

HIREOLOGY RESEARCH REPORT

# THE 2020 APPLICANT EXPERIENCE

WHAT TODAY'S TOP JOB SEEKERS LOOK  
FOR IN THEIR NEXT CAREER MOVE

PRESENTED AT:

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ELEVATE

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A HIREOLOGY EVENT FOR RETAIL AUTOMOTIVE



## INTRODUCTION

# COVID-19 has changed the job landscape drastically, and retail automotive has adapted to the operational challenges of 2020.

The initial quarantine guidelines called for all in-person, non-essential businesses to temporarily shut down, and the increased unemployment rate drove fewer people to make big purchases. Headcount cuts were made, and hiring briefly ceased.

Dealerships understand that they can't simply go back to "business as usual" if they want to continue to see profits soar, so they are continuing with a modified hiring plan that reflects the current climate while also trying to fill their open roles that are essential to operations. Additionally, the unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing from the dramatic spike seen in April, so finding quality candidates on the market has become a priority. But identifying and attracting top talent can be challenging without an in-depth understanding of your applicant pool.

Tighter margins and a lower headcount means that every role matters even more. For that reason, understanding the applicant sentiment is all the more essential to attracting and hiring the best team. In order to help guide your hiring process decisions and better understand what your applicants are wanting this season, Hireology surveyed a pool of recently hired applicants on questions around how they like to communicate throughout the interview process, if they see themselves at their current company in a year's time, and what's most important to them when searching and accepting a new role.

**Read on for a deeper understanding of what your applicants are expecting out of their job search.**

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## SECTION I:

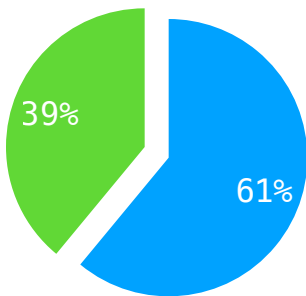
# Automotive Industry Perceptions

Despite the economic uncertainty of the past few months, today's dealership workers hold retail automotive in high regard.

An impressive 94% of respondents hold a neutral or positive perception about working at a dealership, while 60% of respondents have a similar opinion on general retail service roles.



However, these respondents are open to future opportunities outside of retail automotive. 61% said they would be open to working in a new industry if the right career opportunity presented itself.



*61% of recent retail automotive hires would be open to working in a new industry if the right opportunity came along.*

### Takeaway:

While virtually all recently hired employees to dealership roles are happy with working in the automotive industry, over half would consider working in other sectors like retail services. Be sure to highlight your company culture, benefits, and on-the-job perks like training or a mentorship program to keep ahead of the curve.

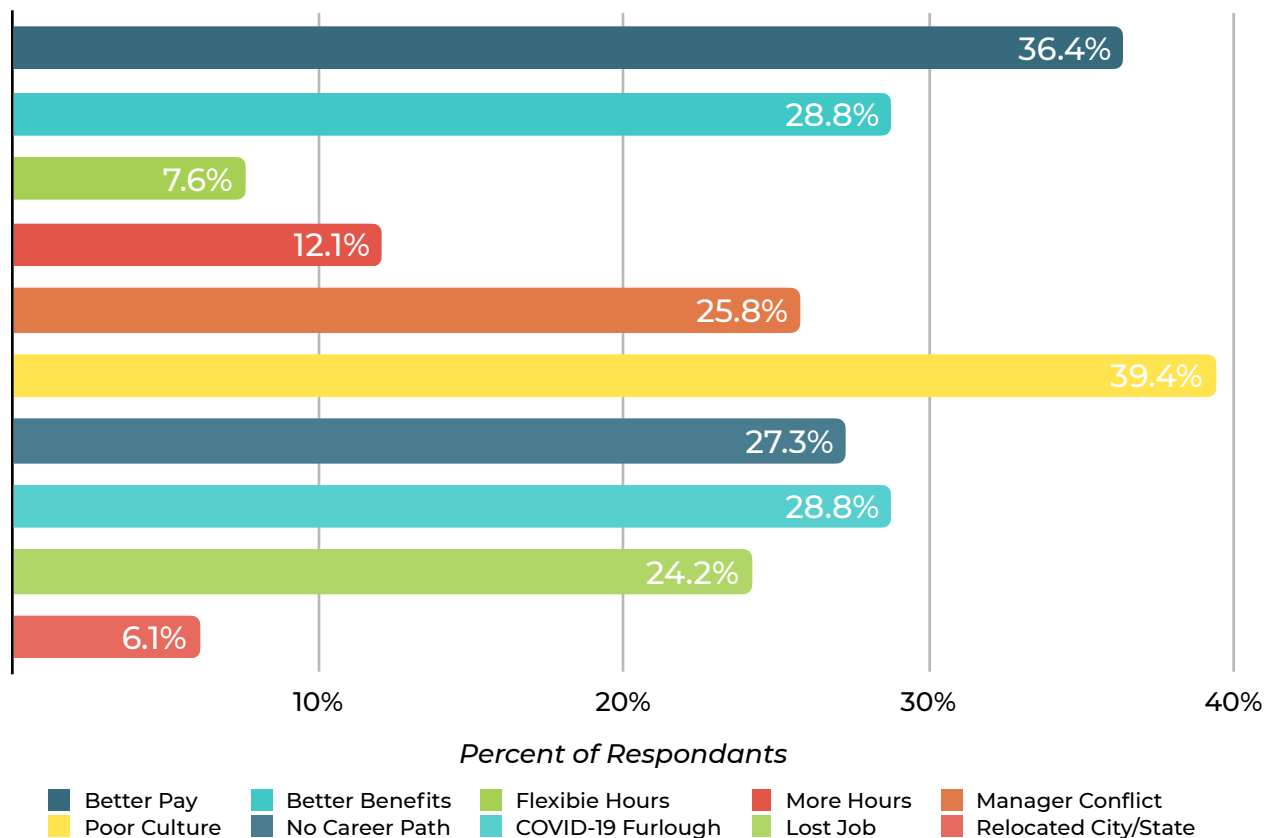
## SECTION II:

# Understand Job Seeker Motivations

One of the best ways to attract top talent is to understand why applicants begin the job search in the first place. Looking at the motivations of today's job seekers can help hiring managers understand how to position their jobs to excite applicants for a new career opportunity.

Among the reasons people chose to begin their most recent job search were finding a better culture (39.4%), pursuing better pay (36.4%), and, finally, seeking better benefits (28.8%).

### Applicant Motivations for Starting the Job Search



When asked to identify the *most important* reason for starting their search, an overwhelming percentage of respondents said finding a better paying role was their driver (27.3%), followed by a poor relationship with their manager (16.7%), and a tie between seeking better company culture and losing their previous role (both 13.6%). Only 3% said better benefits were their number one cause showing that this perk may have once been a unique offering, but may now be expected among today's most in-demand job seekers.

### Takeaway:

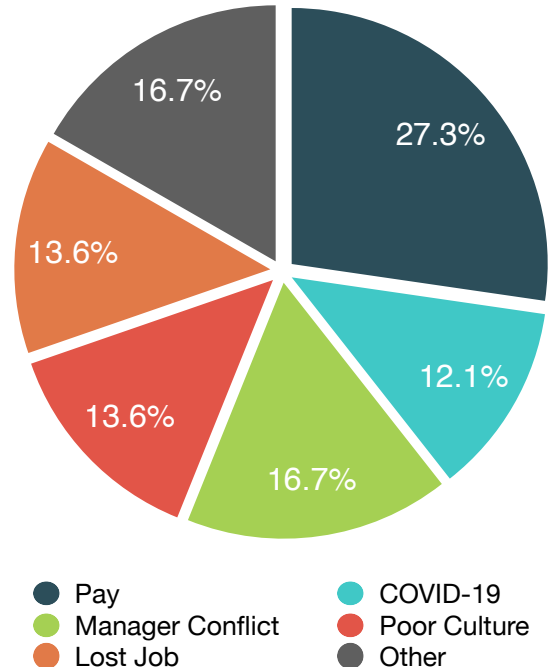
#### Meeting the Many Needs of Today's Top Job Seekers

Culture, quality of management, and pay can vary greatly depending on the company, so these are your opportunities to attract new talent – as well as drive retention for your current team.

To have job seekers apply for your open roles, be sure you include any unique aspects of your company culture—mentorship programs, community involvement and opportunities for advancement may go a long way to demonstrate your investment into building your team.

Top applicants take culture and career growth seriously. Help them understand why your company will set them up for success for their long term career growth.

#### The Top Motivator for Starting the Job Search

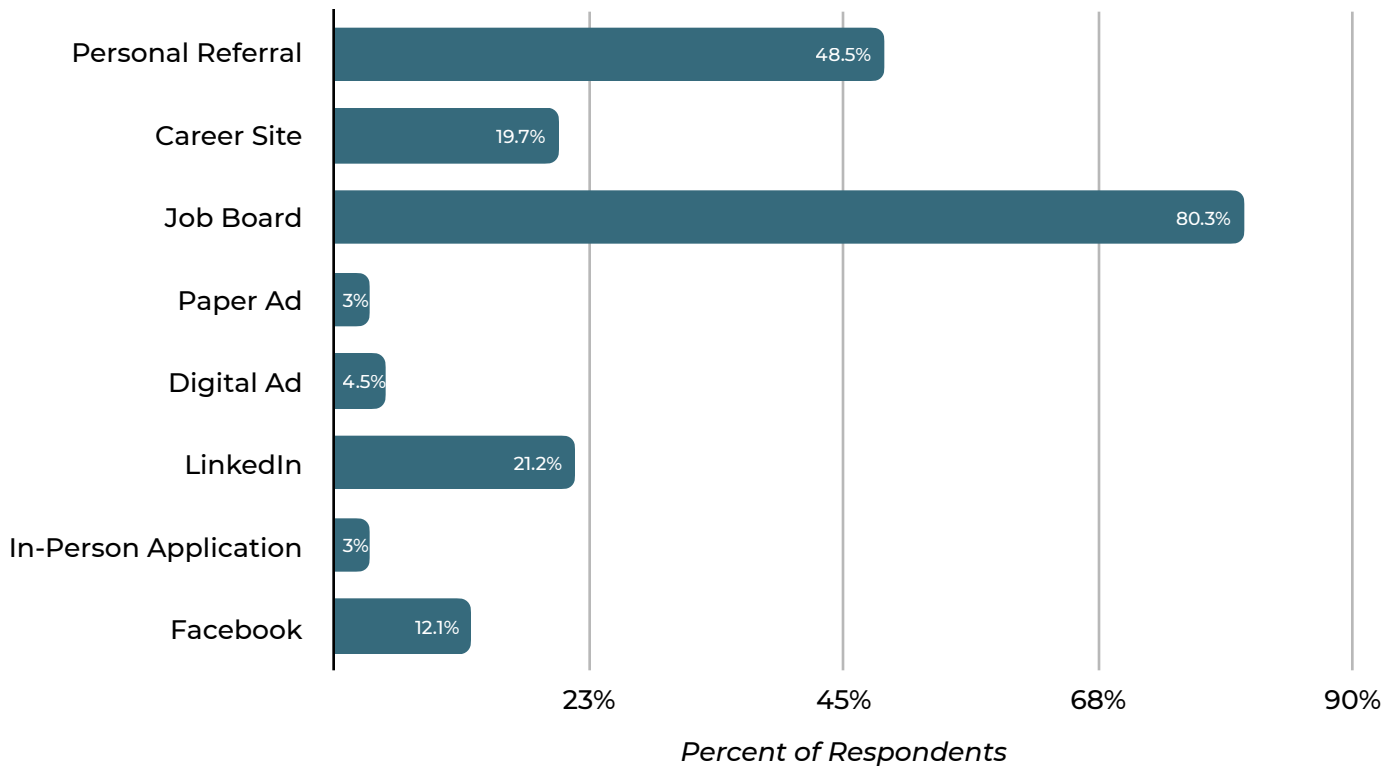


## SECTION III:

# How Top Applicants Find Jobs

While job boards remain a highly utilized tool, referrals, the company website, and LinkedIn are still strong channels to consider for attracting new automotive applicants.

### Which Channels Do You Use to Find Jobs?



### Starting the Job Search

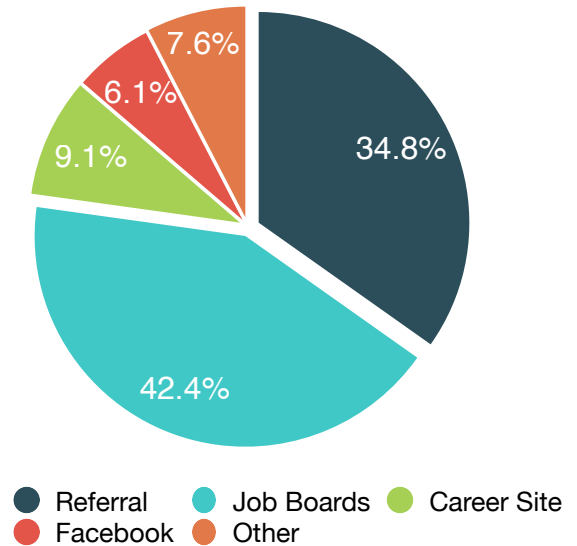
When breaking down which tools were the most helpful, our survey respondents mentioned job boards and referrals were at the top of the list, coming in at 42.4% and 32.8% respectively. The company's website (9.1%) and Facebook (6.1%) rounded out the top channels.



## The Most Effective Channels to Drive Applicants

When asked which the most effective channel today's applicants were using, most applicants shared that they found their roles using job boards (42.4%). Referrals were right behind, coming in at 34.8%, showing the importance of an employee referral program to let your top employees recruit using their professional networks. The company career site came in third at 9.1%, followed by a growing segment from Facebook, which 6.1% of applicants found as the most useful to find their next role.

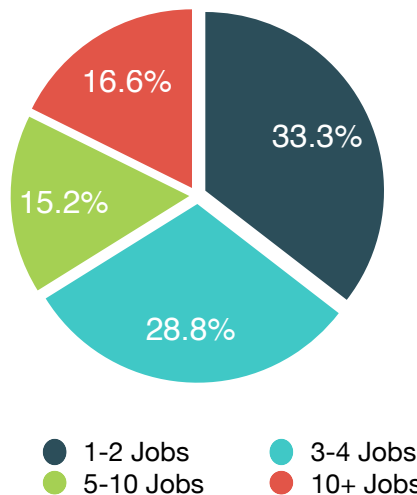
**The Most Effective Applicant Channels**



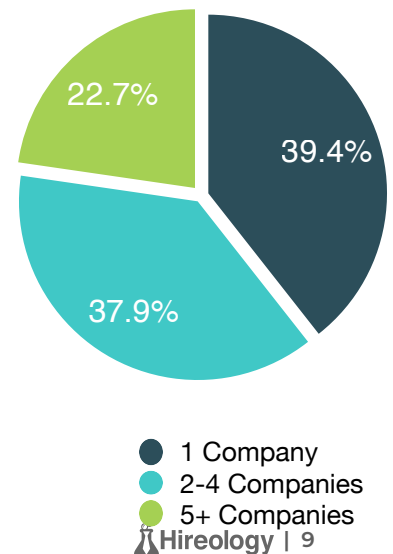
## Top Applicants Apply to Fewer Roles

Since many top applicants can transfer their skills to a variety of organizations, they become very selective in their job hunt, applying only to a handful of companies. These applicants focus on a small number of companies to research and submit their application to. 33.3% of respondents said they applied to more than one job during their most recent job search. However, 39.4% said they had only one company respond to their application.

**Applications Submitted**



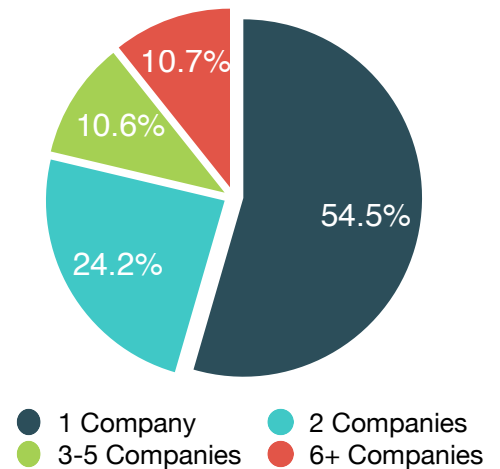
**Interview Interest**



## Top Applicants and Job Offers

Over half of survey respondents received one offer, while 24.2% had offers from two companies. Today's top job seekers are being very selective with where they're applying to, and as a result, only have one or two offers that they are truly considering.

### Offers Received



## How 2020 Impacted Time to Hire

We asked recent hires how long their entire hiring process took — from researching companies, to accepting an offer. 27.3% of respondents said their job search process lasted less than a week, 25.8% said they spent 1-2 weeks from start to finish, and 18.2% said the process took 3-4 weeks.

*40.9% of this year's automotive hires said their job hunt went much faster than they expected.*

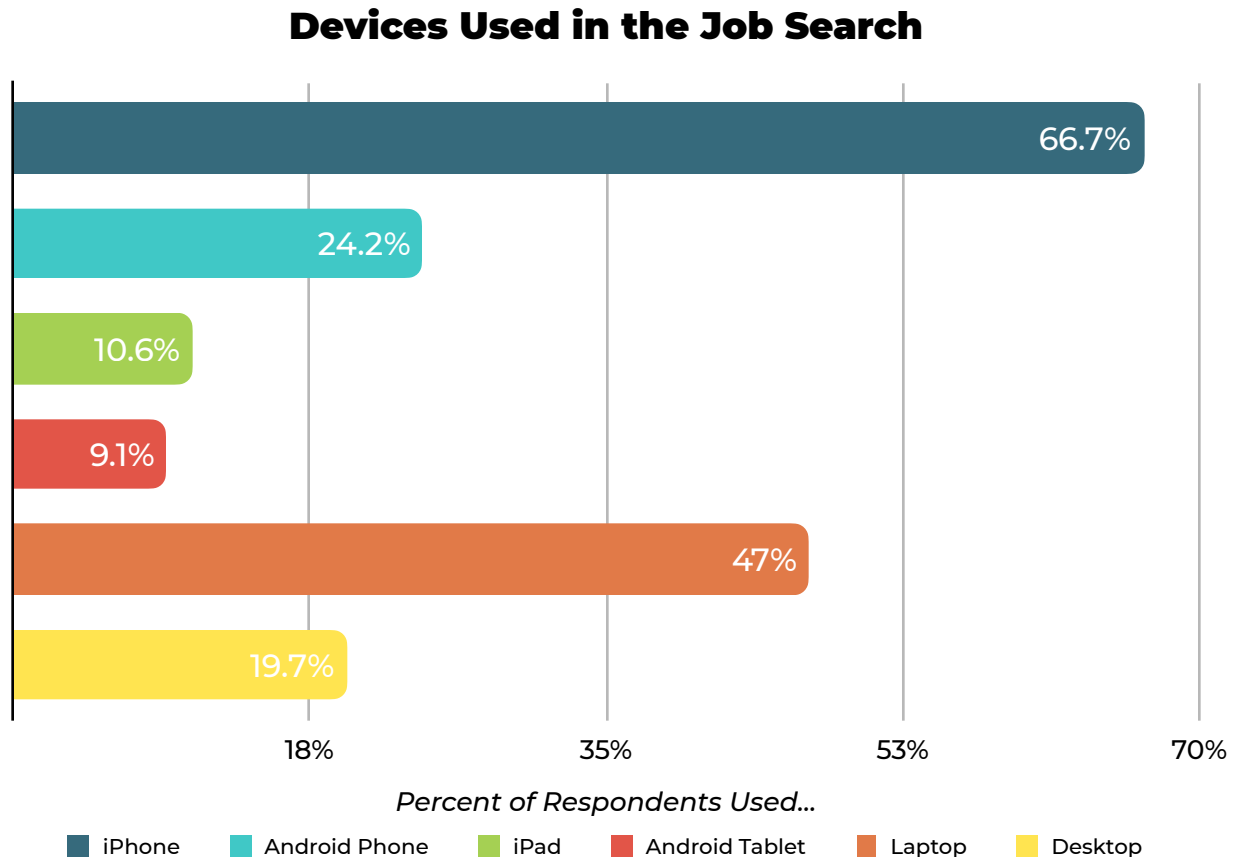
Many respondents were surprised by how quickly their job search wrapped up (56.1%), showing that the process moves very quickly for very in-demand dealership hires. An overwhelming majority (40.9%) said their search was a lot faster than expected, while 15.2% said the search was a little faster than they were expecting. 22.7% of respondents said their search lasted about the time they were expecting it to.

### Takeaway:

Top applicants are selective at where they apply, and today's process is moving faster than ever before. Taking too long to connect with top applicants may mean losing to companies hiring faster. Treat applicants like sales leads to connect quickly and with an outstanding candidate experience.

**SECTION IV:****Devices Applicants Use Today**

Today's applicants are mobile — a majority of applicants use their phones during the application process.

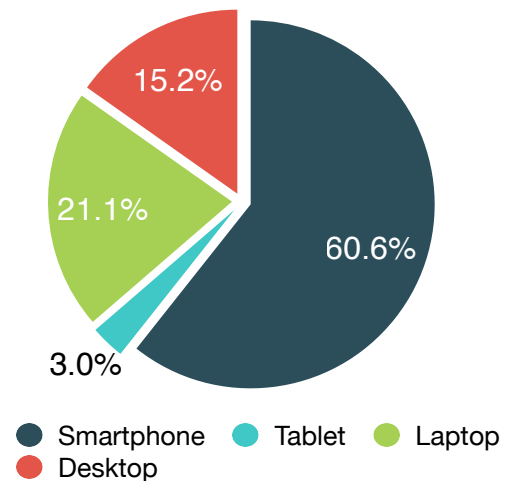


Over 3x more people use iPhones than desktop computers in their most recent job search. 90% of respondents said that they utilized their smartphone (Apple iPhone or Android phone) to aid in their job search, showing that mobile devices aren't the future — they're the devices applicants are using today to manage their lives, including job search activities.

When asked to identify which device was used the most during their job search, 60.6% said their smartphone, 21.2% said a laptop, and 15.2% said a desktop computer.

Over 60% of today's applicants use their phone as their primary job search device, so if your website or application process is not mobile-friendly, you're missing out on a huge talent pool. The greatest opportunity to reach the most applicants is to make your career site optimized for mobile devices.

### Most Important Job Search Device



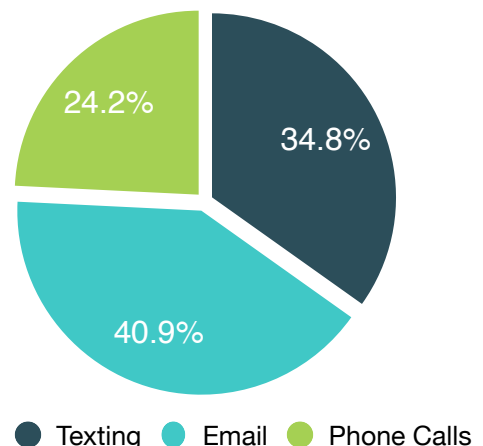
### How Applicants Want to Communicate

A vast majority of applicants use email to communicate with hiring managers, but over half (56.1%) also used text messaging during the hiring process. And a growing number (34%) would prefer to work over text during the hiring process to set up interviews and provide information than email or phone communications.

*34% of today's applicants prefer to work out hiring manager details over text messages.*

When it comes to communicating throughout the interview process, emails and phone calls may get the job done, but allowing candidates the option to text message with your hiring managers can speed up the process dramatically. For example, many candidates

### Preferred Way to Communicate



may be unable to type out a thoughtful email on interview availability, but can respond faster to a quick text on dates to connect.

*72.7% would be open to remote work if they could do their job effectively.*

Given the hiring challenges presented by the pandemic, many companies are embracing remote work. While there are some positions that may not be able to be fully remote — like a mechanic or technician — many jobs can be transitioned into remote-friendly positions. And if that's the case for some roles in your dealership, you could open up your talent streams even more by offering remote as an option. 72.7% of survey respondents said they would consider working remotely if given the opportunity.

**Takeaway:**

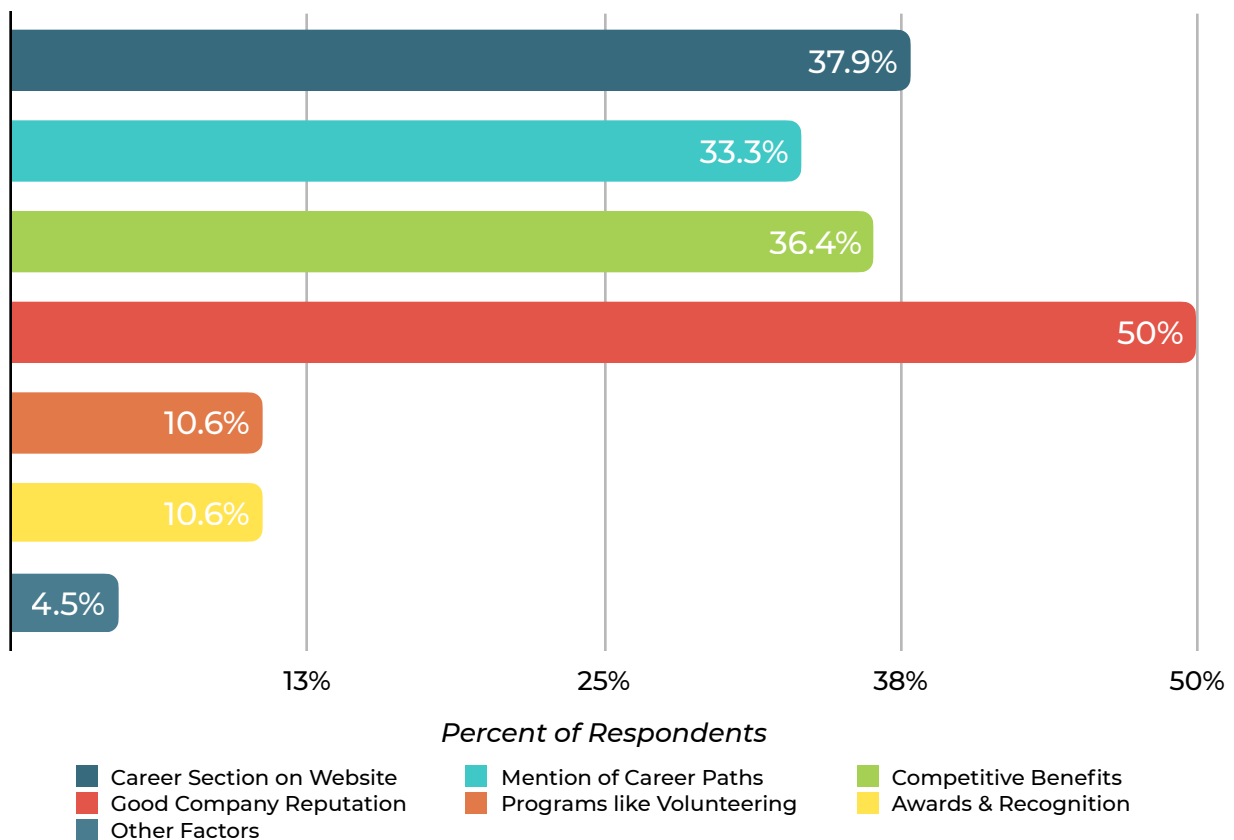
Mobile isn't the next big thing for companies to embrace to better connect with job seekers. Today's leading job seekers are taking a mobile-first approach to the job hunt, in many cases, relying exclusively on their phones to research companies, submit their application and coordinate interviews. Leading applicants will get frustrated at career sites and application processes that aren't easy to complete or read on their smaller phone screens.

In many instances, a poorly optimized site may give your organization the appearance of being old-fashioned or not technology-forward. It could mean a top applicant looks past you completely. To avoid this, make sure your career site and application can be accessed and completed from your mobile phone, and that the experience is simple to complete.

Beyond this, think about putting a system in place that allows your hiring managers to communicate with candidates over text messaging to speed up the process.

**SECTION V:****Convincing Top Applicants to Apply**

Understanding the motivations of today's applicants to take the step to apply to the job can help hiring managers close top talent by making sure their needs are catered to.

**Which Tools Did You Use To Learn About the Companies You Applied To?**

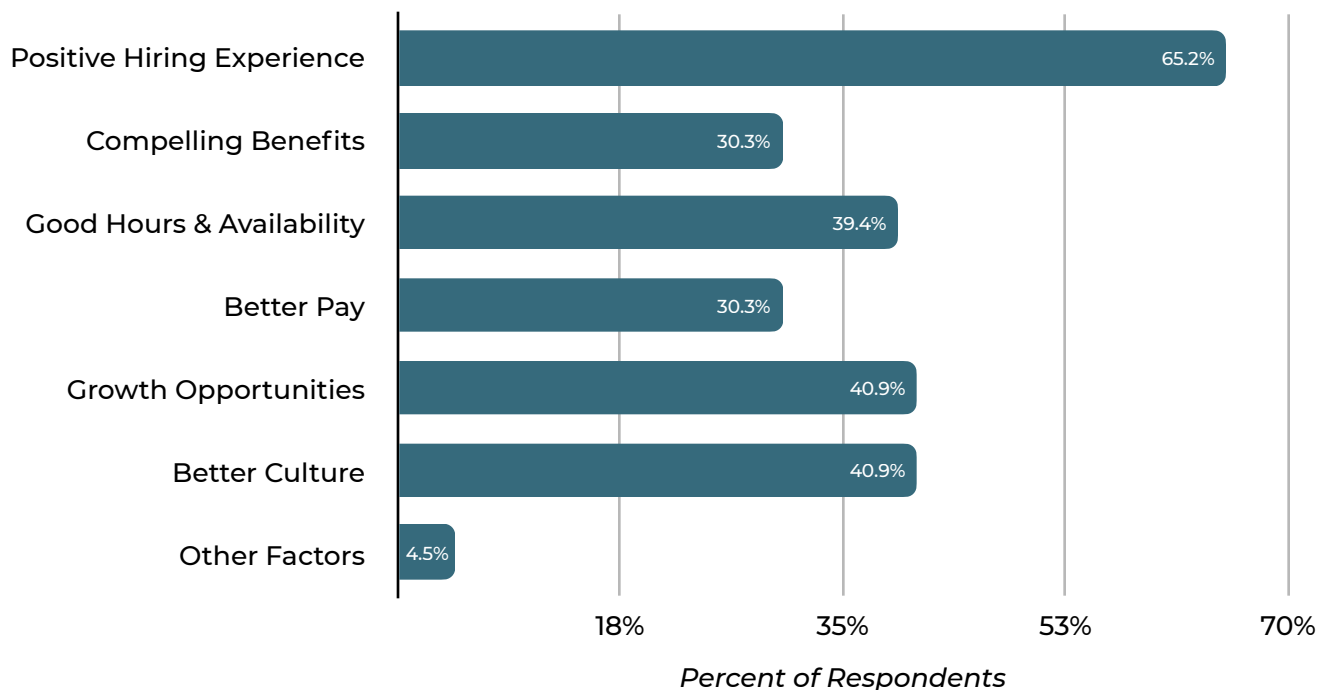
Our findings show that how jobs are presented and the application experience are very important to today's applicants. 50% of respondents said they chose to apply to a certain job because the company had a reputation for providing a good employee experience for people who work there.

*50% of applicants chose to apply because of the company's employment brand and reputation.*

The next leading factor in application submission was a page on the website that highlighted the company culture (37.9%), followed by 36.4% of people saying the benefits aligned with what they needed, and the mention of career paths and the ability to advance in their role (33.3%).

While awards and recognition of being a great company and volunteering activities did influence a small group of people (each 10.6%), the biggest reasons for submitting an application centered on the reputation of the employer brand from peers and the company's own website.

### Which Aspects Helped You Decide to Take the Job?



## Convincing Applicants to Accept Your Offer

And when it came to actually accepting a role, the highest selection of individuals (65.2%) said they joined the organization because of the positive experience during the hiring process, followed by a tie between a better opportunity for career advancement and workplace culture (40.9% for both). If a candidate has other offers on the table — like 45.5% of our respondents did — and you stand out with a stellar employer brand, you're much more likely to secure that talent than your competition.

### Takeaway:

An established employer brand can help you attract talent as well as retain current employees. Culture, job progression, retention, and of course, employee/candidate reviews all impact your company's brand, so presenting your company's ideals and driving source is essential to attracting talent.





## SECTION VI:

# The Impacts of Ghosting Applicants

Today's top applicants don't want to be ghosted - once they apply and even begin the interview process, applicants across the board expect to hear back on whether or not they are selected to move forward and appreciate updates, even if the news isn't good.

**48.8%**

**NEGATIVE PERCEPTION  
FOR NOT HEARING BACK  
AFTER APPLYING**

**45.4%**

**NEGATIVE PERCEPTION  
FOR NOT HEARING BACK  
AFTER INTERVIEWING**

In fact, 48.8% of our respondents said that if they applied to a company and didn't hear back from the company, they would feel very negative about that candidate experience, and 45.4% said that if they didn't hear back after an interview, that would adversely affect their feelings of that company.

### Takeaway:

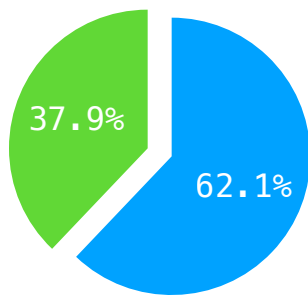
Whether you're extending an offer or letting a candidate know they weren't the right fit, responding to applicants is very important. Closing the loop and allowing applicants lets applicants resume their job search elsewhere while showing that your company values their time and their professionalism.

That doesn't mean that you have to craft personal responses for each candidate — automated messages can be customized to your liking while making outreach feel one-to-one. Lack of candidate follow-up can plague your company's reputation and stop you from connecting with top talent.

## SECTION VII:

# Digital Onboarding is Critical

Today's top applicants don't want to be ghosted - once they apply and even begin the interview process, applicants across the board expect to hear back on whether or not they are selected to move forward and appreciate updates, even if the news isn't good.



*62.1% of applicants had the ability to review and complete onboarding materials digitally before their first day on the job*

Utilizing a digital onboarding program gives every new hire a clear understanding of the expectations of their role, and allows your new hires to get acquainted with your company before their official first day. 62.1% of respondents said that before their first day, they were given the option to fill out new hire paperwork digitally, and 71.2% said the first few days of the onboarding process made them feel prepared for their new role. This is the result of a powerful and effective onboarding strategy. It's easy to enlist and solves dozens of pain points, including high turnover.

*Only 9.4% of respondents felt like the expectations set in the hiring process didn't match the reality of their role.*

### Today's Applicants Want Long-Term Success

Today's employees want to stay with their current employer and grow their career. In fact, 71.2% of respondents said they would hope to stay at their current organization for three or more years. 65.2% of our respondents said

that they were hoping to still be with their current company throughout the next year, and 53% said they hoped to grow their role and responsibilities in the next year. 54.5% said they hoped to receive a raise or promotion, and 24.2% said they would like to find another role with their same company. Only 15.2% of respondents said within the year they'd like to find a new role with a different company.

### **Takeaway:**

While applicants are looking for a long-term fit, they're not just going to stay put without developmental opportunities. Growth should be at the forefront of your onboarding process to ensure that your new hires understand that they have a path for success. On your job boards and job postings, mentioning that your company promotes from within and has plenty of opportunities for growth, similar to Enterprise's hiring page. They outline their unique initiatives, from test drive interviews to their management training program so an applicant gets a feel for their culture and career advancement opportunities right from the start.



## SECTION VIII:

# Next Steps for Hiring Success

Hiring the best team is hard, and a pandemic doesn't help. Your hiring strategy has probably drastically changed throughout the year (maybe a couple of times), but that's pretty standard for 2020.

Understanding where your most essential openings are and finding the right talent to fill those spots to keep operations running should be your top priority, and by understanding your applicants as best you can, you have a much greater chance of attracting and holding on to top talent.

We hope that this data from our applicant experience survey will put your company in the best position possible to adjust your current hiring processes and go forward with hiring the right candidates.

## About Hireology

Hireology's recruitment CRM empowers multi-location, decentralized enterprises and independently owned businesses to build their best teams with confidence. The company equips HR and business leaders with the skills and technology needed to manage the full employee lifecycle – from hire to retire – in one seamless platform.

With focused expertise across several industries – including retail automotive, healthcare and professional and consumer services – more than 7,500 businesses today trust Hireology to help build great teams, lift customer service and drive profitability. Learn more at [hireology.com](https://hireology.com).