

The logo for BMatanga, featuring the letters 'B' and 'Matanga' in a stylized, handwritten blue font.

Intellectual Property Attorneys for Africa



Guardians of the Knowledge Economy

Ideas. Priceless gemstones of our era unleashed from the depths of curious minds by industrious beings. From mobile telephony to solutions harnessing natural resources such as solar energy and more, our world is undergoing an unprecedented transformation from what begins as simple ideas.

BMatanga IP Attorneys came to life in 2010 as a fortress that protects ideas of every form and function. Ideas are the bedrock for wealth creation and advancement of societies when developed, protected and sustained. Just as title deeds are the keys unlocking ownership of brick and mortar buildings; so are patents, trademarks, industrial designs and copyright for intangible assets to creators.

The rise of the internet as an information exchange means that ideas transcend barriers like time, distance and physical borders. They do so at the instant click of a button. Whilst this has led to unprecedented distribution of information, traditions and creative works, it has also created a battlefield which Intellectual Property lawyers and law makers are needed to navigate.

Information has become profoundly sharable and prone to copying and duplication, leading to a gulf between creators and consumers. How can ideas be safeguarded in the quest to extract value from them? BMatanga IP Attorneys was born to answer this question.

Happy Birthday to You, Us & an Incredible Story

Happy birthday to you
Happy birthday to you
Happy birthday dear [NAME]
Happy birthday to you.

A transformed world demands evolved thinking and implementation. Did you know for example, that the common “happy birthday to you” song likely recited on your special day as we are now reciting it on ours, was until recently, copyrighted. Oh yes, a song as common and free flowing as oxygen, was the exclusive property of Warner/Chapell music, generating a cool US\$ 5000 a day in 2008. That is US\$ 2 million for the year for a song made up of 4 repetitive lines!

No public performance of the song or commercial usage such as movies could contain its lyrics without payment of US\$ 700 to the copyright holder.

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As the story above illustrates, ideas are powerful engines of opportunity that are able to create jobs and economic prosperity for individuals, enterprises and nations. It's at this juncture that our existence as Intellectual property lawyers finds meaning. You and multitudes of creators across our land could very well be losing precious intellectual value without knowing it. Our role is to address this inequality by defending, protecting and ensuring that anyone who seeks to innovate a product or a solution to life, derives full value and remuneration of their sweat and brow.

Our humble genesis can be traced back to these very times a decade ago. Ours was and continues to be a mission driven by an insatiable urge to safeguard your ideas.

Raise Your Champagne Glass: Champopo Yauya Nema Facts

Milestones such as our 10th anniversary should not be celebrated without fine Champagne, right? Well it actually depends. The Intellectual Property zeal in us will have you know that Champagne is a territorial mark for bubbly that is only produced in the French region of...Champagne. This is according to the Comité Champagne, the trade association that represents all the grape growers and houses of Champagne, France. Champagne is a unique product born of the shared heritage of Wine Growers and Champagne Houses for whom defence of the Champagne name is vital. That is because only wines made from the grapes grown and harvested in Champagne and then produced under the strict regulations of the Champagne appellation can bear the Champagne name.

The story of Champagne illustrates how highly competitive the markets of today are. Often times when a product is successful, competitors will attempt to make similar or identical products. There are vultures out there, waiting to pounce on these unsuspecting creators and reap profits where they did not expend a dime in creativity or labor. Without incurring research and development costs, they sell the product or service at a lower price and sometimes even at equally competitive prices with the original creations. This does not only eat into the profits of the innovators, it reduces their market share and threatens livelihoods.

The national, regional and global intellectual property apparatus avails itself to any serious enterprise seeking protection. Intellectual property protection gives one an exclusive right to use the intangible asset and right to stop others from copying the protected intangible asset, all in a bid to derive optimum and well-deserved returns.

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Hakuna Matata: IP FOR AFRICA

First released in 1994, the Lion King is a hit cinematographic production from the American Disney company. Set in Africa, it tells the tale of a young Lion's journey to royalty. The movie's most famous line is without a doubt; Hakuna Matata – Swahili for “no worries”. Since 2003, the term exists as a trademark owned by the Mega Corporation. This fact had Kenyans and other speakers of Africa's biggest language protesting. What some viewed as an affront and hyper commercialisation, is to us an illustration of how nascent the intellectual property field is in Africa. More often than not, little to no knowledge about intellectual property and the rights afforded to creators or the benefits for enterprises exists, thereby robbing the continent of billions of dollars in lost intellectual and monetary value. Ours is a consumptive continent endowed with huge natural resources which are shipped out of Africa for value addition then sold back in glitzy packaging. It goes without saying that an enormous continent of a billion rising inhabitants needs to safeguard its wealth. Conversely, global brand custodians need to protect their intellectual property on this rapidly growing continent. We have observed that trying to juggle across 54 countries can be a nightmare for one who is not rooted in that territory. Africa is our home and we understand its people, business culture and territory better, hence we have intentionally positioned ourselves to serve the world from Africa.

As we stand tall on the cusp of a new decade, we're humbled to have come this far with you. Our relationship and your trust in us is an honour we don't take lightly. The finest gems that emerge from your thinking and determination, will continue to adorn our robust shield, diligently protected for your perpetual benefit and success.