

Oracle, ex-HP CEO Hurd in talks for job

September 6 2010, By JORDAN ROBERTSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Former Hewlett-Packard Co. CEO Mark Hurd is in talks to take a top executive job at Oracle Corp., the database software maker run by his friend Larry Ellison, a person with direct knowledge of the discussions said Sunday.

It wasn't immediately clear what job Hurd would take. But the person told The Associated Press that Ellison, the only person to serve as Oracle's CEO since he founded the company 33 years ago, wouldn't be leaving that post. This person emphasized that the talks were not yet finalized.

The person was not authorized to discuss the confidential negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The possibility of Hurd landing at [Oracle](#) isn't a surprise. Ellison was vocal in coming to Hurd's defense after Hurd's sudden resignation Aug. 6 in the wake of a sexual harassment investigation.

Hurd's resignation was stunning because he was widely praised on Wall Street.

Investors praised his cost-cutting; HP announced about 50,000 job cuts over the five years Hurd was CEO. Wall Street also liked that he engineered more than \$20 billion in acquisitions, which helped HP reduce its dependence on printer ink for the bulk of its profits. HP is now a major player in technology services and computer networking.

Those traits could help Hurd at Oracle, which is also known for aggressive dealmaking and cost cuts.

Hurd would also join Oracle at an interesting juncture for both companies.

Oracle, the No. 1 database [software maker](#), and HP, the No. 1 personal computer and printer maker, are longtime partners that are increasingly squaring off against each other. Oracle's \$7.4 billion acquisition of Sun Microsystems last year made it a competitor to HP in the market for computer servers.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Hurd's job talks with Oracle earlier.

In coming to Hurd's defense following his resignation, Ellison called HP's decision to oust Hurd the worst personnel decision since Apple Inc. forced out [Steve Jobs](#) - another of Ellison's friends - 25 years ago. Jobs later returned and lifted Apple out of a funk, turning it onto a top maker of consumer-electronics products.

Ellison has said the HP board's decision to publicly disclose the harassment claim against Hurd amounted to "cowardly corporate political correctness," as the board had found that Hurd didn't violate the company's sexual harassment policies.

The investigation unearthed inaccurate expense reports connected with Hurd's outings with his eventual accuser, an actress and HP contractor named Jodie Fisher.

The substance of her claim was that her work helping organize HP events dried up after she rebuffed Hurd's advances. Hurd, 53, who is married with two children, denies making any advances on Fisher. Hurd also insists he didn't prepare his own expenses and didn't try to conceal

his outings with Fisher, which often included dinner after the events Fisher helped organize and that Hurd attended.

HP has emphasized that its board voted unanimously for Hurd's resignation.

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