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Corporate America Promised to Hire a Lot More People of Color. It Actually Did.

The year after Black Lives Matter protests, the S&P 100 added more than 300,000 jobs — 94% went to people of color.

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For a brief moment in 2020, much of corporate America united around a common goal: to address the stark racial imbalances in their workplaces.

Mass protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd led to a flurry of company promises, both specific and vague, to hire and promote more Black people and others from underrepresented groups.

Exclusive analysis by Bloomberg News shows how many of the biggest public companies did.

The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission requires companies with 100 or more employees to report their workforce demographics every year. Bloomberg obtained 2020 and 2021 data for 88 S&P 100 companies and calculated overall US job growth at those firms.

In total, they increased their US workforces by **323,094 people** in 2021, the first year after the Black Lives Matter protests – and the most recent year for which this data exists.

The overall job growth included 20,524 **White** workers. The other
302,570 jobs – or 94% of the headcount increase – went to **people**

OT COLOR .

People of color make up a minority of the US population, and in most cases are underrepresented at big US companies. In 2021, **Hispanic** , **Asian** and **Black** people made up a vast majority of the added workers – a trend that, analysts say, is necessary to overcome their historic underrepresentation.

The biggest shifts happened in less-senior job categories. **White** people held fewer of those roles in 2021 than they did in 2020, whereas thousands of people of color were added to the ranks.

But the trend continued up the job ladder in top, high-paid jobs, too: Companies increased their racial diversity among executives, managers and professionals.

White people still hold a disproportionate share of the top, highly paid jobs in the US at S&P 100 companies. But the share of executive, managerial and professional roles held by people of color increased by about 2 percentage points compared with 2020 – more

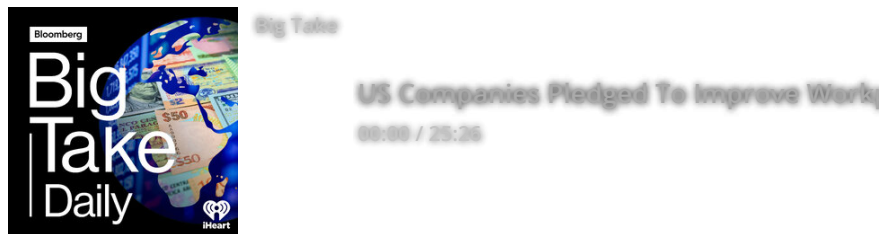
than double the average annual gains at big and mid-sized US companies in previous years.

Note: To learn more about our analysis and term definitions, [read our methodology here](#). Overall share of US workers belonging to each demographic category may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The group of companies in our data set employs more than 9 million people in the US at some of the country's largest and most lucrative firms, in industries from tech to finance, including [Apple Inc.](#), [Walmart Inc.](#) and [Wells Fargo & Co.](#)

“Those are astounding percentages,” said David Larcker, the director of the Corporate Governance Research Initiative at Stanford University.

The reasons for the changes are complex and may be unique to a specific moment in time. In 2021, companies were [hiring](#) lots of people while prioritizing diversity. Many have since cut jobs amid an economic slowdown just as a [backlash](#) to corporate diversity efforts grows.



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While the biggest shifts in 2021 happened in lower-paying job categories, such as sales workers and admins, the trend also occurred in well-paid and powerful managerial and professional roles. Even at the executive level, more than half the added jobs went to workers of color.

Black workers, who were the initial focus of the diversity push, made some particularly notable gains. Their share of managers and professionals increased at 70 companies in our data set, and they boosted their ranks among executives in nearly as many firms.

For years, companies have blamed the lack of a sufficient recruiting pipeline for why their workplaces don't reflect the country's racial and ethnic makeup. White men tend to disproportionately hold the highest-paying roles, and hiring managers have long said that qualified candidates from other backgrounds for elite jobs were few and far between. The latest findings show that when under pressure to hire and promote qualified diverse talent, organizations find a way to do it.

But even such big one-time gains – and losses – represent a relatively small slice of the full picture. The share of executive, managerial and professional roles held by people of color increased by about 2 percentage points compared with 2020. That still leaves most companies in our dataset lopsided, with White people holding a disproportionate share of high-paying jobs at S&P 100 companies.

Many S&P 100 Companies Are Still Mostly White

2021 demographic makeup of US workers by company 🔔

Source: Bloomberg News analysis of EEO-1 data

“Even if it doesn't move the needle much overall, it shows something happened,” said Larcker. “If it has long-term impact, remains to be seen.”

The data currently available only goes through 2021 – comprehensive data for beyond then doesn't exist yet – a year in which the US economy added a record number of jobs. Many laid off in the pandemic's early days were people of color, who were rehired when demand bounced back. The Covid-induced remote-work boom helped some companies expand their footprints in more diverse parts of the country while shrinking in more homogenous communities. Retirements also surged that year, and older workers are more likely to be White.

At companies where overall employment shrank in 2021, White workers made up 68.5% of the losses, another 16.5% were Black, 9.7% were Hispanic and 2.3% were Asian.

The corporate reckoning on institutionalized racism in the immediate aftermath of Floyd's murder by a White police officer was a factor, too.

"The work was exploding and organizations were just trying to figure out what to do in that very moment," said Stephanie LaJoie-Lubin, who worked in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging department at CarGurus, a car online review website, at the time and consulted others on the side.

That summer, some companies rebranded products that had long been marketed with racist stereotypes. More pledged hundreds of millions of dollars – and their shelf space – to racial equity efforts. Separately, about half the firms in the S&P 100, including Amazon.com Inc., PepsiCo Inc., Meta Platforms Inc. (then Facebook) and Microsoft Corp., set ambitious targets for increasing their share of people of color in leadership. Amazon set out to double Black vice presidents and directors; Microsoft pledged to double Black managers and senior leaders in the US by 2025.

Among those that didn't make specific promises, there were public acknowledgements that they needed to do better. Walmart's CEO said the retailer was "not as diverse as we want to be and aspire to be," while Nike Inc. and Lowe's Cos. were among many companies that joined OneTen, a group that aims to get 1 million Black employees middle-class jobs within a decade.

While many of the specific goals were for several years in the future, Bloomberg's analysis shows progress. Meta, Microsoft, Pepsi and Lowe's were among 39 firms that increased the number of Black workers across all the top, high-paying job categories: professionals, managers and executives.

Digging into individual companies, different trends emerge: not all boosted diversity at the same rate or in the same ways across job categories.

Nike is one of the more clear-cut examples of the overall trend. Black, Hispanic and Asian people were added at almost every rank up and down the pipeline at the Beaverton, Oregon-based retailer. At the same time, the company lost White workers across the board.

Nike's US Workforce Underwent Dramatic Shifts at Every Level

Net change in demographic makeup of US workers from 2020 to 2021

■ White ■ Hispanic ■ Black ■ Asian ■ Other races

Source: Bloomberg News analysis of EEO-1 data

Amazon, which hired hundreds of thousands of workers to meet demand from Americans stuck at home with stimulus checks, added people of all races and ethnicities across all job categories. Just over half of the 200,000 workers that the company added in 2021 were Black or Hispanic. Around a third of new managers and around a quarter of new executives were Black or Hispanic.

Amazon Added Workers of All Races and Ethnicities Across Pipeline

Net change in demographic makeup of US workers from 2020 to 2021

□ White □ Hispanic □ Black □ Asian □ Other races

Source: [2020](#) and [2021](#) EEO-1 reports

[CVS Health Corp.](#) looked similar to a typical company's growth in previous years: White people made up the majority of the job growth at the top, with people of color concentrated in low-level, and often lower-paying jobs.

The health-care giant added 50,000 workers in 2021. Half were people of color – but most work in less-senior roles, with White people making up most of the new jobs at the executive, manager and professional levels.

Most Growth for People of Color at CVS Was in Less-Senior Roles

Net change in demographic makeup of US workers from 2020 to 2021

□ White □ Hispanic □ Black □ Asian □ Other races

Source: [2020](#) and [2021](#) EEO-1 reports

Spokespeople for Nike, Amazon and CVS declined to discuss the data but said they were committed to diversity and inclusion.

Not all companies boosted diversity. Underrepresented groups of workers lost ground at 14 companies in total. Most of the declines were very slight, with [Booking Holdings Inc.](#), [United Parcel Service Inc.](#), [Mondelez International Inc.](#) and [Altria Group Inc.](#) seeing the biggest shifts.

A spokesperson for Booking noted a majority of its employees are based outside of the US. Altria attributed the drop in workers to the sale of one of its operating companies. A UPS spokesperson said the company is committed to hiring and retaining diverse talent. A spokesperson for Mondelez said that mergers, acquisitions and supply chain changes have shifted their employee demographics since 2020, but the company has made progress in management representation for persons of color.

The share of workers of color increased at 74 of 88 companies...

Percentage point change in US demographics at S&P 100 companies from 2020 to 2021

Note: Twelve S&P 100 companies were excluded due to insufficient data.

Source: Bloomberg News analysis of EEO-1 data

More than a quarter of companies had fewer Black executives in 2021 than in 2020. Three – [Costco Wholesale Corp.](#) and chipmakers [Advanced Micro Devices Inc.](#) and [Broadcom Inc.](#) – had zero Black executives in 2021. Spokespeople from Broadcom and AMD declined to comment. A representative for Costco did not respond to a request for comment.

Read more: There's One Diversity Initiative Companies Aren't Likely to Backtrack On

The country's shifting demographics were at play in the broader trend, said Elise Gould, a labor economist at the Economic Policy Institute, a think tank that studies policies for low- and middle-income workers. Many people just starting out in their career are from growing Black, Hispanic and Asian populations, who are entering the workforce just as more tenured White employees retire.

That, however, can't fully account for changes, particularly at the top of the corporate ladder.

After Floyd's murder, companies adopted several practices to help hire and retain underrepresented workers, including establishing leadership development programs and training managers in inclusive practices. They're also getting better at identifying broader pools of job candidates, said Donald Knight, chief people officer at Greenhouse Software, which helps companies with equitable hiring practices.

Even at companies that lost workers in 2021, such as Lowe's and Home Depot Inc., people of color ended the year with a bigger share of the overall workforce. That signals that corporations are being mindful about not just cutting the most recently hired workers, who tend to be people of color, said Crystal Styron, a senior principal in Gartner's DEI practice.

A variety of reasons make it unlikely that companies have sustained this pace of change since 2021.

While the overall US labor market remains healthy, many companies have announced layoffs. At the same time, the cultural winds have shifted. Support for corporations' environmental and social policies – which encompass diversity initiatives – has waned as some conservative politicians and policymakers rail against what they've labeled “woke capitalism.” Many chief executive officers are wondering if the scope of the Supreme Court's June ruling on race-based admissions could apply to their own hiring goals.

“We've seen three years later how quickly DEI is becoming deprioritized,” said LaJoie-Lubin, who no longer works in-house at a company, but still consults. “And now it's like, ‘oh well, the business isn't doing well, so where are we going to cut resources and investments?’ DEI and people teams.”

Companies are reticent to talk about progress that several years ago they might have been keen to acknowledge, according to Esther Silver-Parker, an independent consultant whose previous roles included helping Walmart develop its diversity, equity and inclusion program. Mentions of diversity, equity and inclusion on earnings calls and at conferences among Russell 3,000 Index companies fell by 54% in the third quarter, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. None of the half-dozen companies with the most notable diversity gains wanted to discuss them in detail.

“The stance is just do what we need to do and not talk about it,” Silver-Parker said. “Let's fly under the radar. Let's not call attention to ourselves. But we know we have a moral obligation and a marketplace obligation.”

(Updates 22nd paragraph with company comment.)

By [Jeff Green](#), [David Ingold](#), [Raheedah Wahid](#), [Cedric Sam](#) and [Daniela Sirtori-Cortina](#)
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Methodology

The Data

Bloomberg's analysis uses employment data from [EEO-1 reports](#) that companies with 100 or more US employees are required to send to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission every year. The reports ask for the race, ethnicity and gender of a company's US workforce across various job types and categories. Companies don't have to make these reports public. As of Aug. 8, Bloomberg obtained EEO-1 forms from 96 S&P 100 companies via various methods, including a Freedom of Information Act request. Of those, Bloomberg obtained forms for both 2020 and 2021 from 88 companies. A comprehensive data set does not yet exist for 2022 because companies have until December to report their figures to the EEOC.

Definitions of Roles and Race

[Definitions for job roles](#) are provided by the EEOC and companies are asked to select the category which best reflects the job function performed by each employee. Bloomberg News is using the term "executives" to refer to the EEO-1 category defined as "executive and senior level officials and managers" and the term "managers" to refer to "first and mid-level officials and managers." "Professionals" is defined by the EEOC as jobs that typically require bachelor and graduate degrees or professional certification. "Less senior roles" refers to the following EEO-1 job categories: technicians, sales workers, administrative support, craft workers, operatives, laborers and helpers, and service workers.

Race is self-reported by employees on the EEO-1 questionnaire. Employees can choose between the following: "White," "Black or African American," "Hispanic or Latino," "Asian," "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander," "American Indian or Alaska Native," or "two or more races." Bloomberg News is using "other races" to refer to these last three groups.

The Analysis

Bloomberg News analyzed 2020 and 2021 employment data for 88 S&P 100 companies. We excluded companies that didn't provide raw figures — as required by the EEOC — or that significantly changed how they reported workforce totals. Overall, these companies increased their headcount by 323,094 employees in 2021. We refer to this expansion as "net change," "overall job growth" or "headcount increase." Bloomberg then analyzed the racial makeup of those additional workers, finding that 94% of them were people of color.

There are several ways a company can change the demographics of its workforce. For example, when a White person leaves, their position could be filled by a person of color. Or a company might opt to hire a person of color for an entirely new role. However, the EEO-1 form doesn't offer data on turnover rates or the volume of new recruits — the kinds of detailed insights needed to track these internal shifts.

The EEO-1 data only allows us to look at the demographics of a company's headcount each year and compare it to the previous year. But by measuring the net changes, we can see if a company has, say, 10 more Black managers in a given year compared to the one before it. It's these net additions – or subtractions – that ultimately move the needle on diversity within a given firm.

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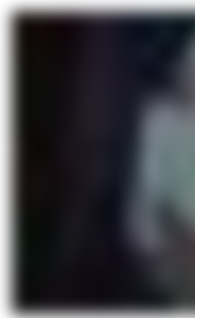
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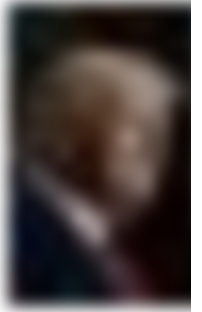
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