



## Workplace Hostility Pushes Employees to Seek New Jobs: 30% Report Higher Confrontation

### Recent Survey Shows Toxic Behaviors Eroding Workplace Culture

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**OKLAHOMA CITY, March 26, 2025** — New data reveals a troubling increase in toxic behaviors within the workplace, underscoring the critical need for companies to take immediate action to prevent employees from becoming job seekers.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

With 30% of employed U.S. job seekers reporting employees at their company are more confrontational than they were three years ago, the urgency to address these issues has never been greater. The trend is particularly pronounced among male job seekers, with 34% noting increased confrontational behavior compared to 23% of female job seekers.

Furthermore, more than one in five employed job seekers (22%) have observed a rise in employees being mean to others at work over the past year. This escalation in toxic behaviors is not only damaging workplace relationships but also undermining the overall company culture, prompting many employees to seek new job opportunities.

#### Personal Accounts of Toxicity

Several personal accounts from survey respondents shed light on the specific toxic behaviors they have experienced:

- “I remember when some workers got physical with each other because one of them made offensive and disrespectful comments about the other's personal life. It created a hostile environment and affected everyone on the team.” — Employed 36-year-old male job seeker
- “I had a coworker who consistently tried to make me do tasks that weren't in my job description and actively tried to sabotage my work. I reported her multiple times to management, but nothing was done about it until I had to quit due to needing to take care of my parents and my deteriorating mental state.” — Unemployed 30-year-old female job seeker



- “When I was employed as an RN on an inpatient hospital unit, I experienced bullying by senior nurses toward younger nurses. They were envious because they did not hold the same accreditations as the incoming graduates. When I started to display mental health issues, there were opportunities for the others to target me, as well.” — Employed 59-year old female job seeker

### **Company Culture and Adaptation**

The findings underscore the significance of company culture in addressing toxic behaviors. More than half of job seekers (54%) believe that company culture should adapt to changing times and employee desires rather than expecting employees to conform to existing culture. This sentiment is stronger among female job seekers (59%) compared to males (49%).

Additionally, 55% of job seekers agree that it is inappropriate for employees to demand the same boundaries from their coworkers that they set with their family and friends. Nearly 3 in 5 (57%) find it difficult to distinguish between a hostile work environment and a clash of coworkers' personalities in today's workplace.

### **Hiring Managers' Perspective**

Hiring managers also report a troubling increase in toxic behaviors. Half of U.S. hiring managers (50%) have observed more instances of poor employee behavior being reported now than they did three years ago. Nearly three-quarters (74%) have witnessed toxic traits regularly, with gossiping (39%) being the most common, followed by unprofessional communication (27%), employees avoiding collaboration (24%), micromanaging direct reports (19%) and employees taking credit for another person's work (19%).

### **Specific Incidents Reported by Surveyed Hiring Managers**

- “An employee constantly gossiped about colleagues, spreading negativity and undermining team morale, which created unnecessary tension and damaged trust within the workplace.” — 44-year-old male hiring manager
- “During a team meeting, one employee repeatedly interrupted others to push their ideas, disregarding everyone else's input. They made dismissive comments like, ‘That is not going to work,’ without offering constructive alternatives.” — 36-year-old female hiring manager
- “An employee was sending inappropriate texts and threats.” — 26-year-old male hiring manager

### **Proactive Measures Needed**

While 84% of employed job seekers say their company implements measures to manage conflicts, more proactive approaches are needed. This includes:

- Providing resources on conflict resolution: 53%
- Encouraging open communication with supervisors: 52%
- Mandating training on appropriate workplace behavior: 36%
- Displaying signs or other materials regarding appropriate workplace behaviors: 27%

Additionally, 62% of job seekers agree that companies need to have signage to remind people to be nice to one another. This sentiment is particularly strong among Gen Z, millennial and Gen X workers (78%, 64% and 56%, respectively) compared to boomer/senior job seekers (44%).

"Addressing toxic behaviors in the workplace is crucial for businesses aiming to attract and retain top talent," Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said. "A toxic environment not only drives employees away but also tarnishes a company's reputation, making it more difficult to recruit skilled professionals. By fostering a positive and respectful workplace culture, companies can enhance their appeal to skilled professionals, reduce turnover and strengthen their overall market position."

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals Nov. 11 – 26, 2024, among 1,001 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 21 to Dec. 10, 2024, among 1,039 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto:Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com), Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

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If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto:Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com), Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

### **About Bill Stoller**

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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