Currently, there are 6,717 ESOPs covering more than 14 million participants. ESOP companies are diverse: there are ESOPs in almost every industry, ranging in company size from just a few employees to more than 250,000, spread throughout the U.S.

**Geography of ESOPs**
- Midwest, 32%
- West, 23%
- South, 29%
- Northeast, 17%

**Number of Participants**
- 36% Up to 50
- 23% 101–300
- 21% 51–100
- 10% 1,000+
- 10% 301–1,000

**Most Common Industries**
- Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Construction
- Banking

**A Brief History of Employee Ownership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th># of ESOPs</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Peninsula Newspapers establishes first ESOP.</td>
<td>1 ESOP</td>
<td>Under 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Federal government creates statutory framework for ESOPs.</td>
<td>200 ESOPs</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Congress passes legislation allowing ESOPs to own S corporations.</td>
<td>6,680 ESOPs</td>
<td>6.3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Today, there are roughly 14.1 million ESOP participants.</td>
<td>6,717 ESOPs</td>
<td>14.1 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>