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Closing the Implementation Gap:  
Improving capacity, accountability, performance and  
human resource quality in the Canadian and Ontario  
public service

## Comparative Analysis of Public Service Employee Surveys

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## Acronyms

CSDDES	Survey designed and executed by the Centre for the Study of Democracy, Queen's University
MPA	Queen's Masters of Public Administration Alumni respondents to CSDDES
OPSES 2009	Ontario Public Service Employment Survey
PEP	Queen's Public Executive Program participants respondents to CSDDES
PSES	2008 Federal Public Service Employment Survey

## Report Overview

The engagement and satisfaction of Canadian public service employees, and the ability for the public sector to attract and retain new talent, is of great interest and concern given the demographic pressures that underpin public sector reform<sup>1</sup>. Engagement is about establishing mutual respect in the workplace for what people can do and be, given the right context.<sup>2</sup>

In the Public Service evidence suggests that departments with high engagement levels (measured through employee surveys) also tend to perform well in performance reviews – a key measurement in overall departmental performance. Seventy-eight per cent of highly engaged public service staff believe they can have an impact on public services delivery or customer service—against only 29 per cent of the disengaged. (Towers Perrin, 2007) Research in Canada suggests that the link between engagement, customer service and profitability in the private sector could translate to the public sector—with trust and public confidence at the end of the chain, rather than profit.<sup>3</sup>

In efforts to achieve a strong service culture in the public services of Canada, an Employee Engagement Interjurisdictional Team (EEIT) was established. Since 2004, it has managed to develop that Protocol, and Employee Engagement Model, and common survey questions. The Initiative has also begun to report on comparative intergovernmental employee engagement results.<sup>4</sup>

This report makes a similar attempt. The growing interest of engagement is reflected in three key surveys of the job satisfaction of public service employees working at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, namely: the 1) Canadian Public Service Career Satisfaction Survey (CSDSES); 2) Public Service Employee Survey (PSES); 3) Ontario Public Service Employee Survey (OPSES). Looking at engagement and satisfaction factors across the sector through the windows provided by the surveys allows a more complete view than any one of the three could on its own, and will inform our aim to suggest improvements in three critical areas of public sector capacity:

**Capacity and Performance improvements:** how can optimum performance be encouraged considering the political versus administrative tradeoffs which permeate all corners of the public sector?

**Attracting and retaining quality employees:** what reforms and modifications would make the public sector a valued and desirable place to work; a place that would attract and retain creative and innovative, publicly spirited Canadians?

<sup>1</sup> Survey research collected in 2006 by the Conference Board of Canada points to the high rate of baby boomer retirement set to peak over the next three to five years (2011-2013), with serious implications for succession planning and developing talent to fill this widening gap. "Bench strength" demographics (employees at levels just below senior management who would be called upon to fill these vacancies) are not much better: the median age of this group is 50 in the public sector, just two years younger than the median age of senior executives.

<sup>2</sup> MacLeod and Clarke, 2009. P6.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Government Executive: June/July 2006. Retrieved on 3 November 2009 from <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rp/pstc-eng.asp>.

<sup>4</sup> Marson and Heintzman, 2009. P27.

**Accountability design:** how might a better environment be cultivated which facilitates better accountability to Parliament, the media and the Canadian public, while encouraging creativity and managerial flexibility?

This report looks at the importance of engagement as a medium for driving the performance and well-being of public servants.

## Introduction

A slew of reports released over the past few years shine a spotlight on the factors that attract and retain employees, and contribute to positive attitudes and behaviours such as job satisfaction and engagement. One such report released by the Conference Board Inc. *Employee Engagement: A Review of Current Research and Its Implications* (Gibbons, 2006), reflected an attempt to define employee engagement in a way that captured the current goals and efforts of organizations across multiple sectors:

*“Employee engagement is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.”*

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The study’s author, John Gibbons, notes that emotional drivers such as pride in one’s work and a positive interpersonal relationship with one’s boss had four times greater impact on one’s discretionary work effort than other factors such as pay<sup>6</sup>. According to Gibbons, while the absence of important factors such as good salaries or benefits can cause dissatisfaction, they are not primary motivators to engagement.

Complementing these findings are the results of the *Global Workforce Study* (Towers Perrin, 2007) that surveyed 90,000 employees in eighteen countries (including Canada). It focused on what drives attraction, retention and engagement and revealed that only 17% of the Canadian respondents (n=5076) felt highly engaged in their work, or willing to go the extra mile to help their companies succeed. Sixty-six percent were moderately engaged and 17% rated themselves as disengaged. The globally weighted averages found that employees exhibit optimism about their jobs and have a strong desire to learn and grow with 83% looking for opportunities to develop new knowledge or skills, and 84% enjoying challenging work that will allow them to learn new skills. The overall conclusion of this report is that the employee engagement scores indicate that they are not delivering their full discretionary effort because they do not feel their companies and leaders are meeting their needs and creating the conditions that will sustain engagement (Howlett, 2009).<sup>7</sup>

Although these findings have been gathered from the private sector it is prudent that they are included in this paper since studies have found that employee attitudes are not sector-

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<sup>5</sup> Gibbons, 2006, P8.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, P8

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved on 15/10/09 from <http://www.thinkdsi.com/leadership/newsletter/index.html>

specific. Ipsos' *Build a Better Workplace Study (2009)*<sup>8</sup> found that overall, there is no significant gap between the public and the private sector, and even reports a higher level of resilience in the public sector and that many of these groups are registering "a positive evolution of engagement scores"<sup>9</sup>. For example, the Ontario Public Service Engagement Index Trends indicate that the level of engagement among OPS employees has increased by 10% to 72% since 2007.<sup>10</sup>

The top drivers of attraction, retention and engagement amongst Canadian employees, according to Towers Perrin are listed in this table:

CANADA		
Top Attraction Drivers	Top Retention Drivers	Top Engagement Drivers
Competitive base pay	Organization retains people with needed skills	Senior management interest in employee well-being
Work/life balance	Opportunities to learn and develop new skills	Improved my skills and capabilities over the last year
Career advancement opportunities	Base salary	Reputation of organization as a good employer
Competitive benefits	My manager understands what motivates me	Input into decision making in my department
Challenging work	Satisfaction with organization's people decisions	Opportunities to learn and develop new skills
Salary increases linked to individual performance	Retirement	Salary criteria are fair and consistent
Learning and development opportunities	Senior management acts to ensure organization's long-term success	Organization focuses on customer satisfaction
Competitive retirement benefits	Fairly compensated compared to others doing similar work in my organization	Appropriate amount of decision-making authority to do my job well
Caliber of coworkers	Appropriate amount of decision-making authority to do my job well	Employees understand how to satisfy customers
Reputation of the organization as a good employer	Reputation of organization as a good employer	In combination with government programs, benefit programs generally meet my needs

*Towers Perrin's Global Workforce Study Executive Report (2007)*<sup>11</sup>

The OPSES' 2009 top engagement drivers, in order of priority, are: leadership practices; opportunities for growth and advancement; organizational communication; fair HR practices; and, learning and development opportunities<sup>12</sup>—most of which correlate with the Canadian stats gathered by Towers Perrin.

In an ongoing research program (bi-annual since 1999) with data collected from representative samples of public service employees working in companies of one hundred people or greater, Ipsos has compiled normative data for one hundred forty questions that fall into a variety of themes such as engagement, leadership and work-life balance<sup>13</sup>. Ipsos' research identifies a series of common drivers of employee engagement that have emerged

<sup>8</sup> Ipsos Reid conducted an online poll of 1,128 employees in Canada between May 22 and May 29, 2009. It releases this study every quarter to identify key trends in employee motivation and opinion.

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved on 9/11/09 from [www.ipac.ca/.../IpsosPresentationEngagingEmployeesforTransformation](http://www.ipac.ca/.../IpsosPresentationEngagingEmployeesforTransformation), Slide 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ipsos Reid/OPS, 2009, P 7.

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved on 9/11/09 from [http://www.towersperrin.com/tp/showhtml.jsp?url=global/publications/gws/key-findings\\_2.htm&country=global](http://www.towersperrin.com/tp/showhtml.jsp?url=global/publications/gws/key-findings_2.htm&country=global), P17.

<sup>12</sup> Ipsos Reid/OPS, 2009, P20.

<sup>13</sup> Ipsos Reid/IPAC, 2009, Slide 15.

from employee research worldwide, which, like the Towers Perrin study included learning and development opportunities as well as opportunities for growth and advancement. While not specifically defined as the interpersonal relationship between worker and boss, as Gibbons has done, Ipsos notes that the quality of leadership and supervision and clear expectations and direction (among other factors) have emerged as strong drivers as well. The importance of these engagement factors is further reflected in the recommendations found in a report released by The Public Policy Forum in 2007—*Canada's Public Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, which is the result of a pan-Canadian consultation that included roundtable sessions (three of those with private sector CEOs), and 50 interviews (surveys) with prominent Canadians, as well as jurisdictional comparisons, analysis of previous reforms, and consultations with business and government leaders, decision-makers, potential public service recruits, students, and managers<sup>14</sup>. Its recommendations include a focus on leadership, building a diverse and dynamic workforce with appropriate balance of control and autonomy, fostering greater organizational experimentation, reducing the public sector's "web of rules" and renewing trust between politicians and public servants (Green, Baird, Fawkes).<sup>15</sup>

In 1998, Ole Ingstrup and Paul Crookall published *The Three Pillars of Public Management: Secret to Sustained Success* especially for the public sector. After interpreting impressively detailed, thoughtful responses from forty agencies in fourteen countries – ranging from "high-profile police, social services, and health care departments; little-known agencies ... as well as small single-site groups, such as mapping,"<sup>16</sup> the authors concluded that three pillars support the success of well-performing organizations:

1. **Aim** (mission – a clear direction of where they are heading);
2. **Character** (an organization with a strong sense of who they are and what is important – trust; communication; people centered activities);
3. **Execution** (they get things done through innovation, openness to change and teamwork).

In this report, we compare responses across three employee satisfaction surveys described in more detail below. In most instances, similar, but not identical, questions were used in the three surveys being compared, meaning there is no way to determine with certainty whether result variances are due to differences in the level of employee engagement or in how questions are worded.

We use *The Three Pillars of Public Management* as a frame in choosing common questions that explore factors of engagement and satisfaction factors across the sector that we see as supporting these pillars such as mission; leadership; accountability; communication; trust; management tools; teamwork and change management. For reinforcement, qualitative responses from the surveys are inserted to give employees a voice. This approach facilitates a more thorough view of today's public sector than any one of the three survey could on its own, and will inform our recommendations for public service reform.

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<sup>14</sup> Retrieved on 09/11/09 from <http://www.ppforum.com/publications/canadas-public-service-21st-century-destination-excellence>

<sup>15</sup> Green, Baird, and Fawkes, 2007, P3.

<sup>16</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P7.

## A Comparison of Public Service Employee Surveys

### The Surveys

#### 1. Canadian Public Service Career Satisfaction Survey (CSDES)

Designed and carried out by the Centre for the Study for Democracy, Queen's School of Policy Studies (CSD), two groups were targeted: Alumni of Queen's Masters of Public Administration program (email invitation delivered to 689 people in October 2009; return rate of 29%) and three classes (96 respondents in September 08; January 09; October 09 groups = 100% return rate) of the Public Executive Program (PEP) at Queen's School of Business. Responses are grouped by both employer (Canadian Federal Government, the Ontario Public Service or Municipal Government) and tenure (less than or equal to 10 years of service and greater than 10 years service), which are included in the shaded rows throughout this report. We also used data collected from a group of Hong Kong senior civil servants<sup>17</sup>. Although not integrated in each set of data presented, references are interspersed for comparison sake.

The Canadian Public Service Career Satisfaction Survey (CSD)			
Which organization do you / did you work for?	Response %	Male	Female
Federal government	36%	54%	46%
Ontario government	32%	44%	56%
Local (municipal)	9%	65%	39%
Other: Provincial	16%		
Other: territorial	1%		
Other: Public Agencies	7%		

#### 2. Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)

The Public Service Employee Survey was administered to all employees in the Public Service for which Treasury Board is the employer as well as employees of participating separate agencies. The survey was a voluntary census, and the collection was done using an electronic questionnaire, between 2008-11-03 and 2009-01-09. Data was also captured from 6172 paper questionnaires received between November 2008 and January 2009. The target population for 2008 consisted of 257,764 individuals. The overall response rate for the 2008 Public Service Employee Survey was 65.8% (169,600).

#### 3. 2009 OPS Employee Survey (OPSES)

The OPS Employee Survey is a census survey; all 69,340 Ontario Public Service employees were invited to participate (on-line or manually) to a 98 question survey. In 2009, 41,604 employees participated (response rate of almost 60%). Ipsos Reid presented the survey results on June 1, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Axworthy facilitated Directorate Seminars for the Hong Kong SAR Program, in Hong Kong in April 2009. Prior to his class, Participants completed the on-line survey during the period of March 15, 2009 to April 15, 2009.



## Survey says ...

In this section of the report, we compare responses across three employee satisfaction surveys described above. We use Ingstrup and Crookall's three pillars as a frame in choosing common questions that explore factors that we see as supporting the three pillars of aim, character and execution.

### Pillar 1. Aim

The strength of the first pillar relies on organizations providing a clear direction of where they are heading.

#### Mission

*“Properly implemented, the **mission** will quickly become the department's most powerful management tool. Everything must be reexamined in the light of the mission.”<sup>18</sup>*

Close to 80% of CSDES respondents indicated that the organization they work for has a clear mission statement (CSDES.Q14) with 72% indicating that it deals with core values, principles and strategic objectives of the organization (CSDES.Q15). Interestingly, confidence in the clarity of the mission increases by almost 10% with tenure: 81% of those with than 10 years work experience vs. 72% of those with less than ten years invested in the public service agree the values of the mission are aligned with the behaviour of the organization. Just over half all CSDES respondents (54%) admit that they do not receive guidance from senior management about how to best achieve the objectives of the mission statement (CSDES.Q16) and again, while 55% of all respondents with more than 10 years experience indicate that senior management talks to them about the mission statement and their definition of how best to achieve it, 62% of those with less than ten years experience stated the opposite.

	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral	
PSES47. I can clearly explain to others the direction (for example the vision, values or mission) of my organization.	70%	14%	16%	
OPSES32. I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my ministry's goals.	75%	7%	1%	16%
<b>CSDES15. The mission statement deals with core values, principles and strategic objectives of this organization.</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>	
All Federal	65%	17%	17%	
Federal >10 years	76%	12%	11%	
All Ontario	72%	13%	15%	
Ontario > 10 years	83%	11%	6%	

<sup>18</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P57.

All Municipal	72%	10%	18%
Municipal > 10 years	85%	10%	5%

While only 7% of survey respondents reported that the mission statement is too general to be of much value in the daily work realities, many participants in the focus group sessions, hosted by CSD, complained that its vagueness had little resonance with the day-to-day realities of their jobs. This sentiment was echoed by an MPA respondent:

*“Reinforce the notion that people join the public service to help build a better Canada—while most mission statements refer to this notion, we need to do a better job connecting the strategic line of sight to our day-to-day functions.” (CSDES.Q60).*

## Leadership

Ingstrup and Crookall found that their respondents shared a surprising similarity of leadership approaches. Many respondents repeated certain principles: listening, involving and delegating, commitment to employees; and consistency.<sup>19</sup>

*PEP respondent: I have only one comment. Many of the questions that I answered today would have been completely opposite if the questionnaire would have been asked a year ago when I was working for a different Director. Which tells me that the right leader does make a difference. (CSDES.Q60).*

What is good leadership and management when it comes to soft skills? It starts by understanding the role of leaders. Stephen Taylor, former Chief Executive of the Leadership Centre for Local Government, offers a useful and simple working definition of leadership as “creating a space in which people can do and want to do what needs to be done.” He goes on to argue that by understanding oneself, the team, the organisation and the operating environment, the leader is in a better place to address the more practical tasks<sup>20</sup>.

While the answers provided by OPSES respondents indicate dissatisfaction in level of engagement of senior leadership regarding employee well-being (less than 50% agreeing that senior leadership is genuinely interested in the well-being of employees (OPSES.Q59)), overwhelmingly (90%), Ontario respondents to CSDES feel that their opinions seem to count (CSDES.Q37). However, OPSES data reveals that barely 50% think that the ministry is on the right track regarding planning for the future (OPSES.Q34), less than 30% of these respondents indicated confidence that results from the 2009 employee survey will be addressed and only 21% indicate that they are aware that action was taken on the concerns expressed in the 2007 survey.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P54.

<sup>20</sup> MacLeod and Clarke, P82.

<sup>21</sup> Ipsos Reid/OPS, 2009, P20.

Contrarily, only 15% of tenured Federal respondents strongly agree that their opinion seems to counts (CSDES.Q37), yet the majority of PSES respondents feel respected, as indicated in the table below (PSES.Q87). Interestingly, only 54% state that they have confidence in the senior management of their department or agency (PSES.Q52). This could be the result of 35% of the these employees having had three different supervisors in their current job in the past three years – that’s almost 58,000 Federal Public Servants. The productivity and engagement implications are immense especially considering the significance of interpersonal relationship with one’s boss having four times greater impact on one’s discretionary work effort than other factors such as pay (Gibbons, 2006).<sup>22</sup>

*“Senior official (DMs and ADMs) spend too little time in one place (less than 2 years, these days). This has a negative impact on the departments they run, and makes achieving progress on resolving key issues more difficult”. (CSDES.Q60)*

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ Neutral	
PSES87. Overall, my organization treats me with respect.	33%	40%	8%	5%	12%	
OPSES59. Senior leadership in my ministry is genuinely interested in the well-being of employees.	15%	27%	14%	12%	5%	27%
<b>CSDES37. At work my opinion seems to count.</b>	32%	50%	6%	5%	6%	
All Federal	22%	58%	3%	7%	10%	
Federal >10 years	15%	58%	11%	5%	10%	
All Ontario	38%	52%	5%	3%	2%	
Ontario > 10 years	40%	49%	5%	2%	4%	
All Municipal	44%	44%	12%	0%	0%	
Municipal > 10 years	10%	70%	20%	0%	0%	

Over 80% of CSDES respondents indicate that they have trust and confidence in their supervisor but many of their open ended comments reflect dissatisfaction with management. One senior civil servant offers this comment:

*“Regrettably it is not always the right people taking leadership roles in the public service. Bureaucracy and sycophancy are key obstacles. On the positive side, the experiences acquired in the public service could be pretty eye-opening and help much to broaden one’s horizons if and when one takes the given opportunities as professionally and sincerely as a genuine ‘civil servant’.” (CSDES.Q58)*

The CSDES Survey included a question about personal leadership. A similar question was included in the 2009 PSES. The results indicate that tenured respondents have a stronger

22 Gibbons. P8.

sense of personal leadership and how it contributes to the mission of the organization where they work.

PSES Q10. I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's or agency's goals	81.0%	19.0%
<b>CSDS17. I understand how my leadership contributes, or did contribute, to achieving the mission and how I could better contribute.</b>	<b>Agree 71%</b>	<b>Disagree 29%</b>
All Federal	64%	36%
Federal >10 years	78%	22%
All Ontario	55%	45%
Ontario > 10 years	70%	30%
All Municipal	79%	21%
Municipal > 10 years	80%	20%

In response to the CSDS question: *Which two elements of your job as a public servant are most important to you in determining your overall level of job satisfaction*, one MPA reflects on personal leadership:

*“The ability to bring about change and contribute to positive service or products from the public sector. I have always been in positions where I could influence decisions. I enjoy the feeling of working toward goals that are not defined by a bottom line. In addition, I have the pleasant experience of working with bright individuals also keen to improve governance or program delivery”.*  
(CSDS.Q59)

## Accountability

To provide clarity, Instrup and Crookall define and distinguish accountability and the sister concepts of authority and responsibility. “Authority involves the legal legitimacy to undertake certain actions. Responsibility is the obligation to take care of a certain area. Once you have responsibility you are expected to make a judgment about what part of your authority you need to apply, and how, to your defined area of responsibility. Accountability follows. If you have authority and responsibility, you also have an obligation to explain how you discharged your responsibility: You must tell your story. But accountability carries a twin obligation: you have to live with the consequences of your actions.”<sup>23</sup>

“ I used to be very "pro" publicly funded services, but now that I work for the government I see insane amounts of waste related to the inability to move things forward due to political pressures. A lot of smart people, who can't get much accomplished, and are limited by the political cycle in their success.

<sup>23</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P74.

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/Neutral	
PSES14a. I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's or agency's goals.	42%	39%	5%	3%	11%	
OPSES32. I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my ministry's goals.	35%	40%	5%	2%	1%	16%
<b>CSDES20. I know what is expected of me at work because accountabilities are properly defined.</b>	23%	55%	13%	3%	5%	
All Federal	16%	56%	14%	7%	6%	
Federal >10 years	25%	59%	9%	7%	0%	
All Ontario	20%	46%	22%	4%	8%	
Ontario > 10 years	28%	39%	4%	25%	4%	
All Municipal	22%	56%	11%	0%	11%	
Municipal > 10 years	25%	50%	20%	0%	5%	

While 75% of all CSD respondents indicated that they know what is expected of them because accountabilities are well defined (CSDES.Q20), only 52% overall **think that the right factors are being measured** (CSDES.Q21).

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
<b>CSDES23. Regarding accountability, the right factors are being measured.</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>44%</b>		4%	17%
All Federal	6%	35%	33%	6%	20%
Federal >10 years	10%	45%	27%	4%	14%
All Ontario	15%	41%	22%	5%	16%
Ontario > 10 years	20%	39%	30%	4%	7%
All Municipal	8%	40%	27%	0%	25%
Municipal > 10 years	5%	45%	15%	0%	35%

*“We are "accountabilitied" endlessly, from every perspective. Risk taking is not genuinely encouraged, valued or supported. I do not truly believe that some of the ways that accountability is measured actually support the public interest”. (CSDES.Q60)*

The CSDES results clearly indicate that the employees surveyed want well defined responsibilities, however, they feel vulnerable to political pressures that seem to be undermining management. This is reflected in the fact that 51% of all CSDES respondents indicate that their organization is NOT free from undue partisan political interference (CSDES.Q48). Filtered responses to this question indicates that tenure affects the perceived level political interference. For example, 58% of the Public Executive Program (PEP) respondents (all > 10 years service) feel that their organization is free from undue partisan political interference (CSDES.Q48) whereas only 40% of the MPA respondents concur.

<b>CSDS 48. This organization is free from undue political interference</b>	Yes		No	
All CSDS	49%		51%	
	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>
All Federal	45%	71%	55%	29%
Federal >10 years	60%	79%	40%	21%
All Ontario	39%	37%	61%	63%
Ontario > 10 years	36%	46%	65%	54%
All Municipal	19%	50%	81%	50%
Municipal > 10 years	20%	67%	80%	33%

Overall, 92% of CSDS respondents report having personal experience working with politicians (Minister/Mayors) and their staff and they understand the difference between their role and the roles of political staffers (CSDS.Q5), but interestingly 66% do not feel that they have been adequately trained for the added demands that working with partisan offices requires. They also do not think that the political staffers are particularly well trained either – over 50% of MPA respondents think that political staff are seldom capable, nor effectively trained, to fulfill the responsibilities given to them in that role (CSDS.Q55).

<b>CSDS 49. I have personal experience working with politicians (Ministers/Mayors) and /or their staff?</b>	Yes		No	
All CSDS	92%		8%	
	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>
All Federal	64%	56%	36%	44%
Federal >10 years	73%	50%	27%	<b>PEP</b>
All Ontario	73%	100%	27%	0%
Ontario > 10 years	81%	100%	19%	0%
All Municipal	100%	N/A	0%	N/A
Municipal > 10 years	100%	N/A	0%	N/A

<b>CSDS 6. If you answered yes Q#5, please indicate if you have received adequate training to deal with the added demands?</b>	Yes		No	
All CSDS	44%		66%	
	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>	<b>MPA</b>	<b>PEP</b>
All Federal	29%	60%	71%	40%
Federal >10 years	36%	63%	64%	37%
All Ontario	50%	56%	50%	44%
Ontario > 10 years	57%	56%	43%	44%
All Municipal	38%	N/A	62%	N/A
Municipal > 10 years	46%	N/A	54%	N/A

Respondents were asked where responsibility for policy decisions should reside. Responses across the board indicate that the development of communication policy and financial policy should be shared equally with politicians. The Ontario respondents are very adamant that the values and objectives of policy be shared – the others are less convinced. It's very

apparent that Federal and Provincial civil servants feel strongly that they should be implementing policy. Their tenured municipal counterparts are split on this matter.

<b>54. Who should have the major responsibility for developing financial policy for the government?</b>	Politicians	Public Service	Shared Equally	No Opinion
All Federal	19%	31%	36%	14%
Federal >10 years	21%	33%	36%	10%
All Ontario	14%	42%	42%	2%
Ontario > 10 years	27%	32%	42%	0%
All Municipal	31%	13%	56%	0%
Municipal > 10 years	20%	40%	40%	0%

<b>55. Who should have the major responsibility for developing the communications policies of the government?</b>	Politicians	Public Service	Shared Equally	No Opinion
All Federal	14%	37%	31%	18%
Federal >10 years	14%	36%	34%	16%
All Ontario	21%	40%	38%	1%
Ontario > 10 years	26%	37%	37%	0%
All Municipal	31%	13%	56%	0%
Municipal > 10 years	10%	40%	50%	0%

<b>56. Who should have the major responsibility for implementing policy?</b>	Politicians	Public Service	Shared Equally	No Opinion
All Federal	1%	80%	9%	10%
Federal >10 years	0%	84%	11%	5%
All Ontario	1%	77%	21%	1%
Ontario > 10 years	2%	78%	20%	0%
All Municipal	31%	13%	56%	0%
Municipal > 10 years	10%	40%	50%	0%

<b>How do the responses of Hong Kong's senior public service executives compare?</b>	Politicians	Public Service	Shared Equally	No Opinion
Who should have the major responsibility for developing financial policy for the government?	7%	36%	50%	7%
Who should have the major responsibility for developing the communications policies of the government?	21%	32%	39%	7%
Who should have the major responsibility for implementing policy?	0%	64.30%	25%	11%

Strong opinions on accountability and responsibility were offered by employees (CSDES.Q60):

*“Often, the politicians go overboard in responding to issues - the response is political, not practical. For example, with respect to E-Health, the organization ignored the rules – the rules did not need a major overhaul. It is not necessary to implement a new reporting regime. Sometimes you can bring in a consultant for a small amount of money to accomplish something quickly. So for the bad*

*actions of one organization, everyone else who had been obeying the rules was punished, resulting in more "administrative" work (process)—less effectiveness. Sometimes the senior executives should say "no" to those political responses—recognize the workload that the political response will require - and support the public servants -acknowledge their expertise, judgment and integrity".*

HK	CDN	Senior public servants weigh in on accountability and partisanship
88%	42%	Indicted undue political interference in their department/agency
54%	93%	Know what is expected of them because accountabilities are properly defined.
69%	62%	Indicate that the right factors are being measured
48%	0%	Feel that political staff are seldom effectively trained to do their jobs
62%	14%	Are not satisfied with the incentives offered for good performance

*"The drive towards accountability has been translated into many levels of approval and has resulted in a loss of responsibility and ownership of a project or process".*

## Pillar 2. Character

The second pillar requires that public service organizations have a strong sense of who they are and what is important, such as trust, communication, people centered activities.

CSDS respondents were asked how their organization best learns: using *past experiences (institutional memory) or comparable work of other organizations in the province, Canada, or the world?* Learning from institutional memory outweighed learning from other organizations by 3:1.

This question was prompted by a paragraph in *The Dead Generalist (Straw, 1998)*, where the author laments that the British civil service has limited connections with the outside world and with each other, experience through professional institutions, conferences, seminars, trade journals and through time spent on the ground with consumers and front-line staff. Continental European administrators, who are much more used to learning from the experience (good and poor) of other countries, ask, *"Why is it that we never see the British at the public administration debates and seminars in Brussels?"*<sup>24</sup>

Are Canadian civil servants encouraged to look outward for inspiration?

### People-centered activities

The value for people came out in remarkably consistent ways in for Ingstrup - Crookall's sample and were demonstrated by listening, developing people, delegating responsibility

<sup>24</sup> Straw, 2004, P29.



and trusting staff to perform competently.<sup>25</sup> These factors are mirrored in the surveys we analyzed—workers are generally satisfied with their job and the job performance feedback that they receive. Asked if their job performance was evaluated fairly and regularly, just over 70% indicated affirmatively (CSDES.Q27), with 74% of Federal and Ontario +10 years employees more satisfied with their regular performance evaluations than all others – most of which are hovering around the 60% mark.

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know /Neutral	
PSES33. I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance.	31%	36%	11%	9%	13%	
OPSES55. I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	24%	27%	13%	11%	2%	22%
<b>CSDES27. My performance on the job is evaluated fairly and regularly.</b>		71%	29%			
All Federal		63%	37%			
Federal >10 years		74%	26%			
All Ontario		62%	38%			
Ontario > 10 years		74%	26%			
All Municipal		58%	42%			
Municipal > 10 years		55%	45%			

Overwhelmingly, the respondents in all surveys are satisfied with the opportunities to learn and grow available to them and indicated an appreciation for career development support to generate fresh thinking and new ideas.

<sup>25</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P97.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know/neutral	
PSES17. I get the training I need to do my job.	67%	20%	13%	
OPSES39. The quality of training and development I have received is good.	61%	21%	2%	26%
<b>CSDES26. I have had opportunities, at work, to learn and grow in this past year.</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>15%</b>		
All Federal	78%	22%		
Federal >10 years	82%	18%		
All Ontario	86%	14%		
Ontario > 10 years	82%	18%		
All Municipal	95%	5%		
Municipal > 10 years	90%	10%		

Even so, a senior public executive urges the federal government to:

*“Provide greater support to staff at all levels to find opportunities for growth and/or change. This is provided only at senior levels. So many people grow stagnant in their jobs because they don't have the skills or support to move into a different one. It is particularly difficult for a person new to the organization to chart their career”.*

Does today's civil servant enjoy a healthy life/work balance? Few wholeheartedly agree and tenured Ontario civil servants mostly disagree (51%). Anecdotes shared by the Queen's Executive Program participants, and the responses noted below, lead us to surmise that that life/work balance is sacrificed with each promotion.

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/Neutral	
PSES5. I have support at work to balance my work, family and personal life.	38%	36%	9%	5%	12%	
OPSES10. I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	25%	32%	11%	7%	1%	23%
<b>CSDES31. I have enough time to get my work done and to spend time for myself and my other obligations and interests.</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>4%</b>	
All Federal	14%	45%	27%	9%	4%	
Federal >10 years	3%	48%	34%	10%	4%	
All Ontario	9%	44%	31%	12%	4%	
Ontario > 10 years	1%	28%	2%	49%	20%	
All Municipal	8%	5%	28%	0%	11%	
Municipal > 10 years	5%	50%	30%	0%	15%	

## Communication

Is attention paid to internal and external audiences? How informed do civil servants feel regarding work related matters? Is there room for improvement?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/neutral	
PSES57. Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff.	14%	36%	20%	12%	16%	
OPSES60. Essential information flows effectively from senior management to staff.	11%	25%	17%	12%	5%	30%
<b>CSDES38. The organization does and excellent job of keeping me informed about matters affecting my work and professional matters that may affect me.</b>	15%	46%	15%	16%	8%	
All Federal	11%	44%	20%	7%	18%	
Federal >10 years	16%	53%	10%	5%	15%	
All Ontario	11%	40%	26%	4%	18%	
Ontario > 10 years	15%	39%	24%	5%	17%	
All Municipal	13%	48%	13%	0%	26%	
Municipal > 10 years	15%	45%	0%	0%	40%	

*“In my current department I am very disappointed by the quality of internal communications and by the lack of managerial skill demonstrated by middle and senior managers. Policy and/or technical skills are valued; management and communications skills are not”. (CSDES.Q60)*

Results indicate that interagency communications are strongly supported except, perhaps, at the senior municipal level (only 60% agree). Illustrative comments included in the 2005 OPS Employee survey demonstrate dissatisfaction:

*“While senior management groups are seriously involved with promoting the ministry to their external clients, there is no more time left for them to communicate with their employees in a more direct manner. While it seems that e-mail system became the trend, hopefully, here is still room for face-to-face contact”.*

*“There has been more staff communication from this Deputy than others before him. My new manager does not share information as readily as his predecessor. My colleagues and clients expect me to be in the loop, but these days, they are often the ones informing me”. (OPS Employee Survey 2005, Pg.68)*

One MPA respondent suggested that organizations should ...

*“... allow the people who do the work to actually talk directly to the people requesting it. This vastly minimizes the number of times you have to rework a project to make it reflect what the Deputy wanted. You can't write the right product after the request has been filtered through five or six people in two*

languages. It wastes time and energy. Let the working level interact with the most senior managers and this would minimize our inefficiencies on many projects". (CSDES.Q60)

## Trust

Ingstrup and Crookall describe it as the glue that holds us together, the lubricant that keeps the wheels moving, the miracle ingredient of organizational life. To thrive, individuals must be able to trust the organization and their colleagues. In **trusting climates**, staff is more likely to suggest improvements.<sup>26</sup> Although the majority of all CSD respondents answered that they trust that their supervisor will take action on complaints, almost as many disagree as agree that corrective action for bad performance is in place (CSDES.Q23).

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Neutral	
PSE50. I feel that I can initiate a formal redress process (grievance, right of appeal, health and safety, etc.) without fear of reprisal.	18%	28%	14%	11%	28%	
OPSES18. I feel free to express opinions that diverge from those of management without fear of reprisal.	18%	31%	14%	12%	2%	25%
<b>CSDES25. I trust that my supervisor will take action on reports of wrong doing and that bad performance will be dealt with.</b>	12%	48%	18%	5%	17%	
All Federal	11%	36%	24%	11%	18%	
Federal >10 years	14%	45%	20%	7%	14%	
All Ontario	8%	42%	20%	25%	20%	
Ontario > 10 years	4%	46%	21%	0%	22%	
All Municipal	8%	57%	19%	11%	5%	
Municipal > 10 years	5%	60%	10%	0%	25%	

This suggestion was offered by a respondent of the CSD survey on how to improve the grievance process:

*“Provide a clear and confidential whistle-blower mechanism for employees, so that they may by-pass destructive supervisors and directly report instances of waste, theft, bullying by supervisors, racism, violence, etc. There are too many bad, bad, bad supervisors in our department for employees to be able to trust taking their concerns to their bosses. There needs to be a reliable alternate mechanism in place – and one that has real powers and TEETH, rather than just a symbolic sinkhole that concerns are thrown into, never to be addressed in the future”. (CSDES.Q59)*

## Pillar 3. Execution

This third pillar of a well-performing organization represents how innovation, openness to change and teamwork contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

<sup>26</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P129.

Ingstrup and Crookall claim that organizations that they studied had voracious appetites for new knowledge. One put it “we hunt for good ideas,” another “we are constantly seeking new knowledge and better ways of doing things. “Traditional public service downplays rewards and seeks to treat employees uniformly. It’s feared that the public will be enraged if “bonuses” are paid to individuals for doing their duty. But that timidity flies in the face of the realities of motivation: incentives improve performance. Creative, well-performing agencies seek to establish mechanisms that catch people doing things right and reward them for it.<sup>27</sup>

The three surveys the CSD reviewed surveys indicate that the public service does not share “voracious appetites” for innovation with 55% of CSDES respondents disagreeing that their organization is willing to be entrepreneurial and take risks. Barely 50% of PSES and OPSES responses indicate that innovation is valued.

This comment offered by a Queen's Executive Program (PEP) respondent to the CSDES may explain the reason:

*“Change the performance management system to reward prudence and thoughtfulness. While innovation and risk-taking are necessary to move an organization forward, currently they are often honoured without regard to implications. this can lead to costly mistakes, which could have been avoided by balancing with due diligence during the evaluation process”. (CSDES.Q60)*

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ Neutral	
PSES12. I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work.	24%	31%	26%	17%	2%	
OPSES20. Innovation is valued in my work unit.	19%	34%	12%	8%	2%	26%
<b>CSDES45. This organization is willing to be entrepreneurial and take risks.</b>		44%	55%			
All Federal		28%	72%			
Federal >10 years		33%	67%			
All Ontario		42%	58%			
Ontario > 10 years		43%	57%			
All Municipal		53%	47%			
Municipal > 10 years		60%	40%			

Open-ended responses indicate that many respondents value empowerment and over 70% of CSDES respondents felt that their opinions seem to count (CSDES.Q37). Likewise, 75% of PSES employees felt that their immediate supervisor would take their suggestions to improve work practices seriously (PSES.Q40). Almost 70% of Federal (PSES.Q39) report that they receive meaningful recognition from their immediate supervisor when a job is well done. Provincial employees are dissatisfied with the way they are recognized and

27 Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P79.

rewarded with only 51% agreeing that they receive meaningful recognition for work well done (OPSES.Q55) and only 38% report that their ministry does a good job of recognizing its employees. When asked about incentives (CSDES.Q24), 60% of both Federal and Ontario respondents agreed that these are in place for good performance.

This comment was offered by a PEP respondent to the CSDES:

*“Understand going in that you are not going to set the world on fire. Because of the need for the appearance to the public of fairness and transparency, you may not get promoted based on your daily skills on the job. You must go through an interview process and you need to be able to perform well in an interview. So learn how to do this”.*

## Change Management

According to Instrup and Crookall, well-performing organizations constantly change and improve—out of necessity often. Effective agencies have built a framework of trust, truth, openness, communication, and continuous learning that allows them to steer their own internal change agenda and ease the burden of externally imposed change. “Change management has not, historically, been an attribute of the public service. It is now a necessity.”<sup>28</sup>

One of the 50% MPA respondents who thinks that the organization they work for is unwilling to change states,

*“Public service can only change if the emphasis is placed on the public and what we are there do to which is serve the public and put the public first. The culture that exists is more one of looking out for yourself/your job and looking at what the next person has that you did not get – looking in versus looking out”.*  
(CSDES.Q59)

There is not an overwhelming feeling that change is welcome or helpful. While 66% of those working with the Ontario public service for more than 10 years feel that their organization is transparent and open to change (CSDES.Q41), less than 40% of this group think that change is managed well (CSDES.Q42). Tenured municipal employees show the most confidence in the change process with 50% agreeing that it is managed well, on the other hand, more than 50% of MPA respondents to CSDES stated that their organization is NOT transparent and NOT open to change but 75% of PEP participants answering the same question indicate the opposite (CSDES.Q41).

	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Don't know
PSES14a. I feel that the quality of my work suffers because of constantly changing priorities.	76%	22%	3%

<sup>28</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P194.

OPSPg40 (2006). Changing priorities make it difficult for me to be as productive as I might be.	34%	39%	24%
<b>CSDES44. Is change managed well within your department?</b>	44%	45%	13%
All Federal	31%	51%	18%
Federal >10 years	39%	51%	10%
All Ontario	36%	43%	21%
Ontario > 10 years	38%	43%	17%
All Municipal	43%	40%	17%
Municipal > 10 years	50%	40%	10%

*“Streamline processes for gaining or moving around resources. When major initiatives are announced, it is sometimes challenging to gain approvals to obtain or reallocate resources to get the job done. We also need to get better and knowing how to reallocate to priorities and stopping the work that doesn't specifically meet business priorities or add direct value”. (CSDES.Q59)*

Answers to CSDES.Q32—*The organization is performing better today than when I started my career*—may reflect how effective recent changes to the public service have been to the overall performance of the organization. Tenured Federal employees, who have weathered recent scandals and who may have had to implement changes as a result, appear to feel that their organizations are performing better now than when they started. Only 3% of the tenured Ontario public service strongly agree that their organization functions as well as it once did. These folks may be influenced by the recent E-Health scandal. Three quarters of the long-term municipal employee note improvements.

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
<b>CSDES32. The organization is performing better today than when I started my career.</b>	13%	40%	15%	6%	25%
Federal >10 years	24%	34%	22%	6%	16%
Ontario > 10 years	3%	28%	36%	18%	15%
Municipal > 10 years	15%	60%	20%	0%	5%

A comment made in *the OPS 2005 survey* demonstrates the positive affect of positive change:

*“I see definite positive changes over the past two years. Younger, more dynamic senior managers, less steeped in a culture of hierarchy and extreme risk aversion, are entering the system. My new manager and Director are communicative, approachable, respectful of my individuality, and supportive of initiatives I propose. I feel that I now can look beyond surviving and think of thriving”.*

Regardless of the affects of change, generally, employees are satisfied. The CSDES responses correlate with the Ipsos findings that engagement levels increase with staff length of service and to staff levels in the organization<sup>29</sup>.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
PSES8. Overall, I like my job.	41%	42%	8%	6%	3%
OPSES30. Overall, I am satisfied with my work as an OPS employee.	28%	39%	22%	7%	4%
<b>CSDES20. The level of satisfaction I experience in working for the public service as satisfying.</b>	37%	43%	12%	5%	3%
All Federal	30%	39%	11%	12%	7%
Federal >10 years	41%	39%	10%	3%	5%
All Ontario	25%	45%	18%	7%	5%
Ontario > 10 years	33%	39%	17%	7%	4%
All Municipal	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
Municipal > 10 years	45%	45%	10%	0%	0%

## Team Work

*In the past, staff in an organization used to work side-by-side with individuals of the same discipline, but each individual would effectively toil alone. Today the nature of work requires more sharing and, hence, more teams and **teamwork**.*<sup>30</sup>

In all surveys reviewed respondents confirmed that key elements of teamwork and collaboration were present in their workplaces.

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
PSES26. In my work, we work cooperatively as a team	37%	41%	8%	5%	9%
OPSPg35 (2006). When needed, members of my team help me to get the job done.		62%	19%	13%	
<b>CSD40. Are your colleagues supportive of teamwork?</b>		84%	12%		4%
All Federal		76%	19%		5%
Federal >10 years		80%	13%		7%
All Ontario		76%	15%		9%
Ontario > 10 years		75%	19%		6%
All Municipal		94%	3%		3%
Municipal > 10 years		95%			5%

<sup>29</sup> Ipsos Reid/IPAC, 2009, Slide 19

<sup>30</sup> Ingstrup and Crookall, 1998, P162.



## Recruitment

Although employees report that they are fairly satisfied with the jobs, **recruiting** and promotion processes are not rated highly. While almost half of MPA respondents stated that the recruitment process was a positive experience (CSDES.Q7), almost the same percentage (43%) agreed with that statement: the “*process is flawed and requires a major overhaul*” (CSDES.Q12).

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/Neutral	
PSES45. When I was a candidate in competitions in the past three years, I found that the competitions were run in a fair manner.	16%	21%	11%	10%	10%	
OPSES34. Hiring, promotion and other staffing processes in my ministry are conducted in an open manner.	13%	25%	16%	16%	2%	24%
<b>CSDES28. Job competitions are fair and transparent.</b>	8%	51%	16%	17%	8%	
All Federal	8%	44%	21%	12%	15%	
Federal > 10 years	13%	37%	16%	15%	20%	
All Ontario	6%	41%	20%	24%	19%	
Ontario > 10 years	10%	46%	19%	26%	11%	
All Municipal	8%	49%	17%	23%	17%	
Municipal > 10 years	5%	40%	20%	0%	20%	

A PEP respondent writes:

*“I would like to see a more aggressive pursuit of youth, the best and the brightest, greater effort to sell public service as a career of choice. I believe the public service requires a high level of energy, enthusiasm, innovation and fresh thinking to meet the challenges placed on the public service by diminishing resources and higher public expectations”.*

**Senior public servants weigh in on recruitment**

**Hong Kong (April 2009)**

Have a common recruitment exam. The Chinese language ability test may eliminate recruiting some fine graduates who studied overseas.  
 Longer interview sessions for greater understanding of potential candidates  
 Speed up the job offer process with regards to background checks required.  
 Entry qualification. Non-degree holders are no longer qualified.  
 Initial Screening through written assessment. Some candidates are good at writing but not thinking and vice versa.

**Queen's Public Executive Program (2009)**

If I could change just one aspect of recruitment - it would be the timing - it takes far too long to get someone in the door - too many people involved (new HR business units)  
 Involvement/support of Human Resources should be greater – senior program and policy executives appreciate the value in recruiting qualified staff but they often lack the time and expertise to make the necessary investments in the staffing process  
 Keep recruitment initiatives current and relevant given changing demographics and the new ways people use to communicate / network (Facebook etc...)  
 Less bureaucratic! The recruitment process is designed with "the rules" and collective agreements first and foremost in mind, rather than being based on a starting point of "what is the best process to attract and recruit the strongest candidate(s)."

According to Towers Perrin, the more engaged the workforce, the greater the percentage of employees intending to remain with their current employer. More than half (51%) of engaged employees across their global sample have no plans to leave their employer and only 4% are actively looking for another job. At the other extreme, 28% of disengaged employees are actively looking for another job and only 15% indicate that they have no plans to leave. From this Towers Perrin surmise that engagement translates into workforce stability—the casualty of low engagement is turnover.<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada (2007) reports that the aging workforce and looming retirement of the baby boomers is of increased concern for the Federal Government.<sup>32</sup> The 2006 Report of the Auditor General of Ontario noted that while 41% of staff in the senior management group would be entitled to retire within the subsequent 10 years, only one-third of the ministries had completed a succession planning process<sup>33</sup>.

Only 19% of PSES respondents are planning to leave within the next five years; the same percentage of Federal and Provincial respondents to the CSDES have given serious thought to leaving and are acting on it.

31 Towers Perrin, 2007.

32 Naczka, 2007, P9.

33 Ontario Auditor General, 2006, P.262

	Yes	No	Not Sure / Neutral	
PSES62. Are you planning to leave the Public Service within the next five years?	19%	61%	21%	
OPSES65. I would prefer to stay with OPS, even if offered a similar job elsewhere.	67%	11%	22%	1%
<b>CSDS 21. I have given serious thought to leaving the public service.</b>	Yes, but have not acted on it	Yes, seeking new job	No	
	31%	15%	54%	
All Federal	25%	19%	55%	
Federal >10 years	28%	11%	61%	
All Ontario	38%	19%	43%	
Ontario > 10 years	42%	16%	42%	
All Municipal	26%	12%	62%	
Municipal > 10 years	29%	16%	55%	

Keeping people, at all levels and ages, but especially older workers with critical knowledge, experience and skills, is going to be more important than ever in coming years, as our working population is getting older. Part of the problem is identified in this comment:

*“Young people still tend to be patronized and undervalued (and young is relative, I was 27 when hired by CIDA). I was hired through the New Development Officer programme, which is technically post secondary recruitment, but competition is so fierce that all of us who were hired in my year and had previous professional work experience and so were overqualified and underpaid for the official positions we were given (PM2), and were actually doing work at higher levels (P4). Also the NDO Programme was not really a career programme, but a recruitment programme. There was little to no attention to retention and career management once we got into CIDA. Very few NDOs are actually satisfied with the Programme.” (CSDS.Q60)*

### How Satisfied are Canadians with Government Services?

Most of the CSDS respondents indicate that they are proud of their work and at the same time embarrassed by the public perception and attitudes toward what they do. Is this feeling warranted?

Since 1997, Ekos Research Associates have been tracking key penetration and usage indicators, satisfaction levels and other existing patterns of behaviour related to the Information Highway while at the same time, focusing on key strategic issues facing organizations today.

The November 2007 Ekos survey asked Canadians to rate their overall satisfaction with the service or response they had received from the **federal** government during their most recent contact. It appears that Canadians are more satisfied with the Internet (self-help) than any other method of service delivery, however in-person contact is also over 75%. In alignment with what Ekos revealed, almost half of the PSES respondents to the 2005 survey thought that the mechanisms were in place to effectively link clients with problem-solvers.

Rate of satisfaction with the service or response received from the **federal** government:

Interaction by:	Telephone	Internet	Email	Mail	In-person
% satisfied	60	79	54	54	76

Half of Canadians surveyed by Ekos consistently predict that the service they receive from each level of government will be about the same in five years as it is now, however, confidence that services will improve in the next five years at all levels of government is declining<sup>34</sup>.

Quality of Service from different levels of government: % who think that service will get better:		Federal Ekos.Q2	Provincial Ekos.Q3	Municipal Ekos.Q4
	2001	41	40	38
	2003	39	38	34
	2005	42	42	39
	2006	38	39	37
	2007	31	31	30

The OPSES 2009 added questions regarding quality of service provided to Ontarians that indicate that the Ekos’s predictions of the public’s expectation of declining improvement levels is accurate—only 30% of OPSES respondents are enthusiastic about their organization’s efforts to improve customer service and only 25% feel that they have the support to deliver service excellence.

OPSES Service Delivery Questions	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NA
OPSES.Q22. My work unit is making an effort to improve service quality.	30%	38%	20%	6%	3%	3%
OPSES.Q26. In my work unit, we provide timely service to our clients.	29%	41%	19%	6%	3%	2%
OPSES.Q21. People in my work unit place a high value on providing good service to our clients.	38%	37%	16%	5%	2%	1%
OPSES.Q8. I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	25%	34%	23%	11%	6%	1%

*I love my job and feel that I personally make a difference to how the OPS is perceived. I am told that my attitude is very different to the usual government responses, i.e., I am well informed, want to assist, and if I don't know the answer, I will say so, take telephone number, etc., and get back to that person with the information usually within 24 hours. I am commended for the quick response time to letters, telephone calls (when voice mail is used), emails. However, there is no firm direction from 'above.' (OPS 2005 Survey, P65.)*

34 *Ibid.*

## Conclusion

The CSDES was designed to garner thoughtful responses. Several anecdotes, sprinkled throughout the paper, including some from the PSES and OPSES 2005, indicate conflicted feelings. Respondents want to make a difference—with integrity intact; they want autonomy, greater flexibility, opportunities to be more collaborative and creative, but are often working in a rigid environment that does not reward creativity; they are proud of their work and at the same time embarrassed by the public perception and attitudes toward what they do. Several expressed concern about the prevailing *'Good Enough for Government Work'*—an attitude which they feel undermines the reputation of the public service.

*"I really get tired of the "lazy bureaucrat" response when you say you work for the government – the span of accountability for senior management in the OPS is at great or greater than private sector, for a lot less money. And - you need to operate in a "fishbowl" environment (CSDES.Q59).*

Common themes emerged that suggest that public servants want to streamline activities to maximize efficiencies; ensure fairness and improve communications; they want to be empowered and rewarded for good performance. Employees value cross-departmental working and should be encouraged to do so.

## Capacity and performance

Studies show, pride in one's work and a positive interpersonal relationship with one's boss are said to have four times greater impact on one's discretionary work effort than other factors such as pay, (Gibbons, 2008), yet rotating senior staff has been tagged by survey respondents as a major issue that affects accountability, productivity, and engagement:

- 31% of Federal employees reported in the PSES 2008 that they had three or more supervisors during the last three years of their current job – this translates into 58,000 federal civil servants having three different supervisors in a three year period! Inevitably, a new manager brings change, yet only 31% of the Federal CSDES survey respondents feel that change is managed well within their department. This could be the result of the loss of experience and specialist knowledge when senior managers are rotated from department to department. Employees are in a constant state of flux as they adjust to different work styles.

A senior federal public service executive offers a potential solution:

*"I think elected or appointed Cabinet Ministers should be required to possess post secondary qualifications or subject matter expertise in the related discipline, as we find in the United States where the Secretary of Education or Transportation is actually qualified to be working in the field. I think this system would yield better public policy development and protect the public from rash politically motivated public policy decisions". (CSDES.Q60)*

Respondents expressed strong concerns with management in their agencies. Except for the Municipal focus group, less than 50% of respondents in all surveys trust that grievances will be dealt with fairly and have no confidence that anything will be done if they do complain to their supervisor.

Tenured Federal employees, who have weathered recent scandals and who may have had to implement changes as a result, appear to feel that their organizations are performing better now than when they started. But only 3% of the tenured Ontario public service strongly agree that their organization functions as well as it once did. These employees may be influenced by the recent E-Health scandal.

### On attracting and retaining quality employees:

Opinions offered by both OPSES and CSDES respondents indicate changes due to budget cuts and restructuring efforts seem to have made recruitment and human resource planning a low priority.

- Only 11% of MPA respondents strongly agree that the job posting that they responded to accurately reflects the position they were hired for.
- Many complained about the lengthy hiring process.
- Over 30% of the MPA alumni who had once worked in the public service but had left indicated that their reason for leaving public service was that their expectations were not met.

There are clear factors at work that support investigating current human resource management policies. Engaging stakeholders in open discussion regarding improvements in the three critical areas of public sector capacity is step one. Step two requires that pressure and desire for reform be created, followed by ownership and responsibility for said reform.

### On accountability design:

- Regarding accountability, 31% of CSDES respondents feel that the wrong factors are being measured.
- The CSDES results clearly indicate that employees feel vulnerable to political pressures that seem to be undermining management. This is reflected in the fact that 51% of all CSDES respondents indicate that their organization is NOT free from undue partisan political interference (CSDES.Q48).
- Tenure affects the perceived level political interference. In each category (Federal, Provincial, Municipal) those with more than 10 years of service report a lower level of political interference present.
- 100% of all Municipal respondents have worked with politicians and their staff and 80% of them report partisan interference.

- Public servants want to be engaged in policy decisions. CSDES responses indicate that the development of communication policy and financial policy should be shared equally with politicians. The Ontario respondents are very adamant that the values and objectives of policy be shared—their federal and Municipal counterparts are less convinced of this. It's very apparent that Federal and Provincial civil servants feel strongly that they should be implementing policy. Their tenured municipal counterparts are split on this matter.

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