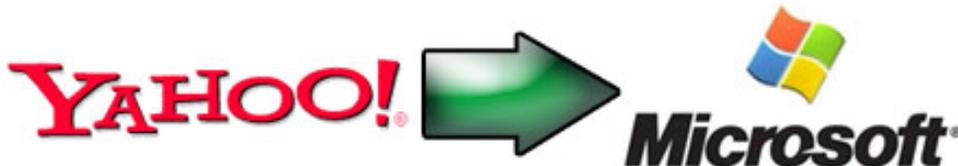


Yahoo Search Executive Moves To Microsoft.

Rumors are swirling that this move is one of the first steps in setting the stage for Microsoft's take over of Yahoo Search in the coming months.

Microsoft (MSFT) released a formal statement last week confirming the hiring of Sean Suchter, an important tech leader at Yahoo (YHOO), from Satya Nadella, SVP for MSN Search, Portal and Advertising:



"We are very pleased to confirm that Sean Suchter will be joining Microsoft as the GM of our Silicon Valley Search Technology Center, working on MSN Live Search. Sean will report into Harry Shum when he starts work on December 22. We look forward to welcoming Sean Suchter to Microsoft at that time."



Microsoft's talent grab from Yahoo is an interesting one, given that Microsoft has also tried to buy Yahoo's search and search ad business many times, to little success.

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer recently discounted the possibility that Microsoft would rebid for all of Yahoo after it abandoned a takeover attempt earlier this year.

Ballmer's most recent statements sent Yahoo's stock further into the basement.

Losing important execs like Suchter, who was the VP of Search Technology at Yahoo, will also not help the company's prospects. Suchter was deeply involved in Yahoo's efforts to open up its search platform, initiatives the company has touted aggressively as a bright spot in its not so lustrous landscape.

Suchter, who came to Yahoo almost six years ago after it acquired Inktomi (the company that got Yahoo into the search business) in early 2003, has been talking with Microsoft for a while and his leaving was not linked or related to the resignation by Jerry Yang to step down as Yahoo's day to day CEO.

But it could be linked to the possibility that another former major Yahoo search exec could also be going to Microsoft. Rumors are that Steve Ballmer has expressed interest in Yahoo's Qi Lu a well-regarded Search and Advertising Technology group EVP at Yahoo, who left earlier this year to be its digital head.

All this muscling up in search by Microsoft is troubling for Yahoo. There are big questions, now that Yang is stepping down, whether Yahoo will stay in the search business or sell it off. Yang has been a big proponent of doubling down in search, considering it integral to the entire Yahoo ecosystem.

But others make the very persuasive argument that Yahoo will be increasingly outspent by both Google (GOOG) and Microsoft, in what is turning into a very vicious and expensive arms race.

If it sold off its No. 2 search business to Microsoft, ironically, Yahoo used to deliver Microsoft's search results, many think it could have huge cost savings and garner guaranteed revenues.

Here is the official release of Sean Suchter's departure from Yahoo ...



From: Tuoc Luong, EVP of Engineering for Yahoo!, Inc.

Date: 11/18/08 3:43 PM

To: Yahoo Search Team



Hi Everyone,

Unfortunately, I have to give some bad news to you. Sean Suchter has resigned. Sean's last day will be December 19th.

Some of you will find this news shocking given that Sean has been a Gibraltar rock at Yahoo and in particular for the Search team...I understand this.

I will point out that we're on a good trajectory. We've released some good products and capabilities and the industry is beginning to take notice. We've closed the gap in Algo relevance and making great strides in building the next generation differentiated search experience and step function in relevance - not to mention infrastructure overhaul that prepares us for the future.

I came here to take on Google because I believe Yahoo above all is best positioned to take the battle to Google. I think we're on the right path to changing the tide and would love to see everyone make the journey but I respect Sean's personal decision. I'm committed to continue the battle against Google as long as Yahoo positions Search to be competitive (and I believe we are). I hope each and all of you feel the same way and stand with me to battle Google.

I've asked Arnab to step up and take over Sean's role as head of YST. Just as Sean has been a strong arm for me, Arnab has been a strong arm for Sean. Although Sean casts a large shadow, I believe Arnab will step up to fill the hole with your support. Arnab will cast his own shadow as the new leader of YST and it's the same YST team that has delivered great products like Search Assist, Secure Scan, SearchMonkey, BOSS, numerous MLR and QRW release to close the GAP in core relevance.

Sean and Arnab have been communicating to the YST leaders about the changes. Arnab has been thinking and discussing the new organization with people. He will send out an e-mail describing his organizational thoughts and plan for YST soon. I believe with the support of other leaders (myself, Bharat, Yongdong, Nam, ..etc), Arnab will fill the void and continue the battle with Google. I urge everyone to support Arnab in his new endeavor.

Tomorrow, I'll be holding an all managers meeting to discuss the changes and Q & As.

Please wish Sean the best in his future endeavor and congratulate Arnab in his new role.

Thanks

Tuoc Luong
Executive Vice President of Engineering
Yahoo!, Inc.

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An aside for consideration are the the distinct segments within the field of Search Engine Optimization. Clarification and separation are required in terms of paid search marketing, sponsored search advertising, pay per click, email marketing (spam), and the foundation of strategic internet marketing: Organic Search Engine Optimization (Organic SEO) are also referred to as Natural Search Engine Optimization (Natural SEO).

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- 90% of all new website visitors are delivered by a major search engine and/or directory.
- 98% of all keyword search activity results are powered by the big 4 search engines: Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL.
- Keyword search results on Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL are determined by search engine spiders and/or robot crawlers.
- Recent internet marketing studies confirm that keyword searchers prefer the organic results at a 6 to 1 ratio vs. pay-per-click sponsored search advertising listings.

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