OpenWeb Names New CEO After Ousting Its Founder

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The advertising technology company OpenWeb appointed industry veteran Jim Daily as its new chief executive officer on Monday, marking a new era for the firm following a period of highly visible turbulence among its leadership team.

Daily, who begins the role April 1, previously served as the North American CEO and global president at Teads, where he helped grow the business to $275 million in annual revenue. More recently, he was the founding CEO of LinksDAO.

At OpenWeb, he plans to focus on expanding the company's publisher partnerships, refining its data offerings, and increasing its presence with advertisers and agencies.

The company, whose core product displays advertising alongside publishers' comment sections, was most recently valued in October 2022 at $1.5 billion after it raised $170 million in Series F funding. It works with more than 3,000 publishers, including CNN, The Wall Street Journal, and Yahoo, which generate revenue and on-site engagement from the partnership.

"OpenWeb has built a strong foundation in fostering online engagement," Daily said. "I'm looking forward to working with the team to further develop its products and partnerships."

Replacing a pivotal figure

Daily’s appointment follows the departure of OpenWeb’s cofounder and former CEO, Nadav Shoval.

Shoval was removed by the company’s board in September 2024, a move he publicly contested on social media and later through legal action.

The abrupt ouster shocked the industry, as Shoval cofounded OpenWeb in 2012, was the sole CEO of its U.S. subsidiary, and owned 7% of its shares, according to the court documents.

When OpenWeb emailed its employees on Sept. 11 saying that chairman Tim Harvey would replace Shoval, Shoval sent a company-wide email in response, saying he had no intention of stepping down.

“The board has falsely stated that I am stepping out of my role as CEO,” Shoval wrote at the time. “Let me be clear: that is not true and not my intent.”

Following a protracted dispute, Shoval and OpenWeb reached a settlement, and he is no longer involved with the company.

“I wasn’t part of those discussions, but I know the company is ready to move forward,” Daily said. “The team is focused on its next phase, and I’m here to help execute on that vision.”

Key priorities as CEO

In his new role, Daily identified a number of key initiatives he plans to prioritize in his first year.

One major focus will be enhancing OpenWeb’s publisher platform, making it faster, more efficient, and improving

monetization for publishers.

“Our core product is already strong, but we can make it lighter, faster, and more responsive,” Daily said. “There’s a real opportunity to improve yield for our publishing partners, and that will be a focus for us.”

Beyond platform enhancements, Daily is looking to expand OpenWeb’s commercial strategy by building stronger relationships with advertisers and agencies. Historically, OpenWeb has been positioned primarily as a publisher technology, but Daily sees an opportunity to engage more directly with buyers.

“We haven’t had a major commercial push with advertisers and agencies, and that’s something I want to change,” he said. “There’s an opportunity to elevate OpenWeb’s positioning in the market and ensure that the buying community understands the value of our scale and data capabilities.”

Daily also pointed to OpenWeb’s growing data products as a key differentiator. With changes in digital advertising—particularly the decline of third-party cookies—OpenWeb’s access to logged-in user data through publisher partnerships could give it a competitive advantage.

“A lot of what we’re building is rooted in first-party data,” he said. “We’ve got a strong adtech team, and we’re putting together products that take context and layer in logged-in data to create something really differentiated in the market.”

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