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**SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING
SESSION I**

Statistics Canada's human resource management strategy¹

Submitted by Statistics Canada

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Statistics Canada is Canada's national statistical agency. It is required under the Statistics Act to collect, compile, analyze and publish statistical information on the economic, social and general conditions of the country and its citizens. The information produced by the Agency helps to clearly illuminate issues. This information is used by public sector departments, both at the federal or provincial levels, as direct input into decision-making and policy development; other users include private sector organizations, unions, interest groups and academia. The majority of issues facing Canadians are discussed using Statistics Canada data and analyses, as evidenced by the media coverage it receives. Such coverage helps Canadians' awareness of important social and economic developments revealed by new statistics.

2. As a scientific research agency, Statistics Canada publishes a wide range of statistical analyses and contributes substantially to the development of statistical methodologies at the national and international levels. It operates as the hub of the nation's statistical systems and

¹ This paper has been prepared at the invitation of the secretariat.

conducts special surveys funded by other federal departments and agencies, provincial government departments, or private sector clients.

3. A total of 5500 employees hired under Canada's Public Service Employment Act work at the Agency, mostly at our head office in Ottawa. Our highly educated public service workforce is composed of about 100 executive managers, some 1000 economists and sociologists, most with undergraduate university degrees in economics or sociology and some with graduate degrees, 300 mathematicians/ statisticians with undergraduate or graduate university degrees in mathematics or statistics, 900 computer systems design specialists, 1500 technicians, 1200 clerical and secretarial staff and 800 administrative staff. In addition to this workforce of public servants, under the Statistics Act, the Agency employs approximately 2000 interviewers who are managed from 3 regional offices and work in 8 locations across the country and are primarily involved in the Agency's data collection activities.

II. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

4. In the mid to late 1980's human resource management activities were driven by some forty individual program divisions (health, education, labour, manufacturing etc.), based on their local operational needs. Recruitment was carried out to fill a specific vacancy, and new employees were provided with on the job training that was related to the specific subject matter area. During this period, promotions and career expectations were limited to the narrow career path within the employee's specific subject matter area. This approach to human resources management produced a workforce that was highly specialized in specific subject matter areas, but lacked the knowledge and experience required to move to other program areas. The result was a lack of corporate awareness and career mobility outside of an immediate area of specialization. Three critical factors led senior management to the realization that it was not in the best interests of the Agency to continue to manage its human resources using this approach:

(a) a demographic analysis of the Agency's workforce indicated that the top five levels of management and most of the senior specialists were aging. The impact of employing a workforce comprised of baby-boomers meant that, at the turn of the new millennium, a vast majority of the Agency's workforce would be eligible to retire within 10 years. It was evident that Statistics Canada would have a succession problem if we continued to manage our human resources in the traditional manner;

(b) demands for statistics were changing rapidly. As a statistical agency, we needed to have the flexibility to rapidly adjust our programs to changing client needs. It was therefore imperative that our workforce be adaptable, multi-skilled, and has transferable knowledge, skills and experience so that they could be redeployed when program and priorities were changed or when there were fluctuations in budgets. A related benefit of employees' becoming multi-skilled was that we could offer them job security – even if their specific project had to be discontinued; and this, in turn, made it very cost-beneficial to invest in their long-term development;

(c) Increasingly, clients were seeking cross-cutting information rather than data based on the results of individual surveys. Our traditional approach to developing subject matter specialists had produced highly competent staff, but they were rather narrowly focused and did not have the breadth of experience needed to work harmoniously on cross-cutting projects or statistical outputs.

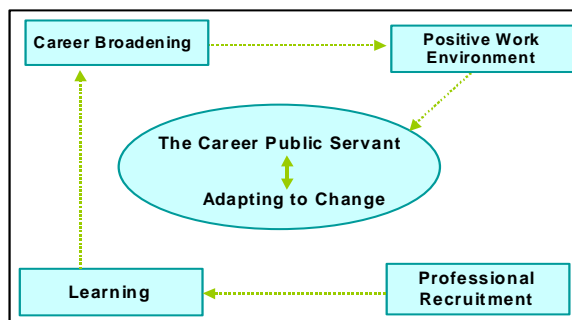
5. The Agency realized that given these factors, what was needed was an adaptable

workforce, one that was flexible, multi-skilled. A more holistic, corporate and long term human resources strategy has since that time gradually evolved at Statistics Canada. This human resources strategy is aimed at:

- (a) incorporating recruitment, development, retention and succession strategies that sustain HR capacity over the long term;
- (b) increasing organizational efficiency through the effective management of human resources given that expenditures for salaries represent 80% of the Agency's budget;
- (c) facilitating organizational adaptability and developing staff that is multi-skilled and flexible so they can be moved amongst the divisions to address priorities, work well on teams, and possess a broad range of knowledge to meet current and future client demands;
- (d) providing opportunities and guidance for staff, encouraging continuous learning and career development for employees so they can enjoy a long term career at Statistics Canada and thus ensure a healthy succession. Investing in the career of employees has the plus of enhancing staff morale;
- (e) increasing opportunities for employees to work on project teams and actively encouraging employees to work together on cross-cutting issues. The net effect has been to increase harmony and organizational cohesion by breaking down vertical barriers.

III. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Statistics Canada's HR Management Strategy



6. Since the early 1990's, Statistics Canada has established a number of human resources policies, practices and mechanisms that have evolved into a Comprehensive Human Resources Management Strategy. This holistic strategy is based on four pillars that cover all aspects of human resources. It consists of:

- (a) hiring the best and brightest employees;
- (b) promoting a culture of continuous learning, training resulting in cohorts of flexible, versatile and mobile employees at each level to form pools that will provide qualified replacements for future departures at the next level up;
- (c) developing long term career potential through career broadening assignments;
- (d) creating a positive work environment that is conducive to employment and career opportunities for all employees.

7. This strategy has helped to create a sense of community which motivates and promotes

productivity and encourages career development and retention. Under the umbrella of this strategy, many initiatives and mechanisms have been put in place, such as: centralized recruitment of university and college graduates; a two year internship program for all new professional recruits that involves at least three managed rotations; mentoring programs; career path guides; workplace wellness initiatives; and the creation of an on-campus Training Institute which provides long duration training designed by the Agency for Agency employees. Fundamental to this strategy is the tradition of a “no lay-off policy”, a practice which fosters trust, a sense of community within the organization and encourages retention of career employees.

IV. PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

8. At Statistics Canada, the level of investment in each employee is high, so it makes sense to select entry-level professionals wisely and to nurture these new hires carefully. A corporate Recruitment and Development Committee annually forecasts the total demand for new professional and technical staff, including economists, sociologists, mathematicians, statisticians, survey technicians and computer specialists. Subsequently, working groups are tasked, by this committee, to conduct university recruitment campaigns and internal competitions to identify and hire the targeted number of new staff in each profession. The working groups, which are comprised of senior line managers representing all statistical program areas of the department, are supported by human resources professionals.

9. Newly hired graduates are not placed immediately into a regular position. Instead, they are placed in a corporate managed pool for two-years. During this period, they participate in an apprenticeship program which provides them with broad exposure to the Agency. New recruits rotate among three or four assignments in various program divisions and participate on compulsory courses related to the Agency’s business. Mentoring and coaching are fundamental elements of the apprenticeship program. New recruits are assigned mentors to help guide them for the duration of their program. Mentors are seasoned senior managers who would have received training in mentoring. They have a broad knowledge of the skills required by the Agency and their role is to help the recruit gain an overall perspective of the Agency. The mentor also helps the recruit select assignments and training, and guides and supports the recruit’s integration into the organizational culture. Upon completion of their developmental program, recruits graduate and then are assigned to a regular position in one of the statistical program areas.

V. CONTINUOUS LEARNING

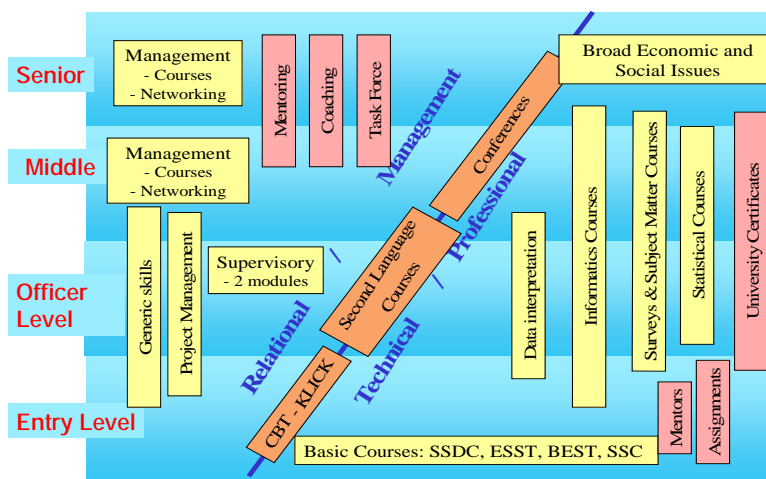
10. Statistics Canada places the highest priority on learning and invests heavily in formal training, regardless of volatile swings in financial budget levels. Over three percent of the Agency’s salary budget is invested in training, with an ensuing average of six days of formal training annually per employee.

11. The Agency provides a full range of professional, technical, computer, management and human relations training opportunities at our on-campus Statistics Canada Training Institute, opened in 1993. Some 30 full-time trainers, professionals who are on temporary assignments to the Institute, and a further 200 ‘guest lecturers’ donate their time to performing training functions in addition to their regular jobs.

12. The scope and thrust of learning activities is determined by the Learning and Development Committee. This committee is chaired by an Assistant Chief Statistician (ACS) and is comprised of a cross-section of senior program executives, who determine the Training Institute’s curriculum and provide overall management and direction to learning at the Agency. On an ongoing basis, this committee identifies training needs and provides direction to teams of subject matter experts and course design specialists involved in the development and delivery of courses. By means of this committee, training content, scope, and overall thrust is entirely in the hands of those who will supervise its beneficiaries.

13. The Statistics Canada Institute has a full range of courses in its curriculum. The aim is to provide continuous learning activities which span an employee’s career. The following illustration highlights the major thrusts of the learning program.

Promotion of Learning at Statistics Canada²



14. At entry to Statistics Canada (STC), all statistical employees have compulsory professional courses in household and business survey taking and data analysis. Some of the flagship training courses that recruits participate on include: a 6-week Survey Skills Development Course (SSDC); a 6-week Data Interpretation Workshop; a 6-week Business and Economic Statistics Course (BEST); and a 4-week Economic Statistics Course (ESST). These basic courses are extensive in nature and are designed to simulate how the fundamental work at STC is carried out. Beyond the entry-level, the Agency provides a full range of optional professional and technical courses, on such topics as computing, sampling, and questionnaire design, to name but a few. In addition, the Agency provides management training tailored to each managerial level.

All new supervisors, middle managers and senior managers are required to take a number of formal courses and seminars as well as participate on corporate task forces or working groups tasked with addressing a corporate cross-cutting issue. This process provides exposure to senior management's decision-making process.

15. Statistics Canada has a formal Learning Policy that requires the establishment of divisional learning plans and encourages each employee to develop an individual learning plan. Across the Agency, a network of divisional learning champions supports the development of these plans. Statistics Canada uses the opportunity provided by the annual performance review to encourage employees to each create a learning plan. At this point in the year, each employee discusses with their supervisor their training needs, both for their current job and for planned career moves within the Agency. We have also instituted another step to help employees plan for the longer term. Employees are offered a biennial 'skip-level interview' with their supervisor's supervisor to discuss longer range training in order to meet career goals. This meeting provides a unique opportunity for employees to gain a broader perspective on corporate requirements and career opportunities than might be available from a first level supervisor.

VI. CAREER BROADENING

16. Career broadening is a prime focus for the Agency. Flexibility to quickly adapt to changes in the environment is fundamental to an effective organization. Statistics Canada encourages employees to acquire a firm grounding in a subject area, and then to develop their versatility by broadening their experiences and enhancing their long-term potential. The Agency has adopted a number of mechanisms to ensure that we have large pools of qualified and mobile employees who are willing and able to move to new and demanding work assignments.

A. Career Streams

17. Within each of the mainstream occupational groups employed at the Agency, there are 'streams' or clusters of jobs that serve a somewhat similar function and require similar competencies but at different levels of the hierarchy. The Committee on Career Streams is made up of senior managers who champion career development. One of the initiatives of this committee has been to create unique electronic career path documents to help guide employees, supervisors and mentors in planning and selecting options for career development. These tools are available on the Agency's Internal Communications Network (ICN). These career paths explain the methods of selection for each level in a group, the knowledge, experience and abilities as well as the training and the rotation traditionally used to build such competencies .

B. Corporate Assignments Program

18. The Corporate Assignments Program is designed to broker assignments, and provide fast service with minimum red tape to fill human resource requirements on a temporary basis to meet workloads or to facilitate redeployment when programs and priorities change. A Corporate Assignment provides the opportunity to acquire new work experience, practice second-language skills, explore different areas in the Agency or participate on an assignment outside the Agency. This program enables employees to gain experience that may lead to a transfer, promotion or even a fresh start. All employees are eligible to apply for a Corporate Assignment with their

director's approval. After four years in the same position, employees need no formal approval to participate. At any one point in time, approximately 10% of the entire Agency's staff is on a Corporate Assignment. The risk to both the employee and manager is reduced by two key rules: employees are guaranteed the security of returning to their home positions; and the host division can terminate the assignment with two weeks notice if the employee is not suited for the position. The program has been in existence since 1983. It is a generally accepted fact that those who have been on corporate assignments often have a higher rate of subsequent career success – which contributes to the program's reputation.

C. Generic Competitions

19. Career progression in the Agency is based on selection through a competitive process designed to ensure that the most qualified person is selected. The norm is to hold a competition for a specific position in a given subject matter area. However, Statistics Canada made a major shift to 'generic competitions', a process that staffs many positions through one large competitive process for a specific level of a given occupational group. This generic approach has many benefits: it offers more opportunities to a larger group of potential candidates; it is very transparently managed, ensuring real fairness as well as its perception; and, since successful candidates are typically assigned to a job in a division which is different from their home base, it reinforces our message about breadth of orientation and skills. Exceptions to the generic process are made about 10% of the time, when individual jobs require specialists, such as highly qualified subject matter analysts.

20. A Senior Steering Committee on Staffing oversees the generic staffing activities and helps ensure that there is consistency between competitions. Generic competitions encourage employees to develop beyond their original field of expertise because they require candidates to have a broader appreciation of corporate issues affecting Statistics Canada. Generic processes are used for the full range of levels including the top three senior management levels. Director Generals, Directors and Assistant Directors positions. Successful candidates from these executive generics are placed in a 'pool'. To facilitate broadening, every attempt is made to ensure the initial assignment is a placement outside of the executive's home division. The executive's performance is reviewed annually by the senior executive committee and consideration for rotation is discussed. Generally, after three to four years a rotation is made to further the development of the executive.

VII. A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

21. The creation of a positive work environment is an essential pillar in Statistics Canada's Human Resource Management Strategy. Ensuring that our employees have a strong sense of the value we attach to them helps to encourage commitment, increase retention and facilitate mobility and versatility. A positive work environment helps the Agency achieve this goal. Over time, a series of practices and support services have gradually been implemented to demonstrate the Agency's commitment to our employees and has served to create a positive work environment. These practices form part of Statistics Canada's Workplace Wellness Strategy. This strategy is guided by the Wellness Committee which is chaired by a senior line manager and comprised of representatives from the senior ranks across the organization. The Wellness Strategy focuses on five key areas: open communication, valuing people, investing in employee

facilities, providing activities and enabling a positive work-life balance.

A. Open Communication

22. A workplace is more positive and productive when there is effective two-way communication. The following are examples of a few of the mechanisms the Agency has in place to ensure that such communication takes place:

- (a) in January, the Chief Statistician presents the annual 'State of the Union Address'. This address highlights the accomplishments of the past year and identifies the priorities and challenges for the upcoming year to senior managers. This presentation is videotaped and a written version is also made available so that all employees can have access to this information;
- (b) weekly meetings of the Executive Committee are followed by 'trickle down' debriefings by committee members to ensure that critical information is passed quickly to all senior managers and their staff. In addition, the Chief Statistician meets semi-annually with groups of the executive cadre to discuss topics of interest and concern;
- (c) an Employee Opinion Survey is conducted every three years, and the results are used to guide and monitor management initiatives. The survey's primary role is to engender 'shop floor' discussions between employees and managers. All managers are mandated to follow-up on the results and must find a suitable way to investigate what lies behind the survey results for their areas. The results of the survey thus serve as a tool for dialogue and interaction between employees and managers concerning issues in the local workplace;
- (d) every two years, each division prepares a Biennial Program Report which details the main program elements, performance measurements, current challenges, goals and progress since the last report. These reports are key communication tools with top management. The Chief Statistician personally responds to each report. His feedback often contains requests for clarification and suggestions for new priorities and goals for the next two years. Every fourth year, a more strategic Quadrennial Program Report is prepared and presented to the Executive Committee. Again, the feedback often requests clarification or may contain suggestions for new priorities and goals for the next two years. The Biennial and Quadrennial Program Reports and the Chief Statistician's feedback, are occasions for divisional stock-taking and are typically posted on an internal website. Reporting on human resource issues is a required feature of these program reports.

B. Valuing People

23. A number of practices and employee support services demonstrate Statistics Canada's commitment to employees, including:

- (a) since 1979, despite periods of severe budget cutbacks, the organization has maintained a 'no layoff policy'. Simply stated, this policy states that, should it become necessary to reduce or eliminate a program due to budget reductions or changes in priority, the affected employees will be moved to other areas requiring staff: they will have absolute preference in staffing;
- (b) a network of senior Harassment Prevention Officers is in place to provide confidential support to employees on issues related to harassment or discrimination;
- (c) an Employee Assistance Program, staffed by professionals, helps employees deal with personal or work related problems;

- (d) An Informal Conflict Resolution Program provides mediation services to help employees and managers resolve conflict in a non-threatening environment;
- (e) a formal Awards and Recognition Program recognizes and celebrates outstanding employee achievements. The program consists of Instant Awards that can be given anytime to acknowledge specific contributions and of more formal awards presented annually, such as those for long service, (25 and 35 years of service), individual and group Merit Awards, Employee of the Year, Marketing Award, Official Languages Award, Wellness Award and a Career Excellence Award for retired employees in recognition of an outstanding career at STC. The awards are presented annually in December at an Awards Day Celebration presided by the Chief Statistician.

C. Investment in Employee Facilities

24. Beyond a safe and healthy environment, Statistics Canada offers facilities that support active living as well as an impressive number of on-site services. The Agency has made an investment in facilities to support the active lifestyles of our employees. For example, the Agency has a fitness and cardio facility, nursing services, and a day-care centre.

D. Providing Employee Activities

25. Statistics Canada promotes good health practices and provides information on healthy living. A few examples of activities organized for employees by teams of managers and volunteers are: the annual influenza immunization clinic; an annual Employee Appreciation Day that encourages fun at work and fosters a sense of belonging to the organization; lunch information sessions with speakers on topics such as nutrition, exercise, stress management etc. In addition, the Agency provides support for over 100 employee clubs, organizations and committees.

E. Enabling a positive work-life balance

26. To help employees achieve work-life balance, the Agency offers employees a number of options. In addition to the normal leave provisions for vacation, sickness and family responsibilities, Statistics Canada offers a truly flexible work environment with options such as flexible time, part-time, job sharing, compressed time and telework.

VIII. BROAD HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

27. Statistics Canada's corporate, holistic and strategic approach to the management of human resources is possible because the Agency instituted a fundamental change in our approach to managing human resources. Three key elements were critical, and once in place, enabled us to translate our strategy into operational plans and to evaluate and monitor our progress so we can meet the needs of managers and employees:

- (a) a formal HR Management infrastructure to carry out these responsibilities and ensure comprehensiveness and coherence among components of the strategy;
- (b) delegation of authority and accountability for human resources management to line managers. At Statistics Canada, human resources management truly is a line management responsibility. Line managers take ownership of HR functions, have HR delegated authority and are held accountable for their contributions;
- (c) strong, long term human resources planning capacity is in place and is integrated with the business planning process of the Agency.

A. HR Management Infrastructure of Committees

28. For many years now, human resources management has long been accepted as a primary responsibility of line managers at the Agency. Human resources management is driven by a network of committees of executive line managers, and each committee is tasked with leading a major human resources program, such as recruitment, learning, internal staffing, career management, awards, wellness etc. Our Human Resources Development Sub-committee oversees the work of these HR management committees, guiding and assessing proposals and initiatives, and determining which should proceed for review and approval by the uppermost committee, the Human Resources Development Committee (our Senior Departmental Executive Committee). This uppermost committee is chaired by the Chief Statistician. This committee is the decision-making body which provides strategic direction on emerging HR issues and guidance to the HR management committees. The majority of executive line managers are involved in at least one HR committee, in addition to their program responsibilities. HR committees have very specific mandates and outputs which are reported on regularly to the senior committee. The Agency's Human Resources Branch which is staffed with human resources professionals provides expert HR strategic advice, operational support and coordination for the hands-on work of the network of line management committees.

B. HR Management Ownership and Accountability

29. Statistics Canada's approach to human resources results in decisions made on the basis of what is best overall for the Agency rather than on the basis of local need. One of the most positive results of this committee work is that, over the years, these committees have reinforced a culture of working to achieve corporate objectives rather than individual divisional needs. With our approach, individual managers do not make local decisions on recruitment, training or promotion based on individual positions or transactions. Instead, they participate on the corporate HR committees and contribute to the overall effective management of the Agency. Managers are expected to make innovative contributions to these HR committees in addition to carrying out their statistical program responsibilities, and their contributions are factored into their annual performance reviews and career success depends on contributions in both areas. The degree of empowerment is high. Statistics Canada gains from this, as proposals to create, modify and improve have direct input from the managers who are the beneficiaries of the changes. The committee system enables this balancing between corporate and local needs and ensures that there is a built-in incentive for managers to do what is best for the Agency.

C. Integrated Human Resources Planning with Business Program Planning Structure and Process

30. Statistics Canada's long term business planning process is well established. The annual planning process is designed to regularly assess the Agency's programs and resources in order to adjust them to meet changing client needs and priorities and to respond to opportunities and operational pressures. It is a process that provides opportunities to identify broad cross-cutting issues which may have an affect on technical and management policies and practices. It also provides the opportunity to monitor performance of ongoing programs and major initiatives.

31. For purposes of business planning, the formal organization is structured in a matrix fashion with five Planning Syndicates under the direction of the Corporate Planning Committee, which is comprised of the most senior executives and the Director of the Corporate Planning Division. Four of these Planning Syndicates are business syndicates and are associated with the statistical program and the technical and management infrastructure which supports them. The fifth Syndicate is responsible for corporate human resource management planning. It is the same committee that coordinates the work of the HR committees. Program changes, including new programs, program reductions, reallocations etc. and their resultant impact on human resources are identified by business syndicates and communicated to the HR syndicate. At the same time, the HR Planning Syndicate identifies corporate human resources priorities for input to the business planning deliberations. It is through the interaction of the business planning syndicates and with the human resources planning syndicate that the human resources issues and priorities are established.

32. Strategic planning is the first formal step in the planning cycle and takes place in the spring and summer. Planning Syndicate deliberations, priorities and issues are presented, discussed and planning priorities are established at the Senior Management Strategic Planning Conference in October. Following this meeting, Syndicates regroup and develop multi-year operational plans to respond to the established strategic priorities. Current programs and projects are identified for possible elimination or reduction and proposed new projects are identified. In January, all the Planning Syndicates reassemble to review the results of this operational planning phase. The proposals are discussed and probed for relevance and the net impact of the "inputs" and "outputs" are assessed for their impact on the overall statistical program as well as their financial and human resources implications. Final decisions as to which projects will be funded are made in March by the Corporate Planning Committee and appropriate adjustments are made to program and infrastructure budgets.

D. Human Resources Planning Component

33. Data on human resources is vital to the planning process. The HR Planning Syndicate ensures the Agency has the data required for informed decision-making. In preparation for the Fall Senior Management Strategic Planning Conference, under the direction of the HR Planning Syndicate, an HR workforce analysis is conducted by STC professional analysts using a micro simulation model (PERSIM) that was developed by agency experts.

34. PERSIM uses historical human resource data, to calculate historical probabilities for retirements based on age and years of service. Other separation probabilities are estimated as a function of age and work experience; promotions are projected on the basis of work experience; and the characteristics of new hires are simulated on the basis of the demographic profile of previously hired employees. These probabilities are applied to the current workforce distribution to project the 1 to 3 year recruitment and promotion rates, by profession and level, in a manner that will hold employment levels constant.

35. The baseline projections produced by PERSIM are used as a starting point to determine the recruitment and promotion targets that will be necessary over the next three years to meet operational needs. Outcomes of decisions from the planning process are added (or subtracted in the case program reductions) to the PERSIM baseline projections to determine the number of new professional and technical staff the Agency will need to hire in the recruitment campaign and the number of positions that will need to be staffed through generic or specific competitions. In addition to determining the recruit and promotion rates, PERSIM is used to analyse the number and maturity, or years of experience, of each of our pools of employees to determine if these pools are sufficiently robust to replace departing staff at the next level up (departing either because of separations or as a result of promotions).

36. Following the planning decisions in March, the annual STC Human Resources Strategic Plan is generated. It documents the result of the integrated planning process, identifying the human resources priorities for the coming year, indicating the recruitment targets, as well as outlining the staffing plans and associated schedules needed to respond to the demands that statistical programs have set out. This Human Resources Strategic Plan provides the basis from which the network of HR Management Committees set up action plans as well as the foundation for Human Resources Branch Business Plan. Progress against these action plans of the HR committees and the Human Resources Branch are monitored regularly throughout the year.

IX. ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL HR STRATEGY

37. The policies, programs and mechanisms that have been put in place to support Statistics Canada's Human Resources Strategy require constant monitoring and evaluation to assess their effectiveness, so the necessary adjustments can be made should they be needed. Some of the mechanisms used to measure the success of our human resources programs include:

A. Employee Opinion Surveys

38. Since the beginning of the implementation of the current approach to Human Resources Management, Statistics Canada has utilized Employee Opinion Surveys to obtain feedback and assess the success of the programs. The first internal survey was conducted in 1992 and was followed by similar subsequent ones in 1995 and 1998. The Canadian Public Service requested that Statistics Canada broaden this program and conduct a Public Service wide employees survey in 1999, 2002 and most recently in 2005.

39. The results of the employee surveys are taken very seriously and are the primary mechanism used to assess the effectiveness of the strategy. Analyses of the responses are carried out in a number of ways. First, at the aggregate level, the responses to the over one hundred

questions are grouped under four major themes: sharing information and goals, equitable work environment, work and workload, and training and career development. The results are compared to previous internal survey results and to the overall results for the public service as a whole. The highs and the lows are explored to determine the reasons and appropriate action is taken to correct the identified issues. For example, in one of the early surveys, respondents felt that they were not being given fair access to developmental assignments by their local managers. In response, as previously mentioned, a new policy was implemented that gave the right for employees to go on a corporate assignment after four years in the same job. Subsequent surveys showed increased satisfaction in this area. Similarly, an early survey identified fairness of promotional opportunities as a concern; it was in response to this finding that we introduced our generic competition system.

40. Second, a more in depth analysis of the four major themes is carried out and the results referred to the line management HR committee responsible for follow-up action. Follow-up often includes the use of focus groups composed of employees to explore the issues in depth. Action plans are developed to deal with identified issues. These plans are approved and progress monitored by Statistics Canada's senior executives. As a result, new learning programs have been implemented, new policies initiated and continuous improvements to the generic competition process have been implemented.

41. Finally, and perhaps most significant, survey results are compiled for and are provided to each of the divisions. The results reflect the responses of the employees within the particular division compared with the overall employees of Statistics Canada and with those of the public service at large. Care is always taken to ensure confidentiality of individual respondents. Divisional directors are expected to provide feedback on the results to their employees, pinpoint areas that require attention, and engage employees in finding and implementing appropriate solutions. Line directors are required to report their action plans, follow-up mechanisms and improvements. Divisional results are taken into consideration in the annual performance review of each director.

42. How do Statistics Canada's survey results compare with those of the public service at large? In the 2002 Public Service-wide survey, Statistics Canada's results were significantly above those of the Public Service wide norm on the vast majority of questions. Our overall results were the best in the Public Service. Beyond this comparison, the 2002 results represented an overall improvement in the generally very good results of the previous 1999 survey.

B. Central Agency Assessments

43. Successive Human Resources Management reviews and audits conducted by the Central Agencies of the Canadian Federal Public Service, to establish and monitor Statistics Canada's implementation of public service wide policies and guidelines, have been extremely positive. Statistics Canada is considered a 'best practices' organization in areas of recruitment, learning and human resources planning.

C. Human Resources External Awards

44. Since 2000, Statistics Canada received a number of prestigious external awards for various aspects of our human resource management strategy and programs, including such awards as:
- (a) The International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) "Gold Star Agency Award" for our Human Resources Strategy;
 - (b) The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages Leadership Award for bilingualism;
 - (c) The National Managers' Community Leadership Award was awarded for our Management Development Program;
 - (d) The APEX "Grand Award Winner" in the category of Newsletters (Not for profit) was awarded for our internal employee electronic newsletter @Statcan;
 - (e) The "Healthy Workplace Award" was awarded from the National Quality Institute. Statistics Canada was the first public institution to receive this award;
 - (f) The Head of the Public Service Award, for the category of "Valuing and Supporting People";
 - (g) The Public Service Award of Excellence, for Employee Health and Well-being.

X. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

45. It has taken many years for Statistics Canada to develop and implement our integrated and comprehensive Human Resources Management Strategy and it continues to evolve. Three fundamental precepts guide our approach:

- (a) senior line managers are required to take the lead and are held accountable for managing human resources. They receive advice and support from a team of highly qualified human resource professionals;
- (b) a strong long term human resources planning capacity is in place and needs to be integrated with the business planning of the organization;
- (c) consistency of broad philosophy and approaches are essential because they help build the trust and commitment of employees.

46. Statistics Canada has some distinct advantages over many organizations. Our mandate is clear and non political. The majority of our employees are concentrated at head office in one complex of buildings. Beyond this, the senior management cadre has been stable over the years and are committed to the value of sound human resource management as a prerequisite for achieving Statistics Canada's mandate.

47. Our Human Resources Strategy has served us well. Statistics Canada's is responding effectively to the strategic issues that were identified in the early 1990's. Over fifty percent of the senior executives have now retired and been replaced from internal succession pools. Our succession pools are sufficiently robust to replace the retirements yet to come. We have a flexible workforce that enables us to address budget fluctuations and changing client needs and priorities in a quick and efficient manner. Employee survey results reflect that our workforce is satisfied and find Statistics Canada an excellent place to work. Our strategy has enabled us to be at the leading edge, providing Canadians with statistical data that illuminates issues and provides input for evidence-based decision-making.

XI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was prepared by Ivan P. Fellegi and E.W. Lee Reid.

² We would be glad to share the curricula of these courses with other statistical agencies.

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