

5 Tips To Protect Your Online Brand

Unfashionable Fakes Is An Epidemic – How Can You Protect Your Brand?

The Internet has created incomparable opportunities for reputable businesses to grow and reach consumers all over the world but has also provided a unique global platform for counterfeiters to expand their operations with little to no repercussions. As counterfeiting continues to evolve so does the need to be progressive in protection.

Even sophisticated consumers looking for genuine products can now easily fall victim to counterfeit websites that use legitimate pictures and misleading pricing strategies to fool consumers. Online sellers use bots to post thousands of images daily and obtain email addresses to create a catalog of potential prey for counterfeit goods. In addition to brand damage, it can pose greater threats to customers' health and safety, a loss in tax revenues for developing countries, as well as harming an industry's employment rate.

Combating counterfeiting and piracy has become a global challenge and is a full-time job. As the worldwide counterfeiting market continues to flourish, IP owners must protect their brand's value, reputation, and consumer trust. This epidemic of lower quality copies will rise to a \$3 trillion problem by the year 2020.

Fighting back against the counterfeit challenge should be a top priority for all businesses. With a comprehensive brand protection strategy to their names, brands can ensure they guard their reputations and their revenue while keeping customers engaged, satisfied, and safe.

What can you do to counter threats to your brand?

Before a successful streamlined collaboration between e-commerce sites, lawmakers, brands and industry experts is established, brands need to take proactive measures by creating a Strategic 5-Step Anti-Counterfeiting Business Plan:

1. REGISTER YOUR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

This is an imperative first step. Create a robust IP portfolio by registering your names and logos as trademarks and consider protecting your products with design and utility patents.

Seek protection in all countries you intend to market your product. Obtaining trademarks gives local prosecutors and law enforcement officers jurisdiction and provides the brand owner rights that can be enforced.

This first step may seem time-consuming and costly, but in the long-term, it will save you more time and money, integrity and frustration.



2. BRAND REGISTRIES TO IDENTIFY AND PROTECT BRANDS

E-commerce sites have programs aimed at helping brands enforce their rights. It's a collaboration that is of no cost to you.

▶ Amazon's Brand Registry
[Amazon Brand Registry](#)

▶ eBay Verified Rights Owner Program
VeRO

▶ Alibaba Group
<https://ipp.alibabagroup.com/home.xhtml>

▶ Wish For Merchants
<https://merchant.wish.com/brand-partner>

3. VERIFY AUTHENTICITY

Advertise those key product features and ingredients that define your unique product. Educate consumers on how they can distinguish between genuine goods and fakes (including holograms or hidden bar codes on packaging) and details of where they can report suspected fakes.

Provide some type of certificate or money back guarantee to help consumers feel confident that what they are purchasing is the real thing. Keep your consumers informed of fraudulent incidents.

The above suggestions are hardly an exhaustive list of preemptive steps, but will lay a strong foundation of protection when a counterfeit is discovered.

While tactics and solutions are ever-evolving, it is hard to keep on top of your daily business operations while ensuring your brand is properly protected.

The professionals at Ference & Associates can work with you to ensure you have the appropriate protection and develop a strategy to protect your products and brand from online counterfeiting. Call **+1 412 741 8400** or visit <https://www.ferencelaw.com/contact-us/>

4. IMPLEMENT A DISTRIBUTION PLAN – TELL YOUR CUSTOMERS WHERE TO SHOP

A planned global distribution plan includes the Internet and brick and mortar sellers. It defines who and where the sellers of your brand should be. This way you define your channels of distribution, making it easy for you to communicate, "authorized dealers" to your customers. Advertise those authorized dealers on your website and in advertisements. This pleases your retailers while also directing customers to shop where authentic products are sold.

5. TECHNOLOGY – TODAY'S AUTOMATED RESOURCES

By continually monitoring online marketplaces and social media you will be more aware of your risks. Monitor rogue websites that utilize your brand name in the URL to confuse consumers, and also websites that attract your consumers with keyword and search engine optimization (SEM), marketplaces, social media, and blogs. Also, constantly monitor your competition. This tedious exercise will help you identify the appropriate technology that can protect your brand in the most proactive and effective way possible.

