

The General Mills Corporation apologized and quickly retreated from a policy change which inserted a forced arbitration clause into its terms of service. The company, which makes popular cereal brands such as Cheerios and Cocoa Puffs, created a social media firestorm when it quietly added language to its website to alert customers that they give up their right to sue the company if they download coupons, "join" it in online communities like Facebook, enter a company-sponsored sweepstakes or contest, or interact with it in a variety of other ways.

The backlash against General Mills' policy was swift and intense. The American Association for Justice joined the effort and more than 4,000 letters with the message "Trix Don't Belong In The Fine Print" were sent to Congress. Many thought the company's means of securing customers' "agreement" regarding mandatory forced arbitration was underhanded. Though General Mills retracted this effort to require arbitration of any disputes with customers, the threat of forced arbitration is ever-present due to recent United States Supreme Court decisions in the arbitration arena. Concerned citizens should contact Congress and urge enactment of the Arbitration Fairness Act.