

## **48% of Companies Have Difficulty Recruiting and Filling Open Jobs**

***Lack of Hard Skills a Top Concern***

***Latest Results from The Harris Poll***

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**OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 11, 2020** – U.S. hiring decision-makers are split on whether it is easy (52%) or difficult (48%) to recruit and fill positions at their company, adding the hiring process takes an average of 21 days to complete.

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

Forty percent of U.S. hiring decision-makers say their company has open positions for which they cannot find qualified candidates. Some of the reasons they remain unfilled include:

1. Applicants lack hard skills — 38%
2. Applicants lack soft skills — 34%
3. Applicants lack relevant experience — 33%
4. General lack of applicants — 27%
5. Unwilling to work hours needed — 21%

Company-specific reasons were also identified, such as pay (21%), benefits (18%), geographic location (17%) or negative company reputation (14%).

# TOP REASONS OPEN JOBS ARE NOT FILLED



The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between April 21 and May 6, 2020, among 1,005 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

**Express**  
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In Bend, Oregon, Express franchise owner Stephanie Miller says her office has seen business and demand increase for skilled trades but with fewer candidates entering these fields, there is currently a large shortage of workers with these necessary hard skills.

Mike Brady, Express franchise owner in Jacksonville, Florida, also says he has several job openings for specific skillsets such as machine operators, CDL drivers and forklift drivers. Adding to the squeeze is the diminished flow of qualified applications from recruiting pipelines in the last three months.

“I think the biggest obstacle is finding qualified people who want to work,” he said. “This is even tougher than when unemployment was at 4%.”

For John Dickey, Express franchise owner in Andover, Maryland, he thinks the applicant pipeline has slowed down due to what he calls the “COVID Economy.”

“Hourly workers can make more money right now staying at home and receiving unemployment benefits rather than going to work,” he said. “In the ‘COVID Economy,’ companies need to raise pay rates. A lot of the people who are looking for work come from the hospitality industry and don’t have the experience to work in manufacturing where there is a demand for workers.”

However, Dickey notes the situation is a Catch-22 because if the government doesn’t provide unemployment benefits to workers in hard-hit industries such as hospitality, there could be catastrophic poverty across the country. But the unemployment benefits could also incentivize industrial workers to stay home, which would negatively impact the economy.

All three Express franchisees agree that the number one thing clients can do to immediately attract job seekers is raise pay rates.

“I think pay is the biggest attractor right now,” Brady said. “We are seeing a lot of job-hopping for 50 cents or \$1 an hour more. I don’t think the benefits and work environment are the biggest attractants right now. People are looking for pay more than anything.”

And if clients do find that perfect fit, Miller says they should seize the opportunity and not let the candidate slip away.

“Recruiting for in-demand jobs is a struggle across the country right now, and it’s going to take both businesses and job seekers pivoting to solve the worker shortage,” Express CEO Bill Stoller said. “Job seekers may need to take time to learn a different skillset than their previous profession and businesses might have to offer competitive wages and a more streamlined hiring process to ensure the truly qualified don’t slip away.”

### **Survey Methodology**

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between April 21 and May 6, 2020, among 1,005 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed or have been laid off, furloughed, or given a zero hour schedule in the past 60 days but worked full-time or were self-employed full-time prior, 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.

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

### **About Bill Stoller**

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 825 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa, and beginning in 2020 will expand to Australia and New Zealand. Since its inception, Express has put more than 8 million people to work worldwide.

### **About Express Employment Professionals**

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK, our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve, employing 552,000 people across North America in 2019. For more information, visit [www.ExpressPros.com](http://www.ExpressPros.com).