

O-451-17

ORDER under the Companies Act 2006

In the matter of application

No. 1487 by Diageo plc and Diageo Brands B.V.

For a change of company name of registration

No. 10276198

DECISION

The company name Diageo Johnnie Walker House Limited has been registered since 13 July 2016 under number 10276198.

By an application filed on 22 June 2017, Diageo plc and Diageo Brands B.V. applied for a change of name of this registration under the provisions of section 69(1) of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act).

A copy of this application was sent to the primary respondent's registered office on 7 July 2017, in accordance with rule 3(2) of the Company Names Adjudicator Rules 2008. The copy of the application was sent by Royal Mail special delivery and returned marked "return to sender". It was also sent by ordinary post. Also on 7 July 2017, the Tribunal wrote to Tifikuddin Ovaysi to inform him that the applicant had requested that he be joined to the proceedings. This was also returned marked "return to sender" and was resent by ordinary post. No comments were received from Mr Ovaysi in relation to this request. On 24 August 2017, Mr Ovaysi was joined as a co-respondent. Also on 24 August 2017, the parties were advised that no defence had been received to the application and so the adjudicator may treat the application as not being opposed. The parties were granted a period of 14 days to request a hearing in relation to this matter, if they so wished. No request for a hearing was made.

The primary respondent did not file a defence within the one month period specified by the adjudicator under rule 3(3). Rule 3(4) states

"The primary respondent, before the end of that period, shall file a counter-statement on the appropriate form, otherwise the adjudicator may treat it as not opposing the application and may make an order under section 73(1)."

Under the provisions of this rule, the adjudicator may exercise discretion so as to treat the respondent as opposing the application. In this case I can see no reason to exercise such discretion and, therefore, decline to do so.

As the primary respondent has not responded to the allegations made, it is treated as not opposing the application. Therefore, in accordance with section 73(1) of the Act I make the following order:

O-451-17

- (a) Diageo Johnnie Walker House Limited shall change its name **within one month** of the date of this order to one that is not an offending name¹;
- (b) Diageo Johnnie Walker House Limited shall:
 - (i) take such steps as are within their power to make, or facilitate the making, of that change;
 - (ii) not cause or permit any steps to be taken calculated to result in another company being registered with a name that is an offending name.

In accordance with section 73(3) of the Act, this order may be enforced in the same way as an order of the High Court or, in Scotland, the Court of Session.

In any event, if no such change is made within one month of the date of these orders, I will determine a new company name as per section 73(4) of the Act and will give notice of that change under section 73(5) of the Act.

All respondents, including individual co-respondents, have a legal duty under section 73(1)(b)(ii) of the Companies Act 2006 not to cause or permit any steps to be taken calculated to result in another company being registered with an offending name; this includes the current company. *Non-compliance may result in an action being brought for contempt of court and may result in a custodial sentence.*

Diageo plc and Diageo Brands B.V., having been successful, are entitled to a contribution towards their costs. I order Diageo Johnnie Walker House Limited and Mr Ovaysi, being jointly liable, to pay Diageo plc and Diageo Brands B.V. costs on the following basis:

Fee for application:	£400
Statement of case:	£400

Total:	£800
--------	------

This sum is to be paid within seven days of the expiry of the appeal period or within seven days of the final determination of this case if any appeal against this decision is unsuccessful.

Any notice of appeal against this decision to order a change of name must be given within one month of the date of this order. Appeal is to the High Court in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and to the Court of Session in Scotland.

The company adjudicator must be advised if an appeal is lodged, so that implementation of the order is suspended.

O-451-17

Dated this 21st day of September 2017

M Bryant

Mark Bryant
Company Names Adjudicator

ⁱAn “offending name” means a name that, by reason of its similarity to the name associated with the applicant in which he claims goodwill, would be likely to be the subject of a direction under section 67 (power of Secretary of State to direct change of name), or to give rise to a further application under section 69.