



Recession Fears Drive 83% of Employers to Streamline, Cross-Train and Cut Costs

61% Say Recession Prep Is Pulling Focus from Company's Long-Term Future

OKLAHOMA CITY, Aug. 13, 2025 — With 80% of U.S. hiring managers bracing for a recession, nearly half expecting it within the next year, businesses aren't waiting to feel the impact. They're already shifting gears, scaling back hiring, rewriting long-term plans and making tough choices between protecting today and investing in tomorrow.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll survey.

The data paints a picture of cautious optimism clouded by economic anxiety:

- 94% say a recession would impact their organization, and 60% anticipate a major or moderate effect.
- 36% admit their company may not survive a recession this year, rising to 57% among blue-collar employers.

Despite these concerns, many employers still see opportunities:

- 78% believe their company will be in a better economic position by year's end.
- 58% view a potential recession as more of a growth opportunity than a threat.

Still, the looming threat is already influencing hiring decisions. More than a third of companies (35%) say they would reduce hiring if a recession occurs, up from 30% in the spring of 2022, and 17% would freeze hiring altogether. In anticipation, 83% of employers have taken proactive steps to prepare, including:

- Cutting unnecessary expenses (45%)
- Streamlining processes (29%)
- Cross-training employees (26%)



- Not filling vacated roles (23%)
- Conducting layoffs (19%)

These actions align with projections from the Congressional Budget Office, which estimates that a moderate recession could raise unemployment from 4.2% to as high as 7.5%, potentially resulting in up to 5 million job losses.

However, the cost of preparation is not just financial; it's strategic. Many companies are already feeling the strain:

- 61% say recession planning has taken time away from efforts to improve their organization's long-term future.
- 57% report having to overhaul strategic plans since the beginning of the year. This includes 65% of blue-collar and 54% of white-collar employers.

When asked what would help them navigate a downturn, hiring managers pointed to:

- Training and upskilling programs (60%)
- Flexible staffing solutions (39%)
- Clearer communication from leadership (33%)

The most resilient companies don't just react to economic shifts; they use them as catalysts to become more efficient," said Bob Funk Jr., CEO, President and Chairman of Express Employment International. "By streamlining operations and investing in versatile talent, businesses can position themselves for long-term success in any environment."

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from June 2 to 28, 2025, among 1,000 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

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

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