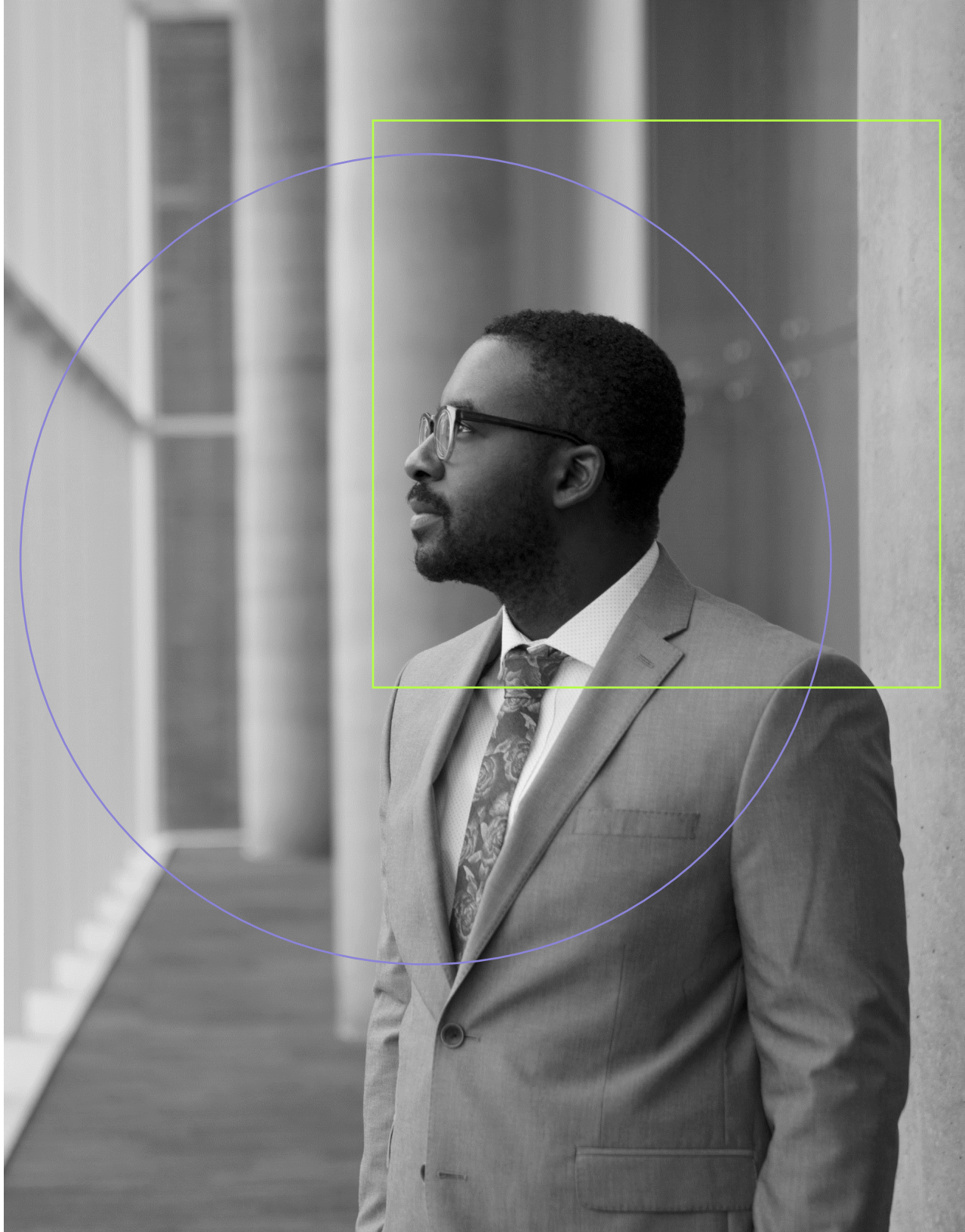
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Market Intelligence

Career Aspirations

mba.com Prospective Students Survey 2021

May 2021



Career Aspirations: mba.com Prospective Students Survey 2021 is a product of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), a global, mission-driven association of 223 leading graduate business schools. Founded in 1953, we are actively committed to advancing the art and science of admissions by convening and representing the industry and offering best-in-class products and services for schools and students. GMAC owns and administers the Graduate Management Admission Test™ (GMAT™) exam, used by more than 7,000 graduate programs worldwide. Other GMAC™ assessments include the NMAT by GMAC™ exam, for entrance into graduate management programs in India, South Africa, and the Philippines, and the Executive Assessment, specifically designed for Executive MBA programs around the world. The Council is based in the United States with offices in the United Kingdom, India, and China.

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Over 8,000 mba.com registrants worldwide responded to the mba.com Prospective Students Survey in 2020

Each month, the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) surveys a random sample of individuals who three months prior registered on mba.com—the GMAC™ website for prospective graduate business students. Their survey responses provide an inside look into the decision-making process of people currently considering applying to a graduate management education (GME) program. The findings detailed in this report are based on responses from a total of 8,430 individuals surveyed between January and December 2020, as well as responses from more than 144,000 individuals surveyed between the years 2009 and 2020.

Prospective students who responded represent those interested in various MBA and business master's program categories, including full-time MBA, professional MBA, executive MBA, master's in management and international management, and specialized business master's programs.

About the Data

The results of this survey do not necessarily reflect a statistically representative sample of the global prospective student population. Rather, the results reflect responses from prospective students who register on mba.com. Because of this limitation, the results of this research study should not be used to generalize about the global prospective student population, but rather the mba.com registrant population.

Explore and Filter the Data for Yourself

An Interactive Data Research Tool accompanies the mba.com Prospective Students Survey 2021. Available exclusively to school professionals at GMAT™ score-accepting institutions, the tool allows users to customize data searches by multiple survey response variables, such as candidate segment, citizenship/residence, gender, age, preferred program type, and more. Access it with your gmac.com login at:

www.gmac.com/prospectivestudents

Business School Participation in GMAC™ Research

GMAC Research offers graduate business schools' opportunities to gather data and generate insights about the business school pipeline.

Schools can sign up to participate in the GMAC Application Trends Survey and Corporate Recruiters Survey on our survey sign-up page:

www.gmac.com/surveysignup

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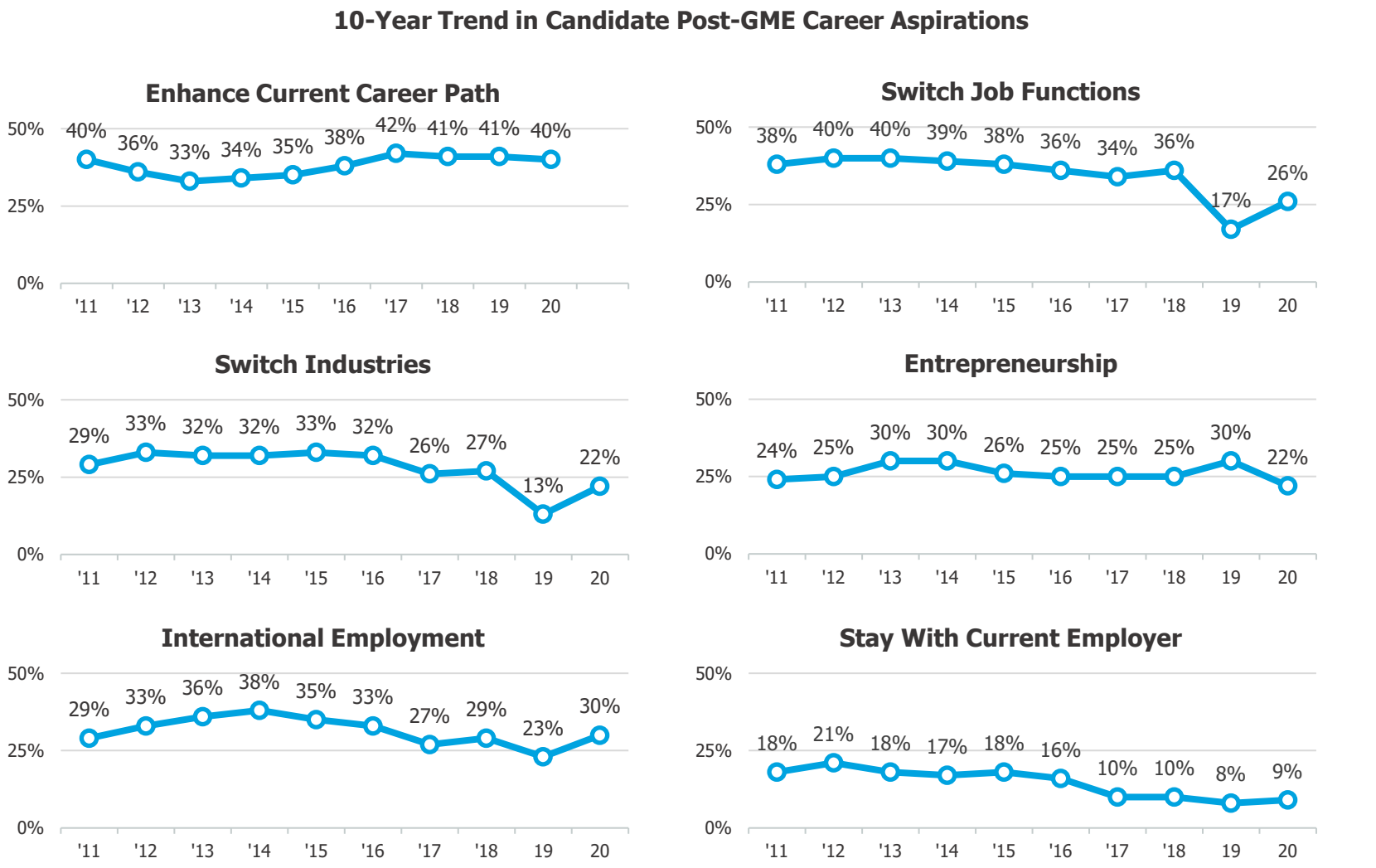
Career Aspirations

This section examines 10-year trends in candidate post-GME career aspirations and displays profiles for candidates with each of the following career aspirations:

- Enhance current career path
- Switch job functions
- Switch industries
- Entrepreneurship
- International employment
- Stay with current employer

The mix of GME candidates' career aspirations shift over time; More plan to stay on their current path than pivot



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Career Goals

This section examines candidate post-GME career goals by the following demographics:

- Gender
- Age
- World region of citizenship

Overall, earning a raise or salary increase are candidates' top career goals, followed by managing people and senior level position

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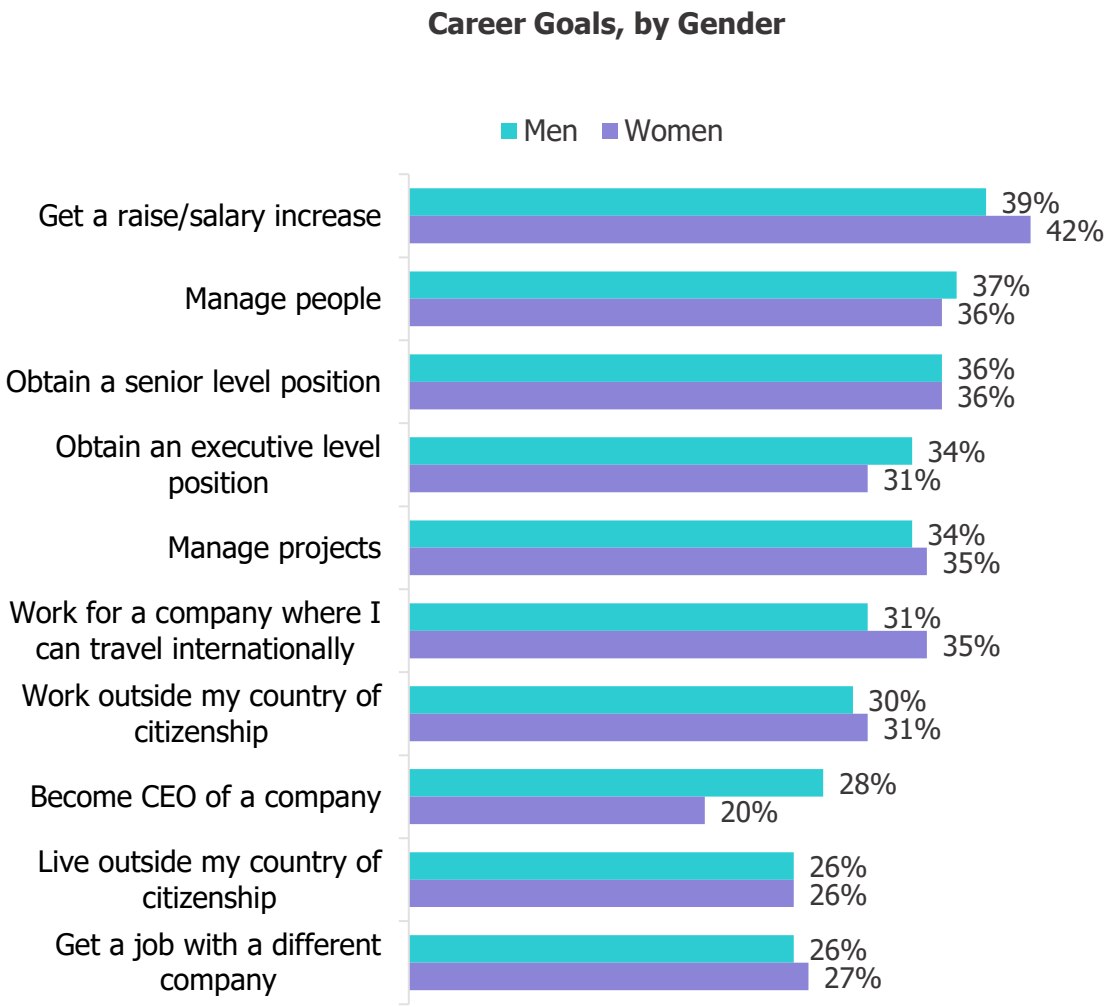
Men are more likely than women to aspire to c-suite positions; Women more likely to seek international travel



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By age, younger candidates more likely to seek international travel; Older candidates more likely to seek promotions

Career Goals, by Age

	Age*				
	22 and under	23 to 24	25 to 30	31 to 39	40 and older
Get a raise/salary increase	30%	39%	49%	42%	37%
Manage people	29%	38%	41%	37%	37%
Obtain a senior level position	30%	33%	39%	45%	32%
Manage projects	30%	37%	37%	34%	29%
Work for a company where I can travel internationally	33%	35%	33%	30%	27%
Obtain an executive level position	30%	30%	33%	37%	37%
Work outside my country of citizenship	28%	32%	31%	30%	22%
Become CEO of a company	26%	25%	23%	26%	23%
Get a job with a different company	10%	25%	36%	34%	26%
Change job functions/occupation	10%	24%	35%	34%	30%

*Column percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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Career goals vary by world region of citizenship; US candidates are the most likely to say a raise is a career goal

Career Goals, by World Region of Citizenship

	World Region of Citizenship*								
	Africa	Canada	Central & South Asia	East & SE Asia/PI	Eastern Europe	Latin America	Middle East	United States	Western Europe
Get a raise/salary increase	28%	47%	34%	78%	25%	42%	31%	52%	31%
Manage people	36%	42%	33%	74%	31%	38%	28%	43%	36%
Obtain a senior level position	35%	42%	37%	71%	28%	39%	34%	41%	27%
Manage projects	40%	37%	34%	55%	33%	34%	31%	37%	32%
Work for a company where I can travel internationally	42%	27%	41%	68%	32%	36%	32%	25%	39%
Obtain an executive level position	31%	38%	33%	63%	26%	37%	31%	36%	30%
Work outside my country of citizenship	44%	18%	42%	65%	43%	51%	38%	14%	34%
Become CEO of a company	34%	21%	31%	49%	27%	23%	30%	21%	25%
Get a job with a different company	24%	27%	18%	56%	19%	30%	20%	34%	21%
Change job functions/occupation	23%	29%	24%	56%	15%	26%	24%	34%	19%

*Column percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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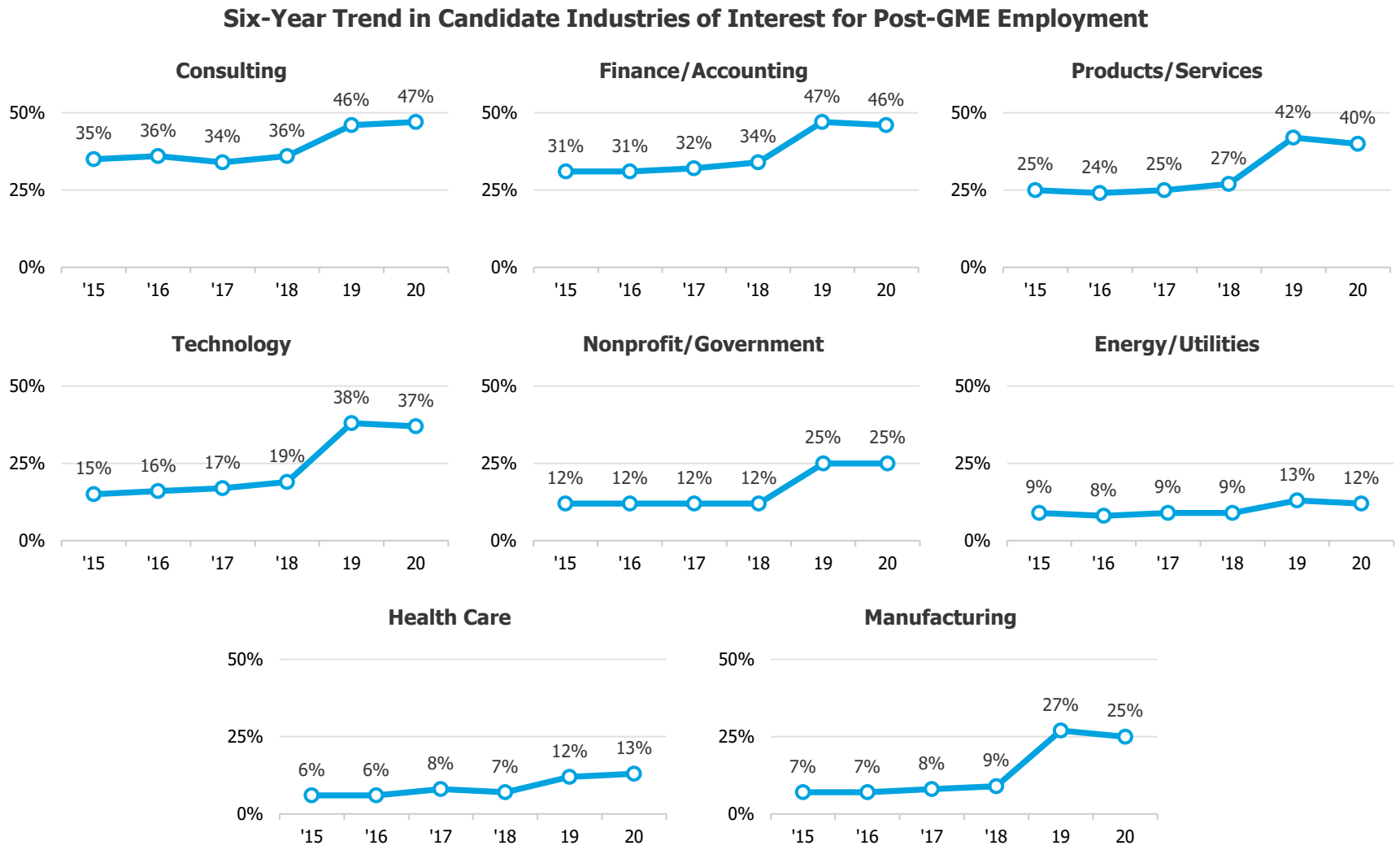
Industries of Interest

This section examines candidates' industries of interest for post-GME employment by the following demographics:

- Gender
- Age
- World region of citizenship

Industries of Interest

The majority of industries draw significant interest Post-GME Employment



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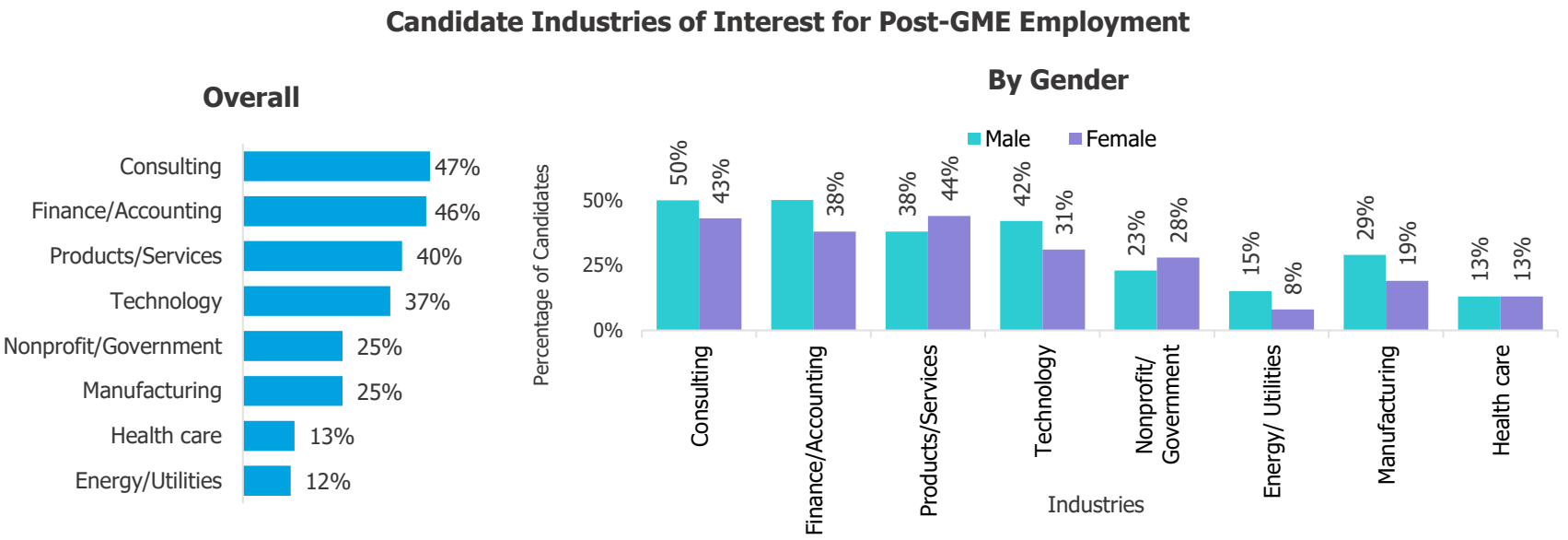
Candidate industries of interest vary by gender and age; Men more interested in consulting, Women in products/services



Age	Industries*							
	Consulting	Finance/ Accounting	Products/ Services	Technology	Nonprofit/ Government	Energy/ Utilities	Manufacturing	Health Care
22 and under	43%	55%	34%	27%	21%	7%	20%	9%
23 to 24	52%	49%	40%	38%	24%	8%	23%	12%
25 to 30	50%	45%	42%	42%	25%	13%	26%	14%
31 to 39	45%	37%	46%	44%	32%	19%	31%	17%
40 and older	40%	33%	49%	40%	35%	16%	30%	16%

*Row percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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Industries of interest vary by candidate world region of citizenship

Candidate Industries of Interest for Post-GME Employment, by World Region of Citizenship

World Region of Citizenship*	Industries							
	Consulting	Finance/ Accounting	Products/ Services	Technology	Nonprofit/ Government	Energy/ Utilities	Manufacturing	Health Care
Africa	49%	55%	53%	39%	43%	31%	38%	12%
Canada	43%	39%	41%	33%	31%	9%	24%	16%
Central and South Asia	57%	48%	51%	48%	29%	13%	29%	12%
East and Southeast Asia/PI	101%	100%	84%	69%	60%	22%	41%	19%
Eastern Europe	41%	48%	42%	34%	15%	10%	26%	13%
Latin America	51%	49%	46%	42%	24%	15%	26%	13%
Middle East	52%	39%	41%	38%	24%	15%	33%	11%
United States	42%	42%	35%	37%	24%	9%	22%	16%
Western Europe	48%	47%	35%	33%	21%	10%	23%	13%

*Row percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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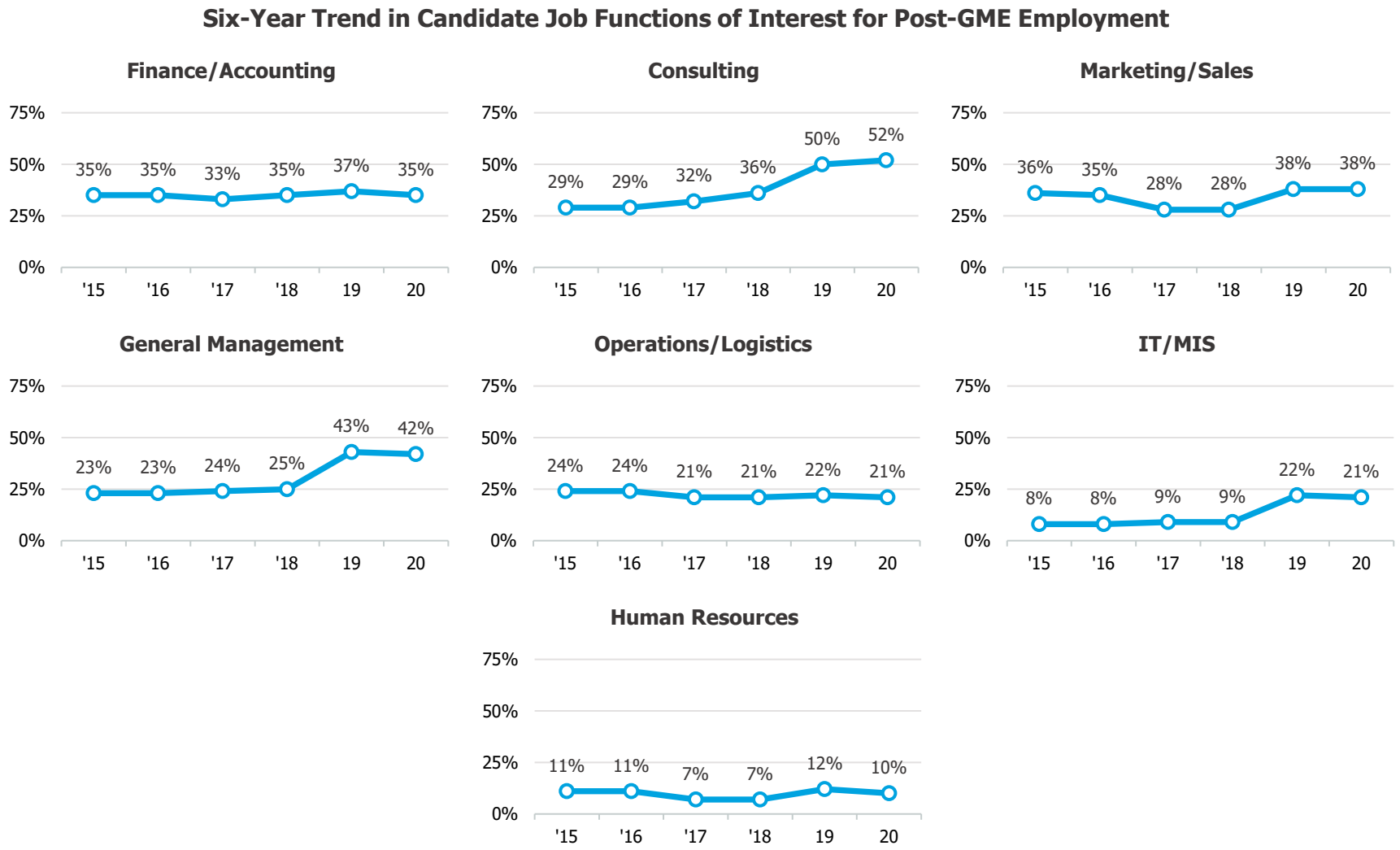
Job Functions of Interest

This section examines candidates' job functions of interest for post-GME employment by the following demographics:

- Gender
- Age
- World region of citizenship

Job Functions of Interest

Candidate interest in consulting roles on the rise; Interest in other job functions remain stable



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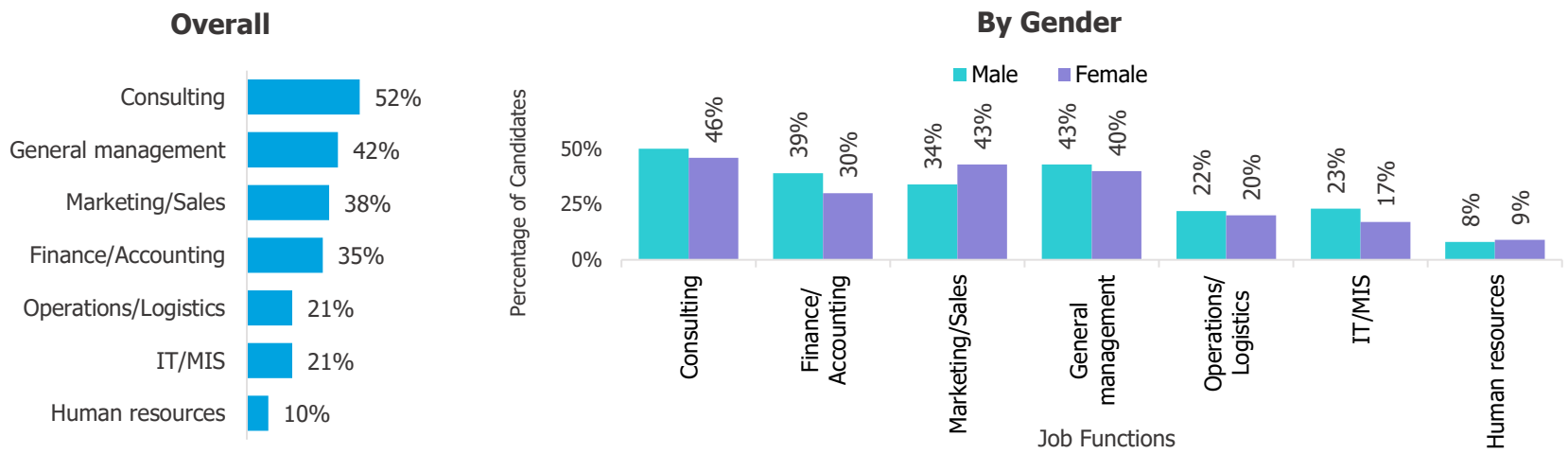
Job functions of interest vary by gender and age; Men more interested in operations, women in marketing

Candidate Job Functions of Interest for Post-GME Employment



Age*	Job Functions						
	Consulting	Finance/ Accounting	Marketing/ Sales	General management	Operations/ Logistics	IT/MIS	Human Resources
22 and under	50%	47%	37%	34%	15%	17%	12%
23 to 24	54%	38%	40%	38%	20%	22%	11%
25 to 30	55%	32%	38%	43%	23%	21%	8%
31 to 39	47%	25%	38%	53%	26%	23%	11%
40 and older	45%	20%	31%	57%	31%	24%	16%

*Row percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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Job functions of interest vary by candidate world region of citizenship

Candidate Job Functions of Interest for Post-GME Employment, by World Region of Citizenship

World Region of Citizenship*	Job Functions						
	Consulting	Finance/ Accounting	Marketing/ Sales	General management	Operations/ Logistics	IT/MIS	Human Resources
Africa	50%	40%	39%	53%	28%	23%	19%
Canada	50%	30%	39%	46%	27%	20%	12%
Central and South Asia	61%	35%	43%	50%	27%	28%	18%
East and Southeast Asia/PI	55%	33%	34%	45%	19%	22%	8%
Eastern Europe	45%	30%	34%	45%	12%	17%	12%
Latin America	55%	38%	37%	49%	21%	19%	8%
Middle East	55%	28%	43%	42%	17%	17%	12%
United States	46%	35%	31%	35%	24%	19%	8%
Western Europe	55%	36%	41%	41%	14%	16%	6%

*Row percentages do not sum to 100 percent due to multiple selections.

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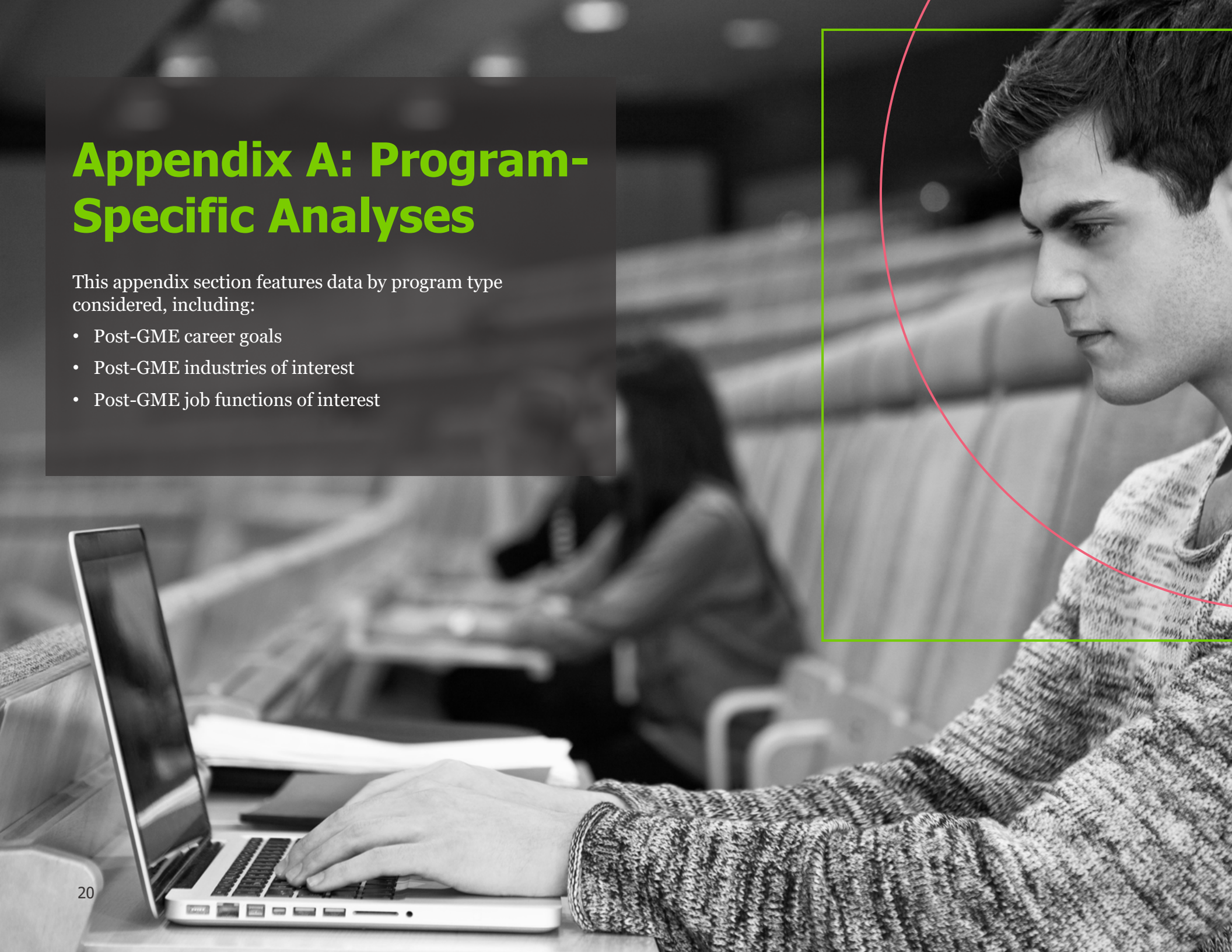
Appendix A: Program-Specific Analyses

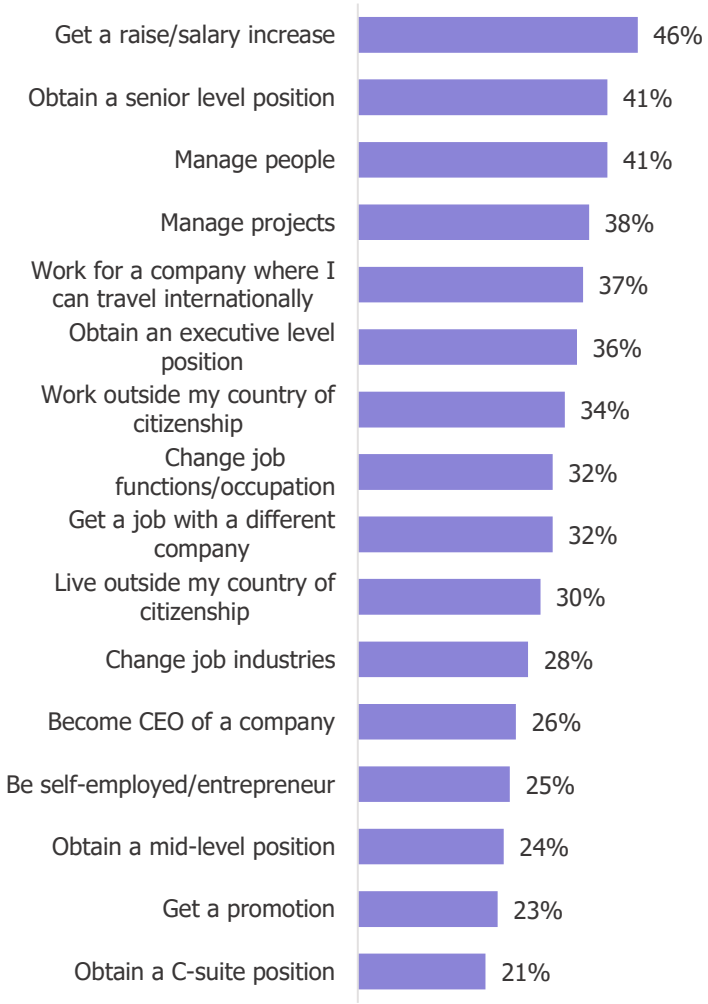
This appendix section features data by program type considered, including:

- Post-GME career goals
- Post-GME industries of interest
- Post-GME job functions of interest

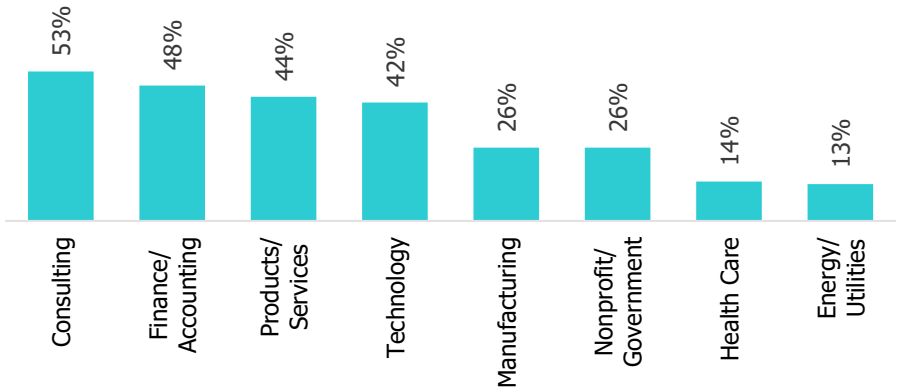


Full-Time One-Year MBA

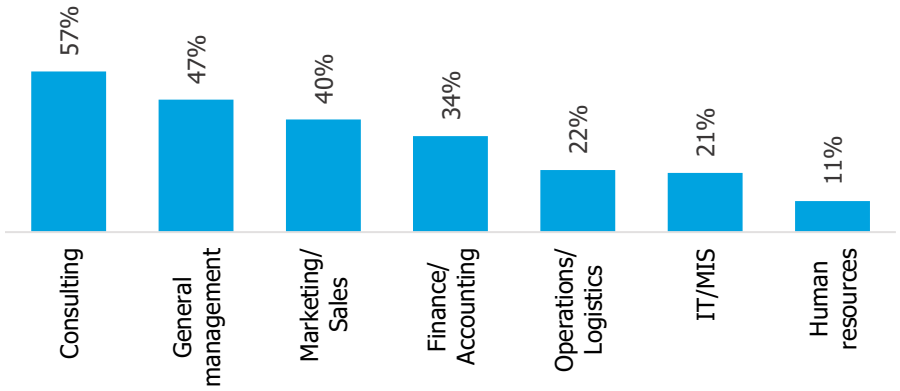
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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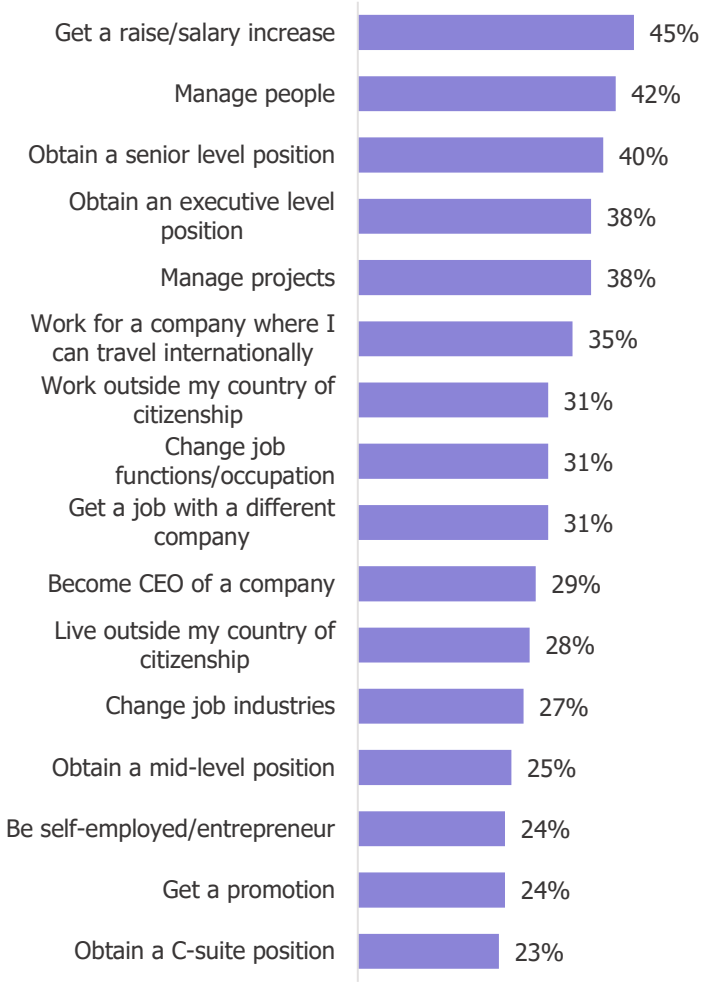
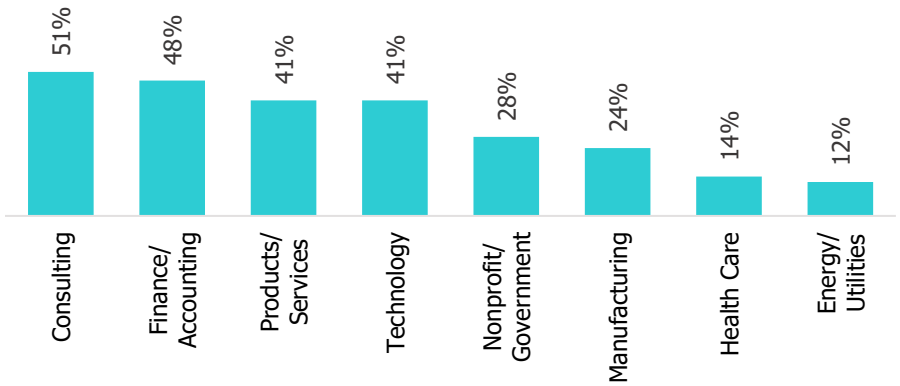
Full-Time Two-Year MBA

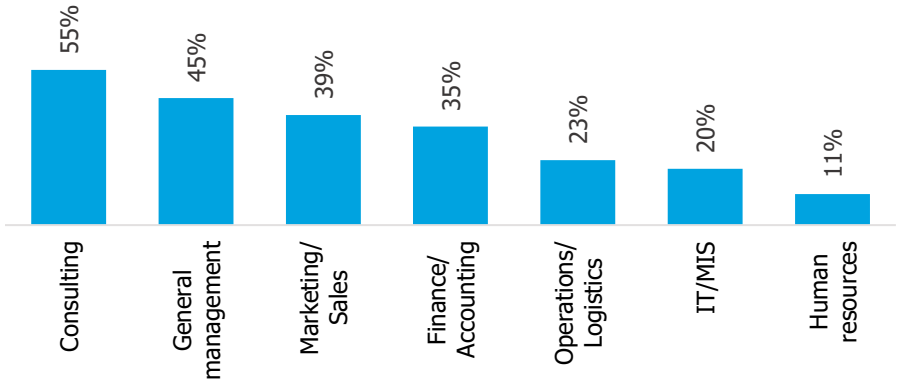
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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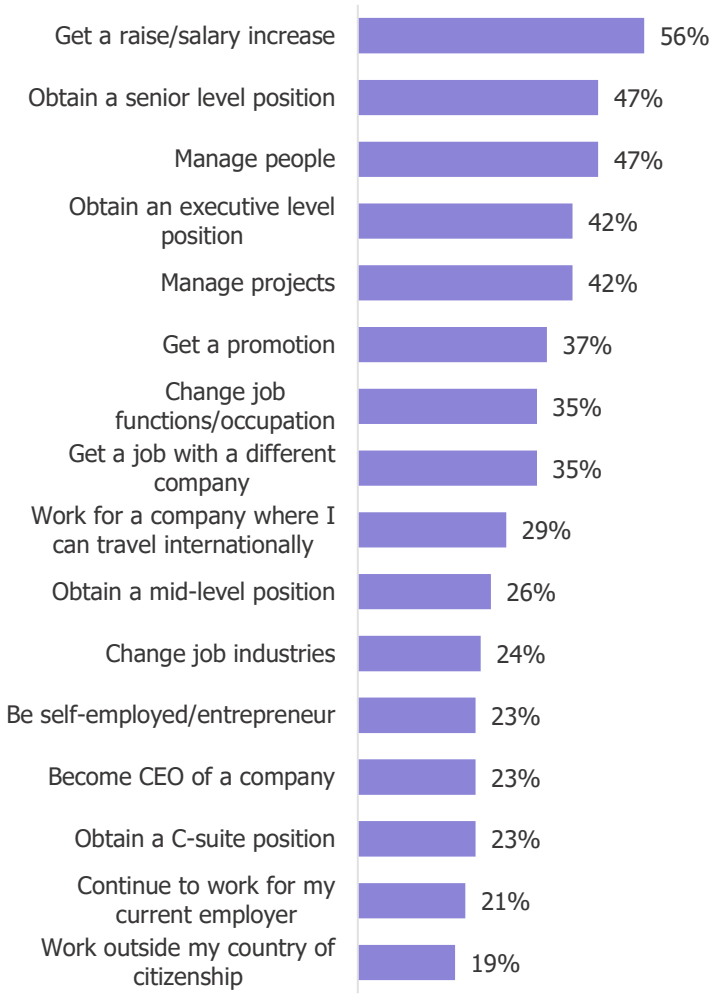
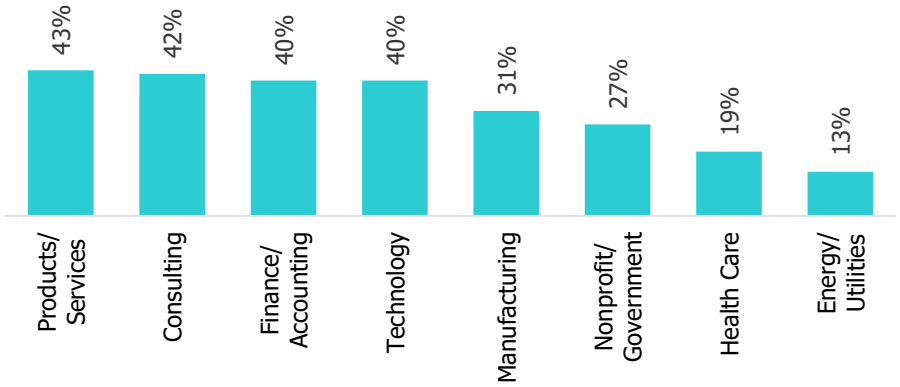
Part-Time MBA

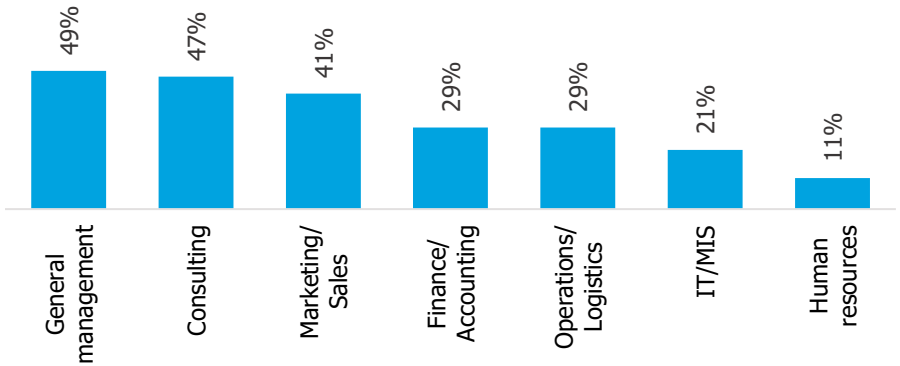
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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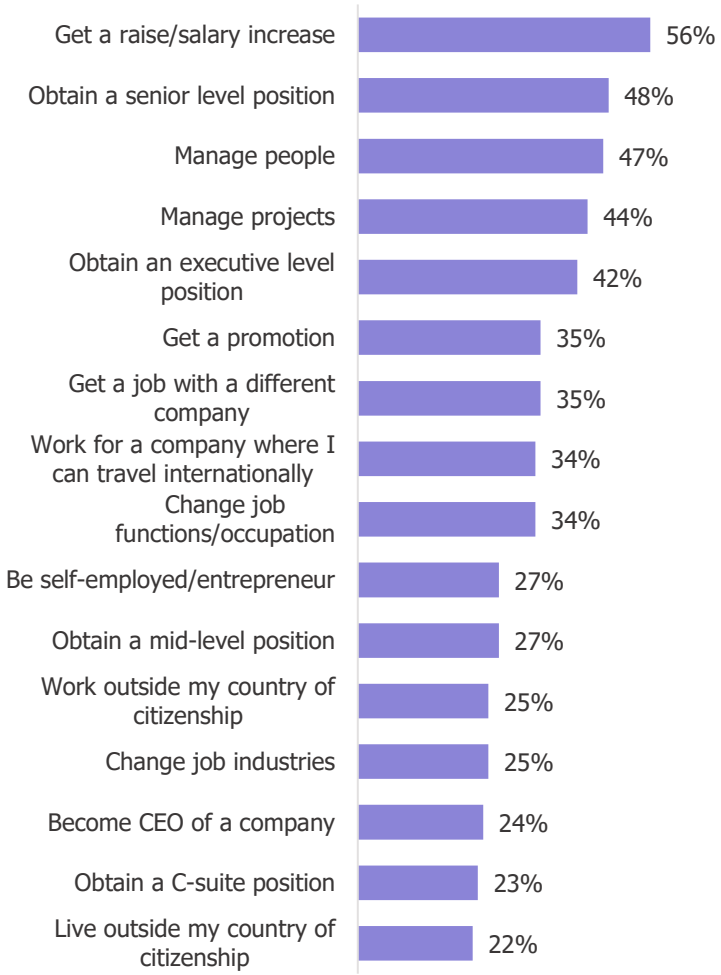
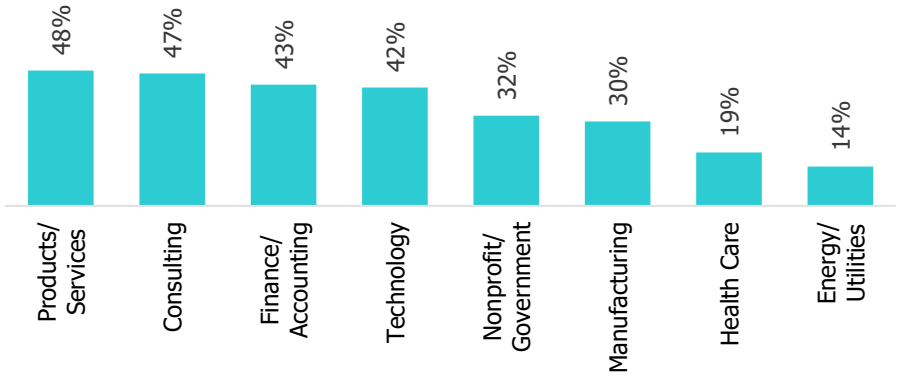
Flexible MBA

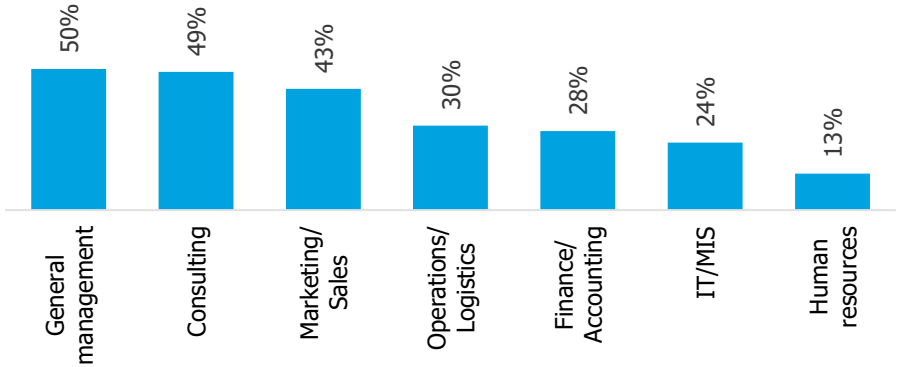
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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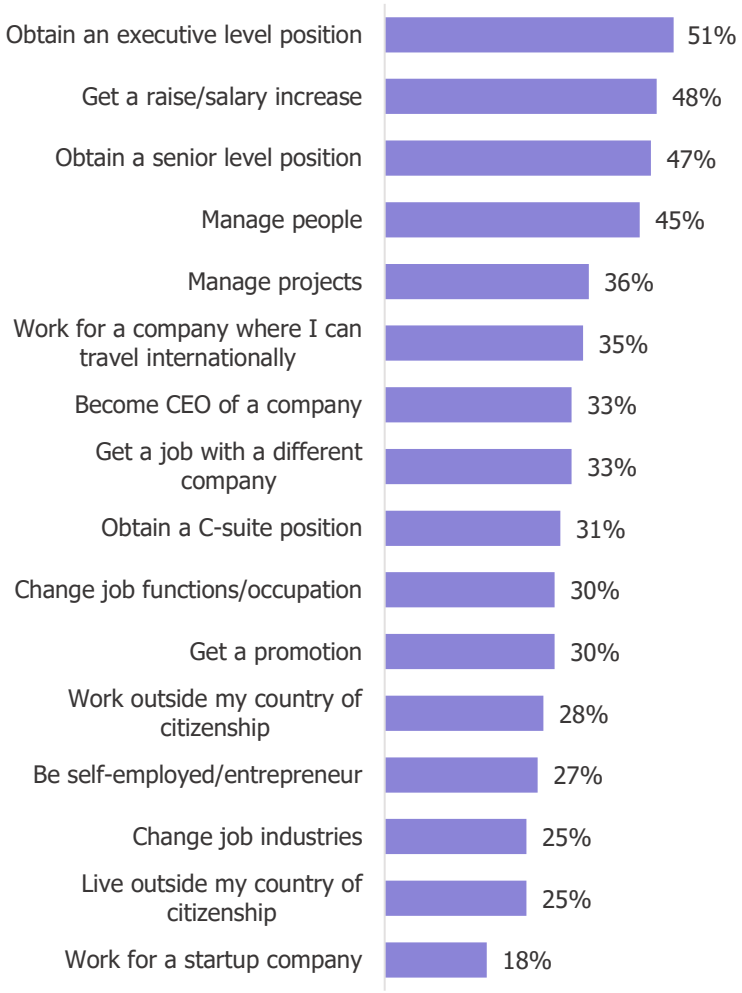
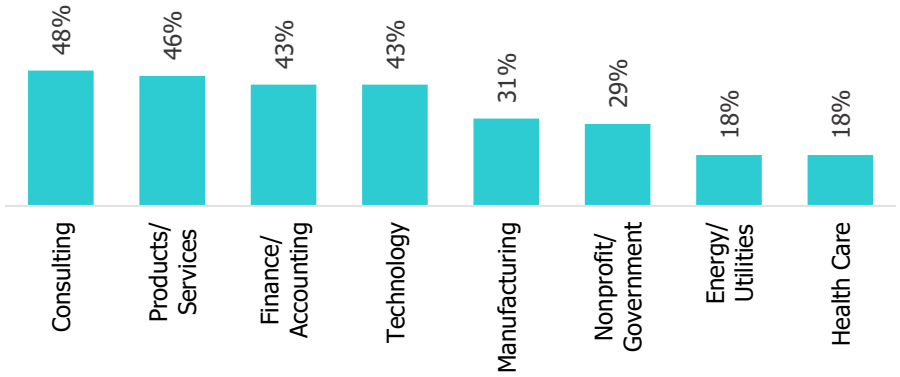
Executive MBA

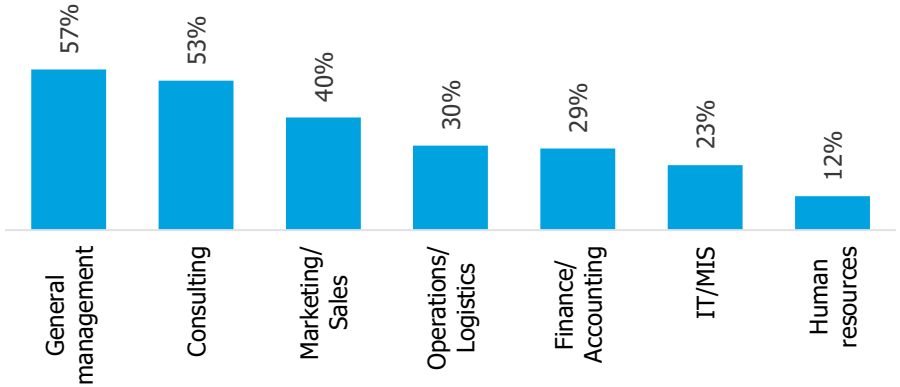
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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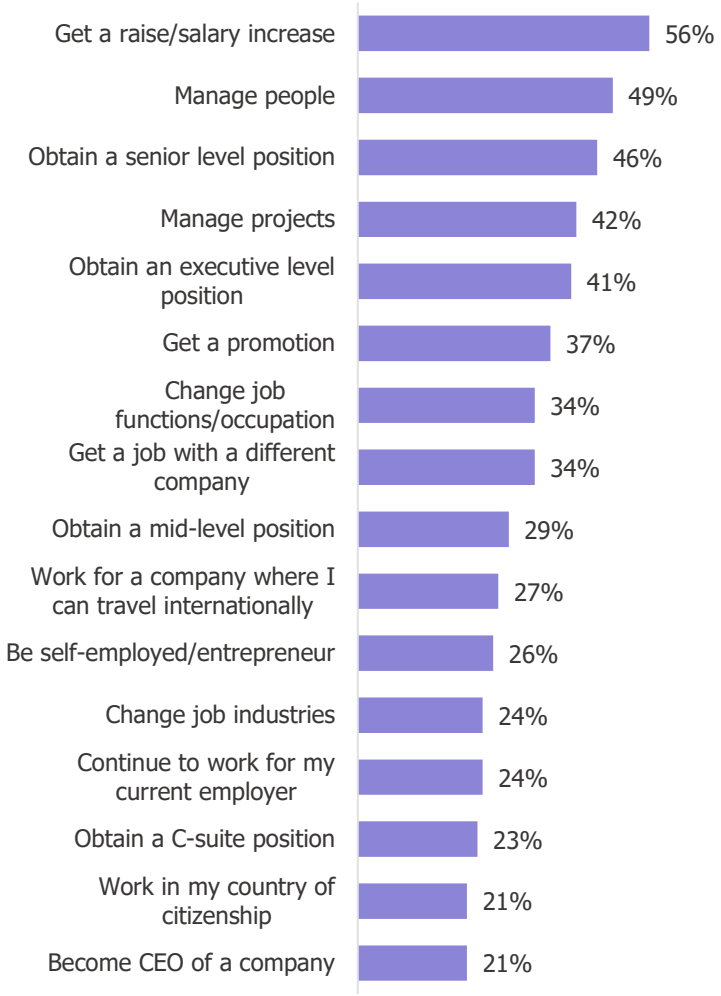
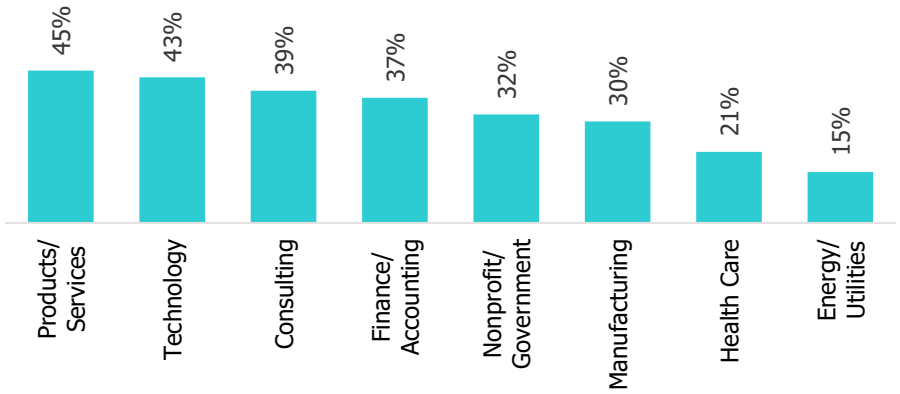
Online MBA

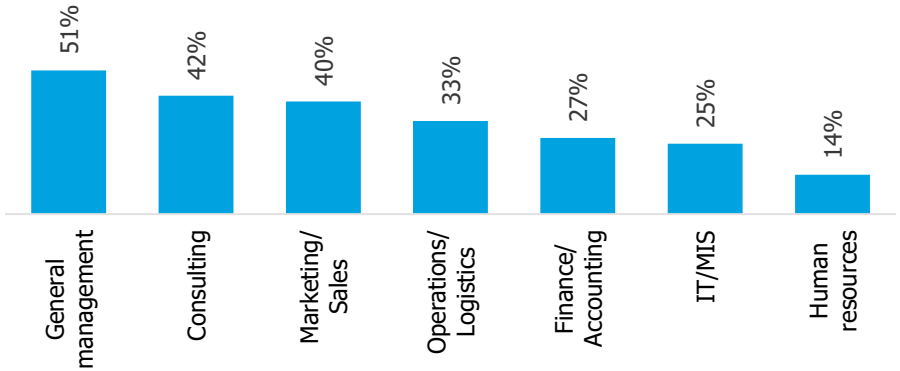
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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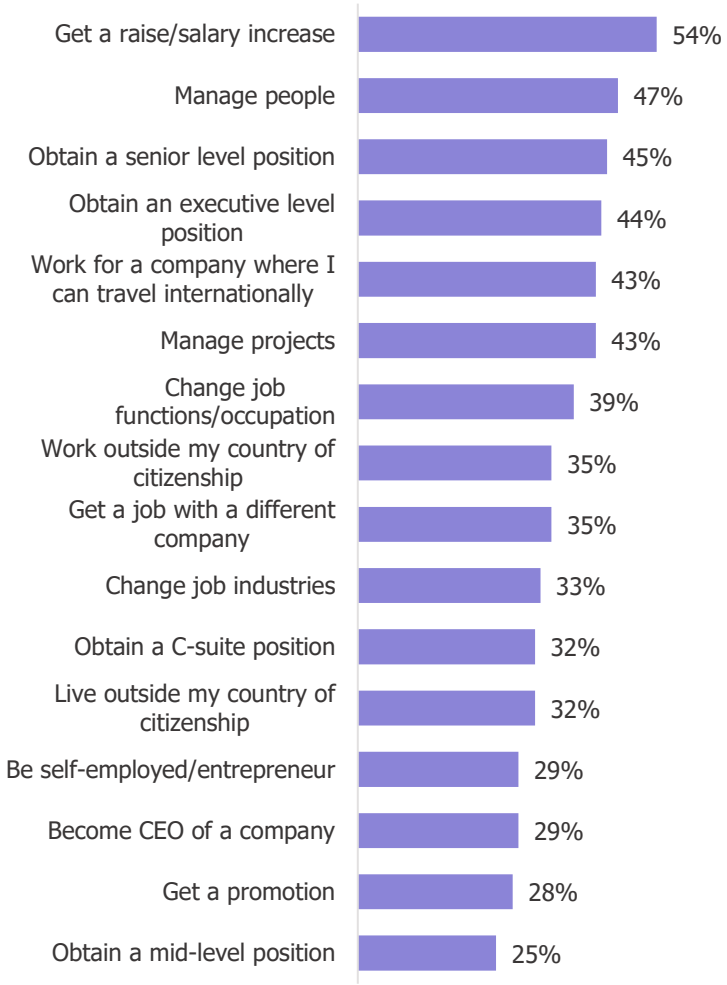
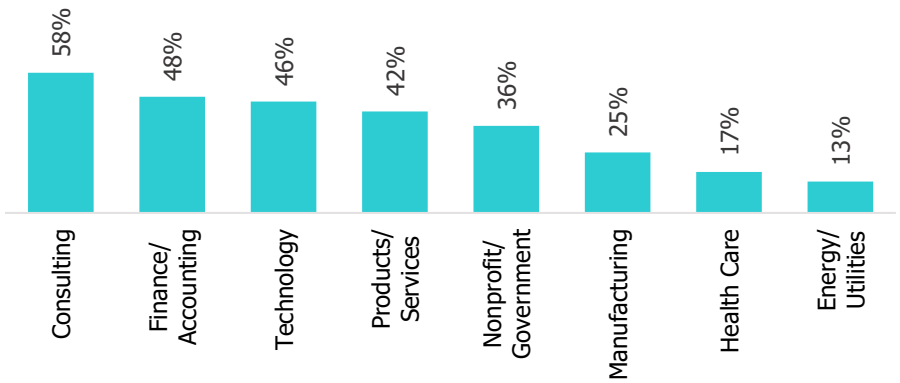
Joint/Dual Degree Program (With an MBA)

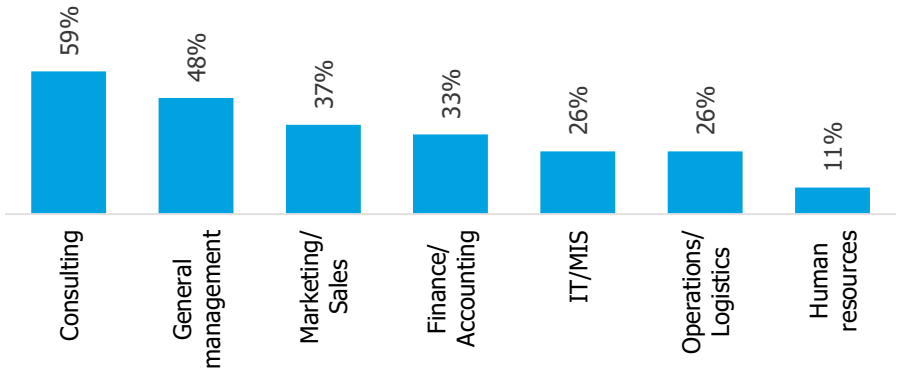
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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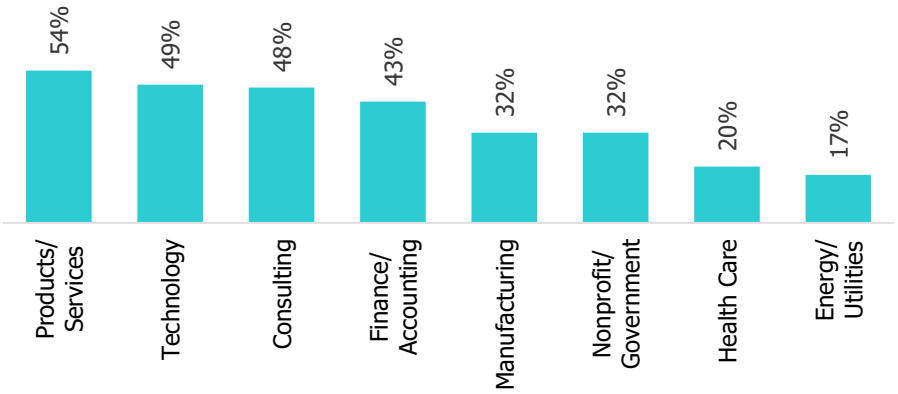
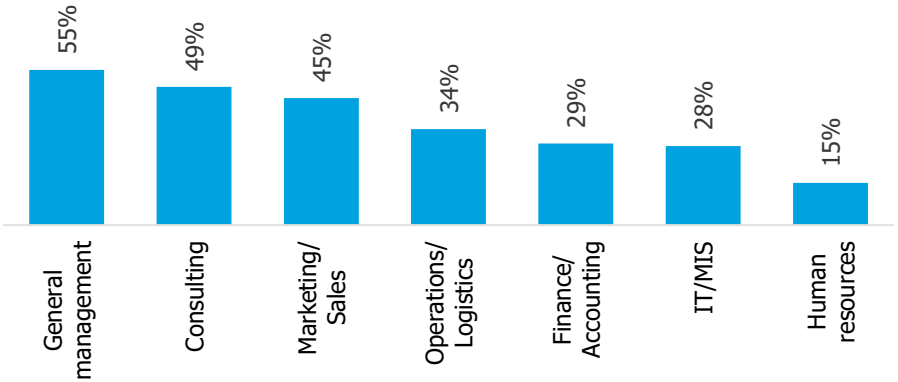
Hybrid/Blended MBA Program

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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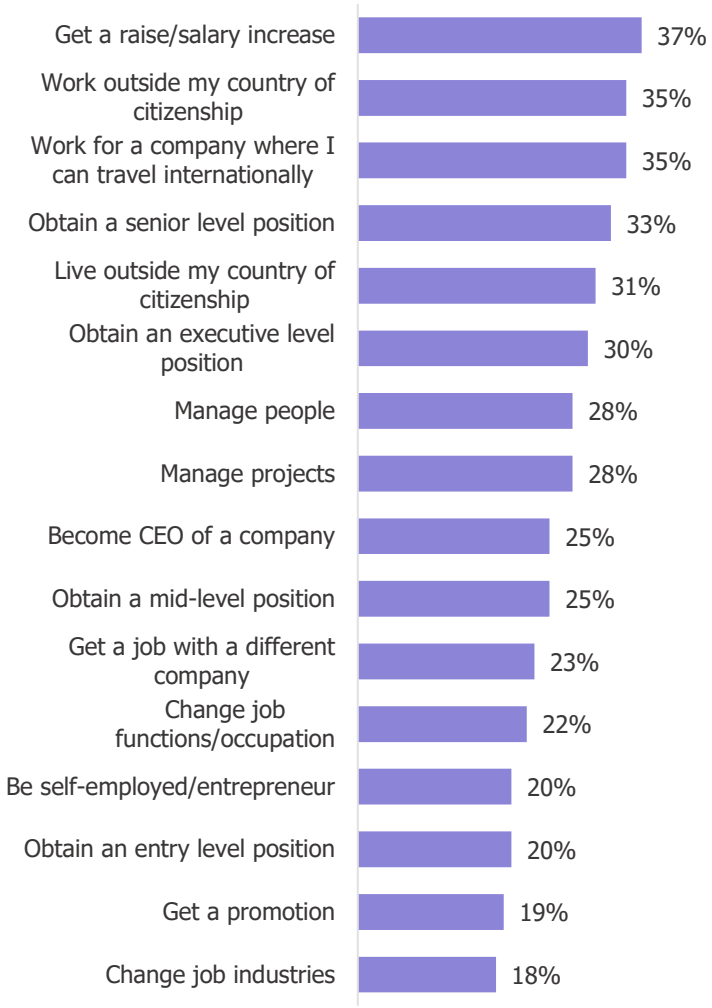
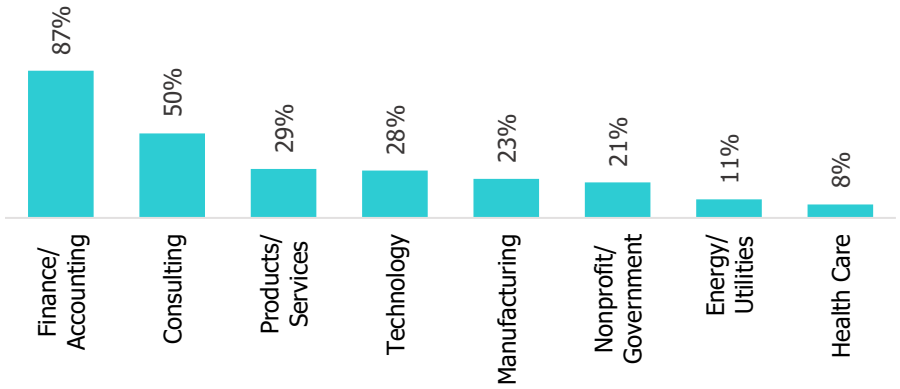
Master of Finance

Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



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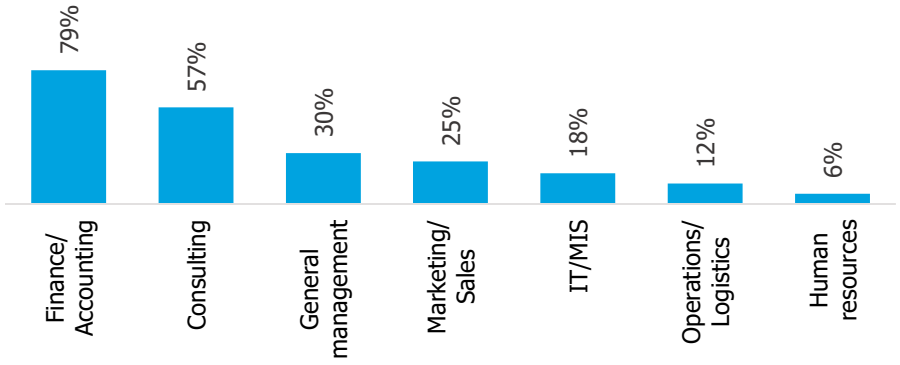
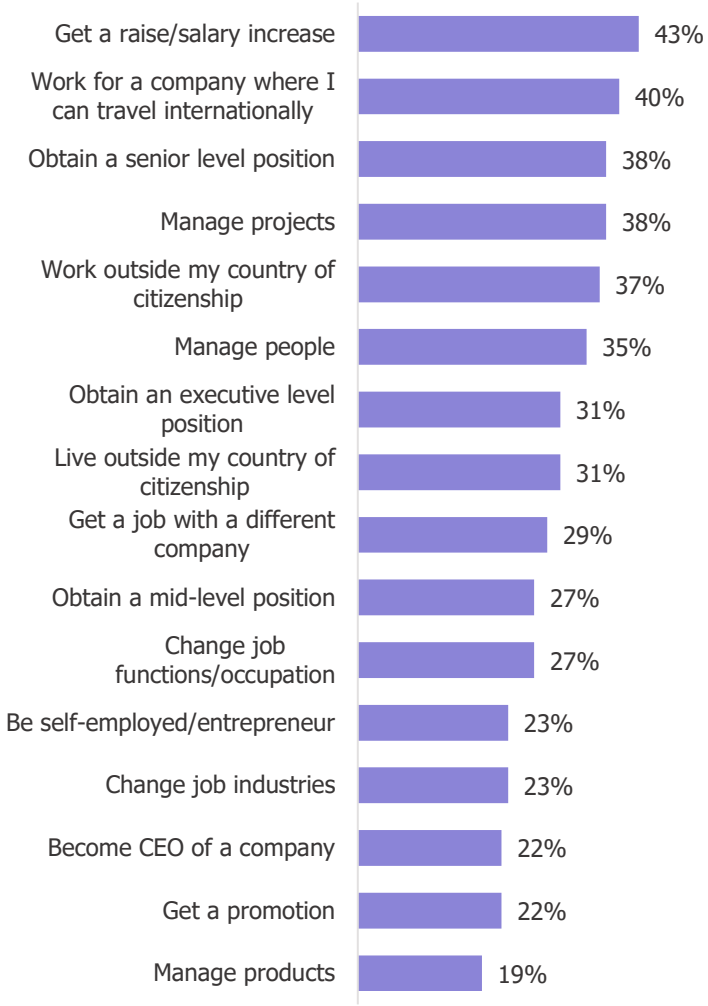


Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Data Analytics

Post-GME Career Goals



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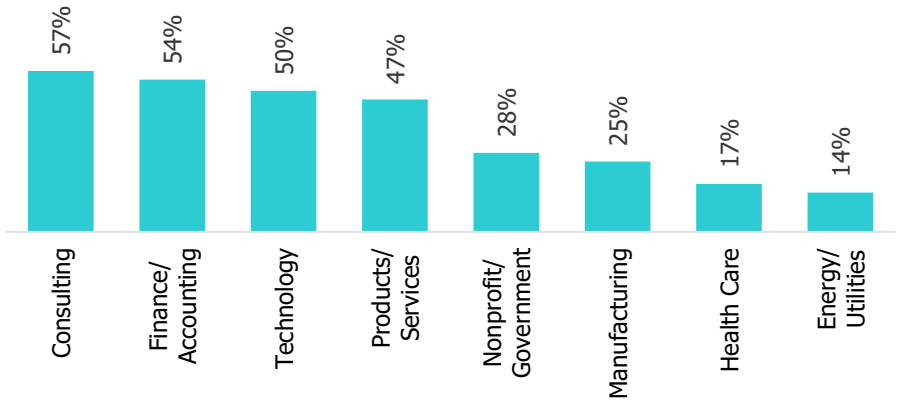

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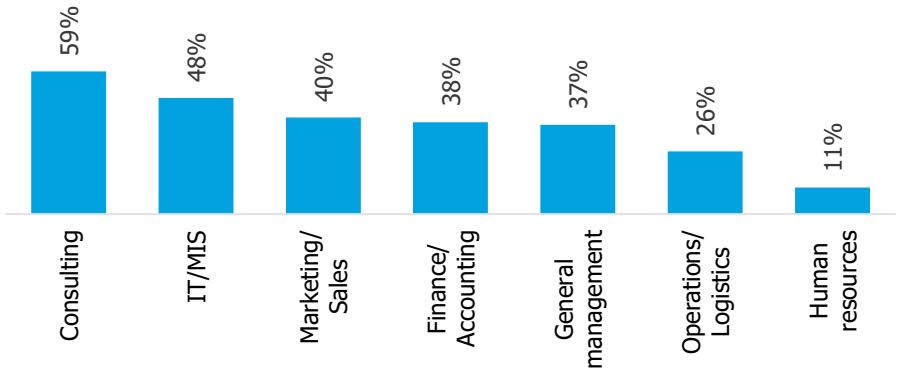
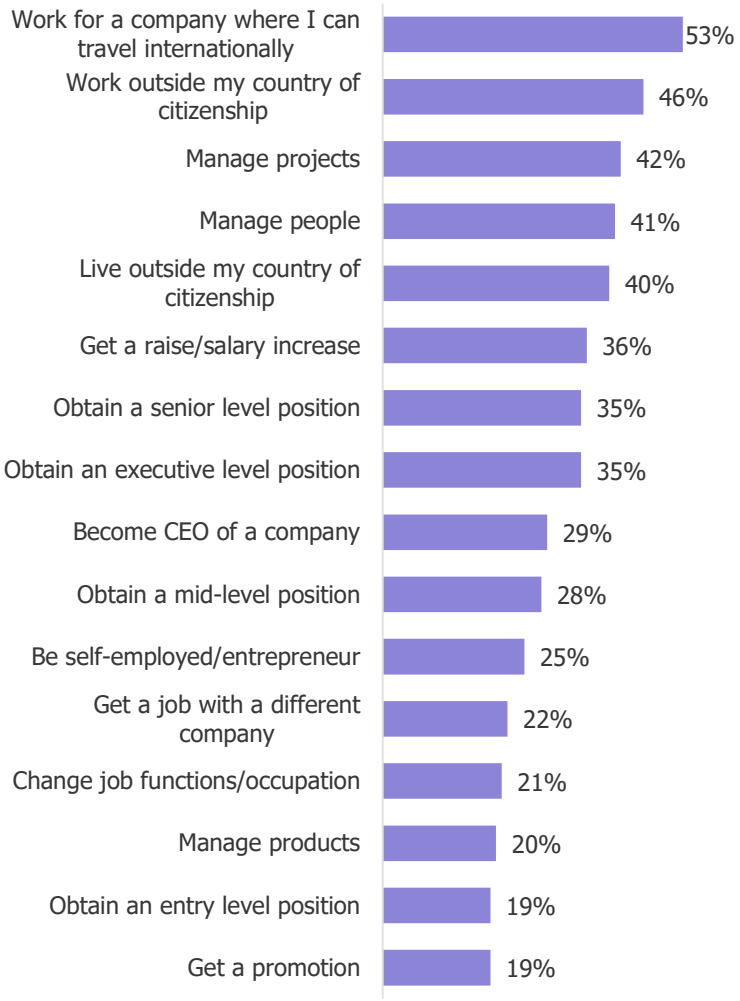


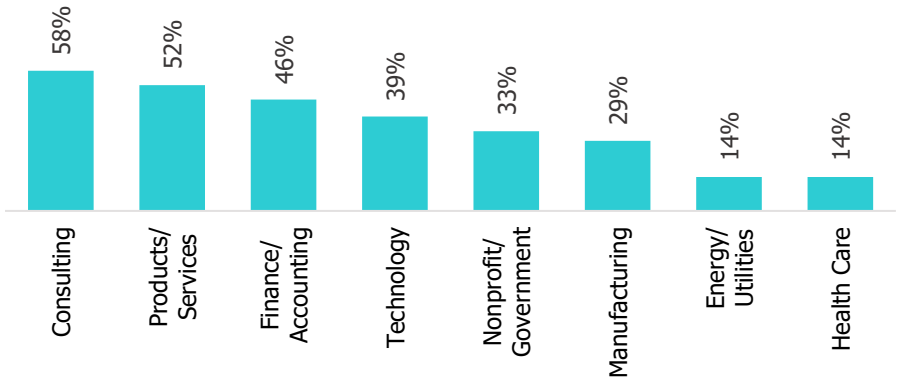
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master in International Management

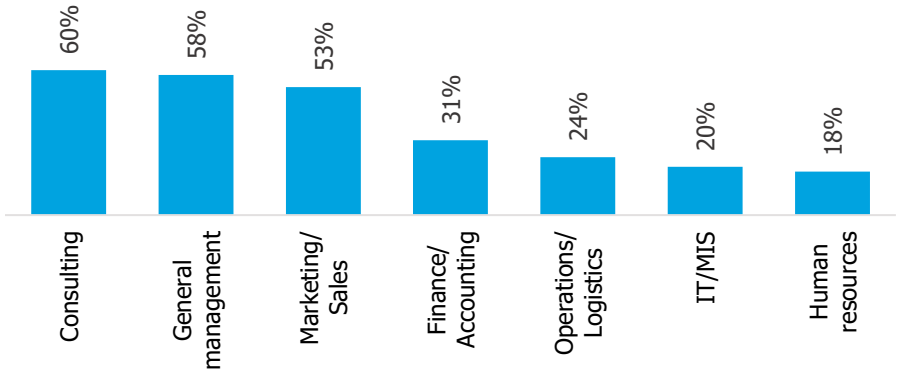
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



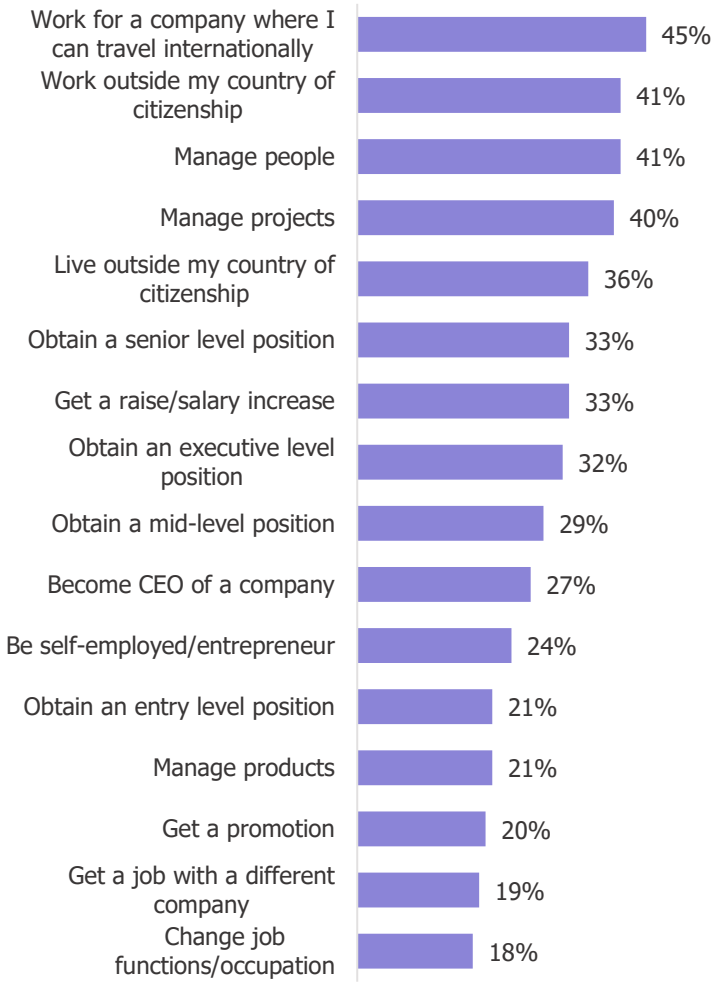
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



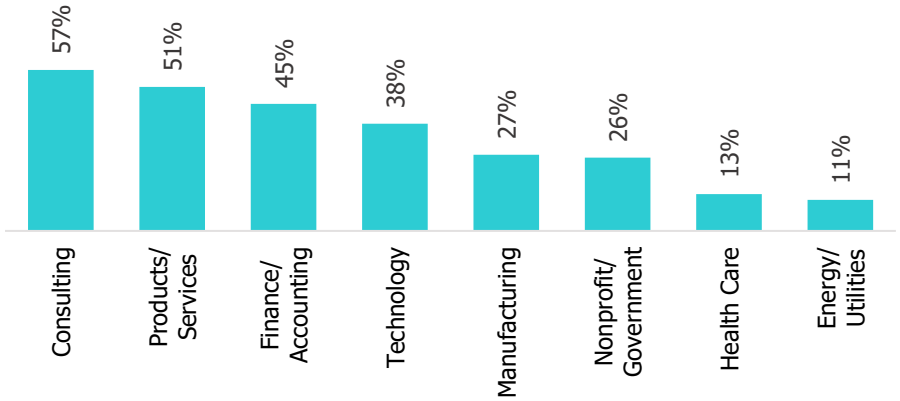
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master in Management

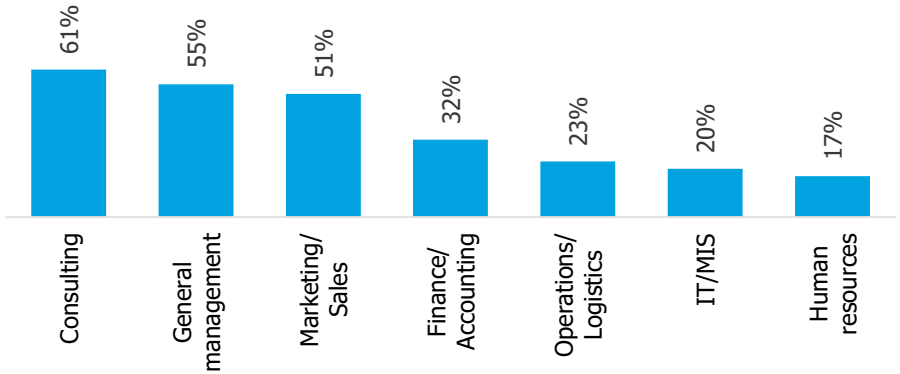
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



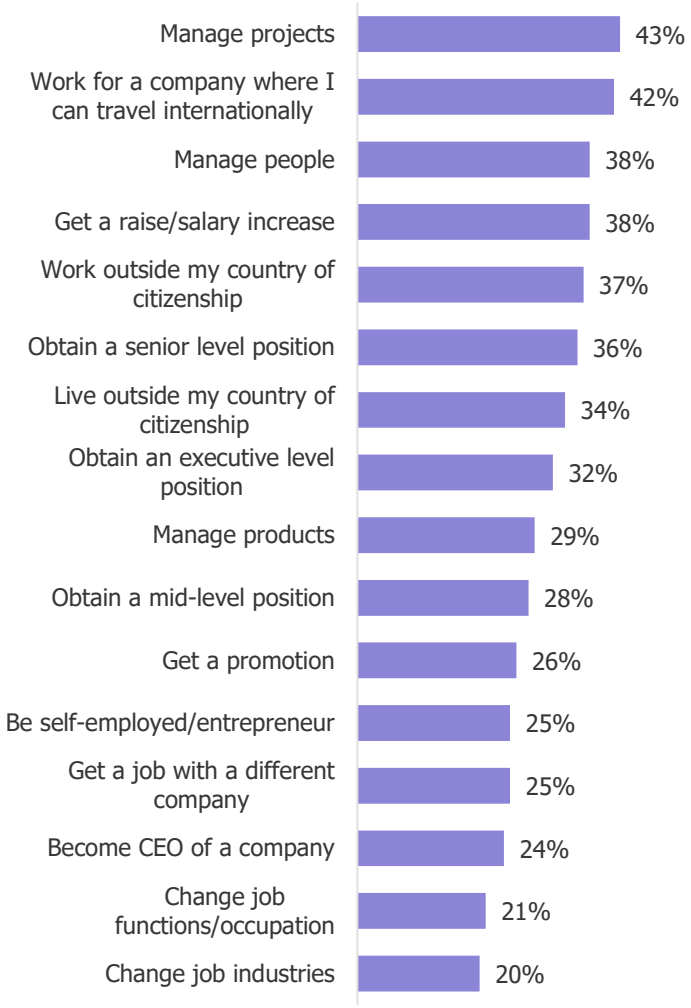
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



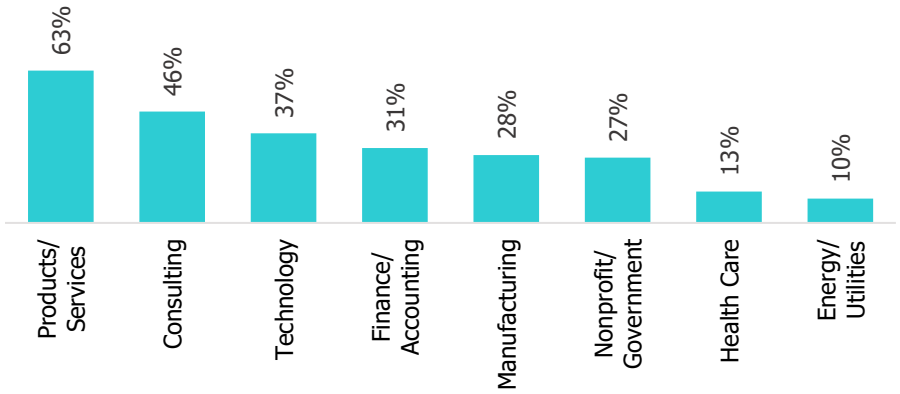
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Marketing

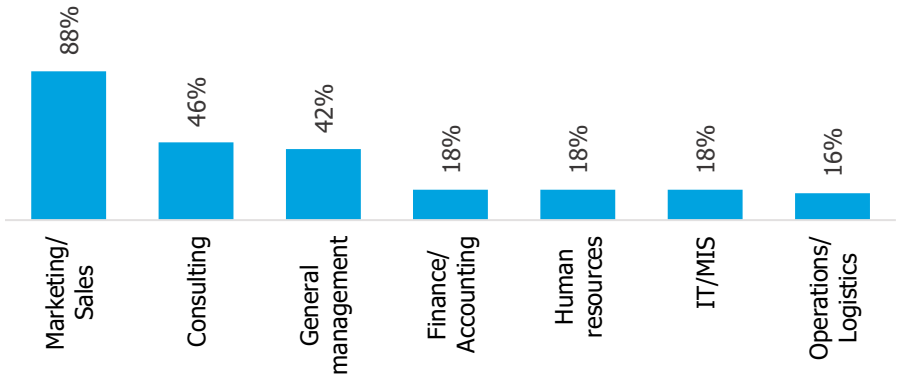
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



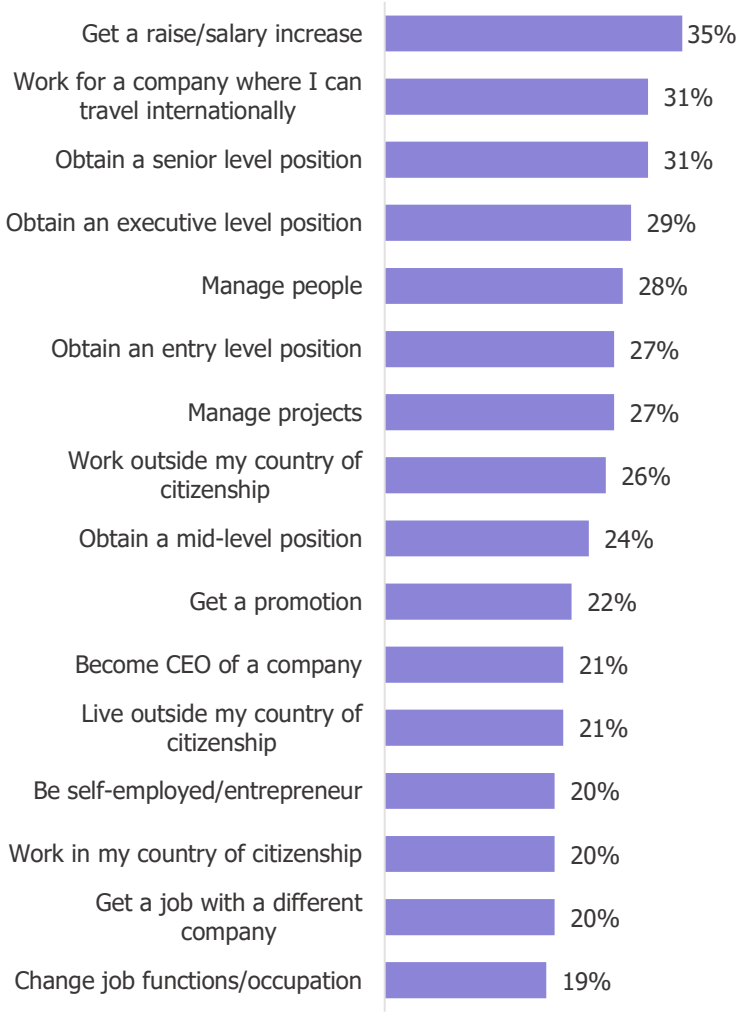
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



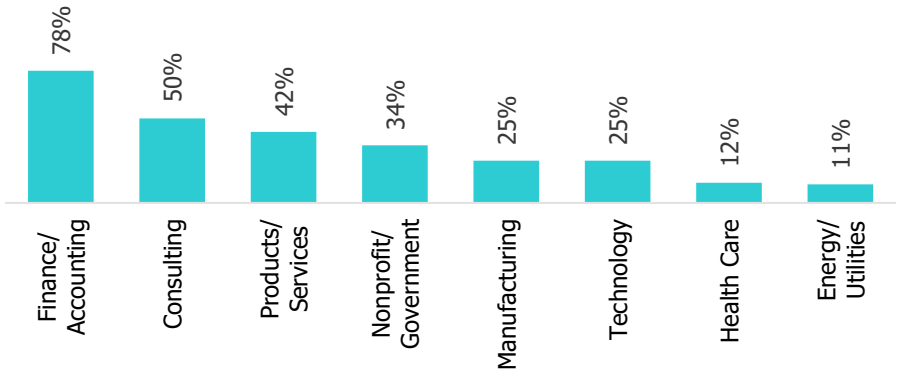
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Accounting

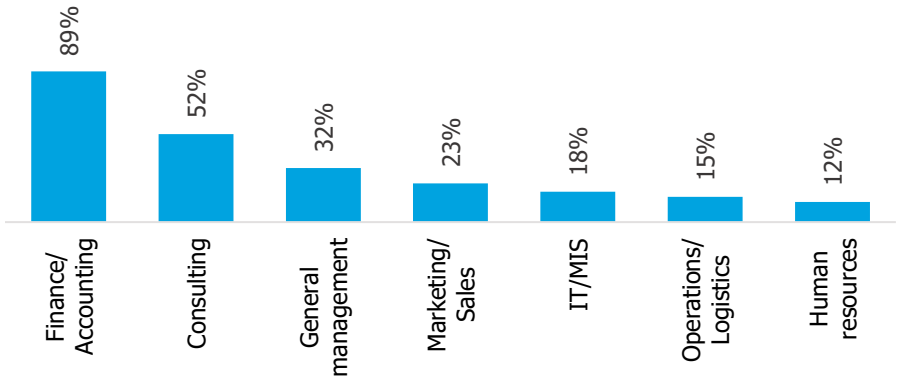
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



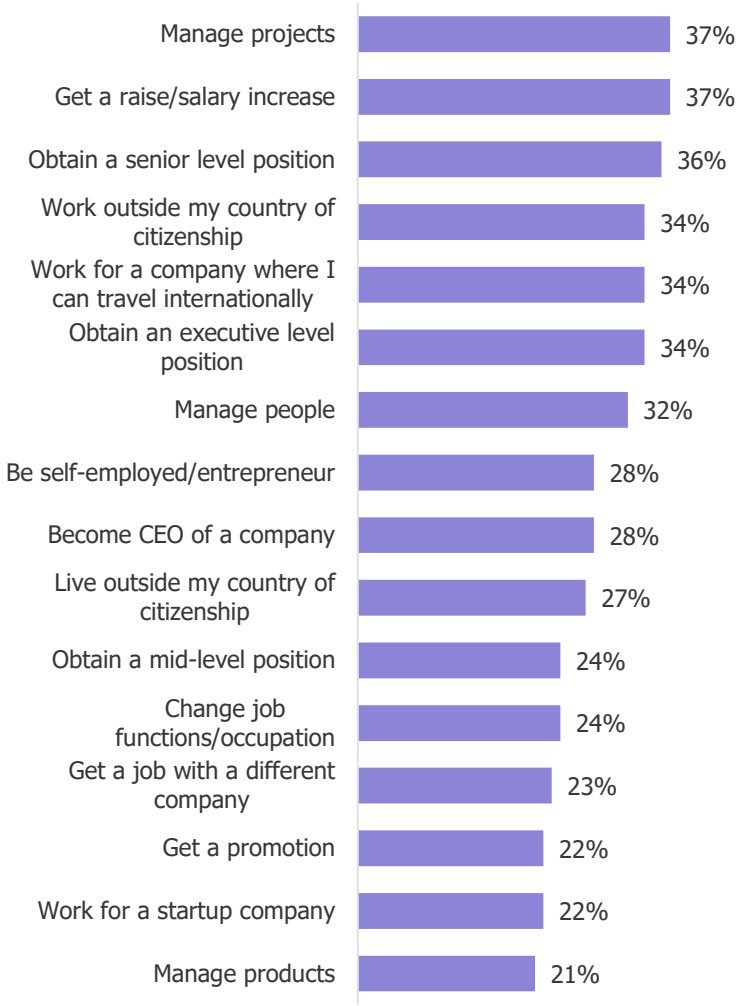
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



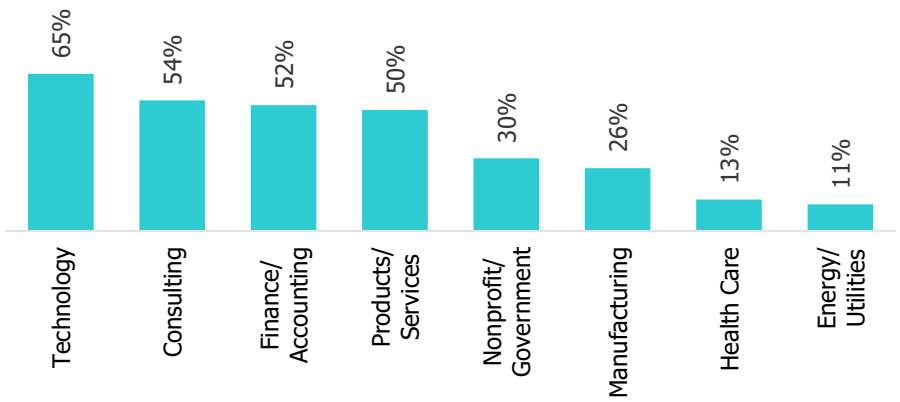
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Information Technology

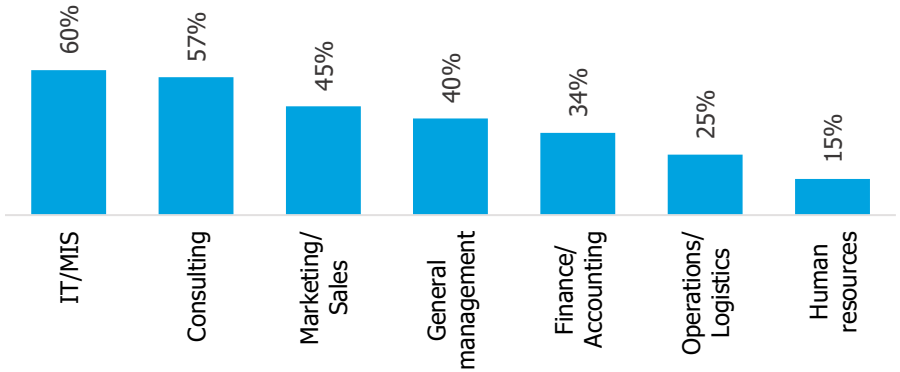
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



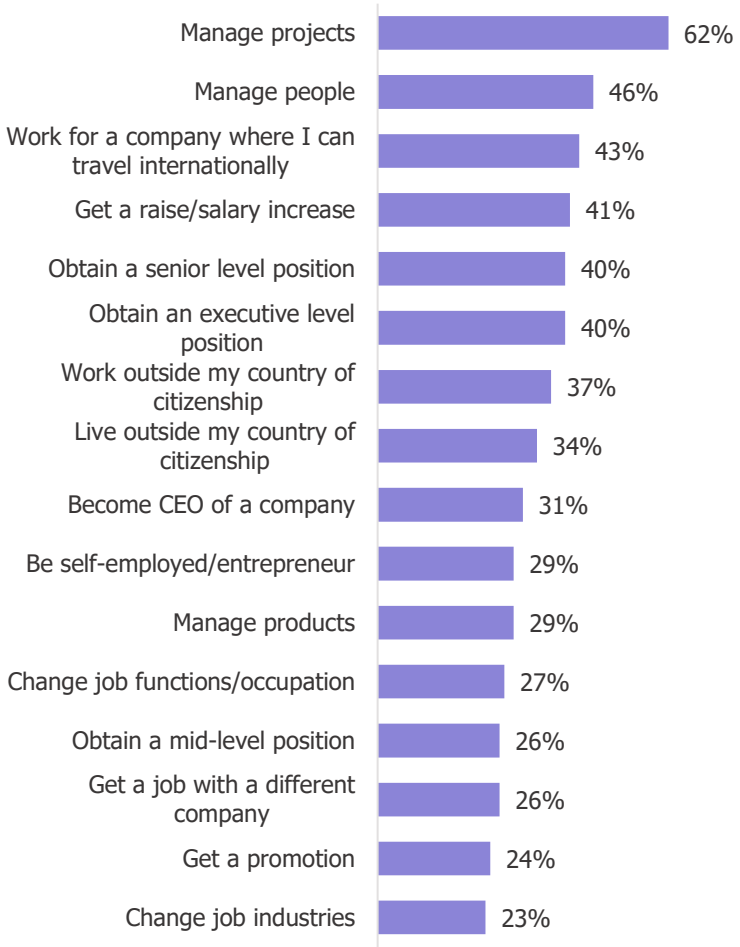
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



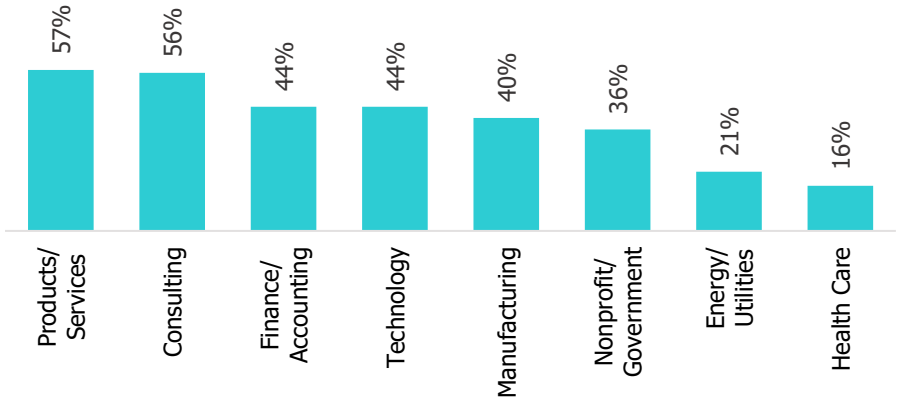
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Project Management

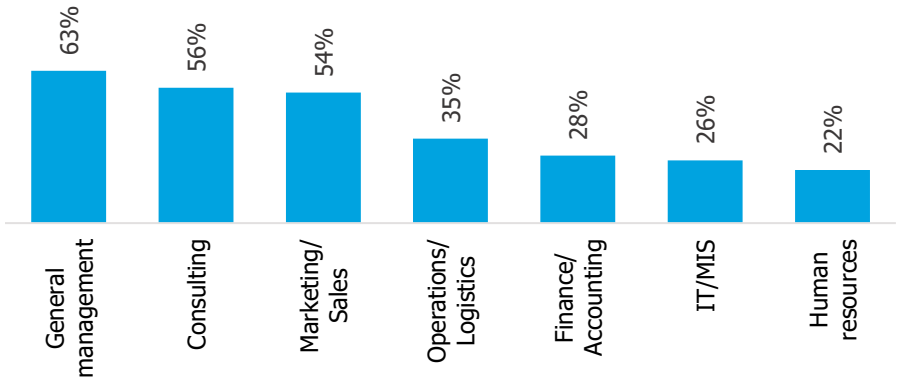
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest

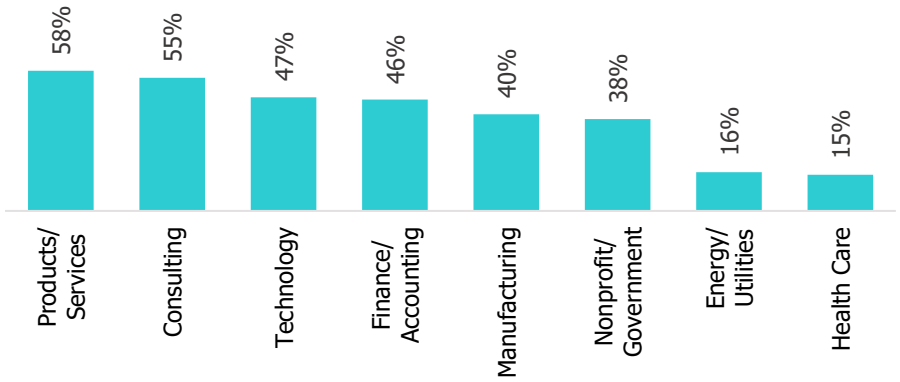


Graduate Management Admission Council™

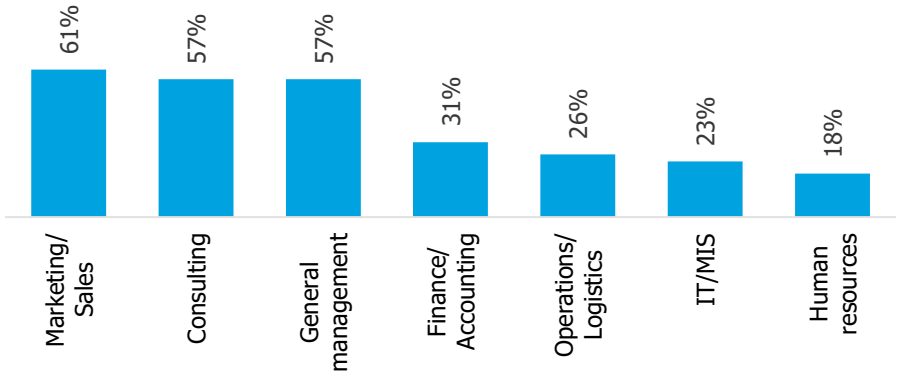
Master of Entrepreneurship

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



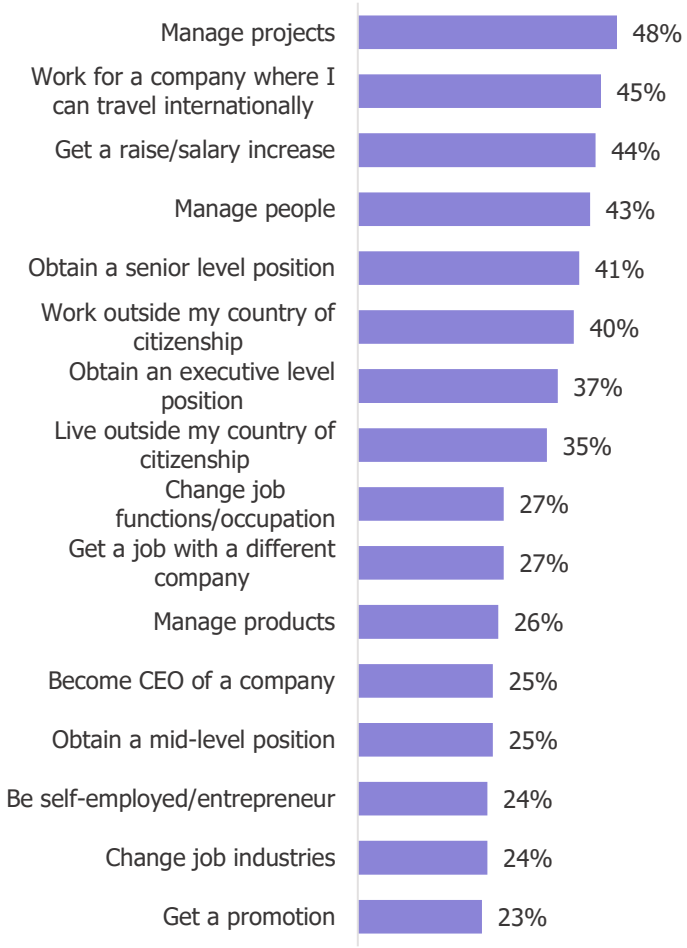
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



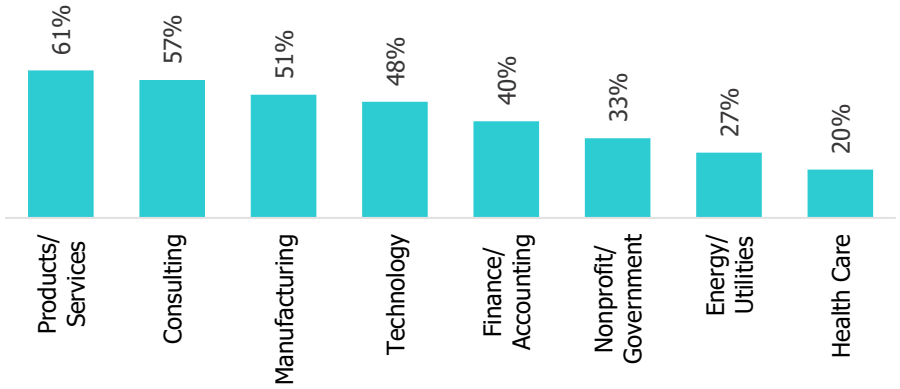
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Supply Chain Management

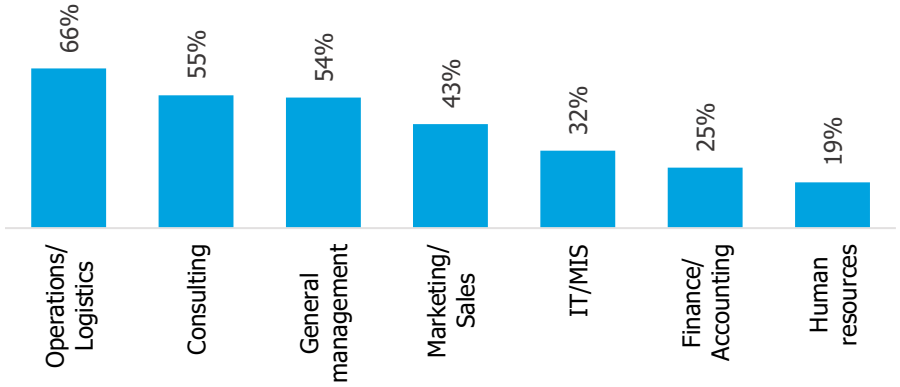
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



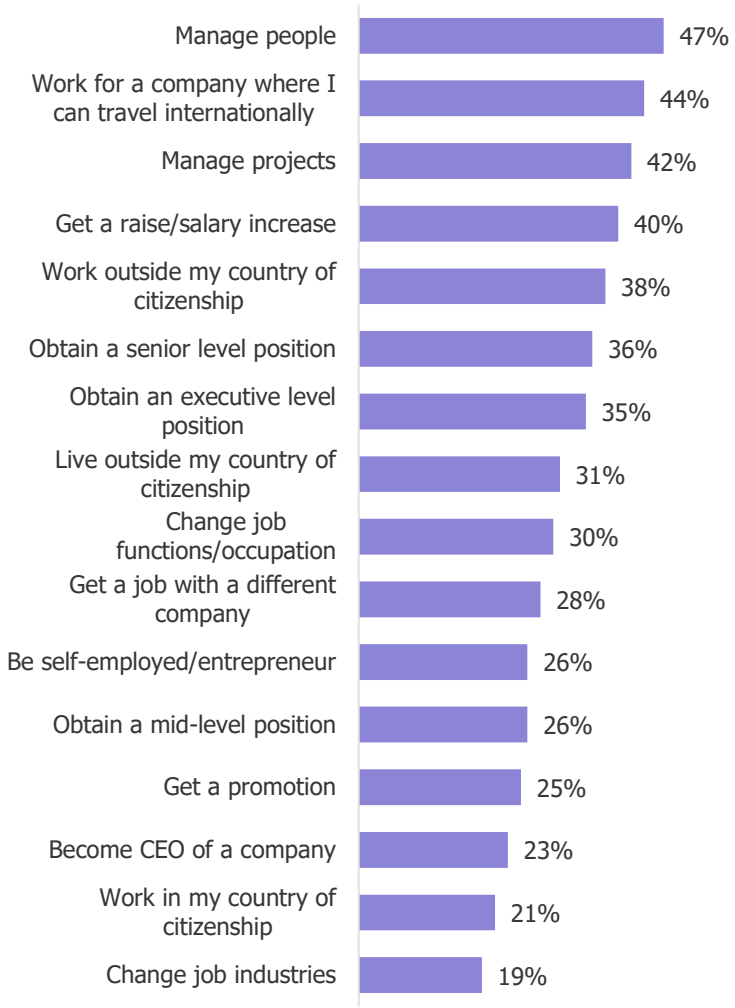
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



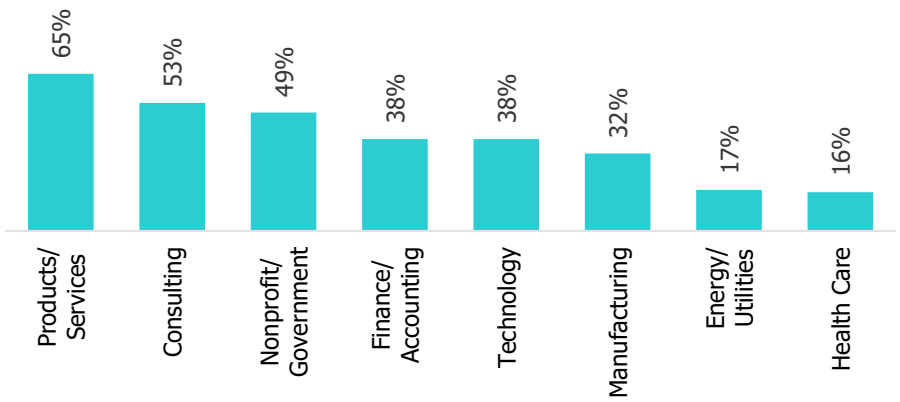
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Human Resources

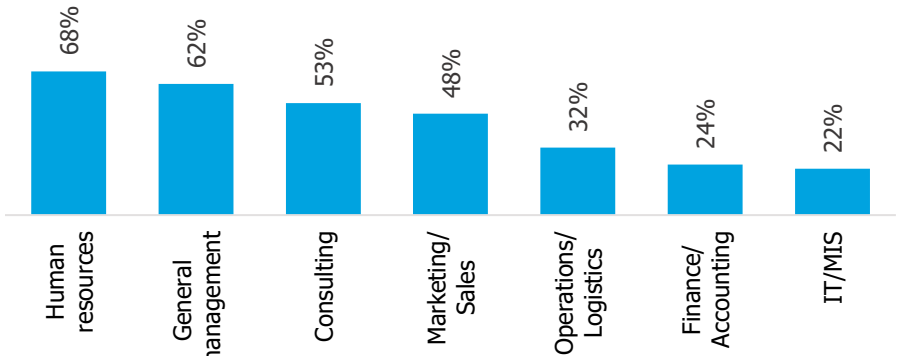
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



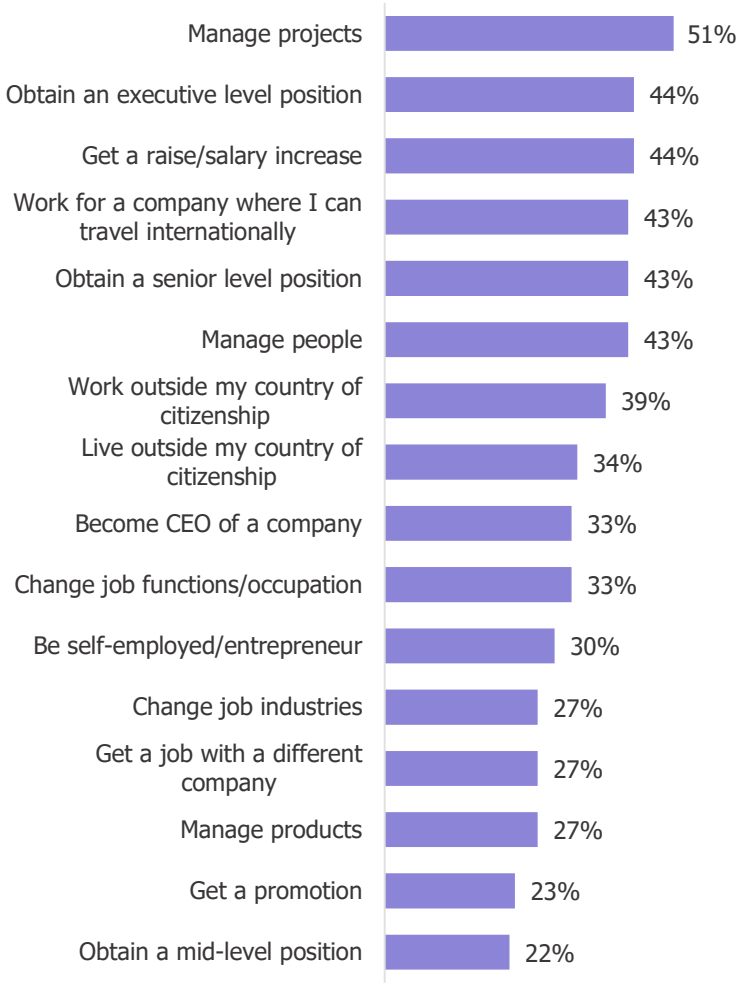
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



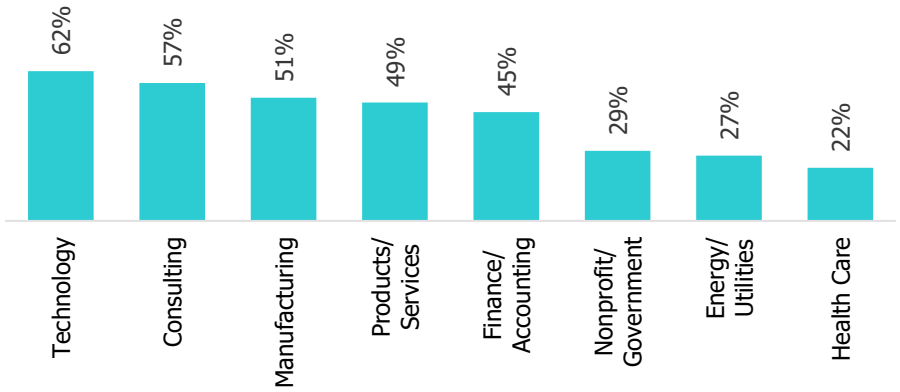
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Engineering Management

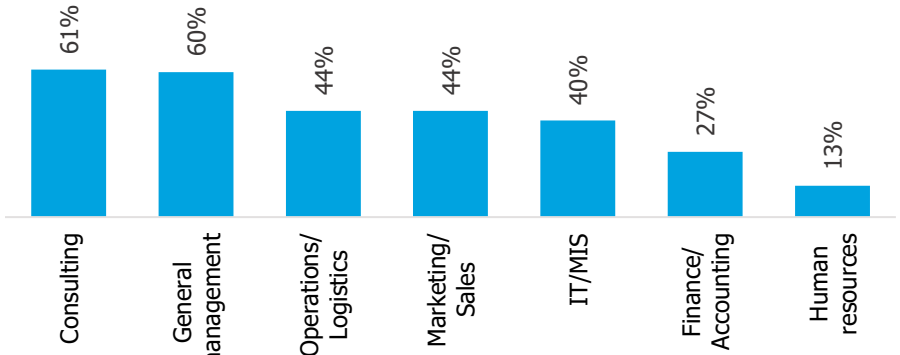
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



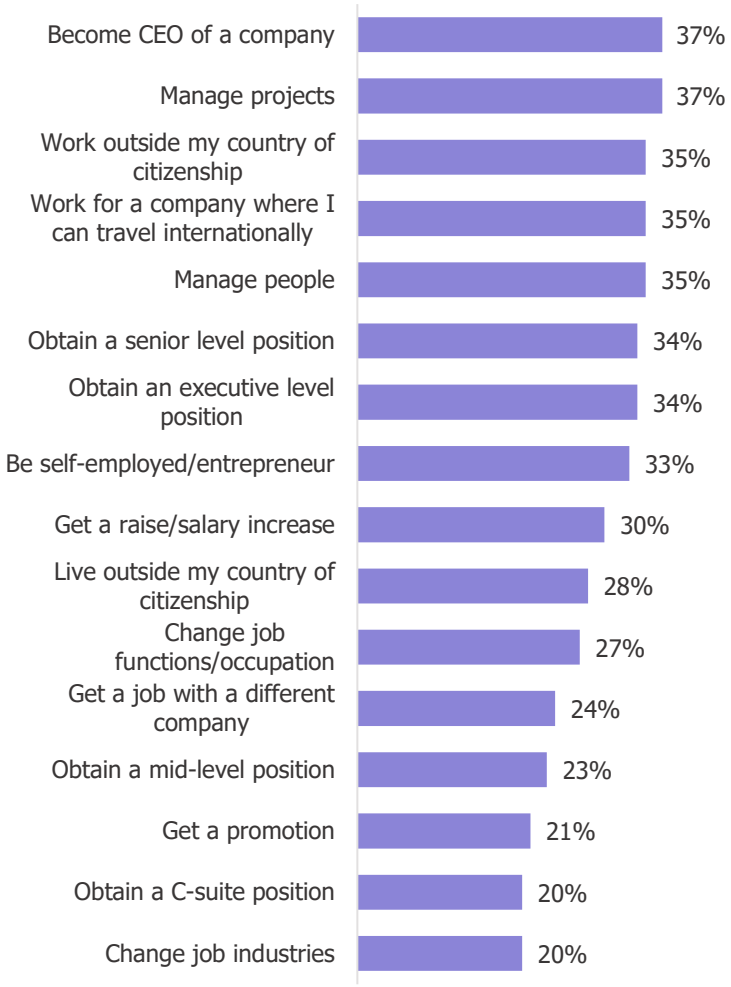
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Real Estate Management

Post-GME Career Goals



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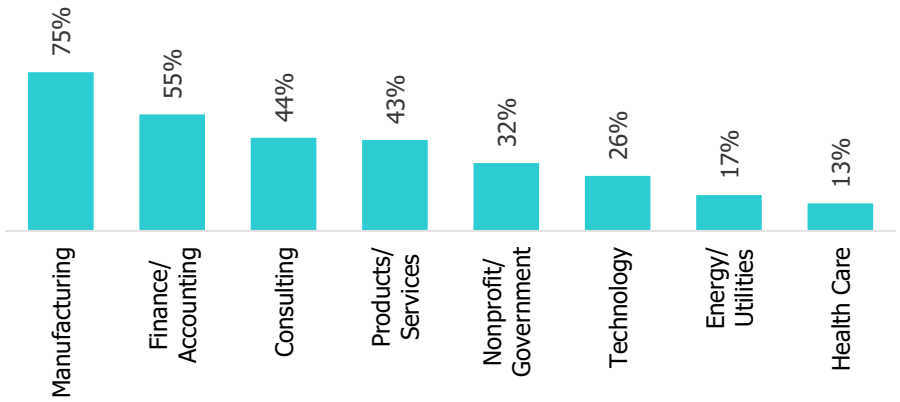
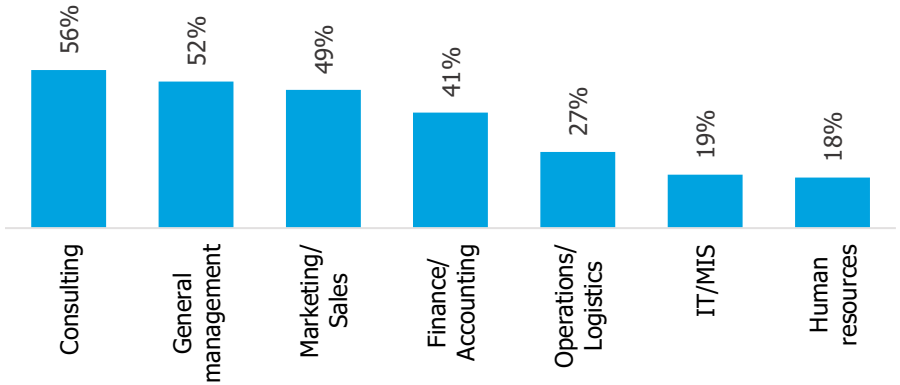


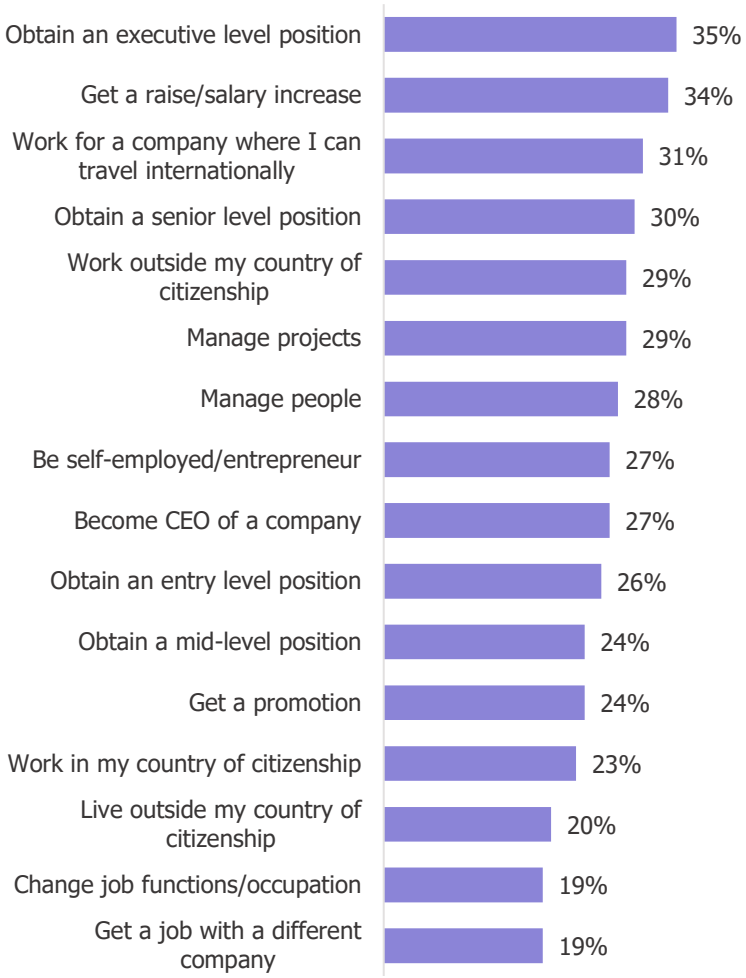
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



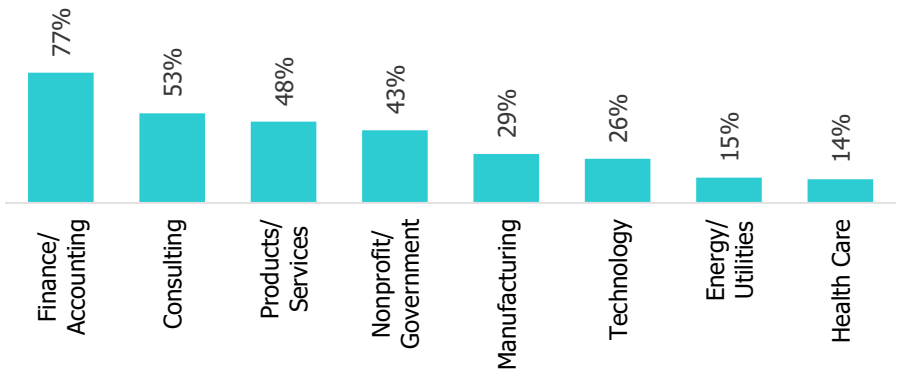
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Taxation

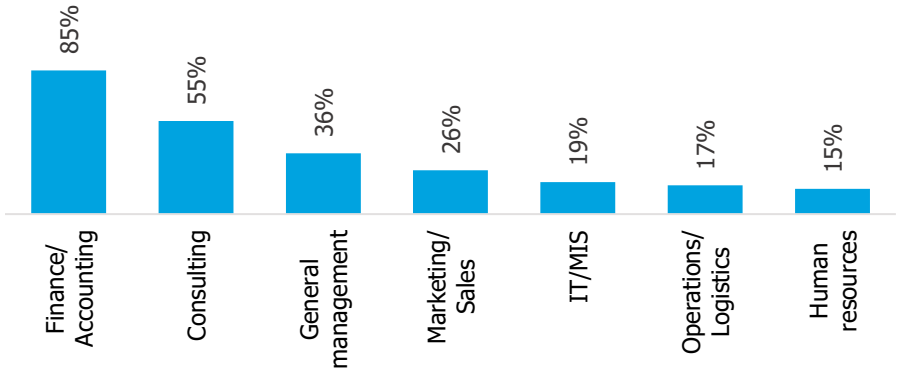
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



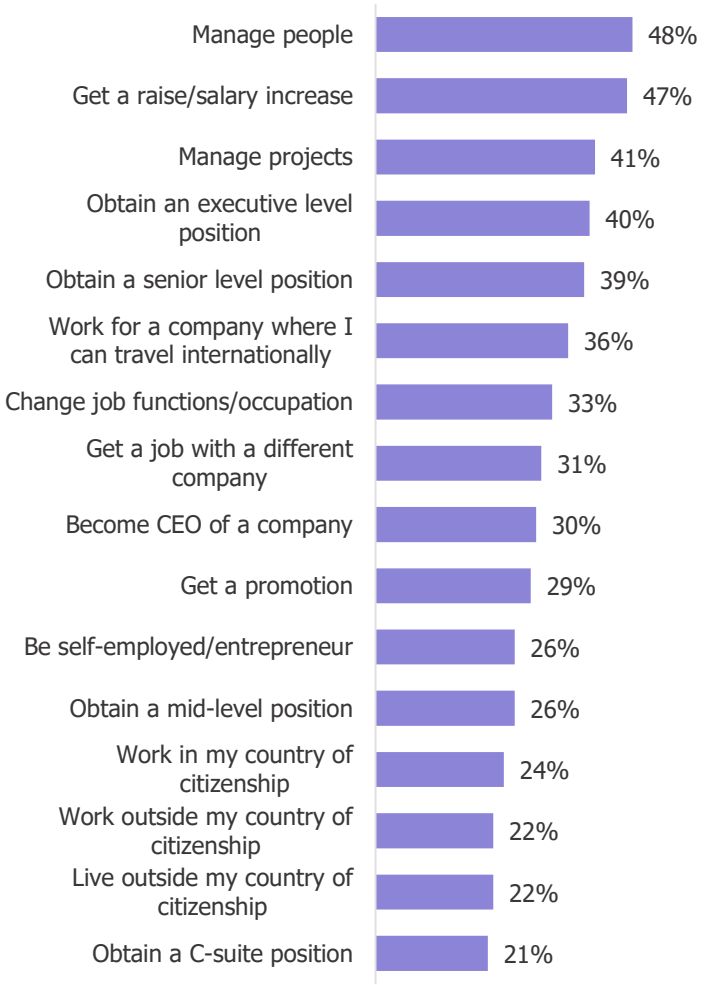
Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



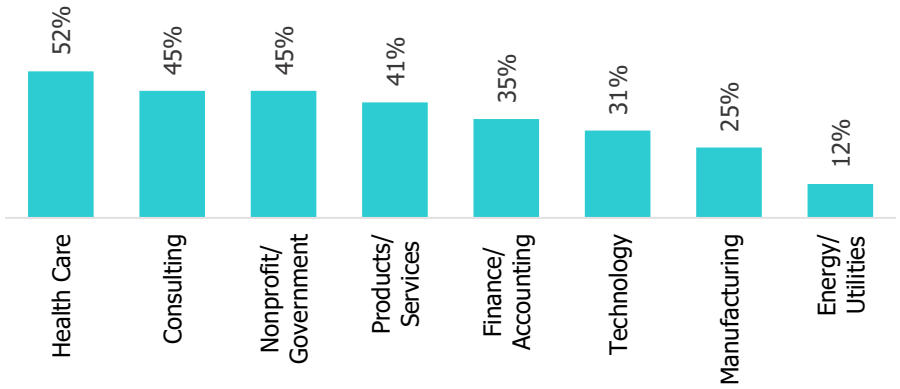
Graduate Management Admission Council™

Master of Health Administration

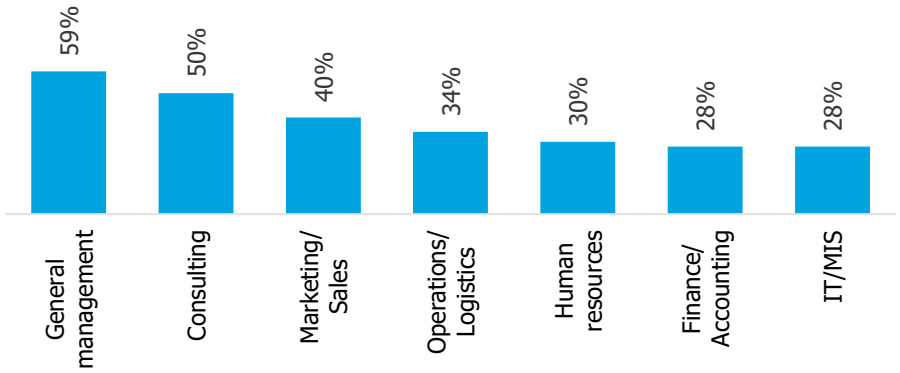
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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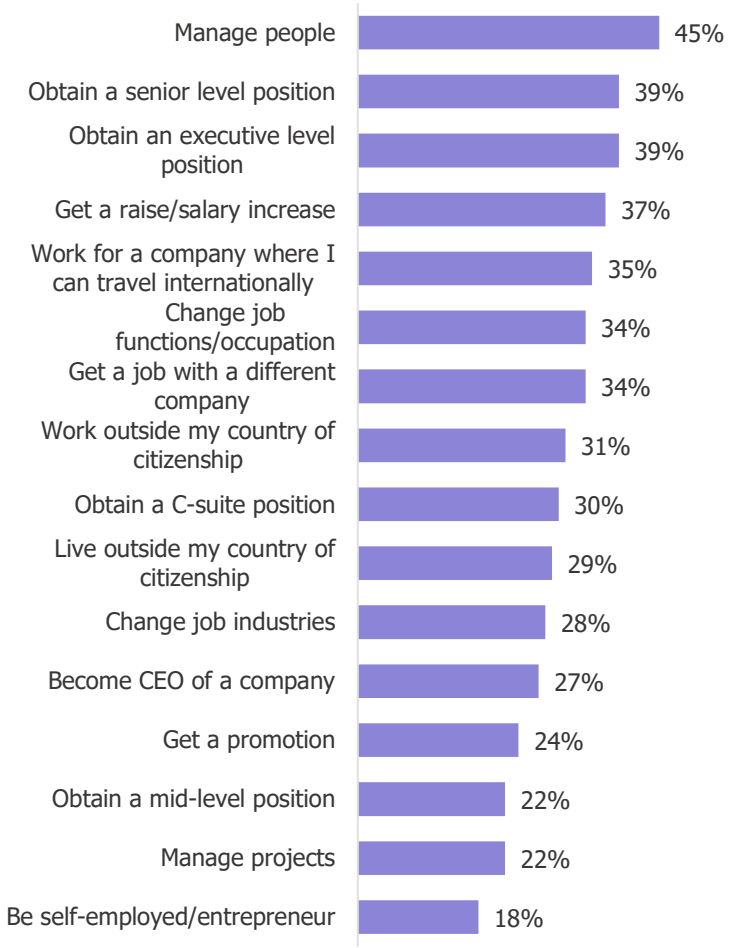
Appendix B: Candidate Profiles by Citizenship

This appendix section features data by candidate citizenship, including:

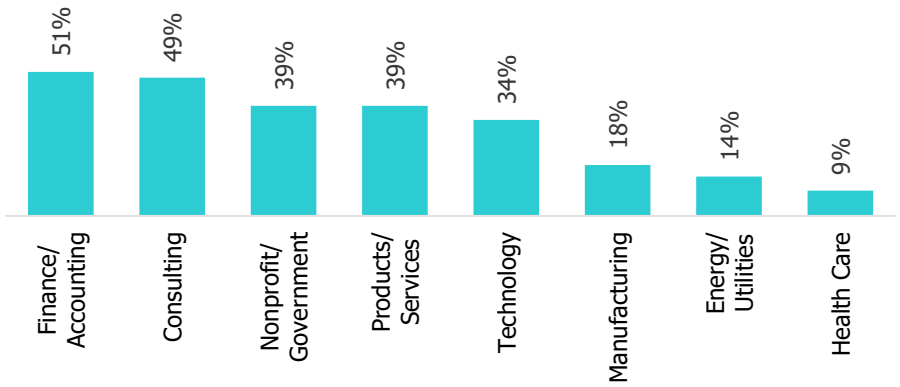
- Post-GME career goals
- Post-GME industries of interest
- Post-GME job functions of interest

Citizens of Australia

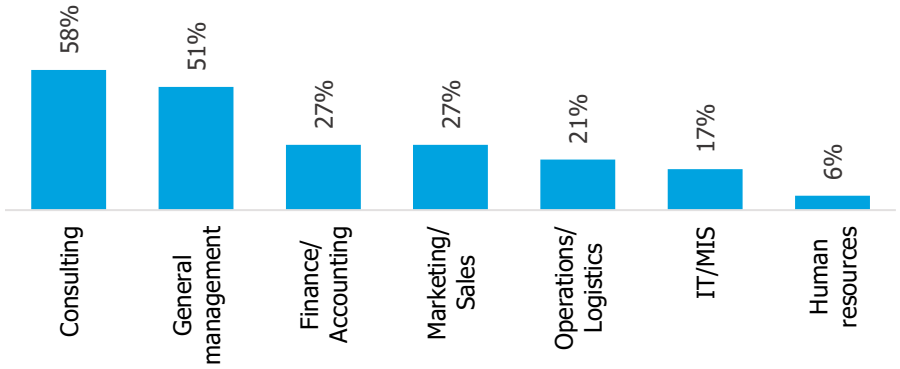
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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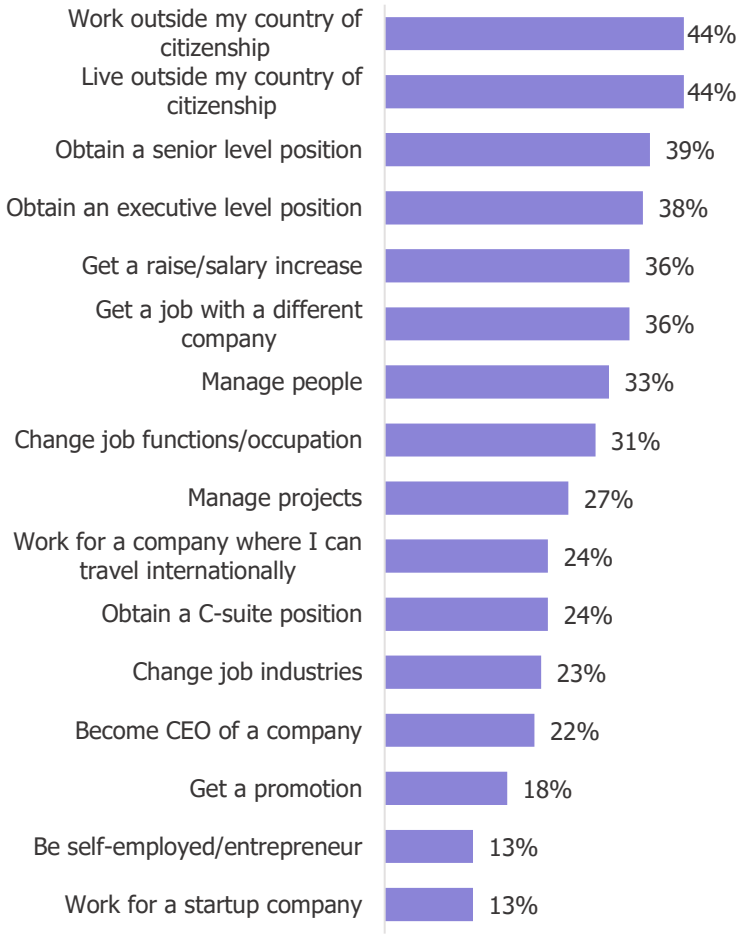
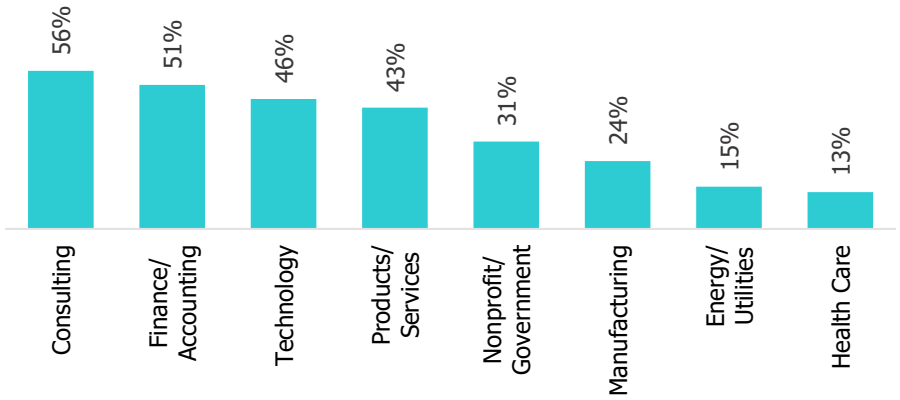
Citizens of Brazil

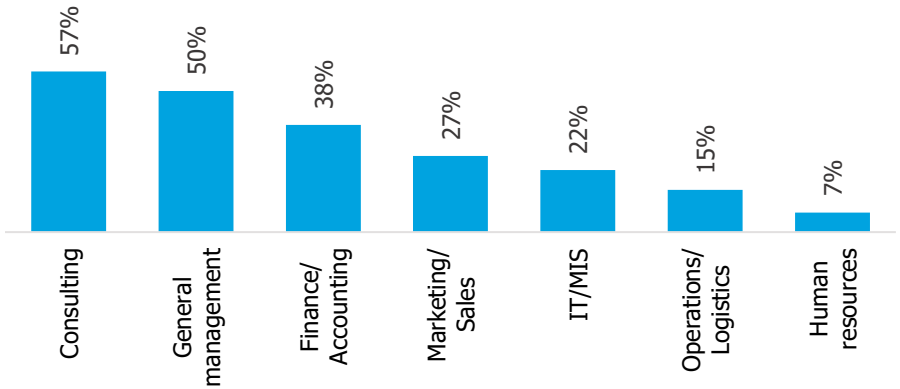
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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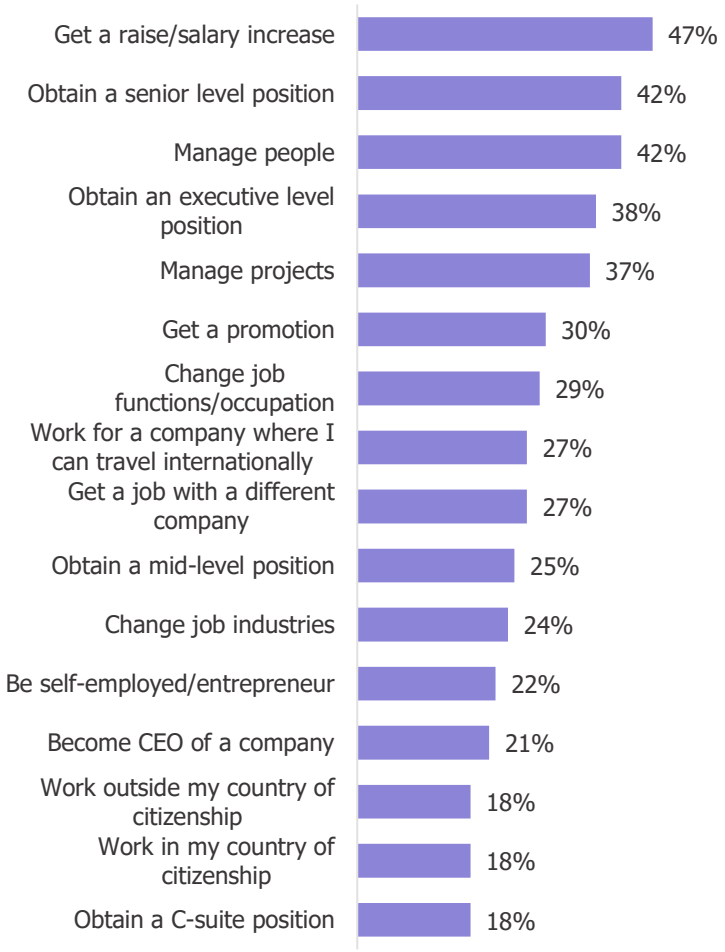
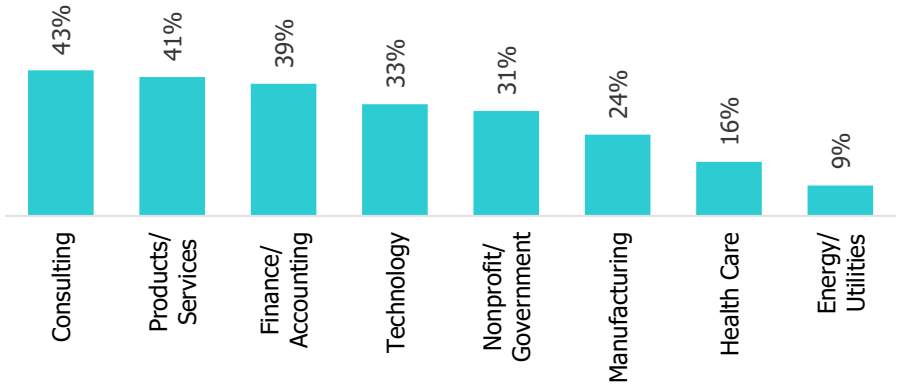
Citizens of Canada

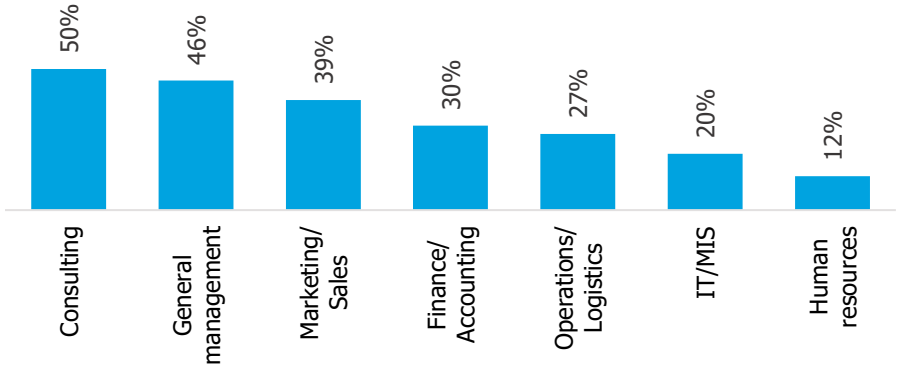
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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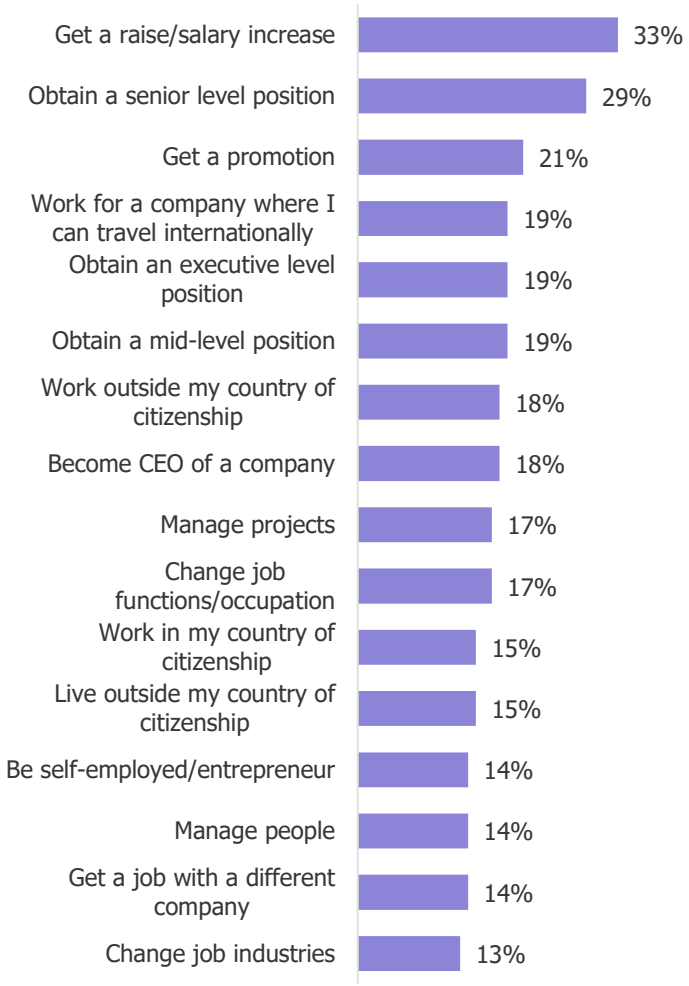
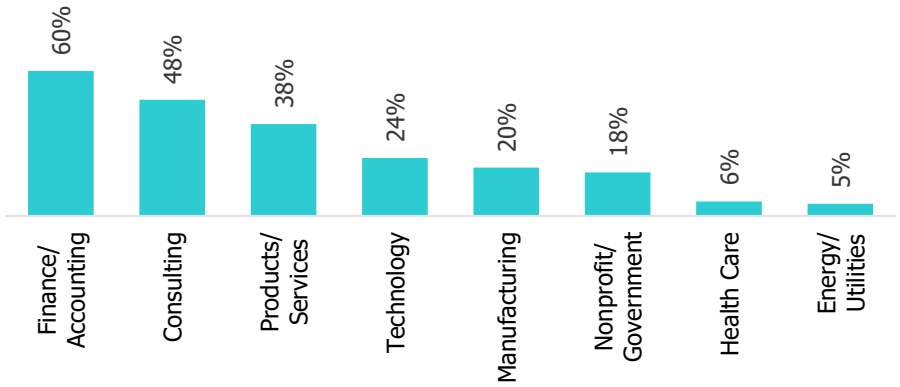
Citizens of China

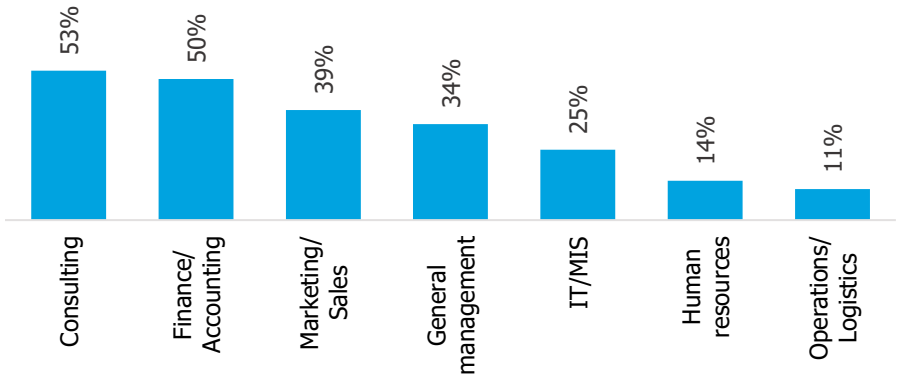
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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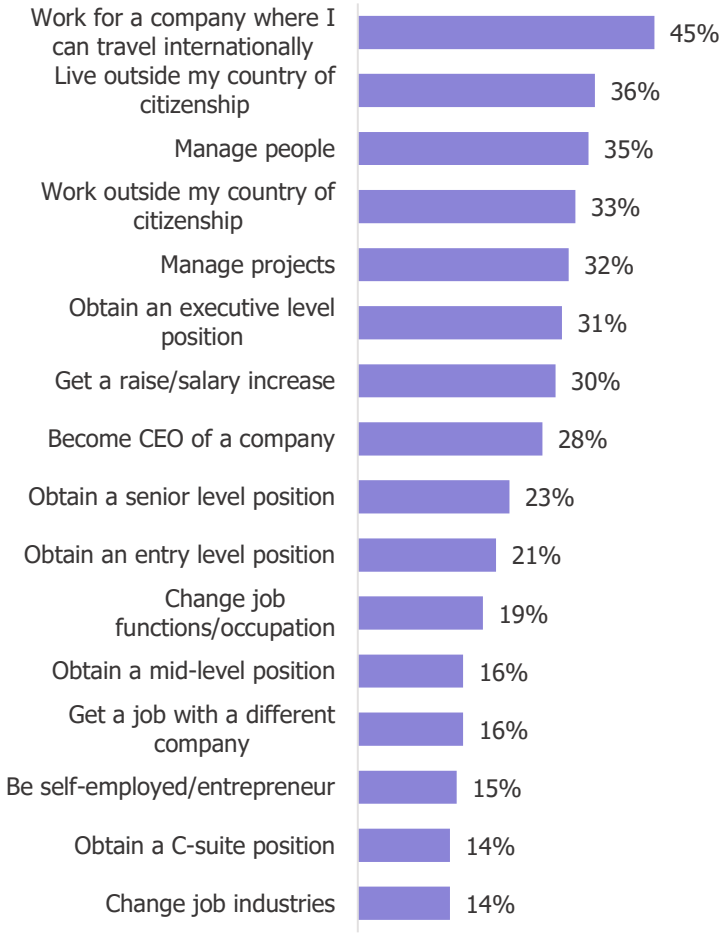
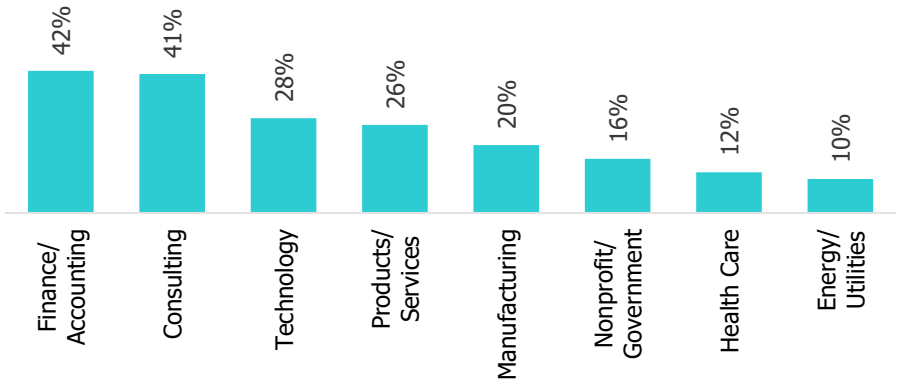
Citizens of France

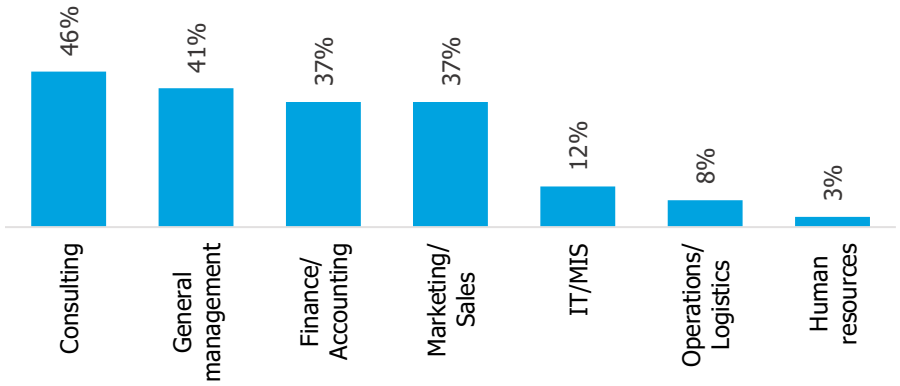
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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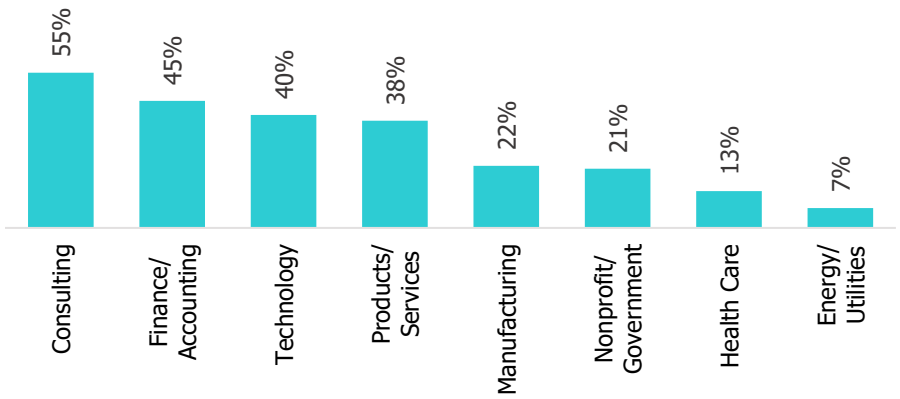
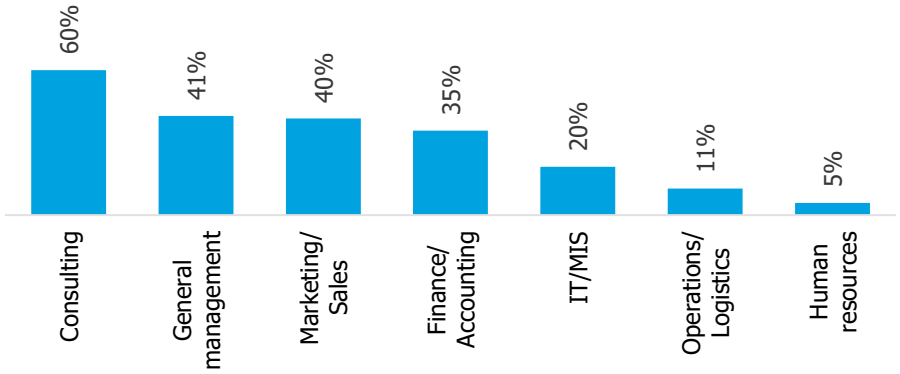
Citizens of Germany

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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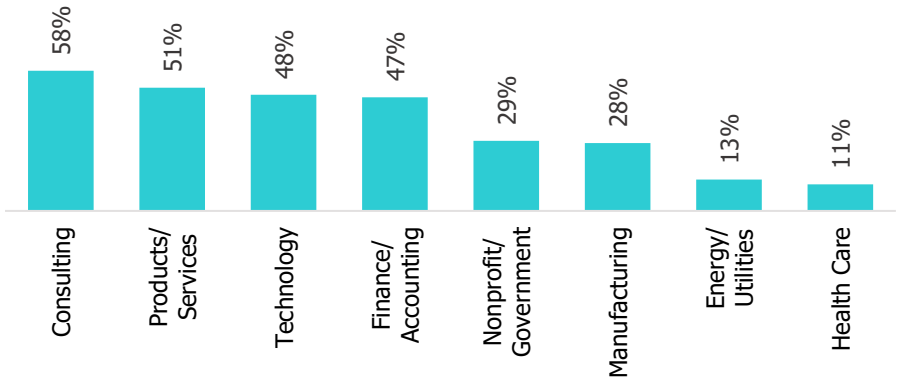
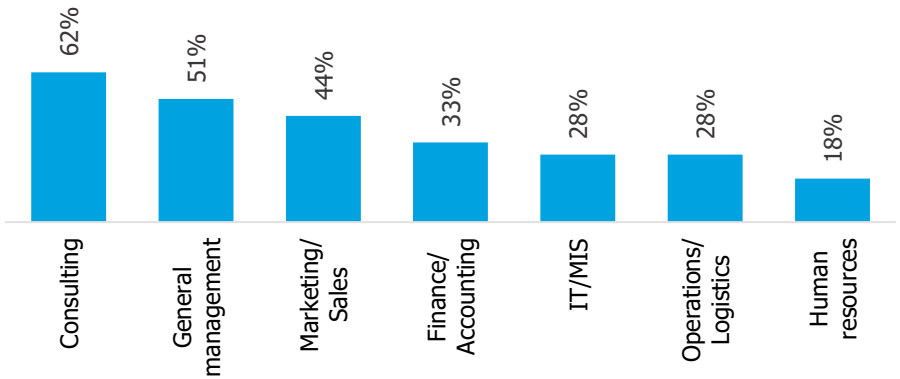
Citizens of India

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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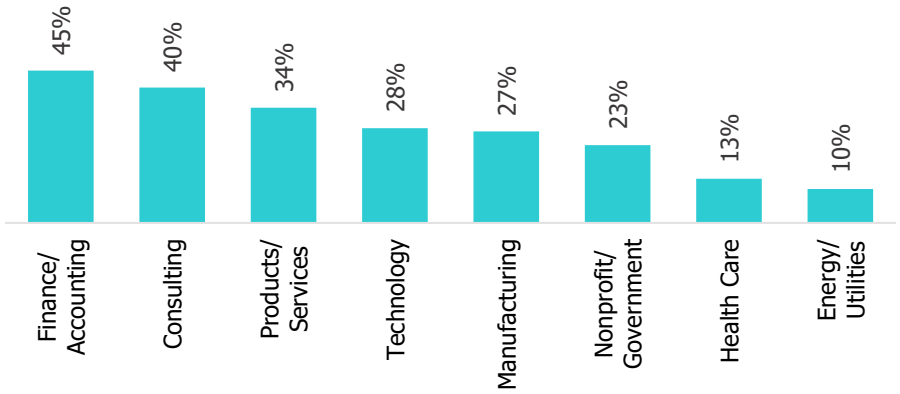
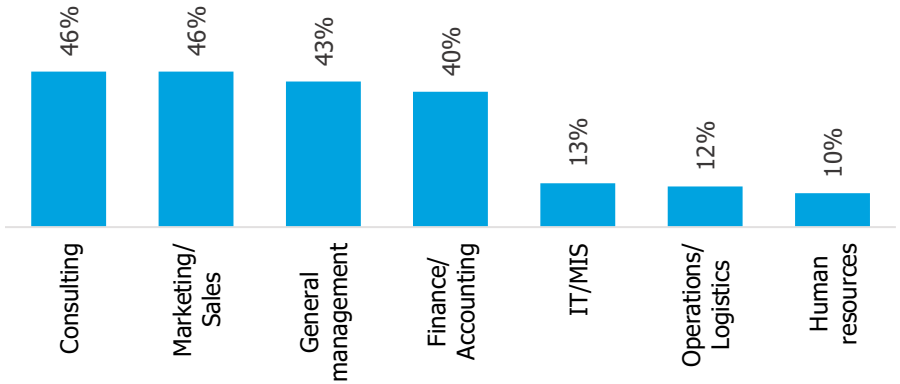
Citizens of Italy

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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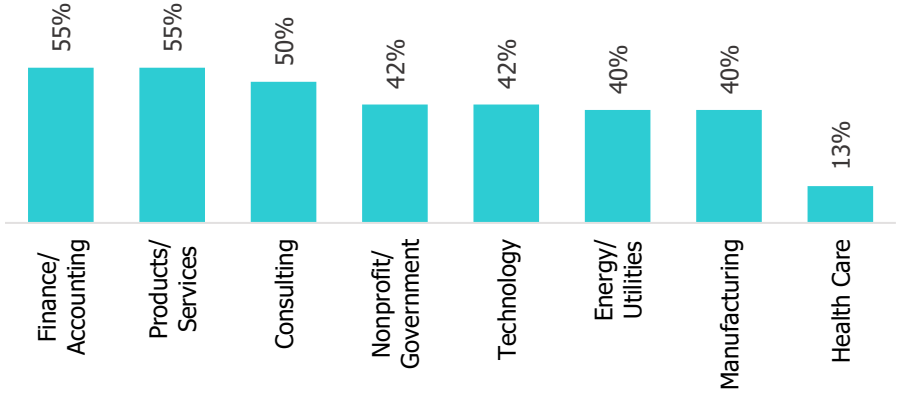
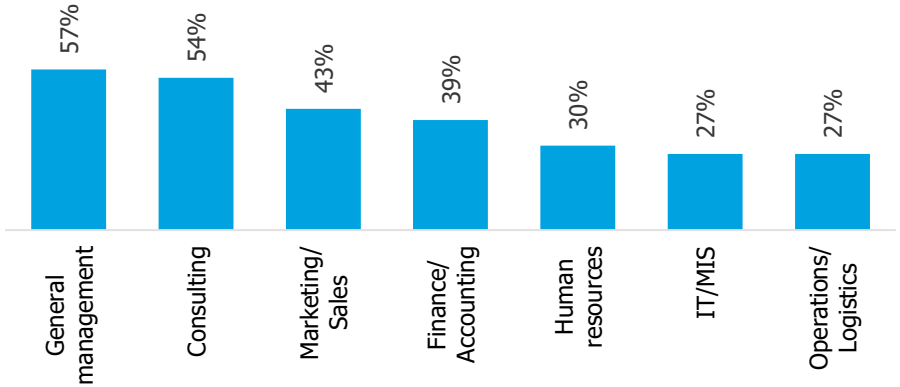
Citizens of Nigeria

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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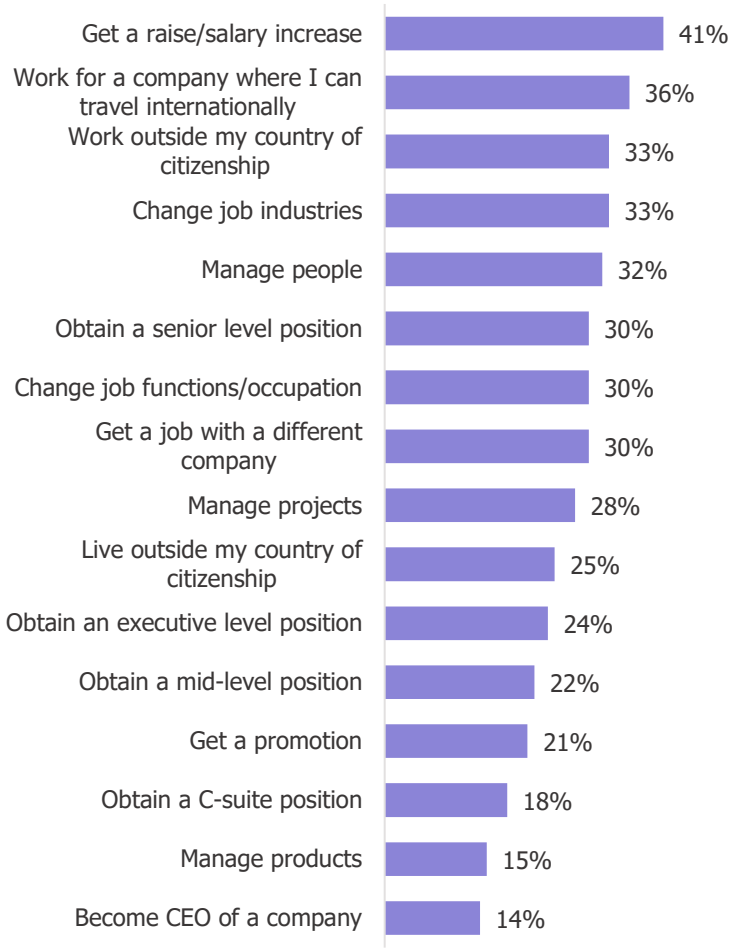
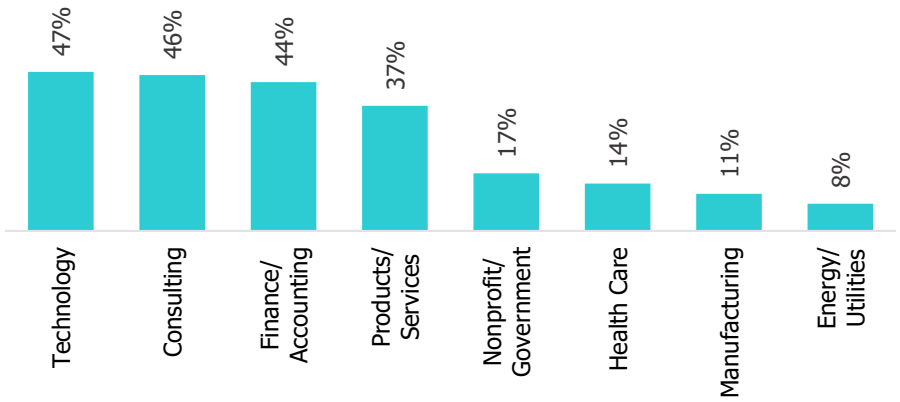
Citizens of Singapore

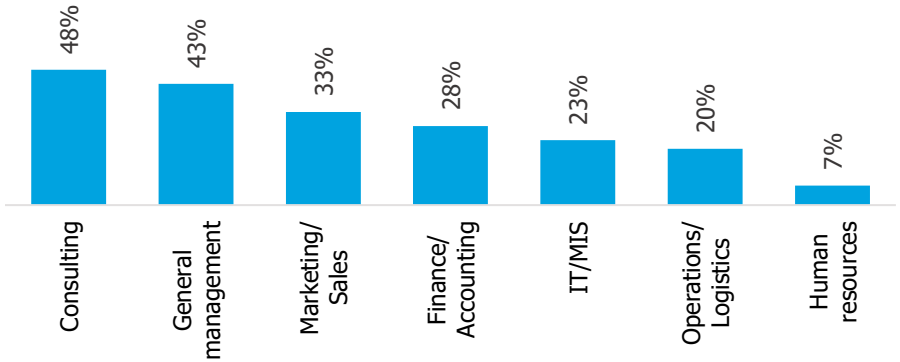
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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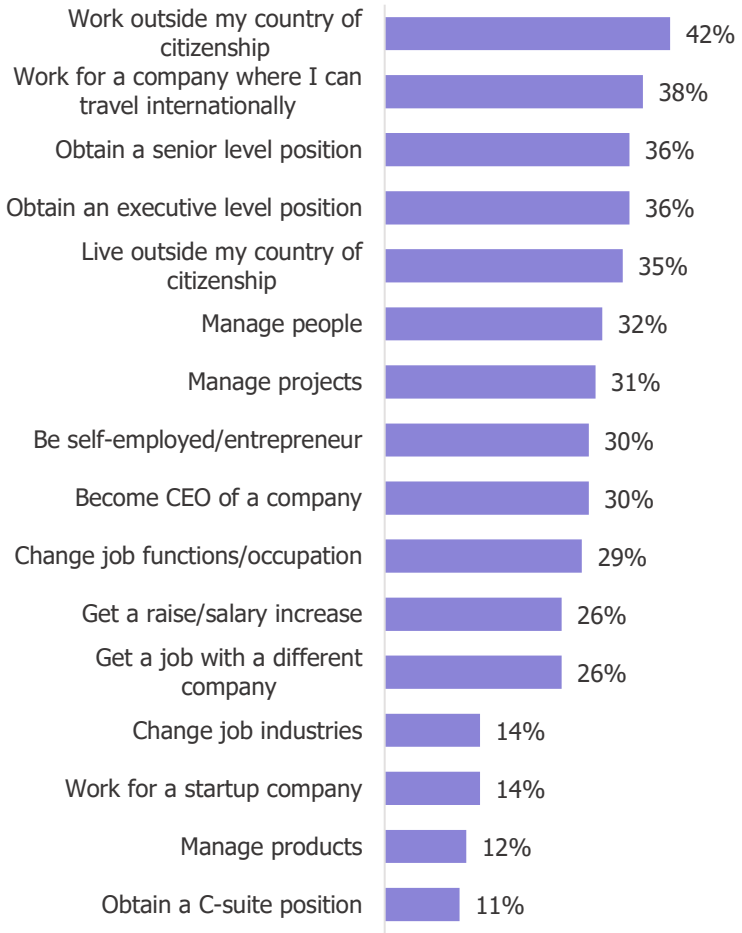
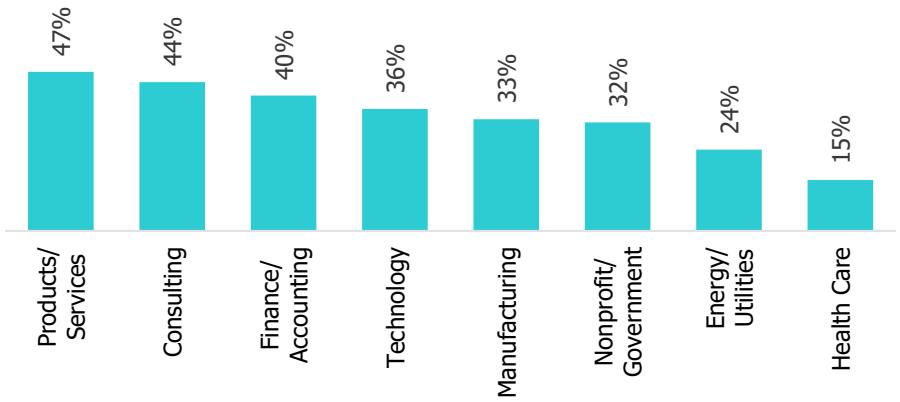
Citizens of South Africa

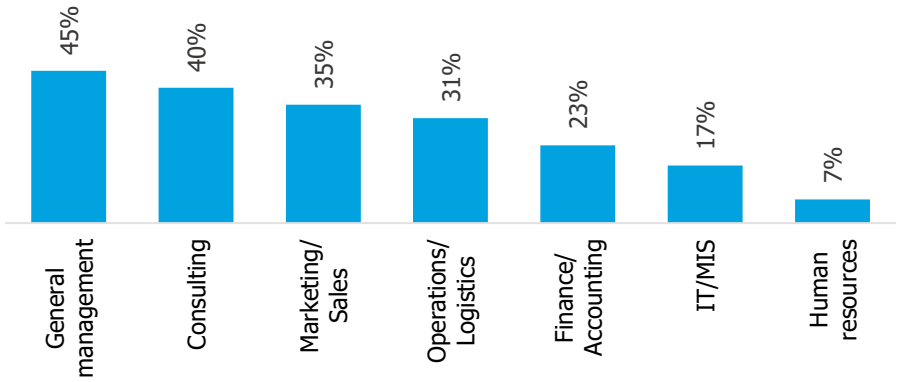
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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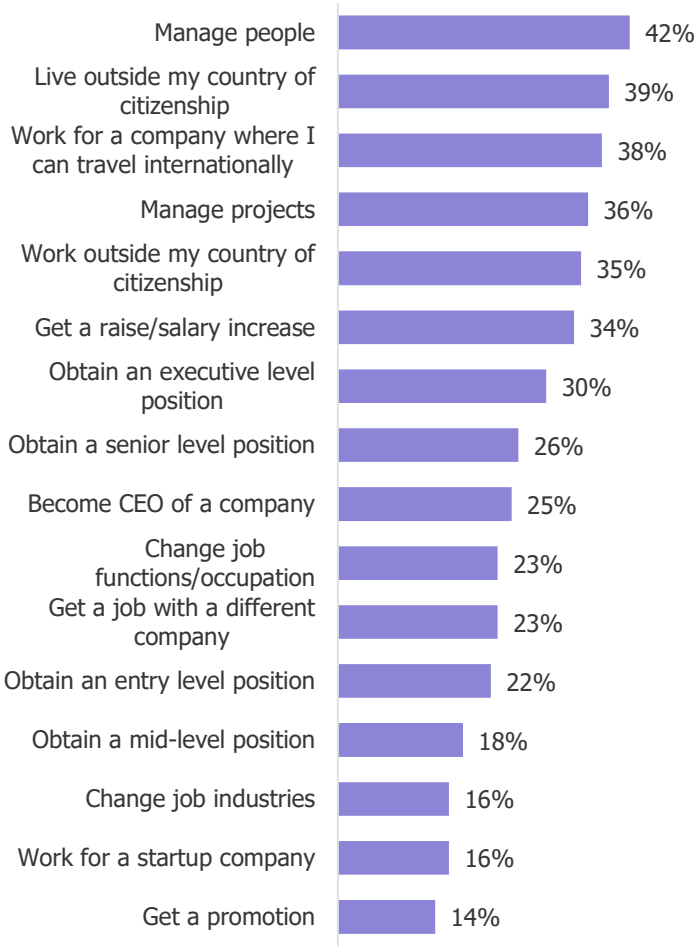
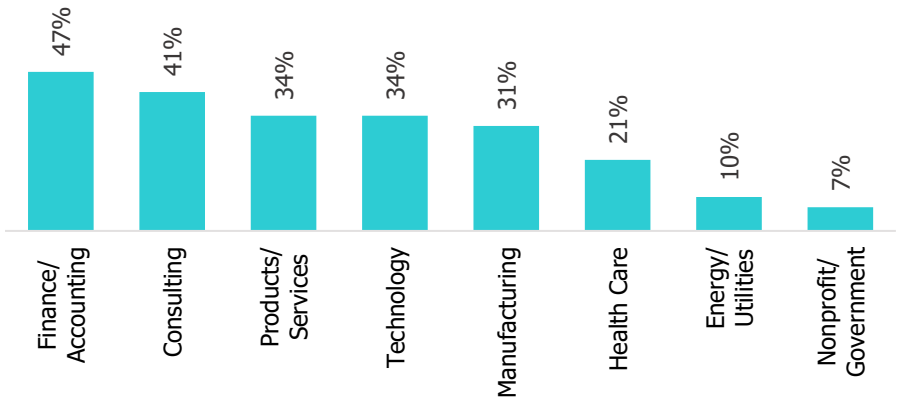
Citizens of Spain

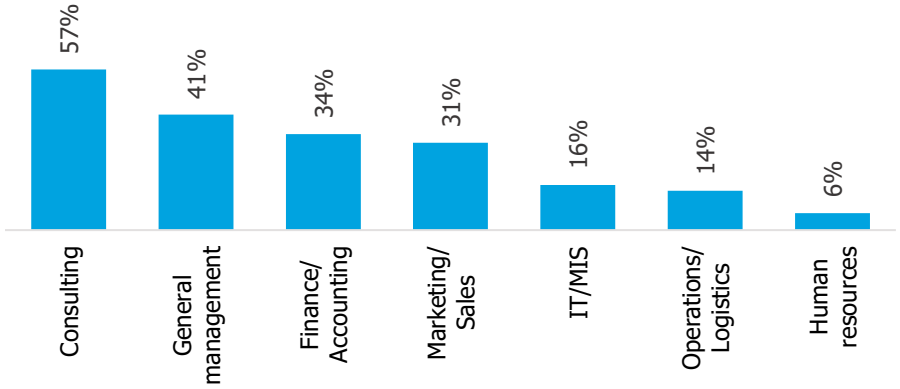
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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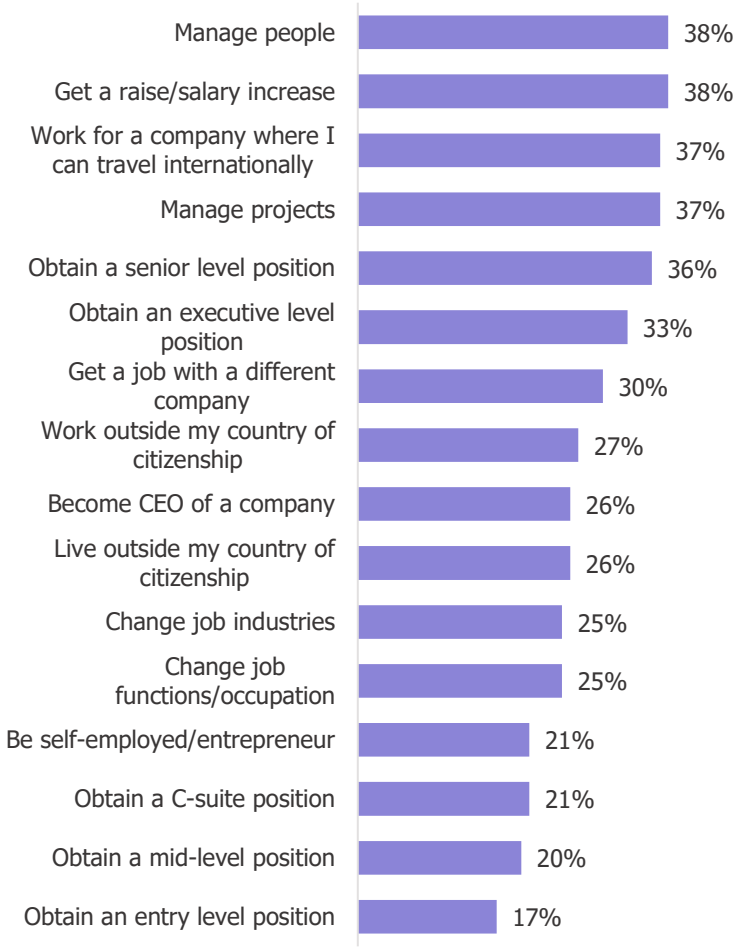
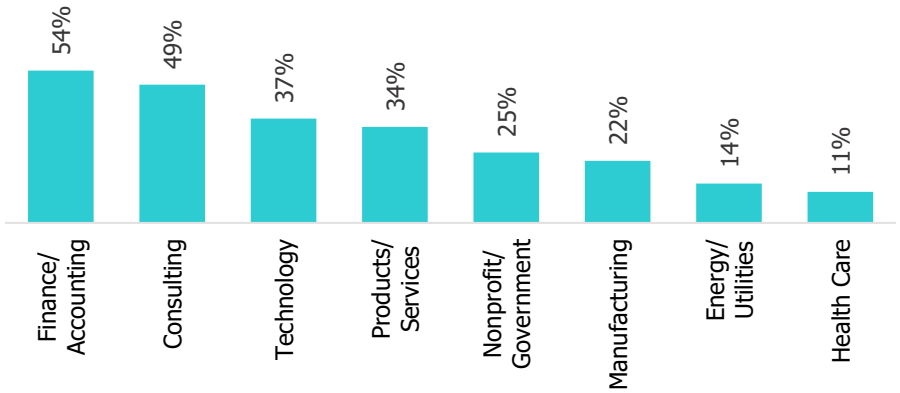
Citizens of the United Kingdom

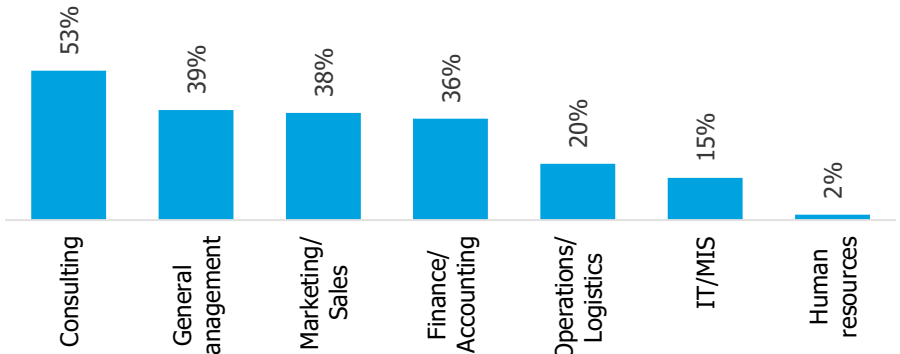
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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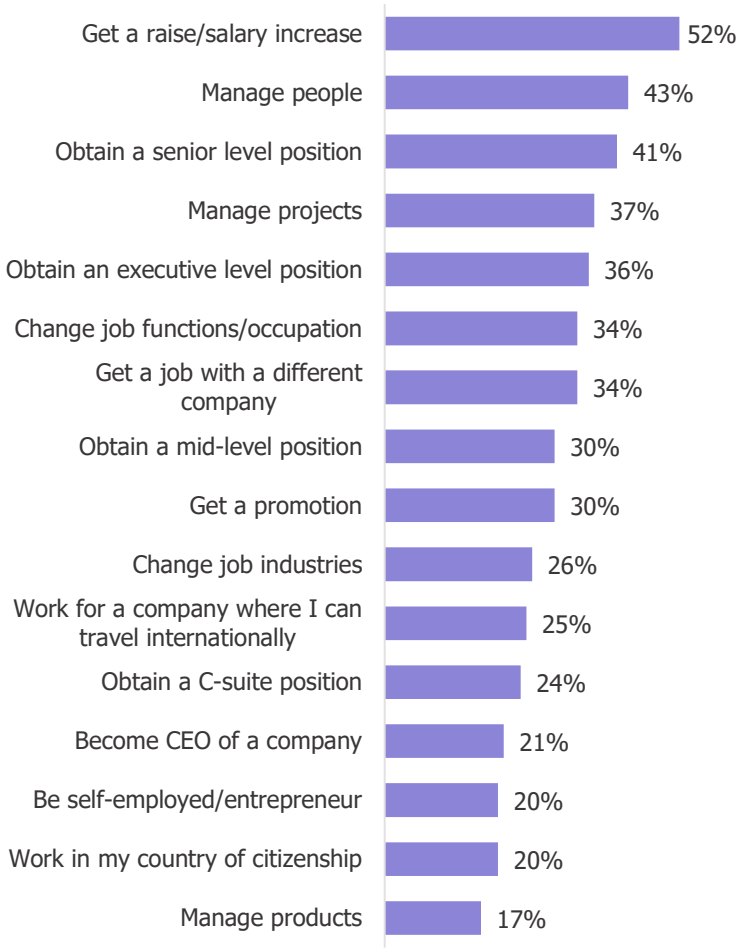
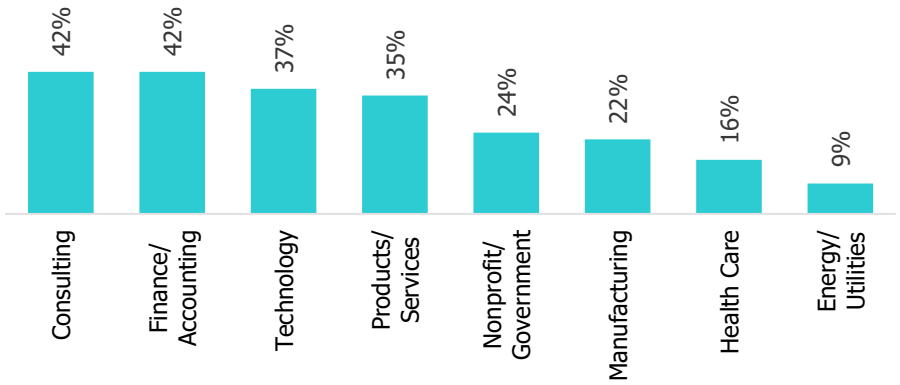
Citizens of the United States

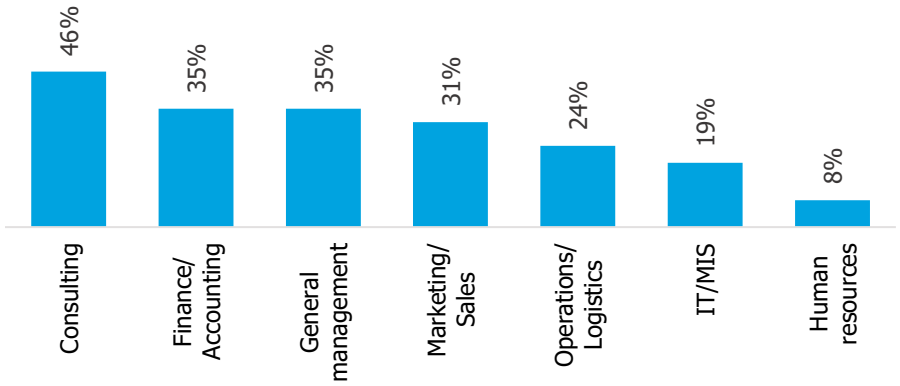
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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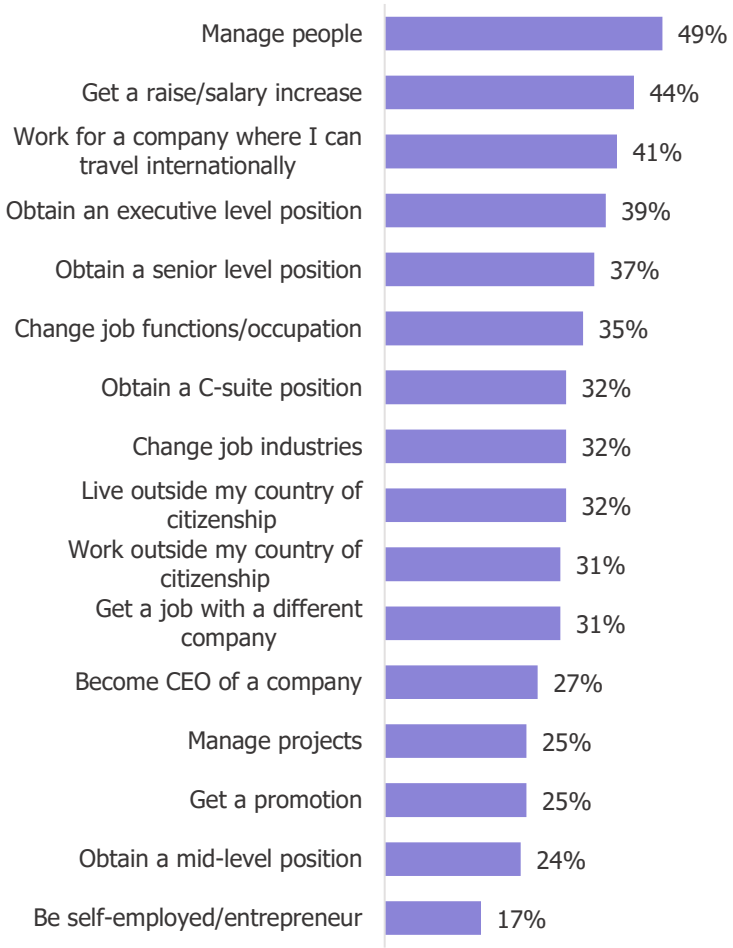
Appendix C: Candidate Profiles by Residence

This appendix section features data by candidate residence, including:

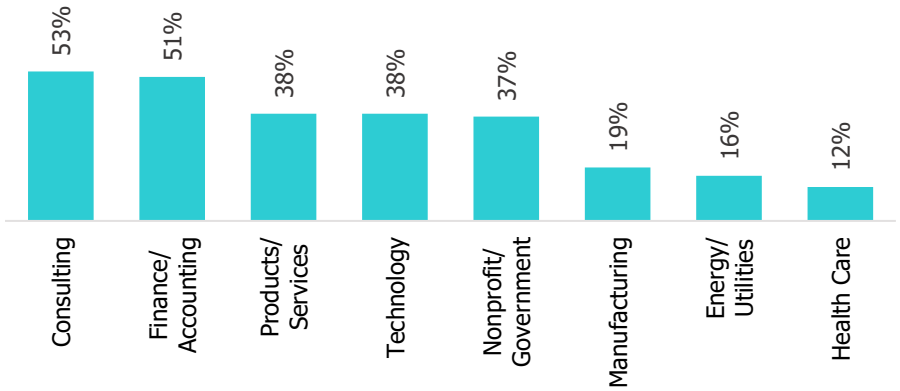
- Post-GME career goals
- Post-GME industries of interest
- Post-GME job functions of interest

Residents of Australia

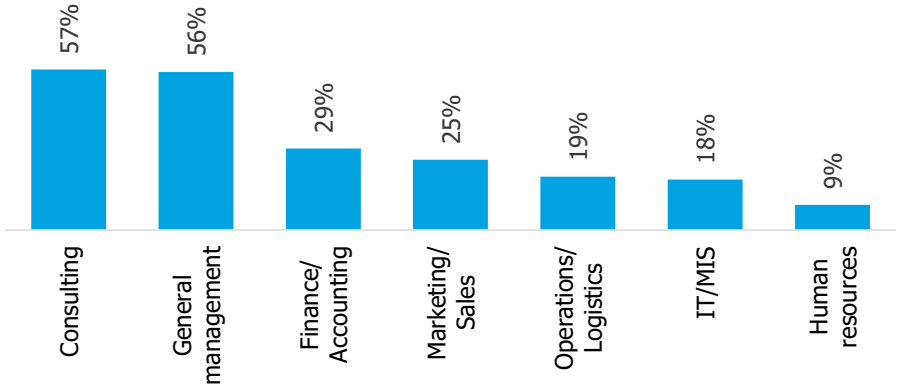
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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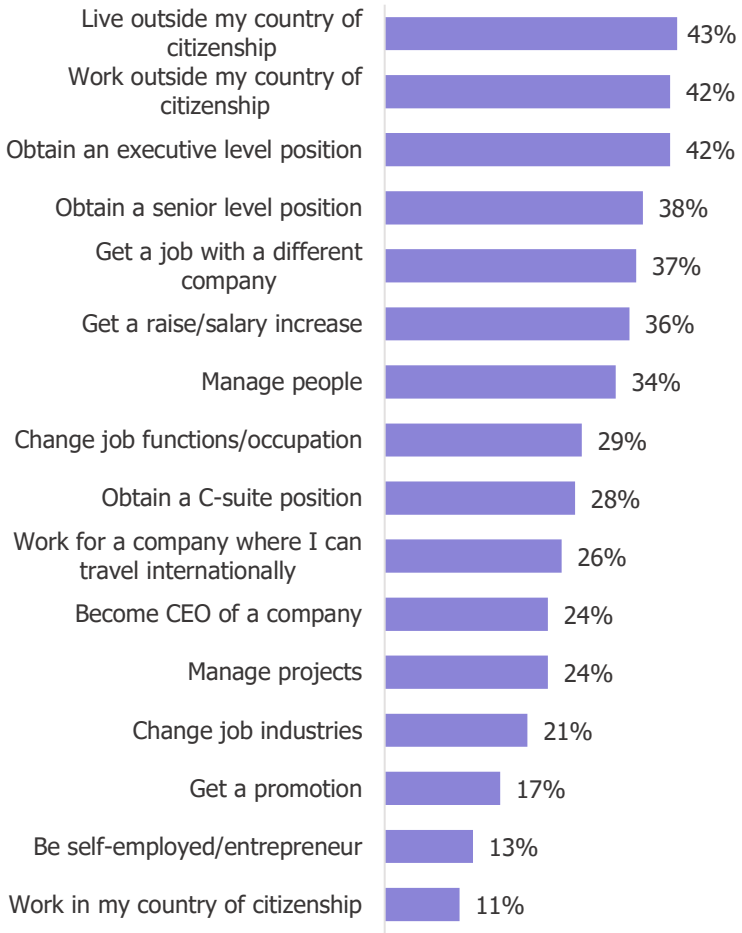
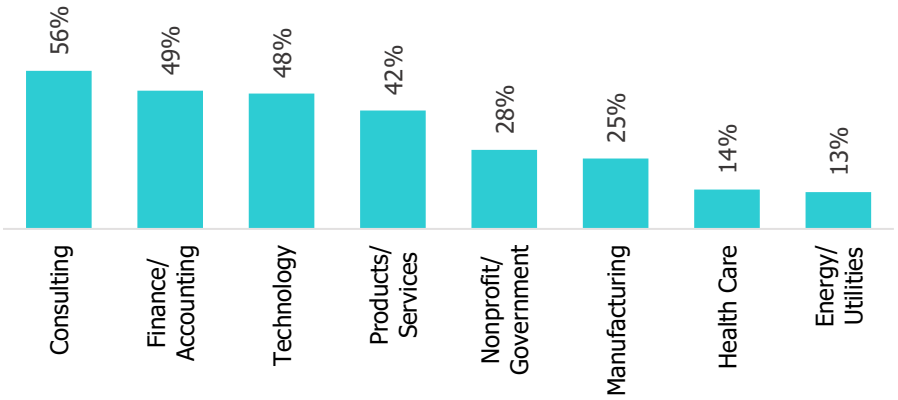
Residents of Brazil

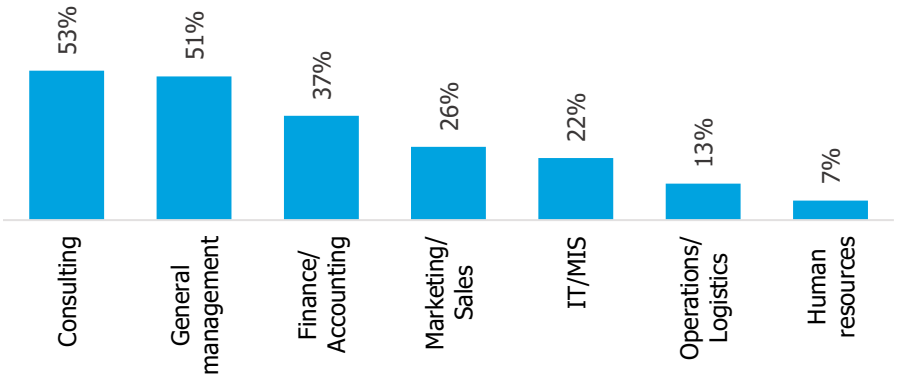
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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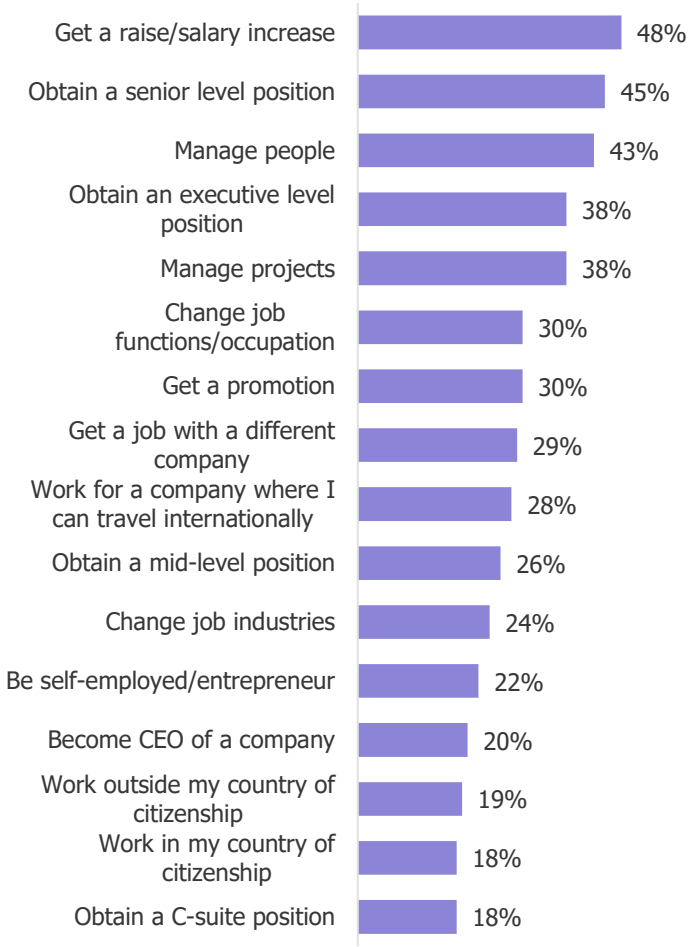
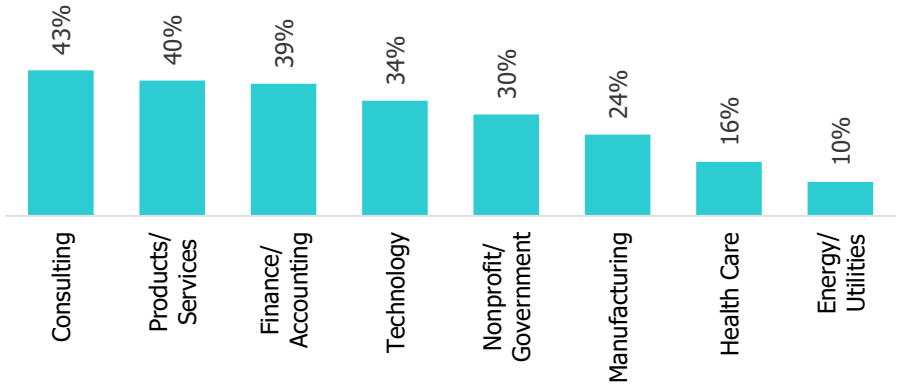
Residents of Canada

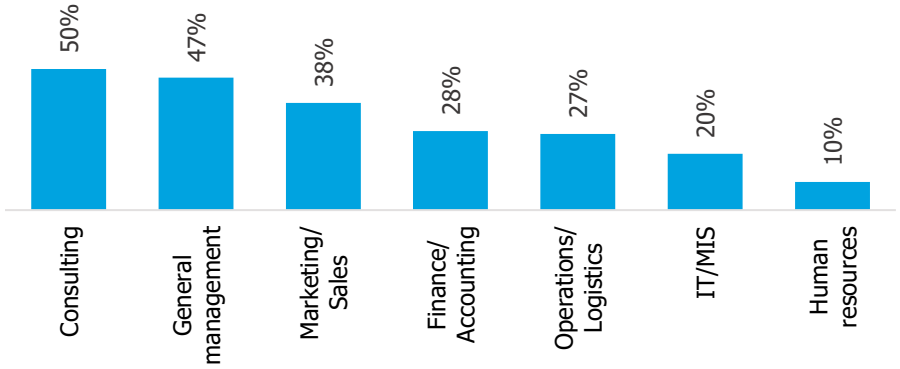
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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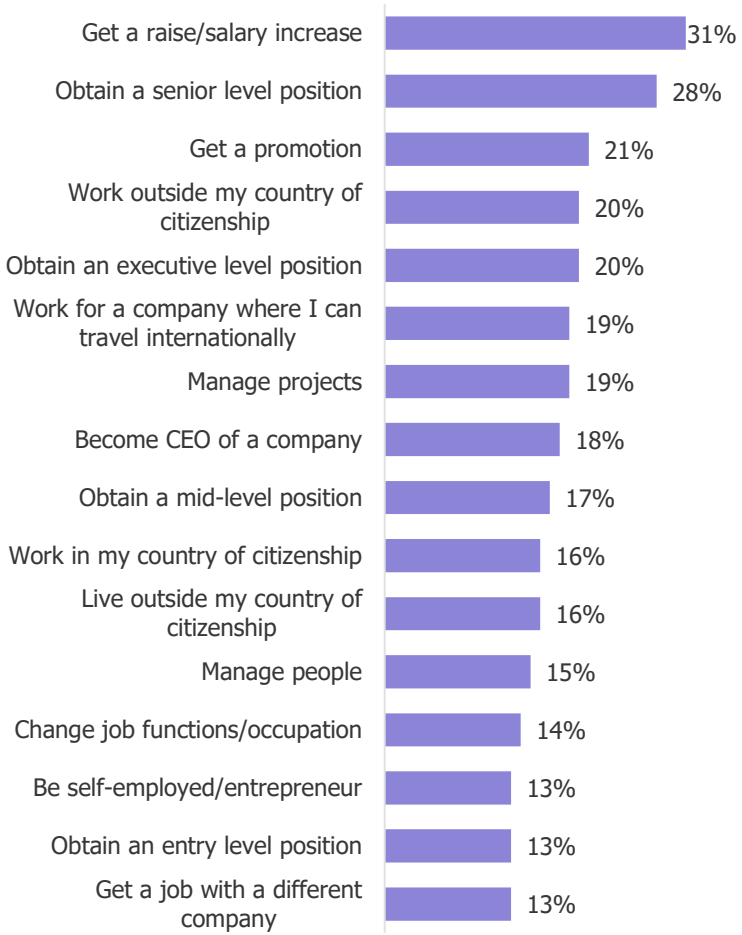
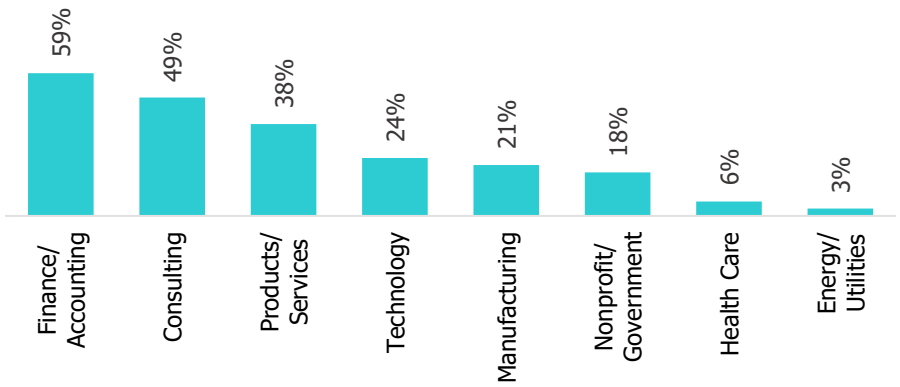
Residents of China

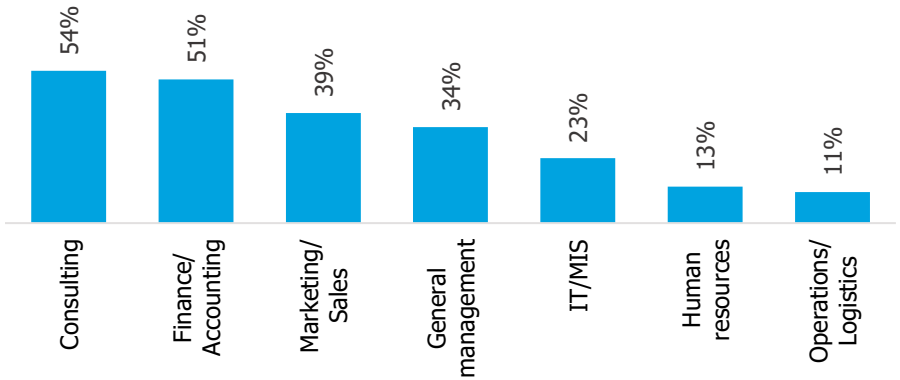
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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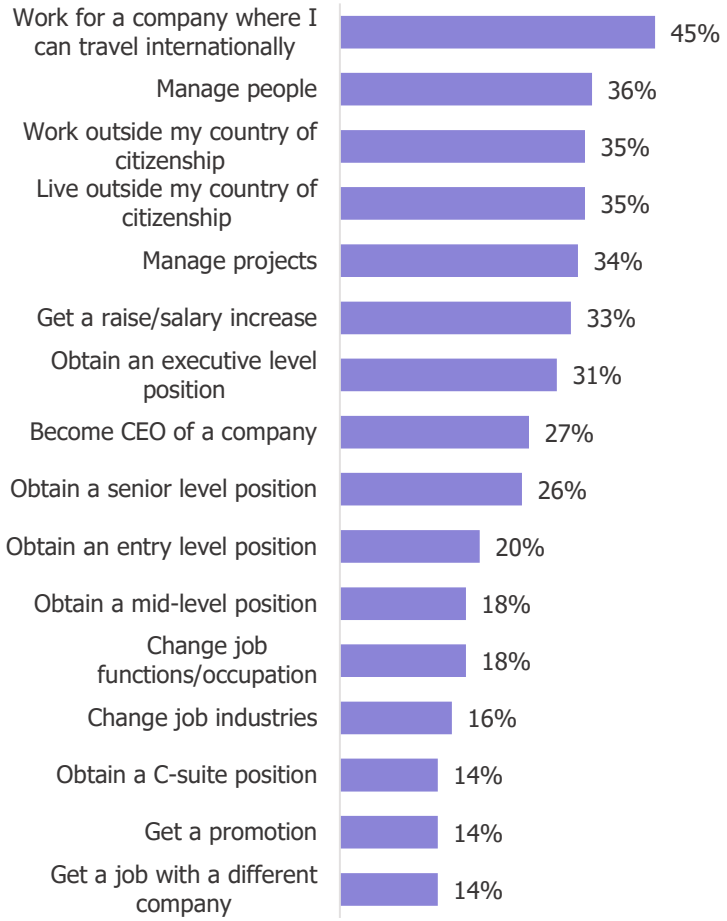
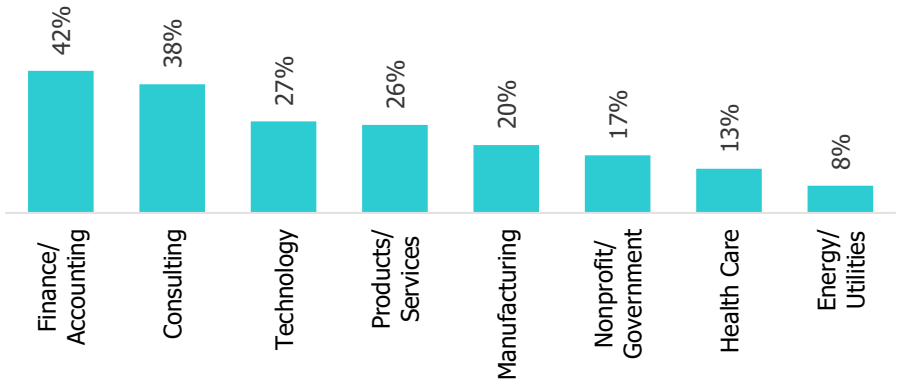
Residents of France

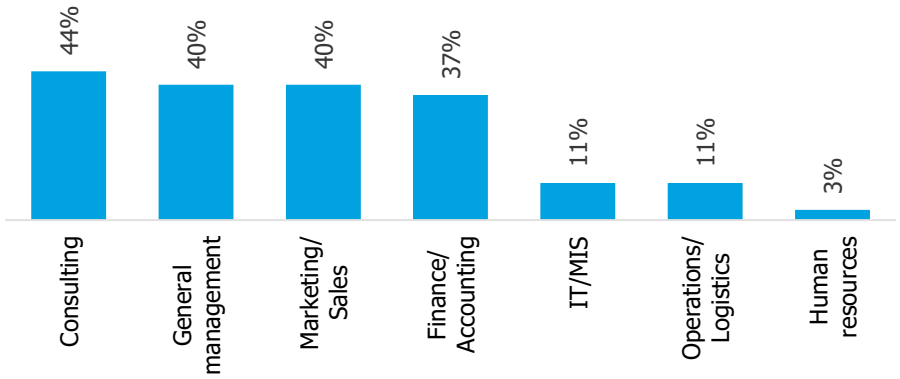
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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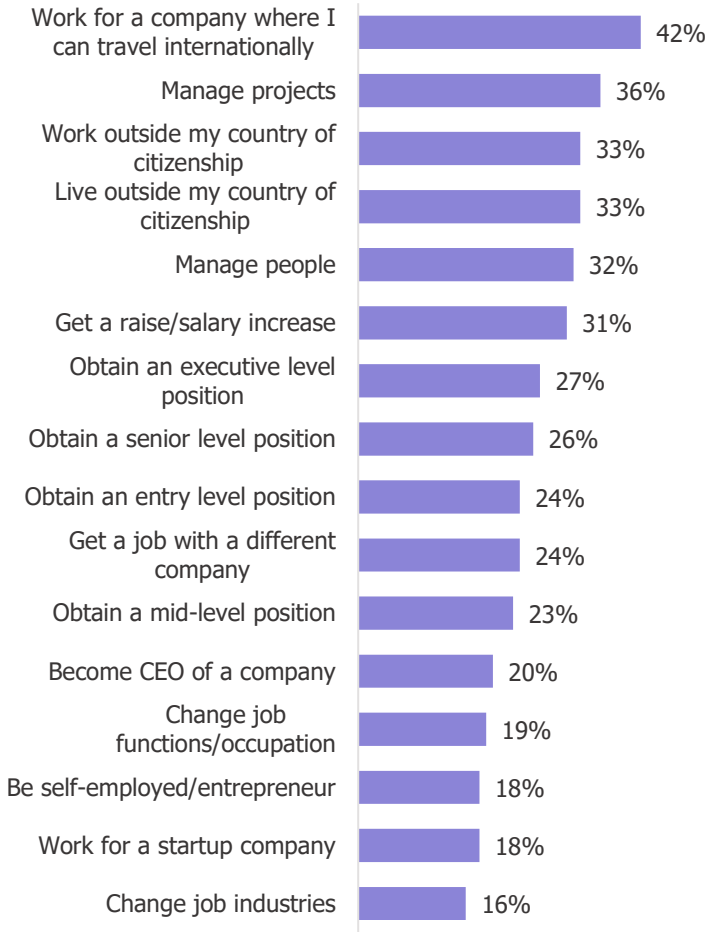
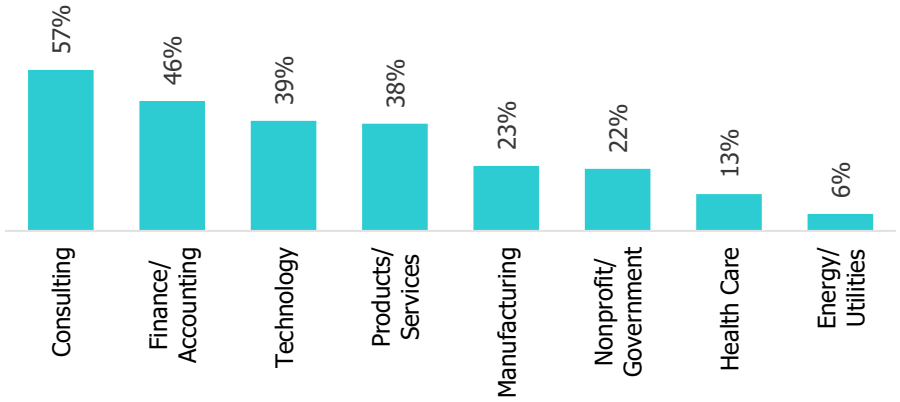
Residents of Germany

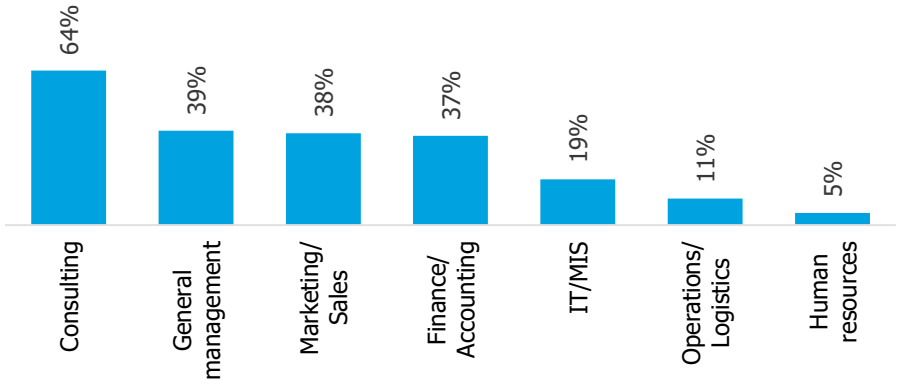
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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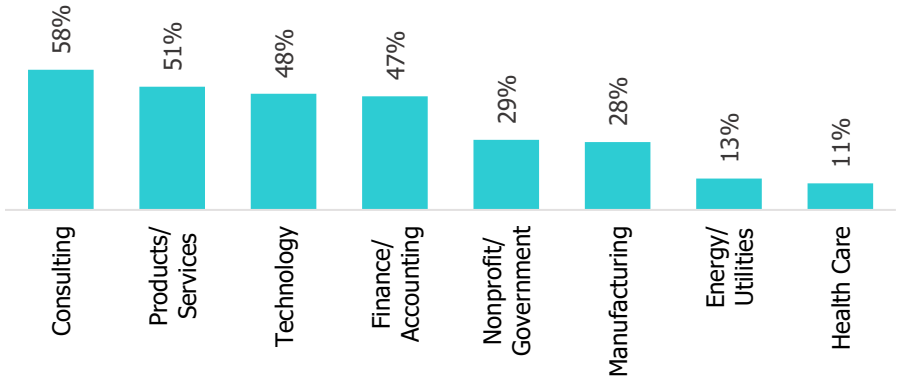
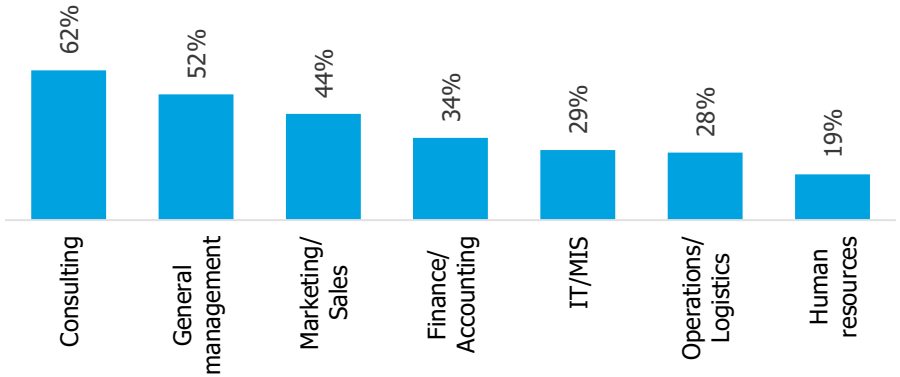
Residents of India

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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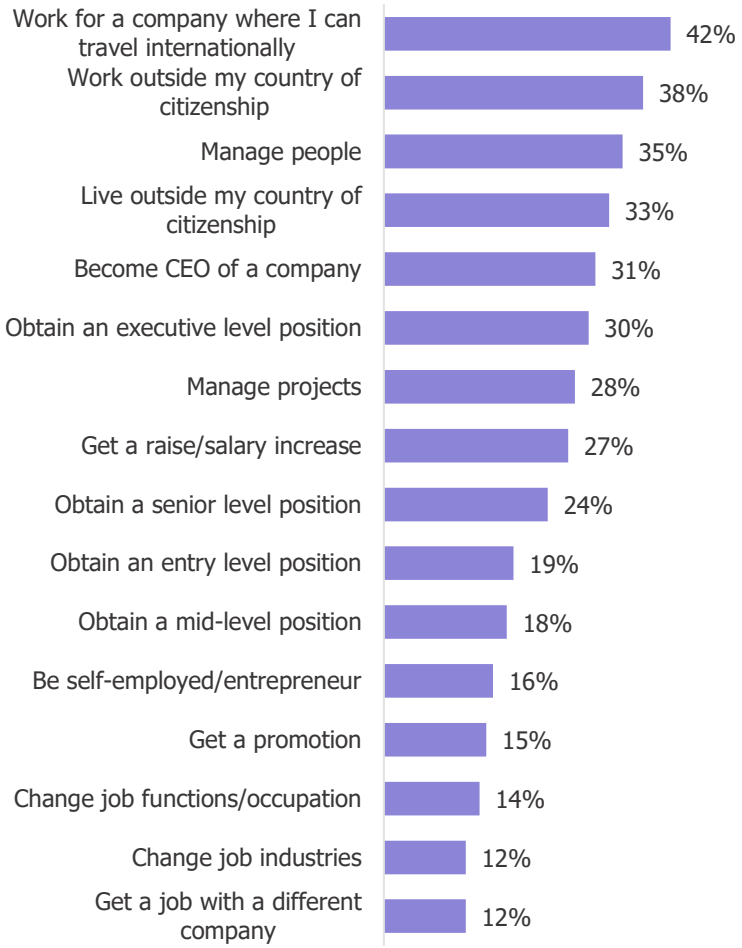
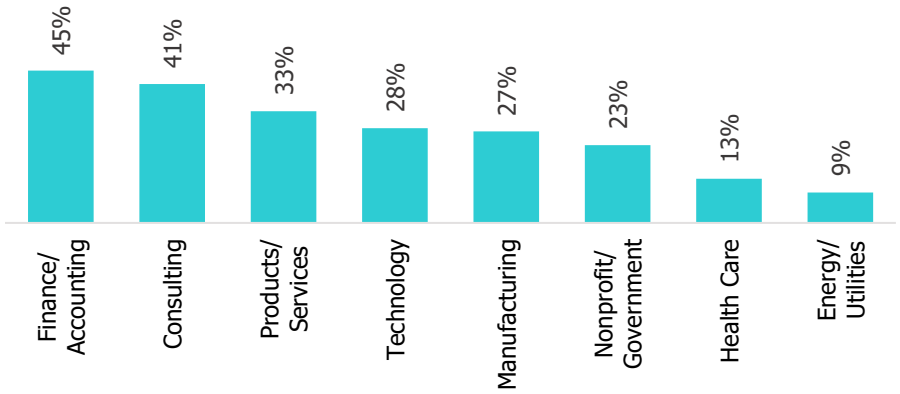
Residents of Italy

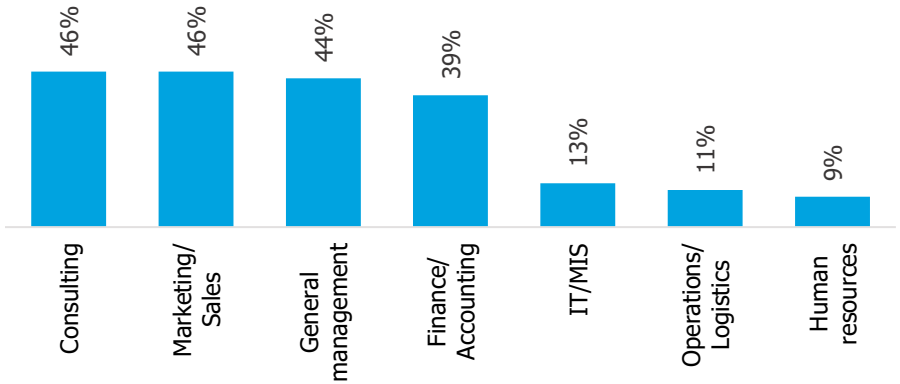
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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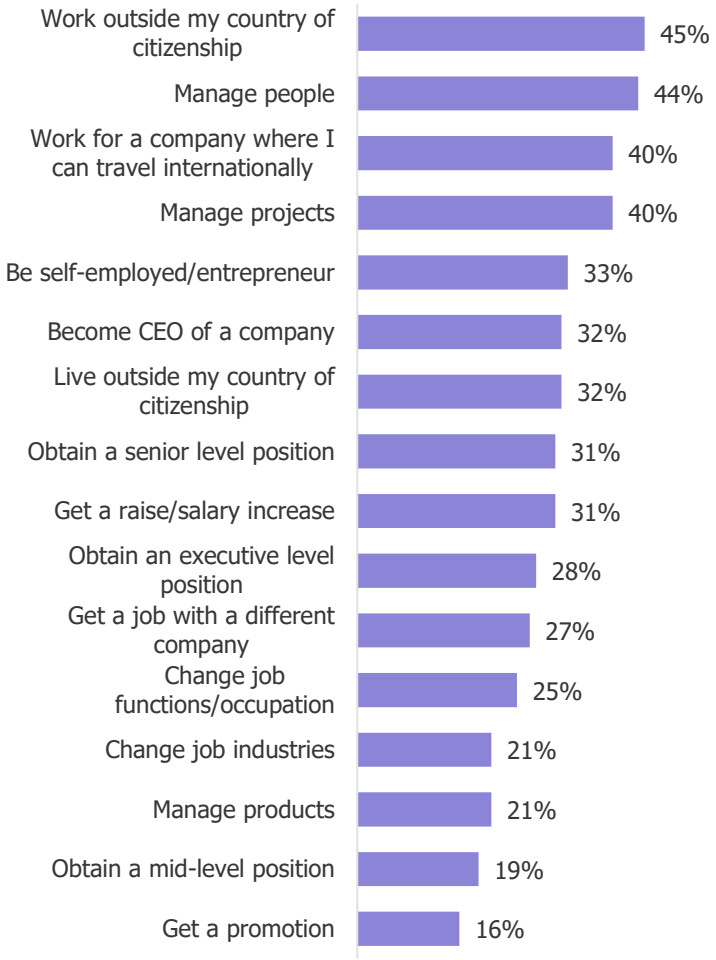
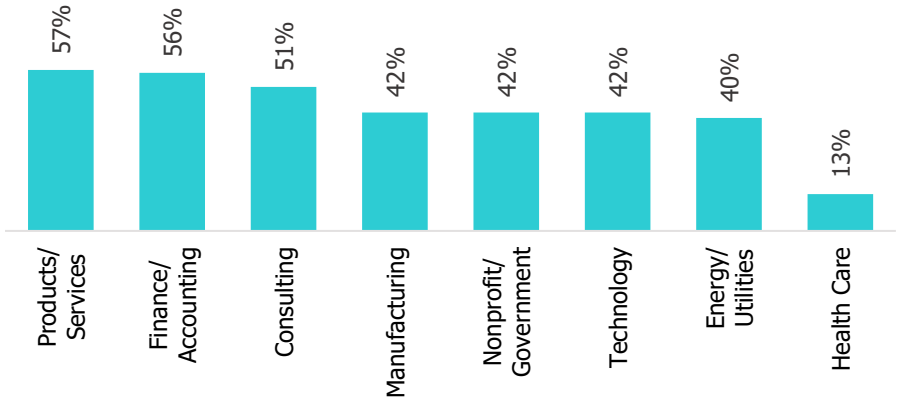
Residents of Nigeria

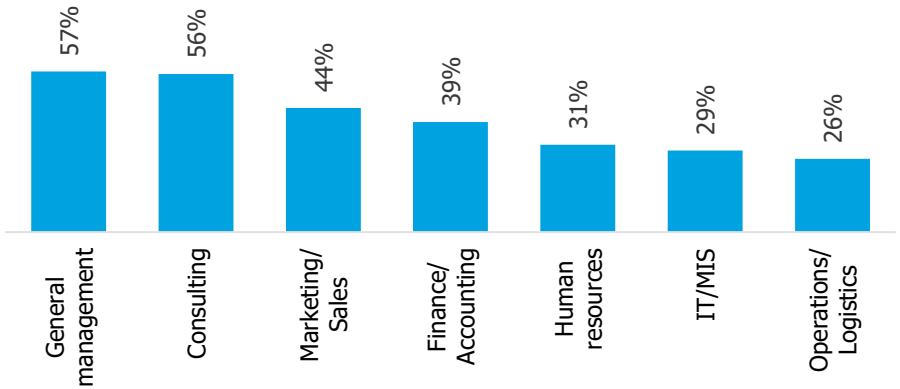
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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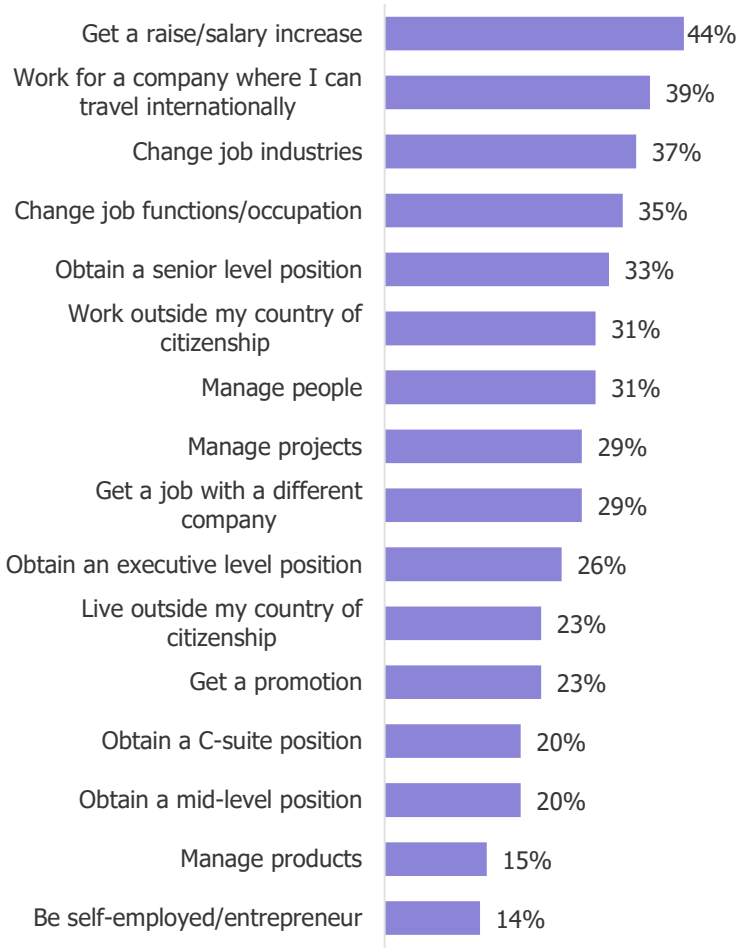
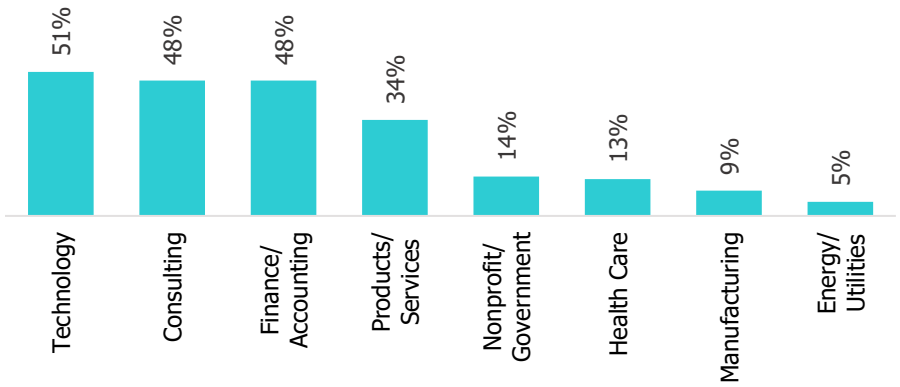
Residents of Singapore

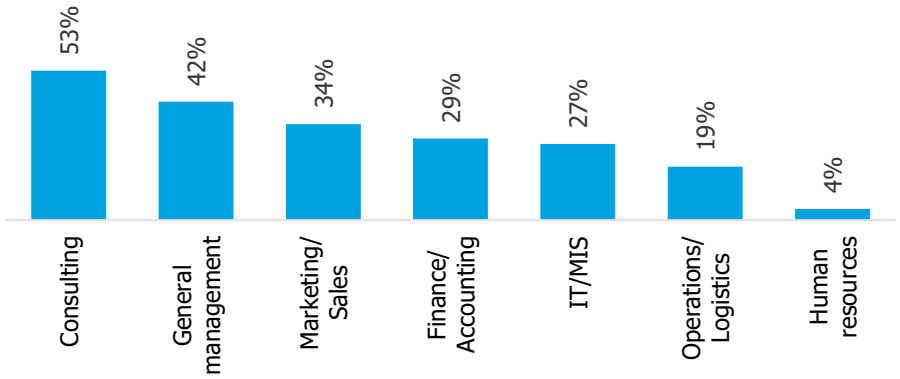
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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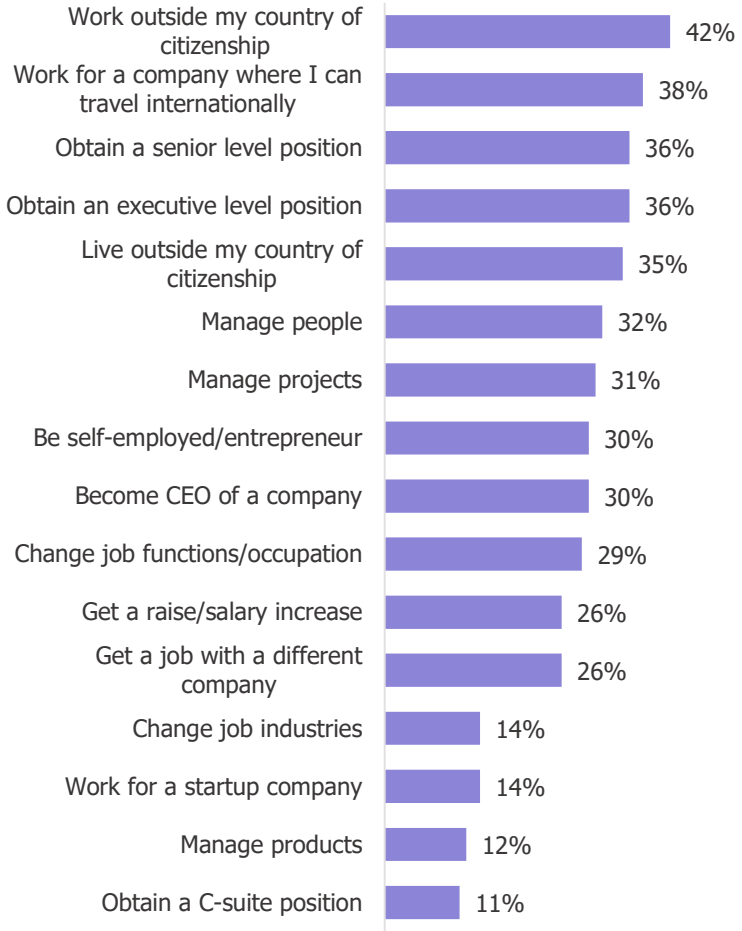
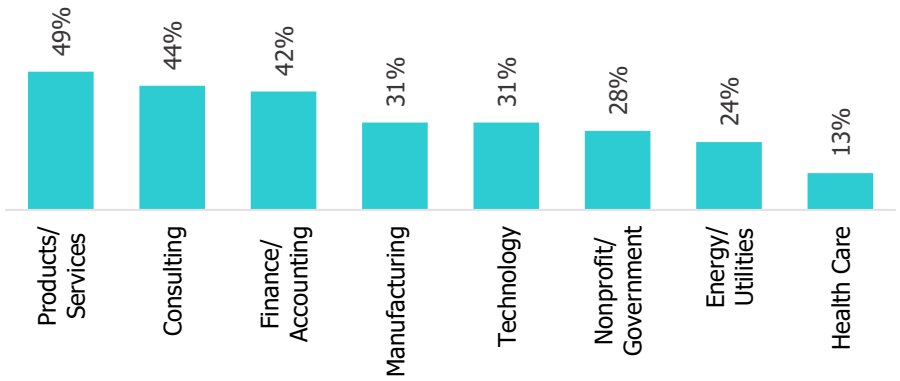
Citizens of South Africa

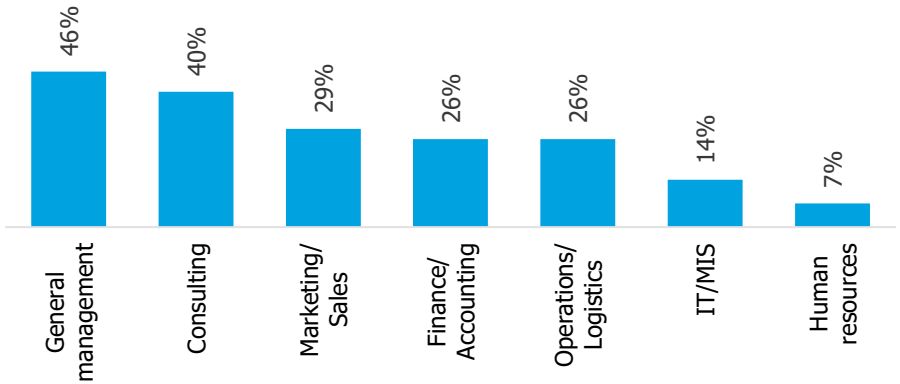
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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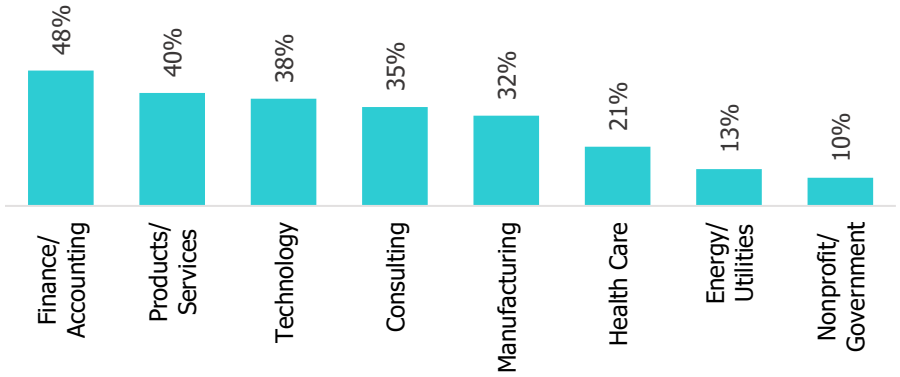
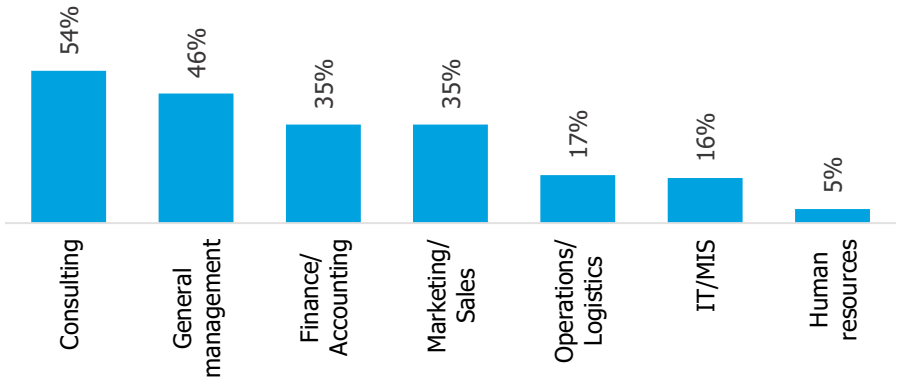
Residents of Spain

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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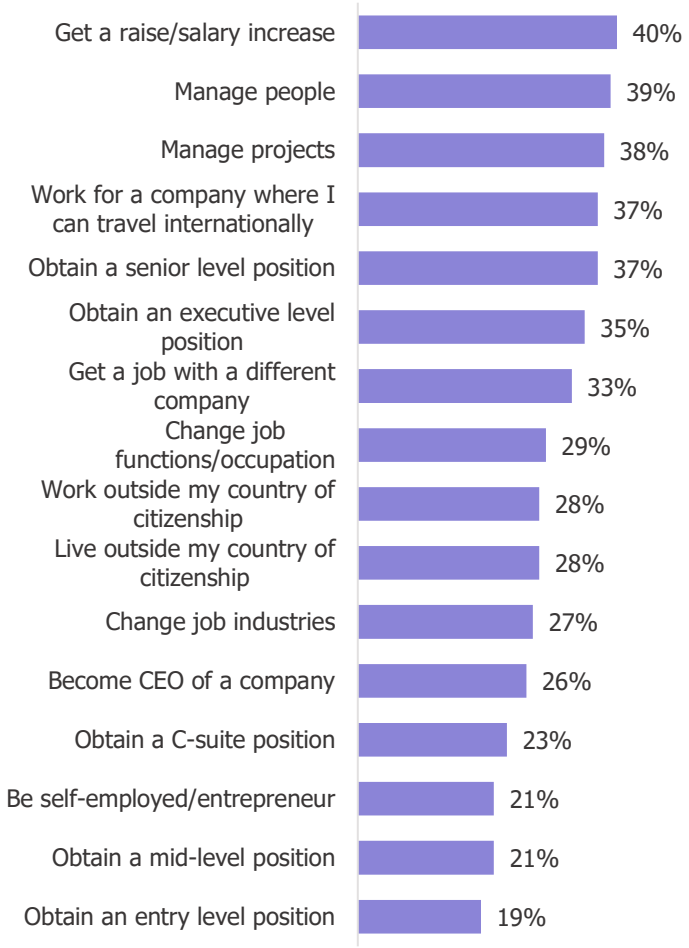
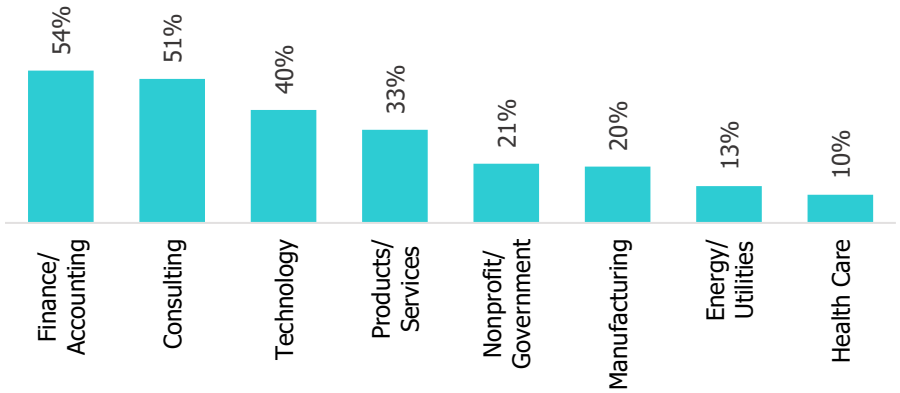
Residents of the United Kingdom

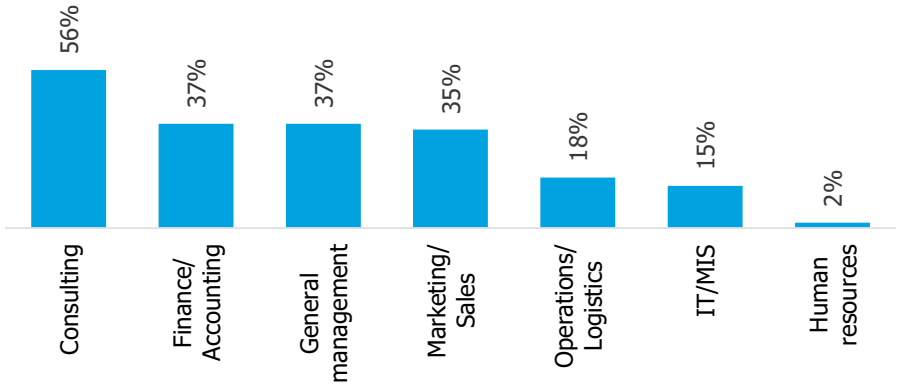
Post-GME Career Goals



Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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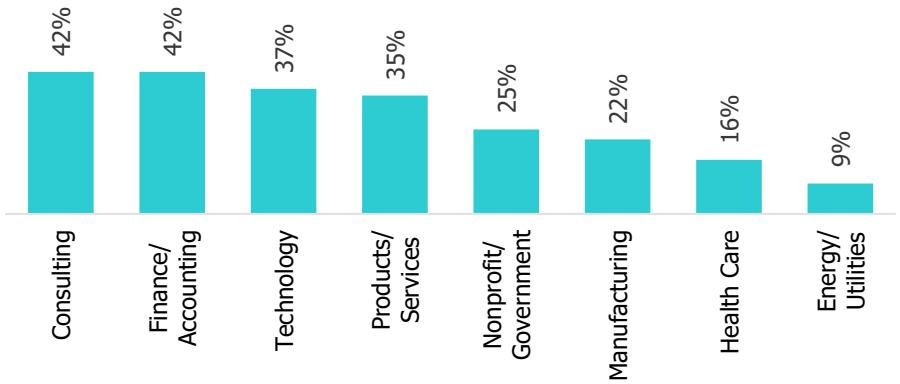
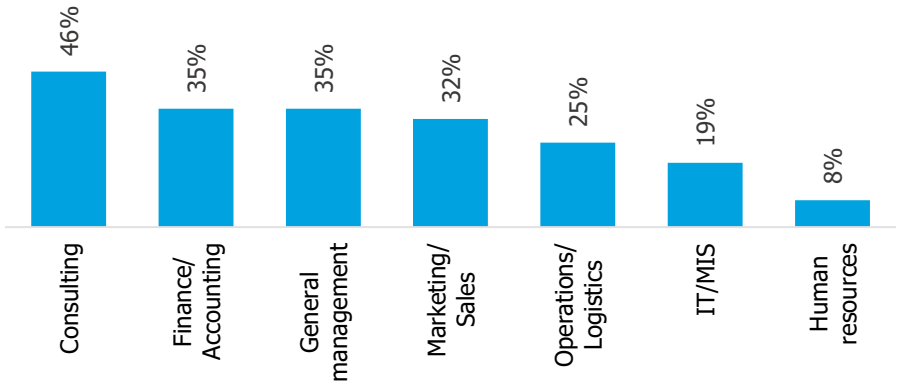
Residents of the United States

Post-GME Career Goals

Post-GME Industries of Interest



Post-GME Job Functions of Interest



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nographic Profile

on details the gender and age details of 2020
pondents by their country of citizenship and

Respondent Demographic Profile

		Overall*	Gender			Age				
			Male	Female	Other	22 and under	23 to 24	25 to 30	31 to 39	40 and older
	Global	**8,430**	**4,826**	**3,578**	**26**	**2,144**	**1,429**	**3,060**	**1,308**	**489**
Citizenship	Africa	610	366	242	2	56	75	253	167	59
	Australia & Pacific Islands	104	61	42	1	16	11	35	24	18
	Canada	455	236	218	1	73	70	193	77	42
	Central & South Asia	1,089	730	356	3	326	214	394	128	27
	East & Southeast Asia	1,019	444	573	2	321	148	347	167	36
	Eastern Europe	189	89	99	1	72	35	40	33	9
	Latin America	521	336	183	2	40	70	281	84	46
	Middle East	277	179	98	0	42	44	112	64	15
	United States	2,534	1,397	1,128	9	560	407	1,001	382	184
	Western Europe	1,632	988	639	5	638	355	404	182	53
Residence	Africa	634	382	250	2	63	74	265	172	60
	Australia & Pacific Islands	101	62	38	1	14	11	35	22	19
	Canada	474	249	223	2	67	73	212	79	43
	Central & South Asia	1,097	731	362	4	324	218	395	131	29
	East & Southeast Asia	1,057	452	603	2	342	151	358	169	37
	Eastern Europe	189	93	95	1	67	36	41	34	11
	Latin America	556	356	197	3	45	80	294	91	46
	Middle East	289	186	103	0	43	46	116	67	17
	United States	2,413	1,319	1,088	6	539	390	943	366	175
	Western Europe	1,615	993	617	5	639	350	398	176	52

*Subtotals may not sum to global or overall figures due to missing demographic data.

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Contributors and Contact Information

Contributors

The following individuals from the GMAC Research team made significant contributions to the publication of this report:

Alexandria Williams, Associate Manager, Survey Research, interpretation of data and drafting of the manuscript for intellectual content; **Devina Caruthers**, Research Manager, questionnaire development and data analysis; **Tacoma Williams**, Associate Manager, Research Operations, sample development, survey management, and quality assurance.

Contact Information

For questions or comments regarding the findings, methodology, or data, please contact the GMAC Research Department at **research@gmac.com.**

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