**2011 Graduate Outlook Survey**

**Summary Report for Manufacturing Employers**

This report looks at trends in graduate recruitment for the Manufacturing industries including graduate recruitment trends, graduate skill shortages, graduate program promotion methods used and factors influencing graduate attrition and retention. In total, 25 Manufacturing employers responded to the survey.

The report provides insight into graduate recruitment activities and suggests ways to improve retention rates and capitalise on investing in graduate employees.

# What’s happening in graduate recruitment?

Nearly four in ten Manufacturing employers surveyed would have recruited more graduates if appropriate candidates had been available (see Figure 1) in 2011. This figure has remained steady over the past two years after the initial impact in 2009 from the Global Financial Crisis when three in ten employers would have recruited more graduates if appropriate candidates had been available.

Figure 1: Proportion of Manufacturing employers who would have recruited more graduates if a higher number of appropriate candidates had been available, 2007-11

# How do you select graduates?

Manufacturing employers were asked to rate which three selection criteria (aside from relevant qualifications) they considered to be *most* important when evaluating applicants. These are presented in Table 1, ranked from most (1) to least (10) nominated and benchmarked against all industry groups for 2011.

The top three most important selection criteria for Manufacturing employers were:

1. Interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral);
2. Passion/Knowledge of industry/Drive/Commitment/Attitude;
3. Calibre of academic results.

The selection criteria nominated by Manufacturing employers was fairly consistent with that ranked by all industry groups.

Table 1: Most important selection criteria when recruiting graduates, 2011 (Rank)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Selection Criteria** | **Manufacturing** | **All industry groups** |
| Interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral) | 1 | 1 |
| Passion/Knowledge of industry/Drive/Commitment/Attitude | 2 | 2 |
| Calibre of academic results | 3 | 4 |
| Critical reasoning and analytical skills/Problem solving/Lateral thinking/Technical skills | 4 | 3 |
| Work experience | 5 | 5 |
| Cultural alignment / Values fit | 6 | 6 |
| Teamwork skills | 7 | 7 |
| Emotional intelligence (incl. self-awareness, strength of character, confidence, motivation) | 8 | 8 |
| Leadership skills | 9 | 9 |
| Activities (incl. intra and extra curricular) | 10 | 10 |

# Popular methods to promote your graduate program

When Manufacturing employers were asked about the methods used to promote their 2011 graduate program (see Figure 2), the vast majority of employers, who could select more than one response option, indicated that they promoted their graduate program through:

* Their **organisation’s website** (75.0%);
* **University careers services** (55.0%);
* **Employment websites (e.g. SEEK, CareerOne)** (50.0%).

Manufacturing employers tendered to use less frequently; ‘social media websites’, ‘newspaper advertising’ and ‘graduate recruitment handbooks’.

Figure 2: Methods used to promote graduate program, 2011

## Why graduates leave an employer

Employers were asked to rate each of nine key factors that can impact on graduate attrition. These are listed in Figure 4 below in order of the proportion of employers who rated them as being either quite important or very important.

Employers from Manufacturing believe the top three reasons a graduate leaves their employer are:

1. Their relationship with direct manager/supervisor;
2. Their desire for greater professional development;
3. They are seeking greater opportunities for advancement.

**Figure 3: Quite/very important factors in graduate attrition, 2011**

# How to retain your graduates

Employers were asked to select the effectiveness of each graduate retention strategies they felt were most effective to not at all effective (see Table 2). These strategies are ranked in terms of the proportion of employers who considered them to be quite/very effective within Manufacturing industries and all industry groups.

Table 2: Quite/very effective graduate retention strategies, 2011 (Rank)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Graduate retention strategy, ranked** | **Manufacturing** | **All industry groups** |
| Internal training and development activities | 1 | 1 |
| Mentoring scheme | 1 | 3 |
| Regular performance appraisals | 1 | 5 |
| Leadership development program for identified ‘stars’ | 1 | 7 |
| Specific graduate induction program | 5 | 4 |
| Buddy system | 6 | 6 |
| Support for external training and development | 7 | 2 |
| Performance-based remuneration | 8 | 9 |
| Graduate-focused social activities | 9 | 8 |
| Specific area for graduates on website | 10 | 10 |

Manufacturing employers ranked equally four strategies that are perceived to be effective in retaining graduates:

1. ‘Internal training and development activities’;
2. ‘Mentoring scheme;
3. ‘Regular performance appraisals’;
4. ‘Leadership development program for identified ‘stars’’.

Interestingly, Manufacturing employers placed less emphasis on ‘Support for external training and development’ when compared to all industries.

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**Further Information:**

The Graduate Outlook Survey is one of a number of graduate outcomes surveys conducted annually by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA).

GCA produce a number of free reports on graduate outcomes data each year, as well as offering tailored reporting and data solutions on graduate recruitment practices and trends within Australasia.

GCA is a not-for-profit organisation whose research work is largely federal government funded. We also produce a number of careers resources for students and graduates, including Graduate Opportunities. For more information about the valuable work we do, please contact the GCA research team on (03) 9605 3700 or [research@graduatecareers.com.au](mailto:research@graduatecareers.com.au) or visit our website at [www.graduatecareers.com.au](http://www.graduatecareers.com.au)