

Procter & Gamble wins 'Satan' suit: Judgment against Amway distributors

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For those needing any more reasons to discount the decades-old rumor that one of America's largest and oldest consumer products companies is in league with Satan, a federal jury recently provided about 19 million of them.

Procter & Gamble announced March 19 that a jury had awarded the company \$19.25 million in damages after a trial in the Utah Federal District Court. The jury in Salt Lake City entered the judgment against distributors for the Amway Corporation for spreading the rumors about satanic affiliations.

This latest case began in 1995, when four distributors for Amway, a household products company that competes with Procter & Gamble, circulated a message via a company voicemail system saying that Procter & Gamble's CEO had donated some profits to the Church of Satan. Although the distributors soon retracted the rumor, the messages made their way to hundreds of Amway clients—and, eventually, to Procter & Gamble attorneys.

The Cincinnati-based company— makers of Ivory soap, Tide laundry detergent and a host of other household products—sued the distributors and Amway. While Amway successfully argued that it had acted quickly to quash the rumors, the jury found that it had, nonetheless, likely cost Procter & Gamble millions in lost sales.

In the 1980s, the company filed similar lawsuits—some of which also were against Amway distributors.

The Web site Snopes.com, which debunks urban legends, said that Procter & Gamble's logo with a crescent moon and stars has suggested to some people the number 666, the "mark of the beast" in the book of Revelation.

Procter & Gamble, founded 170 years ago, introduced the moon-and-stars logo on boxes of candles in 1850, and by the next decade it used the logo on all the firm's products and letterhead. *-Associated Baptist Press*