



## Canadian Job Seekers Applying to Positions They Are Overqualified For, But Employers Have Concerns

*New survey reveals why fears of quick exits and low engagement keep companies from fully embracing top talent.*

**TORONTO, Oct. 8, 2025** — A new survey from Express Employment Professionals and The Harris Poll reveals a growing tension in the hiring process: while most employers welcome overqualified candidates, concerns about retention and motivation often outweigh the benefits, leaving job seekers frustrated and anxious.

### Employers See Value — But Worry About Retention

More than half of Canadian hiring managers (61%) say their company typically considers overqualified candidates. The benefits are clear:

- 46% believe they have more confidence on the job.
- 43% appreciate that they require little to no training.
- 41% value their ability to mentor junior employees.
- 39% cite better decision-making skills.
- 38% say they're more productive.



Though with any decision, there are challenges to weigh. Hesitation runs deep, for several reasons, including:

- 79% worry overqualified candidates will leave as soon as a better opportunity arises.
- 77% feel they can struggle to stay motivated at lower-level roles.

As a result, nearly two-thirds of companies (63%) say they would rather train someone new than risk an overqualified hire becoming disengaged or leaving.

### Job Seekers Feel the Pressure

For job seekers, the presence of overqualified candidates feels like an uneven playing field:

- 59% say it's impossible to compete against them.
- 64% believe companies are more likely to hire an overqualified applicant than someone with only entry-level experience.
- 65% worry employers prefer these candidates because they "bring more to the table," even if the role doesn't match their level.

Despite these concerns, most job seekers are not backing down. A large majority (89%) believe it is appropriate to apply for jobs they are overqualified for, and nearly two-thirds (64%) have done so in the past, often for reasons beyond pay, such as better work-life balance (53%) or passion for the industry (35%). However, the need for income remains the top motivator (58%).

Economic uncertainty is adding to the pressure on job seekers to be less selective in their job search, with around 1 in 3 job seekers (30%) saying it is the reason they are currently applying for jobs for which they are overqualified.

### **Generational Differences Add Complexity**

Younger job seekers are experiencing the most pressure. Gen Z and millennials are significantly more likely than Gen X to believe it's impossible to compete against overqualified candidates (62% and 68% vs. 46%) and to think companies favour them (66% and 72% vs. 53%). They're also more likely to worry that employers prefer overqualified candidates because they bring more to the table (both 68% vs. 62%).

"Overqualified candidates represent a chance to secure top talent in today's market," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, President and Chairman of Express Employment International. "The key is to focus on skills-based hiring, which widens the talent pool by looking beyond résumés and degrees and makes the best use of a candidate's abilities and ambition. Without that alignment, the risk of a quick exit is real."

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 2 to 18, 2025, among 500 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 12 to 27, 2025, among 503 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodology, please contact Ana Curic at [Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com](mailto: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](mailto: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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