

Staples Inc. Names Edward C. Harsant As President, North American Superstores

Steve Matyas Named President, The Business Depot; James Peters, President, U.S. Stores, Leaves To Take Position In California

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Public Company Information:

NASDAQ: SPLS

Staples Inc. (NASDAQ: SPLS), the office supplies and services retailer, today announced it has named Edward C. Harsant, currently president of its Canadian operation, called The Business Depot, Ltd., to the newly created position of president, North American Superstores for Staples.

In his new position, Harsant, who has built The Business Depot into the strongest and most profitable Staples operation, will be responsible for Staples' 921 U.S. stores. He will also continue to have oversight for the 176 Staples stores in Canada, which operate under the Staples, Business Depot and Bureau en Gros names. Harsant will assume his new position as president, North American Superstores, at the end of July and will be based in Framingham.

Staples also announced today that Steve Matyas, currently vice president, sales and operations for The Business Depot, has been named president of The Business Depot. In his new position, Matyas will be responsible for all Staples' Canadian operations, including The Business Depot and Bureau en Gros stores. Matyas, a founder of The Business Depot, will be based in Ontario, Canada, and report to Harsant.

In addition, James C. Peters, president, U.S. Stores at Staples, has elected to return to his home state of California, where he will take a position as president and chief operating officer of Ross Stores, an off-price retail apparel chain based in Newark, Calif.

"Staples is very pleased that Ed Harsant is taking over our U.S. store operations," said Ronald L. Sargent, Staples president and chief operating officer, to whom Harsant reports. "In his five years running our Canadian business, Ed helped build it into our most successful franchise. He is an excellent merchandiser and marketer who implemented several innovations in Canada that later were adopted in our U.S. stores."

Thomas G. Stemberg, chairman and chief executive officer of Staples, said, "We are extremely sad to be losing Jim Peters, although we understand his reason for leaving and returning to his home state of California. Try as we might, we just couldn't make the Northeast weather warm enough for Jim and his family. Jim has done a terrific job in his three years at Staples. Under his leadership, we added almost 400 stores and saw U.S. store sales double. We plan to dedicate one of our stores to him in his hometown of San Diego."

Said Harsant, "I'm excited about the opportunity to lead the entire North American stores division for Staples. There is a tremendous amount of strength in our field organization, both in the U.S. and Canada. I'm looking forward to continuing to build on our very strong position in the marketplace."

Peters said, "Leaving Staples is the toughest business decision I've ever made. I'm leaving a company that I believe has a very bright future. Tom Stemberg has been a wonderful leader with exceptional vision in retailing and in the office supplies and services business."

Harsant joined The Business Depot as president in January 1995. He is responsible for launching the Tech Centres and developing the furniture departments in Staples stores. Formerly vice president of merchandising for Kmart Canada, Harsant has 30 years of

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retailing experience and was vice president of Corporate Stores for Oshawa Foods and vice president of Operations for Towers department stores.

Matyas helped found The Business Depot in April 1991. He had previously been vice president and chief operating officer of Koffler Associates. As part of his new responsibilities as president, The Business Depot, Matyas will oversee the continued growth of the Canadian operation and the expansion of Staples' Canadian e-business in both French and English. Matyas is a graduate of the University of Toronto.

Peters joined Staples as executive vice president, U.S. Stores, in 1997 with more than 10 years of experience in the office superstore industry. Before joining Staples, Peters was senior vice president, Stores for Office Depot. He is a graduate of the University of San Diego.