

WINNER

Wragge & Co

Gordon Harris

A David v Goliath victory changing 100 years of patent law

This was a hard-fought battle through the UK courts that saw Wragge & Co defeat the odds. At the end of this high-profile, six-year fight with Virgin Atlantic Airways, Harris had not only saved his client, airline seat manufacturer Zodiac, £48m in fines and damages, but also played a crucial role in overturning 100 years of patent law.

The dispute centred on the Solar Eclipse flat-bed seat, which was created by Zodiac (then Contour). Back in 2007, Virgin Atlantic alleged that Zodiac infringed design rights and a European patent for flat-bed upper class aircraft seats.

Years of wrangling over the validity of the patent through the courts led Wragge and Zodiac to petition the Supreme Court to change the law in 2013. Following evidence presented during a two-day hearing, the Court did just that – a tremendous result for the client, which commented: ‘The legal team has achieved this important result by being thorough and determined at every stage over many years and taking this case all the way to the highest court.’



Gill Appleby of Macrae Roxburgh Appleby with the Wragge & Co team

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BT TV LEGAL

Russell Johnstone

BT's in-house legal team was instrumental in preparing the telecoms giant to broadcast live Premier League football, after it paid £738m for the rights to show live matches in the 2013/14 season. It provided the sophisticated support needed to launch a suite of premium channels and deal with a daunting number of complex agreements.

COVINGTON & BURLING

Miranda Cole, Louise Nash

The firm provided crucial IP and regulatory advice on one of 2013's most high-profile deals, acting for Microsoft in its \$7bn acquisition of Nokia's devices and services business, which included a patent licensing agreement that was arguably the most significant aspect of the transaction.

HOGAN LOVELLS

Stephen Bennett

Hogan Lovells saved its client's UK business through successfully appealing the patent infringement case *Schütz v Werit* before the Supreme Court. Bennett's team not only ensured that plastics manufacturer Werit would not have to shut down its UK operation, but also helped clarify points of patent law that will have a significant impact on the manufacturing industry.

POWELL GILBERT

Alex Wilson

Wilson secured an important win for leading industry player HTC against global security and smart card company Gemalto in what was a key milestone in the ongoing patent wars. Powell Gilbert successfully sought revocation of a number of Gemalto's patents, with significant, wider potential implications for the multibillion-dollar Android handset and app market.

SIMMONS & SIMMONS

James Cotter

Simmons was a key adviser to expansive telco Telefónica UK in two standout agreements in 2013: its £1.5bn deal to become communications services provider under the UK Government's smart meter implementation programme; and its landmark ten-year £1.2bn contact centre outsourcing to Capita.

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