

Microsoft reportedly evaluating relationship with Activision amid CEO turmoil

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Microsoft is reportedly evaluating its relationship with video game publisher Activision Blizzard following allegations CEO Bobby Kotick knew for years about sexual misconduct claims at the company.

Xbox head Phil Spencer sent an email to staff, according to Bloomberg,

saying he is "evaluating all aspects of our relationship" with Activision Blizzard following a report from The Wall Street Journal claiming Kotick didn't inform the board of allegations of sexual misconduct at the publisher.

In a statement emailed to U.S. TODAY in response to the report, Spencer said he personally has strong values for a welcoming and inclusive environment for Xbox employees.

"This is not a destination but a journey that we will always be on," said Spencer. "The leadership at Xbox and Microsoft stand by our teams and support them in building a safer environment for all."

Activision told U.S. TODAY in an emailed statement it respects feedback from its partners and is engaging with them further.

Employees at Activision Blizzard staged a second walkout demanding Kotick be removed as CEO, NBC News reported. A Twitter account representing employees of the company shared a petition seeking Kotick's removal that has more than 1,000 signatures.

In a statement released Tuesday after the Journal report, Activision's board showed support for Kotick. "The Board remains confident that Bobby Kotick appropriately addressed workplace issues brought to his attention," it said.

Earlier this year, the state of California sued Activision Blizzard claiming the publisher fostered a sexist culture and paid women less than men despite doing more work.

The lawsuit prompted employees' initial walkout urging changes within the company's culture.

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