
Labour Shortages Forcing Canadian Companies to Scrap Job Requirements

Hard and Soft Skills, Years of Experience and Background Checks Increasingly No Longer Essential

TORONTO, March 23, 2022 — Want to apply for a job but worried you won't be considered because you don't meet all the criteria? Well, now is the time, because according to a new poll from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals, more than a quarter of Canadian companies (26%) say to deal with labour shortages and high employee turnover, they have hired people they otherwise would not have.

Of those companies that have hired candidates they normally would not: half say they have overlooked a candidate's lack of soft skills (50%), nearly half have overlooked a candidate's years of experience (45%), over 1 in 3 brought on workers without the required hard skills (37%), more than a quarter have disregarded a candidate's ability to pass a background check (26%) and 1 in 5 have overlooked the absence of educational degrees (20%).

Large companies are more than three times more likely to have scrapped hiring requirements over small companies (41% of companies with 100+ employees, 26% of companies with 10-99 employees and 12% of companies with 2-9 employees).



Nevertheless, Canadian companies think such severe hiring challenges may be short lived, as half believe the tight labour market will end before next year (51%).

Express experts across the country agree that employers are loosening hiring requirements to deal with labour shortages.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, Express franchise owner Shane DeCoste sees this trend across all sectors.

“We are seeing companies in a broad range of industry segments including administrative, accounting, financial and even skilled trades making adjustments to their requirements,” said DeCoste. “The focus is shifting to candidates who have an aptitude to learn skills.” Brent Pollington, an Express franchise owner in Vancouver, British Columbia, says some companies are slower to adjust than others.

“We continue to experience situations with clients putting in a request for candidates with specific skills and experience, and we often have to coach them on what is realistic and hireable in the current market,” said Pollington. “Amazing candidates are still available in the market, but they come with a higher cost.”

Pollington adds that while many employers are relaxing hiring criteria, there is still a strong desire to try to ensure new employees are a good fit with the company culture.

In terms of what employers are willing to forgo when hiring, Hanif Hemani, an Express franchise owner in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, says employers are willing to hire people who have fewer years of experience than they would usually require.

“Companies are changing the amount of ‘direct’ experience a candidate requires,” he said. “Usually it is not skills-specific, rather, employers are willing to hire candidates with shorter amounts of experience in a given skill area. For example, less driving time or less ‘Canadian based’ experience.”

Hemani’s advice to employers: “Whenever possible, hire for attitude and train for skill.”

He says more employers are doing just that and providing new and current employees with training to give them the skills required, since it has become harder to find and retain staff who already have the required skills.

But it’s not just training; employers are adapting and using many incentives to deal with labour shortages according to Pollington.

“Yes, we are seeing more businesses offer training to get either current employees or new employees the skills required for open positions,” he said. “But it’s not just training – companies are looking at every possible area to identify competitive advantages and ways to attract and retain talent.”

Eliminating barriers to employment is pivotal to pulling workers off the sidelines, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

“However, careful considerations for the safety and health of colleagues must be taken into account when waiving employment requirements,” he said. “With the right investments in training and education, companies can create their qualified workers, ready to mentor the next generation.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 10 and Dec. 2, 2021, among 510 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 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 International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor

supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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