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## **Exit Planning for Business Owners**

### **Intellectual Property**

#### *An Often Overlooked Asset*

Wikipedia describes intellectual property as

a term referring to a number of distinct types of *creations of the mind* to which property rights apply. Under intellectual property law, owners are granted certain exclusive rights to a variety of intangible assets, such as musical, literary, and artistic works; discoveries and inventions; and words, phrases, symbols, and designs. Common types of intellectual property include copyrights, trademarks, patents, industrial design rights and trade secrets in some jurisdictions.

Although many of the legal principles governing intellectual property have evolved over centuries, it was not until the 19th century that the term *intellectual property* began to be used, and not until the late 20th century that it became commonplace in the United States.

These exclusive rights given to owners of intellectual property allow them to benefit from the property they have created. The rights provide a financial incentive for the creation of and

investment in intellectual property, and, in case of patents, pay associated research and development costs.

Many business owners develop unique programs and procedures to make operations more efficient, and subsequently sell their company without thought of compensation for those assets. If you have, or think you have, a unique asset that may qualify for patent or copyright protection, consult with an experienced patent/intellectual property attorney. To delay can render a potentially valuable asset worthless, as common usage may prevent you from having exclusive rights. If you don't know of a qualified patent/intellectual property attorney feel free to contact us for names of experienced experts in this field.

You may be sitting on valuable intellectual property without knowing it. In our practice we look for such assets and can help you in determining whether or not you have hidden value in your company.

Potential intellectual property we often see when analyzing companies are:

- *Software programs created for specific benefit of your company.*
- *Customer tracking systems with unique characteristics.*
- *Material handling methods that would benefit other businesses.*
- *Specially designed customer training classes.*
- *Customer service programs with uncommon qualities.*

If you have intellectual property and need help in determining its value, give us a call.

*Plan ahead for success when exiting your business, or plan for less than what you hoped for. Only the best-prepared businesses will sell for top dollar.*

If you have questions about exit planning, please contact us for a no obligation consultation to discuss your particular situation. We have been helping business owners plan for and exit their businesses since 1979.

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#### **Businesses available for acquisition**

**Physical Therapy Clinic. Two locations serving patients in the Metro Washington, DC area. In business for 30 years.**

**Health Food Store. Non-franchised business featuring organic foods and herbs. Located in a major retail area of Virginia.**

**Screen Print and Embroidery. Well established Maryland shop with long standing repeat customers. Real estate is also available.**