



# **BRAVO!**

A guide to implementing a culture of recognition  
in the Public Service of Canada



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Canada 

# Contributors

## **Partners for this pamphlet**

For Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat /The Leadership Network: Robert W. Ward, Roxanne Cameron, Sheila Mahant, Christiane Courchesne, Denise Gagnon  
For Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat/ Human Resources Branch: Jacqueline Knight, Wendy Warren, Thérèse Simard

## **Working Group on Pride and Recognition**

Robert W. Ward, Chair, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat/The Leadership Network  
Robert F. Bourgeois, Justice Canada  
Dan Burke, Canadian Centre for Management Development  
Robert Desperrier, Public Service Commission  
Peter Edwards, Privy Council Office  
David Elder, Privy Council Office  
LGen James Gervais, Office of the Secretary to the Governor General  
Françoise Girard, Justice Canada  
Kathryn Hamilton, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat/The Leadership Network  
Jacqueline Knight, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat  
Robert S. Lafleur, Health Canada  
Emmanuelle Sajous, Privy Council Office  
Ann Stadnisky, Privy Council Office

## **Consultation and advice**

The Federal Regional Councils  
Pride and Recognition Network  
(Pride and Recognition Coordinators and departmental representatives)  
Forum of Young Professionals in the Federal Public Service – National Capital Region  
Youth Champion – Ontario  
Youth Connection – Nova Scotia  
Youth Forum – Vancouver  
Aboriginal and Diversity Programs (Canadian Centre for Management Development)  
Employment Equity Program  
(Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat)

## **Draft pamphlet**

Stiff Sentences Inc.

## **Editorial content**

Écrit Plus  
Kathryn Randle

## **Production coordination**

Jean-Guy Bergeron

## **Design**

Associés libres inc.

Published by the COSO Sub-Committee on Pride and Recognition

For additional copies, please call

Tel: (819) 779-4341

TTY/TTD: (613) 943-5510

This publication is also posted on the Pride and Recognition site of The Leadership Network website at <http://leadership.gc.ca>.

ISBN 0-662-65678-4

Cat. no. CL4-3/2001

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2001

# RECOGNITION

## A self-diagnostic checklist

### PART 1

Review the following behaviours that DO further a culture of recognition and those that DO NOT.

Put a check beside the descriptors that apply to you.

#### DOs

- I ask my employees for their views on methods and criteria for recognition.*
- I think carefully about what I will say and do to show I really care.*
- I prefer many small and frequent recognition occasions rather than relying on a few big ones.*
- I match recognition with the level of achievement and I recognize comparable achievements in comparable ways.*
- I match recognition to the employee's preferences.*
- I recognize contributions as soon as possible after they occur.*
- I say exactly why the employee is being recognized and I link the achievement to corporate goals and values.*
- I praise employees before their colleagues so others can learn from the experience.*
- I make recognition a frequent activity.*
- I find ways to create a sense of fun and celebration in my organization.*

#### DON'Ts

- I associate recognition with increased costs and loss of valuable work time.*
- I seldom meet with employees to discuss positive results.*
- I believe day-to-day recognition results in favouritism.*

- *Employees say the only time I let them know how they're doing is when something's wrong.*
- *I prefer to include everyone in the recognition process rather than risk confronting employees who haven't earned praise.*
- *I recognize people randomly, but as a result my effort sometimes lacks real meaning.*
- *I don't think through the time and place for recognition and, as a result, the process appears confused and insincere.*
- *I don't consult employees about recognition, nor do I involve them in the process.*
- *I take a long time to give praise.*
- *I give recognition in a general way, but I often fail to mention the specifics that indicate my true understanding and appreciation of the effort that was made.*

## **PART 2**

Test yourself on what managers need to know to establish and sustain a culture of recognition.

Do you know...

- The behaviours your organization is recognizing
- How much you are participating in formal corporate awards programs
- How your organization's pride and recognition program is adapted to support your business strategy and priorities
- How your organization has customized informal recognition practices
- What you want to reinforce with day-to-day management behaviours
- Whether management systems are aligned with your pride and recognition efforts
- Your top performers
- How pride and recognition indicators link to other performance measures
- What other organizations know about your activities

# **BRAVO!**

## **Contents**

### **3 Prologue – Scenarios for improvement**

Myra's experience

Martin's experience

### **4 Your sponsors**

### **6 Pride and recognition – a key business strategy**

### **7 Building a culture of recognition**

### **9 Seven key steps to building a culture of recognition**

### **16 Epilogue – Getting it right!**

Myra's experience

Martin's experience

### **18 National Public Service Week**

### **18 References**

### **19 Twenty Bravo! Suggestions**





# **Prologue — Scenarios for improvement**

## **Myra's experience**

Myra had worked in the public service since graduating from Laval University and was eligible for her 25-year service pin. At the end of a long day she was called into her supervisor's office. He began reviewing the department's budget allocations for her projects and asked for next quarter projections. It was past dinnertime when they finished. As she gathered her things, her supervisor said he still had one more item. When she looked up he handed her a small white box. Inside was her 25-year pin. "Good work," he said. "See you tomorrow."

## **Martin's experience**

For over a year, Martin had worked on a new electronic office system for the public service. Today he was presenting his implementation plan to his supervisor and several ADMs. He had worked past midnight to get ready for this morning. His director general was also present and while Martin was nervous, things went well. Martin even received some applause. However, afterward his supervisor pointed out a spelling error in one section and asked him to try and come earlier next time. They were interrupted by one of the ADMs who wanted a Committee of Deputy Ministers to be briefed on the new system in a week's time. Martin's supervisor said she'd be happy to handle the briefing. She was sure Martin could prepare everything on time.

... turn to the Epilogue to read how these scenarios could be improved.



### **Your sponsors**

*Bravo!* is brought to you by the Committee of Senior Officials (COSO) Sub-Committee on Pride and Recognition.

*Bravo!* is a guide to establishing a culture of recognition within the public service, a culture that reinforces corporate priorities and departmental directions. *Bravo!* was produced in response to the results of the Public Service Employee Survey which indicated that employees at all levels want more recognition for their good work.

This guide provides a seven step model to building a culture of recognition and a list of 20 inspirational and effective methods for implementing pride and recognition as part of the Government of Canada's renewal of the public service.



# MYTH #1

## MONEY IS THE ONLY MOTIVATOR

**REALITY:** since the 1950s, performance and motivation experts have studied the question of compensation and performance.

They have discovered that while compensation is an important incentive, a key strategy to attract and retain top performers is to create a culture that values employees by recognizing and rewarding their contributions in a variety of imaginative and meaningful ways.

## **Pride and recognition – a key business strategy**

Each year, thousands of talented, highly skilled professionals in the arts, sciences and business compete aggressively to receive honours and awards, from Genies to Junos, Oscars to the Nobel Prize.

Each of these events consumes enormous amounts of time, energy and cash, all in the name of recognizing achievement and sustaining performance. But these events are also critical parts of business strategies: recruiting more scientists, securing more research funding, promoting Canadian culture, selling more books or filling more theatre seats. A recognition and reward culture is not just a frill; it is a vital component of our performance-driven society.

Research bears this out. Studies in Canada and the United States show that successful organizations have learned that putting people first boosts performance. The converse is also true. In one study, organizations that moved from good to great performance all had leaders who put people first. One way this has been accomplished is by building a pride and recognition culture throughout an enterprise.

The public service is no different. Treasury Board supports efforts to create a culture of appreciation and recognition, a culture that attracts potential recruits and helps support all public servants in continuing to serve Canadians in the best possible way.

## Building a culture of recognition

A culture of recognition is achieved through two broad thrusts:

- First, by developing and implementing pride and recognition activities and programs that support strategic goals.
- Second, by becoming what Don Tapscott and others call a conscious organization.

Conscious organizations are those in which managers at all levels have a superior understanding of how their decisions and actions affect employees' behaviour. Further, in these organizations, managers have become deliberate about what they are rewarding and how they are doing it. Without this intent and focus, managers may not be aware of what their day-to-day actions are actually rewarding, and they may unintentionally send out mixed messages by saying one thing and doing another.

When it comes to building a culture of recognition, policy is not enough. What is required is a focus on building a strategically driven Pride and Recognition Program, supported by managers at all levels, and measurement and accountability systems.



## **MYTH #2**

### **WORK IS ITS OWN REWARD**

**REALITY:** surveys indicate that, while some professionals derive their work satisfaction from results alone, the vast majority perform better and more consistently when they receive thanks for a job well done.

# Seven key steps to building a culture of recognition

The following steps offer one model:

1. Develop a pride and recognition strategy
2. Review formal recognition and awards programs
3. Align informal recognition
4. Determine reinforcing day-to-day managerial behaviours
5. Align other management systems
6. Establish a feedback system
7. Market the program

## **Step One: Develop a pride and recognition strategy**

A good way to start is by considering corporate and organizational values and priorities. Based on these, determine the behaviours you want to recognize in your organization (these will be your strategic objectives) and the initiatives you may wish to undertake. Keeping in mind that you already have a pride and recognition program, initiatives may involve realigning and renewing activities rather than introducing a range of new ones.

## **Step Two: Review formal recognition and awards programs**

The public service has an extensive formal recognition program that you may wish to use to support your strategy. You might want to consider your level of participation in these corporate awards and determine whether you are taking full advantage of these programs to meet your objectives.



The following awards are offered under the corporate program:

*The Outstanding Achievement Award*  
(executive level / individual)

*The Award of Excellence*  
(recipients of formal departmental awards  
/ individuals and teams)

*The Head of the Public Service Award*  
(all employees / individuals and teams)

*The Employment Equity and  
Diversity Award*

For more information on these awards, you can refer to <http://publiservice.gc.ca> and click on Human Resources; under the General Human Resources Information caption, click on HR Connexions, then Awards and Recognition.

Your department or organization has the flexibility to create its own formal awards for outstanding achievement. Most departments use a varied range of programs. By reviewing these you can ensure they are supporting your strategy. In addition, you may want to explore the degree to which you are taking advantage of managers' available discretion in deciding on the nature and value of these awards.

If your department or organization has a Pride and Recognition coordinator, consider having him/her assist you in the review process.

### **Step Three: Align informal recognition**

Informal programs sustain the pride and recognition culture through daily support for its formal components with constant and varied recognition activities. These combine financial and non-monetary recognition. Once again managers have quite a bit of discretion in this area. You may want to talk to your Pride and Recognition coordinator for suggestions and best practices. For example, you could explore the use of instant awards.

Informal recognition activities should reinforce your overall strategy. They should also be customized to fit your culture and employees. In optimizing informal recognition, the key issue is identifying the awards that employees value and tying them to performance. Awards that are not valued do not motivate.

In your review you may want to examine the budget that has been allocated and determine the criteria for the type and amount of awards you are going to use. Finally, you may wish to discuss how your department or organization is handling the issue of the taxation of rewards with your Pride and Recognition coordinator.

#### **Step Four: Determine reinforcing day-to-day managerial behaviours**

Because recognition is all about positive reinforcement—recognizing and rewarding employees who produce results you want to see repeated—it is important that members of the management team perceive themselves as role models. When managers' actions are consistent with their pronouncements, their behaviour sends a powerful and positive signal to employees.

It is equally important for the management team to become aware of what they are currently reinforcing through their day-to-day actions. A study by Dr. Linda Duxbury gives us a glimpse into this. In examining career strategies that work and those that don't, she found that managers are rewarding employees who make themselves known to senior management and who take on visible projects. They are not rewarding those who work hard, do a good job day-to-day, and constantly seek ways to do their job even better.

Managers may want to discuss the behaviours they wish to recognize and the actions they need to take to encourage them. In this process, management teams may want help in determining what their current behaviour is reinforcing and how they can make adjustments. Tools such as employee surveys and upward feedback instruments can be used to gather this intelligence.

#### **Step Five: Align other management systems**

To support pride and recognition activities, senior managers need to consider whether other systems are reinforcing or undercutting these initiatives. Is performance pay linked to how managers treat employees? Are there training programs for managers in the skills required? Is there a budget for pride and recognition? Is there a coordinator? Are interpersonal competencies being assessed when appointing managers at all levels?

## MYTH #3

### PRIDE AND RECOGNITION IS JUST A FRILL

**REALITY:** a recent study conducted by Pfeffer of about 1000 companies in Canada and the United States found that even small increases in supportive practices are associated with a decrease in turnover and an increase in sales and profitability. Other research indicates that employees who feel that their organization values them are more likely to value their customers.



## MYTH #4

### PRIDE AND RECOGNITION IS EASY

**REALITY:** an effective pride and recognition program faces three challenges: time, care and resources. People need time to participate in formal programs, to administer them in a timely way and to celebrate the end of projects and reward those who made an extra effort. People need to exercise sensitivity and care to ensure rewards suit the employee. And finally, only with resources to support a variety of formal and informal activities, and human resources to keep it all going, can a pride and recognition program really help to create a culture of recognition.



### **Step Six: Establish a feedback system**

Continuously monitoring and improving the pride and recognition program will ensure it continues to promote the changing culture and directions of your organization. A powerful way to demonstrate managers' commitment to pride and recognition is by integrating pride and recognition indicators in the business score card along with financial and other performance measures.

### **Step Seven: Market the program**

Marketing and communication are critical to embedding pride and recognition in your department or organization. Marketing employees' achievements to their colleagues and to outside audiences can take many forms: you could use the Pride and Recognition site on The Leadership Network's website at <http://leadership.gc.ca>, the departmental newsletter or place information on pride and recognition at conference kiosks.

As a manager, you can also use speaking engagements as opportunities to thank employees or to draw attention to an achievement. Employees say they appreciate it when senior managers mention their successes to audiences outside the public service.

Finally, you can take advantage of some of the 20 Bravo! suggestions which follow.



## **Epilogue – Getting it right!**

### **Myra's experience**

Myra had worked in the public service since graduating from Laval University and was eligible for her 25-year service pin. At the end of a long day she was called into her supervisor's office. He began reviewing the department's budget allocations for her projects and asked for next quarter projections. It was almost dinnertime when they finished. As she gathered her things, her supervisor said he still had one more item.

Myra sighed, but when she looked up her supervisor was smiling as he led her to a nearby board room. From inside came a roar of applause as her colleagues cheered. Her supervisor ushered Myra into the room. She was presented with a bouquet of 25 roses. As she stood there, her supervisor made a speech praising her accomplishments and contributions. Then she was asked to step up to the podium where Myra was presented with her 25-year pin. As flash bulbs went off, Myra brushed aside a tear and looked around the room. Her husband and her children were there. Her supervisor called for quiet, he had one more thing to say. "Good work, Myra, you are a great public servant," and he gave Myra a gift certificate on behalf of all her colleagues.



## **Martin's experience**

For over a year, Martin had worked on a new electronic office system for the public service. Today he was presenting his implementation plan to his supervisor and several ADMs. He had worked past midnight to get ready for this morning. His director general was also present and Martin was a little nervous, but things went well. Martin even received some applause.

Afterward his supervisor pointed out one section with which she had been very impressed. She also suggested that Martin ask for her help the next time. She reminded him they were a team and there was no reason for him to work until midnight all by himself.

They were interrupted by one of the ADMs. He wanted a Committee of Deputy Ministers to be briefed on the new system in a week's time. The supervisor looked at Martin. She said Martin would deliver the briefing himself and she would provide all the support he needed.

## **National Public Service Week**

The *National Public Service Week: Serving Canadians Better Act* was passed in 1992 to encourage the people of Canada to recognize the value of services rendered by public servants and the Government of Canada to acknowledge the contribution of its employees. The *Act* sets the third week of June as National Public Service Week. This is an ideal opportunity to promote pride in our work and to show employees how important they are. Management involvement at all levels is key to the success of National Public Service Week. One way to do this is to encourage employees to take part in the many activities offered during this week.

### **References**

1. Jim Collins. *Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve*. Harvard Business Review, January 2001.
2. Dr. Linda Duxbury. *Managing for Competitive Advantage in the Knowledge Sector: A Primer for the Millennium* (2000).
3. Dr. Linda Duxbury, et al. *Career Development in the Federal Public Service: An Overview of Key Findings* (January 1999).
4. Don Tapscott. *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. New York, 1998.
5. *Manager's Guide for the New Approach to Recognition in the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency – Recognition: Establishing a Model Program*. CCRA, August 2000.

## **20 BRAVO! SUGGESTIONS**

All 20 Bravo! suggestions meet the Treasury Board guidelines for recognition and award initiatives. These have been selected from a longer list of Bravo suggestions which you can find at:

<http://leadership.gc.ca>

and click on the Pride and Recognition site.



## 20 BRAVO! SUGGESTIONS:

### Recognition from managers

1. **Meet the achievers.** Create an employee of the week/month recognition program that includes public recognition by the unit manager and posting of the employee's achievement and background in a web profile. Interview these employees about their accomplishments in the departmental newsletter.
2. **Credit due.** When discussing employees' innovations, contributions or solutions, give specific credit to the employee(s) or a team by singling them out by name for a few words of praise and recognition.
3. **Management by walking around.** Be visible and be present. Visit your employees and get to know them.
4. **Meet the boss.** Formalize the process for employees to attend meetings with senior managers. Emphasize the value of this opportunity for career planning, learning and networking.

### Recognition from colleagues and employees

5. **When the chips were down.** Recognize employees and managers who pulled people together and kept them motivated during a difficult time. An award could be a "chip" that the individual can cash in for a reward of his/her choice.
6. **You didn't have to do that.** Recognize employees and managers who go out of their way to recognize the work of their colleagues and teams. Designate a space such as a wall or a web page where photos of recipients with their names can be posted, and underneath, nominators can provide personal statements, e.g. "for making us feel valued even on bad days", "for being an example to others."

7. **Mystery recognizers.** On a rotating basis, designate “mystery recognizers”—employees empowered to hand out Bravo! cards for a variety of achievements.

8. **From the ground up.** Ensure that you have mechanisms that allow employees to thank managers for being good managers. For example, provide Good Manager Bravo! cards and support employee initiatives to recognize managers’ people skills.

## Recognizing new employees

9. **My buddy.** Make being a buddy to new employees an honour. Publicly recognize buddies for taking on the role of helping new employees feel welcome. Make a buddy system a priority for the organization.

10. **Welcome new employees.** Give new employees a welcome pin or welcome letter. Install an icon on his/her computer that opens to a welcome note (or send an e-mail) from the Deputy Minister/Head of Agency.

11. **New employees event.** Hold an informal event for newcomers to the Public Service. This could be a breakfast, picnic, etc.

## Recognizing learning

12. **Sharing best practices.** Arrange for employees to present their achievements at departmental briefings. Provide an opportunity for interaction and a question and answer period.

13. **I can do that.** Draw upon the expertise of your employees. Many employees have had previous careers and gained valuable experience in other disciplines. Others may have academic backgrounds that can be applied to departmental objectives. Take inventory of these skills and set them up in a database for quick reference before assigning key projects.

# Vingt façons de dire « Bravo! »

## Reconnaissance de la part des gestionnaires

1. **Des employés productifs à l'honneur** – Créer un programme pour honorer l'employé de la semaine ou du mois – incluant un témoignage public de reconnaissance de la part du gestionnaire de l'unité et l'affichage sur le Web d'un article faisant état des réalisations et des antécédents de l'employé. Publier, dans le bulletin du ministère, une entrevue où l'employé parle de ses réalisations.
2. **Des hommages bien sentis** – Quand il est question d'innovations, de contributions ou de solutions, adresser quelques mots d'éloge à l'employé ou à l'équipe qui en est responsable, en nommant expressément chaque personne.
3. **Des gestionnaires présents** – Être visible et présent. Ne pas hésiter à rendre visite à vos employés et à apprendre à les connaître.
4. **Rencontre avec le patron** – Établir un processus en bonne et due forme pour la participation des employés à des réunions avec les cadres supérieurs; insister sur les dimensions planification de carrière, apprentissage et réseautage.

## Reconnaissance de la part des collègues et des employés

5. **Dans les moments cruciaux** – Reconnaître les efforts déployés par les employés et les gestionnaires pour motiver les gens dans les périodes difficiles et pour maintenir un bon esprit d'équipe. En guise de remerciement, on pourrait offrir un chèque-cadeau, que l'employé pourrait échanger, au choix.
6. **Les petits extras** – Reconnaître les employés et les gestionnaires qui font des efforts supplémentaires pour souligner le travail de leurs collègues et de leur équipe. Désigner un espace, tel qu'un mur ou une page Web, où l'on pourra afficher une photo et le nom du lauréat et où les personnes qui ont proposé son nom pourront ajouter un commentaire personnel du type « parce qu'avec lui/elle, on se sent valorisés même quand ça va mal », ou encore « parce qu'il/elle est une source d'inspiration ».

14. **Career pathing.** Ask employees to identify the skills or area of expertise in which they would like to become more knowledgeable. With their managers, they lay out milestones on the path to success. At each milestone, the manager recognizes the employee's accomplishment and makes this part of the performance appraisal process.

15. **Welcome back.** Provide an opportunity for employees returning from assignments or exchange programs to share what they have learned with other employees.

16. **Lessons learned.** After a major project is completed, hold a post-project review meeting with everyone who contributed to the project to discuss: what went well, what did not go well and suggestions based on what we have learned.

## **Recognizing contribution**

17. **Hall of names.** Name corridors or boardrooms in public service buildings after employees you want to recognize. Build a recognition ceremony around the naming event featuring the recognized employee. Videotape the event and give the recipient a copy. Invite the employee to bring friends and colleagues from outside the public service to see "his/her" corridor or boardroom.

18. **Sign here.** During each quarter, an outstanding employee gets to decorate a wall with art from the Art Bank. A small plaque identifies the name of the employee who made the selection.

19. **Behind the scenes.** Create a "Behind the Scenes" award for those employees who labour long and hard but are often forgotten once the work is done. Suggested recipients for such awards are policy developers, researchers, event planners, compensation and finance employees, employees working as terms.

20. **Top performers as spokespeople.** Include top performers in recruitment activities such as career fairs, university outreach, speakers'bureau.