

Activist insight 24 March 2020

Hugo Boss CEO resigns following activist pressure

Mark Langer has resigned as CEO of German fashion house Hugo Boss, more than a month after *Activist Insight Online* reported that Bluebell Partners was pushing for a management change. Langer [will leave the role](#) on September 30 but will remain as a consultant until the end of the year due to the company's challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The departure was agreed "in best mutual consent," Hugo Boss said in a statement, adding that it "will immediately focus on the search for a successor."

Langer's departure comes following a string of changes at the top. On March 16, former Philip Morris International Chief Financial Officer Hermann Waldemer was named chairman of the supervisory board, while two weeks earlier former chief operating officer of Tom Tailor, Heiko Schäfer, was named COO of Hugo Boss.

On February 14, *Activist Insight Online* reported that Bluebell was pushing Hugo Boss to change its management, citing lost momentum and poor execution by Langer, who had previously served as the chief financial officer of the group. "[Langer] might be a good CFO, but we don't think he has the profile and credibility to lead a company like this one," Bluebell partner Marco Taricco told this newswire at the time.

"We are always glad when a company is responsive and takes into due consideration our suggestions," Taricco told *Activist Insight Online* in an email Tuesday.

Along with the entire fashion industry, Hugo Boss faces severe pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The company withdrew its forecast for the year 2020 and said the "sales and earnings development is impossible to quantify at this stage," as the pandemic spread from China to Europe and the U.S., prompting widespread closures of non-essential stores. It also suspended store renovations and new openings in order to maintain its financial flexibility.

Shares in Hugo Boss have lost half of their value year-to-date but were up 2.5% at around midday Tuesday Continental European Time in Germany.