

Why the Name BananaIP? Why Not?

September 7, 2017

“Are you the Bananas?” the client asked, laughing loudly when we entered.

“Yes, we are,” I said, laughing with her.

Almost every one laughs when we introduce ourselves for the first time.

“Hi, I am from BananaIP.”

“Where did you say you are from? Ha Ha Ha”

They can't help laughing.

One even went to the extent of proclaiming, “Who in the right frame of mind calls an IP firm Banana!”

“Me,” I said instantly, summoning all my energies to put up a poker face.

Laughter again. They laugh, and keep laughing, but never forget. BananaIP is engraved in their memories forever.

“Why did a person like you call your firm Banana?” one CEO asked me seriously after a meeting.

“Because I love Bananas,” I said smiling.

“I love my firm and my work as much as I love the wonderful fruit,” I added, rather unnecessarily.

“Really! What a name,” he said, touching my shoulder before walking away quietly.

If I was religious, I would have thanked God a million times a day for creating the luscious fruit, and many varieties of it.

Every day, I spend time planning and dreaming about eating bananas – How many? Which variety? At what time? In what form? Several questions plague my mind. I think if I spend half the time I spend on these questions on work, my productivity will double and treble.

Talking about eating bananas, one of my partner's sons did not like the name at all.

"Papa, please don't call your firm Banana.

One day, monkeys will come and eat up your firm," he warned.

We didn't take his sensible advice, and went ahead with the name. Monkeys never showed up, and the name did not matter for a long time until one day, an in-house counsel informed us that he cannot work with us because we call ourselves BananaIP, an unprofessional and despicable name for an IP Firm.

"We will never work with a law firm that calls itself Banana," he said contemptuously.

"But, how does that matter? Shouldn't you be looking at the abilities of the attorneys working with the firm?" I asked, unable to hold myself back.

"The name is very important for us," he said with an element of finality.

We lost the client, and were naturally disappointed and dejected. That incident set off a serious discussion among the partners about whether we should change the name. True to our professional instincts, we argued, and kept arguing for a few months before coming to a firm conclusion.

"BananaIP it is, and BananaIP it will be," we finally decided one rainy evening.

We just couldn't let the name go. Unknowingly, the brand of

our firm had become an integral part of each of us, our identity, and our personality. We realized that it meant more than a name or a word for us, and couldn't separate it from ourselves. It was too precious for us to let go.

We as IP attorneys assist creators; people, who think differently; people, who get rights because they think differently; people, who make a difference because they think differently; and people, who thrive on thinking differently. Novelty, Distinctiveness, Inventiveness, Dissimilarity, Differentiability, and Severability, among others, are the foundations of creativity and intellectual property, and why should normative limitations pervade minds of IP attorneys who work with creativity day in and day out? I am glad that all of us strongly believe that those so called norms shouldn't limit us.

Diverging from established norms is the very essence of our work, and we are proud to have a distinctive, unique, and inventive name to identify ourselves with. BananaIP reflects our creativity, our ability, and our difference, and it is an unchangeable part of our identity and personality.

We are happy, very happy to be identified, recognized, and remembered as BananaIP Counsels.

Thank You very much for recognizing who we are, for what we are.

Yours Truly,

Kalyan.