Marketing Doctor

Marketing Check-up

Vans

As of October 1, 2024

Condition: Under treatment

A third of sales gone in two years

Vans built its name on skate culture, creativity and the sidestripe on its shoes. Between 2022 and 2024 it lost a third of its sales and its place as the biggest brand at its parent, VF Corporation. This check-up looks at why young shoppers drifted away, why VF chose to sell less in the short term and what the new brand president has to work with.

Key takeaways

- Vans revenue fell 24% in the year to March 2024 and another 21% in the following quarter. An analyst said the brand looked “outdated and unfashionable in the eyes of discerning young shoppers.”
- Part of the fall was deliberate: VF pulled excess Vans stock out of wholesale stores to stop markdowns from teaching buyers to wait for a sale.
- Vans went about nine months without a dedicated brand president before VF hired Sun Choe, lululemon’s chief product officer, in 2024.
- The brand still has assets many would envy, including the sidestripe, “the unmistakable hallmark of the Vans brand.”

Marketing health check

Area	Finding
Relevance	Fading. Seen as outdated by young shoppers.
Distinctive assets	Strong. The sidestripe is instantly recognized.
Channel health	Being reset. Wholesale stock pulled back to protect price.
Leadership	New. A brand president started in July 2024 after a nine-month gap.
Regions	Americas weakest, down 28% in fiscal 2024.

Timeline

When	What happened
Fiscal 2022	Vans revenue reaches $4.16 billion.
Fiscal 2023	Revenue falls 12%.
Jul 2023	Bracken Darrell becomes CEO of VF Corporation.
Oct 2023	VF launches its Reinvent program, with the Vans turnaround as a top priority. The Vans brand president steps down.
Nov 2023	An analyst calls Vans “outdated and unfashionable” to young shoppers.
Fiscal 2024	Revenue falls 24%, including deliberate cuts to wholesale stock.
May 2024	VF names Sun Choe, lululemon’s chief product officer, as Vans global brand president.
Quarter to Jun 2024	Revenue falls 21%, a modest improvement on the prior quarter.

What happened: the cool brand stopped feeling cool

Vans revenue fell 12% in fiscal 2023 and then 24%, to $2.79 billion, in fiscal 2024. In two years the brand lost a third of its sales, and The North Face replaced it as VF’s biggest brand. The Americas led the decline, falling 28%.

The reason was relevance. GlobalData analyst Alice Price told Retail Dive that Vans looked “outdated and unfashionable in the eyes of discerning young shoppers.” For a brand built on

youth culture, that is the most serious symptom there is.

The diagnosis: three marketing problems

- **Relevance slipped with the core audience.** Young shoppers decide whether a lifestyle brand feels current, and they moved on.
- **Too much stock in stores.** Extra product at retailers tends to end in markdowns, and markdowns teach buyers to wait for a sale.
- **No one at the wheel.** When the Vans brand president stepped down in October 2023, VF's CEO took "a more active role" while it searched. A turnaround needs a dedicated leader.

The treatment: sell less now, protect the brand later

VF said Vans' declines included deliberate actions to right-size inventories in the wholesale channel, part of "resetting the marketplace for Vans." Pulling stock back gives up sales now to protect price and brand later. It is the classic trade-off between brand building and sales activation, and VF chose the brand.

On May 30, 2024, VF named Sun Choe, lululemon's chief product officer from 2018 to 2024, as global brand president of Vans. She said Vans will build on its identity as "a lifestyle defined by creativity and authenticity." That is a sound place to start. Irvine Weekly called the sidestripe "the unmistakable hallmark of the Vans brand." Clear positioning around that identity, and new product that earns attention, will matter more than volume.

The result so far: the decline is slowing

In the quarter to June 2024, Vans revenue fell 21% to $581.8 million, which VF called "a modest improvement relative to the previous quarter." The Americas fell another 25%. VF's CEO summed up the plan as "fixing the Americas, turning around Vans, reducing costs and paying down debt." The test now is whether young shoppers start choosing Vans again at full price.

Lessons for your marketing

1. Watch relevance with your core audience as closely as you watch sales. It moves first.
2. Treat stock sitting with retailers as a brand signal, not just a sales number. Discounts teach customers to wait.
3. When a core brand stumbles, give it a dedicated leader quickly.
4. Look at results by brand, region and channel, not only in total. VF's Americas numbers looked far better without Vans.
5. A regular marketing audit catches fading relevance before it shows up in revenue.

The doctor will see you now.

Book a free marketing check-up at marketingdoctor.ca/contact. We'll examine your marketing, show you what's holding growth back and prescribe what to fix first.

Sources

1. VF Corporation fiscal 2024 fourth quarter results.
https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/103379/000010337924000006/vfcq42024exhibit99.htm
2. VF Corporation fiscal 2022 fourth quarter results.
https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/103379/000115752323000902/a53404817_ex99.htm
3. Retail Dive on VF's transformation program and Vans (November 2023).
https://www.retaildive.com/news/vfc-transformation-program-vans/698356
4. VF Corporation third quarter fiscal 2024 results.
https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/103379/000115752324000175/a53892618_ex99.htm
5. VF Corporation second quarter fiscal 2024 results and Reinvent announcement (October 2023).
https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/103379/000115752323001573/a53702444_ex99.htm
6. VF Corporation announcement naming Sun Choe Vans global brand president (May 2024).
https://www.vfc.com/news/press-release/1836
7. Irvine Weekly on Vans as an Orange County icon.
https://irvineweekly.com/off-the-walls-of-greatness-vans-an-orange-county-icon/
8. VF Corporation first quarter fiscal 2025 results.
https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/103379/000010337924000016/vfcq12025exhibit99.htm

This check-up uses public information available on October 1, 2024. It is marketing analysis, not investment advice. © 2026 The Marketing Doctor.