

Managing Intellectual Property in a Crisis (Part 1)

PUBLISHED ON
March 30, 2020

(Note: This is a three-part series on the importance of a company's intellectual property in difficult economic times. Look for additional parts of this series this week.)

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused business disruptions across the U.S. The restrictions on the movement of people and performance of services is already affecting Pennsylvania's economy. Just like the 2008 downturn, those businesses that manage their assets will be positioned to come out stronger on the tail end of this unprecedented situation.

Managing business assets requires a complete and structured approach. While tangible assets - inventory, land, buildings and equipment - are clearly recognizable and valued quite easily, intangible assets are not so easily recognizable. They are generally nonphysical resources or rights such as financial assets and instruments, business goodwill and intellectual property.

Businesses are often not aware that they own intellectual property that generally provides the owner exclusionary rights, which are critical to any business that wants to commercialize their product or services in view of competition. Therefore, those companies that appropriately manage intellectual property rights create improved opportunities to protect and exploit these rights as assets, especially in an economic crisis or downturn. Developing and maintaining intellectual property, as a management strategy, has proven to be an effective tool for any company and having such a strategy may be essential for a business to gain and maintain a competitive advantage, especially in today's economy.

Innovation has constantly made the U.S. a leader in solving problems. Since the intellectual property system permits owners the right to exclude competitors from copying products and services for a duration of time, there is an incentive to continue to innovate. Those that innovate are constantly ahead of the curve and don't wait for their competitors to copy. Instead, they are the businesses that come out strong or are immune in times of economic peril.

If you have any questions on your business's intellectual property, please [contact me](#) or anyone in the [Barley Snyder Intellectual Property Practice Group](#).

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