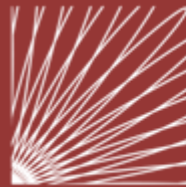


IP UPDATE

Conference Special



ALLIANCE
FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Tuesday 4th December saw the Alliance's Second Annual IP Conference, chaired by Telegraph columnist Sue Cameron and sponsored by Wiggin LLP and the Premier League. The invited audience of nearly 100 people heard from a wide range of speakers about the role IP plays in delivering growth at home and abroad, how important IP rights are to them in building successful businesses, the challenges they face in protecting these rights, and the benefits they derive if they are able to protect their IP effectively. With many of the speakers, drawn from video games, brand, sports broadcasting, design and audio-visual industries, able to offer insights built on personal experience, delegates were left in no doubt how reliant vast swathes of our economy is on IP.

SESSION ONE: DELIVERING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET

Strong commitment from Labour

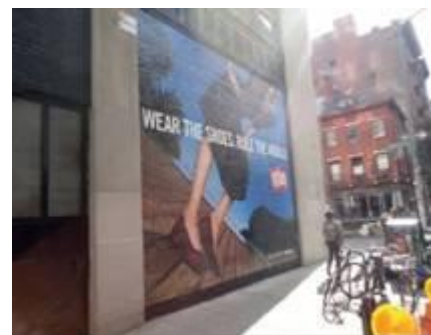
Opening the conference, Iain Wright MP, Shadow Minister for Competitiveness and Enterprise reaffirmed Labour's support for our creative and branded industries. "IP is at the cutting edge of our economy, and innovators need to know that their ideas will be protected", Iain commented. He continued, "We would be foolish to move away from a regime which protects both business and consumers. Strong IP is part of a strong rule of law and we lose our reputation for strong IP at our peril". Iain was also critical of the current Government's approach on these issues, accusing them of "making up IP policy 'on the hoof'".



Iain Wright, Shadow Minister for Competitiveness and Enterprise

First-hand experience

Head of Brand Protection for Fitflop, Judith Tonkin, explained how critical IP rights are to the company. Fitflop has an IP portfolio that includes registered trade marks in 65 countries and patents in 56 countries. With footwear being one of the most counterfeited sectors in the world, Judith was very clear that it would be impossible for Fitflop to succeed in so many countries without the ability to protect their IP rights.



Fitflop



Miles Jacobson, Sports Interactive

Even though Sports Interactive produce a very different product to Fitflop, Miles Jacobson was just as clear on the importance of IP rights to success in the video games industry. Miles explained that Football Manager was first created by two brothers working from their bedroom in Shropshire and, even though it has now been going for 20 years, he is still struck by how important it is that IP laws protect small start-ups as well as big corporations. Miles was also very clear about the impact IP theft has on businesses. He was able to share with the audience the fact that the tougher protection measures they deployed on the last version of Football Manager led to additional revenue which in turn enabled them to employ an additional 8 people!

Role policy can play in delivering growth

Delegates also heard about how the Government can create an environment where IP businesses can thrive and contribute to national and local economies. Wiggin Partner Charles Moore spearheaded the campaign for the TV tax credit in the UK. He cited the example of Game of Thrones, the smash-hit fantasy drama programme produced in Northern Ireland for HBO because of the availability of a local tax relief, which has transformed the economy of the area; generating profits, jobs and tourism. This, Charles explained, demonstrated to the Treasury the wider economic benefits that can come from strong Government support for IP industries, beyond those directly enjoyed by the creator.



Sue Cameron, The Telegraph and Charles Moore, Wiggin

Bringing a design perspective to the first session, Alliance Vice Chair and Chief Executive of ACID, Dids Macdonald, welcomed Iain Wright's support for the design sector and highlighted how design issues, previously misunderstood and neglected by Government in recent years, are now receiving greater attention. For example, a recent Designs Consultation has the objective of simplifying design rights which, to many, are a complex set of rights. Dids also agreed with Iain that IP rights should not be perceived by Government as regulation but as property rights.



Dids Macdonald, ACID

SESSION TWO: MAXIMISING UK IP ABROAD



Lord Green, Minister of State for Trade and Investment

Opening Session Two, Lord Green, Minister of State for Trade and Investment, discussed the challenges facing the creative industries and intellectual property rights, most notably the current economic climate and the rise of emerging markets. Emphasising the shift of economic power from west to east and from north to south, Lord Green highlighted how the creative industries have been singled out by the Coalition government as a key constituent in the project to re-balance the economy.

To fully harness the potential of intellectual property, however, Lord Green stressed the necessity of protecting IP rights in all emerging markets, whatever that industry might be. He said that IP is important to success in international markets and as such IP theft abroad has to be dealt with. He pointed to the UK Government's appointment of IP Attachés in Beijing, Delhi and Brasilia as evidence of the Government's commitment to this issue. He ended by stating that there is no simple solution and that businesses must be encouraged to think about how they can protect and exploit their IP abroad.

Importance of international revenues

Speakers in this session explained how maximising international revenue from their rights benefit businesses back home. Gareth Neame of Carnival Films, one of the UK's leading drama producers, and the man responsible for the global TV phenomenon *Downton Abbey*, was clear how important being able to sell *Downton* overseas was to the economic viability of the series as a whole. Given the delicate financing behind UK TV production, the ability to generate revenue from licensing international rights and the domestic and international sales of DVDs proved critical to the financing of future episodes. In addition, Gareth pointed out the impact it has had on British tourism with visitors to the UK wanting to have the 'Downton' experience.



Sue Cameron and Lord Green



Downton Abbey



(L –R) Gareth Neame, Simon Littlewood, Nick Toolan, Bill Bush and Kate Anthony Wilkinson discuss their experiences with IP abroad

Nick Toolan of PRS for Music, Kate Anthony Wilkinson from Mulberry and Bill Bush of the Premier League joined Simon and Gareth for a panel discussion, a line-up which clearly demonstrated the role IP plays in the success of a diverse range of businesses.



Kate raised the challenge Mulberry faces in deciding where and, importantly, when to register its rights – wait too long and companies can find their brand names are already registered by a third party and it is then used to block your entry into that market. Bill confirmed the importance of the Premier League being able to maximise its international sales as this revenue is reinvested domestically, helping to ensure that the UK Premier League remains the number one domestic league in the world. Nick commented that music rights owners are learning to respond quickly in a changing world, where music is used in a variety of different ways. PRS for Music operates in 150 countries, and experiences the most difficulty with copyright theft in Eastern Europe and Asia. The session demonstrated that managing and developing IP rights abroad can be fraught but, if the right conditions are met, there are far-reaching benefits which enable businesses and cultures to flourish.

The speakers from both sessions, whether they were from the political or businesses world, were united in the view that IP was an invaluable asset and one that needed to be protected. From British brands with massive heritage through to new brands forging a global reputation, from interactive video games through to global beating TV series, there was no doubt that the economy will grow if we encourage, champion and protect IP. The question is whether the Government will throw its weight behind supporting the fantastic British success stories that heard at the conference. Standing up and waving the flag for British success stories is one thing, but these creators, manufacturers and designers need the Government to match words with actions.



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