

From intern to CEO The career journey of Nike's Elliott Hill

One of the key takeaways from Hill's journey is the importance of learning every aspect of the business. By starting in sales and working his way through various leadership positions, Hill gained an in-depth understanding of Nike's operations—from product development to retail, to global market strategies.

NEXT STEP DESK

Elliott Hill's rise from intern to CEO at Nike stands out as an inspiring and rare example of loyalty and career growth. Starting in 1988 as an intern, Hill now prepares to assume leadership as President and CEO of Nike on October 14, 2024, marking the culmination of a 32-year journey with the company.

His story provides valuable lessons on perseverance, adaptability, and the power of long-term dedication in a fast-changing corporate landscape. Let's take a look at how this remarkable professional journey unfolded over the years.

The humble beginnings

Hill's career at Nike began in a modest role. A graduate of Texas Christian University (TCU) and Ohio University, he joined the company in 1988 as an apparel sales representative intern, gaining first-hand knowledge of Nike's brand, products, and the market it served. After a one-year role at Sales, Sports Graphics, Hill transitioned into Team Sales by 1991, where he spent three years managing accounts and working closely with sports organisations.

Hill steadily progressed up the ladder, moving into sales management by 1996, then taking on the role of Director for the Team Sports Division in 1998. It was at this time that Hill's leadership abilities became increasingly visible, as he helped Nike expand its presence in the competitive sports apparel market, driving strategic growth in key areas.

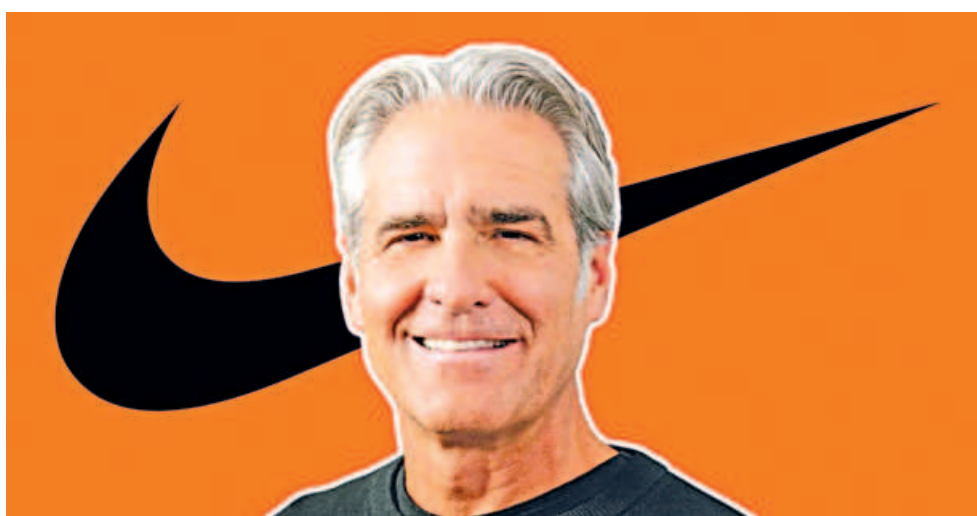
Gaining global experience

The early 2000s saw Hill expand his influence beyond North America. In 2000, he relocated to Europe, becoming Nike's Vice President of Sales and Retail for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA). For the next three years, Hill was responsible for shaping Nike's strategies in these growing markets. His role in EMEA demonstrated his ability to navigate complex, diverse markets—a skill that would be crucial as he later took on global leadership responsibilities.

Returning to the US in 2003, Hill was appointed Vice President and General Manager of USA Retail. In this role, he managed Nike's operations across the country's physical retail landscape, but more importantly, began overseeing Nike's growing e-commerce footprint. His tenure as Vice President of USA Commerce in 2004 further solidified his expertise in balancing traditional retail with digital commerce.

From North America to global strategy

The next decade marked Hill's ascent into Nike's executive ranks. By 2010, Hill was promoted to Vice President and General Manager for North America, overseeing the company's largest and most profitable region. His leadership played a vital role in strengthening Nike's dominance in the US market, at a time when the company faced increasing competition from other sportswear brands.



In 2013, Hill's responsibilities expanded further when he was named President of Geographies and Sales, where he managed Nike's core global markets. This role marked a significant shift in his career as he now had direct oversight of Nike's sales strategy on a global scale, making key decisions that would impact the brand across continents.

Between 2016 and 2018, Hill took on a new challenge as President of Geographies and Integrated Marketplace, bringing together Nike's physical and digital retail strategies. Under his leadership, Nike adapted to the changing retail environment, focusing on integrating online platforms with brick-and-mortar stores to create a seamless consumer experience—an approach that helped Nike stay competitive in an increasingly digital world.

In 2018, Hill became President of Consumer and Marketplace, overseeing both Nike and Jordan Brand's commercial and marketing operations. His ability to unify Nike's various departments and drive business through both innovative product development and effective marketing strategies proved essential for Nike's continued growth, which reached over \$39 billion during his leadership, according to an official press release by Nike.

Returning to Nike

Though Hill retired from Nike in 2020, his story with the company was far from over. In 2024, Nike's Board of Directors invited him back to take on the role of President and CEO. As Nike faces new challenges, including declining sales and increasing competition from brands like On and Deckers' Hoka, Hill's experience and intimate understanding of Nike's culture and strategy have made him the natural choice to lead the company, with current CEO John Donahoe saying, "It became clear now was the time to make a leadership change, and Elliott is the right person. I look forward to seeing Nike and Elliott's future successes."

In an official press release, Hill expressed his enthusiasm upon his return, saying, "NIKE has always been a core part of who I am, and I'm

ready to help lead it to an even brighter future... Together with our talented teams, I look forward to delivering bold, innovative products that set us apart in the marketplace."

What we can learn from Elliott Hill's journey
Elliott Hill's rise to CEO provides valuable insights into career development and the power of long-term commitment to a single organisation. In a time when job-hopping is often seen as the norm, Hill's steady climb through Nike's ranks shows the potential rewards of staying the course.

One of the key takeaways from Hill's journey is the importance of learning every aspect of the business. By starting in sales and working his way through various leadership positions, Hill gained an in-depth understanding of Nike's operations—from product development to retail, to global market strategies. This breadth of experience made him uniquely qualified for the CEO role, where he now oversees the entire company.

Another lesson is the value of global experience. Hill's time in EMEA and his leadership of Nike's global geographies allowed him to develop a broader perspective on how to lead in different markets, an essential skill for any executive in today's interconnected world.

Finally, Hill's story emphasises the importance of adaptability. Over his 32 years at Nike, the industry has changed dramatically—from the rise of e-commerce to the growing influence of social media and digital marketing. Hill's ability to adapt to these changes, and even lead Nike through them, is a testament to his forward-thinking mindset.

Elliott Hill's journey from intern to CEO is a story of dedication, adaptability, and leadership. It reminds us that career growth isn't always about jumping from one opportunity to the next, but sometimes about growing with a company and contributing to its evolution over time. Hill's decades-long career with Nike exemplifies what is possible when one invests in their role and continually seeks ways to grow, both personally and professionally.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

North South University (NSU)

Assistant Director, Office of External Affairs

Deadline: October 23

Eligibility:

Master's degree preferably in MBA with at least 2nd Class/CGPA 3 out of 4.

Minimum experience: 5 years



Roche

Healthcare Systems Partner

Deadline: October 26

Eligibility:

University degree in public health, biological science, health economics, or business, with a practical understanding of digital innovation methodologies.

Minimum experience: 5 years



Plan

International

Communications Officer- Web and Digital Channels

Deadline: October 2

Eligibility:

Bachelor and/or Master in Mass Communication/Journalism/International Relations/Social Sciences/Digital Production or any other relevant discipline from a recognised university.

Minimum experience: 2-3 years



Asset Developments & Holdings Ltd.

Interior Designer

Deadline: October 11

Eligibility:

Diploma or Graduation in Architecture or Interior Design from reputed universities/institutions.

Minimum experience: 5-8 years



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CLINT EASTWOOD

Google Maps will restrict business profiles for fake reviews

NEXT STEP DESK

Google Maps is tightening its grip on businesses engaging in fake reviews by imposing restrictions on profiles that violate the platform's Fake Engagement policy, according to the support page of the company. Businesses found guilty of

manipulating reviews will face a range of penalties, including the temporary removal of existing reviews, blocking new ratings, and displaying a public warning on profiles where fraudulent activity has been detected.

This enforcement measure was first introduced in the UK earlier this year, but

as of mid-September, Google updated its support page to indicate that the policy is expanding globally. Under Google's prohibited content policy, reviews must reflect genuine experiences, and businesses are barred from posting content that misrepresents the nature of their services or products.

Top five tools for product management

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Product management involves juggling multiple tasks, from gathering user insights and defining product requirements to tracking progress and facilitating collaboration across teams. To manage these responsibilities efficiently, product managers need the right tools in their arsenal. Here is a guide to some essential tools and platforms that can help stay organised, streamline workflows, and enhance collaboration.

Figma – for seamless design collaboration

Figma is a cloud-based design tool that allows teams to real-time collaborate on UX/UI design projects. It is a great tool to bridge the gap between designers, developers, and stakeholders by offering a single platform for prototyping, wireframing, and gathering feedback. Multiple team members can work on the same design at once, ensuring everyone stays aligned. Product managers can showcase interactive prototypes that allow stakeholders to experience how the final product will work. Moreover, team members and stakeholders can leave comments directly on designs, making it easier to track feedback. This reduces back-and-forth emails and keeps all feedback in one place.

Notion – for organising product knowledge base

Notion is a versatile all-in-one workspace where you can write, plan, collaborate, and organise everything from product strategy to individual project tasks. It is perfect for creating a single source of truth for the entire product management process, right from brainstorming to post-launch analysis. Notion allows you to create pages for everything from meeting notes to product documentation from an extensive template gallery. You can also create and link databases for user research, feature requests, or product roadmaps. Teams can then view, edit, and comment on shared documents, collaborating in real-time. Moreover, it is also a great place to manage your to-do lists and track tasks for product sprints.



ClickUp – for comprehensive project management

ClickUp is a powerful project management tool designed to manage tasks, timelines, and workflows. It is highly customisable, making it a great choice for product managers who need to track multiple teams or product lines while maintaining visibility over each phase of development. You can organise tasks—by due date, priority and assignees—and track their progress using various views like lists, boards, and calendars. ClickUp also allows time estimates and tracking for tasks, helping you manage timelines more effectively. This tool can be used to create detailed product roadmaps, assign tasks, and set deadlines. You can break down projects into subtasks, track each phase of development, and ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

Slack – for communication and team collaboration

Slack is the go-to communication tool for teams, making it an essential platform for product managers who need to coordinate efforts across various departments. Whether it is exchanging quick updates, sharing files, or discussing

project details, Slack keeps all your conversations organised. It integrates with tools like Jira, Productboard, and Google Drive to bring all your work into one platform and make updates visible within your conversation threads, ensuring everyone is on the same page. It allows you to keep communication flowing across teams as you can set up channels for each product or project, enabling cross-functional collaboration.

Productboard – for prioritising features and roadmap management

Productboard is a product management tool designed specifically for prioritising features and mapping out your product roadmap based on customer needs. It gathers customer feedback and feature requests and ties them directly to your roadmap, ensuring you are always building the most impactful features. You can rank features based on customer feedback, company strategy, and development efforts to visualise your product roadmap and communicate it to stakeholders. Productboard also integrates with tools like Jira and Slack to keep your team in sync. It is ideal for gathering customer feedback and converting it into actionable insights.

OpenAI CTO Mira Murati to step down

NEXT STEP DESK

Mira Murati, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at OpenAI and an important figure behind the development of ChatGPT and DALL-E, the platform's text-to-image generator, has announced she will be stepping down from her role.

In a post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Murati explained her decision, saying, "I'm stepping away because I want to create the time and space to do my own exploration. For now, my primary focus is doing everything in my power to ensure a smooth transition, her a central figure in the company's maintaining the momentum we've

built." Bob McGrew, the company's Chief Research Officer, and Barret Zoph, Vice President of Post-Training, are also leaving.

Murati's decision to leave follows nearly a year after an upheaval at OpenAI, during which Altman was briefly ousted as CEO in a dramatic boardroom coup. Murati took the reins as interim leader during that crisis, stabilising the company until Altman's return.

Murati's six-year tenure at OpenAI has been marked by the launch of several transformative technologies, making her a central figure in the company's rapid rise to prominence.



James Cameron joins Stability AI board

NEXT STEP DESK

James Cameron, the iconic filmmaker behind 'Titanic', 'Avatar', and 'The Terminator', has joined the board of Stability AI, a London-based startup known for its generative AI tools such as Stable Diffusion.

Cameron, a pioneer in blending technology with storytelling, sees AI as a new frontier for filmmakers. He believes the intersection of AI and computer-generated imagery (CGI)

will "unlock new ways for artists to tell stories in ways we could have never imagined".

Stability AI is the creator of Stable Diffusion, an AI-based tool that generates high-quality images from text prompts, similar to OpenAI's DALL-E. The company also offers Stable Video Diffusion, a text-to-video tool that aims to revolutionise video production. CEO Prem Akkaraju sees Cameron's involvement as a crucial step towards "transforming visual media" with AI.