



Going forward:  
Understanding the dynamic  
trends of hospitality students

The Young Hoteliers Summit 2018 Presents

# YHS EMPLOYER RANKINGS 2018

Defining hospitality students' employment perception and  
preferences in terms of recruitment

**Alexandra Lor & Leandra Kall**

March 2018

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



**MOZAIK**  
Vibrant Synergy

DISTRIBUTED BY

**hosco.**  
The hospitality network

# Introduction

What motivates a recently graduated student to work for an international hospitality brand?

If you are unsure about the answer to this question, you may risk losing the race for talent. This situation is even more crucial in emerging markets. These new markets are growing at such a rapid pace that even established global players are not recruiting and retaining enough employees. The race for talent is therefore becoming a strategic function within global hospitality companies.

In the new era of asset light strategies, the acquisition and retention of young talent is becoming the core asset strategy. Winning companies should embrace new talent strategies to outperform their competitors in their respective markets, and better prepare for upcoming challenges from disruptive hospitality companies.

This report was written as a means to inform hospitality companies about what young hospitality graduates are looking for and how they can reach the best talent.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>Who are the Respondents to the Survey?</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Career Path Analysis</b>	<b>08</b>
Motivational Factors: What are the most Important Motivational Factors Involved in Students' Career Choices?	09
Motivation to Work for Hospitality Related Sectors	10
What are Students Planning to do After Graduation?	22
What Entry Level do Young Graduates Choose After Graduation?	23
What Are the Most Appealing Hotel Departments for Young Graduates?	24
What are the Most Effective Communication & HR Practices that Impact Young Graduates' Choices?	25
<b>How can Hospitality Companies Retain Young Graduates?</b>	<b>28</b>
Projected Student Turnover and Retention Patterns	28
Alumni Turnover and Retention Patterns	29
What Could a Hospitality Company Improve for Better Retention ?	30
<b>Hotel Brand Awareness</b>	<b>33</b>
Top-of-Mind Awareness	34
Brand Rankings	35
Brand Rankings by Segment	37
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>41</b>
Limitations & Further Research	41
Takeaways	42
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>44</b>
References	44
About the Authors	45

## The Young Hoteliers Summit

The Young Hoteliers Summit (YHS) is a yearly event hosted at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, bringing together student delegates from leading hospitality institutions and influential players in the industry from around the world. Through keynote speeches, workshops and a Challenge project, all participants are empowered to share ideas and knowledge, to accelerate progression in our industry.

## YHS Employer Rankings Survey

The YHS Employer Rankings survey aims to bring young hospitality talents opinions and expectations to light, to identify where companies may be lacking in terms of employer branding, recruitment and employment methods. The survey results can help hotel companies worldwide rethink both communication and brand attractiveness. The survey explores career paths motivations, and the workplace characteristics which young professionals deem are the most important. In 2018, the YHS Rankings survey was completed by 1766 participants from 95 different nationalities across 198 schools.

## Methodology

A similar methodology as the previous two years has been used as a framework for the YHS Employer Rankings Survey 2018, in order for year-to-year trends to emerge and be further analyzed. The survey was formulated and distributed through Qualtrics, a data collection and analysis platform. Their online platform is used by researchers worldwide and was ranked 12th in the Forbes Cloud 100. The analysis of the survey results were done in assistance from Smith Travel Research (STR), the leading source for hospitality related

data, analytics, and benchmarking and Mozaik, a digital marketing and data analysis agency.

STR chain scale data has been used to select and categorize the hotel brands featured in this study. In order to segment the selected hotel brands, the Average Daily Rate (ADR) classification model has been applied. This method of classification was used to categorize hotel brands by identifying their number of operating properties, number of hotel rooms and their level of international presence. The following segments were defined to accommodate different brands worldwide:

- **Luxury & Upper Upscale:** the brand must be present in at least 3 countries.
- **Upscale & Upper Midscale:** the brand must be present in at least 4 countries and must have at least 7 properties.
- **Midscale & Budget:** the brand must satisfy a minimum amount of properties and rooms (238 properties and 17,898 rooms).

Different criteria have been used for the different segments due to the specificity of each one of the markets. The luxury and upscale market are particularly dependent on their brand name, but in terms of size, some brands are smaller in number of properties and countries present.

# Who are the Respondents to the Survey?



Number of responses: **1766**



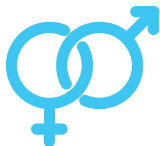
Number of participating schools: **198**



Proportion of students vs alumni:  
**76%** students / **24%** alumni



Number of Nationalities: **95**

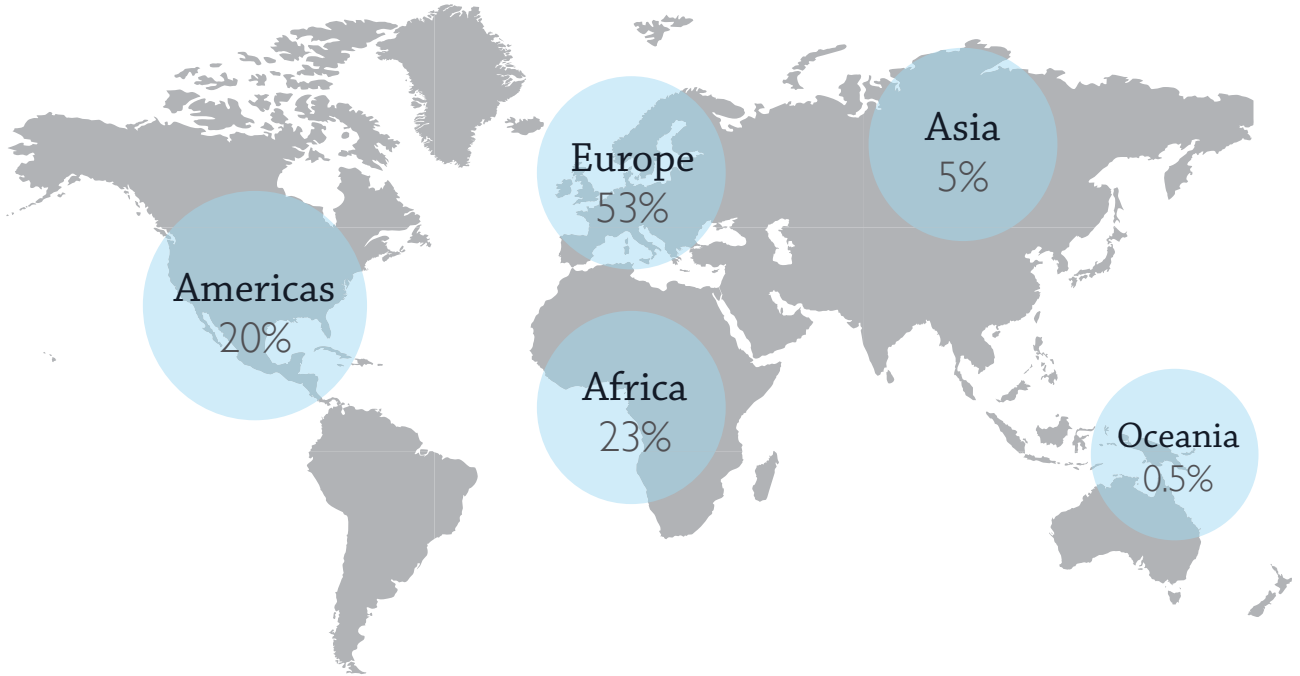


Gender:  
Male/Female: **38.78%** and **61.22%**



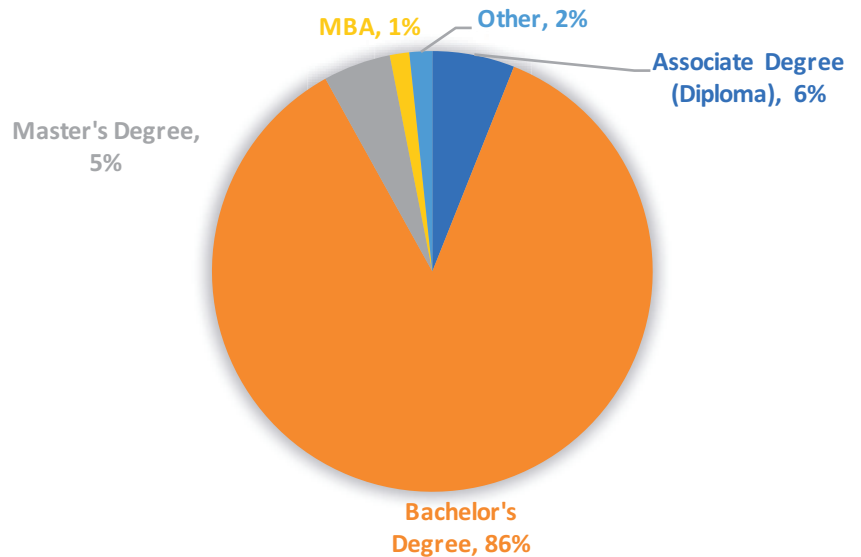
Average respondent age: **21**

## Where were the Respondents from?



## What was the Highest Degree Completed by Respondents?

HIGHEST DEGREE COMPLETED BY RESPONDENTS



# Career Path Analysis

This section aims to investigate the motivations and future aspirations of young hospitality talents. Respondents were asked what hospitality sectors interested them, and what roles they see for themselves in the future. Further, respondents were asked to rank what job characteristics and other factors came into play when choosing a company to work for. In 2018, additional questions were asked on the topic of retention and turnover behavioral patterns.



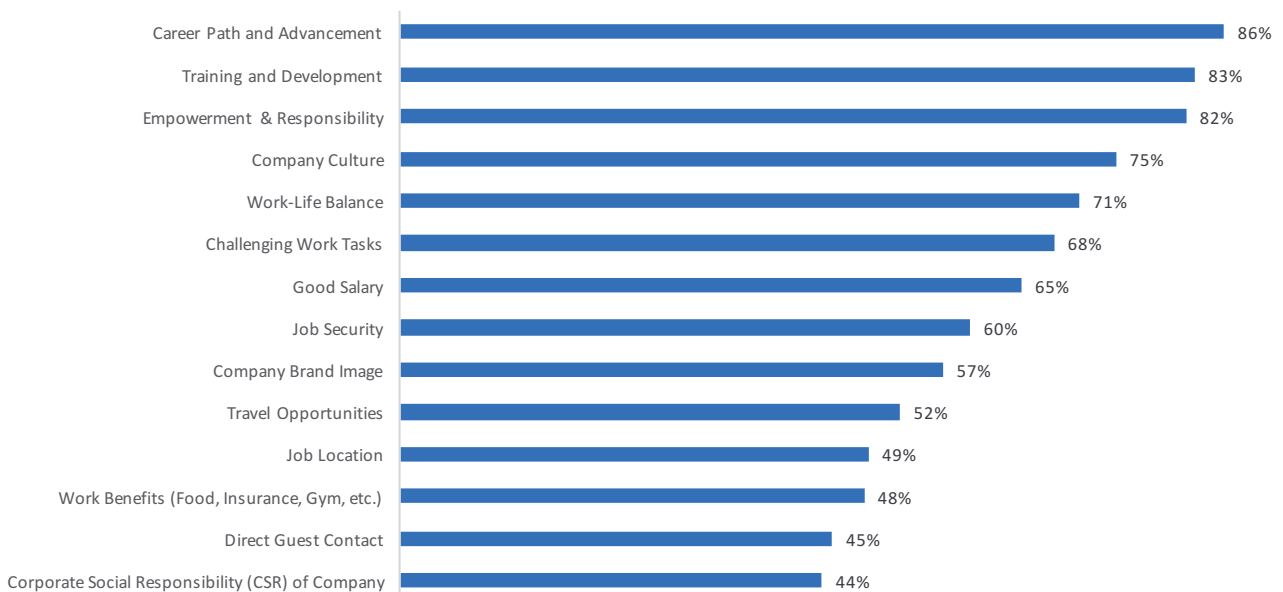
## Motivational Factors: What are the most Important Motivational Factors Involved in Students' Career Choices?

Respondents were asked to rank the following motivational factors, categorized into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation factors.

- **Intrinsic factors:** Career Path and Advancement, Challenging Work Tasks, Empowerment & Responsibility, Training & Development, Work-Life Balance, Company Culture.

- **Extrinsic factors:** Good salary, Travel Opportunities, Direct Guest Contact, Job Location, Work Benefits, Company Brand Image, Corporate Social Responsibility of Company, Job Security.

### EXTREMELY IMPORTANT JOB CHARACTERISTICS IN 2018



## *Key Findings*

- Career path and advancement is the greatest motivator when choosing future employment possibilities for young graduates and for alumni.
- Alumni with more work experience placed more importance on empowerment and responsibility as a motivational factor compared to students.
- The top 6 ranked motivational factors for both students and alumni were intrinsic motivational factors, with good salary and job security placing seventh and eighth respectively.

## *Year-to-Year Trends*

- The importance of intrinsic motivation has carried through from 2017, where last year's survey yielded similar results.

## Motivation to Work for Hospitality Related Sectors

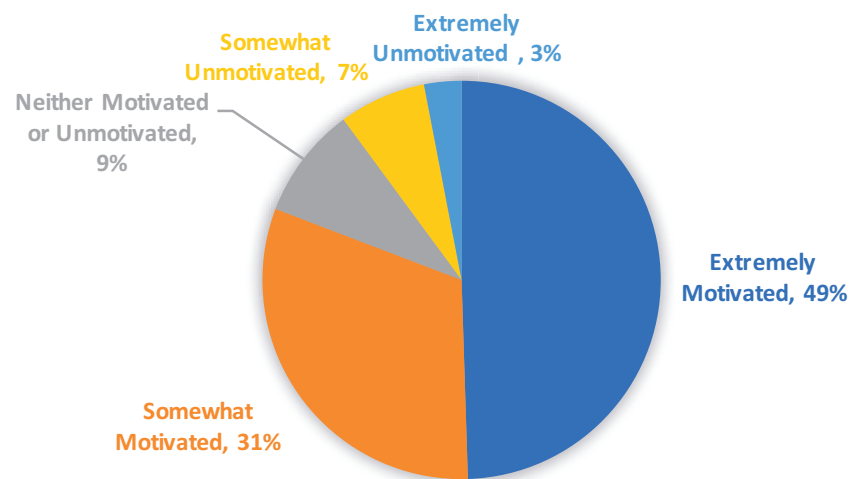
Respondents were asked to rank their motivation to work for the following hospitality related sectors: traditional hospitality, hospitality consulting, online travel agencies, hospitality startups and other sectors that were not part of hospitality. Traditional hospitality includes: hotels, restaurants, event management, cruise lines, theme parks and transportation. Alumni participants were asked to answer this question from the point of view of when they were still students.

# Motivation to Work for Traditional Hospitality

## Key Findings

- 49% of respondents were extremely motivated to work in traditional hospitality, with a similar proportion of respondents less motivated to work in the same sector.
- There is a large difference between negative and positive responses in terms of motivation for working in traditional hospitality, with the latter having a higher number of respondents.
- In comparison with the other hospitality sectors, traditional hospitality had the highest rate of extremely motivated responses.

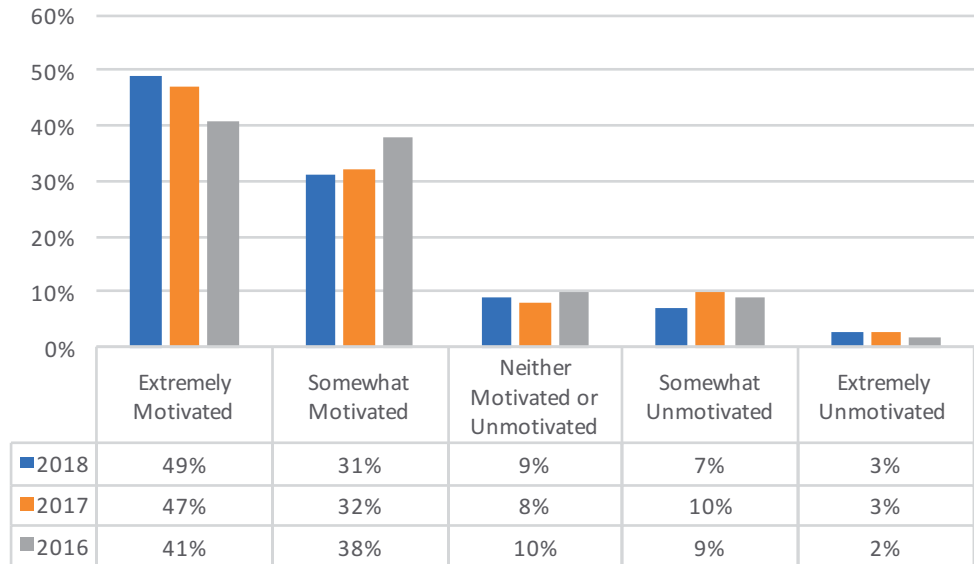
MOTIVATION FOR TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY 2018



## Year-to-Year Trends

- A steady upward trend of respondents extremely motivated to pursue a career in traditional hospitality can be seen from 2016 and 2017.
- The large difference between positive and negative responses previously observed also holds for the two previous years and has remained stable over the years.
- No major variations can be observed for categories showing less motivation.

MOTIVATION TO WORK IN TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY

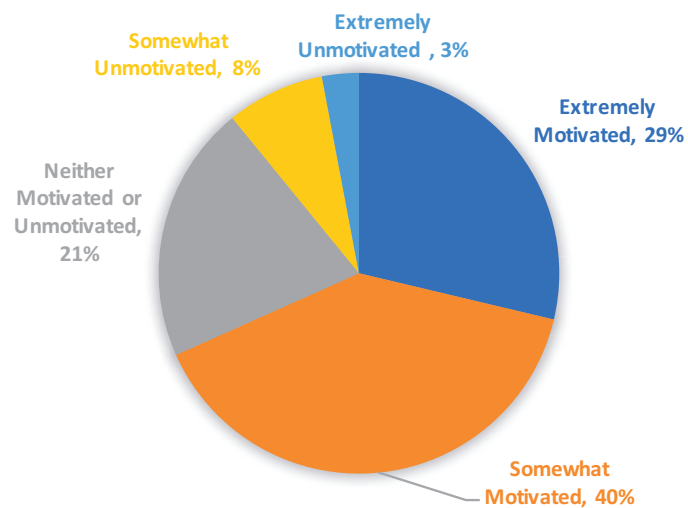


# Motivation to Work for Hospitality Consulting

## Key Findings

- Most participants answered that they were somewhat motivated to work in hospitality consulting.
- Overall, it has been observed that there is a significant difference between positive and negative responses in terms of desire to work in hospitality consulting.
- In 2018, more respondents expressed no or little motivation to pursue a career in consulting as in the previous years.
- There seemed to be a general decrease in motivation for consulting as positive values also slightly decreased.

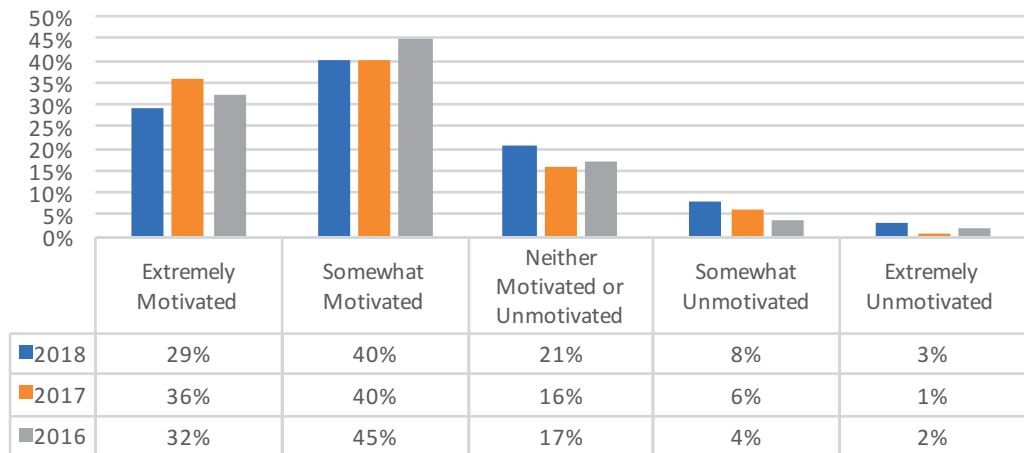
MOTIVATION TO WORK IN HOSPITALITY CONSULTING IN 2018



## Year-to-Year Trends

- A significant increase of respondents somewhat motivated compared to 2016 and 2017 can be observed.
- Overall, positive answers remained stable in the past 3 years whereas negative answers increased year by year.

## MOTIVATION TO WORK IN HOSPITALITY CONSULTING

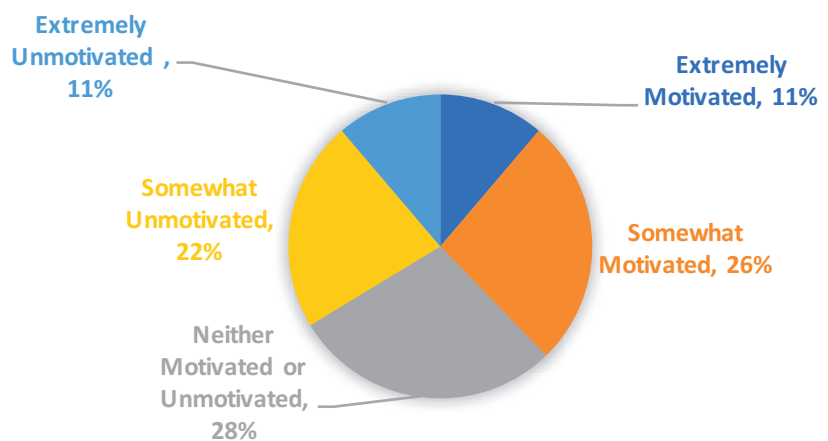


## Motivation to Work for an Online Travel Agency

### Key Findings

- Most respondents were neither motivated or unmotivated when asked about their desire to work for online travel agencies (28%).
- The number of respondents to have answered this question with extremely unmotivated is the highest in comparison with the other hospitality related sectors mentioned in the survey.
- The results might be influenced by the tensions between OTAs and lodging companies that are currently taking place, in particular concerning commissions and other distribution costs.

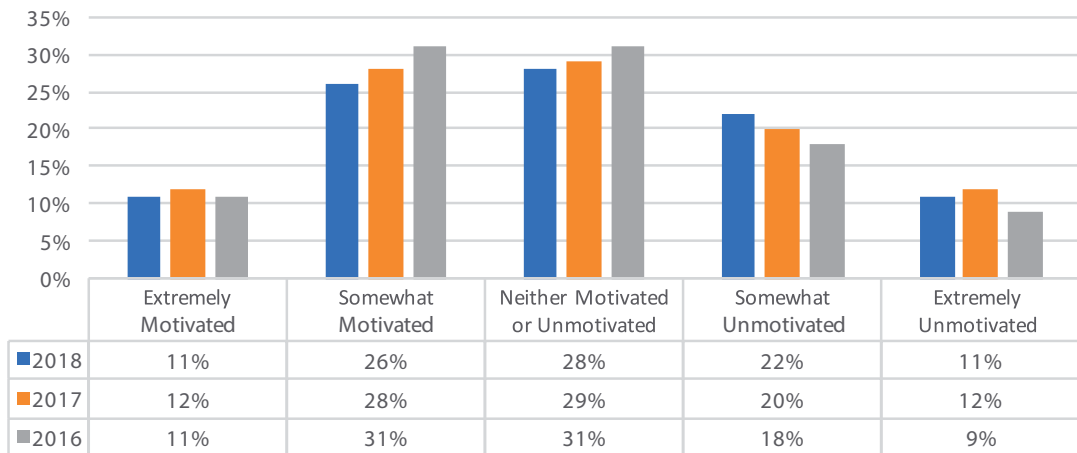
## MOTIVATION TO WORK FOR AN OTA IN 2018



### Year-to-Year Trends

- There is a growing number of participants rather uninterested in working for OTAs.
- Somewhat motivated and neither motivated or unmotivated were less chosen in the 2 past years, whereas somewhat unmotivated increased by 4% in 3 years.
- The largest decrease in responses can be observed in the somewhat motivated category, where the response rate has been decreasing since 2016.

MOTIVATION TO WORK FOR OTAS

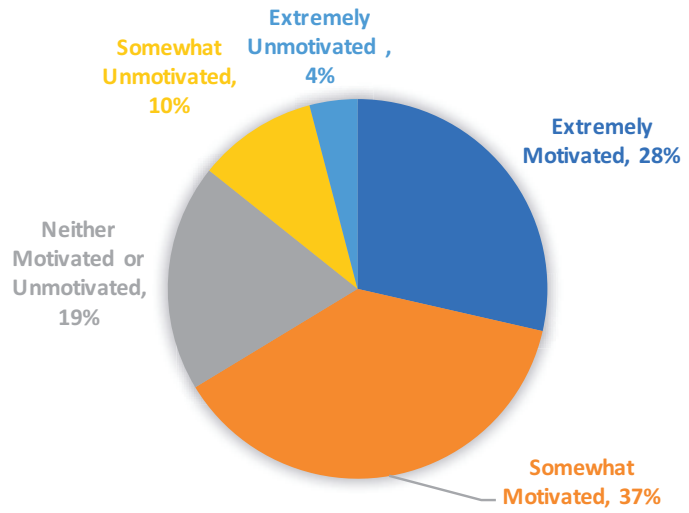


## Motivation to Work for a Hospitality Start-Up

### Key Findings

- Overall, motivation for working in a hospitality start-up is high in 2018.
- The majority of participants were somewhat motivated work in a hospitality start-up setting, but 28% were also extremely motivated to work in a start-up.

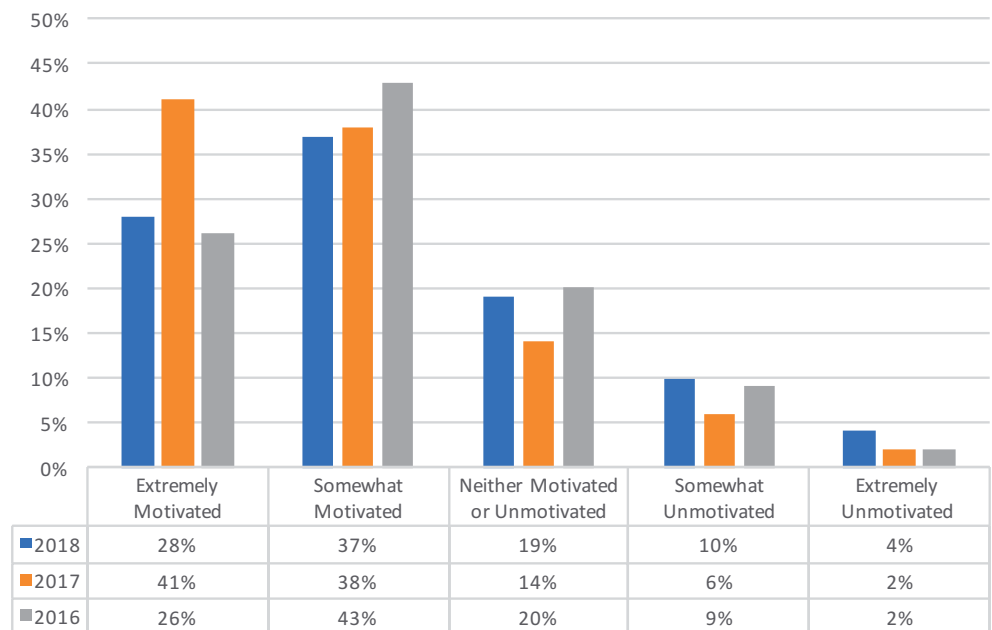
MOTIVATION FOR CREATING A HOSPITALITY START-UP IN 2018



*Year-to-Year Trends*

- It can be observed that there was a significant decrease in participants interested in hospitality start-ups compared to 2017.
- There is a growing number of participants somewhat unmotivated and extremely unmotivated compared to 2016 and 2017.
- Overall motivation to work in this sector has decreased since 2016.

MOTIVATION FOR CREATING A HOSPITALITY START-UP IN 2018



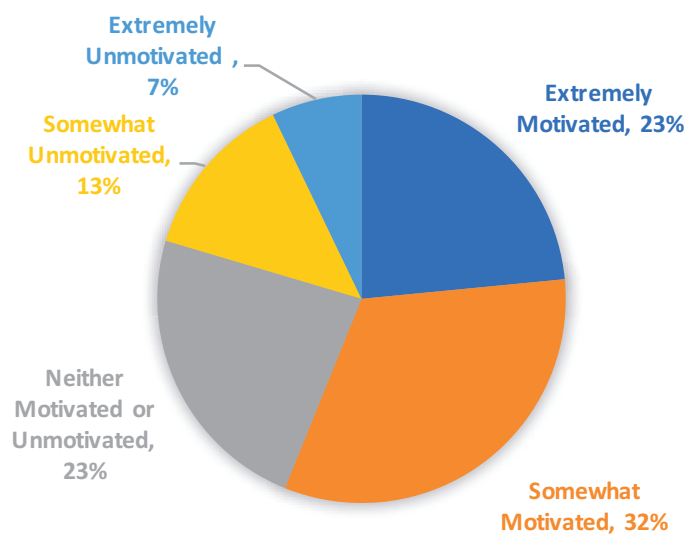


# Motivation to Work for Other Industries

## Key Findings

- Most hospitality students are open to explore industries other than hospitality.
- About 1 out of 4 students is indifferent between working in other industries and working in the hospitality industry.

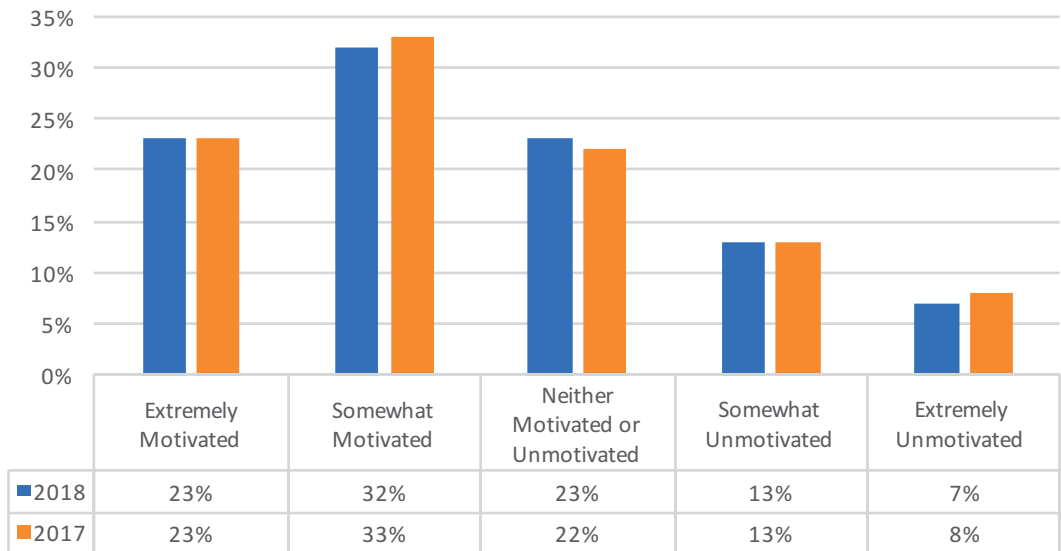
MOTIVATION FOR PURSUING A CAREER IN OTHER INDUSTRIES IN 2018



## Year-to-Year Trends

- The proportion of those motivated to work in other industries outside hospitality are fairly similar compared to 2017.

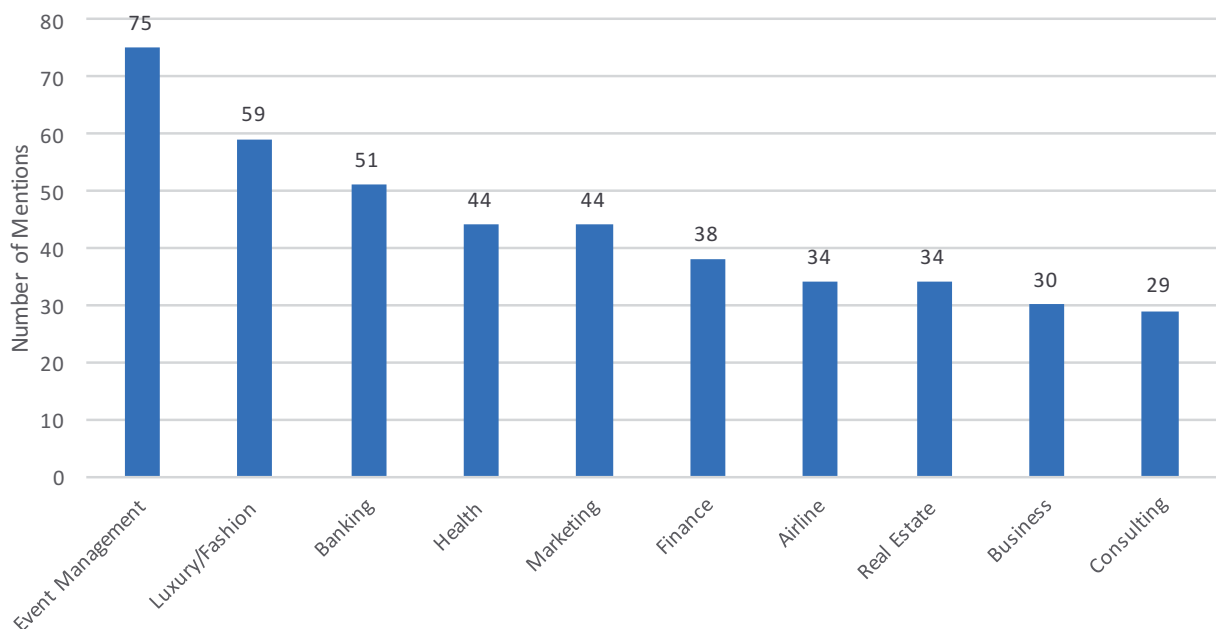
### MOTIVATION FOR PURSUING A CAREER IN OTHER INDUSTRIES



## What Other Industries are Appealing to Students?

- For students expressing motivation to work for another industry, participants were asked in which industries they were motivated to work in.
- Students who expressed motivation to work for other industries than the hospitality sector mentioned: event management, the luxury/fashion industry and the banking industry most frequently.
- Event management is considered to be part of the traditional hospitality sector; however many participants were unclear about this segmentation.
- Other mentioned industries such as airlines, health and real estate also have significant links to hospitality.

MOST MENTIONED SECTORS GRADUATES WANT TO WORK IN 2018

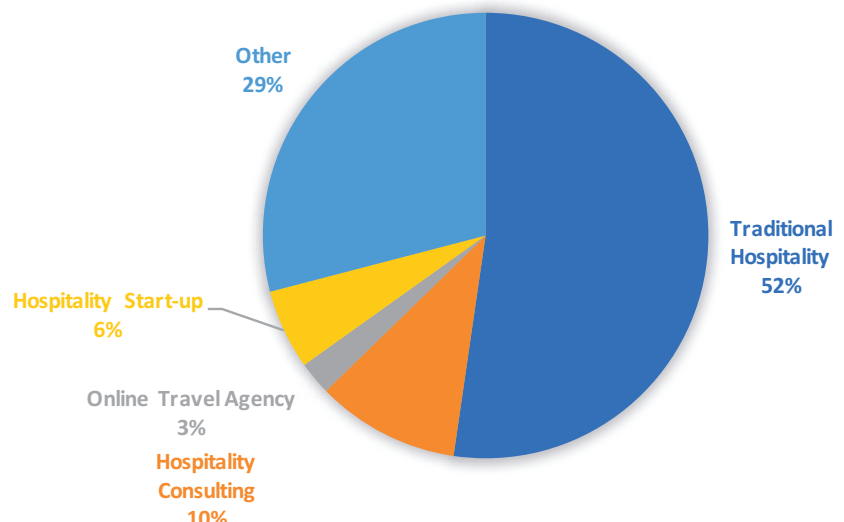


## What motivates Alumni?

### *Key Findings*

- Of the participants currently working in traditional hospitality, 91% of those respondents were extremely or somewhat motivated to work in the same sector while completing their studies.
- 76% of those who were extremely or somewhat motivated to work in hospitality consulting as students, are currently working in the same industry as alumni.
- For the online travel agency and the hospitality start-up sectors, 80% and 70% of respondents working in those industries respectively were extremely or somewhat motivated as a student.
- It is worth noting that 29% of alumni are working in industries other than hospitality.

SECTORS IN WHICH ALUMNI WERE ACTIVE IN 2018



## Key Insights about Young Graduates' Career Motivations:

- The importance of intrinsic motivational factors has shown significant shift in young professionals' expectations and values, moving away from finding value in monetary rewards and more towards a meaningful and promising career.
- Consistent with KPMG's findings about millennials (2017), young hospitality graduates are looking for "fun" at work and have a strong will to advance or develop. Companies should highlight and advertise job benefits that relate more to intrinsic motivation, rather than monetary compensation and other external benefits.
- A steady upward trend of extremely motivated young talents to work in traditional hospitality can be observed, while motivation in other hospitality related sectors are the same or declining. Those extremely motivated to work in traditional hospitality as students will most likely work in the same sector after graduation. Retention within the hospitality sector should be high.
- Most other industries quoted by participants have significant links to hospitality. Hospitality companies should therefore consider these industries as direct competitors for talent acquisition.

## What motivates Alumni?

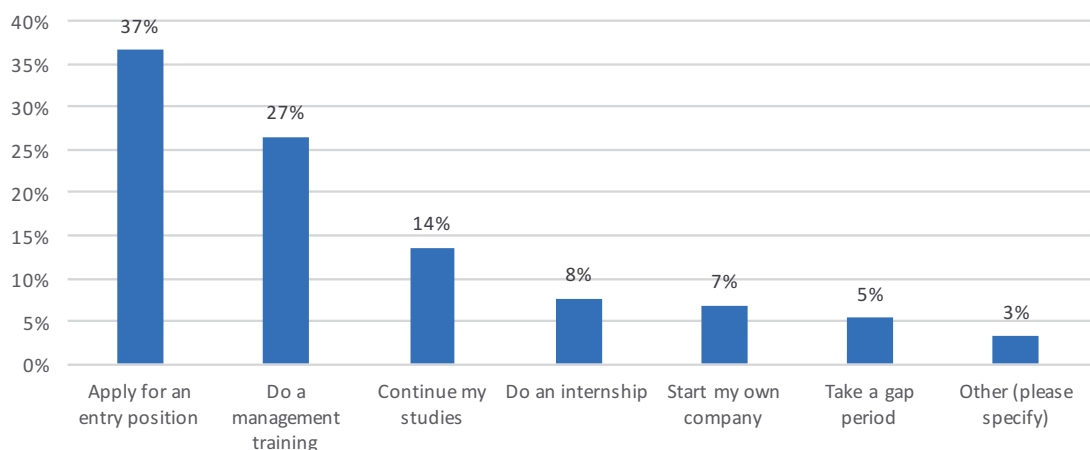
In this section of the survey, participants were asked about their intentions after graduation. First, students were asked what entry level position and department they would aim for. A closer focus was brought this year on what other aspirations respondents had than the classical options students have after graduation.

## What are Students Planning to do After Graduation?

### *Key Findings*

- 37% of respondents were interested in applying for an entry level position, and 27% of respondents were interested in a management training program. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were aiming to start working.
- It could be observed from the responses that several participants had more than one plan in mind for their future. In fact, 21% of participants chose 2 or more answers to this question.
- Other aspirations that were mentioned included traveling as well as pursuing studies in another non-hospitality related field.

### STUDENT'S FUTURE ASPIRATIONS IN 2018

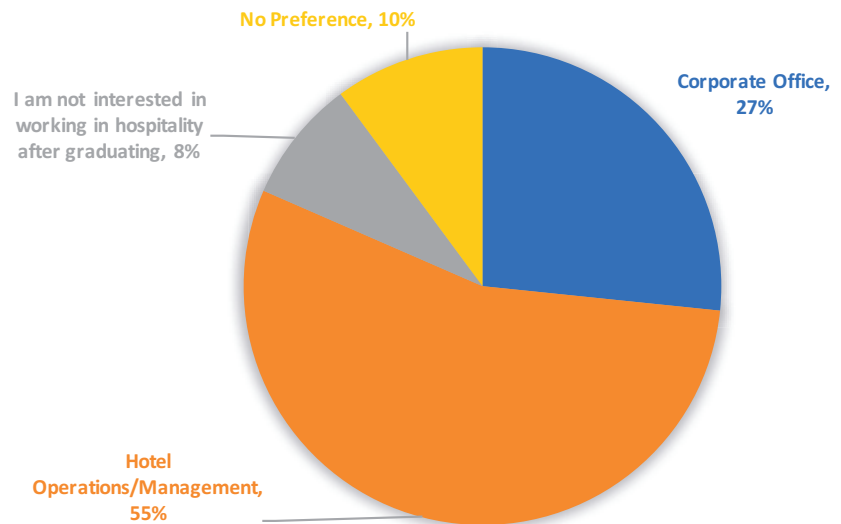


# What Entry Level do Young Graduates Choose After Graduation?

## Key Findings

- In terms of the most appealing entry-level hospitality positions, 55% stated they were interested in hotel operations/management, and 26% were interested in working in the corporate office.
- The results show that many students already have a clear preference for either working at a corporate office or in hotel operations with only 10% being indifferent to a particular entry level.
- When comparing the number of respondents indicating their intention to leave hospitality with motivation to pursue a career in other industries in the previous question, it can be observed that the percentage was lower in this question. This might show that many respondents are open to working in another industry, but not determined to leave the hotel industry.

DESIRED ENTRY LEVEL IN 2018

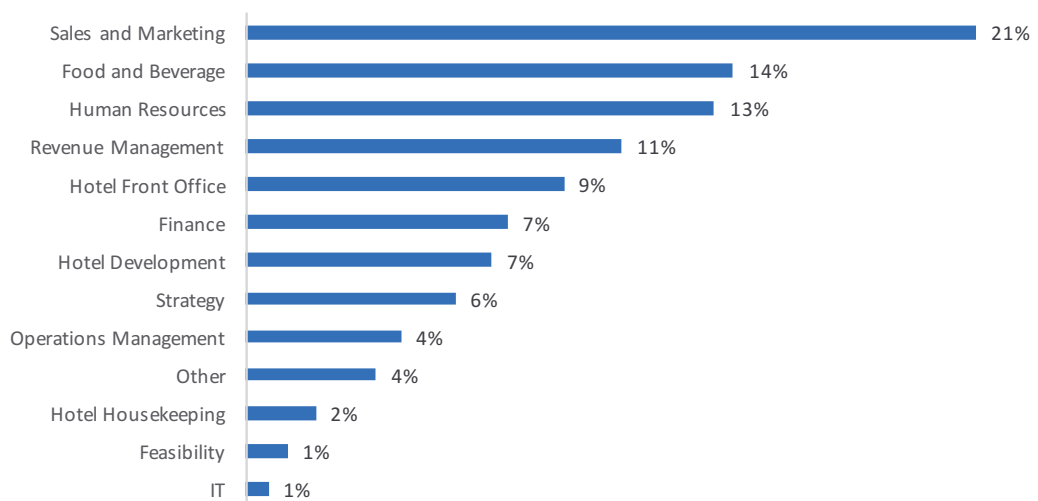


# What Are the Most Appealing Hotel Departments for Young Graduates?

## Key Findings

- Sales and Marketing remained in the most preferred department by hospitality students, followed by Food and Beverage, and Human Resources.
- Preference for Sales & Marketing and Food & Beverage has decreased by 7% and 11% respectively since last year.

DESIRED HOSPITALITY DEPARTMENT TO WORK IN 2018



## Year-to-Year Trends for Aspirations, Entry Level and Departments

- 37% of respondents this year are interested in applying for entry level positions, compared to 31% of respondents last year. Similarly, 27% of respondents are interested in management training programs compared to 18% last year.
- The number of respondents willing to work in Hotel Operations/Management increased every year by an average of 4.5% since 2016.
- The number of respondents that aim to work in the corporate office has decreased yearly by an average of 15% since 2016.



- In comparison to the previous two years, there are only slight changes in the results for the preferred departments to work in:

- Hotel Development moved from 5th place in 2017 to 7th place in 2018, and thus decreased in popularity.
- Finance moved up from 8th place to 6th place in 2018.
- Strategy went from 7th place down to 8th place.
- Aspiration for feasibility also decreased by one rank.
- Housekeeping increased by one rank.

## Key Insights for the Industry: Getting in line with Student's Perspectives of their Future

- The majority of students wish to enter the workforce after graduation, either in an entry level position or management training program.

- While more students may be motivated to work in other industries besides hospitality, there is a lower percentage of respondents who answered they were not interested in working in hospitality at all.

- The most appealing departments for young graduates are Sales & Marketing and Food & Beverage, in line with results from the past two years. Hotel companies can expect to easily acquire talent in those departments in the coming years.

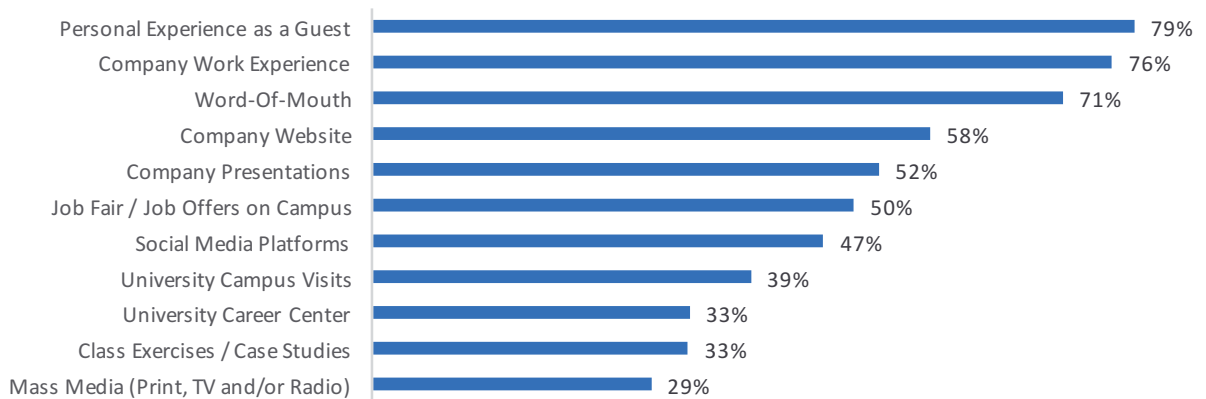
## What are the Most Effective Communication & HR Practices that Impact Young Graduates' Choices?

There are several different methods currently employed by hospitality companies to advertise their employer value proposition and to ensure that an accurate and consistent brand image is conveyed. Participants were asked to rank, in their view, the most important mediums used to form a positive or negative opinion about a hotel company.

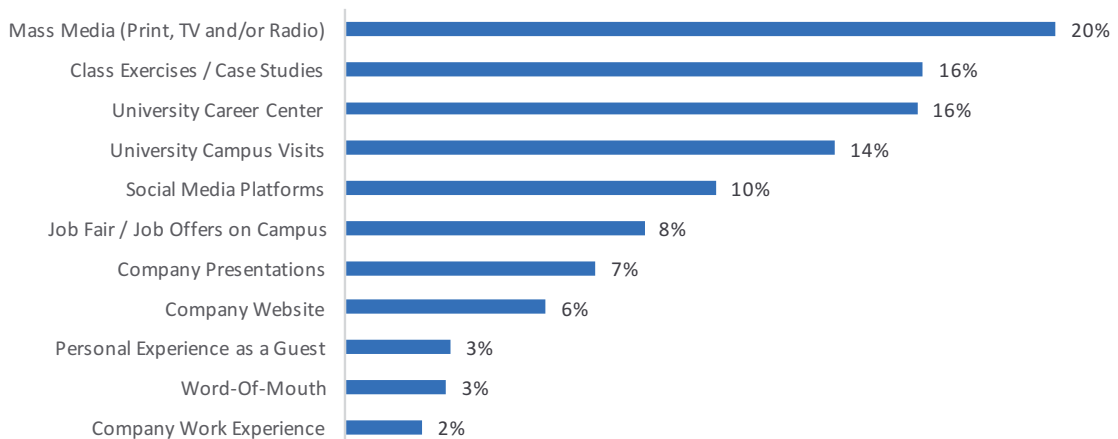
## Key Findings

- The participants found that personal experience as a guest was the most influential factor when forming an opinion regarding a hotel company, followed by company work experience and word-of-mouth respectively.
- Survey participants found company websites more influential than social media platforms.
- Both student and alumni respondents answered very similarly to this question.
- Mass media is the least mentioned extremely important factor but the most mentioned in the not important factor. This is clearly showing the impact of new media versus traditional media when forming opinion about brands.

### EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING A COMPANY IN 2018



### NOT IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING A COMPANY IN 2018



## *Year-to-Year Trends*

- As in the 2017 rankings results, the same factors (company work experience, experience as a guest and word-of-mouth) were ranked the most important for young graduates and working professionals alike.
- The top 3 not important factors: mass media, class exercises and university career center are identical to those of last year.
- The top 3 very important factors are also the same as in 2017. However, personal experience was perceived as more important this year, whereas company work experience was in the lead last year.
- There is an increase in responses marking word-of-mouth as very important.

## Key Insights for the Industry:

- Personal experiences and experiences from others has the greatest influence on respondents' perception of a hotel company. Young talents use company culture as a key differentiator in their choice of workplace (KPMG, 2017). Our findings are converging with other research and studies. It is therefore important for young talents to be able to have access to this intangibility. So how can hospitality companies partner with hotel schools' management to provide different types of immersive experiences than the traditional internship format? The answer to this question could be a great source of attraction for the young graduates.
- The shift that has been observed is not only about the media sources employed (classical media versus digitalized media) but also about the trustworthiness of the message being conveyed. Millennials are most trustworthy of information from their peers. Hospitality companies should involve the young talents they have in sharing their experiences through digitalized media, but also in traditional events like company visits. In simple words, brand and work environment reputations are nowadays co-constructed with your audience.
- Greater interest and involvement from the hotel company can be shown to guests who are studying or interested in the hospitality industry in order to attract talent.

## How can Hospitality Companies Retain Young Graduates?

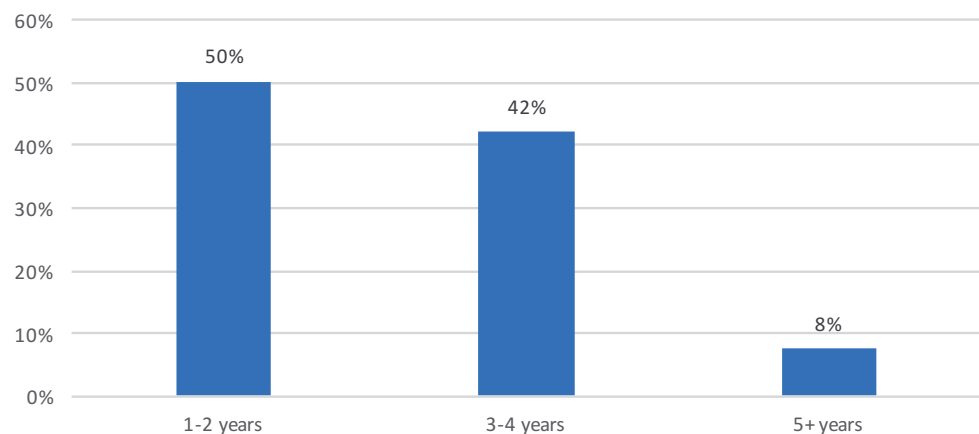
This year, additional questions were asked to respondents in order to further study retention among hospitality graduates. Employee retention is an important factor in hospitality, as jobs in this industry often are subject to high turnover. Students were asked how long they expect to stay at their first company. Alumni participants were asked about their past experience with their first/current company. Data was mostly gathered in form of open-ended questions to avoid excluding any unexpected possibilities.

## Projected Student Turnover and Retention Patterns

### *Key Findings*

- 90% of student participants expect to leave their first company after 5 years.
- Over 50% of students answered that they only expected to stay at their first company for 1-2 years.

HOW LONG STUDENTS EXPECT TO STAY AT THEIR FIRST COMPANY IN 2018

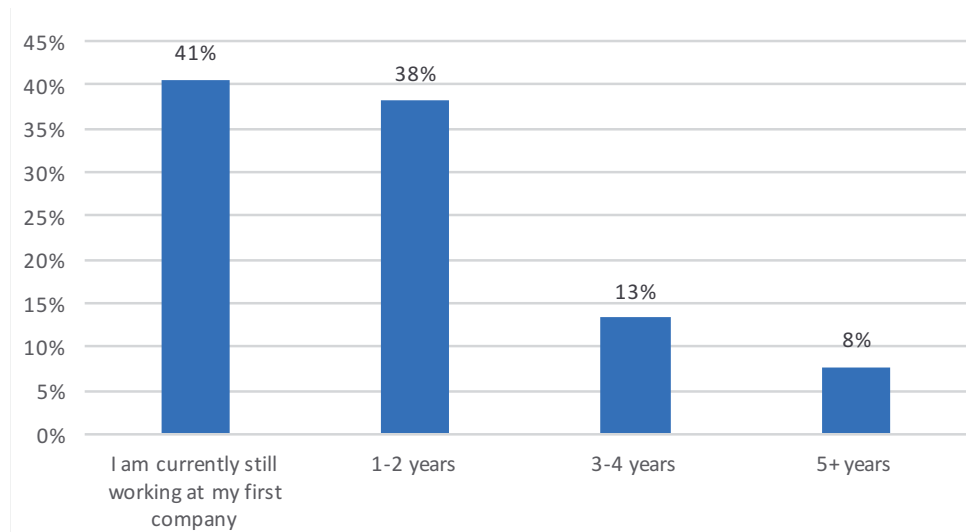


# Alumni Turnover and Retention Patterns

## Key Findings

- Of the alumni participants currently working for their first company, only 7% have been with the same organization for more than 5 years.
- Similar to the student's expectations, 38% stayed at their first company for 1-2 years.
- 92% of alumni no longer working for their first company left voluntarily.

TIME ALUMNI STAYED AT THEIR FIRST COMPANY IN 2018

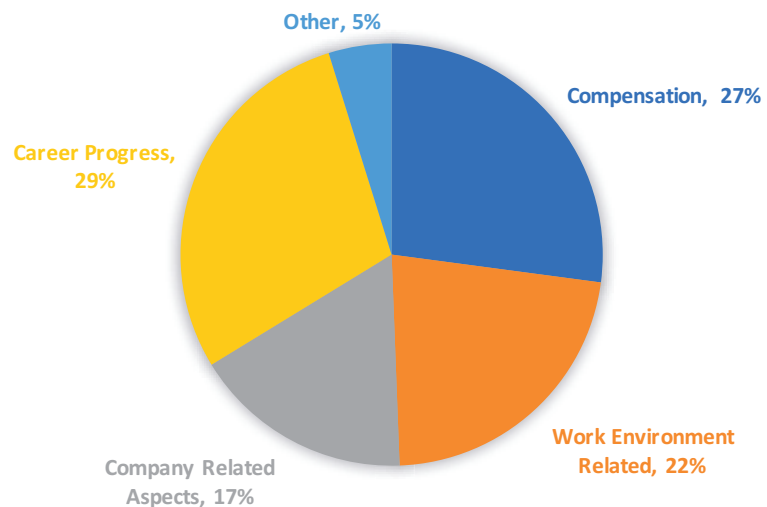


# What Could a Hospitality Company Improve for Better Retention ?

## Key Findings

- When asked what would encourage them to stay at the company longer, the following factors were the most frequently mentioned:
- Career progress (promotion, career development or growth opportunities, career advancement) with 22% of respondents mentioning this:
  - Monetary compensation ([higher] salary, better pay, money) with 20% of respondents mentioning “money” in their answers.
  - Many respondents did not answer the question and even less mentioned that they were absolutely satisfied with their company.

### IMPROVEMENTS FACTORS FOR BETTER RETENTION



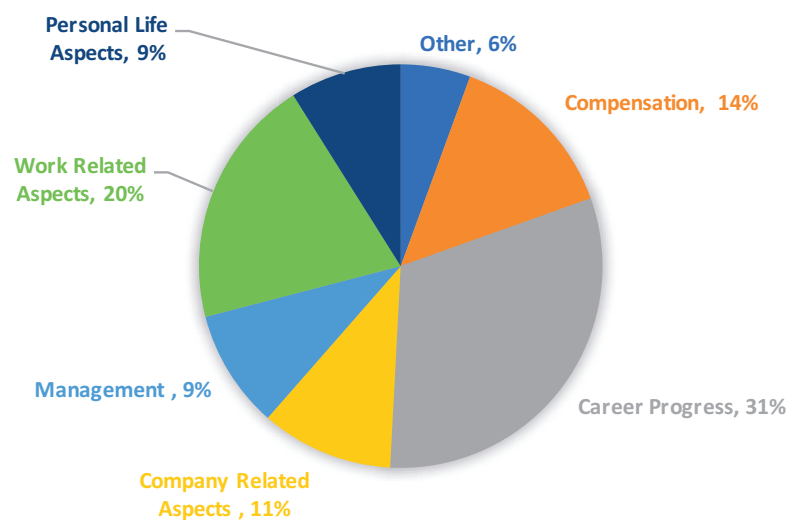
- The main factors that would convince employees to stay longer at their first company were career progress (development/growth opportunities, promotion, more responsibility, training) and job-related factors such as better teamwork, recognition, better work atmosphere or different work structure (empowerment, working hours, etc.).
- Respondents who had already left their first company were more motivated by career progression rather than monetary compensation.

# What Improvement Did Voluntary Leavers Wish From Their Former Companies?

## Key Findings

- The main factors that would have convinced employees to stay longer at their first company were:
  - Career progress (development/growth opportunities, promotion, more responsibility, training).
  - Job-related factors such as better teamwork, recognition, better work atmosphere or different work structure (empowerment, working hours, etc.).
- Voluntary leavers mentioned their willingness to develop their career more often than respondents still working at their first company. Management was also more often mentioned by alumni leaving voluntarily their first company (from the previous 4 to 17 mentions).
- Several respondents also mentioned that they chose to leave the company for reasons related to their personal life (family, visa expiration, willingness to move to another place) and therefore suggested no improvement for their first company.

WISHED IMPROVEMENT BY GRADUATES VOLUNTARILY LEAVING THEIR JOB



## Key Insights for the Industry

- Young graduates are not inclined to stay with their first company for over 5 years. This shows the job-hopping tendencies of millennials and that they leave their job as soon as they do not feel to stay at their current job. Therefore, the hospitality industry needs to be more innovative in terms of talent retention strategies.
- The majority of alumni who have changed companies left voluntarily, quoting career progression and more responsibility as factors that would have made them stay longer.
- Clearer career progression, responsibility and greater benefits were quoted as factors that would encourage current employees to stay longer.
- In order to retain their young talent, hospitality companies should ensure that they provide substantial learning opportunities to their employees as well as clearly define the development process. If these factors are not addressed, retention will be hard for companies (KPMG, 2017).



# Hotel Brand Awareness

The following questions were aimed to uncover the participant's most preferred hotel company, in the Luxury & Upper Upscale, Upscale & Upper Midscale, Midscale & Budget segments. The respondents were asked a series of questions including a Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA) and brand rankings. From this, we were able to award the winners of the YHS Brand Rankings of 2018. Further, a study of the most preferred brand by the top 6 nationalities of the survey was also conducted.

## Top-of-Mind Awareness

Participants were asked in the beginning of the survey to name the first 3 hotel brands that came to mind, as a “Top of Mind Awareness” question. Nearer to the end of the survey, participants were asked to list the 3 hotel brands they most wished to work for in the future, ranking the brands first, second and third. In previous years, this question was presented one after the other. However, in 2018, the questions were separated in efforts to help respondents better differentiate between the two questions. Respondents were further asked to give a reason for the top brand they wished to work for.

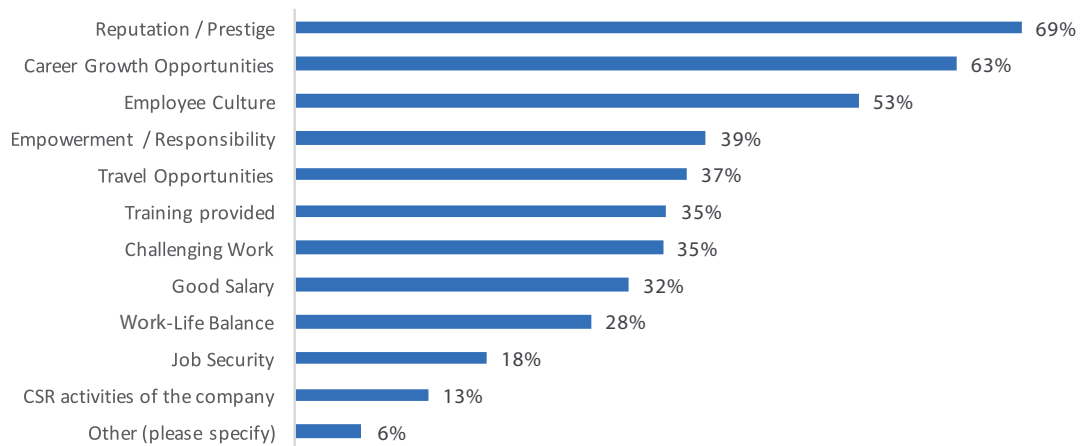
### *Key Findings*

- The companies that were mentioned the most frequently for the Top of Mind question were Marriott [International], Hilton [International] and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.
- It is worth noting that out of the 7 top brands referenced in this question, 5 mentioned hotel groups as opposed to their distinctive brands (Marriott International, Hilton International, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, AccorHotels Group and Intercontinental Hotels Group).
- When asked to specify the reason for naming their top company to work for, the overwhelming response to this question was reputation/prestige, followed by career growth opportunities. Employee culture was the third most popular choice. It can be concluded that company image plays a great role in the choice of brand to work for, particularly for young graduates.

### *Year-to-Year Trends*

- As observed in the previous two years, the majority of respondents were not able to differentiate between hotel groups and hotel brands. When comparing the results to this question with the top brands to work for, no direct relationship could be identified. Thus, further clarification is needed to distinguish hotel brands and companies.

## REASONS FOR MOST PREFERRED BRAND TO WORK FOR

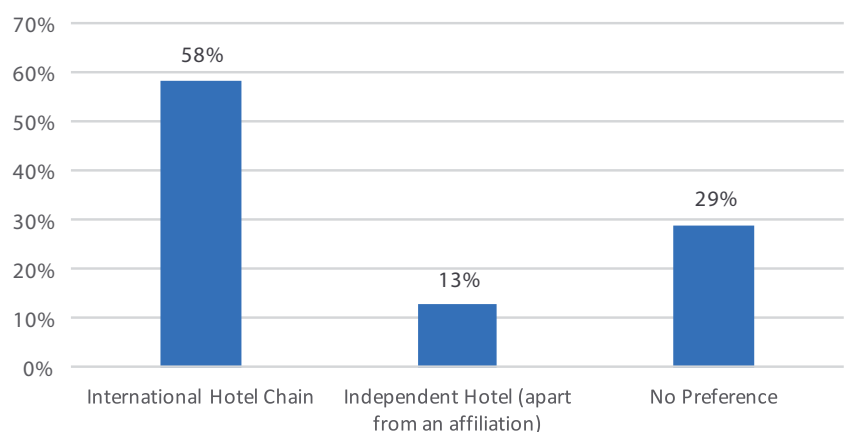


## Brand Rankings

Participants were asked what types of hotels they wished to work for (international chain, independent hotel) and they were asked to select the brands per segment that appealed to them. The results were aggregated, and the top brands per segment were awarded the top ranking of the YHS Employer Rankings Survey 2018. Further, the top brands were analyzed by the top 6 nationalities represented, to see what correlations may come to light. The top 6 nationalities represented in the survey were: Switzerland, USA, France, China, Germany and India. In 2018, the hotel brands were presented in a random order, compared to previous years where they were presented alphabetically. The objective of this was to eliminate biases to select brands that were shown near the top of the question. The changed layout was reflected in this year's results, as they were more varied compared to past years.

## Key Findings

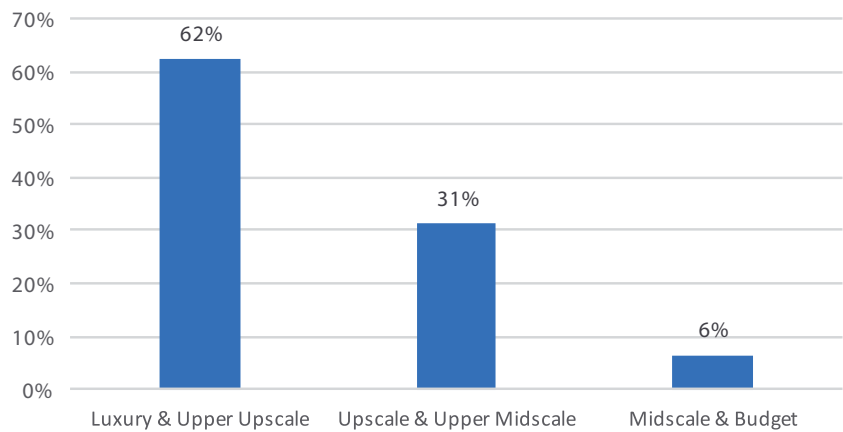
### PREFERRED HOTEL TYPE IN 2018



- 58% of survey participants were most willing to work for an international hotel chain, and 29% had no preference to a chain or independent hotel.

- 62% of participants preferred to work for a luxury & upper upscale hotel chain, and 31% preferred to work for a upscale & upper midscale chain.

#### PREFERRED HOTEL SEGMENTS IN 2018



#### *Year-to-Year Trends*

- The number of students willing to work for the Luxury & Upper Upscale segment has been decreasing since 2016.

- There were no significant changes observed in respondent's preference in hotel type over the years.

## Who are the most Appealing Brands in 2018?

- For the Luxury & Upper Upscale segment, there are significant differences among the top brands for which hoteliers want to work for. Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company takes first place in 2018. Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts takes second place. W Hotels Worldwide was ranked as the third most attractive brand to work for.

- In the Upscale & Upper Midscale segment, DoubleTree by Hilton was ranked first in 2018. Hyatt Place was the second most attractive brand in the Upscale & Upper Midscale segment. Crowne Plaza was ranked third in this segment.

- In 2018, 9% of participants were interested in working in the Midscale & Budget segment, therefore only the top 5 employer brand rankings are shown. Accor Hotel Group's Ibis chain dominated the top 5 most attractive brands. This is the first year where Ibis Hotels, Ibis Styles Hotels and Ibis Budget Hotels were all included as options in the employer rankings. Ibis Hotels remains in first place. Ibis Styles Hotels, an Ibis brand focused on design and comfort, took second place. Best Western Hotels and Resorts keeps its third-place positioning in this segment.

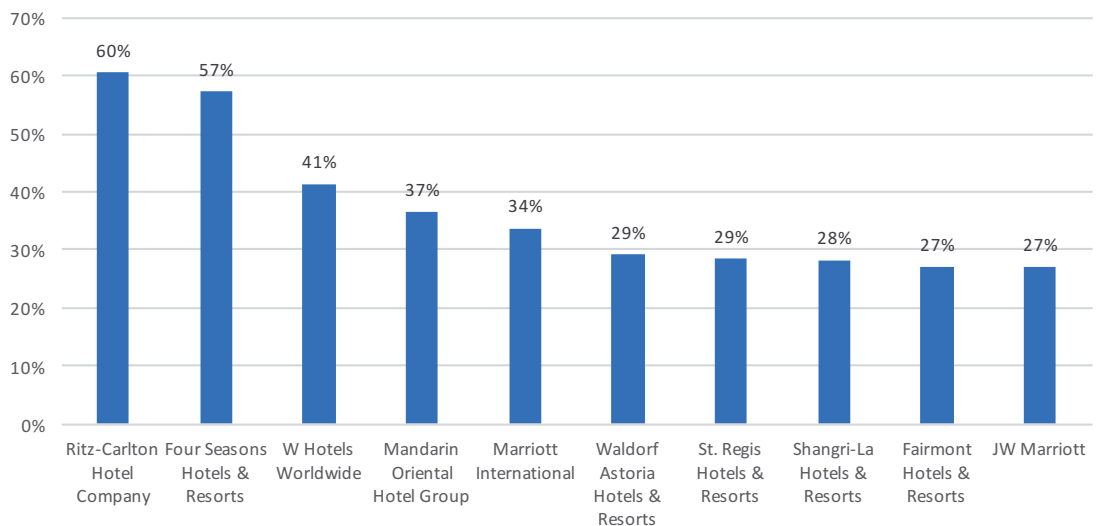
## Brand Rankings by Segment

(Numbers in brackets denote the change in ranking compared to 2017)

### Luxury/Upper Upscale

- |     |                                  |      |
|-----|----------------------------------|------|
| 1)  | Ritz Carlton Hotel Company       | (+1) |
| 2)  | Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts    | (-1) |
| 3)  | W Hotels Worldwide               | (+2) |
| 4)  | Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group    | (-1) |
| 5)  | Marriott International           | (+3) |
| 6)  | Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts | (+9) |
| 7)  | St Regis Hotels & Resorts        | (+9) |
| 8)  | Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts      | (+1) |
| 9)  | Fairmont Hotels & Resorts        | (-3) |
| 10) | JW Marriott                      | (+2) |

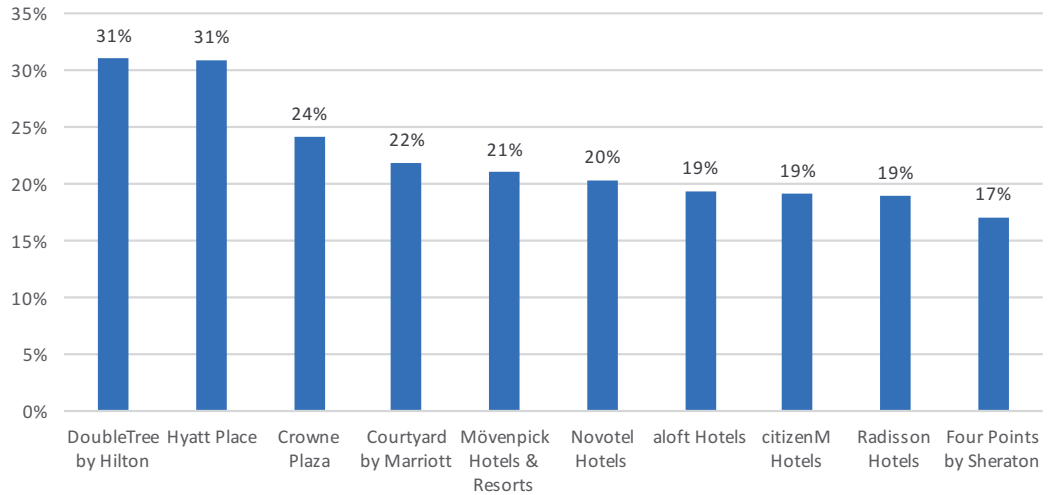
### LUXURY/UPPER UPSCALE PREFERRED BRANDS



## Luxury/Upper Upscale

- 1) DoubleTree by Hilton (+1)
- 2) Hyatt Place (+2)
- 3) Crowne Plaza (-)
- 4) Courtyard by Marriott (+3)
- 5) Mövenpick (+5)
- 6) Novotel (+7)
- 7) Aloft Hotels (-1)
- 8) citizenM (-)
- 9) Radisson (+8)
- 10) Four Points by Sheraton (+2)

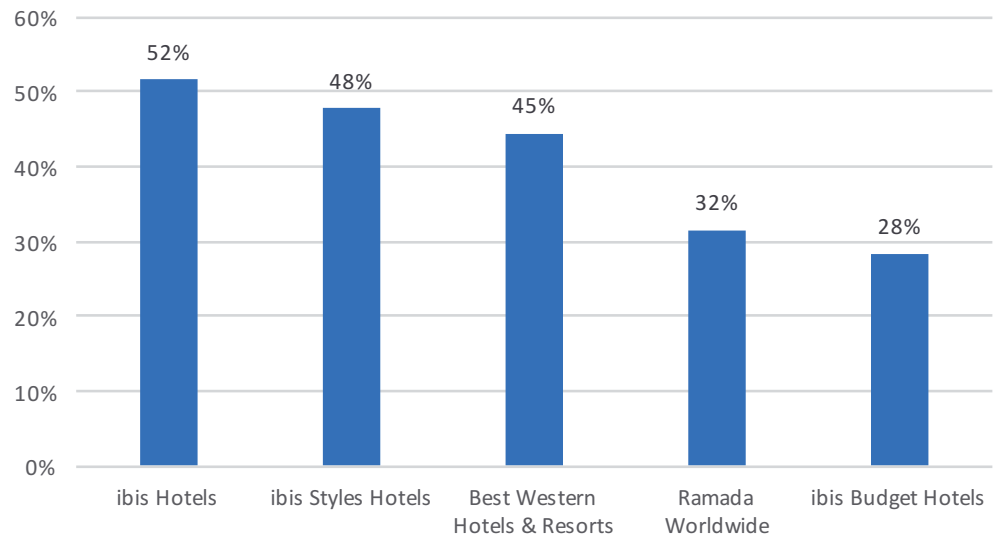
### UPSCALE & UPPER MIDSACLE PREFERRED BRANDS



## Midscale and Budget

- 1) Ibis (-)
- 2) Ibis Styles (-)
- 3) Best Western (-)
- 4) Ramada (-2)
- 5) Ibis Budget (-)

## MIDSCALE & BUDHET PREFERRED BRANDS



## Top 6 Nationalities Represented & Preferred Brands

Country/ Nationality	Number of Respondents	Luxury & Upper Upscale	Upscale & Upper Midscale	Midscale & Budget
Switzerland	281	Four Seasons	Mövenpick	Ibis Styles
USA	258	Ritz-Carlton	Hyatt Place	La Quinta Inns & Suites
France	173	Four Seasons	citizenM Hotels	Ibis Styles
China	108	Ritz-Carlton	Hyatt Place	Ibis Hotels
Germany	70	Ritz-Carlton	NH Hotels	Ibis Styles
India	65	Ritz-Carlton	Novotel Hotels	Ibis Hotels

### Key Findings

- The results were scattered among the various nationalities compared to the previous two years, possibly due in part to the changed layout of the question.
- Overall, Ritz-Carlton was seen as the brand preferred by most respondents in the survey, with Four Seasons in second place. High brand presence in the respective countries influenced the brand rankings for the Upscale & Upper Midscale segment.
- The Ibis Hotel brands dominated the rankings in the Midscale & Budget segment, with the only variation being La Quinta Inns & Suites for participants from the USA.

## *Year-to-Year Trends*

- Unlike previous years, Four Seasons was not the top choice for all 6 nationalities in the Luxury & Upper Upscale segment.
- The Upscale & Upper Midscale segment results has not been consistent with the past two years, indicating a possible lack of knowledge of these hotel brands by survey participants.
- La Quinta Inns & Suites was the preferred brand among participants from USA, in line with results seen in the past 2 years.



# Conclusion

## *Limitations & Further Research*

- More than half of the survey participants were students and alumni were from Europe, rather than an equal international distribution.
- As we had greatest access to hospitality institutes in Europe, the majority of survey respondents were from these schools. There was a significantly lower proportion of students from the Americas, Asia, Africa and Oceania and thus the results could be slightly skewed.
- The majority of survey respondents were students, with a significantly smaller proportion of alumni respondents. Due the limited representation of alumni, it is difficult to draw definitive comparisons between the two groups.
- There was confusion among the full scope of sectors included in “Traditional Hospitality”, where event management is actually included. Further clarification is necessary to ensure participants are aware of all the sectors included in traditional hospitality.
- The Top of Mind Awareness study aimed to identify hotel brand awareness. However, there was confusion among the respondents in respect to distinguishing between hotel companies and brands. Therefore, the results from this question were inconclusive as the purpose of the study was to identify the most preferred hotel brand among young graduates.
- One of the goals of this year’s survey was to start to draw parallels and trends between the results of the previous two surveys. As a result, most of the questions were found in either the 2016 or 2017 surveys. In 2018 however, we added questions regarding retention patterns, where we were unable to draw year-to-year conclusions.
- As an upward trend of young graduates’ interest in working in traditional hospitality can be observed, further research into how many students actually pursue such careers and stay in the industry is warranted.

# Takeaways

## **Career Path Analysis**

More than ever, intrinsic motivation is key for motivating young graduates to work in a specific company. Development and learning opportunities, company culture and work life balance are key factors graduate consider when choosing a job. Hotel companies should seriously consider these factors to attract and retain talent.

There is a general increase in interest for traditional hospitality in the past 3 years. This is very promising for a relatively slow changing industry. Hotel companies should benefit as much as possible from this new motivation and continue widely promoting the industry to continue this positive momentum.

Hotel companies should also consider other industries with similar traits as hospitality (banking, events, and luxury and fashion) as competitors to attract talent. Highlighting the core values of hospitality (relationships, teamwork, service) would set hotel companies apart from the other industries.

## **Communication & HR Practices**

In order to reach and attract new talent, hospitality companies should provide opportunities to have direct contact with the company environment by offering personal experiences within the company. Additionally, young graduates place greater value and trust on information or experiences provided by peers. Nowadays, brand and work environment reputations are co-constructed with your potential employees.

To further enhance young graduates' interest to work for a particular company, hospitality brands could offer potential employees greater insights into their products and company culture.

It is imperative to provide opportunities for young graduates to experience company's competitive advantages in terms of working environments.

Hospitality companies should also aim to highlight their internal culture and job offering on company websites and presentations.

## **Retention**

As mentioned by KPMG (2017), young millennials need to perceive the overall purpose of their work in order to truly commit themselves. Hospitality companies should focus on delivering their employee value proposition in order to reach high retention rates of new graduates. Clear career development and

learning opportunities should be presented to the new graduates even during the recruitment process.

When considering turnover of employees that have been working for over a year at the company, fair monetary compensation as well as an adequate work life balance, should also be taken into consideration.

### **Brand Awareness**

As can be observed from the results of the YHS Employer Rankings 2018, the top 10 preferred brands in the Luxury & Upper Upscale segment were fairly similar to the past two years. On the other hand, the results of the top 10 brands present in the Upscale & Upper Midscale segment are more varied. This is a possible signal to greater uncertainty or lack of knowledge of these particular brands. Therefore, greater brand exposure is necessary for Upscale & Upper Midscale brands. Lower scale brands should seize this opportunity to become more visible in the job market and recruit a larger share of young graduates.

# Acknowledgements

## **HOSCO**

Hosco has been a partner of the YHS Rankings for four years and has year on year helped by distributing the YHS Rankings survey through their large community. This year in particular, Hosco is providing the winning companies of the YHS Employer Rankings promotion and visibility on the Hosco platform, the largest hospitality network for young talents and industry professionals. The 2018 YHS Rankings team would like to thank Elisa Vadanovici, Marketing Specialist at Hosco, for all her help!

## **MOZAIK**

In 2016, the YHS Employer Rankings and Mozaik has partnered in creating a new survey methodology. Keeping in line with the same methodology as in the two previous years, the 2018 YHS Rankings team has continued with a similar overall methodology and survey design. Mozaik has created a new breed of agency effectively combining business knowledge, strategic data analysis and key technological complexes in a long-term and meaningful creative process. The YHS team would like to thank Dr. Samad Laaroussi for his continued support and coaching during the writing of this report.

## **STR**

For the first time, Smith Travel Research (STR) has assisted in 2018 in building, distributing and analyzing the YHS Employer Rankings. As the leading source for hospitality related data, analytics and benchmarking, STR has aided in the survey design and distribution to hospitality institutions, particularly in North America. The YHS Rankings team would like to thank Steve Hood for his continued mentoring and support.

## **Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne**

We would also like to thank Dr. Martin Rios, Dr. Elisa Chan and Dr. Laura Zizka for supporting us with their research and presentation expertise.

Lastly, we would like to thank the entire Young Hoteliers Summit 2018 organizing committee for their help in promoting the survey and creating a unique YHS experience. The YHS Rankings team would like to especially thank Mathew Bo Eriksson for his supervision. The Rankings team of 2018 would also like to thank the former Heads of Rankings Irvan Sutiono, Rui Diogo, Clara Pinto and Louisa Schwarz for their continued involvement in this research.

## **References**

- KPMG. (2017). *Meet The Millennials*. London: KPMG.
- WCN & Universum. (2018). *The Must-Know student Recruiting Trends for 2018*. Universum.

# About the Authors



## **Leandra Kall**

Leandra Kall is a final semester student in the Bachelor of International Hospitality Management at Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne. Having gained hospitality operational experience in Switzerland and Italy, she recently completed an internship in Revenue Management at Scandic Hotels in Hamburg, Germany. After graduation, Leandra is striving to continue her career in hospitality business analytics and hotel real estate finance.

Do not hesitate to send Leandra an email at [leandra.kall@ehl.ch](mailto:leandra.kall@ehl.ch) or connect with her on LinkedIn with any questions or comments regarding this report!



## **Alexandra Lor**

Alexandra Lor is a final year student at the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne in the Bachelor program. Having worked in hospitality institutions in Hong Kong and Paris, Alexandra has gained operational and administrative work experience in diverse multicultural settings. Prior to this report, Alexandra just completed her most recent internship in the Corporate Finance department at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group in Hong Kong.

Do not hesitate to send Alexandra an email at [alexandra.lor@ehl.ch](mailto:alexandra.lor@ehl.ch) or connect with her on LinkedIn with any questions or comments regarding this report!