



SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT

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2015 *Work Environment Survey (WES)* Cycle

Background

Effective succession planning requires talent mobility strategies that identify, attract and develop the next generation of leaders in the BC Public Service. With more than 200 distinct fields of occupations across a wide range of ministries and agencies, this is no small feat. The diversity of career tracks within the BC Public Service means there is great potential for career development and mobility as employees take on different leadership positions to expand the breadth of their experiences. This preliminary research is the first among many that examines the relationship leadership mobility and particular career mileposts may have on the engagement and work environment experiences of their employees, and it does so two ways. First the analysis investigates what kind of relationship, if any, leadership changes per se have on their employees. The analysis then explores whether the length of time supervisors have been in their particular role, leadership band and the BC Public Service factors into employees' perceived experiences.

Research Questions

This research is based on the data available during the 2015 *Work Environment Survey (WES)* cycle. Administrative records from the Corporate Human Resource Information and Payroll System (CHIPS) is combined with data supplied by ministry strategic human resources (SHR) representatives. These data were paired with 19,756 respondents' scores to explore the two research questions below.

1. What is the relationship between executive-level changes in leadership and the experiences of their employees?
2. What is the relationship between direct reports Supervisory-Level Management driver scores and their supervisor's years of service, years in band, and years in position?

The following reviews key findings from both of these research questions.

Key Findings

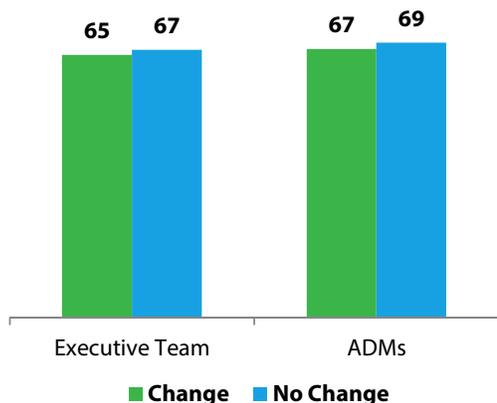
1. What is the relationship between executive-level changes in leadership and the experiences of their employees?

For the purpose of this analysis, executive-level teams are based on data provided by SHRs in preparation for the 2015 WES. The executive-level team is the list of names presented to respondents when they were answering questions about their executives during this cycle. Changes in leadership are defined as any staffing changes that occurred with any executives in these teams from September 16, 2014 to September 15, 2015. Staffing changes consisted of voluntary departures (e.g., retired, resigned or moved to another position) or any other staffing action (e.g., newly hired, rehired, etc.).

Due to some ambiguity in position numbers and reporting structures, strict inclusion criteria was developed which reduced the population used for the analysis.¹ The engagement results from WES respondents who experienced changes in their executive team were grouped and compared to those who did not experience any changes.

In general there is no relationship between changes in leadership and the engagement of their employees.

Average Score
(Out of 100 points)



Nearly two thirds of all WES respondents experienced changes in their executive team, while the rest did not experience any changes. Analysis found small differences in engagement between these two groups. Respondents who did not experience changes were slightly more engaged - scores were two points higher for this group.² The analysis further controlled for reporting structure by isolating and aggregating WES results, looking at Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) only. Leadership changes occurred in 38% of these positions at this level.³ The difference in engagement mirrors trends seen at the executive-team level.⁴ Scores were two points higher among those who did not experience any changes in ADMs. At both levels, analysis found very little correlation between engagement and leadership changes.⁵

¹ Results are based on 19,607 WES respondents (out of 19,756)

² Average score difference was statistically significant based on independent t-test comparisons of means, $t(14,600) = -3.329, p = 0.001$

³ Results are based on 92 ADMs with reporting structures ranging from one respondent to 2,327 respondents.

⁴ Average score difference were not significant with $t(90) = -1.264, p = 0.210$. This is based on independent t-test comparisons of means

⁵ A bivariate correlation is used to test a relationship between two variables. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to +1, where -1 represents a perfect negative relationship, and +1 represents a perfect positive relationship. Correlations with an absolute value from 0.20 through 0.39 are interpreted as *weak*. The correlation coefficient (r) between change in executive and engagement equals -0.024 and between change in ADM and engagement equals -0.120, $p > .05$.

Perceptions were the least positive on Executive-Level and Supervisor-Level Management drivers, particularly when leadership changes occurred at the ADM level.⁶

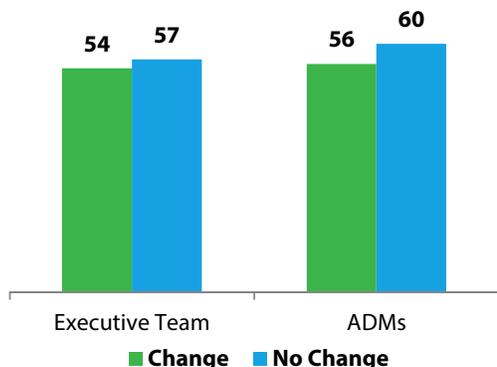
Employee Engagement Model	Differences in Average Scores	
	Executive Team	ADMs
Roof		
BCPS Commitment	-1.3	
Job Satisfaction	-0.9	-2.8
Organization Satisfaction	-1.2	
Building blocks		
Tools & Workspace	1.7	
Stress & Workload	1.5	
Teamwork	-1	-2.2
Vision, Mission & Goals	-1.1	
Job Suitability	-1.4	
Recognition	-1.4	
Staffing Practices	-1.5	
Respectful Environment	-2	-2.7
Pay & Benefits	-2.3	
Professional Development		
Empowerment		
Foundation		
Executive-Level Management	-2.0	-4.9
Supervisory-Level Management	-2.0	-3.2

Analysis next examined the drivers from the *Employee Engagement Model* to see what kind of role leadership changes may have on other aspects of the work environment besides engagement. Employees who experienced changes in their executive teams generally reported scores lower than those who did not. These differences were small and no more than two points. The results among those who experienced changes in ADMs followed the same trend, but the differences in scores were larger on several drivers. The largest differences occurred for the Executive-Level Management and Supervisory-Level Management drivers, suggesting that leadership changes at this level had a negative effect on employees' impressions of leadership communications and practices as measured by these two drivers.

⁶ Driver score differences that appear in the table were statistically significant (independent t-tests) with $p < 0.05$.

Change impacted perceptions of executives providing clear direction for the future.

Average Score
(Out of 100 points)



The Executive-Level Management driver is made up of two questions which ask whether executives communicate decisions in a timely manner and whether they provide clear direction for the future. Employees’ reported lower scores on executives providing clear direction compared to timely communications overall. However, scores for both questions were impacted equally with modestly lower scores for those employees’ who experienced change in their executive.

2. What is the relationship between direct reports’ Supervisory-Level Management driver scores and their supervisor’s years of service, years in band, and years in position

Before launching into the main data to answer this question, the analysis first focussed on supervisors who were union employees.⁷ Supervisory-Level Management (SLM) driver scores of employees with included supervisors were compared based on their supervisor’s years of service and in their position. Analysis found neither had a relationship with SLM scores.⁸ In other words, perceptions of their supervisors were similar regardless of the length of time they have been in the BC Public Service or in their particular supervisory role.

Similarly, employees’ perceptions of their supervisors had no relationship to the years in service. There was little correlation between the employee scores and the supervisor’s years in their current position or their leadership band.⁹ However, some of the most extreme differences between groups were statistically significant. These differences are highlighted next.

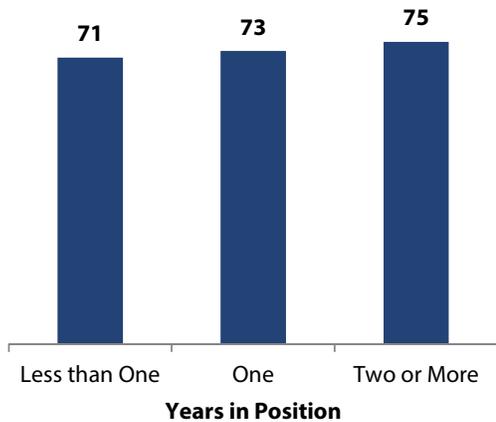
⁷ Results are based on 18,074 WES respondents (7,584 with included supervisors and 10,490 with excluded supervisors) whose supervisors were listed in the September 15, 2015 CHIPS extract. Some respondents were excluded due to data quality issues.

⁸ Correlation coefficients for included supervisors between Supervisory-Level Management and the following: years in service, 0.003; years in current position, 0.008.

⁹ Correlation coefficients for excluded supervisors between Supervisory-Level Management and the following: years in service, 0.013; years in current position, 0.047; years in leadership band, 0.071.

Supervisors with two or more years in their position received the highest SLM driver scores.

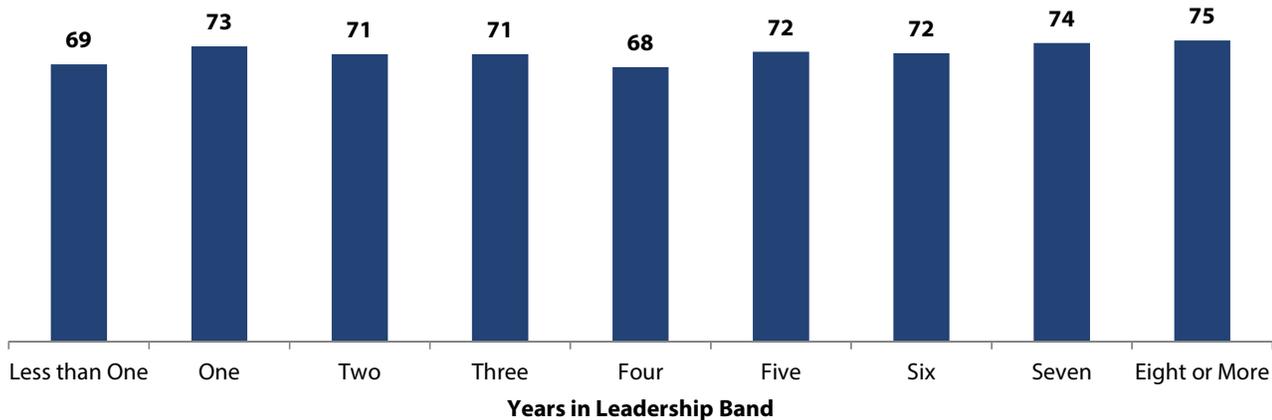
Average Score
(Out of 100 points)



SLM scores fluctuated year to year between 71 and 76 points.¹⁰ Employees whose supervisor was new to their position (less than one year) reported the lowest SLM scores. Scores steadily increased for supervisors with one or two years of experience. However, as the length of time a supervisor was in their position increased, employees' experiences were less impacted.

SLM driver scores varied the most at specific time frames in a leadership band.

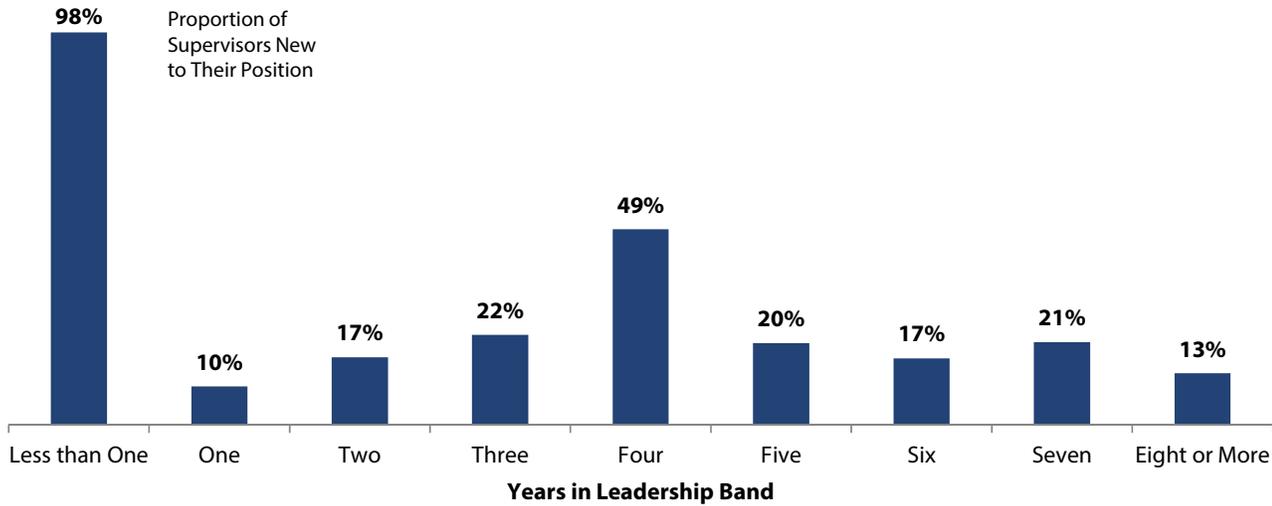
Average Score
(Out of 100 points)



The leadership band classification system started in 2006, so supervisors with eight or more years were treated as one group. Analysis found no linear trend existed between SLM scores and their years in their band. However, supervisors who were in their band for eight or more years had scores that were substantially higher than those who had been in their band for less than one year.¹¹ Supervisors with four to five years in their band had scores comparable to those with less than one year. This is likely due to the number of years in their position.

¹⁰ Average score differences were statistically significant based on one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests, $F(11, 10,091) = 4.9, p < 0.001$. Post hoc tests (Dunnett T3) between less than one year group and groups with average score of 76 were also statistically significant with $p < 0.05$.

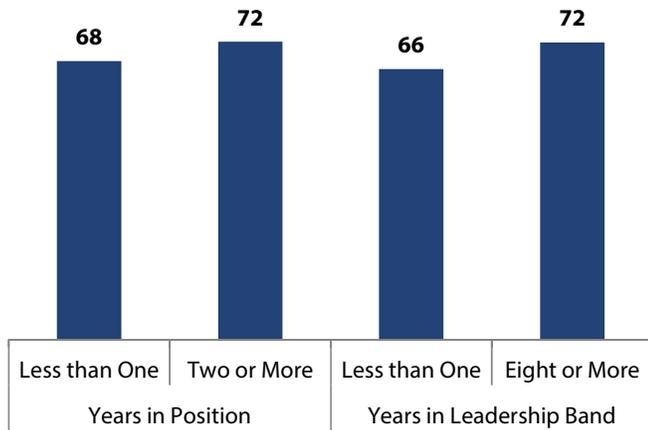
¹¹ The analysis included all levels (i.e., applied, business, and strategic leadership bands). Average score differences were statistically significant, $F(8, 8,648) = 8.9, p < 0.001$. Post hoc tests (Dunnett T3) found the differences between the following groups were statistically significant: less than one year, four years, seven years and eight or more years, $p < 0.05$.



As seen above, supervisors new to their position (less than one year in their position) had modestly lower SLM scores. When analyzing scores with respect to the supervisors' years in their leadership band, the highest proportions of supervisors new to their position were amongst those with less than one year and with four years in their leadership band.

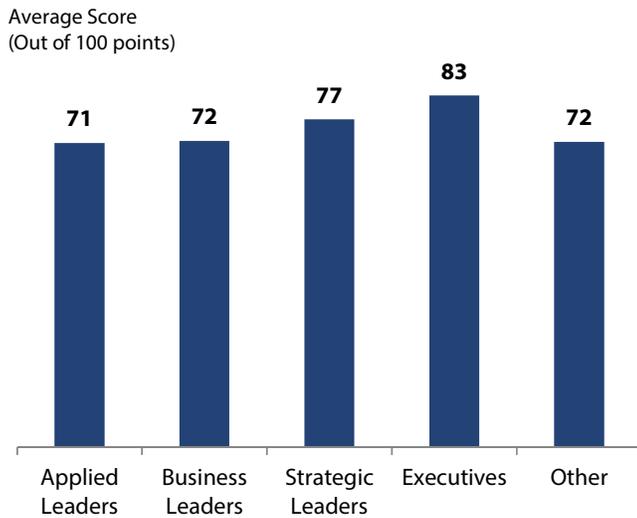
Question scores varied most for supervisors consulting their direct reports on decisions that affect them.

Average Score
(Out of 100 points)



The SLM driver is made up of five questions from the WES. Looking at which of these questions has the largest difference in scores among the extreme ends helps to determine what aspect of Supervisory-Level Management is most impacted by the supervisor's years in their position and in the leadership band. Analysis found the differences were the largest on the question evaluating the extent to which their supervisors consults them on decisions that affect them. However, the other questions were impacted similarly.

Strategic leaders and executives as supervisors resulted in the highest SLM driver scores.



SLM driver scores may be impacted, not only by the supervisor’s years in their position or leadership band, but also by which leadership band the supervisor is in. Out of the excluded supervisors, there were 301 who were not a member of a leadership band and out of those, 127 were executives.¹² Employees whose supervisors were in the strategic leadership band had notably higher scores than those with applied and business leadership supervisors. The highest scores came from employees whose direct supervisors were in the executive group.¹³

¹² The executive group consists of Deputy Ministers, Associate Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers. The other group consists of unclassified supervisors.

¹³ Average score differences were statistically significant based on one-way ANOVA tests, $F(4, 10,098) = 38.8, p < 0.001$. Post hoc tests (Dunnett T3) between the Strategic leaders group and the remaining groups as well as between the executives group and the remaining groups were statistically significant with $p < 0.001$.

Conclusions

Leadership changes per se appear to have a negative difference on employees' engagement and some work environment experiences, but in a lot of cases, this difference is not large. Views tended to be less favourable when leadership changes occurred at the ADM level. This finding suggests organizations may be more vulnerable to perceived communication challenges related to the Executive-Level Management driver. In other words, employees may be less likely to report that their executives provided clear direction and communicated in a timely manner. More analysis would need to look at the impacts of leadership changes in the longer term.

Evaluating Supervisory-Level Management driver scores by varying amounts of supervisory experience uncovered some significant trends for employees who had excluded supervisors. Employees whose supervisor was new to their position and band reported less favourable scores than supervisors with more years. The aspect of Supervisory-Level Management that had the greatest differences involved the extent to which supervisors' consulted direct reports on decisions that affected them. Findings suggest that supervisors new to their positions may want to engage more in this type of activity with their direct reports. Future longitudinal analysis should explore whether this shifts over time as supervisors themselves gain more experience.

Supervisory-Level Management scores were also impacted by the type of leadership band their supervisor belonged to. Strategic Leaders and Executives received the most positive results on this driver, suggesting that the supervisory experience employees' desire may be reflected by leaders in these types of positions. Executives' direct reports tend to report more positive experiences in general, so this trend might be due to other variables not accounted for in the present analysis.

BC Stats encountered a variety of limitations in the data. The approach to classifying leadership changes, ADMs and executive teams was based on what was available from CHIPS. Many decisions and assumptions were made to either create these "proxy" variables of interest and/or remove ambiguities from the data. Therefore the trends identified in this analysis should be treated as exploratory and not be generalized to the broader population. More analysis would need to be done on more robust groupings on reliable data to replicate and possibly further flesh out the key findings.