

## Businesses Begin a New Decade on the Hunt for Talent

*78% Have Trouble Filling Vacancies*

*Job Seekers Holding Out for Higher Wages*

**TORONTO, Jan. 8, 2020** – The next decade is set to kick off with near record low unemployment, leaving businesses scrambling to find skilled workers. Yet some job seekers worry it will be even harder to find employment in 2020. So, where is the disconnect?

In a recent Express Employment Professionals Job Insights survey of business leaders, 26% of respondents said it is “very difficult” to fill open positions, with more than half, 52%, reporting it was “somewhat difficult.” The number of decision makers who said recruiting was “very difficult” is down from 33% in January 2019.



According to Bruce Hein, an Express franchise owner in Sarnia, Ontario, businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to find candidates in a market with such high employment.

“Businesses are seeing a decline in applicant traffic,” he said. “In order to compete, companies are stealing staff from each other to fill vacancies, creating stiff competition for talent.”

Hein notes that the skills gap has only compounded this problem for businesses in desperate need of skilled workers.

“In trades, it has become harder and harder for companies to fill key positions,” he added. “Mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, welders and many others are retiring without a skilled replacement to step in and fill that role.”

In Delta, British Columbia, Express franchise owner Niven Lee argues that businesses need to respond by prioritizing recruitment.

“Recruiting is not a core business for most companies and they do not devote enough time or resources to it,” he said. “Across industries, technology has made work processes faster and better; the customer expects it. But the decision making and recruiting process is still too slow and that needs to change.”

### **Unemployed in a Time of Low Employment**

Surprisingly, 46% of job seekers said finding a new job in 2020 will be “somewhat difficult” in a December 2019 Express survey of job seekers. Another 36% percent agreed that securing employment would be “hard.”

One job seeker said they had applied to more than 75 businesses with only three interviews. Another added that most companies in their area promoted from within, making it harder to get hired for a more senior position.

Bruce Hein believes that one of the reasons for this disconnect between employers and job seekers is that people looking for work often have unrealistic expectations. He urges job seekers to be more flexible and avoid fixating on salary or title.

“You may have to start in a position that is not your dream job and work your way up,” he said. “Or the starting wage might not be what you have in mind. But that first role is a foot in the door. Companies need good people, so prove yourself and you will quickly progress.”

### **What Employers are Looking For**

For those who predict finding a job in 2020 will be difficult, a hard work ethic/integrity is the number one attribute business leaders value in candidates, per the Express Job Insights survey.

Lee Niven agrees and says that while experience and the ability to learn are important, they are irrelevant without integrity.

"It is the most important trait," he said. "Integrity is the foundation from which trust and teams are built upon."



"As we saw in 2019, jobs are out there, and businesses are desperate to fill them," said Bill Stoller, CEO of Express. "But employers and job seekers need to meet in the middle in the new year with candidates proving their value and companies willing to pay for it."

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### **About the Surveys**

In December 2019, Express Employment Professionals surveyed 585 business owners, decision makers and human resource professionals about the overall national hiring trends in the market today and how their business is impacted.

The survey of 200 workers and job seekers was conducted in December 2019 on the Express Job Journey site.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Adria Minsky at (416) 620-7111 or email [adria@mapleleafstrategies.com](mailto:adria@mapleleafstrategies.com)

### **About Bill Stoller**

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in

the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 7.7 million people to work worldwide.

**About Express Employment Professionals**

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.56 billion in sales and employed a record 566,000 people in 2018. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](http://ExpressPros.com).