

**Top-Consultant.com**

**2004  
Candidate Survey**

***Sponsored by Jopit.com***

***>> the #1 search engine for jobs***

## Introduction

We have proven to Top-Consultant clients time and time again that opening your recruitment adverts with a “sales pitch” to candidates (rather than a list of must-have requirements) will dramatically improve the performance of your recruitment campaign.

The best candidates out there will rightly feel that you have to convince them why they should want to join your firm... at least as much as they have to convince you that you should hire them over and above another candidate. So as we enter a tighter recruitment market, the key question for recruiters becomes:

**“What would really make top candidates choose to join us rather than the competition?”**

[Top-Consultant.com](http://Top-Consultant.com) ran a candidate survey in Q2 2004\* to address this very question. What are the key decision criteria candidates are using to differentiate between potential consulting employers?

This report provides the answers – and the encouraging news for most recruiters is that **candidates are open to persuasion**. Most do not have clearly-formed impressions of which firms do and do not meet their criteria, which means that recruiters have the opportunity – throughout the recruitment cycle – to influence candidate perceptions and to position their firm in a way that maximises the chances of a successful hire.

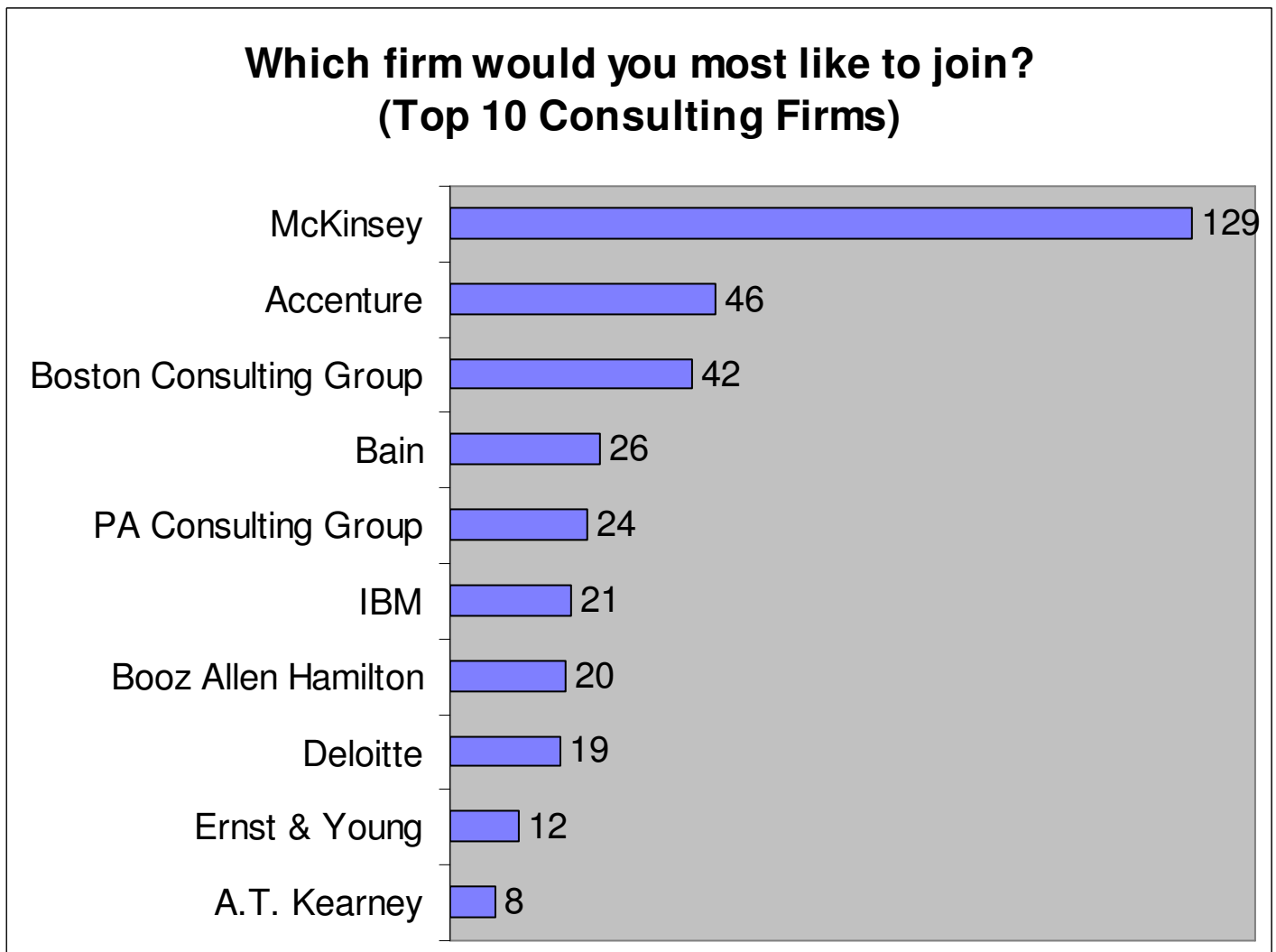
We hope you find this report a valuable resource.

The [Top-Consultant.com](http://Top-Consultant.com) Management Team

\* 750 responses were received. Our thanks to **Prism Executive Recruitment** for assisting in the promotion of the survey

## Top 10 Consulting Firms

The results of the vote for the firm candidates would most like to join were very encouraging. They suggest that McKinsey continues to enjoy runaway popularity – polling more votes than competitors BCG, Bain & Booz Allen Hamilton combined. But no other firm really enjoyed a huge concentration of votes which means that “everything is still to play for” and that a good recruitment campaign can significantly influence candidates’ perceptions of a firm...



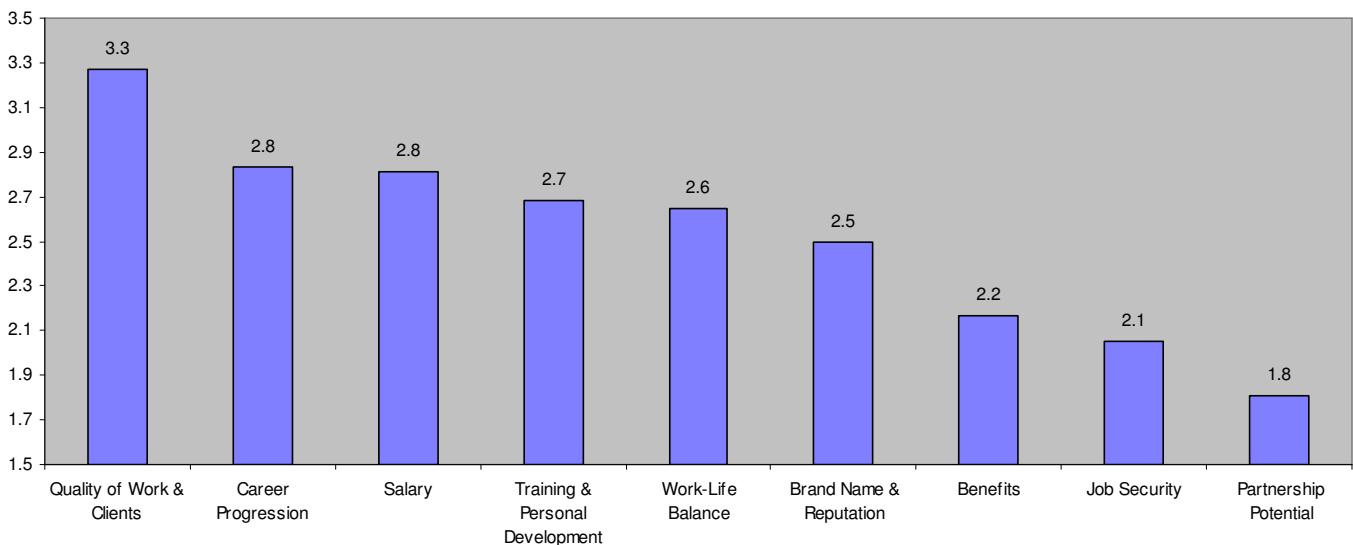
## Key Decision Criteria

So if a good recruitment campaign can significantly influence candidates' perceptions of a firm, what are the decision criteria that candidates are most influenced by – and that your recruitment campaigns should be seeking to address?

The results are almost identical to those achieved when this survey was last run 18 months ago. They show that candidates continue to be strongly influenced by whether a firm can offer the highest quality of work & clients. This is a very subjective matter and firms clearly have considerable scope to influence candidate perceptions at all points in the recruitment cycle.

Career Progression & Salary also ranked highly, as one would expect, but more interesting was the ranking of Training & Personal Development - scoring much higher than many recruiters would imagine and offering another means by which recruiters can differentiate their employment offering.

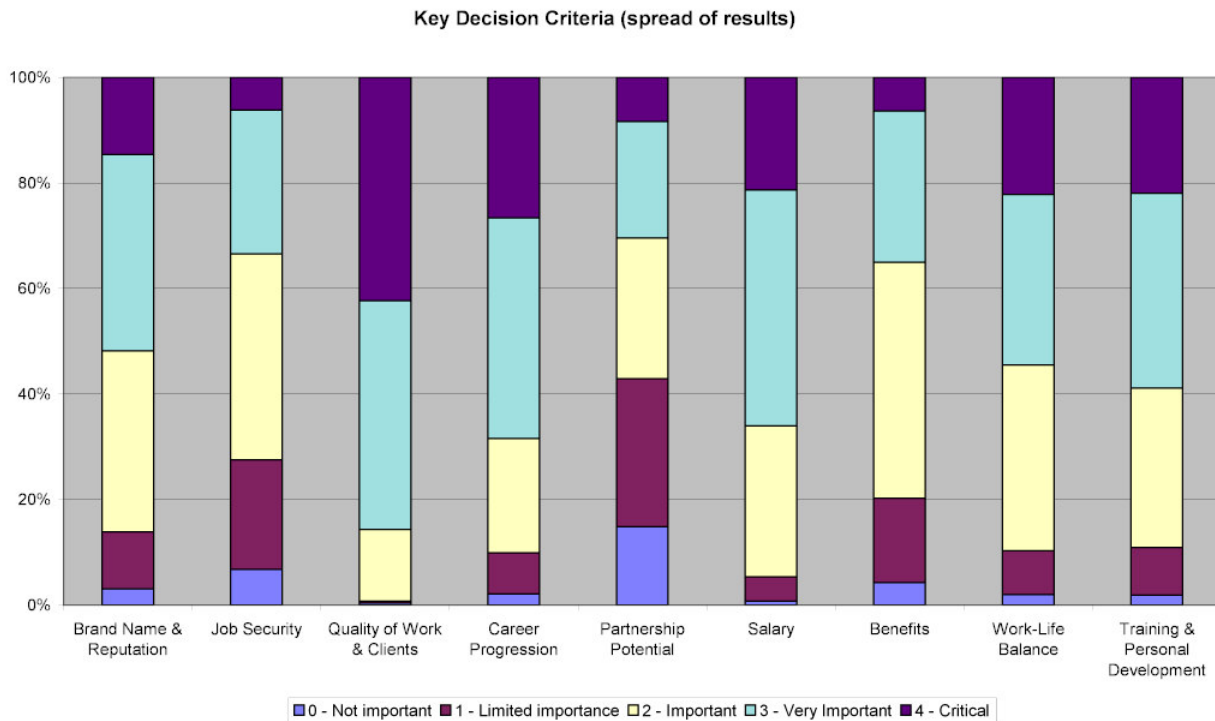
Key Decision Criteria (weighted scores)



## Key Decision Criteria, cont.

By colour-coding the results below, it is possible to differentiate the decision criteria further. Those votes in blue and burgundy represent the proportion of candidates that consider a criteria to be less than “important”.

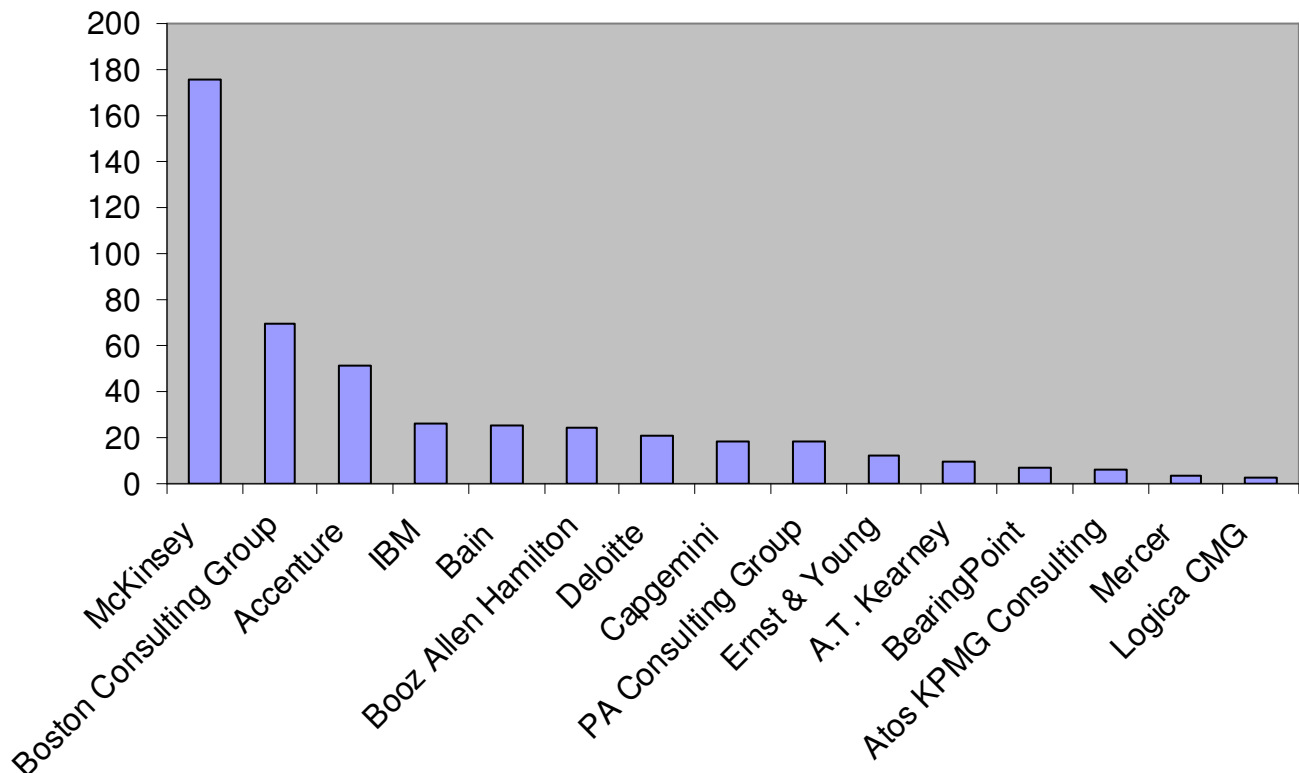
For criteria such as “Quality of Work & Clients” it is clear that almost all candidates will lose interest in a consulting company if they are not persuaded that they can deliver on this criteria. Other criteria – like job security – are deemed critical by only a tiny minority of candidates. This explains how consultancies that endured rounds of redundancies only 12 months ago have been able to recruit again with comparative ease.



## Most important criteria – Quality of Work & Clients

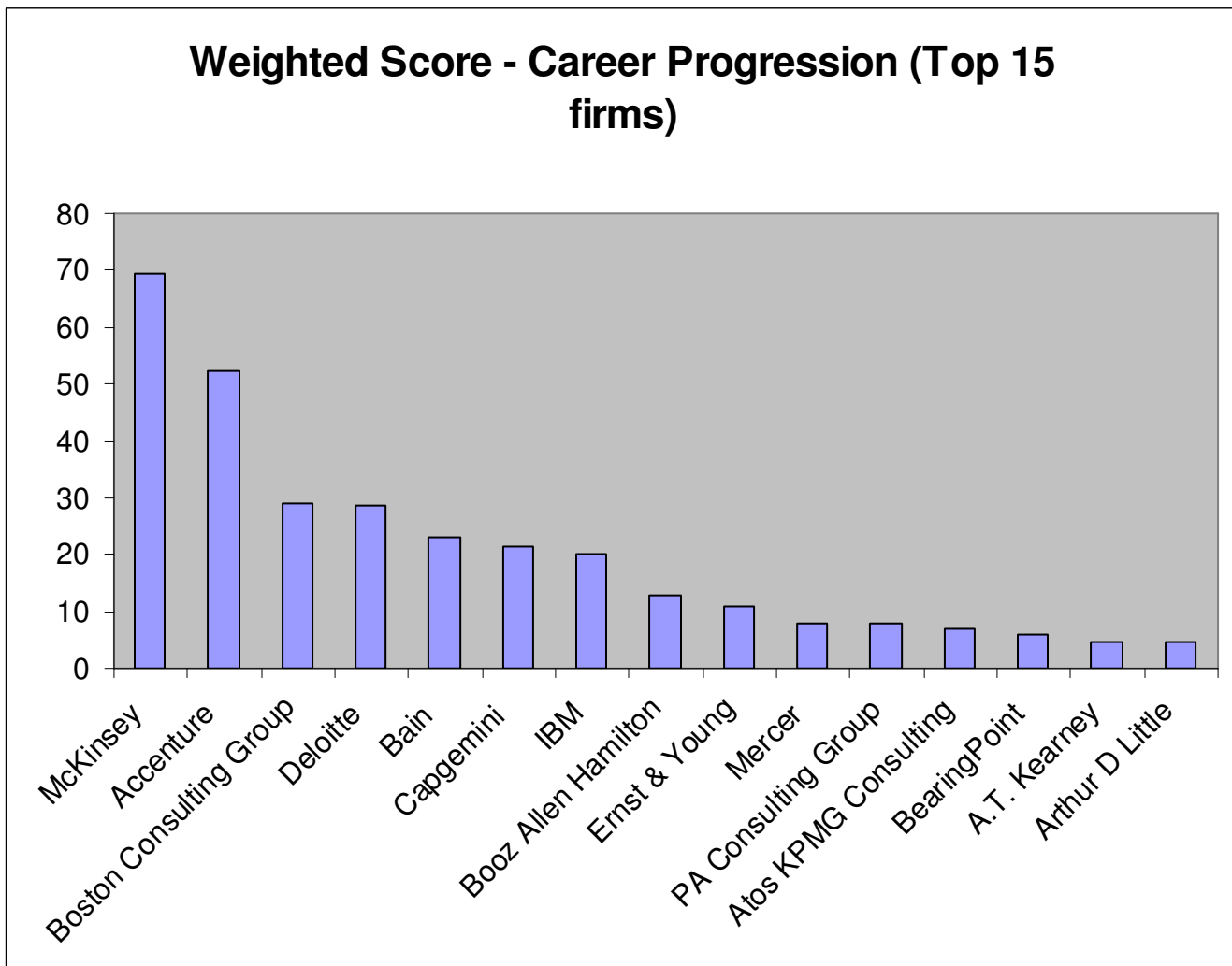
Taking the most important decision criteria – quality of work & clients – it is clear that recruiters need to concentrate on selling this aspect of their firms. Very few firms can look at the results below and feel that candidates already perceive they offer a high quality of work & clients. This is encouraging in the sense that all firms can really influence candidate perceptions about them as an employer if their recruitment (and PR) campaigns can just convey that they **too** have a great client list and challenging assignments for the candidate to work on.

**Weighted Score - Quality of Work & Clients (Top 15 Firms)**



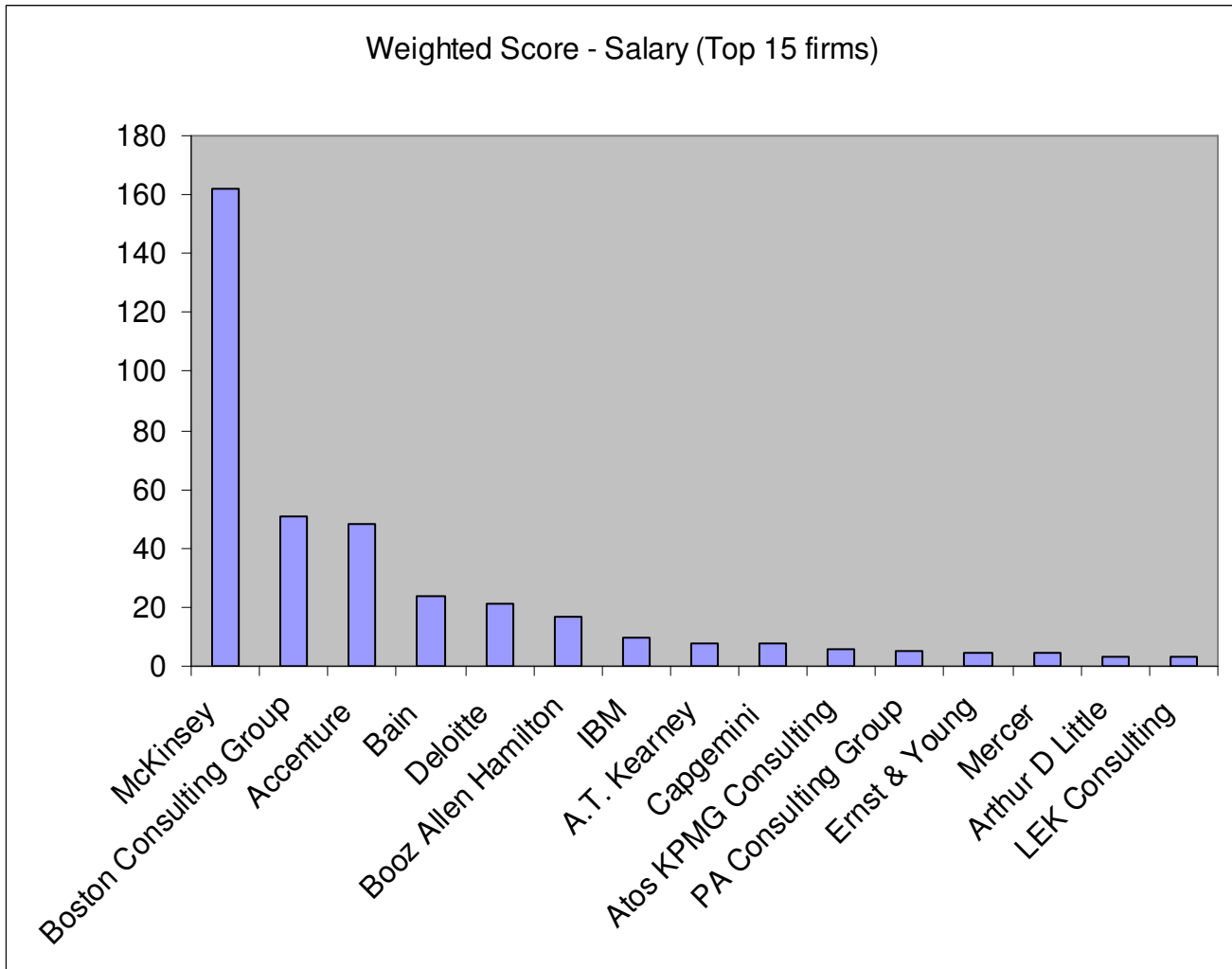
## 2<sup>nd</sup> most important criteria – Career Progression

Career progression potential also carries a lot of weight with candidates and it is interesting to see that the top firms are a lot more evenly spread out in this vote. This implies that candidates do not have a consistent opinion of which firms can offer the most promising career progression prospects and a concerted PR and recruitment campaign by any one firm could certainly impact candidate perceptions quite considerably.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> most important criteria – Salary

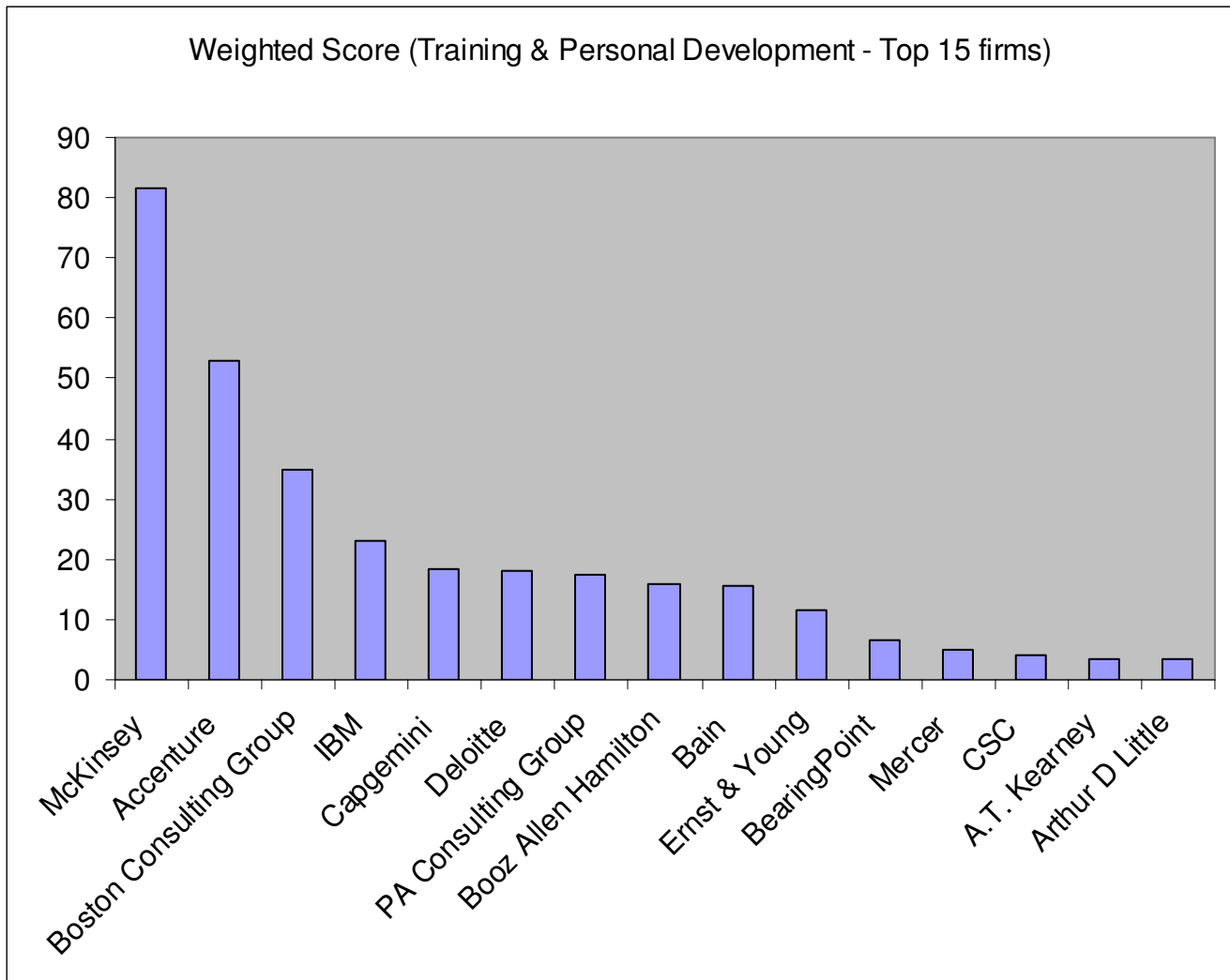
Salary (much more than benefits) remains a vitally important decision criteria, but the results are intriguing in that they illustrate candidates are not particularly well informed on the subject. Firms that are less well known than McKinsey but that offer favorable starting salaries could leapfrog most of the competition if they adopt a policy of actually marketing this strength rather than hiding it under the ubiquitous terminology of “Competitive Packages”





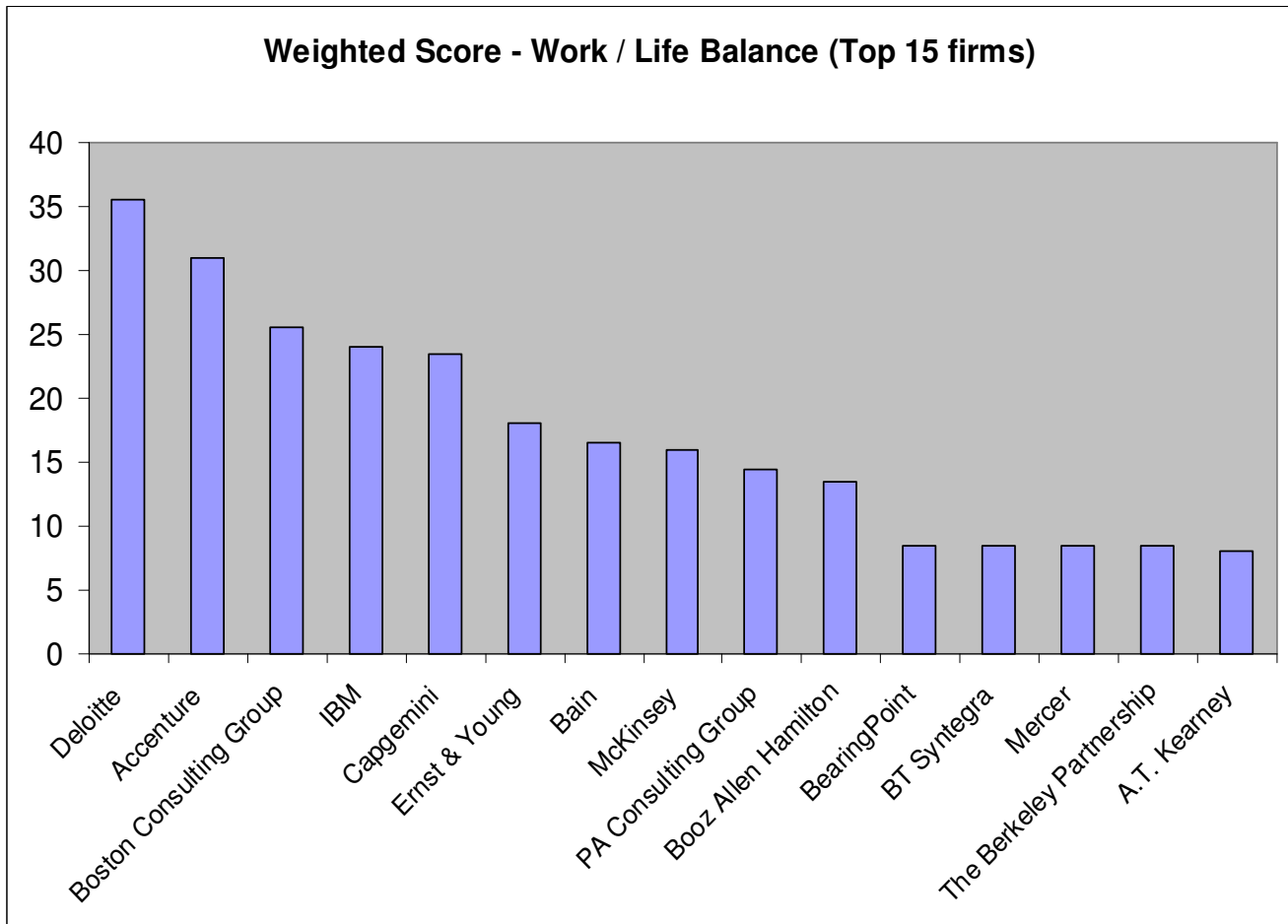
## 4<sup>th</sup> most important criteria – Training & Personal Development

Training & Personal Development will have surprised many recruiters by appearing so highly in the poll. It is also a trump card that many firms are not currently playing – precisely because it is not perceived as being an important recruitment tool. Many firms who are scoring poorly in this category could enhance their attractiveness to candidates quite considerably if more emphasis were placed on marketing the comprehensive training provided throughout their recruitment literature.



## 5<sup>th</sup> most important criteria – Work / Life Balance

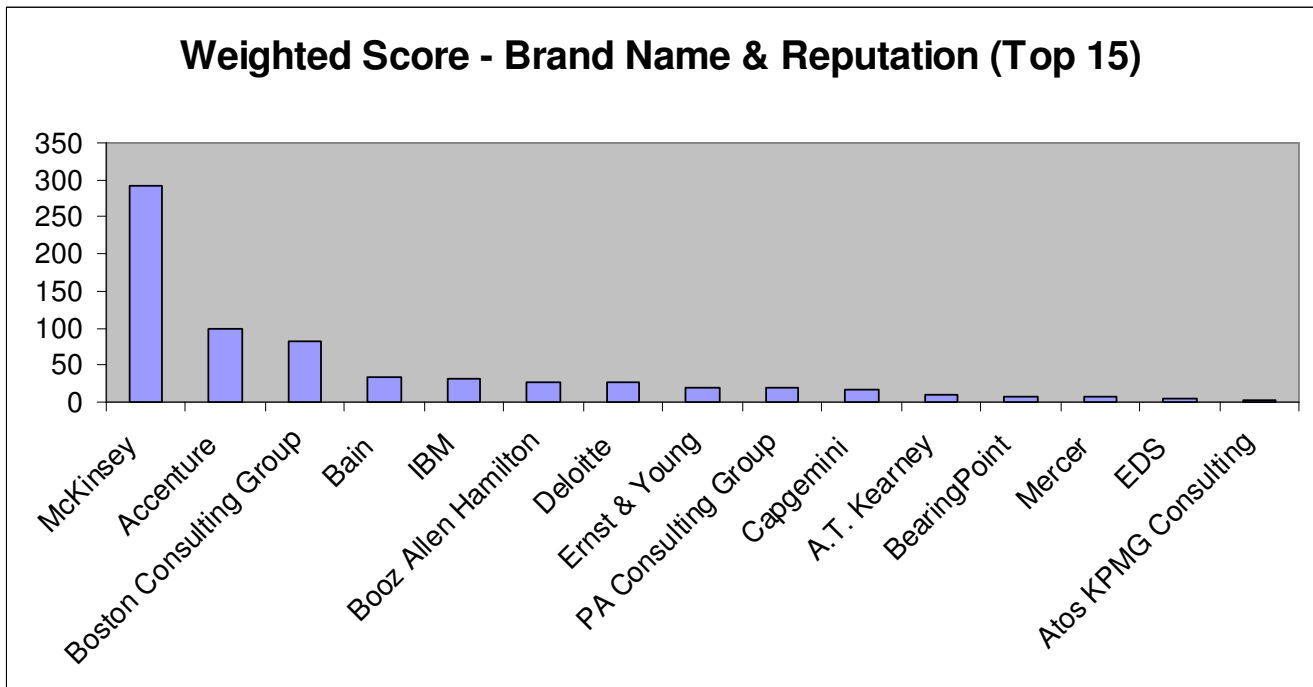
Work / Life balance scores only 5<sup>th</sup> in the rankings – but is considered only marginally less important than the criteria that have been discussed thus far. Deloitte has prided itself on innovating in the area of work / life balance and this effort has – to some extent – been reflected in the candidate votes. With no real clear winner in this category, though, there is clearly scope for a firm to differentiate itself through better communication of its work / life initiatives.



## 6<sup>th</sup> most important criteria – Brand Name & Reputation

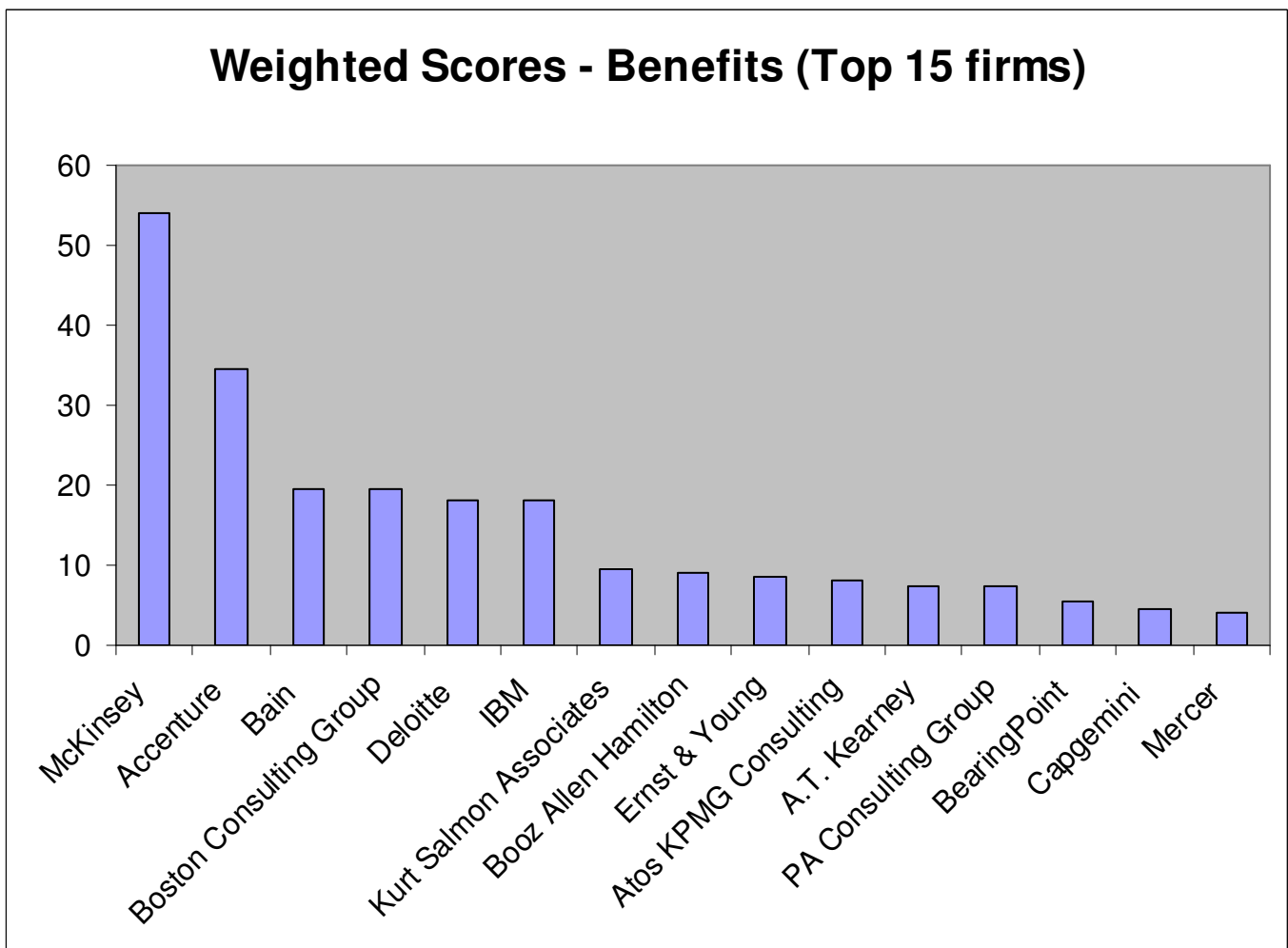
Oh to be a McKinsey recruiter!

Brand name & reputation still hold considerable appeal for candidates – less so than before, but still significant. What is clear from the votes is that candidates have a very pronounced view that McKinsey is strongest in the market. The conviction in terms of number of votes achieved is more pronounced than in any other category. For non-McKinsey recruiters, the importance of selling the other strengths of the company becomes very clear when we see the brand deficit that needs to be overcome.



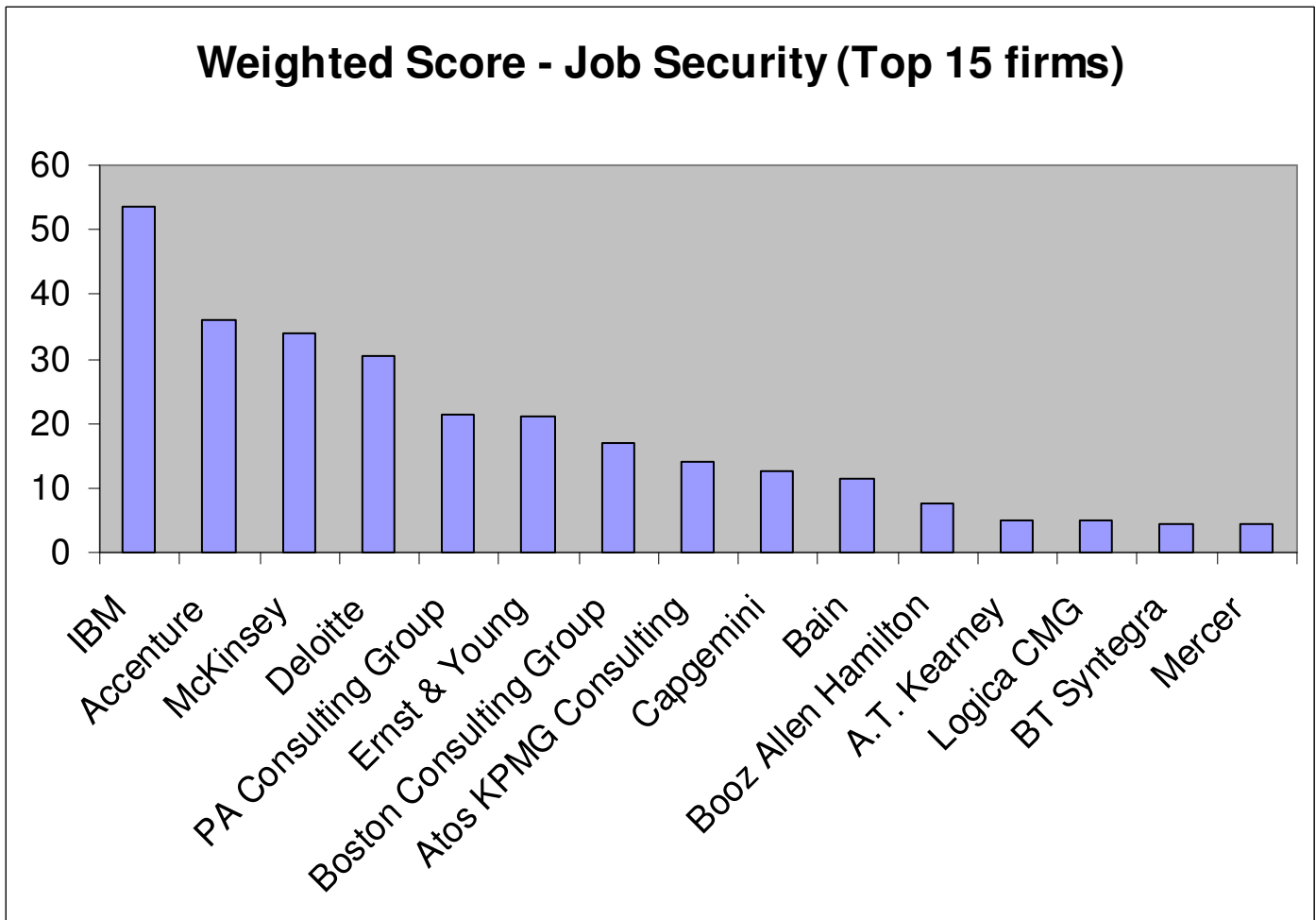
## 7<sup>th</sup> most important criteria – Benefits

Benefits are much less important than salary – so here’s another way in which “Cash is King!”. In the area of benefits, though, it seems candidates do not have very strong views about which firms are leading the pack.



## 8<sup>th</sup> most important criteria – Job Security

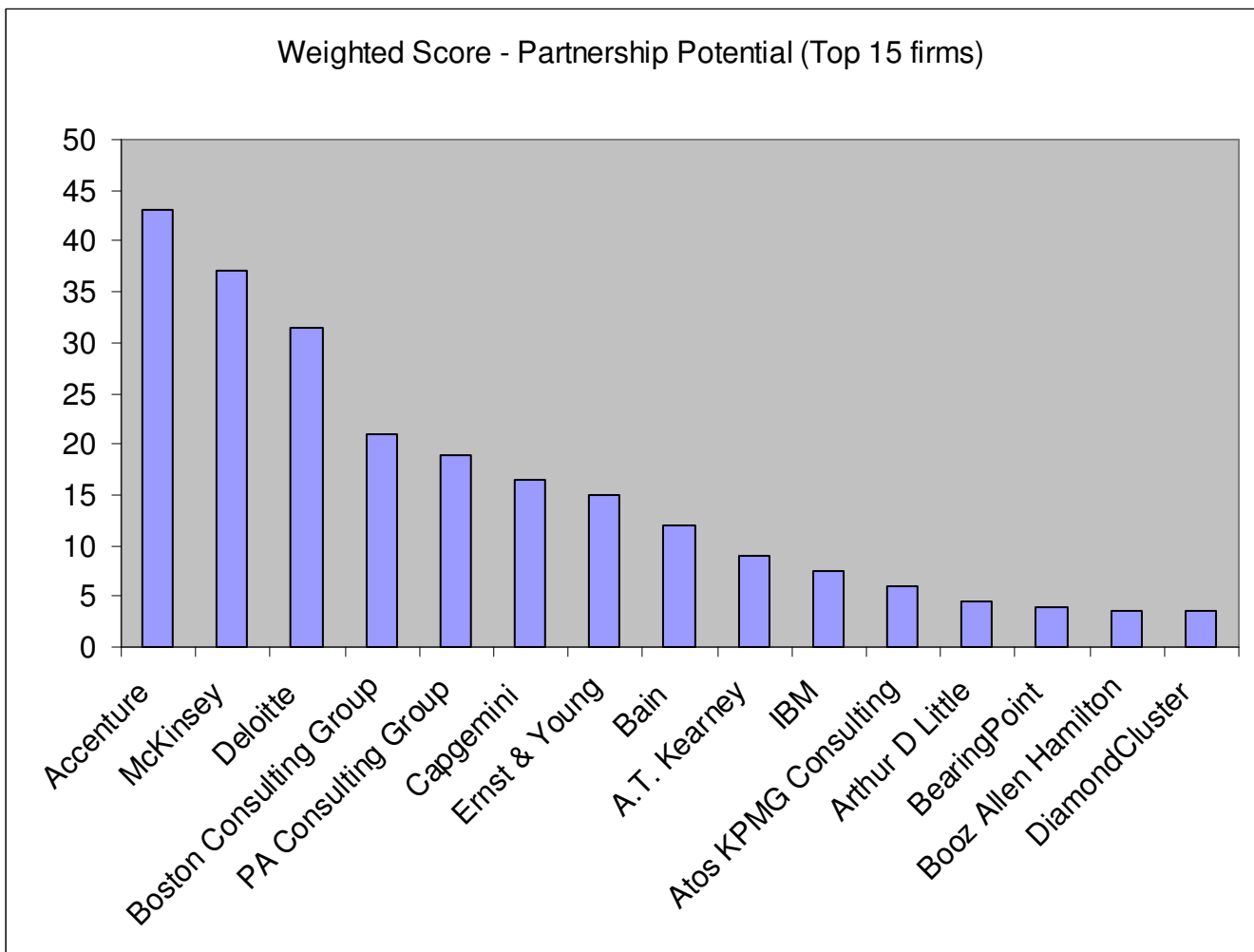
Candidates proclaim that job security is not a key decision criteria – but for those candidates that do hold it dear there are several consulting firms that are perceived as offering this.



## Least important criteria – Partnership Potential

The concept of the Partner model has become less relevant in the last couple of years with the rise of the publicly traded consulting firm. The votes reflected this – as well as candidates’ perceptions that consulting is unlikely to be a “career for life”.

A small proportion of candidates do still consider this to be highly important, though, and the votes for Accenture suggest that reaching the top in a publicly traded firm is perceived to be just as attractive as doing so within a partnership.



## Appendix 1: About our sponsors [Jopit.com](http://Jopit.com)

Searching for Jobs online has always been a time-consuming process. A candidate wanting to apply for senior CRM roles in a particular geography would – until now – have had to search through numerous job boards and then spend several more hours researching companies that have CRM opportunities advertised on their own corporate sites.

To date, existing search engines have not made this process significantly faster for job seekers. **That's why Jopit was created.**

Now a candidate can search on [Jopit.com](http://Jopit.com) for “CRM + London” and instantly be presented with search results from a huge number of corporate careers pages, recruitment agencies and internet job sites.

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If your jobs are not yet featured on Jopit, list your site today by visiting [www.Jopit.com](http://www.Jopit.com) and clicking on “Submit your site”

## **Appendix 2: Feedback & Contact details**

Please feel free to contact us with comments or questions at the address below. If you are currently looking to recruit Management Consultants, do visit our trial advertising page at:

<http://www.top-consultant.com/UK/clients/trials.asp>

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