

# Facebook 'likes' New York high-tech scene

December 4 2011, by Charlotte Raab



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg (L) and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) (R) tour New York's Facebook headquarters with Sheryl Sandberg (2ndR), Facebook's chief operating officer, on December 2, in New York.

New York City is already the US capital of advertising, fashion, finance and media. Now it wants to be its high-tech center too.

The Big Apple's ambition to rival Silicon Valley with its own Silicon Alley received a big boost when Facebook announced Friday that it will open an engineering office next year in New York, its first outside the

West Coast.

The plan was unveiled at Facebook's Madison Avenue offices during an event attended by Facebook chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg, New York Mayor [Michael Bloomberg](#), New York Senator Charles Schumer and other top officials.

"Facebook is capitalizing on what more and more tech companies are realizing: that New York City is the best place in the world to recruit and retain a talented workforce," Bloomberg said.

"We're well on our way to achieving our goal, and that is to become the world's number one hub for information technology and social media."

Sandberg said establishing its first engineering presence outside the West Coast was a "big step" for Facebook, "one we would take only if we found the right combination of talent and community support."

New York may not yet be able to lay claim to the high-tech crown held by Silicon Valley -- home to Apple, [Google](#), Hewlett-Packard, Intel and Oracle, to name just a few -- but it does have a flourishing tech scene of its own.

Major Internet companies such as Barry Diller's IAC have their headquarters here and the city has given birth to a number of successful Internet startups including Etsy, Foursquare, Gilt and Tumblr.

Online music sensation Spotify selected New York as the base for its US operations after launching in the United States in July.

"It's quite amazing how far the tech sector in New York has grown, even in the last three years," said Jonathan Bowles, director of the Center for an Urban Future, a think-tank that focuses on the city's economic and

social development.

"A lot of things have changed. California-based venture companies have set up offices in New York, Google, LinkedIn, Facebook and others have opened offices," Bowles said. "Entrepreneurial bootcamps like Tech Stars have come here.

"Five years ago, most of this wasn't imaginable."

Mike Schroepfer, Facebook's vice president of engineering, said New York will become an increasingly attractive destination as the high-tech scene here grows.

"You may be working for Facebook but you want to go meet and exchange ideas, best practices with other people who are doing similar jobs," he said.

"I think that community has been part of the fuel that has made Silicon Valley a success, and it's clear that New York has that as well. That's why we're here."

As part of his plan to expand New York's tech industry, Bloomberg has offered unused land belonging to the city to a university that pledges to build an engineering and applied sciences campus.

California's Stanford University, breeding ground for many of the Internet stars of Silicon Valley, is among the seven candidate schools.

Lou Kerner, a social media analyst at LiquidNet, said New York may be emerging as the number two tech center in the United States but it is still [Silicon Valley](#) "whose beacon shines bright for every tech entrepreneur in the world."

"They have the best engineers, and most importantly, the best culture to foster innovation," Kerner said by email. "Innovation is core to the culture of the Valley, while it remains a (growing) side show in New York.

"That's why Zuckerberg moved to the Valley when he left Boston, and not New York," he said of the [Facebook](#) co-founder.

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