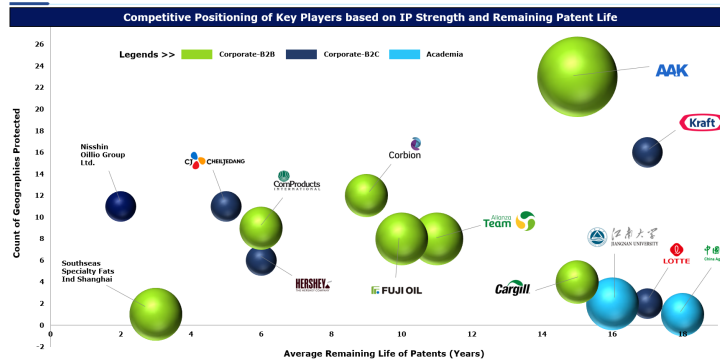
IEB Observation

- The majority of patents identified for cocoa alternatives focus on developing innovative cocoa butter substitutes to replicate its functionality and properties in various food products such as chocolates, bakery products, etc.
- There is currently limited innovation in alternatives to the whole cocoa bean, presenting a significant opportunity for innovators to explore new technologies and processes to create sustainable, scalable substitutes that could mimic the flavor, texture, and functional properties of cocoa beans.

Sources: PatSeer, IeB Analysis

Patent Owners' Competitive Landscape

Analyst Commentary: Patents held by CJ Cheiljedang, Corn Products International, and Hershey are set to expire in the next 5 to 6 years, offering an ideal opportunity for conducting an FTO study on the relevant ingredients; Patents from other key players like AAK, Lotte, Cargill, and Kraft Foods have an average remaining lifespan of 15 to 17 years, presenting potential opportunities for collaboration and licensing.



Notes: Bubble size represents the count of patent families | PCT publications are not considered for geography count | Only active patents (granted, pending) are considered for this representation

Sources: PatSeer, IeB Analysis

Client Impact

- The client gained insights into the temporal evolution of innovations in whole bean alternatives, cocoa powder substitutes, and cocoa butter substitutes, along with filing intensity across different geographies
- The client received an overview of the legal status of patents filed by B2B, B2C, and academic entities, including a mapping of key ingredients to applications and developers, as well as a competitive positioning analysis based on IP strength and remaining patent life
- The client identified white space for R&D and prioritized a few critical patents to mitigate potential infringement risks from a product application standpoint.

Conclusion

- By leveraging a data-driven and holistic approach, Ingenious e-Brain delivered actionable insights into the patent landscape and freedom-to-operate scenario in the cocoa alternative space. Our analysis enabled the client to identify innovation opportunities, assess geographical protection strategies, and prioritize critical patents for strategic decision-making. This empowered the client to navigate the competitive landscape with confidence, mitigate risks, and capitalize on emerging trends in the growing cocoa alternatives market.

Ingenious Brain

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