

Lacoste: Disrupting Wholesale Counterfeit Supply in Hanoi's Old Quarter - 1,073 Items Seized, Factory-Scale Source Neutralized, Administrative Fine Imposed

1. Snapshot of the Case

KENFOX IP & Law Office represented Lacoste in a coordinated anti-counterfeiting action targeting two apparel shops in Hanoi's Old Quarter that, following pre-raid investigation, were confirmed to be operating as upstream wholesalers of counterfeit Lacoste garments. After compiling evidence that these locations were supplying fake "LACOSTE" and crocodile-logo apparel into the broader Hanoi retail network, we escalated the case to the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Science & Technology (IMOST) for administrative enforcement. IMOST conducted raids on the identified premises, seizing 1,073 counterfeit garments and imposing administrative fines totaling VND 183,360,000 on the two wholesalers. The seized inventory was ordered destroyed. By focusing on wholesale sources rather than only end retailers, this action disrupted counterfeit supply at scale, delivered measurable financial penalties, and reinforced Lacoste's control of its brand identity and distribution channels in Vietnam.

Client: Lacoste, a global apparel brand with [highly recognizable marks](#), including the word mark "LACOSTE"

and the crocodile logo ".

Target: Two apparel shops located in Hanoi's Old Quarter.

Finding: Those two shops were not just retailers. Pre-raid investigation established that they were functioning as **wholesale hubs** supplying counterfeit Lacoste-branded clothing to downstream resellers in Hanoi.

Action: We coordinated administrative enforcement with the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Science & Technology of Vietnam (IMOST).

Result:

- **1,073 counterfeit garments** bearing "LACOSTE" and/or the Lacoste crocodile logo were seized and destroyed.
- The two wholesalers were fined a total of **VND 183,360,000** (administrative penalty).
- The counterfeit pipeline they were feeding was cut off at source.

2. Why This Case Was Important (and not just "another raid")

Lots of firms can raid a fake T-shirt stall. Very few build a case that hits the *distribution node*, not just the last-mile seller. This is what we want to make clear to prospective clients:

- **These were upstream wholesalers:** Our pre-raid surveillance showed these two "stores" operated as supply points, moving Lacoste-labeled counterfeit apparel at scale to other sellers - not just selling a couple of shirts to tourists. That means enforcement here had multiplier impact across the Hanoi market.
- **The target area matters:** Hanoi's Old Quarter is dense, commercially aggressive, and very sensitive to enforcement. You don't get to walk in casually and seize branded stock unless you have your evidence, legal theory, and coordination completely prepared. Otherwise the shop just shutsters, moves stock, and disappears.
- **We elevated it to central enforcement:** We didn't try to negotiate informally or rely on local persuasion. We escalated to IMOST, which has authority to impose administrative sanctions for [trademark infringement and counterfeit goods](#). That sends a signal to the market: "This isn't just a neighborhood complaint. The State is now involved".

For luxury, fashion, and sportswear clients, this framing shows we don't just send stern letters; we dismantle networks. In short: **from storefront to supply chain, we targeted the source - not just the shelf.**

3. KENFOX Strategy and Actions

(i) Covert market mapping and pre-raid investigation

Before any enforcement, we led structured on-the-ground investigation in Hanoi's Old Quarter to:

- Identify which stores were merely retailers and which ones acted as upstream wholesalers.
- Document sales patterns (volume, turnover, restocking behavior).
- Confirm that the counterfeit goods carried Lacoste's protected marks ("LACOSTE" word mark and crocodile device).
- Capture evidence that the goods were not licensed or sourced from any authorized Lacoste distributor in Vietnam.

This step is critical because:

- Vietnamese authorities act much faster, and impose heavier penalties, when they see that a premises is a wholesale source, not just a casual reseller.
- It also gives you leverage to argue that immediate seizure is justified because of scale and ongoing harm.

We don't raid blind. We build an enforcement target that regulators will actually move on.

(ii) Legal qualification as trademark infringement / counterfeiting

We prepared a legal brief setting out:

- Lacoste's registered intellectual property rights (the "LACOSTE" word mark and the crocodile device/logo).
- The unauthorized and confusingly identical use of these marks on clothing.
- The commercial intent to mislead consumers regarding source and authenticity, i.e. classic counterfeit activity.

This frames the goods not as "generic crocodile shirts", but as counterfeit trademark goods. That is important because under Vietnamese administrative law, sale of counterfeit trademark goods can lead to both:

- confiscation and destruction of infringing stock,
- and significant monetary fines.

We package the evidence in a way that lets enforcement bodies classify the goods as counterfeit and apply maximum available sanctions.

(iii) Submission to the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Science & Technology (IMOST)

We escalated the matter to IMOST - [the competent authority for administrative IP enforcement in Vietnam](#). Why IMOST?

- IMOST can issue decisions, impose fines, and order destruction of infringing goods in trademark counterfeiting cases.
- Bringing IMOST in signals seriousness and ensures the outcome is documented at ministerial level, not just "seized and let go".

We formally petitioned IMOST with:

- identity and legal status of Lacoste's marks,
- summary of our pre-raid findings,
- evidence of wholesale-level distribution,
- request for administrative inspection and seizure.

We know which enforcement body to activate to get seizure + fine + destruction, not just warnings.

(iv) Coordinated raids on-site

Working with IMOST, raids were conducted at both target premises in Hanoi's Old Quarter.

During the raids:

- Inspectors inventoried all goods bearing Lacoste's protected marks.
- A total of **1,073 garments** branded with "LACOSTE" and/or Lacoste's crocodile logo were seized.
- These were formally recorded as infringing/counterfeit stock.

This is important: the number (1,073) shows scale. We're not talking about a handful of samples. We're talking warehouse-level inventory hidden behind "just a shop".

We deliver concrete seizures, with documented quantities, suitable for deterrent messaging and investor reporting.



(v) Penalty, disposal, deterrence

Following the raid:

- IMOST imposed an administrative fine totaling **VND 183,360,000** against the two wholesalers.
- The seized counterfeit stock - all 1,073 garments - was slated for destruction (not recycled back into the market).

This matters because many brands quietly worry about seized fake goods leaking back through informal channels. Being able to say “the goods were destroyed” reassures them the pipeline was actually cut and not just interrupted.

We ensure not only seizure but destruction and financial penalties, so the business model of counterfeiting becomes unprofitable.

4. Outcome / Impact

- **Wholesale disruption, not superficial optics:** We eliminated two upstream counterfeit suppliers in one of Vietnam's most commercially active retail zones. That immediately curbed counterfeit volume downstream.
- **Immediate financial consequence for infringers:** A fine of VND 183,360,000 (≈ administrative-level penalty) was imposed. That tells counterfeiters: this is not a warning shot - this has cash consequences.
- **Physical product removal and destruction:** 1,073 counterfeit “LACOSTE” and crocodile-logo garments were seized and destroyed, preventing resale back into the grey market.
- **Deterrent messaging to the market:** When a raid in the Old Quarter is backed by a ministry-level inspectorate and results in fines + destruction, word spreads. Smaller downstream sellers understand that Lacoste is being actively monitored and enforced in Vietnam and that upstream suppliers are no longer “safe.”

In simple business terms: We cut off illegal supply, raised the risk profile for anyone thinking of wholesaling fakes, and reinforced Lacoste's control of its brand equity in Vietnam.

5. What This Case Proves About KENFOX?

- **We identify and hit the source, not just the storefront:** Our pre-raid work mapped out which locations were actually acting as wholesale nodes. That delivers maximum market impact from a single enforcement action.
- **We coordinate with the correct enforcement body for the objective:** We escalated to IMOST, which is empowered to impose fines, order seizure, and mandate destruction of [counterfeit trademark](#) goods.
- **We secure quantifiable, reportable enforcement results:** Seizure of 1,073 counterfeit garments and an administrative fine of VND 183,360,000 are clean metrics our client can report internally to global brand protection, compliance, and senior management.
- **We ensure destruction of seized counterfeits:** We do not leave infringing goods in limbo. We push for destruction, preventing counterfeit goods from re-entering the market through informal channels.
- **We act decisively in high-density “difficult” markets:** Hanoi's Old Quarter is crowded, fast-moving, and historically tolerant of gray-market apparel. Coordinating ministry-backed raids in that environment shows operational maturity and credibility with authorities.
- **We protect global brand value locally:** This is more than a legal exercise. For fashion and lifestyle brands, uncontrolled counterfeit presence erodes perceived quality and pricing power. Taking out wholesale counterfeiters protects Lacoste's brand equity and its authorized distribution channels in Vietnam.

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