



Most Canadian Job Seekers Adapt Their Personality to Fit in at Work, But Say It's Not Fair

Two-thirds have changed aspects of their personality to fit workplace culture, with Gen Z and millennials reporting the highest rates.

TORONTO, Sept. 9, 2026 — Job seekers say adapting their personality to fit workplace culture is important for success, but more than half call the expectation unfair. Despite perceptions about younger workers, Gen Z and millennials report adapting the most, according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

For many, adapting is already part of the job. More than two-thirds of job seekers (68%) have changed aspects of their personality to fit workplace culture, while 59% say their personality at work is very different from who they are in everyday life.



Younger job seekers are the most likely to report both experiences:

- Gen Z: 80% have changed their personality to fit workplace culture; 79% say their workplace personality differs from everyday life
- Millennials: 64% have changed; 58% report a difference
- Gen X: 67% have changed; 52% report a difference
- Baby boomers and seniors: 75% have changed; 26% report a difference

That clashes with a common perception: Most job seekers believe younger employees are less willing than previous generations to change their personalities to fit in at work.

Adaptability Can Shape Career Success

More than 4 in 5 job seekers (84%) say adapting their personality to workplace culture is now considered a core professional skill, while an even larger proportion (89%) believe employees who are unable or unwilling to adjust may not stay with a company as long.

Personality also factors in to how employees are evaluated and whether they advance. Nearly all hiring managers (94%) and job seekers (91%) say it shapes perceptions of performance, while 98% of hiring managers and 92% of job seekers believe a positive or approachable personality can accelerate career advancement.

Yet many job seekers question whether personality should carry that much weight. A majority of job seekers (53%) believe it is unfair for employees to have to adapt their personality to a company's culture. More than half (52%) believe their personality has nothing to do with their work or ability to do the job, including 62% of Gen Z, 52% of millennials, 47% of Gen X and 30% of baby boomers and seniors.

Workplace Guidance Has Not Kept Pace

Despite the pressure to adapt, less than half of job seekers (41%) say their company provides guidance on managing or developing their personality for a professional setting. Gen Z (52%) Millennials (42%) are more likely to receive that support than Gen X (33%) and baby boomers and seniors (25%).

Job seekers say personality differences can shape how teams function, particularly under pressure. One respondent said a calm and organized approach helped reduce stress during tight deadlines, allowing the team to collaborate and stay focused.

Others described how difficult interactions can take a toll. One job seeker said a defensive teammate made colleagues reluctant to offer feedback, scared away clients, and slowed decisions, while another recalled an "extremely demanding and overbearing" colleague whose behaviour contributed to several employees leaving.

"Strong teams do not require everyone to have the same personality, but they do depend on people being able to communicate, adapt and work through differences," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, president and chairman of Express Employment International. "Clear expectations and practical guidance can help employees grow while giving job seekers a better understanding of where they can contribute without losing what makes them effective."

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Survey Methodology

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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