

What a difference a year makes. Or not. The 2018 Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study sees seven of last year's top 10 once again in leading positions, with 2017 leader World Bank Group retaining top spot. If

it's variation you want, though, looking further down the list of brands and digging into the attraction and engagement drivers that support the ranking will reveal some big changes.

# The 100 best companies to work for in Africa





CAREERS IN AFRICA TOP 100 A Study developed by

CAREERS IN  
AFRICA  
A Global Career Company Initiative

EMPLOYER OF  
CHOICE  
2018

What matters to YOU?

In association with  
Willis Towers Watson







## What is the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study and what does it measure?

People will talk about the ranking, but the study is more than just a list of brands, and the ranking isn't really the most important bit anyway. Strange to say in an article alongside it, but there it is. Here we are recognising those employers who have caught the attention of the African talent pool, but with the study we are trying to shape the conversation on what makes a great employer in Africa, and through that positively change the employee experience across the continent. The better the employee experiences, the logic goes, the better the company performances, the more jobs created and the greater and more sustainable the boost to economies across Africa.

This ranking then, is formed from a study in which thousands of African professionals give their opinion on employers and employment conditions. More than 20,000 have now contributed, answering around 50 questions each on what makes a great employer, what they like about specific employers and how they feel in their current role. Therefore, the outputs of the study can tell us which employers are well regarded (the ranking), what talent is looking for and how engaged talent currently is. In this article, we'll touch on all three of those areas.

## The ability to make an impact has been identified as a core driver every year in the study.

The ranking is produced by combining the popularity of the brands (how often they are selected for review) with their ratings by survey respondents against a range of criteria. Those factors are combined into a scoring index which is shown against the brands.

### New entrants at the top have more in common

While 2018's top 10 has a lot in common with 2017's, it's even more interesting to look at the things in common between the returning brands and our new entrants to the top 10 this year. The inclusion of the Development Bank of Southern Africa is firmly in line with the overall success of multilateral institutions, but the presence of Bridge International Academies is more interesting. Founded in 2008, the organisation has grown rapidly from its base in Kenya to cover several African countries

with its affordable private education model. Backed by Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, the IFC, CDC and others, the organisation's purpose-centric business model is a natural fit for the core employer attractiveness drivers identified in the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study.

Those core drivers, selected by African professionals from a list of 20, focus on the development of skills and the ability to make an impact. Leadership too is key, but more on that later. The ability to make an impact has been identified as a core attractiveness driver every year in the study. Unlike in other geographies globally, in Africa this driver is of central importance, so much so that additional questions were added this year to drill down into the exact nature of the impact that professionals were looking to make. This idea was developed by Matthew McDonnell, senior consultant at Willis Towers Watson, which collaborates with Global Career Company to produce the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study.

The study revealed that rather than the speed of the impact a person can make, or their level of autonomy, what really matters is the ability to positively impact a company and through it, wider society. This goes some way to explaining the continuing popularity of multilateral institutions as employers, along

with the affinity talent has for commercial organisations such as Bridge International Academies, whose model is mission-driven, or for those who have set up programmes alongside their commercial activities to focus on making a positive impact in Africa, such as Microsoft with its 4Afrika initiative.

### **The sector mix of the top 100 is evolving, and 2019 will be different again**

The first year of the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study saw domination by consumer goods and professional service brands. Energy firms were popular, and banks struggled to make a mark. Times have changed here too. While the oil and gas majors hang on to top positions in spite of reduced recruiting activity, the ripple effect of the 2014–15 slowdown into other sectors prompted reduced recruitment and increased restructuring for FMCG brands, leading to a slide down the rankings for some.

Elsewhere, the increased demand for digital talent and the creation of digital functions within a variety of organisations is changing the talent landscape in banks and telecoms companies, evolving the perception of them as employers and the type of talent they are aiming to access. It may be this which has inspired the significant gains for the likes of MTN and Standard Chartered Bank. Bearing out predictions from the last couple of editions of this ranking, we see the first significant impact from the agribusiness sector, with both Syngenta and Monsanto grabbing top 30 results.

Going the other way, the professional services sector has seen a mixed performance. Most of the big names suffered significant drops, hit by greater competition for their target talent on top of (in some cases) reputational fallout. This competition is being driven, as discussed, by the digital diversification of leading brands in other sectors, together with disruptive entrants such as Google, Facebook, Andela and Jumia, all of whom will likely secure strong results next year.

Finally, in a somewhat surprising development given their commercial challenges, which can perhaps be explained by the recent spirit of positive problem-solving and collaboration, the national carriers have returned to the top 100, with SAA, KQ and Ethiopian securing positions.

### **What talent wants**

What is it that sets these brands apart, then? Well, it's their popularity and the way they are rated against a series of attraction drivers, including reward, development, being a great place to work, leadership and others. In this year's survey, alongside the opportunity



## **Opportunities are being wasted in the areas that matter for women.**

to learn new skills and make an impact, the quality of healthcare provision, leadership and opportunity for advancement were the top-rated drivers. Put simply, if you can offer people development, health insurance, fair leadership and a sense of purpose, you will be a top employer.

Elsewhere in the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice Study though, findings reveal that these simple requirements are not necessarily being widely met. In the part of the survey which focused on the current employee experience of respondents, several areas for improvement can be identified.

### **Crises in leadership and diversity**

Trust in senior leadership was regarded as the third most important factor in choosing an employer overall by talent, but only a little more than half of all respondents feel trust in the leadership of their current employer, while a quarter don't feel that leaders have a sincere interest in their wellbeing.

Add to this that more than a quarter don't feel listened to in their organisations and we have the makings of a serious schism between what talent is looking for and what it is getting. This isn't a problem confined to the top levels of leadership, with concerns raised also around performance management, fairness and accountability.

The problems are worse when we view the responses of female professionals alone, for whom the gap between expectation and reality is more significant still. In addition to the same key attraction drivers affecting men, female professionals have a greater interest in healthcare, flexible working, work-life balance and ethics.

However, in their current roles their level of satisfaction in these areas is poor. 30% feel

that leadership doesn't have real concern for their wellbeing, while almost half don't agree that workplace flexibility is sufficient. In pay and advancement, they feel further disillusionment, with 27% feeling that there are substantial obstacles to doing their jobs well, in addition to the 37% feeling that their organisation provides poor promotion prospects and the massive 34% citing unfair pay.

With many employers seeking to increase the diversity of their teams, it would seem opportunities are being wasted to both talk the talk and walk the walk in the areas that matter for women. Organisations should think long and hard about whether they are doing enough to attract and retain top female talent.

### **International opportunity should go both ways**

As we look ahead towards the rest of 2018 and the next running of this ranking, we can consider the impact that changing talent sourcing strategies and employee experience developments may have. The penny seems to have dropped that employees are demanding a customer-style experience from their workplaces, so it will be interesting to see how the delivery of benefits, performance of line management and the fundamentals of work, like where, when and how work is done, continue to evolve. Will we continue to see greater demand for flexible working and which employers will deliver it to rise up rankings?

Equally, while recruiters continue to be tasked with increasing the proportion of internationally-experienced talent in organisations (a great thing which focuses employers on recruiting a portion of talent from the diaspora), it's interesting to note that almost a third of employees don't feel that their current employers provide them with sufficient opportunity to gain experience internationally on the job.

A logical step would be that while recruiting extensively from the diaspora, the most progressive organisations should be weaving the mobilisation of African professionals, around the continent and beyond, into their employee experiences. The boost to satisfaction, skills development and productivity would surely merit the establishment or widening of such programmes.

With the recipe for success and the areas for improvement made clear to Africa's employers, we should expect rapid development across the fields of employee experience and talent branding from here, an increasingly sophisticated contest for top talent and a hard-fought battle for places in the 2019 Careers in Africa Employer of Choice ranking. The 2018 top 100 should enjoy it today and get ready to go again tomorrow. ■



#### ALGERIA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

43% thought their company didn't provide opportunities for promotion.



#### CÔTE D'IVOIRE

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

Only 65% thought that their organisation tried to employ local rather than international talent.



#### GHANA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

59% of respondents thought their company provided access to training.



#### NIGERIA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

Only 48% thought there are no substantial obstacles at work to doing their job well.



#### ANGOLA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

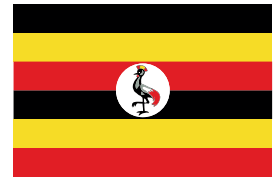
56% had confidence in their senior leadership.



#### SOUTH AFRICA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

Only 44% of respondents felt their employers listened to their needs.



#### UGANDA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

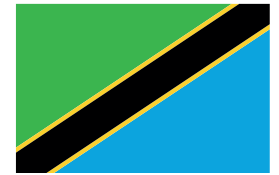
Only 50% said senior leadership had a sincere interest in employees' well-being.



#### KENYA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

58% thought their performance reviews have helped them improve their performance.



#### TANZANIA

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

85% of respondents said their immediate manager treats them with respect.



#### MOZAMBIQUE

##### KEY ENGAGEMENT FACTOR

41% thought the work arrangements at their organisation are flexible enough to meet their needs.

# Lack of confidence in leadership across Africa

## FLEXIBILITY AT THE WORKPLACE - KEY DRIVER FOR WOMEN IN AFRICA

47%

*of women think that there are no obstacles at work to doing their job well*

25%

*of women said that they have access to training*

54%

*thought that the work arrangements at their organisation are flexible enough to meet their needs*

43%

*of women agreed that their organisation provides opportunities for promotion*

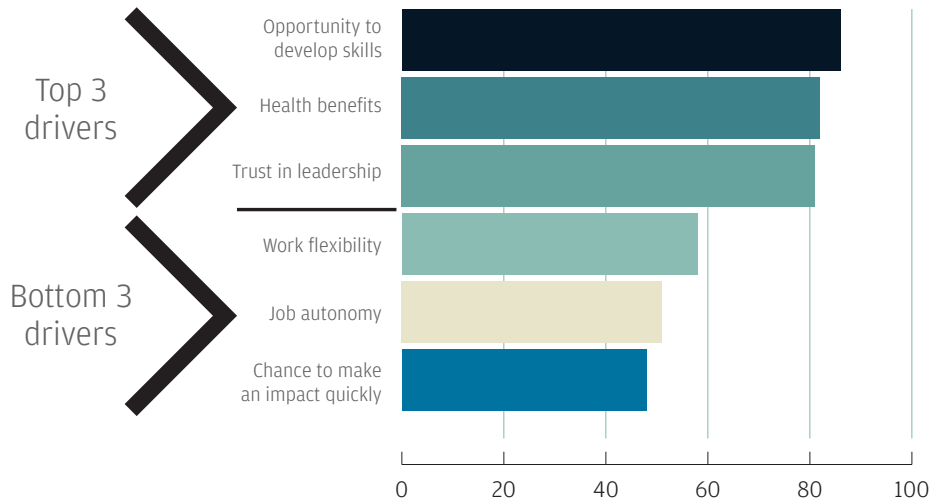
97%

*of women believe that a work-life balance is important*

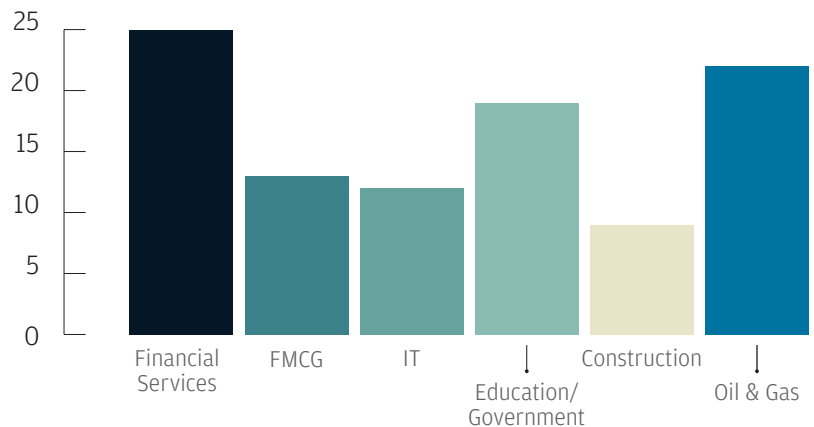
92%

*of women think that flexible working hours are the most important reason to stay in a job*

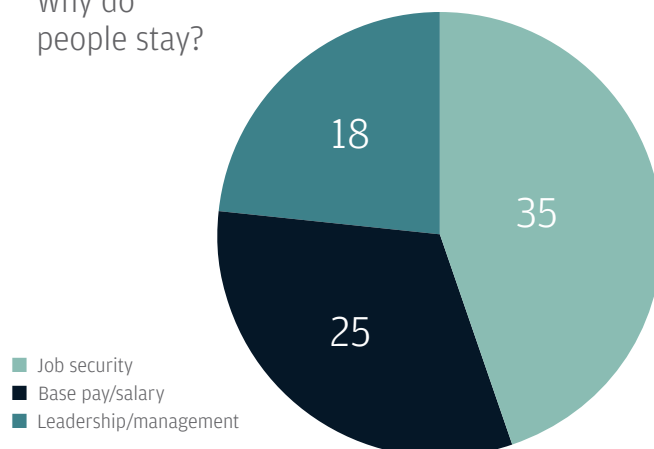
## Most important and least important drivers



Employees felt that opportunities to develop skills were the most important drivers to join a company whereas the chance to make an impact quickly was the least important



## Why do people stay?





# EMPLOYER OF CHOICE TOP 100

Rank	2017 Rank	Company Name	Change on previous year	Score
1	1	World Bank Group	↔ 0	11
2	3	Chevron	↑ 1	14
3	2	Exxon Mobil	↓ -1	15
4	5	African Development Bank	↑ 1	16
5	6	Microsoft	↑ 1	19
6	31	Anglo American	↑ 25	24
7	4	GE	↓ -3	26
8	9	Shell	↑ 1	28
9		Bridge International Academies	NEW	29
10	37	Nestlé	↑ 27	33
11	72	Dev. Bank of Southern Africa	↑ 61	36
12	91	Aggreko International Projects	↑ 79	37
13	90	Standard Chartered Bank	↑ 77	41
14	51	Total	↑ 37	43
15	66	DHL	↑ 51	44
16	33	Rio Tinto	↑ 17	46
17	59	Aga Khan	↑ 42	50
18	47	MTN	↑ 29	51
19		Syngenta	NEW	55
20	30	Unilever	↑ 10	56
21	23	AngloGold Ashanti	↑ 2	59
22	78	Cisco	↑ 56	62
23	7	Nigeria LNG	↓ -16	63
24	80	BHP Billiton	↑ 56	64
25	14	Tullow Oil	↓ -11	68
26	40	Diageo	↑ 14	69
27	8	Schlumberger	↓ -19	70
28		Monsanto	NEW	72
29	12	McKinsey & Company	↓ -17	75
30	21	IBM	↓ -9	78
31	35	Citi	↑ 4	79
32	36	GSK	↑ 4	80
33	45	Addax Petroleum	↑ 12	81
34	43	Standard Bank	↑ 9	84
35	58	JP Morgan	↑ 23	88
36	24	BP	↓ -12	90
37		Alstom	NEW	91
38	86	Boston Consulting Group	↑ 48	93
39	20	British American Tobacco	↓ -19	97
40	93	Orange	↑ 53	99
41	10	Coca-Cola	↓ -31	100
42	48	Ericsson	↑ 6	101
43	28	P&G	↓ -15	102
44	95	APM Terminals	↑ 51	104
45	99	Vodafone	↑ 54	105
46		Eskom	NEW	107
47		Kenya Airways	NEW	109
48	18	Deloitte	↓ -30	203
49	57	Vinci Construction	↑ 8	204
50	26	Heineken International	↓ -24	205

Rank	2017 Rank	Company Name	Change on previous year	Score
51		Tongaat Hulett Group	NEW	206
52	73	Africa Oil Corporation	↑	209
53	84	Barclays	↑	212
54	79	Bosch	↑	214
55	19	ENI	↓	215
56	77	Bollore	↑	217
57		Vodacom	NEW	220
58		Zanaco	NEW	222
59	56	Dangote Group	↓	223
60	62	De Beers	↑	224
61		Ethiopian Airlines	NEW	226
62	82	Lafarge Holcim	↑	227
63	81	Ecobank	↑	228
64		SAA	NEW	230
65	55	Puma Energy International	↓	231
66		GhanaNational Petroleum Corp.	NEW	232
67	54	Afreximbank	↓	234
68		Colgate Palmolive	NEW	235
69		EY	NEW	237
70		Safmarine	NEW	239
71	41	BG Group	↓	240
72	46	KPMG	↓	241
73		Johnson & Johnson	NEW	242
74	65	Wartsila	↓	244
75		Group Five	NEW	245
76		Damco	NEW	247
77	32	Halliburton	↓	248
78		AIG	NEW	249
79	92	Schneider Electric	↑	250
80	22	Anadarko	↓	253
81		FNB	NEW	254
82		Bamburi Cement	NEW	255
83		Centum Investments	NEW	258
84	13	IFC	↓	259
85		Multichoice	NEW	260
86		Nissan	NEW	261
87	60	SAP	↓	263
88		Angola LNG	NEW	265
89	25	PwC	↓	266
90	29	Oracle	↓	267
91	27	Econet (LIQUID TELECOM)	↓	268
92		Cadbury Nigeria	NEW	269
93	61	Visa	↓	272
94	83	Airtel	↓	273
95	16	East African Breweries Ltd	↓	274
96		Reckitt Benckiser	NEW	275
97		AXA Insurance	NEW	278
98	17	Safaricom	↓	279
99	38	ABB	↓	280
100		FMC Technologies	NEW	281



Alex Mugan, Managing Director of the Global Career Company, looks at what it takes to attract top talent to your company.

# Chance to learn new skills is top attraction for employees

**A**lex Mugan is the Managing Director of the Global Career Company and has been overseeing the Careers in Africa Employer of Choice survey and ranking for the last four years. Having seen the evolution of the survey and the resulting trends while also dealing firsthand with both employers and employees, in this interview Mugan offers his insights into the market across Africa and what it takes to attract the top talent to one's company.

*Were there any surprises to this year's ranking?*

A couple yes. The biggest one in the top 10 was Bridge International Academies, which is a big surprise given that in the last couple of years the rankings have been all about really established corporates and multilaterals. To see an organisation like Bridge, founded in the last 10 years and working on a much smaller scale than that was quite surprising.

*Why you do you think Bridge ranked so highly?*

I think it's got a lot to do with the type of things people are prioritising, the attraction drivers of the survey. It's clear that the purpose of brands, making an impact on the brand, making an impact on society, is an important factor. So, organisations that have got a central mission – which they do – are ideal.

*Impact was a key driver last year. It still scores highly.*

It does yes.

*What are the other key factors?*

This year the top attraction driver is the opportunity to learn new skills.

This is not a surprise. People are really interested in employers who develop them. They're more interested in that within Africa than when you do comparative surveys else-

where, with other examples around the globe. So, it's interesting to see that people investing in development is still an important factor for talent in Africa.

Other things that have come to the fore this year include trusted senior leadership. It's in the top three this year. That is where you are talking about leaders that listen; leaders that set a good ethical example; leaders that deliver the values of the business, and you can link that to people with interest in business with a purpose. They are not interested in leaders that push a bad mission; they're interested in leaders that push a good mission. Brands whose leaders are very visible doing those things have tended to do well.

*How is the market changing in terms of skills employers are looking for, or for which there is great competition?*

If you go back five years, the big volume recruiters were definitely the oil and energy sector. In terms of demand, today we are seeing a lot of interest around recruitment for investment finance – people on the deal side but also people on the project side.

The other one, and I think it's an obvious one, is digital skills. Brands, across sectors, are working to digitise their businesses. It could be banks, it could be telcos, it could be fast-moving consumer goods, looking to bring in people who've got not just digital savvy and can do their jobs but who are also able to move the organisation forward to either digital products or digitising the way that core products are delivered.

*But it's more than just software engineers?*

That's right. It's people who understand how to deliver digital products commercially. It could be a chief commercial officer who has to have a digital background. Or it could be a chief digital officer looking after the whole remit. Organisations are pretty indiscriminately looking to pad the ranks with digitally

savvy people for a variety of reasons.

*You said that one of the key drivers was wanting to work for an institution that's making a positive contribution to African development and has impact, and that's why the multilaterals are scoring quite highly again this year. But would you say they also score highly because they offer more stability, as they're more immune to shocks than other sectors?*

I think there's something in that. We haven't really talked about benefits and reward at all yet and there's something to be said. Many companies prefer not to focus on benefits and rewards because there's a perception that if you're attractive on that basis, you're attracting mercenaries.

But I don't really think that's the case, I think when people look at where they want to commit their careers, they make a 360 degree decision, so it's not like I can say, "Look I've got fantastic talent development and you can make a great impact here but I'm going to treat you like rubbish and I'm going to pay you nothing." That doesn't really work for people; and the best talent have options, so they take a look at the whole thing.

When it comes to benefits, with some of the big multilaterals, part of it is security – the safety net and knowing that often you're immune to the prevailing winds of the market. Having said that, there is upheaval in those organisations as well and they're prepared to make big structural changes in order to change the way that they operate.

Look at the African Development Bank over the last couple of years. They've really worked hard to change the structure of the organisation and that can be challenging for the team that's working there. But ultimately it's done to make the place more effective.

There's also an idea that we've had with a few candidates, where there can be a perception around some of the multilaterals that this is something that you do later in your career.



**Employees are interested in leaders that push a good mission. Brands whose leaders are very visible doing those things have tended to do well.**

There are big academic communities in those places and sometimes, I think, some of the talent coming out of the business schools is looking for something that's a bit more dynamic, a little bit less institutional and somewhere where they can change things about the place quicker. But they've got a view on going to that place later. I don't think it necessarily means that just because there's a perception of security that that's a big driver for lots and lots of people.

*You had 34% citing unfair pay. The big talk globally this past year has been the gender pay gap. So, when people say, 34% citing unfair pay, is that relating to the gender pay gap or other things as well?*

I think you've got to say it relates to other things as well. Probably the biggest story in employment in the US, Europe, UK, over the last year is the gender pay gap and the gig economy. It's tempting to look at stats like that coming out of a survey in Africa and say, "Ah, there's a gender pay gap there as well and this is a big issue." And it absolutely might be. I think one should definitely assume that as you've got gender pay gaps happening in most places, you've got one there as well.

Having said that, the 34% in that survey is about dissatisfaction with pay and you can be dissatisfied with pay for a lot of reasons. The people that do these compensation surveys will tell you that satisfaction with pay is a moveable thing and it changes by market and it changes by sector. Investment bankers are among the least satisfied people with pay, but they're paid the most.

It's not as obvious as saying people are dissatisfied; there is clearly an issue with pay on a gender basis or indeed a wider issue with pay. But I think this is a very interesting subject given the issue with the gender pay gap is now discussed on a global scale – you can assume that there is something to look at there in Africa too. ■