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## FOUNDER PATENT READINESS CHECKLIST

You should be thinking seriously about filing a patent application **before** you demo your product, pitch investors, or share your technology with partners. Filing after those moments is often too late or forces rushed, weak patents that create little real leverage.

Use this checklist to determine whether filing **now** is the right strategic move.

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### 1. The Timing Test

You are likely ready to file if **any** of the following are true:

- You are about to **demo** the product to customers, partners, or at events
- You are preparing to **pitch investors** or enter fundraising diligence
- You plan to share technical details with **strategic or technology partners**
- You are approaching a **public launch**, press, or technical publication

**If disclosure is coming, filing should come first.**

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### 2. The Leverage Test

Before filing, you should be able to answer **why** this patent matters.

- You can clearly state the **business objective** (valuation, market control, licensing leverage, competitive deterrence)
- The patent protects the **core system, method, or architecture**—not just a feature
- You know **who** the patent is meant to block, slow down, or discourage
- The patent would still matter if your product evolves over the next 6–12 months

Patents don't create leverage by existing.

They create leverage when they align with business reality.

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### ✓ 3. The “Should We File?” Questions

Before saying “yes,” ask:

- Have we already **publicly disclosed** this invention (demo, pilot, sale, talk, launch)?
- What **technical aspect** actually creates competitive advantage?
- Could a competitor **design around** what we plan to claim?
- Is this better protected as a **patent or a trade secret**?

The default answer should not be “yes, let’s file.”

It should be “**only if this creates leverage.**”

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### ✓ 4. Technical Readiness

Strong patents require more than an idea.

- The system architecture and core workflow are reasonably stable
  - You can describe **multiple implementation variants**, not just one version
  - You can articulate the **technical problem** and the **technical solution**
  - The invention is harder to copy at the **system or method level**, not just UI or output
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### ✓ 5. Portfolio Thinking (Not a One-Off Filing)

Patents decay if they don’t evolve with the product.

- This filing fits into a **broader portfolio strategy**, not a single “hero patent”
  - You have a plan for **follow-on or continuation filings** as the roadmap expands
  - The patent strategy aligns with **fundraising and growth milestones**
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### ✓ 6. Clean-Up for Diligence

Even strong patents lose value if the basics are wrong.

- Inventorship and **ownership are clean**
  - All assignments are signed and properly recorded
  - Contractor and consultant contributions are accounted for
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## How to Use This Checklist

- If you can check **most of Sections 1, 2, and 4**, you are likely ready to file.
  - If you struggle with **why you're filing, what creates leverage, or what competitors can design around**, pause and refine the strategy first.
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## Next Step

If you're unsure whether filing now strengthens your position—or quietly creates risk—the next step is clarity.

### Schedule an IP Strategy Session

NovoTech Patent Firm

*Investor-grade patent strategy for technology founders*