

## Dumb Starbucks May Face Legal Action from Popular Coffee Chain

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Consumers in Colorado often appreciate the humor of a parody. However, businesses that choose to create a parody of another business must be careful to avoid trademark infringement, which could force them to change their name or even close their business.

Most Coloradans are familiar with the coffee chain Starbucks, which boasts more than 20,000 locations worldwide. Because the Starbucks brand is so recognizable around the world, the company sometimes takes action against companies that infringe on its name and trademark.

Starbucks is aware of a coffee shop in California that calls itself Dumb Starbucks as a parody of the well-known coffee chain. So far, there is only one Dumb Starbucks location. Dumb Starbucks' logo is almost identical to the green Starbucks logo; the only difference is that the Dumb Starbucks logo includes the word "dumb." Also, many of the Dumb Starbucks menu options are quite similar to Starbucks'.

Dumb Starbucks alleges that it has the right to create a parody of Starbucks because it is essentially making fun of the large coffee chain. However, Starbucks disagrees and will likely take steps to force the smaller coffee shop to either change its name and logo or close altogether. It is unknown whether Dumb Starbucks has earned a profit.

Most companies aren't as well known as Starbucks, but it is still important for all companies to monitor the use of their trademark. Any company that is interested in protecting its intellectual property may want to make an appointment with an attorney.

**Source:** Los Angeles Times, "[Starbucks 'aware' of Dumb Starbucks, 'evaluating next steps'](#)," Tiffany Hsu, Feb. 10, 2014



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