

Firm Takes Pride in Trademark Enforcement

Baker and Rannells, PA

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No. of Employees: 20

Top Executive: Stephen L. Baker, President

Product/Service: Intellectual Property Attorneys specializing in Trademarks, Copyright and Patents.

Year Founded: 1948

For 60 years, trademarks have found a staunch advocate in the law firm of Baker and Rannells, PA.

The firm specializes in trademark prosecution and enforcement, along with other aspects of intellectual property law. The firm's focus allows it to deliver efficient, effective legal services to clients around the world.

"We pride ourselves on putting our clients' goals first, meeting those goals within budget and delivering the results our clients seek," says Stephen L. Baker, president of Baker and Rannells.

General law firms that have an IP practice often face a steeper learning curve in working with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office and other regulatory bodies. "We don't reinvent the wheel every time we file a response to the Patent Office," Baker says. "That efficiency is translated into lower legal fees."

A trademark means more than the exclusive right to use a name, symbol or design. It also confers value during a merger or acquisition, Baker says. In addition, a trademark makes it easier for companies to defend their market turf.

The firm was founded in 1948 in Manhattan by Baker's father, S. Stephen Baker, who had worked as a patent attorney for the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II. Many clients that hired the firm back then remain today, says Stephen Baker, who went to work for his father in 1964 while in law school and upon graduation joined the firm.

Based in Raritan, the firm serves companies in a

variety of industries, including big names in food and fashion. Clothing companies, for instance, want to trademark their names and designs, even down to the placement of labels and stitching.

"Not only do companies want to be recognized by the name that appears on the garment, they also want to be recognized by distinctive features," says Neil Friedman, a senior associate at Baker and Rannells.

With companies facing global competition, the firm is seeing greater interest in protecting trademarks on an international scale, say Baker and Friedman.

The need to set up trademarks in numerous jurisdictions raises upfront costs for companies. But, the effort pays off in preventing costlier legal battles down the road against trademark pirates, counterfeiters and knock-off artists.

To further serve clients worldwide, Baker and Rannells is adding staff members who can speak multiple languages, further streamlining the process. Staff can converse in Greek, Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin Chinese, Baker says. "While English is lingua franca around the world, there are plenty of companies that can communicate only in their own language."

Baker and Rannells also is in the forefront of defending trademarks and other intellectual property online, where the temptation to copy can be hard for some to resist.

Wherever the practice leads, the attorneys of Baker and Rannells keep the basics in mind. "It all comes down to professionalism, efficiency and meeting clients' goals," Baker says. ■

