

Amazon to deliver 100,000 new US jobs

January 12 2017



An employee prepares order at Amazon's San Bernardino Fulfillment Center

Amazon on Thursday unveiled plans to create 100,000 US jobs over the next 18 months, as President-elect Donald Trump presses the business world to boost activities on American soil.

The US tech and retail giant's plan to bring its American workforce to over 280,000 is the latest—and largest—of a string of job-creation announcements as Trump prepares to take office on a promise to boost

US jobs and curb offshoring.

"These new job opportunities are for people all across the country and with all types of experience, education and skill levels—from engineers and software developers to those seeking entry-level positions and on-the-job training," an Amazon statement said.

Amazon made no mention of the president-elect, but Team Trump swiftly took credit for the plan, which came on the heels of similar initiatives by Japan's SoftBank, Ford Motor Co., Fiat Chrysler and air conditioning manufacturer Carrier.

"The president-elect was pleased to have played a role in that decision by Amazon," said spokesman Sean Spicer, noting that it followed a meeting in which Trump urged tech firms to keep jobs and production inside the United States.

Amazon said that "many" of the new full-time jobs would be in new "fulfillment centers" or warehouses where goods are stored for consumer delivery. It also pledged to add 25,000 who are veterans or military spouses.

"These jobs are not just in our Seattle headquarters or in Silicon Valley—they're in our customer service network, fulfillment centers and other facilities in local communities throughout the country," said Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos.

The world's largest retailer has often faced criticism over working conditions in its warehouses.

In Britain, Amazon has been assailed for its labor policies, particularly after it emerged that some of its workers were unable to cover the cost of their commute, and resorted to sleeping in tents outside the

warehouse.

'Advanced logistics'

The initiative comes with Amazon expanding from its origins as an online retailer to a diversified tech company offering streaming video and music, cloud computing, and home automation through its artificial intelligence program Alexa.

Bezos said new workers will be needed "as we open new fulfillment centers, and continue to invest in areas like cloud technology, machine learning, and advanced logistics."

Amazon's job creation move comes even as the firm invests in technology to allow for speedier deliveries, which could include automating some functions in its warehouses. It also has been laying out plans for delivery by drone, which in some cases could be fully automated.

Amazon has more than 300,000 employees worldwide, and also uses 45,000 "robotic units" for its operations.

The company recently announced plans to boost its brick-and-mortar presence with a handful of stores, including one in New York City. It has also demonstrated a concept high-tech grocery store with automated checkout.

The company boasted that it also helps stimulate jobs and the economy through its Amazon Marketplace, which allows people to sell goods over the online platform, and Amazon Flex, which allows people to drive and deliver on a part-time basis.

Bezos and Trump exchanged barbs during the 2016 presidential

campaign but the Amazon founder was among technology executives who met the president-elect last month in New York.

During the campaign, Trump warned Amazon could have "a huge antitrust problem" and accused Bezos of using the Washington Post, which he owns, to work against him and to push policies that help Amazon avoid taxes.

Bezos, who also owns the private space firm Blue Origin and at one point offered Trump a seat to outer space, congratulated his fellow billionaire after the election, tweeting, "I for one give him my most open mind and wish him great success."

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