



(Taken from <http://www.collegegrad.com/press/whatemployerswant.shtml>, January 17, 2008)

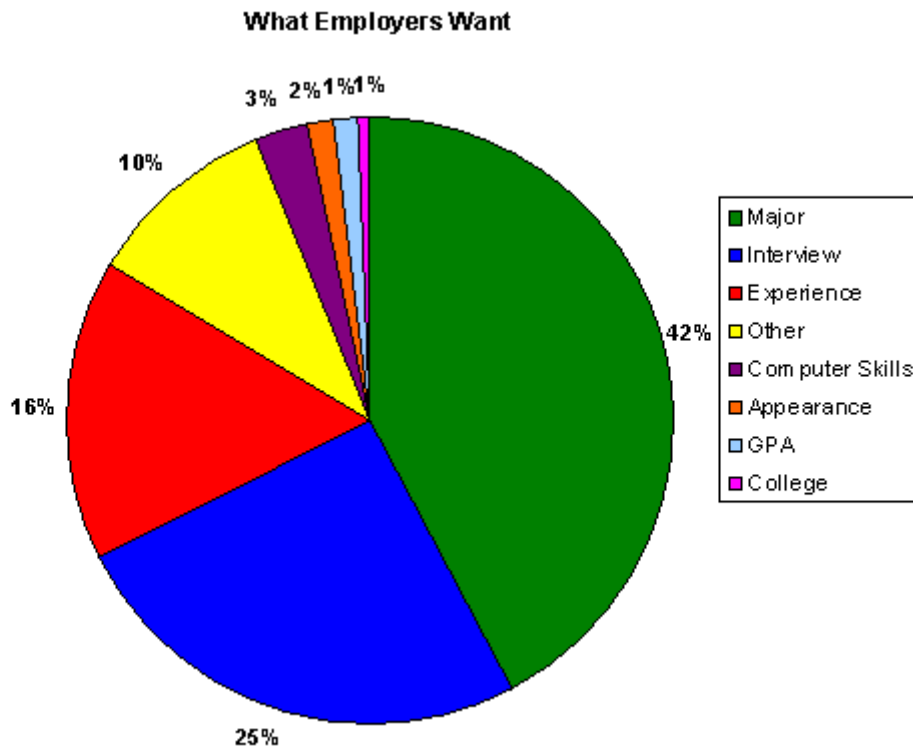
Survey Results Detail What Top Entry Level Employers Want Most

CollegeGrad.com Releases Top Hiring Criteria for College Grads

STATE COLLEGE, PA--(HR Marketer)--August 8, 2007--CollegeGrad.com, the #1 Entry Level Job Site, today released the results of its survey on what employers want most in hiring new college grads. Which is more important to entry level employers – the college you graduated from? Your GPA? Or what you majored in? According to the survey results, the answer may surprise you.

The criteria that the employers ranked as most important are as follows:

- #1 – The student's major (42%)
- #2 – The student's interviewing skills (25%)
- #3 – The student's internships/experience (16%)
- #4 – Other miscellaneous qualifications (10%)
- #5 – The student's computer skills (3%)
- #6 – The student's personal appearance (2%)
- #7 – The student's GPA (1%)
- #8 – The college the student graduated from (1%)



The survey results indicate that 42% of employers surveyed ranked a student's major as the top priority for hiring consideration. This is up from 37% in 2006. Interviewing skills and a student's internships and experience, ranked second and third.

"College students shouldn't be worried about whether they attended the right college or maintained perfect grades," said Brian Krueger, President of CollegeGrad.com. "The results of this survey clearly show that these are not what most employers are looking at first."

What does it mean that employers first look at a candidate's major? Employers explain that in initial hiring consideration, they are first concerned with a set of necessary skills.

"We are looking for candidates that possess the technical and enabling skills required to be an effective client service delivery professional," said Blane Ruschak, National Director of Campus Recruiting for [KPMG](#).

Also critical to employers is to find candidates passionate about their potential industry. Randy Goldberg, National Recruiting Director for [Hyatt Hotels](#) explains that finding job seekers excited about their future position occurs most often when the candidate's major matches their prospective field of employment.

"Most of our entry level management positions are not your typical 9 to 5 positions," said Goldberg, "so seeking out candidates with hospitality schooling and experience is a key ingredient to achieving a rewarding career with Hyatt."

Employers repeatedly state that in order for students to separate themselves from candidates with the same major, students must be able to relate past experiences to the current job opportunity in an interview setting. Also important is to demonstrate a range of transferable soft skills to complement the skills associated with their major.

Krueger points out that "If a candidate is comfortable not only gathering and analyzing technical data, but also effectively communicating the results in presentations, lectures, and one-on-one, this is much more valuable to a prospective employer than those who can only crunch the numbers. And those who can demonstrate this ability in an interview will stand out from among their peers."

Employers seeking candidates with less technical majors also point to versatility as an important professional skill. "We are looking for candidates to be in a continuous learning mode, have a positive attitude and demonstrate a global perspective in their thinking and actions," said Ruschak.

In addition to Ruschak's list of top soft skills for [KPMG](#), other employers would also include the importance of communication skills, dedication, integrity, enthusiasm, creativity and adaptability. According to Vicki Decker, Director of Career Services for Winona State University, "These skills result in successful candidates and are not necessarily tied to any given major." Additionally, they can all be summed up in one word: passion.

Passion about the opportunity is important to employers because it cannot be taught or faked. When employers recognize that a student's enthusiasm and excitement about the job is genuine, that student will most often get the job.

To demonstrate enthusiasm during the interview, Krueger advises providing examples of how passion has had a positive impact on results. "If you can show an employer in your words, actions and past

behaviors that you have true passion for achieving excellence, you can and will be chosen over the superstar."

The information was gathered while compiling the list of more than [500 Top Entry Level Employers for 2007](#). Employers were asked to rank criteria in order of importance for hiring consideration. The full survey is available at: www.CollegeGrad.com/surveys/topemployers.

Additional employer quotes

"Today's college graduates bring new insights and more sophisticated technical skills to the workforce. We at Avis Budget Group are aggressively recruiting individuals who want to join our team, at our corporate and field locations nationwide, and make a difference. By attracting and retaining bright young talent, we can strengthen our position as an industry leader by combining our current workforce's experience with the enthusiasm and fresh ideas of new graduates. With stronger recruitment and training programs, we are investing in the future of our employees as well as our organization."

Mark Servodidio
Executive Vice President, Human Resources
[Avis Budget Group](#)

"We're an aerospace & defense company with over 85% of our new college grads coming into engineering & technical positions, so a student's major is one of the first starting points when we determine whether they meet the minimum qualifications for a specific opening.

"For the most part, degree major is still a top consideration for students seeking entry-level positions in less technical fields at Raytheon. We typically hire business majors for our finance organizations, information systems majors for our IT groups, HR majors for our human resources openings, etc. There are some entry-level jobs, such as for contracts administration, where a broader mix of majors may be applicable, but those openings tend to be smaller in number as compared to most jobs available.

"Degree major is the just the first coarse filter on candidates. There are several things that help us choose between candidates with the same major. One thing that differentiates students is what they want to do with their degree, areas of specialization, or areas of special interest. Raytheon hires a number of electrical engineering majors each year and employs them in a wide variety of positions. Many EE students are certain that they would like a job doing electrical design, but some have taken additional courses that make them a good choice for a specific application, such as RF/microwave design."

"Here are some other things that we consider in candidates:

- Likes challenges & solving problems - has a basic knowledge of math & science
- Can understand a complex technical product, and develop hardware & software to provide innovative & creative solutions

- Uses sound judgment - we are running a business for mostly government customers, therefore, we need people who can help us manage costs and projects to meet cost & schedule goals
- We also need individuals with strong ethics -- to “know what's right & do what's right.”
- Communicates & works well in teams - most employees are a part of a functional core team & other cross-discipline project teams. Communication skills are critical for employees to excel in our team structures, express themselves and their good ideas while listening to others, and deal with external customers, suppliers, & vendors.
- Understands that there is more to life than work - Raytheon is committed to promoting a high performing work force by supporting the diverse work/life needs of its employees while meeting its business needs.
- We need people who enjoy what they are doing at work and want to strike a good work/life balance.
- Wants to improve skills - lifelong learning is a fundamental requirement for Raytheon to remain one of the most admired defense and aerospace systems suppliers through world-class people and technology. We need people who can learn and apply what they learn quickly, so that they can stay ahead of rapidly developing technologies."

Jeff Goodman
 University Programs Manager
[Raytheon](#)

"At Hyatt, our goal is to hire recent college grads who are truly passionate about our industry. As most of our entry level management positions are not your typical 9 to 5 positions, seeking out candidates with Hospitality schooling and experience is a key ingredient to achieving a rewarding career with Hyatt."

Randy Goldberg
 Executive Director Recruiting
[Hyatt Hotels Corporation](#)

"Regardless of their major, recent grads must be able to relate their college experiences to the job that they are applying for, whether it is their affiliation with a campus organization or a course that they have taken. It is crucial for them to make this connection and effectively communicate these experiences, their accomplishments, and talents as it relates to the position."

Latonya Daniels, MBA
 VP, Recruitment and Staffing
[American Heart Association](#)

"At KPMG, we are looking for candidates that possess the technical and enabling skills required to be an effective client service delivery professional in addition to having a genuine desire to be in a

continuous learning mode, have a positive attitude and demonstrate a global perspective in their thinking and actions."

Blane Ruschak
National Director of Campus Recruiting
[KPMG LLP](#)

"At SWIFT we manage employees as people not as resources, so we hire talent who possess the skills and abilities to be engaged and empowered. This we believe helps people to achieve and extends SWIFT's capability."

Mike Shepelak
Head of Human Resources -Americas
[SWIFT](#)

"At Blackbaud the most important things we look for are great communication, professionalism and energy; someone we feel comfortable putting in front of our clients."

Colleen Patton
College Recruiter- Human Resources
[Blackbaud](#)

"It's a great time to be a new graduate. Almost all the grads we are making offers to are also entertaining offers from other companies. For OSRAM SYLVANIA, that means our recruiting has to be much more focused on our message about the importance of our quality of life programs like work-life balance and our environmental responsibility, if we are to land the best candidates."

Maureen Crawford Hentz
Manager of Talent Acquisition
[Osram Sylvania](#)

"Employers value job related experience. The best way for college students to gain experience is through internships, extracurricular activities, and jobs in their fields. Unpaid internships often require little effort to obtain and provide invaluable experience. Students should weigh the advantages and disadvantages for their particular situation when evaluating unpaid internship opportunities. Sacrifices now lay the foundation for greater career rewards in the future."

Dr. Cassandra D. Caldwell
National Director
Talent Acquisition College and External Relations
[Sodexo](#)

"To get a leg up on the competition and to be a "stand-out" to prospective employers, a student needs to complete at least one internship related to his or her major prior to graduating.

"I have been recruiting new grad civil engineers for a number of years and those students who have interned typically have the most self-confidence, better communication and organizational skills, a grasp of business writing and relevant experience coming into their first job out of college."

Barbara Kimball
Staffing Manager
[Graniterock](#)

"In our business, our top consideration is a candidates' work ethic. We know that the printing industry requires employees who aren't afraid of putting in long hours and getting dirty. Students who stand out in the interviewing process include those who perhaps have worked on their feet all day in a manufacturing or construction fields and those from the restaurant industry who know what it means to clear busy tables in a fast-paced environment. It's tough, challenging work, and the opportunities for success are endless."

Rachel S. Koenig, Ed.D.
National Manager of Recruiting & Development
[ConsolidatedGraphics](#)

"When considering candidates we are looking at much more than major. Wachovia is looking for a well rounded, dedicated student who has the desire to succeed in our organization."

Melissa Hunter
Vice President, Campus Recruiting Strategy
[Wachovia Bank](#)

"The Boeing Company looks for entry-level talent from many majors and backgrounds. We are looking for a diverse group of amazing people who want to be a part of a company that does amazing things. Students need to be willing and able to translate their experiences and education into a desire to be involved in those amazing things...like building satellites that connect people who are geographically located all over the world. Or developing products and services in defense, intelligence, and communications for people around the world... Or building the next generation of jetliners to bring people together from every continent on the globe..."

Robert L. Poole
Sr. Manager
College/Diversity Recruiting & Events Management
[The Boeing Company](#)

"NSWCDD is leading scientific and engineering efforts that help the Navy protect our nation. We conduct basic research in all systems-related areas and pursue scientific thrusts that draw upon many disciplines, including biotechnology, chemistry, mathematics, laser and computer technology, chemical, mechanical, electrical and systems engineering, physics and computer science.

"Academic achievements and leadership skills must be demonstrated by entry-level job candidates. Business savvy and the ability to work in non-traditional environments are also required. Our scientists

and engineers work with a diverse team of professionals from different backgrounds and areas of expertise under budget and time constraints and have the ability to lead, learn, and make sound decisions.

"The ability to solve technical problems and communicate the complex results are qualities we are looking for in candidates who will be engaged in Naval research and development.

"Our workforce is about 65% scientists and engineers. What we do is rocket science and essential to designing our future Navy, protecting our nation, and winning the Global War on Terrorism. Our scientists and engineers are provided with challenging work, exposure to the latest technologies and great opportunities to make a difference by improving our security and way of life. All of these with ample benefits and job security.

"When candidates visit NSWCDD, they see that diversity is more than just a 'buzz word' to us -- it's an integral part of who and what we are. We want our teams invigorated by the ideas and energy that come from a good mix of backgrounds and cultures. We look for people who are creative, technically superior, and have the ability to contribute as an individual or a team member. And we are committed to pursuing candidates of all backgrounds to fill these needs. We believe that this diversity enriches the base, and its employees, and the community in which we live and work.

"NSWC Dahlgren Division's recruiting home page, <http://www.nswc.navy.mil/RECRUIT>, features a wealth of information on employment opportunities, the job application process, recruiting schedule, location, starting salaries, benefits and student educational training programs."

Tony Gibert
Recruiting Program Manager
[Naval Surface Warfare Center \(NSWC\)](#)

"The students that stand out are those that have the total package. It is a competitive market for talent, and it is the students who have a combination of strong education, work and other experience, and leadership skills from activities, that are the highest in demand. One strong internship alone, or a high GPA with nothing else behind it, are not the best candidates. One great thing will not get you a job; it is having multiple good things that will.

"Students who have a passion for the opportunities they are pursuing are always top contenders. This is something that cannot be taught or faked. The students who show enthusiasm, excitement, and energy during the interviews and hiring process because they are genuinely excited about the opportunity most often get the job."

KASEY COMNICK
Institutional College Relations
[Ecolab Inc.](#)

"We look for well-rounded professionals who are interested in growing with our organization.

"When recruiting entry level talent one of the attributes we value most is enthusiasm and passion for what we do in serving clients.

"Students with strong work ethics, high standards, and the desire to learn and achieve are highly sought after by Vanguard."

Karen Fox
Manager, University Relations & Recruiting
[Vanguard](#)

"While every employer looks for a strong GPA and work experience in entry-level hires, at Grant Thornton the candidate's "soft skills" are typically the deciding factor. We look for people with a broad range of transferable skills and a willingness to learn more. In addition, our candidates must demonstrate integrity, dedication, creativity and adaptability to be extended an offer. And never underestimate the power of enthusiasm: those who display passion for our company and the position are much more likely to be hired."

Monique Brannon
Director of Recruiting
[Grant Thornton LLP](#)

"Talent is Prudential's competitive advantage in the marketplace and campus recruiting is a critical acquisition channel for talent. Our goal is to develop and retain the people we hire from campus. We understand that our employees are the key to our future growth and success. So it's critical that we not only hire employees with the right skills, but we offer a supportive work environment and professional programs to help develop and retain them. We look for well-rounded campus hires that have proven academic success, but also demonstrated leadership and relationship building skills that are critical in business today."

Marietta Cozzi
Vice President, Staffing
[Prudential Financial](#)

"At Walgreens, we are looking for individuals who are interested in moving through our organization at a pace that matches our rapid store growth. Our store training programs will prepare them for key management positions within our company."

Marty Slevin
Corporate Manager, Retail Recruitment
[Walgreens](#)

"The employment landscape is changing. The war for talent is fierce, but much like lobsters, employers are increasingly "mating for life" when it comes to their hiring of those individuals who are going to bring skills, education, and enthusiasm to the Company, but who will also be loyal and, equally importantly, bring ethics and integrity with them!

"Employers are not taking any chances with their confidential information, with their employee morale, and/or with other factors that will have influence on productivity and with their reputation in the business world. Along with the standard criminal background checks and drug screens, more and

more employers are doing internet searches to see what candidates may be doing on their off time that might not exhibit the type of behavior that might result in tabloid fodder. Clean up those MySpace and FaceBook pages; Big Brother AND Big Sister might take a look at your party pics prior to making that job offer."

Steven Jungman
Division Director
[ChaseSource](#)

"Most employers seek technical competence as well as cultural fit with the organization. When Intel prepares to hire new college grads, we assess technical aptitude and behaviors such as the ability to work on teams, tolerance of an ambiguous environment and a new grad's ability to solve tough problems."

Dani Napier
Campus Recruiting Manager
[Intel](#)

"A student's major is important to us, but equally important is their experience and comfort in working with technology, their demonstrated leadership and overall communication skills. A strong academic record is definitely important, but we look for a well rounded student that can hit that ground running."

Mark L. Clark
Manager, College Recruiting
[Lowe's Companies, Inc.](#)

Career Center Quotes

"A business major is always a safe bet because it only opens doors. The quantitative, communication, and practical skills students acquire can serve them in multiple career paths."

Lisa Mangigian, M. A. LPC
Director of Career Services & Placement
Cleary University

"We noticed that employers like specific majors, they also like students who have co-op or related experience. Also, communication and strong presentational skills are always a plus."

Sylvia E. Camacho
Director, Career Services and Cooperative Education
Suffolk County Community College

"Employers want a person with the skills but a good attitude and work ethic."

Jeannette Moss
Director of Job Placement
Wake Technical Community College

"The top personal qualities employers are looking for in candidates are: Excellent Communication skills (verbal & written); Integrity/Honesty/Ethics/Decency; Teamwork skills (able to work well with others); Interpersonal Skills (relates well to others); Strong Work Ethic, Motivation and Initiative. These are the personal qualities employers are looking for. Obviously, you need the education to do the required work. Experience via an internship is a big plus. Quite frankly, the "major" for most companies is not that important unless of course the job requires a specific skill set like accounting, nursing, engineering. Many just want a degree. That's what I have been hearing. Hope this is helpful.

"Also, at this point in time, the top job opportunities I've found (based on the jobs posted in our Career Center) are: Accounting, Hospitality, Nursing (Health Area), Engineering, Psychology/Sociology (non-profits need these grads big time since the work is challenging and low paying)."

Valerie K. Adams, Director
Career Development
Fairleigh Dickinson University

"Another major that is highly sought after is nursing. That has been the case for the last several years and is projected to be for at least the next ten years when the nursing shortage will reach crisis proportions due in large part to the aging baby boomer population.

"We find majors are very important for 'technical' positions – i.e., engineering for engineering positions, accounting for accounting positions, etc.; however, employers hiring for positions not requiring 'licensure or specific training in order to perform the position,' still look for a skill set that will allow the candidate to be successful such as communications skills, integrity/honesty, interpersonal skills, initiative, teamwork, and strong work ethic (NACE survey). I would add flexibility to that list. These skills result in successful candidates and are not necessarily tied to any given major."

Vicki Decker, Director
Career Services
Winona State University

"I agree that Marketing, Business, Management, Accounting and Engineering are the "hot" majors this year. I disagree that the most important hiring consideration is the college major. I believe employers hire the person first. They are looking first for bright, articulate job candidates with exceptional communication skills, and the ability to be a team player. If the candidate happens to have these skills, plus one of the hot majors, it's a plus!"

Pamela I. Ehlers, M.C.C.
Director, OSU Career Services

"Since I am at a selective liberal arts college, I do not find that major is the most important criterion for our employers. Our employer partners look for strong communication skills, internship experience, and leadership skills. They know that at a liberal arts college, the students will have a broad background including the ability to critically analyze problems. More than half of our graduates have studied abroad, and 73% have internship experience. Our employers find these experiences to be very valuable."

Linda Arra
Lafayette

"About promoting one's training completed as an educational major, when interviewing for employment in marketing, business, management, accounting, or engineering, as well as other working disciplines, it makes a lot of sense to the employer, and is highly desirable, that the interviewee demonstrates a clear determination (focus) to get the job for which he or she is being interviewed. A candidate may go into the interview thinking only to sell the "person," but if the important element of specific job focus is not clearly expressed, then the interview will lose meaningful depth and turn into a shallow puddle. So, before the interview, the job seeker needs to make an in-depth self assessment of why he or she wants the job and how the education (major), and possible related experience, have prepared him or her as a hireable candidate—then "take it to the table" for discussion.

"Since interviewing is a process of elimination—eliminating inappropriate candidates—and based on time efficiency, employers want to find the most suitable candidates in the shortest amount of time. Therefore, candidates can expect more probing type questions that are behavioral-based, situational, and especially results-oriented. Answers should contain a blend of comments relating to the action that was taken to achieve a goal or how one worked through a challenging situation, and also the final result (benefit) to self, another person, department, or company as a whole.

"Soft skills, especially communication capabilities, still play a very important part in the hiring process. Since technical and business savvy people, if hired, need to express their thoughts clearly to associates, then this ability must also be demonstrated in the interview or the chances for being hired dwindle. As an example: a person with exceptional technical know-how whose thoughts do not come across clearly, in verbal expression or content-wise, will probably not "shine" like the candidate who possesses an adequate level of technical capability, but who also communicates his or her ideas clearly with validating examples of success. Thus, when expressed during the interview, good communication skills + good job capabilities = excellent predictors for hire.

"Job seekers need to be prepared for that broad base question—the ice breaker—"Tell me about yourself." Prior to the interview, it's a good idea to mentally compile brief descriptions of relative experience, education, skills, and qualities for the job of interest into one 30- to 60-second promotional statement. Is this possible in such a short period? Yes! By highlighting the best of what a potential candidate has to offer, and by editing, he or she can set a very positive platform for the continuing question/answer session. Role play, prior to the interview, will be very beneficial."

Darrell E.F. Whitsell
Career Planning Specialist
Tarrant County College
Southeast Campus

"The best quote I ever heard from an employer about what they are looking for in a candidate was from an employer that told me they wanted, 'someone with stop on a dime skills, but also someone they wouldn't mind being stuck in an airport with during a snow storm.' They want skills, but ultimately it is people who get hired."

Stephen Cantine, Director
Office of Career Services
Utica College

"Unless it's a technical degree (computer science or accounting, for example) our employers are looking for students that have applicable experience, not what their majors are. They want to know if our students have the ability to learn, to be adaptable, be flexible, communicate effectively (writing, speaking, listening) and 'play nice' (interpersonal skills)."

Diana Rae Patten,
Career Services and Internships Director
Co-Director, Washington DC Term
Coe College

"At the University of Illinois, we have found that while employers are looking for students with a variety of experiences and skills, practical work experience tends to be at the top of the list. Internships and co-ops help students to differentiate themselves, especially when they can clearly articulate the insights they gained from their professional experiences. A student's major is important for some companies, but more and more employers are seeking the analytical and technical skills that our engineering students offer, and are not as concerned about the specific major."

Sarah M. Zehr
Assistant Dean & Director of Engineering Career Services
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"My experience (and the experience of my entire staff) is that, while grades are important, they no longer are the most significant variable in the employer's mind. Substantive internships, preferably more than one during the summers or academic year is hugely important in the decision factor. Internships make the student more business savvy; more realistic and most importantly, completely focused on what they really want to do with their first entry-level job. Employers often lose students after 6-12 months not because they are not capable of doing the job, but because they took a job not knowing really what it was all about. Substantive internships prior to graduation alleviates all those concerns.

"In other words, if the student did a similar job already, and is now interviewing for a job like this permanently, it is very likely that the tenure of the candidate with that first job and first company goes up dramatically."

James M. Bretl, MS
Director, Creighton Career Center

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