

Job Market Competition Exacerbates Hiring Woes

82% of Companies Expect Staffing Challenges to Continue Over the Next Year

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, Sept. 22, 2021 – Eighty-two percent of companies expect to face hiring challenges over the next year with the most commonly cited reason for the talent shortage being increased competition in the job market (30%).

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

Following the increased competition for talent, businesses say the available talent pool does not match the company's needs (28%) and cite difficulty assessing candidates' skills during the hiring process (25%).



Forty percent of these companies currently have open positions they cannot fill and hiring decision-makers say this is due to a lack of applicants with hard skills (46%) and soft skills (39%). Additionally, nearly 1 in 3 say they lack applicants with relevant experience (31%).

While a skills gap appears to already impact hiring efforts, this gap may only widen in coming years as around 2 in 3 hiring decision-makers (68%) agree the future workforce will have a "lost generation" due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Express franchise owners across the nation continue to see increasing hiring challenges for their clients.

"It's impacting every client, every company," says Greg Sulentic, Express franchise owner in Lincoln, Nebraska, of hiring challenges. "When you think it can't get worse, it does."

In his market, the biggest hurdle for companies is the mismatch between the available talent pool and the skills needed.

"The dominant available talent is low skilled with poor soft skills and work history, in addition to retention issues," he said. "There is a lack of desire to return to the workforce, and even more so, to stay in it."

In Chula Vista, California, Express franchise owner Jon Noceda says more than ever, clients are scrambling to bring on top talent through direct hire.

"They don't want to risk the chance of losing someone," he said. "Businesses are immediately making full-time, permanent offers, or making those offers shortly after having the individual on the job for a few days to determine a culture fit."

Noceda added that companies winning the recruiting war are those that are offering bonuses, increased compensation/benefits and remote work or flexible schedules.

While survey respondents reported issues recruiting workers with the right hard skills, Noceda says his clients are actually desperate for applicants with refined soft skills.

"We have talent with the right hard skills in our market, but soft skills were already experiencing a gap that grew during the pandemic," he said. "Ultimately, it's easier to train someone with the right soft skills who is eager to learn but may need a bit of refinement."

Sulentic agrees it's easier to train hard skills than acquire soft skills, but only if companies have a training system in place. Otherwise, businesses are doomed to get stuck in a vicious cycle of being short-staffed, experiencing high turnover and hiring out of desperation.

"Employers have to stop, make a conscious decision to force pay rates up, employ their current workforce to provide on-the-job mentorship (buddy programs) and climb out of the very

difficult circumstances the workforce presents,” he said.

Investing in training for employees does take a lot of time and resources for business owners, but it’s worth it to not only catch up in the recruiting game, but get ahead, Express CEO Bill Stoller said.

“Unfortunately, this hiring crunch doesn’t appear to be easing anytime soon, so investing in employees is crucial to businesses everywhere and the economy,” he added.

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 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.

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. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing 526,000 people globally in 2020. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.