



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on December 4, 2018

## Former Employees: Facebook Poised for Exodus of Current Employees

In the midst of one scandal after another, Facebook — already dealing with plummeting stock prices — is also facing what could prove to be an exodus of its workforce. Current employees are increasingly reaching out to former employees to ask for job references and opportunities outside the social-media giant.

Facebook's woes began in March with reports of the [Cambridge Analytica data breach](#) involving at least 50 million (and possibly as many as 87 million) users of the social-media platform having their personal data harvested and used to manipulate the 2016 election. While it is almost certain that Cambridge Analytica used the harvested data to benefit the Trump campaign, it is equally true that [Team Obama did the same and more in 2012](#).



In the wake of that scandal, Facebook faced a decline in users ([including this writer](#)) and investors. The company faced [the threat of government action](#), and was [forced to consider ways to revamp its model](#) in an effort to save its tarnished reputation. But as this writer said in a previous article published in April as Facebook was still reeling from the Cambridge Analytica breach:

Facebook can't seem to shake off one major blow before another comes along. The past few weeks have seen the social-media giant shaken, rattled, and exposed for the way the company handles users' data and conducts business. Now, with the market responding to that news with investors dumping stocks, both users and investors launching lawsuits, governments calling for regulation and hefty fines, and users abandoning the platform, Facebook may be in very real danger of going the way of the dodo.

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At the time, Facebook had suffered a stock plunge of 22 percent — a total loss estimated at a whopping \$100 billion. Yes, billion. Now, the old bad times may seem like the good old days, as the company's losses are estimated at nearly 40 percent. Nothing Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has done has seemed to stem the bleeding. To make matters worse, Facebook appears to be on the brink of a human resources hemorrhage.

CNBC is [reporting](#):

Some former Facebook employees say their phone is ringing a lot more in the last two months. On the other line: former Facebook colleagues asking about job openings or looking for a reference.



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This type of behavior is normal at most companies. But according to a half dozen former employees, all of whom left in the last year or two, it's a major change in behavior at Facebook, which had long been known around Silicon Valley as the company that no one leaves. These people requested anonymity as none is authorized by Facebook to talk about their time there or interactions with employees.

And while Facebook still enjoys an employee satisfaction rating of 4.3 out of 5 on Glassdoor — a website where employees can anonymously rate their employers — most of that high rating is due to the number of older reviews. The 4.3 rating is sharply lower than it has been in the past, according to CNBC.

Facebook seems to be taking the There-Is-Nothing-To-See-Here approach. Company spokesman Anthony Harrison said, "Our retention rate continues to be very strong," adding, "Everyone at Facebook is focused on making a positive impact in the world, and on working on hard challenges that matter."

That denial appears to be purely a public-relations tactic, or perhaps the executive leadership of the embattled tech behemoth simply can't face the ugly truth. At any rate, the company's claims again fail to jibe with reality. As CNBC is reporting:

But several former employees who spoke to CNBC believe that the wave of scandals and falling stock price are spurring more people to consider leaving for the first time.

"There's new things coming out every day," said one former company executive. "It's a quite somber atmosphere right now at the company."

The report also mentions a former Facebook recruiter who said he has heard from more than 30 current Facebook employees in the past year — roughly half of those in the past two months alone. He said the typical comment he hears from most of these contacts is, "My manager sucks, and I need to look for something new. Do you know of any new opportunities?"

One tradition among Facebook employees who have quit is to post photos of their employee badges to a secret Facebook page populated by former employees. The former Facebook executive quoted earlier in this article told CNBC, "I've been seeing a lot of badges lately."

As the company has become more and more embroiled in "politics" and "grandstanding," it appears to be moving away from the culture of a start-up environment in which fellow-employees felt they were part of a team and toward a culture of top-down management, according to one former Facebook manager. "There's a lot of people who succeed more by how things looked than by the work they were doing," he said, adding, "and there were people who were let go that were incredibly well-respected and it was because they weren't playing the politics game."

And whereas fairly new Facebook employees (those only at the company for a year or two) have historically requested to switch teams within the company if they were unhappy, "This time around far more people are immediately jumping instead of switching teams," according to a former engineer interviewed by CNBC. That engineer said he has personally been contacted by about a dozen Facebook employees since leaving the company this summer. "Overall, I've seen an uptick in people either looking for other activities or dipping their toes outside the Facebook pool," he added.

Because Facebook classifies departing employees as either "regrettable" or "non-regrettable" attrition, and since being blacklisted by the company decreases the likelihood of offers from other top-tier Silicon Valley companies, Facebook employees thinking of leaving have to carefully plan their departures. "The



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way you do it and the timing matters a lot, and it requires knowledge of the game,” according to a former Facebook engineer. A former manager agrees, saying that a bad recommendation from Facebook is enough to make your name “like Voldemort,” adding, “It’s a name you can not say.”

So, former employees report that they are seeing an increase in calls from current employees asking for help formulating an exit strategy. CNBC reports:

Another former Facebook director said he has seen a rise in the number of his ex-colleagues who have reached out to ask about openings at his current company, and these employees often ask about advice on the best way to leave Facebook. He’s also experienced an increase in calls from other companies that are running references on current Facebook staffers.

“Once it becomes weird to tell people that they work at Facebook, or once their moms aren’t proud of them anymore, that’s when people are going to head to the exits,” he said. “I think we’re already getting there.”

Given the fact that Facebook has been exposed as what NSA whistleblower Ed Snowden referred to as a “surveillance company collecting personal data, rebranded as ‘social media,’” it is not surprising that some would be ashamed (or at least feel as if their mothers would be ashamed) to admit to being employed by the company.

And even considering how difficult it appears to be to leave the company “the right way,” those who do not hasten their departure may wind up feeling as if they stayed too long on a sinking ship.

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