

Uber weighs shake-up as inquiry report looms

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Uber on Monday was mulling a shake-up of top management, including a possible leave of absence for its chief executive, as the ridesharing giant prepares to release results of an independent inquiry into misconduct and ethical practices, reports said.

The San Francisco startup, which operates in dozens of countries, was set to release the report prepared by former US attorney general Eric Holder on Tuesday, sources familiar with the matter said.

Uber's board met Sunday with holder and consultant Tammy Albarran to discuss the findings and "unanimously voted to adopt all the recommendations" of the report, according to the source.

The recommendations were not immediately known, but Uber is facing pressure to rein in its no-holds-barred management style led by CEO Travis Kalanick and reform a workplace culture criticized for discrimination and cutthroat practices.

Uber also faces questions about its covert use of law enforcement-evading software and tactics apparently aimed at disrupting rivals in the ridesharing business.

Some reports said the board was considering a proposal that would sideline Kalanick for several months as a "leave of absence."

Other media reported that Uber may part ways with senior vice president

Emil Michael, who has been at the center of many questionable practices at the company.

The Wall Street Journal reported Nestle executive Wan Ling Martello would be named as an independent board member as part of the shake-up.

Moment of truth

"It's safe to say that this week will be the week we finally learn just how committed Travis Kalanick and the rest of the senior leadership team at Uber is to meaningful cultural change," said Jan Dawson, an analyst with Jackdaw Research.

The report comes after a series of embarrassing revelations for the company over the past few months.

Last week, Uber said it had fired 20 people following preliminary results of the investigation, after examining 215 claims of discrimination, harassment, unprofessional behavior, bullying, retaliation and "physical security."

The company also ousted Eric Alexander, who headed Asia-Pacific operations, after reports said he read and discussed medical information about a woman raped in India in 2014 during an Uber ride.

Last month, Uber fired executive Anthony Levandowski, who came from Google's self-driving car unit now known as Waymo, for failing to meet a deadline to turn over information for an internal investigation.

Waymo's lawsuit contends that Levandowski in December 2015 downloaded files from a highly confidential design server to a laptop and took the data with him to the startup.

Top engineering executive Amit Singhal resigned in February after the ride-sharing titan learned he ended his career at Google after a sexual harassment complaint, reports said.

In March, Uber's president Jeff Jones resigned after just six months.

The woes so far have not hit Uber's growth trajectory, but some analysts say its problems won't fixed without a change in leadership.

The privately-held firm is valued at about \$68 billion, making it the largest "unicorn" or venture-backed startup.

Uber does not file full financial reports but indicated its bookings last year doubled to \$20 billion, with net revenue totaling \$6.5 billion and an adjusted net loss of \$2.8 billion not counting China operations that it sold.

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