

## Oracle's Secret Weapon: Safra Catz to Potentially Lead as Sole CEO

By Neil Chamaki, J.D. Candidate 2022 | October 21, 2019

Oracle's Safra Catz had been co-Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with Mark Hurd since September 2014. On October 18, 2019, [Hurd died at the age of 62](#). He was known as the leading force behind Oracle's sales, customer and technical support, business development, and marketing team. Oracle's co-CEO structure allowed Catz to be the dominant force behind finance, M&A, legal, and human resources – traditionally considered the “back end” of a company. Catz is the financial wizard at Oracle and the mastermind behind Oracle's economic strategy. She has been rightfully called [“the enforcer.”](#)

This division of executive functions allowed the co-CEOs to specialize in their respective strength areas. Hurd would handle the “front end,” [often appearing in the limelight for press interviews, speaking on stage, and socializing with customers](#). While Catz has intensely maintained a private identity for an executive, she would be subject to more public visibility if she took the helm as sole CEO. Between Catz's experience as a trained lawyer, former investment banker, and as a 20-year Oracle veteran, [she may be the ideal leader for Oracle](#) as it makes a [big push to take on Amazon, Microsoft, and Google within the cloud](#).

Larry Ellison, the Chief Technology Officer (CTO), former CEO, and founder of Oracle, oversees engineering and product development, but still maintains a final say with respect to executive decisions. He has noted that he is not interested in being CEO again. [Ellison gave Oracle's board five internal candidates to be considered for the next CEO](#).

One of the named candidates is [Steve Miranda](#), Executive Vice President of Oracle Applications Product Development at Oracle. Additionally, [Don Johnson](#), Vice President of Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, and [Thomas Kurian](#), Oracle's former President of Product Development, now CEO of Google Cloud, are being considered. Two other contenders, [Dave Donatelli](#), Executive Vice President for Worldwide Sales and Marketing Strategy, and [Edward Screven](#), Chief Corporate Architect at Oracle, are also in the mix.

Although one of Ellison's five named candidates could potentially rise to co-CEO with Catz, it stands to reason that Catz has more experience as a leader. She has been in the CEO role since 2014 and has the business acumen, legal knowledge, and leadership skills to shine as sole CEO.



Some even describe her as “brilliant, [and] tough as nails.” Oracle will need to adapt quickly during this critical stage – with the loss of Hurd – and appoint a leader that will keep the company relevant in a fiercely competitive technology landscape.