Ousted Pixar CCO John Lasseter to head new animation division

Production company Skydance Media announced today that it is hiring John Lasseter, the former chief creative officer of Pixar Animation and Walt Disney Animation Studios, to head Skydance's nascent animation division. Lasseter, who worked his way up from an animator job at Pixar to a powerful position overseeing Disney's animation strategy and storytelling, was first placed on a leave of absence from Disney in November 2017, then was pushed out of the company in June 2018, following a wave of complaints about sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and groping female employees at Disney's companies.

Skydance CEO David Ellison issued a memo to staff about the hiring, saying, "Let me be clear: we have not entered into this decision lightly." The memo says Skydance investigated the allegations against Lasseter and took them seriously, but he adds, "We are certain that John has learned valuable lessons and is ready to prove his capabilities as a leader and a colleague. And he has given his assurance that he will comport himself in a wholly professional manner that is the expectation of every Skydance colleague and partner."

Skydance is best known as the company behind a number of action or science fiction franchises on television and in film, partnering with Paramount Pictures on *Star Trek: Into Darkness* and *Star Trek: Beyond* and producing movies in the *Mission: Impossible*, *Jack Reacher*, and *G.I. Joe* series. Its animation division, launched in 2017, lists at least four

feature movies currently in planning.

Lasseter’s resurfacing is the latest in a series of recent rebrandings for men in the media industry who were pushed out of their positions after a series of exposés about the accusations against . The have had a ripple effect through the industry, launching the Time’s Up movement against sexual abuse and prompting recipients of sexual harassment to share their stories in a social media movement built around the #MeToo hashtag.

Lasseter was one of a large number of public figures who had been dogged by persistent accusations of sexual harassment for years, but details were vague until Pixar employees and former employees began coming forward, writing about how his leadership enabled a toxic, openly sexist environment at Pixar. The position at Skydance Animation is Lasseter’s first job since leaving Disney.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/9/18175938/john-lasseter-disney-pixar-sexual-harassment-new-animation-division-skybound-entertainment