



MARK McATEER

Good reception

Powell Gilbert's partners are a shrewd bunch. They spend their time doing exactly the type of IP litigation they enjoy, in a tight partnership, in fantastic offices. Now they've helped make the future bright by adding Ari Laakkonen to the partnership.

The significance of Laakkonen's arrival from Nokia via Bird & Bird shouldn't be overlooked. Patent litigation requires rocket scientists, and the top IP practices have their fair share of them. But finding a rocket scientist able to fully understand the business of one of the world's largest mobile phone suppliers is a real coup.

Powell Gilbert partners aren't daft enough to suggest that they will see a significant upswing in work from Nokia, and are at pains to point out that the client will decide who gets its major mandates. Bird & Bird retains arguably the UK's pre-eminent IP and telecoms practices, and that will not change any time soon. But Laakkonen was widely acknowledged as a star performer while at Bird & Bird, and having a former insider working for a dedicated patent firm must be an attraction for Nokia. On top of this, Powell Gilbert's size allows it to be competitive on fees in what is a very expensive business. Laakkonen's experience of multijurisdictional patent litigation might come in handy too.

Credit should also be given for Powell Gilbert building its offering in consumer electronics in addition to its well-known life sciences expertise. Given that patent litigation can be counter-cyclical - as companies look to protect their assets in a downturn - the timing by this amiable bunch looks remarkably astute.

General counsel often complain that private practice lawyers fail properly to understand the mechanics of their business. What better than to find one of your own handling your file?

Former Nokia patent expert joins Powell Gilbert

Laakkonen brings industry experience from Bird & Bird

Intellectual property boutique Powell

Gilbert has significantly enhanced its offering to consumer electronics clients by hiring a former director of IP rights at Nokia, Ari Laakkonen, as a partner in January.

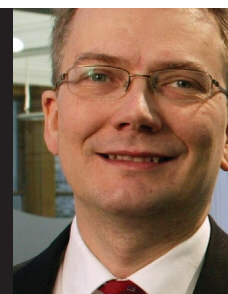
Laakkonen joins the firm - formed in 2007 as an IP litigation spin-off from Bristows - directly from PG's IP rivals, Bird & Bird, where he was a senior consultant, taking the number of partners to seven.

He brings a wealth of industry and technical experience with him. A doctor of computer

'I had a good understanding of both PG and Bird & Bird when I worked with Nokia,' Laakkonen said. 'However, Powell Gilbert provides me the best opportunity for the future, doing the kind of things that I'm good at doing. Bird & Bird are leaders in IP, but I felt my work was more closely matched to what PG was doing and gave me more scope to grow my practice in the future.'

The focus on pure IP litigation in the consumer electronics industry and not just telecoms was a major pull for Laakkonen.

'Powell Gilbert provides me the best opportunity for the future, doing the things that I'm good at doing.' Ari Laakkonen, Powell Gilbert



science, in his role as director of IP rights and senior IP rights litigation counsel at Nokia he was responsible for managing all Nokia's IP litigation in Europe, which also included casework in Asia. Most notably, he was involved in Nokia's long-running and high-profile patent fight with Qualcomm. Bird & Bird advised Nokia in the dispute, which started in 2005 and only ended last summer.

'Consumer electronics represent a large part of patent work, and that's where my practice lies,' he said. 'There had already been a push in this area by Powell Gilbert, and among the US firms, but it's quite a new thing in the UK market. You won't need many fingers to count up how many firms in the UK are seriously doing this.'

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NewsinBrief

GREENE REJOINS CLEARY

Edward Greene, general counsel of Citigroup's Institutional Clients Group, will return to Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton this month. Greene was a partner at Cleary before joining Citigroup in 2004. He will be based in the firm's New York office and specialises in securities, corporate governance and regulatory matters, having gained firsthand experience working as GC for the US Securities and Exchange Commission before joining Cleary in 1982.

CHADBOURNE RECRUITS GOLDMAN SACHS IP HEAD

Chadbourne & Parke hired John Squires, formerly chief intellectual property counsel for Goldman Sachs, as a partner and co-chair of its IP practice in December. Squires, who is based in the firm's New York office, started the patent practice at Goldman Sachs nearly a decade ago, expanding his remit to encompass all soft IP issues, and was involved in lobbying Congress directly to bring about changes to patent law in the US.

ROUSE HIRES IFPI LITIGATOR

IP specialist Rouse & Co has bolstered its Asian litigation practice with the hire of Tim Smith as deputy international service head for Asia litigation. Prior to joining Rouse & Co, Smith was a senior legal adviser for the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, and was in the IP department at Ashurst before that. He will be based in London, but his immediate focus will be on the firm's China practice.