A Career in Travel & Tourism: UNDERGRADUATE PERCEPTIONS
Executive Summary

There is a pressing concern within the Travel & Tourism industry that companies are missing out on the best new talent due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in Travel & Tourism. In order to discuss and address these challenges, Members of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) formed the Human Capital Working Group and commissioned research to:

- understand the extent and nature of these negative perceptions among non-Travel & Tourism undergraduates
- map Travel & Tourism opportunities against their wider career aspirations
- comprehend the considerations taken when choosing a career
- provide recommendations on how future messaging regarding career opportunities in Travel & Tourism can best strike a positive chord with undergraduates
- The research was undertaken through a mix of desk review, circulation of a survey and follow up interviews with Members of the Human Capital Working Group.

Key Messages and Outcomes

Travel & Tourism is viewed as a reasonably attractive industry for university undergraduates but one that is still poorly understood. Scarce information and misconceptions exist about the skills required for graduates as well as the roles, career development and working opportunities in this industry.

Undergraduates across the three countries appear to have a very realistic outlook on the job market and employment overall. In particular: 1) Respondents appear to be ambitious and driven by progression. They place great value onto graduate training schemes. 2) CSR, ethics and values of the company are important (more so in China and USA). 3) Work-life balance matters across all regions but so do interpersonal relationships at work.

Travel & Tourism

- Overall Travel & Tourism is an industry that appears to be still poorly understood by this generation of undergraduates. Scarce information and even some misconceptions still exist about skills, roles, career opportunities and working conditions in the industry.
- While the industry is perceived as reasonably attractive - more so by the Chinese respondents, less so by the British - the reasons why the sector might be attractive include international opportunities, work-life balance or the chance to speak languages which are generally less important /decisive factors when choosing a job compared to job security, competitive starting salary and career progression.
- From a view point of sub-sectors, Airlines, Tourism Boards and the Cultural and Heritage Sector (but only in China and USA) are considered the most attractive in respects to employment opportunities.
- In China, 87% of respondents say they would consider a career in Travel & Tourism. This compares to 61% in the USA and further to 49% in the UK. When asked to elaborate what they like about the industry, those who admitted interest in the sector often provide somewhat feeble reasons such as ‘I like to travel’ although some also mention their cultural interest, a belief that the sector opens the mind or indeed provides a range of development opportunities. Thus, a type of personality emerges that seems to be naturally attracted to the sector, for whom success may be defined by factors such as work-life balance, international opportunity, travel and good benefits. Promoting careers in the sector on the basis of this definition of success may attract a greater variety of candidates, provided they buy into the message.
- The sector is perhaps less attractive to those young individuals who are driven by a more traditional approach to career: financial results, achieving senior leadership positions, working for well-known companies in perceived prestigious sectors that provide highly paid jobs.
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Amongst those who are not interested in the sector lack of information, misjudgement and preconceptions are common. For example, respondents are only able to identify some very broad job roles (‘travel’, ‘guide’, ‘management’ are quoted) and only a career pathway in ‘sales & marketing’ is believed by all respondents to offer ‘many opportunities’.

General career expectations, attitude and choices

The younger generations of graduates appear to have a realistic and risk adverse approach to employment, which is consistent with the desk literature and the Chinese focus group specifically undertaken for the survey. Across all regions:

- Career and salary progression are scored as the top factors in making a career choice attractive.
- Job security is ranked in the top-3 factors.
- Work-life balance is ranked in the top-4 factors.

In regards to factors that influence fulfilment at work, across the board good relationships with bosses and colleagues and clear career progression opportunities score highly. A good salary (but remarkably more so in UK and USA), ability to contribute, autonomy and adding value are also important factors but subject to greater regional differences.

There is also great consistency across the three countries around factors that will contribute far less to their fulfilment at work:

- Ability to use languages (13th out of 13 factors)
- International opportunities/travel and relocation (marginally more important to the Chinese)
- Diversity policies (again, marginally more important to the Chinese)

As far as salary expectations in the next five years, there are wide differences between the three countries, with the Chinese undergraduates being far more optimistic than those in the UK and USA of their future salary progression. 70% of Chinese respondents said they expected to more than double their salaries compared to only 13% in the UK and 5% in the USA. While only 6% of Chinese students thought they would less than double their salary, this was 44% in the UK and 71% in USA. One quarter of those in both China and the US thought that they would double their salary, rising to 43% in the UK.

When it comes to career choices, most respondents across the board focus on (sub-) sectors or pathways rather than a specific industry. Graduate schemes remain a very popular choice and respondents are aware that in current circumstances not one single tool will be more likely to lend you a job, therefore all need to be explored: career offices, fairs, websites, networking, social media etc. Interestingly, the only tool that is considered very helpful (by American and Chinese respondents) are referrals from mentors, friends family and contacts – possibly a cultural factor also linked to the availability (in the USA especially) of mentoring and sponsoring schemes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Today’s young people are conscious of the context in which they find themselves as employment-seekers. They are realistic in their approach and hope to pursue their dream jobs one day. Many of them, particularly those responding from China, are keen on maintaining a better work-life balance than previous generations did and wish to secure their future through good benefits packages.

Travel & Tourism is a potentially interesting industry to many of these young individuals, particularly those keener perhaps on experience, cultural exchanges, diversity and learning than instant financial rewards. Travel & Tourism holds up well against many other industry sectors that business undergraduates are considering in but there remain some challenges when it comes to the understanding of the sector and its subsectors, as well as its profile and awareness of what a career in the sector may offer.

There is no doubt that diversity is the key to success and the industry is doing well in trying to diversify the background of its talent but a clear understanding of needs and gaps is required in order to address them most effectively.

The research brings about some potential initiatives for consideration and review:

- Identifying critical skills needed in Travel & Tourism
- Building awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism
- Addressing industry competitiveness issues
- Increased engagement with education establishments

Industry leaders should be showcased more frequently and should engage with academic institutions to support a compelling, promotional campaign aimed at highlighting less obvious Travel & Tourism roles/careers and feeding into the above portal. This could be completed and enhanced by regional roadshows in collaboration with individual WTTC members aimed at top universities.

Addressing industry competitiveness issues

- Salary and benefit benchmarks for job roles could be developed to work across industries rather than within Travel & Tourism. Industry salary and benefit benchmarks are commonly held within the industry but less is available to compare Travel & Tourism against other industries. In an age where university costs can leave huge debts, the best graduates have no option but to look foremost at companies that pay the best salaries.

Increased engagement with education establishments

- Greater engagement with career offices in academia should be encouraged and planned in order to provide advice on the types of careers and career pathways available within Travel & Tourism. Career offices are generalist by nature and are unlikely to provide information about the industry unless a Travel & Tourism programme is offered within the institutions they belong to. The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.
- Alumni associations can also provide a fertile ground for educating and promoting the sector, especially when alumni originally did not graduate from a Travel & Tourism course. Alumni-students mentoring programmes as well as more general mentoring programmes in schools and universities can help in spreading a positive message and showcase aspirational role models from the sectors.
- Industry leaders should be showcased more frequently and should engage with academic institutions to ensure young people are inspired and motivated by the professionalism and leadership of such individuals. Role models should also involve the less usual jobs e.g. CFO, CTO, Head of PR etc.
- Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enrol students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTC member Shangri-La Hotels).
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Introduction

In 2012, Travel & Tourism directly employed 101 million people around the world. As the industry, which already accounts for 9% of global GDP continues to grow – latest estimates put that growth at 4.4% per annum over the next ten years – it will require more people to fill the new jobs created by this growth. WTTC estimates that Travel & Tourism will directly generate 24 million new jobs globally by 2023.

These new jobs will require a varied skillset across many different geographies, however there is a pressing concern within Travel & Tourism companies that the industry is missing out on recruiting the best new talent amongst top business graduates due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in the industry.

This is something WTTC member companies have already acknowledged; a 2011 survey undertaken by WTTC of its membership shows that recruitment from outside the sector, retention of staff and a disconnect between industry and academia are two of their most problematic Human Resources challenges.

In order to address these challenges, the WTTC Human Capital Working Group was formed, and commissioned further research to:

• understand the extent and nature of perceptions of Travel & Tourism among non-Travel & Tourism undergraduates
• comprehend the considerations taken when choosing a career
• map Travel & Tourism opportunities against their wider career aspirations
• provide recommendations on how future messaging regarding career opportunities in Travel & Tourism can best strike a positive chord with undergraduates

The findings which are illustrated and discussed in this report are intended to form the basis of new initiatives driven by WTTC and its Human Capital Working Group to improve the image of the Travel & Tourism industry among undergraduates. WTTC is grateful to Qunar for sponsoring the fieldwork in China.

GENERATION Y TRENDS

Generation Y has been defined as a generation in a hurry; rushing to get on in their careers, to experience new things, and to live life to the full. Being ‘digital natives’, those from Generation Y live and breathe technology from the moment they wake up to when they go to sleep. They are used to instant communication, feedback and gratification and in their world this immediacy is taken for granted.

Most know that a job for life is very rare and this doesn’t often factor into their career planning. The consultancy, FreshMinds, published a report in 2007 that shows that 41% of Generation Y expects to progress rapidly in their organisation and 38% of Generation Y define themselves by their success at work. The definition of ‘success’ however is remarkably different from that of previous generations as it includes horizontal moves, engagement in special projects, business travel, as well as the more obvious ‘money and status’.

There is no doubt however that the global recession has affected Gen Y views of their careers in a number of ways. Research from Ashridge Business School in the UK into Gen Y graduates (2011) shows that due to the financial downturn, in the last year or two, many have taken any job, and are working in the right area but not their ideal job, or even are staying in a job they don’t like. However, such compromises are unlikely to last long as many as 57% of those surveyed by Ashridge intend to leave their job within 2 years and 40% one year.

Furthermore Generation Y employees want more at work: gym membership and sabbaticals are important as well as flexible working, short-term commitment, consultation, and to have their value recognized.

Equally important – yet at the opposite end of the spectrum – Generation Y are also starting to consider careers outside traditional, corporate structures. A new generation of job search websites has emerged to help talented people of any age to escape from unfulfilling corporate jobs (see for example, Escape the City).

Chinese Generation Y undergraduates demonstrated a very realistic outlook in the focus group. While ambition and a desire to earn a good salary, to travel and climb up the career ladder was certainly noted, they greatly appreciated the current economic and competitive environment and were less confident in their ability to achieve their dream job. They also placed great value on graduate training schemes.

This research showcases opinions of undergraduates from the ‘Generation Y’ or ‘Millennial’ generation. These terms, used interchangeably, refer to those students born between 1980 and 1995 who have grown up with digital technology, a culture of immediacy and an understanding, at least amongst top business graduates, that a job may not be for life.
The Research: Understanding expectations and perceptions

WTTC undertook a survey of undergraduates in business, marketing and management-type studies in the UK, USA and China between October 2012 and January 2013. A total of 2,524 students responded. The survey explored motivating factors for career choice and perceptions of Travel & Tourism in relation to these factors. It also explored respondents’ understanding of the different opportunities available in Travel & Tourism and their knowledge of the sector. In-depth interviews with four members of the WTTC Human Capital Working Group followed this research in order to understand whether the student view was confirmed by those in the industry who have experience of recruiting and working with graduates.

Important factors influencing career choices

Travel & Tourism is viewed as a reasonably attractive industry, yet one that in career opportunity terms, is still poorly understood. Scarcity information and even some misconceptions still exist about skills, roles, career opportunities and working conditions in the industry.

International opportunities, work-life balance and a chance to speak languages are what appeal most to undergraduates about the Travel & Tourism industry. However, respondents feel that other factors such as job security, competitive starting salary and career progression are more critically important overall when deciding about the attractiveness of a sector and a career choice.

Table showing mean scores of 4.35 on importance of different factors influencing undergraduates’ career choice in Travel & Tourism:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Career &amp; salary progression</th>
<th>Job security</th>
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The personality of someone who sees naturally attracted to the sector sees success defined by factors such as work-life balance, international opportunities, travel and good benefits. Promoting careers in the sector on the basis of this definition of success will attract a variety of candidates that buy into the message. For those who are driven by a more traditional approach to career and are attracted to messages promoting financial returns or achieving senior leadership positions, Travel & Tourism performs less well.

The focus on salary, career progression and work-life balance was confirmed by WTTC Working Group interviewees who commented:

“Candidates are very switched on to compensation levels, particularly graduates. Because of the costs of [university] fees in the UK, students are much more assiduous.”

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#2 – WORK IS SOMETHING YOU DO, NOT SOMEWHERE YOU GO

Technology makes the workplace redundant. For Generation Y, work is something you do, not somewhere you go. Those from Generation Y believe that you can work any place any time and that bosses should be judging outcomes not physical presence. This concept certainly applies to most countries, but less so in China where home and/ or remote working are still foreign concepts to businesses. A consequence of technology is also freedom in the way this generation likes to carry out work. Older generation’s managers often favour a more blended balance of freedom and control, and do not always appreciate how important independence is to their younger employees.

#3 – CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ETHICS AND VALUES

Although rather self-orientated, Generation Y has grown with a greater awareness of global environmental, social and economic issues and company values. This goes hand in hand – it is argued – with the way in which they use technology to make people aware of on-going issues and are able to raise the awareness of millions in a few clicks, through Twitter, YouTube and similar social networks. For Generation Y, work is something you do, not somewhere you go. They want to work for a company that benefits others and are likely to enquire about their future employer’s credentials right up front.

Environmental and social concerns are growing amongst Chinese Generation Y, particularly those who have studied or worked in Western countries, and they are likely to grow in importance for Chinese businesses and society at large over the coming years.

TREND #4 – WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Many youths today believe that a dream job comprises of at least one or more of the following aspects: the job works with their lifestyle, they can be themselves, their co-workers have the potential to become friends and their workplace is social and fun. This group is keen to protect their interests, hobbies and personal space, yet will accept working any hours required to finish a project or task that they have responsibility for. This might mean for example working remotely through digital technology or working during unusual hours if that enables them to pursue their favourite activity all the same. Autonomy and ownership are important factors to many in Gen Y, particularly in the United States and can considerably impact their perception of a positive work-environment, as shown later in this report.

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We are asked about career progression all the time during interview.’

‘Lots of candidates ask about company values.’

‘The difference between Asia and Europe is strong. Asia works harder and longer hours, but it is more of a highlight in China. The country is moving at such a fast pace that it does impact the balance. In Europe, people are less inclined to work the high hours without the benefits.’

Today’s graduates leave university with significant debts accrued from years of paying tuition and living expenses. Graduates need to find jobs that will help them pay these loans off quickly – an additional challenge in an industry that is perceived for paying low average wages.

Cross-cultural differences of the important factors for a career

The ‘prestige’ of a brand or industry appears to be more important to the Chinese undergraduates than those in the US or UK.

UK respondents appear to be less influenced by company values and corporate responsibility than the other two nations. They are significantly less likely to say that CSR is ‘very important’ than those in the US and China. There may be arguments to likely say that CSR is ‘very important’ than those in the other two nations. The sampling took place however, travel is a relatively new activity for the fast growing middle classes and as such a greater desire to maximise the opportunity is conceivable.

Good benefits packages matter a lot to Chinese and USA students, although it has been commented that they are becoming increasingly more important in the UK as well. In the USA there are few state-offered structures for health and retirement care, and as in China, employees rely on their companies to provide health and medical cover. In China, one WTTC Working Group member says ‘It is extremely competitive. People will move roles at the drop of hat for an increase of salary’. Another comments ‘In China, any extra benefits one can offer goes very well. It’s a competitive advantage.’ In Japan, things are different still: ‘In Japan we are known to work very hard in comparison to other Asian countries. The balance is not considered as much. It’s about contributing to your company which is seen as your family. In Singapore both husband and wife work and family time is important, the balance is treasurable.’

When questioned about fulfilment at work, however, it is interesting to notice how access to training and development is a very important component across all regions. In addition to the other benefits being offered to graduates, Travel & Tourism will be compared against other industry sectors in terms of how companies commit to staff training.

In respect to the ‘sense of value from contribution’ is relatively high in all countries USA, UK and China countries (3rd, 5th and 6th position respectively). The need for autonomy and individual responsibility is not as high, suggesting perhaps that young generations are putting greater value on team based projects and opportunities, which also links in with the desire to get along well with colleagues (and bosses).

One further interesting aspect relates to the responses to ‘Career company strategic direction and your contribution to it’ - rated either 8th or 9th in all three countries. Here, the link between the all-important job-security and a company strategic clarity is not made. This may well be due to undergraduates’ lack of experience or their belief that in this global world however good a company, it will not be able to influence and/or withstand the impact of the wider economic context.

General career expectations, attitude and choices

Early questions in the survey aimed at understanding and confirming the aspirations driving the younger generations of graduates. What emerged was a realistic and risk-averse approach to employment, which is consistent with both the desk literature and the Chinese focus group specifically undertaken for the survey. Across all regions:

• Career and salary progression are scored as top factors in making a career choice attractive.

• Job security is ranked in the top-3 factors.

• Work-life balance is ranked in the top-4 factors.

One of the WTTC Working Group members confirms this by saying: ‘We place a very strong emphasis on CSR and company values; they are a core part of our business. Certainly in Asia we have a strong reputation.’

Further:

• Receiving a good benefits-package is ranked in the top-5 factors by USA and Chinese respondents.

• A competitive starting salary is far more important for UK respondents.

• Corporate Social Responsibility and company values are much higher on the American and Chinese undergraduates’ agenda than on the British agenda.

This data is confirmed also by WTTC Working Group members elsewhere: ‘Lifelong employment with company is important (in Japan). Hierarchy plays a large role. Job security is a major part, while starting salary is less so as it is prestige which encourages those into companies.’

Across the board good relationships with bosses and colleagues and clear career progression opportunities top the agenda in regards to factors that influence fulfilment at work. Of the three, career progression is the factor that companies are likely to have most influence at the recruitment stage.

A good salary (but remarkably) more so in UK and USA, ability to contribute, autonomy and add-

| TABLE 1: Q6 | In order to be fulfilled at work, how important do you think are the following factors... |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Good r’ship with boss/manager | USA 1 | UK 3 | China 3 |
| Good r’ship with colleagues | USA 1 | UK 1 | China 1 |
| Sense of value from contribution | USA 2 | UK 5 | China 6 |
| Good salary | USA 3 | UK 2 | China 7 |
| Clear career progression | USA 4 | UK 4 | China 2 |
| Excellent training/development | USA 5 | UK 6 | China 4 |
| Strength of company’s leadership | USA 6 | UK 7 | China 5 |
| Individual autonomy | USA 7 | UK 10 | China 9 |
| Clear company strategic direction | USA 8 | UK 8 | China 8 |
| Variety of experiences | USA 9 | UK 9 | China 13 |
| Dynamic work environment | USA 10 | UK 9 | China 6 |

Base: 2534
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Finding a job

This report has already discussed what undergraduates are looking for when searching for a job. Overall, Travel & Tourism emerges relatively strongly as an industry when compared with a selection of nine others. In terms of the industry sectors with the most or least preferred jobs, the picture emerging is one in which:

- Government and Public administration jobs are still sought after – young graduates may (rightly or wrongly) still perceive them as secure jobs.
- In the USA the high value scored by Charity & Non-profit aligns with the belief that CSR and company values as well as personal contribution are very important (and possibly provide a less hectic environment and greater work life balance?).
- Marketing, Advertising and PR score highly overall, which is in principle good news for the Travel & Tourism sector as respondents also believe (see earlier on in this report) that Travel & Tourism offer many opportunities for those looking to pursue marketing & sales pathways.
- The recent banking crisis does not seem to have deterred British respondents from choosing banking and finance as the preferred sector. A somewhat different picture emerges from the USA where banking only comes eighth out of the ten sectors listed. For some WTTC member companies, however, the decline of the banking sector has meant a greater variety of applicants applying for jobs in their companies. One WTTC member commented: ‘In London there has been more variety in the job applications and where the candidates come from as a consequence of [loss of] job security (in traditional sectors such as banking).’

Difference between an attractive career choice and a career in Travel & Tourism

The results of this survey also show that there is gap in the awareness of the type and importance of skills that are perceived to be required in highly desirable jobs and those generally sought after in Travel & Tourism.

Undergraduates who are not interested in the industry demonstrate a lack of information as well as misunderstanding and misjudgment about it. Common justifications to the lack of interest include the fact that ‘the sector is for the low skilled’, ‘I would be wasting my talent’, ‘the sector is not challenging enough’ and even ‘my parents would not agree to me working in the sector’. It appears that Travel & Tourism therefore still faces challenges around its image and perception with many young people thinking of it as low profile and low skilled. One of Human Capital Working Group member adds to this point: ‘We go […] to those countries with strong travel promotion such as Thailand and Singapore to draw in those students who understand the value of the Travel & Tourism industry.’

TABLE 2: Q9 Please have a look at the list of industry sectors below and think about which you would like to work in when you graduate. Please rank your preference from 1 (most preferred) to 10 (least preferred)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing, Advertising, PR</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>5.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government &amp; Public Administration</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Investment, Insurance</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media &amp; Publishing</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity &amp; Non-profit</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail &amp; Sales</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT &amp; Information Services</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Manufacturing</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Construction</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>6.99</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 2524
**Technology & Innovation**

base = 2,524

no opportunities Base: USA = 1057, UK = 463, China = 1004

**Please rate how many opportunities T&T can provide in the following careers...**

4 = many opportunities, 3 = some, 2 = few, 1 = none

- Ability to use language skills
- Progression
- Provides intellectual challenge
- Job security
- Career/salary progression
- Competitive starting salary
- Good benefits package
- Company values and CSR
- Prestige of industry
- Prestige of company/brand
- Potential to earn bonuses
- Strong diversity policy
- International opportunities
- Work-life balance
- Competitiveness of starting salary
- Career opportunities in travel & tourism
- Difference between perceived attractive career choice and careers in T&T

**Difference between perceived attractive career choice and careers in T&T**

**Q12 - All**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q2 - All</th>
<th>Q11 - T&amp;T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career/salary progression</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive starting salary</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides intellectual challenge</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good benefits package</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company values and CSR</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of company/brand</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to earn bonuses</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong diversity policy</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use language skills</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Differences in mean score between responses at Q2 “How important do you believe are the following in making a career choice?” also has a high number of “I don’t know” and Q11 “How attractive do you feel T&T is as a career choice based on the following areas...”

**Career Opportunities within Travel & Tourism**

When asked about the types of job roles and career pathways within the industry, yet again, respondents are only able to identify some very loose job titles (‘travel’, ‘guide’, ‘management’) are quoted as job roles and in terms of career pathway opportunities, the communications and marketing roles are thought to offer the most opportunities, while worryingly, IT, finance and innovation are seen to be pathways offering far fewer opportunities.

The WTTC Human Capital Working Group Members interviewed provided more relevant comments about careers in the industry:

“Typically they stumble upon it. In my experience they are either grown up in the industry or they were studying something else and were doing a part time job and they have enjoyed this angle and pursued it. Travel & Tourism is not seen as a profession. It’s not a natural instinct to choose it early on. We could do a better job in the industry to promote that it is a profession and career.”

“The sector struggles somewhat. Perception is slowly changing. All those hired are brand ambassadors for the industry. Those who started outside of the industry once joined say how brilliant it is and didn’t know. We don’t do enough. We are challenged because people don’t understand what the possibilities are.”

**Travel & Tourism as a career choice**

The ‘attractiveness’ of the Travel & Tourism industry has been already discussed above. Table 3 overleaf provides a full overview or results with regional differences. It is also interesting to notice that – although not reported here – Question 11 (how attractive do you feel Travel & Tourism is as a career choice) also has a high number of ‘I don’t know’ replies compared to previous questions, which may well suggest a need for further and continuous education about the sector.

---

**TABLE 3: Q11 How attractive do you feel Travel & Tourism is as a career choice based on the following areas? (1 = not at all attractive, 5 = very attractive)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total T&amp;T</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International opportunities</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good benefits package</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential to earn bonuses</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong diversity policy</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use my languages</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company values &amp; corporate responsibility</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and salary progression</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the companies/brand</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige of the industry</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an intellectual challenge</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive starting salary</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of subsectors within Travel & Tourism, as discussed above, airlines, cruising, the public sector tourism boards and cultural sectors are the most popular. Despite not asking why these beliefs are held, we can hypothesize possibilities for why this may hold true:

- These sub-sectors provide jobs that are easier for non-Travel & Tourism graduates to visualise career paths in
- These sectors may be perceived as offering more secure jobs and better benefit packages
- The cultural heritage sector (particularly important to US respondents) might be linked with not for profit (also highly rated by US respondents).
TABLE 4: Q11 The following sectors make up the Travel & Tourism industry. How attractive do you feel employment opportunities are in the following sectors? (1 = not at all attractive, 5 = very attractive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airlines</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism organisations (i.e. public sector, tourism boards)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and heritage sector (museums, heritage sites and galleries)</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruising</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour-operating and destination management companies</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online travel agencies (i.e. Expedia)</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel agencies</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant and catering</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground transportation (coaches, ferries, trains, car rentals)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason why other sub-sectors may be perceived as less attractive remains somewhat puzzling and can be perhaps explained by the lack of information as well as misunderstanding about the sector. This conclusion is plausible when one also accounts for the fact that respondents are later unable to provide an answer to the top three jobs in Travel & Tourism that would appeal to them in a specific way, identifying ‘travel’, ‘management’ and ‘guide’ as their top three jobs of choice.

Travel & Tourism is an industry where undergraduates will consider working in future, but there are clearly areas where work needs to continue to highlight the vast range of career possibilities for graduates.

The Way Forward:
Increasing awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism

This research was undertaken by the WTTC at the request of its Human Capital Group to address a pressing concern within the industry that companies are missing out on the best new talent due to negative perceptions of the career opportunities available in Travel & Tourism. It has provided some interesting insights into the life and career aspirations of the young generations as well as their perception of Travel & Tourism.

Young people are conscious of the difficult context in which they find themselves as employment-seekers. They are not naive overall but cautious and relatively realistic in their approach, while still hoping to pursue their dream jobs one day. Those responding from China, are also clear their belief that their parents’ generations worked far too hard for what they perceive to have been a modest outcome; they are therefore keen on maintaining a better work-life balance and wish to secure their future through good benefits packages.

Travel & Tourism is a potentially interesting industry to many of these young people. There appears to be a particular personality for whom success is driven by international opportunities, development and work-life balance that is more drawn to the industry than those who place a higher value on financial rewards. This is an important point when it comes to recruitment campaigns and how the industry may attract or put off graduates from different backgrounds.

Travel & Tourism holds up well against many other industry sectors that business undergraduates are considering careers in. A decade of effort in educating public sector, governments and the public in general about the economic contribution of the industry, the growth experienced by the industry overall versus other more traditional areas and possibly the influence of some mega events such as the London and Beijing Olympics have clearly contributed to raising its profile. This effort should be praised and continued in the longer term.

Nevertheless some challenges remain when it comes to the understanding of the industry and its subsectors, as well as its profile and awareness of what a career in Travel & Tourism may offer. There is no doubt that diversity is the key to success and innovation and effectiveness in teams is known to be driven by innovation. The industry is doing well in trying to diversify the background of its talent but a clear understanding of where the biggest gaps are is required. Promoting the value of a career in Travel & Tourism is something that the entire industry should collaborate on in order to be placed more firmly in the minds of graduates as a potential career choice.
The research brings about some potential initiatives for consideration and review:

**Identifying critical skills needed in Travel & Tourism**

- The Travel & Tourism industry has a need to identify and map out the critical skills and values of graduates required by the companies within it. Recruiting graduates on the basis of these skills will be a better way of identifying the best potential talent for the industry.

**Building awareness and visibility of careers in Travel & Tourism**

- Increase information, clarity and visibility of Travel & Tourism best salaries. but to look foremost at companies that pay the huge debts, the best graduates have no option tries. In an age where university costs can leave those within business / economics related faculties, and are unlikely to provide information about the industry unless a Travel & Tourism programme is offered within the institutions they belong to. The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

- Alumni associations can also provide a fertile ground for educating and promoting the sector, especially when alumni originally did not graduate from a Travel & Tourism course. Alumni-students mentoring programmes as well as more general mentoring programmes in schools and universities can help in spreading a positive message and showcase aspirational role models from the sectors.

- Industry leaders should be showcased more frequently and should engage with academic institutions to ensure young people are inspired and motivated by the professionalism and leadership of such individuals. Role models should also involve the less usual jobs e.g. CFO, CTO, Head of PR etc.

- Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enroll students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTTC member Shangri-La Hotels)

**Addressing industry competitiveness issues**

- Salary and benefit benchmarks for job roles could be developed to work across industries rather than within Travel & Tourism. Industry salary and benefit benchmarks are commonly held within the industry but less is available to compare Travel & Tourism against other industries.

- The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

**Increased engagement with education establishments**

- Greater engagement with career offices in academia should be encouraged and planned in order to provide advice on the types of careers and career pathways available within Travel & Tourism. Career offices are generalist by nature and are unlikely to provide information about the industry unless a Travel & Tourism programme is offered within the institutions they belong to. The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

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- Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enroll students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTTC member Shangri-La Hotels)

**Scope and Methodology of Research**

- The research has focussed on non Travel & Tourism undergraduates, with an emphasis on those within business / economics related faculties.

- The research has been global in approach, with the participation in additional interviews that contributed to this research:

- Salary and benefit benchmarks for job roles could be developed to work across industries rather than within Travel & Tourism. Industry salary and benefit benchmarks are commonly held within the industry but less is available to compare Travel & Tourism against other industries.

- The role of career centres in educating students about industry opportunities remains important to students and must be seen as an on-going priority.

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- Partnerships should be established with schools and universities with a view to enroll students onto placements, internships but also ‘discovery programmes’ (such as those run by WTTTC member Shangri-La Hotels)

**WTTC would like to thank the following member companies for their time and insight in participation in additional interviews that contributed to this research:**

- Shangri-la
- JTB
- Wyndham Worldwide
- Qunar