
Most Canadian Job Seekers Value Purpose and Work/Life Balance Over Climbing Corporate Ladder

85% Say Meaningful Job is More Important than High-Level Job Title

TORONTO, Dec. 27, 2023 — Canadian companies trying to attract and retain employees need to take note that workers are prioritizing personal fulfillment and work/life balance, and are willing to make sacrifices to do so, according to new survey data released today from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Most employed job seekers (54%) feel they are performing “above and beyond” at their company now, compared to a year ago, but only 41% of Canadian hiring decision-makers report the employees at their company are performing similarly. Half (50%) say their employees are doing just enough (“nothing more, nothing less”).

Canadian hiring decision-makers believe the definition of professional success for employees is advancing in their careers (66%). And to achieve such success, around half (51%) report the only way to do so is to “climb the corporate ladder.” Most job seekers (68%) are aligned on this definition of professional success (i.e., advancing in their career), with nearly 3 in 5 (56%) agreeing it can only be done by climbing the corporate ladder. Canadian job seekers and hiring decision-makers also both believe the best way for employees to add value to a company is by advancing their careers (69% and 63%, respectively).

Nevertheless, nearly two-thirds of Canadian job seekers (63%) say they are not interested in “climbing the corporate ladder.” What’s more, most job seekers say it is more important to them to have a meaningful job than a high-level job title (85%) and define success through work/life balance as opposed to climbing the corporate ladder (84%).

Canadian hiring decision-makers also confirm this trend, as most agree it is more important for workers to have a meaningful job than a high-level job title (87%), and more employees are defining success by work/life balance (84%) now compared to three years ago.

SENTIMENTS ABOUT CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER



Interestingly, contrary to what many might assume, and older workers are more likely to agree that work/life balance is more important than climbing the corporate ladder, possibly because they are nearing retirement and have already advanced in their career. For example, 75% of boomers and 66% of Gen X say they are not interested in climbing the corporate ladder, but that number is only 57% for Gen Z. Similarly, while work/life balance is the priority for 90% of boomers, that number falls to 78% for Gen X and 73% for Gen Z.

Workers may choose to remain in their current role rather than accept promotions that require more responsibility and time. However, half of Canadian hiring decision-makers (49%) feel employees who have no desire to advance are looked upon negatively at their company, and 63% of job seekers agree.

When assessing employees not interested in “climbing the corporate ladder,” Canadian hiring decision-makers commonly describe such employees negatively (57%) — including noting a lack of drive (31%), being unengaged (27%) and uncommitted (23%). And half (51%) report such employees as having less long-term potential in their company.

While many companies seemingly desire employees with the drive to rise through the ranks, more than 4 in 5 Canadian hiring decision-makers (86%) agree that employees content with their current role still contribute to the success of a company. Such employees may even be thought of as more introspective and self-aware than most, as around a quarter of hiring decision-makers describe them as knowing their limit (24%) and what they want (20%).

“Whether it's an entry-level position or an executive role, every job contributes significantly to the overall functionality and success of a workforce,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. “People’s ambitions vary, but one thing that all employees should have in common is to find continuing education opportunities to excel in their duties and always strive for improvement. Businesses would also be prudent to discover how team members individually define purpose to avoid mistaking contentment with complacency.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between June 8 and June 22, 2023, among 507 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 13 and June 26, 2023, among 507 adults ages 18 and older who are employed or not employed but looking for work and looking for a new job.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Ana Curic at Ana@mapleleafstrategies.com.

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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