

Apple hires scores of ex-Tesla employees this year as Tesla workers jump sinking Musk disaster company



- Dozens of current and former Tesla employees have left for Apple since late 2017.
- They're not only going to work on Apple's secretive autonomous driving project, but on other products as well, according to a source.
- Employees offered several reasons for the wave of departures, including lagging compensation and stock price growth.

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 [Elon Musk, co-founder and chief executive officer of Tesla](#)

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Elon Musk, co-founder and chief executive officer of Tesla

Apple has attracted scores of employees away from Tesla since late 2017, including manufacturing, security and software engineers, and, more recently, supply chain experts, according to several current and former Tesla employees and LinkedIn data.

This Tesla talent is not only going to Apple's stealthy vehicle initiative, Project Titan. Apple also generally needs software, display, optics and battery-tech talent for its other products.

While Apple contracts out much of its manufacturing, the company seems to be taking steps to more tightly control manufacturing processes and equipment used to make their products, said one current Tesla engineer who has kept in touch with colleagues now working for Apple.

In 2018 so far, LinkedIn data shows Apple has hired at least 46 people who worked at Tesla directly before joining the consumer electronics juggernaut. Eight of these were engineering interns. This year Apple has also hired former Tesla Autopilot, QA, Powertrain, mechanical design and firmware engineers, and several global supply chain managers. Some employees joined directly from Tesla, while others had been dismissed or laid off before joining Apple.

Some ex-Tesla employees who joined Apple this year have not yet updated their public social media profiles with their new career info. That includes Apple's most noteworthy hire, Doug Field, Tesla's former Senior Vice President of Engineering.

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Field joined Tesla in 2013 from Apple, where he was a VP of hardware engineering at Apple. At Tesla, he was responsible for development of new vehicles there, including the Model 3 electric sedan, which is the company's first electric vehicle designed for the mass market. Earlier this month, John Gruber [reported](#) that Field had returned to Apple to work on Project Titan.

Several current and former Tesla employees said that morale dipped among engineers and technicians in Tesla factories and its Palo Alto headquarters when it became clear that Field was not coming back from a leave of absence.

But employees say that, even before Field left, they saw more colleagues voluntarily leaving than they had in prior years at Tesla.

Tesla disputes that more people are leaving than in recent years and says the data does not back it up. The company told CNBC that voluntary attrition has decreased by one-third over the last twelve months, and noted that it has [recently added talent](#) from Apple and other companies.

Regarding competition with Apple for talent, a Tesla spokesperson said, "We wish them well. Tesla is the hard path. We have 100 times less money than Apple, so of course they can afford to pay more. We are in extremely difficult battles against entrenched auto companies that make 100 times more cars than we did last year, so of course this is very hard work."

Apple did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Why people are jumping

One current Tesla engineer said former co-workers who discussed the matter with him — and encouraged him to apply for jobs at Apple — were won over by the company's leadership, competitive pay and products.

Several people familiar estimated that Apple pays about one-and-a-half times the salary for technicians, software and manufacturing engineers than Tesla does today. That's important in California's San Francisco Bay Area, where living expenses are among the highest in the world.

A former Tesla vehicle engineer who was laid off by the company in June said that stock options at Apple would probably be more attractive than they are at Tesla during a rocky time. Many employees at Tesla already sell their options as soon as they are able to in order to make up for the relatively average salaries and the high cost of living around Silicon Valley, he said.

Early Tesla employee's insight into working with Elon Musk

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Tesla's stock price has been under pressure, and [JP Morgan predicts](#) Tesla shares will drop from \$320, where it stands now, to \$195 by the year's end. The company burned \$700 million in cash in the second quarter of 2018, and is trying to reduce its capital expenditures and improve its financial health with significant debt coming due. Musk has repeatedly told investors Tesla should become profitable and cash flow positive in the second half of 2018 without raising capital beyond standard credit lines.

The company is also facing repercussions of Elon Musk's social media outbursts. After a season of lashing out at

perceived critics on earnings calls and on Twitter, Musk [tweeted on August 7th](#) that he was considering taking Tesla private. He also said he had "funding secured," and that the "only reason why this is not certain is that it's contingent on a shareholder vote."


Since then, Tesla's stock price has declined more than 15 percent.

Some Tesla veterans are leaving with a heavy heart. A former engineer who left Tesla for Apple recently said working at Tesla had been the greatest professional experience of his life. He characterized Tesla as the best company on the planet, working hard to solve problems that affect us all and future generations.

Tesla's full statement about talent competition with Apple follows:

"We wish them well. Tesla is the hard path. We have 100 times less money than Apple, so of course they can afford to pay more. We are in extremely difficult battles against entrenched auto companies that make 100 times more cars than we did last year, so of course this is very hard work. We don't even have money for advertising or endorsements or discounts, so must survive on the quality of our products alone. Nonetheless, we believe in our mission and that it is worth the sacrifice of time and the never ending barrage of negativity by those who wish us ill. So it goes. The world must move to sustainable energy and it must do so now."

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