



CONTINUING THE ENGAGEMENT

2010-11 Annual Report of
the Advisory Service for Executives (ASE)



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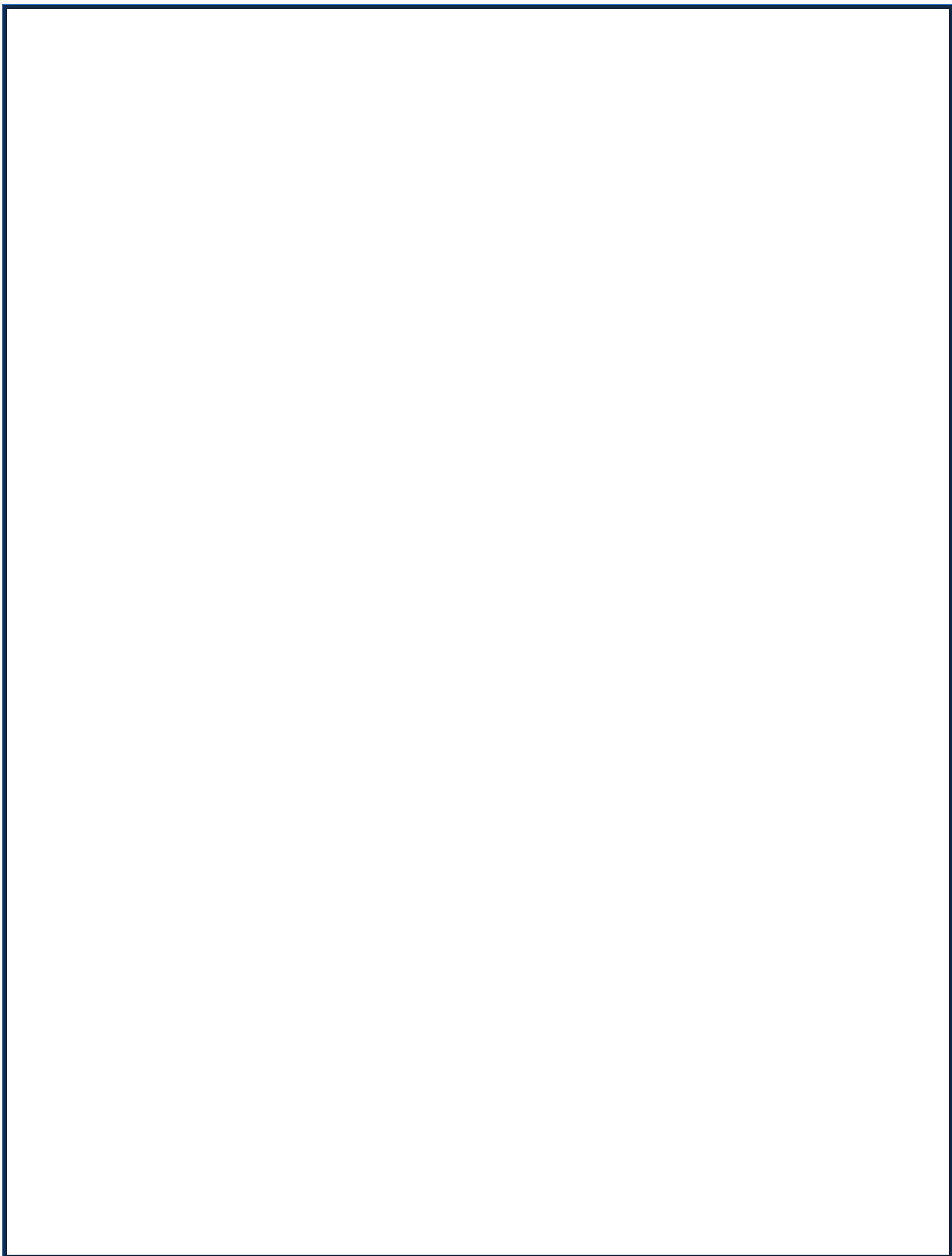


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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this seventh Annual Report is to: provide an overview of the current context in which the Advisory Service for Executives (ASE) operates; provide data and commentary on the nature and number of clients served; summarize the top issues addressed in 2010-11; and, provide with recommendations for change.

The ASE is a one person service supported by the Deputy Head community and housed at APEX. The Senior Advisor, typically an EX-3, provides advisory services to individual executive clients and compiles composite data in an annual report. These macro-level data provide a unique perspective on the collective needs, issues, and concerns of a significant cross-section of the senior leadership cadre of the Public Service of Canada.

The data is useful management information and serves as the basis for this report. The ASE Annual Report identifies hot spots and trends, as well as recommending actions that could improve the job satisfaction, retention, productivity and well-being of the Executive community as a whole.

ASE - Quick Facts

- Confidential service available free of charge to all federal executives nationally and abroad.
- Supported financially by the Deputy Head community and housed at APEX.
- Established in 2003 in response to expressed needs of executives for an objective and confidential ear in dealing with difficult work-related situations.
- Single window for arms-length advice and referral to a specialized resource network.
- Complementary to other services for public service executives e.g. Public Service Commission (PSC) Executive Counseling Services.
- Steady demand - seven year client total: 1511.
- 2010-11 top issues: Career Management; Relationship with Superior; Health; "Dismissals"; Executive Terms and Conditions; Retirement; Performance Management; and, Reorganizations.
- Comprehensive annual reports available at www.APEX.GC.CA.
- Deputy Heads recognize the ASE as an important contributor to workplace well-being.
- In June 2008, ASE funding for one FTE (EX-3) renewed for an additional five years.

OVERVIEW

2010-11 saw a continued steady demand from executives for the services of the ASE. The Senior Advisor provides client service via phone, e-mail, and in-person meetings to executives across the federal public service.

Over this reporting period, the Senior Advisor tracked both the volume of individual clients and the total number of client interactions. The overall client caseload increased slightly to 227 individuals from 62 public service organizations. The total number of client interactions was 335.

In 2010-11, the top reasons executives sought the support of the ASE were, in order of frequency: career management; relationship with a superior; health; “dismissal”; executive terms and conditions; retirement; performance management; and, reorganizations.

CONTEXT

Executives in the federal public service continue to work in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment, marked by uncertain global economic outlooks, and unstable financial markets. It is a period of fiscal restraint and shrinking budgets. Wayne Wouters, Clerk of the Privy Council, in his *Eighteenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada*, notes that he expects that the efforts to return to balanced budgets “will result in reductions to the size of the public service”.

The public service is starting to experience the impacts of the implementation phase of the ongoing strategic reviews, with a number of departments recently announcing layoffs. This trend of increasing layoffs was noted in the Public Service Commission (PSC) 2009-10 Annual Report. The PSC observed that layoffs are increasing and job postings are decreasing¹.

Public Service executives are among the individuals affected by these trends. In addition, all executives, whether in the policy, service or operational area, are feeling increasing pressures to continue to deliver high quality results while leading, and adapting, to often significant organizational changes, and maintaining healthy workplaces. The Clerk, in his *Eighteenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada*, states that “Canadians need – and expect – a high-performing Public Service that can deliver results in a fast changing world”. He further sets out his expectations regarding “excellence in all aspects of our business – in management, in policy, in program and service delivery and in regulation” and underlines the key role that managers have in leading employees and managing for performance excellence.

¹ PSC Annual Report 2009-10.

There is increasingly a much higher degree of awareness and understanding of the relationship between a modern healthy workplace and an engaged and productive workplace which supports better results for Canadians. The Clerk, in his most recent annual report, also notes that “Deputies and managers have a responsibility to create workplaces that support the well-being, wellness and productivity of our employees”.

As well, the ASE annual report comes at a time when the critical linkages between workplace health and productivity are both better understood and measured. The relationship of effective workplace health and productivity programs (such as Employee Assistance Programs [EAP] – like the ASE) to “*superior human capital and financial outcomes*” was a key finding of the 2009-10 Towers Watson report “*Staying at Work - The Health and Productivity Advantage*”. <http://www.towerswatson.com/research/648>

The full costs of an unhealthy workplace at both the individual and systems level are also becoming increasingly better understood. Work is being done on a number of fronts, including the public service Disability Management initiative and through APEX in the area of executive health, to better quantify the costs of such key factors as: lost productivity; decreased employee engagement; increased use of sick leave; and, higher prescription expenses.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA COLLECTION

Confidentiality, which is a key principle of the ASE, is explained to clients at the outset of an initial discussion.² In order to ensure confidentiality, client names and case notes are automatically destroyed six months after the end of the fiscal year (or at any time upon client request). Key demographic data at the aggregate level covering such things as gender, language and classification levels is kept in a secure database and used in the preparation of the annual report.

At each visit, in addition to noting the initial “presenting issues”, the Senior Advisor records the full range and nature of services provided in response to each client’s particular needs. The same presenting problem can have multiple dimensions and can generate the need for a range of responses depending on the circumstances. For example, assisting a client in leaving an untenable situation may require career management, coaching, dispute resolution, and/or legal intervention.

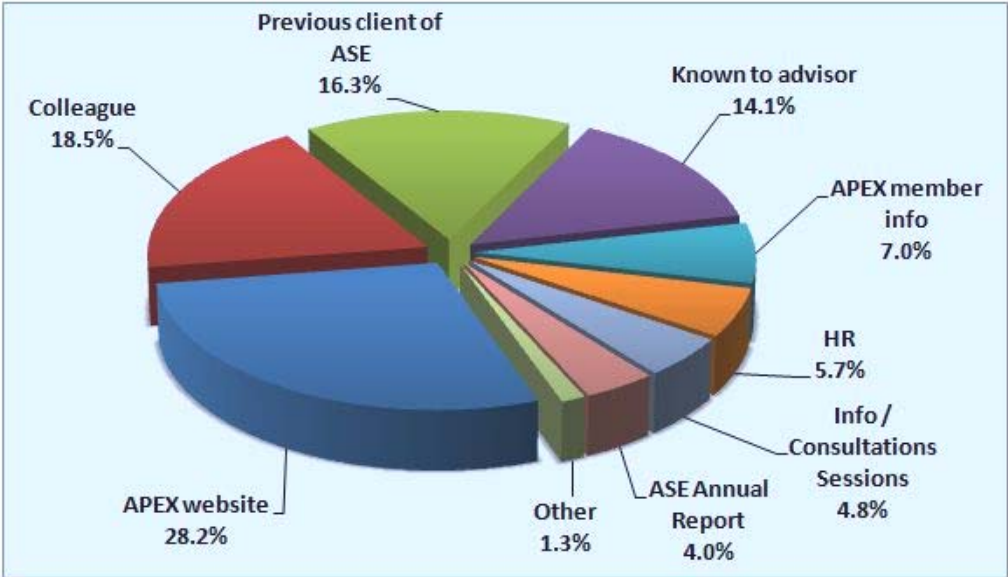
² See “Confidentiality and the ASE – What You Can Expect at www.APEX.gc.ca.”

Since its inception in 2003, the ASE has consistently used this method to more precisely identify and assess the broader range of executive client needs. This approach allows for more complete support at the individual client level. As well, when looking at a broader public service perspective, this detailed information provides more complete data for the annual report, particularly for trend analysis, and to inform the development of policy recommendations. Finally, this information is also a valuable source of ongoing feedback that the Senior Advisor uses to identify emerging trends and issues which could be addressed at a collective or group level by APEX or its partners through targeted workshops, seminars, videoconferences and fact sheets.

CLIENT SATISFACTION AND QUALITY CONTROL

In keeping with the terms of the agreement with Treasury Board Secretariat Advisory Committee (TBSAC), APEX has established a monitoring and evaluation framework for the ASE that requires the collection of aggregate data and regular reporting on the extent and purpose of use of the service. The ASE obtains feedback on client satisfaction both formally and informally throughout the year. A comprehensive report is prepared annually and shared with all Deputy Heads (ASE annual reports, such as this one, for 2004-2009/10 are available at www.APEX.gc.ca). Past ASE reports have observed that, with a maturing ASE service, the positive reputation of the ASE was starting to manifest itself in an increasing number of clients referred by colleagues, departmental human resources, or repeat users of the service. In 2010-11, the Senior Advisor, by asking clients how they found out about the service, tracked sources of referral to the service as shown in figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1 – ASE – SOURCES OF REFERRAL (2010-11)



Based on this data, the sources of referrals can be grouped into two general categories: firstly, either referred by an individual (colleague/human resources advisor) or based on personal experience as an ASE client, or, secondly, as a result of information found on the APEX website or provided in an information session.

More specifically, 54.6% of referrals came from four sources: colleagues; departmental human resources; because the client knew the Senior Advisor; and, return clients. A further 44% of clients came because of information found on the APEX website or sent to members, provided in information sessions such as the Recognition of Entry to the Executive Group event or regional consultations, or the ASE Annual Report. Interestingly, in 2009-10, 4 % of clients specifically identified the ASE Annual Report as the source of information on the ASE.

The Senior Advisor has assessed this data, both in the context of ongoing evaluation of service and in the development of a broader client outreach approach. Executives continue to emphasize that what they are looking for is timely confidential high quality service.

This speaks to two key factors: reputation and relevance. These apply both to the ASE as a service function, housed within APEX, and to the Senior Advisor, as the “service provider”. Executives tell us that the ASE is seen as an impartial, confidential trusted “safe space” where they can relate their story to a neutral third party, be heard, and obtain factual and practical information/advice as well as access expert resources when needed.

OUTREACH AND MARKETING

ASE activities in this area have focused on the regional consultations, the annual Recognition of Entry to the Executive Group and regular updates with the APEX Network of Departmental Representatives, as well as the information provided on the APEX website and at the annual APEX Symposium. Still, many executives remain unaware of the existence of the ASE.

For example, the Recognition of Entry to the Executive Group events helps to ensure that new EX-1’s, who in 2010 comprised about 53.3% of the executive population, are aware of the ASE. Our analyses of the levels of EX clients using the ASE from both 2009-10 and

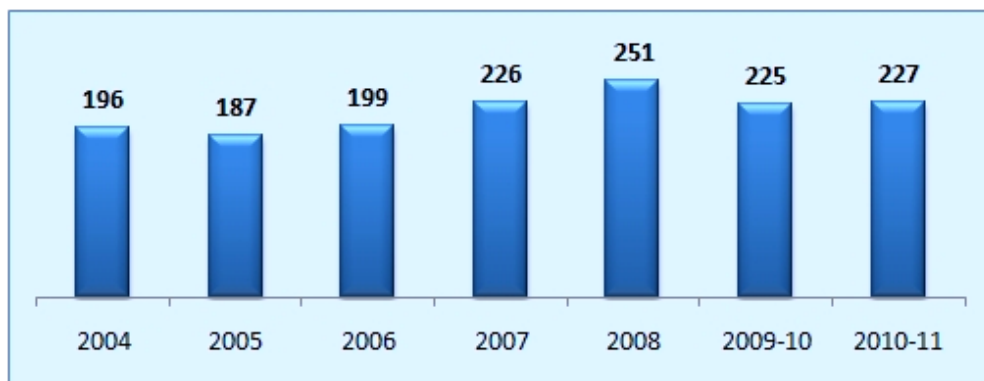
2010-11 show that EX-1's use the service at a rate about 7% percent higher than their representation in the broader public service EX population.

Increased ASE marketing and outreach has historically corresponded with an increase in clients. The current single person service model for the ASE is at maximum capacity to provide continued quality client service. In 2010-11, limited marketing and outreach for the ASE was done. A preliminary assessment of the current service delivery model has been completed with a further review targeted for completion in 2011-12.

PROFILE OF CLIENTS SERVED

Demand from executives for ASE services remained steady in 2010-11 with 227 clients from 62 departments and agencies, involving 335 client interactions. Figure 2 shows client demand over the period 2004-2010/11.

FIGURE 2 – ASE NUMBER OF CLIENTS (2004-2010/11)



The demographic profile of the clients served by the ASE in 2010-11 generally reflects that of the entire public service executive community with some variations in the dimensions of gender and level.

Figures 3 to 6 illustrate, for 2010-11, four key dimensions of the ASE client profile in relation to the public service executive community (data source: TBS, OCHRO): gender; language; level; and, location. By level, the ASE saw slightly fewer EX-3 to 5 in 2010-11.

In 2010-11, the ASE continued to see more female clients than male, a shift that started in 2008-09.

As Figure 3 shows, the percentage of female clients of the ASE is 13.6 % higher than the representation of women in the public service executive group. In 2009-10, this difference was 14 percentage points.

The data source we have used, *The Demographic Snapshot of the Federal Public Service, 2010 (Treasury Board Secretariat, OCHRO)* notes that “In 2010, the representation of women in the Executive category reached 44.1 %. This is 1.1 percentage points higher than last year, 15.7 percentage points above the representation level ten years earlier, and 1.4 percentage points below the workforce availability of 45.5%”.

Male clients of the ASE in 2010-11, in relation to the public service executive population, are under-represented by 13.6%, again almost identical to the 2009-10 difference of 14 percentage points.

FIGURE 3 - ASE - GENDER OF CLIENTS VS. P.S. EX POPULATION (2010-11)

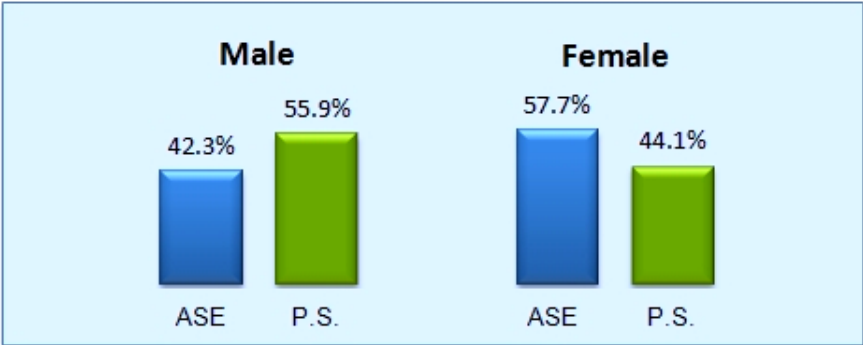


FIGURE 4 - ASE - LANGUAGE OF CLIENTS VS. P.S. EX POPULATION (2010-11)

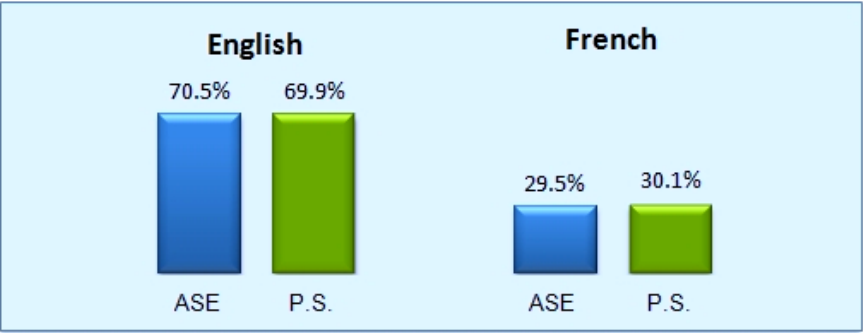


FIGURE 5 - ASE LEVEL OF CLIENTS VS. P.S. EX POPULATION (2010-11)

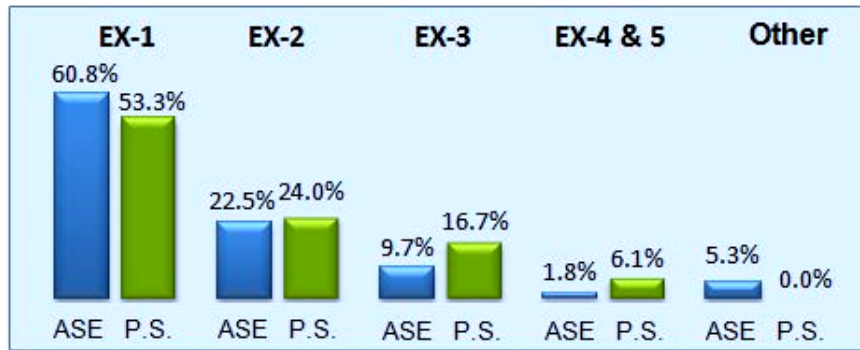
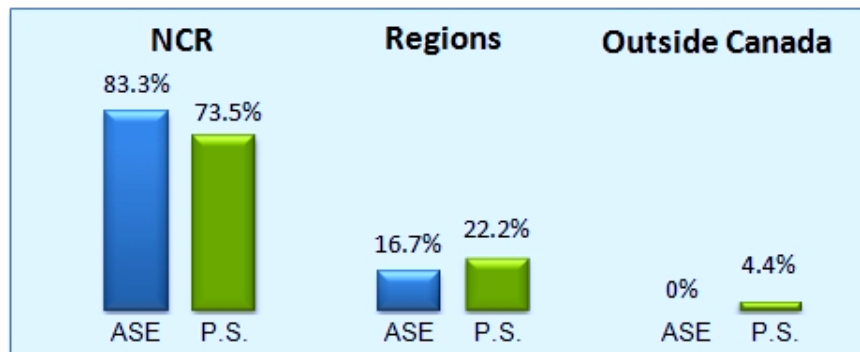


FIGURE 6 - ASE LOCATION OF CLIENTS VS. P.S. EX POPULATION (2010-11)



CLIENT ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS

As a comprehensive employee assistance program for executives which complements existing departmental programs and the PSC Executive Counseling Service, the ASE deals with an extremely broad range of issues and needs.

The design and implementation of a new database in 2009-10 has made possible more sophisticated data and in-depth analysis. These new tools have enabled a further disaggregation of data on client issues from previous years, particularly in the “other” category, as well as a refinement of ASE statistics on client issues for increased precision.

Issues raised by clients are classified under 17 specific headings. It should be noted that one client may consult the Senior Advisor on more than one issue in a particular year and/or, a single issue may overlap several headings.

These headings are: Career Management; Classification; Communications Issues; “Dismissal”; Executive Terms and Conditions; Harassment; Health, including disability issues, accommodation and return to work; Interchange; Official Languages; Performance Management; “Problem Employee” Management; Relationship with a Superior; Reorganizations; Retirement; Staffing; Values and Ethics; and, Other.

The Senior Advisor consistently tracks the top issues and service needs. In 2010-11 the ASE saw some minor shifts in the frequency of the top eight issues and service needs (figure 7 – see below).

THE TOP FOUR REASONS for seeking the support of the ASE in 2010-11 remained the same as in 2009-10: *career management; relationship with a superior; health; and, dismissal*, which was tied for fourth place with *executive terms and conditions*. Completing the top eight, in descending order of frequency, were: *retirement; performance management; and, reorganizations*. “Problem employee” management dropped from sixth place in 2009-10 to thirteenth place in 2010-11. Figure 8 (page 10) shows the top eight reasons for 2009-10 for comparison purposes.

FIGURE 7 - ASE - TOP 8 REFERRAL REASONS (2010-2011)

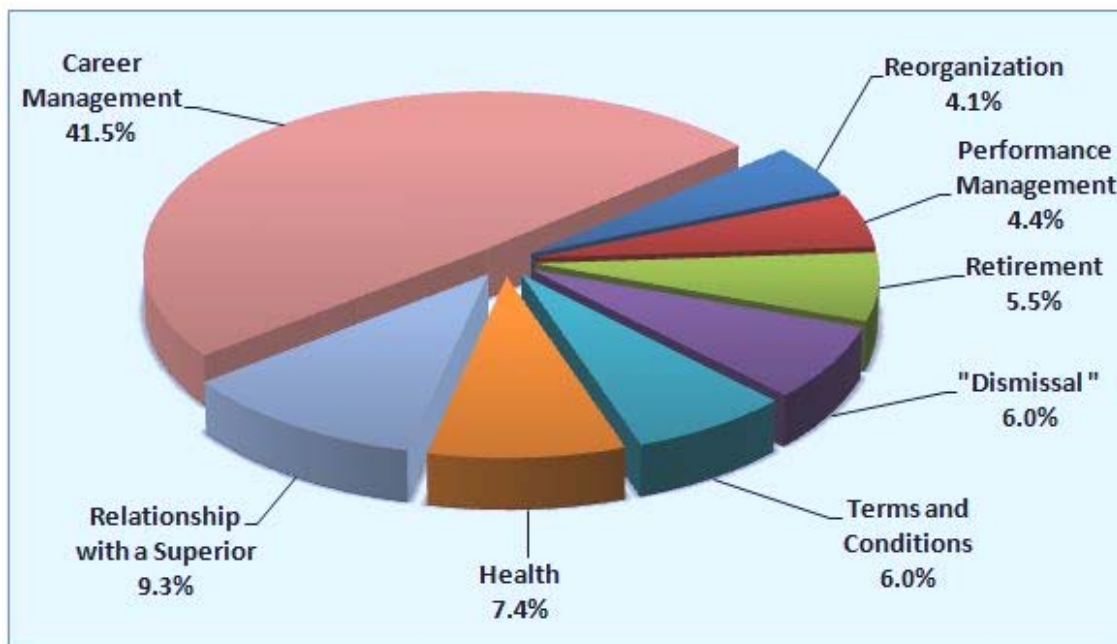
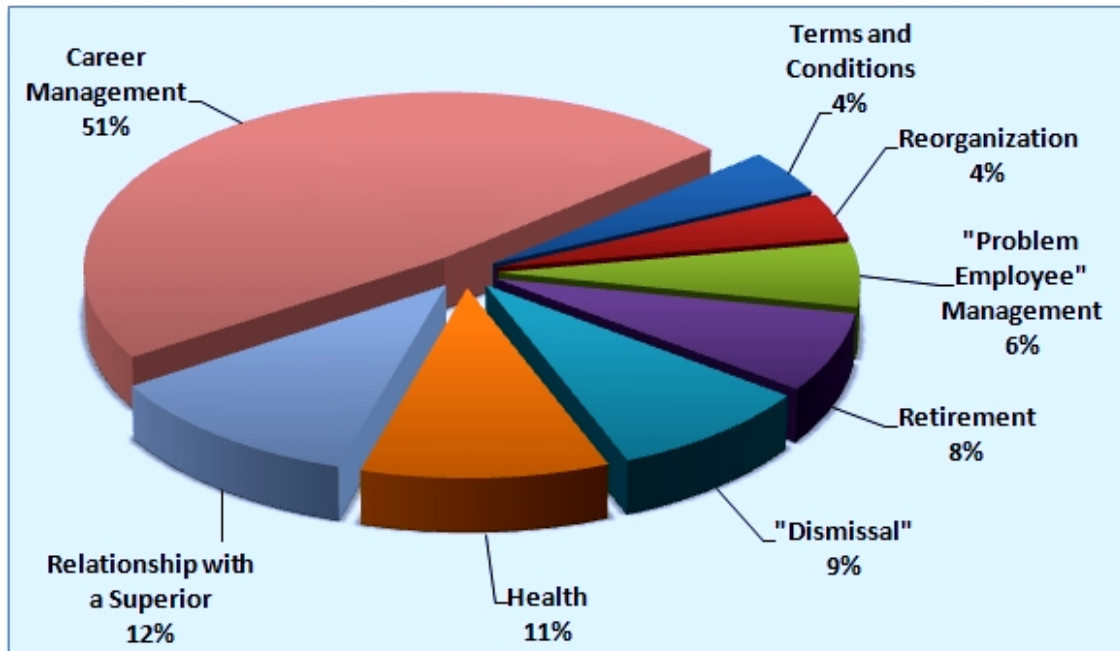


FIGURE 8 - ASE - TOP 8 REFERRAL REASONS (2009-2010)



1. **CAREER MANAGEMENT** while remaining the highest area of demand, dropped by 9.5% in 2010-11 to 41.5%. This is an umbrella category encompassing a full spectrum of issues, from seeking advice on resumes and job search strategies, dealing with job search while in a surplus situation, to queries about how to achieve work-life balance as an executive. Guidance and counseling is offered on how to successfully navigate sometimes confusing career waters. Many of the clients who come for other reasons, such as re-organizations, performance management, irreconcilable differences with a superior or health issues also need a career management component as part of a multi-pronged strategy for moving ahead.

This area of advisory services has become more complex in the current environment of fiscal restraint. The organizational and individual impacts of implementing strategic reviews are starting to be felt more broadly. At the same time, the public service is engaged in the system wide Deficit Reduction Action Plan which will likely result in further staff reductions and additional priority entitlements. This, in turn, leads to a much tighter job market, limiting job possibilities and career movement. A number of executives continue to express frustration that there is not a central career management mechanism for EX-1 to 3.

In its **2009-10 ANNUAL REPORT**, the PSC noted as a trend the consistent increase in the number of new priority entitlements since 2001-02. The report further states that “In the context of fiscal restraint, it is anticipated that the upward trend in the number of priority persons, coupled with decreased staffing actions, may present challenges to the placement of priority persons”.

- 2. RELATIONSHIP WITH A SUPERIOR** is in second position at 9.3%, a decrease from 12% in 2009-10. Executive clients come to the ASE with a variety of issues ranging from not being sure how to manage the relationship with a new manager, being treated with disrespect, humiliated in front of others, perhaps ignored, and/or generally bullied by superiors.

Clients have expressed their frustrations about how the “system” can either let this happen, continue, and, in some instances, appear to overlook such behaviors when staffing decisions are being made. Some of these situations seem to stem from communication issues - ranging from a lack of communication, difficulty in dealing with tough issues/questions, or, not feeling competent to handle an interpersonal issue. Time, or lack of it, working under tight deadlines, and diminished resources coupled with increased uncertainty in the workplace all seem to have contributed to a less civil workplace.

The multiple pressures that affect today’s public service workplace are not likely to be alleviated soon; in fact, one might logically believe that they will, at a minimum, continue or increase. The Clerk’s management expectations are clear: “Deputies and managers have a responsibility to create workplaces that support the well-being, wellness and productivity of our employees”. However, the day to day workplace interactions are what build the workplace culture, whether it be one of civility – or not.

- 3. HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES** remain in third place this year at 7.4%, down from 11% in 2009-10. Health is a broad category which includes issues related to both mental and physical health, such as stress, burnout, depression, substance abuse/addictions, and workplace reintegration following extended disability/sick leave.

The ASE sees not only a range of issues, but a continuum of severity -from health impacts identified early where prevention and mitigation are more possible, to cases that often require significant time away from the workplace and then the challenge of return to work. Successful reintegration into the workplace becomes even more of a challenge in today's environment of fiscal restraint and a tight job market.

Observation

*In January 2011, the Disability Management Initiative released the **Managing for Wellness, a Disability Management Handbook for Managers in the federal public service**, which is a comprehensive and useful tool for managers.*

In February 2011, the Advisory Committee on Senior Level Retention and Compensation (Stephenson Committee) reviewed the APEX recommendations on how the Committee can positively promote the health of executives in the workplace. Their Fourteenth Report in July 2011 noted that they are very receptive to these recommendations and, as a first step, supportive of the development of a departmental scorecard for executive health.

- 4. DISMISSAL** remains in fourth place with 6% of clients coming to the ASE for support in this area, a reduction from 9% in 2009-10. Generally, the ASE saw two types of circumstances: the formal, that is, actual or impending surplus situations that trigger the Directive on Career Transition for Executives and informal, where, typically, executives report that they were told that they were being removed from their positions, as they were not seen as a good fit with “new organizational direction” and needed to move on.

In the formal surplus situations, the ASE has observed fairly significant differences in the capacity of organizations to appropriately support individual executives. Overall, current departmental human resources expertise in dealing with career transition situations appears to be limited. Program review in the mid 1990's likely was the last period when there was a high volume of workforce adjustments. There also appears to be a higher degree of knowledge and comfort with Workforce Adjustment (WFA) situations, which do not apply to executives. In some instances this has created confusing or conflicting advice. Given current trends in terms of lay-offs, quickly re-building this human resources capacity is critical in order to better support individuals as well as to reduce risk for Deputy Heads.

In the “informal” type of “dismissal” situation, our experience has shown that while there can be legitimate corporate reasons for these actions, too often the affected executives report being given little information and support, and being left to find their own way through the numerous challenges related to forced job change. The tight job market also limits mobility and makes finding a new assignment more difficult.

Observation

The recently established advisory working groups on Workforce Management issues, representing a collaboration of the Human Resources Council, departments, HR communities of practice, and Central Agencies, are key mechanisms to help build human resources capacity in this area, share promising practices and better support managers.

5. **EXECUTIVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS** is tied with dismissal for fourth place, which was a new addition to the top referral reasons in 2009-10. Six percent of clients, an increase of 2% from last year, came to the ASE with questions and issues about “the rules”, particularly in areas such as leave, compensation, and deployments. Typically, they are trying to understand “what are the rules?”, “what are my rights?” “how does it work?”

Navigating the set of policies that governs the management of executives is an acquired skill. Often executives are not very familiar with the **TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EXECUTIVES AND THE RELATED DIRECTIVES**, as well, there are often other instances where one policy or directive has to be read in conjunction with another, requiring more advanced navigation skills! For technical policy matters, the Senior Advisor draws on the expertise of the Executive Management Policy group at OCHRO and is very appreciative of their professional support.

6. **RETIREMENT** has remained in fifth place, not unsurprisingly considering the demographic profile of the executive community. 5.5% of ASE clients, a reduction of 2.5 percentage points from 2009-10, sought advice on obtaining pension-related information, assessing options, post-employment considerations, and access to financial advisors familiar with the public service pension plan, severance and related considerations. Typically, the Senior Advisor refers clients to key websites, such as the well-designed and highly user friendly www.pensionandbenefits.gc.ca and the Service Canada retirement planning tools, as well as to the toll free executive specific phone line at the Pension Centre.

- 7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**, after an absence of two years from the top tier of reasons executives seek the support of the ASE, moved into sixth place in 2010-11 at 4.4%. Cases related to this subject had peaked in 2005 and then decreased annually.

As was noted last year, 2010-11 was the first year in which we saw the results of the implementation of the integrated approach to executive performance management program (PMP), an assessment of both the “what” and the “how” of results achieved. Generally, the issues raised in this area can be grouped into two types: questions and concerns regarding the process/approach/definitions, and concerns about the application of the process, often focusing on the rating or feedback on management competencies.

Observations drawn from the ASE cases would indicate that often executives feel poorly informed about the PMP process, in particular, the final evaluation and how the organization arrives at final decision about ratings.

As well, executive clients of the ASE often report a lack of consistent, meaningful feedback from managers, even in such instances as dealing with a “Did Not Meet rating” and the development of the requisite “Action Plan”. There is sometimes a sense of being unfairly targeted or labeled and fears of being dismissed for poor performance. In some cases, clients felt that they were being “sand-bagged” at the assessment stage, without having had prior feedback and or opportunity to remedy areas of management concern.

- 8. RE-ORGANIZATIONS** are in seventh place this year at 4.1%, a very slight increase from 4% in 2010-11. Transition and renewal are constants in today’s public service and will continue to be, particularly in the context of implementation of strategic review changes and the upcoming Deficit Reduction Action Plan. As re-organizations can result in workforce reductions, the comments found in the “Dismissals” section of this report are also relevant to this section.

Executives in today’s public service face a multiplicity of pressures. In their role as managers, they are typically leading changes, trying to effectively support organizational changes and transitions, including possibly laying people off, shield their staff, and, deliver quality results. As individuals, they may be personally affected by cutbacks and layoffs.

Executive clients of the ASE have noted that departments are challenged in their capacity to fully support them as managers dealing with the impacts of reorganizations. As individuals, executives have typically reported that communication was inadequate or largely absent, that they lacked information about their rights, recourse and options. Some executives felt targeted, that they were perhaps seen as “past their best before date”, while others felt that the reorganization was a way to move them from their positions because the “fit” with current management wasn’t there.

AN UPDATE ON HARASSMENT

The ASE continues to track harassment, which is in 9th place in 2010-11. Rebalancing the landscape of harassment management has long been a concern of the ASE, highlighted in a number of the ASE annual reports.

Over the past year, the ASE approached this issue from a broader perspective, looking at investigations overall. In 2010-11, the total of these two categories combined, harassment at 3.3% and Investigations, at 2.2%, is 5.5%. Our observations showed two main areas of need: general information about investigations, including roles and responsibilities and processes; and, individual support, other than legal. Executives have told us they need to know more about investigations, whether from the perspective of managing an investigation or being the subject of one. ASE analyses from past years also indicated that a significant percentage of harassment cases are related to the manager trying to address a performance problem.

To help respond to this need, in February 2011 APEX convened two half day member only workshops on “**The Ins and Outs of Investigations**”, offered in both French and English. A panel of experts in the field of labour relations, employment law, human rights, mediation and conflict resolution, all with an in-depth understanding of the federal public service environment, used an interactive format to share critical information, illustrated with real life cases. 140 APEX members attended in person and via videoconference.

Support for non-represented employees, including executives, such as was formerly provided by a network of volunteers, continues to be an important area of need. Over the past year, the Senior Advisor worked with a retired executive with a strong background in labour relations to offer this kind of support on a trial basis. The support was offered to ASE executive clients where appropriate, based on client interest and agreement, with full consideration for client confidentiality. Feedback to date has been very positive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

UPDATE FROM 2009-10

The 2009-10 ASE Annual Report set out two recommendations: the first focusing on **HEALTH**, which built on a key premise from the March 2009 APEX Summit on Executive Health and Well-being, “The health and well-being of an organization’s people, including executives, is integrally linked to overall organizational health, sustainability, renewal and high quality service delivery” and, the second, **CONTINUING TO DEVELOP SOLID PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS**.

In terms of health, as noted earlier in this report, there are promising developments on a number of fronts. These include a much more widespread understanding of the causal relationship between organizational and individual health in the Public Service of Canada, as well as the linkages between workplace health, innovation and productivity.

This theme is also clearly set out in the Clerk of the Privy Council’s Eighteenth Annual Report - “Deputies and managers have a responsibility to creating and supporting workplaces that support the well-being, wellness and productivity of our employees”. The Fifth Annual Report of the Prime Minister’s Advisory Committee on the Public Service, in setting out issues they will look at in more depth next, also identifies “the importance of managing for wellness and ensuring a healthy, engaged and productive workforce”.

In his eighteenth annual report, the Clerk describes significant progress in a number of key areas of people management, from integrated planning, to supporting employee development to supporting managers through community development, learning and networking.

2010-11

This year’s report titled “Continuing the Engagement”, suggests a theme which underpins this year’s recommendations. The ASE experience and analysis strongly suggests that a continued focus on the topics of last year’s recommendations, **HEALTH** and **DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS** makes the most sense.

These are both key elements critical to building and sustaining the public service organizational capacity necessary for continued delivery of high quality and relevant results. Both require ongoing investment. As the Fifth Annual Report of the Prime Minister’s Advisory Committee on the Public Service notes “Government is a long-cycle

business". Culture change is equally a long term proposition and reflects the result of a myriad of individual and collective actions.

These two recommendations for 2010-11, if implemented over time, should help to improve productivity and the quality of the workplace environment, as well as reduce the growing demand on the ASE.

RECOMMENDATION 1

MAINTAIN A CONTINUED FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING HEALTHY WORKPLACES AND WORKFORCE.

The 2009-10 Annual Report noted the linkages between health and employee engagement, the cost to individuals and the broader system and the impact on the ability of people in organizations to deliver quality results. These comments are equally relevant today and very closely aligned with the Clerk of the Privy Council's updated Public Service Renewal themes of *Engaging Employees in the Excellence Agenda, Renewing the Workforce and Renewing the Workplace*³.

While the ASE annual report focuses on the public service executive community, the foundational principles around organizational health and well-being are broadly applicable. The Stephenson Committee has said that they will be looking at the progress made on the development of a departmental scorecard to benchmark, measure and evaluate changes in workplace health for executives⁴.

Assessing how the public service is doing on workplace health is critical. A key element of this process will be to implement a more evidence-based approach to understand this on a number of levels – public service wide, by organization, or specific key communities, such as executives. Executive health is important as a critical leadership element of the public service workforce. In this context, also recognizing Deputy Head accountability for workforce and workplace, developing an overall scorecard with a set of common indicators for workforce health and a specialized set of executive-specific indicators, would provide a strong base for measurement and assessment.

³ Eighteenth Annual Report of the Clerk to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada.

⁴ Fourteenth Report of the Advisory Committee on Senior Level Retention and Compensation.

Building on the principle of “what’s measured, matters”, it would also be useful to integrate and align these scorecards with the existing Management Accountability Framework to ensure use of common tools in assessments and streamline reporting.

A common set of indicators and measures for workplace and workforce health could also serve as a part of the assessment tools for the management competency portion of the annual Performance Management Process. This could have the effect of introducing a higher degree of objectivity into what is often perceived as a highly subjective process.

RECOMMENDATION 2

An assessment of the broad objective of **DEVELOPMENT OF SOLID PEOPLE MANAGEMENT SKILLS** in the context of the current environment and the foreseeable future and an identification of critical areas of specific need suggests a focus on the area of **WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT**.

Indications are that the public service is on the cusp of another period of high volume change. Effectively managing in this type of environment – continuing to deliver, supporting employees, striving to maintain an engaged workforce – is a difficult task that could be somewhat mitigated with practical tools and strong supports for managers.

From a business process perspective, one might envision three key areas of focus. These are: first, get it right at the front end, at the planning stage e.g., ensure easy access to and use of integrated planning tools and relevant data that reflect the current and future business needs of the organization; second, continue to build system capacity to effectively support managers in managing these organizational changes, e.g., by ensuring that the human resources service providers have the capacity to be able to provide timely and accurate advice on workforce transitions, whether it be for executives or non-executives; and, third, using project management approaches and systematic review/feedback, systematically assess how things are going along the way and at the conclusion of initiatives.

Effective people management in the current and upcoming public service cannot be “corner of the desk”. Many tools are out there; the Canada School of the Public Service, along with APEX offers learning support; and, the Human Resources Council, working closely with central partners is strongly engaged in building human resource capacity.

Over the reporting period, the Senior Advisor has observed that there appears to be less funding available for executive support, such as coaching. It will be critical to assess the

potential risk and future cost of this type of “foregone investment”. Having appropriately equipped and supported executive managers will better ensure achieving workplace and workforce results and mitigating risk for Deputy Heads.

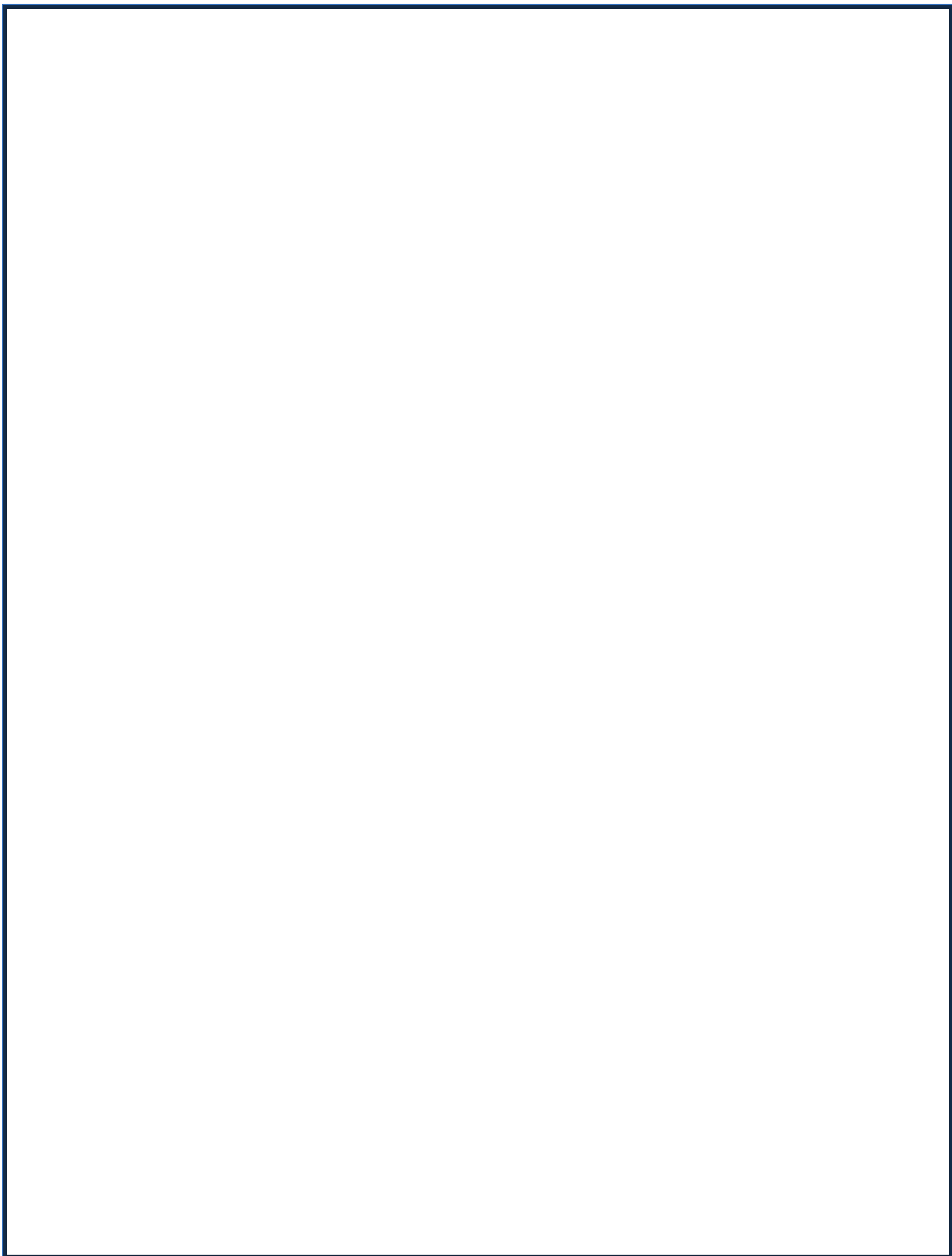
CONCLUSION

The ASE has completed its seventh year of service to Executives. In June 2008, the Deputy Minister Human Resources Management Advisory Committee recognized the ASE as an important contributor to workplace health and the program was renewed for a further five years.

In 2011-12, key initiatives - beyond individual client service - will include: development of a business case for the ASE to better support client demand; implementing a client outreach strategy; and, further analysis and mining of the cumulative data to better identify trends and collective needs for use by APEX and its Central Agency and departmental partners.

As I conclude this seventh annual report, and my final report as Senior Advisor to Executives after a term of two and a half years, I would like to thank those who ably assisted me in providing the best client service possible: my colleagues at the APEX Secretariat who generously shared their skills, experience and knowledge with me; the network of policy advisors and subject matter specialists at the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Public Service Commission and the Canada School of Public Service; and, members of my external network of coaches, consultants, learning specialists, lawyers, health and human resource professionals.

Finally, on behalf of the Executive cadre, sincere thanks are extended to those Deputy Heads who are financially supporting the ASE.



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