

Protecting the intangible

Intellectual Property is such a wide area of law that's ever changing and evolving. Dealmakers facing an M&A transaction are expected to know all about what is often the company's most valuable asset: its intellectual property. Understanding how intellectual property rights infringe upon the world of M&A is essential and has come to dominate these transactions generally. Acquisition International speaks to Chris Bull Head of Intellectual Property Commercial Department at Spoor & about protecting the intangible in South Africa.

Spoor & Fisher is a specialist, full service international IP law firm, with special emphasis on providing services throughout Africa and the Middle East.

Chris Bull comments: "Our main offices are situated in South Africa and Jersey, Channel Islands. We were formed in 1920 and we have approximately 300 people on our staff supporting our intellectual property services practice.

"Our clients are typically large corporate clients seeking specialist IP advice and services in Africa and the Middle East. In the main our clients are international clients based outside of Africa."

Spoor & Fisher specialises in all aspects of intellectual property law including patents, trade marks, copyright and registered designs, related litigation, commercial transactions, due diligence, intellectual property valuation and portfolio management.

Chris Bull, who was recently recognized amongst the world's leading 250 patent and technology licensing lawyers under a survey conducted by IAM in 20 major jurisdictions elaborates: "The size, range and scope of the intellectual property services that we offer are our primary differentiator relative to our competitors in Africa.

"With specific reference to M&A transactions our IP Commercial Department is the largest department with the most extensive international experience within the team relative to our competitors in South Africa and Africa.

"Apart from the above we are also able to offer specialist industry and technical knowledge which is invaluable in any transaction, in that many of our lawyers are not only qualified as attorneys but are also scientists/engineers in the various disciplines listed above."

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

"We are regularly engaged to advise on M&A and other commercial transactions in order to ensure that the intellectual property and intangible asset components of the transaction are dealt with adequately. In the modern economy with many companies having the majority of value locked-up in intellectual property and intangible assets it is essential that these assets receive the proper attention in the transaction. All too often we have seen intellectual property assets given insufficient attention with disastrous consequences

"Quite apart from the legal and regulatory aspects of any transaction we are also engaged to advice on intellectual property valuation aspects of M&A transactions. Under accounting standards M&A transactions often require a purchase price allocation to be completed which not only requires valuation skills but also an in-depth understanding of intellectual property. To date Spoor & Fisher has been involved in IP valuations for projects and transactions having a value in excess of US\$ 1 billion."

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"Significant premiums are often paid in M&A transactions based on the underlying intangible asset or intellectual property value. This of course necessitates that appropriate and comprehensive due diligence work is done on the intellectual property portfolios that are being acquired. All too often we saw intellectual property portfolios being held out to be of substantial value when this was quite clearly not the case.

"Transactions that involve hard physical assets are often easier to evaluate, whereas deals based upon the acquisition of intellectual property can present a unique set of challenges. For example, a property owning company which is a target company can easily have its assets appraised to come up with an objective valuation. Intangible assets, and in particular intellectual property assets, are often harder to evaluate and value.

"In a modern world where intangible asset value forms a significant part of the value of most companies the contribution or value of the intellectual property in a company is often still overlooked in mergers and acquisitions. The intellectual property component is only part of the overall intangible asset value although in technology based companies or brand companies it can form a significant portion of the overall value of a company. It is therefore surprising how little attention intellectual property receives in merger and acquisition activity, particularly in Africa.

"In recent years we have seen due diligence on intellectual property assets become far more prevalent in the United States and Europe. This trend has not spread to Africa and our estimates are that less than 2% of mergers and acquisitions consider the intellectual property that is being acquired in any detail."

What are your predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

"Many have described Africa as "the last great frontier". We are seeing this reflected in a recent upsurge in intellectual property activity across Africa with increased attention on intellectual property filing and prosecution across Africa. In the last 12 months we have also seen unprecedented interest in international companies acquiring interests in African businesses to establish their presence in Africa. We expect this trend to continue, if not grow, through the coming year."

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Safir Anand is the Senior Partner and Head of Trademarks, Contractual and Commercial IP at Anand & Anand, an Intellectual Property Law Firm which has been in practice since the year 1923.

“Our client base is diverse, and includes individuals, companies, incorporations, universities and research organizations; multinationals; embassies and consulates; Indian corporate leaders; SME’s ; celebrities and management agencies; federations including fashion, franchising, hospitality and garment alliances and embassies and consulates.

“I advise clients on everything from their internet strategies, to product packaging, to frameworks for structuring royalty payments. Currently I am strategizing for a number of India’s Fashion Designers with respect to their ownership structure and global expansion structuring.

Anand and Anand acts for Fortune 500 companies among others and services a broad spectrum of industries. The firm is at the forefront in contentious IP litigation and trademark and patent prosecution.

“The Firm in the year 2010 has done exceptional work in the area of Intellectual Property Law. The firm has contributed in drafting two legislations and a large number of cases have been concluded giving impetus to the growth of Intellectual Property law in India.

“We have been the counsel in several landmark IP cases including the Anton Piller Order (HMV cases); Mareva Injunction Order (Philips case); Norwich Pharmacal Order (Hollywood Cigarettes case); Right of privacy case (Bandit Queen case); Dilution in trademarks case (Glenfiddich case).

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

“An effective IP adviser not only helps the client to identify and protect their IP but also helps evaluate and grow the same. As an IP adviser, you should be able to help your

client identify their most valuable IP and help them protect, value and grow the same.”
Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

“A BRAND is the communication tool to the consumer and has the power to shift demand. IP is therefore one of the most important assets of a company.

What are your predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

“With the direction of the Supreme Court that IP cases should expedited and injunction application should not be pending for years, it is expected that courts would endeavour to follow a strict time frame to regulate the life of litigation. Courts will be more inclined to expeditiously dispose of the suit by adopting measures such as costs for delay, admission denial of documents to be done on affidavit, limiting the number of hours a witness can be cross-examined and generally relying upon its inherent powers to prevent any delay. The aforesaid trends have already commenced and are expected to gain momentum in 2011.”

“The Firm in the year 2009 has done exceptional work in the area of Intellectual Property Law. The firm has contributed in drafting two legislations and a large number of cases have been concluded giving impetus to the growth of Intellectual Property law in India.”



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Baptista, Monteverde & Associados is a leading Law firm in Portugal, in particular in what IP and pharmaceutical Law is concerned. Baptista, Monteverde & Associados offers a complete range of legal services and specializes in areas which are not traditionally delivered by law firms in Portugal.

Paulo Monteverde is partner at the Law Firm Baptista, Monteverde & Associados.

The firm and its team are well known internationally for its success in intellectual property and commercial litigation. In fact, Baptista, Monteverde & Associados has recently been awarded the Patents Law firm of the year 2010 in Portugal.

Baptista, Monteverde & Associados includes clients from many of the most technologically advanced and innovative businesses in the world, in fields such as chemistry, life sciences, telecommunications, media and information technology.

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

“An IP adviser helps its clients to make the most appropriate and cost effective strategic business options. Should investment be made in developing a new technology? What “prior art” is there concerning those technologies? Will there be turnover from that investment? Should a lawsuit be initiated against a competitor using a similar technology protected by a client’s patent? These are some of the questions which require proper knowledge and skills to help the companies’ decision makers taking the proper choices and predicting the outcome of each decision. For example, innovative business methods, rather than innovative products, may be at the core of a company’s competitive advantage.”

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

“Intellectual property relates to intangible property such as patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets. IP can be one of the most important assets a business owns. Why? Well, because IP is basically a monopoly right granted by the government. For example, a patent is a limited monopoly granted by the government for the term period of the patent. After the patent expires, anyone may make, use or sell the

invention. Trademarks identify the goods of one manufacturer from the goods of others. Trademarks are important business assets because they allow companies to establish their products reputation without having to worry that an inferior product will diminish their reputation or profit by deceiving the consumer. “

“In 2009 Interbrand valued the Coca-Cola brand as the world's most valuable brand worth almost US\$69bn - an amount which only refers to the brand itself and not to any assets owned by the company.”

“To seek proper protection for IP rights is crucial. How to protect IP rights? In which territory? How and where to enforce IP rights? Should all possible infringements be treated the same way? Proper answers to all these questions should be given in order to ensure that a proper IP business policy is in place.”

“An IP adviser helps its clients to make the most appropriate and cost effective strategic business options. Should investment be made in developing a new technology? What “prior art” is there concerning those technologies? Will there be turnover from that investment? Should a lawsuit be initiated against a competitor using a similar technology protected by a client’s patent? These are some of the questions which require proper knowledge and skills to help the companies’ decision makers taking the proper choices and predicting the outcome of each decision. For example, innovative business methods, rather than innovative products, may be at the core of a company’s competitive advantage.”



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Cárdenas & Cárdenas Abogados has worked with domestic and international customers, under schemes of high ethical commitment, seriousness and professionalism. Luz Helena Adarve Gomez and Juanita Acosta Gómez, are IP Partners at Cárdenas & Cárdenas Abogados Law.

Today the firm has a prominent group of lawyers and several advisers' plant allows us to respond effectively to requests from our customers.

The constant contact with major international companies, allows the firm a peak performance in providing legal professional services.

From an IP perspective, the firm offers Permanent counseling to clients on its Intellectual Property portfolio, both in its selection and protection and enforcement, including patent, copyright, trademark, consumer protection, promotional activities, warranties, advertisement, regulatory and entertainment matters.

Cárdenas & Cárdenas Abogados assist clients in generating policies, mechanisms and enforcement for global and regional protection on IP, understanding it as a competitive tool in the market. Clients include a wide range and variety of consumer products in the fields of technology, food, cosmetics among others.

How does your firm stand out from local competitors in terms of the services you offer?

"Our experience in the handling of global and regional portfolios has allowed us to have the capacity of generating comprehensive IP protection and enforcement strategies involving more than one country.

"Our procedures towards the client are simple, facilitating our clients concerns and thus making our service 100% personalized.

"We have the capability of creating a synergy between the Marketing and Legal in-house teams of our clients.

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

- Verification of comprehensive protection of the company's IP.
- Appropriate due diligence verification,
- Prevention of contingencies,
- Follow-up and appropriate protection of rights,
- Proper drafting and execution of DNA's and protection of confidential information,
- Appropriate IP valuation,
- Optimization and correct design of the ownership and licensing of an IP portfolio.
- Appropriately focus the taxation impact in the handling, ownership and negotiation of the IP owned by the company.

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"Intellectual Property grants the company the right to exercise a legal exclusivity over given assets excluding its competitors from the use of said assets, granting in this manner a commercial advantage over other companies within the same field.

"In the field of patents, technology and R&D, grants an interesting negotiation when entering into a deal with companies having developments in complementary fields.

The steps should be:

- Identify the valuable IP within the company.
- Protect such IP assets through registration, policies, documentations or contracts, or taking measures to maintain confidentiality of the company trade secrets
- Identify the countries where such IP assets will be used and obtain registration in such jurisdictions requesting availability searches.
- Request local agents to review Licenses, Distribution, Franchising, Copyright Agreements involving IP assets regarding the laws of each relevant country.

What're your predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

"I predict that Colombia will enter into treaties such as TLT and Madrid Protocol. In addition, the disposition of the Colombian Patent Office to study and software implemented inventions."



DANUBIA
PATENT & LAW OFFICE LLC
in cooperation with Sár & Partners
Established 1949
Professionals in Protecting Intellectual Property

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Danubia is the oldest and largest IP Law Firm in Hungary, owner of several awards and provides service for domestic and foreign clients in Hungary and for Hungarian and foreign clients before the EPO and OHIM and in other countries in obtaining and defending their IP rights.

Michael Lantos, Hungarian and European Patent Attorney, and managing partner (director) of Danubia Patent & Law Office, Budapest, a full service IP Law firm, (partnership) established in 1949.

"I am responsible for the general conduct of the firm, and am proud that there are partners who assist me in this job, as the main service branches, like Patent matters, Trademarks, Litigation, Copyright and Competition right, IT and accounting have their respective leaders. Besides this activity I am active in patent and trademarks litigation, doing complex prosecution cases before the EPO and OHIM and do filings in abroad. I am also involved in the training of talented younger patent attorneys and lawyers (including trainees)."

"Danubia is the oldest and largest IP Law Firm in Hungary, owner of several awards and provides service for domestic and foreign clients in Hungary and for Hungarian and foreign clients before the EPO and OHIM and in other countries in obtaining and defending their IP rights. Danubia is proud to represent large multinational companies (mostly in the pharmaceutical and biotech fields) in their patent and trademark litigation proceedings in Hungary, and our practice before the European Patent Office is substantial, it goes back when the EPO has started its operation at the end of the seventies. Till 2003 (the date of Hungary's joining the EPC) our practice was carried out by using foreign associates, but since 2003 we are representing clients directly before the EPO."

"We are a full service IP Law firm and therefore work in all segments of IP Law. Our patent attorneys have qualifications covering all fields of technology, and the lawyers are specialized in respective fields within IP, and all needs of the client are dealt with persons having the highest education and practice in that specific field. In complex cases

we create ad hoc teams that match the need of the case to be handled. Our specialty is to provide quality service with reasonable costs. This is particularly true for using Danubia as representative before the EPO and OHIM."

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"Nowadays IP assets has an over 70% part in the total value of the company, and direct IP rights constitute the skeleton of such assets. The steps we can advise is to file patent applications in good time, carry out search, use the time provided by the PCT system, and regularly review policy and drop cases with no importance and provide broad protection to patents that deserve it. Continuous search and review and updating the IP portfolio, working out a consistent brand policy is the core of business success."

What are you predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

"Hungary has just joined the London Agreement, and the simplification of obtaining patent right through European way will continue. We plan to join the unitary patent system, and also prefer the Patent Prosecution Highway. The domestic trademark search and national trademark rights will have higher and higher significance as the CTM is a good vehicle but not an overall remedy and national systems have certain advantages."

"I am responsible for the general conduct of the firm, and am proud that there are partners who assist me in this job, as the main service branches, like Patent matters, Trademarks, Litigation, Copyright and Competition right, IT and accounting have their respective leaders. Besides this activity I am active in patent and trademarks litigation, doing complex prosecution cases before the EPO and OHIM and do filings in abroad. I am also involved in the training of talented younger patent attorneys and lawyers (including trainees)."



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GOODRICH RIQUELME Y ASOCIADOS is a full-service law firm with 75 years of experience that speak for themselves. The firm relies on the expertise of its lawyers, a wide range of specialists committed to their fields of study. Goodrich's overall strength is a result of bringing together the knowledge of different legal practice areas, especially that of intellectual property law, and excelling in customer service.

"As a leading IP law firm in the country, we manage the prosecution of over 3500 trade marks and more than 1000 patents per year; regularly filing and handling over 400 litigations in both fields."

"The vast majority of our intellectual property work is for companies outside of Mexico who are conducting business here. Our staff of attorneys, engineers and computer specialists help adapt foreign patent specifications and claims to Mexican law, register patents and trademarks and maintain them by ensuring their renewals. With the help of a sophisticated computer program that is linked to the Mexican Patent and Trademark Office (MPTO), we can provide our clients with timely notices of due dates and decisions made by the MPTO. We also perform trademark searches and prepare and register user agreements."

"Throughout the years we have perfected our negotiation skills to ensure that our clients get the best possible settlement in any given dispute."

"We register copyrights and draft agreements between authors and publishers. Due to recent changes in technology, we are increasingly being called on for assistance in licensing and litigation relating to computer software."

Goodrich's attorneys handle litigation for clients in areas such as licensing, patent and trademark infringement, including counterfeiting, pirating and unlawful duplication of computer software.

"We are focused on facilitating the exchange of specialized knowledge and are pleased to assist biopharmaceutical companies, banking institutions, and research

organizations. We offer greater expertise in relation to the acquisition of rights and in transactions involving licensing and transfer of technology, as well as in technology joint ventures, research and development, supply and distribution agreements and dispute resolution."

"Goodrich acknowledged long ago that our clients' needs required us to extend our presence beyond Mexico City. Today, we have collaborating attorneys throughout the country. Our participation in the Bomchil Group, an association with offices in every Latin American country, enables us to ensure that our clients are fully, timely, and efficiently represented wherever their business takes them. As our clients' needs continue to change, Goodrich Riquelme will grow to satisfy them, trusted local and international advice on legal and regulatory issues."

"We are focused on facilitating the exchange of specialized knowledge and are pleased to assist biopharmaceutical companies, banking institutions, and research organizations. We offer greater expertise in relation to the acquisition of rights and in transactions involving licensing and transfer of technology, as well as in technology joint ventures, research and development, supply and distribution agreements and dispute resolution."



INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY AGENCY - ESTABLISHED IN 1953

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ROMINVENT S.A., established in 1953, is one of the most prominent agency engaged in the practice of industrial property laws in Romania, providing its Romanian and foreign clients with counseling and representation, in view of acquiring and defending the IP rights, also before ROPTO, OEB, WIPO and OHIM authorities.

Moreover, ROMINVENT ensures the representation of its clients before the courts of law, at all judicial levels, in legal proceedings specific in the IP field.

ROMINVENT is a member of some international associations such as: INTA, AIPPI, LES, ACG, ECTA, ICC-CIB.

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Kuhnen & Wacker has 35 years of experience in the field of Intellectual Property and over time has acquired an excellent international reputation. Rainer Kuhnen is Senior Partner and Co-Founder of Kuhnen & Wacker, alongside Paul-A. Wacker. The firm has 75 employees and 15 attorneys.

Please describe a typical client?

"We service both the domestic and overseas markets; from Individual or SME specializing in some technological niche and requiring world-wide protection for its leading edge technology to big corporations needing large numbers of patents around the world."

How does your firm stand out from local competitors in terms of the services you offer?

"We are dedicated to service our clients with highest quality at still reasonable costs. We have a fine mix of older attorneys with huge experience over time, and younger very energetic attorneys, who may, in case of need, rely on the experience of their older colleagues."

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

"In a word "due diligence", firstly we conduct an analysis and value assessment of the IP portfolio (patents, trademarks, designs) to be purchased with the company, and

then make the analysis of licensing in and licensing out contracts as to problems or even deal-breakers.

"Examples for a show stopper: (a) the company to be purchased has licensed out a very important product to the main competitor, and this contract cannot be quickly terminated; (b) an important product has been licensed in by the company to be purchased, and this contract can be quickly terminated."

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"Renowned trademarks are most valuable because they can be maintained infinitely. Important patents (example: block busters) may generate a huge cash flow for many years as no competitor can undercut good prices. Companies should file with PTO's and invest enough money in initial filing to optimize this."

What are your predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

"Wording of the Regulation for the new unitary EU patent available for all EU countries except Italy and Spain. Will come into effect soon."



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Advokatfirman Lindahl KB ("Lindahl") is a full service law firm, the third largest in Sweden, with offices in six of its major cities. Jonas Westerberg is partner in the IP Group at the Stockholm office of Lindahl.

Lindahl is unique in that it can offer the combination of high specialization and sufficient resources for major transactions in both IP (especially patents) and M&A.

Lindahl covers all areas of IP law on a high level of specialization. In respect of industry sectors the Life Sciences (patents) and Consumer Goods and Services (trademarks) stands out as highly relevant, but Lindahl have clients in all sectors of industry such as the information, media and entertainment industry.

Typical clients are companies with a business depending on technology and know-how or design and valuable brands, companies in the Life Sciences area and companies making investments in businesses with strategic IP assets.

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

"An IP adviser's key function is to identify and report in a comprehensible and business oriented manner the strengths and weaknesses of the target company/assets to be

acquired, based on a genuine understanding of both the complex legal IP issues and the client's business objectives. The IP adviser shall of course also be able to create and implement solutions to identified problems, either through contractual or practical measures."

What are your predictions for IP law in your jurisdiction over the coming 12 months?

"IP has been in focus for the legislator and the topic of several international conventions over the recent years (one major convention being the TRIPS Agreement and the most recent being the ACTA Agreement).

"On the European level it will be of interest to see the progress of the initiative on enhanced cooperation for the creation of the Unitary European Patent System following the currently failed efforts in respect of the creation of a European Union patent.

"Otherwise there are very interesting developments in case law concerning trademark use on the Internet and ISP liability and obligations in connection with file sharing over the Internet."



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J. Derek Mason, Kirsten A. Grüneberg, Philippe Signore, and Steven P. Weihrouch are each partners with the firm of Oblon, Spivak, McClelland, Maier & Neustadt, L.L.P., located in Alexandria, VA, USA. Steven Weihrouch is also the Managing Partner of Oblon, Spivak L.L.P. located in Tokyo, Japan.

For over 40 years, Oblon Spivak has helped its clients protect and use their IP assets worldwide. Headquartered next door to the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Oblon Spivak is one of the largest IP law firms in the United States. As needed, Oblon Spivak draws on the legal expertise, and breadth and depth of technical abilities in the firm, to form the best team to address a client's needs.

Oblon Spivak is a full service intellectual property law firm, representing both domestic and international clients, from small startups to multinational corporations, and covering all areas of IP law and all technologies. The combination of technical capability, legal expertise, and knowledge of our client's culture and language, allows our firm to work closely with clients to address any of their IP needs.

What does an IP adviser bring to the deal table?

"Inclusion of an IP advisor in due diligence, negotiation, and agreement drafting

permits identification of potential IP issues, risk assessment, adjustment of deal terms in relation to potential risks, and inclusion of appropriate representations and warranties in the agreement to protect the investment being made and provide legal recourse post-closing. Our firm can devote the necessary resources to any task to handle extraordinary amounts of information and issues in the rush environment often encountered with M&A activities."

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"Providing a superior product is no longer sufficient for success. Unless the company can prevent competitors from copying the product, the competitive edge provided by the superior product is readily lost. Having IP protection for the product helps the company create an exclusive marketing space, providing market entry barriers for the competitor. A strong IP portfolio also provides negotiating leverage with respect to competitors' portfolios."



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Twiggly Liu is principal of Twiggly MH Liu Law Office, handling all types of intellectual property related cases, including investments, mergers and acquisition and general litigation. Twiggly has experience in handling IP portfolio protection, brand building and strategic planning and is a member of INTA, AIPPI, APAA,LES,ITMA.

Twiggly MH Liu Law Office clientele is made up of Fortune 500 companies, multinational corporations, educational institutions and quasi government organizations in different industries ranging from textile, food and beverages, automobiles, hotels, media and entertainment, healthcare, IT, to lifestyle products.

Twiggly has co-operated with most of her clients for many years, some over 20 years, whom she advised on the first day the clients decided to enter the PRC market. Twiggly MH Liu Law Office's motto is "Clients are more than clients, they are our friends and partners."

"Intellectual property is a relatively young practice of law. It is still unknown to or fully appreciated by a majority of the community/ commercial sector. For example I was contacted at a very late stage of an IPO and the main assets of the company were its technologies and related intellectual property rights. The company had obtained a

number of trademarks, designs and patents registrations. Unfortunately the scope of these registrations was very narrow and specific. This greatly reduced value of the company, so much so the underwriter almost backed out. Pursuant to last minute advice and steps taken to improve the portfolio, maximising its value, the company was listed without upsetting its time table".

"Regarding the next 12 months, IP will continue to grow as the world's economy is moving into knowledge-based economy. IP Law becomes more sophisticated and versatile. In Greater China, this will definitely be the case. I am happy we are part of this development."

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Tay & Partners offer the full range of services in the area of IP & Technology, with offices in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and also Johor Bahru. LINDA WANG is Partner of Malaysian law firm, TAY & PARTNERS.

"I head the Intellectual Property & Technology practice group of Tay & Partners and have overall responsibility for the development and growth of the practice group as well as its direction for general advancement. Needless to say a large part of this is ensuring quality of our work product as well as client satisfaction. Another key focus is the development of new growth areas within the practice group."

How does your firm stand out from local competitors in terms of the services you offer?

"We stand out because we are truly specialists in our area of practice. We have been able to build up significant expertise and our specialist knowledge from our years of experience working in this field. We also know the landscape and field well. Additionally we have nurtured and built up good working relationships with government agencies and have made contacts (including contacts that supply us with relevant intelligence when it comes to anti-counterfeiting work) that allow us to

discharge the work entrusted to us by our clients at a level higher and better than others. Importantly, we never stop giving focus to bringing satisfaction to each and every one of our clients. That is integral to what we do and underlies all that we do."

Why is intellectual property a company's most valuable asset? And what steps should a company take to protect their IP?

"In the world we live in today, IP is what allows a company or business to have an edge over its competitors. Examples are many - patented drugs, luxury brands that immediately command premium prices, the many technologies that are employed in our daily lives and commerce, songs, movies and games, the list goes on. If that is not recognized as the company's most valuable asset and protected accordingly, the company will lose its ability to compete successfully.

"There are various steps that can be taken by a company to protect its IP depending on the kind of IPR that is involved. IPR protection can be an expensive affair, thus, it would be helpful for the company to first look into formulating an IPR protection policy that is strategic and which meets its business needs."