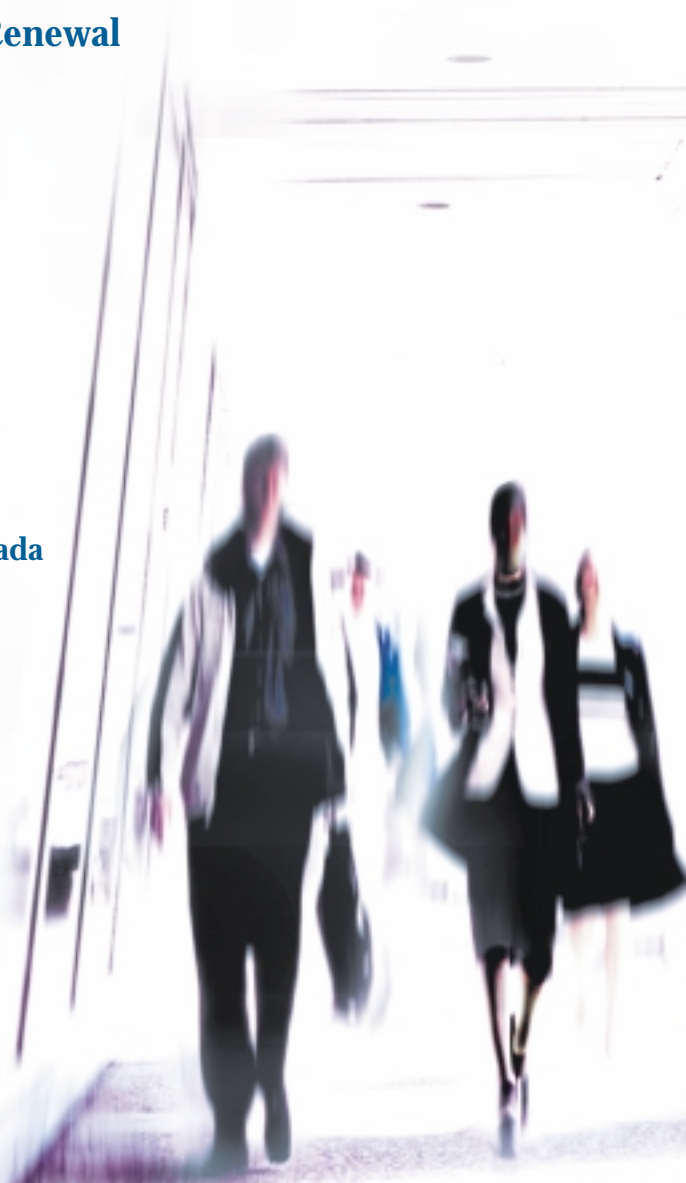# Executive Succession Reconsidered:

Planning for Public Service Renewal

October 2002

Labour Market and Research Unit
Research Directorate
Public Service Commission of Canada

Canada

Acknowledgements

The research for this report was a collaborative effort by a team of talented and dedicated individuals. The Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people:

For an electronic version of this publication, please consult the PSC Web site at http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca

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Executive Summary

The workforce of the federal Public Service of Canada is aging. This problem is compounded by the fact that, historically, public servants retire earlier than employees in the private sector. Both factors pose a challenge for future human resources planning, particularly in senior managerial, professional, and executive positions.

Previous studies have shown that the median age of federal executives is now 50, and is projected to rise to 51 over the next 10 years. During the same period, moreover, 41% of the current executives are expected to retire.[1] This in itself does not present an acute crisis, but is instead a manageable issue because the retirements will occur over a period of time, rather than all at once. But for those employees who represent the recruitment source for the executive level — the executive feeder levels — the median age is 47, and it will rise to 50 by 2011. The strong possibility that the average age of executives and executive feeders will be only one year apart raises the question of whether or not there will be an adequate supply to meet demand as executives and their successors retire.

Before our current research, little was known about the collective career intentions, interests and development needs of executive feeder employees. Are they interested in executive level work? Do they have the requisite experience and skills? What are their development needs? What are their retirement and retention intentions? Using data from our succession planning survey conducted in February and March 2002, we analyzed responses to these and other questions from approximately 2,600 managers and professionals — executive feeder employees — in the federal Public Service.

This report includes seven thematic sections, each of which discusses a particular issue related to succession planning for executive renewal: demographics, interest in executive careers, career plans, capacity, training and development, representativeness and functional communities. Throughout the analysis we link the results and implications for succession planning, to offer a comprehensive understanding of the key components involved in this type of human resources planning. The report presents six main findings:

- **Who are the managers and professionals in the executive feeder groups?** The typical respondent to our survey was male, in his mid to late 40s, and long tenured within the Public Service. He was most likely to have worked in two or fewer departments, and had a moderate level of upward career mobility.

- **Retirement intentions are in line with projections. Voluntary departure risk is low**. Fully 43% of survey participants intend to retire within 10 years. Fewer than one in 20 (3.5%) indicated that they intend to leave for reasons other than retirement within three years.

- **There is strong interest in executive-level careers.** One-third (33%) were "very" interested in an executive level career path, and 37% were "somewhat" interested. Those who were interested in executive careers cited a strong desire to work in a broader context, influence progress toward a goal, and have better access to senior level decision-makers. For the 26% not interested in an executive career, the primary reasons for lack of interest were concerns about work-life balance, and general contentedness with their current work situations.

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[1] *March 31st, 2002: Executive Forecasting Model* (Ottawa: Demographics and Forecasting Unit, Public Service Commission, internal document in progress).

- **Women and visible minorities have a strong interest in executive careers.** Just over three quarters (76%) of women surveyed were interested in an executive career, compared to 71% of men. Similarly, members of visible minorities were much more likely to indicate an interest in progressing to the executive level (84% versus 72% of all other respondents).

- **Those interested in executive careers feel they are ready to work at that level.** Approximately two in three (64%) of those interested in an executive career felt they would be ready to work at that level within two years, and 40% felt they were ready at the time of the survey. However, there are development needs among the entire sample (notably experience in work at the political level and knowledge of a second language) and within specific groups (visible minorities and functional communities).

- **Overall, the supply of potential executives will be sufficient to meet demands.** Our projections show that in any given year over the next 10 years, the annual demand for entry-level executives will be between 250 and 300. Among those in the traditional executive feeder groups, approximately 7,000 of the 27,000 employees in the feeder pool are interested in executive careers, have 10 or more years remaining until retirement, and feel they will be ready to take up an executive role within five years. This provides a substantial pool from which to draw entry-level executives.

We also offer four suggestions for succession planning, based on our analysis of the data:

- language training is a major capacity issue, especially among English-speaking and visible minority employees

- other important areas of capacity-building include improving knowledge of working at the political level or with senior management, and leadership skills

- greater support for training and development — both in time and other resources — could go a long way in preparing feeder employees for executive positions, and

- using a two-pronged approach to succession planning would be highly effective: incorporating general issues (such as increasing awareness of development programs and opportunities) and more specific ones (such as targeting employment equity groups and functional communities).

1

Introduction

1. Introduction

Effective human resources planning and management requires an in-depth knowledge of current workforce demographics, projected retirement patterns, and the career intentions of government employees. It is critically important to understand the effects on the capacity and makeup of the federal workforce as the baby boom generation moves toward retirement.

The effects of the aging Public Service are evident among the ranks of senior professionals, managers, and executives. Forecasts show that over the next 10 years, approximately 5% of executives will retire each year and another 2.5% will leave the Public Service for other reasons.[2] As illustrated below, there is a growing convergence in average age between executives and executive feeders. For the purposes of our analysis — which focuses on the transition from manager or professional to executive — the most relevant turnover numbers are those for entry-level executive positions (EX-1). Our current projections show that under a no-growth scenario, fewer than 300 EX-1 positions will need to be filled in each of the next 10 years.[3]

What of those who will replace today's executives, those employees in what are called the executive feeder groups?[4] Because of a combination of boom-and-bust recruitment patterns, downsizing, population demographics, aging of the workforce and labour market fluctuations, those employees currently in middle management and senior professional positions (the traditional source for federal executives) are very close in age and career stage to current executives.

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[2] Scott Serson, *The Demographics of Public Service Executives and Executive Feeder Groups,* presentation to the Board of Governors of the Canadian Centre for Management Development, December 14, 2001 **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/ex-demo-ccmd_e.htm**; see also Patrick Kieran, "Early Retirement Trends", *Perspectives on Labour and Income,* II.9 (2001), p. 6.

[3] *March 31st, 2002: Executive Forecasting Model* (Ottawa: Demographics and Forecasting Unit, Public Service Commission, internal document in progress).

[4] In this report, the term "feeder group" refers to the population of employees at the EX-equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 levels –— for example, PM-06 and PM-05 –— within an occupational group that serves as a feeder source for appointments to executive positions. The term should not be confused with "occupational groups", which are found in the Public Service population at all classification levels. The top 10 executive feeder groups (listed in order of volume of executive appointments in 2001) are PM-06, AS-07, ES-07, ES-06, CO-03, FS-02, FI-04, PE-06, IS-06 and AS-08, as defined in Serson, *Demographics.*

Graph 1: Median age of executives, executive feeders and overall federal Public Service employees
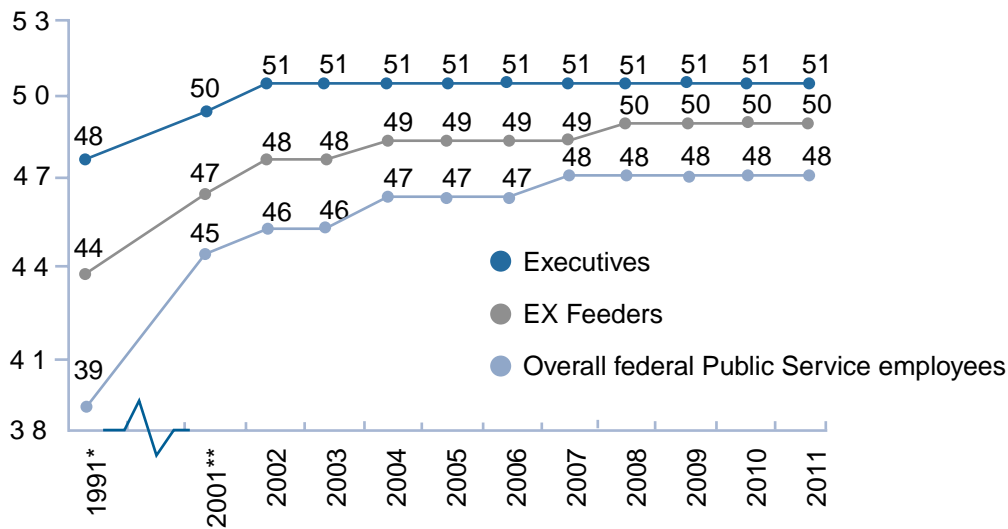
* The 1991 median age of executives includes senior managers (former SM group).
** Excluding the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

The current executive feeder group consists of just over 27,000 employees.[5] Even considering an annual departure rate that is projected to grow from 3.6% to 5.5% over the next 10 years, the size of the feeder group may appear large enough to fill the anticipated vacancies in executive positions. Simply demonstrating that there is an adequate number of employees, however, is not sufficient for effective long-term planning. What remains unknown is:

- whether all feeder-group employees, or just segments of this population, are interested in pursuing executive-level careers with the federal government

- how many will remain in their careers long enough to have a significant tenure as executives, and

- the current capacity and readiness to assume executive level positions successfully among those interested.

Why a survey of managers and professionals?

The manager and professional job categories that comprise the executive feeder groups supply nearly 95% of those who eventually assume executive level positions in the federal Public Service. Those who most often fill these roles are operational, policy, and administrative managers in the highest levels of their functional groups. Although historically there are over 130 groups and levels recognized as feeders to the executive category, 70% of those entering the category have come from 10 specific groups,[6] mainly in the senior policy, administration, and operational streams.[7]

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[5] In our analysis the executive feeder population includes employees in departments under the *Public Service Employment Act* and employees of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

[6] See Serson, *Demographics.*

[7] *Workforce Analysis: A Guide and Workbook for the Federal Public Service* (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002), pp. 33–35; **http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ee/publications/ee/wa-ae_e.doc**

To prevent shortfalls in the representation of members of employment equity groups in the senior ranks and to support the commitment to build a representative Public Service, we also need to pay particular attention to development needs and career intentions of equity group members in the professional and managerial ranks.

The survey of managers and professionals in context

Many surveys of federal public servants have been conducted over the last several years. Trends in the executive group have been well documented,[8] but other than basic demographics little is known about the career plans, aspirations, and capacity of the executive feeder population.

The Public Service Commission's 2002 Survey of Managers and Professionals builds on and complements the recent series of surveys in the federal government: the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey, the 2001 Association of Professional Executives (APEX) Executive Cadre Retention and Transition Survey, the 2000 Student Survey, and the 2001 New Hires Survey. We have learned from each of these surveys, and have gained glimpses into public service managers' and professionals' views on career-related issues. For example:

- The APEX survey included EX-equivalents, which represent about 10% of the total feeder-group population. From this survey we learned that, overall, EX-equivalents were less satisfied with their careers and jobs than executives.[9]

- Contrasting with these results, the Public Service Commission's 2001 Survey of Visible Minority Executive Equivalents[10] showed that less than 10% of those surveyed spontaneously expressed an interest in a traditional executive-level career within government. One possible interpretation of this result is that since the majority of respondents to the survey are senior level, highly trained specialists in the sciences and other professions, they may be disinclined to abandon their investments in their areas of specialization for a generalist management career.

While we do have approximate indicators of feeder group employees' career issues, specific details are missing and some results are ambiguous. The Survey of Managers and Professionals takes the pulse of the executive feeder group community directly, and provides the fullest picture yet of the labour supply for the executive ranks.

[8] See *Work Habits, Working Conditions and the Health Status of the Executive Cadre in the Public Service of Canada* (Ottawa: Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada, 1997; **http://www.apex.gc.ca/interest/synopsis_e.html**); *Survey of Leaders of the Public Service of Canada on Their Vision of the Development of the Public Service: Final Report* (Ottawa: Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada, 2000; **http://www.apex.gc.ca/archive_e.html**); Timna Gorber, Doug Booker and Dajin Li, *Forecasting Departures in the Executive Community, 1998–2007* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 1999; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/techpaper_e.htm**); and Doug Booker and Dajin Li, *Modelling and Forecasting the Representativeness of the Executive Community* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 1998; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/ex_rep_e.htm**)

[9] Christine Minas, *Opportunities and Barriers in the Senior Ranks: Results from the 2001 Association of Professional Executives (APEX) Executive Cadre Retention and Transition Survey* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/ex-apex_e.htm**)

[10] *AEXDP: Survey to* [*sic*] *Visible Minority EX-Equivalents* (Ottawa: Public Service Commission, 2001; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/sursond_e.htm**); AEXDP is the acronym of the Accelerated Executive Development Program.

2 Methodology

2. Methodology

The Public Service Commission established the base sample for the Survey of Managers and Professionals by drawing 8,000 randomly selected individuals from the EX-equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 population in the Treasury Board Secretariat pay system database, as of the end of September 2001. The pool contained 25,956 potential respondents (4,488 EX-equivalent, 8,693 EX-minus-1 and 12,775 EX-minus-2).

Employees from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency were also included in the survey. The agency drew its base sample from their employee database in the same manner and with the same ratio as did the PSC. The agency's selection added a further 1,266 individuals to the initial sample, for a total of 9,266 potential participants in the baseline sample.

The final sample of potential participants consisted of those for whom e-mail addresses could be located, either through departments' databases or through the Public Works and Government Services Web 500 directory of employees. In the final tally, the survey administrators located e-mail addresses for 8,576 of the 9,266 individuals in the baseline sample. They compared the final sample to the original sample, found no systematic biases due to attrition, and considered the sample to be representative of the population (for details, see Appendices A-F).

The PSC contracted Ipsos-Reid to conduct the survey, which was administered through the Internet. Ipsos-Reid provided potential survey respondents with the survey's Web site address (hosted on one of the company's secure servers), which respondents could access by using a confidential and unique personal identification number. Each number was valid for one completed survey. Respondents who interrupted the survey before completing it were permitted to access the site again, using their numbers to complete the survey. The on-line survey was conducted between February 12 and March 5, 2002. The survey yielded 2,650 usable responses, for a 31% response rate. Results are accurate to ± 1.8%, 19 times out of 20.

3

Demographic and Career Profiles

3. Demographic and Career Profiles

Who were the survey's respondents, in terms of their gender, age, membership in employment equity groups and educational attainment? As this report shows throughout, it is not only a respondent's demographic profile that is related to various attitudes and opinions, but also other factors: for example, occupational group and level, community affiliation, and career goals. Concurrently with this report, the PSC will be releasing a detailed analysis of feeder group demographics and workforce modeling.[11] For details on the demographic profile of our survey sample and respondents, see Appendix G.

Gender

The majority of survey respondents were male (64%); only 36% were female. This is similar to the overall gender composition of the feeder groups, where men (67%) outnumber women (33%) by a ratio of 2 to 1. This distribution is in line with the survey population from which we drew our sample. The overall Public Service is more gender-balanced: 53% female and 47% male.

Graph 2: Gender

	Female	Male
Federal Public Service	53%	47%
Survey population	33%	67%
Survey respondents	36%	64%

Age
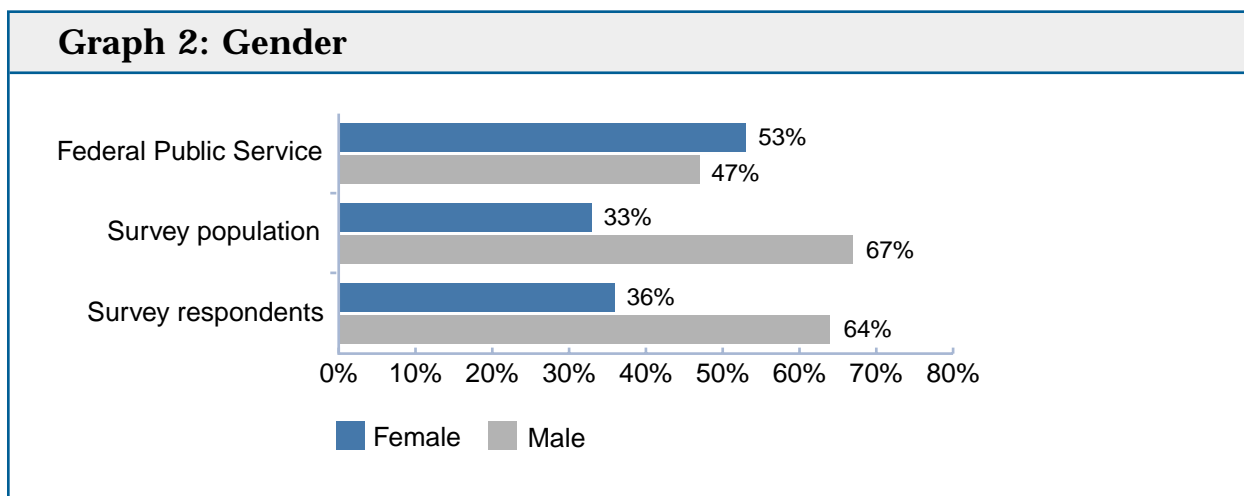
The average age of respondents was 47, only one year older than the overall Public Service average of 46. This is only slightly lower than the average age of federal executives (50).[12] Moreover, as we have noted earlier (see Graph 1 in section 1), the average age of feeder group members is projected to close in on the average age of executives. This is cause for concern in planning succession to the executive levels.[13] Looking at the average age of the feeder groups another way, survey participants have eight years, on average, before the earliest age at which they are eligible to retire (55), and 18 years before reaching 65 years of age.

Employment equity groups

Members of the employment equity groups were well represented among respondents. Visible minorities had the greatest representation (8%), followed by persons with disabilities (3%) and Aboriginal peoples (2%). These proportions reflect the survey population: 7% visible

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[11] The PSC will publish the analysis on the Web site of the Research Directorate
http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/

[12] Minas, *Opportunities and Barriers.*

[13] See Serson, *Demographics.*

minorities, 4% persons with disabilities and 2% Aboriginal peoples. The proportions allow us to focus on the experiences, attitudes and plans of these various groups, and become more informed about how to increase their representation at the executive level.

Language

Almost all executive positions require that candidates be bilingual at the CBC level.[14] Three-quarters (75%) of respondents identified English as their first official language, and one-quarter (25%) French. Significantly, only 34% of respondents had a CBC level or above in their second official language. We discuss further links between language skills and other factors later in this report.

Education

As in the case of language skills, many executive level positions require an undergraduate degree. In fact, many respondents have beyond this level of education: 24% have a master's degree and 9% have a doctorate. Approximately one third (32%) of respondents indicated that a bachelor degree was their highest qualification. As we will see in later sections of this report, higher levels of educational attainment are not equally distributed among respondents.

Table 1: Highest level of education	
Highest level of education	**Percent**
Bachelor's degree	32%
Master's degree	24%
Professional degree (such as law, medicine and dentistry)	13%
Doctoral degree	9%
Certificate or diploma from a community college, CEGEP or technical institute	9%
High-school diploma	8%
University diploma or certificate below bachelor's degree	4%
Total	**100%**

We also have information on respondents' fields of study for those who have at least a bachelor's degree. The largest group holds degrees in the physical and applied sciences (29%), followed by the social sciences (26%) and the humanities, education and arts (23%). Smaller proportions of our respondents have backgrounds in commerce and business administration (22%), and agriculture, biological and health sciences (15%). Surprisingly, only 7% identified public administration as one of their fields of study.

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[14] The term "CBC" refers to the respective levels of competence in reading, writing and oral communication in one's second official language. The letters denote an increasing level of competence, with "A" representing a more rudimentary competency than a "C".

Figure 1: Bachelor's degree or above fields of study (maximum two)

- 7% Public administration
- 15% Agriculture, biological and health sciences
- 22% Commerce and business administration
- 23% Humanities, education and arts
- 26% Social sciences
- 29% Physical and applied sciences

N=2,088
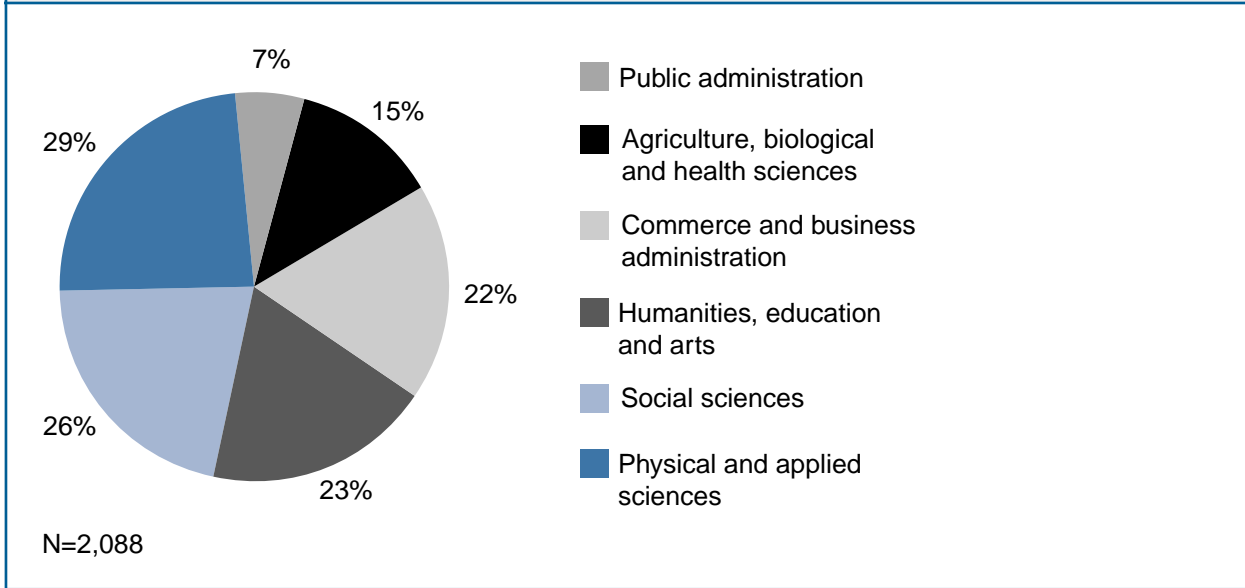
Occupational groups

The largest occupational groups among respondents to our survey are Program Management (PM: 18%), Economics, Sociology and Statistics (ES: 12%), Administrative Services (AS: 9%) and Commerce (CO: 9%); for the top 20 occupational groups, see Appendix A. Given this distribution, there are more employees available for executive positions among these groups than others. Based on numbers alone it is these groups that are most likely to take up executive positions. This information is useful to keep in mind for succession planning as one factor among the numerous layers and interactions of factors that influence individuals' career interests and actions.

Graph 3: Respondents' occupational groups

Occupational group	Percentage
PM	18%
ES	12%
AS	9%
CO	9%
EN	6%
SE	6%
LA	6%
CS	5%
AU	3%
PC	3%

N=2,650
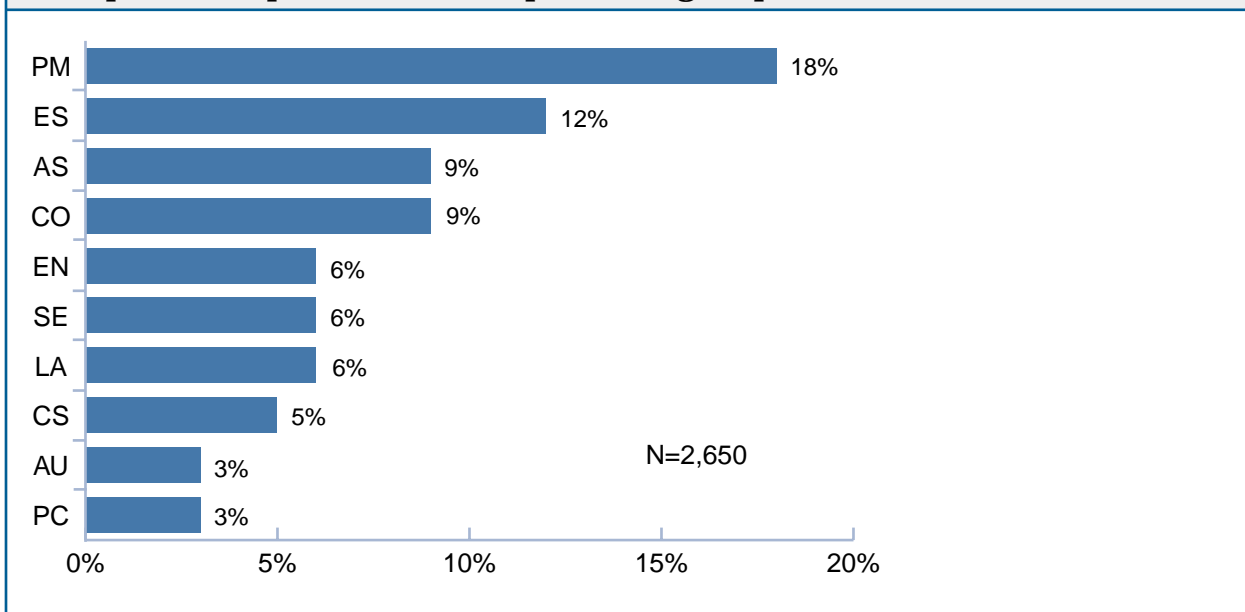
As one might expect of occupational groups and levels in a pyramid-shaped structure typical of large bureaucratic organizations, almost half (49%) of respondents were in the EX-minus-2 category, 37% were in the EX-minus-1 category and 14% were EX-equivalents.

Region of work

Managers and professionals are much more likely than other public servants to work in the National Capital Region (NCR). In fact, there is a concentration of these types of jobs in the Ottawa–Gatineau area. Almost two-thirds of feeder group employees work in the region: 48% in the Ontario side and 16% in Quebec. Moreover, the greatest number of respondents outside the NCR also work in Ontario (8%) and Quebec (6%). This distribution of work locations is nearly the opposite of the overall Public Service, in which we find almost two-thirds (61%) working in regions other than the NCR.[15]

Where managers and professionals work in the country makes a difference in their opportunities for career mobility and access to training and development programs. The concentration of executive positions in the NCR has career and family implications for employees who are interested in executive positions, but who are working outside the region. To date there has been no study of the impact of relocation requirements on the decision to pursue job opportunities. Given the current trend to widening the area of selection for competitions, however, it may be worth future investigation.[16] This is especially the case since we found that NCR and regional participants are equally interested in executive careers.

Traditional and non-traditional feeder groups

Historically, appointments to the executive level have originated from 10 occupational groups and levels, accounting for almost 70% of all internal appointments.[17] If the trend continues, there would be little inflow to the executive community from the remaining feeder groups beyond the traditional sources of recruitment. The feeder groups that have been drawn upon less frequently may provide untapped potential that could enrich the executive ranks. For long-range succession planning, it is worthwhile to explore the perspectives of these groups and compare their perceptions with those of the traditional executive feeder groups.

We compared the responses and demographic profiles of those from the eight occupational groups considered traditional executive feeders (AS, CO, ES, FI, FS, IS, PM and PE) with those from the remaining occupational groups.[18] Generally, those from the traditional executive feeder occupational groups have worked in a greater number of departments and agencies (an average of 2.2) than those in the remaining occupational groups (an average of 1.6 departments).

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[15] *Employment Statistics for the Federal Public Service: April 1, 2000 – March 31, 2001* (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002), p. 46 **http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/pse-fpe/2000-2001/es-se00-01_e.html**; see also Kathy Malizia and Doug Booker, *Demographic Profile of Key Executive Feeder Groups, 1991–1998* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 1999; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/ex_feeder_e.htm**)

[16] See "Recruiting for Canada's Future Public Service: Changing the System", chapter 2 of *2001 Report of the Auditor General of Canada* (Ottawa: Auditor General of Canada, 2001; **http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/0102ce.html**)

[17] See Serson, *Demographics*, pp. 8–9.

[18] The acronyms represent the following occupational groups: Administrative Services (AS), Commerce (CO), Economics, Sociology and Statistics (ES), Financial Administration (FI), Foreign Service (FS), Information Services (IS), Program Administration (PM), and Personnel Administration (PE).

Career histories

Respondents have a significant amount of work experience in the federal government. On average, they have been working as federal employees for 18 years, and 42% of them have been doing so for over 20 years. In comparison, the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey found that 25% of respondents had worked more than 20 years[19]; this figure, however, includes individuals at all occupational levels. The longer career tenure of managers and professionals also indicates that they have considerable corporate knowledge, but because of their older average age a considerable number are, or will be shortly, eligible for retirement. Considering experience, age and tenure together highlights the importance of developing knowledge-transfer strategies aimed at these groups.[20]

Graph 4: Career tenure in the federal Public Service

Tenure	Percentage
Less than 3 years	5%
3–10 years	19%
11–20 years	34%
More than 20 years	42%

N=2,636
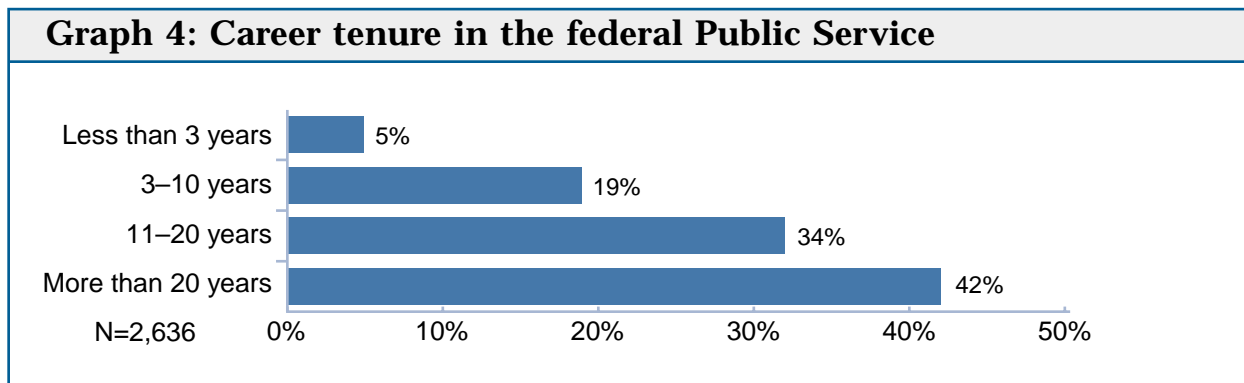
Contrary to current concerns about the overuse and misuse of term assignments and other forms of contingent work,[21] a very small proportion (4%) of respondents were working on a term basis. This was considerably lower than the proportion of term employees across the Public Service (16%).[22] The higher level of indeterminate respondents in our survey is not surprising, given their occupational levels and long tenure in government. However, 43% of indeterminate employees in our survey had been previously employed on a term basis for an average of two years. The majority (61%) of these individuals entered the Public Service between the early 1980s and late 1990s, compared to 47% of those who had not worked as terms. This is consistent with the considerable growth of non-standard employment during the same period.[23]

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[19] *Turning Results into Action,* p. 16.

[20] Mark Hammer, *The Getting and Keeping of Wisdom: Inter-generational Knowledge Transfer in a Changing Public Service* (forthcoming on the Web site of the Public Service Commission's Research Directorate: **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/**)

[21] See Brian McDougall, Micheline Nehmé and Rolina van Gaalen, *Joining the Core Workforce: A Preliminary Report on the Survey of Newly Hired Indeterminate Employees in the Federal Public Service* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2001; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/newhires_e.htm**); chapter 2 of *2001 Report of the Auditor General of Canada;* and Brian McDougall and Doug Booker, *Survey of Hiring Managers in the Federal Public Service: Final Report* (Ottawa: Public Service Alliance of Canada–Treasury Board Secretariat Joint Committee, 2002); **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/hiring-managers_e.htm**)

[22] *Employment Statistics for the Federal Public Service: April 1, 2000 – March 31, 2001.*

[23] Non-standard employment includes part-time, term, contract and casual jobs. Non-standard employment rose in the federal Public Service from 12% of total employment in 1981 to 19% in 1997: Michel McCartin and Grant Schellenberg, *The Future of Work: Non-Standard Employment in the Public Service of Canada.* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 1999; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/nonstandard_e.htm**)

Observations

Our discussion in this section has shown how managers and professionals are both similar to and different from the broader Public Service. The profile that emerges is of a largely male, middle-aged, highly educated and experienced group. They constitute a stable, indeterminate workforce concentrated in the NCR. As a whole, however, their careers have tended to be within one or two departments, with limited interdepartmental movement.

With this demographic background, in the next section we discuss the group's career plans as one of the factors in succession planning. Clearly, knowing the average age of respondents is useful information in determining how many years they have to train for, compete for and take up an executive position, yet it does not tell us what their individual career plans and intentions may be. In other words, we need to examine segments of the overall feeder group if we are to plan effectively.

4

Interest in an Executive Career

4. Interest in an Executive Career

In this section we ask our primary research question: what proportion of the executive feeder community is interested in an executive career? A majority of our respondents were either "very" (33%) or "somewhat" (38%) interested in becoming executives. About one-quarter (26%) were not at all interested, and 3% were undecided.

Among those interested in an executive career, 40% believed that they are now prepared to move into an executive position, 24% indicated that they may be ready in one to two years, and another 24% that they will be ready in three to five years from now. These findings indicate not only an extremely high level of interest, but also a perceived capacity to undertake executive duties. As we will see in section 6, however, perceived readiness does not necessarily equate with capacity.

There are several implications here. First, a large number of those who are interested in executive positions feel that they are ready now to move to this next level. Overall, this is a positive outcome, especially in light of concerns about whether we will have enough individuals to replace departing executives. Second, we may have a problem with accumulated demand for executive positions in which candidates will widely outnumber vacancies, because of so many respondents who see themselves as ready to take up the positions now. Not everyone who desires an executive position will attain one. Individuals' assessments of readiness may not match others' evaluations of their readiness; if they perceive themselves as ready and do not successfully attain executive positions, there is a risk of their feeling discouraged. Given the high levels of interest and self-assessments of readiness, combined with the finite number of entry-level executive positions available (less than 300 per year), human resources planners should consider developing strategies to deal both with career development and issues related to career plateauing.

Another line of analysis we pursued was to compare interest in executive careers between respondents in traditional and non-traditional executive feeder groups.[24] As we might expect, those from traditional feeder groups were more inclined to indicate an interest in moving to an executive level position (75%) than those in the non-traditional groups (65%). Those closer to the executive level were also more likely to show a keener interest in an executive career: 41% of respondents at the EX-minus-1 level indicated they were "very" interested, compared to 29% of those at the EX-minus-2 level.

Interestingly, some members of the employment equity groups were particularly interested in executive careers. Proportionally more women showed an interest in becoming an executive (76%) than did men (71%), in spite of the fact that women are under-represented among executive feeder groups. Approximately four out of five (84%) visible minority respondents showed an interest in an executive career. In fact 52% of visible minority respondents indicated they were "very" interested, compared to 33% of other respondents. This greater interest is encouraging for increasing representativeness in the senior ranks. The challenge, of course, will be to match the interest with effective human resources planning that provides sufficient opportunities for advancement. Human resources planners should work to lever this interest, because both women and visible minorities — indeed, all equity groups — are under-represented at the executive level. We explore this further in section 8.

Educational attainment and geographic place of work were also both related to greater levels of interest in executive careers. Specifically, those with educational levels of master's degrees or higher tended to express a more intense interest in attaining an executive position: 38% were "very" interested, compared to 31% of respondents with degrees below this level.

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[24] For more information, see Kathy Malizia and Doug Booker, *Demographic Profile of Key Executive Feeder Groups, 1991–1998*

And employees working in the NCR were more apt to say they were "very" interested in an executive position (37%) than were respondents from the regions (29%). This may be a reflection of greater senior opportunities in the NCR, and possibly (on the part of regional employers) recognition of the challenges inherent in relocating to another region.

Executive succession planning

A key question we sought to answer was whether we will have enough people to supply the necessary EX-01 inflow over the next several years. If we extrapolate the levels of interest indicated by the survey to the total executive feeder population, about 19,000 of the approximately 27,000 employees in executive feeder groups would be interested in pursuing an executive position (see Graph 5 below). Of those interested, approximately 11,500 would have 10 years or more of service until retirement and feel that they are currently ready to advance to the executive level in five years or less. From this group of employees, about 7,000 are from traditional executive feeder groups. Those interested and indicating that they are ready now to advance to the executive level comprise approximately 7,600 potential executive recruits, with 4,800 originating from the traditional feeder groups.

Continuing our extrapolation, in any one year there would be 7,600 employees interested and available to apply for entry level executive positions, with 4,800 arising from the more likely sources of internal recruitment to the executive community. In terms of demand, our projections show a maximum of 300 available positions per year. In a worst case scenario, this represents a candidates-to-job opening ratio of 16 to 1.

To get an even more detailed understanding of availability, we developed a three category breakdown:

- the current feeder group, which includes those in the top 10 occupational groups and levels in traditional feeder occupations

- the long-term feeder group, which includes those in the remaining occupational groups and levels in traditional feeder occupations and who are one level below the current feeder group, and

- the non-traditional feeders, which include those who are at the executive equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 levels, but do not typically pursue entry-level executive positions.[25]

Graph 5 illustrates that the current, long-term and non-traditional feeders make up approximately a third in each of the succession-planning considerations. Most importantly, we have about 3 in 10 current feeders who are interested in executive careers, have 10 or more years of service remaining, and indicate that they would be ready for this career move in five years. Putting aside considerations of competencies and skill sets, it appears that there are sufficient supplies to meet demand.

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[25] The specific occupational groups and levels in each of the categories are: *current* (PM-06, AS-07, ES-07, ES-06, CO-03, FS-02, FI-04, PE-06, IS-06, and AS-08); *long-term* (PM-05, AS-06, ES-05, CO-02, IS-05, FI-03 and PE-05); and *non-traditional* (all other groups and levels in the EX-equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 classifications).

Graph 5: Executive succession planning by EX candidate pools

	current	long-term	non-traditional	
Total EX feeders	29%	28%	43%	27,000
Respondents with EX interest	32%	28%	40%	19,000
EX interest and ≧10 yrs. to retirement	29%	29%	38%	13,300
EX interest and ≧10 yrs. to retirement & ready for EX position in 5 yrs. or less	32%	29%	38%	11,500

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

current   long-term   non-traditional
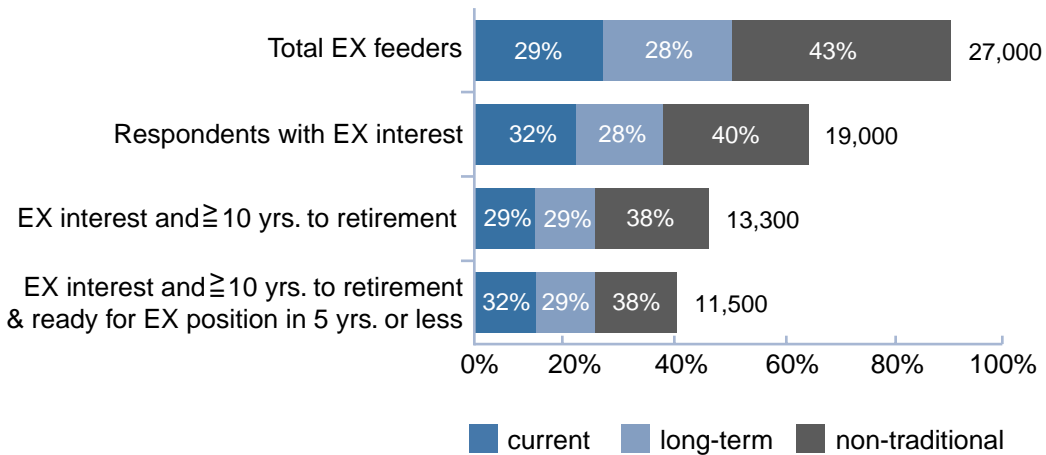
Why become an executive?

Although the high level of interest in an executive career among respondents is reassuring for succession planning, a clearer picture of what attracts and drives these potential executive recruits can contribute to the development of more informed marketing and recruitment strategies. We asked those interested in executive careers to rate the extent to which various factors influenced their interest. Although they rated all reasons highly, respondents were more apt to endorse factors through which they gained more extensive and higher-level influence. The opportunity to influence progress toward a goal was most often regarded highly by respondents (89%).

Those interested in an executive career were attracted by the opportunity to participate in decision-making at a senior level (85%), and being able to work on broader issues (83%). The more altruistic reason of helping coach and develop others seemed to have great appeal, favoured by three-quarters (75%) of those interested in an executive career. More self-focused reasons seemed less influential, but were still rated highly by the majority of respondents: the opportunity to do more interesting work (68%), to earn more money (65%), and to better see the results of their work (63%).

Graph 6: Reasons for becoming an executive

influence progress	89%
senior level decision-making	85%
broader issues	83%
coach others	75%
access to decision makers	71%
interesting work	68%
cross dept. collaboration	65%
earn more money	65%
see results of my work	63%

N=1,872   0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
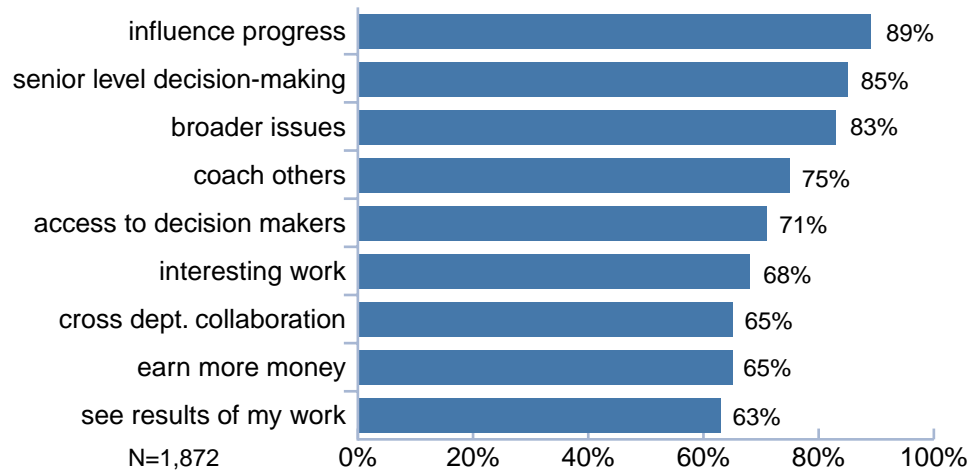
Reasons for not pursuing an executive career path

> *"I feel I am fully qualified to assume an EX-01 position right now, but will not likely pursue that option as it would increase my workload to a level far beyond what I would find acceptable with no commensurate financial or personal benefit."*
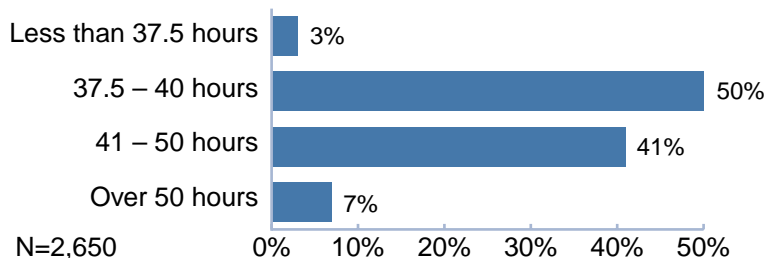
Although the majority of our participants show interest in an executive career, there is a notable proportion who indicated no interest (26%). It is crucial for succession planning to understand the underlying reasons for this lack of interest. The survey presented those with no interest in becoming an executive with a series of possible reasons, and asked them to estimate how much each factor influenced their response. It appears that they are clearly content with their present work, workplace and responsibilities. The implication may be that a promotion to the executive community would affect their level of job satisfaction negatively.

> *"You assume that people who want to advance naturally seek out management positions. Many top analysts DO want to advance but NOT to management positions for reasons not listed in your survey…"*

The factor they most often rated as highly influential was concern with work-life balance (77%), closely followed by their current job being interesting (76%). At present, 50% of our respondents work between 37.5 and 40 hours a week. Thus for most a higher-level executive position may represent more hours of work.[26] Yet it is important to note that "concerns with work-life balance" carries a variety of meanings for individuals and requires further exploration. That is, we cannot assume that the only factor at play is that of work hours — what other aspects of executive work make it difficult to balance work and personal demands?

Graph 7: Hours worked in a typical week

Less than 37.5 hours	3%
37.5 – 40 hours	50%
41 – 50 hours	41%
Over 50 hours	7%

N=2,650

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

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[26] The standard workweek for the majority of federal employees is 37.5 hours.

The issue of work-life balance has received increasing attention in the past 10 years. Our results show that respondents work an average of 43 hours in a typical week. Findings from a survey of federal Public Service executives reveal that executives work, on average, more hours a week than managers and professionals (53 hours).[27] The difference is substantial. Only small minorities of respondents work over 50 hours a week (7%) or less than 37.5 hours (2%). Half of our respondents indicated that they work between 37.5 and 40 hours a week (50%). Less than one third of respondents (28%) worked between 41 and 45 hours and 13% worked between 46 and 50 hours a week.

By way of contrast, in Duxbury and Higgins' recent publication, *The 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study,* the proportion of individuals working over 50 hours per week was found to have increased from 11% to 26% between 1991 and 2001.[28] In comparison, the respondents to our study appear to be maintaining a fairly healthy work-life balance; they do not seem to be working excessive hours.

We also found that hours of work varied with occupational level. EX-equivalent (67%) and EX-minus-1 (57%) respondents are more likely to work more than 40 hours a week than EX-minus-2 respondents (35%). As individuals advance in their careers, they are typically expected to work — and do work — longer hours. It is interesting to note that moving from the average work week of feeder group employees (43 hours) to the average executive work week (53 hours) would represent the equivalent of working Saturday and half of Sunday every week.

[27] Christine Minas, *Mid-Career New Recruits: Their Recruitment Experiences, Job Satisfaction and Career Plans* (New Hires Survey technical paper no. 5; Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/new_hires/mid-career_e.htm**)

[28] Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *The 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study* (Ottawa: Health Canada, 2002; **http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/work-travail/index.html**); using data from the 1998 General Social Survey, Anna Kemeny reports that 27% of the Canadian population aged 15 and older and 38% of managers identified themselves as workaholics: "Driven to Excel: A Portrait of Canada's Workaholics*", Canadian Social Trends,* Spring 2002, pp. 4–5.

Graph 8: Reasons for not pursuing an executive position

| Reason	Percentage
work-life balance concerns	77%
current job is interesting	76%
satisfied with current responsibilities	67%
satisfied with current environment	62%
too close to retirement	47%
satisfied with current salary	45%
satisfied with current manager	43%
potential relocation concerns	32%
difficulty with language requirements	30%
limited advancement	27%
concerns about travel requirements	24%
unfair selection process	23%
gain more experience	15%
salary exceeds that of EX-01	11%

N=760

It is not only negative factors — such as work-life balance issues — that are keeping managers and professionals from wanting to become executives. Positive factors such as satisfaction with their current responsibilities (67%) and environment (62%) carry a significant amount of weight. Career stage is also a factor, with almost half of those not interested indicating that they were too close to retirement (47%). Less than half (45%) indicated that satisfaction with their current salary was influential in not pursuing an executive position. Interestingly, one in 10 respondents indicated that a good reason for not becoming an executive was that his or her current salary exceeded that of the executive entry level (11%). Therefore, the EX-01 level may be particularly unattractive to senior-level professionals because it could represent an increase in workload with little or no increase in pay.

Responses to these deterrent factors can also suggest changes that could be made to attract a greater number of executive candidates. As a reason for not seeking an executive career, for example, a sizeable proportion of respondents (30%) cited difficulty meeting the language requirements of an executive position. Those particular respondents may consider the second language requirements at the executive level as too demanding or unattainable. Over one-quarter of respondents (27%) believed that limited opportunity for advancement in their field of work was a strong deterrent. For those respondents, there may be too few executive positions in their area of specialization. While the perception of an unfair staffing process was not considered an obstacle by the majority of respondents, nevertheless almost one in four (23%) for whom it was a determining factor is a sizeable proportion.
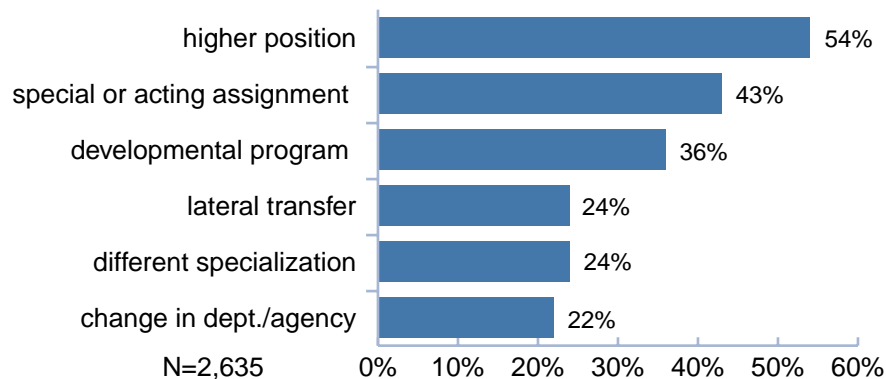
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Career Priorities and Plans
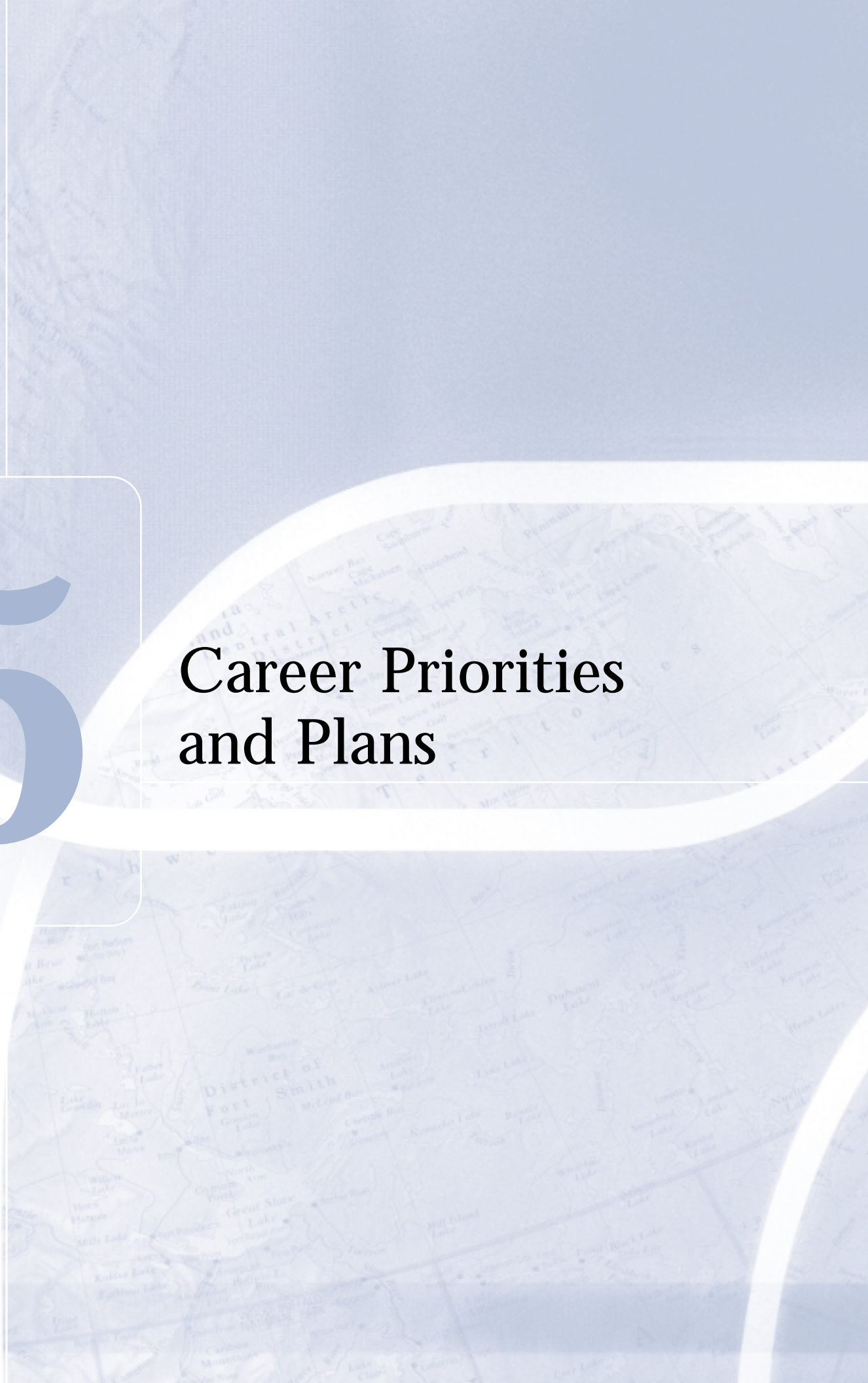
5. Career Priorities and Plans

This section explores managers' and professionals' career priorities and plans. When we asked survey participants about their career aspirations for the next three years, they focussed on career advancement and development.

The career goal most often given high priority was attaining a higher level position, which was endorsed by more than half of the respondents (54%). The stage in one's career was related to whether or not one rated this as a higher priority: those in the early to mid-career executive pool (70%) were more likely to rate it highly than those in a late career stage (61%).[29] Furthermore, those who were "very" interested in an executive career were more apt to rate a promotion as a higher priority (89%) than those who were "somewhat" interested (49%). In addition, those in the traditional executive feeder occupational groups were more inclined to rate a promotion as a high priority (57%) than those in non-traditional occupations (50%). Thus, three factors are associated with this career goal: career stage, level of interest in an executive career, and belonging to an occupational group that usually feeds into the executive community. That is, those who are interested in career mobility tend to be interested in executive careers, are at the early to mid-stage of their careers, and are in one of the traditional executive feeder occupational groups.

Graph 9: Career goals

- higher position 54%
- special or acting assignment 43%
- developmental program 36%
- lateral transfer 24%
- different specialization 24%
- change in dept./agency 22%

N=2,635

A number of respondents also considered taking on a special or acting assignment (43%) and participating in a developmental program (36%) as a higher priority. As in the case of a promotion, special or acting assignments were more popular among those in the early to mid-career executive pool (56%) than among those in the late career executive pool (46%), which makes sense given that those at earlier stages have more time remaining in their careers to invest in such an experience. Another factor related to these goals is that of interest in an executive career. Those "very" interested in an executive career were more likely to give priority to an acting assignment (63%) than those "somewhat" interested in an executive position (44%). More respondents from traditional executive feeder groups favoured an assignment (48%) than those in non-traditional groups (37%).

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[29] The early to mid-career executive pool includes those who were interested in pursuing an executive position and were 10 years or more from retirement, while the late-career executive pool includes those who are interested but have less than 10 years until retirement.

Those who were "very" interested in an executive career were more inclined to plan to participate in a developmental program (58%) than those expressing "somewhat" of an interest in an executive career (33%). Thus those who are already gearing up for an executive position are considering formal means of achieving their goals — developmental programs.

Chosen less frequently as a priority for future careers were transferring to another position at the same level (24%), taking up a different area of specialization (24%), and changing department or agency (22%). Respondents in the early to mid-career executive pool were more likely to give a high priority to taking up a different area of specialization (31%) than their late-career counterparts (22%), which may indicate a desire to get a greater breadth of experience. Similarly, traditional executive feeder groups tended to indicate interest in taking up a different specialization (30%) almost twice as often as those in non-traditional groups (17%). A different specialization was more popular among those showing greater interest in an executive career (35%) than among those who were "somewhat" interested (25%). We do not know, however, whether respondents interested in taking up a different specialization were referring to a functional specialization or to senior management responsibilities.

Respondents who were "very" interested in an executive position accorded higher priority to changing departments or agencies (34%) than those who indicated they were "somewhat" interested (20%). Those in traditional feeder groups were more inclined to favour inter-departmental mobility (27%) than those in non-traditional groups (16%).

Commitment to the Public Service

Our focus on career plans uncovered one of the good-news stories of the survey. The majority (66%) of the potential candidate pool from which the executive community draws is firmly committed to staying in the Public Service until retirement, and only one in 10 of those surveyed clearly indicated that he or she would leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement (10%). On the other hand, almost one-quarter of respondents indicated that they did not know their intentions (24%). While the "don't knows" bear watching, it is those indicating clearly that they intend to leave who most represent a turnover risk.

Among those who were certain that they were planning either to stay or leave, we find associations with age and years of service. On average, those who indicated an intention to leave were younger (44.5 years old) than those who plan to remain (48.7 years old). Similarly, those who plan to leave have a lower average number of years of service (15.2 years) than those intending to remain (20.1 years).

"Managers at [my department] need to discuss whether they will be able to retain and attract the best and the brightest with a policy that precludes ES-07 positions from being created…. How can it possibly be in [its] best interest to lose its top talent to other departments?"

We emphasize that only 10% of respondents indicated that they plan to leave before retirement. Moreover, it is important to understand that there is a time-based relationship between leaving intentions and actual behaviour. The closer the time for leaving, the more likely that the behaviour will occur; the further in the future one estimates leaving, the lower the likelihood of this occurring as planned.[30] Of all respondents, 3.5% plan to leave within three years.

Graph 10: Reasons for leaving the Public Service other than retirement

Reason	Percentage
better use of my skills and abilities (N=255)	71%
work frustrations (N=245)	70%
recognition for good performance (N=254)	69%
higher earnings (N=256)	64%
see results of my work (N=255)	63%
more meaningful work (N=256)	62%
increased opportunities for advancement (N=254)	60%
alignment with personal values (N=252)	59%
career change (N=256)	59%
better work-life balance (N=258)	50%
good job market (N=251)	42%
excessive workload (N=256)	40%
problems with co-workers (N=252)	29%
increased opportunities for training (N=256)	23%

We asked those who intend to leave the Public Service before retirement to indicate the importance of possible reasons for their decision. Over two-thirds of those respondents intending to leave attached greater importance to the following reasons: to make better use of their education, training, skills and abilities (71%), to escape work frustrations (70%), and to get more recognition for good performance (69%). The possibility of earning more money figured prominently as a reason for leaving for 64% of respondents.

"I was hoping for an opportunity to discuss some of the real issues related to management in the civil service — planning frameworks, resourcing strategies, etc. There seems to be no opportunity to raise these types of issues. It's lack of support in these areas that forces me to consider leaving the civil service."

[30] Kène Henkens and Frits Tazelaar, "Explaining Retirement Decisions of Civil Servants in the Netherlands: Intentions, Behavior and the Discrepancy between the Two", *Research on Aging, XIX.2* (1997), p. 149.

Within the broader context of human resources management, we wanted to know what steps could be taken to keep these employees in the federal government. Fully 78% of respondents intending to leave indicated that improved leadership would be a strong incentive to remain. This finding parallels results presented in *The Compelling Offer*, in which the most important work environment consideration is the quality of managers.[31] Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) believed that an improved staffing system would be an added incentive to remain. Receiving a promotion was a motivating factor for 70% of the group, and improved mobility was favoured by 45%. Improvements to the staffing system are currently under review as part of the modernization of human resources management. A number of more tangible opportunities could be easily offered to managers and professionals, such as a sabbatical (mentioned by 55% of respondents), educational leave (41%) and contribution to a mentoring program (39%).

Graph 11: Inducements to stay in the Public Service

Inducement	Percentage
improved leadership	78%
promotion	70%
improved staffing system	64%
sabbatical	55%
improved mobility	45%
educational leave	41%
contribute to mentoring program	39%
better facilities and equipment	36%

N=259
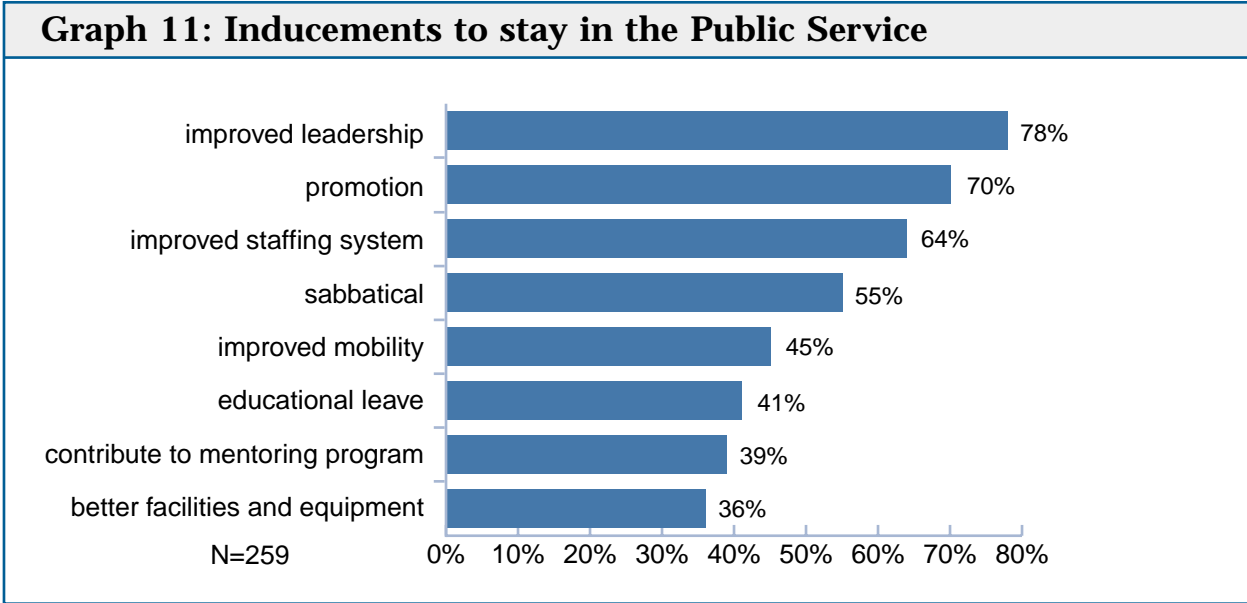
A number of our survey respondents are keen to be promoted — in particular, those who are interested in executive careers and those in the earlier stages of their careers. At the same time, a sizeable proportion of respondents saw taking up a special or acting assignment and participating in a developmental program as higher priorities. Again, those in the earlier stages of their careers were more likely to indicate interest. These findings are useful in themselves because they alert us to the importance of providing these opportunities on the job. It is also important to link them to the current skills and experiences of individuals to gain a fuller picture of all of the considerations in succession planning.

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[31] *The Compelling Offer: A Quantitative Analysis of the Career Preferences and Decisions of High Value Employees* (Washington, D.C.: Corporate Leadership Council, 1999), p. 12.

6

Capacity

6. Capacity

We know who is interested in executive careers and their own self-rated readiness, but do they have the necessary experience and skills to attain executive positions?

One way of providing employees with opportunities for learning on the job is to place them in acting positions at a higher level — usually in response to vacancies created by other employees' departures, vacations, sick leave or other type of leave. There is a popular belief that acting appointments are widespread, yet only 14% of respondents to our survey indicated that they were acting in their current position.

Another way for employees to gain experience is to work in various departments. This provides them with a broader knowledge of the Public Service and a wider perspective with which to view issues. The employees we surveyed have limited experience, since they have worked, on average, in only two federal departments throughout their careers. Moreover, almost half of them (48%) have worked in only one department. This finding parallels others; a survey of federal middle managers in Quebec, for example, found that 83% of respondents had worked in two or fewer departments.[32] The surprisingly low level of mobility between departments and agencies for managers and professionals may be a concern for executive succession in positions that require cross-departmental experience. Together these trends may indicate a certain amount of career plateauing, in the sense that individuals may have insufficient cross-departmental experience to assume executive positions. We feel that this is something to which human resources planners and managers will need to turn their attention in the future, especially considering the proportion of respondents interested in executive careers. Not all will be successful in achieving their goal.

When we look at the respondents' experience outside the federal Public Service, we find that most of them have gained their primary work experience within the Public Service. Only 21% have experience working in other levels of government, and 22% in the not-for-profit sector. One-third of respondents have from one to five years of experience in the private sector, and 11% from six to 10 years. With limited work experience outside government, most of the respondents are career public servants.

Often an important factor in successfully competing for executive positions is having significant staff management experience. The majority of respondents (67%) indicated that they are responsible for managing or supervising employees. Those who are EX-equivalents or EX-minus-1 are more likely to manage or supervise employees (73% and 79% respectively) than are EX-minus-2 respondents (55%). On average, respondents manage or supervise the work of 12 employees. Although we did not inquire into the type of employees they were supervising, the topic merits future research. The people management skills required to manage the increasing proportion of knowledge workers in the Public Service differ from traditional management skills.[33]

[32] *Survey of Federal Public Service Middle Managers in Quebec: Phase I — Analysis of Raw Data* (Montreal: Middle Managers' Network, 2001), p. 11; see also *Enquête auprès des gestionnaires intermédiaires de la fonction publique fédérale au Québec: Phase II — Analyse détaillée des résultats* (Montréal: Réseau des gestionnaires intermédiaires, 2001).

[33] Anil Verma, "Emerging HRM Paradigms for a Knowledge Economy", *HRM Research Quarterly,* V.3 (2001); Anil Verma and Zsuzsanna Lonti, *Changing Government Workplaces* (CPRN Discussion Paper no. W-11; Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2001; **http://www.cprn.org/docs/work/cgw_e.pdf**)

We posed a more specific series of questions to survey participants about the level of experience they have in seven executive functional areas. Readers familiar with the federal government will recognize these as the seven La Relève executive experience factors from the Accelerated Executive Development Program.[34] The majority of respondents had greater experience in people management or supervision, line operations or managing a major operation, and consulting and professional advisory services (see table 2). Respondents had less experience in exposure to the political level, policy development, central and corporate services, and regional operations. Not all entry level executive jobs require a great deal of experience in all areas; the difference in levels of experience should not necessarily be interpreted as negative.

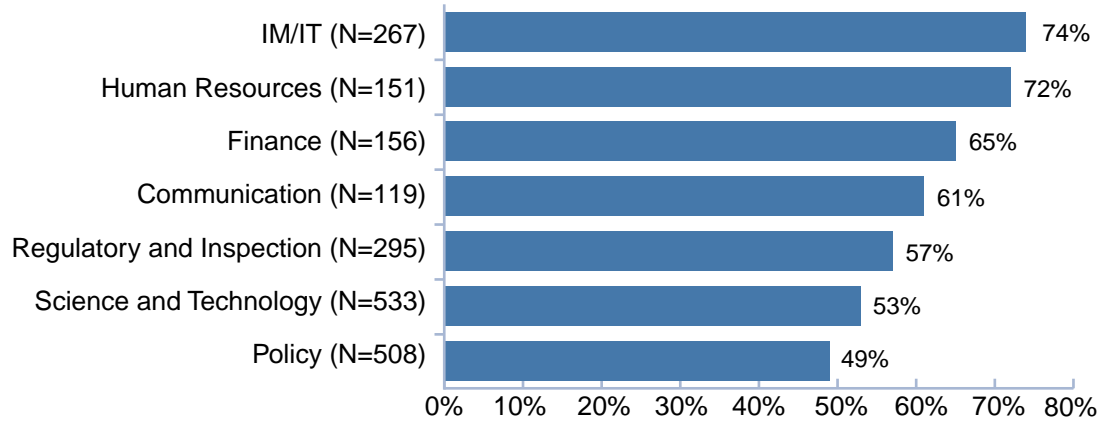| Table 2: Percentage of greater work experiences	
People management or supervision, including staffing	58%
Line operations or managing a major operation	53%
Consulting and professional advisory services	50%
Exposure to the political level	38%
Policy development	36%
Central and corporate services	34%
Regional operations or making recommendations with regional impact	31%

Experience of respondents by functional community

There are notable differences in levels of experience in specific areas between communities.[35] Not surprisingly, participants indicated that they had more experience in areas that related to their functional communities. For example, the majority of respondents from the finance community had a high level of people management experience (65%), but much less experience with exposure to the political level (31%) or policy development (34%). Similarly the policy community had a great deal of experience in policy development (73%) and exposure to the political level (71%), but much less in regional operations (36%). In developing executive succession planning strategies, it would be worthwhile to consider the functional community of new feeder group employees, and to provide greater access to experiences critical for becoming an executive — for example, policy development and exposure to the political level — to which they might not have had access in their functional community streams.

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[34] For a list of the competencies, see "Executive Level Core Functions" on the PCS's Web site: **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/2000/core_e.htm**

[35] We asked respondents to indicate their level of experience on a seven-point scale. For the purposes of this analysis, we classified the respondents as having either a high degree of experience (points 5 to 7 on the scale) or a low degree of experience (points 1 to 4).

Graph 12: Greater people management experience by functional community

Functional community	Percentage
IM/IT (N=267)	74%
Human Resources (N=151)	72%
Finance (N=156)	65%
Communication (N=119)	61%
Regulatory and Inspection (N=295)	57%
Science and Technology (N=533)	53%
Policy (N=508)	49%

(Horizontal axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80%)

This discussion of respondents' capacities contrasts with their earlier proclamations of readiness to take up executive jobs. They may feel ready to take up the positions, but they may have limitations in cross-departmental experience, exposure to the political level, or consulting or advisory skills, for example. This gap between individuals' self-assessments of readiness and more concrete evaluations may cause frustration, and is worth considering in planning exercises.
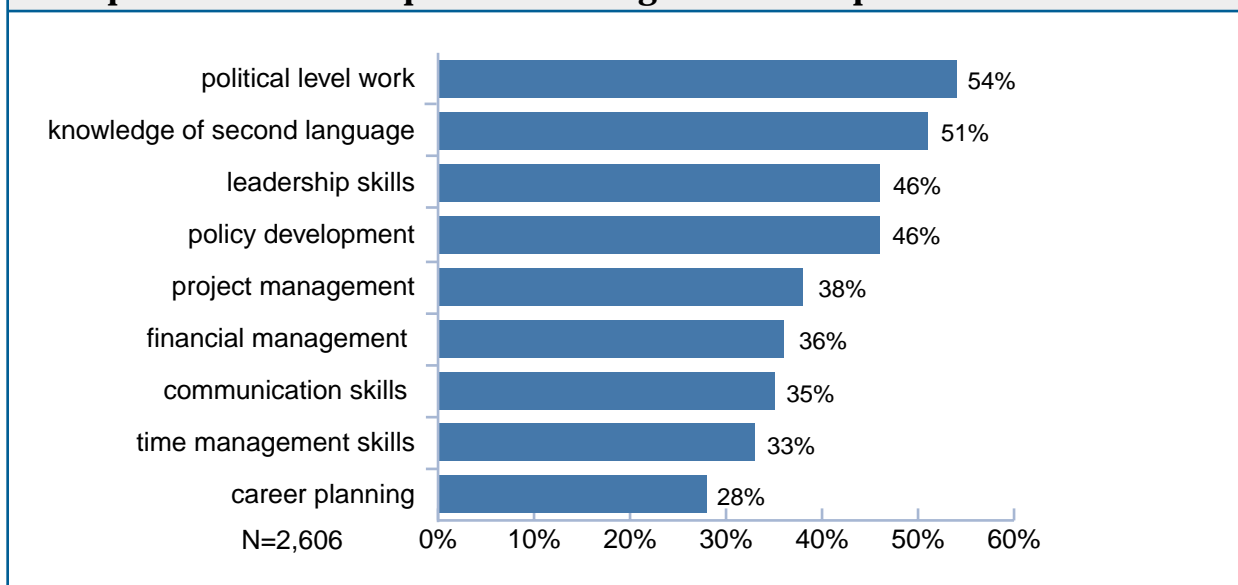
7

Training and Development

7. Training and Development

The need for continuous learning in the workplace has become a high priority for departments and agencies across the federal government. The growth of knowledge-based work requires an emphasis on learning to maintain expertise and remain current in one's field. It has also been recognized that an organization's learning orientation is an important factor in recruiting and retaining employees.[36]

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt they needed training to develop their careers. The desire for training seems to be most prevalent in areas that might ready one for an executive level position. Perhaps this speaks to the fact that almost three-quarters of the group showed an interest in becoming an executive. Four areas were identified as important by almost half of the respondents: increasing knowledge of working at the political level or with senior management (54%), improving their knowledge of their second official language (51%), developing their leadership skills (46%) and improving policy-development skills (46%).

Graph 13: Need for specific training and development

Area	Percent
political level work	54%
knowledge of second language	51%
leadership skills	46%
policy development	46%
project management	38%
financial management	36%
communication skills	35%
time management skills	33%
career planning	28%

N=2,606

Generally, the further away respondents were from an executive entry level position, the greater the demand for training. Those from long-term executive feeder groups (who are two or more levels away from executive entry level) tended to indicate greater need than those from current or even non-traditional executive feeder groups. Training was deemed to be more necessary by those who showed interest in becoming an executive than those who did not show this interest.

More specifically, over half (56%) of those in the long-term and non-traditional executive feeder groups indicated a need to increase their knowledge of working at the political level, compared to 49% of current feeders. There was also greater interest in this area among those who were "somewhat" and "very" interested in an executive position (61% and 62% respectively), compared to those with no interest (34%).

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[36] *A Public Service Learning Organization: Progress Report* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2001).

As we might expect, a greater proportion of those "somewhat" interested and "very" interested in becoming executives (56% and 58% respectively) felt that they needed language training. Furthermore, there is greater demand for second language training among those working in the regions (55%) than in the National Capital Region (49%).

It is important to emphasize that not only do respondents wish to improve their second language skills, but also 36% of them believe that their current linguistic capacity represents a barrier to their advancement. The issue of language training and capacity possibly represents one of the greatest development needs for managers and professionals.

The area of language training warrants special attention. Most executive positions require bilingualism at the CBC level, yet only 34% of executive feeders have this level of proficiency. And the rates of bilingualism (at the CBC level or above among those tested) for those who identified English as their first official language (31%) are much lower than those who indicated French (90%). Clearly, a one-size-fits-all response to this major challenge would not be sufficient or suitable.

Our respondents' positions relative to an entry-level executive position and their interest in positions were related to the degree to which they indicated that they needed to develop their leadership skills. The long-term executive feeders were more inclined to need this training (51%) than those from the current and non-traditional executive feeder groups (44% of each group). About half of those interested in an executive career (53% of "somewhat" interested and 50% of "very" interested) expressed a need for leadership training, compared to 31% of those not interested.
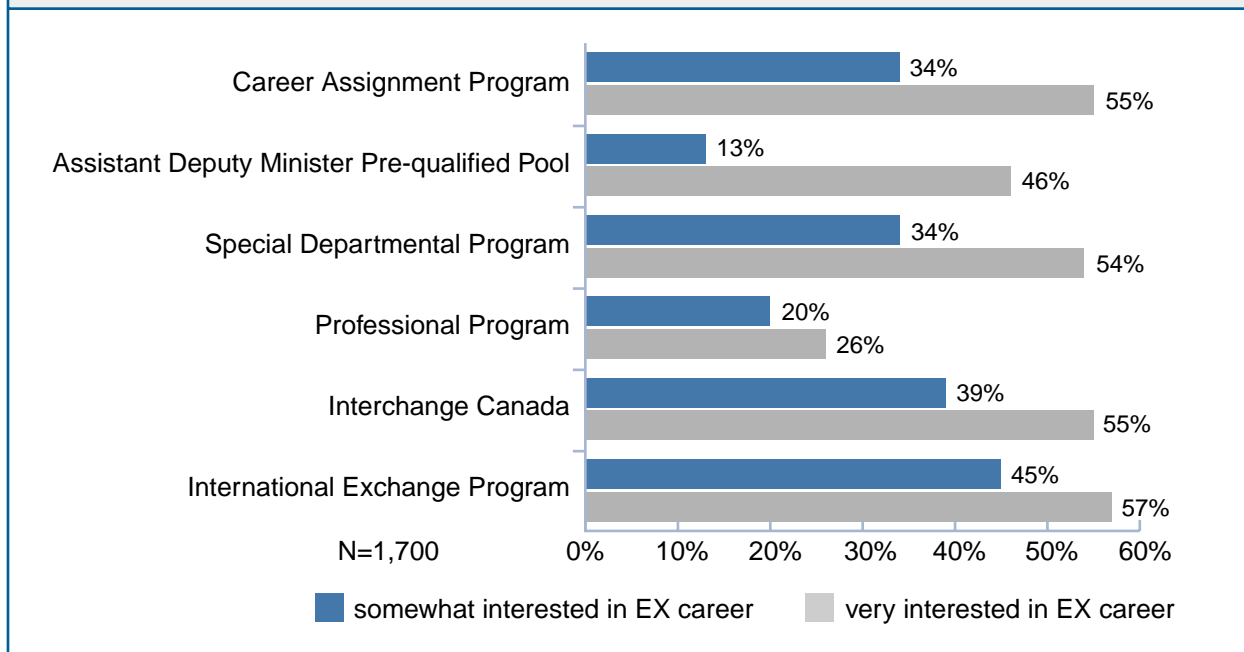
The need for additional experience in policy development was related to interest in an executive career and location of work. Approximately half of those "very" interested (56%) and "somewhat" interested (50%) in becoming executives indicated a need to improve their policy development skills, while only 22% of those not interested in these careers did so. Regional differences indicated that there was greater demand for policy development training among executive feeders in the regions (51%) than in the National Capital Region (43%).

Interest in developmental programs

Developmental programs offer employees structure and guidance in progressing to the next level of their careers. The PSC and individual departments offer a number of programs at various levels, such as the Career Assignment Program.[37] Approximately one-third of respondents indicated an interest in the International Exchange Program (43%), Interchange Canada (38%), Career Assignment Program (34%), and Special Departmental Programs (33%). Despite the high level of interest in the International Exchange Program and Interchange Canada, however, only 3% and 2% of respondents had applied to these respective programs. This fact raises a number of questions about the link between interests and actions when career development is involved.

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[37] For more information, see "Career Development Programs" on the PSC's Web site:
http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/learn-appren_e.htm

Graph 14: Interest in developmental programs by interest in an EX career

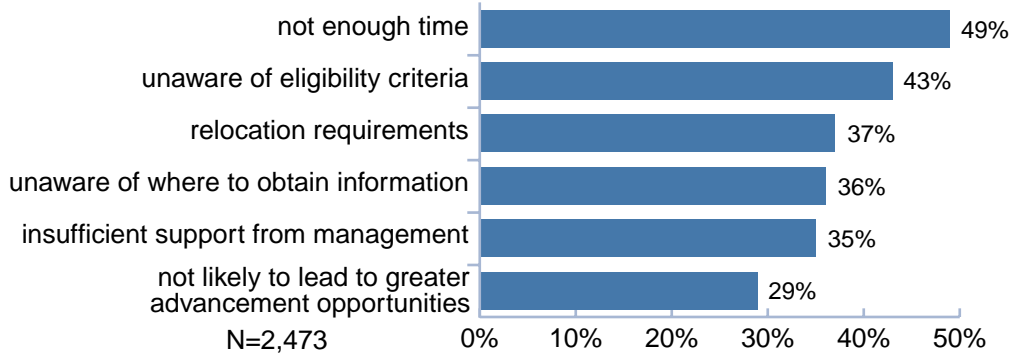| Program	somewhat interested in EX career	very interested in EX career
Career Assignment Program	34%	55%
Assistant Deputy Minister Pre-qualified Pool	13%	46%
Special Departmental Program	34%	54%
Professional Program	20%	26%
Interchange Canada	39%	55%
International Exchange Program	45%	57%

N=1,700

Respondents who were "very" interested in pursuing an executive career were more inclined to be attracted to all developmental programs than those who were "somewhat" interested in becoming an executive. Additionally, long-term executive feeders — two or more levels away from executive entry level — tended to favour developmental programs that could provide them more immediate career advancement, such as the Career Assignment Program, while those in the current executive pool were more inclined to show interest in programs designed for executives, such as the Assistant Deputy Minister Pre-qualified Pool.

Factors that limit participation in developmental programs

There is clear and significant interest in further training and development, and significant interest in formal developmental programs. What is desirable, however, may not always be easily attained. For almost half of respondents (49%), time restrictions played a strong role in preventing them from participating in developmental programs. Another problem they cited was insufficient support from management (35%). Lacking knowledge about the programs seemed to be a deterrent for a substantial proportion of respondents: 43% were unaware of the eligibility criteria for programs, and 36% were unaware of where to obtain information about the programs. Having to relocate to take part in developmental programs was of great concern to 37% of respondents. Because developmental programs tend to be offered in the National Capital Region, relocation requirements were more often a concern for those employed in the regions (57%) than for those in the National Capital Region (27%).

Graph 15: Limitations to participating in developmental programs

Limitation	Percentage
not enough time	49%
unaware of eligibility criteria	43%
relocation requirements	37%
unaware of where to obtain information	36%
insufficient support from management	35%
not likely to lead to greater advancement opportunities	29%

N=2,473

Many of the limitations to participation identified by respondents, such as lack of awareness and insufficient support, could be resolved by active promotion of the programs and their corporate benefits. Increasing the awareness of non-traditional executive feeder group members would be most beneficial, because 48% of them indicated that they were unaware of the eligibility requirements (compared to 37% of traditional feeders), and 43% would have trouble finding information about the programs (compared to 29% of traditional feeders).

When we look more closely at the issue of insufficient time, we find that those who are "very" interested (37%) in executive careers are less likely than those who are "somewhat" interested (56%) to cite a lack of time as a limitation to participating in developmental programs. This is particularly interesting, considering that almost one-quarter (23%) of the former group (compared to 16% of the latter) work 50 hours or more. It might be the case that those who are "very" interested in executive careers see longer hours as a necessity for moving up, and hence do not see themselves as having insufficient time to take up a developmental program.

Marketing strategies aimed at fostering greater participation in developmental programs should start with providing information about the programs in a more widespread and accessible manner. Over one-third of respondents indicated that they were unaware of where to obtain information about the programs. Offering developmental programs in the regions may also help participation, in that over half of respondents employed in the regions found relocation to be an obstacle to participating in the programs. In addition, cultivating an environment in which developmental programs are promoted and obstacles to participation are removed would be beneficial to employees.

8

Focus on Representativeness

8. Focus on Representativeness

In this section we consider representativeness as it relates to succession planning for the executive level.[38] Table 3 shows the representation of the designated employment equity groups in executive level positions and in executive feeder-group levels. In March 2000 representation within the executive group stood at 28% for women, 3% for members of visible minorities, 2% for Aboriginal peoples, and 3% for persons with disabilities. Each of these figures is lower than the respective groups' availability in the executive feeder groups in this sample. The representation of employment equity groups is higher among executive feeder group employees. This bodes well for improving representation at the executive level in the future, assuming that a commitment to removing systematic barriers continues. Measures that have been put in place to improve the situation include the action plan in the Task Force on the Participation of Visible Minorities in the Federal Public Service's report *Embracing Change in the Federal Public Service*, and a focus on employment equity representation in development programs and executive recruitment.

Table 3: Representation of employment equity groups*		
Employment equity group	**Representation in EX positions**	**Representation in EX feeder groups**
Members of visible minorities	3.2%	6.5%
Women	29.3%	32.7%
Aboriginal peoples	1.8%	2.4%
Persons with disabilities	3.3%	3.7%
*As of March 31, 2001		

Members of visible minorities

Second to women, members of visible minorities represent the largest employment equity group. Just under one-tenth (8%) of survey participants self-identified as members of a visible minority. They were heavily concentrated in non-traditional executive feeder occupational groups (51%) in comparison to other respondents (42%). They were also more likely than others to have an educational background in engineering and applied science (26% compared to 17%), and to have completed an M.A., professional degree or Ph.D. (64% compared to 45%). Interestingly, a larger share of visible minority respondents than other respondents were at least 10 years away from retirement (71% compared to 59%).[39] Taken together, these results draw a picture of a highly educated and occupationally specialized group of members of visible minorities in the manager and professional ranks.

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[38] The 1995 *Employment Equity Act* mandates employers within the federal Public Service to make appointments on the basis of the principle of merit, comprising the values of non-partisanship, competence and representativeness. The Act is designed to promote the equitable representation of women, members of visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities, relative to the representation of these groups within the Canadian workforce.

[39] This difference may well account for the greater proportion of visible minority respondents (16%) — in comparison to other respondents (9%) — who indicated that they were planning to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement. Obviously, such a career move has greater potential for younger employees than for their older colleagues. Even with 16% who plan to leave the Public Service before retirement, it would seem unwarranted to predict a major exodus of visible minority employees in executive feeder positions on the basis of this figure.

In comparison to other survey participants, members of visible minorities were significantly more likely to indicate an interest in progressing to the executive level (84% versus 72%).[40] No fewer than 51% of visible minority respondents, compared to 32% of other respondents, indicated being "very" interested. Among the visible minority survey participants who were interested in becoming an executive, nearly half (47%) felt that they were ready at the time of the survey to assume the responsibilities of work at the executive level. This proportion is comparable to the respective figure for respondents who were not members of visible minorities. This greater interest in executive positions among members of visible minorities is a very positive sign for increasing representation at the executive level, especially considering that this group is, by and large, earlier in their careers than other survey participants.

When compared to all other respondents, members of visible minorities were more interested in particular factors that made the pursuit of an executive career particularly attractive: influencing progress towards a goal (50% versus 35%), working on broader issues (43% versus 27%), doing more interesting work (35% versus 19%), and seeing the results of their work (33% versus 14%).

Visible minority respondents were more likely than others to consider the attainment of a higher level position to be a very high priority (41% compared to 25%). Not unexpectedly, the extent to which this goal was identified as a priority was closely related to the level of interest that visible minority respondents expressed in an executive career. Other factors more likely to have been considered very high priorities by visible minority survey participants than by others are participating in a developmental program (22% compared to 8%) and taking a special or acting assignment (20% compared to 10%).

In their career development needs, a much larger share of visible minority respondents than other survey participants indicated that they needed to work on their skills in the areas of a second official language (65% versus 50%), policy development (56% versus 45%), communication (44% versus 34%), and service to clients (24% versus 17%). This pattern is most likely a function of members of visible minorities being concentrated in scientific and technical fields, where there is less opportunity to develop these skills than in a more general bureaucratic stream.

In their concerns about second language skills, we found that a larger proportion of members of visible minorities than other respondents felt they had experienced difficulties in advancing in their careers as a result of their language profile (42% compared to 35%). It should be kept in mind, however, that the visible minority respondents were much more likely to indicate English as their first official language. When we focus exclusively on all respondents who selected English as their first official language, we found little difference between visible minority and other respondents in the proportion who reported adverse effects of their language profiles on their careers.[41] In other words, this sentiment is more a function of having English as a first official language than of being a member of visible minorities.

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[40] Recent studies of newly hired and student employees in the federal Public Service indicate that in the early stages of their careers, visible minority employees and other employees also show overall group differences concerning career priorities and expectations. See Andrea Chatterton, *Recently Hired Visible Minorities: Recruitment Experience, Job Satisfaction and Career Plans* (New Hires Survey technical report no. 6; Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/new_hires/ vismin_e.htm**) and Rolina van Gaalen, *Visible Minority Recruitment Issues for the Federal Public Service: An Analysis of Survey Results* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/surveys/vismin-recruit_e.htm**)

[41] There were not enough members of visible minorities in our sample who selected French as their first official language for us to perform a similar comparison.

Given their relatively high level of interest in moving up the organizational ladder, it comes as no surprise that members of visible minorities express high levels of interest in programs available to assist employees in realizing their career goals. These respondents were more likely than others to indicate a high level of interest in the International Exchange Program (60% compared to 42%), Interchange Canada (54% compared to 36%), the Career Assignment Program (51% compared to 33%), the Special Departmental Program (51% compared to 31%), the Assistant Deputy Minister Pre-qualified Pool (34% compared to 19%), and non-governmental professional programs such as Certified Management Accountant (CMA) certification (28% compared to 18%).

In comparison to other respondents, members of visible minorities were more inclined to be dissatisfied with the support they received from management when it came to availing themselves of the career development opportunities offered. While 23% of members of visible minorities indicated that insufficient support from management had limited their participation in development programs "a lot", only 12% of other respondents did so.

Women

Women made up just over one-third (36%) of the survey respondents, which closely matches their actual representation within the executive feeder community. The average age of women surveyed was lower than that of men (44.4 compared to 48.3 years of age), and women were more likely to be 10 years or more away from retirement than were men (68% compared to 56%). We found women to be more heavily concentrated at the lower executive feeder level (EX-minus-2) than their male counterparts (53% compared to 47%). This difference cannot be explained as a function of age, because very similar age differences between women and men were evident within each executive feeder level — EX-equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2.

We found a large proportion of the women surveyed to be employed within the top 10 traditional executive feeder occupational groups (70% of women compared to 51% of men).[42] Moreover, women express a high level of interest in executive careers, with over three-quarters of them (76%) indicating they were "somewhat" or "very" interested. This proportion exceeds the proportion of men who expressed similar levels of interest (71%).[43] We should be able to take advantage of this interest to increase female representation at the executive levels significantly over the next 10 years.

In accounting for their interest in obtaining an executive position, women were more likely than men to note the attraction of having better access to senior decision-makers (76% compared to 67%) and cross-department collaboration (71% compared to 61%). Women were also more likely than men (35% compared to 26%) to confirm that the opportunity to work on broader issues influenced their interest in this career path "a lot".

As we have noted earlier, a major cause of apprehension about seeking an executive position is balancing work and personal demands. This factor carried relatively more weight in the decision of women not to pursue an executive career than it did for men. Among respondents who had decided against such a career move, or had yet to make up their minds about it,

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[42] We found the highest concentration of women to be in policy-related occupations. Nearly a quarter of the women surveyed (23%) were employed in this functional community.

[43] While this gender difference was not evident among respondents at the EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 levels, it was particularly pronounced among respondents working at the EX-equivalent level; 84% of women versus 68% of men within that group confirmed an interest in such a career move. Similarly, while women and men in the traditional feeder groups were equally likely to indicate interest (77%), women in other occupational groups were more likely than men to do so (75% compared to 66%).

86% of women compared to 76% of men indicated that they were strongly influenced by concerns of work-life balance. Moreover, 63% of women assessed the influence of this factor as very strong, compared to 38% of men. Correspondingly, among respondents who indicated that they intended to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement, women were considerably more likely than men to identify the issue of work-life balance as an "extremely" important consideration (62% compared to 37%). If the goal is to have better representation of women at the executive level, then we clearly need to understand the nature of work-life balance issues better, and seek to resolve them.

Women were less likely than men (20% compared to 34%) to identify difficulties in meeting language requirements as a factor with a strong influence on their decision not to pursue an executive career. Curiously, while the indication of first official language did not differ significantly along gender lines, a larger proportion of women than men stated they had CBC levels or higher in their second language (39% compared to 31%).[44] Despite their high level of interest in entering an executive career path, women were less likely than men to agree they were currently ready for such work (29% compared to 47%). This may be explained by the higher proportion of women in the EX-minus-2 level than the EX-minus-1 level. Among EX-equivalents, 37% of women felt that they were ready now to assume such responsibilities, compared to 64% of men. It is noteworthy that women were less likely than men to report having more than moderate experience in people management (51% compared to 62%), and in line operations (46% compared to 56%). These lower levels of experience may be associated with the fact that women are concentrated at the EX-minus-2 level, and thus they have had fewer opportunities to develop their people management skills.

Gender differences were also apparent in career priorities. In looking three years ahead, women were more inclined than men to identify as high priorities taking a special or acting assignment for development (51% versus 39%), and taking up a different area of specialization (30% versus 21%). Acting assignments, deployments, and secondments are options that provide employees with opportunities to further their careers by broadening their range of experience.

Aboriginal peoples

Aboriginal peoples represented 2% of the survey participants, and just over half of them (51%) were women. The total number of Aboriginal respondents (61) was unfortunately too small for us to conduct in-depth analyses.

Three-quarters of Aboriginal respondents (75%) were employed within the top 10 executive feeder occupational groups. This compares favourably to the proportion of other survey participants employed in these positions, which stood at 57%. This means that compared to historical patterns, it is more likely that they will enter the executive ranks. However, we found Aboriginal survey participants to be highly concentrated at the EX-minus-2 level (59%) compared to others (49%).

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[44] Women were also more likely than men to have been tested for second-language skills (40% compared to 32%).

Persons with disabilities

The total number of persons with disabilities who participated in the survey was 89, or 3.3% of the survey sample. The profile of this group corresponded closely to that of other respondents in many ways. On average, however, persons with disabilities were slightly older than others (48.8 as opposed to 46.8 years of age), and as a consequence they were on average closer to retirement (9.9 years) than other survey participants (12.3 years). A larger proportion of persons with disabilities than other respondents were employed in the traditional top executive feeder groups (70% versus 57%). While we found the single largest concentration of all other respondents to be in the functional community of science and technology (20%, followed closely by policy with 19%), persons with disabilities were most likely to be employed in human resources (17% — also followed closely by policy with 15%). In light of these findings, it is not surprising that persons with disabilities were more likely than others to have an educational background in the humanities (27% compared to 16%).

In their work experience, persons with disabilities were considerably more likely than others to describe as "extensive" their experience in the areas of people management or supervision (36% compared to 19%) and line operations (29% compared to 16%).

We found no significant difference in either first official language, or in the relative proportions of respondents who have CBC levels in their second official language. Persons with disabilities, however, were more likely to feel that they had experienced difficulties in advancing their career because of their language profile (48% compared to 35%).

We also found differences between this group and all other survey respondents in training issues. While one in three of all other respondents (34%) indicated that insufficient support from management had limited their participation in developmental programs, nearly half (49%) of persons with disabilities did so. Taken together, our two findings about language profile and training suggest that persons with disabilities have a heightened awareness of potentially discriminating behaviour in the workplace.

9

Functional
Communities

9. Functional Communities

So far we have examined the respondents' interest in executive careers, training issues and retention from the perspective of demographic indicators, occupational group and level, and years to retirement. Another angle from which to examine these issues as they relate to succession planning is that of the functional community.[45] This perspective considers the experiences of those who do similar types of work across government, and who have an affiliation with a like-minded community.[46] Of the 2,650 respondents to the survey, over three-quarters (77%) identified themselves with one of the seven communities listed in the questionnaire: policy, communications, finance, information management and information technology, regulatory and inspection, science and technology, and human resources.

Age

The average age of respondents ranged from 45 for the policy and communications communities to 49 for the science and technology and human resources communities. The average age within each of the communities has implications for succession planning time frames, in particular for the science and technology and human resources communities.

Table 4: Average age by community	
Community	**Average age**
Policy	45
Communications	45
Finance	46
Information management and information technology	47
Regulatory and inspection	48
Science and technology	49
Human resources	49

Region

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents work in the National Capital Region in Ontario and Quebec. However, less than half (49%) of those in the science and technology community work in the NCR, compared to 72% of employees in all other communities. By contrast, a larger proportion of respondents in the information management and information technology community work in the NCR (86% versus 63% of employees in all other communities). The distribution

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[45] See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002) and *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-04s* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002), both forthcoming on the Research Directorate's Web site; *Demographic Study of the Regulatory–Inspection Community* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 1999; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/ri_demo_e.htm**); and Rhonda Nause et al., *Demographic Study of the Communications Community in the Federal Public Service* (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2000; **http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/is_demo_e.htm**)

[46] For more information on functional communities, see "The Community Centre" on the Learning Resource Network site **http://learnet.gc.ca/eng/comcentr/index.htm**

of various communities across regions has implications for training and development opportunities because of travel or relocation requirements, for example. Communities with members spread widely across a number of regions may face mobility barriers, since most executive positions are in the NCR and relocation may not be desirable or even possible.

Employment equity groups

We found no differences for Aboriginal peoples in employment equity group representation among the communities; however, we did find differences for members of visible minorities. There was a greater proportion of visible minority respondents in the science and technology community (11%) than employees in all other communities (7%). Moreover, we found that persons with disabilities are more highly represented in the human resources community (10%), compared to employees in all other communities (3%). This finding has workplace accommodation implications for the human resources community.

The community with the largest proportion of women is communications (61%), and the community with the smallest is regulatory and inspection (20%). These results may simply reflect the traditional gender distributions found in various types of work. For example, women have been under-represented in science-related occupations for many years; thus it is not surprising that only 21% of the science and technology community consists of women.[47]

Education

As we might expect, those in the science and technology community are highly educated, with 96% of them holding a bachelor's degree or above. The policy community also has a high proportion (88%) of respondents with this level of education. At the lower end of the scale, employees in the information management and information technology community (52%) are much less likely to have a bachelor's degree or above than members of all other communities (83%). This lower level of attainment may be an issue for the community if a degree is required for executive positions in information management and information technology, and if members of the community wish to compete for executive jobs outside their current community.

Table 5: Educational attainment by community

Community	Below a bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree or above	Total number
Policy	12%	88%	505
Finance	20%	80%	155
Information management and information technology	48%	52%	267
Science and technology	4%	96%	532
Human resources	36%	64%	150
Regulatory and inspection	34%	66%	297
Communications	23%	77%	118

[47] Pat Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work* (3rd ed.; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001); Nicole Fortin and Michael Huberman, "Occupational Gender Segregation and Women's Wages in Canada: An Historical Perspective", *Canadian Public Policy,* XXVIII (2002), Supplement.

Language

Approximately three-quarters (76%) of all respondents across the communities identified English as their first official language. Smaller proportions of those in the human resources (58%) and finance (32%) communities gave English as their first official language.

Given that most executive positions require the holder to be bilingual, we were interested in finding out how bilingualism varied across the communities. The proportion of individuals at the CBC level or above in their second official language ranges from 25% for the science and technology community to 52% for the human resources community. Moreover, members of the human resources community are more likely to have CBC levels or above (52%) than members of all other communities (32%). The nature of the work being done by members of these two communities may explain their different levels of bilingualism. For example, in the human resources community, with its service focus, we would expect the bilingualism rate to be high. Nevertheless it is clear that second official language skill is an area where capacity can be developed among executive feeder groups.

Table 6: Language level by community		
Community	**CBC or above**	**Number**
Human resources	52%	79
Communications	50%	59
Policy	37%	187
Finance	33%	51
Information management and information technology	30%	81
Regulatory and inspection	27%	80
Science and technology	25%	134

Interest in executive positions

The level of interest in executive positions varies among each of the communities. For example, 80% of policy community respondents are interested in executive careers, compared to 68% of members of all other communities. In contrast, a smaller proportion of science and technology community members (63%) indicated an interest, compared to members of all other communities (75%).

Table 7: Interest in executive positions by community			
Community	Somewhat or very interested	Not interested	Total number
Policy	80%	19%	500
Communications	78%	22%	117
Finance	77%	23%	152
Human resources	71%	29%	144
Information management and information technology	70%	30%	264
Regulatory and inspection	67%	33%	290
Science and technology	63%	38%	510

Over four-fifths (85%) of respondents affiliated with a community indicated that the opportunity to participate in senior level decision-making influenced them in their interest in becoming an executive. The policy community (90%) was much more likely than members of all other communities (84%) to consider this reason as influencing them. By contrast, the science and technology community was much less likely to indicate this sentiment (77%) than members of all other communities (89%).

Motivations focusing on self-interest varied by community. The policy community, for instance, was more likely to indicate earning more money as a motivator (68%) than members of all other communities (61%). A larger proportion of this community also indicated that better access to decision makers influenced their decision to become executives (78% versus 69% for members of all other communities). There were no differences among communities about the following reasons: to influence progress towards a goal, the opportunity to work on broader issues, and greater cross-departmental collaboration. These results show that even among those who are interested in executive careers, reasons vary by community, and that two communities in particular — policy and science and technology — are quite different from the rest.

We also examined the motivations of those who indicated that they were not at all interested in, or were undecided about, pursuing executive careers. They highlighted concerns about opportunities in one's field of work. This was particularly a concern for employees in the science and technology community, who were more likely to rate it as an important reason (35% versus 22% for members of all other communities). This raises the important issue of a professional glass ceiling: whether professionals can only advance to a certain level before being forced to shift from highly specialized work to general administration and management. For individuals in the science and technology community (of whom 37% have doctoral degrees), making that shift may be too great a departure from their specialized training. Further, it may well represent a potential waste of talent.

"The majority of scientists just want to do science, and most have little interest in climbing the corporate ladder. As well, scientists continuously train themselves throughout their careers, so external training courses are not so much of interest."

Senior leaders would do well to consider whether notions of turning senior professional managers into generalists is a good idea. Moreover, since the science and technology community is less geographically concentrated in one region, specifically the NCR, there may be fewer opportunities for advancement in regions outside this region.

Career plans by functional community

The majority of respondents across functional communities plan to remain in the federal Public Service until retirement. Although only 10% of respondents indicated that they plan to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement, there is a difference about this intention among the communities. The policy community is much more likely to intend to leave for reasons other than retirement (21%), compared to other community members (11%). By contrast, human resources respondents (6%) were much less likely than others (10%) to state this intention. This may be a result of the higher average age of the human resources community (49) and the lower average age of the policy community (45).

Our examination of respondents' demographic profiles, career interests and capacities by community affiliation reveals patterns that were unobserved previously. The differences in interests and attitudes among the communities imply that specific strategies are required to identify an interest in pursuing executive careers, and to design training that is suitable to the various communities. Furthermore, these results indicate that it will be more difficult to attract members from some communities (notably science and technology) than others (such as policy) into the executive ranks.

10

Conclusions

10. Conclusions

This study began with the question of whether there will be enough interest in executive careers among feeder-group employees. In reaching a clear answer, we have presented six main findings:

- **Who are the managers and professionals in the executive feeder groups?** The typical respondent to our survey was male, in his mid to late 40s, and long-tenured within the Public Service. He was most likely to have worked in two or fewer departments, and had a moderate level of upward career mobility.

- **Overall, the supply of potential executives will be sufficient to meet demands.** Our projections show that in any given year over the next 10 years, the annual demand for entry level executives will be between 250 and 300. Among those in the top 10 executive feeder groups, approximately 5,800 are interested in executive careers, have 10 or more years remaining until retirement, and feel they will be ready to take up an executive role within five years. If sufficient efforts are put into developing the next generation of executives, then it appears that there will be a substantial pool from which to draw entry-level executives.

- **There is strong interest in executive-level careers.** One-third (33%) were "very" interested in an executive level career path, and 37% were "somewhat" interested. Those who were interested in executive careers cited a strong desire to work in a broader context, influence progress toward a goal, and have better access to senior level decision-makers. For the 26% not interested in an executive career, the primary reasons for lack of interest were concerns about work-life balance, and general contentedness with their current work situations.

- **Women and visible minorities have a strong interest in executive careers.** Just over three-quarters (76%) of women surveyed were interested in an executive career, compared to 71% of men. Similarly, members of visible minorities were much more likely to indicate an interest in progressing to the executive level (84% versus 72% of all other respondents).

- **Those interested in executive careers feel they are ready to work at that level.** Approximately two in three (64%) of those interested in an executive career felt they would be ready to work at that level within two years, and 40% felt they were ready at the time of the survey. However, there are development needs among the entire sample (notably experience in work at the political level and knowledge of a second language) and within specific groups (members of visible minorities and functional communities).

- **Retirement intentions are in line with projections. Voluntary departure risk is low.** Fully 43% of survey participants intend to retire within 10 years. Fewer than one in 20 (3.5%) indicated that they intend to leave for reasons other than retirement within three years.

Once we determined that there would indeed be sufficient interest, our focus shifted to more specific issues of capacity — acquiring necessary experience and skills — and the various groups' and communities' training and development needs. Our analysis of the data supports five observations for succession planning:

- **Language training is a major capacity issue,** especially among English-speaking and visible minority employees.

- Other important areas of capacity-building include **improving knowledge of working at the political level or with senior management, and leadership skills.**

- **Longer work hours** — typical of executive workloads — are seen as disincentives to pursuing executive careers.

- **Greater support for training and development** — both in time and other resources — could go a long way in preparing feeder employees for executive positions.

- **Using a two-pronged approach to succession planning** would be highly effective: incorporating general issues (such as increasing awareness of developmental programs and opportunities) and more specific ones (such as targeting employment equity groups and functional communities).

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample and respondent characteristics by occupational groups

Occupational group (top 20)	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
AS	808	8.72%	743	8.66%	232	8.75%
AU	395	4.26%	389	4.54%	90	3.40%
BI	127	1.37%	121	1.41%	34	1.28%
CO	697	7.52%	654	7.63%	224	8.45%
CS	668	7.21%	641	7.47%	144	5.43%
DS	125	1.35%	63	0.73%	15	0.57%
ENENG	513	5.54%	487	5.68%	161	6.08%
ES	858	9.26%	790	9.21%	309	11.66%
FI	281	3.03%	262	3.06%	84	3.17%
FS	262	2.83%	207	2.41%	75	2.83%
IS	218	2.35%	195	2.27%	60	2.26%
LA	120	1.30%	118	1.38%	40	1.51%
LAAAA	382	4.12%	378	4.41%	94	3.55%
LABBB	120	1.30%	118	1.38%	21	0.79%
PC	310	3.35%	298	3.47%	88	3.32%
PE	245	2.64%	228	2.66%	74	2.79%
PG	201	2.17%	192	2.24%	59	2.23%
PM	1,512	16.32%	1,383	16.13%	464	17.51%
SERES	488	5.27%	478	5.57%	136	5.13%
TI	153	1.65%	142	1.66%	54	2.04%
OTHER	783	8.45%	689	8.03 %	192	7.25%
TOTAL	9,266	100.00%	8,576	100.00%	2,650	100.00%

Administrative Services **(AS)**
Auditing **(AU)**
Biological Sciences **(BI)**
Commerce **(CO)**
Computer Systems Administration **(CS)**
Defence Scientific Service **(DS)**
Engineering **(ENENG)**
Economics, Sociology and Statistics **(ES)**
Financial Administration **(FI)**
Foreign Service **(FS)**

Information Services **(IS)**
Law **(LA)**
Law **(LAAAA)**
Law **(LABBB)**
Physical Sciences **(PC)**
Personnel Administration **(PE)**
Purchasing and Supply **(PG)**
Program Administration **(PM)**
Scientific Research – Research Scientist **(SERES)**
Technical Inspection **(TI)**

Appendix B: Sample and respondent characteristics by department or agency

Department (top 20)	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency	1,266	13.66%	1,232	14.37%	324	12.23 %
Public Works and Government Services Canada	700	7.55%	658	8.96%	217	8.19%
Justice Canada	651	7.03%	650	8.85%	160	6.04%
Human Resources Development Canada	647	6.98%	579	7.88%	188	7.09%
Environment Canada	457	4.93%	437	5.95%	143	5.40%
Health Canada	451	4.87%	438	5.96%	153	5.77%
Industry Canada	450	4.86%	431	5.87%	144	5.43%
National Defence	441	4.76%	324	4.41%	94	3.55%
Natural Resources Canada	428	4.62%	415	5.65%	124	4.68%
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	396	4.27%	379	5.16%	111	4.19%
Foreign Affairs and International Trade	341	3.68%	305	4.15%	102	3.85%
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	334	3.60%	321	4.37%	113	4.26%
Transport Canada	323	3.49%	306	4.17%	112	4.23%
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	294	3.17%	259	3.53%	96	3.62%
Correctional Service of Canada	278	3.00%	268	3.65%	34	1.28%
Statistics Canada	278	3.00%	271	3.69%	85	3.21%
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	189	2.04%	137	1.87%	45	1.70%
Canadian International Development Agency	176	1.90%	162	2.21%	44	1.66%
Canadian Heritage	140	1.51%	124	1.69%	42	1.58%
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	81	0.87%	78	1.06%	24	0.91%
Others	945	10.20%	802	9.35%	283	10.68%
Non-applicable	-	-	-	-	12	0.45%
Total	9,266	100.00 %	8,576	100.00%	2,650	100.00%

Appendix C: Sample and respondent characteristics by gender

Gender	Proportion in feeder-group population	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
Male	67%	6,018	64.95%	5,584	65.11%	1,706	64.38%
Female	33%	3,248	35.05%	2,992	34.89%	944	35.62%
Total	100%	9,266	100.00%	8,576	100.00%	2,650	100.00%

Appendix D: Sample and respondent characteristics by employment equity group

Designated group	Proportion in feeder-group population	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
Aboriginal peoples	2%	222	2.40%	206	2.40%	61	2.30%
Members of visible minorities	7%	662	7.14%	621	7.24%	208	7.85%
Persons with disabilities	4%	401	4.33%	376	4.38%	86	3.25%
Total	13%	1,285	13.87%	1,203	14.03%	355	13.40%

Appendix E: Sample and respondent characteristics by region of work*

Region of work	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
NCR	4,851	60.64%	4,492	61.17%	1,683	63.51%
Other	3,149	39.36%	2,852	38.83%	967	36.49%
Total	8,000	100.00%	7,344	100.00%	2,650	100.00%

*Excluding the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, for which data were not available.

Appendix F: Sample and respondent characteristics by age

Age*	Number in original sample	Proportion of original sample	Number in original sample with identified e-mail address**	Proportion of original sample with identified e-mail address	Number of respondents	Proportion of respondents
30 & under	248	3.10%	225	3.06%	49	1.85%
31 to 35	648	8.10%	595	8.10%	201	7.58%
36 to 40	1,096	13.70%	1,017	13.85%	315	11.89%
41 to 45	1,535	19.19%	1,412	19.23%	479	18.08%
46 to 50	1,874	23.43%	1,734	23.61%	620	23.40%
51 to 55	1,654	20.56%	1,510	20.56%	594	22.42%
56 to 60	701	8.76%	622	8.47%	248	9.36%
61 to 65	201	2.51%	184	2.51%	62	2.34%
Above 65	51	0.64%	44	0.60%	19	0.72%
***N/A	1	0.01%	1	0.01%	63	2.38%
Total	8,000	100.00%	7,344	100.00 %	2,650	100.00%

  *The average age is 46.
 **Excluding the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, for which data were not available.
***N/A = not available in database or not provided by respondents.

Appendix G: Survey sample and respondent demographics

	Survey sample	Respondents
Total	8,576	2,650
Gender		
Male	65%	64%
Female	35%	36%
Employment equity group		
Members of visible minorities	7%	8%
Persons with disabilities	4%	3%
Aboriginal peoples	2%	2%
First official language		
French	N/A	24%
English	N/A	75%
Age		
25 to 34	9%	8%
35 to 44	31%	28%
45 to 54	45%	46%
55 to 64	14%	15%
65 to 74	1%	1%
Refused	1%	2%
Location of employment		
National Capital Region (Ontario and Quebec)	61%	64%
Ontario	7%	8%
British Columbia	6%	6%
Quebec	8%	6%
Alberta	3%	4%
Nova Scotia	4%	4%
New Brunswick	2%	2%
Manitoba	2%	2%
Saskatchewan	2%	2%
Newfoundland and Labrador	1%	1%
Prince Edward Island	1%	1%
Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon	1%	1%
Not specified	3%	1%
		N/A: figures not available