

Barker
Brettell

Intellectual
Property

Business Advisor Support



CONTENTS

**Barker
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Property

Welcome

Become a partner

Why work with us

Your contact

Identification of IP and signposting

How to start the conversation

How to continue the conversation

Short reads:

-IP: The most valuable asset missing from the balance sheet

-IP on the growth agenda - turning creative assets into commercial advantage

-Intellectual Property – the invisible asset that can make or break an SME

Contact us



Barker Brettell

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Welcome

Welcome to Barker Brettell's Business Advisor Support (BAS) programme - a service designed to help you strengthen the value you deliver to your SME clients by adding clear, commercial intellectual property (IP) insight to your advisory offering.

We bring together five key topics that commonly arise in advisory conversations:

- 1 Protecting brands
- 2 Safeguarding innovation
- 3 Securing designs
- 4 Managing trade secrets
- 5 Unlocking the commercial potential of IP

As an accountant, consultant, or business specialist, you're often the first person a client turns to when making strategic decisions.

BAS exists to support those conversations, giving you access to practical, expert guidance whenever IP becomes part of the picture.

Many SMEs underestimate the power of intangible assets - the brand they've built, the innovations they've created, the designs or know-how that set them apart. Others assume IP is expensive, complex, or only relevant to high-tech businesses. BAS helps break down these barriers. Through straightforward explanations, flexible routes to protection, and commercially focused advice, we make IP understandable and actionable for both you and your clients.

Our team works collaboratively with you, slotting into your existing advisory model with ease.

Whether you need quick guidance on a client query, deeper strategic support, or help spotting the opportunities and risks that IP presents, we're here to provide clear answers and practical steps. We focus not just on protecting assets, but on helping businesses use their IP to grow - from expanding into new markets to creating licensing opportunities or securing investment.

This brochure is designed to help you feel confident raising these issues early, avoiding costly problems later, and ensuring your clients make informed, strategic decisions.

Become a partner

By partnering with Barker Brettell through BAS, you add an extra layer of value to your service - helping your clients understand what they have, protect what matters, and capitalise on the ideas and assets that drive their success.

Together, we can turn innovation into long-term advantage.

Contact us

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Why work with us?

Your clients look to you for guidance on risk and opportunity.

We provide:

- Specialist knowledge
- Collaborative approach
- Proactive protection

By introducing our specialist intellectual property services, you can help them secure assets that underpin long-term value in their businesses and avoid costly disputes later.

We make the process straightforward for you and your clients, offering practical advice that fits seamlessly into your overall strategy for their business success.

Your Barker Brettell contact:



Rosalyn Newsome

Partner & Trade Mark Attorney

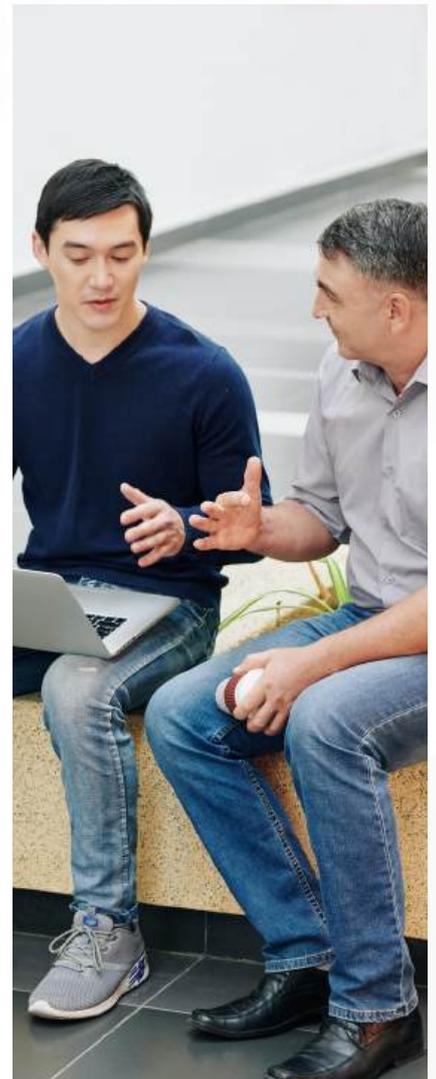


Rosalyn Newsome has over 20 years' experience handling all aspects of trade mark work.

She routinely conducts global brand clearance work and creates global filing strategies to complement business drivers, timeframes and budget considerations.

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Identification of IP and signposting

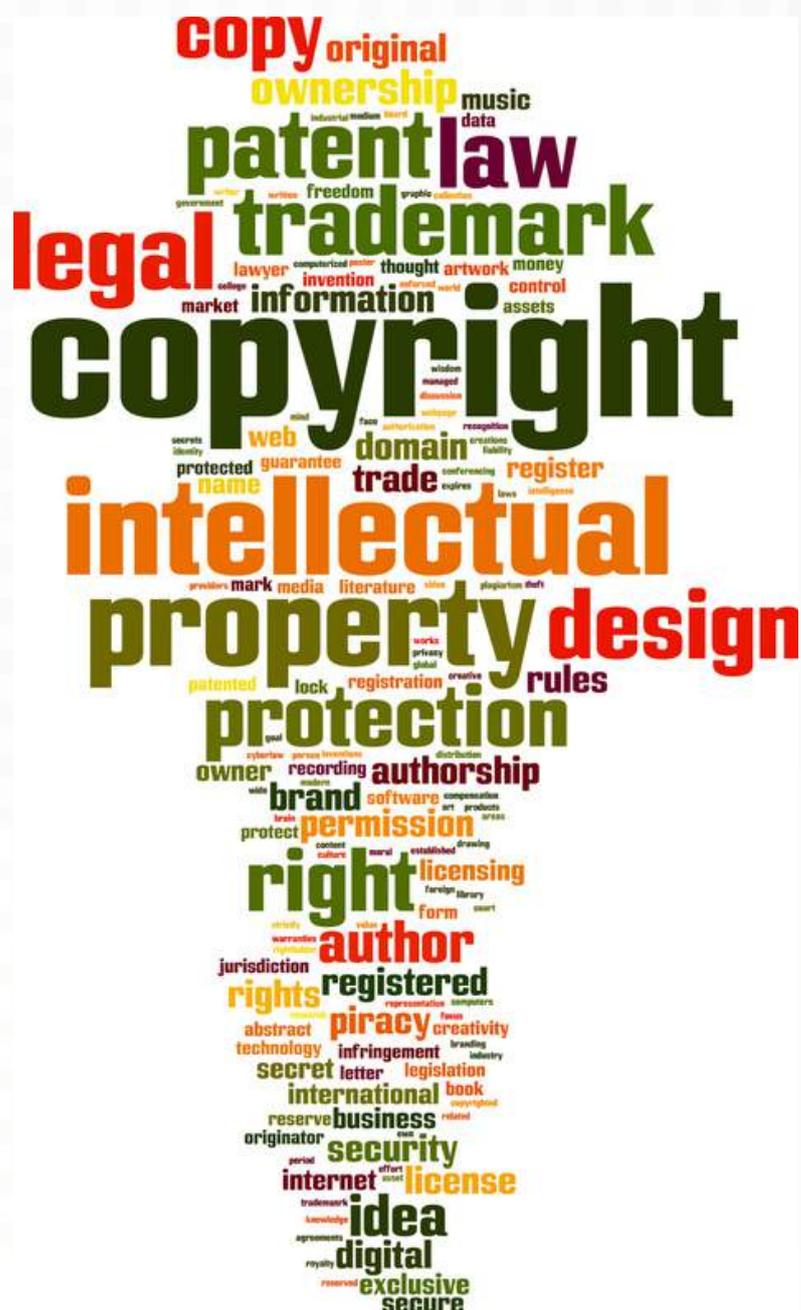
Trade marks, copyright, designs, and patents – which do your clients really need?

For many SME owners, intellectual property (IP) is a vague, catch-all term that sounds complicated and expensive. As a trusted business advisor, you can cut through any client confusion, and help identify exactly which protections matter.

The truth is, not every business needs every type of IP protection. But every business has some IP worth safeguarding. The key is matching the right protection to the right asset.

While we can ultimately take the IP conversation forward, first we will need to feel sufficiently informed about your client to start that conversation.

To help get to this point we've summarised the role of each broad IP right:



Every business has some IP worth safeguarding: the key is matching the right protection to the right asset.

Trade Marks

Copyright

Design rights

Patents

What it protects:

Names, logos, slogans, and other identifiers that distinguish a business's goods or services.

Original works including text, images, music, videos, software, and marketing content.

The appearance, shape, configuration, and surface decoration of a product.

New inventions that are novel, inventive, and capable of industrial application.

Why it matters:

The brand is often the single most valuable asset a business owns. Without a registered trade mark, competitors can use similar names or even register the name themselves.

Copyright is automatic upon creation but proving ownership and enforcing rights is much easier with clear documentation and, where relevant, registered evidence.

A distinctive design can be a major selling point and so can be vulnerable to copying.

Patents grant a legal monopoly on the invention for up to 20 years, allowing the owner to licence or sell the rights exclusively.

Best for:

Any business with a distinctive name, logo, or strapline.

SMEs looking to expand into new markets or sell online.

Creative agencies, software developers, publishers, and content-driven businesses.

Any SME producing unique marketing materials or product literature internally.

Product designers and manufacturers.

Fashion, furniture, and consumer goods businesses.

Businesses developing new products, processes, or technology.

Companies seeking investment based on unique technical innovations.

Example:



A café chain registers its name and logo before franchising, ensuring brand consistency and preventing copycat outlets.



A company keeps detailed creation records, enabling it to prove ownership when a competitor uses the artwork without permission.



A furniture maker registers the design of a best-selling chair, preventing others from producing identical copies.



A tech start-up patents a unique water-filtration system, enabling it to licence production rights and commercialise.

How to start the conversation

Start by asking:

1. What makes you, your product, or your business stand out? (Brand, design, innovation, content?)
2. Would losing this to a competitor cause serious damage?
3. What do you see as your competitive edge?
4. Do you plan to expand, licence, or sell the business in the future?

From your client's answers you should get a feel of whether there is IP which can be protected. And at that point we want you to feel confident to signpost them to Barker Brettell.

This helps you to be seen as a proactive, strategic, advisor. You are not just highlighting risk, but are helping clients strengthen their market position, boost business value, and create opportunities for growth.



To continue the conversation please contact us and we will be happy to answer your questions.

Contact us



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IP: The most valuable asset missing from the balance sheet

Why Intellectual Property (IP) deserves a place in every SME's strategic plan

Ask most SME owners to list their most valuable business assets, and they'll probably mention their premises, stock, equipment, or maybe the cash in the bank. Accountants might add debtors, goodwill, and other intangibles.

But there's one asset, often their most important, that almost never appears fully reflected on the balance sheet:

Intellectual Property (IP).

Trade marks, copyright, designs and patents are all forms of IP, and are the building blocks of a company's identity, reputation, and competitive advantage. Yet because they're not routinely valued or recorded in financial statements, they're frequently overlooked until a problem arises. By then, it's often too late.

Why IP matters more than many realise

For many modern businesses, IP is more valuable than their physical assets.

A distinctive brand attracts customers. Innovative products set them apart from competitors. Creative works, from software to marketing content, generates revenue.

Without protection, those same assets can be copied, misused, or even claimed by others. The consequences range from lost sales to legal disputes, plus the associated expense; and in the worst cases, loss of the business's very identity.



Why IP is missing on the balance sheet

The omission isn't an oversight in the accounting process, but we are told, a quirk of accounting rules. IP often isn't recognised as an asset unless it's been acquired or specifically valued, which means that the most valuable creations businesses develop in-house simply don't appear in the accounts.

This invisibility creates a dangerous misconception: "If it's not on the balance sheet, it can't be that important". In reality, it can be the very thing driving profits and long-term growth.

The insurance for your brand

Protecting IP is not unlike taking out an insurance policy. You hope you never need to make a claim, but when the unexpected happens, you'll be relieved you did.

Just as you wouldn't leave your business premises uninsured, it makes no sense for your clients to leave their brands, designs, or innovations unprotected.

The cost of IP protection is often a fraction of the losses that could result from infringement and unlike most insurance, it can add tangible value to the business by making assets more secure, more marketable, and more attractive to investors.



Not just for big businesses

There is a persistent myth that IP protection is only worth it for large corporations with deep pockets. The truth is the opposite: smaller businesses are often more vulnerable to IP theft because they lack the resources to fight lengthy disputes and so the loss of a key product, brand name, or design can be devastating.

Even modest steps, like registering a trade mark or asserting copyright, can make a big difference. These measures are accessible and affordable for SMEs and can and should form a crucial part of their growth and risk management strategy.

Proactive protection pays off

Treating IP protection as an afterthought can be costly. Once a competitor has copied a product or registered a similar brand, reclaiming those rights becomes an uphill battle.

By contrast, protecting IP early:

- ✓ **Deters potential infringers**
- ✓ **Strengthens market position**
- ✓ **Increases asset value for investment or sale**
- ✓ **Provides clarity in collaborations and licensing deals**



Let's make IP part of the bigger picture

Your role is about more than pure financial advisory services and compliance. Recognising IP as a strategic asset helps your clients see the bigger picture and build long-term value in the company.

The first step is awareness. The next is action. Encourage clients to identify their IP, understand its importance, and protect it where possible.



A call to accountants and advisors

As an accountant, business advisor, or consultant, you're in a unique position to spot when your clients' IP is at risk and to help them take proactive steps.

Start the conversation by asking:



What names, logos, or slogans are central to the business's identity?



Are there unique products or designs that give them a competitive edge?



Have they developed original content, software, or inventions?

Once this information is established, specialist IP advisors, such as Barker Brettell, can step in and ensure the right protections are in place.





IP on the growth agenda - turning creative assets into commercial advantage

For many SMEs, intellectual property (IP) is treated as a defensive measure – something to protect against theft or infringement. While that's important, it's only half the story.

When properly identified and protected, IP can become a powerful engine for growth, creating new revenue streams, opening markets, and increasing business value. For advisors working with ambitious SMEs, understanding how to leverage IP is just as critical as knowing how to safeguard it.

IP as a value multiplier

Investors and buyers look for certainty. Registered trade marks, design rights, patents, and documented copyright ownership provide exactly that: clear proof that the business controls its key assets.

An SME with protected IP can:

- Command a higher valuation in a sale or investment round.
- Negotiate more favourable lending terms.
- Use IP as a tangible asset in strategic planning.

By contrast, businesses without IP protection often face due diligence questions that slow transactions and depress value.



Unlocking new revenue streams

IP isn't just something to hold but is something to license, franchise, and monetise.

A registered trade mark can be licensed to other businesses, generating recurring royalty income. A patented invention can be manufactured under licence by others, allowing the SME to earn revenue without the operational overhead of production.

Design rights can be leveraged in joint ventures, ensuring the SME benefits whenever its designs are used.

The more robust the protection, the easier it is to structure these agreements and the more confidence potential partners will have in the underlying business.

Stronger partnerships, clearer contracts

Collaborations are increasingly common among SMEs whether in marketing, manufacturing, or product development. Clearly defined and protected IP rights help avoid disputes over who owns what.

By entering partnerships with registered IP in place, businesses can:

- ✓ **Set clear licensing terms;**
- ✓ **Avoid ownership disputes that can derail projects;**
- ✓ **Ensure they retain rights to the most valuable aspects of their contribution.**

An investment with tangible returns

Some SMEs hesitate to spend on IP protection because they view it as a cost rather than an investment. Framing it as an enabler of revenue, partnerships, and higher valuations changes that perspective.

The cost of registering a trade mark or design is minimal compared to the additional income it can unlock – whether through licensing, market expansion, or an uplift in sale price.

The role of the advisor: from gatekeeper to growth partner

As an accountant or consultant, your role isn't limited to flagging risks. You can also be the one to highlight opportunities clients might otherwise overlook.

Simple questions can start the process:

- ? **Could your brand be licensed to others?**
- ? **Would protecting this design open the door to new partnerships?**
- ? **Is your IP portfolio strong enough to support an investment pitch?**

These conversations position you as a strategic partner, not just a compliance professional – and they can lead directly to measurable growth for your clients.

Making IP a strategic priority

In the same way that you'd encourage a client to reinvest profits or develop a new product line, you can help them see IP protection as part of their growth plan.

By doing so, you help them move from protecting what they have to building what they can become.

The message is simple: IP isn't just about defence. It's about possibility. And when SMEs see it that way, the returns can be substantial.

Feel confident handing your clients over to [Barker Brettell](#) for bespoke advice.



Intellectual Property – the invisible asset that can make or break an SME

We've explored the world of intellectual property (IP) through the business advisor's eyes: what it is; why it matters; and how accountants, consultants, and corporate advisory teams can help their SME clients use IP to its full advantage.

This article brings those insights together, offering a summary and some practical next steps.

The core message

Every SME owns intellectual property whether that's a brand name, a unique product design, original content, or a technical innovation. But too often, these assets are:

- Missing from the balance sheet (and therefore undervalued);
- Left unprotected (and therefore vulnerable);
- Underutilised (and therefore not generating the revenue or growth they could).

As a trusted advisor, you're in the perfect position to change that.

The Five Big Lessons

1. IP is the most valuable asset you can't see in the accounts

IP may not appear on the balance sheet, but it can drive brand loyalty, market share, and profit. Ignoring it is like ignoring the foundations of a building.

2. The cost of doing nothing can be devastating

Infringement, brand loss, and copycats can undo years of hard work. The legal cost of fixing the problem later is far higher than the modest cost of protecting IP early.

3. IP isn't just defence – it's a growth tool

With the right protection in place, IP can open doors to new markets, generate licensing income, attract investors, and increase business valuation.

4. Different assets need different protections

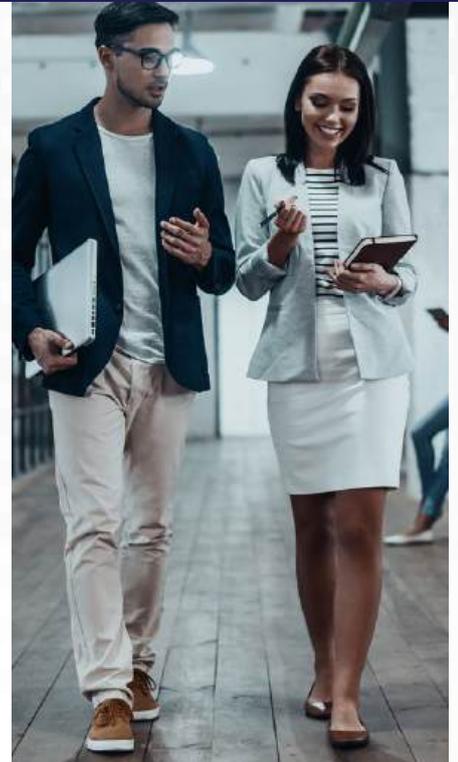
Trade marks, copyright, design rights, and patents each protect specific things. Have confidence to ask the questions knowing Barker Brettell can support your clients for the next step.

You often see your clients' plans before anyone else. That means you can flag risks, highlight opportunities, and connect them with the right legal support before problems arise.

5. The advisor's action plan

To bring IP into your client conversations, you need to ask the right questions:

- What makes your business stand out? (Brand, product, process, content;)
- How would you feel if a competitor copied it tomorrow?
- Is it protected – and if not, why not?



Why advisors are key to prevention

As an accountant, business consultant, or adviser, you have a front-row seat to your clients' growth plans. You are often the first to hear about a new product line, expansion into a new market, or a rebrand. These moments are prime opportunities to ask: "Have you protected this?"

By spotting the risk early, you can save your clients from the far greater costs, whether these are financial, operational or emotional, of dealing with infringement.

The affordable alternative

There's a persistent perception that IP protection is prohibitively expensive. In reality, registering a trade mark or design right is often comparable to the cost of producing a single marketing campaign and far less than the cost of a rebrand or legal dispute.

Like any sound investment, IP protection is about safeguarding future returns.

For a modest upfront cost, it buys peace of mind, strengthens the business, and avoids the far more painful expense of putting things right later.

The takeaway for advisors

By spotting the risk early, you can save your clients from the far greater costs (whether financial, operational or emotional) of dealing with infringement.

If your clients are planning something new or simply want to protect what they've already built, now is the time to put them in touch with Barker Brettell.

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Trade marks, copyright, design rights and patents aren't 'niceties', they are the armour that shields a business's identity, reputation, and competitive advantage





Because protecting IP isn't just good legal sense, it's good business, for both you and your clients.

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