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EIP



California's Daily Journal reports EIP opening in San Diego

British IP firm opens US office.

London-based intellectual property firm EIP has opened an office in San Diego to offer its services to U.S.-based clients, the firm announced last week.

It appears to be the first U.K.-based intellectual property boutique to set up shop in the United States.

Heading the new office is partner Phillip Bennett, previously a San Diego-based partner with Knobbe Martens Olson & Bear LLP. He said opening in San Diego was the next logical step for EIP given its recent growth.

"EIP has a lot of direct clients in the U.S. and over time those relationships have grown," Bennett said.

Bennett said many of the firm's clients file patents either in the United States or in Europe and then repurpose those filings in the other location. Rather than having a firm write a client's patent application for one country and then use an outside foreign agent to edit the application for another country, Bennett said the presence of the San Diego office will allow immediate review.

"We can now ... ensure the applications are done well for the purposes of both jurisdictions," Bennett said, adding that he believes the service is rare.

U.K.-based legal consultant Tony Williams of Jomati Consultants LLP said in an email that U.K. firms don't generally handle much work for U.S. companies in the U.S. He said U.K. firms are more likely to handle international work for U.S. companies.

"[The U.S.] is an IP-rich market with many needs outside the United States," Williams said. While he is not familiar with EIP, Williams said it appears to be the first U.K. IP boutique to set up shop in the states.

The new office will provide similar services to those offered in its U.K.-based offices in London, Bath, Cardiff and Leeds, which house 39 lawyers- technology, telecommunications and life sciences and pharmaceuticals.

"There's certainly a vibrant life sciences community [in San Diego]," Bennett said, "and also - maybe not what you see in Silicon Valley - but also a substantial tech community here."

Procopio, Cory, Hargreaves & Savitch LLP partner Miku H. Mehta said that California is an ideal environment for a foreign IP firm to take root.

"If a firm is representing U.S. companies, it can be close to customers or clients for IP issues," Mehta said. He said it is helpful to have face-to-face meetings with investors, IP departments and everyone involved in the process of making a product at a company because of the intricacies between U.S. and foreign laws.

In a news release, EIP partner Jerome Spaargaren said he is excited to have Bennett in charge due to his years of experience and prior work with EIP. Bennett, who worked previously with partners Spaargaren and Heather McCann as an EIP foreign associate, said the decision to join and start a California office for the firm was a "no-brainer."

"It was pretty impressive to watch the culture they develop for client service and providing value," Bennett said.

The office, which officially opened May 3, currently houses Bennett and his legal assistant. He said he is looking to hire new associates in the near future.

By David Ruiz

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