



Representative Image

CASE STUDY – BRAND PROTECTION

When Expired Products Re-entered the Market at Suspiciously Low Prices

SUMMARY

A leading consumer goods company noticed its products being sold at unusually low prices in the market, raising concerns about possible counterfeiting. Our team traced the source to an authorised disposal vendor that had altered expiry dates and redistributed the expired stock. Enforcement action led to the withdrawal of the products, protecting consumers and safeguarding the client's brand reputation.

BACKGROUND

A leading consumer goods company received reports of products being sold at unusually low prices. Initially suspected to be counterfeit, the investigation revealed something even more alarming:

- Products were **genuine** with original packaging & branding
- They had **expired** and been handed over for destruction
- Re-entry posed serious **consumer health risks**
- Brand trust and reputation were under direct threat

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The company routinely sends expired stock to authorised vendors for disposal. In this case, the vendor failed to destroy the batch and instead:

- **Altered manufacturing & expiry dates** on packaging
- Sold products back into the market
- Products moved through **grey market**, resold at **half retail price**
- Products were designed for children, which further amplified health risk



CHALLENGES

Identical Packaging

Genuine products with original packaging made expired stock nearly impossible to detect during routine inspections.

Alteration of Expiry Dates

Altered date markings appeared authentic and were not easily detected during standard inspection processes.

Discounted Pricing

Reduced prices attracted buyers without raising suspicion, as discounted products are common in competitive markets.

Children's Products

Products designed for children made the health and reputational stakes significantly higher.

Grey Market

Informal distribution channels meant limited records were available to trace the full network.

Unknown Scale

The full extent of grey market distribution was difficult to assess and contain at the outset.

NETRIKA'S INVESTIGATION: END-TO-END ENQUIRY

01

Conducted investigations and traced the supply chain back to the originating vendor

04

Assisted the client with preparation of quality certifications and evidence required for police verification

02

Gathered evidence linking the altered products to the source of the leak

05

Coordinated with local police authorities to support enforcement action

03

Identified four retailers selling the expired products obtained from the vendor

06

Managed all the required documentation and follow-up actions throughout the case, while maintaining complete confidentiality

OUTCOME

1

Source Identified & Contained

2

Expired Stock Withdrawn

3

4 Retailers Identified

4

Disposal Vendor Identified

5

Crisis Averted



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50%

Discount on retail price at which the products were being sold

100%

Expired stock withdrawn from the distribution network

4

Retailers identified via enforcement action

Grey Market

Channel used for product redistribution

KEY TAKEAWAY

Reverse logistics and product disposal can present significant risks if not properly monitored. Strong controls throughout the product lifecycle are essential to safeguard consumers and protect brand reputation.