



IDEAL EMPLOYERS May 12, 2011, 3:30PM EST

Dream Jobs: College Students Make Their Picks

Where do you want to work? A new survey suggests the answer depends to a large extent on if you're an entrepreneur, an idealist, or a leader

By [Francesca Di Meglio](#)

For recent college graduates, finding a job is a lot like finding a match when dating. Personality (yours and theirs) play a major role. Everybody wants a genuine connection, and a little arm candy doesn't hurt. If job hunting were indeed *The Dating Game*, [Google \(GOOG\)](#) would be the most eligible bachelor among all sorts of personality types. [Apple \(AAPL\)](#) and [Walt Disney \(DIS\)](#) wouldn't be far behind.

In its annual survey of U.S. college students, the research firm Universum USA asked its more than 60,000 respondents to identify the characteristics they associate with dream employers and broke down the results into seven personality types. Careerists are looking for a prestigious brand name and employers who recruit only the best and brightest; entrepreneurs want to work for fast-growing companies with a creative work environment; explorers are looking for challenging work and a variety of assignments; harmonizers are seeking work/life balance and secure employment; hunters are attracted by competitive base salaries and good prospects for future earnings; idealists are drawn to friendly work environments and high ethical standards; and leaders want leadership opportunities and mentors.

Universum then asked the students to identify the five employers they would most like to work for. Universum didn't designate an overall winner, but Google—which took the top spot in each of the past four years—is still the big favorite, taking the No. 1 spot in five of the personality types and taking a top-three spot in all seven. Apple is in the top three with six of the personality types, and Disney is in the top three for five, including idealists, who ranked it No. 1 ahead of Google. To better visualize the Universum findings and map the popularity profile of dozens of companies, check out our [interactive graphic](#).

On the overall list of most desirable employers for business students, who made up about 36 percent of respondents and included about 6,000 MBA students, Google, Apple, Disney, [Ernst & Young](#), and [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), respectively, made up the top five. Nearly one of five business students told Universum they wanted to work for Google, up from 16.6 percent in 2010.

ALLURE OF OPPORTUNITY

"Diversity is critical to our business and culture," says Kyle Ewing, talent and outreach programs manager at Google in Mountain View, Calif. "The employees must reflect our users. That means hiring those with a diversity of thought, background, beliefs, and ethnicity. But it is the challenging work that attracts so many people to Google."

Opportunity might also have something to do with it, says Ewing, who adds that the company is anticipating its biggest hiring year ever, with the most openings for entry-level jobs in sales and engineering. While Ewing said she could not make hiring projections, she could confirm that Google expected to hire more employees than it did in 2007, its previous biggest hiring season, when it brought in 6,000 new people. And she says that graduates who majored in all sorts of subjects are regularly welcomed at Google.

Well-known for its unique employee benefits, such as the ability to bring your dog to work and free meals, Google wants to be recognized for more than its perks, says Ewing.

"People hear a lot about things such as the meals, but it's not all about the food," she says. "The meals create an environment for you to have conversations you wouldn't have in your office. That's how some of our best ideas have been born."

BANKS DOWN, GOVERNMENT UP

Looking beyond Google, the 2011 list of most attractive employers has its share of surprises. For starters, banks, oil companies, and the Big Four accounting firms lost some of their luster among business students. Lisa Sundström, global research manager of Universum in Philadelphia, says the role banks played in the financial crisis and the environmental and economic consequences of the [BP \(BP\)](#) oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, may have played a role.

In addition, survey newcomers [Facebook](#) and the UN rocketed into the top 20 by placing No. 12 and No. 17, respectively, on the overall list for business and commerce majors. Government and nonprofit employers, which accounted for half the top 10 employers for all seven personality types, had a good year, too. The CIA and FBI took the No. 1 and No. 2 spots among careerists, who ranked government organizations above all others, with the U.N., the U.S. State Dept., and National Security Agency also among the top 20 in that category.

"The government is still highly appreciated," says Cecilia Dahlström, global marketing director of Universum in Stockholm. "It's driving the U.S. economy forward, and it's getting the country back on track."

OTHER APPEALING COMPANIES

While careerists see the government as a ticket to achievement, idealists see Disney as perhaps the happiest place on earth—at least for employees. Driven by a robust college internship program, Disney offers a range of professional opportunities, including roles in finance, marketing, engineering, animal programs, human resources, and operations, writes Kristi Breen, director of Disney College and International Programs in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., in an e-mail.

"Disney offers individuals more than just a job," she writes. "The training and ongoing development our [employees] receive to further their careers is excellent. There are significant opportunities to network with key leaders within the organization, and unlimited opportunities to grow and move within the company."

Apple, which came in second overall among business students, advanced up the rankings for six of the seven personality types. Although Apple representatives declined to comment, one likely reason for the company's attractiveness to young people is its popular phones, music players, and tablets, as well as its reputation for having a creative work environment, says Petter Nylander, chief executive of Universum in Stockholm.

If the survey makes one thing clear, it's that young people want employers who share their values and are a good fit for their personality, says Nylander.

"What you see is young employees selecting companies that confirm their views of themselves," he says. "Your identity today is built on where you work. It sends a strong message about who you are."

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