INTA to Focus on Brands, Consumer Trust, Innovation and Change  
— Interview with INTA 2017 President Joseph Ferretti

The 139th Annual Meeting of International Trademark Association (INTA) was successfully held in Barcelona, Spain from May 20 to 24. With 10,668 attendees from more than 150 countries, this is the largest Annual Meeting in INTA history. During the five-day event, there were more than 300 educational sessions, over 225 table topics, over 20 speed networking opportunities, and more than 100 committee meetings.

At the Opening Ceremony, keynote speeches were made by Joseph Ferretti, president of the Association and chair of its Board of Directors, Etienne Sanz de Acedo, INTA CEO, and Íñigo Méndez de Vigo, Spain’s Minister of Education, Culture and Sport. Mr. Ferretti highlighted the evolving role of brands from focusing on the functional attributes of products to becoming part of social identity.

China IP was very honored to have an official interview with Mr. Ferretti during the Annual Meeting.
China IP: Through your Biography, I’ve noticed that your undergraduate major was International Relations and Affairs. But next you got your LL.M. in Intellectual Property from the University of New Hampshire, Franklin Pierce Center for Intellectual Property. So why did you make a decision to enter IP field?

Mr. Ferretti: When I was an undergraduate in university, my interest was international relations. I was very interested in culture, history, politics, everything of the world. And when I went to law school, as a practice attorney, we had some cases that involved in intellectual property in 1994. At that time, the Internet was coming on, and there were many intellectual property cases on the Internet. I was at the state of Oklahoma. And there were not many experts in Oklahoma, especially who got advanced legal degree and LL.M. in intellectual property. So that I studied thoroughly and become an expert.

China IP: Would you please make a brief introduction to your work experience?

Mr. Ferretti: After graduation, I went to a law firm and practiced there for 13 years, representing many clients, with their intellectual property manners. And then 12 years ago, I moved to PepsiCo, to support PepsiCo’s trademarks. So now I lead a team of experienced professionals who are responsible for PepsiCo’s trademarks globally.

China IP: PepsiCo’s logo has been changed 11 times. As vice-president & chief counsel, Global Trademarks for PepsiCo, do you think these changes have good impacts on its brand value? And how does PepsiCo regard the relationship between brands and consumers?

Mr. Ferretti: PepsiCo’s trademark has been modernized many times. The changes have not been radical, instead they have been an evolution. I think it is good to freshen your logo. They always maintain the core element and aspects of the logo so that consumers can identify it very easily.

In terms of consumers and brands, of course consumers are the heart of brands. Brands exist to identify a company’s products, for services with the consumer, and it symbolizes trust to the consumer. PepsiCo definitely believes that the trademarks
symbolize trust and good will. Trademarks are important generally because they immediately communicate to consumers these principles of trust, good will and certain quality to expect.

**China IP**: PepsiCo’s products have been in China for 36 years, and deeply loved by the Chinese people. Will Pepsi have some new plans to develop its brand value in China?

**Mr. Ferretti**: China is definitely a very important market to PepsiCo. We are continuing to launch new products in China all the time. And we are pleased to have very good products in China and a lot of consumers.

**China IP**: It is known that Google and Apple maintain on the top of Brand Finance Global 500 in the past many years. As president of INTA, as well as an expert in the IP field, what do you think of the rapid development of Internet companies’ brand value?

**Mr. Ferretti**: Of course the Internet is a fast growing market, and it moves at a tremendous rate. For example, by 2020, there will be 6.1 billion smart phone users globally, led by growth in less-mature markets. In about five years, over 70% of the world’s population will be online. That means global business-to-consumer e-commerce is growing at an incredible rate. In 2002, it surpassed 1 trillion dollars. And three years later in 2005, it more than doubled to 2.2 trillion dollars.

No doubt technology and innovation are playing increasingly important roles in the daily-lives consumers and in the global economy. Technology giants like Google and Apple are leaders in these fields. As long as they continue to innovate and provide consumers new products, one can only expect these brands, and other like them, to top lists such as Brand Finance Global 500.

**China IP**: Could you please make a brief introduction to your work at INTA? And do you think that being INTA president will make a difference to your future work at Pepsi?

**Mr. Ferretti**: This year I am privileged and honored to serve as president of INTA. What it really means is that I am the representative of all the members. It is a huge responsibility and I take it very seriously. INTA does very big work for trademarks around the world. It helps to shape policy around the world, it works hard to intrigue their strategic enforcement of intellectual property laws. It works with trademark offices around the world for training and provide network for brand owners and lawyers in law firms to connect and to communicate. So I am honored to be involved in all of that.

Serving as the president for INTA, I have a very unique opportunity to see even more closely to the trends that are happening around the world, regarding to legislation, or policy or legal changes or enforcement. And I am able to take that knowledge and learning back to PepsiCo, and apply the learning to the brands and PepsiCo’s strategies in my daily work.

**China IP**: This year marks the last year of INTA’s 2014–2017 Strategic Plan. What do you think is its major achievements?

**Mr. Ferretti**: Well, there is a number. The Strategic Plan has allowed INTA to fulfill two overarching goals of any association. First, to serve its members and bring them value. Second, to be an influential player in our industry, with government in the global economy. It has four directions: protection of trademarks, communication, international expansion and member satisfaction.

I would like to speak international expansion. INTA is a global organization. During the past Strategic Plan, we opened two new regional offices. The office in Singapore support Asia Pacific region. And last month we opened an office in Santiago Chile, which will support our work in Latin America and Caribbean region. And over the last three and a half years, we’ve sent 55 official delegations to 30 countries around the world.

We have visited China in last September. We had our first Board Meeting in Beijing. And the Board Meeting was followed by meetings with State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC), the China Trademark Office, the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, SAIC’s Trademark Examination Cooperation Center and Supreme People’s Court. And a cooperation agreement was signed with two industry associations.

We’ve continued to host educational programs in more parts of the world. In last couple of years, we’ve had Geographical Names Conference in Rome, Trademarks in Japan Conference in Tokyo, Building Africa with Brands Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. In 2015, we had Leadership Meeting in Panama, which is the first major INTA event in Latin America and first Leadership outside the US. And then in the past couple of years, we had Annual Meeting in Hong Kong and then today in Barcelona. In 2020 we plan to have annual meeting going back to Asia.

**China IP**: Could you please briefly tell us about INTA’s future priorities in the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan? What are the challenges and opportunities in the next four years?

**Mr. Ferretti**: I think that INTA has taken a very healthy step for its next strategic plan. It is focusing on three main areas, which has been outlined in the Opening Ceremony the other day. First, the value of trademarks and brands. Of course the foundation of brand is always trademark. But we want to assure that we are focusing
on definitely the trademark but more probably the
brand and its entirety. So we are working and focusing
at the moment the value of trademarks and brands.
And second, we’ve pointed to reinforce consumer trust.
As we spoke about before, brands and trademarks are
immediately identified with consumers, as sources
of information. There is trust existing between
consumers and brands. We want to contribute to, as an
organization, reinforce that consumer trust. And then
finally it will be embracing innovation and change, to
make sure that we are examining all the innovation
and change and how that fits with brands. We are very
excited about what to be done in the next four years.

China IP: What do you think of the development of
trademark protection in China in recent years? Do
you believe INTA has made some good impacts on its
development?

Mr. Ferretti: We’ve seen many positive changes in the
trademarks protection in China, many of which INTA
has encouraged over the years. Looking at the results
of the 2013 trademark law amendments in China, they
included protection of non-traditional marks and higher
penalties for counterfeiting. Both of these changes
mark clear progress in building and protecting brands
by China. So we are very happy to see those changes.
More recently we have seen in the news a focus on
improving the fight against counterfeits online. As far
back as 2008, INTA’s anti-counterfeiting committee had
developed a series of best practices for online platforms
to combat counterfeits. Those best practices are being
updated, and we will have some events in China on
online anti-counterfeiting this year. We also welcomed a
delegation from the E-commerce Risk Monitoring Center
of the Hangzhou AQSIQ in May, just as an example.

So we continue to build bridges with government to
address the future of brands in China. And we are very
excited about that. We recently signed a Letter of Intent
with the SAIC Vice Minister Liu Junchen. As part of our
strategic plan to emphasize innovation and change,
brand equity and the links to economy, we look forward
to work with SAIC on these exciting areas, which are of
great importance not only to China’s government, but
also Chinese industry.