

New Survey: Senior-Level Positions Most Difficult to Fill

Independent Contractors a Growing Segment Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oct. 27, 2021 – With companies fairly split on whether it’s currently easy (53%) or difficult (47%) to recruit and fill positions, 55% of U.S. hiring decision-makers say the hardest roles to fill are senior-level openings.

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

Among businesses planning to hire this year, more than 3 in 5 think it will be easy to recruit and fill entry-level (68%) or C-suite executive roles (63%). Slightly fewer think it will be easy to do so for individual contributors (58%) or mid-level employees (56%).

EASE OF RECRUITING BY SKILL LEVEL



“Recruiting at all levels is difficult, but unskilled workers are slightly more available than other skill levels right now,” said Greg Sulentic, Express franchise owner in Lincoln, Nebraska. “Companies that are open to broader skill and background requirements are putting themselves in the best possible position for recruiting success.”

Senior-level positions are always difficult to fill in Sulentic’s market, but he says the drop in labor force participation has accelerated the trend even further. Mid-level roles are the ones he is truly worried about.

“I believe we will experience a massive shortage in the pipeline for mid-level employees that is even more extreme than what we are finding today,” he said. “This will be the result of the current shortage in employees entering the workforce and the lack of trained, skilled employees to move from entry-level to mid-level. However, senior-level will continue to be the most difficult simply due to an aging workforce retiring at greater rates.”

While recruiting for mid- and senior-level employees is proving more difficult in the current labor market, one employee classification is growing exponentially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic—independent contractors.

Jon Noceda, Express franchise owner in Chula Vista and San Diego, California, says independent contractor positions are the most difficult to fill in his market because available contractors only focus on the short-term positions that pay the most. He predicts this will be a permanent result of the pandemic.

“This shift is already happening and will continue to evolve,” he said. “Several sub-industries are

being created across the economy, such as logistics and e-commerce, due to the development of apps and other service-related businesses.”

Sulentic agrees that much of the workforce that traditionally worked in offices or call centers have adjusted over the past year to the work-from-home model.

“They now have access to resources within their homes to do individual work that they weren’t comfortable with previously,” he said. “These tools can be applied to freelance work more easily than in the past and marketing those skills is easier due to broader use of social media. When one of our previous employees told me why he left his on-site supervisor position for an at-home individual contractor assignment that paid him less, he said, ‘I can’t drink coffee and watch the morning news in my pajamas at the office.’”

The shift to more independent contractors can be beneficial for those looking to obtain experience and training in several different industries, Express CEO Bill Stoller said.

“The rise of these ‘gig workers’ provides wonderful opportunities that will hopefully translate into a more skilled workforce to fill those senior positions,” he added. “More skilled workers to replace those retiring is crucial to our economy.”

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.

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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.
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