

New Survey: Businesses Report It's Getting Harder to Fill Jobs

70% Say Recruiting and Hiring is Very or Somewhat Difficult

Nearly 1/3 Blame Lack of Applicants

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 12, 2017 – Express Employment Professionals released new survey results revealing the difficult time businesses are having filling jobs—and the reasons for that difficulty.

In a survey of 533 businesses, respondents were asked, “How easy is it for you to recruit and fill positions?”

Almost one quarter, 24 percent, said “very difficult,” and another 46 percent said “somewhat difficult.” In total, 70 percent reported some level of difficulty, the highest percentage since the last quarter of 2016.

In contrast, 25 percent said “somewhat easy,” while just 4 percent said, “very easy.”

Respondents were also asked for the “primary reason that your open jobs are not filled.”

Almost one third, 32 percent, blamed the “lack of available applicants,” while 30 percent said the “lack of applicants with experience.” This is a slight shift from the previous three quarters of the survey when “experience” ranked higher than “available applicants.”

Other top responses included “I have all my positions filled” (20 percent); “lack of applicants with hard skills” (18 percent); “lack of applicants with soft skills” (13 percent); and “company’s geographic location” (13 percent).

Full results are below.

“There should be little doubt at this point that we have a tight labor market and are approaching full employment, at least by conventional measures,” said Bob Funk, CEO of Express, and a former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. “As a result, it’s not surprising to see companies lamenting the difficulty of finding talent. Employers would be well-advised to consider new recruitment and retention strategies. If the economy continues to grow, these challenges will not subside, and it will be up to business leaders and elected officials alike to find ways to bring more people into the American workforce.”

Currently, how easy is it for you to recruit and fill positions?	Q3 2017	Q2 2017	Q1 2017	Q4 2016	Q3 2016
Very easy	4%	5%	5%	4%	6%
Somewhat easy	25%	27%	26%	23%	29%
Somewhat difficult	46%	46%	45%	41%	41%
Very difficult	24%	19%	20%	30%	21%
I don't know	2%	3%	4%	1%	3%

What is the primary reason that your open jobs are not filled?	Q3 2017	Q2 2017	Q1 2017	Q4 2016	Q3 2016
Lack of available applicants	32%	30%	29%	30%	31%
Lack of experience	30%	32%	33%	33%	24%
I have all my positions filled	20%	24%	26%	23%	30%
Lack of hard skills	18%	18%	17%	21%	18%
Lack of soft skills	13%	14%	13%	11%	10%
Client location	13%	11%	10%	9%	9%
Other (please specify)	11%	12%	11%	7%	7%
Not enough pay offered	11%	11%	10%	10%	6%
Unwilling to work part-time or temporary roles	6%	6%	6%	5%	3%
Undesirable client image or reputation	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%

The survey of 533 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in June 2017 as part of the America Employed campaign to gauge respondents' expectations for the third quarter of 2017. Previous surveys were conducted to cover hiring trends of the quarters indicated.

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

About Robert A. Funk

Robert A. "Bob" Funk is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 770 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Under his leadership, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide. Funk served as Chairman of the Conference of Chairmen of the Federal Reserve and was also the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.05 billion in sales and employed a record 510,000 people in 2016. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.

