

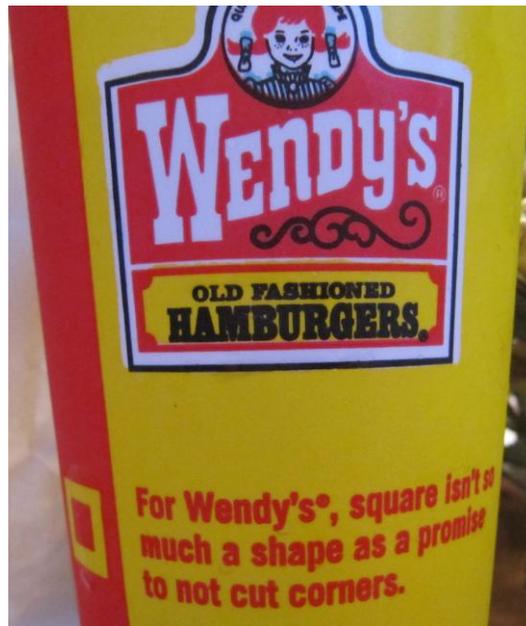
A Winthrop & Weinstine blog dedicated to bridging the gap between legal & marketing types.

[Brands That Cut Corners, Literally . . .](#)

Posted on May 23, 2011 by [Steve Baird](#)

Wendy's is a brand that claims to *not* cut corners: "For Wendy's, square isn't so much a shape as a promise to not cut corners."

As a [trademark type](#), the focus on the square shape and surrounding symbolism leaves me wondering whether Wendy's is cleverly laying the groundwork for claiming [non-traditional trademark rights](#) in the square shape of their hamburger patties, or perhaps just the [National Geographic inspired](#) square logo on the drink cup below:



[Wendy's goes on to say](#): "At Wendy's, those words affect everything we do. We don't cut corners with our hamburgers. Nor anything else for that matter." (See [Dave Thomas Biography](#)).



Well, that may be taking the promise a bit far. What about the corners of their rectangular [brand signals](#)?

I couldn't help but notice the irony of the overstated brand promise when considering the longstanding shape of Wendy's "Old Fashioned Hamburgers" brand signal appearing a mere inch above the statement -- a rectangular-shaped logo carrier with each of the four corners cut out.

The shape of these brand signals with "cut corners" isn't exactly new to Wendy's branding -- trademark records indicate the sign on the left dates back to 1970, and the one on the right, 1981:



Having "corner-cutting" brand signals on my mind over the weekend, I happened to notice Wendy's is not alone. A well-known luxury leather brand:



And, leave it to a famous tool brand to figure out a way to cut corners, and in doing so, actually double the number:



Do you suppose the brand managers for Wendy's paid any attention to the inconsistency between the literal brand promise and the shape of their longstanding brand signals?

Does this speak to the credibility of a brand or just the obscure interest of a trademark type?



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