



Public Service Commission
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A Survey of Managers and Professionals

Executive Succession at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

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Canada

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Executive Summary

The baby boom cohort, currently between the ages of 37 and 56, comprises approximately one third of Canada's population.¹ As many employees within this age bracket approach retirement, employers are becoming increasingly worried about their ability to renew their workforce, especially at levels of the organization dominated by older employees. It is in this context that executive succession is of particular relevance.

Over the next decade, approximately 5% of current executives in the federal Public Service are forecasted to retire annually.² To help prepare for this exodus, the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission has conducted a survey of managers and professionals employed at the executive feeder levels of EX equivalent, EX minus 1, and EX minus 2. The survey was designed to assess respondents' career and departure plans; interest and preparedness for work at the executive level; as well as their professional development needs.

The 2,650 respondents included 324 managers and professionals employed at the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA). The following are the highlights of the results for the CCRA:

- The most common career priorities of the managers and professionals surveyed were obtaining a higher position (49%), and taking on a special or acting assignment (48%).
- Respondents were evenly split between those who intended to retire within ten years (50%) and those who planned to retire later (50%). Only a small proportion of respondents expected to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement (7%).
- The majority of survey participants indicated interest in becoming an executive (67%). This interest was found to be especially strong among respondents more than ten years away from retirement (81%).
- The majority of respondents felt they would be ready to work at the executive level right away (39%) or within one to two years (23%). Nevertheless, many managers and professionals lack some of the types of work experiences that are of value to aspiring executives.
- Improving second official language skills commonly topped the respondents' list of learning needs (57%). While 84% of the respondents with French as first language confirmed having met the CBC standard of bilingualism that is generally required of executives, only 11% of respondents with English as first language did so. Nearly half the managers and professionals (46%) felt they had experienced difficulties in advancing their career as a consequence of their language profile, and over one quarter (27%) indicated they had experienced difficulty in obtaining language training.

¹ 2001 Census Analysis Series –Profile of the Canadian Population by Age and Sex: Canada Ages. Statistics Canada. 2002. p. 15.

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. This document can be found at the following URL: http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/ex-demo-ccmd_e.htm.

1.0 Introduction

The ability of employers to effectively manage employee succession is heavily dependent on the make-up of the workforces external and internal to their organizations. Currently, Canada's working-age population is getting older. The national census of 2001 indicates that, whereas in 1991 Canada's population aged 45 to 64 constituted one-fifth of total population, in 2001 it represented approximately one-quarter. By 2011 this age group is expected to account for nearly one-third of the country's total population. Unprecedented numbers of employees will be nearing retirement or will have retired already. In addition, forecasts indicate that between 2001 and 2011 the mid-career population (consisting of individuals in the 35 to 44 age bracket) will decrease in size by 12%.³ The impact of the resulting demographic shift will be felt acutely by Canada's employers, as competition for skilled and talented workers heats up in the labour market.

Demographic trends within Canada's federal Public Service mirror those of the broader Canadian context in that they indicate an ageing workforce. Given, however, that its employees tend to retire relatively early, there is particular urgency for the Public Service to refine its strategy for dealing with the anticipated wave of retirements.

Executive succession is of particular concern in the Public Service, since employees generally do not reach the executive level until they are well advanced in their career and, consequently, older. According to predictions, roughly 5% of executives in the Public Service will retire annually over the next decade. In addition, 2.5% can be expected to leave the Public Service for other reasons.⁴

To help facilitate executive succession planning in the Public Service, the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission has conducted a survey aimed at providing greater insight into the segment of the internal workforce that generally functions as the primary source of new executives. This group of employees consists of managers and professionals employed at the EX equivalent, EX minus 1, and EX minus 2 levels. The survey, conducted in February of 2002, was designed to assess respondents' career and departure plans; interest and preparedness for work at the executive level; and their professional development needs.

The report *Executive Succession Reconsidered: Planning for Public Service Renewal* contains an in-depth analysis of the survey results for the entire Public Service.⁵ The current report presents an analysis of the results obtained for the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

³ *2001 Census Analysis Series –Profile of the Canadian Population by Age and Sex: Canada Ages*. Statistics Canada. 2002. p. 4.

⁴ Serson, *Demographics*.

⁵ *Executive Succession Reconsidered: Planning for Public Service Renewal*. Public Service Commission. http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/reports-rapports/esr-rrd/index_e.htm

2.0 Methodology

The base sample for the *2002 Survey of Managers and Professionals* was established by randomly drawing 8000 individuals from the EX-equivalent, EX-minus-1 and EX-minus-2 population in the Treasury Board Secretariat pay system database at the end of September 2001. The group contained 25,956 employees (4488 EX-equivalent, 8693 EX-minus-1 and 12775 EX-minus-2).

In addition to this, managers and professionals from the CCRA were invited to participate in the survey. CCRA drew their base sample in the same manner and with the same ratio as above from their employee database, adding a further 1266 individuals to the initial sample, for a total of 9266 potential participants in the baseline sample.

The final sample of potential participants consisted of those for whom e-mail addresses could be located either via departments' databases or through the Public Works and Government Services (PWGSC) Web 500 directory of employees. In the final tally, email addresses were located for 8576 of the 9266 individuals in the baseline sample. The final sample was compared to the original sample and no systematic biases due to attrition were found. Thus the sample was found to be representative of the population.

The Public Service Commission contracted Ipsos-Reid to conduct the survey, which was administered via the Internet. Potential survey respondents were provided with the survey web site address hosted on a secure Ipsos-Reid server, which they accessed using a confidential and unique personal identification number (PIN). Each PIN was valid for one completed survey. Respondents who interrupted the survey before completing it were permitted to access the site again using their PIN to complete the survey. The on-line survey was fielded between February 12th, 2002 and March 5th 2002. In total, there were 2650 useable responses, rendering a 31% response rate. The survey results were accurate $\pm 1.8\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Of the 1232 employees at the CCRA who were invited to participate in the survey, 324 chose to do so, thus resulting in a 26% response rate for the agency.

3.0 Results

3.1 Demographic Profile

The survey results provide us with a useful snapshot of some the basic characteristics of the employees we consulted at the CCRA. Identifying distinctive demographic trends can be useful, as such trends often provide insight into factors impacting on the experiences and views of survey participants.

Figure 1 shows that in terms of distribution by age, employment equity status, and first official language, the demographic profile of respondents at the CCRA closely resembles that of survey participants from all the other departments and agencies together.

Nearly half (49%) of the 324 employees at the CCRA who participated in the survey were 45 to 54 years of age and one third (31%) were 35 to 44 years of age. Relatively small proportions comprised the 25 to 34, and over 54 age groups (4% and 14% respectively). The average age of the managers and professionals surveyed at the CCRA was 46.9.

Figure 1
Demographic Profile

	CCRA		Other Departments/Agencies	
All respondents	324	100%	2326	100%
Age				
25-34	14	4%	188	8%
35-44	101	31%	642	28%
45-54	159	49%	1052	45%
> 54	45	14%	386	17%
EE Groups				
Women	112	35%	832	36%
Visible Minorities	20	6%	188	8%
Aboriginal Peoples	6	2%	55	2%
Persons with Disabilities	5	2%	81	4%
First Official Language				
English	255	79%	1738	75%
French	69	21%	578	25%
Education				
Below Bachelor's Degree	117	36%	431	18%
Bachelor's Degree	121	37%	734	32%
Above Bachelor's Degree	81	25%	1152	50%

Just over one third (35%) of the CCRA respondents were women. Women were on average younger than men (44.4 compared to 48.3 years of age). The other designated employment equity groups constituted small minorities, with members of visible minorities representing 6%, and Aboriginal Peoples and persons with disabilities each representing only 2% of the survey

participants from the CCRA. Approximately four out of five CCRA respondents (79%) indicated English was their first official language.

Of the information captured in Figure 1, the most notable differences between the CCRA community and the other survey participants concerns educational background. Relative to others, respondents from the CCRA tended to have a lower level of educational attainment. While no fewer than half of the respondents from other departments and agencies (50%) were in possession of a degree beyond the bachelor's level, this was the case for only a quarter of the CCRA employees surveyed (25%). Conversely, the proportion of respondents from the CCRA whose educational attainment was below the level of a bachelor's degree was double that of the others surveyed (36% compared to 18%).

The educational profiles of the two groups differed in another respect. Among employees with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, respondents from the CCRA were especially likely to have studied commerce or business administration (49%). Only 19% of the respondents in the rest of the Public Service had specialized in this field.

3.2 Career Profile

Given the age profile of the respondents at the CCRA, it is not surprising that many individuals within this community indicated already having a lengthy career in the federal Public Service (FPS) behind them. On average, CCRA employees had worked in the FPS for 20.0 years, as compared to the respondents from other departments and agencies who on average had spent 17.7 years in the FPS.

The promotions and lateral transfers that make up the career histories of managers and professionals at the CCRA have occurred primarily within the context of the Agency itself. Only 34% of respondents at the CCRA – compared to 43% of other survey participants - had worked in more than one department or agency during the course of their career. In other words, the majority have spent their entire career at the CCRA.

Asked to identify the functional community they most closely identified with, one in four CCRA respondents (25%) - compared to fewer than one in ten (8%) of other respondents - selected the information management / information technology community. Smaller, but significant minorities at the CCRA chose the policy, and regulatory and inspection communities (20% and 16% respectively).

The CCRA respondents were predominately employed in the occupational groups of program administration (PM - 37%), auditing (AU - 24%), computer system administration (CS - 17%) and commerce (CO - 11%). In the rest of the Public Service we found a lesser degree of concentration. The four most common occupational groups for respondents not employed at CCRA were program administration (PM - 15%); economics, sociology and statistics (ES - 13%); administrative services (AS - 9%); and commerce (CO - 8%).

In the context of their overall representation among survey participants at the CCRA (35%), women were relatively well represented in program administration in which they comprised 43% of the survey participants. In contrast, the proportion of women in auditing was comparatively small (17%).

In comparison to respondents employed in other departments and agencies, the respondents at the CCRA were heavily concentrated in the Ontario side of the National Capital Region (NCR). Most respondents at the CCRA (70%) worked in this area, compared to 45% of the other survey participants. However, of the respondents in auditing slightly fewer than half (47%) worked in the NCR and just over a quarter (27%) worked elsewhere in the province of Ontario.

In the past, newly appointed executives have tended to be drawn from eight specific occupational groups. In 2001 these occupational groups (administrative services; commerce; economics sociology and statistics; financial administration; foreign service; information services; programme administration; and personnel administration) comprised the employment backgrounds of 70% of internally appointed executives in the FPS.⁶ Assuming that this trend will persist, many CCRA employees appear to be well positioned to move up to the executive level, as the majority of these respondents (58%) are currently employed in occupational groups recognized as constituting the traditional EX feeder groups. This figure is comparable to the 57% of the respondents from other departments and agencies presently employed within these occupational groups.

Women, who as noted previously constituted a minority (35%) of the managers and professionals surveyed at the CCRA, were very well represented in the traditional EX feeder groups. No fewer than 69% of women were employed in these groups, compared to 53% of men. Similarly, a relatively large proportion of respondents in the NCR were employed in these groups (63% versus 47% of respondents who worked elsewhere in the country).

The level of the positions occupied by respondents at the CCRA tends to be lower, however, than in the case of respondents in the rest of the public service. As Figure 2 shows, respondents working for the CCRA are especially heavily concentrated at the lowest EX feeder level (i.e. EX minus 2 - 65%). In other words, they have further to go, if they indeed wish to advance to the position of executive.

Figure 2
EX Feeder Level

EX Feeder Level	CCRA		Other departments/Agencies	
EX minus 2	210	65%	1087	47%
EX minus 1	102	31%	890	38%
EX equivalent	12	4%	349	15%

Nine of the twelve EX equivalents at the CCRA were employed within the occupational group of auditing. It should be noted, however, that despite their predominance within the highest EX feeder group, the vast majority of auditors were working at the EX minus 2 level (74%). Noteworthy also, is that although half the respondents at the EX minus 1 level were employed in program administration (51%), not one EX equivalent belonged to this occupational group.

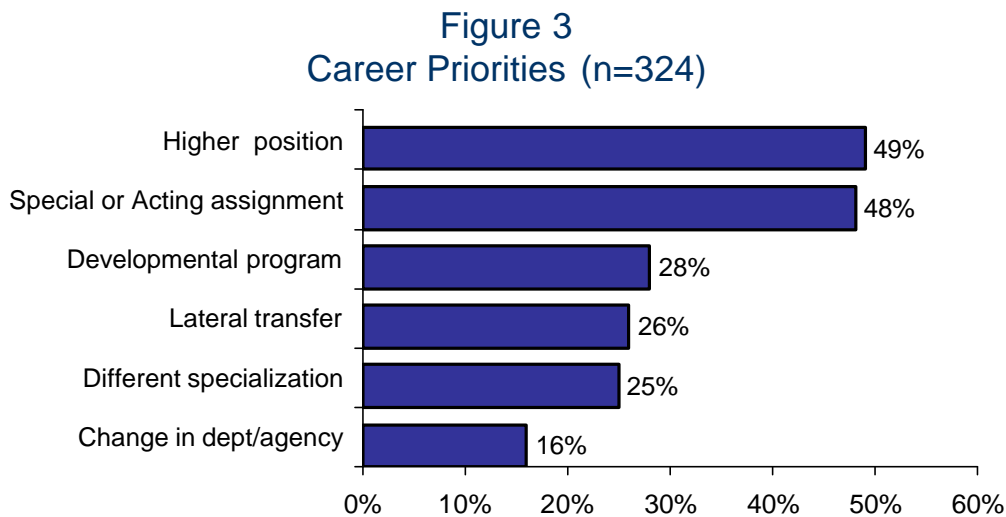
⁶ Serson, *Demographics*.

3.3 Career Goals and Intentions

The survey included a number of questions designed to assess career interests and goals, as well as the motivations behind the career choices respondents hope to make. Specifically, the survey assessed career priorities; intentions for leaving the Public Service; and the level of, and reasons behind interest in the EX career path.

3.3.1 Career Priorities

As is the case elsewhere in the Public Service, managers and professionals at the CCRA are keen to move upward. Figure 3 shows that nearly half of the respondents at the CCRA (49%) rated attaining a higher level position as an important priority. About the same proportion (48%) similarly rated moving to a special or acting position as an important priority.



Respondents were noticeably less interested in making a career move that did not represent a promotion. Approximately one in four respondents working at the CCRA considered it a priority to participate in a developmental program (28%), accept a lateral transfer (26%), or take up a different area of specialization (25%). Only one in six of the respondents at the CCRA (16%) identified changing department or agency as an important priority.

These findings tell us that employees within the EX feeder group at the CCRA would like to move up, and that they would prefer to do so within the Agency. We do not know, however, to what extent they would remain committed to the CCRA if offered more attractive opportunities elsewhere.

3.3.2 Intentions for Leaving the Public Service

In order to anticipate whether or not there will be an adequate supply of candidates over the upcoming decade to fill the positions vacated by the retiring cohort of executives, we need to determine if the employees currently comprising the EX feeder group can be expected to remain with their present employer long enough to be available when the need for them arises.

The demographic profile showed that 14% of the respondents working at the CCRA were over the age of 54, and nearly half (49%) were in the 45 to 54 age range. Hence our particular interest in the time frame respondents have in mind for retirement. We found that 22% intended to retire within 5 years; 27% in 6 to 10 years; 27% in 11 to 15 years; 16% in 16 to 20 years; and 7% in more than 20 years.

The proportion of managers and professionals planning to retire over the next decade (50%) is very similar to the proportion of executives forecasted to retire within that period. Given these findings, we need to ask whether the EX feeder group can possibly be large enough to meet the demand for executives. In considering that issue, we must keep in mind that total number of executives is considerably smaller than the size of the EX feeder group at the Agency. In other words, the 50% of managers and professionals not planning to retire for at least 10 years represent a far greater number of individuals than the current executives who will retire within that period. Nevertheless, we need to recognize that a thorough analysis of this nature is beyond the scope of this report, and should be left for demographic forecasters to undertake. Suffice it to say that our survey results do not provide us with obvious reason to be alarmed about the retirement intentions of managers and professionals at the CCRA.

The data also does not give reason for concern about the effect of voluntary departures prior retirement, as relatively few respondents at the CCRA anticipated they would leave the FPS for reasons other than retirement (7%).

3.3.3 Interest in an Executive Career

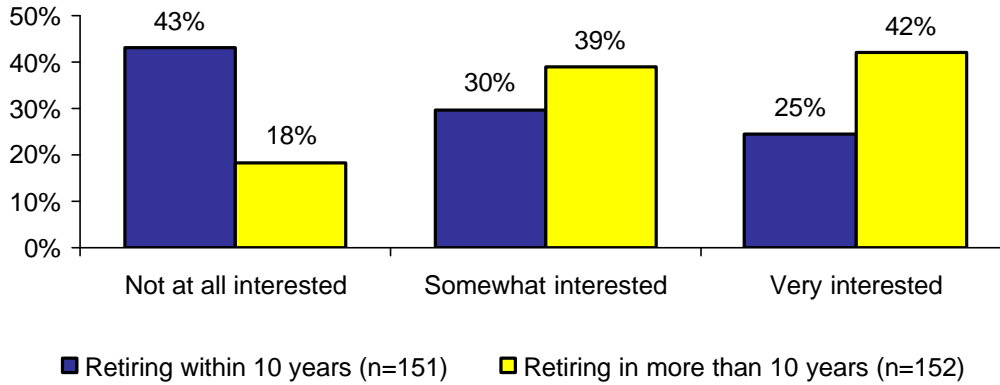
One of the central issues this survey was designed to address, concerns the level of interest within the EX feeder group in progressing to the executive level of the federal Public Service. We found that of the employees surveyed at the CCRA:

- 32% was not at all interested,
- 34% was somewhat interested, and
- 33% was very interested in becoming an executive.

These survey results for the CCRA did not differ significantly from the collective results for the other departments and agencies.

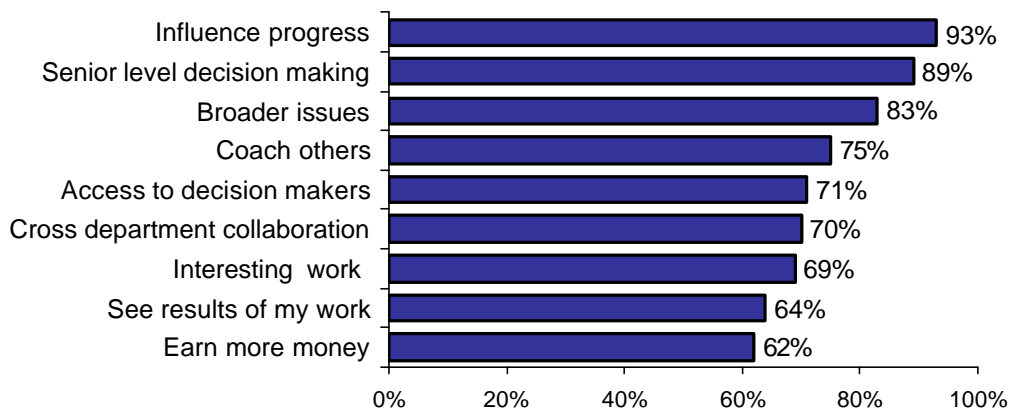
It is worth noting that among respondents at the CCRA who are more than ten years away from retirement interest in advancing to the EX level is considerably higher than among respondents who expect to retire in ten years or sooner (81% compared to 55% interested - see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Proximity to Retirement and Interest in EX Career



The roughly two thirds of the survey participants who were either ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ interested in pursuing an EX career provided a wide range of reasons to account for this interest (see Figure 5). They were most commonly motivated by a desire to influence progress (93%), to participate in senior level decision-making (89%), and to work on broader issues (83%). Interestingly, respondents were least likely to be encouraged by the salary levels offered at the EX level. Yet, this factor was still selected by 62% as a motivator for aspiring to become an executive.

Figure 5
Reasons for becoming an Executive (n=215)

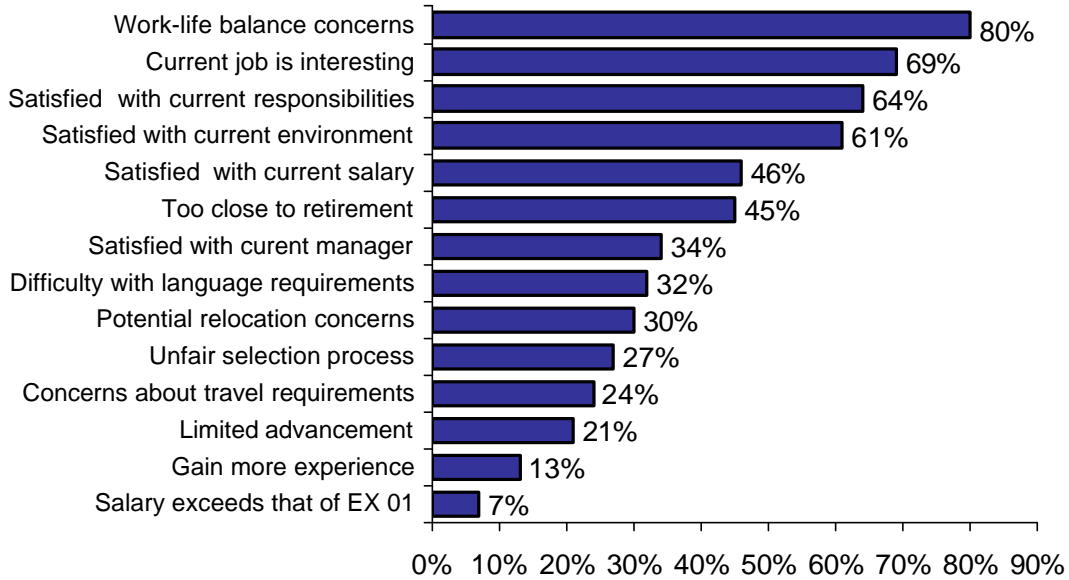


The heavy demands commonly believed to be associated with positions at the EX level had a particularly negative impact on interest in the executive career path. Figure 5 shows that four out of five (80%) survey participants from the CCRA not interested in advancing to the EX level, indicated their decision was highly influenced by concerns about being able to maintain a desirable balance between work and personal life.

Other factors that play an important role in the decision not to pursue an executive position relate to respondents’ degree of satisfaction with the position they hold presently. Thus, respondents not interested in pursuing an EX position often accounted for this lack of interest in terms of their

current job being interesting (69%), satisfaction with current responsibilities (64%), and satisfaction with current work environment (61%).

Figure 6
Reasons for not becoming an Executive (n=108)



3.4 Career Development

To ensure that those interested in progressing to the EX level are adequately equipped to deal with the demands of that career path, the issues of preparedness and professional development needs must be addressed.

3.4.1 Present Competencies

Asked how soon they believed they would be ready to work at the executive level, an impressive 39% of respondent employed at the CCRA indicated they felt they were ready at the time of the survey. About a quarter (23%) felt they would be ready in one to two years, and another quarter (25%) estimated the time frame as being three to five years. Only one in ten (10%) thought it would take longer than five years.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents ten or fewer years away from retirement (55%) felt they were ready to step into an executive position right away, whereas most respondents with more than ten years remaining until retirement (54%) felt they would be ready in one to five years. While perhaps not surprising these results are noteworthy as they will impact on the Agency’s ability to address short- and long-term executive succession needs.

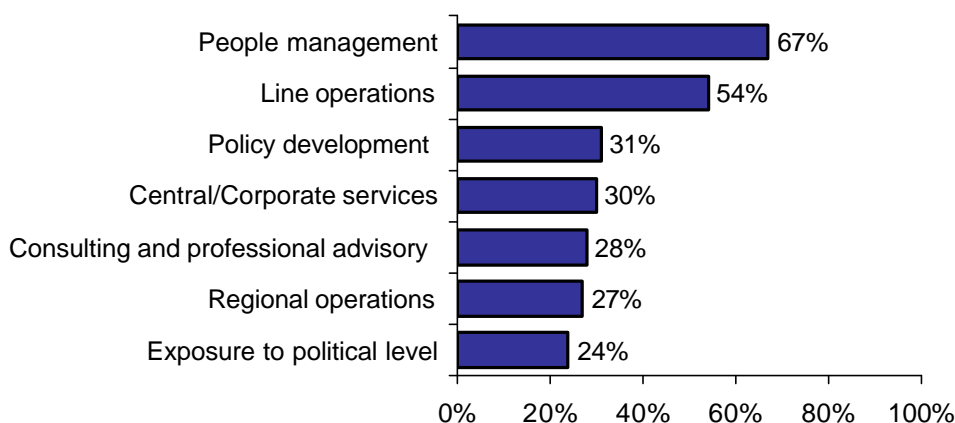
The proportion of women who considered themselves ready to work at the executive level right away was considerably smaller than that of men (23% compared to 47%). Respondents employed as auditors were similarly less likely to feel ready for an executive position than, for example, program administrators (33% compared to 42%).

In order to pinpoint more precisely the strengths and weaknesses of the respondents in relation to skills typically required of executives, we asked the survey participants to rate themselves on a number of experience factors. Figure 6 shows the proportion of respondents who indicated they had a high level of work experience in the areas listed.

People management was the area in which respondents from the CCRA were most likely to report substantial experience (67%). The nearly two-thirds of respondents at the CCRA who indicated that this was the case can be considered a very large proportion, especially in the context of the respective figure for all other respondents, which was 58%. In response to a separate survey question, two-thirds (66%) of the managers and professionals surveyed at the CCRA confirmed they managed or supervised employees at the time of the survey. Although a very similar proportion of other survey participants responded likewise (67%), respondents at the CCRA on average reported supervising a larger number of employees (15 compared to 12).

While a majority of employees working at the CCRA also indicated having a high level of experience in the area of line operations (54%), considerably more modest proportions reported having this degree of experience in policy development (31%), central or corporate services (30%), consulting and professional advisory activities (28%), regional operations (27%), and exposure to the political level (24%).

Figure 7
High Level of Work Experience (n=324)



For the latter two types of activities, we again found that the level of experience indicated by respondents at the CCRA differed markedly from that reported by managers and professionals employed elsewhere. In these cases, however, we found that respondents at the CCRA were less likely to indicate substantial experience. In the area of consulting and professional advisory activities, the figure for employees in other departments and agencies was nearly double that for employees at the CCRA (53% compared to 28%). In the area of exposure to the political level the respective figures were 39% and 24%.

In relation to work experience, the findings for the CCRA showed several noteworthy differences along gender lines which may explain, at least in part, the differences noted earlier in the extent to which women and men feel ready to work at the executive level. Women were less likely than men to indicate having substantial experience in the areas of people management (59% compared

to 71%), line operations (44% compared to 59%), and regional operations (22% compared to 30%). Conversely, women were more likely than men to be highly experienced in the areas of policy development (36% compared to 28%), and to work at the political level (29% compared to 22%).

As would be expected, the degree of experience survey participants reported varied considerably by occupational group. For example, respondents in program administration were much more likely than those employed in auditing to have substantial experience in policy development (47% versus 22%), regional operations (39% versus 18%) and work at the political level (35% versus 15%).

Overall, these findings demonstrate clearly, that despite their confidence in their ability to step into the role of executive, many managers and professionals are still lacking work experience in some of the responsibilities commonly carried by executives. In addition, the results indicate that work experience varies markedly among managers and professionals, and that segments of the EX feeder group are not uniformly prepared for executive level work.

3.4.2 Training and Development Needs

In today's work environment, continuous learning is recognized as of critically important. To fully take advantage of career opportunities, employees must consistently hone their skills in response to new and evolving demands and expectations. Our survey result suggests that managers and professionals are well aware of the importance of developing expertise and acquiring broader work experience.

Respondents at the CCRA identified a variety of areas as requiring significant development on their part. As Figure 7 shows, second official language skills topped this list, with more than half the respondents (57%) confirming they felt they needed to work on their proficiency in one of the second official languages.

This issue is of particular importance to managers and professionals interested in progressing to the executive level, as most executive positions presently call for a minimum of CBC levels of proficiency in the second official language.

Only 27% of managers and professionals at the CCRA confirmed they had been assessed as having CBC levels, and a nearly equal proportion (28%) indicated they had not met the CBC standard. These survey results provide some reason for concern. Not only does the proportion of respondents at the CCRA with CBC levels seem modest at face value, but furthermore, it does not compare favourably to the respective overall figure for the other departments and agencies (35%). Although we must keep in mind that the language skills of 45% respondents at the CCRA had never been tested compared to 36% of other respondents for whom this was the case, the issue of second language skills must be flagged for the CCRA.

The data demonstrate a particularly sharp contrast in the second language skills of respondents whose first official language was English, and those whose first official language was French. The proportions of the groups who had been confirmed as meeting the CBC standards were 11% and 84% respectively. In addition, it should be observed, however, that the respective proportions who had not been tested as of yet also differed strongly (56% compared to 4%).

Alarming, nearly half the respondents at the CCRA (46%) indicated they felt that they had experienced difficulties in advancing their career because of their language profile. This proportion is large in comparison the 34% of other respondents who felt likewise.

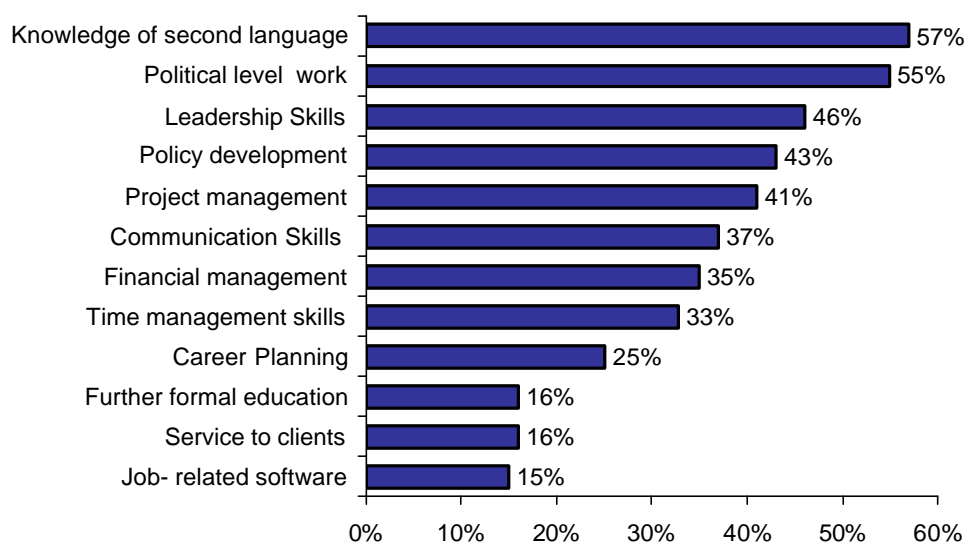
Not surprisingly - given the difference in the proportions of the two groups that had met the CBC requirements - respondents whose first official language was English were much more likely to report an adverse effect of their language profile on their career (53% compared to 20%).

CCRA employees in program administration were also especially likely to note the adverse effect of lacking second language skills. More than half of these respondents (54%), as compared to roughly two out of five respondents in other occupational groups (41%), indicated they felt their career advancement had suffered on account of this factor. Interestingly, respondents in programme administration were not less likely than other respondents at the CCRA to have obtained the CBC level.

Improving knowledge of working at the political level was also identified by a majority of employees surveyed at the CCRA (55%) as factor that they believed would contribute heavily to their career development. These findings are consistent with earlier observations regarding the lack of exposure respondents report having thus far had to work of this kind.

More than two out of five respondents identified as important the development of skills in the areas of leadership (46%), policy development (43%), and project management (41%).

Figure 8
Career Development Needs (n=321)



Women, who as noted, generally felt less sufficiently prepared for executive work than men, provided very clear indications as to their training and development needs. Thus, women were more likely than men to perceive a need to develop their skills in the areas of political level work (63% compared to 51%), leadership (55% compared to 40%), financial management (54%

compared to 26%), project management (52% compared to 36%), and time management (42% compared to 28%).

Auditors were more inclined than other respondents collectively to identify the need to develop their skills in the areas of leadership (55% compared to 42%) and career planning (33% compared to 22%), while program administrators more commonly cited a need to further their formal education (23% compared to 13% of other respondents at CCRA).

3.4.3 Training and Development Opportunities

In order to develop the competencies they are currently lacking, employees need to be exposed to suitable opportunities. Participation in language training and professional development programs can prove to be excellent investments for both employee and employer.

Language Training

In accordance with government policy, training in the official languages is to be made available to employees who do not already meet the language requirements of the positions they hold. Under certain circumstances employees are sent on full-time language training. In addition, in-house training offered on a part-time basis is commonly available, regardless of whether or not the employee holds in a bilingual position.

As noted earlier, knowledge of the second language was the number one area in which survey participants at the CCRA felt they needed to improve their skills.

In this context it is particularly worrisome that over a quarter of the managers and professionals surveyed at the CCRA (27%) indicated they had experienced difficulty in obtaining desired language training. This figure is high in comparison to that for other departments and agencies (19%). Respondents whose first official language was English as compared to French were considerably more likely to confirm they had found it difficult to gain access to language training (29% versus 10%).

The data also indicate that one in four of the respondents at the CCRA (25%) has taken training on a part-time basis, and nearly one in five (19%) has done so on a full-time basis. The majority of survey participants at the CCRA (55%), however, have never taken any language training in the federal Public Service at all.

Given the importance to the Public Service, and indeed to the government, of an effective bilingualism policy, not to mention the role bilingualism can play at the personal level in expanding career advancement opportunities, our survey findings suggest the need for urgency in addressing the issue of language training accessibility.

Development Programs

A number of programs offered in the Public Service are designed specifically to assist employees in gaining the learning experiences they need in order to reach their career goals.⁷ In our survey we asked about interest in these programs. Our findings suggest interest varied considerably, and

⁷ A description of these programs can be found on the following Public Service Commission web-site: http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/learn-appren_e.htm

while, for example, one in three respondents at CCRA (32%) indicated interest in the Career Assignment Program (32%), fewer than one in seven (13%) showed interested in either the Assistant Deputy Minister Pre-Qualified Program or in a professional program (e.g. CMA).

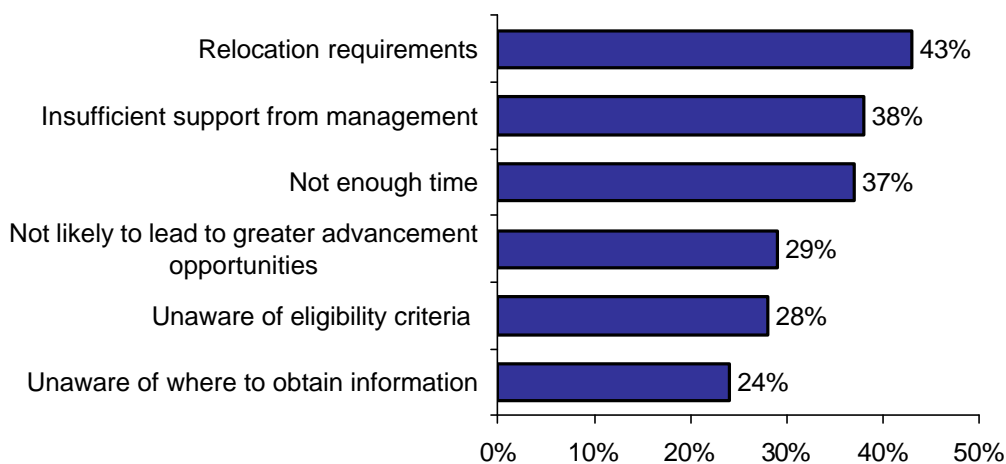
Between employees at the CCRA and other departments and agencies, interest differed considerably for the International Exchange Program (32% versus 45%), Interchange Canada (27% versus 39%), and the Special Departmental Program (25% versus 34%).

We found that only small minorities had submitted applications to these programs. The program in which respondents were most frequently interested, the Career Assignment Program, also was the program most often applied for (by 10%).

The survey results show that a number of barriers prevent employees from taking part in development programs. For respondents at the CCRA, the most important problem in accessing the programs is location. Two in five survey participants indicated that relocation requirements had a lot to do with their lack of participation (43%). Development programs are most often offered in the National Capital Region (NCR). Consequently, we were not surprised to find that respondents who worked elsewhere in the country were considerably more likely than respondents employed within the NCR to identify relocation requirements as a major obstacle to their participation (60% compared to 36%).

Many survey participants at the CCRA also identified insufficient support from management (38%) and lack of time (37%) as factors hindering their participation. However, lack of time was less likely to be cited as a factor by respondents at the CCRA than by others (half of whom felt it had played a major role 51%). Survey participants at the CCRA were in addition less inclined than other respondents to confirm the negative impact of lack of awareness of where to find information about the programs (23% compared to 37%), and lack of awareness of the eligibility requirements (28% compared to 45%).

Figure 9
Factors Limiting Participation in Development Programs (n=324)



4.0 Conclusion

The survey results for the CCRA provide us with valuable insight into the Agency's current executive feeder group.

The majority of the managers and professionals surveyed at the CCRA were men with English as first official language and in the 35 to 54 age range. More than half were employed in the occupational groups of program administration and auditing, and on average they had worked in the Public Service for 20.0 years. Most had spent their entire career at the Agency. Half of the respondents planned to retire within ten years but very few intended to leave the Public Service for other reasons.

It is clear that there is ample interest among managers and professionals at the CCRA in advancing to an executive level position, particularly among individuals more than ten years away from retirement. Furthermore, the majority of respondents felt they would be ready soon, if not immediately for executive level work. However, the survey results also indicated that issues pertaining to career development opportunities need to be addressed.

Despite their enthusiasm and eagerness for career advancement, many respondents pinpointed specific skill and experience factors they felt they still needed to develop further in order to expand the scope of their career opportunities. The areas they most commonly perceived as requiring further development, such as knowledge of a second language and knowledge of political level work, are areas of particular importance to those interested in progressing to the executive level.

The results furthermore indicate that training and development programmes designed to broaden employees' skills and range of work experience can be difficult to access. The fact that 27% of the respondents at CCRA indicated having experienced difficulty obtaining language training is of particular concern given that only about one in four managers and professionals at CCRA has thus far been confirmed as meeting the second language requirements for executive positions.

Attending to the training and career development needs of managers and professionals at the CCRA is therefore essential. A strong commitment to this issue would undoubtedly greatly enhance the ability of the Agency to manage the challenges ahead in the area of executive succession.