

Research Report

Client Satisfaction Survey – 2009

February, 2010

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Executive Summary

Established in 1995, WorkSafeNB was created from the merger of the Workers' Compensation Board and Occupational Health and Safety Commission of New Brunswick. WorkSafeNB actively promotes the prevention of accidents, provides insurance and related services to the employer community, and delivers prompt, effective and efficient rehabilitation through compensation, medical and vocational services to injured workers. WorkSafeNB's vision is to have healthy and safe workplaces throughout New Brunswick.

Improving services to clients is one of the five strategic goals adopted by WorkSafeNB. As a means of identifying and improving aspects of service delivery, WorkSafeNB recognizes the importance of understanding how clients rate WorkSafeNB's ability to provide quality service.

The Client Satisfaction Study is the primary method by which WorkSafeNB measures its Service Goal, while providing supplementary information to evaluate its Safety, Return-to-Work, and Balance Goals. Covering a range of topics that capture the scope of WorkSafeNB's programs and services to its worker and employer client populations, the Client Satisfaction Study has been fundamental in the assessment of WorkSafeNB's performance in:

- Administering relevant compensation programs and services to both injured workers and employers in a fair and equitable manner;
- Producing and disseminating timely and accurate workers' compensation information pertaining to both injured workers and employers;
- Meeting the claim management needs and demands of injured workers and employers, including timely distribution of income replacement benefits; and,
- Meeting the treatment goals that focus on functional restoration, rehabilitation and recovery of the injured worker to pre-injury status; and,
- Meeting employers' and workers' health and safety requirements under the OHS Act.

The results of the Client Satisfaction Study allow WorkSafeNB to:

- Measure client service levels and provide the necessary framework for the development of a Client Satisfaction Index (CSI) and Awareness Index (AI);
- Assess current performance in achieving outcomes set forth in the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment to service users;

- Provide a benchmark against which future performance can be monitored over time and provide satisfaction trend analyses;
- Contribute to service evaluation and subsequent improvements to the service system; and,
- Ensure future planning and development of services is based on comprehensive, statistically valid information.

This report summarizes the findings from a total of 1,741 telephone interviews with injured workers, general workers, registered employers, non-registered employers, and stakeholders conducted between August 18, 2009 and November 5, 2009. This final report contains both written and graphical interpretation of the study results. A variety of statistical measures were used to extract and summarize the salient features of the data ranging from standard cross-tabulations to more complex multivariate procedures:

- A Client Satisfaction Index (CSI) was calculated for injured workers and registered employers. The index is a composite of elements believed to contribute to client satisfaction.
- An Awareness Index (AI) was also calculated for each of the four respondent groups (injured workers, general workers, registered employers, and non-registered employers). The index is a composite of clients' awareness of specific programs and services provided by WorkSafeNB.

The details have been organized by strategic goal. Overall results incorporating data from all five survey populations is presented first, followed by detailed results by each population segment. However, data may not be included for a particular sample population, when that sample population is statistically too small to provide meaningful data.

The insights obtained from stakeholders who participated in the study added tremendous value and enhanced our understanding of clients' levels of satisfaction with WorkSafeNB. The reader is also advised that any information provided by stakeholders constitutes only current opinion, which is subject to change. Statements only apply to those who participated in the study and cannot be extrapolated to a broader audience or universe. Consequently, stakeholder results should be interpreted judiciously as consultative feedback rather than conclusive results.

Also, throughout the body of the report, stakeholders' own language is used wherever possible. However, for easier reading:

- Verbatim responses are shown in italics and/or quotations;
- French verbatims were translated into English;
- Some comments have been paraphrased and/or slightly edited, staying as close to possible to the original phrases and terms used by respondents; and,
- Comments have been grouped thematically, where possible.

Key Findings

The key findings that emerged from this research study are shown below, grouped along the lines of four of WorkSafeNB’s strategic goals – service, return-to-work, balance and safety:

- Service Goal – “We will provide effective programs and services, implemented with care, compassion, efficiency, promptness, and fairness, to benefit both workers and employers.”
- Return-to-Work Goal – “We will decrease the time by which injured workers return or are ready to return to employment.”
- Balance Goal – “We will provide the best possible benefits to injured workers while maintaining the lowest possible assessment rates for employers.”
- Safety Goal – “Our vigorous pursuit of a safe work culture will lead to a decline in the overall frequency of workplace injuries, and a decline in the perception of the inevitability of workplace injuries in New Brunswick.”

SERVICE GOAL

While WorkSafeNB’s goal of providing effective programs and services, implemented with care, compassion, efficiency, promptness, and fairness to both workers and employers, have, for the most part, been realized, there is evidence that indicates levels of satisfaction may be levelling out or declining.

Client Satisfaction Index

The Client Satisfaction Index (CSI) is a standardized (composite) measure of service indicators judged to be critical to overall satisfaction. In 2009, the CSI for injured workers and registered employers was 78% and 82%, respectively. This represents a decline of 3% in the injured worker population, and a 2% decline in the registered employer population, from 2008. While injured workers’ satisfaction fell below the target of 80%, WorkSafeNB’s goal of providing prompt, effective, efficient, just, fair and caring services to clients (injured workers and registered employers) by maintaining or exceeding high levels of satisfaction, in excess of 80%, have been realized when satisfaction indices for both populations are combined and averaged (80%).

CLIENT SATISFACTION INDICES (2000-2009)

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Injured Workers	78%	81%	83%	80%	82%	86%	81%	80%	83%	80%
Registered Employers	82%	84%	84%	84%	83%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%
AVERAGE	80%	83%	84%	82%	83%	86%	84%	83%	84%	83%

Based on client satisfaction index data, a profile of injured workers who were most satisfied and least satisfied with services provided by WorkSafeNB is shown in the table below.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MOST SATISFIED AND LEAST SATISFIED INJURED WORKERS BASED ON CLIENT SATISFACTION INDICES (2009)

Variable	Most Satisfied	Least Satisfied
Claimant Type	No lost time claimants (81%) Long term medical aid only claimants (80%)	Long term disability claimants (71%)
Education	Less than high school education (80%)	University graduates (77%)
Household Income Per Annum	\$30,000 to \$45,000 (82%)	\$30,000 or less (75%)
Employment Status	Working full-time, 30 hours or more a week (82%)	Not working, on disability (70%)
Age at Injury	60 years of age or more (84%)	40 years of age or younger (78%)
Current Age	65 years of age or more (81%)	55-64 years of age (78%)
Receiving Income Replacement Benefits	No (82%)	Yes (74%)
Returned to Work	Yes (80%)	No (75%)
Used WRC	No (80%)	Yes (74%)
Claim Managed	No (80%)	Yes (76%)

SATISFACTION (COMPLETELY/MOSTLY) WITH ELEMENTS OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY WORKSAFENB IN THE PAST YEAR

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Understanding needs										
Injured Workers ¹	79%	83%	86%	83%	88%	87%	85%	86%	85%	82%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	68% (40)	63% (25)	63% (27)	70% (16)	44% (8)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers ²	90%	91%	96%	92%	92%	96%	94%	93%	94%	92%
Stakeholders (Employers)	80% (47)	68% (27)	84% (36)	87% (24)	67% (12)	--	--	--	--	--
Fairness in handling claim										
Injured Workers	82%	87%	89%	85%	89%	89%	87%	86%	85%	84%
Registered Employers	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Effectively handling problems / effectively handling compensation issues or concerns										
Injured Workers	79%	82%	87%	82%	86%	87%	84%	82%	87%	83%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	64% (38)	55% (22)	70% (30)	70% (16)	44% (8)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	94%	96%	95%	97%	92%	96%	92%	92%	97%	93%
Stakeholders (Employers)	81% (48)	70% (28)	78% (34)	78% (18)	67% (12)	--	--	--	--	--
Accuracy of information received / accuracy of compensation related information										
Injured Workers	84%	88%	90%	86%	89%	90%	89%	87%	90%	85%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	75% (44)	68% (27)	72% (31)	83% (19)	50% (9)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	96%	95%	97%	98%	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%	97%
Stakeholders (Employers)	80% (47)	78% (31)	84% (36)	87% (24)	78% (14)	--	--	--	--	--
Amount of benefits received										
Injured Workers	76%	77%	82%	78%	81%	83%	77%	75%	76%	79%
Registered Employers	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Keeping informed and up-to-date										
Injured Workers	76%	82%	85%	83%	82%	85%	81%	81%	88%	85%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	66% (39)	70% (28)	74% (32)	70% (16)	44% (8)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	91%	94%	96%	95%	92%	95%	93%	91%	93%	91%
Stakeholders (Employers)	75% (44)	70% (28)	81% (35)	83% (19)	78% (14)	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Don't knows and refusals excluded.

² Don't knows and refusals excluded.

SATISFACTION (COMPLETELY/MOSTLY) WITH ELEMENTS OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY WORKSAFENB IN THE PAST YEAR (CONTINUED)

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Handling claim in a timely manner										
Injured Workers	80%	82%	87%	85%	84%	88%	82%	81%	85%	77%
Registered Employers	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Willingness to listen										
Injured Workers	81%	88%	88%	86%	86%	88%	85%	86%	89%	85%
Registered Employers	89%	95%	97%	95%	94%	97%	95%	93%	97%	91%
Prompt service										
Injured Workers	81%	86%	87%	88%	88%	89%	86%	85%	86%	85%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	58% (33)	63% (25)	63% (27)	70% (16)	50% (9)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	95%	94%	97%	97%	96%	95%	92%	95%	97%	95%
Stakeholders (Employers)	76% (45)	70% (28)	84% (37)	83% (19)	72% (13)					
Showing respect / level of respect shown										
Injured Workers	85%	90%	91%	88%	90%	91%	88%	89%	90%	90%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	73% (43)	68% (27)	74% (32)	70% (16)	50% (9)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	97%	97%	97%	97%	95%	97%	96%	95%	98%	98%
Stakeholders (Employers)	86% (51)	80% (32)	86% (37)	87% (24)	83% (15)	--	--	--	--	--
Competence										
Injured Workers	85%	88%	90%	88%	89%	92%	88%	90%	91%	87%
Registered Employers	97%	96%	98%	97%	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%	98%
Professionalism										
Injured Workers	87%	90%	92%	90%	91%	91%	91%	91%	92%	89%
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	76% (45)	68% (27)	79% (34)	74% (17)	44% (8)	--	--	--	--	--
Registered Employers	97%	97%	99%	97%	96%	98%	97%	96%	98%	99%
Stakeholders (Employers)	81% (48)	83% (33)	91% (39)	83% (19)	78% (14)	--	--	--	--	--

On every element of service rated, year-over-year declines in levels of satisfaction were recorded in the injured worker population, with largest declines occurring in the following areas – “willingness to listen” (down 7%); “keeping informed and up-to-date” (down 6%); “showing respect” (down 5%); and, “fairness in handling claim” (down 5%).

In the registered employer population, the largest year-over-year declines were recorded in the following areas – “willingness to listen” (down 6%) and “keeping informed and up-to-date” (down 3%). Modest year-

over-year gains were recorded in the following areas – provision of “prompt service” (up 1%); “accuracy of information” (up 1%); and, “competence” (up 1%).

Stakeholders perceived satisfaction, with respect to the injured worker population, rose year-over year, most significantly in the following areas – “effectively handling problems” (up 9%); “professionalism” (up 8%); and, “accuracy of information received” (up 7%), but declined most significantly in the following areas – “prompt service” (down 5%); and “keeping informed and up-to-date” (down 4%).

And, in the case of registered employers, stakeholders interviewed were of the perception that satisfaction rose year-over-year on every element of service (with the exception of “professionalism” which recorded a drop of 2%), but most significantly in the following areas – “understanding needs” (up 12%); “effectively handling problems” (up 11%); “showing respect” (up 6%); and, “prompt service” (up 6%).

Overall Quality of Service

Overall quality of service ratings stayed roughly the same as last year. Of note:

- Injured workers were more likely than registered employers to tell us that WorkSafeNB either exceeded or failed to meet their expectations.
- In 2009, 4% more injured workers (or 18%) rated the overall quality of service as “failing to meet expectations” when compared with the figure reported in 2008 (14%).

OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICE (2000-2009)

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Exceeded Expectations										
Injured Workers	21%	20%	26%	22%	27%	18%	20%	20%	14%	20%
Registered Employers	11%	12%	11%	14%	14%	11%	13%	6%	11%	11%
Just Met Expectations										
Injured Workers	58%	62%	58%	56%	53%	62%	56%	55%	64%	53%
Registered Employers	65%	68%	71%	69%	67%	71%	60%	66%	70%	73%
Failed to Meet Expectations										
Injured Workers	18%	14%	14%	19%	17%	13%	14%	14%	19%	17%
Registered Employers	7%	6%	6%	5%	7%	4%	4%	9%	4%	7%

In previous years, stakeholders were asked their perceptions of how injured workers and employers would rate service received, using the following response scale - “exceeded, just met, or failed to meet their expectations.” In 2009, this question was replaced with a satisfaction scale (“completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, completely dissatisfied). To that end, 54 or 92% of stakeholders were of the opinion that employers were “completely/mostly satisfied” and 48 or 81% of stakeholders were of the opinion injured workers were “completely/mostly” satisfied with the quality of overall service provided by WorkSafeNB.

- According to stakeholders, this discrepancy between employers’ and injured workers’ perceived satisfaction with overall quality of service may stem from a multitude of factors including, in the case of injured workers, the severity of injury suffered and complexity of claim and, in the case of employers, employer size. More specifically, injured workers with complex claims (mainly long term disability claimants) were perceived to be the least satisfied claimant group, while large-sized employers (with health and safety committees devoted to accident prevention) were perceived to be the most satisfied with the overall quality of service provided.

Based on an analysis of statistical data, characteristics of most satisfied and least satisfied injured workers and registered employers are shown in the table below.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CLIENT POPULATIONS MOST SATISFIED AND LEAST SATISFIED WITH OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICE

Client Population	Most Satisfied	Least Satisfied
Injured Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Lost Time claimants Long Term Medical Aid Only claimants Not receiving income replacement benefits at time of survey Working (either part-time or full-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long Term Disability claimants Receiving income replacement benefits Not working (due to disability) Case managed Employed at a small to medium-sized company Older (50 years of age or more)
Registered Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large employers (\$250,000 or more in annual assessable earnings) Paying monthly assessments (MAAP) Higher than average incidence of claims With a worker injured on the job last year With a worker injured on the job last year who had lost time as a result Currently have an active claim with WorkSafeNB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small employers (\$100,000 or less in annual assessable earnings) Paying annual assessments Low to moderate incidence of claims, on average Did not have a worker injured on the job last year Currently do not have an active claim with WorkSafeNB

Awareness Index

The Awareness Index (AI) is a composite of client awareness of specific programs and services provided by WorkSafeNB.

AWARENESS INDICES (2000-2009)

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Injured Workers	73%	74%	72%	71%	72%	72%	70%	65%	66%	68%
General Workers	68%	69%	72%	69%	71%	75%	75%	72%	65%	61%
Registered Employers	80%	83%	83%	82%	84%	87%	81%	80%	78%	78%
Non-Registered Employers	71%	73%	68%	77%	69%	74%	77%	71%	61%	62%
AVERAGE	74%	75%	74%	75%	74%	77%	76%	72%	68%	67%

Level of overall awareness (as determined by the Awareness Index) declined slightly in each of the four client populations, by 1% in the injured worker and general worker segments and 3% in the registered employer segment and 2% in the non-registered employer segment, when compared with 2008 results.

Injured workers were more aware of all six WorkSafeNB programs and services than their general worker counterparts. However, it is worth noting:

- Awareness declined in both employer populations (registered and non-registered) on all programs and services, year-over-year. With respect to non-registered employers, the most substantial drop in awareness occurred with regard to the program that provides money to injured workers for lost employment wages (from 80% in 2008 to 73% in 2009). With respect to registered employers, the most substantial drop in awareness occurred with regard to the program that provides injured workers with costs for approved prescription drugs and physiotherapy (from 80% in 2008 to 73% in 2009). With regard to the remaining programs, declines in awareness of between 1% and 6% occurred in both populations.
- While overall awareness declined in both worker populations (injured and general) there were small increases in level of awareness of accident prevention services and costs for approved drugs and physiotherapy.
- Both injured and general workers were most aware that WorkSafeNB provides money for lost employment wages (83% and 71% respectively).
- Both registered and non-registered employers were most aware that WorkSafeNB provides rehabilitation services (such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy services – 91% and 75% respectively).

Access to WorkSafeNB Information

Respondents were asked if and where they had accessed information on WorkSafeNB’s programs and services. Almost half (48%) of registered employers, slightly over one-quarter (27%) of non-registered employers and roughly one-third of injured workers and general workers (36% and 33% respectively) had accessed information on WorkSafeNB programs and services.

Stakeholders were asked if they had read four WorkSafeNB publications, either in part or in whole. About seven in ten (68%) stakeholders indicated they had read the 2008 Annual Report; 53% had read the 2008 Report to Stakeholders; 39% had read the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment report; and, 34% had read the 2008 Results of the Client Satisfaction Survey.

For injured workers, the most frequently reported method of obtaining WorkSafeNB information on programs and services was through their employer. For registered employers, non-registered employers and general workers, the most popular method of accessing information on WorkSafeNB was via the Internet (68%, 54%, and 52% respectively). Over one-third of registered and non-registered employers also obtained their information directly from WorkSafeNB (38% and 33% respectively).

RETURN-TO-WORK GOAL

Over three-quarters (76%) of injured workers surveyed had returned to work after their most recent injury, representing a slight drop of 3% year-over-year. Before injury, over half (52%) of injured workers surveyed had been employed in the same type of work for more than 10 years.

Overall Quality of Return-to-Work Programs and Services

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of injured workers reported being “completely/mostly” satisfied with the overall quality of service provided to them in relation to WorkSafeNB’s return-to-work programs and services. Eight in ten (80%) registered employers were “completely/mostly” satisfied with the overall quality of service provided to them in relation to WorkSafeNB’s return-to-work programs and services. Many stakeholders, during the course of interviews, shared their perspectives in relation to WorkSafeNB’s return-to-work program. A few believed WorkSafeNB takes a “one size fits all” approach to workplace injuries; they have established protocols or standardized rates of recovery by injury type – rather than assessing injured workers as individuals, with unique underlying circumstances. Also, stakeholders believe the job assistance program provided by WorkSafeNB helps the majority of their injured worker clientele, but workers with transferrable skills (for example, nurses) receive very little training or re-skilling.

Awareness of Workers’ Compensation and Human Rights Duty to Accommodate Legislation

Overall, all five populations were less aware or were *perceived* to be less aware (in the case of stakeholders) of employers’ re-employment obligations under the Workers’ Compensation (WC) Act versus level of awareness of employers’ duty to accommodate under the Human Rights (HR) Act. In fact, of all client populations, non-registered employers, were the least aware of both pieces of legislation (28% and 52%, respectively). Registered employers were most aware of employers’ re-employment obligations under the WC Act (46%) and injured workers were most aware of the duty to accommodate legislation (77%).

AWARENESS OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACT PERTAINING TO THE DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE (2009)

Sample	Percentage of Sample Aware
Under the Workers' Compensation Act employers with 10 or more workers (with the exception of employers in the construction industry) are required to keep a job available to workers injured on the job for up to 2 years.	
Injured Workers	44%
General Workers	41%
Registered Employers	46%
Non-Registered Employers	28%
Stakeholders (Employers' perceived level of awareness)	49% (29)
Under the Human Rights Act employers have a duty to accommodate workers injured on the job who have a temporary or permanent disability	
Injured Workers	77%
General Workers	71%
Registered Employers	70%
Non-Registered Employers	52%
Stakeholders (Employers' perceived level of awareness)	66% (39)

Interviews with stakeholders revealed some interesting comments regarding both Acts. In terms of the Workers' Compensation Act, it was a commonly held belief or perception of stakeholders that most employers were "aware of the legislation in vague terms, but not the specifics (up to two years);" that "employers rarely read legislation, until a workplace accident occurs, until they experience what they are required to do, first hand;" and, "small employers are less likely to be aware versus large employers with corporate HR departments, in-house counsel, or an HR specialist whose job it is to stay on top of legislative requirements, one that deals with WorkSafeNB on a regular basis."

Case Management

Approximately one-quarter of injured workers surveyed had used the services of a case manager. Four in ten (41%) case managed injured workers reported being "completely satisfied" with the overall quality of service provided to them by their case manager; while, 34% were "mostly satisfied." Slightly under one-quarter (24%) reported being "completely/mostly dissatisfied." Just over one-quarter (26%) of registered employers were "completely satisfied" and roughly six in ten (58%) were "mostly satisfied" with the overall service provided to them by the case manager assigned to their claim. Interestingly, stakeholders were of the perception that only 2% of injured workers were "completely satisfied" versus 75% of injured workers being "mostly satisfied" with their case manager. When combined these "completely/mostly satisfied" figures (injured workers versus stakeholder perceptions of injured workers' level of satisfaction) are essentially the same, however the distribution is remarkably different.

SATISFACTION (COMPLETELY/MOSTLY) WITH OVERALL CASE MANAGER SERVICE (2009) – INJURED WORKERS AND REGISTERED EMPLOYERS

Would you say that you were completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, or completely dissatisfied with the quality of service provided to you by your WorkSafeNB case manager?				
Injured Workers	Completely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Mostly Dissatisfied	Completely Dissatisfied
	41%	34%	12%	12%
Thinking about the last claim a worker of yours made to WorkSafeNB, would you say that you are completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with the overall quality of service provided by WorkSafeNB to you, as an employer?				
Registered Employers	Completely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Mostly Dissatisfied	Completely Dissatisfied
	26%	58%	7%	2%
Overall, in your opinion, would you say that injured workers are completely satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, or completely dissatisfied with the quality of service provided to them by case managers?				
Stakeholders (Injured Workers)	Completely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Mostly Dissatisfied	Completely Dissatisfied
	2% (1)	75% (44)	10% (6)	2% (1)

Stakeholder comments provided deeper context. Several common themes emerged: including timeliness of response (“claims not addressed for weeks”) was by far the number one negative noted, along with case managers not believing injured workers; poor communication and follow-up (“lack of personal contact”); failure to help employers make workplace accommodations; sending a worker back to work too soon (“unrealistic return-to-work plans”); lack of discretionary powers with respect to individual claimant protocols (“they tend to group individuals together, when every individual has different needs”); not understanding fully the nature of injury (using a “one size fits all approach” when workers are individuals, with different underlying health problems and rates of recovery); and, denial of claims.

Workers’ Rehabilitation Centre (WRC)

In 2008, 11% of injured workers surveyed had used the programs and services offered at the Workers’ Rehabilitation Centre (WRC) located in Grand Bay, representing an increase of 2% from 2007. In 2009, this number dropped by one percentage point to 10%. In terms of overall satisfaction with the quality of service provided by the WRC, three out of four injured workers who used the services were “completely/mostly” satisfied with the services.

BALANCE GOAL

Balancing the best possible benefits to injured workers with the lowest possible assessment rates for employers is a fundamental principle of the workers’ compensation system. It is a delicate balancing act, satisfying the needs of two divergent populations with very distinct needs.

WORKSAFE NB BALANCES THE BEST POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO INJURED WORKERS WITH THE LOWEST POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT RATES FOR EMPLOYERS (2009)

WorkSafeNB balances the best possible benefits to injured workers with the lowest possible assessment rates for employers	Yes	No	Don't know/ not sure / no opinion
Injured workers	55%	25%	20%
General workers	46%	18%	36%
Registered employers	62%	21%	17%
Non-Registered employers	49%	20%	31%
Stakeholders	75% (44)	19% (11)	8% (4)

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Stakeholders were most likely to agree with this statement (75%), followed by registered employers (62%), while general workers and non-registered employers were least likely (46% and 49% respectively). Just over half (55%) of injured workers agreed with this statement. However, the question evoked a lot of “don’t know” responses from registered employers (17%); non-registered employers (31%); general workers (36%); and, injured workers (20%). This suggests that these populations do not feel confident enough to provide an assessment of whether or not this statement is true.

Reasonableness of Income Replacement Benefits

In 2009, 55% of injured workers’ agreed with the statement “the amount of income replacement benefits provided to injured workers is reasonable,” representing a 20% year-over-year drop. Conversely, 63% of registered employers agreed the amount of income replacement benefits provided to injured workers is reasonable, representing a 10% year-over-year drop. In terms of general workers, 41% believe the amount of income replacement benefits provided to injured workers is reasonable (with only 8% completely agreeing with this statement and, 32% without an opinion). This represents a drop of 18% year-over-year. In 2009, the percentage of non-registered employers who agreed that the income replacement benefits provided to injured workers is reasonable, fell 5% to 48% from 53% in 2008. Again, 35% of non-registered employers were unable to provide an opinion. Over six in ten stakeholders (64%) surveyed were of the perception that injured workers would agree the amount of income replacement benefits provided is reasonable, versus 70% in 2008.

Reasonableness of Assessment Rates

In 2008, 66% of registered employers agreed with the statement “assessment rates paid by employers to WorkSafeNB are reasonable,” representing a decline of 3% from 2007. The level of agreement on this statement remained relatively unchanged in 2009, falling only 1% from the level of agreement recorded in 2008. Fewer stakeholders in 2009 agreed with this statement than in 2008; just over half of the stakeholders surveyed (53%) agreed that they were of the perception that employers felt the assessment rates they pay to WorkSafeNB are reasonable (2009), versus 68% in 2008 who “completely/mostly” agreed.

Accountability to Stakeholders

A part of WorkSafeNB’s mandate is “to demonstrate accountability to the stakeholders (workers and employers) of New Brunswick.” About seven in ten injured workers and registered employers agreed with this statement, 69% and 71%, respectively. Overall, stakeholders were most likely to agree with this statement (88%) versus 60% of non-registered employers. It should be noted, however, that this question also produced a lot of “don’t knows” in the general worker (23%) and non-registered employer (22%) populations.

WORKSAFE NB DEMONSTRATES ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE STAKEHOLDERS OF NB (2009)

WorkSafeNB demonstrates accountability to the stakeholders of New Brunswick	Yes	No	Don't know/ not sure / no opinion
Injured workers	69%	20%	11%
General workers	62%	15%	23%
Registered employers	71%	17%	12%
Non-Registered employers	60%	18%	22%
Stakeholders	88% (52)	7% (4)	5% (3)

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Appeals

In 2008, eight in ten (79%, down from 83% in 2007) injured workers were aware that they had the right to appeal any decision WorkSafeNB made with respect to their claim. This was the lowest ever recorded level of awareness of injured workers acknowledging their right to appeal a decision. Injured workers were asked to rate their satisfaction with aspects of the appeals process. Of those injured workers who had filed an appeal, the greatest degree of satisfaction was with the information received from the Appeals Tribunal after filing during the appeal process (66%, unchanged from 2007), while the lowest degree of satisfaction was with the timeliness of response by the Appeals Tribunal Staff (57%, down 6% from 2007).

COMPLETELY/MOSTLY SATISFIED WITH SERVICE ASPECTS OF THE APPEAL PROCESS (2004-2008)

Service Aspect	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Process required to file appeal	64%	58%	63%	53%	62%
Information received from the Appeals Tribunal after filing during the appeals process	66%	66%	67%	68%	67%
Timeliness of response by Appeals Tribunal to telephone enquiries during appeals process	58%	59%	63%	63%	61%
Timeliness of your response by the Appeals Tribunal staff to correspondence during appeals process	57%	63%	70%	66%	60%
Average scores	61%	62%	66%	63%	63%

Caution: Extremely small sample sizes – percentages provided for directional purposes only.

In 2009, the injured worker and registered employer populations were asked “do you know the process required to file an appeal?” About four in ten injured workers and registered employers were aware of the process required to file an appeal (42% and 39%, respectively).

DO YOU KNOW THE PROCESS REQUIRED TO FILE AN APPEAL (YES/NO)?

Sample	Percentage of Total Sample who Agreed
Do you know the process required to file an appeal (yes/no)?	
Injured Workers	42%
Registered Employers	39%

SAFETY GOAL

In 2009, awareness of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its regulations was highest in the registered employer population (79%) compared with 62% of non-registered employers. Awareness was lowest in the general worker population (59%). In contrast, 67% of injured workers reported being aware of the OHS Act and its regulations.

Internal Responsibility

In terms of internal responsibility, while most stakeholders perceived employers take responsibility for the health and safety of their workplaces, fewer stakeholders perceived that employees take responsibility (84% versus 75% respectively). Comparatively, injured workers were less likely to agree that their employer took personal responsibility for the health and safety of their workplace, with general workers most likely to agree (76% versus 83%).

Sample	Percentage of Total Respondents who Agreed with Statement
My/Employer DOES NOT take personal responsibility for the health and safety of my workplace (yes/no)	
Injured Workers	24%
General Workers	13%
My/Employees DO NOT take personal responsibility for the health and safety of our workplace (yes/no)	
Registered Employers	5%
Non-Registered Employers	22%
Stakeholders	25% (15)
I take personal responsibility for the health and safety of my workplace (yes/no)	
Injured workers	93%
General workers	93%
Registered employers	91%
Non-registered employers	98%
My co-workers take personal responsibility for the health and safety of our workplace (yes/no)	
Injured workers	83%
General workers	83%
Employers TAKE responsibility for the health and safety of their workplaces	
Stakeholders	84% (51)

Perceptions of Workplace Accidents and Injuries

In 2008, four statements were added to the survey to better understand client perceptions about workplace accidents and injuries in New Brunswick, using an agree scale:

1. Workplace accidents are a serious problem in New Brunswick today.
2. Public awareness and education programs make me think more about the risks of accidents and injuries in the workplace.
3. We are paying about the right amount of attention to reducing workplace accidents and injuries in New Brunswick today.
4. Workplace accidents and injuries are an inevitable part of life.

Responses to these questions in 2009 revealed that, in almost all cases, the level of agreement with each statement rose, year-over-year, with two notable exceptions – the percentage of stakeholders agreeing that “workplace accidents and injuries are a serious problem in New Brunswick today” declined significantly (from 80% in 2008 to 59% in 2009) and agreement with the statement “workplace accidents and injuries are an inevitable part of life” rose substantially (from 30% in 2008 to 54% in 2009). Also, injured workers’ agreement with the statement “workplace accidents and injuries are an inevitable part of life” also increased year-over-year, up 6% from 65% in 2008 to 71% in 2009.

Of note, injured workers were more likely than any other group to agree that injuries are a serious problem and are an inevitable part of life. However, registered employers were more likely to agree with the

statement “we are paying about the right amount of attention to accidents,” than any other group surveyed.

AGREEMENT (COMPLETELY/MOSTLY) ON STATEMENTS ON WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS (2006-2009)

Sample	2009	2008	2007	2006
Workplace accidents and injuries are a serious problem in New Brunswick today				
Injured Workers	79%	76%	--	--
General Workers	61%	66%	--	--
Registered Employers	60%	55%	--	--
Non-Registered Employers	57%	50%	--	--
Stakeholders	59% (35)	80% (32)	--	--
General Population	--	66%	--	63%
Public awareness and education programs make me think more about the risks of accidents and injuries in the workplace				
Injured Workers	89%	89%	--	--
General Workers	88%	92%	--	--
Registered Employers	91%	90%	--	--
Non-Registered Employers	91%	88%	--	--
Stakeholders	98% (58)	88% (35)	--	--
General Population	--	72%	--	75%
We are paying about the right amount of attention to reducing workplace accidents and injuries in New Brunswick today				
Injured Workers	76%	72%	--	--
General Workers	76%	78%	--	--
Registered Employers	89%	82%	--	--
Non-Registered Employers	77%	76%	--	--
Stakeholders	71% (42)	78% (31)	--	--
General Population	--	67%	--	68%
Workplace accidents and injuries are an inevitable part of life				
Injured Workers	71%	65%	--	--
General Workers	52%	55%	--	--
Registered Employers	60%	57%	--	--
Non-Registered Employers	61%	51%	--	--
Stakeholders	54% (32)	30% (12)	--	--
General Population	57%	69%	--	66%

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Injured workers, registered employers and stakeholders were asked “what, if anything, do you think WorkSafeNB could do to improve services they provide to injured workers and employers?” Interestingly, 30% of injured workers did not offer any suggestions for improvement, remarking that the services provided to them were fine the way they are. In contrast, only 19% of registered employers felt this way (things are fine the way they are), with 26% indicating they “didn’t know” how WorkSafeNB could improve the service it provides to them.

MOST COMMON SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT (INJURED WORKERS AND REGISTERED EMPLOYERS)

Population	Suggestions for Improvement
Injured Workers	Encourage staff to more pleasant in their dealings (15%) Better communication / access to information (13%) Increase amount of benefits paid (11%) Provide greater / more access to information (11%)
Registered Employers	Better communication / access to information (12%) Provide greater / more access to information (12%)

From the stakeholder population six key themes or suggestions for improvement to services WorkSafeNB provides to its injured worker population emerged, four of which deal with communications-related issues. More specifically:

- Create greater awareness of programs and services by providing more information through public awareness campaigns, on-site seminars, and increased communications with injured workers;
- Improve written communications by presenting written information in simple, easy-to-understand formats;
- Improve/increase communications between WorkSafeNB, injured workers and their respective employers by providing more information on claims and claims process and having more meetings where employer and worker are present;
- Increase amount of consultation with injured workers by improving level of openness and transparency;
- Improve relationships between injured workers and WorkSafeNB staff by treating injured workers professionally and with respect and through more face contact with case managers and improving case manager follow-up; and,
- Handle claims in a timely manner through faster collection of information required to process injured workers’ claims (medical and otherwise).

And, four key themes or suggestions for improvement to services WorkSafeNB provides to its employer population emerged. More specifically:

- Improve awareness of programs and services/increase frequency and level of communications with all companies. Examples provided by stakeholders included creation of a newsletter in either hard copy or electronic format; production of pamphlets on basic metrics and proposed legislative changes linked to a website portal; supplying employers with more publications, posters and signage; increasing the amount of information sessions provided by WorkSafeNB; and by making it mandatory for employers to attend WorkSafeNB information sessions.
- Improve awareness of programs and services/increase frequency and level of communications with small employers on WorkSafeNB's programs and services by creating an awareness campaign directed at small businesses and increasing number of on-site visits.
- Emphasize re-employment obligations/duty to accommodate by ensuring employers are aware of their responsibilities in this regard; and,
- Improve relationships by increasing communications between case managers, workers and their employers by improving mechanisms available for follow-up (for example, create a secure, online mechanism to allow employers access to information on injured workers' claims.)

Recommendations

Using the findings emanating from the research, five key recommendations to improve service are provided below:

1. *Improve communications between WorkSafeNB staff and injured workers.* Data indicates that injured workers are less aware of the services and programs offered by WorkSafeNB and less satisfied with the level of respect and responsiveness shown by WorkSafeNB during the management of claims. Injured workers' experience with WorkSafeNB may improve, which in turn will affect overall levels of injured workers' satisfaction, if WorkSafeNB focuses on improving service delivery standards. This may include, but not be limited to, an increase in face-to-face contacts with injured workers to address their questions regarding the claims process; the benefits to which they may be eligible and entitled; length of time to first cheque, etc.
2. *Improve services to small employers.* Small employers, while representing the majority of employers paying assessments to WorkSafeNB, actually contribute the smallest amount of assessment dollars, when stacked up against their larger industrial counterparts. It is the 20/80 rule – with 20% of WorkSafeNB's employer population (large employers) paying the lion's share, with the remaining 80% (small employers with \$100,000 or less in assessable earnings) contributing the smallest amount. Regardless, this population appears to be getting the short end of the stick, or at least it is their perception (and substantiated by both quantitative and qualitative data), when it comes to programs and services, tailored to their unique work environments. Also, this population had the lowest level of awareness of WorkSafeNB programs and services available to them along with limited understanding of how assessments are calculated (the formula used) and their legislative requirements and employer obligations.
3. *Conduct qualitative research with Long Term Disability claimants* to determine how their needs can be improved. Long term disability claimants, as in the previous year, are the most dissatisfied of all five injured worker claimant categories.
4. *Develop a secure, online mechanism* by which both employers and injured workers can track compensation claims. This would offset some of the perceived burden case managers are presently working under and serve to provide both employer and injured worker with an open and transparent system to help both manage their claims.
5. *Explore the viability of increasing benefits paid to injured workers.* This finding was underscored by the dramatic year-over-year drop of 20% of injured workers and 6% of registered employers who agreed the level of income replacement benefits provided to injured workers are reasonable.

Methodology

Our approach provides WorkSafeNB with rich, statistically meaningful, relevant and actionable data in which to measure the quality of its programs and services with a view to improving service delivery in future.

In 2009, the Client Satisfaction Study was administered by telephone to:

- 808 Injured Workers – workers who had sustained an injury while working;
- 383 General Workers – workers who had not sustained a workplace injury;
- 291 Registered Employers – employers who have an account with WorkSafeNB and are actively paying assessments;
- 201 Non-Registered Employers – employers who are not required to have an account with WorkSafeNB, as defined by legislation; and,
- 59 Stakeholders – individuals of organizations representing employer, worker and injured worker interests.

APPROACH

As previously stated, the Client Satisfaction Study measures the extent to which client expectations are being met across five main client groups (injured workers; general workers; registered employers; non-registered employers; and, stakeholders). See Appendix A for Detailed Study Methodology.

In the injured worker and registered employer populations, the sampling method was non-proportional stratification by claimant type and employer size. The advantage of this stratification approach is that it provided adequate sample sizes for analysis at a deeper level. However, to bring both samples in line with how each population is currently configured, the sample data was weighted to balance claimant type (injured worker sample) and size (employer sample based on annual assessed earnings).

Overall results of each sample population (excluding stakeholders) may be considered accurate to within plus or minus:

- 3.45% for injured worker
- 5.67% registered employers
- 5.01% general workers
- 6.93% non-registered employers

It is worth noting that sampling error is the only potential error that can be measured. In addition, results of any survey may contain non-sampling error and, in some cases, other types of error. The quality of the survey rests on the effective management of these sources of potential error to achieve the lowest total survey error. Also note that client satisfaction surveys cannot be exact measures of performance, but only approximations at a certain point in time.

With regard to the Stakeholder Survey, it was administered in a format that has been used since its inception – one-on-one telephone interviews, in the respondent’s language of choice (i.e., French or English). A total of 59 interviews were completed, representing a response rate of 45%. Given the small sample, the results are considered qualitative in nature due to the high margin of statistical error.