

# The business system support branch

[Business](#)



This paper is intended to explore and assess the problem of motivation within the Business System Support Branch (BSSB) of Environment Canada. We will exam the reasons for this lack of motivation, compare relevant industry theories concerning the issue of motivation, and make recommendations to aide in resolution of these issues. This paper will provide guidelines and recommendation based on proven research into the causes of motivation, communication, and leadership problems in an attempt to resolve the issues facing both the managers and employees of BSSB. Background

The Business System Support Branch (BSSB) of Environment Canada is in part an amalgamation of dispersed Information Technology personnel from both government agencies and proven industry consultants. The core business function of BSSB is to provide software support, development, and maintenance to all regional and national Environment Canada branches. The BSSB is responsible for creating and maintaining most of the information technology applications within Environment Canada, while keeping with the departmental mandates in terms of preservation and enhancement of the quality of the natural environment.

The BSSB group is divided into 3 separate business lines; MERLIN, for Oracle financials, HRMIS for Human Resources, and ADAM, for application development and maintenance. Each business line is managed by one manager and 20 employees share duties amongst the 3 units. Managers can select any number of the 20 employees to work on a particular project in the respective business lines. Monthly meetings help to communication information amongst the various groups.

Individual departments within Environment Canada have the option of soliciting private consultants for new development, or to contract out to the BSSB for development needs. The BSSB operates like an independent consulting firm, having to compete with private commercial consulting firms by submitting RFPs and RFQs for contracts posted by Environment Canada divisions. Until recently the majority of the new projects and exploratory developmental research was done by BSSB.

Most, if not all new projects and research are now farmed out to eager private consulting companies, more than willing to take advantage of the fruitful government contracts. Symptoms After several interviews and one-on-ones with many of the BSSB employees and managers it became noticeably clear that the BSSB has deep seeded issues concerning motivation, communication or lack there of, and leadership problems. While interviewing BSSB employees and managers we found that people were just not motivated or interested in putting forth an effort in their daily routines.

Several employees complained about not being challenged at work and felt that the mundane paper work and bureaucracy surrounding daily tasks was an insult to their intelligence. Managers struggling to get employees to do their daily tasks often found it hard to get any cooperation from subordinates. Many BSSB employees complained about not seeing a project through to completion. The major complaint for most employees stemmed from requirements of development project without boundaries for completion. Many projects tend to drag on way past their deadline dates.

When asked why, many employees stated that the requirements for projects often changed in the middle of development process, and even to some extent after the project had been completed according to specifications. The dissemination of information between managers and employees is disastrous at best. Managers that meet with clients often don't relay the information to employees until meetings are scheduled, weeks later, and by that point it's often too late. Team work is not an important part of the development process, which in part leads to incomplete or unsatisfactory work.

Employees who are stuck on a problem should be able to approach one of their team members for help or feedback. When asked if any help was provided to developers, one employee mentioned that in monthly meetings problems that has arisen were tackled if there was enough time, often leaving employees with a lesser-faire attitude. Having a secure job in the government has provoked the issue for these employees, they feel that they'll put in their nine to five and let the issues work themselves out.

This has caused frustration on the part of both management and employees, often resulting in employees showing up late or not showing up to work at all. When a job is completed by a member of the BSSB, there is no form of recognition for a job well done. Often employees are handed another task to complete and the circle continues. All new and exciting work is contracted out to third party consultants, in an effort to get the best possible solution for the cheapest price.

When asked why the development employees of the BSSB were not given the task of working on the challenging new efforts, the director explained

that they needed professional experience and a noted track record in order to keep their clients happy. Although employees are often consulted by the third party companies their input is usually arbitrary information concerning policies and regulations. There needs to be a concerted effort on the part of both management and employees in terms of job enrichment, job excitement, and overall job satisfaction if this division of Environment Canada is to succeed in the near future.