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# **Viewpoint Diversity In Tech: Reality Or Myth?**

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# Executive Summary

Lincoln Network, a community of free-market tech professionals, conducted a survey in late 2017 and early 2018 to capture the perceptions and experiences of tech professionals in Silicon Valley specifically related to ideology and workplace norms. The data on center-right tech professionals—individuals who self-identify as very conservative, conservative, libertarian, or moderate—are particularly revealing:

1. A large majority consider their workplaces liberal or very liberal.
2. Most feel their views are at odds with the cultural norms in their workplaces.
3. Most do not feel comfortable sharing their views on political or cultural issues with colleagues or only feel comfortable on certain issues.
4. A large majority feel less comfortable sharing their views with colleagues due to Google's reaction to the "Diversity Memo."
5. A significant number cannot do their best work because their ideological views are at odds with their workplace norms.
6. A large majority cannot bring their whole selves to work.
7. Some know someone who did not pursue or left a career in tech because of perceived conflicts in viewpoints.

This paper presents survey results for tech professionals across the ideological spectrum on these seven data points. It also includes dozens of quotes from center-right tech professionals about their experiences in Silicon Valley, including numerous stories of hiding parts of their identities at work and being afraid of getting fired for sharing unpopular political opinions.

The survey and this paper give tech founders, executives, board members, and diversity and inclusion officers the unique opportunity to understand the perspectives of their employees with minority viewpoints, since no other data or compilation of anecdotes exist with respect to viewpoint diversity in Silicon Valley. The paper highlights the emphasis tech companies place on the importance of diversity for business, but the data show that many have ignored viewpoint diversity and excluded employees with minority viewpoints from their inclusion efforts.

Most importantly, the paper addresses the problem identified in the survey by providing recommendations that Lincoln Network developed in consultation with tech executives, investors, policy experts, and HR professionals. These recommendations are suggestions for tech companies interested in fostering viewpoint diversity in the workplace. Government mandates or interventions are not encouraged and would likely be counter-productive. Ultimately, the market will decide which companies are most successful; Lincoln Network believes that tech companies that encourage viewpoint diversity, alongside other forms of diversity, will enjoy a competitive advantage.

**Recommendations to foster viewpoint diversity:**

- Include viewpoint diversity questions in company-led employee surveys and release the findings publicly during self-reporting of other diversity data.
- Encourage the development of employee resource groups through which employees can share and discuss diverse political and religious viewpoints.
- If diversity training is offered or required at any level, ensure viewpoint diversity is adequately covered in the curriculum. Include examples of bias on the basis of ideology and religion.
- Create best practices on viewpoint diversity and make them publicly available to any small tech startup or company in any industry.
- Create accountability metrics for senior executives and diversity and inclusion officers to measure progress in improving viewpoint diversity.
- Ensure that speakers with diverse ideological viewpoints are welcomed by the company and at industry conferences.
- Invest resources to experiment with how existing products and technical teams can help scale innovative approaches to increasing empathy and tolerance in the workplace, such as Deliberative Democracy and Heterodox Academy.
- Create six-month or one-year deployments for non-technical and technical managers to live in non-tech hubs around the country to engage with employees that have a wide range of ideological and religious views.
- Increase budget allocations for user research for product development in non-tech hubs and non-coastal cities.
- Convene public events in tech hubs and other cities across the country that provide forums for civil, fact-based discussions about important issues leading into the 2018 and 2020 election cycles.

# Recommendations, Not Regulations

Tech companies emphatically repeat that diversity is important: Diversity is critical to the bottom line. It improves collaboration and innovation, and when people bring diverse perspectives to their teams, those teams make better decisions. Moreover, having a diverse workforce is simply the right thing to do. Tech companies also prioritize the subjective experience of being able to bring your whole self to work.

Yet Lincoln Network, a community of free-market tech professionals, measured the perceptions and experiences of tech professionals in Silicon Valley and found that Silicon Valley is excluding a broad swath of people from its diversity and inclusion efforts: tech professionals with minority viewpoints. Lincoln Network conducted a survey in late 2017 and early 2018 that garnered 378 responses from tech professionals across the ideological spectrum, including over 100 anecdotes. Many tech professionals with minority viewpoints do not and cannot bring their whole selves to work, even though their companies prioritize “being authentic” as essential for business. Some feel they cannot do their best work. Some leave their companies or leave tech altogether. Tech companies, according to their own arguments about diversity, are thus hurt.

Tech companies that value viewpoint diversity should want to remedy the problem that the survey identified. Lincoln Network therefore consulted tech executives, investors, policy experts, and HR professionals to develop recommendations to foster viewpoint diversity in the tech workplace. Tech companies must maintain the freedom to develop their own internal policies and cultures; these recommendations are not mandates, nor should there be government intervention.

Lincoln Network encourages tech company founders, board members, and senior executives who value diversity to play active roles in creating policies and cultures that encourage viewpoint diversity, alongside other important diversity initiatives, consistent with the following:

- Include viewpoint diversity questions in company-led employee surveys and release the findings publicly during self-reporting of other diversity data.
- Encourage the development of employee resource groups through which employees can share and discuss diverse political and religious viewpoints.
- If diversity training is offered or required at any level, ensure viewpoint diversity is adequately covered in the curriculum. Include examples of bias on the basis of ideology and religion.

- Create best practices on viewpoint diversity and make them publicly available to any small tech startup or company in any industry:
  - Modules for CEOs/executives  
*Ex. Company culture: How to cultivate an environment that fosters the free exchange of ideas*
  - Modules for startup founders  
*Ex. Anticipated challenges to fostering the free exchange of ideas as startups grow and how to manage them*
  - Modules for managers  
*Ex. Recruiting/hiring, allowing free discussion within the workplace, conflict resolution without firing, fireable offenses with respect to speech/conduct*
  - Modules for employees  
*Ex. How to develop empathy tolerance for diverse ideological or religious viewpoints in the workplace*
  - Model written policies  
*Ex. Employee manual language, company values, and objectives*
- Create accountability metrics for senior executives and diversity and inclusion officers to measure progress in improving viewpoint diversity.
- Ensure that speakers with diverse ideological viewpoints are welcomed by the company and at industry conferences.
- Invest resources to experiment with how existing products and technical teams can help scale innovative approaches to increasing empathy and tolerance in the workplace, such as Deliberative Democracy and Heterodox Academy.
- Create six-month or one-year deployments for non-technical and technical managers to live in non-tech hubs around the country to engage with employees that have a wide range of ideological and religious views.
- Increase budget allocations for user research for product development in non-tech hubs and non-coastal cities.
- Convene public events in tech hubs and other cities across the country that provide forums for civil, fact-based discussions about important issues leading into the 2018 and 2020 election cycles.

# Introduction

In February 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported that Peter Thiel would be moving to Los Angeles from Silicon Valley, where he had co-founded PayPal in 1999 and Palantir Technologies in 2004 and was a prominent venture capitalist influencing many tech startups.<sup>1</sup> Thiel is an outspoken libertarian and in 2016 garnered much attention for openly—and financially—supporting Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, even advising on his White House transition team. Thiel has also criticized tech culture’s increasing bias against conservative views and accused Silicon Valley of being a “one-party state.” The intolerance of the broader Bay Area is a major reason for his move to LA.

In November 2017, Tim Ferriss posted on Reddit that one of the reasons he had recently moved from Silicon Valley to Austin, Texas is because “Silicon Valley [ . . . ] has an insidious infection that is spreading – a peculiar form of McCarthyism [ . . . ] masquerading as liberal open-mindedness.”<sup>2</sup> Ferriss, an angel investor and the author of *The Four-Hour Workweek*, acknowledged that he is very socially liberal but that it is “nauseating how many topics or dissenting opinions are simply out-of-bounds in Silicon Valley.” He said, “It’s weird, unsettling, and, frankly, really dangerous” that in Silicon Valley “people openly lie to one another out of fear of losing their jobs or being publicly crucified.”

A few weeks later, Sam Altman wrote a post called “E Pur Si Muove” on his blog,<sup>3</sup> in reference to when Galileo allegedly said, “And yet it moves,” in response to being forced to say the Earth does not move around the Sun. Altman wrote that he “felt more comfortable discussing controversial ideas in Beijing than in San Francisco,” indicating “just how bad things have become, and how much things have changed since I first got started here in 2005.” He noted how people have had to leave San Francisco recently because their work engendered “toxic” reactions, and he said that the environment “will be very bad for startups in the Bay Area.” Altman argued, “Restricting speech leads to restricting ideas and therefore restricted innovation—the most successful societies have generally been the most open ones. [ . . . ] Also, smart people tend to have an allergic reaction to the restriction of ideas, and I’m now seeing many of the smartest people I know move elsewhere.” He continued,

Political correctness often comes from a good place—I think we should all

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1 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/tech-luminary-peter-thiel-parts-ways-with-silicon-valley-1518696120>

2 [reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/7erct8/i\\_am\\_tim\\_ferriss\\_host\\_of\\_the\\_tim\\_ferriss\\_show\\_and/dq6zrh1/](https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/7erct8/i_am_tim_ferriss_host_of_the_tim_ferriss_show_and/dq6zrh1/)

3 <http://blog.samaltman.com/e-pur-si-muove>

be willing to make accommodations to treat others well. But too often it ends up being used as a club for something orthogonal to protecting actual victims. The best ideas are barely possible to express at all, and if you're constantly thinking about how everything you say might be misinterpreted, you won't let the best ideas get past the fragment stage.

Thiel, Ferriss, and Altman all have identified what they see as problems in Silicon Valley: a one-state party, increasing McCarthyism, and restrictions on speech.

## **SURVEY BACKGROUND**

It is against this backdrop that Lincoln Network, a community of free-market tech professionals, released results from a first-of-its-kind survey it conducted in order to capture information about whether Silicon Valley is open and friendly to diverse viewpoints. Tech companies repeatedly stress the value of diversity and inclusion, but do they actually welcome center-right or other minority viewpoints?

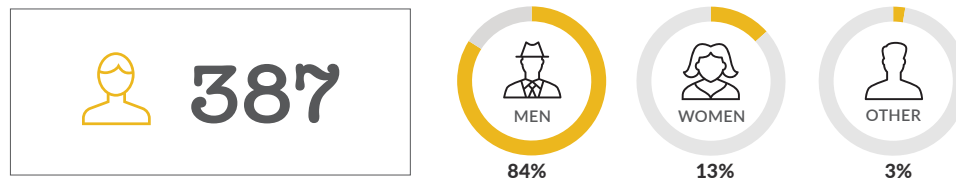
Open to anyone working at a tech company in Silicon Valley, the survey investigated seven questions:

1. How would you characterize the ideological and cultural norms in your workplace?
2. Do you feel your ideological views are at odds with the cultural norms in your workplace?
3. In casual settings with work colleagues, do you feel comfortable sharing your views on political or cultural issues?
4. Following the Google "Diversity Memo" and Google's response, do you feel more or less comfortable sharing your ideological viewpoints with colleagues?
5. If your ideological views are at odds with your workplace norms, does that affect your ability to do your best work?
6. Based on your ideological viewpoints, and the cultural norms in your workplace, are you hesitant to be yourself at work?
7. Do you know someone who did not pursue or left a career in tech because of perceived conflicts in viewpoints?

At the end of 2017 and beginning of 2018, Lincoln Network received 387 completed surveys and conducted 25 one-on-one interviews with tech professionals. To respond to the survey, participants had to agree they work at a tech company in Silicon Valley. Respondents were not required to list a company name, but those who did listed Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Cisco, Dropbox, Facebook, Founders Fund, Google, Instacart, Intel, McAfee, Microsoft, Oracle, PayPal, Salesforce, Uber, and Yelp, in addition to other large companies and numerous startups.

In addition to interviews, survey respondents had the opportunity to write their thoughts and experiences in an open-ended question at the end of the survey. Their opinions and anecdotes are included throughout this paper. Almost all participants did not want their names shared because of potential career consequences.

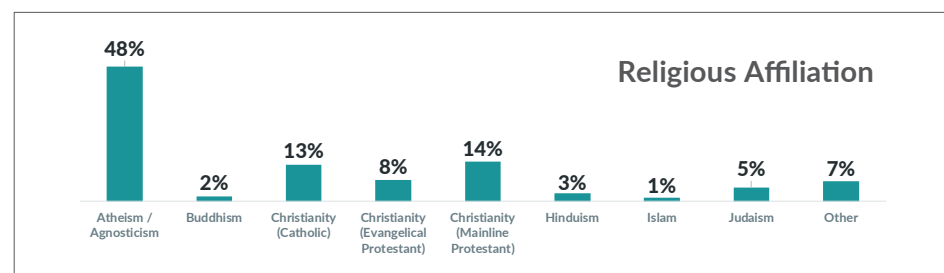
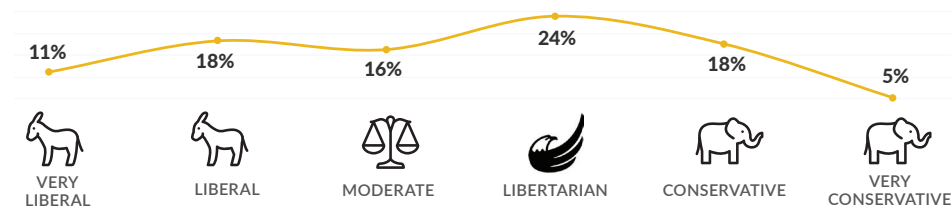
### Total Number of Responses



### Sample of Self-Identified Employers



### Ideological Identification



The survey dataset is not a representative sample of tech professionals in Silicon Valley. Respondents were a self-selected group; many likely took the survey because of what they perceived to be challenging political environments in their workplaces. While the data and anecdotes do not summarize the entirety of Silicon Valley tech professionals' perceptions and experiences, they do illustrate the real perceptions and experiences of real tech professionals who are affected by the cultural norms in their workplaces and the actions of their colleagues, managers, and CEOs. Further, the differences the survey data reveal between the perceptions and experiences of tech professionals on the left and those of tech professionals who are moderate, libertarian, or conservative are meaningful.

The survey was part of a pilot project. Lincoln Network plans to conduct a more extensive survey with an expanded list of questions in November 2018 to reach not only Silicon Valley, but also tech communities across the United States.



# Are Diversity And Inclusion Important? Tech Companies Say Yes

## TECH COMPANIES ON DIVERSITY

Tech companies are emphatic that diversity is good for business. The appendix to this report details dozens of tech companies' and tech executives' positive thoughts about diversity, especially its business value. For example, Google's diversity website says, "We know our best work will come when our workforce reflects the world around us,"<sup>4</sup> while Apple's says, "Diverse teams make innovation possible."<sup>5</sup> HP affirms, "From our earliest days, we've recognized that capturing and drawing from diverse points of view improves our products and services — and our company as a whole."<sup>6</sup> Intel's diversity website proclaims in all capital letters, "Innovation begins with inclusion," followed with, "By bringing together people with a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences— plus, encouraging a community of openness and inclusion—we can continue to innovate and solve the world's toughest challenges."<sup>7</sup> Stripe, on the other hand, makes a different case for diversity. Its careers website emphasizes, "We work on broadening our diversity because we think it's simply the right thing to do. We want to include people, be a spectacular home for them to be themselves, and enable them to do great work."<sup>8</sup> Everyone is welcome, "regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, education, age, or other personal characteristics."

"Diverse teams make innovation possible."

In the vein of diversity, the idea of "bringing your whole self to work" is now a central tenet of tech companies and executives, with many making it a fundamental focus of HR and recruiting. For example, Twitter's careers website states, "Our differences makes [sic] us stronger; inclusion makes them matter. That's why building a strong culture is important to us — once you join the flock, we have many ways for you to get involved and bring your 'whole self' to your role."<sup>9</sup> The appendix also highlights numerous companies' emphases on the value of their employees' bringing their whole selves to work.

4 <https://diversity.google/commitments/>

5 <https://www.apple.com/diversity/>

6 <http://www8.hp.com/us/en/hp-information/about-hp/diversity/index.html>

7 <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/diversity/diversity-at-intel.html>

8 <https://stripe.com/jobs>

9 <https://careers.twitter.com/en/diversity.html>

## DIVERSITY FOCUSES

Most companies focus primarily on two areas of diversity: gender and race/ethnicity, with some also adding in a focus on disability and/or sexual orientation.<sup>10</sup> Many have fallen short of their goals to increase their numbers of women and underrepresented minorities, especially in technical positions. Few tech companies explicitly mention ideological or viewpoint diversity in their diversity initiatives. However, in a video on its company inclusion and diversity page, Apple does specifically mention the value of embracing different ideologies:

Open. Open a door and it opens all the others. Open a mind and see what happens next. No great thing, no beautiful invention was created in a vacuum. It happens when we leave our comfort zone and come together, embrace faiths, cultures, disabilities, differences, embrace races, ages, ideologies, personalities, creating a tool or device nobody saw coming.<sup>11</sup>

“We work on broadening our diversity because we think it’s simply the right thing to do.”

Likewise, Adobe advertises that “*diversity of thought* and experience strengthens our teams and helps us create the best possible products and services for our diverse customers,” although it does not list any efforts to recruit ideologically diverse employees among its other diversity efforts.<sup>12</sup> Netflix says it “relies on debate, candor, and *diversity of thought*.”<sup>13</sup> Lyft says it prioritizes “hiring people who represent a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and *viewpoints*[.]”<sup>14</sup>

Further, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and COO Sheryl Sandberg have both defended the concept of viewpoint diversity with respect to Peter Thiel’s continued position on Facebook’s board, especially after Thiel spoke at the Republican National Convention in July 2016<sup>15</sup> and donated \$1.25 million to Donald Trump’s presidential campaign in October 2016.<sup>16</sup> Zuckerberg argued,

We care deeply about diversity. That’s easy to say when it means standing up for ideas you agree with. It’s a lot harder when it means standing up for the rights of people with different viewpoints to say what they care about. That’s even more important.

We can’t create a culture that says it cares about diversity and then excludes almost half the country because they back a political candidate. There are

<sup>10</sup> For reviews of tech companies’ diversity reports, see TechCrunch’s articles at <https://techcrunch.com/tag/diversity-report/>.

<sup>11</sup> Emphasis added. 0:45, <https://www.apple.com/diversity/>

<sup>12</sup> Emphasis added. <https://www.adobe.com/diversity/attracting.html>

<sup>13</sup> Emphasis added. <https://jobs.netflix.com/diversity>

<sup>14</sup> Emphasis added. <https://take.lyft.com/diversity/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://time.com/4417679/republican-convention-peter-thiel-transcript/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://boingboing.net/2016/10/19/mark-zuckerberg-defends-facebo.html>

many reasons a person might support Trump that do not involve racism, sexism, xenophobia or accepting sexual assault. It may be because they believe strongly in smaller government, a different tax policy, healthcare system, religious issues, gun rights or any other issue where he disagrees with Hillary.

[ . . . ] Our community will be stronger for all our differences – not only in areas like race and gender, but also in areas like political ideology and religion.

A few months earlier, Sheryl Sandberg had also defended keeping Thiel on the board, saying, “We have very different board members with very different thoughts. Those people make good board members because they have strong views that they’re not afraid to show.”<sup>17</sup>

One executive tried to endorse a notion of diversity that goes beyond gender, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation but received backlash and had to backtrack. Apple’s diversity chief, Denise Young Smith, who only served six months in that position before leaving,<sup>18</sup> spoke at a conference about diversity of thought:

Diversity is the human experience. I get a little bit frustrated when diversity or the term diversity is tagged to the people of color or the women or the LGBT or whatever because that means they’re carrying that around...because that means that we are carrying that around on our foreheads. And I’ve often told people a story — there can be 12 white blue-eyed blonde men in a room and they are going to be diverse too because they’re going to bring a different life experience and life perspective to the conversation.<sup>19</sup>

“And I’ve often told people a story—there can be 12 white blue-eyed blonde men in a room and they are going to be diverse too because they’re going to bring a different life experience and life perspective to the conversation.”

The Editor-In-Chief at TechCrunch claimed that what Young Smith said means that diversity of thought should be the sole diversity hiring criterion.<sup>20</sup> He implied that diversity of thought, as opposed to racial and gender diversity, should not be treated “with primary importance.” A Gizmodo journalist accused Young Smith of “positioning

17 <http://www.businessinsider.com/sheryl-sandberg-on-peter-thiel-2016-6>

18 <https://techcrunch.com/2017/11/16/apple-vp-of-diversity-and-inclusion-denise-young-smith-is-leaving/>

19 Emphasis added. <https://techcrunch.com/2017/10/13/apple-diversity-head-denise-young-smith-apologizes-for-controversial-choice-of-words-at-summit/>

20 <https://techcrunch.com/2017/10/13/apple-diversity-head-denise-young-smith-apologizes-for-controversial-choice-of-words-at-summit/>

[ideological diversity] against traditional definitions of diversity—as though hiring women and minorities means building an ideological monolith.”<sup>21</sup>

Young Smith apologized for her remarks, admitting regret for her word choice. She reassured all that in Apple’s view “diversity includes women, people of color, LGBTQ people, and all underrepresented minorities.”<sup>22</sup> She did not reiterate her initial point, even in a more nuanced way, that diversity of thought is important, as are other kinds of diversity. Instead, she ignored diversity of thought entirely. Young Smith had the opportunity to affirm that diversity is broader than often understood in Silicon Valley, but the diversity monoculture stifled even the discussion of ideological diversity. She was in the perfect position to promote new ideas on diversity, but she was shut down.

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21 <https://gizmodo.com/apples-diversity-chief-is-leaving-after-six-months-1820546336>

22 <https://techcrunch.com/2017/10/13/apple-diversity-head-denise-young-smith-apologizes-for-controversial-choice-of-words-at-summit/>

# Exclusion of Minority Viewpoints

Tech companies claim they value diversity, for both business and moral reasons, as the evidence in the appendix indicates. But the data suggest otherwise. The Lincoln Network survey provides evidence that Silicon Valley does not value ideological diversity or the inclusion of minority viewpoints, no matter what tech companies say about valuing diverse perspectives and experiences.

## MINORITY VIEWPOINTS NOT WELCOME

Survey respondents, regardless of their own ideological views, overwhelmingly characterized their workplaces as liberal or very liberal. Most center-right respondents also feel there is a tension between their own personal views and workplace cultural norms. Likewise, many are uncomfortable sharing their views on political and cultural issues in the workplace.

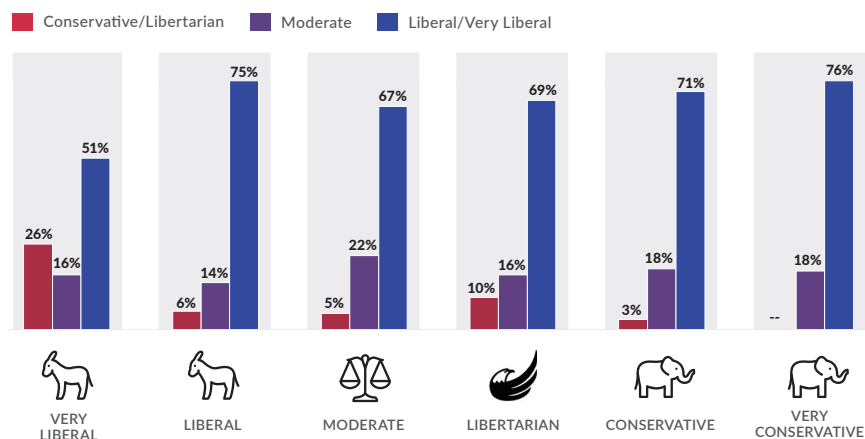
Survey respondents provided many anecdotes about the political environments in their workplaces. Many detailed workplace intolerance of any conservative or non-progressive views. A Christian senior software engineer at Uber bemoaned, “It’s a postmodern secularist Silicon Valley viewpoint. Highly liberal.

It’s motivated by changing the world masquerading as intellectualism but a lot of times it isn’t scientific intellectualism. That’s the default system.” A center-right woman in public affairs for a large company lamented,

“In the Bay Area there’s an automatic expectation that you live in SF and you must be Bernie Sanders progressive or Gavin Newsom progressive. There’s utter shock if you’re not, even if people know you and think you’re great. If conversations start in the workforce, they start at a place of alienation. There’s just a cultural expectation in the Bay Area.”

A conservative software engineer described his workplace as “unabashedly liberal.”

How would you characterize the ideological and cultural norms in your workplace?



He added, "Sometimes they think they're really being open. But when you have an environment where all your coworkers are liberal you have confirmation bias. Everyone thinks they're being open and inclusive, but because they have no dissenting voice, there's no one to check their assumptions."

A conservative over the age of 50 in a technical position listed several problems:

There is overwhelming internal support for leftist political candidates, policies, and ideas and they are frequently expressed at corporate Q&As, internal groups, and discussions. There is oversized internal outrage and support if a leftist agenda item is "wronged" by our product, but zero to very little is done about the mistakes and biases we're responsible for on more conservative issues. There are zero to very few senior people who dare to speak up or represent an alternative (more conservative) point of view in company debates or policy decisions.

"There are zero to very few senior people who dare to speak up or represent an alternative (more conservative) point of view in company debates or policy decisions."

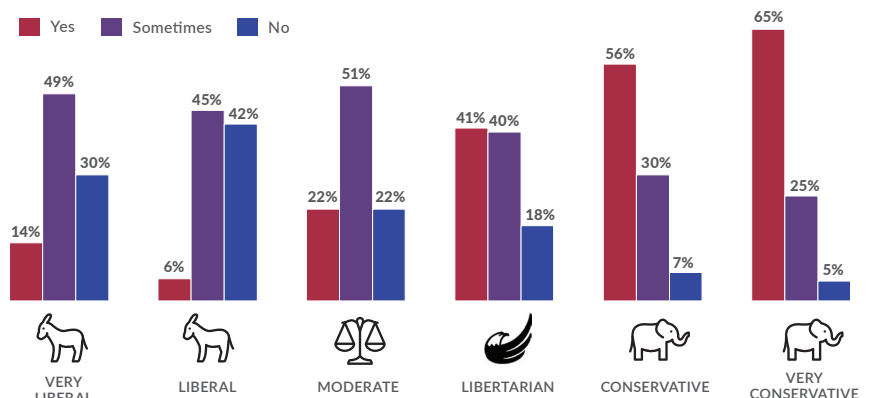
Likewise, a non-technical libertarian said that at his company,

If you're not part of the liberal Democrat crowd, you're an outsider. Talks are often politicized, whether overtly or not. The entire executive team leans in a certain direction, and you don't want to be the odd one out for fear of being ostracized. While there were many groups devoted to identity politics, there wasn't a single non-liberal non-democrat group. Nobody who didn't fit the company's mold talked about their political views. The company was very homogenous in that sense.

A technical libertarian woman over the age of 50 shared, "At times when I have had a difference of opinion, I have been retaliated against, bullied, verbally intimidated and subject to ridicule for my own opinions that are not accepted

by corporate majority rule." A liberal in a technical role stated, "I witnessed repeated calls from managers and non-managers alike for people to be fired for the political views they expressed." A non-technical libertarian believes "there is a concerted purge of conservative employees at Apple."

**Do you feel your ideological views are at odds with the cultural norms in your workplace?**



A libertarian in his 40s in a technical role shared,

A friend at a tech company was nearly terminated when his manager found out he was a Republican delegate. His manager lied to VPs about his performance to try to get him fired while telling him that he was performing well. When HR came to him trying to put him on a PIP, he shared recordings of conversations and cleared his performance record of the lies his VP had been told about him, but the manager was not fired.

“A friend at a tech company was nearly terminated when his manager found out he was a Republican delegate.”

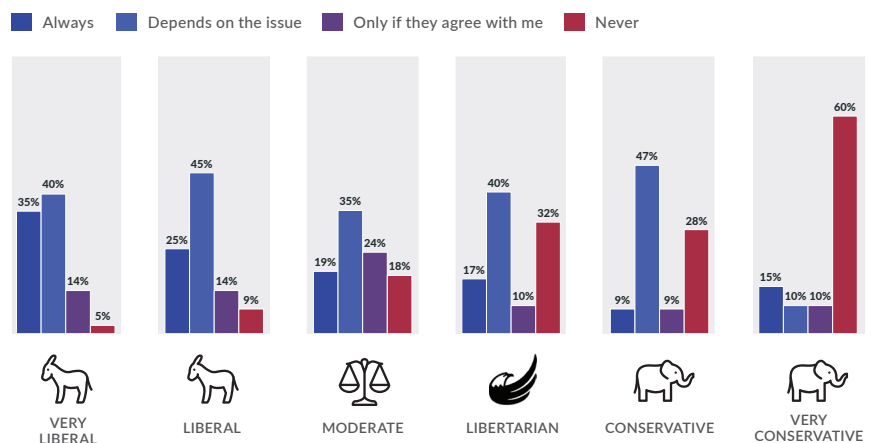
One respondent, a technical libertarian who characterized his company as libertarian, indicated the Silicon Valley environment affects how he chooses to share his views outside of work as well: “I constantly worry about what I can talk about ‘publicly’ (facebook, twitter, blog etc) in fear that anything I could write might effect [sic] future job prospects. I basically don’t talk about any issues I care about on those mediums because of that.” A very conservative man in his 40s in a technical role at McAfee said, “It is unsafe to have any discussions in Silicon Valley that do not subscribe to its tyrannical groupthink. I believe they’re already trying to push me out of the industry.”

A technical employee at Google explained the beliefs of his colleagues. He said they essentially try to stop dissent: “Scientific is hate. Silence is a microaggression. Dissent is violence. We’re a nice company and don’t want to employ haters, microaggressors, and violent Trump voters, do we?” He also said,

I checked “conservative” on the alignment form even though I’d have described myself as liberal five years ago. My views haven’t changed. The change has come from the left, which

has started what I can only describe as a reign of terror. [ . . . ] I am a straight cisgendered white male. The hatred that some people at this company direct toward people like me is palpable.

**In casual settings with work colleagues, do you feel comfortable sharing your views on political or cultural issues?**



A non-technical conservative in his 40s said, “Everyone leans Democrat and people are always asking me to defend Republican values even if I don’t want to. I just keep my head low.”

A non-technical conservative man over the age of 50 shared,

In many instances, business partners make comments disparaging Republicans, unaware that I’m active in Republican politics. Usually I ignore it, but sometimes I bring up my opinions if I think the person is reasonable and open to discussion. It is somewhat disturbing that people assume that all their educated, professional friends must be liberal because they couldn’t possibly be ignoramus conservatives. They don’t give any credence to conservative ideas. Fortunately, my company and services are in high demand, so I don’t think we’ve lost any business due to my politics.

One person in his 40s who described himself as “a mix of libertarian, very liberal, and off-topic” highlighted the “[o]verall irony of mostly leftist views in a mostly proprietary (capitalist, enclosing, monopolistic) software company.” He “[w]ould enjoy more direct confrontation of those opposed objectives.”

Many anecdotes are about consequences for people who voted for or even hinted any amount of support for Donald Trump, such as, “After the election, the head of a department made multiple insinuations we should fire employees who voted for Trump. Also, the CEO of a friend’s smaller startup openly called for anyone who supported Trump to quit or be fired.” Another: “No one in their right mind would ever proclaim to agree with anything Trump said or to support him. [ . . . ] In numerous conversations, no one ever took the Republican side. The conversation was always around why Hillary was right.” A non-technical “conservatarian” emphasized that “if you had any support for Trump whatsoever, you would have been ridiculed. It doesn’t matter what you’re arguing—if you support Trump, you’re a racist Nazi who lacks the proper education or experience to understand why you’re ‘on the wrong side of history.’” One conservative “called in sick after Election Day in order to avoid all conversations about the election.” A software developer who is gay, Christian, and a lifelong Democrat avoided sharing his views because “any sort of disagreement would make them wonder if I’m a secret Trump supporter. The idea of ‘I agree with you 90%’ is not enough.”

“The idea of ‘I agree with you 90%’ is not enough.”

A few respondents said that their workplaces are not political, or that tech is not as political as portrayed. An apolitical man in a technical position explained, “In general, people in tech are much less political than the media makes it out to be. [ . . . ] Most people are focused on their jobs and don’t care much about other people’s political leanings.” A technical conservative in his 40s said this is a problem in larger, public firms, not in smaller companies, because the large firms “employ greater numbers of very young, recent grads who are exhibiting this extreme political-correctness policing and desire to



invoke policing forces against others.” A technical libertarian drew a distinction between “the public-facing wing of the company (PR, marketing, branding)” and “technical staff & management,” where the former “are much more shrill and vocal in their radical progressivism” and the latter “are more reasonable.”

Some believe conservatives are wrong to be concerned about speaking out; there is no one stopping them from doing so. A moderate in a technical position at Juniper Networks believes, “The quietest ones are clearly the conservative Christians that don’t want to risk the perceived ire of an obviously non-Christian non-conservative majority, but I have found that their perceptions are unfounded and that they are overreacting.” Yet, according to tech companies, perception is paramount. It matters if employees perceive that there are certain parts of themselves they cannot share at work.

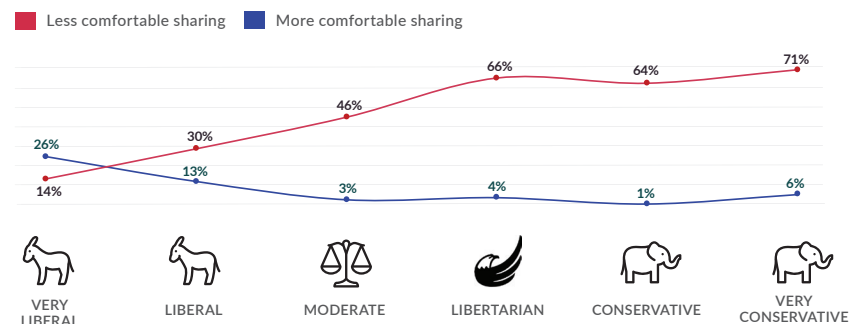
## SILENCING IN THE WAKE OF THE GOOGLE DIVERSITY MEMO

On August 7, 2017, Google fired senior software engineer James Damore<sup>23</sup> for writing a ten-page memo on the underrepresentation of women in technology jobs due to, in his research, biological differences between men and women.<sup>24</sup> In January 2018, Damore filed a class action lawsuit against Google, alleging that Google discriminated against him, another former Google employee, and unnamed class members for being conservative, for being male, and/or for being Caucasian,<sup>25</sup> in violation of labor laws on retaliation for and coercion related

to political activities, workplace discrimination, and workplace harassment.<sup>26</sup>

Exhibit B of the complaint shows screenshots of dozens of “anti-conservative” postings by Google employees on internal Google forums,<sup>27</sup> as well as screenshots of internal reactions to Damore’s memo.<sup>28</sup>

**Following the Google “Diversity Memo” and Google’s response, do you feel more or less comfortable sharing your ideological viewpoints with colleagues?**



Because the Damore memo garnered significant press coverage, and because Google fired Damore ostensibly for sharing his views internally within the company, the affair weighed heavily on tech professionals in Silicon Valley, as indicated by the survey results. One interviewee felt particularly affected by what happened to Damore. Identifying as

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.blog.google/topics/diversity/note-employees-ceo-sundar-pichai/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3914586/Googles-Ideological-Echo-Chamber.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Page 2, paragraph 2, <https://www.scribd.com/document/368692388/James-Damore-Lawsuit>

<sup>26</sup> See pages 52-60, paragraphs 207-279

<sup>27</sup> Exhibit B, pages 1-37

<sup>28</sup> Exhibit B, pages 62-78

an Objectivist and half-black and half-white/Jewish man, this software engineer had been at Google for over three years at the time of the incident. He shared that prior to the Damore memo, his perception was that Google was like a university where people could bring up ideas and discuss and debate without fear of getting fired. His belief that Google was an open place was “shattered” when Google fired Damore: “I felt like the optimism or intellectual curiosity or freedom of the company died at that point.” He elaborated,

In the wake of [Damore’s] firing, it seemed to me that there was no level of qualification or nuance or use of precise technical language that would allow someone to express opinion without getting fired. The only strategy for me was to completely shut up about the whole thing. Public reporting and internal discussion was as if he said women were genetically inferior. People were putting words in his mouth and condemning those words. He was very careful in what he said, but he was still raked over the coals. My takeaway was there’s no way I can be careful enough to express any sort of opinion even agreeing with anything he said without people deliberately maliciously misinterpreting it in order to take someone out.

While he had planned to look for a new position within Google, Google’s response to the Damore memo caused him to look for a position outside of Google, and he left the company months later. Another Google employee, a libertarian in a technical position, explained why he was discouraged by the “memo controversy”:

It was widely mischaracterized throughout the company and much of the response was really hard to believe. Some topics can’t be touched, as evidenced by Larry Summers and Damore. If those topics are investigated and reveal some uncomfortable truths, that is obviously going to be very challenging for society, but I’d rather deal with that than make research and discussion taboo.

A moderate woman in her 40s in a technical role at Google shared,

When Damore presented his ideas for increasing female participation in tech, he precipitated an internal lynch mob at Google. Many of the participants were friends and colleagues of mine. Their behavior was frightening, because they are usually reasonable people and fun to work with. Their jobs require them to be analytical and fact-based. But instead, some switch flipped and they were acting like deranged lunatics, as if they had experienced terrible traumas instead of working at one of the richest and [most] generous companies in the world.

The silencing effect noted by some Google employees has reached beyond Google. A “classically conservative” Catholic technical employee at LinkedIn who has been working in Silicon Valley for almost two decades lamented,

I would definitely be worried about professional repercussions if people knew my political and religious views. James Damore's firing was a huge wake-up call. Silicon Valley has been for my career left-liberal, but now it makes me wonder if we've moved from live and let live to an environment where if you don't go along with the prevailing politics you're out of a livelihood.

“James Damore's firing was a huge wake-up call. It makes me wonder if we've moved from live and let live to an environment where if you don't go along with the prevailing politics you're out of a livelihood.”

He added that he would not work at Google, one reason being that a friend of his who works at Google complained that “the office of diversity and inclusion is running things instead of the department of engineering.”

A libertarian in a technical role shared,

Out of principle, I refuse to consider working for Google after their reaction to the Damore memo. I no longer consider some friends of mine who work in the industry people I can trust, after hearing them publicly discuss their approval of James Damore's firing (as well as other issues pertaining to systematic gender and ethnic differences in qualities relevant to programming). I worry a lot about maintaining the anonymity of internet personas where I discuss my political opinions, for fear of making myself unemployable in the vein of Damore.

A libertarian in a technical position wrote about how he took a personal day due to the responses to the memo of VPs to whom he reports. Their support for Damore's firing prompted him to write a letter conveying his concerns about “the chilling effect on conservatives and libertarians,” and while one VP was open to feedback, he was “not sympathetic to the concerns I voiced on behalf of political minorities.”

Another libertarian in a technical role explained why he feels not much has changed: “There are certain things you \*can't\* talk about (eg. gender differences, value of diversity and diversity initiatives) without serious risk to your career. This was true before the Google memo.”

Some respondents shared that they disagreed with Damore's observations and even found them offensive, and yet still were dismayed by the responses from other tech professionals. A technical moderate in his 40s found the memo “ill-advised and wrong” but denounced as “counterproductive” “the ‘modern-college-campus-style’ of avoiding actually arguing viewpoints with which you disagree by overwhelming attempts at reasoned argumentation with histrionic claims of alleged harm and character

assassination of the people you disagree with as ‘racist’ (or pick any label that would get someone fired).”

It is not just center-right tech professionals who felt the sting of Damore’s firing. The software developer who is gay, Christian, and a lifelong Democrat described how people were uncharitable in their misrepresentation of what Damore wrote and said that is why he would refrain from sharing his political views in the workplace. Another liberal said, “If I worked at Google, I wouldn’t talk about politics at all after Damore.”

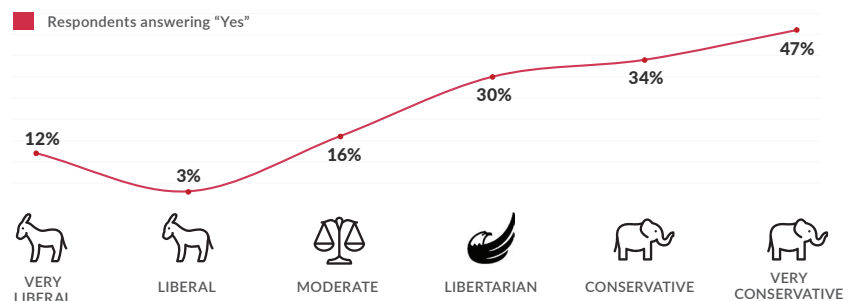
## INABILITY TO DO BEST WORK

Doing one’s best work, according to tech companies, is a goal of efforts to increase diversity and inclusion—because it is best for the companies. The survey thus asked those respondents who indicated that they feel their ideological views are at odds with workplace norms whether they cannot do their best work because of that conflict. A significant number of right-leaning respondents said yes, as seen in the graph. However, in interviews, several respondents indicated they had gotten used to hiding parts of themselves, so it did not affect their work. A very conservative woman in a non-technical

role at Salesforce suggested it was perhaps due to “habit.” Another said it only affected him in “non-professional ways.” The Christian senior software engineer at Uber made the point that he does not know how to determine this, because “it’s always been the norm when I’ve worked in SV.” He previously worked in tech in a

more conservative city, which he found liberal nonetheless, and said, “I do a lot more eggshell-walking here. I’m not sure how much it affects my productivity—as an engineer you can get away with that, as long as you stick your nose to the grind.”

**Do you believe your ideological views being at odds with your workplace norms affects your ability to do your best work?**



## “BRING YOUR WHOLE SELF TO WORK” VS. LEAVE MINORITY VIEWPOINTS AT HOME

It is the prerogative of each company to decide whether it wants its employees to bring their whole selves to work. Many tech companies do invite their employees to be their authentic selves at work because they believe it adds business value, as noted in the appendix. Yet these companies often do not emphasize the ideological, political, or religious aspects of a person’s identity. Survey data reflect that conservative-leaning tech professionals have to leave part of their identities at home, even if their companies say they should bring their whole selves to work.

Survey respondents had many anecdotes about being unable to bring their whole selves to work, even at the highest levels. A moderate non-technical co-founder lamented, “I’m a co-founder, and, despite the power of my position, I STILL feel

“I’m a co-founder, and, despite the power of my position, I STILL feel uncomfortable talking about a wide range of topics. I fear that if my team knew about my politics, more than half would quit on the spot.”

uncomfortable talking about a wide range of topics. I fear that if my team knew about my politics, more than half would quit on the spot.” A conservative C-level executive wrote, “As a woman, everyone assumed I voted for Hillary and I didn’t correct them otherwise. My family and I attended the inauguration [...] but I did not tell anyone at work that I was traveling to DC. [...] Had they known I attended the inauguration I would have been ridiculed and questioned.”

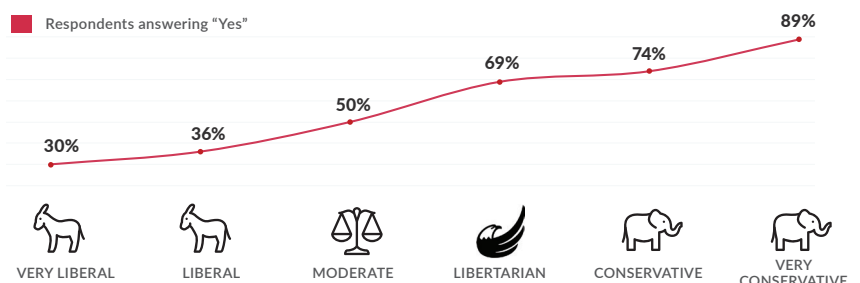
A conservative CEO of a 25-person company in his 50s said at his last company, where he was also CEO, he would occasionally point out to his millennial employees the flaws in their arguments and did not hesitate to share his views when it came up, but that he keeps his workplace a traditional workplace where political discussion does not come up. A libertarian/conservative non-technical employee in his 40s said, “Normally I vocally share my ideas and have a reputation to change them when I learn from others - because I engage in dialog. However I never speak up regarding politics.” A technical conservative said he deserved “an Olympic medal for talking in-depth about political issues without revealing [my] opinion.”

A technical conservative in his 40s said, “I have learned to hide any affiliation with anything conservative in order to remain employed. Management and senior technical people feel free to have highly leftist conversations with impunity and do not consider opposite viewpoints to be reasonable or worthy of their consideration.”

The Christian senior software engineer at Uber shared, “People in my workplace certainly can’t know who I really am. Or in general, everyone would prefer not to

know who I am because a lot of people have this mindset that intellectually capable, smart people are atheist and rational.” Likewise, the “classically conservative” Catholic

**Based on your ideological viewpoints, and the cultural norms in your workplace, are you hesitant to be yourself at work?**



technical employee at LinkedIn bemoaned, “When colleagues go off on jeremiads about how terrible Christians are, I infer that if they knew I was a Christian, they would not like it.” At the same time, a Christian hardware engineer at a small startup feels he can share his beliefs at occasional lunchtime discussions because he is one of the senior employees at his company and because his co-founders respect him and his work.

A few people shared how others confided in them about their own right-leaning views but would never openly reveal their political views. One center-right woman in public affairs for a large company said that she would meet other “conservatarians” at policy or political events but then they would bluff when non-conservatarians asked how they had met.

In response to a question about whether he was hesitant to be himself at his previous company, a “free thinker” at a financial startup immediately responded, “For sure, definitely. No question about that. And it’s one of the reasons that I left.” In fact, he not only left that company but also left San Francisco for several months, and said several of his friends, many of whom are Democrats, want to leave the Bay Area in part because of the intolerant, leftist environment.

## EXITING TECH

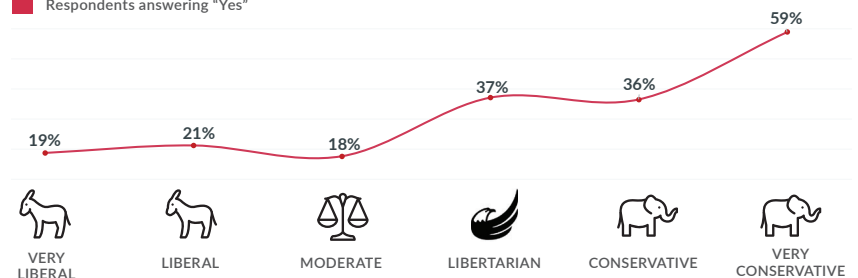
In some cases, intolerance of minority viewpoints is so extreme, or employees holding those viewpoints can no longer tolerate the intolerance, that these workers leave their companies or leave tech altogether, like the above free thinker. A libertarian in a technical role at Google shared, “I have lost multiple talented colleagues who resigned rather than continue in the face of an increasingly extreme, narrowminded, and regressive environment here at Google.” The respondent noted his 13-year history with Google and how in that time “an extreme ideology of social justice has taken over internally, affecting policy and product decisions alike, along with H.R. actions and even hiring decisions.” A very conservative technical employee said,

I personally have 20+ years in tech and Federal Government Tech contracting, and I would like to switch to a different industry to get away from the Silicon Valley companies who are pushing their agenda on everyone in every way possible from collecting usage statistics to feeding

Left-slanted news articles to me on my phone. This last point cannot be overstated.” The “free thinker” at a financial startup explained that he left his

### I know someone who did not pursue or left a career in tech because of perceived conflicts in viewpoints.

■ Respondents answering “Yes”



previous job “because it was a fear-based culture,” and “political views to an extent had to have something to do with it. They tended to hire people who agreed [ . . . ]. It was paralyzing and had some effect on productivity.

A center-right woman in public affairs for a large company said she and her friends have been in situations where a company is attractive to them because it pays well, “but they’re so outwardly left-leaning I don’t think I could apply for a job there. [ . . . ] You know you could do a good job and add value especially being a diverse candidate but having to deal with rhetoric at work would be too much for me.” A conservative software engineer pointed out that some tech professionals with minority viewpoints would like to leave their jobs due to intolerance in the workplace, but do not do so because top tech companies “have a lot of influence in terms of the job market. When you work at one of the top tech companies, an amazing amount of opportunities open up for you. Pay can be double what you’d be making at another company. My company controls my livelihood.”

# A Look at Two Tech Companies

In survey responses and interviews, two companies—in addition to Google—stood out as being perceived as particularly hostile to minority viewpoints: Salesforce and Twitter.

## Salesforce

One stark example of a company where center-right employees feel they cannot bring their whole selves to work despite being encouraged to do so is Salesforce, which emphasizes equality for all instead of diversity—including with the conscious decision to give its diversity head the title “Chief Equality Officer.”<sup>35</sup> It declares on its “Equality” page, “Salesforce welcomes all,” as well as, “We strive to create workplaces that reflect the communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work.”<sup>36</sup> Tony Prophet, current Chief Equality Officer, says the culture Salesforce wants to build both within its own walls and in the broader tech industry is “a culture that’s inclusive, where everybody feels seen, everybody feels valued, everyone feels heard, nobody feels like they have to check just some fraction of their identity at the door because they’re fearful of being judged or discriminated against.”<sup>37</sup> He added that not only is it right to do this, “it’s also the smart thing to do from a business perspective.”

Yet some employees from Salesforce have expressed discomfort with the company’s conspicuous promotion of “progressive”

political ideas. Salesforce displays political messages on TV screens at elevator banks on every floor, which one libertarian employee calls “virtue-signaling,” including often responding to President Trump’s latest policy priority, such as DACA. That same employee shared that he felt he could not vote for Trump in 2016 because if any colleagues found out about his choice, “I

fear reprisals, since my manager was a vocal Hillary Clinton supporter.” He lamented, “Our company makes a decided point to say you should bring your whole self to work, but the culture they’ve created is antithetical to that for ideological diversity. I feel like I cannot bring my whole self to work when it comes to my worldview.” In an interview with a very

“Our company makes a decided point to say you should bring your whole self to work, but the culture they’ve created is antithetical to that for ideological diversity. I feel like I cannot bring my whole self to work when it comes to my worldview.”

35 <https://www.salesforce.com/company/equality/>; <http://fortune.com/2016/09/16/salesforce-chief-equality-officer/>

36 <https://www.salesforce.com/company/equality/>

37 <https://twitter.com/danieljpeter/status/961712641944276992>



conservative employee who works in sales, she emphasized that she wants to control her own narrative and what people find out about her. She hides the fact that she goes to Catholic Mass every day.

Prophet has touted the company's openness to employees' differing experiences and views through its Ohana Groups, or employee resource groups, which he says are:

An open space for people to express and process how they're feeling and for people to listen to them, see them, and respect them in a way that is nonpartisan and in a way that respects all views. [ . . . ] We worked really hard to make these things very respectful and constructive, not provocative. I've been so amazed at the personal storytelling and the empathy that has developed and the tears shed. That is how you grow and learn, by inviting people that aren't necessarily aligned with you to hear your story.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to Outforce, BOLDforce, Latinoforce, Southasiaforce, and Vetforce, among others, Salesforce has a new Faithforce Ohana,<sup>39</sup> which is billed as a safe space for people of all different faiths to share and to learn. The Catholic employee mentioned above is reluctant to get involved because she does not want the increased scrutiny of her traditional beliefs.

## Twitter

Another example of a tech company that has received criticism from employees for its oppressive political environment is Twitter. Twitter, whose mission statement is "Give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers,"<sup>40</sup> writes on its careers page,

Just as inclusion lives on our platform, we're striving to ensure Twitter is reflective of our users, and that our workplace and the decisions we make about it are equally inclusive. We want our different perspectives to flourish – they make us stronger and help make product decisions that will best serve our users around the world.<sup>41</sup>

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has explicitly endorsed the inclusion of ideological diversity as a type of diversity, saying Twitter is focusing internally on "how do we build a more inclusive environment which will have an end result of creating more diversity of gender, of race, of sexual preference, but also of ideology so that we're really understanding all perspectives."<sup>42</sup> Yet not all employees feel their perspectives are included.

A former Twitter employee, a conservative in a non-technical role, said he is "not hesitant

38 <https://www.fastcompany.com/3069082/why-salesforces-new-equality-chief-is-thinking-beyond-diversity>

39 <https://www.salesforce.com/company/equality/ohanas/>

40 [https://about.twitter.com/en\\_us/company.html](https://about.twitter.com/en_us/company.html)

41 <https://careers.twitter.com/en/diversity.html>

42 <https://www.fastcompany.com/40415542/twitter-ceo-jack-dorsey-talks-diversity-with-the-cast-of-the-circle>

to share” about the culture at Twitter:

[T]he culture there was incredibly left-leaning and often times openly opposed to conservative employees, advertisers, and users. Leadership there has no qualms about allowing their political viewpoints to guide their decision making. Twitter’s executive team is a perfect illustration of the arrogance of the “west coast, liberal elite” that middle America often describes. One has to look no further than publicly available stories to see how Twitter’s executives allow their own political leanings to impact decision making, even at the expense of the company’s bottom line[.]

He referenced Twitter’s blocking of certain pro-life advertisements<sup>43</sup> and rejection of a Trump campaign emoji.<sup>44</sup> The former employee concluded, “Twitter’s leaders often blur their own

feelings with the objectives of the

company, and it’s frightening that a company with so much impact in the world has so little care for providing a balanced, unfiltered approach to speech.” A Christian who had been an engineer at Twitter explained that when he worked there the company focused a lot on microaggressions because the social justice warrior community was “huge” on Twitter, which hindered free speech within the company.

“[I]t’s frightening that a company with so much impact in the world has so little care for providing a balanced, unfiltered approach to speech.”

In March 2018, Candi Castleberry-Singleton, Twitter’s Vice President of Intersectionality, Culture and Diversity, shared Twitter’s diversity report on the company blog and highlighted that in 2017 Twitter introduced the #GrowTogether campaign in order to “encourage[ ] our people around the world to make personal commitments toward fostering an inclusive workplace.”<sup>45</sup> She explained that Twitter’s approach to diversity is different, and its goal is “to create a more inclusive culture and diverse workforce by developing a strategy that begins with building a foundation of respect and understanding. We’re focused on powering positive change by fostering respectful conversations, creating deeper human connections, and encouraging diverse interactions across the company.” It remains to be seen how or whether this new focus on “Intersectionality, Culture and Diversity,” as Twitter calls its diversity efforts, will include people who have minority viewpoints.

43 See <http://markets.businessinsider.com/news/stocks/live-action-urges-twitter-to-reverse-advertising-ban-after-company-censors-then-allows-marsha-blackburn-s-pro-life-ads-1003824252>

44 See <https://medium.com/@garycoby/twitter-restricts-trump-eb7e48ccf5ff>; <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/donald-trump-twitter-emoji-crooked-hillary-232647>

45 [https://blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/topics/company/2018/growingtogetherattwitter.html](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/company/2018/growingtogetherattwitter.html)

# The Business Case for Diversity

Over the past several years, as the emphasis on diversity in companies has risen, researchers and consultants have been trying to answer the question of whether there is a business case for diversity. Multiple studies have investigated the relationship between profits and diversity.

A 2017 McKinsey study attempted to measure the effect of diversity, “defined as a greater proportion of women and a more mixed ethnic and cultural composition in the leadership of large companies,” on profitability and value creation.<sup>29</sup> It found a positive correlation between both gender diversity and ethnic and cultural diversity and profitability. Gender diversity is also correlated with value creation.

The study included two necessary caveats: “It is important to note, however, that correlation does not demonstrate causality, which would be challenging to demonstrate.” The first caveat is that financial profitability was not necessarily better because of higher gender or ethnic diversity. As one professor and diversity consultant explained, “If we see more-profitable companies making greater investments in diversity initiatives, it may be that they are the ones that feel they can afford to do so. Wealthy people eat more meat than poor people do, but it isn’t meat that makes them wealthy.”<sup>30</sup> The second caveat is that it is challenging to demonstrate causality. It is impossible to control for diversity.

Recent research shows that teams that are cognitively diverse perform better when problem-solving. Cognitive diversity is “defined as differences in perspective or information processing styles.”<sup>31</sup> In their evaluations of strategic execution exercises given to teams, researchers Alison Reynolds and David Lewis focused on “how individuals think about and engage with new, uncertain, and complex situations.” They found “a significant correlation between high cognitive diversity and high performance.”

While the researchers do not mention ideology, other research shows that liberals and conservatives problem solve using different processes.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, increased ideological diversity on teams presumably leads to increased cognitive diversity, resulting in better problem-solving. The cognitive diversity researchers give companies some advice: “And when you face a new, uncertain, complex situation, and everyone agrees on what to do,

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29 <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity>

30 <https://hbr.org/2016/04/were-making-the-wrong-case-for-diversity-in-silicon-valley>

31 <https://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse>

32 See, e.g., <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17470218.2015.1136338>; <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2016/03/political-insight-republicans-democrats-conservatives-liberals-think-differently>

find someone who disagrees and cherish them.”<sup>33</sup>

Another argument for diversity is that it is what employees want. A 2017 Deloitte study found that people want to work at inclusive companies, with inclusion defined as “[r]espect for and appreciation of differences in demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation and/or non-demographic characteristics such as religion, education, experiences, communication style or work habits.”<sup>34</sup> Of the 1,300 full-time employees in the U.S. Deloitte surveyed, 80 percent said that they consider inclusion when choosing an employer. 72 percent said if another company were more inclusive, “they would leave or may consider leaving” their current company, and almost a quarter of all respondents have already done so. 53 percent of millennials said that “if they could find the same role, they would leave an organization for one with more of the kinds of workplace inclusion features they want,” and 30 percent of all millennials have already done so.

Regardless of the fact that diversity studies show correlation instead of causation, tech companies insist that diversity is good for business, as the appendix illustrates.

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33 <https://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse>

34 <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/press-releases/inclusion-survey.html#>

# Conclusion

While tech companies in Silicon Valley say they value having a broad range of perspectives in their workplaces, tech professionals with minority viewpoints report that they do not always feel free to share their perspectives in the workplace, which may hinder innovation. Lincoln Network's survey and compiled anecdotes, the first extensive investigation of Silicon Valley tech professionals' perceptions and experiences related to ideology and workplace cultural norms, should prompt tech companies to evaluate whether they encourage viewpoint diversity, and therefore the free exchange of ideas, in their workplaces. If companies decide they want to encourage greater diversity of perspectives to include more employees and to better reflect and engage their customer bases, they should consider Lincoln Network's recommendations.

# Appendix

## TECH COMPANIES IN THEIR OWN WORDS ON THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BRINGING YOUR WHOLE SELF TO WORK

### Adobe

“Diversity of thought and experience strengthens our teams and helps us create the best possible products and services for our diverse customers. That’s why we work hard to attract, hire, and develop candidates of all genders, ethnicities, and backgrounds.”<sup>1</sup>

### Airbnb

“Listening to diverse employee voices helps us build a better future[.]”<sup>2</sup>

### Apple

“Diverse teams make innovation possible.”<sup>3</sup>

“Open. Open a door and it opens all the others. Open a mind and see what happens next. No great thing, no beautiful invention was created in a vacuum. It happens when we leave our comfort zone and come together, embrace faiths, cultures, disabilities, differences, embrace races, ages, ideologies, personalities, creating a tool or device nobody saw coming.”<sup>4</sup>

### Atlassian

“Atlassian’s mission is to unleash the potential in every team – including our own. To that end, when we released our first diversity report last year, we focused on diversity at the team level – because we believe that teams perform better when individuals have access to perspectives different from their own.”<sup>5</sup>

### Box

“We take pride in celebrating our difference at Box. That’s why we hire, retain, and develop the best talent from all backgrounds. We’re building teams that are as diverse as our customers and, together, we’re establishing a company culture where everyone feels at home.”<sup>6</sup>

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1 <https://www.adobe.com/diversity/attracting.html>

2 <https://www.airbnb.com/diversity/belonging>

3 <https://www.apple.com/diversity/>

4 0:45, <https://www.apple.com/diversity/>

5 <https://www.atlassian.com/diversity?tab=gender>

6 <https://www.box.com/about-us/diversity-and-inclusion>

## **Cisco**

“At Cisco, we see inclusion as a bridge—a way to connect diverse perspectives. To spark new ideas, explore new possibilities, tap into the power of digital transformation, and inspire innovation.”<sup>7</sup>

## **Dell**

“At Dell, we create opportunities for all employees to bring their ideas to the workplace in an environment that cultivates the exchange of broad thinking and inspires innovation. By embedding diversity and inclusion into our business, we help ensure that we serve customers globally in ways that best meet their needs. Dell’s diversity and inclusion strategy is built on three enduring focus areas: creating a workplace that is inclusive of all differences, cultivating external marketplace relationships with diverse communities and organizations, and growing a diverse workforce.”<sup>8</sup>

## **Dropbox**

“At Dropbox, we’re committed to creating an environment where everyone feels inspired to create their best work and achieve what they previously could only imagine. To do this, we need a diverse team of people who represent different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) isn’t just the right thing, it’s mission critical.”<sup>9</sup>

## **eBay – Devin Wenig, CEO**

“eBay’s mission is to be a leading global marketplace, open to all. Diversity & inclusion is integral to our business success, core to our values and a strategic focus for our company.”<sup>10</sup>

## **Facebook – Mark Zuckerberg, CEO**

“We care deeply about diversity. That’s easy to say when it means standing up for ideas you agree with. It’s a lot harder when it means standing up for the rights of people with different viewpoints to say what they care about. That’s even more important. We can’t create a culture that says it cares about diversity and then excludes almost half the country because they back a political candidate. There are many reasons a person might support Trump that do not involve racism, sexism, xenophobia or accepting sexual assault. It may be because they believe strongly in smaller government, a different tax policy, healthcare system, religious issues, gun rights or any other issue where he disagrees with Hillary. [ . . . ] Our community will be stronger for all our differences -- not only in areas like race and gender, but also in areas like political ideology and religion.”<sup>11</sup>

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7 <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/inclusion-diversity/us.html>

8 <http://www.dell.com/learn/us/en/uscorp1/diversity?c=us&l=en&s=corp>

9 <https://blogs.dropbox.com/dropbox/2018/02/2017-diversity-update/>

10 <https://www.ebayinc.com/our-company/diversity-inclusion/>

11 <https://boingboing.net/2016/10/19/mark-zuckerberg-defends-facebo.html>

### **Facebook – Sheryl Sandberg, COO**

“We have very different board members with very different thoughts. Those people make good board members because they have strong views that they’re not afraid to show.”<sup>12</sup>

“As we strive to be more authentic in our communication, we should also strive to be more authentic in a broader sense. I talk a lot about bringing your whole self to work something I believe in deeply. Motivation comes from working on things we care about but it also comes from working with people we care about, and in order to care about someone, you have to know them. You have to know what they love and hate, what they feel, not just what they think. If you want to win hearts and minds, you have to lead with your heart as well as your mind. I don’t believe we have a professional self from Mondays through Fridays and a real self for the rest of the time.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Facebook – Maxine Williams, Global Director of Diversity**

“Diversity helps us build better products, make better decisions and better serve our community.”<sup>14</sup>

### **GoDaddy – Steven Aldrich, Chief Product Officer**

“[Bringing your whole self to work] means being authentic and really having no barriers between what your colleagues see from you at work and what they would see from you if they were your friend outside of work. It’s a really important concept, because if you’re trying to project an image that isn’t your authentic self, you’re spending a lot of energy putting on an act, and there’s just too much going on to have to spend energy putting on a face.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Google**

“We know our best work will come when our workforce reflects the world around us.”<sup>16</sup>

“Google should be a place where people from different backgrounds and experiences come to do their best work—a place where every Googler feels they belong. The truth is that we’re not there yet. We know diversity and inclusion are values critical to our success and future innovation.”<sup>17</sup>

### **HP**

“From our earliest days, we’ve recognized that capturing and drawing from diverse points of view improves our products and services — and our company as a whole.”<sup>18</sup>

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12 <http://www.businessinsider.com/sheryl-sandberg-on-peter-thiel-2016-6>

13 <http://www.businessinsider.com/sheryl-sandbergs-full-hbs-speech-get-on-a-rocketship-whenever-you-get-the-chance-2012-5>

14 <https://newsroom.fb.com/news/2017/08/facebook-diversity-update-building-a-more-diverse-inclusive-workforce/>

15 <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/why-bringing-your-whole-self-to-work-matters/>

16 <https://diversity.google/commitments/>

17 <https://diversity.google/>

18 <http://www8.hp.com/us/en/hp-information/about-hp/diversity/index.html>



## **Intel**

“By bringing together people with a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences—plus, encouraging a community of openness and inclusion—we can continue to innovate and solve the world’s toughest challenges.”<sup>19</sup>

## **Intuit**

“Our mission to power prosperity around the world aligns with our values and supports our belief that every employee should be able to bring their whole self to work. Diversity and inclusion isn’t just something we do. It’s part of who we are. We believe that innovation thrives in a workforce that includes employees with a wide range of life experiences and a supportive culture that lets great ideas rise to the top. We believe that inclusiveness drives empathy for our customers. That’s why we continuously strive to create a workforce that reflects the demographics of those we serve, helping us create products that solve important problems and exceed expectations.”<sup>20</sup>

## **LinkedIn – Rosanna Durruthy, Global Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging**

“We are the same people at work that we are outside of work, and at LinkedIn, we want all employees to know they can be their complete, authentic selves at work and feel that they belong. We know we are better when we have a diversity of opinions, values and experiences shared in an open, inclusive way. By striving toward this ideal, we’re constantly pushing ourselves to live up to our full potential.”<sup>21</sup>

## **Lyft**

“Every person should come to work at Lyft every day as their authentic self. That’s why we’re committed to creating a workplace where being yourself means having a voice, advancing your career, and making an impact. Getting there means hiring people who represent a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints, and – most importantly – making sure we create an environment that allows all team members to reach their full potential.”<sup>22</sup>

## **McAfee**

“McAfee is firmly committed to driving diversity in all shapes and forms. Diversity makes us smarter and more creative and innovative. McAfee believes that diverse teams’ insights and leadership styles create more opportunities for real innovation, creativity, and strategic problem solving. Diversity invites different perspectives and experiences, and makes us all stronger while adding real value to our company and solutions.”<sup>23</sup>

## **Microsoft**

“Microsoft actively seeks to foster greater levels of diversity in our workforce and in our

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/diversity/diversity-at-intel.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.intuit.com/company/diversity/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://careers.linkedin.com/diversity-and-inclusion>

<sup>22</sup> <https://take.lyft.com/diversity/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.mcafee.com/us/about/public-policy/diversity-inclusion.aspx>

pipeline of future leaders. We are always looking for the best and brightest talent and pride ourselves on our individuality - inviting candidates to come as they are and do what they love.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Netflix**

“To move this fast to delight our 100 million + members around the world, Netflix relies on debate, candor, and diversity of thought. As we grow globally, we are looking for candidates from a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds to join the team and help us build an internet TV network.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Oracle – Safra Catz, CEO**

“Oracle appreciates that it is important to cultivate an environment that is inclusive of all employees and that respecting differences enriches our organization and contributes to our success. Integrating the diverse perspectives of our employees into every aspect of business is what our business is all about.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Palantir Technologies**

“To succeed, we need the very best ideas of all kinds. To access the broadest and fullest set of ideas, our community must attract and encourage people of diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences. We work every day to build a truly diverse workforce, and to foster an environment that is respectful and receptive to new ideas. We celebrate difference and diversity — of background, approach, and identity.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Paradigm** (consultant on diversity training for tech companies)

“Creating diverse and inclusive teams is both a moral and a business imperative. Treating employees fairly while empowering everyone to do their best work is the right thing to do. It’s also critical to building effective, high-performing teams.”<sup>28</sup>

“To reduce bias then, spend time with people from different backgrounds and expose yourself to counter-stereotypical information. And don’t perpetuate stereotypes yourself — be thoughtful in your own conversations and work, challenging assumptions that might be grounded in stereotypes.”<sup>29</sup>

### **PayPal – Dan Schulman, President and CEO**

“Our ability to deliver on our mission of democratizing financial services and capabilities starts from the inside; by building a global team of employees that reflects the communities where we work and live, and the diversity of the customers we serve. That’s why Inclusion is a core value and defines who we are and everything we do. For PayPal, bringing this value to life means building an ever more inclusive company culture, built on

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/business-of-inclusion/default.aspx#epgDivFocusArea>

<sup>25</sup> <https://jobs.netflix.com/diversity>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.oracle.com/corporate/careers/diversity/index.html>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.palantir.com/diversity/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.paradigmhq.com/aboutus/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.paradigmhq.com/2016/07/21/unconscious-bias-faqs/>

respect for individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, and the self-expression of our colleagues.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Pinterest**

“Approach problems from different angles: When you build a product for the entire world to use, you need a team as diverse as the people you’re building for. At Pinterest, we’re all different ages, colors, genders and styles.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Salesforce**

“We strive to create workplaces that reflect the communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Salesforce – Tony Prophet, Chief Equality Officer**

“[We are] building a culture that’s inclusive, where everybody feels seen, everybody feels valued, everyone feels heard, nobody feels like they have to check just some fraction of their identity at the door because they’re fearful of being judged or discriminated against. [ . . . ] Now clearly in our minds, in the minds of many, this is the right thing to do, this is the fair thing to do, this is the ethical thing to do. But it’s also the smart thing to do from a business perspective.”<sup>33</sup>

### **Slack Technologies –Stewart Butterfield, CEO and Co-Founder**

“One of our aims for Slack is to help people ‘bring their whole selves to work.’ [W]e believe there is a widespread feeling that people are meant to check a lot of stuff at the door when they arrive at work. Some of that makes sense, but there’s a risk of having people feel diminished or unable to contribute fully—that’s the part we hope Slack can have a shot at correcting.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Square**

“We want our employee base to be as diverse as the seller population we serve.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Stripe**

“We are committed to building an actively inclusive work environment that makes Stripe an excellent home for everyone—regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, education, age, or other personal characteristics. We work on broadening our diversity because we think it’s simply the right thing to do. We want to include people, be a spectacular home for them to be themselves, and enable them to do great work.”<sup>36</sup>

### **SurveyMonkey**

“In late 2016, when we began laying the foundation for our program, we had no idea the

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30 <https://www.paypal.com/stories/us/our-commitment-to-diversity-and-inclusion-at-paypal>

31 <https://careers.pinterest.com/>

32 <https://www.salesforce.com/company/equality/>

33 <https://twitter.com/danieljpeter/status/961712641944276992>

34 <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/05/why-emoji-are-suddenly-acceptable-at-work/393191/>

35 <https://squareup.com/news/diversity-report>

36 <https://stripe.com/jobs>

social and political climate that was to follow. Now more than ever our efforts around diversity and inclusion are critical, and we know that being transparent is an essential step to holding ourselves accountable.”

“A more diverse SurveyMonkey Troop means better products and services because we will have the ability to address the ever-evolving needs of our customers.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Symantec**

“Vision: To make the world a safer place, we need a team with the expertise and experience to protect against threats both known and unknown. This starts with a diverse workforce. Diversity helps us understand our customers better, enables us to respond to new trends more rapidly, and stimulates innovation.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Twitter**

“Our mission: Give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers.”<sup>39</sup>

“Twitter is where inclusion lives. [ . . . ] Just as inclusion lives on our platform, we’re striving to ensure Twitter is reflective of our users, and that our workplace and the decisions we make about it are equally inclusive. We want our different perspectives to flourish – they make us stronger and help make product decisions that will best serve our users around the world.”<sup>40</sup>

“Our differences makes [sic] us stronger; inclusion makes them matter. That’s why building a strong culture is important to us – once you join the flock, we have many ways for you to get involved and bring your ‘whole self’ to your role.”<sup>41</sup>

### **Twitter – Jack Dorsey, CEO**

“So we’ve been putting a lot more emphasis on the people we do have and how do we build a more inclusive environment which will have an end result of creating more diversity of gender, of race, of sexual preference, but also of ideology so that we’re really understanding all perspectives.”<sup>42</sup>

### **Twitter – Candi Castleberry-Singleton, Vice President of Intersectionality, Culture and Diversity**

“Given the unique role Twitter plays in the world, we decided to approach the concept of diversity differently. Our goal is to create a more inclusive culture and diverse workforce by developing a strategy that begins with building a foundation of respect and understanding. We’re focused on powering positive change by fostering respectful

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37 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/diversity-inclusion-surveymonkey/>

38 <https://www.symantec.com/about/corporate-responsibility/our-people/diversity-and-inclusion>

39 [https://about.twitter.com/en\\_us/company.html](https://about.twitter.com/en_us/company.html)

40 <https://careers.twitter.com/en/diversity.html>

41 <https://careers.twitter.com/en/diversity.html>

42 <https://www.fastcompany.com/40415542/twitter-ceo-jack-dorsey-talks-diversity-with-the-cast-of-the-circle>

conversations, creating deeper human connections, and encouraging diverse interactions across the company. We're calling this strategy Intersectionality, Culture and Diversity (ICD) and we're making it a part of everything we do at Twitter."

"As part of this broader ICD strategy we introduced #GrowTogether, a campaign that encourages our people around the world to make personal commitments toward fostering an inclusive workplace."<sup>43</sup>

## **Uber**

"At Uber, we want to create a workplace that is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the cities we serve: where everyone can be their authentic self, and where that authenticity is celebrated as a strength. By creating an environment where people from every background can thrive, we'll make Uber a better company—not just for our employees but for our customers, too."<sup>44</sup>

## **VMware**

"At VMware, we celebrate our people from a wide variety of dynamic backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We deliver transformative IT solutions by harnessing the power of human difference and building a community that is inclusive and diverse. Our diversity and inclusion initiative, VMinclusion, is a business-led effort to attract and engage the multinational, multicultural talent critical to our globally connected business."<sup>45</sup>

## **Yelp**

"At Yelp, we believe that diversity is an expression of all the unique characteristics that make us human: age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, and education – and that's just a few. We're committed to increasing diversity and transparency both here at Yelp and in Silicon Valley."<sup>46</sup>

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43 [https://blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/topics/company/2018/growingtogetherattwitter.html](https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/company/2018/growingtogetherattwitter.html)

44 <https://www.uber.com/diversity/>

45 <https://www.vmware.com/company/diversity.html>

46 <https://www.yelp.com/careers/who-we-are>