

The Yahoo! Deal

Icahn's Proxy Men

Forbes.com

May 15, 2008

Carl Icahn has selected a bevy of industry heavy hitters to compete for Yahoo! board seats. The proxy board announced Thursday includes Icahn, Mark Cuban and entertainment mogul Frank Biondi.

At least two members of the proxy board--John Chapple, former chief executive of Nextel Partners, and Edward Meyer, former chief executive of Grey Global Group--were said to be part of Microsoft's proxy slate.

Here's a look at Icahn's picks and what they can bring to Yahoo! .

Carl Icahn

Corporate raider extraordinaire. Icahn has a well-deserved reputation as a bully; he doesn't know much about the Internet and likely couldn't care less. For the past 30 years, he's done a fine job of spotting smug, listless managements and slamming them around like losers in a pro wrestling match. For instance, Icahn badgered Motorola into letting go Chief Executive Ed Zander and persuaded it to consider selling off its handset division. If Icahn succeeds in overthrowing Yahoo!'s board, expect him to storm in with a plan to sell off assets, fire employees, re-cut licensing deals, you name it.

Keith Meister

Icahn's top guy. Meister is principal executive and vice chairman of the board of Icahn Enterprises. His relative lack of experience, however, has been questioned. Last year, Icahn nominated Meister to replace him on Motorola's board. Motorola objected and indicated that the 1995 Harvard grad didn't have enough experience. Motorola said Icahn nominated Meister in a proxy contest in 2003, but proxy advisory company Institutional Shareholder Services said his experience to date was a junior analyst at Lazard Freres and short stints at Northstart Capital Partners and J Net Ventures.

Edward Meyer

Advertising big wig. Meyer was chairman and chief executive at advertising giant Grey Global Group from 1970 to 2006. His experience could be a big plus for Yahoo!, which is struggling in online search advertising. Meyer was also said to be on Microsoft's proxy board. Microsoft disbanded that board after it dropped its bid for Yahoo! on May 3.

Brian Posner

Hedge fund maverick. A veteran portfolio manager, Posner left Warburg Pincus to start hedge fund Hygrove Partners in 2000. His departure from Warburg Pincus set off a flurry in the financial press about talented mutual fund managers leaving for the hedge fund world. Posner could inject some savvy investing strategies into Yahoo!

Robert Shaye

Movie mogul. Shaye is the founder of New Line Cinema. Former Yahoo! Chief Terry Semel failed at turning Yahoo! into a Hollywood of the North, but maybe Shaye can make it happen. Semel was from the old studio system at Warner Bros., but New Line, which Shaye founded in 1967, is part of the new guard. New Line started as a distributor of art films and is now one of the leading movie studios. New Line has produced a number of box office hits, including the Lord of the Ring movies and Wedding Crashers.

Lucian Bebchuk

Legal eagle. Bebchuk is a high-profile professor at Harvard Law School. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences called him "one of the nation's leading scholars of law and economics."

Frank Biondi

Entertainment mogul. Biondi was chief executive at Universal Studios, Viacom and Cablevision. Together, Biondi and Shaye could make Yahoo! a force in Hollywood.

John Chapple

Mobile veteran. Chapple co-founded Nextel Partners and served as chairman and chief executive of the wireless company. Prior to Nextel, Chapple held executive jobs at McCaw Cellular, Rogers Communications and AT&T Wireless. Chapple can turn Yahoo!'s already pretty good mobile Web services into blockbusters. He was also said to be on Microsoft's proxy board.

Mark Cuban

Entrepreneur extraordinaire. Cuban already has ties to Yahoo! He sold his start-up Broadcast.com to the Internet portal for \$8 billion in stock in 1999. With the proceeds, Cuban bought the Dallas Mavericks basketball team. In addition to Broadcast.com, Cuban founded MicroSolutions, a systems integrator that he sold to CompuServe in 1990, and HDNet, a high-definition television network. Maybe Cuban could help Yahoo! negotiate--and win--deals for hot Web 2.0 companies.

Adam Dell

Venture capitalist. Dell also has a connection to Yahoo!: He invested in HotJobs, which the Internet portal acquired. His brother is computer king Michael Dell. Surely, Adam Dell can leverage his relationship with his brother to get Yahoo! services on Dell computers.