

# Chinese dating app CEO accused of theft ahead of IPO

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A day ahead of its IPO a popular Chinese dating app backed by Internet giant Alibaba was on Thursday facing accusations by its CEO's previous employer that he stole technology and abused his position.

NetEase, one of the most popular web portals in China, accused Momo chief Tang Yan of stealing information and technological resources in violation of Chinese labour law.

NetEase also said Tang used his former position with it to award lucrative contracts to his wife's company.

Momo is going public in New York on Friday but said it was unable to comment on the allegations due to laws on what companies can disclose before their flotations.

The service, which helps people find dates with others nearby, boasts more than 180 million users.

Tang held various editorial roles at NetEase between 2003 and 2011, eventually rising to editor-in-chief of its main website less than six months before he left to focus on Momo full-time.

NetEase said in a statement that Tang "delivered commercial benefits that are worth over a million yuan to a Beijing advertising company founded by his wife, Zhang Sichuan—conduct that gave rise to suspicion of non-governmental corruption".

"During his employment, Tang took advantage of his post to acquire various information and technological resources to help establish Momo," it added.

"NetEase reserves the right to take legal action over Tang's misconduct during his employment."

There was no explanation as to why the accusations were emerging now.

Momo, which is looking to raise as much as \$232 million in its IPO, is backed by China's biggest Internet company Alibaba and 58.com, a classifieds website.

"In accordance with relevant regulations, Momo is currently in a quiet period and cannot give interviews," Wen Yajuan, a spokeswoman for the company, said by email.

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