ISO 12931: Anti-counterfeiting Solutions to gain back profits!

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Counterfeiting is not something that just happens to luxury goods. Believed to account for up to 10% of global commercial transactions, all markets are at risk of fakes and forgeries.

Because they are not regulated many counterfeited products present dangers to the health and safety of individuals. Not only they distort competition and violate intellectual property rights of legitimate producers, undermining fair trade and distorting tax revenues, but they also generate risks for consumers, users and the supply chain.

Counterfeiting can significantly reduce the profitability of legitimate business. The risks are important: loss turn-over, stolen know-how, loss jobs and wrongful lawsuits following accidents caused by counterfeit products (that are almost impossible to prove as such).

These costs can compromise the long-term survival of a business. It is therefore crucial to protect products and material goods, especially in turbulent economic times, when businesses must maximize their profitability.

Choosing an anti-counterfeiting security solution today is a complicated feat. Although many options exist, a lack of harmonized requirements distorts comparison.

The ISO project committee, ISO/PC246, Anti-counterfeiting tools, has developed a standard that defines the performance criteria for authentication solutions used to combat counterfeiting of material goods ». This new standard, referenced as ISO 12931, is objective-oriented and applicable to all anti-counterfeiting security solutions.

Choosing only the best
The first step in the fight against counterfeiting is to define a strategy:

• Select a product
• Establish where and how it is produced
• Look at how it is distributed
• Decide who and how it can be controlled
• Determine the level of risk.

"All markets are at risk of fakes and forgeries"

The security solution chosen for protection against counterfeiting will depend on the answers to these questions. The standard will help businesses to select the most relevant anti-counterfeiting solution to meet the company's strategy. It will also make it easier to compare and verify the required performance level with that promised by security vendors. In particular, small businesses lacking the resources to conduct similar investigation will benefit from ISO 12931. Suppliers too will benefit standardized criteria to better present the performance of the security solutions they offer.

The standard will also facilitate the implementation and usage of anti-counterfeiting solutions. By harmonizing global efforts, ISO 12931 will ensure that the fight against counterfeiting is even more effective.

The standard will be useful for brand owners, suppliers and authorities. All of these groups have been involved in the project since the very beginning, when the Association française de normalisation (AFNOR), ISO member for France, prepared the original proposal for this International Standard in 2008. ISO/PC246 enjoys a diverse and international collaboration and a strong willingness to succeed - in a good sign for both users and producers of material goods who are victims of fake and forgeries. ISO 12931:2012 is published on the ISO website since June 1st.