

# World's Most Attractive Employers | 2017

UNIVERSUM RESEARCH REVEALS THE SPOKEN AND UNSPOKEN MOTIVATIONS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES AS THEY ENTER THE GLOBAL WORKFORCE.



universum



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Universum, the global employer brand leader, surveyed 294,663 business and engineering/IT students in the world's 12 largest economies: Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Korea, the UK and the US. These students were asked to provide insight on the company characteristics they find most attractive in a potential employer as well as who they perceive as their ideal employer.

Each year, Universum unveils the list of the World's Most Attractive Employers (WMAE), delving into what candidates are hoping to see from a workplace. In order to be considered, a company must rank in the top 90% of employers within at least six of the 12 largest economies in the world, weighted by GDP. In this year's study, Australia was replaced by South Korea, which climbed to 11th place of the world's largest economies according to CIA Factbook (mid-April edition).

### The Breakdown

- ✓ **Responding Students:** 294,663
- ✓ **Business Students:** 145,437
- ✓ **Engineering/IT Students:** 149,226



**Fact:** The WMAE markets represent 70% of the world's economy.

- ✓ The employer attributes students desire are fairly similar, regardless of their location, however, there are enough deviations to call for localization. Companies who localize their message **create employer brand stories** that resonate best.
- ✓ **Social media** continues to be the place most students turn to in order to communicate and understand potential employers, however it is not the only one with return.
- ✓ Globally, there's significant interest in **work/life balance** from talent.
- ✓ Students' pursuit of career goals like work/life balance, job security and company stability leads to the **increase in gender diversity** within organizations.
- ✓ Business and Engineering/IT students are leaning away from macro-employers (those that have **more than 1000 employees**.)

2017

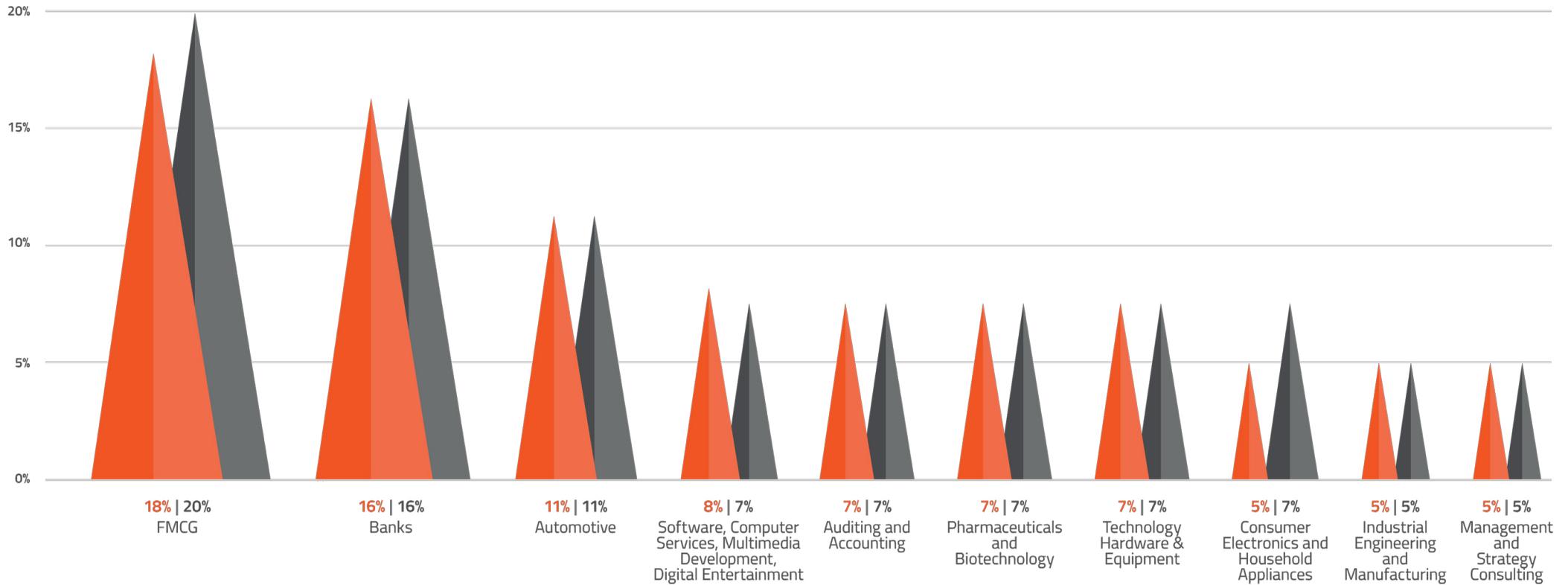
FINDINGS  
WORTH NOTING

## What to Learn from the WMAE

The WMAE are at the forefront of emerging employer branding trends and tactics, but are also at the root of evolutionary adjustments. By following these attractive employers, we can analyze the desires of talent to learn how those desires align with the perception of the companies themselves. Understanding the spoken and unspoken motivations of candidates can help organizations of any size be better prepared to attract and retain talent.

## Business | FMCG is the most represented industry on Business ranking, followed by Banks and Automotive

● 2017 ● 2016  
Distribution of represented industries in %  
76 ranked companies, 2016: 74



Only the top 10 industries in 2017 are shown.



# REPRESENTED INDUSTRIES AND TALENT PREFERENCE

When it comes to the business ranking, of the 76 ranked companies, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) is the most represented industry, followed by banks and automotive. Representation from all industries has seen little change since 2016, with the most substantial decrease being -2% for FMCG and -2% in consumer electronics and household appliances.

## Industries Business Students Prefer to Work Within:



**Management and Strategy Consultancies: 28%**



**Banking: 25%**



**Financial Services: 23%**



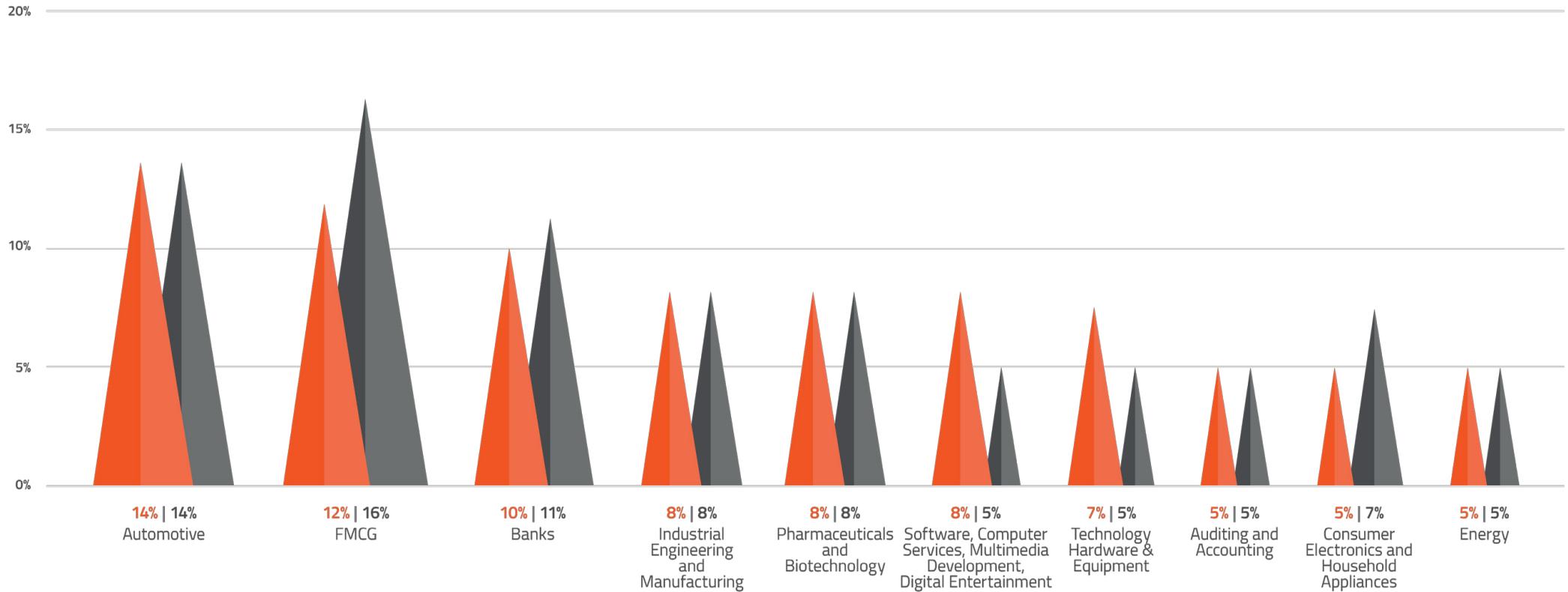
**Auditing & Accounting: 19%**



**Media & Advertising: 17%**

## Engineering/IT | Automotive is now the most represented industry on the rankings, followed by FMCG and Banks

● 2017 ● 2016  
Distribution of represented industries in %  
73 ranked companies, 2016: 74



Only the top 10 industries in 2017 are shown.

# REPRESENTED INDUSTRIES AND TALENT PREFERENCE

In 2017, the automotive industry did not experience an increase, but it became the most represented industry within the Engineering/IT rankings. This is because FMCG decreased by 4% from 2016 to make up only 12% of the 73 ranked companies.

## Industries Engineering/IT Students Prefer to Work Within:



**Software, Computer Services, Multimedia Development, Digital Entertainment: 23%**



**Industrial Engineering and Manufacturing: 21%**



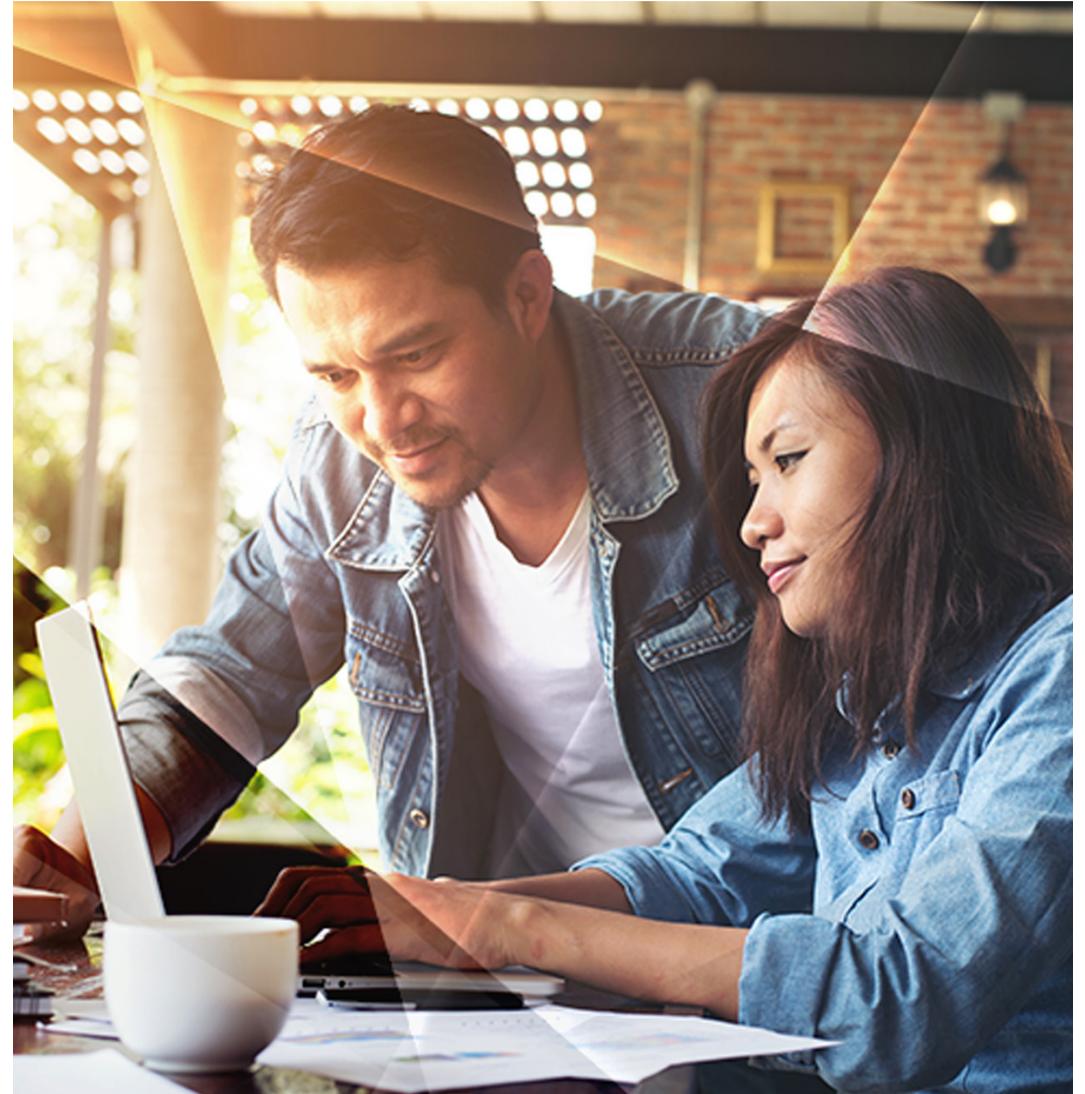
**Aerospace and Defense: 20%**



**Automotive: 17%**



**Energy: 16%**



# Business | WMAE Rankings 2017



EMPLOYER	2017
Google	1
Goldman Sachs	2
Apple	3
EY (Ernst & Young)	4
PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers)	5
Deloitte	6
Microsoft	7
L'Oréal Group	8
KPMG	9
J.P. Morgan	10
McKinsey & Company	11
The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	12
Procter & Gamble (P&G)	13
Morgan Stanley	14
Nike	15
BMW Group	16
Adidas Group	17

EMPLOYER	2017
The Coca-Cola Co.	18
Sony	19
Unilever	20
Johnson & Johnson	21
IKEA	22
Bank of America Merrill Lynch	23
Bain & Company	24
IBM	25
Amazon	26
Nestlé	27
Deutsche Bank	28
Facebook	29
Accenture	30
PepsiCo	31
LVMH Moët Hennessey Louis Vuitton	32
Citi	33
Barclays	34

EMPLOYER	2017
Grant Thornton	35
HEINEKEN	36
HSBC	37
Daimler/Mercedes-Benz	38
General Electric (GE)	39
Volkswagen Group	40
Credit Suisse	41
Ford Motor Company	42
AB InBev	43
Intel	44
UBS	45
Toyota	46
General Motors (GM)	47
Dell	48
Samsung	49
3M	50

# Engineering/IT | WMAE Rankings 2017



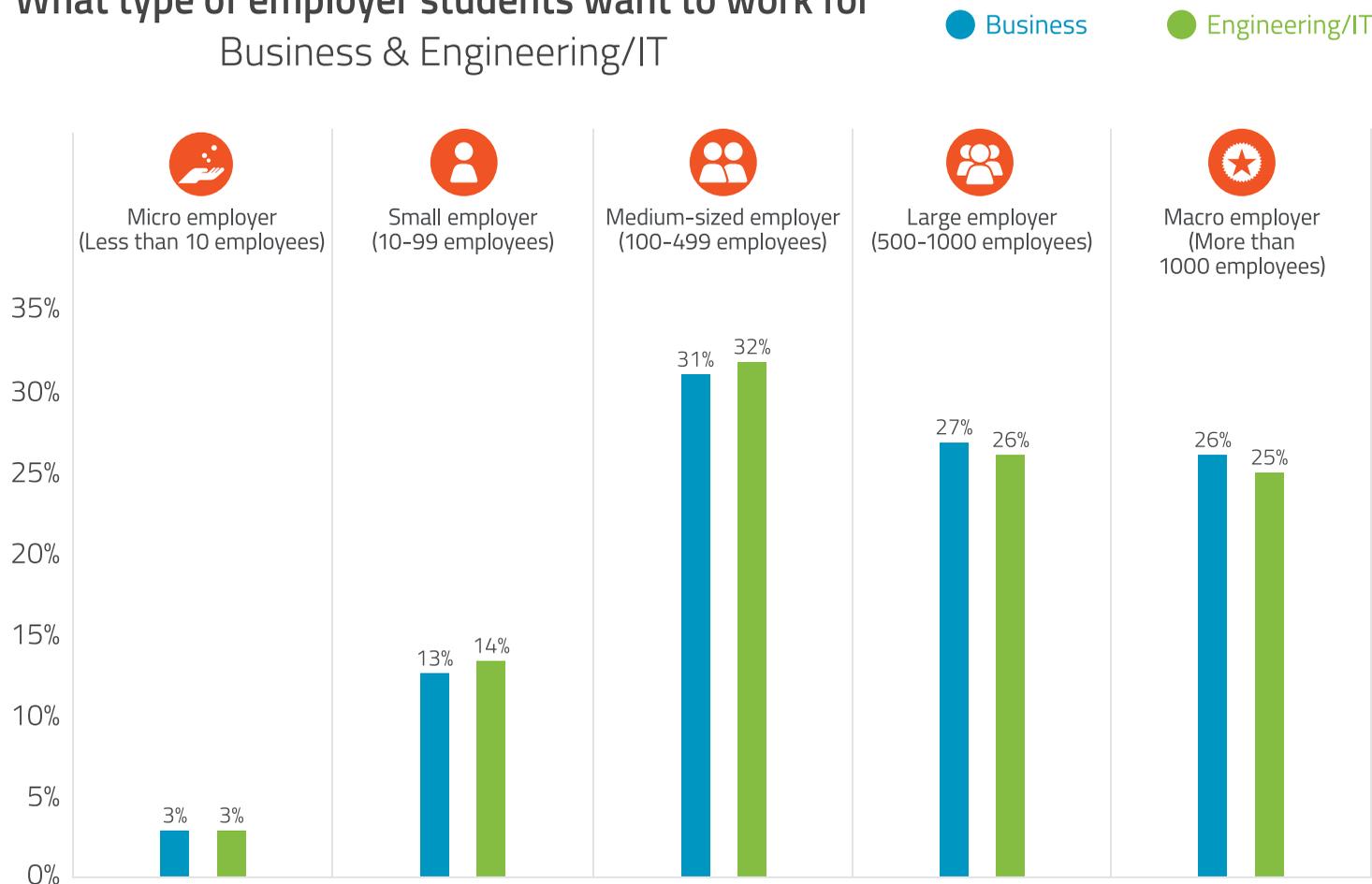
EMPLOYER	2017
Google	1
Microsoft	2
Apple	3
General Electric (GE)	4
BMW Group	5
IBM	6
Intel	7
Siemens	8
Sony	9
Samsung	10
Johnson & Johnson	11
Ford Motor Company	12
Procter & Gamble (P&G)	13
General Motors (GM)	14
L'Oréal Group	15
Facebook	16
Amazon	17

EMPLOYER	2017
Volkswagen Group	18
Shell	19
McKinsey & Company	20
Daimler/Mercedes-Benz	21
Dell	22
The Coca-Cola Co.	23
Toyota	24
ExxonMobil	25
Nestlé	26
Goldman Sachs	27
Electronic Arts	28
IKEA	29
Pfizer	30
Cisco Systems	31
J.P. Morgan	32
Lenovo	33
Oracle	34

EMPLOYER	2017
Deloitte	35
The Boston Consulting Group (BCG)	36
3M	37
Adidas Group	38
PepsiCo	39
Nissan	40
Accenture	41
Hewlett Packard Enterprise	42
Unilever	43
Bosch	44
HEINEKEN	45
BASF	46
Huawei	47
BP	48
EY (Ernst & Young)	49
Novartis	50

# THE MOVE FROM MACRO EMPLOYERS

## What type of employer students want to work for Business & Engineering/IT



Interestingly enough, the macro employer sector isn't the top choice for business and engineering/IT students of 2017. Though this is the sector the average WMAE resides within, it falls to the third top choice for these students. For both industries, nearly three-quarters of the students surveyed would prefer to work within an organization smaller than that of a large macro company. In total, 75% of business students and 74% of engineering/IT students would choose to work for a large employer or smaller.

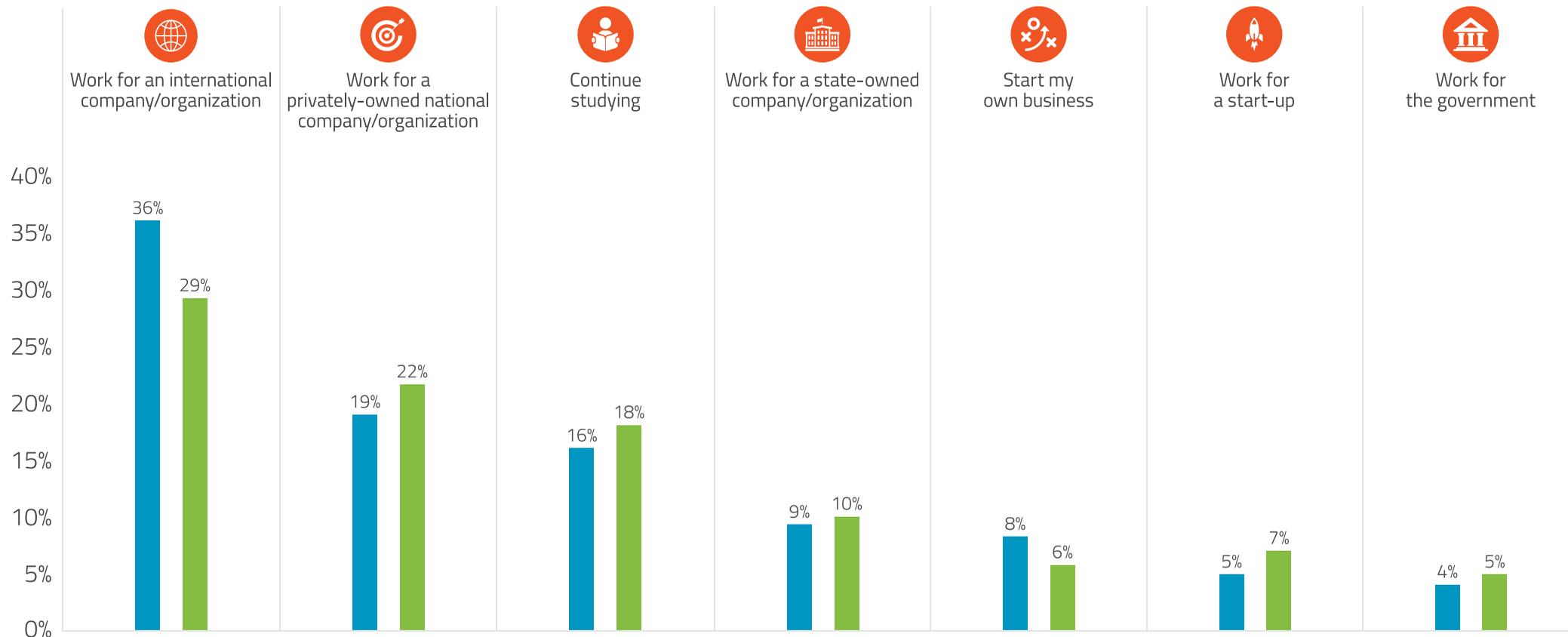
Breaking down those numbers, we still see quite a large number of students interested in these larger, usually more prominent organizations, but the most desired size is that of a medium-sized organization.

## What students want to do most after graduation

### Business & Engineering/IT

● Business

● Engineering/IT



There are probably quite a few reasons for results like these. First, considering the post-graduation goals of students, we see the largest interest area to be working for an international organization/company (36% for business vs. 29% for engineering/IT). From there, the post-graduation interests vary, with a combined majority interest in smaller or national/regional/local organizations.

Additionally, chances are students associate smaller organizations with better atmosphere and friendly environments. These traits might also be related to the work/life balance that is being held at such high esteem. There is also the consideration of impact. Students want to see their work amount to something and effect change, both in social terms, but also within their own careers.

*“Sometimes called Generation Impact, today’s students want to make a difference and might perceive they cannot make as much of an impact in larger organizations like the Fortune 500s.”*

– Claudia Tattanelli, **Global Director at Universum Global**

Of course, the answer for larger or macro organizations isn’t to downsize. In fact, students are looking at number of employees as a baseline for the approachability of the organization. The takeaway to remember here is that students are hoping to find an environment that matches startup and small business culture.

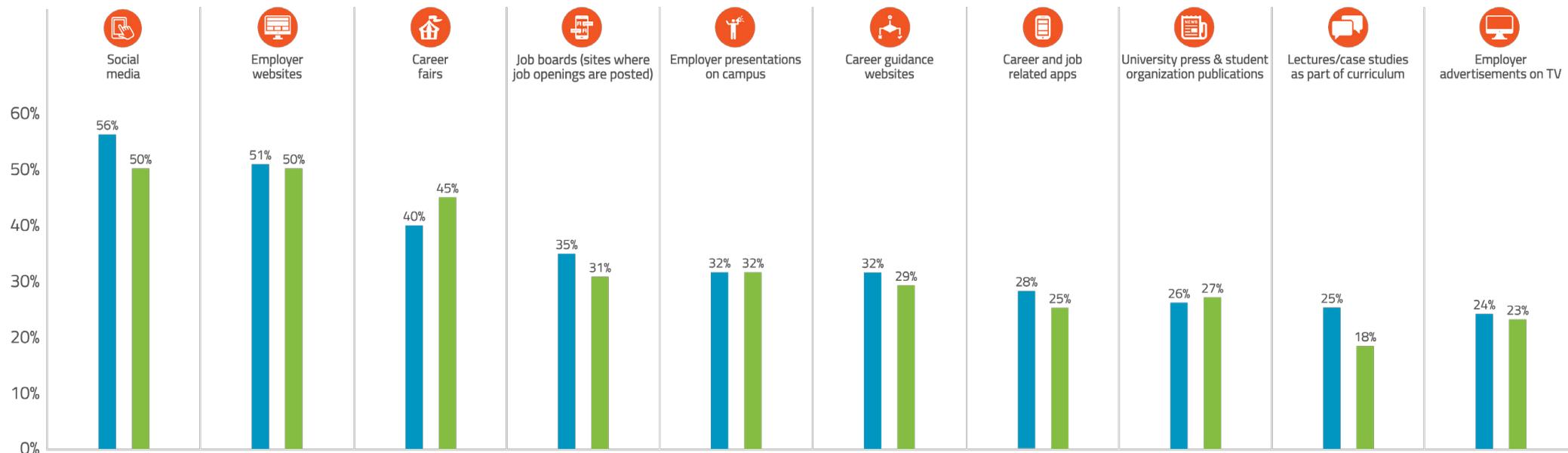
*“In Germany, for example, we see that those employees who chose smaller organizations were more driven by those features of a friendly work environment. Those who chose larger companies were more interested in attractive products and prestige. Overall, there’s an even bigger difference for creative and dynamic work environments. What’s interesting is that for the talent preferring small employers, flexibility is more important, while high future earnings is the bigger draw for those interested in macro employers.”*

– Daniel Eckert  
**Research Manager, Universum Global**

## Top 10 communication channels Business & Engineering/IT

● Business

● Engineering/IT



### Social Media Surge

While social media is the top communication channel followed closely by employer websites for business students, engineering/IT students depend equally on both. It's safe to say that social media and employer websites go hand in hand and play pivotal roles in communicating with students in these industries. Social media content should be focused on building rapport and connecting talent to the company website in order to see the most resonance.



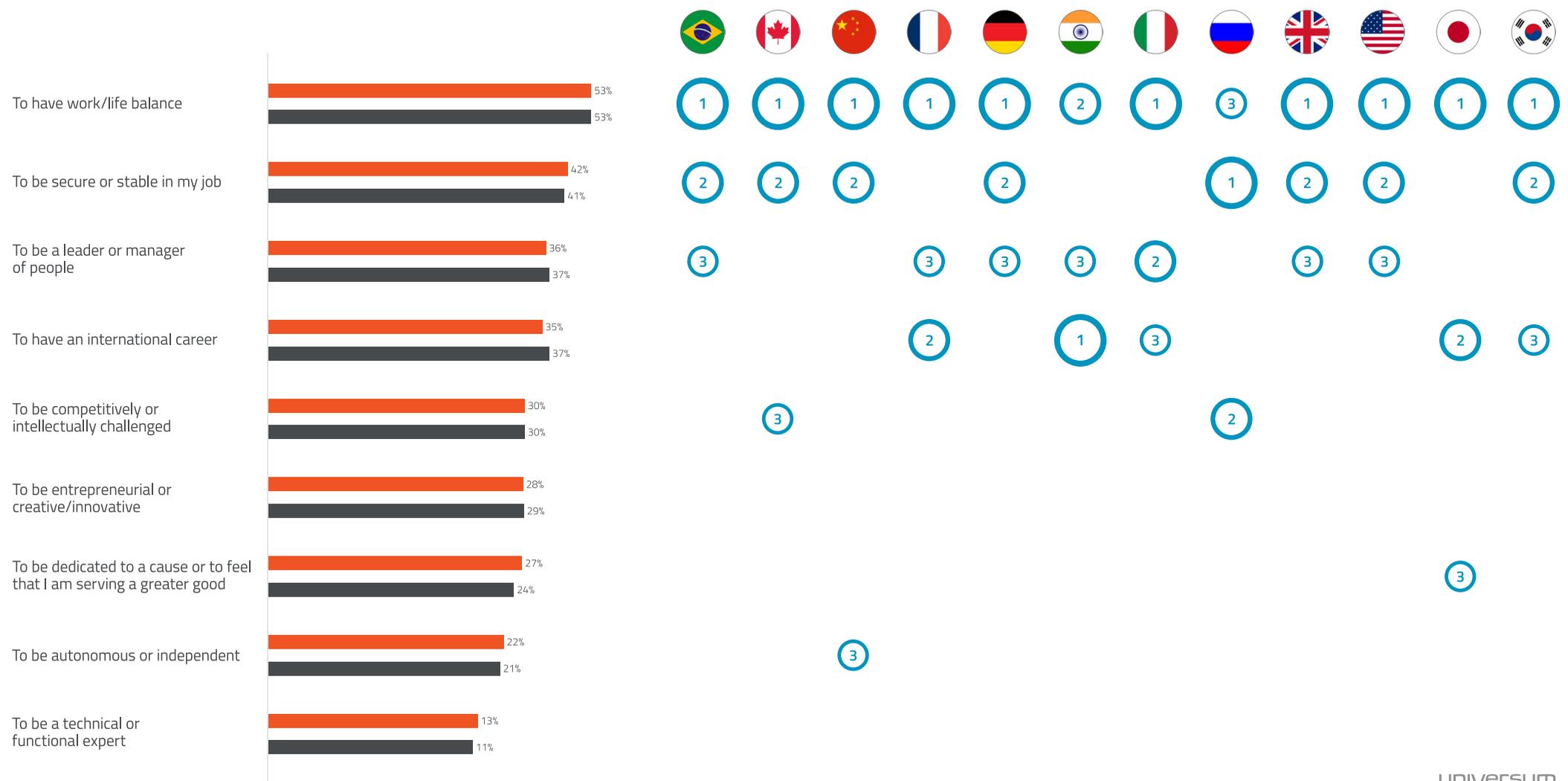
A great deal of employers feel trapped in exhibiting at career fairs, because while these events have large costs and often little return, they help communicate their brand and offer a presence among potential competitors.

Career fairs are behind social media and employer websites, with engineering/IT students using them more than business students (45% of engineering/IT students vs. 40% of business students). Engineering/IT students are more typically offered these channels which explains why they are more apt to turn to them for potential employer connections.

A great deal of employers feel trapped in exhibiting at career fairs, because while these events have large costs and often little return, they help communicate their brand and offer a presence among potential competitors. However, these channels are still viable options for attracting and recruiting talent for all industries when performed correctly and with specific student needs in mind.

**Business | Work/life balance remains the overall top career goal. Russian students favor job security while Indian students prefer having an international career.**

● 2017 ● 2016



Engineering/IT | Work/life balance remains the overall top career goal. Indian students favor having an international career while German and Russian students want job security.

● 2017 ● 2016



# WORK/LIFE BALANCE REMAINS THE OVERALL TOP CAREER GOAL

Across both industries, students continue to place work/life balance at the top of their career goals.

It is important to note that work/life balance might carry varying implications across the globe. What is seen as balancing work and personal life in the UK might be very different in Japan or France. We can see in both fields of study, there are some countries where it falls to the second or third most desirable trait. In the case of German and Russian engineering/IT students, work/life balance falls below being secure and stable in the job. For India, however, talent is more attracted to the idea of finding an international career and, in the case of engineering/IT students, working in an entrepreneurial, creative and innovative capacity. Though the goals of students in India do happen to differ slightly, work/life balance still remains in their top 3 most desired career goals.



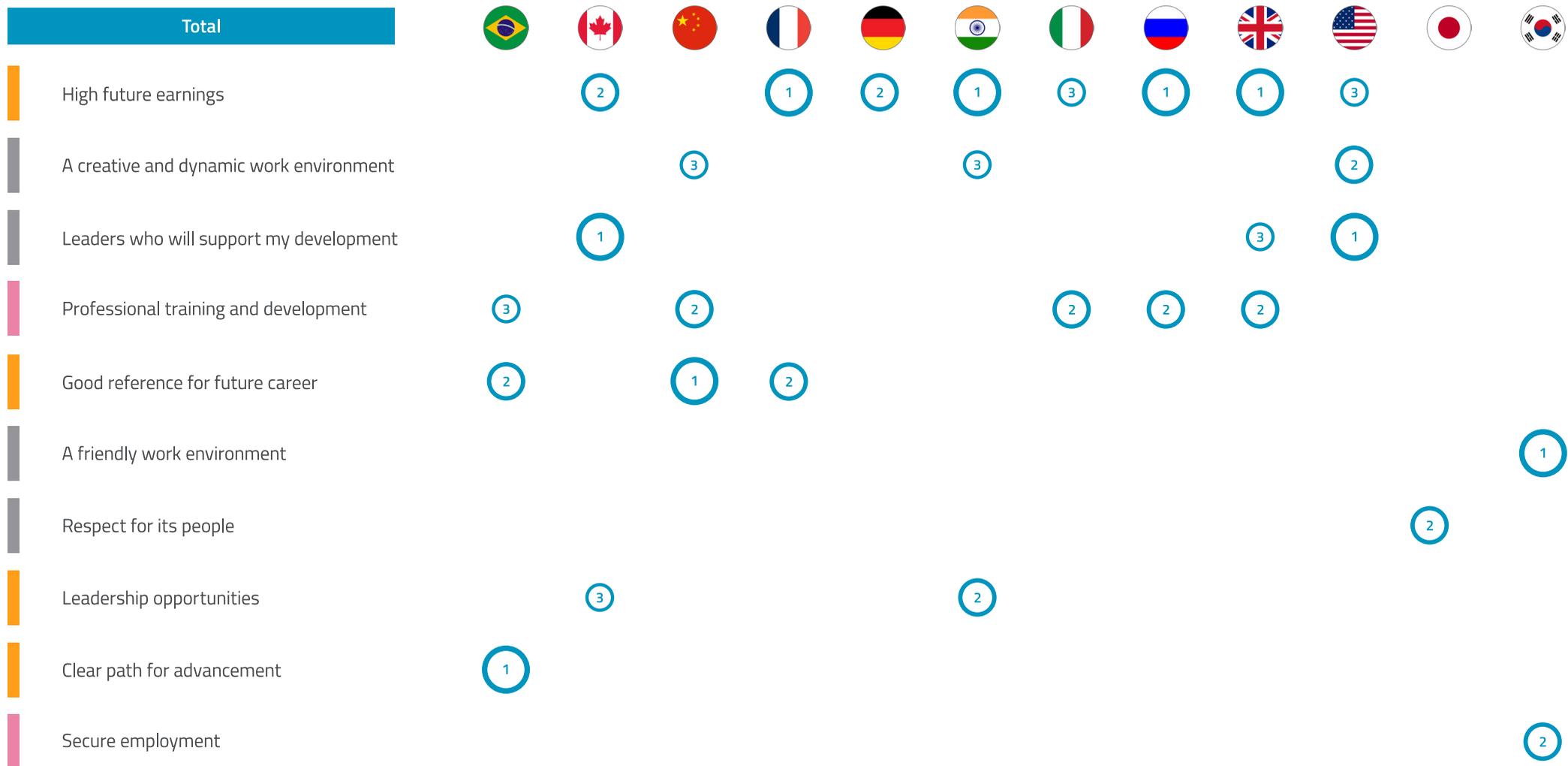
# GENDER DIVERSITY AND COMPANY PERCEPTION



While there are a few outliers to the trend, above all, students want a career that allows for personal successes without the fear of job loss. The correlation we see in today's workforce and the desire for work/life balance and job stability lends itself to another trend in the workforce: gender diversity. Students from this generation are far more capable and interested in sharing the responsibilities of income and household prosperity, no matter their gender. This new outlook requires balance between work and home life from all employees.

Business | Top 10 Preferences

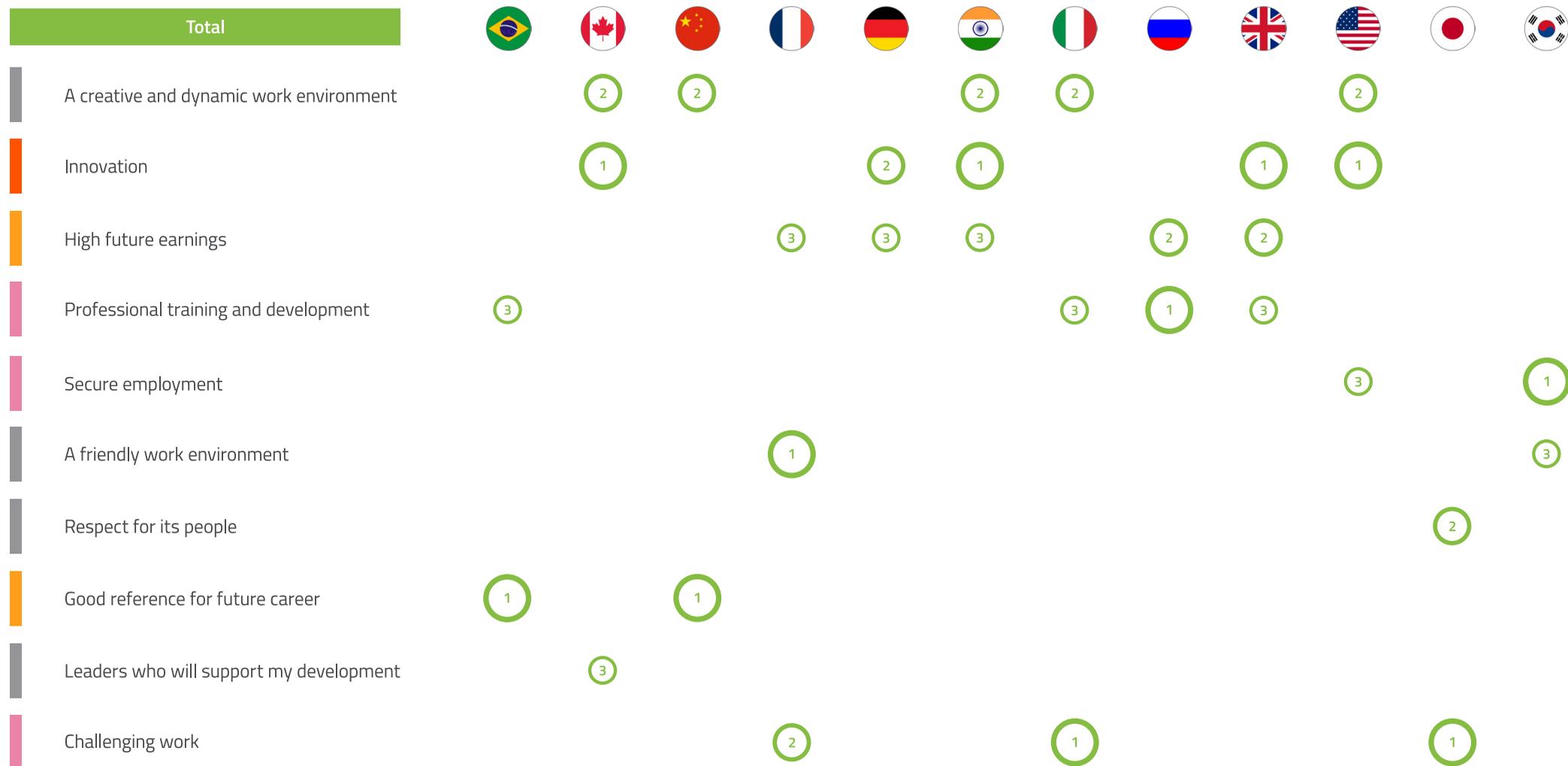
● Employer Reputation & Image  
● Remuneration & Advancement Opportunities  
● People & Culture  
● Job Characteristics



## Engineering/IT | Top 10 Preferences

● Employer Reputation & Image  
● Remuneration & Advancement Opportunities

● People & Culture  
● Job Characteristics

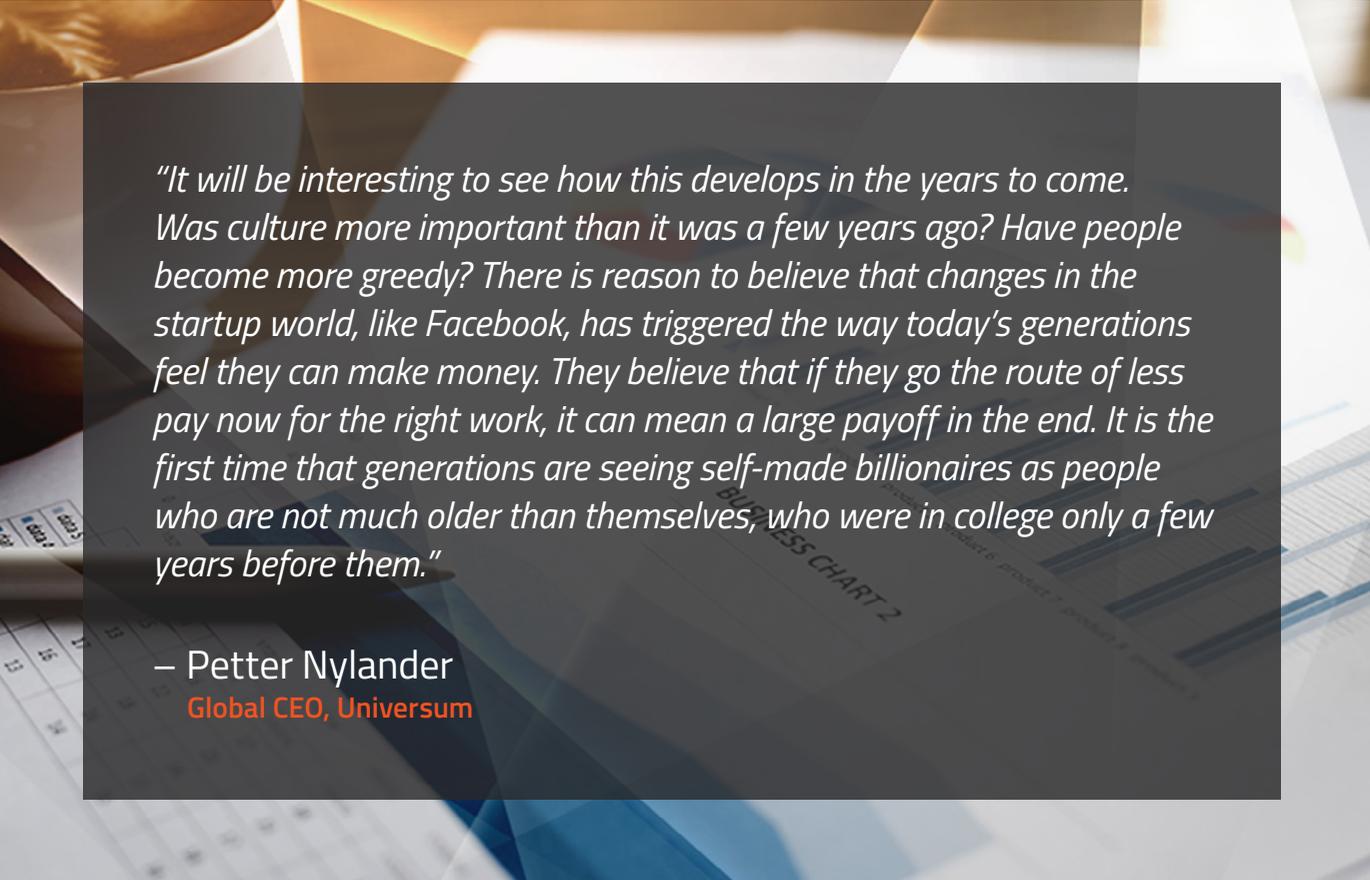


# GLOBAL AVERAGE VS. COUNTRY DIFFERENCE IN EMPLOYER BRAND STORIES

We often associate employer branding with values and the unique story of an organization. These elements are what sets companies apart in the eyes of talent, and can prove to be an efficient way to attract top candidates even if the employer doesn't reside in the WMAE or other desirable markets.

For example, we mentioned earlier that many students show interest in organizations with fewer than 1,000 employees. The perception of macro companies is what drives this desire for employment elsewhere. In this case, macro companies can use their story to combat preconceived notions of culture and reputation.

Overall, the top preferences students seek in their future employer vary greatly in both country and industry. Business students in general, for example, have a top preference for employers that show potential for high future earnings.



*"It will be interesting to see how this develops in the years to come. Was culture more important than it was a few years ago? Have people become more greedy? There is reason to believe that changes in the startup world, like Facebook, has triggered the way today's generations feel they can make money. They believe that if they go the route of less pay now for the right work, it can mean a large payoff in the end. It is the first time that generations are seeing self-made billionaires as people who are not much older than themselves, who were in college only a few years before them."*

– Petter Nylander  
Global CEO, Universum



## Regional Spotlight

The relationship between attribute importance across the English speaking countries (in this case, US, UK and Canada) tend to be similar. In these countries values and desires loosely align in both the business and engineering/IT industries. There is a pattern between some countries in Western Europe (France, Germany, Italy and UK) as well, but nearly no typical pattern between APAC (China, Japan and South Korea).

Behind financial growth, in most cases, we see a creative and dynamic work environment. Interestingly, following those top two, business students show an overall interest in leaders who support their development, professional training and development and good references for their future careers. In some cases, like for business students in Brazil, the overarching preference lies in future capabilities as their top preference is a clear path for advancement. Though it doesn't break the average top 5 preferences among all 12 countries, it does follow the same trend of looking toward the future.

That said, there are outliers. In Germany, the top preference doesn't appear on our top 10 list, because these students prioritize a higher base salary more than students in the other top 12 economies. Although, the number two top preference is high future earnings.

Engineering/IT students differ far more throughout different countries than those in business. On average, the top choice is the desire for a creative and dynamic work environment, however, it is not the outright top choice for any country. We see more interest in innovation, with engineering/IT students in 4 different countries (Canada, India, UK and US) choosing it above all others. In fact, innovation is the second top preference overall, with high future earnings and professional training to follow.

This does show a dynamic difference between the two industries more than it does between the countries being surveyed. Many engineering/IT students seem to put a lot of weight in organizations who challenge their skills, something in line with their preference for innovative companies. Unlike business students, the top 5 choices overall are varied in the underlying desire. We can say that at this time, it looks like compensation is still high on the list for all talent.

## Image Ranking: Top 3 Preferences

# Business

### High future earnings



- 1 Goldman Sachs
- 2 McKinsey & Company
- 3 J.P. Morgan

### A creative and dynamic work environment



- 1 Google
- 2 Facebook
- 3 Apple

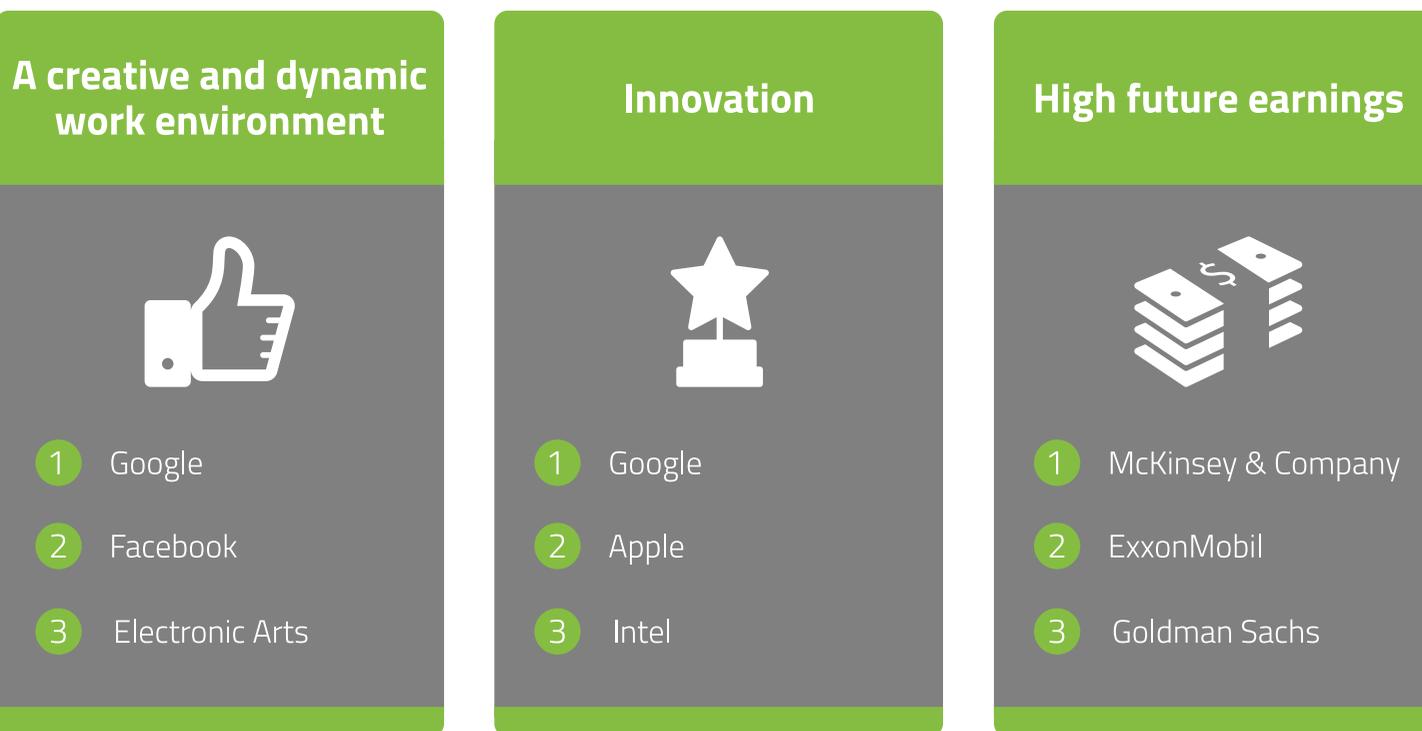
### Leaders who will support my development



- 1 Bain & Company
- 2 EY (Ernst & Young)
- 3 McKinsey & Company

## Image Ranking: Top 3 Preferences

# Engineering/IT



# GLOBAL SPREAD DEFINES FUTURE EARNINGS IN THE CANDIDATE'S EYES

In the eyes of students, companies that operate in more WMAE markets are associated with high financial return. The more global the company is and the more markets it is featured within, the more likely that company will receive an expectation for high future earnings.

## Key Takeaways

These trends point to a few common elements of today's talent. Though notoriety resonates with students in both the business and engineering/IT industries, there is a real desire to work where a mark can more easily be made. In many cases, that means working for medium-sized to large organizations that will have the security of reputation and standing, but the employee count that allows for outstanding workers to be seen. It's important to note just how many students are interested in making investments in smaller opportunities now with potentially larger rewards later. In this case, we mean striking out on their own or joining a startup.

- ✔ **8%** of business students want to start their own business after graduation
- ✔ **6%** of engineering/IT students want to start their own business after graduation
- ✔ **5%** of business students want to work for a startup
- ✔ **7%** of engineering/IT students want to work for a startup

This should show organizations just how profitable an employer brand story and EVP can be to attracting quality talent. While employers might fall to the camp of believing the WMAE are untouchable in the eyes of candidates, providing the actual desires of talent is achievable.

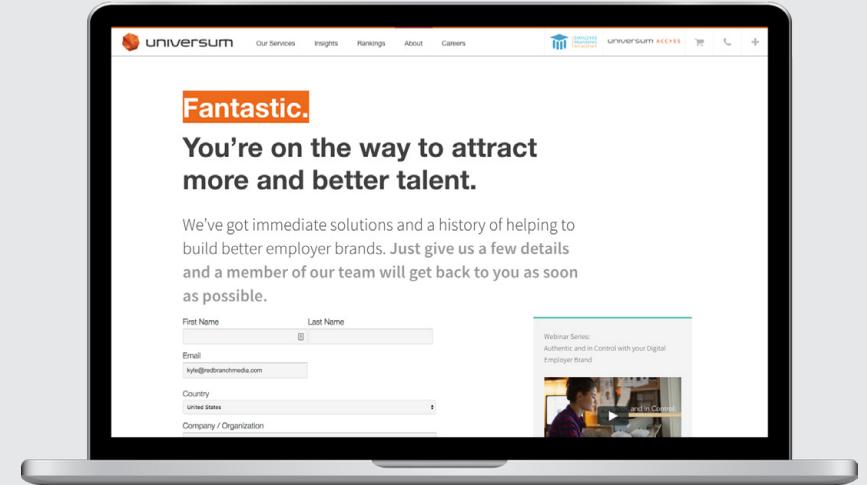




Those desirable attributes fall to one overarching trend, however. Financial reward and compensation is still a top attractor. In most cases, high future earnings rank number one in the eyes of students across all regions. Of course, though money talks, there are still those soft attributes that rank high on the candidate wish list. Above all, work/life balance is pivotal to today's professional with creative environments and the chance to develop skills also at the top.

The pursuit for work/life balance is probably due in part to gender role shifts in society. More now than ever, women and men can achieve successful careers while caring for a household. Candidates associate this attribute with gender diversity and vice versa. Because innovation ranks highly in the eyes of many students, especially those in engineering/IT, attention to building diversity will be profitable for organizations all over the globe.

Our findings should ring hope in the eyes of employers everywhere, no matter the stage of development. Students, while aware of the employer brand and compensation reputation of the WMAE, still see the potential and profitability of working for organizations who don't fall on the WMAE list. As long as companies understand their own unique selling points and can align that with the communication styles and desires of talent, they stand a chance at attracting and hiring students with top skill sets.



## Need Help?

Need help identifying and communicating your unique story? Universum is experienced in helping companies [build better employer brands](#). Ready to start attracting the right talent?