

## Ask SCORE

# PROTECTING YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES IS A SMART MOVE

“TM,” “SM,” “PAT PEND,” “©,” “®.” These small symbols and abbreviations carry a lot of legal weight when it comes to safeguarding a company’s proprietary names, designs, products, and services. As an entrepreneur, you should consider making sure the valuable intellectual properties of your small business are protected as well. But which one(s) do you need?

Trademarks are not the same as patents and copyrights, even though the differences are not widely understood. While there are similarities, they serve different purposes.

According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), a trademark is a word, name, symbol or device used in business to indicate a source of the goods, i.e., your business, and to distinguish those goods from those sold by another business. A service mark is the same as a trademark, except that it identifies and distinguishes the source of a service rather than a product.

A patent for an invention grants a specific legal property right to the inventor—

“the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale or selling” the same invention.

A copyright is harder to define. It is mainly a protection for authors of original works, including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works, both published and unpublished.

The Internet has transformed the once mysterious process of applying for a trademark into something accessible to anyone willing to spend some time to understand the intricacies and get it right.

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David Morrison

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- ✓ When people become eligible for Medicare, they are often confused about what coverages they are eligible for, and what their options are.
- ✓ Our mission is to educate you on how Medicare works for you and identify plans that work with Medicare to ensure you have a robust retirement benefit plan that you can rely on.
- ✓ Whether it is a Medicare Advantage Plan, a Medicare Supplement Plan and/or a Prescription Drug Plan, at Medicare Education Services, we want you to Know Your Choices.



#### MEDICARE ENROLLMENT

If you're turning 65 soon, it's time to think about what Medicare plan is right for you.

If you are already enrolled but would like to review your options, we can help with that too!

#### MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

When you want a little extra coverage - like dental, vision, and hearing care - a Medicare Advantage plan might be right for you.

Contact Us to find out if it would be to your advantage to have a Medicare Advantage plan!

#### MEDICARE SUPPLIMENTS

Original Medicare pays for many healthcare services, but they do not cover everything.

A Medicare Supplement (AKA "Medigap") plan can help to cover the things that original Medicare does not.

#### MEDICARE PART D

Even if you don't currently take prescription drugs, it is our recommendation that everyone enroll in a plan.

Like Part B, a PDP comes with a late enrollment penalty, which you would be required to pay for the rest of your life.

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But while no business skills or special legal knowledge are required to apply, the field is filled with potential pitfalls and wrong turns that could sabotage your trademark filing if you don't know the intricacies of creating trademarks that can stand up to legal challenges later on.

For example, the application requires that you identify goods or services under specific categories. But misunderstanding these categories and filing too broadly or too narrowly can ruin your trademark and cause problems later on. A qualified trademark attorney can help you avoid such problems.

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's Web site at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) provides a wealth of information and resources about protecting your small business' intellectual properties. You'll find basic information about trademarks, patents, and copyrights; links to easy-to-follow "How To" guides; and search engines for researching existing trademarks and patents.

To learn more about trademarks and other small business matters, contact SCORE "Counselors to America's Small Business." SCORE is a nonprofit organization of more than 10,500 volunteer

business counselors who provide free, confidential business counseling and training workshops to small business owners. Call 610.327.2673 for the Pottstown SCORE office, or visit on the web at [www.pottstownscore.org](http://www.pottstownscore.org).

Since 1964, SCORE "Mentors to America's Small Business" has helped more than 11 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through mentoring and business workshops. More than 10,000 volunteer business mentors in over 250 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, call 1.800.634.0245 for the SCORE chapter nearest you. Visit SCORE at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org).

For more information about starting or operating a small business, contact SCORE TriCounty, <https://tricity.score.org/content/find-mentor-183>.

Today at SCORE, we are on the frontline fighting to keep Main Street America in business. If you believe that you can help a small business with your experience, advice and mentoring please think about joining us. Email us at [tricity@scorevolunteer.org](mailto:tricity@scorevolunteer.org), call us at 610.327.2673, or to learn more. To submit an application to be a SCORE TriCounty volunteer, visit our website at <https://tricity.score.org/become-volunteer-2>.

SCORE is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.