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FORTUNE

Apple was the most profitable company on the Fortune 500 list this year. These are the biggest profit generators, and what that means about American business.



Will Daniel

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American companies had a huge year in 2021.

Together, the corporations on this year's *Fortune 500 list* generated a record \$1.8 trillion in profits on \$16.1 trillion in revenue.

The story of the top 10 most profitable U.S. companies reveals some major trends in the current American business landscape: Tech continues to dominate, energy companies remain in a secular decline despite a rebound in 2021, and a strong economy lifts all boats.

The most profitable American companies

Annual profit in billions of dollars

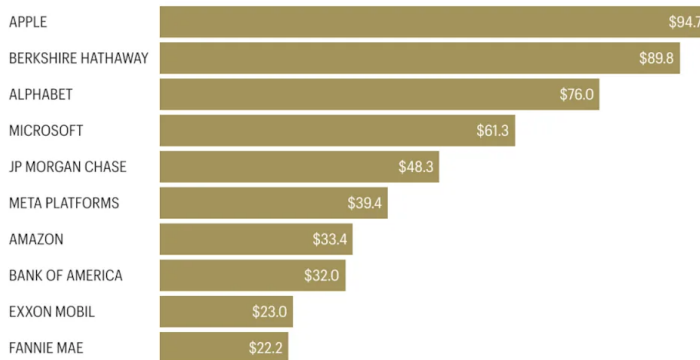


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Tech remains dominant

Apple once again took the top spot on *Fortune's list* of the most profitable American companies in 2021. The tech giant



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raked in \$94.7 billion in profits last year on revenues of \$365.8 billion.

In the past, oil producers and even car companies like Ford were common sights at the top of the most profitable companies list, but these days, tech companies reign supreme. Tech giants represented three out of the top five most profitable companies in the U.S. in 2021 and half of the top 10.

Apple has also taken the top spot on the *Fortune 500* most profitable list for seven out of the last eight years, only being eclipsed once by Warren Buffet's [Berkshire Hathaway](#) in 2019.

Other tech profit generators in the top ten included [Meta Platforms](#), [Amazon](#), [Microsoft](#), and Google's parent company Alphabet.

Fossil fuel's secular decline continues

The waning dominance of fossil fuel companies has been an ongoing trend over the past decade, and only one company, [Exxon Mobil](#), nabbed a top spot in the most profitable list.

But that doesn't tell the whole story.

Rising oil and gas prices [lifted many energy companies](#) to new heights in 2021, increasing the sector's presence in this year's *Fortune 500*.

Still, from 2000 to 2015, Exxon Mobil earned the top spot as the most profitable U.S. firm 12 times, while this year it only managed the number nine slot. It was also the only company that didn't post a double-digit year-over-year increase in profits compared to 2020.

A strong economy lifts banks, mortgage lenders

A strong economy and a record year for stocks meant big

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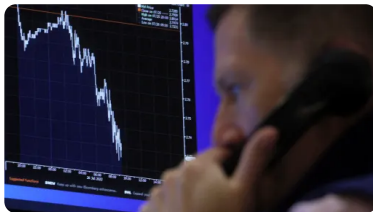
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