

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Sodexo v. Joe LINK

Case No. D2026-2387

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Sodexo, France, represented by Areopage, France.

The Respondent is Joe LINK, Hong Kong, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <sodexouk.com> is registered with NETIM SARL (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on June 2, 2026. On June 3, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 4, 2026, 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 (Unknown) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 4, 2026, 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 June 5, 2026.

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 June 5, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was June 25, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on July 6, 2026.

The Center appointed William A. Van Caenegem as the sole panelist in this matter on July 10, 2026. 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 Complainant is a company founded in 1966 in France and is one of the largest corporations in the world specialized in food services and facilities management. It has more than 426,000 employees serving 80 million consumers daily in 43 countries. In fiscal year 2025, consolidated revenues were 24,1 billion euros which represents by region: 46% North America, 36% Europe, and 18% for the rest of the world.

In 2008, SODEXHO changed the spelling of its mark and name to SODEXO and changed its logo. The mark is used in relation to food services and facility management services. The Complainant has multiple registration for the mark, including SODEXO in Hong Kong, trademark registration n° 300997516 filed on November 21, 2007, and registered on May 11, 2009, relying on the priority of the French trademark registration n° 073513766 of July 16, 2007, renewed in 2017 in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45; International trademark registration n° 964615 for SODEXO registered on January 8, 2008 relying on the priority of the French trademark registration n° 073513766 of July 16, 2007, renewed in 2018, in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45 and protected in many countries; and European Union trademark registration for SODEXO filed on June 8, 2009 and registered on February 1, 2010 under n° 008346462, renewed in 2019 in international classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45. The Complainant also has multiple device mark registrations that include the term SODEXO.

The Sodexo group utilizes a number of domain names including <sodexo.com>, <uk.sodexo.com>, <sodexoprestige.co.uk>, <sodexo.fr>, <sodexoca.com>, <sodexousa.com>, <cn.sodexo.com>, <sodexho.fr>, and <sodexho.com>.

The disputed domain name <sodexouk.com> was created on May 21, 2026, and resolves to an imitation website looking like an official Sodexo's website.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

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

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is composed of the sign SODEXO associated with the letters "uk" which are obviously understood by consumers as the abbreviation for United Kingdom. The Complainant says that for that reason, the disputed domain name is understood as referring to the Complainant's activities in the United Kingdom. The Complainant adds that the addition of the element "uk" in the disputed domain name is obviously not sufficient to distinguish it from the Complainant's marks. The Complainant adds that it is widely recognized that the addition of a generic or descriptive term to a mark will not alter the fact that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark in question. The Complainant therefore contends that because of the identical reproduction of the SODEXO mark, the public will believe that the disputed domain name <sodexouk.com> comes from the SODEXO group or is linked to SODEXO. The Complainant says that the likelihood of confusion between the disputed domain name and the SODEXO mark is further increased as the Respondent uses the SODEXO mark and a similar logo on a fake website which looks like an official SODEXO website, to which the disputed domain name resolves.

The Complainant asserts that the Respondent has no rights nor legitimate interests in the disputed domain name as it has no rights to SODEXO as a corporate name, trade name, shop sign, mark or domain name that would exist prior to the Complainant's rights in relation to SODEXO. The Complainant also asserts that the Respondent was not commonly known by the disputed domain name prior to the adoption and use by the Complainant of the corporate name, business name and mark SODEXO / SODEXHO. The Complainant adds that the Respondent does not have any affiliation, association, sponsorship or connection with the

Complainant and has not been authorized, licensed or otherwise permitted by the Complainant or by any subsidiary or affiliated company to register the disputed domain name and to use it.

The Complainant points out that the sign SODEXO is purely fanciful and nobody could legitimately choose this word or any variation thereof, unless seeking to create an association between their activities and the SODEXO mark. The Complainant contends that because of the well-known character and reputation of the SODEXO/ SODEXHO mark, the Respondent obviously knew of its existence when it registered the disputed domain name and was perfectly aware that it had no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and could not lawfully use it.

The Complainant surmises that the website to which the disputed domain name resolves is created to be used as a scam, and to obtain payment from clients or consumers into fake Sodexo bank accounts. The Complainant asserts that the said website has been created to make the public believe that the disputed domain name is linked to a SODEXO official website. The Complainant says this amounts to fraudulent use of the disputed domain name.

The Complainant concludes by stating that it assumes the Respondent's aim is to perpetrate phishing attacks with the disputed domain name, and that the unauthorized registration of the disputed domain name with the aim of fraudulent use is for the purpose of commercial gain and thus constitutes bad faith registration and use.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

A. 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 trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 SODEXO mark of the Complainant for the purposes of the Policy. Although the addition of other terms here, the geographic abbreviation "uk", may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), sections 1.7. and 1.8.

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

B. 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 recognized that proving that 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 3.1](#), 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.

The Respondent was not authorized to incorporate the distinctive SODEXO trademark of the Complainant in any domain name, and there is nothing to indicate that it is known by the disputed domain name or the term SODEXO or had acquired any rights in the latter before registration of the disputed domain name.

Panels have consistently held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here claimed as the establishment of an imitation website that replicates the SODEXO mark and logo of the Complainant without permission, can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent.

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent has acquired a domain name that incorporates a very distinctive and widely known trademark belonging to the Complainant. A simple google and/or trademark search would make the rights of the Complainant in the SODEXO mark immediately apparent. The combination with the abbreviation "uk" standing for United Kingdom further indicates that the Respondent, at the time of registration, was fully aware what the SODEXO mark stands for and who has exclusive rights in it.

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. Here, the disputed domain name resolves to an imitation website that replicates the distinctive SODEXO trademark of the Complainant and also its logo that incorporates that term combined with a distinctive device element. It is not possible to imagine a legitimate reason to establish such a shadow website and more likely than not the Respondent's intent is to take advantage of Internet users who mistake it for a legitimate site of the Complainant, and to obtain some financial advantage from them by so misleading them.

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 <sodexouk.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/William A. Van Caenegem/

William A. Van Caenegem

Sole Panelist

Date: July 24, 2026.