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HOW TO TAKE DOWN AN IMPERSONATION OR TRADEMARK ACCOUNT ON TWITTER

Being the thorough guy that I am, I'll check to see if there are trademarks associated with Meridian Bioscience. And it turns out you are correct. "Meridian Bioscience" is trademarked.

The instructions for fixing a name squatting account (I call these impersonation accounts) or a trademark infringing account (I call these trademark accounts) on Twitter are straight forward and, to their credit, Twitter has done an excellent job of automating and simplifying the process. To get started, the user, whether it be an individual or company, should visit Twitter's "Name Squatting Policy" page at: <http://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/148-policy-information/articles/18370-name-squatting-policy>

That page will send the user off in one of two directions: misuse based on impersonation or misuse based on trademark infringement. In each instance, after reading through Twitter's explanation of what constitutes wrongful impersonation or trademark infringement, you will be given the option to submit a "ticket" in order to report the violation. Users should read through the policies so they understand what information Twitter will need in order to take down the account. As discussed below, this point is somewhat important.

An example of the trademark ticket is available at: <http://support.twitter.com/forms/trademark>

An example of the impersonation ticket is available at:
<http://support.twitter.com/forms/impersonation>

With a trademark account:

If you have a valid trademark and it is being infringed (per Twitter's policies), definitely use the trademark form; you will get a faster response. Twitter does not want any infringement taking place on its site. You will need, however, your trademark registration number, and the name of

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the trademark office you registered with (in the U.S., it will almost always be the USPTO unless the mark is registered with a state).

In both instances (impersonation and trademark), there are certain criteria that must be met before Twitter will take down the account. For example, with respect to a trademark account:

- When there is a clear intent to mislead others through the unauthorized use of a trademark, Twitter will suspend the account and notify the account holder.
- When we determine that an account appears to be confusing users, but is not purposefully passing itself off as the trademarked good or service, we give the account holder an opportunity to clear up any potential confusion. We may also release a username for the trademark holder's active use.

Or with an impersonation account:

- Twitter users are allowed to create parody, commentary, or fan accounts. Please refer to Twitter's Parody Policy for more information about these accounts. Accounts with the clear intent to confuse or mislead may be permanently suspended.

All of these details are spelled out on Twitter's policy pages, which the user will end up clicking through once they visit <http://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/148-policy-information/articles/18370-name-squatting-policy>. The policies are generally short, easy to understand, and, in most instances, you can tell right from the start whether the offending account is one that is worthy of being shut down. I suggest you visit the link and click through some of the policies and forms to get a feel for how easy it actually is.

One final thing to consider with respect to trademark accounts is whether you want to take down the account or whether you want to take over the account. One of the initial questions in the trademark ticket form is whether you want to shut down the account or whether you want to shut down the account and take it over. In cases where the account name itself is misleading, usually the trademark owner will want to take over the account. Trademark owners may want to consider taking over an account (including all of its followers) rather than shutting down an account.

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I hope there is some coherency in this brief memo. The process really is quite simple. Let me know if you have any follow-up questions. I would like to republish parts of your final article on my blog: <http://www.socialmediaesq.com>, or at least reference it. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute. Let me know if there is anything else I can do to help.