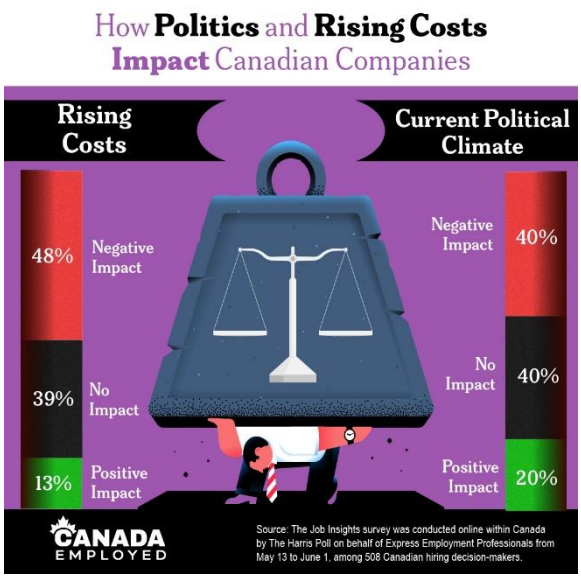
Political Uncertainty Has Some Canadian Employers Putting Hiring Plans on Hold

Rising costs affect 72% of companies' ability to operate or grow, while more than 1 in 3 question how long they can absorb continued increases.

TORONTO, Oct. 14, 2026 — Politics is reaching beyond the ballot box and into the workplace, with close to two-thirds of Canadian hiring managers (60%) saying the current political climate affects their company, according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.



Only 20% say it has positively affected their company, while 40% report a negative impact. But as employers look ahead, the bigger question for some is whether to hire now or wait for greater clarity.

Some Companies Are Waiting for Answers Before Hiring

One in five hiring managers (20%) say planning labour needs will be among their company's biggest hiring challenges for the remainder of the year amid concerns about a recession or economic downturn and changes in government policies.

Among companies planning to reduce or not increase their headcount during the second half of the year:

- 21% point to concerns about a recession or economic downturn.
- 14% are waiting to hire until they see the outcomes of changes in government policies.
- 11% are waiting for the economy to return to normal before hiring.

Job seekers are feeling the effects, too. More than one-third (36%) say politics has negatively affected their ability to find a new job.

Rising Costs Raise the Stakes

Almost two-thirds of hiring managers (61%) say rising costs have impacted their company's ability to operate or grow, including 48% who report a negative impact and 13% who report a positive one.

The pressure is also reaching workforce budgets, with wages and compensation (38%), raw materials and inventory (33%), transportation and logistics (32%) and hiring budgets (29%) among the areas most impacted by recent cost increases. For some employers, however, the concern extends well beyond the next hire.

More than one-quarter of hiring managers (29%) say their company won't be able to survive much longer if wages or costs continue to increase so quickly, although that figure is down significantly from 40% in the spring of 2022.

Job seekers aren't escaping the financial strain, either. More than 9 in 10 (92%) say rising costs have had an impact on their decision to look for a new job, with 71% describing the impact as moderate or substantial.

"Political instability creates an uncertain hiring environment and an unpredictable economy," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, president and chairman of Express Employment International. "While businesses can't control these external pressures, thoughtful planning gives leaders the flexibility to make difficult decisions today while protecting the people and investments that drive future growth."

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Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from May 15 to June 1, 2026, among 508 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from May 19 to June 8, 2026, among 508 Canadian adults ages 18 and older who are employed but looking for a new job or not employed and looking for work.

For full survey methodology, please contact Ana Curic at Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

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If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com.

About Robert (Bob) Funk Jr.
Robert (Bob) Funk Jr. is the Chief Executive Officer, President and Chairman of Express Employment International, a global staffing franchisor founded and headquartered in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He leads a portfolio of workforce solution brands, including the flagship Express Employment Professionals franchise, along with several affiliated brands serving specialized markets. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

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