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New Survey: Two-Thirds of Businesses See Applicants Fail Drug Tests

Marijuana Legalization Poses Challenges for Businesses

Big Jump in Areas Where State Laws Have Changed

OKLAHOMA CITY, May 8, 2019 – The number of open jobs in the country exceeds the number of unemployed workers, but for many Americans, there is still something standing between them and a job: drug use and drug testing.

In a survey fielded by Express, 65% of business say they have job applicants who cannot pass a drug test. More than one-quarter (26%) say that 5% or more of their applicants fail drug testing. Fifteen percent of businesses, however, say applicants who fail are not necessarily excluded from their workforce.

Full results are below, and findings are consistent with a [2018 survey](#) from Express.

Terri Greeno, an Express Employment Professionals franchise owner in Crystal Lake, Illinois, said she hears about applicants failing drug tests multiple times a week—and she expects the problem to get worse.

“As society’s view of marijuana becomes more tolerant, and some states have legalized its recreational use, we expect to see more issues with candidates not passing a drug screen due to marijuana use,” Greeno said.

In Michigan, Janis Petrini, a Grand Rapids franchise owner, has seen exactly that.

“Recreational use of marijuana was legalized in Michigan in late 2018,” she said. “Since then, we’ve seen an increase in drug testing fails.”

Darren Moscato, a franchise owner in Buffalo, New York, says that the way to address this challenge may be to shift the emphasis from whether someone is using drugs to whether someone is impaired.

“As ‘recreational drug use’ becomes more and more legally acceptable we need to push for better technologies to measure impairment,” he said.

Express Employment Professionals conducts drug testing pursuant to all federal, state and local laws, but Express franchise owners continue to report that some companies in their regions are rethinking their procedures.

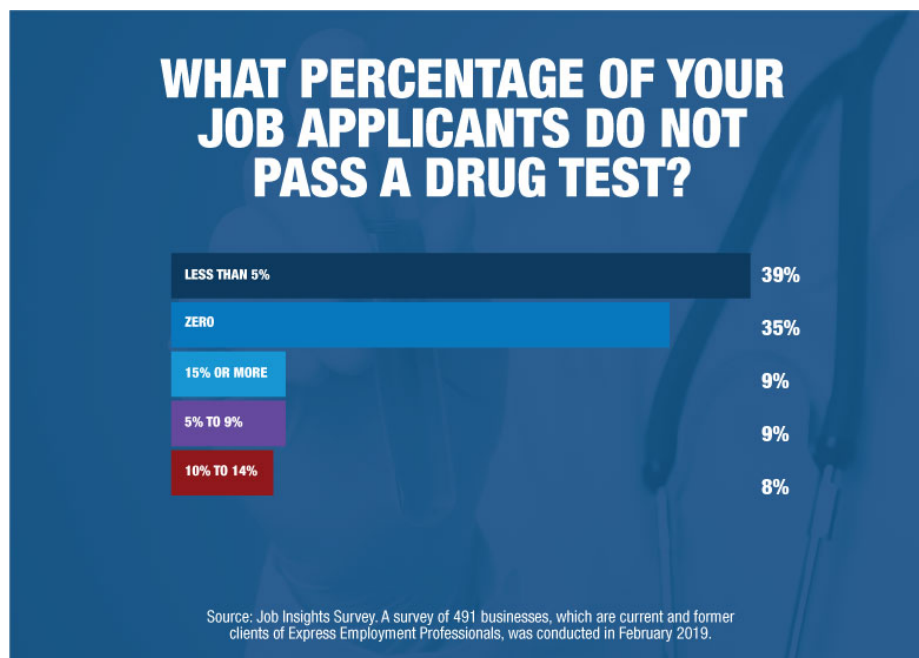
“As public perception of certain drugs changes, we find that employer policies are also evolving. Increasingly, employers are more concerned with intoxication and impairment, than they are concerned with what workers do on their own time,” Moscato added.

Greeno notes the challenges of a more relaxed approach.

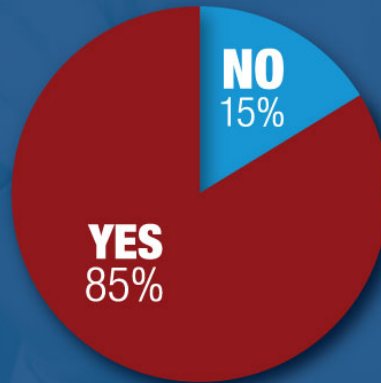
“This is a double-edged sword,” she said. “On one hand, relaxing the drug test requirement would enable businesses to recruit from a larger pool. But of course, they are very wary of this from a risk perspective.”

Chris Ashcraft, a franchise owner in Mobile, Alabama, says businesses are also adapting by adjusting how frequently a job applicant can drug test.

“It used to be that an applicant could not come back for 90 days after a failure. Now it is 30 days,” he said.



ARE APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT PASS A DRUG TEST EXCLUDED FROM YOUR WORKFORCE, EVEN IF QUALIFIED?



Source: Job Insights Survey. A survey of 491 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in February 2019.

“The public’s views on drug laws and drug use have changed at a rapid pace in recent years,” said Bill Stoller, CEO of Express. “That has posed a new set of challenges for businesses. They are more desperate than ever for workers, but safety concerns must always come first, especially when heavy equipment is involved. We will likely see changes in the future, but they will have to be implemented in a careful, thoughtful way.”

The survey of 491 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in February 2019 to gauge respondents' expectations for the second quarter of 2019.

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 7.7 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.56 billion in sales and employed a record 566,000 people in 2018. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.