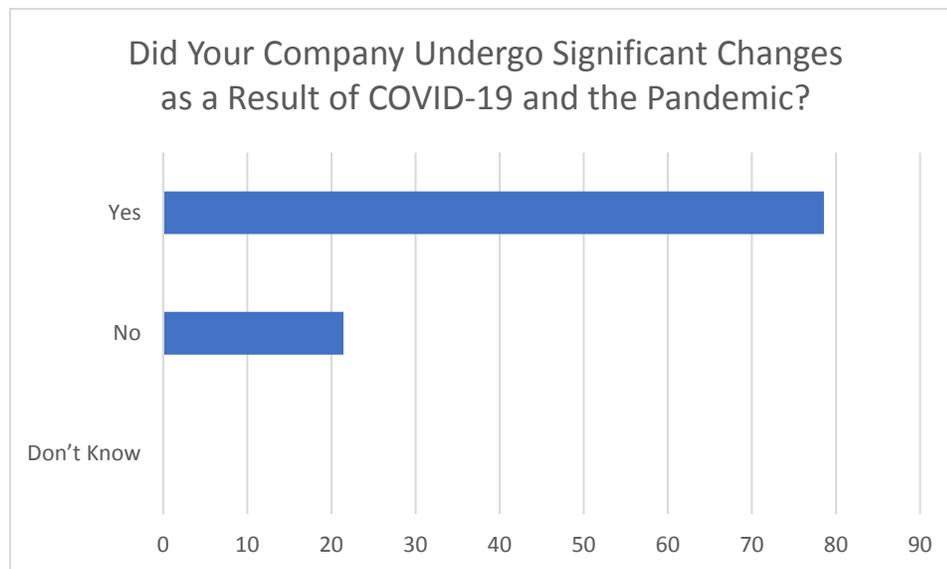


The Sales Leadership Center of the College of Business & Economics at California State University Fullerton conducted a survey of sponsor and other companies to gage the impact of re-entry to business as restrictions of COVID-19 are eased. The survey collected data on the impact to businesses on revenue, business processes and recruitment of college students, along with affiliation with university sales centers. While the survey included primarily California State University sponsors, the results and non-quantitative responses may have relevance beyond the Southern California region as many of the respondent companies are national and international corporations.

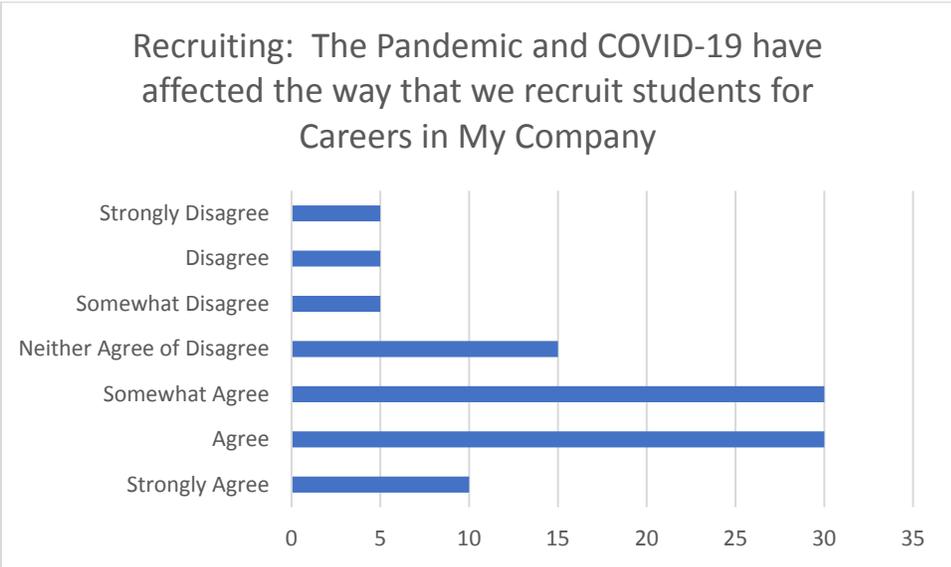
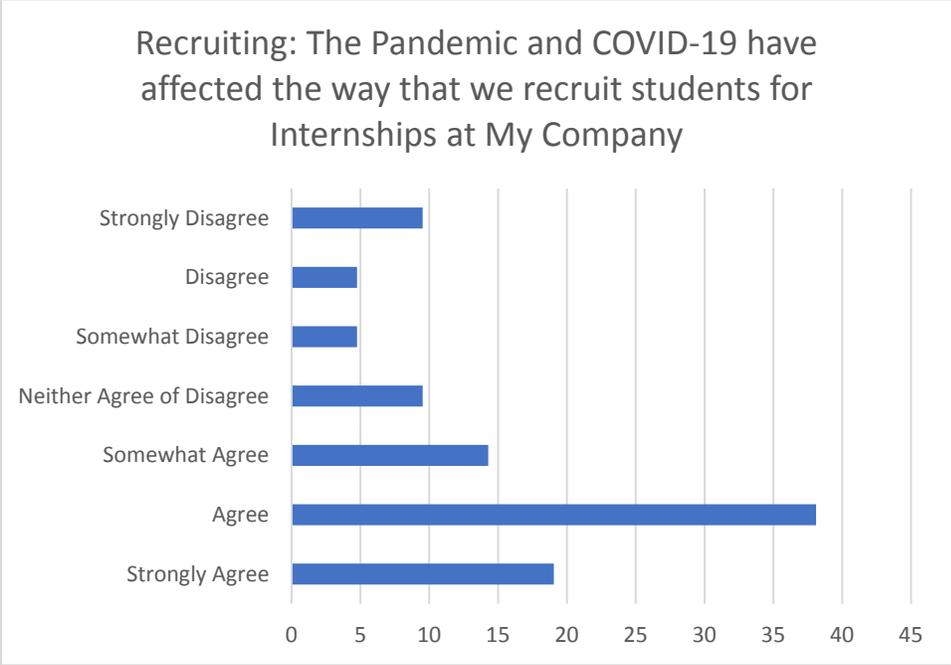
Not surprisingly, almost 80% (78.57%) of the responding companies reported that their companies underwent significant changes to their business as a result of COVID-19.



What was more interesting is that 64% of these respondents saw revenue increases during the pandemic (64.3%). Only 3.5% of these companies saw a decrease in revenues and 10.71% did not respond to this question.

The pandemic appeared to have some impact on relationships with university sales centers as 20% responded that 20% of them did not feel that the relationship with a sales center increased during the pandemic and only 16% agreed that there was an increase in the company's relationship with a university sales center during the pandemic. Another 56% of the respondents were more neutral in this aspect. The interesting note here is that while fewer of the companies responded that sales center impact was not increased, only 16% feel that relationships are more valuable after the pandemic and only 12% do not believe that they will continue relationships going forward. The vast majority of respondents (68%) are neutral in their assessment of more valuable relationships and 16% believe that they are more valuable. A full 24% of respondents believe that they will continue such relationships in the future.

There are data to reference the impact on internship and hiring that will have some consequences for university sales centers. The responding companies (57.1%) indicated that the pandemic affected their internship hiring and 28% responded that this impact may be permanent. On the career position hiring, 17% of the respondents believe that similar impact will occur for career positions and hiring for those positions.



Some qualitative responses about recruiting include:

“We are strictly interacting online as opposed to in-person and on-campus.” (Multiple similar responses)

“We have paused our entry level sales roles and are slowing re-opening them back up.”

"All virtual recruiting. We prefer to travel to the universities and recruit in-person."

"Offering virtual internship opportunities."

"We had no way of training interns at the beginning of the pandemic."

"As far as college recruiting, it is 100% virtual and we miss F2F (face-to-face) communications= with students and really getting to know them."

"Just have to get more creative in how to recruit."

The survey also asked about the changes to what companies seek in potential employees. Most respondents (almost 53%) indicated that they had no changes to what they seek in potential employees. Almost 16% said that they did have changes. When asked what changed, they responded with personality traits (23.5%), geographic flexibility (23.5%), sales skills/training (17.6%), technical skills (14.7%), flexible working hours, cross training capacity (11.7%), and flexible work hours (11.7%).

Some qualitative responses about characteristics of a sales potential (student) include:

"Nothing has changed in the characteristics of recruits we are looking for in regards to career opportunities."

"We will most likely need sellers better at using social media and other online tools in addition to being comfortable welling via Zoom and (MS) Teams. Previously we wanted heavy door-knockers and networkers."

"We like our sales team to be in-person and surrounded by other sales team members to feed off ideas, suggested sales strategies, and share successes. Remote is becoming very popular and it's hard to judge what a new hire may be doing right or wrong."

Our sales training within the company has changed drastically to be virtual, therefore we are looking for people that have more sales experience beforehand. Tech (technology) skills are mandatory within virtual environment. Personality traits have always been important, but those that don't need to be micromanaged thrive."

"The ability to adopt new technologies is going to be crucial going forward. We are looking for newer technologies and we have an aging sales force that may not be able to adapt completely. We will need new personnel that can adapt."

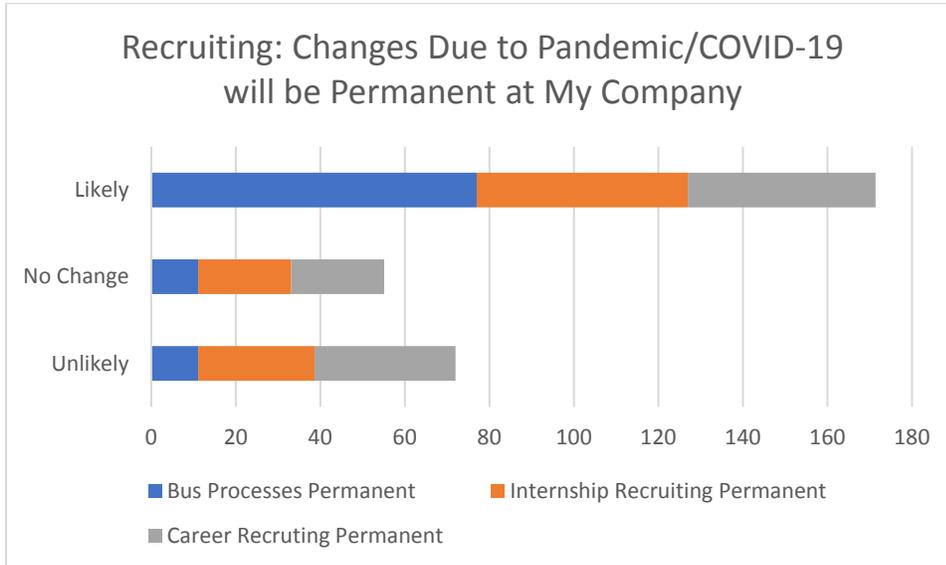
"Due to the remote nature of our sales and our increased attention on our digital solutions, the ability to be far more resourceful, driven, disciplined, and self-sustainable is much higher. Prior to the pandemic, the requirement to be in the office for a set period of time each week provided more opportunities for direct management interaction. Maturity and the ability to self-manage to achieve optimal business results is at a premium."

"They haven't really changed, but ability to use technology and communicate have become MORE important."

Summary

It appears that changes in recruiting, changes in business processes, use of technology, and interaction for sales personnel changed as a direct result of the pandemic and restrictions imposed. Many of the changes will remain post re-entry. Many of the companies in this survey increased hiring and sales during the pandemic. The companies in this survey are not part of the industries most affected by contact restrictions (travel, hospitality, small businesses, etc.) and were able to pivot to remote interaction to increase sales. It also appears that sales skills and electronic media (technology and social

media) are more important for universities to provide to students seeking careers with these companies. Universities should take note of the survey responses and act to improve student skills with technology, remote interaction, team building (especially when not totally in-person), building initiative/drive skills, and communication skills.



About the respondents

Most of the respondents are sponsors of the Sales Leadership Center at the College of Business & Economics at California State University Fullerton. The survey respondents were completely anonymous and the survey was open to companies not associated with the Sales Center. No indication on the survey would identify sponsors or others who completed the survey.

Less than 50 companies completed the survey, so statistical significance among all businesses or national implications are not presented as part of the reporting of this data. However, non-quantitative responses may have some relevance as most of the companies are national or multinational companies operating in the U.S. In fact, 63% of the responding companies are U.S national businesses, 32% are regional businesses and 5% are International. Of those 47% report earnings above \$1billion annually and none report less than \$10million annually.

Respondents were primarily recruiters (58%) and Sales Managers (16%). Their length of time with university sales centers was dispersed over time, from 16% less than one year, 26% at 1-2 years, 37% with 3-5 years and 21% with over five years of experience with university sales centers. Over 63% of the responding companies support five or fewer university sales centers currently.

About the survey

The survey was administered by the Sales Leadership Center of the College of Business & Economics at the California State University Fullerton. Dr. Joshua Dorsey, sales faculty, created the questions with the

assistance of Brad Anderson, Director of the Center. The survey was available to sponsors at the Center and other businesses as communicated through LinkedIn, email invitations and associate communications. The survey was available to respondents through Qualtrics. The survey was open for response throughout the month of April 2021. The survey was closed May 1, 2021.