

Awareness of intellectual property rights protection remains high

Results of the latest Survey on Business Attitudes to Intellectual Property announced today (April 7) reveal that awareness of intellectual property (IP) rights among business establishments in Hong Kong remains high.

A total of 1,001 business establishments responded in the survey commissioned by the Intellectual Property Department (IPD).

More than 92.1% of the respondents were aware that IP rights included copyright, trademarks and patents. The respondents in general considered that it was necessary to protect IP rights in Hong Kong's business environment (93.7%) and that IP was a company's valuable asset (98.3%).

"It is encouraging to see that most of the businesses are aware that protecting IP rights is beneficial and they consider IP a valuable asset," the Director of Intellectual Property, Mr Stephen Selby, said.

Almost half of the establishments (46.0%) considered that the Government should play the most important role in reducing IP rights infringement in Hong Kong, notably lower than the 55.9% in 2006. It was followed by "educational institutions" (19.1%) and "copyright owners" (17.8%).

Nearly 70% of the respondents considered that the promotional activities organised by the IPD were effective in raising the awareness of Hong Kong businesses in IP rights protection. The figure is significantly higher than the 48.3% in 2006.

More than 52% of establishments shared the view that the most serious consequence for a company which infringed others' IP was "criminal liability", which was significantly higher than the 13.3% in 2006. It was followed by "civil liability" (17.8%) and "damage to company's reputation/goodwill" (15.6%).

Nearly half of the respondents (49.5%) were aware of the new criminal liability that directors/partners might incur if their companies possessed pirated software for business use. The survey showed that 67.7% of the respondents learned about this provision from television/ radio and 42.4% from print advertisements in newspapers/ magazines.

The survey revealed that 72.6% of the business establishments were not aware that there were licensing schemes operated on behalf of copyright owners which authorised copying of local newspaper articles and books for use in business.

On the difference between trademark and company registration, only 35% correctly replied that registering a business or company name was different from

registering a trademark. Also, 45.7% of the respondents were not aware that they had to apply for separate registration of trademark, patent or design on the Mainland and in Hong Kong to gain protection in both places.

Regarding the economic benefits of IP right protection, the majority of the business establishments considered that it would help enhance the development of local creative industries (84.5%), create business opportunity and wealth (77.6%) and contribute to the overall development of Hong Kong's economy (72.3%). The findings were consistent with those in the previous surveys.

“IPD will continue to disseminate the message on IP protection to the business community through different channels. We are planning to put out a series of TV announcements featuring different scenarios in the protection of IP and bringing out the right concepts and co-organise seminars with professional business bodies. The survey results have provided a useful direction for us in planning our work,” Mr Selby said.

The survey report is available on the website of the Intellectual Property Department on www.ipd.gov.hk.

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