

Art Museum in New York Sues Café for Allegedly Copying Its Name

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Category : Lifestyle/Entertainment

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **trademarked** / ˈtreɪdˌmɑːkt / (adj) – registered as owned by a certain business
Example: The company’s **trademarked** goods cannot be reproduced by other companies.
- 2. **ride on (someone/something)** / **raid on** / (phrasal) – to depend on something
Example: The future of the café **rides on** the success of the new marketing plan.
- 3. **woo** / **wu** / (v) – to convince someone to support something
Example: The salesman is **wooing** his clients by giving large discounts.
- 4. **comply** / kəmˈplaɪ / (v) – to obey
Example: She always **complies** with the rules to avoid getting in trouble.
- 5. **affiliation** / əˌfɪliˈeɪʃ(ə)n / (n) – a connection with a group or individual
Example: The popular restaurant has an **affiliation** with other leading food businesses.

Article

Read the text below.

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), a well-known art museum in New York, sued the newly opened café MoMaCha for allegedly copying its **trademarked** name and logo.

Earlier this year, MoMA officials sent the café a letter, asking it to refrain from using the name MoMaCha and to change the café’s logo, which resembled that of the museum. Because the café refused to give up its name, the museum filed a lawsuit under the claims that the café is **riding on** MoMA’s popularity.

The museum’s lawyers asserted that the café is trying to **woo** customers by giving them the impression that the popular museum and the café are associated with each other.

In MoMaCha’s defense, owner Eric Cahan clarified that he only combined the words ‘more’ and ‘matcha’ because Japanese green teas are the café’s specialty. He further pointed out that the font style is the only similarity between the museum’s and his café’s logos.

Despite his stance, Cahan **complied** with some of the museum’s demands, such as revising the logo design and converting the letters in the café’s name into uppercase. He also released a statement that denied **affiliations** between the café and the museum.

On a similar note, the Hungry Hobbit café in Birmingham, United Kingdom, was also sued for the same reasons.

Saul Zaentz Company (SZC) owns the rights to the films *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of The Rings*. After learning about the café, the company filed a lawsuit. According to SZC, the name might suggest that the café is being promoted by the production company.

In a later interview, CEO Saul Zaentz said that he is willing to settle the issue with the café.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- If you were a customer of MoMaCha, would you still support the café despite its involvement in a lawsuit? Why or why not?

- If you were the owner of MoMaCha, would you comply with the museum’s demands? Why or why not?

Discussion B

- If you were the owner of a new business, what factors would you consider when deciding on a brand/company name (e.g. originality, brand recall)? Discuss.

- How important do you think is the branding/name of a company to its success?