

IP Inclusive annual meeting

18 April 2023:

Breakout discussion notes



Working for diversity and inclusion in IP

1 Carol Arnold's room

(Notes taken by Anne Burgato)

- Enhancing awareness of IP Inclusive among non fee earners.
- Exploring further the international perspective:
 - working with other existing groups or;
 - encouraging others to exist or;
 - tapping into attorneys or non fee earners in those countries that need support.
- Keep up the emphasis on mental wellbeing, perhaps bringing that up in individual communities.

2 Caelia Bryn-Jacobsen's room

(Notes taken by Anne Burgato)

- Consider 5-year focus to allow time to develop ideas and strategies.
- Three areas to focus on:
 - Religion; something that affects all of us;
 - Older people in the IP profession. Support network would be super;
 - Non attorney community.
- Regional meetings:
 - Things are still changing. Wait and see.
 - Give people the opportunity to set things up on their own - micro level.

3 Ben Buchanan's room

(Notes taken by Anne Burgato)

- Return to the importance of data. Not discouraged by difficulty of gathering data, but rather reassured by participation we have enjoyed in the past
 - Can others take on the role of gathering data at a national level, e.g. Patent Office, IPReg?
- Regions: how to improve regional participation? Potential to invite others beyond the region and engage in intersectional issues.

4 Alicia Chantrey's room (Notes from Cassie Hill)

- IP Inclusive is doing great work but can we expand this and explore the international perspective?
 - It would be interesting to see what other international organisations similar to IP Inclusive are doing.
 - In-house IP counsel have to consider issues worldwide and this would help them to align their business and external providers.
 - The idea of potentially having an international charter and encouraging people to use those businesses who had signed up to the charter so there was an economic benefit.
 - We would have to be mindful of different cultures and what EDI means to them, etc. but it would be helpful to share perspectives with different communities.
 - There have been issues with joint international events in the past due to time zones so must be mindful of this.
- More transparency on the current landscape of hybrid/flexible working
 - There is some reticence in the industry to move jobs/ask for different working conditions/look for new opportunities as it is not clear what the 'new norm' is when it comes to flexible working and how businesses are working in practice.
 - Could we encourage more transparency about hybrid working arrangements, about what is possible and what is being achieved?
- Educating, in particular the junior end, how to network more effectively since Covid.
 - We take for granted what we used to do and do the same thing.
 - However, some people (particularly juniors) will not have networked effectively (or know how to), or have done the Covid version of networking which has fizzled away and so do not have that experience as to how to do so effectively.
 - Is there a way we can help them to identify different ways of networking and how to do so effectively?
- Recruitment and social mobility: This is a hard area to tackle and probably fits within the Careers in Ideas section.
 - The mentoring scheme is definitely helping but it is not the whole picture as it can only help a finite number of people and we want to ensure that talent is nurtured and grows in the STEM arena.
 - Consider working with the 93% Club, In2science or Generating Genius by way of example in a more strategic way.
 - It may be a question of getting young people involved in STEM first before suggesting a STEM career.

5 Pete Fellows's room

- **Regional Groups:** There is something of a self-fulfilling prophecy aspect of headline IP Inclusive events always being in London – perhaps if events were focussed around another location such as Leeds (that really wasn't my suggestion!), then over a period of time perhaps that could have an impact. Holding next year's in person AGM in another location could be a good trial run for this – Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester are all pretty quick from London.
 - Instead of having lots of regional groups, have one regional group that then tours the UK. Or potentially have less regional groups, perhaps combining them into larger areas. There was debate as to whether this would realistically solve the problem particularly because of the insufficient transport network.
 - Could there be more research done on who is in the regions and what they want – a simple ongoing on line survey of some kind?
- **Events:** We talked about the types of events.
 - The majority felt that when events were more concentrated around an educational aspect then people tended to pick an online option if available. If they were seen as more social/networking then more people would attend in person. There was fairly active discussion on this, we agreed that 'IP Inclusive' events rather than one held by a specific community might be a way forward - informal social gatherings of some kind rather than themed.
 - We also discussed not offering a remote or hybrid option for the events themselves. Whilst there will be some who cannot attend events in person this could be mitigated by alternating remote and non-remote events and/or recording events for post-event publication. We felt if the events were social in nature then the fact that they were in-person would be more likely to be understood. It was felt that remote events were a limiting factor on attendance.
 - We also discussed trying to attract higher profile guests in or out of the IP profession.
 - Finally we talked about the types of events such as holding them on weekends or some of the popular more unusual events that IP Out has run – having really different events might help, perhaps around a fun activity etc.
- **IP Inclusive other Plans:**
 - We briefly discussed IP Inclusive plans for the coming year(s) and there was a discussion about the number of communities (could there be more? Are there too many?) and then signatory responsibility.

6 Julia Florence's room

- Good support for a 5-year over-arching business plan – opportunity to get 'back to basics' a bit and really think about what is required, how to achieve it and which groups need support.

- A longer-term view and planning may also help with how the different communities can plan and focus their activities, including those relating to intersectionality. *(JF comment: There seemed to be a slight suggestion that some of the activities are a bit fragmented, but obviously there needs to be flexibility and autonomy to plan events as we heard in the community updates.)*
- It's also important to take account of the external environment, e.g. economic issues, and consider the impact they will have on recruitment, staff retention and whether minority/disadvantaged groups are likely to be more affected – and therefore require more support.
 - Economic factors can also affect the budgets and resources that firms are able to commit to EDI initiatives.
 - It was pointed out that EDI events can be positioned to firms as marketing events too, which might enable firms to justify expenditure!
- Some feel the IP profession is still about 5 years behind other groups in terms of working practices and attitudes (e.g. around billing practices and working hours). Perhaps look at some organisations outside the IP sphere and or adjacent (e.g. solicitors) to see if there is anything we can learn/import. We discussed how to gather this type of information. There may be members who have links with non-IP organisations, either through their social contacts, or perhaps attending webinars put on by other organisations relating to EDI issues. Perhaps something the Advisory Board could help with?
 - It was also suggested to engage speakers from outside the profession who have expertise in EDI/working practices – although it was pointed out this would probably incur costs.
- Discussion around attracting more non-attorney/legal people to IP Inclusive considered whether it would be helpful to have a separate support group or whether this would be more divisive – we didn't come to a conclusion on this. But thought perhaps there could be a task force to look at how best to involve paralegals etc. Possibly one for the Advisory Board, as this has a more diverse membership, in terms of roles within IP.
- There was support in our group for maintaining hybrid and on-line events. I noted that other groups were keen to get back to in-person events. Hopefully we can get a balance of both.
- It was noted that despite all the good work, there is still a need to keep challenging the narrative – e.g. there is still an expectation that it is women who will do childcare and hence want flexible working.

7 Josh McLennon's room

(Notes taken by Anne Burgato)

- Data. The more the better, and harmonising what data is collected across the profession.

- Reach out to those in the profession who are not already part of IP Inclusive. How can we do that? Maybe put pressure on Charter Signatories in some way? Provide support for them too?
- Regional events - useful to collect data on where people are and what cities they would attend events in.

8 Beatriz San Martin's room

(Notes from Jennifer Unsworth)

- Perhaps we need to be a bit more patient about people coming back to events post-pandemic.
- Importance of supporting women throughout their life cycle – menstruation, endometriosis, fertility, maternity leave, menopause and beyond – to break down barriers. The need to involve IP Out and ensure that we are truly inclusive was highlighted.
- Should IP Inclusive be doing anything with regard to the erosion of our rights e.g. people needing to take passports/formal ID in order to vote.
- Should the role of IP Inclusive be extended to encourage involvement from draughtspeople, searchers, technology transfer professionals, inventors ... There was some debate about where the 'boundary' should be.
- There was consensus that regional events still have a place, but no ideas on what that might look like (apart from us being patient while people adapt to new ways of working)

9 Michael Silverleaf's room

- It is powerful to have allies: IP Inclusive should aim to have an ally on each committee going forward.
- Regional networks: People are back in the office and regional networks need to use this to achieve momentum.
- Identifying and promoting best practices using our communities and committees to gather best practices in and promote them out to firms and businesses.
- Equality of opportunity within the practice structure.
 - Remote working should be equally available for all.
 - Need positive efforts to promote equality of treatment.
 - There is a fear of using the wrong language. Training to make people feel more comfortable approaching D&I matters. Language matters. Need to know what to say and what not to say.
 - Being given permission to use the wrong language – being corrected without criticism. Look at the example of the Last Leg for teaching us how to do it.

10 James St Ville's room (Notes from Caroline Warren)

- Communication: For 23/24, we felt that improved communication from IP Inclusive would be valuable – we all felt we had missed events we might be interested in going to – we weren't sure whether we were signed up to the right mailing lists and whether all events from the different groups were communicated via a central list. Monthly / fortnightly emails summarising everything would be great – it sounds like these might exist, but we didn't know about them.
 - We also felt the website could be made easier to use and perhaps simplified – it's not always clear where to find information – mostly around events and who to contact about which committee – but also finding articles and resources.
- In person events: The room felt that it was important to get back to in person events where possible – particularly for younger members of the profession. We also thought this might be a good way to re-invigorate the regional networks, perhaps tying up with the Informals regional networks.
 - As well as providing a more social experience, in person events were thought to give a greater opportunity for people to go along as allies as there is a feeling you might stand out more on a Zoom call.

11 Chair's notes from the final plenary session (Notes from AB)

- We hope to get this event back to an in-person event next year, potentially hybrid as well so people can join from afar.
- Thank you to the breakout room facilitators.
- Do sign up to our mailing list to get our update newsletter which details upcoming events and flags news and features posts. Also on our website events page you can find recordings if you have missed them.
- Thanks to all for making the time to attend and for your contributions.

Appendix 1: Useful links shared in the chat

- IPAN World IP Day event: <https://ipaware.org/world-ip-day-2023/>
- Article on Trans issues: <https://ipinclusive.org.uk/newsandfeatures/why-the-controversy-over-trans-rights-at-the-moment-a-guide-for-allies>
- <https://www.maryannsieghart.com/the-authority-gap/>
- To contact Carol regarding becoming a mentor: carolcareersinideas@gmail.com
- Follow Jonathan's Voice to keep up to date with our joint events with IP Inclusive and to find out about our other training activities on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/jonathan-s-voice/>
- For anyone interested in menopause activities: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12778267/>
 - Any other questions e.g. wanting to join the WhatsApp group - drop me an email: jane.wainwright@potterclarkson.com
 - To join the menopause WhatsApp group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/DLj2Zctbl1x5xULQcpfOuF>
- Anyone interested in taking on an organisational or administrative role for an older people in IP community, contact Julie.Barrett@PurposiveStep.com or via her personal account on LinkedIn.