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# STANLEY'S MARKETING FUTURE—WHAT'S NEXT AFTER PRESIDENT RETURNS TO CROCS

Terence Reilly is widely credited with Stanley's rise in popularity

By [Adrienne Pasquarelli](#). Published on April 18, 2024.

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Stanley has risen to popularity under Terence Reilly's leadership. Credit: Stanley

A giant question mark surrounds the future of Stanley after Terence Reilly, the marketer behind the drinkware brand's meteoric rise with consumers, left to rejoin Crocs earlier this week.

Reilly, who served as Stanley's president since 2020, was widely credited with helping Stanley increase its annual revenue by tenfold to \$750 million.

"There's no question it's a loss [for Stanley] because he is a brilliant marketer," said Anjali S. Bal, associate professor of marketing at Babson College.

Matt Navarro, a four-year veteran of the brand who had been leading global commercial, e-commerce and consumer experience, was named global president to replace Reilly. A Stanley spokeswoman did not elaborate on the brand's future plans.

Reilly will now lead the Heydude brand for the footwear company, where he had previously worked as CMO for seven years before joining Stanley in 2020. While his appointment could be good news for Crocs, which is trying to build up the lagging Heydude boat shoe brand it bought three years ago, Reilly's departure could be a loss for Stanley. He spearheaded several strategies that ultimately led to the drinkware brand's success, including a female-focused marketing plan that



Terence Reilly is rejoining Crocs, where he was CMO. Credit: Terence Reilly

included limited-edition colors and collaborations, clever social media posts and the public gifting of a car to a woman whose plight went viral after her Stanley cup survived an automobile fire.

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Stanley's rise has come in part from smart marketing but also from a fair degree of luck, in terms of timing and the right influencer partnerships, said Denise Lee Yohn, a brand leadership expert.

“Because so much of the brand's popularity is derived from a single product idea dependent upon social media, Stanley is likely to experience the same fate as Crocs did—once the hype dies down, it will slide back into niche brand status,” she said. She noted that the way to find long-term success, with or without Reilly at the helm, involves creating deep emotional connections with customers. Stanley's gifting of the car, for example, was lauded as a smart relationship-building tactic.

Indeed, Bal noted that Reilly's “roadmap for success” is one Stanley can continue to follow. She noted the brand could continue partnerships with Target and Starbucks for example.

“The challenge is—even if you put in the perfect predecessor to that person—they also have to be able to sense the trends,” she said. That sense of trends helped propel Stanley to dominance on TikTok, for example.

Of course, Stanley is also dealing with a more competitive landscape as water bottle rivals, recognizing monetary opportunity in the category, boost their own marketing and partnerships. Earlier this year, when Stanley admitted that its bottles contain lead, competitors including Owala and Klean Kanteen quickly pounced, heavily marketing their own lead-free wares on social media. Retail experts have also said that eventually the water bottle bubble may burst as customers realize it's unsustainable to own so many versions of the reusable product.

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Adrienne Pasquarelli is a senior reporter at Ad Age, covering marketing in retail and finance, as well as in travel and health care. She is also a host of the Marketer's Brief podcast and spearheads special reports including 40 Under 40 and Hottest Brands. Pasquarelli joined Ad Age in 2015 after writing for Crain's New York Business, where she also focused on the retail industry.