

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Montblanc-Simplo GmbH and Compagnie Financière Richemont SA v.
Massalfa Microwave
Case No. D2024-1302

1. The Parties

The Complainants are Montblanc-Simplo GmbH, Germany, and Compagnie Financière Richemont SA, Switzerland, represented by Corsearch, Inc., United States of America.

The Respondent is Massalfa Microwave, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <montblancreplica.com> is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on March 27, 2024. On March 27, 2024, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On March 27, 2024, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Redacted for Privacy, Privacy Service Provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on March 28, 2024, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on April 2, 2024.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on April 8, 2024. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was April 28, 2024. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on May 5, 2024.

The Center appointed Adam Taylor as the sole panelist in this matter on May 11, 2024. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainants are part of the Richemont group, which has supplied luxury pens and other products under the MONTBLANC mark for over 100 years.

The Complainants are collectively referred to hereafter as “the Complainant”, unless it is necessary to refer to them separately.

The Complainant owns many registered trade marks for MONTBLANC including German trade mark No. 132223, registered on July 8, 1910, in class 16.

The Complainant operates a website at “www.montblanc.com”.

The disputed domain name was registered on August 31, 2023.

As of November 29, 2023, the disputed domain name resolved to a website branded “MONT BLANC” offering a “Montblanc replica pen series” for sale.

5. Parties’ Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for transfer of the disputed domain name.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant’s contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

Under the Policy, the Complainant is required to prove on the balance of probabilities that:

- the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trade mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Consolidation - Preliminary Issue

The Panel is satisfied that (a) the Complainants, which are part of a group of companies, have a specific common grievance against the Respondent and the Respondent has engaged in common conduct that has affected the Complainants in similar fashion and (b) it would be equitable and procedurally efficient to permit consolidation of the Complaint. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, (“[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)”), section 4.11.

B. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trade mark and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trade mark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms (here, "replica") may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

C. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognised that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a *prima facie* case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a *prima facie* case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's *prima facie* showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, sale of purportedly counterfeit goods) can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent, irrespective of any disclosure on the related website that such infringing goods are "replicas" or indeed the use of such term in the domain name itself. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

D. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, sale of purportedly counterfeit goods or replicas - effectively acknowledged on the Respondent's website) constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <montblancreplica.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Adam Taylor/

Adam Taylor

Sole Panelist

Date: May 25, 2024