Recruiting and Retaining Early Career Tech Talent

Marcie Zaharee (MITRE), Stewart Mehlman (Emeritus), Susan Neylon (ITECS)

Date: October 3, 2017

Agenda

- ROR Member Participants
- Opportunity
- Objectives
- Methodology
- Research Findings
  - Survey
  - Interviews
- Conclusions

"The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise."

- Socrates, 450 B.C.

IRI Industrial Research Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

ROR Member Participants

- MITRE – Marcie Zaharee

- PPG – Kristi Kauffman

- Cargill – Tristan Lipkie

- Schneider Electric – Tony Montagano

IRI Liaisons
- Stewart Mehlman: EAG
- Susan Neylon: SME
- Lucy Brainerd
- Lee Green

Opportunity

R&D organizations must compete to attract and retain Early Career Technical Talent (ECTT)

This study provides insights into the types of workplace attributes and professional development that ECTT are looking for and helps give IRI member organizations an edge in their recruitment and retention efforts.

Industrial Research Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Definitions

- **Early career technical talent (ECTT):** an individual in the workforce who is 5 years or less from completion of highest degree and/or under the age of 35

- **Successful development plan**: a development plan that enables an employee to grow functionally and in leadership, both horizontally and vertically in an organization, based upon career intentions and potential, while also maximizing the benefit to the organization.

- **Workplace environment/culture includes**:

Adaptability

Amenities

Continuing education and development

Customer service structure

Executive leadership

Office space (physical office, ability to work remotely/flex hours)

Organizational structure

Organizational responsiveness

Technology utilized

Transparency

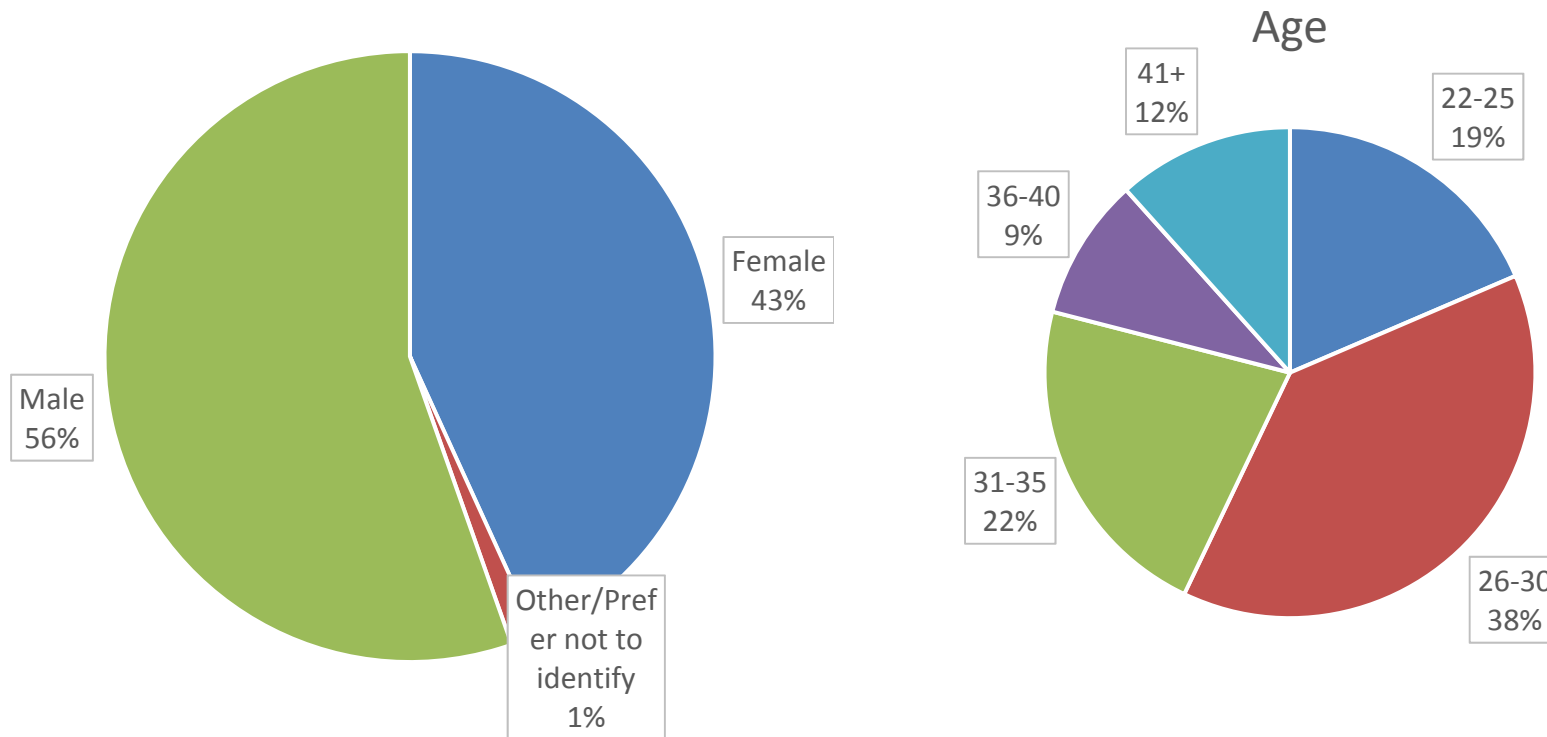Trusted & respected

Values and ethics

Objectives

- Determine key elements of an early career development experience that maximize the mutual benefit for the employee and employer and enhances retention of top talent.
    - Identify **common attributes of workplace environments/cultures** that are successful in recruiting and retaining early career technical talent.
    - Identify characteristics of **successful development plans** for early career hires in the first two years of employment.

IRI Industrial
Research
Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
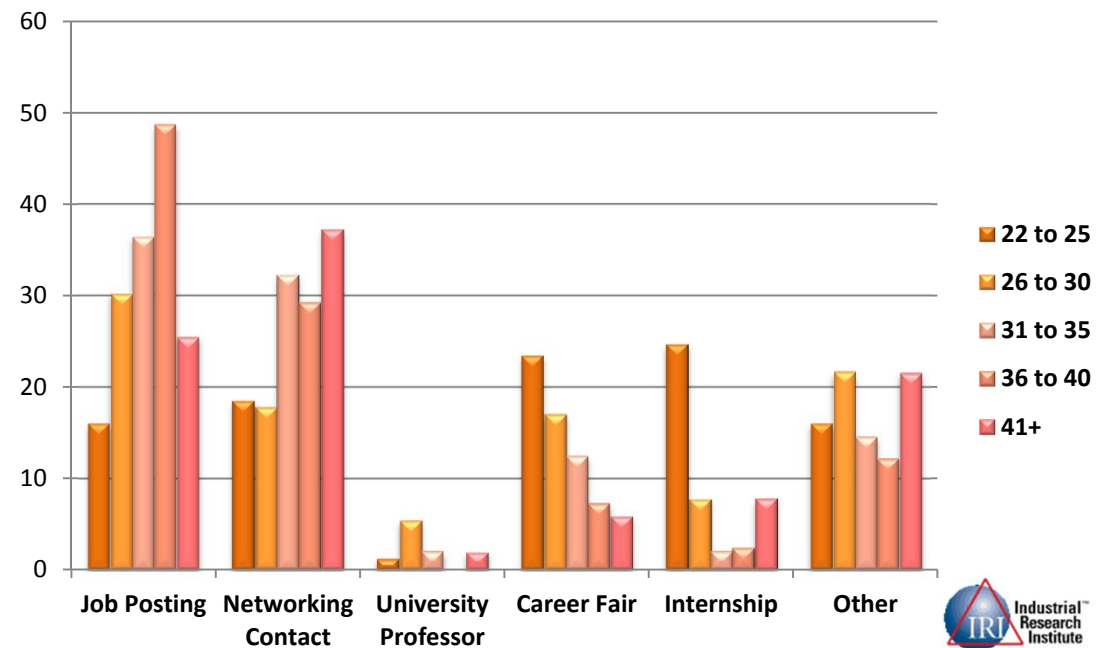WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Methodology

- Literature scan
- Administer survey with ECTT
    - 18-question survey on Survey Monkey platform
    - Questions aimed at gaining insight into what attracts and retains early career tech talent
    - URL distributed to young professional clubs and associations for Facebook/listserv posting, crowdsourced to personal contacts
    - Results analyzed for trends and insight
- Identify companies who do this well – document as case studies
- Deliverables
    - Reporting now at Oct 2017 Member Summit
    - RTM journal article
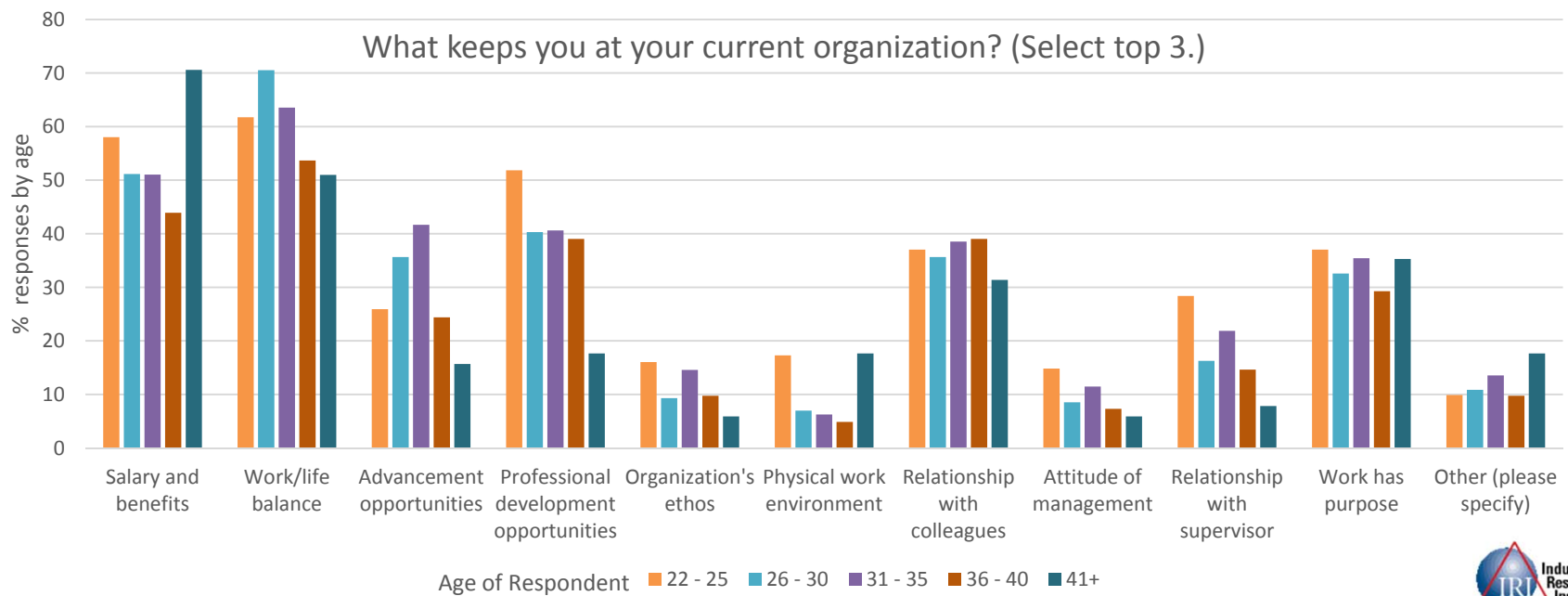
Survey: Demographics of 398 Respondents

Male 56%

Female 43%

Other/Prefer not to identify 1%

Age

41+ 12%

36-40 9%

22-25 19%

31-35 22%

26-30 38%

Results: Recruitment Methods

- "On-Campus Recruiting" was most frequent write-in for ages 22-30

- "Recruiter" was most frequent write-in for ages 31-41+

Legend:
- 22 to 25
- 26 to 30
- 31 to 35
- 36 to 40
- 41+

Categories: Job Posting, Networking Contact, University Professor, Career Fair, Internship, Other

Industrial Research Institute
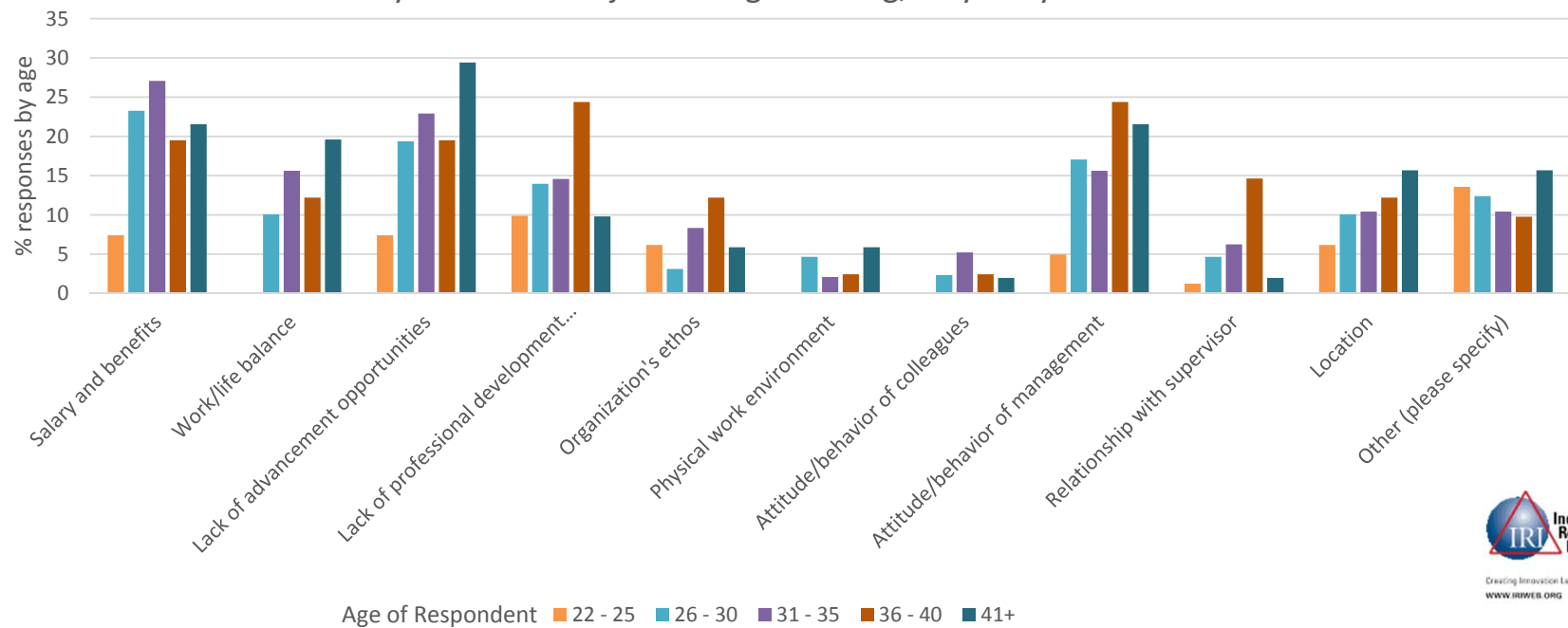Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Key drivers of retention are similar across ages:
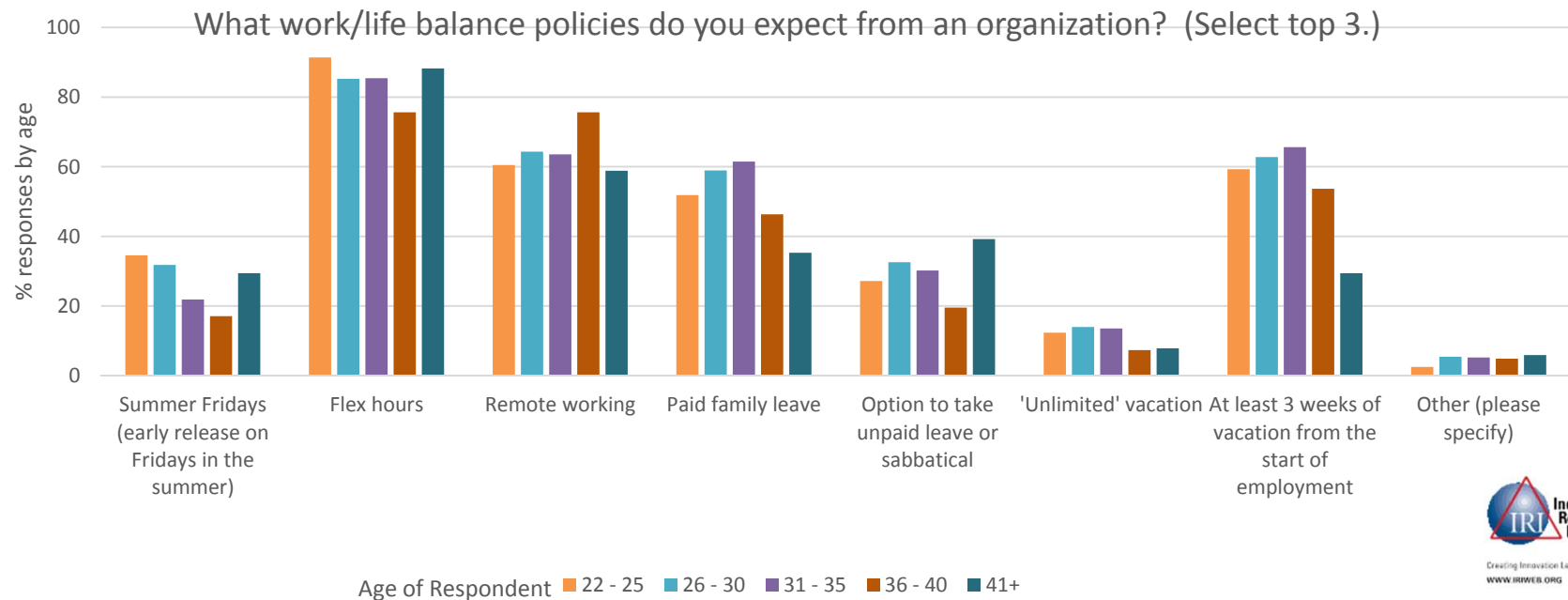Salary, Work/life Balance, and Development/ Advancement

Professionals of all ages leave because of inadequate salary, not enough advancement opportunities, & poor management

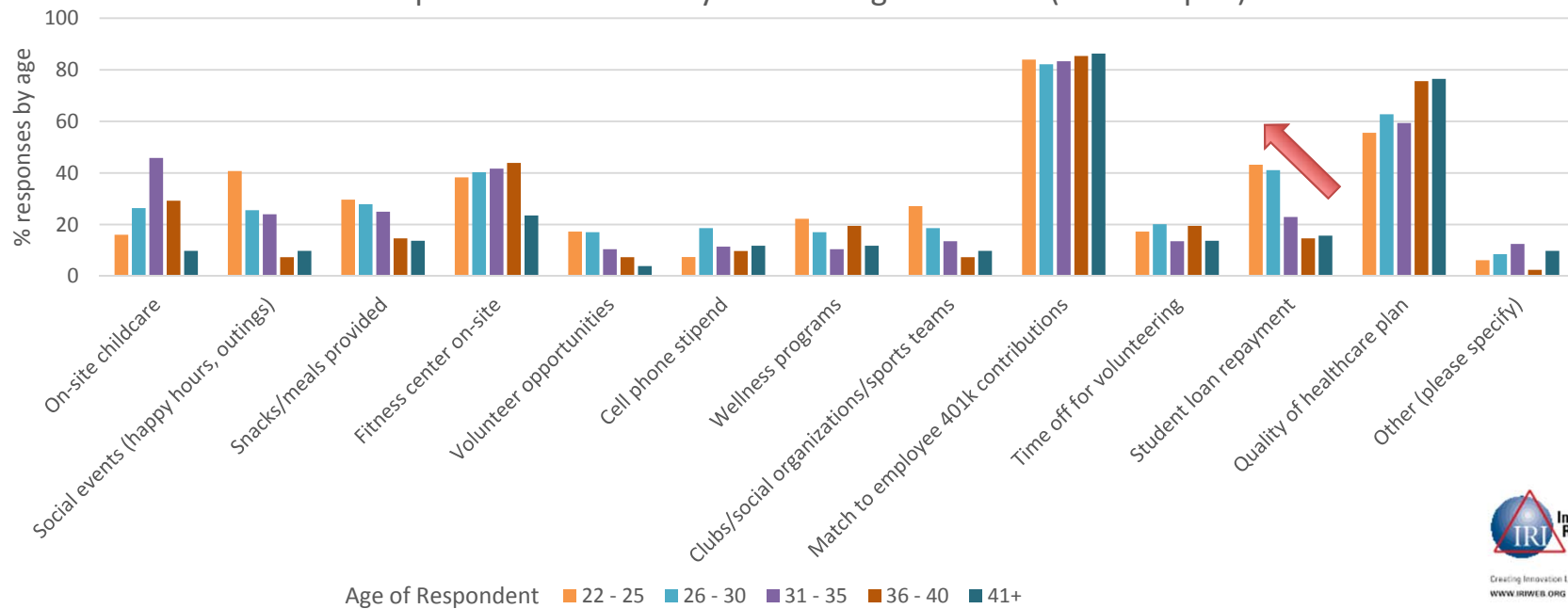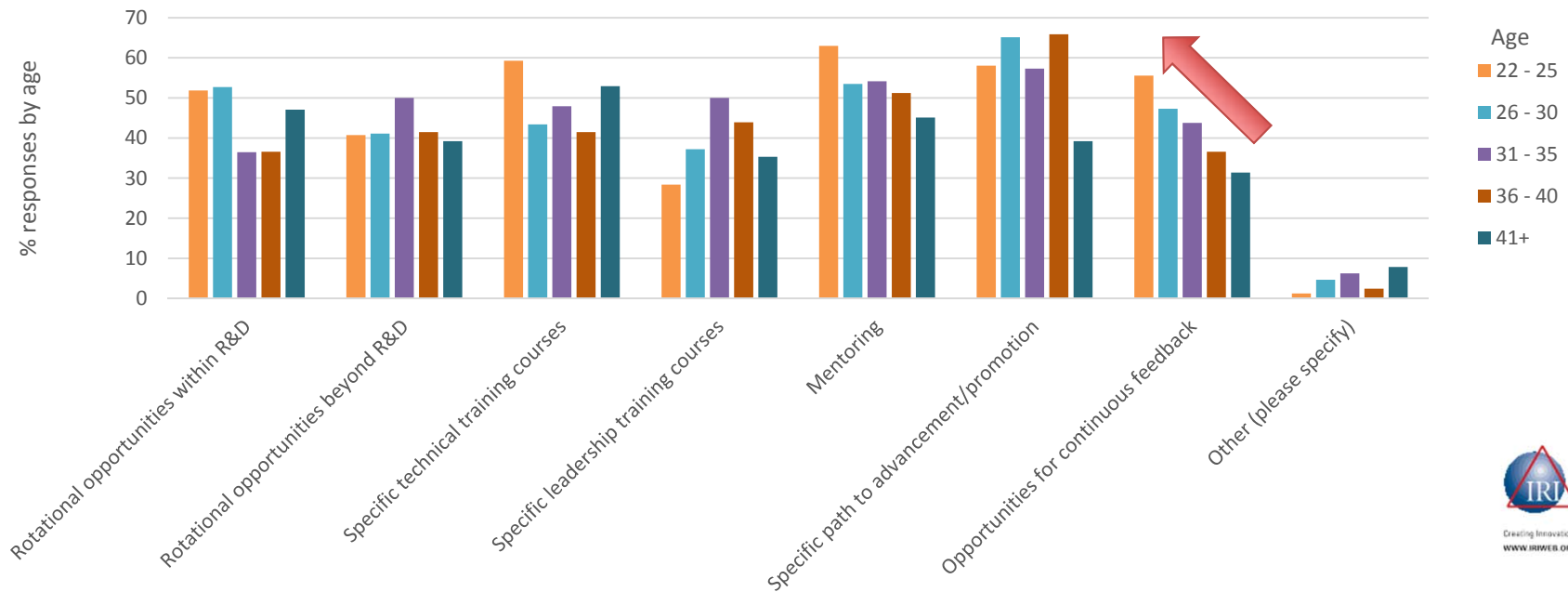If you have left a job since graduating, why did you do so?

Basic benefit desires are similar: 401(k) match, Healthcare
But, early career professionals want student loan repayment

What perks would attract you to an organization? (Select top 3.)

Age of Respondent — 22 - 25 | 26 - 30 | 31 - 35 | 36 - 40 | 41+

**All professionals want programs to find new opportunities.
Desire for continuous feedback is greater from younger professionals.**

What do you think is essential to a professional development plan? (Select top 3.)

Good news for retention: Early Career professionals don't expect to work for more companies in their career….

How many companies do you anticipate you will have worked for by the time you have retired?

% responses by age

Age
- 22-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41+
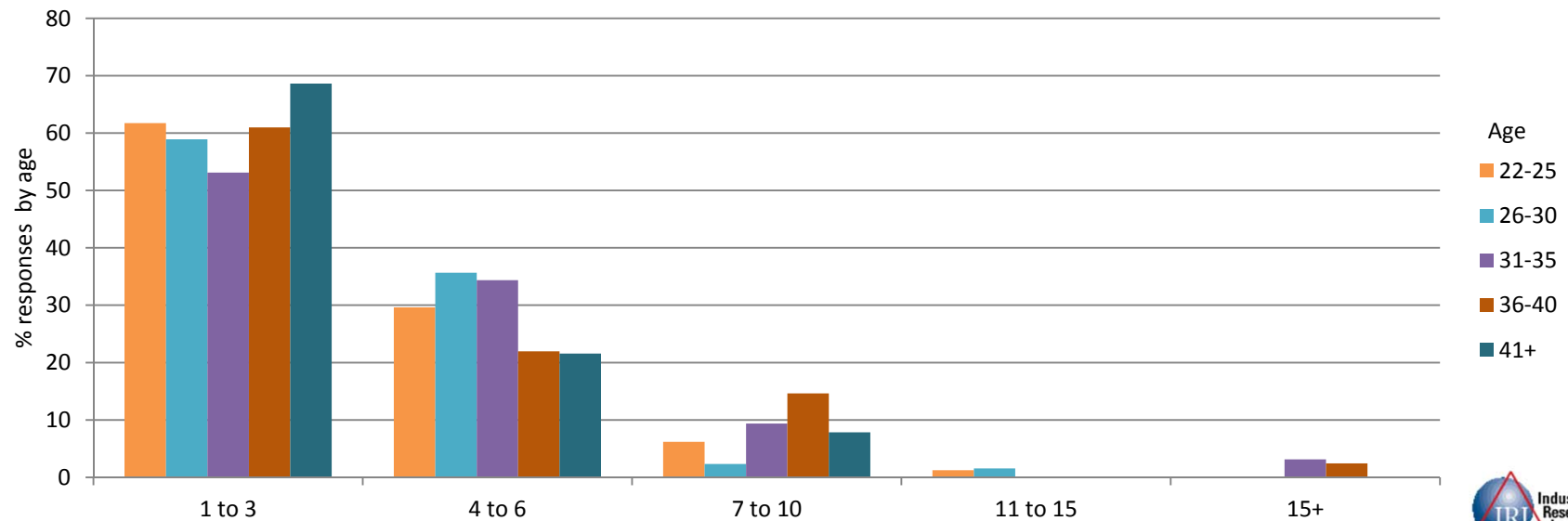
...But Early Career Professionals want to move on to new projects and roles in shorter time

What is your ideal length of time to be assigned to a project?
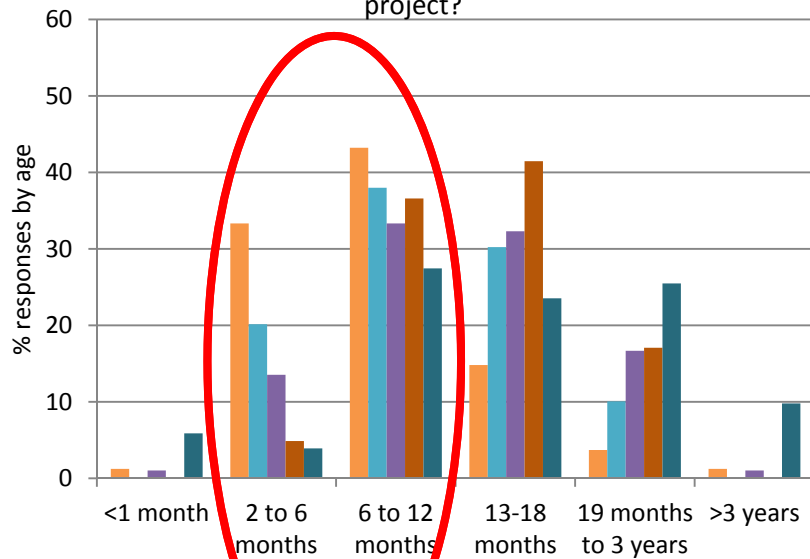
What is your ideal length of time to stay in a particular role?
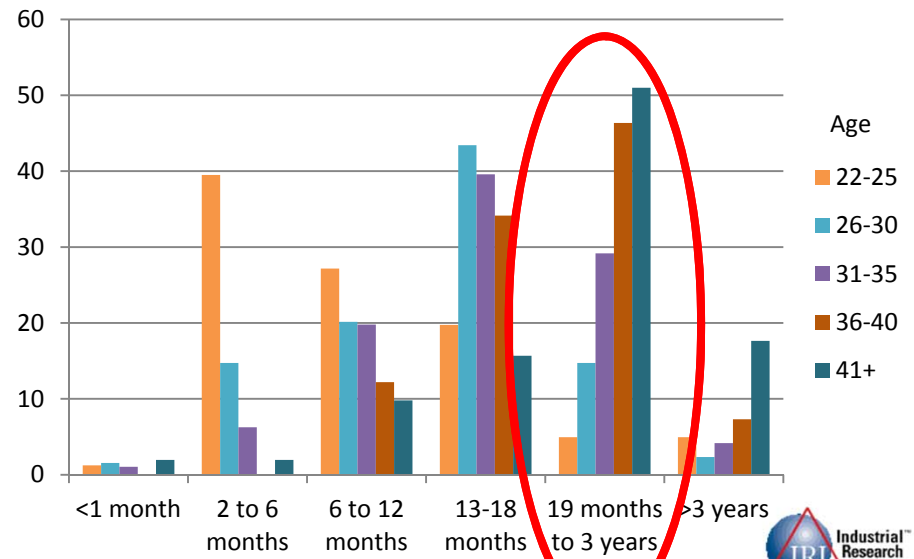
Case Studies:

Case study 1: Established, medium-sized industrial materials company; located in Rust Belt

Case study 2: Nine year old chemical industry startup with 50 employees; located in California

Case study 3: Established, large global energy management company; located in Latin America

Case Study 1: A Learning Organization

HR/Hiring Manager:

- Primary recruiting is on campus recruiting
  - Also provide internships, technology center tour, competitive salaries, and development opportunities
- Evolve staff from "I" to "T"
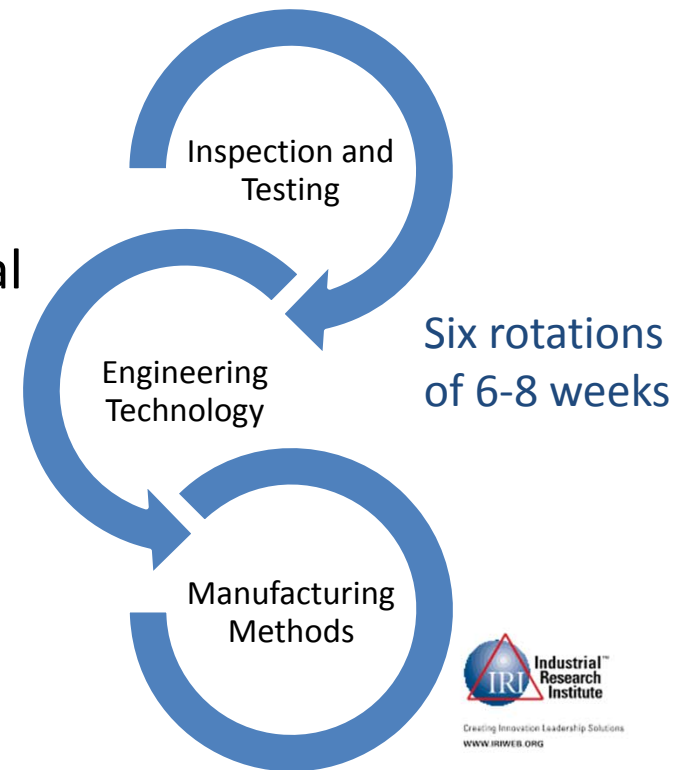- Finishing vs. learning

ECTT:

- Enjoy a variety of projects
- Want to work on projects that have an impact
- Physical workspace for both private and collaborative opportunities
- Appreciate opportunities to visit other plants and attend trade shows
- Want feedback often

Industrial
Research
Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Case Study 1: Key Retention Success Factor – Rotation Plan

- Staff find their passion and interest
- Helps pair the right person to the right job
- Manager and employee jointly create individual development plan
- Visit other plants to network with others
- Variety of short and longer term assignments, simple to complex
- Flexible hours
- Sense of community

Inspection and Testing

Engineering Technology

Manufacturing Methods

Six rotations of 6-8 weeks

IRI Industrial Research Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Case Study 2: Never had a Voluntary Quit

- Training
- Engage really deeply with folks
- Open culture
- Compelling mission
- Good managers
- Folks that are in an organization and happy are turning down calls from headhunters or their network

Case Study 2: Challenges

- Not competing with other heavy industry, rather tech or consultancy

- Students aren't as attracted to engineering because they can't relate to engineering as easily as software development

- Chem-phobia: disproportional fear of chemicals even for Chemistry & Chem E grads

IRI Industrial Research Institute

Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Case Study 3: Successes

- Adapting to cultural changes in the work environment
- Clear processes
- Development opportunities
- Diversity
- Extensive training and continuing education
- Flexible working arrangements
- International with opportunity to work with global teams
- Transparency
- Work on different products
- Working environment - collaborative or individual

Case Study 3: Challenges

- Constant pressure from external recruiting

- New norms are demanding:

  o Training and education desires are difficult to balance with project expectations

  o Expected frequency of recognition and promotions

- Having enough breakthrough projects to keep all ECTT highly engaged

- Having successful rotational plans

- Keeping all levels of experienced employees feeling that the changes are balanced

Industrial Research Institute
Creating Innovation Leadership Solutions
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG

Conclusions

- Early and later career professionals mostly want similar things:
  - o Traditional package is still important: salary, 401k, healthcare
  - o Flexible and remote working is critical
  - o Professional development is very important
- Biggest differences with ECTTs:
  - o Quicker rotation through projects and roles
  - o Continuous feedback
- Physical work environment not important

Case Studies: Top Challenges

- College experience in mechanical engineering is limited.
- Most new employees have one specialty, the rotation program gives them a broader perspective
- It's not about just finishing an assignment, R&D is about learning as well.
- Employees want frequent feedback and want to know they are making a difference
- Keeping them challenged – they want to move quickly
- Our company HQ location is rural, many would prefer to be near a city

Case Studies: Key take-aways

- Continuous education – Desire to keep learning and developing; needs to be personalized; what is offered, how can I grow with the company
- Overall work environment is key – open style, collaborative; but need to have private space when needed
- Flexible work environment – flexible hours, working from home, but understand importance of being in the office
- Project selection: leading edge projects, desire for instant gratification to see projects working, variety of long and short term projects
- Transparency – desire for openness
- Frequent, detailed feedback, what is my potential
- Good manager/leadership

Survey Summary

- Salary, Work/Life Balance, Development/Advancement are the most important factors for retention for all ages
- Professionals of all ages leave because of in adequate salary, not enough advancement opportunities, and poor behavior of management
- "Work life balance" expectations are also similar across ages: flex hours, remote work, and paid family leave. Three weeks vacation is more important for the younger professionals
- Basic benefit desires are similar: 401(k) match, Healthcare But, early career professionals want student loan repayment
- All professionals want programs to find new opportunities. Desire for continuous feedback is greater from younger professionals.
- Good news for retention: Early Career professionals don't expect to work for more companies in their career….
- But Early Career Professionals want to move on to new projects and roles in shorter time than their older peers

Industrial Research Institute
WWW.IRIWEB.ORG