

# Sheryl Sandberg saintly image in Silicon Valley is unravelling as media views her as dominatrix BITCH

She is one of Silicon Valley's most beloved figures and was tipped to be a presidential candidate. But it's all crashing down for Sheryl Sandberg.



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**Sheryl Sandberg: Gender Equality Still Lagging, Despite #MeToo**

Charismatic, personable, strong and highly successful, Sheryl Sandberg has been a shining light for women in business, in particular in the male dominated world of Silicon Valley.


After leaving Google to become Facebook's chief operating officer in 2008, she could not put a foot wrong.

The now 49-year-old executive was often described as the grown-up in the room at Facebook — a maternal, capable and trustworthy presence to offset Zuckerberg's inexperience and inability to connect with the public.

Her book *Lean In*, and her corresponding organisation of the same name, promotes a message for women to break down social barriers and aspire to leadership roles in business and government, and became a feminist mantra.

She was held in such high regard that her name was often thrown around as a potential presidential candidate, with rumours previously swirling she could run as an outside candidate in 2020. Something which she has continually denied.

But after a succession of Facebook crises — and explosive reports detailing her handling of them — Sheryl Sandberg's saintly image is starting to unravel.

 Sheryl Sandberg's star is starting to dim as Facebook stumbles from crisis to crisis.

Sheryl Sandberg's star is starting to dim as Facebook stumbles from crisis to crisis.*Source:Supplied*

Last week, the *New York Times* detailed Facebook's use of a conservative consulting firm accused of using "black ops" style techniques to deflect criticism from the social networking giant and link critics to billionaire democratic donor George Soros.

The [in-depth piece](#) reported that during the fallout from scandals over Russian interference on the platform and breaches of user data, Ms Sandberg deflected blame on other employees while working to cover up the extent of Facebook's problems and obfuscate the truth in the face of media scrutiny.

When Facebook's former security chief Alex Stamos uncovered Russian interference on the site in 2016 he put a team together to investigate. He wanted Facebook to publish a paper about what they found but Ms Sandberg was a key objector, reportedly urging the leadership team to water down the specifics of the report.

On one occasion she reportedly yelled at Mr Stamos for revealing the true extent of the problem of Russian disinformation being spread on the site to Facebook's board. "You threw us under the bus," she reportedly told him.

As the *New York Times* put it: "As evidence accumulated that Facebook's power could also be exploited to disrupt elections, broadcast viral propaganda and inspire deadly campaigns of hate around the globe, Zuckerberg and Sandberg stumbled. Bent on growth, the pair ignored warning signs and then sought to conceal them from public view."

Meanwhile the *Wall Street Journal* [this morning reported](#) that CEO Mark Zuckerberg had blamed Ms Sandberg for the public fallout following the Cambridge Analytica scandal in which user data was given to a firm which tried to use it to manipulate voters ahead of the 2016 presidential election.

Facebook's leadership team went underground for days following the revelation — a big no-no in crisis management when it come to public relations.

### **'FINALLY STARTING TO CRACK'**


The run of bad news for Facebook has started to tarnish the reputation of its second in command.

Writing for [Vanity Fair on the weekend](#), Nick Bilton who regularly reports on Silicon Valley elites wrote, "it seems that Sandberg's curated persona is finally starting to crack".

Before joining Google, she worked as the chief of staff for then US Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers. But despite her immense political connections, "Sandberg's potential political career seems toast," he wrote.

Meanwhile *The Atlantic* went with [a headline](#) declaring she has "lost her feminist street cred" for not living up to her 'Lean In' mantra of changing the world for the better.

That sentiment was echoed by [the Washington Post which wrote](#): "Sandberg's failure at Facebook exposes an emptiness at the heart of the argument that made her famous."

 Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.  
Picture: Jim Watson

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.  
Picture: Jim Watson *Source:AFP*

Under the headline “Maybe someone should lean out,” *Jezebel* accused Ms Sandberg of caring more about protecting her own image than doing what was right by Facebook users.

## **MORE MESS TO CLEAN UP**

In the fallout from last week's *New York Times* report, Facebook embarked on yet another apology tour.


“We absolutely did not pay anyone to create fake news. That, they have assured me, was not happening,” Ms Sandberg told CBS last week — despite the fact that the *Times* didn't exactly accuse the company of doing such a thing.

Speaking on a conference call with journalists on Friday, Mr Zuckerberg repeated his comments that Facebook was slow to spot Russian interference in the 2016 election but argued that “to suggest we weren't interested in knowing the truth or that we wanted to hide what we knew or stop investigations is simply untrue”.

At the same time, Facebook's board of directors issued a statement backing the efforts of Mr Zuckerberg and Ms Sandberg in responding to insidious influence campaigns.

“As Mark and Sheryl made clear to Congress, the company was too slow to spot Russian interference, and too slow to take action. As a board we did indeed push them to move faster,” the statement said.

“But to suggest that they knew about Russian interference and either tried to ignore it or prevent investigations into what had happened is grossly unfair.”

 Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook with Dan Rose, vice president of partnerships and platform marketing, and Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer. Picture: David Paul Morris

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*Source: Bloomberg*