

Former Google Exec: Company Put Profits Over Human Rights And Is Steeped In Corruption

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A former Google policy executive accused the company of choosing profits over human rights in a searing essay published Thursday.

Ross Lajeunesse, a candidate for U.S. Senate in Maine and Google's former head of international relations, blamed the leadership team that has replaced founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page — Alphabet/Google CEO Sundar Pichai, CFO Ruth Porat, and former Google Cloud leader Diane Greene — for failing to live up to the company's original model of "Don't be evil." He left the company in April after 11 years.

"Just when Google needed to double down on a commitment to human rights, it decided to instead chase bigger profits and an even higher stock price," he wrote in the [essay](#), titled "I Was Google's Head of International Relations. Here's Why I Left." He left the company without signing a nondisclosure agreement, according to *The [Washington Post](#)*.

In 2010, Google decided to stop censoring search results, which infuriated the Chinese government and shut the company out of the world's largest internet market for the better part of the past decade. But soon after the decision, Lajeunesse wrote, Google executives in charge of Google Maps and Android ignored that precedent and began lobbying to launch their own products. Google later began building a censored search engine, Dragonfly, in cooperation with the Chinese government. When news of the project leaked, 1,400 employees signed a petition criticizing Google's leadership for their lack of transparency, and Pichai has said in Congressional testimony the company has stopped working on the product.

[Yet Another Google Employee Says She Was Fired for Organizing](#)

Lajeunesse said executives, particularly in Google's cloud computing division, sought to shut him out of international policy decisions in order to circumvent thorny human rights

debates as it pursued deals with the Saudi Arabian government. When Lajeunesse advocated for a binding company-wide commitment to human rights, he said, executives waffled and produced thin excuses to say no. His boss told him such a commitment might increase Google's legal liability.

"I then realized that the company had never intended to incorporate human rights principles into its business and product decisions," he wrote.

Google issued a statement in response to Lajeunesse: "We have an unwavering commitment to supporting human rights organizations and efforts...Ross was offered a new position at the exact same level and compensation, which he declined to accept. We wish Ross all the best with his political ambitions."

Lajeunesse also described internal company strife. Lajeunesse said his superiors routinely bullied their subordinates, particularly young women. During a diversity training, Google's human resources segregated various minorities into rooms labelled with blunt descriptions like "homos" (Lajeunesse is gay) and "brown people," he wrote. When he raised the issue with HR, he said, a senior executive dispatched someone to "do some digging" on Lajeunesse and accidentally sent him the assigning email. Lajeunesse said Google later told him there was no longer a job for him at the company, despite 90 open positions on the policy team.

Lajeunesse closed the essay to advocate for stricter regulations of tech companies.

"No longer can massive tech companies like Google be permitted to operate relatively free from government oversight."

Google has endured several years of employee unrest over a strained relationship with the Trump administration, sexual harassment by executives, and its work on Dragonfly and artificial intelligence for the Department of Defense.

Lajeunesse and Google did not immediately respond to requests for comment from The Daily Beast.