



# ***ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN 2009 – 2010***

Approved by Board of Directors - March 2009  
Updated – August 2009

## ***Context***

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The Working Group on Advocacy has done further work, following Board approval in calendar year 2008 of the advocacy strategic framework and the presentation “From Strategy to Action.”

The Board supported the Working Group’s premise that advocacy occurs when action is taken to introduce, influence, or produce broad change. The Board also agreed with the Working Group’s contextual premise that issues selected for advocacy should be the ones that affect people, have a significant impact, are consistent with APEX’s mandate and mission, are amenable to advocacy intervention, and can mobilize interested partners and stakeholders.

The Board recommended that changes be made to the proposed issues to better reflect considered priorities and requested that this Action Plan be developed.

## ***Issues***

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- Health and Well-being
- Managing Performance & People
- Policy & Program Pressures
- Public Service Renewal

# 1. Health and Well-being

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## Rationale:

- APEX health surveys continue to indicate a high level of concern over stress and burn-out; work-life balance; recognition; and re-entry to the work force after extended absence
- APEX consultations: health and well-being was highlighted by participants as a key issue, and APEX members expect follow-up action

## Goal:

- Public Service decision-makers (particularly central agencies) take concrete steps to ensure the health and well-being of Executives in a healthy workplace
- Public Service decision-makers take concrete steps to remove the stigma attached to mental health issues

## Actions:

Activity/Action	Timing	Lead	Expected Result
Member outreach	Summer 2009	Secretariat	APEX releases detailed information of the health survey to members & posts on website, elaborating on the preliminary descriptive findings that were announced at 2008 Symposium
Health Summit	Mar 25 & 26, 2009	Secretariat, APEX Health Committee	Summit develops a comprehensive set of reasonable and achievable recommendations for improving the mental and physical health and well-being of Executives in the Public Service of Canada
CMA Lunch	May 6, 2009	Secretariat	Joint lunch sponsored by Desjardins and CMA to which APEX will invite Executives – increase awareness and engagement by Executive Community
Health advocacy strategy	Fall, 2009	APEX Health Committee	Based on Health Summit outcomes, a Health and Well-being plan of action/strategy for APEX is submitted to the Board
Letters from APEX	Fall 2009	Secretariat	Letters to Stephenson Committee, and to PM Advisory Committee

## **Communications Activities:**

To include:

- Regular updates to APEX members, via e-communicés, website postings, workshops, etc. to provide information on APEX activities and influence

## **Key Messages:**

- APEX remains committed to improving the health and well-being of Executives because it believes in the productivity benefits of having healthy workers in a healthy workplace
- APEX is concerned about the high levels of stress and fatigue reported by Executives.
- The stigma associated with mental health is costly for the governments as well as for Executives who may use vacation time rather than paid sick leave for fear of being labelled unstable, incompetent, etc. This is unacceptable and action must be taken by government decision-makers to remove this stigma.

## 2. Managing Performance & People

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### Rationale:

- APEX members have indicated a high level of frustration with the application of the Performance Management Program (PMP)
- Good people management improves organizational performance and is the responsibility of each member of the Executive cadre and the government

### Goal:

- Public Service decision-makers (particularly TBS/Chief Human Resources Officer) integrate people management into PMP, clarifying expectations, and developing a measures/rating guide
- Public Service decision-makers (particularly TBS/Chief Human Resources Officer) correct ongoing systemic problems in the application of the PMP to ensure fairness and consistency across the public service
- Public Service decision-makers recognize the importance of people management skills, and prepares appropriate guidelines, training and tools, etc. to assist Executives in improving their skills in this area

### Actions:

Activity/Action	Timing	Lead	Expected Result
Meeting with Michelle D'Auray	As soon as possible	Chair & CEO	Shared process established to achieve goals
Consultations	Ongoing	Secretariat	APEX seeks members' views and concerns and informs Board of Directors, and incorporates members' input into all actions, initiatives, documents

## **Communications Activities:**

To include:

- APEX Bulletins to members outlining results from meetings with PS decision-makers, expected results and next steps
- Consultations results/report shared with Board of Directors and with membership

## **Key Messages:**

- PMP is a government-wide program for all Executives. The rules/guidelines for what constitutes ratings against commitments must be the same for all and applied evenly across the public service.
- It is unacceptable that some departments or agencies will only compensate a newly-arrived Executive for the number of months that the Executive has worked there. A systemic approach is required where an Executive who changes departments during the year and has worked a full year is eligible for compensation that reflects 12 months of work.
- Good people management improves performance and supports public sector values. It is the responsibility of the government and all Executives.

### 3. Policy & Program Pressures

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**Rationale:**

- Federal public servants are working to get billions of dollars flowing quickly to projects to jolt the economy and create jobs through the new stimulus package, while at the same working with more rules and increased accountability
- Government Executives require support in managing these unique challenges in an era of increased accountability and low tolerance for risk and error.

**Goal:**

- Government does not make Public Service workers and Executives scapegoats if errors occur as public servants work to meet government expectations
- Government acknowledges the challenges, increases risk tolerance, and provides tools and support to Executives

**Actions:**

Activity/Action	Timing	Lead	Expected Outcome
Meeting with Michelle D'Auray	As soon as possible	Chair and CEO	Acknowledgment/understanding that APEX is monitoring this issue on behalf of executives
Letter to Clerk regarding Annual Report	Fall, 2009	Chair and CEO	Acknowledgment in Clerk's 16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Report that PS is working diligently and with integrity
Submission/Presentation to Advisory Committee on the Public Service	Fall, 2009	Chair and CEO	Ongoing interest and monitoring by Committee
Consultations	Ongoing	Secretariat	APEX seeks members' views and concerns and informs Board of Directors, and incorporates members' input into all actions, initiatives, documents

## **Communications Activities:**

To include:

- APEX Bulletins to members outlining results from meetings with PS decision-makers, expected results and next steps
- Information shared with Board of Directors and with membership
- Letters to Editor and/or other public positions taken by APEX if its members are seen to be blamed for issues related to delivery of the federal economic stimulus package

## **Key Messages:**

- Executives must ensure efficiency and effectiveness of policies and programs, along with appropriate accountability and stewardship, but must also have government recognition and support for balancing the “need for speed” with excessive rules
- Federal public servants have to take risks and politicians must accept mistakes if the government's stimulus package is going to achieve its goal of successfully jolting the economy
- Executives cannot be the “scapegoats” if the stimulus package announced in the federal budget in February 2009 does not succeed, or if the economy worsens

## 4. Public Service Renewal

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### Rationale:

- PS renewal will not succeed without balancing the recruitment of new blood with the use of the experience and corporate memory of senior Executives.

### Goal:

- The government incorporates into its renewal plans concrete steps to ensure that the experience and corporate memory of senior Executives is retained and the effective knowledge transfer occurs.

### Actions:

Activity/Action	Timing	Lead	Expected Outcome
Research	Summer, fall 2009	Secretariat	Study to determine how other jurisdictions have found ways of ensuring that knowledge and skills of senior Executives are transferred
Meeting with Michelle D'Auray	As soon as possible	Chair and CEO	Joint process established to achieve goal
Letter to Clerk regarding Annual Report	Fall, 2009	Chair and CEO	Acknowledgment in Clerk's 16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the issue
Submission/presentation to Advisory Committee on the Public Service	Fall, 2009	Chair and CEO	Acknowledgement of issue in next report and recommendations for amelioration
Induction for new EXs	Ongoing	Secretariat	Induction event to welcome new Executives and to start developing links and networks
Task Force Roundtable Discussion on Public Service Genome Project	Fall 2009	Chair and Secretariat	To contribute to ongoing dialogue
Consultations	Ongoing	Secretariat	APEX seeks members' views and concerns and informs Board of Directors, and incorporates members' input into all actions, initiatives, documents

### **Communications Activities:**

To include:

- APEX Bulletins to members explaining actions taken and expected results (updates as required)

### **Key Messages:**

- Senior Executives remain a valuable government resource. Public service renewal must include ways of ensuring that their corporate memory and experience is transferred as part of knowledge management to the next generation of Executives.

August 25, 2009