

Hiring Outlook for Second Half of 2020 Muted as COVID-19 Continues to Impact Businesses

Only 35% of Hiring Decision-Makers Say Their Company Will Increase Employees

Latest Hiring Trends from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 8, 2020 – With several states experiencing spikes in COVID-19 cases, businesses are predicting a dim hiring outlook for the latter half of the year with only 35% of decision-makers saying their company will increase employees.

This is according to a newly released survey conducted by The Harris Poll and commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

A total of 42% of hiring decision-makers predict there will be no change in their business, while 16% anticipate a decrease in employee count.



This is similar to the first half of 2020 when 31% of hiring decision-makers said their company

planned to increase employees with 41% reporting no change and 26% decreasing staff.

“I see an increase as long as the economy is allowed to reopen,” said Mike Brady, Express franchise owner in Jacksonville, Florida. “The increase will come mainly from the light industrial industry, as many office services and professional positions will be delayed even further with the work-from-home push.”

Jan Riggins, general manager of two Fort Worth, Texas, Express offices, says while she is not seeing an increase in hiring across the board, employment is picking up for companies with needs tied to current demands.

“Based on what we are hearing from our clients, we definitely expect to see a hiring increase for the last six months of 2020. There are certain industries experiencing more growth and demand than they have seen in the past, while others that are just starting to operate again in the office and are continuing with hiring plans made prior to COVID-19,” she said.

In Oklahoma, the pandemic presents a unique hiring opportunity as the state health department has contracted with Express to hire 1,000 contact tracers. Tracy Underwood, Regional Manager for Express offices in Oklahoma, says her area is also “getting slammed with work in manufacturing for companies that are so far behind.”

Express experts say that despite the rise in cases, they don’t foresee the country shutting down again and add that businesses must be prepared with increased safety measures for their workers.

“The cases are already drastically increasing in the states that have reopened, like Oklahoma,” Underwood said. “It will go up, then go down, but not like when COVID-19 first hit. Companies are still adapting, and most have safety measures in place.”

Carolyn Chiovino, branch manager for an Express franchise in North Aurora, Illinois, agrees that taking steps to ensure employees feel safe is the key to ramping up production and hiring again, and essential businesses are the ones usually ahead in the game at this point.

“I think it will be a ‘roller coaster’ until the end of the year,” she said. “Fear is a huge roadblock to progress, and as companies reopen, they will need to increase safety precautions and use innovative tools to keep production moving, lessening the fear employees may have about rejoining the workplace environment.”

Express CEO Bill Stoller says he sees signs of life in the workforce, which gives him hope that the worst is behind us.

“I am incredibly optimistic better days are ahead,” he said. “We are not out of the woods yet, and the sooner businesses implement measures to protect their workers, the sooner they can safely bring employees back to work, benefiting both American families and the economy.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between April 21 and May 6, 2020, among 1,005 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed or have been laid off, furloughed, or given a zero hour schedule in the past 60 days but worked full-time or were self-employed full-time prior, work at companies with more than 1 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, 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, the international staffing company has more than 825 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa, and beginning in 2020 will expand to Australia and New Zealand. Since its inception, Express has put more than 8 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. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK, our international network of franchises offer localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve, employing 552,000 people across North America in 2019. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.