

Nathan Young, Former President of 600 & Rising, Has Left Periscope

Nathan Young, the co-founder and former president of Black advocacy group 600 & Rising, has left his role as group strategy director at Minneapolis-based agency Periscope.

Earlier this month, Young resigned as president of 600 & Rising, the organization he and Bennett D. Bennett co-founded following the May 25 killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

His resignation came shortly after Young was criticized on Twitter for describing Adcolor as “an awards ceremony completely divorced from reality that sells the story that progress is being made on diversity in advertising and buys cover for holding companies.” A number of fellow diversity advocates took issue with his comments.

Young told Adweek via email that he’s “made no decisions” about what his next move will be. He said he’s currently focused on doing what’s best for his family.

“Periscope has been incredibly supportive of me through all of this, and I consider the folks I worked with family,” he wrote. “Periscope’s emphasis on empathy comes through in the work, and it comes through in how they treat their employees, myself included.”

As president of 600 & Rising, Young helped spark change and discussions within the advertising industry. An open letter he and Bennett wrote, which outlined 12 steps that agencies should take to address systemic racism, quickly garnered 600

signatures.

After its formation, 600 & Rising debuted #CommitToChange, an initiative that encourages agencies to publicly share their internal diversity data. Dozens of agencies including 72andSunny, R/GA and Wieden+Kennedy have taken part. 600 & Rising also secured a partnership with the 4A's and named a board of directors this summer.

In the email Young sent to Adweek, he said the "mental toll of pushing for change in an industry that desperately needs it is incredibly taxing." He said doing both jobs became unsustainable for him.

"While it was a difficult decision to make, I had to do the right thing for my family and for myself," he said. "I love this industry, flaws and all. I love that I played a small role in making it better. But whether you're pushing for change or you're working the job, the amount of energy it requires to be successful is incredible."

He added that he wants to focus his energy "on healing this country," but isn't certain that "advertising provides the best avenue to do that."

As for 600 & Rising, its board of directors said in an email sent to members on Aug. 7 that it's currently "dissolving the current structure of the organization and taking the next 30 days to reassess." Moving forward, it plans to focus on becoming an "advocacy community" led by Black talent and non-Black allies.

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