Apple’s car chief is heading to Ford

Ford has hired away Apple’s car chief, Doug Field, to become its chief advanced technology and embedded systems officer. “Field will lead Ford’s efforts to develop the next-gen Blue Oval Intelligence tech stack to deliver smart, connected vehicles and services that improve over time through constant updates,” according to Ford’s press release. He’ll report to Ford’s president and CEO, Jim Farley.

Field was a VP of special projects at Apple, where he was the de facto head of the company’s confused efforts to make an autonomous electric car — known as Project Titan. He had a previous stint at Apple where he was once the VP of Mac hardware engineering, but he left the company in 2013 to become Tesla’s chief vehicle engineer, where he helped oversee troublesome development of the Model 3 sedan. He left Tesla in 2018 and rejoined Apple.

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The departure is the latest shake-up for Apple’s car division, which has undergone numerous shifts over the past several years. Despite starting the project in 2014, work on an autonomous electric vehicle is still in an early stage, *Bloomberg* reported in January. That approach is a change from an earlier plan to develop self-driving software that would be utilized by other carmakers — which itself was a change from trying to build a car.

“We’re grateful for the contributions Doug has made to Apple and we wish him all the best in this next chapter,” an Apple spokesperson said in a statement to *The Verge*.

It’s unclear who will take Field’s place, though in June, Apple hired Ulrich Kranz, a former BMW executive who worked on the i3 EV and i8 hybrid sports car, to work under Field. Kranz had recently stepped down as CEO of Canoo, an EV startup he co-founded that Apple was interested in acquiring in 2020, as *The Verge* exclusively reported earlier this year. Apple’s car efforts were reportedly moved under the purview of John Giannandrea, the company’s SVP of machine learning and AI, in December.

Field joins Ford as the company has steadily been building out its electric vehicle efforts, most notably with the Ford F-150 Lightning, an all-electric version of the hugely popular pickup truck, as well as an all-electric Mustang. The company is rallying behind a business plan it calls Ford Plus and intends to create more cars that are fully networked and can be updated over the air, like Teslas. Ford has also said that Google’s Android will power infotainment systems in “millions” of its cars starting in 2023.

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