

Artificial intelligence

Bosch subsidiary defends AI patent against Vorwerk

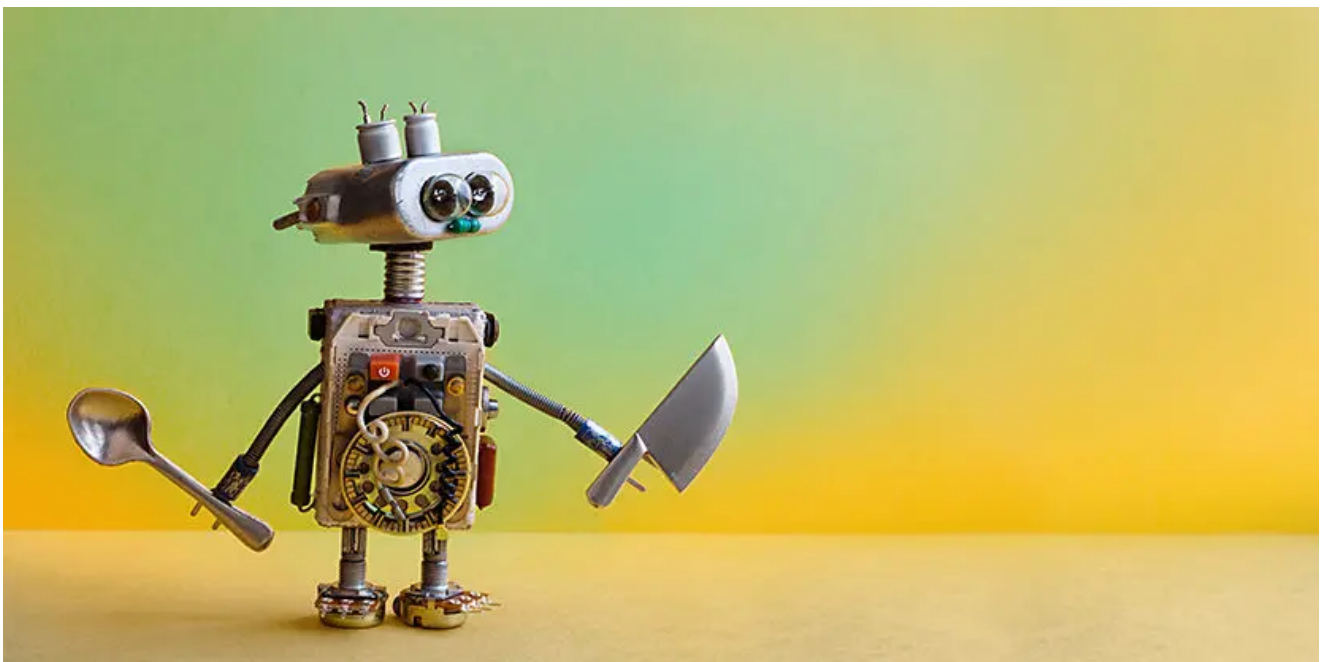
Thermomix manufacturer Vorwerk faces competition. Household appliance manufacturer BSH, a subsidiary of the Bosch Group, has successfully defended its German patent DE 10 2007 031 372 for an intelligent kitchen appliance before the German Federal Patent Court (case ID: 11 W (pat) 4/17).

16 May 2019 by Konstanze Richter

Automation & Robotics

Consumer Goods

Germany



Bosch's patented AI kitchen robot adapts to the habits of its user ©besjunior/ADOBE STOCK

The court confirmed the patent in its entirety. The judgment contrasts with a decision from the German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA), which had previously revoked the property right in opposition proceedings.

The patent protects a learning kitchen robot with artificial intelligence that allows the appliance to adapt to the habits of its user. The Esslingen-based software company IT Designers had filed the invention with the DPMA in 2007. Vorwerk then filed an opposition, claiming the invention infringed its Thermomix technology.

As a result, the DPMA revoked the patent.

In the meantime, Bosch had taken over the property right from IT Designers and successfully appealed against this decision. Vorwerk may also lodge an appeal against this latest ruling.

Bosch acquired Siemens' shares in the joint venture BSH in 2014. Its new kitchen robot could present competition for Vorwerk, whose Thermomix model has dominated the market for intelligent kitchen appliances. Following its artificially-intelligent vacuum and lawnmower robots, the kitchen appliance is Bosch's third foray into the world of domestic robots.

Bosch changes consultant

Originally, patent attorney firm Ruckh filed the patent for the inventor IT Designers and also represented the company in opposition proceedings. After acquiring the patent, however, Bosch retained SR Huebner for the appeal.



Stefan Huebner

products.

For Bosch (BSH)

SR Huebner (Munich): Stefan Rolf Huebner (patent attorney)

For Vorwerk

Rieder & Partner (Wuppertal): Enno Müller (patent attorney)

Federal Patent Court Germany, 11th Senate

Siegfried Höchst (presiding judge), Anton Eisenrauch, Lutz Fritze, Thilo Gruber

Munich-based SR Huebner and Bosch's household appliances division have a long-standing client relationship. Founding partner Huebner had already advised the Bosch subsidiary when BSH was still a joint venture between Bosch and Siemens. The patent attorney specialises in medical patents, physics and material sciences, especially nanotechnology patents.

Vorwerk relied on its long-standing advisors, Rieder & Partner. Patent attorney Müller regularly advises the household appliance manufacturer on filing applications at the European Patent Office and the DPMA – both for the Thermomix and the Kobold