

Translation Beefs Up With New CCO John Norman and President Nils Peyron

Steve Stoute Hopes to Step Up His Agency's Game With Big-Name Industry Talent

By [Ann-Christine Diaz](#). Published on February 17, 2014.



From left: Translation CEO-Founder Steve Stoute, President Nils Peyron and CCO John Norman Credit: Len Irish

Translation founder-CEO Steve Stoute has added muscle to his independent agency with two major executive hires: Chief Creative Officer John Norman, a celebrated agency veteran who most recently served in the same post at TBWA/Chiat/Day, Los Angeles, and President Nils Peyron, former CMO at Toms Shoes.

Translation's calling card has been its ability to bridge the divide between marketing, pop culture and entertainment, thanks in large part to the deep celebrity ties Mr. Stoute formed in his former life as a record exec, producing albums and nurturing the careers of celebrities such as Mary J. Blige, Nas and Rihanna. Previously a multicultural shop, the agency has evolved into a general market player, home to clients Anheuser-Busch, McDonald's, State Farm, Sprite and Kaiser Permanente. Ad Age DataCenter pegs revenue at \$30 million in 2012, the most recent figures available.

The new execs represent the next evolutionary step for the agency, which arguably, has yet to bring its A game when it comes to traditional advertising. "We're out of the puberty stage," Mr. Stoute said. "We represent Fortune 500 companies, it's time to take it to the next level."

Mr. Stoute had pursued Mr. Norman for the CCO role for more than a year. The post has been vacant following the departure of Chris Cereda, who joined the agency in 2012 from KBS&P just as it was moving into general market work. "I've been fortunate enough to work with some of the best artists in the world--whether it be Eminem, Jay-Z, Lady Gaga or Rihanna, and I felt like in the advertising business, I hadn't met many people I'd put at that level of talent. John Norman was the first," said Mr. Stoute.

Mr. Norman proved his creative chops working in-house at Benetton, and leading celebrated campaigns such as Coca-Cola's "Happiness Factory" franchise and Nike's "Joga Bonita" out of Wieden + Kennedy, as well as the +HP campaign out of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. More recently, he moved into chief creative roles at both The Martin Agency and TBWA/Chiat/Day, L.A. At the latter, he oversaw work on Gatorade as well as an upcoming major World Cup campaign for adidas.

For Mr. Norman, the new position represents his third CCO role in five years, which he acknowledged may not reflect well on his agency loyalty. At Translation he sees a landscape he has been seeking for a while. "I never got into advertising to do advertising," Mr. Norman said. "I was a designer and artist by trade and only started advertising at an independent, free-thinking company, Wieden + Kennedy--where I worked the longest, for about eight years. There aren't many mentors in the industry like Dan Wieden who are very independent, who'll say what they think and believe in a simple truth about what brands and work should be. I see that in Steve."

"John has been an asset to TBWA during his tenure at the L.A office," said TBWA/Chiat/Day, Los Angeles President Carisa Bianchi in a statement. "We would like to thank him for all that he has brought to the agency over the past 18 months. We are sad to see him leave and we wish him success in his new role."

Mr. Peyron brings to the newly created role of President a multi-faceted background that spans agencies, brands and Hollywood. He served at McCann and Ogilvy & Mather, where he worked with Chris Wall and Steve Hayden on brands like IBM. In

the entertainment world, he ran film director Gore Verbinski's production company, Blind Wink, which produced the Academy Award-winning animated film Rango, and most recently, he served as CMO at Tom's Shoes.

Mr. Stoute said, "I couldn't believe that skillset existed," and believes Mr. Peyron's diverse experience jibes perfectly with the agency's offerings, which range from traditional campaigns to major entertainment events, like the annual Budweiser "Made in America" concert festival.

"The spirit is very different; it's much more entrepreneurial and the range of opportunities are interesting," said Mr. Peyron. At each of my previous companies, there was a strong-minded founder -- Gore [Verbinski], Blake [Mycoskie] and now Steve. There's also a phenomenal mix of clients and tremendous opportunities to grow the relationships we have. We want to grow the agency, but very carefully. It's a jewel that needs to be polished."

And Mr. Stoute said he will gladly step aside to let the new execs do the polishing. "I learned early on from [Interscope co-founder] Jimmy Iovine, when you have great creative talent your job is to make sure you get in the room and then get out," he said. "The goal is to build one of the best organizations this industry has ever seen -- to combine music, art, creativity and process. I'm excited to see what the next year looks like."