

# ‘Shocking’ survey about antisemitic hiring based on shaky data

A poll by Resume Builder claimed that nearly one-quarter of hiring managers were antisemitic, but experts pointed to a flawed sample

By **Arno Rosenfeld** November 28, 2022



Job seekers at a career fair in San Jose, Calif. A study released last week claimed that many hiring managers discriminated against Jews, but experts are skeptical of the data. Photo by Getty Images

Many Jews were disturbed by a recent survey that appeared to show roughly one-quarter of America hiring managers were deeply antisemitic.

“The results are shocking,” Aish Ha Torah, an Orthodox Jewish educational organization, said in an Instagram post that was widely shared.

But experts say the survey is not reliable. Commissioned by Resume Builder, which makes resume templates, the survey of managers and recruiters found that 26% were “less likely to move forward with Jewish applicants,” and held a variety of antisemitic beliefs about Jews.

In addition to social media chatter, the Anti-Defamation League called the survey “very shocking and troubling” and it generated coverage in

the Jerusalem Post, the British Jewish Chronicle and HR Drive, an industry publication. The results were released shortly before Thanksgiving, when celebrities like Kanye West and Kyrie Irving were making headlines for promoting antisemitic beliefs. Resume Builder said it was motivated to conduct the poll due to “current events,” and much of the coverage connected the findings to broader fears over discrimination against Jews.

But two polling experts who analyzed the survey for the Forward said it was not reliable and was not backed up by any other research into biased hiring decisions.

“I don’t think we’ve seen anything about Jews facing that level of discrimination in decades,” said Matt Boxer, a professor at Brandeis University who specializes in researching trends in Jewish life.

Resume Builder acknowledged to the Forward that its poll did not accurately reflect the views of all hiring managers.

### **A skewed sample**

Surveys like those conducted by organizations such as the Pew Research Center and respected political polling firms are designed to accurately reflect the population being studied. For example, if a poll is meant to measure the opinions of American adults but 70% of respondents end up being women, researchers will typically “weight” the survey so that it isn’t distorted by overemphasizing the views of one gender.

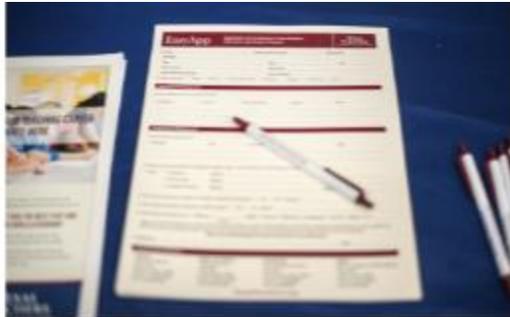
But the Resume Builder survey was based on the response of 1,131 individuals who volunteered to participate in a poll conducted by Pollfish, an online survey company, and said that they were either a recruiter or hiring manager. Julia Morrissey, Resume Builder’s spokeswoman, said the company did not take any steps to ensure the respondents matched the actual demographics of hiring managers.

“We know that opt-in panels like this tend to be biased in all kinds of ways,” said Boxer, who teaches about research methods and statistics. “We need to see some sort of information to justify any conclusions that these hiring managers are a good enough representation of all hiring managers.”

### **‘Not scientific’**

There are several reasons to be skeptical that the individuals who responded to the Resume Builder survey accurately reflect the views of all hiring managers

in the United States. According to additional data provided to the *Forward* by Resume Builder, those who took the survey are younger, less educated and earn less money than most hiring managers and recruiters.



A Texas teachers job application form sits on a table during a job fair. A new survey appeared to show antisemitic hiring practices in the United States, but experts are skeptical of the data. Photo by Getty Images

Roughly half of those who participated in the poll earn less than \$50,000 per year and do not have a college degree, while 23% said they were “self-employed.” They were also overwhelmingly young: More than 50% were under 35 years old.

But Zippia, a job search site that examined government data on recruitment managers, reports that those in the profession earn average salaries of more

than \$80,000, 86% have college degrees and only 28% are under 40 years old, and 98% worked for companies with more than 50 employees.

The racial demographics of Resume Builder’s sample also don’t align with Zippia’s data. While Resume Builder’s sample was 57% white, 21% Black and 4% Hispanic, Zippia found that 65% of hiring managers are white, 11% are Black and 15% are Hispanic.

“The survey is not scientific,” Morrissey, the Resume Builder spokeswoman, acknowledged in an email to the *Forward*. The company added a clarifying note to its page promoting the survey Monday, stating that it used a “convenience sampling method, and therefore, is not necessarily generalizable to the general population of U.S. hiring managers and recruiters.”

In addition to Boxer, another professional pollster who examined Resume Builder’s data for the *Forward*, expressed significant concerns about the company’s sample and how it presented its findings, and asked to remain anonymous to avoid publicly criticizing other researchers.

The ADL said that while it found the survey results alarming, it had “not had the opportunity to examine the raw data.”

Resume Builder is a company that helps individuals create free resumes using an online tool. It periodically conducts surveys and distributes the results to the media. Recent topics have included “quiet quitting,” remote workers who

hold multiple jobs and allegations of discrimination by hiring managers against white men.