

# International – What the future holds for trademark practitioners

**Last week** a new IP law firm was unveiled in Washington, the latest in a series of recent new launches. In the current issue of *WTR*, available from our booth at the INTA Annual Meeting, the rise of the boutiques is just one of the trends we predict will shape the trademark environment in the next two years.

Kelly IP was launched in Washington DC by five former Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner attorneys and will focus on all aspects of trademarks, copyrights, domain names, unfair competition, and related areas. Commenting on the move, David Kelly, co-founder and partner of the new firm, stated: “There is a strong demand for a boutique law firm that offers sophisticated, high-value litigation and counselling expertise focusing on trademark, copyright and internet law.

Over the past 18 months a number of new trademark firms have been established, as law firm partners look to establish their own specialist firms. From New Zealand (Catalyst Intellectual Property) to the United States (Advitam IP) to Europe (Balder IP, Bear and Wolf), legal specialists have struck out. While a certain degree of activity happens in any sector, this is a trend that could gather steam.

In the latest edition of *WTR*, we have identified the (non-trademark counsel and judicial) individuals, institutions and the possible trends and movements that we feel will shape the trademark ecosystem over the next 18 months. The rise of the trademark boutique is one such trend that makes the list with Nicholas Richardson, research manager across the *WTR 1000* and *Patent 1000* projects, observing: “In the patent litigation arena we’ve seen top name partners from major firms setting up lean, highly specialised shops, and I suspect that this will be mirrored on the trademark side of the equation; sophisticated clients are demanding a more personal service alongside tailored solutions to increasingly complex brand protection and enforcement problems.”

However, he predicts that the shift will not prevent larger firms competing strongly for trademark work:

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“At the same time, the biggest firms are likely to get bigger, with growth fuelled by expansion into emerging markets; their ability to offer one-stop shopping to global brands continues to set them apart. Those in the middle may be left feeling the squeeze.” A competitive market is good news for corporate counsel and it would not be a surprise to see other boutiques establish in the coming months.

*WTR*’s predictions for the next 18 months in trademarks (which also includes a glimpse into the future from INTA, OHIM, MARQUES and ECTA) are presented in the current issue of the magazine. If you are not currently a subscriber, head to exhibition stand number 726 to pick up a complimentary copy (while stocks last!). **WTR**

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