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# Job Seeker Trends 2016

*Increasing Global Mobility*



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# Job Seeker Trends 2016

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## AT A GLANCE

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The Boston Consulting Group and Recruit Works Institute conducted, for the second year running, one of the largest global surveys on the experiences and perceptions of people looking for employment. These results provide a snapshot of global and local trends in the job search market and raise important themes for human resources (HR) departments to address as they strive to win in the global war for talent.

### **GLOBAL MOBILITY**

Among those surveyed, 64% indicated interest in finding work in a different country. The percentage of respondents who had actually moved to a different country for a job was 7%.

### **FREELANCE WORK**

Among all job seekers, 76% indicated interest in working on a freelance basis, while 23% were already working as freelancers. The majority of those doing freelance work had a separate primary occupation, thus holding more than one position at a time.

### **JOB SEARCH CHANNELS**

The most popular job search channels in all countries were Internet job sites and referrals by family, friends, and acquaintances. Further, 44% of respondents said that online media such as Internet job sites and social networking sites (SNS) were the most effective channels for job searching.

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**F**OR THE SECOND YEAR RUNNING, The Boston Consulting Group and Recruit Works Institute set out to capture a truly global view of the job search process. (See sidebar “About the Research.”) Our survey of more than 13,000 individuals from 13 countries sheds light on job seekers’ level of interest in employment in other countries and in freelance working styles that do not involve specific employer-employee relationships, as well as the extent to which such factors were considered by these individuals before accepting their current job.

The rapid globalization of the economy over the past 20 years has accelerated the movement of labor forces beyond their national borders. Furthermore, the widespread use of broadband and the advancement of technologies such as cloud sourcing have made it much easier for one individual to hold multiple jobs than it was ten years ago.

Through this survey, we discovered that even more people than we initially envisaged were interested in finding work in a different country or working on a freelance basis. Such diversification of needs may pose both an opportunity and a threat for companies looking to hire. Companies that seize on this diversification as an opportunity and respond quickly to the needs of job seekers will have the chance to become winners in today’s fierce competition for the best talent. Those that do not may find themselves falling behind in their efforts to capture the needs of job seekers and to establish the competitive edge so necessary in today’s rapidly changing job market.

Not only are these trends of importance for individual companies, but they should also be of significant importance for national and local governments in developing their growth strategies.

## Global Mobility, Finding and Changing Jobs Beyond Borders

International trade has made a dramatic leap since the latter half of the 1990s. This advancement in the globalization of the economy has increased the mobility of labor forces beyond national borders. As a result, it is critical for companies seeking to enhance their competitiveness within their market to have the ability to attract talent effectively, not only from within their own country, but from other countries. The same applies when looking to enhance the competitive edge of countries themselves; we believe the effective utilization of human resources recruited from other countries will be a critical government policy issue, one that will also require taking social issues into consideration that will arise naturally as immigration increases.

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“Globalization and the advancement of technologies have changed working styles”

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY, AND THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S SURVEY

We surveyed more than 13,000 people from 13 countries on their 2015 job search experience and the outcome of that process. This is considered the largest global survey on job seeker trends. Respondents included approximately 830 people each from Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, Russia, South Africa, the UK, and the US; 1,400 from India; and 2,500 from China.

Respondents were job-seeking individuals 15 years of age or older who had found a new job in 2015. Full-time homemakers, students, retirees, and the unemployed were excluded. Last year, the survey was limited to people seeking employment opportunities as company employees and officers, temporary staff, and public officials; this year's survey was expanded to include the self-employed and freelancers.

To ensure a representation sample of respondents, we adjusted the survey by dividing it equally between those with a college degree or higher and those with a high school degree or below. We then weighted the results to each country's educational attainment and gender ratio as provided by UNESCO and Barro-Lee. (See Appendix Exhibit 1.) Last year, the survey was conducted in some countries as a mixture of online and offline surveys. However, this year the survey was conducted exclusively online in every country. It must therefore be noted that our results may overweight the responses of Internet users.

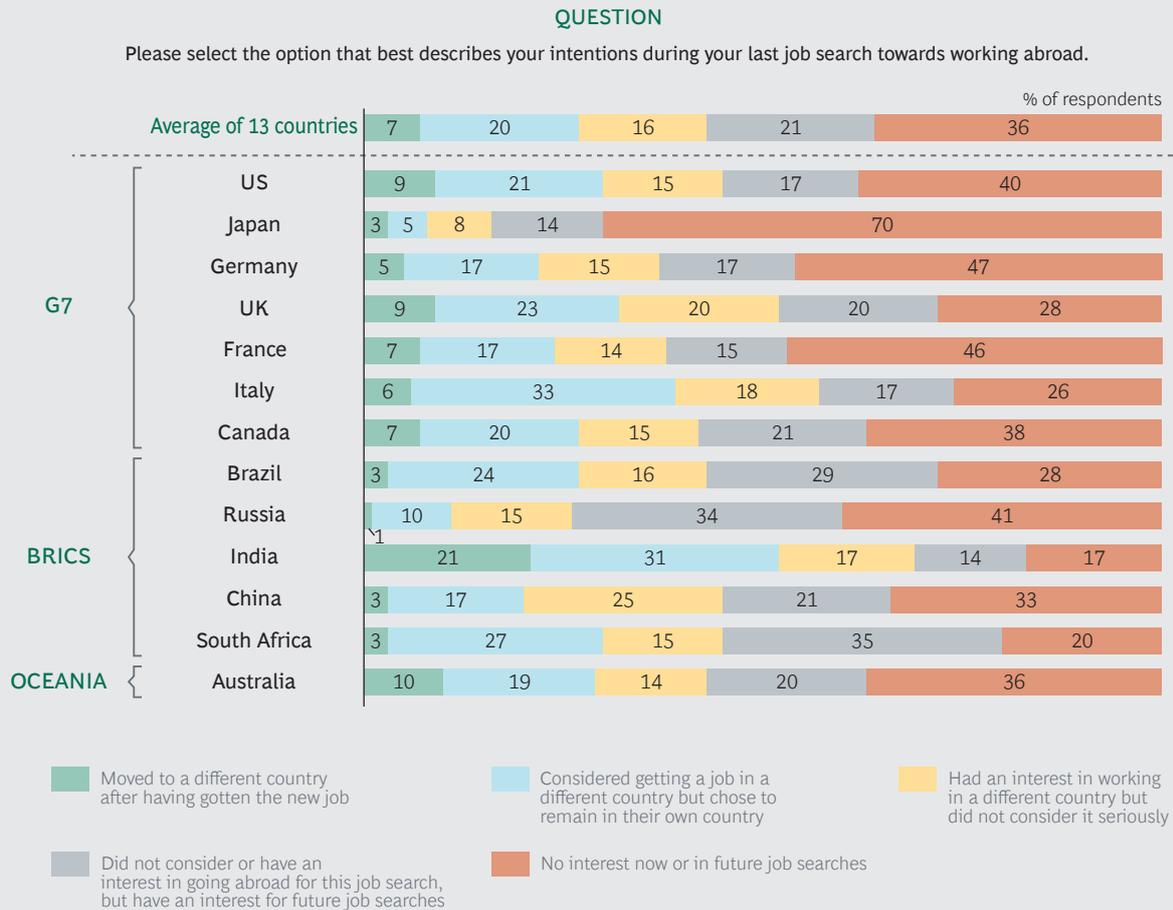
Regarding job search channels, surveyed in continuation from the previous year, this year we added social network sites (SNSs) as an option, in consideration of the strength of professional networks such as LinkedIn and other SNSs such as Facebook.

With this survey, we asked job seekers who found jobs in 2015 whether they had any interest in finding work in a different country (including those who had already moved to a different country) and whether they had considered this possibility during their job search. Of the respondents we surveyed from 13 countries, 64% demonstrated some interest in working abroad and 7% had already moved to a different country for their current job.

When looking at results by country, a higher percentage of respondents living in most of the countries in which the spoken language is English—India, Australia, the US, and the UK—showed an interest in working in a different country than did respondents in other countries, and a higher percentage had moved abroad to work. In contrast, the level of interest found in Japan for working in a different country was the lowest, at just 30%. (See Exhibit 1.)

When analyzing the results by gender, the percentage of individuals across all 13 countries having an interest in working abroad was 69% for men but just 57% for women. By age, while 71% of those in their teens and 20s demonstrated an interest in

## EXHIBIT 1 | Respondents in English-Speaking Countries Have Most Interest in Seeking a Job Abroad



**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

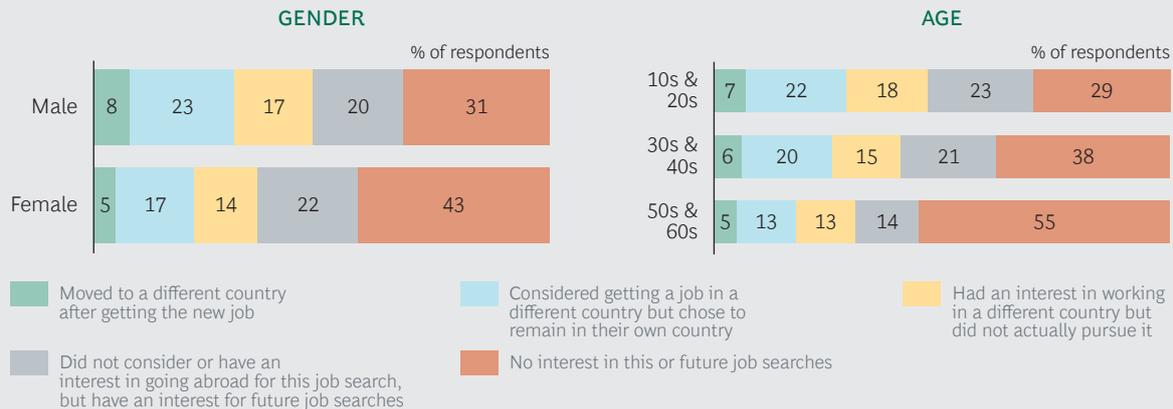
working abroad, the percentage for those in their 30s and 40s was 62% and for those in their 50s and 60s just 45%. As one might expect, younger generations have a stronger desire to take on the challenge of working in a different country than do their older counterparts. (See Exhibit 2.)

When we asked respondents who had moved abroad for their job why they had done so, 30% said they had made their choice because the country they had moved to had a good support system for raising children. Other top reasons included a good educational system (26%) and a good medical system (21%). Thus, many respondents indicated they moved, not for their own convenience, but for the benefit of their families. However, when we also include respondents who had not moved abroad but had considered or were simply interested in working abroad, the respondents were more focused on benefits to the job seekers themselves, such as living in a different cultural environment (25%), the chance to earn a larger salary (19%), and the possibility of enhanced career opportunities (19%). (See Exhibit 3.)

## EXHIBIT 2 | Males and Younger Generations More Interested in Seeking a Job Abroad

### QUESTION

Please select the option that best describes your intentions during your last job search towards working abroad.



**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

## EXHIBIT 3 | Reasons for Interest in a Job Abroad

### QUESTION

What were the reasons you became interested in working abroad? (Up to 3 answers)

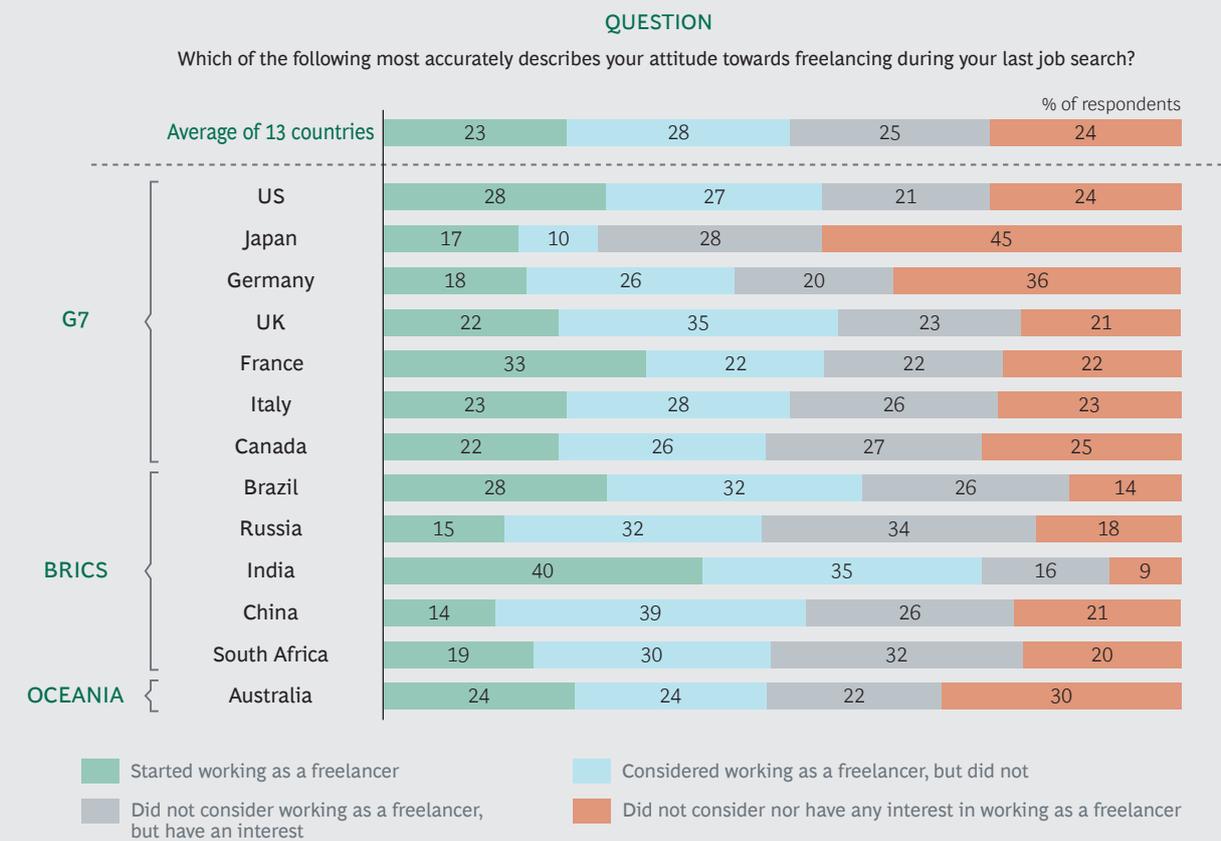


**Note:** Respondents who answered “No interest in this or future job searches” are excluded from “all respondents.” Only the top ten ranked reasons are shown here.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

## Freelance Work

The improvement of remote working environments, the emergence of cloud sourcing, and other factors resulting from widespread broadband access have made it significantly easier than it was ten years ago to earn an income, not only through tra-

## EXHIBIT 4 | Respondents Across Countries Show Interest in Working Freelance



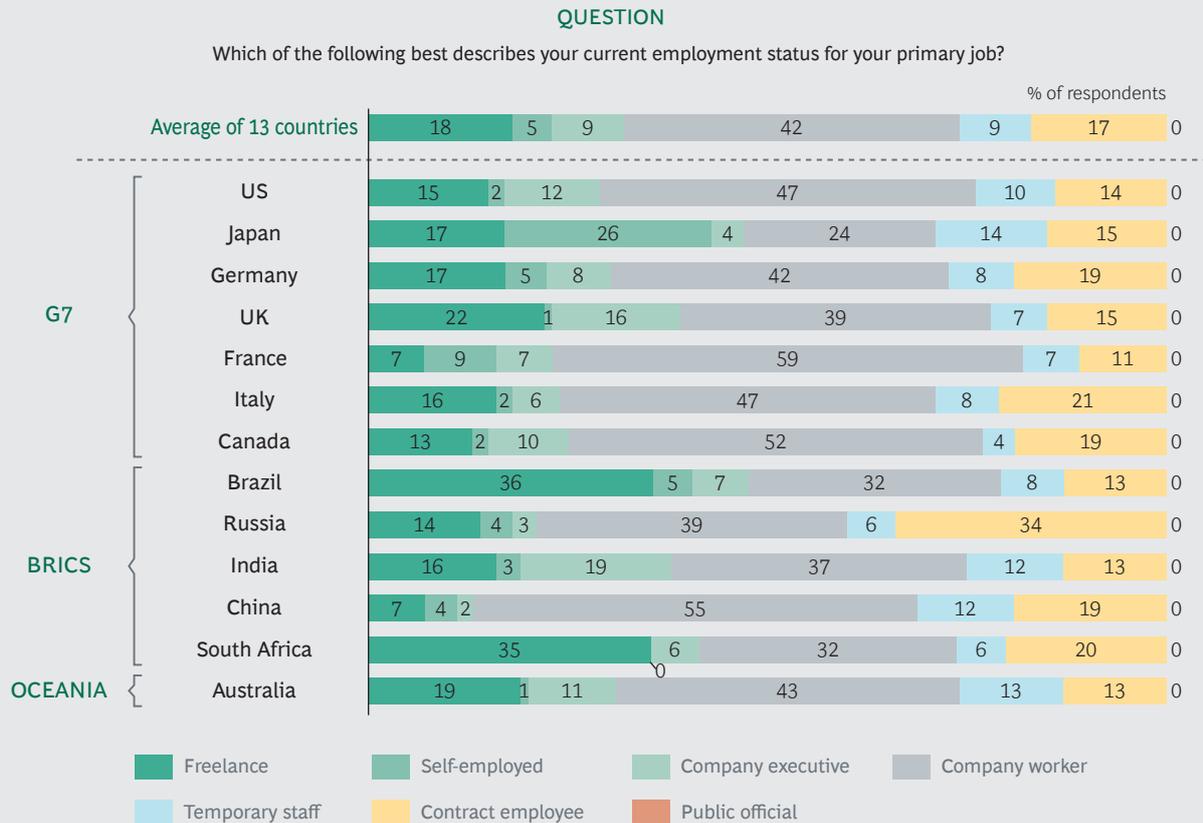
**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

ditional corporate employment, but also through freelance work. For companies, the emergence of this new workstyle provides an alternative method for acquiring the talent they need, in addition to the traditionally practiced method of recruiting and training permanent staff.

In this survey, we asked respondents whether they were interested in working on a freelance basis and whether they had considered this method of working during their job search. The average number of respondents for the 13 countries who had some interest in working freelance was 76%, with 23% having actually started working as a freelancer. There were some differences in results depending on the country, but even in Japan, which had the lowest level of interest in freelance work, more than half of the job seekers demonstrated an interest. We therefore project that the number of freelance workers will begin to rise sharply in the near future. (See Exhibit 4.)

Nonetheless, when we asked the respondents who had actually started working as freelancers (23% overall) about their current primary style of working, the percent-

## EXHIBIT 5 | Most Freelance Workers are Not Completely Independent



**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

age of persons who responded that either freelance, self-employment, or company proprietor was their main way of working was only 32%. In contrast, 68% responded that their main style of work was under the employment of a company, whether as a company worker, contract employee, or temporary staff member. Thus, the survey shows that the majority of freelance workers are not completely independent in their freelance work, but have additional jobs that earn them a regular salaried income. (See Exhibit 5.)

The increase in the number of freelancers and multiple jobholders highlights the opportunity for different companies to share individual laborers who hold the skills and capabilities they desire. This is a relatively new option that can enhance productivity for both companies and individuals. In the increasingly competitive market for human resources, therefore, developing an environment in which it is easier for freelancers to work is likely to become an important issue in acquiring top talent in a flexible and efficient manner.

## Job Search Channels

The Internet has become the most widely used job-search channel in a number of different countries throughout the world. In fact, job seekers who do not use the Internet at all have become the minority, with the majority gathering job search information and making job applications through Internet job sites and SNSs. At the same time, referrals from friends and family, as well as introductions from current employees, continue to gain popularity in both advanced and developing countries.

We asked job seekers about the channels they used to search for and select a job in 2015. These channels included the following:

- **Commercial channels** such as paper-based media (newspaper and magazine advertisements), Internet job sites (résumé portals, job forums, job posting sites, job aggregators), SNSs, temporary- and permanent-employment agencies
- **Public channels** such as government-run job services
- **Referral channels** such as work colleagues, alumni networks, friends, and family
- **Direct inquiries** with employers (such as direct applications to a company, contact with a company employee, and direct recruiting from the company)

Thirty-six percent of all respondents said that Internet job sites were the most effective channel for finding employment. Next came listed referrals (16%), paper media (9%), direct inquiries (9%), and SNSs (8%). In addition, the highest percentage of respondents in every country—from 24% to 49%—named Internet job sites as the most effective channel. However, the ranking of other channels varied by country—a testament to the influence of each country's policies, economy, and culture around the job search process. For example, in China, 17% of respondents named SNSs as the most effective channel for finding a job. Meanwhile, 18% of respondents in Japan and 14% in France cited public services as being the most effective. (See Exhibit 6.)

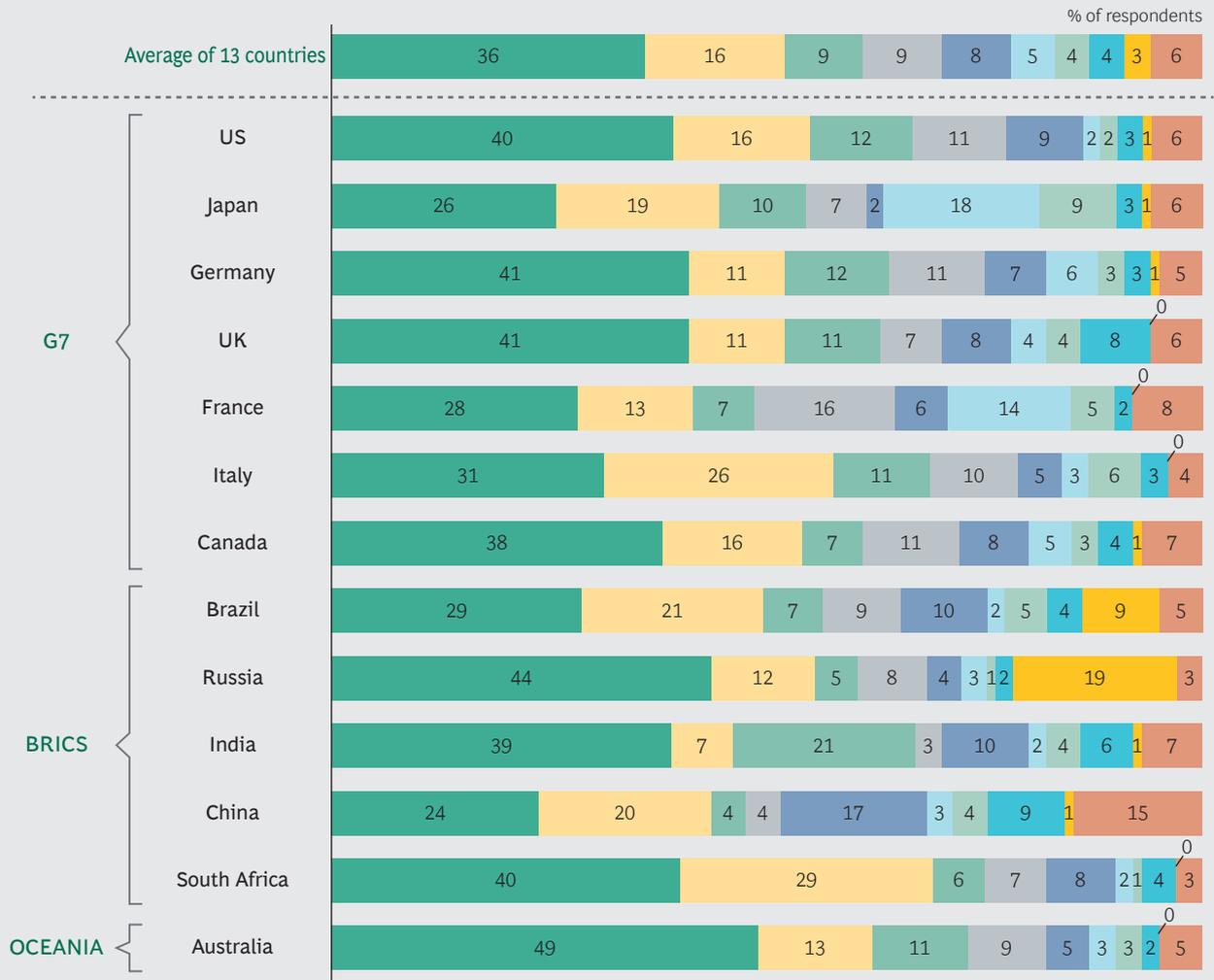
If we add both Internet job sites and SNSs (the job search channel that was newly added to this survey), 44% of job seekers believe the Internet is the most effective and important means of searching for a job. Analyzing this by age group, 47% (38% + 9%) of those in their teens and 20s cited the Internet as the most effective and important job search channel, while 44% (36% + 8%) of those in their 30s, 42% (34% + 8%) of those in their 40s, and 31% (28% + 3%) of those in their 50s were of this opinion. As we see by these results, Internet job sites and SNSs are widely used and serve as an important job search channel regardless of age, although particularly for those under 50. (See Exhibit 7.)

The Internet is already widely used for job searches by people of almost every age, with a high probability that its use will spread even further with the establishment of more telecommunications infrastructure and the widespread use of mobile devices in developing countries. Companies will thus be required to increase their efforts to reach a broader range of job seekers through the use of online sites.

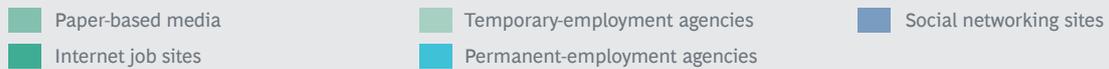
## EXHIBIT 6 | Respondents Name Internet Job Sites the Most Effective Channel for Finding Employment

### QUESTION

Among the channels that played a part in your job search, which was the single most useful to you in landing your current job?



#### COMMERCIAL



#### PUBLIC



#### REFERRAL



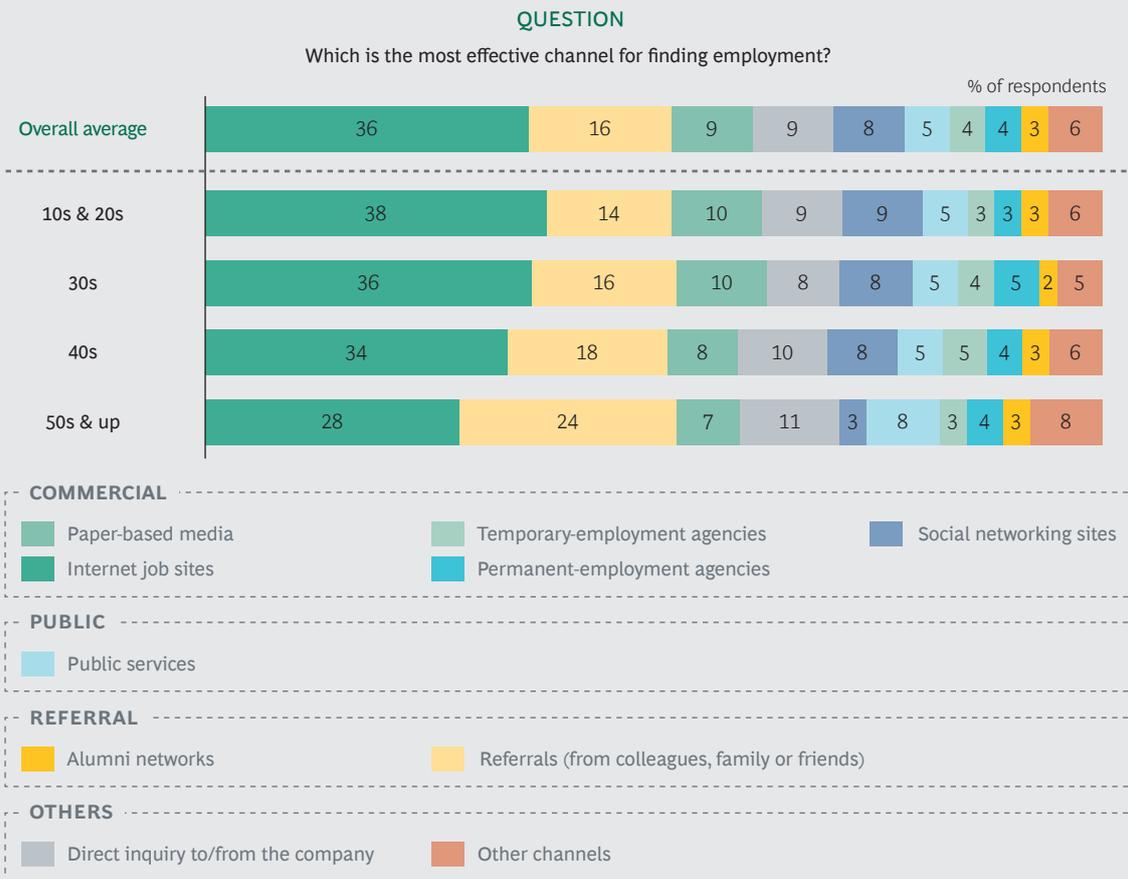
#### OTHERS



**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.

**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

## EXHIBIT 7 | Internet Job Sites Are the Most Popular Job Search Channels for Every Age Group



**Note:** Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100. Percentages include all survey respondents. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

## Conclusion

This survey reveals the current needs and tendencies of job seekers in different countries around the world. Approximately two-thirds of job seekers worldwide are interested in working abroad and approximately three-fourths of job seekers are interested in working as freelancers. Moreover, 7% of total respondents have already moved to a different country for their current job, while 23% are already working on a freelance basis.

Such diversification in workstyles may offer greater opportunities for companies facing a quantitative or qualitative shortage of human resources, or those facing a capability gap. However, a great deal of effort will be required on the part of these companies if they are to take advantage of such opportunities.

To begin, they should ensure that they provide an appropriate environment and work conditions, not only for prospective employees, but also for their families. They should strive to provide an environment in which freelancers find it easy to

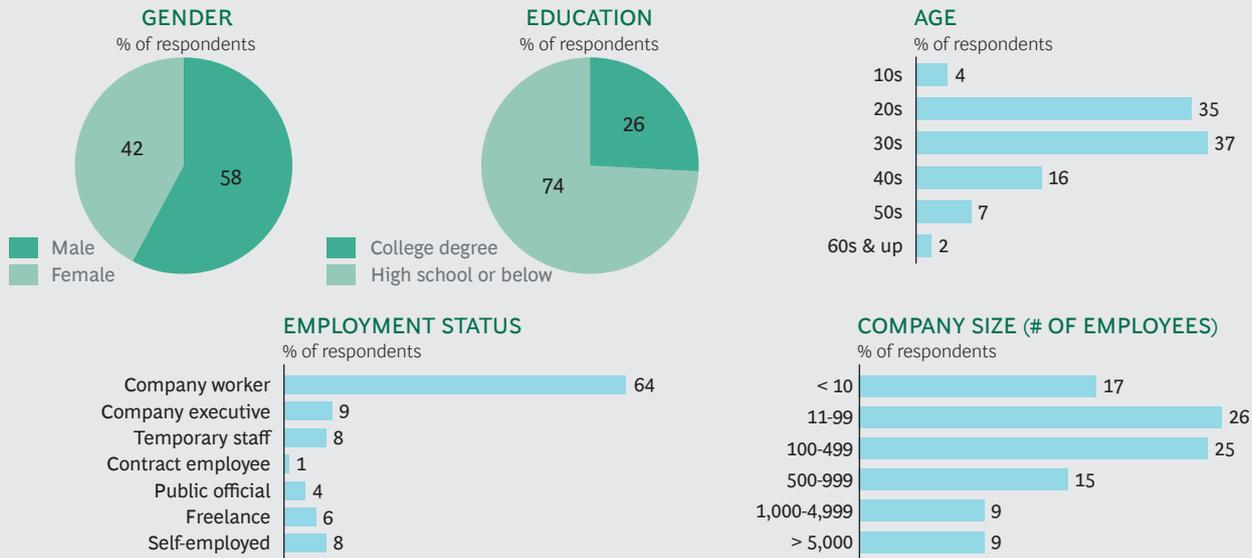
“Can you capture today’s newly mobile and flexible job seekers?”

work. And they should communicate their corporate environment as clearly as possible to job seekers, in an easy-to-understand manner, via the Internet.

We look forward to seeing companies make these and other improvements, promoting more diversified ways of working and thereby greatly increasing the productivity of companies, individuals, and society as a whole.

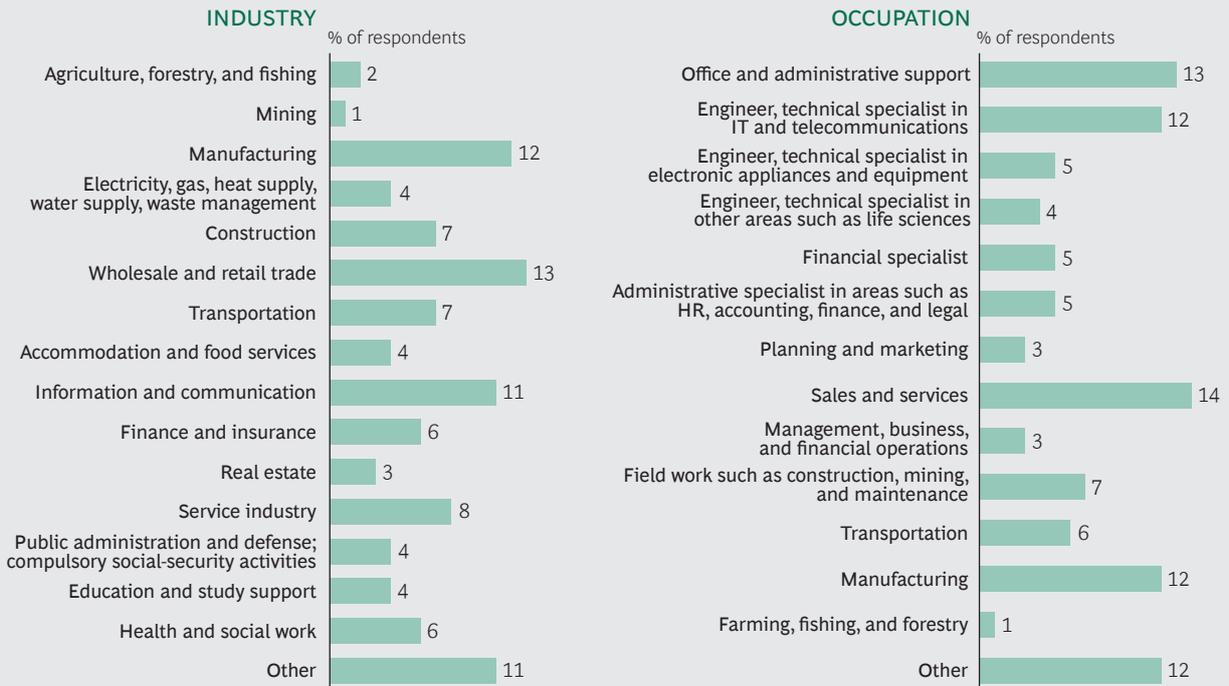
APPENDIX

EXHIBIT 1 | Overview of Survey Participants, Part I



**Note:** Data shows distribution of survey respondents after weighting for educational attainment and gender. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

EXHIBIT 2 | Overview of Survey Participants, Part II



**Note:** Data shows distribution of survey respondents after weighting for educational attainment and gender. n=13,059 respondents.  
**Source:** Job Seeker Trends 2016 Survey.

### **About the Authors**

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### **For Further Contact**

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