

November 25, 2014, 12:36 PM ET

## Food-Service Switch at Intel Exposes Divisions in Silicon Valley

By Jeff Elder



Workers protest the end of their cafeteria jobs at Intel this month near the chip-maker's Santa Clara campus.

Working Partnerships USA

Intel is changing cafeteria managers at its Santa Clara, Calif., headquarters this week. That's not typically newsworthy.

In this case, though, the new vendor, Guckenheimer Corporate Dining, appears not to be re-hiring many of the 70 employees who worked under the old manager, Bon Appetit Management. And that's striking a chord at a time of growing tension between Silicon Valley's haves and have-nots, including stirrings of union activism.

"It's customary for the replacement company to hire most, if not all, of the workers," said Maisie Ganzler, Bon Appetit's vice president of strategy. "The new company doesn't seem to be doing that. That's unusual."

She said Bon Appetit, which managed the Intel cafeteria for nine years, is doing what it can to help the workers find new jobs.

Unite Here Local 19, which represented the workers at Bon Appetit, says they are being treated unfairly in the changeover, including being let go on the day before Thanksgiving.

“Intel has a responsibility to these individuals,” Enrique Fernandez, the local president wrote to Intel CEO Brian Krzanich on Nov. 18. He said Intel “should take steps to ensure that your new contractor Guckenheimer offers employment to current food service workers.”

Intel spokesman Chuck Mulloy says Intel is a “simply a customer of Guckenheimer and Bon Appetit. It is not appropriate for Intel to get involved in any employment issues involving these firms and their employees including hiring decisions.”

Guckenheimer did not respond to requests for a comment.

Agustin Perez, a cook for Bon Appetit, says he was surprised to learn in a letter last month from Bon Appetit that “your current position will unfortunately be permanently eliminated,” effective Wednesday.

Perez, who said through an interpreter that he provides for a wife and three children, worked at the Intel campus for five years. “Most of us who have worked there for years don’t have new jobs,” he said.

Last week, drivers of [Facebook](#)’s employee shuttle buses voted to be represented by the Teamsters Union. In an August report, labor-affiliated Working Partnerships USA said Silicon Valley’s service industry is powered by an “invisible workforce” of low-paid blacks and Latinos working for little-known companies that provide for food service, security and maintenance at the tech industry’s biggest brand names.

Intel’s “lack of action is a stark reminder of the realities faced by Silicon Valley’s invisible workforce, who serve, protect and clean at these companies,” said the group’s executive director, Derecka Mehrens in a statement Monday.

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