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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

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.
- 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
Overall Findings

Track Overview

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)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Mid.</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBM/CS (CLIENT side)</td>
<td>$68,890</td>
<td>$71,150</td>
<td>$91,024</td>
<td><strong>No respondents at this level</strong> (6 graduating classes of CBMs to date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBM/CS (AGENCY side)</td>
<td>$62,621</td>
<td>$92,703</td>
<td>$146,714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>$51,325</td>
<td>$68,214</td>
<td>$97,378</td>
<td>$154,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW</td>
<td>$50,225</td>
<td>$69,243</td>
<td>$107,109</td>
<td>$157,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>$57,525</td>
<td>$66,175</td>
<td>$101,000</td>
<td><strong>No respondents at this level</strong> (3 graduating classes of CTs to date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall Findings

Job Happiness

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBM/CS (CLIENT side)</th>
<th>CBM/CS (AGENCY side)</th>
<th>AD</th>
<th>CW</th>
<th>CT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 59% answered they “really like” or “love” their job.
- 40% answered they “really like” or “love” their job.
- 31% answered they “really like” or “love” their job.
- 42% answered they “really like” or “love” their job.
- 51% answered they “really like” or “love” their job.

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AD</th>
<th>CW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59% work more than 50 hours per week.</td>
<td>58% work more than 50 hours per week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 50% CBM/CS (AGENCY side)
- 28% CBM/CS (CLIENT side)
- 24% CT

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>$68,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>$71,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>$91,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir.</td>
<td>No respondents at this level (6 graduating classes to date)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

- Monetary Bonus: 64%
- Stock Options: 24%
- Employee Discounts: 32%

Company Size

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

18% work for small companies
6% work for medium companies
76% work for large companies
Job Happiness

- 0% “HATE” their job
- 14% “DON’T LIKE” their job
- 29% “LIKE” their job
- 38% “REALLY LIKE” their job
- 19% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

- 12% work below 40 hours per week
- 60% work 41-50 hours per week
- 28% work 51-60 hours per week

Years at Current Job

- 82% have been at their current job 1-2 years
- 16% have been at their current job 3-5 years
- 2% have been at their current job 6+ years

Note: The first CBM class graduated in 2007.

Creative Brand Management/Communications Strategy
(CLIENT side in brand management, product management, and/or marketing for companies - e.g. Capital One)
Gender of Respondents

- 50% female
- 50% male

Where They Work

- 12% NYC
- 15% NOVA/DC
- 35% Richmond
- 38% Other
  (Charlottesville, Chicago, San Diego, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Portland, Hartford, New Jersey, Austin, Los Angeles)

Creative Brand Management/Communications Strategy
(CLIENT side in brand management, product management, and/or marketing for companies - e.g. Capital One)
### CBM/CS

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

#### Employer Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Agency</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Consultancy</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelance/Self Employed</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Profit</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-Up</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend Reporting</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Average Annual Salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>$49,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>$62,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>$92,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir.</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>$146,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

#### Regional Average Salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Average Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>$49,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>$51,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>$47,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$43,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid.</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>$65,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>$71,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>$62,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$50,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>$121,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$79,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$97,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir.</td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>$156,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$106,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$131,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

#### Perks & Incentives Received

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

- Monetary Bonus: 40%
- Stock Options: 10%
- Employee Discounts: 40%
Company Size

Small (1 - 100 people) 4%
Medium (101 - 300 people) 26%
Large (300+ people) 24%

Job Happiness

3% “HATE” their job
8% “DON’T LIKE” their job
49% “LIKE” their job
27% “REALLY LIKE” their job
13% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

3% work below 40 hours per week
47% work 41-50 hours per week
43% work 51-60 hours per week
7% work 61-70 hours per week
Years at Current Job

- 78% have been at their current job 1-2 years
- 16% have been at their current job 3-5 years
- 6% have been at their current job 6+ years

Gender of Respondents

- 54% female
- 46% male

Where They Work

- SF 12%
- LA 13%
- 24% NYC
- 25% Southeast
- 19% Other
- 7% Chicago
AD

Employer Type

- Advertising Agency: 76%
- Freelance/Self Employed: 12%
- Client Side: 4%
- Other: 8% (production company, start up, non-profit, etc.)

Average Annual Salary

- Junior: 16% $51,325
- Mid: 35% $68,214
- Senior: 35% $97,378
- Director: 14% $154,625

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jr.</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Dir.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>$54,000</td>
<td>$67,500</td>
<td>$91,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>$52,454</td>
<td>$70,785</td>
<td>$97,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>$51,250</td>
<td>$67,300</td>
<td>$86,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>$71,875</td>
<td>$99,000</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>$126,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perks & Incentives Received

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

- Monetary Bonus: 36%
- Stock Options: 7%
- Employee Discounts: 27%
Company Size

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

- 12% work freelance or self-employed
- 26% work for small companies
- 23% work for medium companies
- 39% work for large companies

Job Happiness

- 3% “HATE” their job
- 13% “DON’T LIKE” their job
- 53% “LIKE” their job
- 16% “REALLY LIKE” their job
- 15% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

- 9% work below 40 hours per week
- 32% work 41-50 hours per week
- 32% work 51-60 hours per week
- 19% work 61-70 hours per week
- 8% work 71+ hours per week
Years at Current Job

- 79% have been at their current job 1-2 years
- 14% have been at their current job 3-5 years
- 7% have been at their current job 6+ years

Gender of Respondents

- 48% female
- 52% male

Where They Work

- SF 12%
- LA 8%
- 30% NYC
- 13% Southeast
- 11% Chicago
- 26% Other
Regional Average Salary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR</th>
<th>MID</th>
<th>SENIOR</th>
<th>DIRECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$51,000</td>
<td>$69,000</td>
<td>$128,400</td>
<td>$152,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$52,857</td>
<td>$72,083</td>
<td>$119,062</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,000</td>
<td>$76,666</td>
<td>$98,250</td>
<td>$97,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$48,250</td>
<td>$60,285</td>
<td>$66,300</td>
<td>$117,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Boston</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td>$65,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Monetary Bonus: 50%
- Stock Options: 10%
- Employee Discounts: 26%
Company Size

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

- 8% work freelance or self-employed
- 27% work for small companies
- 27% work for medium companies
- 38% work for large companies

Job Happiness

- 1% “HATE” their job
- 16% “DON’T LIKE” their job
- 41% “LIKE” their job
- 29% “REALLY LIKE” their job
- 13% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

- 5% work below 40 hours per week
- 37% work 41-50 hours per week
- 35% work 51-60 hours per week
- 17% work 61-70 hours per week
- 6% work 71+ hours per week
Gender of Respondents

- 35% female
- 65% male

Where They Work

- SF: 12%
- LA: 12%
- Boston: 7%
- NYC: 26%
- Southeast: 10%
- Chicago: 9%
- Other: 24%

Years at Current Job

- 78% have been at their current job 1-2 years
- 12% have been at their current job 3-5 years
- 10% have been at their current job 6+ years

Copywriting
CT

Employer Type

- Advertising Agency: 66%
- Freelance/Self Employed: 6%
- Brand/Innovation Consultancy: 6%
- Client Side: 6%
- Other: 16% (production company, start up, non-profit, etc.)

Average Annual Salary

- Jr. 31%: $57,525
- Mid. 67%: $66,175
- Sr. 2%: $101,000
- Dir.: No respondents at this level (3 graduating classes to date)

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:

- Monetary Bonus: 31%
- Stock Options: 21%
- Employee Discounts: 34%
Company Size

Small (1 - 100 people) 6% work freelance or self-employed
Medium (101 - 300 people) 16% work for small companies
Large (300+ people) 32% work for medium companies 46% work for large companies

Job Happiness

3% “HATE” their job
3% “DON’T LIKE” their job
43% “LIKE” their job
31% “REALLY LIKE” their job
20% “LOVE” their job

Weekly Hours Worked

7% work below 40 hours per week
69% work 41-50 hours per week
14% work 51-60 hours per week
10% work 61-70 hours per week
Gender of Respondents:
- 34% female
- 66% male

Where They Work:
- PDX: 10%
- SF: 10%
- LA: 14%
- NYC: 24%
- Southeast: 38%
- Other: 4%

Note: The first CT class graduated in 2010.

Years at Current Job:
100% have been at their current job 1-2 years
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)