



# NSHSS Scholar 2014 Millennial Career Survey Results

## *The Emerging Workforce: Generational Trends*

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THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS

The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) is an international honor society recognizing outstanding academic excellence of high school and college scholars globally. NSHSS presents its seventh annual survey results exploring the opinions of over 12,000 high school students, college students, and young professionals surveyed in March 2014. The findings chart the preferences and attitudes of high-achieving millennials in the areas of career choices, employers, workplace environment, technology, communications, and educational goals. The findings can help yield better insights into developing strategies for employers regarding generational differences in the workplace and for engaging the emerging talent pipeline.

### **About the Society**

A key attribute of NSHSS members is diversity of culture, ethnicity, religion, and thought. The membership currently numbers 1 million scholars representing over 160 countries. Members range from high school and college to young professionals who have an academic GPA minimum of 3.5. Forty percent joined with a GPA of 3.7 or higher. Of the total membership, 49% identify themselves as non-white.

### **Methodology and Background**

The NSHSS millennial survey has been conducted online since 2008, emailed to all lifetime members.

- Over 12,000 students, ages 15-27, participated in the 2014 survey, answering 29 questions.
- The survey field period lasted for 2 weeks (March 10-23).
- Approximately 79% of respondents are currently in high school (17% are college age, and 4% are in graduate school or young professionals).
- The largest geographical responses are from California, Texas, Florida, New York, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey.
- The survey results were analyzed by an independent external research consultant.
- The data is statistically robust (with a 95% confidence level and +/- 1% margin of error).
- Results should not be taken to be representative of all millennials. The millennial survey results represent the views of the NSHSS members responding to the survey.

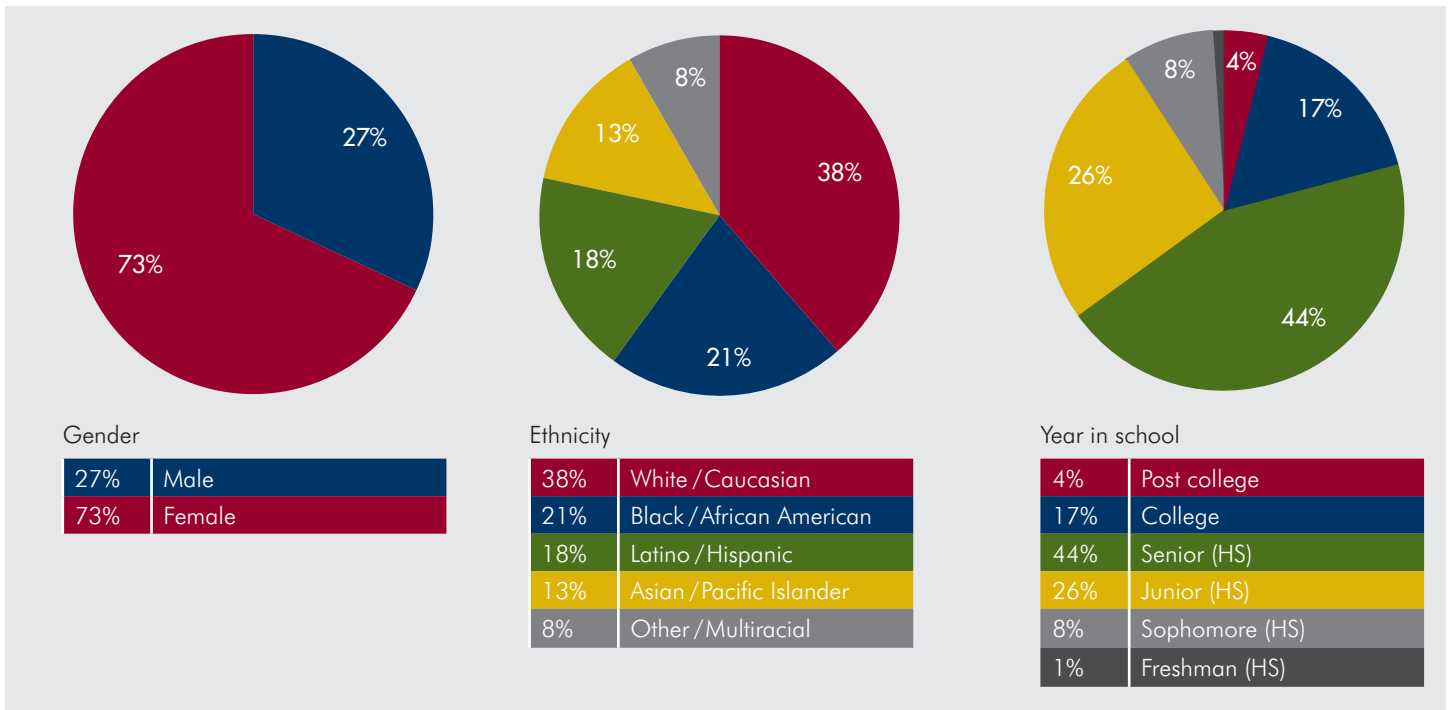


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## Participant Profile

The respondents reflect the diversity of NSHSS and are college-bound high school students, currently enrolled college students, and recent college graduates. Of the respondents, 60% identify themselves as non-white. The majority of the respondents were

high schools students in the 11th and 12th grades, predominantly female, and residing in the United States. Of the 12,000 respondents, 24% indicated they are or will be the first generation in their family to enroll in college.



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## Some Key Findings

- A growing number of respondents indicate that they are multi-lingual, with nearly 21% being fluent in Spanish.
- Respondents are seriously thinking about long-range educational plans — 80% indicate they expect to attend graduate school, considering the following degree programs in order: medicine, engineering, business, law.
- Community engagement — a large percentage (77%) indicate they are actively involved in their communities through volunteerism.
- Respondents have been consistent over the past years in college major and career plans. They continue to indicate they are STEM-focused. Their strongest interests in college majors include in order: medical and health-related fields, sciences, engineering/technology, business, and psychology. The career fields they expect to work in reflect these majors closely for the most part: medicine and health-related fields, sciences, engineering/technology, and business. However, 14% indicate they expect to work in a field related to the arts/media/entertainment, while only 8% indicate they want to major in those areas. Ten percent plan to work in government service or politics, but only 4% plan to major in political science. Eleven percent plan to work in an education field, but only 5% plan to major in education.
- Health-related employers and technology employers continue to rank highly as preferred companies. Of the top 25 ranked companies, seven are hospitals or health service companies. St Jude's Children's Hospital has ranked #1 for the past two years, replacing Google as the overall 2012 top choice. Technology companies consistently rank very highly — Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Amazon are in the top 25, and Facebook follows at #33. The Walt Disney Company had ranked first for four years from 2008-2011, then dropped to #5 in 2012 moving up to 2nd place in 2013 and 3rd in 2014. Two retail stores rank in the top 25: Nordstrom moving from #33 last year to #18 in 2014 and Abercrombie & Fitch ranking #23.
- Among the top 10 ranked companies, gender, age-group, and ethnicity are fairly consistent in selections. Among the top 25 companies selected as preferred, marked differences in selections by gender include higher rankings by females for Children's Health Care

of Atlanta, *The New York Times*, Abercrombie & Fitch, Teach for America, Starbucks, Kaiser Permanente, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and Nordstrom. In the top 25 preferred by males, SONY, Microsoft, Lockheed Martin, IBM, Intel, Major League Baseball, General Electric, Ford Motor Co., and Mercedes-Benz, outranked choices by females.

- Diverse respondents' rankings (compared to the overall rankings) were closely consistent with overall rankings. One noticeable trend among the top 25 companies selected by diverse students is that DreamWorks Animation SKG improved with this group in its rankings from #20 in 2013 to #9 in 2014.

## Of the top 25 ranked companies, seven are hospitals or health service companies.

- Responses among high school and post high school are fairly consistent in the top rankings; however, among the top 25, high schoolers ranked Abercrombie & Fitch much higher, while college students ranked Amazon and Teach for America higher, and both groups ranked *The New York Times* among the top 20.
- Students expressed a strong interest in working for U.S. government agencies (49%) and in U.S. military branches. Three branches of the military ranked in the top 25: the U.S. Air Force at #17, the U.S. Army at #24, and the U.S. Navy at #25. The U.S. Army has improved from 29 to 24 this year. Government agencies ranked in the top 25 include the FBI at #6, the CIA at #10, the U.S. State Department at #13, and the National Security Agency at #14. The NSA has held its own in the rankings, actually improving from 2013, when it was selected as #17.
- These millennials anticipate that internships are key in helping prepare for their future careers. Nearly 85% have participated or expect to participate in an internship during college. Of these, 90% indicate that the most important thing they hope to gain from an internship is development of skills.

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## Top 200 Preferred Companies

Respondents were asked to rank their preferred companies to work for and selected from a list of 220 companies. The list of companies was created by combining the 2012 – 2014 *Fortune* 100 Best Companies to Work For, the 2012 – 2014 *DiversityInc* Top 50 Companies for Diversity, selected companies from *Fortune's* Global 500, and popular write-in choices from prior surveys. Respondents were given the opportunity to select up to three companies and were also allowed to write in choices. Results available for further review include rankings by gender, age group, and diverse/non-diverse rankings.

**Note: Companies with identical rankings are tied in responses.**  
**— indicates not ranked in 2013.**

The more popular choices continue to reflect interests in technology and health fields. In 2013, Google dropped from first place in 2012 to 4th as the most preferred employer. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital has ranked number one for two years, with 7 of the top 25 companies being hospitals or health service companies and organizations. Teach for America remains a popular choice among college students, ranking #26 overall. Some dramatic improvements in rankings over last year's results include: Duke Energy (from #98 to #56); U.S. Coast Guard (from #117 to #85); Thermo Fisher Scientific (from #107 to #89); PepsiCo (from #92 to #73); Southern Ohio Medical Center (from #59 to #28); Aflac (from #172 to #123); Sodexo (from #204 to #128), and Xerox Corp. (from #153 to #128).

Employer	Rank	2014	2013	Employer	Rank	2014	2013	Employer	Rank	2014	2013
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital		1	1	U.S. Navy		25	25	WellStar Health System		48	—
Google		2	4	Teach For America		26	21	Whole Foods Market		49	43
Walt Disney Company		3	2	CHG Healthcare Services		27	27	Bank of America		50	36
Apple, Incorporated		4	5	Southern Ohio Medical Center		28	59	Intel		51	40
Local hospital		5	3	Lockheed Martin		29	29	Ford Motor Co.		52	60
FBI		6	6	JPMorgan Chase		30	37	Goldman Sachs		53	47
DreamWorks Animation SKG		7	14	Facebook		31	38	JCPenney		54	47
Health Care Service Corp.		8	8	General Electric		32	47	Dow Chemical		55	63
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta		9	9	Meridian Health		33	42	Duke Energy		56	98
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)		10	7	Mercedes-Benz USA		34	51	Wal-Mart		56	79
Microsoft		11	10	Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.		35	68	Hershey's		57	50
Mayo Clinic		12	11	Scripps Health		36	58	Procter & Gamble		58	78
U.S. State Department		13	12	Delta Airlines		37	44	Northrop Grumman Corp.		59	71
National Security Agency (NSA)		14	17	Atlantic Health Service		38	24	Marriott International		60	75
SONY		15	15	Coca-Cola North America		39	32	New York Life		60	—
The New York Times		16	13	Major League Baseball		40	33	Discovery Communications		61	—
U.S. Air Force		17	18	Blue Cross and Blue Shield		41	26	Target Corp.		62	62
Nordstrom		18	33	CVS Caremark		41	52	U.S. Marine Corps		62	67
UnitedHealth Group		19	19	Johnson & Johnson		41	31	Ernst & Young		63	56
Kaiser Permanente		20	22	IBM Corp.		42	28	Wells Fargo & Co.		64	65
Starbucks		21	23	Exxon Mobil		43	61	Adobe Systems		65	46
Amazon		22	20	Local police department		44	38	Dell		65	56
Abercrombie & Fitch		23	16	L'Oreal		45	44	World Wide Technology, Inc.		66	73
U.S. Army		24	29	Ohio Health		46	—	Build-A-Bear Workshop		67	64
				Aéropostale		47	40	Baptist Health South Florida		68	55
				Boston Scientific		48	35	Chevron Corporation		69	74
								Siemens		70	69



Employer	Rank	2014	2013
Research in Motion (RIM)		71	82
Time Warner		72	75
PepsiCo		73	92
American Express		74	66
Four Seasons Hotels		75	88
Genentech		76	69
Eli Lilly and Company		77	91
Southwest Airlines		77	86
Toyota		78	81
AT&T		79	54
Bayer		80	53
Deloitte		81	80
Hewlett-Packard		82	82
Cisco		83	71
Costco Wholesale		83	95
PricewaterhouseCoopers		83	96
Abbott		84	82
U.S. Coast Guard		85	117
MGM Mirage		86	100
Hasbro		87	114
Verizon Communication		88	93
Merck & Co.		89	77
Thermo Fisher Scientific		89	107
Intercontinental Hotels Group		90	93
Recreational Equipment (REI)		90	114
Publix Super Markets		91	123
Zappos.com		91	99
General Mills		92	163
Hyatt Regency		92	129
Autodesk, Inc.		93	109
Metlife		93	157
NuStar Energy		94	102
Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide		95	129
A.J. O'Connor Associates		96	102
KPMG		97	132
Allstate Insurance Company		98	102
MasterCard Worldwide		98	155
Roche Diagnostics Corporation		98	102
Bright Horizons Family Solutions		99	87
Edward Jones		99	139
State Farm		99	123
Devon Energy		100	117

Employer	Rank	2014	2013
DPR Construction		100	117
Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company		100	127
Viacom		101	111
Kellogg Company		102	161
Monsanto Co.		102	172
FedEx Corporation		103	129
PCL Construction Enterprises, Inc.		103	147
Pratt & Whitney		103	122
The Boston Consulting Group, Inc.		103	88
McDonald's		104	135
U.S. Census Bureau		105	147
Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants		106	135
Mattel		106	135
The Everett Clinic		106	113
Hyundai Corporation		107	139
Kraft Foods		107	109
Chesapeake Energy		108	90
Deutsche Bank		108	139
Chrysler Group		109	125
Navy Federal Credit Union		109	195
Prudential Financial		109	168
Arnold & Porter LLP		110	102
Booz Allen Hamilton		110	155
National Instruments		110	134
W. L. Gore & Associates		110	139
Kroger		111	172
Mars, Inc.		111	172
Net/App		111	—
United Water		111	117
Wegmans Food Markets		111	163
Balfour Beatty Construction		112	147
LinkedIn		112	157
Local fire department		112	100
Capital One		113	111
Citigroup		113	96
ConocoPhillips		113	116
USAA		113	157
CH2M Hill		114	125
Aetna		115	117
Express Scripts		115	191
Cigna		116	147

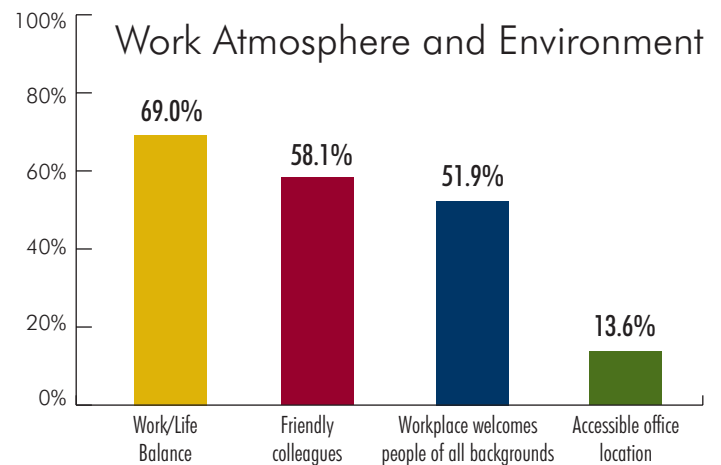
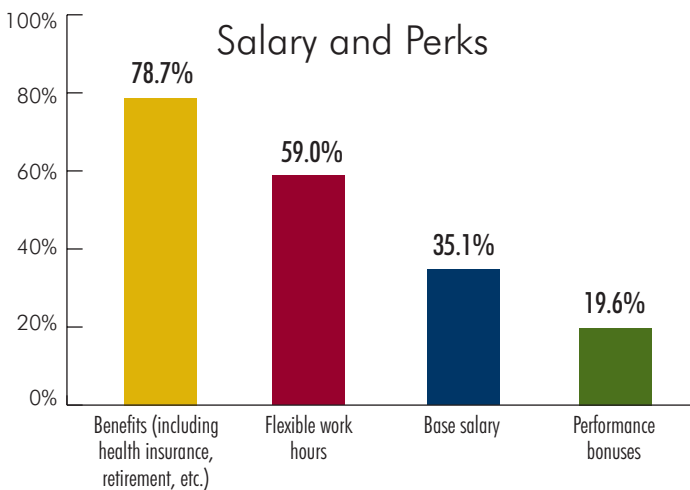
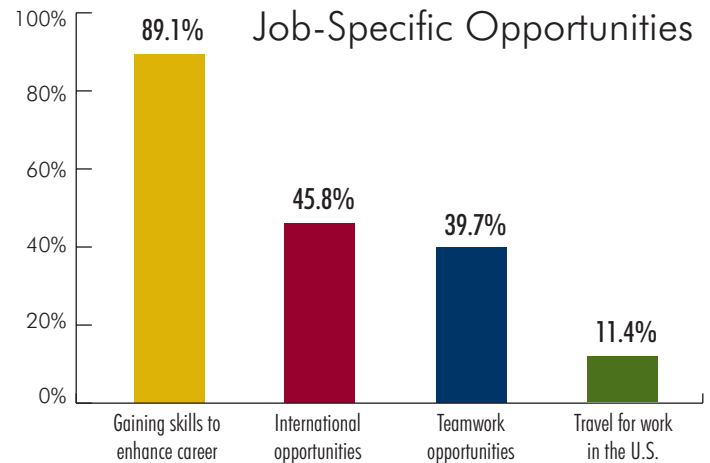
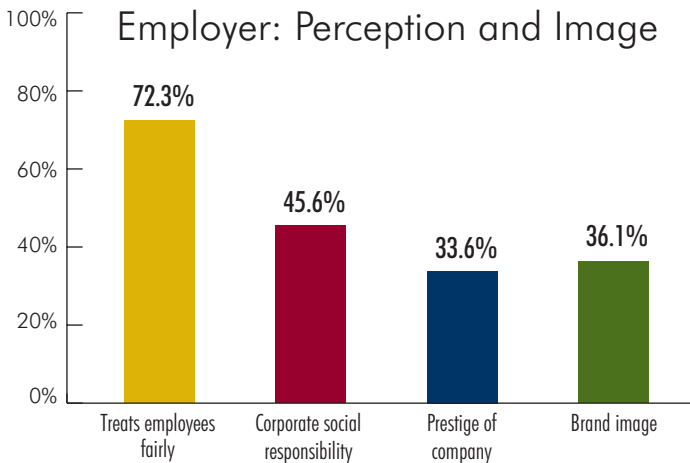
Employer	Rank	2014	2013
S.C. Johnson & Son		116	127
Cooley LLP		117	—
Home Depot		117	168
Nielsen		117	168
Qualcomm		117	180
UPS		117	139
Cox Communications		118	132
HTC		118	139
Accenture		119	108
Burns & McDonnell		119	147
Colgate-Palmolive Company		119	139
Cummins		119	157
SAS		119	172
Stryker		119	153
Tesoro Corporation		119	—
Marathon Oil		120	147
Novo Nordisk		120	—
ARI, Automotive Resources International		121	163
Hilcorp Energy Company		121	163
HSBC – North America		121	180
EOG Resources		122	—
Georgia Pacific		122	187
Rockwell Collins		122	195
Aflac		123	172
Darden Restaurants		123	180
Men's Wearhouse		123	135
TDIndustries		123	191
EMC		124	187
TEKsystems		124	186
ADP		125	180
Air Products		125	139
Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America		125	187
Scottrade		125	172
Ultimate Software		125	172
Alcoa		126	—
Baker Donelson		126	200
Alston & Bird		127	168
American Fidelity Assurance		127	180
Sodexo		127	204
Campbell Soup Company		128	—
Xerox Corporation		128	153

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## Factors in Choosing an Employer

Respondents were also asked about the importance of certain workplace factors when choosing an employer, with options separated into four categories. Students ranked responses on a scale of least-to-most important based on what they most want in an employer.

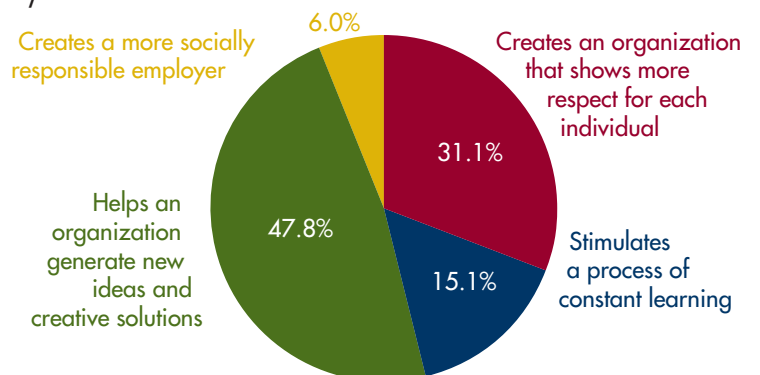
*The factors ranking as most important in each area included fair treatment, strong benefits, opportunities to enhance career skills, and the ability to create a harmonious work/life balance.*



## Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion

**“Today’s youth culture is transparent, authentic, proud and optimistic. In particular, this generation’s influence on diversity and inclusion has completely changed the game in the workforce and in society - forever.”**

**—Todd Corley, Founder, the TAPO Institute and Board Chair, the NSHSS Foundation**



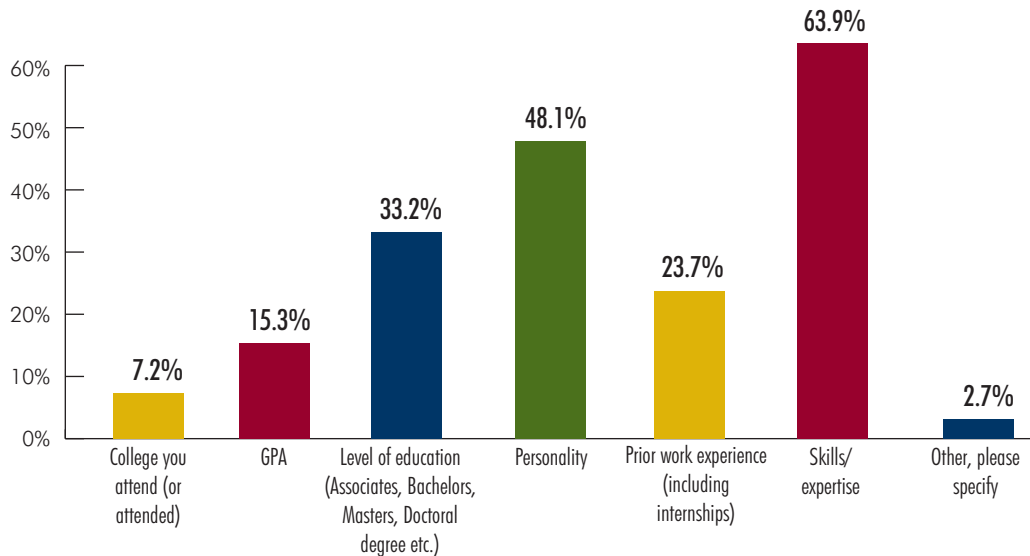


### Qualifications for Employment

Respondents were also asked which characteristics they think most qualify them to work for the employer of their choice. They ranked their opinions of the importance of the college they attended, their GPA, level of education,

personality, prior work experience, skills and experience. The majority (64%) ranked their skills and experience as the most important qualification, followed by personality and level of education.

Which characteristics most qualify you for a job?

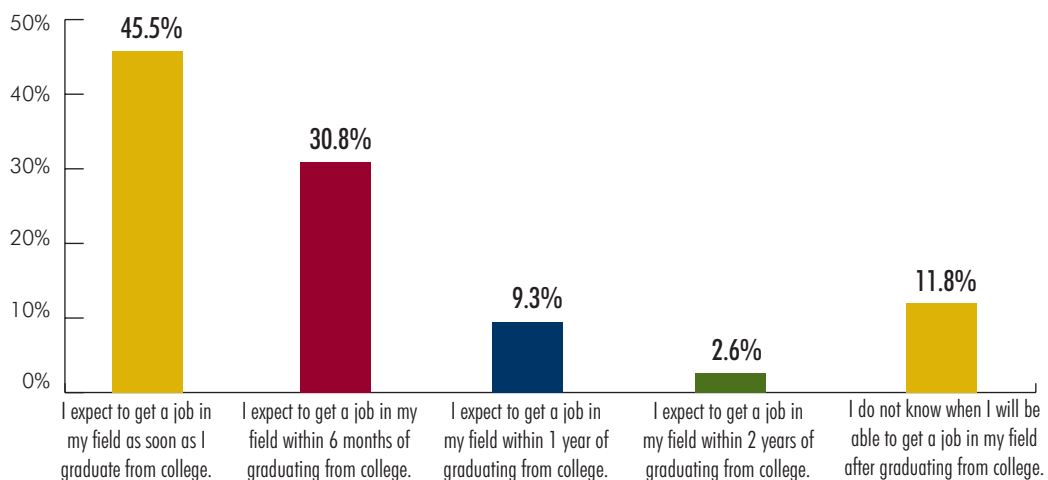


### Economic Expectations

A number of respondents expect to work while in college, 66% indicating that they do or will work while attending college (up from 43% in 2013), and 26% of those indicating they will need to work in college not only to meet their own expenses, but to help meet their family's expenses. Despite the current economic realities, millennials are optimistic.

Respondents expect to become financially independent soon after college, with over 45% expecting to find a job in their field right after college graduation and over 30% expecting to find a job in their field within six months of graduating college. Both of these percentages are consistent with past responses to this question and among both high school and post-high school respondents.

Expectations of length of time to find a job in your field



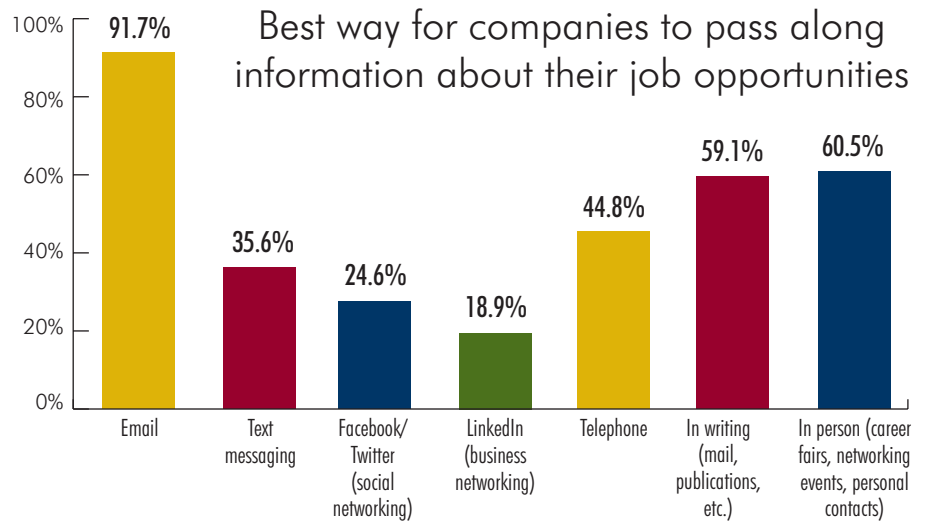
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## Communication with Employers

Respondents were asked how they preferred to be contacted by employers about career opportunities and were allowed to select multiple answers: 91% indicated by email.

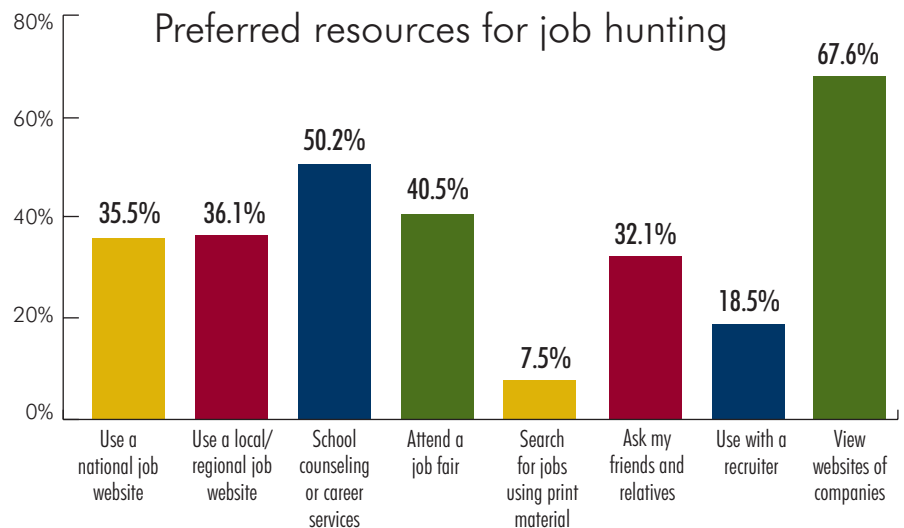
Additionally, they were asked which social/business networks they prefer for interacting with employers. The majority selected Facebook (61.9%) for interaction, but only 26% selected it for learning about job opportunities from potential employers.

Other responses for social media interactions with potential employers include Instagram (18.4%), LinkedIn (34.2%), Twitter (22.9%), and Tumblr (5.0%).



## Job Hunting Resources

When asked to select up to 3 resources they prefer to use in seeking a job, the majority indicated viewing potential employers' websites, followed by personal contact with school counseling or career services.



## Conclusion

These survey respondents represent a segment of the millennial generation that is focused on college and career success, providing a snapshot of this part of the emerging workforce. Currently, the top career interests of this group are STEM fields and business. In the workplace, they hope to find above all, fair treatment, corporate social responsibility, and competitive benefits. They demonstrate a measure of confidence about being able to enter the workforce in their fields soon after completing their education.

As younger millennials move toward college and careers, NSHSS will continue to survey its members annually to chart trends. To receive additional information about NSHSS or the survey, please call Beth Pann, Vice President, (404) 235-5500, ext. 535. ■

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