

How's Work Going



***Employee Survey
Results –
Youth Report***

2007

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Evaluation and Audit Division of the Public Service Commission was approached by GoverNEXT¹ after the 2006 employee survey to provide further analysis of the perceptions of youth in the Public Service to assist with creating strategies and practices for the recruitment and retention of youth. A report was created and presented to the GoverNEXT steering committee. After the 2007 employee survey, the Evaluation and Audit Division decided to continue to provide specific analysis of youth perceptions in the government for GoverNEXT and senior leaders in the Nova Scotia Public Service to assist with the recruitment and retention of youth.

The purpose of this report is to provide further analysis of two distinct groups working in the Government of Nova Scotia: 29 year olds and younger, and 30-39 year olds. This report examines the perceptions of 29 year olds or younger respondents and 30 – 39 year old respondents compared to the perceptions of the overall public service respondents and highlights areas where specific focused action may be required.

1.2 Methodology

The data for this report was analyzed in a similar way to the main employee survey report looking at favourable scores, average (mean) agreement and importance scores and an analysis of employee engagement. Refer to the 2007 Employee Survey Report for more details on the methodology for analysis of favourable and mean scores, the framework for the mapping agreement and importance and measuring employee engagement.

¹ GoverNEXT is a community of young Nova Scotia public servants that strives to create avenues for professional development and networking, and offers advice to the Nova Scotia Government on its Human Resource policies and practices.

2 Perceptions of Youth in the Government of Nova Scotia

2.1 Are there age differences in the perception of government meeting employee expectations?

An analysis of average agreement and importance scores for each category for each age group, compared to overall public service results², illustrates differences in perceptions for employees. The comparison helps to conclude the common areas of success and areas of highest priority for each group to focus action. It also identifies areas of success and priority for specific age groups to be considered in the development of human resource programs, policy and practices. The table on the next page provides a comparison of the analysis of agreement and importance score for each category by age.³

² Overall public service results are also referred to as overall corporate results.

³ Refer to Annex A for Action Grids (scatter plots) for each age group and the overall public service (corporate) results.

Quadrant	Overall Public Service	29 year olds or younger	30 – 39 year olds
Success <i>(High Agreement, High Importance)</i>	Safety Teamwork Overall questions Recruitment	Safety Teamwork Overall questions Recruitment Personal Growth Quality of Work Life Quality of Supervision	Safety Teamwork Overall questions Recruitment Quality of Work Life Quality of Supervision
High Priority <i>(Lower Agreement, High Importance)</i>	Compensation & Recognition Quality of Supervision Quality of Leadership Quality of Work Life Workplace Ethics Fair Human Resource Practices	Compensation & Recognition Quality of Leadership Workplace Ethics Fair Human Resource Practices	Compensation & Recognition Quality of Leadership Workplace Ethics Fair Human Resource Practices Personal Growth
Improvements Needed <i>(Lower Agreement, Lower Importance)</i>	Healthy Workplace Personal Growth Retention <i>Employee Involvement</i> GoverNEXT Disclosure of Wrongdoing	Healthy Workplace GoverNEXT Disclosure of Wrongdoing	Healthy Workplace <i>Employee Involvement</i> GoverNEXT Disclosure of Wrongdoing
Strengthen Importance <i>(High Agreement, Lower Importance)</i>	Diversity Communications	Diversity Communications Retention Employee Involvement	Diversity Communications Retention

Note: Categories **bolded** are common to all groups. Categories in *italics* are common to the overall public service results.

2.2 What do 29 year olds or younger respondents think?

Successes

Similar to corporate results, 29 year olds or younger see **safety, teamwork, overall questions** and **recruitment** as successes in their work environment. In addition, 29 year olds or younger also see **personal growth, quality of work life** and **quality of supervision** as important to them and they are satisfied with what their work environment is providing them.

Highest Priority

Areas of highest priority for 29 year olds or younger are the same as corporate results. **Compensation and recognition, quality of leadership, workplace ethics** and **fair human resource practices** are all areas that require action.

More specifically, in comparison to the overall corporate 2007 results, 29 year olds or younger have the following perceptions:

Personal growth

- questions with regards to opportunities for career advancement, career growth in the government and their department and getting the training and related support they need to support their continuous learning are more important to this age group in comparison to corporate results. However, level of satisfaction with the opportunities is slightly higher than overall public service results.

Quality of Work Life

- More likely to agree they can balance the demands of work life and personal/family life.

Compensation & Recognition

- More likely to agree they receive recognition from their supervisor for a job well done and this is of greater importance to them in comparison.
- It is more important to this group to receive meaningful recognition for work well done.
- Feeling valued for contributions at work is of more importance to this group and they are slightly more satisfied in comparison to corporate responses.

Quality of Leadership

- Respondents are slightly more positive about leadership practices in comparison to corporate respondents, but they do feel there is room for improvement.

Quality of Supervision

- More likely to agree they report to an effective leader.
- It is more important to 29 year old or younger respondents that they are provided with feedback about their work performance.
- More likely to agree managers make timely decisions and this is more important to 29 year olds or younger.

Retention

- More likely to recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work and this is more important to this group.
- More important to 29 year olds or younger that they see a future for their career working for the Government of Nova Scotia.

Disclosure of Wrongdoing

- Less likely to be aware of disclosure of wrongdoing policy, to know who to contact to make a disclosure and to feel comfortable making a disclosure in comparison to corporate responses.

Overall Questions

- More likely to agree they are satisfied with their department

2.3 What do 30 – 39 year old respondents think?

Successes

The 30 – 39 year olds within the government also see **safety, teamwork, overall questions** and **recruitment** as successes in their work environment. Additionally, **quality of work life** and **quality of supervision** are important to them and they are satisfied with what their work environment is providing them.

Highest Priority

Areas of highest priority for 30 to 39 year olds are the same as corporate results, **compensation and recognition, quality of leadership, workplace ethics** and **fair human resource practices**. An additional area of high priority for this age group is **personal growth**.

More specifically, in comparison to the overall public service 2007 results, 30 – 39 year olds have the following perceptions:

Personal Growth

- Personal growth questions with regards to opportunities for career advancement, career growth in the government and their department and getting the training and related support they need to support their continuous learning are more important to this age group in comparison to corporate results and government is not meeting their expectations.

Quality of Work Life

- It is more important to 30 – 39 year olds that they be able to balance the demands of work life with the demands of personal/family life.

Compensation & Recognition

- Feeling compensated fairly for their job is more important to 30 – 39 years in comparison to overall public service results.

Quality of Supervision

- It is more important to this age group they participate in performance appraisal/review with their supervisor.

Retention

- Seeing a future for their career working in the Government of Nova Scotia is more important to 30 – 39 year olds.

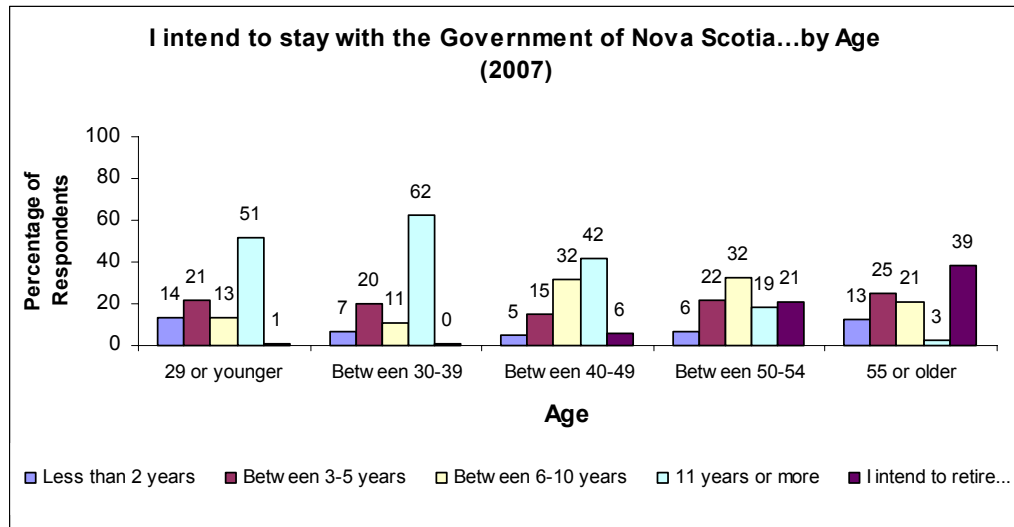
Disclosure of Wrongdoing

- 30 – 39 year olds are less likely to be aware of disclosure of wrongdoing policy, to know who to contact to make a disclosure and to feel comfortable making a disclosure in comparison to overall public service responses.

2.4 What are youth's intentions to stay in the Government of Nova Scotia?

The majority of 29 year olds or younger and 30 – 39 year olds intend to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia 11 years or more (55% and 62% respectively) (Refer to figure below). Approximately 20% of 29 year olds or younger and 30 – 39 year olds intend to stay only 2 – 5 years. Interesting to note, and something to continue to track, is the percentage of 29 year olds or younger who plan on staying less than two years. Approximately 14% see themselves leaving in the next two years. Compared to 30 – 39 year olds, only seven percent stated they intend to leave in less than two years. This higher percentage could be due to the fact that only 70% of 29 year old or younger respondents hold permanent positions compared to 90% of 30 – 39 year respondents who have permanent positions, but this should be something to watch.⁴

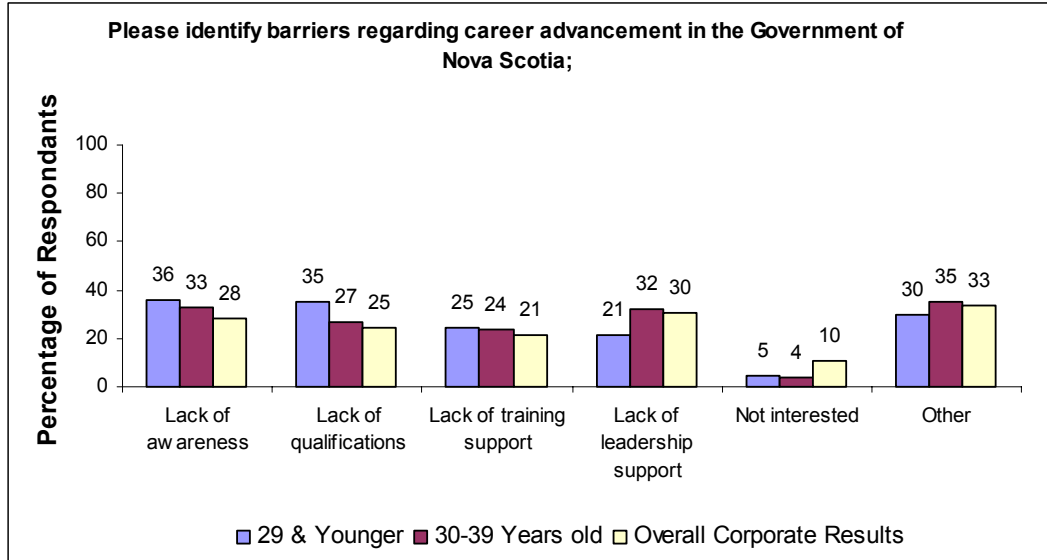
⁴ Refer to Annex B for demographics of respondents by age.



2.5 Are there age differences in perception of barriers to career advancement in the Government of Nova Scotia?

There are some slight age differences in the perception of barriers to career advancement in the Government of Nova Scotia (Refer to table and figure below). The top three reasons employees in the overall public service state as barriers are “other” (such as unfair recruitment and selection processes), lack of leadership support, and lack of awareness. For 29 year olds or younger, lack of awareness is the top issue followed by lack of qualifications and then “other”. In comparison, 30 – 39 year olds state “other”, lack of awareness and lack of leadership support as their top three barriers to career advancement.

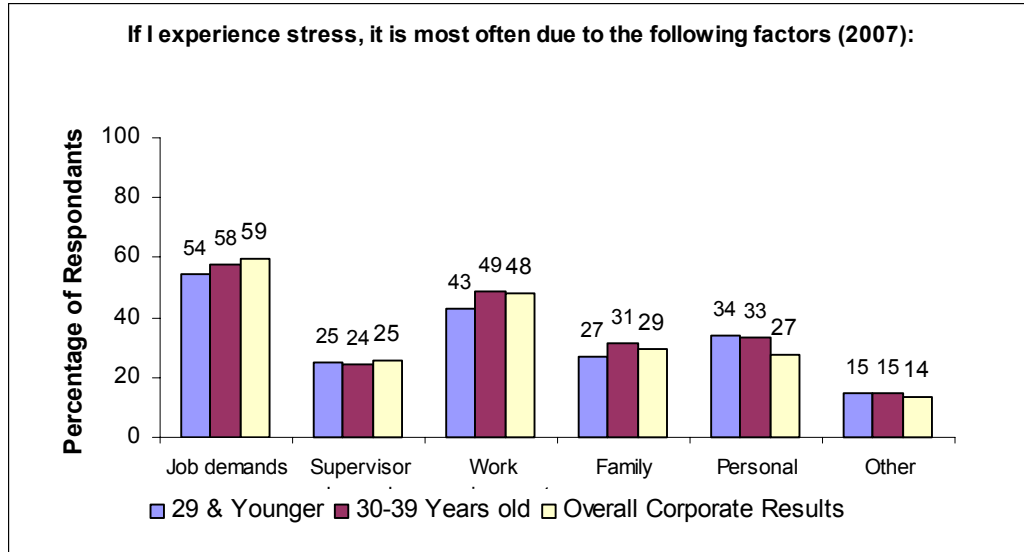
Perceived Barriers to Career Advancement		
Overall Public Service	29 year olds or younger	30 – 39 year olds
1. Other 2. Lack of leadership support 3. Lack of awareness 4. Lack of qualifications 5. Lack of training support 6. Not interested	1. Lack of awareness 2. Lack of qualifications 3. Other 4. Lack of training support 5. Lack of leadership support 6. Not interested	1. Other 2. Lack of awareness 3. Lack of leadership support 4. Lack of qualifications 5. Lack of training support 6. Not interested



2.6 Are there age differences in the factors that cause stress?

The factors that cause stress for employees within the government are relatively similar for overall public service results, 29 year olds or younger and 30 – 39 year olds (Refer to table and figure below). The top two reasons are the same for all groups – job demands and work environment. The next reason for overall respondents is family whereas for 29 year olds or younger and 30 – 39 year olds it is personal.

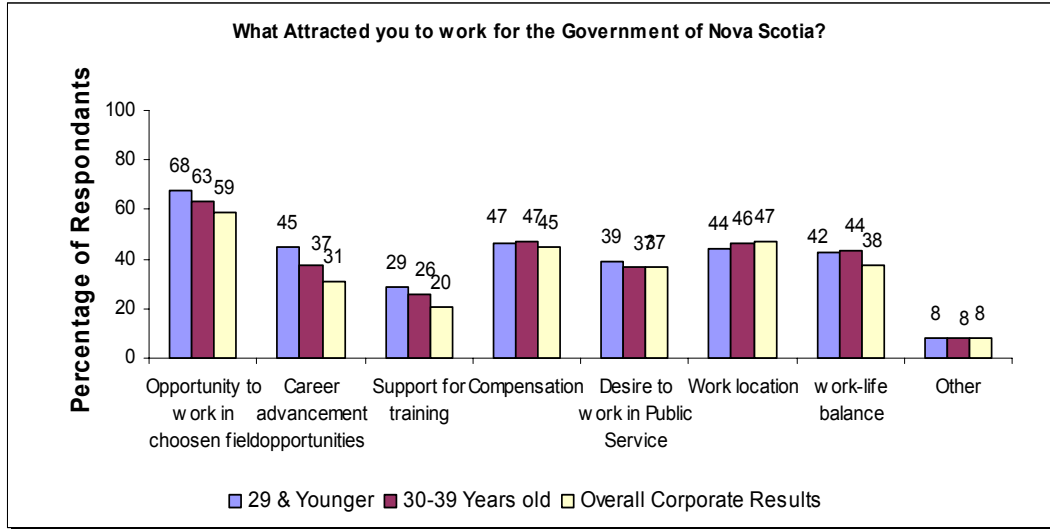
Causes of Stress		
Overall Public Service	29 year olds or younger	30 – 39 year olds
1. Job Demands 2. Work Environment 3. Family 4. Personal 5. Supervisor Demands 6. Other	1. Job Demands 2. Work Environment 3. Personal 4. Family 5. Supervisor Demands 6. Other	1. Job Demands 2. Work Environment 3. Personal 4. Family 5. Supervisor Demands 6. Other



2.7 Are there age differences in what attracted people to work for the Government of Nova Scotia?

The primary reason people were attracted to work for the Government of Nova is the opportunity to work in chosen field (Refer to table and figure below). This is the same for overall public service respondents, 29 year olds or younger and 30 – 39 year olds. The second reason 29 year olds and younger and 30 – 39 year olds were attracted to the Government of Nova Scotia was compensation in comparison to work location for the overall corporate response. The third reason 29 year olds and younger were attracted to the Government of Nova Scotia was career advancement opportunities and for 30 – 39 year olds it was work location.

Attraction to Government		
Overall Public Service	29 year olds or younger	30 – 39 year olds
1. Opportunity to work in chosen field	1. Opportunity to work in chosen field	1. Opportunity to work in chosen field
2. Work location	2. Compensation	2. Compensation
3. Compensation	3. Career advancement opportunities	3. Work location
4. Work-life balance	4. Work location	4. Work-life balance
5. Desire to work in Public Service	5. Work-life balance	5. Career advancement opportunities
6. Career advancement opportunities	6. Desire to work in Public Service	6. Desire to work in Public Service
7. Support for training	7. Support for training	7. Support for training
8. Other	8. Other	8. Other



3 Employee Engagement

3.1 Does age affect employee engagement?

Employee engagement is the extent to which an individual feels connected to, and involved with their job and the organization.⁵ Calculation of the employee engagement index determines how engaged Nova Scotia public servants are.⁶ In other words, how satisfied and committed they are to their job and the organization.

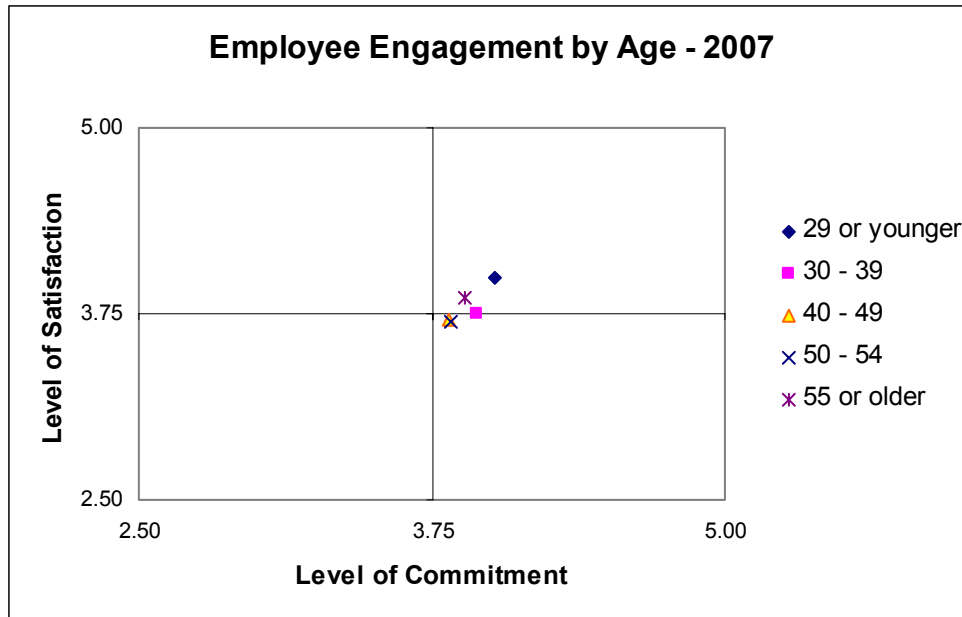
Examination of employee engagement indexes by age shows there are differences in the engagement index for each group. The table below illustrates that employees with the highest level of engagement are those 29 years old or younger followed by 30 – 39 year olds. In comparison to the overall Nova Scotia Government engagement, these two groups are above the corporate index.

Employee Engagement Index	
29 years or younger	75.7
30 - 39 years old	72.6
40 - 49 year olds	70.8
50 - 54 year olds	70.4
55 years of age and older	71.5
Nova Scotia Government	71.6

The engagement index is calculated using indicators to measure the level of satisfaction and commitment. Indicators of satisfaction and commitment can be plotted to illustrate the levels of satisfaction and commitment. The chart below shows the level of satisfaction and commitment for each age group within the public service.

⁵ For further information on employee engagement refer to 2007 Employee Survey Results report. Used with permission of the Employee Engagement Interjurisdictional Initiative. For further information on the initiative or these materials, please contact EEIT@gov.ab.ca.

⁶ The engagement index is out of 100.



As found with the engagement index, age of respondents has an impact on the level of satisfaction and commitment. The most satisfied employees are those 29 years old or younger followed by employees 55 years or older. The most committed employees are 29 year olds or younger followed by 30 – 39 year olds.

3.2 How can the level of employee engagement be improved?

Employee engagement, as previously mentioned, is calculated using indicators that measure the level of satisfaction and commitment employees feel toward the organization. To determine how to improve the level of engagement or maintain it, drivers, or factors, influencing employee’s level of satisfaction and commitment can be examined.⁷ Overall there are general drivers of engagement, but a closer look at specific drivers for each age group will allow for more focused action.

What drives satisfaction and commitment for 29 year olds or younger?

For 29 year olds or younger, satisfaction overall is driven by satisfaction with their job, work and department. They also need to feel they work for an effective organization. Their level of satisfaction with their work is influenced by whether or not they see a future for their career, if they have confidence in leadership, and if they perceive there to be fair human resource practices. Satisfaction with their department is strongly influenced by leadership, and whether they see leadership setting a good example and providing the essential information then need to do their job; they need to feel they have support to provide a high level of service; and their department promotes a healthy and supportive workplace.

Level of commitment is strongly influenced by the work employees do in the Public Service. Just by the virtue of what the public service does drives employee commitment. Commitment is also driven by satisfaction with their job, work and department and whether they feel they work for an effective

⁷ To determine the drivers of commitment and satisfaction a correlation analysis was performed.

organization. Therefore, what government does to increase employee satisfaction will impact the level of employee commitment and vice versa.

The table below illustrates the factors influencing 29 year olds or younger:

Factors Influencing 29 year olds or younger...			
Indicators	Satisfaction <i>Overall – Job, Work & Department</i>		Commitment
	Work	Department	
Drivers	See future for career	Leadership (set example, communication)	Public Service Work
	Feel they work for an effective organization		Satisfaction with job, work & department
	Leadership (confidence)	Have support to provide high level of service	Feel they work for an effective organization
	Fair HR practices	Promotes healthy & supportive workplace	

What drives satisfaction and commitment for 30 – 39 year olds?

For 30 - 39 year olds, satisfaction overall is driven by satisfaction with their job, work and department. They also need to feel they receive recognition for the value of their work and that they work for an effective organization. Satisfaction with their department is strongly influenced by leadership and whether they have confidence in leadership, see issues being resolved that were raised in the survey, being provided clear direction, see leadership genuinely interested in the well-being of employees, setting a good example and providing the essential information they need to do their job. Satisfaction with the department is also influenced by the perception of whether human resource practices are fair, impartial and transparent.

Level of commitment for 30 – 39 year olds is also strongly influenced by the work employees do in the public service. Commitment is also driven by satisfaction with their job, work and department; whether they see a future for their career; feel they work for an effective organization; and receive recognition for the value of work.

The table below illustrates the factors influencing 30 – 39 year old:

Factors Influencing 30 – 39 year olds...			
Indicators	Satisfaction		Commitment
	<i>Overall – Job, Work & Department</i>		
	Work	Department	
Drivers		Leadership (confidence, resolve issues, direction, interest, set example, communication)	Public Service Work
		Recognition for value of work	Satisfaction with job, work and department
		Feel they work for an effective organization	See future for career
		Fair HR practices	Feel they work for an effective organization
			Recognition for value of work

4 Conclusion

4.1 Summary

An analysis of employee survey results by age shows that there are similarities in perceptions between the generations, but there are some specific issues that are of more importance to them and different issues that drive commitment and satisfaction with their work environment.

What we know about 29 year olds or younger in the Government of Nova Scotia

Areas of success for 29 year olds or younger are similar to overall corporate responses with safety, teamwork, overall questions and recruitment being of high importance and they are satisfied with what government is providing them. In addition, categories of personal growth, quality of work life and quality of supervision are successes for this age group. These additional areas are important areas to be successes for this age group because seeing a future for their career and having the support to provide a high level of service influences their level of satisfaction with their organization.

Areas of high priority for action in the work environment of 29 year olds or younger are the same as the overall corporate responses – compensation and recognition, quality of leadership, workplace ethics, and fair human resource practices. Work in the area of compensation is critical as 47% of 29 year olds or younger stated that compensation was one of the reasons they were attracted to work for the Government of Nova Scotia. A lower level of satisfaction with compensation could potentially lead to issues of retention. Possible retention issues may be arising with 14% of 29 year olds or younger intending to leave government in less than two years. This is the highest percentage of any age group, excluding 55 year olds or older who are nearing retirement.

The 29 year olds or younger are, however, the most engaged group within the public service. This translates into a high level of satisfaction and commitment to the organization. This group will continued to be engaged if they feel they work for an effective organization, their department promotes a healthy and supportive workplace, human resource practices are fair, impartial and transparent and they have confidence in leadership and receive the communication they need to do their job.

What we know about 30 – 39 year olds in the Government of Nova Scotia

Areas of success for 30 – 39 year olds are similar to overall corporate responses with safety, teamwork, overall questions and recruitment being of high importance and they are satisfied with what government is providing them. In addition, categories of quality of work life and quality of supervision are successes for this age group.

Areas of high priority for action in the work environment for 30 – 39 year olds are the same as the overall corporate responses – compensation and recognition, quality of leadership, workplace ethics, and fair human resource practices. Personal growth is also an area of priority specific to this age group. Work in the

area of personal growth is critical as 37% of 30 – 39 year olds stated that career advancement opportunities was one of the reasons they were attracted to work for the Government of Nova Scotia. Also, seeing a future for their career in the Government of Nova Scotia influences their level of commitment to the organization. This age group is committed to the public service with 62% of respondents stating they intend to stay 11 or more years. Improvement in the area of career opportunities could increase the percentage of 30 – 39 year olds who would intend to stay to ensure a solid foundation of committed employees for the public service in the future.

Respondents 30 – 39 years old are engaged employees. They are committed to the organization but less satisfied compared to 29 year olds or younger and 55 year olds and older. To improve satisfaction, 30 – 39 year olds need to be satisfied with leadership, feel they receive recognition for the value of work, feel they work for an effective organization, and perceive human resource practices to be fair, impartial and transparent.

4.2 Conclusion

An analysis of employee survey results by age group illustrates there are some generational differences in perceptions. Awareness of these differences allows for focused action in the areas of difference with the overall end outcome of creating a work environment conducive to attracting and retaining youth within the Government of Nova Scotia.

Suggestions to Further Strengthen Youth Commitment and Satisfaction

- Ensure youth of the public service are aware of and have leadership support for career advancement opportunities.
- Provide feedback on and recognition of work performance
- Improve the perception of fair compensation.
- Continue to provide a work environment that allows the balance of work and personal/family life, support to provide a high level of service and provides the information they need to do their job well.
- Work on the perception of fair human resources practices.

Annex A – Action Grids

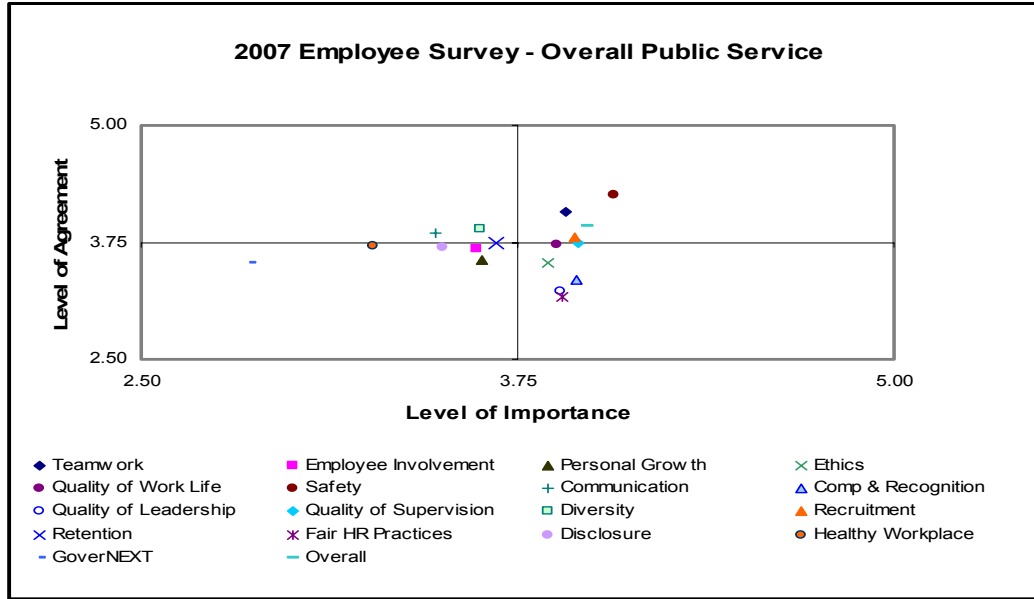


Figure 1: Overall Public Service (Corporate)



Figure 2: 29 year olds or younger

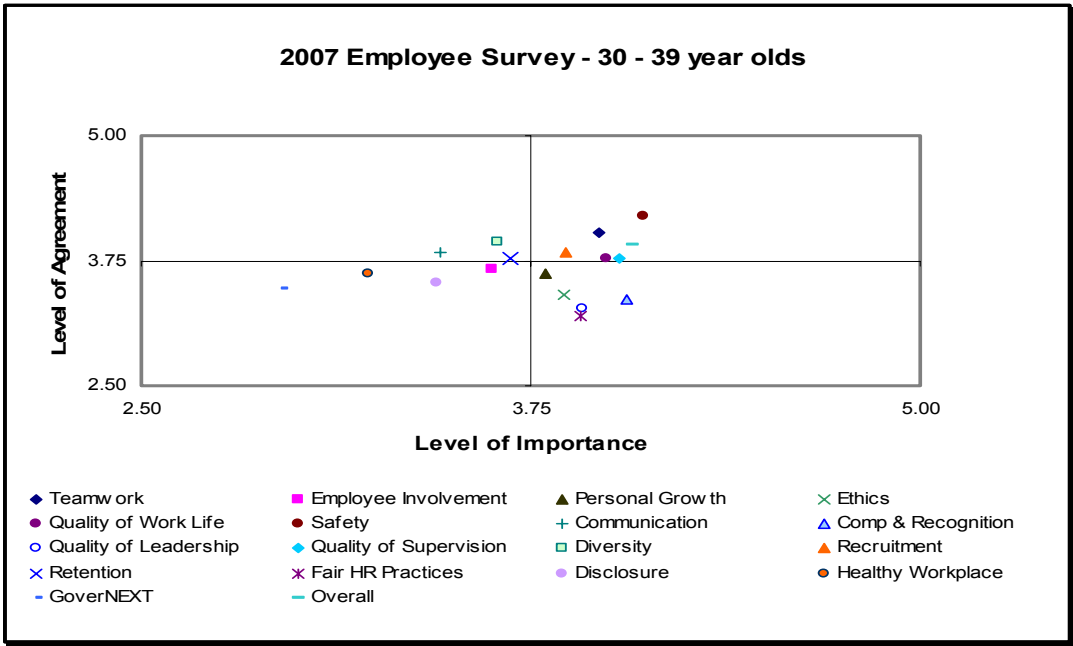


Figure 3: 30-39 year olds

Annex B – Demographics of Youth Respondents

What are the demographics of the 29 year olds or younger respondents?

The following points outline the demographic profile of 29 year old or younger respondents in the 2007 employee survey.

- Represent 5.8% of the survey population.
- Representation from the majority of departments across government, with the largest percentage from the Department of Community Services.
- Approximately 75% of the 29 year old or younger respondents are located in the HRM.
- The majority of respondents have fewer than two years experience (57%) followed by approximately 37% with two to five years experience.
- Majority is female (67%)
- Majority have post secondary education
- Approximately 7.3% are from a designated group (1% Aboriginal Peoples, 3.1% racially visible persons and 3.1% persons with disabilities)
- Majority in a staff position (84%).
- Approximately 70% have permanent job status
- Majority from the PR pay plan, followed by CL, MCP and TS.

What are the demographics of the 30 - 39 year old respondents?

The following points outline the demographic profile of 30 – 39 year old respondents in the 2007 employee survey:

- Represent 19.6% of the survey population.
- Representation from the majority of departments across government, with the largest percentage from the Department of Justice.
- Approximately 66% of the 30 – 39 year old respondents are located in the HRM.
- The majority of respondents have two to five years experience (31%) followed by approximately 31% with six to 10 years experience.
- Majority is female (73%).
- Majority have post secondary education.
- Approximately 10.9% are from a designated group (2.3% Aboriginal Peoples, 7.3% racially visible persons and 2.3% persons with disabilities).
- Majority in a staff position (74%).
- Approximately 90% have permanent job status.
- Majority from the PR pay plan, followed by CL, MCP and TS.