

Legacy Tuna Brand StarKist Picks Tombras to Make Its Mascot a Viral Hit

The world is about to see a whole lot more of StarKist's 65-year-old mascot, the bespectacled, beret-wearing Charlie the Tuna.

Tombras is coming on board as the brand's agency of record, with a key objective to insert Charlie into the cultural conversation "unusual" ways on social media, said Tombras president Dooley Tombras.

"There's a debate in the industry now about whether brand mascots are still a thing. I would argue that if you use them effectively, they're more powerful than ever," he said, pointing to successful approaches like Duolingo's Duo the Owl.

While many companies have made headlines for downplaying or removing their mascots—the latest being Bob's Red Mill—StarKist's Charlie the Tuna is an identifier it wants to lean into, Michael Merritt, vp and head of marketing and innovation, told ADWEEK.

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