

Most Canadian Businesses Hiking Wages in 2023

1 in 4 Companies Say Wage Expectations Biggest Hiring Challenge

TORONTO, Feb. 8, 2023—Most Canadian employers (69%) say wages will increase again this year, according to a survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals. This is a steady increase from 66% last year and a significant increase from 55% in 2021.

High inflation combined with persistent labour shortages means employers that do not offer competitive wages are increasingly losing the battle for talent. Indeed, nearly 1 in 4 companies (23%) say uncompetitive pay is the biggest challenge when trying to attract new employees.



But wages aren't the only thing increasing this year, so is hiring. Half of employers (49%) say they are increasing their number of employees in 2023, up from 44% last year and 33% in 2021.

This is good news for Canadian jobseekers. A recent Express study found nearly half of Canadian adults are seeking employment—either actively looking for a new job or browsing job opportunities occasionally.

Large (100+ employees) and medium-sized businesses (10-99 employees) are more likely (both 56%) than small businesses (36%) to be increasing their number of employees.

For businesses planning to hire in the first half of this year, the main reasons include managing increased workloads (50%), filling newly created positions (48%) and addressing employee turnover (46%).

Despite the need for more employees, over half of businesses (56%) report not having the capacity to hire, a slight increase from 2022 (50%). The main roadblocks for these businesses in hiring are uncertainty about future workloads (40%), budgetary constraints (39%, up significantly from 29% in the first half of 2022), recruiting/hiring strategy adjustments (36%) and lack of upper management approval for hiring additional employees (20%).

“Balancing overall business costs with necessary hires is critical, and it seems like many employers are taking a wait-and-see approach with market conditions before increasing their headcount,” Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said. “But overall, this is great news for job seekers. The majority of businesses need workers, so for those on the sidelines, now is a great time to find the right opportunity.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Dec. 1 and Dec. 15, 2022, among 506 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.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 4.6 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

The omnibus survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Dec. 13-15, 2022, among 1,050 adults ages 18 and older. Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 3.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at

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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.

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. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, employing 586,000 people globally in 2021 and 10 million since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com/CA.