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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fair and merit based staffing practices play a critical role in the development of highly engaged employees and work units. As perceptions of staffing practices improve, the positive impact to the remainder of work environment can be both substantial and wide reaching. For this reason, an analysis of the Staffing Practices driver (i.e. Staffing driver) has been performed to help identify which factors are most closely linked to staffing practices.

**Staffing practices indirectly impact all areas of engagement.**

Due to the Staffing Practices driver’s location in the BC Public Service Employee Engagement Model, improvements to the leadership foundation lead to proportional improvements in staffing scores. This in turn broadly impacts numerous building blocks throughout the model, with the most immediate results being felt by the Respectful Environment driver. Through these connections, the Executive- and Supervisory-level Management drivers (i.e. Management drivers) are able to indirectly influence all areas of engagement, as well as support several workplace functions.

**Staffing scores have slightly increased year over year.**

Over the past three years employees’ perceptions of staffing have steadily improved BC Public Service wide. Based on results from the BC Public Service Work Environment Survey (WES), the Staffing Practices driver was calculated to have an average score of 55 points (out of a possible 100 points). In 2008, the Staffing Practices driver increased by three points, producing an average score of 58 points. Additional improvements in 2009 led to a further increase of two points, resulting in a Staffing driver score of 60 points. While the magnitude of these changes suggested a substantial improvement over time, refinements made to the Staffing Practices driver’s constituent questions following WES 2007 prevented a direct comparison between 2007’s results, and driver scores from 2008 and 2009.

A relationship exists between changes in pay and perceptions of staffing practices

Staffing driver scores for respondents who completed both the 2008 and 2009 were compared against staffing actions (i.e. promotion, lateral transfer, temporary assignment) and pay changes that took place between the 2008 and 2009 WES. Employees, who underwent a staffing action leading to either an unchanged or an increased rate of pay, reported higher staffing scores over time. Decreases in Staffing driver scores were linked with employees who either received decreases in pay or did not undergo a staffing action.

**Perspectives on staffing practices vary greatly across the BC Public Service.**

A wide range of staffing scores was observed across the public service, and depended primarily on employees’ union status, organization, occupational group and classification level. Classification level was found to have a positive relationship with perceptions of staffing practices, in that higher classification levels were typically found to have higher staffing scores. This finding held true across several occupational groups and organizations.
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Staffing scores are closely linked to certain types of staffing actions.**

A comparison of staffing scores across different types of staffing actions revealed several distinct trends. Higher than average staffing scores were associated with promotions, temporary appointments, and auxiliary placements, while lateral transfers, recalls from layoff, and demotions resulted in lower than average scores. For employees that did not undergo a staffing action during the survey year, lower than average scores were also observed.

Correlating work unit staffing scores with various staffing action rates pointed to four significant relationships. A positive correlation was found to exist between staffing scores and auxiliary rehires, temporary assignments (> 7 months), and permanent placements, whereas staffing scores were negatively correlated with lateral transfers.

**Work units with high staffing scores and work units with low staffing scores have distinctly unique work environments.**

Three work unit pairs were selected from across the BC Public Service. Each pair was chosen based on their comparability, as well as the magnitude of difference between their staffing average scores. A comparison of the units within each pair revealed distinct relationships with Executive- and Supervisory-level Management. In general, low scoring units experienced a greater number of workplace changes in their work environment than their high scoring counterparts. Additionally, employees from low scoring work units provided open ended comments that were predominantly concerned with staffing challenges, whereas comments from high scoring units covered a broader range of topics.

**Why are these results important?**

Looking at staffing scores from across the BC Public Service it is possible to find numerous success stories and challenges. Clarity of communication, classification level, pay range, type of staffing action and change management style are all factors that can either positively or negatively influence an employee’s perception of staffing practices. By identifying how these factors manifest themselves for both high scoring and low scoring work groups, it may be possible to discover areas of best practice as well as opportunities for improvement.

While this analysis has offered several encouraging areas of investigation, further research is still needed to better understand the key factors that either influence or are influenced by staffing practices. Promising topics for further research include:

1. **Exploration of competition data and its connection to staffing scores** – Linking employee staffing scores with information regarding the competition process (i.e. number of applicants, duration of competition) may offer further insight into how staffing processes are perceived by employees.

2. **Expand work unit pair analysis to include a wider range of organizations and occupational groups** – Incorporating a broader selection of work unit pairs would help to increase representativeness as well as facilitate the identification of public service wide trends for high scoring and low scoring work units.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 4

## KEY FINDINGS ..................................................................................................................... 6

1. **HOW DOES THE STAFFING PRACTICES DRIVER FACTOR INTO THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT MODEL?** ................................................................................................. 6

2. **HOW HAVE PERCEPTIONS OF STAFFING PRACTICES CHANGED OVER TIME?** ........... 9

3. **DO CHANGES IN PAY RESULTING FROM A STAFFING ACTION, AFFECT PERCEPTIONS OF STAFFING PRACTICES FOR CONTINUING RESPONDERS?** .......... 14

4. **WHAT GROUPS OF EMPLOYEES HAVE THE MOST DISTINCT STAFFING DRIVER SCORES?** ................................................................................................................................. 17

5. **WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAFFING PERCEPTIONS AND ACTION?** ... 20

6. **WHAT MAKES A HIGH STAFFING SCORE AND LOW STAFFING SCORE WORK UNIT?** 23

## LIMITATIONS OF ANALYSIS ............................................................................................... 32

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................ 33

## APPENDIX ............................................................................................................................. 34
Introduction

Fair and merit based staffing practices play a critical role in the development of highly engaged employees and work units. As perceptions of staffing practices improve, the positive impact to the remainder of work environment can be both substantial and wide reaching. For this reason, an analysis of the Staffing Practices driver has been performed to help identify which factors are most closely linked to staffing practices.

Responses collected from the 2009 BC Public Service Work Environment Survey (WES) provided confirmation of the important role the Staffing Practices driver plays in the work environment\(^1\). Based on the results collected from 23,574 employees across the BC Public Service in 2009, it was possible to identify the close connections the Staffing Practices driver has with several workplace characteristics as well as its indirect relationship with employee engagement. The staffing driver focuses on employee perceptions at the work unit level, and is defined by the following two questions:

- IN MY WORK UNIT, THE SELECTION OF A PERSON FOR A POSITION IS BASED ON MERIT.
- IN MY WORK UNIT, THE PROCESS OF SELECTING A PERSON FOR A POSITION IS FAIR.

Taking a closer look at the response trends for each question, just over half of BC Public servants surveyed agreed that staffing selections are based on merit and that the selection process is fair. While this finding offers some positive news, there remains a large proportion of employees who believe that staffing is neither fair nor merit based.

In terms of year over year change, the Staffing Practices driver has experienced a consistent, albeit moderate, increase in average scores from 2007 to 2009. Beginning in 2007, the Staffing Practices driver yielded a mean score of 55 points. In 2008, the score increased by three points to 58 points and then further increased by two points in 2009 for a score of 60 points. While a five point increase in staffing scores was observed between the 2007 and 2009 overall results (55 to 60), a more narrowly focused comparison offered less encouraging results. Specifically, when responses were limited to only those employees who completed both the 2008 and 2009 surveys, the previously observed change of two points from 58 points in 2008 to 60 points in 2009, stabilized to a score of 59 points for both years.

The stabilization of staffing scores over time was one of several areas of investigation BC Stats has chosen to explore in order to better understand how perceptions of staffing practices impact work environments across the BC Public Service. This investigation was guided by the following five research questions:

1. How does the Staffing Practices driver factor into the employee engagement model?

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2. How have perceptions of staffing practices changed over time?

3. Do changes in pay resulting from a staffing action, affect perceptions of staffing practices for continuing responders?

4. What groups of employees have the most distinct Staffing driver scores?

5. What is the relationship between staffing practice and action?

6. What makes a high staffing score and low staffing score work unit?
Key Findings

1. How does the Staffing Practices driver factor into the employee engagement model?

The numerous drivers and connections contained within the BC Public Service Employee Engagement Model provide a means of identifying the complex relationships that exist between the Staffing Practices driver and other elements of the work environment. Compared to the model’s other building blocks, the Staffing Practices driver has a unique set of characteristics, both in terms of its relationship with the leadership foundation, as well as the strength of its incoming and outgoing linkages.

Unlike other building blocks in the model, the Staffing Practices driver is only impacted by the two leadership drivers: Executive- and Supervisory-level Management. Due to the involvement both executives and supervisors have throughout staffing processes, the relationship between the two Management drivers and the Staffing Practices driver forms one of the strongest associations in the model. The Staffing Practices driver connects with the model’s remaining building blocks through outgoing linkages with four drivers: Pay & Benefits, Professional Development, Recognition and Respectful Environment. While all four of these relationships make a significant contribution to the model, the connection between the Staffing Practices driver and Respectful Environment driver is particularly strong.

Figure 1. DIAGRAM OF STAFFING PRACTICES DRIVER’S MODEL LINKAGES
Together, Executive- and Supervisory-level Management drivers impact fair and merit based staffing practices.

No other driver in the model relies as heavily on the Management foundation as the Staffing Practices driver. The close relationship between staffing practices and the foundation points to the important role all levels of management have in improving staffing processes. While both supervisors and executives can make meaningful contributions to the Staffing Practices driver, they should not act in isolation of each other. Rather, the development of fair and merit based staffing practices should be developed when executives and supervisors work in concert.

To help put this relationship in a clearer context, WES 2009 staffing scores were organized into four groups based on their corresponding Executive- and Supervisory-level Management driver scores. Executive and supervisor scores falling in the top third of the overall distribution of results were defined as high scores, whereas the remaining two-thirds were defined as low scores. When each combination of high and low scores was compared against their associated staffing practices scores, a clear trend became apparent. For employees who had low executive and low supervisor driver scores, their average Staffing driver score was 39 points. In cases where a low executive score was reported with a high supervisor score, the staffing driver score improved considerably, to an average of 61 points. However, if employees provided only high executive and low supervisor scores, a more moderate staffing score of 53 was reported. Finally, for employees that provided high executive and high supervisor scores, an impressive average Staffing driver score of 78 points was observed. A summary of these findings is provided in Figure 2.

Fair and merit based staffing practices help build respectful work environments.

Similar to how the leadership foundation impacts perceptions of fair and merit based staffing practices, the Staffing Practices driver also directly influences four of the
model's building blocks. Specifically, the Staffing Practices driver has a close, direct connection with four drivers: Pay & Benefits, Professional Development, Recognition, and Respectful Environment. Due to the strength of these linkages, an increase in the perceptions of staffing practices leads to a proportional and significant increase in the scores of the four impacted drivers.

While each connection represents an essential piece of the overall work environment, the relationship between Staffing Practices and Respectful Environment drivers is particularly strong. To better understand this relationship, employees were organized into two groups based on whether their staffing score was in the top or bottom 50% of the distribution of Staffing Practices results. By doing so, a comparison could then be made with their corresponding Respectful Environment scores. Based on this categorization, employees who reported higher than average staffing scores were found to have a Respectful Environment average score of 85 points. Conversely, employees with lower than average staffing scores were calculated to have a Respectful Environment average score of 60 points. This comparison, along with an analysis of the Pay & Benefits, Professional Development, and Recognition drivers, is depicted in Figure 3.

**Engagement is indirectly affected by changes to the Staffing Practices driver.**

It is possible to separate the ten engagement model building blocks into one of two categories: drivers that have direct connections with one of the three engagement characteristics, and drivers that are limited to only direct connections with other building blocks. In the case of the Staffing Practices driver, the outgoing linkages are constrained to other drivers and as a result its impact on engagement is indirect. As the influence of the Staffing Practices driver on engagement is mediated by other drivers, a comparison of staffing scores and engagement outcomes can be difficult to interpret. However, the impact staffing practices has on the three engagement characteristics can still be identified at a broad level.
Using a similar analysis to what was presented in Figure 3, staffing scores were organized into either an above average or below average category. Both groups were then compared against their associated average score for each of the three engagement characteristics. As can be seen in Figure 4, the influence of staffing practices on engagement is roughly equal for each of the three characteristics. In other words, an increase in the staffing driver score will lead to an equivalent improvement for all three engagement characteristics. This makes intuitive sense as the staffing driver does not directly impact engagement, but instead has a widespread, indirect influence through the numerous connections it makes with the model’s other building blocks.

FIGURE 4. COMPARISON OF HIGH AND LOW STAFFING SCORES BY THE THREE ENGAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

2. How have perceptions of staffing practices changed over time?

As WES is administered on a yearly basis, it is possible to obtain annual comparisons for many of the survey questions as well as the engagement model drivers. The only requirement for year over year comparisons is that the question wording presented in each version of the survey remains constant over time.

Following WES 2007, improvements were made to one of the two questions comprising the Staffing Practices driver. This alteration was significant enough to prevent direct comparisons between the 2007 and 2008 results for the merit focused staffing question, which restricted a subsequent comparison of the Staffing Practices driver. Fortunately, no further adjustments were made to the staffing driver questions which allowed for a valid comparison of 2008 and 2009 results. Despite these limitations, a three year comparison could still be performed on the fairness focused question as its wording was consistent for the 2007, 2008 and 2009 iterations of WES. A summary of these changes is provided in Table 1 (see Appendix).
**KEY FINDINGS**

**Staffing Practices scores have moderately increased over time for the overall BC Public Service.**

The Staffing Practices driver for the BC Public Service overall experienced a slight increase from 2008 to 2009. From an average score of 58 points in 2008 (N=19,262), Staffing driver scores increased by two points to a score of 60 points in 2009 (N=21,313). Despite the moderate magnitude of this increase, this difference represented a statistically significant change\(^2\) and indicated that Staffing Practices scores measurably improved corporate wide.

A similar trend was observed when the average score for both the merit-based and fairness staffing question were compared across years. In 2008, results for the merit-based staffing question provided an average score of 57 points, which improved by two points, leading to a 2009 score of 59 points. Similar to the difference in the overall Staffing Practices driver score between 2008 and 2009, the increase in the merit-based staffing question was large enough to be statistically significant\(^3\).

Looking across three years of results, from 2007 to 2009, the fairness question was also marked by a slight increase over time. However, not all differences between years were statistically significant\(^4\). While the one point change from 59 points in 2008 to 60 points in 2009 was a measureable improvement, the one point change from 58 points in 2007 to 59 points in 2008 was not significant. As a result, it was not possible to determine whether the difference between the 2007 and 2008 results was due to an actual change in employee perceptions, or variation resulting from sampling error. Annual comparisons for the Staffing Practices driver, as well as its component questions, are depicted in Figure 5.

**FIGURE 5. YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISON OF STAFFING PRACTICES QUESTIONS AND DRIVER SCORES FOR THE OVERALL BC PUBLIC SERVICE**

\(^2\)The comparison was conducted using a univariate analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.

\(^3\)The comparison was conducted using a univariate analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.

\(^4\)The comparison was conducted using a univariate analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.
Staffing Practices scores for continuing responders have stabilised over time.

While results for the overall BC Public Service provide a clear, high level view of employee perceptions, the broad scope of the population sometimes obscures subtle trends. By focusing only on respondents who completed both the 2008 and 2009 WES (i.e. continuing responders), a more precise measure of annual change could be determined.

For the Staffing Practices driver, the improvement for the overall BC Public Service disappeared when the population was narrowed to only continuing responders. Rather than an increase in average scores, the year over year comparison revealed a stabilization of results, in which a score of 59 points was reported for both 2008 and 2009. This suggested that respondents who provided Staffing driver results for only a single year (either 2008 or 2009) had average scores that differed from those offered by continuing respondents.

Taking a closer look at the results for single year responders revealed differing trends for both 2008 and 2009. In 2008, the average staffing score of 59 points for continuing responders was 1 point higher than the average score for the overall BC Public Service (58 points). While small, this difference points to a deterioration of the overall staffing score due to the results of the single year responders. This trend was maintained even after the single year responders were further split into following three groups:

1. **Answered Don’t Know (DK) or Not Applicable (NA) to the Staffing Driver Questions in 2009**: employees provided a DK or NA response to either one or both of the Staffing driver questions

2. **Did Not Complete Survey in 2009**: employees were included in the 2009 survey population but did not complete a survey

3. **Not Surveyed in 2009**: employees were not sent a survey in 2009

Single year responders in the Did Not Complete Survey in 2009 group provided the lowest Staffing driver score, with an average of 50 points. A slightly higher average score of 55 points was obtained for single years responders in the Not Surveyed in 2009 group. Finally, employees who responded with Don’t Know or Not Applicable to either one or both of the Staffing driver questions in 2009 reported an average Staffing driver score of 55 points. As the three single year responder groups had similar population sizes, they all likely made a similar contribution to 2008 overall the BC Public Service Staffing driver score. Specifically, their lower than average scores relative to the results for continuing responders lead to a reduction in the overall 2008 results. A breakdown of the overall 2008 population by continuing and single year responders is depicted in Figure 6.
KEY FINDINGS

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF WORK UNIT STAFFING PRACTICES 2009

Whereas single year responders made a noticeable reduction to the overall staffing score in 2008, the impact in 2009 was less clear cut. As with the grouping for 2008, single year responders in 2009 were organized into three clusters:

1. **Answered Don’t Know (DK) or Not Applicable (NA) to the Staffing Driver Questions in 2008**: employees provided a DK or NA response to either one or both of the Staffing driver questions

2. **Did Not Complete Survey in 2008**: employees were included in the 2008 survey population but did not complete a survey

3. **Not Surveyed in 2008**: employees were not sent a survey in 2008

The lowest scoring single year responder group, with a Staffing driver score of 52 points, consisted of respondents who were in the survey population for 2008 but did not complete the 2008 WES. The second group, which was comprised of respondents who responded with DK or NA for either one or both of the 2008 Staffing driver questions, had an average score of 58 points in 2009. Finally, respondents who were not surveyed in 2008 had a 2009 Staffing driver score of 66 points. Due to the range in scores, each of the three single year responder groups likely made a very distinct contribution to the overall 2009 BC Public Service score. Those single year responders who were in the 2008 survey population but did not complete the survey, likely reduced the overall staffing score in 2009 due to their lower than average results. In contrast, the high staffing scores reported by employees who were not surveyed in 2008 helped boost the overall 2009 BC Public Service. A summary of these results is depicted in Figure 7.
For continuing responders, a year over year analysis was also done on the Staffing Practices driver’s two component questions. Similar to how a comparison was performed for the overall BC Public Service Staffing Practices driver and question results from 2007 to 2009, annual comparisons for continuing responders offered a more detailed look into how perceptions of staffing changed over time.

The stabilization of the Staffing Practices driver for continuing responders was due in large part to the moderate year over year changes for the fairness focused staffing question. In 2008, continuing responders provided an average score of 58 points when asked whether the work unit’s process for selecting a person for a position was fair. This increased by one point in 2009 to 59 points; a change that was determined not to be statistically significant.

An annual comparison of the 2007 and 2008 merit-based staffing questions results was determined to be non-significant for continuing responders. For both 2007 and 2008, responses from continuing responders resulted in an average score of 59 points. When a similar comparison was made between the 2008 and 2009 results though, a more substantial increase of two points, from 59 points in 2008 to 61 points in 2009, was observed. Not surprisingly, the larger improvement from 2008 to 2009 was a significant difference and represented a positive change in the perception of merit based staffing processes. However, the lack of a significant improvement in the fairness staffing question between 2008 and 2009 lessened the impact of the merit-based question’s increase, and as a result, prevented a subsequent change in the Staffing Practices driver over time. Figure 8 provides a summary of these results.

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15,172
Score = 59

1,049
Score = 58

2,192
Score = 52

2,890
Score = 66

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5 The comparison was conducted using a repeated measures analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.

6 The comparison was conducted using a repeated measures analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.

7 The comparison was conducted using a repeated measures analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .001 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.
3. Do changes in pay resulting from a staffing action, affect perceptions of staffing practices for continuing responders?

In order to fully explore the changes in employee perceptions over time, it is sometimes necessary to go beyond the response data collected in WES. In the case of the Staffing Practices driver, developing a link between perceptions of staffing practices and the administrative data within the BC Government Corporate Human Resources Information and Payroll System (CHIPS) presented an excellent opportunity for deeper investigation. As the CHIPS file contains extensive information regarding the type and number of hiring actions occurring across the BC Public Service, it was possible to explore how employee perceptions are affected across a number of staffing related variables, such as changes in pay rates and job status (e.g. promotions, lateral transfers, and demotions).

To better understand the relationship between staffing practices and changes in salary, CHIPS data was used to identify staffing actions that occurred between the end of WES 2008 and the end of WES 2009. This data was then connected to continuing responders for the 2008 and 2009 surveys. Once linked, continuing responders were organized into either a staffing action or no staffing action group, depending on whether or not the respondent had undergone a change in their job status during the WES 2008 to WES 2009 timeframe. The staffing action group was further categorized into five groups: decrease in pay, no change in pay, moderate pay increase, large pay increase, and very large pay increase.

A decrease in pay was defined as any staffing action that resulted in a reduction in hourly rate, regardless of magnitude. The no change in pay group was typically associated with staffing actions leading to a lateral transfer, and out of the five groups, contained the largest population of continuing responders. For the three pay increase
groups, the distribution of all pay increases were compared and then separated into three equivalent populations. This resulted in the moderate pay increase group having a raise in hourly rate anywhere from 0.1% to 7.9%, the large pay increase group between 8.0% and 9.9% and the very large pay increase group with a raise of 10.0% or more. A summary of the populations for the no staffing action and staffing action groups is provided in Figure 9.

Once the grouping definitions were finalized, a year over year analysis was conducted by contrasting the 2008 and 2009 Staffing Practices driver scores for each group. The resulting comparisons provided a wide range of differences, both in terms of the magnitude and the direction of each group’s annual change.

Focusing first on the no staffing action group, a moderate decrease in the Staffing Practices average score was observed, from 59 points in 2008 to 58 points in 2009. A slightly larger drop of two points was observed for the decrease in pay group, which had an average score of 59 points in 2008 and 57 points in 2009. While a decline in perceptions of staffing practices were only observed for these two groups, the large population size of the no staffing action group likely mitigated the improvements brought about by the remaining four staffing action groups.

A range of staffing score improvements were observed for the remaining four groups, with the no change in pay group providing the smallest increase, and the large pay increase group offering the greatest boost to the Staffing Practices driver. More specifically, an improvement of three points, from 56 points in 2008 to 59 points in 2009 was calculated for the no change in pay group. With respect to the moderate pay increase group, a more substantial change from 59 points in 2008 to 64 points in 2009 was observed. An even larger improvement was observed for the large pay increase group, with an increase of six points from 59 points in 2008 to 65 points in 2009. Finally, the very large pay increase group experienced a slightly smaller improvement of four points, from 67 points in 2008 to 71 points 2009.
Figure 10 illustrates the magnitude of the Staffing driver score change for each group. To better understand each change relative to its initial 2008 score, the bars have been colour coded according the standard WES colour scheme. Bars that are entirely yellow represent a change contained within the 55 to 64 colour band, whereas completely green bars are for changes within the 65 to 74 colour band. Finally, bars with a yellow to green gradient reflect changes that cross two colour bands.

**FIGURE 10. DIFFERENCES IN STAFFING SCORES ACROSS CHANGES IN PAY AND STAFFING ACTION**

The relationships between staffing actions, changes in pay and the perceptions of staffing practices, offered several insights into the work environment. In terms of decreasing staffing scores, while the change for the decrease in pay group was not entirely surprising, a similar change in the no staffing action group hints at an important trend. In the absence of staffing actions, there appears to be a tendency for perceptions of staffing to slightly deteriorate over time.

For the four staffing action groups, a general upward trend was observed for all groups between 2008 and 2009. However, the differences in their initial 2008 Staffing driver scores suggest that a relationship exists between the degree of pay change a staffing action provides and perceptions of staffing practices. For those staffing actions leading to no change in pay, the improvement from 2008 to 2009 is tempered by the fact that the 2009 result is simply the average Staffing driver score for all continuing responders. The implication is that for those employees who receive lateral transfers to a position of the same pay, their prior work unit may be the cause of their lower than average staffing scores. In other words, employees who pursue lateral transfers may be attempting to migrate away from a problematic work environment. Once they've relocated to a new position, their perceptions of staffing practices normalize and fall in line with the rest of the BC Public Service.
A similar improvement in staffing scores was observed for both the moderate and large pay increase groups. As might be expected, employees who received a more substantial increase in pay also had more favourable perceptions of staffing practices in 2009. This indicates that participation in non-lateral staffing actions, as well as the magnitude of a pay change, has a positive impact on staffing perceptions. When the very large pay increase group was examined, a comparatively smaller improvement of four points took on a different meaning when the group’s initial 2008 Staffing driver score was considered. As the very large pay increase group began with an already high score of 67 points in 2008, even a slight upward change in scores for 2009 represented a substantial shift in perceptions. For this reason, the moderate four point boost in scores from 67 points in 2008 to 71 points in 2009 pointed to the strong influence of large pay increases on Staffing Practices scores.

4. What groups of employees have the most distinct Staffing driver scores?

The breadth and size of the BC Public Service allows for a wide range of employee experiences, both between and within work environments. Due to diversity of staffing requirements for various classification types and organizations, the Staffing Practices driver was found to vary greatly between certain groups. To identify which groups had some of the highest and lowest perceptions of staffing practices, a demographic analysis was performed across several variables of interest.

*Union status provides some of the greatest variation in Staffing driver scores.*

To begin the analysis, survey results from respondents who completed both of the WES 2009 Staffing Practices driver questions were compared across a number of different demographic variables. While many of the variables provided a wide range of staffing scores for their respective categories, splitting the survey results based on an employee’s union status led to one of the greatest differences in staffing scores. For employees who were part of the bargaining unit (included employees) at the time of the 2009 survey, an average Staffing driver score of 55 points was obtained. In the case of employees not included in the bargaining unit (excluded employees), the mean score for the Staffing Practices driver was calculated to be 73 points. The 18 point spread between the included and excluded Staffing Practices driver was determined to be statistically significant.8

*A range of staffing scores exists across occupational groups for both included and excluded employees.*

While a comparison of staffing scores across union status led to a significant difference between excluded and included employees, a great deal of variation also existed within each group. When included and excluded employees were further broken down across occupational groupings, some positions provided Staffing driver scores consistent with their respective included or excluded average scores, whereas other occupational groups offered results that deviated substantially from the mean. A summary of these scores and differences is found in Table 2 (see Appendix).

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8 The comparison was conducted using an independent sample t-test. Significance was tested at the .001 level.
For excluded employees, the largest positive difference came from the Strategic Leadership & Executives occupation group, with a Staffing driver score (88 points) that was 15 points higher than the overall excluded average score. In contrast, the Administrative Support and Information Technology occupational groups had scores that were lower than the average score by 11 points and 12 points respectively.

Looking at included employees, the Information Technology occupational group was on the upper end of the distribution, with a Staffing driver score that was nine points higher than the included employees’ average score. On the opposite end of the distribution, employees in the Enforcement and Corrections occupational group had a mean score that was 17 points lower than the average staffing score for included employees.

*For some occupations, a relationship exists between classification level and perceptions of staffing practices.*

The occupational groups presented in Table 2 (see Appendix) represent an aggregation of several related classifications types and levels. In the case of the Information Technology occupational group, while only a single classification type is included in the group, classification levels range widely from R13 to R30. When each classification level of the Information Technology group was compared against its corresponding staffing scores, a clear upward trend became apparent (see Figure 11). A similar relationship was also present when the lowest scoring bargaining unit occupation groups were considered. Specifically, results for the Enforcement and Corrections occupational group (partially comprised of the Conservation Officer, Correctional Services and Deputy Sheriff classifications) showed that employees with higher classification levels tended to report higher staffing scores.

One possible explanation for the link between classification level and staffing scores is that employees who are at higher classification levels may have had more favourable experiences regarding staffing actions than their lower level coworkers. If an employee has received a promotion through a formal competition process, then they may be...
inclined to perceive staffing processes as fair and merit based. Conversely, employees who are in lower classification levels may have a less positive view of staffing practices as their experiences with staffing processes could either be more limited (they haven’t competed for a promotion) or negative (they competed for a promotion but were unsuccessful).

An additional factor that may have led to an increase in Staffing driver scores for higher classification levels is that for some occupations, higher classification levels involved specific staffing related responsibilities. As a result, the responses for employees with high classification levels may have been a reflection of their duties as a hiring manager or supervisor, which in turn led to them having more favourable perceptions of staffing practices.

**Organizations can also influence perceptions of staffing practices.**

Similar to the variation found in the union status and occupational group results, a wide range of staffing scores were found for the 26 surveyed BC Public Service organizations. Organization level staffing scores ranged across 35 points, from a high score of 78 points for the Office of the Premier, to a low score of 43 points for the Olympic Game Secretariat.

Extending the organization level analysis further, an examination of occupational group results showed an even wider range in scores. Looking at the highest occupational groups scores, the Strategic Leadership & Executives group for both Attorney General and Community Development obtained a staffing practices score of 95 points. On the low end, the Enforcement & Corrections group for the Children and Family Development was found to have a staffing practices score of 27, providing a score range of 68 points across all occupation groups and organizations. Table 3 (see Appendix) offers a summary of these results, as well as the highest and lowest scoring occupational group for each organization.

Looking at the occupational groups with the highest and lowest staffing scores, a clear trend was readily apparent for both the high and low scoring groups. Of the 24 organizations with occupational groups large enough to be reported, the Strategic Leadership & Executives group had the highest score for 16 organizations. The lower two leadership bands (Applied Leadership and Business Leadership) accounted for seven of the remaining eight high scores. This suggests that employees in the leadership groups typically have more positive perceptions of their work unit’s staffing practices.

Compared to the high staffing score groups, the low staffing score groups were comprised of a broader set of occupations. However, the high incidence of Administrative Support occupations indicated that employees included in this group likely experience a unique set of pressures which negatively impacts their perceptions of staffing practices. However, an exception to this trend existed in the case of the Ministry of Small Business, Technology & Economic Development. Rather than having the lowest staffing score, the Administrative Support group had a staffing score that was not only the highest within their organization, but also exceeded the highest staffing scores across three other organizations. Given the unusually high staffing score reported by this Administrative Support group, the Ministry of Small Business,
Technology & Economic Development may be able to identify a set of best practices for staffing processes within their organization.

Finally, the range of staffing scores within an organization offered an indication as to how similar the staffing experiences were for the various occupations within an organization. For example, in the Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport, the difference between the Business Leadership’s high score of 76 points and the Applied Leadership’s low score of 67 points is only nine points. This suggests that the perceptions of applied leaders and clerks are consistent with respect to fair and merit based staffing practices. The tight clustering of staffing scores also indicates that the organization’s remaining occupational groups likely have perceptions of staffing practices that are similar to both business leaders and applied leaders. In other words, regardless of occupation, Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport employees are all on the same page in terms of staffing practices.

On the other end of the spectrum is a 64 point spread between the Attorney General’s Strategic Leadership & Executives group (95 points) and the Enforcement & Corrections group (31 points). Given the critical role senior leaders have in directing staffing policies, the magnitude of this difference points to a significant disconnect between leadership and front line workers within the Ministry of Attorney General.

5. What is the relationship between staffing perceptions and action?

Across the BC Public Service, it is not uncommon for several thousand staffing actions to occur over the course of a year. Frequently, these actions include the hiring of auxiliary, temporary and permanent employees, the handling of lateral transfers, as well as less common procedures such as direct appointments and demotions. As much of this information is tracked within the CHIPS database, it was possible to link the 2009 WES results with staffing action data that was recorded throughout the year leading up to the 2009 WES. While this linkage enabled a great number of analytical opportunities, focus was given to the relationship between WES results and the frequency and type of staffing actions that occurred during the 2008-2009 survey year.

Four staffing actions are linked to higher than average staffing scores, whereas the remaining staffing actions are linked with lower than average staffing scores.

In order to make clear distinctions between the various types of staffing actions defined in CHIPS, eight groups were created based on the similarities between types of staffing actions. Similar to the change in pay analysis, the majority of respondents were placed into the no staffing action group. However, the change in pay analysis focused only on continuing responders, whereas the focus for the staffing action analysis was the entire 2009 survey population. As a result, the sample size for the no staffing action group differs substantially between the change in pay analysis and the staffing action analysis.

In addition to the no staffing action group, the following seven staffing action groups were identified: permanent, lateral transfer, auxiliary, recall from layoff, temporary appointment, demotion, and other. For simplicity, four of the above groupings represent aggregates of two or more staffing types. In the case of the auxiliary group, auxiliaries were identified in the CHIPS files as being either a new hire or a rehire.
the *recall from layoff* group, employees were either coded as being recalled to their original work unit or a new work unit. Another binary combination was used for the *temporary appointment* group, which originally consisted of temporary appointments greater than seven months and less than seven months. Finally, the *other* group is a combination of several low incidence staffing actions, including direct appointments, surplus employee placements and rehabilitation placements.

Once the eight groupings were established, Staffing driver scores were generated for each staffing action. Compared to the overall BC Public Service Staffing Practices driver score of 60 points, four groups had scores above average and four groups had scores below average. Comparing each of the average scores with one another revealed several significant differences\(^9\), where the greatest differences occurred between the *no staffing action*, *permanent, lateral transfer, auxiliary* and *temporary appointment* groups. While the significance of these results was primarily due to the wide range of scores, the relatively small size of the *recall from lay off, demotion*, and *other groups* likely played a part in reducing the statistical significance of some comparisons. A summary of these results can be found in Figure 12.

**FIGURE 12. STAFFING SCORES BY TYPE OF STAFFING ACTION**

![Bar chart showing staffing scores by type of staffing action](chart.png)

**Significant correlations exist between staffing actions and work unit Staffing scores.**

While public service wide results provide an important, high level view of the work environment, shifting the analysis to the work unit level can sometimes offer more interpretable results. As such, Staffing driver scores were calculated for every work unit within the survey population. This resulted in a Staffing driver score for each of the 2,815 work units across government, from which a subset of 189 units were identified as having sample sizes of 20 or larger. This subset was further analysed by

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\(^9\) The comparisons were conducted using a univariate analysis of variance. Significance was tested at the .01 level using a Bonferonni adjustment for multiple comparisons.
generating the relative proportion of staffing actions within each work unit. Finally, the set of proportions for each type of staffing action was correlated with each work unit’s respective Staffing driver score. This correlation provided an indication as to whether the rate of staffing actions within a work unit had a positive or negative relationship with staffing scores. To obtain the most precise results possible, aggregate staffing action groups (i.e. auxiliary, recall from lay off, temporary appointment) were analysed using their constituent staffing actions.

The resulting correlations indicated that four of the staffing action groups had a significant relationship with Staffing driver scores. While the correlation coefficients for each of the significant relationships were only moderate in strength, the presence of even a slight connection pointed towards the important role specific staffing actions play in shaping perceptions of staffing practices. Perhaps even more interesting, is that while three of the four correlations had positive coefficients, one correlation was observed to have a negative relationship. This suggests that differing staffing actions can impact work units in disparate and sometimes opposing ways.

As the rate of auxiliary rehires, temporary assignment (> 7 Months) and permanent staffing actions increase, so do Staffing driver scores.

A set of four scatter plots (Figure 13) depict each of the significant four correlations, with a trend line representing the direction and slope of the relationship. For every scatter plot, the y-axis is defined as the average staffing practices score for a particular work unit, whereas the x-axis is defined as the proportion of the work unit that has undergone the corresponding staffing action. It should be noted that the range of proportions for the auxiliary rehire and temporary appointment (> 7 Months) plots are limited to 20%, while the proportions for the permanent and lateral transfer plots range from 0 to 100%.

Focusing first on the three positive correlations, work units with low Staffing driver scores frequently had low proportions of employees that had undergone either an auxiliary rehire, permanent or temporary appointment (> 7 months) staffing action. On the other hand, work units with high staffing scores also had high proportions of employees who experienced one of the three positively correlated staffing actions. While this evidence does not provide indication of a causal relationship, it does underscore the close connection between high scoring work units and high rates of particular staffing actions.

Decreases in Staffing driver scores are linked to increased rates of lateral transfers.

Looking at the lateral transfer group, a negative correlation indicated that an increase in staffing scores was linked to a decrease in the proportion of lateral transfers within a work unit. As employees who undergo lateral transfers tend to have an unfavourable view of staffing actions, this may be part of the reason why work units with higher rates of lateral transfers also report lower Staffing Practices scores. While it may not be possible to reduce the number of lateral transfers that occur within a work unit, the experience of employees receiving these transfers can certainly be improved. By

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10 The comparisons were conducted using a bivariate Pearson correlation. Significant correlations were found at the .05 level for the auxiliary rehire and permanent staffing actions, whereas significant correlations were found at the .01 level for the temporary appointment (> 7 months) and lateral transfer staffing actions.
ensuring that the employees who undergo lateral transfers are treated fairly, and are provided with clear communication surrounding the staffing processes, it may be possible to address some of the challenges faced by low scoring work units.

FIGURE 13. SCATTER PLOTS OF STAFFING SCORES BY THE PROPORTION OF A WORK UNIT THAT HAS UNDERGONE A SPECIFIC STAFFING ACTION

An important point to make, regarding any correlation, is that since the relationships are not necessarily causal it is not possible to determine which variable is the cause and which is the effect. As a result, it may be that work units with low Staffing driver scores attract a higher number of lateral transfers, rather than lateral transfers employees lowering work unit scores. Alternately, one or more external factors may be simultaneously influencing both the low work unit Staffing driver scores and the rate of lateral transfers.

6. What makes a high staffing score and low staffing score work unit?

Given that there are more than two thousand work units across the BC Public Service, it is not surprising to find several units that are similar, both in terms of their composition and the type of services they provide. While these work units may be
based in different geographic locations, their similarities provide an excellent opportunity for comparison. Assuming the services and occupational structure are equivalent between work units then any disparities in their WES results may be attributable to either their differing jurisdictions or their unique work environments. If in fact these disparities are due to work environment differences, rather than geographic differences, it becomes possible to identify which factors within a work unit contribute to, or detract from, perceptions of staffing practices.

In order to minimize selection bias, work unit pairs were chosen from three separate organizations across government. Each pair was selected based on their comparability, work unit size, and magnitude of the difference between their Staffing Practices scores. Table 4 provides a summary of all six work units.

**TABLE 4. SUMMARY OF THREE WORK UNIT PAIRS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Work Unit Description</th>
<th>Staffing Score</th>
<th>Work Unit Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children and Family Development</td>
<td>QFA - Prince George Youth Custody Center</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VHA - Victoria Youth Custody Center</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Housing and Social Development</td>
<td>322 Surrey Employment and Income Assistance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>106 Victoria Employment and Income Assistance</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>Kamloops Sheriff Services</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surrey Sheriff Services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The leadership foundation impacts high scoring and low scoring work units differently.

In order to get a clearer idea of how each work unit fit within the broader BC Public Service, a regression analysis was performed. Specifically, the Staffing driver score for each work unit was analysed as an outcome of the two foundational Management drivers: Executive- and Supervisory Level Management. By examining the work unit pairs within the context of the WES engagement model, it was possible to confirm whether the strong, corporate level linkage between the Management and Staffing Practices drivers was also maintained at the work unit level. This also offered an effective way of contrasting the unique relationship executives and supervisors have with each work unit.

Within the WES engagement model, a regression analysis helps identify which drivers have the most significant impact on a particular outcome variable, as well as how much of the variance within the outcome variable is explained by the drivers (R-squared). Another way to understand an R-squared value is by converting the regression results into a percentage (simply multiply the R-squared value by 100). The resulting percentage provides an intuitive means of understanding how strong of an impact a driver has on an outcome. The regression results for each work unit pair are presented in Table 5 (see Appendix).

For the first pair of work units, both the contributing drivers, and the R-squared values differed for each work unit. In the case of the Prince George Youth Custody Centre (YCC), Supervisory-level Management is the only component of the Management foundation that had a significant impact on the Staffing Practices driver. Looking at the corresponding R-squared value, it’s possible to say that 36% of the variation in the
work unit’s staffing practices driver was explained by the Supervisory-level Management driver. In contrast, the Staffing Practices driver for the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (YCC) appears to be driven exclusively by the Executive-level Management driver. This relationship is the strongest amongst all the work unit pairs, explaining 52% of the variation in the Victoria YCC’s staffing practices results.

Whereas the higher scoring work unit in the first pair was strongly impacted by supervisors, the higher scoring work unit in the second pair (Surrey Employment and Income Assistance) was influenced by executives. Focusing on the low scoring work unit in the second pair, Staffing driver scores for Victoria Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) were more strongly impacted by supervisors. Despite this difference, the strength of connection with the Management foundation was roughly equal for both EIA offices, with 41% and 39% of the variance in Staffing driver scores being explained for Surrey EIA and Victoria EIA respectively.

The higher scoring work unit of the third pair (Kamloops Sheriff Services) had a relationship with the foundation similar to that of the higher scoring work unit in the first pair (Prince George YCC), in that both were strongly impacted only by the Supervisory-level Management driver. The associated R-squared value indicated that 44% of the variation in the Kamloops Sheriff Services’ Staffing driver scores was explained by supervisors. Amongst the six work units, the Surrey Sheriff Services was unique in that its relationship with the foundation was consistent with the BC Public Service engagement model. Both the Executive- and Supervisory-level Management drivers had a combined impact on perceptions of staffing, explaining 51% of the variation in the Staffing driver scores for the Surrey Sheriff Services.

Across each pair of work units, the higher scoring work unit was found to have either equivalent or higher Executive and Supervisor scores than the low staffing score work unit. Also, Supervisor scores were always higher than their corresponding Executive scores. Finally, with the exception of the Surrey EIA work unit, Staffing driver scores for the remaining work units were lower than their respective Executive and Supervisor scores.

When taken together, these results indicate that higher scoring and low scoring work units have unique relationships with their supervisors and executives. While the moderate to strong R-squared values confirm that the foundation consistently has a significant impact on both high and low scoring work units, it is not clear which components of the foundation contribute to higher or low Staffing driver scores. For some work units, executives may have the largest impact on low Staffing driver scores while for other work units, supervisors have the greatest influence on low Staffing driver scores.

A changing work environment may contribute to the deterioration of staffing scores.

Over the course of a year, a work unit may experience numerous changes, both minor and significant in scope. Depending on how these changes are addressed within the work unit, the perception of the work environment may be impacted. For work units in which the status quo has become a source of frustration, workplace change may be viewed favourably. Alternately, some work units perceive continuous change as being the source of many workplace problems and as a result, the minimization of change is a goal to strive for.
To determine the relationship between workplace changes and the Staffing driver scores for the three work unit pairs, a comparison was conducted using questions from the “Changes In Your Work Environment” section of WES. The entire section consists of a set of 11 questions, covering a broad range of potential changes that a work environment can go through. Respondents can answer either yes or no to each question, which in turn provides a means of determining the percentage of employees in a work unit that have experienced a work environment change. Once the set of 11 proportions were calculated for each of the work unit pairs, a comparison was made between the high staffing score and low staffing score for each change in work environment question. Within each work unit pair, the question with the greatest range of proportions between work units was identified and summarised in the table below (Figure 14).

**FIGURE 14 CHANGE IN WORK ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONS WITH THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE IN PROPORTIONS FOR EACH WORK UNIT PAIR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you experienced changes to the person you report to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George YCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria YCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey EIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria EIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you experienced changes to your duties or responsibilities in your existing job?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pair 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops Sheriff Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey Sheriff Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes: 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No: 23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the majority of the change in work environment questions, the ranges in proportions were minimal. This suggests that the high and low staffing work units within each pair experienced several similar changes. For instance, results for the change in “Your physical environment (e.g., office layout, location, security, etc.)” question indicated that the work units in each pair experienced near identical rates of change to their physical environment. In contrast, the change in “Organizational
structure (e.g., merging of separating units, changing number of levels in workplace)” question elicited a relatively large range in proportions from all three work unit pairs; implying that organizational changes were widespread, but affected similar work units in different ways.

Focusing on the first work unit pair, the largest difference in proportions was associated with the change in “The person you report to” question. Whereas 27% of employees in the Prince George YCC experienced a change in the person they report to, a substantially larger proportion (55%) of Victoria YCC employees underwent the same type of change. Looking at the second pair of work units, the change in “The person you report to” question was also found to produce the largest disparity in proportions. Nearly half (49%) of the employees within the Surrey EIA work unit responded that there was a change in the person they report to, while 63% of Victoria EIA experienced a similar adjustment to their work environment.

Oftentimes, the staffing steps and decisions are communicated to employees by their immediate supervisors, or to whomever they regularly report. This may explain why, for both the first and second work unit pairs, the higher rates of change are associated with the low Staffing score work unit in each pair. It could be that widespread change to a work unit’s reporting structure compromises the quality of communication that a supervisor is able to pass on to their employees. The changes in reporting structure may also be the result of a high number of staffing actions within the work unit. If these staffing actions are both frequent and disruptive enough, employees may begin to question the quality of staffing processes within the work unit.

The greatest range in proportions for the third work unit pair was obtained for the change in “Your duties or responsibilities in your existing job” question. A relatively low percentage (32%) of employees in the Kamloops Sheriff Services reported that their job responsibilities changed during the WES 2009 survey year. In comparison, over three quarters (77%) of the Surrey Sheriff Services work unit indicated that their job requirements had changed. As with the first and second work unit pairs, the work unit with the low Staffing driver score in the third work unit pair was found to have the higher proportion of change. The implication is that frequently shifting responsibilities and work duties play a role in decreasing perceptions of staffing practices. Some employees may view a change in their work duties as an informal staffing action, and as such, question the fairness and merit of actual staffing processes. If a work unit only offers promotions through an increase in work responsibilities, without a corresponding increase in compensation and/or classification level, then staffing processes begin to lose meaning.

Qualitative data supports the quantitative findings.

The challenges faced by a work unit can best be articulated by the respondents. While quantitative results offer a precise means of summarising differences and trends, the underlying context of a work environment can be missed. For this reason, a comment analysis was performed for each of the three work unit pairs. While the work units’ small population sizes prevented a detailed thematic analysis, it was hoped that the selection of several representative comments from each work unit pair could offer a better understanding of their work environments.
Work Unit Pair 1: A comment analysis of Prince George YCC (staffing score = 42) and Victoria YCC (staffing score = 17)

Beginning with the first work unit pair, the quantitative findings indicated that the differences between the Prince George YCC and the Victoria YCC were partially due to issues with the leadership foundation. Whereas perceptions of staffing actions in the Prince George YCC were moderately impacted by Supervisory-level Management, Executive-level Management was shown to have a considerable influence on Victoria YCC’s staffing scores. In other words, Prince George YCC’s higher Staffing driver score could be attributed to supervisors, whereas Victoria YCC’s low Staffing driver score was due in large part to employee perceptions of executives.

A review of the responses to the open-ended question in the survey for each of the YCC’s revealed that the qualitative responses matched the numerical findings. In the case of the Prince George YCC, the most frequently occurring comments either concerned communication or staff morale. As the Supervisory-level Management driver places a strong emphasis on communication, it is not surprising to find that Prince George YCC employees also emphasized the need for clear communication between management and employees. Underscoring this focus on communication was the desire for improved morale. What was absent from the Prince George YCC comments though was a strong focus on staffing actions, which was consistent with their relatively high Staffing driver score. The following comment provided a clear summary of the challenges facing Prince George YCC:

“Morale seems to be at an all time low and tensions between management and staff at an all time high. Improve morale and trust through better communication.”

While the general tone of Prince George YCC’s comments were cautiously optimistic, the responses from Victoria YCC painted a much more pessimistic picture. A common theme throughout the responses was that the Victoria YCC work environment changed dramatically within the past two to three years. Whereas the unit was once viewed as a great working environment, the recent changes had been demoralizing and damaging to the work environment.

“My work unit went from being the best in the province to the worst in under three years.”

For several respondents, this change was mainly due to the introduction of a new executive team. Numerous comments point to a culture of fear developing in the work unit following the change in management. This also appears to be matched with a change in the unit’s structure itself, specifically in terms of the relative proportions of front line workers and upper management. The extent of the change is echoed both in the results for the change in “the person you report to” question as well as in the following comment:

“In the last twelve months there has been too much change and upheaval. The changes that the front line workers have had to deal with are astronomical. When the majority of a work place includes front line workers being unhappy then you must look at the leadership team for reasons why the front line workers are disgruntled.”
When comment data for each YCC was considered in full a striking difference became apparent. While Prince George YCC employees indicated several challenges faced by their work unit, the tone was much less pessimistic than that offered by Victoria YCC employees. The issues confronting Victoria YCC appeared to be both significant and numerous. Within the context of staffing practices, it was clear that the recent changes to Victoria YCC substantially eroded employee perceptions of staffing. Amidst this turmoil though, a Victoria YCC employee provided the following direction for the future.

“More positions awarded on merit and a focus on the development of quality, motivated employees who are involved in creation of visions specific to the organization.”

**Work Unit Pair 2: A comment analysis of Surrey EIA (staffing score = 60) and Victoria EIA (staffing score = 27)**

The second pair of work units was unique in that their Executive scores were both 55 points. This suggests that the differences in Staffing scores between the two EIA offices (60 points for Surrey EIA and 27 points for Victoria EIA) may be less dependent on senior leadership, as compared to the YCC work unit pair. The small number of comments from either EIA work unit concerning executives or senior leadership seemed to agree with this finding. As a result, the range in Staffing driver scores across work units may have depended more on the actions of supervisors.

Looking first at the Surrey EIA office, the relatively large proportion of employees experiencing a change in the person they report to (albeit less than Victoria EIA) implied a great deal of change throughout the entire unit. Not surprisingly, a review of the work unit’s comments revealed that many of the employees were concerned with the number of changes taking place in the work unit. The proper management of change was also a concern, with the following comment providing a comprehensive summary of the issue.

“Knowing we live with constant change makes it of high importance that we ensure we manage the change with detailed, well thought out plans, processes and communications that take into consideration the end users and how much time they are given to understand, implement and adapt to new changes.”

Accompanying the comments on work environment change were several responses focusing on compensation and benefits, physical environment and resources, and the improvement of service delivery. Similar to the Prince George YCC comments, no mention was made of staffing actions or the lack of merit-based and/or fair staffing processes.

The Victoria EIA, on the other hand, provided numerous comments focused specifically on staffing issues. In general, these issues were split between either staff turnover and retention or the quality of staffing practices. Several concerns were brought up regarding staffing practices, with the most common being the need to maintain fairness throughout the staffing process. The following comment describes this topic in greater detail.
“I would like to see my organization focus on fair and meaningful hiring plans and processes. I would like to see the competencies assessed match the main accountables/deliverables of positions.”

The remaining Victoria EIA comments covered a wide range of themes. In particular, attention was given to compensation and benefits, empowerment and engagement, and improvements to service delivery. However, any mention of change in the work environment was conspicuously absent.

Whereas several Surrey EIA employees expressed concern over change, Victoria EIA employees were generally silent on the issue. Given that Victoria EIA had experienced either similar or larger proportions of change in comparison to Surrey EIA, the impression given by Surrey EIA employees is that their experience of change was more troubled. This disparity may point to an important difference in change management styles between the two EIA work units. In terms of staffing actions though, the change difficulties experienced by Surrey EIA did not appear to compromise their perceptions of staffing actions. Conversely, the Victoria EIA unit’s ability to negotiate change did not lead to an improvement in their corresponding Staffing driver scores.

Work Unit Pair 3: A comment analysis of Kamloops Sheriff Services (staffing score = 55) and Surrey Sheriff Services (staffing score = 21)

Of the three work unit pairs, the difference in Staffing driver scores was greatest between the two Sheriff Services units. The magnitude of this difference was also reflected in the results for the change in work responsibilities and duties question. Coinciding with the large disparity in work environments, comments for the Kamloops and Surrey Sheriff Services were also found to differ considerably.

For Kamloops Sheriff Services, the majority of comments expressed an interest in receiving expanded duties. While workload was still an issue for some, there was a desire amongst several employees to redefine their job’s requirements and responsibilities. This may explain the relatively low proportion of employees who have experienced a change to their work responsibilities. As only a few employees have experienced changes to their duties, the repetition of unchanging work day after day may have become monotonous for some employees.

To further support expanded work duties, employees requested the provision of additional training and an increase in pay and compensation. This desire to pursue more challenging and/or interesting work might be best summarised by the following comment.

“As a sheriff I would like to see us more in a forward thinking direction. I know there are things being talked about but I would like to see the Sheriff’s become the elite unit that we once were. I like everything about my job and would like to see us provided with the opportunity to do more.”

This comment also introduces an additional theme that was prevalent throughout the Kamloops Sheriff Services responses. Specifically, employees viewed the Kamloops work unit as being a generally positive place to work. Despite concerns surrounding
wages and professional and career development, employees viewed their work environment in a favourable light.

In contrast, the experiences of the Surrey Sheriff Services work unit were much less encouraging. As with the other low staffing score work units, comments for Surrey Sheriff Services were predominantly concerned with staffing related issues. Staffing concerns covered a broad spectrum of challenges, including the recruitment of new employees, the retention of existing employees and the fairness of staffing processes. For some employees, these challenges are interconnected and should be addressed simultaneously.

“...there are other existing employees that are put in a temporary position of acting as a supervisor only because they are friends of other higher supervisors. We need to hire those that would be able to do the job efficiently and competently with the most knowledge and experience. There needs to be a fair division between knowledge, experience, and competencies. Perhaps, before promoting someone to a position (whether permanent or temporary) references should be heard and feedback from staff should be heard.”

Complicating the staffing challenges are additional issues, such as compensation and benefits, training and development, and concerns that supervisors and executives are not acting in the best interests of the work unit. Taken together, the frustrations expressed by Surrey Sheriff Services’ employees paint a very different picture from that of the Kamloops work unit.
Limitations of Analysis

As with all research, the analysis performed on the Staffing Practices driver was subject to certain analytic limitations. As such, a description of the limitations is needed to facilitate an informed interpretation of the findings.

The question wording for the Staffing Practices driver’s two component questions posed the first challenge for the analysis. As both questions were framed at the work unit level, there was a risk that some employees may have provided responses that were instead focused at the division, organizational or public service wide level. In other words, depending on how an organization handles staffing processes (hiring at the work unit, division or organizational level), the point of reference for an employee within that organization may have been incompatible with the constraints of the questions.

The wording of the merit-based staffing question presented an additional challenge. Since merit was not explicitly defined in the survey, the phrasing of the question may have allowed for multiple interpretations. As question wording fundamentally impacts the interpretation of the survey for all respondents, these considerations should be kept in mind when reviewing all of the findings throughout this report.

Additional consideration should also be given to the work unit pair results. As only a small number of work units were non-randomly selected for the analysis, the results should not be viewed as representative of the wider public service. Rather, the comparisons were intended to illustrate how comparable work units may differ depending on their unique work environments. This in turn could help indentify both best practices and areas of risk for work units of similar compositions. If further comparisons are done, they should only be performed on other closely related work units.

A final caution is needed with respect to the significance tests used throughout the report. While several of the analyses used comparative tests to verify the statistical significance of a finding, a test was not applied to all reported results. In cases where a significance test was not performed, caution she be exercised in the interpretation of results. It is hoped that for future analysis of the Staffing Practices driver, it will be possible to apply a more comprehensive set of statistical tests across the majority of findings.
Conclusions and Recommendations

The Staffing Practices driver offers a clear means of assessing whether or not work units practice fair and merit based staffing processes. Beginning with the Management foundation’s close connection with staffing practices, the Staffing Practices driver has a wide reaching influence over all aspects of the work environment. These connections ultimately link with the three characteristics of employee engagement, and underscore the critical role staffing processes have in mediating an employee’s satisfaction with, and commitment to, their work environment.

Looking at Staffing driver scores across the BC Public Service it is possible to find numerous success stories and challenges. While it may be too impractical to change certain employee characteristics (i.e. occupational group, organization, union status), attention can be given to the way in which these characteristics are influenced by the work environment. Clarity of communication, classification level, pay range, type of staffing action and changes to the work environment are all factors that can either positively or negatively influence an employee’s perception of staffing practices. By identifying how these factors manifest themselves for both high scoring and low scoring work groups, it may be possible to discover areas of best practice as well as opportunities for improvement.

While this analysis has offered several encouraging areas of investigation, further research is still needed to better understand the key factors that either influence or are influenced by staffing practices. Promising topics for further research include:

1. **Exploration of competition data and its connection to staffing scores** – While the CHIPS data provided several insights into staffing and pay changes, additional information regarding the competition process (i.e. number of applicants, duration of competition) may offer a closer connection to Staffing driver scores.

2. **Expand work unit pair analysis to include a wider range of organizations and occupational groups** – Incorporating a broader selection of work unit pairs would help to increase representativeness of the sample as well as facilitate the identification of corporate wide trends for high scoring and low scoring work units.

By connecting staffing scores with the competition process, it may be possible to reveal some of the primary factors influencing perceptions of staffing practices. These factors can then be examined in relation to both broad-level staffing results (public service wide, demographic groups, organization) and finer grained work unit pair data.
### TABLE 1 YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISON OF THE STAFFING PRACTICES DRIVER’S QUESTION WORDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Question Wording</th>
<th>Survey Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 14 (version 1)</td>
<td>In my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is based on merit.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 14 (version 2)</td>
<td>In my work unit, the selection of a person for a position is based on merit.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 15</td>
<td>In my work unit, the process of selecting a person for a position is fair.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2 STAFFING SCORES BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP FOR EXCLUDED AND INCLUDED EMPLOYEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Group</th>
<th>Excluded</th>
<th></th>
<th>Included</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staffing Score</td>
<td>Mean Difference (Score -73)</td>
<td>Staffing Score</td>
<td>Mean Difference (Score -55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Leadership</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement &amp; Corrections</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Economics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Education &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Counsel</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technical Officers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Administration &amp; Research</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trades &amp; Operations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>Group With Highest Staffing Score</td>
<td>Group With Lowest Staffing Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Lands</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Science &amp; Technical Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney General</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Enforcement &amp; Corrections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Public Service Agency</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Applied Leadership</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Family Development</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Enforcement &amp; Corrections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens’ Services</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Trades &amp; Operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Health, Education &amp; Social Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Senior Administration &amp; Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Enforcement &amp; Corrections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Assessment Office</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests and Range</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Trades &amp; Operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living and Sport</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Social Development</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Land Management Bureau</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Senior Administration &amp; Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Premier</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Games Secretariat</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs Bureau</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Applied Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety and Solicitor General</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Science &amp; Technical Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism, Culture and the Arts</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Business Leadership</td>
<td>Science &amp; Technical Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Infrastructure</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Strategic Leadership &amp; Executives</td>
<td>Enforcement &amp; Corrections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NA indicates that the sample size for all occupational groups within the organization was less than 20
TABLE 5 COMPARISON OF WORK UNIT PAIR REGRESSION RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Work Unit Description</th>
<th>Staffing Score</th>
<th>Executive Score</th>
<th>Supervisor Score</th>
<th>Drivers of Staffing Practices</th>
<th>R-Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>QFA - Prince George YCC</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VHA - Victoria YCC</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>322 Surrey EIA</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>106 Victoria EIA</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kamloops Sheriff Services</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surrey Sheriff Services</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Executive &amp; Supervisor</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you have any questions about the information in this report, please contact BC Stats. 250-387-8972