



2022

Candidate Experience Report

What candidates are thinking and feeling in 2022

About the Report

The talent landscape in 2022 is one of the most competitive in recent memory. With the Great Resignation in full force and inflation at record highs, organizations have experienced increased turnover and an even greater challenge of filling those empty seats.

At the heart of this story are the candidates. Job candidates are more than just job seekers. They are the people who become employees, who go on to hire others, and who make up the fabric of every organization. At one time or another, we are all job candidates.

This report dives into the thoughts, feelings, and desires of job candidates today. The results in the report are based on a survey of 1,967 job candidates from around the globe, representing a wide range of industries and backgrounds.

Every organization hiring today knows the importance of a positive candidate experience. The results from the report shed light on what candidates want, how they feel about the state of hiring today, and what leaders in HR, recruitment, and talent acquisition can do to win over top talent.



Who We Are

Criteria is a talent success company that helps organizations make more objective, evidence-based talent decisions that both reduce bias and drive outcomes. We are fascinated by all things hiring, and we built this report to dig deeper into what drives candidates today. Visit us at criteriacorp.com.

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Key Insights From the Report

1 Flexibility is the #1 priority for job candidates.

Candidates ranked work-life balance as more important than compensation, work culture, and benefits. 33% of candidates have turned down a job because it didn't offer flexible or remote work options.

2 54% of candidates have abandoned a recruitment process because the salary didn't meet expectations.

But that wasn't the only reason. 53% abandoned a recruitment process because of poor communication, and 32% because the recruiting process took too long.

3 67% of candidates are "very confident" that their next job will be satisfying.

And 79% of candidates are confident that they will be paid enough in their next role.

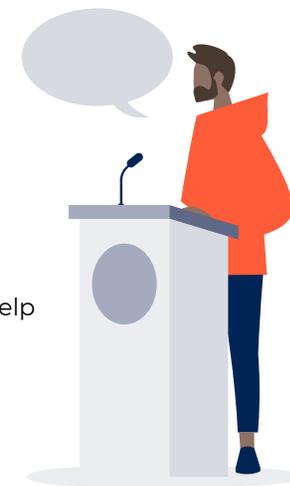


4 28% of candidates feel disadvantaged by the traditional hiring process.

And 35% of candidates feel that their job experience holds them back.

5 94% of candidates say assessments demonstrate their potential well.

And 74% agree that assessments help them demonstrate their potential beyond their past experience. Asian and Black candidates were more likely to feel this way compared to White candidates.



6 51% of candidates prefer game-based assessments.

The Technology and Retail industries were the most likely to prefer them, and Asian and Black candidates were more likely to prefer them compared to White candidates.

7 52% of candidates feel that AI-based hiring can represent them accurately.

But the higher their education, the less confident a candidate was about AI.



Searching for a Job in 2022

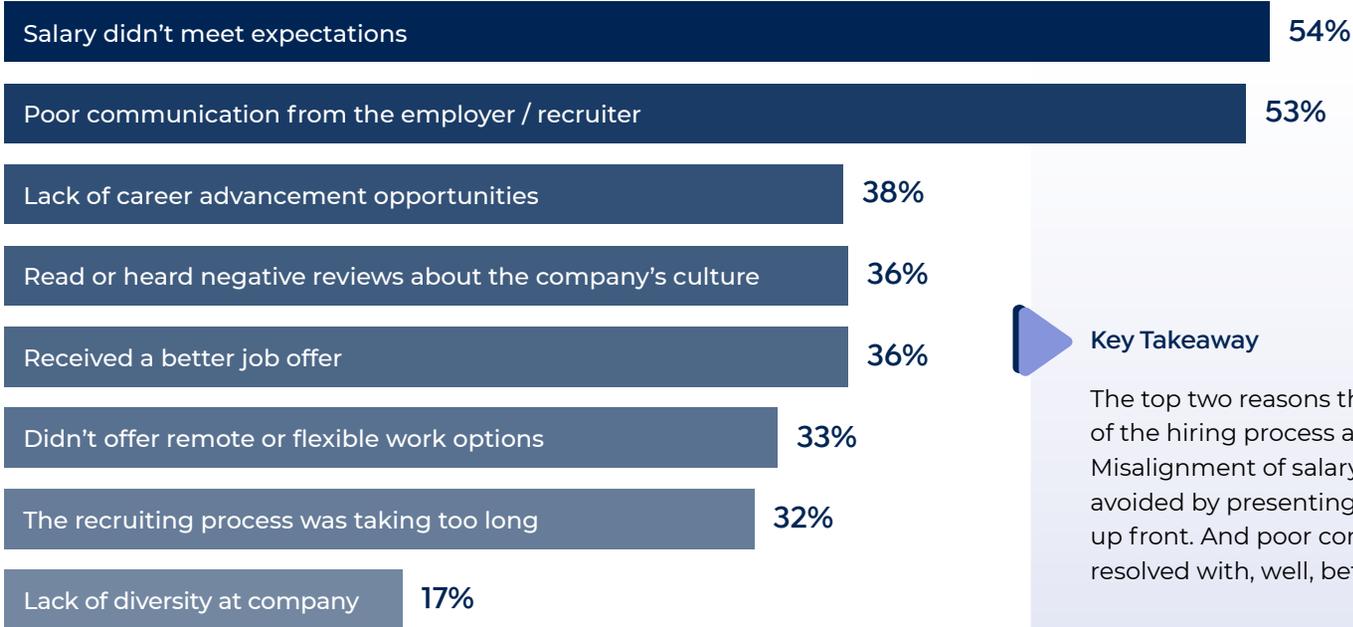


Candidates will abandon a sub-par recruitment process.

In the wake of the Great Resignation, 2022 continues to be one of the most competitive talent markets in recent memory. With unemployment now lower than pre-pandemic levels, job candidates have more choice, which means they're less willing to put up with a negative candidate experience.

Over half (54%) of candidates say they've abandoned a recruitment process because the salary didn't meet expectations, and 53% because of poor communication from the employer or recruiter. And more than a third of candidates have given up on a role because it lacked career advancement, the company culture got negative reviews, they received a better offer, or the job didn't offer enough flexibility.

What are the reasons you've abandoned a recruitment process in the past?



Key Takeaway

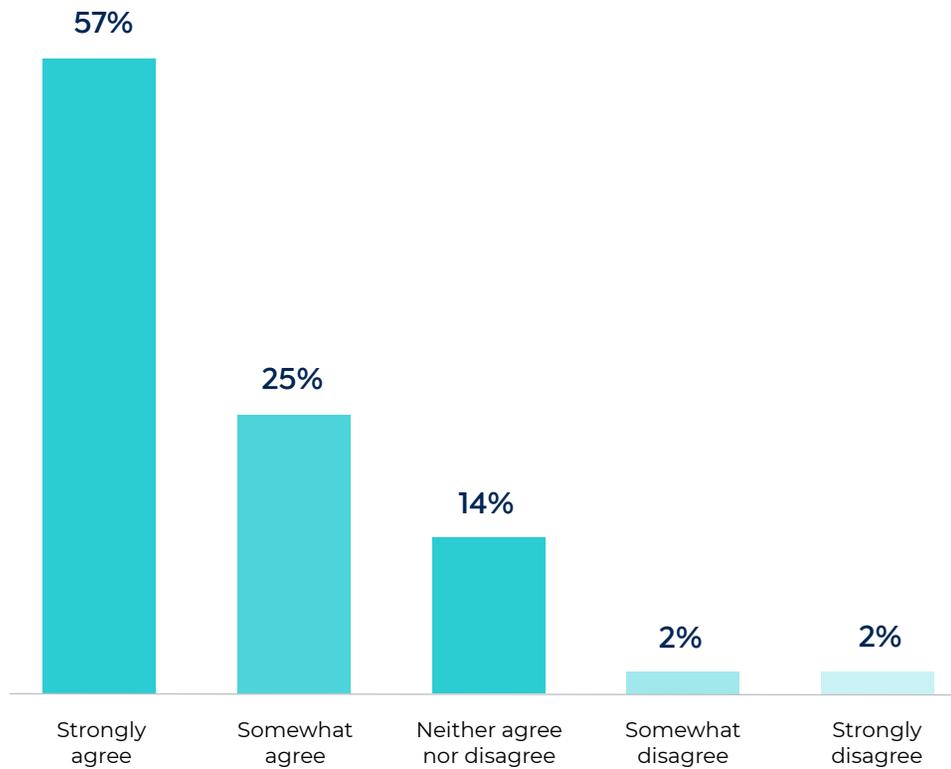
The top two reasons that candidates drop out of the hiring process are also the easiest to fix. Misalignment of salary expectations can be avoided by presenting accurate salary ranges up front. And poor communication can be resolved with, well, better communication.



Candidates prefer up-front salary information.

Salary transparency is one of the hottest topics of 2022. Candidates overwhelmingly agree that they'd rather see salary information front and center in a job description: 57% strongly agree and 25% somewhat agree.

I prefer when job descriptions list salary information



Key Takeaway

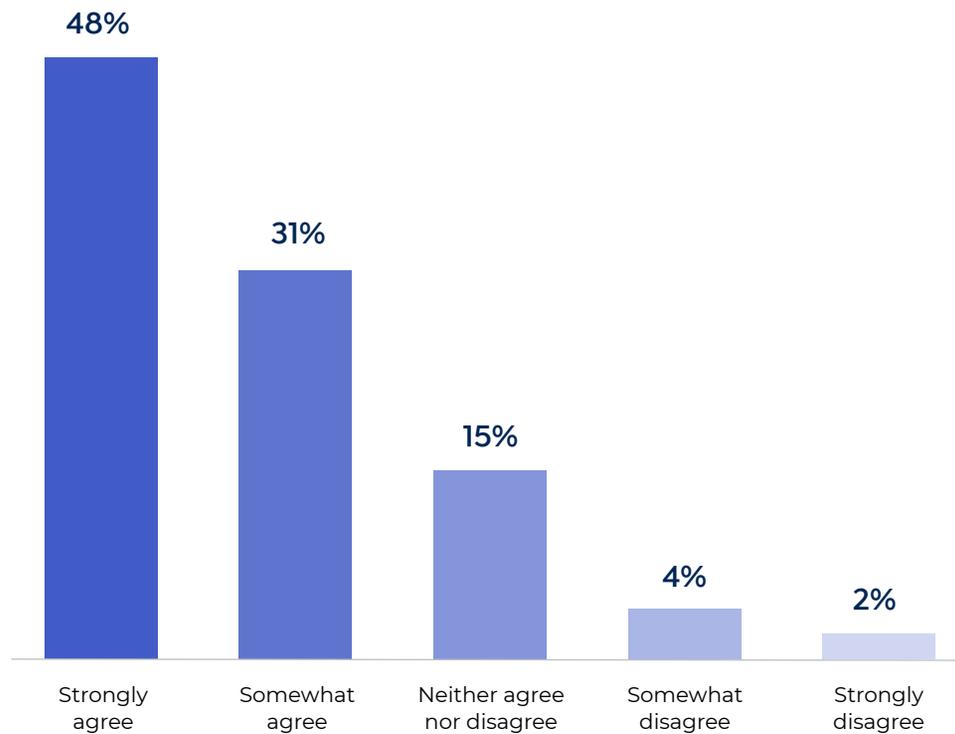
With 54% of candidates saying that they've abandoned a recruiting process when the salary is misaligned, salary transparency in the job description can save a lot of time, effort, and heartache for both employers and candidates.



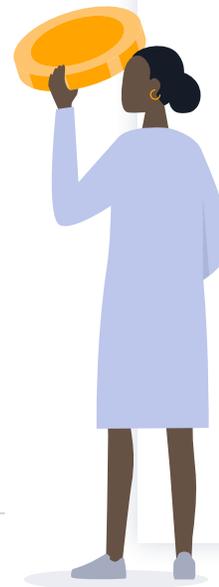
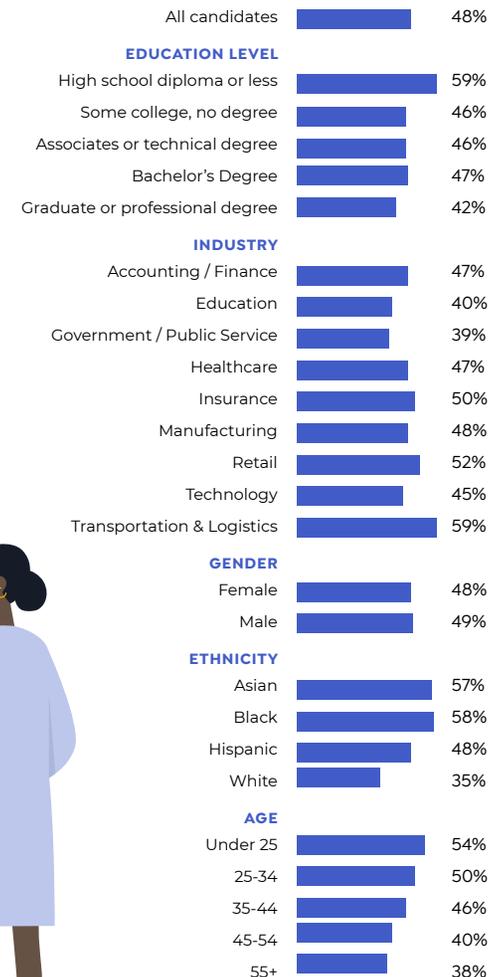
Candidates are confident in their ability to command pay.

Candidates may be hungrier for salary transparency because they're confident in their ability to command pay. The majority of candidates feel confident that they will be paid enough in their next role: 48% strongly agree and 31% somewhat agree. Interestingly, the amount of confidence varies widely by the different groups surveyed. For example, candidates in the Retail and Transportation & Logistics industries were especially confident, as were Asian and Black candidates. Confidence also seemed to decrease with age, with younger candidates exhibiting higher confidence than older candidates.

I am confident I will be paid enough in my new role



Percentage of candidates in each group who "strongly agree" with the statement: "I am confident I will be paid enough in my new role."



What Candidates Want



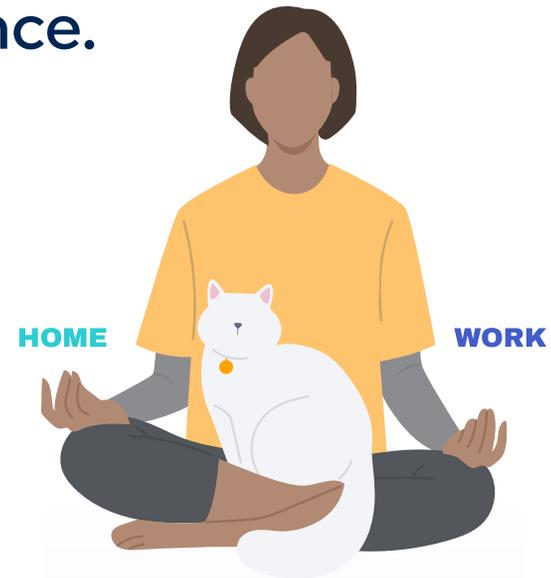
Candidates want better work-life balance.

Candidates may hold the balance of power in today's job market, but employers can stand out in the crowd by offering candidates what they actually want in their next role. We asked candidates to rank seven major qualities that an organization can offer, in order of importance. Here's where they ended up:

1. Better work-life balance
2. More opportunities for career advancement
3. Better compensation
4. Better manager and / or team
5. Better work culture
6. More sense of purpose at work
7. Better benefits

Better work-life balance took the number one spot, and stood out as a recurring theme throughout this report. COVID-19 gave the global workforce a taste of the flexible WFH lifestyle, and this factor has quickly become a top priority for job seekers.

Interestingly, "Better compensation" is not the top motivator, coming in third after "More opportunities for career advancement."



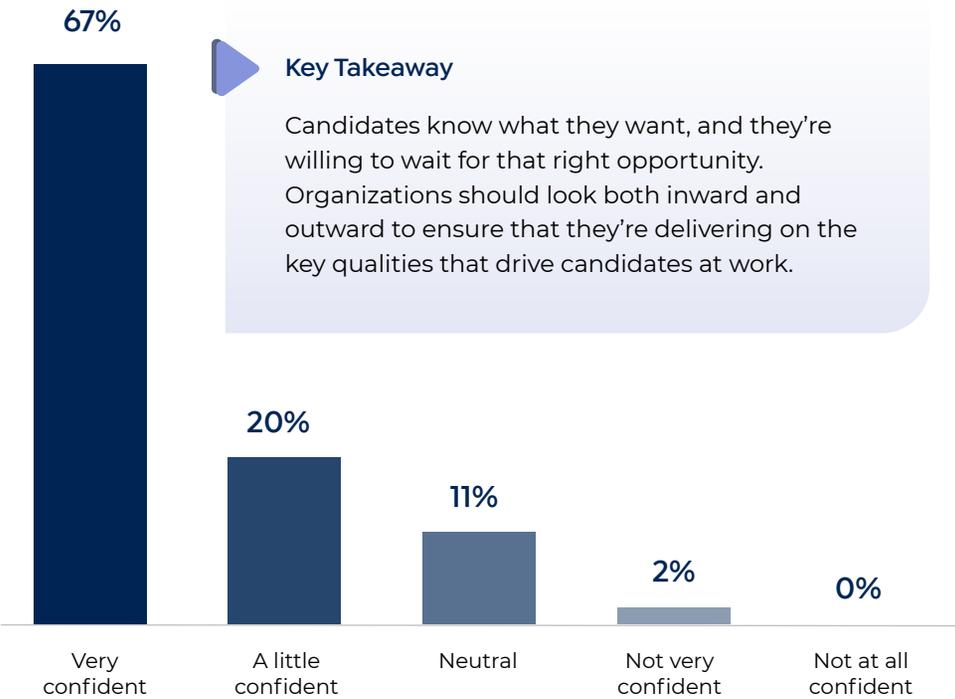
▶ Key Takeaway

Standing out in one or more of these areas can make your organization more competitive in the talent market. And while pay is very important to candidates, it's not the only way, or even the most compelling way, to catch their eye.

Candidates are confident they'll be able to find what they want.

Job seekers are feeling optimistic that their next role will meet their needs. In fact, a full two-thirds of respondents were "Very confident" that their next job would be satisfying. Confidence levels differed amongst groups – for example, those in the Education industry were less likely to be very confident compared to other industries, and Black, Asian, and Hispanic candidates were more confident than their white counterparts.

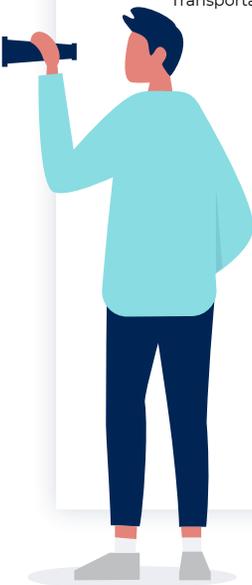
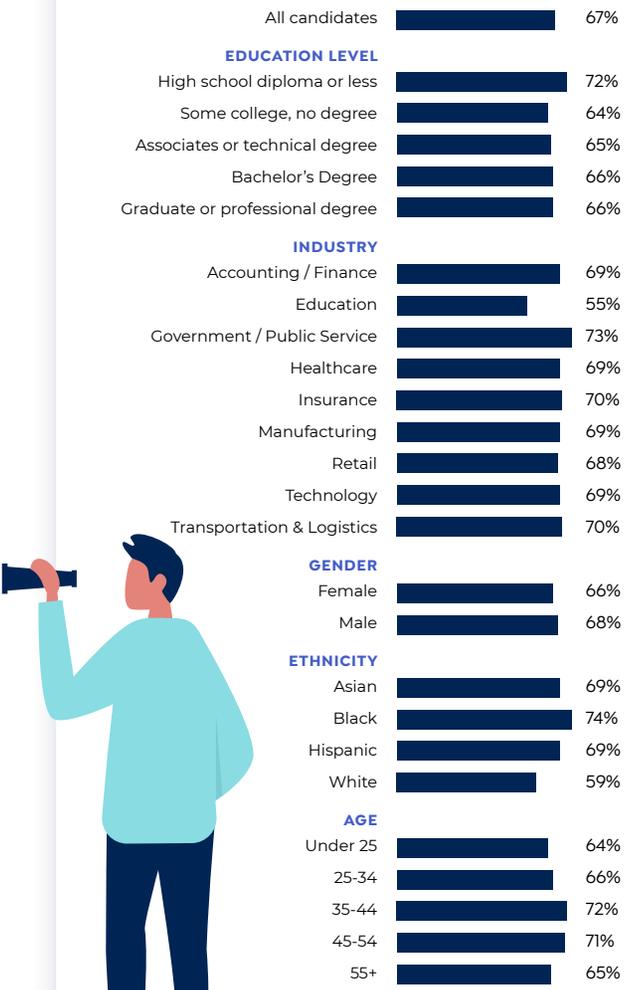
How confident are you that you will be able to find a new job that is satisfying?



Key Takeaway

Candidates know what they want, and they're willing to wait for that right opportunity. Organizations should look both inward and outward to ensure that they're delivering on the key qualities that drive candidates at work.

Percentage of candidates in each group who are "very confident" that they'll find a new job that is satisfying



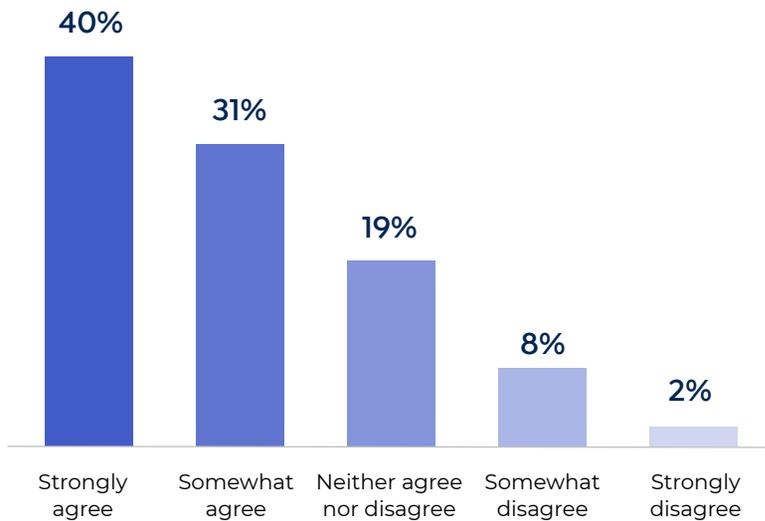
Perceptions of Fairness



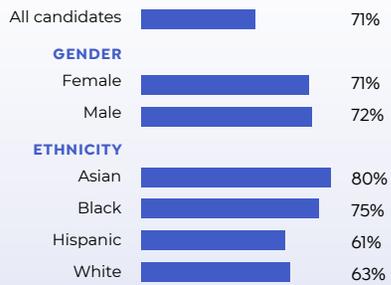
In general, candidates perceive hiring as fair.

A combined 71% of candidates feel that the hiring process in general is fair: 40% strongly agree and 31% somewhat agree. However, 28% of candidates feel that they are disadvantaged by the traditional hiring process: 10% strongly agree and 18% somewhat agree. Asian and Black candidates were more likely to feel that the hiring process was fair, but also more likely to feel disadvantaged by traditional hiring.

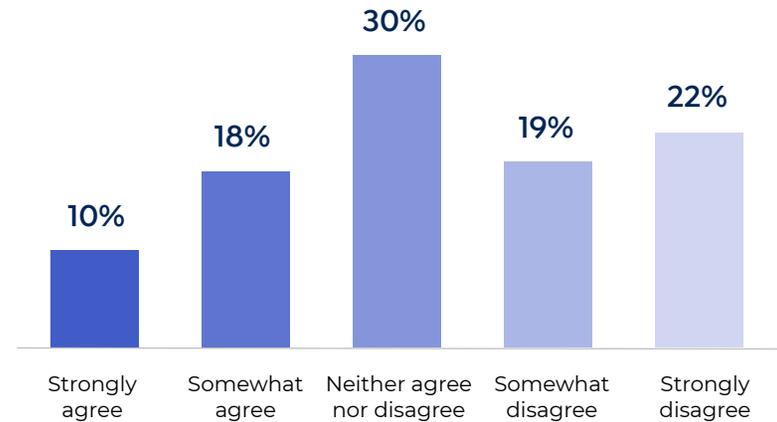
I feel that the hiring process is fair



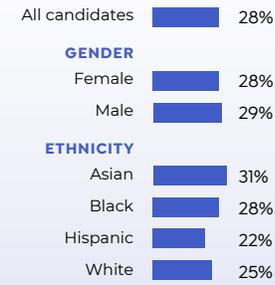
Percentage of candidates in each group who "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree"



I feel that I am disadvantaged by the traditional hiring process



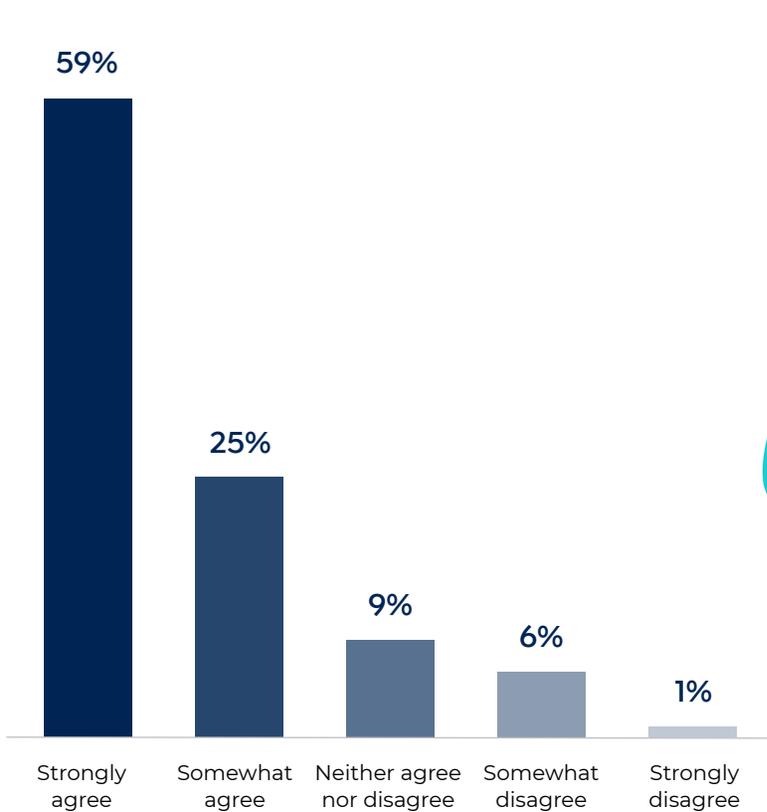
Percentage of candidates in each group who "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree"



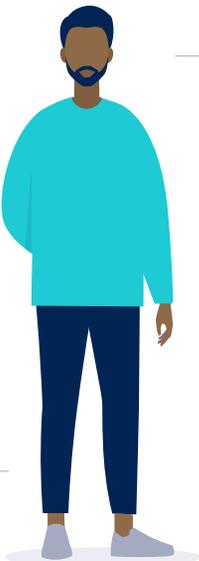
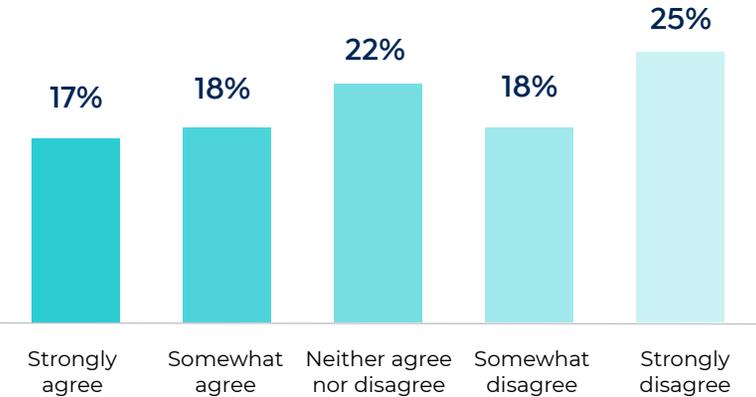
Candidates feel they can put their best foot forward.

A combined 84% of candidates feel that they are able to demonstrate their full potential to employers: 59% strongly agree and 25% somewhat agree. However, 35% of job candidates feel that their job experience holds them back from finding opportunities: 17% strongly agree and 18% somewhat agree. Men were more likely to feel disadvantaged than women, while Asian and Hispanic candidates were more likely to feel disadvantaged than White and Black candidates.

I feel that I am able to demonstrate my full potential to employers



I feel that my job experience holds me back from finding opportunities



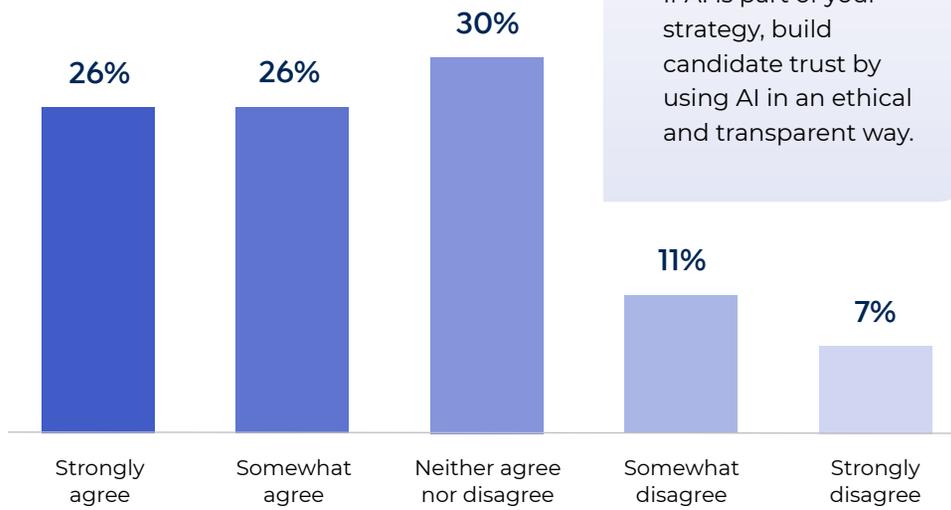
Percentage of candidates in each group who “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree”

All candidates	35%
GENDER	
Female	35%
Male	37%
ETHNICITY	
Asian	43%
Black	31%
Hispanic	39%
White	30%

Candidates are keeping an eye on AI.

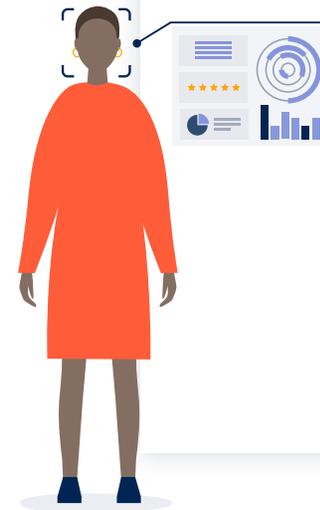
Candidates are largely trusting of AI, but many remain wary. Opinions on AI vary widely from group to group. One trend that emerged: the more educated someone is, the less trusting they are of AI. Candidates under the age of 35 were more confident in AI, and Black candidates were 87% more likely to strongly agree that AI-based hiring could represent them accurately compared with White candidates. Interestingly, the Technology industry also showed lower confidence in AI compared to other industries.

I feel that AI-based hiring can represent me accurately

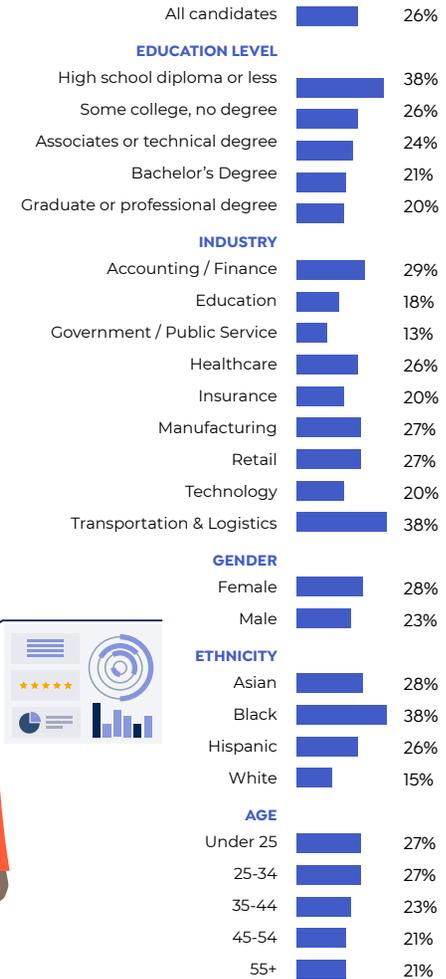


Key Takeaway

AI-based hiring is a promising frontier, but candidates have some reservations. If AI is part of your strategy, build candidate trust by using AI in an ethical and transparent way.



Percentage of candidates in each group who “strongly agree” that AI-based hiring can represent them accurately



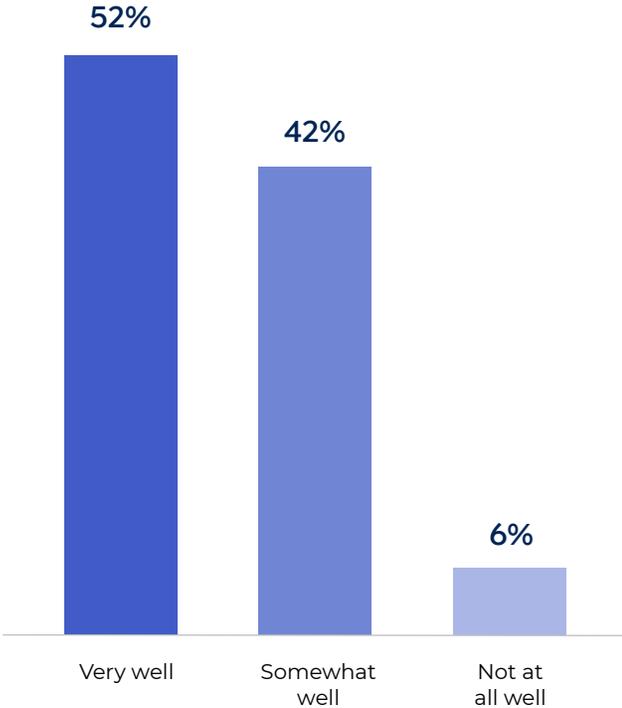
How Candidates Feel About Assessments



Candidates see the value in assessments.

Historically, job candidates haven't been overly fond of taking tests. But with shorter, more engaging assessments increasingly hitting the market, candidate perceptions may be due for a change. In fact, the vast majority of respondents in this survey see the value in assessments, with 94% of candidates saying assessments demonstrate their potential "Very well" or "Somewhat well."

How well do you think your assessment scores demonstrate your potential to succeed in a job?



Key Takeaway

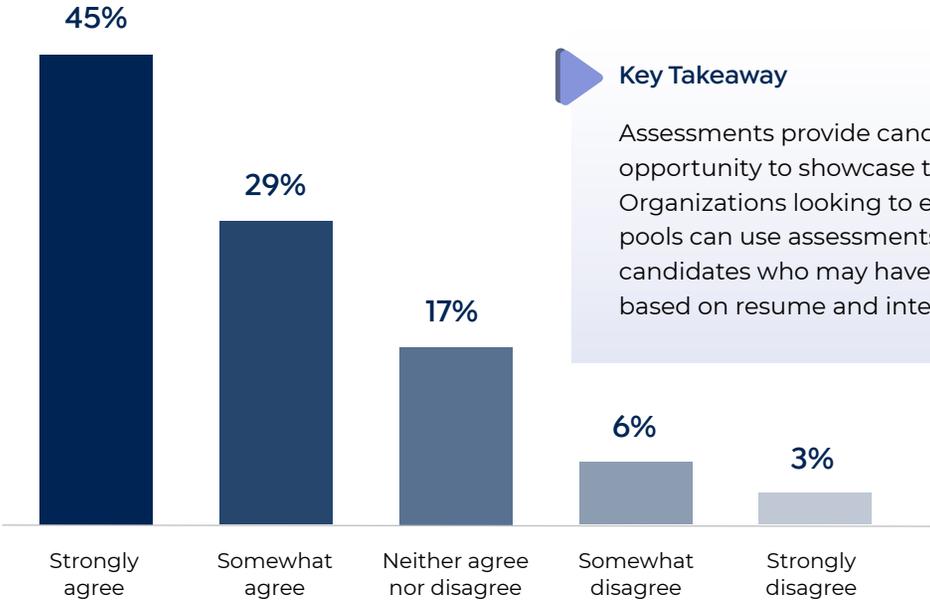
It may well be an outdated myth that candidates don't want to take assessments. Every candidate's goal is to demonstrate their potential, and candidates view assessments as another way to do just that.



Assessments highlight potential beyond experience.

Previous job experience has always been a major part of the talent selection process, but it's also been a catch-22 for candidates who have lacked opportunity and experience in the past. About three-quarters (74%) of candidates agree that assessments play a part in helping them demonstrate their potential beyond their past experience: 45% strongly agree and 29% somewhat agree. The effect seems to be even stronger for non-white candidates. Just 31% of White candidates strongly agree that assessments help them demonstrate their potential beyond their past experience, compared to 60% of Asian candidates, 47% of Black candidates, and 42% of Hispanic candidates. Younger candidates were more likely to feel the benefits as well.

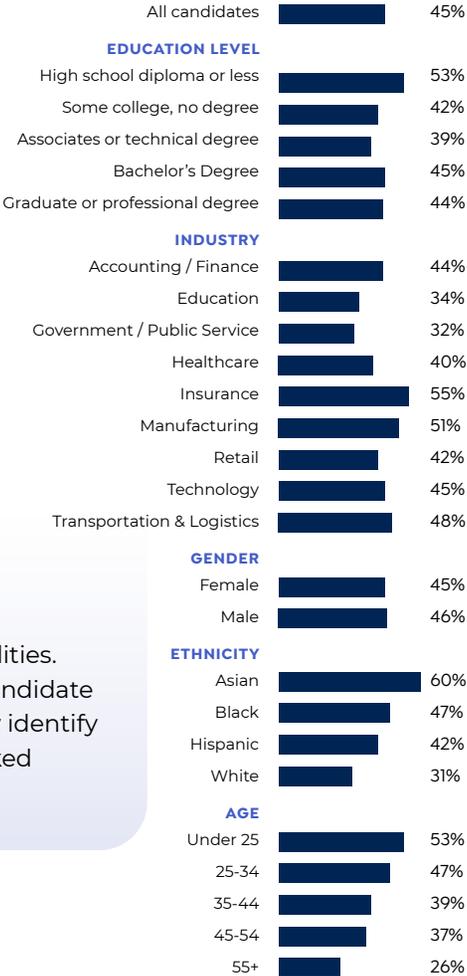
Assessments help me demonstrate my potential beyond my past experience



Key Takeaway

Assessments provide candidates with an opportunity to showcase their future abilities. Organizations looking to expand their candidate pools can use assessments to objectively identify candidates who may have been overlooked based on resume and interview alone.

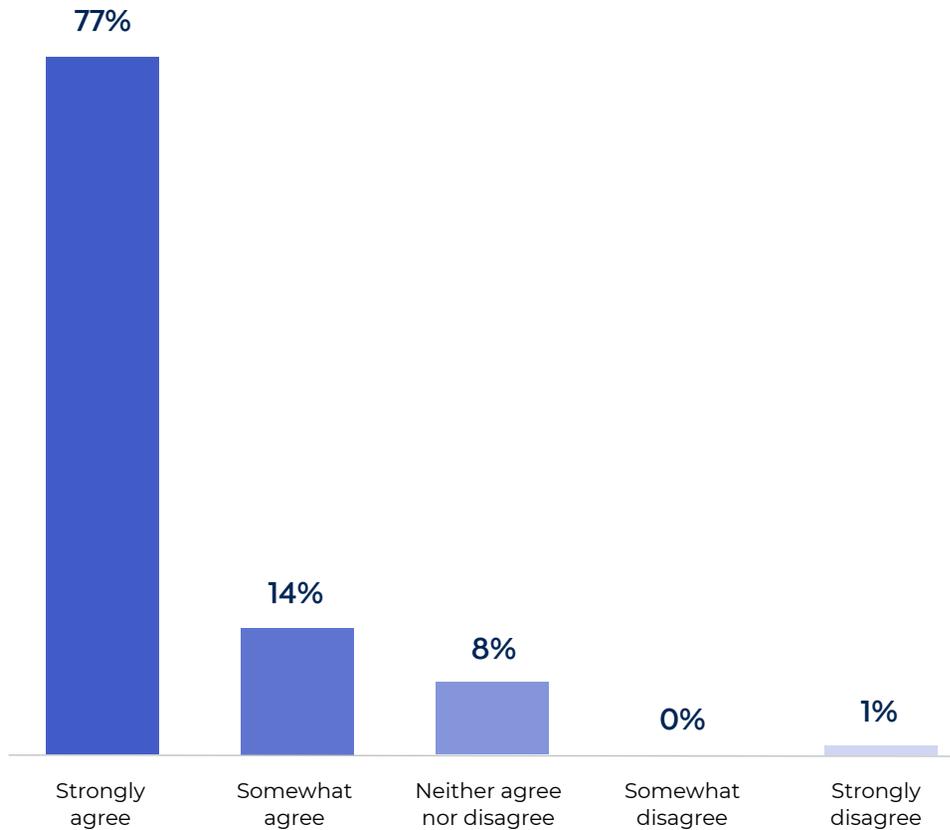
Percentage of candidates in each group who “strongly agree” that assessments help them demonstrate their potential beyond past experience



Feedback is a major value-add.

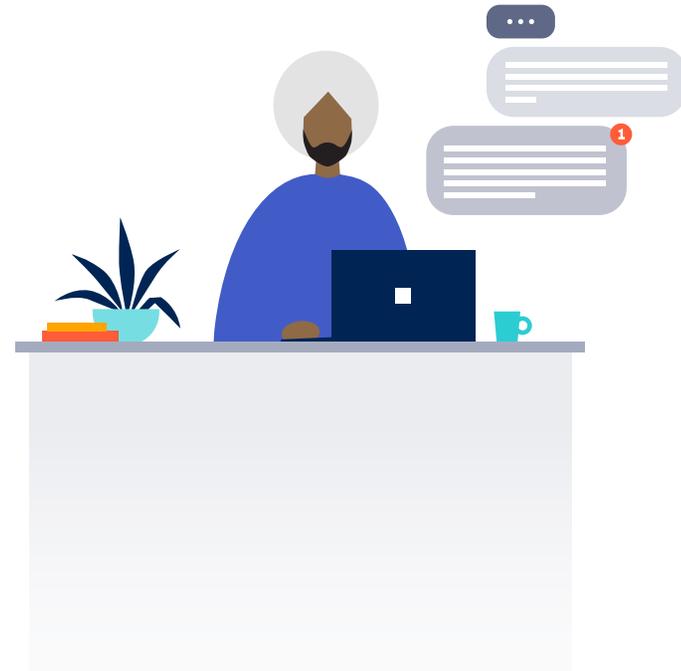
Feedback is one of the cornerstones of a good candidate experience, so it's no surprise that candidates overwhelmingly prefer to receive feedback on their pre-hire assessments. 91% of candidates agree (77% strongly agree, 14% somewhat agree) that they like receiving feedback on their assessment results.

I like to receive feedback on my assessment results after I'm done.



Key Takeaway

Share feedback whenever you can. It improves the experience for candidates, and it gives them something in exchange for the time and effort they put into applying for the role.



On average, candidates prefer game-based assessments.

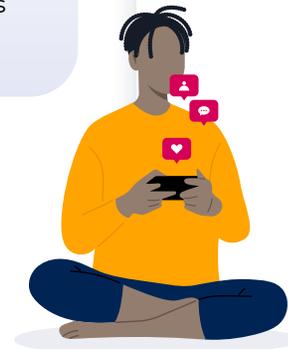
Game-based assessments represent a newer way to make the assessment experience more interactive and engaging. But do candidates actually prefer them to more traditional assessments? Most candidates do, with 26% strongly agreeing and 25% somewhat agreeing that they'd prefer game-based assessments over traditional assessments.

Preferences varied widely by group. Candidates in the Technology and Retail industries were more likely to prefer game-based assessments. Asian and Black candidates were more likely to prefer them over White candidates. And younger candidates favored games much more frequently than older candidates.

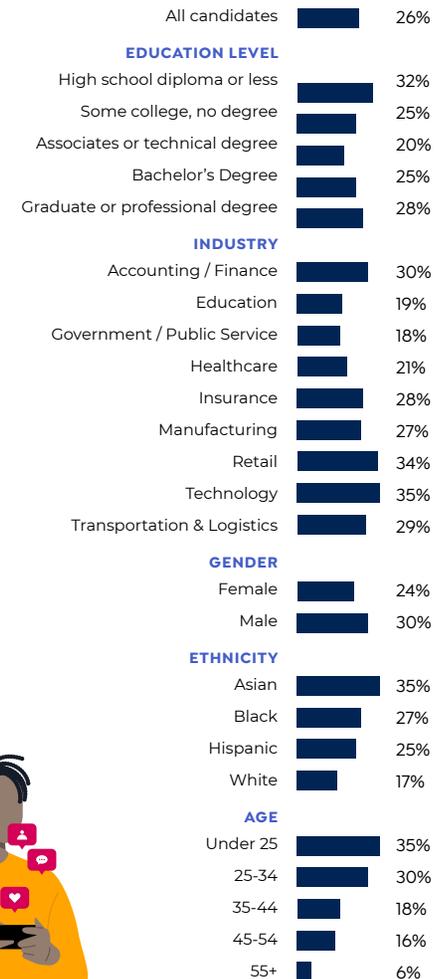
I prefer game-based assessments over traditional question and answer assessments



Key Takeaway
 Game-based assessments won't appeal to every candidate in every industry. But for the right audiences, game-based assessments can enhance the candidate experience and help your organization stand out as an employer of choice.



Percentage of candidates in each group who "strongly agree" that they prefer game-based assessments



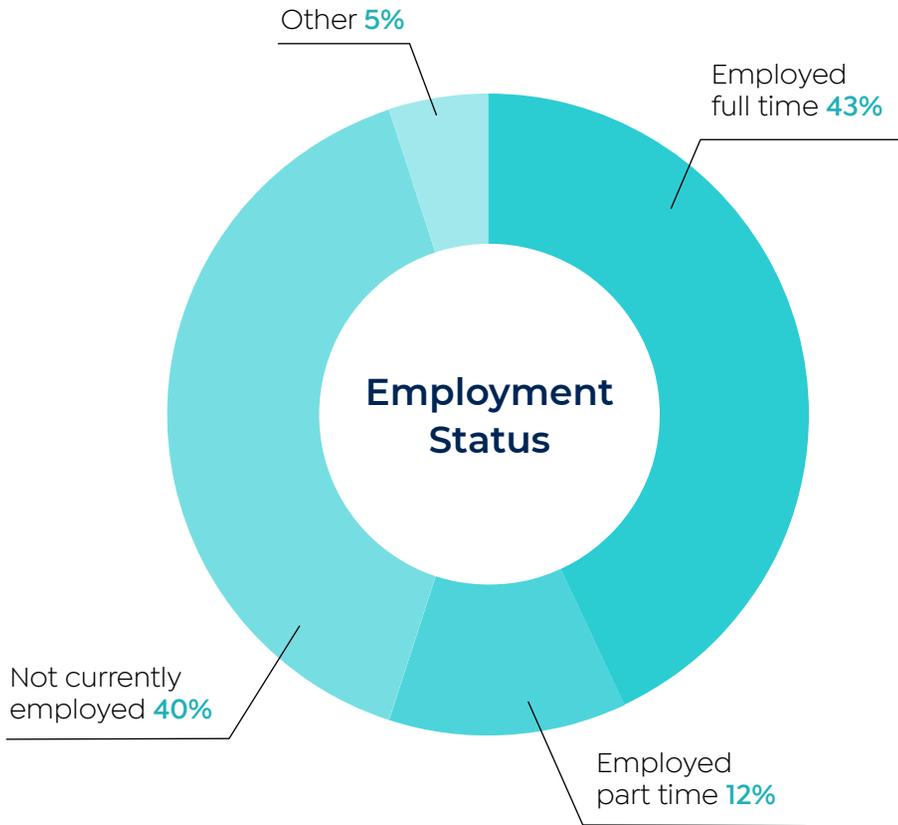
Survey Respondents



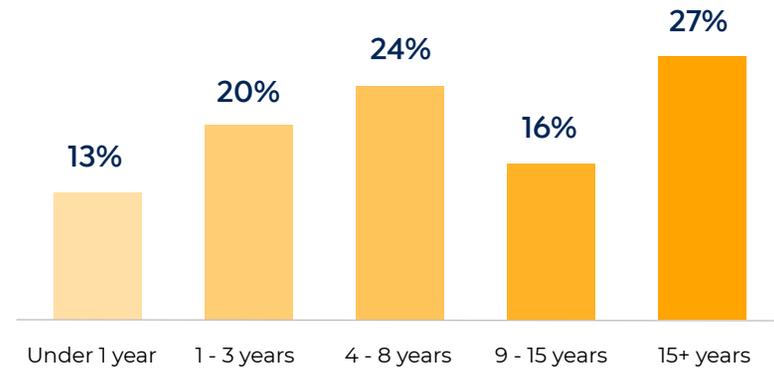
This report is based on a survey of 1,967 job candidates, collected in April 2022.

Read on to learn more about them.

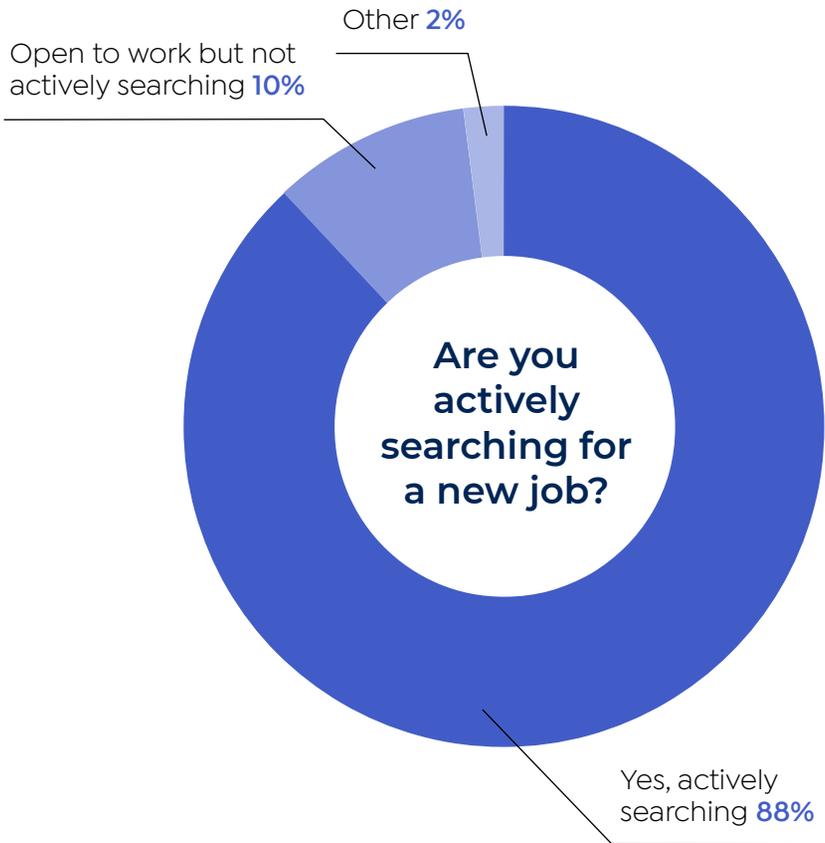
Employment Status



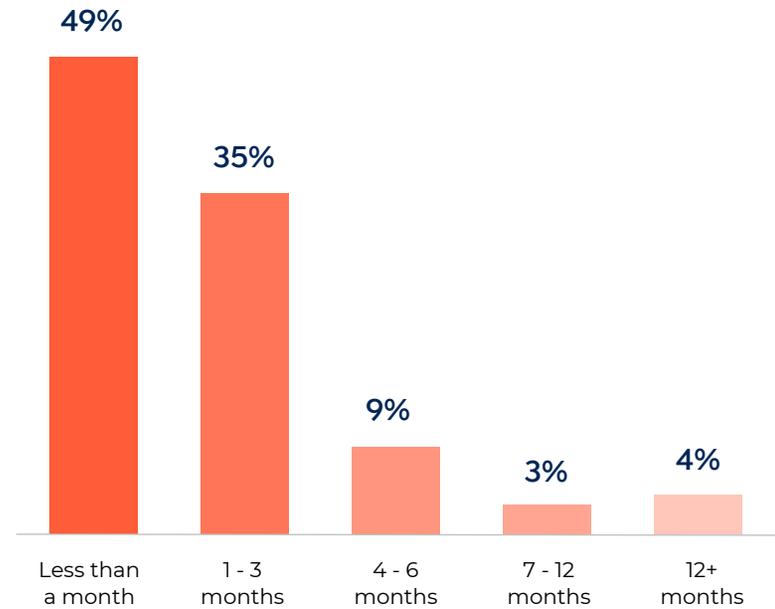
Years in the Workforce

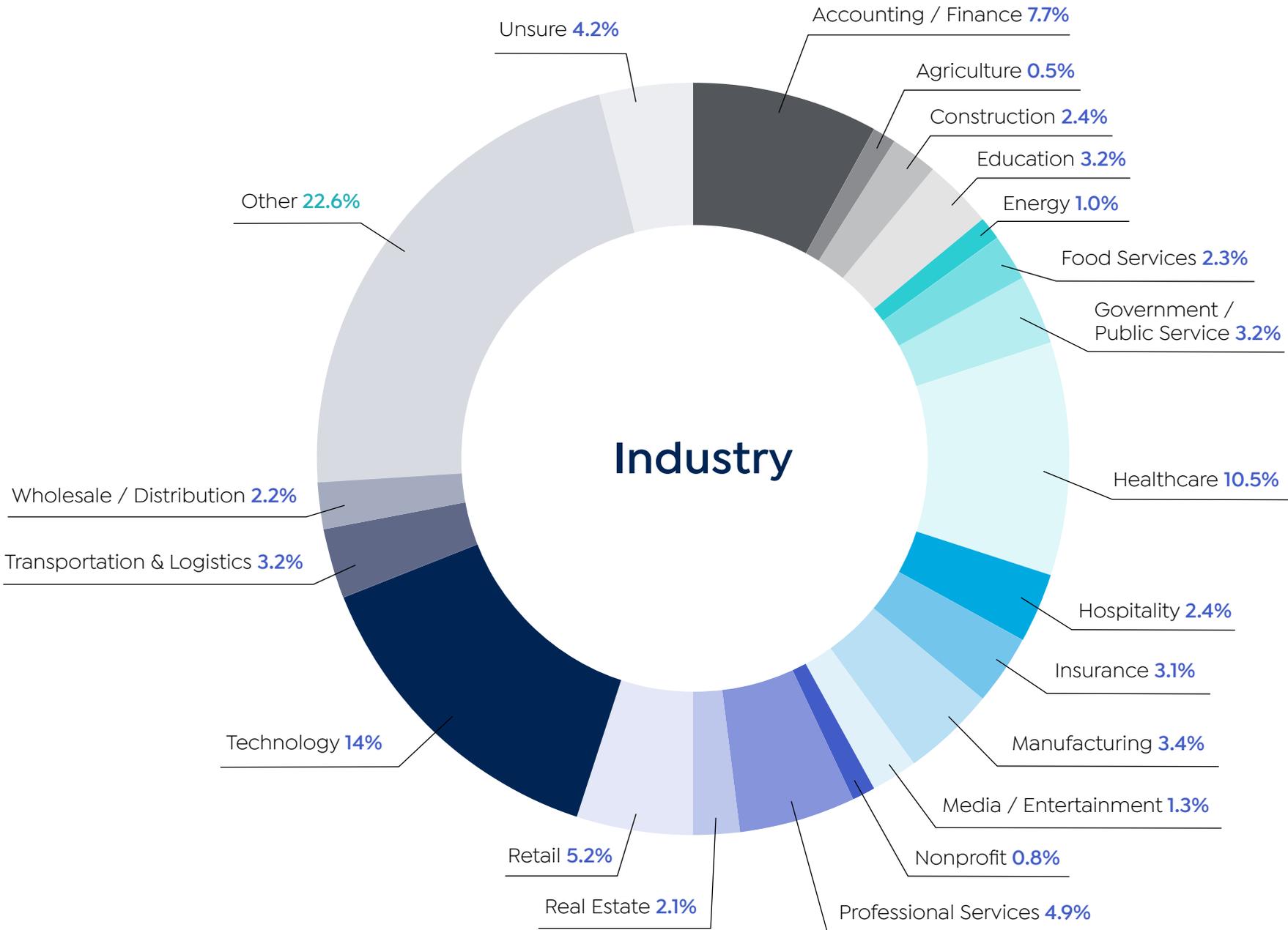


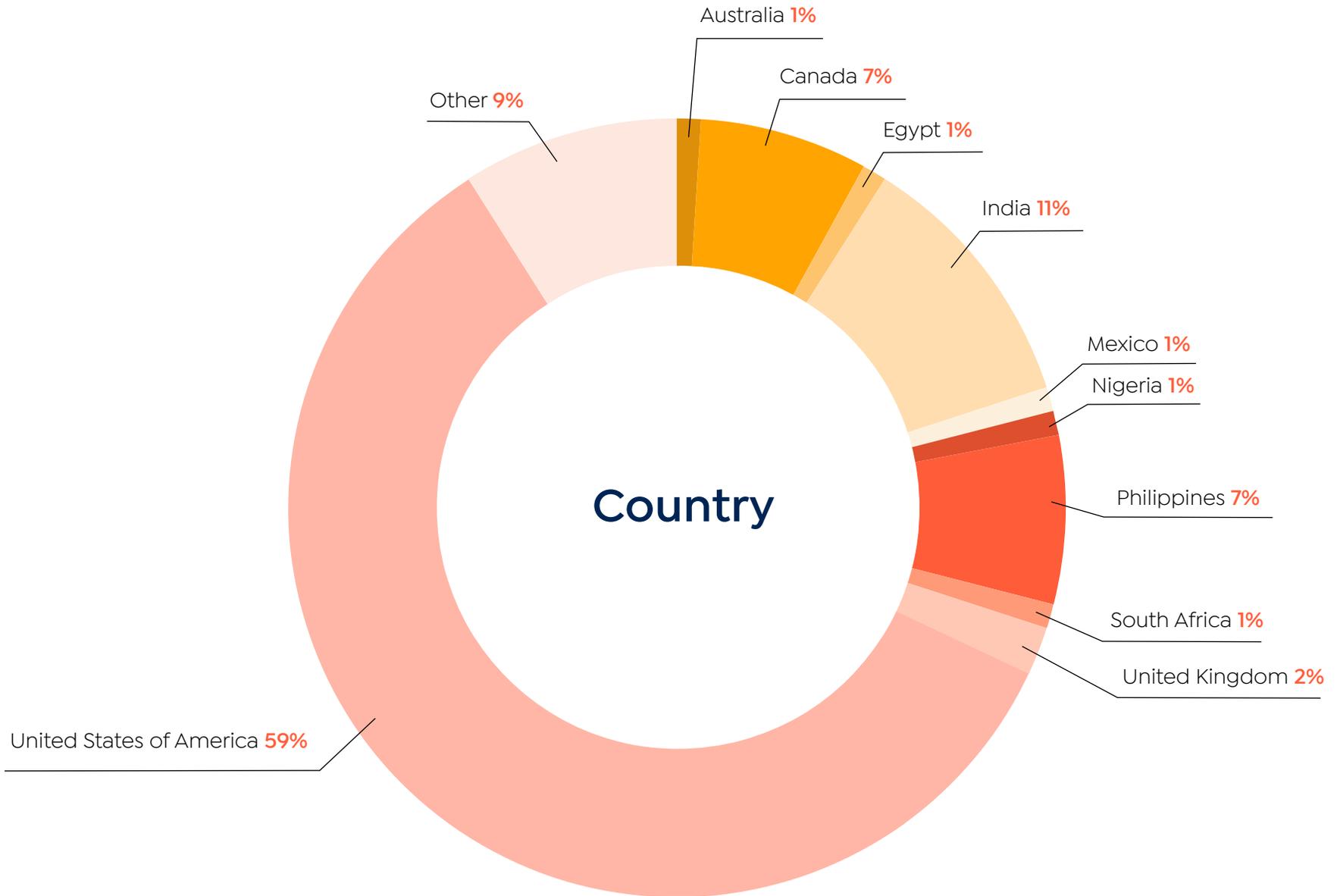
Job Search Status

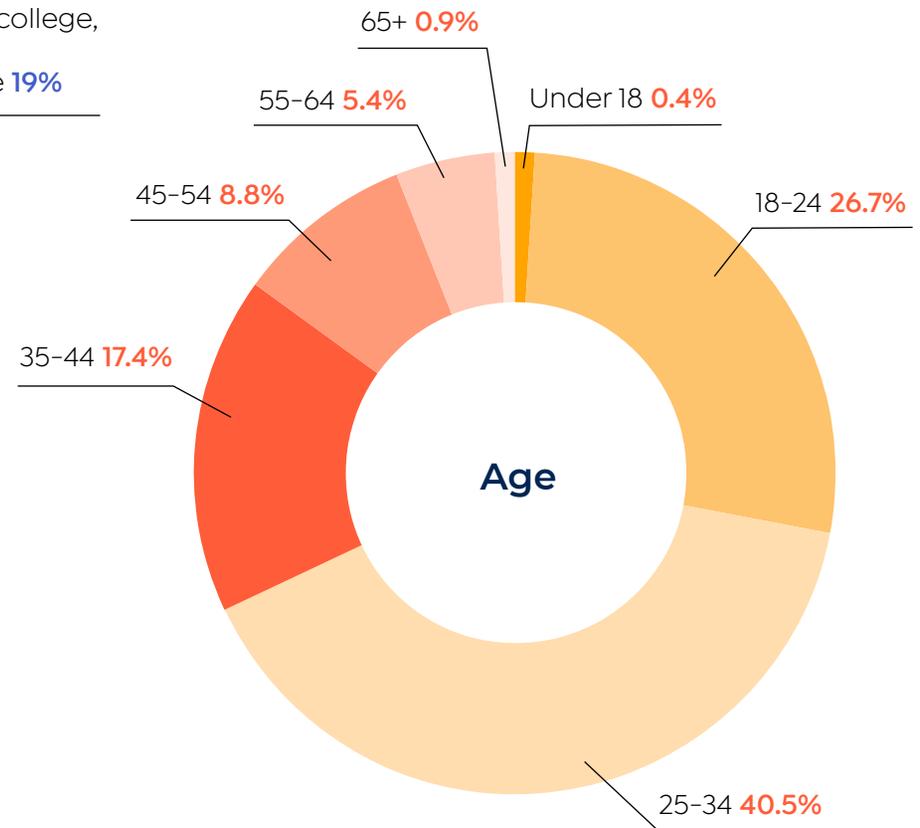
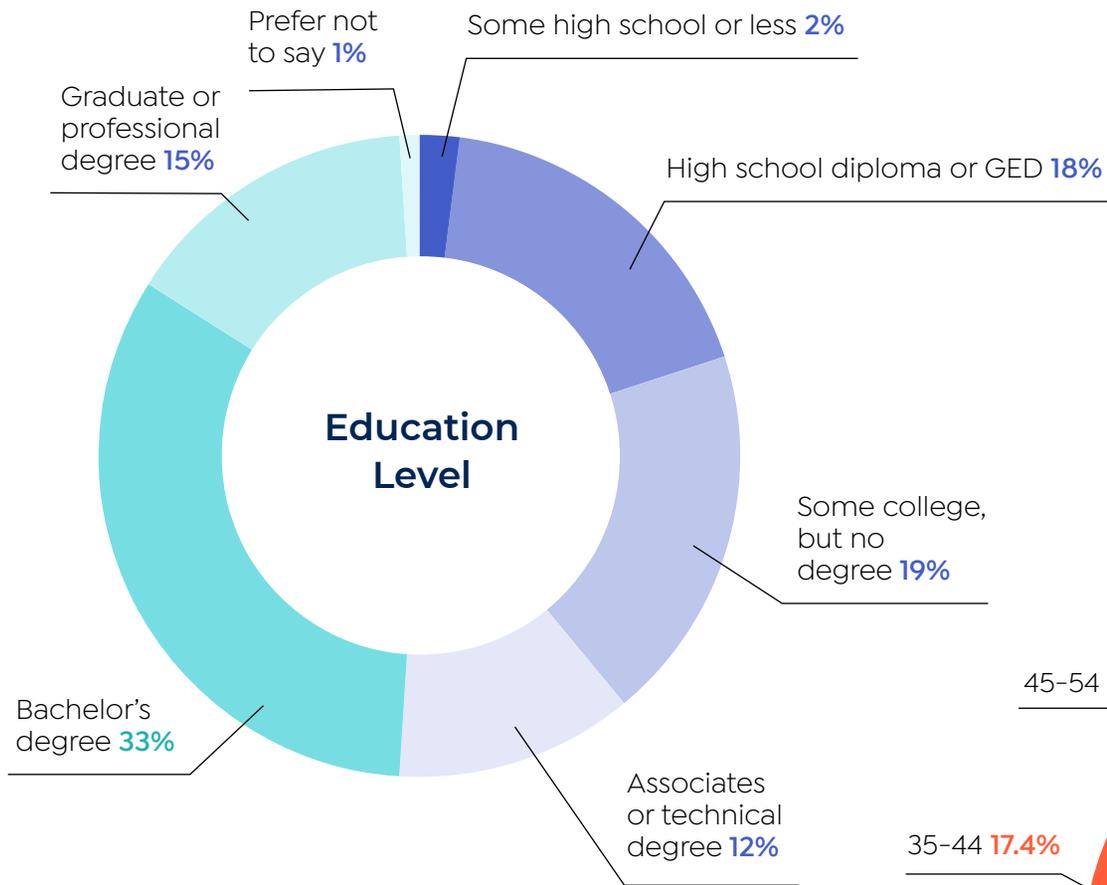


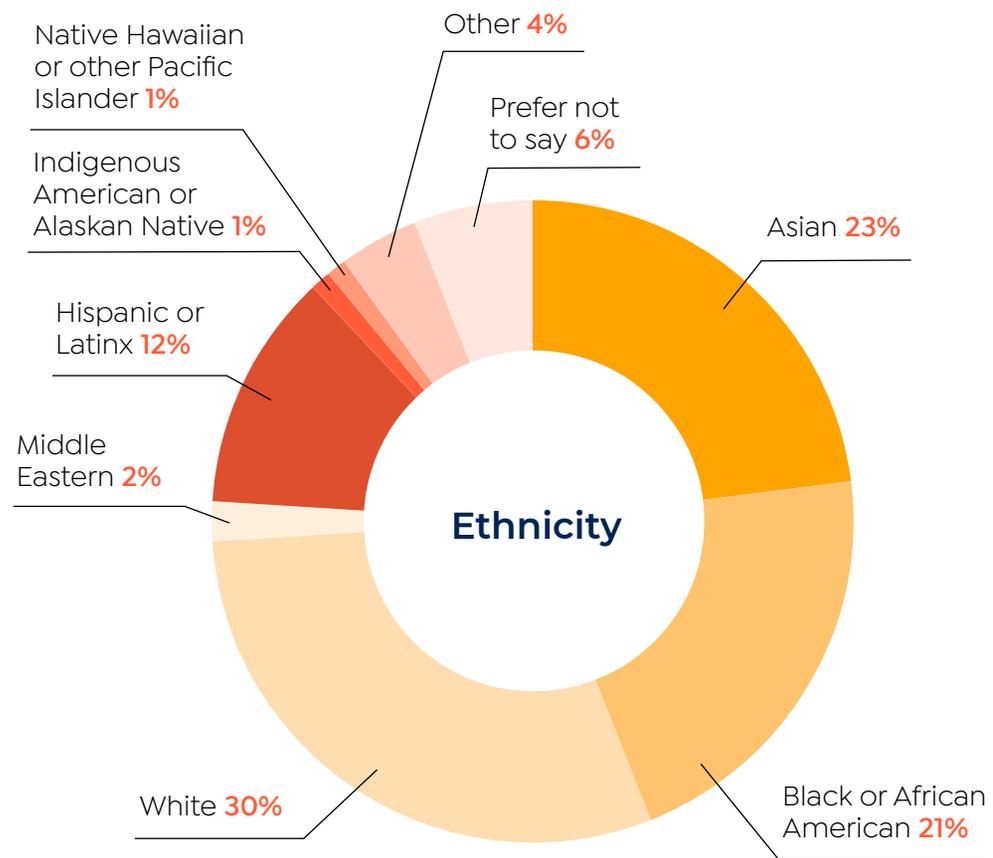
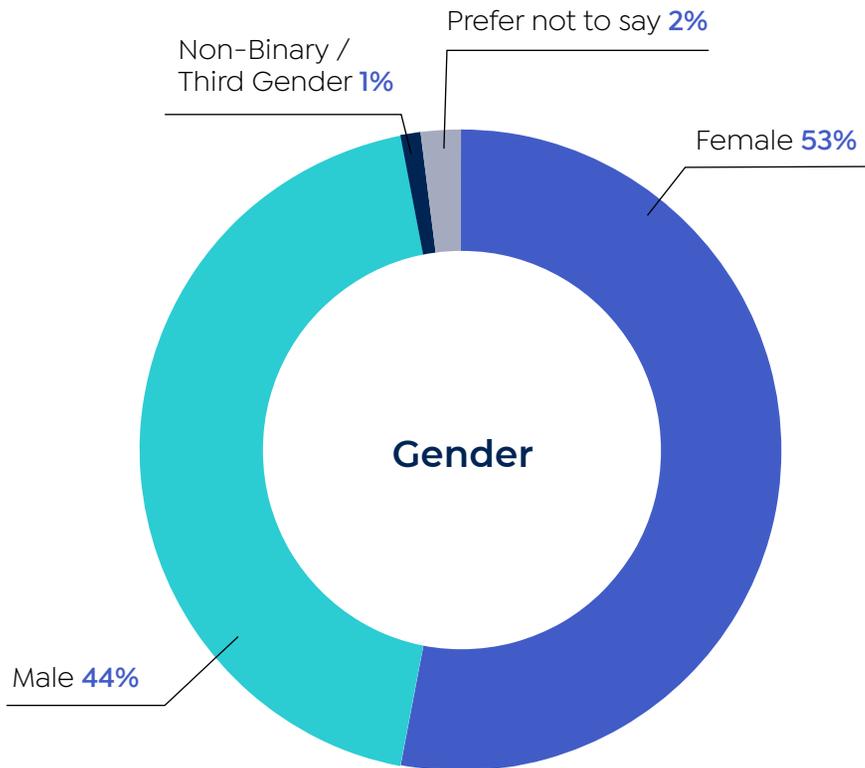
How long have you been looking for a new job?











Drive Talent Success with Criteria

Criteria is a talent success company that helps organizations make more objective, evidence-based talent decisions that both reduce bias and drive outcomes. Our world-leading tools include a comprehensive suite of rigorously validated assessments and decision-making tools that highlight the potential in every job candidate while providing an experience that candidates love.

