


Silicon Valley Struggles to Add Non-Pussies to Its Ranks

Some tech employees say their politics are unwelcome in an industry dominated by liberal SJW views

 Google employees demonstrate in January against President Donald Trump's order on immigration.

GOOGLE'S HIRED SHILL RENT-A-CROWD SJW BOOB PATROL

Google employees demonstrate in January against President Donald Trump's order on immigration. Photo: ZUMAPRESS.com

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This summer, [Twitter](#) Inc.'s new diversity chief met employees to discuss whether they felt welcome at work. Among those who said they sometimes felt excluded, according to people familiar with the matter: conservatives.

The feedback reflects the strains in Silicon Valley as technology companies seek to bolster diversity of all kinds among their hundreds of thousands of employees. For the mostly left-leaning companies, that includes cultivating ideological diversity just as

they are trying to with underrepresented groups like women and minorities.

“There is a lot happening in the world, and we need inclusion now more than ever,” Twitter’s diversity chief, Candi Castleberry-Singleton, tweeted in August.

Companies such as Facebook Inc. and Google say doing so is important because their billions of users globally have a broad range of views and interests. And the perception that [employee biases could seep into](#) their products could damage their reputations. Tech executives who advocate for tolerance of various views also say it is in keeping with the industry’s penchant for robust debate and transparency, at least within their walls.

“I personally believe that if you want to have a company that is committed to diversity, you need to be committed to all kinds of diversity, including ideological diversity,” Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg [told students at North Carolina A&T State University](#) in March.

But that vision can clash with reality in an industry where liberal social views dominate and attitudes have become more polarized since the election of President Donald Trump, current and former tech workers say. In November, for example, Bahtiyar Duysak, a Twitter contract employee who briefly [deactivated the Twitter account of Mr. Trump](#) was celebrated by current and former employees of Twitter.

“It didn’t seem like there was much support for President Trump at Twitter,” said Mr. Duysak, who deactivated the account on his last day at Twitter.

Mr. Duysak praised Mr. Trump's ambition and hard work in an interview, but said he doesn't support him politically. He says deactivating Mr. Trump's account was a mistake.

Aaron Ginn, president of the Lincoln Network, an advocacy group for conservatives and libertarians in tech, said some tech workers have told him they are uneasy about expressing views that are out of step with their liberal colleagues' because doing so could offend others, and hurt their reputation and job prospects.

"People feel scared of violating whatever code of conduct these lynch mobs might have," he said, referring to those outspoken about their liberal views.

Liberal Tech Tilt

Recent political contributions by employees of major tech companies in Silicon Valley reflect a preference for the Democratic presidential nominee over the Republican one.



Employee contributions to presidential campaigns (2015-16)

Alphabet/Google

Hillary for America

\$1,547,930

Facebook

\$461,604

Twitter

Donald Trump

for President

\$122,613

\$24,892

\$4,060

\$4,669

Total employee political contributions (2015-16)

Alphabet/

Google

\$8,501,288

Facebook

\$2,634,732

\$651,234

Twitter

Source: Federal Election Commission

The Wall Street Journal contacted dozens of employees at major tech companies including Twitter, Facebook, Google's Alphabet Inc. and Apple Inc. who donated to Republican causes, but few responded to inquiries.

Google employees appeared surprised to see each other at an election night party hosted by a Republican group in Cupertino, Calif., celebrating Mr. Trump's victory, according to a former Google employee who attended. "We were all shocked," this person said, to discover that there were other Trump supporters at Google. The people agreed not to acknowledge one another at work afterward for fear that their support for Mr. Trump might be revealed, this person said.

"I don't think it would be a good career move to say you were a Trump supporter," said an employee at a major tech company.

Military veterans working at Pinterest Inc. have downplayed their background in the armed services because of concerns that colleagues will assume they are conservative, said a person who has heard these concerns being discussed at the company. This person added that not all of them are conservative.

In interviews, many tech employees and executives said they believed conservative views on issues like tax policy and regulation are welcome in Silicon Valley. But conservative views on social issues like gay marriage, civil rights and immigration meet more resistance, especially in an environment where many liberals at tech companies have become [more vocal internally about their politics](#) since the presidential campaign.

Some conservatives have tried to foster political dialogue at their workplace. Fosco Marotto, a Facebook employee who works with developers, said his colleagues didn't initially believe him when early into the presidential campaign he declared himself a Trump supporter.

In June, Mr. Marotto posted to an internal group used by thousands of Facebook employees that he wanted to discuss issues ranging from employment, taxes and the media over a "Politics Lunch." "A lot of times, people haven't heard from the other side," he said. Dozens of people from across the political spectrum signed up for the more than 45 lunches he has hosted since the summer, he said.

Tech companies have taken steps to cultivate audiences among decision makers in both parties even before the Trump administration.

Twitter, for example, has long hired Republican strategists in Washington to help conservative lawmakers use the platform. Many tech companies, including Facebook and Twitter, have Republicans or libertarians in policy roles or on their board of directors. Twitter's nine core values include "seek diverse perspectives" and "communicate fearlessly to build trust."

Tech firms have limited tools for cultivating political diversity in their staff, though. There is no simple way to determine who is conservative and asking directly can be tricky, experts say. California and New York, for example, limit whether an employer can consider political activities in hiring. Such questioning could also dissuade qualified candidates.

Meanwhile, managing internal debates has proven difficult.

Political tensions flared in August when [Google fired engineer James Damore](#) for writing a memo saying that the search giant's gender gap could be explained partly by biological differences, not sexism. [He also accused Google](#) of being an "ideological echo chamber."

Harmeet Dhillon, the lawyer representing Mr. Damore, said Silicon Valley has been unwelcoming to conservatives for a long time. But since the election, people with liberal bias have shown "more open contempt for other viewpoints," she said. Google employees have told her they have been denied promotions or otherwise punished for their "perceived political views," she added.

Google said Mr. Damore was fired for violating its policies on harassment and discrimination.

"We strongly support the right of Googlers to express themselves. An important part of our culture is lively debate," said Google spokesman Ty Sheppard. "But like any workplace that doesn't mean that anything goes."