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Neeraj Khemlani and Wendy McMahon Named President and Co-Heads of CBS News and CBS Television Stations

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CBS News and CBS Television Stations Integrated Into One Divisional and Leadership Structure

New Structure to Harness the Power of National, Local and Digital News Operations To Serve Audiences Across All Platforms

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 15, 2021-- CBS announced today plans to combine the journalistic and business resources of CBS News and the CBS Television Stations into one divisional and leadership structure. Hearst Newspapers, Cable Networks & Digital Media Executive Neeraj Khemlani and former ABC Owned Television Stations Group President Wendy McMahon have been named presidents and co-heads of the newly formed division. The announcements were made today by George Cheeks, President & Chief Executive Officer of the CBS Entertainment Group, to whom McMahon and Khemlani will report.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210415006038/en/>



Neeraj Khemlani (Photo: Business Wire)

The unified division will bring under one management structure the broadcast resources of CBS News, the 24/7 streaming news service CBSN, 10 CBSN Local platforms, [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com) and 28 CBS-owned stations in 17 major U.S. markets. It will maximize the power of CBS' newsgathering and production operations to serve audiences across all national, digital, local and global platforms.

Ms. McMahon and Mr. Khemlani, who will each assume their roles as presidents and co-heads of the new group early next month, will partner on managing all aspects of the division, bringing their wide range of broadcast, local and digital experience to their positions. This marks a homecoming to CBS for both executives – Khemlani as a producer on 60 MINUTES and “60 Minutes II” for eight years while McMahon served seven years at WBZ Boston and WCCO Minneapolis.

Susan Zirinsky will continue as President of CBS News until the new leadership has started and will assist with the transition. The Company is in discussions with Zirinsky for a significant role at a new CBS News Content Studio to be launched later this year.

“This is an opportunity to create a news and information structure that positions CBS for the future,” said Cheeks. “It speaks to our ability to scale newsgathering, production, technical and operational resources to serve both national and local, linear and digital, with the agility to deliver trusted information to every platform. Wendy and Neeraj have the leadership background and cross-platform accomplishments that cover all these important areas, and they share our commitment for supporting superior journalism, optimal delivery platforms and the strongest of organizational cultures.”

“I’m excited to return home to CBS and work with George and Neeraj to build out a unique and inspired structure that brings together the best in journalism, digital innovation and collaboration, to serve audiences at a time when trusted news and information – the hallmark of CBS – has never been more needed,” said McMahon. “Driven by the ingenuity, experience

and dedication of the storytellers and teams at CBS News and our local stations, we are committed to reflecting the communities where we operate while cultivating a culture grounded in trust.”

“My time at 60 MINUTES and the values of CBS News were formative parts of my career, so the opportunity to return and partner with George and Wendy to lead this storied CBS brand is a privilege of the highest order,” said Khemlani. “I’m excited for us to embrace this transformative moment in journalism, culture and technology with a structure and product set that will amplify the importance of the original reporting and storytelling at CBS News and our local stations on all platforms, including the premiere global streaming news network. And I also want to acknowledge the journalistic force that is Susan Zirinsky for positioning the brand for great days ahead.”

“Z has an incredible legacy of making CBS News stronger in every role she served over almost five decades, including meaningful accomplishments as its president,” added Cheeks. “Z took the reins in March 2019 at a moment of turmoil in the division, creating stability and renewing passion for the brand internally and externally. She elevated the powerful journalism and competitiveness of our flagship broadcasts, led the important coverage of the pandemic and historic election in 2020, established our Race & Culture Unit and most recently created brand extensions for 60 MINUTES, 48 HOURS

and CBS SUNDAY MORNING with Paramount +.”

Mr. Khemlani was most recently executive vice president and deputy group head at Hearst Newspapers, overseeing 3,000 employees who publish print and digital subscription products for 24 dailies and 52 weeklies in cities across the country. He has held senior positions since joining the company in 2009, including president and group head of Hearst Entertainment & Syndication, the operating group responsible for Hearst’s cable network partnerships at ESPN and A+E Networks, digital video entertainment and music streaming businesses. Previously, he led business, product and editorial efforts across News & Information verticals at Yahoo! Khemlani is also an award-winning journalist and has been honored with the Edward R. Murrow Award for Investigative Journalism and an Alfred I. duPont–Columbia University Award for coverage of the war in Bosnia. He began his career as a newspaper reporter, and after graduating from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, transitioned into television, producing for the late Peter Jennings at ABC News from 1993-1996, and then for Dan Rather, the late Bob Simon and other correspondents at 60 MINUTES and “60 Minutes II” from 1998 to 2006.

Ms. McMahon was named president of the ABC Owned Stations in 2017, with direct responsibility for the Walt Disney Company’s eight broadcast stations, local newsrooms and streaming assets, as well as oversight of the 1,500 team members who collectively achieved their 12th consecutive year of local television news leadership in 2020. She had consistent success in driving audience growth via the introduction of innovative content initiatives, including the digital-first brand Localish; the creation of a Race and Culture team as well as the multi-cultural series, Our America; and a first-of-its kind data journalism unit that powered exclusive investigations across the network and stations. As senior vice president of ABC Digital, she led the pivot to streaming and launched the group’s first connected TV apps. Previously, she served as vice president of marketing at KABC in Los Angeles and as a creative services director at CBS-owned stations WBZ in Boston and WCCO in Minneapolis. She was named the 2019 Digital Leader of the Year (NAB), and throughout her career has received numerous Emmys as well as Promax, Telly and Broadcast Design awards.

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Press:

Rick McCabe
CBS
rick.mccabe@cbs.com

Christa Robinson
CBS News
RobinsonC@cbsnews.com

Mike Nelson
CBS Stations
MNelson3@cbs.com

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