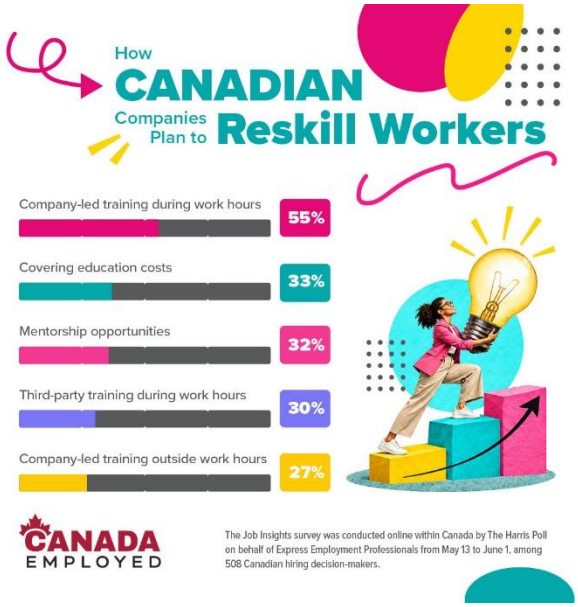
# Canadian Employers Reskilling Existing Workers to Close Talent Gaps

*80% of hiring managers would rather retrain existing employees than hire new ones, while 55% of companies plan to invest in reskilling.*

**TORONTO, Nov. 23, 2026** — More employers are investing in the skills of their existing workforce, according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey. More than half of Canadian hiring managers (55%) say their company plans to reskill employees, similar to spring 2025 (58%).




Among companies planning to reskill, 68% will use company-led training programs and 55% will provide on-the-job training from other employees. Another 45% will use third-party training or courses.

Their plans include:

- Company-led training during work hours: 55%, up from 46% in spring 2025
- Third-party training or courses during work hours: 30%
- Covering education costs, including degrees or certifications: 33%
- Mentorship opportunities: 32%
- Company-led training outside work hours: 27%
- Third-party training or courses outside work hours: 26%
- AI-assisted training: 17%

**Approaches Vary by Age**

Younger hiring managers are more likely to report reskilling plans, led by Gen Z and millennials (66%), followed by Gen X (50%) and baby boomers and seniors (34%).

Gen Z and millennial hiring managers are also more likely than Gen X to say their company will use third-party training or courses (51% vs. 35%), cover the cost of education (37% vs. 23%) and hold company-led training outside of work hours (32% vs. 17%).

**Willingness to Learn Is a Hiring Priority**

Reskilling is also happening alongside hiring. Among companies planning to add staff in the second half of 2026, 28% are doing so to get expertise in new areas. At the same time, 80% of hiring managers say they would prefer to reskill current employees for new roles rather than hire brand-new ones, up from 75% in fall 2025.

Employers also look for the drive to keep learning in the people they hire. The vast majority of hiring managers (90%) rate willingness to learn as absolutely essential or very important when considering applicants, including 48% who say it is absolutely essential. Only dependability (52%) and work ethic (49%) are rated absolutely essential by more hiring managers.

“Reskilling is an important part of building a workforce that can adapt to changing business needs,” said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, president and chairman of Express Employment International. "Existing employees bring valuable knowledge of a company’s operations, culture and customers, giving businesses a strong foundation for developing new capabilities. When combined with strategic hiring, investing in current employees can help businesses address evolving skill demands while maintaining operational continuity.”

Discover more research and real-world workforce trends from the Canada Employed series at ExpressPros.ca/Newsroom.

**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.

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

***

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.

**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 more than 11 million people globally since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.ca.