

# Brand Analysis of Stanley and How It Became Popular

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**Abstract.** Breaking the daily rules and building a new lifestyle has always been the value of the American thermos cup brand STANLEY. Since founder William Stanley invented the stainless-steel vacuum flask in 1913, STANLEY has truly changed people's lifestyles. STANLEY has gone through many stages in the past 100 years of development, from the initial use of military thermos cups to no one paying attention. In recent years, through a chance opportunity from the self-media, it has come back into the public eye. This report investigates the market and brand analysis of STANLEY over the past century through literature review. Through investigation, it is found that the success of STANLEY mainly depends on the chance of the current Internet media and the excellent quality products of STANLEY. STANLEY can promote marketing in the future through the integrate a professional brand communication team, omni channel layout and focus, and strengthening then cooperation with other brands.

**Keywords:** Stanley, Tik Tok, Water Cup, Marketing.

## 1. Introduction

Stanley was founded by William Stanley Jr. in 1913 and the brand was one of the pioneers of vacuum stainless-steel bottles. Its unique and then advanced liquid insulation technology quickly took the market by storm [1]. Pilots also used Stanley bottles during World War II. As vacuum cylinders became more popular and common, and other brands entered the market, Stanley was slowly swallowed up. In 2020, Stanley's new team members used new marketing strategies to change the destiny of the brand that has been in business for more than 100 years.

This report analyzes the development of the Stanley brand and market analysis. Through an in-depth analysis of Stanley's current issues, based on the integrated brand communication theory and the characteristics and methods of integrated media communication. Combined with Stanley's ongoing brand upgrade project, this paper will improve Stanley's brand image and communication efficiency from the perspective of combining theory with practice.

## 2. Brand Analysis

Stanley Water Cup is a brand originating from the United States. It started with an all-stainless-steel vacuum-insulated cup invented by William Stanley in 1913 [1]. This brand is known for its excellent insulation and cold-keeping properties, and its product lines include but are not limited to thermos cups, thermos bottles, and water bottles for outdoor activities. The Stanley water bottle adopts efficient vacuum isolation technology, which allows the liquid in the container to maintain its temperature for a long time, and whether it is hot or cold drinks, it can be kept fresh for a long time.

But when the Stanley water bottle was first born, the company's slogan was cannot be broken. However, this hard-core publicity did not help the Stanley water bottle to increase sales. It was considered a failed product. Sales were extremely low and production was on the verge of discontinuation. The Stanley water bottle may have realized that relying solely on product functionality is no longer enough to stand out in a highly competitive market [2].

Therefore, they decided to reposition the brand, shift the focus from pure functionality to emotional connection and brand story, and shift the target users from tough guys to the female market. The cooperation with the buying guide, a female shopping guide website, opened the curtain on the revival of Stanley water cups.

The turning point came when popular reality TV star Emily Maynard received the cup and shared it on Instagram, sparking concern within Stanley. Sales representative Lauren Solomon was surprised to find that a product marketed to male outdoor enthusiasts was so popular with women. After an in-depth understanding of the needs of several female users, Solomon broke the rules and decisively decided to provide them with 5,000 Stanley cups for online sales. Miraculously, the cups sold out in just five days. The additional 5,000 cups were also sold out in a very short period, which verified the excellent performance of this water cup in solving women's daily pain points, and revealed new opportunities for the Stanley brand to expand the market in cross-gender and diverse application scenarios.

In addition to repositioning the brand and innovative marketing strategies, Stanley Water Bottle is also committed to continuous product improvement. Based on user needs and market trends, they continuously optimize product design, functions, and performance to meet the needs of more consumers.

It can be said that the promotion point of the Stanley water bottle now pays more attention to emotional connection and brand story, rather than just the functionality of the product [3]. This shift makes the brand more attractive and resonant, helping to improve brand image and sales performance.

Currently, after years of development, the Stanley brand's products have transformed. The original main purpose was to promote thermal insulation to male customers, but now the target customers have changed to female customers. The entire Stanley brand has transformed.

### **3. Stanley's Integrated Marketing Analytics**

In recent years, competition in the water cup market has been unprecedentedly fierce. With the rise of brands like Hydro Flask, Yeti, S'well, or Owala, Stanley is almost a brand no one has heard of [4]. However, Stanley found redemption. Former Crocs chief marketing officer Terence Reilly, who was hired by Stanley in 2020, immediately saw potential in the Quencher line, which had almost no market.

Terence saw that a female fitness influencer had been using Quencher and mentioned how good Stanley cups were many times on her TikTok account [5]. Terence seized this opportunity and contacted the female internet celebrity, and soon the cooperation began. Before this, most of Stanley's customer base were men who engaged in outdoor activities, such as outdoor sports, hiking enthusiasts, or workers at construction sites [6]. This female internet celebrity immediately made Terence aware of the potential of the female market. After that, Stanley got rid of its original single customer group and was no longer defined by the original dark green or brown. It also launched diversified color combinations for the Quencher series, becoming an internet celebrity product loved by female consumers. In November 2023, Stanley encountered a once-in-a-lifetime business opportunity; a Stanley customer's car caught fire and was scrapped [3]. But there was no problem with the Stanley Cup in the car, and even the ice cubes in the cup did not melt in the fire. The user also recorded the incident on video and posted it on multiple social platforms. Terence saw this good news and immediately posted a video to respond to this user, sent her several Stanley cups, and the Stanley team even bought her a new car. After this incident, Stanley's reputation spread throughout North America. Men, women, and children are rushing to buy such a high-quality cup, and many supermarkets have even begun to limit the quantity of Stanley that consumers can buy. Under Terence's leadership, Stanley's annual revenue increased from \$94 million in 2020 to \$750 million in 2023. Quencher has also become the most famous and popular Stanley Cup [3].

The success of Stanley's brand this time is due to the power of the hottest new media. It is built on modern network technology and makes full use of media carriers to comprehensively integrate different similar and complementary media such as radio, television, and newspapers in terms of manpower, content, and publicity. This media approach achieves the integration of resources, content, publicity, and interests.

## **4. Analysis of Stanley's Success Factors**

### **4.1. Reposition Target Customers from Outdoor Athletes and Blue-collar Workers to Young Women**

Over the past 110 years, Stanley Company has been operating quite smoothly. The Seattle-based drinkware maker has managed to find its way into the backpacks of outdoorsmen and the lunchboxes of blue-collar workers with its thermos bottles and mugs.

Stanley, known for its products that keep food and drinks hot or cold for longer periods, has steady annual sales of \$70 million. However, starting in 2020, things suddenly changed, and a fledgling product - Stanley Quencher - catapulted the company into an industry giant [6].

The Stanley water bottle quickly became one of the most popular water bottles in the world, attracting a consumer group that Stanley had not catered to in the past hundred years - women. This transformation does not happen naturally and is inseparable from the CEO's strategic vision and in-depth insights into consumers.

### **4.2. The Power of New Media, the Forefront of Marketing Thinking**

In fact, Stanley's CEO had already demonstrated a keen insight into consumers before the hot incident of a woman's car catching fire on TikTok.

The popular Quencher water cup is not a new product. Launched in 2016, it did not attract much attention at first. Due to the mediocre sales of Quencher, Stanley had stopped production and marketing of the product by 2019 [6]. In 2020, Stanley hired Terence Reilly as its new president. Reilly spent seven years at Crocs, where he led the strategy that turned rubber Crocs into the most popular shoe. When Reilly joined Stanley, he held conversations with employees across the company to get feedback on what was working and what was not. One of the employees mentioned a group of women who run the business blog "The Buy Guide" in Utah, USA [5]. In 2017, Ashlee LeSueur, co-founder of The Buy Guide, purchased her first Quencher. She fell in love with the product and quickly started giving it to friends as gifts and recommending it to "The Buy Guide" fans [3]. In 2019, she tried to persuade Stanley to continue producing Quencher, but the sales of Quencher were not good. Stanley rejected her suggestion and gave her another option: let her wholesale 5,000 Quencher and then sell them to fans. Although it was risky, Ashlee LeSueur still did it. In the end, 5,000 Quenchers were sold out within a few days [3].

When Terence Reilly took over Stanley, he considered The Buy Guide as a partner and worked with them to promote new, popular colors for women. Because Quencher sold so well, it replaced the iconic Stanley green water bottle as the brand's best-selling product in 2020 and has held the No. 1 spot ever since.

The TikTok woman's car caught fire, adding another spark to the trend [3]. CEO Terence Reilly also relied on his keen business sense to quickly catch the overwhelming wealth, further making people crazy about Stanley Quencher. Catching huge traffic wealth requires not only luck but also wisdom.

### **4.3. Iterate Product Design to Cater to New Consumer Groups**

Because he realized that women pay attention to the appearance of products, Stanley did not stick to the original product style, but catered to women's aesthetics and preferences and quickly launched new products [4]. It is extremely rare for a brand so old to be able to reinvent itself so much, especially for a specific group of consumers that is the exact opposite of its historical positioning.

### **4.4. Changes in Marketing Methods**

Stanley changed from the traditional large-scale product order model to a limited-series sales model.

Every new product is sold out quickly, and the waiting list for the new thermos cup once exceeded 150,000 people [7].

Being able to buy Stanley's new products has become a privilege and a status symbol, making consumers flock to it. Stanley also collaborated with country music star Lenny Wilson, which sold out in less than 25 minutes, and a holiday collection with Starbucks that also sold out quickly.

## 5. Recommendation

Through the above analysis of Stanley, the company has already occupied a place in the thermos cup market. As the industry continues to develop, there are still many development opportunities in the future. Next, recommendations will be made based on the current market environment and Stanley's strategic development.

### 5.1. Integrate a Professional Brand Communication Team

In the era of self-media, the professional requirements for brand communication teams are getting higher and higher. Enterprises can no longer simply leave communication work to the marketing department or brand department as in the past [8]. Brand communication seems to only convey brand information to consumers, but the current development of Internet big data and the filtering and "picky" nature of the target audience's acceptance of information have greatly tested the accuracy and content of brand communication.

Therefore, Stanley Company's communication team requires multi-department and multi-link collaboration. To ensure that the brand communication strategy can be effectively implemented, it is necessary to establish a brand communication department with clear responsibilities. The responsibilities of this department should include brand planning, copy editing, network optimization, new media operations, etc [8]. At the same time, brand communication also needs to form a consensus within the enterprise. Every employee in each department must identify with the core values of the brand, accept the values conveyed by the brand, and work together to effectively implement the brand communication strategy. This ensures that consumers can effectively obtain consistent brand communication information at every brand touch point.

Currently, the Stanley brand has an innovation center whose main responsibility is responsible for new product research and development and brand management. However, due to issues such as the number of team members, division of responsibilities, and personnel integration and communication capabilities, the communication work of the Stanley brand has not been done well [9]. On the way to establishing a professional brand communication team, the Stanley brand should consider two paths: self-building a team and cooperative promotion.

### 5.2. Omni-channel Layout and Focus

Stanley brand's current sales channels are divided into offline and online, and the types of platforms and outlets involved are relatively comprehensive. Offline channels have cooperation in shopping malls, supermarkets, etc., and online channels are also relatively comprehensive on the TikTok platform [10]. According to the current situation of Stanley brand development and budget management, brand communication should be integrated and focused with key sales channels to provide brand content delivery for the target audience of mainstream sales channels, rather than being large and comprehensive, broad, and scattered [11].

In the new media environment, brands, platforms, channels, consumers, etc. have an increasing demand for communication data, especially brands and platforms. If anyone wants to know the precise user portrait of the target group, such as the user's age, occupation, geographical distribution, preferences, and shopping habits, they must have enough user data to conduct analysis [10]. Therefore, in brand communication, the communication team must reasonably collect normal user data as permitted by laws and regulations. This requires that it is best to understand the main characteristics of potential users before product development, develop new products according to their preferences, and truly satisfy customer value. In addition to user data, communication effects also need data to evaluate, such as the number of plays, reads, playtime, completion rate of advertising information,

cost-to-sales ratio of advertising, user evaluations, etc. These are needed for post-analysis, so the sensitivity to the data must be improved.

### 5.3. Strengthen Cooperation with Other Brands

As the brand cooperates with other Internet celebrities, celebrities, singers, and other brands, Stanley's reputation is becoming more and more prosperous. Stanley can improve its brand positioning; while continuing to maintain mass consumption, it can add several special colors to cooperate with luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton's prints, or Hermes' bright orange [7]. At present, Prada has released its thermos cup in the past two years, but it is not practical due to its average quality. This shows that luxury brands are still very willing to accept such products. With such excellent product quality, Stanley can cooperate with large luxury brands to enhance the visibility of both parties while also elevating Stanley's positioning [7].

Although the Quencher series is still hot-selling at present, due to the influence of fast fashion or competition from other brands, a single series may slowly lose popularity in a few years. For example, the popularity of hydro flask in 2018 was slowly eliminated due to a single product line and was replaced by Stanley. Stanley can completely use the current brand's popularity and popularity to launch new products, such as its cup shape, or large containers, catering containers, for wine, tea, etc. These new products can also try to cooperate with luxury goods.

## 6. Conclusion

This report analyzes the development history of the Stanley brand over the past 110 years, from the beginning as an exclusive product for the military to now a household name. Over the past 110 years, Stanley Company has grown steadily. However, starting in 2020, a new product changed the company's destiny. By chance, Stanley Company became a household name again.

In this report, Stanley's development over the past 110 years is included, including brand analysis, market analysis, etc. Finally, three suggestions for future development were put forward through the analysis of Stanley Company. The main one is to Integrate a professional brand communication team, and focus on Omni-channel layout and Strengthen cooperation with other brands to achieve better development in the future.

Finally, since this report mainly analyzes previous literature and has not yet used data empirical analysis in the analysis process, more data empirical analysis conclusions will be collected in the future.

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