

Genericized Trademarks: Coke and Google

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The classroom may have changed, but brand awareness remains the same. As students unpack their school bags filled with lunchboxes, tapes, and pens, most never realize how many of those items started as **Genericized Trademarks**—once-protected brand names now used as everyday words. The line between brand recognition and brand erosion is thinner than ever, and it poses real intellectual property risks for global companies.

What Are Genericized Trademarks?

Genericized Trademarks occur when a brand name becomes so widely recognized that it's used as the general term for an entire category of products. When this happens, companies risk losing their trademark protection and brand identity. It's the ultimate irony: success leads to dilution.

Everyday Items Born from Genericized Trademarks

Biro: Lazlo Biro invented the ballpoint pen in frustration with leaky fountain pens. Today, the name “biro” refers to any pen—though it remains a registered trademark owned by Bic.

Tipp-Ex: Created in Germany in 1958, this correction fluid’s name is now used generically across Europe. The trademark is owned by Société Bic.

Sellotape: Synonymous with sticky tape in the UK, “Sellotape” has appeared in dictionaries since 1980. The brand belongs to Henkel AG.

Scotch Tape: Officially “Scotch brand cellophane tape,” this 3M trademark became so famous it entered the dictionary as a common noun.

Google: The ultimate example of **Genericized Trademarks**, “to google” entered dictionaries in 2003 despite Google’s attempts to stop it.

Photoshop: Once Adobe’s flagship product, now shorthand for digital editing everywhere. Adobe still campaigns to prevent misuse of the term.

Tupperware: A symbol of storage innovation since 1946, “Tupperware” is often used generically for any lidded plastic container.

Thermos: Invented in 1892, this brand became synonymous with vacuum flasks and still holds trademarks in over 115 countries.

AstroTurf: Originally a branded artificial playing surface from 1965, now widely used to describe any synthetic turf.

Frisbee: Created by Wham-O in 1957, this flying disc remains a registered trademark despite becoming a household word.

iPod: Apple fought hard for this trademark, acquiring rights in 2005 after global recognition.

Coke: Perhaps the most famous of all **Genericized Trademarks**—asking for a “coke” might get you any cola. Coca-Cola has defended its trademark since 1893.

Memory Stick: Sony’s proprietary term became shorthand for all USB drives, showing how easily trademark identities spread.

Zoom: Widely used during the pandemic, “Zooming” has entered everyday speech. The brand now faces the same risks of genericization as “Google.”

Why Genericized Trademarks Are a Brand Protection Threat

When brand names become generic, they lose distinctiveness—the foundation of trademark protection. **Genericized Trademarks** erode market value, reduce legal enforceability, and invite copycats. Once a word enters the dictionary as a generic term, it’s nearly impossible to reverse.

How Axencis Protects Brands from Genericized Trademarks

At **Axencis**, we specialize in safeguarding brands from the dangers of **Genericized Trademarks** and dilution. Our proprietary brand protection tools monitor global marketplaces, detect unauthorized usage, and enforce trademark rights. From preventing counterfeit products to stopping name misuse in listings, Axencis helps brands maintain

distinctiveness and market control.

Preventing Trademark Dilution

Register trademarks across all relevant jurisdictions. Educate distributors and influencers to use trademarks properly (e.g., “Scotch brand tape,” not just “Scotch”). Monitor online use with brand protection software. Work with enforcement partners like **Axencis** to act quickly when misuse occurs.

Final Word

The next time you reach for your **Biro**, pack your lunch in **Tupperware**, or hop on a **Zoom**, remember: you’re using words that once represented powerful, unique trademarks. **Genericized Trademarks** show how easily fame can turn into vulnerability. With proactive brand protection and legal oversight, Axencis ensures that iconic names stay iconic—and that brands keep their identity for generations to come.

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