

Google accused of racketeering in lawsuit claiming pattern of trade secrets theft

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MOUNTAIN VIEW — In an explosive new allegation, a renowned architect has accused Google of racketeering, saying in a lawsuit the company has a pattern of stealing trade secrets from people it first invites to collaborate.

Architect Eli Attia spent 50 years developing what his lawsuit calls “game-changing new technology” for building construction. Google in 2010 struck a deal to work with him on commercializing it, and Attia moved with his family from New York to Palo Alto to focus on the initiative, code-named “Project Genie.”

The project was undertaken in Google’s “Google X” unit for experimental “moonshots.”

But then Google and its co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin “plotted to squeeze Attia out of the project” and pretended to kill it but used Attia’s technology to “surreptitiously” spin off Project Genie into a new company, according to the lawsuit.

Now Attia has added another allegation to the suit: the Mountain View tech giant’s theft of his intellectual property follows a pattern that makes Google guilty of racketeering.

Google did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

This week, a judge in Santa Clara County Superior Court approved the addition of racketeering claims to the lawsuit originally filed in 2014.

Attia’s legal team uncovered evidence that Google had engaged in a “substantially similar fact pattern of misappropriation of trade secrets,” according to a July 25 legal filing from Attia.

“Google would solicit a party to share with it highly confidential trade secrets under a non-disclosure agreement, conduct negotiations with the party, then terminate negotiations with the party professing a lack of interest in the party’s technology, followed by the unlawful use of the party’s trade secrets in its business,” Attia said in the filing.

Six lawsuits against Google, most resolved in the company’s favor, show a similar pattern of intellectual property theft, the filing claims.

Google, Page and Brin “have been engaged in a pattern of racketeering activity for over the past 20 years,” Attia’s lawyer Eric Buether said in a court filing.

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