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Building a Strong Public Service: Reassessing the Quality of the Work Environment in British Columbia's
Public Service
Backgrounder
February 3, 2005

Our Survey

The findings and conclusions presented in our report are based primarily on a government-wide, web-based survey we sent in November 2003 to a randomly selected, representative sample of almost 6,000 public service employees. We did not survey deputy ministers or employees in agencies, boards, commissions or Crown corporations.

We sought respondents' views on, and experiences with the quality of their work environment.

We achieved a 75% response rate. The survey findings for the public service as a whole are considered to be statistically accurate within 2%, 19 times out of 20. We present both our 2004 and 2001 survey results in this report. Differences of 2% or greater between the two surveys can be considered statistically valid.

Improving four key work environment factors provides the best opportunity to improve employee satisfaction with their work environment

In analyzing the data, we looked at 14 different work environment factors to identify the ones that provide the best opportunity to improve employee engagement in the British Columbia public service. We identified the top four. What this means is that any investment made to strengthen employee engagement would have the greatest positive impact if it were dedicated to one of more of the following areas:

- Executive leadership
- Development opportunities
- Career advancement opportunities
- Individual recognition

Survey Highlights

Relationships with executives: survey highlights (%)

Survey responses representing "strongly" or "mostly" agree

Survey Question	2001	2004
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I trust executives to balance needs of employees with those of the ministry	17	21
Executives are aware of and care about employee concerns	22	28
Executives are open and honest in communication	25	33
Executives are accessible to employees	29	34
I have confidence in the leadership abilities of executives	27	36

Source: Office of the Auditor General Work Environment Survey (2001 and 2004)

Continuously improving: survey highlights (%)

Survey responses representing "strongly" or "mostly" agree

Survey Question	2001	2004
The person I report to gives serious consideration to ideas and suggestions for improvements	58	68
In my workplace, mistakes are used for learning as opposed to people being penalized	61	58
Employees in my workplace freely make suggestions to management for improvements or new services	55	56
Managers in my department encourage employees to bring forward suggestions for improvements for programs or services	51	57

Source: Office of the Auditor General Work Environment Survey (2001 and 2004)

Engagement and pride: survey highlights (%)

Survey responses representing "strongly" or "mostly" agree

Questions	2001	2004
I would highly recommend this organization to a friend seeking employment	43	45
I am proud to tell others I am part of this department	54	58
I am proud to be an employee in the British Columbia public service	–	62
This ministry deserves my loyalty	–	57
This department really inspires me to do my best work	–	45

Source: Office of the Auditor General Work Environment Survey (2001 and 2004)

Opportunities for professional development: survey highlights (%)

Survey responses representing "strongly" or "mostly" agree

Survey Question	2001	2004
This ministry supports the growth and development of its employees	–	36
There are enough opportunities for me to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve my skills in my current job 	38	47
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills necessary to take on different roles 	30	37
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfy my personal needs for new challenges and development 	–	36

Source: Office of the Auditor General Work Environment Survey (2001 and 2004)

Performance management: survey highlights (%)

Survey responses representing "strongly" or "mostly" agree

Survey Question	2004
The person I report to sets clear expectations and goals with me	57
In the last year, I did not receive an employee appraisal or an employee performance and development plan	59
In my workplace, employee performance and development plans or appraisals:	
• Are fair and accurate	60
• Help me focus my work efforts to meet our work goals	50
• Help me achieve my development goals	43

Source: Office of the Auditor General Work Environment Survey (2001 and 2004)



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