

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

B&B HOTELS v. leonardo bandini

Case No. D2025-4012

1. The Parties

The Complainant is B&B HOTELS, France, represented by Fiducial Legal By Lamy, France.

The Respondent is Leonardo Bandini, Italy.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com> is registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on October 1, 2025. On October 2, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On October 3, 2025, 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 (lebbhotel.com) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on October 3, 2025, 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 October 7, 2025.

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 October 9, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 29, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on October 30, 2025.

The Center appointed Iris Quadrio as the sole panelist in this matter on November 10, 2025. 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, B&B HOTELS (Société par actions simplifiée), is a well-known French hospitality company incorporated on May 28, 1990, and registered in the French Registry of Commerce. Since its creation, the Complainant has operated under the name B&B HOTELS as a brand, commercial name, and shop sign, offering hotel, restaurant, temporary accommodation, and booking services to a wide range of customers. Over more than three decades, the Complainant has grown into a major player in the European budget-hotel market, currently operating more than 860 hotels worldwide — including substantial presence in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Brazil — with 432 hotels operating in France alone.

The Complainant has reached a leading position in the French budget-hotel sector, achieving a turnover of more than EUR 220 million in 2021, and has continually invested in the expansion, marketing and promotion of the B&B HOTELS brand. To protect its online presence, the Complainant has registered numerous domain names incorporating its B&B HOTELS, BBHOTEL, BB-HOTEL or HOTELBB trademarks in various combinations since as early as 1998.

Moreover, the Complainant is the owner of the following trademarks: (i) European Union trademark registration for B & B HOTELS & logo (semi-figurative), Reg No. 004767323, registered since December 12, 2006, in class 43; (ii) French trademark registration for B & B HOTELS & logo (semi-figurative), Reg No. 3394439, registered since November 29, 2005, in class 43; (iii) French trademark registration for BB-HOTEL, Reg No. 3182313, registered since August 29, 2002, in class 43; (iv) French trademark registration for BBHOTEL, Reg No. 3182311, registered since August 29, 2002, in class 43; (v) HOTELBB, Reg No. 3182312, registered since August 29, 2002, in class 43.

The Complainant has Internet presence through and holds the domain names <bbhotels.com>, <hotelbb.com>, <thebbhotel.com> among others.

The disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com> was registered on July 12, 2025. At the time of filing the Complaint, the disputed domain name resolved to an inactive webpage.

Prior to initiating this administrative proceeding, on August 26, 2025, the Complainant sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Registrar, both by email and by registered post. The Registrar responded on August 28, 2025, stating that it was unable to take action, informing that the Complainant resort to the UDRP. Consequently, the Complainant filed the Complaint on October 1, 2025.

Lastly, the Respondent is identified as Mr. Leonardo Bandini, located in Italy. No evidence has been submitted by the Respondent to demonstrate any business activities, trademark rights or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name.

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 the disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com> is confusingly similar to its BBHOTEL and B&B HOTELS trademarks, on which the Complainant has prior rights.

The Complainant contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com>, and that the Respondent is not related in any way to the Complainant. The Complainant has not authorized or licensed the Respondent to use its B&B HOTELS trademarks or to register any domain name incorporating similar elements.

Moreover, the Complainant argues that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith, as it resolves to an inactive webpage and appears intended to create confusion among Internet users as to the source of the Respondent's website and/or affiliation to the Complainant, and to take unfair advantage of the Complainant's reputation.

Finally, the Complainant requests the Administrative Panel appointed in this administrative proceeding that the disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

According to paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, for this Complaint to succeed in relation to the disputed domain name, the Complainant must prove each of the following, namely that:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar with a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; and
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interest in respect of the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

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 Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition (["WIPO Overview 3.0"](#)), section 1.7.

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

The entirety of the Complainant's BBHOTEL mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7. Disregarding the generic Top-Level Domain ".com", in accordance with section 1.11.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), the only difference between the Complainant's registered trademarks and the disputed domain name is the addition of the French definite article "le" which translates to "the" in English, placed before the BBHOTEL trademark of the Complainant.

It is well established in prior UDRP decisions that the mere addition of a term to a complainant's mark does not avoid a finding of confusing similarity. Although the addition of other terms (here, the French article "le" which translates to "the" in English) may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds that 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 3.0](#), 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 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.

The Complainant has claimed not to have authorized, licensed, or otherwise permitted the Respondent to register or use the disputed domain name or to use any of the Complainant’s B&B HOTELS, BBHOTEL, BB-HOTEL or HOTELBB trademarks in any manner. There is no evidence in the record suggesting that the Respondent has, or could have, any rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. Moreover, the Complainant holds prior rights in its trademarks—which have been registered and used for many years before the Respondent registered the disputed domain name.

The Panel considers that the composition of the disputed domain name carries a risk of implied affiliation. In the present case, the disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant’s BBHOTEL trademark in its entirety, with the mere addition of the French article “le” translating to “the” in English, which does not confer any distinctiveness. Rather, it suggests affiliation with or endorsement from the Complainant, particularly given that the Complainant operates the domain <thebbhotel.com>, making <lebbhotel.com> appear as a derivative or localized variant in the French language of the Complainant’s online presence.

Likewise, it does not appear that the Respondent made nor is making any legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. In this regard, the Complainant demonstrated that the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive website. This clear inactivity confirms that the Respondent has not taken any steps toward a bona fide or legitimate use of the disputed domain name.

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 such connection, the Complainant has submitted evidence showing that its B&B HOTELS, BBHOTEL, BB-HOTEL or HOTELBB trademarks are well known in France and throughout Europe and have been registered and used for many years prior to the Respondent’s registration of the disputed domain name. By registering the disputed domain name <lebbhotel.com>, the Respondent has targeted the Complainant’s mark by reproducing it in its entirety, adding only the French definite article “le” which translates to “the” in English, and considering that the Complainant is a French company with a strong and well-established presence in France, this addition reinforces the misleading impression that the disputed domain name is a derivative or localized version of one of the Complainant’s official domain names, such as <thebbhotel.com>.

Therefore, the Panel is satisfied that the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant and its well-known trademarks when registering the disputed domain name. Consistent with section 3.1.4 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), the registration of a domain name incorporating a well-known mark by an unaffiliated party gives rise to a presumption of bad faith registration.

Furthermore, the disputed domain name resolves to an inactive page. Panels have consistently held that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank or inaccessible page) does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, and the composition of the disputed domain name, and finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of 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 <lebbhotel.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Iris Quadrio/

Iris Quadrio

Sole Panelist

Date: November 28, 2025