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American Employees Choose Work-Life Balance Over Climbing the Corporate Ladder

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From quiet quitting to “lazy girl jobs” and now an era of [quiet ambition](#), job seekers and employees are choosing to prioritize work-life balance over climbing the corporate ladder to upper management and the C-suite.

Where the Corporate Ladder Stands

While employees are setting aside ambitions to rise through the ranks at their companies, 58% of U.S. hiring decision-makers say the only way for employees to achieve professional success is to climb the corporate ladder. Job seekers aren't as convinced, as 57% say they aren't interested in [climbing the corporate ladder](#), according to an Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

When it comes to advancement, 83% of hiring decision-makers believe most employees want to advance their careers and 73% define professional success as advancement. Hiring decision-makers recognize that tides are changing, as 84% report more employees are defining success by work-life balance than climbing the corporate ladder now compared to three years ago. And 85% say it's more important for workers to have a meaningful job than a high-level job title.

Work-Life Balance Priorities

Climbing the corporate ladder has pros and cons — a higher job title and greater responsibility are often paired with improved compensation and benefits but may come at the cost of work-life balance and flexibility.

[Microsoft's 2022 Work Trend Index](#), which surveyed 31 markets, including the United States, found that 53% of employees are more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Employees are also considering new factors in their “worth it equation,” including family, personal life, and flexible schedules. The benefits of work-life balance when supported by a

company are clear, from reduced turnover to [improved productivity](#) and better [mental health for employees](#), according to [Harvard Business Review](#).

Views on Employees Who Don't Choose Advancement

The majority of hiring decision-makers (70%) feel the best way for employees to add value to a company is by advancing in their careers; 55% feel employees who have no desire to advance are looked upon negatively and 56% report these employees have less long-term potential at their company. Of job seekers, 64% believe employees who have no desire to advance are looked upon negatively at their company.

Most hiring decision-makers (89%) say employees who are content to remain in their current roles still contribute to a company's success, and 88% of job seekers agree. These employees may be viewed as more self-aware by knowing their limit (25%) and knowing what they want (24%) by hiring decision-makers.

A lack of upward mobility can drive employees to job search. Career advancement topped [Leaders Media's](#) list of reasons for leaving a job, as job seekers can find more opportunities, improved salaries and the chance to grow their skill sets by changing jobs.

Companies must balance job seekers' desires to prioritize their personal lives with identifying, training, and promoting employees with leadership potential who desire to climb the corporate ladder.

To provide accurate and timely employment forecasts for business leaders, Express Employment Professionals commissions an ongoing [Job Insights](#) survey to track employment and hiring trends across a wide range of industries. 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 from June 13 to 16, 2023 among 1,006 U.S. job seekers.

If you're looking for a job opportunity in 2024, Express can help.

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Express Employment Professionals Pittsburgh West has two offices serving Allegheny and Beaver County. Our Robinson Township office is located at 6200 Steubenville Pike, Robinson Township, PA 15136 and serves the Allegheny West area. Our Monaca office is located at 699 Pennsylvania Avenue, Monaca, PA 15061. Local businesses and applicants are encouraged to stop by, visit expresspros.com/wpittsburghpa, or call **412.494.2000**.