

Appropriating the trademark "HWASUNG" of Korean company to attack the genuine trademark owner

HWASUNG is a trade name and trademark used by HWASUNG Company for their electric wire products. HWASUNG, a Korean company, together with 2 other Korean companies, SEOUL and SIMEX, contributed capital to establish SH-VINA Company, 100% foreign owned enterprise of Korea, in Vinh Phuc province.

Thien Phu Company, based in Hanoi Vietnam, applied to register the trademark "HWASUNG" for products of electric wires, cables and electrical products in Class 09 and was granted the Certificate of Registration Certificate in 2005.

After registering the trademark "HWASUNG", Thien Phu Company petitioned Marke Management Agency in Hanoi to seize a large number of goods including electric cables and telephone cables bearing the trademark "SH-HWASUNG" being sold by Duy Tan Company and Duy Yen Company. These are the two biggest sales agents of SH-VINA Company.

SH-VINA Company stated that the HWASUNG branded electric cable has been imported and consumed by HWASUNG Company in Vietnam through a number of agents from 2002 to 2006. This import has only stopped after SH-VINA company produced electric cable and wired bearing the mark "SH-HWASUNG" in Vietnam. Electric cables manufactured in Vietnam by SH-VINA are branded "SH-HWASUNG". However, until May 2006, SH-VINA company applied to register its mark "SH-HWASUNG" with the Intellectual Property Office of Vietnam (IP VIETNAM). This trademark was rejected for registration on the grounds that it was deemed confusingly similar to the trademark "HWASUNG" was granted to Thien Phu Company which had previously registered.

In September 2006, SH-VINA Company requested IP VIETNAM to cancel Thien Phu Company's HWASUNG trademark registration on the grounds that this trademark coincides with the trade name of the Korean company HWASUNG and the trademark HWASUNG which was used in the Vietnamese market before Thien Phu Company filed for registration.

Hanoi Market Management Agency has issued a notice to suspend the handling of the IPR infringement. The reason for the suspension is that there is a dispute over the trademark registration rights of SH-VINA Company and Thien Phu Company.

On November 28, 2007, IP VIETNAM issued a decision to cancel the HWASUNG trademark registration certificate granted to Thien Phu Company.

In 2013, after 8 years since the application was filed, IP VIETNAM finally issued a Trademark Registration Certificate for the trademark "SH-HWASUNG", officially recognizing SH-VINA Company as the owner of this trademark.

**By Nguyen Vu QUAN
Partner & IP Attorney**

Contact

KENFOX IP & Law Office

Building No. 6, Lane 12/93, Chinh Kinh Street, Nhan Chinh Ward, Thanh Xuan District, Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: +84 24 3724 5656

Email: info@kenfoxlaw.com / kenfox@kenfoxlaw.com