

What to Do if You Forgot to Register Your Facebook Trademark URL

Don't Panic, There are Steps You Can Take

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Did you miss the boat by failing to register a trademark URL with Facebook? Are you now scrambling to recover your brand identity from an anonymous Facebook hijacker? Don't panic. You still have options, both through Facebook and the legal system at large.

Here are your next steps:

Register anyway. Even though the URL registration deadline is passed, apply for the house or dominant brand extension for your company Facebook presence. One example is [facebook.com/coca-cola](https://www.facebook.com/coca-cola). If you don't have a Facebook account, open one and do this.

Consider your options. In some cases, if your branded URL is taken, you may be able to register an alternative address that accurately represents your brand. That said, if you own the rights to a given name, make it your user name so that others cannot take it.

File a complaint. If you find someone else at [facebook.com/\[your brand\]](https://www.facebook.com/[your brand]), and it looks like you or it relates to your industry, initiate a complaint on the [IP infringement form](#). You will need to outline what IP rights are infringed (find IP definitions [outlined here](#)) and how the content infringes your rights. The building blocks of intellectual property are:

- **Trademarks protect identity.** Image and name recognition remain essential elements of product and service marketing. This is where you are the most likely to face a conflict in your username registration, because trademarks directly relate to brand identity.
- **Copyrights protect expressions.** This includes a wide range of creative efforts, including writings, drawings, songs, pictures and movies. The mark protects against being copied, and you must actively manage, secure ownership, register, license, protect and defend those rights.
- **Patents protect ideas.** A patent gives its owner the exclusive right to make, use and sell the patented technology for a limited period. A strong patent can exclude competitors from the market and is often the only thing protecting small, innovative companies from larger, wealthier competitors.

Facebook reserves the right to remove and/or reclaim any username at any time for any reason, so there is hope if you are justified in the reasoning behind your IP infringement form.

Get help. If Facebook does not resolve the issue to your satisfaction, consult a trademark litigator. IP law firms work with companies to safeguard their marketing and branding efforts everyday.

Remember, the trademark litigation process will require you to prove the worth and strength of your brand. In litigation, trademark registrations are valuable. Detailed record-keeping (including all revenue and expenses, advertisements, website traffic, media coverage and customer testimonials) demonstrates the brand's commercial strength and are also valuable. Strong brands receive broader protection from the courts.

Pursuing a traditional legal course of action may seem like a giant leap, but it is necessary where marks are used in an unfair or confusing manner. Many brand owners don't realize that newer technologies such as webpages and software are protected by copyright and trademark laws just as much as traditional works such as art, photography and architecture. As marketers, you understand the work that goes into establishing a successful brand. The new frontier of online marketing on social networks like Facebook demands that you must also familiarize yourself with the legal procedures that are readily available to protect it.

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