



## **“Toxic” Workplaces Causing Canadians to Seek New Jobs**

### ***Gossiping, Bullying and Harassment Among Worst Workplace Behaviours***

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**TORONTO, March 26, 2025** — There has been a troubling increase in “toxic” behaviours within the workplace, underscoring the critical need for companies to take immediate action to prevent employees from leaving, according to a newly released Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

Almost one-third of Canadian job seekers (29%) say employees today are less collaborative and 28% say employees are more confrontational compared to three years ago. In addition, 20% of job seekers report employees have become more mean than a year ago.

The most common toxic workplace behaviours include gossiping (44%), unprofessional communication (36%), taking credit for another employee’s work (25%), bullying (20%) and harassment (18%).



This escalation in toxic behaviours not only damage workplace relationships but also undermines the overall company culture, prompting many employees to seek new job opportunities. In fact, one quarter of job seekers (25%) who quit their previous job did so to leave a toxic work environment and one-fifth of employed job seekers (19%) say they are currently looking for a new job to leave their toxic workplace.

#### **Personal Accounts of Toxicity**

Several respondents provided personal accounts of specific toxic behaviours they have experienced:

- “My manager blamed me for a mistake that wasn’t my fault three times over a period of at least two months, even though I work in an extremely stressful environment. This only led to more anxiety on every shift.” — Employed, 41-year-old male job seeker

- “The manager was bullying me verbally when he talked to the boss. When I made a mistake at work, he came toward me to ask ‘Did you really bring your brain to this job? How can you make a mistake after you have worked in this position for a couple of years?’ Then he would call the boss to tell him I made a mistake and then that boss would criticize me for another 10 minutes.” — Employed, 22-year-old female job seeker
- “During a project meeting, this employee frequently interrupted others while they were speaking, they would dismiss ideas without consideration and often made sarcastic remarks that belittled colleagues’ suggestions. This behaviour not only created a hostile work environment but also discouraged team members from sharing their thoughts, leading to a lack of collaboration.” — Employed, 40-year-old female job seeker
- “Supervisor taking credit for innovative advancements and procedures I studied and implemented without their involvement other than needing their approval to proceed. Also a concerted effort on the same supervisor’s part to get me fired (they failed).” — Unemployed, 62-year-old male job seeker

### **Hiring Managers' Perspective**

Hiring managers also report a troubling increase in toxic behaviours. Almost half of Canadian hiring managers (45%) say they have observed more instances of poor employee behaviour being reported now than they did three years ago. Nearly three-quarters (74%) have witnessed toxic traits regularly, with gossiping (39%) being the most common, followed by unprofessional communication (27%), employees avoiding collaboration (24%), micromanaging direct reports (19%) and employees taking credit for another person’s work (19%).

As a result, more than half of companies (53%) say there have been increased discussions at their company about the way their employees act.

### **Specific Incidents Reported by Surveyed Hiring Managers**

- “Employee got verbally abusive when accidentally bumped by another employee in the lunchroom, spilling his coffee.” — 55-year-old female hiring manager
- “We had a ‘know-it-all’ new hire who wouldn’t take directions from their supervisor and who was very loud and abrasive; we were forced to let them go.” — 57-year-old male hiring manager
- “Taking responsibility for another employee’s work while criticizing that other employee as lazy, limited in talent and unintelligent, due partly to their sex.” — 35-year-old female hiring manager

### **Company Culture and Adaptation**

The findings underscore the significance of company culture in addressing toxic behaviours. More than half of job seekers (56%) believe that company culture should adapt to changing times and employee desires rather than expecting employees to conform to existing culture (44%). This sentiment is stronger among female job seekers (62%) compared to males (51%) and among younger generations.

Additionally, 64% of job seekers agree that it is inappropriate for employees to demand the

same boundaries from their coworkers that they set with their family and friends. Nearly 3 in 5 (55%) find it difficult to distinguish between a hostile work environment and a clash in coworkers' personalities.

### **Proactive Measures Needed**

While 75% of employed job seekers say their company implements measures to manage conflicts, 25% say their company does not take any steps, highlighting the need for more proactive approaches. This includes providing resources on conflict resolution (47%), encouraging open communication with supervisors (46%), mandating training on appropriate workplace behaviour (34%) and displaying signs or other materials regarding appropriate workplace behaviours (24%). Additionally, 57% of job seekers agree that companies need to have signage to remind people to be nice to one another.

"Addressing toxic behaviours in the workplace is crucial for businesses aiming to attract and retain top talent," Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said. "A toxic environment not only drives employees away but also tarnishes a company's reputation, making it more difficult to recruit skilled professionals. By fostering a positive and respectful workplace culture, companies can enhance their appeal to skilled professionals, reduce turnover, and strengthen their overall market position."

### **Survey Methodology**

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Nov. 11 – 26, 2024, among 505 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. 21 to Dec. 6, 2024, among 505 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 Bill Stoller**

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

### **About Express Employment Professionals**

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