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  (working on the AGENCY-side in strategic planning, account management, hybrid planning/management roles, and/or brand consultancy)

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Dear Alums,
Following, please find our second-ever Brandcenter Alumni Salary Survey. The first survey was done in January 2013. I plan to do this survey every 2-3 years.

Purpose
To help our alumni understand average salaries for their disciplines and prepare them for annual reviews, job changes, salary negotiations, etc. We also took a look at things like how happy you are at your job, how many hours you work each week, and what companies/agencies you think are doing the best work in our industry.

Methodology
Online survey, 16 questions, fielded between August 1, 2015 – September 15, 2015

Response Rate
The response rate was terrific considering the average response rate for online surveys is less than 10%. I’m happy to report that 47% of our alums participated in the survey. Of those alums, respondents came from the following tracks:

- 23% Art Direction
- 24% Copywriting
- 15% Creative Brand Management
- 10% Experience Design
- 28% Strategy

n.b. The Creative Brand Management track wasn’t offered until 2005 and Experience Design until 2008 so there are fewer alumni in those tracks.

Respondents came from the following graduation classes
- 11% Class of 1998 – 2003
- 25% Class of 2004 – 2009
- 64% Class of 2010 – 2015

n.b. The earlier classes were much smaller in terms of number of graduates than the more recent classes. For example, the Class of 1998 had 48 graduates. The Class of 2015 had 103 graduates.

Questions/Comments
As this is only our second salary survey and I am definitely not a professional researcher, please let me know if you have questions, comments, or suggestions about this survey or future ones.

Thank You’s
- Thanks to Diana Ojibway (AD, 2002) for turning my boring Word document and tables into beautifully-designed infographics.
- Thanks to Katherine Keogh and Hawley Smyth for proofing this document.
- Thanks to all of our alums who contributed to this report. I’m so grateful to you for everything you do to give back to our program, from mentoring students to sponsoring interns to recruiting our graduates to leading in-class, real world assignments to helping each other network among so many other things.

Best,
Ashley Sommardahl
Director of Student Affairs and Industry Outreach
asommardahl@vcu.edu
 Overall Findings

Track Overview

**CBM**
Creative Brand Management
1st class graduated in 2007

**ST**
Strategy
1st class graduated in 1998

**AD**
Art Direction
1st class graduated in 1998

**CW**
Copywriting
1st class graduated in 1998

**XD**
Experience Design
1st class graduated in 2010

Formerly known as Creative Technology

Special Note Regarding CBM/ST Tracks

The information in this report is generally broken out by track/discipline. As you may know, there is a great deal of “crossover” among the CBM and ST tracks in terms of the jobs they hold. For this reason, I segmented them in the following way:

- CBM/ST working on the CLIENT-side in brand management, product management, and/or marketing for companies – e.g. Capital One
- CBM/ST working on the AGENCY-side in strategic planning, account management, hybrid planning/management roles, and/or brand consultancy.

Average Annual Salaries

Q7: What is your current annual salary? (open-ended)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Mid.</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBM/ST (CLIENT-side)</td>
<td>$79,655</td>
<td>$92,062</td>
<td>$107,333</td>
<td>$140,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBM/ST (AGENCY-side)</td>
<td>$52,660</td>
<td>$70,184</td>
<td>$94,525</td>
<td>$129,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>$51,454</td>
<td>$70,774</td>
<td>$104,765</td>
<td>$142,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>$48,952</td>
<td>$76,404</td>
<td>$107,444</td>
<td>$144,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XD</td>
<td>$68,357</td>
<td>$79,700</td>
<td>$95,200</td>
<td>not enough data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Findings

Job Happiness

Q10: How much do you like your current job? (multiple choice)

Work/Life Balance

Q11: In this industry, we understand that workload varies depending on things like current projects, production, new business, etc. On average, how many hours per week do you work? (multiple choice)

Job Tenure

Q12: How long have you been at your current job? (multiple choice)

n.b. All respondents combined. Not sure this is much of a surprise to anyone given how much people move around in this industry.
## Overall Findings

### Job Hunting

**Q13:** Do you plan to actively look for a new job this year? (yes or no)

- **CBM/ST (CLIENT-side):** 29%
- **CBM/ST (AGENCY-side):** 37%
- **AD:** 42%
- **CW:** 40%
- **XD:** 41%

### Career Advancement

**Q16:** FOR 2014 GRADS ONLY – If you graduated in 2014, have you received a promotion and/or raise since you graduated? (yes or no)

- Of those 58, **53%** said they had earned a promotion and/or raise within their first year of work.

n.b. I asked this question because I had a hypothesis that while our graduates may enter the business at a junior level, they move up more quickly than “normal” juniors. I can’t find an industry average for juniors in our industry who earn a promotion and/or raise within their first year of work, but I have to believe it is less than 53%.

### Best Work

**Q15:** In your opinion, what agency/company is doing the best advertising/branding work right now? (open-ended)

By far, the most popular answers were:

- Wieden + Kennedy
- Droga5

**Honorable Mentions:**

- Barton F Graf 9000
- DDB Adam & Eve
- Pereira O’Dell
- R/GA
- 72andSunny
- TBWA\Chiat\Day

**Most Creative Answers:**

- Jeff Dryer (AD, 2010)
- Auto Connection commercials
- All advertising sucks
# Art Direction

**Employer Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Advertising Agency</th>
<th>Client-side</th>
<th>Freelance</th>
<th>Start-up</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3% (production company, non-profit, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Annual Salary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Mid.</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$51,454</td>
<td>$70,774</td>
<td>$104,765</td>
<td>$142,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Freelance Rate** *(average day rates by level)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Mid.</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$250/day</td>
<td>$693/day</td>
<td>$850/day</td>
<td>$1,600/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perks/Incentives Received**

62% received additional incentives.

The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, referral bonus, employee discounts via agency accounts.

50% DISCOUNT
### Company Size

- **Small (1-100 people):** 25%
- **Medium (101-300 people):** 30%
- **Large (300+ people):** 29%

#### Worked

- **16%** work freelance/self-employed
- **25%** work for small companies
- **30%** work for medium companies
- **29%** work for large companies

### Job Happiness

- **0%** “HATE” their job
- **13%** “DON’T LIKE” their job
- **47%** “LIKE” their job
- **26%** “REALLY LIKE” their job
- **14%** “LOVE” their job

### Weekly Hours Worked

- **13%** work 40 (or below 40) hours per week
- **45%** work 41-50 hours per week
- **33%** work 51-60 hours per week
- **7%** work 61-70 hours per week
- **2%** work 71+ hours per week
Years at Current Job

- 73% have been at current job 1-2 years
- 18% have been at current job 3-5 years
- 6% have been at current job 6-8 years
- 3% have been at current job 9+ years

Job Searching

- 42% plan to actively look for a new job this year.

Gender of Respondents

- 50% female
- 50% male

Where They Work

- SF 12%
- LA 11%
- NYC 34%
- Richmond 5%
- Durham 3%
- Chicago 6%
- Other 29%
Copywriting

Employer Type

<table>
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<th>Other (production company, non-profit, etc.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>$48,952</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>$76,404</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.</td>
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<td></td>
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Average Annual Salary

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Average Freelance Rate

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not enough data</td>
<td>not enough data</td>
<td>$755/day</td>
<td>$1,275/day</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Perks/Incentives Received

60% received additional incentives.
The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, referral bonus, employee discounts via agency accounts.
Company Size

Small (1-100 people)
Medium (101-300 people)
Large (300+ people)

11% work freelance/self-employed
22% work for small companies
29% work for medium companies
38% work for large companies

Job Happiness

5% “HATE” their job
12% “DON’T LIKE” their job
44% “LIKE” their job
31% “REALLY LIKE” their job
8% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

12% work 40 (or below 40) hours per week
46% work 41-50 hours per week
29% work 51-60 hours per week
12% work 61-70 hours per week
1% work 71+ hours per week
Years at Current Job:
- 73% have been at current job 1-2 years
- 18% have been at current job 3-5 years
- 3% have been at current job 6-8 years
- 6% have been at current job 9+ years

Job Searching:
- 40% plan to actively look for a new job this year.

Gender of Respondents:
- 35% female
- 65% male

Where They Work:
- Portland 5%
- SF 15%
- LA 11%
- Chicago 11%
- NYC 25%
- Washington DC 4%
- Richmond 5%
- 24% Other
Experience Design

**Employer Type**

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<th>Client-side</th>
<th>Freelance</th>
<th>Start-up</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Annual Salary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>$68,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>$79,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>$95,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir.</td>
<td>not enough data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Freelance Rate**

No respondents reported that they are freelancers.

(average day rates by level)

**Perks/Incentives Received**

70% received additional incentives.

The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, referral bonus, employee discounts via agency accounts.
### Company Size

- Small (1-100 people): 0%
- Medium (101-300 people): 23%
- Large (300+ people): 63%

#### Worked
- Freelance/self-employed: 0%
- Small companies: 23%
- Medium companies: 14%
- Large companies: 63%

### Job Happiness

- Hate their job: 0%
- Don’t like their job: 4%
- Like their job: 49%
- Really like their job: 22%
- Love their job: 25%

### Weekly Hours Worked

- 40 (or below 40) hours per week: 22%
- 41-50 hours per week: 59%
- 51-60 hours per week: 17%
- 61-70 hours per week: 1%
- 71+ hours per week: 1%
Experience Design

**Years at Current Job**
- 77% have been at current job 1-2 years
- 22% have been at current job 3-5 years
- 1% have been at current job 6-8 years

**Job Searching**
- 41% plan to actively look for a new job this year.

**Gender of Respondents**
- 41% female
- 59% male

**Where They Work**
- 26% NYC
- 6% Washington DC
- 9% Richmond
- SF 6%
- LA 15%
- 9% Boulder/Denver
- 29% Other
- Other
CBM/ST (CLIENT-side)
(CLIENT-side in brand management, product management, and/or marketing for companies - e.g. Capital One)

Average Annual Salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>$79,555</td>
<td>$92,062</td>
<td>$107,333</td>
<td>$140,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perks/Incentives Received

83% received additional incentives.
The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, and free products.

Company Size

Small (1-100 people)
Medium (101-300 people)
Large (300+ people)

14% work for small companies
9% work for medium companies
77% work for large companies
Job Happiness:
- 1% “HATE” their job
- 5% “DON’T LIKE” their job
- 33% “LIKE” their job
- 33% “REALLY LIKE” their job
- 28% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked:
- 12% work 40 (or below 40) hours per week
- 69% work 41-50 hours per week
- 14% work 51-60 hours per week
- 5% work 61-70 hours per week
- 0% work 71+ hours per week

Years at Current Job:
- 78% have been at current job 1-2 years
- 16% have been at current job 3-5 years
- 5% have been at current job 6-8 years
- 1% have been at current job 9+ years
Job Searching

29% plan to actively look for a new job this year.

Gender of Respondents

62% female

38% male

Where They Work

SF 7%

LA 5%

NYC 12%

Washington DC 12%

Richmond 31%

Other 26%
## CBM/ST (AGENCY-side)

(AGENCY-side in strategic planning, account management, hybrid planning/management roles, and/or brand consultancy.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Type</th>
<th>Advertising Agency</th>
<th>Brand Consultancy</th>
<th>Freelance</th>
<th>Start-up</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(non-profit, media, research/trend reporting, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Average Annual Salary**
  - Jr. $52,680
  - Mid. $70,184
  - Sr. $94,525
  - Dir. $129,488

- **Average Freelance Rate**
  (average day rates by level)
  - There is no average freelance rate data because the number of respondents who freelance was too small. Not enough data to report averages by level.

- **Perks/Incentives Received**
  - 63% received additional incentives.
  - The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, referral bonus, employee discounts via agency accounts.
Creative Brand Management/Strategy (AGENCY-side)

Company Size

- Small (1-100 people): 4% work freelance/self-employed
- Medium (101-300 people): 35% work for small companies
- Large (300+ people): 25% work for medium companies
- 36% work for large companies

Job Happiness

- 4% “HATE” their job
- 7% “DON’T LIKE” their job
- 42% “LIKE” their job
- 32% “REALLY LIKE” their job
- 15% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

- 11% work 40 (or below 40) hours per week
- 55% work 41-50 hours per week
- 29% work 51-60 hours per week
- 5% work 61-70 hours per week
- 0% work 71+ hours per week
Creative Brand Management/Strategy (AGENCY-side)

Years at Current Job

- 76% have been at current job 1-2 years
- 18% have been at current job 3-5 years
- 4% have been at current job 6-8 years
- 2% have been at current job 9+ years

Job Searching

37% plan to actively look for a new job this year.

Gender of Respondents

- 55% female
- 45% male

Where They Work

- SF 10%
- LA 12%
- 27% NYC
- 7% Washington DC
- 8% Richmond
- 7% Chicago
- 29% Other
Survey Questions

1. What year did you graduate? (multiple choice)

1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015

2. What track were you in? (multiple choice)

Art Direction
Copywriting
Strategy/Communications Strategy
Creative Brand Management
Creative Technology/Experience Design

3. What city do you currently work in? (multiple choice)

New York City
Chicago
Los Angeles
San Francisco
Raleigh/Durham
Boston
Richmond
Washington DC/NOVA
Atlanta
Austin
Boulder/Denver
Other
4. What type of agency/company do you currently work for? (multiple choice)

- Self-employed/freelance
- Advertising agency
- Brand/strategy/innovation consultancy
- Client-side/company (Nike, Target, Coke, etc.)
- Non-profit
- Start-up
- Research or trend reporting company
- Production company
- Other

5. What size agency/company do you currently work for? (multiple choice)

- Self-employed/freelance
- Small (1-100 people)
- Medium (101 - 300 people)
- Large (300+ people)

6. All agencies/companies have different titles/hierarchies. How would you define your current level? (multiple choice)

- Junior level
- Mid level
- Senior level
- Director level
- Executive level

7. What is your current annual salary? (Please enter it in this format $XXX,XXX.) If you’re working abroad, will you please estimate the amount in US dollars?) (open-ended)

8. If you are a freelancer, what is your average day rate? Please enter in the box below in the format $XX,XXX. (open-ended)

   I am not a freelancer.
   Average Freelance Day Rate

9. In addition to your salary, do you receive any additional incentives/rewards? (multiple choice)

   - No- I don’t receive any additional incentives/rewards.
   - Yes - stock options
   - Yes - employee discounts via agency accounts
   - Yes - monetary bonus for holidays or performance
   - Other
10. How much do you like your current job? (multiple choice)
   - Hate it
   - Don't like it
   - Like it
   - Really like it
   - Love it

11. In this industry, we understand that workload varies depending on things like current projects, production, new business, etc. ON AVERAGE, how many hours per week do you work? (multiple choice)
   - 40 (or below 40)
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61-70
   - 71+

12. How long have you been at your current job? (multiple choice)
   - 1-2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - 6-8 years
   - 9+ years

13. Do you plan to actively look for a new job this year? (multiple choice)
   - Yes
   - No

14. What is your gender? (multiple choice)
   - Male
   - Female

15. In your opinion, what agency/company is doing the best advertising/branding work right now? (open-ended)

16. FOR 2014 GRADS ONLY - If you graduated in 2014, have you received a promotion and/or raise since you graduated? (multiple choice)
   - Yes
   - No
   - I did not graduate in 2014.