

Top sales official at AMD steps down
By [Matt Andrejczak](#), MarketWatch
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SAN FRANCISCO (MarketWatch) -- The top salesman for Advanced Micro Devices Inc. is headed for the exit as the world's No. 2 microprocessor maker is set to release a long-awaited product the company hopes will reduce growing losses and revive its sales.

Henri Richard, the chipmaker's worldwide sales chief, is leaving the company in September, AMD said in a prepared statement late Wednesday. Richard is resigning "of his own accord and on completely amicable terms," the company said.

Richard, known for his sharp suits and frank comments about AMD's much-larger rival Intel Corp., oversaw AMD's international sales force and corporate marketing initiatives. AMD's global sales and marketing organization will now report directly to Chief Executive Hector Ruiz, the company said.

Richard joined AMD in 2002, a year before the chipmaker released its Opteron processor, a technology for corporate servers that would make the company a more formidable competitor to Intel.

One analyst said Richard's departure may be a further blow to AMD.

"His enthusiasm for the company will be missed and could further isolate customers who have grown weary of production delays and poor logistics," wrote Charter Equity Research analyst John Dryden, who reiterated his market perform rating on AMD's stock

An avid video game player, Richard previously held sales and marketing posts at WebGain Inc., IBM, and Bell Microproducts. News of his expected departure had been reported on CNET, in The Wall Street Journal, and on Hexus.net, a technology news Web site.

He is the second top executive to leave AMD this summer.

David Orton, an executive vice president, resigned at the end of last month after playing a key role in merging the operations of ATI Technologies with AMD. Orton was the former CEO of ATI, which AMD acquired in October 2006 for \$5.4 billion. This year, Sunnyvale, Calif.-based AMD has run into problems after taking market share from Intel for three straight years.

For the six months ended June 30, AMD reported a net loss of \$1.2 billion amid weak prices for its chips used in PCs and corporate servers in addition to supply issues. Shares of AMD have sunk 40% this year as investors have showed confidence in Intel's broad counterattack to push back on AMD. Liquidity concerns also have hurt AMD's stock.

In the past year, AMD has had to tap the debt markets three times to help fund its operations and its purchase of ATI. On Aug. 14, AMD completed the sale of \$1.5 billion in convertible senior notes. The proceeds went to pay off a loan originally valued at \$2.5 billion.

AMD wants to regain its momentum with several new products and expanded relationships with major PC makers, such as Toshiba Corp. and Dell Inc.

On Sept. 10, AMD will start shipping its long-awaited, quad-core Barcelona server processor, followed by its quad-core Phenom desktop chip at a later date. Another chip platform for laptops, code-named "Puma," will follow those launches.

The company is hoping the new products will revive its business and blunt Intel's counterattack launched last year.

In trading Wednesday, AMD shares closed at \$12.01, down 1.3%. ■

Matt Andrejczak is a reporter for MarketWatch in San Francisco.