



The Early Bird Gets the... Best College Graduates? Korn Ferry Executive Survey Shows Best Time to Recruit Grads is the Autumn of the Candidate's Senior Year

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*-- Nearly Half Believe Grads are Not as Motivated as Those Who Graduated a Decade Ago --
-- Drive and Passion Beat Grades as Top Reason to Hire --
-- One-Third of Respondents Say Their Companies Don't Require Degrees for Professionals --*

Editor's Note: Survey Results at Bottom of Release

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 10, 2017-- Counter to traditional thinking, a new executive survey conducted by the Futurestep division of [Korn Ferry](#) (NYSE:KFY) indicates that back-to-school time is the best time of year to conduct college recruiting.

In the survey of nearly 1,500 professionals and executives, 64 percent said the autumn of a college student's senior year is the best time to recruit top candidates. Zero percent said that waiting until after graduation is the optimum time to seek out the best candidates.

"In our experience, students who know what they want to do and are driven to pursue their career goals while still in school make the strongest employees," said Adam Blumberg, vice president, Key Accounts, Futurestep. "Solid recruiting programs start early and focus on securing the most qualified talent months before they actually graduate."

The survey showed that while the majority of respondents (61 percent) feel drive and passion are the top attributes they look for in college candidates (grades and university they attended came in last), only 42 percent say grads have the skills they need to succeed on their first job, and 42 percent also believe that compared to a decade ago, today's college graduates are not as motivated to succeed on the job.

"Ten years ago, we were on the cusp of a major recession and graduate hiring was much slower, so it stands to reason that graduates back then had to fight much harder to succeed," said Blumberg. "With today's unemployment rate the lowest it's been in years, it's a candidate's market, so employers need to work quickly and effectively to capture the best talent."

The largest percentage of respondents (38 percent) say that social media (e.g. LinkedIn) is the best way to engage college candidates, followed by in-person networking at 28 percent. When asked why candidates would choose one job over another, the largest percentage (35 percent) said it's because they like the people with whom they meet as part of the recruiting process.

"It's critical that companies make the recruiting experience as positive as possible for candidates," said Blumberg. "A big part of creating that inviting environment is training hiring managers and others in the organization on how to best communicate the organization's employer brand and the positive culture of the company."

College Degrees Not Always Required

The survey also reflected a growing trend when it comes to hiring professionals. One-third of respondents say that holding a college degree is *not* a firm pre-requisite when hiring professionals within their organization.

"Companies across a wide range of industries are now not requiring professionals to have college degrees," said Blumberg. "While college helps teach skills and critical thinking for many people, several organizations realize that there are smart, driven, talented people who do not have degrees but who are valuable assets."

About the survey

Korn Ferry Futurestep fielded the survey in May through July of 2017. It garnered 1,427 responses. Percentages are rounded to the nearest decimal. Totals may not equal 100 percent.

Survey Results

When is the best time to conduct college recruiting?

After the students graduate	0 percent
The autumn of the students' senior year	64 percent
A couple months before the students graduate	15 percent
The students' junior year	21 percent

Is a college degree a firm pre-requisite for hiring professionals in your organization?

Yes	67 percent
No	33 percent

To what extent do you agree with this statement: Recent college graduates have the needed skills to succeed as they enter their first professional job.

Strongly agree	5 percent
Agree somewhat	37 percent
Neither agree nor disagree	19 percent
Disagree somewhat	28 percent
Strongly disagree	10 percent

Compared to 10 years ago, how would you assess the motivation of today's college graduate to succeed on the job?

Much more motivated	18 percent
Somewhat more motivated	16 percent
About the same motivation level	24 percent
Somewhat less motivated	32 percent
Much less motivated	10 percent

What top attribute do you look for when hiring a new college graduate?

Grades	1 percent
Major	3 percent
University they attended	1 percent
Previous experience	11 percent
Drive / passion	61 percent
Fit with our culture	22 percent

Compared to one year ago, is your company planning on hiring:

More new college grads	22 percent
Fewer new college grads	32 percent
The same amount of college grads	45 percent

Does your organization have a college internship program?

Yes	63 percent
No	37 percent

If your organization has a college internship program, what is the primary reason?

To help identify the best students to hire upon graduation	88 percent
To get work done inexpensively	6 percent
To help with one-off projects	6 percent

Does your organization have a formal on-the-job training program for college graduates who are in their first professional job?

Yes	55 percent
No	45 percent

What are you doing to engage college candidates?

On-campus information sessions	23 percent
In-person networking/social events	28 percent
Online social events (e.g. webinars)	2 percent
Social media (e.g. Linked-In, Twitter)	38 percent
Host conferences	4 percent

What is the top reason graduates would choose one employer over another?

Reputation of the company	25 percent
Salary/benefits	10 percent
The people with whom they meet as part of the recruiting process	35 percent
The work they'll be doing	30 percent

What would most incentivize you to make initial contact with a candidate when college recruiting?

A referral from someone you know	22 percent
Their persistence/enthusiasm	17 percent
Video resume	1 percent
Online (e.g. LinkedIn) resume	4 percent
Social media activity	1 percent
Previous work experience at my organization	4 percent
Examples that highlight leadership, drive for excellence	51 percent

About Korn Ferry

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