



## **HOW RESEARCH GUIDES THE NCPC/USPTO ANTI-COUNTERFEITING CAMPAIGN**

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) and the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) are working together to raise public awareness about the importance of intellectual property and to decrease demand for counterfeit goods in the United States. NCPC engaged Ipsos, an internationally recognized research firm, to conduct a research program to help inform strategic messaging and assets for this public education campaign which is targeted at teens, tweens, and their parents.

Major findings from the research are set out below.

### **RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Attitudes and Behaviors**

Ipsos used online focus groups and a nationally representative online survey to measure teens', tweens', and parents' awareness, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding counterfeits. Researchers also used these tools to identify personal motivations for purchasing or using counterfeit products. Here are some of the major findings:

- Awareness of counterfeits is not widespread, and the term “counterfeit” does not fit into the teen lexicon. The most common terms teens, tweens, and their parents associate with “counterfeit” are “real,” “fake,” and “knock-off.”
- Fewer than two in 10 adults and teens think knowingly buying counterfeit is a “really big deal.” Just over two in 10 teens (22%) report having purchased counterfeit in the past year compared with 14% of adults.
- The number one reason consumers buy counterfeit products is because they are less expensive than the real thing.
- Some teens make the argument that counterfeits are okay for people who “can’t afford” or are “too poor” to buy the real thing, especially when it comes to stereotype products such as luxury bags and watches.
- More than eight in 10 adults and teens (84% and 81%, respectively) agree that counterfeit electronics can cause harm, but only 6% of adults and 5% of teens choose being “worried about physical harm” as the main reason they would not buy counterfeit.
- Most teens believe counterfeits can start electrical fires, harm health, and put your life at risk. Most teens also believe that fake cosmetics are contaminated with rat and human feces and urine. However, only 26% of teens agree it is very important for themselves, their friends, or their families to learn more about counterfeits.

## **Campaign Messaging Insights**

The researchers found there is an opportunity to educate consumers about the risks associated with counterfeit products through the public education campaign. Their findings appear below.

- On a topic like counterfeits where there is no cohesive dialogue, the USPTO and NCPC have ample white space to educate consumers.
- The campaign should draw attention to relevant goods and avoid focusing on counterfeit-product stereotypes such as luxury bags and watches. Electronics and cosmetics are the two most relatable product categories for boys and girls, respectively.
- People who buy counterfeits and think it's "no big deal" need information about the dangers associated with fakes for their attitudes to change.
- In addition to emphasizing physical harm to get people to pay attention, messaging should make poor quality trump low cost. Legality is not a primary issue and focusing on it would likely distract from messages about risks and harm.
- Parents, once informed, can be powerful influencers.

## **About the Study**

In September 2019, Ipsos conducted three online focus groups among tweens (ages 10 to 12) and teens (ages 13 to 17) and a fourth online focus group among parents of tweens and teens. In October 2019, Ipsos also administered a nationally representative online survey of 1,000 teenagers ages 13 to 17 and 500 adults ages 18 and over. The highlights summarized above are derived from the results of the focus groups and survey.