

# Recruiters Sound Off

Recruiters had their say on a host of subjects in this year's Wall Street Journal/Harris Interactive survey. In addition to rating the 85 schools included in the rankings, they shared their views on practical experience in M.B.A. programs, leadership qualities, the best training grounds for future CEOs, business-school reputation and the most underrated schools. Here are their responses to some of the questions we posed:

## Practical Lessons

M.B.A. programs have been assailed for being too theoretical, but many recruiters believe schools are doing a better job of providing practical business experience in the curriculum. Even so, many say schools need to go further. As one survey respondent stated, "They can never have enough" real-world practical experience.

Some recruiters find case studies effective, while others favor hands-on projects. "Practical experience needs to be more than just doing case work," one respondent said. "It needs to be about getting out there and actually performing a management function."

Harvard Business School, which relies heavily on case studies, was named most often for incorporating practical learning in the M.B.A. program. The University of Michigan, in second place, takes a different approach and makes real-world projects the heart of its M.B.A. program. In praising Michigan's projects, a respondent said, "The last thing we need is a candidate that has been out of the loop for two years buried in the books."

Rank	University (Business School)	Mentions
1	Harvard University	220
2	University of Michigan (Ross)	182
3	University of Pennsylvania (Wharton)	138
4	Northwestern University (Kellogg)	114
5	Carnegie Mellon University (Tepper)	99
6	Dartmouth College (Tuck)	96
7	Stanford University	90
8	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan)	79
9	University of Texas (McCombs)	74
10	Cornell University (Johnson)	73
10	University of Virginia (Darden)	73

## On Leadership

Leaders, not just managers. That's what corporate recruiters have increasingly demanded, prompting many schools to make leadership development a higher priority in recent years. Now, nearly two-thirds of recruiters say they believe M.B.A. programs are successfully developing managers who are capable of leading others.

The four leadership characteristics recruiters said they value most: being honest and trustworthy, accomplishing what one sets out to do, working

well with others in a team setting, and motivating and inspiring others.

How do M.B.A. programs measure up on specific leadership traits? Recruiters said they find schools most effective in developing team skills and helping students learn to articulate and accomplish their goals. Schools are least effective on these traits: honesty and trustworthiness, motivating and inspiring others, and caring about others.

In general, recruiters believe men and women demonstrate leadership characteristics equally. But some said women are more inclined to care about others, be open to opposing viewpoints, work effectively in teams, and demonstrate honesty and trustworthiness. As for men, recruiters believe they are more likely to motivate and inspire others and are more "consistent, focused and able to stay the course during difficult times."

## CEO Material

Many corporate recruiters love to hate Harvard Business School. While acknowledging its talented faculty and students, they complain about the arrogant culture, graduates' excessive salary demands, and their ambitions to be CEO tomorrow.

So where do you go to find your company's next CEO? Harvard Business School, of course. When asked where they would look if their CEOs asked them to hire a successor to lead the company into the next era, the survey respondents overwhelmingly picked Harvard.

Here's the full tally of schools recruiters would turn to first for a potential CEO:

Rank	University (Business School)	Mentions
1	Harvard University	201
2	University of Pennsylvania (Wharton)	90
3	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan)	72
4	Stanford University	63
4	Dartmouth College (Tuck)	63
6	Northwestern University (Kellogg)	60
7	London Business School	47
8	Columbia University	38
9	University of California, Berkeley (Haas)	37
10	University of Chicago (Ross)	35
10	University of Michigan (Ross)	35

## B-School Reputation

"I'd rather recruit the 10th best candidate at a tier-one school than the best candidate at a tier-two school." More than half of recruiters disagreed

with that statement in the survey, indicating that being a star in a second-string M.B.A. program is a plus.

Still, a school's image plays a significant role in hiring decisions. About 43% of recruiters said the school's reputation is "a driving factor" in deciding which students get job offers, regardless of a candidate's personal characteristics. Employees' alma maters also matter a lot at some companies. About 30% of recruiters said they are strongly pressured to visit the alma maters of their co-workers.

Beyond reputation and the alumni factor in recruiting decisions, survey respondents were split over whether intelligence turns up other student characteristics. While 39% said they would prefer to hire a student with advanced skills and intelligence, 35% favored a graduate who is dedicated, loyal and average in intelligence.

## Undervalued Schools?

Which schools don't get enough respect? The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management received the most votes when we asked recruiters to name the school with the most underrated reputation. Surprisingly, recruiters even mentioned some schools like Dartmouth College and Carnegie Mellon University that consistently shine in our rankings. Reputations apparently can never be strong enough for some people.

Here are the 10 schools named most often as underrated:

Rank	University (Business School)	Mentions
1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Sloan)	45
2	University of California, Berkeley (Haas)	37
2	Carnegie Mellon University (Tepper)	37
4	Cornell University (Johnson)	33
5	Dartmouth College (Tuck)	32
5	Brighton Young University (Marriott)	29
7	University of Virginia (Darden)	27
8	London Business School	26
9	Duke University (Fuqua)	25
10	Babson College (F.W. Olin)	24
10	Purdue University (Kramert)	24

—By Ronald Alsop

**Online Today:** Read recruiter comments on the strengths and shortcomings for all the Journal-ranked schools in B-School Skopshots, at [CareerJournal.com/Bschool](http://CareerJournal.com/Bschool).

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