

Big Tech prepares for a wave of worker unionization

Article

The news: Big Tech workers are mobilizing to unionize, likely inspired by similar movements in media and retail, as well as by the outsized growth and expansion of technology juggernauts.

Efforts to unionize in the US:

- 16 Starbucks stores have [voted](#) to unionize, and 150 more are holding elections.

- An **Amazon** warehouse in New Jersey is the latest to get [a union vote](#) after similar elections in [Staten Island](#) and [Alabama](#).
- 80% of **New York Times** tech workers [voted](#) to certify union representation last month.
- Workers at **Google**, **Raven Software**, and **Activision Blizzard** are [unionizing](#).
- **Apple** retail workers are also trying to [form a union](#), a first for the world's most valuable company. One plan of action: A worker's union will negotiate a \$30/hr minimum wage if given the right to collectively bargain with Apple.
- The effects of the pandemic and increasing prices and inflation are key motivators for unionization, as is the [growth and global influence](#) of Big Tech.
- Last week, thousands of **Etsy** sellers went on a weeklong [strike](#) to protest a recent hike in transaction fees and other changes.

What's next? In Amazon's case, labor experts are [predicting](#) that a successful vote to unionize will be the first domino to fall for the second-largest private employer in the US. In context, Amazon employs **more than 1 million workers** and thousands of contractors in the US, [per](#) GeekWire.

- “One of the biggest reasons for this increase in organizing is the growing recognition by workers (and the public) that not all tech is ethical and that tech companies continue to demonstrate their inability to self-police their morality,” [said](#) **Ken Green**, CEO of **UnionTrack**.
- 50% of tech workers are now [interested in joining a union](#), according to a **2021 Tech Employee Survey** conducted by Protocol and Morning Consult.
- Just in the past year, we've seen proactive moves from tech workers, like thousands of Google employees rejecting [Project Maven](#), a massive Google walkout, the **Facebook** whistleblower's [exposé](#) on data misuse, and [strikes](#) from **Uber** and **Lyft** drivers.

The big picture: Successful unionization taking place within Big Tech could create forward momentum across the industry—resulting in a [seismic shift](#) for an industry that has long considered unionization a [deterrent](#) to innovation and opportunity.

- More importantly, **the balance of power seems to be shifting in workers' favor** at a time when [regulation](#) and [antitrust](#) legislation is on an upswing.
- Big Tech will continue to push back against unionization. For example, a leaked Amazon training video reveals strategies management can use to quash union discussions, [per](#) CNBC.

