D&AD CEO Departs as a Result of Cost-Cutting Measures

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D&AD, a global association for advertising and design communities best known for its annual awards program and festival, has made a “significant reduction” in staffing due to revenue lost from the stay-at-home orders put in place as a result of Covid-19.

CEO Patrick Burgoyne, who has held the role since December, “unselfishly volunteered to relinquish his role and step down,” according to D&AD.

The cuts come months after D&AD announced the cancellation of its namesake festival, which was slated to take place May 19-21 in London, to prioritize the “health and well-being” of attendees and staff. However, this year’s D&AD Awards has continued to forge ahead virtually. Winners of D&AD’s coveted Pencils will be revealed in the coming weeks and months.

Burgoyne joined the nonprofit’s trustee board last year after leaving British advertising publication Creative Review, where he served as editor for 20 years. At the end of last year, longtime D&AD CEO Tim Lindsay handed the reins to Burgoyne before stepping into a chairman role.

Chief operating officer Dara Lynch will now lead D&AD with support from president Kate Stanners, who also serves as chairwoman and global chief creative officer of Saatchi & Saatchi, as well as deputy president Ben Terrett.

D&AD did not say how many employees were impacted by the

layoffs. In a statement, it said its revenue has “dramatically” fallen during the pandemic since the events portion of its business has been “badly hit.”

The London-based organization makes money from tickets to its annual D&AD Festival, which was canceled in March. Those who purchased a ticket prior to the cancellation were offered a refund or credit. Its New Blood Festival, an event for emerging creatives that was initially planned for July 8-10 in London, has also moved online.

“As a consequence we have had to develop a survival plan that enables us to do three things; first, continue to run the D&AD Awards to our usual high standard,” the organization said in a statement. “Second, to continue to support the emerging cohort of creative talent as it seeks opportunities in the advertising and design industry, through the New Blood program. And third, rebuild our reserves so that we can reshape D&AD for a different, primarily digital, future.”

D&AD also makes money off of its award submissions. While the association is still doling out Pencils this year, many holding companies—including Omnicom and WPP—have made the decision to not participate in award shows this year because of cost-cutting measures related to Covid-19. It’s unclear to what extent these decisions have impacted D&AD.

Many of the industry’s awards shows have had to pivot in recent months. The One Club recently revealed the winners of its ADC Awards virtually, while the Clio Awards has pushed its annual gala to next year. Cannes Lions was officially canceled in April.

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