

Disney Shuts Down Metaverse Unit as Part of First Wave of Layoffs

As part of a [companywide cost-cutting effort](#), [Disney](#) has axed its cross-divisional Next Generation Storytelling & Consumer Experiences group, which encompassed the Mouse House's metaverse ambitions.

The elimination of Disney's Next Generation Storytelling & Consumer Experiences group, led by company veteran Mike White, affects about 50 employees, *Variety* confirmed. The news was first [reported](#) by the Wall Street Journal. A Disney rep declined to comment.

The shutdown of Disney's metaverse group came Monday with the first wave of the company's move to [slash 7,000 jobs under interim CEO Bob Iger](#), which is part of its attempt [to reduce \\$5.5 billion in costs](#). Following this week's layoffs, there will be a larger second round of cuts next month, Iger told employees in a memo Monday. A final round of layoffs will hit "before the beginning of summer," according to Iger.

In early 2022, then-CEO Bob Chapek [appointed White to a new role coordinating the company's metaverse efforts](#). As senior VP of the division, White, who has worked at Disney for more than a decade, was tasked with developing company initiatives that combined "physical and digital worlds," Chapek wrote in a memo to staff at the time. Disney also had [hired Mark Bozon, a top Apple gaming executive, as a senior creative leader for the Next Generation Storytelling & Consumer Experiences team](#).

Under Chapek, who was [abruptly fired in November 2022](#) by Disney's board and replaced with former CEO Iger, the company had been [developing a cross-divisional membership program](#) that

was envisioned as bringing together perks and exclusive offers from across theme parks, cruises, Disney+, retail outlets and other touch points. Disney also has scrapped that project under Iger's restructuring.

White is expected to remain at Disney but the status of other members of the company's metaverse unit is unclear. In addition to serving as SVP of Next Generation Storytelling & Consumer Experiences, White has been in charge of Disney's consumer digital products team, overseeing the technology strategy, engineering and product teams charged developing digital experiences across brands including ABC, ABC News, Disney, ESPN, FX, Marvel, National Geographic and Star Wars. After joining Disney in 2011, White previously led technology organizations at Disney Parks Experiences and Products, Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media, and Disney Interactive.

In one of his first moves in returning as CEO, [Iger dismantled the former Disney Media & Entertainment Distribution \(DMED\) division](#), led by Kareem Daniel. White had dual-reported to Daniel and Josh D'Amaro, chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products.