



# MODERNIZATION NOW!

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Your PSMA Newsletter

November 2005

## PSMA in the News



**David Zussman**, published author and internationally recognized authority on public sector management, has been highlighting the *Public Service Modernization Act* in his monthly column in the *Ottawa Citizen* and in other dailies across the country.

Zussman is also president of the Public Policy Forum and professor of the University of Ottawa's School of Management, as well as part-time Commissioner of the Public Service Commission.

He said he receives a host of e-mails about his articles. "The tone is generally positive. If anything, people write in to amplify what I've said. People are definitely interested in the changes that the new legislation is bringing." Most of the feedback comes from retired and active public servants, as well as a surprising number from the business sector.

You could say that Zussman is a champion of HR modernization.

"Government is only as good as the people who work there, and a well-performing public service has a direct impact on Canada's economic success and way of life."



## PSMA...A Click Away

Need help?  
Try the on-line Communications Resource Centre

If you're involved in implementing the PSMA, you may have found that you have to navigate through a sea of sites to find the information you were looking for.

Want help? Try the **Communications Resource Centre**.

Developed jointly by the PSC and PSHRMAC, it is designed to enhance consistent communications across government and demystify some of the technicalities of the legislation.

It's got gems like "quick hits" of quotable quotes, key messages, generic presentations, articles, sample speeches, FAQs and other tools that may come in handy, particularly for those working on tight timelines.

In the first week alone, the Centre had 2,000 page views, with an average viewing time of over nine minutes each. "The response to the site has been terrific," says Nicole Dauz, Senior Communications Officer for the Human Resources Modernization Branch.

"People were telling us they were feeling overwhelmed. Our Centre is giving them access to information to help them understand the legislation and communicate the changes it will bring."

Visit the [Communications Resource Centre](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/comm_e.asp)  
[http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/comm\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/comm_e.asp)



## ATTENTION HR Professionals and Managers!

### STAFFING TOOL KIT

To get a feel for what is possible under the new staffing regime, the **Government of Canada Staffing Toolkit** is a good place to start. You'll find the kit in the [Communications Resource Centre](#).

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## PSEA at GTEC

HR modernization was a hot topic this year at the Government-in-Technology (GTEC) Week, held on October 4-5 at Ottawa's Congress Centre.

The Professional Development Forum included a panel discussion on "Facing the Future: Perspectives for IT Government Professionals".

Moderated by **David Zussman**, it featured presentations from **Jill LaRose**, Associate VP at PSHRMAC, **Gaston Lampron**, VP of the Professional Institute for the Public Service and **Luc Carrière**, President, Computer Systems Group.

The discussion highlighted the impact that the PSEA will have on members of the Computer Systems Group, as well as those looking for a career in IT in the public service.



David Zussman (left) moderates the panel discussion at GTEC. Seated (l to r) are Luc Carrière, Gaston Lampron and Jill LaRose.

## Seven Outcomes for a Healthy Workplace & Workforce. What Are They?

They are the result of a new way of managing human resources under the Government's management modernization agenda. Where can you find them? They are under the [People Component of the Management Accountability Framework](http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/compendium/pcmaf_e.asp) ([http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/compendium/pcmaf\\_e.asp](http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/compendium/pcmaf_e.asp)).

**NEW!**

## What's New with Employment Policies?

Under the PSEA, Employment policies are changing. Check out the new [Employment Policies](http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/hrmm/policies-politiques/employ-pol_e.asp) Web site ([http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/hrmm/policies-politiques/employ-pol\\_e.asp](http://publiservice.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/hrmm/policies-politiques/employ-pol_e.asp)).

## PSEA and the IT Community



**Jill LaRose**, Assoc VP at PSHRMAC, speaks to IT professionals at GTEC about the opportunities and changes they can expect to find under the new PSEA

With some 16,000 members, the Computer Systems Group is among the largest in government.

Given the anticipated growth in technology over the coming years, the demand for application developers, Administrators, Help Desk, Web Developers and many other IT workers is only expected to rise in the public service.

"In order to fully understand the changes that are going to happen in the CS community as a result of the new *Public Service Employment Act*, you also have to look at some of the other complementary activities that are already underway, such as the development of generic job descriptions and competency profiles," said Jill LaRose at this year's GTEC forum.

"I think this is an exciting time to be in government", she said, adding that the modernization of HR management now underway is the most dramatic change of its type in 35 years.

"PSEA, in combination with other modernization initiatives, is going to reshape both the public service workforce and workplace for the IT community."

She told the audience that public service employees stand to benefit from more timely, fair and transparent staffing and better opportunities for feedback and for real dialogue as they compete for new jobs.

"You will also have far greater access to information that can help you plan and direct your career."

She urged the IT community to tune in on a regular basis to find out what's happening with PSEA and other aspects of HR modernization.

"Being aware is the first step to turning the new opportunities into more rewarding careers."

# Making Project Management a Priority



**Carole Lacroix**, DG Performance Measurement and Management at PSHRMAC, spearheads the government's comprehensive project management approach adopted for the implementation of the PSMA.

Ms Lacroix sees three defining moments for the PSMA. The first two are obvious: the coming into force of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*, last April; and the arrival of the *Public Service Employment Act*, this December.

So what's the third? "The first round of funding departments received to implement PSMA."

Though not the milestone one normally hears in the same sentence as other PSMA milestones, she said the investment of \$47M this June represented a huge achievement for the project management approach adopted for the PSMA.

While it wasn't exactly un-chartered territory, using the approach adopted for PSMA did represent innovative thinking and pushing the envelope. It meant following those practices that are sacrosanct to project management – cost benefit analysis, risk assessment, schedules and timelines, action plans and performance measures. It also meant thinking more like a business.

"The first step we took was to draft a strategic investment framework to manage the overall \$200M funding envelope for at least four years. Then we asked departments and agencies to document solid business cases to access PSMA funding," she said.

Organizations have requested funding for in-house training and communications as well as developing policies, frameworks and new staffing models. Specific criteria were developed to evaluate the criticality of each Department's business case.

Departments also had to reallocate funding internally to demonstrate their own commitment to PSMA implementation. "It's all part of the deal".

"At the same time, we put in place rigour and protection in terms of managing projects."



**Carole Lacroix** (centre) with members of her project team (l to r) **Dave Flavell**, **Jocelyn Gravelle**, **Étienne Laliberté**, **Terri-Lynn Warwick** and **Gerry Westland**

"Every two weeks, an Interdepartmental Committee meets to discuss project risks and ways to mitigate them."

A performance measurement component is also part of the system's checks and balances. Every time departments get funding, they have to go back at the end of the year and report to Treasury Board on what they achieved.

The PSMA is a huge undertaking for the public service, " says **Hélène Leblanc**, Acting Director for HR Modernization at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. "Whether we're working in a large science-based department with operations across the country – as is the case for Fisheries and Oceans Canada – or in a small department or agency, the changes that the new legislation brings is the same for everyone."

"We all have to ensure that policies are developed and implemented, that managers and HR professionals have the required knowledge, and that employees and bargaining units are kept informed. The only road to success is one where we're all heading in the same direction. We have to have a coordinated project management approach."

Perhaps the biggest endorsement of the project management approach adopted for PSMA has come from someone not normally given to glowing reports: the Auditor General.

"The real measure of success is how we do next year when we report on how we spent the funding," said Ms. Lacroix.

# PSEA: What's It All About?

You've probably been hearing about the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) and are wondering: "What's it all about?"

In its simplest form, it's all about *flexibility, fairness* and a *new framework* for staffing.

It is an important part of the *Public Service Modernization Act* (PSMA) that was passed in November 2003 and it's a cornerstone of the government's broader agenda to modernize the management of human resources and build a vibrant, effective public service.

While the new PSEA introduces a range of benefits, for most people, it's the *potential* to fill a vacancy more quickly that's making them sit up and take notice.

What? Getting the right person for the job at the right time! Less red tape? More flexibility for staffing decisions? While under the PSEA none of this is guaranteed, all of this is possible!



"The time it takes to staff is the thing that people have come to hate. It's the burr under the saddle and we need to get rid of that frustration by making the most of the opportunity the new legislation gives us," says **Rick Burton**,

VP of the Human Resources Management Modernization Branch, PSHRMAC.

So exactly how does the PSEA change the way staffing is done in the public service?

For starters, staffing will truly become a management responsibility under the PSEA.

The Public Service Commission will maximize the delegation of appointment authorities to Deputy Heads of departments and agencies. They, in turn, will be encouraged to delegate this authority to their directors and managers.

The system will be more flexible too.

Managers won't be obligated to follow a centrally prescribed set of rules.

That's because under the new PSEA, departments and agencies will have leeway to tailor staffing policies to meet their specific operational needs.

What this added flexibility does is reinforce the importance of HR planning.

Departments and agencies will be encouraged to fully integrate HR planning with their business plans, and to use this as a basis for staffing decisions.

A more flexible staffing system however, doesn't mean a free-for all with people making it up as they go along.

Far from it!

Managers will still be expected to follow departmental staffing policies and to reach well-reasoned decisions. And they will held *accountable* for those decisions.

As well, contrary to what you may have heard, the PSEA does not throw out the concept of merit.

The new PSEA says merit is applied when the person being appointed to a position meets the essential qualifications as well as any asset qualifications, operational requirements, or organizational needs identified by the manager or the organization beforehand.

In short, the Act allows a broader definition of merit to be applied in order to ensure the *right fit* for the job.

There are other important changes too, including more opportunities for effective dialogue and transparency under the new Informal Discussion process, and a new channel for recourse to an independent Public Service Staffing Tribunal (PSST).

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Whether you're a Deputy Head, a manager or an employee, you'll find the PSEA introduces changes and opportunities that have the potential to reshape your workplace and your career in the public service.

When the PSEA comes into force in December, this completes the implementation of the legislative components associated with the *Public Service Modernization Act*. However, as **Monique Boudrias**, Executive VP, PSHRMAC, has said:

"The challenge in bringing this legislation to life will be the culture change it entails – the new mindsets, the new behaviours."

## More about the PSEA ...

For information about specific PSC policies and procedures, visit: [http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/index\\_e.htm](http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/index_e.htm)

For information about training and learning, visit: [http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/main\\_e.html](http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/main_e.html).

For other information, check with your department or agency or visit the Communications Resource Centre at: [http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/comm\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hrmm-mgrh/psma-lmfp/centre/comm_e.asp)

## Do You Have a Question?

### Do you really think the PSEA will make a difference?

*Rick Burton, VP of the Human Resources Management Modernization Branch, answers.*

**“Yes I do.** Anyone, and I would put 99% of managers in that category, who has ever complained about the staffing system will find there’s a difference.”

“The key is we’ve got to make it happen. If people are hardened to the fact that this won’t make a difference, then it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. In that case, guess what? Nothing will change.”

“The choice is in our hands, individually and collectively. However, if we don’t take the opportunity to use the flexibilities inherent in the new legislation and accept the corresponding accountabilities, we’ll be back to the same kind of straightjacket we all hate today.”

### As a manager, what support will be available to help me understand the new PSEA Appointment process?

In addition to the support and advice you will receive from the human resources advisors in your organization, the Public Service Commission and the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada are developing helpful guides and tools for your use.

In addition, the Canada School of the Public Service is offering courses for managers related to the new appointment process.

## How will the new PSEA impact the right of public service employees to engage in political activities?

The new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) recognizes both your right as an employee to engage in any political activity at the federal, provincial, territorial or municipal level and the principle of political impartiality in the federal public service.

The PSEA states that you may engage in any political activity as long as it does not impair or is not perceived by others as impairing your ability to perform your duties in a politically impartial manner.

Your individual right as a federal public service employee must, therefore, be examined in light of the need to maintain a politically impartial public service.

The political impartiality of the public service is a fundamental value that ensures Canadians benefit from non-partisan delivery of services.

**If you have a question about any aspect of the new PSMA/PSEA, check out the [FAQs in the Communications Resource Centre](#)**

**or contact us by e-mail at:**  
[hrmm-mgrh@hrma-agrh.gc.ca](mailto:hrmm-mgrh@hrma-agrh.gc.ca)



## Looking Ahead

“Every organization operates within the framework of a corporate culture. It’s best described as “the way we do things here.”

With the new Employment Act, we are aiming to change the culture of the Public Service of Canada. Going forward, government is not going to be like government was. It’s going to be more effective, it’s going to be a different place in which to work and develop a rewarding career.”

## Classification - "Not Just Another Wallflower at the Dance"



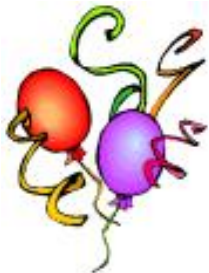
HR modernization isn't just about enacting new legislation like the PSMA.

Programs like Classification are also at the dance.

For the 300 or so Classification and HR Professionals, Line Managers and Bargaining Agents who took part in this year's Classification Symposium in Saint Sauveur, Quebec this September, a friendly line dance proved to be the perfect way to get the dialogue flowing.

"Classification is an important part of the big picture," said **Rick Burton**, VP of the Human Resources Management Modernization Branch, during his keynote presentation.

"Whether it's our work in getting the jobs right by modernizing standards or building a strong, professional classification community, we are very much a part of the modernization activity underway today."



### Watch for the Next Issue of Modernization Now! Your PSMA Newsletter

It's our Special Edition where we highlight the PSMA/PSEA Coming Into Force.

This newsletter is produced by the HR Management Modernization Branch (HRMM), PSHRMAC, with input from the Public Service Commission, the Canada School of Public Service and Treasury Board. If you have a suggestion, or would like to contribute an article, please contact us at [hmmm-mgrh@hrma-agrh.gc.ca](mailto:hmmm-mgrh@hrma-agrh.gc.ca).

## We're Glad You Asked

It's been over six months since the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* came into force. How are we doing? We caught up with union rep **Bob Taylor** who has been working alongside the PSMA Implementation Team.

"The news about the PSLRA is good in those departments with already-established labour committees," said Mr. Taylor, National VP for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 2228.

"Those departments and agencies that hadn't previously availed themselves of some type of consultation forum with the unions are finding it a bit more challenging."

"The biggest change is the culture shift that's required. Departments have to learn to be inclusive with their resident unions. Members, in turn, have to be encouraged to participate as the valid stakeholders that they are. Trust, respect and transparency don't happen overnight. They have to be nurtured," he added.

Capacity is also a major concern, particularly in small agencies for both Union reps and management.

There are signs that it's working. The PSMA Union Management Advisory Committee is making great strides as a central forum that reinforces the importance of union participation in all elements of HR modernization.

Labour leaders are also participating in DM Sub Committees on HR Reform. Many departments are offering specialized courses and outreach programs on the *Act* and, of course, having union representatives working alongside PSMA implementation teams is a positive step forward.

Through consultation and co-development, as well as some key legislative changes, the architects of the PSLRA envisaged a day when the call for collaboration between the unions and the employer would be seen as a beacon of strength and mutual respect: The days where even a whisper of the old union and management credos "Sleeping with the Enemy" and "Selling the Farm" would be relegated to the movies. Are we there yet?

Perhaps not quite, said Mr. Taylor, but we're moving in that direction.

"The bottom line is that both sides agree the old way of doing day to day business just wasn't working. It'll take time but we'll get there."