

US advertising sector's 3,000 new jobs in September mark its best performance in a year

Article

The news: The US advertising, PR, and related services sector reported a 3,000 job increase in September, the largest growth seen in a year. This aligns with data from the Bureau of Labor

Statistics (BLS) highlighting a 336,000 US job increase in September—the biggest since January and double what many economists forecast.

- The unemployment rate stayed at 3.8% in September, consistent with August.

Zoom in: September's advertising job count reached 502,100, the most since November 2000. September added 3,000 jobs, up from August's 1,400.

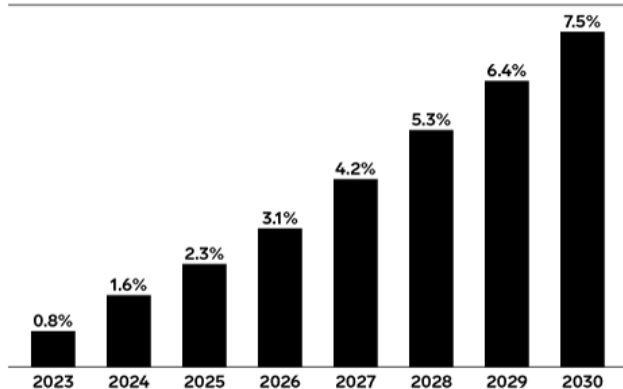
- BLS adjusted August's figures, dropping from 2,900 jobs to 1,400; July's figures were also revised.
- Employment in this category includes ad agencies, PR firms, media reps, and outdoor advertising. Ad agencies, which make up about 47% of these jobs, actually experienced a modest decline in August (September figures aren't available yet), dropping to 233,900.
- After a dip in the final months of the previous year, the ad sector gained momentum in 2023. Every month, apart from March, saw staff increases, countering cuts in media and ad-tech firms.

Yes, but: The broader media streaming category, covering social networks and other providers, declined. Jobs dropped to 229,200 in August, the lowest since 2018.

- BLS reported a loss of 45,000 jobs in the motion picture and sound recording sectors since May due to Hollywood labor disputes, with 7,000 of those in September alone.
- These losses are attributed to the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA strikes, highlighting the economic impact on the entertainment industry. While the writers strike has ended, SAG-AFTRA negotiations continue, addressing key concerns like residuals, working conditions, audition processes, and AI-related actor rights.
- Advertising agencies are also concerned about potential job losses tied to AI—but for now, those concerns appear to be long-term problems.

Share of US Ad Agency Jobs Lost to Automation and Generative AI, 2023-2030

% of total



Note: includes advertising, public relations and related services; excludes manual jobs like stockers/order fillers, installations, maintenance and repair works that are less relevant to ad agency headcounts

Source: Forrester, "Agency AI-Powered Workforce Forecast, 2030 (US)" cited by Campaign, June 15, 2023

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Why it matters: September's growth, marking 33 months of job gains, shows the strong US labor market is thriving despite layoffs in associated sectors like technology, retail, and finance.

- The sector's resilience, coupled with a strong job market, offers a bright outlook for professionals and firms.
- The growth in advertising is noteworthy, but overall economic signs, like a steady unemployment rate, highlight the US's economic stability. The challenge is adapting to unexpected future hurdles—such as the Middle East's latest conflagration, which could fuel uncertainty—without missing a beat.