

Amazon steps up battle over NY Times workplace probe

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The New York Times report based on interviews with more than 100 current and former Amazon employees sparked a barrage of responses about the workplace culture at Amazon, and other major US tech firms

Amazon on Monday renewed its criticism of a New York Times investigation of the US online giant's workplace, saying the newspaper ignored and omitted key facts about the company.

Amazon spokesman Jay Carney said in a blog post that much of the article published in August was based on interviews with a former employee whose "brief tenure at Amazon ended after an investigation revealed he had attempted to defraud vendors and conceal it by falsifying business records."

Carney wrote that another employee quoted as saying she didn't sleep for four days straight later pointed out that her issues were related to juggling work and graduate school and that "in no way was I asked or forced by management to do this."

"When the story came out, we knew it misrepresented Amazon," said Carney, a former White House spokesman who previously worked as a journalist at Time magazine.

"Once we could look into the most sensational anecdotes, we realized why. We presented the Times with our findings several weeks ago, hoping they might take action to correct the record. They haven't, which is why we decided to write about it ourselves."

The Times report based on interviews with more than 100 current and former Amazon employees sparked a barrage of responses about the workplace culture at Amazon and other major US tech firms.

The lengthy report described an environment which pitted employees against each other in an effort to boost productivity.

It said employees often cried at their desks and faced stress from Amazon's employee feedback tools.

New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet said Monday the newspaper stands by its reporting.

"As the story noted, our reporters spoke to more than a hundred current and former employees, at various levels and divisions, over many months," Baquet said in his response, posted on the website Medium and addressed to Carney.

"Many, including most of those you cited, talked about how they admired Amazon's ambitions and urgency even as they described aspects of the workplace as troubling," he wrote. "Patterns emerged: many people raised similar concerns."

Baquet said Carney's responses "challenge the credibility of four of the more than two dozen named current or former Amazon employees quoted in the story or cast doubt on their veracity" but "for the most part... did not contradict what the former employees said in our story."

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