

New Survey: Large Employers Three Times More Likely to Increase Hiring than Small Businesses

Optimism Grows as More Companies of All Sizes Plan to Increase Hiring in 2021

TORONTO, Jan. 27, 2021 – According to a new survey, the hiring bump expected in the first half of 2021 will be led by large companies, which are three times more likely to increase their hiring in the first half of 2021 than small businesses.

The survey from The Harris Poll, commissioned by Express Employment Professionals, found that twice as many employers plan to increase hiring in the first half of 2021 than in the first half of last year. More specifically, 31% of hiring decision-makers expect their company to increase hiring in the year ahead, double the amount from this time last year (16%). Only 10% anticipate a decrease in employee count, while 55% expect there will be no change.

HIRING PLANS FOR EARLY 2021



Source: The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 16 and Dec. 7, 2020, among 506 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

While the hiring forecast has improved, it differs by company size, with larger companies three times more likely than smaller ones to increase their employee count in 2021.

- Companies with 2–9 employees: 17% expect to increase hiring in the first half of 2021
- Companies with 10–99 employees: 33% expect to increase hiring in the first half of 2021
- Companies with 100 or more employees: 42% expect to increase hiring in the first half of 2021

Express experts say there are a few reasons why large businesses are more likely to hire this year than small businesses.

According to Daniel Purdy, an Express franchise owner in Abbotsford, British Columbia, larger companies have fared much better because they had more flexibility from cash reserves, greater funding from stimulus packages and financial aid, a more diverse customer base and formal business continuity plans.

“In addition, larger companies more often sell and trade outside of their local markets, pivoting to reach new customers in regional, national and international markets,” Purdy said. “With their robust infrastructure, stronger operations and transportation and delivery options, larger companies more easily overcame the obstacles and challenges presented by the pandemic.”

KV Aulakh, an Express franchise owner in Barrie, Ontario, explained that larger companies are picking up business from small companies that closed down.

“Smaller companies generally do not have enough capital to deal with an extended period of losses and the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of them to shut their doors,” Aulakh said. “Their business went to larger companies and less competition in the market (especially towards the last quarter of 2020) has resulted in those larger companies needing more labour to help fill the increase in orders.”

The good news is that even though large companies are the most likely to increase hiring, companies of all sizes plan to increase hiring compared to this time last year. According to Express experts, strong consumer demand, vaccination rollouts, anticipation of relaxed government restrictions and the end of some government funding are all factors contributing to the optimism in hiring in the year ahead.

“In the first few weeks of 2021, we’ve already seen an increase in business and candidate applications,” Purdy said. “British Columbians are ready to work and actively contribute to their local economy and with the federal government’s incentives for COVID-19 relief having mostly ended, more people are returning to work.”

Aulakh has also seen an increase in hiring and expects it to continue through 2021.

“There is definitely more work for the companies that were able to sustain the losses and stay open during the pandemic,” Aulakh said. “We are seeing a lot of companies busier than before, partly due to the fact that some of the competition had to close their doors.”

Both Aulakh and Purdy expect manufacturing, packaging, distribution and transportation, medical and heavy and residential construction, among other sectors, to lead hiring, while travel, tourism and hospitality sectors will take longer to recover.

“The good news of increased hiring is much welcomed after a tough year, and if circumstances continue to improve, I anticipate more businesses will be ready to bring on additional employees in the coming months,” Express CEO Bill Stoller said. “Getting people back to work, safely, should be the number one priority in rebuilding the economy in 2021.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 16 and Dec. 7, 2020, among 506 Canadian hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in Canada who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data was weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

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, Oklahoma, the international staffing company has more than 830 franchises in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Since inception, Express has put more than 8 million people to work worldwide.

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