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Executive Succession Reconsidered: Planning for Public Service Renewal

Focus on Environment Canada

Nadia Al-Shaikhly
Rolina van Gaalen

Labour Market Analysis Unit
Research Directorate
Public Service Commission of Canada

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Canada

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4
2.0 METHODOLOGY	5
3.0 RESULTS	6
3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE.....	6
3.2 CAREER PROFILE	7
3.3 CAREER GOALS AND INTENTIONS	8
3.3.1 <i>Career Priorities</i>	8
3.3.2 <i>Intentions for Leaving the Public Service</i>	9
3.3.3 <i>Interest in an Executive Career</i>	10
3.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT	12
3.4.1 <i>Present Competencies</i>	12
3.4.2 <i>Training and Development Needs</i>	13
3.4.3 <i>Training and Development Opportunities</i>	14
3.4.4 <i>Language Training</i>	14
3.4.5 <i>Development Programs</i>	15
4.0 CONCLUSION	17

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 143 managers and professionals employed at Environment Canada. The following are the highlights of the results for Environment Canada:

- The most notable differences between the demographic profiles of respondents from Environment Canada and respondents from the rest of the Public Service pertain to educational background. Managers and professionals at Environment Canada were found to be more highly educated, and a much larger proportion of respondents from Environment Canada indicated Mathematics or Physical Science had been their field of study.
- The occupational structure at Environment Canada is clearly distinct from that in the overall Public Service. In comparison to the rest of the Public Service, managers and professionals at Environment Canada are significantly less likely to be employed in occupational groups that comprise the traditional EX feeder groups.
- The most common career priorities of the managers and professionals surveyed at Environment Canada were taking on a special or acting assignment (41%), and obtaining a higher position (41%). However, the level of interest in attaining a higher position among respondents is lower at Environment Canada than in the rest of the Public Service, where 55% identified this as a higher priority.
- Respondents were evenly split between those who intended to retire within the next 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%).

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 on the following location on the Internet: http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/research/demographics/communities/ex-demo-ccmd_e.htm.

- The level of interest in an executive career was somewhat lower at Environment Canada than in the rest of the rest of the Public Service. Nevertheless, the majority of survey participants at Environment Canada did indicate an interest. At Environment Canada, 43% were ‘somewhat’ interested and 21% were ‘very’ interested. The respective figures for the rest of the Public Service were 39% and 35%. Respondents at Environment Canada who plan to retire in more than ten years were more likely to be ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ interested in pursuing an Ex-level position than respondents retiring within ten (84% compared to 48%).
- The majority of respondents felt they would be ready to work at the executive level right away (38%) or within one to two years (24%). Nevertheless, many managers and professionals lack some of the types of work experiences that are essential competencies for aspiring executives.
- More exposure to political level work topped the respondents’ list of learning needs (57%), followed by improving second official language skills (50%). While 83% of the respondents with French as first language confirmed having met the CBC standard of bilingualism that is generally required of executives, only 13% of respondents with English as first language did so. Over one quarter of the managers and professionals (28%) felt they had experienced difficulties in advancing their career as a consequence of their language profile. One in five (18%) indicated they had experienced difficulty in obtaining language training.

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. Increasing 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 Canada's employers will feel the impact of the resulting demographic shift acutely, 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 insight into the segment of the internal workforce, that 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 Environment Canada.

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 438 employees at Environment Canada who were invited to participate in the survey, 143 chose to do so, thus resulting in a 33% response rate for the department, which is slightly higher than the overall response rate for the survey.

3.0 Results

3.1 Demographic Profile

The survey results provide us with a useful snapshot of some of the basic characteristics of the employees we consulted at Environment Canada. 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 the demographic profile of respondents at Environment Canada in many ways resembles that of survey participants from all the other departments and agencies together.

Figure 1
Demographic Profile

	Environment Canada		Other Departments/Agencies	
All respondents	143	100%	2507	100%
Age				
25-34	4	3%	198	8%
35-44	42	29%	701	28%
45-54	66	46%	1145	46%
> 54	28	20%	84	16%
EE Groups				
Women	37	26%	907	36%
Visible Minorities	10	7%	198	8%
Aboriginal Peoples	*	*	60	2%
Persons with Disabilities	*	*	84	3%
First Official Language				
English	112	78%	1881	75%
French	30	21%	617	25%
Education				
Below Bachelor's Degree	13	9%	535	21%
Bachelor's Degree	55	39%	800	32%
Above Bachelor's Degree	75	53%	1158	46%

*To protect the privacy of respondents, results are not reported for groups with fewer than four respondents in total.

Nearly half (46%) of the 143 employees at Environment Canada who participated in the survey were 45 to 54 years of age and over one quarter (29%) were 35 to 44 years of age. One fifth (20%) of participants were over 54 years of age, while a small proportion comprised the 25 to 34 age group (3%). The average age of the managers and professionals surveyed at Environment Canada was 47.9, compared to 46.9 in the rest of the PS.

Notably, just one quarter (26%) of Environment Canada respondents were women. Women were on average younger than men (45.1 years compared to 48.8 years of age). The other designated employment equity groups constituted small minorities, with members of visible minorities representing 7%, and Aboriginal Peoples and persons with disabilities each representing 1% of the survey participants from Environment Canada. Approximately four out of five Environment Canada respondents (78%) indicated English was their first official language.

Of the information captured in Figure 1, a notable difference between the Environment Canada community and the other survey participants concerns education. Relative to others, respondents from Environment Canada tended to have an overall higher level of educational attainment. No fewer than 92% of the respondents from Environment Canada, compared to 78% of respondents in the rest of the PS, were in possession of a degree at the bachelor's level or above.

The educational profiles of the two groups differed in another respect. Among employees with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, respondents from Environment Canada were especially likely to have studied Mathematics and Physical Sciences (43%), and also Agriculture and Biological Sciences (22%). Only one in ten (10%) of the respondents in the rest of the Public Service had specialized in each of these fields.

3.2 Career Profile

Given the age profile of the respondents at Environment Canada, 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, Environment Canada employees had worked in the FPS for 20.6 years, as compared to the respondents from other departments and agencies who on average had spent 17.9 years in the FPS.

The promotions and lateral transfers that make up the career histories of managers and professionals at Environment Canada have occurred primarily within the context of the department itself. Of respondents at Environment Canada, fewer than half (43%) had worked in more than one department or agency during the course of their career.

Asked to identify the functional community they most closely identified with, three in five at Environment Canada respondents (62%) - compared to fewer than one in five (18%) of other respondents - selected the Science and Technology community (including research and development). Smaller, but significant minorities at Environment Canada chose the policy, and regulatory and inspection communities (13% and 10% respectively).

Respondents at Environment Canada were predominately employed in the occupational groups of physical science (PC – 30%), meteorology (ME – 20%), scientific research (SE– 10%) and economics, sociology and statistics (ES – 8%). 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 Environment Canada were program administration (PM - 18%); economics, sociology and statistics (ES - 12%); administrative services (AS - 9%); and commerce (CO - 9%).

The respondents at Environment Canada were considerably less concentrated in the National Capital Region than others (NCR - 37% versus 66%). In addition, one in three respondents at

Environment Canada (33%) worked on the Quebec side of the NCR area, while the one in four (25%) worked outside the NCR but within in the province of Ontario.

In the past, newly appointed executives in the federal Public Service 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 Due to the type of work at Environment Canada, only 27% of respondents hold positions in the traditional EX feeder groups, versus 59% of respondents in the rest of the FPS. Women, who, constituted a minority of the managers and professionals surveyed at Environment (26%), held 42% of the traditional Ex feeder position, and only 20% of non traditional Ex Feeder positions.

The level of the positions occupied by respondents at the Environment Canada tends to be comparable to that of respondents in the rest of the public service. As Figure 2 shows, one in two respondents working for Environment Canada is employed at the lowest EX feeder level (EX minus 2 – 50%).

Figure 2
EX Feeder Level

EX Feeder Level	Environment Canada		Other departments/Agencies	
EX minus 2	71	50%	1226	49%
EX minus 1	55	39%	937	37%
EX equivalent	17	12%	344	14%

3.3 Career Goals and Intentions

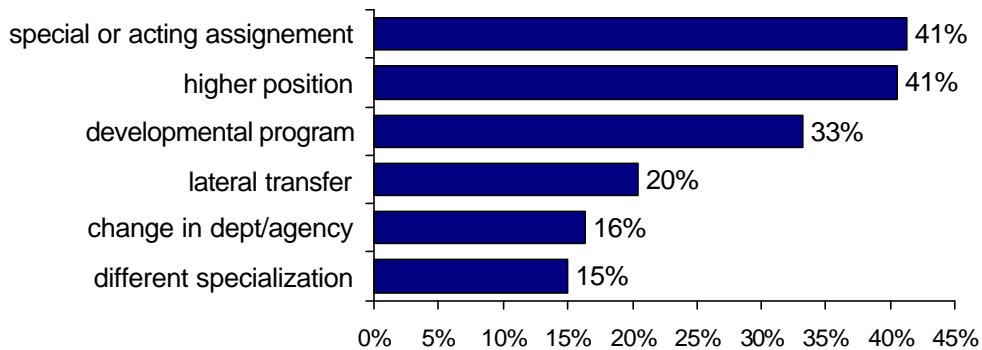
The survey included a number of questions designed to assess career interests and goals, as well as the motivations behind the career choices respondents hope to make. Specifically, the survey assessed career priorities; intentions for leaving the Public Service; and the level of, and reasons behind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

3.3.1 Career Priorities

Managers and professionals at Environment Canada are eager to move to a higher (41%), or special or acting position (41% - see figure 3). However, respondents at Environment Canada were less likely to rate attaining a high level position as a higher priority than respondents in the rest of the Public Service (55%).

⁶ Serson, *Demographics*.

Figure 3
Career Priorities (n= 143)



Respondents were noticeably less interested in making a career move that did not represent a promotion. Approximately one third of respondents working at Environment Canada considered it a priority to participate in a developmental program (33%). While one in five would accept a lateral transfer (20%), only one in six would be interested in changing departments (16%), or taking up a different area of specialization (15%).

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 20% of the respondents working at Environment Canada were over the age of 54, and nearly half (46%) were in the 45 to 54 age range. Hence our particular interest is in the time frame respondents have in mind for retirement. We found that 31% intended to retire 1 to 5 years; 19% in 5 to 10 years; 22% in 11 to 15 years; 13% in 16 to 20 years, and 15% 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 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 department. 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 Environment Canada.

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

3.3.3 Interest in an Executive Career

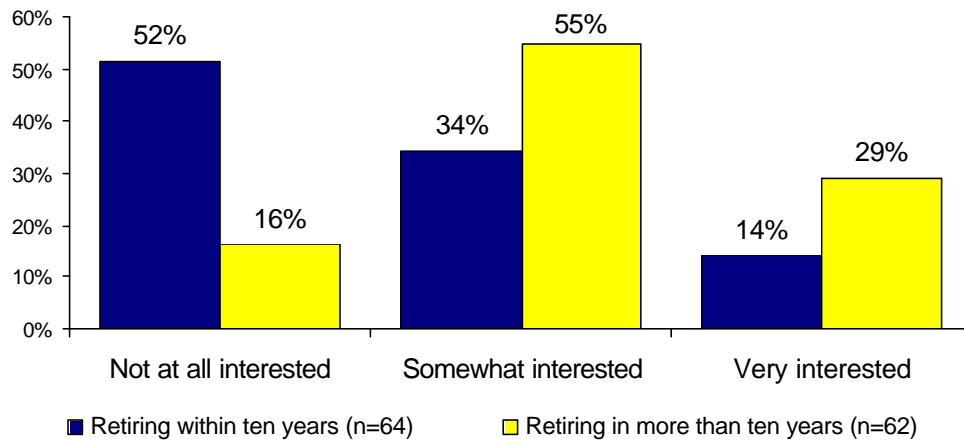
One of the central issues this survey was designed to address, concerns the level of interest within the EX feeder group in progressing to the executive level of the federal Public Service. We found that of the employees surveyed at the Environment Canada:

- 36% were not at all interested (compared 27% to the rest of the Public Service)
- 43% were somewhat interested (compared to 39% in the rest of the Public Service)
- 21% were very interested in becoming an executive (compared to 35% in the rest of the Public Service)

Compared to the rest of the Public Service respondents, these results show a less definite interest among respondents at Environment Canada in executive level positions.

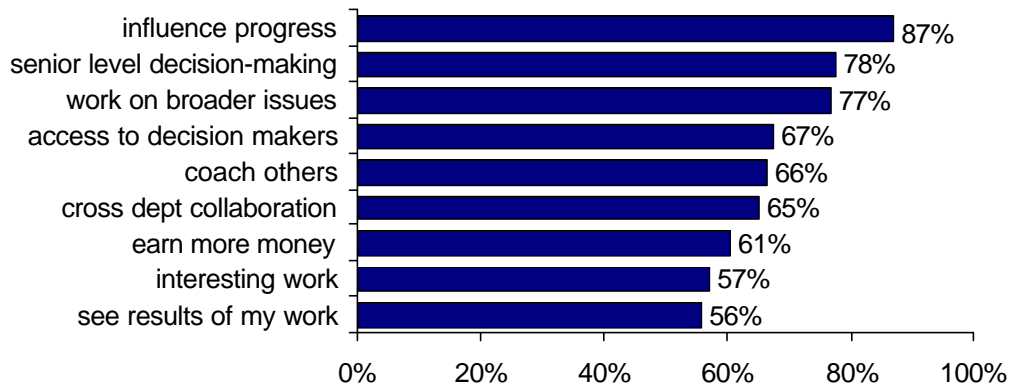
Respondents more than ten years from retirement are more likely to be somewhat or very interesting in advancing to the EX level (84%) than those who are plan to retire within the next 10 years (48%). (see Figure 4)

Figure 4
Proximity to Retirement and Interest in EX Career



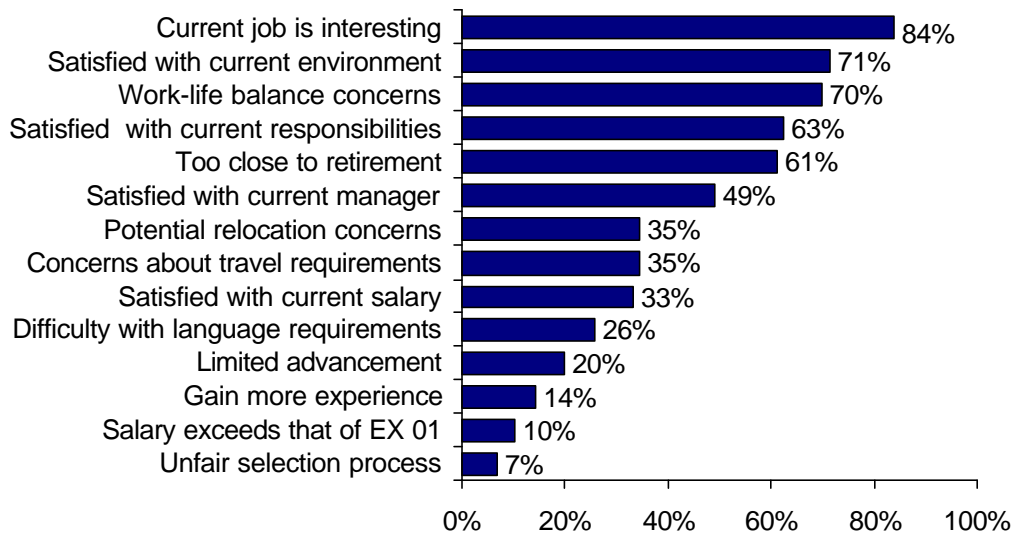
The roughly two thirds of the survey participants who were either ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ interested in pursuing an EX career provided a wide range of reasons to account for this interest (see Figure 5). They were most commonly motivated by a desire to influence progress (87%), to participate in senior level decision-making (78%), to work on broader issues (77%).

Figure 5
Reasons for becoming an Executive (N=86)



For those participants who were not interested in advancing to the EX level, four out of five (84%), cited their current job being interesting as the reason for their lack of interest in advancing to an EX level (see figure 6). This was especially true for women (93%). The second most common reason given by Environment Canada respondents for not wishing to advance to the executive level was satisfaction with their current work environment (71%), and the third most common reason pertained to work-life balance concerns (70%). Women were especially inclined to note this factor as well (79%).

Figure 6
Reasons for not becoming an Executive (N=56)



Two other factors that play an important role in the decision not to pursue an executive position relate to respondents' satisfaction with current responsibilities (63%), and being too close to retirement (61%).

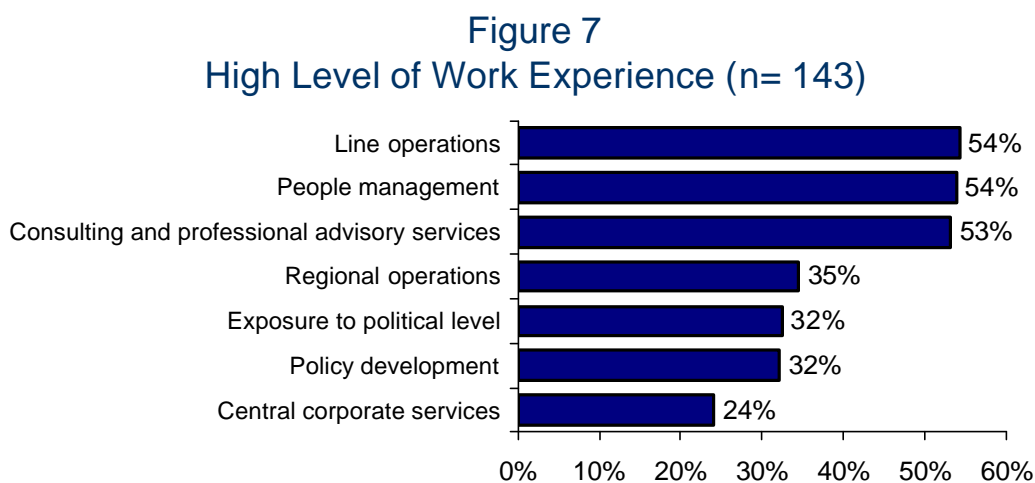
3.4 Career Development

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 38% of respondent employed at Environment Canada indicated they felt ready at the time of the survey, compared to 42% in the rest of the Public Service. One in four (24%) indicated that they would be ready in one to two years, and an equal proportion (25%) within three to five years. Just over one in ten (14%) thought it would take longer than five years.

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 7 shows the proportion of respondents who indicated they had a high level of work experience in the areas listed.



Line operations or management of major operations, and people management were the areas in which respondents from Environment Canada were most likely to report a high level of experience (54%). In response to a separate survey question, seven in ten managers and professionals at Environment Canada (71%) confirmed they managed or supervised employees at the time of the survey, compared to 66% of other survey participants.

While a majority of employees working at Environment Canada also indicated having a high level of experience in the area of consulting and professional advisory activities (53%), considerably more modest proportions reported having this degree of experience in regional operations (35%), exposure to the political level (32%), policy development (32%), and central or corporate services (24%).

For the latter type of activity, we found that the level of experience indicated by respondents at the Environment Canada differed considerably from that reported by managers and professionals employed elsewhere (24% compared 34%).

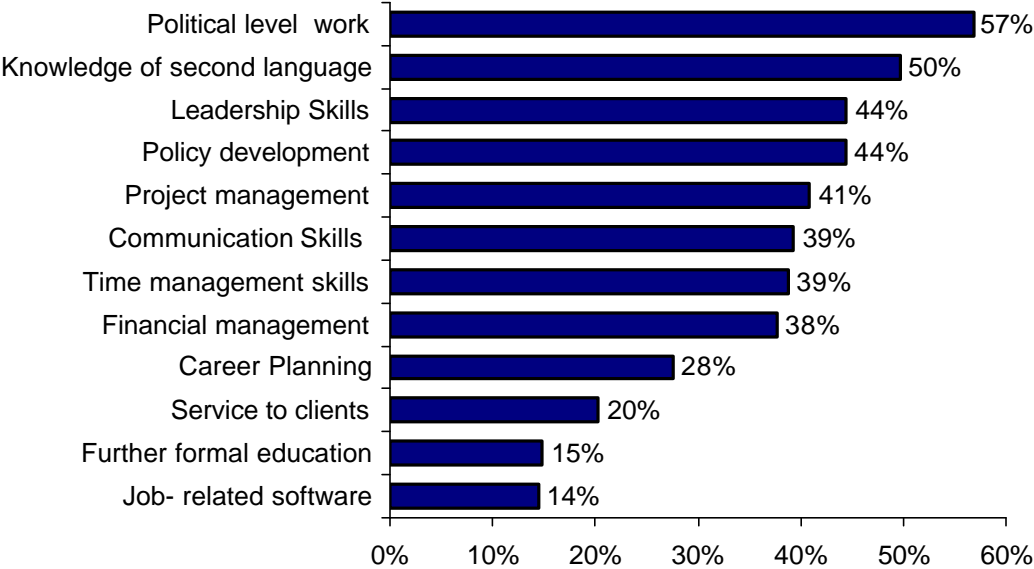
The findings for Environment Canada showed several noteworthy differences along gender lines in relation to work experience. Women were less likely than men to indicate having substantial experience in the areas of people management (46% compared to 57%), line operations (36% compared to 60%), and regional operations (28% compared to 37%). Conversely, women were more likely than men to be highly experienced in the areas of central corporate services (42% compared to 18%), work at the political level (43% compared to 29%) and policy development (38% compared to 30%).

Overall, these findings demonstrate 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 critically important. To 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.

Figure 8
Career Development Needs (N=142)



Respondents at Environment Canada identified a variety of areas as requiring development on their part. As Figure 8 shows, improving knowledge of working at the political level was identified by a majority of employees surveyed at Environment Canada (57%), as a factor that they believed would contribute 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.

Knowledge of a second official language was also a main concern for half the respondents in the department (50%). 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 29% of managers and professionals at Environment Canada confirmed they had been assessed as having CBC levels, and a nearly equal proportion (27%) indicated they had not met the CBC standard. The proportion of respondents at Environment Canada with CBC levels is somewhat lower than the respective figure for the other departments and agencies (34%). These survey results provide reason for concern, although we should point out that the language skills of 44% respondents at Environment Canada had never been tested

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 13% and 83% respectively. In addition, it should be observed, however, that the respective proportions who had not been tested also differed strongly (56% compared to less than one percent).

Over one quarter (28%) of respondents at Environment Canada indicated they felt that they had experienced difficulties in advancing their career because of their language profile. 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 (30% compared to 20%).

With respect to other skills, more than two in five respondents identified as important the development of skills in the areas of leadership (44%), policy development (44%), and project management (40%).

In general, men were more likely than woman to perceive a need to develop their skills in most areas. The difference between men and women was the greatest in relation to project management (45% compared to 30%), and time management (44% compared to 24%).

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.

3.4.4 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 one area in which survey participants at Environment Canada felt they needed to improve their skills. However, in contrast to the rest of

the Public Service, manager and professional surveyed at Environment Canada were less likely to indicate having experienced difficulty in obtaining second language training (18% compared to 26%).

The data also indicate that 25% of the respondents at Environment Canada has taken language training on a part-time basis, and 15% has done so on a full-time basis. The majority of survey participants at Environment Canada (60%), however, have never taken any language training in the federal Public Service at all.

3.4.5 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 a special interest in exchange programs. Approximately one third of respondents at Environment Canada indicated interest in the International Exchange Program (36%), the Interchange Canada program (33%), and Special Departmental Program (31%). Only one in ten (10%) showed interest in the Assistant Deputy Minister Pre-Qualified Program, however about one in four (24%) showed interest in a professional program (e.g. CMA).

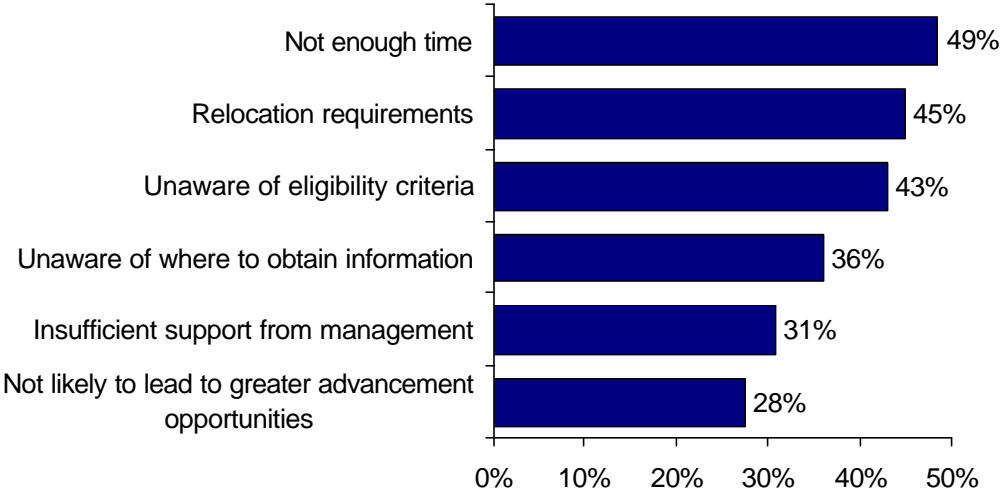
We found that only small minorities had submitted applications to any of the programs. The Career Assignment Program was the program most commonly applied for (by 13%).

The survey results show that a number of barriers prevent employees from taking part in development programs. For respondents at Environment Canada, the most important problem in accessing the programs is time. One in two identified insufficient time as an obstacle to participation in these programs (49%). More than two in five survey participants indicated that relocation requirements were responsible for their lack of participation (45%). 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 barrier to their participation (52% compared to 33%).

Many survey participants at Environment Canada also identified being unaware of criteria and information on the programs as factors hindering their participation. Over two in five respondents were unaware of the eligibility criteria (43%), and more than one third was unaware of where to obtain information about the programs (36%).

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.

Figure 9
Factors Limiting Participation in Development Programs (N=136)



4.0 Conclusion

The survey results for Environment Canada provide us with valuable insight into the department's current executive feeder group, and into the ways these results differ from those for the overall Public Service. Differences in the response patterns derive mainly from the unique occupational structure at Environment Canada, which in comparison to the rest of the Public Service, exhibits a relatively high concentration of Science and Technology related jobs, and correspondingly, a lower representation of managers and professionals in occupational groups that comprise the traditional EX feeder groups.

Despite these differences, there is a high level of interest among managers and professionals at Environment Canada in advancing to an executive level position, albeit less common than within the rest of the Public Service. Individuals more than ten years away from retirement are particularly likely to be interested.

The survey results also indicates that issues pertaining to training and development need to be addressed, particularly in relation to opportunities for gaining experience in work at the political level, and improving second language skills.

The fact that one in four respondents at Environment Canada indicated having experienced difficulty obtaining language training, is of particular concern given that only 29% of managers and professionals at Environment Canada 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 Environment Canada is therefore essential. A strong commitment in this area would undoubtedly greatly enhance the ability of the department to manage the challenges ahead in the area of executive succession.