



Impact

MARCH 2005

COMPENSATION EMPLOYEES' UNION

Survey says members are satisfied with CEU's performance

"Are we representing the views of the majority of members?" That's a question we regularly ask ourselves – and it's a difficult one for the CEU Executive to answer.

The most effective way of getting an objective answer to this question is through an independent survey. The last time we hired a polling firm to survey CEU members was 1997. The results of that survey helped us to set bargaining priorities and service levels that were relevant in the climate of the day.

Since then, the WCB has been in constant turmoil due to legislative changes, downsizing, and reorganization. We recognized the need to look outside the WCB for ways to protect members' rights and to provide effective representation. During this time, we also affiliated to the larger labour movement through the BCGEU.

Given all this, we decided that it was again time to survey the membership to see if you think we're on the right track. With the survey results now in, we're pleased to say that most of you think we are.

We hired a polling company, Strategic Communications, to do the survey. They randomly selected 501 members in the province to participate. The margin of error on a sample of this size is 3.3%, 19 times out of 20.

The survey posed questions on your views of the performance of the CEU, changes in the workplace, and the impact of government on our work at the WCB.

How you rated our performance

Overall, you said that you are familiar with the activities of the union and are satisfied with the performance of the CEU in all the areas that were tested.

Satisfaction with the union's overall performance was very high with 75% of you indicating you are satisfied and 23% indicating you are very satisfied. These satisfaction levels indicate that the CEU is performing its functions well. Just over 8% of you said you were dissatisfied with the union's performance. These are the two main reasons given for this dissatisfaction:

1. The union is not aggressive enough at negotiations
2. The Executive is more interested in helping management appease members than representing our interests

When asked to rate the specific activities in which the CEU engages, you also gave us high ratings (see box below). You gave the lowest rating to the negotiation of collective agreements.

Although 79% of you said you were satisfied in the area of negotiations, over 18% said you were dissatisfied. When we look at the specific information gathered in the survey, we find that you are concerned about wages, job security, and losing ground on benefits. This is not surprising given that the government has imposed "zero sum" wage and benefit controls through the Public Service Employers' Council (PSEC).

How members rate the CEU's performance

Communications

- Satisfied – 86%
- Very satisfied – 31%

Protecting job security

- Satisfied – over 82%
- Very satisfied – 29%

Negotiating collective agreements

- Satisfied – 79%
- Dissatisfied – 18%

Individual assistance

Members seeking help in the past 12 months: 39%

Rating of CEU's response to these requests:

- Satisfied – 83%
- Very satisfied – 46%

Please Note: Whenever we quote the "satisfied" rating in this newsletter, it includes the "very satisfied" responses. Similarly, whenever we quote the "dissatisfied" rating, it includes the "very dissatisfied" responses.

Change is affecting jobs and services

We wanted to find out if you think that reorganization at the WCB and legislative, regulatory, and policy changes have affected the

services you provide. We also wanted to know if you think these changes have affected your work environment. Your answers in these areas show clearly that you think change has affected the quality of the work you do and the services you provide.

Legislative, regulatory, and policy changes

Almost half of you reported that the recent changes have made no difference to your jobs. However, of those of you who did report that your jobs have been affected:

- Over 39% said your jobs are worse
- Over 16% said your jobs are much worse
- Only 8% reported an improvement in your jobs

The survey did not track answers by job classification, but we can speculate that the negative responses may reflect how members in claims and prevention are feeling, as these are the two areas affected most directly by the legislative, policy, and regulatory changes.

When looking at the effects of changes to services to employers and workers:

- 41% of you think that you are able to provide about the same level of service to employers
- 39% of you think you are able to provide the same level of service to workers

A closer look at this issue shows an interesting difference in how you think workers are affected. Almost three times as many of you believe services for workers have worsened, compared to those who believe these services have improved. (See Table 1 below.)

Table 1 – How CEU members think change has affected service to employers and workers

Effect of change	On Service to Employers	On Service to Workers
No change in quality	41%	39%
Service has improved	22%	13%
Service has declined	22%	36%

Reorganization

One third of members said “yes” when asked whether the reorganization at the WCB had adversely affected them. Three sorts of adverse effects dominated the results:

1. Over 42% of you experiencing an adverse effect attributed it to positions being made redundant or loss of benefits due to outsourcing.

2. Over 20% reported more work and/or unrealistic expectations from management.
3. Just over 12% reported problems related to lack of job security.

When comparing the two types of changes, we generally found that you view the effects of the legislative, regulatory, and policy changes more negatively than the effects of reorganization.

Given how many of you believe there has been no change in service quality after reorganization or the legislative changes, we have to ask – is all the turmoil worth it?

CEU should be involved in lobbying

As noted earlier, we decided we must look beyond the WCB’s walls to consider the outside influences affecting us, so that we can do the best job possible of defending your work, your jobs, and the WCB as a public institution. This is a new direction for the CEU; therefore, we tried to gauge how strongly you support this direction.

CEU members did show a high level of awareness that the governing party in the province affects the functioning of the WCB.

An overwhelming 87% of you said that you think the effectiveness of the WCB is impacted by which party is in power.

A clear majority of you (61%) believe that your union should be involved in lobbying the government or political parties to promote the interests of the CEU.

A significant minority of you (30%), however, do not support lobbying. This tells us that while the membership understands the relationship between the party in power and the WCB, we need to exercise some caution in how we convey our message to the government.

We will continue to listen to you

We are pleased with the survey results. The CEU continues to be very relevant to you, the members.

The directions we are taking to protect the benefits and security of our employment, and the integrity of the WCB as an institution, are well supported.

However, we will strive to do better in some areas. And, we have noted that many of you may counsel caution, in other areas.

We will listen to all your voices as we make our plans for the future.

We thank all who participated in the survey.

Complete survey results

Are you interested in seeing the complete results of the survey? Check them out on the CEU’s new web site: www.ceu.bc.ca, which we expect to launch the first week in March.