

# TikTok's COO to step down after nearly 5 years at the popular social media company

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The icon for TikTok is seen, Feb. 25, 2020, in New York. TikTok's Chief Operating Officer, V Pappas, is leaving the popular social media platform after nearly five years at the company. The news was announced in a note sent to employees Thursday morning, June 22, 2023, and later shared on Twitter. Credit: AP Photo, File

TikTok's Chief Operating Officer, V Pappas, is leaving the popular social media platform after nearly five years at the company.

In a note sent to employees Thursday morning and later shared on Twitter, Pappas, who uses she/her and they/them pronouns, said now that the company has achieved a lot of success, she felt it was the right time to move on and focus on "entrepreneurial passions."

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew said in a note sent to employees that Pappas, one of the company's most public faces, will continue to serve as a strategic adviser.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank V for their many contributions over the years," Chew wrote. "Throughout their time at TikTok, they have been instrumental in growing the business, advocating for the company, elevating our product offerings and marketing campaigns, and fostering a positive community of creators and users. They have had a significant and lasting impact and we are truly grateful for their tireless efforts."

Pappas joined TikTok in 2018 as general manager and was promoted to interim head in 2020 when then-CEO Kevin Mayer left the company just after three months in the role. The former YouTube official assumed the COO role the following year, and has testified on Capitol Hill and appeared in media interviews offering a full-throated defense of the company, which has been under scrutiny by lawmakers concerned about its Chinese origins.

For years, TikTok has been fending off claims that its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, would share user data from its popular video-sharing app with the Chinese government, or push propaganda and misinformation on its behalf. The company is currently negotiating its data privacy plans with the Biden administration, which, earlier this year,

threatened to ban it nationwide if its Chinese owners don't sell their stakes.

TikTok maintains it never been asked by the Chinese government to share U.S. user data, and it wouldn't do so if asked.

In his email to employees, Chew also announced an organizational shakeup at the company.

Zenia Mucha, who served nearly two decades as a communications executive at Disney, will join TikTok as the chief brand and communications officer, overseeing the company's marketing and public relations arm.

Chew said TikTok's Chief of Staff Adam Presser will become the company's head of operations.

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