

Stefon Davis
BUF 1101
Professor Tung
February 8, 2017
WIR #2

Parks, L. (2017, January 17). One of a kind. *National Retail Federation*. Retrieved from <https://nrf.com/news/One-of-a-kind>

About a year ago, Vibram's footwear had issues with protecting their brand online. Many underground retailers were manufacturing and selling fake Vibram's products online (Parks, 2017). These mischievous retailers were creating fake profiles on social networks; they often pretended to be affiliated with the brand. These methods were definitely effective because they gained a lot of Vibram's official customers from these fake sites. The shoe that put them on the map is their famous five finger shoes, which are equipped with rubber soles for climbing, running, fitness, and occasionally sailing. As an attempt to protect Vibram's footwear, they teamed up with Mark Monitor, which is a brand protection firm.

Online counterfeiting is soaring at an unbelievable rate. Many customers do not realize that they are purchasing fake products, and sometimes they do not receive anything at all. Over the next couple of months, Mark Monitor removed about 2,000 fake listings for Vibram's footwear (Parks, 2017). They were able to force third parties on 200 law breaking sites, thoroughly observing the Vibram's brand guidelines and ending products being distributed on 350 websites (Parks, 2017). People need to realize that counterfeiting is evolving fast. We are at a point where the replica is almost as powerful as the original product. Retailers need to make sure that they can control the use of the brand name online so that bootleggers cannot establish any websites. These fake websites are everywhere and filled with eye catching promotions that offer some kind of reward for answering a quick survey and entering their personal information.

The recent news with Vibram's is relevant to the overall business of fashion today because the internet is becoming more dangerous as the internet changes every day. People in the black market are developing new schemes and promotions to steal and imitate any and everything moving. There are new transactional and digital challenges that businesses are facing. These businesses need protection in both fields because technology is advancing.

This news does not affect only one company or designer, but it also affects everyone (Parks, 2017). I am pretty sure that most of the successful brands that are up and coming have dealt with some kind of counterfeiting issue. As long as certain products are trending, there will always be some form of counterfeiting. People need to be aware of the many dangers associated with it. I have learned a lot more about retailing because of this article.

After reading what Vibram's footwear went through with their products, I am now more aware of the difficulties in retailing new products. Online counterfeiting is affecting brands around the world and stripping them of their fame and fortune. It is up to the brands to get the right kind of protection. I found this article interesting because these problems can happen to anyone, whether you are a big brand or not. It is teaching me the right steps to go about brand protection. I know there is a lot more to learn, but hopefully I can obtain the knowledge to protect my own brand properly.