

Choosing Your Future Ideal Employer: On What Grounds?

In the same way that companies invest their resources in trying to encourage you to buy their latest products, companies are now investing a lot of time on campus in trying to market themselves as 'ideal employers of choice.' How many of you have been given fancy brochures, free lunches and T-shirts by companies who try any possible means to convince you that they are your ideal employers? On what grounds do you choose your future 'ideal' employer? The challenge for you is to decide which company will deliver on their promise so that you are not fooled into making the wrong decision where things like lousy pay, boring colleagues and bad management may become an issue.

In a recent study by independent research company, Magnet Communications, students point out that they would prefer to learn about potential future employers via company websites, newspaper and magazine articles, internships / work placements and on-campus company presentations. Instead many companies treat them to free gifts and promotional giveaways in the hope that this will make them attractive in the eyes of South Africa's top graduates.

Furthermore, students cited that they would most like to work for companies who offer; international career opportunities, competitive compensation and flexible working hours. Indeed the most attractive employers according to these students all have the following characteristics in common: financial strength, competitive compensation and market success.

Research findings also indicate that the average South African graduate think that R160 900 p.a is fair pay. An average Vaal University of Technology student expects to earn R 142 600 p.a after graduation. Note however, that these expectations do not necessarily reflect reality. Salaries are likely to differ by things such as industry, area of study and geographical location.

When students were asked to name their 'Ideal employers,' over 15 000 students across South Africa voted for the following companies.

Science &								
Commerce	2007	Ranking	Engineering	2007	Ranking	Humanities	2007	Ranking
Absa		1	Sasol		1	SABC		1
KPMG		2	Anglo Platinum		2	Media24		2
South African Reserve Bank (SARB)		3	Eskom		3	National Prosecuting Authority		3

Nevertheless, the challenge is for *you* to decide which company is the right one for you. The best place to start would be to speak to these employers directly at the next Careers Fair or at an on-campus company presentation. Be careful not to dismiss specific industries as boring, valuable learning opportunities exist in the most unexpected places.

Reading about the company and doing thorough research is another way of gathering information about potential future employers. After reading about the company, decide if it all 'makes sense' to you. Find out exactly what this organisation can offer you in terms of career development, the corporate culture and working environment. Lastly, you should be talking to lecturers, friends and family, who may have first-hand experience of working for this company and can, therefore give you the full story. Talk to your careers advisors for more guidance regarding your career search.

For companies to have a better idea of what today's graduates are looking for, and to them become better at communicating what they can offer you – complete the Magnet Graduate Survey, and make your voice heard! The next Magnet Graduate Survey will take place in August and September of this year. Look out for paper questionnaires distributed on campus or complete the survey online at:

<http://universumsurvey.com/sags/vut>