Fresh off a $2.65B valuation, Plaid co-founder William Hockey is leaving

Kate Clark
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William Hockey, co-founder, chief technology officer and president of the fast-growing fintech business Plaid, will step down next week, TechCrunch has learned.

The former Bain associate (pictured above left) co-founded the startup in 2012 alongside chief executive officer Zach Perret. Today, the San

Francisco-based company employs 300 with additional offices in Salt Lake City and New York.

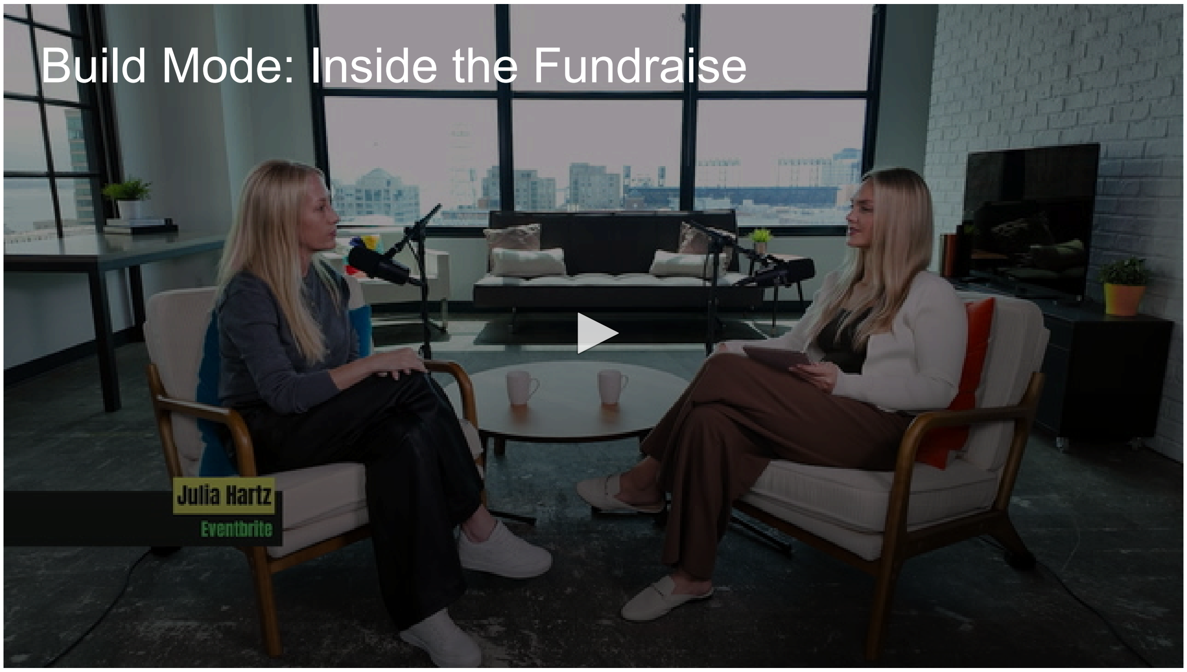
Plaid has confirmed the news, stating that Hockey will remain on the company's board of directors.

"This conclusion was neither a rash nor a recent decision," Hockey writes in a blog post shared with TechCrunch. "Over the past couple of years, I have known that there would come a point at which I would choose to move to a purely strategic and advisorial role."

https://twitter.com/zachperret/status/1140942267290488833

Plaid builds infrastructure that allows consumers to interact with their bank account on the web, powering a number of third-party applications, like Venmo, Robinhood, Coinbase, Acorns and LendingClub. It rose to prominence recently, closing a $250 million Series C investment at a $2.65 billion valuation late last year. The deal was led by famed venture capitalist and author of the Internet Trends report Mary Meeker, who's joined the startup's board of directors.

In total, Plaid has secured $310 million in venture capital funding from Andreessen Horowitz, Index Ventures, Norwest Venture Partners, Coatue Management, Goldman Sachs, NEA, Spark Capital and others.



Plaid has integrated with 15,000 banks in the U.S. and Canada and says 25% of people living in those countries with bank accounts have linked with Plaid through at least one of the hundreds of apps that leverage Plaid's application program interfaces (APIs) — an increase from 13% last year. Last month, the company launched its fintech platform in the U.K.

"As we've done in the U.S., Plaid will become the foundation for that growth by providing access to a financial network that allows developers to deliver the experience users expect from their financial apps," the company wrote in a blog post.

TechCrunch participated in a panel discussion with Hockey and Brex CEO Henrique Dubugras last month, in which Hockey gave no indication of impending plans to leave the business. In fact, taking off just as Plaid amps up its global expansion efforts and accelerates growth is strange timing for a founder to depart.

Oftentimes, when a startup co-founder steps down from the C-suite, it's to make room for a more experienced executive to lead the company through periods of fast growth. Recently, for example, Lime announced its co-founder Toby Sun would transition out of the CEO role to focus on company culture and R&D. Brad Bao, a Lime co-founder and longtime Tencent executive, assumed chief responsibilities.

Other times, it comes amid turmoil. Mike Cagney's departure from SoFi, of course, is an example of this. One month after reports of a sexual harassment and wrongful termination lawsuit against the online lending business surfaced, SoFi announced Cagney would step down.

In Hockey's case, the move was planned and calculated, he said. Plaid chief operating officer Eric Sager, who joined earlier this year, Perret and other executives will take over engineering and product reports, among Hockey's other responsibilities.

"In tech, it has historically been taboo to talk about founders or executives transitioning to different roles inside companies," Hockey writes. "Leadership transitions need to become a bedrock of any company that desires to endure across decades."

Fintech startup Plaid raises $250M at a $2.65B valuation

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