

Money Makes the World Go Round

An Interview with Attorney Billy A. Robbins

With the rapid growth of our global economy, do you find that protecting ideas is more important than ever?

Yes. Innovation creates wealth and keeps the economy rolling. Getting protections for innovations is extremely important and necessary so companies can thrive and make money that can then be invested in research and development that, in turn, creates further patents.

In the world of intellectual property rights, how does America stack up to other countries?

In the US, there is an increased interest in innovation. Right now, the largest filers of patents are the United States and Japan. However, I believe that in a few years from now, China will be the largest supplier of patents. China is investing in technology even though it is Communist controlled. We must incentivize our companies or we will lose our global position.

How has China become such an intellectual force?

Over the last 30 years, many countries have expanded trade and production with China. In doing so, unfortunately, many sold their foundation in deals with China. In many cases, companies that partner with a Chinese company on production are required by that Chinese company to transfer their technology. So, technology that was invented in US is transferred to the Chinese and they pick up these technologies and their applications very quickly.

With the rapid advances in technology, is government keeping up with the demand?

Technological advances have increased exponentially. In turn, requests for patents double every 6 years. The department in Washington D.C. is very big, but I would say there are not enough examiners to keep up with the demand.

If the US files more patents than any other country, what company files and receives more patents than any other?

IBM filed a record 9,100 patents in 2018—this is the 26th year in a row that they have held first place. We know that in 2017, Samsung came in 2nd, Intel came in 3rd. Google was 6th and Apple was 9th). Most of the patents IBM has received relate to artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, security, and quantum computing.

It's also interesting to note that more patents were granted to companies within the state of California than to any other state with 40,631 patents granted. (New York follows in second place with 15,980 patents granted.)

So, there are great things happening in the state of California and the more we encourage and invest in those innovations the more likely it is that the United States will continue as an economic leader.

How does one go about filing a patent?

The single most important step is to file a Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Application. The PCT is an international patent law treaty (concluded in 1970) that gives you a file date

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on a national and international stage. The PCT is a way to protect an invention globally. Once your product is marketed; research from those preliminary market tests will indicate the countries in which you will want to extend your patent. The goal is to shield your intellectual property every step of the way, in the US and beyond.



In 1955, Billy A. Robbins, an electrical engineer, began working in the Patent Department of Hughes Aircraft Company in Pasadena and was hooked. He

passed the bar in 1958 and soon began his own law firm.

An Intellectual Property Attorney for Karish & Bjorgum, PC, Mr. Robbins represents clients in a variety of areas including patents, licensing, transactions, trademarks, copyrights and unfair competition and trade secrets. Prior to joining the firm, Mr. Robbins was with the Los Angeles office of Fulbright & Jaworski, LLP after merging Robbins, Berlinger and Carson into that office in 1997. He has worked as an adjunct professor at Southwestern University School of Law. In addition, he was elected to the College of Fellows of the Institute for Advancement of Engineering. Robbins was a Senior Technical Advisor for the Peoples Republic of China in its Star Program regarding Intellectual Property Laws and Technology transfer.

Mr. Robbins is frequently quoted in print and broadcast media outlets on current issues dealing with Intellectual Property Rights and Business Privacy and Protection. A Co-founder and President of the Technolink Association, Mr. Robbins was recognized by the United States House of Representatives for his leadership role with the Technolink Association. Mr. Robbins is an active member of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and serves on the Global Initiatives Council. He is also Co-chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Licensing Executives Society.