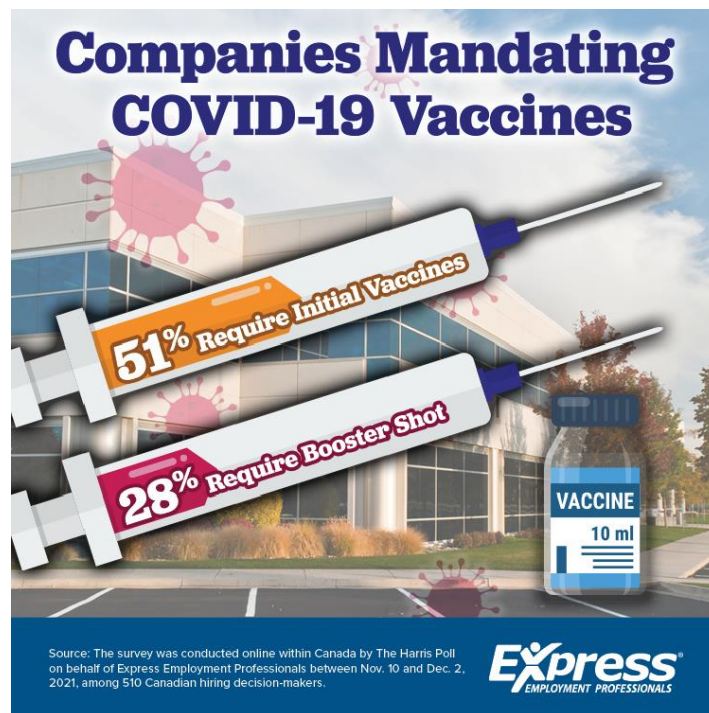


Employer Vaccine Mandates Impacting Labor Market, but Supported by Majority of Employees

Companies Weighing Risks And Benefits of Vaccine Mandates in Tight Labour Market Plagued by Labour Shortages

TORONTO, Jan. 26, 2022 — Half of Canadian companies have mandated employees get the COVID-19 vaccine (51%) and one-third have mandated employees get a booster shot (28%), according to a new survey by The Harris Poll, commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Large companies (100+ employees) are more likely than small companies (2-9 employees) to mandate the vaccine (59% vs. 43%) and a booster (34% vs. 27%).



Companies that require vaccines for their employees are met with positive feedback in the workplace. Nearly two-thirds of Canadian hiring decision-makers (64%) say employees reacted positively to their company's stance on whether they should receive the COVID-19 vaccine or booster.

Not only does it appear employees react positively to vaccine mandates, but the majority deem it necessary for business. [A previous The Harris Poll survey](#), commissioned by Express last year, found that a majority (81%) agree business will only return to pre-pandemic operations (i.e., not limited by restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic) in Canada once more people receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

But decisions around vaccine mandates have come during the tightest job market in a generation. Almost two-thirds of Canadian companies surveyed say they have been affected by labour shortages in some way (71%). More than one-third say labour shortages have increased the workloads for existing employees (36%).

As a result, businesses have been weighing whether mandates will make it even more difficult for them to find and retain staff by reducing the pool of potential employees or if it will make them more attractive to job seekers.

Express franchise owner Tash Damjanovic, who owns franchises in Toronto and Woodbridge, Ontario, says about 50% of the companies they work with have vaccine mandates. Similar to the survey results, she says small businesses are much less likely to implement mandates as they have a harder time competing in such a tight labour market.

"We have seen many smaller companies steer clear of mandates, as they are worried they will not be able to effectively compete for and attract talent," said Damjanovic. "They have been able to hire excellent quality associates who are unvaccinated and who are being passed over by employers with vaccine mandates."

Vaccine mandates don't just vary by company size, but also by level of job role, according to Jessica Culo, an Express Franchise owner in Edmonton, Alberta.

"For senior level roles, we are seeing more than 90% of our clients require proof of vaccination, while for entry level roles, it is closer to 40%," said Culo.

Culo says more job seekers are making vaccination requirements a part of their search criteria.

"An increasing number of job seekers are only willing to work for companies that have implemented vaccine mandates," said Culo. "This is more relevant now than before, as we remain entrenched in a job seekers market."

However, Damjanovic says vaccine mandates have resulted in some companies losing their top talent.

“Unfortunately, vaccine mandates seem to have disproportionately affected associates working in entry level positions, in roles that range from production workers to shipper/receivers,” said Damjanovic. “In one particular case, our associate spent a year working in a warehouse and was described by his manager as ‘the best employee I’ve ever had.’ He was extended a full time job offer at the same time as the company was implementing their vaccine policy, but he was vaccine hesitant and lost out on the opportunity. We have since placed this associate in a full time role with another company.”

She adds that vaccine mandates can make labour shortages worse. She says companies seem to be weighing their risks when imposing vaccine mandates, trying to determine how much workplace disruption will be caused by implementing a vaccine mandate versus not having a mandate.

“Vaccine mandates have come during the tightest job market in recent memory,” said Damjanovic. “That is making it even harder for companies to find staff, as it reduces the pool of potential employees.”

As evidenced by the supply chain issues and longer wait times at just about every business, the desperate search for talent doesn’t seem to be ending anytime soon, Express CEO Bill Stoller said.

“Multiple factors are contributing to this difficult employment landscape, and it’s important for business leaders to enact internal policies that are best for their companies to attract and retain talent,” he added. “As decisions are made, the health and safety of employees should always take precedence for a healthy workforce and healthy economy.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 10 and Dec. 2, 2021, among 510 Canadian hiring decision-makers. Data were 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 to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

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 850 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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