

Linda Yaccarino to bring vaunted ad skills to Twitter

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Newly announced Twitter chief Linda Yaccarino told Elon Musk during a recent marketing conference interview that content moderation and safety are part of a formula to get advertisers to spend more money at the platform.

Named Friday as Elon Musk's successor as Twitter CEO, Linda

Yaccarino is a respected media and advertising executive considered a visionary by some.

Yaccarino left her job as head of advertising at NBCUniversal, where she worked for 12 years.

Born into a family with Italian roots, Yaccarino has spent her career in television, 20 years of it with the Time Warner group that has since become known as Warner Brothers Discovery.

Yaccarino said in a 2021 episode of the Great Minds podcast that she fell in love with television shows as a child and originally thought she would get into production.

"I wanted to create the new 'Sesame Street'," Yaccarino said, referring to a popular children's television program.

Yaccarino became fascinated with the business side of broadcasting while a student at Penn State University in Pennsylvania.

That interest shaped her career path after graduating, which her LinkedIn page indicates was in 1985.

At NBCUniversal, a subsidiary of cable operator Comcast, she redesigned advertising strategy to support a shift from traditional television to streaming shows online.

Yaccarino brought the group's channels into a single platform to streamline ad campaigns.

She also focused on providing metrics when it came to showing audience numbers and the effectiveness of advertising.

Yaccarino didn't hesitate to give Musk advice while interviewing him in front of an audience of advertisers at the "Possible" marketing conference in Miami in mid-April.

Advertisers "need to feel that there is an opportunity for them to influence what you're building," Yaccarino told Musk.

She argued that the goal is to make Twitter a place where advertisers are excited to spend marketing money, saying that involves content moderation, user safety, and product development.

"That's where the influence is," Yaccarino said to Musk.

'Skeptics in the room'

Since taking over Twitter in late October, Musk has repeatedly courted controversy, sacking most of its staff, readmitting far-right figures to the platform, suspending journalists and charging for previously free services.

In response, advertisers fled Twitter due to concerns over marketing messages being associated with troubling content.

"The people in this room are your accelerated path to profitability but there's a decent bit of skeptics in the room," Yaccarino told Musk at the marketing conference.

During the interview in Miami, Yaccarino's direct style and sharp insights visibly intrigued Musk.

Yaccarino brings to Twitter a network that reaches beyond advertising and media.

She is involved in the World Economic Forum in Davos and was a member of the US Presidential Council on Sport, Exercise and Nutrition, attached to the White House.

Yaccarino's connection to the WEF as well as her reported support for vaccinations and masks during the pandemic irks some politically-conservative fans of Musk's previous actions at Twitter.

"Twitter's problems really revolve around Elon Musk," said independent analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group.

"The real test will be, can he step aside and let her do her job?"

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