Companies that own contracts with merchants to accept general purpose credit, debit, and prepaid cards (global brands Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express, Diners Club, UnionPay, and JCB) as well as PIN-based debit cards (Interlink, Star, Nyce, Pulse, Accel, etc.) are called merchant acquirers. Transactions handled by the five largest U.S. owners of these portfolios of merchant card processing contracts totaled 80.29 billion last year, up 13.7% over 2015. Vantiv, First Data, Chase, Bank of America, and Global Payments (includes a full year of Heartland) ranked as the top five U.S. acquirers in 2016 based on transactions generated at merchants with which they own 100% of the processing contract. Vantiv gained the top spot based on its purchase of the Moneris portfolio at the end of 2016. The full year of Moneris acquired transactions are included here in the Vantiv figures.

For the last 20 years, First Data has held the top spot. It still holds the top spot when measuring total transactions processed. Not included in First Data’s acquiring figures shown here are joint ventures in which First Data does not own 100% of the merchant contracts. In joint ventures with Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and PNC, First Data handles most of the processing. It handles the majority of the processing in the revenue sharing agreements (RSAs) with Citi, Santander, and SunTrust. First Data handles all of the transactions for agent/processing businesses with BBVA Compass and Zions.

Based on card purchase volume (spending at merchants), the five largest acquirers handled $3.783 trillion in card payments in 2016, up 10.0% over 2015. In order, they were Chase, Vantiv, First Data, Bank of America, and Global Payments. In 2015, the top five were Chase, Vantiv, First Data, Bank of America, and Elavon.

The acquirers ranked 6 through 10 based on transactions processed in 2016 were Wells Fargo, Worldpay, Elavon, TSYS/TransFirst (includes a full year of TransFirst), and PNC. Collectively, they handled 13.77 billion purchase transactions, down 1.2%. Those ranked 6 through 10 based on purchase volume were Wells Fargo, Elavon, Worldpay, TSYS/TransFirst, and PNC. Collectively, they acquired card payments valued at $986.85 billion, up 26.9%. In 2015, those ranked 6 through 10 were Wells Fargo, Global Payments, Heartland, Worldpay, and TransFirst.
In the charts on pages 1 and 9, First Data figures shown include business tied to contracts with merchants owned directly by First Data in addition to merchants tied to RSAs including Citi, Santander, and SunTrust, which are effectively wholly owned by First Data, and agent/processing agreements with BBVA Compass and Zions, among others.

In the table below, First Data figures exclude those for Citi, SunTrust, Santander, and BBVA Compass, which are listed separately. Elavon figures on pages 1, 9, and 12 include Key Merchant Services because Elavon owns those merchant contracts as part of their joint venture.

The table below ranks companies by the amount of Visa and Mastercard business they acquired. Among the 25 largest Visa and Mastercard acquirers, companies with purchase volume increases greater than 10% last year included TSYS/TransFirst, Global Payments, Merchants’ Choice Payment Solutions, EVO, Vantiv, Wells Fargo, CardConnect, Priority Payment Systems, Chase, Cayan, BB&T, and First Data.

Acquirers with more than $10 billion in American Express, Discover, Diners Club, UnionPay, and JCB credit card purchase volume combined (shown as Other Credit on the table on pages 10 and 11) were Chase, Vantiv, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, First Data, Elavon, Global Payments, Worldpay, and TSYS/TransFirst.

Acquirers with more than $10 billion in PIN debit purchase volume were Vantiv, First Data, Bank of America, Chase, Worldpay, Global Payments, Wells Fargo, and Elavon.

All general purpose card activity for the acquirers listed totaled 100.80 billion transactions worth $5.332 trillion. That included: Visa and Mastercard $3.916 trillion from 70.85 billion transactions, other credit $515.88 billion from 6.08 billion transactions, and PIN debit $899.24 billion from 23.86 billion transactions.

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The 5 largest acquirers handled $3.783 tril. in card payments in 2016.

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