

Survey: More Companies Adopt a Diversity and Inclusion Policy, but Majority Still Don't Have One

Large Companies More Likely to Take Action on Diversity than Small Businesses

TORONTO, June 23, 2021 – There has been a significant increase in the proportion of Canadian companies that have implemented a diversity, equity and inclusion policy, but the majority of companies still do not have one, according to a new survey by The Harris Poll, commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

The proportion of companies that now have a diversity, equity, and inclusion policy has increased to 42%, [up from 35% just five months ago](#). Additionally, 20% of companies that do not currently have a policy in place say they plan to implement one in the next two years. However, more than a quarter (28%) of companies say they do not plan to adopt one.

Notably, the largest companies (with 100 or more employees) are almost twice as likely than the smallest companies (under 10 employees) to have a diversity, equity and inclusion policy (55% vs. 28%), or to plan to adopt one (22% vs. 13%).



The survey also found that while 85% of companies say diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are somewhat or very important, only 1 in 3 companies (33%) say they are taking steps to reach candidates that may not meet their traditional demographics (e.g. have unique backgrounds, are racially/ethnically diverse) in 2021.

The reasons why diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are important to companies include: to support minority groups (49%), foster acceptance and trust among employees (46%), gain new ideas and perspectives (46%), improve company reputation (33%) and to comply with government regulations (32%).

Jessica Culo, an Express franchise owner in Edmonton, Alberta, has seen a significant increase in the number of employers that have implemented a diversity, equity and inclusion policy.

“In the looming war for talent, companies that will win and are able to attract and retain talent will be the ones that incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion and promote cultural intelligence into their operations and guiding principles,” she said.

KV Aulakh, an Express franchise owner in Barrie, Ontario, is seeing the same trend and points out the often-untapped talent of workers from diverse backgrounds.

“If a company is not recruiting and promoting workers because they are from an under-represented group, they are limiting their own ability for growth,” Aulakh said. “One thing we, as business owners, have to ensure collectively is that if a member of an under-represented group comes to our door looking for employment, we give them the same chance as everyone else.”

According to Culo and Aulakh, steps companies are taking when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion include: only partnering with other vendors or organizations that have a diversity, equity and inclusion policy in place; providing diversity, equity and inclusion training to employees; including acceptance of a company's policy as part of the contract for new hires; hiring more women and people from under-represented minority groups to management positions and ensuring the same criteria are used to objectively measure employee performance.

"As lockdowns end and hiring ramps up, companies should look to recruit a team with a variety of backgrounds, perspectives and ideas," Express CEO Bill Stoller said. "Having employees with diverse experiences who can view challenges differently and come up with innovative ideas and solutions can help companies succeed and grow."

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between March 23 and April 12, 2021, among 505 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 1 employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were 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 9 million people to work worldwide.

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