

## Record 92% of US Hiring Managers Brace for Challenges in the Year Ahead

*Job Seekers Also Face Struggles Such as Underqualification*

*Latest Results from The Harris Poll*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan. 24, 2024** — Despite the continued hiring optimism of U.S. hiring managers, more than 9 in 10 (92%) expect to face challenges over the next year — reaching the highest point since the survey began in 2020.

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

At the top of the list of expected obstacles in 2024 are finding qualified candidates (53%), increased competition in the job market (29%) and the available talent pool not matching the company's needs (27%) — on par with the expected challenges cited for 2023.

Nearly a quarter (22%) cite the company's pay not being competitive as another anticipated bump in the road for the new year.



Compounding the struggle to stay competitive, companies are also faced with increased demands from within.

Sixty percent of hiring managers say more employees at their company have asked for a raise in their salary or wages as a result of an increase in the cost of living. In response, businesses may be proactively working to overcome such challenges by making plans to raise wages. Seventy-five percent report their company will increase wages in 2024 compared to 2023.

Regarding job seekers, just over 2 in 5 (44%) say they have asked for a raise in salary or wages in the last year because of an increase in the cost of living.

Gen Z or Millennial job seekers are far more likely to have asked for a raise compared to their boomer/senior counterparts (44%, 54% vs. 25%). Millennials are also more likely to have asked for a raise in the past year compared to Gen X (54% vs. 34%).

### **Skills Mismatch**

Forecasting and planning for challenges can be beneficial, however, some problems are more pressing. More than 2 in 5 hiring managers (42%) say their company currently has open positions that they cannot fill.

Such positions remain unfilled most commonly due to a lack of applicants — on par with 2023 and 2022. Positions also remain unfilled due to a lack of applicants with hard skills (44%), relevant experience (41%), a general lack of applicants overall (39%) and/or those with soft skills (33%).

Job seekers agree one of the biggest challenges they face is finding job opportunities that match their qualifications (56%). While many barriers are skills related, such as lacking hard skills (24%), soft skills (14%) or communication skills (13%), another barrier for 39% of them is companies claiming to be hiring but are only collecting applicants and resumes to review.

This perceived barrier is especially pronounced with men (43% vs. 34% women) and Gen Z (54% vs. 38% Millennials, 36% Gen X, and 37% boomers/seniors).

### **Job Posting Scams**

Companies' inability to fill open positions may also be impacted by the recent rise in job posting scams. While most hiring managers (64%) are aware of such scams, more than a third (36%) are not.

Regardless of awareness, hiring managers seem concerned about the impact these scams could have on their company and their ability to deter candidates. Around half say they are concerned about their company name being used in conjunction with a job post scam (52%) and about candidates avoiding applying to their open positions because of mistaking it for a scam (48%).

Sixty-four percent of job seekers are aware of job posting scams, and more than half (53%) are concerned about falling for one; especially Millennials (62%). In fact, more than 1 in 5 (21%) say they have already fallen for a job post scam (12%) or are not sure if they have (9%).

“The optimism hiring managers feel heading into 2024 is encouraging, but the expected challenges can be daunting,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. “The key to solve most of these issues is for job seekers to gain skills for in-demand positions. With so many training resources readily available, this is the year for job seekers to invest in their future, which will ultimately create a more well-rounded workforce.”

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Oct. 31 and Nov. 10, 2023, among 1,007 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 from November 9 to 26, 2023, among 1,002 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.

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If you would like to arrange for an interview 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.

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