

## “Ask the Legal Professional”

*Question and answer articles on legal topics featured in the Pittsburgh Business Times*



### PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

**Q** Do I need to file a patent application before discussing my invention at a trade show?

**A** Displaying or discussing your invention at a trade show constitutes a public disclosure. Under U.S. patent law, you have one year from the time of public disclosure to file a patent

application. While the U.S. provides a one year “grace period” to file a patent application after a public disclosure, most other countries do not have a “grace period” and a public disclosure will prevent you from obtaining a patent in those jurisdictions. To preserve your patent rights, a patent application should be filed prior to disclosing your invention. After filing the application, you will have 12 months from this initial filing to file applications in other countries.

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