



2006 Employee Survey Results



Frequently Asked Questions

Why was an employee survey conducted?

Since February 2004, employee surveys have been a regular part of how government gathers employee input regarding their work environment. The first sample survey was conducted in 2005 and the second sample survey was conducted in February 2006. This has allowed government to track progress toward improving the work life of public servants and one way we can make the provincial public service one of the best places to work in Nova Scotia. The February 2007 survey will be a full-population survey.

Who conducts the survey?

The Public Service Commission's Evaluation and Audit division is responsible for planning, designing, conducting, analysing, and reporting on the survey.

What do the results indicate?

The information employees provide show where government has seen progress, highlight areas of strength that should be shared across departments, and signal where employees believe improvements are needed.

This year, 68 questions were asked about 13 work related categories, including:

- Teamwork
- Employee Involvement
- Communications and Workplace Ethics
- Quality of Work Life
- Compensation
- Diversity
- Safety
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Recognition
- Leadership
- Personal Growth
- Overall questions

Sixty-five questions measured level of agreement and level of importance (as seen on the chart to the right).

Three questions asked about barriers to career advancement, sources of stress, and intention to stay with the government.

Who participated in the survey?

All permanent civil servants, CUPE Local 1867, and NSGEU Local 480 employees, as of November 1st, 2005 were included in the population that was used to select the representative sample of 1,400 employees. Neither contract nor casual employees were included in the survey; however, these groups may be included in future surveys. The results are based on a 43% response rate.

Has employee opinion changed since 2004?

The following table illustrates how the 2006 sample survey results compare to those of the first full-population survey, done in 2004.

<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Score</i>	2004 Results	2006 Results
Clear strengths to celebrate and build upon	Favourable Scores $\geq 80\%$	0 areas	12 areas
Moderate areas of strength to build upon	Favourable scores between 60-79%	20 areas	30 areas
Improvement areas mid-range	Favourable Scores <41-59%	25 areas	17 areas
Areas that require immediate attention and related action	Favourable Scores $\geq 40\%$	3 areas	6 areas

This is not a straight comparison as additional questions have been added.

What are the benefits of employee surveys?

The employee survey gives you a chance to anonymously share information about your workplace that will in turn, help create a better workplace for you and your colleagues.

Employees can participate in discussions within their workgroups, with their supervisors and managers, to support positive action in response to the survey results. Employees may also have an opportunity to participate in further research activities, to explore and better understand survey results. Your input is integrated into government's corporate human resources plan and each department's business plan, and is an indicator of your department's performance.

Now, after having conducted three surveys, we are in a position to track trends and do better and more detailed analysis to help focus corporate action plans.

What actions have taken place since 2004?

Many activities are taking place across government in response to the survey. Here are some examples:

- Follow up to Results: Many departments have created action teams to create strategies that respond to department-specific issues.
- Merit Hiring: this year the PSC held employee consultations on the fair hiring policy, and is working with HR Community to develop recruitment standards and training for managers.
- Ethical Dilemmas: disclosure of wrongdoing regulations and policy were introduced in 2005 providing employees with the process to disclose wrongdoings and protection from reprisal.
- Career Advancement: the Corporate HR Plan was launched in 2005, career management tools developed, and leadership training is available.
- Recruitment & Retention: launch of a corporate government careers website in 2006, enhancement to youth internship and co-op programs, development of recognition programs, and advancement of healthy workplace initiatives.

Your manager, communication director, HR consultant, or deputy minister may be able to provide you with department-specific activities.

Can I see my department's results?

This year, the sample survey report provides representative data only for the government as a whole. The 2007 full-population survey will provide department-specific results.

What was this year's 'theme' analysis?

This year, evaluators did additional analysis on diversity issues. This included looking at how employees who identify as being part of a designated group respond to all the questions.

The Diversity Report is available online and shows these employees are committed and proud public servants, however, they score lower for questions relating to: feeling safe in the workplace, reporting ethical dilemmas, and diversity related issues.

How do I read and interpret the data?

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

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

The report also provides some results in 'mean scores,' also known as averages.

How do we compare with other jurisdictions?

The very first inter-jurisdictional comparison of employee surveys was completed in 2006. The results show that public service employees across the country share similar issues. Comparing the results of 20 common questions, 95% of Nova Scotia's favourable scores were above the inter-jurisdictional average. We will continue to do these comparisons over time so that we can learn from each other and share best practices.

What will be done with the results?

The results have been presented to Deputy Ministers and many senior management groups and committees. Employees may be asked to participate in further research activities or committees to explore the issues raised in the survey, so that specific action plans can be developed.

Who can I contact for more information?

Please talk to your supervisor or manager if you have questions regarding your department's response to the employee survey results.

You can visit the survey website for more information, www.gov.ns.ca/psc/survey.

For questions about survey results or methodology, please contact Nikki Holden at the Public Service Commission at holdennj@gov.ns.ca or (902) 424-6655.