

A newsletter for business owners.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Patents:

Patents protect new inventions such as a new mouse trap or a new pharmaceutical. Patent law gives a patent owner the right to exclude everyone else from making, using, or selling a product that falls within the invention as described in the patent's claims.

Copyrights:

Copyrights protect the expression of an idea. They protect works of art such as paintings, screenplays, songs, or sculptures. The law gives the copyright owner the right to exclude anyone else from, among other things, copying, performing, or in some cases changing the copyrighted work.

Trademarks:

Trademarks protect a link in the consumer's mind between a particular good or service and the source of that good or service. The law gives trademark owners the right to prevent confusion in the minds of customers caused by another party using a similar trademark. No customer confusion; no trademark infringement.

Trade secrets:

Trade secrets protect any knowledge that gives a business a competitive advantage over another, usually similar, business as long as the business takes appropriate measures to keep its knowledge secret. The law gives trade secret owners the right to stop misappropriation of the secret material or stop the use of the secret material if it was misappropriated.

Intellectual Property Attorneys:

Intellectual property attorneys are attorneys that deal with any of these types of property.

Disclaimer: Charles Runyan providing this article and you reading it does not mean that he has provided you legal advice. Since all legal matters are intensely fact specific, all matters require individualized consideration. In view of that, you should regard this article as GENERAL guidance and not as a definitive statement of the law. His comments are non-specific and you should not rely on them as legal advice. He does not offer you legal advice or become your attorney until: (i) you first elect to hire him, (ii) you and he sign an engagement agreement that sets forth what legal services he will provide and how you will be charged, and (iii) you pay any required fee or security deposit.

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