



Hiring an intellectual property professional

Intellectual property (IP) represents some of the most important and valuable business assets that can impact competition, financing and international growth. While IP can seem like a complex subject, there are many resources at your disposal to help you.

An **IP professional**, such as a patent agent, a trademark agent or an IP lawyer, can help you identify and file your IP, develop a strategy and make a budget to protect and enforce your IP in Canada and around the world. They can also advise you on the proper use of IP to maintain rights, marking, licensing, assignment and other strategies to maximize the value of your IP.

Choose your intellectual property professional

Consult the **Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO)'s list of registered Canadian patent and trademark agents**. Only the individuals and firms listed on CIPO's website are qualified and entitled to act on your behalf with CIPO. These agents often have access to an extensive network in foreign jurisdictions to better assist you, and they can also help you avoid any misleading services or scams.

Speak with professionals to find the right person or firm for the job. Contacting an IP professional early on can ensure you avoid potential costly mistakes. Make sure that they understand your business strategy and area of technology and that they will be able to help you secure your IP rights in the countries where you wish to obtain protection.

Questions you may wish to ask

- ? What information should I gather and bring to the first meeting?
- ? How much does it cost, and what are the timelines?
- ? What should I do or avoid doing before a first meeting to discuss my case?
- ? Do I qualify as a small entity?
- ? Should I pay for accelerated examination?
- ? Does the fast-tracked patent application for clean technology apply to my invention?

You should also ask your **trademark or patent agent** to outline their experience in applying for trademarks or patents.

Before consulting with an intellectual property professional

Understand the different types of IP to help you prepare for the first consultation. Get a handle on the fundamentals of IP by visiting CIPO's website. You can also contact our Client Service Centre to speak with an information officer or IP advisor.

Do a **quick search** of your inventions, trademarks and creations in the countries of interest to you to give you a preliminary view of rights owned by others that might affect the protection of your IP. Search the web, the online Canadian patents, trademarks, industrial designs or copyright databases, and databases from other countries and regions.

Consider in **which countries** your IP rights should be protected. Your business strategy might take you beyond Canada. Consult our Doing business abroad guides to learn about protecting your IP in foreign markets.

The cost will vary, depending on your needs and the nature and complexity of the work required. The following is for information purposes only:

Approximate cost range for Canada ¹		
	IP agent fees ²	CIPO fees (administrative fees)
Trademark	\$500 to \$2,000	Please see Canada.ca/IP-fees for information about CIPO's fees.
Patent	\$5,000 to \$25,000	
Industrial design	\$500 to \$2,000	
Copyright	\$0 to \$500	

1. Thinking of using the international filing system? Please consult an expert to better understand what other fees will apply.
2. IP agent costs vary, based on the complexity of the work and the experience of the agent. Most agent work is charged hourly.

Ask your trademark or patent agent for detailed estimates on professional fees and disbursements, government fees and the likely timing of expenses so that you can budget accordingly.

Also, you may consider discussing payment schedules or arrangements. The IP agent fees cover services such as searching, drafting, preparing and filing your application, refining and resubmitting the application, and preparing and filing formal documentation.

To find out more about registered Canadian IP agents, please visit Canada.ca/ip-professional or contact our Client Service Centre at 1-866-997-1936.

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Cat. N°: Iu71-4/65-2019E-PDF

ISBN 978-0-660-29282-3

Aussi offert en français sous le titre *Embaucher un professionnel de la propriété intellectuelle*.

