

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

VGP IPCo LLC and Valvoline Licensing and Intellectual Property LLC v.
Vladimir Volf
Case No. D2025-4142

1. The Parties

The Complainants are VGP IPCo LLC, United States of America (the “United States”), and Valvoline Licensing and Intellectual Property LLC, United States, represented by CSC Digital Brand Services Group AB, Sweden.

The Respondent is Vladimir Volf, the Russian Federation.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <valvoline.site> is registered with Registrar of Domain Names REG.RU LLC (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on October 9, 2025. On October 10, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On October 13, 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 (Private Person / Personal data, can not be publicly disclosed according to applicable laws) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainants on October 14, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainants to submit an amendment to the Complaint.

On October 14, 2025 the Center informed the parties in Russian and English, that the language of the registration agreement for the disputed domain name is Russian. On October 16, 2025, the Complainants filed an amended Complaint containing a request for English to be the language of the proceedings. The Respondent did not submit any comment on the Complainant’s submission.

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 in English and Russian of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on October 22, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 11, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on November 12, 2025.

The Center appointed Alissia Shchichka as the sole panelist in this matter on November 17, 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

Both Complainants serve as intellectual property holding companies within the Valvoline group, which is active in the production and distribution of automotive, commercial, and industrial lubricants, as well as related automotive chemical products.

The Valvoline group traces its origins to 1866 and operates in more than 140 countries and territories. It also oversees a network of over 1,900 franchised and company-operated service centers in the United States and Canada, providing oil change and other vehicle maintenance services.

The Complainants have evidenced to be the registered owners of numerous trademarks worldwide relating to their trademarks VALVOLINE including, but not limited, to the following:

- International Trademark Registration No. 679766A, designating numerous jurisdictions, registered on August 1, 1997, for the word mark VALVOLINE, in class 25; and
- European Union Trademark Registration No. 009847773, registered on October 25, 2011, for the word mark VALVOLINE, in classes 1, 4, and 35.

The Complainants are also the owners of the domain names <valvolineglobal.com> (registered August 23, 2022) and <valvoline.com> (registered March 4, 1995).

The aforementioned trademarks and domain names were registered before the disputed domain name, which was registered on March 1, 2025. The disputed domain name currently resolves to an inactive website. The Complainants have provided evidence showing that the disputed domain previously redirected to the Registrar's website, where it was offered for sale.

The Respondent, according to the disclosed Whois information for the disputed domain name, is located in the Russian Federation.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainants

The Complainants contend that they have satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for the transfer of the disputed domain name.

According to the Complainants, the disputed domain name is identical to the Complainants' VALVOLINE trademark, as it incorporates the entire trademark. In respect of the generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".site", which forms part of the disputed domain name, the Complainants request that the Panel disregard it under the first element as it is a standard registration requirement.

The Complainants further argue that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. In support of this position, the Complainants note that (1) the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name; (2) the Respondent is not affiliated with, nor authorized by, the

Complainants to register or use domain names incorporating the VALVOLINE trademark; and (3) the Respondent has not used, or made demonstrable preparations to use, the disputed domain name in connection with any bona fide offering of goods or services. Instead, the disputed domain name redirected to a Registrar's sales page, where it was offered for purchase, which the Complainants argue cannot constitute legitimate or fair use.

Finally, the Complainants assert that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. (1) Given the fame and long-standing commercial use of the VALVOLINE trademark, the Complainants argue that the Respondent knew, or should have known, of the Complainants' rights; (2) The Complainants further note that the disputed domain name was being offered for sale, which they consider evidence of bad faith; (3) In addition, the lack of any substantive use, combined with the well-known character of the Complainants' trademark, supports a finding of passive holding in bad faith under the requirements established in the Telstra case; and (4) the Respondent owns multiple domain names incorporating well-known trademarks and has been the subject of prior UDRP decisions, which is indicative of a pattern of trademark-abusive domain name registrations.

The Complainants request that the disputed domain name be transferred to the Complainant.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1 Preliminary Issues

In this proceeding, the Complaint has been submitted jointly by two Complainants. They are affiliated to each other and have a common interest in the VALVOLINE trademark. They also describe a common grievance against the Respondent where it has allegedly engaged in conduct that has affected their rights.

The Respondent has not expressed any views on the issue of consolidation of the Complainants, and it appears to the Panel that it would be procedurally efficient and equitable for the Complainants to be consolidated. Taking the above into account, and on the basis of paragraph 10(e) of the Rules, the Panel allows the consolidation of the Complainants in these proceedings. The Panel will refer to the two Complainants jointly as "the Complainant" in the remainder of this Decision.

Language of the Proceedings

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Russian. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceedings shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complainant requests that the proceedings be conducted in English on the following grounds:

- (1) the Complainant is unable to communicate in Russian, and translating the Complaint would impose an undue burden, cause unnecessary delay, and disadvantage the Complainant;
- (2) any such delay poses a continuing risk to the Complainant and to consumers seeking the Complainant or its products;
- (3) the disputed domain name consists of Latin characters and English terms;
- (4) the term "Valvoline," which forms the dominant element of the disputed domain name, has no particular meaning in the Russian language; and

(5) the Complainant had previously sent a cease-and-desist letter to the Respondent, which went unanswered. The Respondent did not request that communications be conducted in Russian, despite having the opportunity to do so. The Complainant argues that requiring translation at this stage would unfairly burden it and run contrary to the principles of efficiency and fairness underlying the UDRP.

The Respondent did not make any submissions with respect to the language of the proceedings.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 4.5.1).

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceedings shall be English.

6.2 Substantive Issues

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant carries the burden of proving:

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

The Respondent's default in the case at hand does not automatically result in a decision in favor of the Complainant, however, paragraph 5(f) of the Rules provides that if the Respondent does not submit a response, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, the Panel shall decide the dispute based upon the Complaint.

Further, according to paragraph 14(b) of the Rules, the Panel may draw such inferences from the Respondent's failure to submit a response as it considers appropriate.

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

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.

Indeed, the Complainant has confirmed that the Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant, or otherwise authorized or licensed to use the VALVOLINE trademark or to seek registration of any domain name incorporating the trademark. The Respondent is also not known to be associated with the VALVOLINE trademark, and there is no evidence showing that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.3.

The Panel also notes that the composition of the disputed domain name carries a high risk of implied affiliation or suggests sponsorship and/or endorsement by the Complainant. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.5.1.

Accordingly, the Complainant has provided evidence supporting its prima facie claim that the Respondent lacks any 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.

Therefore, the Panel concludes that the Respondent does not have any rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, and the Complainant has met its burden under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

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.

Previous panels have established that the non-use of a domain name (including a blank or "coming soon" page) would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. In this instance, it appears that the Respondent has deliberately registered the disputed domain name that is identical to the VALVOLINE trademark. This name is unlikely to be chosen by a legitimate trader unless there is an intention to create an impression of association with the Complainant.

Considering the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, as well as the composition of the disputed domain name, the Panel concludes that by offering the disputed domain name for sale the Respondent has intended to capitalize on the reputation and goodwill inherent in the Complainant's trademark. The current passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

In addition, the Panel notes that the Respondent, identified as Vladimir Volf, has been involved in multiple prior UDRP proceedings concerning the registration of well-known trademarks (see *Carrefour SA v. Vladimir Volf*, WIPO Case No. [D2020-1665](#); and *Amundi Asset Management v. Vladimir Volf*, WIPO Case No. [D2024-2592](#)). The Respondent's history of engaging in abusive registrations of domain names incorporating well-known trademarks indicates a clear pattern of bad faith conduct. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

The Respondent's selection of a domain name identical to the Complainant's trademark, coupled with the absence of any credible explanation, supports the conclusion that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant's reputation and sought to exploit it. In this regard, the Panel also notes that the disputed domain name previously redirected to the Registrar's webpage, where it was offered for sale (for RUB 4,000), implying the for-sale nature of the disputed domain name. While an offer to sell a domain name is not, by itself, determinative of bad faith, panels generally find bad faith where the surrounding circumstances indicate that the respondent intended to profit from or otherwise exploit the complainant's trademark. Relevant factors in such an assessment among others include: (i) the respondent's likely knowledge of the complainant's rights, (ii) the distinctiveness of the complainant's mark, and (iii) a pattern of abusive domain name registrations. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.1. All of these circumstances are present in the current case.

In light of these circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitute bad faith.

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 <valvoline.site> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Alissia Shchichka/

Alissia Shchichka

Sole Panelist

Date: November 26, 2025