

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Estee Lauder fires group president

February 28, 2022



John Demsey posted a meme with racial slurs, and the company is holding him accountable. Image credit: Estee Lauder Companies

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

U.S. beauty group Estee Lauder Companies has asked group president John Demsey to resign effective this week following a recent post on his personal Instagram account.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

The [meme posted](#), which made jokes about COVID-19 and included racial slurs, caused widespread offense and criticism and has since been removed. According to a statement shared with Estee Lauder global employees on Feb. 28, the remarks damage the company's efforts to drive inclusivity and do not reflect their values.

Driving out hate

In the letter, executive chairman William Lauder and president/CEO Fabrizio Freda stressed the importance of inclusion, diversity and equity as their core priorities around the world.

"This decision is the result of [Mr. Demsey's] recent Instagram posts, which do not reflect the values of The Estee Lauder Companies, have caused widespread offense, are damaging to our efforts to drive inclusivity both inside and outside our walls, and do not reflect the judgment we expect of our leaders," Mr. Lauder and Mr. Freda wrote in the [letter](#).

Mr. Demsey departs the beauty group after several decades.

Over the past few years, the company has implemented efforts to advance its approach to racial equity, pinpointing problem areas and devising plans to resolve them.



With the decision, the group is sending the message that it does not condone hateful and racist behavior of any kind. Image credit: Este Lauder

In November 2021, the group announced an Equity and Engagement Center of Excellence (COE) division in line with its commitment to build greater equity and representation throughout its business.

Building on the company's existing [Commitment to Act on Racial Equity](#), the creation of the Equity and Engagement COE signaled Este Lauder's investment in a focused and holistic approach to drive sustainable progress and advance the company's diverse talent through deep engagement, career advancement, development programs and hiring practices.

The Equity and Engagement COE is led by Nicole Monson, who reports directly to executive vice president of global human resources of Este Lauder Companies Michael O'Hare ([see story](#)).

© 2022 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.