

Oracle shares sink as lawsuit alleges sales were hyped

NEW YORK: Shares in Silicon Valley titan Oracle fell more than 4% on Thursday after a former accountant alleged in a whistle-blower lawsuit that she was pressed to exaggerate cloud-computing sales data.



In the suit filed in the US district court in San Francisco on Wednesday, Svetlana Blackburn accused the software giant of pressuring her last year to boost records of expected sales payments, or accruals, by millions of dollars. When Blackburn, who was a senior finance manager in the cloud computing department, repeatedly refused and said the practices were unlawful, the company fired her, the suit alleges.

"Upper management was trying (and trying to push her) to fit square data into round holes, in an effort to bolster Oracle Cloud Services financial reports that would be paraded before company leadership as well as the investing public," the lawsuit said.

It said she refused to turn her eyes away from "improper" reports generated "in order to justify the bottom lines that her superiors demanded to see". Blackburn's suit was filed under whistleblower' laws that would allow her to reap substantial damages. No specific general or punitive damage claims were given in the suit.

News of the lawsuit sent shares of Oracle falling 4.6% to \$38.42 in early trade on Thursday.

Oracle rejected the allegations and said it would countersue. "We are confident that all our cloud accounting is proper and

correct," spokeswoman Deborah Hellinger said.

"This former employee worked at Oracle for less than a year and did not work in the accounting group. She was terminated for poor performance and we intend to sue her for malicious prosecution."

Source: AFP

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