

2025 Recruitment Trends Unveiled: Insights to Drive Smarter Campus Strategies

Session Speaker

I run community, insights, and brand at RippleMatch. I foster educational programming for the university recruitment community and conduct our research on Gen Z & talent trends. Connect with me on LinkedIn to stay in touch!



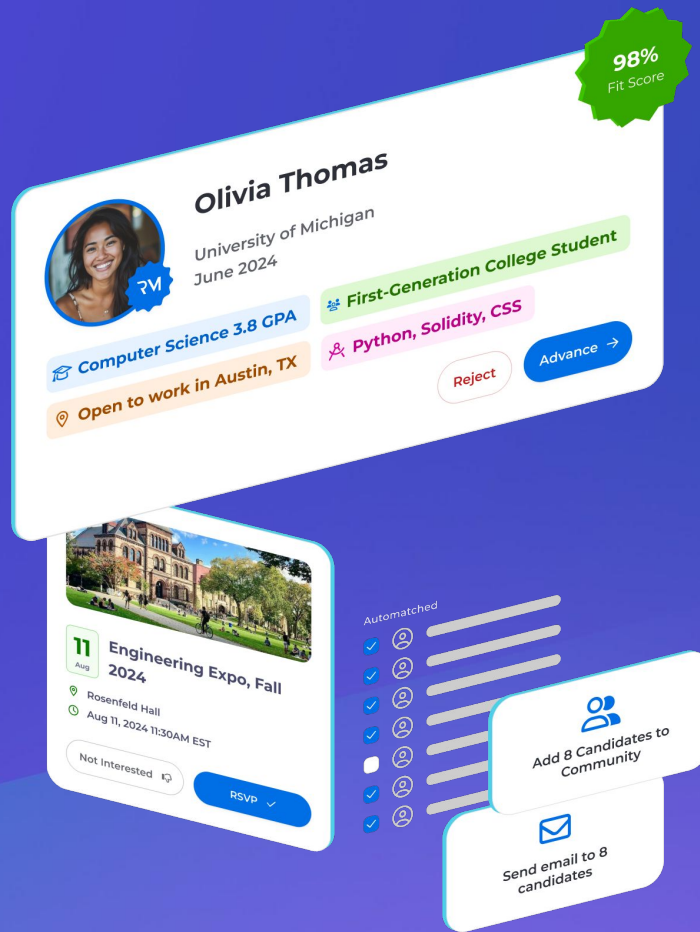
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RIPPLEMATCH

RippleMatch Is The Recruitment Platform That Works For You

RippleMatch is the AI-powered solution for all your early career recruiting needs, empowering your team to consolidate tools, reduce spend, eliminate manual tasks, and transform the candidate experience with faster response times and more intentional connections.



About Today's Data & Trends

We'll be walking through a set of data collected between in November and December 2024 (and earlier for additional context) to provide a picture of what recruitment teams are doing as well as Gen Z students seeking jobs and internships.

Recruiter Pulse Data

We'll be walking through data from the award-winning programs in RippleMatch's Campus Forward Awards. There are 200 total programs, as there are 50 in each size category: 100 or less, 100-200, 200-400, and 400+ early career hires annually. We'll also share some platform activity data.

Candidate Pulse Data

We'll be walking through data of our latest survey of more than 600 candidates, conducted in December 2024, as well as a few past surveys for context. We'll be covering the following topic areas:

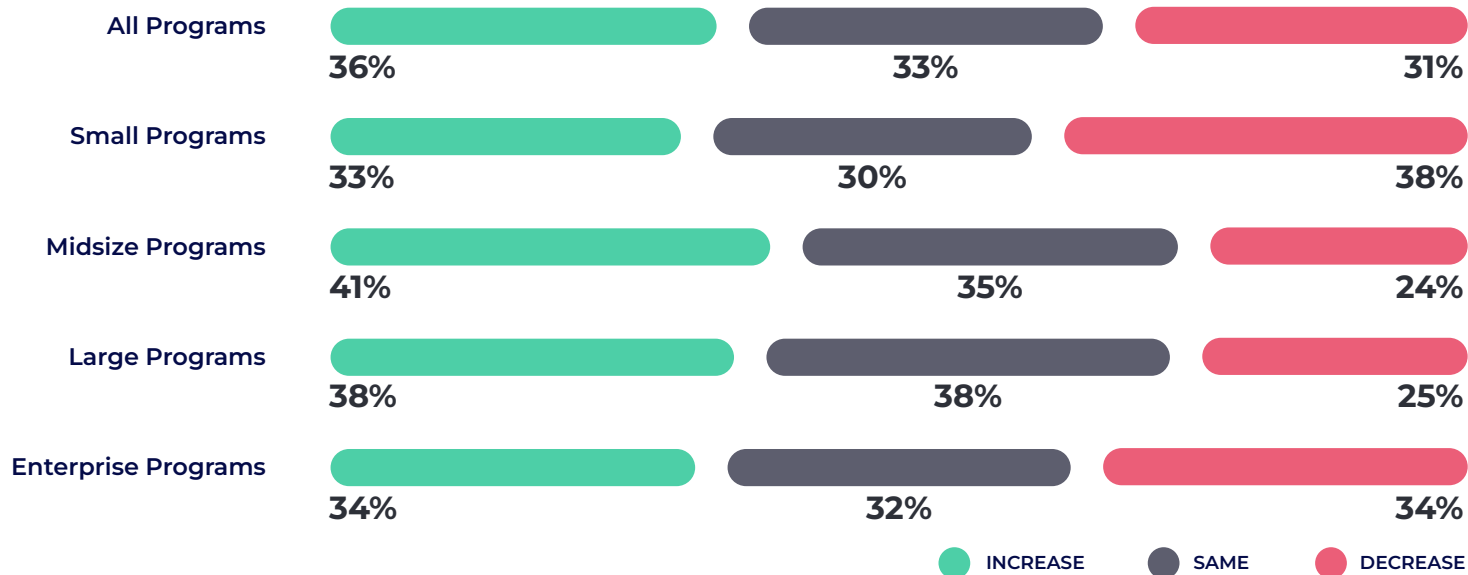
- **How candidates are finding jobs & internships, including AI usage and in-person event attendance**
- **What will influence candidates to accept offers and relocate**

TREND NO.1

2025 Hiring: Headcount is increasing, budgets are not

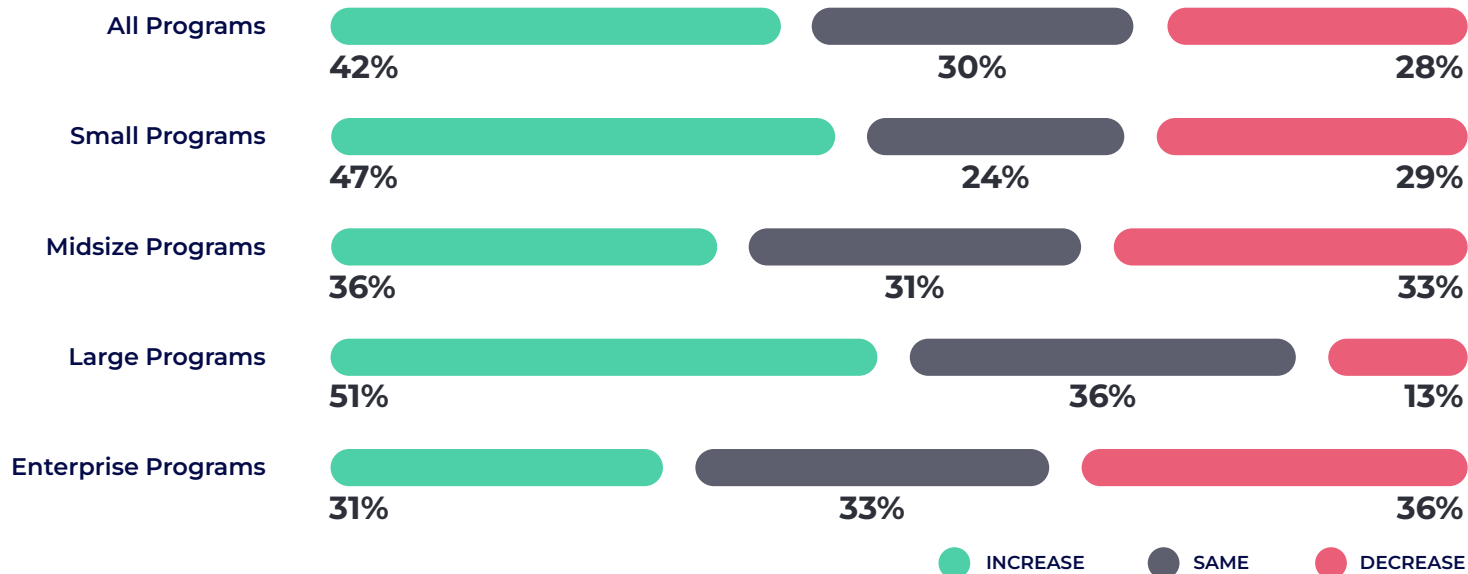
Intern hiring numbers increased or stayed the same for summer 2025

We asked: 'Approximately how many interns for all business units in the United States are you aiming to hire for 2025 vs. what you hired in 2024?'



Many early programs increasing the number of full-time hires compared to previous year

We asked: 'Approximately how many FT hires for all business units in the United States are you aiming to hire for 2025 vs. what you hired in 2024?'



OVERALL BUDGET TRENDS

However, larger budgets will mostly stay the same in 2025 and small budgets may get even smaller

We asked: 'Do you anticipate any changes in your university recruitment budget for next year, 2025?'



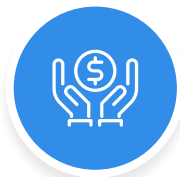
% of teams that selected option

Section Takeaways



Hiring demands grow or stabilize

Most teams are seeing an increase in hiring or are staying the same – only $\frac{1}{3}$ are seeing a decrease



Budgets are not increasing

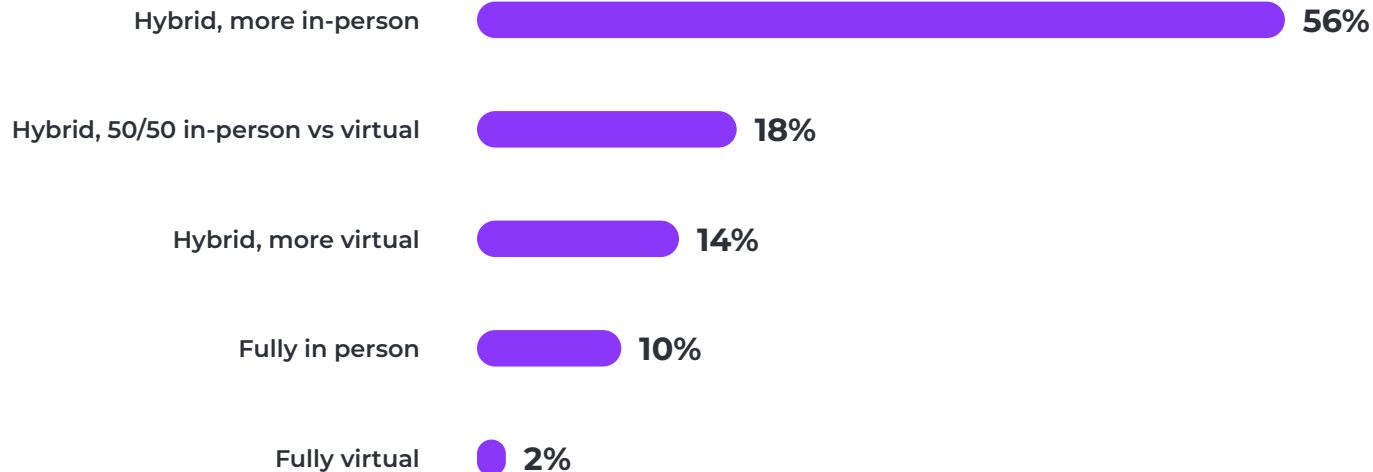
Data from our spending survey shows that budgets are staying the same or decreasing

TREND NO. 2

Hybrid strategies strive for refinement in a challenging landscape

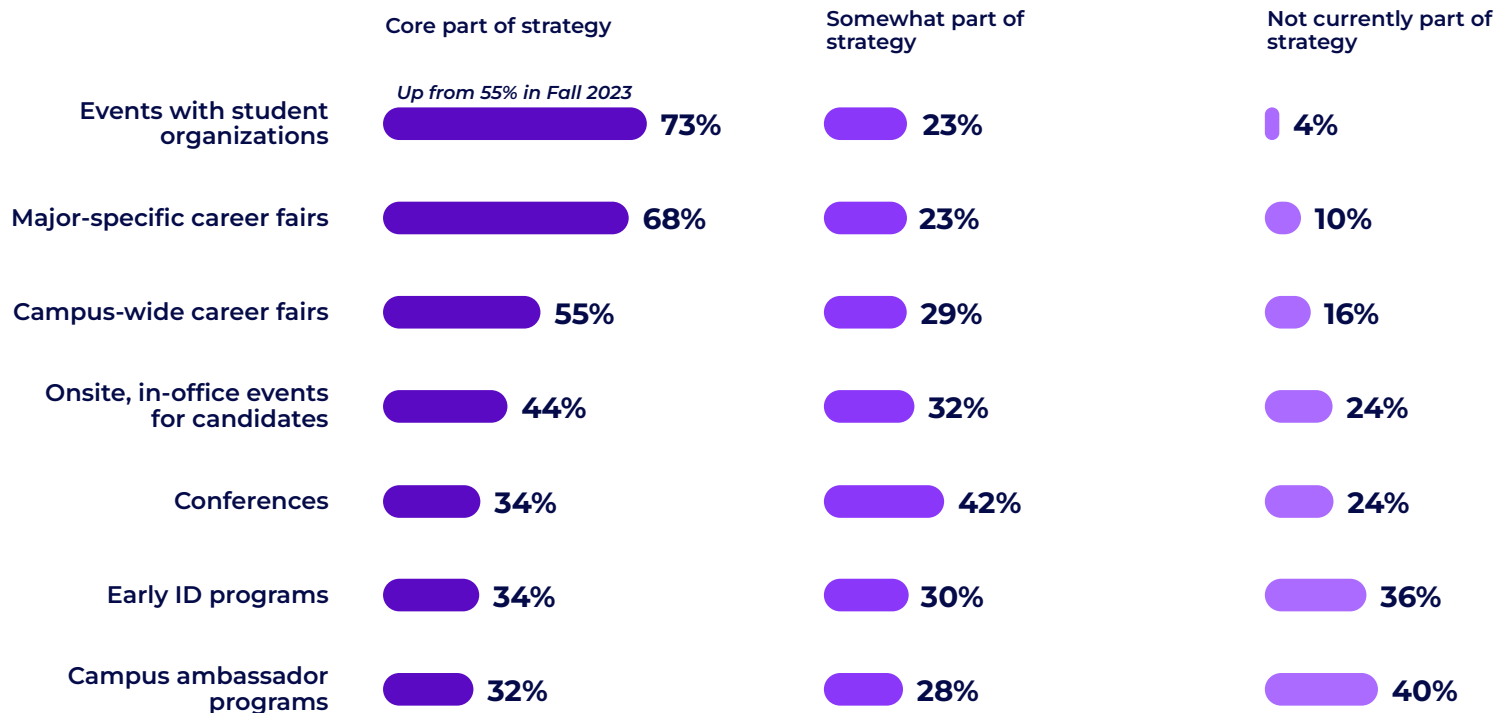
Nearly all teams embrace hybrid recruitment, majority lean in person

We asked: 'Regarding your early career recruitment strategies, please select the most accurate breakdown of the strategies (virtual vs. in-person) you are executing during the Fall 2024-Spring 2025 recruitment season.'



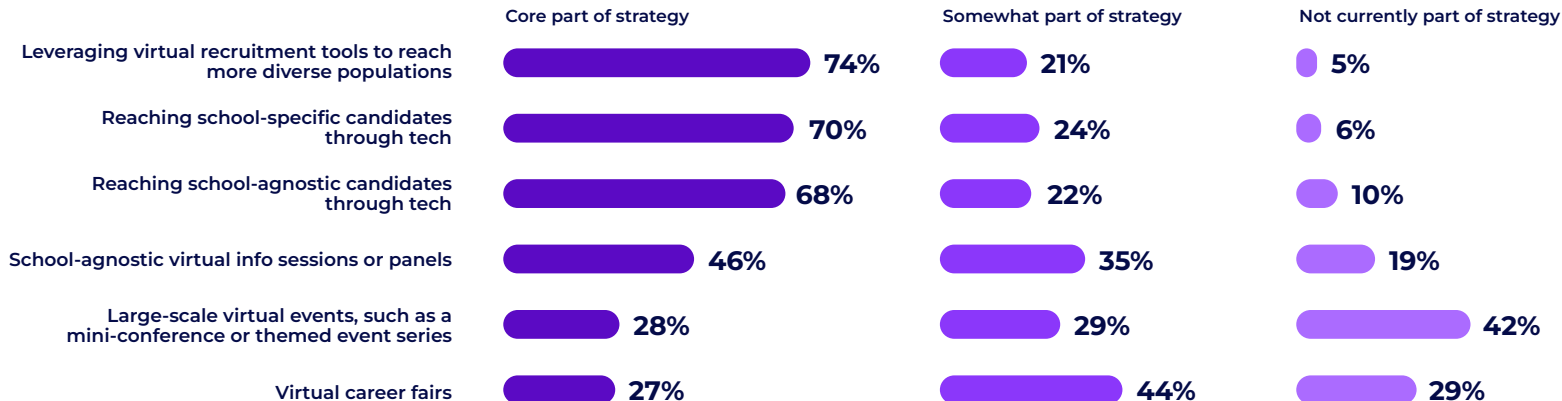
Tailored approach is key for in-person recruitment

We asked: 'Please share additional context on the key elements of your recruitment strategy.'

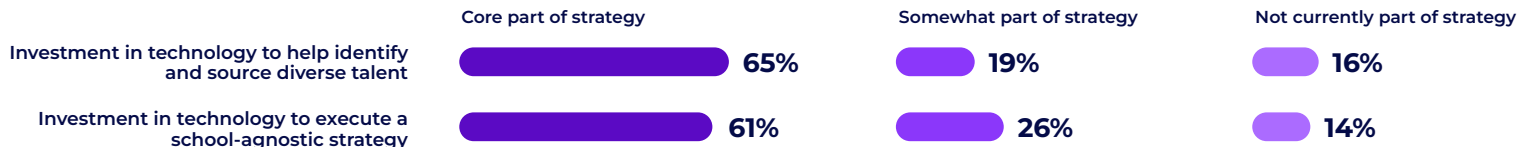


Digital sourcing has emerged as a key way to build pipeline diversity

We asked: 'Please share additional context on the key elements of your recruitment strategy.'

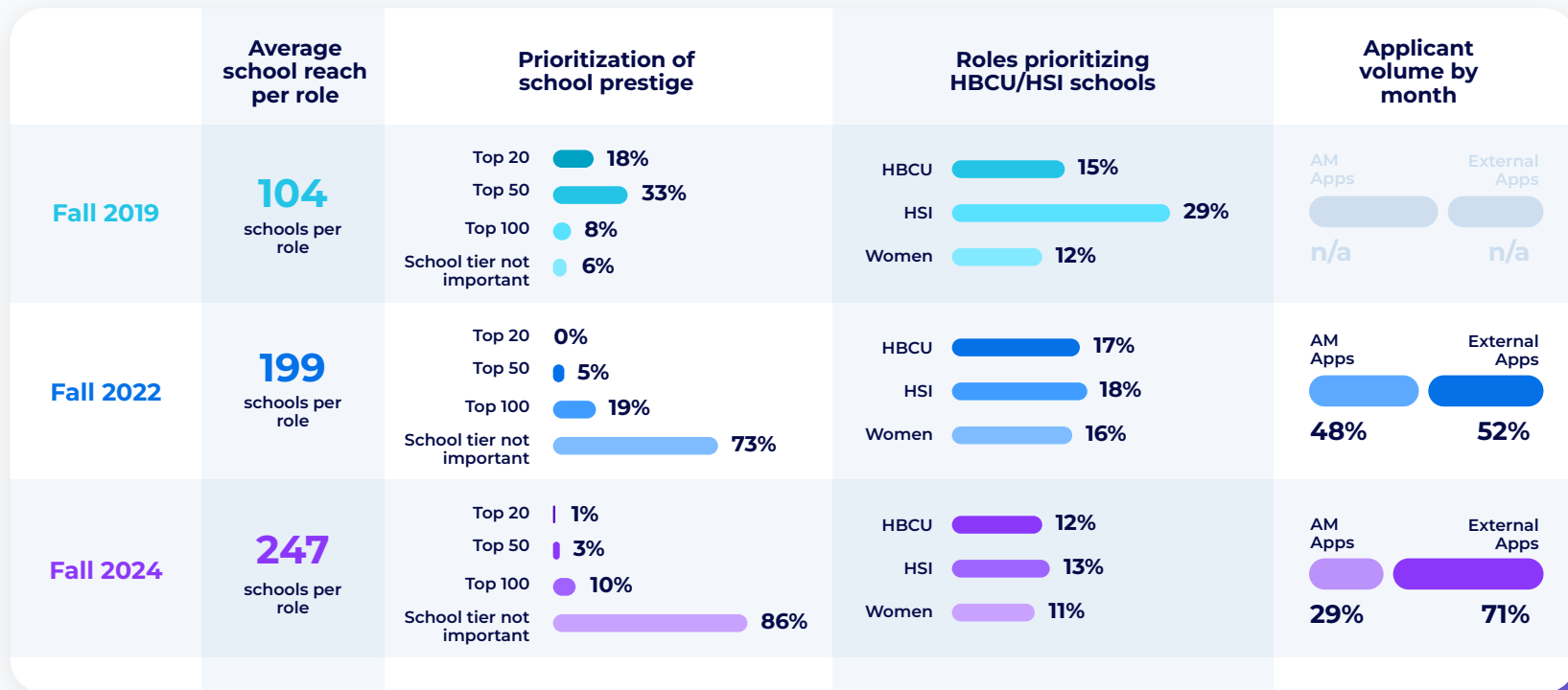


We asked: 'Please share additional context on the key elements of your diversity recruitment strategy.'



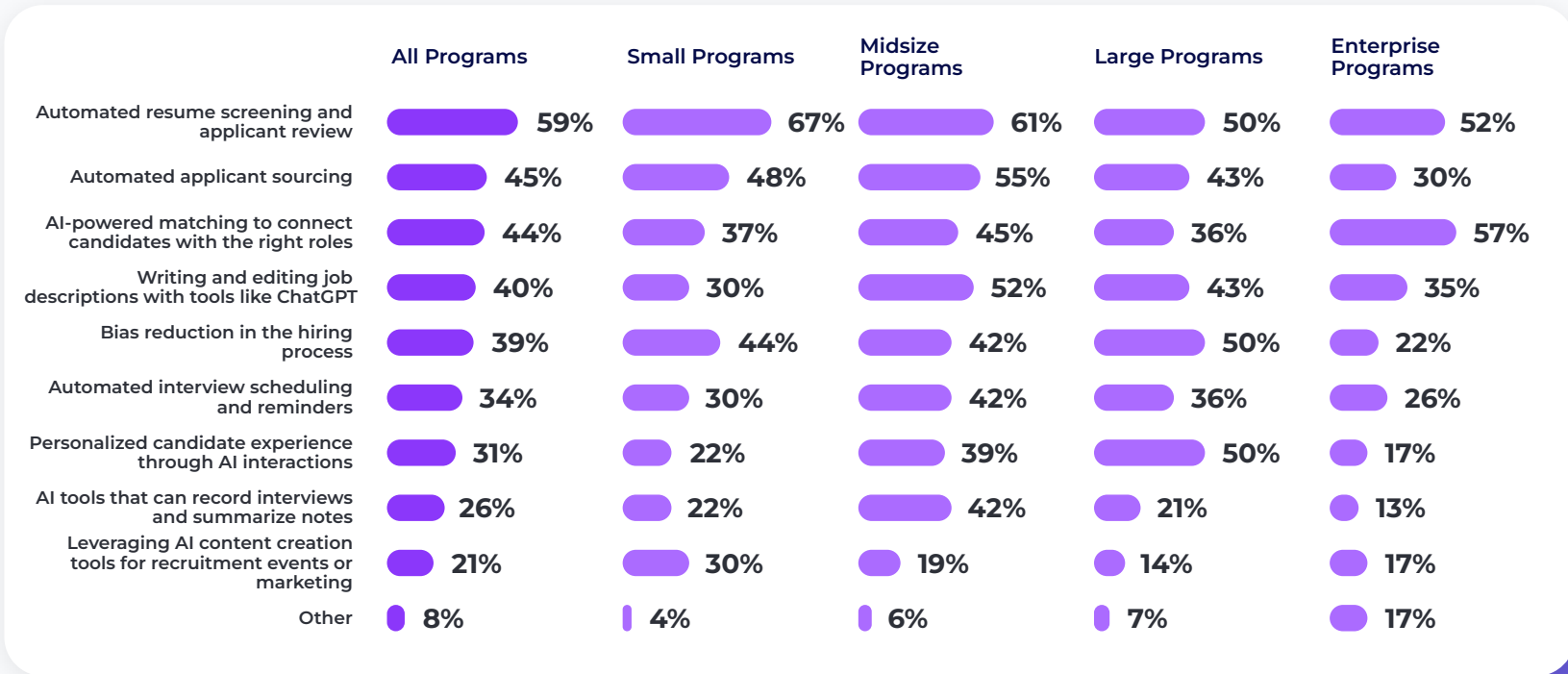
Digital sourcing is used to reach hundreds of different universities and increase diversity

RippleMatch platform data shows how digital sourcing has evolved since 2019 to be focused on expanding reach and connecting with diverse candidates.



Most teams are using AI for resume screening and applicant sourcing

We asked: 'Which tasks does AI currently assist you with in your recruitment process?'



OVERALL BUDGET TRENDS

Number of campus visits & conferences main source of cost reduction, if required

We asked: 'If you were asked to decrease your early career recruitment spend while achieving the same hiring results, where would you look to decrease first?'



% of teams that selected option

OVERALL BUDGET TRENDS

Career fairs, conferences, and swag have questionable ROI

We asked: 'How would you categorize the following programs when it comes to ROI for your early career recruitment goals?'



% of teams that selected option

Section Takeaways



In-person recruitment aims for intentionality

Teams are more often skipping broad career fairs for more intentional events



Virtual recruitment essential for expanding reach

Many companies cite virtual recruitment tools as a core way to bring in a range of candidates



IRL activities could decrease

Based on budget allocation and ROI, IRL activities would be the first to go

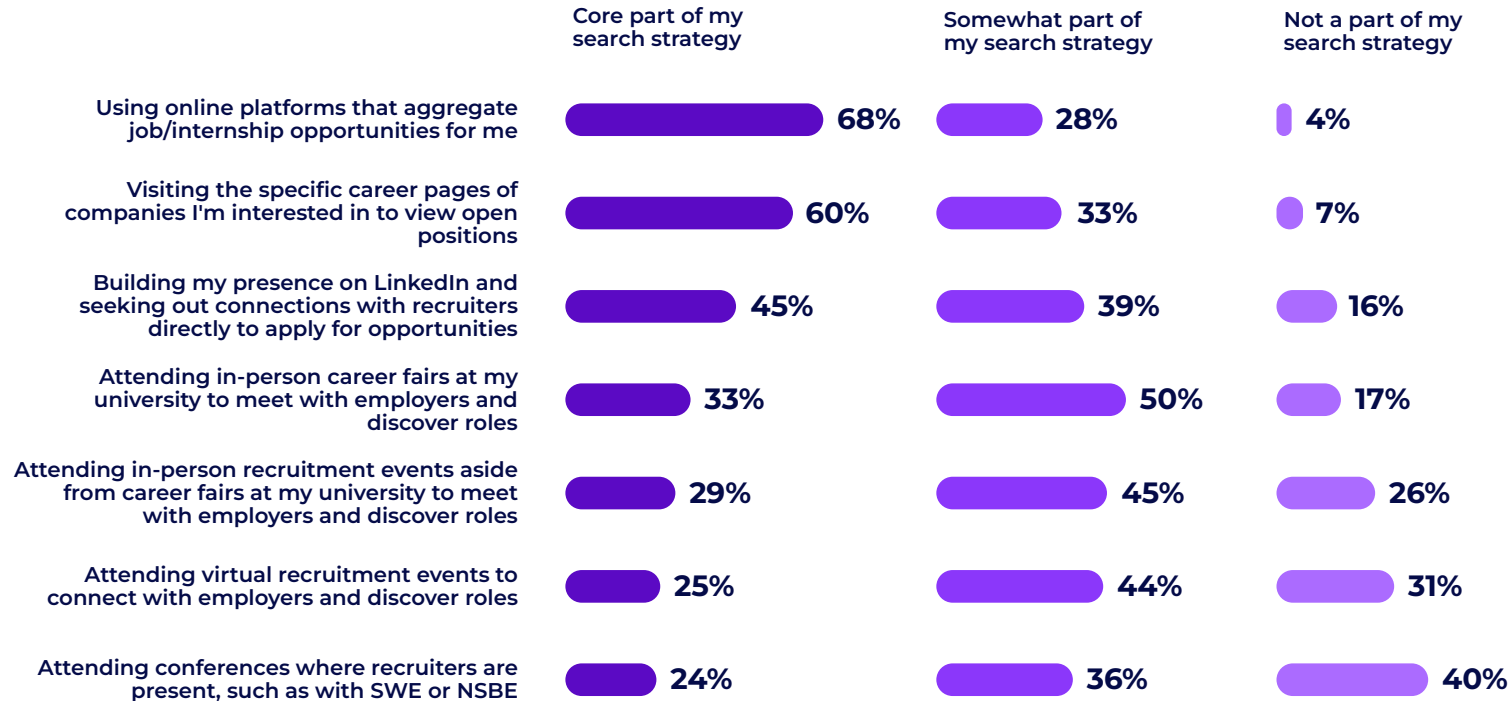
TREND NO. 3

**Recruiters are on campus,
but candidates are online**

CANDIDATE TRENDS

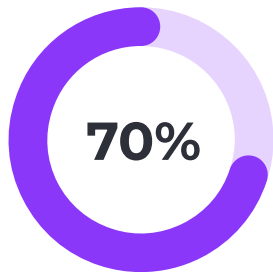
Student job search largely taking place online

We asked: 'How would you describe each method of finding a job or internship?'



Candidates most likely to leverage AI to help with resume tailoring & communication

Do you use AI tools to assist with your job/internship search?



of candidates answered 'Yes'

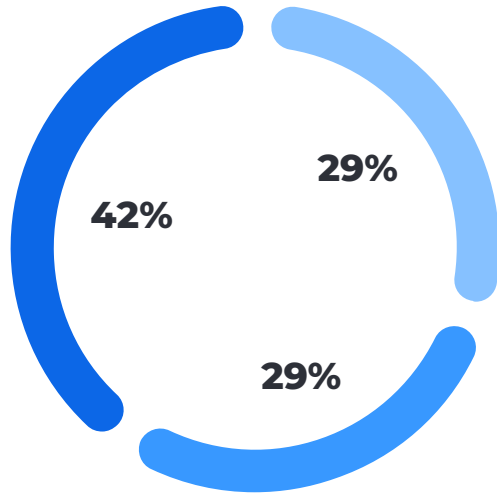
Which of the following ways do you leverage AI while applying and interviewing for internships/jobs?



CANDIDATE TRENDS

71% of students planned to submit at least 100 applications and on average need to submit 178 applications to receive 2 offers

We asked: 'How many applications do you estimate you will need to submit to land a job or internship offer that you plan on accepting?' and 'How many applications and how many offers did you receive this fall?'



42%

100-300
applications

29%

Less than 100
applications

29%

300+
applications

178

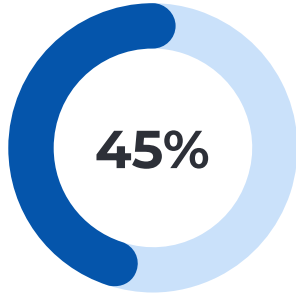
Applications submitted
on average by a student
job seeker

2

Offers received on
average from that
number of applications

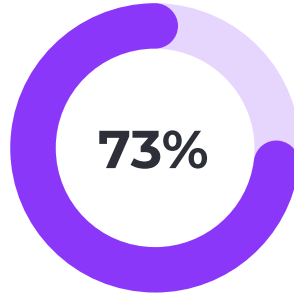
Candidates attend career fairs, but find them only somewhat useful

Have you attended a virtual recruitment event this academic year?



of candidates answered 'Yes'

Have you attended a career fair or recruitment event on campus this academic year?



of candidates answered 'Yes'

How beneficial for your job/internship search do you find career fairs hosted on your campus to be?



Somewhat useful



Very useful



Not at all useful

Aside from career fairs, info sessions are most common event students attend

We asked: 'What types of in-person recruitment events have you attended besides career fairs?'

 55%

Information sessions or presentations

 43%

Company-hosted networking events

 35%

Coffee chats or informal meetups with recruiters

 29%

Skill-building workshops

 25%

On-campus interviews

 4%

Other

We asked: 'What types of virtual recruitment events have you attended?'

 41%

Company webinars or panels

 41%

Virtual career fairs

 27%

Virtual networking sessions or coffee chats

 20%

Online skill-building workshops or hackathons

 12%

Other

 10%

Virtual office tours

Students have recommendations for career fair improvements

As an open-ended question, we asked: 'When it comes to career fairs, what do you think employers could do to make them more useful for you?'



Transparency About Roles and Requirements

Employers should clearly state available positions, whether they are hiring for internships, full-time roles, or specific majors, and if they sponsor visas.



Streamlined and Personal Interactions

Candidates want meaningful discussions instead of only being directed to apply online.



Improved Communication and Follow-Up

Share clear timelines, provide contact information, and follow up with students to ensure their time at the fair is valued.



Enhanced Career Fair Organization

Separate fairs by industry, offer both virtual and in-person options, and improve advertising and scheduling to ensure accessibility for all students.

Section Takeaways



Online resources core part of student job search

Online sites,
company pages, and
LinkedIn are core to
student searches



AI aids in majority of student applications

70% of students are
leveraging AI to assist
with their applications



In-person events could be more effective

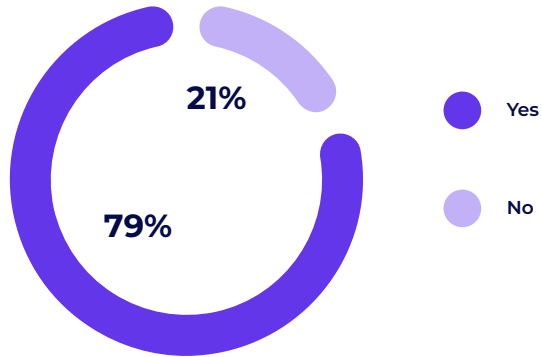
Only 22% of students
find them very
useful, leaving room
for improvement

TREND NO. 4

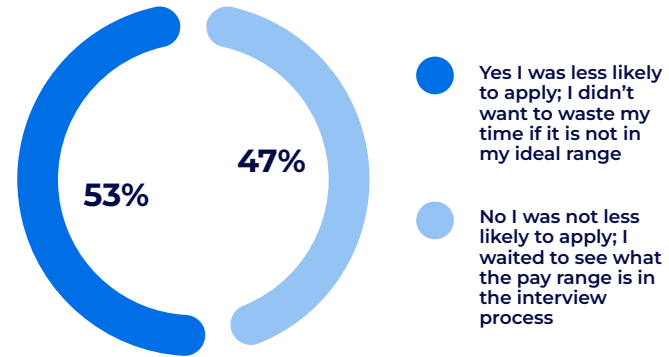
Teams aim to live up to candidate experience expectations

Compensation listing common on many listings, living up to candidate preference

We asked employers: 'Do you list compensation ranges on your public job listings for early career roles?'



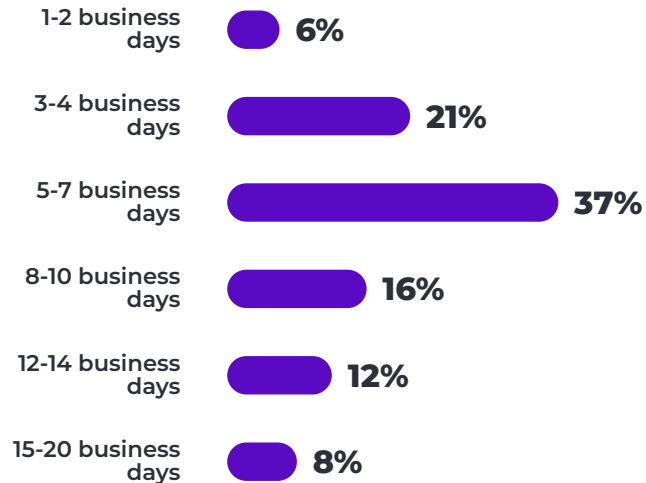
We asked students: 'While conducting your job & search, if you were interested in a role but a company did not have a salary/pay range displayed on their job/internship listing, were you less likely to apply?'



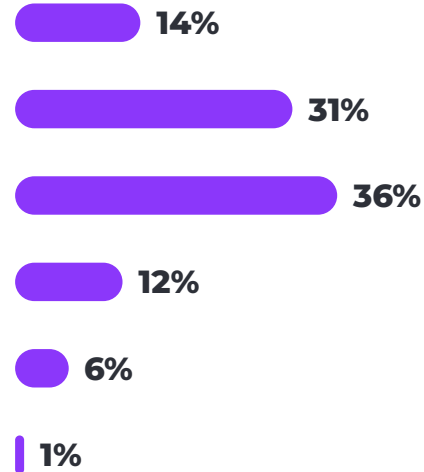
CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Candidate expectations to hear back at all stages of hiring process are within 5-7 day range

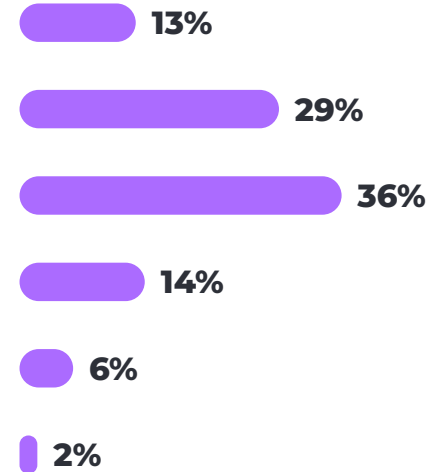
After submitting an application, what is your expectation of how quickly you should receive a notification that you are being selected for a first round interview or rejected for the role?



After completing a first-round interview, what is your expectation of how quickly you should receive a notification that you are being moved forward or rejected for the role?

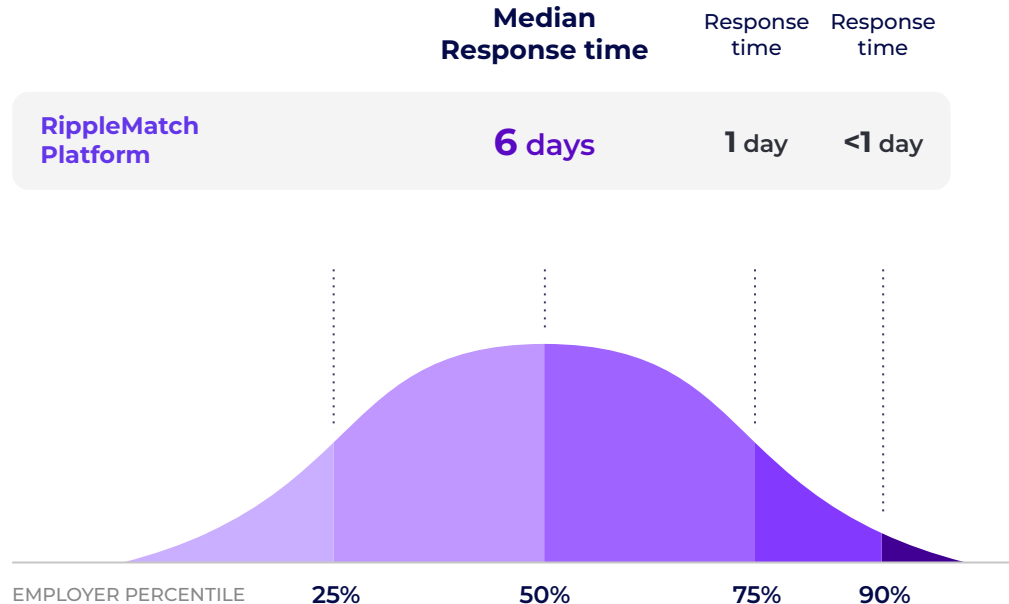
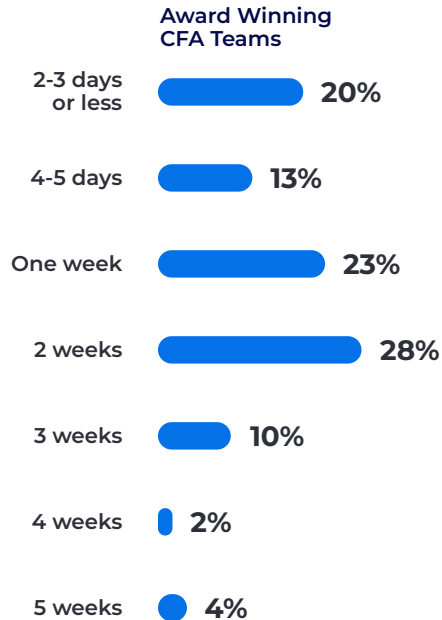


After completing all interviews and assessments, what is your expectation of how quickly you should receive communication that you are being offered a position or rejected for the role?



Many award-winning teams aim to respond to candidates in 1-2 weeks of receiving applications

We asked: 'How many days would you estimate is your typical response time to applications for your early career roles?'



WHAT WILL IMPACT OFFER ACCEPTANCES

After candidates accept an offer, 60% say they will keep passively looking for better opportunities

We asked: 'If you accept a job or internship offer, do you plan to continue to passively search for opportunities in case a better one comes along?'

Yes *Down from 73% in August 2024*

No

60%

40%

'What would be the reasons you would continue to passively search for another role?'

65%
Opportunity to find a position that better aligned with my long-term career goals

62%
Opportunity to find a position with higher salary/pay in this new position

38%
Opportunity to find position offered better work-life balance/flexibility

34%
Opportunity to use a new role as leverage to receive higher pay from my current role

33%
Opportunity to find a position that has a location I prefer

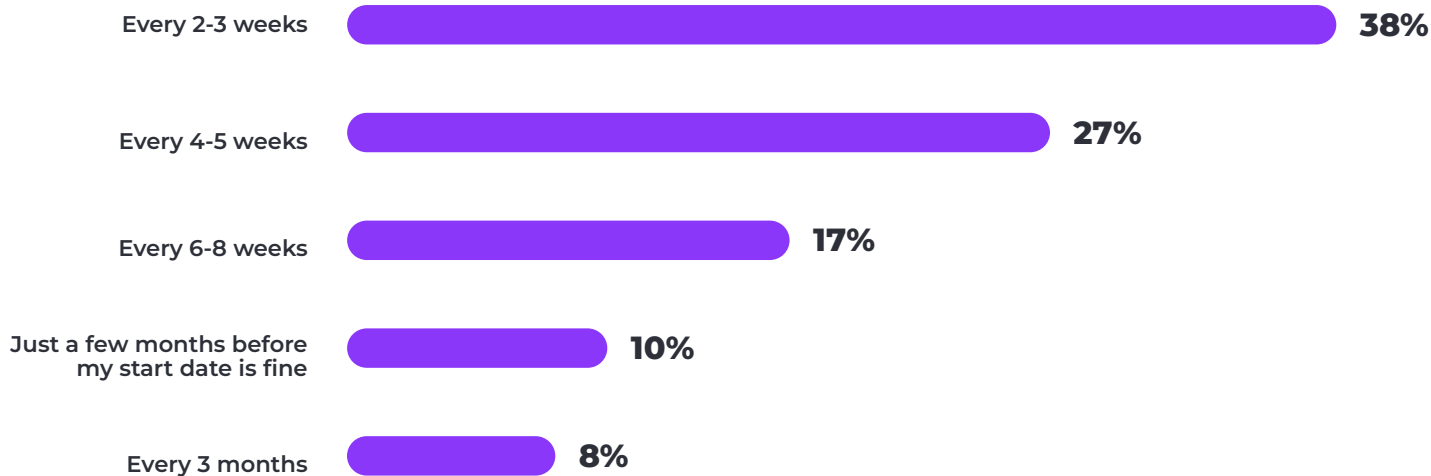
29%
Opportunity to find a company culture I prefer over the original offer

27%
Opportunity to find a position that has better job security

<1%
Other

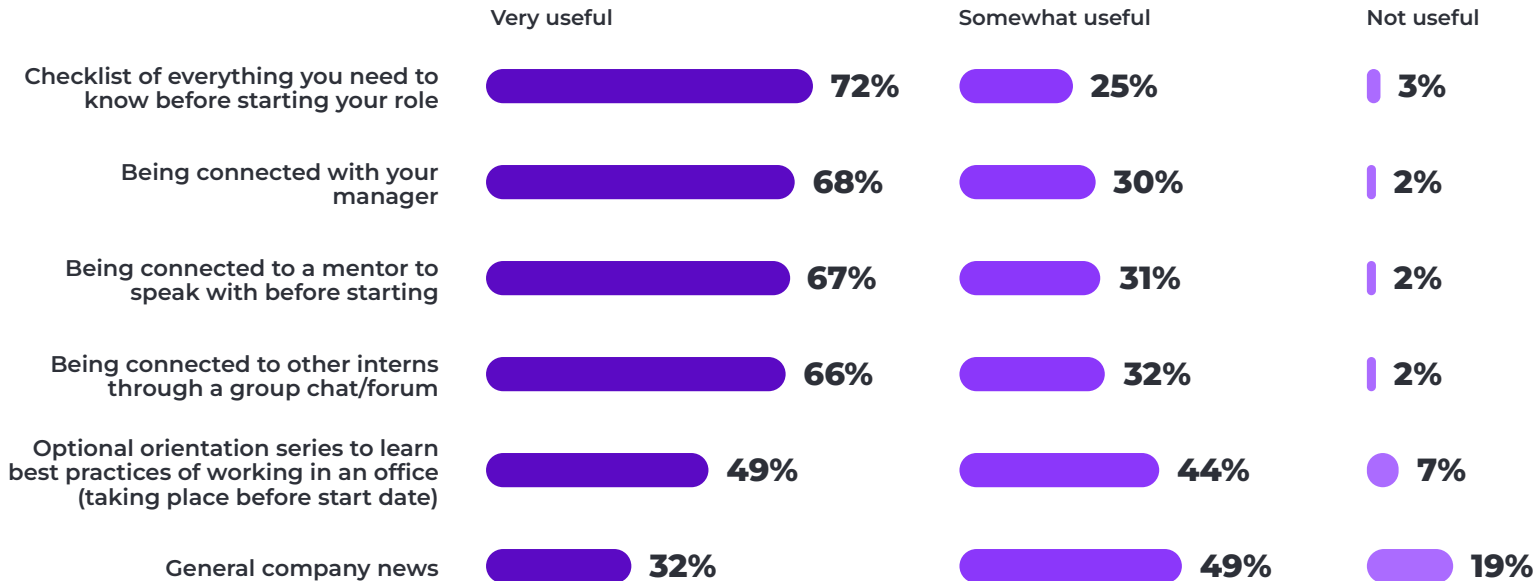
After accepting an offer, hires want to hear from you every 3-4 weeks

We asked: After accepting a role, how often would you like a company to stay in touch with you leading up to your start date?'



Prior to start date, employees want to receive clear checklists and community connections

We asked: 'Ahead of starting your internship or job start date, how useful is each kind of update/communication/event you could hear from a company?'



Section Takeaways



Pay transparency is mainstream

Students want pay transparency on JDs, and companies are responding



Top companies aim for quick response times

5-7 day response time is the gold standard, and many companies are striving for that



Candidates want consistent comms post-offer as well

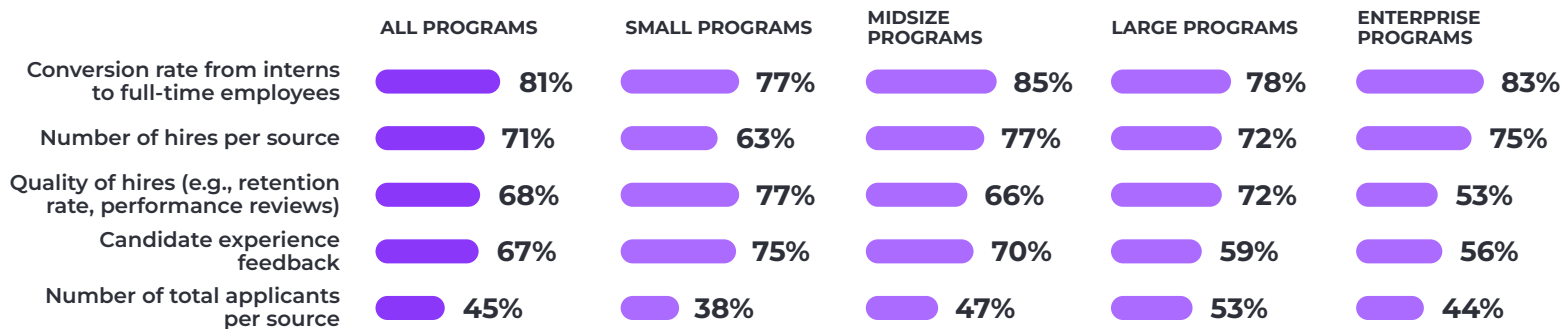
Most students want to hear from employers regularly before their start date

TREND NO. 5

**Internship conversion
rate is top metric for
recruitment ROI**

Conversion rate, quality of hires, and # of hires per source are top markers of strong ROI

We asked employers: 'How do you measure the return on investment (ROI) for your university recruitment efforts?'



We asked students: 'What do you hope to get out of your summer internship? Please rank which are most important, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least. (Below is the average selections, ranked)'

1 A return offer for a full-time role

2 Experience working on a real-world projects

3 New/more developed hard skills

4 Expanded professional network of folks more experienced than me

5 A reliable income for the summer

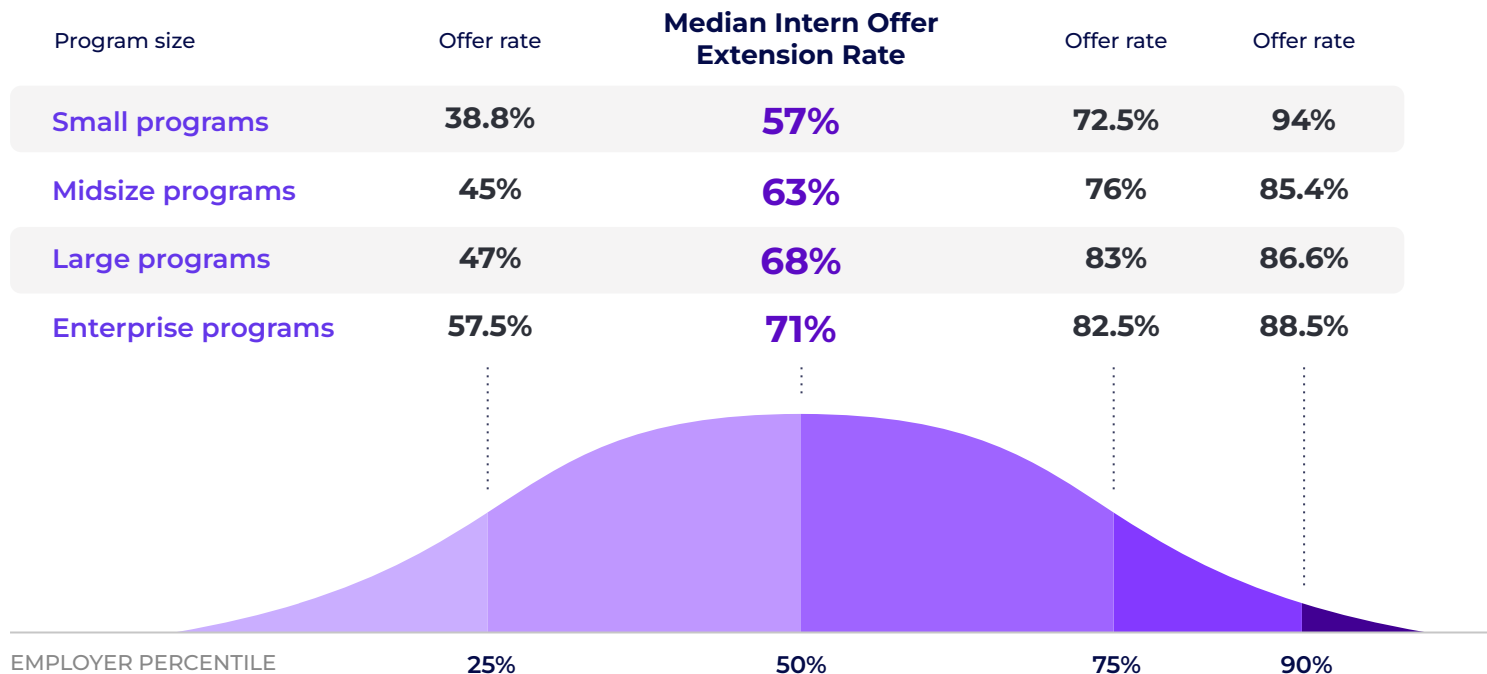
6 Expanded professional network of peers

7 New/more developed soft skills

8 Exposure to a new city

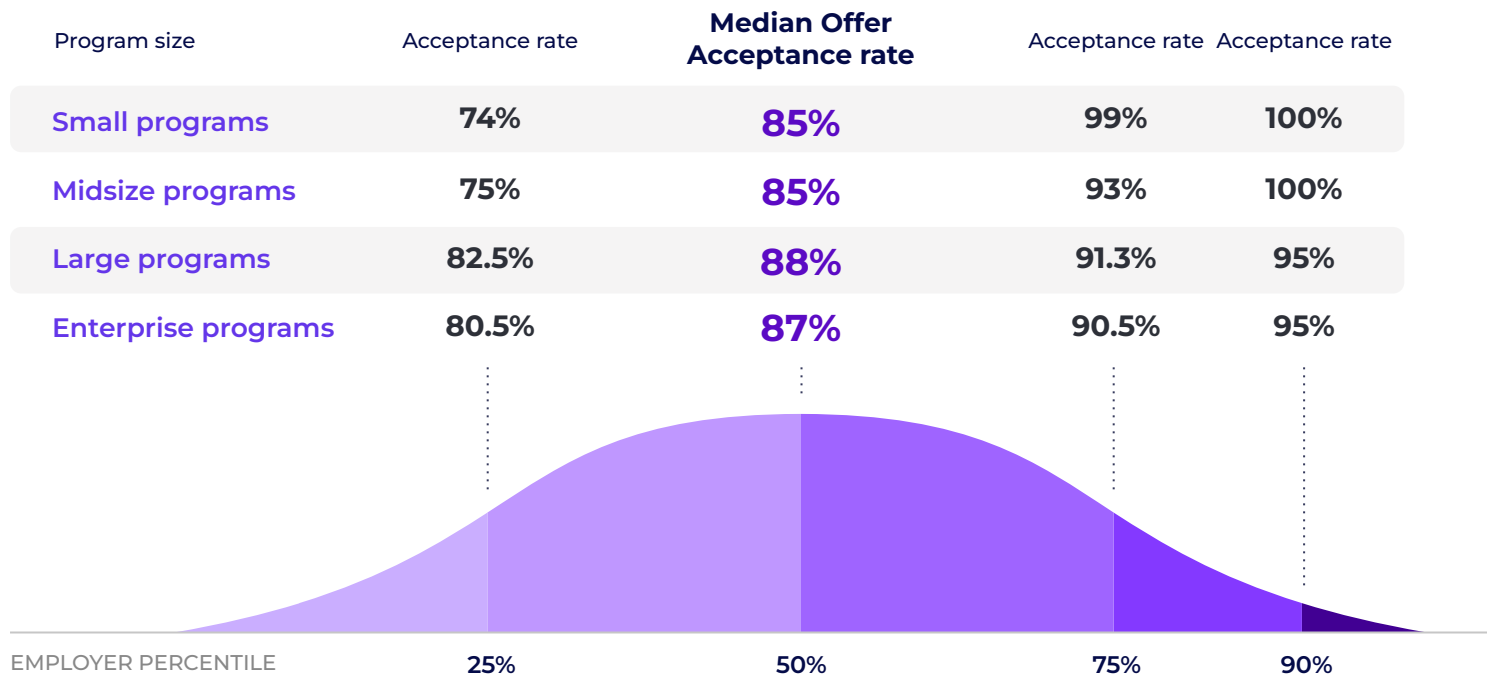
Median offer extension rate exceeds 50%

We asked: 'One key sign of a standout internship and dedicated early careers program is an **'intern return rate'** – the percentage of interns that return as a full-time employee the following year. This year, what percent of your eligible interns did you extend return offers to?'



Most programs have a high intern offer acceptance rate

We asked: 'This year, what percent of your interns that received return offers accepted those return offers?'



Section Takeaways



Interns & employers want high conversion rates

Interns and employers share similar goals on intern to FT pipeline



Offer extension rate varies widely

Top performing companies extend offers 70% or more of the time, but some companies reach as low as 30%



Offer acceptance rate for interns are high

Likely due to a competitive market, intern offer acceptance rates are around 80%

Presentation Takeaways



In-person intentional recruitment events are core strategy for recruiters right now, but candidates are also conducting much of their job search online



Teams are adopting AI more widely to help with sourcing & applicant screening, and virtual recruitment is being leveraged to expand reach



Internship conversion is top marker of good ROI, as shown by high internship conversion rates as well

Q&A