

# **The Role of Higher Education in Career Development: Employer Perceptions**

December, 2012



## About the Study

- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and American Public Media's *Marketplace* conducted a survey of employers who hire recent college graduates in order to understand employer perceptions of the role of colleges and universities in career preparation.
- The survey was developed, fielded and analyzed by Maguire Associates, Inc.
- The sample was developed with assistance from Experience.com. We invited 50,000 employers to participate in this study. As a list source, Experience.com provided employer contacts who work with them to recruit recent college graduates.
- The survey was fielded in late August and early September of 2012



# Methodology

In order to gauge how in sync colleges are in preparing students for employment, we asked questions in the following areas:

- How successful colleges are at producing graduates who are prepared for the workforce
- What types of institutions and credentials are most desired
- What college majors are most desired
- How employers balance academic and practical experience in evaluating recent college graduates who are job candidates
- What skills should college graduates possess
- What skills is higher education responsible for developing
- Results were segmented by industry and hiring level
- Hiring level was defined as:
  - Human Resources (HR) – Recruiters or other HR staff
  - Managers – People who directly manage people
  - Executives – Senior executives of and organization

## Sample Characteristics

		Count	%
<b>Age</b>	<b>25-34</b>	233	33%
	<b>35-44</b>	159	23%
	<b>45-54</b>	174	25%
	<b>55 or older</b>	138	20%
	<b>Total</b>	704	100%
<b>Experience level</b>	<b>10 or less years</b>	124	21%
	<b>11 - 20 years</b>	184	31%
	<b>21 - 30 years</b>	161	27%
	<b>31 or more years</b>	129	22%

## Sample Characteristics (Cont.)

		Count	%
<b>What best describes your career level?</b>	<b>Experienced</b>	231	33%
	<b>Manager</b>	270	38%
	<b>Executive</b>	120	17%
	<b>Senior Executive</b>	83	12%
	<b>Total</b>	704	100%
<b>What best describes your role in hiring employees at your organization?</b>	<b>HR</b>	388	55%
	<b>Manager</b>	267	38%
	<b>Executive</b>	49	7%

## Sample Characteristics (Cont.)

		Count	%
<b>What industry does your organization primarily serve?</b>	<b>Business</b>	158	22%
	<b>Health Care</b>	70	10%
	<b>Media/Communications</b>	44	6%
	<b>Services/Retail</b>	83	12%
	<b>Manufacturing</b>	91	13%
	<b>Science/Technology</b>	102	14%
	<b>Education</b>	56	8%
	<b>Govt/Non-Profit</b>	78	11%
	<b>Other*</b>	22	3%
	<b>Total</b>	704	100%

\*Other industries include Agriculture/Fishing/Forestry (5), Waste Management (2), Wholesale (2), Gaming (1), Sales (1) HR (1) General Public/Unidentified(10).

## Sample Characteristics (Cont.)

		Count	Column Valid N %
<b>How would you describe your ethnic background?</b>	<b>White, Caucasian</b>	532	76%
	<b>Black/African American</b>	44	6%
	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	29	4%
	<b>Asian/Asian American</b>	24	3%
	<b>Native American</b>	1	0%
	<b>Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	3	0%
	<b>Multiracial</b>	10	1%
	<b>Other</b>	9	1%
	<b>Prefer not to answer</b>	45	6%
	<b>Total</b>	697	100%
<b>Please tell us your gender:</b>	<b>Male</b>	209	30%
	<b>Female</b>	490	70%
	<b>Total</b>	699	100%

# Executive Summary





## Key Findings: How are colleges doing?

- Nearly seven out of ten employers surveyed indicated that colleges are doing a “good” or “excellent” job when it comes to producing successful employees; however, more work is required to change the minds of the 31% of respondents who gave colleges a “fair” to “poor” rating.
- HR has the most favorable opinion of a college’s ability to produce successful employees with 72% indicating at least a “good” rating; however, Executives are more than twice as likely to have an “excellent” rating than either HR or Managers in this survey. Managers are the hardest to please with 34% indicating a “poor” or “fair” rating.
- Opinions on the job colleges are doing preparing graduates for work vary by industry category with the Government/Non-profit segment giving top marks to colleges and universities (80% with at least a “good” rating).
- The Services/Retail (39%), Health Care (35%), and Media/Communications (35%) indicated that colleges and universities are doing a “fair” or “poor” job -- more than any other industry.
- One-third of employers in this study place more value on today’s four-year degree vs. that of five years ago. However, those who placed less value on today’s degree nearly balanced out those that indicated more value, resulting in only a slight increase in mean rating of the value today vs. five years ago (3.1 mean rating out of 5 possible points).

## Key Findings: How are colleges doing? (cont.)

- While industries like Government and Education, which typically require advanced degrees, see an overall drop in value of a four-year degree from five years ago, employers from Manufacturing (mean rating of 3.24) and Services/Retail (3.23) place a greater value than average on today's four-year degree, suggesting a more competitive playing field in markets previously more accepting of non-degreed employees.
- Thirty-one percent of employers indicated that recent graduates are unprepared or very unprepared for their job search.
- Over half of the employers indicated difficulty in finding qualified candidates for job openings.
- Among industry segments, Science/Technology and Media/Communications appear to struggle more than other industries in finding qualified candidates receiving mean ratings of 3.75 and 3.57 (out of 5) on difficulty in finding qualified candidates.
- Additionally, these same two industry segments rated colleges and universities as “fair” to “poor” more frequently than other industries in terms of producing successful employees. Media/Communications also indicated, more than other industries, that students were unprepared or very unprepared for their job search.
- According to employers in the study, graduates can prepare better by researching the organization, followed by improving interview skills, and researching the industry. Only Media/Communications ranked the importance of preparing a better resume above interviewing skills, presumably because their concentration field tends to better prepare them in interviewing skills.

# Key Findings: What are employers looking for?

- Employers place more weight on experience, particularly internships and employment during school vs. academic credentials including GPA and college major when evaluating a recent graduate for employment.
- All industries and hiring levels place slightly more weight on student work or internship experiences than on academic credentials.
- Science/Technology, Services/Retail, and Media/Communications segments tilt the scale toward experience more than other industries.
- Weighted results show that college major is the most important academic credential to employers; however, internships and employment during college are the top traits employers consider in evaluating recent graduates for a position.
- College major comes in third, overall, except at Health Care organizations where it is neck and neck with employment during college, and at organizations with fewer than 50 employees where employers value volunteer work and extracurricular activities more, dropping college major to fifth on the list of all traits examined in this study.
- Extracurricular activities, like professional clubs, athletics, and service, are valued more than GPA, relevance of coursework to position, and college reputation except by Executives who emphatically place more weight on coursework relevance and GPA, closely trailing college major.
- An internships is the single most important credential for recent college graduates to have on their resume in their job search among all industry segments with Media/Communications placing the highest value on internships in comparison to other industries.

# Key Findings: What are employers looking for? (Cont.)

- When it comes to the skills most needed by employers, job candidates are lacking most in written and oral communication skills, adaptability and managing multiple priorities, and making decisions and problem solving.
- Employers place the responsibility on colleges to prepare graduates in written and oral communications and decision-making skills. Results indicate that colleges need to work harder to produce these traits in their graduates.
- While the gap between employer need and graduate skills narrows in the Media/Communications industry for written and oral skills, colleges have more of a challenge developing decision-making and technical skills in students geared toward this industry.
- The need for recent graduates to adapt and to manage multiple priorities is greatest among employers from the Business, Health, Media/Communications, and Science/Technology segments; however, employers place less responsibility on colleges for training in these skill areas, perhaps putting the onus more on the individual to acquire these high-demand skills.

## Key Findings: Who Makes the Cut?

- Three out of ten employers reported that recent graduates with bachelor's degrees make up more than 40% of total hires over the past few years, compared to nearly half where graduates made up less than 20% of hires.
- Recent graduates have been hired over the past few years more often at government and education organizations, while recent graduates have made up the smallest proportion of hires at Media/Communications companies.
- Slightly less than one-third (31%) of employers require a bachelor's degree if a position advertised for one. Nearly 70% of employers are open to considering non-degreed candidate who are particularly outstanding or the right fit.
- Media/Communications and Services/Retail are more flexible regarding hiring without a bachelor's degree (both, 84%) opposed to Education (49%) which is required to adhere to more strict licensure and certification requirements.
- Job candidates from flagship public colleges are most popular among employers in the study, followed by private not-for-profit colleges (mean desirability rating of 3.87 and 3.78 out of 5).
- All three hiring roles rank flagship publics above all other types of colleges; however, Executives prefer regional campus of a public college next, in place of private not-for-profit colleges.
- Desirability of college type varies by market: Science/Technology employers find flagship publics most desirable while Media/Communications employers prefer private not-for-profit colleges.

## Key Findings: Who Makes the Cut? (Cont.)

- Employers had negative associations with online colleges, rating these undesirable.
- Nationally known colleges and elite colleges run neck and neck in popularity ratings among employers considering a candidate for employment. Science/Technology and Services/Retail are more influenced by Elite Colleges than Nationally known but only by a slight margin.
- However, preference for regionally known colleges is not far behind nationally known or elite colleges.
- Approximately one-third of employers who come across a candidate from a college that is unknown to them do consider this a negative factor.
- Only 19% of employers look for specific majors and do not consider candidates without them, while the majority – 78% will consider any major. Executives are least interested in looking for candidates with specific majors (14%) than Managers (19%) and HR (19%).
- Employers from Science/Technology (29%) and Health Care (29%) look for specific majors more so than other industries when considering a job candidate. Services/Retail and Business industries are more flexible when it comes to a graduate's major (only 7% and 12%, respectively, requiring specific majors).
- Top majors differ among industry categories (see slide #67 ).

## Five Top Implications for Colleges and Universities in Strengthening Outcomes for Recent Graduates

- Colleges and universities should seek to break down the false dichotomy of liberal arts and career development – they are intrinsically linked.
- Colleges and universities should support rich experiential opportunities that truly integrate the liberal arts with real-world learning as communication skills and problem solving skills. These are in high demand, seen as lacking, and seen as a colleges responsibility to teach.
- Colleges and universities should view the working lives of their students not as a challenge, but as an opportunity, given the weight employers of all kinds place on experiential elements of a recent graduate’s resume.
- For colleges and universities an “employment brand”, a pillar of a larger “outcomes brand” matters. If an institution is not known to employers, graduates will suffer the consequences when seeking jobs.
- Colleges should go beyond a vision of majors articulating to specific careers. Majors matter to some extent, but in many cases, college major is not the determinant of career entry. A college should approach career development as career exploration for a great many of its students guiding and supporting students with the right mix of solid liberal arts skills and content knowledge.

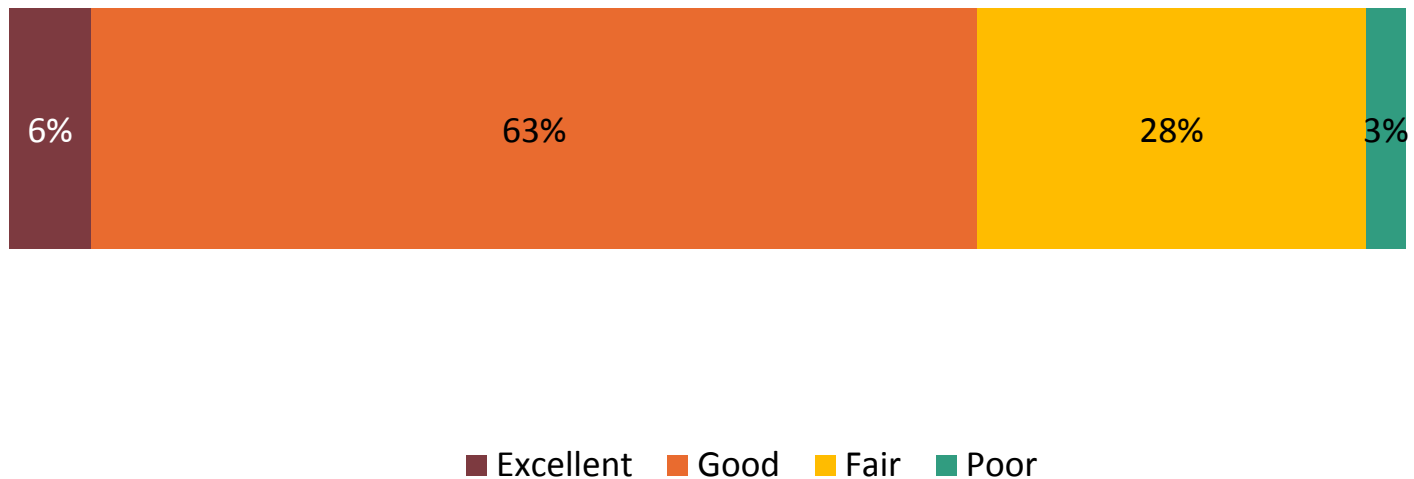
# HOW ARE COLLEGES DOING?





**Colleges and universities are doing a good job according to the majority of employers; however, there is room for improvement.**

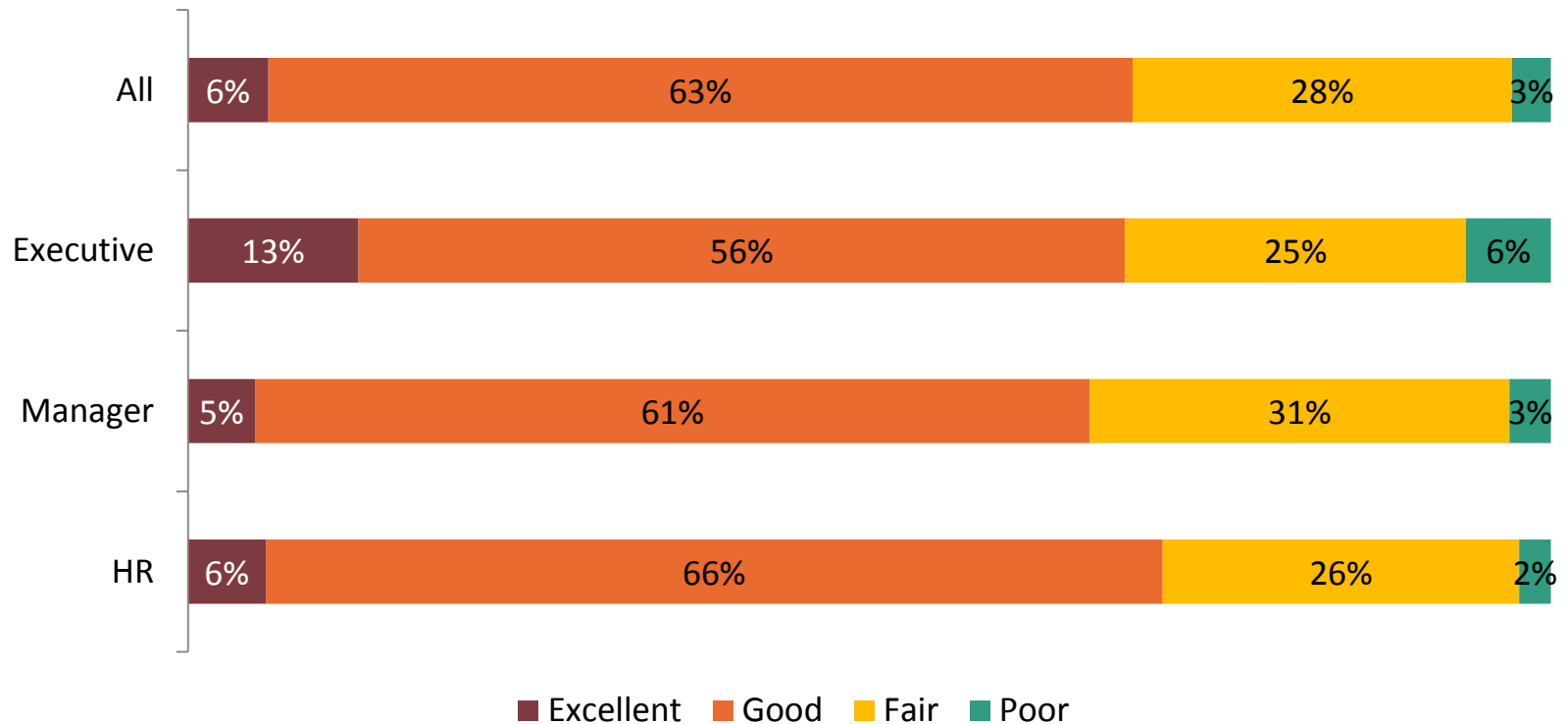
**How Well are Colleges Doing in Producing Successful Employees?**



Q: Please rate how well colleges and universities are doing in producing employees who are successful in your organization.

# Managers are the hardest to please when it comes to their opinion of how colleges are doing.

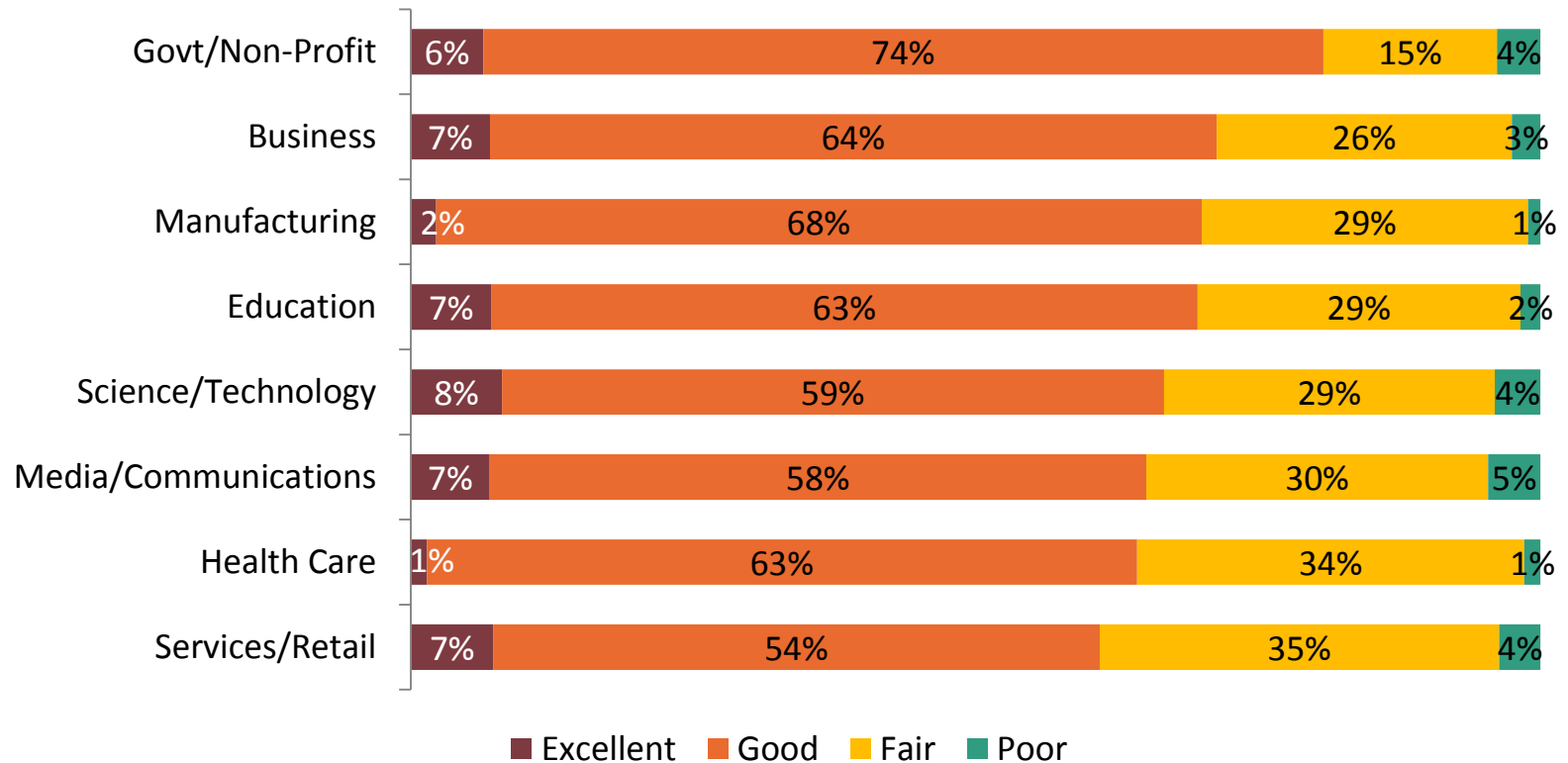
How Well are Colleges Doing in Producing Successful Employees by Hiring Role?



Q: Please rate how well colleges and universities are doing in producing employees who are successful in your organization.

# Colleges and universities can do a better job producing successful employees to the Services/Retail, Health Care, Media Communications, Science/Technology segments.

How Well are Colleges Doing in Producing Successful Employees by Industry?



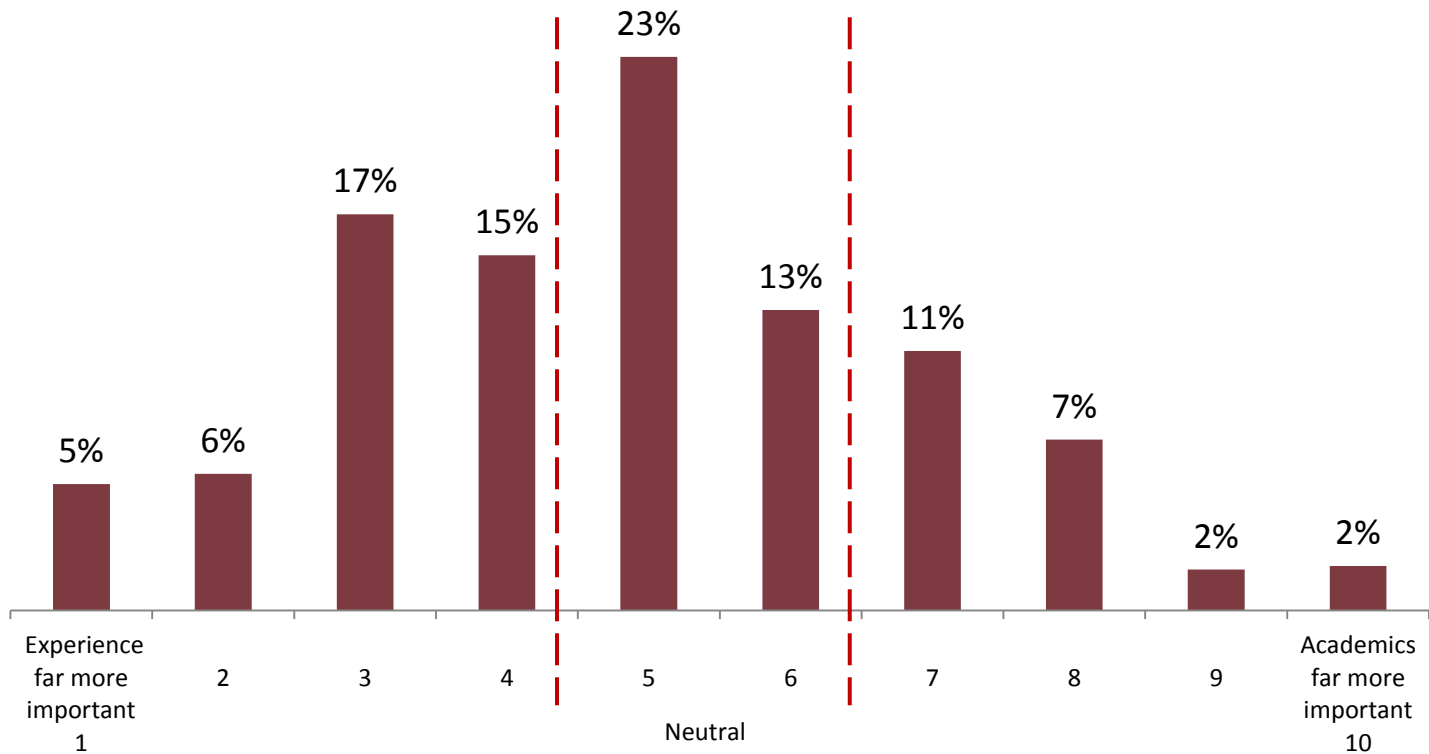
Q: Please rate how well colleges and universities are doing in producing employees who are successful in your organization.

# **WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR IN A JOB CANDIDATE?**



# When evaluating a candidate for employment, employers place more weight on experience over academic credentials.

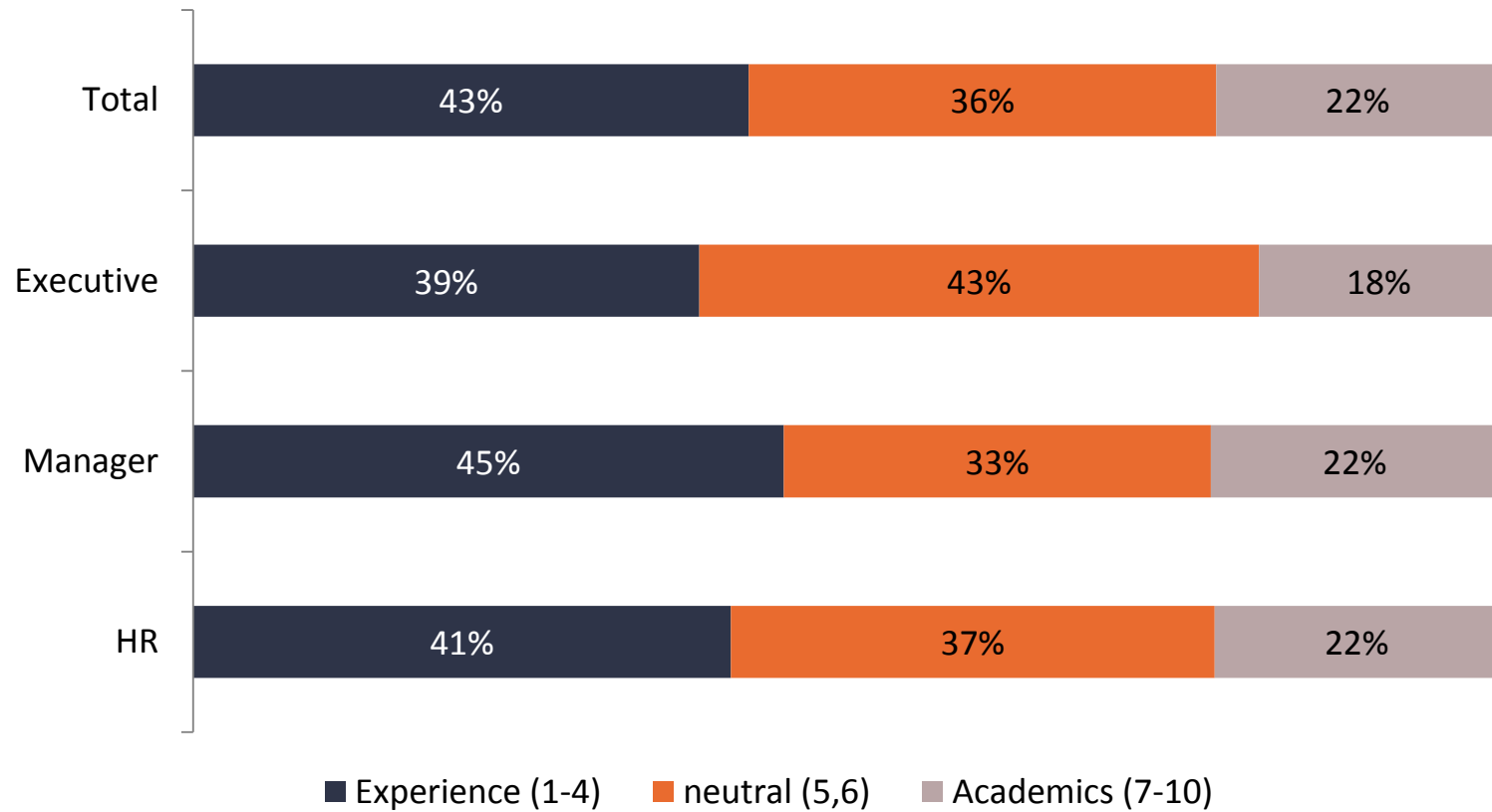
Relative Balance of Experience vs. Academics



Q: Please indicate the relative balance you would give to academic credentials versus experience for recent college graduate seeking a position at your organization (1, total experience to 10, total academics).

# Experience outweighs academic credentials among all hiring roles, especially for Managers.

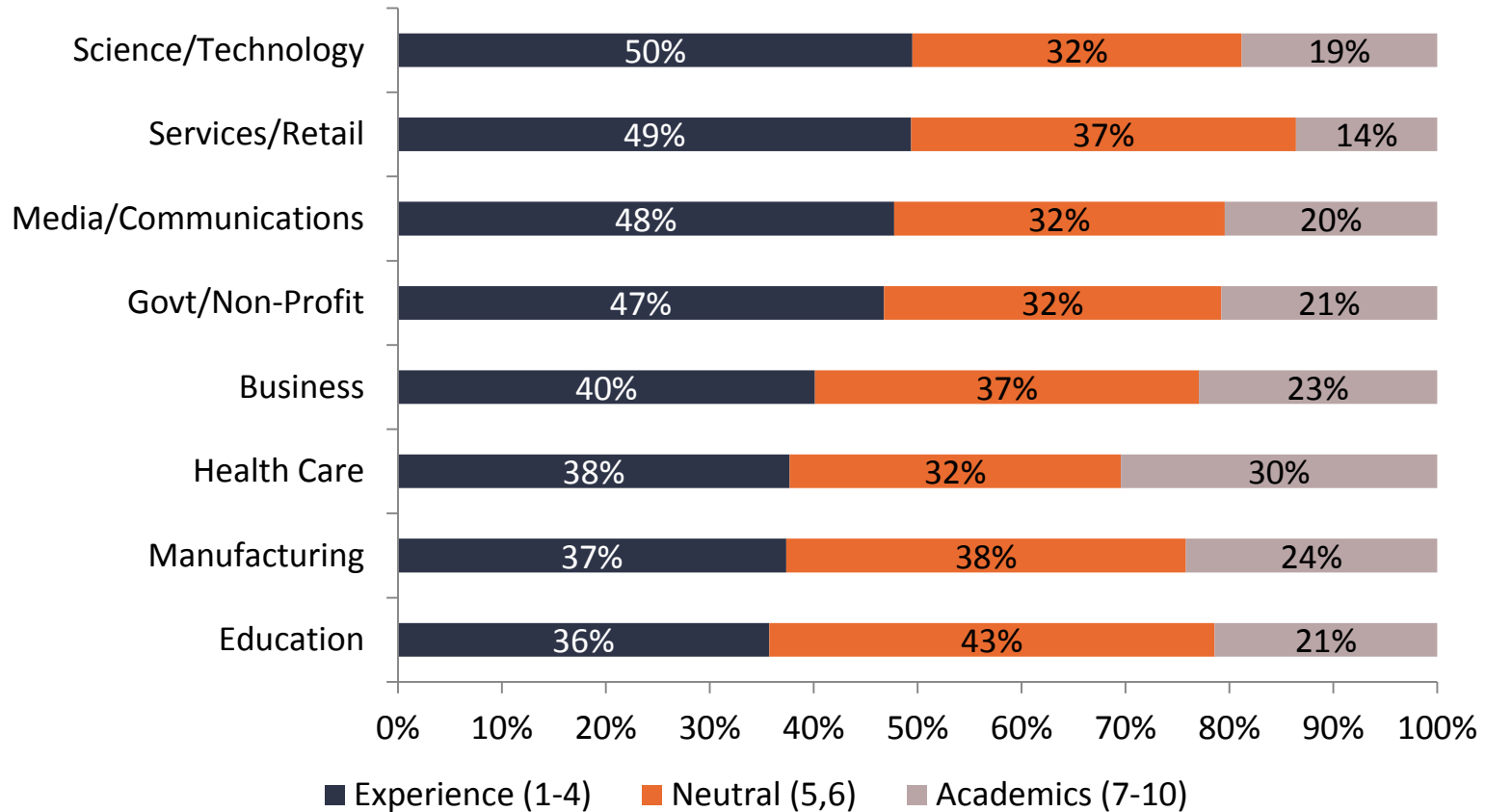
Relative Balance of Experience vs. Academics by Hiring Role



Q. Please indicate the relative balance you would give to academic credentials versus experience for recent college graduate seeking a position at your organization (1, total experience to 10, total academics).

# Experience outweighs academic credentials among all industries as well, particularly Science/Technology, Services/Retail, and Media/Communications segments.

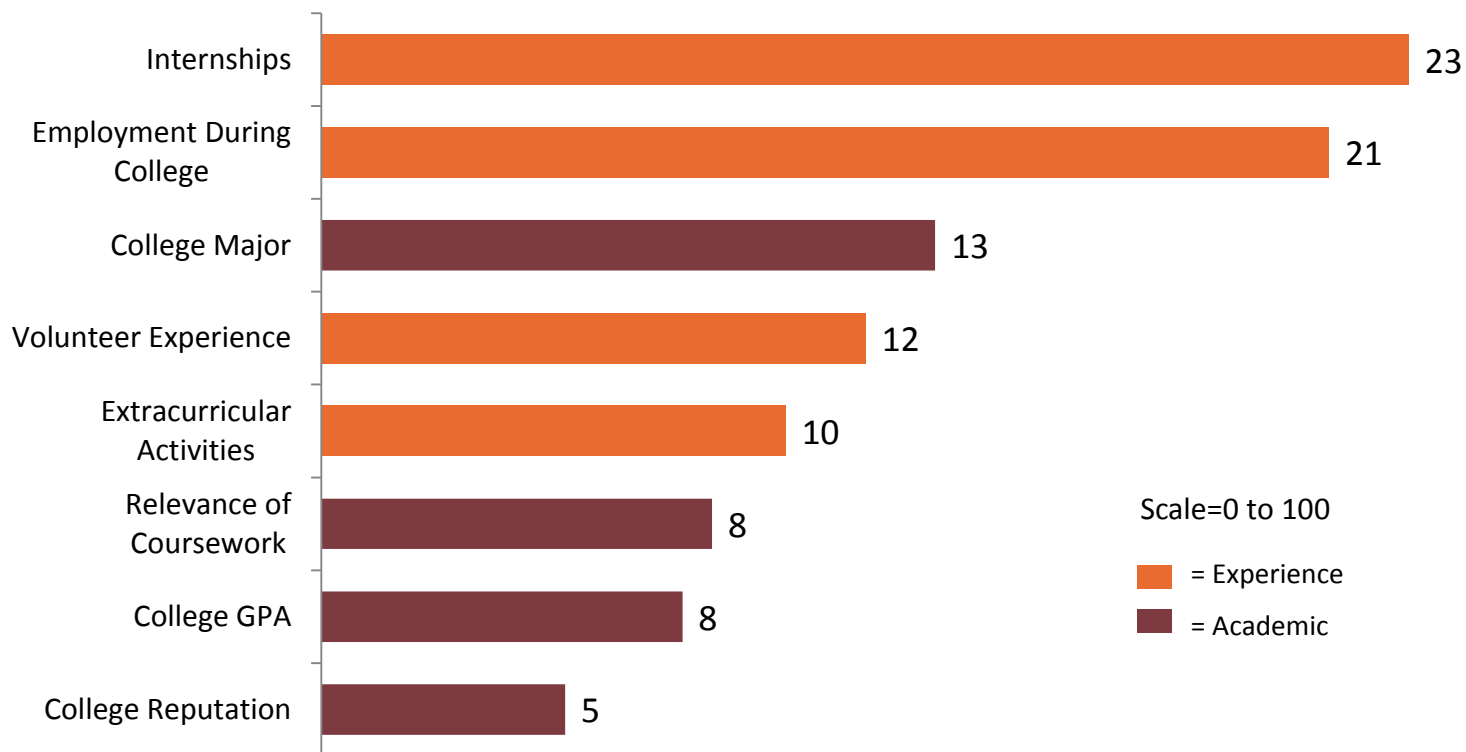
Relative Balance of Experience vs. Academics by Industry



Q. Please indicate the relative balance you would give to academic credentials versus experience for recent college graduate seeking a position at your organization (1, total experience to 10, total academics).

# Internships and employment during college rose to the top of the list as the most heavily weighted attributes considered by employers.

Relative Importance of Attributes in Evaluating Graduates for Hire

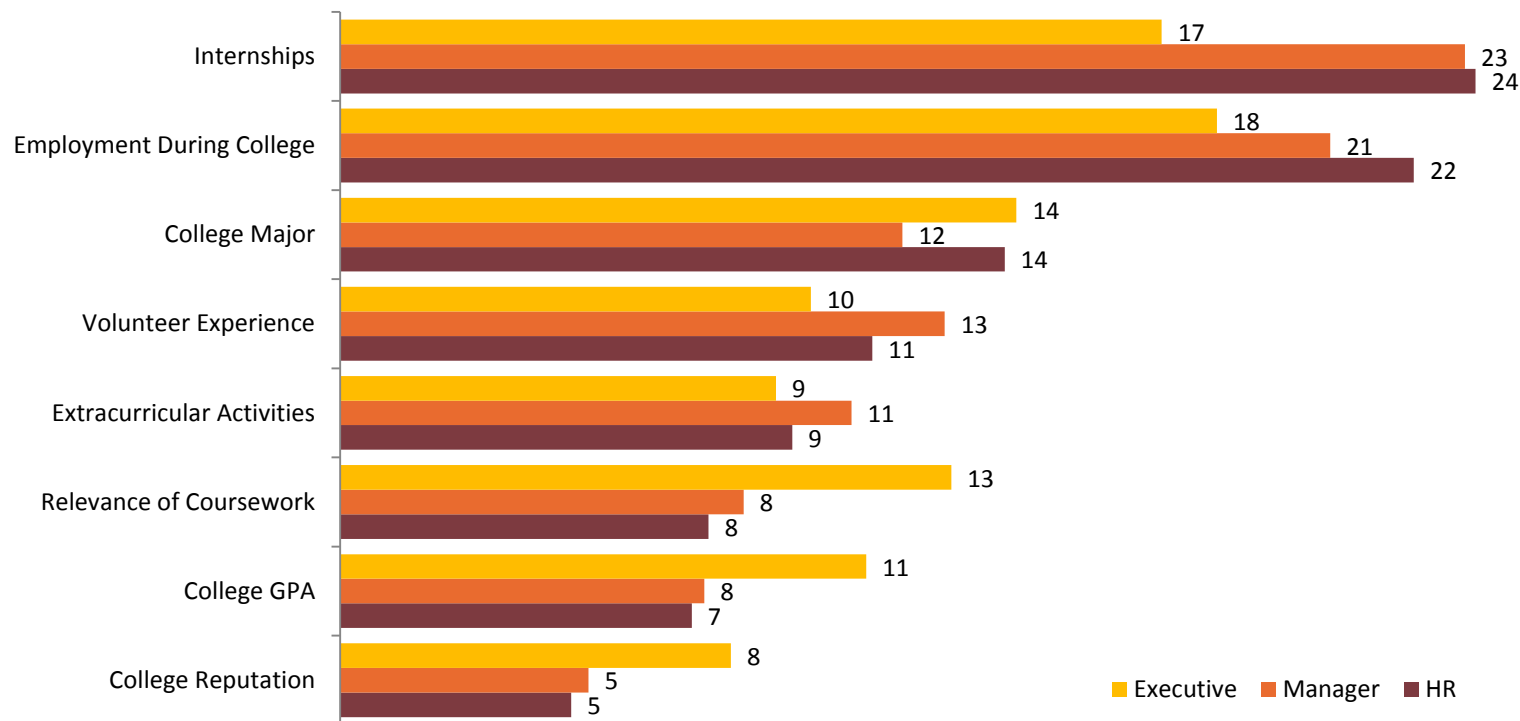


Q: How much weight do you give each of the following educational credentials when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume? How much weight do you give each of the following types of experience when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume to see if further discussions are warranted? (weighted by importance of academic vs. experience on hiring of recent graduates to obtain an aggregate score)



# All three hiring roles agree on the top two elements of a resume.

Relative Importance of Attributes in Evaluating Graduates for Hire by Hiring Role

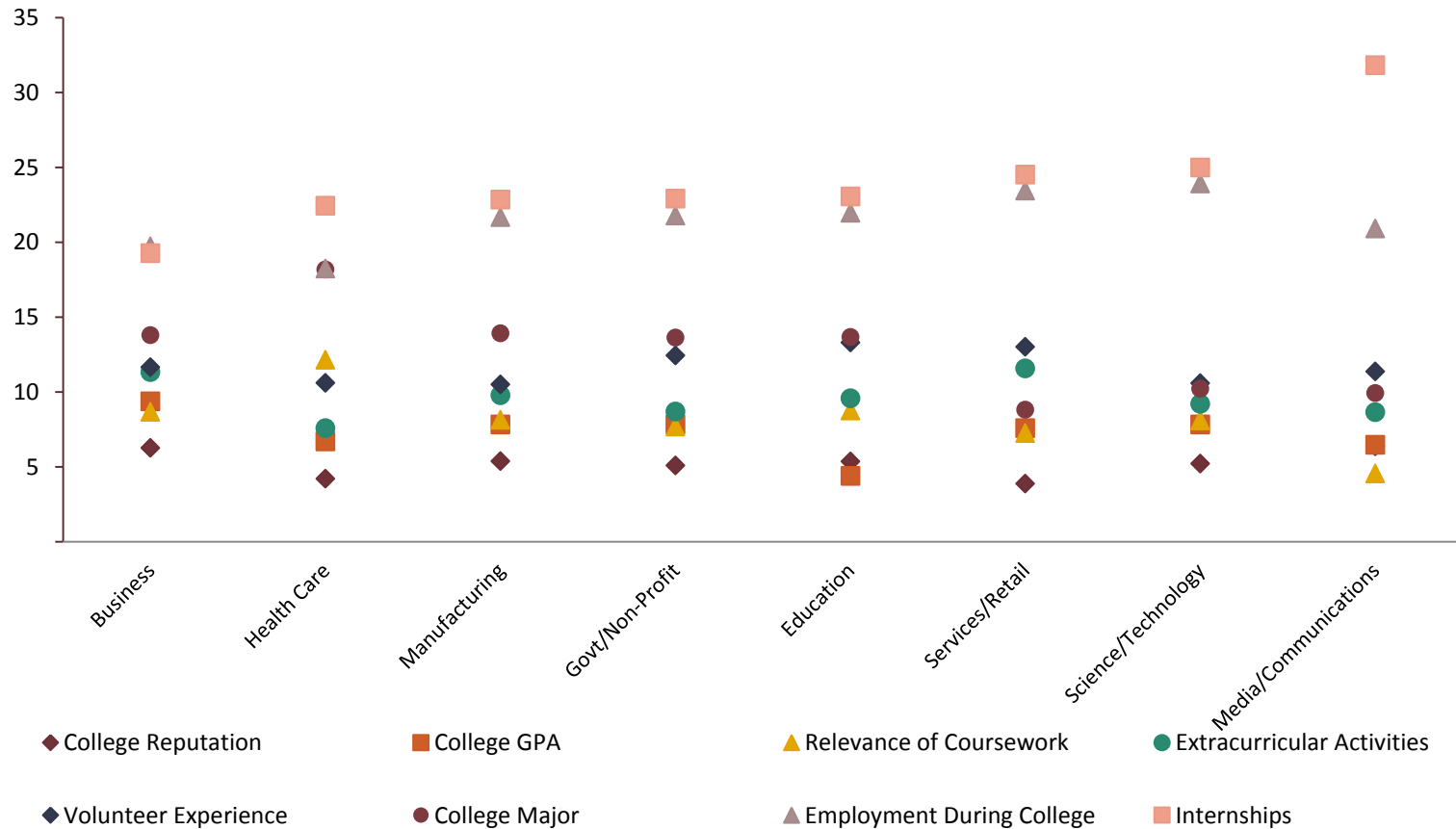


- However, HR and Managers value internships and employment during college more than Executives.
- Overall, extracurricular activities are valued more than GPA, relevance of coursework to position, and college reputation except by Executives who place more weight on coursework relevance and GPA, closely trailing college major.

Q: How much weight do you give each of the following educational credentials when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume? How much weight do you give each of the following types of experience when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume to see if further discussions are warranted? (weighted by importance of academic vs. experience on hiring of recent graduates to obtain an aggregate score)

# Media/Communications employers place the most weight on internships, followed by Science/Technology and Services/Retail employers.

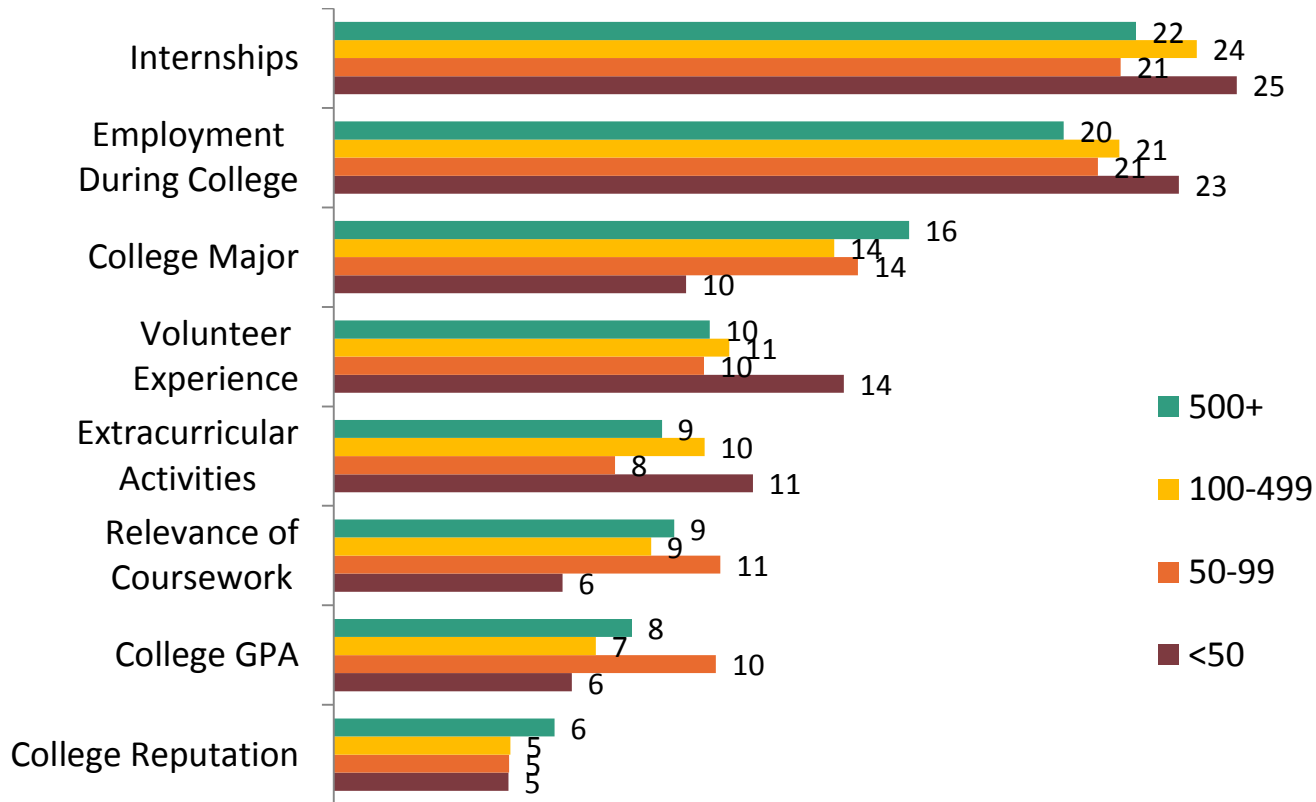
Relative Importance of Attributes in Evaluating Graduates for Hire by Industry



Q: How much weight do you give each of the following educational credentials when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume? How much weight do you give each of the following types of experience when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume to see if further discussions are warranted? (weighted by importance of academic vs. experience on hiring of recent graduates to obtain an aggregate score)

# Larger organizations value college major more than smaller ones where volunteer experience and extracurricular activities carry more weight.

Relative Importance of Attributes in Evaluating Graduates for Hire by Company Size



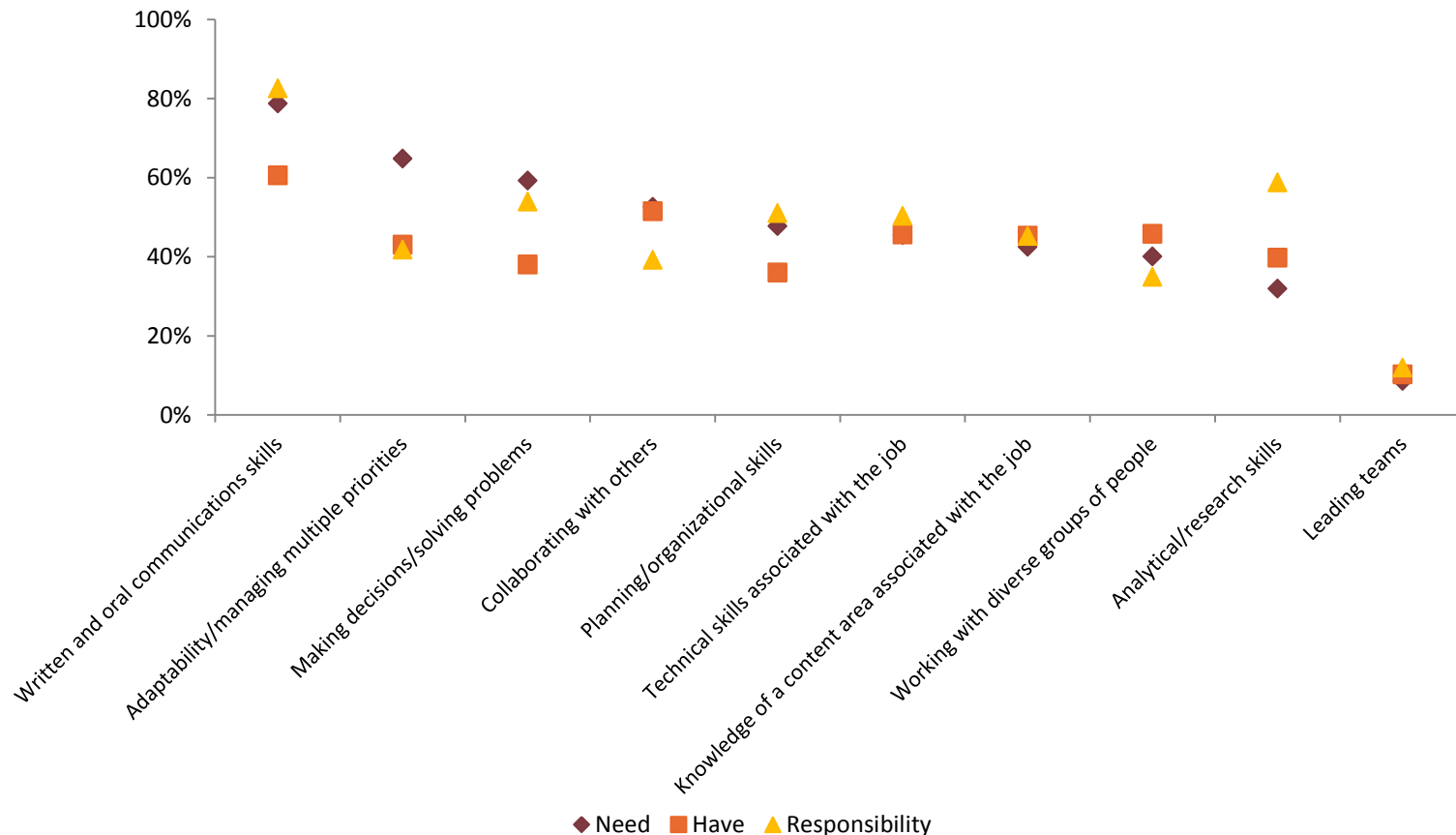
Q: How much weight do you give each of the following educational credentials when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume? How much weight do you give each of the following types of experience when you evaluate a recent college graduate's resume to see if further discussions are warranted? (weighted by importance of academic vs. experience on hiring of recent graduates to obtain an aggregate score)

# SKILLS



# According to employers, colleges are falling short in preparing graduates in communications skills and decision making.

**Top Skills of Recent Graduates Seeking Positions: Have, Need, vs. College Responsibility**

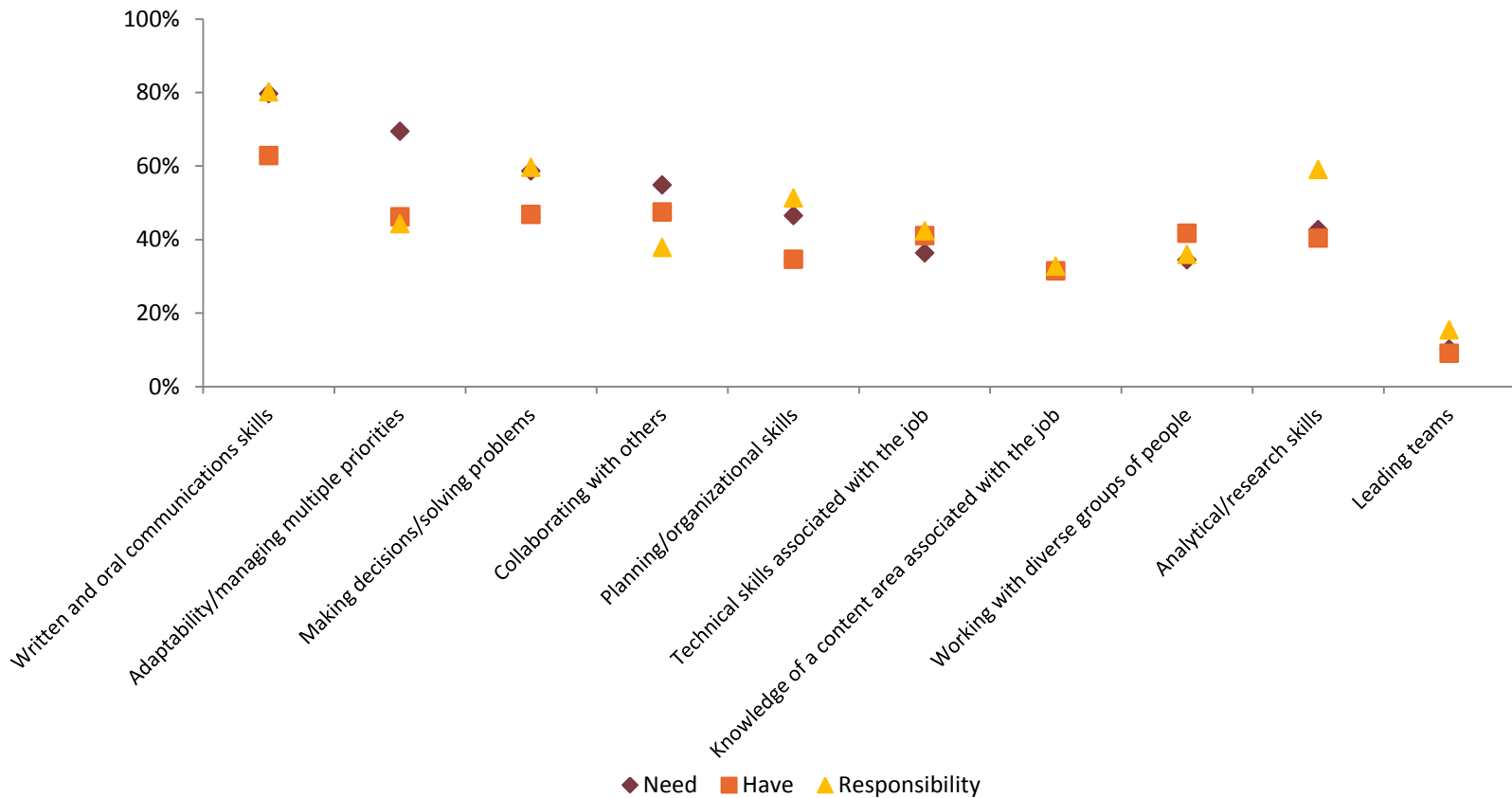


The gap between what employers need and what skills recent college graduates have is wider among written and oral communication skills, adaptability/managing multiple priorities, and making decisions/problem solving.

Q: Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization need to be successful. Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization possess. What are the five top skill areas that colleges and universities are responsible for developing in their graduates.

# For Business employers, colleges are not meeting their responsibility for developing written and oral communications skills.

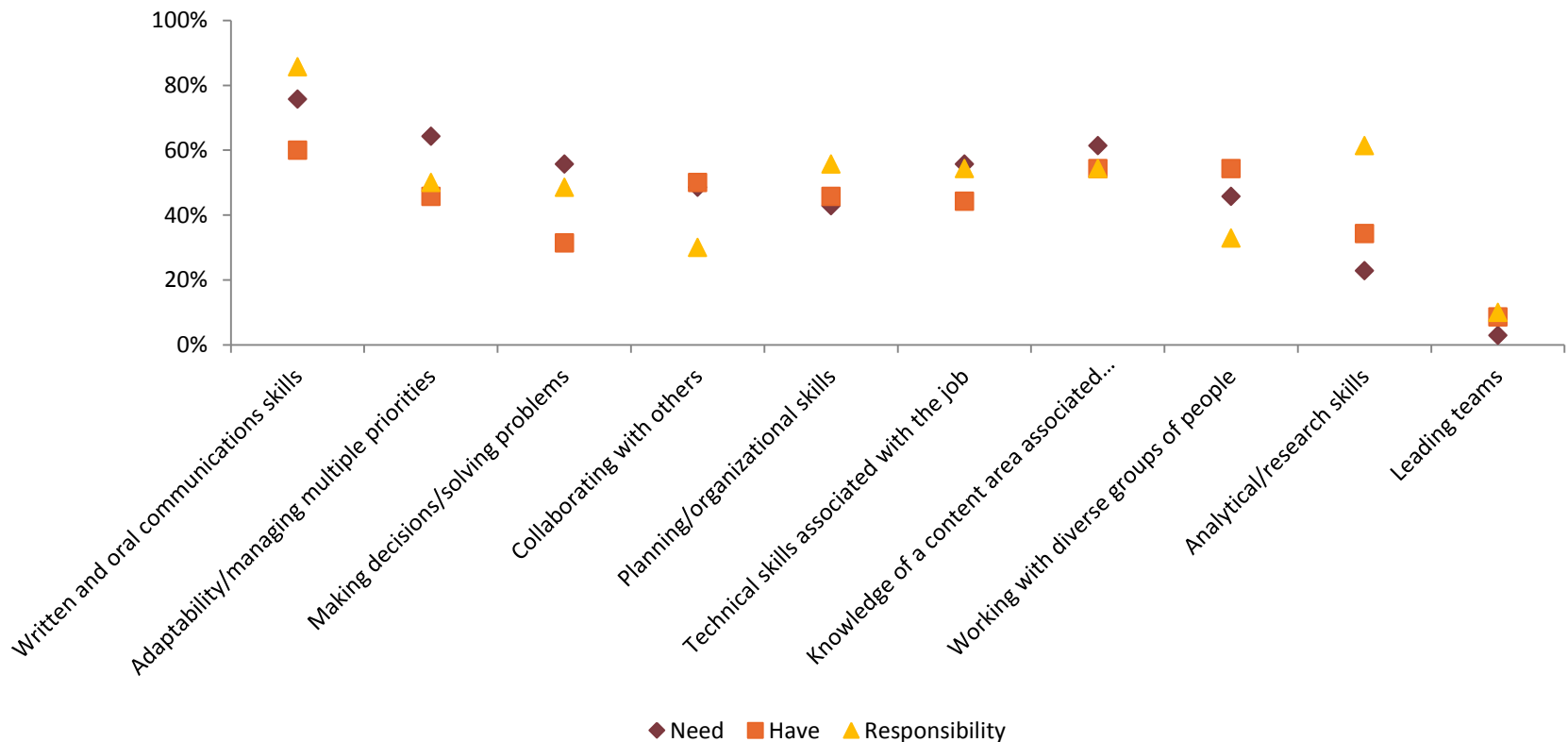
**Top Skills of Recent Graduates Seeking Positions: Have, Need, vs. College Responsibility  
Industry: Business**



Q: Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization need to be successful. Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization possess. What are the five top skill areas that colleges and universities are responsible for developing in their graduates.

# The skills gap in the Health Care industry show the most disparity between have and need in the area of making decisions/solving problems followed by a gap in communications skills and adaptability/managing multiple projects.

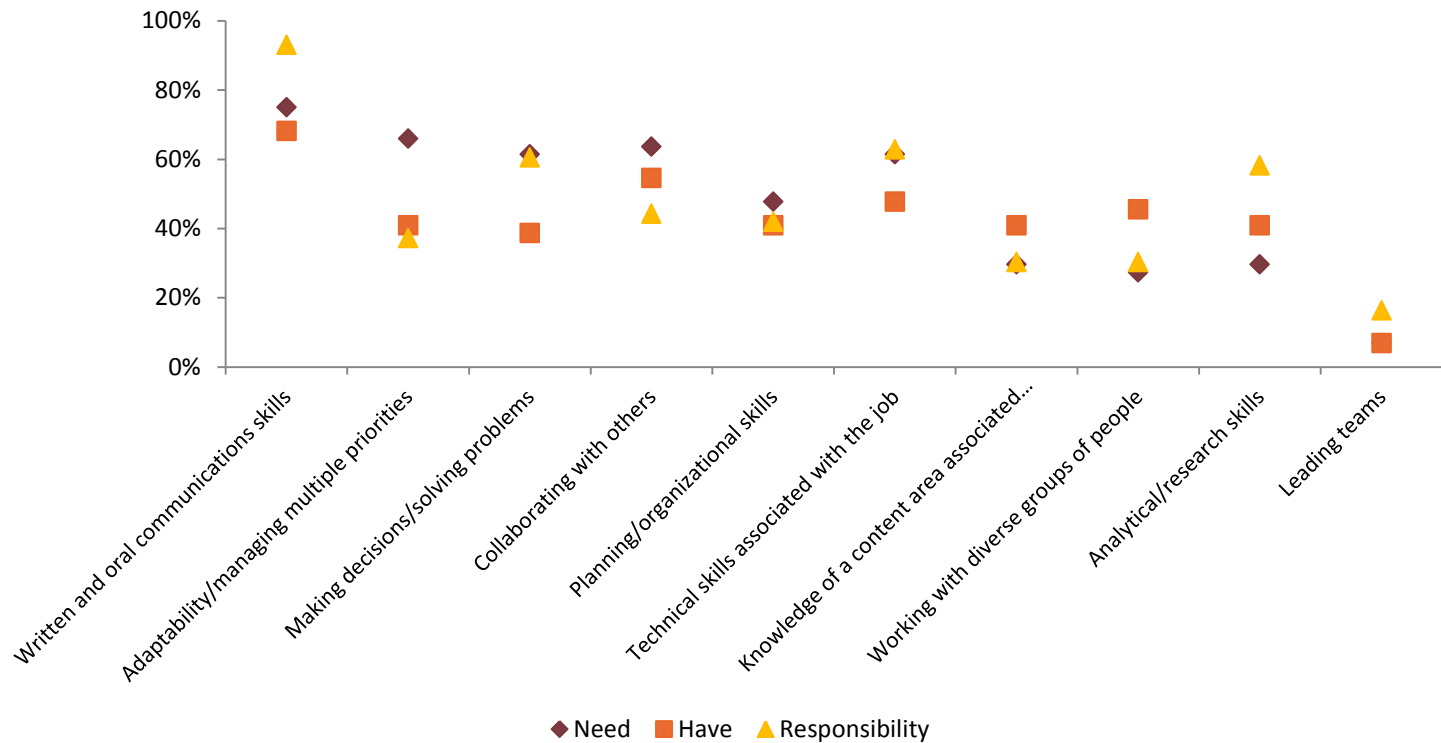
**Top Skills of Recent Graduates Seeking Positions: Have, Need, vs. College Responsibility  
Industry: Health Care**



Q: Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization need to be successful. Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization possess. What are the five top skill areas that colleges and universities are responsible for developing in their graduates.

**While the gap narrows in the Media/Communications industry for written and oral skills, colleges have more of a challenge developing decision-making and technical skills in students geared toward this industry.**

**Top Skills of Recent Graduates Seeking Positions: Have, Need, vs. College Responsibility  
Industry: Media/Communications**

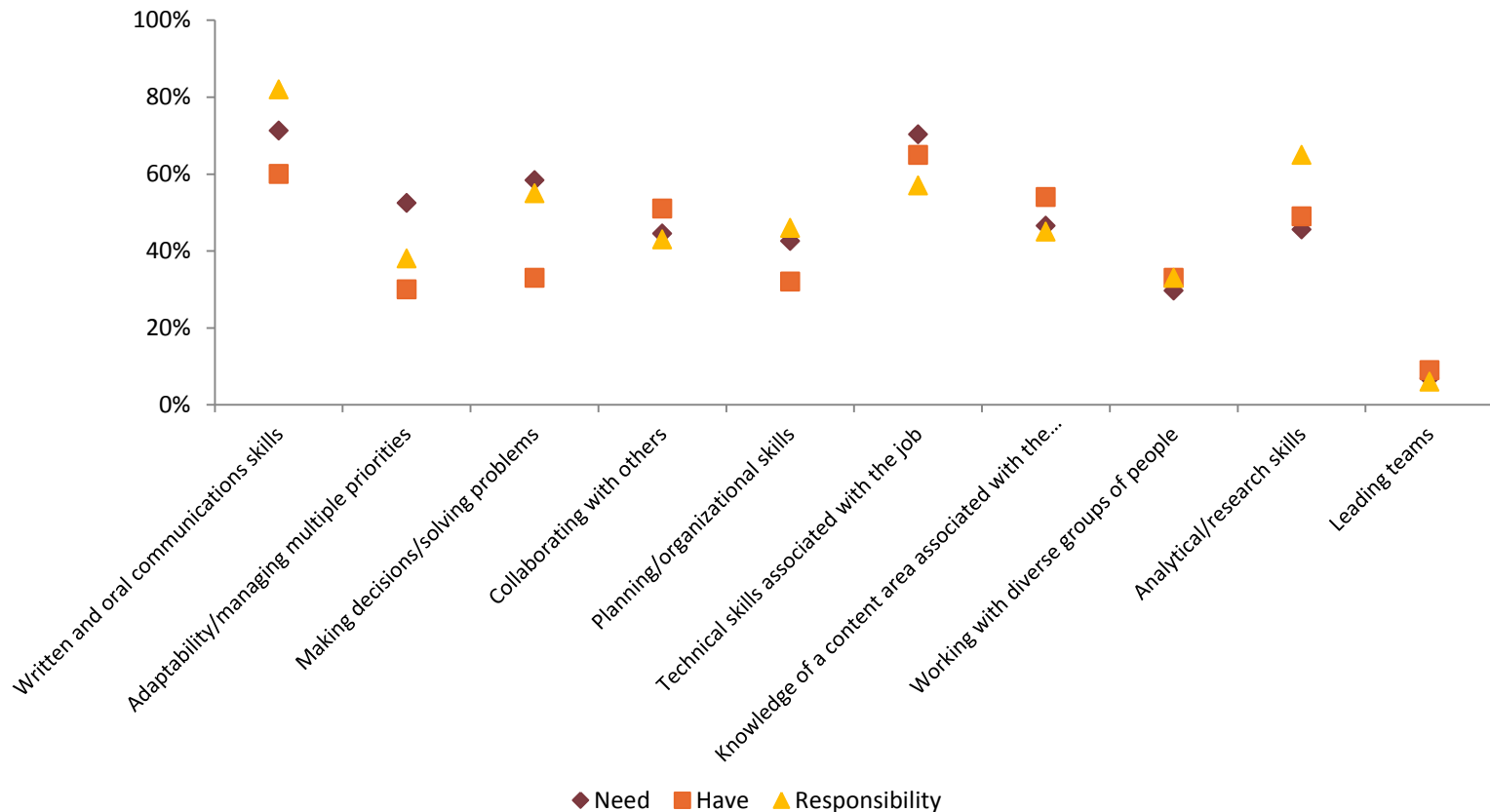


Q: Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization need to be successful. Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization possess. What are the five top skill areas that colleges and universities are responsible for developing in their graduates.



# Written and oral communications are also a concern for Science/Technology employers. There is only a slight skill gap when it comes to technical skills.

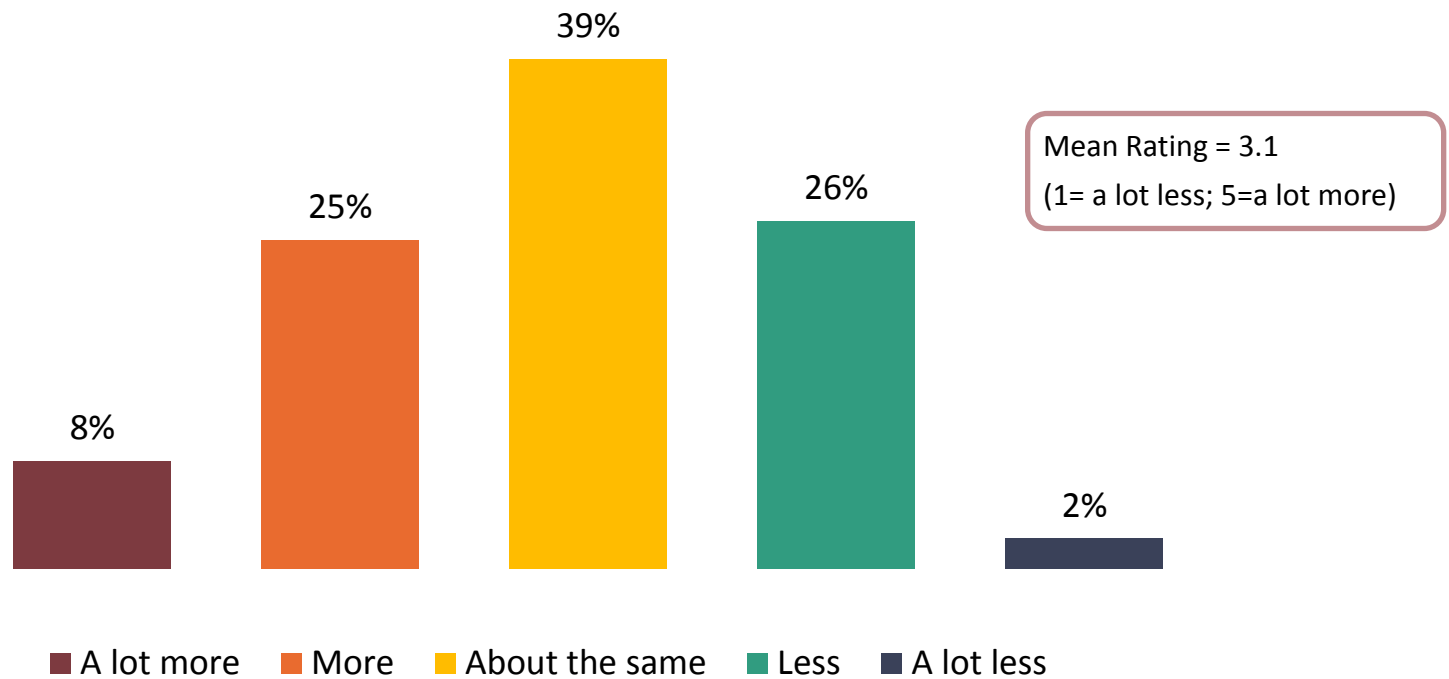
**Top Skills of Recent Graduates Seeking Positions: Have, Need, vs. College Responsibility  
Industry: Science/Technology**



Q: Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization need to be successful. Please tell us the five most important skills that recent college graduates seeking positions at your organization possess. What are the five top skill areas that colleges and universities are responsible for developing in their graduates.

Overall, employers believe a four-year college degree is worth slightly more today than five years ago but this cannot be said for all industry segments.

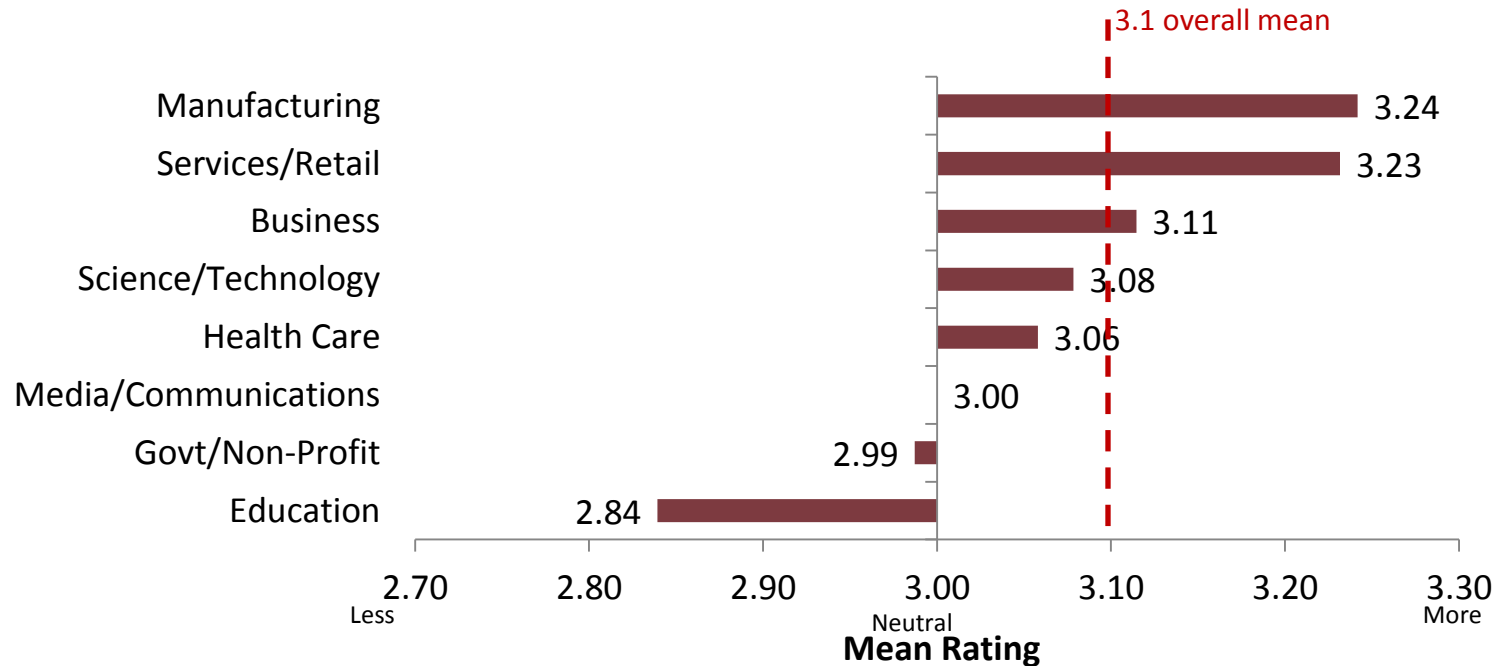
Value of Bachelor's Degree Today vs. Five Years Ago



Q: In your opinion is a four-year bachelor's degree worth more or less in today's job market than it was five years ago?

# Differences among industry segments may explain the higher value placed on a four-year degree.

Value of Bachelor's Degree Today vs. 5 Years Ago by Industry

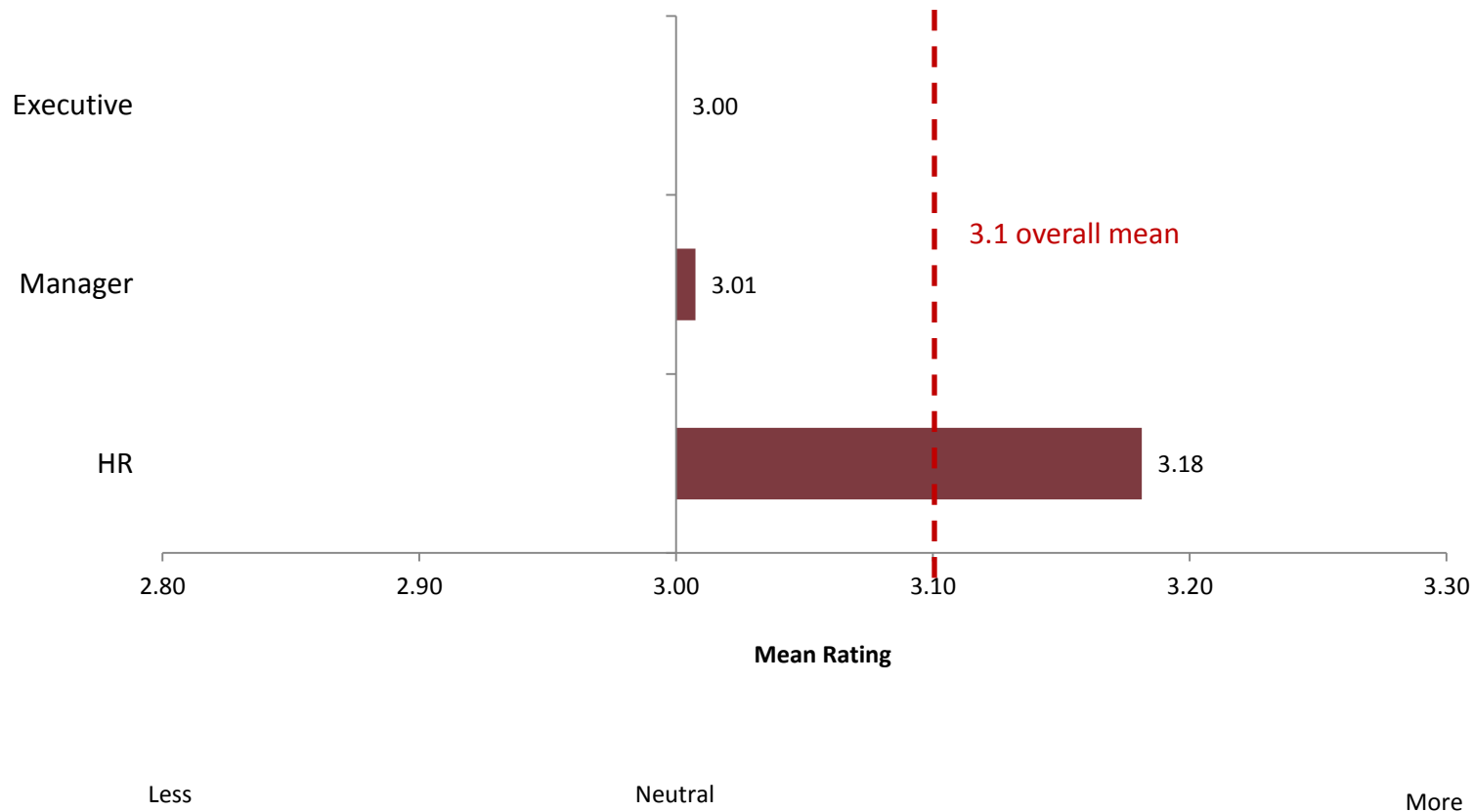


Manufacturing and Services/Retail place a higher value on a four-year degree over any other industry segment. These industries, traditionally more accepting of high school degrees and certifications, now are trending more toward a more educated work force signifying a more competitive playing field in these industries. In contrast, Education and Government/Non-profit were the only industry segments to show less value of today's college degree with an average mean rating of less than 3, highlighting the move towards advanced degrees in these fields.

Q: In your opinion is a four-year bachelor's degree worth more or less in today's job market than it was five years ago?

# Executives and managers see little change in value from today's degree over the past five years. But HR sees more value in a college education.

Value of Bachelor's Degree Today vs. Five Years Ago by Hiring Role



Q: In your opinion is a four-year bachelor's degree worth more or less in today's job market than it was five years ago?

Open-ended comments by employers referring to their thoughts on the value of a college degree can be roughly placed into three categories.

What is the Primary Value of a College Degree in Today's Job Market?

Minimum  
Standard

- Critical
- Requirement
- Necessity
- Major-specific

Proof

- Demonstrates abilities, critical thinking, writing, drive, responsibility, commitment

Future  
Success

- Better job
- Better salary
- Get ahead

# Sample Comments: Minimum Standards

- A bachelor's degree is the lowest degree possible to succeed. In reality, a masters is preferable.
- A Bachelors is needed to get in the door. It's the new HS diploma.
- Everyone has a Bachelor's. They come a dime a dozen, if not more than that. A Master's is the beginning of degrees/experiences that cause a person to stand out now.
- For the most part it is necessary to obtain any type of job.
- Get's your foot in the door/resume looked at.
- I believe that it is very important. Most entry-level positions require a BA.
- I look at it as an indication that the candidate understands the basics.
- It is absolutely required for entry into the workforce.
- It seems that for a lot of the higher paying jobs you will still need graduate level education. A standard undergrad degree just doesn't cut it in some fields anymore.
- It's a door opener. It shows the candidate has vision and can work toward achieving a goal.
- A college degree is a must for anyone pursuing a professional or semi professional position. However the value of a Bachelor's degree has declined since there are so many prospective employees with graduate degrees looking for jobs and willing to accept a position and salary that would have been filled by someone with a Bachelor's degree a few years ago.
- I'm not really sure as it depends upon the degree and the current market for the major/degree. I suppose that most think of a BA today as the equivalent what was thought of years ago as a High School Degree. I think most look for college graduates to have the "soft" skills as well which is something one can teach but not necessarily all can deliver since it also includes non tangible skills such as character, morality, ethics, empathy, listening, etc.
- It depends on what the student Majors in. Science, Technology ,Engineering and some areas of Business, definitely holds more weight than other majors.
- If not in philosophy, math, any of the hard sciences, then it has NEGATIVE value (unless from a top 20 school). Those with degree in easy major (communications, psychology) are likely to have acquired many bad habits and attitudes during college. It takes a long time to train these habits and attitudes out of them. Better for them to not go to college.
- I don't feel that there is any true value - pretty much everyone can get into some type of college now, and companies aren't paying for a bachelor's degree except for highly technical or required to have one in order to practice type positions (Engineering, Computers, Nursing, Education, etc)

# Sample Comments: Proof

- Having succeeded in a learning environment and proving credentials and knowledge.
- A college degree demonstrates that the graduate has discipline and motivation.
- A college degree indicates you have dedication and responsibility and are willing to better yourself.
- A college degree is much more than just the education, it prepares individuals for the workforce by teaching them responsibility, strong work ethic, writing and computer skills.
- Balance with work experience it has more weight that they stuck to it and completed.
- Breadth and depth in critical thinking skills and perseverance as a key behavior
- Candidates who have a bachelor's degree are generally more able to handle a larger workload, and are typically better candidates. It helps distinguish between those that have put in effort to further their careers vs. those who have not.
- College degree demonstrates focus and a certain set of skills.
- Demonstrates how well an individual can manage their time along side their extracurricular activities
- Demonstrates ability to learn, work toward completion of a major goal.
- Evidence of knowledge and discipline
- For the employer it shows dedication, drive and good decision making. For the student the affiliation with the school and alumni are both valuable as well as the opportunities to gain experience on projects in the class room.
- Illustrates the individual's ability to focus on tasks and responsibilities. Shows discipline.
- In my professional opinion, a degree offers an individual a way to enhance his/her skills in areas such as communications and finance. A person with a degree is more likely to show maturity and motivation.
- In todays market place it is unfortunately not as valuable as it would be in a growing economy. One value to consider is the discipline, focus and determination it takes for someone to complete all years of schooling.
- Proof that you can complete a rigorous 4 year program. The degree is only part of the picture. We also look for campus involvement as well as internships and how well those things are balanced.
- Proves a student has "staying-power."

# Sample Comments: Future Success

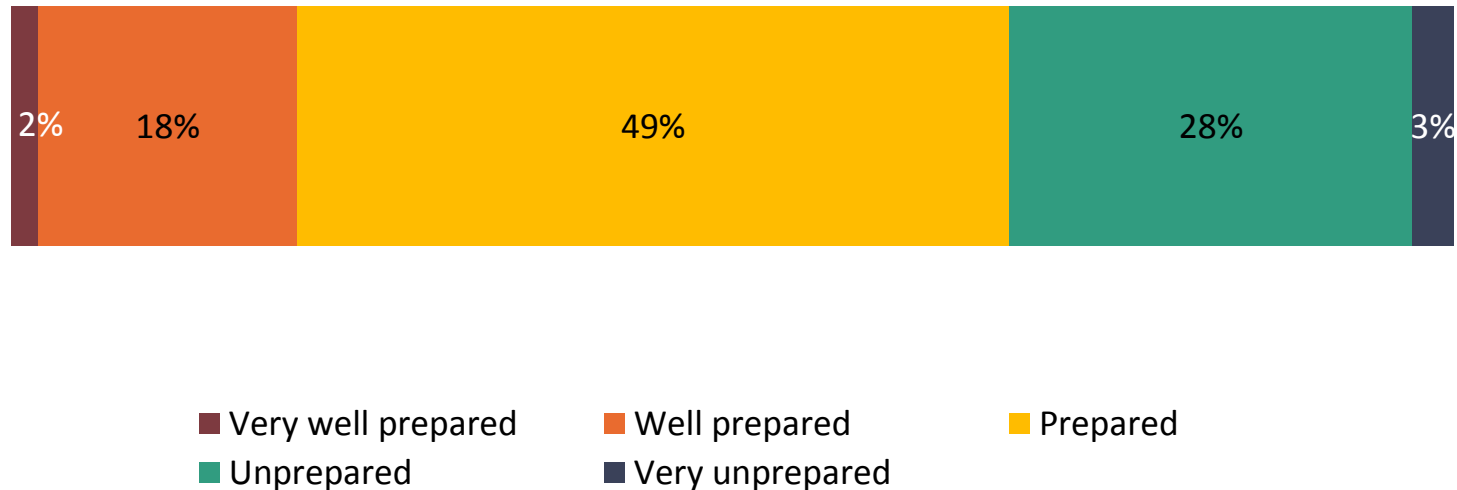
- Earning a degree in today's job market allows you to apply for positions that you may not be able to apply for without a degree. Earning a degree gives you more opportunities than a person without a degree. I believe in this crazy job market, a degree is very valuable.
- For our industry, the value of a degree is beneficial only when the Employee is trying to progress in his career. We feel that the degree would support some of the analytical challenges that we find in most current employees.
- Provides specific tools the individual will use in decision making roles. Trains in management tools needed for career growth.
- In the current recession, according the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce, those with only a high school diploma lost 5.6 million jobs. Those with a bachelors degree or higher gained two million jobs. The need for a college education has never been more clear. A college graduate is more likely to have a job, and to be paid more.
- It allows for competitive marketability and opportunity to explore potential new career options
- Opportunity to move up from entry level position faster than someone without one.
- Priceless - but to be more sensible - a degree may get you the job but not more money than the original salary guidelines
- A college degree helps you form thought processes; it teaches you how to think. What you do with these tools will help determine your success in today's job market
- points to candidate being open to learning and trying to set him/herself up for success
- Knowledge of subject area, better writing skills, maturity and willingness to learn, desire for advancement and challenge
- A college degree is very important. However, to remain competitive in today's market there is a need for a Master's level degree in lucrative majors that can rebuild the job's industry in this country. Students should begin to look at the degree that they are seeking with a global perspective.



**WHAT CAN GRADUATES DO BETTER?**

# Graduates are prepared for a job search according to the majority of employers in the study, but there is room for improvement.

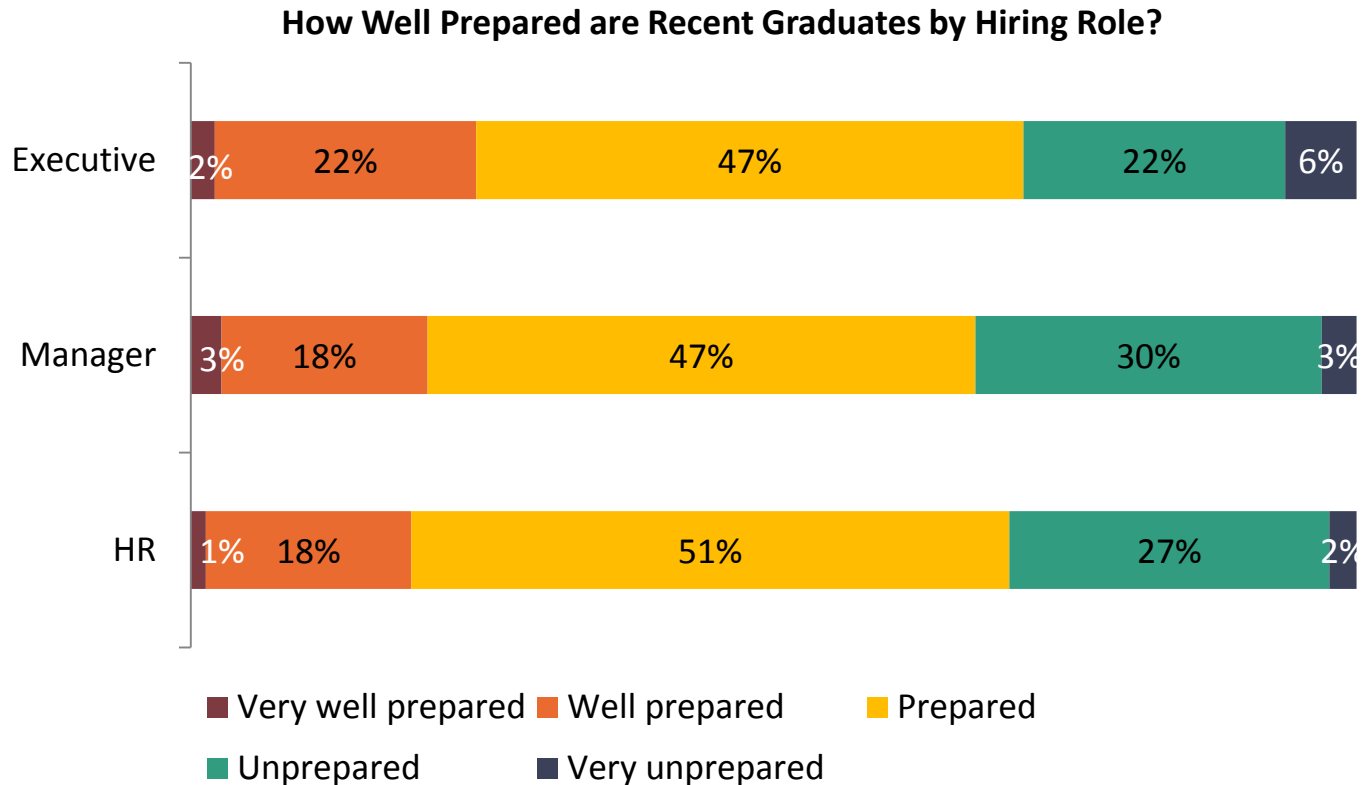
## How Well Prepared are Recent Graduates?



Only 31% of employers indicated recent graduates are “unprepared” or “very unprepared” – similar to how they responded to how well schools were doing in producing successful employees.

Q: On the whole, how well prepared are recent college graduates for a job search?

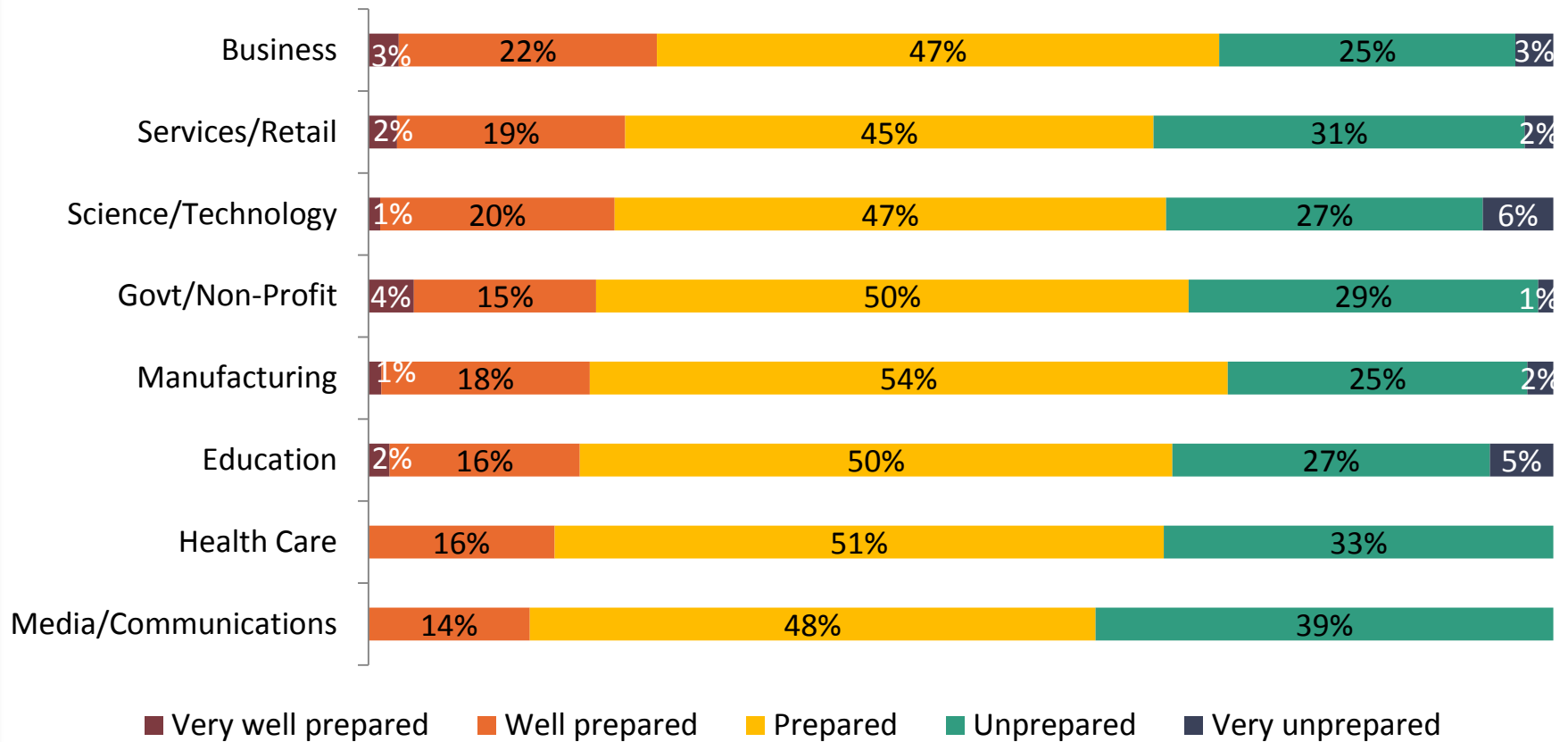
# Managers, again, tend to be hardest to please with one-third choosing “unprepared” to “very unprepared” for the recent graduate’s preparedness rating



Q: On the whole, how well prepared are recent college graduates for a job search?

# Recent graduates are better prepared going into Business, Services/Retail, and Science/Technology fields.

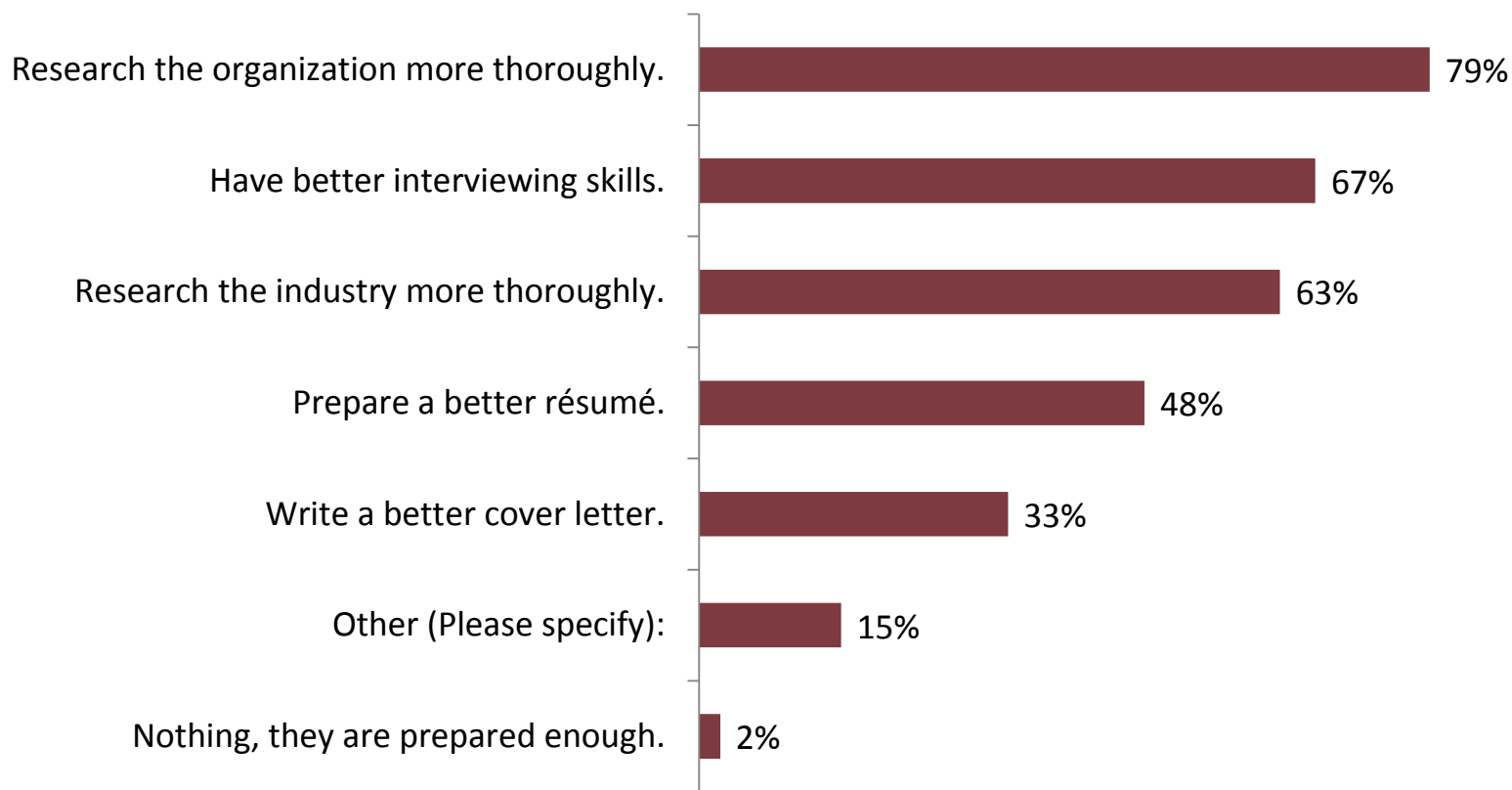
How Well Prepared are Recent Graduates by Industry



Q: On a whole, how well prepared are recent college graduates for a job search?

**According to employers, graduates need to do their research, both of the organization and industry they are entering, and improve their interviewing skills.**

### How Can Graduates Do Better?



Q: What could recent graduates do to be better prepared for a job search?

# All hiring roles agree that graduates could do better researching organizations first and foremost.

## How Can Graduates Do Better by Hiring Role



Not surprisingly, HR personnel have higher expectations when it comes to interviewing skills and resumes compared to Executives and Managers, which could be because those HR representatives that screen candidates first, tend to weed out the worst leaving the best candidates to Executives and Managers.

Q: What could recent graduates do to be better prepared for a job search?

# Graduates headed to a Media/Communications field could do better researching the industry and preparing a better resume.

## How Can Graduates Do Better by Industry

	Business	Health Care	Media/ Communications	Services/ Retail	Manufacturing	Science/ Technology	Education	Govt./ Non-Profit
Research the organization more thoroughly	81%	84%	77%	80%	77%	77%	73%	85%
Research the industry more thoroughly	73%	57%	70%	59%	63%	65%	52%	55%
Have better interviewing skills	69%	71%	61%	69%	68%	65%	64%	63%
Prepare a better résumé	43%	46%	66%	49%	43%	52%	46%	55%
Write a better cover letter	31%	27%	43%	40%	23%	30%	48%	41%

Q: What could recent graduates do to be better prepared for a job search?

# Who Makes the Cut?





# More than half of the employees in the study have a difficult time finding qualified graduates.

Mean Rating = 3.5  
(1= Very easy; 5=Very difficult)

Level of Difficulty in Finding Qualified Recent Graduates

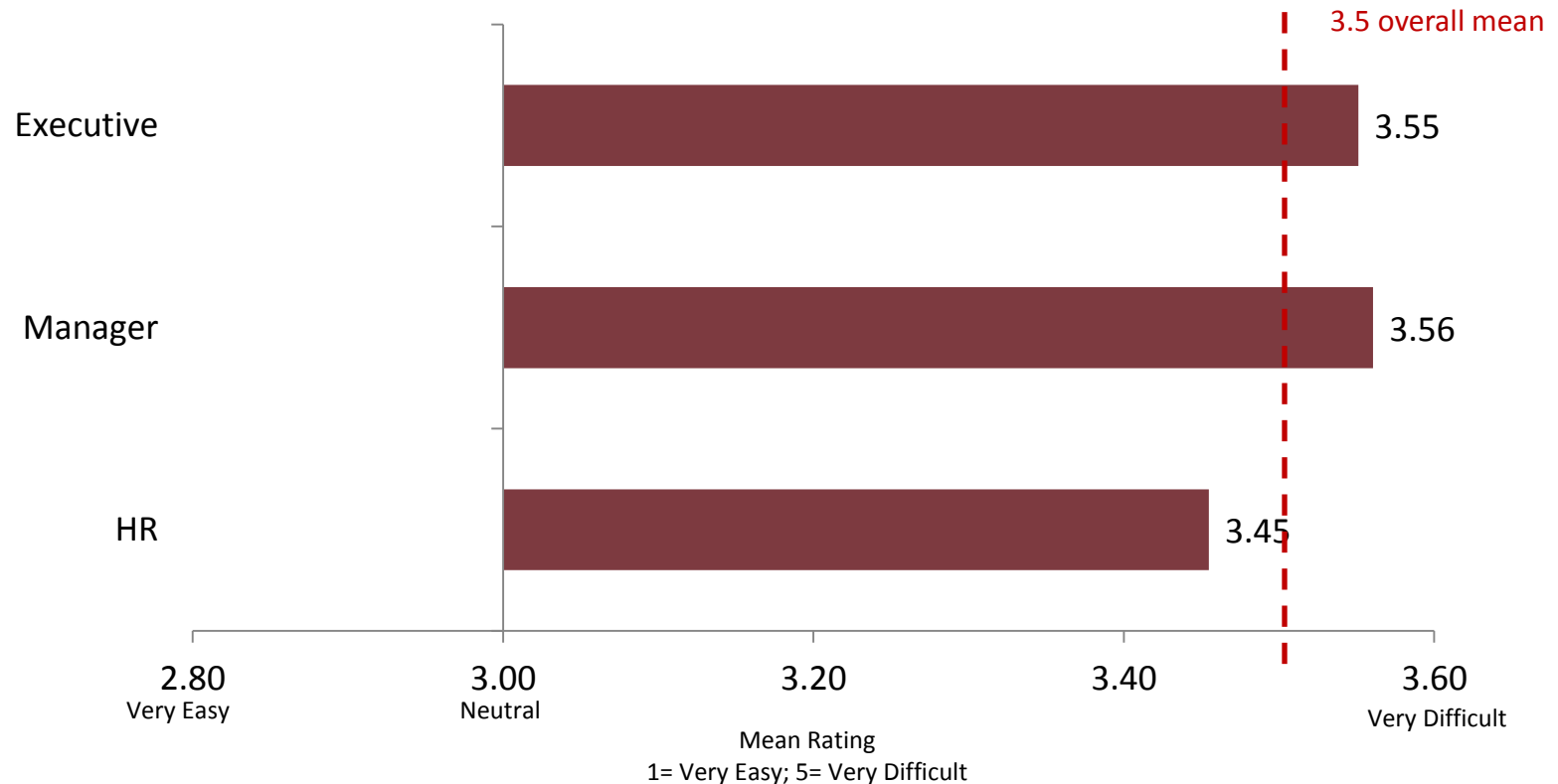


■ Very difficult ■ Difficult ■ Neutral ■ Easy ■ Very easy

Q: How difficult is it to find recent college graduates who are qualified for jobs at your organization?

# Managers and Executives have a harder time finding qualified candidates than HR.

Level of Difficulty in Finding Qualified Recent Graduates by Hiring Role

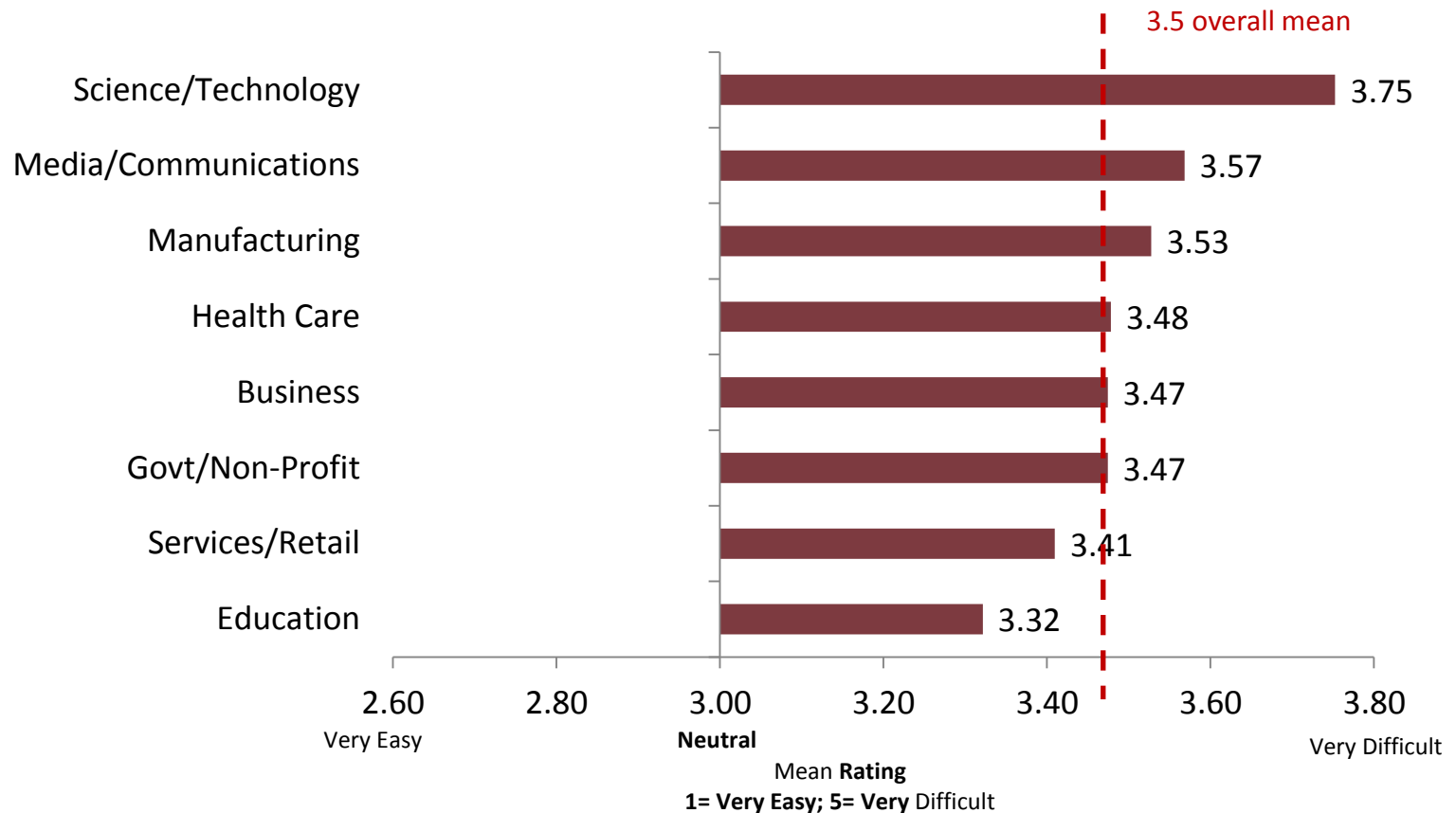


This may indicate their higher standards in attaining the best fit for the position while HR personnel may be more likely to cast a wider net.

Q: How difficult is it to find recent college graduates who are qualified for jobs at your organization?

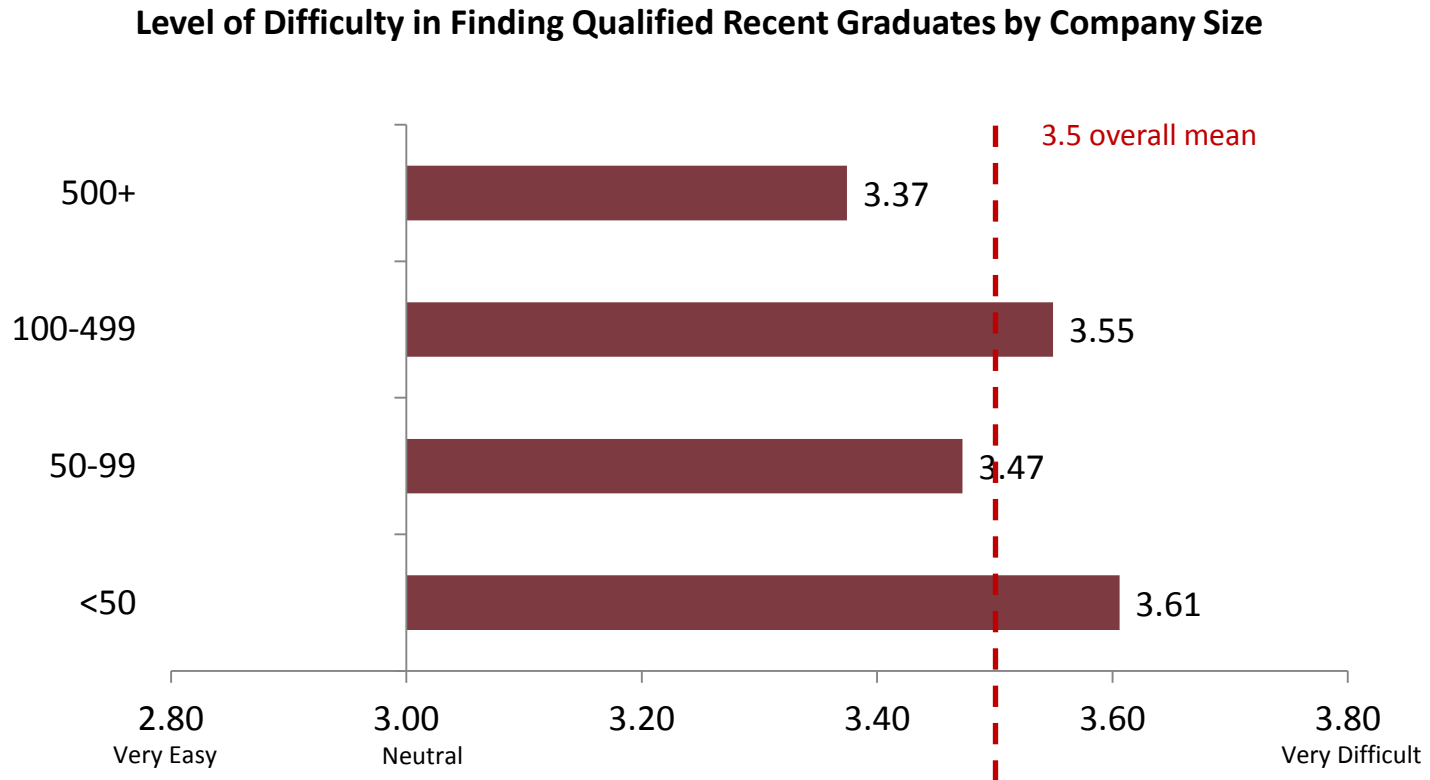
# Employers from Science/Technology, Media/Communications, and Manufacturing industries appear to have the most difficult time finding qualified graduates.

Level of Difficulty in Finding Qualified Recent Graduates by Industry



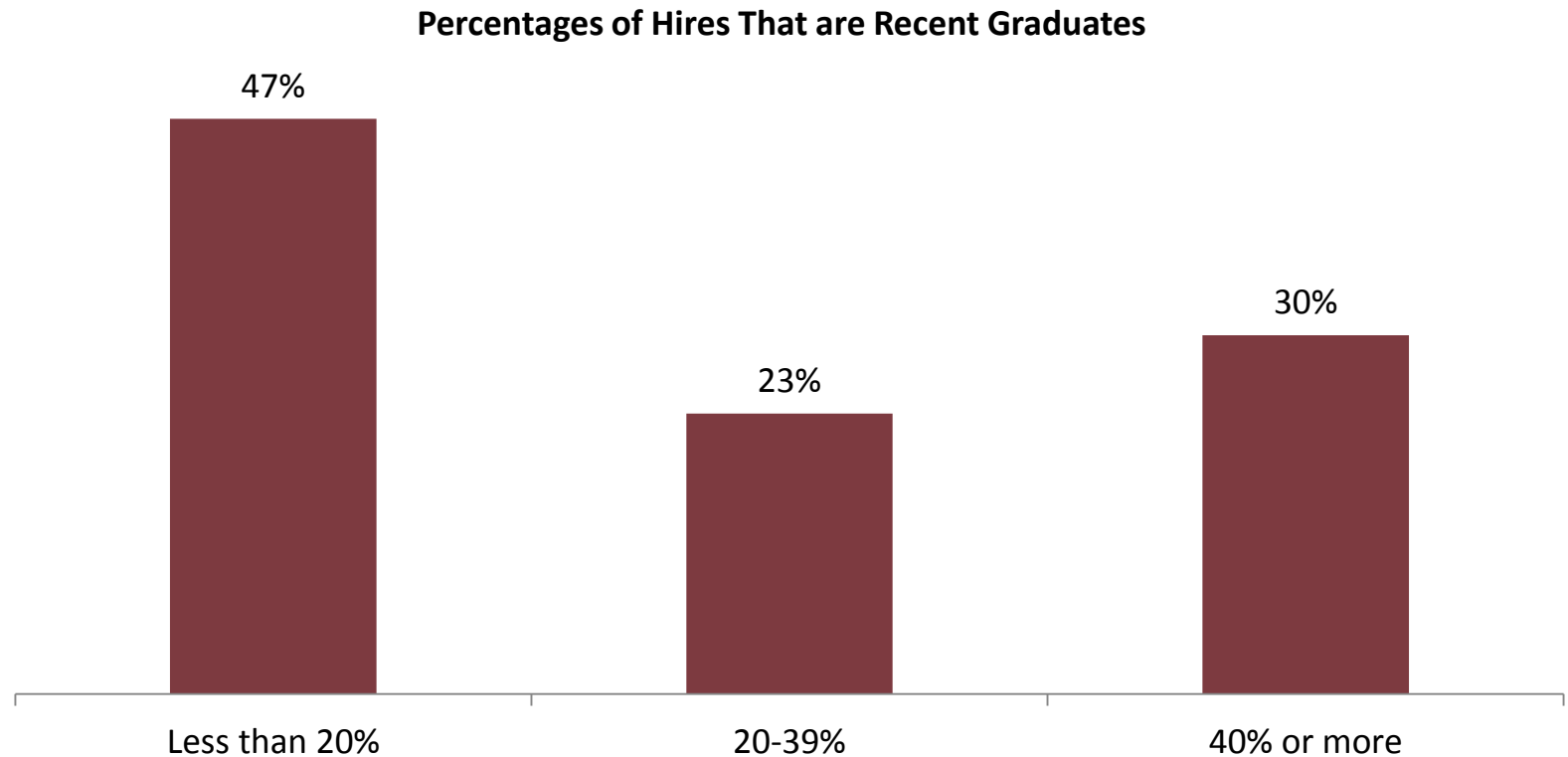
Q: How difficult is it to find recent college graduates who are qualified for jobs at your organization?

# Companies with fewer than 50 employees have a more difficult time than larger companies in finding qualified graduates .



Q: How difficult is it to find recent college graduates who are qualified for jobs at your organization?

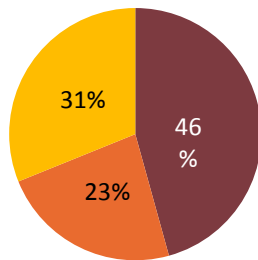
Three out of ten employers reported that recent graduates with bachelor's degrees make up more than 40% of total hires over the past few years, compared to nearly half where graduates made up less than 20% of hires.



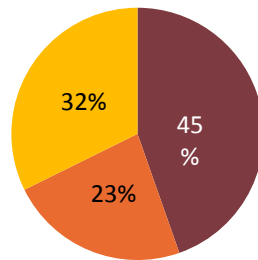
Q: Over the past few years, what percentage of your organization's or unit's hires are recent college graduates with bachelor's degrees?

# Government and Education employers have hired recent graduates at a higher rate than other industries over the past few years; Media/Communications have the lowest rate of hire of recent college graduates.

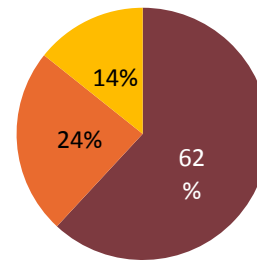
Percentages of Hires That are Recent Graduates by Industry



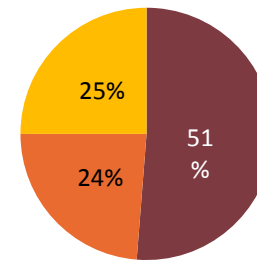
Business



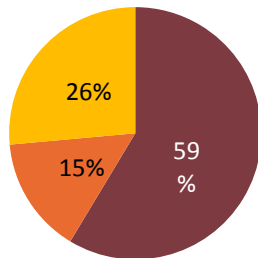
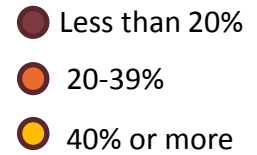
Health Care



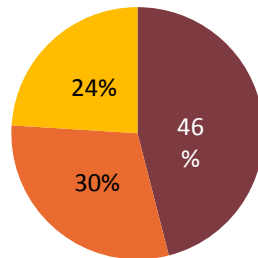
Media/Communications



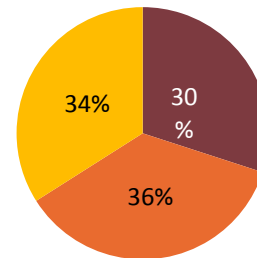
Services



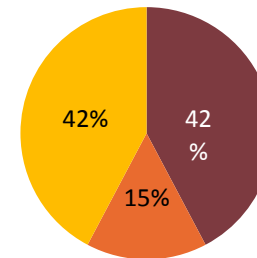
Manufacturing



Science/  
Technology



Education

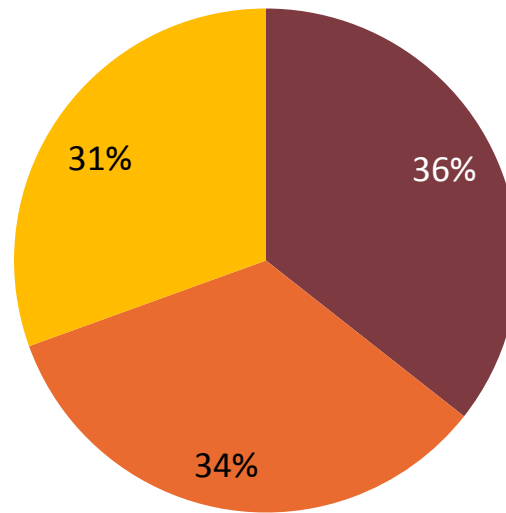


Government/  
Non-Profit

Q: Over the past few years, what percentage of your organization's or unit's hires are recent college graduates with bachelor's degrees?

# Seven out of ten employers would still hire a candidate even without a college degree.

Hire Without Bachelor's Degree

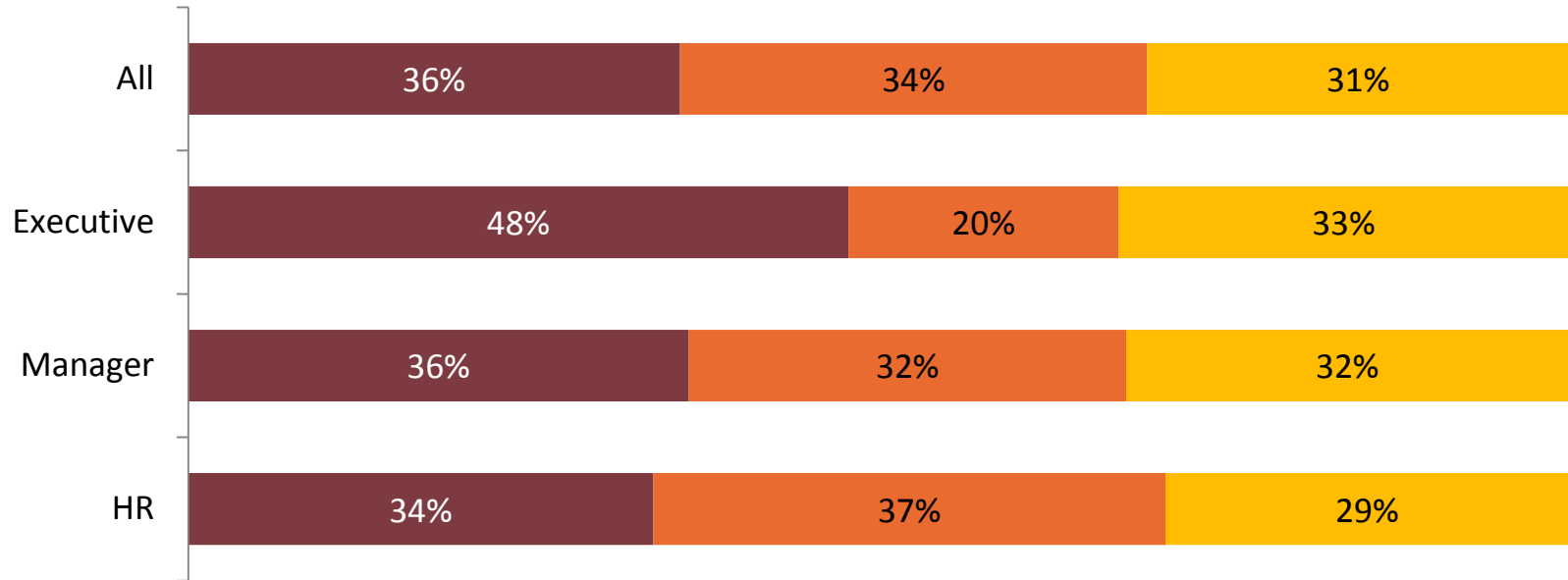


- Yes, we look for candidates with the right fit regardless of degree.
- Yes, for a particularly outstanding candidate only.
- No, a degree is always required.

Q: Does your organization ever hire a candidate with strong experience but no degree for a job that was advertised as requiring a bachelor's degree?

# Executives are more likely to hire someone without a bachelors degree if the fit is right.

Hire Without Bachelor's Degree by Hiring Role

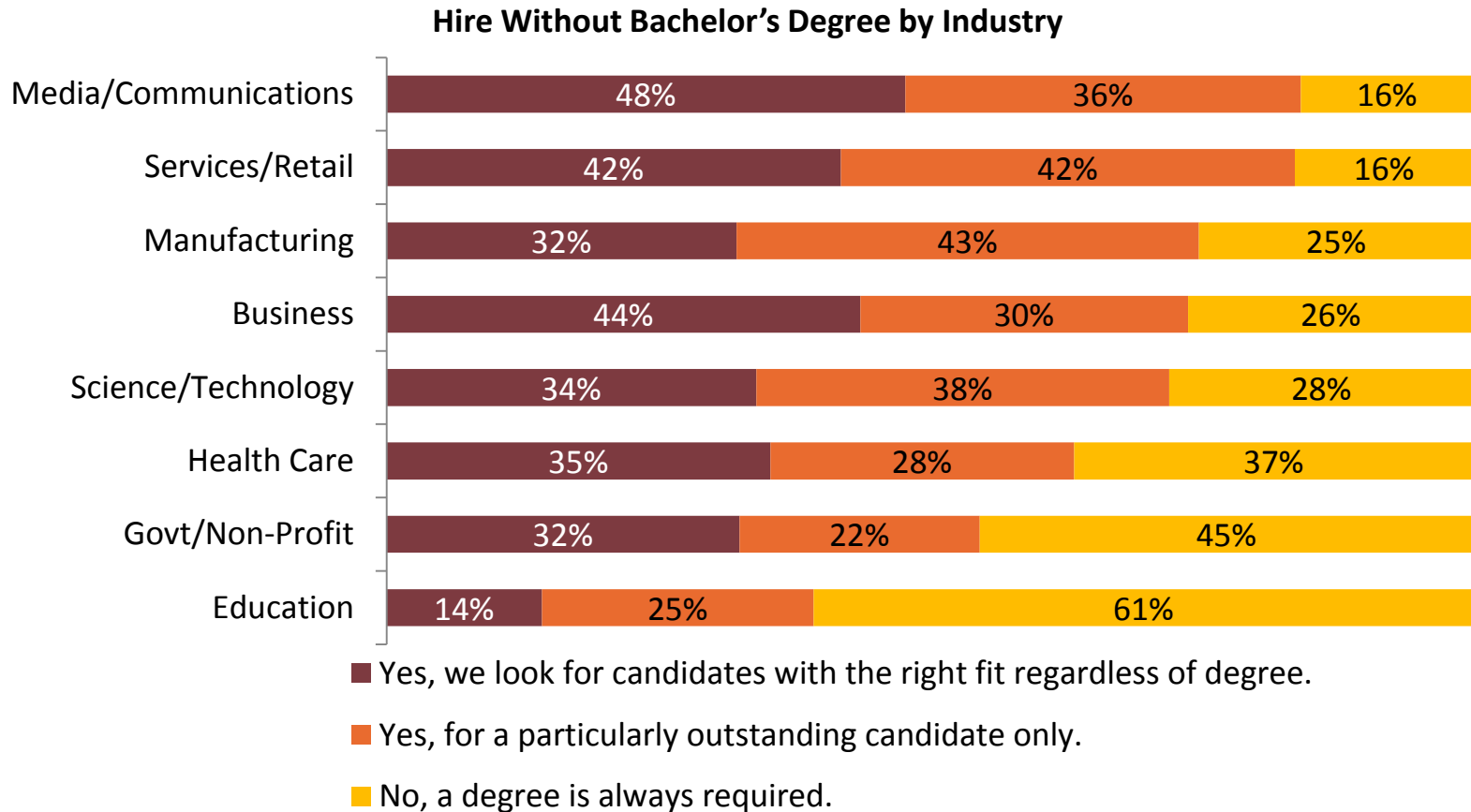


- Yes, we look for candidates with the right fit regardless of degree.
- Yes, for a particularly outstanding candidate only.
- No, a degree is always required.

Q: Does your organization ever hire a candidate with strong experience but no degree for a job that was advertised as requiring a bachelor's degree?

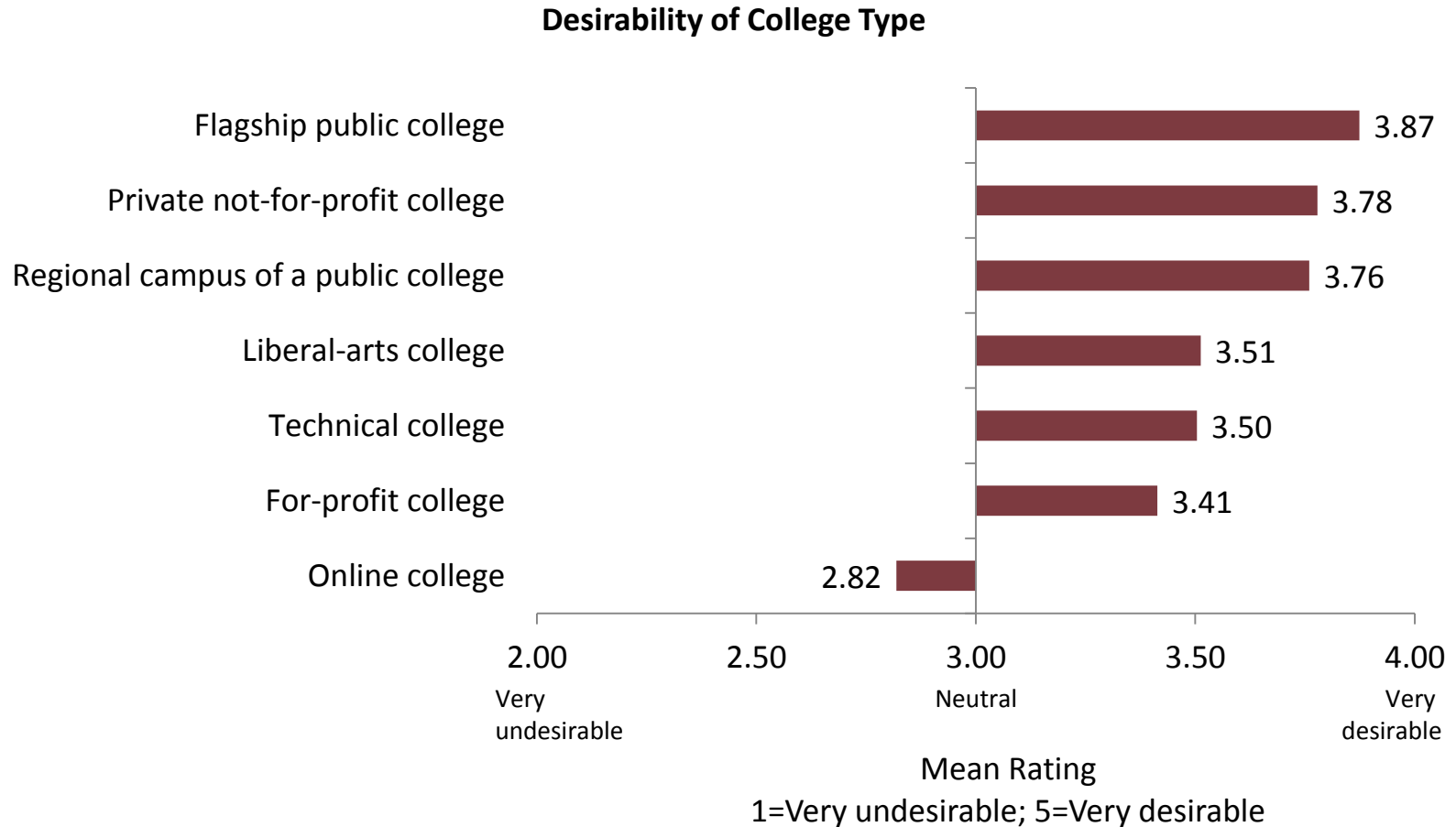


# Media/Communications and Services/Retail segments are more flexible when it comes to hiring without a bachelor's degree.



Q: Does your organization ever hire a candidate with strong experience but no degree for a job that was advertised as requiring a bachelor's degree?

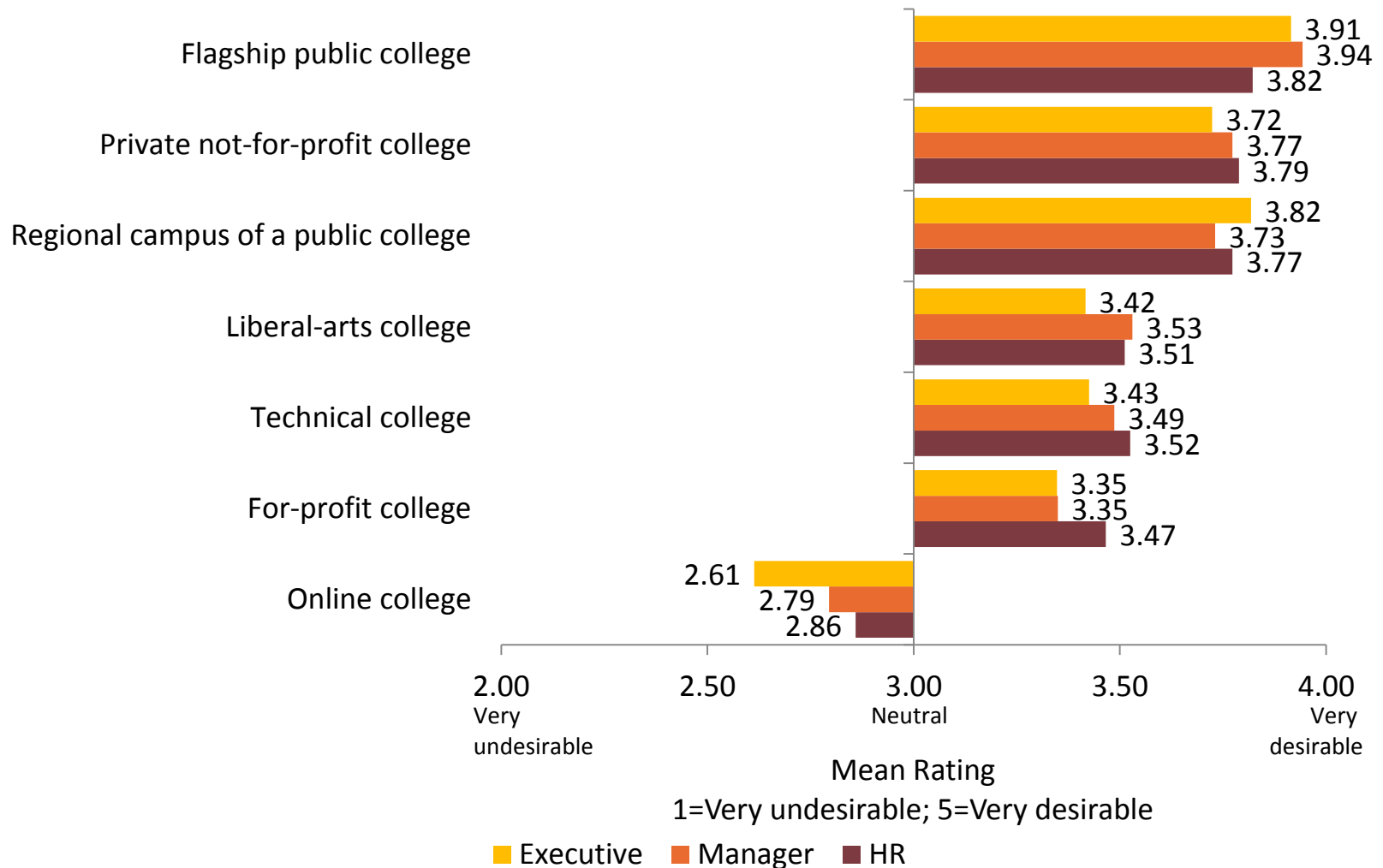
**Employers prefer to hire recent graduates with a bachelor's degree from flagship public colleges, followed by private not-for-profit. Online colleges are least desirable among all other college types.**



Q: How desirable would it be for you to hire a recent graduate with a bachelor's degree from each of the following types of colleges and universities?

# HR finds for-profit colleges and online colleges more desirable than managers or executives.

Desirability of College Type by Hiring Role



Q: How desirable would it be for you to hire a recent graduate with a bachelor's degree from each of the following types of colleges and universities?

# Government and Non-profit organizations prefer candidates from a regional campus of a public institution over a flagship public college.

- Desirability ratings for private not-for-profit follow closely behind flagship public schools across most industries except for government and manufacturing organizations who rate regional campuses more highly.
- For-profit colleges have a higher desirability rating than liberal arts colleges for Manufacturing and Science/Technology employers.

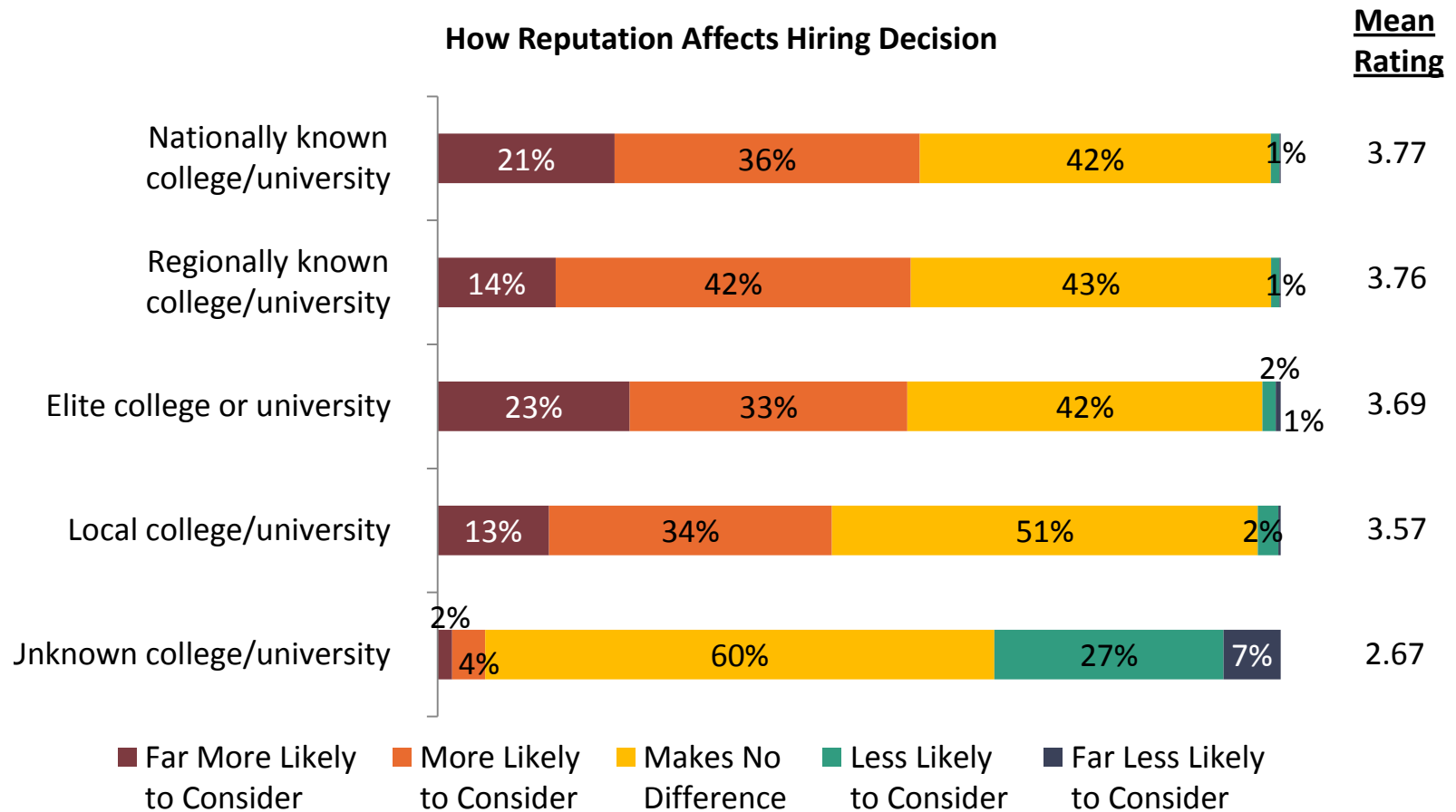
**Desirability of College Type by Industry**

College Type	Business	Health Care	Media/Comm.	Services/Retail	Manuf.	Science/Technology	Education	Govt./Non-Profit
Flagship public college	3.92	3.70	4.00	3.77	3.94	4.03	3.93	3.66
Private not-for-profit college	3.84	3.69	3.95	3.73	3.69	3.86	3.91	3.61
Regional campus of a public college	3.83	3.61	3.77	3.68	3.72	3.85	3.85	3.71
Liberal-arts college	3.70	3.39	3.64	3.60	3.35	3.21	3.89	3.45
Technical college	3.37	3.37	3.61	3.53	3.87	3.74	3.20	3.32
For-profit college	3.48	3.33	3.47	3.37	3.49	3.37	3.47	3.33
Online college	2.90	2.81	2.64	2.96	2.80	2.64	2.92	2.80

Scale: 1=very undesirable; 5=very desirable

Q: How desirable would it be for you to hire a recent graduate with a bachelor's degree from each of the following types of colleges and universities?

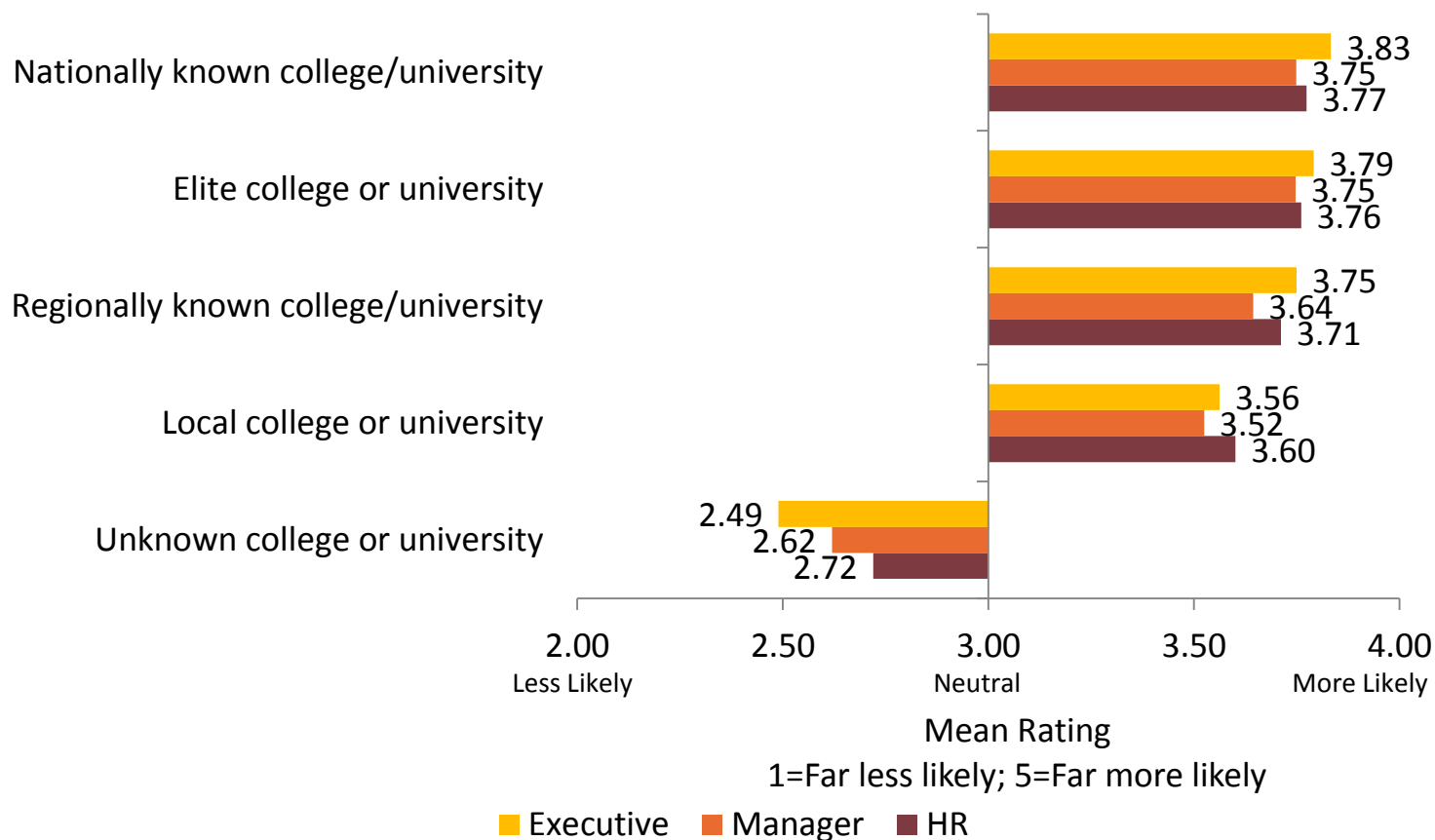
# Brand reputation is important. Over one-third of employers are less likely to consider an unknown college.



Q: Public and private colleges have a broad range of regional and national reputations. Please tell us how a college's reputation affects your consideration of a candidate.

# HR personnel are more likely to be influenced into hiring a candidate from a local or unknown college than Executives and Managers.

How Reputation Affects Hiring Decision by Hiring Role



Q: Public and private colleges have a broad range of regional and national reputations. Please tell us how a college's reputation affects your consideration of a candidate.

**Science/Technology and Services/Retail employers find elite colleges more desirable than nationally-known based on this study but only by a slight margin.**

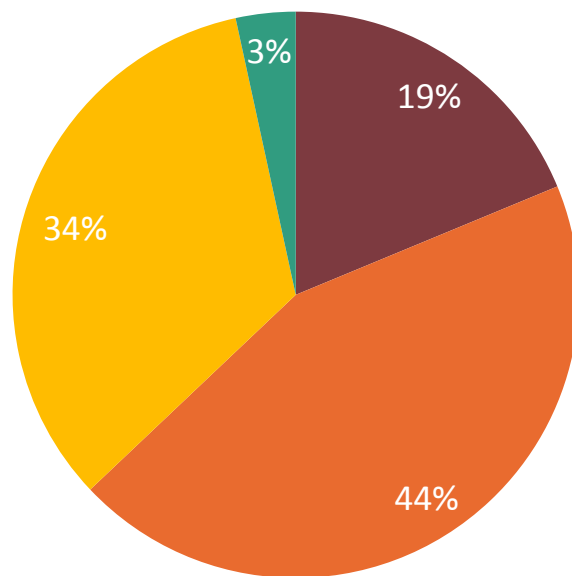
**How Reputation Affects Hiring Decision by Industry**

College Type	Business	Health Care	Media/Comm.	Services/Retail	Manuf.	Science/Technology	Education	Govt./Non-Profit
Nationally known college/university	3.89	3.63	3.84	3.64	3.77	3.83	3.88	3.65
Elite college or university	3.86	3.54	3.84	3.69	3.77	3.89	3.84	3.59
Regionally known college/university	3.73	3.67	3.70	3.47	3.68	3.77	3.84	3.67
Local college or university	3.61	3.50	3.52	3.42	3.63	3.63	3.59	3.57
Unknown college or university	2.73	2.63	2.52	2.84	2.56	2.63	2.63	2.65

Q: Public and private colleges have a broad range of regional and national reputations. Please tell us how a college's reputation affects your consideration of a candidate.

# The college major is important at least to some degree for all but 3% of employers surveyed.

Importance of College Major



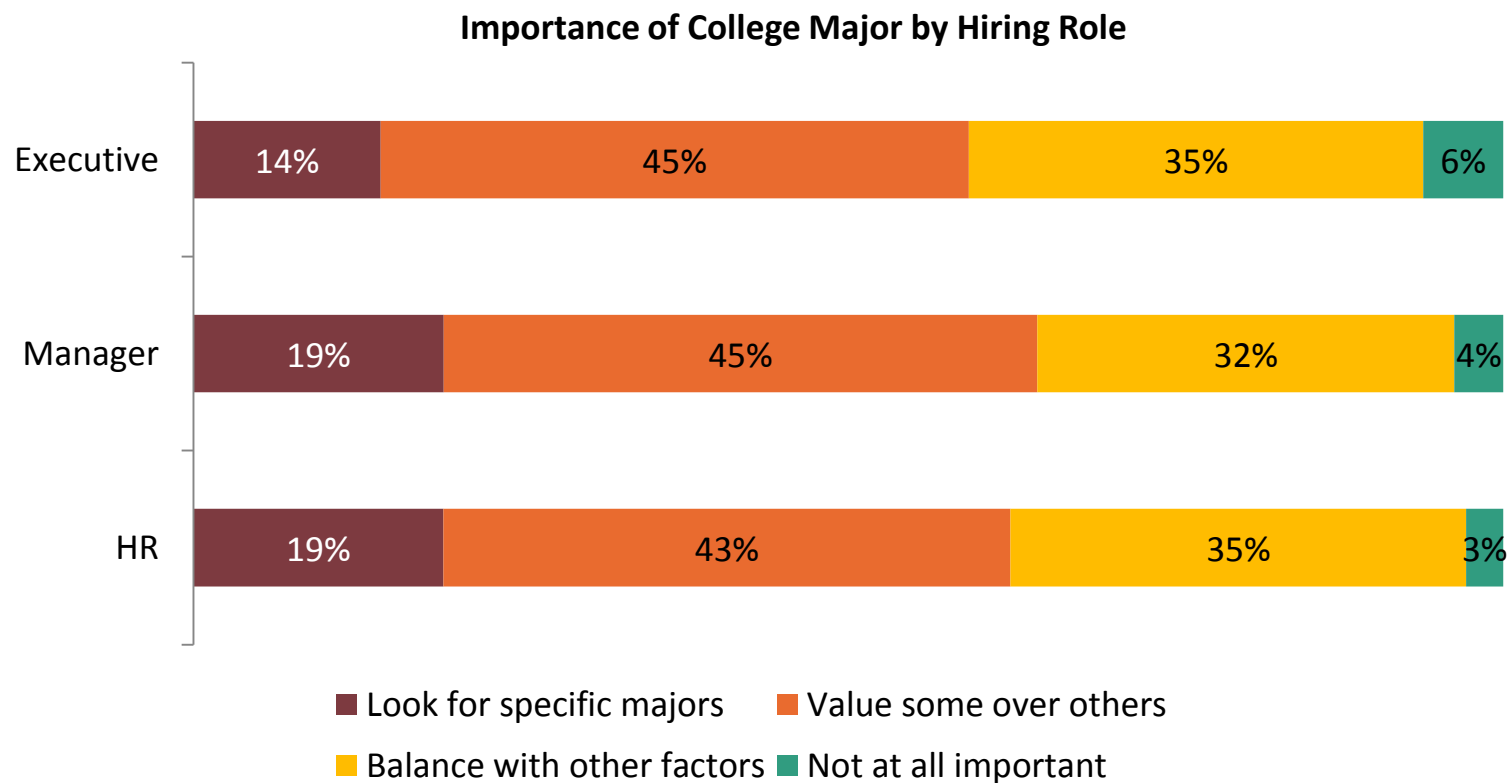
- Look for specific majors
- Value some over others
- Balance with other factors
- Not at all important

Only 19% of employers look for specific majors and do not consider candidates without them, while the majority – 78% will consider any major.

Q: How important is a recent college graduate's major to your organization when you hire?



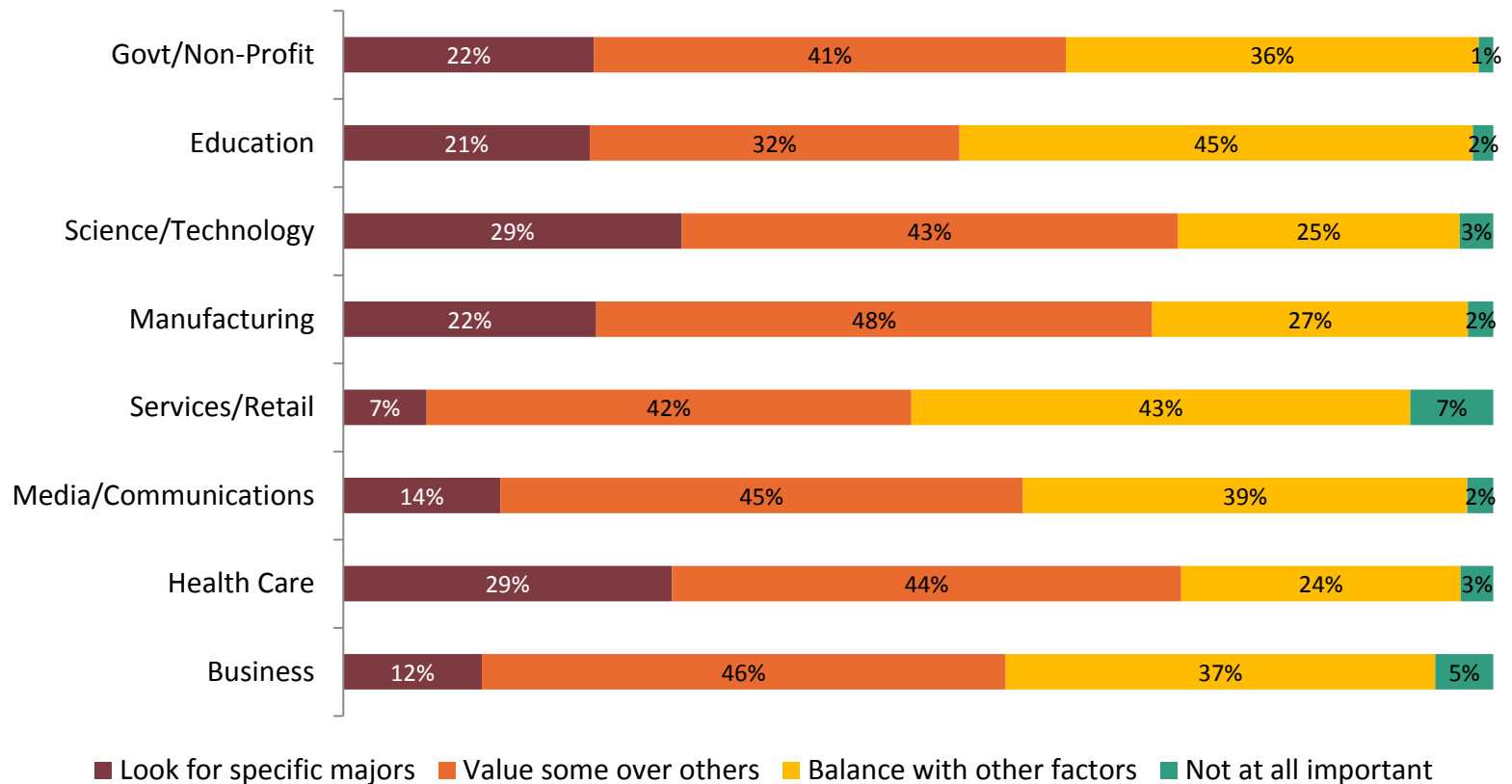
While the majority of employers admit the college major is important to some extent, Executives show greater leniency than Managers and HR who are more likely to look for specific majors.



Q: How important is a recent college graduate's major to your organization when you hire?

**Employers from Science/Technology and Health Care look for specific majors more than those from other industries. Services/Retail and Business industries are more flexible when it comes to a graduate's major.**

**Importance of College Major by Industry**



Q: How important is a recent college graduate's major to your organization when you hire?

# Top Majors in Order of Interest by Employment Industry

Business	Health Care	Media/Communications	Science/Technology
Accounting/Finance	Nursing	Marketing/Merchandising	Computer Science
Business - Other	Health Professions - Other	Management & Administration	Engineering - Electrical
Marketing/Merchandising	Social Work	Business - Other	Accounting/Finance
Management & Administration	Physical Therapy/Rehabilitation & Therapy	Communication & Journalism - Other	Information Technology
Sales	Business - Other	Accounting/Finance	Management & Administration
Computer Science	Psychology - General	Computer Science	Business - Other
Economics	Management & Administration	English - General	Engineering - Mechanical
Communication & Journalism - Other	Accounting/Finance	Graphic Design	Marketing/Merchandising
Information Technology	Mathematics & Statistics	Sales	Engineering - General
Entrepreneurial Studies	Marketing/Merchandising	Journalism	Computer Graphics
Real Estate	Computer Science	Advertising	Engineering - Computer
	Information Technology	Computer Graphics	Computer Programming/Software Engineer
	Engineering - General	Information Technology	Engineering - Chemical
	Social Sciences - Sociology	Engineering - Computer	Biological & Biomedical Sciences - Biology, general
	Biological & Biomedical Sciences - Biology, general	Engineering - Electrical	Physical Sciences - Chemistry
	Psychology - Counseling	Engineering - General	Engineering - Other/Unspecified
		Entrepreneurial Studies	Biological & Biomedical Sciences - Biotechnology
		Broadcast Journalism	
		Mass Communications	
		Public Relations	
		Web Management/Development	
		Liberal Arts	

Business and information technology degrees are considered across many industry segments.

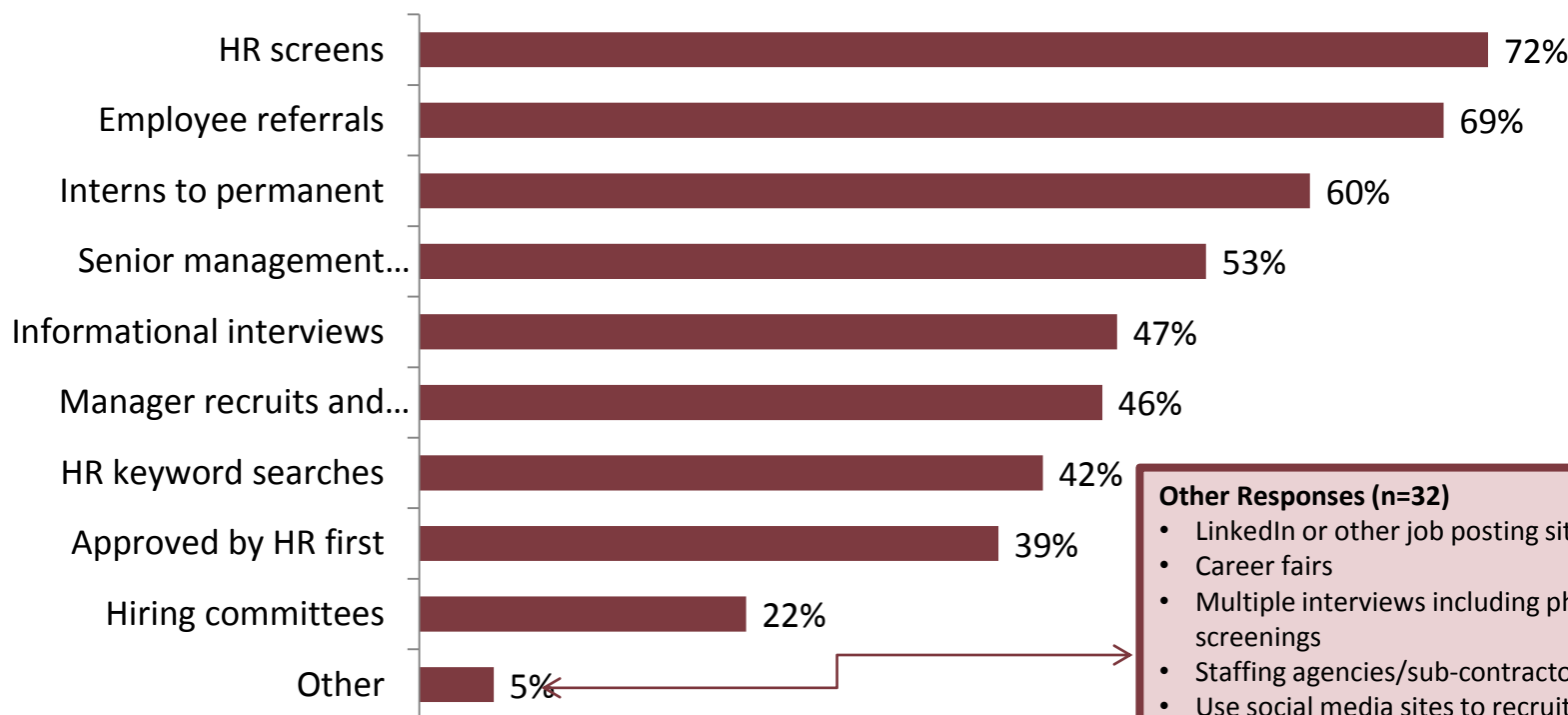
# EVALUATING CANDIDATES



# HR is part of the hiring process at the majority of organizations in the study (72%) but only approves candidates first at 42% of companies.

- Employee referrals and interns to permanent are also top hiring activities at the majority of sites.
- Senior management approves candidates at more than half of the organizations surveyed.

Hiring Process



**Other Responses (n=32)**

- LinkedIn or other job posting site
- Career fairs
- Multiple interviews including phone screenings
- Staffing agencies/sub-contractors
- Use social media sites to recruit
- College recruiting
- Online application system
- Recruiters are used to find new hires

Q: Which of the following happen as part of the hiring process at your organization?  
(multiple response)

# Interns being hired into permanent jobs is most common at Government and Manufacturing companies compared to other industries. HR is least involved in education.

## Hiring Process by Industry

Hiring Activity	Business	Health Care	Media/ Comm.	Services/ Retail	Manuf.	Science/ Technology	Education	Govt./ Non-Profit
HR screens	65%	73%	73%	69%	78%	77%	62%	74%
Employee referrals	70%	77%	68%	66%	74%	76%	56%	58%
Interns to permanent	60%	60%	59%	49%	65%	62%	47%	68%
Senior management approves	51%	50%	68%	51%	47%	60%	53%	55%
Informational interviews	54%	43%	36%	52%	43%	42%	40%	50%
Manager recruits and hires	53%	43%	50%	46%	42%	44%	49%	41%
HR keyword searches	42%	37%	59%	36%	53%	55%	15%	22%
Approved by HR first	35%	41%	52%	31%	42%	43%	25%	42%
Hiring committees	16%	19%	20%	27%	22%	18%	45%	21%

Frequency of hiring activity = lowest, highest; ○ = noteworthy difference

Q: Which of the following happen as part of the hiring process at your organization? (multiple response)

# The larger the company, the more involved HR is in the hiring process.

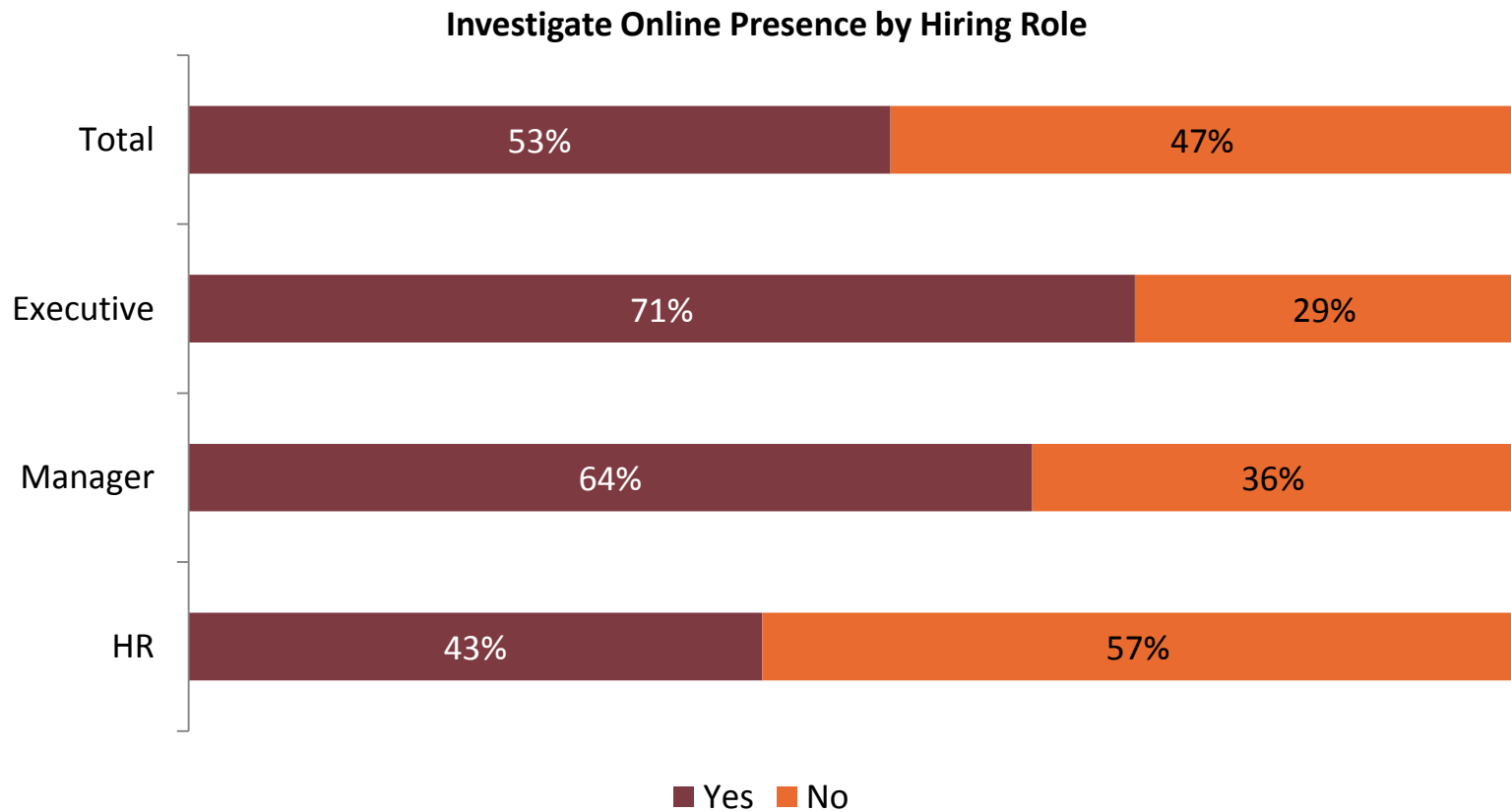
The most common hiring activity selected at very small companies (<50 employees) was the approval of senior management. Interns becoming permanent employees is more common at the largest companies. Employee referrals occur most often at medium-sized companies (100-499) vs. smaller or very large companies.

**Hiring Process by Company Size**

	<50	50-99	100-499	500+	Total
HR screens	52%	73%	83%	85%	72%
Employee referrals	60%	64%	82%	71%	69%
Interns to permanent	59%	56%	59%	63%	60%
Senior management approves	62%	54%	58%	41%	53%
Informational interviews	45%	35%	50%	51%	47%
Manager recruits and hires	52%	47%	45%	41%	46%
HR keyword searches	28%	37%	51%	51%	42%
Approved by HR first	26%	38%	42%	52%	39%
Hiring committees	17%	16%	26%	26%	22%

Q: Which of the following happen as part of the hiring process at your organization? (multiple response)

# More than half of employers evaluated job candidates online. Executives are far more likely to check online presence than Managers and HR personnel.

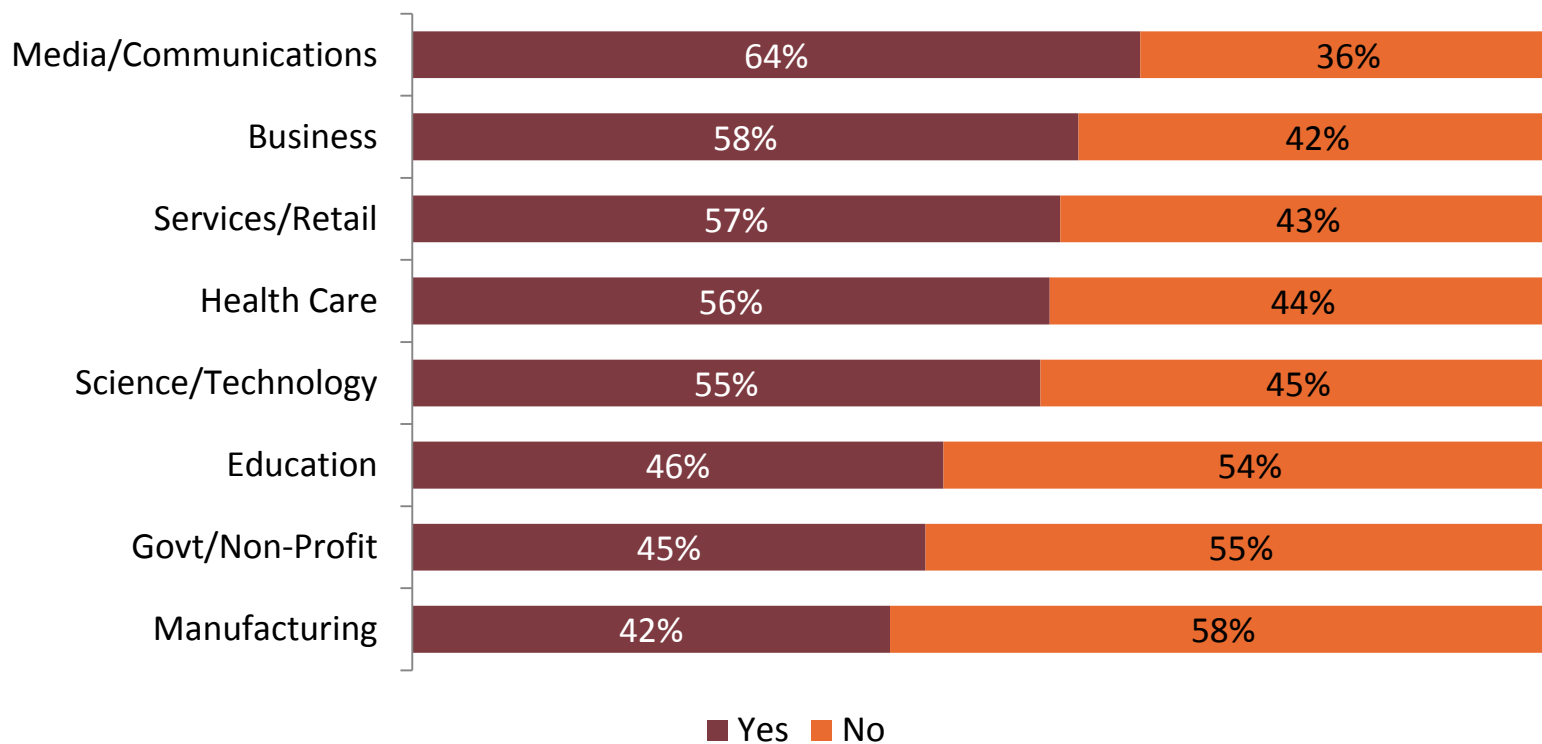


Q: Do you investigate a job candidate's online presence as part of your evaluation?



# Nearly two thirds of Media/Communication employers investigate a job candidate's online presence, Employers from Manufacturing are least likely to check online presence.

Investigate Online Presence by Industry

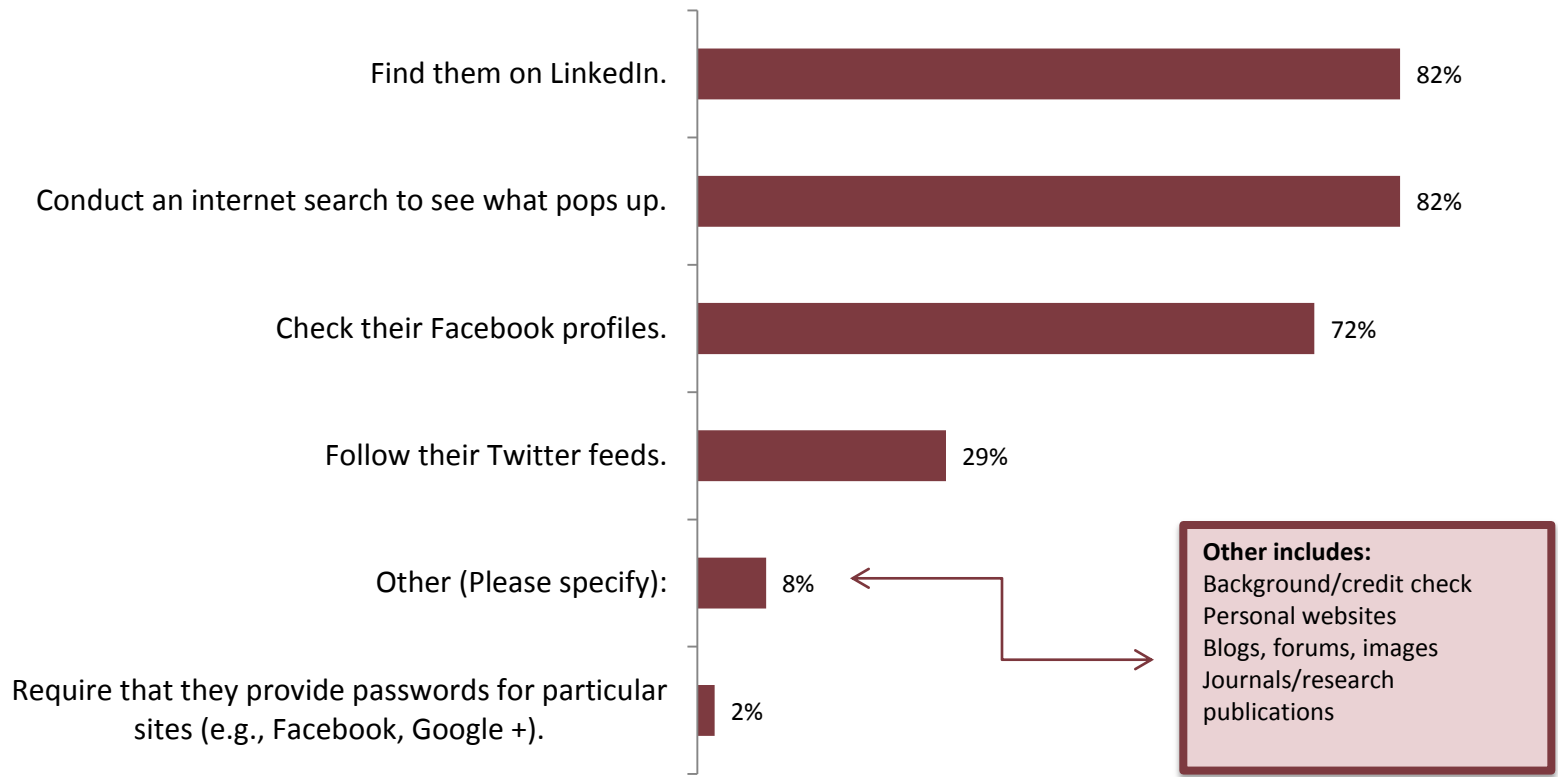


Q: Do you investigate a job candidate's online presence as part of your evaluation?

# For those employers who look at a candidate's online presence, LinkedIn and internet search are the most common practices.

- Checking out Facebook profiles is also common for 72% of employers.
- Password requests are very infrequent at only 2% of organizations in this study.

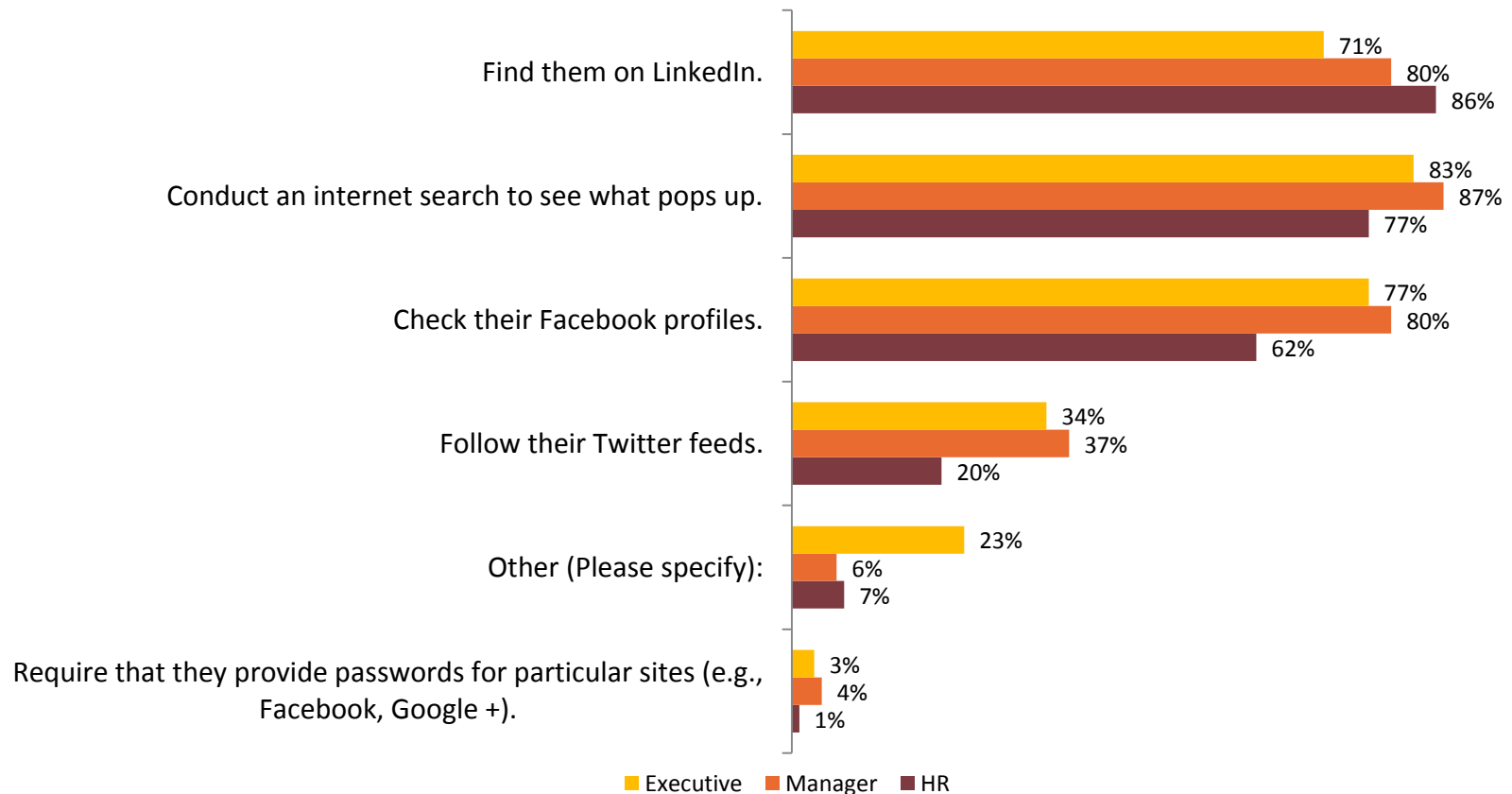
## Online Investigation Practices



Q: Which of the following do you use in evaluating job candidates' online presence? (multiple response)

# LinkedIn is overwhelmingly preferred over Facebook and internet searches among HR employers, while internet search and Facebook are preferred by Executives.

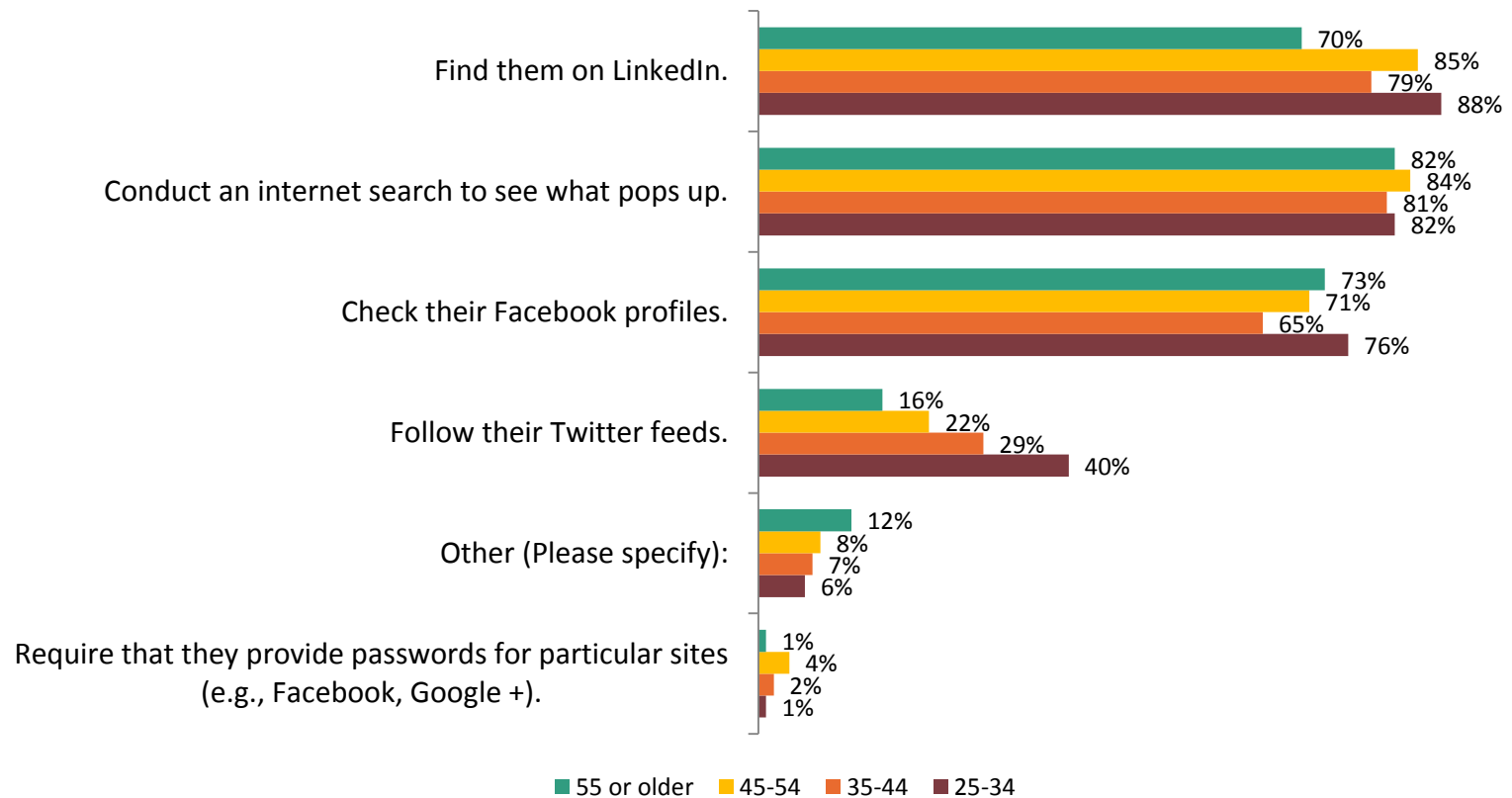
## Online Investigation Practices



Q: Which of the following do you use in evaluating job candidates' online presence? (multiple response)

# The youngest age category, 25-34, use Twitter and Facebook more than other employer age groups.

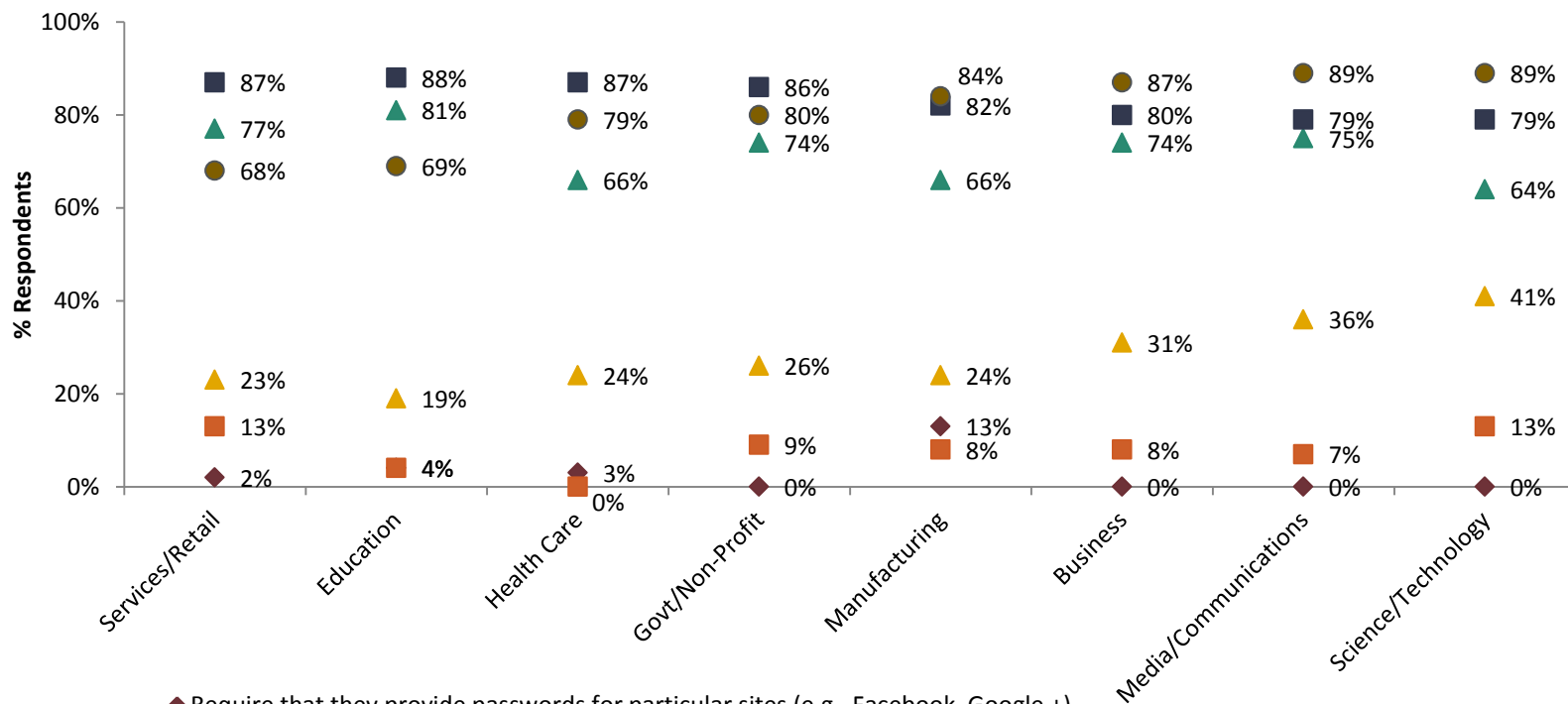
## Online Investigation Practices by Age of Employer



Q: Which of the following do you do in evaluating job candidates' online presence? (multiple response)

# Employers from Health Care, Education, and Services/Retail organizations prefer Facebook over LinkedIn and Twitter.

## Online Investigation Practices by Industry



◆ Require that they provide passwords for particular sites (e.g., Facebook, Google +).

■ Other (Please specify):

▲ Follow their Twitter feeds.

▲ Check their Facebook profiles.

■ Conduct an internet search to see what pops up.

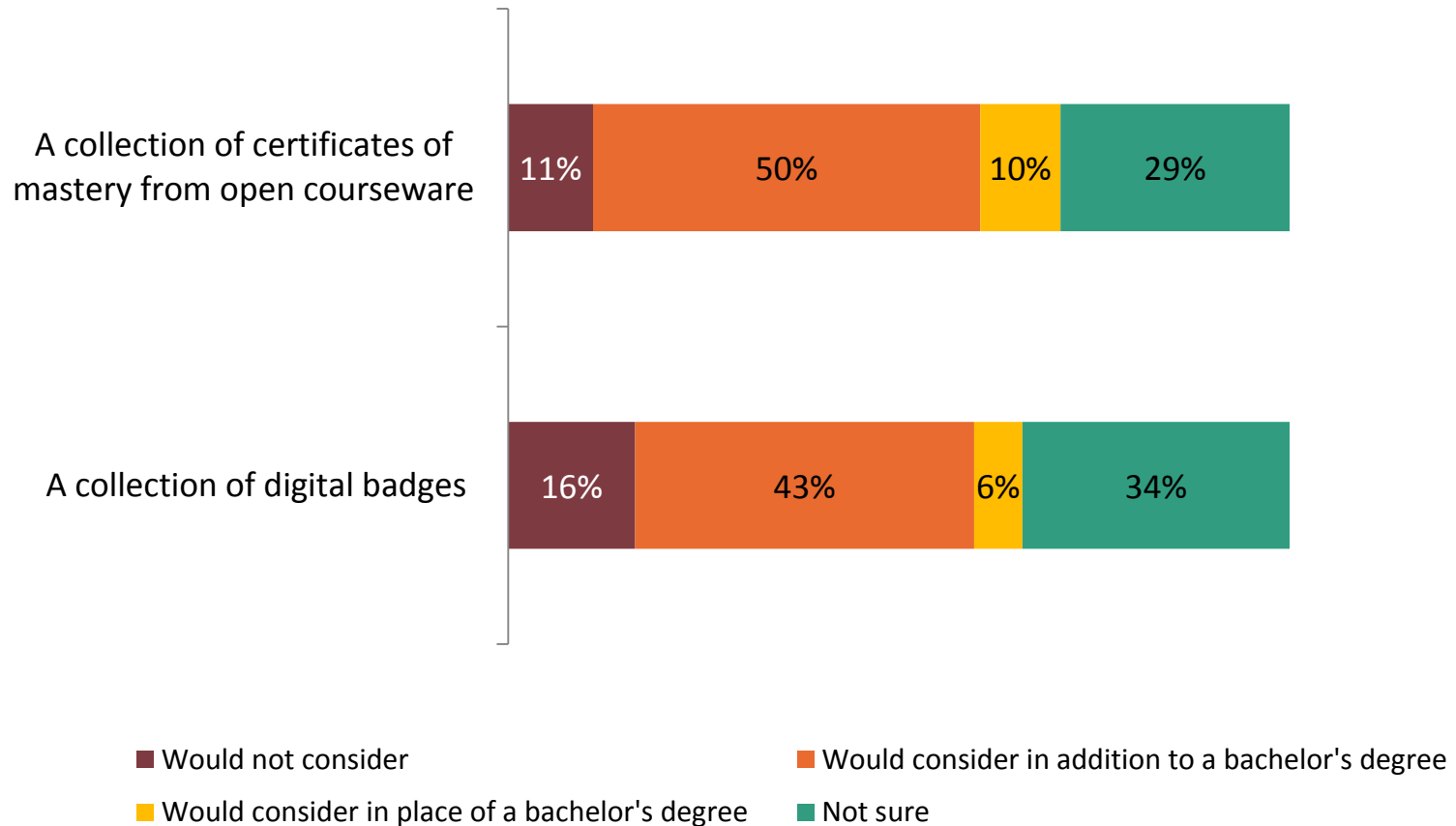
● Find them on LinkedIn.

Twitter is used primarily by employers in the Science/Technology, Media/Communications, and Business segments.

Q: Which of the following do you do in evaluating job candidates' online presence? (multiple response)

**Digital badges are less desirable than certificates from open courseware among employers surveyed; a high level of uncertainty still exists on how these credentials fit into their hiring decisions.**

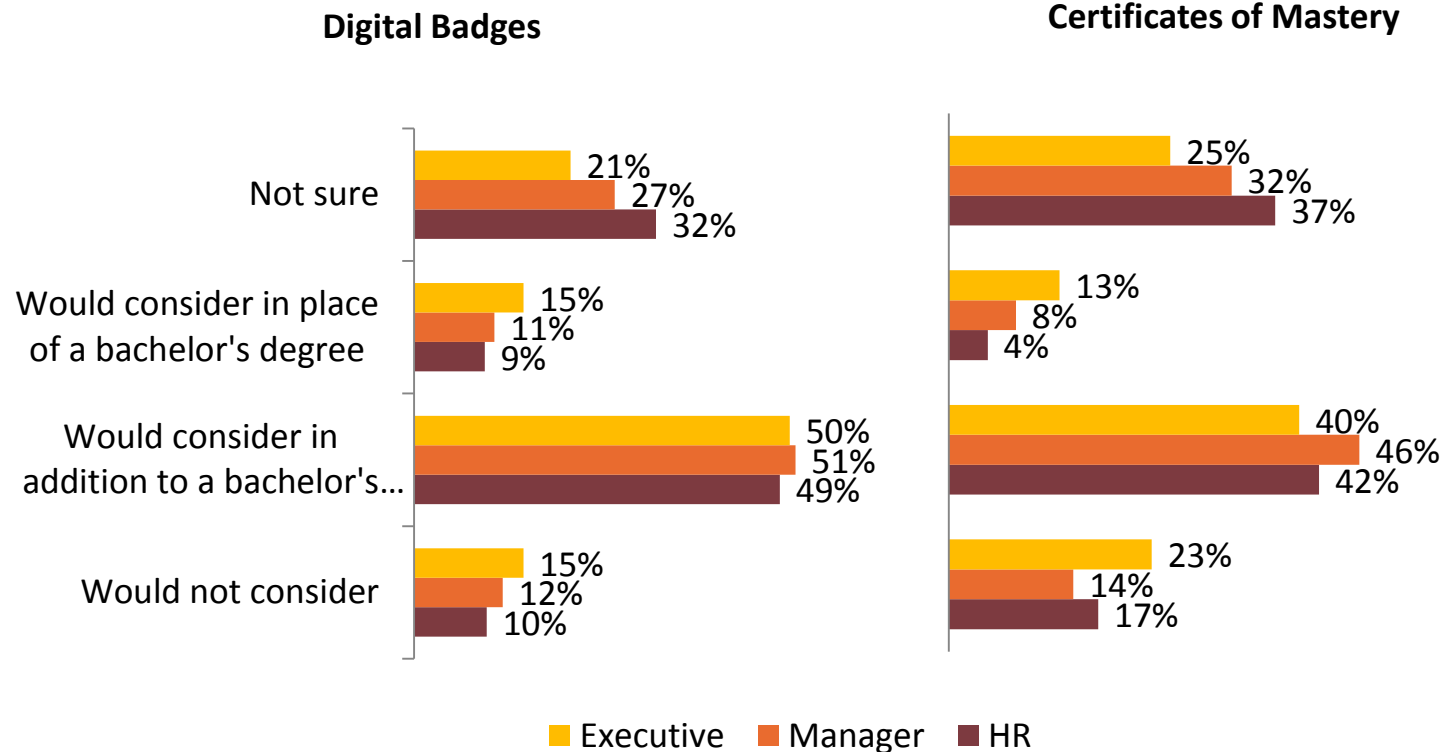
### Consideration of Nontraditional Credentials



Q: Today's employment candidates have a variety of nontraditional credentials available to them. Please tell us how you would consider these credentials in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.

# Executives are less likely to consider both digital badges and open courseware certificates in evaluating a candidate than Managers and HR employers.

## Consideration of Nontraditional Credentials by Hiring Role



Q: Today's employment candidates have a variety of nontraditional credentials available to them. Please tell us how you would consider these credentials in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.

# Nontraditional degrees are considered at least as an addition to bachelor's degrees by roughly half of the employers surveyed.

## Consideration of Nontraditional Credentials by Industry

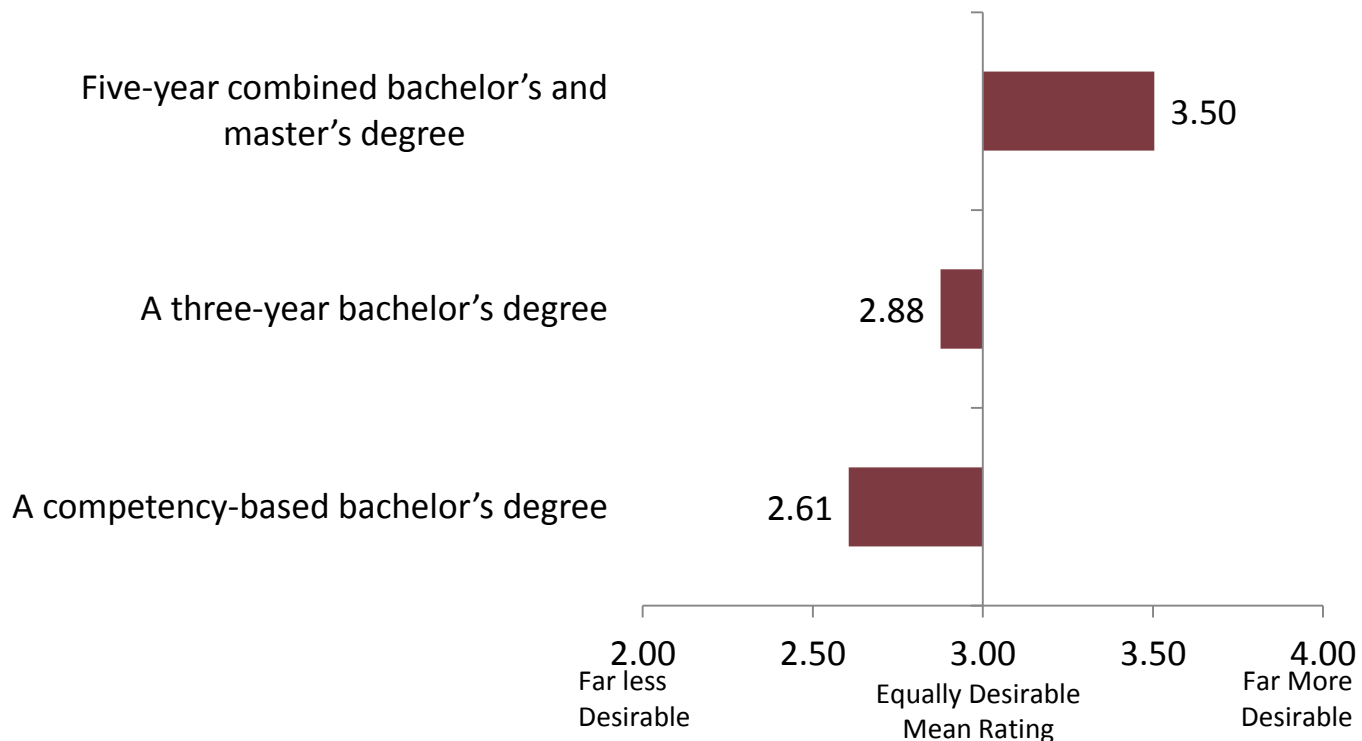
		Business	Health Care	Media/Comm.	Services/Retail	Manuf.	Science/Technology	Education	Govt/Non-Profit	Total
Digital Badges	Would not consider	18%	19%	14%	15%	12%	16%	20%	17%	16%
	Would consider in addition to a bachelor's degree	<b>42%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>	35%	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>43%</b>
	Would consider in place of a bachelor's degree	8%	1%	9%	6%	6%	8%	2%	8%	6%
	Not sure	32%	34%	25%	<b>44%</b>	39%	33%	32%	30%	34%
Certificates of Mastery	Would not consider	12%	7%	9%	13%	9%	10%	18%	8%	11%
	Would consider in addition to a bachelor's degree	<b>47%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>55%</b>	34%	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	Would consider in place of a bachelor's degree	13%	9%	18%	10%	10%	10%	2%	10%	10%
	Not sure	27%	27%	18%	<b>44%</b>	34%	27%	25%	29%	29%

Q: Today's employment candidates have a variety of nontraditional credentials available to them. Please tell us how you would consider these credentials in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.



# Employers, overall, desire a five-year combined bachelor's and master's degree more than the traditional four-year degree.

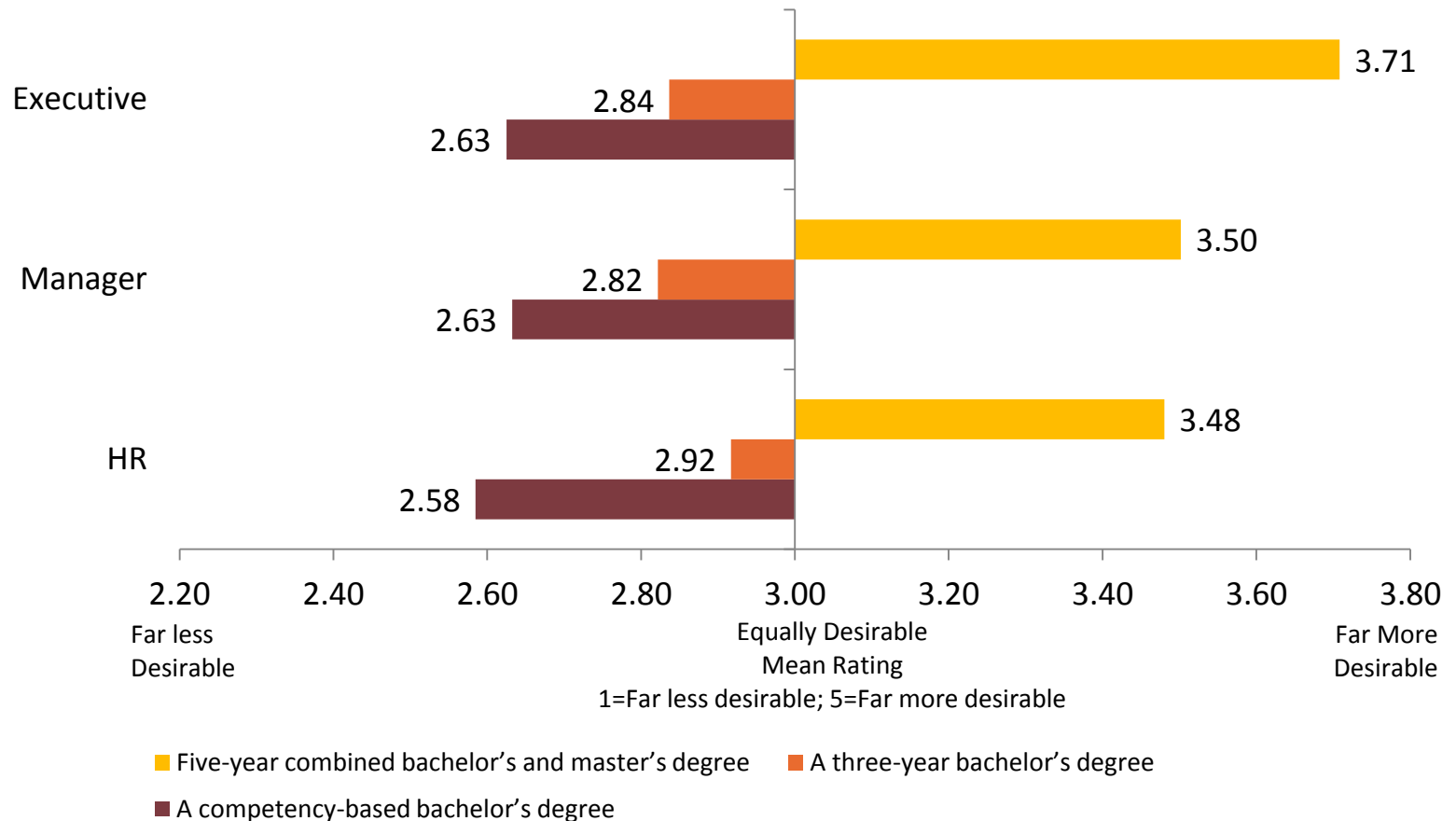
Desirability of Nontraditional Bachelor's Degrees vs. Traditional Four-Year Degree



Q: Students today have the opportunity to pursue nontraditional bachelor's degrees. Please tell us how desirable these degrees are in comparison to a traditional four-year bachelor's degree in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.

# Executives prefer a five-year degree over traditional four-year degree more than Managers and HR.

Desirability of Nontraditional Bachelor's Degrees vs. Traditional Four-Year Degree  
By Hiring Role

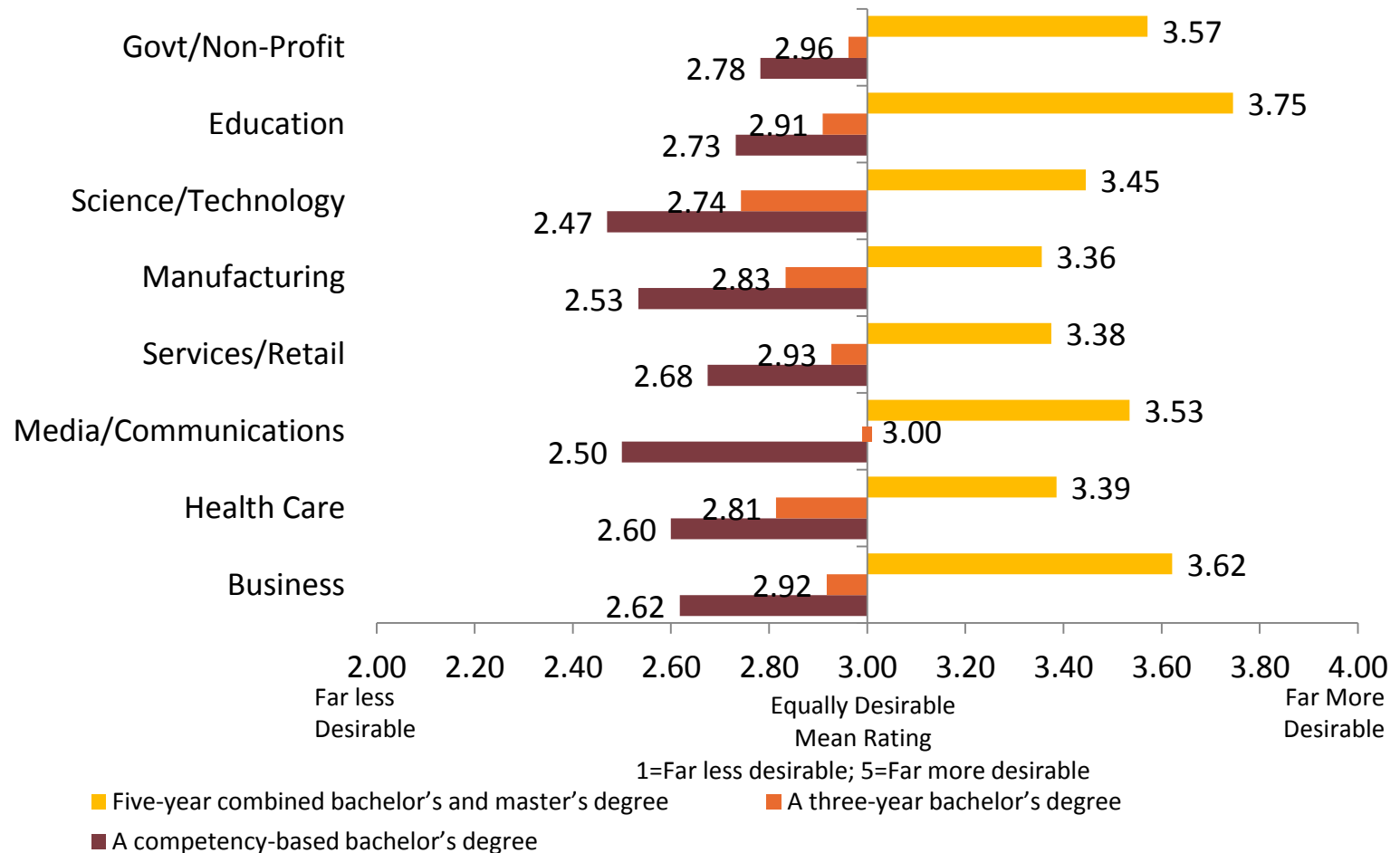


Q: Students today have the opportunity to pursue nontraditional bachelor's degrees. Please tell us how desirable these degrees are in comparison to a traditional four-year bachelor's degree in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.

# The Education segment is more desirable of five-year combined degree than other industries

Business, Government/Nonprofit, and Media/Communications industries follow. The mean desirability rating of a three-year degree is neutral or below but still more desirable than a competency-based degree.

**Desirability of Nontraditional Bachelor's Degrees vs. Traditional Four-Year Degree By Industry**

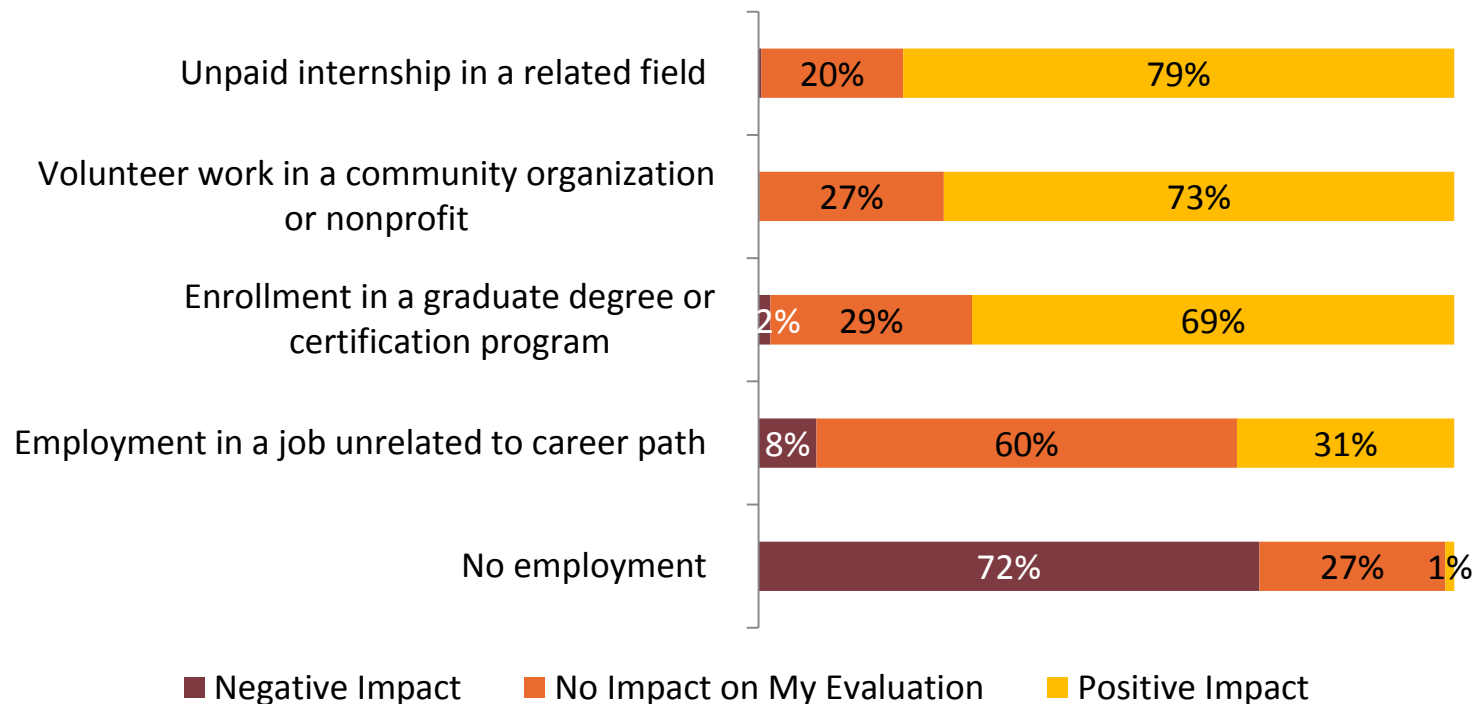


Q: Students today have the opportunity to pursue nontraditional bachelor's degrees. Please tell us how desirable these degrees are in comparison to a traditional four-year bachelor's degree in evaluating a candidate for a position at your organization.

# Unpaid internships and volunteer work have a big impact on employers hiring decisions.

While some graduates are unable to find work in their chosen fields, employers generally place unpaid internships, followed by volunteer work and graduate degree program, the best alternatives as they evaluate graduates for hire. Employment in an unrelated field has little to no impact but is much more favorable than no employment at all.

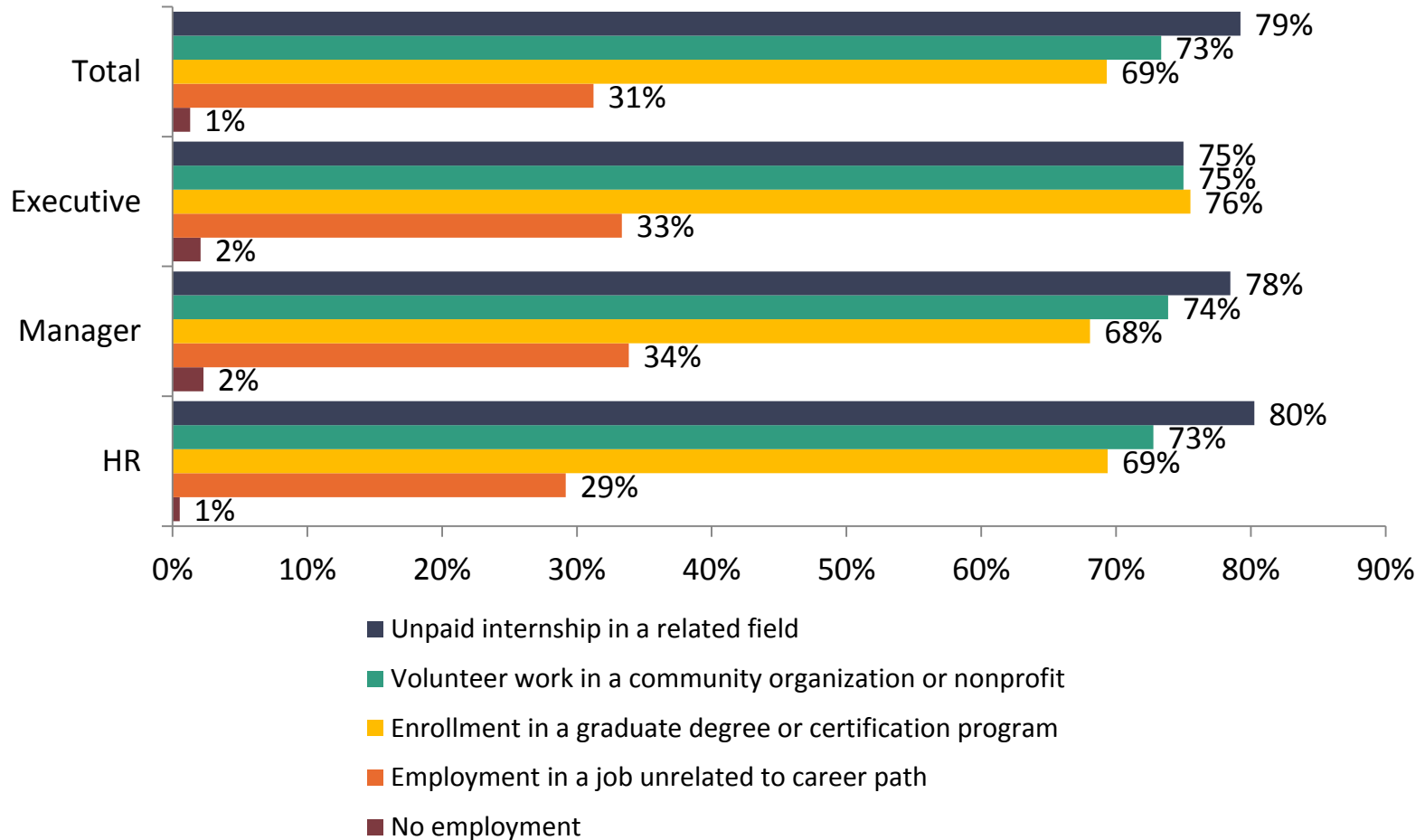
**Impact of Choices on Evaluation of Candidate**



Q: Students unable to find work in their chosen fields make other choices out of necessity. What impact does each of the following choices have on your evaluation of a candidate's resume?

# Executives value enrollment in a graduate program as a better alternative for graduates unable to find work than internships but only slightly.

**% of Respondents Indicating a “Positive Impact” on Evaluation of Candidate by Hiring Role**

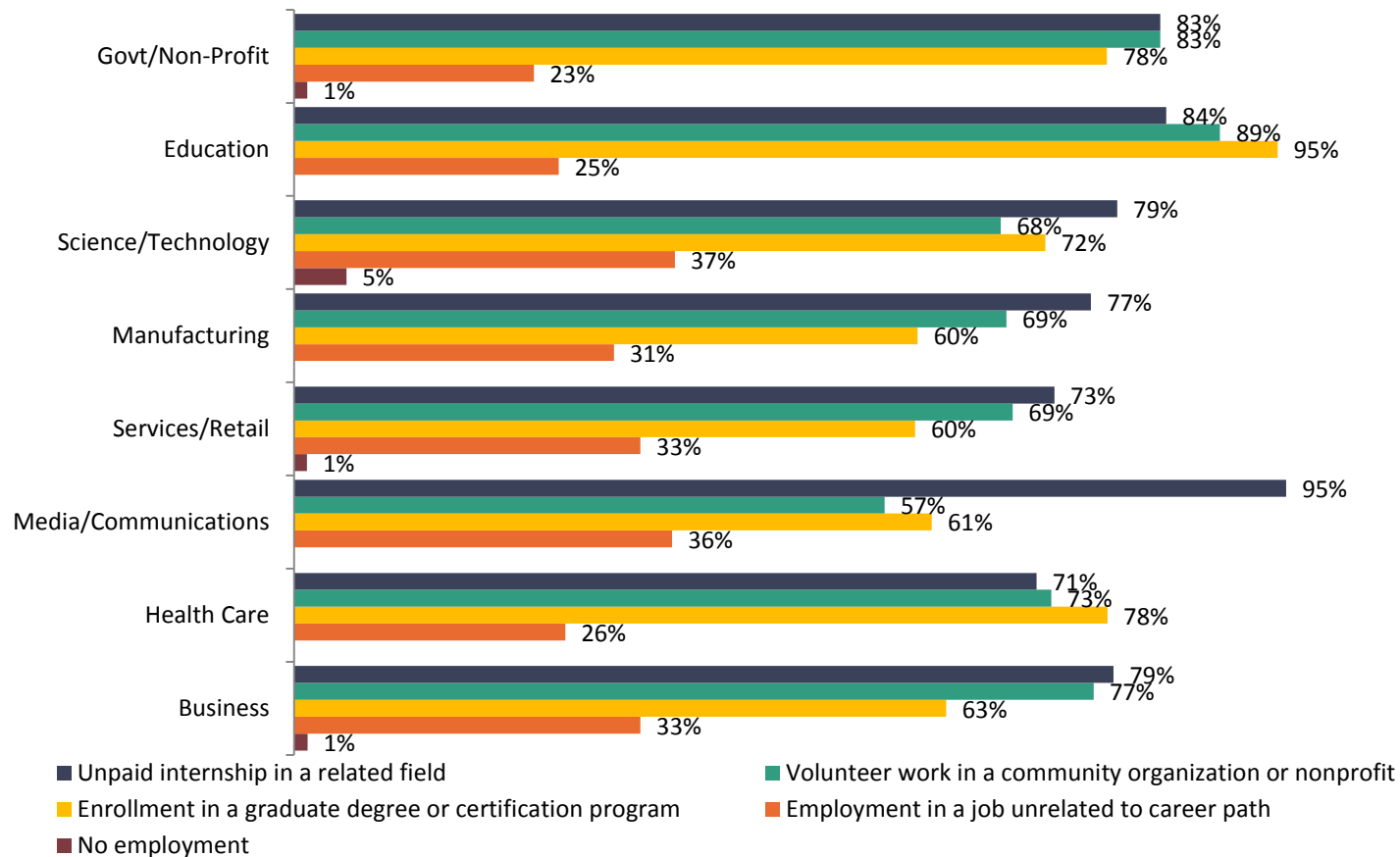


Q: Students unable to find work in their chosen fields make other choices out of necessity. What impact does each of the following choices have on your evaluation of a candidate’s resume?

# Media/Communications employers look to internships as an alternative to employment in a much more positive way than other industries.

Only Education and Health Care employers feel a graduate degree has more impact on their evaluation than internships.

**% of Respondents Indicating a “Positive Impact” on Evaluation of Candidate by Industry**



Q: Students unable to find work in their chosen fields make other choices out of necessity. What impact does each of the following choices have on your evaluation of a candidate’s resume?