

October 2015  
A ResourceBank publication

Results of a major insight  
survey of nearly 1,500  
active job-seekers within  
the UK Retail sector



ResourceBank

# 1.0 Introduction

...nearly **1,500** active candidates completed an on-line survey...

**The UK retail jobs market continues to recover with latest data from the ONS forecasting that the sector will need to employ an additional 100,000 workers by 2020 to keep up with demand.**

Recent research from CV-Library indicates that candidates are becoming increasingly selective and need more persuading to apply for retail industry vacancies. Figures for June 2015 show that job postings for retail roles rose 1.2% year-on-year, yet applications for the roles dropped by 18.1% in the same period, which CV-Library said results in an overall deficit of 19.1% in terms of the number of applications per role.

“Candidates across the nation have become more selective in their job search and our recent data shows that the retail sector is particularly prone to picky candidates. It’s essential that businesses do more to attract the right talent for their vacancies.”

Employers need to understand what is important to candidates in their job hunting activity and what attracts them to specific roles. It is also key to understand what media candidates will use to search for jobs – so that employers can select the best channels for their talent attraction strategies.

The inaugural ResourceBank Retail Candidate Insight Survey has been designed to give Employers clear insight into candidate needs, wants and behaviours.

It also provides a clear ranking of the most attractive companies from a candidate perspective – and will offer the ability to benchmark this attractiveness in future years.

The survey was undertaken during July and September 2015 with nearly 1,500 active candidates completing an on-line survey. The following pages highlight the main findings of the survey and further data is available on specific skills, locations and sectors upon request.



## Findings in this report include:

- What factors are most important to candidates?
- What media do candidates use to look for jobs?
- What salary increase do they expect when moving jobs?
- Who are the most attractive companies in each sector?

# 2.0 What candidates look at when choosing a new job / employer



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**A good Working Environment is the number one factor for retail candidates.** Having an environment which is comfortable, fun, interesting and good to work in is the overall most important consideration when retail candidates are looking for a new job.

## 2.1 What candidates look at when choosing a new job / employer

**Compared to research in other sectors, where job content and salary frequently come first, retail candidates really care about the environment in which they work.**

Salary/Rate of pay was the second most important consideration for job-seekers. In a sector with one of the lowest average pay rates, salaries are understandably a key concern to all levels of candidate.

The actual job content and level of responsibility provided in the role comes third on the list of most important factors for candidates, followed closely by Opportunities for Promotion (which was the most important factor for Managers) and Training Offered.

The company employer brand / values rounds off the top half dozen factors selected by candidates.

Surprisingly, Flexible Working Hours and Holidays are not in the top half of the list of factors selected, and Staff Discounts was the least important factor identified in the survey.

“...retail candidates really care about the environment in which they work.”



- 01 WORKING ENVIRONMENT
- 02 SALARY / RATE OF PAY
- 03 LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY / JOB CONTENT
- 04 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION
- 05 TRAINING OFFERED
- 06 THE COMPANY / EMPLOYER BRAND VALUES
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# 3.0 What's important to different candidate categories

## In-store sales & customer service



Store sales and customer service staff made up the majority of the survey responses – and they prioritise Working Environment and Rate of Pay above all factors. Training comes in third and subjective elements such as the company's brand values and the candidate's own personal shopping experience in the store come fourth and fifth on the list – above actual job content.

## Store managers



Good retail managers are in increasing demand across the sector and are often the most challenging vacancies for retailers to attract a good level of candidate for. Manager candidates are most interested in Opportunities for Promotion, Salary, level of responsibility and working environment. They are also attracted by the company employer brand / values and the training offered by prospective employers.

## Merchandising



Many fashion brands rely on innovative merchandising to drive sales and candidates with expertise are in ever higher demand. These candidates rate the Working Environment as the most important factor, followed by Salary and Job Content. Merchandisers are also attracted by Opportunities for Promotion and the Company's Employer Brand.

# 3.1 What's important to different candidate categories

## Logistics



Candidates working in the warehousing and logistics field place Salary as the primary factor when looking for new jobs. Working Environment, Training Offered, Opportunities for promotion and Job content are the other top five factors for candidates in logistics.

## Marketing



For many growing retailers and those with a large online presence, a strong marketing team can provide a real competitive advantage. For Marketing candidates, Salary is the most important factor when considering a new role, with Working Environment coming a close second and Opportunities for Promotion in third. Job content, Employer Brand values and Training offered make up the top six factors for marketing professionals.

# 4.0 Where & how do candidates find jobs?

**In previous surveys, internet job-boards have been the most popular source for candidates to find jobs. However, in 2015, Google is the top of the sources for all candidates in retail to find their next role.** It is a clear indication of Google's dominance of the UK's internet search market that candidates will type their search straight into Google rather than visit specific job boards. Companies who are competing for candidates in retail must pay attention to where their vacancies appear on a Google Search in order to attract the highest number of candidates.

The second most popular method for candidates to find jobs is to search on specific retail company websites for open roles. Naturally companies with a well known brand will do well out of this – but they must make sure that the careers pages on their websites are easy to find, simple to search, list all the open jobs and make the application process clear and easy for candidates. With the growth of search volumes from mobile devices and tablets, companies must ensure that applying for jobs is easy from these devices as well as from traditional desk top PCs.

The third and fourth most favoured methods for finding a new job are Search on Jobboards and Register with a recruitment agency.

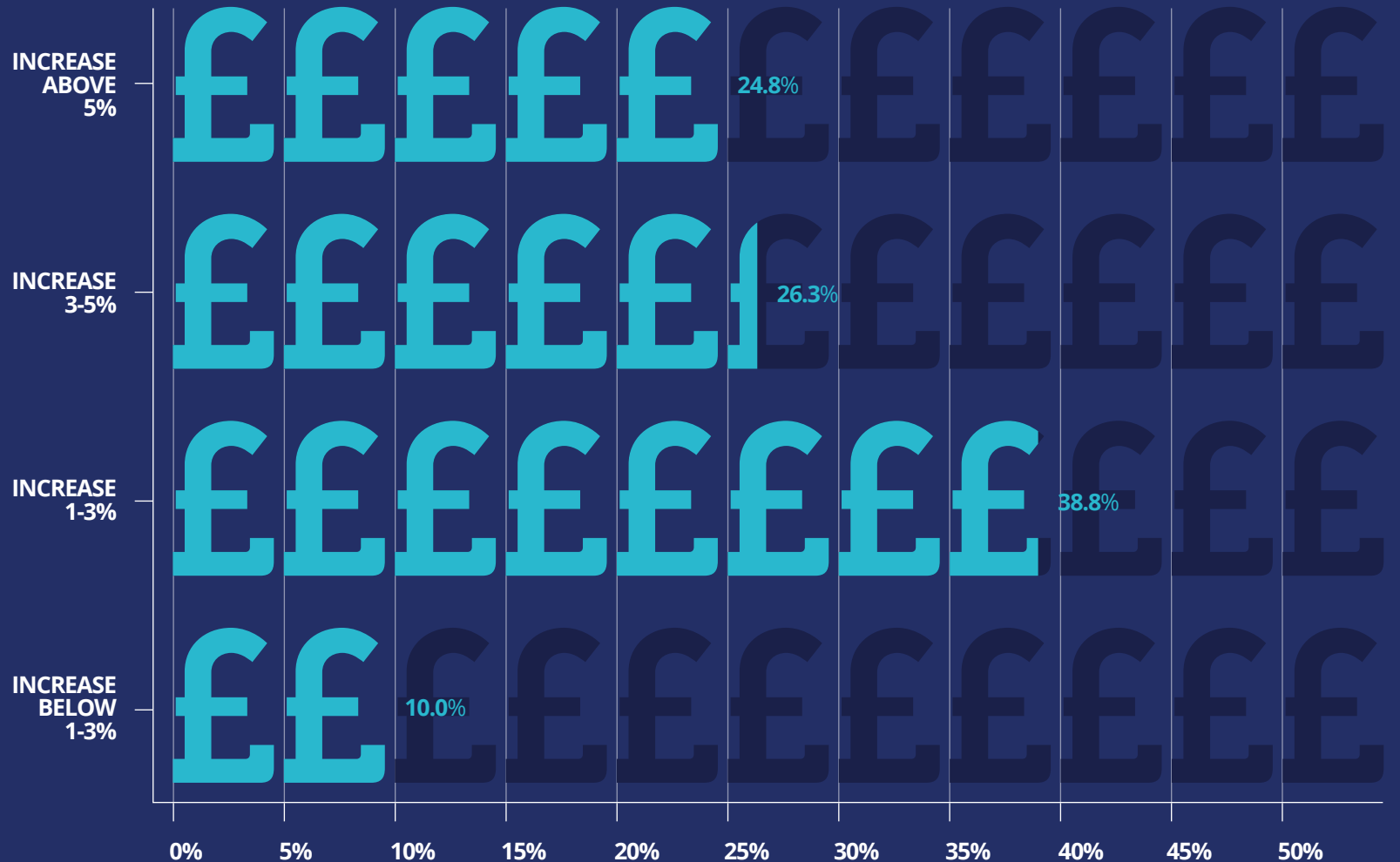
Candidates are least likely to use historic methods such as using retail magazines, local papers and attending careers fairs.



# 5.0 What salary increase are candidates expecting when moving job?

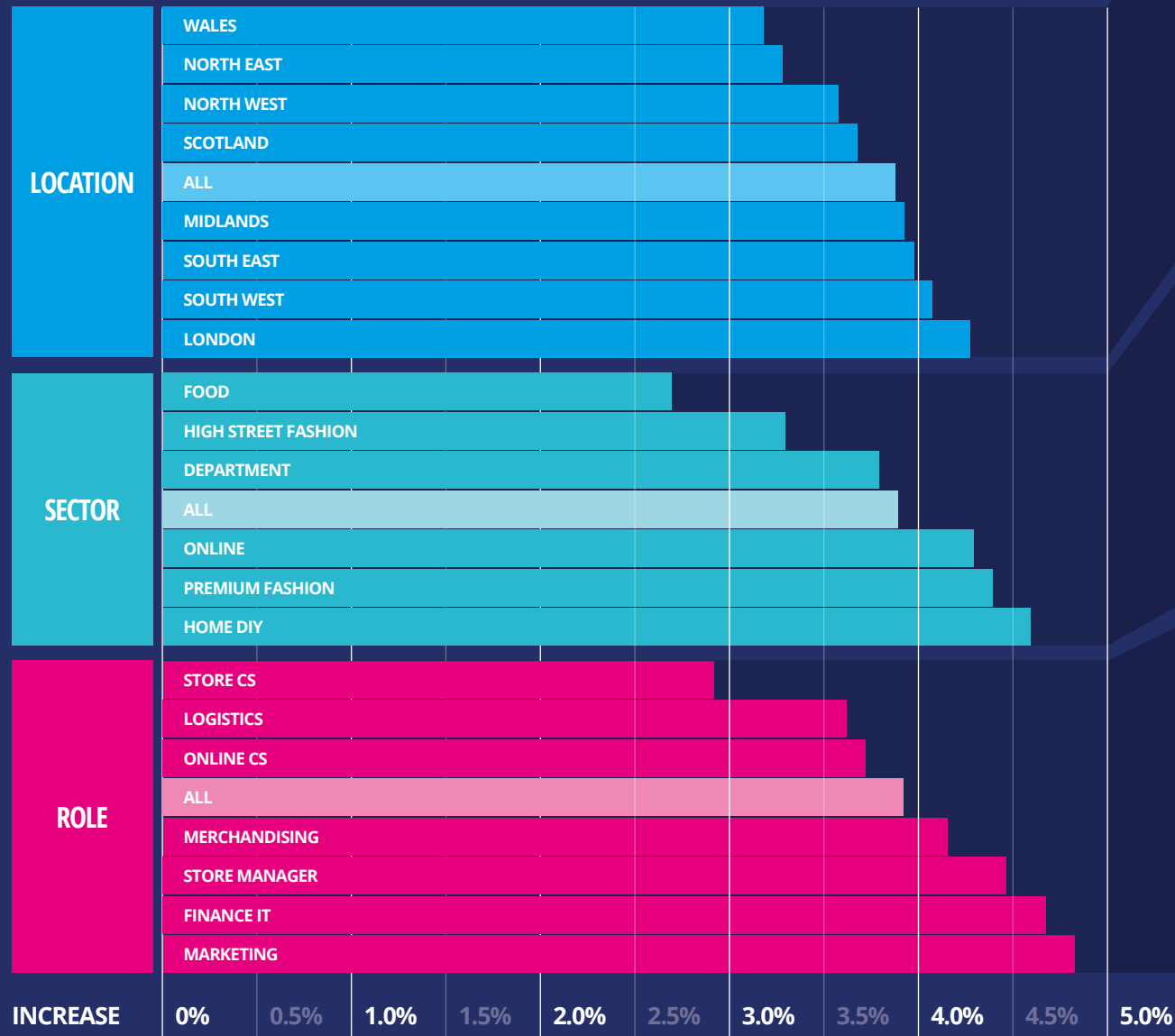
Average expectation **+3.9%**

With Salary / Rate of Pay being the second most important factor for job-seeking retail candidates, it is no surprise that the majority are looking for a salary increase over 3% from their new job, and nearly a quarter a looking for an increase of more than 5% from their new role.





# 5.1 What salary increase are candidates expecting when moving job?



## LOCATION

When looked at geographically, candidates based in London are looking for the highest increase from a new role, while candidates in Wales and the North East of England have the lowest target salary increase in their minds.

## SECTOR

When looked at by sector, candidates aiming for work in the Home/DIY sector have the highest expected salary increase – more than those looking for jobs in the premium fashion sector and with online retails. Unsurprisingly, candidates looking for a new role within the food / grocery sector are aware of the cost pressures in this sector and have the lowest salary increase expectations.

## ROLE

The different role that a candidate is looking for also has a significant impact on the salary increase they are expecting. Candidates working in Marketing are looking for an average salary increase of close to 5%, while in-store sales/customer service staff are looking for less than a 3% increase on average.

# 6.0 The most attractive employer brands in retail

“Top of the list was John Lewis...”

Candidates were asked to score 72 of the UK’s leading retailers in terms of how attractive they were as an Employer.

Top of the list was John Lewis, followed by online giant Amazon beating Marks and Spencer to third place. Zara was the top high street fashion brand and House of Fraser came in fifth.

At the other end of the list, Carpetright, Bensons for Beds and Peacocks were the least attractive employer brands in our survey.

## Scoring explained

Candidates were asked to score each company in terms of how attractive they were as a potential employer. A four scale ranking was used:



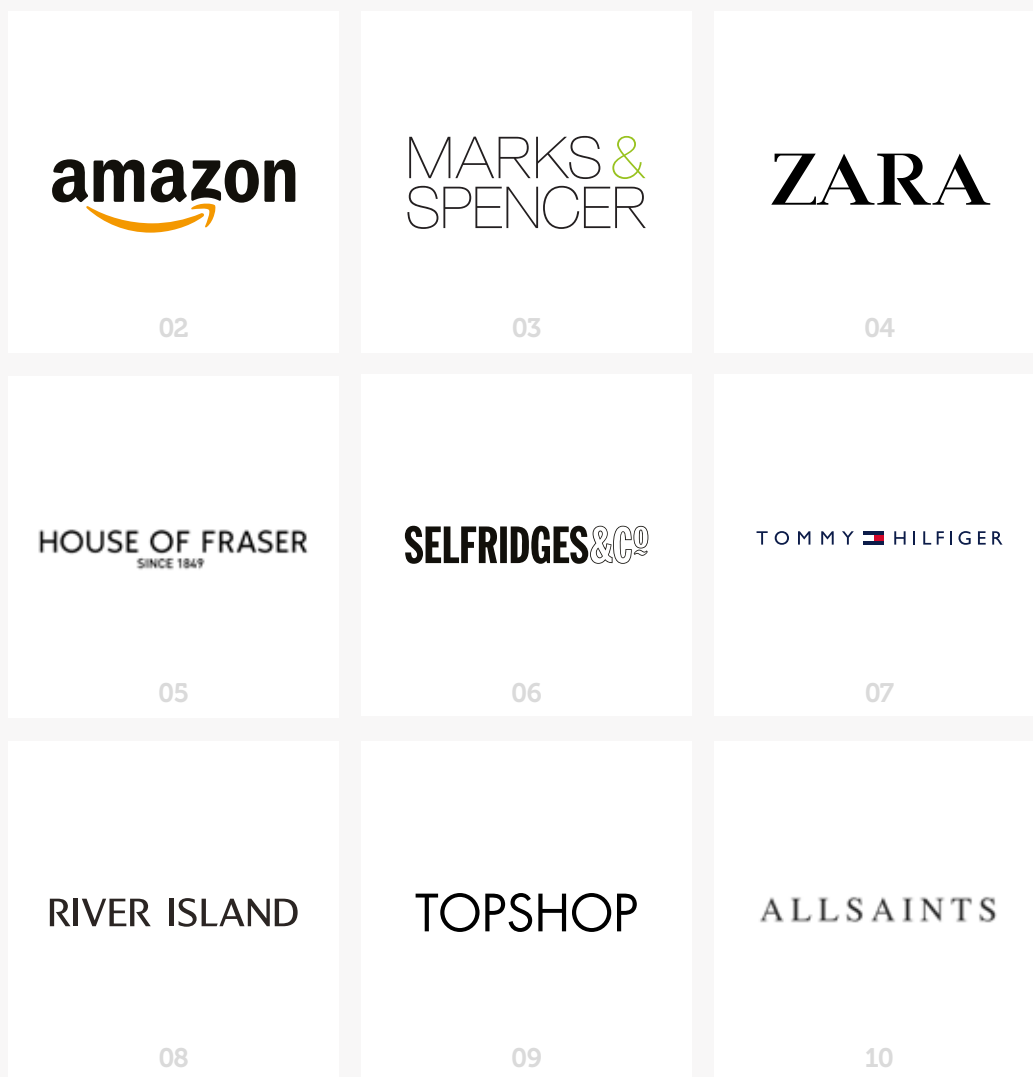
The numerical figures shown in the report show the mean average score received by each company.

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# 6.1 The most attractive employer brands in retail

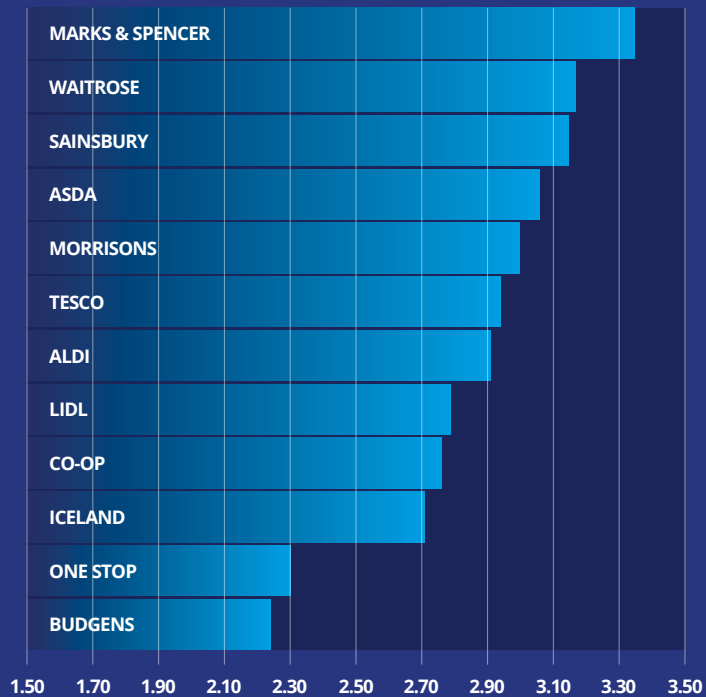
Nb – our survey was only focussed on Department Stores, Fashion retailers, Grocers, Home/DIY and online specialists, and therefore we did not ask candidates for their insight into large brands in other retail sectors such as Boots, Superdrug, WHSmith, Halfords and Sports Direct.



<b>JOHN LEWIS</b>	<b>3.55</b>	NEW LOOK	2.96	GAP	2.64
<b>AMAZON</b>	<b>3.32</b>	JIGSAW	2.95	CREW	2.63
<b>MARKS &amp; SPENCER</b>	<b>3.31</b>	WHITE STUFF	2.94	AVENUE 32	2.60
<b>ZARA</b>	<b>3.29</b>	TESCO	2.91	BATHSTORE	2.60
<b>HOUSE OF FRASER</b>	<b>3.27</b>	MONSOON	2.89	M AND M DIRECT	2.53
<b>SELFRIDGES</b>	<b>3.25</b>	ALDI	2.88	SUPERDRY	2.53
<b>TOMMY HILFIGER</b>	<b>3.25</b>	MINT VELVET	2.88	FAT FACE	2.45
<b>RIVER ISLAND</b>	<b>3.22</b>	HOMEBASE	2.87	TKMAXX	2.44
<b>TOPSHOP</b>	<b>3.22</b>	B&Q	2.85	BHS	2.41
<b>ALLSAINTS</b>	<b>3.21</b>	BOOHOO	2.84	PLUMB CENTRE	2.37
WHISTLES	3.21	NET A PORTER	2.82	ARGOS	2.34
H&M	3.14	JACK WILLS	2.77	BODEN	2.34
WAITROSE	3.14	WICKES	2.77	SHARPS BEDROOMS	2.32
WHITE COMPANY	3.14	LIDL	2.76	MATALAN	2.28
SAINSBURY'S	3.12	HACKETT	2.75	ONE STOP	2.27
ASOS	3.10	HOWDENS	2.74	WILKINSONS	2.26
DEBENHAMS	3.09	CO-OP	2.73	BUDGENS	2.21
HARVEY NICHOLS	3.08	VERY	2.73	PRIMARK	2.16
NOT ON THE HIGH STREET	3.08	FENWICKS	2.71	DREAMS	2.15
FRENCH CONNECTION	3.04	MAGNET KITCHENS	2.71	DFS	2.12
ASDA	3.03	DOROTHY PERKINS	2.69	M&CO	2.11
WORLD DUTY FREE	3.01	ICELAND	2.68	PEACOCKS	2.07
MORRISONS	2.97	WREN KITCHENS	2.67	BENSONS FOR BEDS	2.00
NEXT	2.97	JOULES	2.66	CARPETRIGHT	1.89

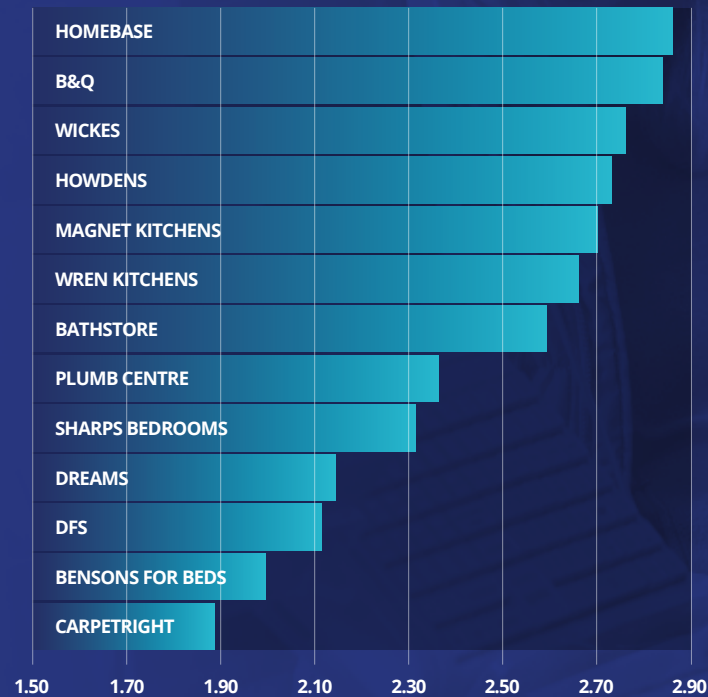
# 7.0 The most attractive employer brands in each sector

## Food / Groceries



Marks and Spencer is the most attractive employer in the food sector, followed by Waitrose and Sainsbury. Budgens and One Stop are the least attractive employer brands in this sector.

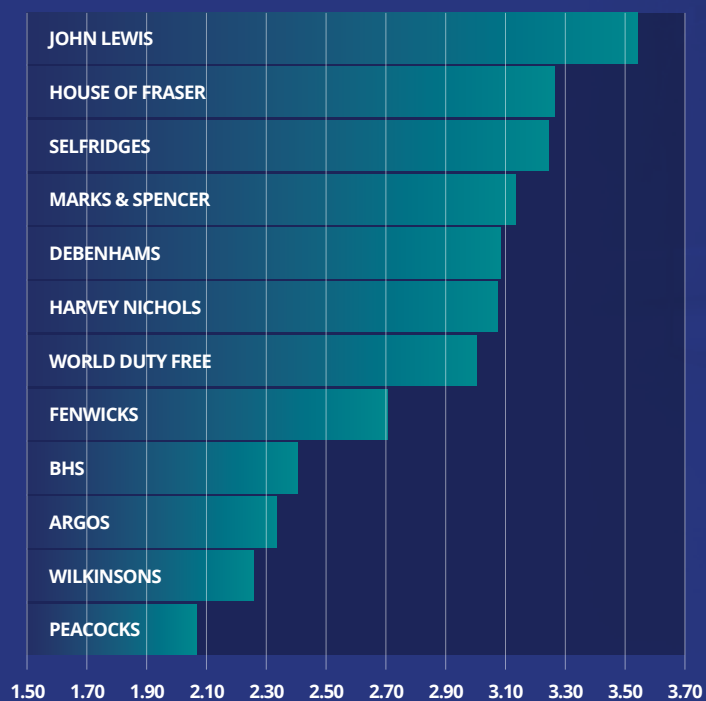
## Home / DIY



Homebase is the most attractive employer in the Home/ DIY sector, followed by B&Q and Wickes.

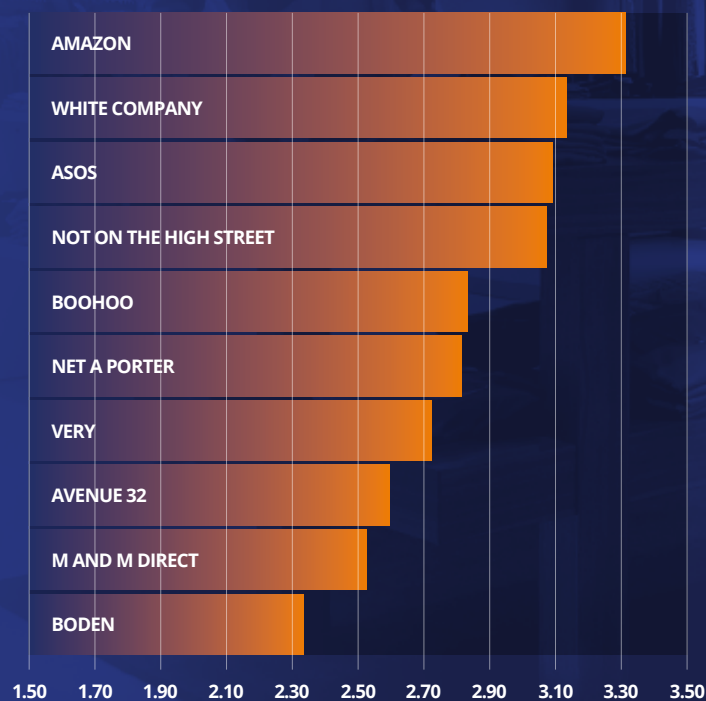
# 7.1 The most attractive employer brands in each sector

## Department Stores / Multiple retailers



John Lewis leads this sector as the most attractive employer, with House of Fraser and Selfridges in second and third respectively. Peacocks, Wilkinsons and Argos are the least attractive of the multiple retailers that we included in the sector.

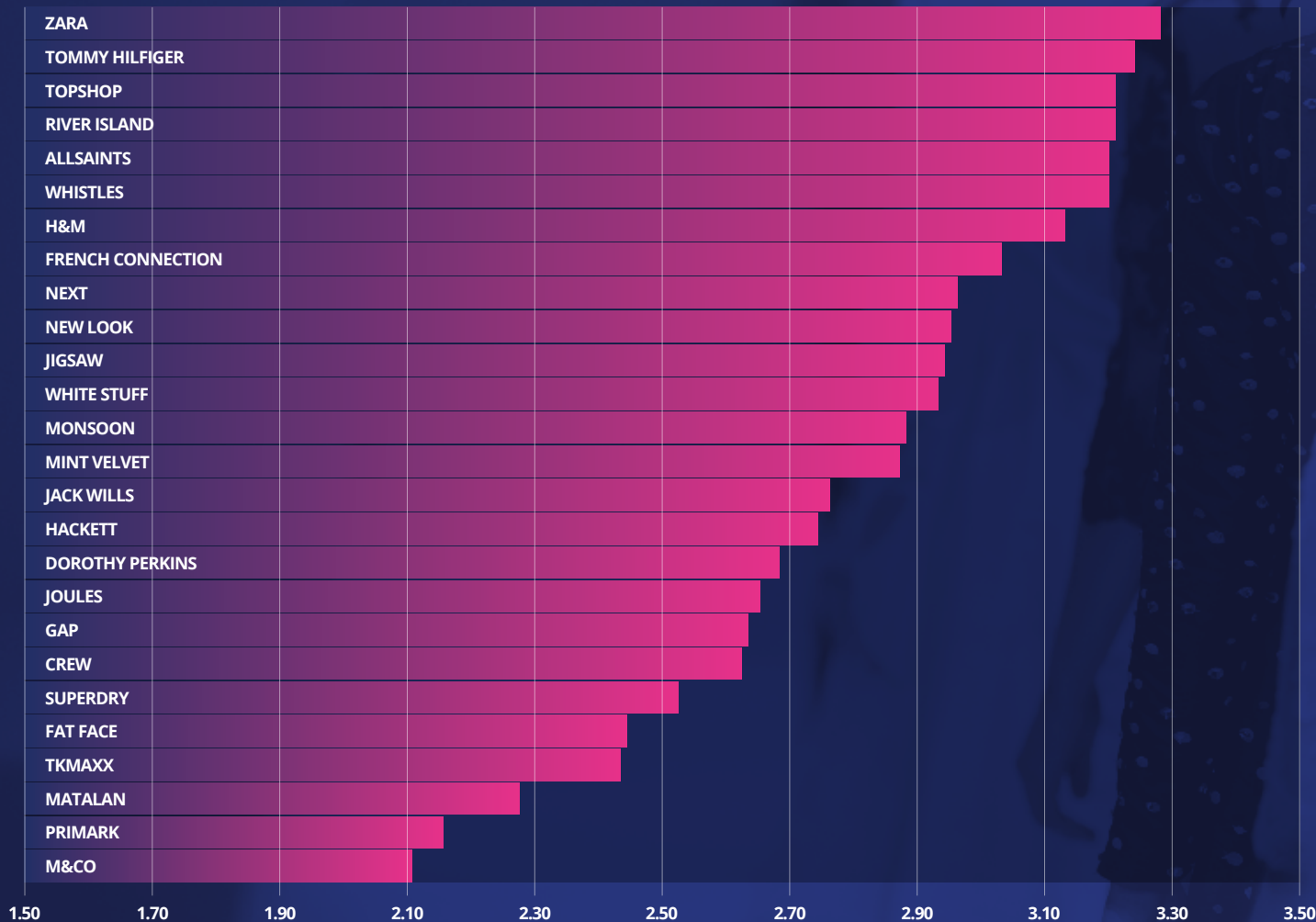
## Online retailers



Of the retailers that were included in this sector, Amazon headed the list, followed by the White Company, Asos and Not on the High Street. Boden were the least attractive employer brand.

# 7.2 The most attractive employer brands in each sector

## Fashion Retailers



Zara tops the list of the most attractive employer in the Fashion sector, followed by Tommy Hilfiger and Topshop. M&Co, Primark and Matalan are the least attractive employer brands.

## 8.0 About the research & publisher

ResourceBank

**Established in 1995, ResourceBank recruits, retains and manages talent on behalf of leading organisations in the UK and Europe.** The business offers a range of services including recruitment outsourcing, executive search, HR administration outsourcing and workforce assessment.

ResourceBank employs teams of experienced HR and recruitment professionals working with clients such as Magnet Group, Tesco, Balfour Beatty, World Duty Free Group, Vector Aerospace, Dyson, Muller Dairy, The White Company, Pitney Bowes and Aliaxis.

This research project was undertaken between July and September 2015 with more than 30,000 active candidates from the retail sector asked to complete an on-line survey. Nearly 1,500 completed responses were recorded. Further data is available on specific skills, locations and sectors upon request (see below).

