

How Job Candidates Can Make a Splash in a Sea of Applications

Passion for the Role and Researching Company are Key

TORONTO, March 13, 2024 — Hiring managers go through so many resumes that the information and candidates can start to blend together — but Canadian hiring managers say there are things job applicants can do to stand out, according to an Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

Demonstrating passion for the role (54%), showing they've researched the company (44%), and quantifying their achievements (41%) are among the top ways a candidate can stand out to an employer.



Keeping the resume short and concise (37%), having a personal referral from someone who works at the company (36%), showing creativity (34%), and including links to relevant work (32%) are also helpful.

Beyond Tangible Qualifications

About half of job seekers believe that, to a company, dependability (41%), willingness to learn (39%), work ethic (37%) and communication skills (33%) are absolutely essential traits for a candidate to possess when applying for a job.

The ability to work well in a team (31%), problem-solving skills (30%), time management skills (27%), adaptability (27%), and critical thinking skills (27%) are also important.

Perhaps a sign of a shift in the generational workforce, Gen X and boomers/seniors are more likely to consider dependability absolutely essential compared to Gen Z and Millennials (52%, 54%, vs. 32%, 33%). However, Gen Z is more likely to consider initiative as absolutely essential compared to other generations (35% vs. 15% Millennials, 23% Gen X, 23% boomers), as well as creativity (26% vs. 13% Millennials, 15% Gen X, 15% boomers).

Distinguished From the Competition

As Canadian job seekers consider which skills and traits may be important to have, they also think about the ways to stand out when applying to a job. More than half of Canadian job seekers say that demonstrating passion for the role (60%) will help, as will showing they've researched the company (49%).

Close to half (44%) say that quantifying achievements, keeping the resume concise (43%), having a personal referral from someone who works at the company (42%), and showing their creativity (31%) will separate them from the competition.

Interestingly, many job seekers believe connecting more personally during the job application process can help them stand out. More than a quarter of job seekers (27%) believe reaching out to the company's hiring manager regarding the status of their application is beneficial, as is having a visually appealing resume (25%), connecting on social media (13%), or including a photo (9%).

"In the competitive landscape of job interviews, it is vital for candidates to grasp the importance of standing out," said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. "It is not merely about meeting basic qualifications, but surpassing expectations with distinct strengths and qualities that make a lasting impact."

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker survey was conducted online within Canada by the Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from November 9-26, 2023, among 509 Canadian adults

ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

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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