

Q&A: Ride-hailing service Lyft's product chief Tali Rapaport

February 4 2018, by Tom Krisher



This photo provided by Lyft shows Tali Rapaport, the company's vice president of product. Even though it's been in business for just over five years, the Lyft ride-hailing service is evolving as it moves toward a time when personal car ownership falls and self-driving robotaxis start carrying passengers. Preparing for that time and everything between is largely Rapaport's responsibility. (Courtesy of Lyft via AP)

Even though it's been in business for just over five years, the Lyft ride-

hailing service is still evolving as it moves toward a time when personal car ownership falls and self-driving robotaxis start carrying passengers.

Preparing for that time and everything between is largely the responsibility of Tali Rapaport, Lyft's [vice president](#) of product.

Lyft said it provided over 375 million rides last year, more than double the number in 2017. The company expanded to most of the U.S. and started service in Toronto, its first city outside the U.S.

In an interview at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Rapaport talks about what ride-hailing passengers can expect in the coming months and years. Questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: What can people expect from Lyft in terms of [new products](#)?

A: We plan in 2018 to continue to invest in bringing shared rides to more places. We just launched a concierge portal for third parties to call Lyfts. One of the exciting uses for concierge are doctor's offices and [medical facilities](#). We didn't have an easy way for a third party to come in and say 'I need a car.' You just basically go on a website and you put in the addresses and who the patients are, and the cars kind of go and pick them up.

Q: One of your co-founders says people already are giving up second cars because ride-hailing has become so convenient. Do you have enough cars available for that happen?

A: I expect people to buy fewer second cars. To get someone to give up their second car, we need to be reliable not just in a small area. We need to be reliable in the suburbs. It's much less likely the driver will get a ride at any one time around any corner in the suburbs—there's just less

density. But if you let drivers pre-accept their schedule, they can piece together enough rides where previously we wouldn't have had a driver there.

Q: When [autonomous vehicles](#) are widely in use, do you think getting rid of second cars will accelerate? A: Autonomous vehicles work on the same idea. We're not going to have an AV car sitting in front of every doorstep everywhere. We'd still want you to let us know the night before. That concept of you letting us know when you need to go somewhere and us building a schedule around it is one of the ways that we're able to build reliability even in an AV world.

Q: Do you see a day when personal car ownership goes away?

A: We'll never take away the choice, I don't think that will be popular in the U.S. Decades from now, when autonomous vehicles are truly ubiquitous and costs come down, I don't expect the ownership model for autonomous vehicles to be personal car ownership. If you think about how often we use our cars, if you're going to use a car 4 percent of the time and it's autonomous and could be used the other 96 percent of the time, that feels less likely that the model will be true personal ownership. You will be able to get just as good of service from a model where you're not owning the [vehicle](#). We're talking well over a decade.

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