
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.02—Human Resource Renewal

BACKGROUND

As at March 31, 2003, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) had the equivalent of 63,595 full-time employees who were delivering public services through 30 government ministries and offices. Salaries, wages, and benefits paid to or on behalf of these employees for the 2002/03 fiscal year amounted to almost \$4.4 billion, or 6.5% of total government expenditures of \$67 billion.

At the time of our audit, Management Board Secretariat (MBS), in particular its Human Resources Division (Division), was responsible for the effective management of human resources (HR) in the OPS. A key goal of the Division was to promote the renewal of the OPS workforce to ensure that people with the appropriate skills are in place to do the current and future work of the government. Subsequent to our audit, these responsibilities were assumed by the newly formed Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management (Centre).

For the past decade, the government has been working towards a vision of a smaller public service that focuses on its core businesses. Initiatives following from this agenda have included early retirement opportunities, downsizing, and local services realignment, whereby the responsibility for a number of government functions was transferred to local governments. Another key strategy has been alternative service delivery (ASD), which typically involves the contracting of services formerly delivered by a government office or agency to a third party. MBS has estimated that more than 75 ASD initiatives have been implemented across the government.

The effect of restructuring and of transferring some service-delivery responsibilities has been significant. Between 1995 and 2000, the size of the OPS declined from 81,250 to 61,800 full-time-equivalent employees—a decline of 24%—and has remained close to that level since that time.

In the late 1990s, recognizing the challenges government employees were facing in their new work environment as well as the need to ensure government employees could continue to provide quality public service into the 21st century, MBS, in consultation

with ministry managers and human resource specialists, developed a human resources strategy for the OPS entitled *Building Tomorrow's Workforce Today: A Human Resources Strategy for the Ontario Public Service* (1999 HR Strategy). The 1999 HR Strategy aimed to reaffirm the value of public service, build on its strengths, and ensure workforce capacity—now and into the future—by outlining a number of actions needed to renew the OPS. In 2001, MBS built upon the 1999 HR Strategy by developing and issuing a renewal initiative entitled *Renewing and Revitalizing Our Workforce: A Report on an Action Conference for OPS Managers* (the 2001 R&R Initiative).

AUDIT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objective of our audit was to assess whether the government had adequate policies and procedures in place to ensure that the OPS human resource renewal and revitalization strategies and policies were being implemented effectively to achieve its goals and maintain and improve the quality of services provided to the public.

We identified audit criteria to address our audit objectives. These were reviewed and accepted by senior officials at MBS and further reviewed with other ministries we visited. Our audit work covered the period to March 31, 2004. The scope of our audit included discussions with MBS and ministry staff and a review and analysis of relevant policies, procedures, and related documents at MBS and at the ministries of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Health and Long-Term Care, and Agriculture and Food. We also met with a number of union and bargaining agent representatives.

In addition to our interviews and fieldwork, we surveyed approximately 2,300 OPS employees, selected randomly from across the Ontario public service and covering all ministries and occupational groups except for the senior management group (SMG), asking for their views on a number of human resource-related issues. We consulted both MBS and the government's bargaining agents and union representatives in developing our survey. We were very pleased with the 50% response rate for our survey and appreciated the input provided by employees.

We also employed a number of computer-assisted audit techniques to analyze corporate human resource data available in the government's Workforce Information Network and corporate payroll systems.

Our audit was conducted in accordance with standards for assurance engagements, encompassing value for money and compliance, established by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and accordingly included such tests and other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We did not rely on MBS's internal auditors to reduce the extent of our procedures because they had not conducted any recent work in the areas covered by our audit.

OVERALL AUDIT CONCLUSIONS

While the government, in its 1999 HR Strategy, has recognized the critical issues that need to be addressed, it has not sufficiently implemented the necessary renewal and revitalizations strategies to achieve its goals. Several years of downsizing combined with hiring restrictions and weak efforts to promote the OPS as an employer of choice have resulted in a workforce that is considerably older than those in other Ontario workplaces. Insufficient progress has been made to address this demographic problem or to ensure the skills and competencies needed in the workplace now and in the future are being identified and obtained.

The delivery of essential public services may be at risk if strategies to acquire needed skills and to recruit younger workers are not implemented soon.

One of the key ingredients to achieving success will be the need to ensure management at the ministry level is equally as accountable as the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management for the achievement of corporate HR goals.

Some of our major concerns were:

- Despite the stated intention in the 1999 HR Strategy to strategically address OPS skill shortages and the aging workforce, no subsequent initiative—other than an internship program aimed at recruiting young university and college graduates—has addressed the specific skill shortages noted therein, and the average age of public service employees has continued to rise at approximately the same rate as before the strategy was developed. It now stands at 43.3 years of age, up from 42.8 in the 1999/2000 fiscal year. As well, younger people are not being hired into the OPS in sufficient numbers, with fewer candidates being hired into the internship program and fewer placements being found for those completing the program.
- The government is not sufficiently prepared for the upcoming retirements of significant numbers of its employees. For example, while 41% of staff in the senior management group (SMG) will be entitled to retire within the next ten years, only seven of the 21 ministries have reported completing a succession planning process for their critical leadership positions. We noted that 249 retirees, representing 18% of total retirements from the OPS in 2002/03, were rehired back into the OPS in 2002/03.
- While the vast majority of public servants we surveyed feel that their work makes an important contribution to the people of Ontario and find their work both interesting and challenging, 32% are dissatisfied with their job. One significant source of dissatisfaction was the lack of career development opportunities. Our work indicated that only one in every 67 employees received a promotion last year, which may be indicative of an employment environment with minimal opportunities for advancement.

- Over the past decade there has been a trend in the OPS to hire new staff into unclassified (contract or temporary) positions rather than classified (permanent) positions—a trend that is at odds with the 1999 HR Strategy goal of developing and retaining a new generation of public administration. Unclassified staff now comprise 17.7% of the OPS workforce, almost double the 9.1% rate of 1995/96. Of the 11,142 employees hired in the 2002/03 fiscal year, 9,951 or 89% were hired as unclassified staff. As our survey confirmed, unclassified staff are more difficult to retain: 55% of survey respondents in unclassified positions intended to leave the government, while only 32% of respondents in classified positions had the same intention.
- The HR strategic planning and reporting process was weakened by a lack of ministry accountability for achieving corporate HR goals, the absence of benchmarks for assessing progress on the corporate renewal and revitalization outcomes and related performance measures, and the lack of consolidated reporting on the government's overall progress in meeting its HR goals.
- Despite the government's commitment to rebuild the OPS as a learning organization, there was little assurance that employees were receiving the training and development they need. Insufficient information is available both centrally and at ministries to determine the level of training provided to employees or whether it is cost effective.
- While the government work environment appears to promote wellness generally, with most employees we surveyed indicating they can adequately balance their work with their personal and family needs, the amount of paid overtime worked by government employees has more than doubled since 1999/2000. As well, an estimated 12 days annually per employee were lost due to absenteeism, and the government's Attendance Support Program (ASP), which is directed at working with employees with significant absences, could be improved.

Overall Centre Response

The appointment in April 2004 of a Deputy Minister and Associate Secretary of the Cabinet with responsibility for human resource strategy and delivery illustrates the importance the government is placing on the work and people of the OPS. The OPS Human Resource function is being transformed to enable the organization to focus on strategic policy and operational capacity.

As such, the Centre finds the Office of the Provincial Auditor's report particularly timely and helpful. We recognize and appreciate the Auditor's attention to human resources in the OPS, the articulation of structural and accountability issues, and the comprehensiveness of the recommendations. In fact, we are pleased to report that we have a number of initiatives currently in progress that will address some of the recommendations and that other initiatives are in the program development stages.

DETAILED AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

THE RENEWAL AND REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

Workforce planning linked to business goals is one of the tools organizations use to determine their future workforce needs and to develop strategies for filling these needs. Such efforts, with government leaders setting the overall direction and goals, are needed to identify the critical skills and competencies an organization requires, and to ensure these skills and competencies are maintained within the organization on a continuous basis.

The cornerstone workforce planning document for the OPS is its 1999 HR Strategy, which identified the following five most significant human resources challenges facing the government:

- skills gaps and shortages;
- an increase in demands on the workforce;
- demographics;
- lack of organizational flexibility; and
- the need to make the OPS an employer of choice.

To provide a foundation for renewing and revitalizing the OPS, the need for action in the following three areas was identified: understanding the work and the workforce, investing in learning and development, and updating human resource policies.

A number of positive developments followed from the 1999 HR Strategy. For example, MBS developed new human resource policies dealing with staffing, performance management, and learning and development. In 2001, MBS built upon the 1999 HR Strategy by developing the 2001 R&R Initiative. This initiative identified five corporate renewal and revitalization outcomes and established corresponding performance measures, as outlined in the following table.

**MBS's 2001 Revitalization and Renewal Initiative—
Outcomes and Measures**

Desired Outcome	Performance Measure
pride in quality public service	percentage of employees leaving voluntarily because of job dissatisfaction
dynamic leadership	percentage of critical leadership positions with up-to-date succession plans
learning organization	percentage of employees with learning and development plan objectives achieved
motivating and flexible work environment	percentage of work days lost due to illness, injury, etc.
capable and innovative workforce	percentage of OPS customers satisfied with OPS services

Source of data: Management Board Secretariat

Ministries were expected to incorporate these measures into their own HR planning and reporting processes.

THE OPS WORKFORCE

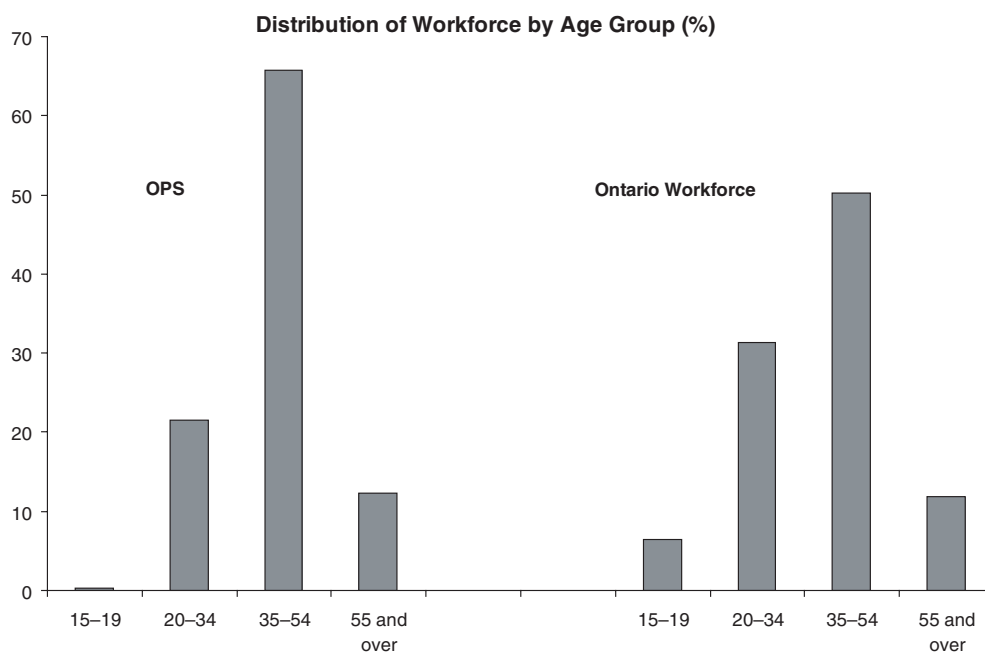
Over the next two decades, the demographics of the Canadian workforce will change dramatically. Specifically, the upcoming retirement of the baby-boom generation—those born between 1947 and 1966—is creating an urgent need to attract and retain a new generation of managers and staff. This is especially true for the public service.

The Institute of Public Sector Administration of Canada (IPAC) conducts a biennial survey of all federal, provincial, and territorial deputy ministers and selected municipal chief administrative officers to identify the key issues facing managers in the public service. In its 2002 survey, respondents indicated that their single most important concern was the need for human resource renewal. Specifically, public service executives were concerned about their aging workforces and how this will affect the future delivery of quality public services. In this regard, IPAC survey respondents cited the following as important actions to be taken: developing aggressive public-sector recruitment strategies, marketing public-sector organizations as good places to work, addressing morale and re-skilling issues, and transferring essential knowledge from older employees to the new generation of public servants.

The problem of an aging Canadian workforce is especially significant for the OPS. For example, while the latest data available from Statistics Canada indicates that 15% of the Canadian workforce as a whole will be eligible for retirement between the years 2010 and 2020, our analysis of the Ontario government's employee database indicated that over this same 10-year period, more than 35% of OPS employees will be eligible to retire. This is in addition to the 14% of OPS staff that will be eligible for retirement before 2010. In total, we estimate that approximately half of the OPS's workforce will

be eligible for retirement by 2018. For staff in the senior management group (SMG), retirements will occur even earlier: we estimate that 41% of SMG staff will be entitled to retire within the next ten years.

The following bar graph illustrates the imbalances in terms of age distribution between the OPS workforce and that of the Ontario workforce as a whole. As indicated, the gap between the percentage of workers in the 20–34 age range and the percentage of those in the 35–54 age range is much greater in the OPS than for the Ontario workforce.



Note: Data for the Ontario Workforce is for 2001 (the most recent data available), and data for the OPS is for 2002/03.

Sources of data: Statistics Canada and Management Board Secretariat

At the time of our audit, MBS was well aware of the need to address the OPS’s aging workforce: the issue of demographics was highlighted in the 1999 HR Strategy as one of the government’s five key challenges. The Strategy noted, for example, that the baby-boom generation made up 30% of the Canadian population but over 70% of the OPS workforce, while the under-30 age group was significantly underrepresented. As the Strategy indicated: “...demographics highlight the urgent need for both knowledge retention and youth recruitment strategies.”

Despite the fact that demographics issues have been of concern since at least 1999, we noted no evidence of progress in actually rebalancing OPS’s demographic profile. The government has not set any demographic targets, nor do guidelines exist that might, for example, inform ministries’ ongoing hiring practices. None of the five strategic outcomes or corresponding performance measures developed in the 2001 R&R Initiative directly addresses OPS demographics. Our analysis indicates that the OPS continues to age, as detailed in the following table, at approximately the same rate as for the five-year period preceding the development of the 1999 HR Strategy.

Average Age of OPS Staff, Selected Years, 1995/96–2002/03

	1995/96	1999/2000	2002/03
classified (permanent) staff	42.8	43.9	44.4
unclassified (temporary) staff	38.1	37.7	38.8
OPS	42.2	42.8	43.3

Source of data: Management Board Secretariat

Identified Skills Shortages

While the 1999 HR Strategy noted skills gaps and shortages as one of the five key HR challenges to address, the subsequent 2001 R&R Initiative did not address this adequately. Skill shortages were noted to exist in such areas as labour relations, policy, financial/business analysis, audit and risk analysis, service contract management, project management, information technology and systems support, and communications. However, none of the revitalization and renewal outcomes or corresponding performance measures directly address these shortages, and there has been no subsequent reporting on whether or how skills gaps were being addressed, whether they were still significant, or whether new skill shortage areas had emerged.

Succession Planning

Because over 40% of the OPS senior management group will be eligible for retirement in the next 10 years, the government will be faced with substantial knowledge and managerial gaps across a multitude of different program areas unless strategies to manage this retirement wave are developed. Clearly, succession planning is a very important component of the management and renewal of the government's human resources. The government needs to recruit management talent and identify potential candidates within its own middle management cadre and provide the training and development opportunities they need to be ready to lead the OPS of the future.

Despite requirements outlined by MBS that succession plans be prepared to address all critical leadership positions, in their HR reporting to MBS, only seven of the 21 ministries indicated they had completed a succession planning process and had developed such succession plans. Of these, we noted that two had simply identified all senior management group (SMG) positions as being critical and pointed to a general "pool" of middle management talent from which replacements would be drawn. The remaining 14 ministries reported either being at an earlier stage in the process or having not yet commenced this work.

While the focus to date has been on succession planning for the SMG, it should be noted that many positions critical to the effective delivery of government services are outside of the SMG or do not have a leadership component. Though succession planning is equally important for these positions, we noted no efforts in this regard.

REHIRING OF RETIREES

Our analysis indicated that in the 2002/03 fiscal year 249 retirees (former OPS employees) were rehired back into the OPS. That number represents approximately 18% of total retirements from the 2002/03 fiscal year (in 2002/03, there were 1,414 retirements from the OPS). The need to rehire such a significant number of retired employees is indicative of inadequate succession planning and of critical skills shortages.

Recruitment

One factor contributing to the aging workforce is that younger employees are not being hired in sufficient numbers. The government's corporate 1999 HR Strategy appears to have had no impact on actual hiring practices, which take place at the ministry level as staffing needs arise.

Our analysis indicated that for 2003, the average age for new hires into the SMG was 48.6 years of age, equal to the 48.6 average age of existing SMG staff. The average age for new classified staff members was also quite high at 37. Currently, only 12% of the OPS workforce is under 30, while the latest data available from Statistics Canada (2001) indicates that approximately 29% of Ontario's workforce is in this age group.

While the 2001 R&R Initiative does provide a framework for future recruitment practices, government downsizing initiatives, hiring freezes, and imposed controls on the number of staff positions have made it difficult for ministries to put this framework into practice. As well, no clear principles, targets, and measures for recruitment had been set. None of the ministries we visited had conducted an analysis to determine their short- or long-term recruitment requirements or had plans in place to address future staffing needs. Rather, recruitment continues to be done on a reactive or ad hoc basis.

ATTRACTING APPLICANTS

To successfully recruit younger staff into the OPS, measures must be taken to attract qualified people. The Conference Board of Canada, in presenting ways to improve the ability of the public service to attract talent into its ranks, stressed the need for an improved image of the public sector through more effective marketing of it as a positive career choice and a great place to work. It also stressed the need for government to become more engaged in student employment programs and on-campus recruiting.

We noted that the federal government recently piloted an e-recruitment project and is introducing a national information system to allow government managers to access a government-wide database of prospective job candidates. The system—designed to save time and improve the prospects of finding applicants with the most appropriate set of skills for available jobs—will house the resumés of all applicants for a period of time.

We also noted that the federal government recently invested in its image as a prospective employer, launching marketing initiatives covering a number of employment and career and training opportunities. While the Ontario government has

recognized the need to invest more in this area and, in early 2002, developed an OPS promotional strategy, apart from the production of a brochure promoting the OPS as a career choice, the project has accomplished little to date, primarily due to current funding constraints.

ONTARIO INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The only corporate employment initiative specifically aimed at the recruitment of young people into the OPS is the Ontario Internship Program, under which, since 1999, between 100 and 150 new university or college graduates have annually been hired into management-entry positions under two-year contracts. With regard to this program we noted the following problems:

- Given its small size (100–150 positions represent less than 0.25% of the OPS workforce), even if all interns were successful in obtaining classified OPS positions, the effect on the government's overall government demographic profile would be minimal.
- As the following table indicates, the percentage of interns who have been appointed to government positions following their internship period (the retention rate) has dropped below 70%.

Retention Rate of the Ontario Internship Program, 1999–2001

	1999	2000	2001
interns entering program	103	104	103
interns subsequently appointed to government positions	79	69	71
retention rate	77%	66%	69%

Source of data: Management Board Secretariat

- The majority of interns who have secured jobs to date have been appointed to temporary, unclassified positions. We understand this is primarily due to the current lack of permanent job opportunities in the OPS.
- As at February 2004, 73 of the 148 interns hired into the 2002 program had not yet been able to secure a government position, and these contracts were to expire shortly. The 2002 program had already lost a number of its interns, who responded to external job offers. Accordingly, the actual retention rate for the year will likely be considerably less than 50%.
- Due to fiscal pressures, the 2004 program was reduced to allow for only 75 interns.

Recommendation

To ensure the Ontario Public Service (OPS) has the long-term capacity to continue to provide quality public service:

- the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management should:
 - assess the government's long-term staffing needs and develop an action plan to fulfill these needs (this should involve an analysis of the skills needed to manage the current and future work of the OPS and the development of demographic targets for the OPS);
 - expand efforts to promote the provincial government as an employer of choice for young people entering the job market and consider the development of an e-recruitment program; and
 - work with ministries to expand the Ontario Internship Program or develop other youth recruitment programs; and
- ministries should develop comprehensive succession plans that identify all critical positions, the timing of when such positions will need to be filled by new staff, how such positions can and will be filled, and the training and development required to prepare a new generation of staff for these positions.

Centre Response

The environment of the Ontario Public Service (OPS), and indeed of all public services, has become increasingly more complex. Therefore, a top priority is renewal and revitalization to ensure a vibrant future. Renewal means ensuring that employees have the skills to respond to the changing role of government. Revitalization means planning ahead to ensure that there will always be a future generation of skilled employees.

The Centre has a number of initiatives underway to address skill, competency, and demographic challenges in the OPS. Three key strategies are designed to address parts of this recommendation, as follows.

The OPS is developing an integrated talent management strategy to replace the current succession management program for senior managers for implementation in the 2005/06 fiscal year. Talent management is the ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing talent to ensure that leadership capability for all key positions continues to be available and developed.

A key foundation of organizational transformation over the longer term is the development of a single, overarching recruitment strategy. This recruitment strategy will refine and streamline hiring practices, enhance our competitive advantage, and ensure the OPS remains attractive as a potential employer. An assessment of the skills required to deliver results is developed at the ministry and program level, and the related tools and supports are to be developed at the corporate level. As well, our plan is to include an e-recruitment component to support the strategy.

As part of the modernizing of our recruitment practices, in 2004/05, the OPS will develop and begin implementing a Young Professionals Employment Strategy to expand and build upon the success of the Ontario Internship Program. The strategy will encompass a set of initiatives aimed at co-ordinating strategic human resources planning activities and supporting programs that facilitate youth (and new professional) attraction, recruitment, development, and retention.

Staff Retention

Merely recruiting good people is not enough. An equally challenging task is to motivate existing staff to stay by providing interesting work, competitive pay and benefits, and career development opportunities.

SURVEY OF OPS EMPLOYEES

The survey we conducted of OPS staff addressed such matters as the nature of employees' jobs, their workplace environment, their classification, their training and development, and their overall job satisfaction. However, because of ongoing negotiations, bargaining agents and union representatives as well as management at MBS requested that compensation issues be excluded from our survey. Most respondents answered all of our questions, and many provided supplementary observations.

There is much good news in the survey in that results confirmed that most government employees are committed to their chosen profession, enjoy their jobs, and have a keen desire to make a difference in the lives of Ontario's citizens. However, there were a number of areas where a significant number of government employees expressed dissatisfaction. The following table outlines a selection of results.

Selected Results from Our Survey of OPS Employees

Strengths to Build Upon	Areas of Dissatisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% of respondents clearly felt that they understood their job role • 92% felt the work they do makes an important contribution to the people of Ontario • 88% found their job interesting and challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% of respondents did not believe they were afforded sufficient opportunity to advance their career • 49% of employees did not believe that rewards were based on merit • 39% did not believe they were classified fairly • 37% said their departments did not support career development

Prepared by the Office of the Provincial Auditor

Drivers of Job Satisfaction

A common axiom in human resources is that the happiest employees tend to be the best-performing employees. Studies also link employee satisfaction to customer satisfaction, as satisfied employees are more dedicated to their jobs and provide better customer service. Accordingly, a key goal of human resource management is to foster employees who are satisfied with their employer, their working conditions, and their jobs.

In our survey we directly asked employees to assess their overall job satisfaction, and 32% of employees reported that they were not satisfied with their job. This represents a significant minority that should be of concern to management. Major reasons cited by these employees for overall job dissatisfaction were the lack of career advancement opportunities, organizational constraints that prevented adequate client service, and poor relationships with co-workers or with their manager.

Satisfaction is a nebulous concept and is shaped by many factors and influences. Accordingly, to improve employee job satisfaction, management must know what most contributes to it. In an attempt to determine this more precisely, we correlated each employee's overall reported satisfaction with his or her responses to all other survey questions to identify the most statistically significant satisfaction *drivers*.

As a result of our analysis, we were able to identify 10 statistically significant drivers of employee satisfaction. For five of these, the correlations were very high; accordingly, we have classified these drivers as *strong*. Of the remaining five, four have been classified as *medium*, while the final one, although still statistically significant, has been classified as *weak*. The following table outlines the results of our analysis.

Job Satisfaction Drivers Identified from Survey of Employees

Satisfaction Driver	Driver Strength
job provides opportunities to make good use of skills and abilities	Strong
job is interesting and challenging	Strong
work is personally satisfying	Strong
work-related stress levels are manageable	Strong
job provides opportunities to develop and improve career-enhancing skills	Strong
job workload is reasonable	Medium
work arrangements are flexible	Medium
department is adequately staffed	Medium
there are opportunities for career advancement	Medium
job requirements can be balanced with personal and family needs	Weak

Developed by the Office of the Provincial Auditor

Other jurisdictions, such as British Columbia and Manitoba, have conducted workplace and job satisfaction surveys with similar results. Although some of the above drivers may appear obvious, it should be noted that many other job areas covered in our survey surprisingly did not show a significant statistical correlation with overall job satisfaction. For example, we found that the following factors did not correlate with employees' level of job satisfaction: physical working conditions; the provision of adequate technology and equipment to do the job well; a clear understanding of the job, of the department's goals, and of the ministry's vision; a say in decisions and actions impacting one's work; and sufficient management direction.

STABILITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Over the past decade there has been a trend in the OPS to hire new staff into unclassified (contract or temporary) positions rather than classified (permanent) positions. Unclassified contracts are often renewed a number of times, with employees thereby continuing in an unstable employment relationship for a number of years, assuming they do not accept another job with more favourable employment prospects. As the following table illustrates, the percentage of unclassified or contract staff in the OPS has almost doubled since 1995/96.

OPS Employee Composition, Selected Years, 1995/96–2002/03

	1995/96	1999/2000	2002/03
classified staff	68,672	52,335	51,209
unclassified staff	6,983	8,482	11,250
OPS full-time equivalent staff*	76,732	61,800	63,595
unclassified as a percentage of OPS staff	9.1%	13.7%	17.7%

* OPS full-time equivalent staff includes classified and unclassified staff as well as other staff, such as those at selected Crown corporations.

Source of data: Management Board Secretariat

Our analysis indicates that current hiring practices continue to reflect this trend. Of the 11,142 new employees hired into the OPS in the 2002/03 fiscal year, only 1,191 (11%) were hired into the classified service. Over the same period, 2,865 classified staff exited the OPS.

Our work suggests that this trend is the accumulated result of individual staffing decisions made at the ministry level in response to pressures in managing their operations within the context of budgetary, head-count, and hiring constraints rather than a deliberate shift in the government's HR strategy.

The use of unclassified staff undoubtedly has the advantage of providing management with greater flexibility in adjusting staff levels as business needs change or in terminating unproductive staff. However, there are longer-term implications to this approach to filling staffing needs. For example, managers may be more reluctant to invest in training, particularly longer-term developmental training, that is required to ensure such employees provide optimal service. The government also has far greater difficulty retaining unclassified staff. In responding to our survey, 55% of unclassified staff indicated their future intention to leave, while only 32% of classified staff stated the same intention. Satisfaction with the job itself was not a factor in this difference as unclassified staff actually reported higher levels of job satisfaction than classified staff.

It is difficult to reconcile the government's significant movement toward the use of unclassified staff with its stated HR goals. Citing a federal study indicating the public sector is not a preferred career path for most recent graduates, the 1999 HR Strategy noted: "Attracting people with the skills we need and retaining a new generation of public administrators will remain a challenge until we can reposition the OPS as an employer of choice." Offering the vast majority of new entrants into the OPS only temporary employment opportunities does not appear consistent with this vision.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Opportunities for career development and advancement are key in attracting and retaining employees. However, fewer than half of OPS employees we surveyed believed

that they had sufficient opportunity to advance in their career. Almost 40% also believed that their department did not support career development or advancement or that they had no opportunities to develop and improve the skills needed to enhance their career. In fact, over a third of respondents were planning to leave the government, and the two major reasons for wanting to leave were to pursue better career opportunities and to seek better compensation. Our analysis work indicated that in the 2002/03 fiscal year there were fewer than 1,000 promotions in the OPS. This approximates one promotion for every 67 government employees, indicating that most careers in the OPS advance at a very slow rate.

As the number of government promotions is few, it is all the more important to provide other career enhancement opportunities for employees. These can include lateral moves, temporary assignments or special projects, and secondments to other organizations. The results of our survey of OPS employees confirmed the potential for using such opportunities to improve employee satisfaction, particularly with employees who have been with the government for some time. Specifically, employees who had been with the government for five or more years reported relatively high dissatisfaction rates in the areas of workload and work-related stress. However, this was not the case for respondents who had been in their current position for less than three years, even if they had been in the public service for a much longer period. Such employees were also more optimistic about their future prospects. For example, 60% of respondents who had been in their current position for less than three years felt they had reasonable opportunities for career advancement, while only 43% of respondents with more than three years in the same position felt the same. After 10 years, the rate dropped to 37%.

UNION AND BARGAINING AGENT RELATIONS

Another factor influencing employee satisfaction and staff retention is the nature of the ongoing relationship with employee representatives. It is generally acknowledged by both management and employee representatives that their current relationship is strained. As part of our audit, we met with a number of union and bargaining agent representatives to ascertain the human resource issues of greatest concern to their members. They identified the following as key concerns:

- the increased use of consultants, unclassified staff, or temporary-help services to conduct government work that in their view should be done by permanent employees in classified positions;
- the government's job classification system, which they indicated was antiquated and badly in need of a major overhaul to reflect the changing nature of government work;
- the current dispute-resolution processes, which they find unwieldy and which have led to several thousand outstanding cases (pre-litigation mechanisms, such as ministry-level review committees empowered to resolve disputes at earlier stages,

could, in their view, resolve many of these matters at considerably less expense and with fewer detrimental effects on employee morale);

- the confrontational rather than collaborative approach they perceive the government takes in dealing with employee representatives; and
- the decentralization of HR responsibilities, which increases the difficulty in resolving issues, as each ministry must often be dealt with separately.

RECOGNITION

Recognition has been shown to motivate staff; increase morale, productivity, and employee retention; and even reduce absenteeism. Unfortunately, almost half of the respondents to our survey did not feel they were getting appropriate recognition for high-quality service. In addition, 44% believed that the current employee performance appraisal system was unfair. Finally, 34% of our survey respondents indicated that they had not had a performance review in the last year, even though MBS policy calls for such reviews to be conducted annually.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Information from exit interviews can help organizations learn what improvements in their practices may be necessary to retain talented staff. In developing its 1999 HR Strategy and its 2001 R&R Initiative, MBS recognized the need for ministries to conduct exit interviews. In fact, the performance measure adopted for one of the five corporate outcomes targeted by the 2001 R&R Initiative—namely, “pride in quality public service”—can only be reported on through the use of exit interviews. Despite this, none of the ministries we visited had an exit interview process in place, and other ministries indicated that exit interviews were only conducted occasionally if at all.

Recommendation

To improve employee satisfaction and staff retention rates in the Ontario Public Service, the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management should:

- **when reviewing existing or developing new human resource initiatives, assess them vis-à-vis the key drivers of employee satisfaction;**
- **determine, based on long-term business needs, which types of positions are best filled via permanent appointments versus temporary contractual appointments and work with the ministries to achieve these objectives;**
- **expand existing programs that support temporary job assignments, lateral transfers, and secondments to provide staff with enhanced career development opportunities;**
- **work with its employee representatives to prioritize and address the prime sources of employee job dissatisfaction;**

- broaden both formal and informal employee recognition and appraisal programs; and
- establish a formal exit interview process and use the results from these interviews to identify opportunities to improve employee satisfaction and retention.

Centre Response

We will continue to strengthen initiatives that enhance overall employee satisfaction as well as retention rates for high performers. For example, as well as considering the findings of the survey conducted by the Office of the Provincial Auditor, when developing corporate HR policies and initiatives, the Centre will integrate research conducted by other research-based organizations.

We will establish, and communicate to ministries, principle-based criteria to use when assessing which positions, by their nature, may be best suited to temporary, contractual appointments rather than permanent positions.

Internal mobility is a key factor in ensuring job fit and in providing career development opportunities. The Ontario Public Service (OPS) offers many of these temporary and permanent opportunities to employees, and this is one of our strongest selling features. We are exploring ways to expand horizontally some of our current programs (lateral transfer, etc.) to facilitate moving across ministry boundaries.

We agree that it is important to be aware of and prioritize the prime sources of both employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction. At the corporate, ministry, and local levels, employer representatives regularly work with and meet with the bargaining agents to address ongoing issues of the employees they represent. In addition, the use of employee survey tools has been identified by leading public and private employers as one of the best methods to identify these factors. We will be looking at the feasibility of regular surveys in the OPS.

We agree to broaden informal employee recognition programs and appraisal (performance management) programs. The OPS has a number of formal recognition programs at both the corporate and ministry level. Based on our research, we have identified a gap in the provision of informal, everyday recognition, and the Recognition Fund, approved by Cabinet in June 2004, is designed to address this gap. The Recognition Fund is designed to demonstrate support and recognition for outstanding achievement throughout the OPS and to enable the creation of a culture that demonstrates regular, meaningful recognition of the contributions of employees.

The current Performance Management Operating Policy sets the framework for the OPS performance management program. Over the next year, we plan to implement a number of initiatives to reinforce and support the policy.

We concur that exit interviews are an important source of information. Although a number of ministries and managers conduct exit interviews or surveys, we will communicate to all ministries the value of exit interviews in gathering data to identify opportunities to improve employee satisfaction and retention.

HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND REPORTING

MBS's 1999 HR Strategy and its 2001 R&R Initiative were the initial steps of a larger government-wide effort to renew the OPS, one that would involve ministries in HR strategic processes, from planning to implementing to reporting on success. With respect to HR planning, significant progress was made by June 2002, with all ministries having developed and submitted HR plans covering the two-year period from April 2002 to March 2004. The plans themselves provided details on a number of innovative initiatives, with a view to achieving the government's HR objectives. Such initiatives include employee recognition programs, leadership conferences, job rotation opportunities, and employee surveys to identify current issues. While most initiatives were to be undertaken by individual ministries, several cross-ministry initiatives were also planned, which indicated that ministries were recognizing the availability and value of other corporate resources. While in their 2001/02 plans only 9% of ministries had specified inter-ministry, cluster, or occupational groups as potential partners in HR initiatives, this percentage rose considerably to 35% in the 2002/04 plans.

While the 1999 HR Strategy has resulted in some positive initiatives in HR renewal, we noted a number of shortcomings with the government's strategic planning processes.

Accountability for Achieving Results

For a corporate HR strategy to succeed, government leaders must set its overall direction, pace, and goals; communicate its importance; and provide the required resources. Our review of the processes in place to ensure the 1999 HR Strategy was implemented at the ministry level indicated insufficient commitment and accountability for achieving these results. Specifically, while MBS was working regularly with ministry HR branches to influence their planning and reporting activities, it had no direct authority over their operations. Likewise, given their limited authority and capacity, HR branches have effectively delegated much of the responsibility for management-employee relations, staff retention, succession management, and training and development to the operational branch or individual manager level, where there is often little knowledge of or interest in fulfilling the corporate HR agenda. Accordingly, a greater commitment from senior management across the government will likely be necessary to accelerate the achievement of corporate HR goals.

The Tracking and Reporting of HR Initiatives

With respect to the five renewal and revitalization outcomes and corresponding performance measures outlined in the 2001 R&R Initiative, we noted that although all ministries were to report on all five outcomes, only 10 of the 21 ministries (48%) actually addressed all five in their 2002–2004 HR plans and only seven ministries (33%) subsequently reported on all five of the common performance measures. A number of the measures used by ministries also did not relate to the outcomes they purportedly addressed. In fact, many ministries have simply indicated they do not have the systems in place to measure or are unable to collect the data needed to report on the five corporate renewal and revitalization outcomes.

Given the difficulty in obtaining complete data on its corporate performance measures, MBS had not yet been able to establish benchmarks for any of them. At the time of our audit, the measures were under review for possible modification or replacement with new indicators. Until common corporate measures are developed and accepted by ministries, and until benchmarks are established for them and systems put in place to capture the relevant data, it will be difficult for both the ministries and the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management to assess whether sufficient progress on the renewal and revitalization outcomes is being made.

The ministries' progress reports provided up to the time of our audit to MBS had also been weak in providing specifics of results achieved vis-à-vis the corporate HR goals. For example, in ministries' May 2003 reports, only 30 of 84 (36%) commitments that ministries had agreed to meet by that time had been fully met. (These commitments, which were outlined in ministries' 2002–04 plans, included such activities as conducting customer or employee surveys, holding workshops, increasing recognition programs, or increasing attendance at wellness events.) The remaining commitments were either partially met (52%) or not met (12%).

Beyond the concerns about ministry performance reporting, we noted that corporate reporting on the achievement of HR objectives and progress vis-à-vis its strategy has been lacking. For example:

- No reporting has taken place that directly outlines progress to date in addressing many of the issues identified in the 1999 HR Strategy. In our view, the Annual Report of the Civil Service Commission would be an ideal vehicle for providing such reporting. However, this report, which the *Public Service Act* requires be tabled annually, was last issued to cover the period 1999–2000. Only unapproved drafts exist for all subsequent years.
- While ministries reported back to MBS on their progress in implementing their HR plans in May of 2003; at the time of our audit, the MBS summary report on this progress had not been finalized.

Recommendation

To track progress in implementing the government's human resource renewal strategy for the Ontario Public Service (OPS), the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management should:

- obtain the commitment of ministry senior management for the achievement of corporate HR strategic goals and develop sufficient accountability mechanisms to ensure this commitment is incorporated into ministry business planning and performance review processes; and
- establish benchmarks and targets for performance measures and work with ministries to ensure that measurement data is available and collected and the results are regularly reported on, both at the ministry level and on a corporate, government-wide basis.

Centre Response

The Centre agrees that strengthened accountability mechanisms and structures will help advance the HR Strategy. To that end, several initiatives are now in place, or in development.

The creation of a single central organization accountable for all aspects of HR management—the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management—will in part address this recommendation through related accountability structures. For example, supported by the Secretary of Cabinet, new accountability mechanisms have been included in the Deputy Minister's and senior management 2004/05 performance contracts.

As well, we are currently developing OPS-wide human resource metrics reports and related measures that will help senior managers better understand the state of human resources as it relates to their operations. These measures will provide indicators of HR organizational progress, particularly as that progress is benchmarked against external measures. To this end, we are developing an HR scorecard.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Through training and development, employees improve or update the skills and knowledge they require to meet their current and expected future job responsibilities. Training can be provided internally or externally through courses or seminars, via participation in professional certification programs, or informally through on-the-job training.

Numerous strategic initiatives have recognized the importance of training and learning as one of the cornerstones of quality public service. In addition to the 1999 HR Strategy, the government's 1998 *Building the OPS for the Future: A Quality Service Organization* and its 1999 *Building the OPS for the Future: A Learning Organization*

focused on rebuilding the OPS as a learning organization. Despite these commitments, we found that training and development are not being adequately managed to strengthen the government's most important asset—its people.

Learning and Development Plans

According to the government's 1999 *Building the OPS for the Future: A Learning Organization*, ministries should prepare annual learning plans that are linked to the ministry's business and human resource plans. However, we found that none of the ministries we visited were sufficiently addressing this recommendation. We found learning plans were not linked to overall ministry business needs or aligned with corporate goals. Rather, they were typically developed at the individual employee or perhaps branch level. HR departments were not maintaining centralized records of these plans, nor were they compiling them into ministry-wide plans that would allow them to identify and prioritize overall training needs or take into account training that had already been provided to staff. Training was typically approved on an event-by-event basis without documentation that would justify it in terms of alignment with identified training requirements or ministry business priorities. In addition, while ministries had identified a number of learning and development strategies in 2002, at the end of our audit, they either did not have an implementation plan to address these strategies or had not completed the planned work on them.

Management Board of Cabinet policy requires that, for each employee, an annual performance development plan be completed. The policy indicates that the plan should identify performance commitments, measures related to those commitments, and the learning and development activities to be undertaken during the year. The plan must also be aligned with the current and future business needs of the ministry. We found that none of the ministries we visited had a system in place to ensure that all employees had such a development plan. We randomly sampled 79 employees in the ministries we visited and found that only 6% of employees sampled had performance development plans in place that met all of the policy's requirements; 26% of employees sampled did not have a performance development plan at all; and the remaining 68% of employees' plans did not specify required information, such as the training to be provided, the employee's performance commitments, or measurements of performance.

Access to training was also raised as a significant concern by respondents to our employee survey with 29% indicating they did not receive sufficient training to do their job well.

The Tracking of Training

It is difficult to determine the ideal amount of training that should be provided to an organization's employees. In discussing the need to invest in staff learning and development, the 1999 HR Strategy noted that public-sector organizations spend an

equivalent of 1.4% of their salary and wage budgets on employee learning and development, while it also noted sources that indicated high-performing organizations invest as much as 6%.

A starting point for knowing where the OPS stands in terms of providing adequate training opportunities is capturing training costs incurred on a government-wide basis. However, as the 1999 HR Strategy noted: “It is difficult to calculate OPS investment in employee learning and development with any reliability at this time.” Unfortunately, at the time of our audit five years later, this was still the case as there was no overall corporate summary of the amount or cost of training and development provided. Without such data, the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management will not be able to establish benchmarks, assess whether training levels are adequate, or monitor whether they are rising or falling over time.

In 1999, the government developed a new information management system known as the Workforce Information Network (WIN) to maintain the personnel records of all Ontario public employees. In addition to basic HR information on each employee, WIN was also designed to track the training provided to each employee such that corporate-level reporting and analysis could be conducted. However, we noted ministries were not utilizing the WIN system to record training provided.

In reviewing the individual training budgets and expenditures on training at the ministries we visited, we further noted that while some ministries had training budgets prepared on a divisional basis and some of these divisions attempted to monitor actual training expenditures, none of the ministries maintained overall training budgets or cost-tracking systems to measure and assess the cost-effectiveness of the training provided.

Since we were unable to obtain an accurate picture from MBS or from the ministries of the amount invested on training and development, we attempted to determine it from the government’s central accounting system. The data we obtained indicates that Ontario’s training expenditure per employee may be much lower than the public-sector average of 1.4% noted in the 1999 HR Strategy. Even though there had been an increase in recorded training expenditures per employee from \$191 in 1995/96 to \$307 in 2002/03, this latter amount still represents only 0.5% of the government’s payroll costs. By comparison, a Conference Board of Canada report projected training expenditures in Canada to be \$838 per employee in 2002 (approximately 1.6% of total payroll costs), and also indicated that training investments by Canadian organizations had been lagging behind other countries for some time.

Government-wide Training Programs

The Learning Solution Group (LSG), formerly Generic Training, was created by MBS in 1999 to provide cost-effective training opportunities for government employees. Such opportunities would be created through the development of new learning

programs and resources as well as the sharing, on a government-wide basis, of quality programs already developed by individual ministries.

We found that the LSG's planning process for developing its offering of training courses was not comprehensive. That is, we saw no evidence that OPS workforce priorities or business needs were key criteria in determining the course curriculum. The LSG developed its courses based on a review of ministries' submitted learning plans, which in turn were developed without input from individual employees. In this regard, we noted very high cancellation rates on the training sessions offered—54% in 2001/02 and 29% in 2002/03—often due to low enrolment. This may impact on the LSG's future success because staff who have their planned training cancelled may well turn to other sources for future training.

We also noted that for only two-thirds of its courses did the LSG have course attendees evaluate the training session they attended, and there were no records to indicate management had analyzed the evaluations that did exist to assess whether the courses had addressed attendees' priorities and their ministries' business needs.

One of the objectives of the LSG is to leverage its resources and avoid duplication of training efforts between it and the ministries. Nevertheless, most of the larger ministries maintained their own training programs, and attendance on LSG courses from these ministries was quite low. When courses offered at the ministry level covered similar areas as those offered by LSG, reasons cited for maintaining these courses at the ministry level were: the cost of LSG courses; the need for more flexibility in course times and locations; and the ability to customize courses for the ministry's specific business requirements.

On a government-wide basis, attendance at LSG courses averaged only 2.75 hours per OPS employee in 2003, indicating that the vast majority of government employee training is being delivered independently of this group. Although it has a mandate to recover its costs, low enrolment and the high course-cancellation rate were key reasons the LSG has been incurring a deficit of approximately \$1 million per year since its inception.

Recommendation

To achieve the vision of the government as a true learning organization, foster the continual development of the government's human resources, and assess and improve on the cost-effectiveness of investments in employee training:

the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management should:

- **work to ensure management policies on training and development are implemented throughout the government;**
- **ensure government-wide training programs develop cost-competitive courses that reflect both employee and ministry training needs; and**

- consider prescribing that ministries use the Workforce Information Network to record all staff training provided; and

ministries should:

- prepare annual corporate training plans that address both the Ministry's corporate priorities and employees' training and development needs; and
- track and report on the cost, nature, and success of training provided.

Centre Response

A Learning Strategy is currently in development that sets the framework for the governance, design, development, and delivery of all learning and development activities. Linked to the Learning Strategy is the Learning and Development Operating Policy, which will align with and support the strategy.

Training is currently being harmonized across the OPS for all employees. The Leadership and Development Branch will have overall responsibility for governance of learning across the OPS and have final accountability for: determination of corporate priority learning areas, content alignment across the OPS with corporate priorities, quality of curriculum design, and quality of outcomes. This will allow for reduced duplication while increasing the value of the OPS learning investment.

We acknowledge the importance of tracking learning and training. We are currently conducting a review that will result in a recommendation for the best way to cost-effectively track and manage training initiatives.

After the implementation of the above initiatives during the current and subsequent fiscal years, ministries will also be better positioned to address training planning and effectiveness issues.

ORGANIZATION WELLNESS

Wellness programs help organizations address employee health issues, reduce preventable sick days, and enhance employee productivity. They are also a factor in employee retention. Our survey results indicate that the government work environment appears to promote wellness generally. According to our survey of OPS employees, for instance, over 80% of respondents felt they could adequately balance their personal and family needs with their work requirements. Furthermore, most respondents felt that their physical working conditions and the tools and resources they were provided with were sufficient and appropriate for their work.

One wellness program currently offered to all government employees is the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EAP). This EAP, delivered on a confidential basis through an external firm, is designed to help employees with a wide range of personal

and work-related problems. We surveyed the OPS employees and found that 84% of those who had used the EAP had found the services provided helpful.

In addition to the EAP, other wellness-related programs available for employees include flex-time and compressed-work-week arrangements. However, we were unable to determine how widespread such programs were because the ministries we visited did not have processes in place to track staff participation in them.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism can have a significant impact on office performance and productivity and can signal employee commitment problems. While we acknowledge that there are a number of possible approaches to measuring absenteeism (especially given the complexities of the government's human resource database), our analysis indicates that the average number of days lost annually due to sickness in the OPS has remained relatively steady over the past 10 years at about eight days per employee. While it is difficult to compare these levels with benchmark data, the data that is available suggests that OPS levels are comparable with other public-sector jurisdictions. In fact, our analysis indicates that Ontario's absenteeism rate has remained steady while rates in other jurisdictions have been rising.

Other significant components of total absenteeism rates are days lost due to work injuries and absences under long-term income protection programs. For long-term absences in particular, available data suggests OPS levels are generally higher than those of other jurisdictions. When all such sources are considered, we estimate that in the OPS close to 12 days annually per employee are lost due to absenteeism.

None of the ministries we visited maintained a central system to monitor staff with high absenteeism rates. The responsibility for managing absenteeism was delegated to the branches. However, there were no ministry procedures in place to guide branch management.

The OPS does have a corporate Attendance Support Program (ASP) designed to assist management to work with employees with high absenteeism rates to improve their attendance and help them return to a normal work schedule. As part of our data analysis, we identified 61 employees from the ministries we visited, the majority of whom had more than 100 absence days in 2003, and followed up to determine if the requirements of the ASP had been complied with for these employees. We found that in only 10 of these 61 cases (16%) were all the requirements of the ASP met. While the requirements were partially met for 34 cases (56%), for the remaining 17 cases (28%) the employee had not even been registered in the ASP program.

We also noted there was a high number of repeat participants in the program, and the process did not ensure these individuals received specific attention and counselling.

Recommendation

To promote organizational wellness and ensure that productivity is not impeded, the Centre for Leadership and Human Resource Management and ministries should better manage absenteeism by improving systems to identify and work with employees with high absenteeism rates and by verifying that the requirements of the Attendance Support Program are complied with.

Centre Response

Since 1997, with the inception of the Attendance Support Program (ASP), we have been actively focusing on managing short-term sickness and our calculations show a reduction in short-term absences over that period. However, we agree that systems to manage absenteeism can improve and we are taking steps to do so.

We are developing a comprehensive, multi-year health framework that will provide new direction and focus to improve organizational health and well-being. The framework will integrate current policies and programs, and set priorities for developing new policies and programs to fill gaps.

In addition, the following improvements are either in progress or planned to improve the way we manage absenteeism:

- *reinforcing managers' understanding and compliance with their responsibilities under the current ASP and other areas of attendance/disability management;*
- *improving identification, tracking, and follow-up with employees who have high levels of sick leave usage;*
- *revising policy guidance to enable employees with disabilities to maximize their productivity and facilitate the early, safe, and sustainable return to work of employees who are absent due to illness or injury; and*
- *developing strategies to ensure more systematic management of disability issues, particularly workplace injuries and illnesses.*

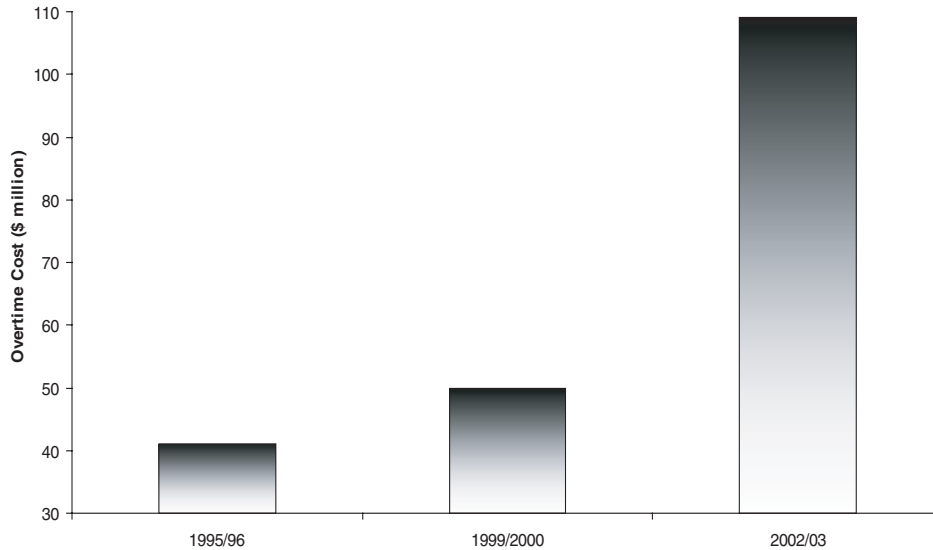
OTHER MATTER

Overtime

Prolonged working hours can reduce both productivity and the quality of service provided. From our survey results, 42% of respondents believed that work overload was the factor that had the most impact on the quality of their work. As well, 53% of survey respondents felt that their departments were currently understaffed, and 36% of respondents indicated they could not complete their assigned workload during regular office hours.

As discussed earlier, the government has been downsizing since 1995. Our analysis of overtime since then identified a noticeable upward trend in paid overtime in the OPS, even after excluding all strike-related overtime, as indicated in the following bar graph.

OPS Paid Overtime, Selected Years—1995/96–2002/03



Note: For 2002/03, 2.8 million hours in strike-related overtime was deducted from the total. This amounted to \$92.5 million in overtime costs.

Source of data: Management Board Secretariat

Whereas in 1995/96 staff worked 1.9 million paid overtime hours, in 2002/03 this had risen to 4.6 million hours (excluding strike-related overtime). The above bar graph does not capture unpaid overtime, which anecdotal evidence indicates is also considerable.

Recommendation

To ensure that service quality is not impeded, ministries should monitor the overtime being worked by their employees, set acceptable thresholds for such overtime, and, in areas where these thresholds are being exceeded, take appropriate corrective action.

Centre Response

We are concerned about the amount of overtime worked and acknowledge that overtime must be balanced with employee well-being, as well as operational and fiscal priorities. To a large extent, individual ministry managers are responsible for reviewing workload issues including paid and unpaid overtime and staffing resources.