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AI: Driving the demand for in-house chief intellectual property officers

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Intellectual property (IP) is becoming increasingly important to business leaders as it is the tool by which businesses both protect and commercialize their key intangible assets, such as artificial intelligence (AI), software, platforms, pharmaceuticals, etc. We are seeing a growing need for the role of chief intellectual property officers (CIPO) because they are often equipped with the skill set to manage all aspects of the protection and commercialization of valuable business IP assets. This position is becoming key to effective IP management and while still not nearly as common as general counsel or associate counsel within businesses, it is here to stay.

The number of IP cases litigated between 1996 and 2018 increased by nearly 81%,^[1] with copyright filings during that time rising by 170%, according to the Judiciary Data and Analysis Office, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. While this work is often delegated to patent law firms, it is becoming necessary to have a C-suite level in-house expert helping advise businesses on how to navigate the complex world of IP, among other areas of expertise that a CIPO brings to the table.

In 2016, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) reported IP-intensive industries directly accounted for 27.9 million jobs in 2014, up 0.8 million from 2010.^[2] Some organizations have a team of patent lawyers in-house. However, IP encompasses not only patents but also copyrights, trademarks, designs, and trade secrets, and with technological advances happening rapidly, businesses are looking for ways to ensure their most valuable assets are protected.

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