World's Most Attractive Employers 2020

Research from Universum reveals the motivations of university graduates as they enter the global workforce.

CONTENTS

Each year, Universum surveys over one million career seekers globally.

In 2020, we asked: Which employers do students hold in highest regard? And what factors most influence that decision?

universum

Key
Findings

COVID-19 will have lasting impact on employment-seeking behaviors, accelerating trends that have been building for years.
Over the past two years, students in business and engineering/IT have been placing a higher priority on "high future earnings" and "secure employment." The economic downturn spurred by the pandemic will only strengthen these priorities. What remains to be seen: To what extent will young professionals make trade-offs in an unstable economy? Will they exchange high future earnings or their desire for an entrepreneurial work environment for basic job security, for example?

The tech and automotive industries are big winners in the 2020 rankings.
Both the tech and automotive industries show significant upward movement as top choices among young talent, a testament to innovation in each of those industries. The automotive industry, however, may struggle to hold on to these wins, given the slump in auto sales as well as pandemic-related challenges for car-sharing companies.

Traditional, gold-standard careers in industries like banking and strategic consulting are less sought-after in 2020.
While careers in these industries were once seen as the clearest choices for ambitious high performers, young talent now favors jobs related to AI, automation and clean energy (among others) in industries such as tech, auto and manufacturing. They want to be a part of the future the innovation economy.

Among business students, Apple, Microsoft & Amazon are the big winners in 2020. Each of these companies jumped at least three points in the rankings, and Amazon jumped 7 points. Among engineering and IT students, Amazon also won big. Amazon's aggressive recruiting strategies, including a shift to virtual recruiting before the pandemic began, helped it make strides in the last 12 months[1].

Office culture is on the verge of a radical rethink. How will employers define "culture" and "community" when employees all work remotely? How will will they onboard new talent and share their values when no one has met in person? The disruptive forces of remote work may recalibrate what employees look for in a future employer—and leave employer brands racing to keep pace with changing priorities.

1: https://www.wsj.com/articles/forget-wall-street-m-b-a-s-want-to-work-for-amazon-1507114801; https://www.wsj.com/articles/amazon-changes-the-way-it-recruits-m-b-a-s-11582021802?mod=hp_featst_pos1

Key Findings · Study Details · Preferred Industries · World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings · Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era · Ideal Employer Attributes - Business · Ideal Employer Attributes - Engineering/IT

"The 2020 World's Most Attractive Employer rankings demonstrate that companies can make transformative changes in how they are perceived among would-be employees in just a year or two. Innovation-fueled brands like Amazon, Daimler AG and Philips made significant gains in the rankings. The challenge—and opportunity— for employer brands in 2020 is to judge how the global pandemic and economic downturn will affect employees' work priorities over the next 12 to 18 months."

– Mats Röjdmark, Chief Executive Officer, Universum

universum

6

Key Findings

Study Details

Preferred Industries

World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings

Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era

Ideal Employer Attributes – Business

Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT
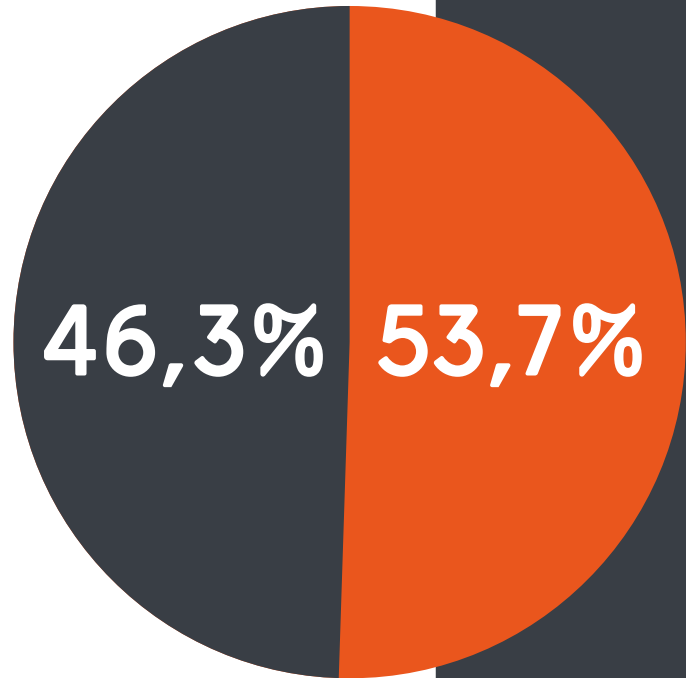
WMAE Study Details & Demographics

Universum, a global employer brand research firm, surveyed 235,273 business, engineering and IT students in the world's 12 largest economies. The study was conducted from September 2019 to April 2020. The students were asked: (a) which employer characteristics are most influential as they consider future employment, and (b) which employer brands they most admire.

To be considered, companies must rank in the top 90% among the most attractive employers. Universum's World's Most Attractive Employer report is now in its twelfth year.

Student Backgrounds
WMAE 2020

Business (108,866)

46,3% **53,7%**

Engineering/IT (126,407)

Research Regions
WMAE 2020

Key Findings

Study Details

Preferred Industries

World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings

Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era

Ideal Employer Attributes – Business

Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT
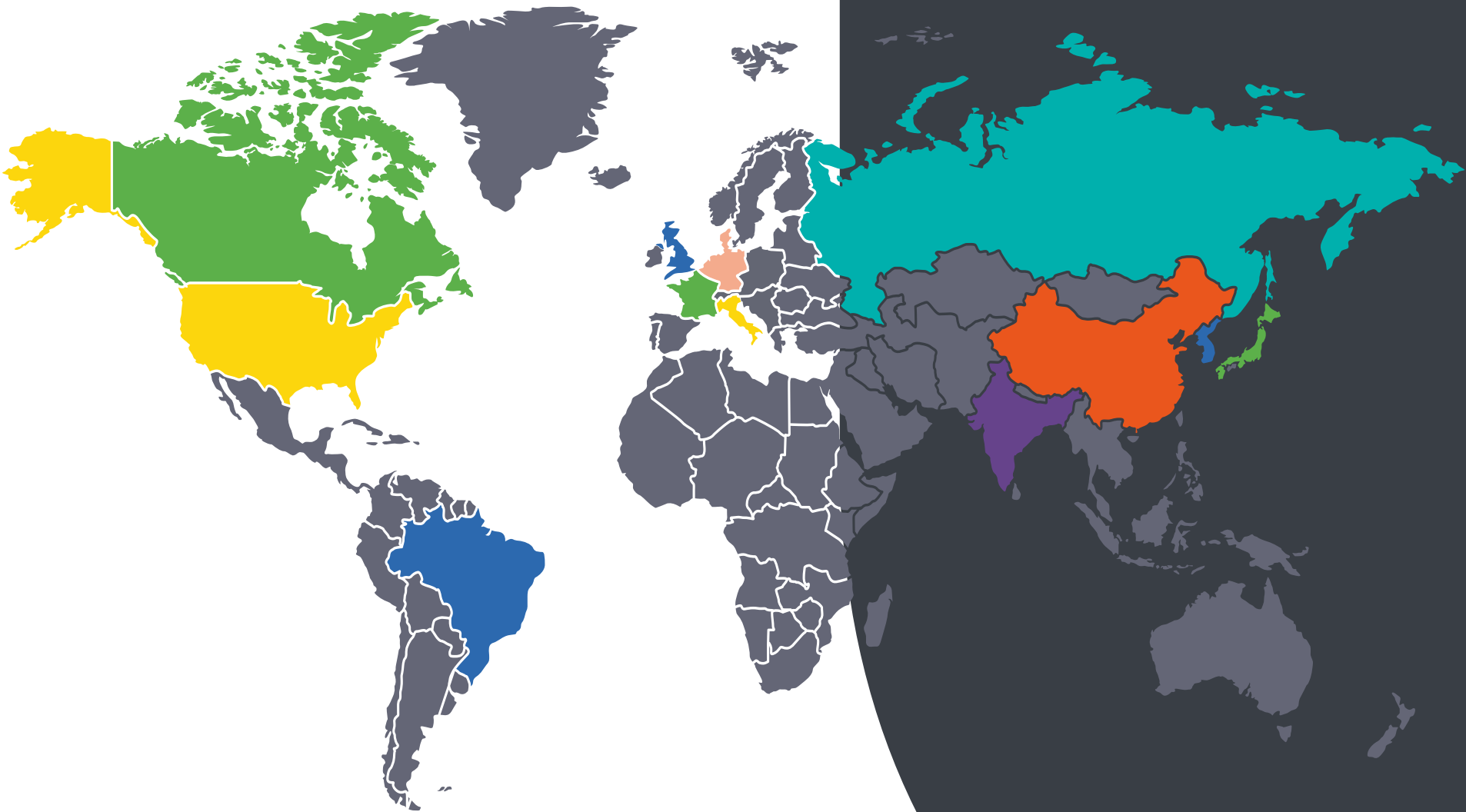
Snapshot: WMAE Business students

Most Desired Employer Attributes WOMEN

High future earnings

Friendly work environment

Professional training & development

Secure employment

Creative & dynamic work envioment

Most Desired Employer Attributes MEN

High future earnings

Market success

Professional training & development

Competitive base salary

Friendly work environment

Preferred Industries WOMEN

#1 Marketing, Advertising and PR
#2 Management and Strategy Consulting
#3 Financial Services and Technology
#4 E-Commerce
#5 Banks

Preferred Industries MEN

#1 Financial Services and Technology
#2 Banks
#3 Management and Strategy Consulting
#4 E-Commerce
#5 Marketing, Advertising and PR

7

universum

Key Findings   Study Details   Preferred Industries   World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings   Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era   Ideal Employer Attributes – Business   Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT
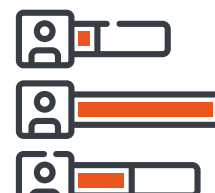
Snapshot: WMAE Engineering students

Most Desired Employer Attributes WOMEN

 Friendly work environment

 Secure employment

 Professional training & development

 High future earnings

 Innovation

Most Desired Employer Attributes MEN

 High future earnings

 Innovation

 Competitive base salary

 Creative & dynamic work envionment

 Friendly work environment

Preferred Industries WOMEN

#1 Computer Software and Technology
#2 IT and Engineering Consulting
#3 Aerospace and Defence
#4 Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
**#5** Energy

Preferred Industries MEN

#1 Computer Software and Technology
#2 Aerospace and Defence
#3 Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
#4 IT and Engineering Consulting
#5 Automotive

8

universum

Key Findings   Study Details   Preferred Industries   World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings   Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era   Ideal Employer Attributes – Business   Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

Preferred Industries

"**Students are increasingly choosing industries that drive global innovation. The technology industry is the obvious choice, but automotive and manufacturing are also making historic strides with AI, robotics and automation. Young people want to be part of companies and industries that are making the biggest impact on society and daily life.**"

– **Richard Mosley, Chief Strategy Officer, Universum**

universum
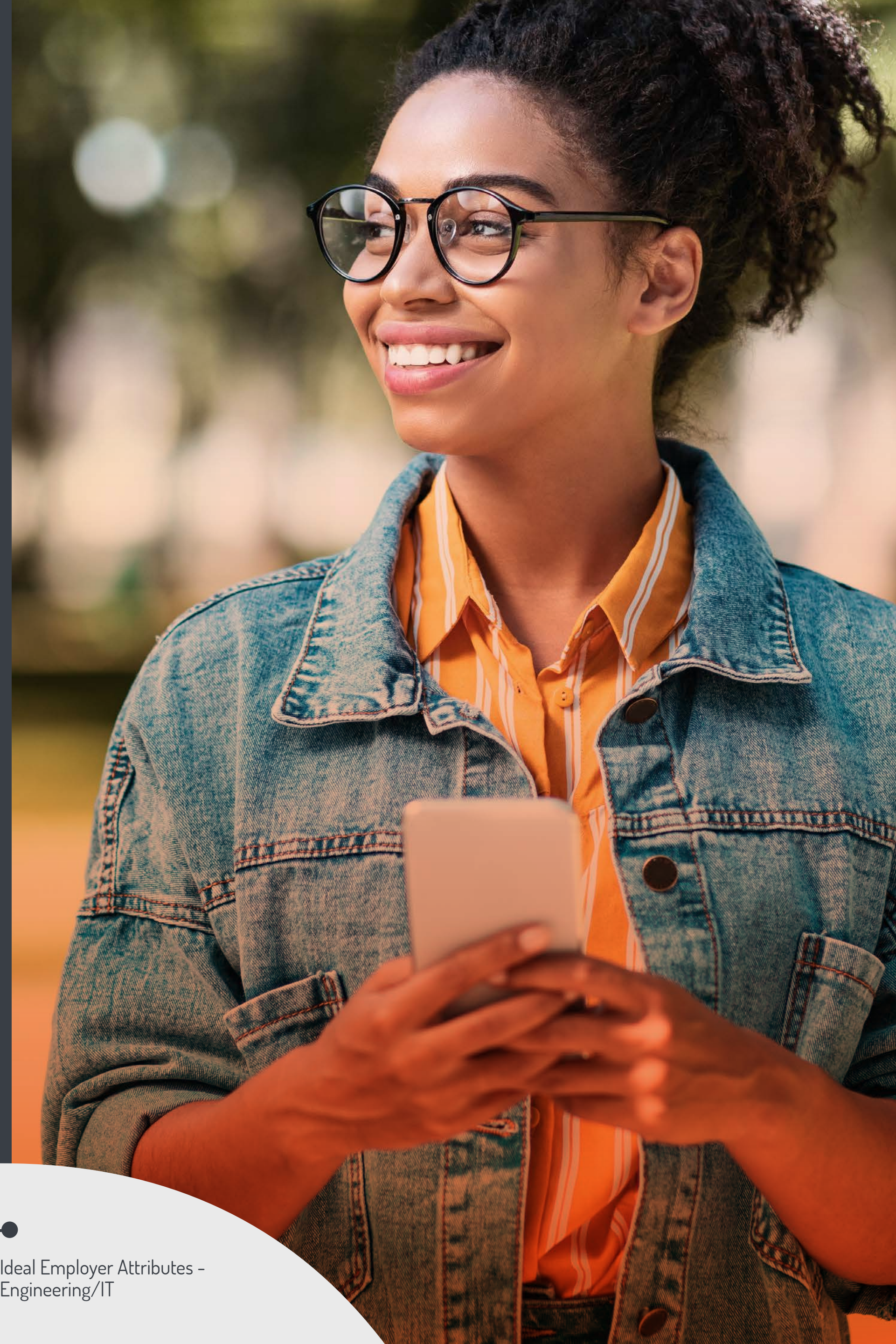
Preferred Industries

Business students

Professional services, banking and strategy consulting once topped the WMAE list as gold-standard, career-making places to work for business students. Yet these industries have faced increasing competitive pressure over the last few years, including in 2020.

Banks in particular have struggled to keep pace with digital transformation and face serious talent and product competition from Fintech and Big Tech.[2] Technology companies are encroaching on banks' roles in the financial sector, offering solutions in mobile payments, insurance and lending. Jared Council of the Wall Street Journal explains, "Big tech companies see financial services as a way to get closer to users and glean valuable data, and see their edge as offering helpful tools and technologies to those users. Alphabet Inc.'s Google plans to introduce checking accounts next year, in a partnership with several financial institutions. Apple Inc. rolled out a credit card last summer. Amazon.com has talked to banks about offering checking accounts." Banks, already scrambling to keep pace with technology companies' leg up in AI and CX, will similarly struggle to attract top talent to an industry consigned to catch-up mode.

2: https://www.wsj.com/articles/banks-see-pressure-in-ai-race-from-fintechs-and-big-tech-11598002201?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=3

Business Industry Ranking

#1 Marketing, Advertising and PR
#2 Management and Strategy Consulting
#3 Financial Services and Technology
#4 Banks
#5 E-Commerce
#6 Auditing and Accounting
#7 Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
#8 Fashion, Accessories and Luxury Goods
#9 Media
#10 Tourism and Hospitality
#11 Market Research
#12 Insurance
#13 Education
#14 Telecommunication and Networks
#15 Aerospace and Defence
#16 Property and Real Estate
#17 Internet Content and Information
#18 Automotive
#19 Health, Wellness and Fitness
#20 Computer Software and Technology

12

universum

Key Findings · Study Details · Preferred Industries · World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings · Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era · Ideal Employer Attributes – Business · Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

Preferred Industries

Engineering/IT students

Engineering and IT students gravitate to jobs in the tech industry. But as more and more industries invest in next-generation advances in AI, natural language processing, automation and robotics, talented engineers are in demand across nearly every industry.

According to LinkedIn, the fastest growing job titles in the US in early 2020 were: AI specialist, robotics engineer and data scientist. AI experts in particular have seen a 74% increase annually over each of the last five years. (That category includes AI engineers, machine learning engineers, AI researchers and AI leaders.) Robotics engineer roles grew 40% in the last year.[3]

What is often missed, however, is that the engineering shortage is most acute for more experienced engineers. As one Reddit user explains, "There's a shortage of engineers to replace newly retired engineers. Unfortunately, they don't express this distinction in university. [...] It's a bit frustrating to be a young engineer expected to fill the shoes of a seasoned veteran."[4]

Luigi Galdabini, owner of Cesare Galdabini SpA (a machine tool company), says it's less about experience and more about the skills acquired in university. "In Italy, there are too many students who are studying something not requested by the market," explains Galdabini. It's easier to find a lion in the streets here" [than to find a mechanical engineer with the right qualifications].[5]

Young engineers graduating university face an additional conundrum brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As more professionals work remotely, younger engineers will miss out on mentoring experiences gained from working alongside more experienced colleagues.

[3] https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/talent-solutions/emerging-jobs-report/Emerging_Jobs_Report_U.S._FINAL.pdf?mod=article_inline
[4] https://www.reddit.com/r/AskEngineers/comments/f6brnz/is_there_a_real_shortage_of_engineers/
[5] https://www.wsj.com/articles/europe-is-hiringbut-its-workforce-isnt-ready-11572343201

Engineering/IT Ranking

#	
#1	Computer Software and Technology
#2	Aerospace and Defence
#3	Mechanical and Industrial Engineering
#4	IT and Engineering Consulting
#5	Automotive
#6	Computer Games
#7	Computer and Network Security
#8	Energy
#9	Telecommunication and Networks
#10	Manufacturing
#11	Architecture and Urban Planning
#12	E-Commerce
#13	Computer Hardware
#14	Internet Content and Information
#15	Management and Strategy Consulting
#16	Civil Engineering
#17	Chemicals
#18	Construction
#19	Pharmaceutical and Biotechnology
#20	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

universum

13

Key Findings   Study Details   Preferred Industries   World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings   Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era   Ideal Employer Attributes – Business   Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

World's Most Attractive Employers Ranking

Top 50 World's Most Attractive Employers
Global Business Ranking 2020
Business Students

#1 Google
#2 Apple
#3 Microsoft
#4 Amazon
#5 Deloitte
#6 Goldman Sachs
#7 EY (Ernst & Young)
#8 PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)
#9 J.P. Morgan
#10 L'Oréal Group
#11 McKinsey & Company
#12 KPMG
#13 Nike
#14 The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
#15 Morgan Stanley
#16 BMW Group
#17 Adidas

#18 Procter & Gamble (P&G)
#19 The Coca-Cola Company
#20 LVMH Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy
#21 Sony
#22 Bank of America
#23 IKEA
#24 IBM
#25 Bain & Company
#26 Johnson & Johnson
#27 Unilever
#28 Daimler/Mercedes-Benz
#29 Accenture
#30 H&M
#31 Deutsche Bank
#32 PepsiCo
#33 Facebook
#34 Citi

#35 Nestlé
#36 HSBC
#37 Toyota
#38 Barclays
#39 Intel
#40 Volkswagen Group
#41 Dell
#42 Grant Thornton
#43 Samsung
#44 Huawei
#45 Ford Motor Company
#46 AB InBev
#47 Credit Suisse
#48 UBS
#49 General Motors
#50 Heineken

Most Attractive
EMPLOYERS
WORLD
universum
2020

universum

Key Findings   Study Details   Preferred Industries   World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings   Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era   Ideal Employer Attributes – Business   Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

Amazon wins big; giants in traditional industries like financial services struggle to remain future-relevant.

Amazon was the biggest employer brand winner in 2020, rising 7 spots to number 4 in just one year. The company has been an aggressive recruiter on college campuses over the last few years. Interestingly, it shifted to virtual recruiting to scale its efforts before the global pandemic set in. To recruit MBAs (as of February 2020, The Wall Street Journal reported Amazon was hiring 1,000 MBAs per year), the online retail giant moved to a virtual recruiting strategy. This move will likely position it well into the rest of 2020 and early 2021 now that virtual recruiting is the norm.

Accounting, financial services and professional service firms—once top choices for business school students—struggle to remain relevant at a time when students are looking for innovative, entrepreneurial work settings.

Among the Big Four, Deloitte has mostly maintained its top WMAE ranking over the last three years, but EY, PwC and KPMG have each lost at least 5 points over the same period. Some point to changes in the nature of the accounting field, where advances in AI, natural language processing and robotic process automation will eliminate a portion of entry-level jobs. But the challenge for these companies is much larger than process automation.

Top 50 World's Most Attractive Employers
Global Engineering/IT Ranking 2020
Engineering/IT Students

#1 Google
#2 Microsoft
#3 Apple
#4 BMW Group
#5 Amazon
#6 Intel
#7 IBM
#8 Siemens
#9 Samsung
#10 GE - General Electric
#11 Sony
#12 Volkswagen Group
#13 Daimler/Mercedes-Benz
#14 Toyota
#15 Ford Motor Company
#16 Johnson & Johnson
#17 L'Oréal Group

#18 General Motors
#19 McKinsey & Company
#20 J.P. Morgan
#21 Procter & Gamble (P&G)
#22 The Coca-Cola Company
#23 Dell
#24 Goldman Sachs
#25 Facebook
#26 adidas
#27 Deloitte
#28 IKEA
#29 The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
#30 Nestlé
#31 Nissan
#32 Lenovo
#33 ExxonMobil
#34 Volvo Car Corporation

#35 Huawei
#36 Accenture
#37 3M
#38 Oracle
#39 Bosch
#40 Shell
#41 PepsiCo
#42 Philips
#43 Pfizer
#44 Cisco Systems
#45 BP
#46 Electronic Arts
#47 Unilever
#48 Schneider Electric
#49 Bayer
#50 PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)

Most Attractive
EMPLOYERS
WORLD
universum 2020

universum

Key Findings | Study Details | Preferred Industries | World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings | Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era | Ideal Employer Attributes – Business | Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

To fuel innovation and growth, companies hunt for key talent in engineering and IT.

Engineering industry rankings tend to move around less than business rankings do. The Top 3 (Google, Microsoft and Apple) have maintained their relative positions over the last three years. Amazon gained 4 points in just one year, and 12 points in the last three years—landing it at #4 for 2020.

Individual companies within the auto industry fared very differently in 2020, showing that industry forces alone cannot explain the good (or bad) outcomes for employer branding and recruiting.

Volkswagen rose 8 points over the last year, while Daimler gained one point. On the other side: Ford dropped 3 points and Nissan dropped 4 points.

All auto manufacturers are investing in electric vehicles as well as battery and fuel-saving technologies. Volkswagen recently took large stakes in JAC Motors

and Gotion High-Tech, both of which help it solidify suppliers for the critical EV market. And Daimler has reported it will spend over $11 billion to launch 10 pure electric and 40 hybrid models.

Yet the move to EV requires a new mix of talent, particularly electrical engineers. This means getting college students involved in these companies sooner, with extensive internship opportunities, boot camps and specialized training programs. "There is a general talent shortage in IT as the pace of technological change increases for all industries," Manjit Singh, CIO of Toyota Motor Corporation's North American operations, told The Wall Street Journal.[6] Toyota is expanding its outreach programs for young IT professionals, including internships and development programs with select universities.

[6]https://www.wsj.com/articles/employers-move-to-attract-tech-talent-before-graduation-11576850400

universum

Redefining Culture, the Workplace and Employer Branding Values

Office life and culture are on the verge of a radical rethink—and employer branding professionals will have to move quickly to account for this disruptive change. How will employers define "culture" and "community" when employees all work remotely? How will they onboard new talent and share company values when no one has met in person? Robotic process automation will eliminate a portion of entry-level jobs. But the challenge for these companies is much larger than process automation.

universum

How will employers define "culture" and "community" when employees all work remotely? How will they onboard new talent and share their values when none of them have met in person?

Young talent consistently say they value "a friendly work environment" and "respect for its people" in future employers, but employers face big challenges supporting these with a highly dispersed workforce—many of whom do not work traditional (i.e., shared) hours.

Some companies are moving community-building activities online, such as biotech company Nimbus, which recently hosted a virtual ukulele-building class. Or Arrakis Therapeutics' Friday pizza parties. "A mantra that we've been sharing with managers, especially, is, keep the fun and the social going," said Jennifer Daniel, CHRO at Schrödinger Inc.[7]
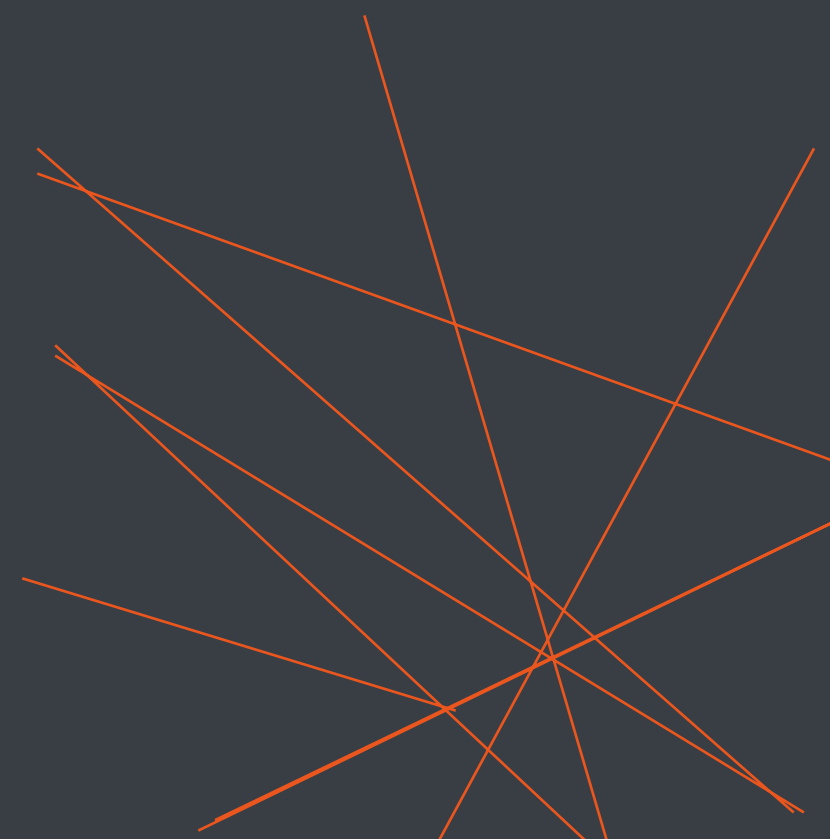
The shift isn't always about promoting fun activities and camaraderie. Companies have found they must also teach employees how to incorporate new collaboration tools into daily life—and in particular, avoid some of the negative consequences of sharing online. Some have found that collaboration tools like Slack can unleash negative chatter in a way that is less likely to happen in person. "When everyone is working virtually, instant-messaging platforms like Slack can become a dumping ground for grievances, passive aggressiveness and other exchanges that are best left for private conversations," says Victor Cho, Evite's CEO.[8]

Keep in mind, not all employers are betting on a future of remote work. Amazon is expanding its office space in 2020. The company is adding thousands of jobs in key markets, and Amazon is betting on a return to work. "The ability to connect with people, the ability for teams to work together in an ad hoc fashion—you can do it virtually, but it isn't as spontaneous," said Ardine Williams, vice president of workforce development at Amazon.[9]

---

[7] https://www.wsj.com/articles/work-from-home-remote-work-perks-biotech-tech-zoom-cocktails-trivia-night-employee-morale-11597677774
[8] https://www.wsj.com/articles/slack-has-made-remote-office-communication-easier-it-can-also-be-less-civil-11597915801?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=6
[9] https://www.wsj.com/articles/amazon-bets-on-office-based-work-with-expansion-in-major-cities-11597741203

Ideal Employer Attributes Business

High future earnings	**47.58**
A friendly work environment	**40.64**
Secure employment	**40.51**
Professional training and development	**40.39**
Market success	**38.06**
Respect for its people	**37.51**
A creative and dynamic work environment	**36.86**
Competitive base salary	**35.9**
Encouraging work-life balance	**35.24**
Good reference for future career	**35.08**

COVID-19 will have lasting impact on employment-seeking behaviors, accelerating trends that have been building for years.

Universum has documented a rising focus on compensation and security over the last several years, as well as a continued focus on training and development—which in many ways can be seen as a proxy for job security. These priorities will probably accelerate under pandemic conditions, as the recession will likely persist well into 2021.

We believe a growing demand for economic security may recalibrate students' expectations, as well as employer brand priorities.

The 2020 Universum research shows a misalignment between what young people say they want versus the types of employers they prioritize. For example, 40% of students say a "friendly work environment" is a priority, but many fewer choose employers with this attribute. It's an important lesson for employers, which must discern between idealism and pragmatism. We expect that the global economic recession fueled by COVID-19 will make these choices even starker.

universum

21

Key Findings · Study Details · Preferred Industries · World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings · Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era · Ideal Employer Attributes – Business · Ideal Employer Attributes – Engineering/IT

Ideal Employer Attributes
Engineering/IT

High future earnings	**47.14**
Innovation	**45.65**
A friendly work environment	**41.53**
Secure employment	**40.97**
A creative and dynamic work environment	**40.68**
Professional training and development	**39.68**
Competitive base salary	**39.21**
Embracing new technologies	**37.38**
Encouraging work-life balance	**36.43**
Respect for its people	**35.94**

With massive numbers of professionals now working remotely, will compensation expectations change?

For both business and engineering students, "high future earnings" is a key employer attribute. Yet with the work-from-home trend, some companies are making downward cost of living adjustments for employees (just as they would make upward revisions for employees moving to high-cost urban areas). Will salary expectations soften over the next 12-24 months as young professionals move to secondary cities and exurban locations?

Economic data shows that professionals in high-cost markets like Silicon Valley, London and New York are leaving expensive cities as their jobs become remote—a trend that pre-dates COVID. Yet many expect the exodus from expensive urban markets to accelerate as more jobs become permanently remote or part-time remote.

The signs of such a shift are everywhere. Pinterest just paid $90 million to terminate its office lease in San Francisco, citing a shift to have more of its employees work from home.[10] An internal survey at Facebook found 40% were interested in permanent remote work. Another survey by Hired found 42% of Silicon Valley tech workers would move out of San Francisco to a less expensive area if they become full-time remote workers. [11]

In London, a study by career-advisory service, Escape the City found the rate of job seekers wanting to leave the city more than doubled for the same period in mid-2019 to mid-2020 (from 20% to 51%).[12] Explains one millennial professional, "I've grown so much as a person in the city and I'll always be grateful for that. [But] I want to buy a property but am unable to do so in London. Now I am remote working so I don't need to be in the city."

[10] https://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Pinterest-terminate-SF-office-lease-88-Bluxome-15525421.php
[11] https://www.wsj.com/articles/remote-work-is-reshaping-san-francisco-as-tech-workers-flee-and-rents-fall-11597413602?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=15
[12] https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/people-leaving-cities-london-manchester-coronavirus-pandemic-lockdown-a9612116.html

universum

22

Key Findings — Study Details — Preferred Industries — World's Most Attractive Employers: Rankings — Redefining Office Culture in the COVID Era — Ideal Employer Attributes - Business — Ideal Employer Attributes - Engineering/IT

ABOUT UNIVERSUM

Universum, part of the StepStone Group, is a global thought leader in Employer Branding. With 30 years of valuable experience in the field of employer branding, we have established ourselves in 60 markets globally, and our diverse workforce is physically present in 20 countries. We are uniquely positioned through our talent surveys to deliver key insights to recruiters about what future talent is looking for in a company. Our data-led, human and meaningful output has attracted 1,700 clients, including many Fortune 500 companies, as well as global media partners that publish our annual rankings and trend reports.

Find out more at
www.universumglobal.com