# Unilever to reveal turnaround strategy amid restructuring and trade challenges



Unilever is set to provide further clarity on its ongoing turnaround strategy when it releases its first quarter results on Thursday, 24 April. The global consumer goods company, known for brands such as Marmite, Dove, Hellman’s, and Magnum, has been undergoing significant organisational changes following the appointment of its new chief executive, Fernando Fernandez, who took over the role on 1 March.

Mr Fernandez, who previously led Unilever’s beauty division and served as the company’s chief financial officer earlier this year, has been entrusted with steering the firm through a challenging period marked by restructuring efforts and external economic pressures. Having dedicated nearly four decades to Unilever, the Argentine chief executive is expected to outline his vision for the company’s recovery, following the departure of his predecessor, Hein Schumacher, who left the position “by mutual agreement” after less than two years.

At the centre of Unilever’s transformation is a substantial overhaul involving the reduction of 7,500 jobs and a strategic focus on streamlining its brand portfolio, particularly within its food division. The company intends to divest its ice cream brands, including Ben & Jerry’s and Wall’s, by planning an independent stock market listing for this division in Amsterdam, with additional listings anticipated in London and New York. These moves are designed to sharpen Unilever’s focus on its most profitable and recognisable products.

However, the company has encountered increasing scrutiny from investors, including activist shareholder Nelson Peltz, amid concerns over its performance amid global economic uncertainties. Mr Fernandez has indicated that social media influencers may play a greater role in future marketing campaigns to reduce consumer scepticism about corporate messaging.

Unilever is also contending with the broader implications of international trade disputes, particularly those stemming from policies implemented during Donald Trump’s trade war era, which impact supply chains for large multinational corporations. The company has already signalled that it expects a subdued start to 2024, influenced by restrained pricing strategies and weakening consumer confidence, but it remains hopeful for an improvement in performance as the year progresses.

Matt Britzman, an analyst with Hargreaves Lansdown, remarked on the impending earnings announcement, stating, “Thursday’s results [are] a crucial indicator of how well the firm is doing. Markets are also expecting further updates on the progression and restructuring efforts of the ice cream spin-off. With global trade tensions persisting, Unilever’s approach to addressing tariff risks and their impact on the supply chain will be closely watched.”

In addition to the financial and strategic challenges, Unilever has been involved in controversy concerning its Ben & Jerry’s brand. The ice cream company, known for its political activism, accused Unilever in a legal filing to the US District Court for the Southern District of New York of dismissing Ben & Jerry’s chief executive, David Stever, in March. According to the filing, the decision was motivated by Unilever’s desire to curtail the brand’s political statements, highlighting tensions between the parent company and its subsidiary over differing approaches to corporate social responsibility and activism.

As Unilever prepares to communicate its first quarter performance and strategic direction, both investors and industry observers will be keen to assess how the company plans to navigate its internal restructuring alongside external pressures from the global economic environment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.the-independent.com/business/unilever-to-update-on-turnaround-under-new-boss-amid-mounting-trade-pressure-b2735067.html> - This article corroborates the information about Unilever's planned update on its turnaround strategy under new CEO Fernando Fernandez, the expected first quarter results on 24 April, the ongoing job cuts of 7,500 roles, the planned spin-off of the ice cream division including Ben & Jerry's and Wall's, and investor scrutiny including activist Nelson Peltz. It also mentions Fernandez's prior roles and the company's challenges with trade tensions and marketing strategies.
* <https://www.unilever.com/news/press-and-media/press-releases/2025/improved-performance-led-by-volume-growth-and-gross-margin-expansion/> - Unilever's official press release confirms the launch of a major productivity program in March 2024 targeting 7,500 mostly office-based job cuts, the focus on its top 24 markets and Power Brands, and the ongoing ice cream business separation with plans for independent listings. It also notes the company’s outlook for a subdued start to 2025 with expectations of improvement later in the year.
* <https://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Article/2025/03/05/unilever-turnaround-not-an-easy-task-for-new-ceo/> - This article supports the claim that Fernando Fernandez replaced Hein Schumacher as Unilever CEO on 1 March, following investor impatience including pressure from activist Nelson Peltz. It also discusses the ice cream division spin-off challenges, the legal issues between Unilever and Ben & Jerry’s regarding political activism, and the restructuring urgency.
* <https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/unilever-brought-new-boss-fast-track-its-turnaround-strategy-deliver-goods/indepth/article/1914508> - The source details how Unilever’s new CEO Fernando Fernandez plans to accelerate the turnaround strategy, including leveraging social media influencers to boost marketing effectiveness and consumer engagement, supporting the article’s mention of influencer marketing to reduce consumer scepticism.
* <https://wartimeceostories.com/p/capitalism-but-kinder> - This profile on Unilever’s previous CEO Paul Polman provides context on the company’s past leadership approach focused on sustainability and long-term growth, contrasting with recent restructuring and strategic changes under new leadership, enriching understanding of Unilever’s evolving corporate strategy environment.