

Organizational Achievements

As a result of Ms. Cohn's extraordinary creativity and focus on results, the Trademark Organization has been transformed from an office mired in the labor-intensive, paper-based processes of the 19th century to one effectively leveraging 21st century technologies and office space strategies to the advantage of its customers and employees. Her vision helped to produce a vastly improved process for federally registering trademarks, thereby enhancing United States commerce and the economy by encouraging investment and productivity in the U.S. marketplace. Her creativity has led the USPTO to the forefront of Federal workplaces, attracting employees with the flexibility of its work schedules and the opportunity to work from home.

Long before most other leaders in the Federal sector, Ms. Cohn recognized the potential for using technology to improve Government processes, and the need to update Government services in a manner consistent with ongoing changes in the external business world. She recognized that survival of the Trademark Organization in the face of rapidly growing workloads, and increased public demand for high quality, low cost services, would require it to dramatically alter its way of doing business. Trademark filing levels had risen steadily for several years – from 83,000 in 1989 to more than 400,000 in 2012. Funding did not keep pace with filings, constraining the ability to keep up with the demand for services. Performance targets were not consistently met due to the labor intensive process, the lead time for acquiring more staff and the unpredictability in filings. She recognized early on that it would be impossible to continue to address higher levels of work and achieve desired performance levels by constantly increasing staff alone. The manual processing of paper filings was labor-intensive with a high error rate. Increasing volumes of paper received by the Agency led to many mishandled and lost applications requiring more office space for storage. The end result was poor customer service and increased costs.

To meet these challenges, Ms. Cohn helped implement an innovative business design for the Trademark Organization, focusing primarily on using emerging technologies to improve the efficiency of processes and to lower costs. This process now enables employees and customers to conduct all trademark-related business electronically. Employees are able to process and examine applications electronically from remote locations, allowing them to work from home. The shift to electronic processing has enabled the Office to eliminate its paper-based examination records, improving record accuracy and eliminating thousands of square feet of office space. As a result of Ms. Cohn's focus on changing business methods, the production, quality and efficiency of the Trademark Organization have improved with a positive return on investment. Performance targets have been met and sustained for a record seven years due to the changes in employee performance, work processes and production mechanisms that can be adjusted with appropriate incentives as demand increases.

Under Ms. Cohn's leadership, the Trademark Organization has moved from a completely paper-based process to one that is, since July 2004, fully electronic, offering customers

improved access to the Office and employees great flexibility in choosing their work environment. USPTO's customers have responded by filing more than 99% of trademark applications electronically. More than 78% of all applications are now processed electronically from filing to final decision demonstrating widespread acceptance for the Agency's investment in automated systems. In moving the Trademark Organization to an automated environment, Ms. Cohn played a pivotal role in leading the effort to implement the strategic vision.

Not only did she help set a vision for the organization, she played a key role in implementing the systems that would convert the vision to results. As systems have been implemented, customers of the Agency were introduced to using electronic forms available on the Internet that permit direct entry of application data into USPTO databases. For customers still using paper applications, scanning and optical character recognition (OCR) technologies are used to build full electronic files. She also spearheaded the introduction of automated tools to be used by employees that made all work tools available from a single, desktop PC. In the past employees had to access work resources in multiple locations with resulting inefficiencies. Her efforts have also increased public access to USPTO information; simplified the application process for customers through the use of USPTO-created electronic forms; and introduced the electronic transfer of materials extracted from internal data bases to the Government Printing Office (GPO) for printing the weekly Trademark Official Gazette (TMOG).

The results of this change include the elimination of lost paper, the streamlining of examination and the ability of examiners to work from any location without the need for a paper file. Customers are now able not only to file applications electronically, but also to receive all communications and Office actions electronically from examining attorneys. This is a major milestone in the effort of the USPTO to transform itself into an e-government agency that can better meet the needs of business owners seeking trademark registration.

Ms. Cohn is now leading the process of upgrading current systems to the next generation of electronic processes. In 2013, the USPTO expects to receive more than 433,000 applications for Trademark registration, the highest number ever. To meet the needs of these applicants, their attorneys, and USPTO employees, Ms. Cohn has encouraged the development of new mechanism to generate feedback from the Trademark Organization's various stakeholders. Internally, she has overseen the creation of a team of business architects to ensure that systems are developed that meet the needs of all users. This team has documented all of the Trademark Organization's business processes and identified the priorities for information technology development. This process promises to streamline the development of new systems as the USPTO creates a 21st century IT platform.

Ms. Cohn has also led an aggressive effort to engage the Trademark Organization's stakeholders in feedback sessions, holding frequent roundtables with user groups and implementing their suggestions whenever feasible. To meet the needs of the public, various educational resources, including easily accessed, entertaining informational

videos, trademark process timelines and a significantly enhanced Basic Facts Booklet have been posted on the USPTO Web site to explain the Trademark application and registration process to small businesses, entrepreneurs and sole proprietorships.

In the international arena, Ms. Cohn led the effort in 2011 to increase the membership of the Trademark Trilateral, a partnership of the trademark offices of Europe, Japan and the United States, to include both South Korea and China. The "TM 5" group now meets regularly to share information, best practices, and knowledge on Trademark application examination and maintenance of registrations. This diplomatic effort supports American intellectual property policy in a wider global arena.

As Commissioner, Ms. Cohn has placed significant emphasis on Trademark's organizational quality utilizing feedback from outside stakeholders and bar groups, and developing a program that rewards excellence from employees. Using carefully developed metrics, employees are rewarded for meeting clearly defined outcomes that dictate providing the highest possible performance throughout the trademark examination process. Under Ms. Cohn's guidance, this effort has been a crucial element in meeting organizational goals consistently in recent years.

The Trademark Dashboard is published on the USPTO Web site pursuant to Ms. Cohn's direction, providing up-to-date statistics on every aspect of Trademark's organizational performance. Under Ms. Cohn's leadership, the Trademark organization has become more customer-centric, performance-based, and a model for transparency and government service.