ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION
SODEXO v. Janet Michael
Case No. D2026-4412

1. The Parties

The Complainant is SODEXO, France, represented by Areopage, France.

The Respondent is Janet Michael, United States of America ("United States").

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <sodenxo.com> is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on September 30, 2026. On October 1, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On October 2, 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 (Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on October 2, 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 October 5, 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 October 6, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was October 26, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on October 27, 2026.

The Center appointed Jonathan Agmon as the sole panelist in this matter on October 29, 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, founded in 1966, is a French company known as SODEXO and formerly known as SODEXHO ALLIANCE, specialized in food services and facilities management, with more than 426,000 employees serving 80 million consumers in 43 countries. For fiscal year 2025, consolidated revenues reached EUR 24.1 billion.

From 1966 to 2008, the Complainant promoted its business under the SODEXHO mark and trade name. In 2008, the Complainant simplified the spelling of its mark and name by removing the letter 'h' and adopting SODEXO.

The Complainant provides a wide range of services under its trade name and mark SODEXO through an offer of on-site services including food catering, food delivery, hospitality and cleaning, and infrastructure maintenance.

The Complainant also owns numerous domain names corresponding to and/or containing Sodexo or Sodexho. The Complainant promotes its activities among others under the following domain names: <sodexo.com>, <uk.sodexo.com>, <sodexoprestige.co.uk>, <sodexo.fr>, <sodexoca.com>, <sodexousa.com>, <cn.sodexo.com>, <sodexho.fr>, and <sodexho.com>.

The Complainant owns, among others, the following registered marks:

- International trademark no. 964615 for SODEXO (stylized), registered on January 8, 2008;
- International trademark no. 1240316 for SODEXO, registered on October 23, 2014;
- European Union trademark no. 008346462 for SODEXO, registered on February 1, 2010; and
- United States trademark no. 3722463 for SODEXO (stylized), registered on December 8, 2009.

The disputed domain name was registered September 25, 2026. At the time the Complaint was filed, the disputed domain name resolved to a holding page provided by the Registrar.

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 almost identical or confusingly similar to the mark SODEXO in which the Complainant has rights. The only difference between the signs is the addition of the letter "n" between the letters "e" and "x". Such a difference corresponds to obvious misspelling of the SODEXO mark which can be made by an Internet user and is characteristic of typosquatting practice intended to create confusing similarity between the Complainant's mark and the Respondent's domain name. Given the almost identical reproduction of the SODEXO mark, the public will believe that the disputed domain name comes from the Complainant. The confusion is the more likely given that the company SODEXO widely uses the domain name <sodexo.com> to connect to its official website. The disputed domain name is configured to have an email service or mail exchange system ("MX").

- The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The disputed domain name is registered in the name of a person who is not known to the Complainant. The Respondent holds no prior rights in SODEXO as a corporate name, trade name, shop sign, mark or domain name, and was not commonly known by the domain name before the Complainant adopted and used the SODEXO name and mark. The Respondent also has no affiliation, association, sponsorship or connection with the Complainant, and has not been authorized, licensed or otherwise permitted by the Complainant or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates to register or use the domain name.

- The domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. SODEXO is a purely fanciful name that no one could legitimately choose, in any form, except to create an association with the Complainant's activities and mark. Given the mark's well-known name and reputation, the Respondent obviously knew of it when registering the disputed domain name, and knew she had no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name and could not lawfully use it. Previous UDRP decisions recognize that such actual knowledge at the time of registration may support an inference of bad faith. The Respondent not only knows the SODEXO mark but seeks to benefit from its reputation, very likely by creating confusion with it to divert or mislead third parties for her own illegitimate profit. Although the recently created domain name does not appear to resolve to an active website, passive holding does not prevent a finding of bad faith. Relevant factors include the distinctiveness or reputation of the complainant's mark, the respondent's failure to respond or provide evidence of actual or contemplated good-faith use, and the respondent's concealment of its identity or use of false contact details and these circumstances may apply here. Bad faith use may also arise from the threat of abusive use of the domain name, such as phishing. The Complainant further contends that the disputed domain name is configured with an email (MX) service and that, having recently faced several attacks, it fears the disputed domain name will be used fraudulently for phishing.

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 Panel finds the mark SODEXO is recognizable within the disputed domain name, which differs from the mark only by the insertion of the letter "n" between the letters "e" and "x". This minor variation is a typical example of an obvious or intentional misspelling of a trademark (so-called typosquatting), which does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.

Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, sections 1.7 and 1.9.

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 record also shows that the disputed domain name resolves to a holding page provided by the domain name Registrar. There is therefore no evidence that the Respondent has used, or made demonstrable preparations to use, the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services, or that the Respondent is making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of it, within the meaning of paragraphs 4(c)(i) and 4(c)(iii) of the Policy. Nor is there anything in the record to suggest that the Respondent has been commonly known by 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.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Complainant's SODEXO trademark substantially predates the registration of the disputed domain name and has been recognized by prior UDRP panels as well known. As noted above, the domain name is recognizable within the disputed domain name, which differs from the mark only by the insertion of the letter "n" between the letters "e" and "x" which is a typical example of typosquatting. In these circumstances, the Panel finds it more likely than not that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and targeted its trademark when registering the disputed domain name.

The disputed domain name resolves to the registrar default hosting page. Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name, in this case a holding page provided by the Registrar displaying domain names that are up for an auction sale, would not by itself prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. On the contrary, in looking at the totality of circumstances in each case, panels have found that the registration and non-use of a domain name can still constitute bad faith for purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.3.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness and reputation of the Complainant's trademark, the composition of the disputed domain name, the fact that the Respondent activated the MX records allowing email services, and did not respond to the Complaint 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.

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.

Finally, the Respondent failed to participate in these proceedings and given the fame of the SODEXO trademark and the specific composition of the disputed domain name, the Panel is unable to conceive of any plausible good faith use that the Respondent could make of the disputed domain name.

Having regard to the totality of the circumstances, the Panel finds that the Respondent registered and is using the disputed domain name in bad faith.

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 <sodenxo.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Jonathan Agmon/
Jonathan Agmon
Sole Panelist
Date: November 11, 2026