



Peter Snoeker

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Protecting innovation and creativity: why leading IP lawyer Peter Snoeker has spent his career protecting inventors and creators

Peter Snoeker became an IP lawyer by chance one day back in 1988.

The law firm he'd joined after graduation needed someone to specialise in IP to help one of their major clients. Peter quickly took up the challenge – mainly because no one else specialised in IP at the firm. It was the start of a long and successful career.

"At the time there was no IP expertise. This firm had 50 lawyers, but no IP specialist!" Peter laughs. "The client was a retail chain and had always bought a lot of stuff from China, but then a company accused the chain of infringing on their rights.

"It was a difficult situation but I had a few legal tricks up my sleeve and managed to win in the end. That case was instrumental in my becoming an IP lawyer. It was my breakthrough case."

Becoming an IP lawyer

Almost by default, whenever one of the partners in the law firm had an IP problem they automatically looked to Peter for a solution. Similarly, long term clients of the firm soon contacted Peter whenever they had copyright or other IP issues to deal with.

Many of these clients would follow Peter when he set up his own legal firm years later. At the same time, Peter became involved in a range of sectors, from retail and technology to manufacturing, where clients all needed IP legal services.

Setting up Snoeker Advocatuur

In 2010, Peter decided to set up his own firm Snoeker Advocatuur, to free himself up from the limitations of the larger corporate law firms he'd

experienced. His aim was to create an environment where he could build a different culture, prioritise the needs of his clients, and grow more meaningful relationships.

Peter's decision was met with overwhelming support and most clients followed him to his new firm: "Practically all my cases involve regular clients that I've had for the past 25 years or more. The lifecycle of managers in the Netherlands is something around four years. Then they hop off to another firm. That other company would then have a similar IP issue and they would phone me."

Understanding his clients' business

A key factor for Peter is his commitment to understanding his clients' businesses. He believes that a deep understanding of the client's industrial sector and goals is essential to provide effective legal advice.

Peter takes time to get to know his clients, their challenges and aspirations. By doing so, he can tailor his services to their specific needs and offer guidance that goes beyond legal technicalities. This person-centered approach has earned Peter the trust and loyalty of many who continue to seek his assistance even as they transition to new roles or companies.

"All this work is about human relations," Peter says. "That's why I've always had these steady clients. I try to understand the client and do a lot of research into their business sector. Their world, if you like."

"I try to get a feeling of what that client really needs or wants. Often they just say 'we want to trademark or copyright something' without understanding the competition, other inventors or creators and the like."

"You really have to get under the client's skin in a positive way, to be able to advise what they really want and need."

Peter guides this client through the commercial realities. It's a big commitment on his part as he builds trust and understanding.

"You really have to get under the client's skin in a positive way, to be able to advise what they really want and need. Often clients will just go for the business opportunity and want to register something, but often – legally speaking – that may harm an earlier registration, for example."

"It is really important to not just do a service and then send your invoice and that's it, but to get them to understand the consequences of their actions and what the future may hold for their IP."

Litigation and settlements in IP cases

While Peter has extensive experience in IP litigation, he tends to steer away from court proceedings whenever possible. He recognises that litigation can be time-consuming, costly, and unpredictable. Instead, he emphasises the importance of out-of-court settlements, which can often lead to more favourable outcomes for all parties involved. Peter works closely with his clients to explore settlement options and negotiate agreements that protect their interests while avoiding the uncertainties of the courtroom.

"With every jurisdiction – in Holland or overseas – litigation takes time. It's like gambling. Like Tombola. I tell clients that you can't ever really predict the outcome of a case that goes to litigation. In my 35 years' experience providing legal services, I've had many instances where I said, 'well we have a very strong case but I can't give you a percentage regarding your victory in court'. I have a 90% rate of success, but it's never a done deal and I make that clear to them if they want to go to court."

These days businesses in most jurisdictions are encouraged to settle: "Not just Dutch, but most businesses whether French, Italian, German, prefer to negotiate for a settlement and you need to make clients aware of the risks if they don't want to settle. Like I say, it's a Tombola, a gamble."

Navigating the international landscape of IP Law

With the increasing globalisation of business, IP protection has become a global concern. For years now, Peter has developed expertise in handling cross-border IP issues, assisting clients in securing their trademarks and copyrights in different jurisdictions – going back to his very first case in 1988, and more recently achieving successful results for clients deploying AI.

While he relies on local counsel for the practical aspects of registration, Peter provides valuable guidance on the costs and strategies involved

in creating a worldwide IP portfolio. His understanding of the nuances between jurisdictions ensures that his clients receive comprehensive and effective IP protection.

Similarly, as a member of IR Global, Peter is aligned with an international network of like-minded legal advisors who refer work and share their experience in different legal jurisdictions.

"I get referrals and although I always have a lot of work going on, it's really great to share expertise and get to know people from across the world with relevant experience."

"I like that tremendously. I also like to attend the events. The few that I've attended have always been very well organized and the members are so close and eager to talk. I like the way that, at the core of IR Global members, are really there for one another. And that feels good."

Personal Interests and Cultural Appreciation

Beyond his professional achievements, Peter enjoys swimming and has a regular fitness routine. He's also a fan of European art house movies.

As a culture buff, Peter has a penchant for French literature and culture and frequently attends ballet performances with his wife: "Yes, I love France and also love the French. I read mostly French literature in French and have quite a few big French clients."

When it gets important often they ask if they can talk in French. "Can we switch to French?" they'll ask, and that's never a problem for me."

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Peter Snoeker (Breda, 1959) graduated in civil law at the University of Leiden in 1988. After passing the bar exam, Peter in 1988 associated with a well established Dutch law firm, where he developed expertise in the field of IP and received acclaim from clients. His entrepreneurial itch resulted in the co-founding in 2007 of Spring advocaten. Today, the office of Snoeker Advocaatuur is located next to one of Amsterdam's beautiful canals, where Peter advises and accompanies his clients in the fields of trademark law, copyright, image right, contract law, design-patent law, AI-law.