

# Charles M. Howell

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“I was drawn to the idea of a deep underlying understanding of everything,” patent agent Charles Howell says.

For Charles, a career as a patent agent is the ideal use for his physics degree. “It’s an easy jumping-off point from physics to patent law,” he says.

As a registered patent agent, Charles is authorized to represent clients at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in patent matters. Charles completed all the USPTO’s requirements and passed the Patent Bar. Besides the registration exam, the requirements to be a patent agent include sufficient scientific and technical training, as well as proof of good moral character and reputation.

Building on his physics coursework and strong work ethic, Charles writes wide-ranging design and utility patent applications for clients. He prosecutes them in front of the USPTO. He also writes opinion letters related to patentability and for potential infringement issues. Charles works closely with patent attorneys.

In Charles’ practice, clients bring him all sorts of new ideas to present to the USPTO. It might be something mechanical, like a new interpretation of a hinge. It might be software or AI-related developments. Occasionally, he’ll even work on a physics-specific application. In every case, he wants clients to see him as helpful, dependable, responsive, cheerful, and generally a nice guy. That’s in addition to knowing he’ll offer his best efforts on their patent work.

Problem-solving, analysis, and adaptability are key components of Charles’ client work. Inventors present him with a diverse spectrum of projects. Sometimes the inventors go into every detail. In other situations, in-depth research helps Charles uncover the right approach for a successful patent application. He reviews similar applications and explores any unfamiliar terminology or usages. “I like those little eureka moments when I understand something new,” Charles says.

In patent law, there’s always something new. “I was told the learning curve is something more of a wall to be climbed,” Charles says. “I’m always looking to get better and stronger, so everything is a learning opportunity. I

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## EDUCATION

- Iowa State University (B.S., Physics, cum laude)

## BAR ADMISSIONS

- U.S. Patent Bar Registration Number 80913

like getting feedback and trying to improve on the next project.”

His work builds on his clients’ inspiration. “It’s cool seeing what inventors have come up with,” Charles says. “It’s brand-new. No one has done this before. I want to see it succeed.”