
More Canadian Companies Reskilling Existing Employees Rather than Hiring New Due to Budget Constraints

Companies Having Trouble Finding Skilled Workers

TORONTO, Aug. 28, 2024 — Canadian companies have open positions to fill, but a growing number are reskilling existing employees to meet their skills needs rather than hiring new ones – and budget constraints are the leading reason according to a newly released Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

Two in five companies (41%) are planning no growth in their employee count this year, and nearly one in ten (8%) plan to reduce their workforce.

Financial constraints appear to be hampering company growth for many, as a large majority (73%) of companies planning a workforce reduction point to the need to reduce costs as the main driver. Additionally, around 3 in 10 companies (28%) that are either not planning to hire or reduce their employee count say they do not have enough room in the budget this year and cannot afford to hire.

Reskilling current employees, however, may be the key to balancing the desire to strengthen workforces and fill skills gaps, while keeping costs in line.

More than half of companies (52%) report they plan to re-skill employees this year (i.e., train a current employee for a new position or teach them new skills for their current role), a significant increase from 43% in 2021.

Among those who plan to re-skill employees, the majority intend to offer company-led training sessions, either during or outside work hours (67%). Many also report their company plans to provide on-the-job training by other employees (61%), third-party training or courses (38%), and 30% will cover the cost of their employees' education to earn additional degrees or certifications. Notably, 10% say they plan to use artificial intelligence (AI) to help train employees.



The rising costs of doing business is weighing heavily on companies according to Brent Pollington, Express franchise owner in Vancouver, British Columbia.

“This is one of the most important factors I discuss with clients - rising costs are impacting payroll, whether it’s wages, increased mandates on statutory holidays and sick time, benefits, or the increased costs of training, development, and onboarding,” said Pollington. “These increased costs have made companies scrutinize more during the interview process, ensuring that if they’re going to make the investment, it’s with the right person.”

Pollington says that one of the main reasons more companies are reskilling employees is that they can’t find job seekers with the skills required for open positions.

“Businesses here are hiring every day, there’s definitely demand in the market,” said Pollington. “However, the market is full of applicants who are applying to jobs without the necessary skills or qualifications. Companies are very willing to invest in training and development, especially when it comes to re-skilling for growth within a particular role, if they can find the right candidate.”

Pollington says that job seekers can also take initiative when it comes to upgrading their skills.

“Investing in their own training can be a powerful way to demonstrate their value and potential to a company,” said Pollington. “This shows the organization the employee is serious about their development and is likely to provide a return on that investment. The best training I can suggest for an employee or job seekers is one that aligns with their vision and career goals.”

Traditional job roles are rapidly evolving or disappearing altogether, meaning the workforce is at a crossroads where reskilling and upskilling employees now could create the necessary talent of the future, according to Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO.

“As we’ve seen over the past several years, there is no quick fix for the skills gap,” he added. “However, companies investing in their greatest assets, people, will see the most success in

recruiting, retention and their bottom line.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 16 – June 3, 2024, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

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.

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 492,000 people globally in 2023 and more than 11 million since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com/CA.