

2024

BEAUTY AS A CAREER

INSIGHTS AND INTEREST FROM CAREER COUNSELORS



SUMMARY

Last year, concerns over rising college debt, the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on traditional white-collar careers, and questions about the value of a college education intensified the focus on the choice between college and career/vocational education. To better understand this issue, we conducted research at the annual American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Conference, focusing on school counselors who play a crucial role in guiding these decisions.

2023: Our 2023 study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore counselors' perceptions of career choices, with a particular emphasis on the beauty industry. The research aimed to gauge counselors' interest in beauty careers and identify the information they needed to effectively support their students and promote these career paths.

The 2023 study revealed that career counselors strongly believed interest in career/vocational education would grow compared to college. Conversations with counselors also highlighted a shift in parental expectations, with more parents increasingly favoring trade careers for their children.

2024: In 2024, we repeated our research to benchmark changes and explore additional dimensions of career perception, such as job security, earning potential and career satisfaction.

The 2024 findings showed that career counselors felt, by an even larger margin than last year, that interest in career/vocational education would surpass interest in college. Specifically, when asked about beauty careers, the positive margin was also significant. More than half of the career counselors viewed careers and college as equally capable of providing security, earning potential and career satisfaction. However, among those who perceived a difference, careers were viewed as significantly outperforming college.

While familiarity with beauty industry careers increased from 2023 to 2024, the results underscore a strong need for further information and continued education, particularly regarding the various types of beauty school programs available.

This research equips industry stakeholders with data to guide their initiatives and informs policymakers' perceptions of the value of careers in the beauty industry. The findings affirm that these careers should be recognized as first-choice options, potentially shaping future strategies and policies.

METHODOLOGY

Pivot Point and Beauty Cast Network (BCN) conducted research at the 2024 American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Annual Conference. Our research focused exclusively on data gathered from career counselors. We collected 143 respondent surveys from this group.

This report is based on quantitative research that includes open-ended comments as well as insights from on-the-show-floor conversations with career counselors.

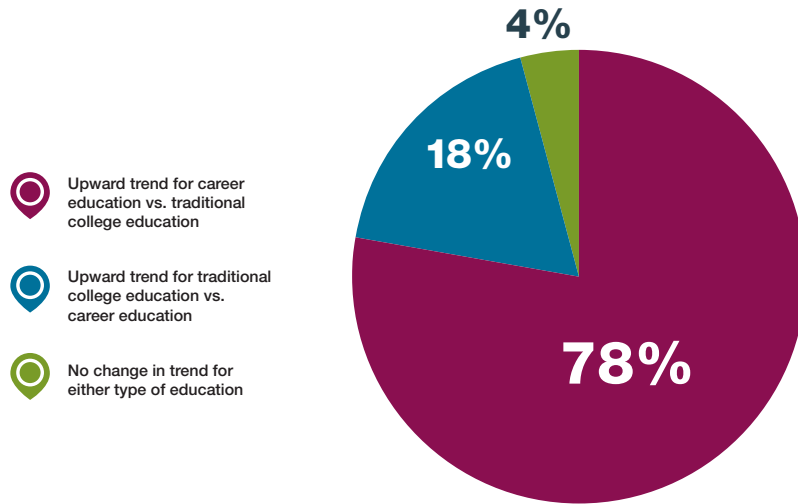
Together, these provide an overview of attitudes and perceptions about career education, with a focus on the beauty industry—defined as hairdressing, barbering, nails, skin care and massage.



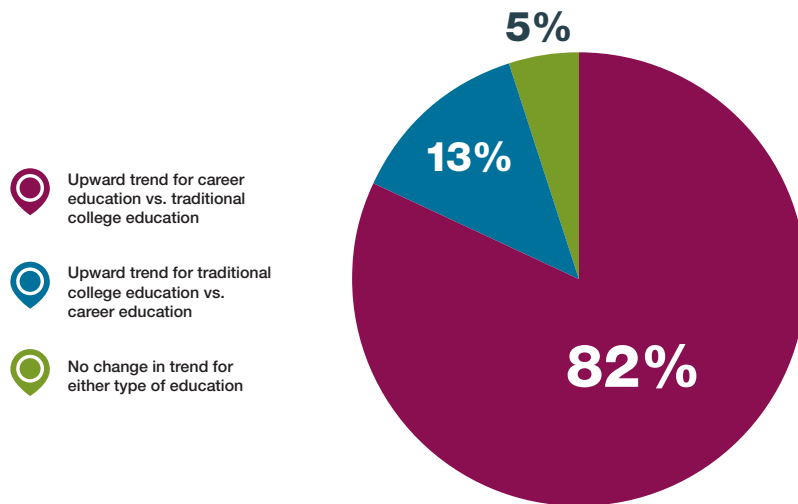
QUESTION

In your opinion, what are the future trends of students pursuing vocational education compared to traditional college education?

2023 Career Counselors



2024 Career Counselors



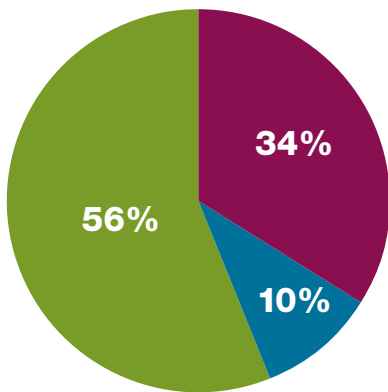
By a significant and slightly larger margin, career counselors continue to see post-secondary education trending toward vocational vs. traditional college education.

QUESTION

Please consider each statement below and select the type of education you believe best reflects the statement.

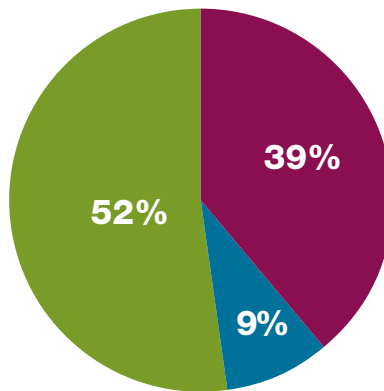


Offers More Job Security



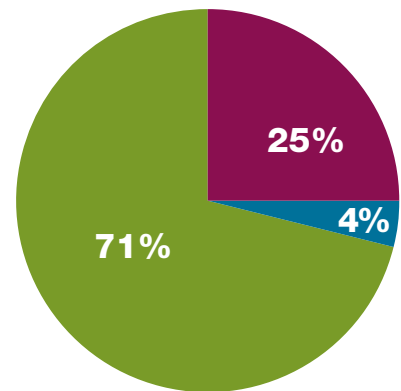
- Vocational Education
- Traditional College Education
- Both Equally

Has Higher Earning Potential



- Vocational Education
- Traditional College Education
- Both Equally

Leads to Greater Career Satisfaction



- Vocational Education
- Traditional College Education
- Both Equally

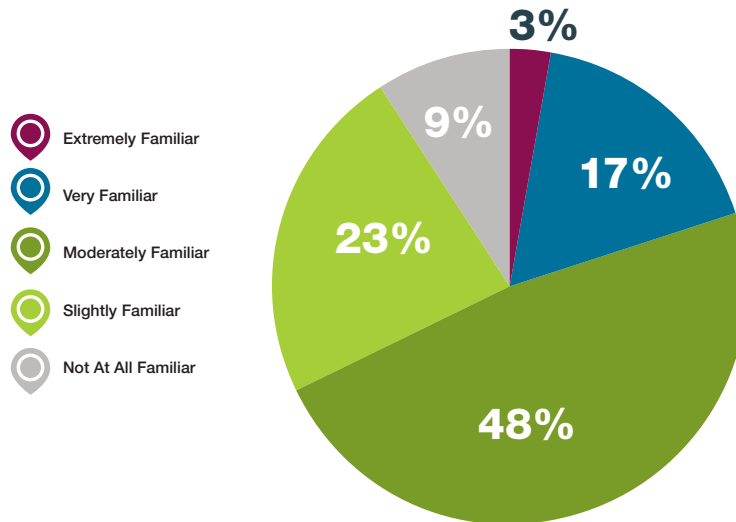
More than half of career counselors regarded careers and college as **equally** able to offer security, earning potential and career happiness. Those who felt there was a difference saw careers as significantly more valuable than college.



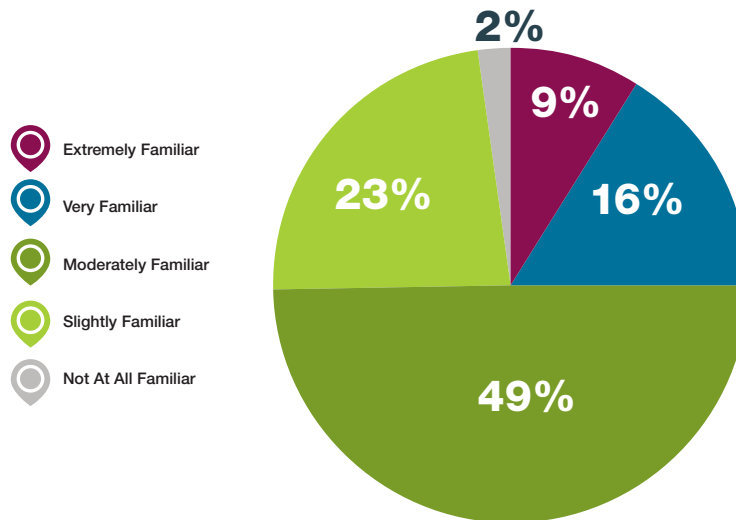
QUESTION

The beauty industry includes hairdressing, barbering, nails, skin care and massage. What is your level of familiarity with career paths in the beauty industry?

2023 Career Counselors



2024 Career Counselors



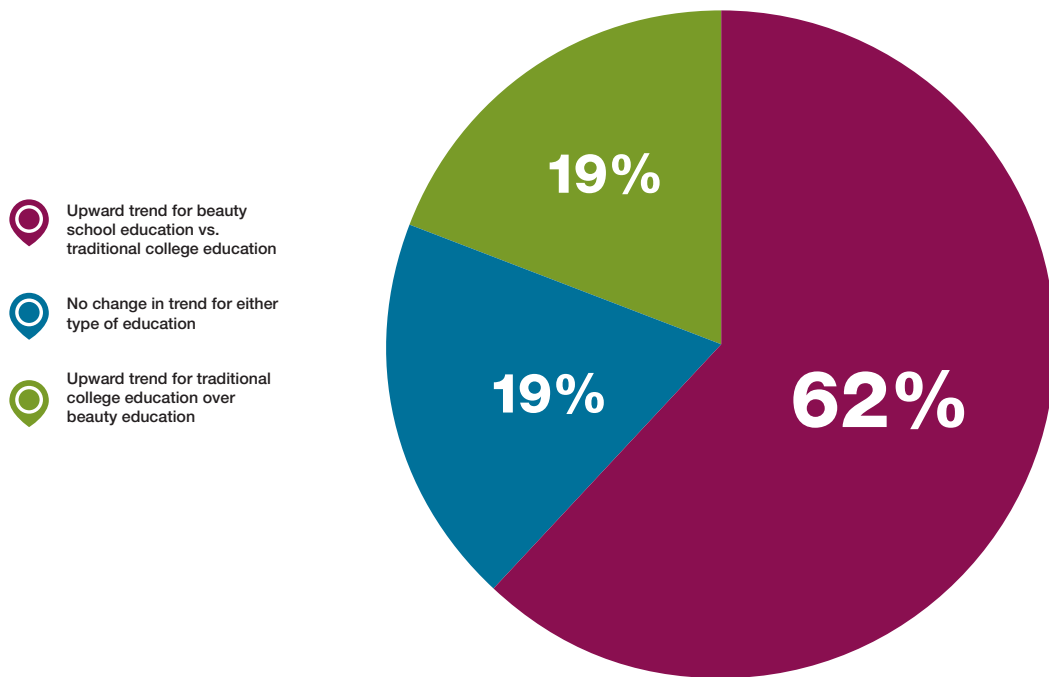
While YOY the average mean “familiarity” **increased** from 2.98 to 3.21, most counselors don’t have a strong understanding of career paths in beauty.



QUESTION

In your opinion, what are the future trends of students pursuing beauty education compared to traditional college education?

2024 Career Counselors



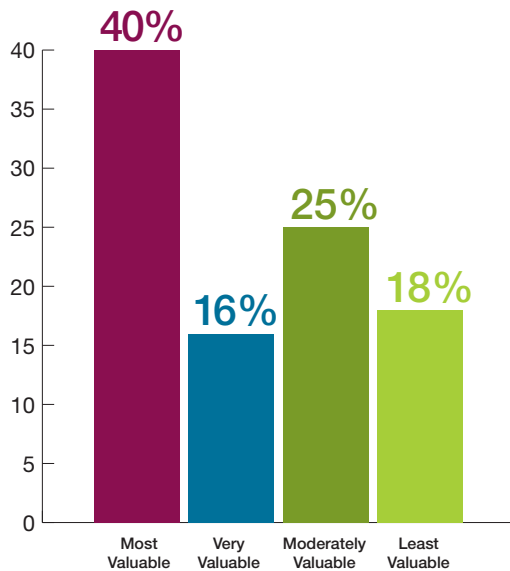
Although the margin is slightly smaller compared to overall vocational education—likely due to less familiarity with the beauty industry—career counselors still see a strong trend toward post-secondary beauty education over traditional college education.



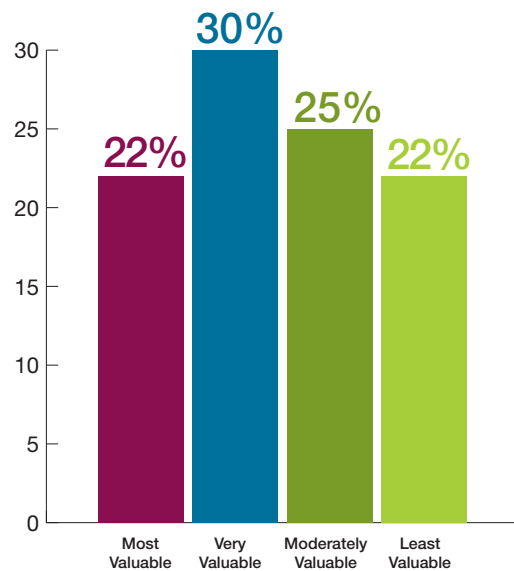
QUESTION

Please rank the following forms of information from most valuable to least valuable for supporting students who want to pursue beauty careers:

Type of Beauty School Programs



Licensing Requirements and Processes



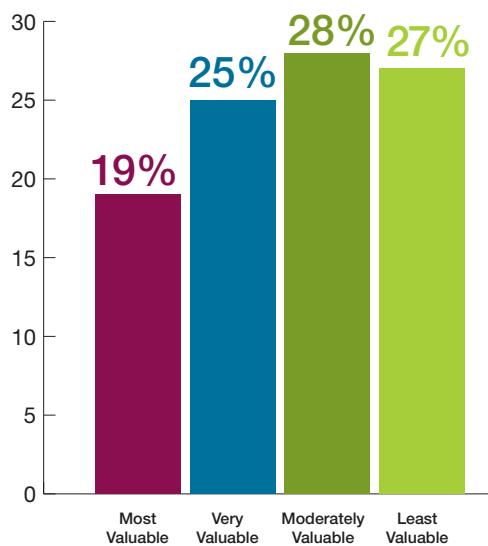
Career counselors consider information about different types of beauty school programs to be their greatest need. However, information on licensing requirements, employment and financial aid are also seen as important.



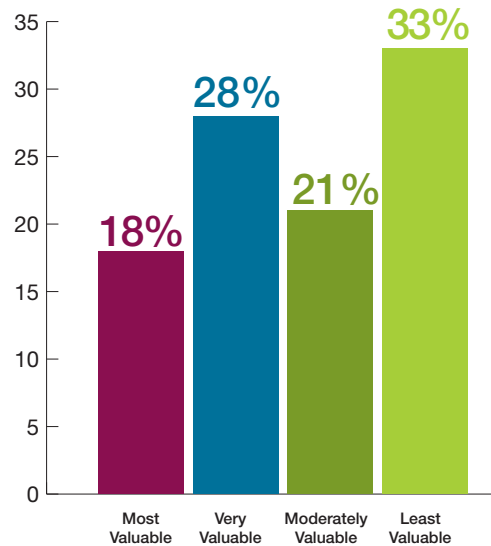
QUESTION

Please rank the following forms of information from most valuable to least valuable for supporting students who want to pursue beauty careers:

Job Prospects and Earning Potential in the Beauty Industry



Financial Aid and Scholarship Opportunities for Beauty Education



Career counselors consider information about different types of beauty school programs to be their greatest need. However, information on licensing requirements, employment and financial aid are also seen as important.

VERBATIM COMMENTS

The following comments from the research highlight key themes that emerged both in the study and our in-person conversations.

“I think that social media such as TikTok influences young people to move toward a career in cosmetology, etc.”

“Adults considering a career change are looking in this field as well.”

“Careers in the beauty industry are very popular amongst my students but often times students do not know if they want to have a side career or if they are willing to commit fully to the industry.”

“We need help connecting to more beauty schools or education programs because our current one always has too few seats for the amount of interested applicants.”

“Would love to learn how I can offer these services in Spanish and English in person and virtually.”

“My son got his Cos license and it led to not only his career but scholarships and a debt-free associate degree.”

“I’d say students and school staff need much more info about the availability of financial aid for those considering this career path! I have many students interested who lack funds to pay for training on their own.”

ABOUT BEAUTY CAST NETWORK

Penny Burns is the founder of Beauty Cast Network (BCN), a digital career services platform founded in 2013 to connect schools and students with leading regional and national employers across the categories of beauty, barbering, nails, skin care and wellness. BCN's mission is to help graduates find their way to the right first job, a critical step in developing a successful career.

A long-time industry veteran, Penny has gone from successfully managing and owning nine schools to re-focusing her energies on helping graduates and employers connect through the Beauty Cast Network. Penny believes that when we help a graduate choose a career path that allows them to continue to learn and grow, it will eventually lead them to a profitable and sustainable Dream Career.

INQUIRY FORM

beautycastnetwork.com



Penny Burns, Founder

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Gordon Miller, CEO/President

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ABOUT PIVOT POINT RESEARCH

Pivot Point is a third-generation family business dedicated exclusively to the professional beauty industry, supported by a team including more than 30 licensed beauty professionals.

Pivot Point offers original and third-party cosmetology, barbering, nails and esthetics education and content through our beauty industry-specific learning platform.

We manufacture the industry's most diverse range of high-quality mannequins, all produced in our company-owned, SA 8000-certified factory and meeting stringent ethical and production standards. This includes our [competition](#), [texture](#) and versatile and eco-friendly [CAP SERIES](#) mannequins—designed for increased portability, reduced storage space and minimized landfill waste, and offering customizable hair and skin tone options.

Pivot Point is committed to supporting the industry and its professionals. In addition to our commitment to [ethical manufacturing](#), [diversity and inclusion](#), and [sustainability](#), we are a proud founding member of Beauty Changes Lives, and collaborate with, Intercoiffure on the Honor Your Teacher recognition program, the Intercoiffure Student Contest and the Leo Passage Educator of the Year award.

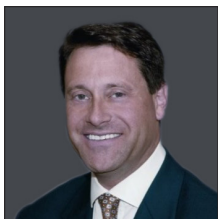
Whether you are interested in gaining internal intelligence or supporting your sales and marketing, our deep understanding of the industry ensures your research objectives are met with actionable, real-world insights.

We look forward to working with you!

INQUIRY FORM

pivot-point.com/research/

The Pivot Point Research Leadership Team



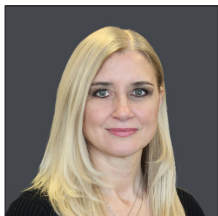
Steve Reiss
Strategic Marketing & Business Insights

15+ years providing custom research solutions to leading beauty industry groups, with a focus on leveraging research insights to create effective strategies supporting business goals.



Sabrina Cason
Primary Research

Specializes in consumer-focused market research, leading and designing research methodology, execution and analysis that provides insight to drive business growth.



Vasiliki A. Stavrakis
Secondary Research

Specializes in analyzing and aggregating third-party and government data and regulatory, licensing and accrediting agency requirements to inform business decisions.



Christina Mooshil
Data Visualization

Specializes in combining analysis, design and storytelling to create visual data representations that help people understand and evaluate information more easily.