



Unfilled Jobs, Longer Hiring Times Fuel Growing Frustration with Canada's Job Market

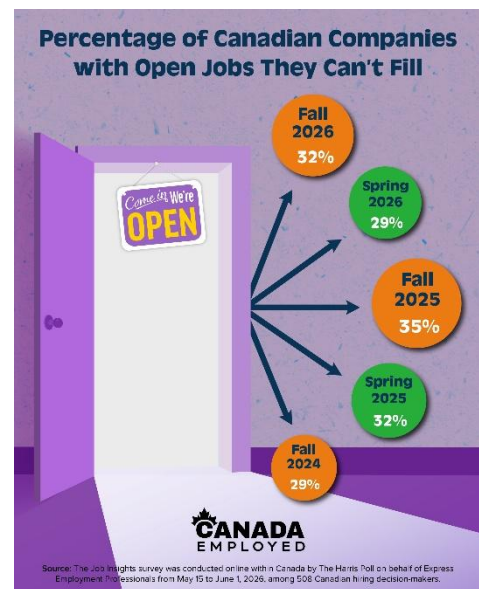
Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey finds 1 in 5 open positions close without a hire as job seekers struggle with automated hiring systems.

TORONTO, Aug. 12, 2026 — The hiring process itself may be getting in the way of filling open jobs, as Canadian companies report more unfilled roles, longer timelines and positions closing without a hire while job seekers say automated systems are making it harder to feel heard, according to a newly released Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

The disconnect comes as 32% of Canadian hiring managers say their company currently has open positions they cannot fill, up from 29% in the fall of 2025.

Open Roles Are Stalling Before They Are Filled

The hiring process is also taking more time than it did two years ago, even as some open roles close without a hire.



More than one-quarter of hiring managers (28%) say the amount of time it takes to hire a candidate at their company has increased compared to two year ago, and almost a third (30%) say it takes at least four weeks to hire a candidate when factoring in resume reviews, interviews and final decisions. Candidates go through an average of three interviews before receiving an offer.

At the same time, hiring managers report, on average, almost 1 in 5 open positions are closed without a candidate filling the role (17%). More than 1 in 5 (21%) say open positions go unfilled entirely.

Job Seekers Say the Process Feels Less Human

For job seekers, the same process can feel difficult to navigate before they ever reach an interview.

More than one-third report that navigating an automated hiring process instead of feeling heard by people during the hiring process is a challenge in their job search (35%). A similar share believe companies are claiming to hire but are only collecting resumes to review, standing in the way of their next employment opportunity (32%).

Fit issues are adding to the frustration. More than 1 in 4 job seekers indicate being overqualified is complicating their search (27%), while the same proportion report being underqualified is holding them back (26%). One quarter believe AI taking open positions is affecting their next job opportunity (25%).

As employers look to fill open roles, the experience candidates have during the hiring process may be just as important as the position itself.

“Hiring has become more complex, and employers are working to balance speed, quality and the right fit,” said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, president and chairman of Express Employment International. “Technology can help streamline the process, but it delivers the greatest value when paired with thoughtful, human interaction. That makes communication more important than ever. When the process is clear and timely, employers can keep business moving, and candidates can better understand whether an opportunity is the right fit.”

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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 survey 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.

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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