



# VCU Brandcenter Alumni Salary Survey

January 2013

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# Introduction

## Dear Alums,

Following, please find the first-ever Brandcenter Alumni Salary Survey.

## 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, 13 questions, fielded between October 17, 2012 – November 8, 2012.

## 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 51% of our alums participated in the survey. Of those respondents, they came from the following tracks:

- 26% Art Direction
- 23% Communications Strategy
- 27% Copywriting
- 16% Creative Brand Management (first CBM class graduated in 2007)
- 8% Creative Technology (first CT class graduated in 2010)

## Questions/Comments

Given the facts that this is our first survey and I am definitely not a professional researcher, please let me know if you have questions, comments, suggestions about this survey or future ones.

## Thank You's

- Thanks to Kevin Rothermel (CS, 2006) who reviewed my questions and format. Kevin is a Planning Director at The Martin Agency.
- Thanks to Mike Razim (CBM, 2013) who helped me with the analysis and infographics/design. Mike interned last summer at Apple in their Marketing Communication department working on data analytics and visualization. He'll be looking for a job this May in case anyone is interested in hiring a talented brand strategist with design skills. ☺ His email is [mikerazim@gmail.com](mailto:mikerazim@gmail.com).
- Thanks again 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 real world assignments to helping each other network among so many other things.

**Best,  
Ashley Sommardahl**

*Director of Student Affairs/Industry Outreach*

*VCU Brandcenter*

*[asommardahl@vcu.edu](mailto:asommardahl@vcu.edu)*

# Overall Findings

## Track Overview



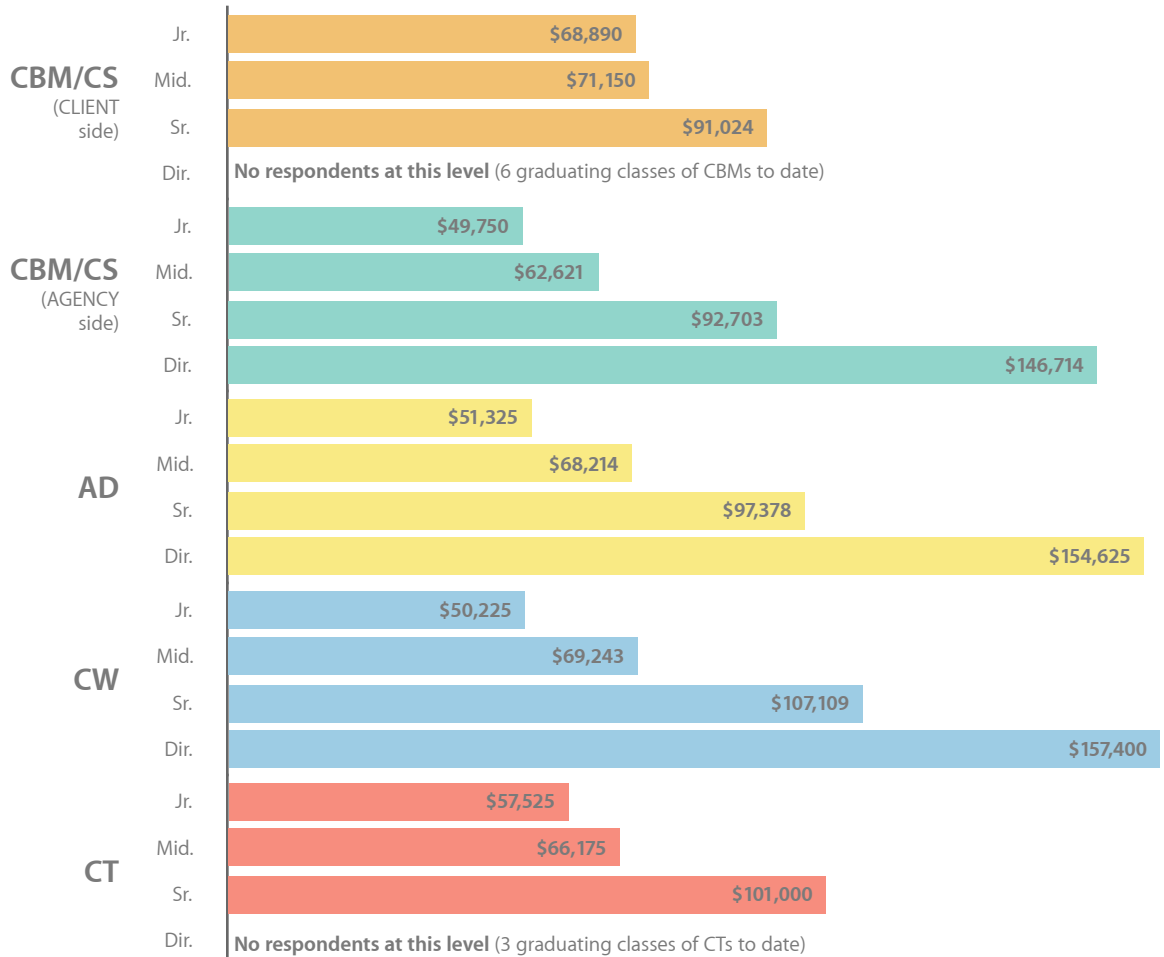
## Special Note Regarding CBM/CS Tracks

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

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

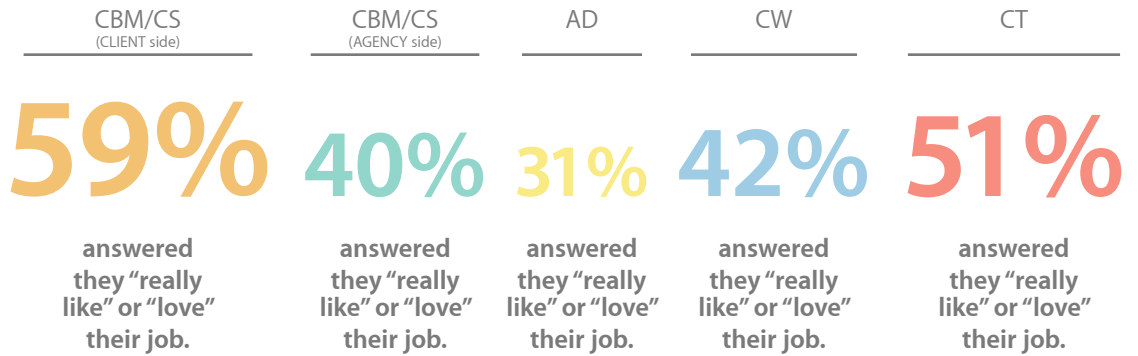
## Average Annual Salaries

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



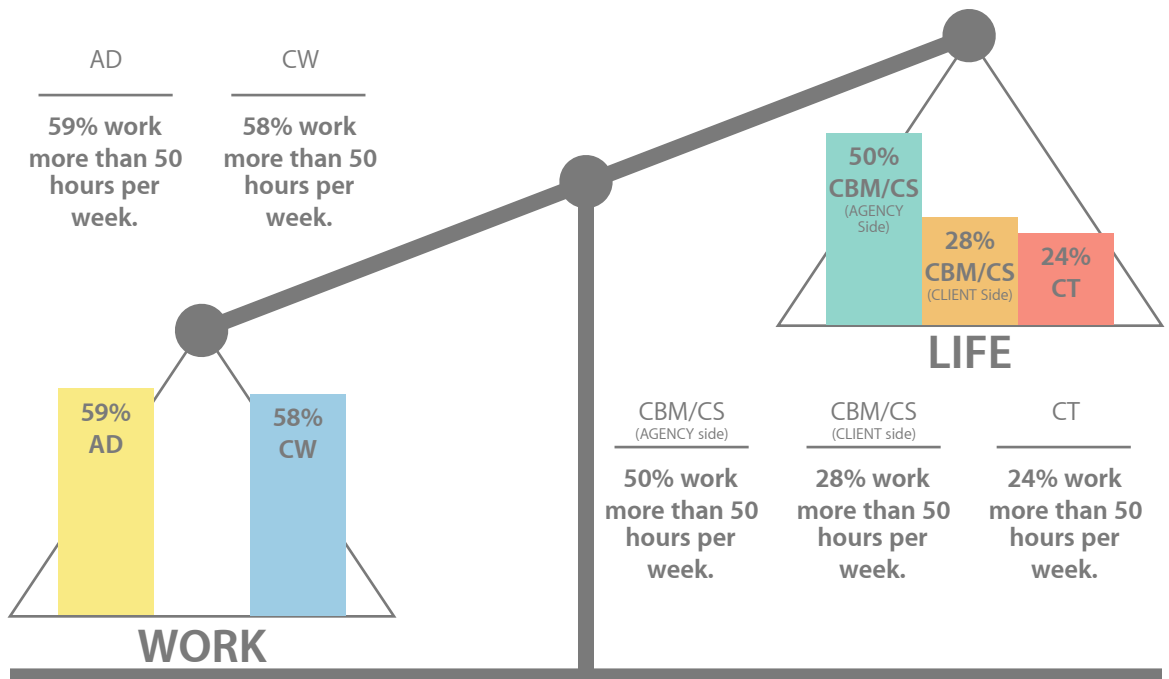
## Job Happiness

Q9: How much do you like your current job? (multiple choice)



## Work/Life Balance

Q10: 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)



## Best Work

Q13: In your opinion, what agency/company is doing the best advertising/branding right now? (open ended)



55% of alums across ALL tracks answered:

Wieden + Kennedy

Honorable Mentions:

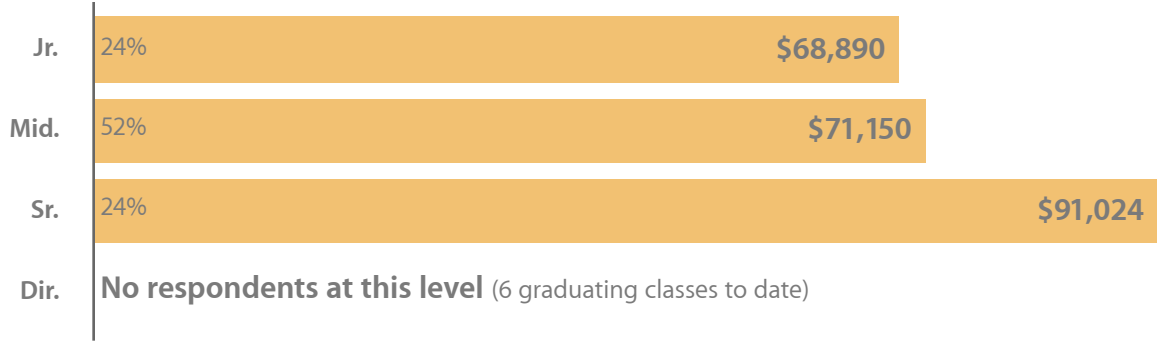
72 and Sunny  
 Droga5  
 BFG 9000  
 Google Creative Lab  
 R/GA

Venables Bell & Partners  
 TBWA/Chiat/Day LA  
 Deutsch LA  
 Mother

# CBM/CS

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

## Average Annual Salary



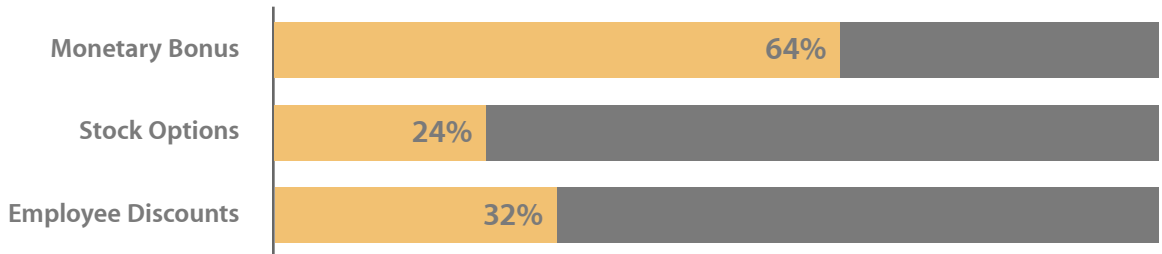
**Note:** 1. These are averages for **BASE** salary. 64% of respondents reported earning a monetary bonus in addition to their base salary. For the next survey, data will be collected for average annual bonus amount.  
2. The first CBM class graduated in 2007.

## Regional Average Salary

N/A for this data set because not enough respondents to accurately cut data.

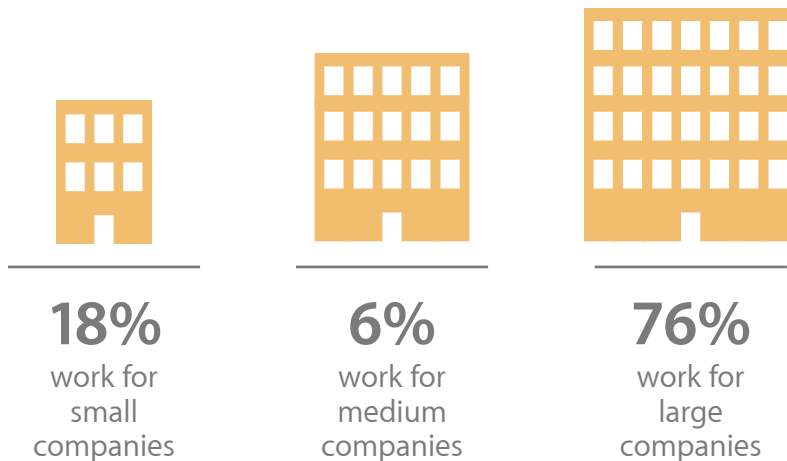
## Perks & Incentives Received

**80%** receive some sort of perk or incentive in addition to their salary including:

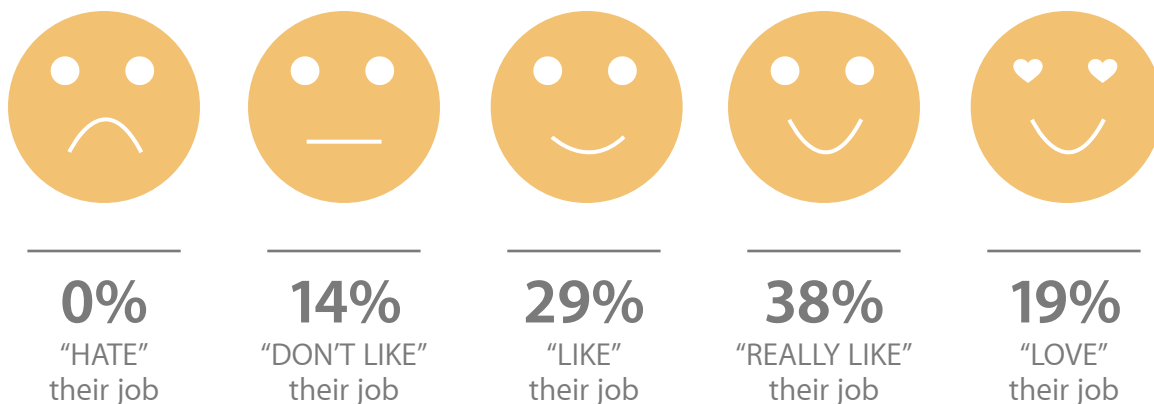


## Company Size

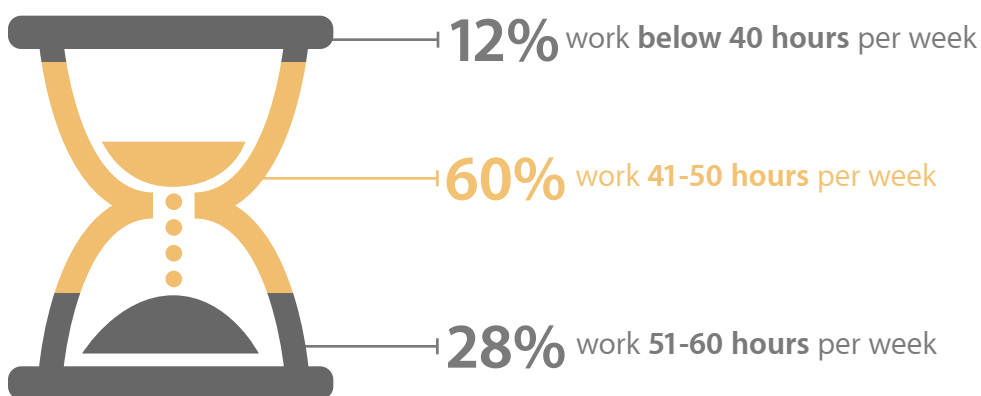
Small (1 - 100 people)  
Medium (101 - 300 people)  
Large (300+ people)



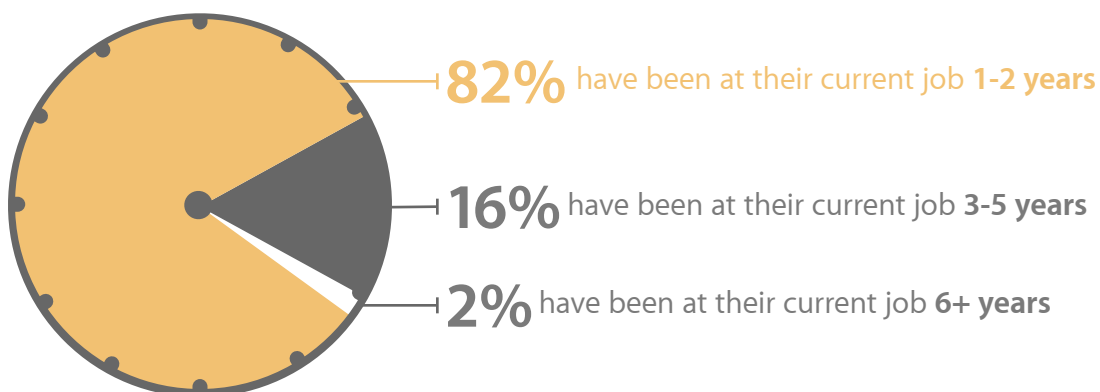
## Job Happiness



## Weekly Hours Worked

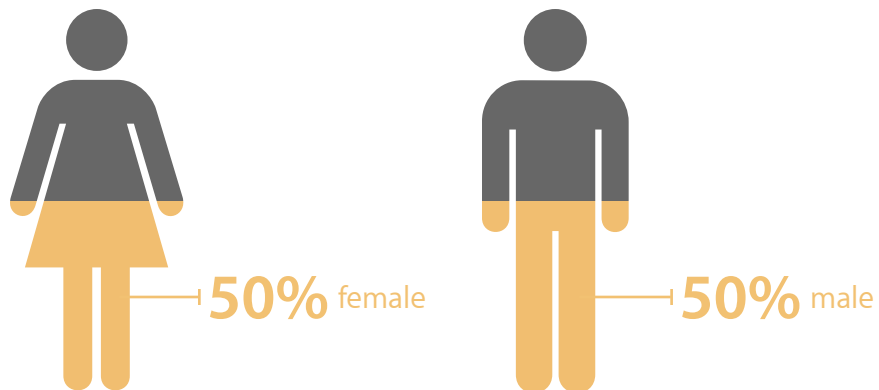


## Years at Current Job

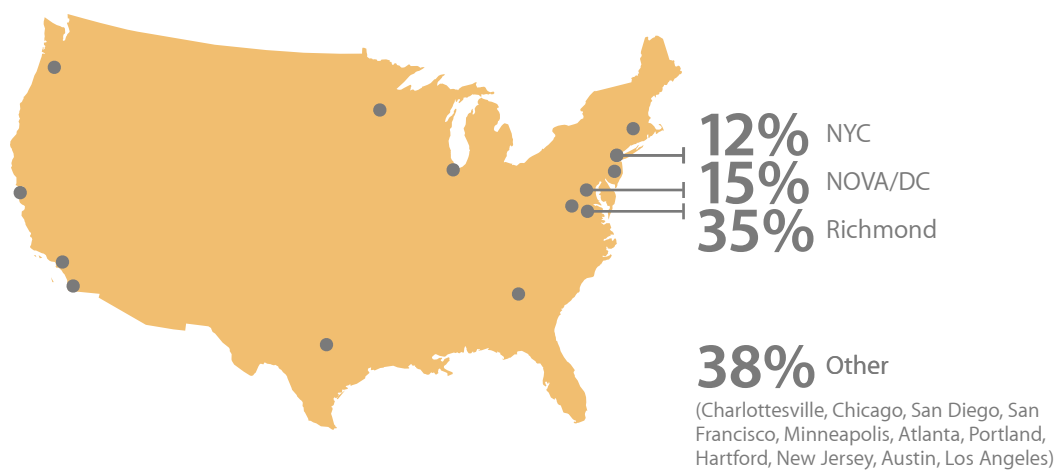


Note: The first CBM class graduated in 2007.

## Gender of Respondents



## Where They Work

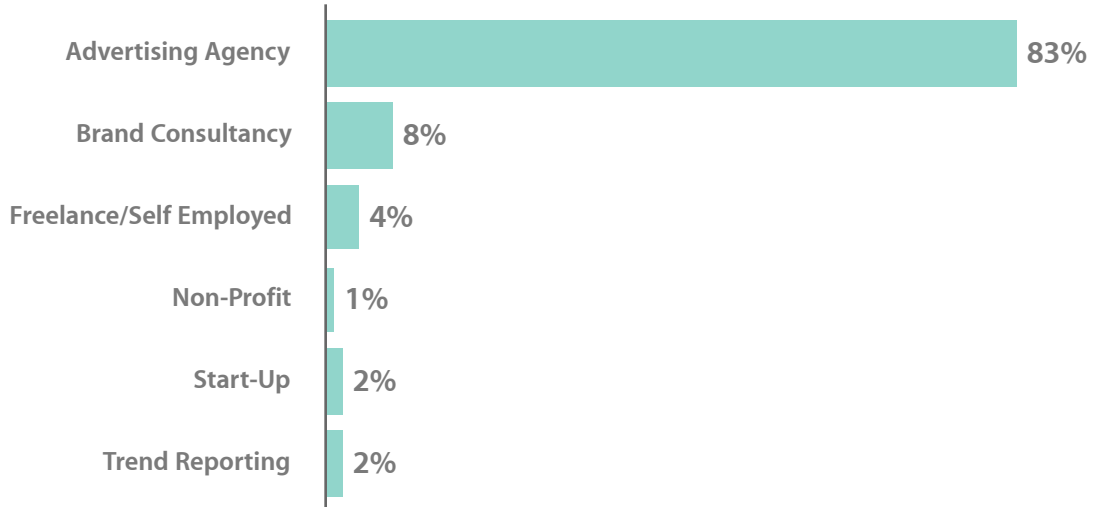




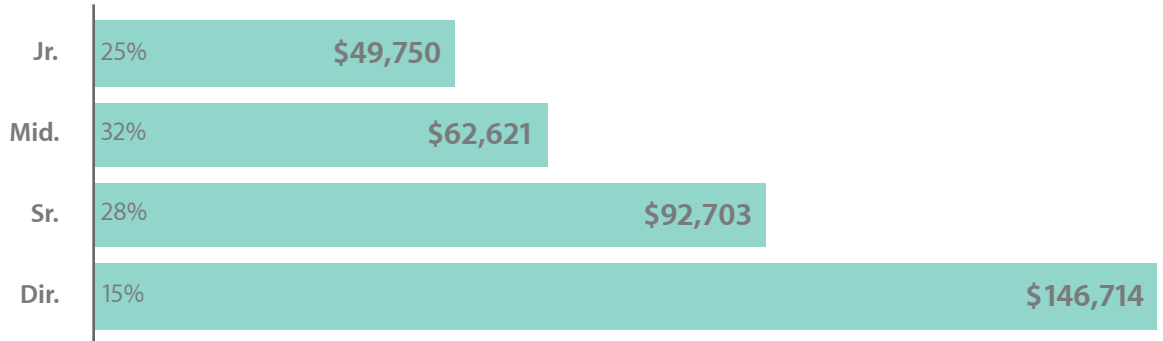
# CBM/CS

(AGENCY side in strategic planning, account management, and/or brand consultancy)

## Employer Type



## Average Annual Salary



**Note:** 4% of respondents were freelance or self-employed (primarily mid./sr. level) with an average salary of \$87,000.

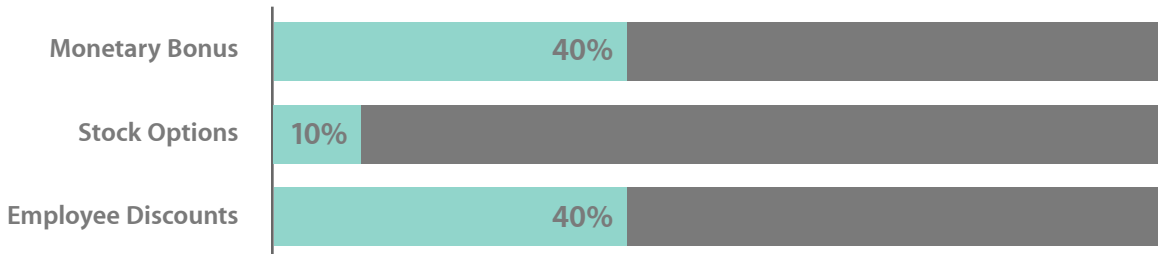
## Regional Average Salary

*If a city is not listed, it's because there wasn't enough data to support an average salary.*

JUNIOR		MID		SENIOR		DIRECTOR	
LA	\$49,850	LA	\$65,333	NYC	\$95,000	NYC	\$156,250
NYC	\$51,700	NYC	\$71,785	SF	\$121,750	Southeast	\$106,666
SF	\$47,500	SF	\$62,600	Chicago	\$97,693	Chicago	\$131,666
Southeast	\$43,333	Southeast	\$50,785				

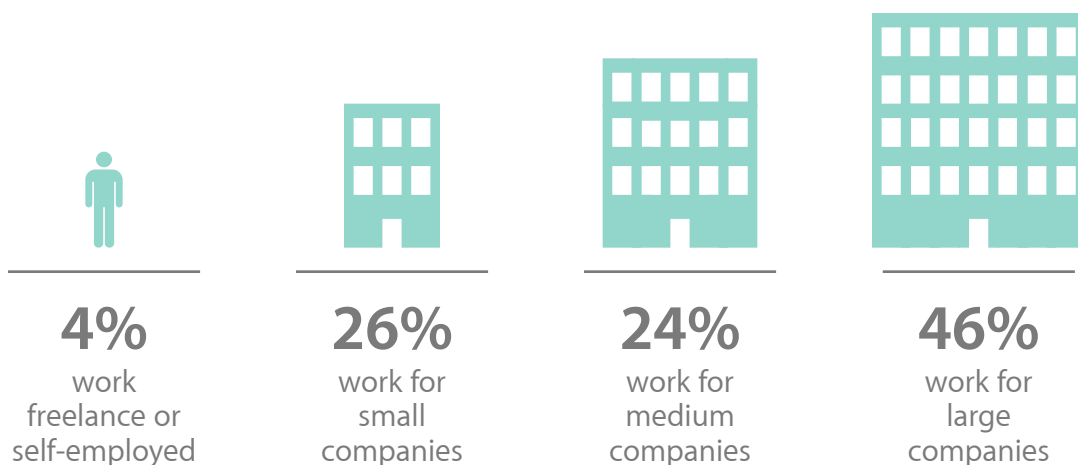
## Perks & Incentives Received

**60%** receive some sort of perk or incentive in addition to their salary including:

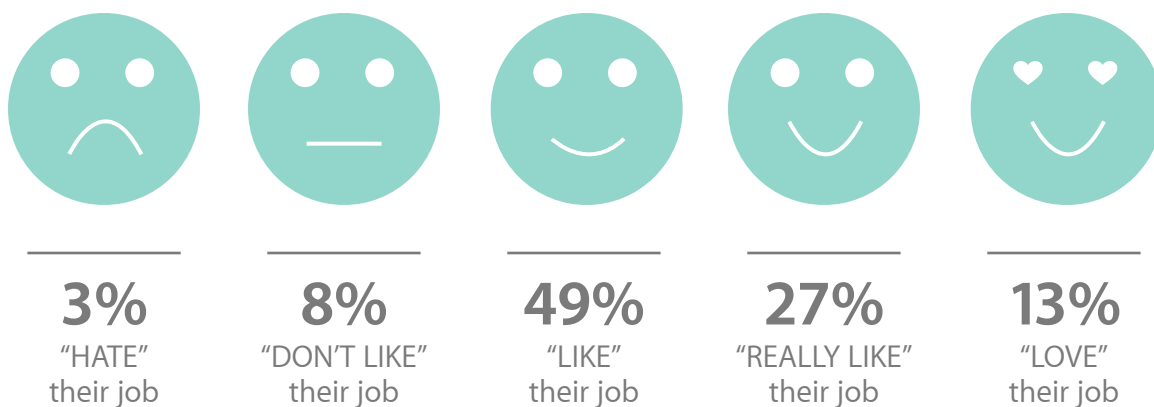


## Company Size

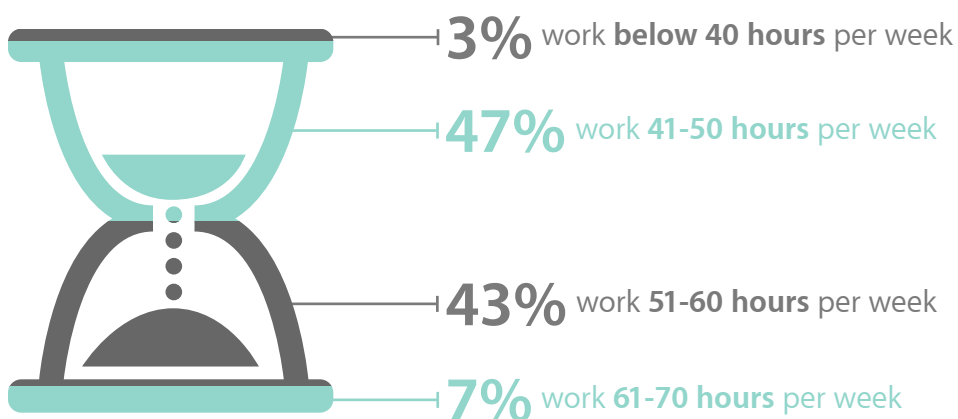
Small (1 - 100 people)  
Medium (101 - 300 people)  
Large (300+ people)



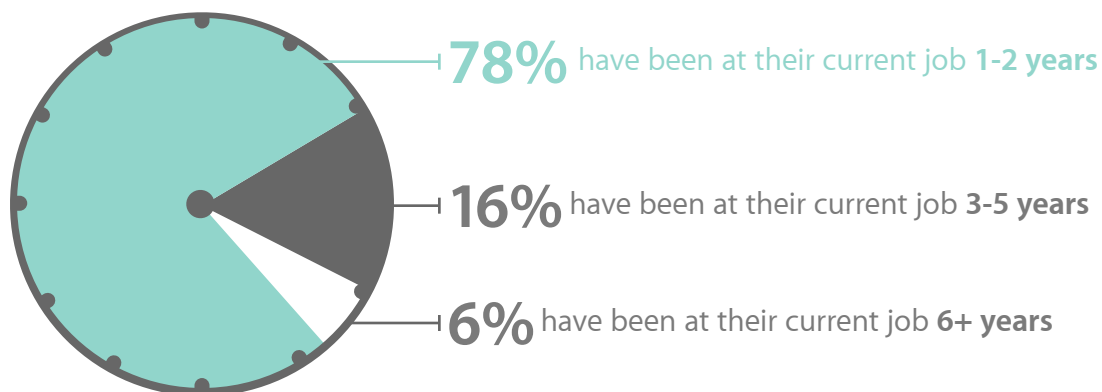
## Job Happiness



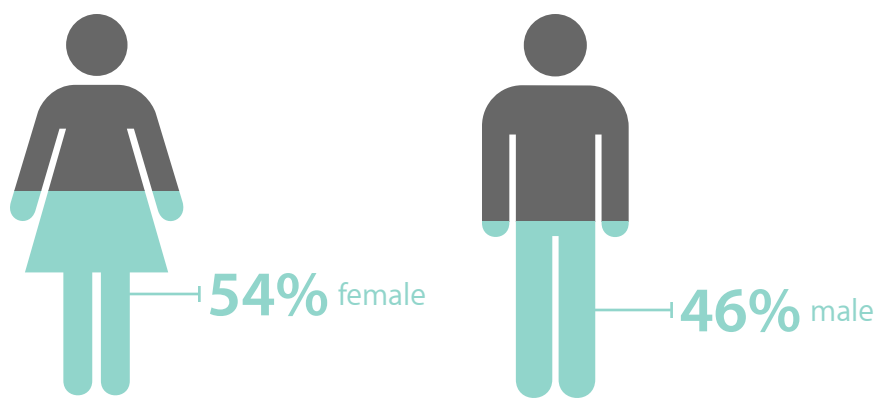
## Weekly Hours Worked



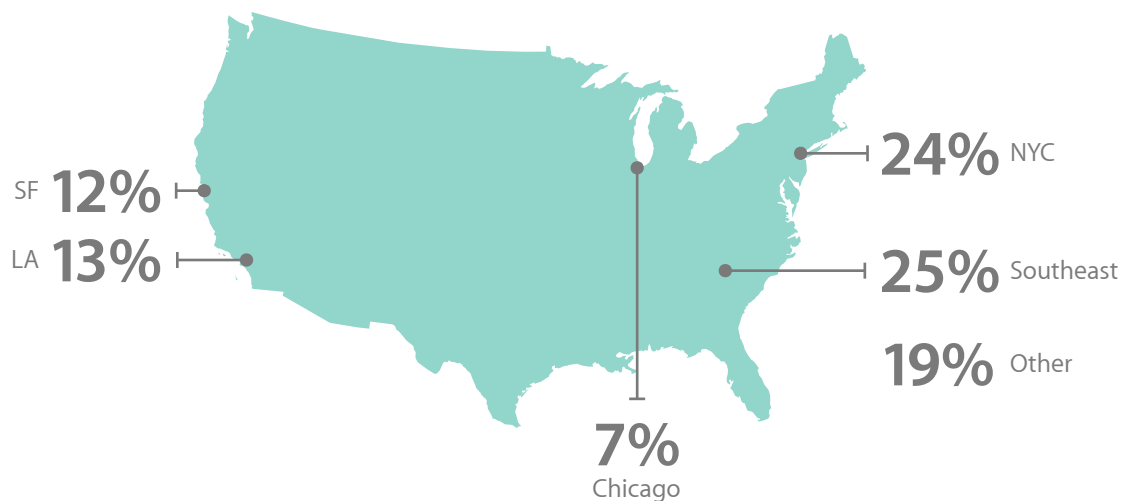
## Years at Current Job



## Gender of Respondents

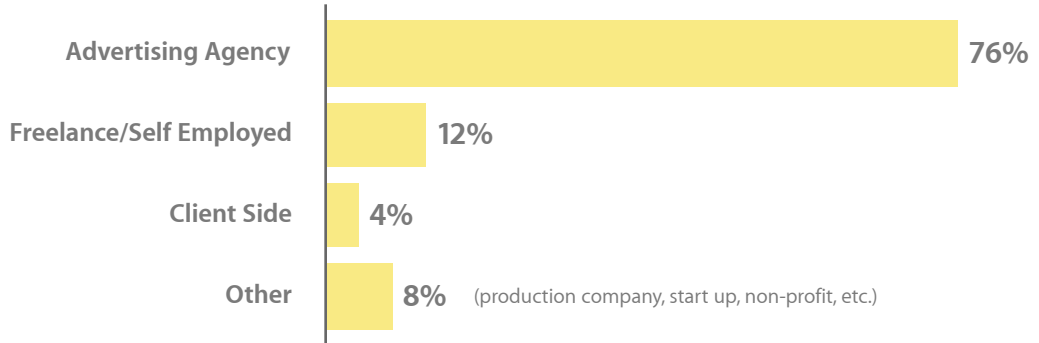


## Where They Work

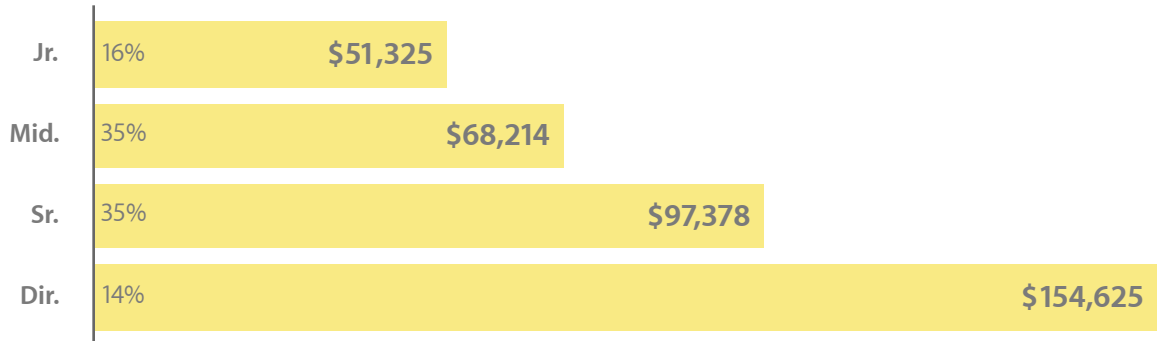


# AD

## Employer Type



## Average Annual Salary



**Note:** 12% of respondents were freelance or self-employed (primarily sr. level) with an average salary of \$99,000.

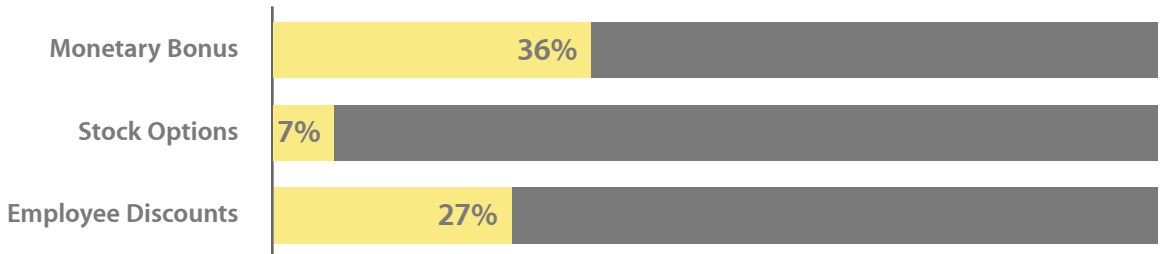
## Regional Average Salary

*If a city is not listed, it's because there wasn't enough data to support an average salary.*

JUNIOR		MID		SENIOR		DIRECTOR	
LA	\$54,000	LA	\$67,500	LA	\$91,400		
NYC	\$52,454	NYC	\$70,785	NYC	\$97,500	NYC	\$183,333
Southeast	\$51,250	Southeast	\$67,300	Southeast	\$86,714	Southeast	\$123,000
		SF	\$71,875	SF	\$99,000		
				Chicago	\$107,500	Chicago	\$126,000

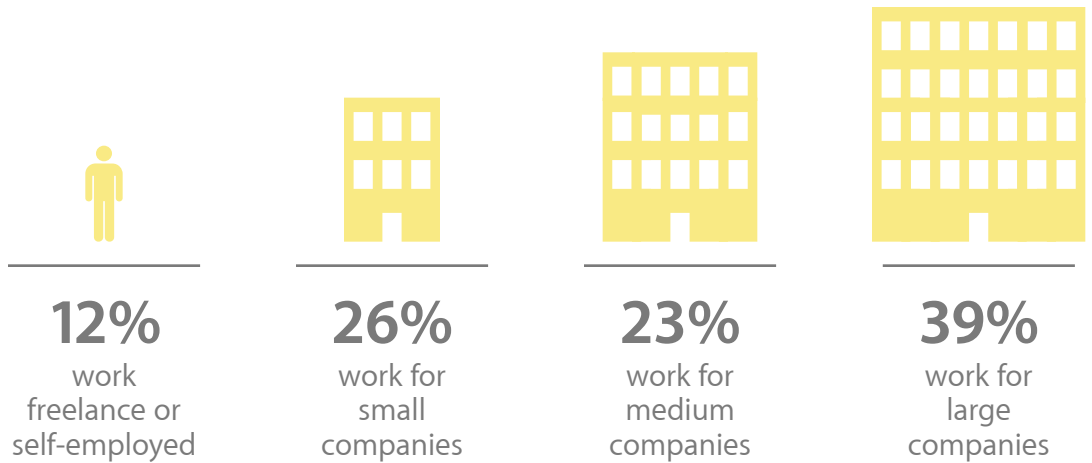
## Perks & Incentives Received

**56%** receive some sort of perk or incentive in addition to their salary including:

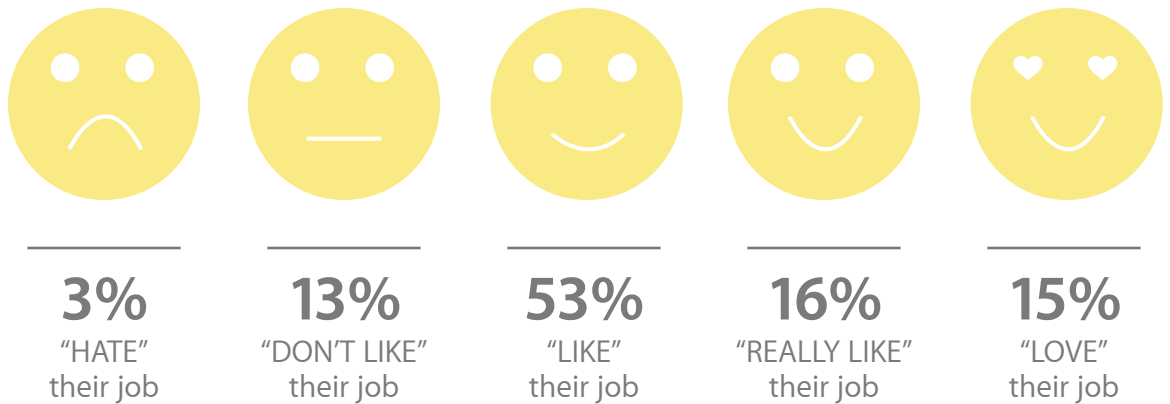


## Company Size

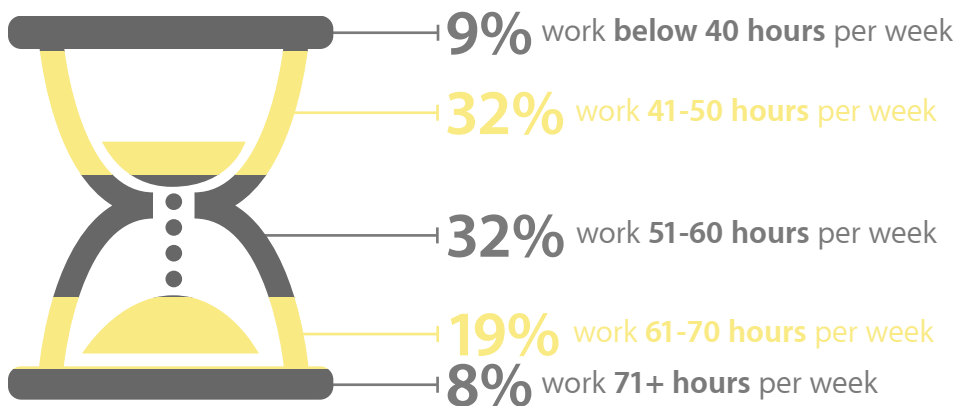
Small (1 - 100 people)  
Medium (101 - 300 people)  
Large (300+ people)



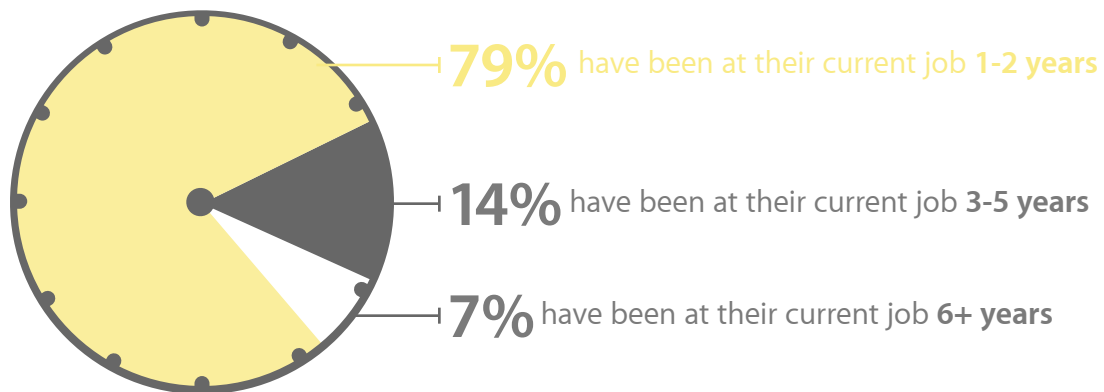
## Job Happiness



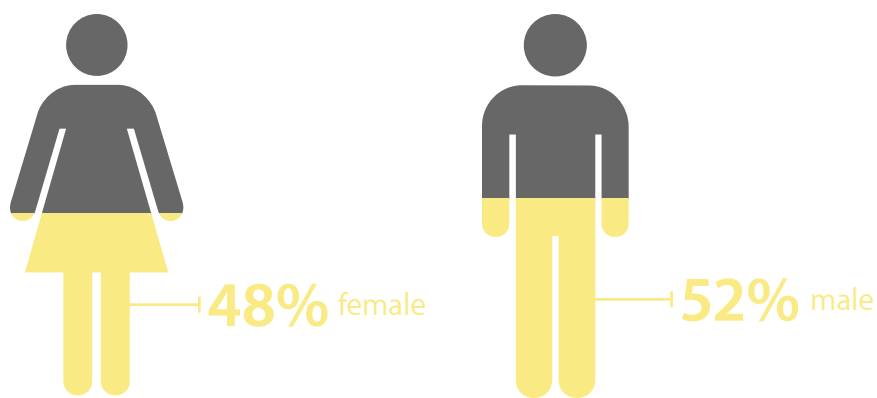
## Weekly Hours Worked



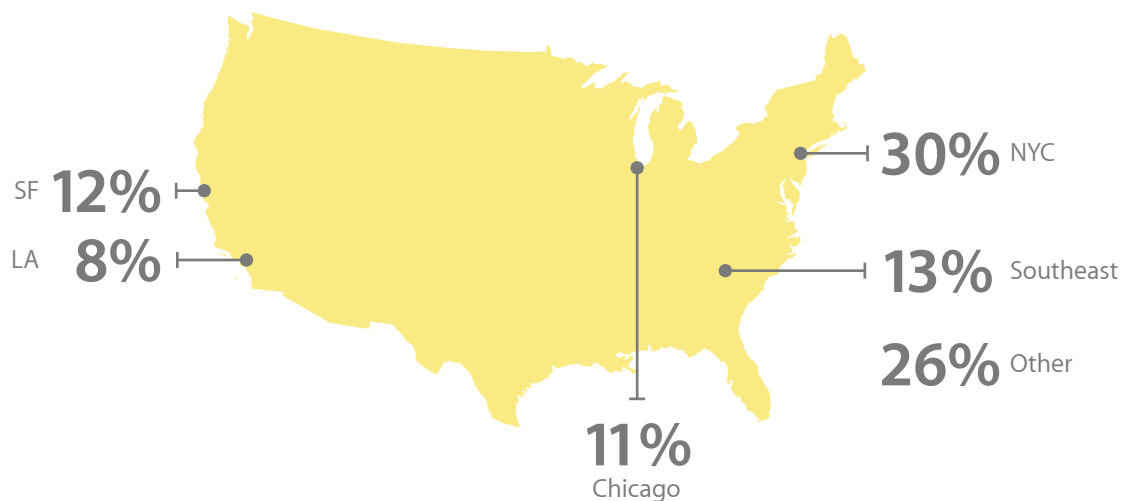
## Years at Current Job



## Gender of Respondents

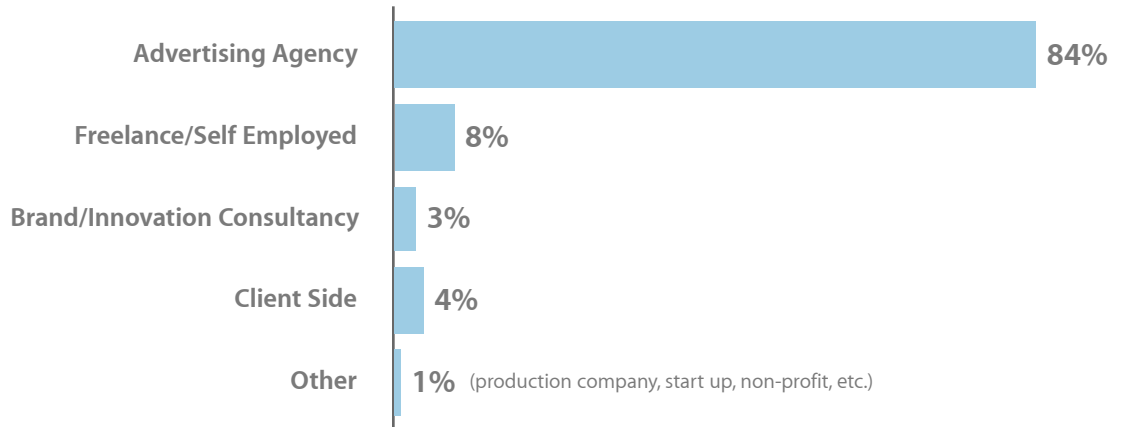


## Where They Work

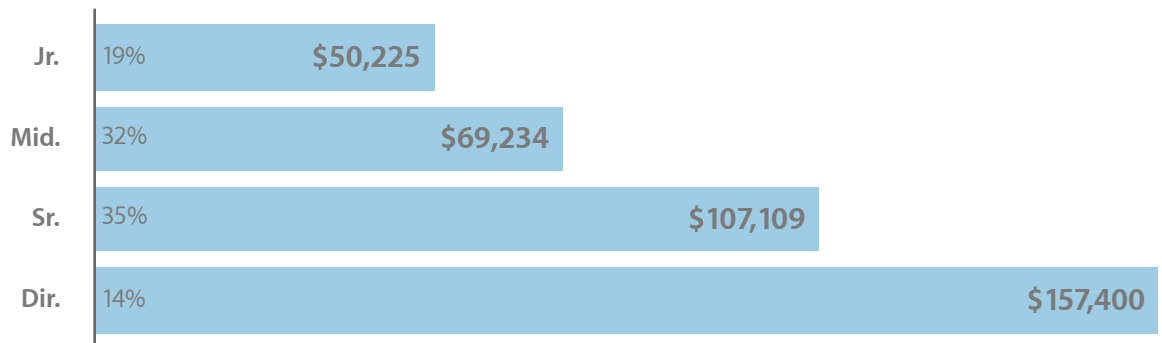




## Employer Type



## Average Annual Salary



**Note:** 8% of respondents were freelance or self-employed (primarily sr./dir. level) with an average salary of \$123,000.

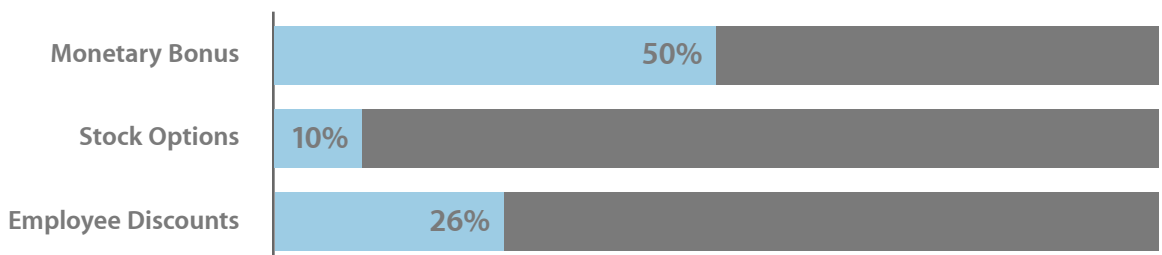
## Regional Average Salary

*If a city is not listed, it's because there wasn't enough data to support an average salary.*

JUNIOR		MID		SENIOR		DIRECTOR	
LA	\$51,000	LA	\$69,000	LA	\$128,400		
NYC	\$52,857	NYC	\$72,083	NYC	\$119,062	NYC	\$152,600
SF	\$44,000	SF	\$76,666	SF	\$98,250	SF	\$205,000
Southeast	\$48,250	Southeast	\$60,285	Southeast	\$97,300		
		Chicago	\$66,300	Chicago	\$117,500	Chicago	\$136,666
		Boston	\$65,000				

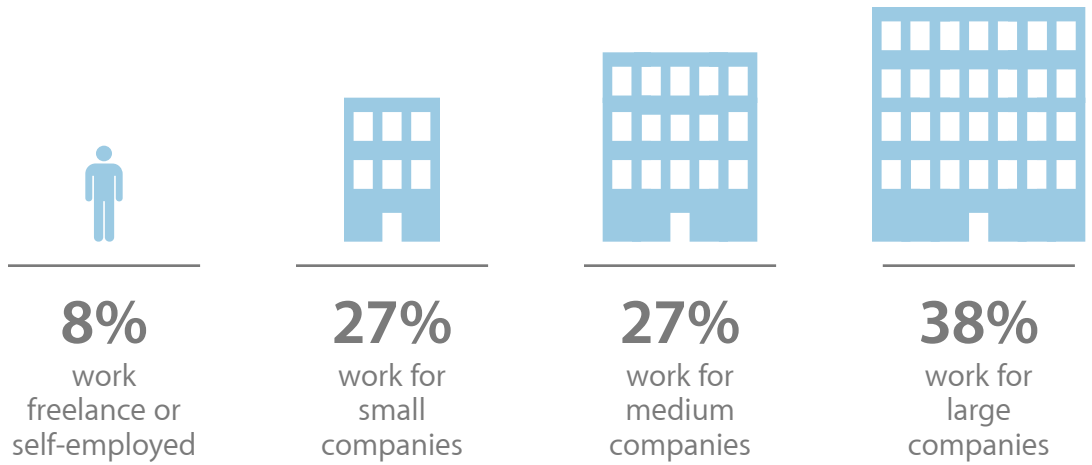
## Perks & Incentives Received

**66%** receive some sort of perk or incentive in addition to their salary including:

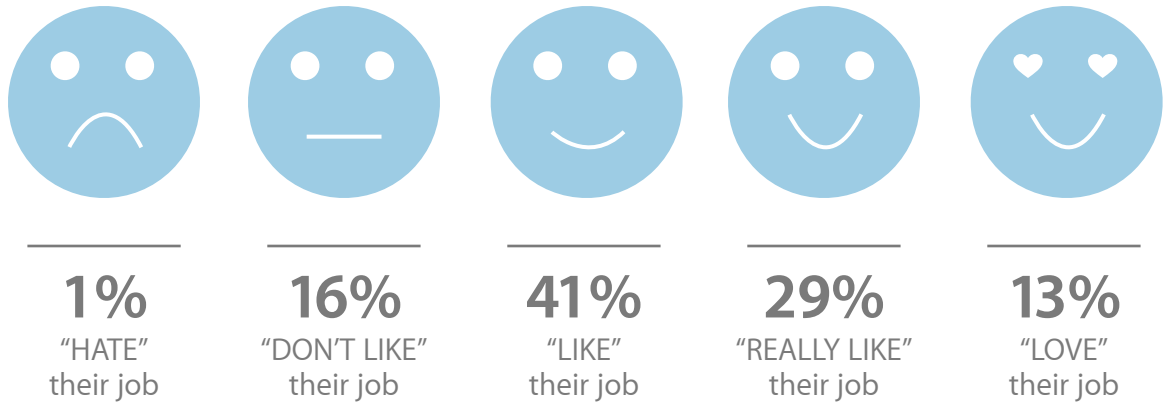


## Company Size

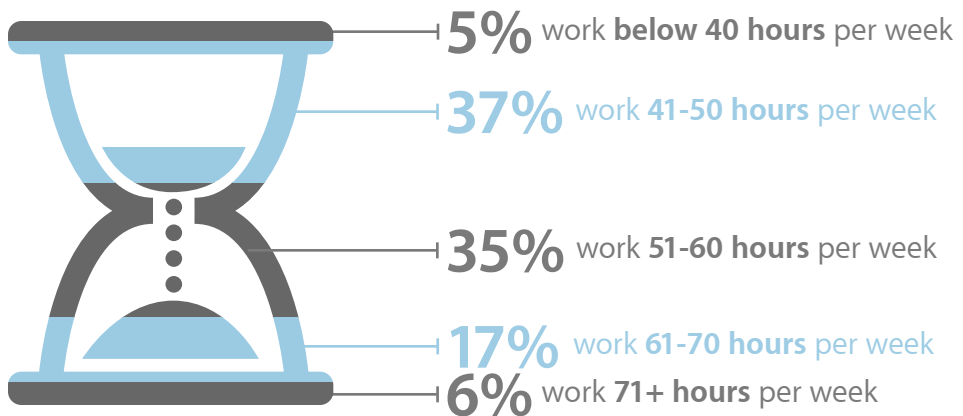
Small (1 - 100 people)  
 Medium (101 - 300 people)  
 Large (300+ people)



## Job Happiness

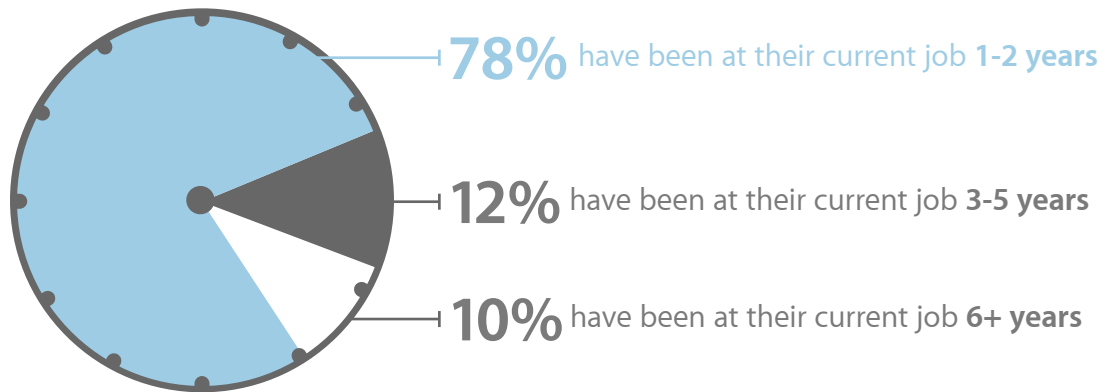


## Weekly Hours Worked

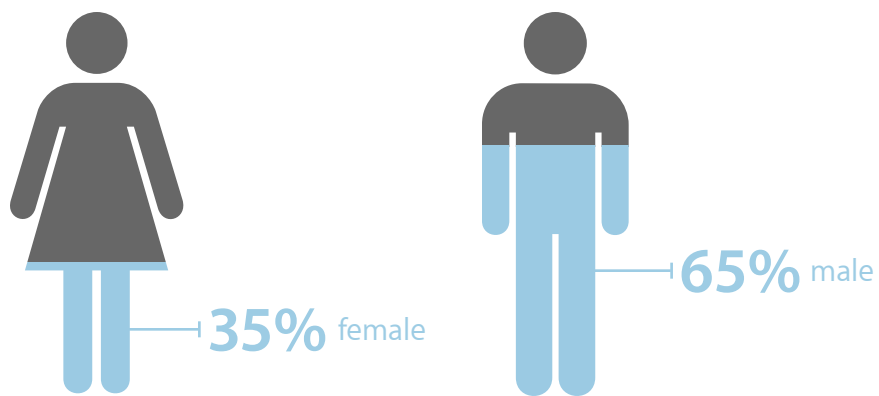




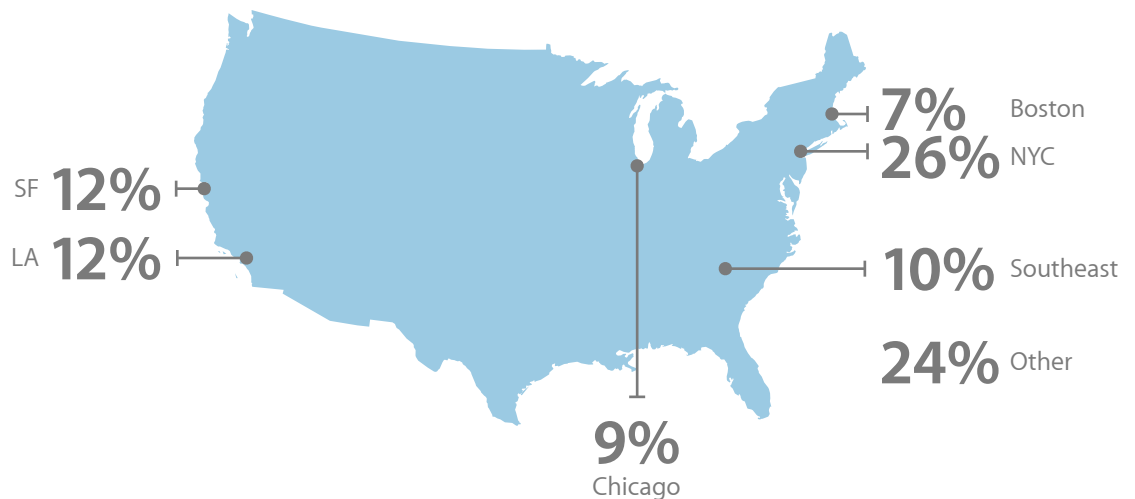
## Years at Current Job



## Gender of Respondents

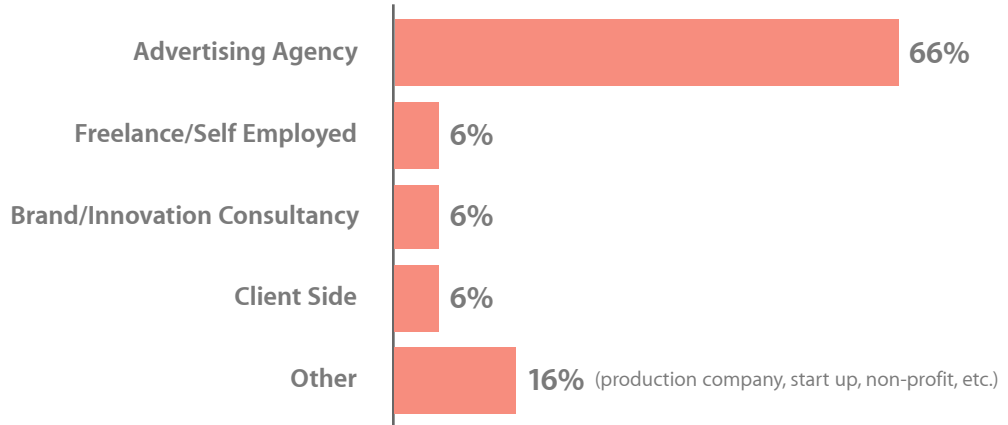


## Where They Work

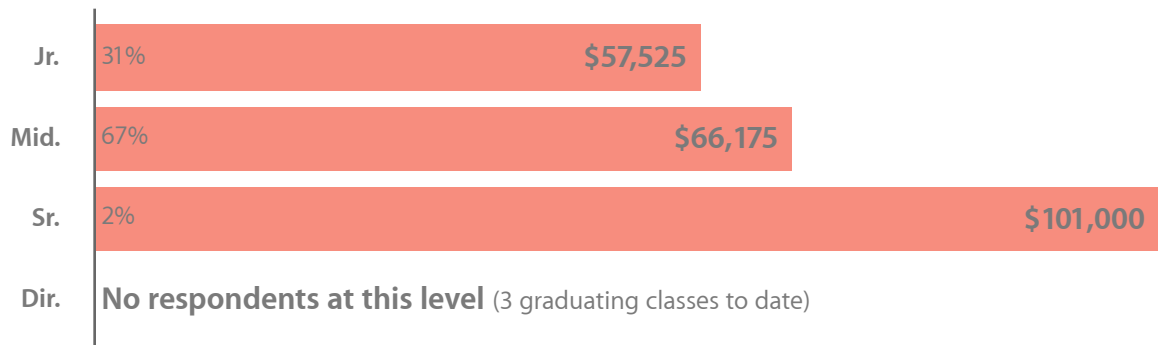


# CT

## Employer Type



## Average Annual Salary



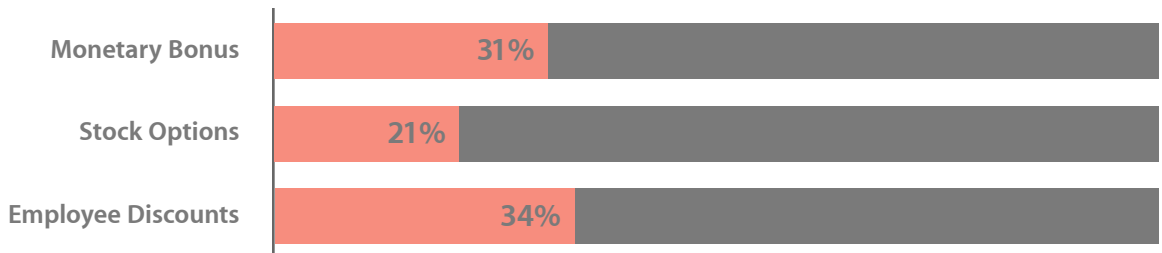
Note: The first CT class graduated in 2010.

## Regional Average Salary

N/A for this data set because not enough respondents to accurately cut data.

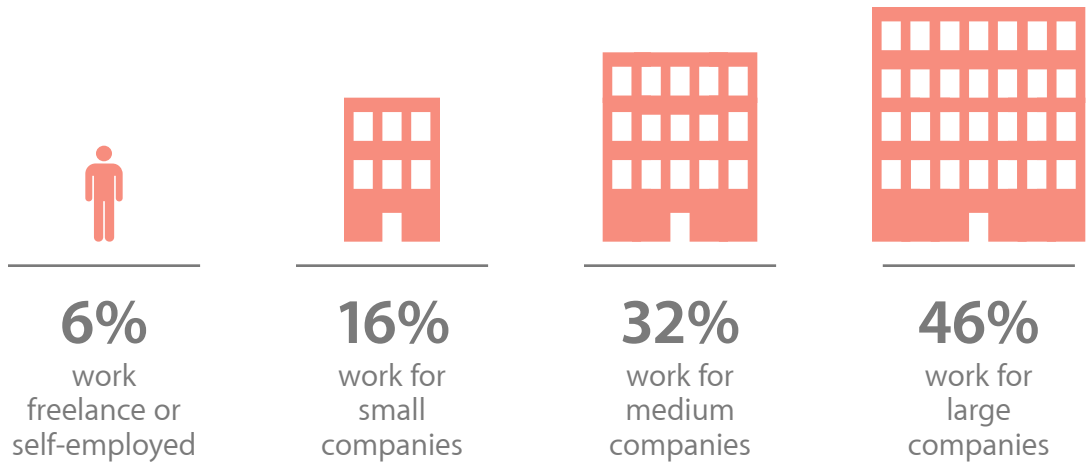
## Perks & Incentives Received

**50%** receive some sort of perk or incentive in addition to their salary including:

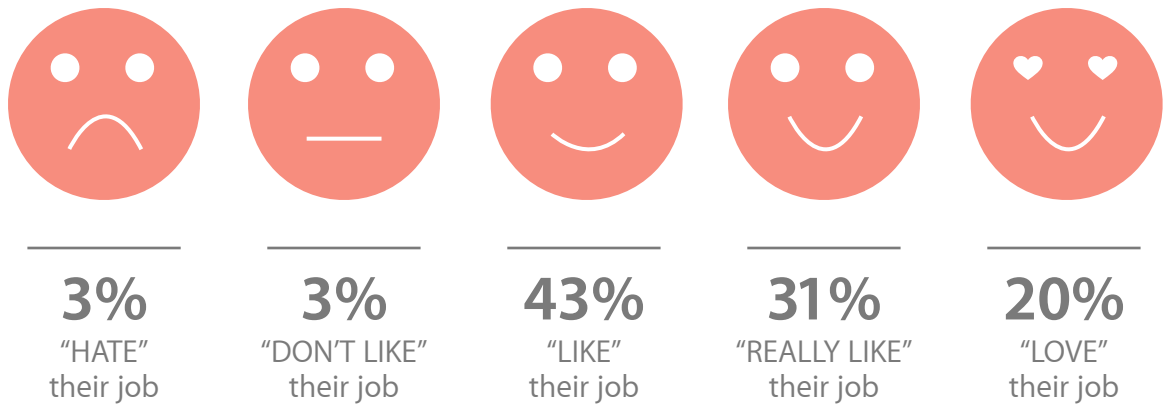


## Company Size

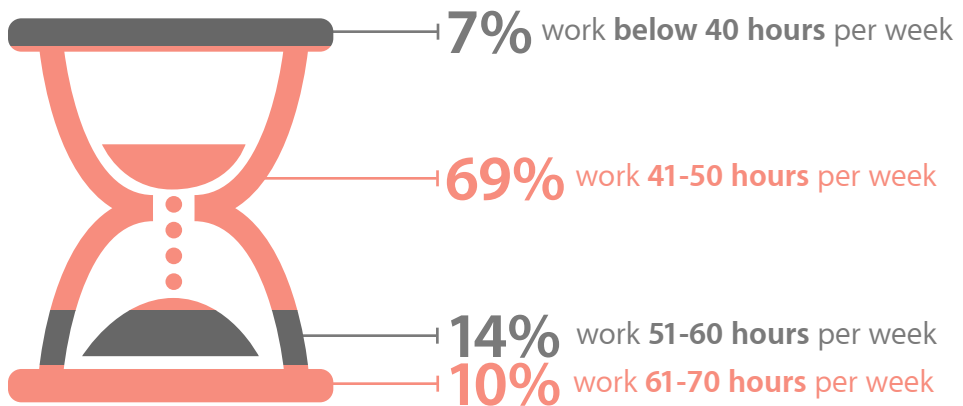
Small (1 - 100 people)  
Medium (101 - 300 people)  
Large (300+ people)



## Job Happiness



## Weekly Hours Worked

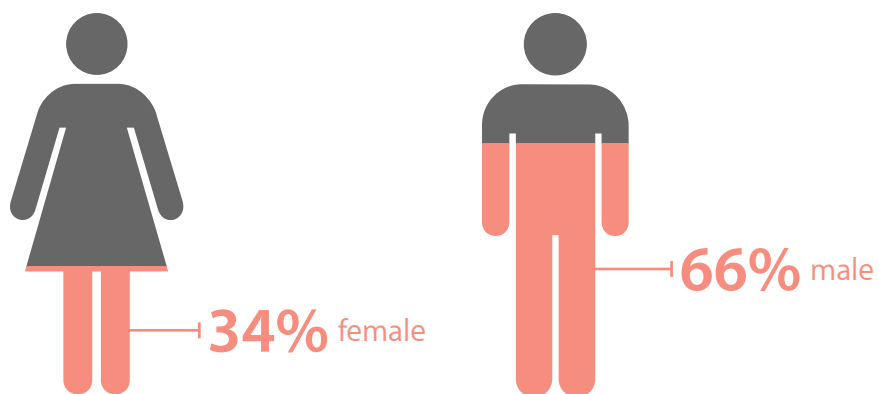


## Years at Current Job

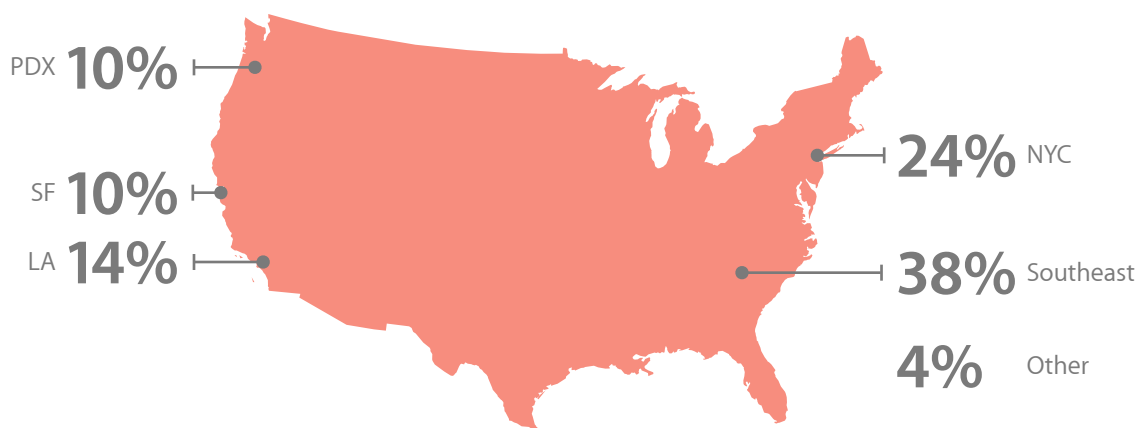


Note: The first CT class graduated in 2010.

## 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

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

- Art Direction
- Copywriting
- Communications Strategy
- Creative Brand Management
- Creative Technology

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

- New York City
- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- San Francisco
- Raleigh/Durham
- Boston
- Richmond
- Washington, DC or NOVA
- Atlanta
- 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, Lego, Microsoft, etc.)
- Production company
- Non-profit
- Start-up
- Research or trend-reporting company
- Other

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

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

**6. All agencies 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 \$XX,XXX.) If you're working abroad, will you please estimate the amount in US dollars?** (open ended)

**8. 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

**9. How much do you like your current job?** (multiple choice)

- Hate it
- Don't like it
- Like it
- Really like it
- Love it

**10. 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)

- Below 40 hours
- 41-50 hours
- 51-60 hours
- 61-70 hours
- 71+ hours

**11. How long have you been at your current job?** (multiple choice)

- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-8 years
- 9+ years

**12. What is your gender?** (multiple choice)

- Male
- Female

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