

# Trends in the C-Suite: EDUCATION

Does an Ivy League education predict success?

## For All Concerned Parents:

Should you worry if your child doesn't get accepted into an elite undergrad school?

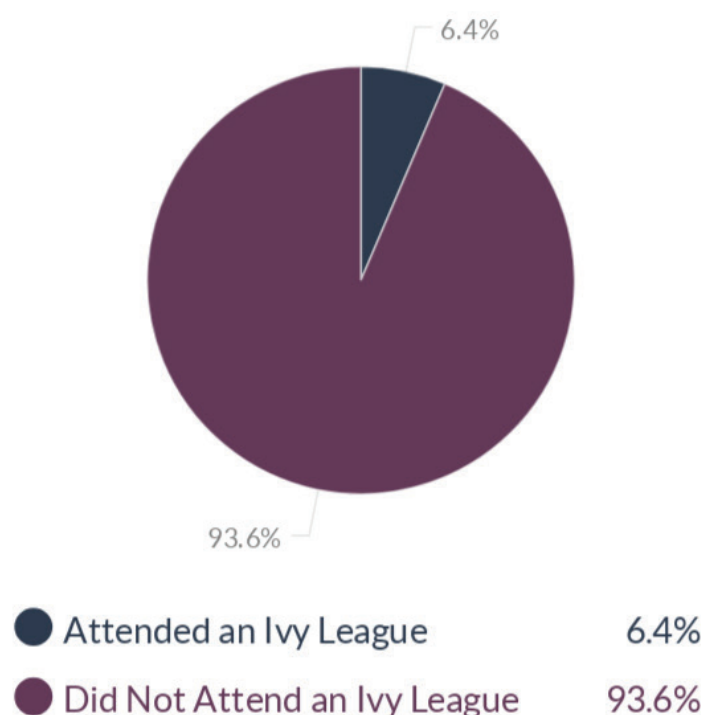
As some of us here at Lancor, a global executive search firm, recently struggled through the college application process with our own children, it personalized the relative importance of a prestigious undergrad degree. Does a successful business career in technology generally follow because one attends an elite school? On the flip side, does attending a less distinguished college forecast certain career mediocrity? (As successful headhunters, we admit this is where our minds have wandered late at night as we contemplate our own children's future.)

As we approach the time of the year that is filled with anxious walks to the mailbox, should we be buying into the peer pressure of elite university acceptance letters? The competition seems to be getting more intense every year, leaving parents frustrated and confused about what is best for our children. In asking this difficult question, we set out to do a deeper dive into elite university degree representation for technology sector business careers.

Lancor interacts with thousands of executive candidates in the world of technology. We've placed hundreds of A-players in the C-suite at some of the most innovative and successful technology companies in the world. Using our wealth of knowledge and experience, we addressed the question: *Are there certain undergraduate programs that are more frequently represented by the generational leaders of the technology sector?*

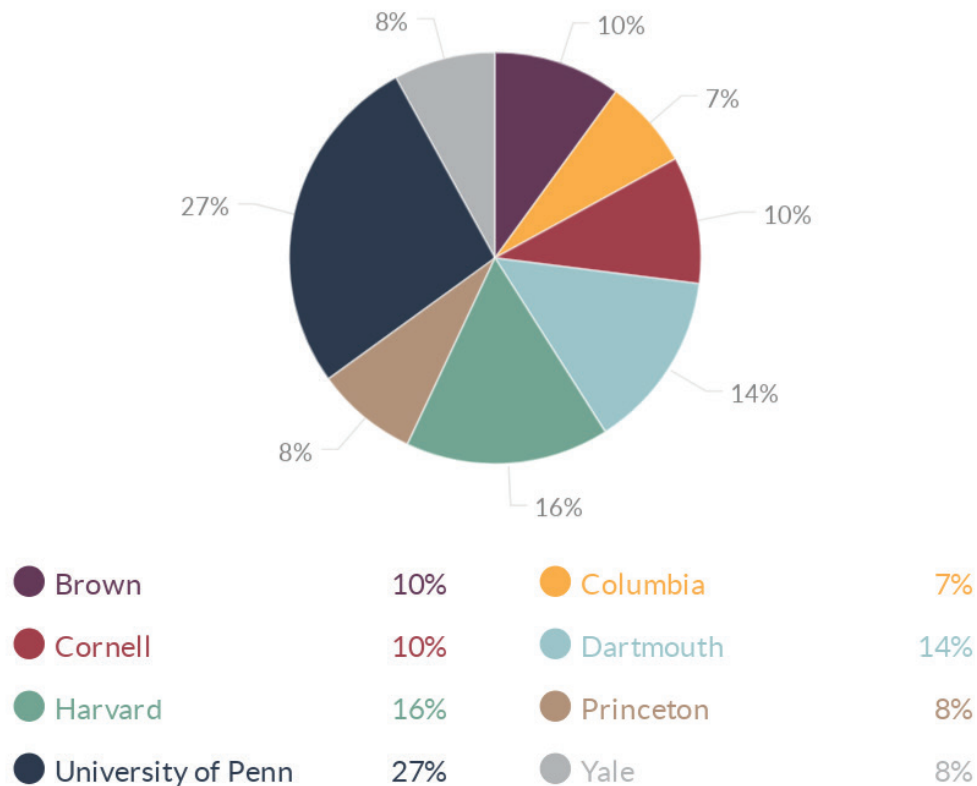
We surveyed many of our clients and candidates by combing through 3,750 C-Suite executives working at over 800 of the most admired and successful public, venture, and PE-backed technology companies in the nation. We came across some interesting and encouraging findings.

Ivy League Undergraduate Distribution



## Distribution of Ivy League Schools

(Distribution based on 6.4% of executives who attended Ivy League schools.)



## Most Represented Undergraduate Programs

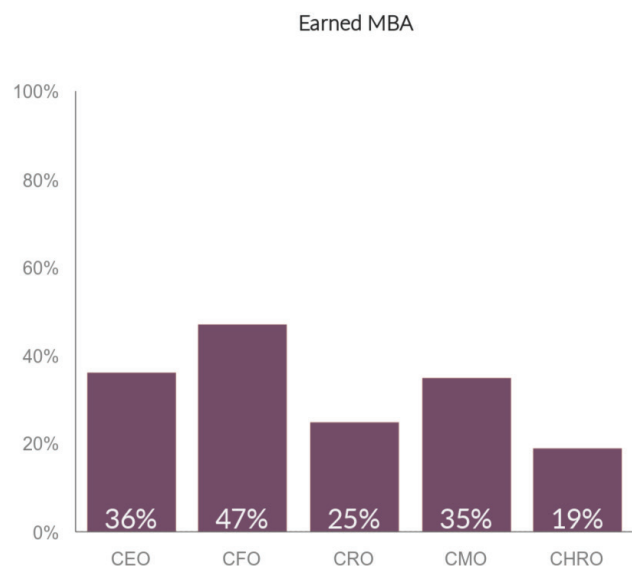
	CEO	CFO	CRO	CMO	CHRO
#1	Stanford University	Berkeley	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	Berkeley	SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
#2	Berkeley	Penn	UMASS	Penn	Berkeley
#3	Penn	Stanford University	TEXAS The University of Texas at Austin	Syracuse University	ILLINOIS
#4	HARVARD UNIVERSITY	BYU BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY	SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY	Stanford University	Santa Clara University
#5	Dartmouth	Santa Clara University	Santa Clara University	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN	WISCONSIN UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# Findings

For our children who may dream of being influential leaders of successful technology companies (or we even may be dreaming on their behalf) our data shows there is no one educational path to get there. As you can see from our findings above, less than 7% of the total technology executives surveyed attended an Ivy League school for their undergraduate degree. For some, this may come as a shocking statistic within the technology sector given the emphasis we always see placed on "pedigree". Stanford and Penn make their appearances, but alongside state schools like Texas, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Moreover, less than 50% of all executives within the five functional areas we surveyed earned their MBA. CFOs and CEOs topped the bunch, at 47% and 36% respectively.

While there appears to be a few educational patterns, there is clearly no "one path" leading to success. Lancor has found that search committees are typically more interested in how the finalist performs in situational leadership and by their association with "academy" companies (especially during formative years) than if they attended a tier-one undergraduate program.

## The bottom line: WHO your child is upon graduating college is more important than WHERE they may have attended.



A strong determination to use those four years to grow will lead students down the right path wherever the next season of life takes them. The key is to become involved in something where they have passion and can be a difference maker in their undergraduate community. Learning to lead takes practice, and the time spent in the halls of most four-year colleges is the perfect place to take those risks and grow, both as a person and as a leader. In most situations, it doesn't much matter where that undergrad experience took place.

**"Be as curious as you can. Put yourself in situations where you're not just yielding to what's familiar. I came out of college with a level of confidence and self-understanding that I don't think I could have possibly gotten from an East Coast school, where I would have been among the kind of people I grew up with and lived near."**

- Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz,  
a 1975 graduate of Northern Michigan University

So be encouraged, fellow parents of high school students, whether this applies to you now or down the road. Contrary to what you may have thought, your kid is really going to be alright, regardless of whether they were accepted into Harvard or Northern Michigan.

- Most Represented MBA Programs
- 1 Harvard University
  - 2 Stanford University
  - 3 University of Pennsylvania
  - 4 Northwestern
  - 5 University of Chicago

**Notes**  
 Sample Includes: 831 top US tech companies of \$50M in revenue and above, including software, consumer tech, fintech, etc.  
 Executive function areas of focus: CEO, CFO, CRO/Head of Sales, CMO & CHRO.

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