

**Managing the Demographic Shift:
Retention and Recruitment of the Public Servant**

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Abstract

The Public Service will be experiencing a shortage of workers with the demographic shift as baby boomers leave the workforce over the over the next 5-10 years. This study has been conducted to investigate the determinants of job satisfaction and establish the importance of job satisfaction in determining retention and recruitment of Public Servants. Herzberg's two factor theory will be used. According to Herzberg's two factor theory, long term motivation determinants of job satisfaction include achievement, recognition of achievement, the work itself, responsibility, advancement or promotion and growth. Short-term factors or hygiene factors include organization policies and administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, salary, status and security. The purpose of the study is to review whether the Federal Government is meeting the satisfaction needs of its current employees and new hires in order to retain and recruit them. The results of the data confirm that on average the Public Servant employees are satisfied but there is significant room for improvement.

Key Words

Retention

Recruitment

Federal Public Servants

Job Satisfaction

Job Dissatisfaction

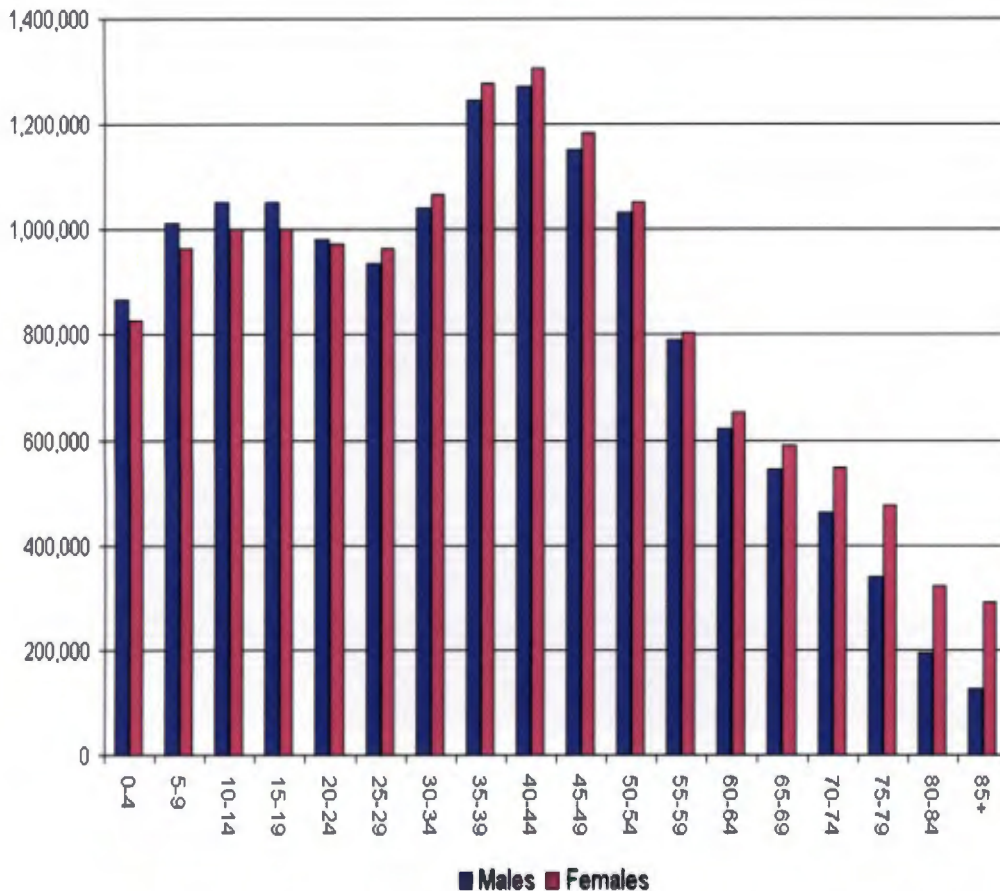
Introduction

The cradle to grave concept of employment has generally disappeared in the modern workforce; there is an evolving social contract between employers and employees that will test companies' human resources strategies against each other. The presence of a free agent mindset available to the workforce has raised an interesting question as to why people would choose to work in a specific environment and for how long. The value of the question for the Canadian government has never been more important than now with the large demographic shift that will change the historical trend of labor availability, labor composition and the tools that managers will need to utilize to ensure retention and recruitment in the future "War for Talent". According to Statistics Canada, in 2006 25.5 % of senior government managers and officials were 55 years or older. There is a need for the Canadian Government to recruit new talent and retain the talent it has within the organization in order for it to be in a position to fill the vacancies caused by the retirement of current staff (Naczek 2007).

The demographic shift will take place when the largest age demographic, individuals born between 1946 and 1964, begin to retire and leave the workforce. This age demographic is the largest portion of employees in the workforce today and there is not the same amount of new employees available to replace them when they retire. Please see Graph 1. This shifting of available employees, for the purpose of this paper will be referred to as the demographic shift and will have a negative effect on retention and recruitment of employees as employees will have more choices in his or her career paths as more jobs will be available to them.

Graph 1

Source: Luigi Zanasi, Demographics of Canada October 2005



The concept of a career in the public service developed only late in the 19th century, and the growth of federal government employment is largely a 20th century phenomenon. It was the military and social mobilization of the 20th century that produced an increase in federal government employees. At the century's end in America nearly one of every seven workers was employed by government. Today, the federal Public Service is the largest enterprise in Canada with 250,000 people employed in 20 departments, 180 regulatory and administrative agencies, the members of the Canadian Forces (64,000 plus 25,000 reservists), the RCMP

(some 20,000 regular and civilian members) and Crown corporations (for example, employees of CBC, VIA Rail and Canada Post) (Public Service Commission 2008).

Although the Canadian Public Service has grown, the interest in working as a Public Servant has decreased.

In the waning decades of the 20th century, there has been a growing dissatisfaction with government and public servants around the world. Polls show similar trends in most developed societies, including ones with strong state traditions like France and Japan and the polls are echoed in changes of people wanting to work for the government (Donahue and Nye 2003). According to Donahue and Nye (2003), educated young people, including graduates of schools of public policy and administration, are becoming less likely to enter government service due to the negative perception of the organization from scandals reported in the news. In addition, there is a perception that public service generates less satisfaction than working in the private sector. These perceptions could cause problems in recruiting government employees who have the right skills (Norris 2004).

According to a study by Duxbury, Dyke and Lam (1998) there is a portion of public servants who intend to leave the Public Service. Twenty percent of Public Servants who were interviewed indicated that their ultimate career aspirations were to work outside the government sector and 21% of those intending to leave indicated that they were thinking of leaving within the next year. Women in all work sectors and both male and female executives and scientists were most likely to have thought about leaving the Public Service.

In the past Public Service discussions about improving the human resources management system, particularly staffing and recruitment, have focused on issues of speed, flexibility,

affordability and access (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008). With the potential need for new recruits, there will have to be a significant human resources shift to develop a long term plan that identifies and implements these factors that will keep employees with the organization. This plan will need to identify what causes satisfaction in employees and how to increase satisfaction in order to respond to the growing pressure of escalating retirements, the potential return to a boom economy and the resulting increase in competition for knowledge workers and the diminishing supply of younger people in the labor market (Public Service Commission of Canada 2008).

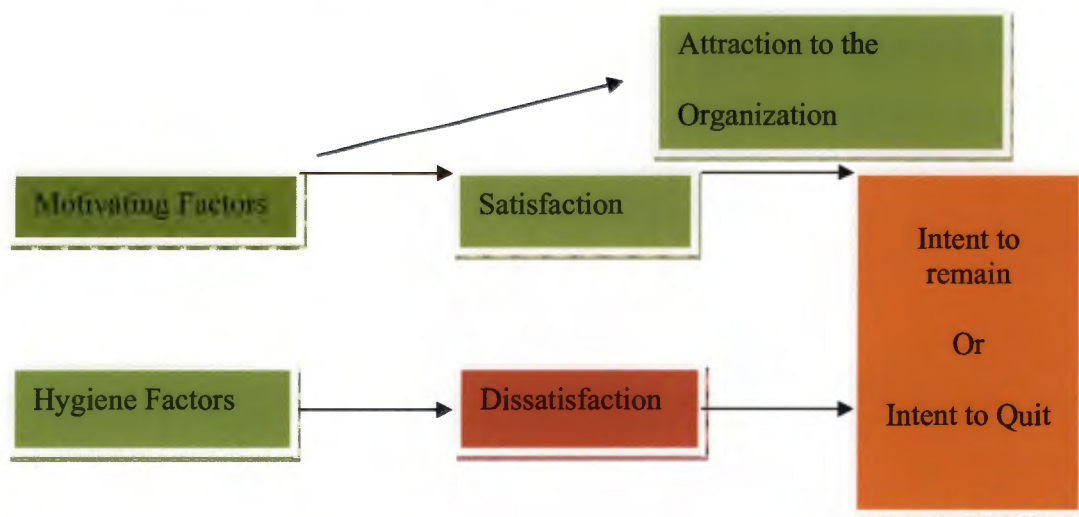
It is people, coordinated by institutions, who deliver public service so they are the lifeblood of the organization. Planning for the future means managing their satisfaction today (United Nations, 2005). The paper will discuss retention and the need to identify the satisfaction determinants that cause Public Servants to stay within the organization. The paper will also discuss recruitment and the need to identify how new hires are best recruited and how to retain them once they are employees. The purpose of this study is to investigate the determinates of job satisfaction and establish the importance of job satisfaction in determining recruitment and retention of Public Servants.

Literature Review

Determinants of Job Satisfaction

There are many studies and papers that discuss job satisfaction and the elements related to achieving a state of satisfaction at work. Job satisfaction is one's positive affective attachment to the job viewed either in its entirety (global satisfaction) or with regard to particular aspects (factor satisfaction) (Tett and Meyer, 1993).

There are several theories that define this relationship between employees' satisfaction with their employer and job and the elements or aspects that influence their satisfaction. One such theory is Fredrick Herzberg's two-factor theory. Fredrick Herzberg's theory states that people's satisfaction or dissatisfaction at work is influenced by motivating and hygiene factors which will lead to employees intent to stay or quit with an organization (Nelson and Quick, 2003). Motivating factors also attract an individual to an organization. The two-factor division of satisfaction determinants is made between psychological and physical aspects.



Factors that create motivation or job satisfaction describe a person's relationship with the task being performed and are associated with long-term positive effects on job performance such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement or promotion and growth (Nelson and Quick, 2003). Herzberg's research found a positive relationship between motivating factors and the employee's level of satisfaction. (See Table 1)

Motivation factors are needs that are based on psychological growth. The absence of these factors does not lead to dissatisfaction; rather it leads to less satisfaction (Nelson and Quick, 2003).

Additional factors, referred to as hygiene factors, must also be taken into consideration as these can influence job satisfaction as well. As stated by Nelson and Quick (2003), job dissatisfaction is a result of poor hygiene factors. Herzberg (1982) adopts the term Hygiene to describe extrinsic satisfaction factors that are related to a person's relationship to the context or environment in which they do their job. Hygiene factors offer only short-term changes in job attitudes. As hygiene factors are only short-term the overall level of satisfaction can quickly fall back to its previous level even with these factors present.

Hygiene factors include organization policies and administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, salary, status and security. (See Table 1) For example if a person complains about "poor supervision" then the supervision hygiene factor is poor or absent (Nelson and Quick, 2003). Hygiene factors are important up to a certain point, but beyond the threshold there is little value in improving the hygiene factors. Motivation and Hygiene factors are independent of each other such that even if there is absence of good hygiene factors, employees may still be motivated to perform their jobs well due to the presence of motivating factors (Nelson and Quick, 2003).

Table 1 - The Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Motivation SOURCE: Adapted from *Debra Nelson and James Campbell Quick, eds., Organizational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges. 4th ed. (United States: South-Western, 2003)*

Hygiene: Job dissatisfaction	Motivation: Job satisfaction
	Achievement
	Recognition of achievement
	Work itself
	Responsibility
	Advancement
	Growth
Organization policies and administration	
Supervision	
Interpersonal relations	
Working conditions	
Salary	Salary
Status	
Security	

Connecting Job Satisfaction and Turnover

There is a substantial body of literature that supports the proposition that satisfaction is linked to turnover intention and turnover of employees (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Shikiar and Freudenberg, 1982; Steel and Ovalle, 1984; Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Carsten and Spector, 1987; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990; Hom et al, 1992). Tett and Meyer's (1993) meta-analysis study confirms a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover. This study substantiates that when job satisfaction decreases the probability that an employee will leave increases and that the opposite is true that when job satisfaction increases an employee will more likely remain in the organization.

As I am interested in examining the degree to which motivation and hygiene factors are present in the Canadian government's workplace as they relate to retention, I will use Herzberg's two-factor theory as a framework for this examination. My model of relationships is shown in Figure 1.

Motivating & Hygiene Factors as they Relate to Job Satisfaction

The two-factor theory was developed in the United States primarily within the context of western cultural views (Nelson and Quick, 2003). The Federal Public Servant survey, New Hires survey and Fredrick Herzberg's study all have participant demographics of western knowledge based workers; therefore the demographics support the use of the two-factor theory.

Motivators and Job Satisfaction

Achievement

Goal attainment and having deadlines that are achieved creates a sense of achievement in employees. A study by Loriann Robinson (1990), found similar results to previous studies that goals are an important dimension for performance and job satisfaction. It is recognized that goal clarity or planning and participation in goal setting are factors linearly and positively related to job satisfaction (Arvey, Dudley and Boling, 1976). In addition a study completed by Judge, Bono, Erez and Locke (1990) concluded that there is a positive relationship between an individual's ability to attain goals and satisfaction.

Recognition of Achievement

The previous section confirmed the positive correlation between achieving goals and satisfaction for employees. This was an internal reward. But when an employee is recognized by others for achieving a goal, there is also an external reward by peers and managers that creates a feeling of recognition for a job well done. The attitude of employees is based on employees' perceptions (negative or positive) of their jobs (Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991). If an employee feels valued by being acknowledged through the reward of recognition, this will create a positive perception about his or her job. The reward can simply be verbal or it can be written but there has been a proven positive connection that when employees are recognized for achievement then their satisfaction level will increase (Norris, 2004). Empirical evidence by Liorens et al (2003) supports the positive relationship between recognition and satisfaction.

A key management strategy that can be used is to provide rewards by creating a corporate culture that includes verbal praise, celebration of project milestones or other accomplishments, a letter of appreciation from the company president, or a framed certificate recognizing achievement (Messmer, 2004). It can be concluded that to succeed as an organization, employers need to reward employees for good performance as rewards provide recognition of achievement which in turn will create satisfaction (Norris, 2004).

Work Itself

Job descriptions vary but levels of satisfaction can be found within the tasks and factors surrounding the job itself. Job satisfaction was found to be consistent with individual task properties including time-allocation, importance, autonomy, attention demands, complexity, and enjoyment of each individual task performed (Taber and Alliger, 1995).

Employees are attracted to work that allows them to make a difference and the more they are involved in their job the more they are likely to feel an inner satisfaction. Studies completed by Donahue and Nye (2003) and the Public Service Commission of Canada (2008) confirm that this desire to make a difference is a key attraction to an employer. The involvement of people in their jobs, in turn influences the intra psychic reward of sense of competence that they experience, which then directly influences the employees' job satisfaction (Sekaran, 1989).

It is important that employees' skills match their jobs and if further training is needed that they receive the training. Studies have shown that matching employees with the right jobs is important and it is important that jobs allow employees to do what they are best at as

statistically this has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction (Naczka, 2007). Capable people usually opt for a work environment that allows them the flexibility of learning while employed (Kaliprasad, 2006). Employees also prefer work that is more interesting, allows them to grow and makes better use of their talents. Kaliprasad (2006) stated that a stimulating and challenging work environment is a key element to providing variety. Workers who perform tasks that have a greater degree of skill variety are more satisfied than workers who perform jobs with fewer of these attributes (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008). It can therefore be concluded that the ability by an employee to make a difference by using their talents and the level of involvement that the employee has through the complexity of their job will influence their inner reward by providing a sense of competence which is positively related to job satisfaction.

Responsibility

An effective human resource strategy allows employees to participate in key decisions and provides them with access to resources and products to be successful and take responsibility for factors of the organization. (Kaliprasad 2006). This work environment allows for innovation and initiative which increases an employee's level of responsibility. Several studies confirm a positive correlation between the levels of satisfaction employees feel and the level of responsibility they have (Pergamit and Venum, 1999 and Industrial Engineer, 2007). These studies indicate that an employee who has the ability to take responsibility through innovation and initiative will be more satisfied in her or his job.

Understanding the relationship between responsibility and pay must also be considered. A employer must be cognitive of the fact that expanding job responsibilities can also have a

negative effect on employee job satisfaction. This can occur as the employee perceives inequality with their coworkers when they are doing additional work for the same rate of pay. Consequently, job duties and wages must be perceived as consistent with each other (Public Service Commission of Canada 2008).

Advancement or Promotion

Identified best practice organizations are willing to invest in the career development process for employees, give managers training on how to help employees with career development and provide employees with the tools and resources that they need to develop their careers (Duxbury, Dyke, Lam, 1998). Kaliprasad (2006) stated that in-house career development and promotion opportunities are considered to be highly effective strategies to attract the key staff to an organization as they are more likely to advance. A study conducted by Robie et al (1998) confirmed that higher level positions are associated with promotion prospects. Promotion has been determined to have a significant positive ($r = .53$) correlation with job satisfaction (Ellickson, 2002; Cranny, Smith and Stone, 1992). As well a meta-analysis examining the relationship between job level and job satisfaction concluded that as job levels increased, so did satisfaction (Robie et al, 1998). It can then be concluded that career development opportunities can lead to advancement and promotion and advancement and promotion will increase job satisfaction (Pergamit and Venum, 1999).

Growth

A study by Duxbury, Dyke and Lame (1998) comparing the fourteen organizations that have been identified as “best in class”, progressive organizations found that these companies have staff who feel satisfied about their growth. This is because these top business’s offer their employees a number of development options with a emphasis on experiential learning (e.g. on the job learning, rotations, assignments, projects). The ability to grow through job shadowing or working on projects allows employees to enhance their skills. When employees can grow and enhance their skills this will lead to greater satisfaction (Canada at Work, 2000). It can be concluded then that progressive organizations offers staff developmental opportunities which will lead to employee growth and employee growth will lead to greater satisfaction with the organization.

Hygiene and Job Dissatisfaction

Organization Policies and Administration

The Public Service is a unionized environment structured by a collective agreement and organized by rules. According to Donahue and Nye (2003), if organization policies and administration create a workplace that is highly bureaucratized and rule-bound, it is less appealing (Donahue and Nye, 2003). Less appeal can be a result of policies that do not promote a relationship of trust between the employees and the employer. This is supported by Williams (2005) who found that policies directly related to employees level of trust in an organization. If policies are written to be evasive or perceived by employees to not be in their favor then this can lead to distrust. It can be concluded then that trust is directly related

to organization policies and policies are less satisfying to employees if they are bureaucratic and rule bound which in turn will lead to job dissatisfaction.

Supervision

The nature of supervision in the workplace is defined by the relationship between the individual employee and the immediate supervisor (Hopkins, 1983). This relationship is made up of distinct factors. Ting (1997) found that employees' satisfaction with supervisors is assessed by the degree to which employees perceive their supervisor as motivating, providing clear work expectations, willing to listen, and willing to share authority and responsibility. Findings by Durst and de Santis (1997) state that organizations can effectively promote job satisfaction by recruiting well trained experienced executives who are good communicators and who share information with staff.

In addition Ting (1997) reported that government employees who enjoyed a supportive relationship with their immediate supervisors' experienced higher levels of job satisfaction than those who did not. A multi-analytical study completed by Ellickson (2002) provided consistent findings with Ting's (1997) observation that good relations with immediate supervisors will have a significant effect on employee satisfaction. Supervision had a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction .46 (Ellickson, 2002). Therefore it can be concluded that an employee's level of satisfaction in her or his relationship with her or his manager will have a direct correlations on the employee's level of satisfaction with the organization.

Interpersonal Relations

Employees who have stronger ties to an organization demonstrate more satisfaction as they feel like they are part of a team. It is important to pay attention to an organization's social environment with respect to employee's job satisfaction, especially as it relates to interactions among co-workers (Salancik, Pfeffer, 1978). Durst and de Santis (1997) state that the longer an employee has been associated with an organization, the more opportunity the employee has had to network with others and build relationships. Employees who relate well with their fellow employees display greater job satisfaction than those workers who do not (Public Service Commission of Canada, 2008). A meta-analytical study completed by Ellickson (2002) confirmed a positive relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction. The results underscore the importance of paying attention to an organization's social environment with respect to employee job satisfaction, especially as it relates to interactions among co-workers (Ellickson, 2002).

Working Conditions

Employees' perspectives of their working conditions create the framework for their work experiences. Norris (2004) states that the perception of an employment experience represents the physical rewards and benefits that people believe that they receive from work. As per Norris (2004) the initial decision to work for an employer is shaped by motivational values but employment experiences may modify the level of satisfaction by creating less satisfaction. For example if a employee chooses to work for a large organization but then is placed in a cramped working space, she or he may feel less satisfaction with his or her working conditions which may generate less satisfaction with her or his employer. Lee,

Mowday (1987) and Steers, Mowday (1981) both concluded that an employee's working conditions, including the work environment, is positively related to job satisfaction.

Salary

Salary is the only determinant that appears on both sides of the two-theory determinant table. It is rated as the smallest determinant for motivation and job satisfaction but it is also rated fifth as a hygiene job dissatisfaction determinant. (See Table 1) This indicates that while pay is required for physical satisfaction e.g. to purchase food it also can have an effect on psychological satisfaction e.g. status. Therefore levels of salary need to be evaluated in relation to the job duties to attract and retain competent people (United Nations, 2005).

It is difficult however to compare the private sector to the public sector as government agencies are not subject to the financial discipline of the marketplace for job promotions and pay raises (Norris, 2004). There is also evidence that performance-related pay can damage performance and motivation rather than improve them in the government (Marsden and Richardson, 1994).

Wages are also seen as a challenge as government in general tends to pay less-skilled workers better wages than they would earn in the private sector so these individuals will stay with an organization. These employees may block the entry level positions that skilled workers tend to use to enter the Federal Public Service (Donahue and Nye, 2003).

A multi-analytical study by Ellickson (2002) confirmed that pay has a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction at $r = .43$. An abundance of literature also links rewards such as pay to increased job satisfaction (Barber, Dunham and Formisano, 1992; Liou, Sylvia and

Brunk, 1990; Ting, 1997; Blau, 1999). It can therefore be stated that pay has a direct relation to satisfaction of an employee in relation to their job.

Security

Employees will report higher intentions to leave if they experience high levels of job insecurity. A study conducted by Laine (2009) concluded that the qualitative aspects of job insecurity correlated positively with intent to leave.

The decision to select one career pathway over another involves trade-offs, or ranked priorities, such as the importance to job security (Norris, 2004). The job security or the confirmation that employees job tenure will continue with an organization, is a perception that can affect an employee's level of satisfaction (Public Service Commission of Canada 2008).

If the Public Service is going to retain current employees and attract new employees the motivating factors of achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement or promotion and growth must be satisfied. In addition the more short-term hygiene factors of company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, salary, status and security must be satisfied. A secondary analysis of two studies will be conducted as they are relevant to understanding the current levels of satisfaction of the Public Servant.

Methodology

Data

The data for this study comes from two surveys conducted for the Federal Government. The first survey is the 2005 Public Service Employee Survey (Statistics Canada, 2006) with 106,495 employees from across Canada. The study was conducted by Statistics Canada via email invites but participants also had the opportunity to pre-order paper copies. The survey had a 58.9% participation rate. The Public Service Employee Survey is an important tool as it provides information to management on the current satisfaction levels of employees with a variety of different aspects of their jobs.

The second survey was the 2001 New Hires Survey (NHS) completed by 990 recently hired post-secondary new hires across all occupational categories from across Canada selected at random. The study compared recruitment experiences, job satisfaction and career plans between participants who were recruited through the Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) campaigns and those who were not. The NHS was administered via email and the Internet by IPSOS-Reid under contract to the Public Service Commission. This study provided key insight into issues regarding effective recruitment for Public Servant employees.

These two surveys were chosen as they are most relevant to how the Public Servants currently perceive their satisfaction with the organization for retention purposes and the perspective of New Hires to the organization as their satisfaction levels will effect recruitment. The 2005 Public Service Survey and New Hires survey also provided a much larger data base than doing an independent survey thereby providing a more rounded perspective due to the large size of the organization. As well, an additional Public Service

Survey was conducted in 2008 with results to be released in 2009, so the 2005 study can be used as a benchmark to see if improvements have been made.

The questions from the surveys that were used to operationalize the antecedents to job satisfaction are listed under each antecedent category. The questions selected are the most relevant questions to the antecedents that could be found in these surveys.

Unless otherwise stated in the following questions, employees completing the Public Service Employee survey were asked to respond using a 4 point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1=strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree. There were also other options available to participants being 5= not applicable, 7=don't know and 9=not stated. New Hires survey participants used a variety of answer methods that are generally stated with the question.

Motivating Factor Questions

Achievement

Public Service Employee Survey:

“My immediate supervisor assesses my work against identified goals and objectives”.

New Hires Survey:

“What type of information was provided to them when they were first hired?” Please list the information.

“Did you receive a job description?” Yes or No

“Did you receive a description of the work unit's activities and responsibilities” Yes or No

Recognition of Achievement

Public Service Employee Survey:

“I get adequate recognition from my immediate supervisor when I do a good job”.

Work Itself

Public Service Employee Survey:

“I get the training I need to do my job”.

“I am able to get on-the-job coaching to help me improve the way I do my work”.

New Hires Survey:

“Does the job make full use of your education?” Agree or Disagree

“Does the job offer the opportunity for interesting work?” Agree or Disagree

They were also asked to rate by importance, from eleven choices, why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service. Choices related to the work itself included:

“The opportunity to work in my field of study”

“To make full use of my knowledge, skills and abilities.”

Responsibility

Public Service Employee Survey:

“I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work”.

Advancement or Promotion

Public Service Employee Survey:

“My immediate supervisor does a good job of helping me develop my career”

“My department (agency) does a good job of supporting employee’s career development”

“I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department or agency, given my education, skills and experience”

“I believe I have opportunities for promotion within the Public Service, given my education, skills and experience”,

Public Service Employees were asked to choose either not at all, minimally, moderately and significantly to the following questions:

“To what extent, if at all, has the lack of access to developmental assignments affected your career progress in the Public Service over the last three years?”

“To what extent, if at all, has the lack of access lack of access of information about job opportunities affected your career progress in the Public service over the last three years”

“To what extent, if at all, has the restriction in the area of competitions affected your career progress in the Public service over the last three years”.

New Hires Survey:

“Do you agree that you have a good opportunity for promotion” Agree or Disagree

“Do you feel that your agency or department supports career development?” Agree or Disagree

“Does the Federal Public Service offer a variety of jobs? Agree or Disagree

New Hires were also asked to rate by importance, from eleven choices, why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service. The choice related to advancement or promotion included:

“Increased opportunities for advancement.”

Growth

Public Service Employee Survey:

“I have opportunities to develop and apply the skills I need to enhance my career”.

New Hires Survey:

New Hires were also asked to identify why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service and they were given eleven reasons to choose from and they were asked to

rate them in order of importance. The choice related to growth was the opportunity to gain experience in this type of work. Please see table 4 for a complete list of choices.

Hygiene Factor Questions

Organization Policies and Administration

Public Service Employee Survey:

“My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement”.

“Senior Managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement”.

“The relationship between my union and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat is highly productive”.

New Hires Survey:

“Do you feel that the Federal Public Service is rule bound and bureaucratic?”

Agree or Disagree.

“Does the Federal Public Service make hiring decisions in a reasonable amount of time?”

Agree or Disagree

Supervision

Public Service Employee Survey:

“I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance”

“I feel that senior management does a good job of sharing information”

New Hires Survey:

“What type of information was provided to you about your hiring manager?”

Interpersonal Relations

Public Service Employee Survey:

“In my work unit, we work cooperatively as a team”.

New Hires Survey:

“The Federal Public Service is committed to diversity in the workplace?” Agree or Disagree

“Does the Federal Public Service have good employee morale?” Agree or Disagree

Working Conditions

The Public Service Employee Survey:

“My organization is a good place to work”.

New Hires Survey:

“Does the job offer sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life?” Agree or Disagree

“Please indicate what type of information was provided about working conditions when you where first hired?”

New Hires were also asked to identify why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service and they were given eleven reasons to choose from and they were asked to rate them in order of importance. One of the choices included:

“The location of the job.”

Salary

Public Servant Survey:

“I am classified fairly (my current group and level) compared by others doing similar work in my organization or elsewhere in the Public Service”.

New Hires Survey:

“Does the job have excellent benefits?” Agree or Disagree

“The Federal Public Service offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector?”

Agree or Disagree

New Hires were asked to indicate what type of information was provided to them regarding salary scales when they were first hired and to identify why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service two of the choices included:

“Salary”

“Benefits:

Security

New Hires Survey:

New Hires were asked to identify why they accepted the job offer with the Federal Public Service. Two of the choices included:

“The opportunity to get into the Federal Public service”

“Job security”.

Results

For ease of discussion only the top three choices made by employees in the Public Service

Survey have been listed in this section so the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Table 2 - Percentage of respondents in each category from the Public Service Employee Survey questions (2006)

1= strongly agree, 2=mostly agree, 3= mostly disagree, 4=strongly disagree, 5= n/a, 7=don't know, 9=not stated							
	1	2	3	4	5	7	9
Work is assessed against goal	22	42	17				
Receive adequate recognition	28	44	16				
Receive training to do the job	21	53	17				
Receive on the job coaching	18	42	23				
Supervisor supports career development	15	36	26				
Department supports career development	38	24	16				
Have opportunities for promotion within department		33	26		22		
Have opportunities for promotion within the Public Service		40	23		15		
Have opportunities to develop and apply my skills		45	22		17		
Immediate Supervisor respects collective agreement		44	34			8	
Senior managers respect collective agreement	26	46				11	
Relationship between Union and Treasury Board is productive		18		16		42	
I receive feedback from my supervisor	21	51		12			
In my work unit, we work cooperatively as a team	34	50		12			
My job offers flexibility for work life balance	32	50		12			
I am classified fairly compared to others doing similar work	18	34	25	19			

Motivators and Job Satisfaction

Achievement

In response to the Public Servant Survey question “My immediate supervisor assesses my work against identified goals and objectives”, 22 % strongly agreed, 42% of respondents mostly agreed, and 17% mostly disagreed.

A large number of New Hires to the public service (71%) indicated that they received information regarding their salary scales, 62 % received their job description, 62% received the general description of the activities of the department or agency, 61% received the statement of qualifications and 40% of new hires received the general description of the work unit’s activities and responsibilities.

Recognition of Achievement

The perception of recognition of achievement for the Federal Public Servant survey in response to the question “I get adequate recognition from my immediate supervisor when I do a good job” was 28% strongly agreed, 44% mostly agreed and 16% mostly disagreed.

Work Itself

Public Servant survey participants responded to the question “I get the training I need to do my job” 21% strongly agreed , 53% mostly agreed, and 17% mostly disagreed and “I am able to get on-the-job coaching to help me improve the way I do my work” 18% strongly agreed, 42% mostly agreed, and 23% mostly disagreed.

The New Hires survey results confirmed that 32% of new hires to the public service received information regarding their information about opportunities for training. New hires accepted job offers with the Federal Public Service because of the opportunity to work in

their field of study (51%) and to make full use of their knowledge, skills and abilities (37%). The majority of new hires agreed that the FPS offers the opportunity for interesting work (83%). Yet less than half of the new hires felt that the FPS makes full use of their education (PSR 33% others 44%).

Responsibility

The Public Servant survey respondents stated that “I am encouraged to be innovative or to take initiative in my work” 32% often, 26% sometimes, 24% always, 17% rarely or never, 1% don’t know, 1% not applicable and 0% not stated.

Advancement or Promotion

Public Servant Survey results for questions regarding career advancement were as follows:

- “My immediate supervisor does a good job of helping me develop my career”
15% strongly agreed, 36% mostly agreed, and 26% mostly disagreed.
- “My department (agency) does a good job of supporting employee’s career development” 38% mostly agreed, 24% mostly disagreed and 16% strongly disagreed.
- “I believe I have opportunities for promotion within my department or agency, given my education, skills and experience” 33% mostly agreed, 26% mostly disagreed and 22% strongly disagreed.
- “I believe I have opportunities for promotion within the Public service, given my education, skills and experience” 40% mostly agreed, 23% mostly disagreed and 15% disagreed.
- To what extent, if at all, have any of the following adversely affected your career progress in the Public service over the last three years?

- a. Lack of access to developmental assignments 27% not at all, 22% minimally, 21% moderately and 20% significantly.
- b. Lack of access of information about job opportunities 31% not at all, 27% minimally, 21% moderately and 15% significantly.
- c. Restriction in the area of competitions 24% not at all, 18% minimally, 19% moderately and 31% significantly,

The majority of new hires agreed that the Federal Public Service offers a variety of jobs (89%) and that they have a good opportunity for promotion (PSR75% other 62%) with their agency or department supporting career development. New hires to the public service indicated that they received information regarding their information about the opportunities for career advancement in that job (33%) and the reasons for accepting a job offers with the Federal Public Service were to increase opportunities for advancement (19%).

Growth

The New Hires survey confirmed that 32% of respondent's reason for accepting a job offers with the Federal Public Service were, to gain experience in this type of work. In, the Public Servant Survey, current employees responded to the question "I have opportunities to develop and apply the skills I need to enhance my career" with 45% mostly agreed, 22% mostly disagreed and 17% strongly agreed.

Hygiene and Job Dissatisfaction

Organization Policies and Administration

Results from the Public Servant survey regarding employees perspectives of the organizations policies and administration included “My immediate supervisor understands and respects the provisions of my collective agreement” 34% strongly agreed, 44% mostly agreed, and 8% don’t know. “Senior Managers respect the provisions of my collective agreement” 26% strongly agreed, 46% mostly agreed, and 11% don’t know. “The relationship between my union and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat is highly productive” 18% mostly agreed, 42% did not know, 13% strongly disagreed. 16% mostly disagreed.

The New Hires survey indicated low levels of satisfaction with company policy and administration related to Human Resource practices as only 23% agreed that the FPS makes hiring decisions in a reasonable amount of time.

Supervision

A small number of New Hires to the public service (13%) indicated that they received information regarding their hiring manager. With communication being a key factor in the employee and manager relationship respondents to the Public Servant survey responded to the question “I receive useful feedback from my immediate supervisor on my job performance” 21% strongly agreed, 51% mostly agreed, and 18% mostly disagreed. The sharing of information results were similar to the question “I feel that senior management does a good job of sharing information” 43% mostly agreed, and 28% mostly disagreed. 16% strongly disagreed.

Interpersonal Relations

The majority of new hires agreed that the Federal Public Service is committed to diversity in the workplace (91%). Yet only half of the new hires felt that the Federal Public Service

had good employee morale (PSR 56% other 44%). Permanent employees who completed the Public Servant survey had similar results to the questions “In my work unit, we work cooperatively as a team” 34% strongly agreed, 47% mostly agreed, and 12% mostly disagreed.

Working Conditions

New hires to the public service indicated that they received information regarding working conditions (30%) when they started with the organization. The reasons that New Hires reasons accepted a job offers with the Federal Public Service were flexibility to balance work with family and other personal needs (13%) and the location of the job (10%). It was interesting that once the New Hires began working for the organization 89% stated that The job offer sufficient flexibility to balance work and personal life. Current employees had a similar perspective that the organization is a good place to work: 32% strongly agreed, 50% mostly agreed, and only 12% mostly disagreed.

Salary

New Hires reasons for accepting a job offers with the Federal Public Service were salary (13%) and benefits (12%). The majority of new hires agreed that the Federal Public Service jobs have excellent benefits (85%). However only 29% felt that the Federal Public Service offered competitive salaries compared to the private sector.

Federal Public Servant participants responded to the questions “I am classified fairly (my current group and level) compared with others doing similar work in my organization or elsewhere in the Public Service: 18% strongly agreed, 34% mostly agreed, 25% strongly disagreed and 19% mostly disagreed.

Security

New Hires reasons for accepting a job offers with the Federal Public Service was job security offered by the organization (33%) and the opportunity to get into the Federal Public service (31%) which they felt would result in a more secure job then the private sector.

Discussion

There were limited questions regarding achievement in the Federal Public Servant survey and New Hires survey. Personal achievement was not adequately measured as the most relevant question asked was “My immediate supervisor assesses my work against identified goals and objectives”. As noted in the literature review, goal clarity and participation in goal setting are positively related to job satisfaction. The majority of public servants agreed or strongly agreed that their manager assessed them against identified goals and objectives but the survey question is limited in scope because it is not clear if employees participated in setting these goals or if the goals were mandated on their behalf.

Recommendations: Further queries need to be made to confirm if employees feel like they receive personal achievement through their employment as a Public Servant by setting their own goals. Employees could also be asked if they feel they can achieve meaningful goals in their work.

When an employee is recognized by their peers or supervisors this creates a positive perception about the organization and increases the employees level of satisfaction. According to the results of the Public Servant survey just over half of the participants mostly agreed or strongly agreed (64%) that they received adequate recognition from their supervisor so they Public Service is doing a adequate job of recognizing its employees but there is room for improvement.

Recommendation: The Public Service needs to strengthen its recognition of employees through promoting recognition programs and informal instant recognition awards from colleagues and managers.

As the literature stated, it is important that an employee's skills and abilities match their job. Further training needs to be given to ensure this alignment as this will create a positive impact on the employee's satisfaction of the work itself. The survey results found that the majority of Public Servants mostly agreed or strongly agreed that they got the training they needed to do their job (74%) but only sixty percent indicated that they were able to get on-the-job coaching to help improve the way that they work.

Recommendation: An on the job coaching program for employees needs to be created and supported to further increase the opportunity for on the job coaching for employees.

The New Hires survey provided direct questions to participants regarding the opportunity to make full use of their skills and abilities and if the participants found the job interesting. The majority of New Hires (83%) indicated that the Public Service offers interesting work but only 37% felt that they were able to make full use of their skills and abilities and even less (33%) felt that their job made full use of their education.

Recommendation: The Public Service needs to provide more opportunities for employees to use their skills and abilities e.g. special projects to increase the levels of employee satisfaction with the work itself.

Neither survey provided significant data to determine if employees felt that they were satisfied with their level of responsibility within the organization. Employees (58%) indicated that they were given the opportunity to be innovative and show initiative, which as the literature indicated increases responsibility, but it is difficult with this indirect question to determine the level of responsibility that employees received with these opportunities. For example finding a better way to record meeting minutes does not carry the same responsibility as reorganizing a national mail distribution system.

Recommendation: Further data needs to be gathered to determine if employees feel they receive significant responsibility opportunities in their work as this would lead to greater satisfaction.

Several direct questions were asked in the surveys that provided significant data regarding advancement and promotion within the public service. Only 54% of Public Servant survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that the public service does a good job supporting their career and even less agreed that their supervisor helps develop their career (51%). Levels of satisfaction with promotion activities were also low with only 40% of participants agreeing that they had opportunities for advancement and promotion. Participants agreed that the lack of opportunities were due to the lack of access to developmental assignments (63 %), lack of information about job opportunities (63%) and restrictions to applying for job opportunities (68%). New Hires to the Public Service demonstrated a higher level of satisfaction with the opportunity for promotion (75%) yet only 33% agreed that they had received information regarding opportunities for job advancement.

Recommendation: The Federal Public Service needs to increase awareness of job opportunities within the organization and better support career advancement of employees.

The surveys were limited in their questions regarding satisfaction and growth for Public Servants. New Hires survey participants (32%) did indicate that the reason that they accepted a job with the Public Service was to gain experience which could be assumed to be growth but this is a weak connection. Participants of the Public Servant survey (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that they did have opportunities to develop and apply their skills but it is difficult to determine from the question the significance of the growth.

Recommendation: Further data needs to be gathered to determine if Federal Public Servants feel they have the opportunity for growth in their jobs as this will lead to greater satisfaction.

Questions regarding the satisfaction of employees with the Federal Public Service policy and administration were limited but there were questions to understand the employee's perception surrounding their Union contract which is a foundation for policy within the organization. The majority of employees agreed or strongly agreed that their immediate supervisor (78%) and senior managers (72%) understood and respected their collective agreement. However, only 12% of employees agreed that the relationship between the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and their Union was productive. A large majority of participants (42%) did not know if the relationship was productive and 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the relationship was productive.

Recommendations: Further research should be conducted to understand why employees do not know if the relationship between their Union and employer is productive as this situation could lead to less trust which in turn would lead to less satisfaction with the organization. Employees need to be asked if they think policies and administration of policies are fair and reputable.

The data from the New Hires survey also identified a concern regarding the hiring practices and administration policies of the Public Service. Only 23% of New Hires agreed that the Federal Public service makes hiring decisions in a reasonable amount of time. This perception of new hires will affect the organizations ability to attract new employees as they may apply elsewhere due to delay in hiring.

Recommendation: The Federal Public Service needs to decrease the length of time for hiring processes through more efficient screening tools.

The studies were limited in the questions regarding the direct perception of how employees viewed their Supervisor. There were questions regarding communication with supervisors and if employees received information about their supervisors but the data was inconclusive of how employees perceived their supervisors.

Recommendations: The Public Service needs to gather specific information regarding employee's perceptions of their manager to determine the levels of satisfaction of employees with the supervision they receive with the organization.

Public Servants study participants (81%) strongly agreed and mostly agreed that in their work units they work cooperatively as a team and 91% of New Hires felt that the Federal Public Service is committed to diversity. This data appears to provide a strong indication that the employees have a high level of satisfaction with their interpersonal relations yet only 56% of New Hires felt that the organization had good employee morale. It should be noted that the New Hires had been with the organization for less than two years so they would not have developed the interpersonal relationships that the longer term employees of the Public Servant Survey would have.

Recommendations: The New Hires participants should be surveyed intermittently over the next five years to investigate if their perception of morale increases or decreases with the length of time they spend in the organization. Current Public Servants could also be asked questions regarding their interpersonal relations with co-workers and their supervisors.

While working conditions were not directly surveyed in the studies, it was interesting that even with the lower satisfaction levels in other areas, 82% of employees strongly agreed or

mostly agreed that the organization was a good place to work. As identified in the literature review, working conditions can take away from or add to the other factors of satisfaction of employees. The findings may be due to the Public Service having several committees that oversee the working environment of the Public Servants to ensure safe and comfortable work environments.

Recommendation: A separate survey should be conducted to confirm if in fact the working environment is a strong indicator of satisfaction for Federal Public Servants and if the findings support this then Federal Public Service should utilize working conditions as strength for recruitment and retention of employees.

A large number of New Hires agree that the Federal Public Service offers excellent benefits (85%) but only 29% feel that the Federal Public Service offers competitive salaries compared to the private sector. As discussed in the literature the Federal Government cannot participate in the wage scales of the private sector due to the differences between the accountability of the organizations.

Recommendation: The Federal government benefits are a strength for promoting the organization as an employer of choice so they need to promote this strength for recruiting and retention of employees.

The Public Servant survey findings also indicated that 52% of Public Servants strongly agreed or agreed that they are classified fairly for the work that they do within the organization and 44% mostly disagree and strongly disagree.

Recommendation: Additional questions need to be asked regarding the division of work and wages as there appears to be two strong perspectives regarding equity of job duties related to pay.

The New Hires survey data indicates that only 33% of New Hires accepted a job with the organization because of job security and 31% felt that the job with the Federal Public Service would offer more job security than the private sector. These findings indicate that while job security is important to the organization there is a perception that the government jobs are not necessarily more secure than the private sector jobs.

Recommendation: The Federal Public Service should connect and promote mentoring of long-term employees with new hires so that they get the sense of security that the government jobs have provided for other public servants.

One concern that I had with the New Hires study was that it was not equally distributed with its selection of participants. Disproportionally the study had 3,761 participants from the National Capital Region and 1,095 from Ontario with the whole country participant total of 10,610. This number was further explained in the study, that even though two-thirds of the federal employees work outside of the National Capital Region, the majority (79 %) of PSR new hires were working in this location. I question if the results would be different if a smaller province would have had a more equal percentage of input as the report showed a difference in attitude between the larger and smaller communities. For example recruits from smaller provinces would be more willing to move and that once candidates are established in a community through relationships and children they are less likely to leave their employer.

Implications for Management

Organizations can support their employee career development by increasing its focus on people; communicating trends/directions; giving employees the opportunity to acquire breadth and to become more visible; helping employees understand their strengths and weaknesses; and by developing mentoring programs (Duxbury, Dyke, Lam 1998).

Retaining employees by strengthening the factors of job satisfaction will continue to be a challenge as there continues to be change to the culture of the organization. By continuing to invest in the talent within the organization and promoting employees, the organization will demonstrate the opportunity for growth and strengthen the organizations ability to retain talent. Identifying future leaders and developing them through promotions from within are important so that staff can see the potential for career advancement.

Monitoring succession planning is also key to retention. The weakness the organization will need to be aware of is assuming that the leaders that they select for development will stay. Management candidates should be screened for the intent to remain with the organization. There is a danger of not looking beyond the middle manager level. It is not enough to simply identify these individuals but you must also create a long term connection to the local office and local community.

There is a common view in the Human Resource world that employees leave their managers not their organization. Therefore it is imperative that interpersonal skills also be a screening tool for the employees that the organization appoints to management positions as managers set the tone for the work environment. These managers must also be leaders that can lead in any situation to address the changing workplace of the federal government.

As discussed it is important that employees be educated about their benefits and have proper job matching. This could be done through internal job fairs and implemented into the new employee orientation sessions. It is important to ensure that new employee orientations include a discussion with clear outlines of job expectations. Senior managers or retirees stories should be captured and/or presented to new employees to develop a sense of connection, pride in accomplishments and also so employees can see the variety of opportunities that are possible. The organization needs to focus on transferring this knowledge through shared stories and experiences for all levels through informal arm chair discussions. Enhancing employee involvement (e.g., through participation in self-directed work teams, gain sharing, quality of life programs, quality circles, or job enrichment) may contribute to greater employee job satisfaction. In turn, the combination of employee involvement and greater job satisfaction may contribute to higher productivity and greater efficiency in the workplace.

There needs to be greater awareness of the importance of working conditions because, as discussed, better working conditions lead to greater satisfaction. Modification of employees' surroundings may be easier to implement than enhanced financial rewards as the Federal government has a set pay scale. Changes such as lighting for example can have a long lasting effect on employees because of health issues such as seasonal affective disorder. (When people can suffer depression if they do not have sufficient lighting)

To ease the loss of knowledge the federal government may also want to look at offering a shortened work week with regular pay for the first 3 days and pension paid for the last two

days as an incentive for individuals to work past retirement thereby reducing the large loss of knowledge all at once.

An additional problem with recruitment of employees is that there are not enough high level jobs to offer junior staff until the baby boomers retire. Therefore, the Federal government should focus on offering internships to show the benefits of working for the organization and to connect students with the public service. The Federal government should further research the feasibility to offering to pay a portion of student loans plus minimum wage as an incentive to students to work for the organization. The program could be called CanFed. Application for the internship would be a screening based on a written proposal from the student on “How do you want to make a difference in the public service?” Youth committees, websites, school counselors could funnel this challenge to the target market. Successful candidates for the internship could be selected to create a team to operate a project to completion. The project would be chosen from the CanFed proposals or business cases with an assigned mentor to oversee. The group would have to brainstorm the idea like the think tanks of many of the top corporations. Participants will benefit from networking and developing leadership skills. The organization will benefit from new perspectives, new solutions and the opportunity to identify future talent within the groups for future placement. Focus could be placed on the sectors or areas showing the greatest loss in workers.

A similar program could be developed internally called “Project Leadership”. Public Servant employees could participate in voluntary brainstorming sessions that would allow them to utilize their talents by offering solutions to problems in the organization. This would address the employee’s needs to make a difference which will help retain talent. It could be made into a competition with the group with the best idea implementing their ideas.

Conclusion

The Federal Public Service is moving in the right direction to recruit and retain a knowledge based workforce that will withstand the “war on talent” demographic shift but it has several areas of concern with identified low levels of satisfaction. The Federal Public Service needs to ensure that existing employees and new recruits are well informed about the opportunities in the Federal Public Service. Many talented employees will turn to the government in this economic downturn because of the stability the jobs offer, it is a golden opportunity for the Federal Public Service to engage and retain employees.

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