

# **Billionaires of the 2010s: From Facebook Execs to Heiresses, Here's a Look at the Biggest Names to Join the 3-Comma Club**

The world's billionaire population has more than doubled over the past decade, Forbes' 2010 and 2019 Billionaires lists show.

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It's not easy to become a billionaire, but hundreds of people do it every year.

There are currently 2,153 billionaires in the world, according to Forbes, up from an estimated 793 at the start of the decade. However, while more than 1,811 people spent time in the three-comma club over the past decade, not everyone who became a billionaire in the past decade stayed one.

Just consider Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes and Juul cofounders Adam Bowen and James Monsees, who all lost their billion-dollar fortunes within months of making them. In 2019 alone, 195 people became billionaires, Forbes reported.

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Keep reading to meet some of the most notable people who became billionaires over the past decade, organized by the year they were added to Forbes Billionaires List. All net worths below reflect 2019 data.

## **2010: The former CEO of Marvel, Isaac Perlmutter, sells the comic giant to Disney and subsequently becomes a billionaire.**

Isaac Perlmutter, the former CEO of Marvel, reached billionaire status after selling the company to Disney for \$4 billion. Today, his net worth is estimated to be \$5.11 billion by the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

***Other notable names who became billionaires in 2010, according to Business Insider:***

- Wu Yajun, the cofounder of a Chinese property-development company (\$12.2 billion)
- Horst Paulmann, the founder of a Latin American retail conglomerate (\$2 billion)

## **2011: Jin Sook and Do Won Chang of Forever 21 become billionaires.**

The married couple opened their first store in 1984, three years after immigrating to the US from South Korea. The Forever 21 brand grew into a fast-fashion giant but competition led the company to file for bankruptcy in September of this year, after the couple lost their billionaire status in July.

***Others who became billionaires in 2011, according to Forbes:***

## **2012: Elon Musk breaks into the three-comma club.**

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk made his Forbes 400 debut in 2012 with a net worth of \$2 billion. Today, Forbes estimates he is worth \$24.3 billion.

In January of this year, Tesla announced it would pay Musk nothing for the next 10 years – no salary, bonuses, or stock – until the company reaches a \$100 billion market cap. If that happens, Musk could become the richest person in the world.

*Others who became billionaires in 2012, according to Forbes:*

## **2013: Robert Pera, an Apple engineer turned WiFi entrepreneur, becomes a billionaire.**

Robert Pera is the CEO of Ubiquiti Networks, a wireless networking company he left Apple to found in 2005. He owns 75% of the publicly-traded company and Forbes estimates his current net worth to be \$10.5 billion.

Once he reached billionaire status, Pera purchased the Memphis Grizzlies and became the youngest NBA club owner at 34.

*Others who became billionaires in 2013, according to Forbes:*

## **2014: Another Facebook heavyweight, COO Sheryl Sandberg, becomes a billionaire.**

Sheryl Sandberg has been the chief operating officer at Facebook since 2008 and currently has an estimated net worth of \$1.8 billion. She has made headlines in her time at the

social media giant for her controversial pioneering of the “Lean In” movement and her involvement in some of Facebook’s scandals.

*Others who became billionaires in 2014, according to Forbes:*

## **2015: Elizabeth Holmes becomes a billionaire from her fraudulent blood-testing start-up Theranos.**

Theranos was worth \$9 billion at its peak in 2019, Business Insider previously reported. However, the company went defunct after problems with its blood tests were exposed in a series of investigative reports by the Wall Street Journal’s John Carreyrou. The reports began in October 2015 and later became a book.

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Just a few months earlier, in March, Forbes named Holmes the youngest self-made woman on the magazine’s billionaires list; she was 31 at the time. Holmes was later charged with wire fraud by the Department of Justice for her role at Theranos. Holmes pleaded not guilty. Both she and co-defendant Ramesh “Sunny” Balwani could face 20 years in prison if convicted.

*Others who became billionaires in 2015, according to Forbes:*

## **2016: WeWork’s atmospheric rise makes co-founders Adam Neumann and Miguel McKelvey billionaires. Three**

## **years later, the coworking company undergoes an equally spectacular IPO debacle.**

Neumann and McKelvey made their fortunes after founding coworking empire WeWork. Their net worth has paralleled the startup's growth and subsequent plunge following the up-and-down IPO adventure that saw it go from a \$47 billion valuation to talk of bankruptcy in just six weeks. Neumann's net worth plummeted from \$4.1 billion in March 2019 to \$600 million on October 10, Business Insider previously reported.

Neumann reportedly regained his status as a billionaire thanks to Softbank's bailout of WeWork later in October. Though estimates of his exact net worth vary, the former CEO is now thought to be worth "at least \$1 billion," according to Bloomberg. McKelvey, however, likely remains locked out of the three-comma club.

***Others who became billionaires in 2016, according to Forbes:***

## **2017: Finance bros help Patagonia sportswear founder Yvon Chouinard join the three-comma club.**

Chouinard, 81, founded the sportswear brand beloved by mountain climbers and finance bros alike in 1984 after running a side business selling imported rugby shirts to rock climbers, Forbes reported. Chouinard serves as the brand's CEO and led its push for sustainability.

Chouinard now has a net worth of \$1.2 billion, Forbes estimates.

***Others who became billionaires in 2017, according to Forbes:***

## **2018: L'Oréal heiress Francoise Bettencourt Meyers becomes a billionaire – and the wealthiest woman in the world – after her mother's death in September.**

Bettencourt-Meyers, 66, is the granddaughter of L'Oréal founder Eugene Schueller, Business Insider previously reported. Her mother, Liliane Bettencourt, was his only heir. The family's 33% stake in the company was worth \$107.5 billion in May 2017.

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Bettencourt-Meyers' properties include a Classical-style villa in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, a mansion off of the Brittany Coast, and a secluded island in Seychelles. Bettencourt-Meyers now has a net worth of \$55.6 billion, Forbes estimates.

*Others who became billionaires in 2018, according to Forbes:*

## **2019: Social media and makeup mogul Kylie Jenner makes headlines when she's declared "the world's youngest self-made billionaire" by Forbes at age 21.**

Jenner, who turned 22 in August, has built up a cosmetics empire, starred alongside her family in "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" as well as in her own spin-off show "Life of Kylie," started a clothing line with her sister, and made

millions promoting products on Instagram.

Beauty conglomerate Coty Inc. acquired a majority stake in Kylie Cosmetics in November, bringing the company's valuation up to \$1.2 billion, Business Insider's Dominic-Madori Davis previously reported. That, plus the cash she has pulled in from the business, brings her to billionaire status, Forbes said in March.

Many have criticized Forbes' decision to call Jenner "self-made," saying she was born into wealth and privilege, as Business Insider's Katie Warren previously reported. In February, Jenner responded to the backlash in an interview with Paper magazine, saying, "The self-made thing is true" and adding that her parents "cut her off at the age of 15."

***Others who became billionaires in 2019, according to Business Insider:***

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