

## APEX Survey of EX Awareness of *PSMA*

### Introduction:

Two surveys were undertaken: from June 2, 2005 to June 15, 2005 and from June 27, 2005 to July 15, 2005. Both surveys were administered in English and French. The surveys were the same except that the second survey had an additional question about attendance at the APEX sponsored *PSMA* briefings that took place in June. As well, inadvertently, the French survey offered respondents the option of an additional response (Do Not Know) to Question 6.

The responses were as follows:

	English		French	
	#	%	#	%
Survey #1	43	76.9	13	23.2
Survey #2	236	86.4	37	13.6
Total	279	84.8	50	15.2

The combined survey results indicate an over-representation of English executives (84.8% compared to 71.5% in the PS).

### 1. Distribution by Level

	Responses	Distribution	EXs		EXs in PS
EX-1	179	54.4%	59.3%		53.8%
EX-2	81	24.6%	26.8%		23.2%
EX-3	32	9.7%	10.6%		16.9%
EX-4	7	2.1%	2.3%		4.6%
EX-5	3	0.9%	1.0%		1.6%
Other <sup>1</sup>	27	8.2%			
Total	329				
EXs only	302	91.8%			

The distribution of EX respondents mirrors their distribution in the PS quite well in order of magnitude; however, lower level executives (EX1 and EX2) are over-represented while those above the EX-3 level are underrepresented.

<sup>1</sup> Other included acting EXs and EX equivalents.

## 2. Distribution by Department

The following 14 departments had 10 or more respondents:

HRSDC	29
National Defence	18
PWGSC	16
Industry	15
Transport	15
Health	15
Citizenship and Immigration	15
Indian and Northern Affairs	14
Fisheries and Oceans	14
Environment	13
Social Development	11
Public Service Commission	11
Statistics Canada	11
Natural Resources	10

The remaining respondents were divided among 42 other departments and agencies.

## 3. Distribution by Region

	#	%	EX's in PS (%)
Nfld	2	0.6	0.8
PEI	2	0.6	0.9
NS	10	3.0	2.0
NB	14	4.3	1.4
Que (-NCR)	23	7.0	2.5
On (-NCR)	19	5.8	3.8
NCR	190	57.8	71.3
Man	21	6.4	1.4
Sask	4	1.2	0.8
Alta	9	2.7	1.8
BC	20	6.1	3.5
Yukon	3	0.9	0.1
NWT	2	0.6	0.2
Nunavut	4	1.2	0.1
Abroad	6	1.8	7.0
Total	329		

In the Atlantic region, NB is somewhat over-represented; in the West, Manitoba is over-represented. Overall, while the NCR has the largest proportion of respondents (57.8%), it is under-represented relative to the proportion of all EXs in the NCR (71.3%).

#### 4. Knowledge of *PSMA*

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	Total
Responses	47	81	58	117	26	329
%	14.3	24.6	17.6	35.6	7.9	

Apparently, executives feel that they are reasonably knowledgeable about the new Public Service human resources management regime: although only 7.9% felt they had excellent knowledge, 35.6% believe they are very well informed and more than sixty percent think they are at least fairly well informed.

#### 5. Knowledge of Components of *PSMA*: *PSLRA*, *FAA* and the new *PSEA*

	1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	Total
<i>PSLRA</i>						
Responses	57	78	60	106	28	329
%	17.3	23.7	18.2	32.2	8.5	
<i>FAA</i>						
Responses	67	80	77	86	19	329
%	20.4	24.3	23.4	26.1	5.8	
<i>PSEA</i>						
Responses	49	79	65	108	28	329
%	14.9	24.0	19.8	32.8	8.5	

Overall, executives feel slightly less knowledgeable about the component parts of the *PSMA* than when asked about the knowledge of the broad piece of legislation.

Executives feel least knowledgeable about the changes to the *FAA* (just over 55% feel at least fairly well informed). This may reflect a lack of awareness that specific human resource management authorities are contained in what appears to be and is familiar to most as legislation related to financial matters. Surprisingly, executives believe they are slightly more knowledgeable about the new *PSEA* (61.1% believe that are at least fairly knowledgeable), which is yet to come into force and around which policies are still in development, than they do about the *PSLRA* (58.9% believe they are at least fairly knowledgeable) that has been in force since April.

Nevertheless, it is positive that overall more than 55% of executives think they are reasonably well informed about the specific legislative changes contained in the *PSMA*.

## 6. Views about the Benefits of the *PSMA*

Executives were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements about the potential benefits of the *PSMA* on a scale of 1 to 5, from a little to a lot. The percentage distribution below is based on those who answered the question, removing those who responded that they didn't have an opinion. The ranking is based on respondents who rated each statement 3 or more in the rating scale. In other words, the statement ranked #1 received the most positive responses; the statement ranked #10 received the least positive responses.

<i>PSMA</i> will:		1	2	3	4	5	Total	Ranking
Streamline grievances	Responses	31	60	109	101	21	322	
	%	9.6	18.6	33.9	31.4	6.5		4
Make it easier to discipline	Responses	48	80	129	61	5	323	
	%	14.9	24.8	39.9	18.9	1.5		9
Build better relationships with unions	Responses	25	57	108	111	23	324	
	%	7.7	17.6	33.3	34.3	7.1		2
Make it easier to manage performance	Responses	30	82	109	96	6	323	
	%	9.3	25.4	33.7	29.7	1.9		8
Improve transparency	Responses	25	60	108	108	23	324	
	%	7.7	18.5	33.3	33.3	7.1		3
Simplify staffing	Responses	30	65	83	112	37	327	
	%	9.2	19.9	25.4	34.3	11.3		5
Make staffing faster	Responses	45	55	90	107	29	326	
	%	13.8	16.9	27.6	32.8	8.9		6
Create pools of qualified candidates	Responses	16	34	74	141	60	325	
	%	4.9	10.5	22.8	43.4	18.5		1
Favour mobility	Responses	32	69	122	83	15	321	
	%	10.0	21.5	38.0	25.9	4.7		7
Mean less work for executives	Responses	104	106	87	21	2	320	
	%	32.5	33.1	27.2	6.6	0.6		10

Generally, executives are relatively positive about *PSMA* but are adopting a wait and see attitude based on the small proportions that responded that they agreed “a lot” with the

statements. They are most positive about the ability to create pools of qualified candidates, improved relationships with unions, improved transparency and streamlined grievances. They are slightly positive about staffing being simpler and faster. They are not convinced that the new legislation will improve mobility or do much with respect to managing performance or disciplining employees. Overall, they agree least with the statement that the PSMA will mean less work for executives.

#### 7. Level of Commitment

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Responses	12	21	56	120	120	329
%	3.6	6.4	17.0	36.5	36.5	

Despite some of the above reservations, there appears to be a high level of commitment to the successful implementation of the new legislation since 73 % of responses fell in the top two categories.

#### 8. Current Sources of information about PSMA

		Dept. SM	Dept. HR	PSHRMAC/ PSC/TBS	CSPS	APEX	Total
Briefing	Responses	101	153	96	27	82	459
	%	22.0	33.3	20.9	5.9	17.9	
							33.5%
Written communication	Responses	105	153	105	24	69	456
	%	23.0	33.6	23.0	5.3	15.1	33.3%
Training course	Responses	17	46	27	40	48	178
	%	9.6	25.8	15.2	22.5	27.0	
							13.0%
Website	Responses	29	66	120	25	37	277
		10.5	23.8	43.3	9.0	13.4	
							20.2%
Total	Responses	252	418	348	116	236	1370
		18.4	30.5	25.4	8.5	17.2	
							100.0%

## 9. Level of Knowledge Required by Executives

	General Awareness	Sufficient to Discuss with HR	Expert Knowledge	Total
Responses	43	215	71	329
%	13.1	65.3	21.6	

It would appear that most executives are aware of their accountability for the implementation of the PSMA in that only 13.1% believe that they need only a general awareness of the legislation. Most will continue to rely on their HR professionals for advice and guidance.

## 10. Level of Readiness to Implement *PSMA*

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Responses	76	77	97	68	11	329
%	23.1	23.4	29.5	20.7	3.3	

Substantially more executives fall in the first two categories (153) than in the last two (79), indicating that more feel unready to implement the legislation than ready.

## 11. Areas of Interest for Future Learning

Of the total of 329 respondents 285 (86.6%) indicated an interest in knowing more about the PSMA. It is not surprising that among these respondents the interest in learning more about staffing is higher (61%) than about labour relations since the new PSEA is not yet in force.

## 12. Preferred Sources for Future Learning

	Dept. Sr. Mgt.	Dept. HR	PSHRMAC /PSC /TBS	CSPS	APEX	Other <sup>2</sup>
Responses	97	193	128	85	132	9
%	15.2	30.4	20.2	13.4	20.8	1.4

Two hundred sixty nine executives, 81.7% of all respondents, replied to this question. They were able to indicate more than one preferred source of information. After their departmental HR shop, APEX is most executives' preferred source of information followed closely by the policy central agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Regional federal councils, peers and "those ... who have experience with this approach in other settings" were the only sources of information noted. Most were comments to the effect that all of the potential sources had a role to play.

### 13. Preferred Communication Vehicle

	Briefings	Courses	Publications	Electronic communications	Websites	Other <sup>3</sup>
Responses	221	148	70	126	94	12
%	32.9	22.1	10.6	18.8	14.0	1.8

Two hundred seventy one respondents (82.3%) answered this question. Once again respondents were able to indicate more than one preferred option. The largest proportion of executives (32.9%) prefers briefings with the second largest proportion (22.1) preferring courses. It may be implied from the responses to the previous question, that these should be delivered in-house by HR. This is particularly true with respect to courses since the CSPPS did not rate highly as a source for further information.

### 14. Attendance at PSMA sessions (May 27 – June 22) sponsored by APEX and the National Managers’ Community

This question was not asked on the first survey. Of the potential 273 respondents to the second survey, 226 answered this question. One hundred sixty eight (74.3%) indicated that they had not attended one of these sessions.

#### Conclusion

This was not a rigorous statistical survey, rather a sampling of views. Nevertheless, the profile of respondents was not unrepresentative of the EX Group in the Public Service.

Most executives believe they are quite knowledgeable about the *PSMA*. However, it must be recognized that this is a self-assessment with no objective evidence of their actual level of knowledge. Given that most executives believe themselves to be quite knowledgeable about the new *PSEA*, which has just completed the policy development phase, these self-assessments may be optimistic. In addition, APEX continued to hear from a significant proportion of executives and managers who attended its Spring consultation on the *PSMA* that this was the first time they had heard about or appreciated the substance of the changes resulting from the Act.

The responses about readiness are also somewhat contradictory: despite the supposed knowledge of the *PSMA*, a substantial proportion of EXs (46.5%), don’t feel ready to implement it.

Concerning the potential benefits of the *PSMA*, executives either need to be educated or convinced about them, particularly concerning the direct authorities for discipline and performance management. Although it is impossible to say whether the large proportion of executives who do not believe that the *PSMA* will mean less work for them is actually

<sup>3</sup> Discussion groups/focus groups/Armchair Discussions, best practices, practical tools and on-line training were suggested.

representative of the view that the *PSMA* will mean *more* work, based on anecdotal information, this could be the case.

It appears that executives are relying on their HR professionals for information about the *PSMA* and will continue to rely heavily on them after implementation as well.

Overall, it appears that efforts should continue on all fronts to increase executives' knowledge of the *PSMA* and to convince them of its potential benefits otherwise there will be little real buy-in and, as a result, limited process or cultural change.

