

The Patent Lawyer

GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

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Discussion on Chinese service invention-creation and rights ownership thereof

Zhongling HAN and Xiaodong WANG of Beijing Sanyou Intellectual Property Agency Ltd. offer advice for determining an “Employer-First” and “Employee-First” duel model as a solution for invention-creation ownership.

An interview with GE

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New Canadian rules

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Adaption of the description

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Women in IP Leadership

Celebrating achievements and continuing
the empowerment of women



This segment is dedicated to women working in the IP industry, providing a platform to share real accounts from rising women around the globe. In these interviews we will be discussing experiences, celebrating milestones and achievements, and putting forward ideas for advancing equality and diversity.

By providing a platform to share personal experiences we aim to continue the empowerment of women in the world of IP.



If you would like the opportunity to share your experiences with *Women in IP Leadership*, would like to nominate an individual to be involved, or would like to learn more about sponsorship, please contact our Editor.

Dr Jennifer Bailey: Patent Director, HGF

An interview: inspirations, experiences, and ideas for equality.

Jennifer is a European Patent Attorney and Chartered Patent Attorney (UK) at HGF Limited. During her career she has drawn on her varied technical background to advise clients across a wide range of sectors spanning life sciences, chemistry, and materials, and has a particular interest in microbiology and food science.

Jennifer enjoys helping her clients to maximize the value of patents to their businesses, and believes in empowering innovators by raising awareness of IP. She is experienced in invention capture and filing strategy, managing worldwide portfolios, and freedom-to-operate. Jennifer has also represented clients in numerous EPO Opposition and Appeal proceedings, particularly in the food and drink sector.

What inspired your career?

A love of science, across its spectrum, and learning new things. I came across the patent profession during an industrial placement at AstraZeneca as part of my chemistry degree. At that point I wasn't quite ready to leave the lab bench behind but didn't see myself as a synthetic chemist so I chose a PhD in a different subject – molecular microbiology. Although I really enjoyed the practical side of my PhD, I missed the breadth of different topics I had covered during my degree and A-levels. I think one of the best things about the patent profession is that you get to work on inventions across a wide range of technologies, and you're always learning something new.

How have you found the pathway to your current position? And can you offer advice from your experience?

It has definitely not been linear. Sometimes I have felt like I've made quite rapid progress, whereas at other times it's felt more like I've run into a wall. I have also taken a few sideways steps in order to widen my experience. Even when the path is relatively smooth, it's a career in which there are always ups and downs as you have to constantly adapt to different clients, cases and other demands.



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Recognizing those individuals who have a lot to contribute but may not be so adept at pushing themselves forward will help empower women.
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Some useful advice I received is to define success for yourself. For me, success is about building good client relationships, having the skills to do the best job I can for my clients, working in a great team and enjoying the intellectual challenge that the role brings. Also, in the times when everything seems difficult, it can be helpful to look back and see how far you've come to remind yourself what you're capable of.

What challenges have you faced? And how have you overcome them?

One challenge I constantly face is feeling like I never know enough. As a trainee I think I expected that once I qualified I'd feel fully competent. Of course the reality was different! Qualification is just the beginning and, for me, the feeling that I am fully capable of handling everything has never really arrived. The more experience I have, the more I realize I have yet to learn.

I've come to deal with that by striving to keep on learning and developing, and by trying to remember that no-one is the "finished" article. I have also found being part of a great team and support network immensely helpful – if I don't know something someone else in the team may do, and if there isn't an answer then at least we can bounce around ideas.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in your career so far?

I can't really pick one single success. Instead I prefer to try to recognize all of the small successes – securing a new client, getting a difficult application granted, receiving an email from a client thanking me for a great job – these small wins help me to stay motivated and balance out the day-to-day challenges that come with the role.

What are your future career aspirations? And how will you work to achieve them?

I think my main goal is to achieve my potential and be the best attorney I can be. I would love to get to the point where I feel confident in what I'm doing all of the time, but I don't think that's really my personality. So instead I hope to keep on gaining new experiences and making a wider contribution, such as by training others, in order to have a well-rounded career. I'd also like to expand my practice to work with more clients in areas of technology that are important to me personally, such as sustainability.

What changes would you like to see in the IP industry regarding equality and diversity in the next five years?

I would like to see more women at higher levels. I think there has definitely been change in the

right direction over the last few years but IP is quite a traditional profession and there is still plenty of room for improvement. I think the profession could also benefit from including a broader spectrum of people from different backgrounds.

How do you think the empowerment of women can be continued and expanded in the IP sector?

Unfortunately, I think that in most sectors women are still penalized for taking time out to have a family. I have had friends in other firms who were denied the chance to apply for promotions due to taking maternity leave. Thankfully, this has not been my own experience and I felt very supported during my recent maternity leave. However, from talking to other new parents, it seems that it is mostly women who take a step back from their careers to have families. I think that better parental leave policies across all sectors, which pay for both parents to take time out of work, would help to give more women in IP the opportunity to return to work earlier after having children, if they wanted to.

I also think that transparent promotion processes which are truly based on merit and contribution will help empower women (and men) in all sectors, including IP. Although it isn't always the case in all firms, generally I think it's been quite common that people who are more willing to speak up about their achievements, or those that are seen to "fit-in", are more likely to get promoted than people who are perhaps a bit quieter. Recognizing those individuals who have a lot to contribute but may not be so adept at pushing themselves forward will help empower women and work towards gender balance at the top of IP organizations.