



# Class of 2019 Report

How Employers Can Attract Gen Z Talent





Members of Gen Z, anyone born from 1997 onward according to [Pew Research Center](#), are true digital natives: growing up with the internet, social media and smartphones from a very early age.

As the oldest among this rising generation are just turning 22 this year, they are starting to graduate college and begin their job search.

But how does this incoming generation impact the workforce? What are their expectations for their first job out of college? What technologies do they expect employers to have in place?

Our fourth annual report explores the interests and expectations of the Class of 2019 – including industry, role, location, salary expectations. Additionally, we evaluated the realities of entry-level hiring from the perspective of recruiters and what has changed since our first report in 2016.

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# Job Search Expectations of College Seniors vs. Realities of Recruiters

	The Class of 2019 Expectations	Recruiters' Realities
Salary	On average college seniors expect to earn <b>\$47,562</b> at their first job after college.	Recruiting professionals expect to pay its average entry-level employee <b>\$56,155</b> .
College Major	<b>24%</b> of college seniors will be <b>graduating with a degree in STEM</b> .	<b>48%</b> of recruiters say they are most interested in <b>hiring STEM majors</b> .
Job Role	Only <b>18%</b> of seniors want to work in HR roles and <b>10%</b> want to work in IT roles.	<b>HR and IT are the top entry-level roles</b> recruiters expect to hire this year.
Qualifications	<b>87%</b> of college seniors say they are <b>confident</b> that their <b>job interview skills</b> will get them the job they want.	Recruiters say that on average, <b>37%</b> of entry-level job applicants at their company <b>are not qualified for a position</b> they applied to.
Work Experience	The <b>average student</b> in the Class of 2019 <b>completed only one internship</b> , with 31% saying they didn't complete any internships.	For <b>70%</b> of recruiters, <b>past work experience</b> is <b>more important</b> than an entry-level applicant's college major.
Job Boards	<b>65%</b> of college seniors agree that the <b>majority of the search results</b> from job boards that they've used <b>are irrelevant</b> or not a good fit for them.	<b>44%</b> of recruiters say the <b>money their company spends on recruitment advertising on job boards is not worth it</b> for the candidates they hire as a result.
Job Offers	<b>45%</b> of college seniors <b>say they would begin to consider jobs</b> at other companies if they didn't hear back <b>one week or less</b> after a job interview.	<b>76%</b> of recruiters say they <b>extend offers</b> to potential hires in <b>one week or less</b> after an interview.



## Actionable Takeaways for Recruiters and Hiring Managers

### **Be strategic** with your salary offers

While **college graduates are only expecting to get paid \$47,562 at their first job, recruiters report expecting to offer \$56,155** to the average entry-level employee. With a tight market for talent and low unemployment rates, employers should expect to pay more to stay competitive for top talent.

### **Consider posting freelance positions** or projects for entry-level candidates

Freelance work could be a good way to test out talent before offering a full-time position and many are already considering the option – **59% of college seniors said they are likely to get a job in the “gig economy” to supplement their main income.**

### **Set up automated, but personalized communications** for applicants

College seniors expect a quick response from employers after applying for a job – **62% say less than a week.** Automated emails thanking candidates for their application, and time-delayed rejection emails eliminate the “black hole” of recruiting. Even though these communications are automated they can still be personalized and create brand consistency.

## Invest in AI and text messaging technology for recruiting

On average recruiters are spending almost an hour a day screening candidates on the phone.

Utilizing AI chatbots and text messaging to answer candidate questions and suggest job recommendations based on candidate preferences and locations can save recruiters valuable time. In fact, **22% of recruiters surveyed have already invested in new recruitment advertising techniques like Snapchat, and text message-based recruiting.**

## Get offer letters out quickly with the help of automation

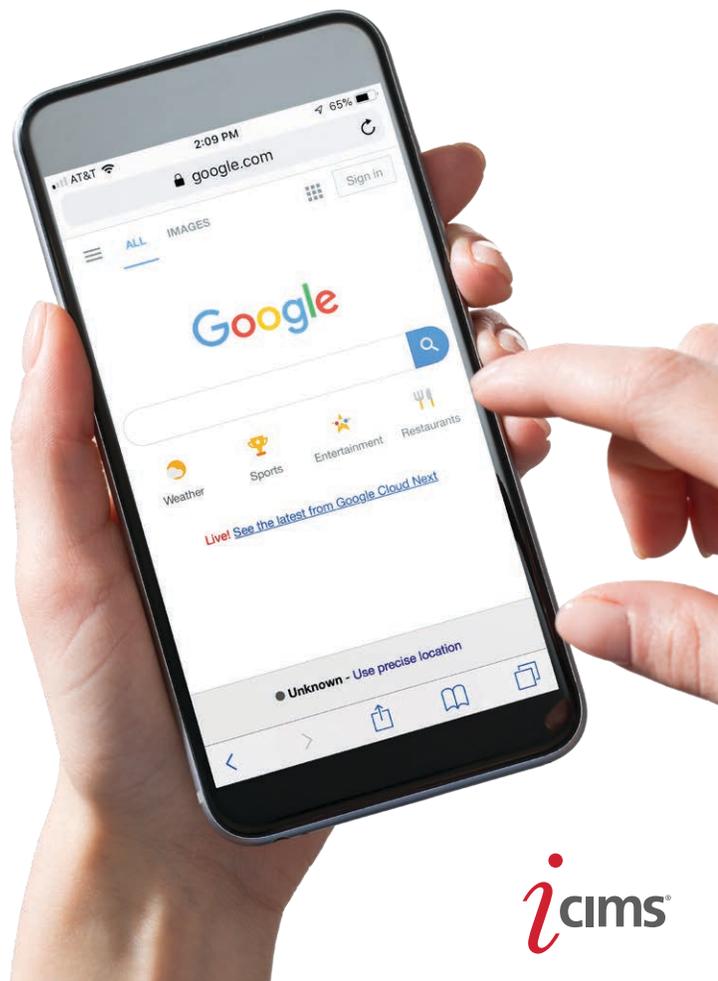
Don't lose out on top talent – **45% of college seniors say they would begin considering other jobs if they hadn't received a response from a company within a week after a job interview. And on average, recruiters say they extend offers eight days after an interview.**

Once a decision is made on who to hire, don't delay getting the offer letter over to the candidate because of a manual, lengthy offer letter process. Lengthy offer processes discourage candidates and open the window for competitors to step in.

## Save recruiting advertising budget by optimizing your job postings for Google

Employers can improve the quality of job applicants, their candidate experience and slash recruiting costs – **65% of college senior agree that the majority of the search results from job boards that they've used are irrelevant or not a good fit for them. Additionally, 44% of recruiters say the money their company spends on recruitment advertising on job boards is not worth it for the candidates they hire as a result.**

Instead, establish a direct and strong link between your career site and Google to ensure your job openings, updates and content is pulled instantly. Employers will get more relevant talent since Google's algorithms more effectively match job seekers with pertinent opportunities.



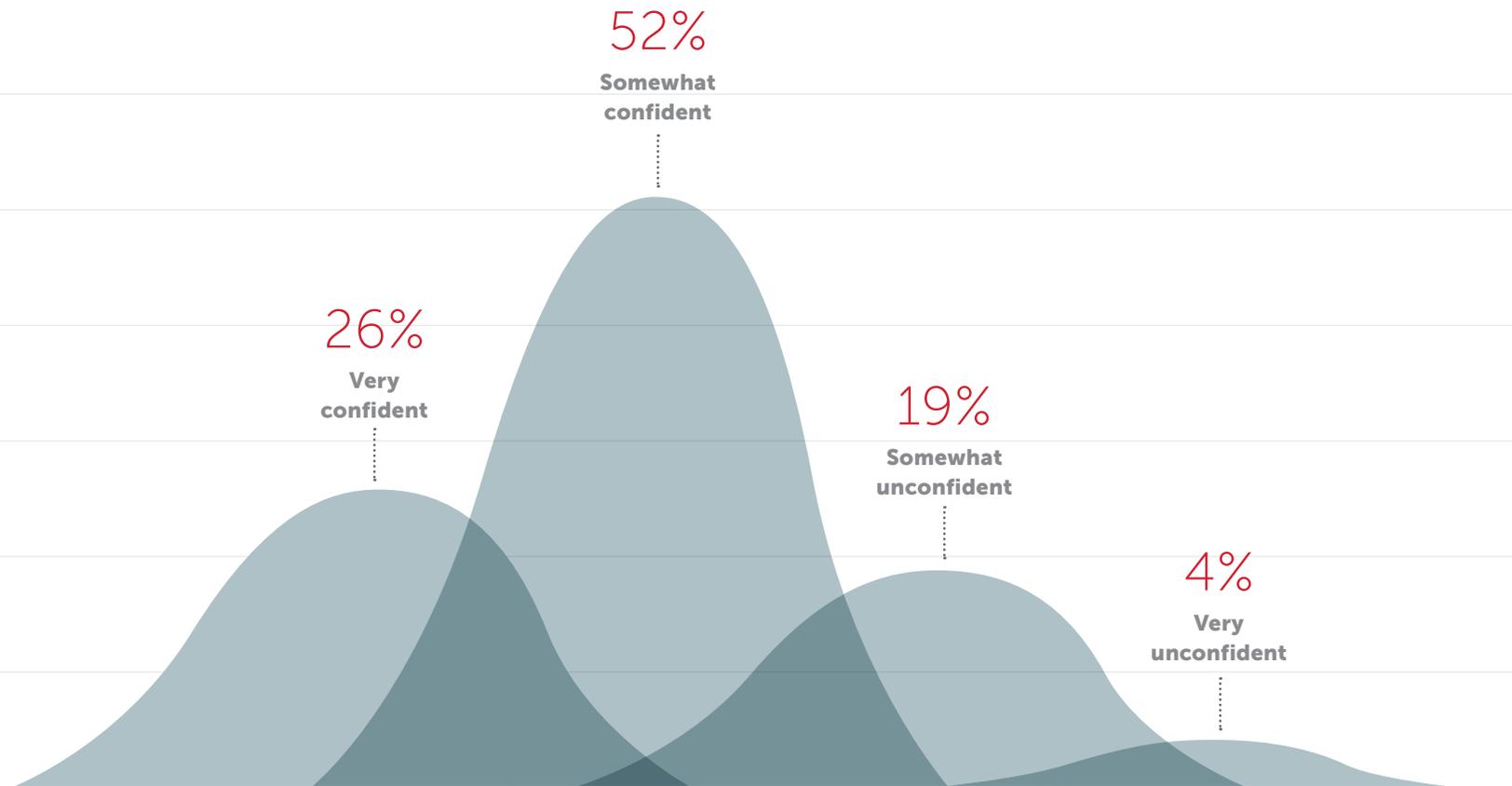


## SECTION 1

# What Jobs Are Winning the Interest of Gen Z?

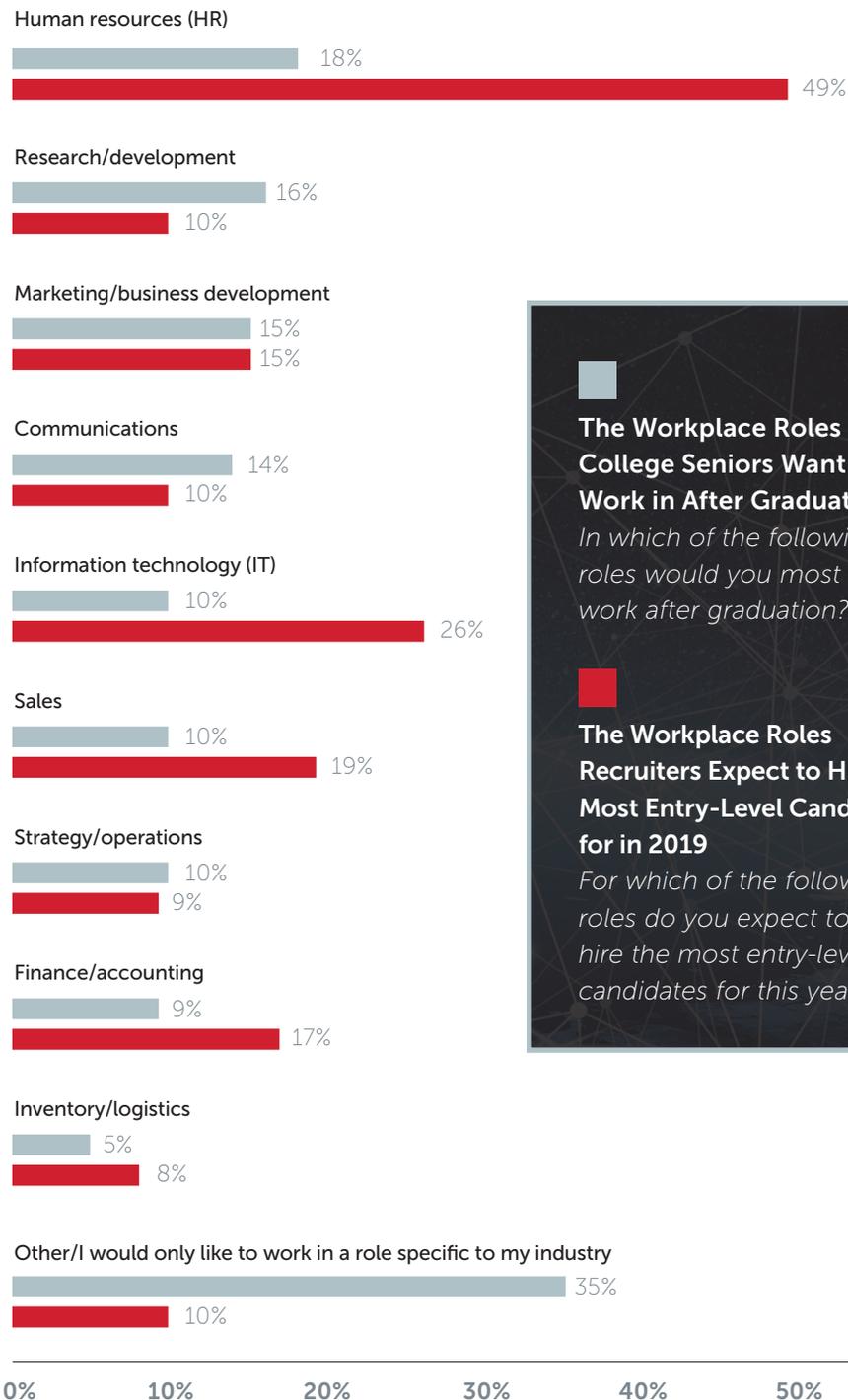
# The Class of 2019 is Confident in Their Ability to Find a Job After Graduation

*How confident or unconfident are you that your first job after college will be a job you wanted? For example, it's a role you're interested in and offers a sufficient salary.*



# Employers Expect to Hire the Most Entry-Level Candidates in IT and HR Roles

Employers may have trouble filling their most in-demand entry-level roles (human resources and information technology), as only 18% of seniors want to work in HR roles and only 10% want to work in IT roles.



**The Workplace Roles College Seniors Want to Work in After Graduation**  
*In which of the following roles would you most like to work after graduation?*

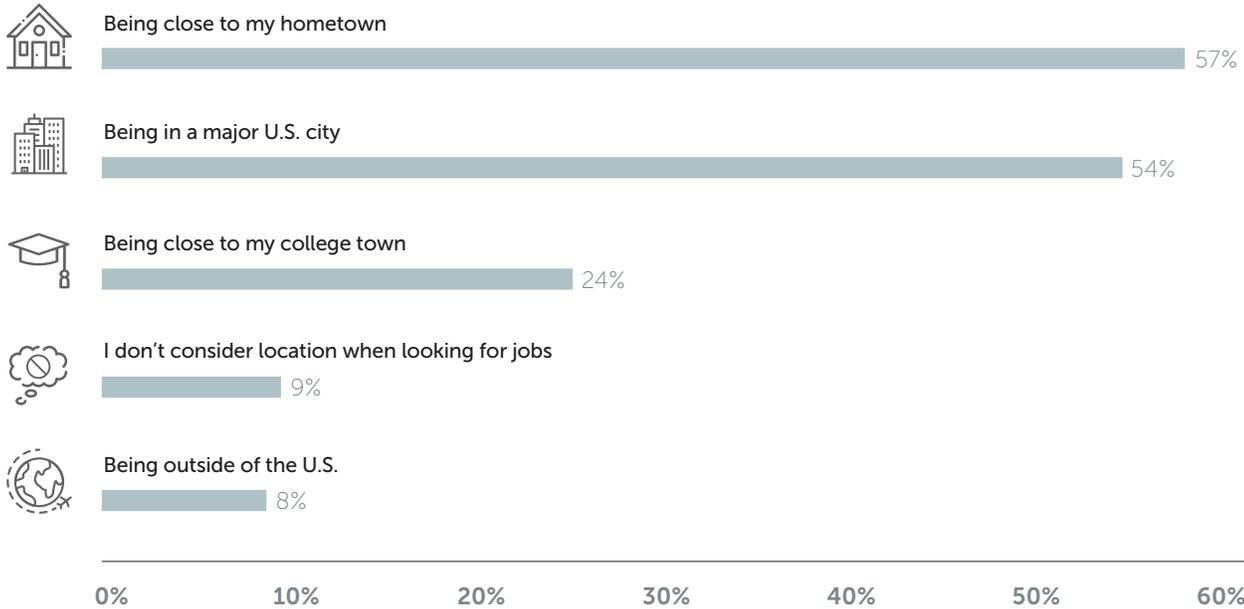
**The Workplace Roles Recruiters Expect to Hire the Most Entry-Level Candidates for in 2019**  
*For which of the following roles do you expect to hire the most entry-level candidates for this year?*



The job preferences of the 2019 graduating class indicate that IT will continue to be a male-dominated field for some time. **22% of men would most like to work in IT after graduation, compared to just 6% of women.**

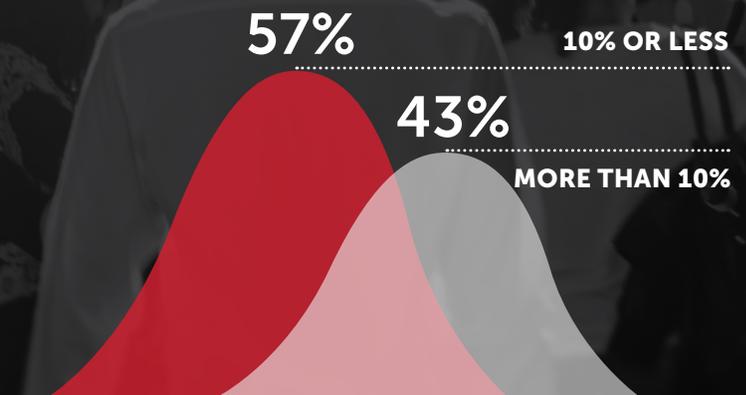
# The Class of 2019 is Mostly Interested in Jobs Near Their Hometowns or Major U.S. Cities

Which of the following, if any, do you consider when looking for jobs?



According to Recruiters, on Average About 18% of Entry-Level Hires Relocate

On average, approximately what percentage of the entry-level candidates you hire, if any, have to relocate for the job they're offered?





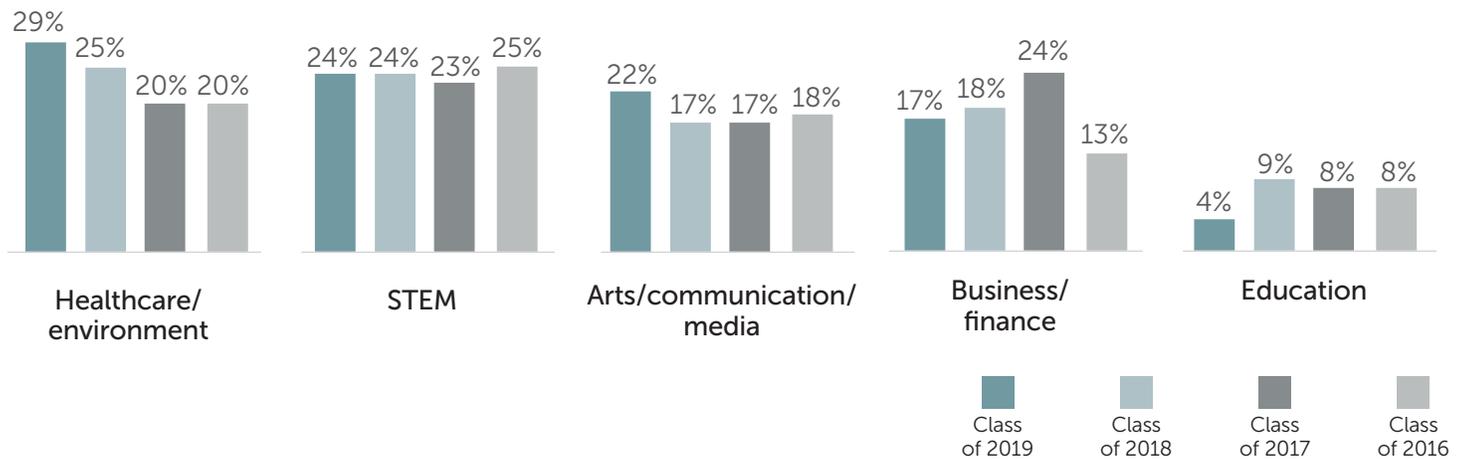
## SECTION 2

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What Are the Top Majors  
College Seniors Are Graduating  
with This Year?



## Healthcare and STEM Are the Top Majors of the Class of 2019



## Recruiters Reveal They Are Most Interested in Hiring STEM and Business Majors

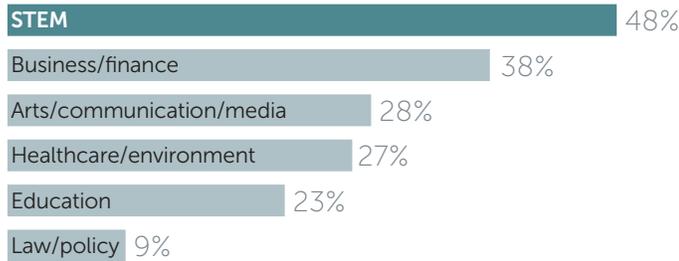
Major	Class of 2019	Class of 2016
Business	17%	<b>38%</b>
Psychology/social work	<b>13%</b>	8%
Healthcare, such as nursing or public health	12%	<b>18%</b>
Life sciences, such as biology	<b>8%</b>	5%
Computer science/information technology	7%	<b>27%</b>
Liberal arts/humanities, such as English or philosophy	6%	<b>7%</b>
Arts/fine arts, such as photography or visual arts	<b>6%</b>	4%
Engineering	5%	<b>27%</b>
Marketing/advertising/public relations	4%	<b>19%</b>
Social sciences, such as anthropology or history	4%	4%
Education	4%	<b>23%</b>
Physical sciences, such as physics or chemistry	3%	<b>8%</b>
Law, such as criminal justice	3%	<b>5%</b>
Agriculture/natural resources/environment	2%	<b>5%</b>
Mathematics	2%	<b>9%</b>
Political science/government/public administration	2%	<b>4%</b>
Journalism	2%	2%

Which of the following categories best describes your current college major?

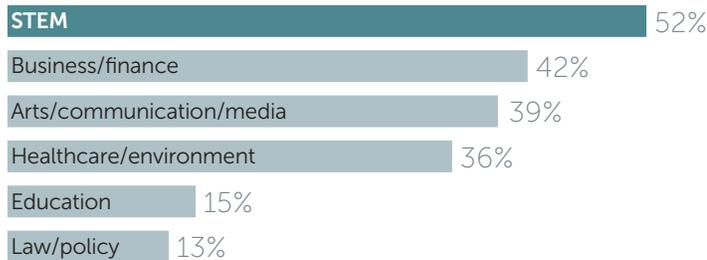
Which of the following college majors are you most interested in hiring?

## While STEM Majors Have Been the Top Interest of Recruiters, Interest in Education Has Grown Since 2016

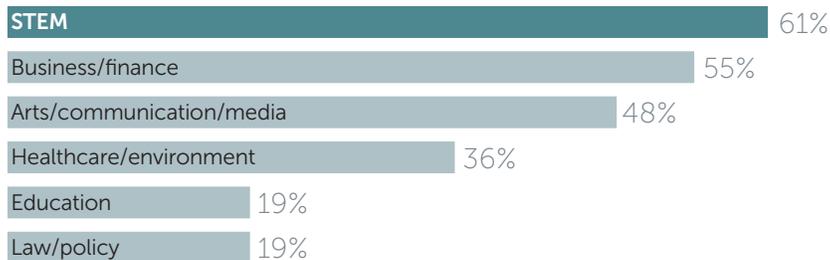
### 2019



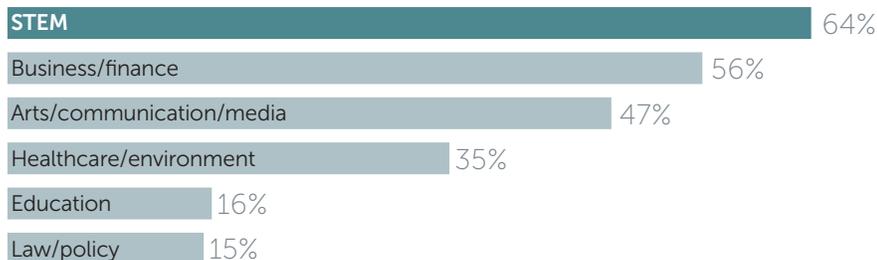
### 2018



### 2017

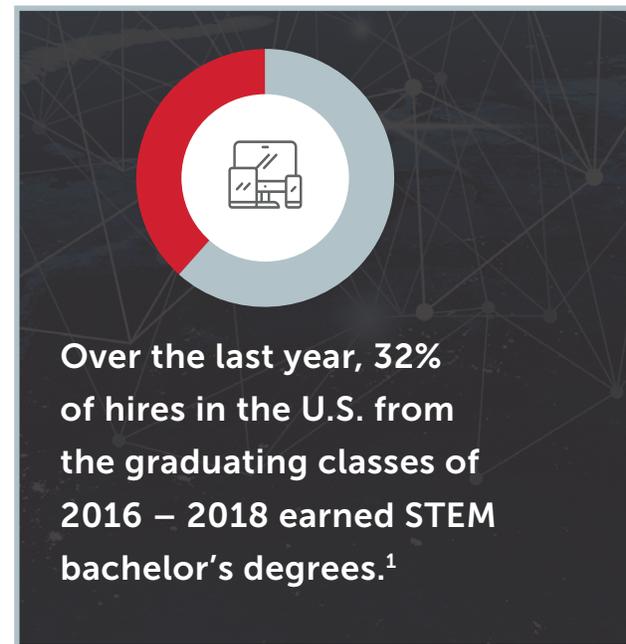


### 2016



While only 24% of college seniors surveyed will be graduating with a degree in STEM, these students are in high demand – 48% of recruiters say they are most interested in hiring majors in these fields.

Additionally, iCIMS data shows that those who graduated with STEM majors in years past represent the largest percentage of hires in the U.S.



Similarly, 42% of recruiters are interested in hiring business/finance majors (a drop from 55% in 2017) while only 18% of college seniors will be graduating with that type of degree.

## iCIMS Data Shows the Top Majors of Entry-Level Applicants and Hires

According to iCIMS data, which is drawn from a database of more than 75 million job applications and three million jobs posted per year by more than 4,000 customers, these are the **top five majors of entry-level applicants** across the U.S.

- |                           |                            |            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| 1. Mechanical Engineering | 3. Nursing                 | 5. Finance |
| 2. Psychology             | 4. Business Administration |            |

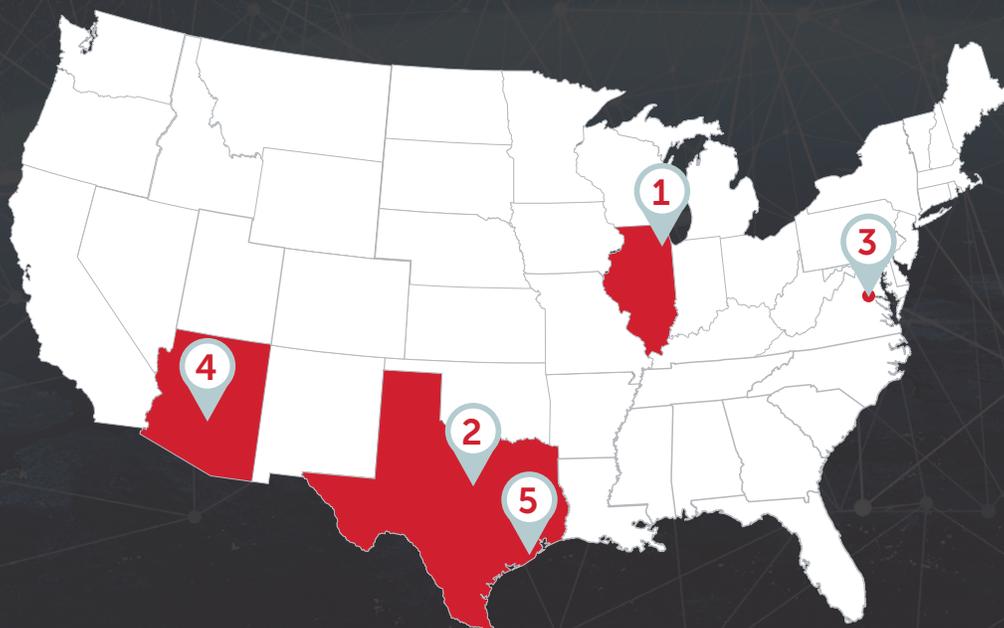
Additionally, iCIMS data shows that these are the **top five majors across the U.S. of people who were hired**.

- |               |                            |               |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Nursing    | 3. Biology                 | 5. Accounting |
| 2. Psychology | 4. Business Administration |               |

## Top U.S. Metro Areas Where the Highest Percentage of Entry-Level Hires Were STEM Majors

While it's widely known that Silicon Valley and New York City are STEM hiring hot spots, STEM majors graduating in 2019 may want to consider these other metro areas where the largest percentage of entry-level hires have a STEM degree.

**According to iCIMS' data, outside of Silicon Valley and New York City, these are the top five U.S. metro areas where the highest percentage of hires were STEM majors:**



1. Chicago, IL
2. Dallas, TX
3. Washington, DC
4. Phoenix, AZ
5. Houston, TX



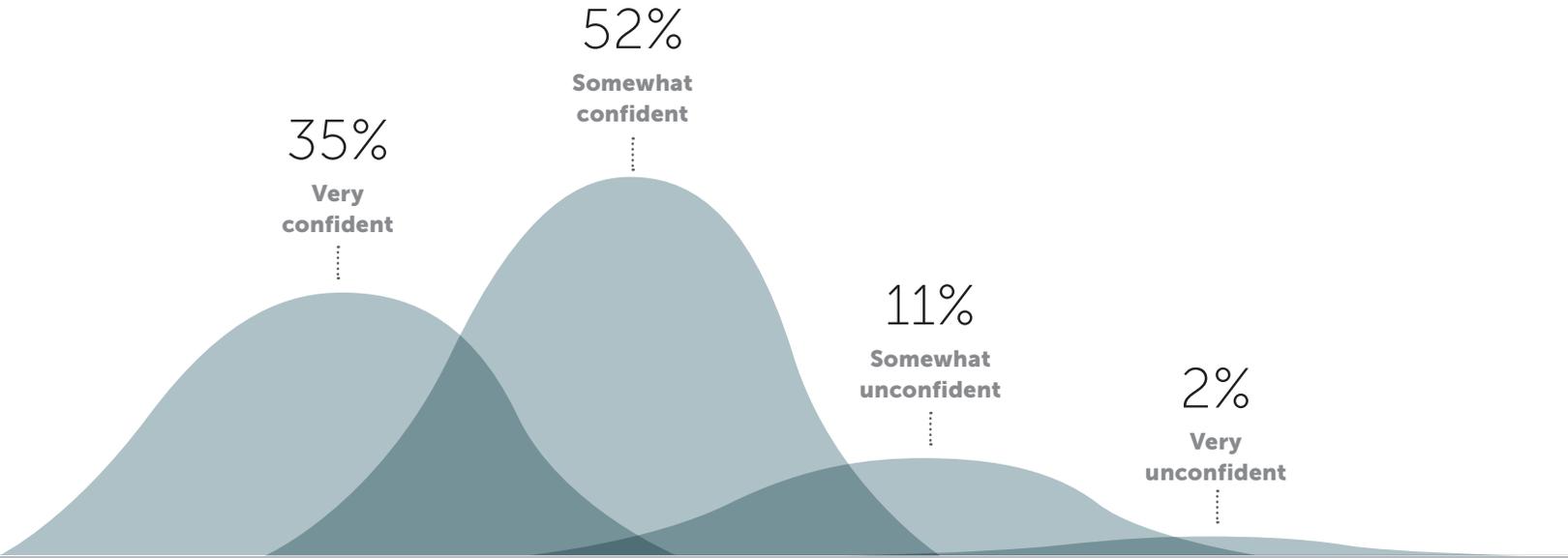
## **SECTION 3**

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How Are Employers Screening and Finding Top Entry-Level Talent?

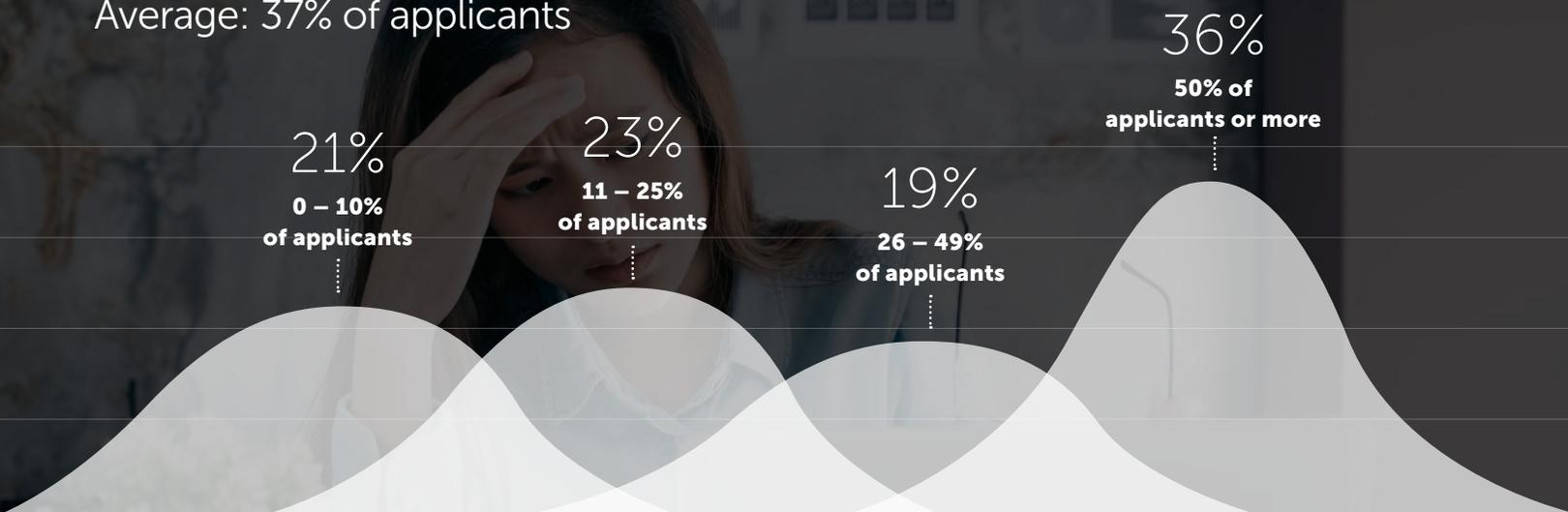
# The Class of 2019 is Confident. However, Employers are Faced with a Skills Gap When Hiring Entry-Level Candidates

How confident or unconfident are you that your job interview skills will get you the job you want? For example, your ability to discuss your experience or “sell your personal brand” in a job interview.



Approximately what percentage of entry-level job applicants at your company, if any, are not qualified for a position for which they have applied?

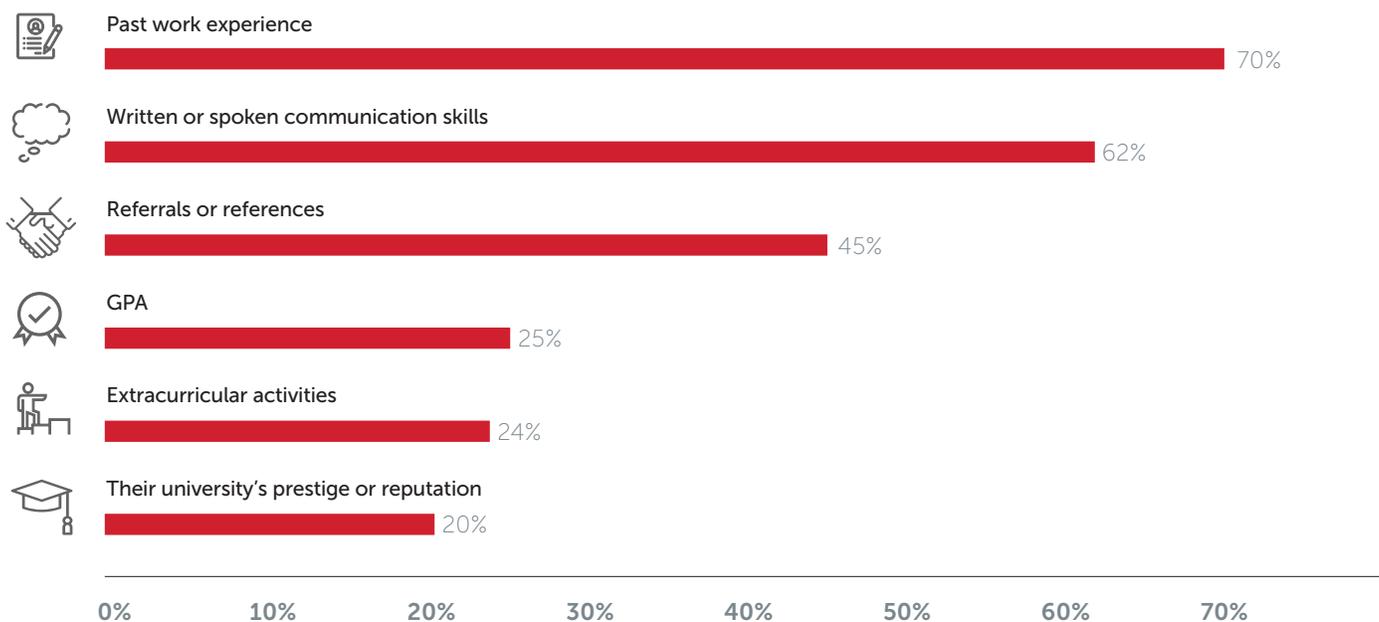
Average: 37% of applicants



## For Recruiters, Past Work Experience and Communication Skills Are More Important Than College Majors

Beyond a candidate's college major, recruiters look for past work experience and strong communication skills in an entry-level applicant. Interestingly, GPA and the university's prestige rank low on this list, suggesting work-related skills and abilities are more important than other accomplishments on a resume.

*Which of the following, if any, are more important in an entry-level job applicant than their college major?*

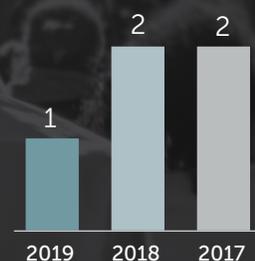


## The Average Student in the Class of 2019 Completed One Internship

As 70% of recruiters believe past work experience is more important than an entry-level candidate's college major – gaining internship experience in the field they want to work in is invaluable for college students.

To gain experience and build their resumes before graduation, 69% of the Class of 2019 completed at least one internship, with the average being one internship and only 14% completed three or more.

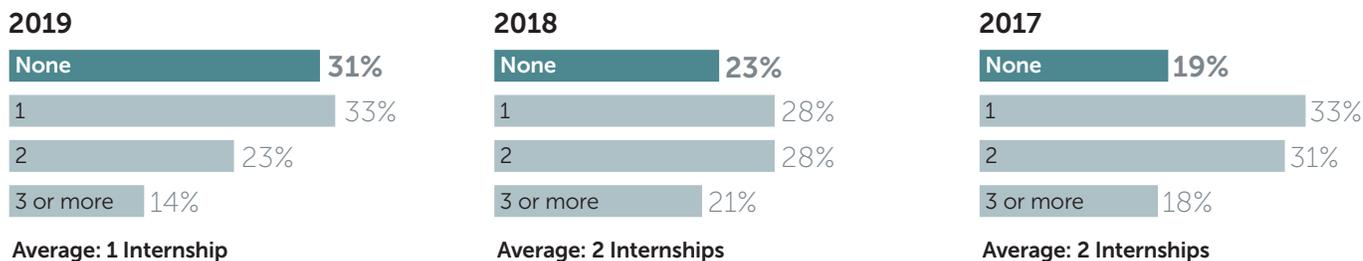
**This is less than the Class of 2017 and 2018 who completed two internships on average.**



Average number of internships

## Fewer Students Are Completing Internships

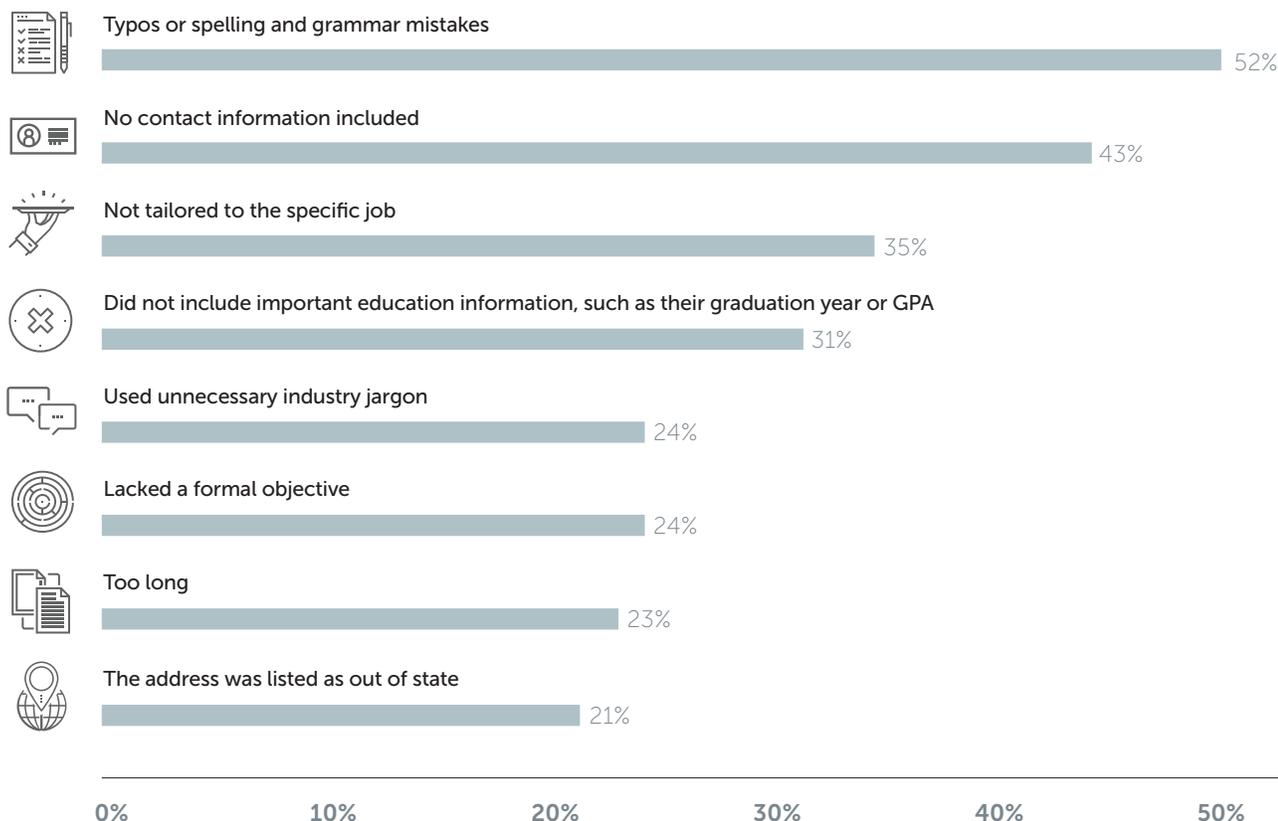
How many internships, if any, have you completed?



## The Reasons Recruiters Toss Resumes

Recruiters (52%) are often put off by spelling or grammar errors in a candidate's resume. And 43% of recruiters warn that forgetting to include contact information on a resume or application will generally make them stop reading an entry-level candidate's resume.

For which of the following reasons, if any, would you stop reading an entry-level candidate's resume? Meaning, you would not consider them for a job.





## SECTION 4

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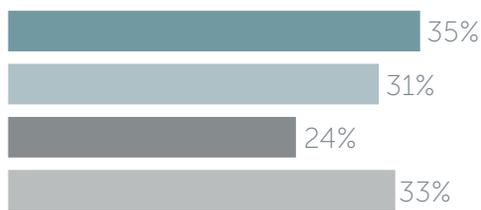
What Should Employers Expect to Pay Entry-Level Talent?

# Huge Expectations Gap: Recruiters Plan to Offer Higher Salaries Than College Seniors Expect

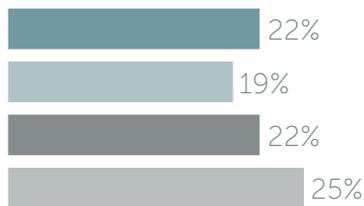
Approximately how much do you expect to earn at your first job after college?

Average: \$47,562

## \$35,000 or less



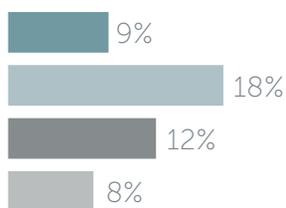
## \$35,001 – \$49,999



## \$50,000 – \$74,999



## \$75,000 or more



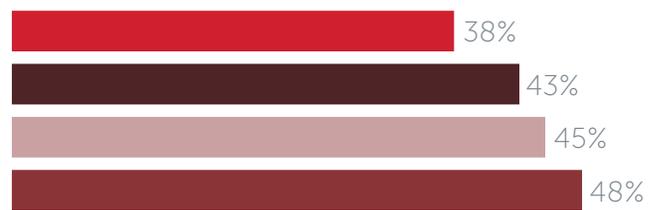
College Seniors



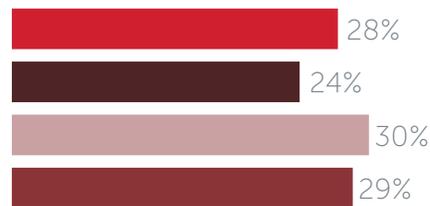
Approximately how much does your company expect to pay its average entry-level employee?

Average: \$56,155

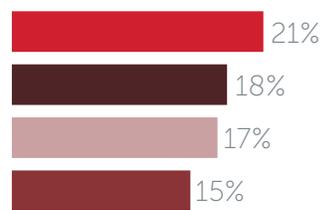
## \$35,000 or less



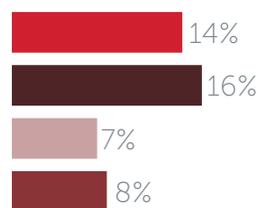
## \$35,001 – \$49,999



## \$50,000 – \$74,999



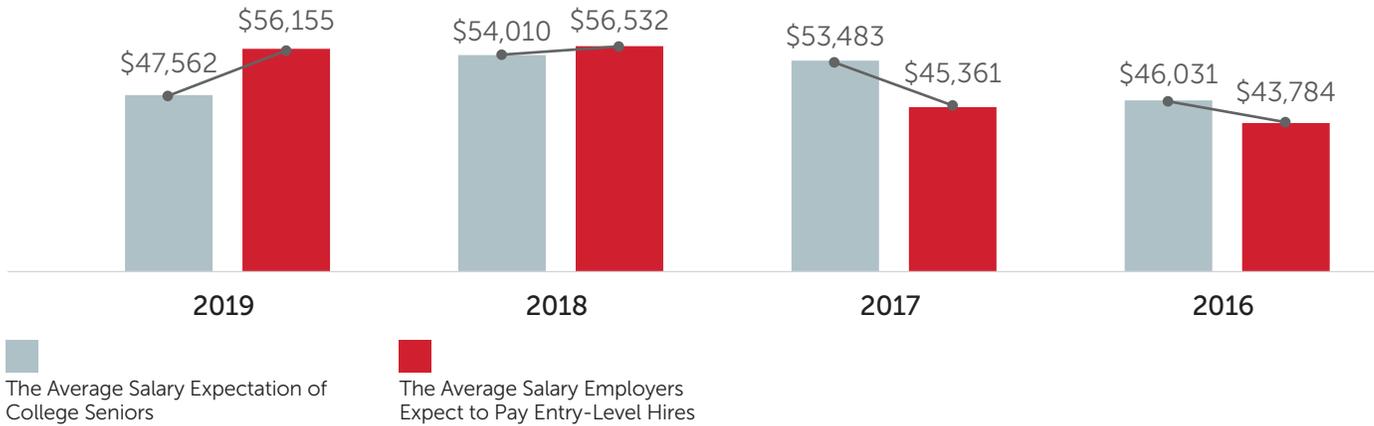
## \$75,000 or more



Recruiters

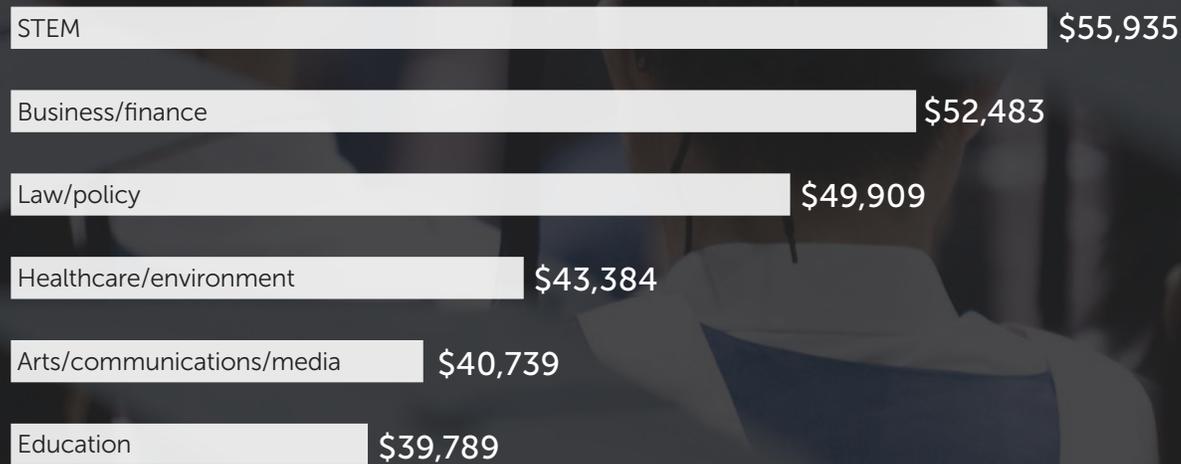


## College Seniors' Salary Expectations Have Lowered While Recruiters Expect to Pay More Year After Year



## Salary Expectations Vary Greatly Based on College Major

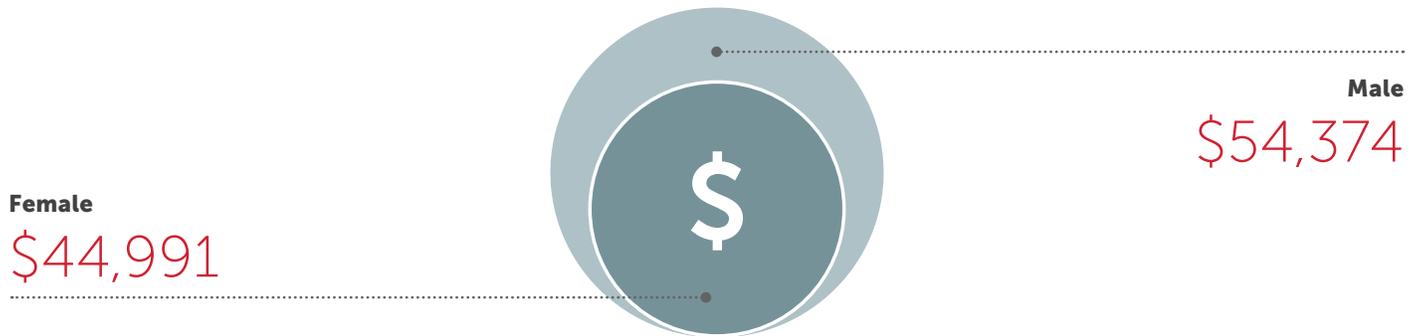
College seniors' salary expectations are wide-ranging based on their majors and perceived job demand. **STEM industry (\$55,935) and business/finance (\$52,483) majors are anticipating the highest salaries; arts/communications/media (\$40,739) and education (\$39,789) majors are anticipating the lowest.**<sup>2</sup>



## There is a Huge Gender Gap for Salary Expectations

Men are known to earn more than women in nearly every kind of job and consistently have been shown to demand more in salary negotiations, but there's evidence the seeds of a pay gap may take root in college. **While 44% of men expect to earn between \$50,000 and \$74,999 at their first job after college, only 31% of women expect to earn a salary in that range.**

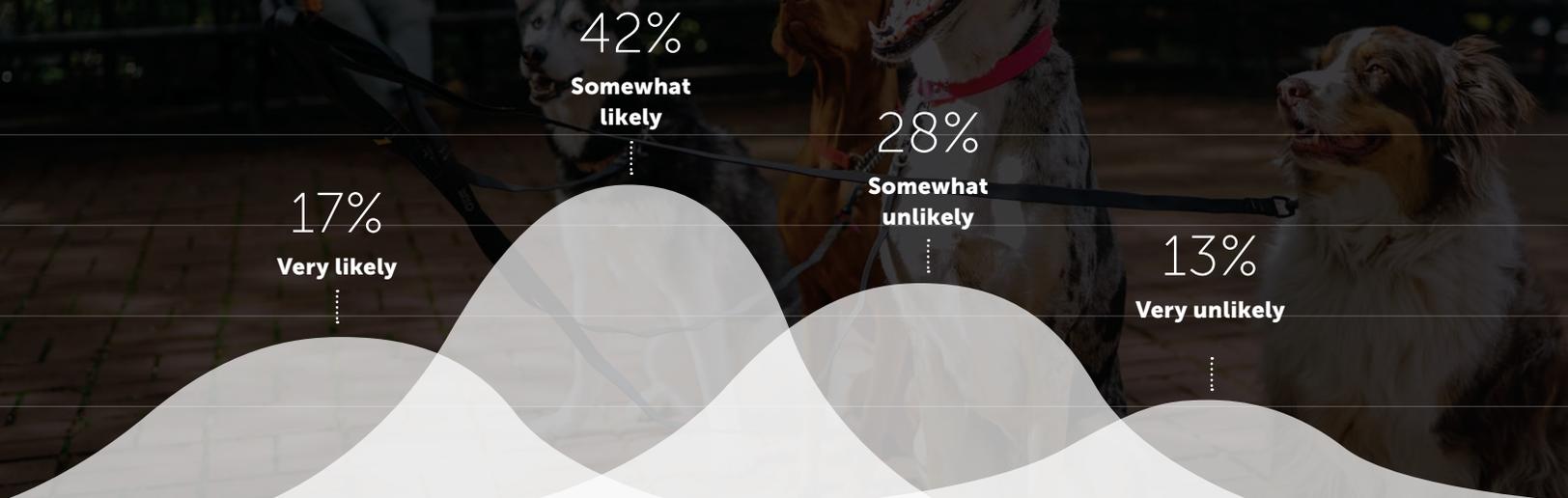
### Average Salary Expectations



## However, Many Are Still Considering Earning Extra Income Through Side Gigs

This year, 59% of college seniors said they are likely to get a job in the “gig economy” to supplement their main income compared to 2018 when 64% of college seniors surveyed said they would likely do this.

*After you graduate, how likely are you, if at all, to get a job in the “gig economy” to supplement your main income? Meaning, a temporary or freelance job, such as driving for a rideshare service or walking dogs.*





## SECTION 5

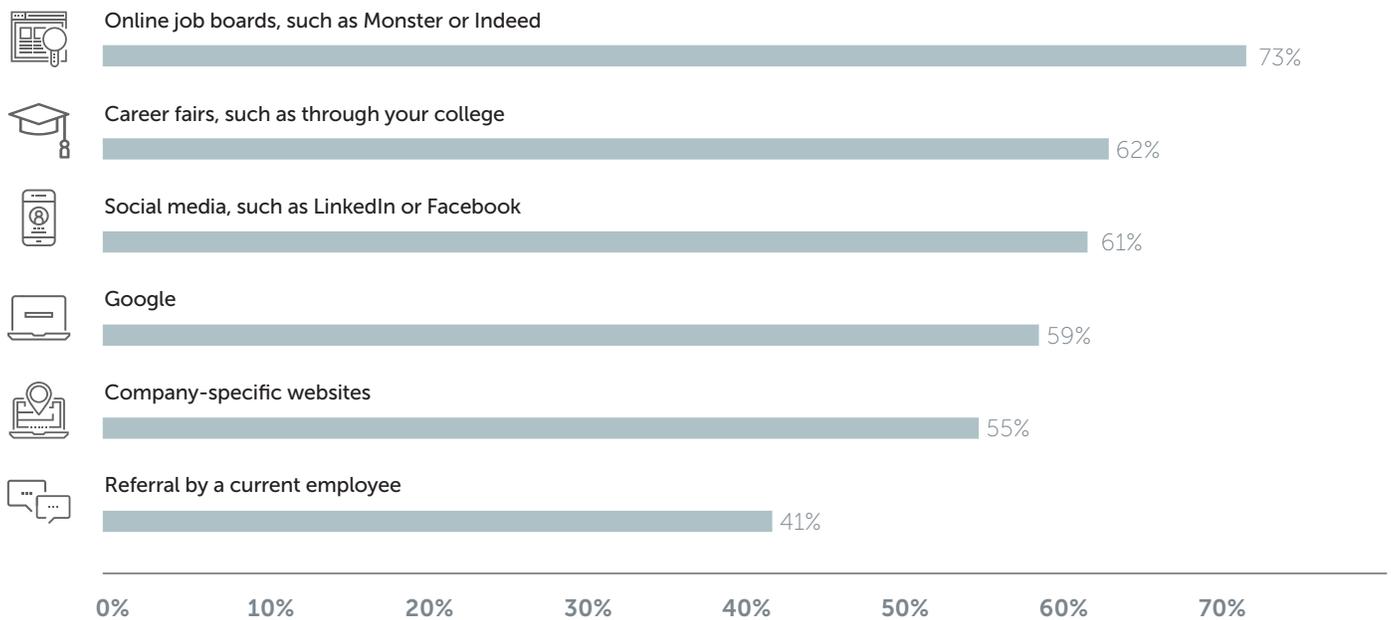
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What Are Gen Z's Expectations for Candidate Experience?



# Online Job Boards, Career Fairs and Social Media are the Top Ways College Seniors Search for Jobs

Which of the following, if any, have you ever used to search for jobs?



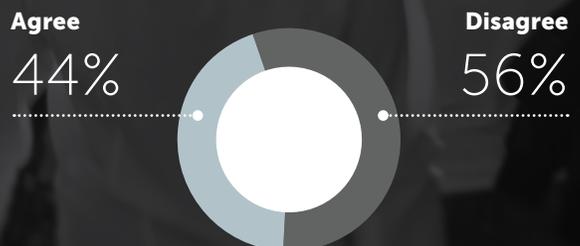
## However, There is Frustration with Searching on Online Job Boards

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The majority of the search results from job boards that I've used are irrelevant or not a good fit for me.



## Recruiters Are Divided on the ROI of Posting on Job Boards

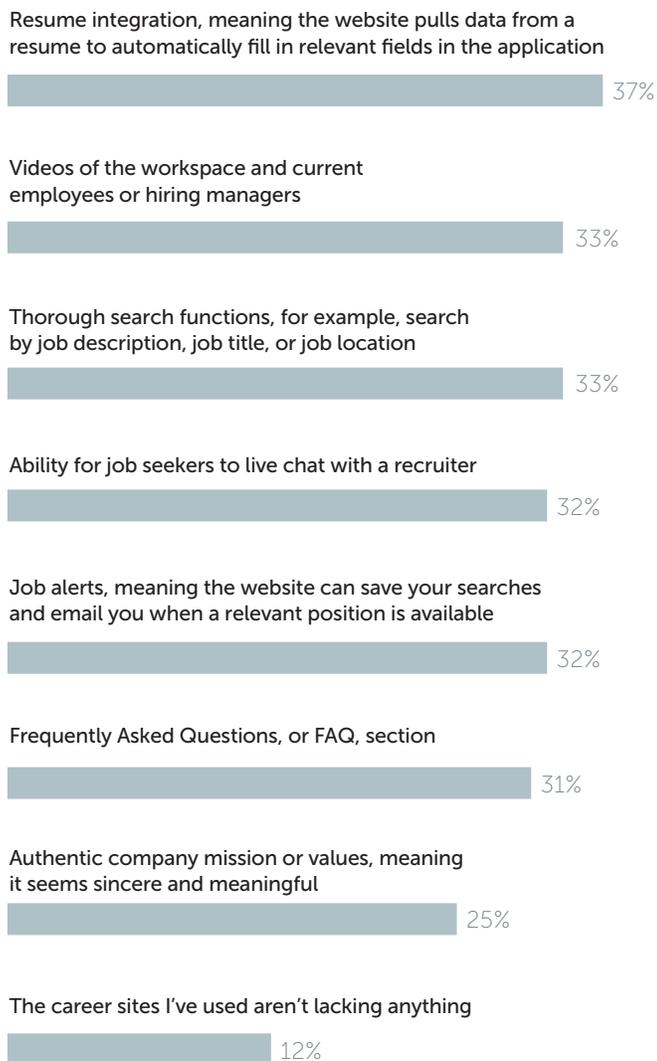
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The money my company spends on advertising on job boards is not worth it for the candidates we hire as a result.



# 81% of Recruiting Professionals and 88% of College Seniors Think Career Websites Are Lacking Key Features and Functionality

## College Seniors:

Thinking of the career websites you've used to browse jobs, which of the following characteristics, if any, do you feel they are lacking?



## Recruiters:

Thinking of your company's careers website, which of the following characteristics, if any, do you feel are lacking?



## The Majority of College Seniors Won't Lock Down a Job Until May or Later

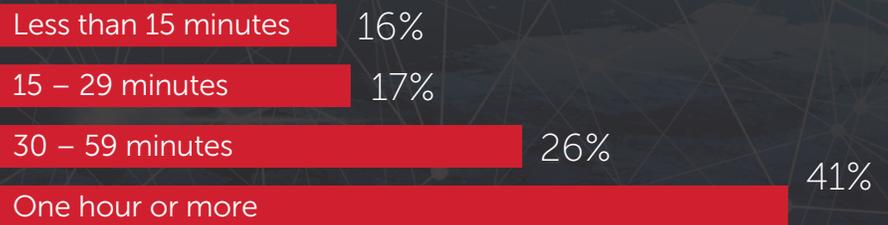
According to iCIMS' data, the majority of jobs that the class of 2018 were hired into, were not posted until **May through September**.

This may mean that even if college seniors start to apply to jobs before their spring graduation, most graduates won't land a job until after they graduate in May or a few months later.

If college seniors start to apply to jobs before their spring graduation, **most graduates won't land a job until after they graduate in May or a few months later.**

## Live Chat Bots and Text Messaging Could Save Recruiters an Hour a Day Spent Screening Candidates

*When recruiting entry-level candidates, in a typical day, approximately how much time would you estimate you spend on the phone conducting initial or screening interviews?*



**Average: 56 minutes**

# 95% of Companies Have Taken Steps to Overcome the Increased Challenge of Hiring

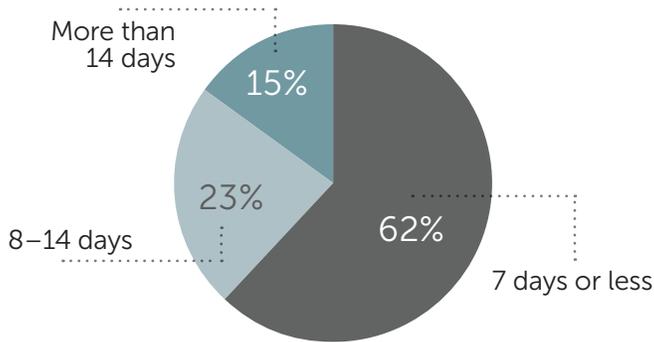
Many companies have invested in improving their candidate experience and increasing employee offer packages or perks to help bring in top entry-level candidates.

*Which of the following, if any, has your company done to make filling entry-level positions less challenging?*



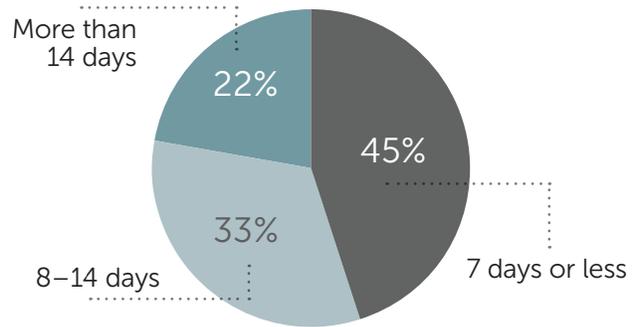
## College Seniors Expect Quick Communication After Applying and Interviewing

*Approximately how many days after applying for a specific position do you anticipate hearing from the employer?*



**Average: 9 days**

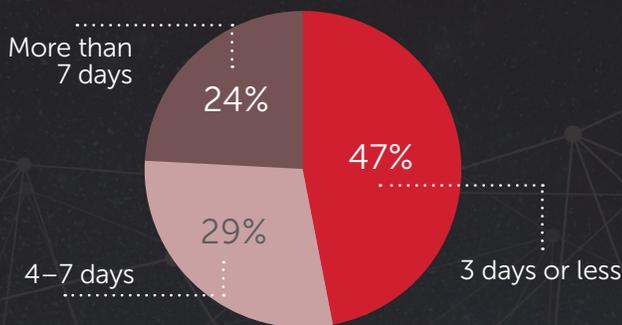
*If you hadn't received a response from a company, approximately how many days after a job interview would you move on to considering other jobs?*



**Average: 12 days**

## Recruiters Say on Average They Extend Offers 8 Days After an Interview

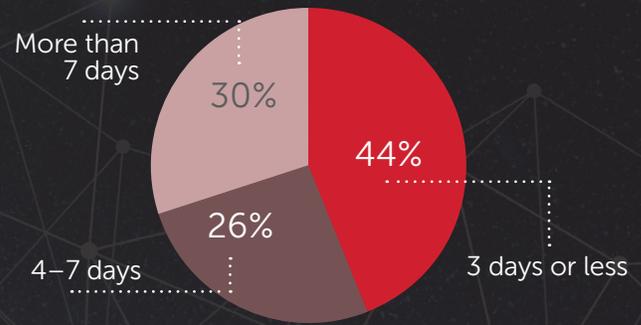
*On average, approximately how many days after an interview, if any, do you extend an offer to potential hires?*



**Average: 8 days**

## After 16 Days it's Safe for College Seniors to Assume They Didn't Get a Job

*If your company had not responded, on average, approximately how many days after a job interview is it safe for an applicant to assume that they didn't get the job?*



**Average: 16 days**

## 90% of Recruiters Say Their Company Has Policies in Place to Protect Applicants' Personal Data

*Which of the following policies, if any, do you have in place to protect job applicants' personal data? Meaning, personally identifiable information, such as name, address, or Social Security number. (Among those whose company has policies in place to protect job applicants' personal data)*

We tell candidates up front how their data will be used



We allow candidates to obtain a copy of their data upon request



We tell candidates up front who their data will be shared with



We allow candidates to delete their own data



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%

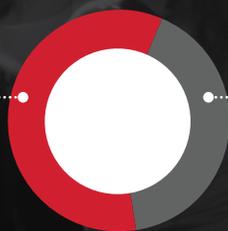
## Candidate Experience Matters – Candidates Are Likely to Leave a Negative Review Online if They Have a Bad Job Application Experience

*How likely or unlikely would you be to leave a negative review of a company online if you had a bad job application experience? For example, on a review site, such as Glassdoor.*

*Compared to 5 years ago, how much more or less likely are applicants to write a negative review of your company online as a result of having a bad job application experience? For example, on a review site, such as Glassdoor.*

Likely

59%



Unlikely

41%

Likely

52%



Unlikely

48%

Many recruiting professionals are convinced if a candidate feels any part of the hiring process is less than professional, they will tell others about it and possibly hurt the company's reputation. That makes it increasingly important for hiring managers to routinely review their talent acquisition processes to ensure standards are consistently being met.



# Class of 2019 Report

## How Employers Can Attract Gen Z Talent

### Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted among 500 U.S. college seniors and 500 U.S. human resources or recruiting professionals, between March 14 and March 27, 2019, using an email invitation and an online survey.

### About iCIMS' System Data

iCIMS' system data is drawn on a database of more than 75 million applications and three million jobs posted per year by more than 4,000 customers. iCIMS customers represent a broad swath of the U.S. economy, with expansive geographic, industry and occupational representation. Entry-level hires and candidates include people who had a graduation year listed as 2016, 2017, 2018.