

Hiring Outlook Jumps 24% Since January 2020

55% of Companies Plan to Increase Employees in Q3, Q4

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 14, 2021 – In a stark contrast from 2020, over the next year, hiring decision-makers say they are feeling hopeful (44%), optimistic (42%) and confident (41%) about their company’s hiring outlook with 55% planning to increase their number of employees later this year.

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



Seventy percent of companies with 500 or more employees plan to increase hiring this year, highlighting a trend that companies with at least 10 employees are 2-3 times as likely as their smaller counterparts to expand their workforce.

Additionally, 63% of businesses in the service industry anticipate adding workers compared to 57% in the manufacturing sector. Overall, 61% say these open positions will focus on white-collar work.

Among U.S. hiring decision-makers who say their company is increasing their number of employees, the most common reasons are to fill newly created positions (47%), manage the increased volume of work (47%) and/or to fill positions that are open due to employee turnover (46%), indicating businesses may be focused on growth and expansion in 2021.

While these signs of growth are encouraging, they may also present a challenge as more than half (59%) say they need more employees to manage their workload but do not have the capacity to hire.

In New Jersey, Express franchise owner Mike Nolfo said businesses are still reeling from losses during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We expect all businesses to increase their hiring of both contractors and long-term employees for the rest of 2021. The feeling is most companies are still playing catch-up and the only thing holding them back is the availability of reliable and capable employees,” Nolfo said. “There is optimism across the board.”

Lynn Yoerk, Express franchise owner in Illinois, agrees employees will be in great demand for the rest of 2021.

“Companies will need to meet demands of their customers and to catch up on work that has been backlogged due to lack of positions being filled,” she said.

Despite the optimism of an expanded workforce, hiring managers are scrambling to fill the historic 9.3 million job openings across the U.S. with workers nowhere to be found.

“The volume of work at companies is high due to unfilled orders caused by a lack of employees or delayed product from another supplier that lacks employees,” she said. “It’s a vicious cycle. And on top of that, turnover is an ongoing issue forcing businesses to start focusing on retention.”

Nolfo agrees that hiring decision-makers are performing a juggling act right now on the road to recovery.

“There is a strong push to get back to 2019 employee levels while managing high employee turnover and a low labor participation rate,” he said. “Companies really want to grow and thrive right now, but the availability of labor is stifling that growth.”

Competition for talent is not only fierce between businesses but across different industries, as well, with consequences for the consumer, particularly in the manufacturing and service industries.

“As the service industry opens up and employees get back to work, these two sectors will be competing for the same pool of people, and they will have wage competitions driving up the cost of goods,” Yoerk said.

In the northeastern part of the country, Nolfo predicts white-collar workers will be more in-demand as employees return to physical workspaces and adapt to flexible work schedules. But if companies don’t allow workers some flexibility surrounding remote work, the Express franchise owner said they risk even higher turnover.

With her clients, Yoerk sees more of a need in blue-collar positions.

“This is the area that the stimulus money impacted the most,” she said. “The higher-paying positions were able to compete with the stimulus money, so we were able to still engage employees and top talent.”

Signs point to a robust economic recovery from the recession of 2020, but employees are desperately needed in every industry, Express CEO Bill Stoller said.

“The optimistic hiring outlook is a welcome change but it’s apparent we need to pull workers off the sidelines to solve the backlog of services and goods,” he said. “Meaningful work provides more than just a paycheck, and after a year of isolation, these benefits are needed more than ever.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between March 23 and April 12, 2021, among 1,001 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. 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 was 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 with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena (Karami) Hollander, 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, Oklahoma, the international staffing company has more than 830 franchises in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Since inception, Express has put more than 9 million people to work worldwide.

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