

Trademark

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A **Trademark** is a logo, image, symbol, word(s), letter(s) or color(s) that is used and sometimes legally registered as a representation of a company. For service industries, trademarks are often called servicemarks, particularly in the United States. Trademarks are often noted by way of ™, or ® if registered.

Trademarks are used to keep a company's distinctly identifying intellectual property secure. Trademarking company identifiers provides legal rights that prevent other parties using the registered property. This legal protection can help prevent counterfeiting of the company's product. For consumers, a Trademark allows them to recognize brands and continually purchase those with which they have had a positive experience or recommendation.

A Trademark must be distinct, identifiable and original. Often a Trademark will convey the brand essence of a product. Trademarks are seen everywhere in modern life. ™ or ® and the associated slogans, images and logos are placed on products, packaging, advertising, magazines, and more.

A Trademark's ownership is maintained simply by its continued use by a company. Use affords protection against use by other companies internationally, in accordance with trade agreements. Trademarks may be legally registered, usually for a term of 7-12 years. Registering allows companies to bring infringing parties to court to prosecute for damages, typically projected losses resulting from the infringement sometimes including damages to brand equity. Trademarks may be licensed to outside companies to produce products, often to offer products the original holder does not have the capacity to supply.

The use of Trademarks is well noted through history. An example of early use is the marking of swords by individual blacksmiths in the time of the Roman Empire.

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