

Ballmer Announces Retirement

Written by Marco Attard
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Infamously bullish Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer announces he is to retire within 12 months-- leaving the once technology leader with no clear successor, at least so far.



"There is never a perfect time for this type of transition, but now is the right time," Ballmer says. "We have embarked on a new strategy with a new organization and we have an amazing Senior Leadership Team. My original thoughts on timing would have had my retirement happen in the middle of our company's transformation to a devices and services company. We need a CEO who will be here longer term for this new direction."

The news comes around 6 weeks after [the "far-reaching realignment" of the company's management,](#) part of an effort to create a "One Microsoft" out of a conglomerate with a payroll of over 90000 employees...

Microsoft already has a special committee directing the hunt for a replacement, with the likes of Bill Gates and independent board director John W. Thompson joining forces with executive recruiting firm Struggles International.

Reportedly the announcement came as a shock to the company-- one "former senior executive" tells Business Insider "It's a total shocker... Something big must have changed, obviously."

The source continues to speculate the Microsoft board "[has] come to believe the company

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should be split into two, consumer and enterprise?" An understandable concern, considering (again) Microsoft's massive scale.

However at least one ex-Microsoft exec might be pleased at the news-- former senior VP Joachim Kempin, who back in January 2013 [spoke with Reuters on Microsoft's need for a change in leadership](#) -- even if, at the time, Ballmer "systematically" forced out potential challengers.

The author of "Resolve and Fortitude: Microsoft's 'Secret Power Broker' Breaks His Silence," Kempin suggested a Ballmer replacement should be "a younger person who understands the Facebook Inc generation and this mobile community... [Microsoft] does not need this guy on stage with this fierce, aggressive look, announcing the next version of Windows and thinking he can score with that."

While Microsoft might benefit from a change in leadership-- or certainly from someone so quick to dismiss emerging technologies (Ballmer famously said there was ["no chance that the iPhone is going to get any significant market share"](#) following the 2007 reveal of the iDevice)-- we will miss Ballmer and his sweaty, exuberant on-stage antics. Remember his hollering for developers? We can only hope the next Microsoft CEO will be half as colourful.

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Go [Microsoft Insider: "It's a Total Shocker... Something Big Must Have Changed" \(Business Insider\)](#)