

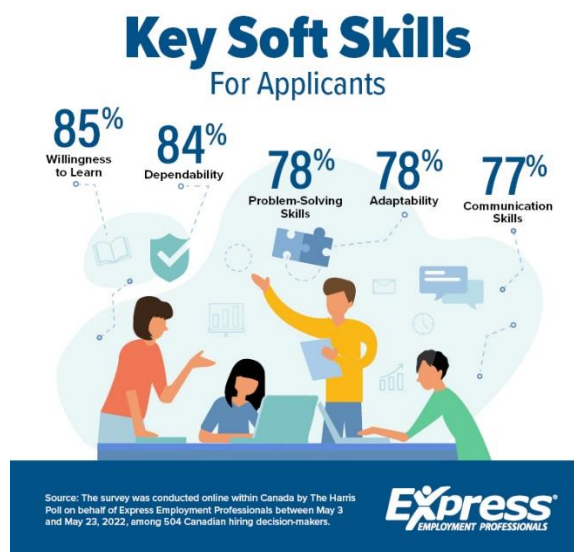
Willingness to Learn, Dependability and Problem-Solving Most Desired Soft Skills by Employers

Companies Prefer to Re-Skill Employees with Strong Soft Skills Rather than Hire New

TORONTO, Nov. 16, 2022—Canadians looking for a job should not discount just how important strong soft skills are to employers, according to a survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Forty percent of companies report having open positions they cannot fill—with almost one-third (30%) saying it is because of an inability to find candidates with the right soft skills.

Among the top soft skills hiring managers deem important for job applicants are a willingness to learn (85%), dependability (84%), problem-solving (78%) and adaptability (78%). Communications (77%), initiative (76%), critical thinking (73%) and fitting in with the company culture (72%) are also highly rated skills for employers.



When it comes to finding someone with the right hard skills, most employers (70%) say they would rather re-skill (or upskill) an existing employee who has the right soft skills instead of hiring someone new.

Upskilling an existing employee who works well within the organization can be a sure and reliable bet, as opposed to bringing in someone new, according to Edmonton, Alberta, Express franchise owner Jessica Culo. But she says employers need to be aware that what is expected by employees has changed over the years.

“Upskilling programs have had to become more available, more efficient and more flexible, as employees expect this more than they did before,” said Culo. “They want these programs to be relevant to where they are in their career now and fit with their future career plans.”

“Younger generations, like Gen Z, are generally highly motivated to learn new skills and develop professionally,” added Culo. “In a rapidly changing world, it makes sense. That thirst for knowledge and the ability to retain that knowledge provides a big competitive advantage.”

When it comes to which soft skills employers are looking for, Culo says collaboration and the ability to work in a team are among the top examples of specific soft skills desired by employers.

“To coordinate and delegate tasks well, requires the ability to both negotiate and share responsibility for a task outcome. In nearly every industry, good results are the result of a good team,” said Culo. “Flexibility and adaptability are also important, as the last several years have demonstrated how fast we need to adapt at times. There is no saying how work will continue to change in the future, so the ability for employees to roll with change and still achieve results is a valuable skill.”

When it comes to which soft skills are hardest to find, Culo says critical thinking and decision-making skills are becoming increasingly rare.

“The digital world demands critical thinkers and sound decision-makers as every industry constantly faces change and increasing competition,” said Culo. “As our attention spans decrease, problem-solving analysis and the ability to sit and think are becoming more rare.”

While the way we work may have changed drastically over the past few years, the makeup of quality employees is still paramount, Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said.

“Employees should take pride in their work and the soft skills expected of them create a more collaborative work environment for all and can translate into other areas of life,” he added. “No matter the company structure, dependability, communications skills and willingness to learn are timeless attributes.”

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 3-23, 2022, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in Canada 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 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 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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