ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
LF, LLC v. meng li
Case No. D2026-4205

1. The Parties

The Complainant is LF, LLC, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Markmonitor Limited, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is meng li, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <masterforgeco.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 September 18, 2026. On September 21, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On September 22, 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 (Dynadot Privacy Service, Super Privacy Service LTD c/o Dynadot) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on September 22, 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 amendment to the Complaint on September 22, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to 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 September 23, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 13, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on October 14, 2026.

The Center appointed Roger Staub as the sole panelist in this matter on October 20, 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 United States-based, wholly owned subsidiary of Lowe's Companies, Inc., which is, together with its subsidiaries, a Fortune 100 home improvement company and the world's second-largest home improvement retailer. The Complainant submits that the group employs approximately 300,000 associates and operates over 1,750 home improvement stores, 540 branches and 120 distribution centers. In the fiscal year 2025, the group achieved USD 86.3 billion in sales. MASTER FORGE is the Complainant's outdoor cooking and living brand, under which it sells gas grills, charcoal grills, smokers, portable grills, outdoor pizza ovens, fire pits, patio heaters, wood stoves, pellet stoves, grilling accessories, and replacement parts.

The Complainant owns, inter alia, the following trademark registrations consisting of the element "Master Forge":

- United States Trademark Registration No. 3796604 for MASTER FORGE registered on June 1, 2010, in Class 21; and

- Canada Trademark Registration No. TMA802951 for MASTER FORGE registered on July 26, 2011, in Classes 11 and 21.

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

The disputed domain name resolves to a website prominently using the Master Forge brand throughout the website (including within the "About us" section). Also in the website's Privacy Policy, Master Forge is used in a way suggesting that it is a company name. The website contains advertisement of purported Master Forge branded products via "BUY ON AMAZON" links. When clicking on any of those links, users are redirected to Amazon stores offering a wide range of competing products.

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.

First, the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights. The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's MASTER FORGE mark in its entirety, only differing by the addition of the two letters "co", which is most likely a reference to the term "company". Anyone who sees the disputed domain name will likely perceive it as a domain name belonging to the Complainant, or at least an entity related to or endorsed by the Complainant. The Top-Level Domain ".com" is required only for technical reasons and can be ignored for the purposes of comparison.

Second, the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Complainant has found no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known as "Master Forge" or "Master Forge Co" prior to or after the registration of the disputed domain name nor that it owns any trademarks incorporating those terms. The Respondent is not a licensee of the Complainant and has not received any permission or consent from the Complainant to use its MASTER FORGE mark. The Complainant further contends that the Respondent is not making legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. The nature of the disputed domain name creates a risk of implied affiliation with the Complainant. The inclusion of the MASTER FORGE mark plus the two letters "co" within the disputed

domain name effectively impersonates, or at least suggests endorsement, by the Complainant. The disputed domain name is not used in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. The use of the disputed domain name to impersonate the Complainant cannot confer any legitimate interest on the Respondent.

Third, the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant contends that there is a likelihood of "initial interest confusion", that the website associated with the disputed domain name is confusing and that a lack of any disclaimer increases the potential for confusion. Internet users presented with the disputed domain name in search engine results are likely to believe that it is run by, connected with, or authorized by the Complainant. The website is inherently confusing due to the prominent use of the Complainant's MASTER FORGE mark, the self-identification in the "About us" section and the promotion and advertisement of purported MASTER FORGE branded products. Further, the Respondent's website claims to be part of an Amazon affiliate program. It does not adequately disclose the lack of any relationship with the Complainant and instead trades on the goodwill attached to the Complainant's MASTER FORGE mark. The Complainant further submits that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name with prior knowledge of the Complainant's MASTER FORGE mark and that the Respondent's purpose was to interfere with the Complainant's business.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

According to the Policy, to qualify for a transfer, the Complainant must prove each of the following:

First, the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights.

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

Third, the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

Since the Respondent did not submit a response, the Panel may accept the reasonable, supported contentions of the Complainant as true. This Panel will determine whether those facts constitute a violation of the Policy that is sufficient to order the transfer of the disputed domain name (see *Joseph Phelps Vineyards LLC v. NOLDC, Inc., Alternative Identity, Inc., and Kentech*, WIPO Case No. D2006-0292).

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, the term "co", which may be read as an abbreviation of "company") may bear on the 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.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegitimate activity (here, claimed impersonation for the purpose of advertising purportedly MASTER FORGE branded products) 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.

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.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel notes (i) the inherent distinctiveness of the Complainant's trademark, (ii) the Complainant's group's position as the world's second-largest home improvement retailer, (iii) the composition of the disputed domain name, which consists of the Complainant's mark and the term "co" (which many Internet users are likely to understand as an abbreviation for "company"), (iv) the use of the Complainant's MASTER FORGE mark on the website to which the disputed domain name resolves, despite the Respondent having no relationship with the Complainant, (v) the use of the disputed domain name to direct Internet users to a website where products are offered which, according to the Complainant's undisputed submission, purport to be MASTER FORGE branded products, (vi) the Respondent's failure to disclose on the website its lack of relationship with the Complainant, and (vii) the Respondent's failure to submit a response. Taken together, these circumstances indicate that the Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain name with the intent to mislead and attract Internet users for commercial gain, which denotes bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.1.4.

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 <masterforgeco.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Roger Staub/
Roger Staub
Sole Panelist
Date: November 3, 2026