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Office



SPA
Future
Thinking

IP Audits Evaluation Report

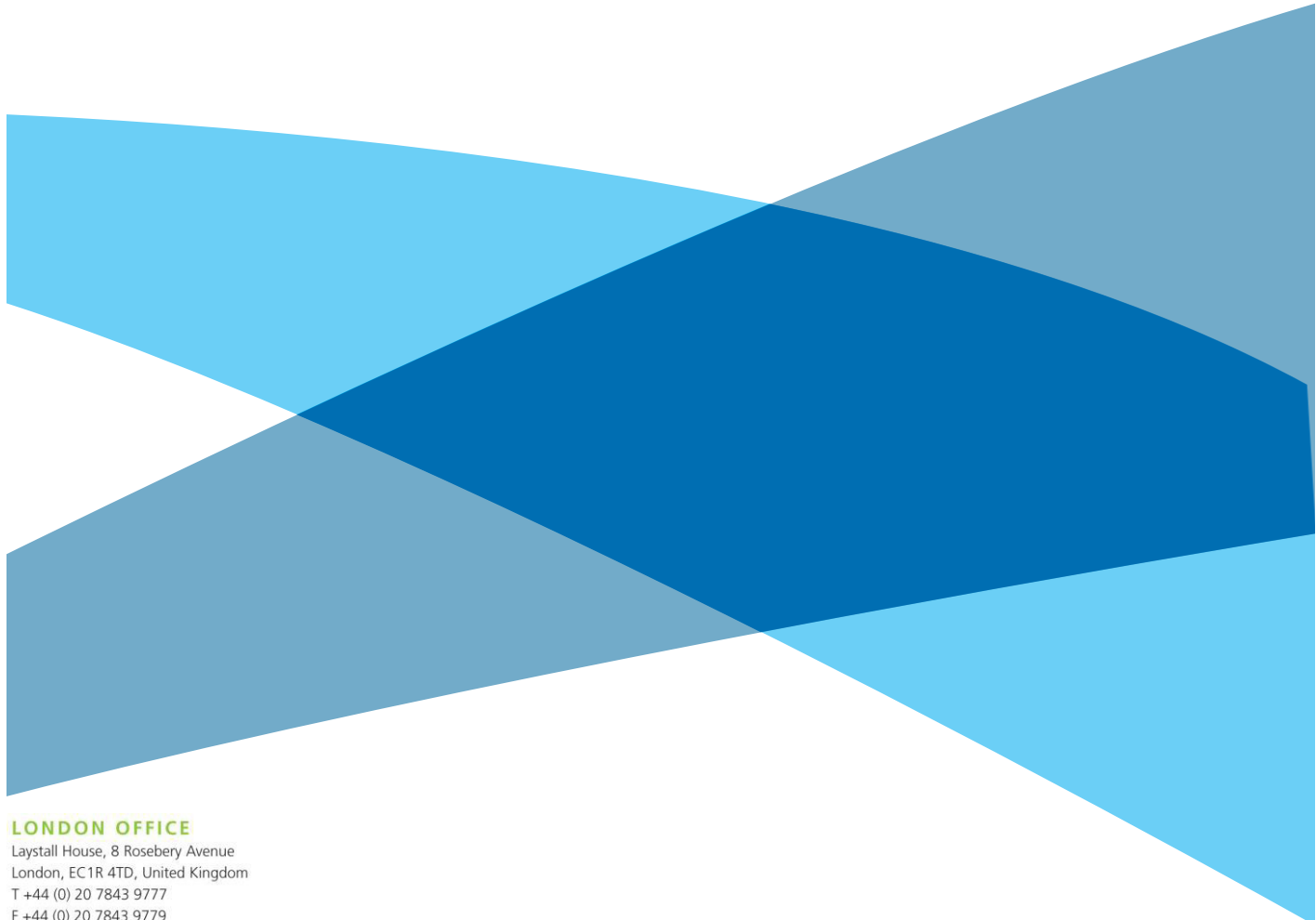
Version: Final V3.0

Prepared for: Intellectual Property Office

Ref: JN1596/DD/JM

Date: March 2014

This is an independent report commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO). Findings and opinions are those of the researchers, not necessarily the views of the IPO or the Government



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Contents

Executive summary	1
Background	3
Main findings	5
1. Implementation of recommendations	5
2. Awareness of IP Audit.....	15
3. Perceptions of the IP professional.....	17
4. Perceptions of the IP report.....	20
5. Perceptions of IP Audit costs	22
6. Conclusions	24
7. Recommendations.....	25



Executive summary

A programme of research was conducted among businesses participating in the IP Audit programme between November 2011 and March 2013. The core objectives of the research programme were to measure the effectiveness of the audit process; focusing on how well informed businesses are of the audit prior to participating, their perceptions of the audit process and benefits/actions taken as a result of the IP Audit. The results from the research will inform how the IP Audit programme is implemented in the future.

The research consisted of 100 telephone quantitative interviews with businesses and was followed by 6 qualitative depth interviews. The quantitative fieldwork was conducted between November and December 2013 and the qualitative research was conducted in January 2014.

Each business participating in the IP Audit received an audit, in a report format, of the IP within their business. Nearly all businesses (95%) indicated that they received a report with recommendations on protecting or capitalising on their intellectual property.

- Most businesses (82%) **have acted or are acting** on recommendations outlined in their reports.
- **Actions taken** as a result of the IP Audit range from **registering trade marks** (19%), **filing for patents** (17%) to **introducing non-disclosure agreements** (15%).
- Three out of ten (31%) businesses reported that their **recommendations identified new business opportunities**.
- Furthermore, over four in ten (43%) have **identified new opportunities** to exploit their IP through initiatives like **licensing and franchising**.
- While one in six (17%) have been able to **secure more business** as a result of their IP assets.
- Encouragingly, some businesses are reporting some **financial benefits as a direct result of the IP Audit**, with around three in ten (28%) indicating that they have seen some financial gain as a result.
- Some businesses also report that **funding streams** like equity funding (23%) and grant funding (30%) **have opened up** to their business as a result.

There is some evidence suggesting that businesses can be slow to act on recommendations, with the greatest barriers to implementation being costs (44%) and resource limitations (31%). Unsurprisingly, at the top of their list for help with implementation is funding (42%). Some businesses also mention the need for on-going support (15%) to ensure that they are still on track with IP. This was described as IP surveillance by one business.



The value of the IP Audit to businesses is high. Before the IP Audit, few businesses were aware of the audit process (23%); post audit awareness of intellectual property issues is much higher on their agenda (79%) and there is widespread acknowledgement of the value of the IP process.

The funded IP Audit process is well regarded, most businesses are very positive about the IP professionals and there is evidence that they are pivotal in the success of the programme. Professionals get highly rated for all key measures, with their knowledge and competence particularly well rated. Perhaps more importantly, relevance and usefulness of the advice they provided also get very high ratings.

The report is the key deliverable from IP professionals and this is generally perceived as fit for purpose. More than half (54%) of businesses indicated that the report was fully comprehensive, with another four in ten (39%) saying it was moderately comprehensive. There is however some evidence a more focused report highlighting key actions and timescales in which to achieve them may be preferred by some businesses.

Overall, the IP Audit has a positive impact in helping businesses to raise their awareness of IP value and capitalising on previously untapped opportunity. The challenge for the IPO in moving the programme forward is likely to be around the funding of the IP Audit programme. While businesses acknowledge the value of the IP Audit, and that it benefits their business, the investment is nevertheless perceived as high. Other business priorities are often considered more important. Surprisingly, despite the reported benefits there is a reluctance to self-fund the IP Audit; only 23% of businesses indicated that they would have funded their IP Audit.



Background

As part of its commitment to increase SMEs access to Intellectual Property advice, the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) provides funding to qualifying high growth potential SMEs to receive an IP Audit.

The IP Audits programme has been informed by the 2011 Hargreaves Review of IP and Growth which highlighted the difficulties faced by SMEs in accessing the IP system. The IPO discussion paper “From Ideas to Growth: helping SMEs get value from their IP” and the conclusion document confirmed the IPO’s commitment to develop this programme of work and evaluate it to determine future provision.

This programme of research follows businesses who participated in the IP Audit programme during November 2011 to March 2013. It measures the value of participating for the individual businesses and assesses the benefit to the wider economy.

The core objectives of the research were to measure:

- Actions taken following the IP audit and the impact of these changes within businesses
- Understanding as to whether receipt of the IP Audit and engagement with the opportunities highlighted in the audit has increased SMEs awareness and access to the IP system
- SMEs overall impressions of the IP Audit
- Perceptions of the report and recommendations of the IP Audit

The research consisted of quantitative and qualitative elements. The quantitative fieldwork was conducted between 8th November - 7th December 2013 and the qualitative research was conducted between 6th - 16th January 2014.

A total of 100 Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) were conducted with businesses participating in the IP Audits programme. The research adopted a census approach, with all 237 businesses targeted for the research. A response rate of 42% was achieved. The survey was 18 minutes in length.

Prior to contact, all the businesses received a survey introduction letter from the IPO. The letter informed the businesses of the research and introduced the types of topics that would be included. It also provided them with the option to opt-out should they have wished to do so.

A total of six one hour face-to-face depth interviews were conducted with businesses. The depth interviews explored initial motivations of participation and expectations as well as actions taken and benefits highlighted as a result of the IP Audit. The table below gives a breakdown of the interviews achieved for both the quantitative and qualitative research.



Recognised IP Audit Partner	Completed interviews	Completed depth interviews
GrowthAccelerator	55	3
Scottish Enterprise	36	2
Welsh Government	9	1
Total	100	6

The completed interviews for businesses referred onto the IP Audit programme by the Welsh Government are too low and do not allow for analysis in isolation. The report focuses on the total picture and where there are interesting differences by subgroups these are highlighted.

The report incorporates both the quantitative and qualitative findings, with quotations from both the qualitative and quantitative research used throughout to add context.

Throughout the report, we have highlighted key insights focusing on how the programme can add value for those who may participate in the future.



Main findings

This report is based on the research findings from businesses who participated in the IP Audit programme.

1. Implementation of recommendations

Typically, each business participating in the IP Audit received an evaluation of their IP assets in the form of a report. Nearly all businesses (95%) received a report with recommendations on protecting or capitalising on their intellectual property.

Businesses are generally acting on recommendations; overall, 82% reported that they had taken some action as a result of the IP Audit. A wide range of actions were mentioned, with a considerable number being mentioned by too few businesses to identify a pattern. The three top actions being taken are around reconsidering trade marks (22%), registering trade mark rights (19%) and filing an application for a patent (17%). The actions being taken are in line with the recommendations given by IP professionals (outlined in section 4); however, businesses can be slow to act as other priorities are considered more urgent.

Chart 1- Actions taken as a result of receiving an IP Audit



QD7. What actions, if any have you taken as a result of the IP Audit? (Base: all businesses participating - 100; mentions by 5% or more shown on chart)

Those who say they are not taking any action as a result of their IP Audit give varying reasons for this. Reasons include funding and time limitations.

"[We need] an extra pair of hands to help. Extra funding as the next stage is going to be quite costly."

Micro Business - GrowthAccelerator

Only 8% of businesses specifically mention that they have reviewed their IP strategy as a result of their IP Audit. Some businesses suggest that writing an IP strategy would require a resource investment; which may not always align with other business priorities and others felt they were too small to have a strategy.

"What happens with a lot of people is unless you've got a member of staff who you can delegate to and say 'write my IP strategy' then you are busy on other parts of the business. Things can get put to one side."

Micro Business - GrowthAccelerator

Insight:

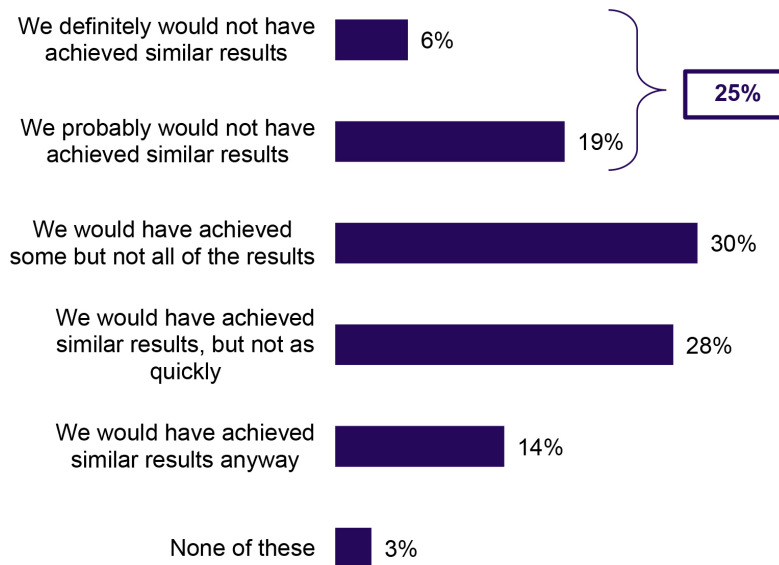
Specifically integrating the IP Audit recommendations outlined in the report into businesses strategy could ease the burden of trying to find resource to write the strategy and would ensure that IP is embedded into the business ethos.



The IP Audit programme is highly valuable to businesses and there is evidence that it benefits the wider economy as businesses would not have achieved similar outcomes had they not participated on the programme. Only 14% thought that without the IP Audit programme they would have achieved similar results.

A quarter (25%) of businesses indicated that they would not have achieved similar results without the IP Audit Programme. A similar proportion (28%) felt they would have achieved similar results albeit at a slower pace and three in ten (30%) said without the IP Audit they would have achieved some but not all the results.

Chart 2- IP Audit's contribution to business outcomes



QE4. Which of the following best describes your view of the contribution the overall IP Audit has made to your business, or is expected to make? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)



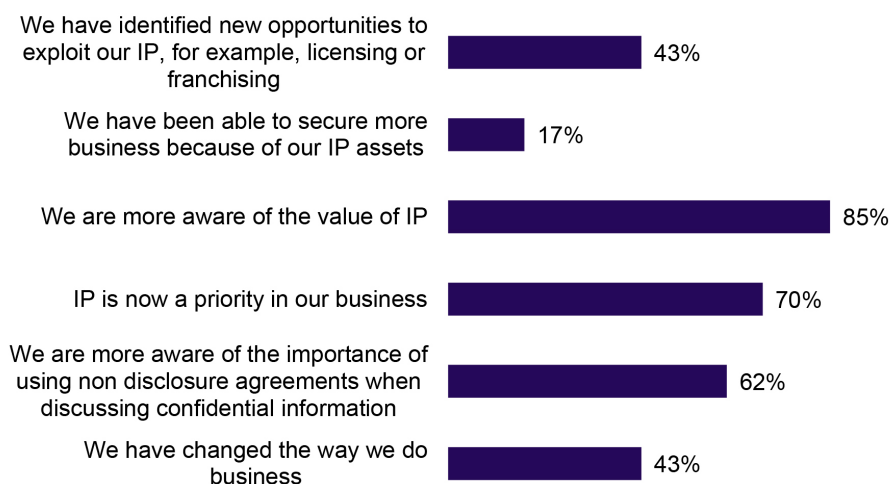
Chart 3 shows that there is strong evidence that IP Audits are having a positive impact and benefiting businesses. Encouragingly, over four in ten (43%) businesses have identified new opportunities to exploit their IP, through initiatives like licensing and franchising. Around one in six (17%) say they have managed to secure more business as a result of their IP assets.

Overall, 85% of businesses agreed that they are more aware of the value of intellectual property as a result of participating in the IP Audit programme. As shown in the comment, others are taking the next step and incorporating IP into their daily business.

“Made someone responsible for explaining IP to new employees and customers”
Large Business - Scottish Enterprise

Furthermore, 70% indicated that IP is now a priority in their business and 62% are now more aware of non-disclosure agreements.

Chart 3 - Proportion of businesses who agree that these benefits have been realised



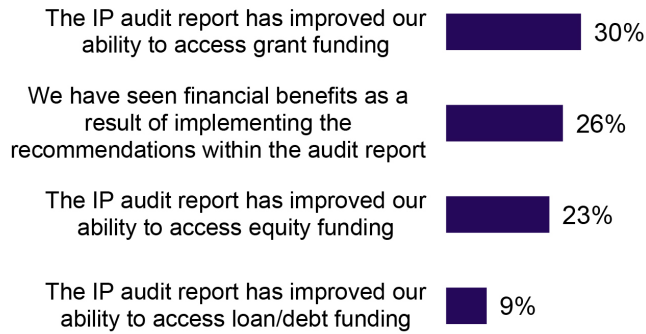
QE3. I am now going to read some benefits other organisations say are a result of their IP Audit. (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

“If you go back to the audit and track it through, that talked about copyrighting and the brand ... that led on to other considerations around what we can do with our brand ... which has then gone through to the MAS to find some funding, and we’ve now got some money for that.”
Small business – GrowthAccelerator

As highlighted in chart 4, businesses also cite financial gains they have been able to capitalise on as a result of participating in the IP Audit. A quarter (26%) indicated that they have seen financial benefits as a result of the IP Audit. Some businesses also say they are now able to access funding as a result of the IP Audit (grant funding 30%, equity funding 23% and access to loans 9%).



Chart 4 - Proportion of businesses who agree that these benefits have been realised

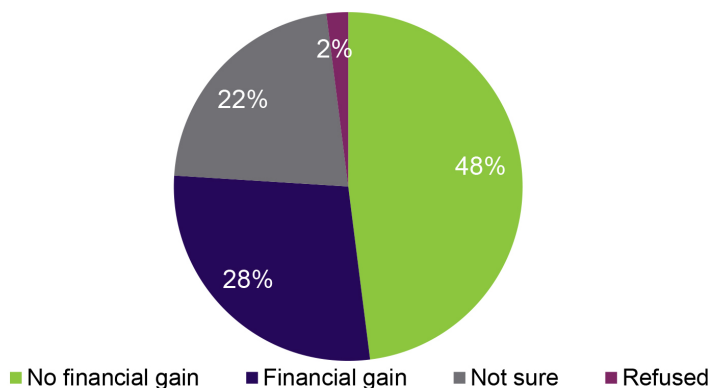


QE3. I am now going to read some benefits other organisations say are a result of their IP Audit. (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

Encouragingly, some businesses have been able to see financial gain or can see potential gains in the future. As highlighted in chart 5, over a quarter (28%) of businesses were able to estimate current or future financial gains which are a direct result of participating in the IP programme. Reflecting the range of businesses participating in the research, the reported levels of gain varied significantly, with £50 being the lowest gain and £4,000,000 being the highest.

Around half (48%) of businesses thought there would be no financial gain as a result of participating in the IP programme. Just over one in five (22%) could not say what the gain would be.

Chart 5 - Perceived financial gain as a result of IP Audit



QE5/E6. I would now like you to consider the financial impact your IP Audit has had on your company's turnover. Please could you estimate what the financial gain has been? If you have not yet taken action please think about potential gains once you act on the recommendations or suggestions from your IP report. (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

When businesses were asked whether the overall benefits of participating were expected to be greater than the costs, about the same as the costs or less than the costs a high proportion (73%) reported that the benefits are greater than the costs.



While some businesses were generally unable to forecast what the actual financial gain would be, only 5% thought the benefits were less than the costs. Table 1 gives a full breakdown of businesses perceptions.

Table 1: Benefits of IP Audit compared to cost of implementing recommendations

	%
Benefits greater than costs	73%
About the same as costs	5%
Less than costs	5%
No benefits	16%
Don't know	1%

QE7. Considering the benefits to your business as a result of the IP Audit, including any subsequent action you may have taken or be planning to take as a result of the audit, would you say that the overall benefits are expected to be greater than the costs, about the same as the costs or less than the costs? If your business had no benefits please just say so. (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

When businesses were asked the extent they will implement recommendations, overall, three quarters reported that they have or will at least implement some of the recommendations. Just 26% had not yet acted on or implemented any of the recommendations.

Table 2: Likelihood to implement recommendations

	%
Likely to implement at least some recommendations (net)	73%
Have/will implement all	22%
Have/will implement most	29%
Have/will implement some	22%
Not yet acted on recommendations	26%

QQD5. Which of the following best describes how far you have gone in acting upon the recommendations or suggestions in the report? (Base: businesses who received a report with recommendations - 95)

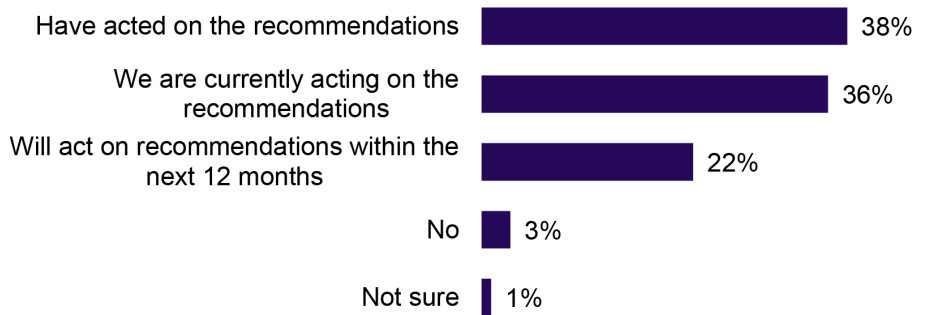


Insight:

Businesses do not always implement recommendations immediately. This suggests that a more staged approach would be beneficial for some. This staged approach would be particularly helpful for micro and small businesses. These may not have the resource to act on recommendations straight away because other business demands are sometimes viewed as more urgent than intellectual property.

It is however encouraging to see that nearly two in five businesses have acted on the recommendations highlighted in the report, with most others currently acting or intending to act. Furthermore, only 3% categorically indicate that they will not be acting upon recommendations provided.

Chart 6 - Acting on recommendations



QD4. Have you acted or are you acting on the recommendations or suggestions? (Base: businesses receiving recommendations - 95)

“They actually flagged up some things like this where we thought ‘Durr, that’s obvious, we should have thought of that’, i.e. some basic things that might have slipped through the net were it not for the IP audit.”

Micro Business GrowthAccelerator

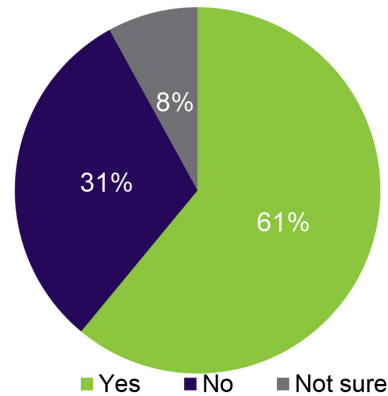
The IP Audit process is having notable success in contributing to growth and business development.

Three in ten (31%) businesses indicate that the recommendations identified new opportunities for their business.

The comment to the left illustrates the value of the IP Audit to businesses and how without the correct guidance opportunities would go unidentified.



Chart 7 - Identifying new business opportunities as a result of IP Audit



QD6. Did the recommendations or suggestions identify new opportunities for your business? (Base: businesses receiving recommendations - 95)

Around half of those who had new opportunity areas identified in their recommendations have acted on them and a further third are currently acting on the identified opportunities.

Overall, businesses are satisfied with the recommendations being given by IP professionals, with 88% giving a score of at least 7 out of 10 for the recommendations given to their business. Table 3 shows that businesses indicating that they received a fully comprehensive report are more likely to be extremely satisfied with the recommendations.

Table 3 - Overall satisfaction with recommendations

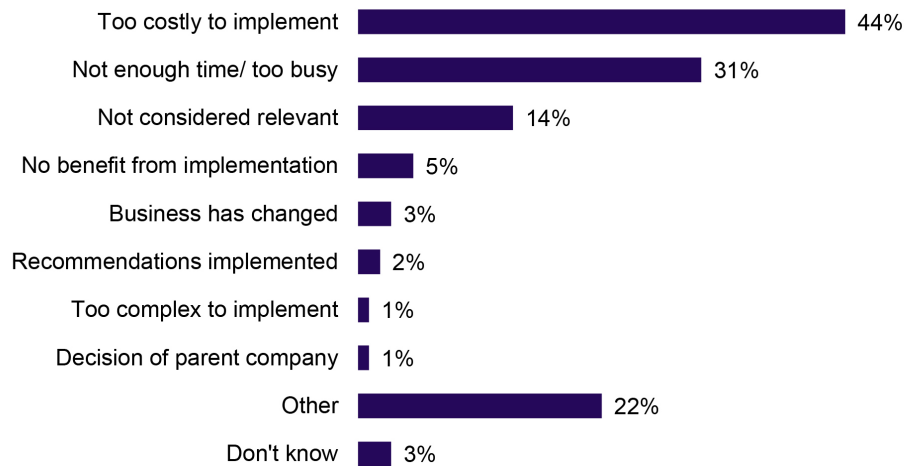
	All businesses receiving recommendations (95)	Businesses receiving a fully comprehensive report (53)
All satisfied	88%	99%
Extremely satisfied (9-10)	54%	74%
Satisfied (7-8)	35%	25%
Neutral (5-6)	8%	0%
Not satisfied (0-4)	2%	0%
Mean score	8.38	9.19

QB9. On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, how likely would you be to recommend your IP professional to another business similar to your own?



The two main barriers to implementing recommendations are costs and insufficient time. Few businesses indicate that the recommendations are not relevant or that they would be of no benefit to their business.

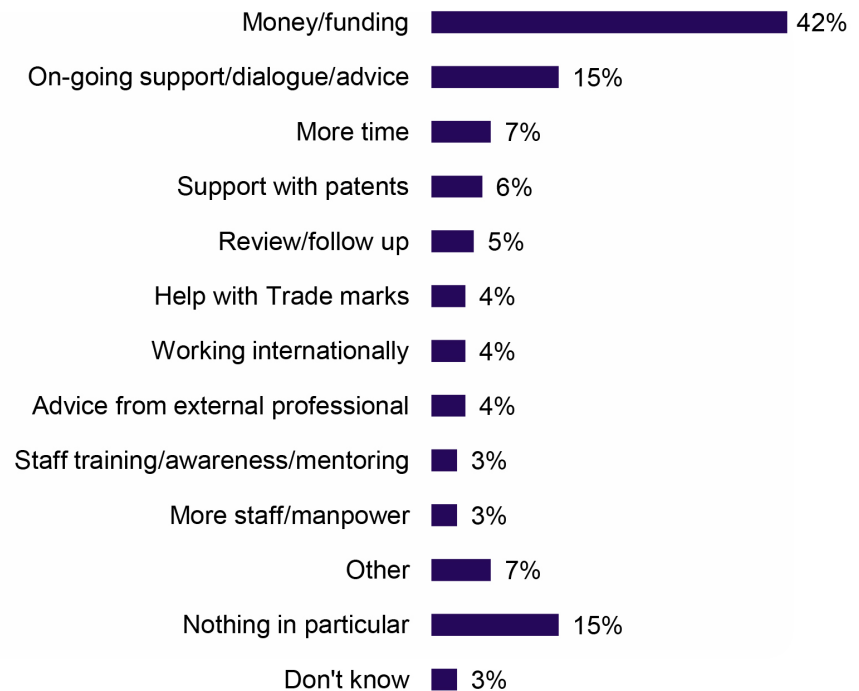
Chart 8 - Barriers to implementation



QD9. What are the MAIN reasons/barriers for not implementing any or some of the recommendations made (Base: businesses who received a report with recommendations - 95)

When businesses were asked what support would help them to implement the recommendations highlighted in their IP Audit report, unsurprisingly, financial support (42%) was the most mentioned. Some businesses specifically mention the need for continuous support to ensure they are still on track; on-going support (15%) and reviews or follow ups (5%). One business referred to this type of support as 'IP Surveillance'. This was seen as a way of fine tuning their approach and ensuring that they are still on the correct path.

Chart 9 - Support requirements

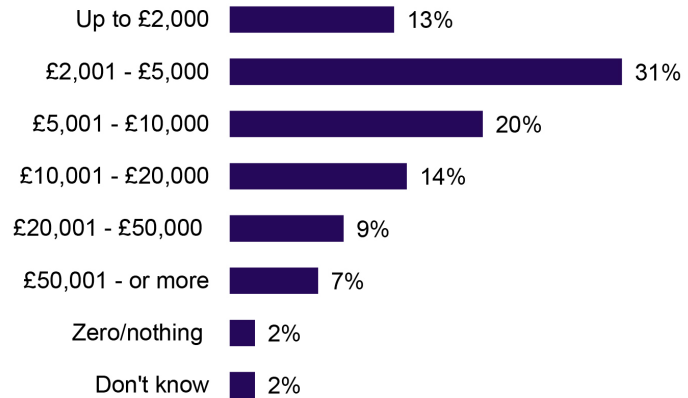


QD10. What further support would help your business to implement the recommendations or suggestions in your IP report?
(Base: businesses who received a report with recommendations - 95)

Anticipated cost of implementation of the recommendations varied considerably for businesses participating in the survey. The variance in implementation cost may be down to the very unique requirements and aspirations of each business. Some businesses were able to give an actual cost of implementation; those unable were prompted with a range of costs and asked to choose what their estimated costs would be. Among all businesses giving a cost or a range, the mean cost for implementation was £17,350. The median anticipated cost of implementation among those giving a definitive estimate was £8,000. Chart 10 gives the range of anticipated costs to businesses to implement recommendations.



Chart 10 - Implementation costs



QE1/E2. What was or what do you expect the estimated cost of implementing the recommendations or suggestions from your IP Audit to be to your business? (Base: businesses who are acting on or intend to act upon recommendations - 91)

2. Awareness of IP Audit

Prior to starting the IP programme, only 23% of businesses were aware of IP Audits. Most (87%) indicated that they were referred to the programme by one of the three recognised IP Audit Partners (GrowthAccelerator, Scottish Enterprise or Welsh Government).

As shown in table 4, businesses are generally clear about the objectives of the IP Audits prior to starting the programme, with 88% giving a score of at least 7 out of 10, where 10 is very clear of the objectives and 0 is not at all clear.

Table 4 - Clarity of IP Audit objectives

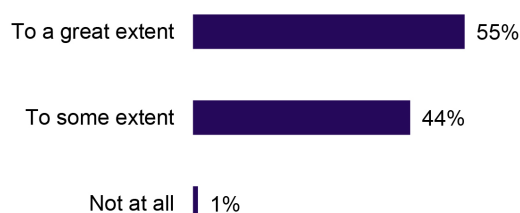
	%
Extremely Clear (9-10)	43%
Clear (7-8)	45%
Neutral (5-6)	7%
Not clear (0-4)	5%
Mean score (out of ten)	8.11

QB3. On a scale of 0-10 where 0 is not at all clear and 10 is very clear. How clear were you about the objectives of the IP Audit? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)



Businesses endorse their commitment to IP Audits, with nearly all believing that their business would benefit from the audit prior to starting the programme.

Chart 11 - Perceptions of the extent to which IP Audits benefit businesses



QB4. Before your business was audited, to what extent did you feel the IP Audit would benefit your business? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

Confidence in the benefits of the IP Audit was higher among micro businesses. More than two thirds of those with 0-4 employees believed their business would benefit from the audit to a great extent (69%). The high confidence levels were somewhat lower among businesses employing 5 or more employees, with 43% believing they would benefit to a great extent.

Insight:

While smaller businesses felt that the full IP Audit would benefit them prior to embarking on the programme, there is evidence showing that some would have welcomed an initial 'IP health check'; with the main audit following when their businesses was more established and in a better position to action recommendations.

The IP Audit is having a positive impact on raising businesses general awareness of intellectual property. Overall, 79% agreed that they are more aware of intellectual property as a direct result of the IP Audit. As shown in table 5, businesses referred by Scottish Enterprise are more likely to believe this strongly.

Table 5 - Likelihood to agree IP Audit has raised awareness of intellectual property

Rating	Total (100)	GrowthAccelerator (55)	Scottish Enterprise (36)
All agree (net)	79%	76%	89%
Strongly agree (5)	53%	44%	72%
Tend to agree (4)	26%	33%	17%
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	7%	11%	0%
Tend to disagree (2)	7%	9%	3%
Strongly disagree (1)	5%	2%	6%
Mean	4.17	4.09	4.51

QC2. To what extent would you say you agree or disagree that you are **more** aware of intellectual property as a direct result of your IP audit? (Base: all businesses participating 100 - don't know responses not shown on table)



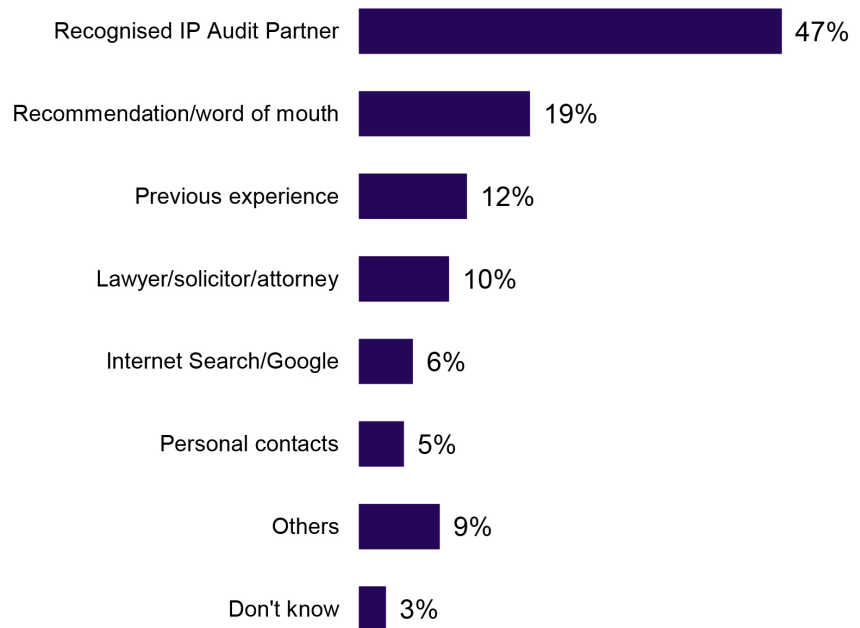
3. Perceptions of the IP professional

Businesses were mainly introduced to their IP professional through a recognised IP Audit Partner. As illustrated in chart 12, this is by far the most utilised referral source. Some specialist businesses indicate that they specifically seek out IP professionals who are experienced in their area of specialism.

Insight:

While businesses are able to find experts themselves; there is scope to ensure that recognised IP Audit Partners have links with a wide range of IP professionals that businesses can easily access.

Chart 12 - Finding an IP professional



QB5. Now thinking about the IP Audit process, how did you go about finding your IP professional who completed the audit report for you? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

IP professionals participating in the audit programme are generally proactive and are highly engaged with the audit process. They use a wide range of channels to understand the businesses on the IP programme, including site visits (61%).

Table 6 - Method used by IP professional to get information on business

Channel used	%
Email	92%
Telephone	84%
Site visit	61%
Off-site visit	17%
Post	8%
Other face-to-face meeting	5%

QB6. Once you were in touch with your IP professional, which if any of the following methods did he or she use to get information about your business? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

IP professionals play a pivotal role in the success of the IP Audit. Businesses value the IP professional and rate them highly across a range of measures. Overwhelmingly, businesses believe that the IP professional understood their business (74% to a great extent and 25% to some extent). Furthermore, the majority (88%) indicated that they would recommend their IP professional to a business similar to their own.

When businesses were asked to rate the levels of satisfaction with various elements of support they received from their IP professionals, the majority were very positive. As shown in chart 13, IP professionals were rated very positively for all measures, with knowledge and competence receiving the highest ratings.

Some report that the IP professional provided a different perspective to their business, enabling them to think of protecting or capitalising on areas they would not have thought of had they not had the opportunity to consult with the professional.



Chart 13 - Satisfaction with IP professional for...



QB8. Thinking about the support that you received from your IP professional, can you please indicate your level of satisfaction with the service received...*where 10 is very satisfied and 0 is not at all satisfied (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

"Previously we thought IP was just about registering tracks with PRS to protect the music, but they said 'Look, it extends to other things, it's about protecting your brand, your logo etc - What if you trade in a market where it exists already?"

Micro Business - GrowthAccelerator

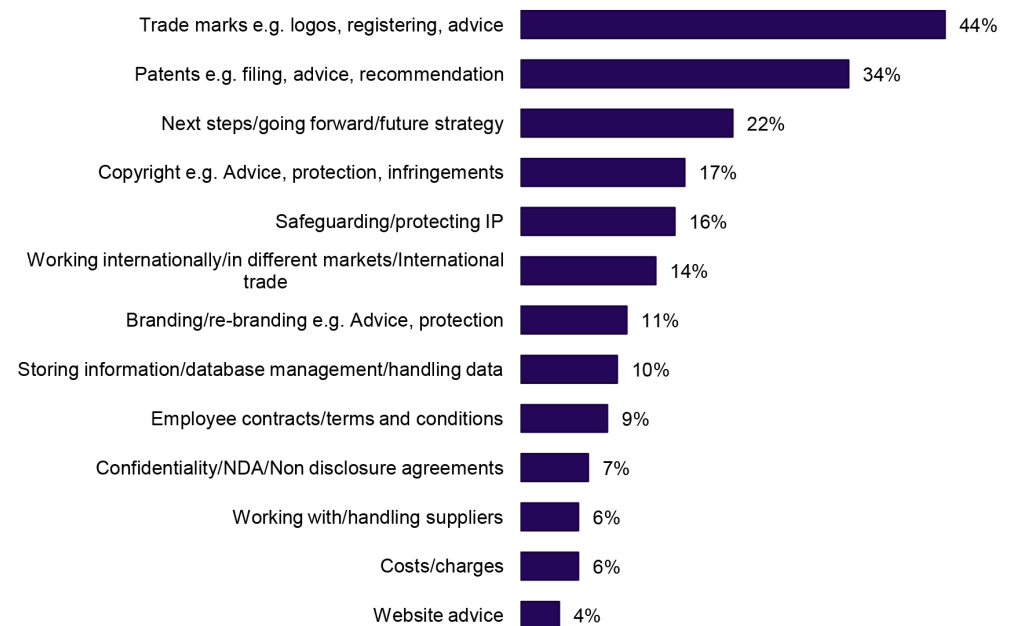
4. Perceptions of the IP report

Nearly all businesses (95%) received a report with recommendations or suggestions on protecting or capitalising on their intellectual property.

On the whole, the reports received are very well regarded by businesses, with 54% saying the report received was fully comprehensive and 39% moderately comprehensive. Just 6% felt the report was basic.

The reports produced incorporate a wide range of information. Encouragingly, there is a focus on core elements of IP, with 41% saying they received recommendations around trade marks and 34% around patents. Chart 14, gives a full breakdown of the information included in the reports.

Chart 14 - Type of information included in reports



QD3. What type of information was included in your report? ... (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

As highlighted in chart 14, around a fifth (22%) of businesses received a report which highlighted next steps or future strategy.

Insight:

There is an argument that all the recommendations being made to businesses are in fact focusing on the future and strategy. However, not all businesses are making the link with the future or thinking about the recommendations in a more strategic manner. This suggests scope for the IP professionals to provide greater guidance around future planning and guidance to enable businesses to embed recommendations into their organisation's strategy.

"We have an IP strategy because of the work done through the audit."

Micro Business - Scottish Enterprise

While businesses are on the whole positive about the reports they received, some indicate that a more focused report would have been more beneficial. This report would have highlighted:

- Quick wins
- Medium term goals
- Long term goals

"You have an element of people writing for the file and there was lots of wording that had to be there, rather than really needing to be there. A bit like in my bank days where you end up writing far more you need to. What you want is some real action points."

Small Business - GrowthAccelerator

As shown in section 1, some businesses are not implementing all the recommendations highlighted in their report and others are not doing so in a timely manner. For such businesses, recommendations in easily digestible segments may influence them to take action quicker as they can focus on the easy wins.



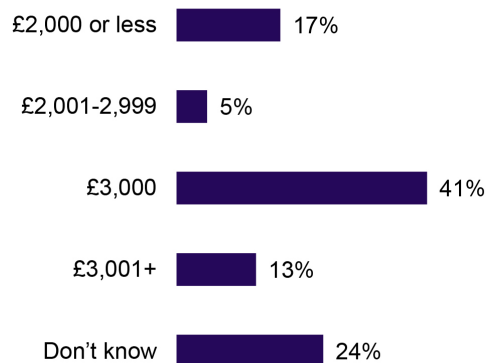
5. Perceptions of IP Audit costs

On average, the investment for an IP Audit is £3,000. Two in five (41%) businesses participating in the IP Audit programme could correctly identify the cost of the audit. Awareness of IP Audit costs was strongest among micro businesses (54%) and those referred via Scottish Enterprise (61%). It is worth noting that costs can vary and businesses stating lower or higher costs may have been referring to the actual cost of their audit rather than the average.

Insight:

A quarter of businesses did not know what the cost was; this suggests a greater need for businesses participating on the programme to be aware of the level of investment from the Intellectual Property Office.

Chart 15 - Perceived cost of IP Audit



QC3. And how much would you say the IP Audit you received cost the Intellectual Property Office? (Base: all businesses participating - 100)

All businesses were informed of the level of investment of the IP Audit and asked whether given their experience of the audit they would consider self-funding. Overall 23% indicated that they would self-fund, 14% were unsure and 63% would not self-fund.

“We would have considered it but being a start-up business it was down to funds”

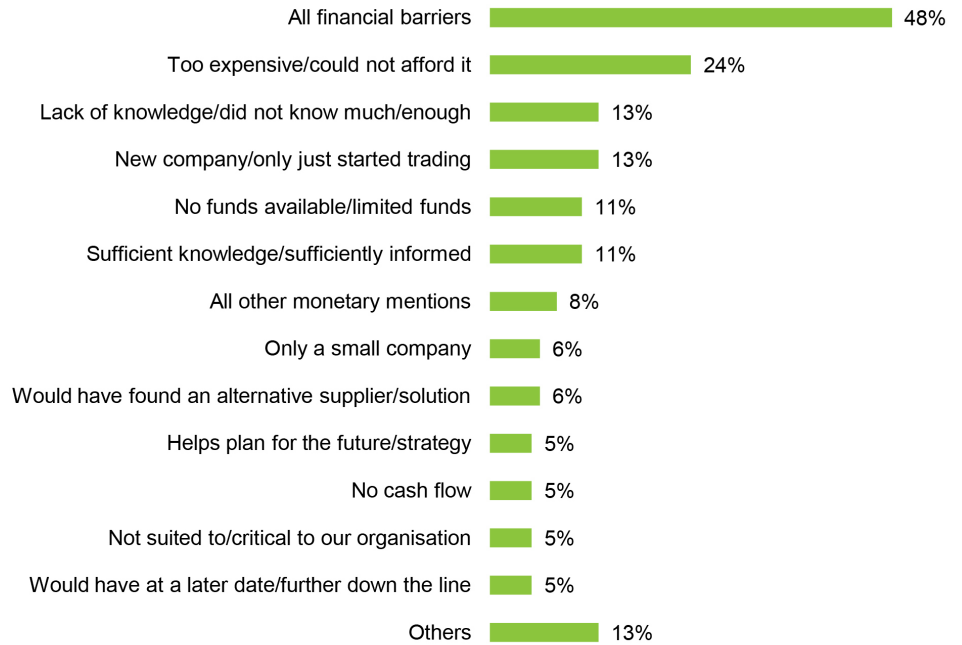
Micro Business - Scottish Enterprise

As has been demonstrated throughout this report, businesses are very positive about IP Audits and see the value of them. However, £3,000 is perceived as a significant investment and other more immediate and perhaps visibly tangible business needs are given a higher priority than intellectual property.

The reluctance to self-fund is mainly due to financial barriers. Nearly half of businesses indicate this. Other barriers include being newly established as a business and being a small company (chart 16 gives a full breakdown).



Chart 16 - Barriers to self-funding IP Audit



QC6. Why do you say you would not self-fund? (Base - businesses who would not consider funding themselves - 63)

Overall, businesses see the value of protecting and capitalising on intellectual property, nearly nine in ten (87%) would recommend the IP Audit to a business similar to themselves.



6. Conclusions

Overall, the IP Audit programme is working well and businesses see value in it. Businesses are reporting benefits as a result of participating in the programme. The majority indicate that they are taking or intend to take action as a result of receiving the IP Audit. The top actions taken as a result of the IP Audit are around reconsidering trade marks, registering trade marks and patents.

Benefits identified by businesses as a result of participating in the IP Audit programme include opportunities to exploit their intellectual property through licensing and franchising (43%). One in six (17%) reported that they have been able to secure more business because of their IP assets. Furthermore, some also report greater access to grant (30%) and equity funding (23%) as a result of the IP Audits. Around three in ten (28%) reported some financial gain which were as a direct result of the IP Audit Evaluation.

Encouragingly, the majority of businesses say they are now more aware of the value of IP, and that it had become more of a priority within their business.

Most are very positive about the IP Audit process and rate the IP professionals who evaluated their business very highly. They also perceive their IP Audit report as being fit for purpose, with most saying it was either fully or moderately comprehensive.

Although many businesses were unable to report the financial benefit to their business as a result of participation in the IP Audits programme, three quarters considered that the benefits exceeded the costs of participation.

Only a quarter of businesses indicated that given their IP Audit experience they would self-fund an audit. For those who would not self-fund, the greatest barrier is the cost, with nearly half reporting this.

7. Recommendations

Overall, there are four areas of improvement or support identified in the research.

Implementation:

- There is a need to support businesses with implementation. The most requested support is around funding; this could include signposting to funding streams.
- There is an opportunity for the IP professional to provide greater support to businesses to ensure that the IP Audit recommendations are integrated into their business strategy.

The Audit Process:

- Some businesses have identified the need for a staged approach to the IP Audit process. In particular, start-ups and smaller businesses would benefit from an initial 'IP health check' before a full audit.
- More focused reports that incorporate quick wins and can be incorporated into a businesses strategy would be beneficial to businesses. This would ensure that businesses at least act quickly on some of the recommendations.

Further support:

- Scope to provide on-going support to ensure businesses remain on track and are aware of any IP legislative changes.

Self-funding IP Audits:

- There is a requirement to ensure that all businesses are aware of the cost of the IPO funded IP Audit.
- There is a need to continue funding IP Audits or find other means of supporting businesses with raising IP awareness. Businesses are cost sensitive and the IP Audit is perceived as a notable expense.



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Published: April 2014

DPS/IP Research-04/14



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