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SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

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INDUSTRY SCIENCE
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SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

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SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

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**INDUSTRY SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
SUPPORT STAFF STUDY**

**Prepared by:
Hopkins Stewart Associates
August, 1990**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A study was conducted to explore matters of importance related to morale and job satisfaction for Support Staff in Industry, Science and Technology Canada by the consulting firm of Hopkins Stewart Associates engaged by the Human Resource Branch. The study was conducted from December 1988 to March 1989 at Headquarters and from March to June 1990 in the Regions.

At Headquarters, the study consisted of: consultation with a working group composed of seven Support Staff members; interviews with forty Support Staff members; interviews with twenty supervisors and managers from the Officer, Senior Management and Executive levels; interviews with 10 Human Resource specialists; and analysis of work force characteristics and data regarding the group. The Public Service Alliance representative was consulted on the set-up of the study and provided input during the process.

The regional study consisted of: questionnaires completed from 144 regional Support Staff members, 49 of which were individually interviewed; interviews with 49 regional officers and supervisors from the Commerce Officer, Senior Management and Executive levels; 10 regional Focus Group meetings attended by members of Support Staff groups; interviews with 10 Human Resource specialists; and analysis of work force characteristics and other miscellaneous data regarding the group. Statistics Canada was consulted for approval of the questionnaire and interview methodology.

The study explored the working relationships of Support Staff with their supervisors and co-workers, their understanding of the new Department, their satisfaction with the nature and quantity of their work, communications, office equipment, accommodation, hours of work, training and career progression.

Key findings were as follows:

- Overall satisfaction with working relationships with their supervisors, their co-workers, their jobs and the Department. High dissatisfaction with career advancement.
- Very good work performance according to supervisors but evidence of demotivation.
- A reducing number of support staff, technological change and resourcing methodologies resulting in increasing workloads.
- Limited mobility, both lateral and upward, and limited opportunities for career development.
- High dissatisfaction with the administration of staffing, classification performance appraisals and career counselling services in the Department.

Certain issues are Department-wide and general recommendations have been developed to address identified weaknesses. Other issues are regional and regional recommendations have been made to address them. A complete listing of recommendations follows.

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
(IN ORDER OF PRIORITY)**

GENERAL

SHORT-TERM

1. THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL STAFF TO CONFIRM POSITIVE ATTITUDES.
2. SUPERVISORS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO INFORM THEIR EMPLOYEES MORE OFTEN THAT THEY ARE PERFORMING WELL.
3. AN ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WHICH IS BASED ON EMPLOYEE REQUESTS AND WHICH REQUIRES MINIMAL ADMINISTRATION. A REASONABLE PERCENTAGE OF POSITIONS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN EACH REGION TO BE USED FOR ASSIGNMENTS.
4. A REASONABLE PERCENTAGE OF THE TRAINING BUDGET SHOULD BE ALLOCATED FOR SUPPORT STAFF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING IN EACH REGION.
5. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT STAFF SHOULD BE MAXIMIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT THROUGH SUCH MEANS AS ENSURING THAT:
 - (a) THE LIMITED NUMBER OF LOWER LEVEL OFFICER POSITIONS ARE OPEN TO A LARGER NUMBER OF SUPPORT STAFF;
 - (b) EXPERIENCE BARRIERS ON COMPETITION POSTERS THAT LIMIT MOVEMENT BETWEEN DIVISIONS/BRANCHES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT ARE ELIMINATED;
 - (c) OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTING ASSIGNMENTS BE SHARED ON A ROTATIONAL BASIS TO PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.
6. MONITORING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ON A DEPARTMENT-WIDE BASIS AND FINDINGS REPORTED TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT ON THESE STAFFING ISSUES.
7. SUPERVISORS SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE SUPPORT STAFF'S "NEED TO KNOW" AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO INVITE SUPPORT STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM.
8. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENSURE THAT INFORMATION CIRCULARS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT STAFF ARE CLEARLY AND UNDERSTANDABLY WRITTEN. THEY SHOULD BE REVIEWED FOR READABILITY PRIOR TO RELEASE.
9. SUPERVISORS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BE FRANK WITH THEIR EMPLOYEES ABOUT REASONABLE TRAINING EXPECTATIONS DURING THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL PROCESS. FOLLOW-UP SHOULD BE MADE BY HUMAN RESOURCES ON TRAINING RECOMMENDED ON ANNUAL APPRAISAL FORMS.

(III)

LONG-TERM

10. A STUDY ON OFFICE AUTOMATION AND ITS EFFECT ON WORKLOAD/WORKTYPE SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN.
11. SUPPORT STAFF RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF TEMPORARY AGENCY PERSONNEL SHOULD BE REVIEWED.
12. FURTHER REVIEW SHOULD BE MADE OF THE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STUDIED IN 1987 WITH A VIEW TO IMPLEMENTING IT. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE A STUDY OF EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENCIES.
13. REGULAR INFORMATION SESSIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SUPPORT STAFF ABOUT MEANS SUCH AS LATERAL TRANSFERS AND OUTSIDE HOURS LANGUAGE TRAINING TO ENHANCE CAREERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN ADDITION TO THE CAREER INFORMATION ALREADY PROVIDED.
14. ORIENTATION PRACTICES AND INFORMATION PROVIDED TO NEW EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE REVIEWED TO ENSURE THEIR ADEQUACY.
15. MANAGERS SHOULD CONSULT WITH ALL STAFF INCLUDING SUPPORT STAFF ON ANTICIPATED CHANGES TO WORK ENVIRONMENT, EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS TO ENSURE THEIR NEEDS ARE MET.
16. MEANS OF INCREASING PART-TIME/WORK-SHARING OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE EXAMINED.
17. A COMMITMENT SHOULD BE MADE TO SUPPORT STAFF TO REPORT ON THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS UNTIL IMPLEMENTATION.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF SUPERVISORS IN MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISORY TRAINING COURSES.
- IMMEDIATE ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO WORKLOAD PROBLEMS AND ACTION TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE IT. REVIEW POSSIBILITY OF INSTITUTING SUPPORT STAFF SELF-HELP GROUP SIMILAR TO THOSE IN SOME REGIONS.
- A SPECIAL EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE TEAM EFFORT WHERE REQUIRED.
- REVIEW ACCOMMODATIONS AND FURNISHINGS SUPPLIED TO SUPPORT STAFF WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING THEM.
- WORKING SUPPLIES SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE EQUALLY TO ALL STAFF.
- PROCEED QUICKLY WITH RE-ORGANIZATION AND RE-EXAMINE ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE NEW ORGANIZATION TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SUPPORT STAFF EMPLOYEES WISHES.

(i v)

HEADQUARTERS RECOMMENDATIONS

- HUMAN RESOURCES SHOULD COMMUNICATE REALISTICALLY WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT THEIR CHANCES OF PLACEMENT FROM THE LATERAL TRANSFER INVENTORY. A REGULAR REVIEW SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN OF THOSE CANDIDATES IN THE INVENTORY.
- WHEN REQUESTED, LAMPS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO SUPPORT STAFF IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY WOULD BE PROVIDED TO OFFICERS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY PRODUCE THEIR WORK.

INDUSTRY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

1. BACKGROUND

The Administrative Support Category presently makes up 30% of the work force of Industry, Science and Technology Canada. The need to study matters related to this category was raised by employee representatives at the National Employee/Employer Consultative Committee and a commitment was made by senior management to conduct a study. In order to ensure that the study adequately recognized the needs and expectations of the Administrative Support Category, a working group composed of representatives of the Administrative Support Category was formed. The Working Group played a consultative role throughout the Headquarters Phase of the study. No previous study of this kind has been conducted in Industry, Science and Technology Canada.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was to identify issues affecting departmental Support Staff and to recommend practical, immediate and long-term solutions to any problems identified with the aim of increasing Support Staff job satisfaction and productivity.

3. SCOPE

At Headquarters, a sampling method was used to select Support Staff for interview. In the Regions, due to limited numbers, all Support Staff employees were invited to complete a questionnaire with approximately 5 Support Staff employees interviewed in each Region. Groups sampled as part of the Administrative Support Category included:

CR
ST-SCY
ST-OCE
DA-CON
CM

Employees of both former Departments (the Ministry of State for Science and Technology and the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion) were sampled at Headquarters.

It was recognized early in the project that there were many issues that could affect employee morale which were outside the control of the Department. These include such issues as contract negotiations, salary administration and other Legislative and Central Agency-imposed policies. This study addressed only those issues that could be affected by the Department.

Hopkins Stewart Associates was selected to undertake the study. Approximately 35 consultant days were expended on the Headquarters Phase while 81 consultant days were expended on the Regional Phase.

4 . METHODOLOGY

High Support Staff involvement and cost-effectiveness were primary concerns during methodology development for this study. The methodology and questionnaires were reviewed and approved by Statistics Canada to ensure valid survey results.

At Headquarters, the study consisted of: consultations with the Working Group which was composed of 7 Administrative Support Category employees; interviews based upon a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of 40 Support Staff from all Responsibility Centres; interviews based upon a supervisory questionnaire administered to 20 employees of the Commerce Officer, Senior Management and Executive levels; interviews with Human Resources Branch staff; and a review of relevant documentation. Findings and recommendations were discussed with the Working Group in order to confirm their validity and relevance to the needs of the Administrative Support Category.

In the Regions, the study consisted of: 49 Support Staff interviews based upon the same survey questionnaire used for Headquarters revised slightly to reflect regional needs; interviews based upon the supervisory questionnaire administered to 49 members of the Commerce Officer, Senior Management and Executive groups; interviews with 10 Regional Human Resource specialists; information acquired from Support Staff participants in 10 regional Focus Groups; questionnaires completed and returned anonymously from an additional 95 regional Support Staff employees, and a review of relevant documentation. The total of 144 completed questionnaires provided an approximate 70% participation rate.

Participation both in interviews and in questionnaire completion was voluntary and names of persons interviewed were not recorded in order to ensure the anonymity of participants. The areas covered by the questionnaire were workload/worktype, departmental information, education/training and development, hours of work, career advancement, accommodations, furnishings and equipment, supervision, co-workers and job satisfaction.

Interviews were conducted, using the questionnaire, on a one-to-one basis in the language chosen by the person being interviewed. Team members were briefed on the meaning of the questions and the rating scale and the five point rating scale was placed on a wall or other visible location for easy reference. Rating scale definitions were included in the questionnaire.

Focus Groups were held in Regional Offices where there were more than 10 Support Staff employees. Some regions had more than one Focus Group meeting in order to accommodate Support Staff employees in groups of no more than 10. The Focus Group meetings which were fairly well attended were chaired and facilitated by one of the consultants on topics contained in the questionnaires. Participants were encouraged to raise concerns and suggestions.

Data was drawn from sources including: the Human Resource Information System; the Performance Review and Employee Appraisal System; and training and development records. In addition, the 1989 Industry Marketing Study; the 1989-90 Multi-Year Human Resource Plan (MYHRP); 1989-90 Management of Human Resources: Quarterly Reports; the 1987 PSAC Job Satisfaction Study of DRIE Employees; the 1987 PIPSC Study on the morale of Commerce Officers; and the 1989 Compressed Work Week Study in Ontario were reviewed.

SUPPORT STAFF GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

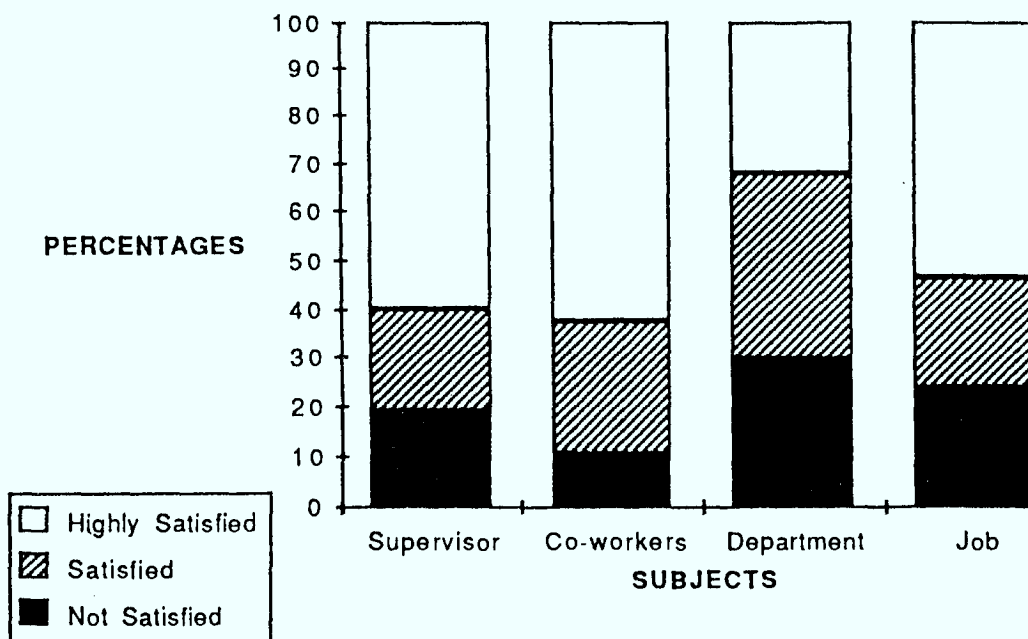
	TOTAL POPULATION	SURVEYED POPULATION	
	(1989)	HQ(1989)	REGIONS(1990)
% FEMALE	85.3%	85%	92%
AVERAGE AGE	39 YEARS	38.6 YEARS	38 YEARS
<u>GROUP/LEVEL</u>			
CM	6	1	
CR-2	3 -		
CR-3	55	4	8
CR-4	200	15	40
CR-5	89	4	23
DA-CON	3 -	-	
ST-OCE-2	4 -	-	
ST-OCE-3	49	3	14
ST-SCY-1	2 -	-	
ST-SCY-2	117	3	23
ST-SCY-3	150	9	22
ST-SCY-4	13	1	4
OTHER	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL	700	41/473	134/207
PARTICIPATION RATE		(8%)	(65%)

DEPARTMENTAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to give this report the required balance, it is important to look at overall job satisfaction.

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of the Support Staff are at least adequately satisfied with their supervisors, their co-workers, the Department and their jobs. In addition, the majority of supervisors are very well satisfied with both the quality and the quantity of work produced by their Support Staff. These facts should be communicated to both the supervisors and the Support Staff and this should be the basis upon which the rest of this report is considered.

Overall Support Staff Satisfaction



There are always areas for improvement and there will always be pockets of dissatisfaction no matter what is done to improve the situation. For the purposes of this study, however, it was felt that improvement could and should be attempted where there was more than 20% dissatisfaction indicated by the Support Staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

SHORT-TERM

THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL STAFF TO CONFIRM POSITIVE ATTITUDES.

The Support Staff were invited to provide the consultants with a list of issues which affected their job satisfaction and performance. Their priorities were as follows:

1. Workload/Worktype
2. Communications
3. Training
4. Career Progression
5. Co-Workers
6. Supervision
7. Accommodations, Furnishings and Equipment

Analysis was conducted on each of these main issues and practical recommendations proposed where problems were identified.

5.1. WORKLOAD/ WORKTYPE

While both Support Staff and their supervisors are generally satisfied with the quality and quantity of work produced by Support Staff, both recognize that workloads are changing. Workforce adjustment and the introduction of microcomputers have reduced the percentage of Support Staff to the total population of the Department. The anticipated time savings due to microcomputers has not yet been achieved due to reluctance of some officers to utilize the new equipment. Some supervisors still ask their Support Staff to perform functions that the systems could perform directly and thus, reduce the Support Staff's ability to meet other demands.

There is a significant proportion of Support Staff and supervisors who are not satisfied with the amount of support work to be accomplished although there does not appear to be a general trend towards overtime. This level of dissatisfaction was due to too much, too little or fluctuations in the amount of work. In some regional offices, workload appears to be effecting the quality of work produced. One solution utilized in some Regions is a Support Staff self-help group which looks at ways to more equally distribute the workload and to better provide service during holidays and sickness. This group also is used to disseminate work-related information. Direct Support Staff involvement in the problem-solving process appeared to be effective and was satisfactory to Regional Management and Support Staff alike.

SATISFACTORY TO:

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

IMMEDIATE ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO WORKLOAD PROBLEMS AND ACTION TAKEN TO ALLEVIATE IT. REVIEW POSSIBILITY OF INSTITUTING SUPPORT STAFF SELF-HELP GROUP SIMILAR TO THOSE IN SOME REGIONS.

Support Staff indicated high satisfaction with the introduction of microcomputers as it has changed their daily work and made their jobs more interesting. Indeed, they wish more training in all aspects of microcomputers to enhance their productivity. The effect of office automation on the workload and functions of Support Staff, however, has not yet been studied in the Department.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION - LONG-TERM

A STUDY OF OFFICE AUTOMATION AND ITS EFFECT ON WORKLOAD/WORKTYPE FOR SUPPORT STAFF SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN.

There does not appear to be a rationale for the number and type of Support Staff positions in the various Regional and Headquarters organizations. In some areas, there is one secretary for one officer while in others, there is one secretary for 22 staff members.

The use of temporary agency staff to supplement the regular staff is an additional source of frustration. Although this could be seen as beneficial by the Support Staff, it is viewed, rather, not only as an additional burden due to the requirement to train and retrain staff but as a demotivator in terms of job security and their own value to the Department. In one extreme case, there were 13 temporary agency secretaries for Support Staff in one section to train in six months.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION - LONG-TERM

SUPPORT STAFF RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND THE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF TEMPORARY AGENCY PERSONNEL SHOULD BE REVIEWED.

In addition, there is significant frustration in those Regions where re-organization is taking place with the length of time taken and the information available to Support Staff. The Support Staff have found it difficult to express their preferences for positions prior to the jobs being defined and supervisors being identified. Without information on preferences, decisions were taken by Regional Management to place individuals in positions which may or may not meet the needs of individuals or the organization.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

PROCEED QUICKLY WITH RE-ORGANIZATION AND RE-EXAMINE ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE NEW ORGANIZATION TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SUPPORT STAFF EMPLOYEES' WISHES.

5.2. COMMUNICATIONS

While most Support Staff felt they had enough information to do their jobs, they indicated a need for more information on departmental plans that affected them. This would include such issues as reorganizations; new work functions, procedures and systems updates; and use of office space.

The major concerns were:

- Support Staff are not being invited to participate in meetings with senior management on issues affecting them. In some cases, where meetings were in fact held, there was a strong sense that input or questions from Support Staff would be negatively received. Corporate Focus Days were not held in all Regions.
- Bulletins and circulars addressed to all staff were not clear and understandable. This complaint came from both supervisors and support staff.
- Comprehensive orientation information is rarely given to new employees.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT-TERM

SUPERVISORS SHOULD BE INFORMED OF THE SUPPORT STAFF'S "NEED TO KNOW" AND SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO INVITE THEIR SUPPORT STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS ON ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THEM.

THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE INFORMATION CIRCULARS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO SUPPORT STAFF ARE CLEARLY AND UNDERSTANDABLY WRITTEN. THEY SHOULD BE REVIEWED FOR READABILITY PRIOR TO RELEASE.

LONG-TERM

ORIENTATION PRACTICES AND INFORMATION PROVIDED TO NEW EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE REVIEWED TO ENSURE THEIR ADEQUACY.

5.3. TRAINING

The majority of Support Staff employees are satisfied with the amount of training they receive. They would, however, like more indepth microcomputer training to increase their productivity such as wordprocessing programs for secretaries; analytical programs such as LOTUS 1-2-3 and graphics programs.

In addition, frustration was expressed concerning training recommendations on the performance appraisal which were not carried out. In Regions where Human Resources routinely monitored training, the training given was more likely to be similar to that recommended and fewer complaints were heard from the Support Staff. Overall, training given tends to be task specific and very little developmental training is given to Support Staff.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

SHORT-TERM

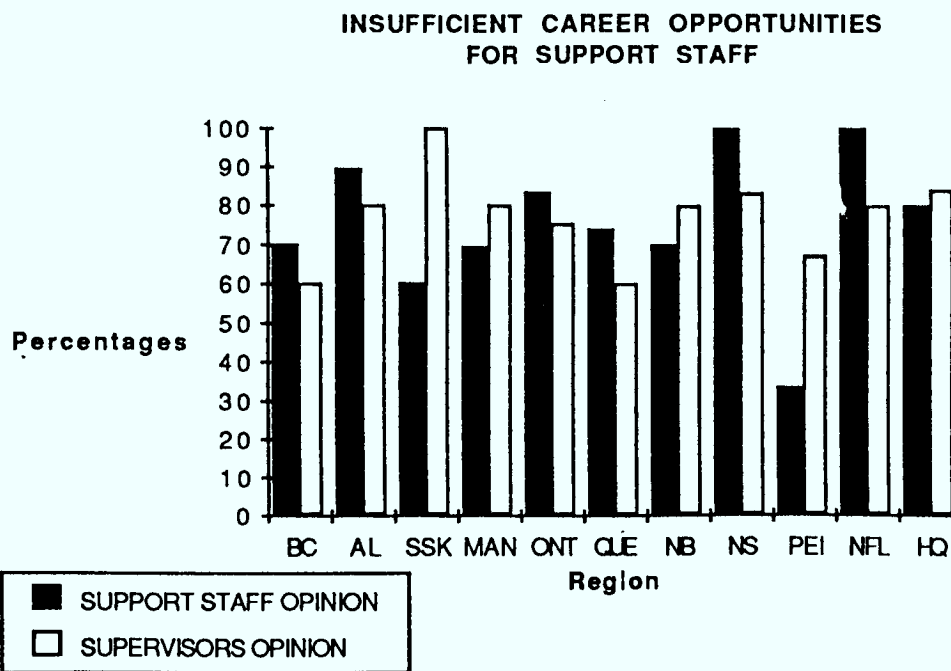
A REASONABLE PORTION OF THE TRAINING BUDGET SHOULD BE ALLOCATED FOR SUPPORT STAFF DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING IN EACH REGION.

LONG-TERM

SUPERVISORS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BE FRANK WITH THEIR EMPLOYEES ABOUT REASONABLE TRAINING EXPECTATIONS DURING THE APPRAISAL PROCESS. FOLLOW-UP SHOULD BE MADE BY HUMAN RESOURCES ON TRAINING RECOMMENDED ON ANNUAL APPRAISAL FORMS.

5.4. CAREER PROGRESSION

The majority of Support Staff employees are not satisfied with their career progression to date and are concerned about the fairness of most human resource systems. This is the area where employees expressed the greatest degree of dissatisfaction.



There appears to be a great deal of ambition in the group interviewed with the majority having thought seriously about or taken steps towards changing jobs in the past year. Lack of opportunity was the reason most often given for not changing jobs.

The Support Staff do not feel that the systems in place assist them in their career progress. A significant proportion of Support Staff feel that the staffing system in the Department is not operating fairly, that the transfer system is not working adequately,

that career counselling does not meet their needs and that the classification system is not operating fairly.

A review of career opportunities indicated that there were very few career possibilities listed on competition boards. It obviously requires creativity to move through and upwards in the Public Service in the 1990's. Nonetheless, there were some barriers noted on competition posters and by the Support Staff themselves which further reduce the already limited opportunities. In some cases, the area of competition for lower level officer and clerical positions were restricted to one Branch or one Directorate or the questions required such knowledge or experience that employees outside the specific area were unable to compete. There seems to be limited consideration of potential and on-the-job training. In many cases, a position being filled by competition had been occupied by one employee acting on a long-term basis and therefore, the experienced person won the competition. There were also examples of situations where Support Staff's expectations had been raised by promises made by management which were not subsequently fulfilled. Such actions reduced the support staff's satisfaction with the Department and the human resource systems.

Due to streamlining in the Public Service and the resulting lack of secretarial and clerical back-up positions, there is increased imperative staffing of bilingual positions and less full-time language training offered than before. It is necessary for Support Staff to upgrade their bilingual capabilities through language training after hours. The Department has a program at Headquarters to assist employees in this regard.

Lateral transfers and reassignments appear to be recognized by managers at Headquarters as an appropriate means of staffing. The Support Staff were not satisfied, however, with the administration of the lateral transfer system. Some were never contacted and names were left in the system that should have been removed.

HEADQUARTERS RECOMMENDATION

HUMAN RESOURCES SHOULD COMMUNICATE REALISTICALLY WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT THEIR CHANCES OF PLACEMENT FROM THE LATERAL TRANSFER INVENTORY. A REGULAR REVIEW SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN OF THOSE CANDIDATES IN THE INVENTORY.

In the Regions, it appears that there are inhibitors to career movement. The Support Staff are often discouraged from changing positions as there are no back-up positions and any staff changes requires retraining. Some employees even found their own replacements and yet the reassignments were not allowed. Many Support Staff feel that there is a disadvantage in being a productive worker as it appears to them that only poor employees are allowed to change positions and increase their experience levels.

In reality, there are few opportunities in the Department or in the Public Service for employees to move out of the Support Staff group and into the officer level. Once in a lower level officer position such as the AS-1 or 2 classification levels, there is limited opportunity to progress in ISTC particularly in the Regions due to the limited number of higher positions.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

SHORT-TERM

AN ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WHICH IS BASED ON EMPLOYEE REQUESTS AND WHICH REQUIRES MINIMAL ADMINISTRATION. A REASONABLE PERCENTAGE OF POSITIONS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN EACH REGION TO BE USED FOR ASSIGNMENTS.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPORT STAFF SHOULD BE MAXIMIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT THROUGH SUCH MEANS AS ENSURING THAT:

- (a) THE LIMITED NUMBER OF LOWER LEVEL OFFICER POSITIONS ARE OPEN TO A LARGER NUMBER OF SUPPORT STAFF;**
- (b) EXPERIENCE BARRIERS ON COMPETITION POSTERS THAT LIMIT MOVEMENT BETWEEN DIVISIONS/BRANCHES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT ARE ELIMINATED;**
- (c) OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTING ASSIGNMENTS BE SHARED ON A ROTATIONAL BASIS TO PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

MONITORING SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ON A DEPARTMENT-WIDE BASIS AND FINDINGS REPORTED TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT ON THESE STAFFING ISSUES.

LONG-TERM

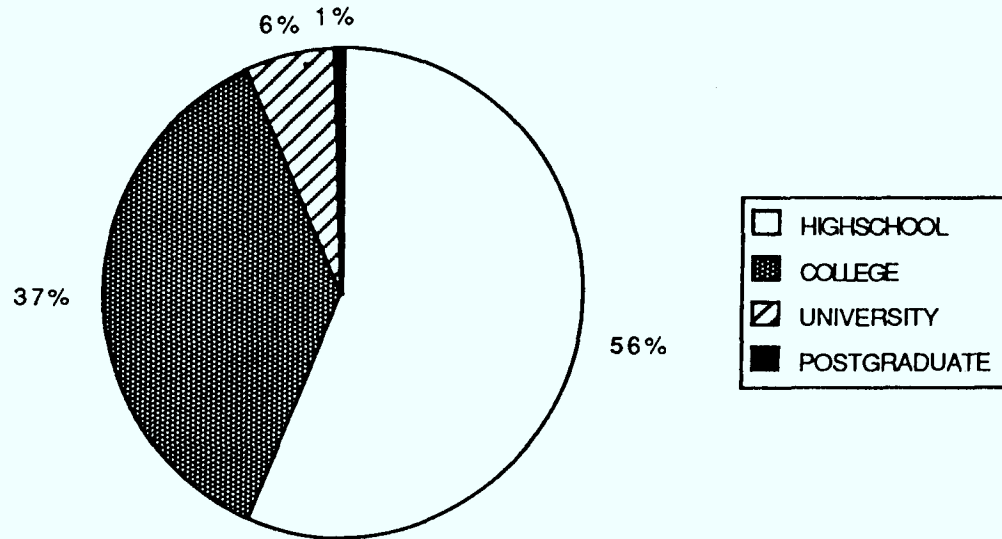
REGULAR INFORMATION SESSIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO EMPLOYEES ABOUT MEANS SUCH AS LATERAL TRANSFERS AND OUTSIDE HOURS LANGUAGE TRAINING TO ENHANCE CAREERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN ADDITION TO THE INFORMATION ALREADY GIVEN.

The Commerce Officer (CO) Group is one of the largest in the Department. It is a highly paid group which is predominantly male. There is an increasing trend to require university education to enter this group although the group is not in the Professional and Scientific Category and the Selection Standard does not include university education as a minimum requirement. On the basis of this study and the Industry Marketing Study, the majority of Support Staff who are predominantly female, do not appear to have university education. In fact, this study indicates that of the study participants only 7% in the Regions and 5% in Headquarters have university degrees of any sort. A total of 44% in the Regions and 25% at Headquarters have some type of post-secondary education. This is shown graphically on page 11. Specific information on degree type was not requested and no other data on education is available from Departmental sources.

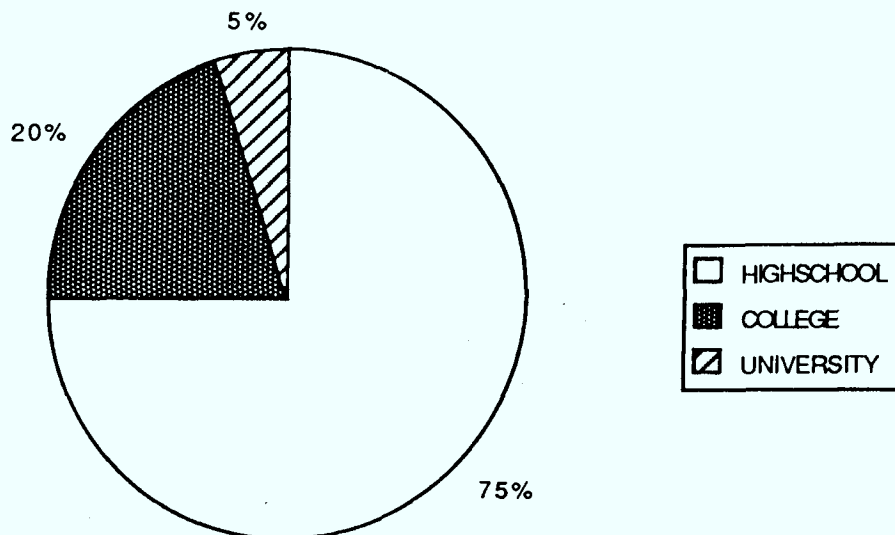
The study participants indicated a desire, however, to increase formal education particularly in the Regions. In one Region, there is opportunity given to Support

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT EDUCATION?

REGIONAL SUPPORT STAFF - STUDY PARTICIPANTS

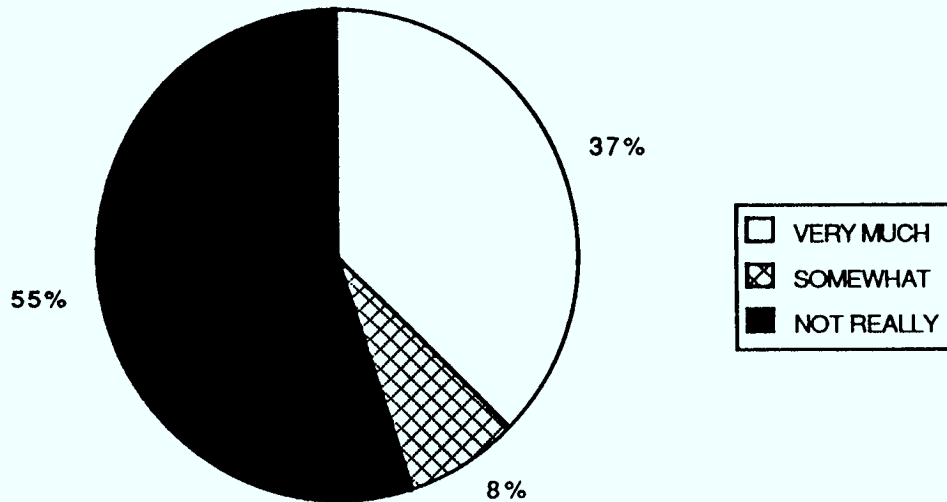


HEADQUARTERS SUPPORT STAFF - STUDY PARTICIPANTS

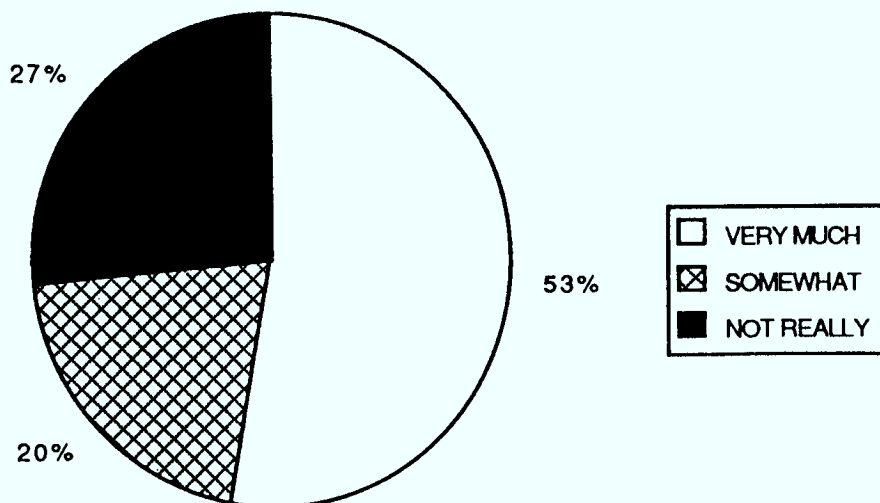


DO YOU WISH TO FURTHER YOUR FORMAL EDUCATION

HEADQUARTERS SUPPORT STAFF STUDY PARTICIPANTS



REGIONAL SUPPORT STAFF STUDY PARTICIPANTS



Staff to enter the CO Group through the AS Group with some educational/experience requirements.

Senior staff and human resources officers both indicated that if the Support Staff would try to improve their education level, assistance would be given to them by the Department. The Support Staff have to show the initiative first.

There is a significant issue here which should not be missed. The majority of Support Staff are women in their mid-thirties and early forties with family responsibilities. It is extremely difficult given the level of work required in both these important areas to find time to increase education not acquired earlier in life. Further, there is no policy or program in the Department to assist and ensure that employees who do make extreme efforts are duly rewarded. Indeed, there is a perception by Support Staff that women who do progress into the CO group are not recognized as equals by their male counterparts. Examples were given of women who appear to be actually "driven out" of the Department. Finally, the Support Staff pointed out that there is a trend in the Department to decrease the number of CO-1 positions.

Support Staff feel that education should not be the sole criteria for entry. Many of the Support Staff are fully conversant with the officer's functions having worked in the Department for many years and they feel that they even train new officers. No study has been done into possible experience equivalencies for the Commerce Officer Group.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION - LONG-TERM

FURTHER REVIEW SHOULD BE MADE OF THE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STUDIED IN 1987 WITH A VIEW TO IMPLEMENTING IT. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE A REVIEW OF EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND EXPERIENCE EQUIVALENCIES.

Part-time work and work sharing were of interest to many Support Staff employees in many Regions and in Headquarters. They also felt that more part-time opportunities were possible while still meeting Departmental objectives. It was recognized that, at present, occupying a part-time position, reduced chances of progressing when compared to the rest of the population.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION - LONG-TERM

MEANS OF INCREASING PART-TIME/WORK-SHARING OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE EXAMINED.

5.5. CO-WORKERS

In general, there appears to be a team spirit in the Department at the working group level. The Support Staff feel that they are getting along well and that everyone is treated fairly. A vast majority reported high satisfaction with their co-workers and supervisors also felt that the employees were satisfied with their colleagues.

There were some exceptions to this in certain Regions where there appears to be real morale problems and a certain lack of cooperative spirit amongst the staff members.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

A SPECIAL EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO IMPROVE TEAM EFFORT WHERE REQUIRED.

5.6. SUPERVISION

At Headquarters, Support Staff are very happy with their supervisors and feel that:

- they receive very good advice and guidance;
- decisions affecting them are made appropriately;
- supervisors are open to suggestions;
- supervisors provide regular feedback;
- supervisors are friendly and easy to approach;
- supervisors treat their employees as valuable members of the work unit .

It should be noted that only 10% of the Support Staff indicated any dissatisfaction with their supervisors.

No recommendation is made.

In the Regions, however, there is a greater degree of dissatisfaction at 22%. The major problems indicated were the lack of feedback on the quality of work and not treating Support Staff as valuable members of the Department. A vast majority of supervisors had not been on managerial or supervisory training in the last five years if ever.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF SUPERVISORS IN MANAGEMENT OR SUPERVISORY TRAINING COURSES.

5.7. ACCOMMODATIONS, FURNISHINGS AND EQUIPMENT

A majority of staff were generally satisfied with their technical equipment, furnishings and office space. There were some problems noted with furnishings that did not match the technical equipment and some offices that were not satisfactory. It appears that these specific issues are being addressed.

What became apparent through this study was that equipment, furnishings and office space merely highlighted issues of lack of respect and inequality of treatment. There were many instances where desks were moved without the support staff's prior knowledge and where equipment was switched or was poorly selected which reduced the support staff's productivity. Some office equipment and/or supplies are restricted to officer or senior management levels which are useful to Support Staff. Situations such as these are extremely demoralizing to Support Staff.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION – LONG-TERM

MANAGERS SHOULD CONSULT WITH ALL STAFF INCLUDING THEIR SUPPORT STAFF ON ANTICIPATED CHANGES TO WORK ENVIRONMENT, EQUIPMENT AND FURNISHINGS TO ENSURE THEIR NEEDS ARE MET.

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

REVIEW ACCOMMODATIONS AND FURNISHINGS SUPPLIED TO SUPPORT STAFF WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING THEM IN CERTAIN REGIONS.

WORKING SUPPLIES SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE EQUALLY TO ALL STAFF IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY PRODUCE THEIR WORK.

HEADQUARTERS RECOMMENDATION

WHEN REQUESTED, LAMPS SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO SUPPORT STAFF IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY WOULD BE PROVIDED TO OFFICERS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY PRODUCE THEIR WORK.

6. OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Of interest for possible follow-up by management, the Human Resources Branch and the Corporate Development Secretariat, is the following list of other suggestions and important areas of concern that the survey group noted:

At Headquarters:

- meet/see the Minister and/or Deputy Minister
- physical fitness facilities
- better policing of hours
- larger difference between supervisory and non-supervisory SCY positions
- equality between managers and Support Staff concerning lunch hours
- reward system for hard workers
- equal treatment of francophones
- improved relationship with management
- locate all offices in the same building and treat equally
- more team work

In the Regions:

- more challenges, more responsibility
- more time to grasp role of Department
- equal treatment of anglophones
- more recognition
- system for identifying high potential Support Staff
- reduce fear of lay-off
- realistic, consistent job descriptions

- increase Support Staff to Officer percentage
- promote quarterly staff lunches
- more realistic deadlines from Ottawa
- two way appraisals

The expectations of the survey group for the study both at Headquarters and in the Regions include:

- feedback and action quickly
- see final report
- more communication
- more advancement possibilities
- better attitude of managers toward Support Staff
- poor management practices noted
- more equality
- more friendliness
- adding of level between support and officer
- new furniture and equipment
- new program for "overqualified" people
- more equal distribution of workload
- PY allocations reviewed

In order to ensure that there is action taken on the recommendations and that the study maintains momentum:

A COMMITMENT SHOULD BE MADE TO SUPPORT STAFF TO REPORT ON THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS UNTIL IMPLEMENTATION.

7. CONCLUSION

The Support Staff in the Department were found to be a thoughtful and incisive group who wanted to work hard and produce good results. It would not have been possible to conduct this study without the support and participation of the Support Staff themselves.

The problems identified in this study are not insurmountable. Some areas of concern such as career progression cannot be fully resolved by the Department given the overall lack of opportunities in the Public Service, while many other issues can be quickly resolved by senior management. Implementation of these recommendations would support the Corporate Development and Taskforce on Women initiatives already underway in the Department and would be a tangible indication of management commitment.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

Human Resources Branch
October 30, 1990

OBJECTIVES

- Identify issues affecting departmental Support Staff
- Recommend practical, immediate and long-term solutions to any problems
- Aimed at increasing support Staff job satisfaction and productivity

GROUPS SURVEYED

Group	HQ	Regions	Total	
			<u>Survey</u>	<u>Population</u>
CR	23	71	94	347
ST-OCE	3	14	17	53
ST-SCY	13	49	62	282
CM	1	0	1	6
OTHER	1	0	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>
			175	700

25% of the Total Population surveyed

BACKGROUND

- ✓ Issue raised at the EECC
- ✓ Commitment made by Senior Management to study matters related to Support Staff

METHODOLOGY

- Working group of representatives of Support Staff played consultative role
- Interviews based on survey questionnaire to Support Staff
- Interviews based on questionnaire to Supervisors
- Interviews with HRB staff
- Review of relevant documentation
- Focus Group in Regions

KEY FINDINGS

1. Overall satisfaction with working relationships with Supervisors, co-workers, jobs, Department
2. Very good work performance according to Supervisors, but evidence of demotivation

KEY FINDINGS (cont.)

3. High dissatisfaction with career advancement
4. Limited mobility, both lateral and upward
5. Limited opportunities for career development
6. Increasing workloads and reducing number of Support Staff
7. High dissatisfaction with the administration of staffing, classification, performance appraisals and career counselling

ISSUES AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE

1. Workload/worktype
2. Communications
3. Training
4. Career progression
5. Co-workers
6. Supervision
7. Accommodation, Furnishing & Equipment

WORKLOAD/WORKTYPE

- Satisfied with quality & quantity of work
- Recognize that workloads are changing
- Satisfactied with the introduction of microcomputers
- Allocation of support Staff to Officers does not appear logical
- Use of temporary agency staff is a source of frustration
- Length of time for re-organization in some Regions

COMMUNICATIONS

- Felt they had enough information to do their jobs
- Would like more information on Departmental Plans:
 - Reorganization
 - New work functions, procedures, systems
 - Use of office space

COMMUNICATIONS

MAJOR CONCERNS

- Meetings are not held
- Input not welcomed in meetings
- Clarify Bulletins and Circulars
- Orientation for new employees

TRAINING

- Satisfied with the amount of training received
- Would like more indepth training on microcomputers
- Frustration with training recommendations in PREA which are not carried out
- Would like more developmental opportunities

CAREER PROGRESSION

- Greatest degree of dissatisfaction
- Majority have thought or tried to change jobs
- Lack of opportunity
- Dissatisfied with systems in place
- Barriers to advancement
- Limited opportunities to move into Officer level positions
- Entry into C0 group difficult
 - education requirement
 - decrease in number of C0-1 positions
- Part-time work and work sharing should be increased

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CO-WORKERS

- Getting along well with co-workers
- Fairly treated
- High degree of satisfaction

SUPERVISION

- High degree of satisfaction
- Some dissatisfaction in Regions:
 - lack of feedback
 - not treated as valuable members
- Increase participation in Supervisory training

ACCOMMODATION, FURNISHING AND EQUIPMENT

- Generally satisfied
- Specific issues being addressed
- Indicator of lack of respect and unequal treatment
- Less restriction on use of supplies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations under the responsibility of Human Resources Branch have been integrated into the Human Resource Framework
- Proposed Action Plan has been developed

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
SHORT TERM			
1. The results of this study should be distributed to all staff to confirm positive attitudes.	Distribute Study to all staff	Human Resources Branch	Minimal cost
2. Supervisors should be encouraged to inform their employees more often that they are performing well.	PREA Policy has been approved. PREA course to be given to supervisors will cover this subject.	All Responsibility Centres	Cost of development and delivery of PREA course estimated at \$45,000
3. An assignment program should be developed which is based on employee requests and which requires minimal administration.	Developmental Assignment Unit already approved. Start date scheduled for January 1991.	Human Resources Branch	3 P.Y.s \$50,000
3.a) A reasonable percentage of positions should be established in each Region to be used for assignments.	Human Resources Framework Other Responsibility Centres	Human Resources Branch All Regions	
4. A reasonable percentage of the training budget should be allocated for Support Staff developmental training in each Region.	Other Responsibility Centres	All Regions	

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
5. Career opportunities for Support Staff should be maximized by the Department through such means as ensuring that:	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	Minimal financial cost
(a) the limited number of lower level officer positions are open to a larger number of Support Staff;	Human Resources Framework Management responsibility	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	Minimal financial cost
(b) experience barriers on competition posters that limit movement between Divisions/Branches within the Department are eliminated;	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	Minimal financial cost
(c) opportunities for acting assignments be shared on a rotational basis to provide equal opportunities.	Human Resources Framework Management responsibility	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	Minimal financial cost
6. Monitoring should be undertaken on a Departmental wide basis and findings reported to Senior Management on these staffing issues.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	Could involve O & M dollars to hire consultants to carry out a study

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
7. Supervisors should be informed of the Support Staff's "need to know" and should be encouraged to invite Support Staff to <u>participate</u> in meetings on issues of importance to them.	Human Resources Framework To be included in PREA course	Human Resource Branch All Responsibility Centres	No financial cost
8. The Department should ensure that information circulars for distribution to Support Staff are clearly and understandably written.	Other Responsibility Centres	All Responsibility Centres	No financial cost
8.a) They should be reviewed for readability prior to release.			
9. Supervisors should be encouraged to be frank with their employees about reasonable training expectations during the Performance Review and Employee Appraisal process.	Human Resources Framework To be included in PREA course	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	No financial cost
9.a) Follow up should be made by Human Resources on training recommended on annual appraisal forms.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	1 P.Y.

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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LONG TERM

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
10. A study on Office Automation and its effect on workload/worktype should be undertaken.	Information Management Strategy Working Group to integrate into the Department's overall information technology strategy.	Working Group on Information Management Strategy	
11. Support Staff resource allocation and the cost-effectiveness of the use of temporary agency personnel should be reviewed.	Other Responsibility Centres. PS 2000 recommends elimination of P.V. control	All Responsibility Centres	
12. Further review should be made of the Officer Development Program studied in 1987 with a view to implementating it.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	
12.a) This should include a study of education requirements and experience equivalencies.			

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
13. Regular information sessions should be given to Support Staff about means such as lateral transfers and outside hours language training to enhance careers in the Public Service in addition to the career information already provided.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	
14. Orientation practices and information provided to new employees should be reviewed to ensure their adequacy.	Human Resources Framework. Orientation Program for new employees to be developed.	Human Resources Branch	\$75,000 developmental cost \$25,000 on-going cost
15. Managers should consult with all staff including Support Staff on anticipated changes to work environment, equipment and furnishings to ensure their needs are met.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	No financial cost
16. Means of increasing part-time work-sharing opportunities should be examined.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
17. A commitment should be made to Support Staff to report on these recommendations on a regular basis until implementation.	Human Resources Framework Management responsibility	Human Resources Branch All Responsibility Centres	No financial cost
REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS			
18. Increase participation of supervisors in management/supervisory training courses.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	Cost of training already included in Corporate training budget
19. Immediate attention should be paid to workload problems and action taken to alleviate it. Review possibility of instituting Support Staff self-help group similar to those in some Regions.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	
20. A special effort should be made to improve team effort where required.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	
21. Review accommodations and furnishing supplied to Support Staff with a view to improving them.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	

SUPPORT STAFF STUDY

October 9, 1990

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<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>ACTION PLAN</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>
22. Working supplies should be made available equally to all staff.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	
23. Proceed quickly with re-organization and re-examine assignments within the new organization taking into account the Support Staff employees wishes.	Management responsibility	All Regions	
HEADQUARTERS RECOMMENDATIONS			
24. Human Resources should communicate realistically with employees about their chances of placement from the lateral transfer inventory. A regular review should be undertaken of those in the inventory.	Human Resources Framework	Human Resources Branch	
25. When requested, lamps should be provided to Support Staff in the same manner as they would be provided to officers in order that they may produce their work.	Management responsibility	All Responsibility Centres	