

High Tech Ways the Apparel and Footwear Industries are Combatting Counterfeiting

Many people underestimate the impact of counterfeit products in their lives. In fact, the total value of “trade in counterfeit and pirated goods amounted to up to 2.5% of world trade in 2013,” according to a [report](#) from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the apparel and footwear industries are among the most at risk. In addition to disrupting the profits of legitimate brands, imitation products also pose a risk to consumers because they may use ineffective or dangerous chemicals in the manufacturing process.

Crackdowns and efforts by government, online retailers and factories have had limited impact. In response, brands themselves have explored a number of new technologies to prevent and protect themselves against counterfeiting from materials sourcing to the end user.

High-tech threads and textiles are offering creative ways for many apparel companies to prevent counterfeits. [Researchers](#) have developed “a partially invisible thread made of polyethylene and a dye molecule that absorbs visible light. The thread can be weaved into a pattern that is invisible to the naked eye, but which can be seen using a polarization filter.” The solution is incredibly difficult for fakers to imitate, but the verification tools are fairly inexpensive and straightforward. Another materials-based solution goes straight to the source. Scientists have found a way to [genetically modify cotton](#) so that its DNA bears a particular marker that indicates its origin. Virtually impossible to falsify and able to withstand many washings and damage, these threads can be mass produced and applied in a range of products. Both textile-based solutions may see increased use in the coming years.

Embedded UV indicators have been one of [Micro-Pak's key methodologies](#) in combatting counterfeits

of our top-of-the-line mold prevention products. In addition to additional covert strategies, our stickers have particles that have a unique dual response to UV light. They can be authenticated using a series of simple tests, including handheld UV laser lights and a continuous glowing feature that continues after light exposure. The feature is straightforward and easy to use, but it requires a specific set of tools and reactions that counterfeiters are failing to duplicate.

RFID chips and online registrations are becoming increasingly [common](#). This strategy crowdsources tracking to consumers. After making a purchase, they can use their smartphones to scan and authenticate the item. The record is shared with the brand, which confirms that the item is legitimate. The buyer now has an official record, and the company can keep tabs on the movement of their products. Ferragamo has taken to inserting chips in all of its shoes, and other luxury and respected brands are tagging items themselves, tags and packaging.

In combatting counterfeits, it's important to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy that combines both traditional and new processes. In its commitment to ending counterfeits, Micro-Pak educate its customers and relies on trusted distributor partnerships to prevent the purchase and spread of knock offs. Brands also must follow up with penalties and legal actions to deter their manufacture in the first place. Micro-Pak also quickly responds to facilities requesting reviews and submitting samples for verification. It's the only way for everyone involved to ensure their safety and success.

Learn more about Micro-Pak's comprehensive [anti-counterfeiting practices](#), [three key tactics you can use to stamp out counterfeiting](#) and [successful anti-counterfeiting actions around the world](#).

