



***Blueprint 2020:
Building Tomorrow's Public Service Together***

Peter Edwards

Blueprint 2020
National Secretariat,
Government of Canada

Adam Fritz

Blueprint 2020
National Secretariat,
Government of Canada

John Kehoe

Canada School of
Public Service,
Government of Canada

**4th Annual Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA)
Conference in Public Management: Public Management in Theory and Practice**

May 25, 2015

Abstract

Launched by the Clerk of the Privy Council in 2013, Blueprint 2020 is a first-of-its-kind transformation initiative that is fundamentally changing the way the Public Service of Canada does business in the 21st century. The Blueprint 2020 initiative sets out a vision for “a world-class Public Service equipped to serve Canada and Canadians now and into the future”, and – for the first time in the social media age – is directly engaging public servants in transforming the federal Public Service for the long-term. This paper explores the path of the Blueprint 2020 initiative to date, examining (1) distinguishing factors in the context of past Public Service renewal efforts; (2) lessons learned and confirmed through the first two years of the exercise; and (3) reflections on large-scale organizational culture change. Adopting a case study approach, this paper draws from available research, records from the initiative to date, input to the engagement process, and interviews with key players to extract lessons that have broader application to the theory and practice of public management. Canada’s quality of life and our nation’s position in today’s uncertain and competitive world depend on a strong, high-performing federal Public Service. This paper shows that Blueprint 2020 is an initiative of unprecedented scope leveraging new technologies and promoting grassroots discussion to empower employees across the federal Public Service to embrace change and meet the challenges of the future.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
1. The Blueprint 2020 Story	1
2. Origins of Blueprint 2020	1
3. A Vision for Canada’s Federal Public Service	3
3.1 Vision and Principles	3
3.2 Governance	4
4. Overall Approach	6
4.1 Learning from Past Reform Efforts	6
4.2 Key Events	6
4.3 Engagement Approach	9
5. Learning How to do Things Differently	10
5.1 Distinguishing Factors	10
5.2 Lessons Learned	12
6. Culture Change	15
7. The Way Forward	17
Annex 1: Themes and Trends from Blueprint 2020 Interim Reporting in Fall 2013	18
Annex 2: Horizontal Initiatives Outlined in the Destination 2020 Report	24

1. The Blueprint 2020 Story

With over 260,000 employees, the Public Service of Canada is the largest employer in the country, encompassing over a hundred departments and agencies¹ delivering important services to Canadians – from providing old age security and employment insurance benefits to protecting Canadian sovereignty to helping families save for higher education. The federal Public Service is responsible for regulating the safety of food and drugs, undertaking research and development to protect our shared environment, promoting Canada’s national interests around the world, and developing economic, trade and energy policies, among many other duties. Federal public servants make a difference in the lives of Canadians every day. To ensure excellence in public service requires a continuous process of reflection as to how the Public Service can remain both relevant and high-performing. The Blueprint 2020 initiative was devised to answer such questions.

The Blueprint 2020 story is one of leadership at all levels. It begins with awareness among senior leaders that numerous change drivers were placing stresses on the Public Service’s capacity to fulfill its mandate of service excellence. It grows from there to thousands of employees from coast-to-coast-to-coast engaged in finding ways to ensure a world-class Public Service equipped to serve Canada and Canadians now and into the future.

This paper tells the story of the Blueprint 2020 initiative from the inside – its origins, evolution and prospects for the future. In doing so, the paper explores the lessons learned over decades of Public Service renewal efforts, and demonstrates how the Blueprint 2020 exercise has charted a new course in shaping large-scale organizational culture change in the public sector.

2. Origins of Blueprint 2020

The world continues to change rapidly, putting significant stress on the existing ways of doing things. Around the globe, governments and private sector organizations are examining new ways of working to ensure efficiency and effectiveness². Canada’s Public Service is no exception.

While discussions about these issues would have been taking place in various Public Service fora over the years, between November 2011 and May 2012, the Deputy Minister Committee on Public Service Renewal³, partnered with the Privy Council Office, Policy Horizons Canada and the Canada School of Public Service to explore changes that were happening globally and domestically that could have significant impacts on the Public Service over the coming decade. The result was a foresight exercise based on literature reviews and discussions with more than 40 leading thinkers in the academic, private and public sectors, including domestic and international experts in public administration, current and retired public servants, academics, and think tanks.

¹ Financial Administration Act, Schedules I, IV and V. *Statutes of Canada, c. F-11*. Canada. Department of Justice. 1985. Available: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-11/> [April 7, 2015]

² See, for example, Lindquist, Evert. 2010. *From Rhetoric to Blueprint: The Moran Review as a Concerted, Comprehensive and Emergent Strategy for Public Service Reform*. The Australian Journal of Public Administration, vol. 69, no. 2, pp. 115-151

³ The Deputy Minister Committee on Public Service Renewal drove the renewal agenda and advised the Clerk of the Privy Council on forward looking priorities. In collaboration with the broader deputy minister community, they worked to ground renewal initiatives in the business of government to ensure that excellence and leadership at all levels was reflected in the Public Service.

The foresight exercise with deputies explored key drivers that were, and are, dramatically reshaping how the Public Service functions, creating significant stress on the existing ways of doing things, and impacting service delivery to Canadians. Some of these drivers of change include:

- **Increasing globalization, issue complexity and interconnectedness**
Change is accelerating. It involves an increasing number of actors who have varied interests, values and demands who want to be engaged, and who play roles that in the past only governments played.
- **Accelerating technological change**
The Internet and mobile communications are revolutionizing how people carry out their work and conduct their daily lives and how business operates. This raises expectations for e-enabled and easy-to-access government services at Canadians' fingertips.
- **Changing demographics**
The changing make-up of Canadian society has impacts on expectations, values and service demands. Calls for more responsive and customized services are increasing.
- **Growing demand for accountability and the achievement of results as efficiently as possible**
Citizens expect governments to live within their means, to be increasingly open and transparent and to make relevant information available.
- **Shifting workforce expectations with respect to work and workplaces**
Employees want more efficient and flexible ways of working to serve the Government and Canadians more effectively, and want the tools and technologies to do so.

The foresight study went on to examine the interaction of these change drivers with the Public Service system to determine potential consequences. Six areas of significant change and impact were identified and studied in depth, resulting in the following insights:

- **Networked Governance**
Issue complexity and the increased capacity of others to create public value are encouraging the Public Service to work more with and through others to achieve policy objectives effectively.
- **Crowded Policy Marketplace**
The proliferation of inputs from various sources is challenging the Public Service to redefine its role and to reconcile multiple and often conflicting perspectives.
- **Innovation, Learning and Knowledge-Building**
The need to make sense of, and adapt to, a complex, rapidly changing and more collaborative environment is challenging the Public Service to develop new skills, to experiment and to innovate.

- **Service Delivery**
Pressure is growing to customize services, to deliver them in a more integrated manner, to keep pace with new delivery methods, and to collaborate with others where it improves efficiency.
- **Motivation and Leadership**
Factors such as purpose, autonomy, influence, and learning will be important to the increasingly diverse workforce of the future. This will require an empowering and supportive workplace, and leaders who can foster such an environment, manage diversity and work collaboratively with others.
- **Public Institutions, Values and Relations with Government**
Although Public Service values will not change, the Public Service will be challenged to respond to increased demands for openness and transparency, to develop accountability mechanisms suited to a collaborative environment, and to engage with the government, Parliament and citizens on its evolving role.

Overall, the foresight exercise and its associated studies concluded that the identified change drivers would re-shape the Public Service's organizational design and core functions (i.e., policy development, program and service delivery, regulation and management). There was a strong consensus among participants in the study that the status quo would no longer be sustainable, and that the Public Service had a vital role to play in rethinking how it functions so as to retain its legitimacy, authority and relevance. It was recognized that the Public Service had to:

- Explore ways to take advantage of networks and partnerships for meaningful policy advice, effective program design and improved service to Canadians;
- Find ways to appropriately encourage innovation and risk-taking; and
- Develop the competencies and leadership skills needed to harness the best talent and the brightest ideas.

It was out of this dialogue that the Blueprint 2020 initiative was born.

3. A Vision for Canada's Federal Public Service

3.1 Vision and Principles

Drawing from this base of research and discussion, senior leaders developed a draft vision for the Public Service. The National Managers' Community and the Federal Youth Network were then consulted on this draft to ensure it met the needs and had the support of these key horizontal communities of employees, whose members represent the future of the Public Service. The resulting draft vision was put before all employees in June 2013 for their reaction.

The Blueprint 2020 initiative engaged public servants in a discussion about a vision calling for "**A world-class Public Service equipped to serve Canada and Canadians now and into the future.**" It aims for the Public Service to be recognized as having the best people working together with citizens, making smart use of new technologies and achieving the best possible outcomes with efficient, interconnected and nimble processes, structures and systems. The core objective is to improve the lives of our citizens and secure a strong future for our country.

The vision is guided by four principles, as outlined in the document *Blueprint 2020: Getting Started – Getting Your Views*⁴, that help examine how work is done in the federal Public Service:

- **An open and networked environment** that engages citizens and partners for the public good.
- **A whole-of-government approach** that enhances service delivery and value for money.
- A modern workplace that **makes smart use of new technologies** to improve networking, access to data and customer service.
- **A capable, confident and high-performing workforce** that embraces new ways of working and mobilizes the diversity of talent to serve the country's evolving needs.

At the launch of the Blueprint 2020 initiative, public servants were asked to reflect on what the vision and principles meant to them and their work. More than 110,000 public servants responded to this call, actively participating in Blueprint 2020 engagement activities in the first eight months of the initiative.⁵ Throughout this period, it was heard loud and clear that public servants agreed with the Blueprint 2020 vision and principles, that they wanted to affirm their strong commitment to public service and that they wanted to see concrete action taken as a result of the engagement process.⁶

3.2 Governance

Originating from a committee of deputy heads, the initiative's governance was always structured to ensure a collaborative approach in planning and implementation (see Figure 1). This approach was reinforced by the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service in their 7th report to the Prime Minister⁷, which concluded that:

“Engagement is the key to employee commitment. If public servants can see where their institution is headed, they will be keen to get there.”

The Board of Management and Renewal⁸, a committee of deputy heads chaired by the Clerk of the Privy Council, established the Blueprint 2020 initiative, and provided strategic direction as the initiative unfolded. A Sub-Committee on Public Service Engagement (now called the Sub-Committee on Public Service Engagement and Workplace Culture), chaired by Louise Levonian, was created by the Board of Management and Renewal to oversee the Blueprint 2020 initiative. This steering committee then assembled a “tiger team” of specialized capacities

⁴ Clerk of the Privy Council. *Blueprint 2020: Getting Started – Getting Your Views*. June 2013. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=349> [April 7, 2015]

⁵ Clerk of the Privy Council. *Destination 2020*. May 2014. Available: <http://clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=378> [April 7, 2015]

⁶ Clerk of the Privy Council. *What We've Heard: Summary Interim Progress Report on Blueprint 2020*. December 2013. Available: <http://clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=361> [April 7, 2015]

⁷ Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service. *Seventh Report of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service*. March 2013. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=314> [April 7, 2015]

⁸ The mandate of the Board of Management and Renewal is to provide a forum to discuss major management reforms and the renewal of the Public Service, with a focus on advancing whole-of-government approaches to external and internal service delivery, and positioning the Public Service for the future. Available: <http://www.pco.gc.ca/docs/secretariats/spsp-psps/comm/docs/mandat.pdf> [April 7, 2015]

through assignments from departments and central agencies to finalize the vision and engagement strategy. The final organizational structure consisted of:

- A small Blueprint 2020 National Secretariat supporting the Sub-Committee, and composed entirely of employees on secondment from their home departments and agencies;
- A broader “Extended Team” (drawn from departments represented on the Sub-Committee) dedicating 20-50% of their time to the cross-government initiative; and
- A “Virtual Team” in all regions across the country, working a few hours a month, supporting the dialogue among public servants, and ensuring that everything said through social media was captured, analyzed and seen by human eyes.

Meanwhile, the deputy heads of each department and agency were given the autonomy to establish their own mechanisms to carry out their respective activities led by identified senior Engagement Champions. In this way, the Blueprint 2020 initiative maintained a local focus responding to the needs of departments and agencies, while ensuring consistent messaging and organization from the National Secretariat.

This innovative approach to assembling a mix of levels, competencies and experiences working in a dynamic environment fostered creativity and collaboration. Leveraging talent and resources from across government enabled an enormous amount of work to be accomplished in an era of fiscal restraint. It used to be said that if it mattered, it got funded. The Blueprint 2020 initiative turned this on its head by accomplishing the exercise within existing resources. It mattered enough to become part of everyone’s job.

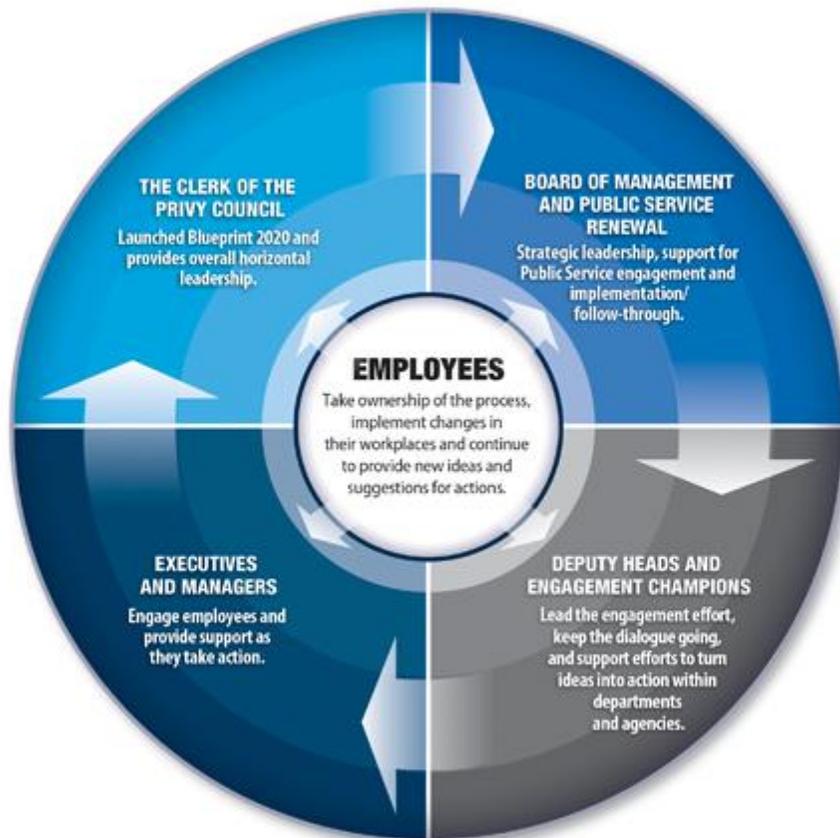


Figure 1: Collaborative governance model of the Blueprint 2020 initiative

4. Overall Approach

4.1 Learning from Past Reform Efforts

Public Service renewal is not a new phenomenon. Today's efforts to modernize or transform the Public Service are part and parcel of a long series of efforts to keep up with changing circumstances stretching back for decades. As part of the analysis informing the design of the Blueprint 2020 initiative, the Canada School of Public Service looked back at past renewal efforts, from the Royal Commission on Government Organization to La Relève, to draw several lessons on the effective implementation of such initiatives:⁹

- **Establish a Balanced Plan**
As in any change management initiative, it is important to articulate the need for change, define a shared vision as to where you want to go and be realistic about what can be accomplished.
- **Leadership Matters**
Renewal requires the visible participation of senior leaders, including the Clerk and senior deputies, and there needs to be a means to ensure continuity as senior leaders inevitably change roles.
- **Own the Results**
There is a need to establish clear direction on expectations and identifiable deliverables, as sustainability and credibility of renewal rests on producing results and demonstrating that there are repercussions for not delivering.
- **Measure the Results**
Regular reporting on results is key, with anecdotal reports complementing quantitative measurement in key areas.
- **Communicate Clearly**
Scepticism and fatigue about renewal is inevitable, and it is crucial to clearly and continuously communicate the why, what, who, and how of a renewal initiative to all public servants, making effective use of those communities of interest best positioned to act as change agents.

Bearing these lessons in mind, the Blueprint 2020 initiative became the first whole-of-government exercise to engage all public servants in transforming the Public Service over the long-term.

4.2 Key Events

The Blueprint 2020 engagement exercise was launched on June 7, 2013 by the then Clerk of the Privy Council in an historic first webcast¹⁰ reaching employees in every province and territory, across six time zones. That summer, engagement took place in-person across departments and agencies, as well as online through GCpedia and GCconnex (the

⁹Canada School of Public Service. *Overview of Past Efforts at Public Service Renewal and Lessons Learned*. 2007.

¹⁰ Clerk of the Privy Council. *Building the Public Service of the Future Together*. June 7, 2013. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pagelid=355> [April 20, 2015]

government's internal Wikipedia and Facebook/Reddit analogues, respectively), on Twitter and on the Clerk's website, around a consultation document called *Blueprint 2020: Getting Started – Getting Your Views*. Public servants were asked what the vision meant to them, what was needed to make the vision a reality and what they could do to help achieve the vision.

In September 2013, a blitz of engagement activities took place across the Public Service, led by departmental Engagement Champions and horizontal communities, including webcasts, online discussions, town halls, armchair discussions, and roundtables, among other forms of engagement. Ninety-seven departments, agencies and horizontal communities completed interim reports in October highlighting individual actions taken or planned. Apart from confirming the validity of the vision and principles among public servants, this wealth of ideas, input and information provided the foundation on which all future Blueprint 2020 activities would stand. Public servants shared their thoughts and opinions, and senior management listened (see Annex 1 for an analysis of the themes and trends that arose from the Interim Reports).

In December 2013, the report *What We've Heard: Summary Interim Progress Report on Blueprint 2020* was released outlining the feedback received from employee engagement. It reported that employees showed broad support for the vision, and indicated that to achieve the four pillars of the vision there was a need to place a particular focus on five priority areas:

- Innovative practices and networking;
- Processes and empowerment;
- Technology;
- People management; and
- The fundamentals of public service.

As was the case with the October 2013 interim reports, departments, agencies and horizontal communities submitted follow-up reports in February 2014 and January 2015, transparently posting the actions and key initiatives underway on GCpedia for all public servants to see and read.

In May 2014, the third Blueprint 2020 report was released entitled *Destination 2020* (the title being crowdsourced by public servants). This report confirmed that continued engagement was the way forward, and set out an initial 15 horizontal initiatives to be undertaken across the Public Service (see Annex 2). These horizontal initiatives responded to different aspects of the five priority areas identified through early engagement efforts, and, one year later, progress is already being made on a number of the initiatives, including:

- **Standardized videoconferencing services** are now being offered by Shared Services Canada¹¹ to support greater collaboration across departments, time zones and regions;
- **A new enterprise-wide approach to learning** has been established at the Canada School of Public Service¹², including a common, standardized curriculum available in a wide variety of delivery formats and methods that will support all public servants through key career transitions;
- **An Internal Red Tape Reduction initiative** has been launched by the Treasury Board Secretariat to crowdsource among public servants where some of the biggest internal irritants occur, examine their root causes and experiment with ways to address them;

¹¹ Shared Services Canada. *Videoconferencing Initiative*. Available: <http://www.ssc-spc.gc.ca/pages/telecommvideo-eng.html> [April 20, 2015]

¹² Canada School of Public Service. *2015–2016: A Common Curriculum for a High-Performing Public Service*. Available: <http://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/cc/index-eng.aspx> [April 20, 2015]

- **Wi-Fi is being deployed** across government buildings by Shared Services Canada¹³ to enable public servants to work anywhere and anytime using mobile technology;
- **Tools for learning official languages are being enhanced** to support learning and maintaining employee proficiency in official languages and help build a bilingual workforce; and
- **A Central Innovation Hub has been established**¹⁴, and a network of affiliated departmental innovation labs are in place, to test new approaches to how the Public Service does business and replicate successful innovations across government.

On October 6, 2014, Wayne Wouters, the Clerk of the Privy Council who had launched the Blueprint 2020 initiative, retired from the Public Service, and Janice Charette took over as Clerk. As had been learned from previous exercises, leadership matters in ensuring that Public Service renewal activities maintain focus and the necessary level of attention to see through the desired changes. Ms. Charette had been involved since the beginning in her previous role as Deputy Clerk of the Privy Council, and confirmed her continued support in a national webcast on January 29, 2015, called *Blueprint 2020: The Journey Continues*, stating:

“I fully endorse the Blueprint 2020 vision. Wholeheartedly. The Blueprint 2020 vision was shaped by thousands of public servants across the country, who commented and provided great ideas. It is the framework for all of us to modernize the Public Service for the future.”¹⁵

With this statement, Ms. Charette highlights the evolution of the Blueprint 2020 initiative from a priority initiative of the Clerk of the Privy Council to the framework used to organize all Public Service modernization efforts.

Several government-wide initiatives were planned or underway prior to the launch of the Blueprint 2020 exercise, such as Open Government and the consolidation of IT services, that aim to modernize and transform business processes, how information is used and managed, and how people are supported and mobilized. The Blueprint 2020 initiative now connects all such modernization efforts as the overarching platform for change to build a better Public Service. For example, Service Canada has made great efforts in recent years to improve and streamline processes to better serve Canadians in line with the Blueprint 2020 vision of an open, networked and technologically savvy Public Service. Increased automation and digital services have decreased costs and paper-based processing, greater collaboration with provincial, territorial and municipal governments has improved the ability to identify the beneficiaries of programs and services, and the modernization of the Government of Canada’s internet presence and program administration has made it easier for Canadians to access information and services.

¹³ Shared Services Canada. *Telecommunications Transformation*. Available: <http://www.ssc-spc.gc.ca/pages/telecommobj-eng.html> [April 20, 2015]

¹⁴ May, Kathryn. *Government's new innovation 'Hub' open to new thinking*. Ottawa Citizen. February 11, 2015. Available: <http://ottawacitizen.com/business/local-business/governments-new-innovation-hub-open-to-new-thinking> [April 20, 2015]

¹⁵ Clerk of the Privy Council. *Blueprint 2020: The Journey Continues*. January 29, 2015. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=402> [April 20, 2015]

4.3 Engagement Approach

Reaching the more than 260,000 employees of Canada's largest employer meant acting strategically, regionally, asynchronously, and in real-time. To achieve this, engagement took place across four streams:

- **Vertical:** Deputy heads of departments and agencies engaged their own employees. Senior Engagement Champions were appointed to lead engagement activities, and employees were encouraged to exercise their own leadership. Some Engagement Champions also enlisted younger co-champions to learn through reverse mentoring how to ensure engagement was relevant across generations.

Vertical efforts were critical since, even with the advent of social media, face-to-face engagement is still the most powerful means of communicating a message. Many departments created their own engagement groups, and, in the months following the launch, shared information and created opportunities for direct involvement. These ranged from in-person discussions and town halls to using social media during nationwide online events. Under the leadership of employees at all levels, many organizations also held competitions modelled on the popular television programs "Dragons' Den" and "Canadian Idol" that tested ideas and built excitement about the future. These events resulted in several new initiatives, such as actions to improve access to career development and mentoring, revise leadership competencies at all levels and streamline approval processes at Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the creation of an online network bringing together a dispersed community of teleworkers to share best practices and lessons learned at the Department of Justice.

- **Horizontal:** The national exercise reached out and worked with horizontal communities of employees (e.g., youth, managers, communicators) and Regional Federal Councils. Incorporating the perspectives of these communities into strategies, and then holding outreach activities with them, allowed for a wide range of public servants to make the exercise their own.
- **Web and Social Media:** Using the Clerk's website as the principal source for external input opened up the dialogue – with more than 206,900 views of the Blueprint 2020 vision document on the Clerk's website. Using Twitter for live events broadened participation – with more than 36,000 tweets using the bilingual hashtag #GC2020 (trending nationally several times through the first year). Internal social media (GCpedia, GCconnex) allowed public servants to have meaningful discussions "within the firewall" – with the Blueprint 2020 group's more than 4,800 members (the largest on GCconnex) contributing over 4,500 comments* in over 250 discussion threads. These discussions have been rich and eye-opening for employees at all levels.¹⁶
- **Targeted External:** While Blueprint 2020 is first and foremost an employee engagement exercise, the Public Service does not operate in a vacuum. Working closely with external partners, like the Public Policy Forum and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), brought valuable advice from the public, private, non-profit, and academic sectors. External engagement also included video discussions between young Canadian and Australian public servants on challenges facing our respective public

¹⁶ These web and social media statistics were valid as of March 20, 2015.

services, and Canadians provided perspectives through the Clerk of the Privy Council's website as well. Importantly, IPAC hosted, in collaboration with academic partners¹⁷, the hugely successful National Student Paper Competition on the Future of the Public Service, now entering its third year.¹⁸ Canadian graduate students are asked to share their ideas on how to make the Blueprint 2020 vision a reality and help implement the commitments made in the *Destination 2020* report. This partnership provides a voice to future public servants, and is an innovative means of both engaging and recruiting the best and brightest among future leaders.

Over the first two years, the focus of engagement evolved from engaging on the vision and what needed to be done to achieve the vision, to engaging on implementation of the *Destination 2020* commitments and the many activities underway within departments and agencies. More importantly, however, engagement has begun to be hardwired into the Public Service as business as usual. This is taking place through changes in organizational structure, changing expectations as to who and how people are engaged, and by empowering employees at all levels to lead change in areas they can control. The efforts of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) are a great example.

FedDev Ontario has been engaging their employees using a variety of approaches, including agency-wide contests, the creation of an "Idea Lab" that enables ongoing employee brainstorming on how to improve operations, and regular communication on the progress achieved. In 2014, FedDev Ontario completed a review of its governance structure, naming a non-executive member to most committees. Under this inclusive governance initiative, these developmental opportunities were open to all employees via a letter of interest, and those who were not selected to sit on a committee in the first year were offered the opportunity to work directly with an Executive Champion to implement the priorities developed through staff engagement set out in the first FedDev Ontario Integrated Business Plan, launched in April 2014.

Such examples demonstrate how organizational structures are beginning to change to reflect the Blueprint 2020 vision.

5. Learning How to do Things Differently

5.1 Distinguishing Factors

From the beginning, the Blueprint 2020 initiative aimed to learn and do things differently from previous Public Service renewal efforts. This can be seen in the overall objectives and expected results for the exercise defined by the Board of Management and Renewal in February 2013:

¹⁷ I.e., the Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA), the Canadian Federation of Business School Deans, Dalhousie University Rowe School of Business, the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Regina, and the Canada School of Public Service.

¹⁸ The Institute of Public Administration of Canada. *National Student Paper Competition on the Future of the Public Service*. Available: <http://www.ipac.ca/blueprint2020-news> [April 20, 2015]

Objectives of Blueprint 2020	Expected Results of the Engagement Process	Expected Results of Blueprint 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what the Public Service needs to be in the near future. • Serve as a platform to frame the changes required to get from here to there. • Use the vision as a guide to transform the Public Service for the long-term. • Inspire and reinvigorate people on the important role of the Public Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform – Common understanding of vision and roadmap for Public Service transformation • Engage – Involvement and commitment to action both organizationally and at the individual level • Shape Blueprint 2020 – Innovative ideas to help formulate course of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lean, nimble, motivated and high-performing Public Service equipped with the skills and tools to serve Canada and Canadians now and in the future. • An open and collaborative Public Service working with others to solve the complex problems facing society. • A culture that embraces innovation, transformation and continuous improvement.

As can be seen, engagement was placed at the heart of how the Blueprint 2020 initiative would achieve the expected results. Compared to previous renewal exercises, the Blueprint 2020 initiative is different in a number of important respects:

- **Large-Scale**
It is the largest engagement exercise ever undertaken in the Public Service, the first to use social media to connect and engage public servants, and gave everyone a role to play.
- **Bottom-Up**
It is bottom-up, with public servants offering opinions, ideas and solutions to improve their own workplaces and to work better to serve Canadians.
- **Transparent**
It is transparent, with departments, agencies and horizontal communities posting their reports on GCpedia for all public servants to see, in a way that could not have been done in the past.

These things make the Blueprint 2020 initiative unique, and the process has been effective. From the beginning, there was ownership of the initiative at all levels – with deputy heads launching their own events, horizontal communities mobilizing their members and individual public servants engaging in multiple channels. Just eight months after the launch of the exercise, the majority of departments, agencies and horizontal communities had identified and initiated many actions to contribute to the achievement of the Blueprint 2020 vision. Such speed and scale would not have been possible without broad and continuous engagement and a governance model focused on collaborative leadership.

Still, if a culture of innovation, transformation and continuous improvement is to be realized, ongoing engagement efforts and the development of new initiatives in line with the Blueprint 2020 vision and principles will be required. Achieving the vision entails assessing the

performance not of individual departmental programs, but rather of the institution that is the Public Service of Canada. Is it maintaining and enhancing its relevance to Canadians? Is it remaining an employer of choice, inspiring young Canadians who want to do something that matters for the country? It will take time to be able to answer these questions, and for the expected changes in Public Service culture to take root, as everyday behaviours slowly reflect the Blueprint 2020 vision.

5.2 Lessons Learned

Achieving this change in culture will be an ongoing process. In examining the first two years of the initiative, several lessons learned can be drawn out as to how best to implement culture change in an organization as large as the federal Public Service:

- **Engage early, engage often, engage everyone, and make it meaningful**

Proactive engagement on initial concepts and drafts of the Blueprint 2020 vision fostered early buy-in and collaboration from key groups, including senior management, horizontal communities, key enablers such as human resources and communications communities, and external thought leaders from the academic, private and public sectors.

Using multiple channels to ensure the exercise reached as many people as possible was vital. With an organization as big and complex as the federal Public Service, employees needed to be reached in ways that mattered to them. The four engagement streams for Blueprint 2020 (i.e., vertical engagement in departments/agencies, horizontal engagement through functional communities and networks, web and social media engagement, and targeted external outreach) provided many ways for people to get engaged.

Reaching out to horizontal communities and change agents to help in designing and sustaining engagement efforts was highly effective in expanding the reach and inspiring others. For example, the Federal Youth Network and National Managers' Community were directly involved in developing strategy and in leading engagement on the Blueprint 2020 vision. This meant the exercise could belong to everyone.

It is also necessary to continually evaluate whether a balanced and representative population is being heard and engaged, as it is easy to oversample early adopters while many employees may remain relatively unengaged and unaware of what is happening. Additional effort is required to expand the reach of engagement particularly to staff in regional and operational settings.

- **Use social media to break down barriers across levels, branches, regions, communities, and departments**

In an organization as large as the federal Public Service, social media can break down hierarchical, functional and regional barriers, as employees from entry level to Deputy Ministers in all corners of the country can discuss ideas in a shared space. Both internal social media platforms, such as GCpedia and GCconnex, as well as external sites, such as Twitter, were shown to be effective in engaging public servants, although the rules of engagement differ from site to site.

The Blueprint 2020 exercise proved that employees can be trusted to have professional, open and self-regulated discussions through social media platforms. The Public Service of Canada is guided by a strong *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*, which has helped ensure a grounded, professional, nonpartisan, and practical approach to open

dialogue. At no time has it been necessary for the online dialogue to be edited or mediated by a central authority. In the very rare instances where a comment might have been deemed inaccurate or inappropriate, the other public servants taking part in the discussion always addressed any such statements immediately, thus ensuring the tone and direction of the dialogue remained constructive.

Challenges do remain in leveraging the true power of social media platforms within the Public Service, including ensuring a common level of knowledge and expertise in using the tools and balancing respect for official languages with the need for informal discussion. Technological obstacles have proven to be a continuous challenge throughout the Blueprint 2020 exercise, as there is not yet a consistent approach to providing access to internal and external social media platforms across and within departments and agencies. This experience has shown, however, that social media have found their place in organizational communication and engagement. The Public Service needs to move to where Canadians already are.

- **Communicate the transformation story openly, effectively and continuously**
As the Blueprint 2020 exercise evolved, the focus of engagement shifted several times – from gathering ideas to prioritizing actions to engagement in the implementation of actions. As not all employees follow the initiative in real time, it is necessary to have open and ongoing forms of communication to allow people to pick up and quickly understand what the process is, how it has changed and where it is going. Communication should also be targeted to effectively convey relevant aspects to various demographics. For example, in many cases departments, agencies and horizontal communities are better placed than a central coordinating body in reaching their respective constituencies.

Managing expectations and measuring progress of a long-term, large scale and visionary initiative such as Blueprint 2020 is inherently difficult. Sharing information openly reinforces engagement and a culture of accountability from senior management to the employees they manage. Posting Blueprint 2020 reports on GCpedia for all to see was a ground-breaking step. In the past, management reports were traditionally sent directly from deputy to Clerk of the Privy Council. Now, posting on GCpedia means the accountability of deputy to Clerk is supplemented with accountability of deputy to employees, and allows sharing of best practices across the Public Service. While seemingly a small thing, this alone is a landmark event in a new culture of workplace transparency.

- **Leverage the talent and support of the entire Public Service**
Seeking assistance from across the Public Service, including tapping into skills not necessarily used in many public servants' day jobs (e.g., social media know-how), allowed for an enormous amount of work to be done that could not have been otherwise accomplished in an era of fiscal restraint. This represents a significant change in management practice that increases productivity across the Public Service. By accomplishing the exercise within existing resources, the Blueprint 2020 initiative became part of everyone's job, which likely would not have happened if a budget had been set aside for a dedicated project team – in which case it would have been "their" job. Engaging and sharing responsibility made the difference.

That being said, a central coordinating function is still necessary to facilitate linkages and connections across organizations. The role of this group, however, should be seen as that of a facilitator and mobilizer, rather than as the authoritative lead.

- **Embody the desired change**

Managers need to set the tone and direction, and make change matter for employees. The tone was set early on by Mr. Wouters, the then Clerk of the Privy Council, during the national webcast launching the Blueprint 2020 initiative, when he said:

“This is the first time that we are launching an engagement strategy whereby it will not be filtered through your boss up to the DG (Director General), up to the ADM (Assistant Deputy Minister), up to the deputy. This is an opportunity for all of you to basically participate directly, because we now have the tool to do this. So we’re scared as hell! No, because...we’ve never done this before...So this is a real opportunity. I think it’s great.”¹⁹

It is insincere to tell people to embrace change while continuing to do things the way they have always been done. Through the Blueprint 2020 initiative, leaders are expected to embody the change they want to see in others, and to establish a culture where employee engagement is the norm. This means finding the courage to abandon some usual management preferences, as working outside of traditional structures requires inventiveness, creativity and collaboration. If managers only do what they feel comfortable doing, they are leading in the past.

Choosing the right champions for change is important. For senior management leadership to be meaningful and perceived as legitimate, leaders must be invested in the success of the initiative. Leaders who are close to retirement or who are perceived as not having a genuine interest in seeing success on their watch may not be able to develop credibility or the trust of their employees in championing the vision. They don’t have “skin in the game”.

Leaders exist at all levels, however, and having a fundamental impact on the future means reaching the leaders of tomorrow. Employees who are engaged today will become future leaders with a different understanding of what it means to lead effectively. This is an important element of making engagement and innovation business as usual. Employees are looking for permission to make improvements within their own units, and to also pursue change around larger ideas. Managers are responsible for ensuring people possess the necessary competencies to support change, and to support employees in taking responsibility for change. Push responsibility down in the organization and hold people accountable for results.

- **Integrate engagement and continuous improvement into planning and decision-making processes**

An exercise such as Blueprint 2020 should not be seen as additional work to be done on top of existing workloads, but rather as an integral part of how work is done. Generally, the exercise has been most successful where organizations have positioned Blueprint 2020 as the principle vehicle for transformation. For example, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) established the INspire Innovation Hub in 2014 with a mission to

¹⁹ Clerk of the Privy Council. *Building the Public Service of the Future Together – An Armchair Discussion with the Clerk of the Privy Council*. June 15, 2013. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pagelid=355> [April 7, 2015]

"inspire a critical mass of employees to explore and adopt new ways of working in order to measurably improve NRCan's ability to innovate for the public good." By creating an internal mechanism to test and scale up new ways of working inside the department, NRCan has institutionalized an ongoing commitment to engagement, learning and adaptation to help it transform along the lines of the Blueprint 2020 vision.

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has also created their own internal, online employee engagement tool, called *Destination 2020*, which is being used to assess and refine options around nine priority areas for action identified during Blueprint 2020 engagement activities. In their February 2014 report to the Clerk, called *The Way Forward*, the CRA reported that their internal engagement tool had received more than 460,000 views, more than 11,500 comments, and 70,000 votes posted in response to comments.²⁰ The *Destination 2020* tool was further used to assess options for the use of competencies in staffing, and also to provide suggestions on how CRA could improve the performance management system and staffing process. CRA continues to use the *Destination 2020* tool to solicit ideas and feedback, and continues to use the Blueprint 2020 initiative as an opportunity to reinvent the workplace with a focus on employee engagement and service excellence.

These and other examples, such as that of FedDev Ontario outlined above, demonstrate that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions to integrating the Blueprint 2020 vision into organizational design. The federal Public Service is a patchwork of multiple departmental cultures with many and varied core functions. Working together, each department and agency must find its own path towards the shared Blueprint 2020 vision.

6. Culture Change

Culture change is essential in any organizational transformation. It is also the most difficult kind of organizational change. Most change initiatives fail because the people and cultural aspects of the change are overlooked.²¹ One of the chief goals of the Blueprint 2020 initiative is to foster a culture that embraces innovation, transformation and continuous improvement. As the Clerk of the Privy Council, Ms. Charette, put it:

"As we move forward, we must above all not lose sight of the human aspect. The Blueprint 2020 vision is not focused solely on what we do. It also has an impact on our behaviour and on how we do things... We need a culture that enables people to be bold and innovative."²²

Culture change does not have to be big and grand, but can simply be about doing things differently. While deputy heads and senior leaders may hold the responsibility for building and fostering a new culture within their organizations, more and more leadership is being shared among the wider ranks, inspiring trust, teamwork and creativity. All public servants need to think about what the Blueprint 2020 vision means in their workplace and how to make it real.

²⁰ Canada Revenue Agency. *Blueprint 2020 February 2014 Report: The Way Forward*. February 2014.

²¹ Kotter, John P. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. (cover story)." *Harvard Business Review* 73, no. 2 (1995): 59-67

²² Clerk of the Privy Council. *Blueprint 2020: The Journey Continues*. January 29, 2015. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageld=402> [April 7, 2015]

Organizational culture is often defined as “the way things are done around here”.²³ It includes key values, assumptions, understandings, and norms of behaviour. It gives employees a sense of identity, and helps people know how to work together effectively. To live the Blueprint 2020 vision will require an organizational culture that embraces engagement and collaboration. That is comfortable taking calculated risks and trying new things. That expects change to take place, and is prepared to question, understand and adapt to it. The challenge ahead is to build such a culture across the Public Service.

Real challenges lie ahead. In changing behaviours, it is said that a person needs to hear a message at least seven times before it sinks in and they take action on it.²⁴ Reaching those public servants who have yet to be engaged, and sustaining the momentum with those who have, will require relentless efforts to communicate, innovate and connect at a meaningful level. Overcoming the potential for “change fatigue” to set in will require telling a cohesive story as to how transformation initiatives are working together to improve how the Public Service functions. The journey is far from over, it is really just beginning.

Although much work remains to be done, culture changes can already be seen in the results of the Blueprint 2020 engagement exercise and the activities arising from the *Destination 2020* report and departmental efforts:

The value and commitment to sharing information transparently across the whole-of-government has been demonstrated in posting all departmental progress reports on GCpedia and in regularly communicating across the Public Service through newsletters, weekly updates and national webcasts.

Relationships and connections across levels, branches, regions, communities, and departments have been built through interdepartmental events like the highly successful 2015 Innovation Fair, and in encouraging employees to connect with senior management in formal and informal settings, such as through reverse mentoring and opening up management meetings to employees.

People have been empowered to influence their own work environments through multiple and ongoing engagement processes, including crowdsourcing the biggest irritants among the web of rules through the Internal Red Tape Reduction Initiative.

Improved tools, such as an enhanced directory of federal public servants, and the new enterprise-wide commitment to learning are **helping make it easier for public servants to do their jobs effectively in service to Canadians.**

And finally, **safe spaces**, such as the Central Innovation Hub and virtual spaces on GCconnex and GCpedia, **have been created to experiment with new ideas, so that the Public Service can keep up with a fast changing world.**

These efforts are positively contributing towards achieving the Blueprint 2020 vision. Early progress in changing behaviours is fragile, however, as old habits and assumptions are entrenched in how people do and perceive their work. Engagement must continue moving

²³ Manley, Kim. “The way things are done around here’ - *Developing a culture of effectiveness: A pre-requisite to individual and team effectiveness in critical care.*” Australian Critical Care 21.2 (2008): 83-85.

²⁴ Payne, Dennis. *How Many Contacts Does It Take Before Someone Buys Your Product?* Business Insider. July 12, 2011. Available: <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-many-contacts-does-it-take-before-someone-buys-your-product-2011-7> [April 20, 2015]

forward to secure and build on the progress to date. As the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service has noted:

“Blueprint 2020 is an undertaking for the long-term benefit of a national institution, which will complement many other significant change initiatives under way in the Government of Canada. In all cases, it will take time to achieve results.”²⁵

7. The Way Forward

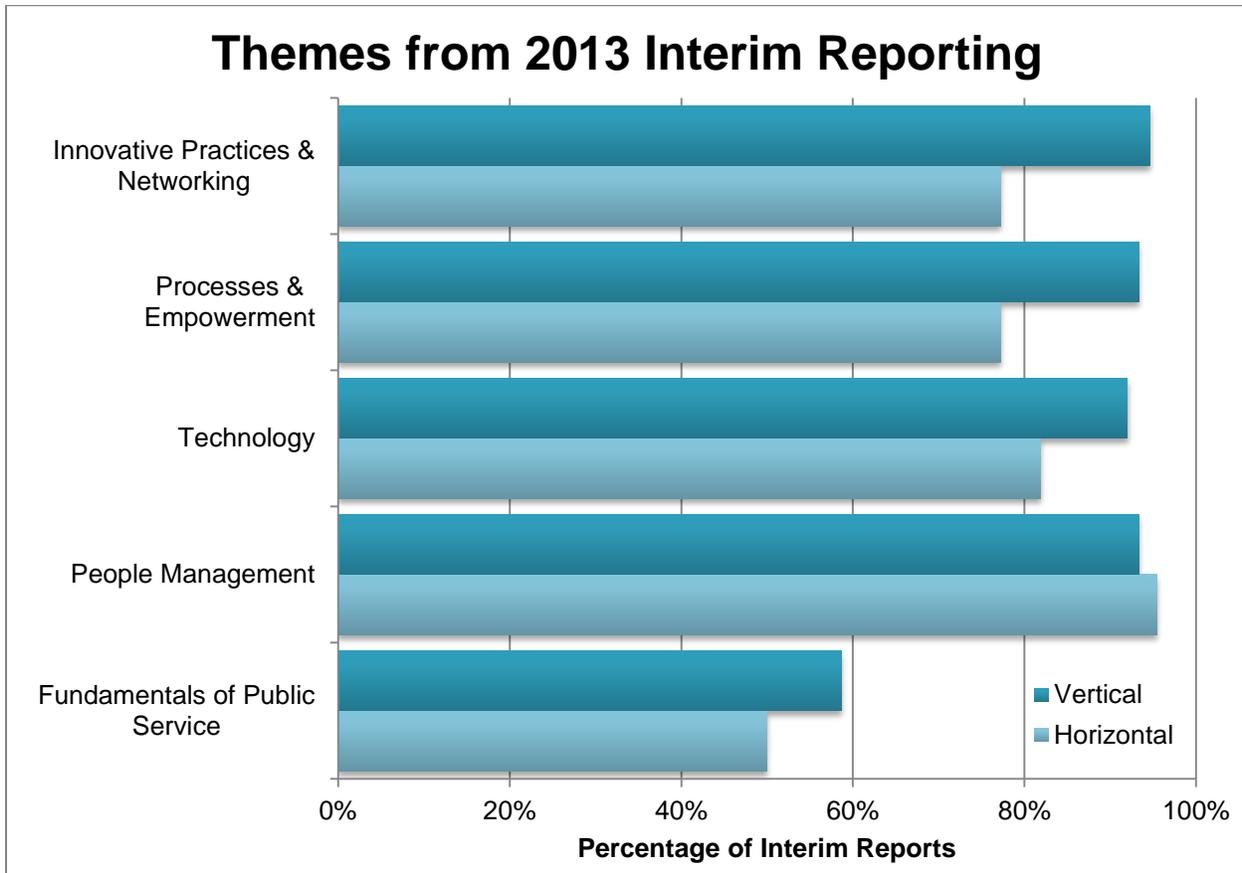
The Blueprint 2020 initiative is ground-breaking in many ways. It is the first large-scale, bottom-up engagement exercise in the history of the Public Service of Canada. It is the first exercise of the social media era to engage all public servants on the long-term transformation of the Public Service. Learning from previous efforts, it has set a new benchmark in terms of how Public Service renewal must be structured and managed to ensure a transparent, effective and legitimate process.

Two years into the exercise, there are already signs of culture change taking place across departments and agencies. Information is being shared more openly. New relationships are being formed across organizations. People are using new tools and experimenting with new ideas to better serve Canadians. This is only the beginning of what is proving to be an exciting and inspiring journey. By taking action now, and embracing the need for continuous improvement, the Blueprint 2020 initiative is ensuring the long-term success of the Public Service of Canada, and helping to achieve positive outcomes for Canada and Canadians.

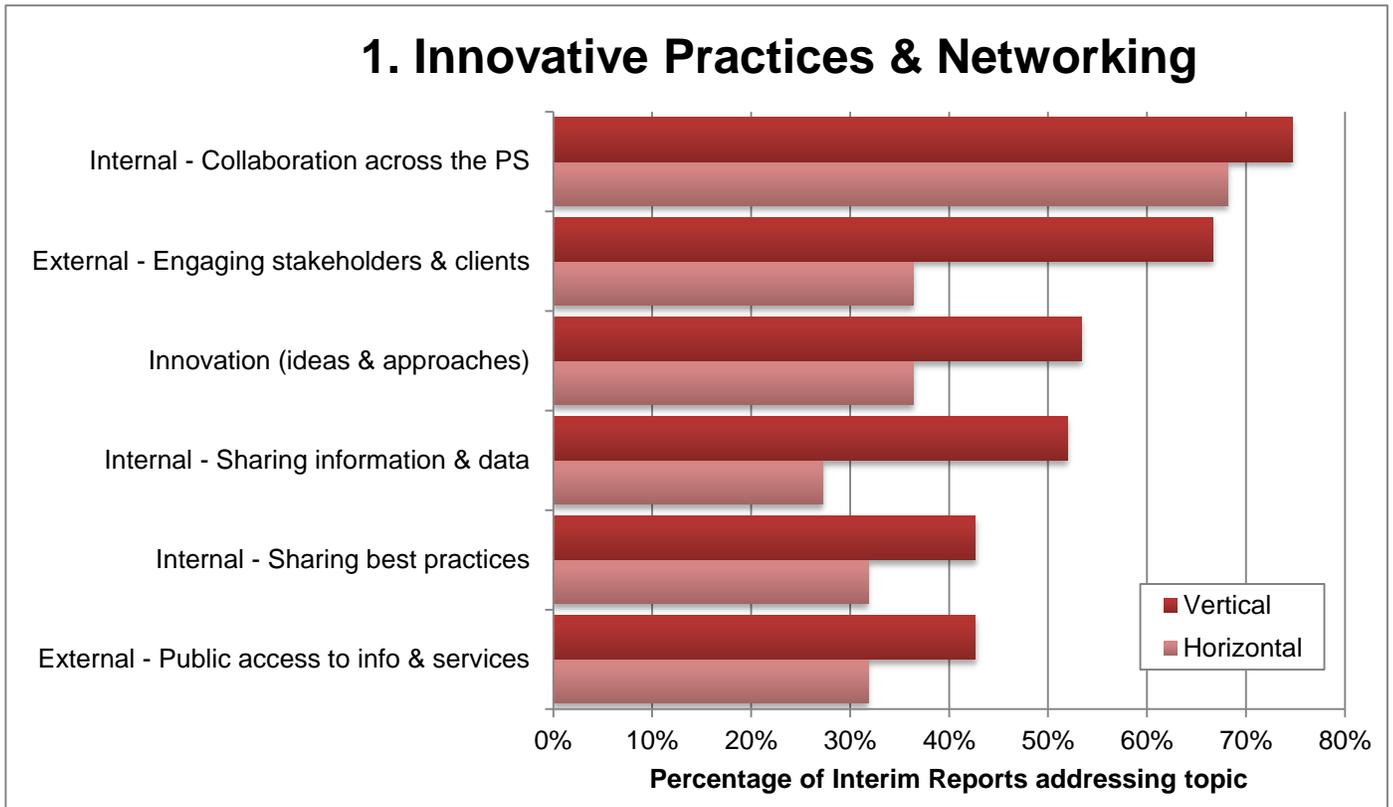
²⁵ Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service. *Eighth Report of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service*. March 2014. Available: <http://www.clerk.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pagelId=369> [April 7, 2015]

Annex 1: Themes and Trends from Blueprint 2020 Interim Reporting in Fall 2013

- The following graphs provide a generalized picture of popular issues raised in the Interim Reports of departments/agencies (vertical) and communities, networks and regional councils (horizontal) during the fall of 2013.
- Based on analysis of 97 reports (75 vertical, 22 horizontal) conducted using NVivo qualitative analysis software.
- Values show the percentage of Interim Reports that addressed each topic, but do not reflect relative importance of a given topic for the organizations.

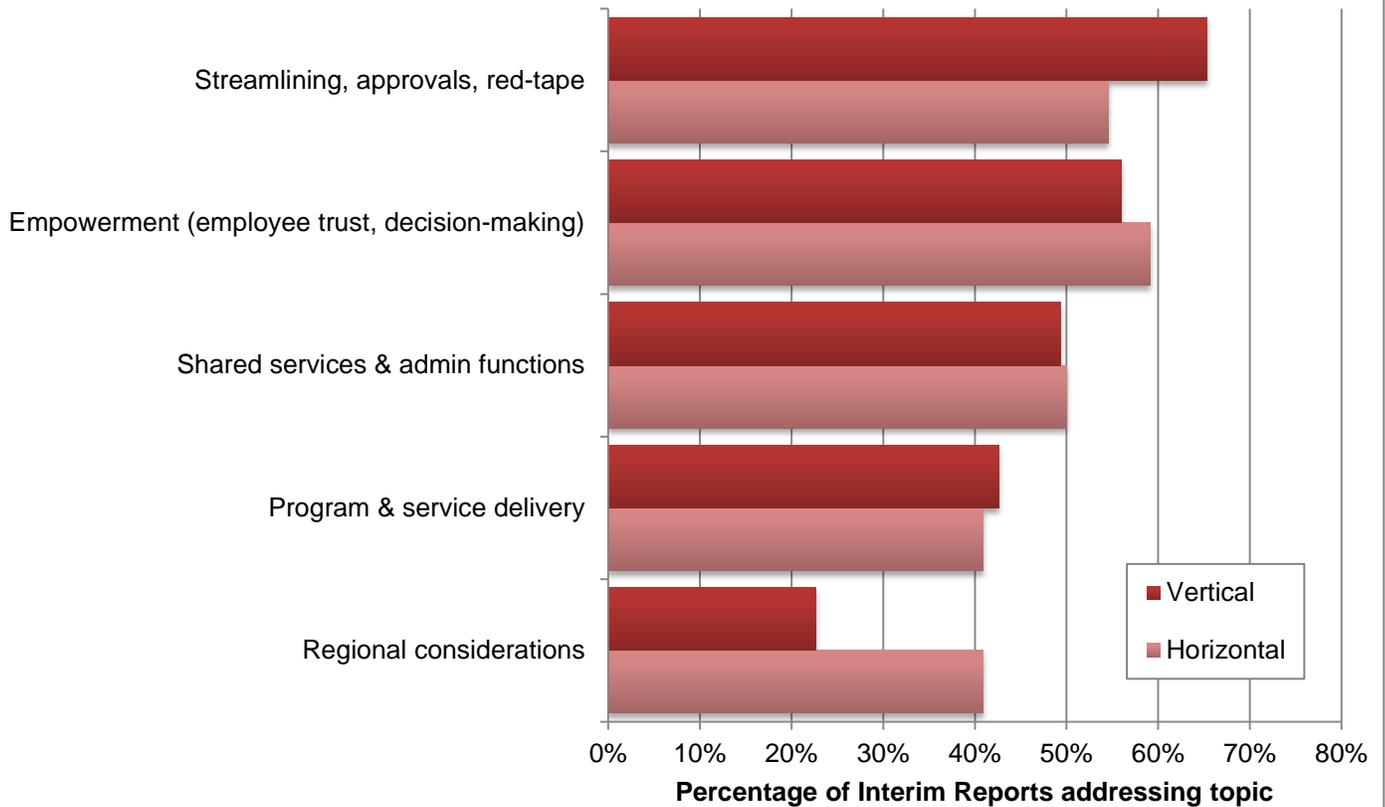


Top trending topics per theme:



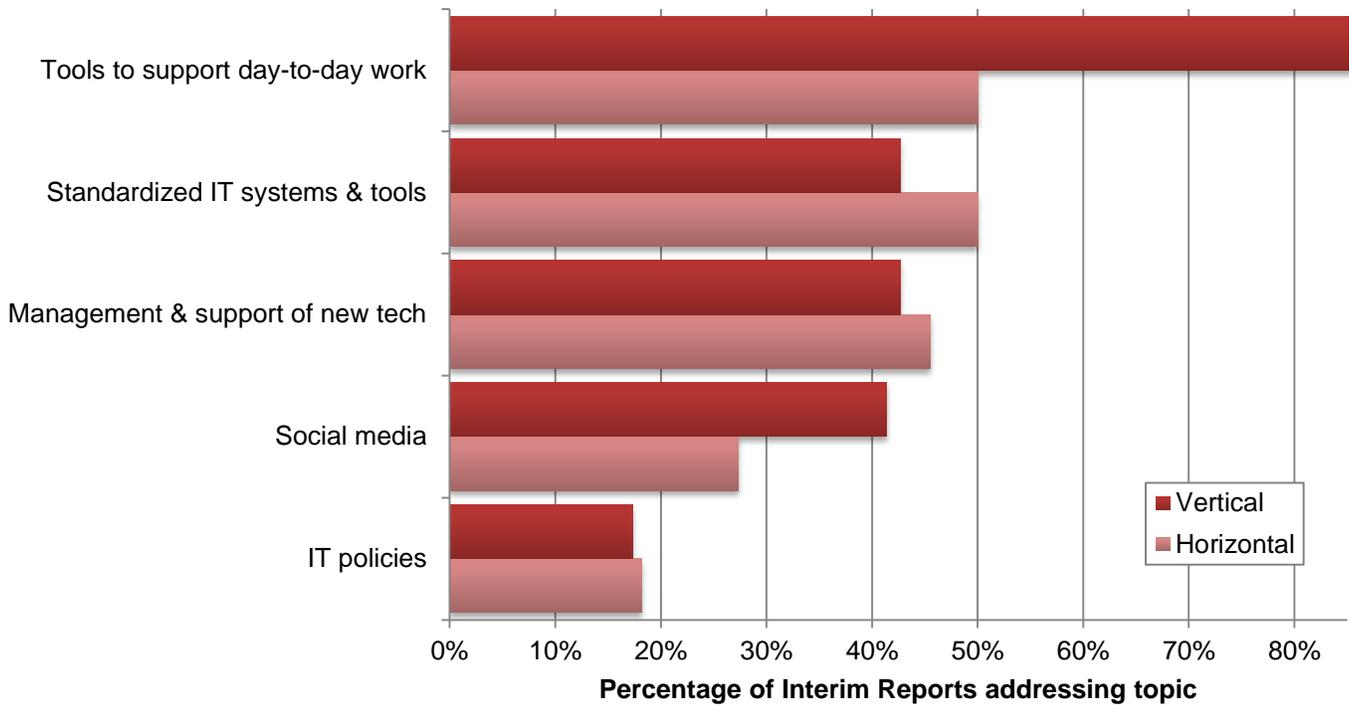
Other topics (% of total reports): Risk aversion (34%), Internal communication (e.g., decisions, priorities) (31%), Clear communication with the public (27%), Transparency (18%) and Value-added role (7%)

2. Processes & Empowerment

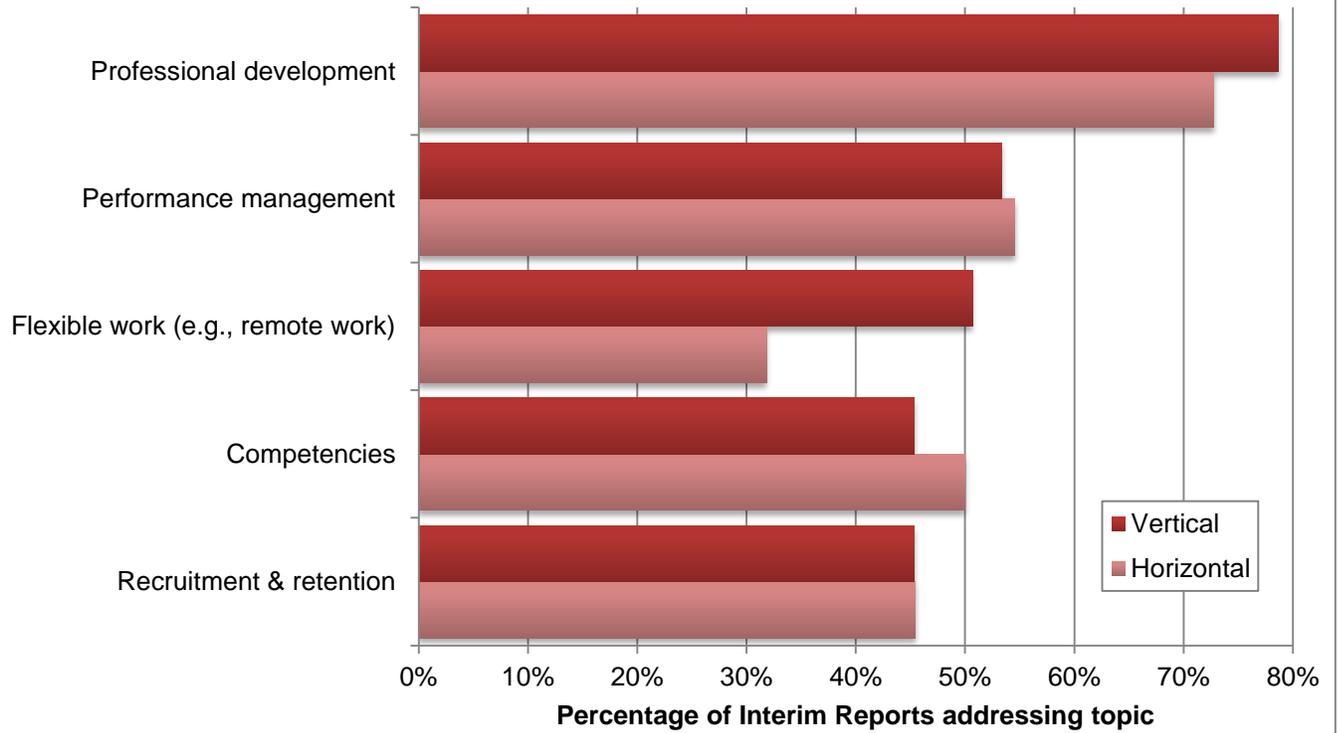


Other topics (% of total reports): Information management (12%), Policy design & development (8%), and Operational review (4%)

3. Technology

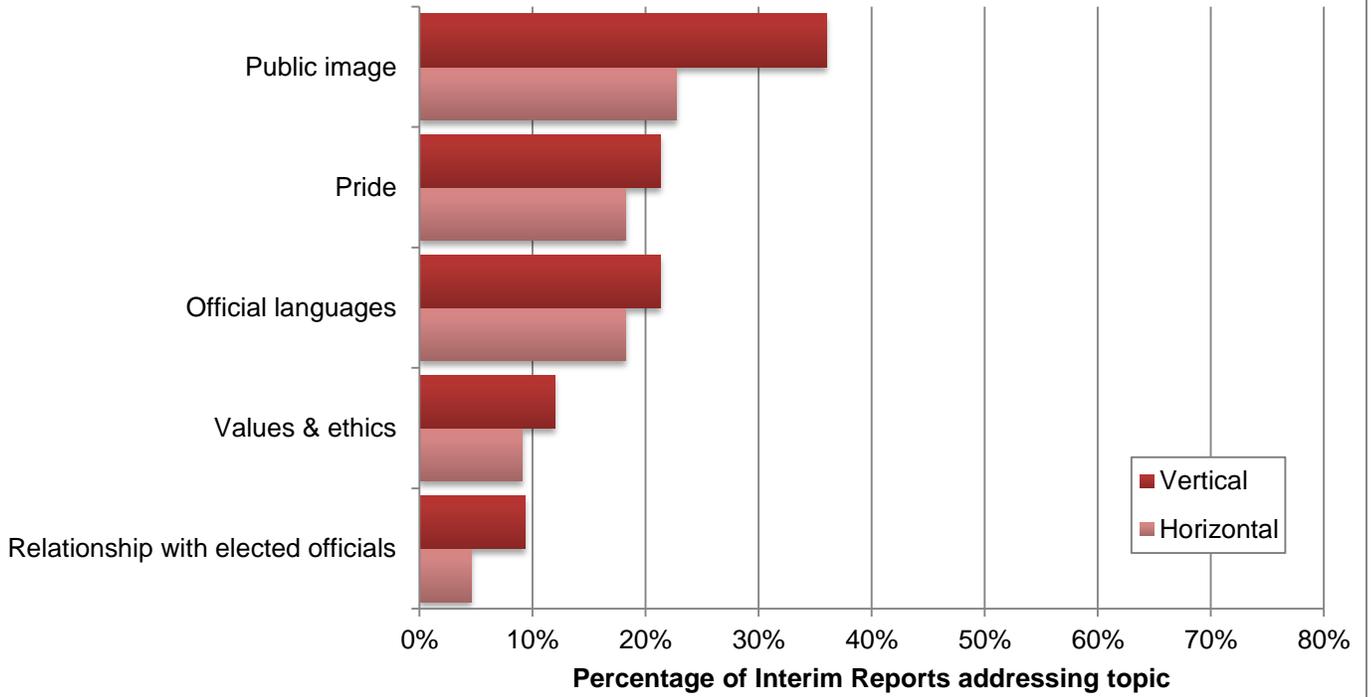


4. People Management



Other topics (% of total reports): Wellness & work-life balance (39%), Staffing (37%), Organizational structure (e.g., matrix, tiger teams) (35%), Employment equity & diversity (24%), HR services & processes (general) (14%), Leave (5%), Compensation (4%), and Disability management (2%)

5. Fundamentals of Public Service



Annex 2: Horizontal Initiatives Outlined in the Destination 2020 Report

<p>INNOVATIVE PRACTICES & NETWORKING</p> <p>Crowdsourcing Innovation within the Public Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior management and employees in departments/agencies <p>Central Innovation Hub and Change Labs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Privy Council Office with senior management and employees in departments/agencies <p>Virtual collaboration with external partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior management and employees in departments/agencies 	<p>PEOPLE MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Improved approach to staffing focused on results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior management and managers in departments/agencies <p>Simplified approaches to job descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior management with input from employees in departments/agencies <p>Enhanced tools and capacity for learning official languages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development by employees of their second language skills will be supported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer & Canada School of Public Service with the Official Languages Champions Community • New online practice tests will be piloted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Service Commission & Public Works and Government Services Canada <p>Enterprise-wide commitment to learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Canada School of Public Service, senior management and employees in departments/agencies
<p>PROCESSES & EMPOWERMENT</p> <p>Internal Red Tape Tiger Team to identify irritants and solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treasury Board Secretariat and employees in departments/agencies <p>Connecting employees with senior management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Senior management and employees in departments/agencies 	<p>FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SERVICE</p> <p>Engagement process to define and communicate the Federal Public Service Brand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treasury Board Secretariat and employees in departments/agencies <p>Public Service of Canada landing page to profile what public servants do and to promote employment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treasury Board Secretariat
<p>TECHNOLOGY</p> <p>Enhanced Directory of Federal Public Servants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shared Services Canada <p>Desktop video conferencing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shared Services Canada <p>Wi-Fi access and other tools to support a mobile workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shared Services Canada <p>Usability enhancements to GCpedia and GConnex, and a shared intranet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treasury Board Secretariat, Shared Services Canada 	