

# How's Work Going?



**Employee Survey  
Results Report  
2006**

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*THIS REPORT PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THE 2006 EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS.*

The employee survey process continues to be an objective process to gather information on employee's perceptions, to explore government's areas of strength and to determine where government should focus to improve the work environment. The results will help government to understand how to recruit, motivate and ultimately retain engaged employees who are proud to work as public servants and who provide excellent service to Nova Scotians.

## Executive Summary

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to making the workplace better for its employees, thereby enhancing government's effectiveness and service delivery to the public. In 2004, with the administration of the first government-wide employee survey, the Government of Nova Scotia began to regularly ask employees for their input to improve their work environment. The 2006 employee survey is the third in this series.

In 2006, 1,400 employees of the Nova Scotia Government were asked their opinion. The survey was conducted between February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in a paper format, and had a 43% response rate, exceeding the required target. The 2006 survey generated reliability assessment results<sup>1</sup> above 0.6 and as high as 0.8, which indicates the survey results are reliable.

This report uses the data collected from the 2006 survey to gauge employee's perceptions of their work environment and to identify Government's areas of strength, where improvements are needed and takes into account what employees value. Recommendations have been developed to highlight where government should focus to improve their employees' work environment, and to support the continued progress.

To support continued progress and further action, this report also includes analysis of written comments received over the entire survey series. Written employee comments act as a voluntary focus group and help to clarify the underlying issues identified in the survey results. Fundamentally, it is a roadmap to progress based on employees reported complaints and suggestions and is a great catalyst for change. This information will help corporate and departmental action committees to clearly understand the views of survey respondents. By addressing what employees indicate as the most pressing issues, the work environment should improve and result in an increased level of employee satisfaction.

The 2006 survey data was also analyzed to determine what drives employee satisfaction and commitment. A number of studies have linked employee satisfaction and commitment to public sector client satisfaction and to citizen trust and confidence. This report provides the preliminary results of the specific questions that were used to assess the drivers identified to influence the Government of Nova Scotia employees' level of satisfaction and commitment. This is part of a larger inter-jurisdictional initiative in which the Public Service Commission's Evaluation and Audit division is involved. The inter-jurisdictional initiative is mandated to establish a public sector employee engagement model and strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The Cronbach's alpha measure was used to assess the survey reliability. This measure has a top value of one.

### Results In Brief

The following conclusions can be drawn from the 2006 survey results:

- Progress has been made: Three years of employee surveys show that the Government is on the right track. Results have improved in many areas. Of the 68 questions asked 40 questions had increases in favourable scores in the range of 1% to as high as 20%.
- Overall, Nova Scotia Public Servants are committed employees. Committed employees are proud to tell people they work for the Government of Nova Scotia, they would prefer to stay even if offered a similar job elsewhere and would recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work. They also strive to improve the results of the organization and are inspired to give their best. However, there is a need to improve the level of employees' satisfaction.
- The 2006 survey results also indicate that Government has 12 clear strengths (questions with a favourable rating of 80% and above). Government should be proud that employees feel safe in their work environment, have a positive working relationship with their co-workers and supervisor/direct report and employees strive to improve their department.
- The survey results indicate that the Government of Nova Scotia has six questions that have a favourable rating of 40% or less. Those six questions are outlined below:
  - Hiring based on merit;
  - Senior management to try and resolve issues raised by employees in this survey;
  - Managers to have the ability to attract and recruit the people they need in order to achieve their division/departmental goals.
  - Employees' opportunity for career advancement;
  - Employees' opportunity for career growth; and
  - A work environment that is supportive of involvement in community/volunteer activities.
- When the results are analyzed based on demographics, differences are noted in the following areas:
  - Managers were more positive in their response than staff and supervisors.
  - Favourable scores tend to decrease with years of experience
  - Regional employees provided slightly lower favourable scores to most questions, compared to employees in the Halifax Regional Municipality
  - MCP employees were more positive in their response to the majority of questions

- The analysis of the written comments indicated that there were more unfavourable than favourable or neutral comments written by employees. Correlation analysis indicates that the more dissatisfied employees were about a topic, the more likely they were to write comments.
- Suggestion analysis reveals another important trend: the prevalence of 'Fix it' suggestions. Of all written comment suggestions, approximately three quarters suggest that the government make changes or modifications to existing programs, policies and strategies over the creation of entirely new initiatives. This indicates there is a perception that government has a good basis for many of its programs, policies and strategies. With further evaluation, monitoring and continued improvements significant impacts could be achieved without the time and costs involved in creating new initiatives.
- The analysis of the written comments indicates that there are a number of issues concerning employees. Comments were concentrated in the categories of Compensation and Recognition and Leadership. A major theme in the Leadership comments is a perceived lack of progress or action on issues identified in the survey. This has been a priority for all 3 years and as noted earlier this question is not yet showing an improvement in survey scores. Based on the employee comments, employees do not know what is being done about survey results, and who exactly is responsible for acting on those results. Employees also expressed some confusion as to the purpose of some changes; they were not sure if they were in response to the survey, or being done for other reasons. Employees also feel that senior management doesn't really want to know their concerns.
- To compare results using the 20 common questions developed through the inter-jurisdictional initiative to establish an employee engagement model, Nova Scotia's 2006 results were shared among five participating jurisdictions. The results of this analysis provided a jurisdictional average in the first inter-jurisdictional employee survey report. The results of this report showed that 95% (19/20 questions) of Nova Scotia's favourable scores were above the inter-jurisdictional average, and 85% (17/20 questions) of Nova Scotia's average scores were above the inter-jurisdictional average.



### Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to assist Government:

When considering which improvements are necessary and important to employees as well as impact on employees' level of commitment and satisfaction,

#### **It is recommended:**

1. **To improve the level of commitment, Government should focus on improving employees' perception with regards to merit based hiring and senior management's commitment to responding to the survey. To improve employees' level of satisfaction focus on improving confidence in leadership and recognition.**

Based on the employee comments and favourable score results, employees do not know what is being done about survey results, and who exactly is responsible for acting on those results. Employees also expressed some confusion as to the purpose of some changes; they were not sure if they were in response to the survey, or for other reasons.

#### **It is recommended:**

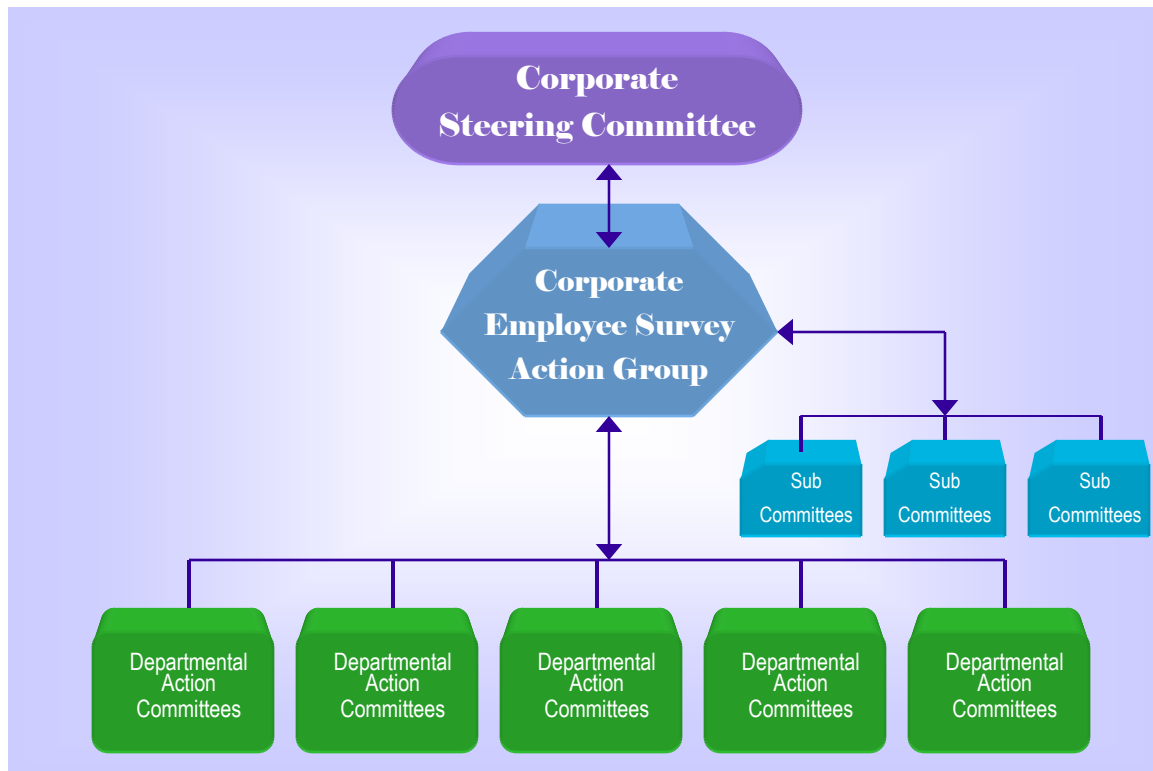
2. **To ensure employees understand leadership's commitment to improving employees work environment, actions (initiatives, programs, strategies and policies) and progress should be regularly communicate to let employees know what actions leadership is taking.**

The results of the employee surveys will provide government with a longitudinal perspective to help determine if the corporate HR goals are being achieved. There has been progress made, but some changes take time and a shift in culture, which will not occur over-night.

**It is recommended:**

3. To help measure progress and establish direction, targets should be established for each question. (This was also recommended in 2005).
4. To lead progress and direction, a Corporate Employee Survey Action Forum should be created which would be chaired by the PSC with representation from each Department. The representatives should be employees who have direct responsibility for responses and action to the survey findings. They should have the knowledge of what is going on in their department. A designated person from the PSC should be responsible for overseeing the action of the forum and coordinating all information. Responsibilities of the forum would include:
  - Share information;
  - Determine trends and best practices;
  - Provide advice to the corporate response to recommendations made in the survey reports;
  - Coordinate and guide the government action plans with established measurement targets on a yearly basis with consultations with departments;
  - Create a report that overviews all initiatives, programs, strategies and policies created in response to the survey results which would be communicated on a regular basis to employees; and,
  - Establish a formal link with departments, specifically department action groups, and the Corporate Employee Survey Advisory Committee, if applicable.

Refer to the organizational chart below for the reporting relationship:



The Public Service Commission Evaluation and Audit division currently holds three years of survey data. Further analysis of this data by the Evaluation and Audit division could provide government with more thorough information to help assist with further focused action planning. Evaluation and Audit will conduct further analysis on specific themes on a rotating schedule. A proposed schedule will be determined once a government action plan has been created to address concerns. This year, further analysis of the perceptions of designated group respondents over the past three survey years has been performed (Refer to the 2006 Employee Survey Diversity Report).

## Chapter 1 Methodology

### 1.1 Who did we survey?

The 2006 survey was administered February 24<sup>th</sup> – March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006, in a paper format, to a representative sample of 1,400 employees of the Nova Scotia Government. (Permanent civil servants, correctional workers, and highway workers). Our target overall response rate was 40%, which we surpassed with an overall response rate of 43%.

Refer to Annex B for demographic information on who responded to the survey.

### 1.2 What questions did the 2006 survey ask?

The 2006 survey built upon the previous two surveys<sup>2</sup>. In total 68 questions were asked and divided into the following 13 categories:

Teamwork	Compensation and recognition
Employee involvement	Leadership
Personal growth	Diversity
Workplace ethics	Recruitment
Quality of work life	Retention
Safety	Overall questions
Communications	

Each question on the survey, with the exception of three, was followed by two Likert-type<sup>3</sup> answer scales, which measured the level of agreement and level of importance. The other three questions asked employees to identify:

- Perceived barriers to career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia;
- Their intentions to stay with Government of Nova Scotia; and the,
- Source of their stress.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix C for survey instrument comparison

<sup>3</sup> Two Likert-type answer scales, measuring level of agreement and level of importance, followed each question on the survey. The first scale measured level of agreement, using a five-point scale, with a sixth option for selecting “not sure/don’t know”. The answer scale was as follows: 5- Strongly agree; 4- Somewhat agree; 3- Neither agree nor disagree; 2- Somewhat disagree; 1- Strongly disagree. The second scale measured level of importance, and used a five-point scale, as follows: 5- Critical; 4- Very important; 3- Important; 2- Somewhat important; 1- Not important.

Included within the 68 questions are 20 common inter-jurisdictional employee engagement questions. These questions allow for employee engagement to be measured and compared to other jurisdictions.

Refer to Annex A for a list of the survey questions by category.

### 1.3 How was the survey data analyzed?

The following analyses were conducted with the 2006 Employee Survey data:

- An analysis of favourable scores and mean (average) scores was performed for each question,
- A mean score was calculated for each category,
- Analysis of frequencies (favorable, neutral and unfavorable scores) according to demographic variable,
- Qualitative and quantitative analyses were completed for the written comments for all three survey years,
- Comparisons were made with results from prior years,
- Comparisons among survey items (correlations),
- Reliability assessments were performed, and the
- Employee Engagement Index was calculated.

#### 1.3.1 How were favourable scores calculated?

An analysis of favourable scores was performed for each question. To determine the favourable score, the level of agreement scale was collapsed into categories of favourable, neutral and unfavourable responses as illustrated in the table below:

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree or unsure</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
<b>Unfavourable score</b>		<b>Neutral score</b>	<b>Favourable score</b>	

The favourable categories were then grouped into four classifications as illustrated in the table below.

<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Score</i>
Clear strength to celebrate and build upon	Favourable Scores $\geq 80\%$
Moderate area of strength to build upon	Favourable Scores between 60-79%
Improvement Areas	Favourable Scores between 41-59%
Areas that require immediate attention	Favourable Scores $\leq 40\%$

**1.3.2 How were Mean (Average) Scores Calculated?**

The employee data was also analyzed using descriptive statistics (average scores). The average agreement score was calculated for each question. These average scores were then used to calculate the overall average agreement score for each category. To determine the mean (average) agreement score and importance score, the following level of agreement scale of (1-5) was used as illustrated in the table below:

<b>Average Level of Agreement</b>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree or unsure</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Average Level of Importance</b>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Critical</i>

The average level of agreement and importance for each category were then grouped into three classifications as illustrated in the table below:

<b>Average Scores</b>	
Average 3.75 and greater	Strengths
Average 3-3.74	Needs Improvement
Average lower than 3	Requires Immediate Attention

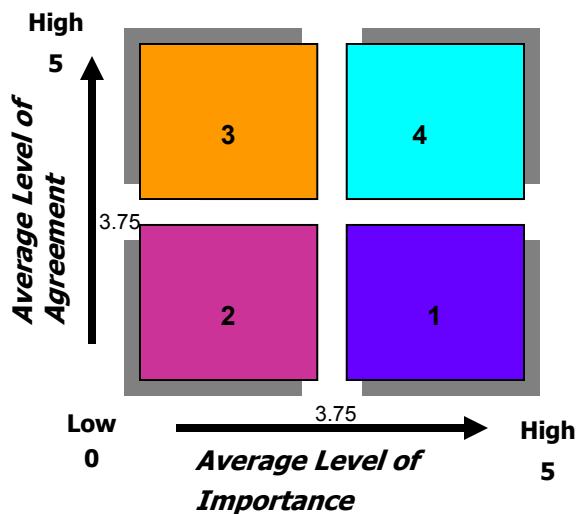
**1.3.3 Action Grid - Mapping Agreement and Importance Scores**

To help understand the results and to determine where government should continue to focus its response and action efforts, the 2006 survey was also analyzed using a method which comprises both the level of agreement and the level of importance to employees.

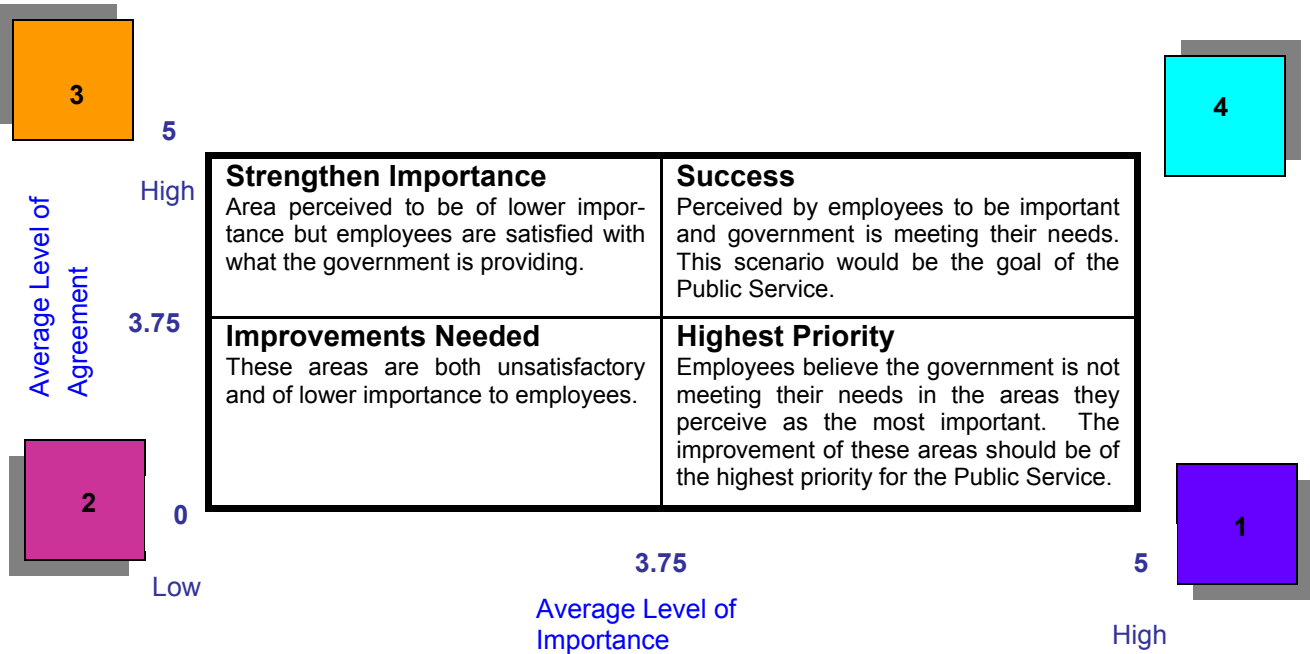
The 2006 survey maps the agreement and importance scores on an action grid (scatter plot) using descriptive statistics (average scores), as illustrated below:

**Interpreting the Action Grid**

The questions/categories with lower agreement appear lower on the chart, and the questions/categories valued more by employees are closer to the right side of the chart.



To help identify where to focus response and action efforts, the quadrants are numbered. These quadrants are numbered one through four starting at the bottom right corner. The following table defines each of the four quadrants and how to interpret the data points.



**1.3.4 How were the Comments Analyzed?**

The following analyses were performed using the employee written comments for all survey years.

- **Category Analysis** - Comments were divided into the same 13 categories used in the survey tool.
- **Theme Analysis** - Comments were assigned a general **theme** according to the tone of the comment. Themes reflect the answer key of the Employee Survey questions:
  - √ **Favourable**
  - √ **Neutral**
  - √ **Unfavourable**



### Compliant, Suggestions, and Favorable/Neutral Analysis

It should be noted that comments could be considered both a suggestion and a compliant if both sets of criteria were met.

√ Compliant Analysis: Complaints were defined as 'a clearly stated problem.' All complaints in a category were further analyzed and grouped into **subjects**. Subjects were often unique to each category and reflect the topic of complaint. For example, in the category of Safety, a subject was Reported Bullying.

√ Suggestion Analysis: A suggestion was defined as 'a clear alternative action.' Suggestions were divided into 3 types:

↳ **Fix it** – i.e. we need to change X to do this, or become like Y, etc

↳ **Create it** – i.e. we need this X that we currently do not have in any form.

↳ **Move it** – i.e. we need to finish (complete) this X.

√ Neutral comments were counted, but not analyzed as the information in neutral non-suggestive comments was often vague and it was difficult to decipher meaning.

- **Statistical Analysis** - Correlation analysis was performed comparing the mean category agreement and importance scores from 2006 and the number of favourable, unfavourable and total written comments.

Analysis of the distribution of themes across categories was completed and significant differences from the average percentage were calculated using the standard deviation of each theme compared to overall means.

Percentages were calculated for themes, categories, complaint and suggestion analysis.

#### 1.3.5 Are the results of the 2006 survey reliable?

The reliability assessments conducted for the answer scales used in the survey are one indication of the validity of the results. Using Cronbach's alpha measure, the reliability assessment of the 2006 survey generated results above 0.6 and as high as 0.8. The general rule is the higher the alpha the more reliable the survey. Results of this analysis indicate the survey is reliable.

## Chapter 2 Overall Results

Our focus in this chapter is the overall employee survey results across the Government of Nova Scotia. More detail information by category can be found in Chapter 3 of this report. The following broad topics are discussed in this chapter:

- What do employees currently believe and are there any differences among groups?
- Have the results improved?
- What are the government's strengths?
- Are employees' engaged (satisfied and committed)?
- Where is the government not meeting the work environment needs of their employees?
- Where should government focus?
- How does Nova Scotia compare to other jurisdictions?

### 2.1 What do employees currently believe?

As the table below demonstrates, an analysis of favorable scores shows there are 42 areas (questions) of strength (12 clear strengths and 30 moderate strengths), 17 areas that indicate the need for improvement, and six areas that require immediate attention.

Interpretation	Favourable Scores	2006 Results
Clear strengths to cele-	Favourable score $\geq 80\%$	12
Moderate areas of	Favourable score between 60-79%	30
Improvement Areas	Favourable score between 41-59%	17
Areas that require imme-	Favourable scores $\leq 40\%$	6
<b>Total Questions (that use a favourable score range)</b>		65

Refer to Chapter 3 for the frequency of responses (unfavourable, neutral and favourable), in percentages, as well as the mean score (average score), for each question in the survey by category.

As the table below demonstrates, an analysis of mean scores by category demonstrates that the Government of Nova Scotia has five categories that are strengths, eight categories that need improvements and that there are no categories that require immediate attention.

Interpretation	Mean (Average) Score	2006 Results
Strengths	Average score $\geq 3.75$	5
Categories that require improvement	Average score between 3-3.74	8
Categories that require immediate attention	Average score $< 3$	0
<b>Total Categories</b>		13

### What are the differences among employee groups, ages, etc.?

When the results are analyzed based on demographics, differences are noted in the following areas:

- Managers were more positive in their response than staff and supervisors.
- Favourable scores tend to decrease with years of experience
- Regional employees provided slightly lower favourable scores to most questions, compared to employees in the Halifax Regional Municipality
- MCP employees were more positive in their response to the majority of questions

## 2.2 Has there been any progress over the last three years?

An analysis of favourable scores show that results of the 2006 survey in comparison to previous surveys demonstrate that government is making progress. These changes are summarized below:

### Changes in Favourable Score since 2004

<b>40</b>	Questions had <b>increases</b> in the number of favourable responses. Increases ranged from 1% to as high as 20%.
<b>6</b>	Questions had <b>decreases</b> in the number of favourable responses. Decreases ranged from 1% to 6%.
<b>5</b>	Questions had <b>no change</b> in the number of favourable responses.
<b>17</b>	Questions were new or did not have a favourable score range.
<b>68</b>	Total questions

Refer to Annex A for a summary of favourable results by year and by question.

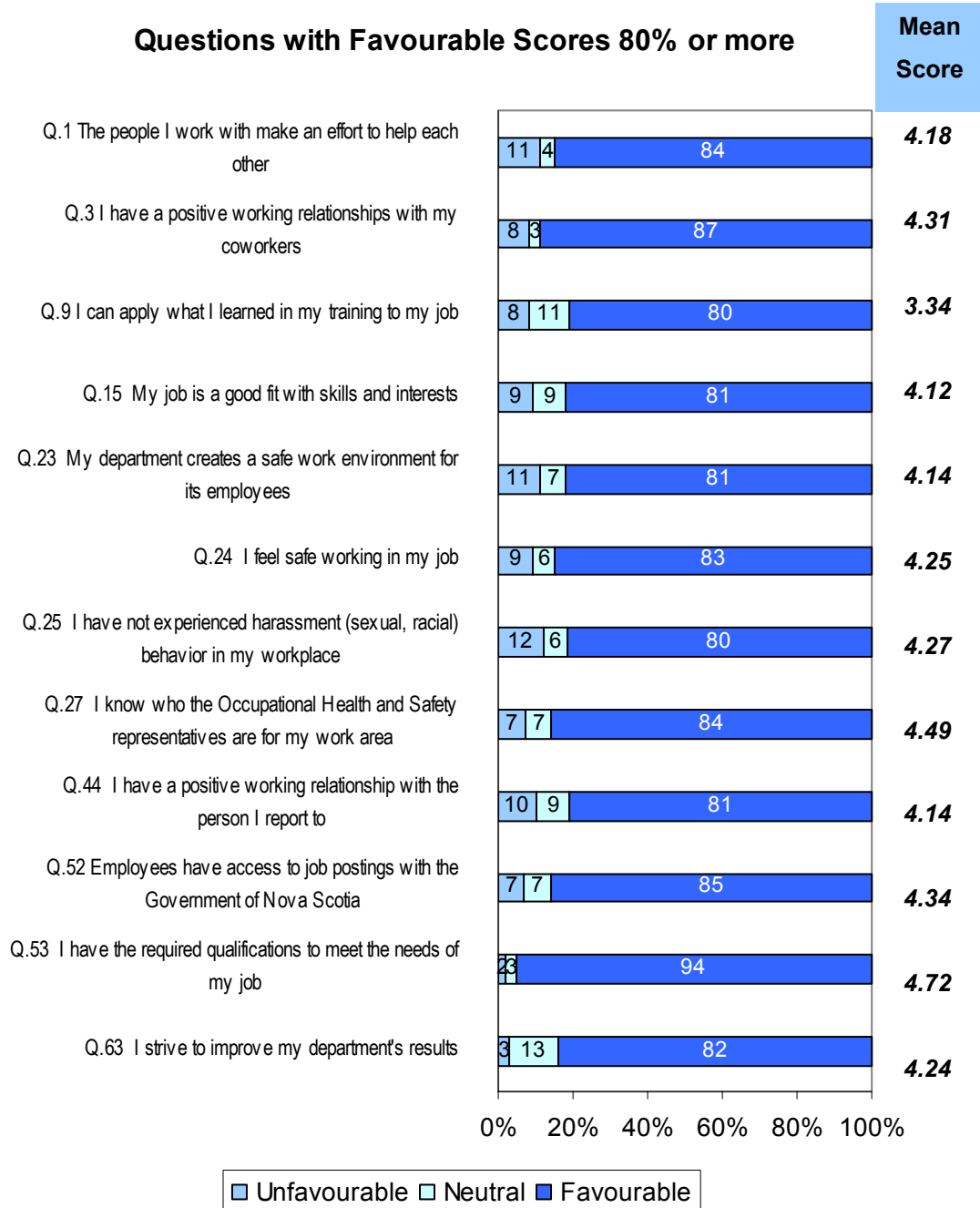
The table below summarizes the results by identifying the number of questions in each of the favourable classifications by year and shows the increase in favourable scores since 2004<sup>4</sup>.

Category	2004	2005	2006	Increase from 2004
Clear strengths to build upon (Favourable score $\geq 80\%$ )	0	8	12	<b>12</b>
Moderate areas of strength to build upon (Favourable score between 60-79%)	20	21	30	<b>10</b>
Improvement Areas (Favourable score between 41-59%)	25	20	17	<b>-8</b>
Areas that require immediate attention (Favourable scores $\leq 40\%$ )	3	5	6	<b>3</b>

<sup>4</sup> Note: Additional questions were added and some deleted in 2005 and 2006; therefore, this is not a straight comparison to 2004.

**2.3 What are government’s strengths?**

The 2006 survey results indicate that Government has 12 clear strengths (questions with a favourable rating of 80% and above). Of the 12 clear strengths, 11 also had average scores of at least 80% (4 out of 5). The table below summarizes these results:



The 2006 survey results, when analyzed by category, indicate that Government has five categories of strength as illustrated in the table below:

**Categories with Averages of 3.75 or more**

	Mean Score (1-5)	Mean Score (%)
<b>Safety</b>	4.20	84%
<b>Teamwork</b>	4.01	80%
<b>Overall Questions<sup>5</sup></b>	3.84	77%
<b>Communication</b>	3.80	76%
<b>Diversity</b>	3.77	75%

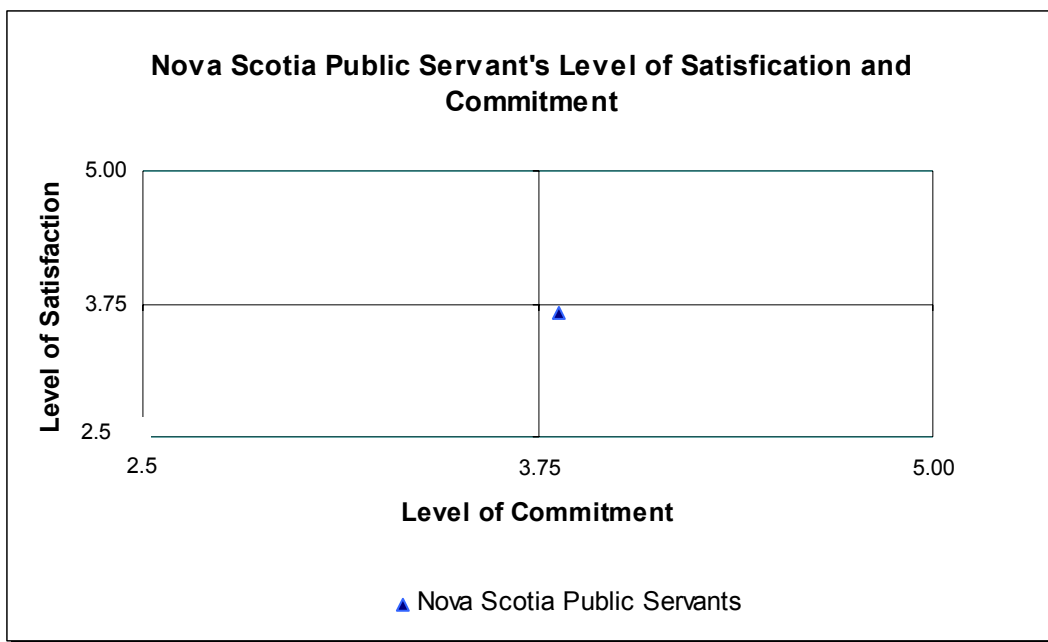
Government should be proud that employees feel safe in their work environment, have a positive working relationship with their co-workers and supervisor/direct report and employees strive to improve their department.

## **2.4 Are Government of Nova Scotia Employees Engaged?**

Based on the assessment of our work environment, have we have engaged our employees? Determining the level of employee engagement is another way to measure progress. Employee engagement is the extent to which an individual feels connected to, and involved with, their job and the organization. Research shows that increased employee commitment, satisfaction and trust in leadership can positively impact the organization to help it reach it's true potential. The conclusion can be made that overall employee satisfaction is evident in the level of engagement employees have in their work.

Results, as illustrated in the scatter plot on the next page, show that employees are committed but unsatisfied.

<sup>5</sup> The overall questions consist of the additional common employee engagement questions.



Further analysis into the engagement of public servants in the Nova Scotia Government shows that the following groups are considered engaged employees:

- MCP
- CUPE
- 55 years or older
- Employees with fewer than 2 years experience
- Less than Grade 12 education
- Management

The following groups are considered disengaged employees:

- TE
- PR
- NSGEU
- 40 – 49 year olds

Refer to Annex D for all the results.

### How can the level of employee engagement be improved?

There are several drivers of employee engagement, which can be measured. These include employees perceptions of their opportunities for input into decisions that affect their work; productive, collaborative and respectful working relationships; clear expectations and sense of direction for the organization; confidence in leadership; job fit with skills and interests; opportunities for learning and development; recognition for their work; and, having the support they need to provide customers quality service while achieving a balance between work and personal life.

An analysis of the correlations between the engagement drivers and indicators can show where action and attention should be focused to improve employee engagement. The Evaluation and Audit division of the PSC has performed this analysis. The table below outlines the factors influencing employees level of commitment and satisfaction, based on the 2006 survey results.

<b>FACTORS INFLUENCING</b>	
SATISFACTION	COMMITMENT
1. Quality of Leadership (Q.41)	1. Public Service Work (Q.57)
2. Work Life Balance (Q.19 & 20)	2. Opportunities for Career Advancement and Growth (10 & 11)
3. Recognition (feel work is valued) (Q.37)	3. Fair Hiring Practices (Q.51)
4. Receive Communication Needed (Q.30)	
5. Recognition (received) (Q.38)	
6. Learning and Development Opportunities (Q.14)	

The survey results indicate that the public service work itself has a large influence on employee's commitment level. Employees were generally proud to work as a public servant. Although employees' perceptions on career advancement, career



growth and fair hiring were less than favourable, the public service work itself was a more influential driver. However, to enhance employees' level of commitment, employee perception of career advancement, career growth and fair hiring needs to improve.

To improve on employees' level of satisfaction, the government should concentrate on the satisfaction drivers which received favourable scores of 50% or less, as noted below:

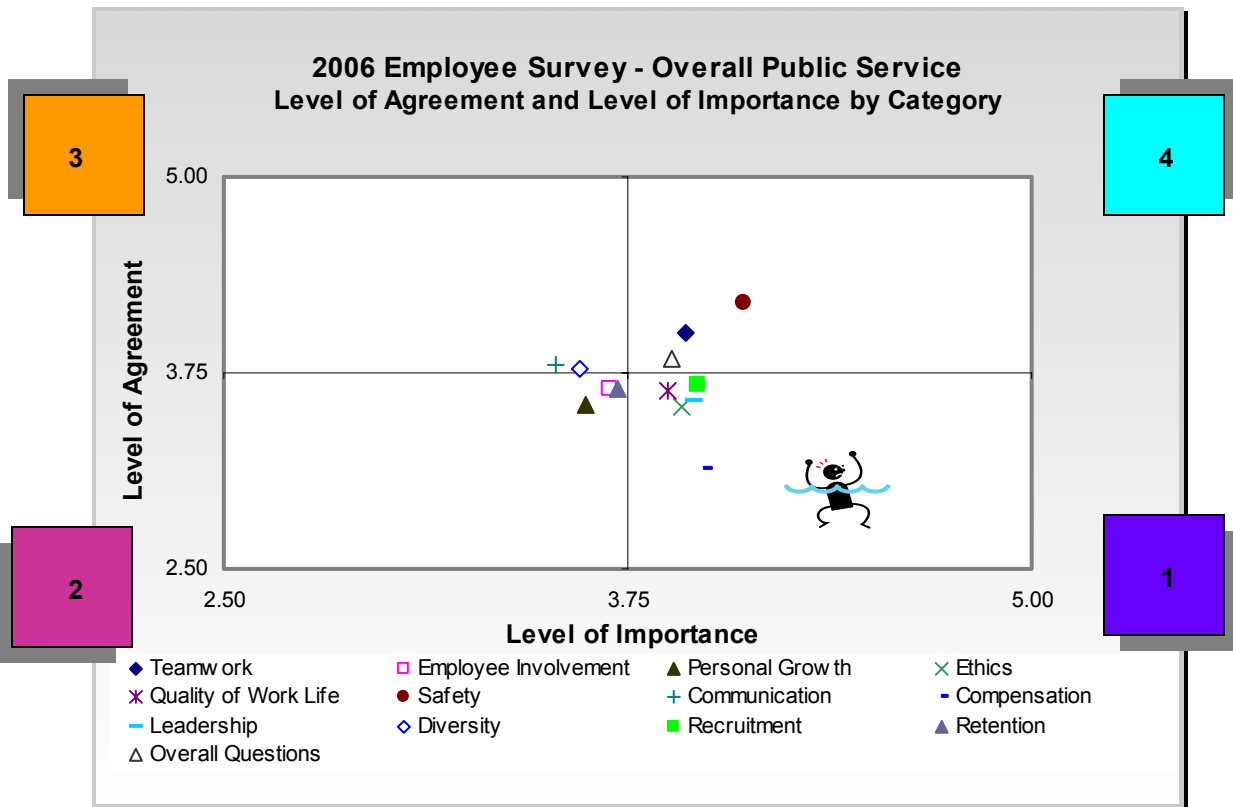
- Confidence in leadership
- Recognition (value for work and received)

**2.5 Where is the Government of Nova Scotia not meeting their employees work environment needs?**



To provide a visual picture to illustrate how employees perceive their current work environment and what they consider as important to them the average scores for each question were used to calculate the overall average agreement and importance score for each category. These 13 category agreement and importance scores were then mapped on a scatter plot.

The following scatter plot shows the results by category.



Overall, employees' perception of their work environment can be summarize as follows:

- ❑ Currently employees show the highest level of agreement and highest level of importance in the categories of safety, teamwork and the overall questions. (These categories were classified as strengths.)
- ❑ Employees also convey a higher level of agreement but lower level of importance in the categories of diversity and communications. (These categories were classified as strengths.)
- ❑ Employees express a lower level of agreement and lower level of importance in the categories of employee involvement, personal growth and retention. (These were classified as needing improvements)
- ❑ Results show that employees have lower levels of agreement but place higher levels of importance in the categories of compensation and recognition, leadership, ethics, recruitment and quality of work life. (These were classified as the highest priority areas needing improvements)

## **2.6 Where does the Government of Nova Scotia need to focus to improve their employees' work environment?**

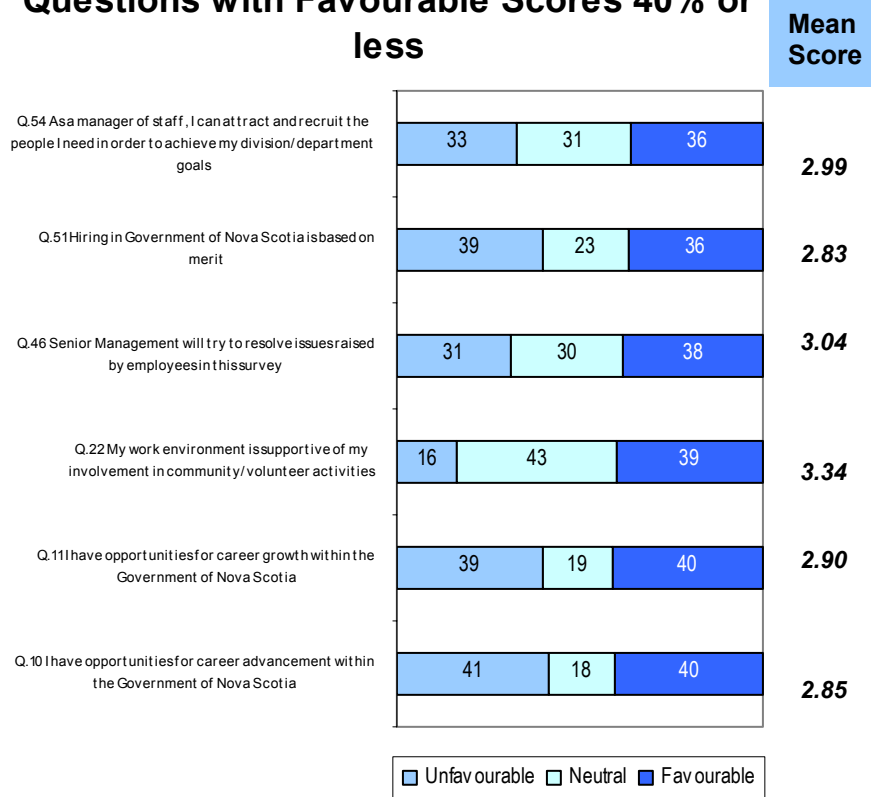
When considering where the Government of Nova Scotia should focus to improve their employees' work environment, Government should consider the following factors:

1. Which improvements are necessary? – Specifically which questions had favourable scores  $\leq 40\%$
2. What is important to employees?
3. Are there any significant relationships among the questions?
4. Does the question have an impact on employees' level of satisfaction and commitment? (Level of engagement)

### **Are Improvements Necessary?**

Based on the survey results, Government has six questions that have a favourable rating of 40% or less. Of these questions, four questions have an average agreement rating of less than 3 out of 5. The table on the next page summarizes these results:

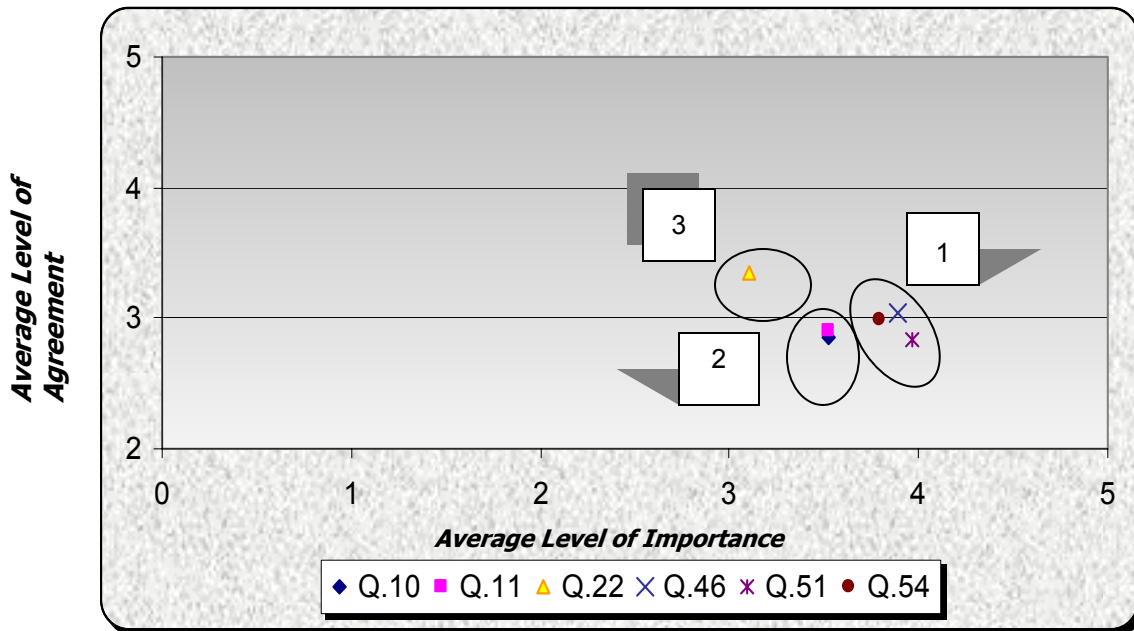
### Questions with Favourable Scores 40% or less



Out of the six questions outlined above, only two are new to this action category. Q.11 is a new survey question and has not been asked on prior surveys. The favourable score for Q.22 has decreased since the 2005 survey and is now in the action category (Favourable score of 40% or less).

#### What is important to employees?

When focusing on improvements another factor that should be considered is the level of importance of the question to the employee. The chart below maps the level of agreement and level of importance for the six questions. The questions with lower agreement appear lower down on the chart and the questions more valued by employees are closer to the right side of the chart. To aid in prioritization, we have grouped the questions into three clusters, as illustrated on the next page:



The **first cluster** contains the questions that employee value the most. This cluster contains the following questions:

Q.46 Senior Management will try to resolve issues raised by employees in this survey

Q.51 Hiring in the Government of Nova Scotia is based on merit

Q.54 As a manager of staff, I can attract and recruit the people I need in order to achieve my division/department goals

The **second cluster** contains the questions that employee value next. This cluster contains the following questions:

Q.10 I have opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia

Q.11 I have opportunities for career growth within the Government of Nova Scotia

The **third cluster** contains the question that employee valued the least. This cluster contains the following question

Q.22 My work environment is supportive of my involvement in community/volunteer activities

**Are there any significant relationships among the questions?**

Several of the required improvement questions have multiple impacts on each other. For example when employees were asked to identify the barriers they perceive regarding having opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia, the results show that 33% of employees state “other” reasons and specifically named unfair recruitment and selection processes as one of the “other” reasons<sup>6</sup>. This implies that employees’ current perception of fair merit hiring (Q.51) is influencing employees’ perception of their ability to advance and grow in their careers.

This conclusion is supported by the statistical analyses that highlights that there is a strong connection between how employees responded to Q.51 and how employees responded to Q.10. In addition, the comment complaint analysis (refer to Chapter 4 for details) revealed recurring topics such as favoritism, lack of support, inequitable work environment and lack of action by management as common complaints among the subject areas (such as hiring, recruitment).

**What is the impact on employee engagement?**

Equally important when focusing on improvements is understanding how these six questions affect employee engagement. Correlation analysis performed indicates that of the six questions, only questions Q 51 (*Hiring in the Government of Nova Scotia is based on merit*), Q.10 and Q.11 (*Opportunities for career advancement and growth*) have a significant influence on employee engagement. The analyses indicates that employees’ perception of merit hiring, career advancement and growth are drivers influencing employees’ level of commitment.

When considering which improvements are necessary and important to employees as well as impact on employees’ level of commitment, improving questions 51, 10 and 11 should be Government’s priority along with improving employees’ level of satisfaction through improving confidence in leadership and recognition.

**2.7 How do our results compare to other jurisdictions?**

The Government of Nova Scotia continued to participate with an interjurisdictional initiative to develop a common public sector employee engagement model and tool. For the 2005-2006 fiscal period five jurisdictions surveyed employees using 20 common questions. Nova Scotia was one of the five jurisdictions.

The results showed that 95% (19/20 questions) of Nova Scotia’s favourable scores were above the interjurisdictional favourable average score, and 85% (17/20 questions) of Nova Scotia’s average scores were above the interjurisdictional mean average score.

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<sup>6</sup> See table Chapter 3.3 – Personal Growth page 37 for a list of other possible responses.

## Chapter 3      2006 Employee Results by Category

In this chapter, we have outlined the following survey results by category:

- Unfavorable, Neutral and Favorable scores by question
- Mean (average) scores by question
- Overall category mean (average) score
- Differences within demographic groups are highlighted
- Comparison to 2004 and 2005 survey results by question
- Summary of employees' written comments by category

*(Note: due to rounding of numbers, the totals in some graphs / charts may not equal 100 % within each section)*

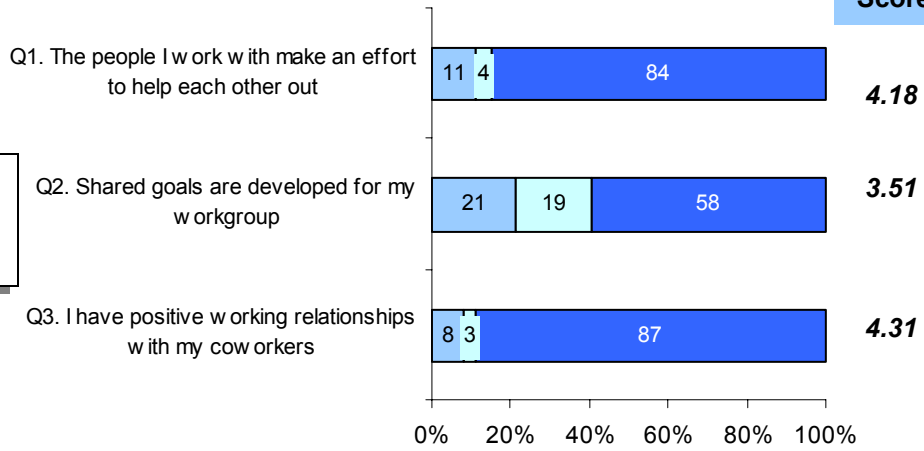
3.1 Teamwork

4  
Success

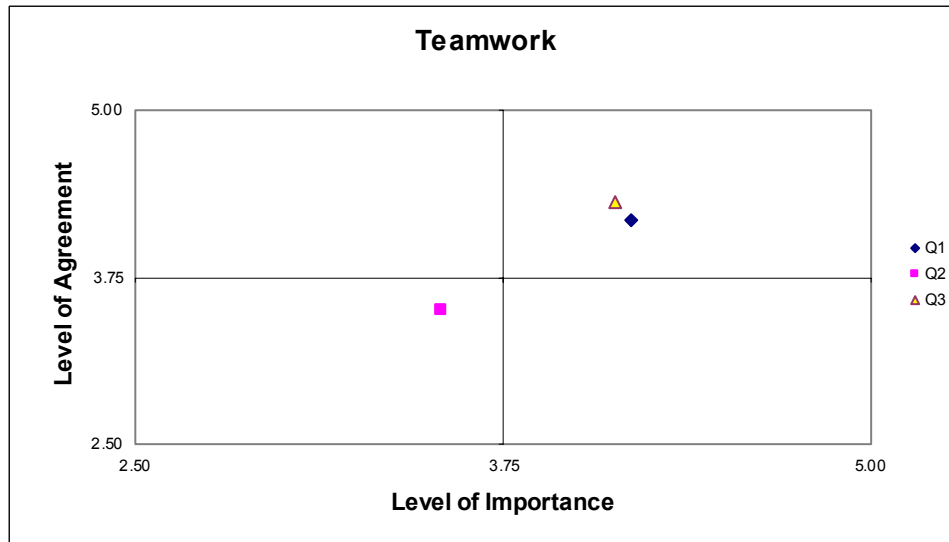
**Category Mean:**  
**4.01**

Teamwork

Mean Score



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)



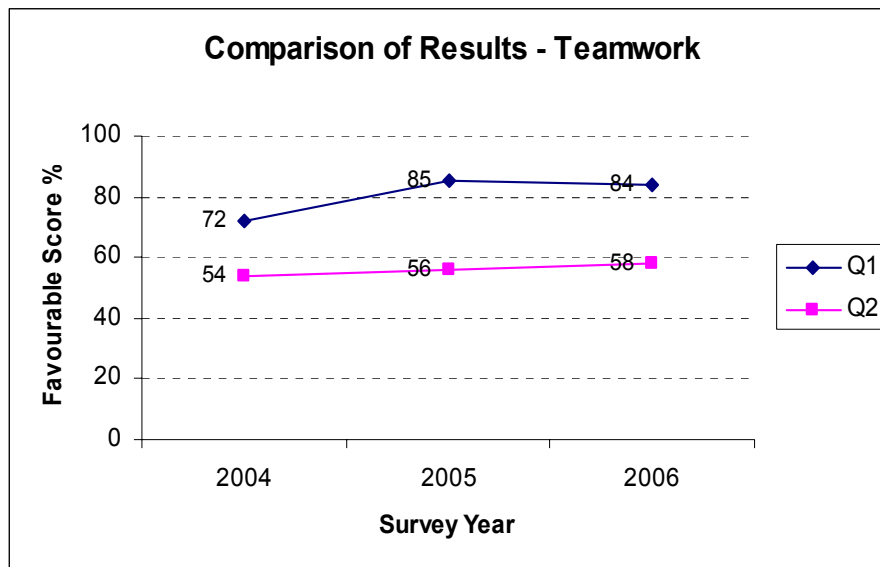
### Favourable and Importance Scores

Teamwork questions, in general, generated favourable responses with the exception of one question. Only 58% of employees feel that shared goals are developed for their workgroup. This question, however, is of lower importance in comparison to the other teamwork questions. Over 80% of respondents believe the people they work with make an effort to help each other out and that they have a positive working relationship with their co-workers. These two areas are very important to employees with importance scores over 90%.

In further detail:

- More managers, in comparison to staff and supervisors, believe shared goals are developed for their workgroup.
- MCP employees are more likely to state that shared goals are developed for their workgroups.

### How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Question 3 was new in 2006; therefore, it is not included in the comparison.

A comparison of results between the three survey years shows there has been an increase of approximately 12% of respondents who agree that the people they work with make an effort to help each other out (Q1). There was also a slight increase, of approximately 4%, in the number of respondents who believed shared goals are developed for their workgroup (Q2).



**Teamwork Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly favourable and the number of comments are lower than average. The most common subject was *I work with great people*. Other subjects include: *Poor team spirit*, *Inequitable work contribution* and *Lack of shared goals*. There were no suggestions in this category. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

3.2 Employee Involvement

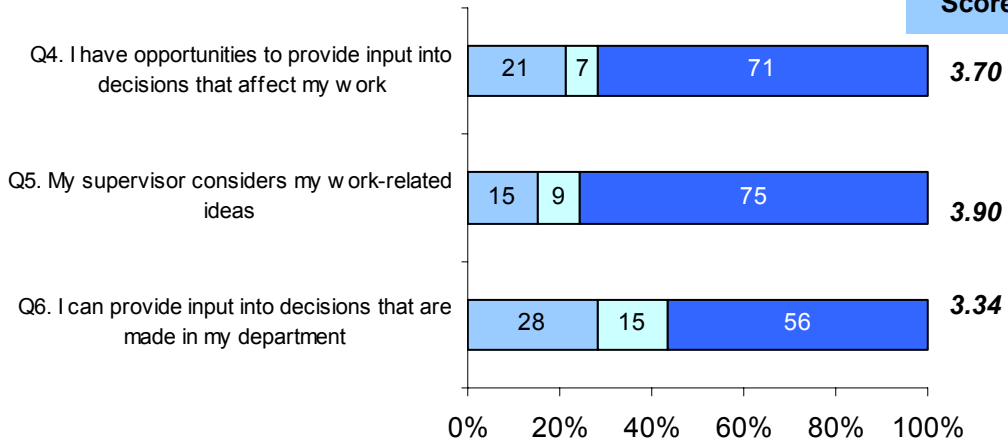
2

Improvements Needed

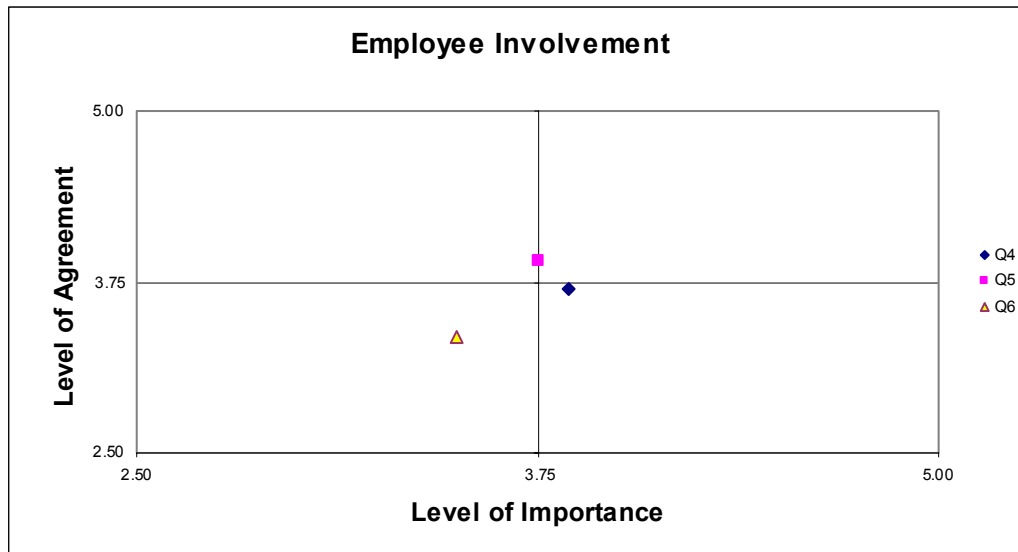
**Category Mean:**  
**3.65**

Employee Involvement

Mean Score



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)



### Favourable and Importance Scores

In general, employees are positive about employee involvement in their workgroups.

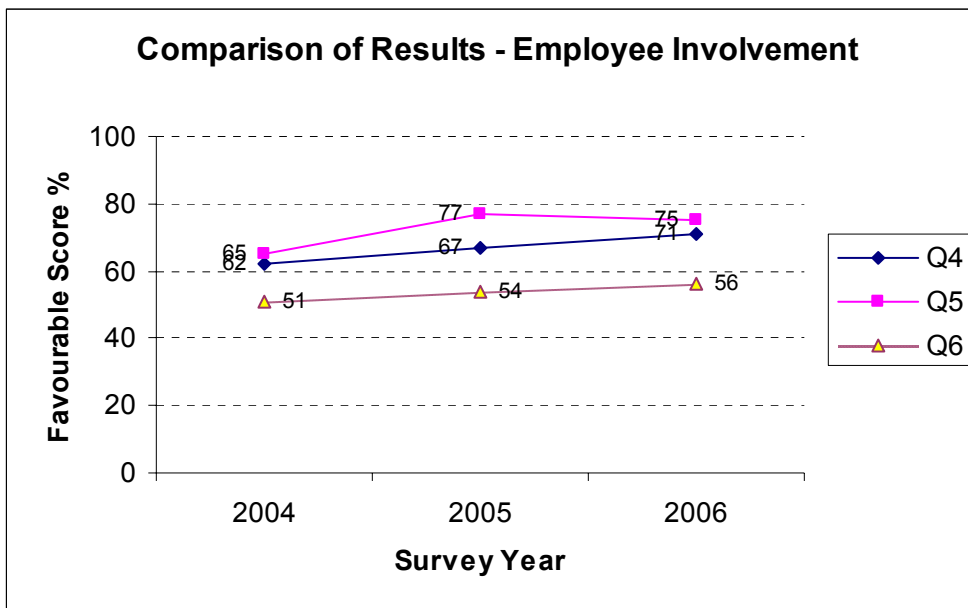
- Just under three-quarters of respondents believe they have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work.
- 75% of employees feel their supervisor considers their work-related ideas.
- More than half of respondents agree that they can provide input into decisions that are made in their department.

Employee involvement is important to employees with importance scores ranging from 83% to 89%.

In further detail:

- Favourable responses for regional staff continue to be considerably lower than responses from staff in the Halifax Regional Municipality when asked if they feel they can provide input into decisions that are made in their department.
- Employees with less than two years of experience are more likely to agree they can provide input into decisions that are made in their department.
- Male employees are more likely to feel they can provide input into decisions that are made in their department compared to female employees.

### How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



For each of the questions within the category of employee involvement there has been a consistent increase in the favourable scores since 2004. A five to 10% increase has been observed in each area.

**Employee Involvement Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable and the number of comments were lower than average. The most common subjects were *No opportunity for input* and *Input is not heeded (when asked)*.

Suggestions by employees included encouraging input of employees under 30 and the consideration of personalities, diversities and goals when making decisions or requests. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

3.3 Personal Growth

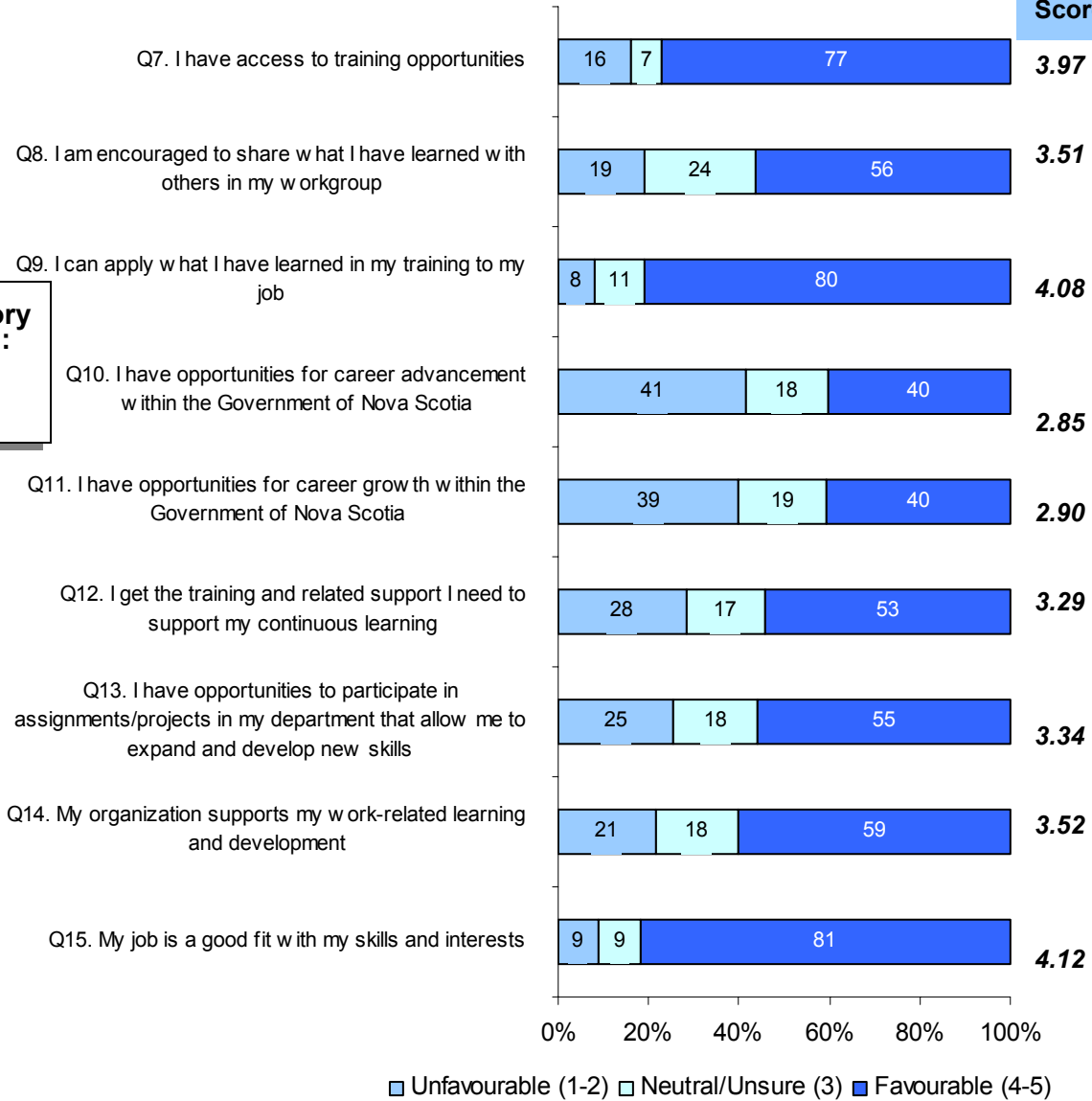
2

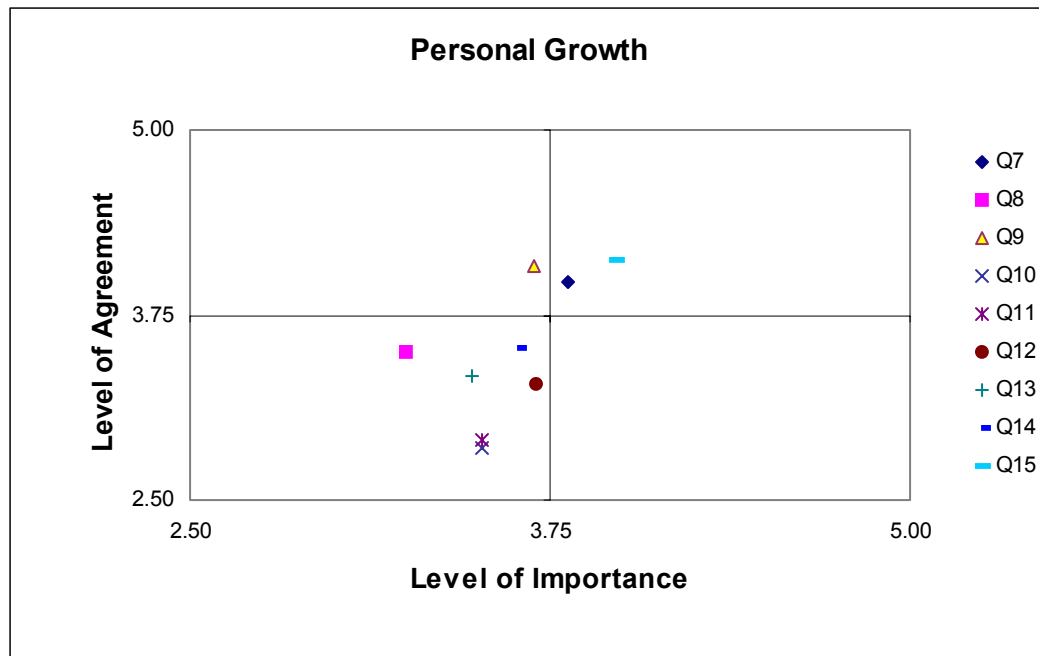
Improvements Needed

Personal Growth

Mean Score

Category Mean:  
3.54





#### Favourable and Importance Scores

Personal growth questions generated mixed responses from respondents. The following highlighted questions are areas that would be considered a priority for analysis in this category.

- Only 40% of respondents feel they have opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Approximately 40% agree they have opportunities for career growth within the Government of Nova Scotia.
- The relatively low favourable scores by respondents when asked if they feel they have opportunities for career growth and advancement could be explained by the fact that just over half of employees feel they get the training and related support they need to support their continuous learning.
- 55% of employees agree they have opportunities to participate in assignments/projects in their department that allows them to expand and develop new skills.

Survey results show that personal growth is an important factor in the government work environment. Specifically, more than 90% of respondents feel it is important to have access to training opportunities and that their job be a good fit with their skills and interests. Also, approximately 87% of employees believe it is important that they be able to apply what they have learned in training to their job, get the training and related support to support continuous learning, and have an organization that supports their work-related learning and development.

In further detail:

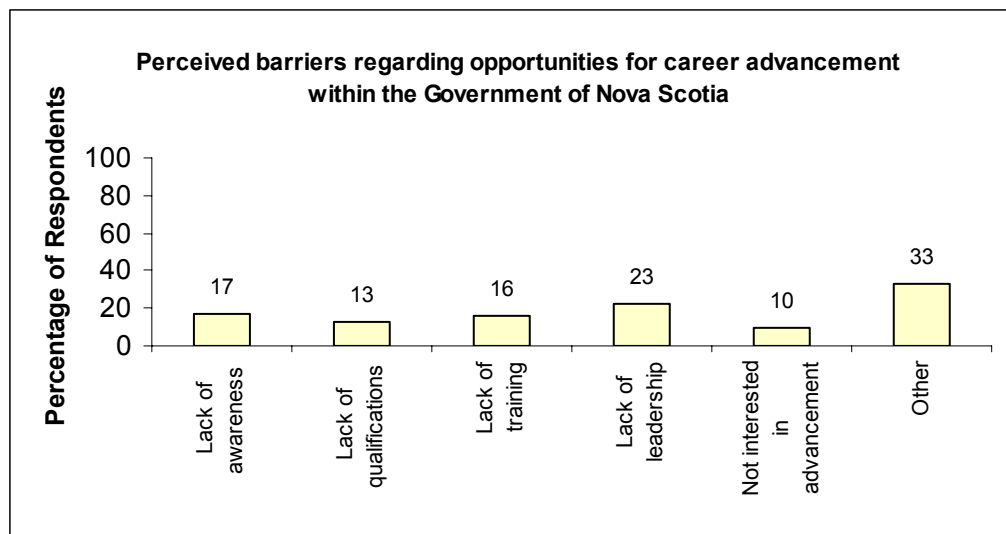
- Employees in the Halifax Regional Municipality were more likely to agree they have opportunities for career advancement, compared to regional

employees (47% versus 36% respectively).

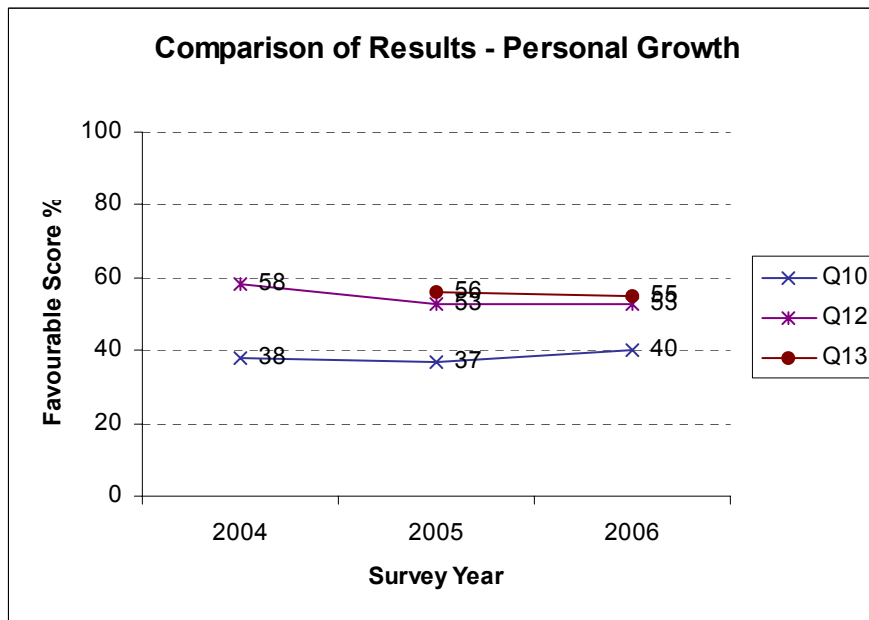
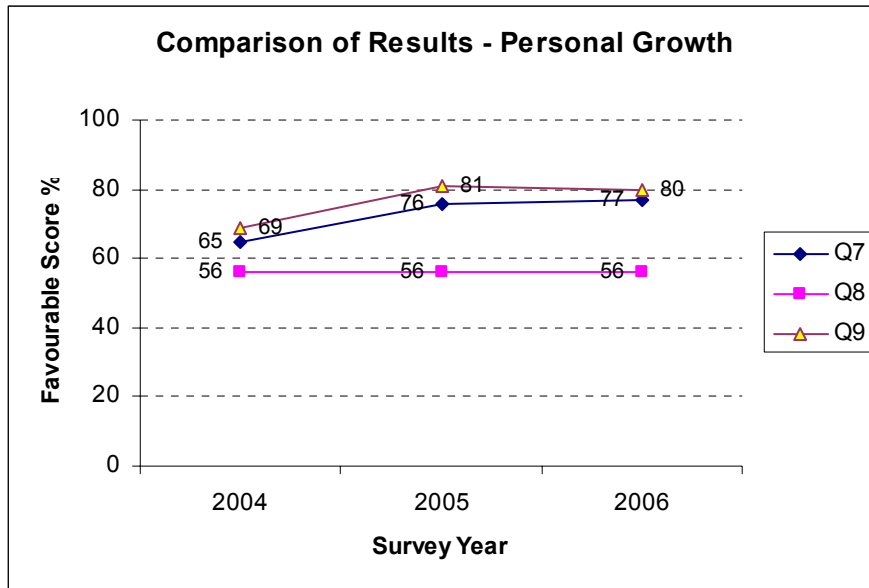
- As the age of the respondent and the years of experience increases, the less likely these employees will report feeling they have opportunities for career advancement, that they have opportunities for career growth with the government and that they have opportunities to participate in assignments/projects in their department that allow them to expand and develop new skills.
- Managers report the highest levels of favourable responses to questions regarding personal growth, compared to staff and supervisors.
- Male employees have slightly lower favourable responses to personal growth questions in comparison to female employees.

### Barriers to Career Advancement

In 2006 employees were asked to identify the barriers they perceive regarding having opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia. As illustrated in the table below, results show that 33% of employees state “other” reasons rather than the options provided in the question. Specifically, employees state the top three “other” reasons to be unfair recruitment and selection processes, lack of opportunities and location. Almost a quarter of employees perceived lack of leadership as a barrier to their career advancement.



How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Questions 11, 14 & 15 were new in 2006; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

When comparing results from the 2004 and 2005 surveys to the 2006 survey, a notable increase can be noted for two areas. These two areas include employees' belief that they have access to training opportunities and they can apply what I have learned in my training to my job (Q7 & 9). No change has been seen with



respondents feeling they are encouraged to share what they have learned with others in their workgroup (Q8). Respondents still tend to be less favourable about career advancement, receiving support to meet the continuous learning needs and having the opportunities to participate in assignments that would allow them to expand and develop new skills (Q10, 12 & 13).

### **Personal Growth Comments**

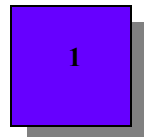
Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Training** and **Advancement**.

Within **Training**, the most common subjects were *Favoritism involving training opportunities*, *Need for more training in general* and *Need for more budget money for training*.

Within **Advancement**, the most common subjects were no support for *internal movement/advancement* and *no room to advance to new salary/position*.

Suggestions focused on increasing money for training, access to more relevant training, support for internal advancement and more career coaching and succession management. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

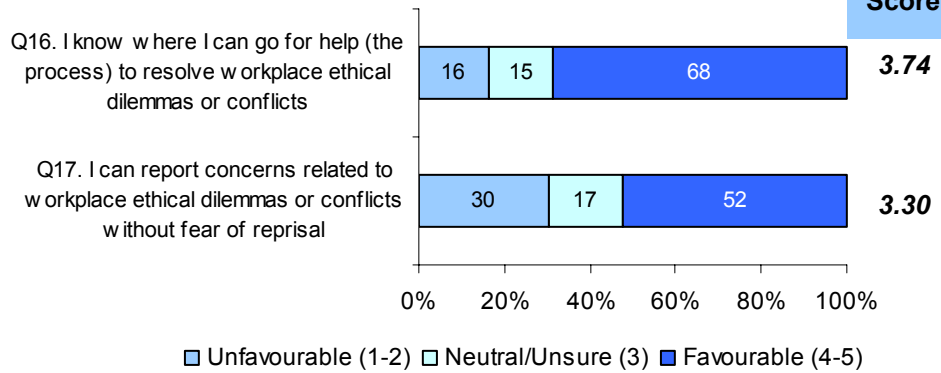
3.4 Workplace Ethics



High Priority

**Category Mean:**  
**3.53**

Workplace Ethics



### Favourable and Importance Scores

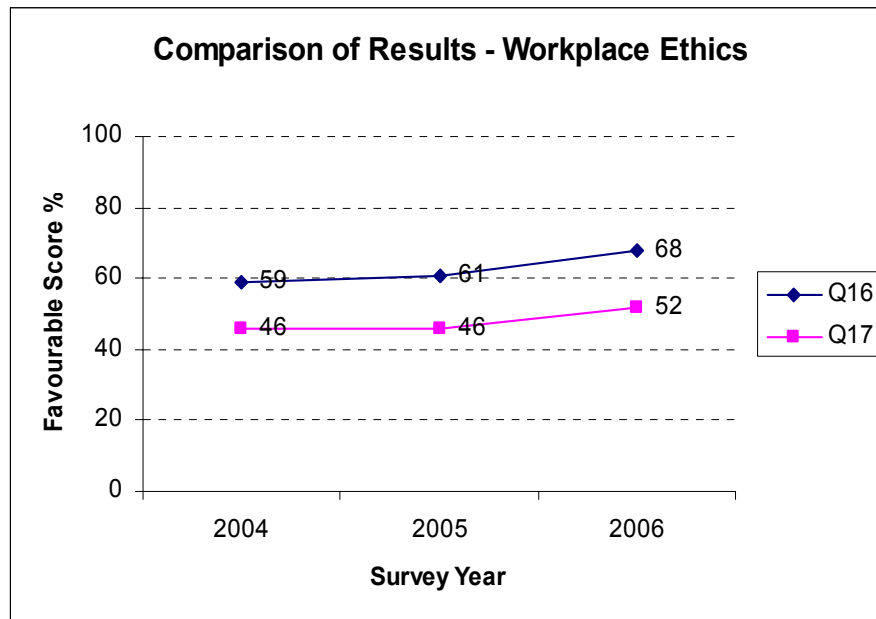
Just over two thirds of respondents agreed they knew where they could go for help to resolve workplace ethical dilemmas or conflicts. However, when asked if they could report those concerns without fear of reprisal, approximately 52% of employees agreed.

It is seen as very important to respondents to know the process for resolving workplace conflicts and to feel they can do so without the fear of reprisal.

In further detail:

- Managers, compared to staff and supervisors, were more likely to know the process for reporting workplace ethical concerns or dilemmas and were significantly more likely to report such concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Male employees were more likely than female employees to feel they could report ethical concerns or dilemmas without fear of reprisal.

### How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?

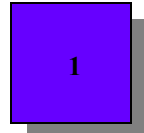


Both questions in this category have seen an increase in the results since 2004. There has been an increase of approximately 9% in employees' level of agreement with knowing the process to report workplace ethical concerns (Q16). From 2005 to 2006, a 6% increase is seen in favourable scores from employees when asked if they could report workplace ethical concerns (Q17).

**Ethics Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable and the number of comments is lower than average. Common subjects include *Repercussions from reporting unethical behaviour* and *Lack of ethical behaviour of management/senior staff*.

Suggestions included creating an evaluation process to report concerns, more focus on ethics and more education on dealing with or resolving conflicts. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.



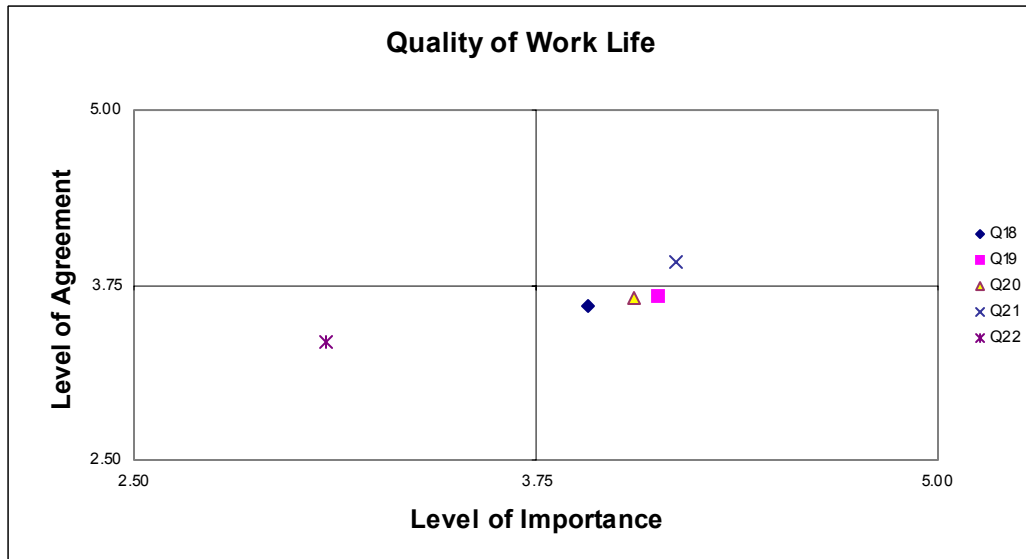
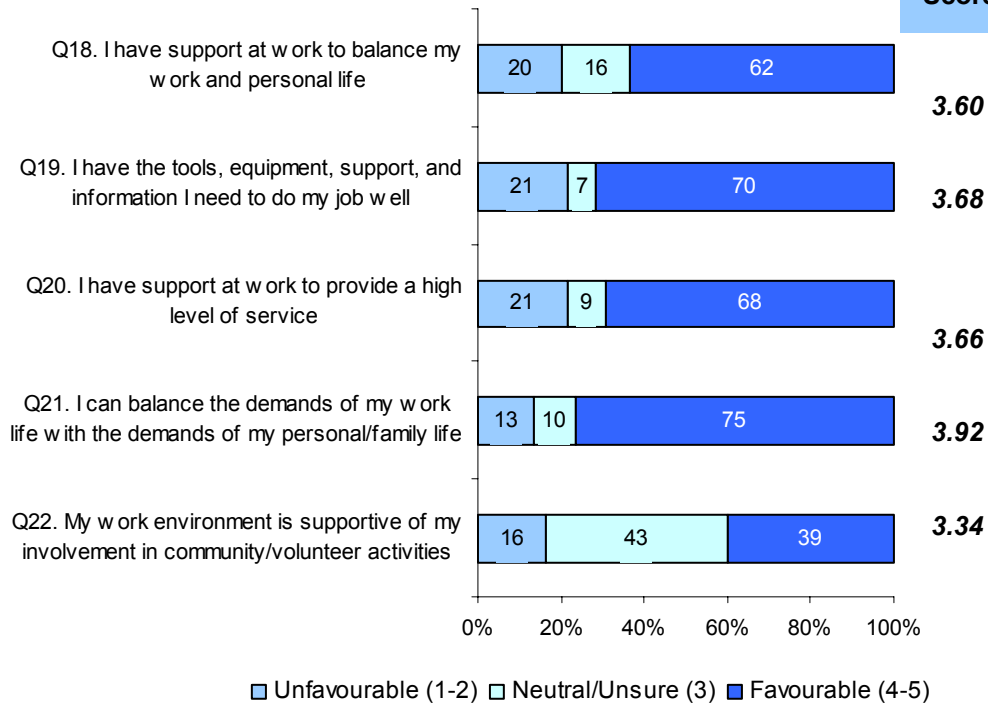
3.5 Quality of Work Life

High Priority

Quality of Work Life

Mean Score

**Category Mean:**  
**3.64**



### **Favourable and Importance Scores**

The favourable scores within the category of quality of work life are relatively high except for one area. When asked if their work environment is supportive of their involvement in community/volunteer activities only 39% of respondents agreed. The other four questions within this category have favourable scores ranging from 62% to 75%.

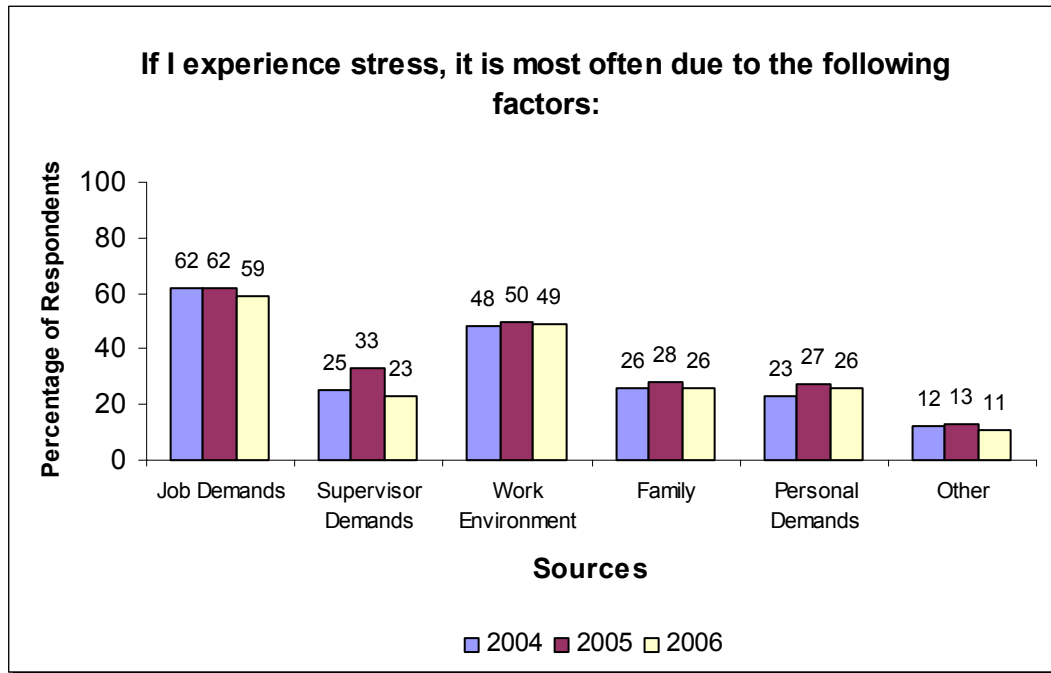
When determining what area to focus on from this category, the importance scores must be noted. The question that received the lowest favourable score also has the lowest importance score. There is a significant difference in the importance of whether the work environment is supportive of employees' involvement in volunteer activities and the other four questions. Focus action on what is perceived as the most important to employees.

In further detail:

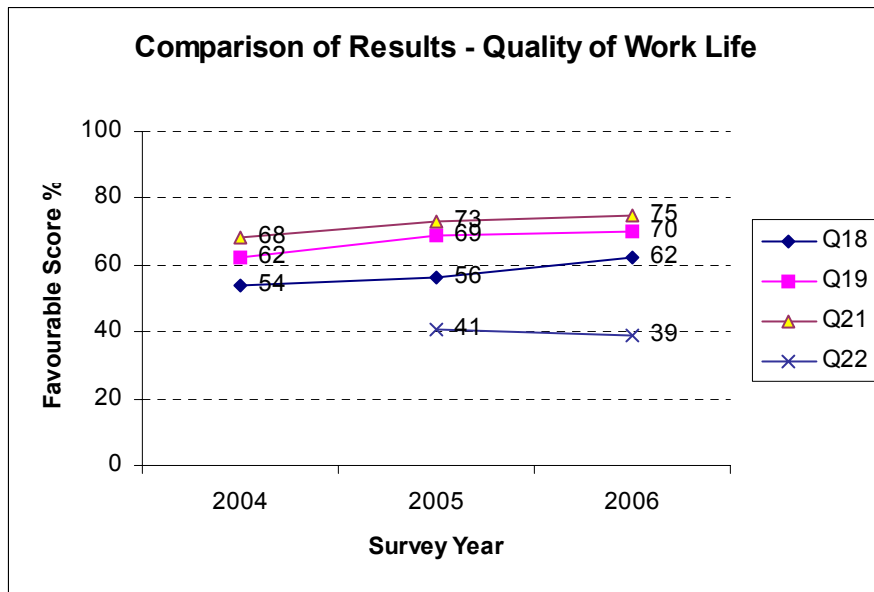
- Employees with less than grade 12 education were more likely to feel they have the support at work to balance their work and personal life and feel they can balance the demands of their work life with the demands of their personal life.
- Favourable scores decrease with years of experience when respondents were asked if they have the tools, equipment, support and information they need to do their job well and if they have the support to provide a high level of service.

### **Sources of Stress for Employees**

Over the past three years employees have been asked what they perceive to be sources of stress. Results have remained relatively consistent since 2004 with job demands rating the highest followed by work environment (refer to the figure on the next page). Supervisor demands, family and personal demands all seem to have similar results with approximately a quarter of employees identifying each of these sources as stressors. Examples of 'other' stressors for employees include leadership, financial concerns and health issues.



How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Question 20 was new in 2006; therefore, it is not included in the comparison. Also, question 22 was new in 2005; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

A comparison of results to 2004 and 2005 surveys shows that for the majority of questions steady improvements can be noted. Increases in favourable scores of approximately 7 to 8% since 2004 have been observed. There is one question that does not follow this trend. Slightly fewer respondents in 2006 felt that their work environment was supportive of their community/volunteer activities in comparison to 2005 results (Q22).

### **Quality of Work Life Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Four major subjects were identified: **Insufficient 'Human' Resources**, **Poor Work Environment**, **Poor Work Life Management** and **Insufficient 'Other' Resources**.

Within **Insufficient 'Human' Resources**, the most common subject was *Increased workload with decrease (or lack of increase) of staff*.

Within **Poor Work Environment**, the most common subjects were *Stressful work environment* and *Poor morale*.

Within **Poor Work Life Management**, the most common subjects were *Insufficient support of wellness/work life balance* and *Inconsistent treatment of staff*.

Within **Insufficient 'Other' Resources**, the most common subjects were *Insufficient financial resources*, *Insufficient/problematic technology* and *Insufficient tools*.

Suggestions included increasing staff, addressing workloads and stress, supplying tools, improving the physical environment, flexible work options and improving morale/respectful environment. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.



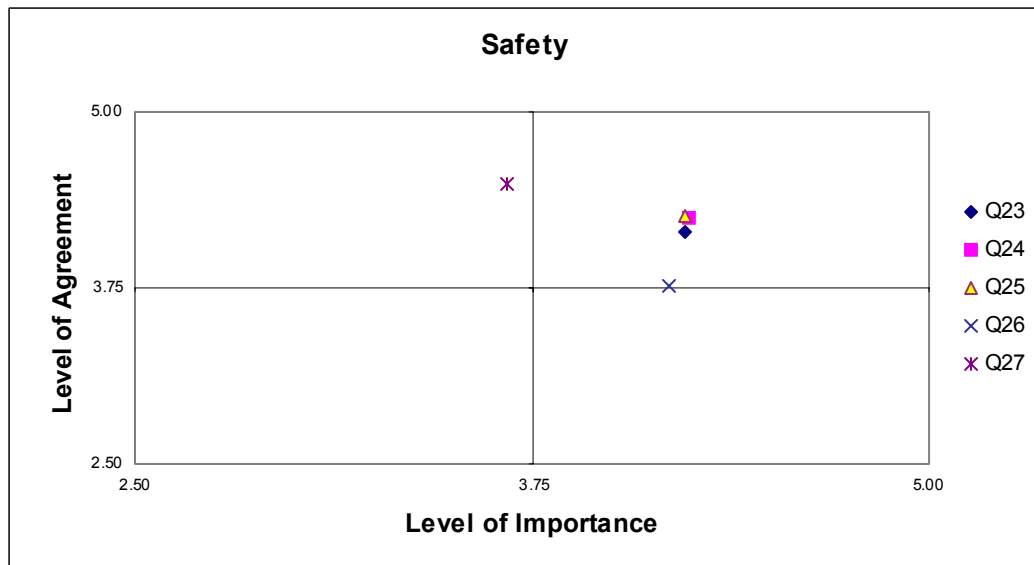
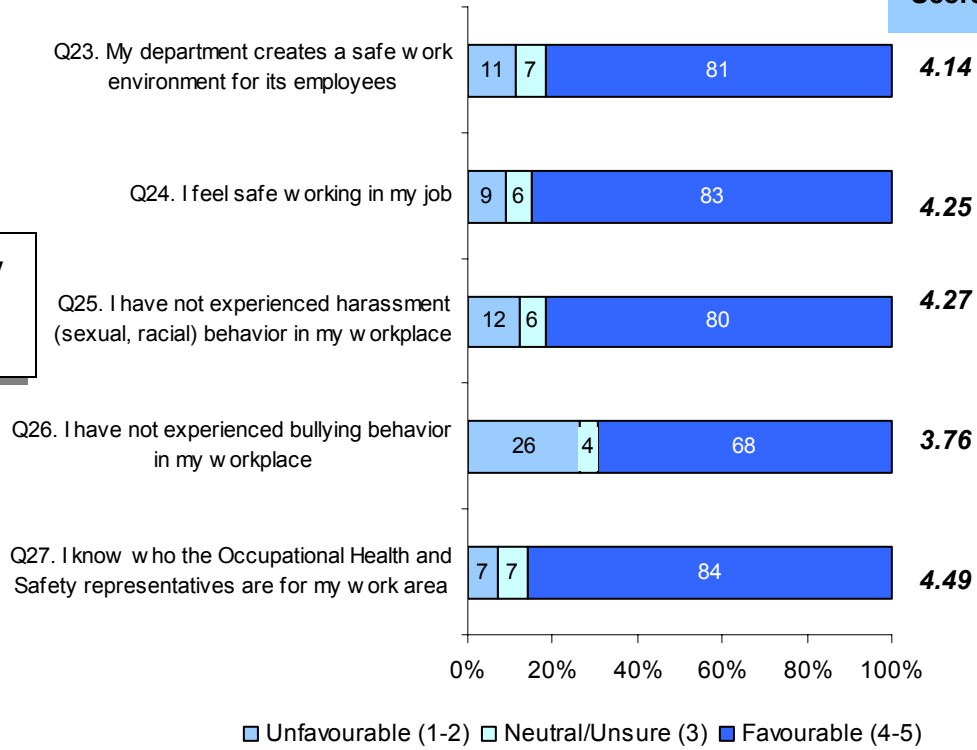
3.6 Safety

4  
Success

Category Mean:  
4.20

Safety

Mean Score



### Favourable and Importance Scores

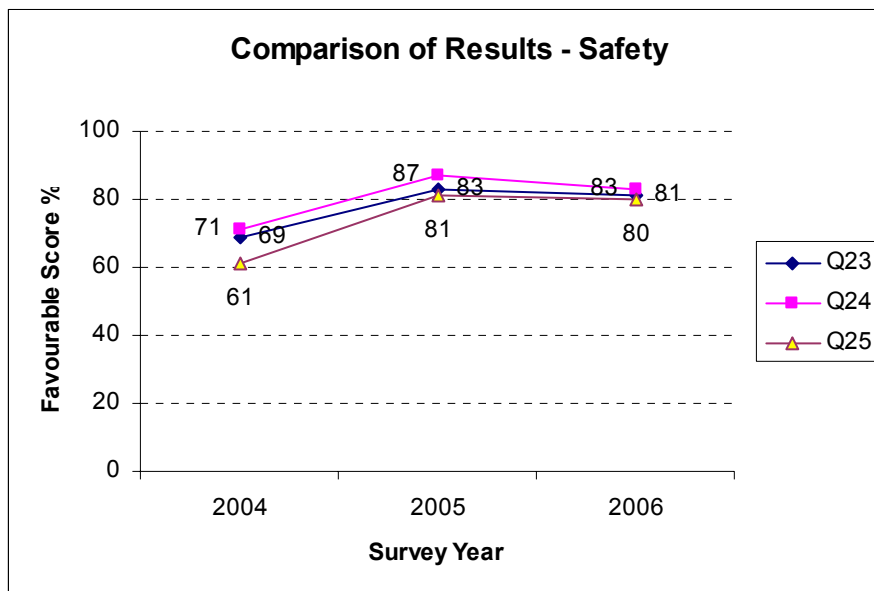
Areas within the category of safety have been identified as strengths for the Government of Nova Scotia. The majority of questions have favourable responses over 80%, with one exception. Approximately 68% of respondents agree they have not experienced bullying behaviour in the workplace.

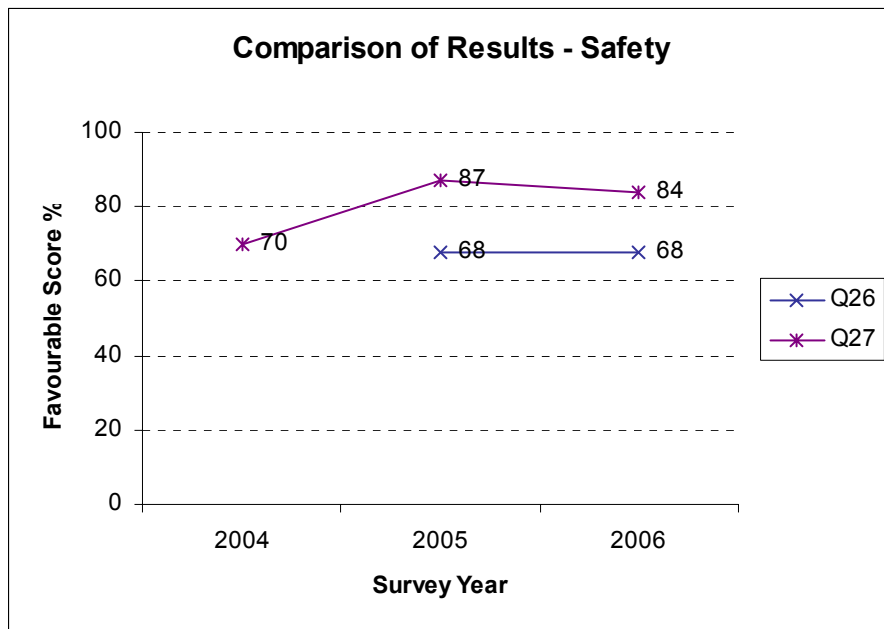
Safety is a very important component of the work environment for employees. More than 90% of respondents agree that it is important that their department create a safe environment, that they feel safe working in their job, and to not experience harassment or bullying in their workplace.

In further detail:

- Men were more likely to report they have not experienced bullying or harassment behaviour in the workplace.
- Employees with less than grade 12 were more likely to have experienced harassment but less likely bullying.
- Employees with fewer than 2 years of employment experience and those 29 years or younger were less likely to have experienced harassment.
- Employees 55 years of age and older were more likely to agree that they have not experienced bullying in the workplace, in comparison to other age groups.
- Employees in the regions had slightly lower favourable scores on all safety questions in comparison to those in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

### How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?





**Note:** Question 26 was new in 2005; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

Safety continues to be an area of strength as results continue to show an increase since 2004. The additional question added in 2005 with regards to bullying, however, shows no improvement in 2006 (Q26).

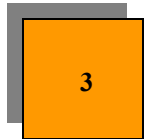
### **Safety Comments**

Although this category is an area of success as indicated in the survey results, serious issues have been identified in the written comments that require immediate attention and appropriate action.

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Common subjects include *Reported bullying*, *Reported harassment*, *Air quality/workspace health concerns* and *Frustration due to lack of action by management*.

Suggestions focused on addressing health concerns, as well as dealing with bullying and harassment including creating and revisiting relevant policies (i.e. zero tolerance). Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

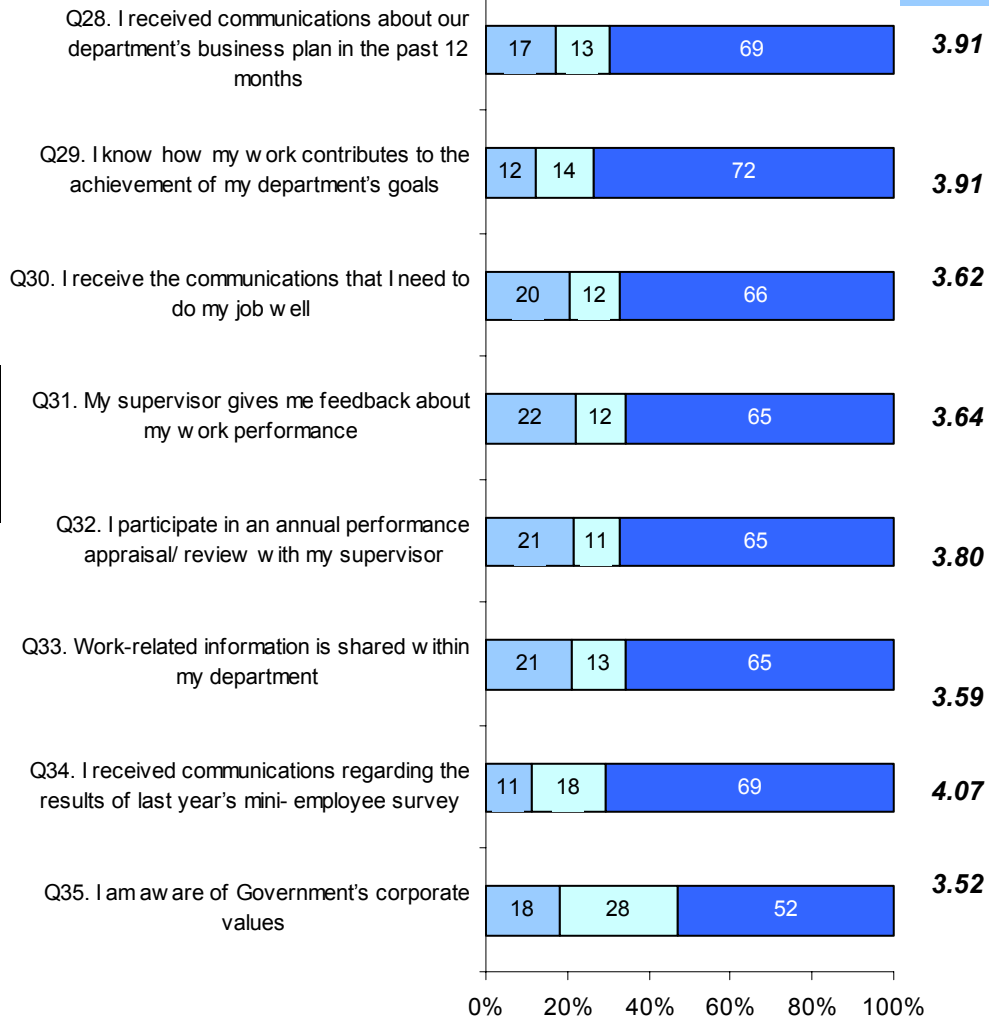
3.7 Communications



Strengthen Importance

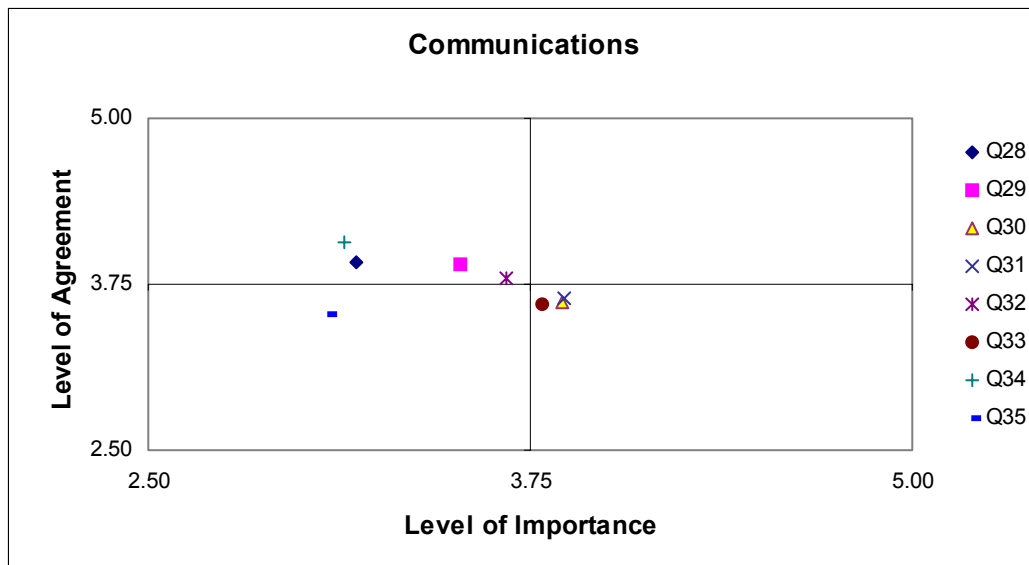
Communications

Mean Score



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)

Category Mean:  
3.80



#### Favourable and Importance Scores

Communications is considered an area of strength for the Government of Nova Scotia, with one exception.

- Just over half of respondents agree they are aware of Government's corporate values.

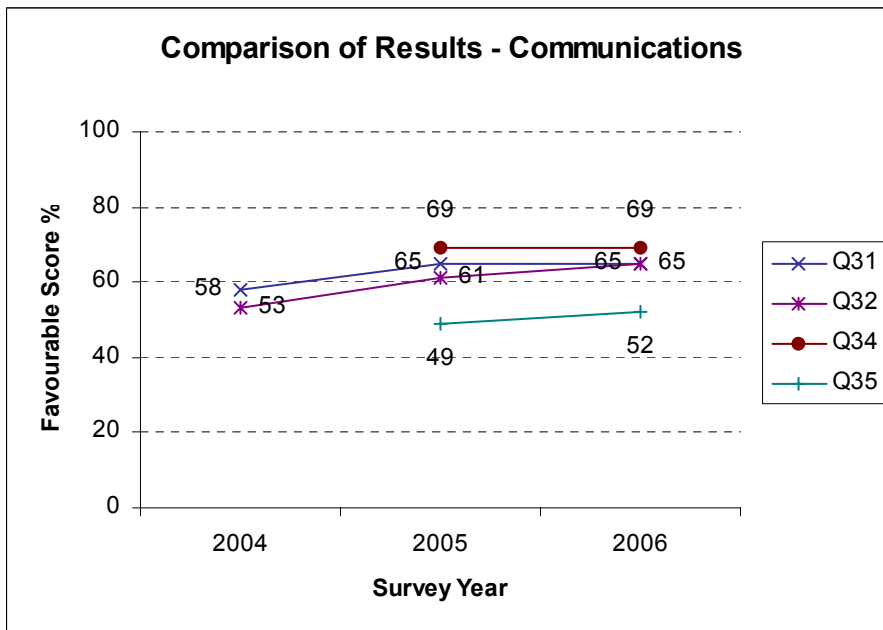
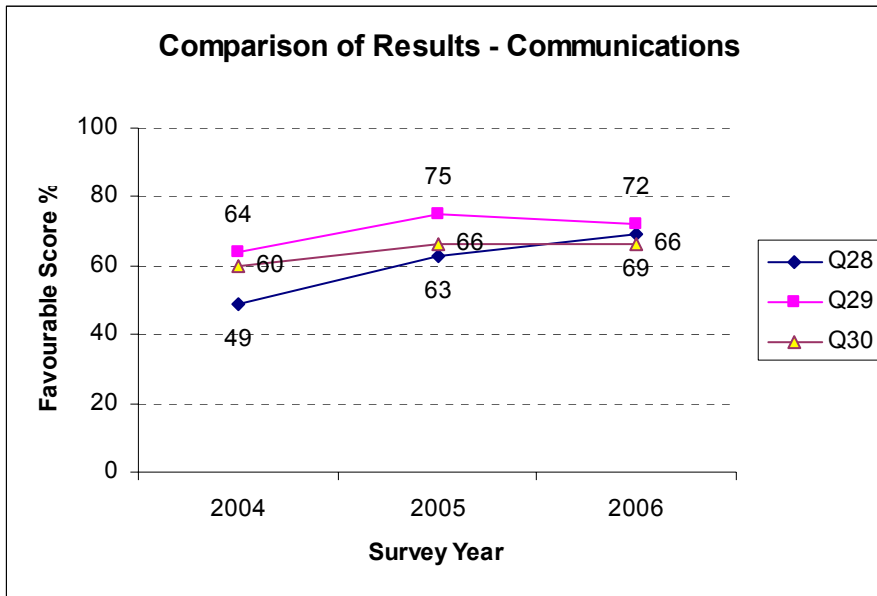
Communications is considered very important to employees, particularly when it is communication they need to do their job well, communication with regards to work performance and knowing that work-related information is shared in their department. It is interesting to note that just over 70% of respondents believe it is important to receive communications about their department's business plan, to receive communications regarding the results of last year's survey and to be aware of Government's corporate values.

In further detail:

- MCP employees were more likely to report receiving communications about their department's business plan in the past 12 months and to know how their work contributes to the achievement of their department's goals.
- Employees 29 years or younger were considerably less likely to agree that their supervisor gives them feedback about their work performance compared to other age groups.
- CUPE employees were less likely to agree that their supervisor gives them feedback about their work performance compared to other pay plans.
- Managers reported higher levels of favourable scores to all communications questions compared to staff and supervisors.
- Female employees were more likely to respond favorably when asked if they received communications about the results of last year's employee survey.

- Older respondents were more likely to report that they are aware of Government's corporate values.

How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Questions 34 and 35 were new in 2005; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

When comparing results, the majority of questions have increased in favourable scores since 2004. Two new questions in 2005, however, have seen only slight increases. These two questions are in the areas of communication with regards to the results of the previous employee survey and awareness of Government's corporate values (Q34 & 35).

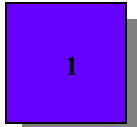
### **Communications Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Communication** and **Performance Management**.

Within **Communication**, the most common subjects are *Poor internal communication* and *Poor communication from senior management*.

Within **Performance Management**, the most common subjects are *Performance management not being done* and *Performance management being done unfairly*.

Suggestions included improving internal communication, providing timely performance feedback and creating confidential reverse performance reviews for management. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

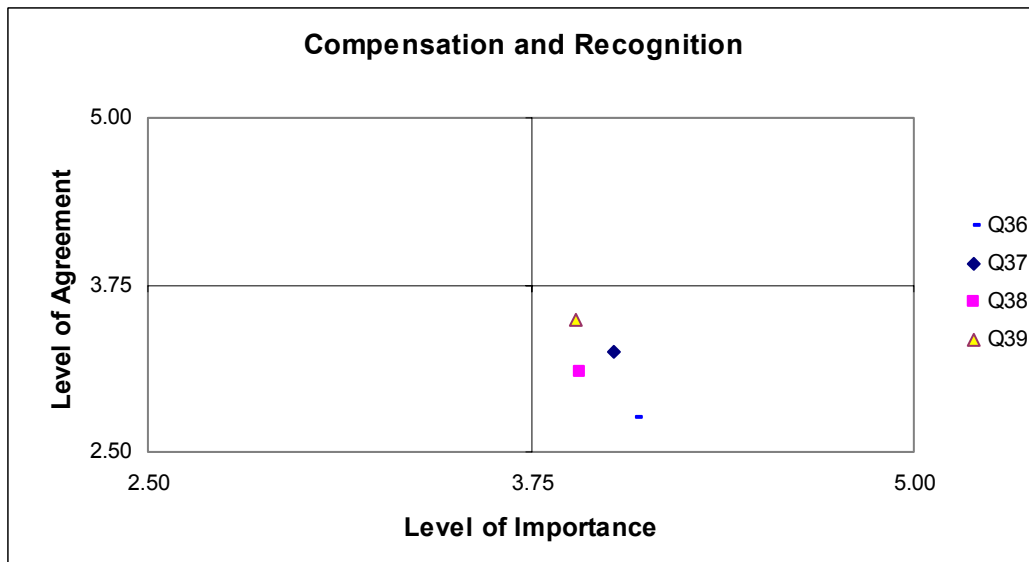
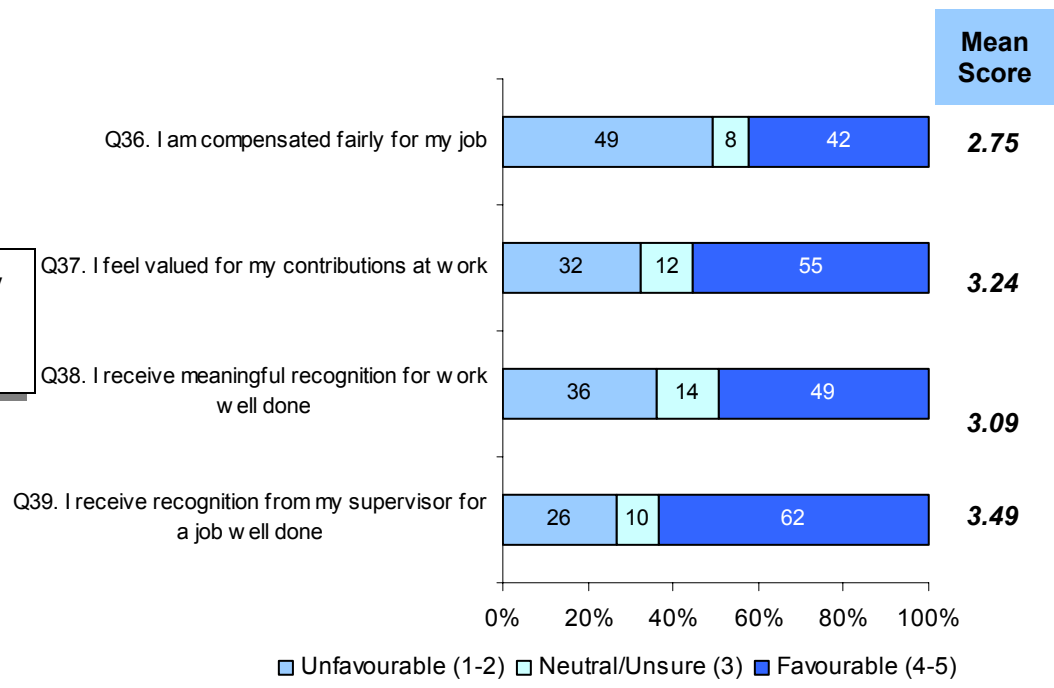


High Priority

3.8 Compensation and Recognition

Compensation and Recognition

**Category Mean:**  
**3.14**





**Favourable and Importance Scores**

Compensation and recognition questions generated relatively low favourable responses.

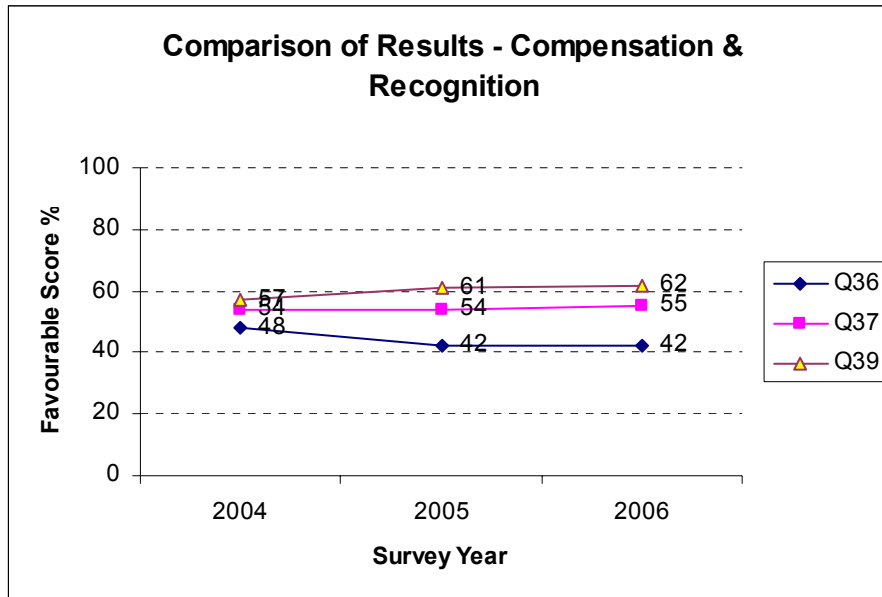
- Approximately 42% agree they are compensated fairly for their job.
- Just over half of respondents feel valued for their contributions at work.
- Less than half of employees believe they receive meaningful recognition for work well done.
- 62% of respondents feel they receive recognition from their supervisor for a job well done.

Compensation and recognition is very important to employees. Importance scores for all questions were over 90%.

In further detail:

- Employees with six to ten years of experience were more likely to feel they were compensated fairly for their job.
- Employees with less than grade 12, in comparison to employees with grade 12 and post-secondary education, were more likely to feel they were compensated fairly for their job.
- 30 – 39 year old employees feel more valued for their work than the other age groups.
- Favourable scores tend to decrease with years of experience when employees were asked if they receive meaningful recognition for work well done.
- MCP and CUPE employees are more likely to feel they receive meaningful recognition for work well done. Corrections and TE employees are less likely to feel they receive meaningful recognition.
- As years of experience increase, favourable scores decrease when respondents are asked if they believe they receive meaningful recognition from their supervisor for a job well done.

How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Question 38 was new in 2006; therefore, it is not included in the comparison.

When comparing the results of the 2004 and 2005 survey, there has been some progress made with employees feeling they receive recognition from their supervisor for a job well done (Q39). A decline was seen in 2005 with the question on compensation and has remained there in 2006 (Q36). Results of the question of employees feeling valued for their contributions at work only saw a 1% increase in favourable score (Q37).

### **Compensation and Recognition Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with a higher than average number of comments. Comments were grouped into Compensation and Recognition subjects.

Compensation - Four major subjects were identified with Compensation: **Insufficient Compensation, Inequitable Compensation, Classification Issues** and **Collective Agreement Issues**. A small number of comments were grouped in an 'Other' category as well.

Within **Insufficient Compensation**, the most common subjects were *No cost of living increase/salary is too low, Salary low compared to private industry standards, Salary low compared to federal government* and *No financial incentive to perform well*.

Within **Inequitable Compensation**, the most common subjects were *Pay/Classification doesn't reflect actual work, Unpaid overtime* and *Unfair pay (i.e. same job different pay/managers make less than direct reports)*.

Within **Classification Issues**, the most common subjects were the *Bargaining unit classification review (BUCR)* and *Overhaul entire classification system*.

Within **Collective Agreement Issues**, the most common subject was *Negotiations are too long for new contracts*.

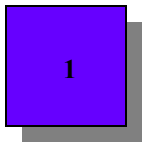
Recognition - Two major subjects were identified with Recognition: **Insufficient Recognition** and **Inequitable Recognition**.

Within **Insufficient Recognition**, the most common subjects were *Lack of recognition (general)* and *No recognition for increased workloads*.

Within **Inequitable Recognition**, the most common subjects were *Favoritism* and *Rewarding seniority instead of performance*.

Compensation suggestions included putting salaries on par with others, changing the compensation system and negotiating collective agreements faster. Recognition suggestions included different recognition options as well as changing existing recognition programs. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

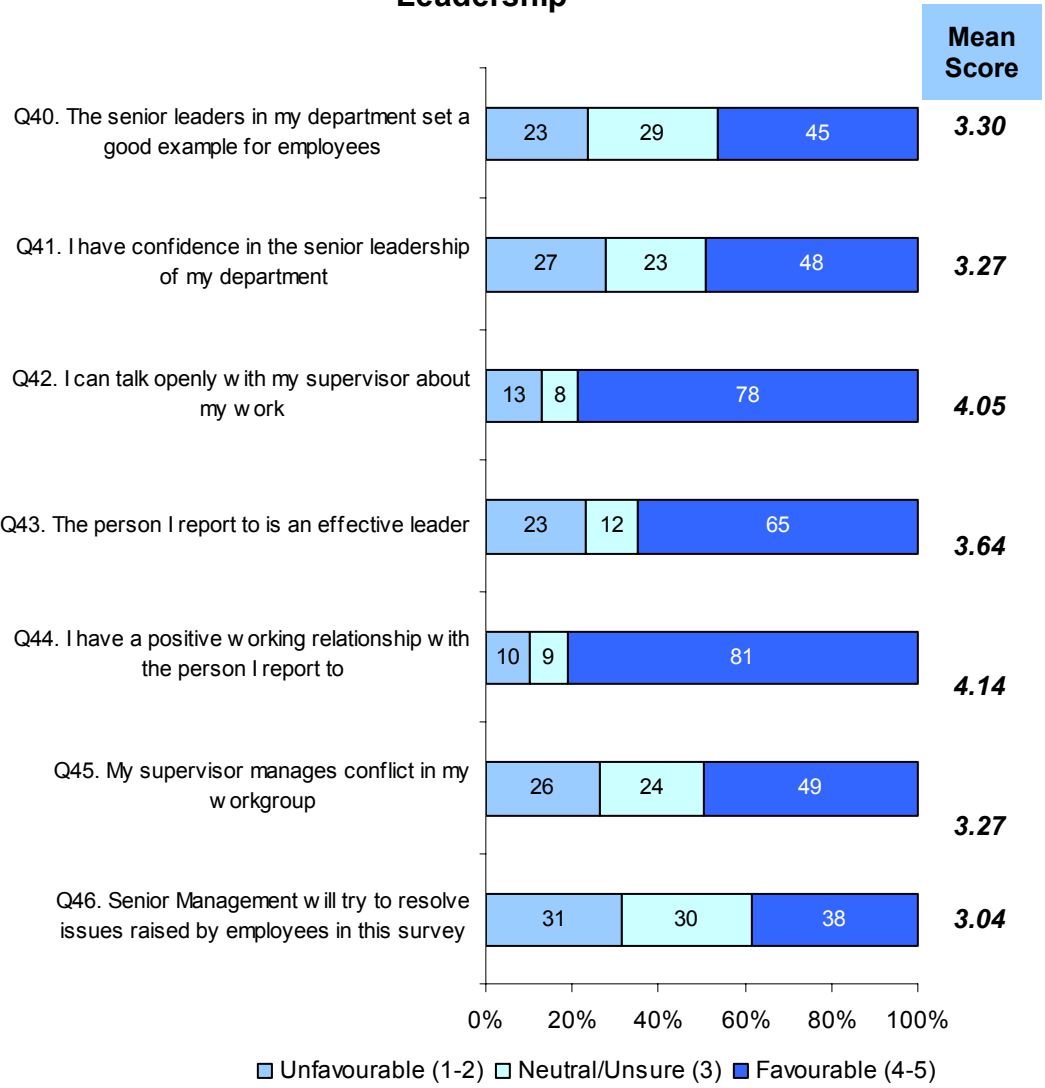
3.9 Leadership

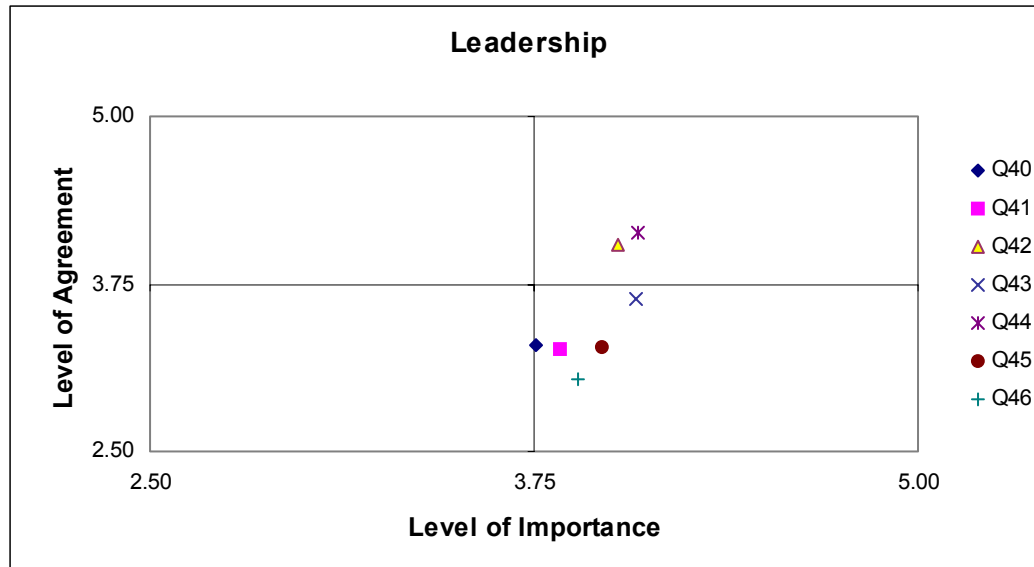


High Priority

Leadership

**Category Mean:**  
**3.57**





#### Favourable and Importance Scores

Leadership is an area that generates mixed results. Favourable scores range from a high of 81% to a low of 38%. Results of the following questions would be areas to focus on during action planning:

- Only 45% of respondents believe the senior leaders in their department set a good example for employees.
- Less than half of employees have confidence in the senior leadership in their department.
- Approximately 65% of employees believe the person they report to is an effective leader.
- Just under half of respondents agree that their supervisor manages conflict in their workgroup.
- Just over a third of employees believe senior management will try to resolve issues raised by employees in this survey.

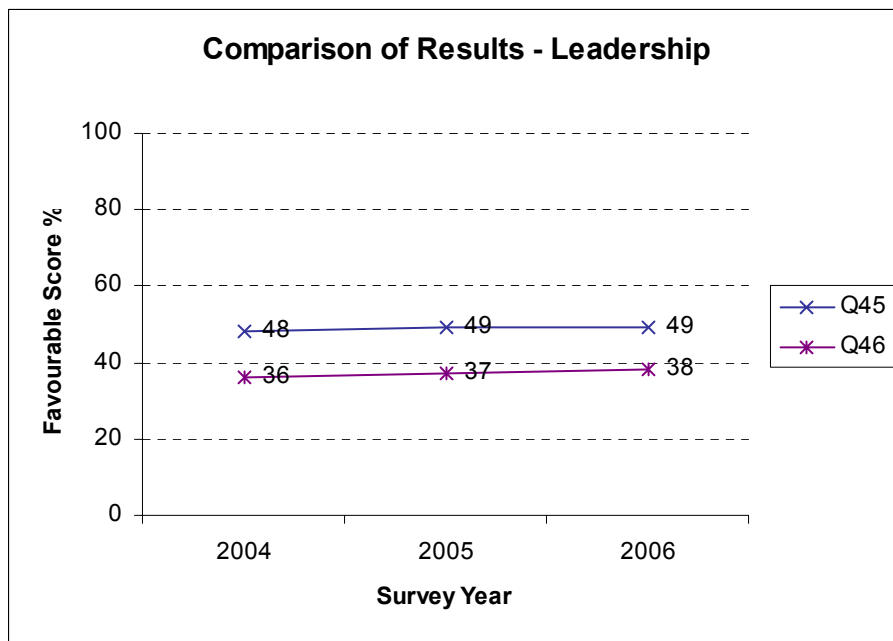
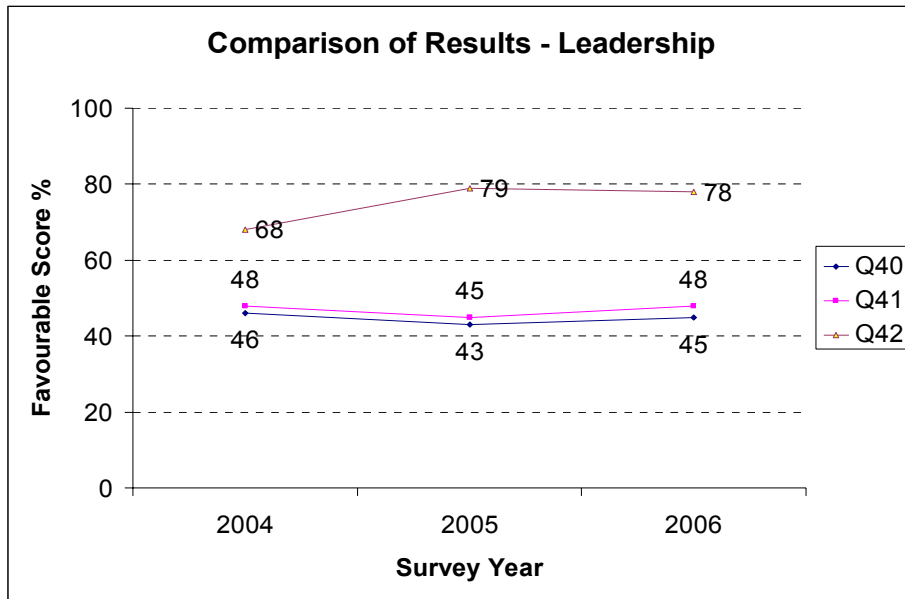
Leadership is also another very important component to the government work environment. Importance scores range from 86% to 95%.

In further detail:

- Managers, in comparison to staff and supervisors, have significantly higher favourable scores when asked if the senior leaders in their department set a good example for employees and if they have confidence in the senior leadership in their department.
- As years of experience increase, favourable scores decrease when employees are asked about their confidence in the senior leadership in their department.
- Employees with less than grade 12 are more likely to feel their supervisor manages conflict in their workgroup compared to employees with grade 12 and post-secondary education.

- MCP employees are less likely to feel their supervisor manages conflict in their workgroup, whereas, CUPE are the most likely to feel their supervisor manages conflict.

How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?



**Note:** Questions 43 and 44 were new in 2006; therefore, they are not included in the comparison.

There are consistencies in the results between all three survey years. The biggest improvement since 2004 was in the percentage of respondents who felt they could talk openly with their supervisors about their work (Q42). The other questions either saw no change or a relatively little increase.

### **Leadership Comments**

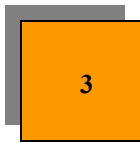
Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with a higher than average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Management Practices** and **Commit and Act on Survey Results**. A number of comments were grouped in **Lack of Confidence/Effectiveness of Leaders** and an 'Other' category as well.

Within **Management Practices**, the most common subjects were *Management practices (varied)*, *No accountability/not managing issues*, *Favoritism*, *Not supporting staff*, *Not appreciating staff* and *No direction*.

Within **Commit and Act on Survey Results**, the most common subjects were *Act on survey results* and *Demonstrate change*.

Suggestions included changing management practices and committing and acting to survey results. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

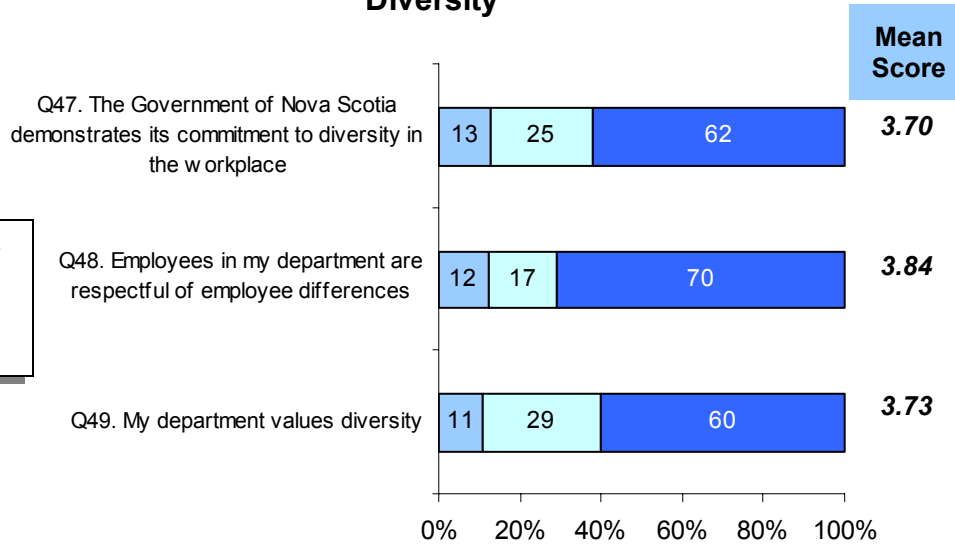
3.10 Diversity



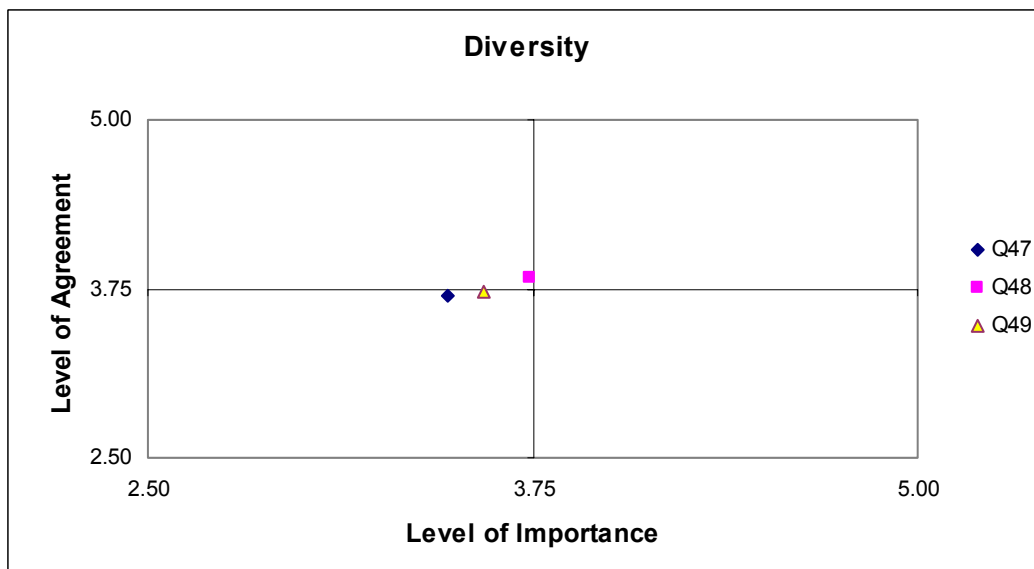
Strengthen Importance

Diversity

**Category Mean:**  
**3.77**



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)





**Favourable and Importance Scores**

Questions regarding diversity generated mixed results from employees.

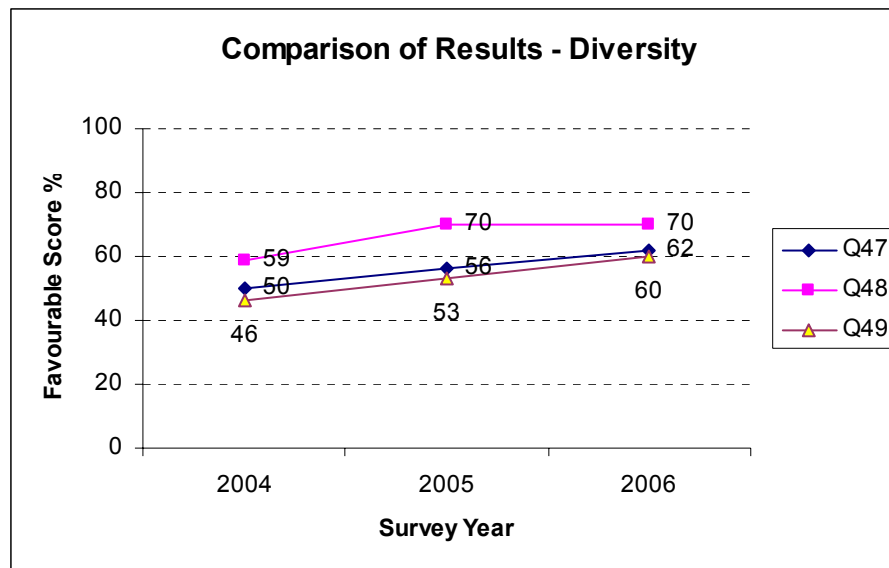
- 62% of employees agree that the Government of Nova Scotia demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the workplace.
- Almost three quarters of respondents believe the employees in their department are respectful of employee difference.
- Only 60% of employees feel their department values diversity.

Almost 90% of employees felt it was important for employees in their department to respect employee differences. In addition, over 80% of respondents felt it was important that the Government of Nova Scotia demonstrate its commitment to diversity and for their department to value diversity.

In further detail:

- Employees with fewer than two years of experience with the government were more likely to agree that the Government of Nova Scotia demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the work place and that the employees in their department are respectful of employee difference.
- Respondents with less than grade 12 were more likely to feel the Government of Nova Scotia demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the work place and that their department values diversity.
- Employees in the regions were less likely to feel employees in their department are respectful of employee difference, compared to employees in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- AS pay plan employees reported higher levels of favourable scores regarding diversity questions compared to the responses from other pay plans.

**How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?**



When comparing 2006 results to previous surveys in 2004 and 2005, there has been a steady increase in the number of favourable scores for each of the diversity questions. The largest increase, since 2004, of 14% is seen with employees' belief their department values diversity (Q49).

### **Diversity Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Reported Discrimination (against persons of designated groups)** and **Lack of Support/Progress for Diversity**. There were a small number of comments grouped under perceived 'reverse discrimination' as well.

Within **Reported Discrimination (against persons of designated groups)**, the topics included *Gender discrimination against women, Racism and Discrimination (unspecified)*.

Within **Lack of Support/Progress for Diversity**, topics include *Lack of progress/commitment, No support for persons with disabilities, No mention of language diversity (bilingual) and Low levels of diversity training*.

Suggestions stated the need for more work in affirmative action and addressed employees' perception of reverse discrimination. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

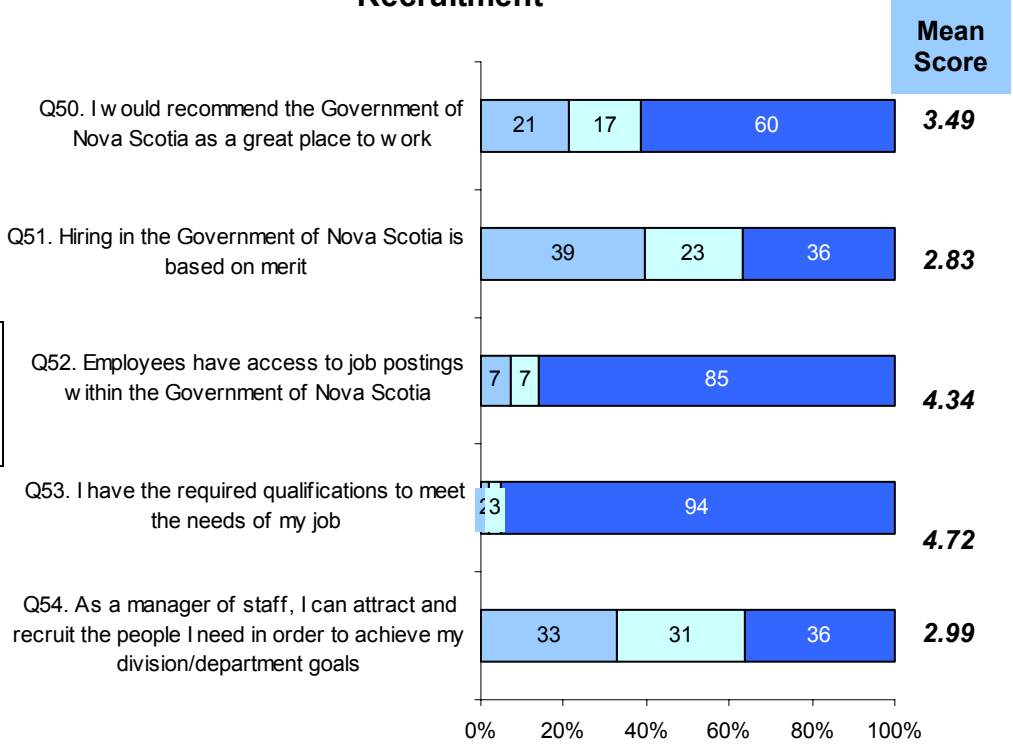
1

3.11 Recruitment

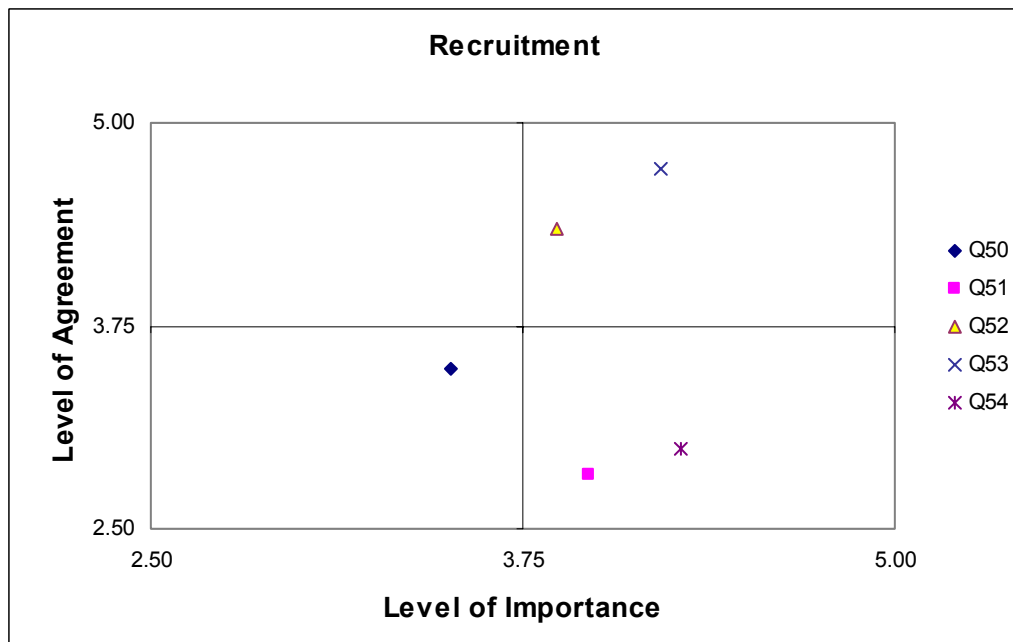
High Priority

Recruitment

**Category Mean:**  
**3.67**



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)



**Favourable and Importance Scores**

Recruitment questions generated a mix of responses from employees. The questions that should be of focus for action planning include the following:

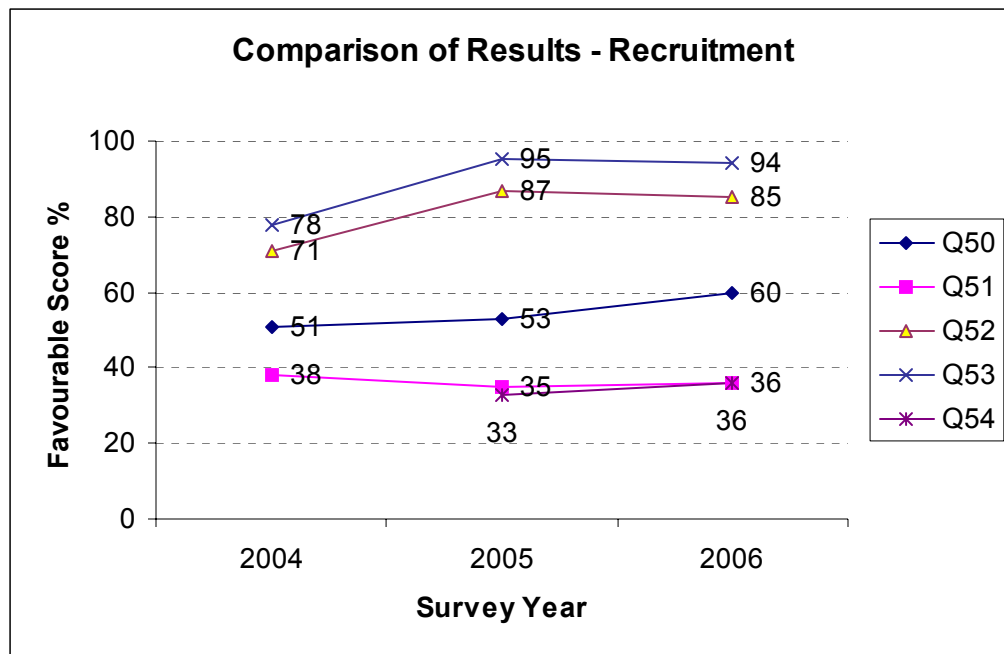
- Just over a third of respondents believe hiring in the Government of Nova Scotia is based on merit.
- Only 36% of managers of staff feel they can attract and recruit the people they need in order to achieve their division/departmental goals.

Each question in the category of recruitment is important to employees with all but one question with importance scores well above 90%.

In further detail:

- Younger employees and employees with less than five years of employment experience are more likely to recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work.
- As years of experience increases, the less likely employees are to agree that hiring is based on merit.
- Managers are more likely to feel that hiring was based on merit compared to staff and supervisors.
- MCP and AS employees were more likely to feel that hiring was based on merit; employees in Corrections and CL pay plan employees were less likely to agree.

**How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?**



**Note:** Question 54 was new in 2005; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

A comparison of results to previous surveys shows the continued improvement of employees' believing they have the required qualifications to meet the need of their job and that they have access to job postings within government (Q53). Between 2005 and 2006 improvement has been seen with employees' agreement in recommending the Government of Nova Scotia as a one of the best places to work (Q50). The two questions identified previously as the areas to focus action planning have had relatively consistent results in prior surveys (Q 51 & 54). The question in reference to hiring based on merit has slightly declined in 2006 (Q51).

### **Recruitment Comments**

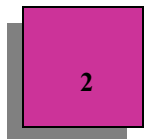
Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Inequitable Hiring Practices** and **Barriers to Effective Recruitment**. A number of comments were grouped in an 'Other' category as well.

Within **Inequitable Hiring Practices**, the most common topics were *Hiring based on favorites, friends and family, Hiring decisions made before posting/interview, and Hiring based only on interview, not education, experience or past performance.*

Within **Barriers to Effective Recruitment**, the most common topics were *Union rules (minimum qualifications, not best, limited access to jobs - external and excluded) and Slow recruitment process.*

Suggestions included changing/improving the recruitment process, giving credit to prior learning, enabling casuals to become permanent, opening up FTE's and creating a civil servants exam. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

3.12 Retention

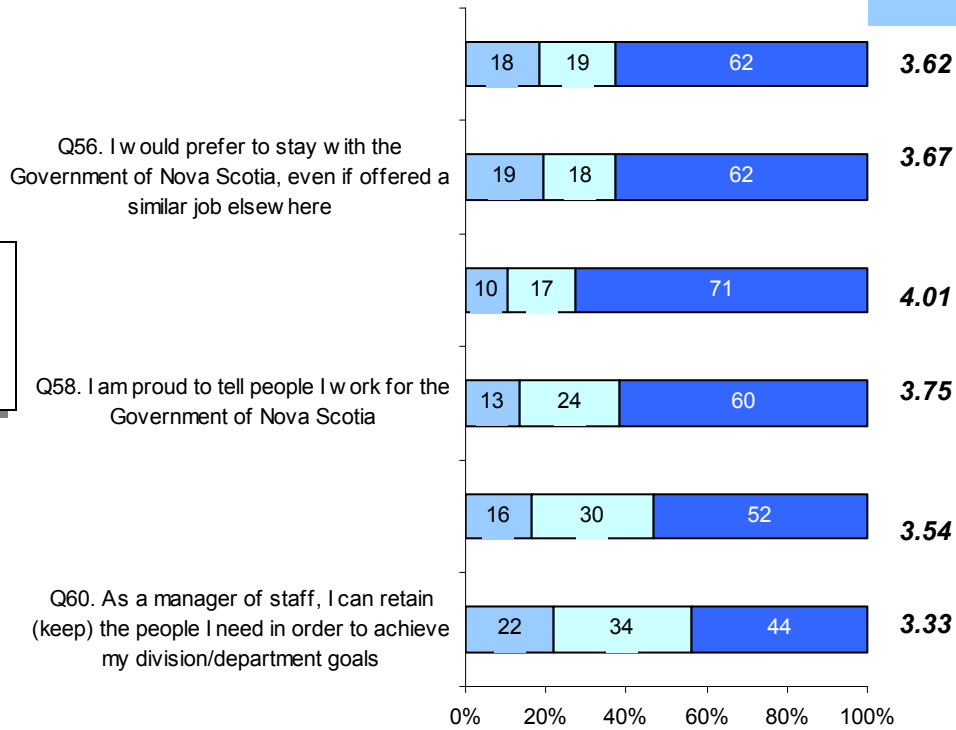


Improvements Needed

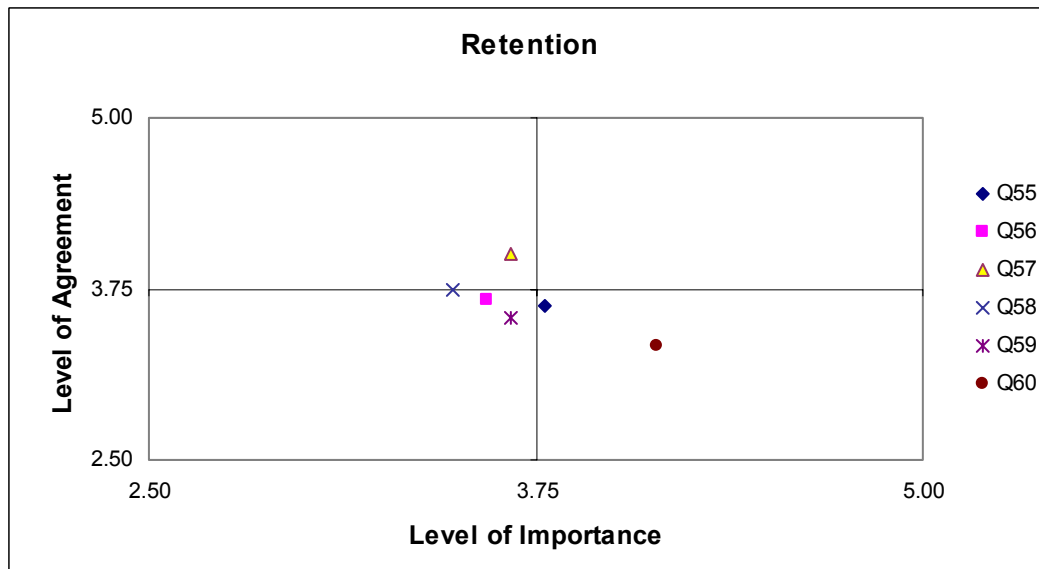
**Category Mean:**  
**3.65**

Retention

**Mean Score**



■ Unfavourable (1-2) ■ Neutral/Unsure (3) ■ Favourable (4-5)



### **Favourable and Importance Scores**

Questions within the category of retention generated relatively low favourable scores.

- Only 62% of respondents believe they see a future for their career and would prefer to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia even if offered a similar job elsewhere.
- 60% of respondents are proud to tell people they work for the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Just over half of employees agree they work for an effective organization.
- Only 44% of managers of staff feel they can retain the people they need in order to achieve their division/department goals.

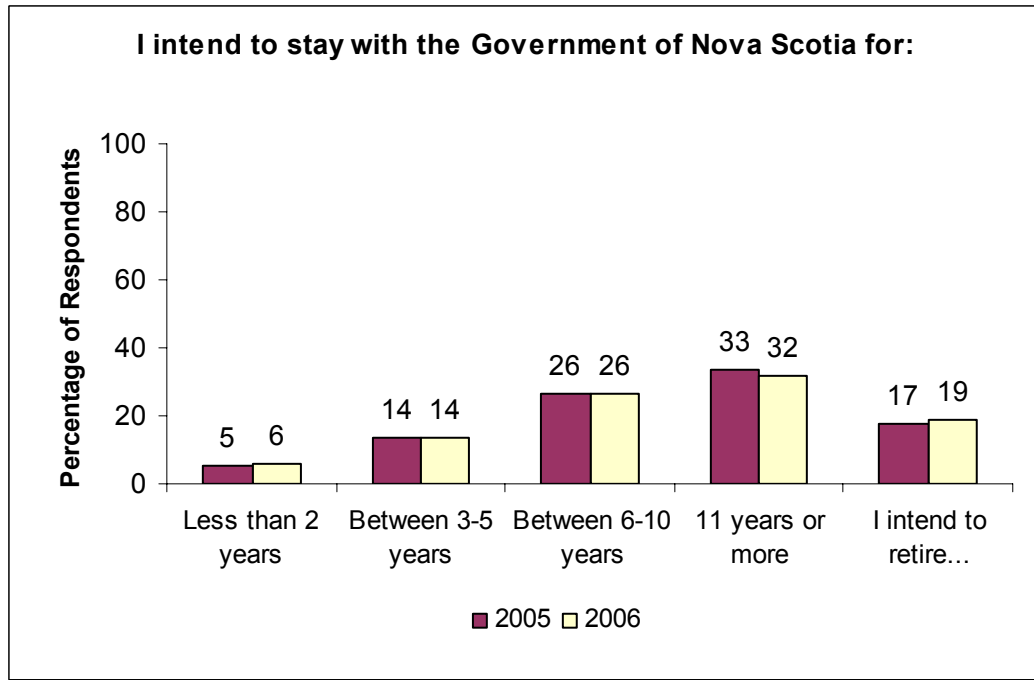
Retention is an important factor for employees in their work environment. In particular, 100% of managers of staff feel it is important to be able to retain the people they need in order to achieve their division/department goals.

In further detail:

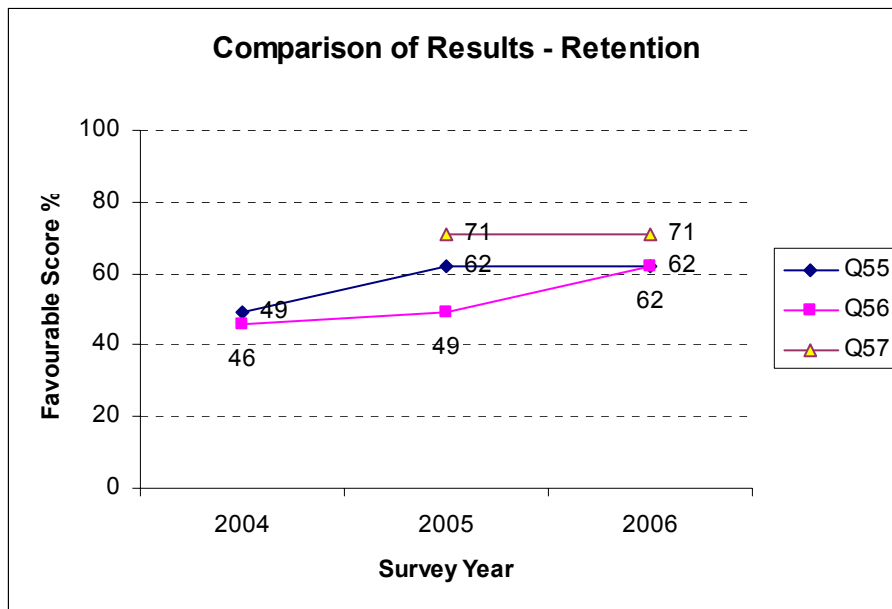
- Employees aged 30 – 39 were more likely to see a future for their career in the Government of Nova Scotia and would prefer to stay with the Government even if offered a similar job elsewhere.
- Employees with post-secondary education were less likely to stay with the Government if offered a similar job elsewhere, compared to employees with less education.
- CUPE and other pay plan employees were more likely to stay with the Government even if offered a similar job elsewhere, compared to other pay plans.
- Employees with 6 – 10 years experience reported the highest level of pride to work as a public servant.
- Managers were more likely to feel they work for an effective organization, compared to staff and supervisors (staff 47% favourable; supervisors 60% favourable; and managers 75% favourable).

### **Intentions to Stay in the Nova Scotia Government**

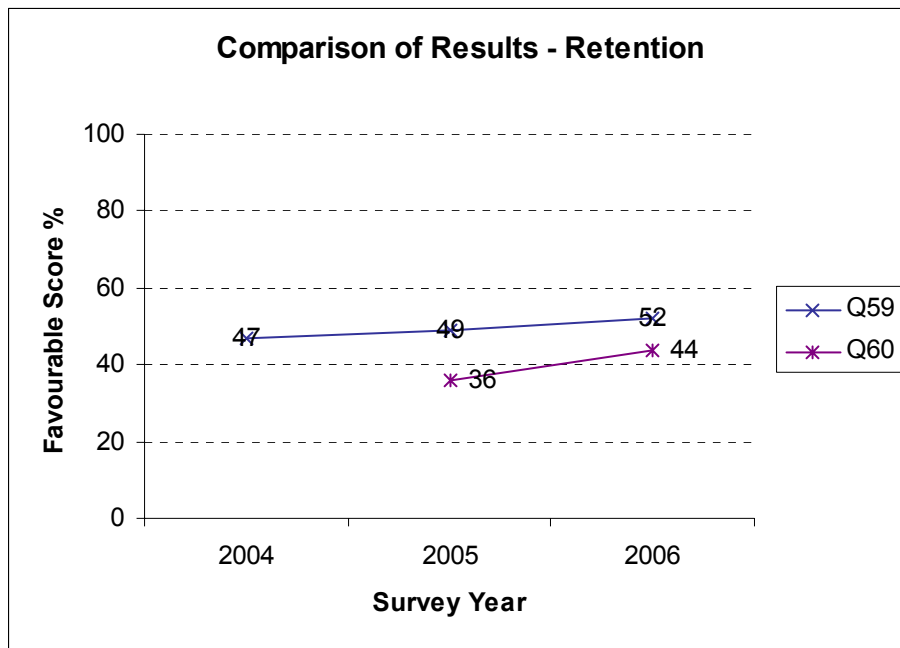
Employees' intentions to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia have stayed relatively consistent over the past two surveys (refer to the figure on the next page). Over a quarter of employees intend to stay 6-10 years while 32% intend on staying 11 or more years. Not surprising those employees planning to retire in the next five years has increased slightly as more public servants become eligible for retirement. Further analysis of employee intentions to stay should be conducted to look at age differences. In addition, an analysis of employee intentions to stay and retirement eligibility would allow for better forecasting of when and what percentage of employees will retire.



How do the results compare to 2004 and 2005?







**Note:** Question 58 was new in 2006; therefore, there is no comparison to 2004.

Since 2004 the largest increase in favourable scores is with employees' perception of seeing a future for their career working in the Government of Nova Scotia and preferring to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia even if offered a similar job elsewhere (Q55 & 56). Response to the question on feeling proud to work as a public servant stayed the same in 2005 and 2006 (Q57). Only a minimal increase is noted in respondent's favourable scores when asked if they work for an effective organization (Q59). Managers belief that they are able to retain the people they need to achieve their goals has also only seen a slight increase since 2005 (Q60).

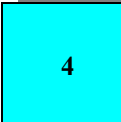
### **Retention Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly unfavourable with an average number of comments. Two major subjects were identified: **Observed Poor Retention** and **Planning or Considering Leaving**. A number of comments were also grouped in **No Longer Proud/Preferred Employer** and **Not an Effective Organization**.

Within **Observed Poor Retention**, the most common subjects were *Low morale*, *Low retention (general)* and *We are losing the best people*.

Within **Planning or Considering Leaving**, the most common subjects included *Would leave for another opportunity*, *Intending to leave*, and *Only staying for family obligations, pension, etc.*

Suggestions included offering 'in demand' benefits, such as subsidized day care and more flex time as well as changing the culture, increasing salaries, opening up more positions (FTE's), evenly distributing workloads and creating greater accountability. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

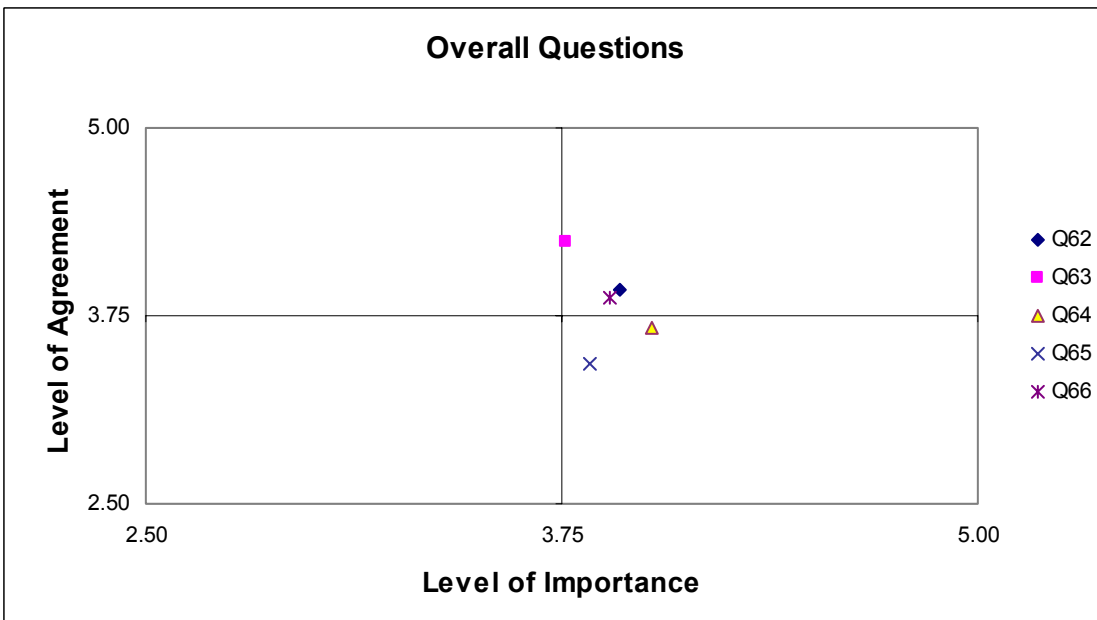
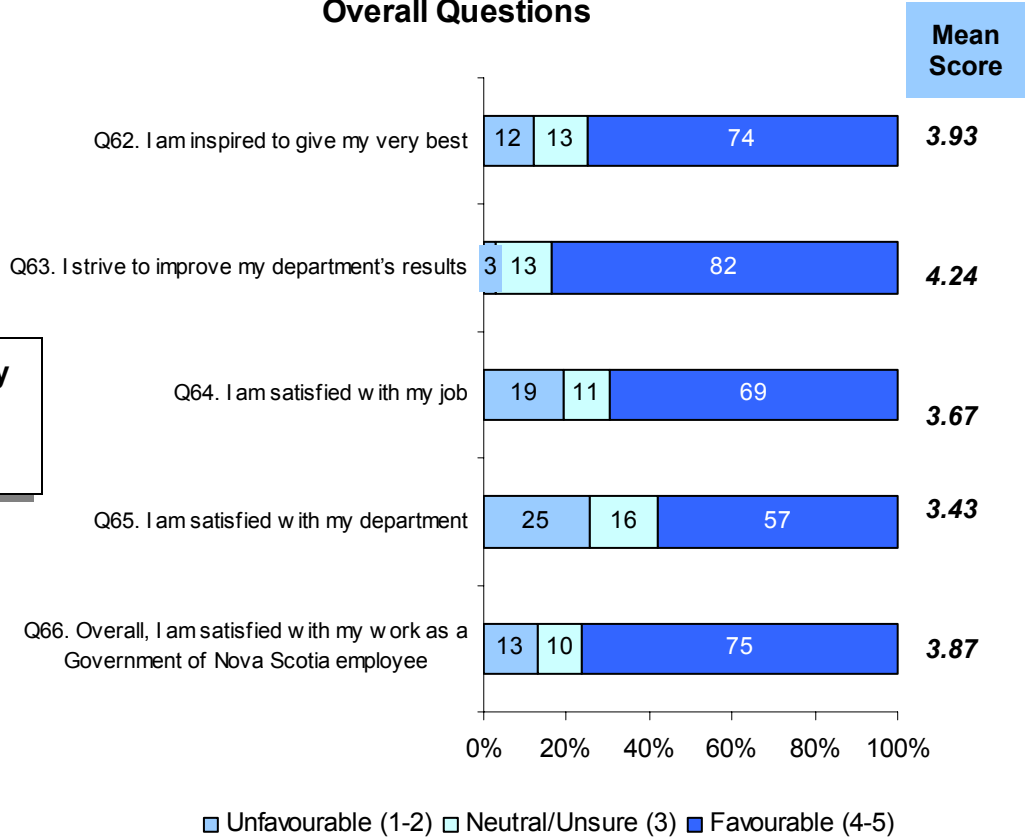


Success

3.13 Overall Questions

Overall Questions

**Category Mean:**  
**3.84**



### **Favourable and Importance Scores**

All the questions in the overall category were new questions in 2006. These questions generated mixed responses from respondents.

- Approximately 74% of respondents agree they are inspired to give their very best.
- 82% of employees strive to improve their department's results.
- Just over two-thirds of respondents are satisfied with their job.
- Only 57% are satisfied with their department.
- Three-quarters of employees are satisfied with their work as a Government of Nova Scotia employee.

All the areas within this category are important to employees. Importance scores range between 88% and 93%.

In further detail:

- Regional employees are slightly more satisfied with their job in comparison to employees in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- Employees with less than grade 12 are significantly more satisfied with their jobs in comparison to employees grade 12 or post-secondary.
- MCP and CUPE employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs.
- Favourable scores tend to decrease with years of experience and level of education when respondents are asked if they are satisfied with their department.
- Also, favourable scores tend to increase with the age of employees when asked if they are satisfied with their department.

### **Other Comments**

Comments in this category were mostly favourable with an average number of comments. The most common topics include *Satisfaction with work/job/department* and *complaints (varied)*.

Suggestions included structural changes to government, less privatization as well as more focus on organization and budget issues. Refer to Supplementary Appendix.

## Chapter 4 What are Employees Saying - Comment Analyses

### *Notes on Interpreting the Comments*

The submission of written comments by respondents was completely optional. Not all employees wrote comments; therefore, these comments may not be reflective of the views of employees from every department, or necessarily the population as a whole. This does not mean that the views expressed are not valid. These are the perceptions of employees who chose to write comments. If employees did choose to write comments, their views are summarized within this report.

There is a view that people tend to write negative comments more often than neutral or positive comments. This view was not tested or analyzed in this report. In this case the majority of all comments were unfavourable (77%), compared to favourable (14%) and neutral (9%).

It is important to keep in mind the overall number of comments in each category. Some categories (i.e. Compensation and Recognition, Leadership) account for a much larger percentage of comments as compared to other categories (i.e. Ethics, Employee Involvement). Although some categories may appear to be overly negative (i.e. Ethics with zero favourable comments) it is important to keep in mind the total number of comments in that category (only 18 comments about Ethics)

Presented in this chapter is the overall analyses of employees' written comments from the 2004, 2005 and 2006 employee surveys.

Written comments from the surveys can help identify the possible meaning behind employee's responses. An analysis of employee comments from the past three surveys provides useful information to help further focus action planning.

Interpreting written comments can be problematic, as the views of a few may not reflect the views of many. Context is important to keep in mind by noting the actual number of comments, as well as the subject matter. It is important to remember that these are the opinions and perceptions of employees who decided to respond to the survey and to write comments.

However, submitted comments can provide insight into the root causes of dissatisfaction in certain areas. For individuals who may not share all the views indicated in the Employee Survey results and wonder why satisfaction is low in certain areas – this summary information can be invaluable.

The majority of the comments over the past three years have focused on the areas of leadership and compensation and recognition, which support the results of the analysis of average agreement and importance scores. These two areas were identified as categories of the highest priority for improvements. Not surprising, the

majority of the comments in these areas were unfavourable. Correlation analysis indicated that the more dissatisfied employees are, the more likely they were to write comments, especially unfavourable comments. However, the correlation analysis did not show a significant relationship between the number of comments and the importance scores of survey questions. A category rated as more important than another category, didn't necessarily receive more comments.

Mixed in with the complaints were suggestions for improvement. Employees know what affects their work environment negatively and what improves it. They have a unique firsthand perspective from their position in government and have submitted some suggestions for improving their work environment. Some suggestions indicate directions and priorities for leaders in government as well. By outlining what needs to be 'fixed', 'created' and 'moved' employees have provided an unsolicited roadmap to improving the work environment and morale.

The complaint analysis revealed recurring topics of concern that appeared in several different survey categories. Topics such as Favoritism, Lack of Support, Inequitable Work Environment and Lack of Action by Management had widespread effects on everything from teamwork, to quality of work life and even impacted how people feel about their compensation and recognition. These topics represent the fundamental problems occurring in work environments that have the unfortunate results of poor morale, frustration, apathy and negatively impacts recruitment and retention. To be effective, changes must take into account the multiple impacts of positive and negative changes in work environments from the employees' perspective.

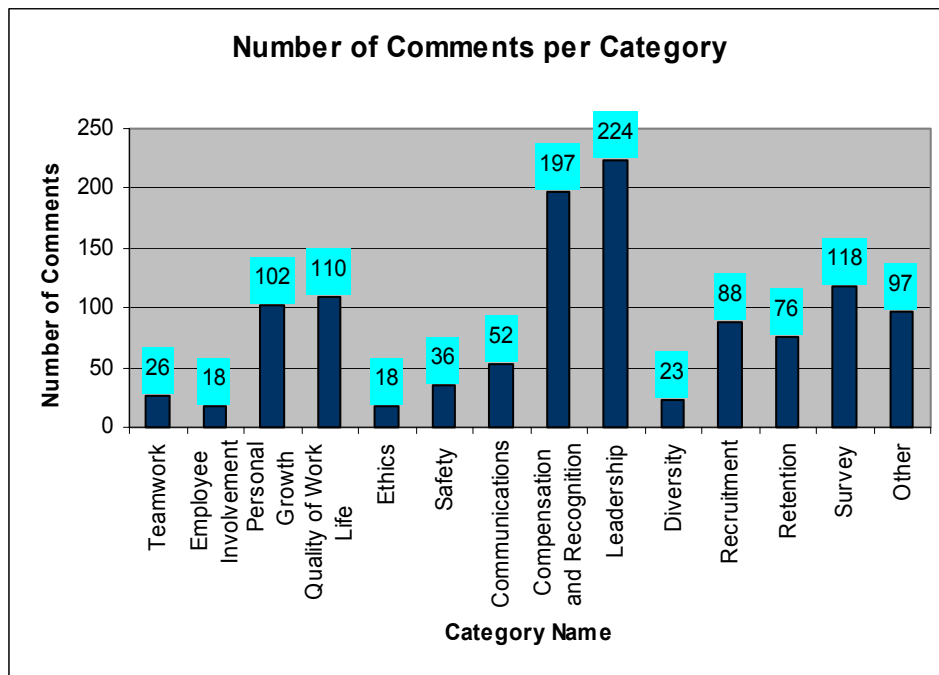
#### 4.1 Category Analysis

Category analysis indicated that the number of comments varied from a low of 18 (Ethics and Employee Involvement) to a high of 224 (Leadership) with most comments concentrated in the categories of Compensation and Recognition and Leadership. The distribution of comments into categories is presented in the Figure on the next page<sup>7</sup>.

Refer to Chapter 3 for details per category

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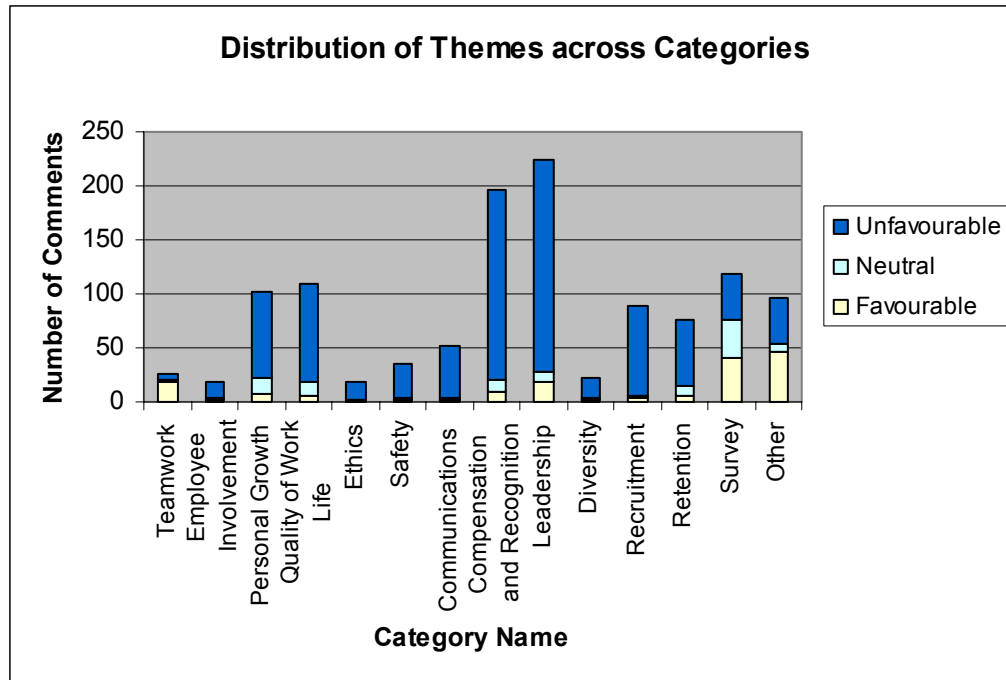
<sup>7</sup> This graph represents the number of total comments *before* separation into subjects.



#### 4.2 Theme Analysis

Theme analysis indicated that the majority of comments were predominately unfavourable (77%) with favourable comments and neutral comments accounting for 14% and 9% respectively. Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables and chart.

In order to determine where the unfavourable, neutral and favourable comments were concentrated, a distribution of themes across categories was performed. The comments in each category had unique distributions of themes as indicated in the figure on the next page. Favourable comments were clustered in the categories of Teamwork, Survey and Other. Neutral comments were generally evenly distributed; a higher concentration in the Survey category was noted. There was a notably higher percentage of unfavourable comments in the categories of Employee Involvement, Quality of Work Life, Diversity, Leadership, Ethics, Safety, Compensation and Recognition, Communications and Recruitment. Therefore, in those categories employees were more likely to submit unfavourable, rather than neutral or favourable opinions on these topics. Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables.



### 4.3 Complaint Analysis

The complaint analysis determined there were a total of **1137** complaints, which can be grouped into **149** subjects<sup>8</sup>. The categories with the largest variety of complaint subject areas are Compensation and Recognition (29), Recruitment (23) and Personal Growth (20). Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables.

The overall analysis of complaints indicates a number of common topics appearing in several survey categories. These common topics include:

➤ ***Favoritism***

This was a common topic in the categories of Personal Growth (training opportunities), Compensation and Recognition (recognition of employees), Leadership (varied) and Recruitment (hiring favorites, family and friends).

➤ ***Lack of Support***

This was a common topic in the categories of Personal Growth (training, advancement), Quality of Work Life (work life balance), Leadership (not supporting staff) and Diversity (not supporting persons with disabilities).

➤ ***Inequitable Work Environment***

This was a common topic in the categories of Teamwork (inequitable work contribution), Quality of Work Life (treatment of staff), Communications

<sup>8</sup> The number 1137 represents the total number of complaints after separation into subjects.

(performance management), Compensation and Recognition (unfair pay for work completed, MCP bonuses), Leadership (inconsistent policy application – OT, Flex time) and Recruitment (acting positions, general hiring).

➤ ***Union Rules***

This was a common topic in the categories of Personal Growth (limiting advancement opportunities) and Recruitment (interfering with hiring the best candidate).

➤ ***Succession Management***

This was a common topic in the categories of Personal Growth, Recruitment and Retention where employees asked that more be done in this area.

➤ ***Poor Physical Environment***

This was a common topic in the categories of Quality of Work Life (noisy, disruptive work spaces) and Safety (lack of heat, fresh air, clean workplace).

➤ ***Poor Morale***

This was a common topic in the categories of Quality of Work Life and Retention.

➤ ***Lack of Action by Management***

This was a common topic in the categories of Employee Involvement (not heeding employees input), Ethics (not dealing with concerns), Communications (not doing performance management) and Leadership (not acting on survey results, not managing issues).

It is important to note that these topics had varying numbers of comments in each category. However, these topics represent some of the prevailing issues expressed by employees. These issues should be taken into consideration when creating or modifying programs/policies as they appear to have multiple impacts on employee work environments.

#### **4.4 Suggestion Analysis**

Suggestion analysis yielded a total of 256 suggestions, a large majority of them 'Fix it' suggestions (74%) as opposed to 'Create it' (19%) and 'Move it' (4%). Suggestions were concentrated in the categories of Compensation and Recognition (68 suggestions) and Leadership (44 suggestions). Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables and chart.



#### 4.5 Favourable and Neutral Comment Analysis

This type of analysis yielded 221 comments that were neither suggestions nor complaints. These comments were concentrated in the categories of Survey (62 comments) and Other (48 comments). Common favourable subjects focused on the survey itself ('thanks for asking' and 'good survey') and general satisfaction with work/job/department. Other favourable comments included working with great people, compensation and recognition, and supervisors/managers/ leadership in general. Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables regarding favourable and neutral totals and for favourable comment details and examples.

#### 4.6 Statistical Analysis

Correlation analysis showed a significant negative correlation (-0.59) between the number of comments and the agreement scores of the survey<sup>9</sup>. An even stronger negative correlation (-0.63) existed between the number of unfavourable comments and the agreement scores. No significant correlation was found between importance mean scores and number of comments. Refer to Supplementary Appendix for data tables.

In other words, the lower the satisfaction of employees within a category (indicated by a lower agreement score) the more comments were written about that category. Also, the less satisfied the employees were with a category, the more complaints they wrote.

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<sup>9</sup> Significant correlations defined as greater than .50 or lesser than -.50.

## Annex A—Summary of Favourable Results, 2004-2006

The following table includes a summary of all questions asked in all three surveys. It is designed to compare original question scores (favourable) in 2004 with subsequent years, while indicating new questions that were added and when certain questions were dropped or changed.

- Questions that were not asked in that year are indicated by a dash ‘-’.
- Questions that have changed wording are indicated by footnotes.
- Unless otherwise indicated, wording changes of questions in 2005 were carried over to 2006 as well.
- Categories are indicated as represented in 2004. Please note that questions have changed categories, and categories have split (Recruitment/Retention) or disappeared (Other Questions) in subsequent years.
- Shaded areas in the last column represent no grounds for comparison.
- Questions highlighted were identified as areas requiring action in 2005.

**Table 1: Summary of Favourable Results –Nova Scotia Public Service, 2004-2006**

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		% Change since 2004
		Q#	% Fav	Q#	% Fav	Q#	% Fav	
Teamwork	The people I work with make an effort to help each other out	1	72%	1	85%	1	84%	+12%
	The people I work with work as a team	2	67%	-	-	-	-	
	Shared goals are developed for my workgroup	3	54%	2	56%	2	58%	+4%
	I have positive working relationships with my coworkers	-	-	-	-	3	87%	
Employee Involvement	I am given an opportunity to provide input on decisions that affect my job	4	62%	3	67%	4	71%	+9%
	My supervisor considers my work-related ideas	5	65%	4	77%	5	75%	+10%
	I can provide input into decisions that are made in my Department	6	51%	5	54%	6 <sup>10</sup>	56%	+5%

<sup>10</sup> Changed wording to ‘ I have opportunity to provide input into decisions that affect my job’ in 2006.

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
<b>Communications</b> (Category split into Communications and Workplace Ethics in 2005)	I received communications about our Department's business plan in the past 12 months.	7	49%	27	63%	28	69%	+20%
	I know how my work contributes to our Department's priorities/ purpose	8	65%	28	75%	29 <sup>11</sup>	72%	+8%
	I receive the communications I need in order to do my job well	9	60%	29 <sup>12</sup>	66%	30	66%	+6%
	My supervisor gives me feedback about my work performance	10	58%	30	65%	31	65%	+7%
	I participate in an annual performance appraisal/review with my supervisor	11	53%	31	61%	32	65%	+12%
	Work-related information is shared within my Department	12	56%	32	63%	33	65%	+9%
	I know where to get information within the Government of Nova Scotia in order to do my job well	13	63%	-	-	-	-	
	I know where I can go for help (the process) to resolve workplace ethical dilemmas or conflicts <sup>13</sup>	14	59%	20	61%	16	68%	+9%
	I can report concerns related to workplace ethical dilemmas or conflicts without fear of reprisal <sup>14</sup>	15	46%	21	46%	17	52%	+6%
	I received communications regarding the results of last year's Government-wide employee survey	-	-	33	69%	34 <sup>15</sup>	69%	No Change (2005-2006)
	I am aware of Government's corporate values	-	-	34	49%	35	52%	+3% (2005-2006)

<sup>11</sup> Changed wording to 'I know how my work contributes to the achievement of my department's goals' in 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Changed wording to 'I receive the communications that I need to do my job well' in 2005.

<sup>13</sup> This question was grouped under new category 'Workplace Ethics' starting in 2005.

<sup>14</sup> This question was grouped under new category 'Workplace Ethics' starting in 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Changed wording to 'I received communications regarding the results of last year's mini-employee survey' in 2006.

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
Quality of Work Life	I am provided with support to balance my work and family life	16	54%	12 <sup>16</sup>	56%	18 <sup>17</sup>	62%	+8%
	I have the resources (tools, equipment, support and information) I need to do my job well	17	62%	13 <sup>18</sup>	69%	19	70%	+8%
	I can balance the demands of my work life with the demands of my personal life	18	68%	14 <sup>19</sup>	73%	21	75%	+7%
	My work environment is supportive of my involvement in community/volunteer activities	-	-	15	41%	22	39%	-2% (2005-2006)
	I am familiar with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	-	-	16	78%	-	-	
	I know how to contact EAP for assistance	-	-	17	74%	-	-	
	I would feel comfortable using EAP services	-	-	18	52%	-	-	
	I have support at work to provide a high level of service	-	-	-	-	20	68%	
Compensation/ Recognition	I am compensated (salary and benefits) fairly for my job	19	48%	35 <sup>20</sup>	42%	36	42%	-6%
	I feel valued for my contributions at work	20	54%	36	54%	37	55%	+1%
	I receive recognition from my supervisor for a job well done	21	57%	37	61%	39	62%	+5%
	<i>I have a good understanding of my benefits in the following areas:</i> - Life Insurance - Vision Care - Prescription Drugs - Paramedical Practitioners - Dental Care	22	65% <sup>21</sup>	-	-	-	-	

<sup>16</sup> Changed wording to 'I am provided with support to balance my work and personal/family life' in 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Changed wording to 'I have support at work to balance my work and personal life' in 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Changed wording to 'I have the tools, equipment, support and information I need to do my job well' in 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Changed wording to 'I can balance the demands of my work life with the demands of my personal/family life' in 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Changed wording to 'I am compensated fairly for my job' in 2005.

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
<b>Compensation / Recognition</b>	I know who to contact regarding questions about my benefits coverage	23	62%	-	-	-	-	
	I receive meaningful recognition for work well done	-	-	-	-	38	49%	
<b>Leadership</b>	I can talk openly with my supervisor about my work	24	68%	38	79%	42	78%	+10%
	The leaders (Directors and Executive Directors) in my department set a good example for employees	25	46%	39 <sup>22</sup>	43%	40	45%	-1%
	I have confidence in the leadership in my Department	26	48%	40 <sup>23</sup>	45%	41 <sup>24</sup>	48%	No Change
	My supervisor manages conflict in my workgroup	27	48%	41	49%	45	49%	+1%
	Senior Management will try to resolve issues raised by employees in this survey	28	36%	42	37%	46	38%	+2%
	The person I report to is an effective leader	-	-	-	-	43	65%	
	I have a positive working relationship with the person I report to	-	-	-	-	44	81%	
<b>Personal Growth</b>	I have access to training opportunities	29	65%	6	76%	7	77%	+12%
	I am encouraged to share what I have learned with others in my workgroup	30	56%	7	56%	8	56%	No Change
	I can apply what I have learned in my training to my job	31	69%	8	81%	9	80%	+11%
	I have opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia	32	38%	9	37%	10	40%	+2%
	I get the training and related support I need to meet the demands of my job	33	58%	10 <sup>25</sup>	53%	12	53%	-5%

<sup>21</sup> Results are averaged over the five areas.

<sup>22</sup> Changed wording to 'The senior leaders (comprised of: Deputy Ministers, Assistant/Associate Deputy Ministers, CEO's, Directors and Executive Directors) in my Department set a good example for employees' in 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Changed wording to 'I have confidence in my Department's senior leaders' in 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Changed wording to 'I have confidence in the senior leadership of my department' in 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Changed wording to 'I get the training and related support I need to support my continuous learning' in 2005.

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
<b>Personal Growth Cont'd</b>	I have opportunities to participate in assignment/projects in my department that allow me to expand and develop new skills	-	-	11	56%	13	55%	-1% (2005-2006)
	I have opportunities for career growth within the Government of Nova Scotia	-	-	-	-	11	40%	
	My organization supports my work-related learning and development	-	-	-	-	14	59%	
	My job is a good fit with my skills and interests	-	-	-	-	15	81%	
	Please identify the barriers you perceive regarding having opportunities for career advancement within the Government of Nova Scotia	-	-	-	-	Barrier <sup>26</sup>	-	
<b>Diversity</b>	The Government of Nova Scotia demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the workplace	34	50%	43	56%	47	62%	+12%
	Employees in my Department are respectful of employee differences	35	59%	44	70%	48	70%	+11%
	My Department values diversity	36	46%	45	53%	49	60%	+14%
<b>Safety/ Security</b> (Changed to Safety in 2005)	My Department creates a safe work environment for its employees	37	69%	22	83%	23	81%	+12%
	I feel safe working in my job	38	71%	23	87%	24	83%	+12%
	Harassment is not tolerated in my workplace	39	61%	24 <sup>27</sup>	81%	25	80%	+19%
	I know who the Occupational Health and Safety representatives are for my work area	40	70%	26	87%	27	84%	+14%
	I have not experience bullying behaviour in my workplace	-	-	25	68%	26	68%	No Change (2005-2006)

<sup>26</sup> This question did not use the agreement-importance scale; therefore it is not available for comparison. This question was introduced in 2006. This question did not have an assigned number but was placed after question 15. For the purposes of analysis it was referred to as 'Barrier'. Refer to Figure 1 below for a summary of results.

<sup>27</sup> Changed wording to 'I have not experienced harassment (sexual, racial) behaviour in my workplace' in 2005.

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
<b>Recruitment/ Retention</b>  (Split into two categories in 2005 as indicated:  REC – Recruitment RET - Retention)	I would recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as one of the best places to work in my community (REC)	41	51%	46	53%	50 <sup>28</sup>	60%	+9%
	I intend to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia for:(RET)							
	- The next five years	42	54%	56 <sup>29</sup>	-	61	-	
	- The next ten years		54%					
	I see a future for my career, working for the Government of Nova Scotia (RET)	43	49%	51	62%	55	62%	+13%
	Hiring in the Government of Nova Scotia is based on merit (REC)	44	38%	47	35%	51	36%	-2%
	Employees have access to job postings within the Government of Nova Scotia (REC)	45	71%	48	87%	52	85%	+14%
	Even if offered a similar job with slightly higher pay elsewhere in my community, I would stay with the Government of Nova Scotia (RET)	46	46%	52	49%	56 <sup>30</sup>	62%	+16%
	I have the required qualifications to meet the needs of my job (REC)	47	78%	49	95%	53	94%	+16%
	I work for an effective organization; in other words, my Department regularly achieves the goals set out in our business plan (RET)	48	47%	54	49%	59	52%	+5%
	As a manager of staff, I can attract and recruit the people I need in order to achieve my division/department goals <sup>31</sup> (REC)	-	-	50	33%	54	36%	+3% (2005-2006)
	I am proud to work as a public servant (RET)	-	-	53	71%	57	71%	No Change (2005-2006)
As a manager of staff, I can retain (keep) the people I need in order to achieve my division/department goals <sup>32</sup> (RET)	-	-	55	36%	60	44%	+8% (2005-2006)	
I am proud to tell people I work for the Government of Nova Scotia (RET)	-	-	-	-	58	60%		

<sup>28</sup> Changed wording to 'I would recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work' in 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Changed format to checkboxes with instructions to select only one choice in 2005, therefore it is not available for comparison. Choices were expanded to include: Less than 2 years, Between 3-5 years, Between 6-10 years, 11 years or more and I intend to retire within the next 5 years. Refer to Figure 2 below for a summary of results for 2005 and 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Changed wording to 'I would prefer to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia, even if offered a similar job elsewhere' in 2006.

<sup>31</sup> This question targeted managers and supervisors only. (Managers of staff)

<sup>32</sup> This question targeted managers and supervisors only. (Managers of staff)

Category	Question Wording	2004		2005		2006		%
<b>Other Questions</b> (2004 category only)	If I experience stress, it is most often due to following factors: - Job Demands - Supervisor Demands - Work Environment - Family - Personal - Other	49 <sup>33</sup>	-	19 <sup>34</sup>	-	Stress <sup>35</sup>	-	
	What attracted you to work for the Government of Nova Scotia?	50 <sup>36</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Overall Questions</b> (2006 category only)	I am inspired to give my very best	-	-	-	-	62	74%	
	I strive to improve my department's results	-	-	-	-	63	82%	
	I am satisfied with my job	-	-	-	-	64	69%	
	I am satisfied with my department	-	-	-	-	65	57%	
	Overall, I am satisfied with my work as a Government of Nova Scotia employee	-	-	-	-	66	75%	

<sup>33</sup> This question did not use the agreement-importance scale; therefore it is not available for comparison. This question was placed in the 'Quality of Work Life' category in 2005.

<sup>34</sup> This question was placed in the 'Quality of Work Life' category in 2005.

<sup>35</sup> This question did not have an assigned number but was placed after question 22 in the Quality of Work Life category. For the purposes of analysis it was referred to as 'Stress'. Refer to Figure 3 below for a summary of results.

<sup>36</sup> This question did not use the agreement-importance scale; therefore it is not available for comparison.



## Annex B – Who responded to the survey?

### B-1 Who responded to the survey?

The overall target response rate for this year's survey was 40%. The actual response rate was approximately 43%. Of the 1400 employees sampled, 598 surveys were completed and returned. Table 1 summarizes the response rate by department. Response rates for departments ranged from a high of 53.9% for Natural Resources to a low of 33.2% for Transportation and Public Works.

**Table 1: Response Rate by Department / Agency / PSE Category in the Survey**

Department / Agency / PSE Category in the Survey	# Of Surveys Re-	Total # of Surveys	Response
Agriculture and Fisheries	36	72	50.0
Communications Nova Scotia	8	17	47.1
Community Services	77	177	43.5
Education	23	54	42.6
Environment and Labour	39	72	54.2
Finance	11	33	33.3
Health	38	102	37.3
Justice	100	216	46.3
Natural Resources	55	102	53.9
Office of Economic Development	6	15	40.0
Office of Health Promotion	5	10	50.0
Public Prosecution Service	8	23	34.8
Service N.S. & Municipal Relations	51	137	37.2
Tourism, Culture and Heritage	12	34	35.3
Transportation & Public Works	93	280	33.2
Other – Central Agencies	12	23	52.2
Other – Small Agencies	10	28	35.7
Other Government Admin Agencies	2	5	40.0
No Department Selected	12	0	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>42.7%</b>

**B-2 How do response rates compare since 2004?**

The response rate for 2006 has declined in comparison to the two previous years with only approximately 43% of sampled employees responding as compared to 53% of the total population in 2004 and 58% of the sample population in 2005 (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Response Rate by Department / Agency / PSE Category in the Survey by Survey Year**

Department / Agency / PSE Category in the Survey	2004 Response Rate (%)	2005 Response Rate (%)	2006 Response Rate (%)
Agriculture and Fisheries	61.1	58.2	50.0
Communications Nova Scotia	50.0	52.9	47.1
Community Services	54.4	58.3	43.5
Education	52.1	54.5	42.6
Environment and Labour	68.6	64.6	54.2
Finance	50.8	48.6	33.3
Health	52.0	53.8	37.3
Justice	50.1	59.1	46.3
Natural Resources	69.5	71.8	53.9
Office of Economic Development	-	87.5	40.0
Office of Health Promotion	-	**	50.0
Public Prosecution Service	34.4	54.2	34.8
Service N.S. & Municipal Relations	48.6	54.5	37.2
Tourism, Culture and Heritage	55.5	62.9	35.3
Transportation & Public Works	44.1	51.2	33.2
Other – Central Agencies	58.3*	75.0	52.2
Other – Small Agencies		55.6	35.7
Other Government Admin Agencies		50.0	40.0
No Department Selected	1.1	0.8	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>

\* - In 2004, "Other" was inclusive of all three of the separated "Other" Agencies

\*\* - In 2005, Office of Health Promotion was included with Health

### B-3 What are the demographics of respondents?

It was noted in 2004 that the demographic characteristics of the respondent group were similar to those found in the overall survey population<sup>37</sup>. Sample populations in 2005 and 2006 were chosen from a representative sample of the Nova Scotia Public Service and it can be concluded that the demographic characteristics of the respondents over the past three years is similar to the overall public service (Refer to Tables 3 – 10). A few exceptions, however, can be noted where the percentage of respondents has notably increased or decreased.

Table 4 below presents response rate by age. It reveals a decline in the response rate of 30 – 39 year olds on the past two surveys. In 2004 demographic survey trends found that age 30-39 year old respondents provided consistently lower favourable scores throughout the survey, compared to other groups<sup>38</sup>. Could this trend be linked with their declining response rate?

The gender distribution of respondents has changed slightly over the past year. The response rates were relatively similar in 2004 and 2005 but in 2006 there appears to be an increase in female respondents and a decrease in male respondents (Refer to Table 6).

Another demographic difference is revealed in Table 8, which examines the response rate of designated group members. In 2004 and 2005 response rates were relatively similar for designated group members (5.9% and 5.5% respectively) whereas in 2006 the response rate increased (8.0%). The increase in designated group response rate subsequently increased the response rate of racially visible and persons with disabilities. Racially visible members response rate increased from 2.1% in 2005 to 3.8% in 2006 and the response rate of persons with disabilities increased from 2.4% in 2005 to 3.2% in 2006. Aboriginal Peoples remained under 1% over the two-year period. These representation rates are similar to the Nova Scotia Public Service as of January 2005 when designated group members represented approximately 7.2%. It was reported that Aboriginal Peoples represented 0.5%; racially visible were 2.7%; and persons with disabilities were 4%<sup>39</sup>.

The last demographic difference noted is with reference to Table 10 and the response rate by pay plan. Response rates have changed for CUPE and Corrections employees. In 2004 and 2005 the response rate of CUPE members was 9.7% and 9.1% respectively but in 2006 it declined to 5.0%. Response rates of Corrections workers were 1.7% and 1.4% in 2004 and 2005 and then increased to 4.7% in 2006.

**Table 3: Response Rate by Geographic Work Location (%)**

<b>Geographic Work Location</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
HRM	-	49.6	45.8
Regional	-	47.6	47.0

-<sup>2</sup> Question not asked in 2004

<sup>37</sup> How's Work Going? Employee Survey Results 2004, p. 17

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 33

<sup>39</sup> Moving Toward Equity, Affirmative Action and Diversity in the Nova Scotia Public Service 2004-2005, October 2005.

**Table 4: Response Rate by Age (%)**

Age	2004	2005	2006
29 or younger	3.5	4.5	4.5
30-39 years of age	26.7	14.7	15.2
40-49 years of age	35.4	41.4	36.8
50-54 years of age	19.7	23.8	25.9
55 years or older	13.0	14.3	16.2

**Table 5: Response Rate by Years of Employment Experience (%)**

Years of Employment Experience	2004	2005	2006
fewer than 2 years	6.3	5.1	4.5
2-5 years	11.4	11.2	12.9
6-10 years	16.6	17.6	17.2
11-20 years	31.4	28.5	30.9
20 year or more	33.4	36.6	33.3

**Table 6: Response Rate by Gender (%)**

Gender	2004	2005	2006
Male	47.5	47.4	42.5
Female	51.2	51.2	55.9

**Table 7: Response Rate by Educational Background (%)**

<b>Educational Background</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Less than Grade 12	-	4.8	4.0
Grade 12 or equivalent	-	20.4	18.2
Secondary School	-	73.5	76.3

-<sup>2</sup> Question not asked in 2004

**Table 8: Response Rate by Non-Designated and Designated Group Members (%)**

<b>Diversity</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Non-Designated Group	86.3	87.9	85.1
Designated Group	6.0	5.5	8.0
Aboriginal	-	0.9	0.8
Racially Visible	-	2.1	3.8
Persons with a Disability	-	2.4	3.2

-<sup>2</sup> Question not asked in 2004

**Table 9: Response Rate by Job Level (%)**

<b>Job Level</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Staff	66.2	63.1	67.1
Supervisor	17.8	17.7	16.7
Management	14.1	16.3	14.2

Table 10: Response Rate by Pay Plan (%)

Pay Plan	2004	2005	2006
PR	25.0	26.0	26.4
TE	15.0	13.9	15.1
CL	21.7	18.5	20.4
MCP	16.2	18.1	16.7
AS	3.7	3.8	4.8
CUPE	9.7	9.1	5.0
Corrections	1.7	1.4	4.7
Others	5.7	6.8	5.2

*Note: Columns do not add up to 100% due to non-response.*

## Annex C – Survey Instrument Comparison, 2005 - 2006

The 2006 survey instrument builds on the 2005 instrument with additional questions and minor restructuring. These changes were based on requests for additional information/analyses or for clarification purposes. Specifically, in comparison to the 2006 employee survey, the following changes were made:

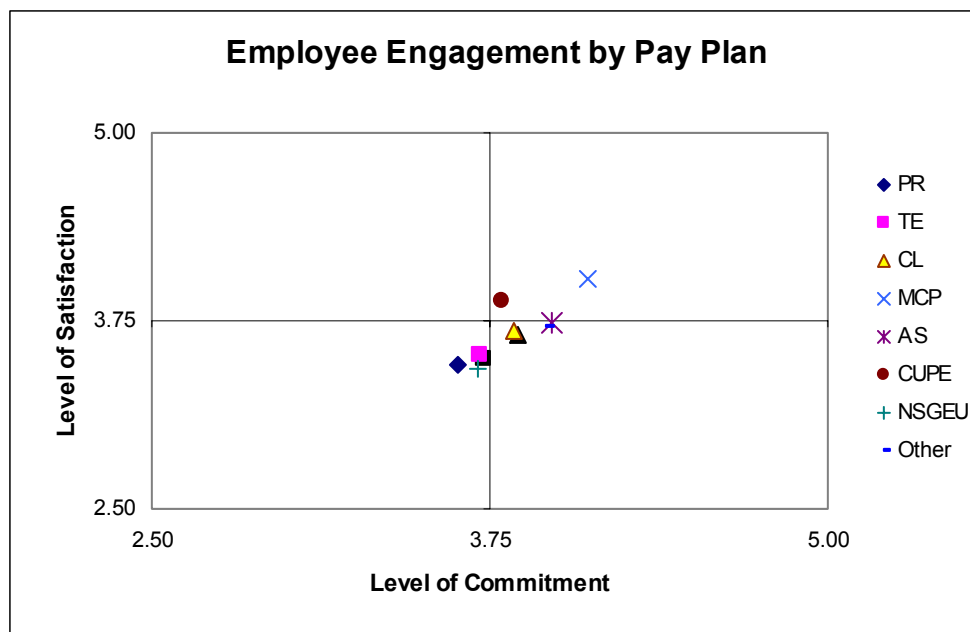
- ❑ An additional teamwork question was added asking employees if they felt they had a positive working relationship with co-workers.
- ❑ In the personal growth section, three questions were added. One regarding opportunities for career growth within the Nova Scotia Government. The second one asked if employees felt their organization supports their work-related learning and development. And the third one asks employees perception of whether their job is a good fit with their skills and interests.
- ❑ The workplace ethics section was moved ahead of the quality of life section.
- ❑ The three questions on the Employee Assistance Program were removed from the quality of life section. An additional question in this section was added asking employees if they believed they have the support at work to provide a high level of service.
- ❑ A new question was added to the compensation and recognition section. This question asked employee if they feel they receive meaningful recognition for work well done.
- ❑ In the leadership section two questions were added. One question asked whether employees believed if the person they report to is an effective leader and the other asked if employees have a positive working relationship with the person they report to. In addition, the order of questions was changed.
- ❑ An additional retention question was added asking employees if they were proud to tell people they work for the Government of Nova Scotia.
- ❑ A new section was added with five overall questions to assist with the analysis of employee engagement.

In the past additional core questions were included in the survey to gather information on a specific HR programs and/or services. These questions are not meant to be asked on a regular basis, and would be changed from year to year. The 2004 employee survey included questions regarding employees' knowledge about benefits. These were removed in the 2005 survey, and replaced with three questions regarding the *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP). In the 2006 survey, no additional core questions were added.

## Annex D – Level of Employee Engagement

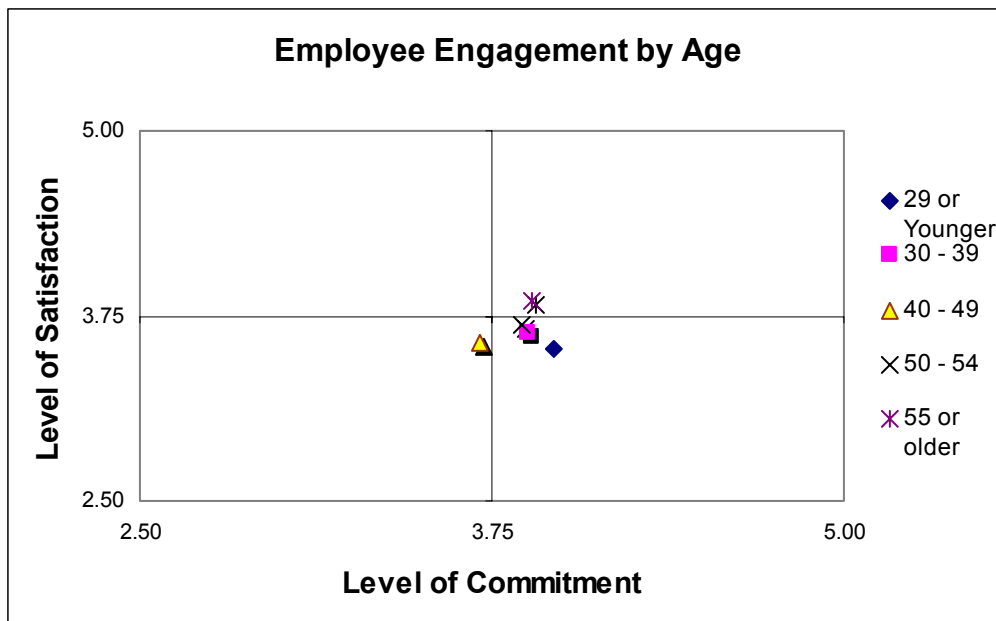
Further analysis into the engagement of public servants in the Nova Scotia Government, allow us to look at the level of employee engagement by pay plan, age and years of experience to discover if there are any notable trends.

An analysis of engagement by pay plan shows that CUPE and MCP employees are fully engaged (refer to figure below). They are satisfied and committed. Employees in the AS, CL and other pay categories are committed but not as satisfied. TE, NSGEU and PR employees are not as committed and not as satisfied with their work environment.



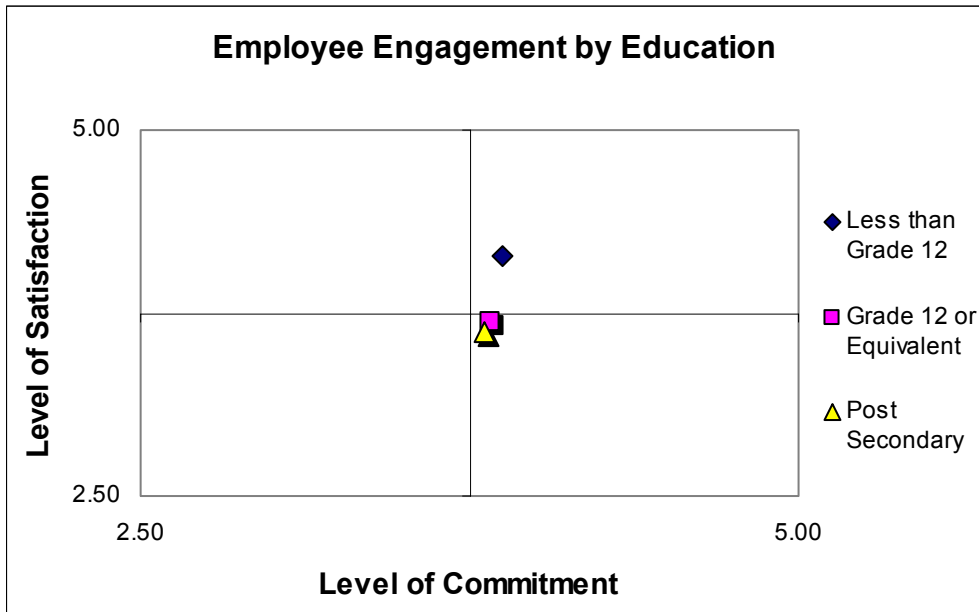
The age of respondents has an impact on the level of engagement (see figure on the next page). The most engaged employees are those at the end of their careers (55 years or older). Committed but unsatisfied employees include 29 year olds or younger, 30 – 39 year olds, and 50 – 54 year olds. Interesting to note the most committed group are employees 29 years old or younger. This is a good base to grow future public servants. The key now is retention. Those aged 40 – 49 years old tend to be not as committed and not as satisfied with their work environment compared to other age groups.



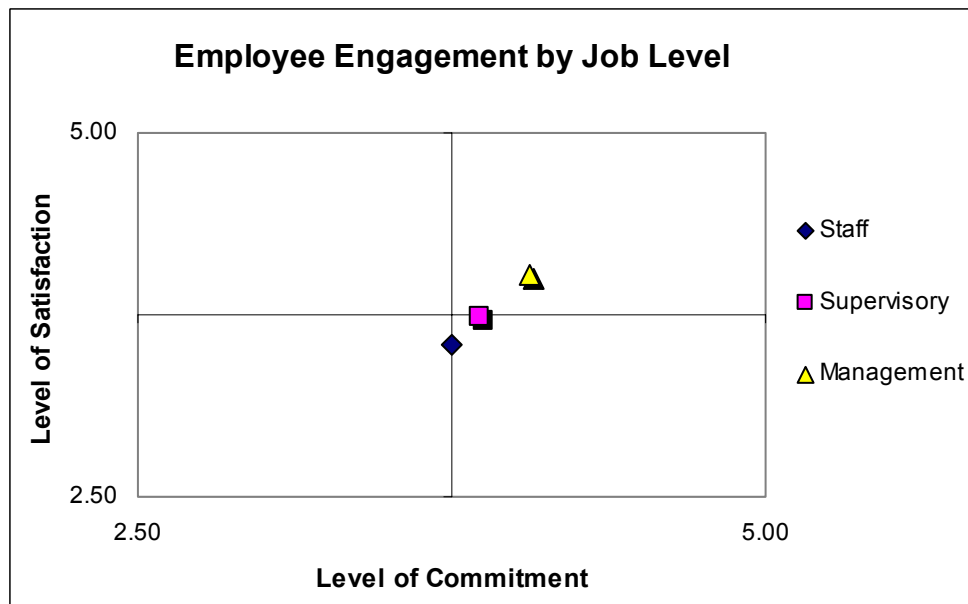


When looking at the level of engagement and years of experience, the trend tends to be the more years of experience the lower the level of commitment and the more unsatisfied employees are with their work environment, relatively speaking (refer to figure below).

Employee engagement tends to be the highest for respondents with the least amount of education (those with less than grade 12). Commitment tends to be relatively similar between all employees, but level of satisfaction is the lowest for respondents with post secondary education (refer to figure below).



The job level in which a respondent occupies appears to have an impact on the level of engagement. Results show the higher the job level the more engaged the employee. Managers tend to have the highest level of engagement and can be considered fully engaged employees. The least committed and satisfied group in comparison to managers are staff. Employees in supervisory positions fall in between managers and staff (refer to figure below).



The gender of the respondent appears to have a minor impact on the level of engagement. Female respondents tend to be slightly more committed and more satisfied than male respondents (refer to figure below).

