

# Ulta Beauty

## Bringing beauty to the world

Ulta Beauty President and CEO Kecia Steelman reflects on a busy first year in her role and discusses the company's plans for driving forward in a competitive industry.

### Unleashing a new strategy

Steelman points to the launch of the company's Ulta Beauty Unleashed strategy as a highlight of her first year as President and CEO. Ulta Beauty Unleashed focuses on strengthening the fundamentals, putting guests and associates at the center of decisions, and scaling new growth opportunities to fuel Ulta's next phase of growth. "It's about having a great store experience and environment," says Steelman. "It's about bringing the brand to where the guests want us to be and offering our brand outside of the US. And then building on our foundational, fundamental business processes, and looking for efficiencies." Deliberate, careful international growth

Under Steelman, Ulta Beauty is quickly expanding internationally to help drive growth and meet global demand for its beauty products. Recently the company acquired a UK beauty retailer, launched a joint venture within Mexico, and teamed up with one of the world's leading brands to bring Ulta Beauty to Kuwait and Dubai. Steelman is adamant that the company won't be distracted by its global expansion. "I've seen a lot of companies making the mistake of taking their eyes off the core business and I do not want that to happen," she says. "We're very focused on how we're driving our business forward in a stable and a profitable way."

### Delivering up-to-the-minute beauty

Ulta Beauty strives to stay on top of beauty trends and deliver product assortments and experiences, that help meet the needs of customers across generations, cultures, and people. How does the company stay relevant? By listening to its customers and gathering important intel from beauty enthusiast communities and a network of internal beauty influencers. "We have the ability to see white space in the industry," Steelman remarks. "We've got great relationships with our brands, and we're bringing this information to them and helping them curate."

Newness is important in the beauty category, whether that takes the form of new brands or new products from existing brands, notes Steelman. "We've had great successes where we've been able to bring in exclusive products that are within a main assortment that keeps that guest engaged," she says. The company's 'Only at Ulta' products are expressly designed to highlight such exclusives.



**Kecia Steelman,**  
President and CEO,  
Ulta Beauty

## Making the move into wellness

As beauty enthusiasts expand their self-care routines, Ulta Beauty has responded by moving into the wellness space, opening the door to new brands, customers, and opportunities. The company has introduced wellness products to a few hundred stores as well as UB Marketplace, its new online platform offering a curated selection of high-quality beauty and wellness products. “Wellness is actually growing faster than the beauty category itself,” says Steelman.

It can be challenging for consumers to navigate the vast amount of wellness products available, and many turn to Ulta Beauty as a trusted resource. “Our team has been doing a great job of refining and getting an assortment in for wellness,” says Steelman.

## Unexpected collaborations create buzz

Stelman is delighted at Ulta Beauty’s success in using high-profile entertainment and sports collaborations to stand out in a crowded, competitive market. The company has collaborated with celebrities, participated in music festivals, and teamed up on social media with family members of athletes. “You have to meet guests where they are from a cultural standpoint too,” says Steelman. “Being part of the of the conversation is really where I think we need to be.... You’ll see us continue to do even more of that in 2026.”

## Looking ahead: new brands, ‘beautytainment,’ and Agentic AI

Stelman is proud of what Ulta Beauty achieved in 2025. With the current momentum, what does the future hold? First, establishing Ulta Beauty as a collaborator to help build a beauty brand. “We want to be the place that you come and you can really build your business with us,” says Steelman. Even more in-store ‘beautytainment’ events (the company held over 70,000 in 2025) are planned, “creating energy and excitement, and education in a fun and authentic way.”

And then there’s artificial intelligence (AI)—especially the intersection of e-commerce and AI, as consumers begin to use AI agents more frequently. “I do think that the way [consumers] are going to be shopping for their holiday needs this next year is going to be a little bit different than last year,” she says. “We’re really going to be leaning in.”



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