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ROUSE



IP Toolkit No. 1

Practical Guide for SMEs on Trademark & Digital Branding in Malaysia

ROUSE

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TRADEMARKS AND BRANDING

What is a Trademark?

Any sign used to identify and distinguish your goods or services from those of others.

Key Components

- Names/Word Marks (e.g., “Nike”)
- Logos (e.g., the Nike “Swoosh”)
- Slogans (e.g., *“Just Do It”*)
- Service names (e.g., Grab)
- Trade dress or visual identity of packaging (e.g., Coca-Cola’s bottle shape)



- Sound Marks – (e.g., Intel jingle.)
- Scent Marks - No scent marks granted in MY yet. (e.g., Play-Doh scent)
- Colour Marks: No colour marks granted in MY yet. (e.g., Tiffany Blue)

Purpose

- ✓ Trademark signals **origin and trust.**
- ✓ Assures customers of your product/service, not a knock-off.
- ✓ Enables legal **enforcement**
- ✓ Helps build **reputation** over time.

What a Trademark is NOT ❌

- A business registration
- A domain name (unless registered as trademark)
- Automatically protected just because you use it online

Digital relevance
(for SMEs selling online)

- **Store names** on Shopee, Lazada – can be protected as trademarks if distinctive.
- **Social media handles** (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) – consistent handles help build brand recognition.
- **Product logos, hashtags, and packaging designs** – form visual identity of online store and can be copied if not protected.

Unregistered brands *let copycats use their name/logo—costing SMEs visibility and customers, esp. online.*

Takeaways

- Trademarks apply to **words, symbols, designs, or combinations**.
- They are not automatic – **you must register them** for protection.
- They protect your brand both **offline and online**.
- A registered trademark gives you the **legal tools to act against infringement**.

Key Role of Trademarks in Digital Branding

Brand Protection & Reputation

Legal protection against unauthorised use, imitation or infringement, safeguarding brand's integrity and reputation.

Brand Identification & Recognition

Trademarks help consumers recognise and associate products or services with a specific company or source.

Supporting Digital Searchability

Trademarks as keywords - boost your searchability across Google, online marketplaces & social media. (E.g., Colgate)

Building Trust & Credibility

Familiar trademarks build trust and loyalty by signaling consistent quality and reliability to customers.

Marketing and Branding

Trademarks are powerful marketing tools - create strong, memorable brand identities and help you stand out from competitors.

Enabling Digital Monetisation

Trademarks carry financial value: they can be bought, sold, licensed or even used as collateral for loans.



Takeaways

- Secure legal rights - stop misuse/knock-offs (crucial when your name or content goes viral).
- Establish Identity – through visual shortcuts, distinctive logos, words or symbols — instant recognition.
- Trademarks as keywords - enhance discoverability across Google, online marketplaces & social media.
- Signals legal legitimacy & protection, building trust boosting consumer confidence online.
- Help you stand out in a crowded online market
- Open doors to licensing, merchandising & influencer partnerships, turning your brand into revenue.

Brand Assets

Your brand lives online – and every element must be clearly defined and protected

Logos & Icons

*Logo is **face of your brand**.*

Need to be distinctive, consistent across platforms, and registered as a trademark to protect against imitation.

🔧 *Think of it as your brand's fingerprint.*

Product/Service Names

*These are **valuable identifiers.***

Document and trademark Unique Names (e.g. "Coffee Cube", "Pizza Lab").— they can grow into **standalone brands**.

📌 *Don't let others ride on your name.*

Hashtags & Campaign Tags

*Serve as **digital word-of-mouth tools**.*

List all official hashtags and monitor usage to guard brand voice.

📢 *Hashtags build community — but they can also be hijacked.*

Online Store & Domain Names

Website, social media handle, and e-commerce shop names (e.g. teamwangdesign.com, @luckincoffee.msia) are all **digital front doors**.

Consistency = brand trust.

🔒 *Secure the name before someone else does.*

TRADEMARK REGISTRATION

Where to Register Trademarks and Why it Matters

Protect your brand locally and globally

Where to Register

National Registration

Register directly with the **Intellectual Property Office** of the country you want protection in.

✅ Example:

Malaysia – MyIPO

Indonesia – DGIP

Singapore – IPOS

💡 Best when you're targeting **specific countries only.**

International Registration - WIPO Madrid System

One application. One fee. Multiple countries.

Madrid System lets you register your trade mark in over **130 countries** through a **single filing** with WIPO, based on your home registration.

✅ Ideal for **regional or global business expansion.**

Why it Matters

🔒 **Legal Advantage**
- ✓ Official proof of ownership
- ✓ Sue for infringement.

⚡ **Easier Enforcement**
- ✓ No need to prove goodwill or prior reputation (like in passing off case)
- ✓ Stronger footing in domain disputes, takedown requests, and social media impersonation claims

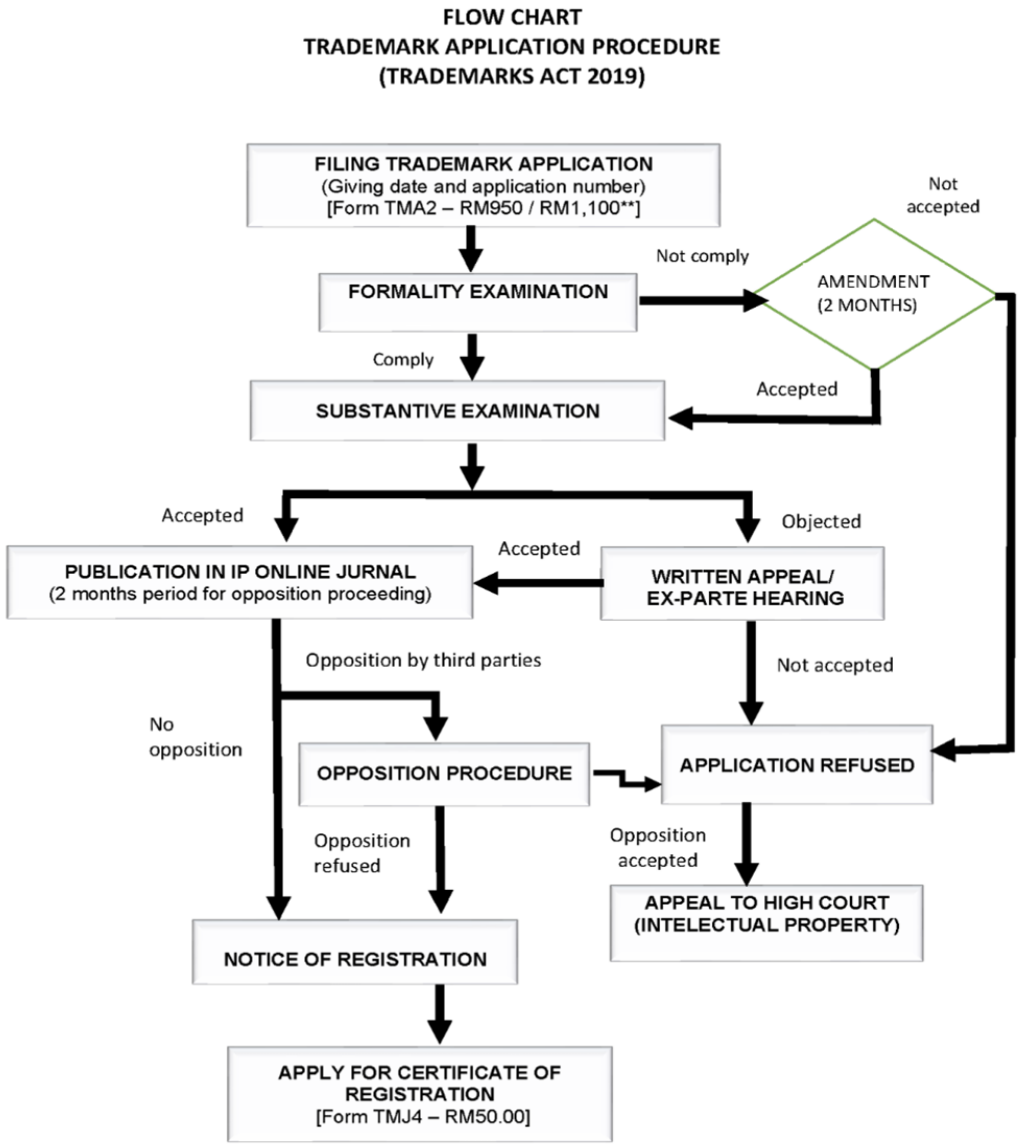
🌐 **Nationwide (and International) Protection**
- ✓ One registration.
- ✓ Used to support applications overseas (Madrid System)

💼 **Boosts Brand Value**
- ✓ Business asset
- ✓ Adds value in licensing, franchising, investment, and brand sales.

Why Register Your Trade Mark?

- Even if common law offers some protection, **registration gives you stronger, faster, and clearer rights**.
- Go beyond trademark registration - secure **domain names and social media handles** for your brands

Trademark Application in Malaysia (MyIPO)



How It Works

File your application → Submit your name/logo and details online through MyIPO.

1. **Formality check** → MyIPO checks if your form is complete. If not, you'll be asked to amend it.

2. **Substantive check** → MyIPO examines whether your mark is *unique* and not too similar to others.

3. **Publication** → If accepted, your mark is published for 2 months so others can object.

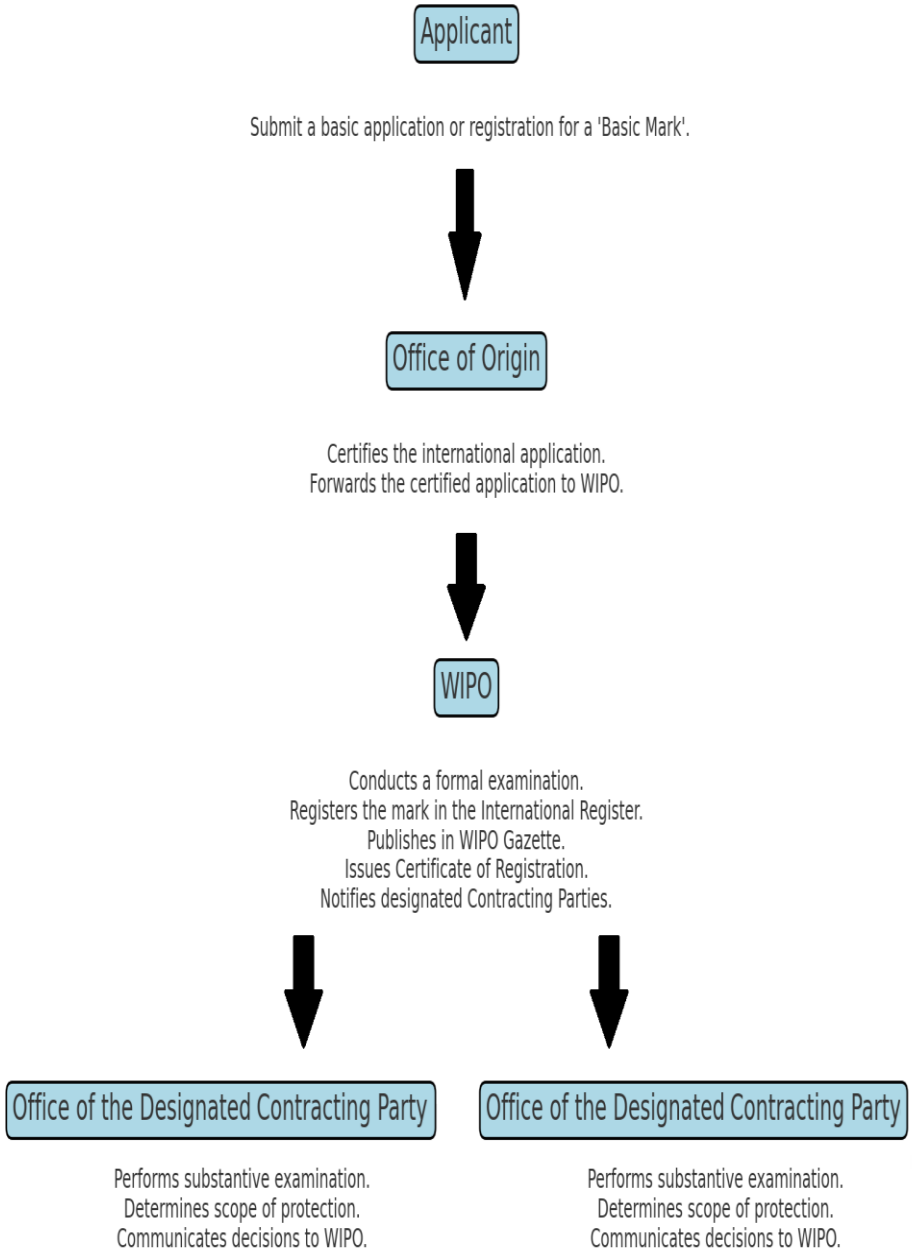
4. **Opposition or appeal (if any)** → If someone objects, MyIPO reviews both sides before deciding.

5. **Registration & certificate** → If no opposition (or you win the appeal), your mark is registered and you get a certificate.

Timeline: Usually takes 12–18 months if there's no objection or major issue.

International Registration

(WIPO Madrid System)



How the WIPO Madrid System Works

1. Start locally ("Office of Origin")

1. You must first apply for or register your trademark in your home country (e.g., MyIPO in Malaysia).
2. This national office reviews and certifies your application before forwarding it to WIPO.

2. WIPO processes your application

1. WIPO checks that your application meets formal requirements.
2. It then publishes it and sends it to all the countries you selected for protection.

3. Each country decides separately

1. The IP Offices in those countries (called "Designated Contracting Parties") examine your application according to their national laws.
2. Each can approve or refuse protection in their own territory.

Think of it as a single door (WIPO) leading to many countries — one filing, multiple protections.

OFFICIAL

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

FUN FACT

The Power of Brand Recognition



Why did Nike drop its name / lettering "Nike" from its swoosh logo, leaving only the iconic *swoosh*?

Common Trademark Mistakes Made by SMEs

Many small businesses unintentionally put their brand at risk. Here's how:

❌ Not Registering the Trademark

"I already have a logo, so I'm safe."

Not quite!

- Cannot sue for infringement - without official registration
- Limiting to common-law passing-off* (first-to-use).
- Passing-off is harder to prove—especially online—and slower, costlier to enforce.

➡️ Enforcing your rights can be more **costly, slower, and uncertain**.

⚠️ Copying or Clashing with Existing Brands

"That name sounds cool—let's use it!"

Many SMEs choose names **too similar** to big brands — knowingly or not.

Eg. i-AppleFix for a phone repair store.

➡️ Leads to **legal trouble**, rebranding costs, and damage to reputation.

🔁 Inconsistent Branding Across Platforms

"Different name here, different logo there—it's all the same lah!"

Different brand names, logos, or styles across website(s), Instagram, & Shopee confuses customers and weakens brand recall.

➡️ Complicates ability to protect and prove trade mark use.

🌐 Expanding Online Without Trademark Protection

"I'm going global... but forgot to protect my name overseas."

Trademarks are territorial –

Register before entering new markets/countries; or others (on marketplaces/social media) will file first.

In civil-law countries (e.g., China, Thailand, Indonesia), rights only arise on a **first-to-file** basis (not first to use) — registration is essential.

➡️ Leads to loss of rights in target markets, forced rebranding, blocked sales, and increased legal costs to recover the brand name.

🗂️ Poor Record-Keeping of Brand Assets

" I know where all our logos are —no need to document/track them."

No clear list of what brand elements exist, when they were created, or who owns them.

Trademark is owned by company, but domain names or social media handles are registered under an individual (e.g., staff, founder, freelancer).

➡️ Leads to confusion when enforcing rights, applying for registration, or negotiating deals.

Risk of losing control if individual leaves or disputes arise.

Secure Your Digital Trademark Footprint

🌎 Claim Your Domain Name Early

e.g.www.brandname.my

✅ Buy your brand domain **before someone else does**, even if your site isn't ready.

✅ Consider variations like .com, .my, .net, and .store.

🔒 Lock Down Your Social Media Handles

e.g. @brandname on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X.

✅ Consistent handles = easier for customers to find you.

✅ Prevents others from **pretending to be your brand**

✅ **Reserve the name now - e**ven if you're not active yet.

🎯 Match Branding Across Platforms

✅ Maintain **consistent names, logos & taglines** across your website, social media & marketplaces (Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop etc.).

✅ **Builds recognition & goodwill** to strengthen your trademark protection.

👀 Monitor for Impersonators or Misuse

Fake websites, parody accounts, typo URLs (e.g. brandnme.com).

⚠These can damage trust and scam your customers.

✅ Report and take action quickly — easier when your name is registered.

🗂️ Tie It Back to Your Trademark Strategy

Did you know?

Use your website domain and social media handle as proof of trademark use.

💼 Capture timestamped screenshots of website URL and social media profiles showing your trademark in use—proof of use for disputes or enforcement.

Takeaways

- Create strong digital ID + proof of use underpins all trademark rights.
- Do trademark search early – check similar names before filing or launching brand to avoid conflicts.
- Search in key markets – cover Malaysia and any countries where you plan to sell or expand in the next 3–5 years.

Secure domains and social handles early; if your exact brand name is taken, add a descriptive word to stand out. If "Kopi" is taken, use a variant like KopiMY or KopiCafe.

Create & Maintain a Digital Brand Asset Log

Think of it as your brand's "insurance policy" — a centralised record that helps you manage, monitor, and protect your digital presence.

What to Include in Your Brand Asset Log

Asset Type : Details to Record

Logos: File versions, formats, usage rights, last update.

Domain Names: Registration info, expiry dates, registrar access.

Social Handles: Username, platform, date created, login credentials.

Storefronts: Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop URLs, admin contacts.

Hashtags: Branded campaigns, date launched, purpose

Track Expiry & Renewal Dates

Every registered trade mark has a **validity period** (e.g. 10 years in Malaysia).

➡️ Missing a renewal can mean losing your registered rights.

✅ Keep a calendar of:

- Trademark application number and registration number
- Filing, Registration and expiry date
- Grace period for late renewal
- Who is responsible to renew
- Jurisdiction (country/region)

Monitor Licensing & Usage Terms

- Licensee/licensor name and contact details.
- Track the **duration** of the licence
- Record **geographic limits** and **scope of rights**
- Set **review/renewal dates**
- **Agreement stat and end dates**

➡️ **Avoid**

- Overuse, misuse, or expired agreements that appear valid.
- Situations where TM is still being used **under expired or outdated licensing terms**, leading to **unauthorised use** that appears legitimate.

Know Where Your Trademarks Are Used

Keep a log of:

- Countries where marks are registered.
- Platforms where your brand appears (e.g. Shopee, IG, FB)
- Logos/versions in use (colour, black & white, simplified).
- Evidence of use (screenshots, links)
- Proof of Use (dated screenshots, URLs, product photos, promotional materials).

✅ Supports renewals, enforcement, and international filings

Pro Tips

✓ Store it in a shared but secure folder (e.g. Google Drive, Notion, or Airtable).
✓ Assign one person to update it regularly.
✓ Add screenshots or links as evidence of online use.
✓ Sync with your trade mark registrations for legal alignment.
✓ Good documentation = easier enforcement + licensing opportunities.
✓ ***Suggestion: Use Excel, Airtable, or Notion to build a live, sharable IP register.***
📝 ***Bonus: If you're ever audited, pitching to investors, or handling IP disputes — this log becomes gold!***

Brand Asset Tracker

	TM: BRAND	TM: BRAND	Domain/ Handle
Proprietor	BrandCo Sdn Bhd	BrandCo Sdn Bhd	BrandCo Sdn Bhd
Jurisdiction	Malaysia	WIPO (ID, SG)	Domain (.com/.my), IG handle
Reg No.	TM2023xxx	IR1622xxx	www.brandname.my/@brandname
Expiry Date	12/03/2033	01/09/2032	Renewal yearly
Renewal Due	12/03/2033	01/09/2032	Annually (domain), per platform policy (IG/FB)
Licensing	No	Yes	NA
Notes	Used on Shopee + TikTok	Licensed to Brand Asia Sdn Bhd	Ensure registered under company, not staff/agency

🧭 Building A Strong, Unified Digital Brand

Tracking your brand assets across all online platforms is critical for building a strong, unified digital brand.

Map your Brand Everywhere

- 📌 Websites
- 📌 Instagram / Facebook / TikTok
- 📌 E-commerce (Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop)
- 📌 Email, WhatsApp Business, Google Business

If name, logo, or tone **isn't aligned -** brand becomes fragmented.

Consistency Matters

✅ Builds instant recognition ('Starbucks' analogy).

✅ Reinforces trade mark identity

✅ Helps with SEO and social searchability

✅ Builds trust (customers know it's you)

Consistency boosts recall, trust & legal strength.

Avoid Mismatches

🚫 Inconsistent names/logos across accounts.

🚫 Change logo without updating everywhere

🚫 Having multiple versions of your store (e.g. BrandOfficial, Brand_MY, TheRealBrand)

Mismatches confuse customers & weakens legal protection.

Central Tracker

Create a simple **Brand Tracker Sheet**

- Logo version used
- Platforms where brand appears
- IP status: registration, expiry, licensing, use history
- Classes & Territory

**User: Legal, founders, compliance team.*

- ✓ Helps with staff turnover, rebranding, audits
- ✓ Control stays in-house

Integrating Your Trademark into a Holistic Brand Strategy

.

Step 1: Align Brand with Business Strategy

- Define purpose & mission – ensure brand story is unique & protectable.
- Identify target audience & markets – determine where to register.
- Highlight core values & USP – reinforce through IP (slogans, designs).
- Maintain strategic consistency – all products/services use the trademark correctly and consistently.

Step 2: Develop a Protectable Brand Identity

- Register your brand name & logo in relevant classes & territories.
- Design distinctive visuals – avoid generic/overused elements.
- Create a brand style guide with ™/® usage rules.
- Define brand personality & voice – distinctiveness aids registrability.
- Secure related IP: domain names, handles, taglines.

Step 3: Build Brand and Protect on a Budget

- Use affordable design tools for unique, ownable content.
- Claim consistent social media handles – builds proof of use.
- Enter partnerships with clear IP clauses/licences.
- Ensure official listings always display the registered name/logo.

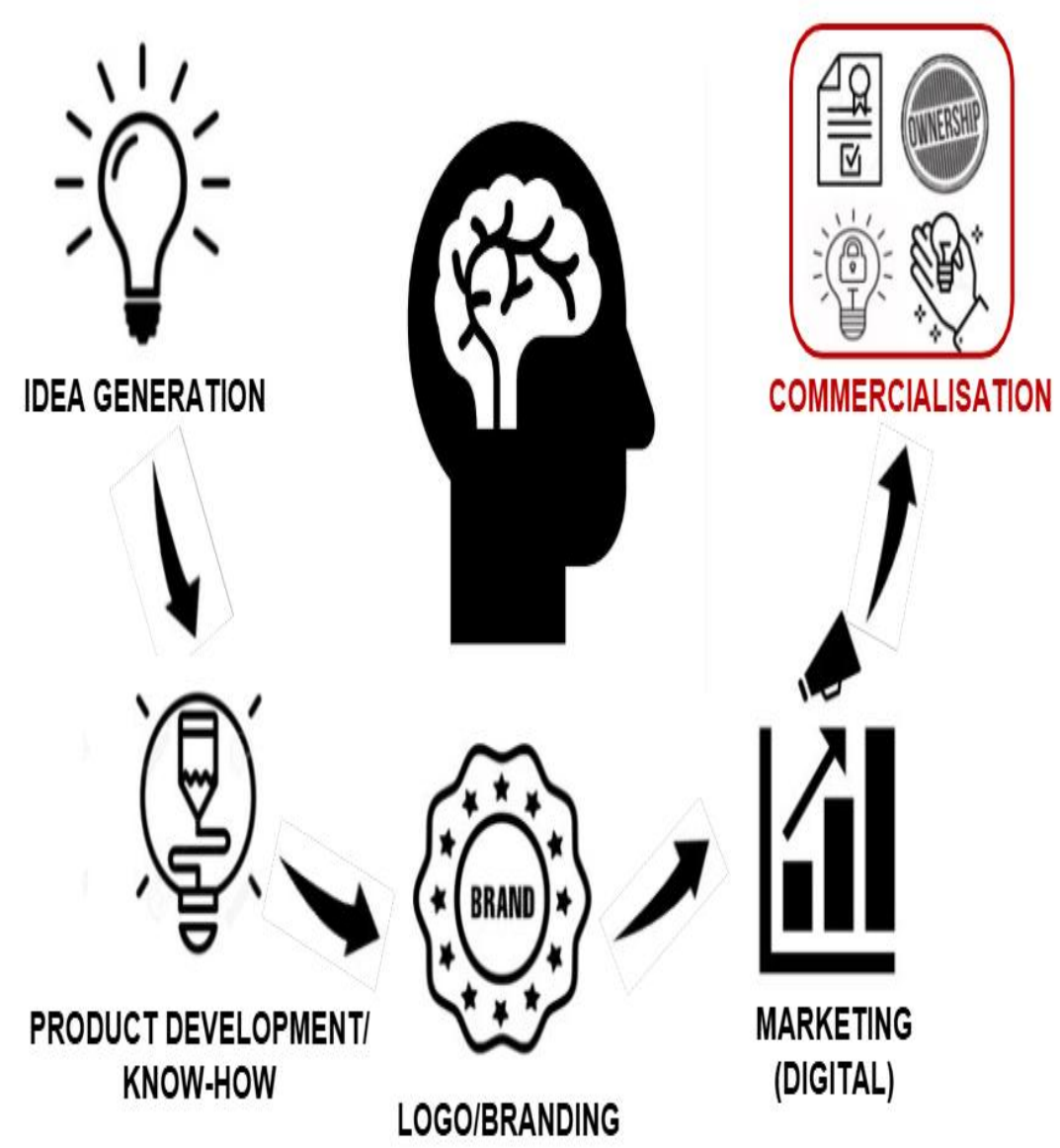
Step 4: Enhance Trademark Value

- Deliver consistent quality – builds goodwill linked to your IP.
- Use storytelling to emotionally connect customers to your trademark. *(Share founder's story on product packaging and social media.)*
- Monitor for misuse & counterfeit listings.
- Promote certifications & awards – strengthens brand reputation.

Step 5: Manage and Grow your Trademark Assets

- Keep a brand tracker – monitor renewal dates & usage.
- File trademarks for new product lines or territories early.
- Monitor brand health – sales, mentions, infringement reports.
- Refresh branding only after IP clearance-Avoid infringing others' rights.
- Leverage trademarks for licensing, franchising, collaborations.

✓ 98.5% of Malaysian businesses are SMEs – competition is intense!
✓ A well-built brand justifies premium pricing and sets you apart from competitors
✓ Branding is more than a logo – it's your business reputation.
✓ A strong brand builds trust, recognition & loyalty



BAND COMMERCIALISATION

ROUSE

Turn You Brand into a Business Tool

🔑 A trade mark isn't just legal protection — it's a gateway to business growth through strategic use.

Commercialisation

Commercialisation means using your registered (or registrable) trade mark to generate income.

Transforms your brand:

Logo → **Valuable Asset**

(can be licensed, franchised, or partnered with others)

Examples of commercialisation:

🔑 Charging fees for others to use your brand (licensing)

🔑 Expanding through brand franchises

🔑 Monetising online collaborations or affiliate branding

Ways to Monetize Your Brand Identity

Marketing & Promotion

"Always secure written contracts to protect your brand."

→ This keeps it consistent with the other boxes, and shows

LICENSING

Let others use your brand (name/logo) on their products for a fee.

Example: A local coffee shop licenses its logo to a mug maker in exchange for royalties

FRANCHISING

Clone your brand/business model — sell your trade mark, concept, and business system (name, recipes, operations) —to partners.

Example: A bubble-tea stall sells franchise rights so others can open "YourBrand Tea" outlets

ONLINE PARTNERSHIPS

Team up with bloggers, influencers or complementary brands for co-branded content

Example: A craft bakery works with food Instagrammer

CO-BRANDING & RESELLER ARRANGEMENTS

Work with retailers or event organisers to feature your brand.

Example: A juice brand teams up with a gym chain to sell "YourJuice at FitGym" bottles.

E-COMMERCE COLLABORATORS

Selling via curated marketplaces or through white-label brand partnerships to reach new customers.

Example: A skincare SME sells your product line under a popular health-beauty store on Shopee.

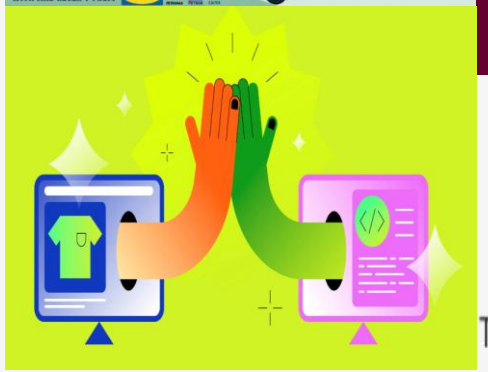
TRADEMARK ASSIGNMENT

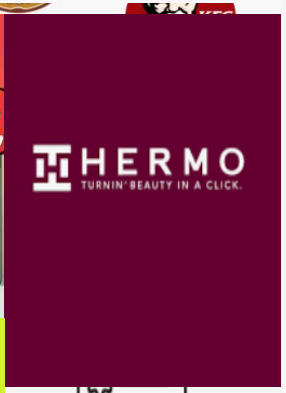
Sell your trademark rights outright for cash.

Example: A food stall assigns its "YumYum Bites" mark to an investor to fund a second outlet.











Marketing and Promotion is another lever SMEs can pull.

Use digital ads, social media, and influencers to increase visibility and brand value.

Tip: Always use a simple agreement outlining fees, duration and quality standards so brand stays protected as it grows.

Licensing Basics

What is a trademark license, how it works, and common terms

TM Licence

A legal agreement where the **owner (licensor)** allows another party (**licensee**) to use the trade mark, usually in exchange for payment.

How it works:

- Can be **exclusive** (only 1 licensee) or **non-exclusive** (many)
- Used for **expanding reach** without giving up ownership
- Gives the licensee legal rights to use the brand under agreed terms.

Simple Checklist for SMEs:

- **Clauses to include in the contract:**

Parties - Who is the licensor and licensee?

Scope of Licence - What mark is licensed, and for what use?

Territory - Where can the mark be used (e.g., Malaysia only)?

Duration - Start and end dates, and renewal terms

Fees / Royalties - Flat fee, % of revenue, or combination?

Quality Control - Brand guidelines the licensee must follow

Termination Clause - Conditions to end the agreement

Ownership Statement - Confirm that trade mark ownership remains yours

Dispute Resolution - Negotiation or Arbitration – requiring disputes to be settled through negotiation or arbitration before going to court.

✅ ***Tip: Always register written agreements — avoid handshake deals.***

CASE STUDY: SME Brand-Building Journey of Les' Copaque (Upin & Ipin)

Registered Trademarks & IP Portfolio

Les' Copaque Production (a Malaysian SME behind *Upin & Ipin*) secured trademarks for its character names, logos, and titles.

Registered "Upin & Ipin" with MyIPO, securing exclusive rights and investor confidence.

Registered mark enabled legal action and seizures against knock-offs, preserving brand integrity and trust.

IP commercialisation & Expansion

Les' Copaque's **licensing deals and partnerships** to monetise *Upin & Ipin*.

- ✓ International TV Licensing (including revenue-share deals in Indonesia).
- ✓ Merchandising arm; Themed fast-food restaurant chain (*Kedai Makan Upin & Ipin*)

Every **toy, apparel, or product** is licensed and approved by Les' Copaque.
Demonstrates how IP rights enabled them to confidently expand its brand into merchandise and services.

Business Success - By strategically Managing IP

- Small 2007 cartoon project grew into a thriving enterprise.
- *Upin & Ipin* is **one of Southeast Asia's most recognised franchises.**

Proves IP power to drive SME growth.

Securing trademarks early, enforcing rights, & licensing turned Upin & Ipin into a commercial empire—TV shows, toys, branded debit cards & a planned theme park.



This success story highlights that diligent IP registration, vigilant enforcement, and smart commercialisation can empower an SME to achieve remarkable business growth.

TRADEMARK PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Why Protect Your Trademark

TRADEABLE ASSET	*Helps companies do deals*
STOPS OTHERS FROM COPYING	*A market position or timing advantage*
PROTECTS YOUR RIGHT TO USE BRAND	*Stops others from using confusingly similar marks or interfering with your brand in the market.*
IP- RICH BUSINESSES GROW FASTER	*Positive association between IPR ownership and economic performance stronger for SMEs.*
NO IP IS A LEGAL RISK	*Higher Financial Cost – delays, disputes*
IP EMBEDDED PRODUCTS HAVE HIGHER VALUE THAN COMMODITY PRODUCTS	*SMEs that own IPRs have 68% higher revenue per employee than SMEs that do not own IPRs**

*https://www.euipo.europa.eu/en/publications/intellectual-property-rights-and-firm-performance-in-the-european-union

Protecting Your Brand Online

Monitoring Online Misuse

Why Monitor?

- **Spot counterfeits and copycats** using trade name, brand name, logo, or packaging.
- Detect **brand misuse on social media** – including impersonation accounts, fraudulent promotions, or misuse of your IP in fake ads.
- Identify **unauthorised sellers** on e-commerce and social media.
- **Protect customer trust** and your brand reputation.

What to Watch For

- **Product listings** with your brand name or logo without permission.
- **Fake online stores** using your brand name on Shopee, Lazada, or FB etc.
- **Copied photos** or descriptions taken from your official pages.
- **Ads** pretending to sell your products.

How Can SMEs Monitor

- **Search your brand regularly** on popular platforms (Shopee, Lazada, Facebook, Instagram).
- **Use online alerts or tools** to get notifications of suspected infringement.
- **Check customer reviews** for mentions of fake products.
- **Establish a complaint mechanism/email address** to receive reports of suspected counterfeit products/ sellers from customers.
- **Spreadsheets** – Keep a simple log of suspicious sellers.
- **Track marketplace flash sales** to see if suspiciously low-priced products with your brand appear.
- **Public Business Registration Database** - Identify infringing trade names



Even small businesses can do basic monitoring for free. Consistent checks can stop problems early and save your brand's reputation.

Enforcing Your Brand Rights Online

How to Respond to Infringement

Platform Takedown Process

Step 1: Collect Evidence

- Collect evidence of infringing products/sellers
  - Take screenshots of the counterfeit product listing include date and time if possible.
  - Save the URL (link) of the seller page or product listing.
  - Identification information of the seller/store if possible.
- Obtain copies of trademark registration certificates

Step 2: Report to Platform

- Submit complaint form and supporting evidence via Platforms' IP portal or other available channels:
  - Shopee's IP Portal
  - Lazada's Rights Owner Portal (ROP)
  - Facebook/Instagram Brand Protection

Step 3: Follow Up

- Closely monitor **response or email**.
- **Document** the result (e.g., listing removed, seller warned).
- Save all **confirmation emails** for your records.

Escalating to Legal Enforcement

When do SMEs Need to Escalate?

- When **same seller keeps copying** your brand even after takedowns.
- If there are **multiple linked seller accounts** (a network of fakes).
- If **counterfeit products** show up in **physical shops or markets**.

What Can SMEs Do?

✅ **Send a formal warning letter** *(Cease-and-desist)*
- Clarify your IP rights
- Request to stop infringing activities
- Warn of potential legal consequences

✅ File **complaints to competent authorities** for more deterrent actions

***Consider consulting with** local IP agents or lawyers to obtain initial advice on potential enforcement actions.*

Key Takeaways

Even small businesses can act to protect their brand online

- Renew trademarks on time to keep protection active.
- Keep registration and product verification records handy.
- Follow simple takedown steps to remove fakes.
- Save all evidence and track responses.
- Seek local IP advice if problems persist.
- Keep contact list of IP agents for quick escalation.
- Consult SME Helpdesk or trusted advisors when in doubt.

What you can do while waiting for platform response

- **Monitor listings daily** to check if infringing posts reappear under new seller names.
- **Record ongoing evidence** (new links, screenshots, chat history) to strengthen follow-up reports.
- **Inform customers via social media** (without naming infringers) that only official pages or stores sell genuine products.
- **Prepare escalation materials** (e.g., warning letter draft, list of IP agents) so action can be taken quickly if needed.

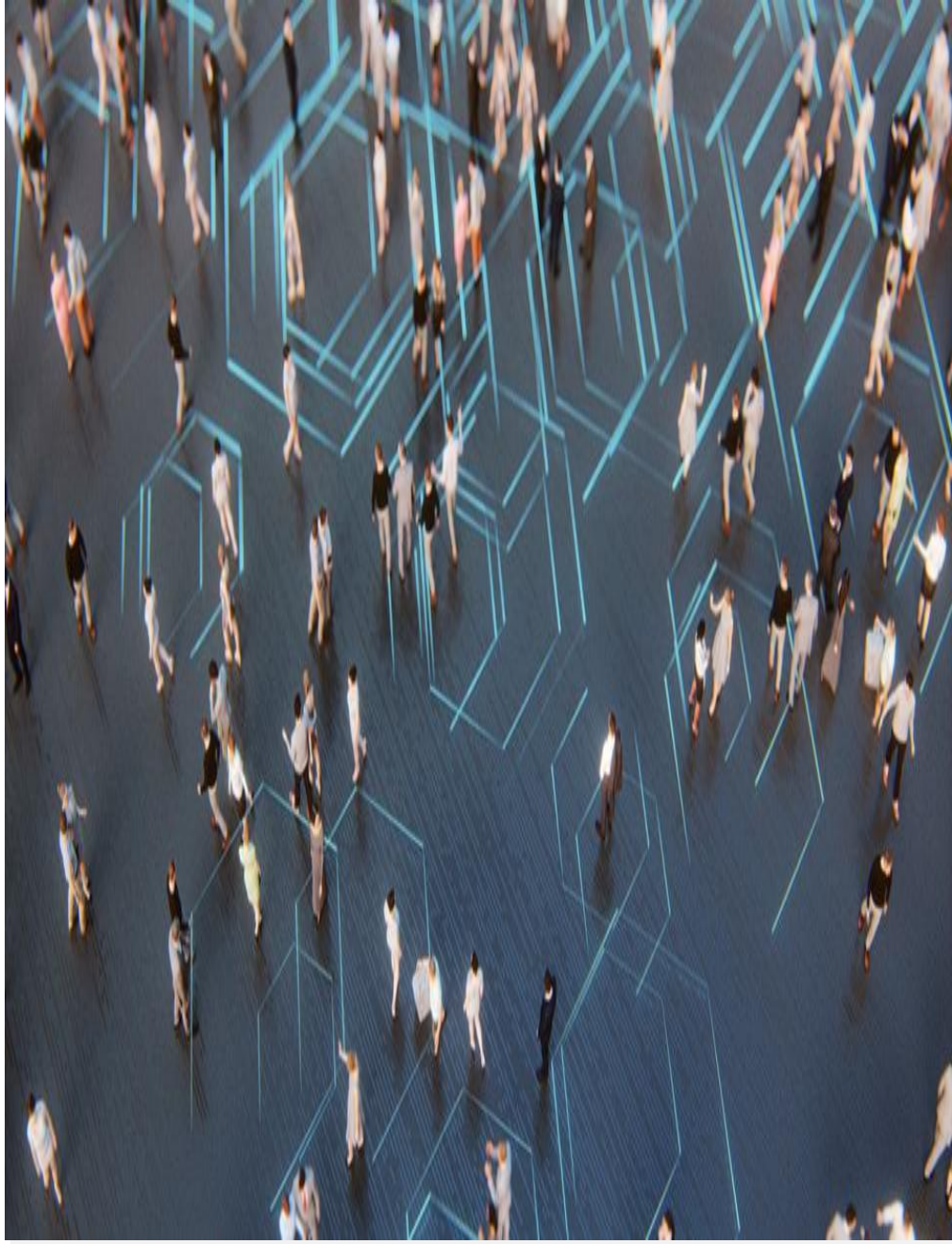
SME IP Challanges

Challenge	SME IP solution
Lack of budgets for IP; Lack of capital for investment in IP	• SMEs must budget for IP spending. • Spend slowly over time to acquire more IP. • Many countries have government grants for IP.
Limited IP expertise – on what IP to get how to acquire and how to use it in business.	• SMEs require understanding (expertise) — through short online courses and resources (e.g., WIPO Academy, SME IP Guide, WIPO IP Diagnostics) to learn how to identify, register, and manage IP.” • Use IP advisors carefully! • Use online tools. Use free IP audit tools (e.g., WIPO IP Diagnostics). • Seek initial advice from SME helpdesks or IP offices
Limited IP management resources	• With no IP team, SMEs must assign someone with responsibility to manage IP matters • Outsource specific tasks (e.g., renewals or watch services) to verified local IP agents/advisors. • Use digital IP tracking tools or Excel logs for renewals

Real-World Branding Lessons for Malaysian MSMEs

Case	What Happened?	Key Lesson for MSMEs
🥄 **Sambal Nyet vs Copycat Brand (2023)**	A fake "**Sambal Nyet Khairi**" copied influencer-entrepreneur Khairul Aming's brand name and packaging. Khairul had registered **"Sambal Nyet"** as trademark and sent legal notice. Public supported his stand.	✅ Register your brand early — it gives legal power and public credibility to act against imitators.
🐯 **"Harimau Menangis" Trademark Backlash (2021)**	Celebrity tried to trademark **popular local food term**, sparking public backlash from small sellers. She later withdrew her application and apologised.	⚠️ Avoid using **generic or cultural terms** as trademarks — they're hard to protect and may trigger negative PR.
🍦 **Llaollao vs ll.la.lo (2022)**	Local froyo outlet mimicked the global **Llaollao** brand name, logo, and design. Customers accused it of copying; backlash went viral.	🚫 Copying another brand's identity can destroy trust and invite legal risk — build your own **distinctive brand.**

THANK YOU



ROUSE