ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Watts Water Technologies Inc. v. xue bai
Case No. D2026-2562

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Watts Water Technologies Inc., United States of America ("United States"), represented by CSC Digital Brand Services Group AB, Sweden.

The Respondent is xue bai, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <febcobrand.com> is registered with Dynadot Inc (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 12, 2026. On June 12, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 15, 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 (REDACTED FOR PRIVACY / Super Privacy Service LTD c/o Dynadot) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 17, 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 17, 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 19, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 9, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 17, 2026.

The Center appointed Yuri Chumak as the sole panelist in this matter on July 21, 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, Watts Water Technologies Inc., is a United States company incorporated in Delaware in 1985. Together with its consolidated subsidiaries, it manufactures and supplies water technologies and solutions designed to promote safety, energy efficiency, and water conservation in commercial and residential buildings. The record shows that the Complainant is the parent company of Watts Regulator Co., which was founded in 1874.

Watts Regulator Co. owns registered rights in the FEBCO mark, including:

- China Trademark Registration No. 3148741 for FEBCO, registered on September 14, 2003;

- United States Trademark Registration No. 1,136,005 for FEBCO, registered on May 27, 1980; and

- International Registration No. 1289664 for FEBCO, registered on March 12, 2015.

The Complainant's corporate group uses the FEBCO mark in connection with backflow prevention products and related valves. The group promotes the FEBCO brand through its website at "www.watts.com" and holds a portfolio of domain names incorporating the FEBCO mark, including <febcobackflow.com> and <febcoonline.com>.

The disputed domain name was registered on October 10, 2025.

At the time relevant to this proceeding, the disputed domain name resolved to a website that prominently displayed the FEBCO word mark and logo and presented itself in the first person as FEBCO. The website promoted FEBCO-branded backflow prevention products, included a section headed "Febco Sales Today", stated that FEBCO operated as part of the "Watts family of brands", provided an email address at the disputed domain name for customer support, and invited visitors to subscribe for a discount. The screenshots in the record do not show any disclaimer identifying the Respondent or explaining that the website was not operated by or affiliated with the Complainant or Watts Regulator Co.

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 confusingly similar to the FEBCO mark because it incorporates the mark in its entirety and adds only the term "brand". The generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant, has not been authorized to use the FEBCO mark, and is not commonly known by the disputed domain name. The Complainant submits that the Respondent's website impersonates the Complainant's FEBCO brand and does not constitute a bona fide offering of goods or services, a legitimate noncommercial use, or a fair use. The Complainant also submits that any reseller claim would fail because the website does not accurately and prominently disclose the Respondent's relationship with the trademark owner.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The FEBCO trademark rights relied upon by the Complainant substantially predate registration of the disputed domain name. According to the Complainant, the composition of the disputed domain name and the associated website show that the Respondent knew of the FEBCO mark and intentionally sought to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a false impression of affiliation with the Complainant and its FEBCO brand.

The Complainant requests that the disputed domain name be transferred to it.

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 trademark registrations relied upon in the Complaint are registered in the name of Watts Regulator Co., rather than the Complainant. However, the record establishes that the Complainant is the parent company of Watts Regulator Co. A parent company may rely, for purposes of standing under the Policy, on trademark rights held by a company or brand under its corporate umbrella.

The Panel therefore finds that the Complainant has shown rights in respect of the FEBCO mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, sections 1.2.1 and 1.4.1.

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 3.1, section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms, here, "brand" 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, section 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.

There is no evidence that the Respondent has been authorized by the Complainant or Watts Regulator Co. to use the FEBCO mark. There is also no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The website associated with the disputed domain name prominently displayed the FEBCO mark and logo, presented itself as FEBCO, and represented that FEBCO operated as part of the Watts family of brands. Such use is in the nature of passing off and does not constitute a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use.

Even assuming that the website promoted genuine FEBCO products and that the Respondent could be characterized as a reseller, the Respondent's use would not satisfy the principles applicable to reseller or distributor cases. At a minimum, the website did not accurately and prominently disclose the Respondent's relationship with the trademark owner. Instead, it represented itself as the FEBCO brand and as part of the Complainant's corporate group. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.8.1.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here, claimed passing off can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.13.1.

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.

The FEBCO trademark rights relied upon by the Complainant substantially predate the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name. The disputed domain name incorporates the FEBCO mark in its entirety and adds the term "brand", which reinforces an apparent association with the trademark owner.

The content of the Respondent's website removes any doubt as to the Respondent's knowledge of and intent to target the FEBCO mark. The website prominently displayed the FEBCO mark and logo, promoted FEBCO-branded products, used first-person language as FEBCO, and expressly associated itself with the Watts family of brands. The Panel therefore finds that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name with actual knowledge of the FEBCO mark and its association with the Complainant's corporate group.

The website was also commercial in character. It promoted products, included a section headed "Febco Sales Today", provided customer support contact information, and invited visitors to subscribe for a discount. At the same time, it did not disclose that it was operated independently of the Complainant and Watts Regulator Co.

By using the disputed domain name in this manner, the Respondent intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the FEBCO mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website and the products promoted on it. This constitutes evidence of bad-faith registration and use under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.1.4.

The Respondent has not provided any explanation for its selection or use of the disputed domain name capable of displacing the inference arising from the composition of the disputed domain name and the content of the associated website.

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 3.1, section 3.2.1.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity, here, claimed passing off constitutes bad faith. WIPO Overview 3.1, 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 <febcobrand.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Yuri Chumak/
Yuri Chumak
Sole Panelist
Date: July 30, 2026