A REPORT
TO THE INTERNAL AUDIT BUREAU,
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
CANADA

Assessing the Operational Environment of HRDC: Global Report

Project No. 404/98

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Decima Research Inc is pleased to present the following report to the Internal Audit Bureau of Human Resources Development Canada. This report has been prepared from the results of a self-assessment employee questionnaire administered in 17 of the Department's locations across Canada, including HRCCs and Regional Headquarters offices. This global report presents the detailed findings of all employees surveyed in this wave of research, which was conducted in late 1998 and early 1999.

The self-assessment questionnaire was developed as a tool to inform HRCC directors and managers about aspects of organizational health, to assist them in the achievement of their goals and objectives. Preliminary work on this self-assessment questionnaire began in 1996 under the heading "Risk Model", with further refinements being made during the 1997 wave and the current 1998 / 99 wave. More detailed information on the development of the project can be found in the Technical Appendix A.

This assessment tool was designed primarily for the benefit of HRCCs and will continue to be offered to HRCCs directors and other HRDC managers as part of IAB's yearly Environmental Assessment and Consultative Services. The data collected from the overall assessments in a fiscal year will be analyzed for common themes and concerns on an annual basis.

2. GLOBAL OVERVIEW

For the third consecutive year, Decima Research Inc. was commissioned by the Internal Audit Bureau of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) to assess the workplace environment across the Department.

The self-administered employee questionnaire contained a total of 128 questions and was completed by 1,133 employees from 17 participating offices (15 local and 2 RHQs). The overall response rate was 67%. Aside from one office, all sites completed the questionnaire between January and April, 1999.

Participants in the current assessment represent a majority of regions across Canada. The population studied included a mix of large urban and smaller center locations, and both English and French employees. Hence, the study yields "indicative," if not truly "representative" results.

The global results indicate that of all organizational measures examined, those that pose the greatest challenge to HRDC are perceptions of conflict within the organization; attitudes toward resources and support; and overall job satisfaction. Although these areas continue to represent a challenge to the organization, it should be noted that some of the specific elements of job satisfaction and resources and support have improved since 1997.

In terms of resources and support, employees this year are significantly more likely than those employees surveyed in 1997 to agree that they have enough staff to do the work in their office. Further, they indicate an increase in the support they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities. Similarly, examining one element of job satisfaction, employees in 1999 are significantly more likely to agree that they have a high degree of job security in their current position than in 1997. This confidence in job security has risen steadily since the first year the survey was conducted in 1996.

Of all organizational measures examined in 1999, those that represent the greatest strength to HRDC are perceptions of autonomy and empowerment; and employees' understanding of the goals and objectives of the organization. Generally, employees claim they like to make decisions on their own. For the most part, they feel that management trusts them to make good decisions and, as such, encourages them to make decisions on their own.

Employees also have a good sense of the goals and objectives of HRDC. Knowledge of the goals of HRDC and the goals of individuals' offices has risen since 1997. Employees in 1999 are significantly more likely to agree that they know what goals HRDC has as an organization and what goals their office has, as compared to 1997. Again, these items have risen steadily since 1996.

In comparison to 1997, employees of HRDC are significantly less likely to characterize their office as "disorganized" or "tense." In addition, employees are significantly more likely to characterize their office as "boring." Taken together, these findings may be a reflection of the increased stability and improved perceptions of job security within the organization. However, employees are significantly less likely to characterize their office as "respectful."

For the first time, a survey of the general Canadian population was conducted during the 1999 wave of the *Assessing the Environment* review. Fifteen representative questions were chosen from the different survey indices in order to benchmark HRDC against the general population. Just over 800 Canadians employed full-time outside the home were surveyed in March of 1999. Overall, the Canadian population scored significantly better than HRDC on all items surveyed.

Finally, for the first year, assessments of "burnout" within the workplace were also measured. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996[1]) assesses employees' levels of cynicism, physical and emotional exhaustion as well as feelings of professional efficacy. With respect to the Burnout Inventory, employees within HRDC demonstrated average levels of cynicism and exhaustion and lower than average levels of professional efficacy. An examination of other studies determined that employees in HRDC are experiencing, for the most part, Burnout levels that are comparable to other Canadian workers both in management and clerical positions.

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[1] *Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., & Leiter, M.P., 1996. Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual, 3rd edition. Palo Alto, California.*
Consulting Psychologists Press Inc.

3.   SUMMARY OF RESULTS

3.1   Response Rate

A total of 1,133 employees completed the questionnaire for an overall response rate of 67%.

3.2   Findings from Indices

Many of the questions posed in the questionnaire have been grouped together to form "indices," or summaries of findings from related questions probing different aspects of the same subject. In total, 16 such "groupings" of questions, or indices, were created at the analysis phase of this study.

All summary measures, with the exception of the "burnout inventory" measures, were standardized on a 10-point scale. These standardized scores allow for comparisons to be made between measures according to those that present an organizational strength (a high score) or a potential weakness (a low score). Standardization also accounts for the fact that some indices are comprised of more questions than others, and that some questions are negative in connotation. Without standardizing the questions in the manner depicted in this report, ranking areas of relative strength and weakness, and benchmarking results, would not be possible.

While the index summaries are reported on the standardized scale, the individual questions themselves do not have to be standardized to facilitate comparisons. As a consequence, results for the individual questions are reported on the same 5-point scale that they were captured on.

The 3 dimensions of the "burnout inventory" are measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 to 6. This is the scale that was originally developed for these questions, and replication of that scale was necessary to facilitate comparisons with other audiences. It was also a term of the licensing agreement of the owner of the questions and database. The higher the score for "exhaustion" or "cynicism", the more negative the connotation, denoting more frequent occurrences of workers feeling exhausted or cynical. Conversely, the higher the scores for "professional efficacy", the more positive the connotation, denoting more frequent occurrences of workers feeling professionally effective.

The following table includes the scores for all 16 measures.

INDEX SUMMARY: AVERAGES AND RANGES

Index	Global Average (1999)	Range Minimum	Maximum
Job Satisfaction	5.67	4.40	6.74
Workplace Climate	5.79	5.23	6.24
Ethical Behavior	6.32	5.67	6.63
Organizational Commitment	6.07	5.51	6.88
Confidence in Goal Attainment	6.66	6.11	7.43
Goal and Objective Clarity	7.11	6.51	8.00
Leadership	6.38	5.75	6.90
Resources and Support	5.58	5.02	6.36
Conflict	4.29	3.70	4.75
Communication	6.42	5.75	7.14
Work Feedback Mechanisms	5.76	5.06	7.03
Skills and Training	6.44	5.38	7.04
Autonomy / Empowerment	7.07	6.33	7.73
Burnout Inventory -- Exhaustion	2.71	1.98	3.59
Professional Efficacy	4.22	4.01	4.44
Cynicism	1.87	1.38	2.56

The table above reveals a number of things. First, the global averages, based on the responses from all 17 participating offices, indicate that employees' perceptions of conflict among and within different levels of the organization, attitudes toward the resources and support in place within the organization, and overall job satisfaction, emerge with the lowest ratings.

Second, and conversely, employees' reported acceptance of the concept of autonomy and empowerment, and their understanding of both personal and organizational goals and objectives, emerge as the items with the highest ratings.

With respect to the Burnout Inventory, employees within the organization demonstrated average levels of exhaustion and cynicism and lower than average levels of professional efficacy. The results found for HRDC on the cynicism and exhaustion dimensions of the Burnout Inventory are comparable to results found for other Canadian workers in clerical positions both inside and outside of HRDC (see Section 5.4 "Burnout Inventory" for more information).

The table also presents a "minimum" and "maximum" range for findings across each index. These scores represent the highest and lowest single office rating recorded on the index. As such, they invariably come from different offices participating in the study.

The following graph illustrates the average index score for each area of investigation along with the minimum and maximum index scores found within HRDC.

RANGE FOR INDEX SCORES
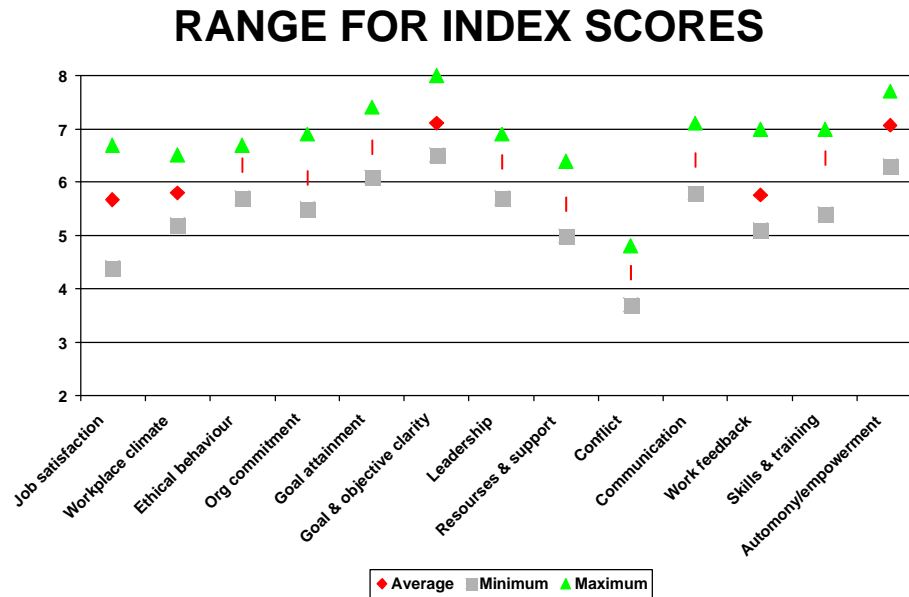
As can be seen in the graph above, many of the highest office averages (maximum) are well above the global average. It appears that a wide range of scores can be found among the various offices surveyed. Indeed, the range on some indices above is as wide as 2 points on the 10-point scale.

4. ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL MEASURES

As explained earlier, 16 summary measures were created to help explain various organizational outcomes. Each summary measure, or index, was constructed by combining responses to a number of related questions. Definitions of each summary measure have been provided in Technical Appendix B.

For each organizational measure, a table was prepared displaying the average score on each question for 1999. Due to the changes to the questionnaire that have been implemented in 1999, averages for only those questions that have remained exactly the same from 1997 to 1999 are included for comparative purposes.

A "global range" has also been included for comparative purposes. This range represents the "maximum" or highest score obtained by a single site for that particular question, along with the "minimum" or lowest score obtained by a single site.

In addition, a graph that contains the percentage of respondents who fall into each of the questionnaire answer categories has been produced. Graphs for the 1999, 1997 and 1996 data are displayed where applicable. If the wording for a particular question has changed from 1997 to 1999, the different wording from the previous year will appear in the graph. Consequently, comparisons from 1996 and 1997 to 1999 must be made with caution. Many of the questions asked in the '96 and '97 waves of the study have been modified in this most recent iteration of the study. In these instances, differences in scores across indices and individual questions that comprise them may be due to the modifications in the wording of the question.

More details on the analysis can be found in Technical Appendix C.

Job Satisfaction

As mentioned in the "findings from indices," job satisfaction is one area that poses a challenge to the organization. HRDC obtained a score of 5.67 out of a possible ten points on the overall measure of job satisfaction. (The overall index scores have been standardized on a 10-point scale to facilitate ranking the relative strengths and weakness of the organization. The individual questions that comprise the indices require no such standardization, and are reported on the same 1-5 scale the data were collected on. For further explanation, see: "Section 3.2, Findings from Indices")

The average scores on all questions included in the index in 1999 are shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Min.	**Max.**
4	I am satisfied with my current salary as compared to others within the organization.	2.77	-	1.76	3.63
7	I believe I have a high degree of job security in my current position.	2.58*	2.26	1.91	3.17
10	I have lots of opportunities for career advancement in our organization.	2.29	-	1.80	2.86
16	I am satisfied with my current salary as compared to those doing similar work in other organizations.	2.67	-	1.61	3.50
25	I find the work I do very fulfilling.	3.36	-	2.61	3.74
73	Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied.	3.36	-	2.89	3.85

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The questions included in the job satisfaction index are traditionally accepted as strong indicators of job satisfaction in private sector organizations. In private sector employee studies, assessments of job security and opportunities for promotion, together with assessments of compensation, usually come closer to approximating overall levels of job satisfaction than is the case in HRDC. Over the three waves of this research, we have witnessed relatively high levels of job satisfaction (q.73 above) compared to assessments of job security and opportunities for promotion. Indeed, employees have generally exhibited high levels of job satisfaction *notwithstanding* these other assessments.

One possible interpretation of these seemingly contradictory results is that in giving low ratings to job security, compensation, and career assessments, employees are simply acknowledging the recent history of the federal public service. Clearly, downsizing and flattening of the organization, together with wage freezes, has been a reality in the federal public service for some time. Equally clearly, these "realities" are reflected in assessments of these items. The disconnect between these assessments and job satisfaction may simply be a

function of employees acknowledging these conditions as the "new realities" of the workplace, without letting them unduly impact their assessments of job satisfaction *per se*. It is understood in this interpretation that "acknowledging" and *embracing* or *supporting* these new realities are distinctly different concepts.

The one question contained in the job satisfaction index that was repeated from 1997, specifically perceptions of job security, has increased significantly. Employees this year are considerably more confident in their level of job security than they were in 1997. This confidence in job security has risen steadily since 1996. At that time, only 10% of employees surveyed were prepared to concede they had a "high degree of job security". The number now stands at 29%, up significantly, but not the highest Decima has measured in recent employee studies, to be sure.

With respect to satisfaction with pay, male employees are significantly less likely to agree that they are satisfied with their pay than are female employees. While only 30% of men within HRDC claim they are satisfied with their current salary as compared to others within the organization, 40% of female employees espouse the same point of view. Similarly, just under one-quarter of men at HRDC (23%) claim they are satisfied with their salary as compared to those doing similar work in other organizations, as compared to 37% of women who agree with this statement.

In terms of the index measure of job satisfaction, those employees who scored significantly higher on this organizational measure are more likely to be:

- women;
- employees who have worked for HRDC for less than 10 years; and
- employees who have worked for the public service for less than 10 years.

The distribution of responses to the questions in the job satisfaction index is shown in the following chart.

JOB SATISFACTION

I am satisfied with my current salary as compared to others within the organization.

1999	37 / 17 / 46

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

I believe I have a high degree of job security in my current position.

1999	29 / 21 / 50

I believe I have a high degree of job security in my current position.

1997	19 / 20 / 62

I believe I have a high degree of job security in my current position.

1996	10 / 12 / 78

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Satisfied**　　☐ **Neutral**　　☐ **Disagree/Dissatisfied**

JOB SATISFACTION

I have lots of opportunities for career advancement in our organization.

1999	15 / 23 / 62

There are lots of opportunities for promotion and career advancement in our office.

1997	8 / 15 / 77

There are lots of opportunities for promotion and career advancement in our office.

1996	6 / 11 / 83

I am satisfied with my current salary as compared to those doing similar work in other organizations.

1999	33 / 17 / 50

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Satisfied**　　☐ **Neutral**　　☐ **Disagree/Dissatisfied**

JOB SATISFACTION

I find the work I do very fulfilling.

1999

53	25	22

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied.

1999

58	19	23

Are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your job?

*1997

67	32

Are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with your job?

*1996

71	26

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Satisfied**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree/Dissatisfied**

(*Please note that in 1997 and 1996 this question was measured on a four-point scale (i.e. "satisfied, "very satisfied," "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied". There was no mid-point or "neutral" position on this scale. Therefore the decrease in the percentage of those who "agree" that they are satisfied with their job in 1999 may simply be a reflection of the change in scale rather than a change in attitude.)

Workplace Climate

A series of 14 separate words were presented to respondents in an effort to describe the defining characteristics of the offices surveyed.

Employees were asked the degree to which seven of the attributes characterized their **ideal** workplace, as well as the degree to which they characterized their **own** workplace.

On the overall measure of "workplace climate", the average scored of all those surveyed was 5.79 out of a possible ten points. (Like all other index averages referenced throughout this report, this score is standardized on a 10-point scale to facilitate ranking). The average scores on all questions included in the workplace climate index are shown below. The actual characteristics ranked are reported on the same 1-7 scale the data were captured on. Similarly, the ranges are also reported on the 1-7 scale.

No.	Question	Actual Workplace 1999	Ideal Workplace 1999	Actual Workplace 1997	Global Range 1999	
					Max.	Min.
81	Organized	4.30	5.83	-	3.64	5.08
82	Disrespectful	2.92	-	-	2.36	3.66
83	Exciting	3.54	5.24	3.55	2.39	4.03
84	Untrusting	3.32	-	-	2.82	3.97
85	Supportive	4.26	5.84	-	3.44	4.85
86	Outdated	3.44	-	-	2.97	4.10
87	Relaxed	3.45	5.24	-	2.46	4.02
88	Disorganized	3.42*	-	3.91	2.66	4.38
89	Respectful	4.46*	5.95	4.71	3.63	4.84
90	Boring	3.18*	-	2.67	2.56	4.20
91	Trusting	4.14	5.81	-	3.63	4.75
92	Unsupportive	3.23	-	-	2.80	3.82
93	Innovative	4.16	5.70	4.18	3.62	4.69
94	Tense	4.44*	-	4.93	3.55	5.45

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The workplace climate index is designed to provide an overall assessment of the prevalent climate in the workplace; one that employees face on a day-to-day basis. Results above indicate that descriptions of the workplace as "respectful", "organized" and "supportive" are amongst the highest rated descriptions, while "tense," "outdated" and "disorganized" are among the more common negative descriptions emerging from this line of questioning.

Generally speaking, employees would not characterize the workplace as "disrespectful" or as "boring." However, the number of employees who have characterized their office as "boring" is up compared to 1997. This may be an indication that the disruption brought by significant change in the last four to five years is beginning to give way to a more routine if not mundane existence for increasing numbers of employees.

A number of the characteristics probed in 1997 were explored again in 1999. As compared to employees in 1997, respondents in 1999 are significantly less likely to characterize their workplace as "disorganized" or "tense." On the other hand, employees are also significantly less likely to characterize their workplace as "respectful" as compared to those surveyed in 1997.

Of all "ideal workplace" characteristics probed, employees of HRDC feel a respectful, supportive and organized workplace is of the greatest importance. Employees rated the *importance* of all seven "ideal workplace" attributes significantly higher than they rated the *presence* of each in their workplace. This indicates that employees value these positive attributes, but do not feel their own workplace reflects these ideals as much as would be liked.

In order to validate the internal consistency of employee characterizations of the workplace, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which both positive and negative attributes described their offices. The negative characteristics rated were direct opposites of the positive attributes examined (e.g. organized/disorganized.) Hence, if employees rated their office "organized", one would expect them to give a comparably low score for the opposite attribute, "disorganize"

The results of this internal validity test suggest HRDC employees were fairly consistent in their evaluations of these positive and negative attributes, with one exception. While only 31% of those surveyed characterized their workplace as "exciting", 23% of those surveyed characterized their workplace as "boring." This indicates that the majority of employees at HRDC neither find their work environment exciting, nor boring.

No significant demographic differences exist in terms of the overall measure of workplace climate.

The distribution of responses to the workplace climate questions is shown in the following chart.

IDEAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Organized

1999 | 86 | 7 | 7 |

Exciting

1999 | 71 | 16 | 13 |

Supportive

1999 | 84 | 6 | 10 |

Relaxed

1999 | 73 | 12 | 15 |

Respectful

1999 | 87 | 5 | 8 |

Trusting

1999 | 84 | 6 | 10 |

Innovative

1999 | 82 | 10 | 8 |

Percentage

☐ **Describes**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Does not describe**

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Organized

1999 | 55 | 15 | 30 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Disrespectful

1999 | 20 | 16 | 64 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Exciting

1999 | 31 | 24 | 45 |

Exciting

1997 | 29 | 27 | 45 |

Exciting

1996 | 27 | 29 | 44 |

Percentage

☐ **Describes**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Does not describe**

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Untrusting

| 1999 | 26 | 20 | 54 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Supportive

| 1999 | 53 | 18 | 29 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Outdated

| 1999 | 26 | 26 | 48 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Percentage

☐ Describes   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Does not describe

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Relaxed

| 1999 | 33 | 16 | 51 |

1996/97 No previous data for this item.

Disorganized

| 1999 | 30 | 17 | 53 |

Disorganized

| 1997 | 33 | 28 | 38 |

Disorganized

| 1996 | 38 | 22 | 39 |

Percentage

☐ Describes   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Does not describe

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Respectful

| 1999 | 57 | 17 | 26 |

Respectful

| 1997 | 57 | 24 | 18 |

Respectful

| 1996 | 58 | 25 | 16 |

Boring

| 1999 | 23 | 23 | 54 |

Boring

| 1997 | 13 | 21 | 65 |

Boring

| 1996 | 10 | 21 | 68 |

Percentage

☐ Describes   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Does not describe

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Trusting

| 1999 | 47 | 21 | 32 |

1996/97   No previous data for this item.

Unsupportive

| 1999 | 24 | 17 | 59 |

1996/97   No previous data for this item.

Innovative

| 1999 | 45 | 28 | 27 |

Innovative

| 1997 | 42 | 27 | 31 |

Innovative

| 1996 | 40 | 31 | 28 |

Percentage

☐ Describes   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Does not describe

ACTUAL WORKPLACE CLIMATE

Tense

1999	53	16	31

Tense

1997	60	22	18

Tense

1996	62	20	17

Percentage

☐ **Describes**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Does not describe**

Ethical Behavior

The ethical behavior index contains six questions, as shown in the table below. The average rating given by HRDC employees for the questions comprising this index was 6.32 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores on questions included in the ethical behavior index, along with the range of scores found, are shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Minimum	Maximum
2	Management in my office consistently demonstrates a commitment to the importance of ethical behavior.	3.43*	3.32	2.77	3.67
14	Employees in my office can report unethical behavior in the workplace without fear of repercussions to themselves.	3.02*	2.83	2.74	3.19
26	If an employee raised a concern about unethical behavior, I believe there would be an open discussion of that concern in my office.	2.95	2.97	2.54	3.46
30	Employees in my office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.	3.42*	3.27	2.98	3.93
31	Employees in my office would not hesitate to report unethical behavior if it were to occur.	3.29*	3.37	2.94	3.70
39	There have been occasions in the past when I could have benefited from independent advice on how to deal with unethical behavior in the workplace.	3.15*	2.97	2.93	3.63

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The majority of HRDC employees (57%) agreed that management in their office consistently demonstrates a commitment to the importance of ethical behavior. Similarly, over one-half (56%) of HRDC employees surveyed agreed that employees in their office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

As for accountability mechanisms, room for some improvement appears to exist. Almost four-in-ten employees (39%) disagree with the proposition that there would be an "open discussion" in their office if a "concern about unethical behavior were raised." In a similar vein, 29% of HRDC employees do not believe that employees in their office could report unethical behavior in the workplace without fear of repercussions to themselves.

All the questions in the ethics battery have undergone some revisions, as can be seen in the graphs below. Therefore, care must be taken in interpreting the differences in results from 1997 to 1999. Differences may be due to a change in attitude, or they may simply be a function of the change in wording to the questions.

Keeping these cautions in mind, it was found that HRDC employees are significantly more likely this year, than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that management in their office consistently demonstrates a commitment to the importance of ethical behavior. Similarly they are significantly more likely than respondents were in 1997, to agree that employees can report unethical behavior in the workplace without fear of repercussions to themselves and that employees in their office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

Conversely, HRDC employees are significantly less likely in this wave to agree that employees in their office would not hesitate to report unethical behavior if it were to occur. A significantly higher percentage of this year's respondents also agree that they could have benefited in the past from independent advice on how to deal with unethical behavior.

Those employees who scored significantly higher on the overall index measure of ethical behavior are more likely:

- to be men;
- to have been employed with HRDC for over 21 years;
- to have been employed with the public service for over 21 years; and
- to have a university degree.

The distribution of responses to the ethical behavior questions is shown in the following charts.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

Management in my office consistently demonstrates a commitment to the importance of ethical behaviour.

1999	57	24	19

My managers consistently demonstrate a commitment to the importance of ethical behaviour.

1997	49	28	22

No previous data for this item.

1996

Employees in my office can report unethical behaviour in the workplace without fear of repercussions to themselves.

1999	35	36	29

People in this office can voice their concerns about ethical breaches without fearing any repercussions.

1997	30	34	36

No previous data for this item.

1996

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

If a concern about unethical behaviour were raised by an employee, I believe there would be an open discussion of the concern in my office.

1999	38	23	39

If an ethical concern were raised by an employee, I believe there would be an open discussion of that concern in our office.

1997	39	25	35

No previous data for this item.

1996

Employees in my office would not hesitate to report unethical behaviour if it were to occur.

1999	48	30	22

People in this office would not hesitate to inform superiors if there was unethical activity occurring in the office.

1997	51	30	19

People in this office would not hesitate to inform superiors if there was unethical activity occurring in the office.

1996	61	23	16

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

There have been occasions in the past when I could have benefited from independent advice on how to deal with unethical behaviour in the workplace.

1999

35	42	23

There have been occasions in the past when I could have used an independent and objective departmental advisor on an ethical issue at work.

1997

30	38	31

No previous data for this item.

1996

Employees in my office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

1999

56	25	19

The people in this office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

1997

46	31	22

The people in this office make sure that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

1996

44	30	25

Percentage

□ **Agree**   □ **Neutral**   □ **Disagree**

Organizational Commitment

Employees scored an average of 6.07 out of a possible ten points on the overall measure of organizational commitment.

The average scores for all questions included in the organizational commitment index are shown in the table below. Please note that agreement with question 12 indicates a lack of organizational commitment, therefore, a low score on that question is a positive result for the organization.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Minimum	Maximum
12	Right now, staying with this organization is more a matter of necessity than desire.	3.19	-	2.73	3.69
13	One of the major reasons I continue to work here is that I feel strongly committed to this organization.	3.05	-	2.67	3.41
19	I believe in the policy changes the government has initiated for this Department in the past few years.	2.57	-	2.27	3.10
21	If I could choose again, I would still work for this organization.	3.42	-	2.87	3.79
23	I feel a sense of pride in working for HRDC.	3.31	-	2.83	3.67
24	I would strongly recommend HRDC to any young person looking for employment with the public service.	3.04*	2.73	2.35	3.57

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The index measuring organizational commitment includes a number of different kinds of commitment: "affective" (I want to stay), "normative" (I should stay) and "continuance" (I have to stay). While all three forms have been measured for the three waves of the study, changes to the most recent questionnaire blur the issue of the comparability of the findings. Nonetheless, the results would appear to indicate that the most positive form of commitment – affective – would appear to be on the upswing, while continuance commitment appears to be on the decline. If these trends are validated in the next wave, they will herald good news for the organization, and will bear further testimony to the stability that appears to be returning across the department as measured in other parts of this study.

As can be seen in the table above, HRDC scores relatively high in terms of employees' pride in the organization and their willingness to work for HRDC again if they had the choice. Just under one-half of HRDC employees (49%) agree that they feel a sense of pride in working for this organization. As well, 54% of those surveyed would continue to work for HRDC if they could choose again.

These results appear to be contradictory to the percentage of individuals who feel "strongly committed" to the organization. Only 35% of HRDC employees agree that they feel this sense of commitment to HRDC. One explanation as to why employees would choose to work for the organization again, yet not feel strongly committed to it, is the sense of pride they feel in the actual work they do. Feeling a sense of pride in working for the organization is highly correlated (*correlation=0.68) with employees reporting that they would continue to work for HRDC if they could choose again. This attachment *is to the job per se* as opposed to the *organization*, and is reflected not just in (comparatively) high levels of reported pride, but also in relatively high levels of both job satisfaction and fulfillment.

Examining the one item in the index that remained the same from 1997, we find that HRDC employees this year are significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that they would strongly recommend HRDC to any young person looking for employment with the public service.

In terms of the index score for organizational commitment, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- term employees;
- to have worked for HRDC for less than 10 years; and
- to have worked for the public service for less than 10 years.

*(Note: A correlation can range from –1 to +1. A correlation of 0 indicates that no relationship exists between the two items. A correlation of 0.68 is considered high.)

The following chart depicts the distribution of responses to questions in the organizational commitment index.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Right now, staying with this organization is more a matter of necessity than desire.

1999	46	17	37

Right now, staying with this office is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

1997	62	21	17

Right now, staying with this office is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

1996	68	16	17

One of the major reasons I continue to work here is that I feel strongly committed to this organization.

1999	35	35	30

One of the major reasons I continue to work here is that I believe that loyalty is important & feel a sense of obligation to remain.

1997	21	29	50

One of the major reasons I continue to work here is that I believe that loyalty is important & feel a sense of obligation to remain.

1996	22	29	49

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

I believe in the policy changes the government has initiated for this Department in the past few years.

1999	15	41	44

I believe in the policy changes the government has initiated for this Department in the last three years.

1997	12	34	54

I believe in the policy changes the government has initiated for this Department in the last three years.

1996	15	39	45

If I could choose again, I would still work for this organization.

1999	54	26	20

If I could choose again, I would still choose to work in this office.

1997	58	24	18

If I could choose again, I would still choose to work in this office.

1996	58	24	17

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

I feel a sense of pride in working for HRDC.

1999 | 49 | 32 | 19 |

I feel a sense of pride in working for this office.

1997 | 49 | 31 | 20 |

I feel a sense of pride in working for this office.

1996 | 47 | 34 | 18 |

I would strongly recommend HRDC to any young person looking for employment with the public service.

1999 | 39 | 30 | 31 |

I would strongly recommend HRDC to any young person looking for employment with the public service.

1997 | 29 | 29 | 42 |

I would strongly recommend HRDC to any young person looking for employment with the public service.

1996 | 23 | 27 | 50 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

Confidence in Goal Attainment

On the overall measure of confidence in goal attainment, HRDC scored 6.66 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores on all questions included in the confidence in goal attainment index are shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range Minimum	Maximum
53	I am confident that HRDC will reach its goals.	3.21*	3.01	2.95	3.65
55	I am confident that my office will reach its goals.	3.39*	3.17	3.09	3.86
57	I am confident that I will reach my goals.	3.38*	3.76	3.10	3.67

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

This index is designed to gauge employee perceptions of their confidence that departmental, office and personal goals will be achieved.

All three items contained in the goal attainment index were repeated from 1997. We find that in 1999 employees of HRDC are significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree they are confident that both HRDC and their office will reach their respective goals. In contrast, this year employees are significantly less likely than in 1997 to agree that they themselves will reach their own personal goals.
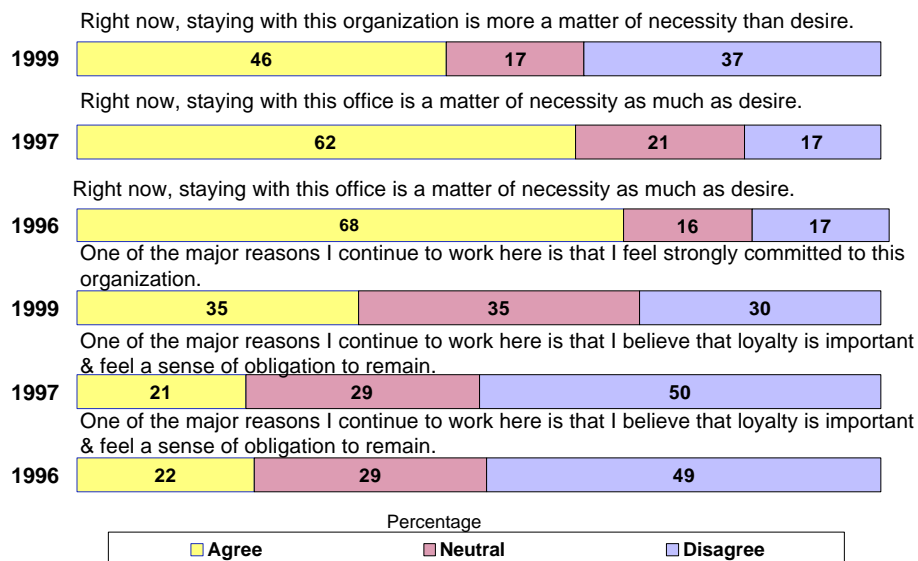
In terms of the index measure of goal attainment, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- women; and
- term employees.

The following chart indicates the distribution of responses to questions in the confidence in goal attainment index.

GOAL ATTAINMENT

I am confident that HRDC will reach these goals.

| 1999 | 38 | 46 | 16 |

I am confident that HRDC will reach these goals.

| 1997 | 28 | 47 | 24 |

I am confident that HRDC will reach these goals.

| 1996 | 24 | 50 | 25 |

I am confident that my office will reach these goals.

| 1999 | 48 | 38 | 16 |

I am confident that my office will reach these goals.

| 1997 | 38 | 41 | 20 |

I am confident that my office will reach these goals.

| 1996 | 27 | 50 | 21 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

GOAL ATTAINMENT

I am confident that I will reach my goals.

| 1999 | 46 | 40 | 14 |

I am confident that I will reach my goals.

| 1997 | 73 | 18 | 9 |

I am confident that I will reach my goals.

| 1996 | 63 | 26 | 10 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

Goal and Objective Clarity

The area of goal and objective clarity is an area that represents a relative strength for HRDC. The organization scored a 7.11 out of a possible ten points on the overall measure of goal and objective clarity.

The average scores on all questions included in the goal and objective clarity index are shown in the table below.

				Global Range	
No.	Question	1999	1997	Minimum	Maximum
17	I have been provided with specific performance requirements in my job.	3.21	-	2.34	4.27
52	I know what goals HRDC has as an organization.	3.54*	3.38	3.16	4.02
54	I know what goals my office has.	3.53*	3.35	3.16	4.09
56	I have established a set of personal goals for my career within the Department.	3.51	-	3.20	3.88
58	My work objectives are very clear.	3.64	-	3.40	3.86
59	I have a clear sense of priority when it comes to my work objectives.	3.88	-	3.64	4.26

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

When assessed on knowledge and clarity of goals and objectives, employees continue to be most clearly aware of their personal work objectives and the priorities related to these objectives. In contrast, they are somewhat less likely to agree that they have been provided with specific performance requirements in their job.

This year, employees are significantly more likely than HRDC employees surveyed in 1997 to agree that they know what goals HRDC has as an organization, and know what goals their office has. This knowledge of HRDC's goals and the goals of their office, has increased steadily since 1996. As can be seen in the following graph, 46% of those surveyed in 1996 were aware of the goals of HRDC. In the current wave, 63% of employees claim they are aware of the goals HRDC has set for itself. The same trend is seen for employees' knowledge of their local office goals.

In terms of the index measure of goal and objective clarity, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:
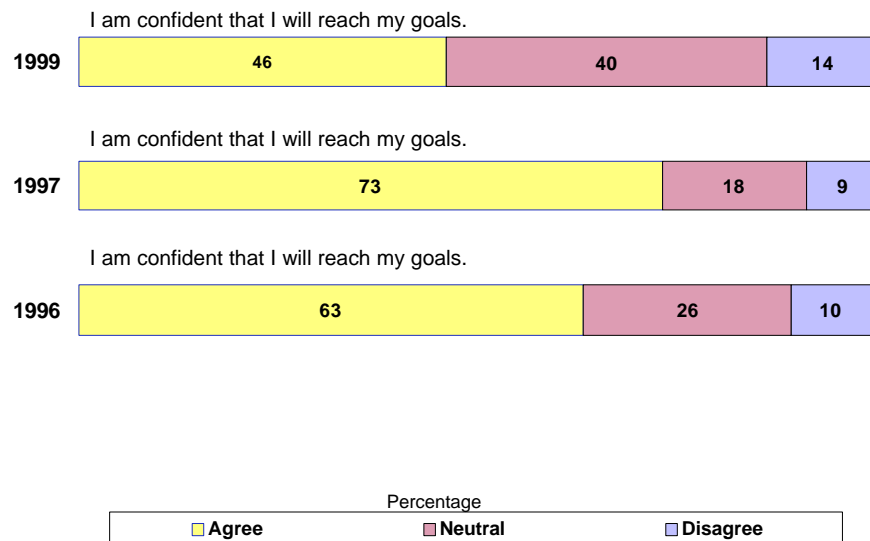
- women;
- term employees; and
- a high school education.

A more detailed breakdown of the responses for each particular question in the goal and objective clarity index is shown below.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE CLARITY

I know what goals HRDC has as an organization.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1999	63	21	16

I know what goals HRDC has an organization.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1997	55	24	20

I know what goals HRDC has an organization.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1996	46	27	26

I know what goals my office has.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1999	62	20	18

I know what goals my office has.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1997	56	23	21

I know what goals my office has.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1996	44	29	26

Percentage

□ Agree   ■ Neutral   □ Disagree

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE CLARITY

I have established a set of personal goals for my career within the Department.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1999	60	24	16

I know what goals I personally have to achieve in my job.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1997	85	9	6

I know what goals I personally have to achieve in my job.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1996	80	13	7

I have been provided with specific performance requirements in my job.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1999	52	15	33

I have specific performance requirements and/or goals in my job.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1997	62	19	18

I have specific performance requirements and/or goals in my job.

Year	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1996	66	18	16

Percentage

□ Agree   ■ Neutral   □ Disagree

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE CLARITY

My work objectives are very clear.

1999	68	19	13

My work objectives are very clear and specific; I know exactly what my job is.

1997	67	17	15

My work objectives are very clear and specific; I know exactly what my job is.

1996	68	14	18

I have a clear sense of priority when it comes to my work objectives.

1999	78	14	8

I understand fully which of my work objectives are more important than others; I have a clear sense of priority on these goals.

1997	79	12	9

I understand fully which of my work objectives are more important than others; I have a clear sense of priority on these goals.

1996	71	15	13

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

Leadership

On the overall measure of leadership, the average score given by those surveyed was 6.38 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores for all the questions included in the leadership index are shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Minimum	**Maximum**
41	I feel confident that management will always treat me fairly.	2.96	2.97	2.50	3.28
43	Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve the operations in our office.	3.09	-	2.52	3.60
44	You can count on supervisors/managers to back you up when you make decisions that clients don't agree with.	3.31	3.40	2.93	3.57
45	Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the office's future.	3.12*	3.00	2.65	3.43
49	Management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions about how to improve operations in our office.	3.46	-	2.79	4.05

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

While the majority of those surveyed (60%) agreed that management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions about how to improve operations in their office, a somewhat smaller percentage (41%) agreed that management actually acts on these suggestions.
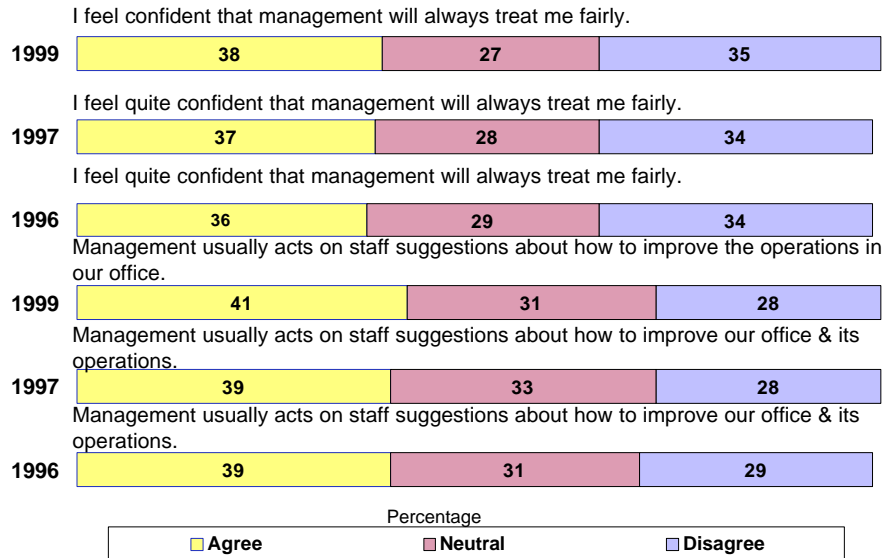
The only significant difference between 1997 and 1999 is regarding employees' trust in management to make sensible decisions for the office's future. Employees in 1999 are significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that management can indeed be trusted to make sensible decisions for the office.

There appears to be a continued lack of confidence that management will always treat employees fairly. Only 38% of HRDC employees agreed with this statement, while 35% of employees did not feel that management would always treat them fairly. These results are virtually unchanged over the three waves of this study
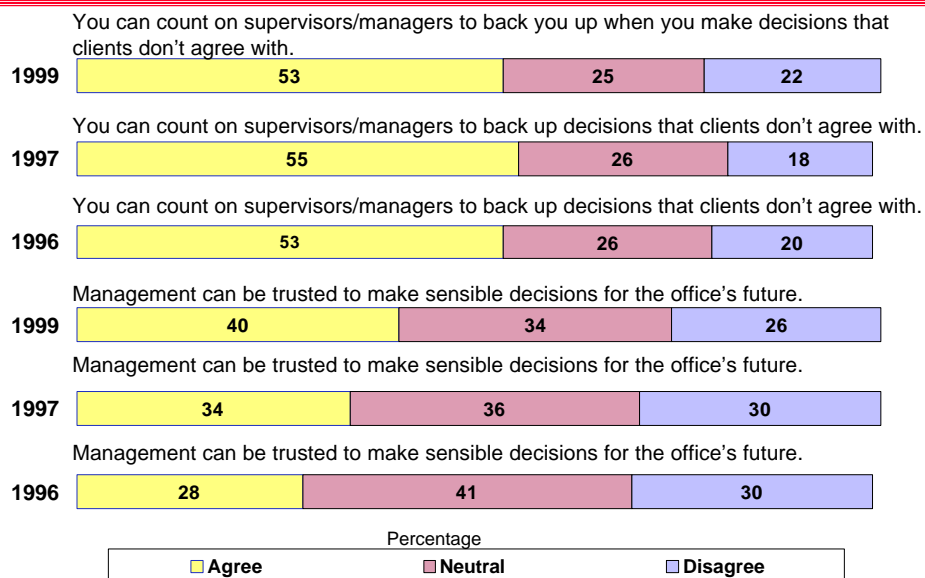
In terms of the index measure for leadership, no significant demographic differences exist.

A more detailed breakdown of the responses in the leadership index is shown in the chart below.
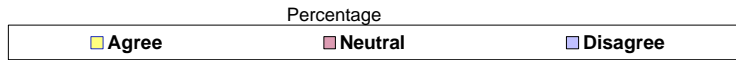
LEADERSHIP

I feel confident that management will always treat me fairly.

| 1999 | 38 | 27 | 35 |

I feel quite confident that management will always treat me fairly.

| 1997 | 37 | 28 | 34 |

I feel quite confident that management will always treat me fairly.

| 1996 | 36 | 29 | 34 |

Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve the operations in our office.

| 1999 | 41 | 31 | 28 |

Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve our office & its operations.

| 1997 | 39 | 33 | 28 |

Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve our office & its operations.

| 1996 | 39 | 31 | 29 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree**　　☐ **Neutral**　　☐ **Disagree**

LEADERSHIP

You can count on supervisors/managers to back you up when you make decisions that clients don't agree with.

| 1999 | 53 | 25 | 22 |

You can count on supervisors/managers to back up decisions that clients don't agree with.

| 1997 | 55 | 26 | 18 |

You can count on supervisors/managers to back up decisions that clients don't agree with.

| 1996 | 53 | 26 | 20 |

Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the office's future.

| 1999 | 40 | 34 | 26 |

Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the office's future.

| 1997 | 34 | 36 | 30 |

Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the office's future.

| 1996 | 28 | 41 | 30 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree**　　☐ **Neutral**　　☐ **Disagree**

LEADERSHIP

Management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions about how to improve operations in our office.

1999 | 60 | 23 | 17 |

Management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions and ideas.

1997 | 57 | 24 | 18 |

Management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions and ideas.

1996 | 59 | 24 | 16 |

Percentage

☐ **Agree** ☐ **Neutral** ☐ **Disagree**
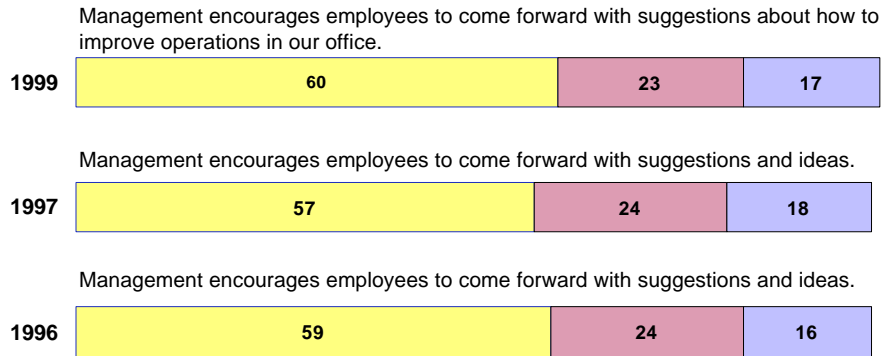
Resources and Support

Employees continue to find resources and support wanting across the department. Employees gave it an average rating of 5.58 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores for all the questions included in the resources and support index are shown in the table below. Please note that agreement with question 61 indicates a lack of resources and support, therefore a high score is a negative indication for the organization.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Minimum	**Maximum**
38	I have the information I need to provide effective service to my clients.	3.57	-	3.17	3.87
61	In the last three years, my personal workload at the office has increased.	4.12	-	3.69	4.39
62	I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office.	2.52*	2.31	1.80	3.47
64	I have all the support I need to effectively carry out my responsibilities.	3.21*	3.09	2.83	3.57

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

When it comes to information, the majority of those surveyed report that they have all they need to provide effective service to their clients. Only 16% of those surveyed feel that they do not have enough information to provide clients with effective service.

As compared to 1997, employees of HRDC are significantly more likely to agree that they have enough staff to do the work in their office. Although the level of agreement has increased from last year, room for improvement still exists. Specifically, 58% of those surveyed in 1999 do not believe that they have enough staff to do the work in their office.

Additionally, employees of HRDC are significantly more likely this year as compared to 1997 to agree that they have all the support they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities.
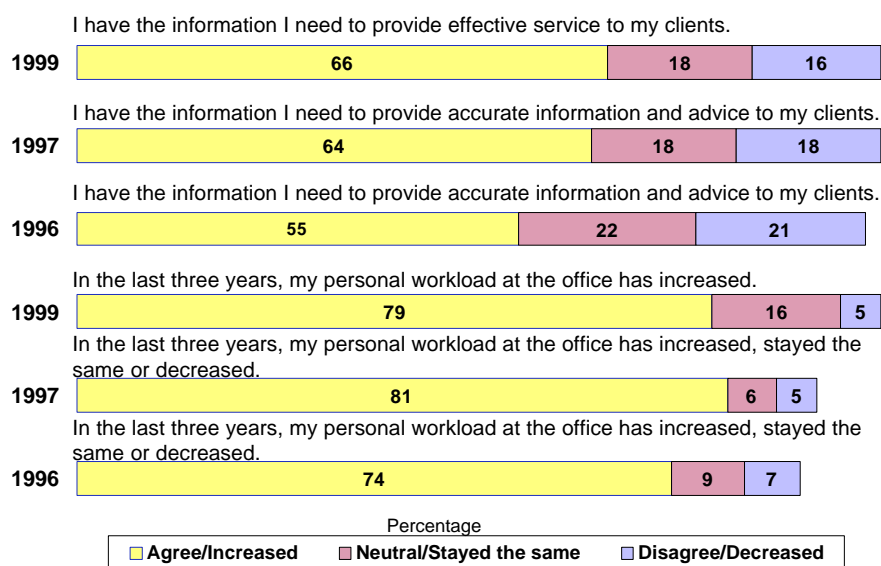
Employees feel that in the last three years their personal workload at the office has increased. Fully 79% of those surveyed report that their personal workload has increased over the past three years.

In terms of the index measure for resources and support, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:
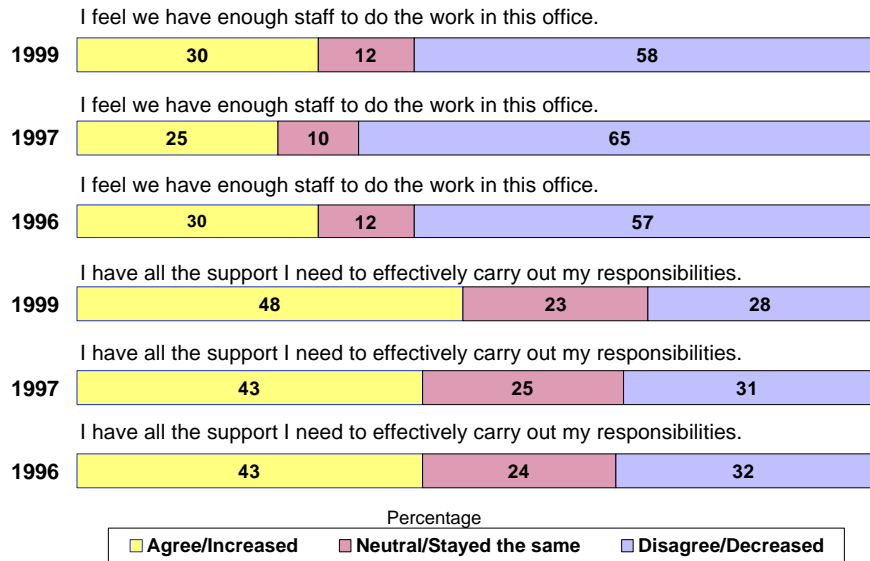
- women;
- part-time employees;
- term employees;
- 16-34 years of age;
- have worked for HRDC for less than 10 years; and
- have worked for the public service for less than 10 years.

The following chart depicts the distribution of responses to questions in the resources and support index.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

I have the information I need to provide effective service to my clients.

1999 | 66 | 18 | 16

I have the information I need to provide accurate information and advice to my clients.

1997 | 64 | 18 | 18

I have the information I need to provide accurate information and advice to my clients.

1996 | 55 | 22 | 21

In the last three years, my personal workload at the office has increased.

1999 | 79 | 16 | 5

In the last three years, my personal workload at the office has increased, stayed the same or decreased.

1997 | 81 | 6 | 5

In the last three years, my personal workload at the office has increased, stayed the same or decreased.

1996 | 74 | 9 | 7

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Increased**   ☐ **Neutral/Stayed the same**   ☐ **Disagree/Decreased**

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office.

1999	30	12	58

I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office.

1997	25	10	65

I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office.

1996	30	12	57

I have all the support I need to effectively carry out my responsibilities.

1999	48	23	28

I have all the support I need to effectively carry out my responsibilities.

1997	43	25	31

I have all the support I need to effectively carry out my responsibilities.

1996	43	24	32

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Increased**   ☐ **Neutral/Stayed the same**   ☐ **Disagree/Decreased**

Conflict

The area of perceived conflict in the department continues to represent a challenge. Employees gave the organization a score of 4.29 out of a possible ten points on this index measure

The average scores for all the questions included in the conflict index are shown in the table below. Please note that because of the negative connotation of these statements, having a lower score on the individual questions is a positive indication for the office.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range Minimum	Maximum
29	I believe that there are competing priorities between different levels (i.e. local, regional and national) within HRDC.	3.73	-	3.47	4.13
33	When working as part of a team or group, I usually witness conflict between group members.	3.08	-	2.53	3.61
40	I often find that the objectives I have in my program area are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in another program area.	3.26*	3.16	2.90	3.62

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The one item in the conflict index that was repeated from 1997 shows a significant difference between 1997 and 1999. HRDC employees in 1999 are significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that the objectives in their program are made more difficult to achieve by the action of employees in other program areas. This reflects a higher degree of conflict for this particular item.
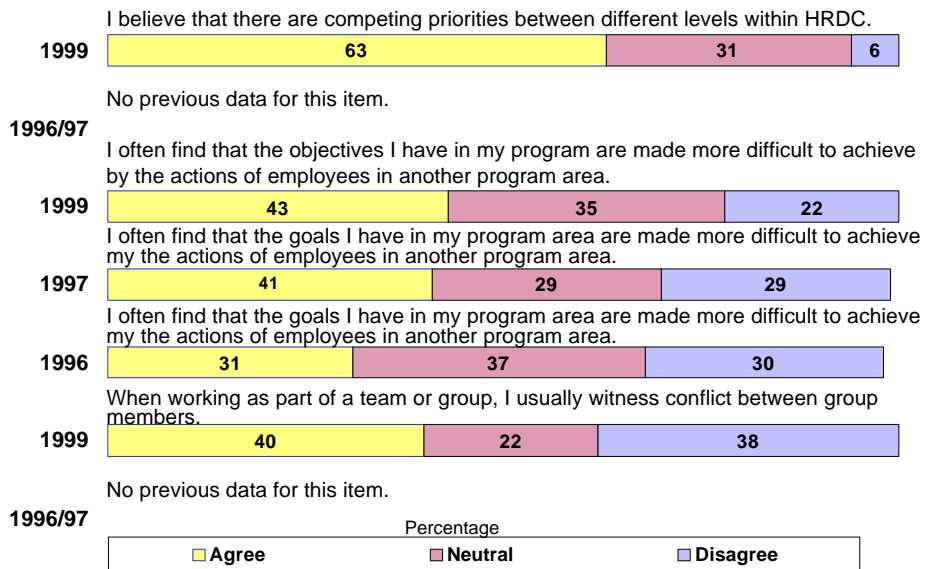
The majority of HRDC employees in 1999 (63%) believe that there are competing priorities between different levels within HRDC. This year, two regional head-quarters offices (RHQs) were surveyed in addition to the HRCCs. Comparing results from RHQ employees to those from the remaining HRCCs suggests that the former (RHQ staff) are significantly more likely to believe that competing priorities exist between different levels of the organization. Specifically, 72% of employees at the RHQs agree that competing priorities exist, while 61% of those at the HRCCs believe that competing priorities exist among the different levels of HRDC. This is not surprising though since the work performed by RHQ employees is different from that performed in HRCCs. Differences in opinion would therefore be expected for this item.

In terms of the index measure for conflict, those employees who scored significantly higher on the overall measure are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- 16-34 years of age;
- have worked for HRDC for less than 10 years; and
- have worked for the public service for less than 10 years.

The chart below indicates a more detailed distribution of the questions in the conflict index.

CONFLICT

I believe that there are competing priorities between different levels within HRDC.

1999 | 63 | 31 | 6

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

I often find that the objectives I have in my program are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in another program area.

1999 | 43 | 35 | 22

I often find that the goals I have in my program area are made more difficult to achieve my the actions of employees in another program area.

1997 | 41 | 29 | 29

I often find that the goals I have in my program area are made more difficult to achieve my the actions of employees in another program area.

1996 | 31 | 37 | 30

When working as part of a team or group, I usually witness conflict between group members.

1999 | 40 | 22 | 38

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Percentage

□ **Agree**   □ **Neutral**   □ **Disagree**

Communication

On the overall measure of communication employees gave an average score of 6.42 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores for all the questions included in the communication index are shown in the table below.

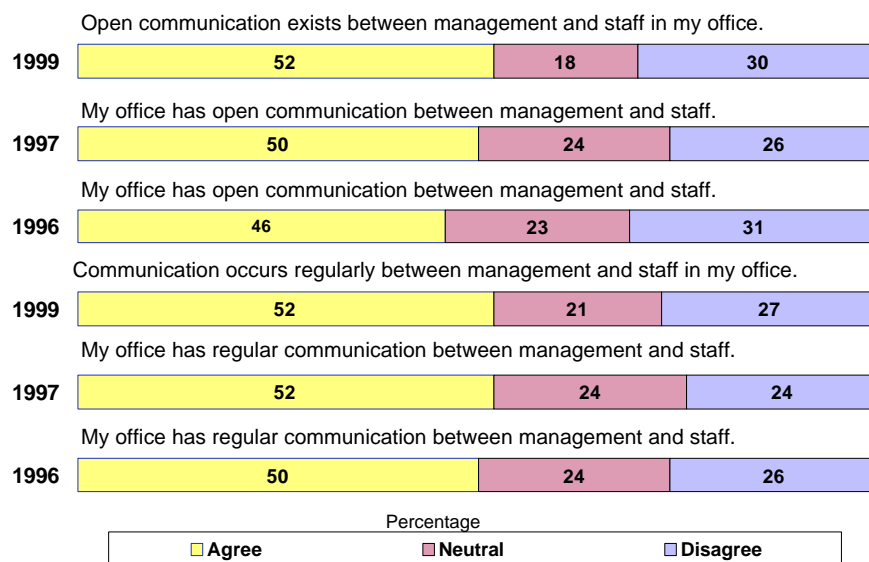| No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range	
				Minimum	**Maximum**
1	Open communication exists between management and staff in my office.	3.24	-	2.77	3.67
3	Communication occurs regularly between management and staff in my office.	3.27	-	2.98	3.71
11	There is sufficient communication between management and staff in my office.	2.99	-	2.63	3.43
18	The people in my office regularly discuss ways to improve how we do our jobs.	3.32	3.28	2.95	3.84

While the majority of those surveyed agree that open communication exists between management and staff (52%) and that communication occurs regularly in their office (52%), a somewhat lower percentage of individuals agree that sufficient communication exists (40%). Just over one-third (34%) of HRDC employees do not agree that sufficient communication exists between management and staff in their office.

One question contained in the communications index was repeated in 1999. Results for it were not significantly different from the 1997 average.
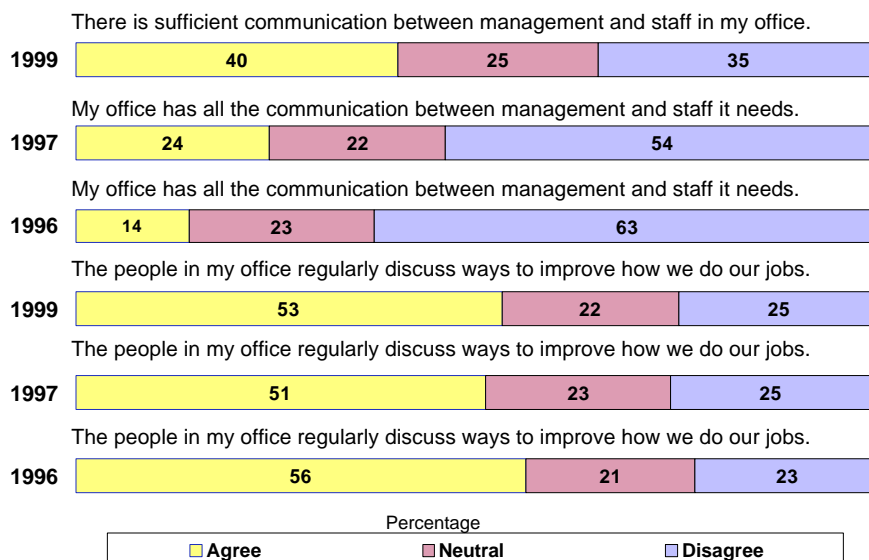
In terms of the index measure for communication, those employees with a college diploma scored significantly lower than those with a high school education. This is the only demographic difference that exists for the overall measure of communication.

The chart below provides a more detailed distribution of the questions in the communication index.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication exists between management and staff in my office.

1999	52	18	30

My office has open communication between management and staff.

1997	50	24	26

My office has open communication between management and staff.

1996	46	23	31

Communication occurs regularly between management and staff in my office.

1999	52	21	27

My office has regular communication between management and staff.

1997	52	24	24

My office has regular communication between management and staff.

1996	50	24	26

Percentage

☐ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ☐ **Disagree**

COMMUNICATION

There is sufficient communication between management and staff in my office.

1999	40	25	35

My office has all the communication between management and staff it needs.

1997	24	22	54

My office has all the communication between management and staff it needs.

1996	14	23	63

The people in my office regularly discuss ways to improve how we do our jobs.

1999	53	22	25

The people in my office regularly discuss ways to improve how we do our jobs.

1997	51	23	25

The people in my office regularly discuss ways to improve how we do our jobs.

1996	56	21	23

Percentage

☐ **Agree** ■ **Neutral** ☐ **Disagree**

Work Feedback Mechanisms

The area of work feedback mechanisms was given a score of 5.76 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores for all the questions included in the work feedback mechanisms index are shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	Global Range	
			Minimum	**Maximum**
5	My work is regularly measured against specific performance requirements.	3.01	2.32	4.39
6	We have a process in place for employees to exchange ideas about work practices.	2.98	2.44	3.59
22	Management provides me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.	2.59	2.12	3.73
70	Co-workers and colleagues provide me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.	2.94	2.63	3.48

Employees appear to be most critical of the amount of feedback received from management. Over one-half (52%) of HRDC employees disagree that management provides them with continuous feedback about how well they're doing. A similarly high percentage of individuals do not feel that their co-workers provide them with continuous feedback either. Only 36% of employees agree that co-workers and colleagues provide them with continuous feedback about how well they are doing.

A fairly high percentage of employees reported that their work is not regularly measured against specific performance requirements. Fully 37% of those surveyed *disagree* that their work is regularly measured against performance requirements.

In terms of the index measure of work feedback mechanisms, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:
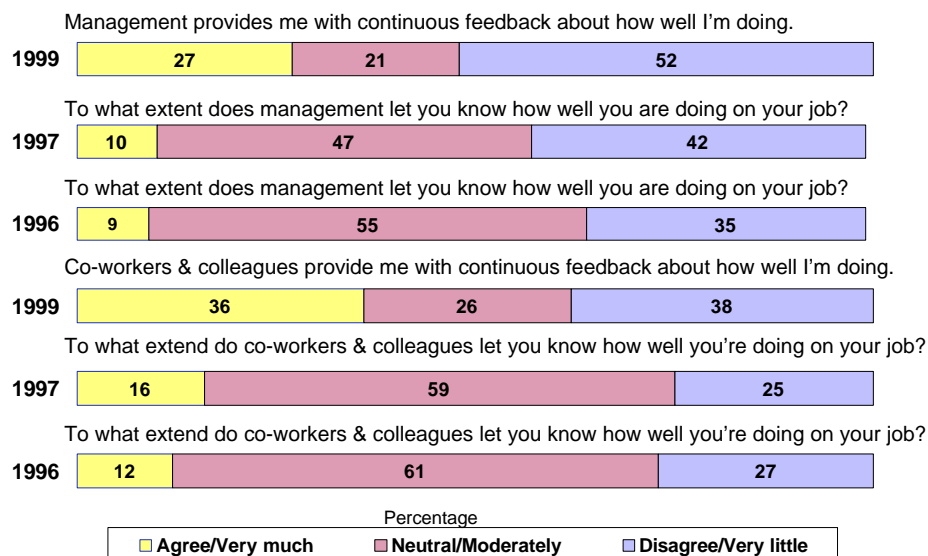
- part-time employees;
- term employees;
- 16-34 year olds;
- have worked for HRDC for less than 10 years; and
- have worked for the public service for less than 10 years.

The chart below provides a more detailed distribution of the questions in the work feedback mechanisms index.

WORK FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

My work is regularly measured against specific performance requirements.

1999	39	24	37

My work is regularly measured against specific performance requirements or goals.

1997	35	24	41

My work is regularly measured against specific performance requirements or goals.

1996	33	25	41

We have a process in place for employees to exchange ideas about work practices.

1999	41	23	36

We have a process in place to exchange "best practices" and "lessons learned."

1997	22	28	50

We have a process in place to exchange "best practices" and "lessons learned."

1996	22	27	51

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Very much**   ☐ **Neutral/Moderately**   ☐ **Disagree/Very little**

WORK FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Management provides me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.

1999	27	21	52

To what extent does management let you know how well you are doing on your job?

1997	10	47	42

To what extent does management let you know how well you are doing on your job?

1996	9	55	35

Co-workers & colleagues provide me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.

1999	36	26	38

To what extend do co-workers & colleagues let you know how well you're doing on your job?

1997	16	59	25

To what extend do co-workers & colleagues let you know how well you're doing on your job?

1996	12	61	27

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Very much**   ☐ **Neutral/Moderately**   ☐ **Disagree/Very little**

Skills and Training

On the overall measure of skills and training, employees gave the department a score of 6.44 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores on all questions included in the skills and training index are shown in the table below. Please note that agreement with questions 28 and 34 indicates a lack of skills and training, therefore a low score is a positive indication for the office.

No.	Question	1999	1997	Global Range Minimum	Maximum
28	I often have to read a manual to learn how to complete a specific task in my job.	3.16*	3.04	2.40	3.61
32	I feel I have enough training to do my job.	3.30	3.22	2.53	3.85
34	I often have to ask a colleague for help in order to complete a specific task in my job.	2.61	-	2.18	2.96
60	I'm confident of my ability to operate all the computer systems necessary to do my job.	3.65*	3.47	3.25	4.04
66	I regularly receive formal classroom training for the different duties my job requires.	2.90*	2.68	1.88	3.83

(*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the 1997 and 1999 average for this item.)

The skills that employees bring with them to their work and efforts made to maintain the relevance of these skills in a changing workplace are essential building blocks for an effective and efficient organization. Several questions were used to explore these issues including questions about employees' self-perceptions of competence, and the adequacy of their current skill set and training.

As seen in 1997, of all the different aspects of skills and training captured in this study, the area of greatest strength within HRDC is employees' confidence in their ability to operate all computer systems required. This confidence in ability has increased significantly since 1997. Fully two-thirds (67%) of those surveyed in 1999 agree that they are confident of their ability to operate all the necessary computer systems.

Employees in 1999 are also significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that they receive regular classroom training. Although this item is on the up swing, room for improvement still exists. In fact, 52% of HRDC employees disagree with the statement that they receive regular formal classroom training for the different duties their job requires.
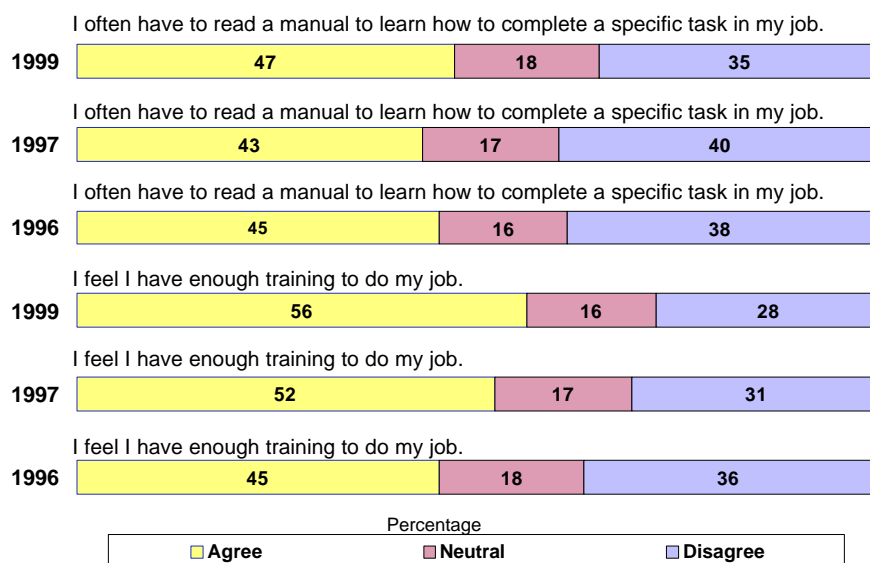
In 1999, HRDC employees are also significantly more likely than those surveyed in 1997 to agree that they have to read a manual to learn how to complete a specific task in their job. Fully 47% of employees in 1999 agree with this statement.

A large percentage of employees report that they often have to read a manual to complete a specific task in their job. A similarly large percentage of individuals report that they do not receive formal classroom training. Taken together, these results appear to indicate that an opportunity for improving skill sets exists.

In terms of the index measure for skills and training, no significant demographic differences exist for this overall measure.

The chart below indicates a more detailed distribution of the questions in the skills and training index.

SKILLS AND TRAINING

I often have to read a manual to learn how to complete a specific task in my job.

1999	Agree 47	Neutral 18	Disagree 35

I often have to read a manual to learn how to complete a specific task in my job.

1997	Agree 43	Neutral 17	Disagree 40

I often have to read a manual to learn how to complete a specific task in my job.

1996	Agree 45	Neutral 16	Disagree 38

I feel I have enough training to do my job.

1999	Agree 56	Neutral 16	Disagree 28

I feel I have enough training to do my job.

1997	Agree 52	Neutral 17	Disagree 31

I feel I have enough training to do my job.

1996	Agree 45	Neutral 18	Disagree 36

Percentage

☐ Agree   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Disagree

SKILLS AND TRAINING

I often have to ask a colleague for help in order to complete a specific task in my job.

1999	26	17	57

I often have to ask someone else to teach me how to complete a specific task in my job.

1997	27	22	52

I often have to ask someone else to teach me how to complete a specific task in my job.

1996	27	16	58

I'm confident of my ability to operate all the computer systems necessary to do my job.

1999	67	12	21

I'm confident of my ability to operate all the computer systems necessary to do my job.

1997	60	13	26

I'm confident of my ability to operate all the computer systems necessary to do my job.

1996	57	13	28

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

SKILLS AND TRAINING

I regularly receive formal classroom training for the different duties my job requires.

1999	39	19	42

I regularly receive formal classroom training for the different duties my job requires.

1997	29	22	48

I regularly receive formal classroom training for the different duties my job requires.

1996	28	19	53

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

Autonomy and Empowerment

The area of autonomy and empowerment represents a relative strength for HRDC, with the organization obtaining a score of 7.07 out of a possible ten points.

The average scores for all the questions included in the autonomy and empowerment index are shown in the table below. Please note that agreement with question 51 indicates a lower degree of autonomy and empowerment.

No.	Question	1999	Global Range	
			Minimum	**Maximum**
8	I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job.	3.23	2.31	3.91
35	I regularly provide management with suggestions about how to improve the operations in our office.	3.13	2.57	3.56
42	I like the freedom to make important decisions on my own.	4.02	3.98	4.31
46	Management encourages employees to make decisions on their own.	3.39	2.59	3.78
48	Management trusts me to make good decisions.	3.66	3.27	4.06
50	I don't need any supervision to carry out the main tasks associated with my job.	4.23	3.95	4.52
51	I'd like it if there were more formal policies and procedures to guide me in the decisions I'm asked to make.	2.99	2.54	3.34
68	I am often held personally accountable for the decisions I make in my job.	3.64	3.18	3.80

Several aspects of autonomy and employee empowerment were included in this index to reflect the many dimensions of these issues. Employees were asked to report the amount of freedom desired in decision-making along with the degree to which management encourages employees to make their own decisions, and the trust management has in these decisions.

The vast majority of employees (83%) agree that they like the freedom to make important decisions on their own. Over one-half of HRDC employees (58%) also agree that management encourages employees to make decisions on their own, and two-thirds (67%) of those surveyed report that management trusts them to make good decisions. This is a positive sign for the organization with the majority of employees enjoying the freedom to make decisions on their own, and believing that management encourages and trusts these decisions.

In terms of the index measure for autonomy and empowerment, those employees who scored significantly higher are more likely to have the following characteristics:

- male;
- full-time employees;
- indeterminate employees;
- 45-54 years of age;
- have worked for HRDC for over 10 years; and
- have worked for the public service for over 10 years.

The graph below provides a more detailed distribution of the responses to the questions in the autonomy / empowerment index.
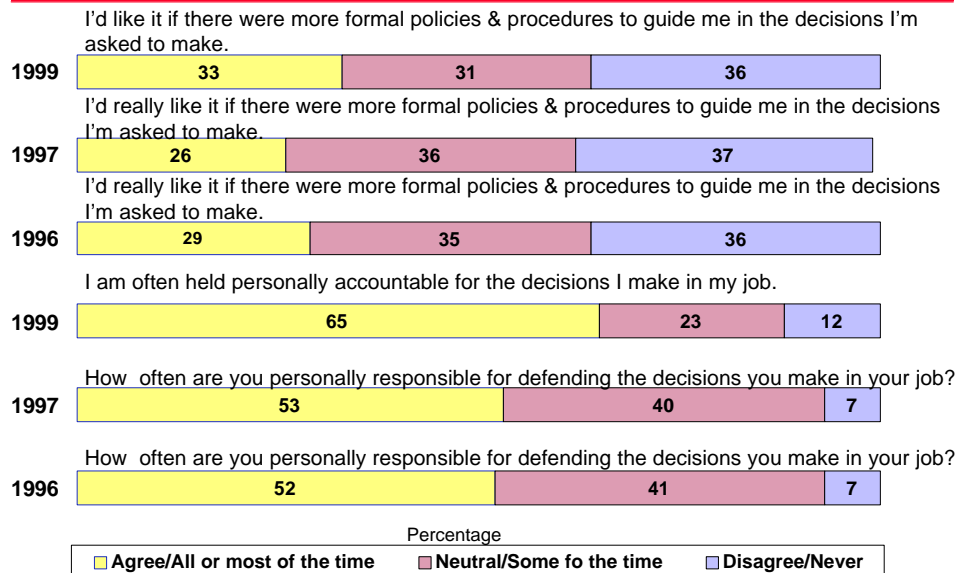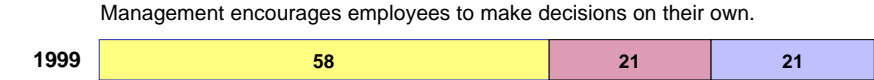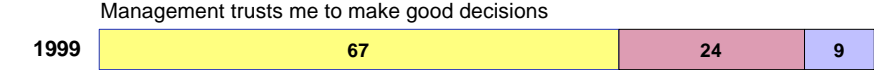
AUTOMOMY/EMPOWERMENT

I regularly provide management with suggestions about how to improve the operations in our office.

1999	40	33	27

I regularly provide management with ideas and suggestions about how to improve our office and its operations.

1997	33	39	28

I regularly provide management with ideas and suggestions about how to improve our office and its operations.

1996	37	34	29

I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job.

1999	49	20	31

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Percentage

☐ **Agree/All or most of the time**   ☐ **Neutral/Some of the time**   ☐ **Disagree/Never**

AUTOMOMY/EMPOWERMENT

I like the freedom to make important decisions on my own.

1999	83	13	4

I like the freedom to make major decisions on my own.

1997	72	19	8

I like the freedom to make major decisions on my own.

1996	70	21	9

I don't need any supervision to carry out the main tasks associated with my job.

1999	91	5	4

I don't need any supervision or direction to carry out the main tasks associated with my job.

1997	81	9	10

I don't need any supervision or direction to carry out the main tasks associated with my job.

1996	84	7	8

Percentage

☐ **Agree/All or most of the time**   ☐ **Neutral/Some of the time**   ☐ **Disagree/Never**

AUTOMOMY/EMPOWERMENT

I'd like it if there were more formal policies & procedures to guide me in the decisions I'm asked to make.

1999	33	31	36

I'd really like it if there were more formal policies & procedures to guide me in the decisions I'm asked to make.

1997	26	36	37

I'd really like it if there were more formal policies & procedures to guide me in the decisions I'm asked to make.

1996	29	35	36

I am often held personally accountable for the decisions I make in my job.

1999	65	23	12

How often are you personally responsible for defending the decisions you make in your job?

1997	53	40	7

How often are you personally responsible for defending the decisions you make in your job?

1996	52	41	7

Percentage

☐ **Agree/All or most of the time**   ☐ **Neutral/Some fo the time**   ☐ **Disagree/Never**

AUTOMOMY/EMPOWERMENT

Management encourages employees to make decisions on their own.

1999	58 / 21 / 21

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Management trusts me to make good decisions

1999	67 / 24 / 9

No previous data for this item.

1996/97

Percentage

☐ **Agree/All or most of the time**   ☐ **Neutral/Some of the time**   ☐ **Disagree/Never**

5. ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC AREAS

5.1 Change

In order to determine how employees perceive the changes that have taken place in the organization over the last few years, a number of questions were asked probing changes in the department and within an employees' own office. The breakdown of the average score for each question included in the change battery of questions is shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	Global Range	
			Minimum	**Maximum**
15	The changes in the Department over the past few years have been very stressful for me personally.	3.65	3.02	4.17
20	I am confident that in the future there will be less change in my office.	2.05	1.72	2.23
36	The main objectives of my position have changed significantly over the past few years.	3.63	3.10	4.00

Responses to these questions indicate that a great deal of change has taken place over the past few years and that employees believe that change will continue to occur. Six-in-ten HRDC employees agree that the main objectives of their position have changed significantly over the past few years. In addition, three-quarters (75%) of those surveyed disagree with the statement that there will be less change in their office in the future. Only 6% of employees are confident there will be less change in their office in the future.

The graph below provides a more detailed distribution of the responses to the questions dealing with change.

CHANGE

The changes in the Department over the past few years have been very stressful for me personally.

1999 | 59 | 24 | 17

No 1997 data for this item.

1997

The recent changes in the department and my HRCC have been very stressful for me personally.

1996 | 64 | 20 | 15

I am confident that in the future there will be less change in my office

1999 | 6 | 19 | 75

No 1997 data for this item.

1997

I am confident that in the future things will settle down and there will be less change in my HRCC.

1996 | 18 | 21 | 61

Percentage

☐ **Agree**　　☐ **Neutral**　　☐ **Disagree**

CHANGE

The main objectives of my position have changed significantly over the past few years.

1999 | 59 | 22 | 18

No 1997 data for this item.

1997

Since 1993, do you believe the main objectives of your position have changed significantly, changed a little or remained unchanged?

1996 | 75 | 6 | 19

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Changed**　　☐ **Neutral/Not sure**　　☐ **Disagree/Unchanged**

5.2 Impacts

In order to determine whether decisions made at various levels of HRDC have an impact on how employees feel about their job, a number of questions were asked. The table below summarizes answers to questions related to employee perceptions of the impact decisions have on them. The breakdown of the average score for each question included in the impacts series of questions is shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	Global Range	
			Minimum	**Maximum**
47	Decisions made in RHQ(s) have an impact on how I feel about my job.	3.67	3.32	3.92
67	Decisions made nationally by departments and agencies outside of HRDC (i.e. Treasury Board, Public Service Commission) have an impact on how I feel about my job.	3.73	3.25	4.09
69	Decisions made in NHQ have an impact on how I feel about my job.	3.67	3.23	3.93
72	Decisions made locally in my office have an impact on how I feel about my job.	3.98	3.63	4.21

The majority of employees agree that the decisions made at various levels of HRDC have an impact on how they feel about their job. Decisions made locally in employees' offices have the greatest impact on how individuals feel about their job. Fully 83% of those surveyed agree that these decisions made locally have an impact on how they feel.

The graph below provides a more detailed distribution of the responses to the questions in contained in this index.

IMPACT OF DECISIONS

Decisions made nationally by departments & agencies outside of HRDC (i.e. Treasury Board, PSC) have an impact on how I feel about by job.

1999	64	27	9

Decisions made in NHQ have an impact on how I feel about my job.

1999	62	30	8

Decisions made in RHQ(s) have an impact on how I feel about my job.

1999	64	29	7

Decisions made locally in my office have an impact on how I feel about my job.

1999	82	13	4

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

5.3 Satisfaction with Decisions

In addition to employees being asked about the *impact* of the decisions made at HRDC and within government more generally, employees were also asked whether they are typically *satisfied* with decisions made at various levels. The breakdown of the average score for each question included in the "satisfaction with decisions" battery of questions is shown in the table below.

No.	Question	1999	Global Range	
			Minimum	Maximum
9	In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in RHQ(s).	2.82	2.46	3.17
27	In general, I am satisfied with decisions made nationally by departments or agencies outside of HRDC (i.e. Treasury Board, Public Service Commission).	2.32	1.89	2.62
63	In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in my office locally.	3.18	2.80	3.46
65	In general, I am satisfied with decisions made between HRDC and provincial governments.	2.77	2.42	3.26
71	In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in NHQ.	2.79	2.50	3.11

Almost half (46%) of HRDC employees appear to be generally satisfied with the decisions made locally in their office. This is a positive sign since employees indicated those decisions have the greatest impact on how they feel about their jobs.

Employees are least satisfied with the decisions made by departments outside of HRDC. Only 8% of respondents agree that they are satisfied with these particular decisions. Over one-half (56%) report they are not satisfied with the decisions made nationally by departments or agencies outside of HRDC.

The large number of neutral responses seems to suggest that many employees are largely ambivalent about the decisions made at the remaining levels of HRDC.

The graph below provides a more detailed distribution of the responses to the questions in this series.

SATISFACTION WITH DECISIONS

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in my office locally.

1999		
46	28	26

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in RHQ(s).

1999		
22	44	34

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in NHQ.

1999		
16	54	30

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made between HRDC and provincial governments.

1999		
16	53	31

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made nationally by departments or agencies outside of HRDC (i.e. Treasury Board, PSC).

1999		
8	36	56

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

5.4 Burnout Inventory

The burnout inventory has been developed to determine the level of burnout among workers in various occupations. Three dimensions emerge from the inventory: exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy.

The exhaustion dimension consists of 5 questions referring to both physical and emotional fatigue. The cynicism dimension also consists of 5 items, reflecting an indifferent or a distant attitude toward work. This indifference and cynicism is believed to be an attempt to distance oneself from the exhausting demands of work. Exhaustion and cynicism are positively correlated, meaning that high levels of exhaustion are associated with high levels of cynicism.

Cynicism and exhaustion tend to be negatively correlated with professional efficacy. Professional efficacy refers to satisfaction with both past and present accomplishments at work. It also probes an individual's expectations of continued effectiveness at work. This dimension consists of 6 items.

All three scores are based on a 7-point frequency scale with a "0" indicating the absence of a particular item and a "6" indicating the daily occurrence of the particular item. Higher scores for both exhaustion and cynicism are **negative** in connotation, reflecting more frequent occurrences of employees feeling exhausted or cynical. Conversely, higher scores for professional efficacy are **positive** in connotation, reflecting employees sense of effectiveness in their job.

TABLE 19
DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT INVENTORY

Dimension	Global Average	HRDC Employees (Nova Scotia, 1998)	Canadian Clerical Workers	Canadian Management
Exhaustion	2.71	2.80	2.70	2.55
Professional Efficacy	4.22	4.41	4.54	4.73
Cynicism	1.87	1.89	1.92	1.32

Scale: 0=Never; 3=Regularly (a few times a month); 6=Daily

In terms of exhaustion, employees at HRDC feel "exhausted" once to a few times a month on average. Their level of cynicism is slightly lower, occurring perhaps a few times a year. Respondents feel relatively efficacious though, reporting that they have been effective in their work once to a few times a week. It should be noted however, that employees in HRDC scored significantly lower on professional efficacy than employees working for other organizations, as can be seen in the table above.

The results for both Canadian clerical workers and managers employed at a hospital in central Canada (Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996)[2] have been provided for comparison purposes. As can be seen in Table 19, the reported levels of cynicism and exhaustion for HRDC employees are average in comparison to the other organization. However, HRDC's level of professional efficacy is statistically significantly lower than the levels of efficacy found for the Canadian hospital workers.

The only demographic differences across the three dimensions of the burnout inventory relate to the term of employees. Those employees who are employed full-time report significantly higher levels of professional efficacy than do those employees who have part-time status. Part-time employees also scored significantly higher compared to full time employees in terms of their reported levels of cynicism.

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[2] Leiter, M.P., and Schaufeli, W.B. (1996). "Consistency of the Burnout Construct across Occupations". Anxiety, Stress, and Coping, Vol. 9. 229-243.

5.5   Information on the Year 2000

With the upcoming turn of the millennium, many problems exist surrounding the Y2K issue. Employees were questioned as to whether they had received sufficient information regarding Y2K initiatives within HRDC. The global average for HRDC was 3.24 on a five-point scale. Almost one-half (49%) of HRDC employees feel that they have received enough information on Y2K initiatives within the organization.

The distribution of the responses by percentage of respondents to the questions on "information on Y2K" for all offices is shown in the following chart.

Information on Y2K

I feel that I have received enough information on Y2K initiatives within HRDC.

49	24	27

Percentage
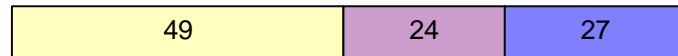
☐ Agree   ◼ Neutral   ◼ Disagree
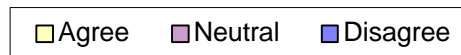
6. BENCHMARKING HRDC EMPLOYEES AGAINST THE GENERAL PUBLIC

A survey of the general Canadian population was conducted as part of this year's program. The intent of this companion study was to compare results gathered from HRDC employees to results on the same questions gathered from the general public. Using factor analysis on the results generated from the 1997 study, a representative question was chosen from each of the indices. The fifteen questions chosen from this analysis were posed to a random sample of Canadian adults employed full-time outside the home. Respondents participating in the interviews came from every occupational group, in every industry sector, with all manner of responsibilities and compensation arrangements.

As such, this sample is a very diverse base against which to benchmark HRDC employees, given the similarities of their employment circumstances. Consequently, comparisons have been made across several dimensions of this benchmarking exercise. First, the HRDC average for all 17 sites is provided. Second, results from the general population survey are shown, followed by the results for only those members of the public survey who indicated they were members of a public sector / para-public union (33% of the total surveyed). Finally, the highest scoring office average on that question is also provided.

Just over 800 Canadians were surveyed in a nationwide telephone study conducted in mid-March 1999. The results for the Canadian population are considered accurate within +/- 3.47%, nineteen times in twenty.

Question	HRDC Average	General Canadian Population	Members of a Public Sector Union	Highest Office Average
Open communication exists between management and staff in my office.	3.24*	3.60	3.48✦	3.67
I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job.	3.23*	3.68	3.61✦	3.91
Management provides me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.	2.59*	3.09	2.92✦	3.73†
I feel a sense of pride working for my organization.	3.31*	4.00	3.92✦	3.67†
If a concern about unethical behavior were raised by an employee, I believe there would be an open discussion of that concern in my workplace.	2.95*	3.70	3.63✦	3.46
I feel I have enough training to do my job.	3.30*	4.31	4.23✦	3.85†
The main objectives of my position have changed significantly over the past few years.	3.63*	3.19	3.28✦	3.10
	HRDC Average	General Canadian Population	Members of a Public Sector Union	Top Office Average

I often find that the objectives I have in my job are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in another part of our organization.	3.26*	2.86	2.85✦	2.90
Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve our operations at work.	3.09*	3.28	3.12	3.60✝
I am confident that the organization I work for will achieve its goals.	3.21*	3.95	3.68✦	3.65✝
My work objectives are very clear.	3.64*	4.15	4.17✦	3.86✝
I feel we have enough staff to do the work in our organization.	2.52*	3.22	2.88✦	3.47
In general, I am satisfied with decisions made where I work.	3.18*	3.62	3.54✦	3.46
Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied.	3.36*	4.03	4.10✦	3.85
Considering a scale from 1-7, where "1" does not describe your office at all, and "7" perfectly describes your office, to what extent would you describe your office as tense?	4.44*	3.85	4.09✦	3.55

*Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the HRDC average and the average for the general population on this item.
✝Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the top office average and the average for the general population on this item.
✦Note: A statistically significant difference exists between the public sector union averages and the averages for HRDC.

The table above reveals several things. First, it indicates that the general Canadian population scored significantly better than HRDC employees on *all* of the questions included in the benchmarking exercise. For example, while 84% of the general population agreed that they have enough training to do their job, only 56% of HRDC employees agree with this statement. Similarly, 73% of the Canadian population feel a sense of pride in working for their organization, while 49% of HRDC employees claim to feel a sense of pride in working for HRDC.

Second, the scores of those individuals in the general population employed with a public sector union are somewhat lower than that of the general Canadian population. On most of the questions, the scores for members of a public sector union are still significantly better than the scores for HRDC employees.

Third, the last column of averages in the table above represents the highest average office score on that particular question from among the 17 offices surveyed. The table reveals that the majority of "highest HRCC" office scores are not significantly different from the averages for the general Canadian population. This suggests that while in total, the 17 offices surveyed may lag behind the general population on all items surveyed, some HRCCs are achieving scores comparable to those found within the general population.
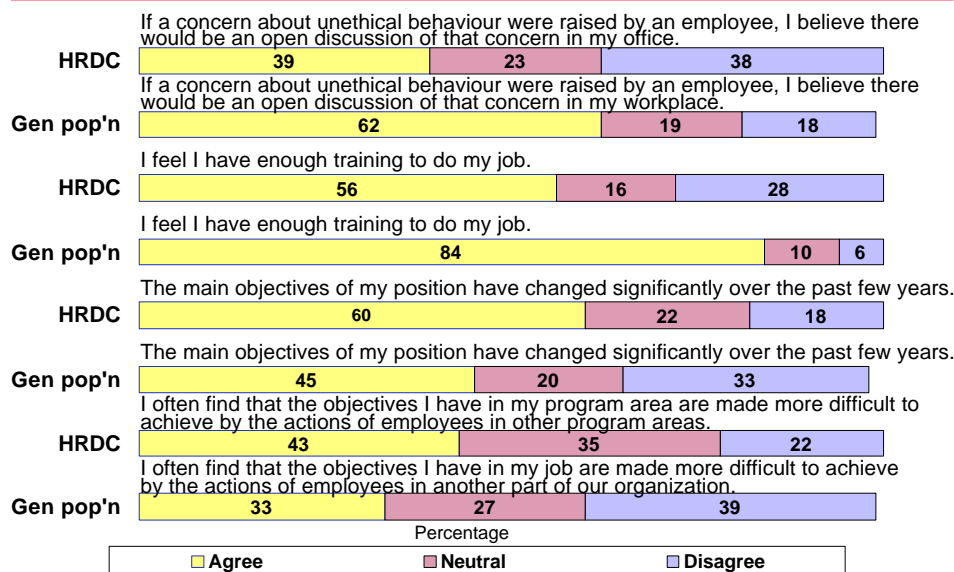
This in turn suggests that HRDC can "close the gap" in comparison to the general population on these items, *because some offices already compare favorably to the Canadian population.*

With respect to gender, a general trend was found for both the Canadian population and HRDC. Female employees tend to rate the various benchmarking items higher than men rate them. For example, while female HRDC employees obtained an average of 3.43 with respect to job satisfaction, male HRDC employees reported a significantly lower average of 3.26 for the same item.

BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS

Open communication exists between management & staff in my office

HRDC	52	18	30

Open communication exists between management & staff at work.

Gen pop'n	59	21	20

I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job.

HRDC	49	20	31

I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job.

Gen pop'n	61	22	17

Management provides me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.

HRDC	27	21	52

Management provides me with continuous feedback about how well I'm doing.

Gen pop'n	42	22	36

I feel a sense of pride in working for HRDC.

HRDC	49	32	19

I feel a sense of pride in working for my organization.

Gen pop'n	73	18	9

Percentage

☐ **Agree**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree**

BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS

If a concern about unethical behaviour were raised by an employee, I believe there would be an open discussion of that concern in my office.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
39	23	38

If a concern about unethical behaviour were raised by an employee, I believe there would be an open discussion of that concern in my workplace.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
62	19	18

I feel I have enough training to do my job.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
56	16	28

I feel I have enough training to do my job.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
84	10	6

The main objectives of my position have changed significantly over the past few years.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
60	22	18

The main objectives of my position have changed significantly over the past few years.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
45	20	33

I often find that the objectives I have in my program area are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in other program areas.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
43	35	22

I often find that the objectives I have in my job are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in another part of our organization.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
33	27	39

Percentage

□ Agree   □ Neutral   □ Disagree

BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS

Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve the operations in our office.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
41	31	28

Management usually acts on staff suggestions about how to improve our operations at work.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
48	24	28

I am confident that HRDC will reach these goals.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
38	46	16

I am confident that the organization I work for will achieve its goals.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
69	20	10

My work objectives are very clear.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
68	19	13

My work objectives are very clear.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
78	14	8

I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office.

HRDC

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
29	13	58

I feel we have enough staff to do the work in our organization.

Gen pop'n

Agree	Neutral	Disagree
48	17	35

Percentage

□ Agree   □ Neutral   □ Disagree

BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in my office locally.

HRDC		

46 | 28 | 26

In general, I am satisfied with decisions made where I work.

Gen pop'n

59 | 27 | 14

Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied.

HRDC

58 | 19 | 23

Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied.

Gen pop'n

72 | 21 | 7

To what extent would you describe your office as tense.

HRDC

53 | 16 | 31

To what extent would you describe your office as tense.

Gen pop'n

40 | 17 | 43

Percentage

☐ **Agree/Describes**   ☐ **Neutral**   ☐ **Disagree/Does not describe**

7.   DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Office Locations

Sites that participated in the study in 1996, 1997 and 1999 represent a majority of regions across Canada. The following table lists all participating offices.

1996	1997	1999
Charlottetown	Calgary	Winnipeg
Cornerbrook	Charlottetown	Cornerbrook
Grand Prairie	Danforth	Bathurst
Halifax	Kamloops	Edmunston
Moncton	Newfoundland Central District	Bridgewater
Northern Saskatchewan	Northern Saskatchewan	Longueuil
Owen Sound	Owen Sound	St-Jérôme
Peterborough	Quebec	Timmins ISP
Richmond Hill / Newmarket	Saint John	Toronto Shared Services
Southern Manitoba	Scarborough	Toronto HRT
Southern Saskatchewan	Repentigny	Manitoba RHQ
St. Catharines	Rimouski	Northern Saskatchewan
Terrace	Saanich	Saskatchewan RHQ
Victoria	Southern Saskatchewan	Edmonton ISP
	Toronto Centre	Edmonton EIT
		Terrace
		Surrey

As can be seen in the table above, two offices that participated in the study in 1996 participated again in 1999. One other office has participated in the study all three years. This will allow these offices to track their progress against the many organizational measures studied. The offices that participated in both 1996 and 1999 are:

- Cornerbrook, Newfoundland; and
- Terrace.

The office that participated in the study for all three years is Northern Saskatchewan.

Tenure

Number of Years Employed with HRDC

For 1999, results show that employees have worked an average of about eleven years for HRDC. As the breakdown for 1999 shown below demonstrates, almost three-in-ten employees have been working for HRDC for five years or less.

NUMBER OF YEARS WORKED FOR HRDC

Category	1996	1997	1999
5 years or less	33	34	29
6-10 years	21	21	19
11-15 years	17	13	13
16-20 years	11	12	16
21+ years	10	9	16
Non-response	8	11	6

Note difference in question from 1996/97 to 1999:

1999: How many years have you worked for HRDC?

1996/97: How many years have you worked in your current office?

Percentage
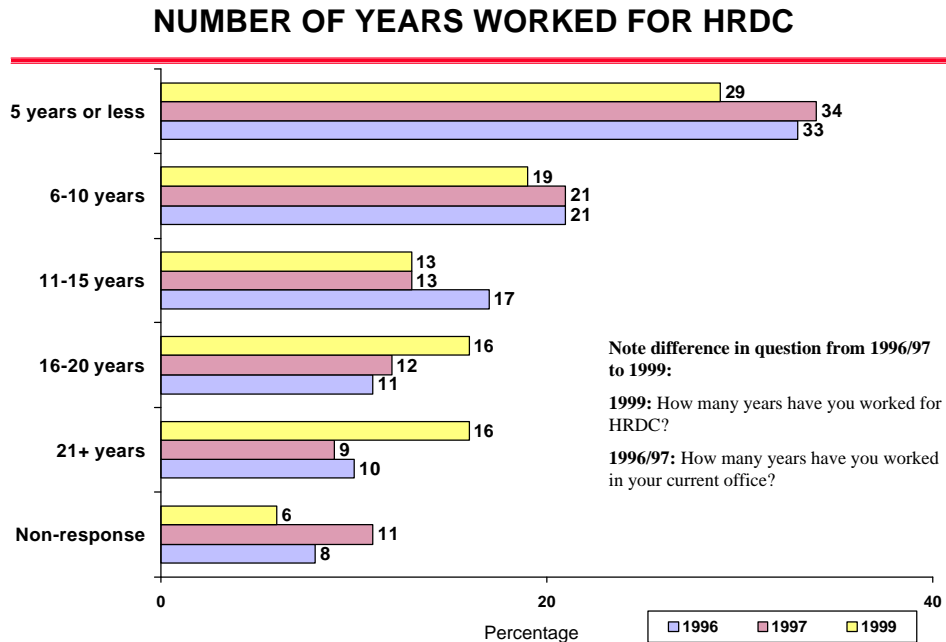
In 1997 employees reported that on average they had worked for their current HRCC for 9 years. Comparatively, in 1999 employees reported working for HRDC as a whole, an average of 11 years. This difference in tenure may simply be a function of the different wording of the question rather than a true difference in those employed in 1997 vs. those employed in 1999.

Years Employed with Public Service of Canada

For 1999, results show that employees have worked an average of 13 years in the Public Service of Canada. A breakdown of the percentage of employees falling into categories of five-year intervals can be seen below.

YEARS EMPLOYED WITH PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Category	1996	1997	1999
5 years or less	19	11	23
6-10 years	18	19	18
11-15 years	19	16	15
16-20 years	17	24	18
21+ years	19	20	21
Non-response	8	10	6

Percentage
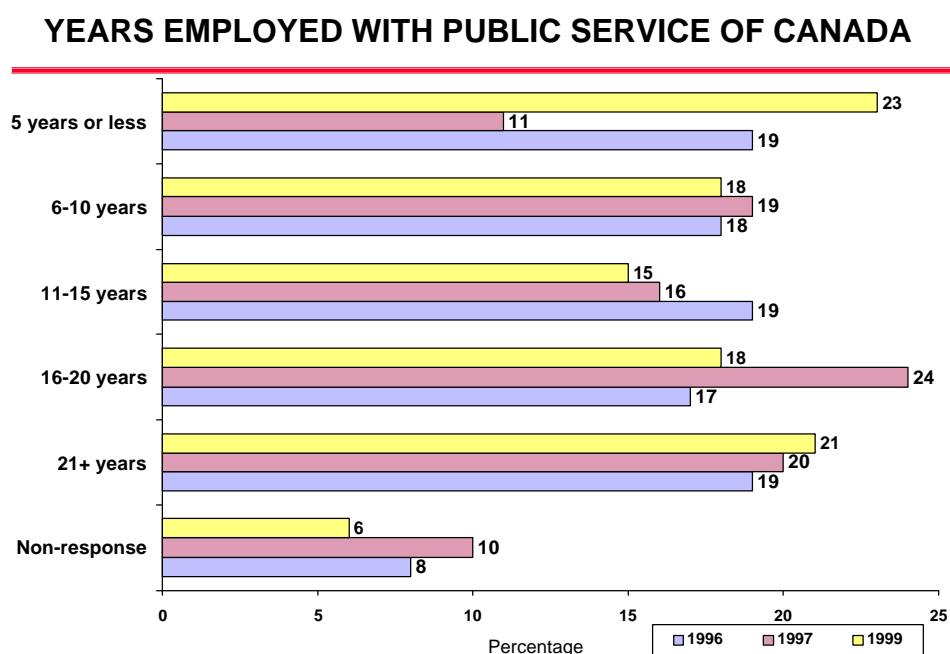
The average number of years employees have worked with the PSC has decreased slightly from 1997 when the average number of years HRDC employees had worked with the public service was 15. This may be due to the fact that in 1999, there is a large increase in those who have worked with the public service for less than five years. This difference may be a characteristic of the offices surveyed as opposed to a change in the demographic make-up of the organization as a whole.

Functional Groups

Again this year, the largest proportion of respondents works in Insurance (45%). Very few completed questionnaires were returned from employees in Labor (4%) or Corporate Services (5%).

FUNCTIONAL GROUPS

FUNCTIONAL GROUPS
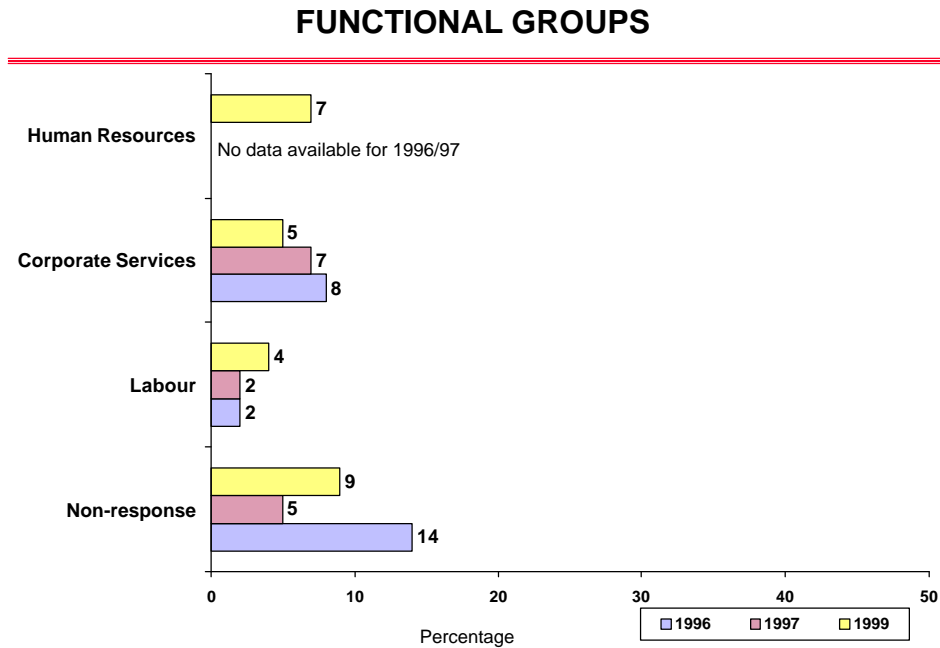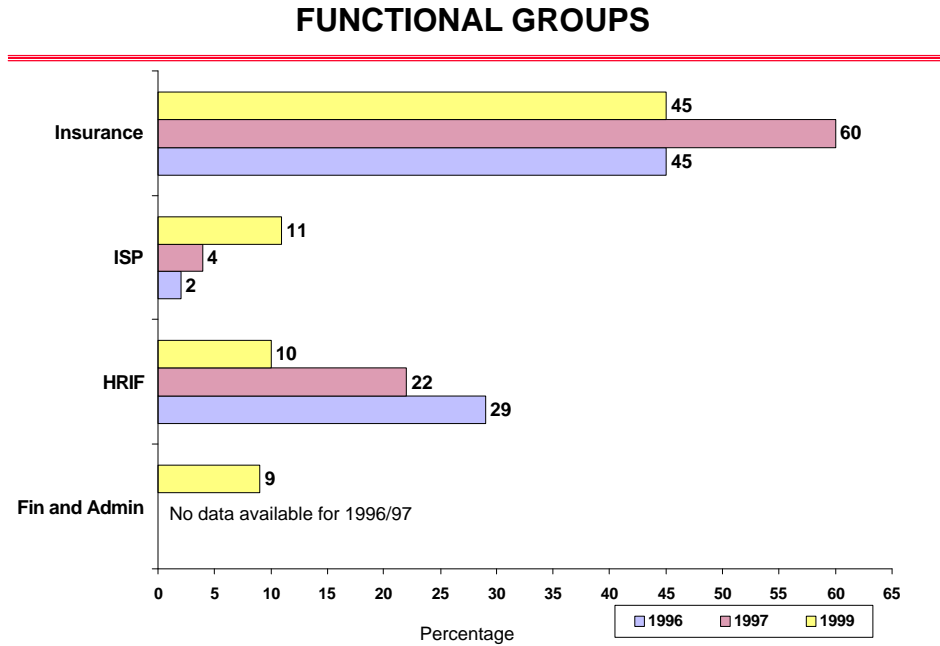
Two categories were added to this demographic variable in 1999 that did not appear in the survey in 1997. Specifically, finance and administration (9%) and human resources (7%) were added.

A somewhat smaller proportion of those surveyed was represented by employees from the HRIF functional group this year with only 10% of the sample coming from this group, as compared to 22% in 1997.

Type of Employment

Three-quarters of those surveyed are classified as "indeterminate" employees. A somewhat larger percentage of term employees (22%) was surveyed this year as compared to 1997 (15%).
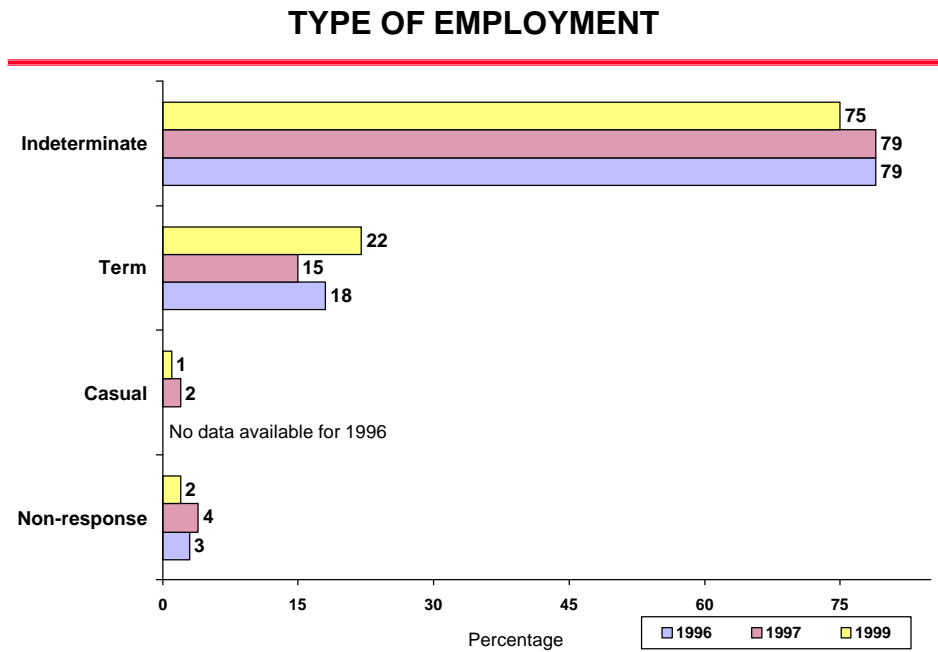
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

The proportion of "casual" employees remains quite small in 1999 (1%).

Form of Employment

The vast majority of respondents are full-time employees (90%). A somewhat larger percentage of "part-time" employees were surveyed this year (9%), as compared to 1997 when only 5% of the sample consisted of part-time employees.

FORM OF EMPLOYMENT
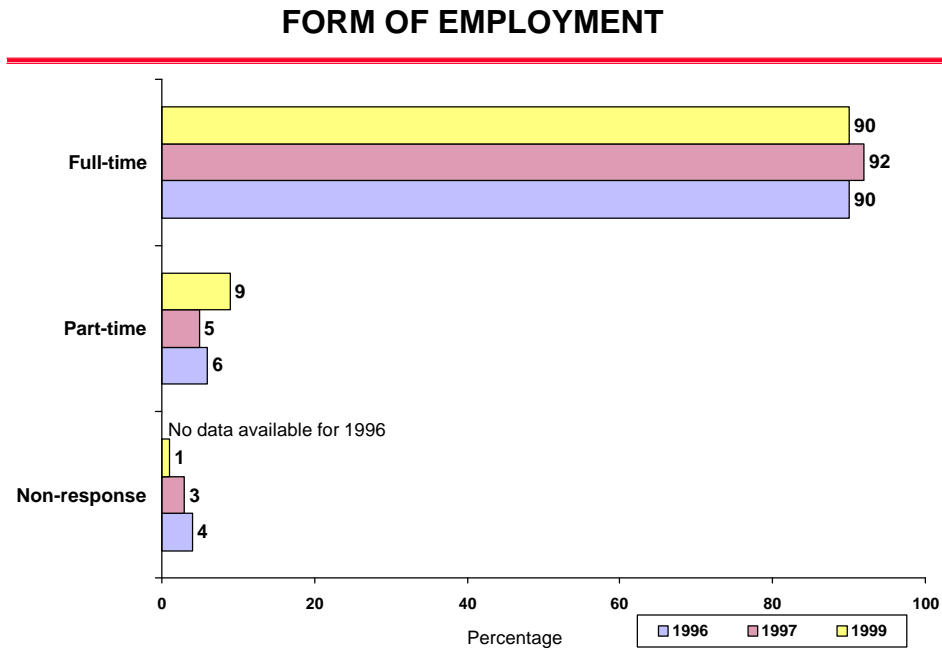
Level of Education

The distribution of employees according to educational attainment for 1996, 1997 and 1999 is presented below.

This year, the category "college diploma" was added to the education demographic variable. In past years, these individuals were grouped together with those in the "some college/university" category.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Education Level	1996	1997	1999
Some high school or less	3%	3%	2%
Completed high school	25%	26%	23%
Technical school	12%	16%	7%
Some college/university	32%	30%	21%
College diploma	-	-	18%
University degree/post-graduate degree	21%	21%	27%

Generally speaking, just over one-quarter (27%) of employees has a university or post-graduate degree. This proportion of university graduates surveyed has increased significantly over 1997 and 1996.

Certain differences between men and women exist in terms of their level of education. While 45% of male employees report that they have completed a university degree, only 21% of female employees report the same. In addition, just over one-quarter of women (28%) report that high school was the highest level of education they completed, while 9% of men report this as their highest level of education.

Interestingly, a higher percentage of employees located in the RHQs reported that they have obtained a university degree, as compared to those employed with an HRCC. While 39% of those surveyed in the RHQs report that they have completed a university degree, one-quarter of those employed at HRCCs (25%) reported that they have the same level of education.

Gender

About three-quarters (72%) of employees surveyed in 1999 are female. Another 26% are male, while the remaining 2% chose not to identify their gender.

GENDER
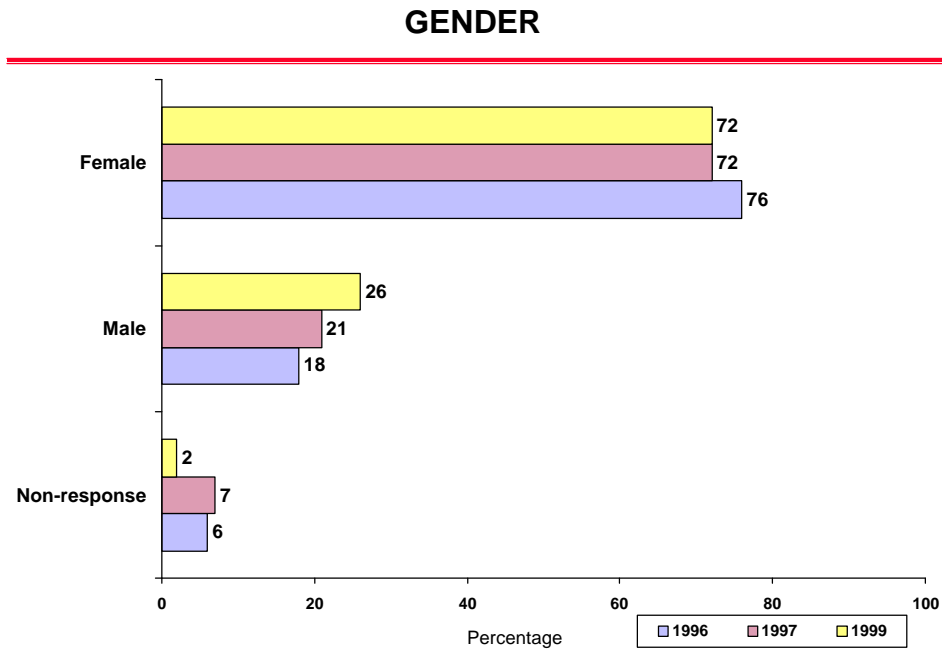
This year, the employees surveyed contained a larger percentage of males than was the case in 1997 and 1996. This increase in the percentage of males participating is statistically significant.

Age

The majority of employees surveyed are between the ages of 35 and 49. A large proportion of those surveyed is also represented by the 18-34 year old age category.

AGE

Age	1996	1997	1999
18-34	18	17	23
35-39	18	18	14
40-44	23	21	21
45-49	19	22	20
50+	10	14	17
Non-response	12	9	5
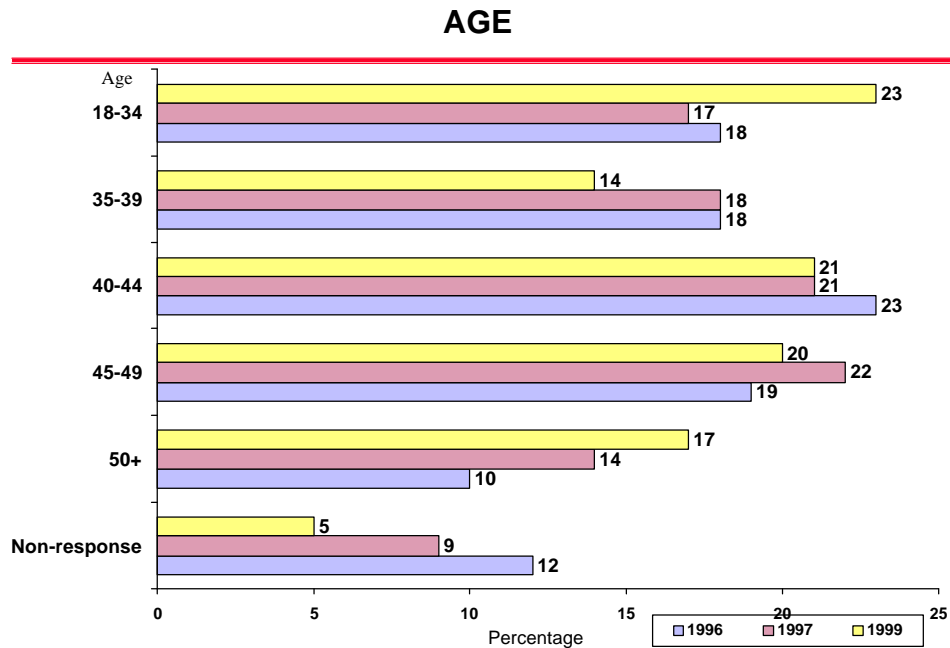
Percentage

A significant increase in the percentage of individuals between the ages of 18 and 34 is seen this year, as compared to both 1997 and 1996. This may simply be a function of the characteristics of the offices surveyed, rather than a true change in the population. A slight increase in those aged 50 and over can also be seen.

Occupational Level and Group

The table below illustrates the distribution of respondents across occupational level and group for 1996, 1997 and 1999.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND LEVEL

Group/Level	1996	1997	1999
AS-01	<1%	<1%	<1%
AS 02	<1%	<1%	<1%
AS-03	<1%	<1%	<1%
AS-04	<1%	-	-
CR-02	3%	3%	1%
CR-03	6%	8%	4%
CR-04	19%	19%	15%
CR-05	11%	13%	27%
CS-01	<1%	1%	2%
CS-02	-	-	<1%
PM-01	10%	9%	6%
PM-02	27%	26%	14%
PM-03	3%	2%	5%
PM-04	<1%	1%	4%
PM-05	-	-	2%
Other	1%	1%	5%
AS (level not specified)	<1%	-	<1%
CR (level not specified)	<1%	1%	1%
PM (level not specified)	2%	4%	4%
Non-response	15%	12%	8%

Over one-quarter of respondents have a CR-05 classification alone, with another 15% having a CR-04 classification. Very few respondents with an AS classification completed the survey.

The distribution of respondents across occupational groups and levels has changed somewhat since 1997. A larger percentage of employees with a CR-05 classification were represented in this sample, and a smaller percentage of employees with a PM-02 classification.

For the purpose of demographic analysis, the occupational groups and levels were collapsed into 4 groups; the first includes all CRs, the second contains AS-01 to AS-03, PM-01 and PM-02, the third includes AS-04, PM-03 and PM-04 and the final group contains CS-01 and CS-02. This year, the question was administered to supervisory level employees for the first time. The following graph reflects these groupings:

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AND LEVEL

CR	47 / 44 / 40
AS 01-03 & PM 01-02	21 / 36 / 38
Other/Not specified	18 / 17 / 18
AS 04 & PM 03-04	11 / 3 / 4
CS 01-02	3 / No data available for 1996/97

Percentage

■ 1996 ■ 1997 □ 1999
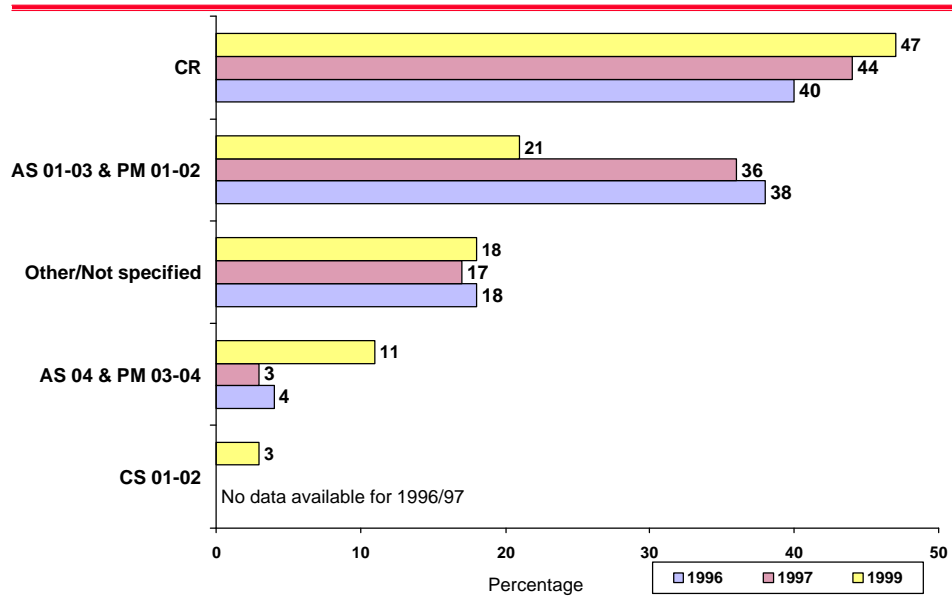
Again we find that a higher proportion of AS-04 and PM 03-04 employees are represented in the sample, and fewer employees from the AS 01-03 or PM 01-02 category.

BACKGROUND

This is the third year that Decima Research has been working with the Internal Audit Bureau of Human Resources Development Canada on an assessment of the environment of Human Resource Centres of Canada (HRCC).

The project began back in 1996 with the Internal Audit Bureau's conceptualization of a "risk model" based on the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accounts (CICA) Criteria on Control (CoCo) Framework. The intent of this approach was to design a self-assessment questionnaire, based on the model, which could be administered to employees. The results of this questionnaire would then be analyzed in the context of the Control Framework, allowing management at the local HRCC office level to assess their operations against these management control criteria.

Wave 1 - 1996/97

The project culminated in the fall of 1996 with the design of a self-administered employee questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a total of 133 questions.

Based largely on the CICA control framework, the majority of the questions related to four broad areas of investigation which, for the sake of simplicity, can be summarized as:

- purpose (knowing what to do);
- commitment (wanting to do it);
- capabilities (being able to do it); and
- monitoring and learning (learning from doing it).

Also included in the questionnaire were a number of questions designed to gain insight into specific areas of interest including the business plan, computer systems, teams and workgroups and service standards.

The questionnaires were completed by 1,123 employees below the supervisory level in 14 participating HRCC offices for an overall response rate of 70%. The questionnaires were completed between late October and mid November 1996. The 14 pilot sites featured participating offices in each province except for Quebec, with a mix of large urban and smaller center locations, and English and French employees.

Initial participation in the study prompted the Nova Scotia region to undertake a similar process with a focus on the impact of organizational change on employees.

Wave 2 - 1997/98

The self-administered employee questionnaire designed in 1996/97 was again used to quantify the opinions and attitudes of employees at various HRCC offices. The questionnaire for this second wave of the project contained a total of 100 questions, the majority of which were replicated from the first wave of the project.

Last year, 1,038 employees below the supervisory level completed the self-administered questionnaires in 15 participating offices for an overall response rate of 56%. The questionnaires were all completed between late November and mid December 1997. Participants in the 1997/98 assessment represent a majority of regions across Canada.

Wave 3 – 1998/99

The third wave of the employee questionnaire has undergone many changes to the questions and format, while maintaining the integrity of the major areas of investigation. The questionnaire for the third wave contains a total of 128 questions, including a new area of investigation referred to as the "burnout inventory." The burnout inventory explores the level of exhaustion, cynicism and feelings of professional effectiveness within the organization.

The majority of employees completed the self-administered questionnaire from January to April of 1999. One HRCC, the Winnipeg office, completed the questionnaire in November and December of 1998.

DESCRIPTION OF SUMMARY MEASURES

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is described as a positive emotional state reflecting an affective response to the job situation. Satisfaction may be derived from several aspects such as the job itself, pay, and opportunities for promotion and job security. A typical question that addresses satisfaction with the job itself, is:

> "Considering all aspects of my job, I am generally satisfied."

Workplace Environment:

A number of descriptors were used to gauge the 'personality' of the workplace. Respondents were asked to what extent the terms characterized their ideal workplace and to what extend the terms characterized their actual workplace. One can then determine whether each term is actually a valued element of the workplace or not. Terms were selected that reflected a number of dimensions of the workplace environment, such as mood (e.g. innovative, supportive), confusing (e.g. organized) and pace (e.g. exciting, boring).

Ethical Behavior

Also included in organizational culture is the feeling that ethical behavior is present and supported in the workplace. Questions designed to probe for this include:

> "Employees in my office would not hesitate to report unethical behavior if it were
> to occur."

Organizational Commitment

Broadly, this concept refers to the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Committed individuals also demonstrate behavioral 'symptoms', such as putting in more effort than absolutely required. A typical statement from an individual with high organizational commitment is:

> "If I could choose again, I would still work for this organization."

Goal and Objective Clarity

A number of questions were designed to assess the degree to which employees are aware of and understand both their goals and objectives of the organization. An example of the questions in this group includes:

> "I have been provided with specific performance requirements in my job."

Confidence in Goal Attainment

Of additional interest is the degree to which employees of the various HRCC offices embrace the goals of the organization. In particular, the questions focused on employees' assessments of the attainability of the new goals the organization has set for itself. For example:

> "I am confident that HRDC will reach these goals."

Leadership

This index included a number of aspects regarding employee/management relations. Areas covered are openness of communication and the sharing of ideas, and support and faith in management

> "Management encourages employees to come forward with suggestions about how to improve operations in our office."

Resources and Support

Essential to performing any role are sufficient resources and instrumental support from the organization. For example:

> "I have the information I need to provide effective service to my clients."
> "I feel we have enough staff to do the work in this office."

Conflict

Conflict in organizations frequently interrupts employees' path to goal achievement. Sources of conflict are both internal and external.

> "I often find that objectives I have in my program area are made more difficult to achieve by the actions of employees in another program area."

Communication

Open and frequent communication is an essential organizational building block. This index is composed of questions such as:

"Open communications exists between management and staff in my office."

Work Feedback Mechanisms

Regardless of how clearly roles are defined in an organization, appropriate feedback mechanisms are essential to allow employees a means by which to assess their performance toward these goals. Several agents for feedback may be in place: the work itself, colleagues, and superiors.

"My work is regularly measured against specific performance requirements."

Skills and Training

Another organizational building block is the skill base of the employees, and efforts made to maintain the relevance of these skills in a changing workplace.

"I am confident of my ability to operate all the computer systems necessary to do my job."

"I feel I have enough training to do my job."

Autonomy and Empowerment

Changes in organizational structure also change the degree of individual freedom and responsibility for decision making. This index encompasses many aspects of both 'voice' and responsibility, and the degree to which employees feel empowered or overwhelmed.

"I have a lot of decision-making authority in my job."

"Management trusts me to make good decisions."

Change

Due to the great deal of changes that have taken place in HRDC over the last few years, a number of questions have been designed to explore how employees perceive these changes.

"The changes in the Department over the past few years have been very stressful for me personally."

Decision-Making Impacts

Many of the decisions made at various levels of HRDC may influence how individuals feel about their job. Decisions made both within the organization and by other government departments outside the organization can have an impact on how individuals feel about their job.

"Decisions made locally in my office have an impact on how I feel about my job."

Satisfaction with Decisions

The extent to which employees are satisfied with the decisions made at the various levels of HRDC can also have an impact on job satisfaction.

"In general, I am satisfied with decisions made in my office locally."

Burnout Inventory

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996[3]) has been developed to determine the levels of burnout within various occupational groups. Burnout can have many implications both for the individual and for the organization such as increased absenteeism, reduced productivity and increased turnover. The current inventory has three dimensions:

- exhaustion;
- professional efficacy; and
- cynicism.

Higher scores on all three dimensions indicate frequent occurrences of exhaustion, cynicism or professional efficacy. Therefore, high scores for exhaustion and cynicism would be negative in connotation since this would reflect more frequent occurrence of these concepts. High scores for professional efficacy would be a positive occurrence since this would reflect employees feeling effective in their job more frequently.

Higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism are more likely to be associated with low levels of professional efficacy. Understandably, the more exhausted an individual is and the more cynical they are about their work, the less effective they will feel in their job.

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[3] *Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., & Leiter, M.P., 1996. Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual, 3rd edition. Palo Alto, California.*
Consulting Psychologists Press Inc.

DESCRIPTION OF ANALYSIS

Index Construction: How we created the indices

As explained in the body of the report, 16 logical summary measures were created to help explain various organizational outcomes. Definitions of each summary measure have already been provided in Technical Appendix B.

Each summary measure, or index, was constructed by combining responses to a number of related questions. The decision as to which questions would go into the index, with the exception of the Burnout Inventory was made in the first wave of this study in 1996. The decision was initially based on intuition then validated statistically to ensure that the questions were adequately correlated with each other. In each index, all of the questions included are weighted equally.

Calculation of Average Scores: How we coded the variables

With the exception of the "workplace climate" description and "burnout inventory," all of the attitudinal statements included in the questionnaire are based on a scale from 1 through 5, where 1 equals "strongly disagree" and 5 equals "strongly agree."

For the workplace climate descriptions, a series of 14 separate words or phases were put to respondents in an effort to distill the defining characteristics and corporate culture of the offices surveyed. Seven of the words used were "positive" attributes that could describe the workplace, with the remaining 7 being "negative" attributes, opposite to the original 7 "positive" words (e.g. organized / unorganized). These word pairings were used to validate the responses. For example, if an office receives a high score for "organized," they should receive a comparably low score for "unorganized".

Respondents were asked to rate each of these 14 words on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 where 1 equals "would not describe their office at all" and 7 equals "would describe perfectly." Therefore, the higher the score, the more employees feel that that word describes their workplace.

Respondents were also asked to what extent the 7 "positive" attributes would describe their **ideal** workplace. Comparisons can then be made between the ideal and the actual workplace, in order to determine whether differences exist.

For the Burnout Inventory, a series of 24 questions were used, representing 3 validated dimensions. The Burnout Inventory uses a "frequency" scale, asking respondents how often they experience the various feelings explored in the statements. The scale ranges from "never" which equals 0, to "daily" which equals 6.

For 2 of the 3 dimensions, "exhaustion" and "cynicism," the higher the score (which can range from 0 to 6), the more negative the connotation. A high score would reflect a higher occurrence of employees feeling exhausted or cynical. For the "professional efficacy" dimension the opposite is true with higher scores having a positive connotation. A high score in this case again indicates a higher occurrence of employees feeling effective in their job, which would be a positive attribute.

Analysis and Reporting: How we presented the results

In section 4.0 of the report, a table was prepared for each of the summary measures that indicates the specific questions that were included in the calculation of each index. The average score for the office is shown for each question individually, as well as the global average for comparative purposes.

In addition, in order to provide an indication of the intensity of the responses, comparative graphs that contain the percentage of respondents who fell into each of the answer categories have been produced. For the attitudinal statements on the questionnaire, the percentage of respondents who "agree," are "neutral" and "disagree" with the statement are shown. For the workplace climate descriptions, the percentage of people who believe the word "describes" their office, are "neutral" or believe the word "does not describe" their office are shown.