

Psychology of Trademarks: A Case Study

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Abstract

Trademarks build upon and reinforce cultural archetypes (e.g. OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE) because people attach great significance to such words and symbols. But what happens when they are combined in novel ways (e.g., OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE to sell bath soap)? How are such trademarks interpreted by the consuming public, and why?

The OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE Problem stands for the proposition that the fusion of two marks (e.g. OXFORD and CAMBRIDGE) to create a new mark (e.g., OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE) can have a meaning that is different than the meaning of its constituent parts.

This dissertation is an in-depth case study of the OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE trademark. Field research and analysis are used to discover how the consuming public perceives and interprets this mark and how cultural icons of Anglo-Saxon culture can be posited onto an enterprise that chooses to use such rich symbols for its trademark. The technique of psychological muscle testing is used to probe the subconscious reaction of the public to the use of these cultural icons as trademarks. Finally, Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic techniques of analysis are applied to the symbolic elements that comprise the OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE trademark. The result is a psychoanalytic interpretation of the meaning of cultural archetypes as trademarks that sheds light on other, broader aspects of the psychology of trademarks.