

VCU Brandcenter

ALUMNI SALARY SURVEY RESULTS

FALL 2015

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Introduction

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

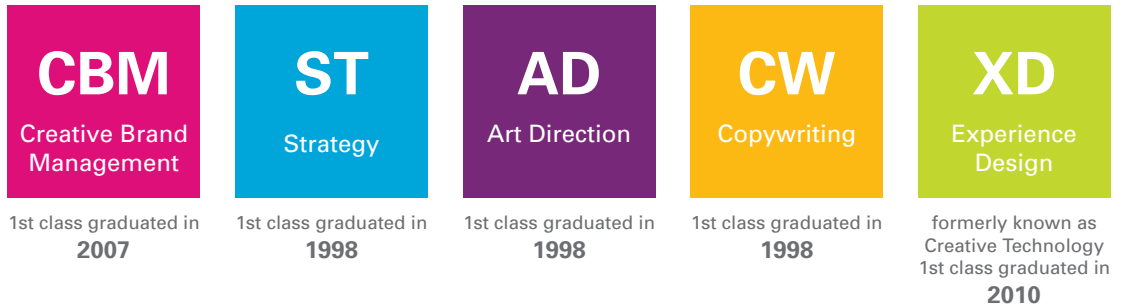
- Thanks to Diana Ojibway (AD, 2002) for turning my boring Word document and tables into beautifully-designed infographics.
- Thanks to Katherine Keogh and Hawley Smyth for proofing this document.
- Thanks to all of our alums who contributed to this report. I'm so grateful to you for everything you do 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



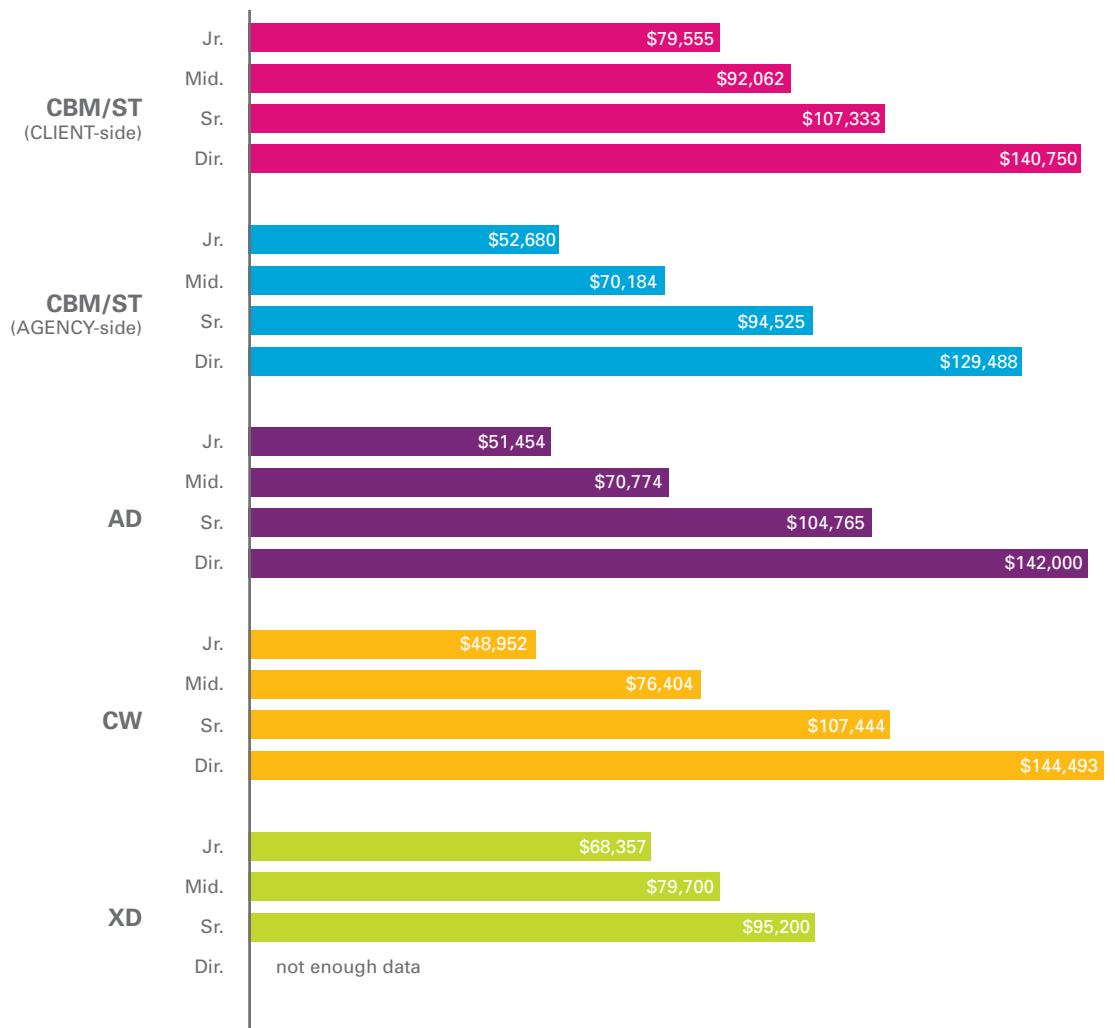
Special Note Regarding CBM/ST Tracks

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

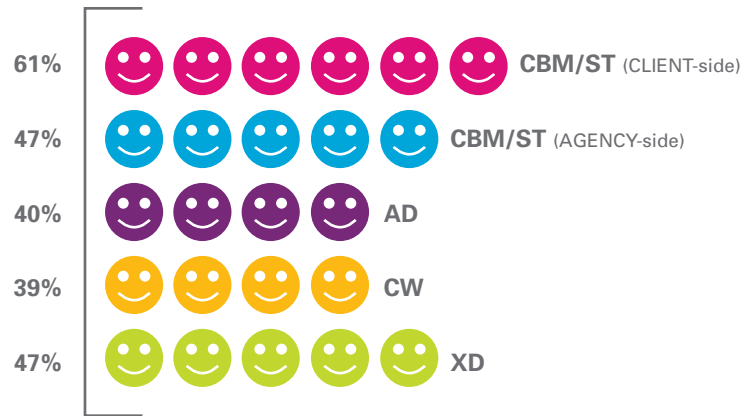
Q7: What is your current annual salary? (open-ended)



Job Happiness

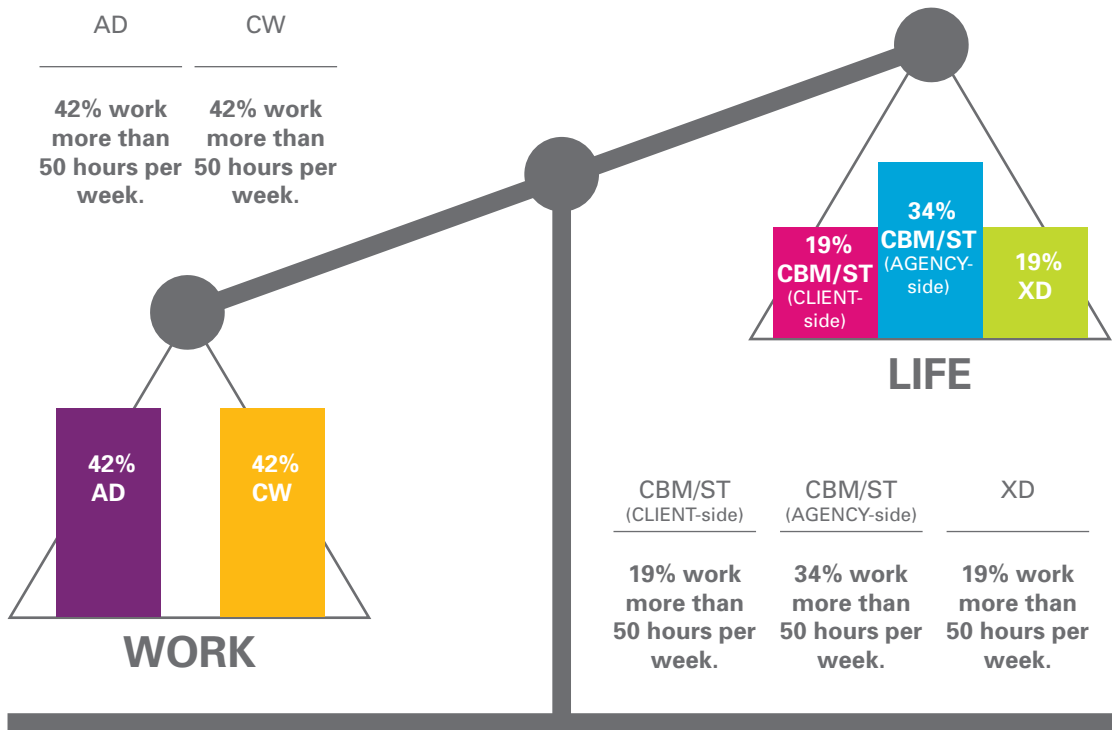
Q10: How much do you like your current job? (multiple choice)

Percentage that answered they "really like" or "love" their job.



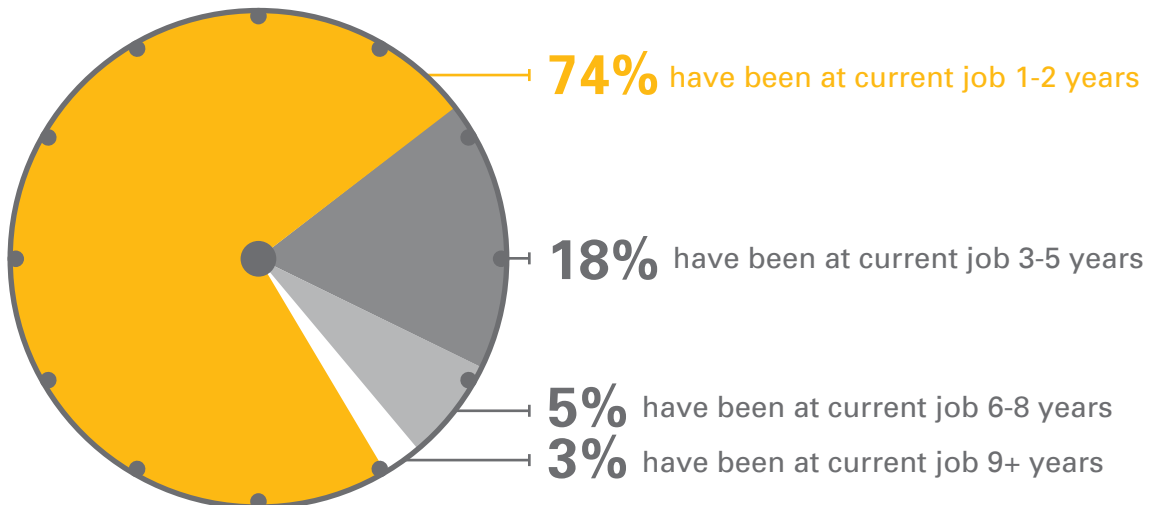
Work/Life Balance

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.

Job Hunting

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

CBM/ST (CLIENT-side)	CBM/ST (AGENCY-side)	AD	CW	XD
29%	37%	42%	40%	41%
plan to actively look for a new job.	plan to actively look for a new job.	plan to actively look for a new job.	plan to actively look for a new job.	plan to actively look for a new job.

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)

The class of 2014 had 87 students total. 58 of them answered this survey.



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 and Droga5

Honorable Mentions:

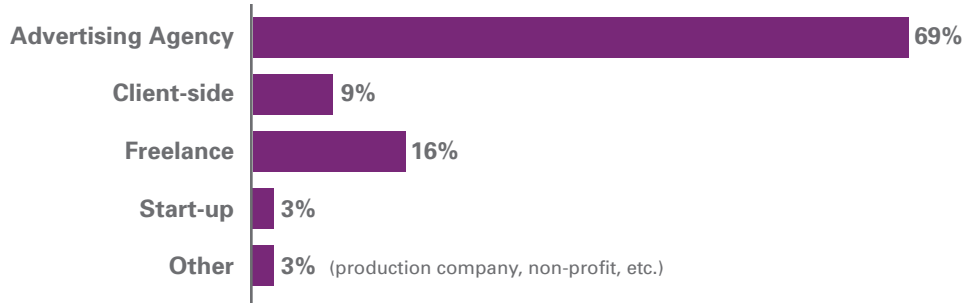
Barton F Graf 9000
DDB Adam & Eve
Pereira O’Dell
R/GA
72andSunny
TBWA\Chiat\Day

Most Creative Answers:

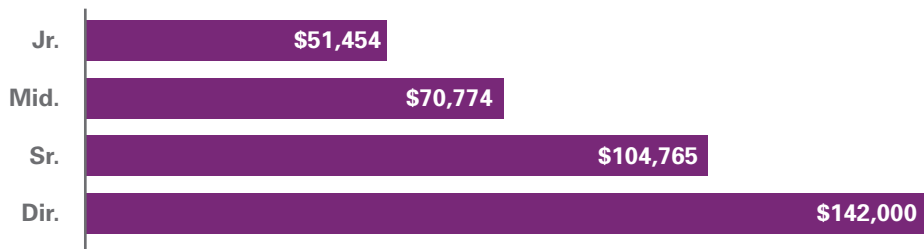
Jeff Dryer (AD, 2010)
Auto Connection commercials
All advertising sucks

Art Direction

Employer Type

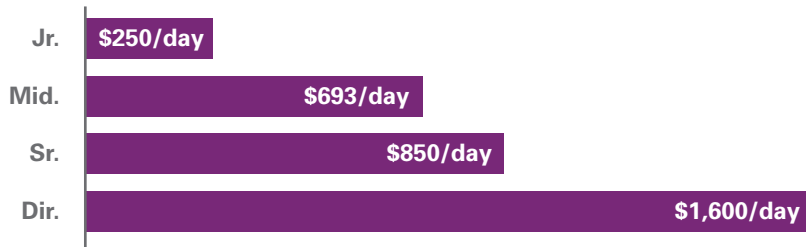


Average Annual Salary



Average Freelance Rate

(average day rates by level)



Perks/Incentives Received

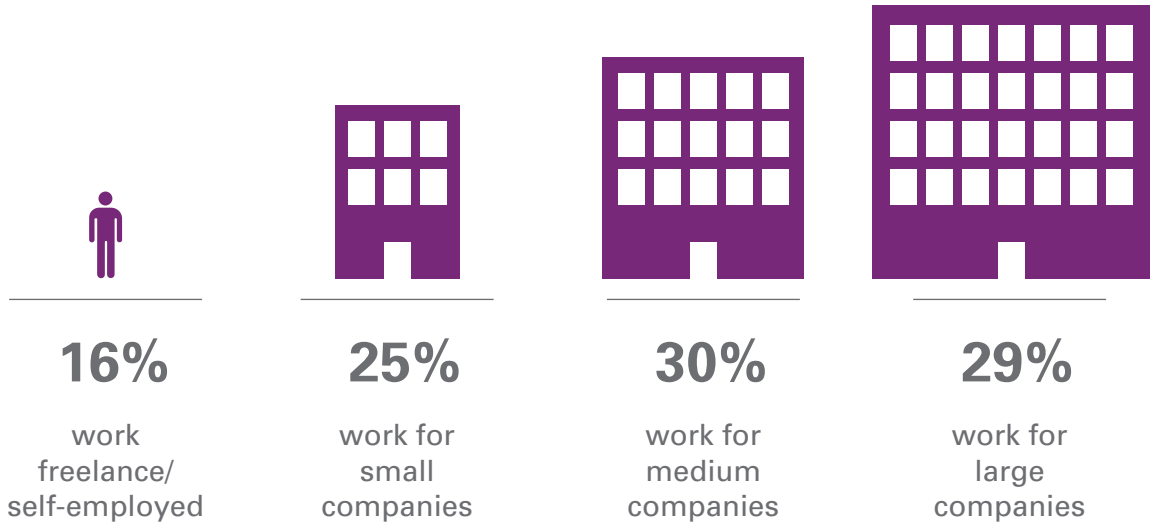
62% received additional incentives.

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



Company Size

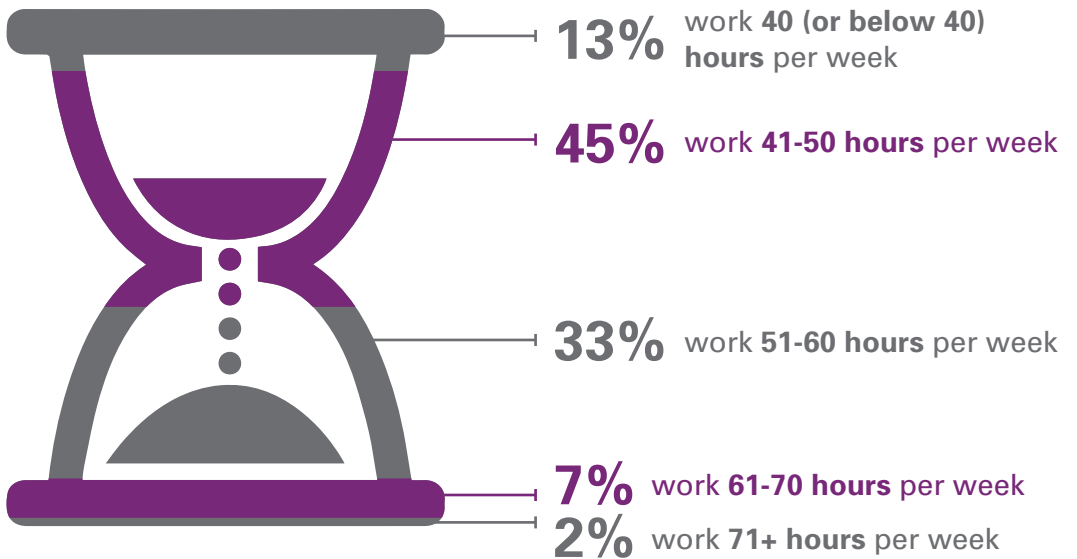
Small (1-100 people)
Medium (101-300 people)
Large (300+ people)



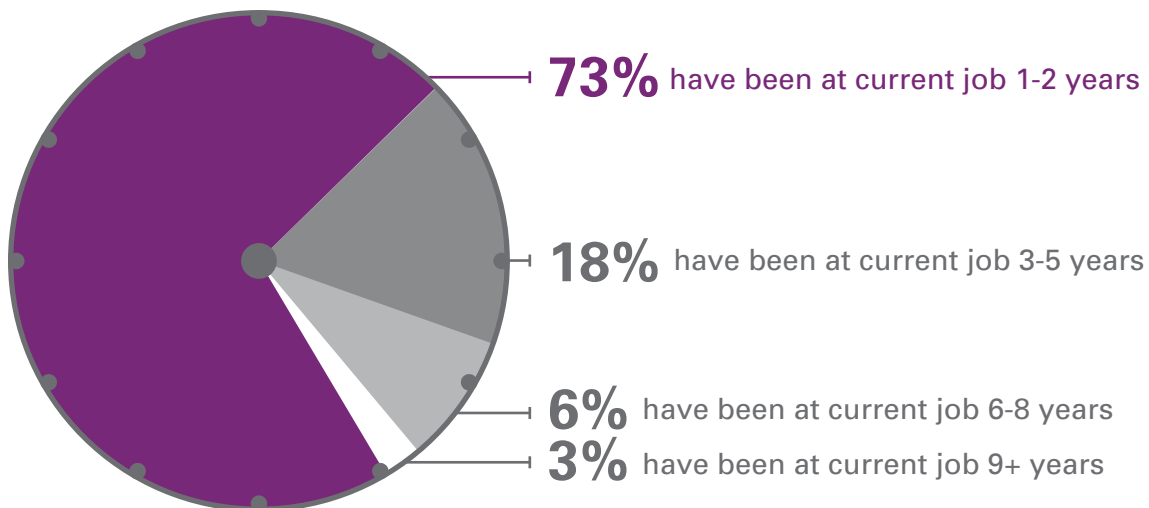
Job Happiness



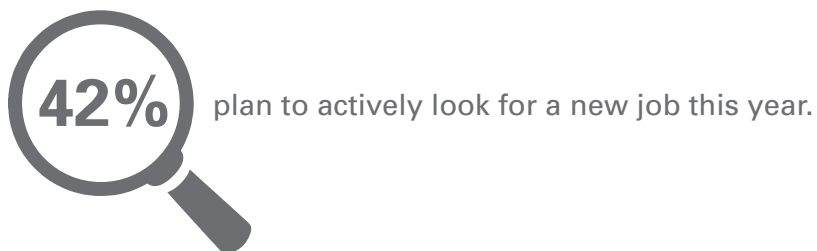
Weekly Hours Worked



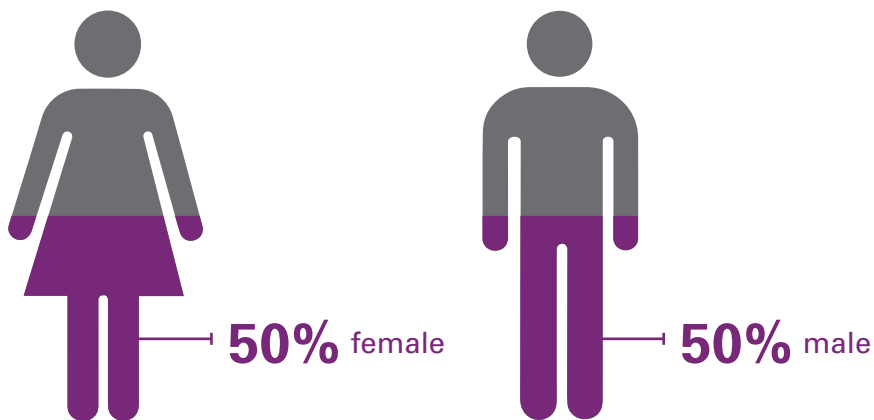
Years at Current Job



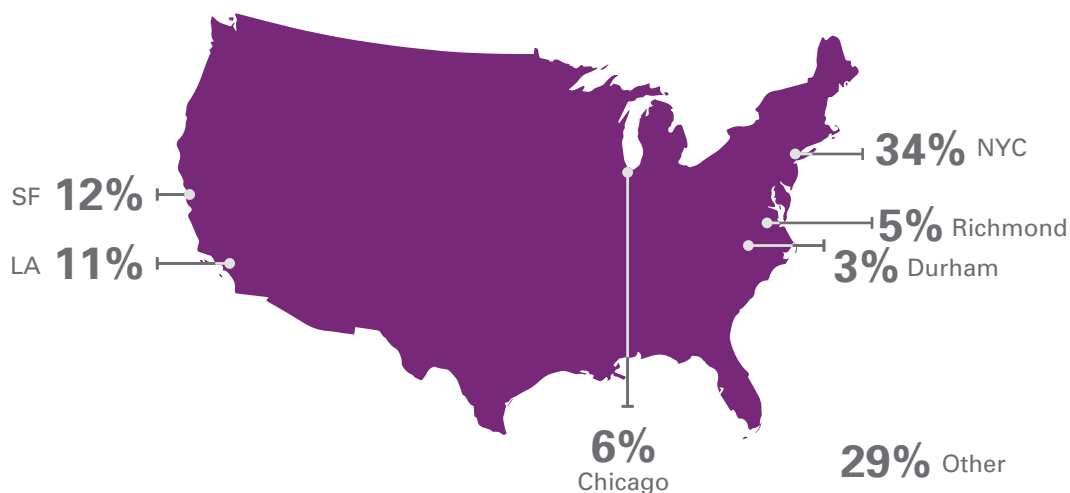
Job Searching



Gender of Respondents

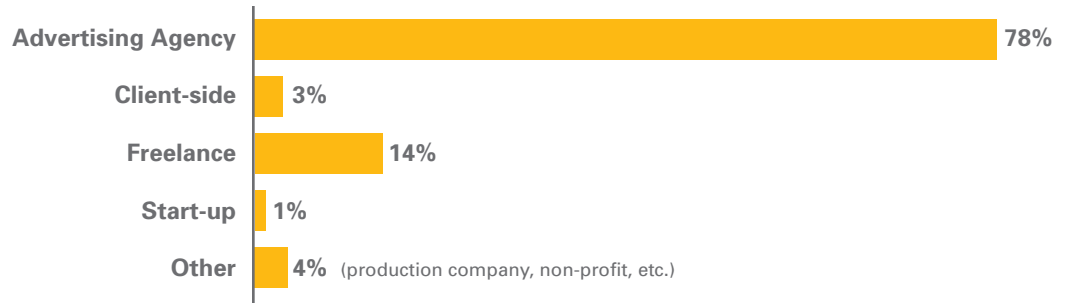


Where They Work

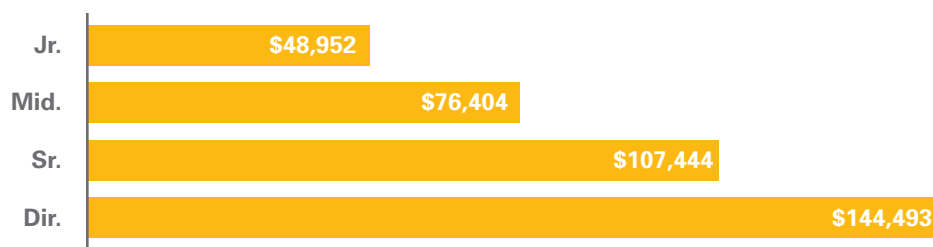


Copywriting

Employer Type

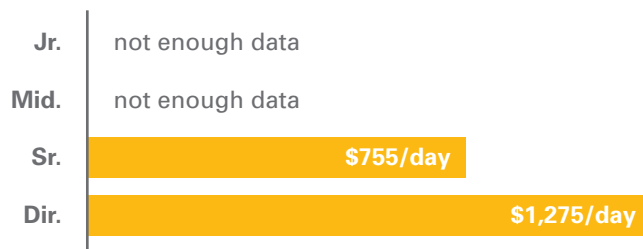


Average Annual Salary



Average Freelance Rate

(average day rates by level)



Perks/ Incentives Received

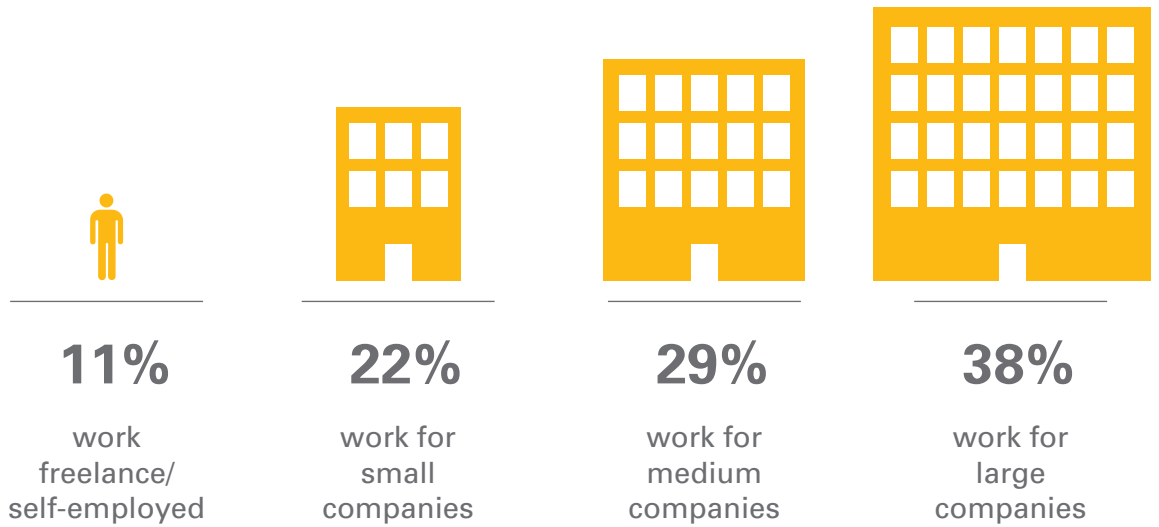
60% received additional incentives.

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



Company Size

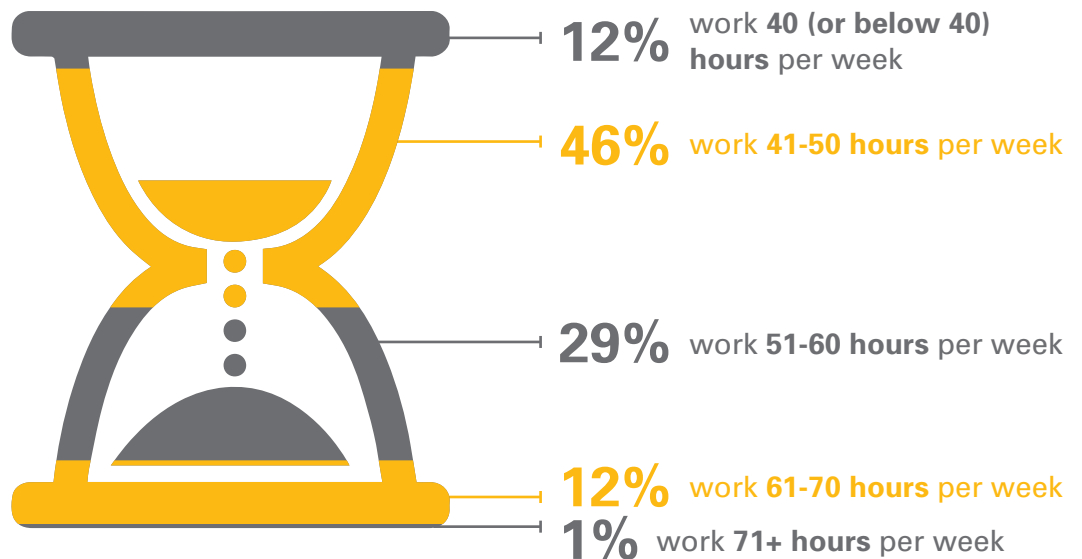
Small (1-100 people)
Medium (101-300 people)
Large (300+ people)



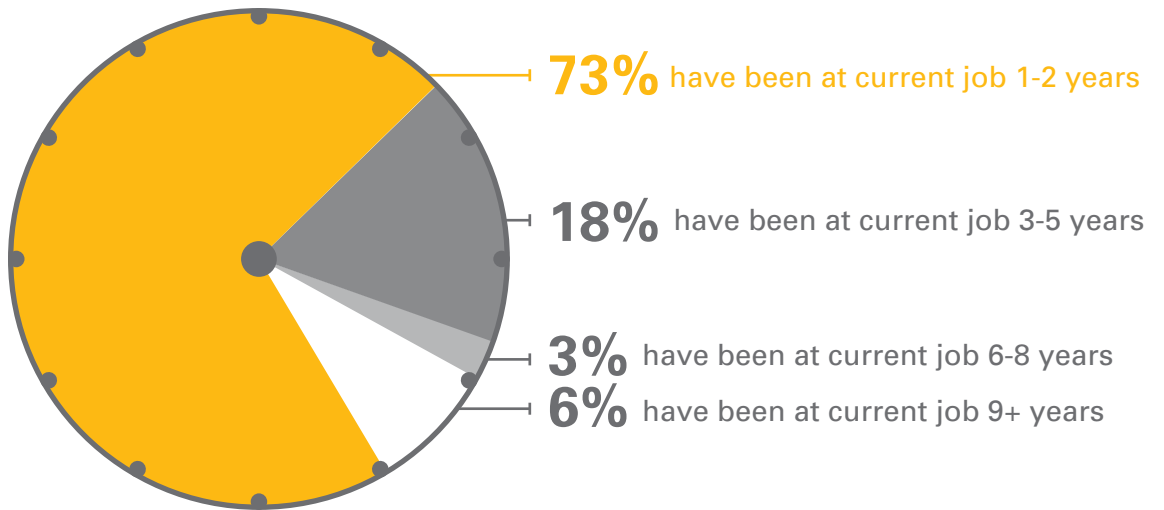
Job Happiness



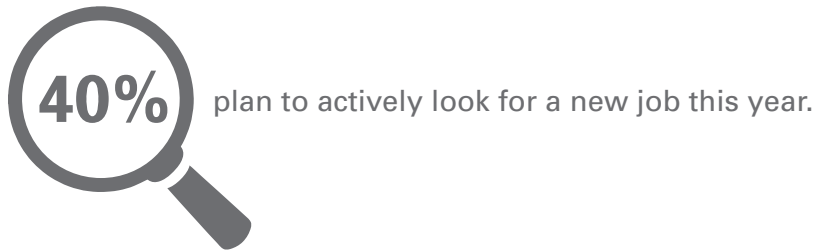
Weekly Hours Worked



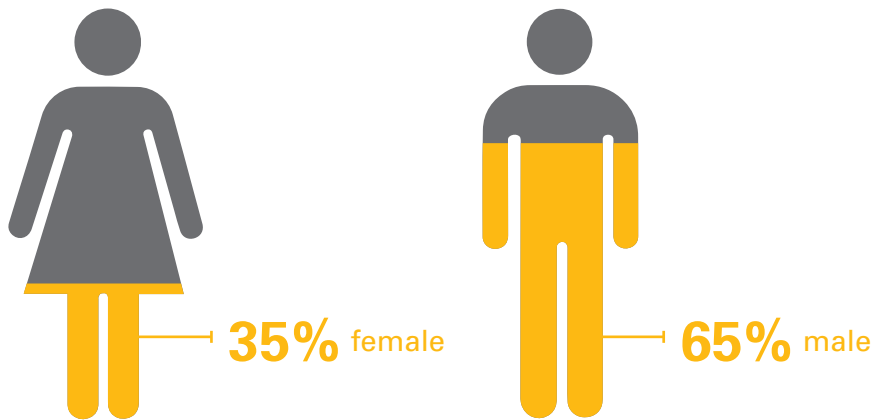
Years at Current Job



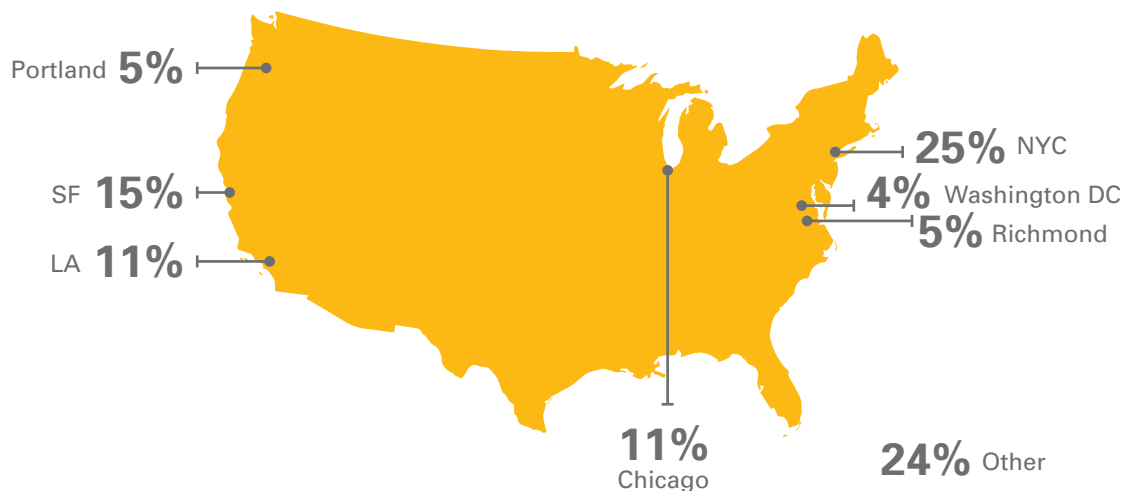
Job Searching



Gender of Respondents

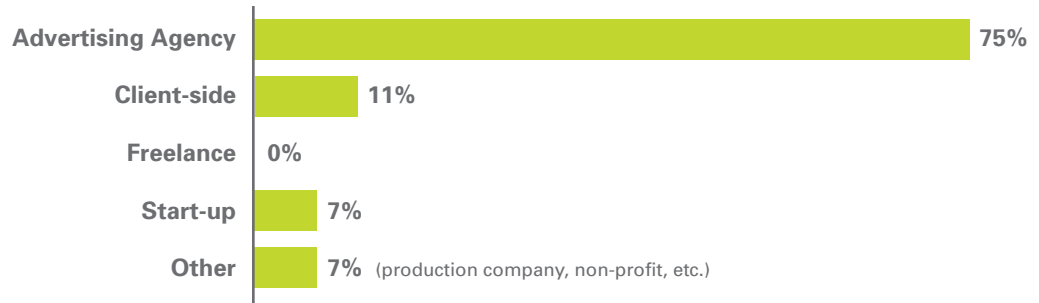


Where They Work

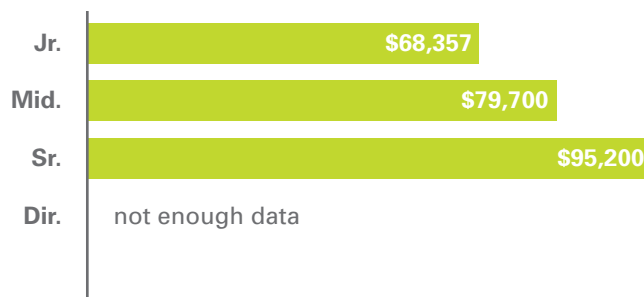


Experience Design

Employer Type



Average Annual Salary



Average Freelance Rate

No respondents reported that they are freelancers.

(average day rates by level)

Perks/Incentives Received

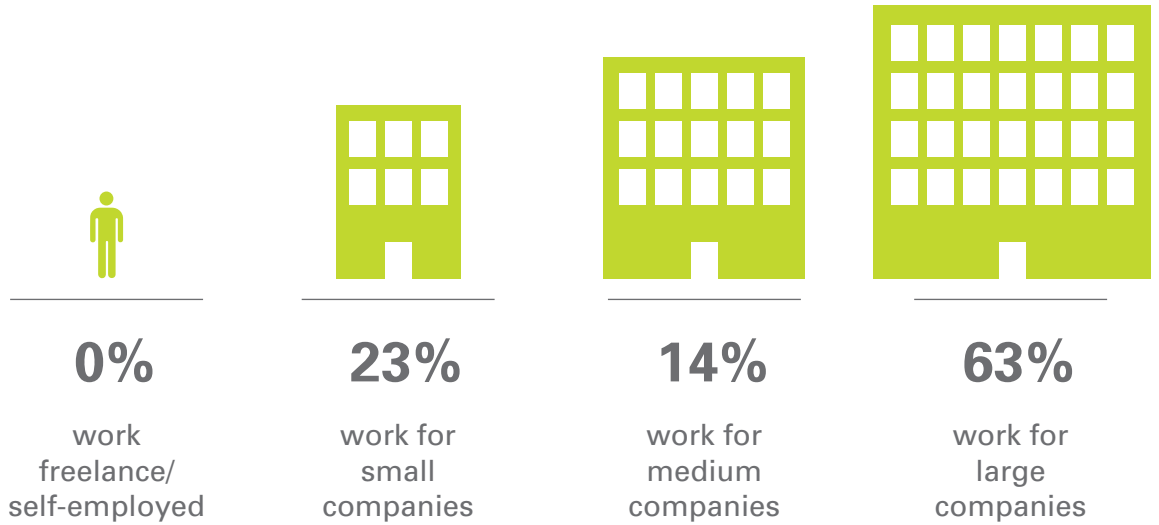
70% received additional incentives.

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



Company Size

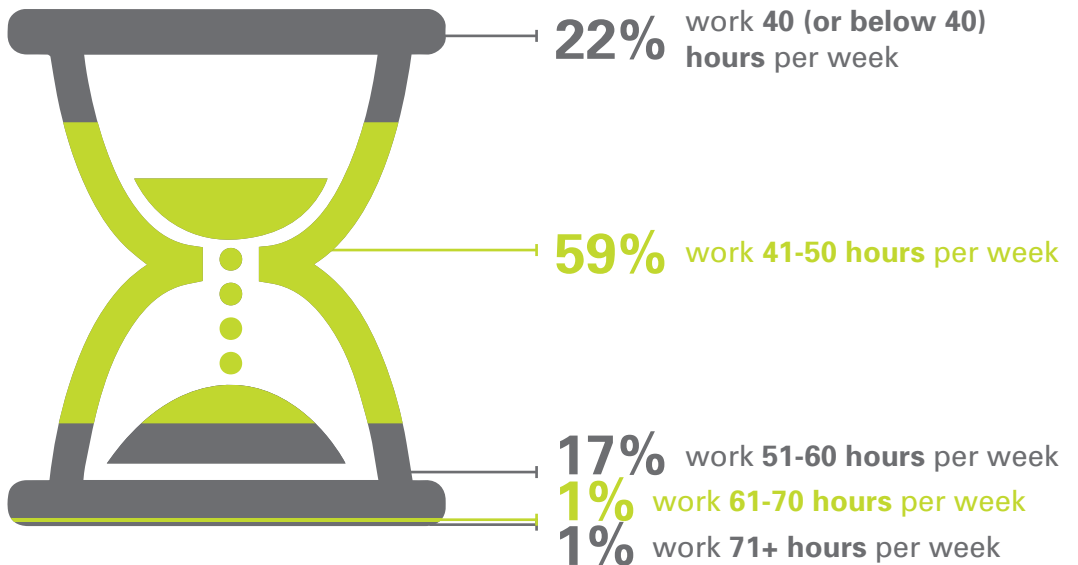
Small (1-100 people)
 Medium (101-300 people)
 Large (300+ people)



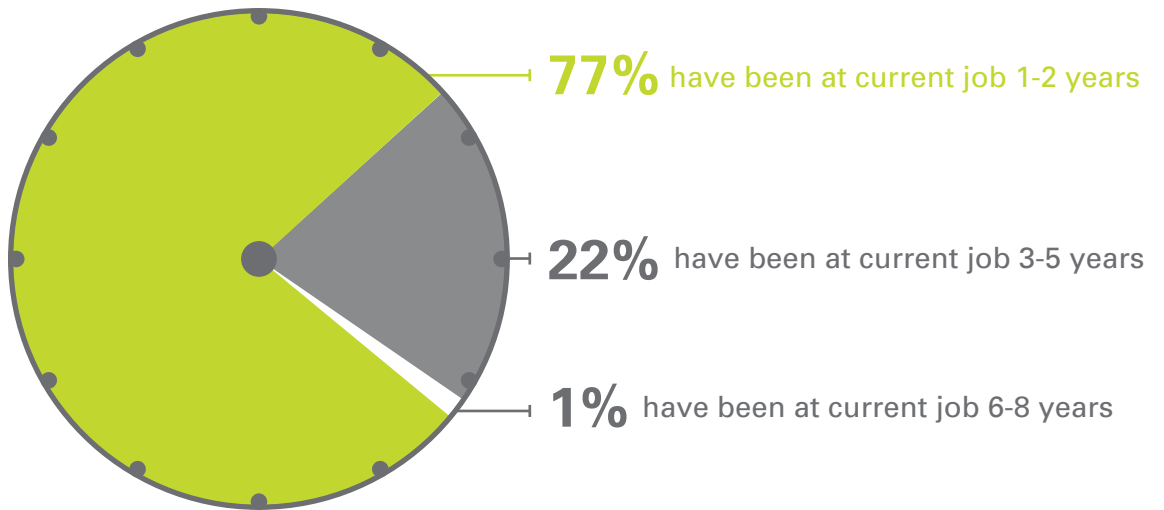
Job Happiness



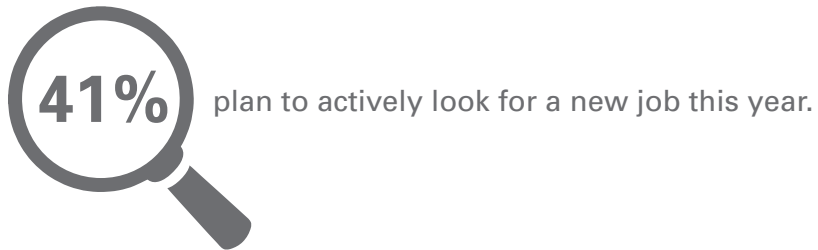
Weekly Hours Worked



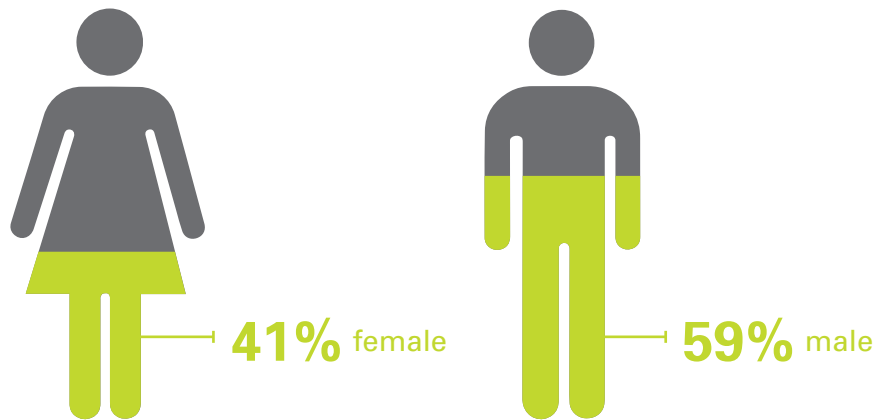
Years at Current Job



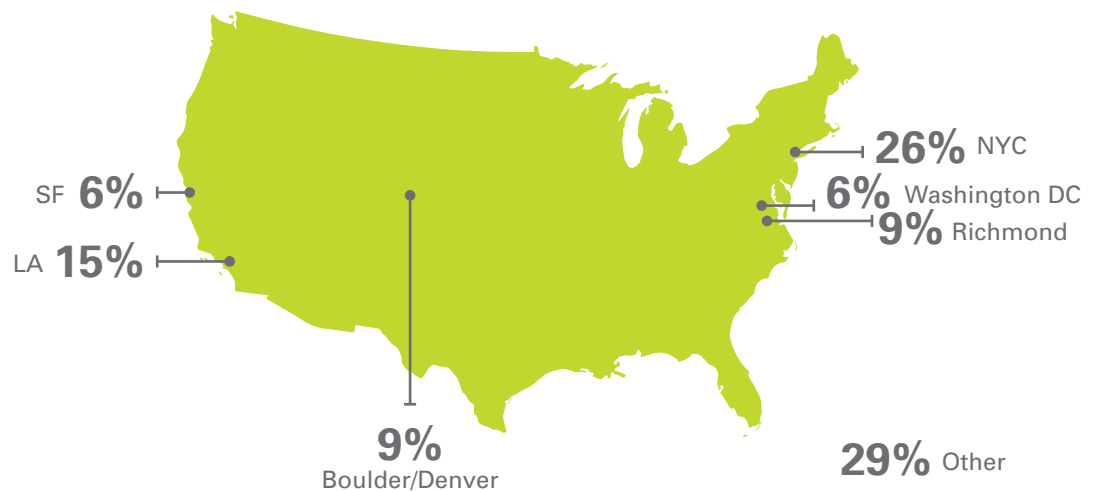
Job Searching



Gender of Respondents



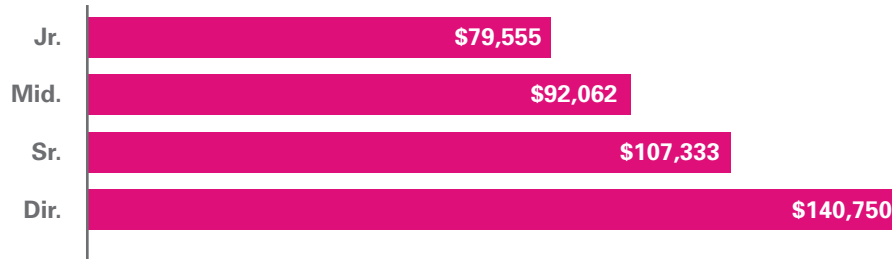
Where They Work



CBM/ST (CLIENT-side)

(CLIENT-side in brand management, product management, and/or marketing for companies - e.g. Capital One)

Average Annual Salary



Perks/Incentives Received

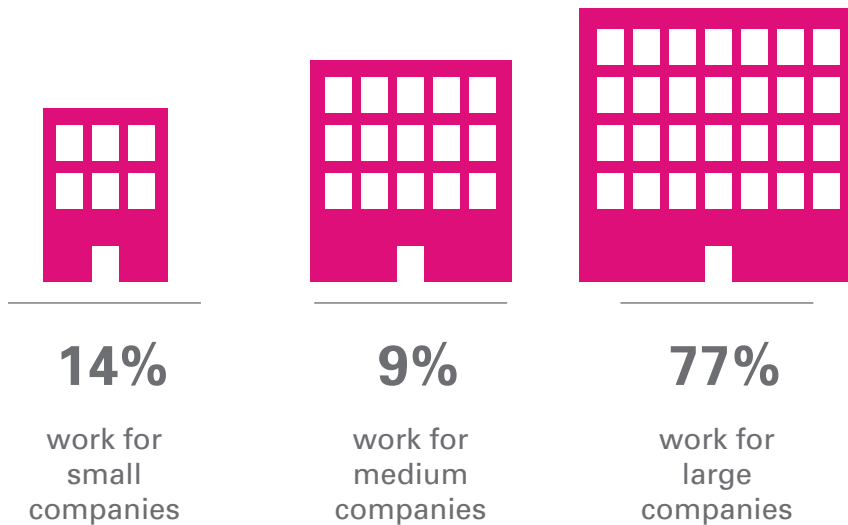
83% received additional incentives.

The most common were: stock options, holiday bonus, performance bonus, and free products.

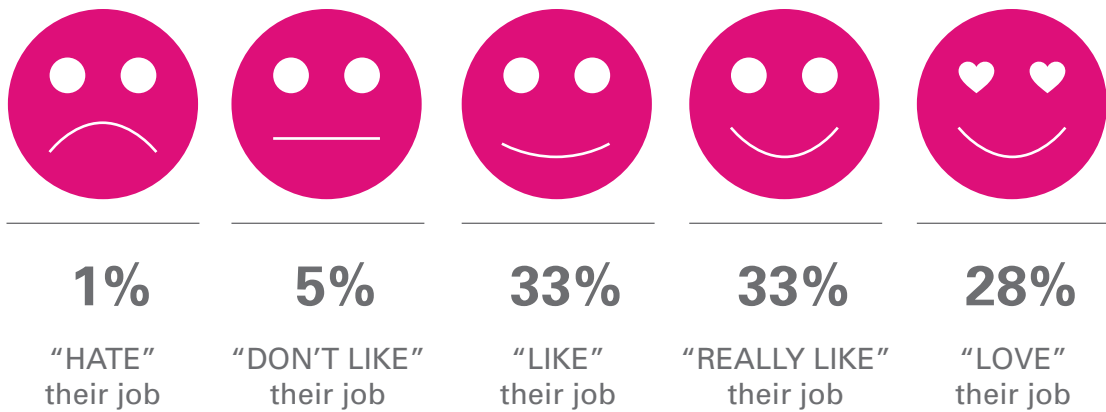


Company Size

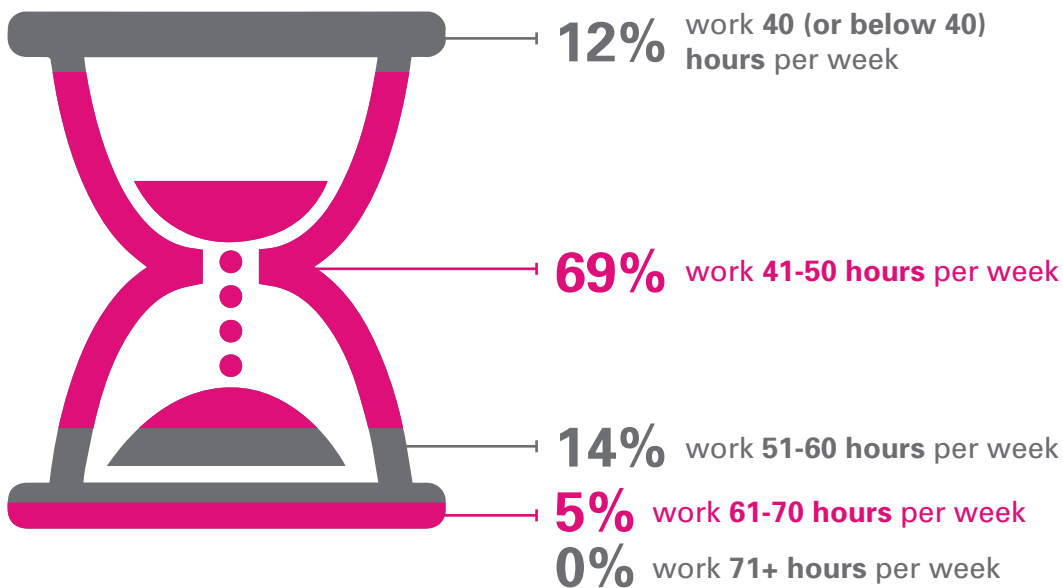
Small (1-100 people)
Medium (101-300 people)
Large (300+ people)



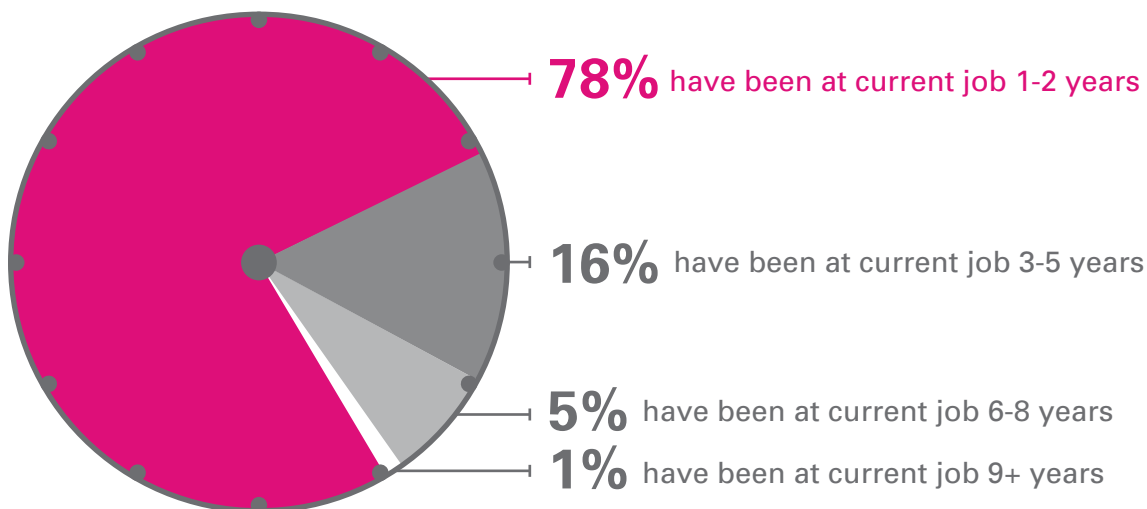
Job Happiness



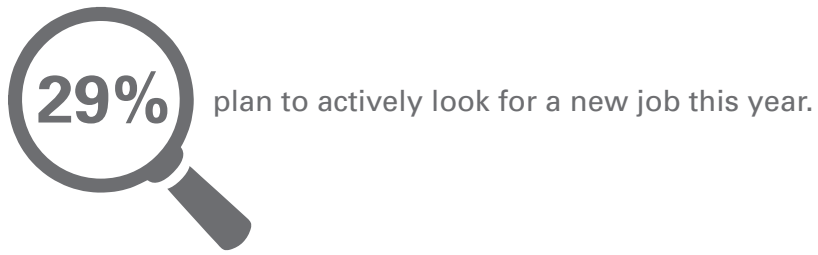
Weekly Hours Worked



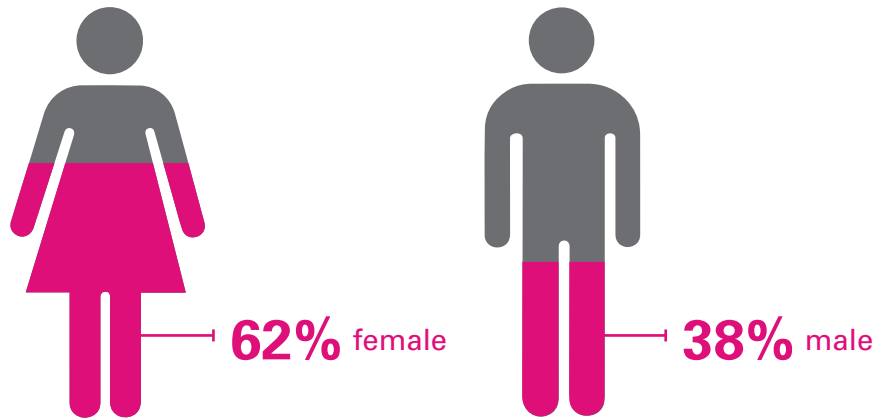
Years at Current Job



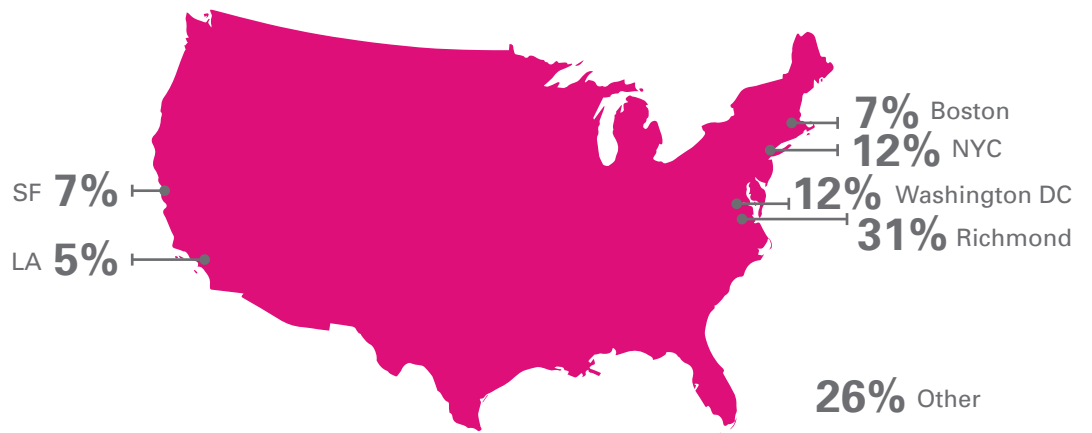
Job Searching



Gender of Respondents



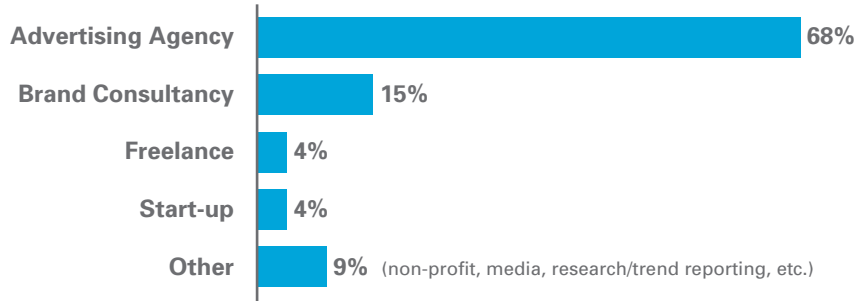
Where They Work



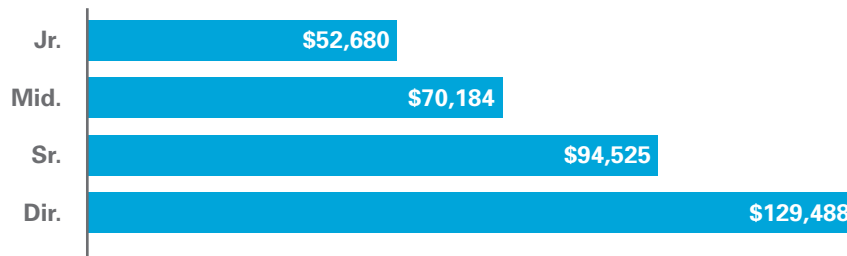
CBM/ST (AGENCY-side)

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

Employer Type



Average Annual Salary



Average Freelance Rate

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.

(average day rates by level)

Perks/Incentives Received

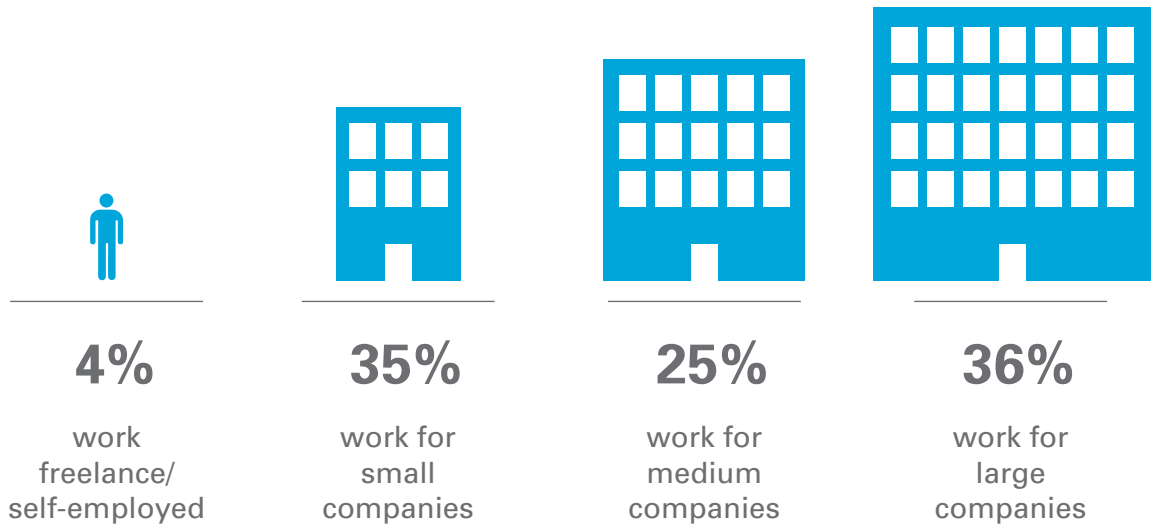
63% received additional incentives.

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

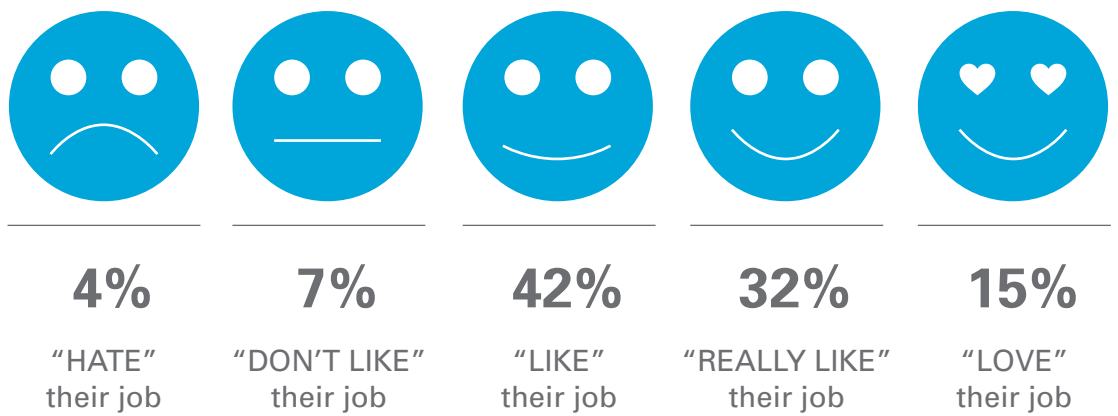


Company Size

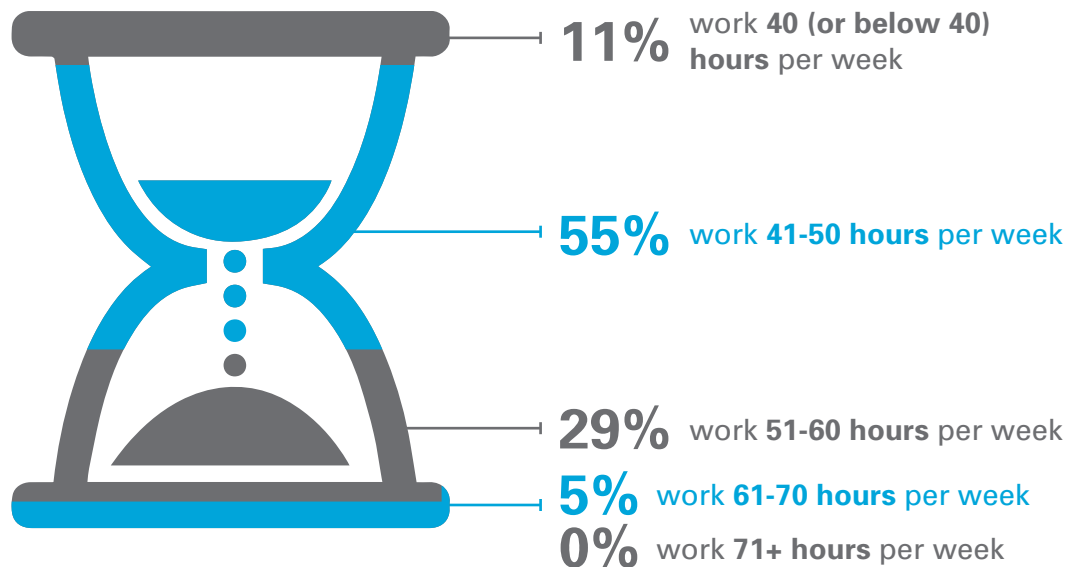
Small (1-100 people)
 Medium (101-300 people)
 Large (300+ people)



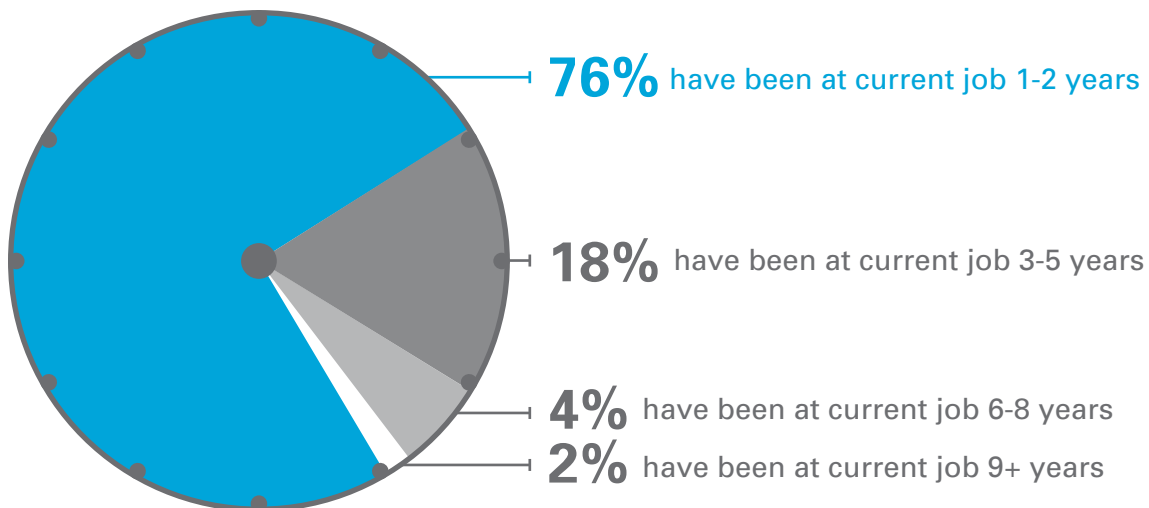
Job Happiness



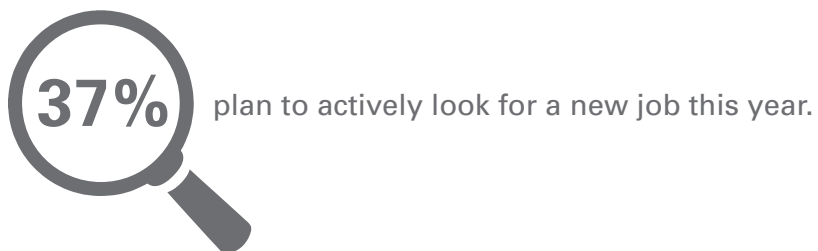
Weekly Hours Worked



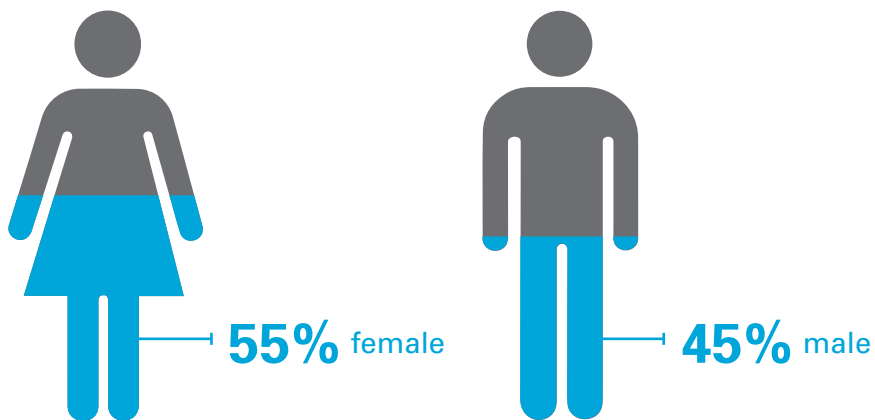
Years at Current Job



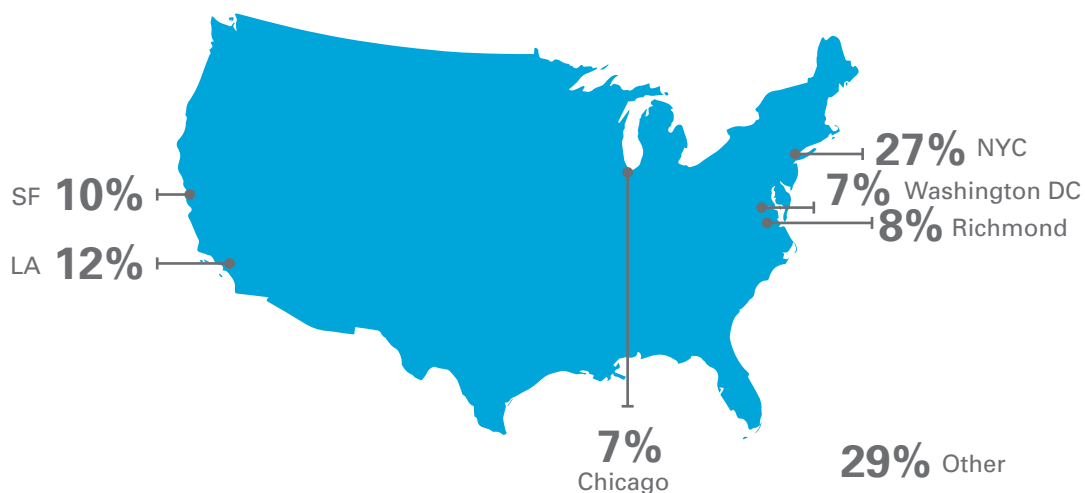
Job Searching



Gender of Respondents



Where They Work



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.