

# U.S. advertising employment increased by 2,200 jobs in October

Johnson, Bradley . Advertising Age ; Chicago Vol. 92, Iss. 16, (Nov 8, 2021): 3.

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## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Employment in advertising, public relations and related services rose by 2,200 jobs in October, according to the monthly employment report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. [...]October's advertising, public relations and related services staffing increase implies a gain in ad agency employment last month. Labor is the biggest cost for agencies, and ad agencies were grappling with sluggish growth even before the recession.

## FULL TEXT

Employment in advertising, public relations and related services rose by 2,200 jobs in October, according to the monthly employment report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But the report from BLS revealed the biggest monthly job drop on record for internet media as internet staffing pulled back from an all-time high. Ad agency employment also slumped.

For the overall economy, U.S. employers in October added 531,000 jobs as the labor market gained strength.

Below, Ad Age Datacenter breaks down the report by the numbers.

Advertising, PR and related services

U.S. employment in the BLS classification of advertising, public relations and related services increased to 453,100 jobs in October. The ad business banked its ninth consecutive month of growth since ad jobs hit a pandemic period low of 432,100 in January.

The October increase in advertising employment came in above September's gain of 1,200 ad jobs. BLS upwardly revised the September figure from the preliminary 1,000 jobs increase it reported a month ago.

This BLS bucket includes ad agencies, PR agencies and related services such as media buying, media reps, outdoor advertising, direct mail and other services related to advertising. Ad agencies account for the biggest portion about 44% of jobs in that BLS bucket.

Ad agencies

U.S. ad agencies cut 1,100 jobs in September, the first monthly decline since January. That drop followed a gain of 1,800 jobs in August, when ad agency employment reached its highest point since March 2020, the month that the World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a pandemic.

BLS reports ad agency employment on a one-month lag, so October figures aren't yet available. But October's advertising, public relations and related services staffing increase implies a gain in ad agency employment last month.

Agencies are watching staffing levels closely. Even before the COVID-induced recession began in February 2020, ad agency employment had trended downward from the record high of 208,800 jobs reached in 2018. The recession officially ended in April 2020.

Agency job cuts before and during the coronavirus pandemic aren't a surprise. Labor is the biggest cost for agencies, and ad agencies were grappling with sluggish growth even before the recession.

U.S. ad agency employment tends to peak earlier than the overall U.S. job market in the waning days of a business cycle's economic expansion before a recession. On the flip side, agencies generally are cautious about adding employees as the economy recovers, resulting in a lag in staffing growth.

## Internet media

U.S. internet media employmentthe BLS classification of "internet publishing and broadcasting and web search portals"fell by 5,100 jobs in September, the biggest monthly decline on record for internet media jobs. (The previous biggest monthly dropa loss of 3,300 jobs came in 2001 amid the bursting of the dot-com bubble.) Even with that surprising drop, internet media employment312,300 jobsin September was the third-highest on record, behind only August and July.

As with ad agencies, internet media staffing is reported with a one-month delay.

Digital media firms have prospered during the pandemic, and that has translated into solid job growth. U.S. staffing at internet media businesses rebounded quickly from a brief dip in the early stages of the pandemic in spring 2020.

## U.S. employment

The nation in October added 531,000 jobs, above what economists expected. The economy added an upwardly revised 312,000 jobs in September and an upwardly revised 483,000 jobs in August, showing the job picture during the summer was better than previous employment reports indicated.

Following an unprecedented loss of 20.7 million jobs in April 2020 as the nation locked down, the economy has added jobs every month except for December 2020. But the total U.S. nonfarm payroll is still 4.2 million jobs below its February 2020 all-time high.

## Unemployment rate

The U.S. unemployment rate, based on a separate survey of households, fell to 4.6% in October from 4.8% in September.

The unemployment rate in February 2020 stood at 3.5%. In April 2020, it reached 14.8%, the highest level since before World War II.

Ad Age Datacenter subscribers can see an expanded table showing advertising employment back to 2000 at [AdAge.com/adjobs](http://AdAge.com/adjobs).

## DETAILS

**Subject:** Workforce planning; Internet; Public relations; Economic conditions; Employment; Pandemics; Media planning & buying; Web portals; Unemployment; Coronaviruses; Outdoor advertising; Recessions; COVID-19; Advertising agencies

**Business indexing term:** Subject: Workforce planning Economic conditions Employment Media planning & buying Unemployment Outdoor advertising Recessions Advertising agencies; Industry: 54185 : Outdoor Advertising 54181 : Advertising Agencies 54183 : Media Buying Agencies

**Location:** United States--US

**Classification:** 54185: Outdoor Advertising; 54181: Advertising Agencies; 54183: Media Buying Agencies

**Publication title:** Advertising Age; Chicago

**Volume:** 92

**Issue:** 16

**First page:** 3

<b>Publication year:</b>	2021
<b>Publication date:</b>	Nov 8, 2021
<b>Publisher:</b>	Crain Communications, Incorporated
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Chicago
<b>Country of publication:</b>	United States, Chicago
<b>Publication subject:</b>	Advertising And Public Relations, Business And Economics--Marketing And Purchasing
<b>ISSN:</b>	00018899
<b>e-ISSN:</b>	15577414
<b>Source type:</b>	Trade Journal
<b>Language of publication:</b>	English
<b>Document type:</b>	Feature
<b>ProQuest document ID:</b>	2596085284
<b>Document URL:</b>	<a href="https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/u-s-advertising-employment-increased-2-200-jobs/docview/2596085284/se-2?accountid=44910">https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/u-s-advertising-employment-increased-2-200-jobs/docview/2596085284/se-2?accountid=44910</a>
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<b>Last updated:</b>	2021-11-11
<b>Database:</b>	ABI/INFORM Trade & Industry, ABI/INFORM Global

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