

Advisory Committee on Enforcement

Seventeenth Session Geneva, February 4 to 6, 2025

AWARENESS RAISING STRATEGIES AND CAMPAIGNS

Contributions prepared by South Africa and the International Trademark Association (INTA)

1. At the sixteenth session of the Advisory Committee on Enforcement (ACE), held from January 31 to February 2, 2024, the Committee agreed to consider, at its seventeenth session, among other topics, the “exchange of information on national experiences on awareness-building activities and strategic campaigns as a means for building respect for IP among the general public, especially the youth, in accordance with Member States’ educational or any other priorities”. Within this framework, this document introduces the contributions of one Member State (South Africa) and one Observer (the International Trademark Association - INTA) on their experiences with awareness-raising strategies and campaigns.
2. The contribution by South Africa presents the *Only Genuine X Copy* social media influencer campaign, designed to draw attention to the ease of creating fake identities and promoting fake products on social media platforms. By collaborating with various influencers, the campaign sought to amplify awareness about counterfeits, promote intellectual property rights protection, and engage followers in debate around the topic.
3. The contribution by the International Trademark Association (INTA) describes the *Unreal Campaign*, a consumer awareness initiative aimed at educating adolescents and young adults (ages 14-23) about the dangers and impacts of counterfeit goods, as well as the importance of trademarks. The campaign uses a multidimensional approach leveraging educational outreach, social media engagement, and collaborative partnerships, and is developed by INTA with financial support from its members.
4. The contributions are in the following order:

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A SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS CAMPAIGN USING INFLUENCERS – ONLY GENUINE X COPY

*Contribution prepared by Ms. Amanda Lotheringen, Senior Manager, Copyright and Intellectual Property Enforcement, Companies and Intellectual Property Commission, Pretoria, South Africa**

ABSTRACT

The “ONLY GENUINE X COPY” social media influencer campaign for South Africa was designed to draw attention to the ease of encountering fake identities and products on social media channels. The campaign involved working with selected influencers, copying their personal social media accounts to create fake online profiles. These fake profiles were then used to promote fake products. Consumers who wanted to buy fake products and clicked on the respective links ended up at a website containing information on the dangers of counterfeited and pirated products.

The campaign relied on the existing practice of influencer marketing, where influencers have proven to sway public opinion and consumer behavior, thereby leveraging influencers to spread anti-counterfeiting messages, creating a ripple effect, reaching wide audiences and encouraging genuine, lawful consumption habits.

The goal of the campaign was to foster a culture of respect for intellectual property (IP) rights and to promote ethical purchasing decisions by having the influencers direct their followers towards information on “copies” and fakes.

The campaign raised awareness about counterfeit goods and promoted IP rights protection, collaborating with various influencers across social media platforms, with a focus on Instagram influencers. They helped amplify the messaging and engage their followers to provoke debate around the topic.

I. THE ROLE OF THE COMPANIES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COMMISSION AS IP OFFICE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

1. The Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) was established as an independent statutory body in May 2011, following the promulgation of the new Companies Act.¹ Previously, the CIPC was housed under the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC).

2. The CIPC has a wide legislative mandate, including the oversight of companies, cooperatives, trademarks, patents, designs, and IP enforcement. It has been on a modernization path for several years. Among its achievements is the digitization of patent records and the introduction of electronic filing systems for trademarks, patents, designs, and copyright in cinematographic films, making IP services more accessible and streamlined.

3. In addition to its regulatory functions, the CIPC plays an active role in educating the public on the importance of IP rights and building respect for IP. It is committed to promoting good

* The views expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Secretariat or of the Member States of WIPO.

¹ No. 71 of 2008

corporate governance and supporting the commercialization of South African innovation, creativity, and indigenous knowledge. Part of its core mission is to foster respect for IP rights through outreach and collaboration, ensuring that South African businesses, innovators, and IP rights holders understand the value of protecting their innovations and creations.

4. The CIPC continues to explore new approaches to business, with a focus on strengthening protection and promotion of IP rights of innovators and creators from South Africa, both locally and globally.

II. AWARENESS-RAISING STRATEGIES

5. One of the most valuable tools in the fight against counterfeiting and piracy is to change the behavior of consumers. This is not an easy task, and over the last couple of years the CIPC has undertaken many initiatives to create awareness and build respect for IP.

6. The most impactful awareness-raising campaigns in South Africa aimed at combating counterfeiting and piracy was the “Be Your Own, Buy Your Own” (BYO) campaign² which was launched in 2013.³ This initiative, launched in collaboration with key partners such as Proudly South African, the Southern African Federation Against Copyright Theft (SAFACT), and Microsoft, took a fresh approach by focusing on the positive aspects of IP rights rather than just the consequences of piracy. Targeting youth and young adults, the campaign emphasized creativity and innovation across industries like film, music, books, and software, highlighting the value and fun aspects of protecting ideas. By shifting from the typical “anti-piracy” message to one that celebrated “conservation of ideas” and rewarding good behavior, BYO achieved significant engagement. The campaign, designed to run for at least 12 months, paired public awareness with targeted enforcement to help drive long-term behavior change.

7. Raising awareness about IP rights in South Africa has been a long-standing priority, especially since the enactment of the Counterfeit Goods Act of 1997, in alignment with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). Despite numerous campaigns over the years, progress in changing consumer behaviors and increasing public awareness about the harmful effects of piracy and counterfeiting has been slow. It became necessary to intensify our efforts and develop more creative and targeted approaches to effectively reach the right audiences with this critical message.

III. RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR A FRESH, CREATIVE APPROACH

8. The Swiss-South African Intellectual Property Project (SSAIP)⁴ was created to enhance South Africa's socioeconomic development by promoting the use and protection of IP rights. Funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and implemented by the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI), this initiative brought a number of innovative projects to South Africa. One such project was the “Stop Piracy” campaign that the Swiss association Stop Piracy⁵ ran in 2024. This campaign primarily targeted youth and focused on the pressing issue of piracy and the impact on the economy, entrepreneurs, and the overall national landscape.

² <https://www.wipo.int/web/wipo-magazine/articles/thinking-out-of-the-box-to-change-consumer-behavior-39849>

³ https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/mdocs/en/wipo_ace_9/wipo_ace_9_18.docx

⁴ <https://www.ige.ch/en/law-and-policy/development-cooperation/current-projects/south-africa>

⁵ <https://www.stop-piracy.ch/en/>

9. One of the standout projects under the SSAIP umbrella is the Influencer Campaign,⁶ a social media-driven awareness initiative, designed and implemented by Content Monarchy Pty Ltd. Social media profiles⁷ were designed to mimic the original brand pages, to let people wonder if they were legitimate or not. These accounts eventually redirected to the website but were made live only on August 22, 2024 to avoid being shut down beforehand. This campaign was rolled out over six months, concluding with a special event that took place on August 22, 2024. Its core objective was to engage the South African public, with a strong emphasis on youth and women, to enhance awareness around IP rights and their protection. Both CIPC and the IPI recognize the need for innovative and modern approaches to connect with these demographic groups in meaningful ways.

10. This campaign aligns with the core mandate of the CIPC to educate the public and raise awareness, particularly within the innovation and creativity sector. By focusing on key areas such as IP rights registration, consumer protection, and fostering respect for IP, the campaign aims to create more understanding and awareness about the value of IP in society and the dangers of counterfeiting and piracy, helping to build more conscientiousness among the public.

11. This collaboration also aims to achieve economic goals such as boosting investment, promoting sustainable job creation, and highlighting the contributions of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to the economy. By promoting the use and protection of IP rights, the campaign aims to support South Africa's socioeconomic development, aligning with the larger goal of the CIPC to build a capable State where respect for IP is embedded in society.

12. The Influencer Campaign is fully backed by the IPI, which also selected the service provider Monarchy Pty Ltd to deliver it. The CIPC-IPI partnership is guided by a mutual agreement that the concept's ownership remains with the IPI, ensuring that the campaign maintains the integrity of its original design and purpose. By working closely with Monarchy and the IPI, the CIPC is set to deliver an impactful, well-orchestrated campaign that will resonate with South Africans and reinforce the importance of protecting and respecting IP rights.

IV. THE INFLUENCER CAMPAIGN “ONLY GENUINE X COPY”

13. The strategy was to develop and launch a national campaign to address the issues of anti-piracy and anti-counterfeiting in South Africa, using creative and innovative ways to engage with the public.

14. The key objectives were:

- Educating consumers, businesses, and policymakers about the dangers of counterfeit goods and the benefits of supporting legitimate industries;
- Fostering respect for original products;
- Encouraging public engagement in supporting IP protection;
- Utilizing online platforms and media to disseminate the message;
- Creating a lasting change in how counterfeit goods and pirated content are perceived.

⁶ Campaign details available at www.maxhosa.shop, which is now an official campaign page
⁷ @MaxhosaShop and @MaxhosaFashion

15. Creating a campaign identity that resonated with South Africa's diverse audience and inspired long-term action against counterfeit products was a real challenge. Recognizing South Africa's unique socioeconomic challenges, including high levels of poverty and limited awareness of IP issues, the campaign aimed to assess the public's interest in counterfeit goods and initiate discussions around these issues. The focus was on humanizing the impact of piracy by showcasing how it harmed local industries and individuals behind legitimate products.
16. Enlisting well-known South African personalities with respected products as ambassadors and launching an Instagram campaign with "fake" profiles selling these products at discounted prices generated buzz and anticipation in the lead-up to the launch date, when the campaign would shift from promoting fake products to unveiling anti-piracy messages.
17. The campaign concluded with a conference featuring political stakeholders, experts, influencers and affected brands, which included an interactive workshop and a formal dinner to solidify the campaign's message and future actions.
18. The campaign's focus was on the younger generation, while remaining relevant to all age groups. The branding and campaign name, "OGxC", reflected this diverse appeal. The term "OG" stands for "Only Genuine" and draws from slang meaning originality, while "x" signifies "no" or collaboration, and "C" refers to the copying of products. The campaign's slogan, "Only Genuine. No Copies" captured the essence of the message. Additional platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, were utilized to reach piracy-prone audiences through supporting influencers.



The new brand developed



19. Brands and influencers were carefully chosen. They included the following: MaXhosa Africa, a prestigious South African fashion brand founded by award-winning designer Laduma Ngxokolo, known for its exclusive range of high-end products, and Amanda du-Pont/Live Africa, a socially conscious South African actress and television host with her own beauty range, Lelive, and a significant social media following. In addition to these primary figures, three supporting influencers were chosen based on their strong social media presence and engagement. After careful vetting, these influencers were selected for their public suitability and business ethics, ensuring alignment with the campaign's objectives.

20. These profiles directed users to a campaign website, which only went live on August 22, 2024, to avoid premature detection. The website, initially appearing as an online shop, transformed into an official campaign page upon the reveal. The campaign avoided directly selling products to prevent consumers from recognizing the deception too early. The profiles remained live as long as possible until the campaign reveal date.

21. The campaign was revealed on August 22, 2024, at the OGxC conference. The fake profiles were rebranded, and influencers continued to educate their audiences through posts and videos.



V. THE WINS

22. The campaign garnered significant attention, with users either expressing outrage or interest in buying the fake products. The interactions were mixed, with some excitement around the fake deals, while others raised concerns about the legitimacy of the accounts. The campaign reached over one million people, and the message on the impact of piracy resonated widely. The below figures highlight the impact of the campaign.

Visits to fake accounts: 48,192 unique profiles
Total interactions: 2,317 impressions across all four fake accounts
Total accounts reached: 736,558 unique accounts
Engagement and user interactions: over 50,868 comments, likes, and shares
Amanda du-Pont's reels: 907,000 views
Unique visitors to www.maxhosa.shop on August 22 when the social media profiles were made live: 143 visitors.

VI. CONCLUSION

23. By leveraging social media platforms and engaging trusted influencers, the Influencer Campaign sparked important conversations and educated consumers about the value of genuine products and the risks associated with counterfeit items. The campaign's success, demonstrated by its significant reach and engagement, underscores the power of innovative approaches in addressing the issue of counterfeit goods.

24. However, this is only the beginning. The Counterfeit Goods Act, aligned with global IP standards, provides a strong framework, but we must continuously adapt our strategies to counter the evolving tactics of counterfeiters. The CIPC remains committed to finding new, creative, and effective ways to combat the trade in counterfeit goods and piracy.

25. Through sustained efforts, collaborations, and enhanced consumer education, the CIPC pledges to reduce the demand for counterfeit products and ultimately eradicate their presence in South African markets. Our ongoing initiatives will continue to protect IP rights, support the integrity of legitimate businesses, and ensure that consumers are empowered to make safe and lawful purchasing decisions. Together, we can eliminate the trade of counterfeit goods in South Africa and protect our economy, industries, and communities from its harmful effects.

26. As we continue our efforts to combat the trade in counterfeit goods and protect IP rights, we are reminded of the wisdom of Lao Tzu: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." This campaign is one of the many steps towards creating a safer, more informed marketplace for all South Africans.

[End of contribution]

INTA'S UNREAL CAMPAIGN - A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO YOUNG CONSUMER COUNTERFEIT AWARENESS

Contribution prepared by Mr. Alastair Gray, Director of Anticounterfeiting, International Trademark Association, New York, United States of America⁸

ABSTRACT

The International Trademark Association's (INTA) Unreal Campaign is a comprehensive consumer awareness initiative aimed at educating young adults (ages 14-23) about the dangers and impacts of counterfeit goods and the importance of trademarks and brands. This multidimensional approach leverages educational outreach, social media engagement, and collaborative partnerships to inform and empower young consumers about the role of intellectual property (IP) rights in society. By utilizing diverse strategies such as interactive workshops, competitions, partnerships and informative online content, the campaign effectively highlights the economic, social, and health risks associated with counterfeit products. The Unreal Campaign is organized and deployed by INTA member volunteers who are part of the Unreal Campaign Committee supported by INTA staff and financial sponsors from across industries, including e-commerce, sporting goods, and pharmaceuticals.

I. INTRODUCTION

1 The International Trademark Association (INTA) has been at the forefront of combating the demand side of counterfeiting through its innovative committee-led consumer awareness initiative, the Unreal Campaign. INTA is a global association of brand owners and professionals dedicated to supporting trademarks and other associated forms of intellectual property (IP) to foster consumer trust, economic growth, and innovation, and is committed to building a better society through brands. Members include nearly 6,500 organizations, representing more than 34,350 individuals (trademark owners, professionals, and academics) from 185 countries.

2. The Unreal Campaign aims to educate young consumers aged 14 to 23 about the importance of trademarks and brands and the dangers of purchasing counterfeit products. By employing a multidimensional approach, the Unreal Campaign reaches young people both in-person and online, making a significant impact on consumer awareness with the aim of disrupting the demand side of the counterfeiting equation.

3. In 2019, INTA produced a study exploring the relationship between Gen Zers and brands and their attitudes and perceptions of counterfeit products. It found that as digital natives, those who grew up with the presence of digital technology or in the information age, 36 percent learn or get information from social media and 79 percent had purchased counterfeit products within the past year. Importantly, 91 percent of the respondents stated that they were open to changing their views based on new things they learn, highlighting the opportunity that exists for engagement with this age group. More recently, a 2023 study by the University of Portsmouth revealed how social media influencers are facilitating the counterfeit trade. Based on UK surveys of 2,000 people, the study found 22 percent of consumers aged 16-60 who are active on social media had purchased counterfeit goods endorsed by influencers.

⁸ The views expressed in this document are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Secretariat or of the Member States of WIPO.

4. The fight against counterfeits is a joint responsibility of brands, governments, and consumers. If consumers understand and appreciate the risk of buying counterfeit products and cheap imitations, counterfeiters will face less demand thus reducing their manufacturing and supply, especially when it comes to intentional purchases of counterfeits. This is critical for the younger generations, set to become more active consumers in the future. INTA's Unreal Campaign emphasizes that brand owners seek to protect their trademark rights as well as their consumers—pointing to the links between fake goods and health and safety risks, organized crime, job losses, and damage to local communities and their economies. This engagement with consumers and educating them about the positive role of brands in society aims to strengthen consumer trust and protection, to counter anti-IP sentiment, and to increase brand equity.

5. Alongside the INTA member volunteers on the Unreal Campaign Committee, the Unreal Campaign receives sponsorship funding from INTA members, including corporations and law firms. This financial support is invested into developing and posting the online content, maintaining the website, and ad-hoc costs related to hosting the Unreal Campaign in-person events around the world.

II. IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG CONSUMERS

A. SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

6. One of the key pillars of the Unreal Campaign is conducting in-person educational workshops and seminars. These sessions are designed to be interactive and informative. In addition to an introduction to IP, the sessions include topics such as the dangers of counterfeit goods, how to identify fake products, and the importance of supporting legitimate businesses.

7. Since the Campaign's inception in 2012, INTA members have presented the Unreal Campaign to nearly 85,000 students through more than 550 in-person and virtual events in schools and universities around the world. More than 80 of these events were organized in 2024, reaching over 5,000 students across a range of developing and developed economies, including Brazil, India, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru and the United States.



Above: Photographs of the Unreal Campaign presentations with students in 2024

8. The presentations are organized and delivered entirely by the members of the Unreal Campaign Committee during their two-year committee term in their jurisdiction with support from INTA staff. All INTA members can participate in the Unreal Campaign and, with 35,000+ members across 187 countries, INTA has strong involvement from past committee members and members of the Association's Anticounterfeiting Committee, who organize presentations around the world and create new opportunities for reaching young consumers.

9. The committee has also translated the original presentation slides into 19 languages, including Danish, French, German, Korean, Serbian, Turkish, and Vietnamese, which can be reused by future Unreal Campaign Committee members presenting in those languages.

10. To create a lasting message for the Unreal Campaign presentations, the committee has developed digital "take home" materials which includes the information from the presentation about IP rights and counterfeits, safer shopping tips, conversation starters as well as quizzes and games.



Above: Extract of the Unreal Campaign's digital "take home" materials that are shared with students

11. As more and more INTA members engage with the Campaign and hold educational presentations in academic institutions around the world, the Unreal Campaign holds enormous potential to curb the demand for counterfeit goods on a global scale.

B. YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER PARTNERSHIPS

12. Following a successful youth organization partnership in 2021 with the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA), in 2023 and 2024, the Unreal Campaign partnered with DECA Inc (a not-for-profit career and technical student organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe).

13. Through this partnership the "Unreal Campaign Challenge" was launched where DECA member students were invited to produce a 60-second public service announcement (PSA) video on the dangers of counterfeits. In 2024, 103 video entries were received, which garnered 108,496 votes during the public vote period with three winning videos chosen to be included in the in-person Unreal Campaign presentations delivered to students around the world.

14. In 2024, the Unreal Campaign also partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and the National Trade Foundation for Education (Comeduc) to deliver a regular series of presentations to schools in Santiago, Chile, reaching more than 300 students.

15. It is through such partnerships that the Unreal Campaign can leverage the creativity of its target audience. With students becoming part of the anticounterfeiting conversation and partnerships being established with educational institutions, it provides an opportunity to expand the curriculum to include IP, and for students to hear experiences directly from IP practitioners about their day-to-day work.

III. ONLINE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG CONSUMERS

16. In today's digital age, social media is a powerful tool for reaching young consumers. The Unreal Campaign leverages platforms like Instagram and TikTok to share accessible and engaging content, including videos, memes, infographics, and stories that are relevant to this demographic. Including humor, TV, film, and other popular culture references in its social media content allows the Unreal Campaign to tackle the serious subject of counterfeiting in a way that is less confrontational or scolding, which can be off-putting and for young consumers, and not as effective. The content has also covered gym and sports equipment, gaming accessories, and makeup and cosmetics alongside posts around fashion, footwear, and accessories.



Above: Examples of the Unreal Campaign's social media content published in 2024.

17. In 2024, the Unreal Campaign's social media content surpassed 5 million impressions, 2.6 million video plays, increased the followers' count of the Unreal profile by 41 percent, received 22,300 link clicks, and 79,000 interactions with its content (including swipes, clicks, likes, saves, comments and shares).

IV. CONCLUSION

18. The demand for counterfeit goods must be constantly addressed and the approach needs to be dynamic and adaptive to new trends and generational shifts. The Unreal Campaign employs a multidimensional approach to raise awareness about counterfeit products. By engaging young consumers both in-person and online, the Campaign effectively educates them about the importance of IP and the risks of counterfeiting and empowers them when making purchasing decisions and while they are still forming their purchasing habits.

19. Globally, there are many counterfeit public awareness initiatives by governments and trade associations, and consumer rights organizations are connecting with consumers on a daily basis and INTA and its members are proud to be a part of this effort.

20. Moving forward, the Unreal Campaign plans to expand its reach and introduce new initiatives to further combat counterfeiting with more video content and influencer collaborations as well as tackling challenging counterfeit subjects including falsified medicines and car parts. At INTA, we see every engagement as an opportunity to educate, inform, and even change a potential counterfeit buyer's decision. INTA and the Unreal Campaign welcome opportunities for collaboration. We deeply appreciate how the anticounterfeiting battle, and indeed the Unreal Campaign's success, is rooted in community engagement and necessitates all stakeholders working together.

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