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IP Mistakes to Avoid – No. 3 – Thinking you’re covered because you’ve got the company name registered

Ahead of his presentation on the Top IP Mistakes to Avoid at Leeds Business Week, partner [Laurence Brown](#) from EIP’s Leeds office dispels one of the most common myths surrounding IP protection.

Many people believe that registering a company name (or a domain name) means that you are then free to use the name. That’s not the case.

You might not be free to use your new company name (or domain name), and what’s more you might not find out about it straight away. Most start-up companies take a while to build awareness in the marketplace, and it’s not until they’re growing and successful that they will appear on their competitors’ radar.

I often hear companies forced into an expensive renaming or rebrand because they infringe someone else’s rights. This happens at the worst time, just as the company is succeeding and gaining awareness and recognition. Much of the goodwill and recognition built up with the old name or brand is lost as well as the monetary cost of rebranding.

Likewise, without a registered trademark, you might not be able to stop a competitor using your brand name.

How can you avoid this mistake? Often the simplest way is to register the name as a trademark right at the beginning. And as an added bonus you get an asset to add value to your company and can use the ® symbol to advertise that the brand is protected.

Whatever the stage of your company, it's never too late considering registering your company name and/or brands as a trademark. A discussion with a trademark attorney will only cost you your time and could save money down the line.

Watch out for the last in this series of mistakes to avoid, published next week.

Laurence and trademark attorney Sharon Daboul will be presenting a seminar at 11:00 on Wednesday 19 October in the Leeds Club as part of Leeds Business Week, where you can learn another 19 IP mistakes to avoid.

If you have a brand but not a trademark, or just want to take a fresh look at your company's IP, why not book one of our IP clinics on Thursday 20 October