

**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**

On-line survey on public
perceptions about career
development and the workplace

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This report provides findings from the November 2010 Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) survey, based on an on-line survey conducted between November 3 and 11, 2010 with a representative sample of 1,202 adult Canadians (18+). An on-line methodology was chosen because this option enabled the research to be conducted in a manner consistent with previous research conducted by other suppliers.

The 2010 CERIC survey focused on several topics that pertain to the Canadian workplace and Canadians' perceptions of and approaches to their career development. Key research highlights are summarized below.

Research highlights

At the start of a new year, Canadians are generally happy with their jobs, but less so with the remuneration and rewards they receive

Job satisfaction. Most Canadians are reasonably, if not fully, satisfied with their jobs. Three in ten (31%) are very satisfied and another 50 percent somewhat satisfied, compared with 19 percent who express dissatisfaction. From executives to front-line service workers, and across occupations, Canadians also like the work they do (86% somewhat/strongly agree) and the people they work with (88% somewhat/strongly agree).

Job contentment. Six in ten (62%) Canadians also report they are generally content with their job, with no plans to move on. Among those who hope to move on to something else (33%), they are among those Canadians least content with their remuneration, or younger Canadians (under the age of 30) seeking a role with more responsibility, closer to their field of interest, or that makes better use of their education and training.

Satisfaction with on-the-job rewards and recognition. Canadians are more divided about the kind of remuneration and on-the-job reward and recognition they receive. Four in ten (39%) do not feel they are paid a fair amount for the work they do, and fully half of Canadians doubt they are sufficiently rewarded, or receive adequate recognition, for their efforts at work. Visible minority workers are among the least convinced they receive the recognition they should when they do a good job – 47 percent agree they receive the recognition they should, compared to 59 percent of non-visible minority Canadians.

Notably, organizations' remuneration and reward practices affect retention. Canadians who feel strongly that they are being paid a fair amount for the work they do are more likely to be content with their jobs (with no plans to move on), compared to Canadians overall (79% versus 62%).

Canadians are reasonably, if not fully, convinced their workplaces are respectful and free from discrimination, although visible minority workers are less certain on this point

Perceptions of a respectful workplace. Canadians generally feel their workplace is respectful and free from discrimination, although less so visible minority Canadians. Overall, a majority describe their workplace as either very (39%) or somewhat (43%) inclusive. But, visible minority workers are clearly less convinced. Although few think their workplace is *not* inclusive, only 28 percent of visible minority Canadians describe their workplace as *very* inclusive, compared to 41 percent of non-visible minority Canadians.

Regardless of occupation, education or income, Canadians are universally more engaged with their jobs the more they feel their workplace is inclusive. In fact, Canadians who feel strongly that their workplace is

respectful and free from discrimination are twice as likely as others to be very satisfied with their jobs.

Canadians report mixed satisfaction with performance management and career advancement in their organizations

Satisfaction with performance management. Canadians express fairly tepid levels of satisfaction with their organization's performance management practices. Most are either somewhat satisfied (48%) or even dissatisfied (33%) with their employer's performance management practices; few (16%) are *very* satisfied. Canadians across socio-demographic groups typically hold this view, although satisfaction with performance management is more evident among workers in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

Understanding of career advancement. Perhaps as a result of their perceptions of performance management practices, Canadians are typically not entirely clear on what they need to do to advance in their organizations. With the exception of two in ten (19%) who strongly agree they know what they need to do, most Canadians either have only some idea (49% somewhat agree they know what they need to do) or little at all (19% somewhat/6% strongly disagree).

How do Canadians view others' opportunities for advancement compared to their own? Overall, Canadians are more likely to *disagree* (60%) than agree (35%) with the statement "I feel others have better opportunities for advancement." However, visible minority Canadians are more likely to feel others have better opportunities (53% versus 32% of non-visible minority Canadians), and that their ethnic or cultural background has hindered their advancement (37% versus 7%). In short, visible minority Canadians are as likely as non-visible minority Canadians to say they understand what they need to do to advance in their organization, but they are *much* less convinced it's a level playing field.

As they look to 2011, Canadians are fairly optimistic about their career goals

Meeting career goals. Despite the pressure placed on them during the recession, the Canadian public is reasonably bullish about their career. Three-quarters of Canadians are somewhat (50%) or very (26%) satisfied

with their ability to meet their career goals, though those who remain unemployed are much less positive (40% versus 76% satisfied). Indeed, lack of job opportunities is clearly the top source of frustration among Canadians dissatisfied with their career outcomes.

Top career information sources. Canadians turn, first and foremost, to their colleagues for guidance. Up since 2007, co-workers and associates (68%, up 2 points) are now Canadians' top source for information and guidance about their careers, followed closely by other friends and neighbours (65%), newspapers (62%) and parents (61%). Slightly smaller proportions report they regard such sources as Internet career sites (58%) and government employment centres (53%) as helpful (both up 6 points since 2007), followed by community-based employment agencies (43%, unchanged since 2007), instructors and educational staff other than a counsellor (42%, down 6), professors (40%, first time asked), high school teachers (36%, down 5) and human resource specialists (37%, down 7). Even smaller groups of Canadians turn to a variety of other sources, including career specialists and counsellors in an educational setting (37%, down 5) or in private practice (30%, down 6).

Value of professional career counselling programs. A majority of Canadians see the value of a professional career counselling program, but fewer are certain they would use one. When asked directly, most Canadians deem access to professional career counselling programs as very (27%) or somewhat (52%) valuable, but when asked how likely they would be to use them, fewer Canadians are certain they would use them (16% very certain, 39% somewhat certain). Canadians more certain they would use career counselling programs are typically those dissatisfied with their careers and/or those who desire to move on to a new line of work.

Canadians look first and foremost to on-line sources when seeking a new position or job, but few use social media tools

Top job search tools and tactics. Overall, Canadians are most likely to rely on on-line websites (48%) for job opportunities, followed by print media (30%), word-of-mouth/networking (19%) and employment agencies (12%). Among those Canadians who turn to websites for information on employment opportunities, no single site stands out as a 'go-to' site for information about potential jobs.

Canadians do not differ much in their preferred job search tools and tactics, although today's students are much more likely to turn to job postings on-line – from a variety of websites – compared to the average Canadian (73%, compared to 55% overall). In addition, the use of social media tools (such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) for job search purposes is *not* widespread among Canadians. Almost half (46%) report they do not use or are not interested in using them to advance their career goals. Among those who do, they are most likely to turn to company websites (28%), followed by social networking sites (12%), such as Facebook, and professional networking sites (9%), such as LinkedIn.

The hidden job market. Canadians heard more positive news about the country's labour markets and economy as the year wound down. Yet, competition among job seekers remains fierce, and many Canadians are using gutsier, more pro-active tactics to catch the eye of employers. Overall, two-thirds of Canadians (65%) report they've tapped the hidden job market (i.e., unadvertised job sources). Large numbers say active networking (73%), submitting unsolicited resumes (59%) and in-person employer cold-calls (56%) are all tactics they've used to secure a new position.

In today's tough job market, visible minority Canadians, in particular, are finding more success with unconventional job search methods. Among Canadians, they most aggressively mine their networks (nine in ten versus seven in ten non-visible minority Canadians), and are more likely than other Canadians to have found submitting unsolicited resumes (73% versus 57%) and accessing unadvertised job sources (71% versus 56%) as important to securing a job.

Canadian youth more often than not appreciate their parents' involvement in their careers

Role of parents. In general, Canadians are much more likely to describe their parents' role in their careers as supportive rather than over-involved. One-third of Canadians say their parents have been "wonderfully supportive" of their career goals. This rises to more than half of Canadian youth (18 to 24 years), who typically characterize their boomer parents as wonderfully supportive (54%), with another two in ten who say their parents are supportive, but don't know how to help (a proportion identical to those in older generations). Contrary to the common perception of this generation's "helicopter parents," few characterize their parents as overbearing (5%). Indeed, rather than a source of career angst, Canadians with supportive parents are more likely than others to be satisfied with their ability to meet their career goals.

How parents can help. Many Canadians think that parents can help their children's career development by providing them with a range of opportunities and experiences. The most important ways include: encouraging them to learn from their experiences (by succeeding or failing) (56%); exposing children to a range of character-building experiences such as sports and hobbies (51%); helping children develop career-related skills (39%); encouraging children to volunteer in a variety of places (32%); talking to children about career choices (31%); and exposing children to a variety of careers (28%). Notably, these results are consistent among Canadians with and without children.