

Uber taps Barney Harford as COO

December 20 2017



In this Monday, Sept. 12, 2016, file photo, a self-driving Uber sits ready to take journalists for a ride during a media preview in Pittsburgh. On Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017, Uber named Barney Harford its new COO, the same day the European Union's top court dealt it a blow, ruling that the ride-hailing company should be regulated like a taxi company and not a technology service. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File)

Uber has named Barney Harford its new COO, the same day the European Union's top court dealt it a blow, ruling that the ride-hailing company should be regulated like a transportation company and not a

technology service.

Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said Wednesday that Harford would oversee Uber's global operations, marketing and customer support teams beginning on January 2.

Even before the EU setback announced earlier Wednesday, Uber has had a rough 2017, from the ouster of CEO Travis Kalanick, sexual harassment allegations and the revelation that it covered up a massive breach of customers' data. Kalanick resigned in June, under pressure from the board after a video surfaced of the former CEO arguing with a driver for the [company](#).

Last week, a [federal judge](#) unsealed an inflammatory letter in which a former Uber security specialist accused the ride-hailing service of corporate espionage. The judge urged prosecutors to investigate allegations that Uber stole technology from Wymo, Google's autonomous vehicle unit.

The company, founded in 2008 and based in San Francisco, has also seen numerous defections by executives and board members in the past year.

Harford, who has been serving Uber in an advisory role since October, is the former CEO of Orbitz and serves on the boards of United Airlines and RealSelf. He moved to the U.S. from Britain in 1999 to work for Expedia, where he worked with Khosrowshahi.

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Citation: Uber taps Barney Harford as COO (2017, December 20) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-12-uber-barney-harford-coo.html>

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