

From new payment tools to the public cloud, 2 JPMorgan Chase execs explain how the Columbus, Ohio, facility plays a key role in future tech at the bank

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- JPMorgan Chase has more than 19,000 employees in Columbus, Ohio, including 5,000 tech workers.
- The site is home to much of the bank's tech work, from digital banking to cloud deposit engineering.
- Insider spoke with two JPMorgan Chase execs on the future of Columbus and tech at the bank.

When graduates of The Ohio State University's class of 2021 recently gathered in Columbus, Ohio, to celebrate their commencement, addressing them via video was JPMorgan Chase's Jamie Dimon.

It wasn't chance that connected Dimon, chairman and CEO of the nation's largest bank by assets, to the university. JPMorgan Chase is the second-largest private employer in Columbus, where Ohio State is located, counting more than 19,000 employees, including 5,000 tech workers.

The bank's roots in the city stem in part from its 2004 acquisition of Bank One, which partially originated out of Columbus as First Banc Group. JPMorgan's acquisition also brought Dimon, then Bank One's chairman and CEO, to the bank, leading him to ultimately succeed William Harrison as chief executive in 2006.

Dimon's presence at the graduation is a reflection of JPMorgan Chase's growing influence in Columbus and of the pipelines the bank has laid into Ohio State and the surrounding community.

The city is now a key hub for the bank's tech development, including the headquarters for a cloud-based project aimed at overhauling Chase's \$2.2 trillion deposit system.

"Fundamentally, Columbus has the technology and engineering talent that we're after. That's been proven through the long history that we have there," Rohan Amin, chief information officer for consumer and community banking at JPMorgan Chase, told Insider.

A talent pipeline in Columbus

The market for top tech talent within finance is hot – and all the more so because the nation's largest banks are now competing with not only each other but a broad range of fintechs and smaller regional and community banks.

All of them are looking to up their mobile game in a digitization trend that began even before the COVID-19 pandemic and has only accelerated since.



JPMorgan Chase

JPMorgan Chase's Rohan Amin and Heather Blair.

To that end, JPMorgan Chase is banking on leveraging its existing ties to Columbus to compete for the engineers and tech workers there.

Roughly 10% of the bank's global tech team is based in Columbus, Amin said.

"We're really fortunate to have a lot of great partnerships here in Columbus and a lot of really great community involvement that allow us to identify that top talent here in the city and bring them to JPMorgan Chase," Heather Blair, head of technology for consumer banking and head of the firm's Columbus tech center, told Insider.

In 2020, the bank announced a \$75 million investment in a global career readiness initiative to take place over five years across 10 sites. That included \$7 million earmarked for Columbus in partnership with Ohio State, Columbus State Community College, and city schools.

The bank also launched an early-career technical training program in 2020 as part of its software-engineering program.

JPMorgan Chase is banking on three things that Amin and Blair said will attract tech talent to Columbus: Real-world business problems, "a great technology stack," and the ability to learn within the company.

Employees want "to be able to work at super scale, with impact to customers, on modern technology environments, and they want to be able to grow," Amin said.

The bank's outsized physical presence in Columbus might help attract fresh talent as well.

The site's main facility at the McCoy Center is the JPMorgan's largest office in the world, totaling more than 1.9 million square feet. The bank is currently in the process of adding solar panels to the site's parking lots after installing them on the main building's rooftops in 2019.

JPMorgan Chase's central hub in Columbus will also soon see a new influx of workers from a place close to home: the firm's long-time office tower in the city's downtown. In April, The Columbus Dispatch reported the bank will be relocating its workers still in the tower, built in 1964 and a holdover from the Bank One days, to the McCoy Center site.

Mobile payments to edge cloud computing

The tech work taking place in Columbus, meanwhile, spans a wide range.

The bank recently re-organized employees across Chase from working across 1,000 project teams to 100 product-oriented ones. Among these areas of focus at Columbus is Chase First Banking, the bank's debit card account geared towards kids and their parents.

Groups working on Chase's payments tools – like integrating the bank's products into Apple Wallet – also work in Columbus, Amin said, as do a team of virtual bankers and those reimagining the future of Chase's branches.

Another team, as Insider has reported, is set to work on re-designing Chase's system that underpins \$2.2 trillion in customer deposits. Amin described the work as "aggressive modernization"



JPMorgan Chase

Solar panels at JPMorgan Chase's Columbus site.

as the bank leverages public and private cloud tech.

"Columbus is quite critical to that," he added.

And like other banks, Chase has also turned its sights towards edge cloud computing. The technique allows data to be analyzed faster by doing computations closer to the point of collection – like at an ATM or on a customer's phone, for example.

Developing edge cloud tech is a considerable undertaking for Chase, which counts more than 56 million digitally-active users, but also one that can lead to big benefits.

"We want to make sure that our capabilities, our data, the insights and personalization that we're doing, it's close as possible to those customers. That's certainly part of the way we design and leverage the cloud, is to take advantage of that as well," Amin said.