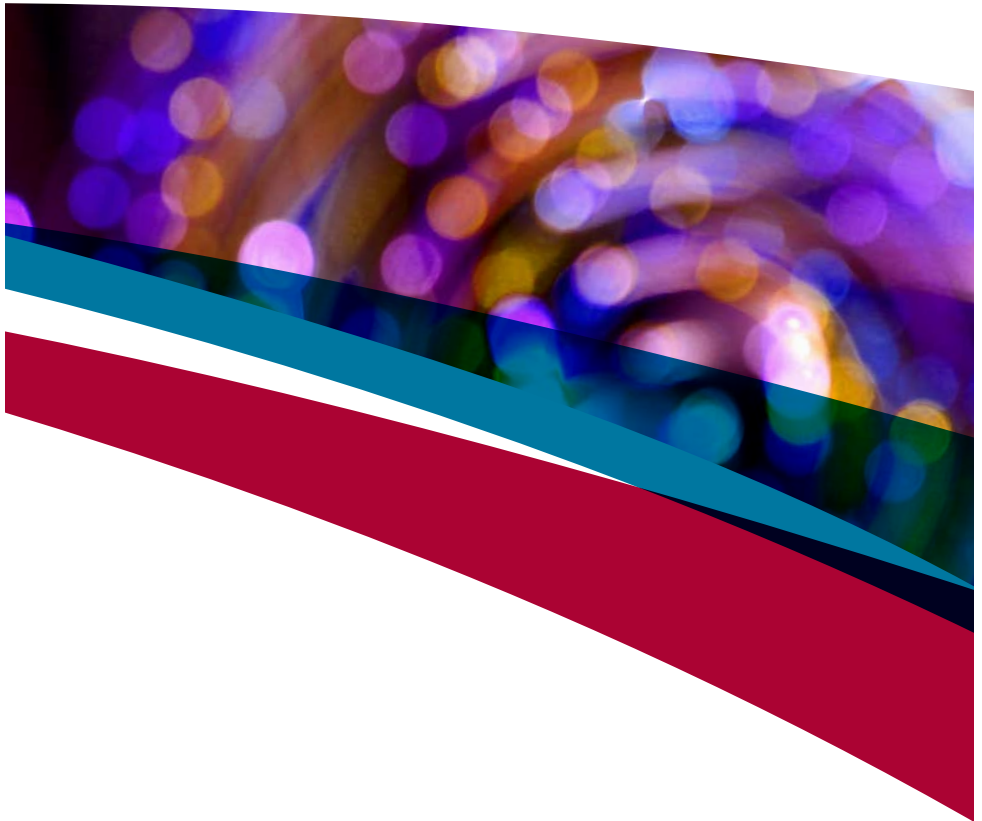


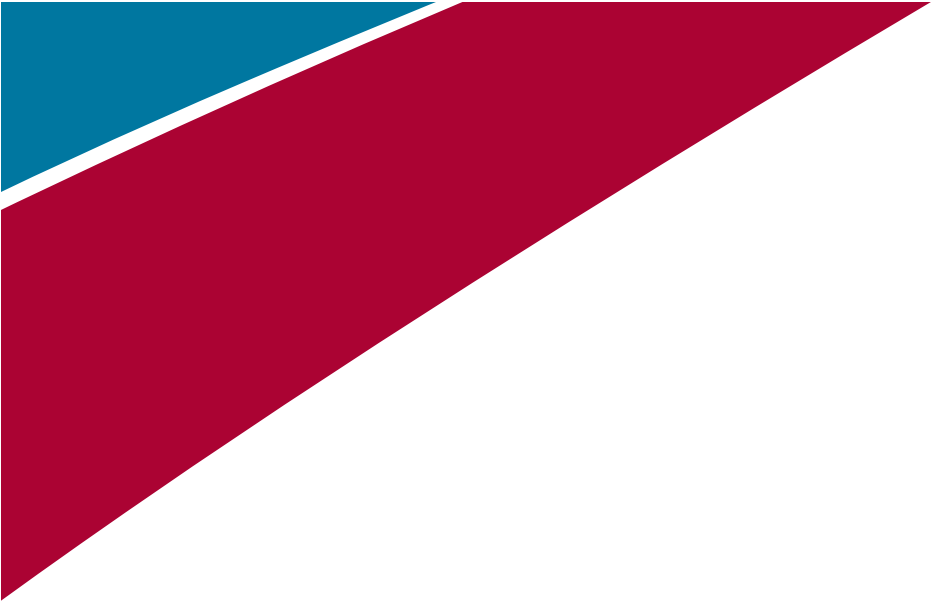


Intellectual
Property
Office

Business Support for SMEs

Maximising the Value of Intellectual Property





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Introduction

UK businesses are among the most innovative in the world; with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounting for 99% of all UK businesses it is vital that they consider the importance of protecting their innovation as early as possible. Intellectual property (IP) forms part of this consideration, and SMEs are encouraged to seek the professional IP advice which patent and trade mark attorneys can provide. However, with global trade in IP licenses being worth more than £600 billion a year, it is crucial that IP advice forms an intrinsic part of an SME's business model, taking into consideration the potential to commercialise and market the innovation.

This booklet provides an overview of many of the business support initiatives currently available to SMEs. These can be used in conjunction with professional IP advice to help businesses maximise the commercial value of their intangible assets, and build a thriving and innovative business model.

Please note: This booklet does not provide a comprehensive list of all the current business support initiatives available to SMEs; it is intended to illustrate the range of opportunities and support available to help UK businesses maximise the value of their IP.



Business Support Programmes

Design Leadership Programme, Design Council

The Design Council is an enterprising charity which aims to stimulate growth through the effective use of design and innovation. The Design Leadership Programme is the Design Council's coaching and mentoring service for SMEs, public sector organisations and universities. The programme is delivered by a team of Design Associates based across the UK, who will lead and advise clients through a design strategy suitable for their needs with a view to realising a final design project.

Taking part in the programme costs between £2k and £15k; this depends on the needs and the size of the business. The Programme is supported by the Department for Business, innovation and Skills and each year a number of places on the programme are subsidised by 50%.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information:

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/leadership/>



Passport to Export, UKTI

UKTI's Passport to Export Service assesses a company's readiness for international business, and helps it build international trade capacity. It is an assessment and skills-based programme for SMEs that provides new and inexperienced exporters with the training, planning and ongoing support they need to succeed overseas. Companies receive an in-depth capability assessment, and face to face training from expert professionals and advisors, which should include an element of IP awareness. This enables SMEs to understand the stages of export in relation to their own business, and develop a focused action plan.

Passport to Export is delivered by UKTI's regional teams. Each region works within a national framework to ensure consistency of delivery but the process has been developed to allow them to reflect local variations and strengths in delivering the process.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information:

<http://www.ukti.gov.uk/export/howwehelp/passporttoexport.html>



Catapult centres, Technology Strategy Board

As the national agency responsible for technological innovation, the Technology Strategy Board works with business in the context of a catalyst to stimulate and support growth, ranging from running funding programmes to assisting research and development to commercialisation.

Catapult centres are a network of world-leading technology and innovation centres which bridge the gap between business, academia, research and government. The centres create a critical mass for business and research innovation by focusing on a specific technology where there is a potentially large global market and a significant UK capability. They allow businesses to access equipment and expertise that would otherwise be out-of-reach, as well as conducting their own in-house research and development.

The Technology Strategy Board is establishing seven Catapults in the following areas: high value manufacturing; cell therapy; offshore renewable energy; satellite applications; connected digital economy; future cities; and transport systems. They are working closely with the IPO to ensure an effective IP strategy is implemented within the centres.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information: <https://catapult.innovateuk.org>



GrowthAccelerator

GrowthAccelerator is a new programme aimed at helping England's brightest businesses achieve their ambition and potential. It delivers tailored advice to high-flying businesses with the aim of increasing the number of SMEs that achieve rapid and sustainable growth. It is delivered by leading business growth specialists, in a partnership between private enterprise and government.

It comprises a team of 800 Growth Coaches and Growth managers with expertise in every industrial sector, all with proven track records in business growth and commercialisation, who will guide the business to fully realise their potential and exploit all available opportunities for funding, development and investment as well as sound leadership advice. The costs for using this scheme are subsidised, and range from £600 for micro-businesses to £3000 for medium-sized businesses.

Available to businesses in England

For more information: <https://www.growthaccelerator.com>



Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)

MAS provides manufacturing business support for companies of all sizes based in England. Their team of experienced and highly-skilled advisors work with individual businesses to help streamline processes, reduce waste, become more energy efficient and generally improve and grow.

MAS offer a free business review to develop an action plan tailored to the company needs, which can then lead on to a specialist project to address the actions identified in the review. Up to 50% match funding, from £300 to £3000, is available for SMEs participating in the consultancy improvement projects. These include help with strategic business planning, developing new ideas, improving processes and growing the supply chain.

For more information: <https://www.mymas.org/>

Available to businesses in England

or contact the MAS enquiry line: 0845 658 9600

Intellectual Assets Service, Scottish Enterprise

The Scottish Enterprise Intellectual Assets service offer a range of free and impartial services to assist Scottish businesses to identify, manage and exploit their hidden value. This includes support in developing new products and services, working with third-parties, building a brand, licensing and presenting the company or its products for sale or investment.

The service does not replace the expertise of professional legal advice; it assists companies to identify where their value lies, strategies they may consider to manage and protect these assets, and how their brand and reputation can be used to capitalise and promote them better to existing and new customers. The service is delivered through one-to-one interactions with IA specialists, an IA audit and workshops.

Available to businesses in Scotland

For more information: <http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/grow-your-business/innovation/intellectual-assets.aspx>





High Potential Starts, Business Wales

Pre-start or early-stage businesses in Wales with significant growth potential may be eligible for the High Potential Starts programme. The programme offers businesses specialist bespoke advice and mentoring, delivered by industry experts, to develop their business idea and support them to reach their true potential.

Available to businesses in Wales

For more information: business.wales.gov.uk or call 03000 6 03000



Business Innovation Programme, Business Wales

In Wales, free innovation advice and support is available through the EU-funded Business Innovation Programme. The programme has a team of Innovation Specialists based across Wales including two dedicated IP Managers and can help businesses to identify, protect and exploit their intellectual property; create and commercialise new products and processes; increase efficiency in manufacturing through technology and process improvement; and introduce design for new product development and manufacture.

The Innovation Specialists can help clients to access funding for innovative projects such as SMARTCymru R&D funding, or Innovation Vouchers offering up to £25,000 towards external expertise or capital equipment. These funding streams, available across all sectors, are offered on a rolling basis rather than through competitive calls. Support is also available to enable businesses to collaborate with academia.

Available to businesses in Wales

For more information: business.wales.gov.uk/innovation
or call 0300 060 3000



Financial Opportunities

Patent Box

The Patent Box will provide a reduced corporation tax rate for companies which exploit patented inventions or certain other medicinal or botanic innovations. It is being phased in from April 2013.

The reduced 10% rate will apply to profits derived from: selling patented products; licensing or sale of the patent rights; and infringement and compensation payments.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information:

about the Patent Box regime including guidance on how to apply the rules
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ct/forms-rates/claims/patent-box.htm>





SMART, Technology Strategy Board

The 'SMART' initiative is specifically aimed at SMEs, offering funding opportunities to assist research and development in the areas of science, engineering and technology. Three types of grant are available: proof of market, for initial planning, market research and testing; proof of concept, for technical feasibility studies, basic testing and prototyping; and prototype development, for trials and demonstrations – all three options include a strong thread of IP protection throughout. The initiative will fund up to 60% of the total project costs.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information:

<http://www.innovateuk.org/content/competition/smart.ashx>





Innovation Vouchers, Technology Strategy Board

Innovation Vouchers are an initiative run by the Technology Strategy Board, designed to encourage businesses to look outside their current network for new knowledge that can help them to grow and develop. SMEs from across the UK can apply for an Innovation Voucher.

A grant of up to £5000 is available to businesses to work with a supplier for the first time and is used to pay for knowledge or technology transfer from that supplier; this can include specialist IP advice.

Available to businesses across the UK

For more information: <https://vouchers.innovateuk.org/>



IP Audit

Sponsored by the IPO, the IP audit scheme works on a referral basis and is available to businesses engaged on one of the IPO's partner's business support schemes. IP audits provide potential high growth, innovative SMEs with a tailored assessment of the IP within their business to help them develop IP management strategies. To qualify for an audit the business must demonstrate a sound business need and submit an application outlining the expected benefits of the IP audit through one of the IPO's recognised partners i.e. Welsh Government, Scottish Enterprise and the GrowthAccelerator programme.

The audit is delivered by a qualified IP professional of their choice and covers all aspects of formal and informal IP. The process is intended to address real, rather than perceived, needs and will allow the SME to implement a sound IP policy at the heart of their business model. The IPO covers the costs of the audit up to £3,000 (including VAT).

For more information e-mail: ipaudits@ipo.gov.uk





IP Advisory Services

Pro Bono Clinics

Regular clinics are held at a number of sites around the UK giving 30 minutes of free basic advice to innovators who are at the early stages of developing an idea. The clinics are all given by professional IP attorneys, who are all members of the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA) or the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (ITMA).

For more information:

<http://www.cipa.org.uk/pages/advice-clinics> and <http://www.itma.org.uk/trademarks/clinics>



PatLibs

The PatLib Centres are a network of 13 Patent Libraries covering all regions of the UK. They are part of a Europe-wide network of Patent Libraries. They were created to provide users with local access to patent information and related issues. The centres have qualified and experienced staff who offer practical assistance on a variety of IP rights.

The range of services provided includes patent searching, clinics with IP professionals and business advice, but can vary between centres. All PatLib advisors have received training through the IP Master Class, enabling them to combine commercial IP advice and wider business advice.

For more information: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/business/business-patlib>





Business and IP Centre, British Library

The British Library Business & IP Centre in London is part of the PatLib UK network. It supports entrepreneurs, inventors and small businesses from initial inspiration to successfully launching and growing a business.

It focuses on making the crucial link between IP and business information and expertise through providing support from fully-trained information and research specialists, as well as an inventor and IP attorney in residence. The Centre also offers a programme of practical workshops, one-to-one advice clinics and networking events, featuring 'role model' entrepreneurs, designed to help SMEs develop their skills in IP, market research, marketing, managing finances and business planning.

For more information: <http://www.bl.uk/bipc>





IP Master Class

The IP Master Class has been developed by the IPO in partnership with Coventry University and the British Library. The IP Master Class provides students with the skills to conduct an IP health check, and gain a thorough understanding of patents, licensing, trade marks, copyright, brand identity and IP valuation.

The course also offers delegates the opportunity to increase and refine their skills in licensing, patent and trade mark database searches to a professional standard. Accredited by Coventry University and supported by both CIPA and ITMA. It is a two and a half day residential course and offers delegates the opportunity to gain credits at Postgraduate level. The cost is £990 per delegate.

For more information:

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/business/business-support/business-masterclass>



Get it Right First Time

Get it Right First Time are a series of free business support seminars across the UK hosted by the IPO and Companies House. They are aimed at improving understanding of IP, including how to protect assets and identify ways of exploiting them commercially. The events are aimed at all first time directors but open to anyone with an interest in IP.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/getitright

Exhibitions and seminars

The IPO attend many seminars and exhibitions offering delegates advice and information about the benefits businesses gain from understanding, using and protecting their IP. Details of up and coming seminars and exhibitions can be found on our events calendar.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/events/events-calendar



Online IP Services

Online Health Checks

The IPO online Health Check is a tool which helps any business conduct a basic assessment of its IP. The assessment is free of charge and covers important topics such as licensing IP, confidential information, trade secrets and franchising. The information entered by the business is then analysed to produce an individual report detailing where they may have unused or unprotected IP, where they may be using IP they don't own, and giving action points to help develop a business strategy, including seeking specialist IP advice if necessary.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/business/iphealthcheck





Health Check series

The Health Check Series is a suite of booklets and online tools which have been developed to help identify intellectual assets and advise on how best to exploit and protect them. They cover subjects such as licensing and valuation of IP, Non-Disclosure Agreements and dispute resolution.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/business/business-support

IP Insight

A free monthly e-newsletter produced by the IPO, offering readers the latest developments in IP news, views from the IPO and IP professionals, IP stories in the media, and details of IP events and exhibitions.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/news/newsletters/ipinsight





Dispute Resolution

Mediation Service

Mediation is a method of alternative dispute resolution which enables opposing parties to discuss the problems causing the dispute with the help of an independent person or mediator. Where negotiation has been unsuccessful mediation seeks to resolve the dispute without resorting to a court hearing. The mediator's job is not to reach a decision on the dispute but to facilitate exploration of the issues and help the parties to reach solutions which can often be beyond what a court might impose on them. The IPO Mediation Service can help businesses to resolve IP disputes in its Newport and London offices and at centres around the UK.

For more information: www.ipo.gov.uk/mediation.pdf



Opinions

The Opinion Service allows users to request an opinion from an IPO Senior Patent Examiner on novelty, inventiveness or infringement of a UK patent. This can be either an assessment of whether the patent in question relates to something that really is new and inventive, often in the light of documents the requestor has discovered and sent to the Office as part of the request, or an assessment of whether a certain activity or product with infringe a patent.

Opinions are non-binding but can help to give an indication of whether full legal proceedings might be successful, Opinions are delivered within 12 weeks and the standard fee is £200.

For more information:

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/patent/p-dispute/p-opinion>

Intellectual Property Enterprise Court

On 1 October 2013 the Patents County Court was renamed the Intellectual Property Enterprise Court (IPEC) to reflect that it can hear cases relating to all IP rights.

In the event that negotiation or mediation is unsuccessful then court action may be unavoidable. The Government has been working to reduce the cost of court proceedings and so improve access to justice. To make it easier to resolve disputes relating to IP rights, the Ministry of Justice simplified and streamlined procedures in the Patents County Court. It also introduced a fixed scale of recoverable costs capped at £50,000 and a limit on damages which may be claimed of £500,000. These bring greater certainty to SMEs on where their case will be heard and the maximum costs they will pay if they are unsuccessful.

Cases in the IPEC may now be heard on a small claims track which is intended to deal with lowest value, least complex disputes. The small claims track can resolve a range of IP disputes including copyright, trade mark and unregistered design right. Claims allocated to the small claims track will be subjected to cost restrictions, ensuring that costs are proportionate to what is at stake. The value of the claim will need to be £10,000 or less.

For more information:

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/ipenforce/ipenforce-dispute/ipenforce-courts>



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