

From Dress Codes to Culture Codes: Casual and Positive Work Environments Seem Fundamental for Success

Employers Increasingly Lenient on Attire, Cell Phones and Communication

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, June 26, 2024 — A casual work environment, coupled with an emphasis on strong positive company culture, appears to play a major role in ensuring company success and even providing a competitive edge.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

As times change, the rules and etiquette of the workplace have evolved to align more closely with the needs and desires of society.

U.S. hiring managers report arriving on time for work/meetings (60%) and keeping a clean workspace (52%) were not only important five years ago but remain important today (66% and 59%, respectively).

However, some rules appear less vital to the workplace today with 7 in 10 hiring managers (70%) feeling workplace etiquette that was not acceptable three years ago is now acceptable.



When it comes to work attire, 49% say that that having dress code guidelines and adhering to the indicated dress code (46%) were important five years ago — however, much fewer report the same is true today (31% each). Regarding communication, silencing mobile devices at work (37%), refraining from taking/making personal calls during work (33%) and even utilizing formal business communication (32%) appear to be less important today than they were five years ago.

But as companies adjust to keep up with the times, it may be difficult for employees to keep up, as well. About half of hiring managers (51%) say it is confusing for employees to know what is and is not acceptable etiquette in the workplace now because it has changed so much.

Job Seeker Perspective

For most U.S. job seekers, etiquette rules like arriving on time for work/meetings (72%), keeping your workspace clean (62%) or greeting coworkers (54%) were not only important five years ago but are still important today (72%, 65%, 54% respectively).

However, about 3 in 5 feel that both having a dress code (62%) and adhering to the indicated dress code (57%) were important five years ago but only around 1 in 3 feel these rules are important today (34%, 35% respectively).

Conversely, three-quarters of job seekers (75%) agree that workplace etiquette that was not acceptable three years ago is now.

“In a tight labor market, perks like a more casual dress code are simple to implement and can have a significant impact on recruiting and retention,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment

International CEO. “Some values, however, like punctuality and workspace cleanliness should remain important to respect colleagues’ valuable time and mutual space.”

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 Nov. 9 to 26, 2023, among 1,002 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact 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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