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Ford Shifts More Execs as Demand for a Plan Grows

By Ian Thibodeau (excerpt)

The latest executive shift within Ford Motor Co. came Thursday as industry experts and Wall Street wait for the Blue Oval to prove it has a plan to drive growth and fund an uncertain future — and whether the right team is in place to execute that plan.

Ford officials say they have all the right people in place. But as pressure mounts within the executive ranks to prove there's a way forward, the battlefield promotion of the former chief marketing officer to president of North America brought yet another leadership shakeup.

Ford announced Thursday that Kumar Galhotra will head Ford's North American operations, taking over for North American President Raj Nair who was [ousted Wednesday for unspecified](#) "inappropriate behavior" deemed inconsistent with Ford's code of conduct. The duties of five other Ford executives shifted as part of the latest reorganization.

The dismissal and subsequent changes are another stutter-step for CEO Jim Hackett, new to the job last May after Mark Fields was shown the door. A few weeks ago, Jason Luo, the former chairman and CEO of Ford Motor Co.'s Chinese operations, [resigned for unspecified](#) the company said were for "personal reasons that predate his time at Ford."

Hackett's task is to change the ingrained culture within Ford and retool the company so it's equipped to handle an uncertain future. With Ford stock trading at some of the lowest levels since Hackett assumed leadership, the automaker has yet to deliver news that excites Wall Street — something "change-agent" Hackett was brought in to do. ...

...Jim Farley, Ford president of global markets, told The Detroit News by telephone Thursday that the latest change-up in the ranks comes as Ford pushes to "redo" its car and SUV lineup, and introduce a slate of new products in North America.

Galhotra will report to Farley starting March 1. The 52-year-old executive was head of Ford's Lincoln brand since 2014. He oversaw the brand's global operations, including a push into the Chinese market, the reintroduction of the Continental luxury sedan and the launch of the all-new Lincoln Navigator that the company can't make enough of. He worked on the latest rebrandings of the luxury make that's been in search of an identity for years.

Farley said Galhotra will be charged with bringing those efforts to Ford in North America. He said Galhotra and his replacement as vice president of Lincoln and Ford's chief marketing officer, Joy Falotico, 50, will play vital roles as Ford rolls out new products. ...

...David Kudla, CEO and chief investment strategist of Mainstay Capital Management LLC in Grand Blanc, isn't overly concerned.

"Ford's bench at the executive level is deep enough that this should have minimal impact on operations and their strategy moving forward," he said. "While this public departure is visually a black eye for Ford, it will heal up in due time with no lasting effect." ...

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