

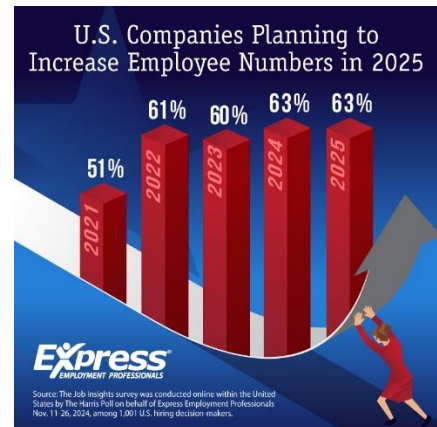


Optimism Holds Strong: 84% of US Hiring Managers Eye 2025 Growth More Than Half Plan to Increase Headcount

OKLAHOMA CITY, Dec. 30, 2024 — As 2024 comes to a close, 84% of U.S. hiring managers are positive about their company's hiring outlook for the first half of next year, with 52% feeling optimistic, 46% hopeful, 45% confident and 38% satisfied.

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

Most hiring managers (63%) anticipate increasing their workforce, with 19% planning significant increases and 44% expecting slight growth. Comparatively, in 2024, 63% of hiring managers also planned to increase their employee count, indicating consistent optimism over the past year.



The primary drivers for increasing headcount include managing increased volumes of work (52%), filling newly created positions (46%) and addressing employee turnover (43%).

Additionally, companies are looking to handle expansion into new categories or markets (33%), acquire expertise in new areas (30%), manage work caused by AI concerns (22%), rehire for positions that were previously cut (22%), manage work caused by cybersecurity concerns (20%) and adapt to changes resulting from new legislative or policy implementations (16%).

Stable or Minimal Reductions in Workforce

Thirty percent of U.S. hiring managers say their company plans to maintain current workforce levels in the first half of 2025, mirroring the 29% who reported similar intentions in 2024. Meanwhile, only 6% anticipate decreasing their workforce, consistent with the 7% of companies that planned to cut staff in 2024. The primary reasons for these workforce decreases include cost-cutting measures (68%), company restructuring (22%) and aligning with decreased demand (21%).

Optimism Balanced with Persistent Challenges

“There seems to be more optimism in the market after a slowdown from the crazy highs of COVID and post-pandemic activity,” said Bill Sofio, an owner of Express and Specialized Recruiting Group franchises in North Carolina, about 2025 hiring predictions. “There was a year

or two of settling down and it feels like a more normal business cycle is forthcoming.”

In New Hampshire, Express franchise owner John Roller agrees. His sales representative is hearing a lot more enthusiasm for hiring after the past few years of “uncertainty about government regulations, confidence in orders forecasted and a very tight labor market.”

However, despite the high optimism heading into 2025, both Sofio and Roller say businesses will still face challenges, including continued worker shortages, return-to-office mandates and pushback against offering slightly lower wages.

“The positive sentiments among U.S. hiring managers highlight a resilient and forward-thinking workforce,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. “Businesses are strategically positioning themselves for growth, addressing immediate needs like increased workloads and turnover, while also preparing for future challenges such as AI and cybersecurity. The outlook for 2025 is promising, driven by a workforce ready to innovate and adapt.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals Nov. 11 – 26, 2024, among 1,001 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

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.

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.

