



Science of Talent Attraction

How Top Performers Search for Jobs



Nearly everyone is actively looking for jobs, including top performers

We've all heard stories about how top performers drive a disproportionate amount of impact in the workplace. One study finds 10% of productivity comes from the top 1%, and 26% of output derives from the top 5%—that's 4X (or 400%) more than the average worker.¹ There's no question this level of impact can be transformational to your business.

But who are these candidates and how do they search for jobs? To find out, we surveyed 1,000 hiring managers and 1,000 job seekers in the United States about the most critical attributes associated with top performance and how people with these attributes find opportunity.

We learned:



Problem solving, communication, self-direction and drive are the most important attributes associated with top performance.²

90%

of top performers say they search for job opportunities at least a few times a year.³

92%

of top performers hired within the past year took an action to find a job within the 6 months prior to being hired.⁴



These insights confirm the majority of the workforce still actively pursues jobs, suggesting no one is 'passive' about their career anymore. What's more, top performers — who in the past may have been assumed to be 'passive' candidates — are equally active in their job search.

Talent acquisition teams that embrace these trends will be better equipped to attract transformational talent to their organizations.”

Tara M. Sinclair, PhD
Chief Economist, Indeed

¹The best and the rest: revisiting the norm of normality of individual performance, Personnel Psychology, 2012

²Indeed survey, n=1,000

³Indeed survey, n=599

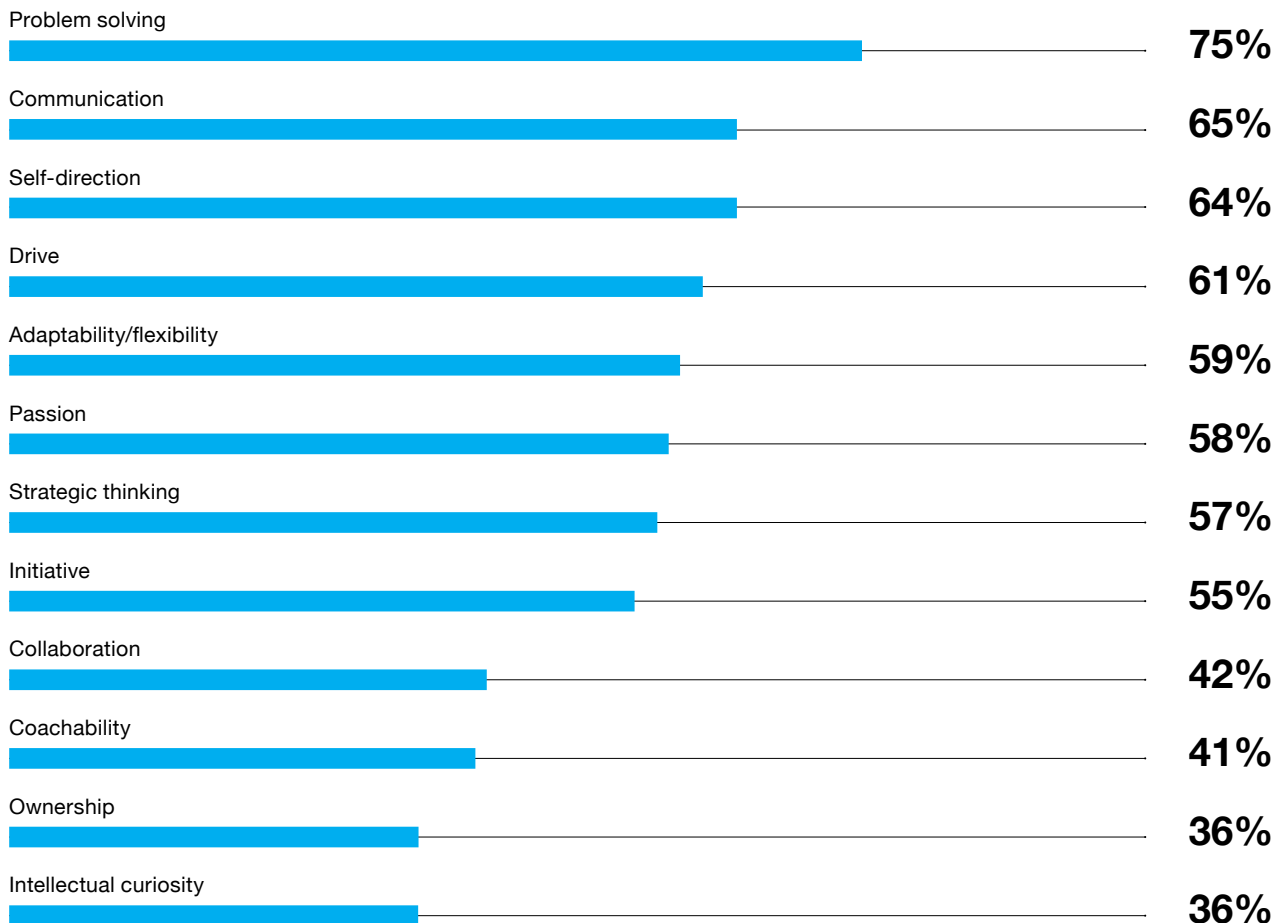
⁴Indeed survey, n=199

We identified 5 leading attributes of top performers

“Top performance” can be defined differently by different people. In the most generic sense, based on our research, top performers have well-rounded personalities. They are quick learners, personable, helpful and efficient in their day-to-day work. But they also go beyond what is required of them, work well with others and communicate effectively. They listen to others, are open to feedback and criticism and have a strong desire to learn.

For the purposes of this study, we conducted intensive one-on-one interviews with hiring managers about the people on their teams, asking them to identify the top performers and the attributes most associated with them. To identify the value of these attributes at scale, we surveyed 1,000 more hiring professionals in the U.S. to pinpoint the most important attributes that indicate top performance.

Thinking about top performers you currently work with or have worked with in the past, what qualities or attributes did those top performers exemplify?⁵

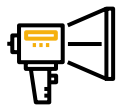


⁵Indeed survey, n=1,000



Problem solving

Ability to define a problem and then determine and implement a solution



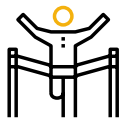
Communication

Effectively conveys ideas to others



Self-direction

Self-starter, someone who initiates new assignments and challenges



Drive

Desire to succeed, goes above and beyond what is asked of them



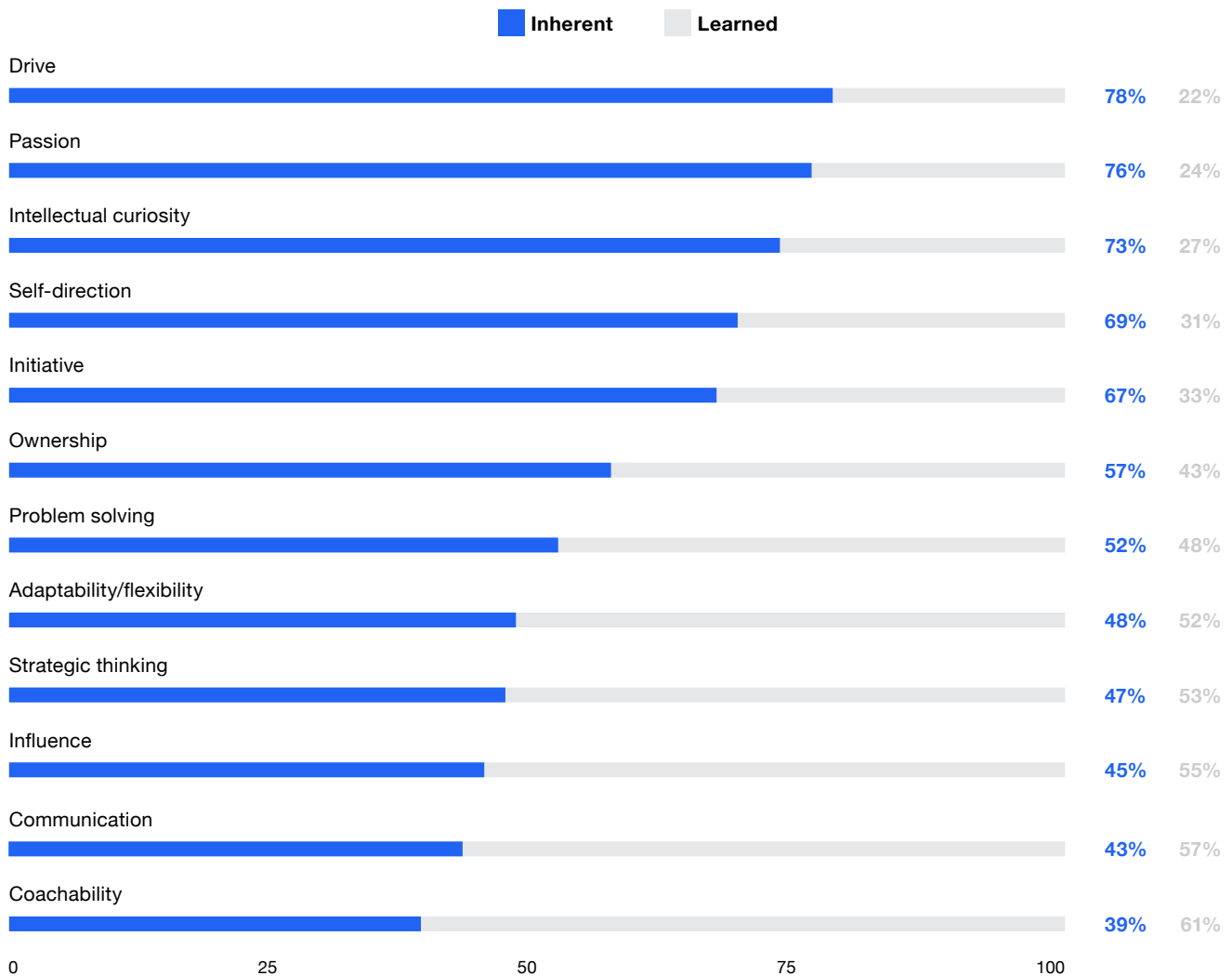
Adaptability/flexibility

The ability to be flexible in a changing environment, take on new tasks

Hiring managers believe some of these traits are innate and others have to be learned

Employers surveyed are more likely to believe drive, self-direction and initiative are innate traits identified in top performers, while problem solving and strategic thinking are more likely to be gained through experience.

Which of these qualities or attributes do you think are inherent and which ones are learned on the job or through experience?⁶



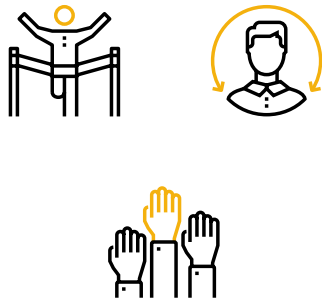
⁶Indeed survey, n=1,000

What makes this combination of attributes transformational in the workplace

Drive, self-direction and initiative are attributes that would suggest an employee possesses the innate ability to take action, such as with a project at work or to actively engage in a job search.

Problem solving and strategic thinking are complementary learned attributes. These would indicate an individual has successfully gained experience in these areas and applied them effectively on the job.

Drive, self-direction and initiative



Indicate **effort** and an innate bias toward **action**

Problem solving and strategic thinking

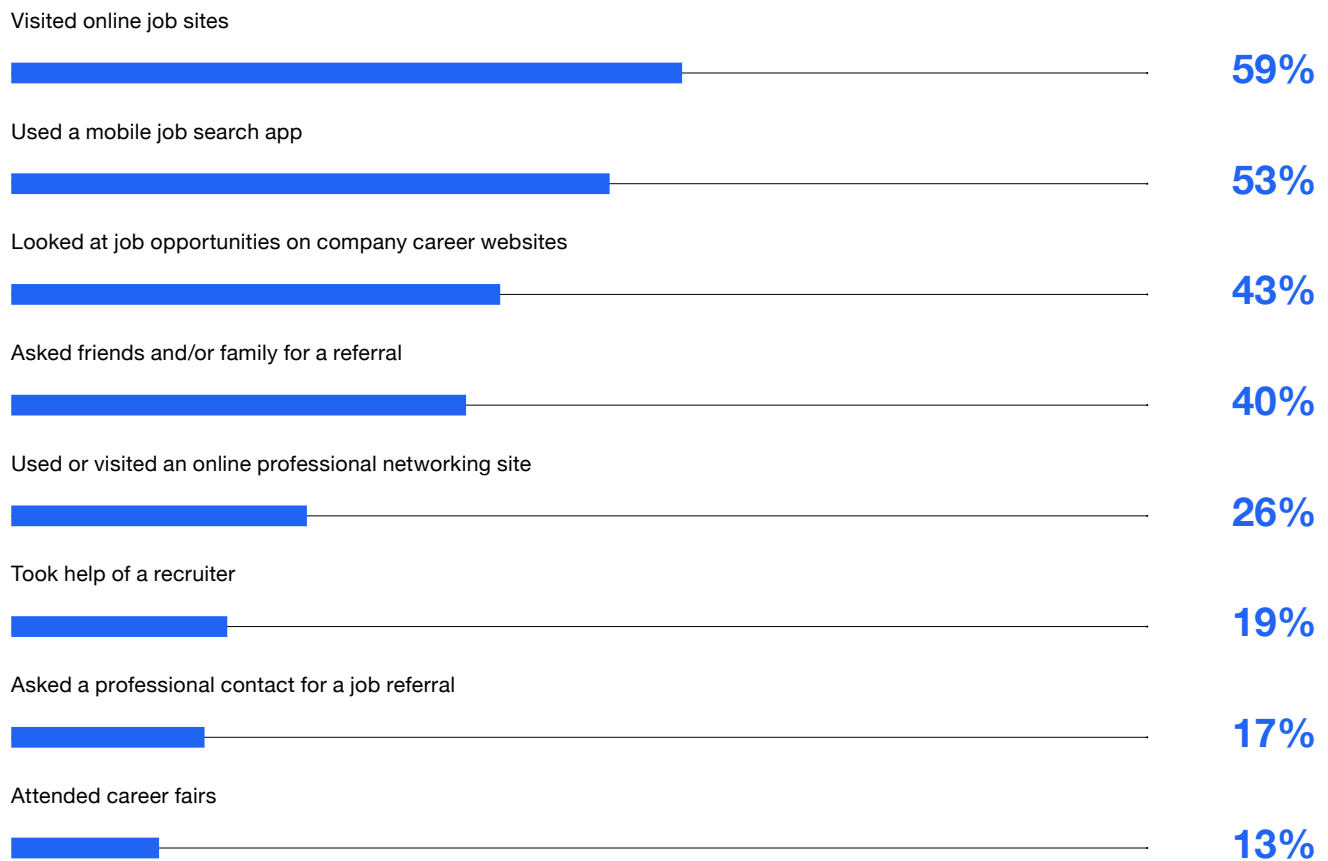


Indicate **experience** and the capability to learn how to do things effectively

Visiting an online job site is the #1 job search activity for top performers hired

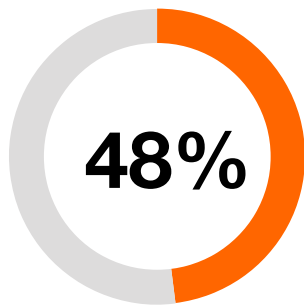
92% of top performers hired within the past year took an action to find a job within the 6 months prior. The majority of them used online job sites to find opportunity.⁷

Prior to being hired at your current job, which actions did you take to look for job opportunities?⁸

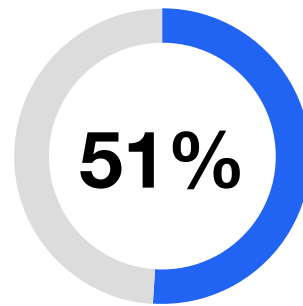


⁷⁻⁸Indeed survey, n=199

Top performers are more confident in the jobs they find themselves, rather than jobs presented by a recruiter



say they'd feel more confident a job is the right fit for them when they pick the company and apply rather than being contacted by an external party for the position.⁹



say they would be more successful in a job they found and got on their own versus a job which they got through an external party (friend, recruiter, etc).¹⁰



⁹Indeed survey, n=471

¹⁰Indeed survey, n=442

Aside from pay and benefits, most top performers choose a job based on work/life balance and location

Other than competitive pay and health benefits, which of the following would most attract you to a new job?¹¹



Variety of benefits



Flexible hours



Good location



Good fit for my family



Ability to work remotely



¹¹Indeed survey, n=599

Top performers are more likely than others to choose a new job based on company reputation and more meaningful work

They are more likely to be attracted by:¹²

+60%

Company mission/vision of the organization

+40%

Company has a good reputation

+25%

Meaningful work

+17%

Work and/or team environment

And they're **9%** less likely to be attracted to a new job for better compensation.

Three ways to attract more transformational talent

Optimize inbound sources to reach more quality candidates

Our research shows more people are using inbound channels to search for jobs and get hired, including top performers. To find more people with top performer attributes, optimize the recruitment channels they use most to search for jobs: online job sites, email notifications and mobile.

Use your employer brand to appeal to top performers

Top talent are more likely than others to accept a new job for the mission, vision or reputation of a company, meaningful work and a positive work environment. If these leading motivators align with your employer brand, integrate them into your job content, career site and recruiting process.

Make it easy for top talent to apply to your jobs

Many companies work hard to inspire talented applicants, only to turn them off during the application process. To avoid eliminating potentially transformational candidates early in the recruiting process, ensure your application process is simple and mobile-friendly.

Research methodology

Indeed conducted a comprehensive talent study in the United States December 4-7 2018, among 1,000 adults ages 18 and older, using the Decipher survey platform owned by FocusVision.

In addition, Indeed conducted an online survey with a sample of 1,000 professionals responsible for recruiting, sourcing and screening candidates for vacant positions at their company from various industries across the United States. The survey was fielded using the Decipher survey platform owned by FocusVision December 4-10 2018.

Definitions of attributes

Below are the key attributes and definitions used throughout this study

Drive	Desire to succeed, goes above and beyond what is asked of them
Problem solving	Ability to define a problem and then determine and implement a solution
Initiative	Seeks out ways to contribute most, with a desire to lead
Self-direction	Self-starter, someone who embraces new assignments and challenges
Passion	Demonstrated enthusiasm or excitement for something.
Ownership	Takes responsibility for their work
Strategic thinking	Creative thinking, thinking outside of the box
Communication	Effectively conveys ideas to others
Adaptability/flexibility	Has the ability to be flexible in a changing environment, take on new tasks
Collaboration	Works effectively in groups and with others, open to feedback from others
Coachability	Takes feedback and constructive criticism and implements it
Intellectual curiosity	Seeks self-improvement in areas that impact the business





Your next hire is here

Indeed helps people all over the world hire and get hired. Over 250 million people each month search for jobs, post resumes and research companies on Indeed.¹³

Get started today at [indeed.com/hire](https://www.indeed.com/hire), contact us at 1-800-909-5939 and find more insights at [indeed.com/lead](https://www.indeed.com/lead).

¹³Google Analytics, Unique Visitors, September 2018