



Registrability of Catchphrases or Slogans

Until quite recently, “Catchphrases” or “Slogans” have been rejected in the examination stage in principle, due to a lack of distinctiveness. However, the JPO recently changed its practice, and will now be accepting the registration of “Catchphrases” or “Slogans”, if they (1) are not commonly used in the daily market, (2) can be recognized as a coined word, and also (3) are not merely an advertising phrase or a corporate business policy.

In the past, in order to obtain a trademark registration for a mark which is composed of a “Catchphrase” or “Slogan”, the applicant had to file for a mark combined with its corporate logo or other distinctive words or devices, etc. This is because the examination guidelines relating to Art. 3, Item 1, Para. 6 of the Japanese Trademark Law states that any mark which cannot be recognized as a mark being used by any particular person/party should not be registered, and specifically stated that “Catchphrases” or “Slogans” shall be construed to fall under the category of non-distinctive marks. However, the JPO has changed its examination guidelines by deleting the text specified above that mentions “Catchphrases” or “Slogans”.

In light of the above changes, please consider obtaining trademark registrations for such catchphrases or slogans as one of your future trademark strategies.



SUZUYE & SUZUYE

Trademark Division

11th Floor, Celestine Shiba-Mitsui Bldg.,

3-23-1 Shiba, Minato-Ku, Tokyo, JAPAN

Email : j-trademarks@s-sogo.jp

Tel: +81-3-6722-0764 Fax: +81-3-6722-0776

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