

JAMES THOMPSON

Major Career Roles

Chief Commercial Officer, Heineken
Chief Beauty & Brand Officer, Avon Products Inc
Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer, Diageo North America
Global Managing Director, Diageo Reserve (Diageo)
President, Guinness Canada Ltd
Regional Chief Marketing Officer, Diageo
Chair, sofi.health
Advisor, Heineken NV

Other Career Highlights

Director, VinePair Inc
Division President - Global Marketing, Diageo North America
Senior Vice President Marketing – Priority Brands, Diageo North America
Vice President – Release Brands, Diageo North America
Vice President Marketing, Guinness Bass Import Company
Director, Guinness Asia Pacific Ltd
Senior Advisor, Boston Consulting Group

James Thompson is an international marketing and commercial leader whose career has spanned more than three decades across consumer goods, beverages, beauty and retail. Having lived and worked in New York, Singapore, Toronto, Amsterdam, Brussels and London, he brings a genuinely global perspective on brand building, customer experience and commercial execution. Now in a portfolio career, he works as a Senior Adviser to Boston Consulting Group, coaches senior executives, partners on leadership development programmes and advises a number of early-stage companies.

James' most recent corporate role was as Chief Commercial Officer at Heineken, where he was responsible for shaping global commercial strategy, integrating brand, customer and route-to-market agendas and driving performance across multiple markets. Before that he served as Chief Brand, Beauty and Stores Officer at Avon (later part of Natura & Co), where he also spent time as General Manager for Avon China, giving him first-hand experience of leading in one of the world's most dynamic consumer markets.

Prior to these roles, James spent nearly 25 years with Diageo in a series of senior positions, including President, Global Reserve (its luxury portfolio), and Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer in both North America and Asia Pacific. His early career was with Unilever, where he spent a decade in marketing roles that grounded his approach in disciplined consumer insight, innovation and portfolio management.

James is a Fellow of Judge Business School at the University of Cambridge and of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. He sits on the Advisory Board of Peace One Day, is a Director at VinePair Inc and a Non-Executive Director at BA Glass.

James brings deep cross-sector expertise in:

• Global brand, marketing & commercial leadership – senior roles at Heineken, Avon, Diageo and Unilever.
• Consumer goods, beverages, beauty & retail – experience across mature, emerging and luxury categories.
• Growth, innovation & portfolio strategy – driving category expansion, innovation pipelines and premiumisation.
• Leadership development & executive coaching – mentoring senior leaders and partnering on bespoke development programmes.

He now combines this breadth of experience with a calm, practical mentoring style, helping leaders and founders navigate growth, transformation and the demands of global roles.