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THINK ABOUT YOUR DESIGN



Many times inventors neglect a powerful route for protecting their innovations -- design patent protection. In the US, a design patent has a term of 14 years, or, if filed after December 18, 2013, 15 years.

In contrast to utility patents, which protect any "new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof," design patents are intended to protect the "ornamental appearance" of an article in commerce, i.e., how the article looks.

By judicious selection of the salient features to emphasize in a design patent application and possibly filing multiple design patent applications directed to different embodiments or aspects of a design, the protection afforded by a design patent can be very broad -- and very valuable.



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