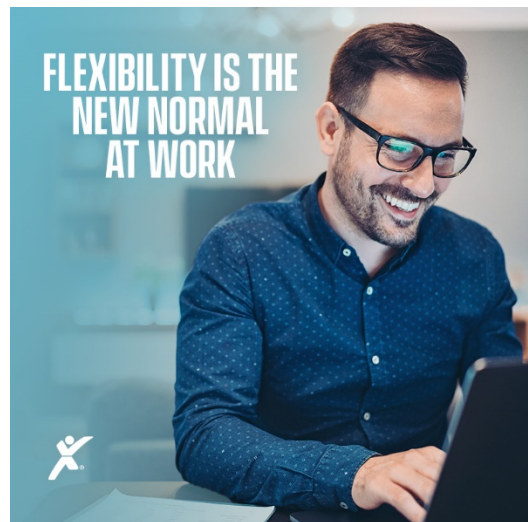


Flexibility is the New Normal At Work Post COVID-19

Success in Reopening Will Depend on Safety and Embracing Change

TORONTO, ON, May 27, 2020 – As companies reopen and employees return to work, change, safety and flexibility in the workplace appear to be the new normal, according to Express Employment Professionals franchises in Canada.

"Many businesses have been forced to beta test a new way of doing business. This may mean more 'online' capacity for some and more 'remote' based employees for others," noted Hanif Hermani, the Express Managing Director in Saskatoon. "In both cases, they have found that it can be done. I believe that when businesses re-evaluate their human capital needs under this new reality, they will need to build in more flexibility into their human capital."



Hermani maintains that flexibility will result in likely mean more "contingent" labour based on projects or contracts.

Niven Lee, Franchise owner from Delta, BC, noted that COVID-19 accelerated the trend toward employees working remotely and "pushed companies to implement faster than planned." In the long run, Lee believes this will "benefit companies, saving on rent for office space and will also benefit workers saving on the costs associated with commuting time."

Lee acknowledged that there are "challenges with working at home and not everyone is fully equipped to do so." He noted that "remote working and social distancing in the workplace may negatively impact overall organizational health in terms of the intangibles such as trust, collaboration, engagement and team bonding etc."

"I think many employers have learned how resilient their business can be with a little innovation and initiative," added Bruce Hein, Express Franchise Owner in Sarnia. "For the first

time, some companies are taking advantage of e-commerce, offering free shipping and delivery or takeout and curbside pickup, redeploying staff to new departments to keep them employed and contributing, and quickly developing new products and services to keep their business relevant.”

The same flexibility will also be demanded of employees added Brent Pollington, Express Franchise Owner in Vancouver. “Being open to change will be important,” said Pollington. “Statements like ‘that’s not my job’ can’t exist. I feel the employees who are adaptable and able to mentally cope with the constant change and new requests being asked of them will rise to the top.”

Lee echoed that thought, noting “the biggest lesson employees can take away is that the world can change very quickly and will require you to learn new skills. With all this change, workers are being asked to take on additional responsibilities, so they have to do more and learn skills quickly.”

Employers will continue to look to government health advisories for guidance as workplaces open up but part of making their employees feel safe will involve their needing to be flexible as well; providing more options to employees, including continuing to work from home, to ensure they feel comfortable in the “new normal.”

“Employers will be better prepared to keep their employees and customers safe, and we'll likely see increased flexibility after so many were able to work from home for several weeks,” added Hein.

Jessica Culo, Express franchise owner from Edmonton, Alberta, noted that the majority of her clients are open to sustaining "work from home" options for their employees. “We are hearing that virtual meetings are going to stick around.” However, employers indicated that will have to introduce increased accountability measures and companies are also going to have to re-evaluate how performance is measured.

According to Culo, the biggest lesson that employers have learned “is that they have to be ‘Radically Open Minded’ - what we thought would never work, may just work. What we thought would be awful, may not be.”

Ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly be felt by businesses for years, said Express CEO Bill Stoller.

“While it’s easy to take a high-level look at the damage the virus has done to companies, not everything has been negative,” he said. “We have learned to be more grateful for good health, appreciate each other more and lean on one another for support. We will come out of this on the other side better thanks to the resiliency and determination of the human spirit.”

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.

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 825 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa, and beginning in 2020 will expand to Australia and New Zealand. Since its inception, Express has put more than 8 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK, our international network of franchises offer localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve, employing 552,000 people across North America in 2019. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.