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Drug Testing: Is It Time for a Change?

Tight Labor Market Leads Some to Rethink Practices

New Survey: 65% of Businesses Have Applicants Who Fail Drug Tests

OKLAHOMA CITY, March 28, 2018 – With unemployment falling and the demand for workers rising, employers have had to rethink recruiting and hiring practices to find the talent they need to grow their businesses. As a result, some employers are overhauling their drug testing practices based on the belief that overly broad testing eliminates valuable talent from the applicant pool, particularly in states where marijuana has been legalized in some form.

While Express Employment Professionals continues to drug test pursuant to all federal, state and local laws regarding drug testing, Express franchise owners report some companies in their regions are among those rethinking their procedures, while others are not, despite the labor market pressures.

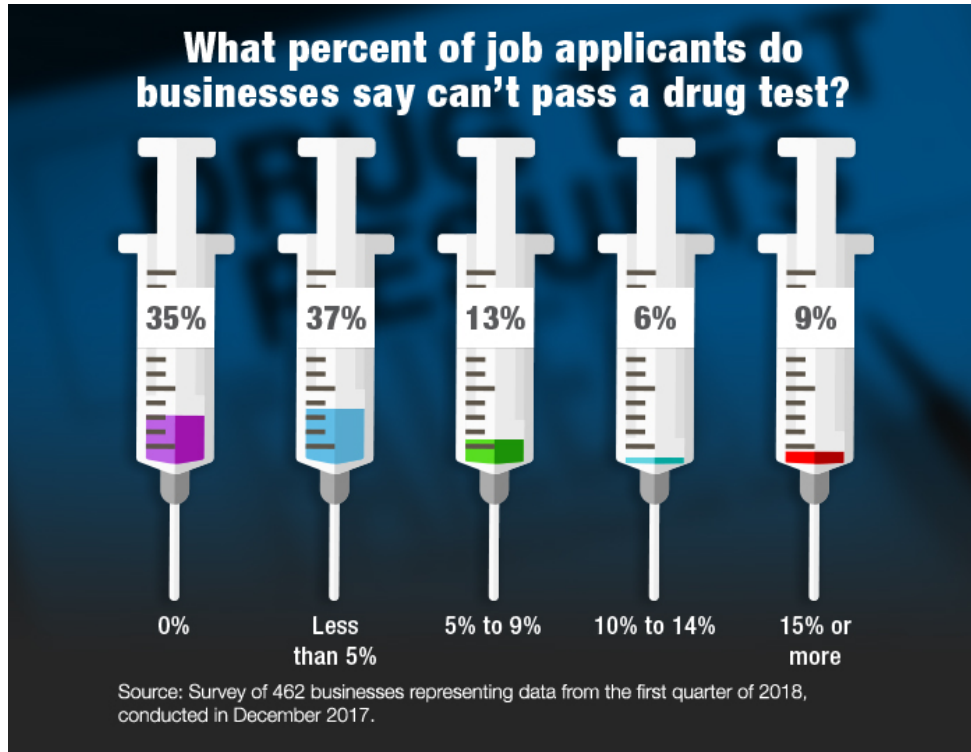
“There is no one-size-fits-all policy. In each case, the same question arises, ‘How do I deal with medical marijuana and recreational use?’” said Andrea Owens of HourGlass Testing Solutions, drug screening experts who have worked with Express franchise owners like Janis Petrini in Grand Rapids, Michigan. “We have several clients that have multiple locations throughout the U.S. evaluating their drug testing policy.”

It’s easy to see why companies might be evaluating their policies. According to a recent Express survey, the majority of businesses (65 percent) lose job applicants because of drug test failures.

Overall, 37 percent said less than 5 percent of applicants do not pass a drug test. Thirteen (13) percent said 5 to 9 percent do not pass. Six (6) percent said 10 to 14 percent do not pass, and 9 percent said 15 percent or more do not pass. In other words, at 15 percent of businesses, one in 10 applicants does not pass a drug test.



Full results are below.



Anne Woods, an Express franchise owner in Santa Fe Springs and Covina, California, remarks that she is “actually a bit surprised” that more companies in her area have not stopped testing for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the chemical compound found in marijuana. Recreational marijuana sales began in January 2018 in California.

Ronnie Morris, an Express franchise owner in Jackson, Tennessee, regularly sees job seekers miss out on opportunities because of drug testing.

“We see a lot of people who could be put to work but are ineligible due to the results of drug screens,” he said. “This is especially true for jobs that do not require extensive technical expertise or the use of equipment.”

Ultimately, the problem has to be addressed somehow. As Morris sees it, “In a tight employment market, something has to give. With less than 4 percent unemployment and an economy growing at 3 percent, it’s hard to operate under the same requirements we did when unemployment was 6 percent and economy was growing at 1 percent.”

“Safety must always come first, but still, I’m noticing two trends. First, drug use remains a common roadblock between job seekers and jobs. Second, some employers are hungry enough for workers that they are questioning longstanding practices,” said Bob Funk, CEO of Express, and a former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. “There’s no perfect answer, and given the ongoing opioid crisis, employers also have to keep their focus on solutions like prevention, treatment and care.”

The survey of 462 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in December 2017.

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bob Funk to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

About Robert A. Funk

Robert A. "Bob" Funk is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Under his leadership, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide. Funk served as Chairman of the Conference of Chairmen of the Federal Reserve and was also the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.4 billion in sales and employed a record 540,000 people in 2017. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.