



Canadian Job Seekers Say Networking Is Becoming More Transactional and Technology Is to Blame

Most job seekers say professional connections now feel transactional, as online platforms erode authenticity and reshape career-building.

TORONTO, March 25, 2026 — A growing majority of Canadians say networking no longer feels like relationship-building but a thinly veiled transaction, and new survey data shows just how pervasive that discomfort has become.

According to a recent Express Employment Professionals–Harris Poll survey, 70% of Canadian hiring managers and 76% of job seekers say networking today feels more like a business transaction than a genuine personal connection.

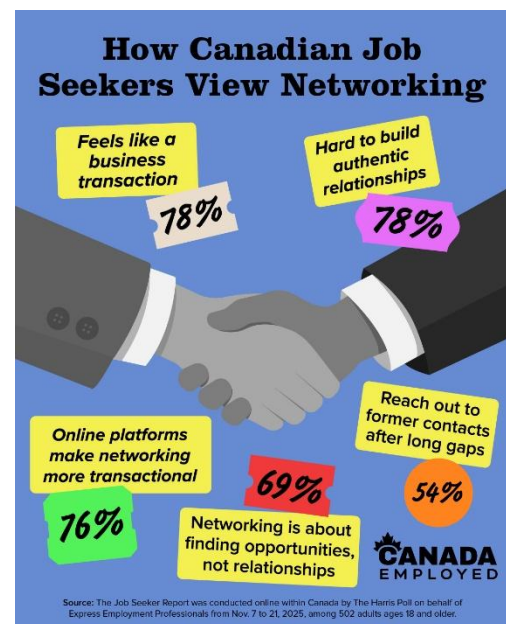
At the same time, 69% of job seekers and 64% of hiring managers say networking is primarily about identifying job opportunities, rather than building relationships, revealing a widening gap between what professionals want networking to be and what it has turned into.

And the problem goes far deeper than awkward small talk.

Tech Is Making Networking Worse

Online platforms were supposed to make meeting people easier, but instead, they've introduced a new layer of artificiality.

- 76% of job seekers and 78% of hiring managers say online networking platforms have made interactions more transactional.
- Even though 38% of hiring managers think these platforms make authentic connections easier, most admit the interactions still feel impersonal and opportunistic.
- 78% of job seekers say it's difficult to form authentic relationships in environments where the goal feels transactional from the start.



And perhaps the most telling figure: 70% of hiring managers now evaluate networking contacts based strictly on their influence or usefulness.

In other words, the “what can you do for me?” energy is unmistakable.

The Return of Real Connection

While a large majority of hiring managers (86%) and job seekers (82%) agree networking is critical for getting a foot in the door, there’s mounting frustration with how it’s done.

The disconnect is clear. People want opportunity, but they don’t want to feel like a commodity. With 80% of hiring managers agreeing that authentic relationships are difficult to build when networking feels transactional, both sides appear ready for something different.

“The most valuable connections in our professional lives come from showing up with authenticity and a genuine interest in others,” said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, President and Chairman of Express Employment International. “When we approach conversations with openness rather than expectation, we create the foundation for relationships that grow over time. Technology can help us meet, but it’s our human commitment to listen, engage and invest in people that gives those connections lasting worth.”

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 Nov. 3 to 19, 2025, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Nov. 7 to 21, 2025, among 502 adults ages 18 and older.

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.