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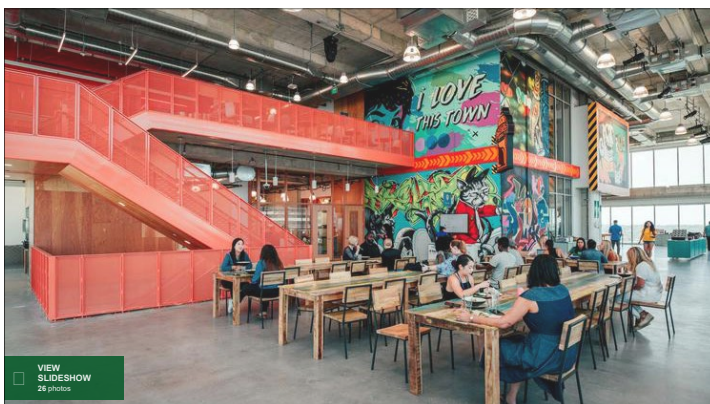
First look: Facebook headcount swells as social media giant opens new Austin office

Employee perks include free lunch, laundry & room to form a rock band

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By Erin Edgemon - Staff Writer, Austin Business Journal
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Company

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Company

Gensler
Company

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Company

TIER REIT
Company

Steve Adler
Person

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Facebook Inc. has a lot of room to grow in Austin.

The social media company's newest offices in the Third + Shoal tower downtown have room for more than 1,550 employees.

Facebook (Nasdaq: FB) has about 1,200 employees currently in the capital city across multiple offices, said [Katherine Shappley](#), head of the Austin office and vice president of Facebook's North American Global Business Group.

"As you look at Silicon Valley, all companies I think are looking to other prime locations like Austin — center of the country, vibrant community and great talent pool," she said. "So the company is very invested in continuing the growth here in Austin."

Shappley was one of the first Facebook employees in Austin, when the company opened with seven employees in 2010 and occupied one floor at 300 W. Sixth St. It now occupies four floors at 300 W. Sixth — [go here for a 2017 tour](#) of that office a few blocks away from this new one.

Facebook's growth over the last nine years is a "great indication" of its future in Austin, Shappley said.

Facebook on Sept. 4 gave members of the media and community partners a sneak peak of its new urban-modern offices, which occupy 11 stories or 256,500 square feet at Third + Shoal, 607 W. Third St. The company wouldn't disclose how many employees work in the new building, which opened a few weeks ago.

Austin Mayor [Steve Adler](#), state Sen. [Kirk Watson](#) and Austin Community College President [Richard Rhodes](#) joined in on the festivities.

At Third + Shoal, Facebook offers many amenities to make employees' lives a little bit easier — and maybe keep them at work a little longer. There are three full-service kitchens where employees eat for free. There are also 10 smaller kitchens that offer snacks and drinks.

The office has 10 outdoor decks/terraces, a fitness center with locker room and a recreation room where yoga classes are taught. Other unique features are a shipping center where employees can have their packages and letters mailed for free and a free drop-off laundry service.

On the expansive hallways throughout the building, there are 14 art installations sourced via Facebook's Artist in Residence program. The artwork on the 22nd and 15th floors, which were toured by the media, was very modern and included painted graffiti and works resembling street posters.

Facebook Austin boasts the largest finance department outside of Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park, California, Shappley said. Employees also work in a wide variety of roles in community and businesses operations; human resources; the global business group, which works with advertisers and agencies; hardware and engineering; and on WhatsApp.

While all of the departments continue to see growth, the global business group that Shappley leads has seen the greatest headcount growth over the last few years, more than doubling.

"We are really doubling down on Austin as a center for enabling businesses small, medium and large, but particularly the small business group," she said.

Facebook's wider footprint

Shappley declined to speak about Facebook's offices outside of downtown. She said the company is currently focused on its two flagship offices downtown, the other being at 300 W. Sixth St.

"As we grow we are looking at more space as we need it," Shappley said.

Sources [confirmed to Austin Business Journal](#) last September that Facebook had leased the entire 17-story Domain 12, which will be about 320,000 square feet. Completion of that building is expected in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Facebook also currently has offices at Domain 8 and about [32,000 square feet](#) at Parmer Innovation Center.

Despite intense competition for employees in Austin and recent national backlash Facebook has received over user privacy, Shappley said the company isn't seeing any challenges recruiting top talent. She said the tech industry is united in bring more skilled workers to Austin and building pipelines for talent.

"I think in a way the competition actually strengthens the entire industry," she said. "You've got people who are coming to Austin specifically to work in this sector. All of the tech companies here are investing in programs that will feed the next generation of talent."

One of these is a digital marketing certificate program that Facebook has partnered with Austin Community College to create. The courses are designed to provide students with digital skills to build effective social media marketing and digital media strategy. Classes begin Oct. 14. For more info, [click here](#).

"The need for digital skill sets is more important today than ever before, but closing the digital skills gap is something we can't do alone," Rhodes said in a statement. "This collaboration is a win for our students and our regional economy."

The program is part of Facebook's pledge to train 1 million people and small businesses across the U.S. in digital skills by 2020. As part of its collaboration with ACC, Facebook pledged \$60,000 to subsidize the cost for interested students.

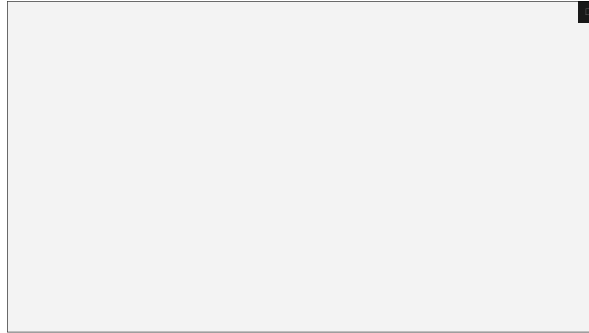
And, of course, Facebook's swanky office space and perks are also recruiting tools.

Shappley said the benefits Facebook offers at its offices such as free meals, wellness benefits and resource groups are attractive to employees.

"We think the physical space itself is a visual representation of what we are trying to be as a company," she said. "Be open is one of our core values. Move fast is one of our core values, and we try to enable that through the space."

WRNS Studio was the interior architect on Facebook's offices at Third + Shoal. Project Management Advisors Inc. and American Realty Project Management were project managers and Harvey Cleary Builders was the general contractor. MEJ & Associates served as consultants on mechanical, electrical and plumbing. Cardno was the structural engineer.

Third + Shoal was developed as a joint venture by TIER REIT Inc., Austin-based Cielo Property Group and Invesco Real Estate with overall design by architecture firm Gensler. Other tenants of the 29-story tower include Bank of America, national law firm Dickinson Wright PLLC and the New York-based investment firm Stonepeak Infrastructure Partners. Intelligentsia Coffee, a 30-seat coffee bar, recently opened its first Texas location on the ground floor. JuiceLand also plans to open at the tower.



Intelligentsia Coffee opened on the ground floor of Third + Shoal on Aug. 21
ARNOLD WELLS/STAFF

The List: Largest Austin-area tech employers
Ranked by Austin employees 2019

Rank	Company Name (Prior Rank)	Austin Employees 2019
1	Dell Technologies Inc.	13,000
2	Apple Inc.	6,200
3	IBM Corp.	6,000

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