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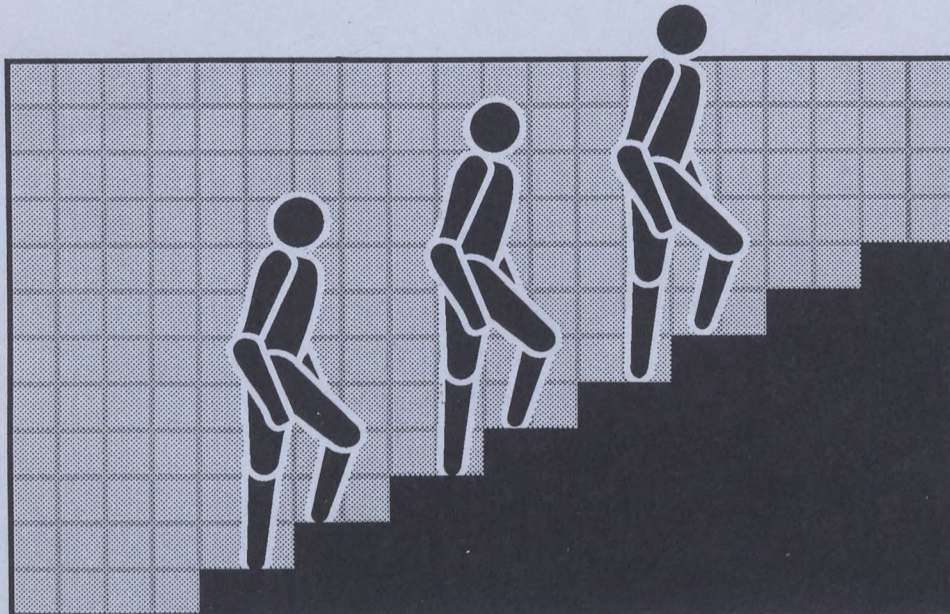
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TOWARDS EXCELLENCE:

A VOICE FROM WITHIN

1991 Employee Opinion Survey
Report to Employees

MAY, 1992



Industry Science &
Technology Canada

The Corporate Development
Steering Committee:

- Futures committee
- HayGroup

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To all ISTC employees:

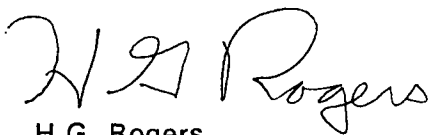
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TECHNOLOGIE CANADA

The strength of ISTC is people; its vision comes from you; you determine and measure its successes. For this reason we have tried to harness your wealth of knowledge and ideas through an employee survey.

Your response has been overwhelming. The majority of employees at all levels took the time and care to comprehensively complete the questionnaire and constructively outline thoughtful suggestions for improvements. It is a privilege to lead ISTC, where so many creative people are eager to participate in striving to achieve excellence in a constantly changing world.

Using the Hay Group's analysis of the data generated by your responses, the Futures Committee of the Corporate Development Steering Group raised a number of recommendations and suggestions; then these were modified and improved with feedback from the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) members and the Corporate Development Steering Group. These recommendations were then approved by DMC and are summarized here. An action plan has been formed by assigning each of these recommendations to an office of primary interest, (OPI), usually an ADM. In addition, each responsibility centre will review the issues and implement what is required and best addressed at the local level. In 6 months, DMC will undertake a preliminary review of progress on the implementation of these ideas and will complete a comprehensive review of the results achieved in one year's time.

If the generation of ideas is one achievement, the full utilization of this wealth of information will be an even greater accomplishment. Only if we work together on implementation of the action plan will we access the benefits your wisdom holds. Only then will the ideas contained in Towards Excellence: A Voice From Within become a reality. I look forward to joining with you along this exciting road into the future.



H.G. Rogers
Deputy Minister

Last December you had the opportunity to complete a questionnaire titled "Employee Opinion Survey" that asked your views of many different aspects of working at Industry Science and Technology Canada (ISTC). This booklet provides you with Hay's independent summary and an overview of recommendations developed by the Futures Committee of ISTC's Corporate Development Steering Group. These issues and recommendations were tabled with Departmental Management Committee in April.

This analysis highlights the survey items which are either contributing to or hindering the success of ISTC. Additional question by question data are available in regions and headquarters.

SURVEY BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The process of surveying employee attitudes and opinions supplements other formal and informal communication methods that are in place at ISTC. It provides an in-depth "snapshot" of the Department and obtains employee input on key issues that need to be addressed and possible responses to make ISTC an even better and more effective place to work.

The specific objectives of the survey were to:

- assess progress on understanding/implementing the mandate since the 1989 mandate survey;
- identify current strengths of and areas for improvement in ISTC;
- provide a benchmark on employee attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of Departmental effectiveness;
- provide a vehicle for objectively gathering employee suggestions and involving them in the change process; and,
- identify strategies and actions where required to support the mandate.

All ISTC employees were given the opportunity to share their views on their working environment and the effectiveness of the Department. 65% of all ISTC employees filled out the questionnaire; this response rate is high for surveys of this type. It clearly indicates a strong interest among employees to be involved in shaping ISTC's future. A significant number of write-in comments provided many useful suggestions from employees on strengths and areas for improvement.

To ensure confidentiality, the completed questionnaires were forwarded to Hay Management Consultants where they were keypunched and computer processed. Hay then analyzed the data in conjunction with the Futures Committee. A detailed report was tabled with DMC in mid-April. At this meeting Senior Management reconfirmed its commitment to communicate the results to all employees and follow-through on the findings as described in the Deputy's covering letter.

Because many of the questions asked in this survey are ones that Hay has asked of its other clients, we can compare how ISTC employees rate ISTC relative to how employees elsewhere rate their own organizations.

These comparisons provide an important reference point because public sector organizations do typically score close to the industry average on many core attitudinal areas (e.g., supervision, training, compensation etc.), but below average on the openness of the culture and operating efficiency. While this is a general trend, some Canadian public sector organizations continue to outperform the industry norm on many dimensions and make dramatic improvements over time.

HOW TO READ THE OVERVIEW CHARTS

The "overview" charts presented on Page 4, graphically summarize how employees rated ISTC on the core survey factors defined on Page 3. To understand these charts it is important to keep in mind the following points:

- Each of the factors listed at the top of the charts summarizes several survey questions. Within any single factor, any one question could be rated very low and the rest very high, or vice versa.
- The "0" line represents the "Hay Norm" which is the average of other organizations surveyed by Hay on the same questions. Scores above this line mean that employees rated ISTC more positively than the average of employees elsewhere when rating their organizations. Conversely, scores below the Hay Norm indicate employees rated ISTC below the average obtained for other organizations.
- As a general guideline, scores that are at least 7% above or below the norm (areas outside of the shaded area) are considered **significantly** different.
- These charts are based on the responses of all employee responses and reflect the **overall** attitudes and perceptions cutting across the Department. Nevertheless, these results sometimes vary by job level and region versus headquarters.

WHAT THE OVERVIEW CHARTS MEASURE

Although the survey consisted of 178 questions, many of these are interrelated. To help in presenting the great wealth of survey results, the questions have been grouped together into various groups or "factors". The 18 factors described below and graphed on the following page provide an overview of the major issues impacting organizational performance. These results can be compared to other organizations. (N.B. The numbers in parentheses indicate the survey questions which make up each factor.)

Integrated Management Effort: The extent to which ISTC has goals that are clear and has defined plans to meet those goals. (Q147, Q148, Q152)

Internal Communication: Overall credibility of communications, and effectiveness of lateral, upward and downward communications. (Q5, Q8, Q64, Q74, Q120, Q154, Q155, Q156)

Performance Management: Perceptions of the performance management system including clear job expectations, fair performance evaluations, and regular feedback. (Q11, Q19, Q26, Q76, Q78, Q171, Q173, Q176)

Cooperation\Teamwork: The extent to which there is good cooperation between employees in the Department, and supervisors encourage teamwork and cooperation. (Q12, Q77)

Promotions\Advancement: The degree to which selection procedures are seen to be fair and employees feel favourable and informed about advancement opportunities and requirements. (Q18, Q22, Q23, Q56)

Recognition: The extent to which employees feel their efforts are appreciated and there is non-monetary recognition of performance. (Q24, Q67)

Training and Development: Training for current and future jobs, and the emphasis on developing employees. (Q58, Q60, Q159, Q175)

Performance Emphasis: The amount of work expected of employees, tolerance for poor performance, and the extent to which employees give their best effort. (Q107, Q108, Q115, Q164)

Job Stress: Perceptions of job stress and the extent to which managers help to reduce it. (Q109, Q112)

Departmental Culture: The extent to which there is open discussion of conflicts, and encouragement of innovation, constructive criticism, and risk taking. Also, the degree to which managers are free to take independent actions, and receive support from higher levels of management. (Q145, Q146, Q165, Q169, Q172)

Employee Involvement: The opportunity for employees to make suggestions, have their ideas adopted, and feel a sense of personal accomplishment and contribution. (Q6, Q20, Q31, Q32, Q54, Q68, Q75)

Job Challenge: The chance to do challenging work and degree to which jobs use people's skills and abilities. (Q7, Q13)

Supervision: Ratings of supervisors' job knowledge, accessibility, fairness in dealing with employees, and people skills. (Q70, Q71, Q72, Q73)

Employee Commitment\Satisfaction: Overall job satisfaction, rating of ISTC, and pride in working for the Department. The level of morale now and compared with a year ago. (Q1, Q4, Q21, Q124, Q130)

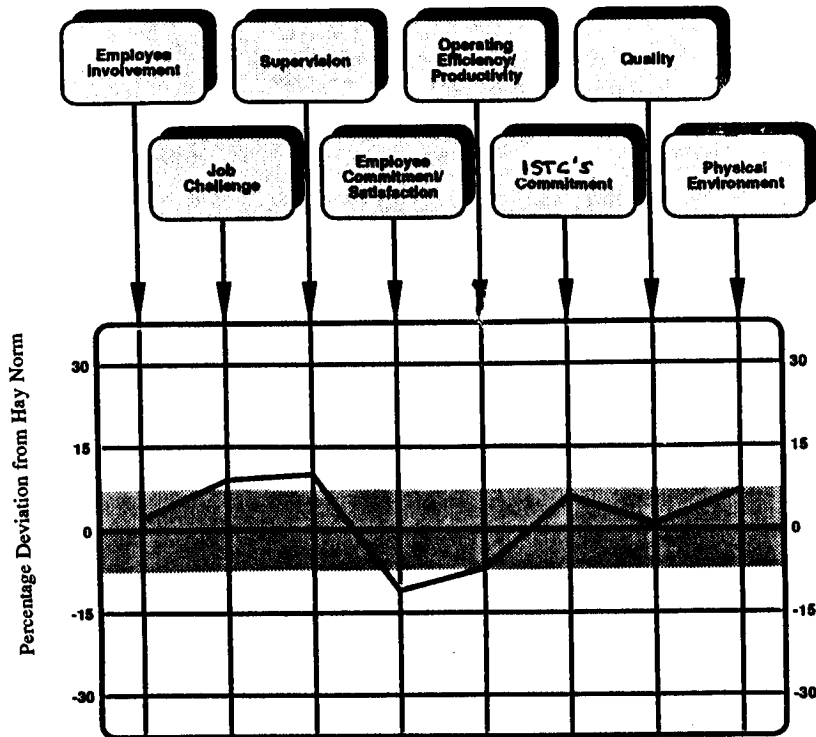
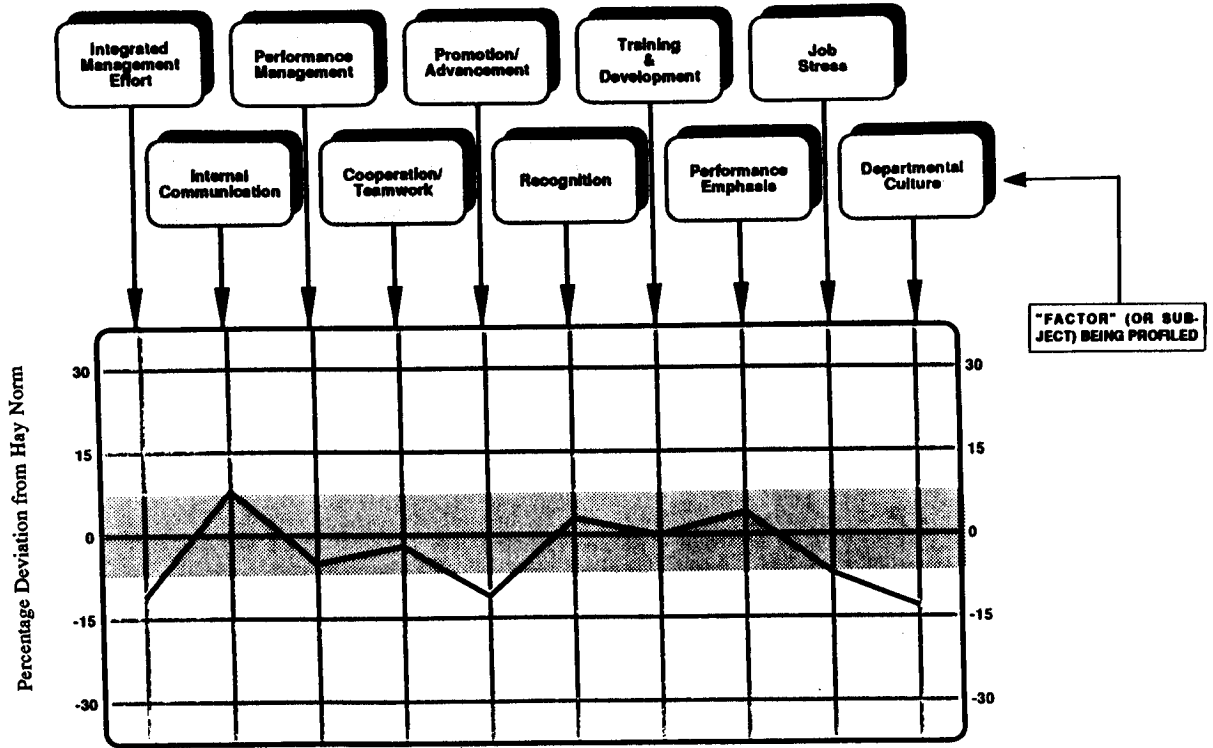
Operating Efficiency\Productivity: The extent to which the work flow is well organized and there are few problems due to unnecessary procedures. Perceptions of current staffing levels. (Q25, Q49, Q113, Q132, Q133)

ISTC's Commitment: Perceived ISTC interest in employee welfare, respect for the individual, job security, and fairness or treatment. (Q14, Q53, Q55, Q57)

Quality: The balance between quality and quantity and the overall emphasis on quality standards. (Q69, Q114, Q131)

Physical Environment: Overall rating of working conditions. (Q134, Q135, Q137, Q138)

OVERVIEW CHARTS MAJOR FACTORS RESULTS FOR TOTAL ISTC



OVERALL SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results paint a generally positive picture of ISTC as a place to work. Compared to other organizations in Hay's data bank, ISTC is rated at or above average on 10 of 18 factors. These results indicate that ISTC has established a strong foundation for moving towards organizational excellence.

STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

ISTC is rated particularly favourably in the areas of Internal Communication, Supervision, Job Challenge, ISTC's Commitment and Physical Environment. Each of these is commented on briefly below:

Internal Communication -- Although there are some specialized issues related to communication, upward and lateral communication are rated favourably by employees.

Supervision -- The nature and quality of supervision is at a very high level. Employees rate their supervisors as fairly evaluating their performance, providing appropriate job information and demonstrating a good job knowledge.

Job Challenge -- The current environment provides employees with the opportunity to do challenging work and there is a high degree of job satisfaction.

ISTC's Commitment --The Department is generally viewed as being committed to employee welfare, respecting the individual and applying policies and work rules fairly.

Physical Environment is generally viewed favourably.

In addition, questions designed specifically by ISTC show that over the past 2 years the Department has been establishing a strong **foundation for organizational renewal**.

The Department is viewed as becoming increasingly **client focused**, although there is recognition of the need for more direct involvement of clients in defining ISTC's priorities, activities, products and services.

Employee confidence, trust and **commitment to a new mandate** have been high. Employee understanding of the mandate has improved significantly over the past year. Employees feel well informed on the direction and business of ISTC.

Employees express a high level of confidence in the **ability of fellow employees**.

There is a strong and growing **focus on job training**.

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ISSUES TO DEAL WITH

Today, ISTC is in the midst of an important transition. Employees strongly support the future direction and values of ISTC yet they believe that the existing culture could, in practice, be more supportive of these values.

Against the context of a strong process driven climate, ISTC's ability to manage change and implement its mandate needs to be supported by addressing the following areas:

Linking Goals and Plans to Mission/Mandate--While the departmental vision is clear, employees do not always see consistency between the vision and management action, and do not always see effective translation of the mandate into goals and plans.

To address this issue it is recommended that the development of the annual strategic plan be based on a regular survey of clients, employees and ministers to determine the Department's key priorities, activities, initiatives, products and services. At all stages of plan development, employee participation should be sought and an ad hoc committee representing all levels of employees should be formed to examine the document to ensure its readability and relevance to the Department's mission and objectives.

A video might also be produced in which the Deputy Minister could convey to all employees the essence of the strategic plan relevant to the mission and objectives and to the subsequent development of sector/regional business plans and directorate work plans.

These suggestions could ensure the systematic translation of client needs into workplans, facilitate employee participation, and the linking of plans specifically to the Department's mission and objectives. All of these recommendations will be reviewed by an employee working group aimed at improving linkage between strategic goals and the mission.

Work Demands And Stress --The current work environment is demanding and stressful. It is characterized by high quality standards, large volumes of work, and declining resources and support.

Recommendations related to improving work plans by basing them only on clients' urgent current needs should ensure a better focus of work and greater selectivity, thus diminishing a major source of stress. DMC should discuss how priorities can be set in order to ensure that workload and quality can be better balanced. Management training should include some basic stress recognition and solution elements. Managers should examine "overload" and "marginal work."

Recognition/Performance Feedback -- In the face of increasing demands and continued constraint there is a need for more recognition and ongoing performance feedback.

More frequent feedback and recognition by management could be achieved. ISTC's "Coaching for Commitment" course provides a good basis. Additional ideas should be requested from Human Resources Branch and the Corporate Development Steering Group through its Working Groups on Management of Human Resources and Best Practices. Managers should be encouraged to meet with employees at least twice a year to review performance and make recommendations if necessary. Non-monetary rewards could be given higher profile by being presented at ISTC Day and at Corporate Focus Days in the regions. Managers should ensure that realistic career development and training objectives are established in the Performance Review and Employee Evaluation.

Improving Work Flow And Teamwork -- Breakdowns in work flow and teamwork are likely symptomatic of intensified demands/stress, perceived lack of resources, and procedural inefficiencies. Regional results are below those of headquarters on many items and may indicate reduced levels of teamwork and cooperation between the regions and headquarters.

Recommendations fall into two groups:

a) General work flow/teamwork

Given that 81% of employees feel they often have to interrupt work to handle unexpected requests, DMC should review the reactive nature of the Department's work to determine if this is a realistic level. The result will be either reducing the reactive workload or accepting it and redesigning departmental systems, planning, and procedures to more effectively address work of this reactive nature. Some re-engineering of administrative processes is required to meet concerns about procedures and paperwork. Once or twice a year, the ISTC Exemplary Contribution Award could be given to two groups who would not normally work together but achieve a success by doing so.

b) Regions versus Headquarters

Improved teamwork and co-operation between regions and HQ should be encouraged through such measures as sector teams. More visits by senior management to the regions and short term assignments are two suggestions by employees to improve relationships. More effective dissemination of corporate information to regional employees together with greater accessibility to training and promotional opportunities are needed. There should be more and earlier regional input into all Policy development. Further potential coverage of regional events by Precis should be investigated by Communications Branch.

Career Advancement Potential -- Confidence in personal future is declining as feelings of job insecurity and career plateauing increase.

Given restrictions on hiring due to downsizing, it is unlikely a great deal can be done to expand opportunities for advancement. However, it is recommended that HRB develop career profiles so individuals have a realistic expectation, continue to promote opportunities for assignments and interchanges to increase the variety of experiences, and further develop the career counselling centre. In addition, HRB has been asked to review the fairness in hiring practices and consider ways to give better notice of job openings.

Improving Human Resources Management -- Concern with human resource management policies and procedures.

To deal with the minority of individuals who are not able to perform to potential, a task force should be struck consisting of the DG of HRB, the DG of the 2000 Plus Secretariat, the chairpersons of the Total Quality Commitment (TQC) and Best Practices Committees and at least one volunteer from each work level. The task force should investigate new and creative means to help employees who are not performing to their potential to improve their effectiveness. Some methods might include team and peer coaching, training, or finding a niche in another organization or with a different manager.

Employee Empowerment, Conflict, and Communication -- Employee comments indicate that progress has been made on involving and empowering employees, but there are still many impediments to greater involvement. Employees still feel constrained by policies and procedures and burdened with paperwork. Although communication is generally rated favourably, there are still areas for improvement.

It is recommended that managers be given more freedom to make decisions and support for greater delegation of authority.

In addition, the Best Practices Working Group should include this issue, and the question of encouraging open discussion and constructive criticism, in their search for best practices. Finally, distribution channels should be flatter and employees given access to information on relevant topics so that they can be better informed, for professional and business reasons, about issues in which they are involved.

Communication Gap -- Directors General and Directors have varying views on issues facing the Department.

This issue should be placed on the agenda for the next EX conference and focus days, and staff meetings should discuss this problem as it applies to specific issues and should examine other problems specific to job levels.

In senior management training programs, modules should be included on techniques of multi-level communication.

Quality Focus -- The strong quality emphasis of the Department is sometimes sacrificed for quantity, resulting in a strong activities focus and below average responsiveness/vitality. While standards for quality are high, managers face a continuing challenge of balancing the high demands for production with the emphasis on quality.

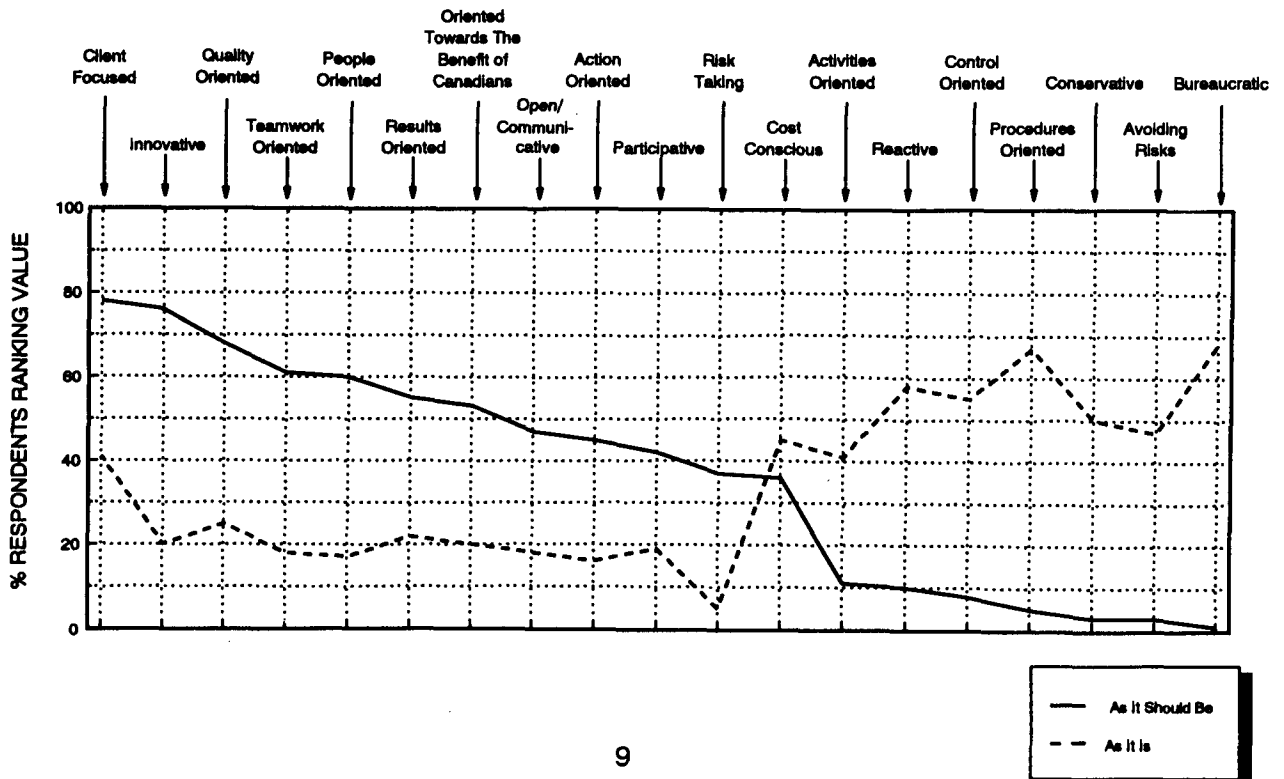
The recommendations on having ISTC focus on fewer priorities, activities, products and services and improving work flow will make it possible to centre on quality, rather than quantity.

Quality can only be improved if there is a definable objective. More projects should not only demand outputs such as reports or processes ,e.g. conferences, but they should also produce definable results (increased market share, adoption of new technology etc.)

Employee Morale -- To improve employee morale the department should continue to monitor employee attitudes, maintain open dialogue with unions, implement best practices of other organizations and the recommendations of this report, and begin to practice the corporate culture most employees believe ISTC embraces.

Departmental Culture -- Procedures/control-oriented culture limits **employee empowerment** and results in low emphasis on innovation/freedom to act. The current and desired culture as viewed by ISTC employees is graphed below.

DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE



It is recommended that a Deputy's award, for the next few years, be given to the individual or team which best brings about changes between what ISTC employees believe it should practice and what employees believe it does practice. (As graphed above)

The Deputy has challenged the DMC: within two weeks after the release of this report to employees, its members are to come up with two ideas to help bring about change in this area.

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CONCLUSIONS

The survey has provided a wealth of information. The challenge now is to use this information constructively and to take action on the issues affecting the Department's success. ISTC has made progress and begun creating a positive climate for employees. Yet experience shows that employee attitudes in organizations tend to be relatively stable and change slowly.

Solving the problems will not be easy. Action will be hampered by the historical and current public sector environment and the lack of autonomy imposed by virtue of being a unit within the larger government. At the same time senior management are committed to acting on the survey results with the help of all employees.

FOLLOW THROUGH/TAKING ACTION

There are a number of elements to the follow-through plan accepted by DMC:

This document is a first step in informing all employees of the survey results.

Detailed, question-by-question results are available in each region and to Headquarters employees in the Departmental Library and the PS2000 Plus Secretariat.

A number of working groups of employees will be involved in taking action on some of the issues raised in the course of the survey. Other issues have been specifically assigned to individuals or areas for immediate action.

DMC is committed to reviewing progress on the survey issues in six months, doing a detailed evaluation of results achieved after one year, and re-surveying all employees as required in a constantly changing environment.

Creating and sustaining a positive climate throughout the Department will demand something from all employees. There is also a potential payback -- creating a Department that is one of the best places to work in Canada.