

# Vice Media files for bankruptcy protection

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Millennial-focused Vice, known for its edgy [news](#) and lifestyle content, had been among the rising stars of a new breed of digital [media](#) firms but struggled as advertising revenues shrank.

Vice said it had agreed to the terms of an asset purchase agreement with a consortium of its lenders which includes Fortress Investment Group, Soros Fund Management and Monroe Capital.

The consortium had submitted a credit bid of about \$225 million "for substantially all of the Company's assets, in addition to the assumption of significant liabilities upon closing," Vice said.

"To facilitate the sale, Vice has filed voluntary petitions for reorganization under Chapter 11 in the US Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York," it said in a statement.

In its Chapter 11 petition with the court, the New York-based company said it had estimated assets of between \$500 million and \$1 billion. It also estimated it had more than 5,000 creditors.

In 2017, Vice Media was valued at \$5.7 billion—more than the market capitalization of The New York Times at the time.

Vice's difficulties come after the closure of fellow free digital media groups BuzzFeed News as ad revenues dried up and both had struggled to attract new investments, taking on debt to stay afloat.

## **'Bad boy' image**

Vice, which had once attracted major funding from Disney and Fox, among others, canceled its signature show Vice News Tonight and laid off 100 people in late April.

Vice Group said all its media brands would continue to produce content despite the bankruptcy filing.

"Vice serves a huge global audience with a unique brand of news, entertainment and lifestyle content," Vice's co-CEOs Bruce Dixon and Hozefa Lokhandwala said in a statement.

"This accelerated court-supervised sale process will strengthen the company and position Vice for long-term growth, thereby safeguarding the kind of authentic journalism and content creation that makes Vice such a trusted brand for [young people](#) and such a valued partner to brands, agencies and platforms," they said.

"We look forward to completing the sale process in the next two to three months and charting a healthy and successful next chapter at Vice."

Vice was founded in 1994 as a Canadian magazine and grew into an online media group with news websites and television operations.

It cultivated a "bad boy" image and its success captured the attention of the media world as it connected with young audiences.

But in 2018 co-founder Shane Smith stepped down as [chief executive](#) after the group was tainted by reports of workplace harassment, which led to the dismissal of three employees after "multiple instances of unacceptable behavior."

Smith was replaced as CEO by television industry veteran Nancy Dubuc, who left the group in February 2023.

Vice gained notoriety for sending former NBA star Dennis Rodman to North Korea. It also won praise for a five-part documentary on the inner workings of the Islamic State group.

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