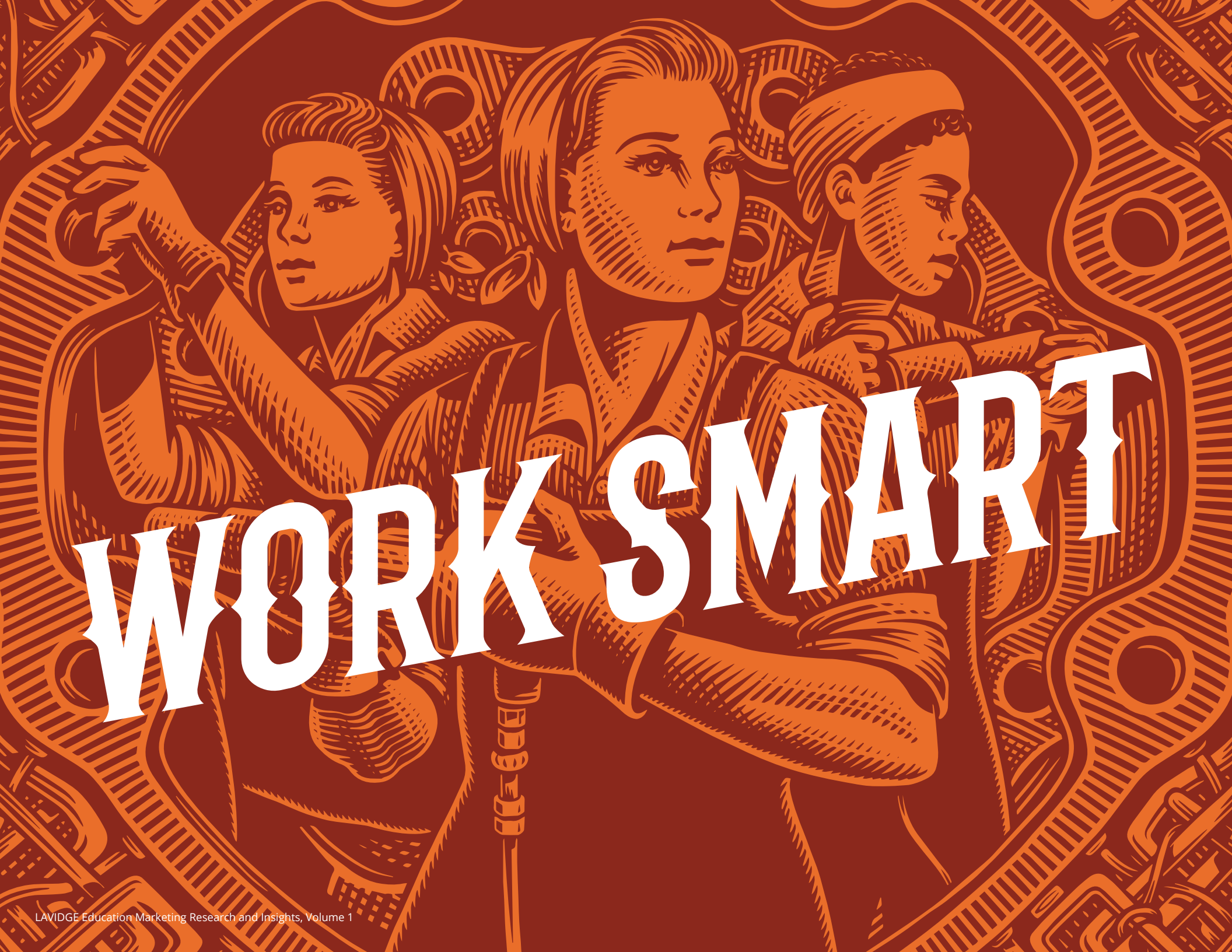


The background of the entire page is a photograph of four students walking away from the camera down a long, brightly lit hallway with a series of white arches. On the left, a Black male student with a black backpack walks. In the center, a female student with long blonde hair and a male student with dark hair and a backpack walk. On the right, a female student with long dark hair and a black shoulder bag walks. The floor is dark and reflective.

LAVIDGE Education Marketing Research and Insights, Volume 1

LAVIDGE



WORK SMART

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Introduction

Education—both public and private—is big business, and the industry will continue to benefit from high enrollment rates well into the future despite major disruptions which have already begun. The industry must adapt to a changing paradigm in which students no longer decide what they want to be when they grow up but must instead prepare for a future which could include four to five career changes—with the need to retool their skills each time.

The shift applies to schools, testing facilities and support services, all of which fall under the 13 subsectors which make up the U.S. economy's education services industry. This includes traditional providers such as primary and secondary schools in addition to less traditional forms of education such as career and vocational training.

More than 90% of revenue from this sector, which generated \$2 trillion in 2018, comes from public schools, private schools, community colleges, nonprofit universities and colleges, and for-profit universities. This represents 1.2% growth since 2013. During the same timeframe, the number of businesses grew by 4.4% and the number of employees grew by 1.2%.¹

With an anticipated compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 4.5% between 2018 and 2026, recent research predicts that U.S. education market will be worth \$2,040 billion by 2026.² The same report states that as per capita disposable income increases, U.S. consumers are more willing to pay for discretionary educational services such as private schools, postsecondary institutions including colleges, universities, trade schools, and more. Rising per capita disposable income in our booming economy presents a potential opportunity for educators well into the future.

DISPOSABLE INCOME IS ON THE RISE

U.S. Dollars Per Capita³

2014 (actual)	2019 (anticipated)	2024 (anticipated)
\$55.99 thousand	\$64.77 thousand	\$75.46 thousand

Source: STR and Tourism Economics

UNBUNDLING IS UNRAVELING TRADITION

The industry is undergoing significant change as the trend of unbundling⁴ education gives rise to an increasing array of alternative learning, career, and vocational credentialing programs. It's a great time for education service providers to think and act as entrepreneurs.

Just ask Jeff Maggioncalda, who opened [Coursera](#) in 2012. His business model initially offered free access to massive open online courses ([MOOCs](#)). It's been such a huge success that it was recently valued at more than \$1 billion.⁵

These days, Coursera also partners with numerous regionally accredited schools including University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Duke University and many more. Illinois offers paying students credit for completing a six-course specialized digital marketing program made available through Coursera. Duke recognizes a five-course specialization teaching analytics for databases from Microsoft's Excel to MySQL.

Maggioncalda isn't alone. [MOOC](#) competitors Sebastian Thrun, David Stavens, and Mike Sokolsky launched Udacity in February 2012 with the same mission to offer free online courses to the masses. It now offers a variety of paid, non-accredited Nanodegree® career-training programs. Instead of following traditional learning paths, content is developed through partnerships with industry leaders. The idea is to tap their knowledge regarding which vocational skills are most marketable in their fields, and how to present them best. It's a concept that has been well received, considering Udacity

recently reported \$90 million in annual revenue.⁶

Meanwhile, traditional colleges and universities must take action if they are to thrive. This could include communicating the intrinsic value in traditional offerings which go beyond job skills to teach students how to think. Elite schools can, and should, apply this approach. For the masses, however, success will require educators to be as adaptable to change⁷ themselves as their students will need to be to compete in the fast-paced, high-tech, ever-changing economy of the future.

HIRING STANDARDS ARE CHANGING

It's true. Four-year degrees still hold value in the job market. For now. The shift from degrees being seen as the only career-readiness currency to accepting hard and soft job skills instead has begun in earnest. Google, Apple, IBM and many others no longer require job candidates to hold a four-year degree from an accredited college or university.⁸ Instead, they require applicants to demonstrate their skills for what IBM CEO Ginni Rometty first referred to as "new-collar jobs"⁹ through specialized testing. In other words, coders and many others must effectively audition for their jobs.

Tech companies aren't the only ones placing more emphasis on skills than on a college degree. Nordstrom, Home Depot and Costco Wholesale represent retailers who don't require job seekers to be college graduates. Publix, Starbucks, Bank of America, Penguin Random House and Hilton agree, providing ample evidence that the trend is being adopted across a wide variety of business sectors.¹⁰

The need for businesses to be agile in responding to market demands requires them to also be flexible when recruiting labor. Waiting for colleges to develop programs for new roles as they become necessary—and for them to turn out their first classes of students who've earned four-year degrees—simply isn't practical. They need educational partners that can change quickly to meet changing needs. Savvy educational institutions will find ways to offer coding bootcamps, vocational training, certificate programs and other alternatives to full-blown degree programs.

The need is clear. Already, experts are predicting a shortfall of 2 million workers by 2020 who won't have the necessary training for cloud computing and maintenance, database management, 3D printing, robotics and numerous other hard and soft skills needed in healthcare, manufacturing and more.

EDUCATORS ARE PARTNERING WITH EMPLOYERS

There is an alternative to sitting back and watching as on-the-job apprenticeships and internships further disrupt all but the most elite in the education industry. For many, that means partnering with employers. Such partnerships could range from overseeing internships and apprenticeships for newcomers to becoming embedded within a company to provide ongoing, lifelong training for those who stay.

Such is the case with Arizona State University's InStride,¹¹ an example of a successful spinoff which takes advantage of an existing partnership with Starbucks to offer specialized employee training.

There is great room for the program to grow.

Daniel Pianko, co-founder and managing director of University Ventures (which is not an investor in InStride), told *Inside Higher Ed* in May 2019 that the opportunity extends beyond the traditional 18- to-22-year-old market, calling the company “a ‘logical extension’ for ASU Online and its more than 175 bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees and certificate programs.”

InStride, whose competitors include Guild Education, EdAssist Solutions, Edcor and GP Strategies, is working toward creating a network of educational partners to collaborate with ASU Online. The first such partnership¹² has already been announced, taking the subsidiary international as it welcomes University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Even so, InStride is most interested in capturing its share of the \$20 billion U.S. tuition benefits market by appealing to 37 million Americans who have earned some college credits but stopped short of earning a degree.

Meanwhile, the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) Office of Economic Opportunity has forged a workplace education alliance of its own. The Arizona Advanced Technology Network brings together Maricopa Community College District, Central Arizona Community College and Pima Community College under the guidance of the ACA to provide workplace credentials.¹³ Boeing, Raytheon and Lucid Motors contributed to developing the curriculum which will be used to train employees.

These types of programs create win-win-win scenarios for educators and those in need of specially trained workers, as well as for students who, presumably, would avoid going into as much debt.

STUDENT DEBT CRISIS LEADS TO OPPORTUNITY

Speaking of debt, hardly a news cycle passes without mention of the high cost of college tuition and the resulting crushing debt. The average borrower owes \$28,650 upon graduation with a cumulative national student loan debt of \$1.5 trillion.¹⁴ Yet many graduates learn after taking out hefty student loans that having a degree doesn't necessarily prepare them for the jobs they need to be able to repay their loans.

Proposed resolutions to this crisis vary from offering taxpayer-subsidized public higher education for all to privatizing student loans now in the hands of the government. While not everyone agrees on what is needed or how to do it, there is a consensus that change is both possible and necessary.¹⁵

Many proposed solutions are in the hands of those who control government programs and oversee government lenders. Yet, there are ways schools can help:

- Competency-Based Education (CBE) can be used to fill the gap by offering training in real-world skills in less time for a lower cost. Title IV funding for these programs is available for at many schools. By adapting to the growing need for low-cost programs, schools can shore up future enrollment.
- Income Share Agreements (ISAs) offer another alternative by assuring students who are hesitant to go into debt that if they are unable to find work in their field they will not have to repay their loans.
- And schools can look for alternative ways to fund education through grants, student-work programs and other no-debt solutions.

BOTTOM LINE, COLLEGE STILL MATTERS

While it's true that the education industry is experiencing a variety of threats related to how things have always been done, there are many more opportunities to do things in new ways. As Executive Director of the Teaching Systems Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Justin Reich told Pew researchers, "Educators have always found new ways of training the next generation of students for the jobs of the future, and this generation will be no different."¹⁶

It's up to educators to step up and make it happen.

Summer / Fall 2019

Tim Trull, Managing Director, Strategy

Stephen Heitz, Chief Innovation Officer



Overview

There is no one-size-fits all career, so it logically follows that there are many educational paths one can take to get where one wants to go. Whatever one's career talents or interests, however, it pays to put in the time, money and effort to pursue an education in their chosen field.

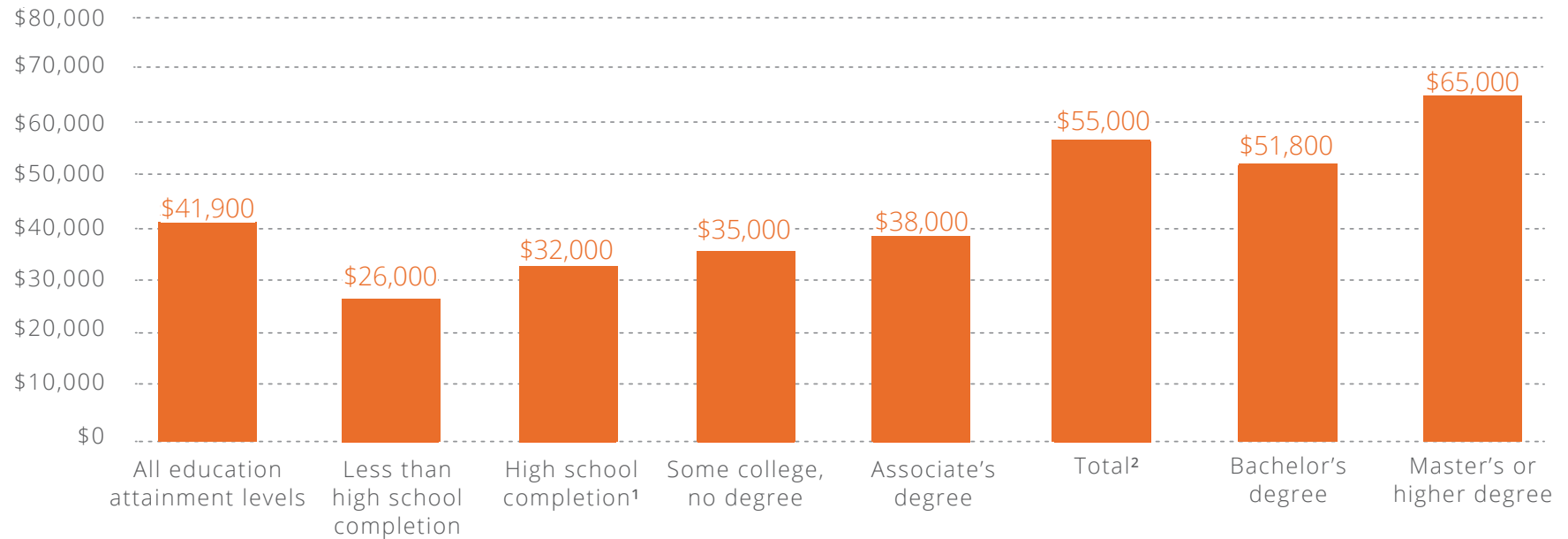
The National Center for Education Statistics found that in 2016, those who failed to earn a high school diploma or an equivalent credential earned \$25,400 on average per year.¹⁷ Workers with a high school diploma can expect to earn \$30,000 per year. Those with a bachelor's degree earn on average \$46,900 per year. The disparity between those with post-secondary education and those who stop learning upon graduating from high school represents a half-million dollars over a 30-year career.

For those who want to maximize their earning potential, obtaining a traditional four-year degree isn't the only option. Technical and trade schools cost less and offer programs which can be completed in less time. They offer smaller class sizes and often include hands-on training as opposed to being centered on book learning. Those who enter the trades as electricians, machinists, dental hygienists and certified nursing assistants can expect to earn a median income of \$35,720 per year.

Over time, tradespeople can earn as much as or more than someone with a bachelor's degree (\$51,800) or a master's degree or higher (\$65,000).¹⁸ In Phoenix, Ariz., for example, where the heat drives the cooling business, an HVAC tech earns on average \$59,610 per year.¹⁹ Plumbers in the same market earn on average \$52,353 per year.

Even jobs with pay scales that remain on the lower end of the vocational school-educated spectrum can pay off. In another example (also based on the Phoenix job market) a certified nursing assistant (CNA) earns on average \$27,072 per year. He or she can still come out ahead sooner than those who hunker down for four or more years in school. That's because start-up costs are lower than paying for college and those with vocational degrees can start their careers two years sooner, often making up for as many as 12 years of income disparity before they even go to work.²⁰

Making the decision to pursue an education—whether technical, vocational or from a traditional two-year college or four year university—clearly makes financial sense.



1 Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

2 Represents median annual earnings of full-time, year-round workers ages 25–34 with a bachelor's or higher degree.

NOTE: Data are based on sample surveys of the noninstitutionalized population, which excludes persons living in institutions (e.g., prisons or nursing facilities) and military barracks. Full-time, year-round workers are those who worked 35 or more hours per week for 50 or more weeks per year. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), "Annual Social and Economic Supplement," 2018. See Digest of Education Statistics 2018, table 502.30.

None of this data matters, however, unless educational institutions communicate what they have to offer their specialized pool of potential students. This takes skillful marketing to identify your audience, to prepare messages which will resonate with them and to do it more effectively than your competitors.

To support the education industry with developing effective advertising, marketing and public relations messages to attract learners, LAVIDGE fielded a comprehensive survey. Then we dug in deep to provide context for our results, which provide an informative look at related public perceptions and attitudes.

Selected Highlights

EDUCATION SEEKERS ARE LOOKING FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

No college degree or career and technical education program is one-size-fits-all, and neither are the reasons why students decide to enroll. However, one chord rang true among “LAVIDGE Education Marketing Research and Insights, Volume 1” respondents. From becoming their best selves to improving their careers or levels of income, everyone expressed interest in pursuing higher education in hopes of making a change for the better.

ONLINE EDUCATION PREFERENCE RIVALS THAT OF ON-CAMPUS LEARNING

University campuses are here to stay. Whether on campus or online, study respondents overwhelmingly said they prefer to take classes through a university than enroll in specialty training (28%), a junior college (26%) or a trade school (21%). Attending a university in person was most popular among respondents overall at 58% with online education relatively close behind at 49%.

ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCES ARE IMPORTANT THROUGHOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS

How welcoming your campus is to current students and guests matters more than you might think when it comes to recruiting potential students.

WHILE THE STUDENT JOURNEY IS LONG, THE DECISION-MAKING STEP IS RELATIVELY QUICK

Completing a trade, technical, career, university or junior college education program can exponentially improve one’s status in life in addition to fulfilling personal goals. It logically follows that where to enroll and what course of study to pursue are arguably among the most important life decisions one can make.

EDUCATION SEEKERS WANT AFFORDABILITY

It’s a fact. Sixty percent of prospective students will spend more than two weeks researching your school before deciding to enroll. It’s imperative to know which marketing messages are most likely to influence them to choose your institution of learning.

MOTIVATIONAL PHRASES ARE PREFERRED BY EDUCATION SEEKERS

Marketing rule No. 1: Don’t imply to prospective students that they might be ignorant. Surprisingly, the oft-quoted phrase, “If you think education is expensive, try ignorance,” ranked poorly among study participants.

What We Found

EDUCATION SEEKERS ARE LOOKING FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT

No college degree or career and technical education program is one-size-fits all, and neither are the reasons why students decide to enroll. However, one chord rang true among “LAVIDGE Education Marketing Research and Insights, Volume 1” respondents. From becoming their best selves to improving their careers or levels of income, everyone expressed interest in pursuing higher education, vocational education or post-secondary education in hopes of making a change for the better.

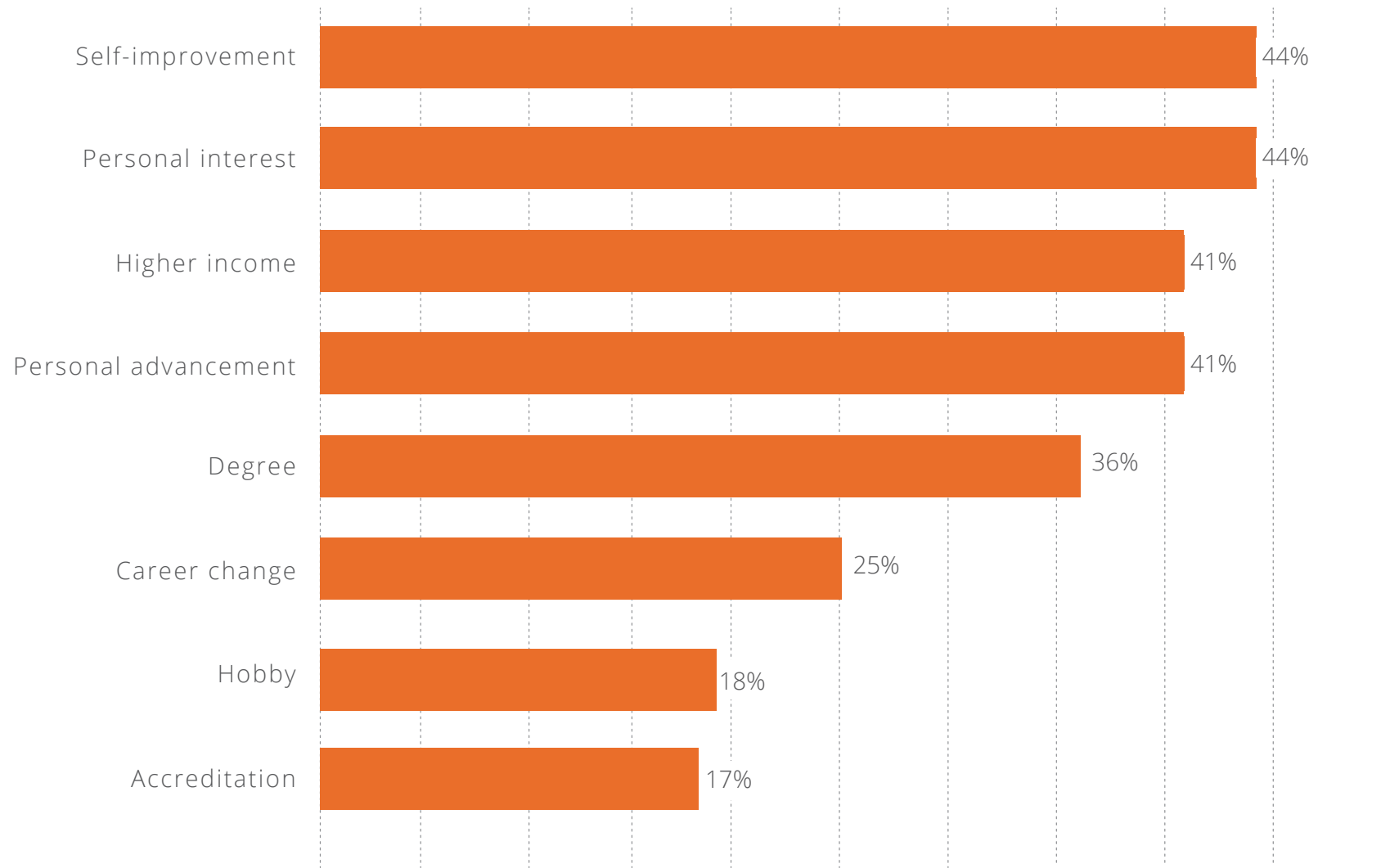
You might be surprised to learn that study respondents ranked both self-improvement and personal interest (tied at 44% each) slightly higher than increasing their income or advancing their career (tied at 41%) as reasons to enroll in school. Clearly, potential students want their educational pursuits to reflect themselves beyond how it will impact them during the work day and for student success to mean more than impacting their ability to pay their bills.

A quarter of our education industry marketing report respondents attributed their interest in higher education to a career change. Respondents didn’t specify whether the anticipated career changes were due to outside forces or simply related to personal choice. With many jobs being phased out of today’s market and more anticipated to be replaced by technological advance in the future, it’s no surprise.

An AARP report in early 2019 identified “[Six careers worth going back to school for—even if you’re over age 40](#)” including industrial-organizational psychologist, personal financial advisor, training and development specialist, recreational therapist, medical records and health information technician, and psychiatric technician. Associated careers pay average salaries between \$28,000 and \$94,720 per year.

Slightly fewer education industry study respondents (18%) indicated hobbies as their motivation to enroll. An example might be going back to school for a Master of Arts or Master of Fine Arts by studying [puppetry](#) at University of Connecticut. For those with an interest in learning to become a licensed auctioneer, Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) in central Pennsylvania offers a [vocational diploma program](#) just for you. Credit is transferable to an associate degree at the school. Theater, dance and the performing arts are also hobbies that can be pursued as a degree, with [The Julliard School](#) in New York topping the list of places to enroll.

WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE TO PURSUE EDUCATION



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

LIFE STAGES, INCOME, IMPACT MOTIVATIONS

Different life stages offer different motivations for those pursuing their education. Culinary Arts might appeal to someone focused on pursuing a passion. Another student more motivated by a potential starting salary might choose a degree in high demand such as mechanical, chemical or petroleum engineering, even though it is less personally fulfilling.

Here's what we found:

- Full-time working professionals chose professional advancement (51%) and higher income potential (54%)
- Respondents under the age of 35 chose personal interest (50%) and higher income potential (55%)

Income level has a similar effect on educational preferences. Respondents with salaries between \$35k and \$49k chose:

- Personal interest (51%)
- Higher income potential (58%)

Retired respondents are most likely to choose degrees they simply find interesting:

- Self-improvement (52%)
- Hobby (30%)

GENDER, AGE, & INCOME IMPACT EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS

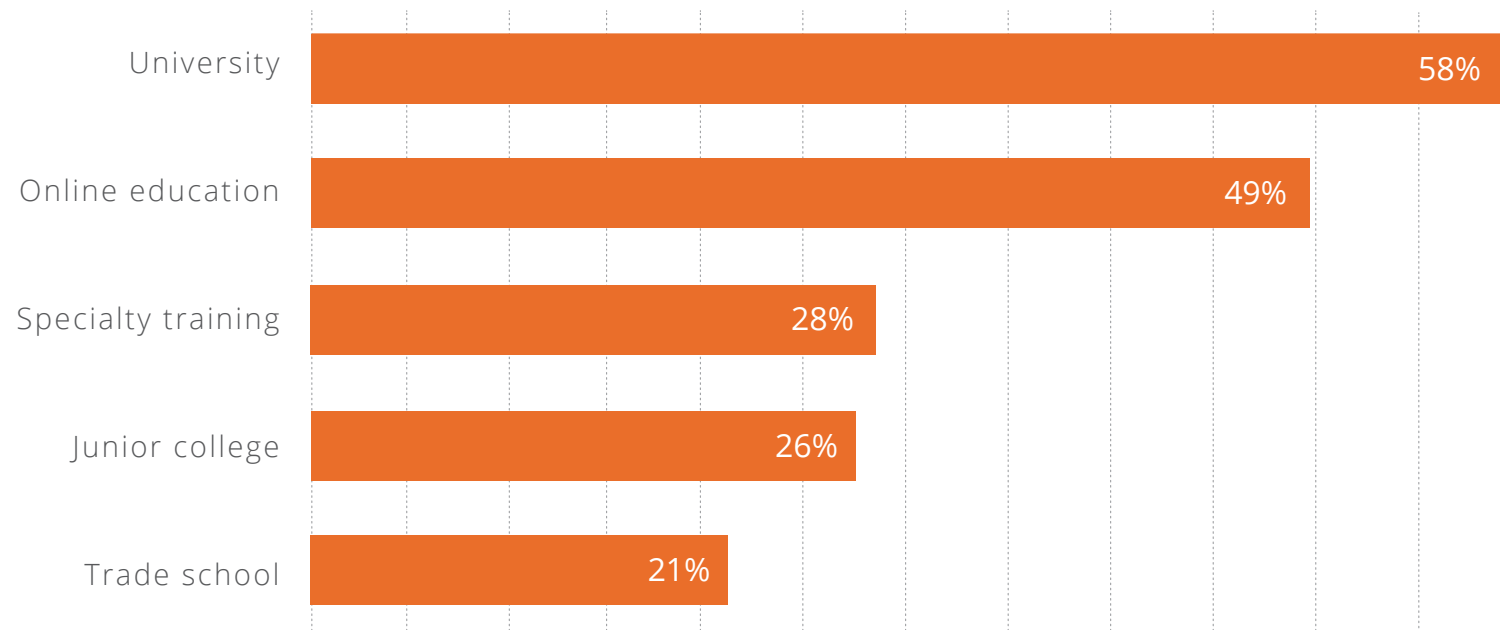
The most preferred college major for women in the United States is nursing, and 87% of those who graduate in the field are female, according to a [Team College Factual report](#) published in 2017. The same report found that business administration and management is the most preferred college major for men.

Our study found that half of female respondents prefer personal interest education, ranking it more favorably by a margin of 15 percentage points (50%) over males (35%).

In addition, respondents under 35 years of age (35%) and those with incomes <\$35k/annually (30%) chose a career change more than respondents in older age groups and those with higher incomes.

Online education preference rivals that of on-campus learning

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR SCHOOL



University campuses are here to stay. Whether on campus or online, study respondents overwhelmingly said they prefer to take classes through a university than enroll in:

Specialty training (28%) | Junior college (26%) | Trade school (21%)

While attending a university in person was most popular among respondents overall (58%), online education (which trailed by 9 percentage points) was still preferred by nearly half of all participants (49%).

[*Inside Higher Ed*](#) reported similar findings in March 2019, stating that dozens of educational institutions coast to coast are aware of the [trend to offer degree programs online](#) that's been in motion since at least 2012. As predicted, mainstream educational institutions are finally taking note.

"Numerous public university systems and state flagships are planning ambitious online endeavors," the *Inside Higher Ed* article's subhead states. "How many succeed in a competitive marketplace will depend on pricing, execution and leadership."

Current education industry leaders in online-only programs include front-runners Arizona State University and University of Maryland University College, each of which boasts student enrollments of 25,000 or more.

One of many hopeful up-and-comers in online education, University of Missouri System also announced in early 2019 its plans to increase its student body from 75,000 to 100,000 by 2023, acknowledging such programs as a ["key driver of future growth."](#)

It's a leap forward that shouldn't be too difficult for more universities to get students to take. That's because online education as a choice for taking programs or classes ranks high among all age groups, education levels and ethnicities.

Here's how respondents who prefer online education break down by demographic:

Age:	Education:	Ethnicity:
• <35 years of age (52%)	• High school or less (45%)	• Caucasian (52%)
• 35-54 years of age (46%)	• Some college or trade school (55%)	• Non-Caucasian (42%)
• 55+ years of age (50%)	• College graduate + (50%)	

Note: Of those who are within a certain age group, X% of them favor online education. The other percentage is left unsaid as it is assumed that it is the remainder.

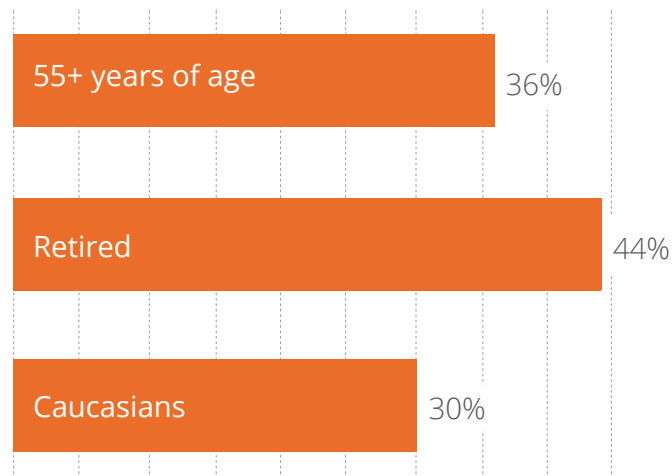
We start all over again with the next age group and X% of this group (separately from the previous age group) feel positively toward online education.

AGE, RACE AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS PLAY A ROLE

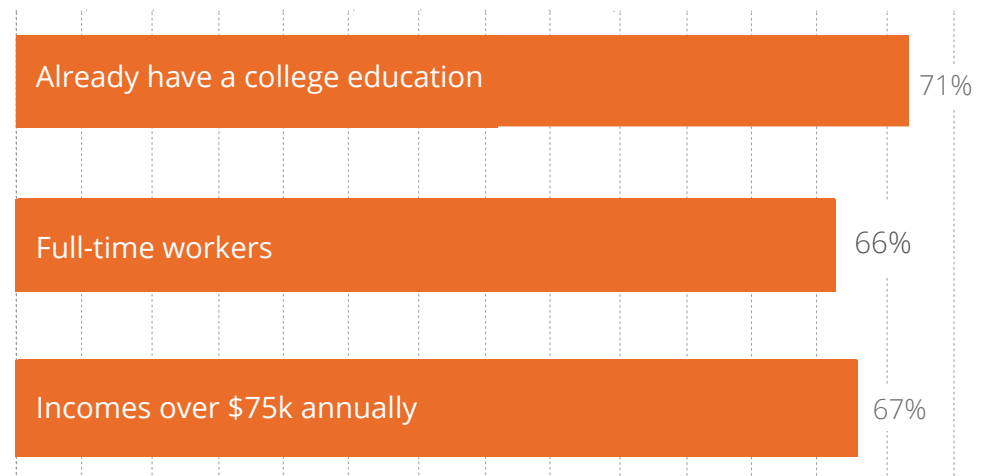
Demographics should play a role when marketers reach out to potential students. Who they are and where they are in life does influence whether they are likely to pursue a program of study at a university or junior college. The same applies to those who already have a degree, whether they work full time or are retired and their annual income level.

Here's the breakdown:

THOSE MORE LIKELY TO CONSIDER JUNIOR COLLEGE THAN OTHER ETHNICITIES



THOSE WHO WOULD CONSIDER A UNIVERSITY



On-site experience is important throughout the selection process

How welcoming your campus is to current students and guests matters more than you might think when it comes to recruiting potential students.

Overwhelmingly, our study respondents ranked their experience during on-site visits to your campus as most influential at 47% followed by personal referrals/word-of-mouth (39%) when first learning about their options.

This underscores the importance of maintaining a user-friendly campus. Everything needs to be accessible, orderly and welcoming. If the experience is frustrating, it isn't likely that potential students will walk away feeling warmly toward your school.

[*American School & University*](#) recommends focusing on hospitality, culture, context, flexibility and user expectations to develop an integrated wayfinding program to make visitors feel welcome and confident while visiting your campus.

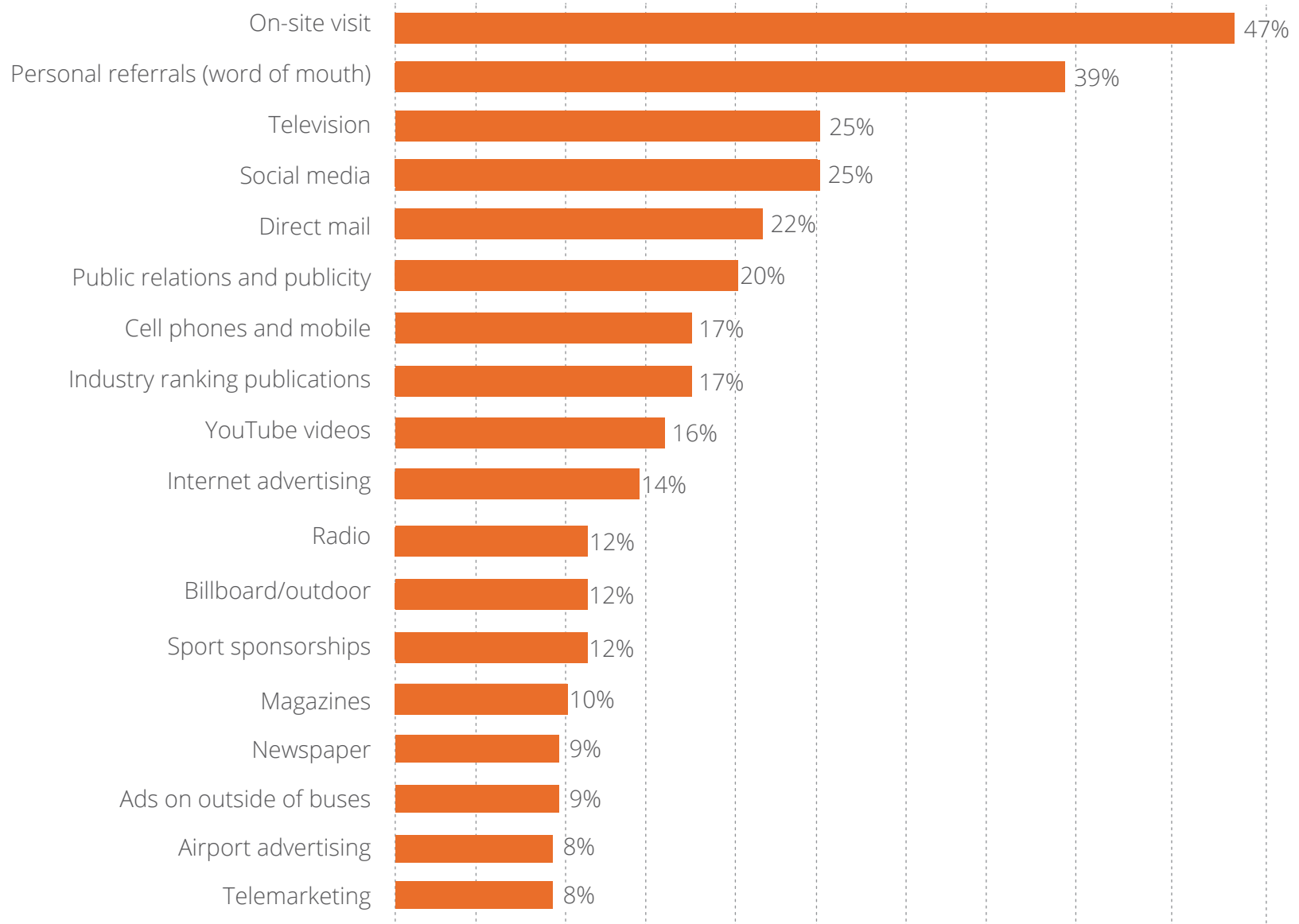
"A comprehensive approach to wayfinding means that a university has made an internal commitment to 'speak in one voice' to its visitors," the article states. "That means the built environment will be identical, in terms of wayfinding information and logic, to the other ways that the university communicates. Building this system makes the campus more legible, understandable and therefore more hospitable to visitors."

HAPPY STUDENTS MAKE THE BEST AMBASSADORS

In addition, the morale of current students guests encounter, as well as the opinions of your graduates, are paramount. Finding ways to meet student needs and keep the alumni engaged long after graduation can significantly increase chances that they will recommend you to others.

This is particularly true in a post-[*Varsity Blues*](#) college admissions scandal era when tensions run high if [*student—and faculty—concerns*](#) about fairness, ethics and morality aren't effectively addressed. If the people potential students and their families meet during a campus tour seem unwelcoming, guarded or disgruntled, your guests aren't likely to want to come back.

PREFERRED WAYS TO INCREASE INITIAL AWARENESS OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR SCHOOL



Other preferred ways for students to learn about your school or institution of learning include:

- Social media (25%)
- Television (25%)
- Direct mail (22%)
- Public relations (20%)
- Industry ranking publications (17%)
- Mobile ads (17%)
- YouTube videos (16%)
- Internet banner ads (14%)
- Billboard/outdoor advertising (17%)
- Radio (12%)
- Sports sponsorships (12%)
- Magazines (10%)
- Bus advertising (9%)
- Newspaper (9%)
- Airport advertising (8%)
- Telemarketing (8%)

DEMOGRAPHICS DON'T ALWAYS INFLUENCE PREFERENCES

The above holds true across the board. Regardless of age, education level or ethnicity, education seekers initially learn about education options through an on-site/on-campus visit.

Potential students who work full time, however, tend to be more motivated than part-time workers, the unemployed or retirees by the following marketing tactics:

- Personal referrals (49%)
- Mobile (21%)
- Radio messages (15%)
- Magazines (13%)
- Newspaper (10%)

While the student journey is long, the decision-making step is relatively quick

Completing a trade, technical, career, university or junior college education program can exponentially improve one's status in life in addition to fulfilling personal goals. It logically follows that where to enroll and what course of study to pursue are arguably among the most important life decisions one can make.

So, exactly how much time are potential students willing to invest in making the choice best for them? While consideration of colleges can take up to a year or more, surprisingly the detailed research phase can happen in as little as two weeks for 40% of students. This means your institutional brand is important and the strength of that brand can really speed up the information request process prior to applying.

Conversely, the majority of study respondents indicated that they spend more than two weeks, after their initial request for information, as they continue to research potential educational options before contacting them for more details. This finding holds consistent across all demographics.

Here's the breakdown:

- More than 2 weeks (60%)
- 6 days to 2 weeks (19%)
- Less than 1 day (13%)
- 2-3 days (6%)
- 4-5 days (1%)

Of course, there are always outliers. Of those who said they spend more than two weeks researching schools before reaching out for additional information, a significant number of respondents indicated they would need about two months to fully investigate them. Slightly fewer reported three months would allow sufficient time, and an equal number of respondents said they'd need more than six months.

Those who said they'd need longer than six months or up to a year were few and far between but were represented in our study. So were those who said they could wrap it up within 20 minutes of perusing a school's website.

HERE'S A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING OF REASONS WHY:

- “[I need] a few weeks of comparing and contrasting programs, pricing and program lengths.”
- “[It took me] about 6 to 8 months looking at ads and making calls to schools.”
- “[I’d be willing to research] as long as it takes. No certain amount of time. As long as I’m satisfied with all the information gathered.”
- “[It would] depend on what I was looking for...a degree, job education, or just for me.”
- “[I took] enough time to read a few pages on their website, so maybe 20 minutes or so.”
- “I looked for about 2-3 weeks at schools before deciding.”
- “I spent three weeks learning about and decided to go to Chandler-Gilbert Community College.”
- “I took about two weeks researching and evaluating schools before I made my choice.”
- “Not long. I applied to a university two semesters before getting my associates. I knew I would be applying to ASU because it’s the go-to university out here for residents.”

LEARNING ABOUT SCHOOLS, ROUND TWO

First impressions are important. But so is follow-up when it comes to recruiting students to your college, trade school or university.

Interestingly, in addition to ranking highest as the initial information-gathering method, study respondents in the Southwest who wanted to learn more also ranked [campus visits](#) as most influential. This varies slightly from national statistics noted by the American College Foundation. While some students begin touring campuses as high school juniors, the foundation’s website states, most wait until their senior year and they have already chosen their top-six favorite schools.

Here’s our breakdown:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| • On-site visit (57%) | • Personal contact (36%) | • Brochure (28%) | • Social media (24%) |
| • Website (47%) | • Email (28%) | • Events (27%) | • Telephone (18%) |

WHEN VISITS AREN'T ENOUGH...

Sure, visits are great. Really great. Respondents to our education industry study, however, did suggest numerous creative ways they'd like to be educated on their learning options including:

DIGITAL

- Gaming console ads
- Programmatic ads on sites with subject matter related to degree programs
- Live chat to answer questions about school programs and eligibility
- YouTube videos
- 360-degree virtual tours of the school
- Webinars promoting academic programs
- Remote access to preview a portion of a course
- SMS text messaging
- Bloggers
- Yelp reviews

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Mentors
- Podcast
- Alumni endorsements
- Business/industry endorsements of school programs
- Present info through AARP and other organizations for seniors
- Provide high school students with guidebooks outlining steps to enroll
- Cooperating with work education programs
- Remote access to preview a portion of a course

TELEVISION

- Commercials
- Infomercials
- News releases

PUBLICITY AND PR

- Airplane banners
- Sky writing
- Story placements in student publications
- College T-shirt giveaways

OUTDOOR

- Billboards
- Radio spots
- Car wraps
- Train wraps and seat placards
- Shuttle wraps
- Door hangers & flyers
- Movie theater ads
- Restroom stall ads
- Store bulletin board ads or flyers
- Gas station ads

Students seek affordability

It's a fact. Sixty percent of prospective students will spend more than two weeks researching your school before deciding to enroll. It's imperative to know which marketing messages are most likely to influence them to choose your institution of learning.

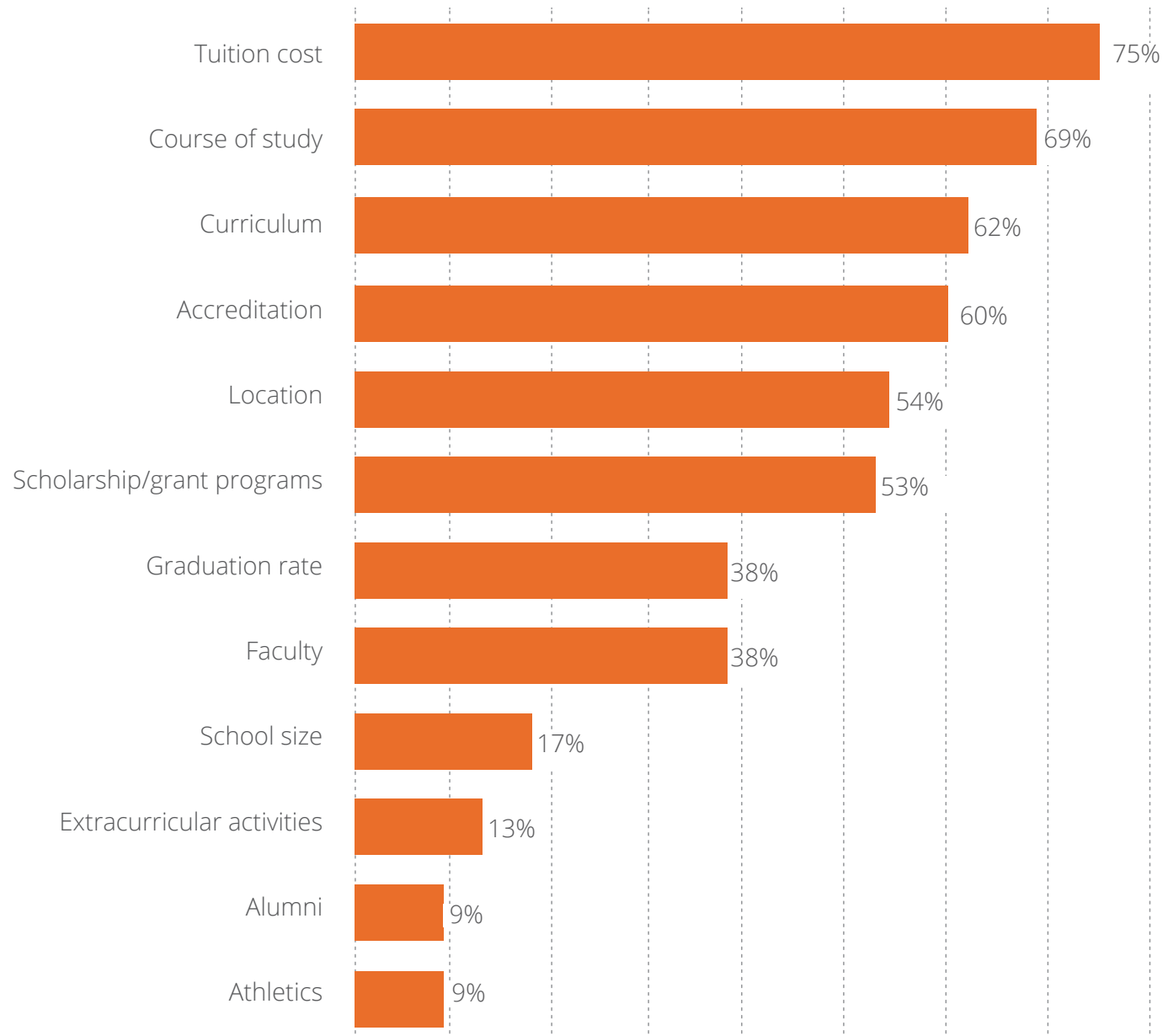
We asked study respondents who participated in our "LAVIDGE Education Marketing Research and Insights, Volume 1" study which words are most effective in motivating them to choose an institution or school. We learned that "affordable" is almost twice as motivational for education-seekers than any other option presented. Considering [college tuition has increased more than 150% in the past decade](#), it's not completely surprising. So, in case you were tempted to focus on something sexier, such as your student athletics program, or something timely such as inclusivity, you might want to reconsider.

Here's the breakdown:

- Affordable (72%)
- Recommended (30%)
- Inspirational (17%)
- Exclusive (6%)
- Top-rated (42%)
- Diverse (28%)
- Unique (14%)
- Large (6%)
- Excellence (42%)
- Focused (28%)
- Easy (13%)
- New (4%)
- Personalized (38%)
- Challenging (23%)
- Small (13%)
- Convenient (36%)
- Prestigious (18%)
- Inclusive (13%)
- Innovative (31%)
- Well-known (18%)
- Popular (8%)

What's more, affordability also ranked highest as motivational among those aged 55+ (81%), and those with some college or trade school education (81%).

IMPORTANT ASPECTS FOR CHOOSING AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OR SCHOOL



EDUCATION STUDY REVEALS SUBGROUP PRIORITIES

What's motivational overall isn't necessarily consistent across the board. Preferences among subgroups of potential enrollees emerged, showing variances based on a number of demographic identifiers.

For example:

- Those with college education rank innovation (37%) and excellence (46%) higher than their counterparts without a degree
- Younger respondents (less than 35 years of age) rank the preference for large schools (13%) more motivating compared to other age groups

THERE'S IMPORTANT, AND THEN THERE'S VERY IMPORTANT

What's the difference between marketing messages important enough to motivate a student to enroll and ones they consider very (or most) important?

Our education study reveals that when choosing an educational institution or school, cost *always* tops the list:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Tuition cost (75%) | • Scholarship/grant programs (53%) | • Extracurricular activities (13%) |
| • Course of study (69%) | • Faculty (38%) | • Alumni (9%) |
| • Curriculum (62%) | • Graduation rate (38%) | • Athletics (9%) |
| • Accreditation (60%) | • School ranking (26%) | |
| • Location (54%) | • School size (17%) | |

Additionally, tuition cost consistently ranks high across employment, income, gender, age, education and ethnicity.

Other top priorities include the following.

Course of study ranks high:

- Amongst full time workers (76%)
- Those with incomes of \$75k+/annually (80%)

Accreditation is also important to:

- Those with some college or college degree (70%)
- Full-time workers (69%)

Non-Caucasians rank the following higher than Caucasians:

- Faculty (50%)
- Graduation rate (52%)

Athletics is more important to those:

- Under 35 years of age (36%)
- With high school education or less (39%)

Extracurricular activities are ranked similarly among those:

- Under 35 years of age (43%)
- High school educated or less (53%)

Extracurriculars also ranked higher among these two groups compared to other groups.

Motivational phrases are preferred by adult learners

Marketing rule No. 1: Don't imply to prospective students that they might be ignorant—unless you're Harvard University. Bok's Law, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance," generally attributed to former Harvard President Derek Bok, could be construed to do just that. (Maybe Bok should have taken a poll before borrowing the phrase from an [Ann Landers](#) column which ran in October 1975.)

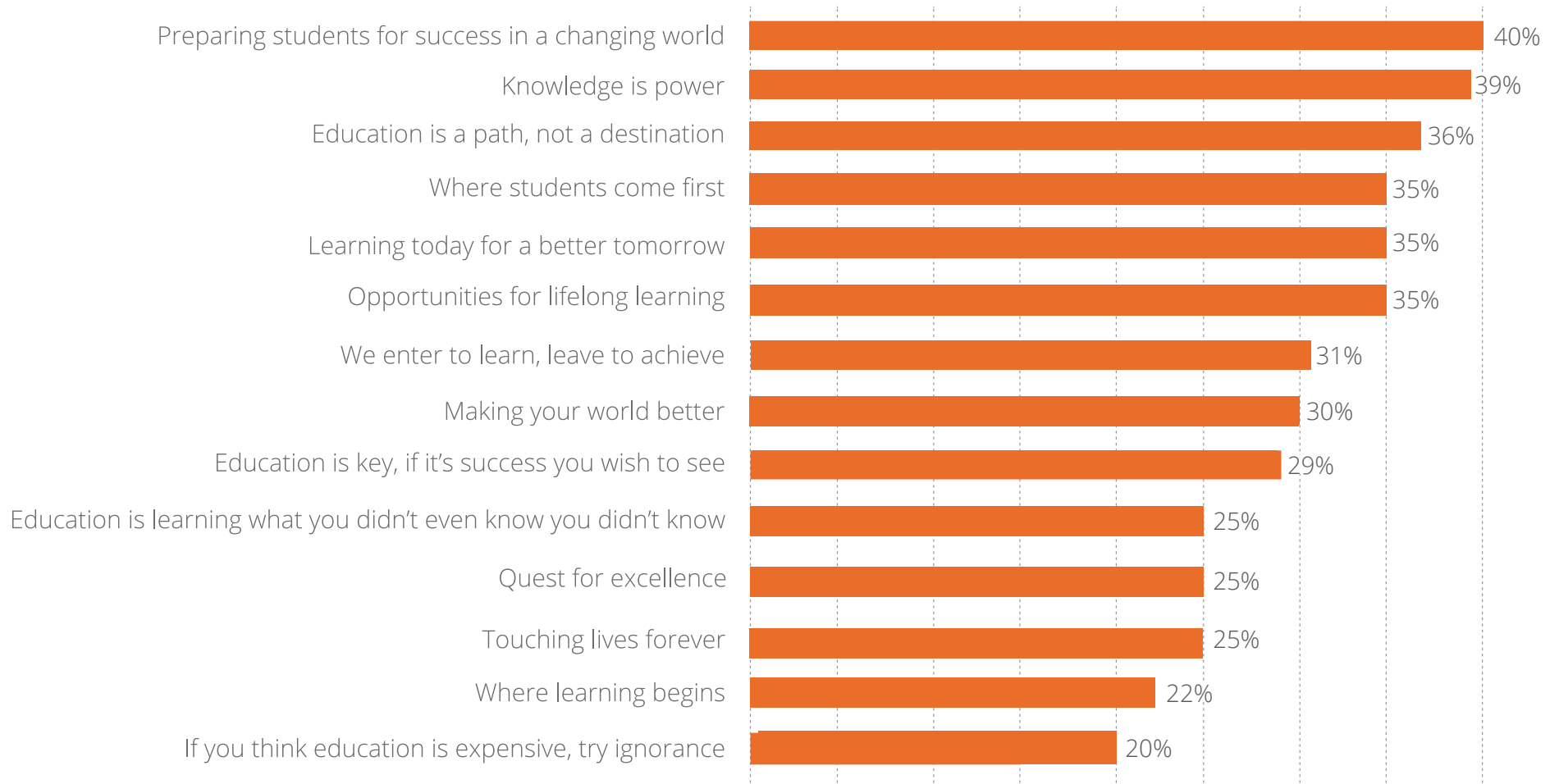
Regardless, the quote has become quite well known and Harvard is not exactly short on student applications.

Our study respondents, however, ranked it dead last for effectiveness in a field of 14 marketing phrases. It turns out education seekers are far more attracted to motivational phrases about how education can enrich their lives. In short, they want to know the upside of what's in it for them.

Here's the breakdown:

- Preparing students for success in a changing world (40%)
- Knowledge is power (39%)
- Education is a path, not a destination (36%)
- Where students come first (35%)
- Learning today for a better tomorrow (35%)
- Opportunities for lifelong learning (35%)
- We enter to learn, leave to achieve (31%)
- Making your world better (30%)
- Education is key, if it's success you wish to see (29%)
- Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know (25%)
- Quest for excellence (25%)
- Touching lives forever (25%)
- Where learning begins (22%)
- If you think education is expensive, try ignorance (20%)

MOST EFFECTIVE PHRASES TO COMMUNICATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES OR SCHOOLS



AGE, GENDER & MORE INFLUENCE EDUCATION SEEKER PREFERENCES

It pays to know which demographic groups your educational institution's programs are likely to benefit so you can craft effectively targeted marketing messages.

If your target audience includes seniors, for example, you'll want to include messaging tailored for their more mature needs and discerning tastes.

Our study revealed that respondents aged 55+ (49%) and retired (46%) prefer phrases that refer to education as a journey such as, "Education is a path, not a destination."

Females tend to prefer more empowering statements, by ranking "knowledge is power" higher (43%) than males (34%). Females also ranked "preparing students for success in a changing world" higher (44%) than males (34%).

Finally, "Where learning begins" ranked higher with those who had high school or less education (35%) and those who had children in the household (27%).

A blurred background image of students sitting at desks in a classroom, writing with pencils. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image.

Appendix

Methodology

The objective of this research was to gather quantitative feedback from a random sample of adult consumers (18+) living in Arizona and other major markets in the Southwest U.S. A total of 472 online surveys were completed, with the following breakdown of completes by market: Phoenix, 220; Salt Lake City, 51; Denver, 50; Albuquerque, 50; Las Vegas, 50; San Diego, 51.

Individual participants were provided by a major online survey panel, with the actual survey hosted by WestGroup Research in Phoenix, Ariz. The statistical margin of error for the overall sample is +/- 4.3% at the 95% confidence level, the standard error margin threshold for most public opinion research. Average survey length was approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Error margins for sub-segments of the sample (e.g., different age groups) will vary depending on the size of that sub-segment. Statistically significant findings are noted within the report where applicable.

Primary research was conducted by WestGroup Research on behalf of LAVIDGE during October/November 2018. Additional industry research was conducted through June 2019.

Respondent profiles

GENDER

Male	39%
Female	61%

AGE

18-24	11%
25-34	21%
35-44	18%
45-54	20%
55-64	17%
65+	13%

EDUCATION

High school or less	21%
Some college or trade school	38%
College +	41%

INCOME

Under \$35,000	31%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	17%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	19%
\$75,000+	29%
Prefer not to answer	4%

Data

Why choose to pursue education

Self-improvement	44%
Personal interest	44%
Higher income	41%
Professional advancement	41%
Degree	36%
Career change	25%
Hobby	18%
Accreditation	17%

Important aspects for choosing an educational institution or school

Tuition cost	7%
Course of study	69%
Curriculum	62%
Accreditation	60%
Location	54%
Scholarship/grant programs	53%
Graduation rate	38%
Faculty	38%
School size	17%
Extracurricular activities	13%
Alumni	9%
Athletics	9%

Preferred ways to increase initial awareness of educational institution or school

On-site visit	47%
Personal referrals	39%
Television	25%
Social media	25%
Direct mail	22%
Public relations and publicity	20%
Cell phones and mobile	17%
Industry ranking publications	17%
YouTube videos	16%
Internet advertising	14%
Radio	12%
Billboard/outdoor	12%
Sports sponsorships	12%
Magazines	10%
Newspaper	9%
Ads on outside of buses	9%
Airport advertising	8%
Telemarketing	8%

Considerations for type of educational institute

University	58%
Online education	49%
Specialty training	28%
Junior college	26%
Trade school	17%

Data

Preferred ways to learn more about educational institution or school

On-site visit	57%
Website	47%
Personal contact	36%
Email	28%
Brochure	28%
Events	27%
Social media	24%
Telephone	18%

Most effective phrases to communicate educational institutes or schools

Preparing students for success in a changing world	40%
Knowledge is power	39%
Education is a path, not a destination	36%
Where students come first	35%
Learning today for a better tomorrow	35%
Opportunities for lifelong learning	35%
We enter to learn, leave to achieve	31%
Making your world better	30%
Education is key, if it's success you wish to see	29%
Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know	25%
Quest for excellence	25%
Touching lives forever	25%
Where learning begins	22%
If you think education is expensive, try ignorance	20%

Most effective words to communicate educational institutes or schools

Affordable	47%	Well-known	18%
Top-rated	42%	Inspirational	17%
Excellence	42%	Unique	17%
Personalized	38%	Easy	13%
Convenient	36%	Small	13%
Innovative	31%	Inclusive	13%
Recommended	30%	Popular	9%
Diverse	28%	Exclusive	6%
Focused	28%	Large	6%
Challenging	18%	New	4%
Prestigious	18%		

Time researching educational institution or school, before requesting information

More than 2 weeks	60%
6 days to 2 weeks	19%
Less than 1 day	13%
2-3 days	6%
4-5 days	1%

Questionnaire

This brief survey will ask for your opinions on various issues related to the marketing of educational institutions, schools, programs or classes. For the purposes of the survey, this will mean any advertising, websites, messages or other information you have received from various educational institutions or schools.

To complete the survey, simply click on the appropriate answer or provide the requested information where appropriate. For open-ended questions, please provide complete phrases or thoughts, and as much detail as needed to express your opinion.

1. People have different reasons for considering educational services. Which of the following reasons influenced or would influence your decision regarding educational institutions, schools, programs or classes for yourself or a member of your household?

- Professional Advancement
- Personal interest
- Self-improvement
- Career change
- Hobby
- Accreditation
- Degree attainment
- Higher income potential
- Other _____

2. What type(s) of educational institutions or schools did you select, or would you consider for programs or classes?

- University
- Junior College
- Online education
- Trade school
- Specialty training
- Other (describe): _____

3. Listed below are various factors that might influence your selection of a school or other educational institution. Beside each, please indicate whether that factor was or would be Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Very Important, or Not at all Important to you when evaluating educational options.

- Scholarship/grant programs
- Graduation rate
- School size
- Tuition cost
- Alumni (others who attended the same school)
- Extracurricular activities
- Course of study
- Accreditation
- Location
- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Athletics
- School ranking

4. Listed below are various media or ways that educational institutions or schools might communicate with you to make you aware of them. Please rate each method on how effective you feel it would be in increasing your awareness of schools or institutions. A '10' means that method would be Extremely effective, a '1' means it would not be effective at all or choose another number in-between that matches your opinion.

- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Billboard/outdoor
- Ads on outside of buses
- Airport advertising
- Direct mail
- Magazines
- Internet advertising
- Social media
- Cell phones and mobile
- Public relations and publicity
- Telemarketing
- Sports sponsorships
- Personal referrals (word of mouth)
- Industry ranking publications
- On-site visit
- YouTube videos

5. In the space below, please list any other methods you think would be particularly effective in increasing awareness of a school or other educational institution. (OPEN-END)

6. What is the expected amount of time you research potential institutions or schools after initially becoming aware of them?

- Less than 1 day
- 2-3 days
- 4-5 days
- 6 days to 2 weeks
- More than 2 weeks

7. Once you are aware of an educational institute or school, the next step would be to gain a better understanding of the classes, courses or programs offered. Please rate each method on how effective you feel it would be in learning more about each school or institution. A '10' means that method would be extremely effective, a '1' means it would not be effective at all or choose another number in-between that matches your opinion.

- On-site visit
- Website
- Telephone
- Email
- Brochure
- Personal contact
- Social media
- Events

8. In the space below, please list any other methods you believe would be effective in educating you about the classes or programs offered by a school or institution. (OPEN-END)

9. Listed below are various words that educational institutes or schools might use to describe themselves. Please choose which words you feel would be most effective and least effective in communicating a school's benefits. Simply drag and drop your 'Top 5' and 'Bottom 5' into the spaces indicated.

- Affordable
- Top-rated
- Excellence
- Personalized
- Convenient
- Innovative
- Recommended
- Diverse
- Focused
- Challenging
- Prestigious
- Well-known
- Inspirational
- Unique
- Easy
- Small
- Inclusive
- Popular
- Exclusive
- Large
- New

10. Next, we'd like to get your opinions on potential phrases that educational institutions or schools might use in advertising and marketing. As with previous questions, please rate each phrase on how effective you feel it would be in promoting a school or institution. A '10' means it would be extremely effective, a '1' means it would not be effective at all or choose another number in-between that matches your opinion.

- Preparing students for success in a changing world
- Knowledge is power
- Education is a path, not a destination
- Where students come first
- Learning today for a better tomorrow
- Opportunities for lifelong learning
- We enter to learn, leave to achieve
- Making your world better
- Education is key, if it's success you wish to see
- Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know
- Quest for excellence
- Touching lives forever
- Where learning begins
- If you think education is expensive, try ignorance

The following questions are for statistical purposes only.

11. Please indicate your gender: Male/Female

12. What is the zip code where you live? _____

13. Which of the following includes your age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or older

14. Including yourself, how many adults 18 or older live in your household? _____

15. How many children under the age of 18 live in your household? _____

16. Which of the following includes the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school (did not graduate)
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college or trade school
- College graduate (bachelor's degree)
- Post-graduate (master's degree or higher)
- Prefer not to answer

17. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Work full time
- Work part time
- Retired
- Self-employed
- Student
- Temporarily unemployed or looking for work
- Homemaker
- Other:
- Prefer not to answer

18. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

- Caucasian/White
- African American
- Asian American
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- Other:
- Prefer not to answer

19. What is your marital status?

- Single (never married)
- Married or living as married
- Separated
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Other:
- Prefer not to answer

20. Which of the following includes your total household income last year before taxes?

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

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About LAVIDGE

Meet LAVIDGE, an employee-owned ad agency specializing in discovering and communicating insights which engage, motivate and inspire. From building brand awareness to driving revenue and from positioning thought leaders to enhancing perceptions, it's why we do what we do. Our unified marketing approach encompasses advertising, public relations, and digital marketing. And we've been doing it successfully since 1982 for clients in education, hospitality, healthcare, real estate, technology, sports, personal care, food service, and government. Intrigued? Visit us at LAVIDGE.com and get social with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



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