MarkMonitor
Protecting brands in the digital world

Clarivate Analytics

Sports League Fights Sophisticated Criminals with a Combination of Online Intelligence and Rogue Website Litigation

Industry: Sports League

Solution:
MarkMonitor Brand Protection
MarkMonitor Professional Services

OVERVIEW

A sports league removes counterfeit goods from online venues resulting in a dramatic drop in infringement. By using the *MarkMonitor Brand Protection* solution and professional services, the brand effectively choked off counterfeit sales by focusing on both distribution and promotion channels.

CHALLENGES

- Sophisticated counterfeiters pitching fake goods to sports fans
- Enormous scale, rapidly growing counterfeit problem
- Lost revenue

SOLUTION

MarkMonitor Brand Protection

MarkMonitor Professional Services

RESULTS

- Marketplace enforcement resulted in counterfeit listings dropping by 96%
- Legitimate retail channels rose in search rankings
- Forced the shutdown of more than 3,600 websites offering counterfeit team merchandise
- Removed over 2,100 search results abusing league and team trademarks

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An established sports league looked to MarkMonitor to quantify and address counterfeiters and brand infringement to protect their fans and their intellectual property. The league found that counterfeiters, with increasingly advanced tools and methods, were using digital marketing to their advantage, siphoning off business from the legitimate business. As a sports league dedicated to holistic brand protection, they looked to outside counsel and industry proven solutions to address the issue. MarkMonitor experts uncovered networks of rogue websites, selling or promoting counterfeit goods, and prioritized take-down and litigation strategy. This resulted in the shutdown of over 2,000 infringing search results and over 3,000 websites offering counterfeit goods.

CHALLENGE

For this sports league, a top priority is safeguarding their fans who deserve authentic merchandise and a secure shopping experience. To protect their fans as well as the intellectual property of its member clubs and brands, this sports league upped their game against counterfeiters.

The sports league found that counterfeiters were operating at an increased level of sophistication and scale. Savvy counterfeiters were employing digital marketing best practices, professional e-commerce sites and SEO experts to pitch fake goods to sports fans. Many rogue sites used domain names that incorporated both the league and club trademarks and also mimicked the look and feel of official team store sites to convince fans they were shopping on an authorized site. Understandably, these deceptive tactics caused fan confusion, particularly when the counterfeiters focused on and followed the fan base of "hot" teams throughout the sports season.

2,000

An initial round of rogue website litigation disabled nearly 2,000 websites and froze the counterfeiter's payment accounts.

SOLUTION

The sports league has always taken a holistic and coordinated approach to anti-counterfeiting. Their brand protection team involves corporate counsel, law enforcement agencies, outside counsel, investigators and the brand protection services of MarkMonitor.

Before the league could fully understand the scope of the threat posed by online counterfeit sales, it first had to expose and quantify the problem. They found that the counterfeit landscape was changing. Fraudsters increasingly operate over a wide array of online channels; all of these, including online marketplaces, e-commerce sites, social media and the rest, had to be monitored and analyzed. The analysis revealed new levels of sophistication and scale.

The sharp increase in the number and scope of rogue websites — often mimicking legitimate sites down to the level of using the same customer service numbers — demanded a large-scale effort to significantly disrupt the counterfeiters' business.

Advanced anti-counterfeiting technology from MarkMonitor delivered unprecedented, in-depth online intelligence, identifying and automatically validating networks of rogue websites — showing which rogue sites were owned by the same perpetrator. The automated technology revealed results and connections that were never obvious with manual analysis.

The networks of rogue websites exposed by online intelligence enabled the league to prioritize litigation targets. An initial round of rogue website litigation disabled nearly 2,000 websites and froze the counterfeiters' payment accounts. This opened the door for a series of cost-effective supplemental orders that seized an additional 1,300 sites.

The combination of online intelligence and rogue website litigation proved to be a game changer.

Online Intelligence

- Made connections between sites to identify and cluster networks of rogue websites
- Prioritized litigation targets

Rogue Website Litigation

- Disabled large clusters of rogue websites so that they can no longer be accessed by consumers
- Froze counterfeiters' payment accounts
- Enabled cost-effective supplemental orders that removed additional sites

RESULTS

Counterfeiters obviously encounter more success when left to operate unchallenged; they're also known to shift their energies to more passive targets when brands visibly fight back. Once the league understood where their greatest counterfeit threats were, targeted, aggressive action proved to be the best strategy.

By visibly and vigorously fighting to remove counterfeit goods from online venues they saw a dramatic drop in infringement. They effectively choked off counterfeit sales by focusing on both distribution and promotional channels. The combination of online intelligence and rogue website litigation led to the effective and efficient seizure of thousands of abusive domains.

More than half the Fortune 100 trust MarkMonitor to protect their brands online.
See what we can do for you.

MarkMonitor Inc.
U.S.   (800) 745-9229
Europe   +44 (0) 207 433 4000
www.markmonitor.com

MarkMonitor
Protecting brands in the digital world

Clarivate
Analytics

About MarkMonitor

MarkMonitor, the leading enterprise brand protection solution and a Clarivate Analytics flagship brand, provides advanced technology and expertise that protects the revenues and reputations of the world's leading brands. In the digital world, brands face new risks due to the Web's anonymity, global reach and shifting consumption patterns for digital content, goods and services. Customers choose MarkMonitor for its unique combination of advanced technology, comprehensive protection and extensive industry relationships to address their brand infringement risks and preserve their marketing investments, revenues and customer trust. For more information, visit **markmonitor.com** or call us at **1-800-745-9229**.