Public Service Commission of Canada Commission de la fonction publique du Canada

Developing a Staffing Strategy

A Means To Efficient And Effective Resourcing

INTRODUCTION

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is pleased to offer departments and agencies a planning tool that assists an organization in developing a staffing strategy to meet the corporate business objectives. This document is organized in two sections and is published in electronic form only. This will facilitate the inclusion in this document of additional practices or mechanisms suggested in the future by the users of this document.

Designed for use principally by corporate management and HR planning specialists, this tool is organized as follows for ease of access:

- Section I deals with Human Resource (HR) plans, which serve as an information base to develop the staffing strategy;

- Section II sets out a series of resourcing challenges or opportunities organizations may have experienced or anticipate facing. For each challenge there is a list of mechanisms that may be helpful in responding to it, as well as the PSC contact points where assistance is available.

The active collaboration of the Treasury Board Secretariat was invaluable, especially with respect to developing Section 1, and this assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

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SECTION I - DEVELOPING A HUMAN RESOURCES PLAN

Why develop a human resources plan?

An HR plan can serve as an information base for many purposes, such as:

1. identifying HR requirements to better meet business objectives

2. promoting a proactive approach to HR management and career planning

3. reducing the time and cost of future staffing

4. identifying opportunities for synergy, such as opportunities for collaborative staffing actions

5. identifying employment equity goals and facilitating their realization

6. identifying official languages requirements

7. signalling potential work load and/or work force adjustment situations

8. predicting potential shortfalls in the labour force and market availability

9. highlighting projected retirements and resignations and developing appropriate succession plans

10. identifying seasonal or cyclical hiring patterns

What information should be considered in developing a human resources plan?

Some organizations will already have an established HR planning tool and process in place.

Where these exist they should be used. If there isn't one available, then management teams may want to consider at least some of the following elements:

1. What are the departmental strategic objectives for the next year; for the next three years; for the next five years?

2. What are the capabilities and capacities of the organization's current workforce and what are the organization's current or existing HR needs?

   - Are there existing employees who can do the work at this time?

   - What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing resources?

   - Are the positions classified at the appropriate groups and levels?

   - Where are the labour markets in which likely candidates are located?

   - Is the workforce sufficiently diverse to reflect the labour market availability (i.e. employment equity considerations)?

   - Is the workforce capable of meeting the Official Languages obligations?

   - What are employees' career development needs, plans and aspirations?

1. What is the organization's future supply of, and demand for, employees to meet the business plans and priorities in a timely manner?

   - Which functions will need to be performed?

   - How will the current functions evolve?

   - How should the organization be structured?

   - Will the positions be classified at the appropriate groups and levels?

   - Which type of competencies/qualifications will be required?

   - Will the competencies required to perform the work be the same as now? If not, what will be required?

   - How many people will be needed to perform the work? At what point in time and for how long?

   - Are there employees who, with appropriate development, could perform the work in the future?

   - What attrition will occur, e.g. retirements, deployments or promotions out of the organization?

   - how will corporate memory be preserved?

- how will specialized skills or knowledge be retained?

- What use of extended leave is estimated (e.g., sick leave, parental leave, leave-with-income-averaging)?

- How can employees' career development needs, plans and aspirations be accommodated?

- Where will the labour market be in which likely candidates will be found?

- Will the workforce be or remain sufficiently diverse to reflect future labour market availability (i.e. employment equity considerations)?

- Will the workforce be capable of meeting future Official Languages obligations?

Treasury Board recommends that organizations implement an HR management framework. This framework should be linked to the strategic planning cycle and the achievement of corporate business lines. Further information on how to do this can be obtained by using the Human Resource Management Framework Guide developed by Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

SECTION II - DEVELOPING A STAFFING STRATEGY

What is a staffing strategy?

A staffing strategy is not transactional, it is the organization's plan of attack to overcome the organizational HR challenges that have been discovered through the planning process. For example, an organization may have an employment equity under-representation situation. Is the organization having difficulty finding people from one or more designated employment equity groups for its positions? Are there vacancies anticipated in the HR plan that will provide an opportunity to increase the representativeness of the workforce? How can the organization respond to these challenges and opportunities? This section contains descriptions of a variety of mechanisms that might be useful for this and other resourcing needs. One or more of these mechanisms would then become part of the organizational staffing strategy.

Staffing in the Public Service is governed by the *Public Service Employment Act* and the *Public Service Employment Regulations*, and the *Standards for Selection and Assessment*. Individuals are hired and promoted based on their qualifications in accordance with the merit principle. There are many ways and means to staff positions. These include:

- appointments from eligibility lists established through competition for the same or similar positions;

- acting appointments;

- other appointments without competition (e.g. promotions and change of tenure);

- deployments;

- assignments;

- secondments;

- corporate programs such as AEXDP and CAP; and,

- specified period appointments.

Some of these can be carried out very quickly, whereas others may require a greater investment of time and financial resources to administer. Information on these transactional approaches can be found in the Manager's Handbook.

In developing an organization's staffing strategy, departments have an opportunity to make informed choices based on the:

Facts: What **must** be done? (e.g. the legal requirements, departmental policy, etc.)

Options: What **can** be done?

Values: What **should** be done?

In the following sections are a number of options that, depending on your organization's needs, can be extremely effective. In some instances, the organization may have to seek delegated staffing authority from the PSC in order to use the option. Additionally, consultants with the Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC) or the Strategic Staffing and NCEOR Directorate are available to assist the organization's HR advisors with respect to the various mechanisms described in the following sections.

1: Ensuring that the organization is diverse and reflects labour market availability

Has the organization considered?:

Employment Equity (EE) Programs, such as Departmental EE programs and the PSC Ad Hoc EE Program or the Executive EE Program can be used to help meet employment equity objectives where there is under-representation. Programs are approved by the Commission and can be tailored to meet a variety of needs using various selection methods. Does your department have an existing departmental program? If not, here is a template to help your department request Commission approval for one.

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The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) and CO-OP/Internship Programs offer work experience to full-time students. On a short term basis, you can increase the representativeness of your workforce if you recruit students who belong to one or more of the designated employment equity groups. Following the period of employment, the student can be hired as an ambassador between the employer and their school.

Student bridging allows managers to recruit students into term or indeterminate positions upon completion of their program of study. In addition to being helpful for increasing EE group representation, this mechanism may also help to address demographic issues such as an aging

labour force and Official Language issues.

Staffing Manual
Exclusion Approval Order

Recruitment Inventories may be established and maintained by the PSC, or by departments; please consult your delegation agreement to determine if your department already possesses the authority to establish or maintain such inventories. They can be continually loaded with interested applicants. Inventories may be established specifically for EE designated groups and used in conjunction with EE programs.

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Post-Secondary Recruitment (PSR) campaigns recruit qualified graduates (usually university) to fill anticipated entry-level positions. Departments may access this program at any time throughout the year, and may find this an effective means to increase representation. PSR is seen as a primary vehicle for renewing the federal workforce and for meeting EE objectives.

For more info

Area of Selection - A broader area of selection in competitions may provide a larger pool of candidates, with a more diverse population from which to make a selection. PSC and TBS demographic data may help identify where these candidate pools exist. An expanded area of selection specifically targeting EE groups, may also attract more EE group members.

PSC - Demographics
PSC - Labour Market Analysis
TBS - Demographic Analysis of the PS
Staffing Manual

2: Ensuring that the organization is capable of meeting official languages obligations

Has the organization considered?:

The Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) and CO-OP/Internship Programs offer work experience to full-time students. These programs may offer managers the opportunity to attract students, with a variety of language capabilities.

Student bridging allows managers to recruit students into term or indeterminate positions upon completion of their program of study. This mechanism may be helpful in shortage areas and to address demographic issues such as the aging labour force, Official Languages and EE.

Staffing Manual

Area of Selection - A broader area of selection in competitions could provide a larger pool of bilingual candidates, with a more diverse population from which to make a selection. PSC and TBS demographic data may help identify where these candidate pools exist.

PSC - Demographics
PSC - Labour Market Analysis
TBS - Demographic Analysis of the PS

3: No natural candidate pools exist because of rare or specialized skills

Has the organization considered?:

An Apprenticeship or Professional Training Program (APTP) is a program which can be very helpful for developing existing employees or recruiting new people in skill-shortage areas. A program generally combines formal and on-the-job training to give employees the knowledge and skills to become qualified for the working level. Information is available on how to establish an APTP.

A variety of Management and Professional Development Programs currently exist which address recognized Public Service-wide or functional community labour shortages:

- Accelerated Executive Development Program (AEXDP);

- Career Assignment Program (CAP);

- Management Trainee Program (MTP);

- Accelerated Economist Training Program (AETP); and,

- Financial Officer Recruitment and Development Program and Internal Auditor Recruitment and Development Program (FORD/IARD).

A department may similarly establish internal development programs for critical population shortages.

AEXDP - ex.prog@psc-cfp.gc.ca
CAP - cap@psc-cfp.gc.ca
MTP Contact

[AETP Contact](#)
Post-Secondary Recruitment Contact for [FORD/IARD](#)

[Recruitment Inventories](#) may be established and maintained by the [PSC](#), or by departments; please consult your delegation agreement to determine if your department already possesses the authority to establish or maintain such inventories. They can be continually loaded with interested applicants.

[Regional Staffing Consultants](#)

Area of Selection - A broader area of selection in competitions could provide a larger pool of skilled candidates, many of whom might not be found in the normal area of selection. The area of selection may target other organizations with similar business lines and labour pools. PSC and TBS demographic data may help identify where these candidate pools exist.

PSC - [Demographics](#)
PSC - [Labour Market Analysis](#)
TBS - [Demographic Analysis of PS Workforce](#)

[Post-Secondary Recruitment](#)(PSR) campaigns recruit qualified graduates (usually university) to fill anticipated entry-level positions, and departments may access this program year-round. PSR is a primary vehicle for renewing the federal workforce as well as for meeting employment equity objectives.

[For more info](#)

4: Shortages or anticipated turnover in the Executive or feeder groups

Has the organization considered?:

The Strategic Executive Staffing Plan (SES) offers organizations a tool to use in developing an efficient approach to filling anticipated Executive vacancies. Working with Executive Programs at the PSC, organizations identify their strategy for meeting their Executive resourcing needs for the coming 6-18 months.

[Executive Programs](#)

A variety of [Management Development Programs](#) currently exist which address recognized Public Service-wide management development needs:

- Accelerated Executive Development Program [(AEXDP)](#);

- Career Assignment Program (CAP); and,

- Management Trainee Program (MTP).

A department may similarly establish internal development programs.

AEXDP - ex.prog@psc-cfp.gc.ca
CAP - cap@psc-cfp.gc.ca
MTP Contact
Executive Programs

Interchange and International Programs assist executives and managers to broaden their horizons and gain a better appreciation of international issues or other levels of government and the private sector. Organizations may need to consciously promote the opportunities available through these programs. The knowledge, innovation and cultural changes resulting from such experiences have a lasting and long term effect on the organization and may prove useful in developing leaders with the broad perspective needed.

Executive Programs

The objective of the Assistant Deputy Minister Prequalification Process (ADM PQP) is to establish a representative pool of individuals who possess the ADM leadership competencies and are ready for appointment to the ADM level. The pool of candidates can be readily accessed to meet organizational needs.

Executive Programs
The Leadership Network

5: Loss of corporate memory

There are various staffing mechanisms that can be used to help reduce the loss of corporate memory or to repatriate expertise. Has the organization considered?:

Pre-retirement SAPP - e.g., if the incumbent is assigned responsibility for a special project, his or her substantive position can be staffed while the incumbent remains in the organization, thus facilitating the transfer of corporate memory.

Casual employment - e.g., if the transfer of corporate memory is not accomplished before an employee leaves the organization, perhaps he or she would be willing to return to provide a period of transition with his or her replacement.

Term/Specified Period employment - e.g., if the transfer of corporate memory is not accomplished before an employee leaves the organization, perhaps he or she would be willing to

return to provide a period of transition with his or her replacement.

6: Attracting staff in small organizations

Small organizations can sometimes offer valuable experience that cannot be acquired in larger departments. Lack of mobility once in these organizations, however, can occasionally prevent individuals from considering such a move. To improve mobility, **has the organization considered?:**

Reciprocal Area of Selection agreements, whereby large organizations with similar business lines or employee populations agree to open selection processes to employees of the smaller organization. The larger department benefits by having access to a broader and possibly more diverse pool of candidates and the smaller organization benefits by offering greater career and promotional opportunities for its employees. For example, the Department of Justice opens competitions for LA positions to lawyers in other small organizations, such as the Tax Court and the Immigration and Refugee Board.

Assignment/secondment inventories and corporate support for these temporary work assignments encourage movement into, within and out of the organization. This in turn will contribute to improved employee skills, will provide challenging work and will add to career potential, thus making the organization a more attractive place to work.

7: Workload associated with repeat or high volume staffing

This may not always be a strategic staffing issue. For example, repeat or high volume indeterminate staffing may be a symptom of retention issues, whereas repeat or high volume term staffing may indicate that initial durations are too short. However, to address this staffing issue strategically, **has the organization considered?:**

Competency Profiles - A competency is any knowledge, skill, ability or aptitude that contributes positively to work performance. Associated behaviours that demonstrate the various levels of a competency are usually defined and can be used as examples. A competency profile for a job defines a set of competencies, and the associated level of each competency necessary for that job. A competency profile can be developed for a specific job, for a grouping of jobs (perhaps just within one department), or for a functional community of jobs (perhaps across departments). A competency profile can also be established for an individual employee, based on his or her demonstrated behaviours. Competency profiles are used in most areas of HR, including training and development. They could be used in staffing by identifying the candidates who possess the competencies identified at the level required of the position to be staffed. Competency profiles developed for groups of positions may streamline the identification of qualifications, clarify position requirements and facilitate the administration of generic staffing processes, particularly when combined with standardized testing.

> Personnel Psychology Centre

A standardized test is a systematic procedure for sampling an individual's behaviour in order to evaluate job-relevant qualifications. New standardized tests may be developed or existing tests may be used to support departments in managing the volume of applicants in a selection process.

They ensure a comprehensive and consistent assessment of specific qualifications and , if electronically scored, may reduce the time required for candidate assessments, particularly for cyclical staffing requirements. Test results may be transferable between selection processes, thereby reducing the costs and time associated with repeated testing.

Personnel Psychology Centre

Recruitment Inventories may be established and maintained by the PSC, or by departments; please consult your delegation agreement to determine if your department already possesses the authority to establish or maintain such inventories. They can be continually loaded with interested applicants. Recurring/seasonal requirements may be satisfied through the use of inventories created expressly for this purpose.

PSC Regional Staffing Consultants

Partnering may result in the saving of time and effort, by sharing staffing workload within departments, between departments with similar requirements or within functional communities. A collective approach to selection can be very efficient compared to individual selection approaches which require development of selection tools and evaluation of candidates for each separate process. In some situations, the pool of candidates is the same between processes resulting in the reassessment of the same candidates for similar positions. Partnering can be valuable both for open and for closed competitions.

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