

ENS appoints patent, technology licensing expert

Lawyer firm Edward Nathan Sonnenbergs (ENS) has appointed Chris Bull, considered one of the world's leading patent and technology licensing lawyers, as a director in the firm's Intellectual Property (IP) department.

Bull's move to ENS, along with the firm's appointment of a number of other top IP lawyers, signals a major power shift in the South African IP law industry, as it positions ENS as the only full-service law firm in Africa with a full service IP department.

Bull, the former chairman of the executive committee and head of the Patent and Technology Commercial Department of IP firm Spoor & Fisher, says his move from an IP firm to a full service law firm mirrors developments in the IP industry that have been seen in North America, Europe and China.

IP requires active management

"Intellectual property lies at the heart of many businesses, whether its value is recognised or not. Many corporate clients though, are finding challenges in the model of managing their IP services through a specialist IP firm, while all of their other legal requirements are handled by a single, large law firm. This is particularly so where clients are looking for more than vanilla patent and trade mark support," says Bull.

Intellectual property assets require active management, nurturing and professional services support. This requires the professional services firm that is responsible for intellectual property management to also have capabilities in the other legal areas such as mergers and acquisitions, licensing, joint ventures, competition law, tax, transfer pricing, industry expertise and litigation.

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