



IU Study 2024

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. ESSENTIAL OR OPTIONAL?

**Diversity in companies.
What the skilled workers of tomorrow think.**

iu

INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES

DIVERSITY IN ACTION: A MUST FOR COMPANIES?

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE AMONG THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE WHETHER SKILLED WORKERS DECIDE TO TAKE ON A JOB OR NOT. THAT IS WHAT THIS STUDY BY IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES SHOWS.



Prof. Dr. Katharina-Maria Rehfeld

Professor of Human Resources at IU International University of Applied Sciences

“**Trainees and students have a clear message for their future employers: Companies that not only communicate diversity and inclusion, but also put them into practice, are more attractive. This is a key factor, especially when it comes to competing for the skilled workers of tomorrow.**”

Diversity is a fact of life. Human beings are unique and all contribute different perspectives and characteristics, whether in terms of background, culture, gender, sexual orientation, faith, age or ability.

How do companies handle diversity and inclusion? And, as the skilled workers of tomorrow, what do trainees and students want from potential employers? The IU study on diversity and inclusion answers these questions.

75.1% of future skilled workers expect companies to take action on diversity and inclusion. When searching for suitable jobs and employers, many of the respondents are already aware of whether employers communicate information on diversity and inclusion. However, only 24.7% say that companies always or usually address these aspects in their self-presentation.

“This is a missed opportunity for the companies that don’t do it,” says IU expert Prof. Dr. Sonja Würtemberger. This is because the majority of tomorrow’s skilled workers use online job portals and company websites to find out about

future employers. In other words, digital sources that companies can influence directly.

While professional, respectful communication is particularly important during the application process, diversity and inclusion play a more prominent role when it comes to deciding for or against an employer: **Equal opportunities for all as well as openness and acceptance of different characters and personalities are among the top motivators when choosing an employer.** On the other hand, fair pay, job security and development opportunities are the most frequently mentioned hygiene factors; they are must-haves.

Managers have a special role to play when it comes to diversity: most respondents believe that they should act as role models and regularly take measures to create an open, appreciative working environment.



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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

DEFINITIONS AND OPINIONS.

Prof. Dr Sonja Würtemberger and Prof. Dr Katharina-Maria Rehfeld teach and conduct research at IU International University of Applied Sciences on various topics in the field of human resources; in particular on international human resource management, diversity and inclusion.

The experts define the terms diversity and inclusion for us, and give their views on the study.

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to the differences between people, such as background, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or abilities.

Diversity is a fact of life in our society because it exists in different forms depending upon the context (schools, companies, etc.).



Prof. Dr Katharina-Maria Rehfeld
Professor of Human Resources at
IU International University of Applied Sciences

“Diversity is a fact, **inclusion** is the goal. The bridge in between is called psychological safety. Only those who are not discriminated against or marginalised can live up to their full potential.



Diversity is not something you can agree or disagree with, it is a fact. We are diverse and different on many levels. We have to recognise this and see it as an opportunity.”



Prof. Dr Sonja Würtemberger
Professor of Human Resource Management at
IU International University of Applied Sciences

INCLUSION

Inclusion is a human right. It refers to the right to equality and participation in society – regardless of individual characteristics or backgrounds (see Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, Article 3, Paragraphs 1 to 3).

In a corporate context, **inclusion means a corporate culture** in which people are respected, recognised and supported regardless of their differences.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. ESSENTIAL OR OPTIONAL?

FOUR IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS.

diversity

equality

inclusion

**MEASURES TO INCREASE
DIVERSITY? YES PLEASE.**

75.1%

of the trainees and students surveyed said: It is quite/very important to me that my future employer takes measures to ensure diversity and inclusion.

**NOTHING MOTIVATES
LIKE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

At **38.2%**

equal opportunities is one of the most important aspects when deciding on an employer.

(When asked about factors for job satisfaction.)

**COMPANY COMMUNICATION
ON DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION EXISTS BUT
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT.**

24.7%

of the skilled workers of tomorrow surveyed always/usually notice information on diversity and inclusion in job adverts or on company websites.

**ARE MANAGERS ALWAYS
ROLE MODELS? IDEALLY.**

89.0%

believe that supervisors should be role models when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AMONG RESPONDENTS.

THE SKILLED WORKERS OF TOMORROW.

Human beings in all their diversity: We take a look at the respondents' current professional situation and other characteristics that are relevant in terms of diversity and inclusion. **After all, the trainees and students of today are the skilled workers of tomorrow.**

Which of these describes your current professional situation? In %

I am on a training programme.

32.6

I am a student.

67.4

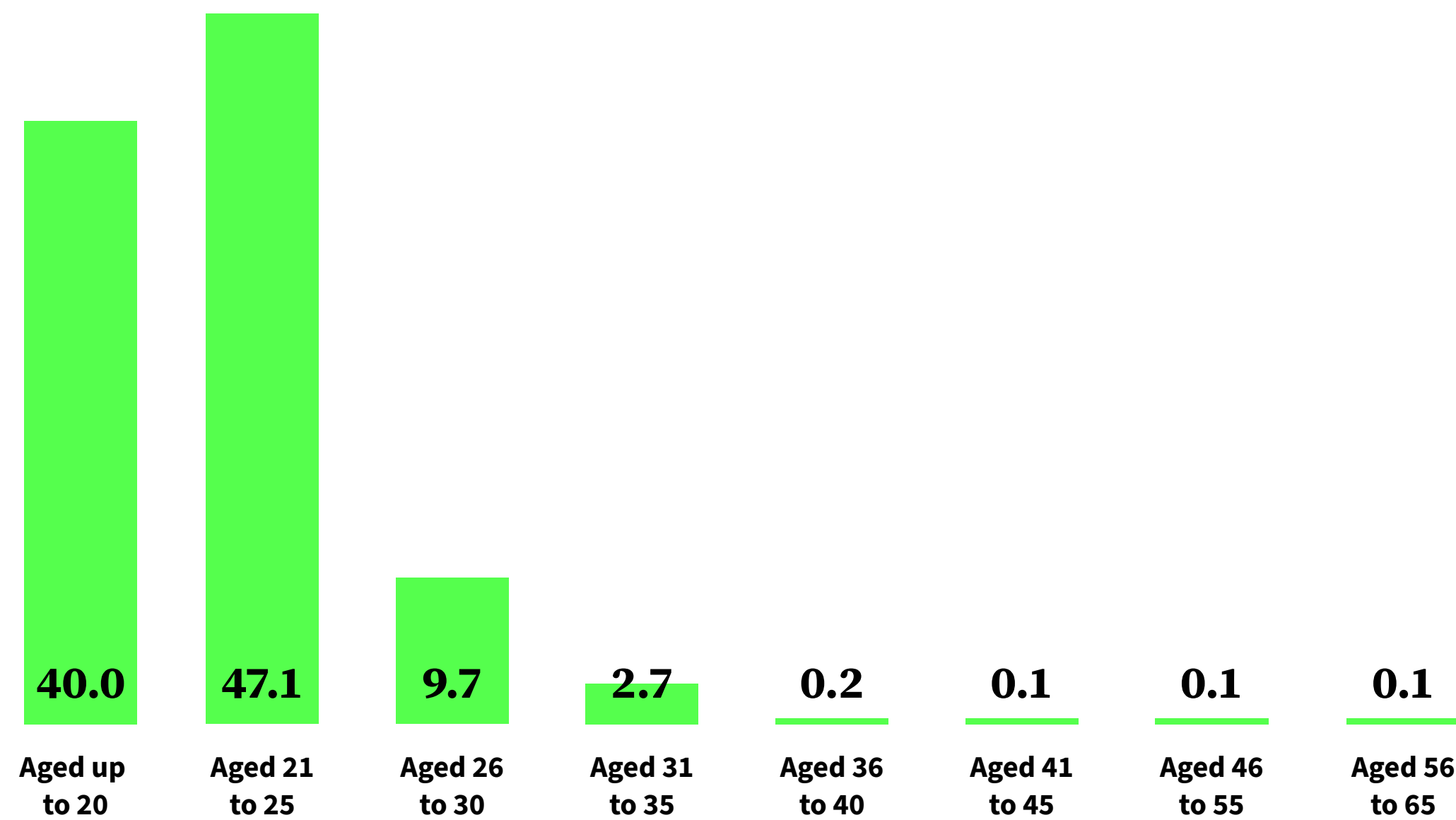
SO MANY PEOPLE, SO MANY DIFFERENCES.

Of the 1,214 trainees and students surveyed, 99.5% were aged between 16 and 35. Just over two thirds identify as female, just under a third as male and 2.0% as diverse.

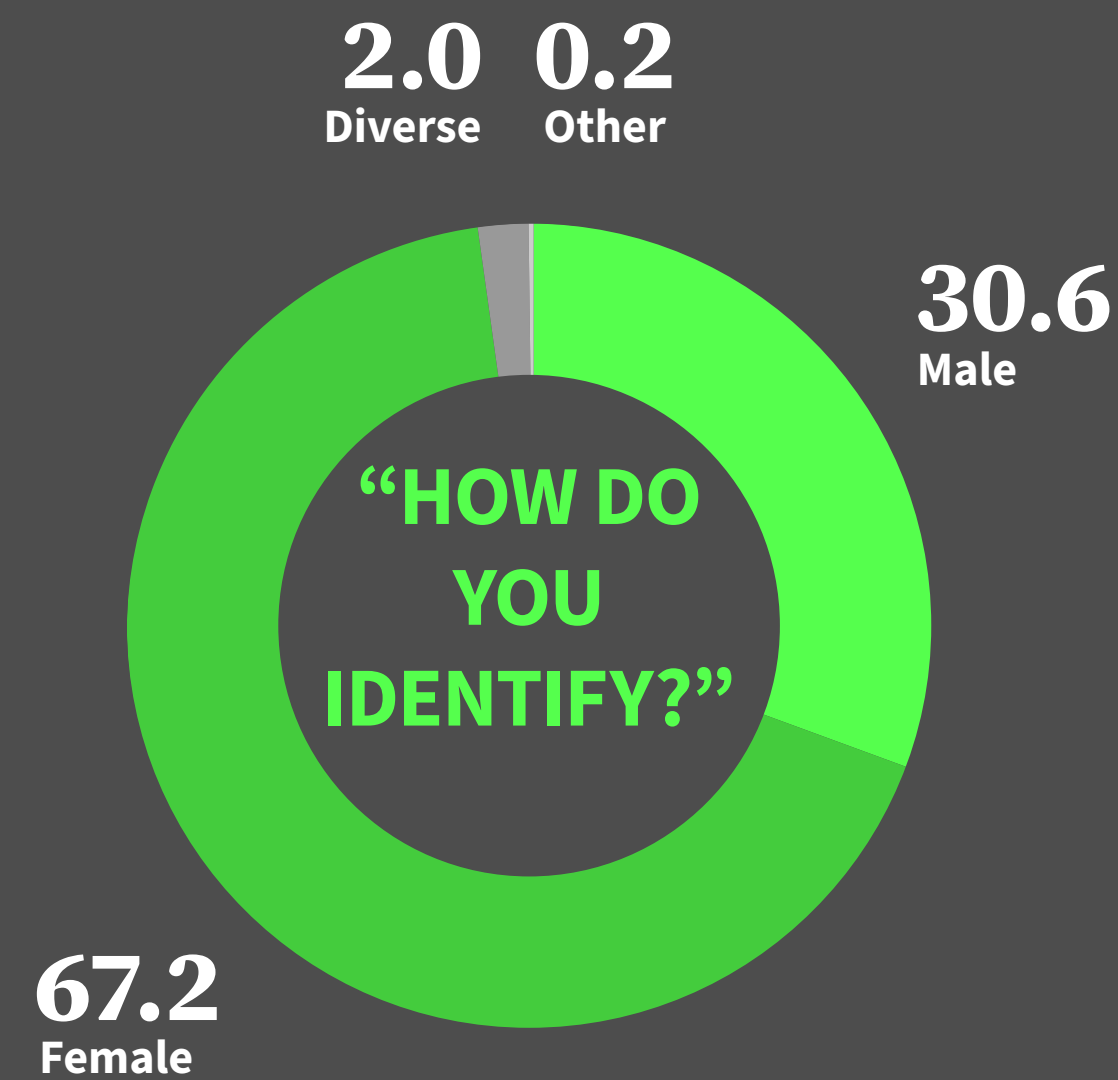
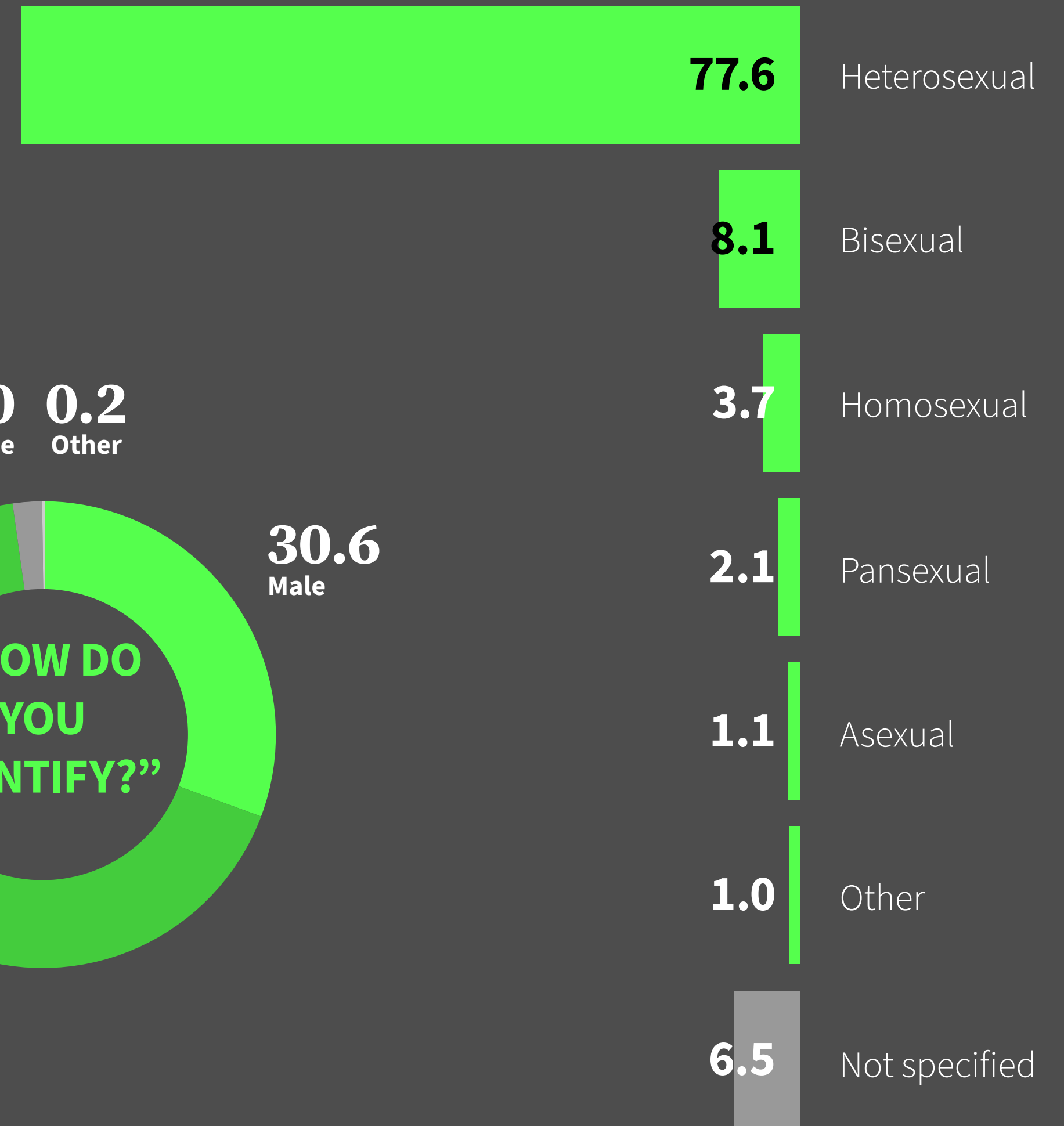
There is a great deal of diversity when it comes to sexual orientation: While 77.6% describe themselves as heterosexual, 15.0% state their orientation as bisexual, homosexual, pansexual or asexual. 1.0% state a different sexual orientation.

“HOW OLD ARE YOU?”

What age group are you in? In %



“WHAT IS YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?”



What is your gender identity? In %

Which sexual orientation best describes your identity? In %

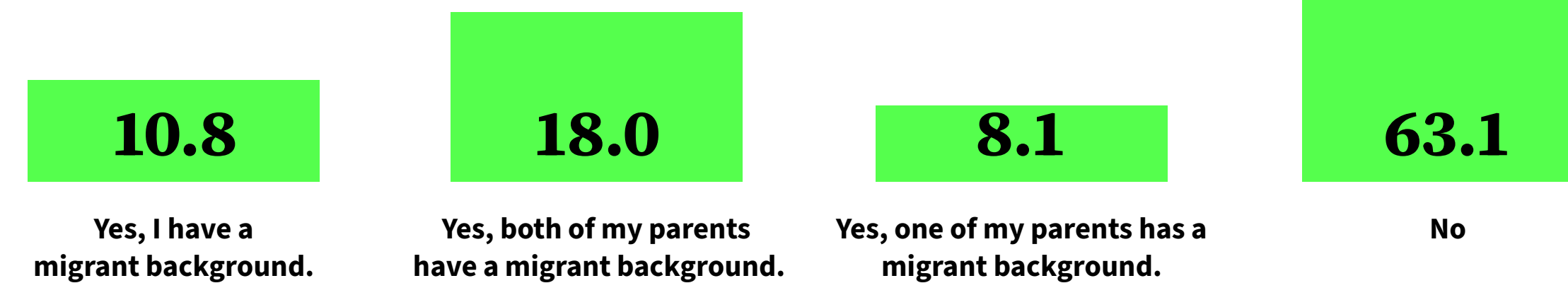


SO MANY DIFFERENCES, SO MUCH DIVERSITY.

Background and religion are two other characteristics that distinguish people from one another – and shape a diverse society. 36.9% of respondents are from a migrant background, either personally or through their parents. In terms of religion, Christianity and Islam are the two most frequently cited faiths. More than a third of the trainees and students surveyed do not identify with any religion.

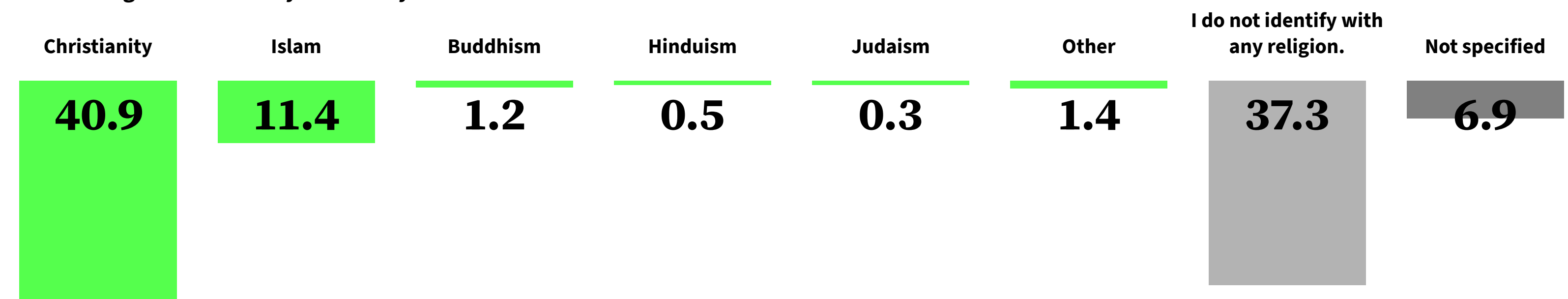
“WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?”

Do you or your parents have a migrant background? In %



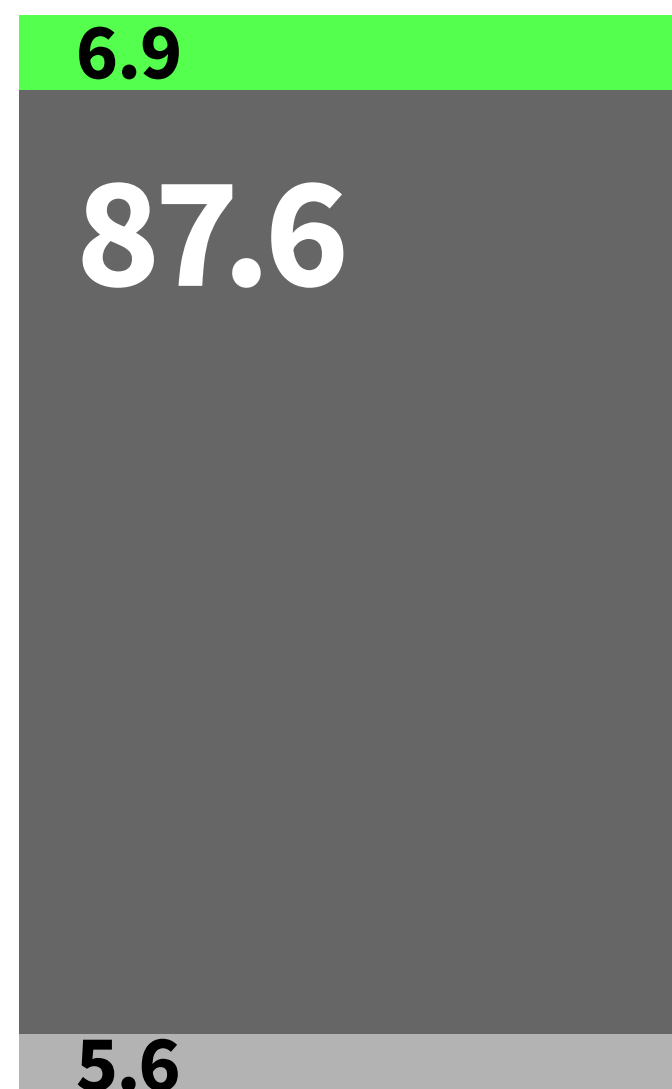
“WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS?”

Which religion or faith do you identify with? In %



PEOPLE EXPERIENCE DIVERSITY. ESPECIALLY IN PEOPLE CLOSE TO THEM.

RESPONDENTS
WITH
DISABILITIES



Do you have a physical, mental or sensory disability? In %

- Yes I have a physical, mental and/or sensory disability.
- I do not have a disability.
- Not specified.

35.4

59.8

4.9

RESPONDENTS WITH
PEOPLE CLOSE TO
THEM WHO HAVE
DISABILITIES

Does someone close to you have a physical, mental or sensory disability? In %

- Yes, family member(s), acquaintances and/or friends.
- No.
- Not specified.

! ONLY 6.9% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE A PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR SENSORY DISABILITY THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, MORE THAN A THIRD KNOW SOMEONE IN THEIR SOCIAL CIRCLE WITH A DISABILITY.

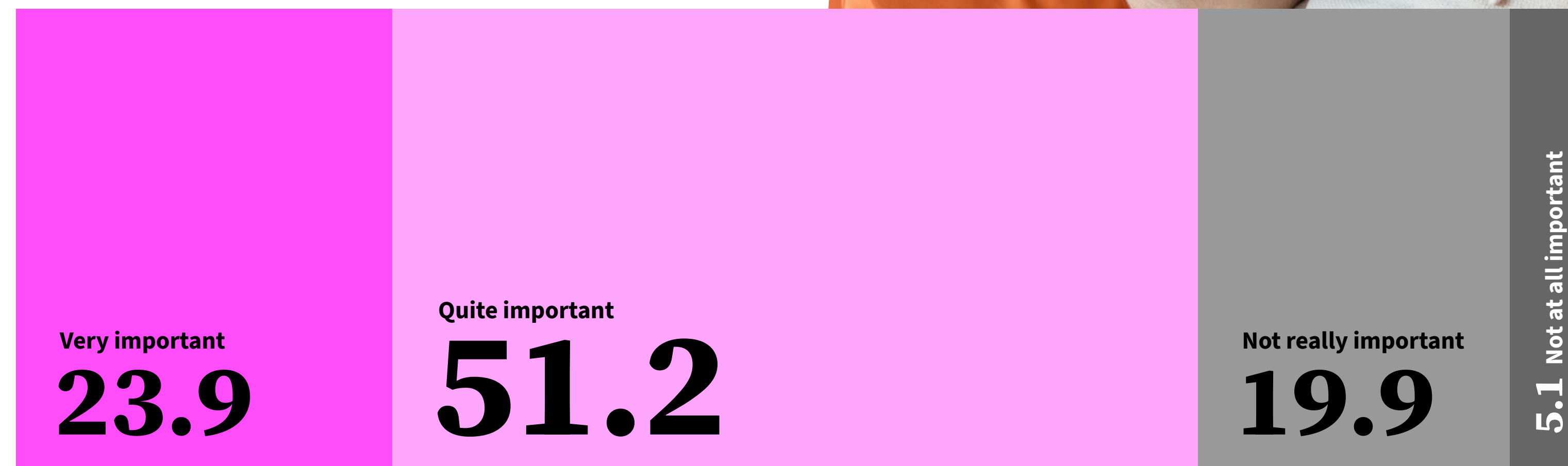


THESE FACTORS ARE DECISIVE WHEN CHOOSING A JOB.

WISHES. ACTIONS. MOTIVATORS.

For 75.1% of the skilled workers of tomorrow, it is very or quite important that potential employers take measures relating to diversity and inclusion. Only a quarter of the respondents say that it is not very important or not important at all to them.

How important is it to you that your future employer takes measures to promote diversity and inclusion? In %



DREAM EMPLOYER WANTED. HUMANITY MATTERS.

Friendliness and respect in our dealings with others are the attributes most frequently mentioned when future workers picture their dream employer.

Other important descriptions include pay, flexibility, fairness, innovativeness and social engagement.



Employees expect teamwork, fairness, friendliness and social responsibility from employers – these are essential characteristics of an inclusive corporate culture. Diversity and inclusion are not a goal, but rather a decisive factor in creating this kind of culture.”



Prof. Dr Katharina-Maria Rehfeld

Professor of Human Resources at
IU International University of Applied Sciences

INNOVATIVENESS
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
FLEXIBILITY PAY
FRIENDLINESS
RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR
TRANSPARENCY FAIRNESS
ENJOYING THE WORK TRUSTWORTHINESS

Picture your dream employer: What three words would you use to describe them? Open question; grouped; top 10 answers

MUST-HAVE VS. MOTIVATOR: DIVERSITY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

A detailed look at the **decisive factors when choosing an employer** (based upon Herzberg's 2-factor model*) shows that fair pay, job security, development opportunities and flexible working time models are the most important hygiene factors when it comes to attracting workers to a company. **On the other hand, real motivators are primarily equal opportunities, family friendliness, acceptance of diversity and the meaningfulness of the work.**

Which of the following aspects are important to you when choosing your future employer? Please select the three most important aspects for you. In %: percentage of how often the aspect appears in the top 3



HYGIENE FACTORS

MOTIVATORS



Herzberg's 2-factor model* groups job satisfaction factors into two independent categories:

1. What is important in order to avoid dissatisfaction? (= hygiene factor)
2. What is important in order to increase satisfaction? (= motivator)

In the study, the two categories were surveyed separately – and also rated independently of each other by the respondents.

* Source: Herzberg, F. I., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). The motivation to work (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley.

“

THE LOW RELEVANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY CAN MEAN TWO THINGS: EITHER IT DOESN'T AFFECT MANY PEOPLE, OR OUR STRUCTURES ARE TOO EXCLUSIVE AND THE PEOPLE WHO NEED IT ARE NOT PART OF THE DISCOURSE.

ACCESSIBILITY IS STILL SEEN AS SOMETHING THAT IS ONLY RELEVANT TO A FEW PEOPLE. HOWEVER, DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND THE AGEING OF SOCIETY REVEAL SOMETHING ELSE: ACCESSIBILITY WILL BE RELEVANT TO ALL OF US AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE ARE STILL NOT PAYING ENOUGH ATTENTION TO AT THE MOMENT.”

Prof. Dr Katharina-Maria Rehfeld

Professor of Human Resources at IU International University of Applied Sciences



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE.



ALREADY
LOOKED?

63.3 Yes

36.7 No

20.9 Yes

79.1
No

ALREADY
APPLIED?

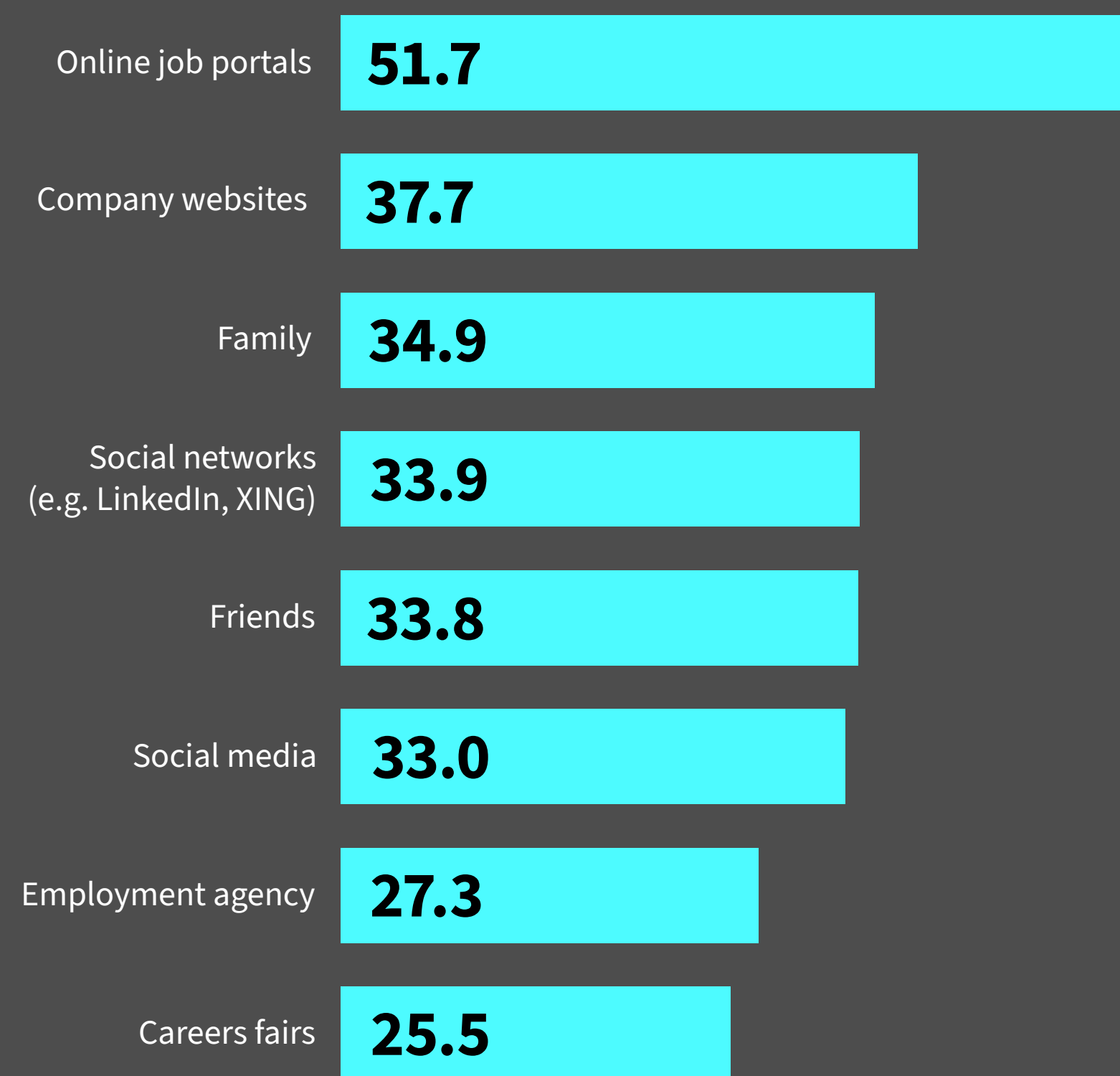
What next after graduation? 63.3% of the trainees and students surveyed have already looked into possible job offers – and 20.9% have already applied for jobs.

Have you already looked into job offers/possible jobs after your studies/training? In %

Have you already applied for a job after your studies/training? In %

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL. HOW THE SKILLED WORKERS OF TOMORROW GET THEIR INFORMATION.

The most important sources of information for trainees / students when looking for a job are the internet and their social environment. Online job portals are the main way to find out about potential jobs and employers. Other digital sources include company websites, social networks and social media. In third and fifth place respectively among respondents were family and friends.

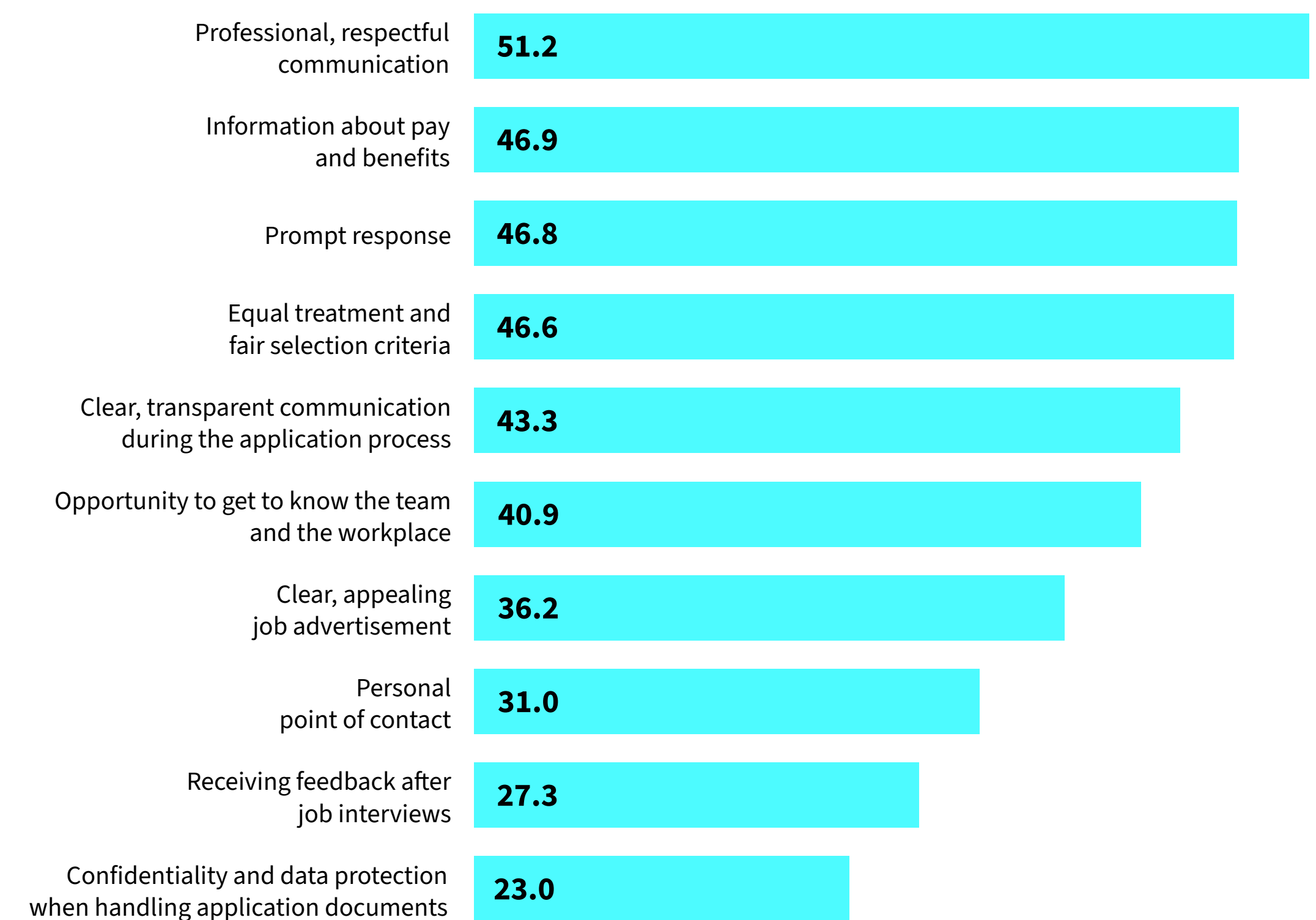


What sources of information have you already used or do you plan to use when looking for a job after your studies / training?

In %: top 8 answers

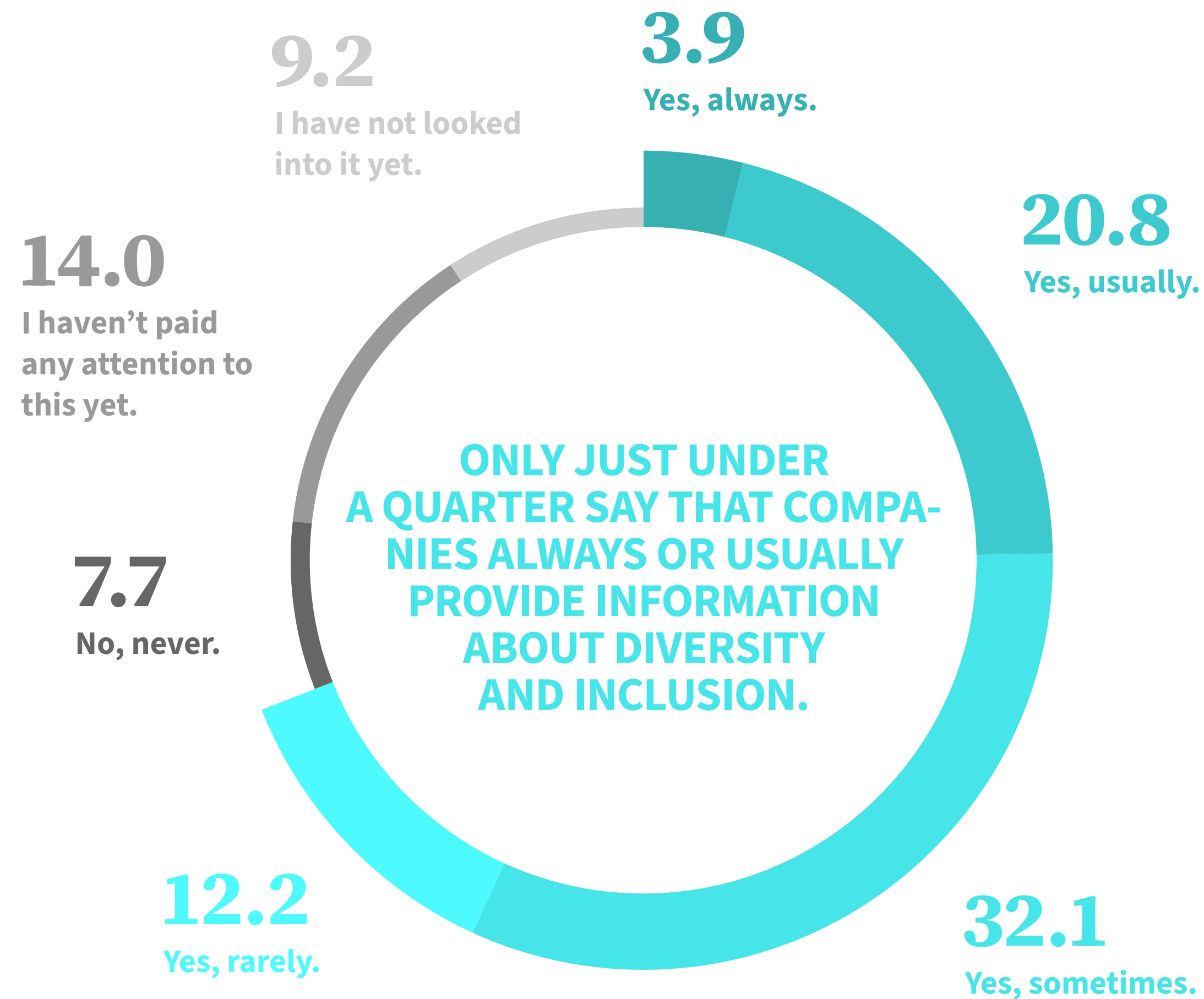
WHAT COUNTS IN THE APPLICATION PROCESS? RESPECT AND TRANSPARENCY.

The best way for companies to impress future skilled workers in the application process is through professional, respectful and transparent communication, clear information and quick responses. Equal treatment and fair selection criteria are also often in the top 5 most important aspects during the application process.



Which of the following aspects are important to you in the application process? Please select the five most important aspects for you and rank these from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important. In %: percentage of how often the aspect appears in the top 5 rankings; top 10 answers

DO COMPANIES PROVIDE ADEQUATE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION? YES AND NO.



Have you ever seen employers provide information on diversity and inclusion in their job adverts or on their company websites? In %



If more than 75% of potential candidates find the commitment to diversity and inclusion important, this sends a clear signal to employers: do good things and talk about it whenever and wherever you can – but only as long as it is authentic. Those who do not do anything should not make false promises. However, companies should not wait until they have achieved perfect diversity management before communicating it to the world, as this would be a waste of potential when appealing to applicants.”



Prof. Dr. Sonja Würtemberger
 Professor of Human Resource Management
 at IU International University of Applied Sciences

EXPECTATIONS OF COMPANIES AND SUPERVISORS.

A QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Managers are role models when it comes to diversity and inclusion, according to almost 9 out of 10 respondents. 91.2% and 79.9% respectively also believe that supervisors should regularly plan measures to ensure an open, appreciative working atmosphere, or should receive special training.

Supervisors should be role models for respectful and conscious behaviour when it comes to diversity and differences among employees.

89.0

Supervisors should attend regular training courses to deepen their understanding of how to manage diversity for the benefit of all.

79.9

Supervisors should regularly take measures to create a working environment in which every employee is heard and valued.

91.2

To what extent are the following aspects important to you?

In %: only respondents who answered "Very important" and "Quite important" on scale of 1 to 4



HOW TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION? FAIRNESS, FEEDBACK, ACCESSIBILITY.

Equal opportunities, an open feedback system and an accessible working environment are among the most frequently mentioned measures that the workers of tomorrow want from future employers. Regular information and equal opportunities officers are only in the top 5 for a few respondents.



In your opinion, what measures or programmes should your future employer take to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace? Please select the five most important aspects for you and rank these from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important. In %: percentage of how often the aspect appears in the top 5 rankings

“

Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone in the company – not just of a single person or a diversity management department. However, many people do not realise what is being done behind the scenes by these departments to create processes that enable equal opportunities and promotion prospects for all.

It should also be made clear that appointing equal opportunities officers or diversity managers must not be just a token gesture, especially when you consider that only 24.3% voted in favour of a diversity manager. Such positions must be linked to concrete influence and responsibility in order to bring about real change.”



Prof. Dr. Sonja Würtemberger
Professor of Human Resource Management
at IU International University of Applied Sciences



FACTS ABOUT THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

ABOUT THE STUDY.

1,214

respondents between the ages of 16 and 65
who are studying or undergoing
training in Germany.

IMPRINT

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Contact us

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