



Strengthening the Value of Existing IP

Coller IP Management was approached by an Engineering Company to advise on the content of its patent portfolio. Their senior technical manager had spotted that two key patents underpinning their main specialist services were due to expire within two years. He raised a concern that loss of the patents could open the door for competitors and asked if **we** could extend the life of the patents?

We responded quickly to confirm that the life of a patent is limited to 20 years – so it is not possible to literally extend it - but there were actions that the Company could take to strengthen its IP by other routes and retain a competitive edge.

We led a focused workshop with our client, and reviewed the wider Intellectual Capital in the business that supported their main specialist services. We discovered three areas that were key to their continued success and required solutions to protect the company's business position.

1) The Company's main specialist service is well known and its name is respected by its clients. There was nothing in place however to prevent competitors from undertaking a similar service under the same brand name. Our professional patent team has now registered the brand as a Trademark to protect its use in those countries where there is likely to be significant demand. Trade mark registrations may be renewed indefinitely and so the service will be protected into the future.

2) There was an opportunity to put long-term service agreements in place during the continuing period of validity of the patents, to provide continuity of demand and enable the Company to commit support to its client base. This is now being actively progressed.

3) The technology and processes underpinning the specialist service have been developed recently. We alerted the Company to opportunities to file patents for recent improvements to the service that would continue to protect its use for many years to come. We are now working with the Company to drive this process forward.

Our approach recognised unprotected elements of the Company's Intellectual Capital and identified practical ways in which its legal protection could be strengthened, increasing commercial leverage in the market.

As a result of these actions, our clients have better identified and managed their business risks and have greater confidence in retaining and continuing to grow the value of their business.

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