New law firm sets out to help startups fight off IP giants

Eve Brown led a group of Suffolk University Law School students who helped two small-business clients defeat trademark challenges from Monster Energy and Nautica. Now, with her new law firm, she’s hoping to do the same for startups and other businesses that cannot afford the services of large intellectual property firms.

Brown and co-founder Paul Nagy started Bricolage Law LLC in January. “Bricolage” is a word meaning the construction of something from objects the creator has on hand. The firm does not bill clients by the hour, but charges a flat rate for a range of IP matters, from patent prosecution to litigation before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Brown, who has been teaching law classes since graduating from law school about a decade ago, is currently the director of Boston University’s Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Clinic, a job she will leave at the end of June to focus full-time on Bricolage. She was previously the director of a similar clinic at Suffolk Law.
While she was at Suffolk, the clinic represented the fishing-enthusiast blog Monster Fish Keepers in a dispute with the energy-drink maker Monster Energy, which claimed that the apparel the blog wished to trademark would create confusion with the company’s own products. The U.S. Trademark Trial and Appeal Board granted Suffolk’s client a partial victory in the case in early February. The clinic had previously led a boating apparel firm to a win over the sportswear brand Nautica.

“The results we were getting for the clients at the clinic were fantastic, but there were so many more people who needed our help,” Brown said. Bricolage currently has a group of about 10 staffers working part-time, including third-year law students.

Bricolage will charge a fixed fee of anywhere from $1,000 to $1,500 to help entrepreneurs form a new entity to $20,000 for a TTAB dispute.

To help save on costs, Bricolage won’t have an office and instead use shared spaces such as WeWork when it needs meeting space. Otherwise, lawyers can do most of their work remotely, including TTAB matters, which does not require meeting before a judge.

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