

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

ABG Volcom LLC v. haiyan guo

Case No. D2023-1655

1. The Parties

The Complainant is ABG Volcom LLC, United States of America (“United States” or “US”), represented by Authentic Brands Group, United States.

The Respondent is haiyan guo, China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <volcomus-shop.com> is registered with Name.com, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on April 14, 2023. On April 17, 2023, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On April 20, 2023, 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 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 April 25, 2023. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was May 15, 2023. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on May 16, 2023.

The Center appointed Benoit Van Asbroeck as the sole panelist in this matter on June 1, 2023. 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 skate, surf & swimwear, and snowboarding lifestyle brand and owner of registered trademarks in the mark VOLCOM including, *inter alia*:

United States Trademark Registration No. 1725875 for VOLCOM, registered on October 20, 1992, in International Class 25;

United States Trademark Registration No. 2534210 for VOLCOM, registered on January 29, 2002, in International Class 25;

United States Trademark Registration No. 2689830 for VOLCOM, registered on February 25, 2003, in International Classes 9, 16, and 18.

The Complainant also owns and operates the website to which the domain name <volcom.com> resolves.

The disputed domain name was registered on September 13, 2022, well after the Complainant secured rights to the trademarks. According to evidence submitted by the Complainant, the disputed domain name resolves to a website using the VOLCOM trademarks selling VOLCOM branded goods with discounted prices in US dollars.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant asserts that each of the three elements specified in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy are present. The three elements being: (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights; (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name; and (iii) the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

(i) The disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to its trademarks since it incorporates the VOLCOM mark in its entirety. In addition, the Complainant points out that where the relevant trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the addition of other terms (whether descriptive, geographical, pejorative, meaningless, or otherwise) would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element. In addition, the Complainant points to the contents of the website that the disputed domain name resolves to. The fact that the Respondent is using descriptive terms which describe the Complainant's goods (*e.g.*, sneakers) only increases the likelihood that consumers would be confused.

(ii) The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

The Complainant claims that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Complainant points to the fact that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name and has not been authorized to use the Complainant's trademarks. Furthermore, the Complainant contends that there is no evidence of the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name or a name corresponding to the disputed domain name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services. In contrast, the Complainant mentions that the disputed domain name resolves to an online store website selling VOLCOM branded goods using the Complainant's trademarks without permission, thus creating a misleading impression of association with the Complainant.

(iii) The disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

The Complainant contends that the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant claims registration is in bad faith since the Respondent was well aware of the Complainant's trademarks at the time of registration. The Complainant notes that the trademarks were registered 30 years before the disputed domain name and are well-known around the world. Furthermore, they add, a simple Google search would have disclosed the Complainants' marks and business. Moreover, the Complainant asserts that the use of the disputed domain name is also in bad faith. By using the disputed domain name for a website passing off as the Complainant's website selling competing and unauthorized goods, the Respondent intentionally attempts to attract for commercial gain Internet users to its website. Thus, the Complainant claims, the Respondent is intentionally trying to create a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

The Panel finds that it has jurisdiction to hear this dispute as the Policy has been incorporated by reference into the registration agreement between the Registrar and the Respondent.

The Panel notes that while the Respondent has been duly notified, it did not reply to the Complainant's contentions within the time period established by the Rules. Pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Rules the Panel shall nonetheless proceed to a decision on the Complainant's Complaint and it may draw such inferences from the Respondent's failure to respond as it considers appropriate.

Paragraph 4(a) of the Policy requires that in order for its Complaint to succeed, the Complainant must prove that the following three elements are present:

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

The above three elements will each be discussed in further detail below.

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Complainant is required to establish: (1) that it owns rights in a trademark or service mark, and, if so, (2) that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to its trademarks.

Firstly, the Panel finds that the Complainant has clearly evidenced that it owns registered trademark rights to VOLCOM. The Panel is satisfied with the evidence provided in support of the existence of trademarks for the word "volcom". It should be noted that paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy does not set minimum requirements as to the jurisdictions of the trademarks a complainant relies on, nor as to the number, nature or scope of protection of such trademarks.

Secondly, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's registered trademarks since it incorporates the VOLCOM mark in its entirety (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7 as well as *L'Oréal, Lancôme Parfums et Beauté & Cie v. Jack Yang*, WIPO Case No. [D2011-1627](#); *Rapidshare AG*,

Christian Schmid v. InvisibleRegistration.com, Domain Admin, WIPO Case No. [D2010-1059](#); and *The Stanley Works and Stanley Logistics, Inc. v. Camp Creek Co., Inc.*, WIPO Case No. [D2000-0113](#)). The other words “us” and “shop” will likely be perceived as referring to the country United States and an online shop targeted at this market. In any event, as the trademark VOLCOM is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the addition of “us” and “shop”, as well as a hyphen separating “volcomus” and “shop”, does not prevent the Panel’s finding of confusing similarity under the first element. It is a well-established view of UDRP panels, with which the Panel agrees, that the addition of other terms (whether descriptive, geographical, pejorative, meaningless, or otherwise) would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element (see [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8 as well as *Ansell Healthcare Products Inc. v. Australian Therapeutics Supplies Pty, Ltd.*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-0110](#); *Nintendo of America Inc. v. Fernando Sascha Gutierrez*, WIPO Case No. [D2009-0434](#); *M/s Daiwik Hotels Pvt. Ltd v. Senthil Kumaran S, Daiwik Resorts*, WIPO Case No. [D2015-1384](#); and *BHP Billiton Innovation Pty Ltd v. Oloyi*, WIPO Case No. [D2017-0284](#)).

Finally, as for the applicable Top-Level Domain (“TLD”), *i.e.*, the suffix “.com”, the Panel holds that this can be disregarded under the first element confusing similarity test (*CANAL + FRANCE v. Franck Letourneau*, WIPO Case No. [DTV2010-0012](#); *Bentley Motors Limited v. Domain Admin / Kyle Rocheleau, Privacy Hero Inc.*, WIPO Case No. [D2014-1919](#); and *SAP SE v. Mohammed Aziz Sheikh, Sapteq Global Consulting Services*, WIPO Case No. [D2015-0565](#)).

On the basis of the foregoing findings, and according to paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy, this Panel finds and concludes that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s trademarks.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy non-exhaustively lists three circumstances that shall demonstrate a right or legitimate interest:

“Any of the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be proved based on its evaluation of all evidence presented, shall demonstrate your rights or legitimate interests to the domain name for purposes of paragraph 4(a)(ii):

- (i) before any notice to you of the dispute, your use of, or demonstrable preparations to use, the domain name or a name corresponding to the domain name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services; or
- (ii) you (as an individual, business, or other organization) have been commonly known by the domain name, even if you have acquired no trademark or service mark rights; or
- (iii) you are making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the domain name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue.”

It is a well-established view of UDRP panels, with which the Panel agrees, that a *prima facie* case advanced by a complainant is generally sufficient to satisfy the requirements under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy, and the burden of production of evidence shifts to the respondent to provide relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name (*AGUAS DE CABREIROA, S.A.U. v. Hello Domain*, WIPO Case No. [D2014-2087](#); *Spigen Korea Co., Ltd., Spigen Inc. v. Domain Admin, Whois Privacy Corp.*, WIPO Case No. [D2016-0145](#); and *HubSpot, Inc. v. WhoisGuard Protected, WhoisGuard, Inc. / Steve Johnson*, WIPO Case No. [D2016-1338](#)).

The Panel notes that the Respondent has not responded to any of the Complainant’s contentions, let alone submitted evidence to the contrary, and that, pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Rules, the Panel may draw such inferences from the Respondent’s failure to respond as it considers appropriate. In the present case,

taking into consideration the Respondent's default, this Panel finds that the Complainant has made out an unrebutted *prima facie* case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, in view of the circumstances of this case, including the following factors.

The Panel agrees with the Complainant that there is no evidence that the Respondent is using the disputed domain name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services. Moreover, as the Complainant has demonstrated, the Respondent has used the disputed domain name to falsely suggest affiliation with the Complainant. The Panel agrees with the Complainant that the content of the website that the disputed domain name resolves to, including the use of the Complainant's trademarks in VOLCOM and its logo as well as the sale of VOLCOM branded goods, may indeed lead consumers to be confused about the source of the website and whether the website is sponsored or otherwise endorsed by the Complainant (noting the website does not accurately and prominently disclose the lack of relationship between the Respondent and Complainant). As is clear from sections 2.2, 2.5 and 2.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), UDRP panels have consistently found that such use of a domain name can neither be considered legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the domain name nor a *bona fide* offering of goods or services.

Furthermore, the nature of the disputed domain name, which incorporates the Complainant's trademark in its entirety plus a geographical term and the word "shop", carries a risk of implied affiliation as it effectively impersonates or suggests sponsorship or endorsement by the Complainant. See section 2.5.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

Moreover, the Complainant asserts that the Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant in any way nor has the Complainant licensed, authorized, or permitted the Respondent to register domain names incorporating the Complainant's trademarks. The Panel has taken note of the Complainant's confirmation in this regard and has not seen any evidence that would suggest the contrary. In the absence of any license or permission from the Complainant to use its trademarks, no *bona fide* or legitimate use of the disputed domain name could reasonably be claimed in the circumstances of this case (see, e.g., *Sportswear Company S.P.A. v. Tang Hong*, WIPO Case No. [D2014-1875](#); and *LEGO Juris A/S v. DomainPark Ltd, David Smith, Above.com Domain Privacy, Transure Enterprise Ltd, Host master*, WIPO Case No. [D2010-0138](#)).

Finally, the Panel agrees with the Complainant that there is no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

For all the foregoing reasons, the Panel finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy non-exhaustively lists four circumstances that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of the domain name in bad faith:

"(i) circumstances indicating that you have registered or you have acquired the domain name primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to the complainant who is the owner of the trademark or service mark or to a competitor of that complainant, for valuable consideration in excess of your documented out-of-pocket costs directly related to the domain name; or

(ii) you have registered the domain name in order to prevent the owner of the trademark or service mark from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name, provided that you have engaged in a pattern of such conduct; or

(iii) you have registered the domain name primarily for the purpose of disrupting the business of a competitor; or

(iv) by using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your web site or other on-line location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your web site or location or of a product or service on your web site or location."

The Panel finds that the circumstances and evidence presented by the Complainant offer sufficient proof that both the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name are in bad faith.

The Panel will first discuss the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name. The Panel believes that the Respondent knew or, at least, should have known at the time of registration that the disputed domain name included the Complainant's abovementioned trademarks. Knowledge of the VOLCOM trademarks may be inferred from the fact that these trademarks existed for a long time prior to the Respondent's registration of the disputed domain name (see section 3.2.2 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#) and in particular: *SembCorp Industries Limited v. Hu Huan Xin*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-1092](#)). Moreover, UDRP panels have consistently found that the mere registration of a domain name that is identical or confusingly similar to a famous or widely-known trademark by an unaffiliated entity can by itself create a presumption of bad faith (see section 3.1.4 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#)). Finally, the use of the disputed domain name for a website that, without authorization of the Complainant, displays the Complainant's VOLCOM trademarks and offers VOLCOM branded goods is a further indicator that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant, the nature of its business and the VOLCOM mark when it registered the disputed domain name.

In addition, the Panel believes that the Complainant has also convincingly demonstrated that the disputed domain name has been used in bad faith, namely to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the Respondent's website by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainants' VOLCOM trademarks as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of this website (paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy). The Panel agrees with the Complainant that the content of the website that the disputed domain name resolves to, including the use of the Complainant's trademarks in VOLCOM and its logo as well as the sale of VOLCOM branded goods, may indeed lead consumers to be confused about the source of the website and whether the website is sponsored or otherwise endorsed by the Complainant (noting the website does not accurately and prominently disclose the lack of relationship between the Respondent and Complainant). It is a well-established view of UDRP panels, with which this Panel agrees, that such illegitimate activity is manifestly considered evidence of bad faith (see section 3.1.4 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#)). Moreover, the Respondent's retention of control of the disputed domain name represents an implied and ongoing threat to the Complainant, which further supports a finding of bad faith.

In light of the above, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used by the Respondent 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 <volcomus-shop.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Benoit Van Asbroeck/

Benoit Van Asbroeck

Sole Panelist

Date: June 15, 2023