

Form 5500 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.	OMB Nos. 1210-0110 1210-0089 2025 This Form is Open to Public Inspection
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Part I	Annual Report Identification Information
For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025	
A	This return/report is for: ☐ a multiemployer plan ☐ a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must provide participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.) ☒ a single-employer plan ☐ a DFE (specify) _____
B	This return/report is: ☐ the first return/report ☐ the final return/report ☐ an amended return/report ☐ a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)
C	If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here. ▶ ☐
D	Check box if filing under: ☒ Form 5558 ☐ automatic extension ☐ the DFVC program ☐ special extension (enter description)
E	If this is a retroactively adopted plan permitted by SECURE Act section 201, check here. ▶ ☐

Part II	Basic Plan Information—enter all requested information
1a	Name of plan DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(K) PLAN
1b	Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001
1c	Effective date of plan 07/01/2008
2a	Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan) Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. Box) City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (if foreign, see instructions) DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 810 DSW DRIVE COLUMBUS, OH 43219
2b	Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-0746639
2c	Plan Sponsor's telephone number 614-237-7100
2d	Business code (see instructions) 448210

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	08/10/2026	JESSICA WARD
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

3a Plan administrator's name and address ☒ Same as Plan Sponsor	3b Administrator's EIN 3c Administrator's telephone number
4 If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN, the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report: a Sponsor's name c Plan Name	4b EIN 4d PN
5 Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	5 11355
6 Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines 6a(1) , 6a(2) , 6b , 6c , and 6d). a(1) Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year a(2) Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year b Retired or separated participants receiving benefits c Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits d Subtotal. Add lines 6a(2) , 6b , and 6c e Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits. f Total. Add lines 6d and 6e g(1) Number of participants with account balances as of the beginning of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item) g(2) Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item) h Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested.....	6a(1) 10332 6a(2) 8893 6b 10 6c 1104 6d 10007 6e 3 6f 10010 6g(1) 3453 6g(2) 3482 6h 0
7 Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item)	7

8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristic Codes in the instructions:

2E 2F 2G 2J 2K 2T 3H 3D

b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristic Codes in the instructions:

9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor	9b Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor
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10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)

a Pension Schedules

- (1)** ☒ **R** (Retirement Plan Information)
- (2)** ☐ **MB** (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- (3)** ☐ **SB** (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- (4)** ☐ **DCG** (Individual Plan Information) – Number Attached _____
- (5)** ☐ **MEP** (Multiple-Employer Retirement Plan Information)

b General Schedules

- (1)** ☒ **H** (Financial Information)
- (2)** ☐ **I** (Financial Information – Small Plan)
- (3)** ☐ **A** (Insurance Information) – Number Attached 0
- (4)** ☒ **C** (Service Provider Information)
- (5)** ☒ **D** (DFE/Participating Plan Information)
- (6)** ☐ **G** (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)

11a If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

11b Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

11c Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2025 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2025 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code _____

SCHEDULE C (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Service Provider Information This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110
		2025
		This Form is Open to Public Inspection.

For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025		
A Name of plan DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(K) PLAN	B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶	001
C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 DESIGNER BRANDS INC.	D Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-0746639	

Part I	Service Provider Information (see instructions)
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You must complete this Part, in accordance with the instructions, to report the information required for **each person** who received, directly or indirectly, \$5,000 or more in total compensation (i.e., money or anything else of monetary value) in connection with services rendered to the plan or the person's position with the plan during the plan year. If a person received **only** eligible indirect compensation for which the plan received the required disclosures, you are required to answer line 1 but are not required to include that person when completing the remainder of this Part.

1 Information on Persons Receiving Only Eligible Indirect Compensation

- a** Check "Yes" or "No" to indicate whether you are excluding a person from the remainder of this Part because they received only eligible indirect compensation for which the plan received the required disclosures (see instructions for definitions and conditions).. ☒ Yes ☐ No
- b** If you answered line 1a "Yes," enter the name and EIN or address of each person providing the required disclosures for the service providers who received only eligible indirect compensation. Complete as many entries as needed (see instructions).

(b) Enter name and EIN or address of person who provided you disclosures on eligible indirect compensation
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS INSTITUTIONAL
04-2647786

(b) Enter name and EIN or address of person who provided you disclosures on eligible indirect compensation

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2. Information on Other Service Providers Receiving Direct or Indirect Compensation. Except for those persons for whom you answered "Yes" to line 1a above, complete as many entries as needed to list each person receiving, directly or indirectly, \$5,000 or more in total compensation (i.e., money or anything else of value) in connection with services rendered to the plan or their position with the plan during the plan year. (See instructions).

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

FIDELITY INVESTMENTS INSTITUTIONAL

04-2647786

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
37 60 64 65	RECORDKEEPER	225538	Yes ☒ No ☐	Yes ☒ No ☐	0	Yes ☒ No ☐

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

STRATEGIC ADVISERS LLC

04-2654524

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
27	ADVISOR	118374	Yes ☐ No ☒	Yes ☐ No ☐		Yes ☐ No ☐

(a) Enter name and EIN or address (see instructions)

(b) Service Code(s)	(c) Relationship to employer, employee organization, or person known to be a party-in-interest	(d) Enter direct compensation paid by the plan. If none, enter -0-.	(e) Did service provider receive indirect compensation? (sources other than plan or plan sponsor)	(f) Did indirect compensation include eligible indirect compensation, for which the plan received the required disclosures?	(g) Enter total indirect compensation received by service provider excluding eligible indirect compensation for which you answered "Yes" to element (f). If none, enter -0-.	(h) Did the service provider give you a formula instead of an amount or estimated amount?
			Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐		Yes ☐ No ☐

Part I Service Provider Information (continued)

3. If you reported on line 2 receipt of indirect compensation, other than eligible indirect compensation, by a service provider, and the service provider is a fiduciary or provides contract administrator, consulting, custodial, investment advisory, investment management, broker, or recordkeeping services, answer the following questions for (a) each source from whom the service provider received \$1,000 or more in indirect compensation and (b) each source for whom the service provider gave you a formula used to determine the indirect compensation instead of an amount or estimated amount of the indirect compensation. Complete as many entries as needed to report the required information for each source.

(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	(b) Service Codes (see instructions)	(c) Enter amount of indirect compensation
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS INSTITUTIONAL	60	0
(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	(e) Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.	
HARBOR CAP APP INST - HARBOR SERVI 34-1953399	0.10%	
(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	(b) Service Codes (see instructions)	(c) Enter amount of indirect compensation
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS INSTITUTIONAL	60	0
(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	(e) Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.	
PGIM TOTAL RTN BD Z - PRUDENTIAL M 22-3703799	0.25%	
(a) Enter service provider name as it appears on line 2	(b) Service Codes (see instructions)	(c) Enter amount of indirect compensation
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS INSTITUTIONAL	60	0
(d) Enter name and EIN (address) of source of indirect compensation	(e) Describe the indirect compensation, including any formula used to determine the service provider's eligibility for or the amount of the indirect compensation.	
TRP NEW HORIZONS - T. ROWE PRICE S 52-2269240	0.15%	

4 Provide, to the extent possible, the following information for each service provider who failed or refused to provide the information necessary to complete this Schedule.

(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide
(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide
(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide
(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide
(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide
(a) Enter name and EIN or address of service provider (see instructions)	(b) Nature of Service Code(s)	(c) Describe the information that the service provider failed or refused to provide

Part III Termination Information on Accountants and Enrolled Actuaries (see instructions)
(complete as many entries as needed)

a Name:	b EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	e Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	b EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	e Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	b EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	e Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	b EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	e Telephone:

Explanation:

a Name:	b EIN:
c Position:	
d Address:	e Telephone:

Explanation:

SCHEDULE D (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration	DFE/Participating Plan Information This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110 2025 This Form is Open to Public Inspection.
For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025		
A Name of plan DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(K) PLAN		B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001
C Plan or DFE sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 DESIGNER BRANDS INC.		D Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-0746639
Part I Information on interests in MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs (to be completed by plans and DFEs) (Complete as many entries as needed to report all interests in DFEs)		
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: GALLIARD STBLE RTN C		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): SEI TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 52-2250946-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 7699226
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2030		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083978-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 12933946
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2045		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083972-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 29054371
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2050		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083970-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 28523774
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET INC		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083967-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 1481372
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2065		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 82-6194314-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 2457769
a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2035		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083976-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 20093283
For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 5500.		
Schedule D (Form 5500) 2025 v. 250312		

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2060		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 45-3799419-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 11433610

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2070		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 87-7039453-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 196677

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2025		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083980-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 9314991

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANG INCOME & GROWTH		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 87-6420194-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 156191

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2020		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083982-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 1301689

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2055		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 27-6715091-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 19496042

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE: VANGUARD TARGET 2040		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a): VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST COMPANY		
c EIN-PN 90-6083974-001	d Entity code C	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions) 22473512

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):		
c EIN-PN	d Entity code	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):		
c EIN-PN	d Entity code	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

a Name of MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE:		
b Name of sponsor of entity listed in (a):		
c EIN-PN	d Entity code	e Dollar value of interest in MTIA, CCT, PSA, or 103-12 IE at end of year (see instructions)

Part II Information on Participating Plans (to be completed by DFEs, other than DCGs)

(Complete as many entries as needed to report all participating plans. DCGs must report each participating plan using Schedule DCG.)

a Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
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plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN**a** Plan name**b** Name of
plan sponsor**c** EIN-PN

SCHEDULE H (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Financial Information This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110 2025 This Form is Open to Public Inspection
	For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025	
	A Name of plan DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(K) PLAN	B Three-digit plan number (PN) 001
C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 DESIGNER BRANDS INC.	D Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-0746639	

Part I	Asset and Liability Statement		
1 Current value of plan assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of the plan year. Combine the value of plan assets held in more than one trust. Report the value of the plan's interest in a commingled fund containing the assets of more than one plan on a line-by-line basis unless the value is reportable on lines 1c(9) through 1c(14). Do not enter the value of that portion of an insurance contract which guarantees, during this plan year, to pay a specific dollar benefit at a future date. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 1b(1), 1b(2), 1c(8), 1g, 1h, and 1i. CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 1d and 1e. See instructions.			
Assets		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
a Total noninterest-bearing cash	1a	0	0
b Receivables (less allowance for doubtful accounts):			
(1) Employer contributions	1b(1)	0	0
(2) Participant contributions.....	1b(2)	0	0
(3) Other	1b(3)	0	0
c General investments:			
(1) Interest-bearing cash (include money market accounts & certificates of deposit)	1c(1)	0	0
(2) U.S. Government securities	1c(2)	0	0
(3) Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(3)(A)	0	0
(B) All other	1c(3)(B)	0	0
(4) Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(4)(A)	0	0
(B) Common	1c(4)(B)	0	0
(5) Partnership/joint venture interests	1c(5)	0	0
(6) Real estate (other than employer real property)	1c(6)	0	0
(7) Loans (other than to participants)	1c(7)	0	0
(8) Participant loans	1c(8)	4453219	4555894
(9) Value of interest in common/collective trusts	1c(9)	141283391	166616453
(10) Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1c(10)	0	0
(11) Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	1c(11)	0	0
(12) Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1c(12)	0	0
(13) Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	1c(13)	96084494	105368033
(14) Value of funds held in insurance company general account (unallocated contracts).....	1c(14)	0	0
(15) Other.....	1c(15)	0	0

1d Employer-related investments:		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
(1) Employer securities	1d(1)	0	0
(2) Employer real property	1d(2)	0	0
1e Buildings and other property used in plan operation	1e	0	0
1f Total assets (add all amounts in lines 1a through 1e)	1f	241821104	276540380

Liabilities

1g Benefit claims payable	1g	0	0
1h Operating payables	1h	0	0
1i Acquisition indebtedness	1i	0	0
1j Other liabilities	1j	0	0
1k Total liabilities (add all amounts in lines 1g through 1j)	1k	0	0

Net Assets

1l Net assets (subtract line 1k from line 1f)	1l	241821104	276540380
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Part II Income and Expense Statement

2 Plan income, expenses, and changes in net assets for the year. Include all income and expenses of the plan, including any trust(s) or separately maintained fund(s) and any payments/receipts to/from insurance carriers. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 2a, 2b(1)(E), 2e, 2f, and 2g.

Income

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
a Contributions:			
(1) Received or receivable in cash from: (A) Employers	2a(1)(A)	6602928	
(B) Participants	2a(1)(B)	14998291	
(C) Others (including rollovers)	2a(1)(C)	3531359	
(2) Noncash contributions	2a(2)	0	25132578
(3) Total contributions. Add lines 2a(1)(A) , (B) , (C) , and line 2a(2)	2a(3)		
b Earnings on investments:			
(1) Interest:			
(A) Interest-bearing cash (including money market accounts and certificates of deposit)	2b(1)(A)	0	
(B) U.S. Government securities	2b(1)(B)	0	
(C) Corporate debt instruments	2b(1)(C)	0	
(D) Loans (other than to participants)	2b(1)(D)	0	
(E) Participant loans	2b(1)(E)	365988	
(F) Other	2b(1)(F)	0	
(G) Total interest. Add lines 2b(1)(A) through (F)	2b(1)(G)		365988
(2) Dividends: (A) Preferred stock	2b(2)(A)	0	6506699
(B) Common stock	2b(2)(B)	0	
(C) Registered investment company shares (e.g. mutual funds)	2b(2)(C)	6506699	
(D) Total dividends. Add lines 2b(2)(A) , (B) , and (C)	2b(2)(D)		6506699
(3) Rents	2b(3)		0
(4) Net gain (loss) on sale of assets: (A) Aggregate proceeds	2b(4)(A)	0	0
(B) Aggregate carrying amount (see instructions)	2b(4)(B)	0	
(C) Subtract line 2b(4)(B) from line 2b(4)(A) and enter result	2b(4)(C)		
(5) Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of assets: (A) Real estate	2b(5)(A)	0	0
(B) Other	2b(5)(B)	0	
(C) Total unrealized appreciation of assets. Add lines 2b(5)(A) and (B)	2b(5)(C)		

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
(6) Net investment gain (loss) from common/collective trusts	2b(6)		26204977
(7) Net investment gain (loss) from pooled separate accounts	2b(7)		0
(8) Net investment gain (loss) from master trust investment accounts	2b(8)		0
(9) Net investment gain (loss) from 103-12 investment entities	2b(9)		0
(10) Net investment gain (loss) from registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	2b(10)		6688893
c Other income	2c		0
d Total income. Add all income amounts in column (b) and enter total	2d		64899135

Expenses

e Benefit payment and payments to provide benefits:			
(1) Directly to participants or beneficiaries, including direct rollovers	2e(1)	29826625	
(2) To insurance carriers for the provision of benefits	2e(2)	0	
(3) Other	2e(3)	0	
(4) Total benefit payments. Add lines 2e(1) through (3)	2e(4)		29826625
f Corrective distributions (see instructions)	2f		0
g Certain deemed distributions of participant loans (see instructions)	2g		9322
h Interest expense	2h		0
i Administrative expenses:			
(1) Salaries and allowances	2i(1)	0	
(2) Contract administrator fees	2i(2)	1500	
(3) Recordkeeping fees	2i(3)	224038	
(4) IQPA audit fees	2i(4)	0	
(5) Investment advisory and investment management fees	2i(5)	118374	
(6) Bank or trust company trustee/custodial fees	2i(6)	0	
(7) Actuarial fees	2i(7)	0	
(8) Legal fees	2i(8)	0	
(9) Valuation/appraisal fees	2i(9)	0	
(10) Other trustee fees and expenses	2i(10)	0	
(11) Other expenses	2i(11)	0	
(12) Total administrative expenses. Add lines 2i(1) through (11)	2i(12)		343912
j Total expenses. Add all expense amounts in column (b) and enter total	2j		30179859

Net Income and Reconciliation

k Net income (loss). Subtract line 2j from line 2d	2k		34719276
l Transfers of assets:			
(1) To this plan	2l(1)		0
(2) From this plan	2l(2)		0

Part III Accountant's Opinion

3 Complete lines 3a through 3c if the opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is attached to this Form 5500. Complete line 3d if an opinion is not attached.

a The attached opinion of an independent qualified public accountant for this plan is (see instructions):

(1) ☒ Unmodified (2) ☐ Qualified (3) ☐ Disclaimer (4) ☐ Adverse

b Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate whether the IQPA performed an ERISA section 103(a)(3)(C) audit. Check both boxes (1) and (2) if the audit was performed pursuant to both 29 CFR 2520.103-8 and 29 CFR 2520.103-12(d). Check box (3) if pursuant to neither.

(1) ☒ DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 (2) ☐ DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d) (3) ☐ neither DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 nor DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d).

c Enter the name and EIN of the accountant (or accounting firm) below:

(1) Name: **MEADEN & MOORE, LTD.**

(2) EIN: **34-1818258**

d The opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is **not attached** as part of Schedule H because:

(1) ☐ This form is filed for a CCT, PSA, DCG or MTIA. (2) ☐ It will be attached to the next Form 5500 pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-50.

Part IV Compliance Questions

4 CCTs and PSAs do not complete Part IV. MTIAs, 103-12 IEs, and GIAs do not complete lines 4a, 4e, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, or 5. 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 4j and 4l. MTIAs also do not complete line 4l. DCGs do not complete lines 4e, 4f, 4k, 4l, and 5, and DCGs generally complete the rest of Part IV collectively for all plans in the DCG, except as otherwise provided (see instructions).

During the plan year:

	Yes	No	Amount
a Was there a failure to transmit to the plan any participant contributions within the time period described in 29 CFR 2510.3-102? Continue to answer "Yes" for any prior year failures until fully corrected. (See instructions and DOL's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program.)		☒	
b Were any loans by the plan or fixed income obligations due the plan in default as of the close of the plan year or classified during the year as uncollectible? Disregard participant loans secured by participant's account balance. (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part I if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
c Were any leases to which the plan was a party in default or classified during the year as uncollectible? (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part II if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
d Were there any nonexempt transactions with any party-in-interest? (Do not include transactions reported on line 4a. Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part III if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
e Was this plan covered by a fidelity bond?	☒		5000000
f Did the plan have a loss, whether or not reimbursed by the plan's fidelity bond, that was caused by fraud or dishonesty?		☒	
g Did the plan hold any assets whose current value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?		☒	
h Did the plan receive any noncash contributions whose value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?		☒	
i Did the plan have assets held for investment? (Attach schedule(s) of assets if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	☒		
j Were any plan transactions or series of transactions in excess of 5% of the current value of plan assets? (Attach schedule of transactions if "Yes" is checked and see instructions for format requirements.)		☒	
k Were all the plan assets either distributed to participants or beneficiaries, transferred to another plan, or brought under the control of the PBGC?		☒	
l Has the plan failed to provide any benefit when due under the plan?		☒	
m If this is an individual account plan, was there a blackout period? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-3.)		☒	
n If 4m was answered "Yes," check the "Yes" box if you either provided the required notice or one of the exceptions to providing the notice applied under 29 CFR 2520.101-3.			

5a Has a resolution to terminate the plan been adopted during the plan year or any prior plan year? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If "Yes," enter the amount of any plan assets that reverted to the employer this year _____.

5b If, during this plan year, any assets or liabilities were transferred from this plan to another plan(s), identify the plan(s) to which assets or liabilities were transferred. (See instructions.)

5b(1) Name of plan(s)	5b(2) EIN(s)	5b(3) PN(s)

5c Was the plan a defined benefit plan covered under the PBGC insurance program at any time during this plan year? (See ERISA section 4021 and instructions.) ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not determined

If "Yes" is checked, enter the My PAA confirmation number from the PBGC premium filing for this plan year _____.

SCHEDULE R (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Retirement Plan Information This schedule is required to be filed under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110 2025 This Form is Open to Public Inspection.
For calendar plan year 2025 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2025 and ending 12/31/2025		
A Name of plan DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(K) PLAN		B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 001
C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 DESIGNER BRANDS INC.		D Employer Identification Number (EIN) 31-0746639
Part I	Distributions	
All references to distributions relate only to payments of benefits during the plan year.		
1 Total value of distributions paid in property other than in cash or the forms of property specified in the instructions.....		1
2 Enter the EIN(s) of payor(s) who paid benefits on behalf of the plan to participants or beneficiaries during the year (if more than two, enter EINs of the two payors who paid the greatest dollar amounts of benefits): EIN(s): 04-6568107		
Profit-sharing plans, ESOPs, and stock bonus plans, skip line 3.		
3 Number of participants (living or deceased) whose benefits were distributed in a single sum, during the plan year.....		3
Part II	Funding Information (If the plan is not subject to the minimum funding requirements of section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code or ERISA section 302, skip this Part.)	
4 Is the plan administrator making an election under Code section 412(d)(2) or ERISA section 302(d)(2)? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
If the plan is a defined benefit plan, go to line 8.		
5 If a waiver of the minimum funding standard for a prior year is being amortized in this plan year, see instructions and enter the date of the ruling letter granting the waiver. Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____		
If you completed line 5, complete lines 3, 9, and 10 of Schedule MB and do not complete the remainder of this schedule.		
6 a Enter the minimum required contribution for this plan year (include any prior year accumulated funding deficiency not waived)		6a
b Enter the amount contributed by the employer to the plan for this plan year		6b
c Subtract the amount in line 6b from the amount in line 6a. Enter the result (enter a minus sign to the left of a negative amount).....		6c
If you completed line 6c, skip lines 8 and 9.		
7 Will the minimum funding amount reported on line 6c be met by the funding deadline? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
8 If a change in actuarial cost method was made for this plan year pursuant to a revenue procedure or other authority providing automatic approval for the change or a class ruling letter, does the plan sponsor or plan administrator agree with the change? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
Part III	Amendments	
9 If this is a defined benefit pension plan, were any amendments adopted during this plan year that increased or decreased the value of benefits? If yes, check the appropriate box. If no, check the "No" box..... ☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ Both ☐ No		
Part IV	ESOPs (see instructions). If this is not a plan described under section 409(a) or 4975(e)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code, skip this Part.	
10 Were unallocated employer securities or proceeds from the sale of unallocated securities used to repay any exempt loan? ☐ Yes ☐ No		
11 a Does the ESOP hold any preferred stock? ☐ Yes ☐ No		
b If the ESOP has an outstanding exempt loan with the employer as lender, is such loan part of a "back-to-back" loan? (See instructions for definition of "back-to-back" loan.) ☐ Yes ☐ No		
12 Does the ESOP hold any stock that is not readily tradable on an established securities market? ☐ Yes ☐ No		
For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 5500.		
Schedule R (Form 5500) 2025 v. 250312		

Part V Additional Information for Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

13 Enter the following information for each employer that (1) contributed more than 5% of total contributions to the plan during the plan year or (2) was one of the top-ten highest contributors (measured in dollars). See instructions. *Complete as many entries as needed to report all applicable employers.*

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

- 14** Enter the number of deferred vested and retired participants (inactive participants), as of the beginning of the plan year, whose contributing employer is no longer making contributions to the plan for:

a The current plan year. Check the box to indicate the counting method used to determine the number of inactive participants: ☐ last contributing employer ☐ alternative ☐ reasonable approximation (see instructions for required attachment).....

14a

b The plan year immediately preceding the current plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment).....

14b

c The second preceding plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment).....

14c

- 15** Enter the ratio of the number of participants under the plan on whose behalf no employer had an obligation to make an employer contribution during the current plan year to:

a The corresponding number for the plan year immediately preceding the current plan year.....

15a

b The corresponding number for the second preceding plan year.....

15b

- 16** Information with respect to any employers who withdrew from the plan during the preceding plan year:

a Enter the number of employers who withdrew during the preceding plan year.....

16a

b If line 16a is greater than 0, enter the aggregate amount of withdrawal liability assessed or estimated to be assessed against such withdrawn employers.....

16b

- 17** If assets and liabilities from another plan have been transferred to or merged with this plan during the plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment..... ☐

Part VI Additional Information for Single-Employer and Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

- 18** If any liabilities to participants or their beneficiaries under the plan as of the end of the plan year consist (in whole or in part) of liabilities to such participants and beneficiaries under two or more pension plans as of immediately before such plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment..... ☐

- 19** If the total number of participants is 1,000 or more, complete lines (a) and (b):

a Enter the percentage of plan assets held as:

Public Equity: _____% Private Equity: _____% Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets: _____%

High-Yield Debt: _____% Real Assets: _____% Cash or Cash Equivalents: _____% Other: _____%

b Provide the average duration of the Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets:

☐ 0-5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ 15 years or more

- 20 PBGC missed contribution reporting requirements.** If this is a multiemployer plan or a single-employer plan that is not covered by PBGC, skip line 20.

a Is the amount of unpaid minimum required contributions for all years from Schedule SB (Form 5500) line 40 greater than zero? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b If line 20a is "Yes," has PBGC been notified as required by ERISA sections 4043(c)(5) and/or 303(k)(4)? Check the applicable box:

☐ Yes.

☐ No. Reporting was waived under 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) because contributions equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution were made by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. The 30-day period referenced in 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) has not yet ended, and the sponsor intends to make a contribution equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. Other. Provide explanation.....

Part VII IRS Compliance Questions

- 21a** Does the plan satisfy the coverage and nondiscrimination tests of Code sections 410(b) and 401(a)(4) by combining this plan with any other plans under the permissive aggregation rules? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- 21b** If this is a Code section 401(k) plan, check all boxes that apply to indicate how the plan is intended to satisfy the nondiscrimination requirements for employee deferrals and employer matching contributions (as applicable) under Code sections 401(k)(3) and 401(m)(2).

☒ Design-based safe harbor method

☐ "Prior year" ADP test

☒ "Current year" ADP test

☐ N/A

- 22** If the plan sponsor is an adopter of a pre-approved plan that received a favorable IRS Opinion Letter, enter the date of the Opinion Letter 06 / 30 / 2020 (MM/DD/YYYY) and the Opinion Letter serial number Q702438A.

DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(k) PLAN

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
WITH
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

December 31, 2025

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MEADEN & MOORE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Designer Brands Inc. Retirement Plan Committee
Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan
Columbus, Ohio

Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit

We have performed an audit of the financial statements of Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan (the "Plan"), an employee benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), as permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) (ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit). The financial statements comprise the statement of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management, having determined it is permissible in the circumstances, has elected to have the audit of the Plan's financial statements performed in accordance with ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.103-8 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. As permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C), our audit need not extend to any statements or information related to assets held for investment of the plan (investment information) by a bank or similar institution or insurance carrier that is regulated, supervised, and subject to periodic examination by a state or federal agency, provided that the statements or information regarding assets so held are prepared and certified to by the bank or similar institution or insurance carrier in accordance with 29 CFR 2520.103-5 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA (qualified institution).

Management has obtained certifications from qualified institutions, Fidelity Management Trust Company as of and for the years ended December 31, 2025 and 2024 and Matrix Trust Company for the period from January 1, 2024 to January 10, 2024, stating that the certified investment information, as described in Note 5 to the financial statements, is complete and accurate.

Opinion

In our opinion, based on our audit and on the procedures performed as described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section:

- the amounts and disclosures in the accompanying financial statements, other than those agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- the information in the accompanying financial statements related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Plan and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that

the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Management's election of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit does not affect management's responsibility for the financial statements.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Management is also responsible for maintaining a current plan instrument, including all plan amendments, administering the Plan, and determining that the Plan's transactions that are presented and disclosed in the financial statements are in conformity with the Plan's provisions, including maintaining sufficient records with respect to each of the participants, to determine the benefits due or which may become due to such participants.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Except as described in the Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit section of our report, our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Plan's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our audit did not extend to the certified investment information, except for obtaining and reading the certification, comparing the certified investment information with the related information presented and disclosed in the financial statements, and reading the disclosures relating to the certified investment information to assess whether they are in accordance with the presentation and disclosure requirements of accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Accordingly, the objective of an ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit is not to express an opinion about whether the financial statements as a whole are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Matter - Supplemental Schedule Required by ERISA

The supplemental Schedule of Assets Held for Investment Purposes at End of Year as of December 31, 2025 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplementary information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information included in the supplemental schedule, other than that agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, has been subjected to auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS. For information included in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, we compared such information to the related certified investment information.

In forming our opinion on the supplemental schedule, we evaluated whether the supplemental schedule, other than the information agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, including its form and content, is presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

In our opinion:

- the form and content of the supplemental schedule, other than the information in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, are presented, in all material respects, in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.
- the information in the supplemental schedule related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Meaden & Moore, Ltd.

Meaden & Moore, Ltd.
Dublin, Ohio

August 7, 2026

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

	December 31	
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
ASSETS		
Notes receivable from participants	\$ 4,555,894	\$ 4,453,219
Investments, at Fair Value:		
Mutual funds	105,368,033	96,084,494
Collective investment funds	<u>166,616,453</u>	<u>141,283,391</u>
Total Investments at Fair Value	271,984,486	237,367,885
LIABILITIES	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Assets Available for Benefits	<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>	<u>\$ 241,821,104</u>

See accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

	Year Ended December 31	
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Additions to Net Assets Attributed to:		
Contributions:		
Employer	\$ 6,602,928	\$ 6,654,897
Employee	14,998,291	15,038,890
Rollover	<u>3,531,359</u>	<u>1,595,541</u>
Total Contributions	25,132,578	23,289,328
Investment Income:		
Interest and dividend income	6,506,699	5,591,836
Net unrealized/realized appreciation	<u>32,893,870</u>	<u>24,212,401</u>
Total Investment Income	39,400,569	29,804,237
Interest income on notes receivable from participants	365,988	324,389
Deductions from Net Assets Attributed to:		
Benefits paid to participants	29,835,947	38,554,043
Administrative expenses	<u>343,912</u>	<u>298,016</u>
Total Deductions	<u>30,179,859</u>	<u>38,852,059</u>
Net Increase	34,719,276	14,565,895
Net Assets Available for Benefits:		
Beginning of Year	<u>241,821,104</u>	<u>227,255,209</u>
End of Year	<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>	<u>\$ 241,821,104</u>

See accompanying notes.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan

The following description of the Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan (the “Plan”) provides only general information. Participants should refer to the Plan document for a complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General:

The Plan, which began July 1, 2008 and was restated effective July 29, 2021, is a defined contribution plan covering all full-time employees of Designer Brands Inc. (the “Company”) who meet the service and age requirements. All union, nonresident aliens, leased, and temporary or seasonal employees of the Company are excluded from participation in the Plan. It is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (“ERISA”).

The Plan was amended to allow for participation in the Plan by eligible employees of Topo Athletic, LLC beginning on January 1, 2024.

Eligibility:

All employees of the Company age twenty-one and older must be employed for one month to become eligible to make employee contributions to the Plan. Employees must be employed for six months to become eligible for employer contributions.

Contributions:

Employee Contributions - Participants may elect between 1% and 50% of their pre-tax compensation to be contributed to the Plan by the Company. Participants are also permitted to elect Roth contributions and catch-up contributions.

Employer Contributions - The Company makes safe harbor matching contributions of 100% of employee deferrals that do not exceed 3% of compensation, plus 50% of employee deferrals between 3% and 5% of compensation.

Employer Discretionary Contributions - The Company may also make a discretionary profit sharing contribution to the Plan. Such additional contributions, if any, shall be allocated to each Participant in proportion to his or her compensation for the calendar year. No such contributions were made to the Plan in 2025 or 2024.

Rollover contributions from other plans are also accepted, provided that certain specified conditions are met.

Contributions are subject to limitations on annual additions and other limitations imposed by the Internal Revenue Code, as defined in the Plan agreement.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan, Continued

Participants' Accounts:

Each participant's account is credited with the participant's elective contributions, safe harbor employer matching contributions, employer discretionary contributions, and earnings and losses thereon.

Vesting:

All participants are 100% vested in elective before-tax and after-tax deferrals, employer safe harbor matching contributions, and rollover contributions made to the Plan.

Forfeitures:

Any forfeitures in the Plan shall be used to pay Plan expenses and reduce future employer contributions payable under the Plan. The balance of unused forfeitures at December 31, 2025 and 2024 was \$143 and \$1,712, respectively. Forfeitures used to reduce fees in 2025 and 2024 were \$4,079 and \$1,361, respectively.

Notes Receivable from Participants:

Loans are permitted under certain circumstances and are subject to limitations. Participants may borrow from their fund accounts up to a maximum equal to the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of their vested account balance. Loans are repaid over a period not to exceed 5 years with exceptions for the purchase of a primary residence. Loans are valued at unpaid principal plus accrued but unpaid interest. No allowance for credit losses has been recorded as of December 31, 2025 and 2024. Delinquent participant loans are recorded as distributions on the basis of the terms of the Plan agreement.

The loans are secured by the balance in the participant's account and bear interest at rates established by the Plan Administrator. Principal and interest are paid ratably through payroll deductions.

Other Plan Provisions:

Normal retirement age is 65. The Plan also provides for early payment of benefits after reaching age 59-1/2.

Payment of Benefits:

Upon termination of service by reason of separation of service, retirement, death, or total and permanent disability, a participant may receive a lump sum amount equal to the value of his or her account or receive the value in installments. Benefits are recorded when paid.

Hardship Withdrawals:

Hardship withdrawals are permitted in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan, Continued

Investment Options:

Upon enrollment in the Plan, a participant may direct any contributions to any of the investment options offered by the Plan. Based on the Plan's qualified default investment alternative ("QDIA") policy, if an investment election is not made, a participant's contributions are invested in the appropriate target date fund for their age.

2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting:

The Plan's transactions are reported on the accrual basis of accounting.

Investment Valuation and Income Recognition:

Investments are stated at fair value. Marketable securities are reported at fair market value as of the balance sheet date. Fair market values represent quoted market prices or, if quoted market prices are not available, estimated fair values as determined by the Plan's investment broker.

The fair values of the collective investment funds are based on the underlying investments which are generally a variety of investment contracts.

Purchases and sales of securities are recorded on a trade-date basis. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date. Net appreciation includes the Plan's gains and losses on investments purchased and sold as well as held during the year.

Use of Estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Administrative Fees:

Substantially all recordkeeping fees are paid by the Plan, allocated pro rata to each participant's account. Other administrative and investment management fees are paid by the Company.

Plan Termination:

Although it has not expressed any intent to do so, the Company has the right under the Plan to discontinue its contributions at any time and to terminate the Plan subject to the provisions of ERISA. In the event of Plan termination, participants would become 100% vested in their accounts.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies, Continued

Risks and Uncertainties:

The Plan's investments include investments in mutual funds and collective investment funds holding investment contracts with varying degrees of risk, such as interest rate, credit, and overall market volatility risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

Subsequent Events:

Management evaluates events occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements in determining the accounting for and disclosure of transactions and events that affect the financial statements.

Subsequent events have been evaluated through August 7, 2026, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

The Plan was amended effective January 1, 2026 to implement the Roth catch-up rules required by SECURE 2.0.

3 Tax Status

The Plan adopted a prototype plan from Fidelity Management Trust Company. On June 30, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service stated that the prototype plan, as then designed, was in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. The Plan has been amended; however, the Plan Administrator believes that the Plan is currently designed and being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, they believe that the Plan was qualified and the related trust was tax-exempt as of the financial statement date.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require plan management to evaluate tax positions taken by the Plan and recognize a tax liability if the Plan has taken uncertain tax positions that more-likely-than-not would not be sustained upon examination by applicable taxing authorities. The Plan Administrator has analyzed tax positions taken by the Plan and has concluded that, as of December 31, 2025, there are no uncertain tax positions taken, or expected to be taken, that would require recognition of a liability or disclosure in the financial statements. The Plan is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions. However, currently no audits for any tax periods are in progress.

4 Fair Value Measurements

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

4 Fair Value Measurements, Continued

The three levels of the fair value hierarchy under Topic 820 are described as follows:

Level 1: Inputs to the valuation methodology are quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Plan can access at the measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly, such as:

- * Quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets.
- * Quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets.
- * Inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability.
- * Inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the Level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3: Inputs that are unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2025 and 2024.

Mutual Funds:

The fair value of the mutual funds are based on quoted market prices.

Collective Investment Funds:

The fair values of the collective investment funds are based on the underlying assets of the funds. The fair value is expressed in units. The investment is valued using the net asset value (“NAV”) per share as a practical expedient and have not been categorized in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in the table below are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the investment amounts presented on the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

Participant transactions (purchases and sales) may occur daily, but liquidity is limited because of the unique characteristics of investment contracts and the absence of an actively traded secondary market.

Were the Plan to initiate a full redemption of the collective investment fund, the investment advisor reserves the right to temporarily delay redemptions from the trust in order to ensure that securities liquidations will be carried out in an orderly business manner. Units of the trust are issued and redeemed at current NAV. Redemptions by participating plans occur at NAV following any stated notice period in the fund agreement.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

4 Fair Value Measurements, Continued

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's assets at fair value as of December 31, 2025 and 2024. Classification within the fair value hierarchy table is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2025				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Mutual funds	<u>\$ 105,368,033</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 105,368,033</u>
Investments measured at net asset value				<u>166,616,453</u>
Investments at Fair Value				<u>\$ 271,984,486</u>

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2024				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Mutual funds	<u>\$ 96,084,494</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 96,084,494</u>
Investments measured at net asset value				<u>141,283,391</u>
Investments at Fair Value				<u>\$ 237,367,885</u>

5 Information Prepared and Certified by Trustees

The following information included in the accompanying financial statements and supplemental schedule was obtained from data that has been prepared and certified as complete and accurate by the Trustees. The certifications were provided by Fidelity Management Trust Company as of and for the years ended December 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025	2024
Investments, at fair value	\$ 271,984,486	\$ 237,367,885
Notes receivable from participants	\$ 4,555,894	\$ 4,453,219
Interest and dividend income	\$ 6,506,699	\$ 5,591,836
Interest income on notes receivable from participants	\$ 365,988	\$ 324,389
Net unrealized/realized appreciation	\$ 32,893,870	\$ 24,212,401

6 Party-in-Interest Transactions

The Plan has arrangements with various service providers and these arrangements qualify as party-in-interest transactions.

Revenue sharing for investments that generate such amounts for Fidelity are returned to the Plan on a quarterly basis. These amounts may be applied to pay administrative expenses of the Plan or allocated to the accounts of participants invested in those funds.

SCHEDULE OF ASSETS HELD FOR INVESTMENT PURPOSES AT END OF YEAR
Form 5500, Schedule H, Part IV, Line 4i

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

EIN 31-0746639

Plan Number 001

December 31, 2025

(a)	(b) Identity of Issue, Borrower, Lessor, or Similar Party	(c) Description of Investment Including Maturity Date, Rate of Interest, Collateral, Par or Maturity Value	(d) Cost	(e) Current Value
* Harbor Capital Appreciation Institutional		Mutual Fund	N/A	\$ 18,294,072
* MFS Value Fund R6		Mutual Fund	N/A	5,555,786
* Vanguard Institutional Index Fund		Mutual Fund	N/A	29,206,933
* Columbia Small Cap Value Fund II - Y		Mutual Fund	N/A	3,010,910
* American Funds Europacific Growth R6		Mutual Fund	N/A	13,093,163
* Prudential Total Return Bond Fund - Z		Mutual Fund	N/A	11,716,964
* Vanguard Mid-Cap Index Institutional		Mutual Fund	N/A	10,571,921
* Vanguard Small Cap Index Institutional		Mutual Fund	N/A	5,287,392
* Jpmorgan Mid Cap Growth Fund R6		Mutual Fund	N/A	8,630,892
* Galliard Stable Return Fund C		Common/collective trust	N/A	7,699,226
* Vanguard Target Income		Common/collective trust	N/A	1,481,372
* Vanguard Income & Growth		Common/collective trust	N/A	156,191
* Vanguard Target 2020		Common/collective trust	N/A	1,301,689
* Vanguard Target 2025		Common/collective trust	N/A	9,314,991
* Vanguard Target 2030		Common/collective trust	N/A	12,933,946
* Vanguard Target 2035		Common/collective trust	N/A	20,093,283
* Vanguard Target 2040		Common/collective trust	N/A	22,473,512
* Vanguard Target 2045		Common/collective trust	N/A	29,054,371
* Vanguard Target 2050		Common/collective trust	N/A	28,523,774
* Vanguard Target 2055		Common/collective trust	N/A	19,496,042
* Vanguard Target 2060		Common/collective trust	N/A	11,433,610
* Vanguard Target 2065		Common/collective trust	N/A	2,457,769
* Vanguard Target 2070		Common/collective trust	N/A	196,677
		Subtotal Investments		271,984,486
* Participant notes receivable		Interest at 4.00% to 9.50%	N/A	4,555,894
				<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>
* Party-in-interest to the Plan.				

DESIGNER BRANDS INC. 401(k) PLAN

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
WITH
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

December 31, 2025

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MEADEN & MOORE

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Designer Brands Inc. Retirement Plan Committee
Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan
Columbus, Ohio

Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit

We have performed an audit of the financial statements of Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan (the "Plan"), an employee benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), as permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) (ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit). The financial statements comprise the statement of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2025 and 2024, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management, having determined it is permissible in the circumstances, has elected to have the audit of the Plan's financial statements performed in accordance with ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.103-8 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. As permitted by ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C), our audit need not extend to any statements or information related to assets held for investment of the plan (investment information) by a bank or similar institution or insurance carrier that is regulated, supervised, and subject to periodic examination by a state or federal agency, provided that the statements or information regarding assets so held are prepared and certified to by the bank or similar institution or insurance carrier in accordance with 29 CFR 2520.103-5 of the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA (qualified institution).

Management has obtained certifications from qualified institutions, Fidelity Management Trust Company as of and for the years ended December 31, 2025 and 2024 and Matrix Trust Company for the period from January 1, 2024 to January 10, 2024, stating that the certified investment information, as described in Note 5 to the financial statements, is complete and accurate.

Opinion

In our opinion, based on our audit and on the procedures performed as described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section:

- the amounts and disclosures in the accompanying financial statements, other than those agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- the information in the accompanying financial statements related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Plan and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that

the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Management's election of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit does not affect management's responsibility for the financial statements.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Management is also responsible for maintaining a current plan instrument, including all plan amendments, administering the Plan, and determining that the Plan's transactions that are presented and disclosed in the financial statements are in conformity with the Plan's provisions, including maintaining sufficient records with respect to each of the participants, to determine the benefits due or which may become due to such participants.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Except as described in the Scope and Nature of the ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) Audit section of our report, our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Plan's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our audit did not extend to the certified investment information, except for obtaining and reading the certification, comparing the certified investment information with the related information presented and disclosed in the financial statements, and reading the disclosures relating to the certified investment information to assess whether they are in accordance with the presentation and disclosure requirements of accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Accordingly, the objective of an ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C) audit is not to express an opinion about whether the financial statements as a whole are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Other Matter - Supplemental Schedule Required by ERISA

The supplemental Schedule of Assets Held for Investment Purposes at End of Year as of December 31, 2025 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplementary information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information included in the supplemental schedule, other than that agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, has been subjected to auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS. For information included in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, we compared such information to the related certified investment information.

In forming our opinion on the supplemental schedule, we evaluated whether the supplemental schedule, other than the information agreed to or derived from the certified investment information, including its form and content, is presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

In our opinion:

- the form and content of the supplemental schedule, other than the information in the supplemental schedule that agreed to or is derived from the certified investment information, are presented, in all material respects, in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.
- the information in the supplemental schedule related to assets held by and certified to by a qualified institution agrees to, or is derived from, in all material respects, the information prepared and certified by an institution that management determined meets the requirements of ERISA Section 103(a)(3)(C).

Meaden & Moore, Ltd.

Meaden & Moore, Ltd.
Dublin, Ohio

August 7, 2026

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

	December 31	
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
ASSETS		
Notes receivable from participants	\$ 4,555,894	\$ 4,453,219
Investments, at Fair Value:		
Mutual funds	105,368,033	96,084,494
Collective investment funds	<u>166,616,453</u>	<u>141,283,391</u>
Total Investments at Fair Value	271,984,486	237,367,885
LIABILITIES	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Assets Available for Benefits	<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>	<u>\$ 241,821,104</u>

See accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR BENEFITS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

	Year Ended December 31	
	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Additions to Net Assets Attributed to:		
Contributions:		
Employer	\$ 6,602,928	\$ 6,654,897
Employee	14,998,291	15,038,890
Rollover	<u>3,531,359</u>	<u>1,595,541</u>
Total Contributions	25,132,578	23,289,328
Investment Income:		
Interest and dividend income	6,506,699	5,591,836
Net unrealized/realized appreciation	<u>32,893,870</u>	<u>24,212,401</u>
Total Investment Income	39,400,569	29,804,237
Interest income on notes receivable from participants	365,988	324,389
Deductions from Net Assets Attributed to:		
Benefits paid to participants	29,835,947	38,554,043
Administrative expenses	<u>343,912</u>	<u>298,016</u>
Total Deductions	<u>30,179,859</u>	<u>38,852,059</u>
Net Increase	34,719,276	14,565,895
Net Assets Available for Benefits:		
Beginning of Year	<u>241,821,104</u>	<u>227,255,209</u>
End of Year	<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>	<u>\$ 241,821,104</u>

See accompanying notes.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan

The following description of the Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan (the “Plan”) provides only general information. Participants should refer to the Plan document for a complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General:

The Plan, which began July 1, 2008 and was restated effective July 29, 2021, is a defined contribution plan covering all full-time employees of Designer Brands Inc. (the “Company”) who meet the service and age requirements. All union, nonresident aliens, leased, and temporary or seasonal employees of the Company are excluded from participation in the Plan. It is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (“ERISA”).

The Plan was amended to allow for participation in the Plan by eligible employees of Topo Athletic, LLC beginning on January 1, 2024.

Eligibility:

All employees of the Company age twenty-one and older must be employed for one month to become eligible to make employee contributions to the Plan. Employees must be employed for six months to become eligible for employer contributions.

Contributions:

Employee Contributions - Participants may elect between 1% and 50% of their pre-tax compensation to be contributed to the Plan by the Company. Participants are also permitted to elect Roth contributions and catch-up contributions.

Employer Contributions - The Company makes safe harbor matching contributions of 100% of employee deferrals that do not exceed 3% of compensation, plus 50% of employee deferrals between 3% and 5% of compensation.

Employer Discretionary Contributions - The Company may also make a discretionary profit sharing contribution to the Plan. Such additional contributions, if any, shall be allocated to each Participant in proportion to his or her compensation for the calendar year. No such contributions were made to the Plan in 2025 or 2024.

Rollover contributions from other plans are also accepted, provided that certain specified conditions are met.

Contributions are subject to limitations on annual additions and other limitations imposed by the Internal Revenue Code, as defined in the Plan agreement.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan, Continued

Participants' Accounts:

Each participant's account is credited with the participant's elective contributions, safe harbor employer matching contributions, employer discretionary contributions, and earnings and losses thereon.

Vesting:

All participants are 100% vested in elective before-tax and after-tax deferrals, employer safe harbor matching contributions, and rollover contributions made to the Plan.

Forfeitures:

Any forfeitures in the Plan shall be used to pay Plan expenses and reduce future employer contributions payable under the Plan. The balance of unused forfeitures at December 31, 2025 and 2024 was \$143 and \$1,712, respectively. Forfeitures used to reduce fees in 2025 and 2024 were \$4,079 and \$1,361, respectively.

Notes Receivable from Participants:

Loans are permitted under certain circumstances and are subject to limitations. Participants may borrow from their fund accounts up to a maximum equal to the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of their vested account balance. Loans are repaid over a period not to exceed 5 years with exceptions for the purchase of a primary residence. Loans are valued at unpaid principal plus accrued but unpaid interest. No allowance for credit losses has been recorded as of December 31, 2025 and 2024. Delinquent participant loans are recorded as distributions on the basis of the terms of the Plan agreement.

The loans are secured by the balance in the participant's account and bear interest at rates established by the Plan Administrator. Principal and interest are paid ratably through payroll deductions.

Other Plan Provisions:

Normal retirement age is 65. The Plan also provides for early payment of benefits after reaching age 59-1/2.

Payment of Benefits:

Upon termination of service by reason of separation of service, retirement, death, or total and permanent disability, a participant may receive a lump sum amount equal to the value of his or her account or receive the value in installments. Benefits are recorded when paid.

Hardship Withdrawals:

Hardship withdrawals are permitted in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

1 Description of Plan, Continued

Investment Options:

Upon enrollment in the Plan, a participant may direct any contributions to any of the investment options offered by the Plan. Based on the Plan's qualified default investment alternative ("QDIA") policy, if an investment election is not made, a participant's contributions are invested in the appropriate target date fund for their age.

2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting:

The Plan's transactions are reported on the accrual basis of accounting.

Investment Valuation and Income Recognition:

Investments are stated at fair value. Marketable securities are reported at fair market value as of the balance sheet date. Fair market values represent quoted market prices or, if quoted market prices are not available, estimated fair values as determined by the Plan's investment broker.

The fair values of the collective investment funds are based on the underlying investments which are generally a variety of investment contracts.

Purchases and sales of securities are recorded on a trade-date basis. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date. Net appreciation includes the Plan's gains and losses on investments purchased and sold as well as held during the year.

Use of Estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Administrative Fees:

Substantially all recordkeeping fees are paid by the Plan, allocated pro rata to each participant's account. Other administrative and investment management fees are paid by the Company.

Plan Termination:

Although it has not expressed any intent to do so, the Company has the right under the Plan to discontinue its contributions at any time and to terminate the Plan subject to the provisions of ERISA. In the event of Plan termination, participants would become 100% vested in their accounts.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

2 Summary of Significant Accounting Policies, Continued

Risks and Uncertainties:

The Plan's investments include investments in mutual funds and collective investment funds holding investment contracts with varying degrees of risk, such as interest rate, credit, and overall market volatility risks. Due to the level of risk associated with certain investment securities, it is reasonably possible that changes in the values of investment securities will occur in the near term and such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

Subsequent Events:

Management evaluates events occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements in determining the accounting for and disclosure of transactions and events that affect the financial statements.

Subsequent events have been evaluated through August 7, 2026, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

The Plan was amended effective January 1, 2026 to implement the Roth catch-up rules required by SECURE 2.0.

3 Tax Status

The Plan adopted a prototype plan from Fidelity Management Trust Company. On June 30, 2020, the Internal Revenue Service stated that the prototype plan, as then designed, was in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. The Plan has been amended; however, the Plan Administrator believes that the Plan is currently designed and being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, they believe that the Plan was qualified and the related trust was tax-exempt as of the financial statement date.

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require plan management to evaluate tax positions taken by the Plan and recognize a tax liability if the Plan has taken uncertain tax positions that more-likely-than-not would not be sustained upon examination by applicable taxing authorities. The Plan Administrator has analyzed tax positions taken by the Plan and has concluded that, as of December 31, 2025, there are no uncertain tax positions taken, or expected to be taken, that would require recognition of a liability or disclosure in the financial statements. The Plan is subject to routine audits by taxing jurisdictions. However, currently no audits for any tax periods are in progress.

4 Fair Value Measurements

The framework for measuring fair value provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The hierarchy gives the highest priority to unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities (Level 1) and the lowest priority to unobservable inputs (Level 3). Valuation techniques maximize the use of relevant observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

4 Fair Value Measurements, Continued

The three levels of the fair value hierarchy under Topic 820 are described as follows:

Level 1: Inputs to the valuation methodology are quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Plan can access at the measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly, such as:

- * Quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets.
- * Quoted prices for identical or similar assets or liabilities in inactive markets.
- * Inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability.
- * Inputs that are derived principally from or corroborated by observable market data by correlation or other means.

If the asset or liability has a specified (contractual) term, the Level 2 input must be observable for substantially the full term of the asset or liability.

Level 3: Inputs that are unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets measured at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2025 and 2024.

Mutual Funds:

The fair value of the mutual funds are based on quoted market prices.

Collective Investment Funds:

The fair values of the collective investment funds are based on the underlying assets of the funds. The fair value is expressed in units. The investment is valued using the net asset value ("NAV") per share as a practical expedient and have not been categorized in the fair value hierarchy. The fair value amounts presented in the table below are intended to permit reconciliation of the fair value hierarchy to the investment amounts presented on the Statement of Net Assets Available for Benefits.

Participant transactions (purchases and sales) may occur daily, but liquidity is limited because of the unique characteristics of investment contracts and the absence of an actively traded secondary market.

Were the Plan to initiate a full redemption of the collective investment fund, the investment advisor reserves the right to temporarily delay redemptions from the trust in order to ensure that securities liquidations will be carried out in an orderly business manner. Units of the trust are issued and redeemed at current NAV. Redemptions by participating plans occur at NAV following any stated notice period in the fund agreement.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

4 Fair Value Measurements, Continued

The following table sets forth by level, within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's assets at fair value as of December 31, 2025 and 2024. Classification within the fair value hierarchy table is based on the lowest level of any input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2025			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Mutual funds	<u>\$ 105,368,033</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Investments measured at net asset value			<u>166,616,453</u>
Investments at Fair Value			<u>\$ 271,984,486</u>

Assets at Fair Value as of December 31, 2024			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Mutual funds	<u>\$ 96,084,494</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Investments measured at net asset value			<u>141,283,391</u>
Investments at Fair Value			<u>\$ 237,367,885</u>

5 Information Prepared and Certified by Trustees

The following information included in the accompanying financial statements and supplemental schedule was obtained from data that has been prepared and certified as complete and accurate by the Trustees. The certifications were provided by Fidelity Management Trust Company as of and for the years ended December 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025	2024
Investments, at fair value	\$ 271,984,486	\$ 237,367,885
Notes receivable from participants	\$ 4,555,894	\$ 4,453,219
Interest and dividend income	\$ 6,506,699	\$ 5,591,836
Interest income on notes receivable from participants	\$ 365,988	\$ 324,389
Net unrealized/realized appreciation	\$ 32,893,870	\$ 24,212,401

6 Party-in-Interest Transactions

The Plan has arrangements with various service providers and these arrangements qualify as party-in-interest transactions.

Revenue sharing for investments that generate such amounts for Fidelity are returned to the Plan on a quarterly basis. These amounts may be applied to pay administrative expenses of the Plan or allocated to the accounts of participants invested in those funds.

SCHEDULE OF ASSETS HELD FOR INVESTMENT PURPOSES AT END OF YEAR
Form 5500, Schedule H, Part IV, Line 4i

Designer Brands Inc. 401(k) Plan

EIN 31-0746639

Plan Number 001

December 31, 2025

(a)	(b) Identity of Issue, Borrower, Lessor, or Similar Party	(c) Description of Investment Including Maturity Date, Rate of Interest, Collateral, Par or Maturity Value	(d) Cost	(e) Current Value
*	Harbor Capital Appreciation Institutional	Mutual Fund	N/A	\$ 18,294,072
*	MFS Value Fund R6	Mutual Fund	N/A	5,555,786
*	Vanguard Institutional Index Fund	Mutual Fund	N/A	29,206,933
*	Columbia Small Cap Value Fund II - Y	Mutual Fund	N/A	3,010,910
*	American Funds Europacific Growth R6	Mutual Fund	N/A	13,093,163
*	Prudential Total Return Bond Fund - Z	Mutual Fund	N/A	11,716,964
*	Vanguard Mid-Cap Index Institutional	Mutual Fund	N/A	10,571,921
*	Vanguard Small Cap Index Institutional	Mutual Fund	N/A	5,287,392
*	Jpmorgan Mid Cap Growth Fund R6	Mutual Fund	N/A	8,630,892
*	Galliard Stable Return Fund C	Common/collective trust	N/A	7,699,226
*	Vanguard Target Income	Common/collective trust	N/A	1,481,372
*	Vanguard Income & Growth	Common/collective trust	N/A	156,191
*	Vanguard Target 2020	Common/collective trust	N/A	1,301,689
*	Vanguard Target 2025	Common/collective trust	N/A	9,314,991
*	Vanguard Target 2030	Common/collective trust	N/A	12,933,946
*	Vanguard Target 2035	Common/collective trust	N/A	20,093,283
*	Vanguard Target 2040	Common/collective trust	N/A	22,473,512
*	Vanguard Target 2045	Common/collective trust	N/A	29,054,371
*	Vanguard Target 2050	Common/collective trust	N/A	28,523,774
*	Vanguard Target 2055	Common/collective trust	N/A	19,496,042
*	Vanguard Target 2060	Common/collective trust	N/A	11,433,610
*	Vanguard Target 2065	Common/collective trust	N/A	2,457,769
*	Vanguard Target 2070	Common/collective trust	N/A	196,677
		Subtotal Investments		271,984,486
*	Participant notes receivable	Interest at 4.00% to 9.50%	N/A	4,555,894
				<u>\$ 276,540,380</u>
*	Party-in-interest to the Plan.			