

Possible CEOs to succeed Carol Bartz at Yahoo

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In this Dec. 1, 2010 file photo shows an employee leaves a Yahoo headquarters building in Sunnyvale, Calif. Carol Bartz was fired from Yahoo Monday after two and a half years as CEO. Tim Morse, the company's chief financial officer, was named interim CEO. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

(AP) -- The search has now begun for a person willing to lead one of the world's most popular Internet properties, Yahoo Inc., whose problems have deepened under its three previous leaders.

The challenge is to find someone who can bring a Web 1.0 property into the new digital world of mobile and social Internet. There's also the fact that the CEO job may not exist for long if the company looks to sell itself or break up.

Here are some possible CEO candidates to replace [Carol Bartz](#), who was

fired Tuesday after failing to turn the Web portal around:

- Timothy Morse, Yahoo's interim chief executive and chief financial officer since July 2009. He is likely the backstop candidate to be the company's permanent CEO. Morse had been CFO at chip-maker Altera Corp. and held various financial management roles at General Electric Co. for more than 15 years. He is seen as a strong operator credited with improving operating profits at Yahoo, mainly through cost-cutting, even as revenue at the company fell. His solid financial background and [Silicon Valley](#) experience could be an asset if major strategic moves are pursued, although he could be seen as damaged goods because Bartz had hired him.

- Ross Levinsohn, Yahoo's executive vice president for the Americas. Levinsohn joined the company in October 2010 from Fuse Capital, a digital media and communications [investment fund](#) that he co-founded and led as managing director. As a strategist, he helped orchestrate News Corp.'s purchase of [Myspace](#) in 2005, an acquisition that ultimately failed. He is seen as well connected in the world of new media. "He's probably learned from his mistakes about what he did at Myspace," B. Riley & Co. Inc. analyst Sameet Sinha said. For now, Levinsohn is serving on an executive leadership council that is advising Morse, so it's a short step up to the top job.

- Jonathan Miller, News Corp.'s chief digital officer since March 2009. He knows the Web portal business from his stint as AOL's chief executive from 2002 to 2006 and knows Levinsohn from their time co-founding Velocity Interactive Group, which became Fuse Capital. He should be busy trying to sell online video service Hulu, but it helps that Yahoo is one of the bidders. He knows when to cut losses, having helped sell the money-losing Myspace in June. He could also be instrumental to scoping out a Yahoo-AOL merger if the idea resurfaces.

- Jason Kilar, CEO of Hulu, which is being sold by its owners, News Corp., The Walt Disney Co., Comcast Corp.'s NBCUniversal and Providence Equity Partners. Kilar has helped Hulu become profitable and has innovated unique ad strategies that give viewers choices. He also helped launch the Hulu Plus paid subscription plan. If and when Hulu gets sold, Kilar may be up for a job with larger responsibilities, and he understands the challenges of selling ads online. The Harvard Business School grad also worked as an executive at Amazon.com Inc.

- David Kenny, president of online content delivery company Akamai Technologies Inc. Kenny joined Yahoo's board in April. He was chairman and CEO of digital advertising agency Digitas, a unit of ad agency giant Publicis Groupe SA, from 1997 to 2008 so he understands the Web advertising economy. Although he isn't on Yahoo's executive leadership council, he is a member of Yahoo's board and will be involved with major strategic decisions.

- Tim Armstrong, CEO of AOL Inc. He could be a candidate, but he runs a competing Web portal that has problems of its own. AOL has been slashing staff and recently bought The Huffington Post to boost its audience. TechCrunch, another recent AOL purchase, may see the departure of its founder Michael Arrington, who is starting up a venture capital firm. Besides needing to reverse losses at AOL, Armstrong has plenty of strategic challenges to overcome before moving on.

- Peter Chernin, former president and chief operating officer of [News Corp.](#) Chernin now runs Chernin Entertainment, which produced "Rise of the Planet of the Apes" for 20th Century Fox, the studio he once oversaw. Although Chernin certainly has operational management skills and vast experience in media, he's got a smash hit on his hands and a possible film franchise to manage. On a positive note, Chernin has looked into possibly taking over Yahoo with other investors, according to the Wall Street Journal's technology blog, All Things D.

- Jack Ma, CEO of China's Alibaba Group. He is the dark horse who could take control of Yahoo and potentially snag the CEO job for himself. Ma has battled Bartz over his decisions and has chafed at Yahoo's 43 percent stake in his prized Internet company. "Jack Ma has not made it a secret that he really wants that stake back," Susquehanna Financial Group analyst Herman Leung said. Alibaba's market capitalization of \$27.5 billion dwarfs Yahoo's of about \$17.2 billion, making some kind of stock swap purchase possible with the help of private equity funds, Leung said. Ma could buy all of Yahoo to get back the Alibaba stake and sell the rest of the portal "at cost or at a loss," Leung said.

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