

College Hiring Outlook Strongest in More than a Decade, According to New CareerBuilder Survey

- **80 percent of employers say they plan to hire college graduates this year, up from 74 percent last year**
- **Nearly half of employers plan to increase the starting salaries they offer to recent graduates**
- **CareerBuilder data shows college graduates are making mistakes that are preventing them from getting jobs**
- **Business, engineering, and computer and information sciences among most sought after majors**

CHICAGO and ATLANTA, May 17, 2018 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- It is a good time to be a graduate, as employers say they are planning to hire more recent college graduates this year than they have in more than a decade, according to new CareerBuilder research. Eighty percent of employers say they plan to hire college graduates this year, up from 74 percent last year and 58 percent in 2008. Those who are not hiring college grads say it's because their organization isn't expanding headcount this year (57 percent) or they need more experienced workers (26 percent).

The national survey was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder between April 4 and May 1, 2018, and included a representative sample of 1,012 hiring managers and human resource professionals in the private sector across industries and company sizes.

Class of 2018 Starting Salaries

Nearly half (47 percent) plan to offer recent graduates higher pay than last year, and a third of employers will be paying a starting salary of \$50,000 or more. Forty-five percent anticipate no change in salary compared to last year and 8 percent plan to decrease.

Expected starting salaries for recent college graduates break down as follows:

- Under \$30,000: 21 percent
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000: 23 percent
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000: 22 percent
- \$50,000 and higher: 33 percent

College graduates may not feel they can negotiate salary, but that thinking may mean they are leaving money on the table. Seventy-four percent of employers say they are willing to negotiate salary offers when extending a job offer to a recent college graduate.

Lack of Experience May Cost College Graduates Opportunities

While the majority of employers say academic institutions are adequately preparing students for roles needed in their organization (82 percent), that doesn't necessarily mean graduates have the job-seeking skills needed to land the job. Employers said that over the past year, more than half of recent college graduates:

- Didn't send a thank you note: 37 percent
- Didn't know anything about the company: 35 percent
- Didn't submit a cover letter: 31 percent
- Didn't ask any questions in the interview: 29 percent
- Didn't have professional references: 26 percent
- Had poor grammar on their resume: 26 percent
- Had unprofessional pictures on their social media profiles: 21 percent
- Checked their mobile phone during the interview: 19 percent

What Exactly Are Employers Looking For?

Employers are seeking a handful of significant skills and backgrounds from new college grads. More specifically, employers hiring recent college graduates in 2018 say they're looking to fill roles in these areas:

- Information technology: 31 percent
- Customer service: 26 percent
- Business development: 20 percent
- Sales: 18 percent
- Finance/accounting: 18 percent
- Human resources: 15 percent
- Production: 14 percent
- Marketing/public relations: 10 percent
- Clinical: 9 percent
- Legal: 5 percent

Additionally, employers hiring recent college graduates this year state the following majors are the most in-demand at their firms:

- Business: 35 percent
- Engineering: 22 percent
- Computer and information sciences: 18 percent
- Engineering technologies: 13 percent
- Communications technologies: 11 percent
- Health professions and related clinical sciences: 11 percent
- Math and statistics: 9 percent
- Science technologies: 7 percent
- Mechanic and repair technologies: 6 percent
- Public administration and social services: 6 percent
- Construction trades: 6 percent
- Communication and journalism: 5 percent
- Education: 5 percent
- Transportation and materials moving: 5 percent
- Liberal arts and sciences, general studies and humanities: 5 percent

Research Method

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 1,012 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between April 4 and May 1, 2018. Data for employers were weighted where necessary by company size and job level to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

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