

What Kalanick's Fall Means for Silicon Valley Culture

Mr. Kalanick had been on indefinite leave from the company as of last week, a move he said was necessary to mourn the sudden death of his mother last month in a boating accident, and with an aim to re-emerge as a newly invigorated leader.

When Uber announced Mr. Kalanick's leave last week, the company said it would be run by a committee of 14 executives, including the chief technology officer, regional managers and heads of legal, product, operations and other areas.

Mr. Kalanick's departure exposes Uber's leadership shortcomings and raises the question of who can lead a company whose defiantly competitive startup culture and leadership style reflected the pugnacious chief executive.

Mr. Kalanick, 40 years old, handed in his resignation Tuesday, a spokesman said. Several investors pushed Mr. Kalanick to resign, people familiar with the matter said, to help turn around the company as it works to battle allegations that it has a workplace permissive of sexual harassment and sexism.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-kalanicks-fall-means-for-silicon-valley-culture-1498078684>

Kalanick Critic to Step Down From Uber Board of Directors

Turmoil at [Uber Technologies Inc.](#) continues as longtime backer and director Bill Gurley is leaving the company's board following the resignation of Chief Executive Officer Travis Kalanick.

Gurley was one of Uber's earliest investors and biggest fans. He played a key role on the board over the years, helping to recruit many of the company's executives. But in private Gurley became a vocal critic of Kalanick in recent months, people familiar with the matter said. The startup has been in upheaval for most of this year, following rider protests over the company's ties to the Trump administration and an investigation into Uber's corporate culture conducted by former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-06-21/uber-investor-gurley-said-in-talks-to-leave-board-of-directors>

March 2017: Travis gets into a fight with an Uber driver about fares, gets caught on dashcam
<http://www.wsj.com/video/uber-ceo-caught-on-video-berating-company-driver/E909CB38-2594-4308-A637-2661CBE58038.html>

In rapid succession, Uber faced a lawsuit from Google parent Alphabet Inc. over allegedly stolen technology, a federal probe looking into technology used to evade regulators, an exodus of executives, and it admitted that it erroneously withheld tens of millions of dollars from New York City and Philadelphia drivers over more than two years. The blows threaten to harm Uber's reputation with drivers, expose it to legal challenges, slow its push toward developing self-driving vehicles and complicate its prospect for an initial public offering.

A top Uber executive, who obtained the medical records of a customer who was a rape victim, has been fired

A top Uber executive obtained medical records of a woman who had been raped during a ride in India, according to multiple sources.

By way of background, in 2014, a 26-year-old woman in New Delhi, India was raped and assaulted by her Uber driver at the end of a Saturday night in December. The driver — who was already awaiting trial for at least four other criminal charges — was arrested and later sentenced to life in prison.

He is no longer with the company, an Uber spokesperson said.

The executive in question, Eric Alexander, the president of business in the Asia Pacific, then showed the medical records to Uber CEO Travis Kalanick and SVP Emil Michael. In addition, numerous executives at the car-hailing company were either told about the records or shown them.

<https://www.recode.net/2017/6/7/15754316/uber-executive-india-assault-rape-medical-records>

With her blog post about toxic bro-culture at Uber, Susan Fowler proved that one person can make a difference

Consider what she started with:

After the first couple of weeks of training, I chose to join the team that worked on my area of expertise, and this is where things started getting weird. On my first official day rotating on the team, my new manager sent me a string of messages over company chat. He was in an open relationship, he said, and his girlfriend was having an easy time finding new partners but he wasn't. He was trying to stay out of trouble at work, he said, but he couldn't help getting in trouble, because he was looking for women to have sex with. It was clear that he was trying to get me to have sex with him, and it was so clearly out of line that I immediately took screenshots of these chat messages and reported him to HR.

<https://www.recode.net/2017/6/21/15844852/uber-toxic-bro-company-culture-susan-fowler-blog-post>

Uber was a pretty good-sized company at that time, and I had pretty standard expectations of how they would handle situations like this. I expected that I would report him to HR, they would handle the situation appropriately, and then life would go on - unfortunately, things played out quite a bit differently. When I reported the situation, I was told by both HR and upper management that even though this was clearly sexual harassment and he was propositioning me, it was this man's first offense, and that they wouldn't feel comfortable giving him anything other than a warning and a stern talking-to. Upper management told me that he "was a high performer" (i.e. had stellar performance reviews from his superiors) and they wouldn't feel comfortable punishing him for what was probably just an innocent mistake on his part.

I was then told that I had to make a choice: (i) I could either go and find another team and then never have to interact with this man again, or (ii) I could stay on the team, but I would have to understand that he would most likely give me a poor performance review when review time came around, and there was nothing they could do about that. I remarked that this didn't seem like much of a choice, and that I wanted to stay on the team because I had significant expertise in the exact project that the team was struggling to complete (it was genuinely in the company's best interest to have me on that team), but they told me the same thing again and again. One HR rep even explicitly told me that it wouldn't be retaliation if I received a negative review later because I had been "given an option". I tried to escalate the situation but got nowhere with either HR or with my own management chain (who continued to insist that they had given him a stern-talking to and didn't want to ruin his career over his "first offense").

Over the next few months, I began to meet more women engineers in the company. As I got to know them, and heard their stories, I was surprised that some of them had stories similar to my own. Some of the women even had stories about reporting the exact same manager I had reported, and had reported inappropriate interactions with him long before I had even joined the company. It became obvious that both HR and management had been lying about this being "his first offense", and it certainly wasn't his last. Within a few months, he was reported once again for inappropriate behavior, and those who reported him were told it was still his "first offense". The situation was escalated as far up the chain as it could be escalated, and still nothing was done.

<https://www.susanfowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber>

Waymo filing says ex-Uber CEO Travis Kalanick knew engineer had Google info

In the ongoing legal case between Uber and Waymo, a new filing suggests Uber knew that Anthony Levandowski possessed Google information as of last March, before Otto's acquisition.

The former Google self-driving project engineer founded Otto, and then joined Uber to lead its self-driving efforts when Otto was acquired by the ride hailing giant.

Waymo's new filing cites a response from Uber itself, made June 8 in response to a discovery request from Waymo, which contains the following admission:

"On or about March 11, 2016, Mr. Levandowski reported to Mr. Kalanick, Nina Qi and Cameron Poetzsch at Uber as well as Lior Ron that he had identified five discs in his possession containing Google information..."

"Mr. Kalanick conveyed to Mr. Levandowski in response that Mr. Levandowski should not bring any Google information into Uber and that Uber did not want any Google information. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Levandowski communicated to Uber that he had destroyed the discs"

<https://techcrunch.com/2017/06/22/waymo-filing-says-ex-uber-ceo-travis-kalanick-knew-engineer-had-google-info/?ncid=rss>

Wanted at Uber: A CEO Who Can Do Pretty Much Everything

Ms. Vell, who has placed leaders of several small- and medium-sized tech companies, suggested several potential prospects for the No. 1 job. Among them is Keith Block, president of Salesforce.com Inc. and a 26-year veteran of Oracle Corp.

"He's very, very strong operationally," Ms. Vell said. "I know he's CEO material. He's very ethical, tough. People love him."

Mr. Block didn't return calls for comment. A Salesforce.com spokeswoman declined to comment.

Other possible picks for Uber CEO include Safra Catz, co-CEO of Oracle, and Pat Gelsinger, CEO of VMware, a unit of Dell Inc., according to Ms. Vell. An Oracle spokeswoman declined comment about whether Ms. Catz might join Uber. A VMware spokesman said Mr. Gelsinger "is deeply committed to his role as VMware CEO."

A person close to Facebook Inc.'s chief operating officer, Sheryl Sandberg, quashed speculation that she could be a contender for the job, saying that Ms. Sandberg plans to stay put.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/wanted-at-uber-a-ceo-who-can-do-pretty-much-everything-1498066764>