

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
Trademark Trial and Appeal Board
P.O. Box 1451
Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

Mailed: September 6, 2007

Opposition No. 91177194

IAQ, Inc.

v.

ADVANCED CLEANING AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC.

Cheryl Goodman, Interlocutory Attorney:

Answer was due on June 18, 2007. On July 6, 2007, the Board issued a notice of default for failure to file an answer.

On July 27, 2007, applicant responded by providing what appears to be a late "answer."

The standard for permitting a late filing and for setting aside notice of default is good cause. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(c); *Fred Hayman Beverly Hills Inc. v. Jacques Bernier Inc.*, 21 USPQ2d 1556 (TTAB 1992).

In the present case, opposer is not substantially prejudiced by the late filing, applicant's submission of an "answer" shows that applicant has a meritorious defense, and it does not appear that applicant's failure to timely file its answer was the result of willful conduct or gross neglect.

Accordingly, good cause having been shown, notice of default is set aside.

We now turn to consideration of applicant's "answer."¹

It is presumed that this communication is intended as an answer to the notice of opposition. A reading of this informal "answer" reveals, however, that it is argumentative and more in the nature of a brief on the case than a responsive pleading to the notice of opposition. As such, it does not comply with Rule 8(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, made applicable this proceeding by Trademark Rule 2.116(a).

Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(b) provides, in part:

A party shall state in short and plain terms the party's defenses to each claim asserted and shall admit or deny the averments upon which the adverse party relies. If a party is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of an averment, the party shall so state and this has the effect of a denial. Denials shall fairly meet the substance of the averments denied. When a pleader intends in good faith to deny only a part or a qualification of an averment, the pleader shall specify so much of it as is true and material and shall deny only the remainder.

¹ Applicant's communication does not indicate proof of service of a copy of same on counsel for opposer as required by Trademark Rule 2.119 (which is more fully explained later in this order). In order to expedite this matter, a copy of said communication is forwarded herewith to counsel for opposer, but strict compliance with Trademark Rule 2.119 is required in all further papers filed with the Board.

The notice of opposition filed by opposer herein consists of 15 paragraphs setting forth the basis of opposer's claim of damage. In accordance with Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(b) it is incumbent on applicant to answer the notice of opposition by admitting or denying the allegations contained in each paragraph. If applicant is without sufficient knowledge or information on which to form a belief as to the truth of any one of the allegations, it should so state and this will have the effect of a denial.

In view of the foregoing, applicant is allowed until **THIRTY DAYS** from the mailing date in which to file an answer herein which complies with Fed. R. Civ. P. 8.

As noted earlier in this order, Trademark Rules 2.119(a) and (b) require that every paper filed in the Patent and Trademark Office in a proceeding before the Board must be served upon the attorney for the other party, or on the party if there is no attorney, and proof of such service must be made before the paper will be considered by the Board. Consequently, copies of all papers which applicant may subsequently file in this proceeding, including its answer to the notice of opposition, must be accompanied by a signed statement indicating the date and manner in which such service was made. The statement, whether attached to or appearing on the paper when filed, will be accepted as prima facie proof of service.

It should also be noted that while Patent and Trademark Rule 10.14 permits any person to represent itself, it is generally advisable for a person who is not acquainted with the technicalities of the procedural and substantive law involved in an opposition proceeding to secure the services of an attorney who is familiar with such matters. The Patent and Trademark Office cannot aid in the selection of an attorney.

It is recommended that applicant obtain a copy of the latest edition of Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which includes the Trademark Rules of Practice and is available for a fee from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.²

Strict compliance with the Trademark Rules of Practice, and where applicable the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, is expected of all parties before the Board, whether or not they are represented by counsel.

Discovery and trial dates are reset as follows:

² The Trademark Trial and Appeal Board Manual of Procedure (TBMP) (Stock No. 903-022-00000-1) is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uspto.gov>.

DISCOVERY PERIOD TO CLOSE: **March 5, 2007**

30-day testimony period for party in position of plaintiff
to close: **June 3, 2007**

30-day testimony period for party in position of defendant
to close: **August 2, 2007**

15-day rebuttal testimony period for party in position of
plaintiff to close: **September 16, 2007**

In each instance, a copy of the transcript of testimony together with copies of documentary exhibits, must be served on the adverse party within thirty days after completion of the taking of testimony. Trademark Rule 2.125.

Briefs shall be filed in accordance with Trademark Rules 2.128(a) and (b). An oral hearing will be set only upon request filed as provided by Trademark Rule 2.129.

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The USPTO published a notice of final rulemaking in the Federal Register on August 1, 2007, at 72 F.R. 42242. By this notice, various rules governing Trademark Trial and Appeal Board inter partes proceedings are amended. Certain amendments have an effective date of August 31, 2007, while most have an effective date of November 1, 2007. For further information, the parties are referred to a reprint of the final rule and a chart summarizing the affected rules, their changes, and effective dates, both viewable on the USPTO website via these web addresses:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/notices/72fr42242.pdf>

http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/notices/72fr42242_FinalRuleChart.pdf

By one rule change effective August 31, 2007, the Board's standard protective order is made applicable to all TTAB inter partes cases, whether already pending or commenced on or after that date. However, as explained in the final rule and chart, this change will not affect any case in which any protective order has already been approved or imposed by the Board. Further, as explained in the final rule, parties are free to agree to a substitute protective order or to

supplement or amend the standard order even after August 31, 2007, subject to Board approval. The standard protective order can be viewed using the following web address:

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/dcom/ttab/tbmp/stndagmnt.htm>