

Inside Twitter, shuffled jobs and Elon Musk tweets dampen morale

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Twitter Inc. employees are enduring the whiplash of public commentary from the social network's future owner, a changeover in leadership and a hiring freeze. On top of all that, some will be assigned new jobs as the company shifts away from its riskier projects.

Executives told workers of plans to pull back resources for some long-

term ambitions, including audio spaces, newsletters and communities, in favor of focusing on more immediate needs, like user growth and personalization efforts, according to people familiar with the matter. That means many employees will be shuffled within the company's consumer product group, the people said.

Jay Sullivan, who took over product leadership earlier this month when Chief Executive Officer Parag Agrawal fired the division's prior boss, is leading the restructuring. Employees speculate about layoffs, though none are planned, according to the company.

"We are making some updates to our consumer product team structure and roadmap to better focus on the areas that will have the greatest positive impact to the public conversation," a Twitter spokesperson said in a statement.

Teams inside Twitter continue to work on an edit button feature, a person familiar with the matter said. The aim is to release the update later this year, allowing users to edit a tweet within a time-limited window of sending it. The tweet's prior history will also be available to view, the person said.

It may be months before Twitter is under the control of its future owner, Tesla Inc. CEO Elon Musk. The world's richest man agreed to acquire Twitter for \$54.20 per share in late April, a price that values the company around \$44 billion, but the deal has not yet closed. Employees are struggling with squaring what might be the best financial outcome for shareholders, including themselves, with the chaos of working through the wait.

Musk's constant tweeting, including trolling of Twitter employees, has complicated the feeling. Workers' messages in internal Slack groups show Musk has alienated many of them by criticizing Twitter's policies

around speech and harassment and singling out the company's top lawyer, Vijaya Gadde, who is well liked internally.

Musk gave employees even more reason for consternation this week after he apparently sent an email to staff at Tesla with a subject line: "Remote work is no longer acceptable" (sic). He said that "anyone who wishes to do [remote work](#) must be in the office for a minimum (and I mean *minimum*) of 40 hours per week or depart Tesla. This is less than we ask of factory workers." Such a policy would run counter to Twitter's current stance, which is one of the most prominent big tech companies to allow most employees to work from home permanently.

In one internal discussion shortly before Twitter's board accepted the deal, an [employee](#) asked if anyone was "excited about the idea of having Elon on board?" The question prompted 446 replies from dozens of employees over three days, many of them negative, according to posts reviewed by Bloomberg. Some replied that Musk didn't seem to grasp the challenges Twitter faces around speech, or building a social network more generally. Others were excited about Musk, or at least felt his deal was a better option than staying the current course or selling to private equity.

Twitter executives have used recent staff meetings to explain that the company's board has a fiduciary duty to find the best possible outcome for shareholders. In a recent thread, an employee wrote that Musk "puts the douche in fiduciary."

News reports on May 19 from Insider that Musk settled a sexual harassment claim with a former SpaceX employee for \$250,000 led to a new wave of internal posts.

"Is there going to be any response from Twitter leadership around Elon Musk's alleged sexual harassment and [sexual violence](#) here?" one

employee asked on Slack. "As a woman working at Twitter, I find this radio silence extremely disheartening." Twitter's executives have yet to address the news story with employees, according to two sources.

When Musk sent a recent tweet about former CEO Jack Dorsey leaving the company's board, he included a sexual joke that also seemingly mocked the recent harassment report. Dorsey replied with a tweet of his own that included a horse emoji, presumably a nod to a reported detail that Musk offered to buy the victim a horse in exchange for an erotic massage. That exchange also made it to Twitter's internal message boards. "Doesn't everyone feel so proud?" a Twitter employee posted, mockingly.

In addition to the uncertainty around the reorganization and the reaction to Musk's unpredictable tweeting, workers are also grappling with a hiring freeze and other cost cutting measures Twitter has implemented to stabilize the business during a tumultuous time for the broader economy. Those reductions included rescinding offers that had already been made to some prospective new employees.

In one instance, a worker planning to join Twitter's office in Mexico City from the Bay Area learned just four days before his start date that his job offer had been recalled. That sent him scrambling to get his old job back, and immediately soured his opinion on the company he was excited about.

"I told (Twitter's) lawyers, 'Don't talk to me for the future. Don't consider me for anything for the future,' " the person said. "I don't ever want to hear the word Twitter."

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