

Public Service Commission

2005 Employee Mini Survey Results

Q&A

July 2005

Why was an employee survey conducted?

Beginning in February 2004, employee surveys are now a regular, annual part of how government gathers employee input regarding their work environment. The current survey was conducted in February 2005 to allow government to track and monitor progress toward improving the work life of public servants and the quality of services delivered to the public. The results and information you provided shows where government has strengths that should be shared across departments and signals where employees believe improvements are needed. The next mini survey is planned for February 2006 and a government-wide survey is planned for February 2007.

What do the results indicate?

This latest employee survey shows that government is making progress, and that there are areas that continue to require improvement.

This year's survey has eight clear strengths to celebrate and build upon. At least 80 per cent of respondents believe:

- The people they work with make an effort to help each other.
- They can apply what they have learned in training to their job.
- Their department creates a safe work environment for its employees.
- They feel safe working in their job.
- They have not experienced harassment behaviour in their workplace.
- They know who the OHS representatives are in their work area.
- They have access to job postings within the Government of Nova Scotia.
- They have the required qualifications to meet the needs of their job.

There are also 21 areas of moderate strength. Between 60 – 79 per cent of respondents believe they:

- Are given opportunities to provide input on decisions that affect their job.
- Have a supervisor that considers their work-related ideas.
- Have access to training opportunities.
- Are provided with the tools, equipment, support, and information needed to do their job well.
- Are able to balance demands of work life with demands of personal/family life.
- Are familiar with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Know who to contact for EAP assistance.
- Know where they can go for help to resolve workplace ethical dilemmas or conflicts.
- Have not experienced bullying behavior.
- Receive communication about their department's business plans.
- Know how their work contributes to the department's priorities/purpose.
- Receive the communication they need to do their job well.
- Receive feedback from their supervisor about work performance.
- Participate in an annual performance appraisal/review.
- Experience the sharing of work-related information within their department.
- Received employee survey results information.
- Receive recognition from their supervisors.
- Are able to talk openly to their supervisor about work.
- Work in a department that is respectful of employees' differences.
- See a future for their career working for the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Are proud to be a public servant.

There are also five areas that require action. Fewer than 40 per cent of respondents believe:

- They have opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia.
- That senior management will try to resolve issues raised by employees in the survey.
- That hiring is based on merit.

- As managers, they can attract and recruit the people they need in order to achieve the division/department goals.
- As managers they can retain the people they need in order to achieve the division/department goals.

How do the results compare to last year's survey results?

The following table illustrates how this year's results compare to those of last year. You will notice that last year, there were no clear strengths or rating higher than 80 per cent as there are this year. There are two additional areas that require immediate attention, versus the three identified last year. The additional two areas requiring attention were based on new questions asked this year around our ability to attract and retain qualified staff.

<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>2005 Result s</i>	<i>2004 Result s</i>
Clear strengths to celebrate and build upon	Favourable Scores >80%	8 areas	0 areas
Moderate areas of strength to build upon	Favourable scores between 60-79%	21 areas	16 areas
Areas that require immediate attention and related action	Favourable Scores <40%	5 areas	3 areas
Gap areas that require prioritization and action	Differences >40% between favourable and importance scores	9 areas	2 areas

What are the benefits of employee surveys?

The employee survey provides you with an

opportunity to provide candid input to help shape the work environment and create a better workplace for you and your colleagues. Employees can participate in discussions within their workgroups, with their supervisors and managers, to support positive action in response to the survey results. Employees may also have an opportunity to participate in further research activities, to explore and better understand survey results. Finally, your input, via the survey results, is integrated into government's corporate human resources plan and each department's business plan, and is an indicator of your department's performance.

Who participated in the survey?

All permanent civil servants, CUPE Local 1867, and NSGEU Local 480 employees, as of November 1st, 2004 were included in the population that was used to select the representative sample of 1,500 employees. Neither contract nor casual employees were included in the survey; however, these groups may be included in future surveys.

What actions have taken place in response to the survey results?

Many activities are taking place across government in response to the survey. Your manager, supervisor, communication director or HR consultant may be able to provide you with department-specific activities. You can also find a progress update on the survey website at www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey. One very important example of government's response is the development of the *Corporate Human Resource Plan* that has been developed to address many of the human resource challenges facing government. The plan is being rolled out across government this summer. You can get a copy on the PSC website at: www.gov.ns.ca/psc/CorporateHumanResourcePlan.

What will be done with the results?

The results have been presented in an audit report that outlines strengths, opportunities for improvement, immediate areas of concern, and trends. Employees may be asked to participate in further research activities to explore the issues raised in the survey. Performance targets based on the employee survey results will form part of government's business planning process, and integrated into annual business and accountability reporting. Additionally, strengths that have been outlined in the report will be celebrated, and success stories shared across government. Follow up surveys will be also be conducted to measure any changes in opinion that may occur.

How do I find out what is happening in my

department?

An update report is available on the PSC's survey website www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey. You may also speak with your supervisor, manager or member of the advisory committee. A list of members is available on the survey website.

Can I see my department's results in addition to the overall results?

Yes, department-specific results are outlined on the website, www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey.

How do I read and interpret the data?

Responses provided by employees are categorized into three areas: *favourable responses* (when employees selected somewhat or strongly agree), *neutral responses* (when employees selected neither agree or disagree), and *unfavourable responses* (when employees selected somewhat or strongly disagree). The percentage of favourable responses is most often cited in the report.

As an example, 85 per cent of employees report that coworkers make an effort to help each other out. The number reported refers to the percentage of respondents who chose either somewhat or strongly agree to the question on the survey that asked about teamwork.

Can I see the results for my workgroup, division, and/or location?

The results were not sorted by division or location. Extra care went into ensuring that responses were anonymous. Since some divisions and locations have fewer than ten employees the results could only be sorted according to department and general demographic information (age, gender, years of experience, etc.)

What was the response rate and how accurate are the results?

More than 860 employees participated, representing a response rate of 58 per cent. The results are accurate within 3.15 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. This means that the survey provides a 95 per cent confidence rating and that the results are representative of employee opinions, beliefs and perceptions.

Who leads the survey?

The Evaluation and Audit division of the PSC planned, designed, conducted and analyzed the survey.

Who can I contact for more information?

Please talk to your supervisor or manager if you have questions regarding your department's response to the employee survey results. You can visit the survey website for more information, www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey. For questions about survey results or methodology, please contact Carrie Hotton at hottonca@gov.ns.ca, or (902) 424-6655.