



NEWS RELEASE

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A better work environment would improve public services, says Auditor General

VICTORIA — In his latest report to the Legislative Assembly, Auditor General Wayne Strelloff concludes significant changes are needed to improve the work environment in the public service to meet the service expectations of British Columbians: "Citizens want government services to be delivered effectively and efficiently by staff who are both competent and courteous. We found that good performance—as well as customer satisfaction—are linked to a healthy work environment."

Strelloff's report examines four key factors in building a strong work environment: leadership, work satisfaction, organizational culture and performance management, using a survey completed by over 6,000 government employees in January 2001. The survey had a 74% response rate and is accurate to within 2%, 19 times out of 20.

Strelloff notes improving leadership of the public service provides the best opportunity for government to strengthen the work environment and to create a culture that is truly citizen-centred. He adds, "I was disappointed to discover that employees in the public service lack trust and confidence in their leaders." For example, at the time of the survey, only 27% were confident in the leadership abilities of ministry executives. This lack of trust and confidence in leaders has led to employees (especially those under the age of 30) who are only moderately engaged in their work. It has also created a culture that discourages employees from continuously improving the services they provide British Columbians. Only 31% of all employees—24% of those under 30—believe they can question policy or practice without being criticized or penalized for doing so.

To help ensure British Columbians receive the high standards of service they expect, Strelloff recommends the provincial government develop and implement a strategy for managing its human resources. He also stresses the importance of developing a comprehensive plan for managing the changes resulting from recent budget and staff reductions.

"The service expectations of British Columbians can only be met by a public service that is enabled, encouraged and rewarded to give of its full creativity and talent," says Strelloff.

In its response, the Public Service Employee Relations Commission agreed with the Auditor General's conclusions and, through the Public Service Renewal Initiative, it committed to making the improvements necessary to strengthen the public service and meet the needs of British Columbians.

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[2002/2003 Report #1 – Building a Strong Work Environment in British Columbia's Public Service: A Key to Delivering Quality Service](#)

This report is available:

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