OnePlus brand builder Carl Pei has left the smartphone company

It’s been tough to talk about OnePlus as a scrappy smartphone startup ever since its close ties with Oppo, Vivo, and electronics giant BBK came to light, but it’s still hard to overstate the impact of Carl Pei, the longtime public face of the company, who confirmed his departure today. As a marketer and brand builder, he used a combination of bold promises, real talk, and unconventional marketing campaigns to turn smartphone enthusiasts simply looking for a good deal into a community of OnePlus fans.

In a blog post on the OnePlus forums, Pei says he’s “looking forward to taking some time to decompress and catch up with my family,” without addressing why he’s doing so now. Rumors suggest that he had a falling-out with fellow co-founder and CEO Pete Lau, and / or that Pei left to start his own new venture, but his memo doesn’t sound like the words of someone who left for a new job.

Either way, it seems abrupt: *Android Central* and *Android Police* reported that he had already left the company as of four days ago, and OnePlus wasn’t prepared to answer questions about where he had gone and why. Perhaps the company simply didn’t want to distract from the new phone it launched on Wednesday: the OnePlus 8T. Pei, meanwhile, led the development of OnePlus’ less expensive recent phone: the Nord.

Here’s Pei’s full memo:

> *After nearly 7 years at OnePlus, I’ve made the difficult*

decision to say goodbye.

I grew up spending tremendous amounts of time on the internet, building products and communities. Seeing that ideas in one's mind could be turned into reality and impact people's lives gave me lots of joy, and I knew early on that this was the path for me.

The world didn't need another smartphone brand in 2013. But we saw ways of doing things better and dreamt of shaking things up. Better products. Built hand in hand with our users. At more reasonable prices. Fast forward to today, and OnePlus is a strong force to be reckoned when it comes to flagship smartphones. And with the new Nord product line, this success will continue into new market segments.

Having just turned 24 when OnePlus started, it's where I spent most of my 20s, and also where I grew up. From nervously interviewing my first employee, to facing severe stage fright the first time I presented a product, to learning how to manage a team… The journey has been real. The things we've accomplished and learned, I can't begin to imagine a more rewarding adventure.

Our community joined the movement before we even had a product, back when all we had were ambitions and ideas. From having hundreds of you show up to have ice cream with me, thousands attending our launch events, and tens of millions purchasing our products worldwide; I want to thank you all for believing in us throughout all these years.

And the team. The amazing people that I've been fortunate to fight side by side with. The friendships I've made here are the most precious parts of this journey. With them, the company is in capable hands.

I am eternally grateful to Pete for taking a chance in this kid without a college degree, with nothing to his name but a dream. The trust, mentorship, and camaraderie will never be

forgotten. Thanks for the opportunity of a lifetime.

I’ve never regretted trusting my gut feeling, and this time it’s no different. These past years, OnePlus has been my singular focus, and everything else has had to take a backseat. I’m looking forward to taking some time off to decompress and catch up with my family and friends. And then follow my heart on to what’s next.

With gratitude, Carl

We’ve interviewed him quite a few times at new smartphone launches, and you can almost get a sense of how the company has changed by reading each one.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/16/21519785/oneplus-carl-pei-departure