

How Much Should You Pay For Patent Drawings?

NEWSLETTER Volume 8 + April 2013

There is no set rate or price for patent drawings because prices are set by the market. Prices vary with the complexity and timing of drawings and reference materials supplied. The highest price is no guarantee of the best quality. Those in the market for patent drawings are wise to shop for the best quality at a competitive price.

There are many factors that affect the price of patent drawings.

The types of reference materials provided directly influence the price you pay for patent drawings. Most patent drafters are skilled in Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD). By using existing CAD files a draftsman does not need to recreate the drawings. If an item has already been manufactured or a prototype built, chances are there are existing CAD files, used in almost all modern manufacturing processes. In your quest to get the best CAD files, ask for "source files" or original CAD files (files that the original manufacturing drawings were created in). Not all reference materials originate in a CAD platform, though various other files can help lower costs if they are editable. In short, always ask for source files.

If the original reference is a photograph or slide, send full color digital versions (often in JPG or PDF format) to your draftsman. Second or third generations of those photographs have a tendency to lose substantial detail. The clearer the photographs, the less time a draftsman spends deciphering the elements and details. Saving time will help control your costs.

Prototypes can also be a good reference source for patent drawings. They are better than photographs because a draftsman does not need to spend time correcting distorted perspectives.

Another good way to lower your cost for patent drawings is to purchase a 3D model when applicable. For example, if you have invented a device for extinguishing an oil rig fire, it will be beneficial to purchase a 3D model of an oil rig. The cost of such a model, depending on the amount of detail required could be several hundred dollars or more. Custom drawing an oil rig with all its details takes many more hours of labor and could easily run in the thousands. Models are helpful for drawings in many fields of invention. Models of the human body and all body parts are plentiful and especially useful for medical device inventions. Some models can be downloaded from the internet for free and incorporated into patent drawings.

Fees for patent drawings are usually based on the amount of time it takes to produce drawings. Simple inventions usually take less time to draw than a complex invention. It stands to reason that drawing a toothpick will take less time than drawing a conveying system with 10,000 moving parts. However, even very complex drawings can be created cost effectively, if the right reference materials are provided.

Allow for enough time to have patent drawings prepared. Many drafting companies charge expedited fees for fast turnaround drawings.

When cases have similar components, familiarity with an entire product range enables a drafter to streamline operations, saving time and money. By creating a library of repeat components time is saved in reusing instead of redrawing each component.

For any set of drawings containing similar information, prices are often set depending on how many elements are the same. If you have 40 screen shots; the most cost effective way is to create one template and then add the different elements for each figure.

Revisions drive the cost of patent drawing up substantially.

If you supply vague or confusing information, a draftsman has to deduce what is needed, often by trial and error. There may be many ways to interpret vague information and may take a number of interpretations before you are satisfied with the results.

Unclear information requires a lot of guessing, which generally results in revisions.

If you make changes/modifications to the design or invention during or after the drawings are done; expect to pay extra for extra work. Revisions are usually not included and incur additional cost.

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Most drafters base their prices on an hourly rate. A very experienced drafter will charge a higher rate but his or her experience may actually save time. In the end the price may actually be lower than a drafter charging a lower rate.

The overriding concern should always be the quality of the drawings themselves. If drawings are done incorrectly or just poorly they may be rejected. The cost of correcting bad drawings will always exceed the cost of good drawings.

Many patent drawing services have emerged outside of USA. In Indonesia, India and Philippines, patent drawings can be found for as low as \$20.00 a sheet. Drafters offer their services for as low as \$5.00 per hour. If you chose this path be aware of risks involved with confidentiality. Other risks may involve a lack of knowledge and experience in United States Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO) patent drawing rules.

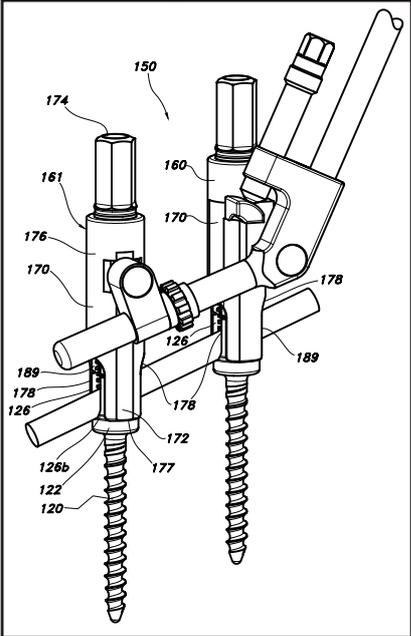
You may be tempted to save cost by doing your own patent drawings. When drawings are rejected or objected to, they may ultimately cost more to fix or redo. The following is frequently included in rejection/objection notices from the USPTO:

¶ 6.21 New Drawings, Competent Draftsperson

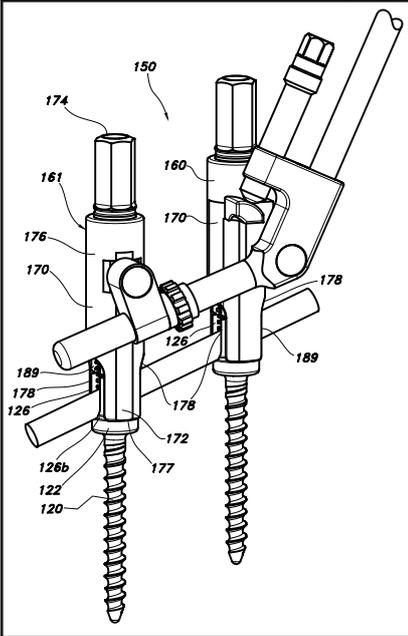
New corrected drawings are required in this application because [1]. Applicant is advised to employ the services of a competent patent draftsman outside the Office, as the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office no longer prepares new drawings. The corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The requirement for corrected drawings will not be held in abeyance”¹.

The following is a sample of a patent drawing indicating variations of price based on reference materials supplied.

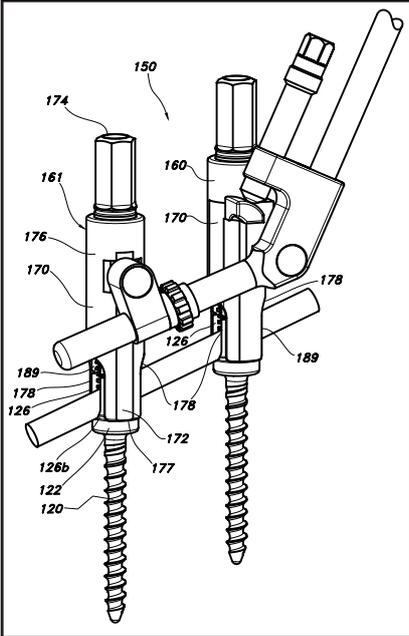
Same Drawing, Different Price-Based on a \$60.00 - \$80.00 hourly rate



Drawing based on AutoCAD file
½ hr = \$30.00 - \$40.00



Drawing based on Prototype
3 hr = \$180.00 - \$240.00



Drawing based on Photograph
4 hr = \$240.00 - \$320.00

Conclusion

Price is certainly an important aspect when considering patent drawings. In our opinion it should not be the most important factor. The lowest price drawings may end up costing you more.

ENDNOTES

1. Manual of Patent Examining Procedure -Chapter 600 parts, form, and content of application, II. notifying applicant § 6.21 New Drawings, Competent Draftsperson