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El Tequileño Recruits Rick Tigner to Lead Its U.S. Distribution Push

The former Jackson Family Wines chief will strengthen distributor ties after the brand reached 63,000 U.S. cases in 2025.

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Paradise Spirits said Tuesday that Rick Tigner, the longtime former chief executive of Jackson Family Wines, has joined the leadership team of El Tequileño as the tequila brand pushes for wider distribution in the United States and other markets.

The company said Tigner will bring experience in global sales, distributor management, route-to-market strategy and brand development. Paradise Spirits said his work will focus on strengthening commercial capabilities and distributor relationships while helping guide El Tequileño's expansion in the U.S. and in selected international markets.

The appointment comes as El Tequileño grows from a still modest but fast-rising base in the U.S. According to Impact Databank figures cited by Shanken News Daily, the brand reached 63,000 cases in the U.S. in 2025 after roughly tripling over the previous three years. Because the source described that gain as approximate, the earlier comparison is also approximate, but a tripling would place the brand near 21,000 cases about three years earlier. That would imply an increase of roughly 42,000 cases over the period and an annualized growth rate of about 44%.

The 63,000-case figure is background to the executive move, not a new October sales update. No value sales, pricing data or quarterly breakdown was disclosed in the report. Still, the volume growth offers a clear measure of why Paradise Spirits is adding a senior executive with deep experience in commercial execution and distributor relations.

Wayne Henuset, founder and president of Paradise Spirits, said in remarks released with the announcement that Tigner understands the different parts of building a lasting drinks brand, from the product itself to distributor partnerships and consumer connections. Henuset said Tigner's experience and judgment will be important as the company looks to build on recent momentum and move into what it sees as the next stage of growth.

For El Tequileño, the timing is important. In the U.S. spirits business, supplier growth often depends on how well a brand manages wholesaler relationships, market coverage and the path products take from producer to retailer. Paradise Spirits said Tigner's background in those areas was a key reason for bringing him into the leadership group.

Tigner said in the company's announcement that El Tequileño has traits that can support long-term international growth. He pointed to the brand's authenticity, the quality of its tequila, committed ownership and a story rooted in family and place. He

also said he sees strong opportunity ahead for the business.

Shanken News Daily described El Tequileño as an Impact “Hot Prospect” tequila brand in its report on the hiring. The publication said Tigner is joining after a long career at Jackson Family Wines, one of the better-known wine companies in the U.S., giving El Tequileño an executive with experience working across markets and channels.

El Tequileño was founded in 1959 by Don Jorge Salles Cuervo and is made at the La Guarreña distillery. The company has not released additional 2026 operating details in the report, but Paradise Spirits made clear that the leadership change is tied to a broader effort to scale the brand’s commercial reach after the sharp rise in its U.S. case volume through 2025.