

Showing Up for Jobs Still Matters; Employers Prefer In-Person Interviews

Interview Methods Appear Industry Specific

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

TORONTO, July 26, 2023— Job seekers should prepare to meet with potential employers at least once during the hiring process, as 54% of Canadian hiring managers say they prefer to interview candidates face-to-face instead of through a screen or phone.

However, the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still evident as 8% of hiring managers only conduct interviews virtually, while another 37% use a combination of in-person and virtual.

This is according to a recent survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.



If an applicant shows up at a business unannounced to secure employment, a majority of employers describe the tactic positively, saying it shows motivation (47%), initiative (46%) and drive (39%).

Only 28% view this behaviour as negative with descriptions such as obsessive (12%), creepy (13%) or out-of-date (13%).

The Return of In-Person Interviews

Hanif Hemani, an Express franchise owner in Saskatchewan, believes that the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally transformed the interview process, however, the in-person interview will always be an integral part of the interview process.

“The pandemic certainly improved the video-based interview experience,” he said. “This will continue to be used. However, there are limitations, and in-person interviews are still preferable, particularly for certain positions. Interviewers have a better sense of a candidate's mannerisms and customer interactions in an in-person interview.”

While the methods for conducting job interviews depend on multiple factors, including industry and skill level of the candidate, the value of interacting in person can also set candidates up for success.

“The pros of virtual interviews are convenience for scheduling, overcoming distance challenges and the ability to conduct multiple interviews from multiple locations. The cons include often sterile interactions, how easily it is for the applicant to be distracted by information on other ‘screens,’ and candidate mannerisms—which may be important for certain customer-facing roles like sales positions. The pros and cons of in-person interviews are really the inverse,” Hemani said.

Virtual interviews are not the only technology transforming the market. With the rise in artificial intelligence and other automated technologies finding their way into the job application process over the past number of years, Hemani still believes that the human touch will always be needed.

“I fundamentally believe that human interaction will always be required,” he said. “We have seen this evolution in many industries where automation was used to improve the end-user experience, but ultimately actually worsened it to a point where end-users preferred a human.”

In the end, no matter the setting, there is one thing job seekers can do to increase their chances of employment.

“Follow-up is certainly the best option,” Hemani said. “During this follow-up, you could reflect on a comment that the interviewer may have presented and provide some insight after the

fact. It shows that you were listening and cared to do a bit more research.”

Technology was such a wonderful asset to keep the workforce connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

“However, returning to in-person interviews or a virtual component at the start of the hiring process allows employers to assess soft skills that are hard to capture virtually,” he said.

“Looking at these survey results, it seems companies agree.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between June 8 and June 22, 2023, 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.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 4.6 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Amanda Murray at (343) 999-8357 or email AmandaMurray@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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