

Human Resources in Publishing

A research study for The Publishing
Training Centre conducted by BML
on behalf of the publishing industry

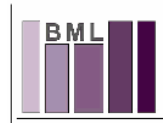
Executive Summary



THE PUBLISHERS
ASSOCIATION



ALPSP



Research commissioned and published by:

The Publishing Training Centre at Book House
45 East Hill
Wandsworth
London SW18 2QZ
T: +44 (0) 208 874 2718
E: publishing.training@bookhouse.co.uk
W: www.train4publishing.co.uk

Research conducted by:

BML
39 Store Street
London WC1E 7DS
T: + 44 (0) 870 870 2345
E: steve@bookmarketing.co.uk
W: www.bookmarketing.co.uk

© The Publishing Training Centre / BML, November 2009

ISBN:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Publishing Training Centre and BML are grateful for the backing given to this research project by The Publishers Association, Independent Publishers Guild and Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers.

We would also like to thank those members of the Research Working Group for their invaluable help in steering the project, both in its overall scope, and the specific coverage at each stage.

Finally, many thanks to all those publishers, publishing course directors, students and recruitment agencies who participated in the research.

CONTENTS

	Page number
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Project objectives	1
1.3 Staff coverage	3
2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Stage 1: HR Departments	4
2.2 Stage 2: students, course directors, recruitment agencies	5
3 THIS REPORT	6
4 OVERALL SUMMARY	7
4.1 Recruitment: problems/barriers overall	7
4.2 Recruitment: specific functions	9
4.3 Recruitment: interest in publishing vs other industries	11
4.4 Recruitment: image of the industry	12
4.5 Recruitment: attractions of book publishing	15
4.6 Recruitment: methods/sources	16
4.7 Skills and development: entry-level skills	18
4.8 Skills and development: training	19
4.9 Retention: problems/reasons for leaving	20
4.11 Improving recruitment and retention	21
5 CONCLUSIONS	25
5.1 Recruitment	25
5.2 Skills and development	28
5.3 Retention	29
5.4 Suggestions for co-operative action	30
6 HR DEPARTMENTS: SUMMARY	31
6.1 Recruitment methods	31
6.2 Recruitment problems	32
6.3 Staff retention	35
6.4 Working practices	37
6.5 Improving staff recruitment and retention	38
6.6 Staff development	39
6.7 Training budgets and control	40
6.8 Staff turnover	41
6.9 Future skills needs	41

7	GENERAL (NON-PUBLISHING) STUDENTS: SUMMARY	42
7.1	Interest in industries	42
7.2	Attractions of the book publishing industry	43
7.3	Detractions of the book publishing industry	43
7.4	Images/descriptions of industries	44
7.5	Book publishing industry functions	46
7.6	Book publishing industry skills	46
7.7	Sources for jobs	47
7.8	Making book publishing more attractive as a career	47
8	BOOK PUBLISHING STUDENTS: SUMMARY	48
8.1	Interest in the book publishing industry	48
8.2	Attractions of the book publishing industry	49
8.3	Detractions of the book publishing industry	49
8.4	Alternatives to working in the book publishing industry	50
8.5	Images/descriptions of industries	50
8.6	Book publishing industry sectors	52
8.7	Book publishing industry functions	53
8.8	Book publishing industry skills	54
8.9	Sources for jobs	55
8.10	Making book publishing more attractive as a career	55
9	PUBLISHING COURSE DIRECTORS: SUMMARY	56
9.1	Students' interest in the book publishing industry	56
9.2	Students' interest in particular functions	57
9.3	Students' skill levels	57
9.4	Calibre of students	57
9.5	Student challenges when searching for jobs	58
9.6	Making book publishing more attractive as a career	58
9.7	Course design	58
9.8	Employer requirements	59
9.9	Promoting the industry	60
10	RECRUITMENT AGENCIES: SUMMARY	61
10.1	Factors in job search	61
10.2	Attractions of the book publishing industry	64
10.3	Detractions of the book publishing industry	64
10.4	Book publishing industry functions	65
10.5	Image of the book publishing industry	66
10.6	Making book publishing more attractive as a career	66
10.7	Improving methods of recruitment into the book publishing industry	67
10.8	Staff retention within the book publishing industry	68
10.9	Staff retention within functions	69
10.10	Staff retention: learning from other industries	69

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Publishing Training Centre (PTC) has funded a research project – backed by the Publishers Association, Independent Publishers Guild and Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers – to examine in detail how UK book and journal publishers recruit, develop and retain their staff.

The findings from the research are being made freely available to the publishing community.

PTC established a working group (WG) of representatives from consumer and academic publishers to help steer the research on behalf of the wider publishing community. BML, the independent research agency, was commissioned to help design, undertake and disseminate the findings of the research.

Over the course of the last 12 months a number of research phases were conducted, each of which have been reported upon individually, and this document provides the final summary of the complete research programme.

1.2 Project Objectives

1.2.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of the study is to provide the UK publishing industry with information that will assist in developing approaches and methods/schemes for the better/more effective recruitment, development and retention of staff.

The project aims to set benchmarks in these broad areas to allow analysis of trends over time.

1.2.2 Detailed objectives

Following consultation with the research WG, a very wide range of detailed objectives was put forward. These were then reduced somewhat both in accordance with the priorities of the WG, the information obtained from the first stage of the project, the practicalities of obtaining information and with the restraints on resources available to complete the project.

Accordingly, the final information needs of this study were as follows:.

A Staff recruitment

- i recruitment pressures and shortages (by function, sector)
- ii barriers to entry to the profession
- iii image and attractiveness of the industry (vs other industries)
- iv methods/sources of new staff
- v overcoming recruitment problems

B Staff skills and development

- i skills sought/gaps and shortages (by function, sector, skills)
- ii whether new recruits have or need to learn the necessary skills
- iii whether universities (general, publishing) provide the right skills sets
- v development/training (attitudes, practices, spend per employee)

C Staff retention

- i rates of staff turnover/retention
- ii why people leave (companies/the industry)
- iii how companies retain staff
- iv improving retention

Where relevant, the study sought to explore past/future changes in these areas.

1.3 Staff coverage

The following list shows the staff types that the WG indicated should be included in the study:

- Publishing in general
- Editorial
- Production
- Marketing
- Sales
- Management
- Ecommerce/website development/digital publishing
- Legal/rights/contracts

Specifically excluded from the study were:

- Support staff (eg general finance)
- IT support (as distinct from web design/ecommerce).

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The research was conducted in 2 main stages, obtaining information from the following groups¹:

- A HR departments of UK publishers
- B Directors of publishing courses at UK universities
- C Students on book publishing courses at UK universities
- D Students on non-publishing courses at UK universities
- E Recruitment agencies in the UK.

2.2 Stage 1: HR departments²

This stage involved an online questionnaire among the HR departments of publishing companies.

Invitations to participate were sent via the PTC, PA, IPG, Association of Learned Professional Society Publishers, Publishing Personnel Group. A total of 33 companies responded to the survey, which was conducted from December 2008 to January 2009.

The responses were fairly evenly split between large, medium and small companies³. This meant that while the sample represented good coverage of the relatively small number of large and medium companies in the industry, the long tail of smaller companies was not so well represented. Caution is therefore required when looking at variations in the findings among the latter group.

The detailed report on this stage of the project was issued in March 2009.

¹ Other potential sources - such as new staff, loyal staff, publishing students who had moved into other industries, etc could not be covered by this study, even though it was recognised they could provide valuable information.

² In this document we are using the term HR to include both the specific function and the practical function in companies without a specific HR function.

³ Respectively those with 501+, 51-500 and 1-50 staff.

2.3 Stage 2

The information obtained from Stage 1 was used to define and scope Stage 2, which comprised the following 4 elements;

- A Online study with 503 final year students in a range of subjects
- B Online study with 65 students on book publishing courses
- C Online study with 10 directors of publishing courses
- D Self-completion and telephone interviews with 6 recruitment consultants

All four of these elements were completed during July - September 2009, with individual reports issued in September 2009.

3 THIS REPORT

This report provides a summary of each individual phase of the project, together with an overall summary and some general conclusions.

More information about the research methodology and more detailed findings can be obtained in the reports for each individual phase of the research.

In this report we refer to different levels of staff within the book publishing industry defined as:

Senior = senior management

Middle = middle management, department heads, etc

Junior = all other staff

1st post = junior staff who have not been in full-time employment before

We provide the specific question(s) pertaining to the information in the relevant sections of the report.

4 OVERALL SUMMARY

4.1 Recruitment: problems/barriers overall

4.1.1 Problems/barriers: overall

Most publishers (all large companies, 92% of medium-sized, and 70% of small⁴) experience problems with staff recruitment.

By far the most widespread recruitment problem (highlighted by 82% of HR departments) is a lack of candidates with the right skills, particularly (but not exclusively) at middle level. This is an increasing problem for many, particularly large and medium-sized companies.

Many publishers (48%) are also concerned about their ability to offer competitive salaries, and this is believed by HR departments (and recruitment agencies) to be the single greatest barrier to potential staff.

Other issues and barriers mentioned by significant numbers of publishers and/or recruitment agencies are:

- i people put off by the industry's white, middle-class, elitist image
- ii a lack of awareness of and interest in the industry, preventing people from considering book publishing
- iii a lessening of the appeal of the industry (particularly at middle level) by an increase in outsourcing (leading to fewer opportunities, and less interesting work)
- iv location, i.e. lack of jobs near where people (want to) live
- v a lack of clear career development within the industry.

There is acknowledgement that, during the recession, potential recruitment barriers may be less important, with candidates keen to securing any suitable position, and more likely to consider a wider range of industries, roles and locations than would ordinarily be the case.

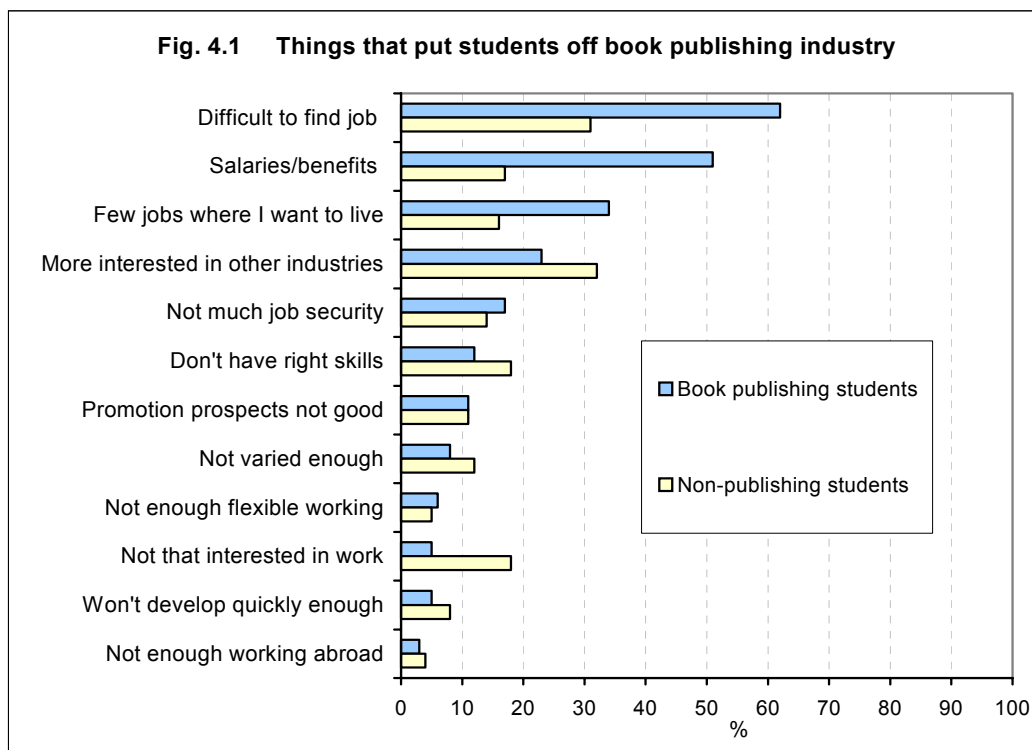
⁴ Definitions used: large = 501+ staff; medium-sized = 51-500 staff; small = 1-50 staff.

4.1.2 Barriers to entry: students

Low pay, and the perceived difficulty in finding a job (at all or in the right location) are the main things that make book publishing students think twice about a career in the industry, although most – especially those at postgraduate level – are still keen to work in book publishing.

Interest in other industries is also a factor for some book publishing students (particularly undergraduates/those whose courses are not limited to book publishing), while there is also some (unprompted) concern about long hours of work, and about the sales performance/profitability of the industry (and the effect of that on job security).

Non-publishing students are also put off book publishing because they think the pay is low, and that it might be a difficult sector for them to get into (**Figure 4.1**). However, a lack of interest in the industry compared to other professions, and the related view that the work may be boring/monotonous, are at least as important detractions.



4.2 Recruitment: specific functions

4.2.1 Current problems

As might be expected, the function/role which currently causes the greatest recruitment problem for publishers is digital publishing (particularly for larger companies), followed by sales, editorial and production/design.

There is less widespread concern about recruitment of other functions, although they are something of a problem for specific groups of publishers:

- i legal/rights roles for large companies
- ii online functions for medium-sized publishers
- iii cross-functional roles for small publishers.

As previously indicated, recruitment problems are currently of most concern for staff at middle levels, but some publishers have problems recruiting senior staff across all functions, and junior staff in areas such as sales, production/design and legal/rights/contracts.

HR directors say that their particular problems recruiting for digital, editorial and production/design are due to the lack of candidates with the right skills in these areas, while their inability to offer competitive salaries is particularly challenging when recruiting to sales. Recruitment agencies emphasise the problems of both skills and salaries for digital staff, with not only a lack of skilled staff within publishing but also difficulty in attracting skilled people from other industries, particularly at a senior level, because of the relatively low salaries.

Meanwhile, the agencies think recruitment problems in the editorial function (particularly at middle level) are to do with the amount of competition for the best candidates, and also the reduced appeal of the function due to increased outsourcing of some of its core elements.

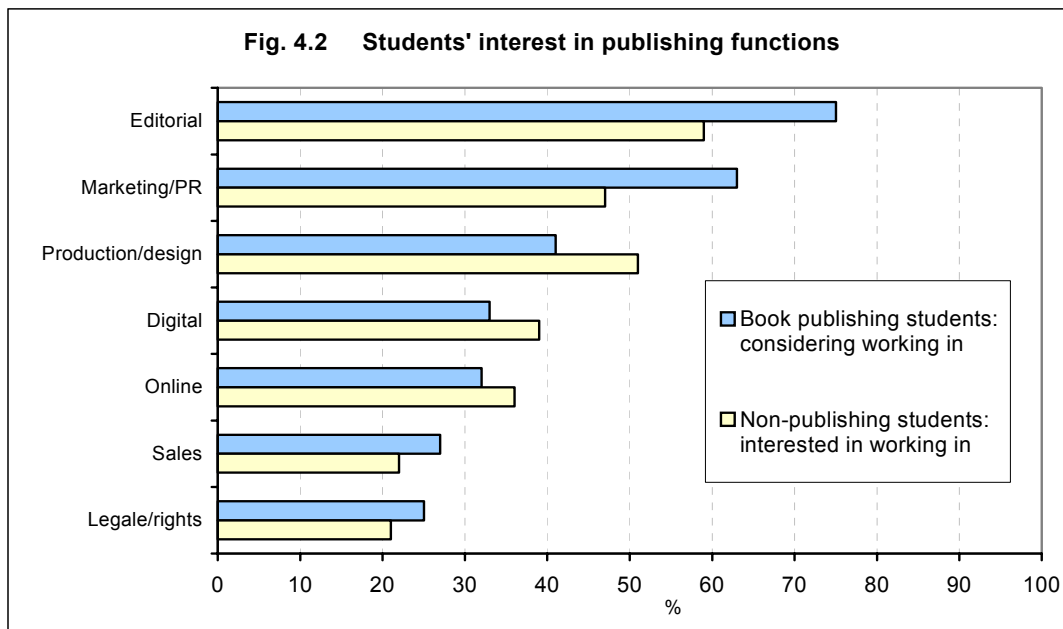
4.2.2 Future needs

Not surprisingly, publishers expect to need more staff in digital and online functions/roles over the next five years, at all levels. Again, this is especially true of larger companies. At the same time, publishers don't tend to expect to see a decrease in their need for staff in other functions, with perhaps the exception of production roles within larger companies.

4.2.3 Interest in publishing functions: students

The problems recruiting at junior level for sales and legal/rights roles appear to relate to a lack of interest among potential candidates in these areas, with around three quarters of publishing students and 80% of non-publishing students uninterested in these functions. Publishing course directors also feel that these are relatively unappealing to their students.

Production/design is also of interest to far fewer book publishing students (41%) than either editorial (75%) or marketing/PR (63%), although it is second only to editorial in terms of interest among non-publishing students (**Figure 4.2**).



Although digital and online functions are not specifically identified by publishers as recruitment problem areas at junior level, these also appear to lack widespread appeal among either publishing or non-publishing students, and particularly so among female students.

Among book publishing students, the lower popularity of functions such as sales, legal/rights and digital tends to reflect mixed rather than entirely negative opinions of them. So, while they are appreciated as potentially important and challenging roles within the industry, they are also seen as being somewhat dull/repetitive. This contrasts with e.g. editorial (seen as being at the heart of the industry, and offering a chance to work with authors) and marketing (seen as both challenging and interesting).

4.3 Recruitment: interest in publishing vs other industries

4.3.1 Interest in publishing vs other industries: book publishing students

Most book publishing students remain keen to work in the industry (54% very keen; 35% fairly keen), despite some concerns relating to finding work with a reasonable salary. Few book publishing students (8%) have been put off the industry by their course, with far more (42%) keener on working in book publishing now than when they started studying the subject.

Publishing course directors agree that only 8% of their final year students have been put off a career in book publishing since starting their course, and that most (77%) want to work in the industry.

Many book publishing students - especially among postgraduates – say they started their current course with the intention of following such a career (40%), although a similar proportion (44%) were open to the idea of working within other industries or publishing sectors. Indeed, when book publishing students are asked which other industries they might consider, press publishing (71%) and marketing/PR (51%) are clear leaders, with broadcasting in third (26%).

4.3.2 Interest in publishing vs other industries: non-publishing students

Nearly one in five (18%) of non-publishing students are considering working in the newspaper/magazine/book publishing sector after leaving university. Only education/teaching (31%) and health sector/medicine (24%) are more widely considered among the industries explored, with publishing on a par with e.g. the civil service, marketing/advertising/PR, IT/telecoms/web development and art/design/fashion.

An even higher proportion (24%) say they have ever thought about a job/career in book publishing specifically, rising to 54% of students of humanities, 39% of arts students and 26% of business students. These three groups are also the most likely to still be thinking about a career in the (wider) publishing industry.

More specifically, students of literature and media studies/PR are – according to publishing course directors – the most likely non-publishing students to consider working in book publishing, ahead of those studying creative/arts subjects and education. Few course directors think that students of sectors such as law, business, science or medicine would be interested in a career in publishing.

4.3.3 Interest in book publishing industry sectors

Book publishing students seem keenest on working in the adult fiction sector (63%) and children's books (56%), followed by adult non-fiction (44%) and academic (38%). School/ELT (25%) and professional publishing (21%) have much less appeal.

Postgraduates are much more interested than undergraduates in adult non-fiction (55% vs 28%), academic (47% vs 24%) and professional (26% vs 12%).

Other than interest in the types of books in each sector, fiction is popular because it is seen as being bestselling/profitable and influential; children's is considered creative, offering publishing in varied formats, and non-fiction is seen as being stimulating and diverse.

In contrast, educational and professional publishing are seen as being important, but somewhat boring.

4.4 **Recruitment: image of the industry**

4.4.1 Image of the industry: non-publishing students

As indicated above, some publishers are concerned that the image of the industry contributes to the recruitment problems that they experience, e.g. by having a white, middle class image or being seen as uninteresting.

However, the majority of non-publishing students (69%) do not think the industry particularly *white/middle class*, and black/minority ethnic students appear, if anything, less inclined to make this association than their white counterparts.

At the same time, more of these students equate book publishing with this image than do so for most of the other industries examined: only banking and the civil service are seen as more *white/middle class*. Book publishing is also well behind the charity/social service, education and retail sectors in terms of being associated with *equal opportunities*.

More generally, book publishing does not have a particularly positive image among non-publishing students, although it suffers more from a weak rather than a poor image.

So, for example, relatively few non-publishing students think of the industry as being *cool* (19%), *exciting* (17%) or *cutting-edge* (11%), whereas the majority think at least one of these descriptions apply to e.g. broadcasting, art/design/fashion and IT/telecoms/web design. Book publishing (25%) is also far less likely to be thought *varied* than are e.g. art/design/fashion (55%), broadcasting (53%), education/teaching (46%) and marketing/ad agency (45%).

At the same time, book publishing is not felt to be particularly *poorly paid* by non-publishing students (20%), with nearly as many non-publishing students thinking it *well paid* (17%)⁵. Nor do most describe it as *boring* (24%) or *uncool* (18%), and relatively few think it either *high status* or *low status*.

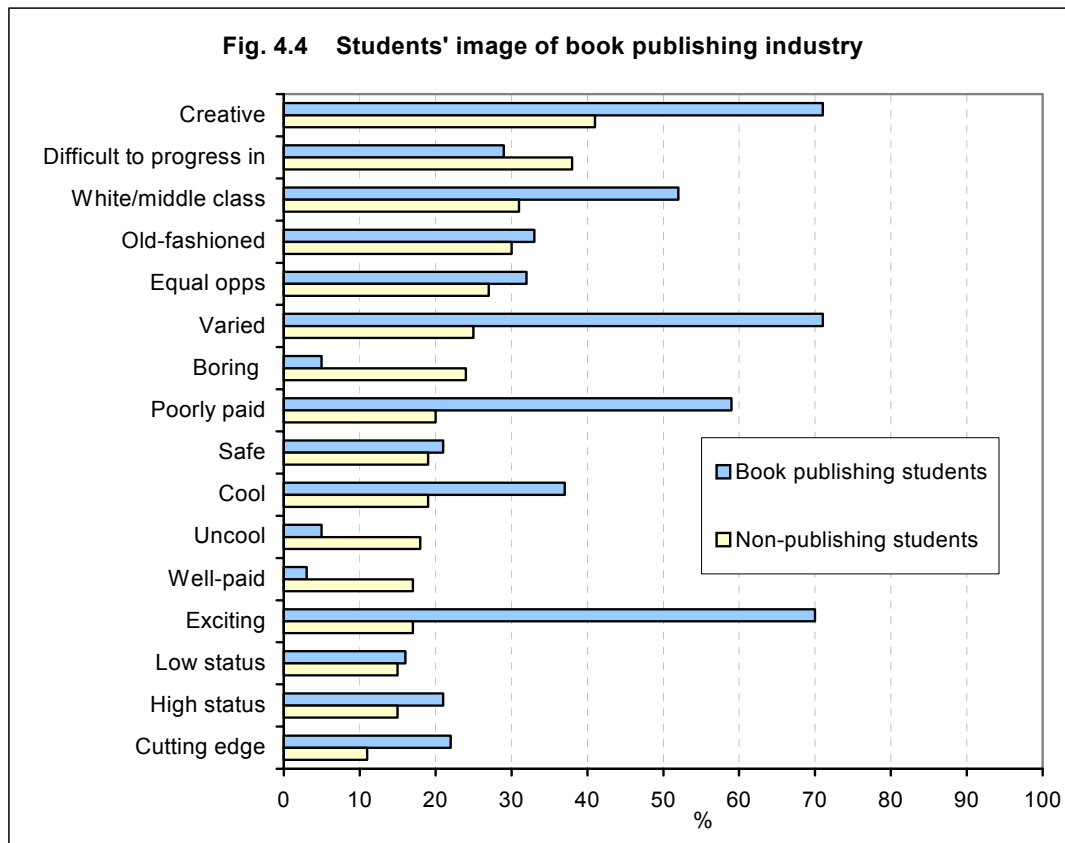
Alongside *white/middle class*, the most widespread negative images of book publishing among non-publishing students are that it would be *difficult to progress in* (38%) and that it is *old-fashioned* (30%). Only art/fashion/design is felt more *difficult to progress in*, and only the civil service and banking are considered more *old-fashioned*.

The most positive aspect about the book publishing industry among non-publishing students is that it is *creative* (41%) although this is far less than for art/design/fashion (84%), broadcasting (60%) and marketing/ad agencies (58%).

⁵ It may be that these students don't view publishing particularly negatively in terms of pay simply because they have no experience of salary levels in the industry. It may be that this would become more of a barrier were they to look more closely at publishing as a career (certainly book publishing students are less positive about this – see below).

4.4.2 Image of the industry: book publishing students

Unsurprisingly, book publishing students have a stronger (and usually) better image of book publishing than non-publishing students, with most seeing it as *exciting*, *varied* and *creative* (**Figure 4.4**), and very few thinking it *boring* or *uncool*.



Less positively, many book publishing students associate the industry with being *low paid* (59%) and they are even more likely than non-publishing students to think it *white/middle class* (52%) and *old-fashioned* (33%).

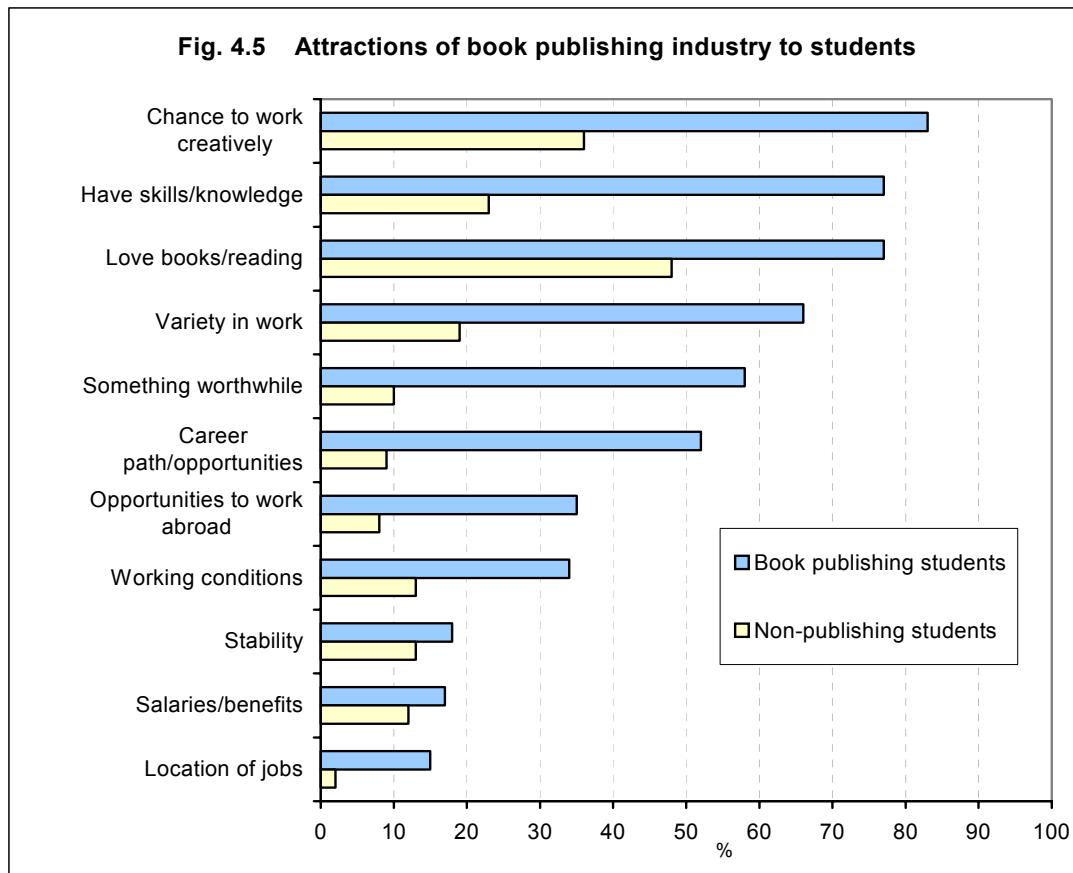
Moreover, even book publishing students are not particularly likely to think the industry *cool* (38%) or *cutting edge* (22%) especially compared to e.g. broadcasting (76% each), art/design/fashion (71%/56%) and media publishing (65%/38%). These three sectors are also close to or ahead of book publishing on two of its most positive associations (*exciting* and *creative*). Indeed, it is only in terms of being *varied* (71%) that book publishing is well ahead of these other industries (50-60%).

4.5 Recruitment: attractions of book publishing

The key thing that attracts people to the idea of working in book publishing is a love of books/reading. This is the most widespread attraction among non-publishing students (mentioned by 48%), and a factor for most (77%) of those studying book publishing. Nine out of ten publishing course directors identify it as one of the things driving their students to work in the sector, and recruitment agencies also feel it is the prime motivator.

The opportunity to work creatively is also one of the main attractions of the industry for both book publishing (83%) and non-publishing (36%) students, and something also widely recognised as a factor by course directors and recruitment agencies. The variety of the work is another important attraction for book publishing students.

Naturally enough, the chance to use their skills/knowledge also attracts book publishing students to the idea of a career in the industry, while some non-publishing students (23%) are also attracted to the industry because they think they have suitable skills (**Figure 4.5**).



Recruitment agencies think that the opportunity of being around authors/ celebrities is another important attraction for the industry, particularly for certain functions, such as editorial, but also - by association - for those in less directly related roles. Book publishing students confirm that this chance to work with authors is something that motivates their interest in the industry. Both these groups also mention the attraction of doing work that is perceived to be worthwhile.

Recruitment agencies suggest that for some at a senior level, a move into publishing may represent the fulfilment of a long-held ambition, with book publishing attractive to senior people because it is seen as influential (e.g. shaping the culture/ education of the nation, etc) and profile-raising (e.g. among their peers and the media).

Recruitment agencies also think the publishing industry benefits from being perceived to be especially flexible in terms of working practices, making it particularly appealing to e.g. women with child care issues.

4.6 Recruitment: methods/sources

4.6.1 Junior level

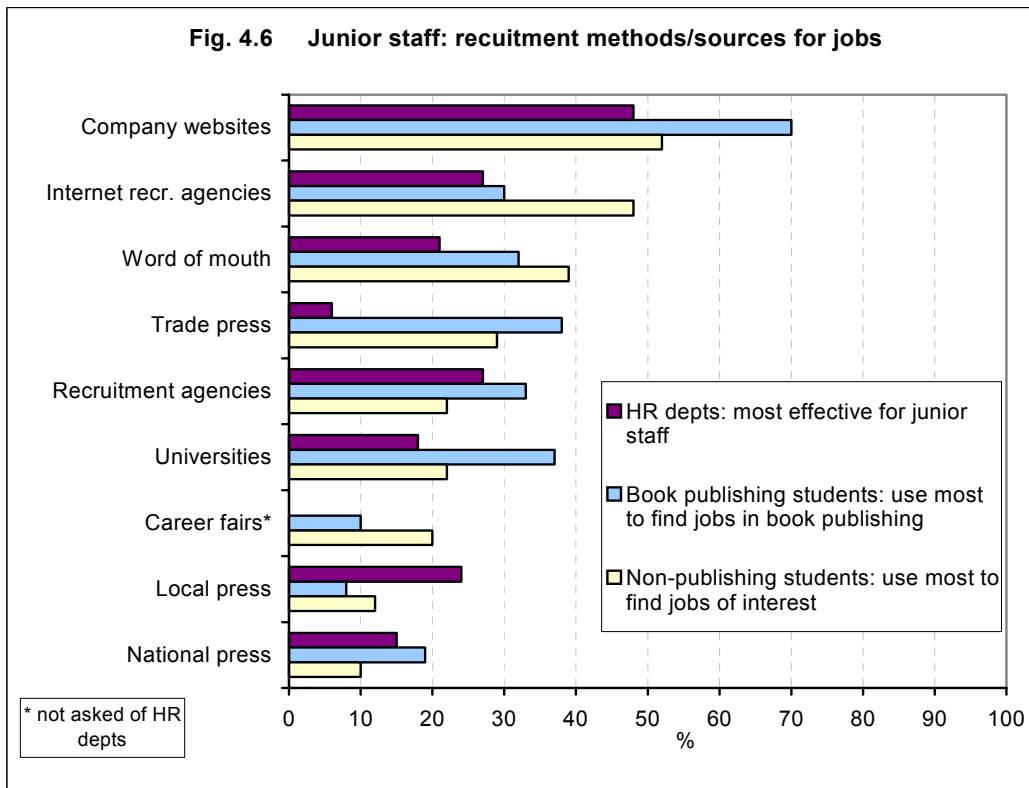
Company websites are seen as the leading source of potential jobs for both book publishing students and non-publishing students.

Publisher HR departments (particularly of larger companies) also see their websites as the most effective channel for recruiting junior staff (**Figure 4.6**), and most companies of all sizes are making increasing use of that medium.

Internet recruitment sites are almost as popular as company websites for non-publishing students, and again many publishers are making more use of these. However, some small companies do not appear to be using this medium at all.

Whereas the book trade press is the second most important source of jobs in the sector for book publishing students, this medium is not seen by publishers as being particularly effective for recruiting junior level staff, and many HR departments have been making less use of both the trade and national press in recent years.

University websites/bulletins are also fairly widely used by book publishing students, and though not felt particularly effective by their HR departments, publishers are increasingly using contacts with universities for recruitment.



4.6.2 Senior/middle level

HR departments name using head-hunters as the most effective method for recruiting senior staff, ahead of recruitment agencies - which they consider the best approach for recruiting middle management, and for staff recruitment overall. Small companies are again less likely to be using head-hunters than medium and large companies.

Small companies also appear relatively unlikely to recruit using college contacts, local/national press and trade associations, and are more reliant than larger companies on using word-of-mouth. Indeed, many companies of all sizes are using the latter more.

4.7 Skills and development: entry-level skills

4.7.1 Skill levels: book publishing students

While HR departments say that the widespread problem of the lack of candidates with the right skills is especially true of middle level staff, some also highlight a lack of suitable skills at junior level (where recruitment is especially difficult for functions such as production/design, sales, and legal/rights).

The lack of skills in sales is acknowledged by book publishing students, of whom over half (54%) think they are not very well equipped to work in this function. In contrast, most book publishing students think they are at least fairly well equipped for production/design (78%) and legal/rights (68%), although their course directors are less sure that this is so for legal/rights, especially among undergraduates.

Overall, book publishing students are more likely to consider themselves fairly well equipped (61%) than very well equipped (32%) for a career in book publishing, and are most confident about their abilities in editorial and marketing. A significant proportion (39%) don't feel equipped to work in digital/online roles/functions.

Additional skills (beyond those related to specific functions) which final year book publishing students feel they are lacking for starting a career in book publishing are finances, managements skills and hands-on experience. The lack of hands-on experience is also highlighted as a gap by publishing course directors.

More generally, course directors tend to think that the calibre of students on their book publishing courses has improved in recent years, somewhat in contrast to the opinion of HR departments that the skills level of candidates is an increasing problem.

4.7.2 Book publishing course development

Course directors appear confident that their book publishing courses are developed to meet the needs of the industry: 7 out of 10 say they have a very clear idea of employer needs, while the others have a fairly clear idea.

Course directors learn of employer needs from informal conversations (9 out of 10), conferences/seminars (9), having industry personnel on advisory boards (8) and specific discussions with publishers (7). Nearly all (9 out of 10) feel they get sufficient input from the industry about the skills, attributes and knowledge required by employers of publishing graduates, although some would find more guest speakers helpful.

In practice, course directors report that their postgraduate publishing courses are revised every year, while undergraduate courses are updated less often (every 3-5 years). Course directors say that these revisions reflect industry trends/needs, so in recent years have increasingly focused on digital and online aspects, with some also seeing increasingly practical/business-oriented learning.

4.7.3 Suitable skills: non-publishing students

41% of non-publishing students feel they probably/definitely have skills suitable for the book publishing industry, with a further 34% saying that they possibly do. For humanities, the figures are 62% and 29% respectively, and for arts the figures are 54% and 30%.

As with publishing students, those studying in other disciplines are most likely to think their skills suitable for editorial, production/design and marketing/PR functions, while they see their skills as least suitable for legal and digital roles.

Suitability is linked to subject studied: editorial with humanities, production/design with arts, sales/marketing with business, online/digital with business/media or science/technology, legal/rights with law.

Besides skills relating to specific functions, non-publishing students most commonly feel they have communication skills, creativity, conscientiousness and an ability to be analytical which could be useful to the book publishing industry.

4.8 Skills and development: training

4.8.1 Training budgets and control

Virtually all larger and medium companies have specific training budgets, usually controlled by HR departments, although sometimes by line managers or varying depending on circumstances. In smaller companies, line managers tend to control training budgets, although some (30% of those surveyed) say they do no specific training.

Where budgets exist, publishers typically spend £200-300 per annum per employee on training, although nearly a third spend more than this.

4.8.2 Methods used to develop staff

Development of staff within publishing companies is increasingly done using on-the-job and in-house training (both by the company and through external agencies). In contrast, a significant proportion are using external training courses less, although this approach is still very widely used, and increasingly so for some staff not in their first full employment.

Significant minorities of publishers are increasingly developing their staff using mentoring, job shadowing (mainly those in their first job), and away days (mainly those not in their first job).

At the same time, many (especially smaller publishers) do not use job swaps, job shadowing or away days at all.

4.9 Retention: problems/reasons for leaving

4.9.1 Overall

Overall, most HR departments don't consider staff retention to be a major problem (45% don't think it is a problem at all; 48% think it a slight problem). However, nearly one in five large companies say that retention is a fairly significant problem for them.

Retention problems seem mostly to affect junior staff, and only a small number of publishers say they have problems retaining senior staff.

HR departments are evenly divided as to whether retention has improved (27%) or deteriorated (27%) in recent years, with many (42%) thinking it unchanged. Any improvements in retention are associated with the general economy, better salaries and more flexible working, while lack of career development is seen as the main reason for worsening retention.

Indeed, according to publishers, the two main reasons why people leave their companies are because of limited promotion prospects and wanting a change/new opportunity within the industry. Pay also appears to be of some relevance, especially as a motivation among junior staff for leaving a company.

HR departments say that a similar set of factors (career development, pay/benefits, wanting a new challenge) are the main reasons why people leave the industry altogether, and many think that these have become more important in recent years. In contrast, most say that few leave the industry in search of better conditions or more interesting work.

Recruitment agencies name relatively poor salaries and career development opportunities as the major reasons for changing jobs/professions among those in the book publishing industry, at all staff levels. They point to the particular problems of retaining senior staff who, in addition to better salaries, may be tempted to leave to find new challenges, with the perception that it is easier to elicit change and development in a new company/industry.

4.9.2 Within function

While digital publishing, followed by sales, editorial and production/design, are the main problem areas for publishers in terms of recruitment, editorial and marketing/PR are the functions where retention is most difficult, although retention in sales roles is also a concern for large publishers.

Recruitment agencies suggest that salaries are a particular problem in terms of retention in marketing/PR, while retention of sales staff is affected by a change in the traditional role, with more outsourcing of its functions making it more of a desk job, with less obvious career development.

Within digital, recruitment agencies point to the difficulties of retaining top quality staff because of the intense competition for digital skills, with these especially liable to head hunted from either inside or outside the industry.

4.10 Improving recruitment/retention

4.10.1 Working practices/conditions

Most publishers say they have improved working practices/conditions in recent years, with:

- i 60-70% offering more opportunities for flexible working hours, part time working and working from home
- ii more than half of large companies offering more overseas working
- iii c40% overall increasing salary levels.

HR departments feel that further improvements in these areas would make the industry more attractive, and therefore more able to recruit and retain staff.

More specifically, they believe that flexible hours/part time work are effective for all levels, but especially for middle levels of staff, while working from home is an attractive benefit for middle and senior staff, but not those at junior level. In contrast, they say that increasing pay/salaries is an effective way of improving recruitment/retention for junior staff, but that this is not particularly effective for senior staff, for whom bonuses/profit shares have more impact.

Better pay – especially at entry level – is certainly one of the main things that students say would improve the attractiveness of the book publishing (mentioned, without prompting, by 40% of book publishing students and 27% of non-publishing students). This is also one of the main ways that publishing course directors think the industry could increase its appeal.

Recruitment agencies feel that publishing can learn from other industries in its use of working conditions, making more use of small, but appreciated gestures, such as away days, flexitime and summer hours.

4.10.2 Career development/training

Both HR departments and recruitment agencies believe that providing clearer career development and training opportunities would make the industry more attractive.

Recruitment agencies suggest that publishers consider expanding and better publicising management training schemes for junior staff, perhaps offering 'training contracts' similar to the legal profession (training in mixed areas, such as editorial, production, sales and marketing, with the prospect of a permanent role at the end). They recommend that these schemes should not be limited to graduate level candidates, who may not be best suited to some roles (e.g. sales).

Recruitment agencies also emphasise the importance of career development as a means of retaining staff. They state not only the importance of making timely promotions to help make staff feel valued, but also the need of ensuring that promised promotions are fulfilled wherever possible. They feel this can be particularly effective for solving both recruitment and retention problems at junior/middle level, by offering more opportunities for existing staff with some experience (supplemented where necessary by appropriate training).

Publishing students mention (without prompting) all of these areas as things which would improve the attraction of book publishing as a career, particularly easier access to work experience (29%), as well as internships (14%), clearer career development (12%), graduate training schemes (9%), and opportunities to have more responsibility (8%) and be more creative (6%) early in career. Publishing course directors also stress the importance of placements and internships.

4.10.3 Promoting the industry

Publishers think that the industry needs to be promoted more extensively if it is to widen its appeal, and that this promotion should be both generic (raising awareness of the industry as a whole rather than focussing on specific roles/functions), and company-specific (e.g. promoting the brand; attending recruitment fairs).

Recruitment agencies and course directors also think the industry needs to promote itself more vigorously, at more levels (e.g. in school as well as universities) and among a wider audience (e.g. to students of business, science and education courses, as well as more obvious subjects, such as English).

Most publishing courses offer opportunities for students to engage with book publishing, e.g. organising talks from industry personnel, work experience and visits to publishers, and some (but not all, and especially those running postgraduate courses) allow students from outside publishing to take advantage of these opportunities.

More widespread advertisement of the industry and its functions/roles is the thing most commonly mentioned by non-publishing students which would make book publishing more attractive to them. This may be mentioned by more than pay/conditions simply because these students are unaware of the salary levels available.

While HR departments suggest more use of careers fairs as a way to promote the industry, it is worth remembering that these are not widely thought of as a source of jobs among either publishing or non-publishing students.

4.10.4 More jobs regionally/locally

Reflecting the fact that some students are put off the book publishing industry by the availability of jobs near where they want to live, more regional/local job opportunities are mentioned by both publishing students (17%) and non-publishing students (15%) as a way of making the industry more attractive.

4.10.5 Recruitment/retention approach

Perhaps unsurprisingly, recruitment agencies think that publishers could improve their recruitment by making more use of specialist recruitment expertise (agencies, head-hunters, etc).

They also suggest that recruitment would be improved if the industry were more willing to take on newcomers to publishing, rather than tending to hire 'more of the same' candidates. In particular, at senior level, they feel that business/strategic experience should be more important than publishing experience.

Recruitment agencies also suggest that publishers should make better use of exit interviews to really help assess their recruitment and retention of staff, rather than just undertaking what to them is seen as often more of an academic exercise.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Recruitment

5.1.1 Raising awareness

- To attract a wider range of potential candidates at entry level, there is a clear need to make the industry much more visible, by promoting it more at all levels of education (e.g. school as well as higher education), and beyond the 'obvious' subject areas within arts and humanities, to e.g. business, science, law, etc.
- This promotion might be through offering more speakers at universities (and not just aimed at or advertised to publishing courses) and by increasing presence at careers fairs. However, it should be borne in mind that careers fairs are not widely used as specific sources of jobs/job information by university students.
- Since graduates see company websites and online recruitment agencies as the leading sources of jobs and job information, publishers will need to continue to increase the focus on these aspects of their recruitment at junior level.
- Publishers should also be aware that though they doubt the effectiveness of the trade press as a means of recruiting staff at junior levels, students continue to use it to find out about jobs.

5.1.2 Encouraging interest

- If those outside the obvious subject areas are to be encouraged to consider a career in book publishing, it will be necessary to better inform them about the range of jobs available, and indicate how their different skills or subject knowledge might be useful within the industry.
- This would obviously be particularly true of those who perhaps lack experience of the publishing industry, but have skills/knowledge relating to functions/sectors which the industry finds hardest to recruit, or which have least appeal (e.g. the sales, design, legal and digital functions, and educational and professional sectors).
- Perhaps more importantly, it will be necessary to emphasise the positive aspects of a career in book publishing, while overcoming the barriers and negative perceptions that currently put people off. Since the book publishing industry currently has a weak rather than a poor image among those outside the industry, there is certainly an opportunity to do this.

5.1.3 Counteracting the negatives

- Concerns that potential candidates are put off working in book publishing by perceptions that it is a white, middle class industry, do not appear to be reflected very strongly by the candidates themselves. Other negative associations – the perception of low pay, that the industry is generally hard to get into/find work in; and that it is not particularly exciting or dynamic – appear far more important barriers.
- It may be difficult for publishers to counteract the impression of low pay/financial benefits, especially against industries such as finance and IT. However, publishers are in a stronger position here than some sectors (e.g. retail, design, education, social services), and may be able to emphasise instead other favourable working conditions (flexible hours, working from home, etc).
- It may also be hard to overcome the perceived concentration of the industry in a few major centres (especially London), putting off people who do not (want to) live near to those areas. It may be that this concentration is not as great as people think, and that it is possible to advertise this more clearly.
- Avoiding the tendency – real or perceived – of the industry to prefer employing those with experience in the industry rather than those who might have suitable skills but lack publishing experience, might help counteract the feeling that the industry is hard to get into for those outside the sector.
- More use of specialist recruitment services for middle and senior level staff might help in this regard, with some publishers – especially smaller companies – increasingly reliant on word of mouth as a method of recruitment, despite the awareness that recruitment agencies and head-hunters are more effective.
- At junior level, offering more work placements, internships and training schemes (preferably introducing candidates to a wide range of industry functions), would serve to promote the industry, make it more accessible and provide beneficiaries of these with a more constructive idea of what a career might offer. These should be offered beyond students on publishing courses, and possibly also to non-graduates.
- The key image perceptions that publishers need to counteract if they are to attract dynamic candidates from outside the industry are that the book publishing industry is less varied, creative, exciting, cutting-edge and cool than competing industries, such as broadcasting, design, IT, education and marketing/advertising.

- In addition to trying to overcome these barriers to the book publishing industry as a whole, the industry also needs to overcome the lower levels of interest (among both publishing and non-publishing students) in those areas which it finds hardest to recruit, such as digital, sales and legal/rights functions. To do this, publishers will need to convince people that these roles are not only important/challenging, but are also as interesting and central to the industry as the more popular editorial and marketing functions.
- The industry also needs to consider the effect of outsourcing on the attractiveness of some core functions within the industry (e.g. editorial, sales), i.e. where these are perceived to be becoming more administrative, and therefore less interesting/challenging.

5.1.4 Emphasising the positives

- The industry should promote its obvious strengths (eg creativity), and make virtues of the variety of jobs/career options on offer, the feel-good factor of working in a 'worthy' industry (educational, cultural, etc), and the prospect of possible contact with famous authors/celebrities.
- Publishers should be aware that even book publishing students consider other industries – such as media publishing, design and broadcasting – to be at least as strong on these attributes, and also rather more cutting edge and cool than book publishing.
- If it is to keep up with these other sectors, book publishing must promote itself as an exciting industry, advancing with new technology in all areas (eg formats, delivery of content, sales and communication channels).
- Emphasising the opportunities for junior level staff to progress quickly to more responsible roles, and to be involved in creative and interesting work early in their careers, would also increase the attractiveness of book publishing to both publishing and non-publishing graduates.
- At a higher level, continued promotion of the book publishing industry as both high status and influential can help persuade senior candidates from outside the industry consider a move into publishing as an opportunity to raise their profile and make an impact. These qualitative aspects of the industry are all the more important where publishing is competing with higher paid sectors, e.g. for the best candidates in strategic and digital roles.
- As indicated above, book publishing is thought to have a positive image in terms of working conditions (flexibility of hours, working from home, sympathetic to those caring for children), and can take advantage of this perception to attract staff, particularly at middle and senior level.

5.2 Skills and development

5.2.1 Finding suitable skills

- Publishers do not have particular difficulty recruiting the right skills for junior editorial and marketing roles, with book publishing courses equipping their students well for these core functions, and with non-publishing students able to transfer their skills to fit these roles.
- Publishing courses appear less able to deliver students equipped for harder-to-recruit roles, such as sales, legal/rights, production/design and digital, despite working closely with employers when designing their courses, and developing the content to reflect changes in the industry (e.g. with increasing emphasis on digital/online aspects).
- Even more attention might therefore need to be paid to these aspects of the courses, with more input from publishers in developing these modules and providing relevant external speakers. In addition to generally promoting these areas, it might also be possible to make a virtue of the fact that publishers find recruitment in these areas difficult, i.e. they might be easier ways in to the industry for graduates.
- The gap in skills relating to new technologies (e.g. digital, online) and specialist functions (e.g. sales, legal) is also generally true of non-publishing students, so that publishers will need to target graduates in specific subjects if it is to hope to find suitable entry level skills/knowledge for these roles.
- So, rather than focusing only on those subject which might be assumed to be generally most interested in publishing (e.g. humanities), the industry needs to look to e.g. business students for sales roles; IT, media and possibly art/design students for online/digital; creative subjects for production/design; legal students for legal/rights roles.

5.2.2 Developing suitable skills

- Those studying business, media, IT and creative subjects would perhaps be the most suitable candidates for internships and training schemes that introduce students to a range of functions within the industry.
- Problems experienced by publishers in finding recruits with the right skills at middle level point both to the need to attract candidates from outside the industry (discussed above) and to the importance of training and development within the industry.

- Further investigation may be required to establish whether the current levels and approaches to training could be improved, either by changing the balance in those methods used widely (internal/on the job training; use of specialist agencies), or increasing the use of less widespread approaches, such as mentoring, away days and especially job swaps and shadowing.

5.3 Retention

- Retention is less problematic for publishers than recruitment overall, although that may partly reflect the current economic climate, with staff more cautious about changing company or career.
- Where there are concerns about retention (mainly at junior level in functions such as marketing and editorial, and perhaps also at more senior levels in digital functions) publishers need to try to counteract the tendency for staff to move company or leave the industry in search of better salaries, more promotion prospects and a more responsible/challenging role.
- As with recruitment, competing with other industries on salary may be difficult, making it all the more important for publishers to make their staff feel valued and rewarded in other ways. This could be through timely promotions or increases in responsibility (with appropriate training where necessary), or by further improving flexible working conditions.
- Exit interviews might also be employed more scientifically by publishers in future, to help them understand and monitor the key problems in retaining staff.

5.4 Suggestions for co-operative action

- The research suggests a number of areas where the book publishing might work together to take forward the findings from the research:
 - i Developing vehicles and approaches for promoting the industry and its publishers to a wide range of constituencies at various levels (school, university, other industries).
 - ii Developing the relationship between the industry and book publishing courses, to ensure that graduates are equipped for harder-to-recruit functions.
 - iii Developing training/work placement schemes to appeal to both publishing and non-publishing students.

- Further industry-wide research might also be considered, either where not feasible within the limitations of this study, or developing out of its findings:
 - i To test among potential targets any ideas/approaches developed to promote the industry/publishers and counteract recruitment barriers.
 - ii To directly investigate recruitment barriers and skills shortages among middle level staff (i.e. among those within and without the industry).
 - iii To directly investigate why staff move jobs within and outside the industry, perhaps through a more uniform and scientific use of exit interviews, or by building up a database of people willing to provide feedback at a later date/in confidence.
 - iv To monitor changes in interest in, and opinions of, the industry over time.

6 PUBLISHING HR DEPARTMENTS: SUMMARY FINDINGS⁶

6.1 Recruitment methods

6.1.1 Most effective methods

Q. When recruiting staff, which 2 methods do you consider to be most effective overall, and at each of the levels shown?

Overall, recruitment agencies are seen by publishers as the most effective method of recruiting staff (mentioned by 55% of HR departments), followed by the publisher's website (27%) and Internet recruitment sites (24%).

There are variations according to the level of staff being sought:

- i Head-hunters are considered most effective for senior staff (48%), followed by recruitment agencies (39%), word-of-mouth (33%) and national press (30%)
- ii Recruitment agencies are most effective for middle level staff (55%), followed by trade press, publisher's website and Internet recruitment agencies (all 27%)
- iii The publisher's own website is most effective for junior staff (48%), followed by Internet recruitment and agencies (both 27%).

There are some significant variations in terms of the size of the publishing company, with particular importance ascribed to:

- i recruitment agencies among medium companies for junior staff, and among large companies for middle level staff
- ii the publisher's website among large companies for all levels (and especially junior level)
- iii national press and head-hunters among medium/large companies for senior staff
- iv word-of-mouth among small companies for all levels (and especially junior/middle).

⁶ Based on online survey of 33 HR departments

Significant numbers of small companies appear not to recruit using: college contacts; Internet recruitment; head-hunters; local/national press; trade associations.

6.1.2 Changes in methods

Q	What changes, if any, has your company made to its methods of external recruitment over the past few years?
---	---

According to HR departments, there have been a few significant changes to recruitment methods in recent years, notably:

- i decreasing use of national and trade press (by 55-58% of publishers)
- ii increasing use of the publisher's website (by 76% of publishers), Internet recruitment sites (55%), contacts with colleges (55%) and word-of-mouth (52%).

There have been no significant overall/consistent changes in use of other methods, though individual companies each have their own patterns.

6.2 **Recruitment problems**

6.2.1 Functions/roles/levels with problems

Q	Which, if any, of the following functions/roles does your company have trouble recruiting?
Q	At what levels is recruitment a problem for these functions/roles?

The function/role which causes publishers the greatest recruitment problem is digital publishing, mentioned by 30% of HR departments. This especially affects large companies (55%), but appears less so for smaller companies.

Around 25% mention problems with sales (especially large companies), editorial (small and large companies) and production/design (medium companies).

Other functions appear problematic only for certain sizes of companies:

- i online functions for medium-sized (25%)
- ii cross-functional roles for small (20%)
- ii legal/rights/contracts roles for large (18%)

Overall, 12% of HR departments say they have no problems recruiting for any of the functions covered.

Recruitment in the main problem areas (digital, sales, editorial, production, online) tends to be of most concern for staff at middle levels. However, some are concerned about recruitment at senior level across a range of functions, and at junior level in e.g. sales, production/design and legal/rights.

6.2.2 Specific problems with recruitment

- Q Below are possible problems you may have in recruiting new staff. Which, if any, has your company experienced?
- Q Which, if any, have become more of a problem in the past few years?
- Q Which, if any, of the following (a) levels / (b) functions/roles are particularly affected by these recruitment problems?

Large and medium-sized publishers are more likely to mention specific recruitment problems than small, of whom 30% say that none of the probed problems are an issue. All of the large and most of the medium companies say they are affected by at least one of the problems, and are more likely to mention each specific problem than small companies.

By far the most widespread problem (mentioned by 82% of HR departments) is a lack of candidates with the right skills, with two-thirds saying the problem is increasing. This increase appears less true of small companies (40%) than medium (75%) or large (64%).

Nearly half of publishers (48%) feel they have difficulty offering competitive salaries, with 21% saying this is an increasing problem. It is of particular concern to large companies (73%), less so to medium (50%) or small (20%).

One-third says company location is an issue, but this is not really increasing. It is of particular concern to large companies (55%).

Two further areas are worth mentioning:

- i Career development issues are a problem for 15% of companies, with 14% saying this is increasing as a concern.
- ii 27% of large companies see a lack of interest in the industry as a problem, but this is not mentioned by medium or small companies.

As indicated in Section 6.2.1, in general, problems tend to affect the recruitment of middle staff more than senior or junior staff. However, the major problems

(skills, salaries) affect recruitment at all levels to some extent, while junior staff are thought to be the most affected by location issues.

According to HR departments, lack of candidates with the right skills especially applies to the editorial (36%), digital (33%) and production/design (30%) functions/roles, while competitive salaries especially affects sales (24%) and marketing (18%). Company location is thought to especially affect editorial staff (21%).

6.2.3 Barriers to recruitment

Q	What do you see as the 2 main problems to attracting new people into the publishing industry?
---	---

While all large publishers think there are some major barriers to attracting new people into the industry, nearly one in four small and medium companies feel there are no major barriers.

73% mention salary levels as the major barrier.

Overall, 39% think the industry's white middle class image is a barrier, though this is much less of an issue with large companies, where only 5% mention this as a problem.

27% of large publishers (but only 12% overall) think a major problem is that people just don't think of book publishing as an industry at all - let alone as suitable for them personally.

20% of small publishers (but only 9% overall) think location is a barrier. This somewhat contradicts the finding in Section 6.2.2, where large companies are the most likely to see location as a problem to recruitment, but it is possible the difference is that the earlier data relates to general recruitment while this latter concerns attracting new people.

6.3 Staff retention

6.3.1 General issues

- Q Overall, how big a problem is staff retention in your company?
- Q How, if at all, has staff retention in your company changed over the past few years?
- Q Why has retention improved/worsened?
- Q Which, if any, of the following functions/roles does your company have trouble retaining?

Few HR departments think retention is a great problem, with 45% saying it is not a problem at all and 48% saying it is only a slight problem. The others say it is a fairly significant, but not a major, problem. Large companies (18%) are the only ones to say it is a significant problem.

Companies are very divided as to the trend in retention, with 42% saying it has not changed and equal numbers (27% each) saying it has got better and worse. 70% of small companies say it has not changed (compared to 30% of medium/large companies). While c40% of medium and large companies think retention has improved, none of the small companies say this.

Various reasons are given for why retention has improved (eg general economy, better salaries, flexible working), while lack of career development is considered the main reason why retention has declined.

Editorial (36%) and marketing/PR (27%) are the main areas where retention is found to be a problem, though sales is also a problem for large companies (27%).

Retention problems seem mostly to affect junior staff, while only 2 of the 33 HR departments think it affects senior staff.

6.3.2 Leaving the company

Q Apart from promotion/stopping work/redundancy, what are the 2 main reasons why people leave your company overall?

According to publishers, the two main reasons why people leave their company are lack of promotion prospects (mentioned by 45% of HR departments) and wanting a change/new opportunity within the industry (39%).

Just 15% name moving to another industry and 12% looking for better pay/benefits as major reasons why people leave the company.

Senior staff are thought to leave mostly for a change/new opportunity within the industry, and this seems to particularly affect large and medium companies.

Middle staff are felt to leave particularly for promotion and wanting a change/new opportunity within the industry, with promotion particularly affecting large and medium companies.

Junior staff are deemed to leave for promotion (particularly among large companies) and more pay (especially medium and large). The search for change/new opportunity also affects junior staff in small and medium companies.

6.3.3 Leaving the industry

Q Please think about the reasons why people might leave publishing to go to other industries/professions. How, if at all, have the incidences of people leaving for these reasons changed over the past few years?

45% of HR departments think career development has increased as a reason for leaving the industry in recent years, while none think it has decreased. This appears true for more small and medium than large companies

Instances of leaving the industry for better pay/benefits has increased for 39% of HR departments, while lack of suitable jobs to move on to and wanting a change/new challenge have increased as factors for 33% and 27% respectively.

Looking for better conditions or more interesting work are both the least common of the probed reasons for leaving the industry, and also show least signs of increasing. They do appear, however, to be something of a problem for some smaller companies.

6.4 Working practices

- Q What changes to working practices, if any, has your company introduced or expanded in the past few years?
- Q At which, if any, levels have these changes to working practices had a positive effect on staff recruitment or retention in your company?

The majority of publishing companies have introduced or expanded working from home (mentioned by 70% of HR departments), part time working (64%) and flexible working (61%) in the past few years, while two out of five have increased salaries.

Small and medium companies are more likely than large companies to mention introducing/expanding working from home and part time working⁷, while half the large companies now offer more opportunities to work overseas.

Of the main approaches examined, flexible hours and salary rises are seen by HR departments as the most effective in terms of staff recruitment or retention overall, while bonus/profit schemes are seen as the least effective.

Working from home is considered effective for recruitment/retention of middle or senior staff, but not for junior staff. Salary increases are seen as more effective for junior than other staff, and not particularly effective for recruiting/retaining senior staff.

Part time and flexible working are considered more effective for recruiting/retaining middle level than other staff.

⁷ It is, of course, possible that large companies operate such practices, but introduced them some time ago.

6.5 Improving staff recruitment and retention

Q Apart from financial inducements, what can the publishing industry/publishing companies do to improve staff recruitment and retention?

Various possible actions for improving recruitment/retention are put forward by HR departments, with the most commonly mentioned being:

- i Offer clear career development
with clear paths for future roles, and including both lateral and vertical movements
- ii Improve training
so people are better skilled and can improve in any areas of weakness, making them both more useful/employable and better able to develop their careers
- iii Improve working conditions
particularly offering more flexible hours and conditions
- iv Promote the book publishing industry
as a general opportunity, making people more aware of it overall, and with less emphasis on specific roles/functions
- v Attend recruitment fairs
promote the company at these events, showing its opportunities and benefits (this will also help promote the industry in general)
- vi Promote brand/company
making the publishing companies better known, and therefore more likely to be seen as possible employers.

6.6 Staff development

- Q Please think about those staff in their first full time employment. How, if at all, has your company changed the ways in which it develops the skills of these staff over the past few years?
- Q Please think about those staff not in their first full time employment. How, if at all, has your company changed the ways in which it develops the skills of these staff over the past few years?

6.6.1 Staff in 1st full time employment

Over half the publishing companies have increased both training on-the-job (mentioned by 58% of HR departments) and in-house training by the company itself (52%) as a means of developing staff in their first full time employment. Nearly half (48%) have increased in-house training by external agencies for this group.

Significant minorities have increased mentoring (39%), away days (24%) and job shadowing (21%) for first jobbers, while relatively few have increased external training (15%) or job swaps (9%).

Only external training courses have been used less by a significant percentage of publishers (27%).

Significant numbers have never used job swaps (55%), job shadowing (30%), away days (27%) or mentoring (18%) for those in first full time employment.

Large companies are the least likely to have increased their use of on-the-job training, but the most likely to have increased the use of away days.

Small companies are the least likely to have increased in-house training (whether run by themselves or by external agencies), and are also the least likely to use job swaps or away days at all with first jobbers.

6.6.2 Other staff

In the main, changes in development methods for other staff are very similar in pattern to those for staff in their 1st employment (see Section 6.6.1), though there are minor differences in exact percentages and the rank order of use. For example:

- i these other staff are more likely to see an increase in the use of away days (45% vs 24% for 1st employment) and external courses (39% vs 15%)
- ii conversely, they are less likely to see an increase in the use of job shadowing (12% vs 21%)
- iii larger companies are less likely than small/medium to use external training for these other staff

6.7 Training budgets and control

Q	Does your company have specific training budgets, or do any training costs come out of other budgets?
Q	Who controls training within your company?
Q	What is the approximate annual cost per employee within your company?

Virtually all medium and large publishing companies have specific training budgets. Half of the small companies surveyed have specific budgets, 20% pay for training from other budgets while 30% do no specific training.

In large companies, either HR (73%) or line managers (27%) control the budget.

In medium companies, control is mainly with HR (58%), while it varies according to circumstance/type for 25%.

In small companies, where a budget exists, control is typically with line managers (40%).

Where budgets exist, companies tend to spend £200-300 pa per employee, though 31% of those with budgets spend over £300.

6.8 Staff turnover

Q	Approx number of permanent staff joining/leaving in last 12 months (% of permanent employees)
Q	Average permanent headcount over last 12 months
Q	No. of permanent headcount leaving voluntarily/involuntarily in last 12 m

Publishing companies typically see joining and leaving rates of 10-20% of permanent staff, with the average joining rate (17%) a little ahead of the leaving rate (15%).

Small companies appear to see a wider gap between permanent staff joining (21%) and leaving (14%), while large companies see a marginally higher rate leaving (16%) than joining (15%).

Companies record an average annualised voluntary turnover rate⁸ of 12%, and an involuntary turnover rate⁹ of 4%. The figures appear slightly higher for smaller companies (14% and 6% respectively).

6.9 Future skills needs

Q	Do you think your company's needs for each of the following functions/roles at a <u>SENIOR/MIDDLE/JUNIOR</u> LEVEL will increase, decrease or stay about the same over the next 5 years?
---	--

Over 50% of publishing companies expect to need more staff at senior level for both digital publishing and online positions over the next five years. Increases in the same functions at middle and junior levels are expected at slightly lower levels (but still by 1/3 to 1/2 of companies).

Large companies are particularly likely to expect to need more staff in digital functions at all levels.

Relatively few companies expect to need fewer staff in any of the main publishing functions, although there was some expectation (especially among larger companies) of a decreasing need for staff in production roles.

⁸ i.e. excluding redundancies/dismissals/end of fixed term contracts.

⁹ i.e. redundancies/dismissals/end of fixed term contracts.

7 GENERAL (NON-PUBLISHING) STUDENTS: SUMMARY FINDINGS¹⁰

7.1 Interest in industries

- Q Which, if any, of the following industries/sectors are you considering working in after you leave university?
- Q Have you ever thought that you might look for a job/career in the book publishing industry when you start work?
- Q How interested do you think you might be in a job/career in the book publishing industry when you start work? (1-10 scale)

18% of non-publishing students are considering working in the newspaper, magazine or book publishing sector after leaving university. Only education/teaching (31%) and health sector/medicine (24%) are more widely considered, though several other industries are mentioned at the same level as publishing (eg civil service, marketing/advertising/PR, IT/telecoms/web development, art/design/fashion). Publishing is far more likely to be considered than architecture/building/construction or engineering.

Students of humanities (35%), business (29%) and arts (27%) are the most likely to be considering newspaper/magazine/book publishing.

When specifically asked about the book publishing industry, 24% say they have ever thought they might seek a career there - a proportion that rises to 54% within humanities, 39% within arts and 26% within business studies.

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), 21% of students rate their interest in book publishing at 7 or above, with an average rating of 4.2. Humanities (6.2) and arts (5.2) students are again the most interested. Those who claim to have considered book publishing at all rate their interest at an average of 7/10, compared to 3/10 for those who have not.

¹⁰ Based on online survey of 503 final year non-publishing students

7.2 Attractions of the book publishing industry

- Q What, if anything, MOST attracts you to working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)
- Q For which, if any, of the following reasons are you attracted to working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)

On a spontaneous basis, the aspect that most attracts non-publishing students to the book publishing industry is their own love of books/reading (21%), followed by the chance to work creatively (12%). However, 25% say that nothing attracts them to book publishing.

When prompted, 48% mention their love of books/reading, 36% mention working creatively and 23% say they are attracted because they think they have suitable skills.

31% of those who have not considered book publishing hitherto say there are no attractions to them.

7.3 Detractions of the book publishing industry

- Q What, if anything, do you think is LEAST attractive about working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)
- Q Which, if any, of the following would put you off/make you think twice about working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)

On a spontaneous basis, the aspects that most puts non-publishing students off the book publishing industry are the feeling it is boring/monotonous (21%), that it is difficult to get into/too few jobs (18%) and offers low pay (16%).

When prompted, 32% say they are more interested in other industries, and 31% feel it would be difficult to get a job in publishing. A further 17-18% each are not interested in the work, don't think they have the right skills, and think it suffers from low pay.

Those who have considered the industry before are particularly put off by perceived difficulty of getting a job (50%), and are also more likely than those not considering the sector to think the financial benefits too low (23%) and to feel there aren't the jobs close to where they live (24%).

7.4 Images/descriptions of industries

Q Below are a number of descriptions of industries/sectors which some people have given. Please indicate which you think apply to each of the industries/sectors shown.

7.4.1 Book publishing industry

Overall, book publishing does not appear to have a strong image among non-publishing students, either of a positive or negative nature.

On the positive side it is seen as *creative* (41%), and to some extent *varied* (25%) and offering *equal opportunities* (27%).

On the negative side it is seen as *difficult to progress in* (38%), *old-fashioned* (30%), and with a *white middle class* image (31%).

Arts students have the most positive image of book publishing in general, though even here no description was given by 50% or more.

Females tend to have a more positive image of book publishing than males; though this may also be connected to the subject studied.

Older students are more likely than younger to think book publishing is *boring*.

7.4.2 Comparison between industries

Broadcasting & art/design/fashion are the only industries with a majority (c60%) of non-publishing students thinking them *exciting* – even business students and males tend to think this (vs 17% for book publishing).

Banking/finance/accountancy (57%), retail (47%) and the civil service (43%) all have significant numbers thinking them *boring*: much higher than for book publishing (24%).

Broadcasting (57%), art/design/fashion (54%) and IT/telecoms/web design (54%) all have a majority thinking them *cutting edge*, an image rarely associated with book publishing (11%).

Only the civil service (44%) and banking (36%) have a higher percentage thinking them more *old-fashioned* than book publishing (30%).

Banking (84%) is clearly held to be *well-paid*, as to a lesser extent are IT (50%) and marketing/advertising agency (33%). In contrast, charity/social service (62%), retail (57%) and to a lesser extent art/design (42%) and education/teaching (38%) are considered *poorly paid*. Book publishing is relatively unlikely to be associated with either extreme, with similarly low numbers considering it *well paid* (17%) or *low paid* (20%).

While book publishing was considered *varied* by a significant minority (25%), this was far less than for art/design/fashion (55%), broadcasting (53%), education (46%), charity (43%), marketing/advertising agency (45%) and newspapers/magazines (38%).

Art/design/fashion was the only sector deemed more *difficult to progress in* (by 53%) than book publishing (38%), which was on a par with broadcasting (37%).

Banking (58%) and the civil service (45%) are the only industries with a higher proportion thinking them *white, middle class* than book publishing (31%). However, the latter image was less prevalent among those from black/minority ethnic groups (21%) than among white students (32%).

Charity (54%), the civil service (52%) and education (47%) are the top rated for offering *equal opportunities*, much higher than for book publishing (27%).

Only banking is seen as really *high status* (68%), compared to just 15% thinking this of book publishing. Retail (55%) and charity (42%) are the main ones considered *low status* (again, versus 15% for book publishing).

While book publishing has 41% thinking it *creative*, art/design/fashion (84%), broadcasting (60%), marketing/advertising agency (58%) are all much more highly rated on this facet.

Civil service (61%) and education (57%) are the *safest* industries: the figure for book publishing is 19%.

Art/design/fashion (59%) and broadcasting (53%) are the industries most thought *cool*. The civil service (34%) is the most likely to be thought *uncool*, with book publishing again typically considered neither one nor the other.

7.5 Book publishing industry functions

Q How interested do you think you might be in working in these areas within the book publishing industry?

Editorial (59%) and production/design (51%) were the only publishing functions of interest to the majority of non-publishing students. In addition, 47% show some interest in marketing/PR.

Sales and legal/rights/contracts have the lowest interest - with c80% saying they are not very/ at all interested in each case. Over 60% are not interested in either online roles or digital publishing.

Interest in any function varies mainly by subject being studied, not by the general demographics, although men are somewhat more interested than women in:

- i digital publishing (1.7¹¹ vs 0.9)
- ii online development/sales/marketing (1.5 vs 0.9)

Students of humanities, arts and business tend to be more interested, while those studying medicine and science then to be less interested, in most of the functions.

7.6 Book publishing industry skills

Q Do you feel you have skills which could be used in the book publishing industry?

Q Do you feel you have skills which could be used in the following functions in the book publishing industry?

Q What, if any, other skills do you have which you feel could be used in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)

41% of non-publishing students feel they probably/definitely have skills suitable for the book publishing industry in general, with a further 34% possibly having such skills.

Students of humanities are the most positive about this, with 62% definitely/probably and 29% possibly feeling they have such skills. For arts students the figures are 54% and 30% respectively.

Medical students are the least likely to feel they have suitable skills, though even here 26% think they probably have skills, with 32% saying possibly.

¹¹ Based on scale of Very interested=+5; Fairly interested = +3; Not very interested=+1; Not at all interested=-1.

Non-publishing students are most likely to think their skills suitable for editorial functions, followed by production/design and marketing/PR: their abilities are felt to be least suitable for legal and digital.

Suitability is linked to subject studied: editorial with humanities, production/design with arts, sales/marketing with business, online/digital with business or sciences.

One third of non-publishing students cannot think of any additional skills (over and above those relating to the specific functions) that they have which could be used in the book publishing industry. Around one in six feel they have communication skills and creativity which could be of use in the industry, while one in eight or nine think their ability to be hardworking/ conscientious or analytical would be useful.

7.7 Sources for jobs

Q Which of the following do you think you will use MOST to help you find the kind of jobs you are interested in? (MAX 3 CHOICES)

Non-publishing students are clearly looking firstly to online sources for jobs, with company websites (mentioned by 52%), and internet recruitment (48%) leading the way.

However, those considering press/book publishing industries are more likely than the others to use other sources eg 29% vs 20% for recruitment agencies; 20-21% vs 10-12% for local/national press.

7.8 Making book publishing more attractive as a career

Q What could the book publishing industry do to make it a more attractive career option for you? (UNPROMPTED)

Non-publishing students give 3 principal ways in which the book publishing industry might be made more attractive as a career:

- i advertise more/widely (36%)
- ii offer better pay/conditions (27%)
- iii provide more jobs locally/regionally (15%).

8 BOOK PUBLISHING STUDENTS: SUMMARY FINDINGS¹²

8.1 Interest in the book publishing industry

- Q Thinking about how you feel now, how keen are you to work in the book publishing industry when you have finished your studies?
- Q Thinking back to when you started your publishing course, to what extent were you planning to work in the book publishing industry when you finished your studies?
- Q What was it about working in the book publishing industry that attracted you at that time? (UNPROMPTED)
- Q Overall, compared to when you started your publishing course, would you say that you are now more interested, less interested or have about the same level of interest in working in book publishing?

Among book publishing students, 54% are currently very keen, and 35% fairly keen, to work in the book publishing industry, with postgraduates keener than undergraduates

40% started their course firmly intending to work in book publishing, with a further 14% assuming they would (but open to other ideas), and 30% looking to work somewhere in publishing (but not necessarily with books).

Postgraduates (53%) are more likely than undergraduates (22%) to have joined their course fully intending to work in book publishing. In contrast, undergraduates (mainly on general publishing courses, not wholly book-related) tended to have started their course looking for work in publishing, but not necessarily books.

Overall, 42% are keener now on working in book publishing than when they started their course, with just 8% less interested.

There is no outstanding single factor prompting publishing students' initial interest in the industry, with an interest in books/reading the most mentioned (by 23%), ahead of natural progression from degree course (18%), chance to use creativity (15%) and the wish to be involved in promoting knowledge (12%).

¹² Based on online survey of 65 book publishing students

8.2 Attractions of the book publishing industry

- Q What, if anything, MOST attracts you to working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)
- Q For which, if any, of the following reasons are you attracted to working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)

For book publishing students, the spontaneous aspects that most attract them to working in the industry are being around books (28%) and being around authors (23%)

When prompted, 83% mention working creatively, while 77% feel they can use their skills/knowledge, and 77% are influenced by a love of books/reading.

Two other factors are mentioned by a majority: 66% think it has a reasonable variety in work, while 58% think it a worthwhile job.

There are no really significant differences in attractions by any demographic.

8.3 Detractions of the book publishing industry

- Q What, if anything, LEAST attracts you to working in the book publishing industry? (UNPROMPTED)
- Q Which, if any, of the following have put you off/made you think twice about working in the book publishing industry? (PROMPTED)

The spontaneous aspects that most put book publishing students off the industry are low pay (45%), too few local jobs (22%) and long hours (20%) .

When prompted, 62% think it might be difficult to find a job, while 51% mention low pay/benefits, 34% mention a lack of jobs where they want to live and 23% are more interested in other industries. There is also some concern (among 18%) about the state of the publishing industry (e.g. its sales, profitability) and the negative effect of this on job security.

Undergraduates (mainly on general publishing courses, not wholly book-related) are more likely than postgraduates to say:

- i Don't feel have learned enough/right skills [26% vs 3%].
- ii Publishing course boring/disappointing [15% vs 3%].
- iii More interested in other industries/sectors [37% vs 13%].

8.4 Alternatives to working in the book publishing industry

Q Which, if any, industries/sectors are you considering working in, other than book publishing?

When book publishing students are asked about other industries they might consider working in, press publishing (71%) and marketing/PR (51%) are clear leaders, with broadcasting next (26%)

Although there are many minor variations between different demographics, the main alternatives are the same across all types of student.

8.5 Images/descriptions of industries

Q Below are a number of descriptions of industries/sectors which some people have given. Please indicate which you think apply to each of the industries/sectors shown.

8.5.1 Book publishing industry

On the positive side, book publishing is seen by book publishing students as *creative* (71%), *exciting* (70%), and *varied* (71%).

Negatively, it is seen as *poorly paid* (59%), and *white, middle class* (52%).

More see it as *old-fashioned* (33%) than *cutting-edge* (22%).

Variations by demographics are small: even the most keen on working in the industry are only more positive in terms of *exciting* (91%).

8.5.2 Comparison between industries

Book publishing has a more *exciting* image than any other industry among book publishing students, though only just ahead of broadcasting, newspapers/magazines and art/design/fashion.

Book publishing contrasts strongly with those seen as *boring*: banking (65%), and the civil service (62%) are far more criticised here than book publishing (5%).

However, only 22% of book publishing students rate the book industry as *cutting edge*, compared to broadcasting (76%) and art/design/fashion (56%). Only the civil service (41%) and banking (35%) are seen as more *old-fashioned* than book publishing (33%)

All industries are seen more than book publishing to be *well-paid*, especially banking (88%) and IT (50%). However, charity/social work, retail, and teaching are seen more than book publishing to be *poorly paid*.

Book publishing is more likely than the other industries to be considered *varied*, ahead of marketing/advertising agency (59%), broadcasting (56%) and media publishing (50%).

Broadcasting, art/design and newspapers/magazines are much more likely than book publishing to be thought *difficult to progress in*.

Only banking is seen as more *white, middle class* than book publishing, while book publishing is well behind charity/social services, education and retail in terms of *equal opportunities*.

Book publishing is not seen as either *high or low status*: banking, and to lesser extent marketing/advertising agency, art/design, broadcasting and newspapers/magazines are considered *high status*; retail and charity/social services are thought *low status*.

Book publishing is widely seen as *creative* (74%), although less so than art/design (88%) and on a par with broadcasting (74%). However, book publishing is ahead of newspapers/magazines (59%) and marketing/advertising agencies (44%) in terms of creativity.

Not many think of book publishing as *safe*, compared to education (68%) and the civil service (53%).

Broadcasting (76%), art/design (71%) and newspapers/ magazines (65%) are all more likely to be thought *cool* than book publishing (37%). 50% think civil service *uncool* (only 5% say this of book publishing).

8.6 Book publishing industry sectors

8.6.1 Interest in book sectors

Q In which sectors of the book publishing industry are you considering working?

Book publishing students seem keenest on working in adult fiction (63%) and children's books (56%), followed by adult non-fiction (44%) and academic books (38%).

School/ELT (25%) and professional publishing (21%) have less appeal.

Postgraduates are much more interested than undergraduates in working in adult non-fiction (55% vs 28%), academic (47% vs 24%) and professional books (26% vs 12%).

8.6.2 Sector images

Q Which, if any, of the book publishing sectors shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?

Q What is it about these sectors that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?

The children's book sector has the most positive image among book publishing students (60%), ahead of adult fiction (46%) and non-fiction (34%).

Positive images are linked to interest in the relevant sector itself, plus:

- i Children's = creative, varied formats.
- ii Fiction = bestselling/profitable, influential.
- iii Adult non-fiction = stimulating, diverse.

None of the sectors are viewed particularly negatively, though professional publishing has the fewest positive votes (15%). Educational and professional publishing tend to be considered important but also somewhat boring.

8.7 Book publishing industry functions

8.7.1 Interest in functions

Q What type of work are you considering within the book publishing industry?

Book publishing students are keenest on working in the editorial (75%) and marketing/PR (63%) functions within the industry.

No other function is being considered by as many as half the students, with production/design (41%) the next most popular. Sales (27%) and legal/etc (25%) are the functions of least interest, with only a third considering specific roles in digital publishing and online development/marketing/etc.

There are few variations by any demographic, although:

- i undergraduates (72%) are more likely than postgraduates (58%) to be considering *marketing/PR*
- ii men (57%) are more likely than women (27%) to be interested in *digital publishing*
- iii postgraduates (34%) are more interested in *legal/rights/contracts* than undergraduates (12%).

8.7.2 Images of functions

Q Which, if any, of the book publishing functions shown have particularly positive images with you? And which, if any, have particularly negative images?

Q What is it about these functions that gives them this particularly positive/negative image with you?

Editorial has the most positive image among book publishing students (60%), ahead of production (51%) and marketing (48%).

All three functions are considered creative, plus:

- i editorial = heart of industry, chance to work with authors
- ii production = chance to shape the books
- iii marketing = interesting, challenging.

The majority of comments are positive or neutral rather than negative for other functions, although all were perceived rather boring by some:

- i online = cutting edge, direct contact with readers
- ii digital = future of publishing, but somewhat technical/dull
- iii legal/rights/etc = important, intellectually challenging, but boring
- iv sales = personal contact, challenging, but repetitive.

Digital and *legal/rights/contracts* have a more positive image among postgraduates (42% and 32% respectively) than undergraduates (15% and 7%).

8.8 Book publishing industry skills

Q Overall, how well equipped do you feel your course has made you for a job/career in the book publishing industry?

Q More specifically, how well equipped do you feel your course has made you to work in the following areas/functions within the book publishing industry?

Q What, if any, other or particular skills/knowledge do you feel you are lacking in terms of working in the book publishing industry?
(UNPROMPTED)

NB Final year students only

32% of final year book publishing students think they are very well, and 61% fairly well, equipped for a career in the industry.

90% think they are very/fairly well equipped for working in editorial, 86% for marketing/PR and 78% for production/design.

54% say they are not at all/very well equipped for sales, and 39% not for online/digital.

There are no significant variations by any demographic.

When asked what skills/knowledge they feel they are lacking, no answer is given by a significant proportion of respondents. The missing skills revolve around finance, contracts and rights, with some mention of managerial skills and hands-on experience.

8.9 Sources for jobs

Q Which of the following do you think you would use most if you were looking for job opportunities in the book publishing industry? [up to 3]

Publisher websites (mentioned by 70%) are seen as much the most common source of job information among book publishing students, well ahead of the trade press (38%) and university websites/job bulletins (37%) in second and third place. Only 8% would use the *local press* and only 10% *career fairs*.

There are few variations by any demographic, although use of *recruitment agencies* was seen as a significant source among postgraduates (50%), but not undergraduates (8%).

8.10 Making book publishing more attractive as a career

Q What could the book publishing industry do to make it a more attractive career option for you? (UNPROMPTED)

These book publishing students suggest better pay (40%), especially at entry level would make the book publishing industry a more attractive career option, with 29% suggesting making it easier to get work experience, including offering paid internships (14%).

17% want the industry to provide more jobs locally/regionally (ie near where they do/want to live, less London-centric, etc), while 12% feel the industry needs to offer clearer career development.

There was also some support for graduate training schemes (9%), and for more responsibility (8%) and opportunities to be creative (6%) early in the career, rather than just being given administrative work.

9 PUBLISHING COURSE DIRECTORS¹³

9.1 Students' interest in the book publishing industry

- Q From your knowledge of the students completing their book publishing courses in 2009 (both undergraduate and postgraduate), what % would you say fall into the following categories?
- Q For which, if any, of the following reasons do you feel your students are particularly attracted to working in the book publishing industry?
- Q Which, if any, of the following do you feel put students off/make them think twice about working in the book publishing industry?
- Q Do you feel that working in the book publishing industry has become more or less attractive to your students in recent years, or has it stayed the same?

Course directors estimate that, on average, 77% of their final year book publishing students want to work in the industry, while 8% no longer wish to and a further 8% never intended doing so: directors are unsure about the attitudes of the remaining students.

Directors feel that postgraduates are more committed to the industry than undergraduates.

Three of the directors feel the industry has become less attractive to their students in recent years, while none think it has become more attractive.

Directors see their students as attracted to the industry through *loving books/reading* (9 out of the 10 respondents), *wanting the chance to work creatively* (9), and *wanting to use their skills/knowledge* (8). Of slightly less importance are *the chance to do something worthwhile* (7) and *seems to offer a reasonable variety in the work* (6).

Eight out of ten course directors see their students as being put off by salaries/benefits, 7 by the difficulty of finding a job and 6 by not finding jobs near where they want to live. No other issue is mentioned by more than 3 respondents.

¹³ Based on online survey of 10 publishing course directors

9.2 Students' interest in particular functions

Q How attractive do you feel the following book publishing functions are to your students?

Course directors rate the editorial function as the most attractive to their book publishing students, with 7 out of 10 saying it is very attractive and 2 that it is fairly attractive. The next most attractive are marketing/PR (4 very, 6 fairly) and then digital (2 and 8 respectively), ahead of production (1 and 7) and online development/marketing/etc (3 and 3).

Sales (4 fairly attractive) and legal/etc (1 very, 4 fairly) are seen as the least attractive to students.

9.3 Students' skill levels

Q In general, how well equipped do you feel your students are to work in each of the following areas within the book publishing industry, once they have finished your undergraduate/postgraduate course(s)?

Q What, if any, other or particular skills/knowledge do you feel your students tend to lack in terms of working in the book publishing industry, once they have finished their studies? [3 no response]

Course directors tend to say that both undergraduate and postgraduate book publishing students are at least fairly well equipped for all main industry functions, though perhaps less so for legal and sales.

Postgraduates are considered slightly better equipped than undergraduates for editorial, production and legal functions.

On the whole, directors do not feel there are particular gaps in their students' skills/knowledge sets, apart from a lack of hands-on experience.

9.4 Calibre of students

Q How, if at all, do you feel the calibre of students on your book publishing courses has changed in recent years? [1 no response]

Four of the ten course directors consider that the calibre of their book publishing students has improved, and another 4 that it has stayed the same, over recent years. None felt that the calibre had fallen.

9.5 Student challenges when searching for jobs

Q What problems/challenges do you imagine students face when looking for work in the book publishing industry, and how, if at all, have these changed in recent years?

Course directors thinkg that the main problem/challenge facing book publishing students when looking for jobs in the industry is (increasing) competition for opportunities, particularly in a time of recession.

9.6 Making book publishing more attractive as a career

Q What could the book publishing industry do to make it a more attractive career for your students, and/or to make sure that the best candidates look for work in the industry?

Course directors most commonly suggest improving salary/pay as the way to make the industry more attractive to their book publishing students, with placements/internships also mentioned.

9.7 Course design

9.7.1 Course revisions

Q Approximately how often do you revise your book publishing course(s) in terms of the skills/subjects covered?

Directors of postgraduate book publishing courses tend to revise the course every year, whereas those running undergraduate courses divide between those revising them every 3 years and every 4-5 years.

9.7.2 Recent and future course changes

- Q What, if any, changes have you made to your book publishing course(s) over the last few years, e.g. in terms of content and skills taught, level and method of teaching, etc?
- Q What, if any, changes do you expect to make to the skills/subjects covered by your book publishing course(s) over the next few years eg in terms of content and skills taught, level and method of teaching, etc?

Course directors say that recent changes to their book publishing courses tend to relate to digital and online aspects, with some mention of more practical/business-oriented learning. Future changes are expected to follow industry trends (or requirements), although some may cut back their book publishing courses/content.

9.8 **Employer requirements**

9.8.1 Awareness of employers' requirements

- Q Do you feel you have a clear idea of what potential employers in the book publishing industry are looking for from your course(s)/ graduates, in terms of student skills, attributes and knowledge?

Seven of the ten course directors feel they have a very clear idea of what employers in the book publishing industry are looking for, with the other 3 having a fairly clear idea.

9.8.2 Learning of employers' requirements

- Q How, if at all, do you find out what potential employers in the book publishing industry are looking for from your course(s)/ graduates, in terms of student skills, attributes and knowledge?
- Q Do you feel you get sufficient input/advice from potential employers in the book publishing industry about what they are looking for from your course(s)/graduates, in terms of student skills, attributes and knowledge?
- Q In what, if any, ways could the book publishing industry be of greater help to you when you are developing/revising your book publishing course(s)?

Course directors learn of employer needs from a variety of sources, especially from informal conversations (9 out of 10 respondents), conferences/seminars (9), having industry personnel on advisory boards (8) and having specific discussions with publishers (7). Three also have book publishing industry personnel audit their courses.

Nine of the ten feel they get sufficient input from the industry about their requirements from courses/graduates, though two say more guest speakers might be of help in the development of their courses.

9.9 Promoting the industry

- Q What, if anything, does your institution do to help promote the book publishing industry as a career among its students?
- Q Which, if any, of these are advertised and/or open to students who are not on book publishing courses?
- Q Apart from those on book publishing courses, what type of students (in terms of subjects areas) do you feel are most interested in working in the book publishing industry?
- Q What, if anything, do you feel the book publishing industry could do to make sure that students who are not studying book publishing consider it as a career?/ ... make it a more attractive career for students who are not studying book publishing?

All the institutions represented by the 10 course directors promote careers in the book publishing industry by holding talks from industry personnel. Other common methods of promoting work in the industry include organising work experience (9), organising visits to publishers (7) and advertising relevant jobs (6). However, just 2 hold specific book industry career fairs.

Five of the ten directors say the talks from industry personnel are open to all students (regardless of course), while 4 say that work experience opportunities are open to all.

Looking beyond those studying book publishing, eight out of ten course directors think that students of literature may also be interested in working in book publishing, with 7 saying this of media/PR students, 6 of creative/arts students and 6 of education students. Few (no more than 3 in each case) think that those studying law, business, science or medicine would be interested in working in the book publishing industry.

Directors feel that in order to attract non-publishing students, publishers should promote themselves more, both at different educational levels, and also outside publishing courses, eg in schools, to business students and to students in science and education subjects.

10 RECRUITMENT AGENCY: SUMMARY FINDINGS¹⁴

10.1 Factors in job search

10.1.1 First job: all industries

Q Thinking about all industries (and not just book publishing), when people are looking for their first jobs, what would you say are the main things they look for when considering possible careers?

Recruitment agencies say that, under current (i.e. recessionary) conditions many who are starting their careers are looking for anything to get them going, earn some money and gain experience which may enable them to move on to greater benefit in the future.

A 'foot on the ladder' is deemed especially important for those looking at careers in e.g. marketing, publishing, IT, sales, PR, etc, where there are no clear entry requirements/qualifications or routes into the sectors.

Under other, non-recessionary conditions, people may be fussier, looking for a combination of rewards - interest, money, travel, job culture.

Often a first job is seen as experimental, with relatively few first jobbers looking more than a year or two ahead (even within specific professions such as medicine, law and accountancy). Even so, many/most like the idea of broad opportunities at the particular companies they approach.

10.1.2 Other levels: all industries

Q Now thinking about people looking for work at senior [/middle management; junior level], again in any industry, what would say were the main things they look for when considering changing companies or even entering a profession at that sort of level?

Recruitment specialists have varying views about the main considerations of those changing jobs or careers, so that it is not possible to place them in any particular order of importance.

¹⁴ Based on online/telephone survey of 6 recruitment agencies

It appears that factors are often seen as the same whether the job hunter is looking to change companies or to change profession, and are similar whether at senior, middle or junior level, with commonly mentioned factors including:

- i looking for more money
- ii looking for greater status
- iii wanting to take the next step up the ladder
- iv looking for a new challenge/more responsibility, either in a new company or a new profession.

Career progression – which may sometimes equate to sideways or downward moves, as well as upward – is seen as perhaps a little less important for senior than for middle management or junior posts.

At the junior level, agencies say it is quite common for people to change their profession simply because they find they do not like their original choice of industry.

10.1.3 Variations in factors for the book industry

Q In what ways, if any, do you think priorities are different for people considering work in the book publishing industry specifically? Please also indicate where there are differences between the different levels.

According to recruitment agencies, the widely perceived low level of salaries within book publishing means that people are choosing the profession because of the possibility of job satisfaction and their interest in books, authors, and so on. Indeed, they say that candidates appear willing to sacrifice the chance of a higher salary for more appealing environments and work and, for a significant minority, the chance of mixing with celebrities (of whatever the publishing sector).

Depending on the actual function, creativity also plays a role; this especially relates to people in editorial and publishing roles, who like the idea of being able to influence both the type and content of books published.

Those at more senior levels are thought to particularly want the chance to be influential, shaping the culture/education of the nation, and also gaining a higher profile with peers, booksellers, the press, etc. In contrast – and in common with other industries – at first post/junior levels the key priority is often just to get a toehold in publishing.

Even where the roles are more generic (eg sales/marketing, IT-related), it seems there is often a desire to be working with books, even if at a bit of distance - perhaps gaining interest and glamour by association.

10.1.4 Recent priority changes: all industries

Q In what ways, if any, do you think these priorities have changed in recent years, whatever the industry? Please also indicate where there are differences between the different levels.

Prior to the recession, the recruitment agencies feel there had been no important changes to the priorities of those seeking new jobs/careers.

However, since the recession, the agencies feel people place far greater emphasis on security: this particularly applies to those considering moving jobs, who are now more hesitant to make a change unless they have a strong impression that they will be made redundant.

People are also thought to be looking more closely at the financial strength of potential employers – especially those at senior and, to a lesser extent, middle levels.

Meanwhile, those in their first jobs appear to recruitment agencies to be currently more open to securing any suitable position, to considering temporary posts, and to looking further afield geographically. Additionally, these people are considering a broader range of industries and functions.

Career progression is thought to be of less importance to many in this recessionary context.

10.1.5 Possible post-recession changes: all industries

Q Do you think things will change again once this recession is over? In what ways? Please also indicate where there are differences between the different levels, whatever the industry

Recruitment agencies expect that as the economy recovers there should be more job opportunities, so that job security will become less of an issue, and career progression will again be at the forefront for those considering a new job/career.

They think that people will become more choosy about their jobs, at all levels, and have a higher level of confidence in staying put with companies, whatever their financial performance.

10.2 Attractions of the book publishing industry

Q What is it that attracts people into book publishing specifically? What are they looking for/expecting from joining the industry? Please also indicate where there are differences between the different levels.

According to the recruitment agencies, the initial main attraction to the book publishing industry is often a love of books and reading, and the potential to be around authors. Of course, this tends to be role-related, for example it applies to those in editorial roles more than those in IT.

Other attractions mentioned include:

- i An interest in education, and this especially applies to sectors beyond adult fiction - not just educational or academic, but also non-fiction and children's book generally.
- ii The chance to be creative, shaping books and their content.
- iii The chance to do something 'worthwhile'.
- iv The chance to physically producing something.
- v A perceived greater flexibility in terms of working practices than many other industries (of particular appeal to women with child care issues).

Coming into the industry at a senior level is thought to sometimes be the fulfilment of a long-held ambition, i.e. where people like the idea of being a publisher (with all the kudos that is felt to bring) but are only interested in the powerful positions within the industry (hence not working in the sector before). However, more often at this level a new career is just a new challenge, with the specific industry not necessarily that important.

10.3 Detractions of the book publishing industry

Q Thinking generally, what do you feel are the main barriers which put people off joining the book publishing industry, or make it difficult for you to recruit people into the industry? How does this vary from other industries?

There is general agreement among recruitment agencies that the low level of salaries offered is the main recruitment barrier for the book publishing industry, and that this affects all levels and functions. In the current recession, however, it is thought perhaps less of a barrier for those seeking their first or very junior jobs.

Salary levels are seen as a particular problem in the digital area and for senior level positions, where it is proving very difficult for book publishers to attract candidates from a wide range of better-paying sectors.

A number of other barriers are mentioned – real or perceived:

- i Lack of ethnic diversity.
- ii Need for degree level education.
- iii Relatively few training and/or personal development opportunities (though with larger companies offering these more than smaller ones).
- iv Increased outsourcing of much of the more interesting work (eg editing, author contact), especially at middle level. This means that not only are there fewer jobs in-house anyway, but also many posts are seen as being less attractive and challenging.

10.4 Book publishing industry functions

Q Below are a number of functions/roles within the book publishing industry. For each of them, please indicate whether there are specific issues relating to recruitment in them, and if so, whether these issues apply to senior, middle or junior levels.

For each of the 8 functions investigated, at least half of the recruitment agencies say there are no particular recruitment issues.

Other comments are very varied, with little commonality between respondents or across functions.

Perhaps most significantly, the fact that online and digital functions are becoming more important means that book publishers are often/usually having to recruit staff from outside the industry - which in turn leads to salary issues.

Some functions – e.g. sales, production, legal/rights – appear relatively unattractive to new recruits, so are rarely first choice, if thought of at all.

10.5 Image of the book publishing industry

Q Do you feel the book publishing industry has a positive or negative effect on recruitment into the industry? What sort of image do you think people outside the publishing industry have of it? Anything else?

Two of the six recruitment agencies feel book publishing has neither a positive nor a negative image.

One feels it has a fairly good image, but that “*companies need to address how to sell the opportunity to candidates and how they manage the interview process: some companies treat it as a beauty parade and are then surprised when the candidate turns them down!*”

One feels the image varies according to the sector (though is always a bit old-fashioned), as follows:

- i Trade: highbrow.
- ii Academic: attractive to those with higher degrees and interest in research.
- iii Educational: a fairly positive image given the publicity of government initiatives and the fact that most people are affected by it either personally or through children .

The other two agencies feel the industry has the image of being elitist, middle class, Oxbridge and not very well paid.

10.6 Making book publishing more attractive as a career

Q What do you feel the book publishing industry could do to make itself more attractive as a profession to those outside it? Anything else? What can book publishing learn from other industries?

Q In particular, what could be done to attract people at a senior [middle; junior] level? What can be learned from other industries?

The main way that recruitment agencies feel the book publishing industry can make itself more attractive to those outside the profession, is to improve salaries/rewards.

Other suggested actions include:

- i Dispelling the notions that it is elitist, and that getting a job is reliant on ‘who you know’.
- ii Expanding and better publicising management training schemes.
- iii Promoting the industry more vigorously to students, and making sure this goes beyond the obvious/traditional courses (such as English).

The comments relating to each of the 3 staff levels were somewhat similar to the above, with a few additions:

Senior: Appeal more to relevant external business and strategic experience instead of insisting that 'books are different'.

Middle: Make more opportunities available to junior level staff with some experience, and offer them more support and training. This should enable companies to save a little on the salary, which can then be utilised elsewhere.

Junior: Do more work with the Colleges and Universities.

Think of "Training Contracts" similar to the legal profession, with e.g. 2 years 'mixed areas' editorial/production/sales/marketing with the prospect of a permanent role at the end. This should not be limited to graduate level candidates, as has been tried previously, because graduates may not be the most suitable candidates for some roles (e.g. sales).

Offer more advice/information and inducements with regard to promotion and career development, and offer more in the way of management traineeships.

10.7 Improving methods of recruitment into the book publishing industry

Q	Apart from making the job/position seem more attractive, what could be done to improve recruitment of senior/middle/junior level staff? Are publishers using the best methods of recruitment, or should they be trying other approaches? How can the book publishing industry benefit from what other industries do?
---	--

Two of the six recruitment agencies say there is nothing in particular that can be done to improve recruitment practices in the book publishing industry, for any level.

Three say publishers should make more use of specialist recruitment agencies, adding that publishers tend not to be very good at presenting/promoting themselves.

Other suggestions include:

- i Relying less on the old boys' network which is seen as being so prevalent within the industry (though typical of 'creative' industries more generally).
- ii Avoiding the tendency to hire 'more of the same' candidates and be more prepared to take in newcomers from other industries.

10.8 Staff retention within the book publishing industry

- Q What do you feel are the major issues with staff retention within the book publishing industry?
- Q Are there particular issues that affect retention of staff at a **senior [middle, junior]** level?

Overall, recruitment agencies feel that to improve retention, it is necessary for employers to make staff feel more valued, with the important qualification that this is not just a question of salaries.

Given the importance of career development, some recruitment agencies stress the need for promised promotions to be fulfilled wherever possible, and that valued staff can be retained by seeing continuous development.

They also suggest that companies should take action as a result of exit interview information, whereas too often this seems to be an academic exercise.

It was also pointed out that some churn is necessary and helpful, leading to a refreshment of the staff gene pool, but care must be taken not to throw out much-needed experience.

With senior staff, the particular issues around retention are seen as:

- i the fact that salaries can be better elsewhere, both within and without the industry
- ii the problem of hitting a ceiling within a company, not just in terms of salary or authority, but also the desire/need for fresh challenges
- iii the view that it can be easier to institute change and development at a new company (i.e make a mark) than the one you have been in for some time.

For middle and junior staff, retention issues are principally to do with career progression and better salaries.

10.9 Staff retention within functions

Q Are there particular issues which apply to the different functions/roles, and if so, whether these issues apply to senior, middle or junior levels?

For each of the main publishing functions at least 3 of the 6 recruitment agencies see no particular issues surrounding retention.

Otherwise, for editorial and production/design there are felt to be too few opportunities: not only do people with the best jobs hang on to them, but with increasing (too much) outsourcing, there are too few interesting roles left.

Salaries are considered an especial problem in retaining people for marketing/PR, while there is perceived to be a continuing decline in the traditional sales role (becoming more of a desk job, with no obvious career progression).

Publishers are having to compete fiercely to obtain top quality digital staff, and are having to try to attract them from both within and without the industry. This also means that where publishers have employed the best staff in this area, they are especially liable see them headhunted out.

10.10 Staff retention: learning from other industries

Q What can the book publishing industry learn from other industries about improving staff retention?

Suggestions of areas in which the book publishing industry could improve retention are:

- i Working conditions: small gestures such as awaydays, flexitime, summer hours.
- ii Rewards: good incremental salary rises, annual bonuses, and timely promotions to create goodwill and make candidates feel valued.
- lii Better people management: not allowing individuals to stagnate, and preventing the job losing its challenge.
- lv More use of specialist publishing recruitment expertise: head-hunters and recruitment consultancies who know and understand the business, to their fullest capacity. Most are willing to advise on team building, job descriptions etc.