RECRUITING TRENDS 2015-16
45th Edition

BRIEF 8

Feedback From Respondents: Entrepreneurial Mindset, Creativity & Innovation, Cultural Capital, & More!

Key findings from 2015-16 are presented in this research brief. We have broken the release of employer information into a series of short briefs that will be made available over the next six weeks. You can download the briefs from the Collegiate Employment Research Institute.

Meet the Completers

We generated this convenience sample from employers currently seeking college talent through their interactions with college and university career services offices. Nearly 200 career service centers from around the country invited their employers to participate in this study. More than 4,730 employers provided information useful for understanding recruiting trends and practices. We also included information from respondents recruiting talent for full-time positions, internships, and co-ops. Readers can use the following key sample characteristics to determine how applicable our survey results are for their campus employer base.

Key Economic Sectors	
Professional & scientific services	22%
Manufacturing	11%
Nonprofits	8%
Finance & insurance	8%
Educational services	13%
Government	7%
Healthcare & social assistance	6%

Company Size		
Very small	> 9 employees	9%
Fast-growth	10-100 employees	30%
Small	101–500 employees	24%
Midsize	501–3,999 employees	20%
Large	4,000–25,000 employees	10%
Very large	> 25,000 employees	7%

Key States	
Michigan	8%
Massachusetts	7%
Texas	7%
California	6%
Wisconsin & Florida	5%
Illinois, New York & North Carolina	4%

Role in College Recruiting	
Full-time positions	56%
Internship or co-op positions only	16%
Short-term hiring	8%
Experienced hiring	20%

Institutions Where Companies Recruit Talent	
Two-year public college	26%
Four-year public college	51%
Four-year private college	40%
Two- & four-year for-profit institution	22%
Institution with bachelor's & advanced degree programs	67%
Institution with advanced degrees only	9%
Historically black college & university	17%
Hispanic-serving institution	15%
Asian, Asian-Pacific serving institutions	14%

Active Recruiting by Region	
International	5%
Entire U.S.	23%
Regional recruiting only	72%

Each year a CERI advisory team comprised of employer and college representatives propose several issues they would like to see covered in *Recruiting Trends*. From the ideas elicited from this group, we selected several topics for inclusion in the survey. This brief explores respondents' answers to entrepreneurial mindset, creativity and innovation, cultural capital development, and the T-shaped candidate. Employer and recruiter responses to several open-ended questions about the future and challenges of college recruiting wrap up this brief.

Entrepreneurial mindset

The word entrepreneur has become more than a noun specifically defined as a person who starts their own business. The words entrepreneur, entrepreneurialism, entrepreneurial minded, and other variations are part of the vocabulary swirling around higher education these days. When we asked respondents to define the entrepreneurial mindset or entrepreneurial mindedness, the main ingredient was likely to be starting "something" that involves an element of risk and the possibility of failure. While some felt the phrases meant starting a company that might fail, more respondents focused on the entrepreneurial process and the spirit and interest to be innovatively engaged. They were clear that candidates could not be entrepreneurial if they were not innovative, even if they understood the entrepreneurial process. Thus students wishing to engage the entrepreneurial enterprise must pursue activities outside the classroom and be willing to experiment.

Our comparison by organizational size revealed several differences worth mentioning. Experimentation and failure received higher endorsement (agreement) from the largest companies (>10,000 employees) compared to small and midsize organizations (101-1,500 employees), while gaining experience outside the classroom gained stronger agreement from very small companies (>100 employees) compared to larger organizations (101-10,000 employees). Even in this case all size categories strongly agreed outside experience was critical. Very small organizations agreed slightly more than all other organizations that an entrepreneurial minor would influence their decisions while evaluating a candidate's résumé.

Comparisons across industrial sectors revealed more significant differences. Most of the differences occurred between two sectors. For example, Healthcare and Social Services organizations expressed disagreement that entrepreneurial minors would resonate with them, while Administrative Services and Retail agreed that minors might help. The more striking differences appeared in comparisons of outside experience and experimentation.

◆ Accommodations (Hospitality), Information Services, and Transportation strongly agreed that experimentation and failure were important while Construction and Healthcare and Social Services neither agreed nor disagreed. The response from Healthcare and Social Services was understandable: risk and failure are not widely accepted practices in their sector.

◆ Accommodations (Hospitality) and Information Services strongly agreed that students needed experiences outside the classroom compared to Government and Manufacturing, which expressed less agreement. Both sectors, however, agreed that outside experience was necessary.

In what ways were organizations willing to reach out to colleges, universities and, students to advance the entrepreneurial mindset and increase entrepreneurial opportunities? When we asked respondents to identify methods for collaboration, these ideas popped out:

◆ Encouraging their employees to serve as mentors to young entrepreneurs (44%).

◆ Sponsoring innovation and design competitions (18%).

◆ Judging pitch competitions (14%).

When it comes to financial commitments, organizations were less willing to provide funding for entrepreneurial activities. Less than 5 percent indicated that they would assist in funding "innovation spaces" and entrepreneurial programs or provide seed funds to spark startup ideas. Although a university needs to find only one sponsor to launch an entrepreneurial program, it must recognize that a sponsor willing to contribute monetary assistance will be hard to find.

When it comes to finding creative talent on campus, where do employers look for it? Some employers tend to remain in their comfort zone and seek talent where they typically recruit, among business, engineering, or other majors. By interacting with student professional associations, students in big projects and capstone projects, and students in interdisciplinary programs, employers are more likely to find entrepreneurial-minded students.

Many employers recognize that entrepreneurial students can come from almost anywhere on campus, regardless of department or particular group:

An entrepreneurial culture is most often found among students without a defined degree who may not know where their next step will land but are interested in working hard to get there.

Q94. Many colleges and universities are developing curriculum around entrepreneurial enterprise. For each of these statements indicate whether you agree or disagree.				
	Mean	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)
Students with creative aspirations need experiences outside the structure of coursework	4.09	2	17	81
Experimentation and dealing with failure are critical to the talent we are recruiting	3.81	7	28	65
Curriculum (courses) can serve as a driver to develop entrepreneurial oriented graduates	3.76	5	24	71
Entrepreneurial competencies come out better during the interview process (than on the résumé)	3.58	6	38	56
Providing academic credit for starting a business motivates students to pursue entrepreneurial activities.	3.53	10	35	55
Am entrepreneurial minor will resonate with us while evaluating a résumé.	3.16	22	41	37

These students are in majors that are more relaxed and allow more elective classes.

Employers are quick to point out that finding one great creative talent may not portend future hires:

There seems to be no predictor for where to find students with an entrepreneurial mindset. Last spring (2014), I hired an amazing grad who has the best entrepreneurial instincts I've seen in years. Within 8 months, he is running his own department with a big budget and salary. This spring (2015), I hired 5 more from where he came, trying to get more of his Magic Mojo. Alas, even after 6 months of enthusiastic training, 2 were duds and we let them go, and 3 remain but they're just okay.

Then there are the naysayers who do not believe colleges can produce entrepreneurial folks because the curriculum is too rigid or staid and uninteresting. These employers find students are not interested in getting out and simply working hard at something new and challenging.

We asked respondents if they interacted with the career centers to expand their reach when they looked for entrepreneurial talent. Twenty-seven percent said that they did not approach the career center, while another 54 percent said that they interacted infrequently with the career centers. Most of the search for innovative talent takes place away from the career centers; only 19 percent of employers reported frequently working with the career centers.

What role can a career center play in assisting an organization in identifying and recruiting entrepreneurial talent? Unlike responses to a similar question about non-entrepreneurial talent, the answers in this case were mixed. Employers fell into three groups: those who believed career centers can play a major role in their talent needs; those who were not sure if career services have a role in identifying entrepreneurial talent; and finally, those who believed career services have no role in this area of talent acquisition.

For those who believed career services could assist them, the career center's ability to increase awareness among students about entrepreneurial enterprises was a key. In addition career center staff were in a position to serve as the connector that brings students and employers together, communicate the employer's message to faculty and student groups, and help students prepare for transition to the workplace.

Career services professionals can make the biggest impact by helping us partner directly with programs and professors to arrange joint ventures/projects. They can also make a significant impact by helping us identify recent graduates and alumni that have registered with the career center.

Some employers, however, found career centers are a barrier to gaining access to the talent they are seeking. The barrier is partly due to the fact that many career advisors do not have experience in a business; they have simply risen through the educational ranks without little outside experience.

Without wanting to sound rude, most career center staff would not recognize entrepreneurship if it were a 3-year-old who bit them on the shin. Unfortunately, most academics seem to mouth the words of entrepreneurship without knowing the messy realities of running a business. Business means equality of opportunity, including the opportunity to fail.

The bottom line for the employers in this group was that career services do not understand the entrepreneurial space and should stay out of it.

Creativity and innovation

Not every student aspires to start his or her own business, despite the many anecdotal comments from students. In fact, many companies do not want entrepreneurial-minded employees because of the implication for turnover; businesses do not want to invest in an employee who leaves after a couple years to start a company. They want students who are committed to their organization for a longer period of time. In the haste to push an entrepreneurial agenda, we lose sight of both groups.

We asked employers what skills they seek for creative talent if they would rather not deal with the entrepreneurial mindset. The simple answer is they want a candidate who shows initiative, demonstrates teamwork, and displays passion and excitement for their job, and that is just the start. Everything needs to click for a graduate today, as employers place higher and higher expectations on new talent. Creative talent must combine a number of competencies to leverage their creative spirit.

We found no significant differences on these competencies based on organizational size. We found a few differences in industrial sector comparisons.

◆ Mining and Oil and Utilities rated Passion lower in importance than all the other sectors.

◆ Transportation rated Grit, Change, and Learning higher in importance than other sectors.

◆ Arts & Entertainment and Retail rated Initiative higher in importance than other sectors.

Based on their recruiting objectives, employers may have different long-term goals for their new hires. We asked respondents to indicate whether they will be placing their new hires on paths that lead to management or channeling them into opportunities to be innovators and explorers of new opportunities for the organization. Respondents clearly seek to balance the hiring of creative explorers and managers:

◆ We will hire new college talent to be future managers (17%).

◆ We will hire new college talent to be active explorers and innovators (16%).

◆ We will hire new college talent to achieve balance between managerial and innovator paths (61%).

Cultural Capital

For the past two years, *Recruiting Trends* has been tapping into employer thoughts on the role of cultural capital. Employer representatives cautiously expressed reservations about lack of cultural awareness among recent candidates. Last year our cultural capital questions focused on organizations that operated globally. In this year's survey, we broadened our questions to encompass the role of cultural awareness across all types of organizations. We asked how well students understand workplace cultures (business practices, ethnic groups, native languages, etc.) and the situations they might encounter as new professionals during their first work assignment.

In the first set of questions, employers provided insight into the values they place on various dimensions of cultural awareness. While employers valued multiple dimensions of cultural capital, they were in highest agreement that a candidate's ability to work with a range of cultures was essential to their organization.

Employers tended to value multicultural experience more than foreign experience. This finding always rankles the academic community, which places a premium on foreign study, despite the limited focus of our question. The message from employers might not be that foreign study is bad; it might be that employers

Q96. In the haste to establish entrepreneurial programs, we often lose sight of creative and innovative students who have no aspiration to be "entrepreneurial." How important a role does each of the following competencies play in your identification of creative talent?	Mean	Somewhat to very unimportant (%)	Neither important nor unimportant (%)	Important (%)	Very to extremely important (%)
PASSION: excited, internal drive, ambition, meaningful engagement salient to identity	6.08	1	6	53	40
INITIATIVE: seek out new responsibilities, undertake extra efforts, able to think and act without being urged, achieving a fresh approach to something	6.07	1	5	60	34
TEAMWORK: leverage strengths of team members, build consensus, build team one person at a time, build mutual respect.	6.04	1	7	53	38
LEARNING: continuously seek new information and experiences, openly share learning, able to self-reflect and self-evaluate	5.94	1	7	60	31
VISION: able to see the big picture, flexible and adaptable, agile, cultivates and challenges self, create a common purpose.	5.83	2	8	62	28
CHANGE: accept as inevitable and persistent, seize as an opportunity, understand how others respond to change, never comfortable with where one is.	5.73	2	10	64	24
NAVIGATE: adjust to unfamiliar environments, recognize connections and mutual interests, collaborate.	5.62	3	10	68	19
CREATIVE: curious, push past conventional wisdom or thoughts, contribute new, unconventional ideas, willing to do things differently.	5.58	2	10	64	24
GRIT: stick tenaciously to an idea or project despite failures, willing to assume personal risk in taking on new responsibilities, persistent	5.49	4	11	68	17
KNOWLEDGE: possess domain knowledge, organized, predictable communication schedule.	5.46	3	14	65	17
Ratings were based on a 7-point scale: 1 = not at all important to 7 = extremely important.					

Q101. In considering the role of cultural capital (understanding of workplace cultures and cultures of specific clients you serve) among the young adults that you are recruiting would you agree or disagree with the following statements.	Mean	Disagree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Agree (%)
We value employees who can show they are able to work effectively with clients and businesses from a range of different cultures.	4.31	1	9	91
We value employees who are aware of the global challenges faced by our organization.	3.82	6	28	66
We value previous multicultural experiences that demonstrate a new hire's ability to integrate effectively in our diverse teams.	3.66	9	31	60
We value previous multicultural experiences that demonstrate a new hire's ability to adapt to new locations.	3.52	12	36	52
We value employees with the ability to speak other languages that are critical to our economic growth.	3.43	16	25	49
We value previous foreign experience that demonstrates a new hire's ability to adapt to new locations.	3.21	19	45	36
We are worried that many young adults' perspectives or educational experiences are not broad enough to operate in a multicultural economy.	3.01	31	37	32

value the range of multicultural engagements within the U.S. — engagements that will continue into employment — more than understanding a culture thousands of miles away. Employers divided their decisions fairly equally about whether young adults have a broad enough educational background or perspective to function in a multicultural economy: about one-third agreed, one-third disagreed, and the remaining neither agreed nor disagreed.

When we compared across organizational size, industrial sector, and location, we discovered differences that may help explain how cultural competencies manifest throughout the workplace. Each statement revealed statistically significant variations based on organizational size. In all cases, smaller companies tended to value multicultural capital less than large organizations (they disagreed with the statements more often or to a greater degree). For example, the means reported for the role of multicultural experiences in shaping teams were 3.41 (<100 employees) and 3.65 (101-1,500 employees) compared to 3.98 (1,501-10,000 employees) and 4.03 (>10,000 employees). The exception occurred when larger employers (>1,501 employees) reported higher agreement than smaller employers that young adults were unable to work well in a multicultural economy.

Industrial sector comparisons produced few significant differences. Educational Services, Government, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Transportation were in higher agreement on the value of speaking a second language. Mining and Oil, Nonprofits, and Wholesale Trade were more worried than Agriculture, Arts and Entertainment, and Utilities that young adults were unable to work in multicultural environments. Mining and Oil valued candidates who were aware of the global challenges their organizations faced compared to the other sectors.

It was difficult to obtain a complete picture of the geographical implications for the value of cultural capital because of the way the data were coded. By teasing out information by state, we did identify several places where employers placed very high value on the multicultural awareness of candidates. These locations include California, Colorado, Texas, and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, which includes surrounding counties in Maryland and Virginia.

Employer representatives did not find it too difficult in most respects to find candidates who had specific skills or competencies associated with cultural awareness. If they did have difficulties, they encountered them when they tried to find candidates who had foreign language proficiencies at high enough levels to enhance job performance and candidates who had cross-cultural written and verbal skills.

Most employers do not take into consideration foreign language ability when they recruit new professionals. In other words, foreign language proficiency is nice for a candidate to have but is not sufficient to sway a hiring decision. The foreign language gap arises shortly after candidates start work and their assignments change. On the other hand, students with high proficiency in a foreign language (usually their academic major) fail to pair their language interests with other competencies (e.g., business acumen, technical savvy, or statistical acuity) and use these potentially more lucrative aspects of education as leverage in the recruiting process. These employer representatives were finding it modestly difficult in finding qualified candidates (at least for their starting assignment).

When we compared responses across organizational size, we found a few differences. Very large companies (>10,000 employees) found it harder than very small companies (<100 employees) to find candidates who could bridge cultures and manage projects with a multicultural team. Similarly we found a few differences among representatives from different industrial sectors. Representatives from Agriculture and Mining and Oil reported more difficulty in finding candidates who could bridge cultures, manage multicultural teams, work in unfamiliar places, and work effectively within and across different boundaries (e.g., functional, organizational, cultural, political and nation state). Arts and Entertainment representatives generally had a less difficult time in finding candidates who could work in multicultural environments.

The T-shaped candidate

Many organizations are actively seeking candidates who demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge (e.g., the ability to think critically, span functional, organizational, and cultural boundaries, and manage multicultural work teams). IDEO described an individual who mastered both depth and breadth as a T-shaped professional. We reintroduced a survey question after a several year absence to see where employers placed their organizational needs ranging from generalists to specialists with deep knowledge of a subject area. When we last used this question, employers were trending to the middle of the scale (the T area). This year confirmed the trend. With the range of 1 equaling a generalist (very broad but little depth), 5 to 6 equaling a T (balance between depth and breadth), and 10 equaling a specialist (very deep with little breadth), the average was 5.6 (median 6).

◆ Ratings 1 to 4 (19%)

◆ Rating of 5 (30%)

◆ Rating of 6 (25%)

Q102. Which skills or competencies do you have difficulty finding among new or recent college graduates?				
	Mean	Not difficult at all (%)	Somewhat to moderately difficult (%)	Difficult to very difficult (%)
Able to attain specific levels of foreign language competency	2.65	23	51	26
Able to use foreign language skills to amplify and extend job performance	2.61	25	50	25
Can effectively adapt their written and verbal communication to various cultures	2.55	20	59	21
Can comfortably live and work in a new or unfamiliar context	2.36	27	57	16
Able to mentor and develop others from different cultural backgrounds	2.28	29	56	15
Able to work comfortably and effectively with customers, employers, peers, etc. within and across cultures	2.27	30	56	14
Able to take appropriate initiative bridging host and home countries	2.24	30	59	12
Able to manage projects with a multicultural team	2.12	35	54	11

◆ Ratings of 7 to 10 (26%)

We found no differences when we compared ratings across organizational size. Industrial sector comparisons revealed that employers in Arts and Entertainment were likely to seek candidates who were more likely generalists (mean 4.18) compared to Educational Services, Mining and Oil, and Professional, Business, and Scientific Services (mean approximately 6.00). All the other sectors ranged from 4.8 to 5.7.

Open-ended questions and comments

We gleaned the remaining comments from open-ended answers to several survey questions. These comments may pertain to data reported in other briefs in this series. We conclude with this information so that readers have as complete a picture as possible of the emerging recruiting scene for 2015-16.

Q44. As you look ahead to 2020, in what ways do you envision college recruiting changing in your organization?

We asked respondents to envision what college recruiting might look like in 2020. While we are still scanning over 1,600 comments, our first impression is that organizations still expect to be actively involved on college campuses through their partnerships with career centers, student organizations, and academic units. Most plan to continue key recruitment strategies, especially internship programs. They believe they will be doing more niche development with specific groups of students or academic majors.

Employers will be under pressure to demonstrate that their recruitment strategies are cost effective; ROI is a recurrent theme as they look out over the next five years. Behind the ROI talk lurks the desire for more sophisticated technologies that can assist in assembling talent pools and speed up the recruitment process. Advanced technology still cannot replace the one tried and true recruiting strategy that employers know works: personal relationships. Respondents clearly know that great recruiting depends on great relationships.

Our initial read of the comments did not reveal any emerging trend that may quickly alter the landscape for college recruiting. Pressures may trigger movement to new recruiting alternatives, as these voices suggest. A tipping point may not be too far in the future.

Technology will be a big influence. There will always be a human element in college recruiting, but I believe attending career fairs will eventually be a thing of the past. We'll also likely grow our college recruiting program with the growth of millennials and the decrease of baby boomers in the workforce. Likely, we'll also adopt other methods of gaining entry level talent that might not always come from colleges.

The annual increases in college fair registration costs will force our organization to evaluate the number of career center events we attend in comparison to other less costly options, such as targeted student group information sessions. Often times the cost of conducting these information sessions is more cost effective when compared to the cost of attending a career fair. By coordinating these groups we ensure that we are meeting the correct population of students who meet our qualifications versus random career fair attendees. Additionally, the amount of time spent conducting information sessions, which is usually one hour, pales in comparison to the standard four- to five-hour commitment associated with career fairs. This minimal investment of time allows us to coordinate multiple sessions at the same campus or at different campuses.

College recruiting will reach two extremes. We will either be very involved partners, directly identifying candidates based on metrics derived by the schools, or we will abandon schools altogether. I see no possible middle-ground scenario. The

changes implemented in the next year, both in my organization and in the schools, will determine which path we go down. We are at a tipping point right now, fed up with the lackluster results but not unaware of the pool of raw talent the schools represent. In short, we will always recruit from colleges, just maybe not through or with colleges.

I expect to complete a 100 percent shift from selecting our candidates from a pool of people who have proactively responded to a specific opening to selecting candidates from a large pre-existing pools of candidates available online.

Higher costs (in terms of both time and dollars) are affecting our recruiting efforts as we don't always find the best hiring fits after spending the money and time at various career fairs. However, our company still intends to pursue career fairs as a strong method of making contact and determining "best fit" candidates. If the costs continue to go up, we may have to rethink this method and rely more on connecting with students through Internet sources.

We will be deepening our relationship with select key universities, reducing the number of campuses we are physically present at but maintaining a virtual relationship with others and increasing our reliance on technology in the résumé review process and candidate management system.

By 2020 I see our organization focusing on a targeted number of schools that have the best recruiting statistics for our organization as well as schools that make the recruiting experience organized and easy. The less organized schools have already dropped off our recruiting radar. Also we have been targeting midsized schools over the large historically "top" schools as we have found that these students tend to be more open to a more reasonable starting salary and job responsibilities.

Q49. What do you believe, at this time, will be the major obstacles your organization faces in achieving your recruiting objectives for 2015-2016?

Challenges our recruiters face today are not new by any means, but the rapid ramp-up in hiring over the past couple of years has amplified their problems. Many recruiting teams still lack the resources to do their jobs. The lack of staff, lower travel budgets, and steeper registration fees for campus events all reduce their interactions with students. In addition, pressing colleagues into attending campus events is harder because fewer people can justify time away from the office.

The biggest challenge is simply competition, which has escalated steeply over the past three years. Attracting new graduates to an organization is more problematic this year, especially if it is located in a small town or rural area or in a less-than-glamorous industry (not Google, for example). Underlying competition masks the difficulty in finding qualified candidates. Many employers believe — it may just be a matter of perception — that the new college talent bench is not very deep [OK?] because they cannot find qualified candidates to fill their open positions.

The perpetual complaint from employers is that students exacerbate the recruiter's problems by holding unrealistic expectations about starting salaries, job assignments, and promotions. The danger for students, however, is that past misbehaviors have a way of catching up with them. More companies are requiring background checks; a candidate's poor decisions can end the recruitment process.

Consider these comments from various voices in the recruiting space:

Finding recent grads with positive attitudes. Most grad have

problems with: (1) Thinking they know anything ... they don't. Their degree means they are ready to begin learning; (2) Entitlement to higher starting wages. They're not worth it ... they can't do anything unsupervised; (3) Basic skills. We hired a physics and a telecomm grad this spring, but they don't know how to read a ruler or tape measure, can't add fractions together, can't calculate a 20 percent tip in their heads ... it's astounding how naïve they are to basics. (4) Maturity. We fill 24 intern positions each year and only accept college seniors. I'd say only 1 in 24 exhibits adult-level maturity. The others are literally children with little initiative and zero tenacity; (5) No alignment between what is taught in college and what it required in the workplace. I'm not only referring to antiquated or irrelevant skills, but (A) a misalignment of how quickly tasks must be performed in the real work (e.g., you have 1 hour not the entire semester), (B) focus to stay on task and not give up until it's done (without whining or saying it can't be done), and (C) producing error-free work. In our industry, you're not rewarded for perfection ... it is expected baseline. We hire the best grads we can find and it still takes 2-3 years for them to produce error-free work.

What universities seem to lack is competency-based education. Graduates with the same degree vary widely in abilities. Hiring grads is completely unpredictable! There needs to be standard competencies in each discipline that I as an employer can rely upon.

Our younger audience tends to focus on the amount of salary, not the insurance choices, long-term job stability, and savings or retirement plans.

Candidates show up with unrealistically high expectations to be pampered and overpaid when there are thousands of candidates available for each position offered. Our greatest obstacle is sorting through thousands of applicants to find one or two candidates willing to actually work.

One problem we have is coinciding the academic calendar with our business planning calendar.

Our challenges include the competitive environment, inflated wage pressure due to competition and, job offers going out much earlier than in years past. Students have to decide too soon, and the potential for rescinded acceptances increases.

Our challenge is finding college graduates that have gained some experience in their career field prior to graduating. We are finding that some don't work in their career field in the summers and wait until the end of their college education to start gaining experience.

We have difficulties finding individuals who are willing to come to a small town community or work in a small town. We also have difficulties finding individuals with a good work ethic and experience or the knowledge of real world business.

Students are focused on getting hired by big corporations. Students don't want to deal with unknown companies, and I feel they don't take the time to consider opportunities small employers may offer them. Students lack follow-up. I tried reaching them by phone, email and other forms of contact and never got a response back.

Poor staffing and planning plus time to train and get a new hire up to speed causes our organization to be behind at times. We predominately rely on new college grads, however their start dates do not always line up with our hiring/training timetables. The industry is very connected to the economy and makes staffing difficult to predict.

Really, it is just getting around to all the different places we would like to recruit from. We only have a team of three people, and we are recruiters for all twelve of our schools in three different states. So it is not possible to be everywhere.

Q68. Which positions that you need to find talent for this year do you expect to present you with the biggest challenge in finding qualified candidates?

This survey question was confusing for many respondents. We asked respondents who selected specific academic majors to identify the areas in which they expected the most difficulty in finding the talent they needed. We posed the question this way because the media, political staffers, and administrators often want information sorted by specific majors. Savvy recruiters know that the difficulty in finding talent goes beyond the skillsets required for filling a job; matching the right candidate for the right job with the right organization is about competencies, attitudes, and behaviors.

The list provided by more than 1,300 respondents covered nearly every major. The small group of employers needing actuarial talent knows hiring the right candidate will be difficult because of the small numbers graduating in this field. Nonprofits are running into problems due to the increased competition for talent, making it harder to attract graduates to engage in community-based activities. Nevertheless, the list of talent most difficult to find includes these fields every year:

◆ Computer Engineering

◆ Computer Sciences (programming, software development, information security, IT services)

◆ Math and Science Education (grades 6-12)

◆ Management training programs (while not major specific, fewer candidates are interested in this entry-level position).

◆ Sales (all types from e-sales and inside sales to retail)

◆ Special Education

These concluding thoughts from several employers expand the picture beyond difficulties in finding talent among a specific set of majors.

We see many recent graduates underperforming expected competency levels of critical thinking, process management, and communications (writing and presentation). Frankly, we are often shocked by the unpreparedness of recently hired graduates who indicated 3.5 GPAs.

Analysts with the proper technical skill combined with the presence to succeed in this fast-paced environment are hard to find.

We need students who are willing to take a position that will require them to work their way up in a company instead of starting at the top.

We have trouble finding candidates that can handle the hours in a working day; changing from a college schedule to a 55- to 60-hour work week is stressful.

I hire engineers exclusively, and I look for a balance of technical and social skills and cultural fit. I look for engineers who can work in a team as either a team member or leader.