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RIM names new CEO as Lazardis, Basillie step down

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(Reuters) - Research In Motion's co-chief executives Mike Lazardis and Jim Balsillie have bowed to investor pressure and stepped down, handing the job to an insider with four years at the struggling BlackBerry maker.

Thorsten Heins, a former Siemens executive who has risen steadily at the Canadian company to become one of two chief operating officers, took over as CEO on Saturday, RIM said.

Barbara Stymiest, an independent board member who once headed the Toronto Stock Exchange, will take over as chairman, a role that Lazardis and Balsillie had also shared. Lazardis and Balsillie will remain board members.

COMMENTARY

SHAW WU, ANALYST AT STERNE AGEE

"It's a start. On the positive side, I think people might be positive on the fact they're actually doing something. But we'll have to wait and see.

"They might need someone with consumer electronics expertise, because they're a consumer company whether they like it or not. It started out as an enterprise business and even for RIM, it's going to be a consumer business.

"That they both remain part of the board might be the right move. I'm not sure people wanted them to be totally uninvolved.

"I'm not sure this is what people really wanted to see - it might have a little too bold. It seems a bit aggressive.

"Heins has been introduced at their events, I remember hearing him speak about the company. But he's not a well-known quantity.

"I think there's going to be a learning period.

"It remains to be seen whether these moves are going to be effective or not."

EDWARD SNYDER, ANALYST AT CHARTER EQUITY RESEARCH

"It's the first positive thing that they have done in months. It's a step in the right direction.

"With them (Lazardis and Balsillie) still in the game, is their strategy going to continue with the new CEO? Is it a change in direction, or is it a move to the shareholders and investors off their backs? Is it a real change, or is it window-dressing?

"It sounds like it might be a first good step, but ... I have my doubts. My feeling is that it's a figure-head change.

"The stock will probably rally a bit."

MICHAEL URLOCKER, ANALYST AT GMP SECURITIES IN TORONTO

"I am not sure that an engineer as new CEO really gets to the central issues faced by RIM."

(Reporting by [Alastair Sharp](#) in Toronto and [Edwin Chan](#) in Los Angeles, compiled by Tiffany Wu)

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