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# Examining the Personnel Community A Focus on PE-04s

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# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	3
<b>2.0 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 POPULATION AND CENSUS.....	5
2.2 SURVEY RESPONDENTS PROFILE .....	5
<b>3.0 RESULTS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1 COMPETENCY PROFILE .....	7
3.2 INTEREST IN EXECUTIVE POSITIONS .....	7
3.2.1 <i>Reasons for wanting to become an Executive</i> .....	8
3.2.2 <i>Reasons for not wanting to become an Executive</i> .....	9
3.3 REQUIRED COMPETENCIES FOR EXECUTIVES .....	9
3.4 COMMUNICATION METHODS.....	10
3.5 LEARNING METHODS .....	11
3.5.1 <i>Learning Barriers</i> .....	12
3.6 INTENTIONS TO LEAVE THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE .....	13
3.7 CHALLENGES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT.....	14
<b>4.0 CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>15</b>

## Executive Summary

The Human Resources (HR) community across the federal Public Service (FPS), like other functional communities, is facing future staffing challenges with the retirement of older employees. In order to prepare for such workforce changes a better understanding of the career plans and career development needs of middle and senior PEs was necessary. This report was commissioned by the Human Resources Community Secretariat (HRCS) and is based on research conducted by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission. The findings are based on responses by 114 PE-04s over the months of February and March of 2002.

The survey identified numerous findings important both to succession planning and career development:

- Fully 43% of the PE-04s surveyed indicated that they were somewhat or very interested in advancing to executive positions while 50% indicated that they were not interested and 7% did not know.
- The opportunity to influence progress towards a goal was the main reason for interest in advancing to an executive position. The main reason for a lack of interest in advancing to the executive level was because of concerns with work-life balance.
- PE-04s reported greater experience in people management and central/corporate services, but less experience of working at the political level and in policy-making.
- Respondents identified very good leadership skills, considerable management skills, and comprehensive experience in the HR field as the three most important competencies necessary to become an executive in HR.
- The communication method most useful for respondents in order to remain informed about career and development opportunities, and HR initiatives in general was the HR Connexions Website and other Internet sites.
- Respondents expressed the greatest interest in the Career Assignment Program and work assignments as career development activities. The main reason limiting respondents' participation in career development programs was lack of time.
- Approximately one-tenth (11%) of respondents planned to leave the federal Public Service for reasons other than retirement while 74% planned to remain until retirement.
- The main challenge in Human Resources Management (HRM) identified by participants was managing the implementation of HR modernisation.

This report provides an understanding of the career intentions and interests of PE-04s that will support the executive succession planning required to address the future staffing challenges of the Human Resources community in the federal Public Service.

# 1.0 Introduction

In order to better understand the career plans and challenges facing the Human Resources (HR) community of the federal Public Service, a census of middle and senior employees in the Personnel Administration (PE) group and Administration Services (AS) group working in compensation was undertaken in February and March of 2002. Accordingly, all eligible respondents were invited to participate in the survey – 1163 in total. In all, 385 completed questionnaires were received rendering a response rate of 33%. Of this total, 114 (30% n=385) were PE-04s.

This report addresses three key areas of concern to the senior HR community:

- career plans, including interest in executive positions and retirement
- career development
- perceived challenges facing HR

Indeed, PE-04s have different attitudes and perceptions than senior HR staff on many issues such as retirement, promotions, and the future of HRM, which may be due to their younger average age, higher education levels and high Employment Equity groups representation. A separate report examines the survey responses of PE-05 and PE06s<sup>1</sup>, which also differ from other HR staff as a result of their own demographics. The issues examined in this report build upon previous research findings and will contribute significantly to future strategies on succession planning and career development<sup>2</sup>.

## 1.1 Background

A 1998 Treasury Board Secretariat study revealed that the demographic profile of the HR community is largely comprised of women and older workers. In fact, women comprised 70% of PEs<sup>3</sup>. Both male (32.8%) and female (17.4%) PEs were more likely than the rest of the Public Service (14.1%) to have 25 or more years of pensionable service<sup>4</sup>. During 1993-1998 the average age of PEs increased by 2.5 years from 41.9 to 44.4, surpassing both the average age increase (1.8 years) and the average age (42.3) for the total Public Service<sup>5</sup>.

The average age of PEs will have implications for retirements. The percentage of PEs identified as eligible to retire between 1998 and 2008 was 47%, compared to 35% for the total Public

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<sup>1</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*. (Ottawa: Research Directorate, Public Service Commission, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> See Rothwell, W. J. (1994) *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within*. New York: AMACOM.

See Ezzedeen, S. R., Swiercz, P. M. (2001) From Sorcery to Science: AHP, a Powerful New Tool for Executive Selection. *Human Resource Planning*, vol. 24.3, 15-26.

<sup>3</sup> Analysis, Research and Compensation Group, Human Resource Branch, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (1998). *Demographic Study of the Human Resource Community Personnel Administration Group*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

<sup>4</sup> IBID

<sup>5</sup> IBID

Service<sup>6</sup>. Evidently, this will have implications not only for PE-04s eligible to retire, but also for promotions to senior positions.

The percentage of PEs below 35 years of age (9.1%) was also much lower than the figure for the total Public Service (19.9%)<sup>7</sup>. As a result, steps have been taken to address the age demographic of PEs, which include the introduction of a Human Resources Development Program (HRDP)<sup>8</sup>. HRDP has the broad mandate of renewing and developing the HR community across government by supporting a centrally managed recruitment process for external recruits. Participants enter at the PE-01 level and graduate at the PE-03 level after three years. A commitment was made from 23 departments to hire 100 new PE-01s from the 2001-2002 Post Secondary Recruitment campaign, with an emphasis on recruiting 30-40% visible minorities.<sup>9</sup> To date, approximately 200 recruits have entered the program since 1999.

Human Resources across the federal government have entered a period of transition. The Task Force on Modernising Human Resources Management (MHRM), announced by the Prime Minister in April 2001, is focusing on legislative amendments to the HR framework that will likely be tabled in the House of Commons in the fall of 2002. Intermediate HR personnel will experience the long-term impacts of modernisation, both as employees and later, as they are promoted to senior positions, as managers.

A current snapshot of the experiences and career plans of middle HR staff will enable key HRM issues to be identified, thus leading to the generation of ideas on how to best approach the improvement of ongoing and emerging areas of concern.

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<sup>6</sup> Analysis, Research and Compensation Group, Human Resource Branch, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (1998). *Demographic Study of the Human Resource Community Personnel Administration Group*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

<sup>7</sup> IBID.

<sup>8</sup> Human Resource Community Secretariat. (2002, March). *Human Resources Recruitment and Development Program for New HR Professionals – Description and Course Calendar*. Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat [On-line], Available Internet: [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hr\\_connexions\\_rh/sigs/HRCS/Renewal\\_Initiatives/HR\\_Prof\\_Dev\\_Prog/siglist\\_e.html](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/hr_connexions_rh/sigs/HRCS/Renewal_Initiatives/HR_Prof_Dev_Prog/siglist_e.html)

<sup>9</sup> Human Resources Community Secretariat, *Creating Synergy*, April 2002.

## 2.0 Methodology

The survey results of the PE-04 group, excluding those working as compensation managers, are based on the responses given by 114 public servants to a questionnaire administered during a three-week period in the months of February and March 2002. The Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission, in collaboration with the Human Resource Community Secretariat, designed the questionnaire. The questionnaire, which was composed of some 59 items, covered a wide range of issues including participants' interests in becoming executives in the Public Service, their retirement plans, and their career development.

The survey was conducted over the Internet and by mail. The polling firm Ipsos-Reid, under contract with the Public Service Commission, administered the web-based survey. All potential participants of the survey with identified e-mail addresses were sent letters of invitation by electronic mail soliciting them to participate in the survey, personal identification numbers in order for them to have access to the questionnaire posted on the web, and the Internet address of the survey. A number of reminder notices were sent by e-mail.

## 2.1 Population and Census

The population for this survey consisted of all level four federal public servants in the Personal Administration group (PE), excluding those working as compensation managers. A complete list of these employees, regulated by the Public Service Employment Act, was attempted in order to identify all e-mail addresses for the purpose of administering the web-based survey. Due to the difficulty of maintaining current employee lists, and especially e-mail addresses, 1163 public servants were included to participate in the survey.

## 2.2 Survey Respondents Profile

The percentage of females among the 114 PE-04 respondents was more than double that of the percentage of males. Indeed, 69% of respondents were female while 32% were male. In comparison to previous demographic studies concerning the Human Resources community<sup>10</sup> these facts should come as no surprise. Yet in the *Survey of Managers and Professionals*<sup>11</sup> conducted in the greater federal Public Service, females represented only 36% of respondents.

In terms of Employment Equity groups, Aboriginal persons (3%), visible minorities (7%) and persons with disabilities (9%) were all represented<sup>12</sup>. The employment equity group representation of the PE-05 and PE-06 respondents was very similar as the following indicates: Aboriginal persons (4%), visible minorities (3%) and persons with disabilities (10%).

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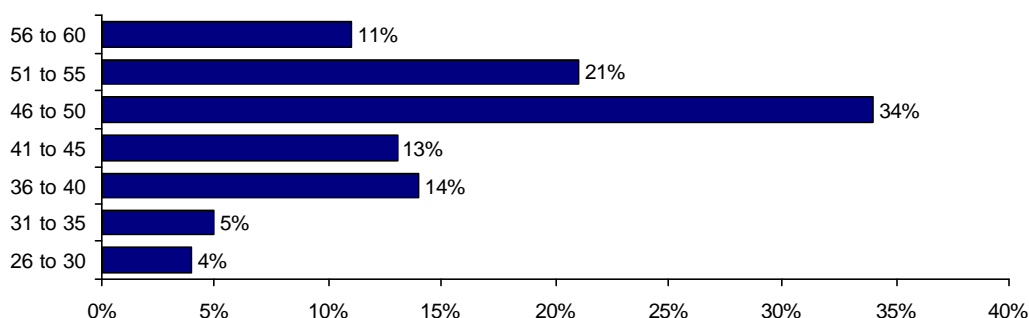
<sup>10</sup> Analysis, Research and Compensation Group, Human Resource Branch, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (1998). *Demographic Study of the Human Resource Community Personnel Administration Group*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

<sup>11</sup> Preliminary data from the Survey of Managers and Professionals conducted in the winter of 2002 by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission of Canada.

<sup>12</sup> For comparisons of these figures see: Analysis, Research and Compensation Group, Human Resource Branch, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (1998). *Demographic Study of the Human Resource Community Personnel Administration Group*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

The age profile indicates that the majority of the PE-04s surveyed (34%) are in the 46 to 50 age group (Graph 1). The average age of survey participants was 47 years old. Only 4% identified themselves as part of the 26 to 30 age category and 5% as part of the 31 to 35 age category. As to the middle age groups, 14% and 13% of respondents indicated that they were in the 36 to 40 and 41 to 45 age categories, respectively. Finally, 21% of participants identified themselves as being part of the 51 to 55 year old age category, while 11% identified themselves as part of the 56 to 60 category.

**Graph 1: Age profile of Respondents (N=114)**



The majority of PE-04s (74%) are employed in the National Capital Regions (Ontario and Quebec), with only 26% working in other regions. Similarly, 64% of respondents to the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* indicated that they worked in the NCR. Over half (57%) of respondents identified English as their first official language and 43% identified French. These findings concerning first official language are similar to those found in a previous study of the Human Resources Community<sup>13</sup>.

With regards to the education profile of the respondents, a minority reported having a high school diploma (18%), a diploma or certificate from a community college, a CEGEP or a technical institute (11%), or a university certificate or diploma below the bachelor's degree (11%). The remaining majority (60%) reported holding a university degree (including post-graduate studies). Comparable education levels of federal public servants in the Human Resources Community can be found in a study released in 1999 by the United States Office of Personnel Management<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, 79% of respondents to the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* indicated holding a university degree (including post-graduate qualifications), which is as one would expect given that professionals have higher educational qualifications than other employee groups.

<sup>13</sup> Analysis, Research and Compensation Group, Human Resource Branch, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. (1998). *Demographic Study of the Human Resource Community Personnel Administration Group*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

<sup>14</sup> United States Office of Personnel Management. (1999). *Federal Human Resources Employment Trends: A Comprehensive Study of the Federal Human Resources Community Part 1*.

## 3.0 Results

### 3.1 Competency Profile

In order to develop a better understanding of the current skills and abilities of PE-04s we asked survey respondents to rate their level of experience in a number of key areas. The areas in which respondents indicated greater levels of experience are the following: people management (52%, n=59), central/corporate services (51%, n=56), consulting and professional advisory services (43%, n=48) and line operations or managing a major operation with significant program deliverables (31%, n=34). Similarly, the area in which respondents in the *Survey of Managers in Professionals* had the most experience was also in people management.<sup>15</sup> Smaller proportions of PE-04s had this same level of experience in these areas: regional operations (22%, n=25), exposure to the political level (22%, n=25) and policy development (22%, n=25). Therefore, development of PE-04s in these three areas may be beneficial to increasing PE-04s' strengths in various competencies and thus, better preparing them to take up senior management and executive level positions as they become vacant.

### 3.2 Interest in Executive Positions

The majority of PE-04s that participated in the survey did not express an interest in advancing to executive positions within the Public Service. Fully, 50% (n=57) of respondents indicated that they were not interested in advancing to executive positions and almost one-tenth (7% n=8) of respondents indicated that they did not know whether they were interested in or not. Only 43% (n=49) of respondents were somewhat or very interested in pursuing executive positions.

The level of interest in pursuing an executive career is lower for PE-04s than PE-05s and PE-06s<sup>16</sup> and the overall results from the *Survey of Managers and Professionals*. In fact, 66% of PE-05s and PE-06s indicated that they had some level of interest in executive positions while 30% indicated that they had no interest at all and 4% indicated that they did not know. Again, 71% (n=1685) of respondents in the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* indicated some level of interest in advancing to an executive position. The lower level of interest among PE-04 may be an indication of their greater distance in terms of level from executive positions.

No differences were found based on the gender of PE-04 respondents; men were not more or less interested in executive positions than women. However, as with other groups, the survey found that respondents approaching the age of retirement were much less interested in progressing to an executive position than those in younger age categories. Indeed, 83% of those between 56-60 indicated that they were not interested, as well as 71% of respondents between 51-55 and 60% of respondents between 46-50. Interestingly, fewer respondents in the 36 to 40 age category demonstrated no interest in executive positions than in the 41 to 45 age category (43% vs. 25%).

Readiness to assume executive positions was also assessed. Of respondents who indicated some type of interest in advancing to executive positions in the Public Service, 14% (n=7) indicated

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<sup>15</sup> Preliminary results from the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* conducted in the winter of 2002 by the Research Directorate of the Public Service Commission of Canada.

<sup>16</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*



that they were ready immediately to occupy an executive position while 10% (n=5) said they would be ready in 1 to 2 years, 47% (n=23) in 3 to 5 years, 18% (n=9) in five years or more and 10% (n=5) did not know. The survey found that most participants who indicated an immediate readiness or readiness within 1-2 years were part of the older age groups and most respondents who indicated that they would be ready to assume an executive position in more than 5 years were situated in the lower age range.

### 3.2.1 Reasons for wanting to become an Executive

Respondents who expressed some level of interest in advancing to executive positions in the federal Public Service were asked to what extent certain elements influenced their interest (Table 1).

Table 1: Reasons deemed important by Respondents for wanting to become Executives<sup>17</sup>

Activity	Percentage (number)
The opportunity to influence progress toward a goal	88% (43)
The opportunity to participate in senior level decision making	82% (40)
The opportunity to work on broader issues	82% (40)
The opportunity to help coach and develop others	78% (38)
The opportunity for greater cross-department collaboration	71% (35)
The opportunity to better see the results of my work	71% (35)
To have better access to senior decision makers	69% (34)
To earn more money	67% (33)
The opportunity to do more interesting work	59% (29)

The top four elements which were seen to be the greatest influences on respondents' interests in seeking executive positions were: the opportunity to influence progress toward a goal (88%), the opportunity to participate in senior level decision making (82%), the opportunity to work on broader issues (82%) and the opportunity to help coach and develop others (78%). Similarly, the opportunity to influence progress toward a goal and the opportunity to participate in senior level decision making were also the two first choices of respondents in the Survey of Managers and Professionals with 89% and 85%, respectively.

<sup>17</sup>In instances where the number of respondents within a category are below what is deemed suitable for reporting the figures are not reported.

### 3.2.2 Reasons for not wanting to become an Executive

The survey participants that did not express any interest in occupying EX positions were also asked to identify to which extent certain reasons influenced their decision (Table 2).

Table 2: List of Top Five Reasons deemed important to a greater extent by respondents for not wanting to become Executives<sup>18</sup>

Activity	Percentage (number)
Concerns with work – life balance	92 (60)
Satisfaction with my current working environment	79 (51)
My current job is interesting	75 (49)
Satisfaction with my current level of responsibilities	66 (43)
Satisfaction with my current manager	60 (39)

The top four reasons for not wanting to pursue an executive career are: concerns with work-life balance (92%), satisfaction with current working environment (79%), current job is interesting (75%) and satisfaction with current level of responsibilities (66%). In comparison with the *Survey of Managers and Professionals*, the top three reasons of respondents were concerns with the work-life balance (77%), my current job is interesting (75%) and satisfaction with my current level of responsibilities (66%).

### 3.3 Required Competencies for Executives

Respondents were asked to identify the three competencies, out of 11, that they considered essential to become an executive in HR (Table 3). The three elements that respondents considered the most important were: very good leadership skills (61%), considerable management skills (61%), and comprehensive experience in the HR field (57%). Similarly, the figures concerning the top three choices of PE-05s and PE-06s<sup>19</sup> were: very good leadership skills (59%), comprehensive experience in the HR field (55%) and considerable management skills (55%).

Survey participants were asked to make a similar selection, but this time concerning leadership competencies for senior Public Service managers<sup>20</sup>. At this point, it is important to point out that all of the leadership competencies that were listed are important with regards to senior management. Indeed, when performance evaluations are made of senior managers in the federal Public Service, all of these competencies are taken into account and are evaluated. But in this context, the survey was interested in respondents' perceptions of what were the most important elements.

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to footnote 17 regarding why certain response categories are excluded from this table.

<sup>19</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*.

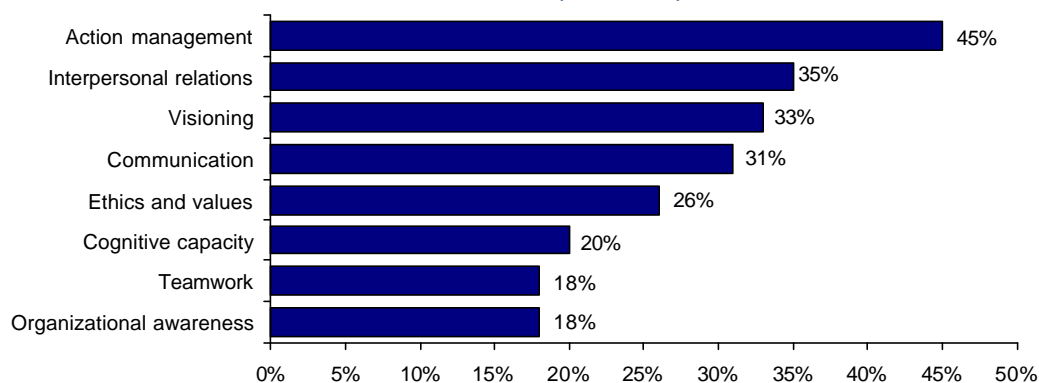
<sup>20</sup> More specifically, participants were asked to select the 3 leadership competencies, out of a possible 14, that they found to be the most important for senior management positions.

**Table 3:**  
**List of Top Five Important Elements in becoming an Executive in HR<sup>21</sup>**

Activity	Percent (number)
Very good leadership skills	61% (70)
Considerable management skills	61% (69)
Comprehensive experience in the HR field	57% (65)
Very good teamwork skills	24% (24)
Good knowledge of the mechanics of government	19% (27)

Graph 2 illustrates the ranking of the competencies by respondents and highlights their top three choices: action management (45%), interpersonal relations (35%), and visioning (33%). These figures can be similarly compared with those of the PE-05 and PE-06 groups<sup>22</sup>. Among that group the distribution was as follows: action management (44%), visioning (34%) and values and ethics (31%).

**Graph 2: Leadership Competencies perceived to be required by HR Executives (N=112)**



### 3.4 Communication Methods

Survey participants were asked to identify the two most useful ways they remain informed about both their careers and development opportunities and about HR initiatives (Table 4). For the purpose of this question, a total of 7 various communication methods were provided to participants who were then asked to select the two that they see as most important. The two most useful communications methods of participants with regards to remaining informed about careers and development opportunities were the HR Connexions website and other Internet sites (56%) and communication by e-mail (39%). On the other hand, the top two communication methods as to remaining informed about HR initiatives were the HR Connexions website and other Internet sites (56%) and interdepartmental committees (47%). Similarly, PE-05s and PE-06s saw HR Connexions and other Internet sites as the most useful way of remaining informed about their career and development opportunities (54%) and HR initiatives (44%)<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Please refer to footnote 17 regarding why certain response categories are excluded from this table.

<sup>22</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*.

<sup>23</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*.

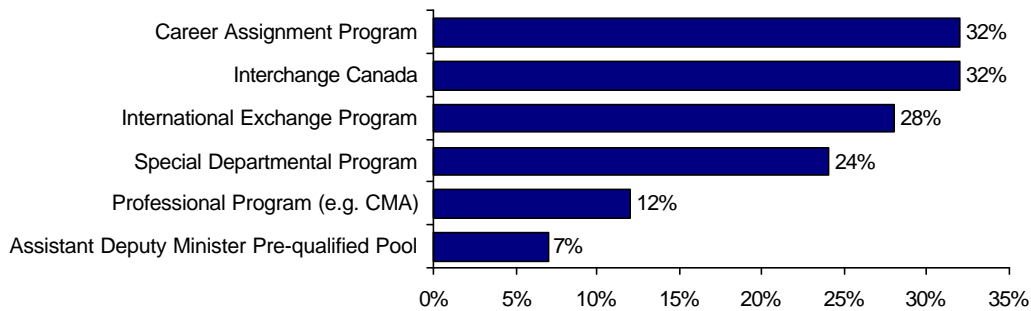
**Table 4: Preferred Communication Methods of Respondents**

Method	About career development and career opportunities	About HR initiatives in PS in general
	Percent (number)	Percent (number)
HR Connexions and other Internet sites	56% (64)	51% (58)
E-mail communication	39% (44)	25% (29)
Networking (at community events)	33% (38)	31% (35)
Inter-departmental committees	25% (29)	47% (53)
Team meetings	16% (18)	25% (29)

### 3.5 Learning Methods

In addition to inquiring about participants' interests in executive positions we examined a number of learning-related issues, in particular, the preferred learning methods of participants and how they can be facilitated. The three career development programs which generated the most interest were the Career Assignment Program (32%), Interchange Canada (32%) and the International Exchange Program (28%) (Graph 3). The highest interest among PE-05s and PE-06s was in the International Exchange program (31%), a finding also reflected in the APEX survey of executives and executive equivalents<sup>24</sup>. Overall, PE-04 respondents were consistently less interested than respondents of the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* in all these developmental programs. This may be due to the fact that PE-04s are at an intermediate level while managers and professionals are at more senior levels in their careers, which is more conducive to taking-up these development opportunities. Higher interest in the latter survey ranged from 43% in the International Exchange Program to 18% in professional programs<sup>25</sup>.

**Graph 3: Interest in Career Development Programs (N=108)**

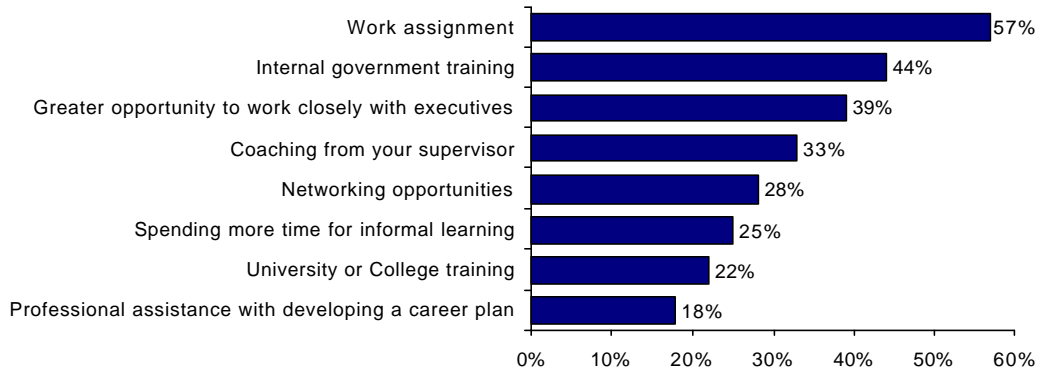


<sup>24</sup> Christine Minas (forthcoming) *Opportunities and Barriers in Senior Ranks: Results from the 2001 Executive Cadre Retention and Transition Survey*.

<sup>25</sup> Preliminary data from the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* conducted in the winter of 2002 by the Research Directorate.

Subsequently, participants were asked to select three, out of a possible eight, which they thought were the most beneficial development activities (Graph 4). The three activities found to be the most beneficial by respondents were work assignments (57%), internal government training (44%), and the greater opportunity to work closely with executives (39%).

**Graph 4: Beneficial Career Development Activities (n=114)**

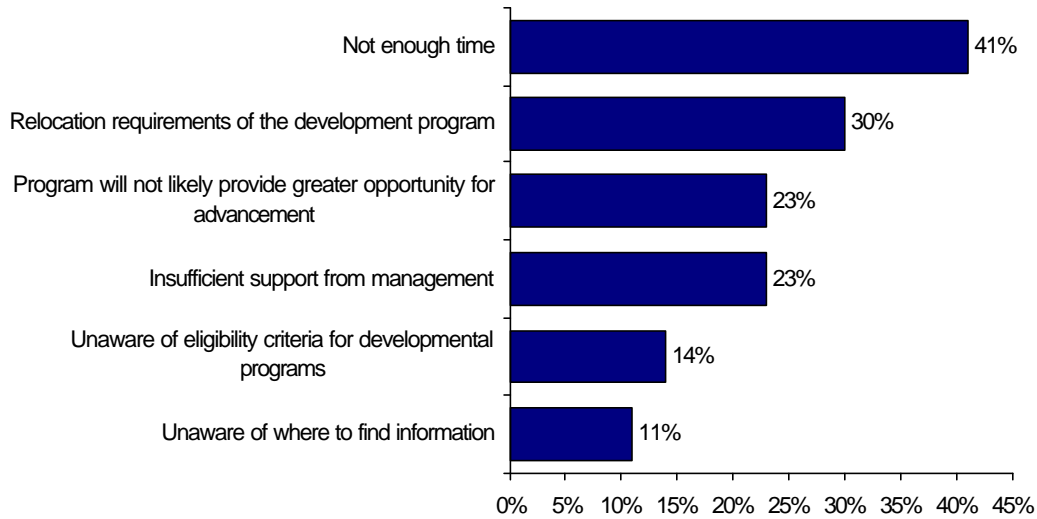


### 3.5.1 Learning Barriers

The survey attempted to identify any barriers that could have prevented respondents from participating in any one of the previous development programs. This was accomplished by providing respondents with a number of possible barriers and asking them to indicate if any had limited their participation in the programs (Graph 5). The top 4 barriers as identified by participants were: lack of time (41%), relocation requirements of the development program (30%), the development program will not likely provide greater opportunities for advancement (23%) and insufficient support from management (23%). These reasons are similar to the findings of the *Survey of Managers and Professionals*, although those respondents placed considerably greater emphasis on the following three reasons: unaware of where to find information (36%), insufficient support from management (35%) and unaware of eligibility criteria for developmental programs (29%)<sup>26</sup>. Personnel administration staff may have a greater awareness than other occupational groups of these development programs due to the nature of the work that they do.

<sup>26</sup> Preliminary data from the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* conducted in the winter of 2002 by the Research Directorate.

**Graph 5: Reasons limiting participation in Development Programs (N=101)**



As a result of these findings, it becomes clear that the career development programs that participants show the most interest in and find the most beneficial are the Career Assignment Program, Interchange Canada, and the International Exchange Program. Likewise, it is evident that the developmental activities most preferred by participants are work assignments, internal government training, and the opportunity to work closely with executives. In the light of these results, the HR Community in the federal Public Service may want to place greater emphasis on these learning methods. With regards to the participation of respondents in these programs, a couple of suggestions emerge from the survey results. The first would be to provide enough time to allow participation in such programs and activities. This could be accomplished in a number of ways: through the introduction of reduced workweeks and flextime for instance. The second suggestion would be to make sure that the given programs and activities are offered in as many geographical areas as possible in order to limit the relocation requirements.

### **3.6 Intentions to leave the federal Public Service**

Other important issues examined in the survey were retention and retirement. Respondents intend to retire in an average of 10 years. More importantly, only 11% of respondents planned to leave the federal Public Service for reasons other than retirement, while 74% planned to remain until retirement and 16% did not know. By comparison, 10% of respondents in the *Survey of Managers and Professionals* indicated an intention to leave for reasons other than retirement while 24% did not know.

Interestingly, the survey found some significant differences based on the age of respondents and whether or not they planned to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement. In fact, respondents situated in the middle age categories were much more inclined to leave for reasons other than retirement than those in both the younger and older age categories. In particular, none of the respondents in the 26 to 30 and 31 to 35 year old age categories indicated a desire to leave the Public Service for reasons other than retirement while 20% of those in the 36 to 40 category did so.

### 3.7 Challenges in Human Resources Management

The final question of the survey provided participants with a list of nine current and future challenges in HR management and asked them to identify the three they thought were the most important (Table 6). The top four challenges were: managing the implementation of HR modernisation (72%), obtaining the resources needed in order to perform our services (55%), operating in an environment with a lack of qualified PEs (43%), and managing the transition from an operational HR role to an advisory HR role (43%).

**Table 5: Current and Future Challenges in Human Resources Management**

Challenge	Percentage (number)
Managing the implementation of HR modernisation	72% (82)
Obtaining the resources needed in order to perform our services	55% (63)
Operating in an environment with a lack of qualified PEs	43% (49)
Managing the transition from an operational HR role to an advisory HR role	43% (49)
Managing an ageing workforce	27% (31)
Redefining our client relationships	24% (27)
Redefining our union relationships	12% (14)

The report on PE-05s and PE-06s notes that the same three challenges were identified as the most important by respondents, however to a greater extent. PE-05s and PE-06s had the following responses: managing the implementation of HR modernization (77%), obtaining the resources (human and financial) needed in order to perform their services (60%) and operating in an environment with a lack of qualified PEs (48%)<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> See *Examining the Personnel Community: A Focus on PE-05s and PE-06s*.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The first objective of this survey was to provide the Human Resources Community Secretariat with relevant information concerning its PE-04 population in order to develop an executive planning strategy for the future. With regards to the PE-04s surveyed, half of them expressed no interest in advancing to executive positions (50%), while a minority of respondents were interested (43%) or did not know (7%). The lower interest in becoming an executive among PE-04s than PE-05s and PE-06s could be due to the fact that they are in earlier stages of their careers and thus not actively thinking about progressing to the executive ranks. However, due to the younger average age of PE-04s there is the opportunity to provide developmental training to those that show potential for becoming executives and are interested in executive positions.

The survey identified work assignments as the preferred learning methods of the PE-04 respondents, while also noting that lack of time is the major reason limiting participation in training programs and activities. With facts such as these taken into consideration, an executive training program for PE-04s could very well be implemented much like the PE development program.

Finally, in terms of implications for the wider federal Public Service, most of the issues of succession planning that were dealt with in this study should also be of concern to other occupational groups throughout the federal Public Service given the older age profile of employees overall.