
Pay Raises No Longer Enough: Free Lunches, Movies, and “Furry Fridays” Part of Latest Trends in Employee Perks

Disconnect Between What Employees Want and What Employers Offer

New Survey: Remote Work and Flextime Keep Employees Loyal

TORONTO, Sept. 12, 2019 – With job vacancies on the rise, so are opportunities for workers to score a free lunch, win a vacation, enjoy a flexible schedule or bring their dog to work. In the modern workplace, where employers are fighting fiercely to recruit new employees and keep the ones they have, employee perks are becoming more important and more creative.

Express Employment Professionals recently polled job seekers to find out what perks—other than pay raises and traditional benefits—matter to them and would make them want to stay at their jobs. More than half said remote work opportunities (61%) and flextime (58%). Other popular responses include student loan repayment or tuition assistance (40%), a relaxed dress code (38%), gym membership (37%) and vendor discounts (24%). Full results are below. Respondents were able to select multiple answers.

Express also polled business leaders about what perks they offer, and found many employers are not offering what employees value most. While fifty-one (51%) said they would like a relaxed dress code, less than one-third (32%) said flextime and less than a quarter (24%) said remote work opportunities. Twenty-four percent (24%) said student loan repayment or tuition assistance, 20% said vendor discounts and 16% said gym memberships. Full results are below.

When it comes to job perks employers offer, Express Employment Professionals franchise owners have seen it all. Car washes, free or discounted lunches, daycare at work, bring your pet to work days, dog daycare subsidies, gym memberships, paid days off for important milestones such as birthdays and anniversaries, movie passes, oil changes and golf memberships are just a few examples of ways employers are making their employees feel valued in the hopes that they will stay.

“Keeping competitive with wages is still important but added incentives to reward employees are just as important,” said Sarah Vitelli, an Express franchise owner in Richmond Hill, Ontario. “Some employers are having a hard time with giving beyond the salary. Helping employees achieve a better balance between their work and personal lives will help grow your business.”

“Paid time off is the number one most appreciated perk, but flex hours and ability to work remotely are also very popular,” according to Jessica Culo, an Express Franchise owner in Edmonton, Alberta. “But this doesn’t mean that employees expect to choose (or make) their own hours. They want to work for a

company that will reasonably accommodate them if they have to run to a dentist appointment, leave early now and then to take their kid to their hockey game or step out to take their dog to the vet. I think this goes hand in hand with feeling like their boss and company truly care about what is important to them.”

“Flex time, benefits, perks and development opportunities promote long-term employment relationships,” Culo continued. “Hands down, what we hear from companies is that they want to retain their performers and they want to hire talented people who will stay with the company.”

Vitelli agrees, stressing the importance “of being flexible as an employer and leader. Companies that give their employees a few hours to go to appointments, kids school events, and even time to go grocery shopping provide a better work life balance, which I believe equals better productivity. Employees will stay loyal and won’t look to leave for a few extra dollars.”



Smart employers recognize that perks are essential. They reflect a good culture and can be the difference between high turnover and loyal employees,” said Bill Stoller, the CEO of Express. “Now’s the time to listen to employees and to get creative. It takes effort—but usually less effort than hiring a new team.”

The survey of 289 business leaders and decision makers was conducted in August 2019 through the Express Refresh Leadership blog. The survey of 254 job seekers was conducted in August 2019 through the Express Job Journey blog.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email ana@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.