

New Generic Top-Level Domain Program: Top Ten Tips for Being Prepared

1

Hire Specialized Outside Counsel

Engage specialized counsel experienced in ICANN matters to guide you through understanding the program and preparing and executing your strategy, including the steps below.

2

Engage Organizational Stakeholders

Include representatives from various departments: legal, marketing, business units, IT, and others, and ensure that executives have opportunity to provide input. Plan and schedule training with outside counsel to educate the team on the potential impacts and benefits of the program. We recommend that the team be formed and training scheduled as soon as possible, no later than October 20, 2011.

3

Understand Uses, Benefits, Risks, and Opportunity Costs

A new gTLD offers potential marketing, security, branding, and other benefits. However, applying represents a significant financial and resource investment. When deciding your strategy it is important to weigh these risks with the potential opportunity cost of not applying for a new gTLD.

4

Review New gTLD Timelines

Applications will only be accepted within a limited window; following the submission window applicants and other interested parties will need to keep track of the windows available for reviewing third-party applications, submitting comments, or filing objections. Outside counsel can assist and are able to take action as desired within the available timeframes.

5

Develop a Dedicated Budget

Understand estimated costs associated with the program, whether participating as an applicant or focusing on enforcement. Develop an appropriate budget for 2012 and beyond, noting that budgets should be assessed as an organization-wide issue rather than as the sole responsibility of the legal department.

6

Commission Clearance of New gTLD Strings

Conduct a thorough evaluation of your organization's trademark and domain name portfolios, and determine your strings of interest and enforcement priorities as well as clearance of any additional strings of interest. We recommend string clearance be completed by October 31, 2011; however, if assessing multiple strings, clearance should begin no later than October 15, 2011.

7

Make Final Participation Decision

To ensure you have adequate time to work with your outside counsel to prepare and submit your application(s), this decision should ideally be made no later than October 31, 2011.

8

Select Technical Service Providers

Begin the selection process for a registry services provider (to assist with the technical portion of the application) as well as a provider for data escrow services to meet ICANN requirements immediately after making your final participation decision.

9

Begin Preparing Your Application

As a new gTLD application is a highly complex document that will likely span several hundred pages, begin work no later than November 1, 2011 to ensure the application can be completed before the application period opens in January 2012.

10

Begin Planning Enforcement Strategy

Work with your outside counsel to understand the mechanisms available to protect your brands in these new spaces, both during the launch of the new gTLDs and beyond. To ensure you are prepared, begin planning your strategy by no later than November 1, 2011.

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