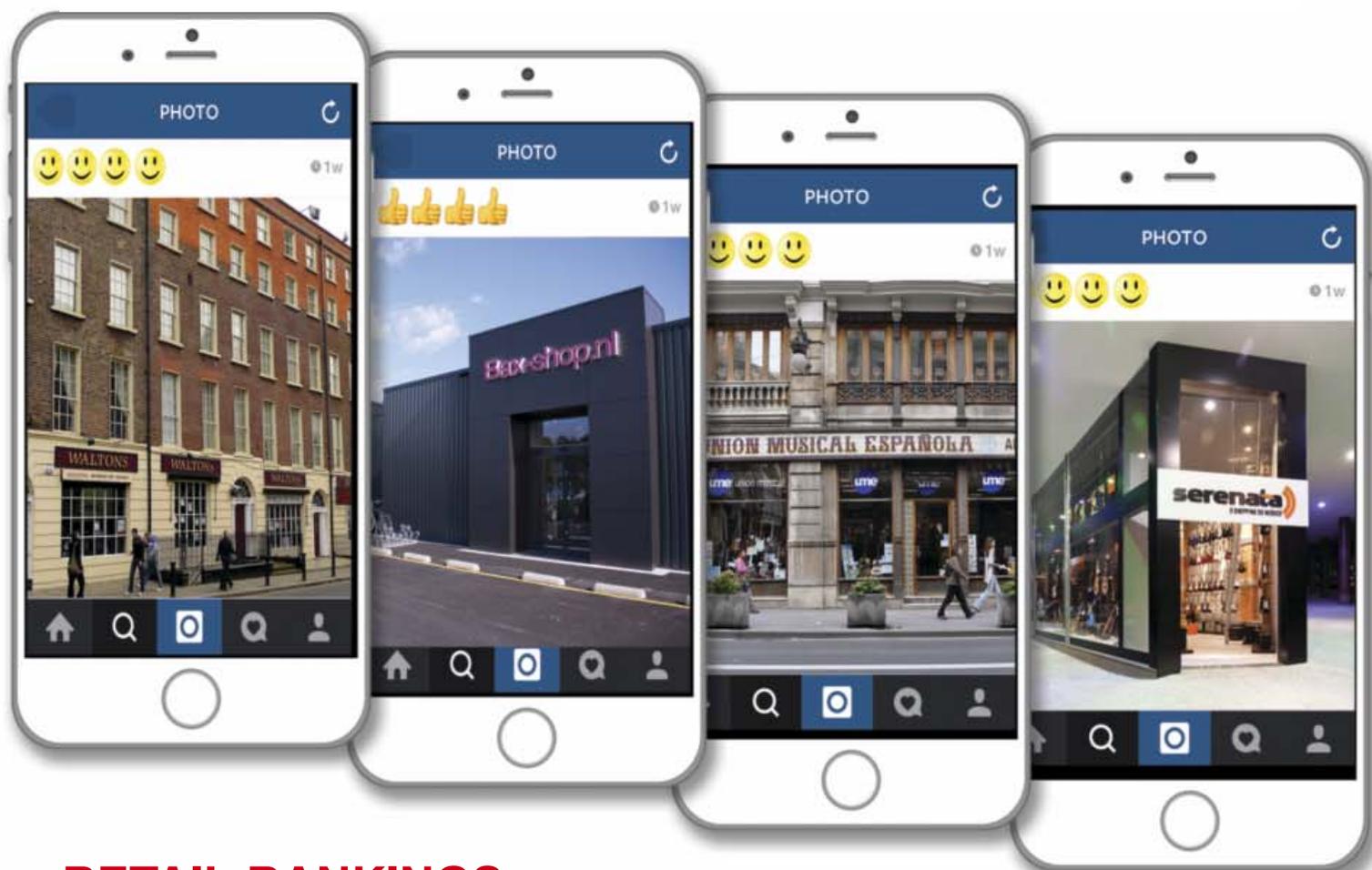


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## WITTNER TAKES ACTION AGAINST CHINESE COUNTERFEITERS



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## WITTNER TAKES ACTION AGAINST CHINESE COUNTERFEITERS



*Wittner's legal team raiding the Purified Five Degree Violin workshop that was producing counterfeit Wittner tuning pegs.*

CHINA'S INCONSISTENT enforcement of international intellectual property rights has been a source of frustration for manufacturers in North America and Europe, who have watched Chinese factories regularly expropriate their trademarks and patents without consequence. Most, however, have done little more than complain. A notable exception is Wittner, the venerable German manufacturer of metronomes and violin parts.

Last year, shortly after Wittner's pro-

prietary fine-tune violin tuning pegs entered the Chinese market, counterfeit copies began showing up in stores. Not only were the counterfeits identical replicas of the originals, but so were the product boxes. In fact, the Chinese copies and packaging were so close to the originals, only an expert could tell them apart. Incensed at the theft of his engineers' expertise, Horst Wittner, Wittner CEO, decided to fight back, launching an aggressive legal challenge.

On September 13, 2016 Officials of the

Trade and Industry Bureau of Taixing, flanked by Wittner's Chinese lawyers, stormed the Purified Five Degree Violin factory in Xiqiao Town, seizing 232 pairs of counterfeit fine-tune pegs carrying the Wittner trademark. Purified Five Degree Violin workshop not only counterfeited and distributed Wittner pegs throughout China, the company even copied Wittner's invention patent and registered it with the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China. Following the raid, an Administrative Penalty Decision affirmed that Purified Five Degree Violin workshop deliberately infringed the legal rights of Wittner. A fine was levied and the 232 boxes of counterfeit tuning pegs were confiscated.

The Xiqiao Town raid led to a thorough investigation of counterfeiting activity throughout China. In Taizhou (Jiangsu province), Foshan (Guangdong province), and Bengbu (Anhui province) factories counterfeiting Wittner's famous fine-tune pegs were found. Xiqiao Town in Taizhou City, a center of violin production, was also among the cities with counterfeiters. Seven shops from Xiqiao Town were found selling fake Wittner fine-tune pegs through the Chinese e-commerce platform Taobao. After the raid, Wittner successfully removed the offers for fake pegs.

Wittner is currently in the process of filing several civil lawsuits against the counterfeiters based on trademark and invention patent infringement and is seeking severe penalties and sanctions.