

## **Job Seekers Buck the Trend, Opting for Purpose over Corporate Promotion**

***57% Are Not Interested in Climbing Corporate Ladder***

***Latest Results from The Harris Poll***

---

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Dec. 27, 2023** — While U.S. hiring managers and job seekers feel career advancement is valuable, many job seekers are more focused on achieving personal fulfillment and work/life balance.

This is according to a recent survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

More than half of employed job seekers (56%) feel they are performing above and beyond at their company now compared to a year ago — and hiring managers are seeing similar effort (53%).

From the perspective of hiring managers, the definition of professional success for employees is advancing in their careers (73%). And 58% report that the only way for employees to achieve professional success at their company is to "climb the corporate ladder."

Around 7 in 10 job seekers (71%) are similarly aligned on the definition of professional success (i.e., advancing in their career) and believe climbing the corporate ladder is the only way employees can achieve this (57%).

Most hiring managers also feel the best way for employees to add value to a company is advancing their careers (70%) — a similar proportion of job seekers concur (71%).

### **Meaningful Work vs. Advancement**

Despite a strong majority of job seekers (86%) and hiring managers (83%) saying most employees want to advance in their careers, 57% of job seekers say they are not interested in "climbing the corporate ladder." Workers appear more focused on personal fulfillment and balancing their personal and professional lives.

Most job seekers say it is more important to them to have a meaningful job than a high-level job title (83%) and define success more by work/life balance than climbing the corporate ladder (80%).

More than 4 in 5 hiring managers report similar perspectives; 85% say it is more important for workers to have a meaningful job than a high-level job title, and 84% report more employees define success by work/life balance than climbing the corporate ladder now compared to three years ago.



As a result, workers may choose to remain in their current role. However, more than half of hiring managers (55%) feel employees who have no desire to advance are looked upon negatively at their company; 64% of job seekers agree.

When thinking of employees who don't wish to advance their careers, more than half of hiring managers (55%) describe employees negatively — most commonly linking these employees with a lack of drive (34%), being uncommitted (22%) and unengaged (22%). And more than half of hiring managers (56%) report employees who are not interested in "climbing the corporate ladder" have less long-term potential in their company.

While some companies seemingly desire employees with the drive to rise through the ranks, nearly 9 in 10 hiring managers (89%) agree that employees who are content in remaining in their current role still contribute to the success of a company. In addition, these employees may be thought of as more self-aware, as around a quarter of hiring managers describe them as knowing their limit (25%) and knowing what they want (24%).

“Whether it's an entry-level position or an executive role, every job contributes significantly to the overall functionality and success of the 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 the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between June 13 and June 26, 2023, among 1,010 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between June 13 and June 26, 2023, among 1,006 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto:Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com), Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

\*\*\*

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact [Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com](mailto:Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com), Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

### **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 579,000 people globally in 2022 and more than 10 million since its inception. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](https://ExpressPros.com).