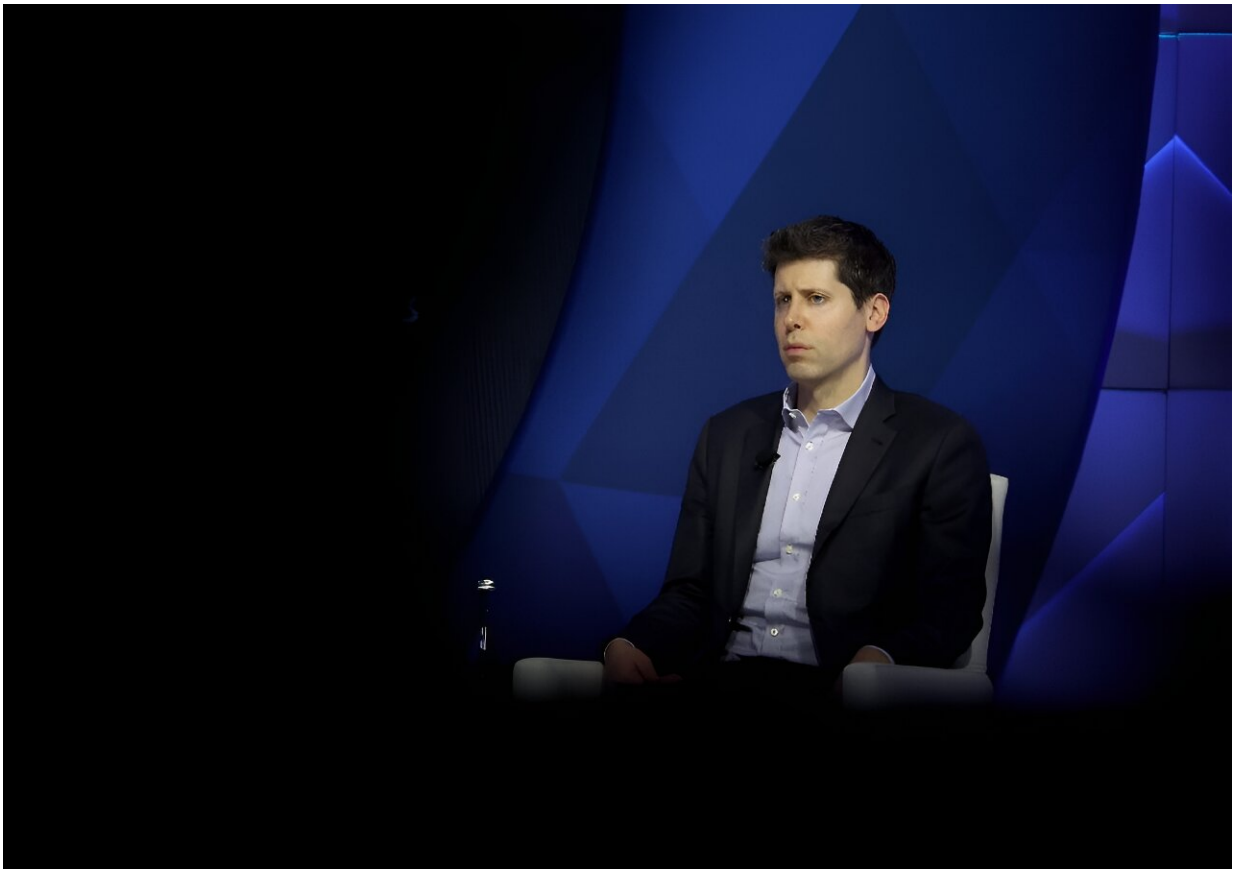


# OpenAI staff threaten mass exodus to join ex-CEO Altman

November 20 2023

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OpenAI shocked the tech world when it fired former CEO and co-founder Sam Altman.

Hundreds of staff at OpenAI threatened to quit the leading artificial

intelligence company on Monday and join Microsoft, deepening a crisis triggered by the shock sacking of CEO Sam Altman.

In a fast-moving sequence of events, Altman, who was ousted by the board on Friday, has now been hired by Microsoft where he will take the lead in developing a new advanced AI research team.

There was talk Monday that OpenAI is interested in Altman returning, and that he may be open to the idea under certain conditions.

"We want to partner with Open AI and we want to partner with Sam so irrespective of where Sam is he's working with Microsoft," chief executive Satya Nadella said in a streamed Bloomberg interview.

"That was the case on Friday. That's the case today. And we absolutely believe that will be the case tomorrow."

In a letter released to media, the vast majority of OpenAI's 770-strong staff suggested they would follow Altman unless the board responsible for his departure resigned.

"Your actions have made it obvious that you are incapable of overseeing OpenAI," the letter said. "Microsoft has assured us that there are positions for all OpenAI employees at this new subsidiary should we choose to join."

A key AI executive at Microsoft confirmed that they all were welcome from OpenAI if the board that removed Altman doesn't resign.

Among the signatories was co-founder Ilya Sutskever, the company's chief scientist and a member of the four-person board who pushed Altman out.

"I deeply regret my participation in the board's actions," Sutskever said in a post on X, formally Twitter. "I never meant to harm OpenAI."

Another signatory was top executive Mira Murati, who was appointed to replace Altman as CEO when he was removed on Friday, but didn't last the weekend in the job.

"We are all going to work together some way or other, and I'm so excited," Altman said on X.

OpenAI has appointed Emmett Shear, a former chief executive of Amazon's streaming platform Twitch, as its new CEO despite pressure from Microsoft and other major investors to reinstate Altman.

After the startup's board sacked Altman, US media cited concerns that he was underestimating the dangers of its tech and leading the company away from its stated mission—claims his successor has denied.

Nadella wrote on X that Altman will lead a new advanced AI research team at Microsoft, joined by OpenAI co-founder Greg Brockman.

Global tech titan Microsoft has invested more than \$10 billion in OpenAI and has rolled out the artificial intelligence pioneer's tech in its own products.

Nadella said Microsoft remains committed to its partnership with OpenAI.

The drama was the talk of Silicon Valley on Monday.

"I know that some people are going to hate me for this, but this is the best show I've seen in my life," added Miguel Fierro, the tech giant's Principal Data Scientist Manager.

Altman shot to fame with the launch of ChatGPT last year, which ignited a race to advance AI research and development, as well as billions being invested in the sector.

His sacking triggered several other high-profile departures from the company, as well as a reported push by investors to bring him back.

But OpenAI stood by its decision in a memo sent to employees Sunday night, saying "Sam's behavior and lack of transparency... undermined the board's ability to effectively supervise the company."

## **'Badly' handled**

Shear confirmed his appointment as OpenAI's interim CEO in a post on X on Monday, while also denying reports Altman had been fired over safety concerns regarding the use of AI technology.

"It's clear that the process and communications around Sam's removal has been handled very badly, which has seriously damaged our trust," Shear wrote.

Generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT are trained on vast amounts of data to enable them to answer questions, even complex ones, in human-like language.

They are also used to generate and manipulate imagery.

But the tech has triggered warnings about the dangers of its misuse—from blackmailing people with "deepfake" images to the manipulation of images and harmful disinformation.

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