



**Bridge the gap:  
Reveal the perspectives of  
today's generation and  
hospitality employers**

# YHS EMPLOYER RANKINGS REPORT 2020

HEIDI LEE & LEA CAMPAGNI  
MARCH 2020

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The YHS Employer Rankings Report is an integral part of the Young Hoteliers Summit held at EHL every year. To create a voice for these young hoteliers in today's talent market, we have created a survey that collects their opinions, especially on what they want to see in terms of recruitment and talent development.

This report compiles and examines the data retrieved from the YHS Employer Rankings Survey 2020. The report focuses on several sectors that are motivational factors in the context of employee retention, training and development, employee empowerment, career aspirations, and job search methods. The report ends with a ranking of the most preferred employers in the industry.

Following the key findings of this report, it is recommended that employers encourage cross-departmental training and focus on Career Path and Advancement possibilities as a means to retain employees. This report highlights the fact that for employees, employee empowerment means greater flexibility and support from management. Furthermore, respondents pointed out that for many of them, the internship experience yielded a negative influence on their intent to pursue a career in that same profession.





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# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

## *The Young Hoteliers Summit*

In 2010, five students from the École Hôtelière de Lausanne founded a small committee with a great purpose: to bring together established professionals and aspiring leaders of the hospitality industry to share ideas and knowledge which would accelerate progress in the industry. Since then, YHS has established itself as the largest student-run hospitality summit in the world. Every year, YHS welcomes approximately 30 speakers, student delegates from over 40 world's leading hospitality institutions, as well as members of the media, and other external guests at the summit. Building on a different theme each year, YHS serves as a platform for insightful and engaging debates and discussions on the industry's hottest topics.

## *YHS Employer Rankings Survey*

The YHS Employer Rankings Survey aims to improve opportunities for young talent in the industry by highlighting the expectation gaps between employers and these talents. This year, we have been able to collect 1150 responses from students and alumni of over 270 universities around the world. Findings are summarized in the rankings report, which further investigates on most discussed topics: Training and Development, Employee Empowerment and Job Promotion Methods. By doing so, the report seeks to encourage companies to re-examine their position within the job market.

## *Methodology*

Based on last year's results and latest industry trends, a questionnaire was developed by updating the YHS Rankings Survey 2019. To this effect, the added focus was given towards new questions regarding Employee Empowerment, Training & Development, and Internship Experience.

The survey was distributed by Hosco, the STR SHARE Center, YHS delegate schools, and the YHS Marketing department on social media.

The report presented a number of limitations which include:


- The majority of the respondents were students, with only a limited number of alumni. The insufficient sample size of alumni increases the difficulty in identifying significant relationships from the data and concluding the results precisely.
- Several major changes were made on the question types and options this year, in order to increase the quality of the data collected. Thus, we were unable to draw parallels and trends between the results of previous years due to these modifications.

# DEMOGRAPHICS



**1,150**  
Responses 

**93%** **7%**  
Students Alumni

**102**   
Nationalities

**278**  
Participating Schools 

Average Age  
**22**

  **34% vs 66%**







# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

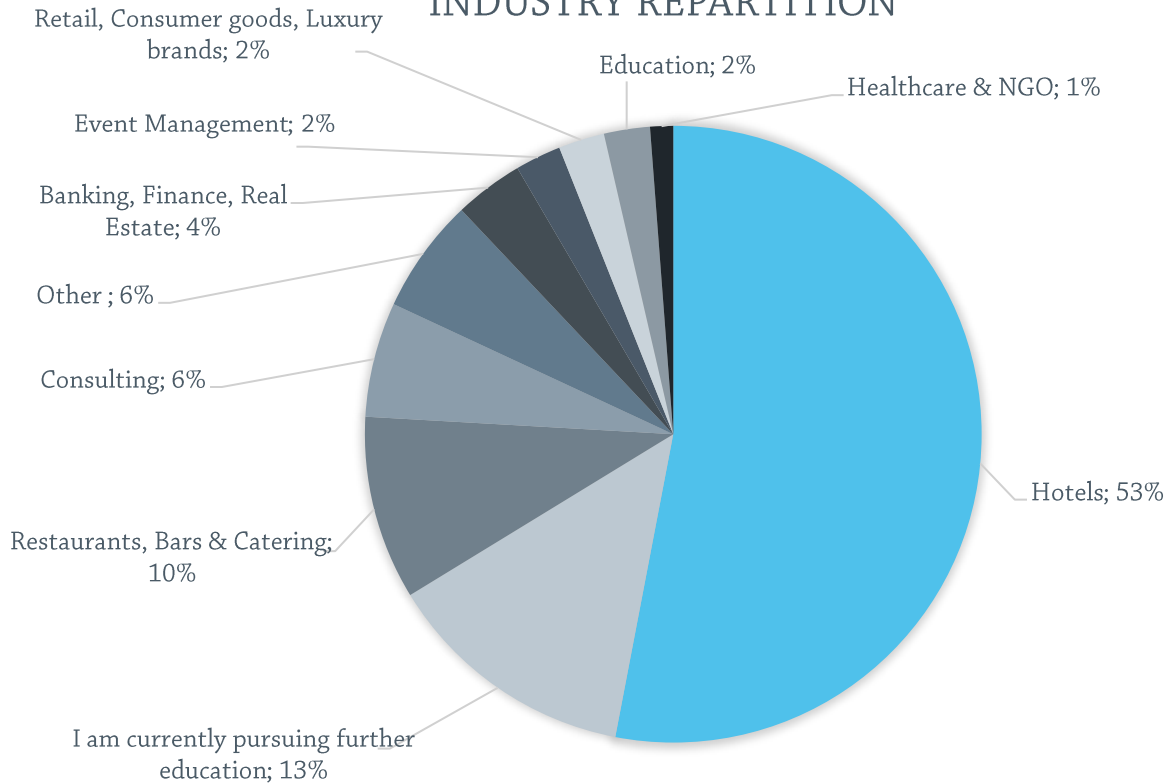
This section considers what were the alumni aspirational career paths when they were students. It also identifies the industry sectors they are currently engaged in and the factors that would impact their retention as employees.

They were asked to select the motivational factors that have/would have impacted their decision to stay with their first employer.

To better distinguish between positive and negative responses, a diverging stacked bar chart was chosen.

# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

## INDUSTRY REPARTITION



For this year's report, the survey provided more detailed information concerning the industry repartition.

The traditional hospitality sector is now separated into Hotels and Restaurants, Bars & Catering, and new sectors have been added.

## ***Industry Repartition***

### ***Key Findings:***

- 53% of alumni decided to pursue their careers in Hotels, and the following two predominant sectors are Restaurants, Bars & Catering (10%) and Consulting (6%).



# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

## *Alumni preferred sector when they were students*

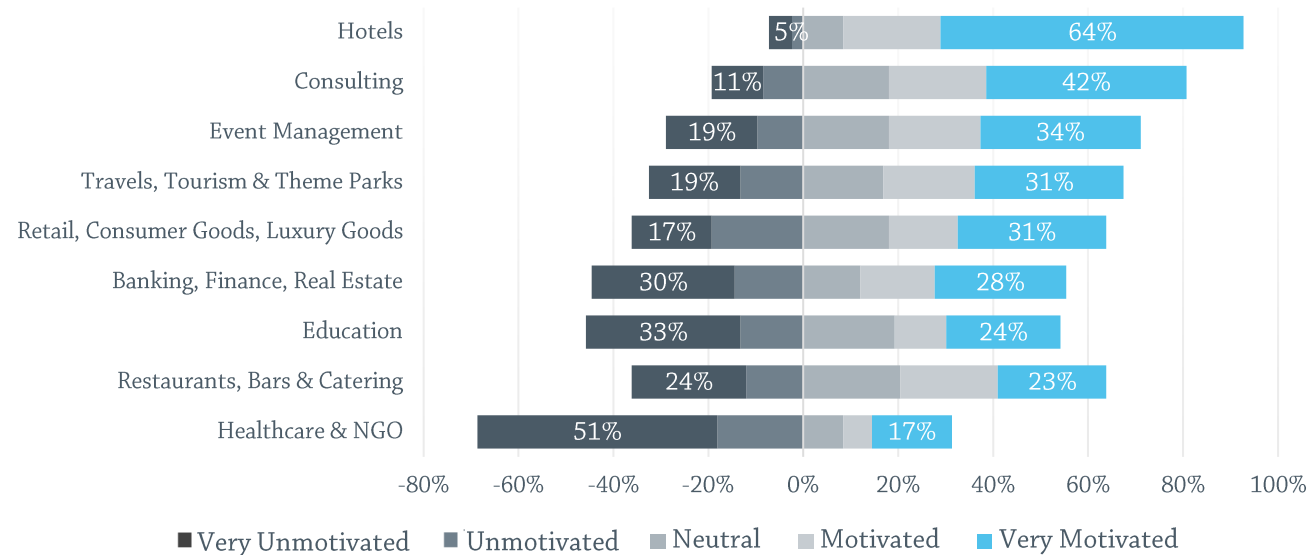
### *Key Findings:*

- The top 3 sectors in which alumni were extremely motivated are: Hotels (64%), Consulting (42%) and Event Management (34%).
- Respondents reflected positively towards their motivation to work in Hotels, with 93% of motivated respondents.

### *Further analysis:*

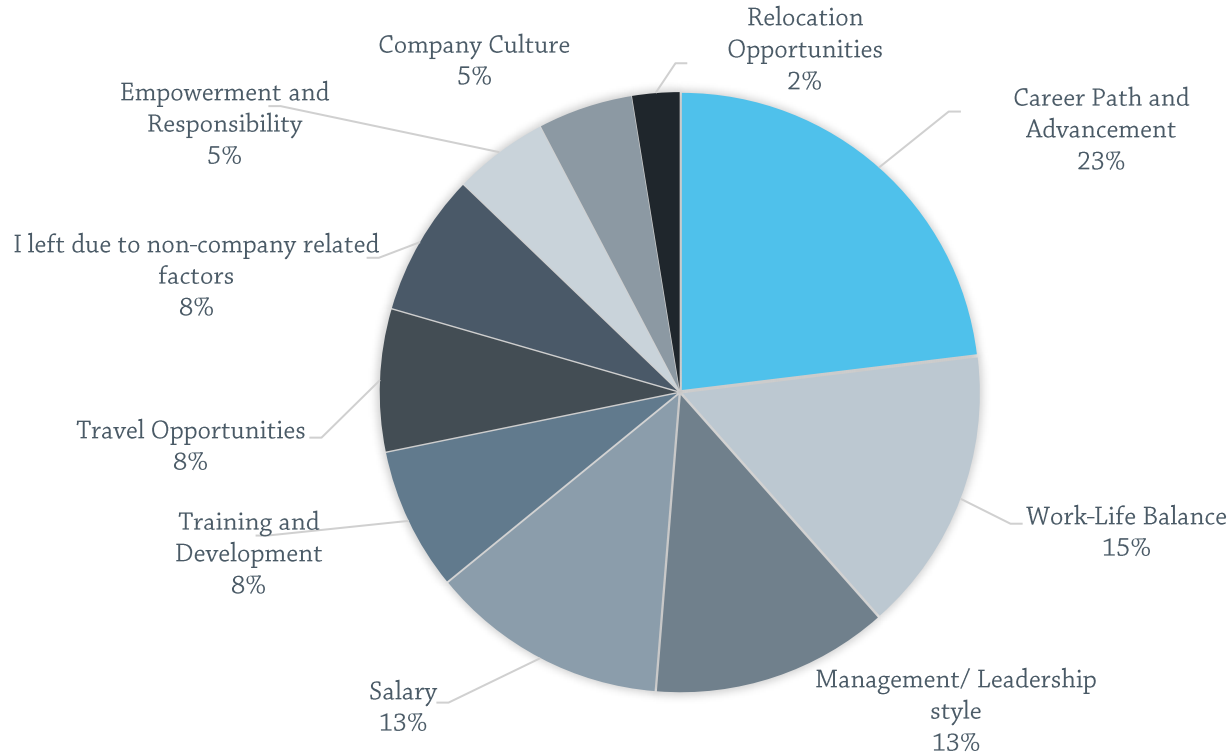
- Nearly 73% of the alumni who were very motivated and motivated to pursue in Hotels are currently working in the same sector.
- Even though alumni were not very motivated towards Restaurants, Bars & Catering when they were students (23%), almost all of them remained in the same sector.

PREFERRED CAREER PATH OF ALUMNI WHEN THEY WERE STUDENTS



# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

I WOULD HAVE STAYED FOR AN IMPROVEMENT ON...



To analyze motivational factors, we decided to differentiate between alumni still working in their first company after graduation and the ones who already left their first employer.

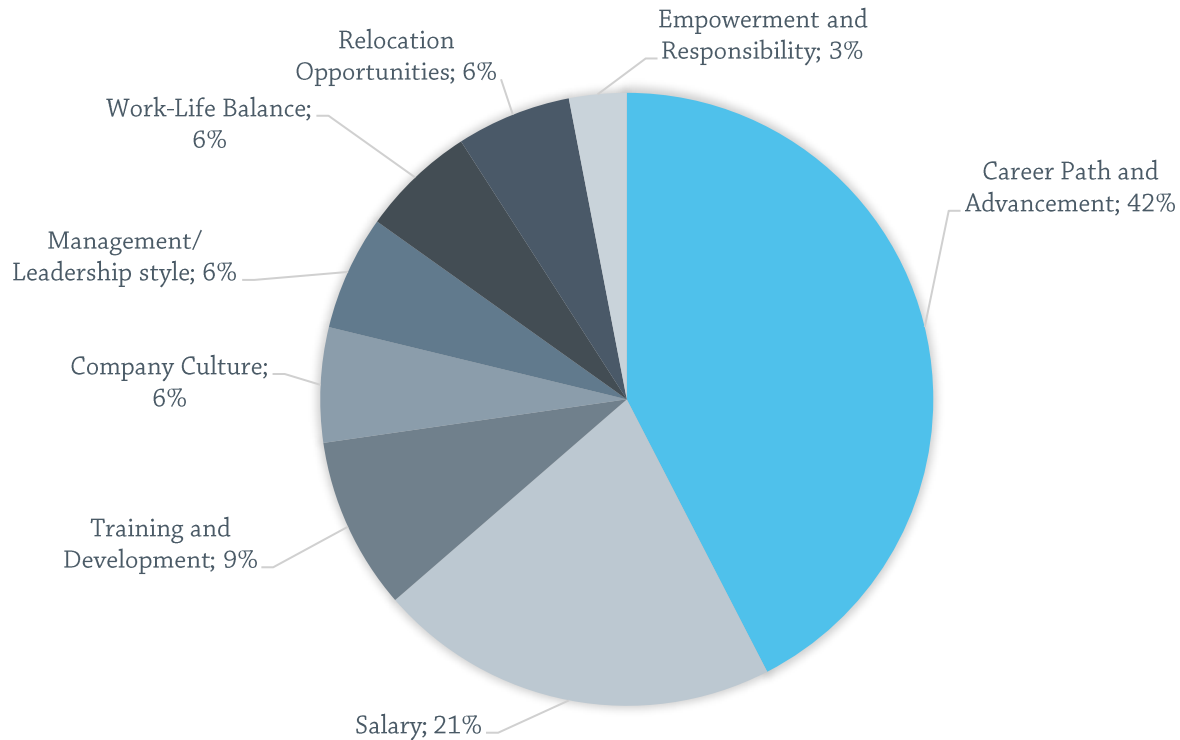
## Motivational Factors

### Key Findings:

- More than half of our respondents (54%) are not working anymore for their first company and stayed on average 2.3 years in this company.
- Four factors that would have encouraged alumni to stay with their first employer are: Career path and Advancement (23%), Work-life Balance (15%), Salary (13%) and Management style (13%).

# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

I WILL STAY FOR AN IMPROVEMENT ON ...



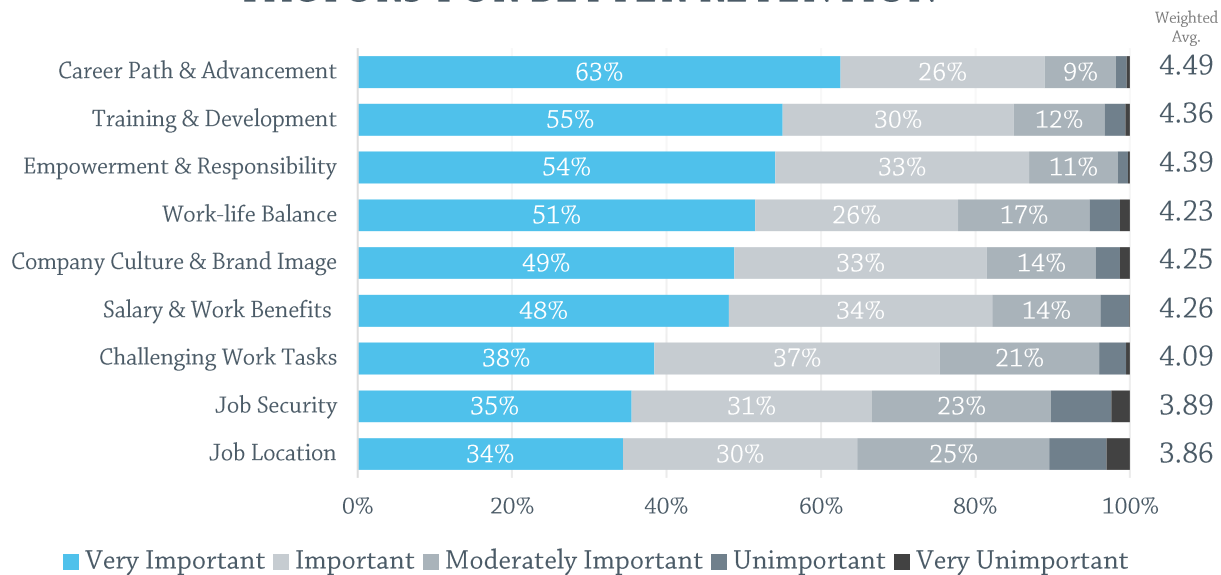
## Motivational Factors

### Key Findings:

- Alumni who are still with their first employer claim that they will stay longer if a positive change is made on Career Path and Advancement (42%) and Salary (21%).
- Career Path and Advancement is the most impactful motivational factor on employees' motivation to remain in a company.

# EMPLOYEE RETENTION

## FACTORS FOR BETTER RETENTION



## Factors for better retention

### Key Findings:

- The most influential factor when choosing a future job is Career Path & Advancement (63%), followed by Training & Development (55%) and Empowerment & Responsibility (54%).
- The top 5 ranked motivational factors are intrinsic motivational factors. On the other hand, extrinsic motivational factors such as Salary & Work Benefits, Job Security and Job Location rank sixth, eighth and ninth respectively.

### Further analysis:

- Career Path & Advancement continues to be the most crucial factor in choosing future employment possibility and impacting the decision to stay or leave a company compared to 2019.
- Comparatively Empowerment and Responsibility is less important in employee retention. Moreover, many other factors have now higher importance than Salary & Work Benefits.





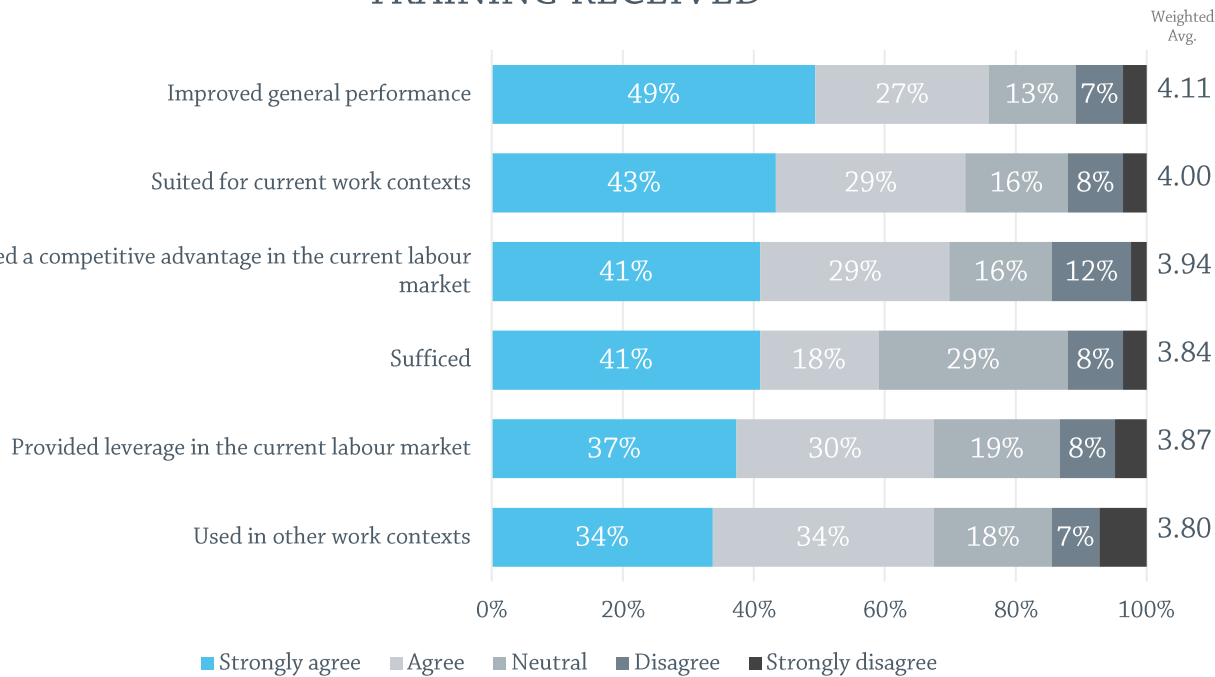
# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

In this section, the report assesses the satisfaction alumni have concerning the training received in their company and how the current Training & Development programs can be improved.

Young graduates were asked to rank the statements under each subject from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

## TRAINING RECEIVED



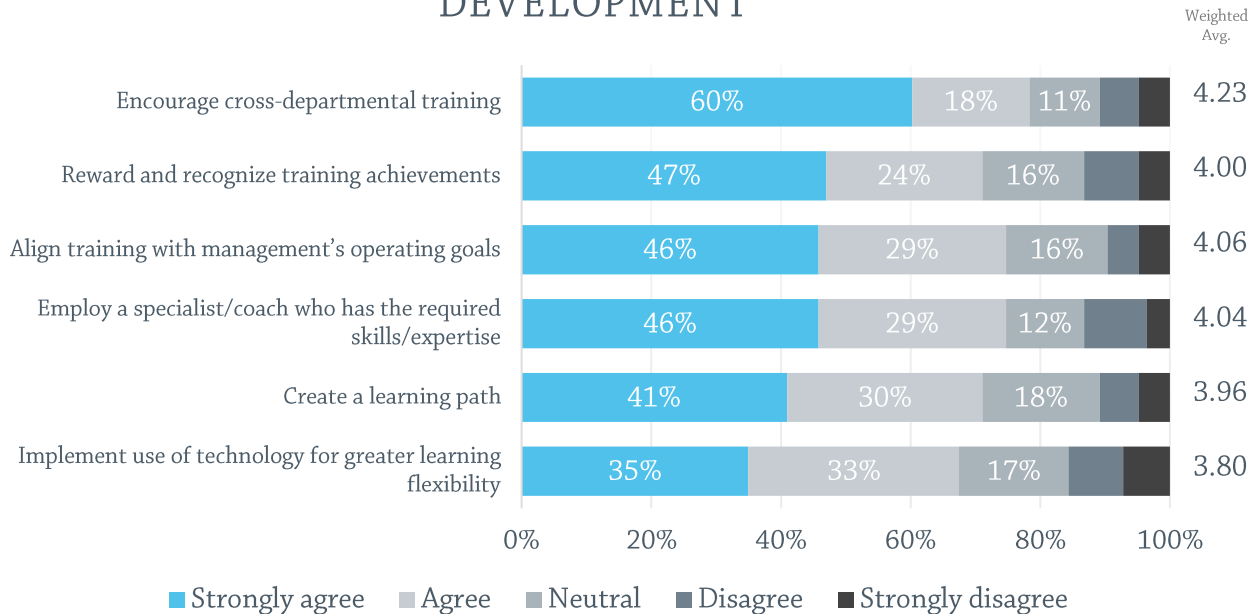
## Training Received

### Key Findings:

- Globally the training received yielded positive impressions from the young graduates' perspective.
- 14% of respondents disagree with the usefulness of training outcomes in other work contexts. This can show that respondents perceived the training outcomes as not transferable and too specific to the company.

# TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT



## Training and Development programs improvement

### Key Findings:

- Alumni seem to greatly value cross-departmental training, 78% of respondents agree that improvements should be made in that area.
- The other points of improvement for training and development programs are given equal importance, except the use of technology for greater learning, which is rated slightly lower by respondents (35% of strongly agree).



# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

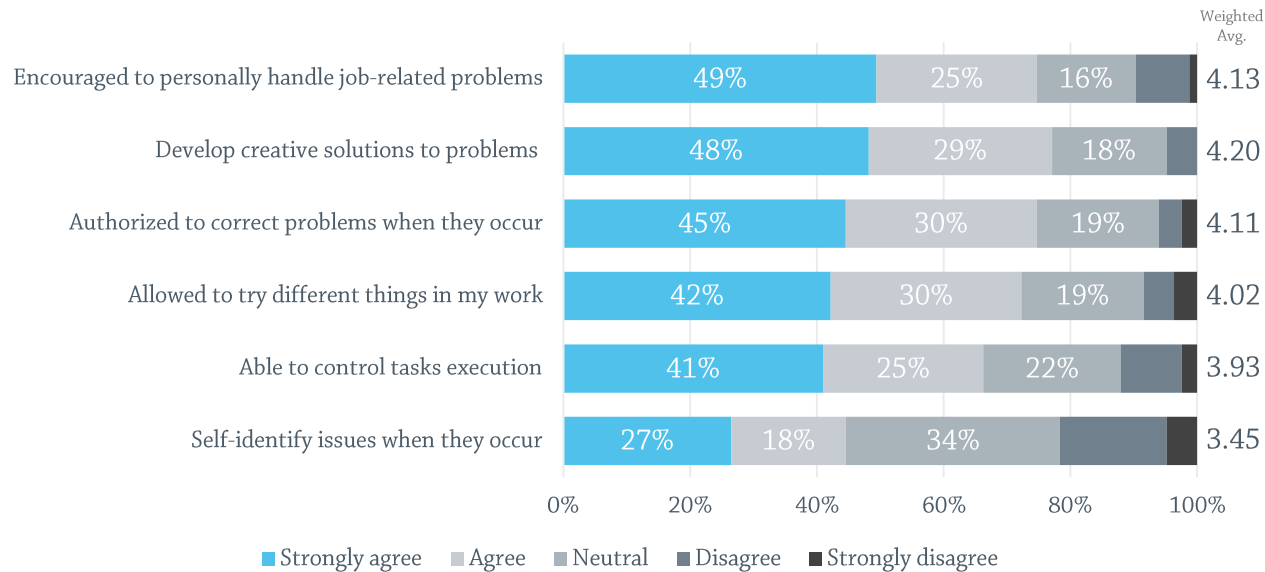
In this section, we are assessing alumni satisfaction concerning employee empowerment. That being how much scope companies give them to exercise.

Young graduates were asked to rank the statements under each subject from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).



# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT



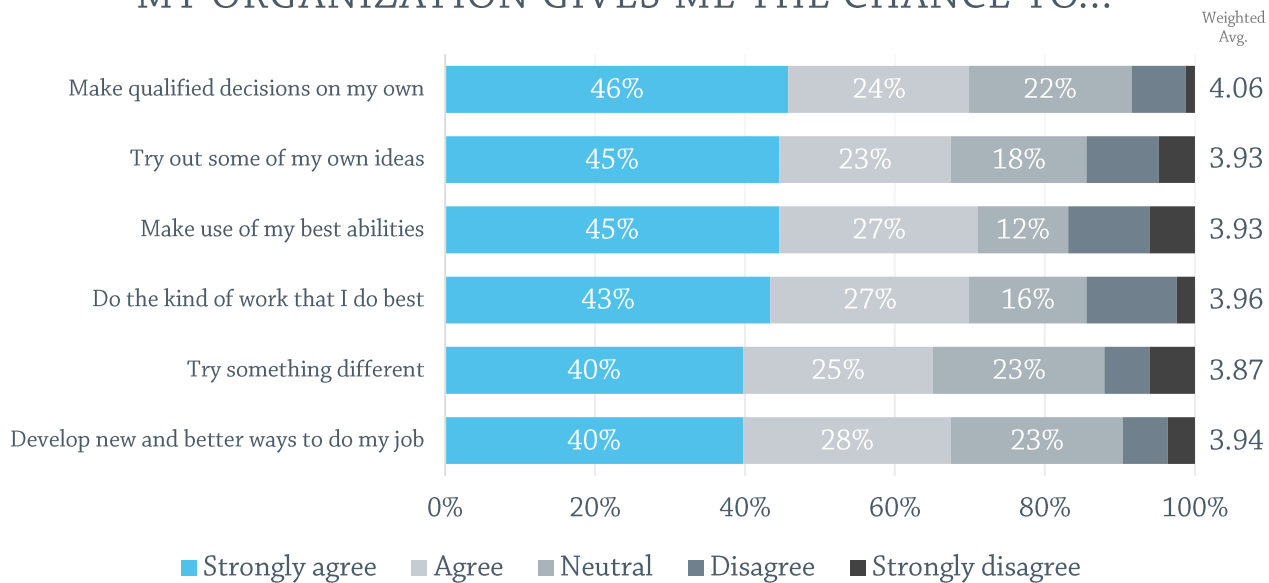
## Employee Engagement

### Key Findings:

- For the alumni who took the survey, employee empowerment means being allowed to be creative when dealing with a work-related problem, being given authority, flexibility and being encouraged to handle problems on their own.
- However, not needing approval from managers to handle a problem is not perceived as much as a means of employee empowerment.

# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## MY ORGANIZATION GIVES ME THE CHANCE TO...



## *My organization gives me the chance to...*

### Key Findings:

- Organizations, from the alumni point of view, mostly allow for flexibility, autonomy and learning.
- Some of the alumni feel like they are not able to make use of their best abilities (17% of them disagree and strongly disagree) or try something different in their work setting (12% of them disagree and strongly disagree). These factors can impact employee satisfaction, employee commitment, and therefore employee effectiveness.



# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

To gain further insights from young graduates, we offered them the possibility to answer a few additional questions, to which 77% of our alumni respondents accepted to answer.

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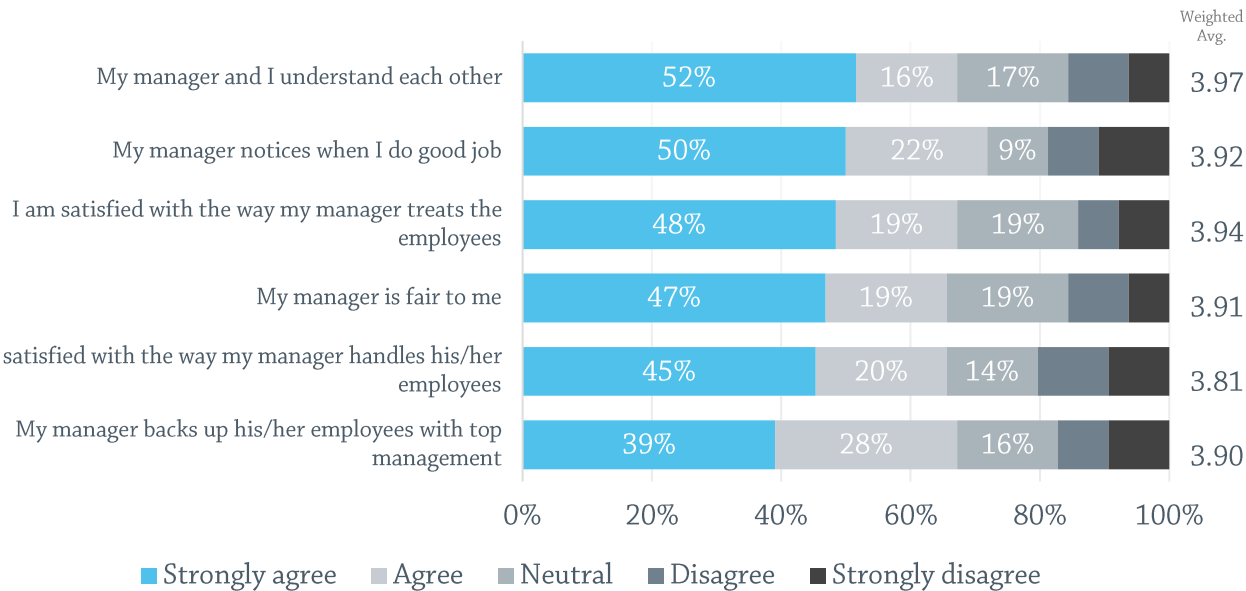


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# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGERS



## Relationship with Managers

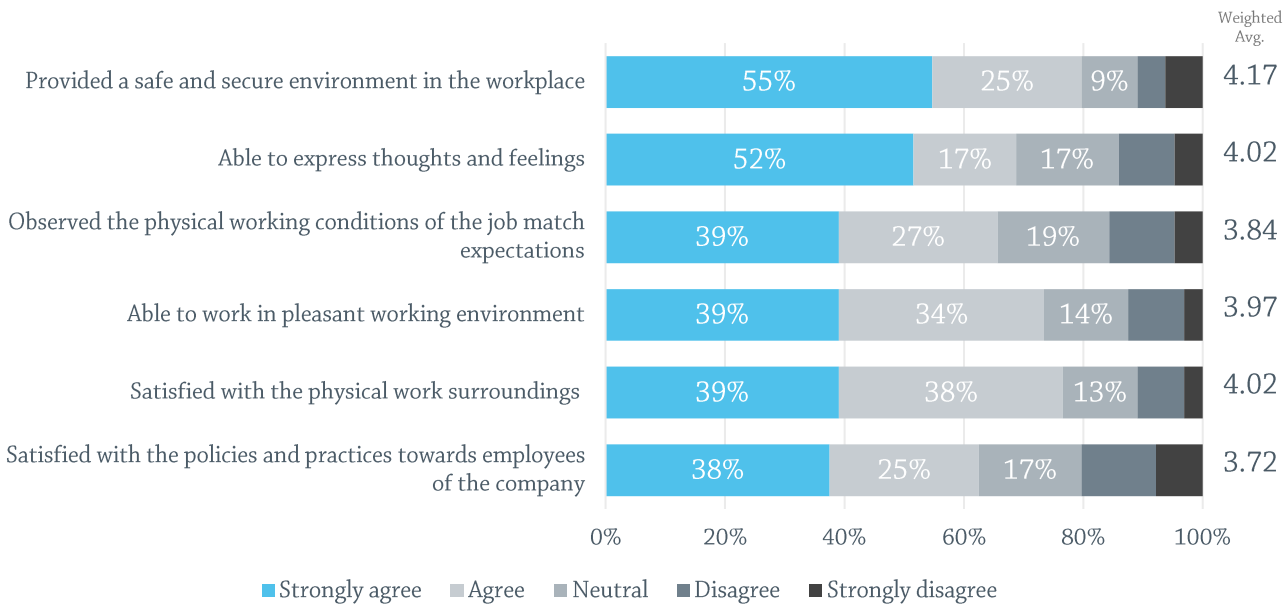
### Key Findings:

- Employee-manager relationships are tricky and essential for a good functioning firm. Here graduates seem quite satisfied by their managers, yet there still are some dissatisfied respondents (about 15% to 20% of the sample).



# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## WORK ENVIRONMENT



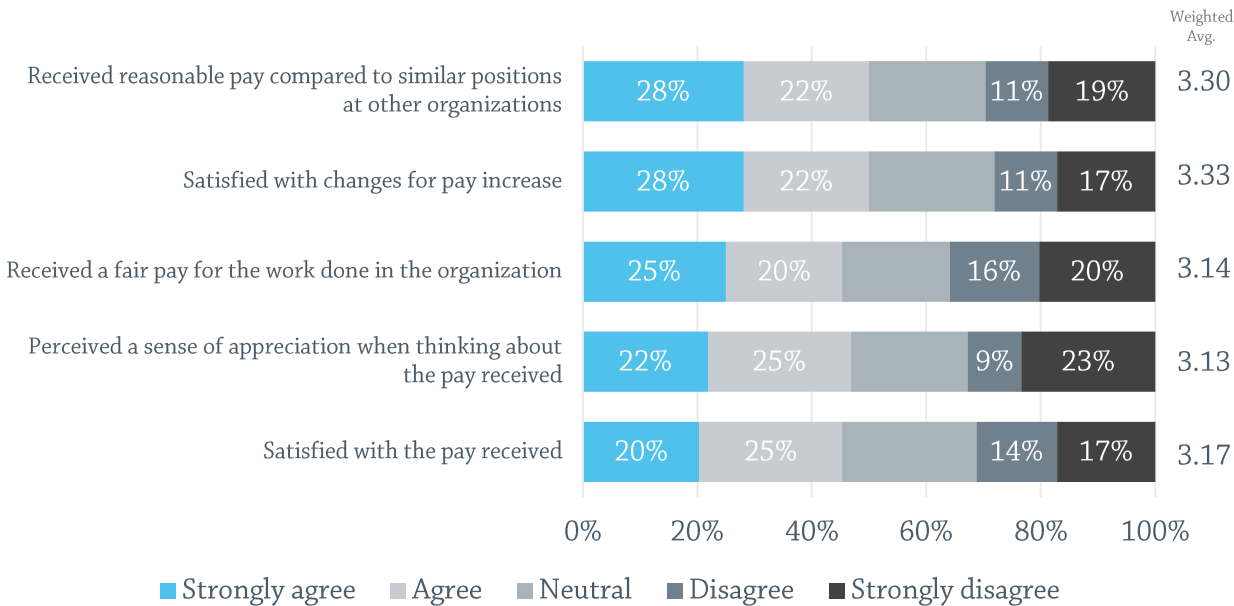
## Work Environment

### Key Findings:

- 80% of alumni agree on the safe and secure environment that their company provides and 69% of them feel accepted and listened to.
- The job's working conditions and policies & practices towards employees of a company record the highest dissatisfaction (20% of disagree and strongly disagree).

# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## PAY



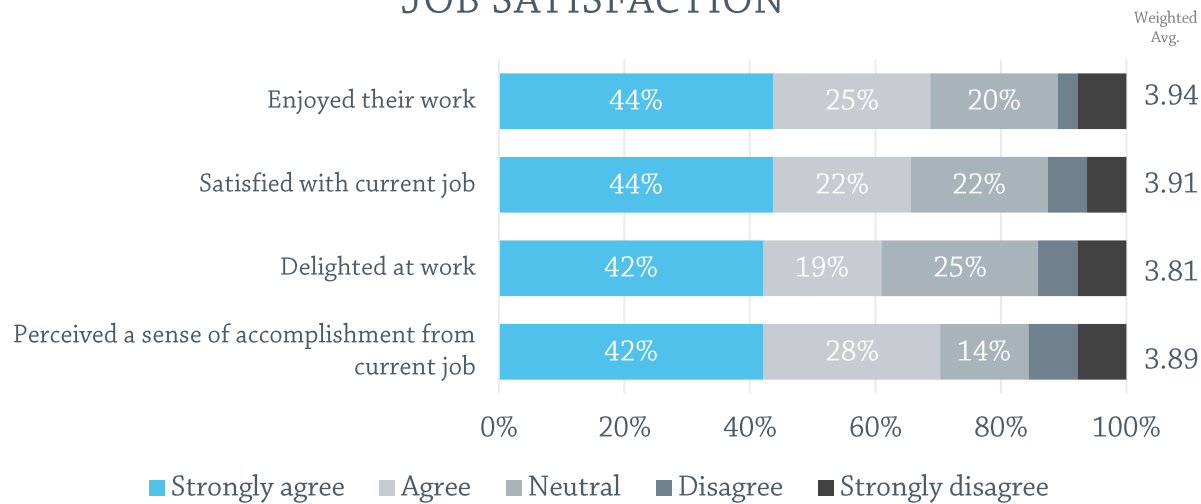
## Pay

### Key Findings:

- A high number of respondents (23%) say that they do not feel appreciated by their company when they think about what they are paid.
- 36% of respondents claim their pay is not fair for the work they do.
- Amongst the several questions asked to alumni analyzed in this section, this pay related question is the only one with the lowest percentage of respondents agreeing strongly to the different pay related statements, as well as the highest percentage of respondents expressing strong disagreement with these statements.

# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## JOB SATISFACTION



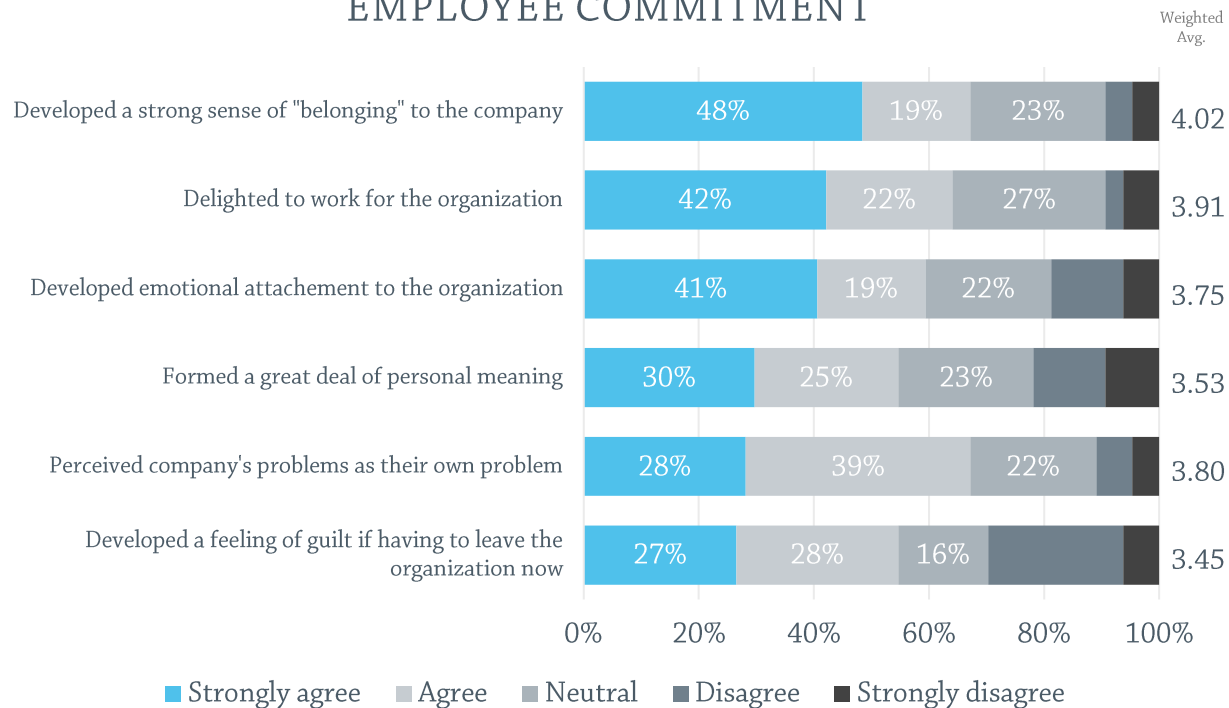
## Job Satisfaction

### Key Findings:

- A good number of young graduates express their satisfaction and contentment of working and belonging in their company (44%).
- Only a few seem like they do not fit in their organization and express their dissatisfaction (relatively constant percentage of dissatisfied and strongly dissatisfied respondents across the mentioned statements– around 15%).

# EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

## EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT



## Employee Commitment

### Key Findings:

- Employees seem to have different views on what employee commitment means. We can see that results are spread quite differently among the different employee commitment statements.
- Some have a more emotional approach, with feeling company's problems as their own (67% agree), feeling "emotionally" attached (60% agree) or feeling guilty about leaving their company (55% agree). While others see working in a company as an accomplishment, with a sense of pride to be working in that organization (64% agree) or a sense of belonging (67% agree).



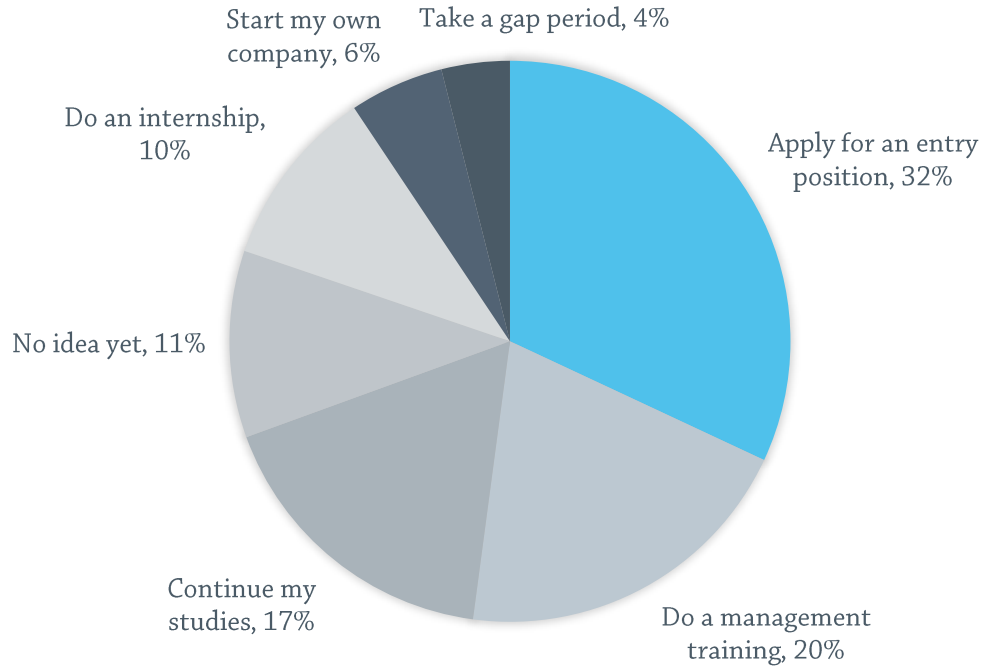
# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

This section focuses on the career aspirations of students, by first identifying their post-graduation plan, as well as their anticipated employment duration with their first employer.

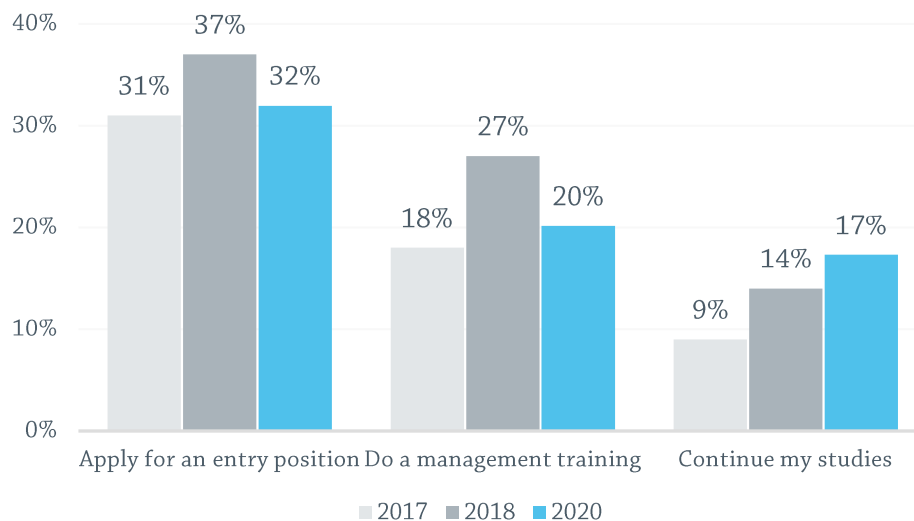
This year, we take a closer look at students' expected takeaways from their first employer so that employers may better understand the viewpoints of the young employees of today.



## STUDENTS' FUTURE ASPIRATIONS



## YEAR-ON-YEAR TRENDS



# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

## Post-Graduation Plan

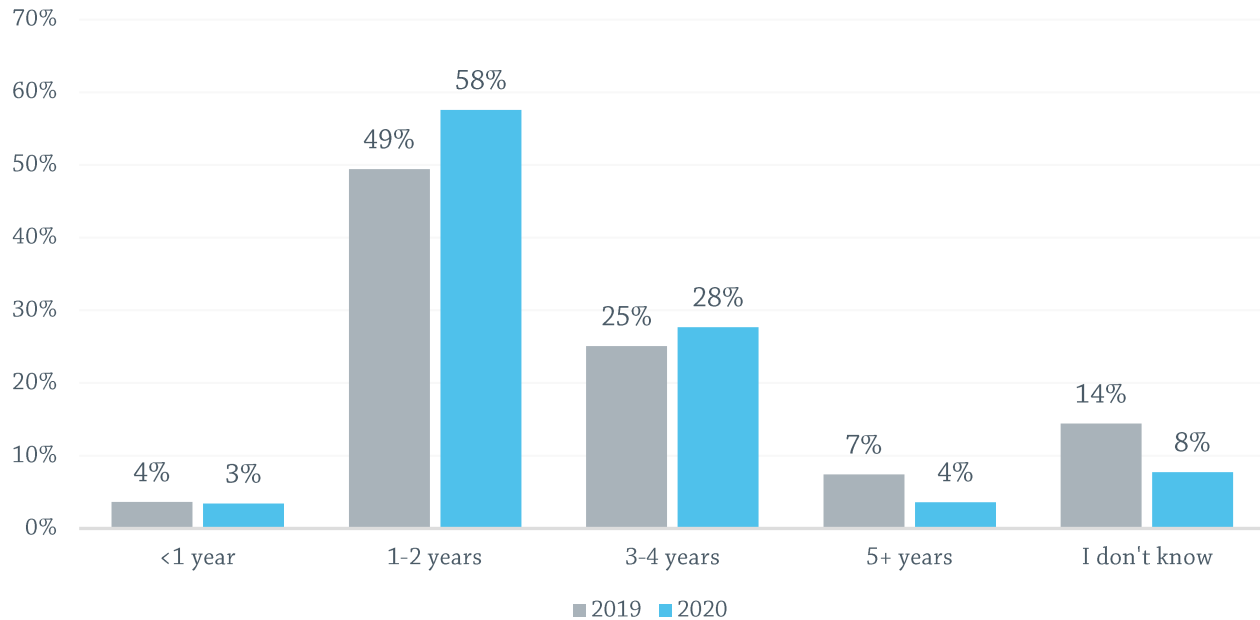
### Key Findings:

- Within all the student respondents, 32% of them wish to apply for an entry position, and 20% of them would do a management training. Over 68% of the students aim to start working after graduation.
- Compared to 2018, the percentage of students planning to work after graduation has dropped 11%, from 79% to 68%. This may foresee a drop in workforce availability in the coming years.
- There is a steady increasing trend on students planning to continue their studies after their current program.
- Doing an internship dropped 2 places (from 3rd in 2019 to 5th chosen option in 2020), giving way to "Continue my studies".



# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

STUDENTS ANTICIPATED EMPLOYMENT DURATION WITH THEIR FIRST EMPLOYER



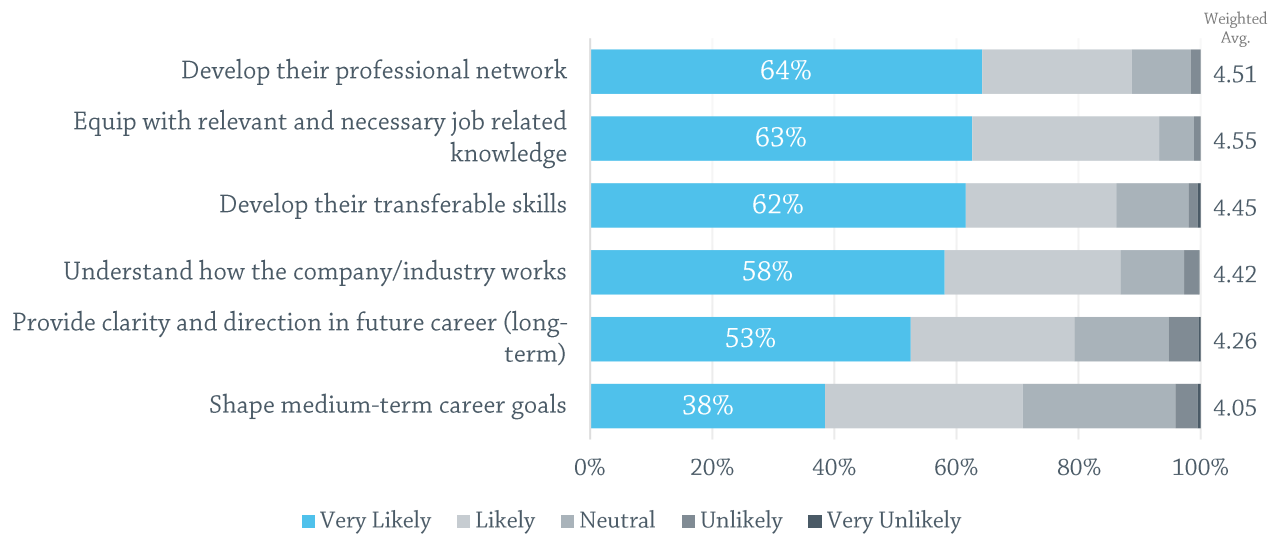
## Students Retention Rate

### Key Findings:

- 58% of the students plan to stay at their first company for 1-2 years.
- Nearly 90% of the students are expecting to leave their first company within 5 years. The percentage has increased by 11% compared to last year. Companies may anticipate a higher turnover rate of students at the beginning of their careers.
- More students have shown a more precise idea of their employment duration in their first company, with an increase of 6% compared to 2019.
- The chart has shown a similar trend between 2019 and 2020, which allows us to say that students still have the same vision concerning their future and interactions with companies.

# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

## EXPECTED TAKEAWAYS FROM EMPLOYERS



## Students' Expected Takeaways

### Key Findings:

- More than 95% of respondents agree that all the above options are important takeaways from their first jobs.
- 94% of the respondents placed the highest preference on "Equipping with relevant and necessary job-related knowledge" as their very likely and likely takeaway.
- Students put a higher emphasis on shaping long-term career goals rather than medium-term career goals, as we can see a higher weighted average of 4.26.



## CAREER ASPIRATIONS

This year, to further explore the influence of internship experiences on students' career decisions, new questions were applied. We first distinguished between respondents whose internship experiences have or have not impacted their decisions on future careers. It also evaluates the relationships among the factors that have affected their career intentions.

To better distinguish between positive and negative responses, a diverging stacked bar chart was chosen.

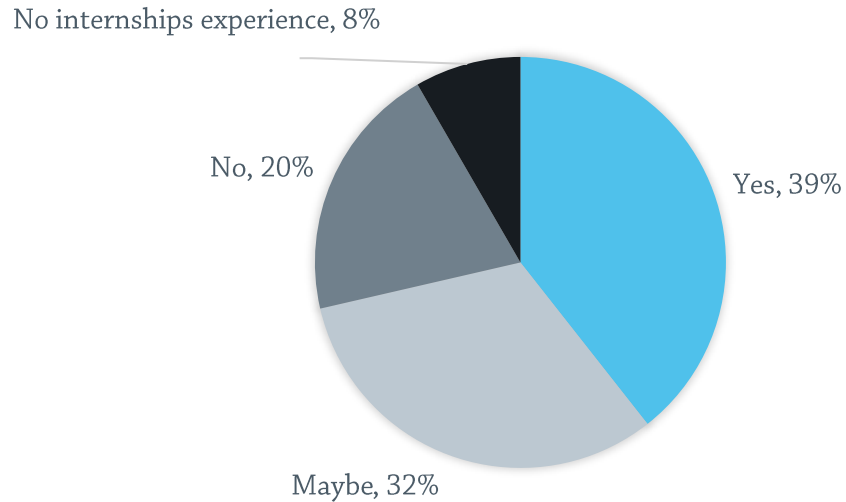
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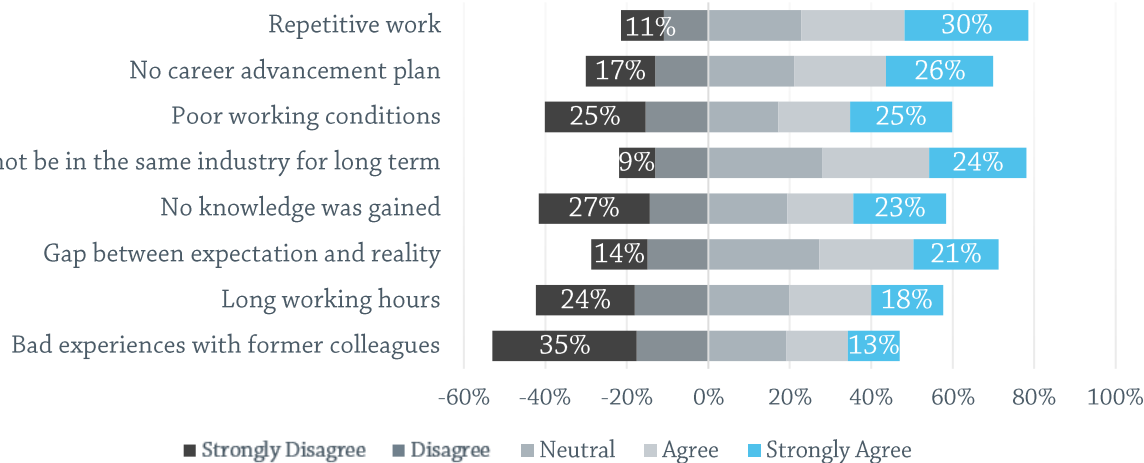
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The hospitality network



## DID YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AFFECT YOUR CAREER DECISIONS



## FACTORS IMPACTED CAREER DECISIONS



30

# CAREER ASPIRATIONS

## *Influence of internship experience to career decisions*

### **Key Findings:**

- 20% of the respondents do not wish to work/are currently not working in the same industry as their most recent internship.
- The top 3 reasons respondents have chosen are: Repetitive work (79%), Would not be in the same industry for long term (78%), and Gap between expectation and reality (71%).
- Repetitive work (30%) has impacted most of the respondents' decisions in staying in the same industry, followed by No career advancement plan (26%) and Poor working conditions (25%).
- 35% of respondents claimed the relationship between students and employers as having the least influence on their career decisions.



YOUNG  
HOTELIERS  
SUMMIT

# EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

This section investigates students' motivation to work in the following sectors on a five-point scale: Hotels, Restaurants, Bars & Catering, Travels, Tourism & Theme Parks, Consulting, Event Management, Banking, Finance, Real Estate, Retail, Consumer Goods, Luxury Goods, Education, Healthcare & NGO.

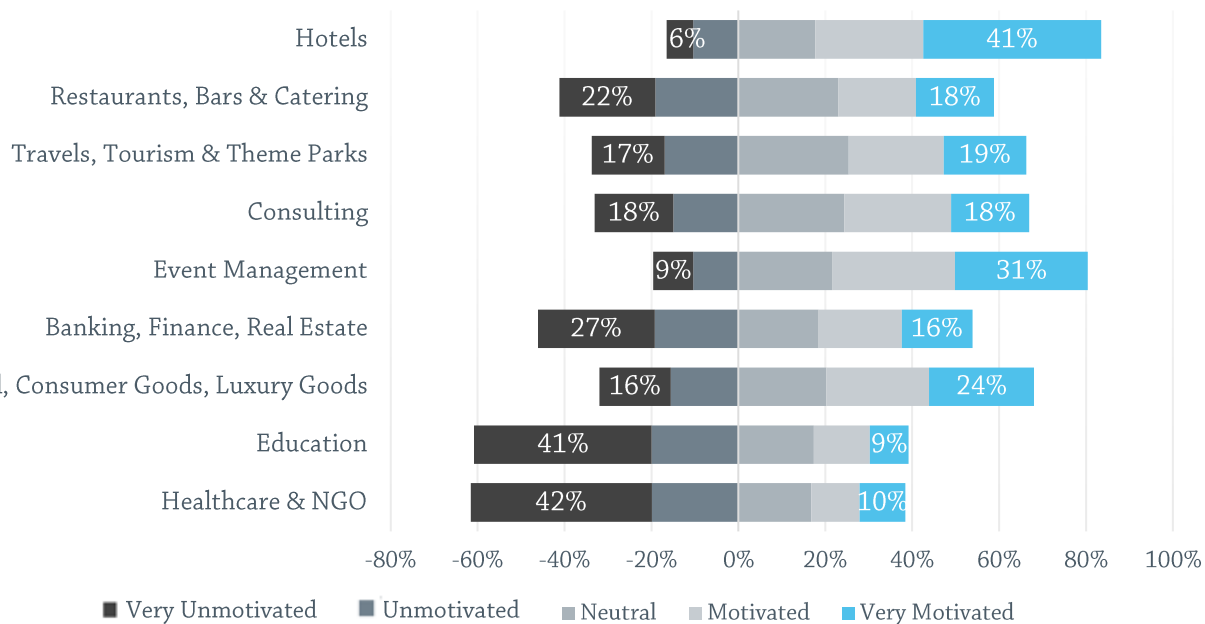
To better distinguish between positive and negative responses, a diverging stacked bar chart was chosen.



YOUNG  
HOTELIERS  
SUMMIT

# EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

STUDENTS' MOTIVATION FOR VARIOUS HOSPITALITY SECTORS



## Students' Motivation for Various Hospitality Sectors

### Key Findings:

- The top 3 sectors that students are extremely motivated are: Hotels (41%), Event Management (31%) and Retail, Consumer Goods, Luxury Goods (24%). This reveals that hospitality students no longer purely dedicated to the hotel sector but also attracted by other customer-centric sectors.
- Banking, Finance, Real Estate share a 50-50 distribution on negative and positive responses from students.
- Healthcare & NGO (42%) and Education (41%) show similar extremely unmotivated responses, implying that a large proportion of students are not interested in these two sectors.



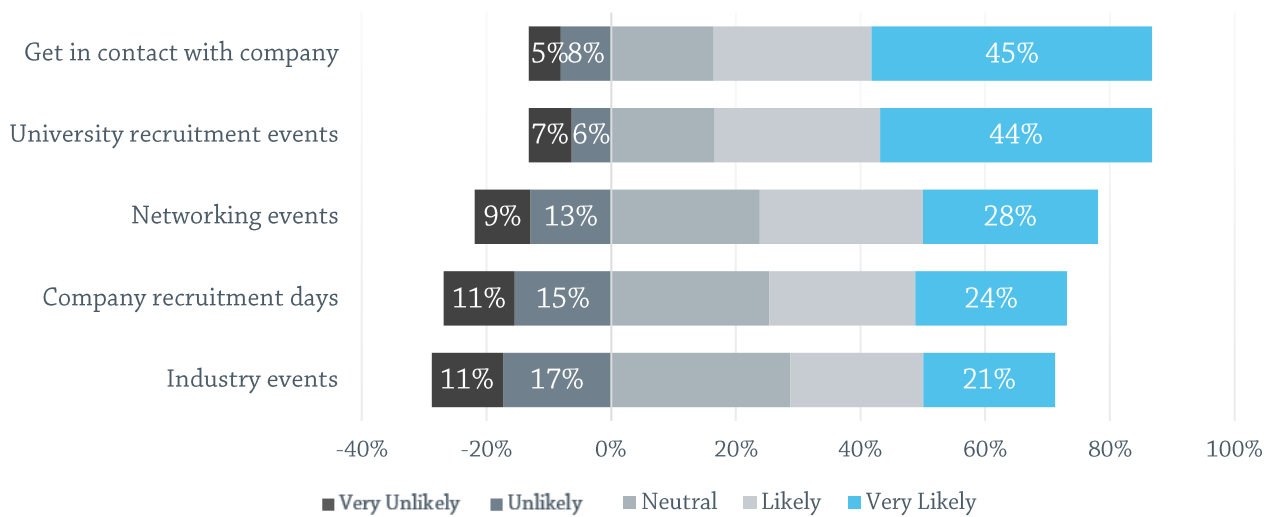


## JOB SEARCH METHODS

This part of the report determines the respondents' frequency of using various job search channels, both offline and online. To scale the responses, a Likert scale is adapted in the survey. In addition, figures from last year have been extracted to draw a better comparison in the usage trend.



## OFFLINE SEARCH CHANNELS



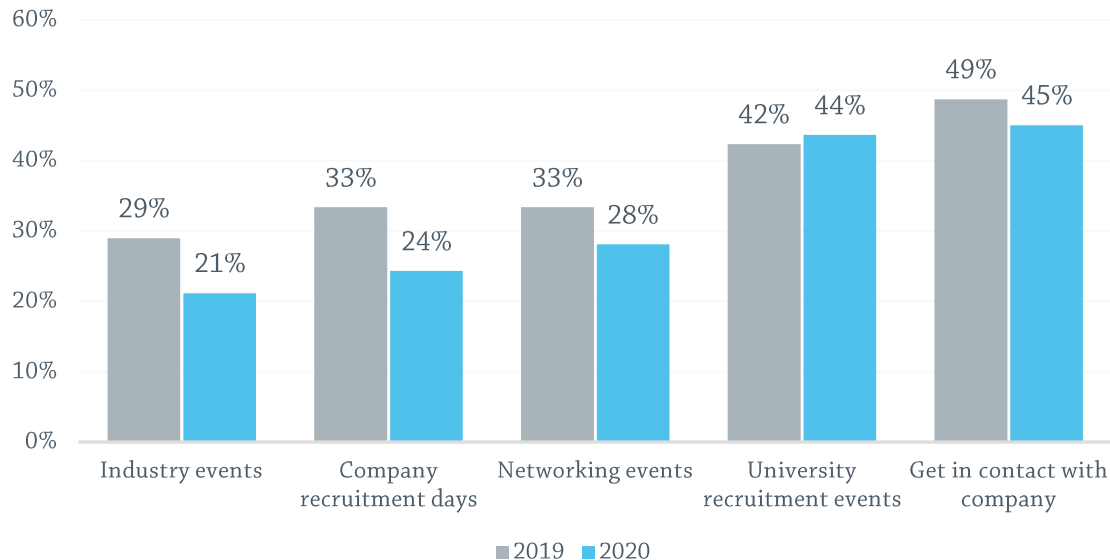
# JOB SEARCH METHODS

## Offline Search Channels

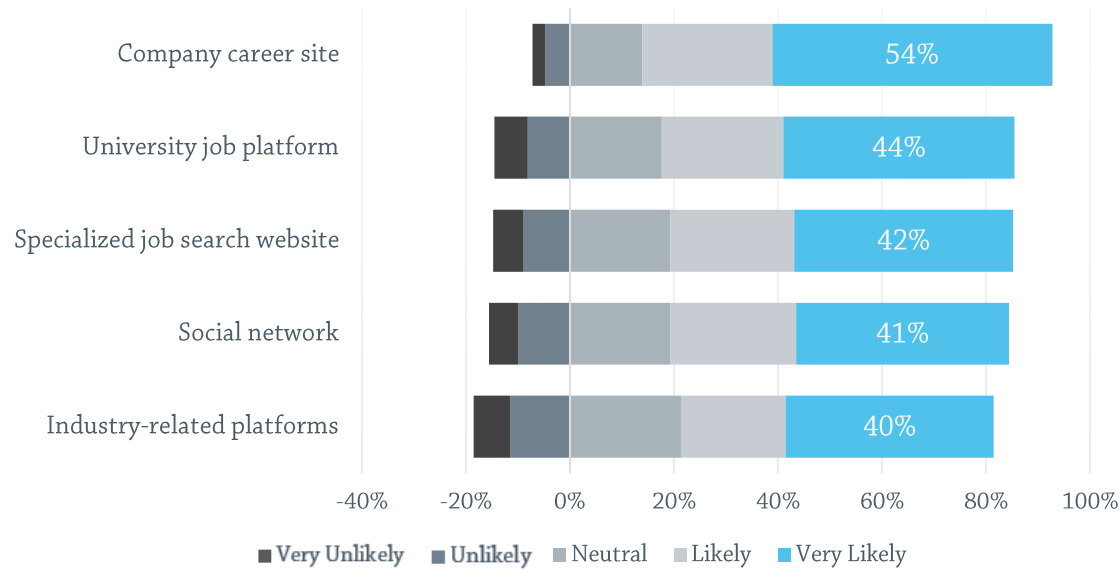
### Key Findings:

- Get in contact with the company (45%) is the most preferred offline channel to find new jobs.
- 28% of respondents responded negatively with participating industry events.
- Except University recruitment events (+1%), all other methods showed a decreasing trend of respondents very likely to utilize compared to 2019. This has implied that students are relying less on offline job search methods to seek employment.
- Company recruitment days showed the largest drop in respondents that are very likely to use (24% in 2020 vs. 33% in 2019). This has shown that students and alumni have less interest in attending recruitment days.

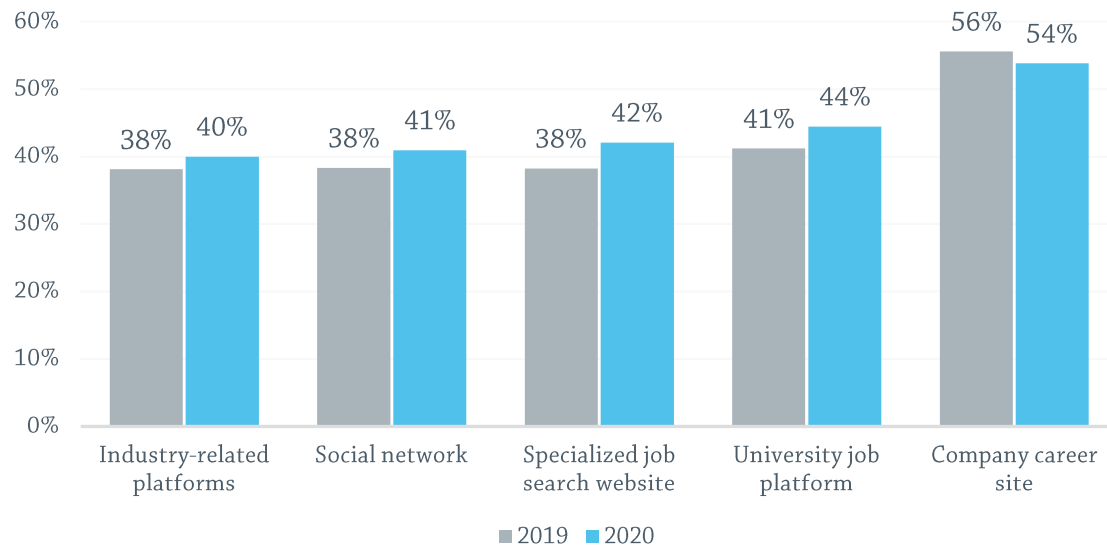
## YEAR-ON-YEAR TRENDS



## ONLINE SEARCH CHANNELS



## YEAR-ON-YEAR TRENDS



# JOB SEARCH METHODS

## Online Search Channels

### Key Findings:

- Except Company career site (-2%), all other online search methods showed an increasing trend of very likely to utilize by respondents compared to 2019.
- Company career site remained the most popular online job search method (54%) for the two consecutive years.



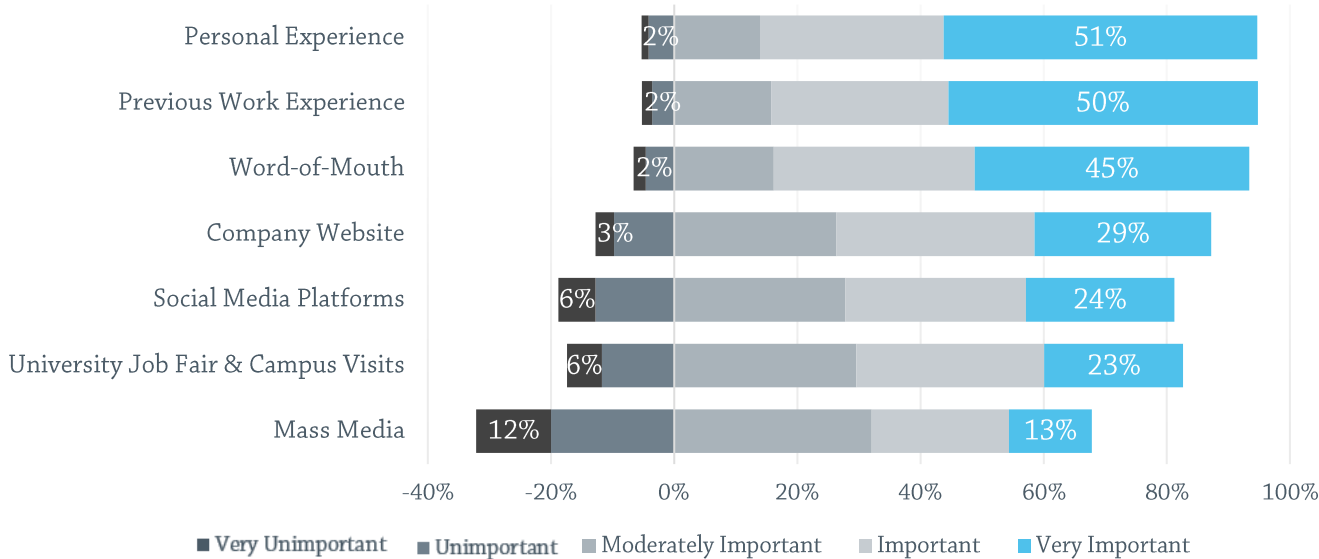
# EMPLOYER PERCEPTION

This section depicts the importance of communication & HR practices implemented by employers. It identifies to what extent it impacts young graduates' opinions about a hotel company. This year, on-campus options are aggregated.

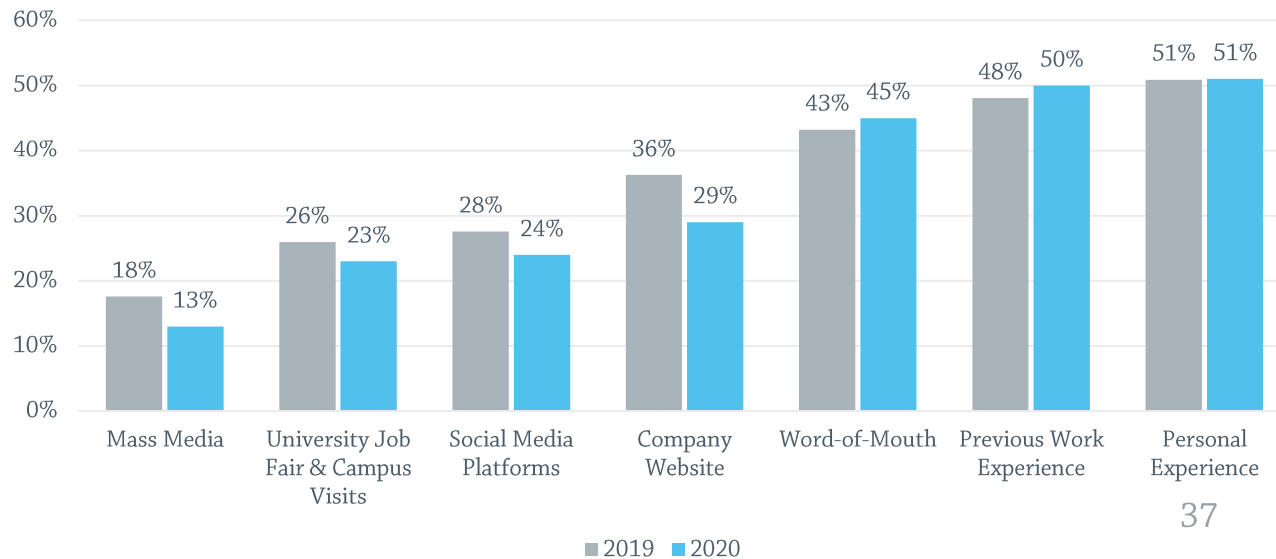
To better distinguish between positive and negative responses, a diverging stacked bar chart was chosen.



## INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ON HOSPITALITY EMPLOYERS



## YEAR-ON-YEAR TRENDS (VERY IMPORTANT)



# EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS

## Influential Factors

### Key Findings:

- Compared to 2019, the percentage of positive responses on Company Website has dropped 7%. This shows that the company website is no longer significant when forming opinions.
- Personal Experience as a Guest/ Customers remains the most influential factor when forming an opinion about a hospitality company (51%).
- 20% of respondents consider Mass Media (e.g. Print, TV, Radio) as the least important influential factor. This has indicated that exposure and interaction between mass media and recipient do not correlate with the new generation's perception of a company.



# EMPLOYER RANKINGS

This section first identifies which hotel segments are students and alumni interested to work for (Luxury/ Upper Upscale, Upscale/ Upper Midscale, Midscale/ Budget). Segments were categorized based on their Average Daily Rate (ADR).

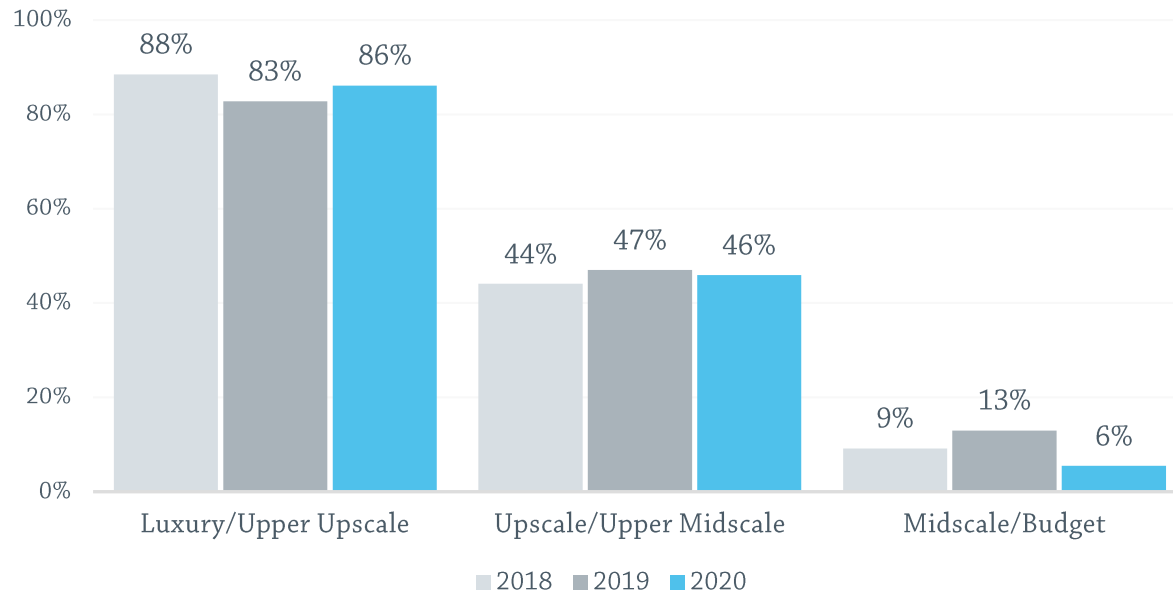
Then, lists of hotel brands were provided to the respondents in order to rank their preference from top 1-3 this year. This ensures accurate data collections and provides insights into individuals' mindsets. In addition, we added a bracket with the brands' parent company for easier navigation. A full list of hotels given by STR was adapted to avoid any possible personal or statistical eliminations.





# EMPLOYER RANKINGS

## PREFERRED HOTEL SEGMENTS



## Preferred Hotel Segment

### Key Findings:

- 86% of respondents who are planning to work/ currently working in the hotel industry prefer to work in the Luxury/ Upper Upscale.
- Midscale/ Budget segments showed a 7% drop, from 13% in 2019 to 6% in 2020.

# EMPLOYER RANKINGS



- 4) Hilton
- 5) Bulgari Hotels (Marriott International)
- 6) Dorchester Collection
- 7) Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group
- 8) Fairmont (Accor)
- 9) W Hotels (Marriott International)
- 10) Rosewood

## *Luxury/ Upper Upscale*

### *Key Findings:*

- Four Seasons has ranked the first for two consecutive years.
- The top 3 rankings have remained unchanged since 2019.
- Among the top 10 desired employers to work for, 4 hotel companies belong to Marriott International (Ritz-Carlton, Marriott Hotels and Resorts, Bulgari Hotels and W Hotels). This could be explained by its wide scope of brands and possible job opportunities, as being the largest hotel chain in the world.

# EMPLOYER RANKINGS



- 4) Movenpick (Accor)
- 5) AC Hotels (Marriott International)
- 6) Novotel Hotels (Accor)
- 7) Double Tree (Hilton)
- 8) Courtyard (Marriott International)
- 9) Wyndham Hotels
- 10) Four Points by Sheraton (Marriott International)

## Upscale/ Upper Midscale

### Key Findings:

- 42% of respondents ranked Hyatt Place as their most desired employer to work for in the Upscale/ Upper Midscale segment.
- Two companies under Accor Hotel Group (Movenpick and Novotel Hotels) are ranked among the top 10 in this segment.
- Movenpick, Novotel Hotels, Courtyard by Marriott and Wyndham Hotels are first-timers on the top 10 list.

# EMPLOYER RANKINGS



- 4) B&B Hotels
- 5) Vienna Hotel
- 6) Ramada (Wyndham Hotels and Resorts)
- 7) Hotel F1 (Accor)
- 8) Toyoko Inn
- 9) Appart'City
- 10) Motel One

## *Midscale/ Economy*

### *Key Findings:*

- Ibis Hotels has once again returned as the most preferred employer to work for in the Midscale/ Economy segment after 2018.
- Accor has continued to dominate this segment with 3 of its brands ranking first, third and seventh place on our Top 10 list

# CONCLUSION

## Key Takeaways

- For alumni, **Employee Empowerment** means being allowed to be creative when dealing with work problems, to be flexible and encouraged to handle problems on their own. However, employee empowerment is not associated with being free from the need of a manager's approval. 22% of alumni respondents can feel empowered and still require their manager's approval to handle a work problem.
- 78% of alumni respondents agree to say that improvements should be made in their current **Training & Development program**, and that companies should encourage more cross departmental training. Related to this finding, around 10% of these same respondents perceive the outcomes of the training received as not useful in other work contexts, showing that what was learnt is not transferable and sometimes overly specific to the company.
- 36% of alumni respondents feel that the **Pay** they receive is not fair for the work they do. The pay section of the report accounts for the highest number of dissatisfied people regarding their earnings received from their employer.
- Career Path and Advancement is the most influential factor in **Employee Retention**. Our alumni respondents put in first place Career Path & Advancement as the most important factor that would encourage or would have encouraged them to stay in the company.
- More than half of the respondents pointed out the negative influence of their previous **Internships Experience** on their intent to enter the profession. The top 3 reasons affected their decisions are repetitive work, would not be in the same industry for long term, and gap between expectation and reality.

# CONCLUSION

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, hospitality companies should...

- **Introduce greater flexibility to promote employee empowerment**  
Encourage employees to handle job-related problems by themselves and grant authorization to correct problems when they occur. In such, employees would feel a sense of accomplishment from their jobs, thus, develop a sense of belonging and build an emotional attachment to the company.
- **Tailor Training & Development programs to allow transferable knowledge learning**  
Create Training & Development programs by encouraging cross-departmental training and align training with management's operating goals. It would enable employees to acquire applicable skills for current/other work contexts and improve general performance.
- **Create personalized career paths to increase employee retention**  
Focus on employee growth and learning by identifying their competencies and career objectives to build a personalized career developing plan cater to their goals. Thus, this would improve employee engagement and increase retention rate.
- **Effectively structure internship programs**  
Ensure the program's objectives are aligned with the organizational requirements and satisfy intern expectations by providing meaningful tasks, recognizing their achievements, and assisting them when necessary.



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The hospitality network

Hosco is one of our distribution partners for the YHS Employer Rankings Survey 2020. Hosco brings together leading hospitality organizations and students from top-ranked hotel schools worldwide into an innovative, real-time, and user-friendly online community. Not only does Hosco provide an engaging platform for job seekers and recruiters, but it is also a place to network, gain career advice, industry insights, and more. The YHS Rankings team would like to thank Zhandra Fuentes, Senior PR & Marcom Manager for her assistance.



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