

First Survey on Business Attitudes to Intellectual Property

The first “Survey on Business Attitudes to Intellectual Property” commissioned by the Intellectual Property Department reveals that the awareness level of intellectual property rights among the business sector in Hong Kong is remarkably high.

With the intention of providing strategic insights in developing the Government’s policy on intellectual property for the business sector, the Intellectual Property Department initiated an annual survey on business attitudes to intellectual property. In total, 1,204 business establishments responded.

Over 90 per cent of respondents understood what items were protected by intellectual property. 95 per cent of them considered that it was necessary to protect intellectual property rights in the business environment of Hong Kong. The respondents in general believed that the intellectual property infringement was quite serious now.

85.4 per cent of respondents agreed that intellectual property protection could help the development of local creative industries. About three-quarters (75.6 per cent) believed that the protection of IP rights could enhance the creation of business opportunity and wealth.

"The survey indicates that businessmen in Hong Kong understand the importance of intellectual property in developing creative industries, as well as in revitalising the economy of Hong Kong," said Mr. Stephen Selby, Director of Intellectual Property Department. "That is a positive signal for us."

However, only slightly over one-tenth (12.5 per cent) of them had registered trademarks, patents or designs in Hong Kong even though 95 per cent of respondents believed that intellectual property rights were valuable assets of a company.

Among them, companies from the manufacturing (20 per cent) and the wholesale, retail & import and export trades/restaurants and tourism sectors (16.2 per cent) were more likely to have their trademarks, patents and designs registered.

The survey shows that only 7.1 per cent of business establishments have carried out research and development in Hong Kong. Among these business establishments, 80.9 per cent of them have searched the patent register to ensure that they would not infringe other’s inventions. 85.3 per cent of them knew that by searching the patent register, they could find useful ideas for developing into new inventions.

“Although almost 70 per cent of business establishments understand the difference between trademark registration and business/company registration, the government will continue to step up effort in clearing up any misunderstandings of our intellectual protection system.”

“While the businessmen recognize that intellectual property rights are valuable assets for a company, some of them are not taking appropriate measures to protect their own rights by registering their trademarks, patents or designs,” said Mr. Selby.

"This survey provides useful insights for us. Clearly, we need to strengthen our efforts in promoting the protection of intellectual property rights among the business community. The "No Fakes Pledge" TV commercial and the SME Seminar which will be held in Dongguan in May are examples of events designed to cater for the business sectors -- especially to SMEs.

"Through these promotional activities, we hope to emphasise the importance of intellectual property protection as a tool for wealth creation," he added.

Mercado Solutions Associates Ltd was commissioned by the Intellectual Property Department to conduct the survey. The survey findings are available on the website of the Intellectual Property Department at: www.info.gov.hk/ipd.

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