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Training Enforcement Agencies to Suppress Fake Goods in Thailand

Counterfeit products damage the Thai economy. Not only do they hamper public confidence in the quality of goods imported from overseas, but they pose a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of consumers.

In response to this problem, various government agencies in Thailand have been specifically tasked with protecting Thai consumers from the detrimental effects of counterfeit products. Organizations such as the Royal Thai Customs Bureau, the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation (DSI), and the Department of Intellectual Property bear this responsibility, acting under a mandate to suppress fake goods.

In order to assist these institutions in their efforts to stem the tide of illegal, fake goods, Tilleke & Gibbins holds training sessions on an annual basis to educate their respective employees on brand identification and detecting counterfeit products. The trainings improve government authorities' capabilities to suppress counterfeit products, and they provide a means through which intellectual property owners can regularly share up-to-date information on their products and trademarks with government authorities.

On June 17, 24, and 26, 2014, Tilleke & Gibbins and around a dozen intellectual property rights owners joined together to provide product identification training to Thai government agencies in Chiangmai (Northern Thailand), Phuket (Southern Thailand), and Pattaya (Eastern Thailand). Overall, the training aimed to:

- ▶ Raise public awareness in each region of the risks associated with selling and purchasing counterfeit products.
- ▶ Raise government officers' awareness and educate them on how to take aggressive action against counterfeit products.
- ▶ Create and strengthen our clients' relationships with Customs, the police, and the DSI, which are on the front line of IP enforcement efforts.
- ▶ Express our appreciation to each government official and congratulate them on successful seizures and improvements in their procedures in recent years.
- ▶ Inform the officers about whom they should contact for any inquiry regarding particular brands or whenever they find suspected counterfeit products.
- ▶ Educate the officers on product inspection to improve their capabilities in identifying fake goods.

Prior to the training in each region, we also visited the well-known markets in the regions to distribute leaflets in both Thai and English, in an attempt to raise awareness among the sellers and buyers about the risks and dangers of selling and purchasing counterfeit products.

A total of 179 enforcement officers attended these events. It is hoped that these trainings will provide greater insight to law enforcement officers to assist them in their duty to closely monitor counterfeit products being imported into or sold in the Thai market, and help officers realize that brand owners are very serious about protecting their valuable intellectual property rights. 🏠