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## **Most Canadian Job Seekers Fear Discussing Certain Topics at Work, Many Say They Can't Be Themselves**

### ***But Employers Say They Encourage Authenticity and Promote Positive Mental Health***

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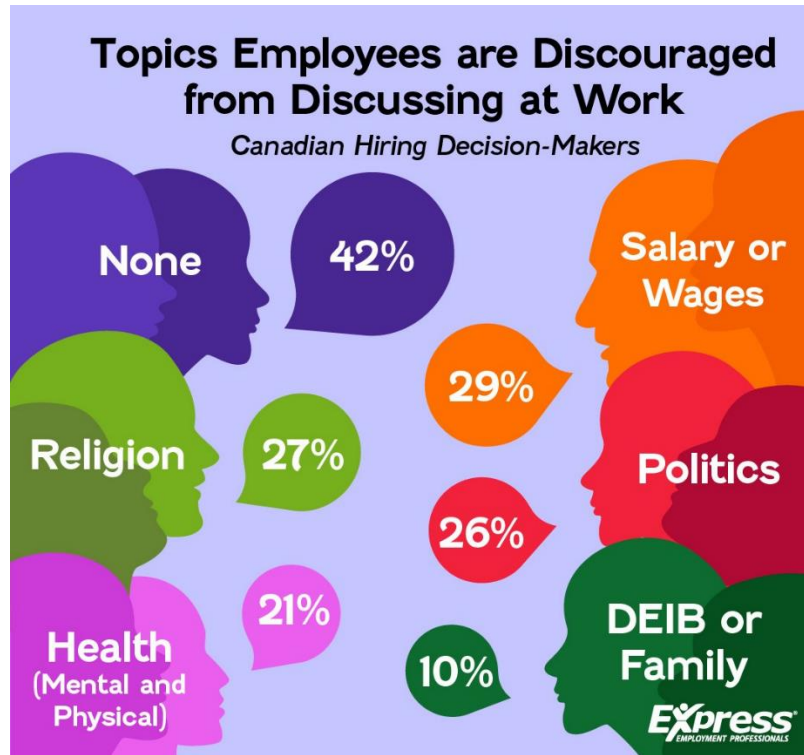
**TORONTO, June 12, 2024** — Although overall company culture has become more casual, 43% of Canadian job seekers say they don't feel comfortable being themselves in the workplace, and 73% believe employees are discouraged from discussing certain topics, according to an Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

The top three topics job seekers say they have to avoid at work: religion (42%), salary/wages (41%) and politics (39%).

While job seekers may feel there are some subjects they shouldn't talk about at work, there are others that they feel comfortable discussing. For example, discussing family (78%), diversity equity and inclusion (DEI) (76%), physical health (70%) and mental health (60%).

And, as for the traditional three topics to avoid at work, many are comfortable discussing salary/wages (59%), religion (46%) and politics (51%). Interestingly, men are far more comfortable discussing salary/wages in the workplace than women (65% vs. 50%) as well as politics (59% vs. 40%).

Workplace etiquette can be a moving target though, as more than half of job seekers (60%) feel it is confusing to know what is and isn't acceptable etiquette in the workplace because it has changed so much. Perhaps for that reason, most job seekers (86%) say they like to keep their home life separate from their work life.



Source: The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

### Encouraging Authenticity

Around three-quarters of hiring managers (72%) say their company places a great deal/moderate amount of priority on encouraging employees to be authentic (i.e., bring their whole selves) at work.

A key part of the whole self of an employee is their mental health — and 7 in 10 hiring managers say their company promotes positive employee mental health (70%). Yet digging deeper, only around one-third say their company places a *great deal* of priority on authenticity (31%) and promoting positive mental health (36%), perhaps leaving room for improvement in these areas.

Discouraging open communication in the workplace may be inadvertently silencing employees from sharing and contributing to the company.

More than half of hiring managers (58%) say there are topics employees are discouraged from discussing at their company — including salary/wages (29%), religion (27%), politics (26%), their health, both physical and mental (21%), diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (10%) and family (10%).

“Several company environments now lean toward a more laid-back atmosphere in the post-pandemic era; however, some sensitive conversations are not appropriate for the workplace,”

said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. “While people should be comfortable being themselves at work, employees should respect the beliefs of their colleagues, creating a safe space for everyone. A healthy company culture is an inclusive and supportive one, no matter the personal differences.”

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker survey was conducted online within Canada by the Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from November 9-26, 2023, among 509 Canadian adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact [Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com](mailto:Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com).

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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](mailto: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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