

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Sodexo v. Andy Muller
Case No. D2026-3109

1. The Parties

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

The Respondent is Andy Muller, United Kingdom ("UK").

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <sodexo-aus.com> is registered with NameSilo, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 15, 2026. On July 16, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 16, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response confirming that the Respondent is listed as the registrant and providing the contact details. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 17, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information confirmed by the Registrar.

The Center verified that the 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 July 22, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 11, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on August 14, 2026.

The Center appointed Mengyuan Li as the sole panelist in this matter on August 19, 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 French company founded in 1966, being one of the largest companies in the world specialized in food services and facilities management, with more than 426,000 employees serving daily 80 million consumers in approximately 40 countries. The Complainant's trademark SODEXO is used in connection with various services in the field of food services and facility management services. From 1966 to 2008, the Complainant promoted its business under the SODEXHO mark and trade name, and in 2008 it simplified the spelling of its mark and name to SODEXO.

The Complainant has provided evidence that it is the registered owner of various trademarks relating to its company name and brand SODEXO, including, but not limited to the following:

- UK Trademark SODEXO, No. 00908346462, registered on February 1, 2010, in International Classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45;
- European Union Trademark SODEXO, No. 008346462, registered on February 1, 2010, in International Classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45; and
- International Trademark SODEXO (figurative), No. 964615, registered on January 8, 2008, in International Classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45.

The domain name <sodexo.com> resolves to the Complainant's official website promoting its services. The Complainant also owns numerous domain names corresponding to and/or containing Sodexo, which, among others, include the following: <uk.sodexo.com>, <sodexo.au>, and <sodexo.com.au>.

The Respondent is reportedly based in the United Kingdom.

The disputed domain name was registered on June 18, 2026, and resolves to a registrar parking page, displaying pay-per-click ("PPC") links.

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:

Firstly, the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the SODEXO trademarks in which the Complainant has rights.

- The SODEXO trademarks have a strong reputation and are widely known all over the world. Previous UDRP decisions already recognized the well-known character of the SODEXO trademarks.
- The disputed domain name is composed of the sign SODEXO associated with the letters "aus". The letters "aus" are obviously understood by consumers as an abbreviation of the word "Australia"; therefore, the disputed domain name is understood as referring to the Complainant's activities in Australia. The disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the SODEXO mark as it reproduces the SODEXO mark in its entirety and adds the geographical abbreviation "aus" and a hyphen.

Secondly, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

- The Respondent is unknown to the Complainant, and does not have any affiliation, association, sponsorship or connection with the Complainant. The Respondent 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 Respondent has no rights in SODEXO as corporate name, trade name, shop sign, mark or domain name that would be prior to the Complainant's rights in SODEXO. The Respondent was not commonly known by the disputed domain name prior to the adoption and use of SODEXO by the Complainant as its corporate name, business name and trademarks.

Finally, the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

- The sign SODEXO is purely fanciful and nobody could legitimately choose this word or any variation thereof, unless seeking to create an association with the Complainant's activities and SODEXO mark.
- Given the well-known character of the SODEXO trademarks, the Respondent obviously knew its existence when he registered the disputed domain name. Previous UDRP decisions already recognize that actual knowledge of the Complainant's trademarks and activities at the time of registration of the disputed domain name may be considered an inference of bad faith.

- It is very likely that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name to create confusion with the Complainant's trademarks to divert or mislead third parties for illegitimate profit.

- Pursuant to previous UDRP decisions, bad faith registration and use may be recognized where the disputed domain name resolves to parking pages containing PPC sponsored links based on the trademark value of the domain names. Accordingly, the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name to direct users to such a PPC parking page constitutes bad faith 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 mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms here, being "-aus", 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 3.1](#), 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.

Firstly, the Complainant contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. In the absence of any authorization, license, or other permission from the Complainant to use its SODEXO mark, the Respondent nonetheless registered and used disputed domain name which incorporates the Complainant’s trademark.

Secondly, the Complainant contends that the Respondent is not using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or fair use of the disputed domain names. The Respondent’s current use of the disputed domain name as a parking page with PPC links in the circumstances of this case is neither a bona fide offering of goods or services nor legitimate noncommercial or fair use.

Thirdly, there is no evidence to suggest that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain names.

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 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 disputed domain name, which wholly incorporates the Complainant’s coined and well-known SODEXO mark, currently resolves to a page displaying PPC links, from which the Respondent would most likely derive commercial gain. Given that the Respondent has put forward no plausible explanation for his registration of the disputed domain name, the Panel finds that the Respondent was most likely aware of the Complainant at the time of registration. The Respondent is using the disputed domain name in an intentional attempt to attract Internet users, for commercial gain, to his website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the SODEXO mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of his website. This amounts to registration and use of the disputed domain name in bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. In addition, the addition of “-aus” in the disputed domain name may be perceived by Internet users as referring to the Complainant’s business in Australia, thereby increasing the likelihood of confusion between the Complainant’s business and the disputed domain name.

Further, the Panel also notes the following factors that contribute to the Respondent's bad faith: (i) the Complainant is well known; (ii) the Respondent failed to submit a response; and (iii) it is implausible that there would be any good faith use to which the disputed domain name may be put.

Therefore, the Panel finds that the Respondent has registered and used the disputed domain name in 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 <sodexo-aus.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Mengyuan Li/

Mengyuan Li

Sole Panelist

Date: September 1, 2026