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Subject: U.S. TRADEMARK APPLICATION NO. 85014843 - SK-INFLUX - 512425-8135 - EXAMINER BRIEF

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (USPTO)

APPLICATION SERIAL NO. 85014843

MARK: SK-INFLUX



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GENERAL TRADEMARK INFORMATION:

<http://www.uspto.gov/main/trademarks.htm>

TTAB INFORMATION:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/dcom/ttab/index.html>

APPLICANT: Evonik Goldschmidt GmbH

CORRESPONDENT'S REFERENCE/DOCKET NO:

512425-8135

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EXAMINING ATTORNEY'S APPEAL BRIEF

Applicant, Evonik Goldschmidt GmbH, has appealed the examining attorney's final refusal to register the mark "SK-INFLUX" under Section 2(d) of the Trademark Act on the basis that it is likely to cause confusion with the "SK" and design marks in Registration Nos. 2759298, 3422863, and 3411705.

FACTS

Applicant applied to register the mark "SK-INFLUX" on the Principal Register in connection with "chemical products for use in industry, namely, additives and auxiliary agents for the production of cosmetic and pharmaceutical products." Registration was refused under Trademark Act Section 2(d), 15 U.S.C. §1052(d), based on a likelihood of confusion with the marks for "SK" and design in Registration Nos. 2759298, 3411705

and 3422863.¹ This appeal follows the Examining Attorney's final refusal under Section 2(d).²

ISSUE

The sole issue on appeal is whether applicant's mark "SK-INFLUX" is likely to cause confusion with the "SK" and design marks in Registration Nos. 2759298, 3411705 and 3422863, pursuant to Trademark Act Section 2(d), 15 U.S.C. §1052(d).

ARGUMENT

Trademark Act Section 2(d) bars registration of an applied-for mark that so resembles a registered mark that it is likely that a potential consumer would be confused or mistaken or deceived as to the source of the goods and/or services of the applicant and registrant. *See* 15 U.S.C. §1052(d). The court in *In re E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 476 F.2d 1357, 177 USPQ 563 (C.C.P.A. 1973) listed the principal factors to be considered when determining whether there is a likelihood of confusion under Section 2(d). *See* TMEP §1207.01. However, not all the factors are necessarily relevant or of equal weight, and any one factor may be dominant in a given case, depending upon the evidence of record. *Citigroup Inc. v. Capital City Bank Grp., Inc.*, 637 F.3d 1344, 1355, 98 USPQ2d 1253, 1260 (Fed. Cir. 2011); *In re Majestic Distilling Co.*, 315 F.3d 1311, 1315, 65 USPQ2d 1201, 1204 (Fed. Cir. 2003); *see In re E. I. du Pont*, 476 F.2d at 1361-62, 177 USPQ at 567. In this case, the following factors are the most relevant: similarity of the marks, similarity of the goods and/or services, and similarity of trade channels of

¹ The examining attorney had also cited U.S. Registration No. 3301847 as a bar to registration under Trademark Act Section 2(d). However, the refusal as to Registration No. 3301847 is now withdrawn.

² The refusal as to Registration No. 3411705 is limited to applicant's chemical products for use in industry, namely, additives and auxiliary agents for the production of pharmaceutical products.

the goods and/or services. *See In re Dakin's Miniatures Inc.*, 59 USPQ2d 1593 (TTAB 1999); TMEP §§1207.01 *et seq.*

Taking into account the relevant *du Pont* factors, a likelihood of confusion determination in this case involves a two-part analysis. *See In re E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.*, 476 F.2d 1357, 1361-62, 177 USPQ 563, 567 (C.C.P.A. 1973); *In re 1st USA Realty Prof'ls Inc.*, 84 USPQ2d 1581, 1584 (TTAB 2007); *see also In re Dixie Rests. Inc.*, 105 F.3d 1405, 1406-07, 41 USPQ2d 1531, 1533 (Fed. Cir. 1997). The marks are compared for similarities in their appearance, sound, connotation and commercial impression. TMEP §§1207.01, 1207.01(b). The goods and/or services are compared to determine whether they are similar or commercially related or travel in the same trade channels. *See Herbko Int'l, Inc. v. Kappa Books, Inc.*, 308 F.3d 1156, 1164-65, 64 USPQ2d 1375, 1380 (Fed. Cir. 2002); *Han Beauty, Inc. v. Alberto-Culver Co.*, 236 F.3d 1333, 1336, 57 USPQ2d 1557, 1559 (Fed. Cir. 2001); TMEP §§1207.01, 1207.01(a)(vi).

The overriding concern is not only to prevent buyer confusion as to the source of the goods and/or services, but to protect the registrant from adverse commercial impact due to use of a similar mark by a newcomer. *See In re Shell Oil Co.*, 992 F.2d 1204, 1208, 26 USPQ2d 1687, 1690 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Therefore, any doubt regarding a likelihood of confusion determination is resolved in favor of the registrant. TMEP §1207.01(d)(i); *see Hewlett-Packard Co. v. Packard Press, Inc.*, 281 F.3d 1261, 1265, 62 USPQ2d 1001, 1003 (Fed. Cir. 2002); *In re Hyper Shoppes (Ohio), Inc.*, 837 F.2d 463, 464-65, 6 USPQ2d 1025, 1025 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

I. Similar Marks

Applicant's mark is highly similar to the registered marks. Applicant's mark is the standard character mark "SK-INFLUX." Each registered mark is comprised of the term "SK" and a design element. The dominant term in each of the marks are the letters "SK."

Applicant's mark merely adds the term "INFLUX" to the literal element of the registered marks. Significantly, the mere addition of a term to a registered mark generally does not obviate the similarity between the marks nor does it overcome a likelihood of confusion under Trademark Act Section 2(d). *See In re Chatam Int'l Inc.*, 380 F.3d 1340, 71 USPQ2d 1944 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (GASPAR'S ALE and JOSE GASPAR GOLD); *Coca-Cola Bottling Co. v. Jos. E. Seagram & Sons, Inc.*, 526 F.2d 556, 188 USPQ 105 (C.C.P.A. 1975) (BENGAL and BENGAL LANCER); *Lilly Pulitzer, Inc. v. Lilli Ann Corp.*, 376 F.2d 324, 153 USPQ 406 (C.C.P.A. 1967) (THE LILLY and LILLI ANN); *In re Toshiba Med. Sys. Corp.*, 91 USPQ2d 1266 (TTAB 2009) (TITAN and VANTAGE TITAN); *In re El Torito Rests., Inc.*, 9 USPQ2d 2002 (TTAB 1988) (MACHO and MACHO COMBOS); *In re Corning Glass Works*, 229 USPQ 65 (TTAB 1985) (CONFIRM and CONFIRMCELLS); *In re U.S. Shoe Corp.*, 229 USPQ 707 (TTAB 1985) (CAREER IMAGE and CREST CAREER IMAGES); *In re Riddle*, 225 USPQ 630 (TTAB 1985) (ACCUTUNE and RICHARD PETTY'S ACCU TUNE); TMEP §1207.01(b)(iii).

"SK" will be the first term used by consumers when calling for the respective goods. Consumers are generally more inclined to focus on the first word, prefix or syllable in any trademark or service mark. *See Palm Bay Imps., Inc. v. Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin Maison Fondee En 1772*, 396 F. 3d 1369, 1372, 73 USPQ2d 1689, 1692 (Fed. Cir. 2005); *see also Mattel Inc. v. Funline Merch. Co.*, 81 USPQ2d 1372, 1374-75 (TTAB 2006);

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