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Starbucks Applies for Russian Patents After Leaving Country

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Engin Akyurt / pexels

Starbucks has applied for several patents in Russia almost two years after exiting the country over its war in Ukraine, the Vedomosti business daily reported Tuesday, citing the database of Russia's intellectual property agency Rospatent.

Experts speculate the move could signal either Starbucks' potential return to the Russian market or an effort to extend patent protections before they expire next year.

Starbucks suspended work and deliveries in Russia on March 10, 2022, days after the Ukraine invasion and announced a full exit that May after nearly 15 years in the market.

Pro-Kremlin rapper Timati and Russian restaurateur Anton Pinskiy acquired Starbucks' Russian operations in July 2022 and reopened it as "Stars Coffee" with the slogan "Bucks is gone, stars stay."

Pinskiy had reportedly tried and failed to register the "Stars Pinskiy Coffee" and "Stars

Kanokov Coffee" trademarks, with Rospatent ruling that they bear too many similarities to Starbucks.

In April this year, the restaurateur filed a suit seeking the early termination of the Starbucks Corporation trademark.

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According to Vedomosti, Starbucks Corporation applied for eight Russian patents for brands like "Starbucks coffee" and "frappuccino," as well as for services like food and drink preparations and loyalty programs.

The Seattle-based Starbucks Corporation has not commented on the Vedomosti report.

Starbucks Corporation may be pursuing the dual goal of maintaining the possibility of eventually returning to Russia and protecting its trademarks after the patents' three-year expiration period in 2025, legal experts told Vedomosti.

Starbucks employed 2,000 people across its 130 stores in Russia before its wartime exit.

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