

TRADEMARKS

Bob Boad Associate Director at Marlow IP Recruitment

Continuing with our focus on trademarks, here we speak to Bob Boad who recently joined Marlow IP Recruitment in the newly created role of Associate Director. His wide-ranging career has included heading up BP's global trademark team, a senior role in a pharmaceutical company's trademark team, a spell as Chairman of an IP boutique firm and a pro bono role as President of a not-for-profit organisation that raises public awareness of the risks associated with counterfeit products. We caught up with him to ask what lies behind this latest change of direction for his career and to find out how he hopes to make a difference for clients in the IP field.

You have almost 40 years' experience in practising trademark law – what led you to move in to intellectual property recruitment?

I spent most of my career working in-house for major 'blue chip' organisations where I was fortunate to be able to help build strong, successful teams. For me, one of the most satisfying aspects of that was to be able to help some very talented individuals to develop and work towards achieving their full potential. At this stage in my working life I felt the need for an exciting, new challenge and this was an irresistible opportunity to use my experience and spend more of my time helping candidates, as well as clients, to flourish.

Looking ahead, what do you see as the key challenges for trademark lawyers?

For employers, both in private practice and in-house teams, I think finding and retaining top quality practitioners will be key. There is a growing demand for those individuals who can deliver sound legal advice accompanied by sensible guidance towards commercial solutions and ensuring timely, cost effective preventative measures are also in place. If employers do not want to risk missing out on the best people they will need to embrace new ways of working and take full advantage of the growing range of IP solutions.

For the individual attorneys and lawyers there is a wide range of personal challenges, including constantly developing their personal skillset and staying on top of the enormous flow of new

case law and evolving legislation in the IP field. They also need to keep up to speed with the constantly evolving threats from competitors and infringers, who are quick to exploit the opportunities presented as companies expand or implement new ways of conducting business.

What are the benefits for a client in using a 'headhunter' to recruit IP law specialists?

For a client who is looking to hire in the IP field there are several advantages to working with a specialist recruitment consultant. This is a very competitive sector and by using a professional to help with the recruitment process a client can give themselves the best chance of finding someone who is an ideal fit and who will find their new job fulfilling and, hopefully, stay for a long time rather than quickly move on again.

Firstly, we can help the client to ensure that they have a well prepared specification for the role they are looking to fill. We bring an experienced set of eyes and objectivity to this key part of the process so we can raise questions to help ensure the candidates will properly understand what the client is looking for and what will be expected of

them. We can make sure the appealing points, from the perspective of potential candidates, are given due prominence.

Secondly, it is part of our job to not only understand the client and its culture but to also recognise who will fit best in to that working environment. It is not enough for us to simply know the strongest potential candidates; we need to appreciate the 'chemistry' to achieve a good fit for both parties.

Thirdly, with our insight into the marketplace we can streamline the process and dramatically improve the outcome for clients because of the ideal candidate may not be actively seeking a new job and probably will not even be reading job advertisements. Our Managing Director, Graham Marlow believes that IP practitioners are less likely to actively seek out new employment opportunities than professionals in most other fields. He also estimates that advertising an IP job or working from a limited candidate database may only reach 20% of the potential market whereas headhunting can reach the other 80% of relevant candidates. **LM**



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