

Workers' Compensation in 2010 and Beyond:
Strategic Plan

Solid
Forward-Thinking
Value Adding

WorkSafeTM

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF BC

www.WorkSafebc.com

Foundations of Our Strategy

Our mandate

The origin and fundamental value of workers' compensation rests on the principle of mutual protection arising from the Historic Compromise in which workers relinquished their right to sue their employer and employers agreed to fund a no-fault insurance system.

The British Columbia *Workers Compensation Act* enshrines the Historic Compromise and creates the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). The WCB is an independent agency governed by a Board of Directors appointed by government. The mandate of the WCB, in concert with workers and employers, is to:

- Promote the prevention of workplace injury, illness, and disease
- Rehabilitate those who are injured and provide timely return to work
- Provide fair compensation to replace workers' loss of wages while recovering from injuries
- Ensure sound financial management for a viable workers' compensation system

Our vision

Workers and workplaces safe and secure from injury, illness, and disease.

Our mission

To add value to workers and employers by:

- Assisting them to create a culture of health and safety in the workplace
- Delivering quality decisions and advice
- Providing compassionate and supportive service
- Ensuring solid financial stewardship now and in the future

Our guiding principles and premises

We, the officers and agents of the B.C. Workers' Compensation Board, believe that:

- We must focus on our core mandates – prevention, rehabilitation, and compensation.
- Our principal focus is WorkSafe™ – the promotion of healthy and safe workplaces through enforcement, consultation, and education.
- The WCB is most effective when it is dedicated to the WorkSafe initiative, facilitating the co-operation of workers and employers in preventing workplace injuries, diseases, and fatalities.
- Societal and cultural change is essential for creating a culture of health and safety in the workplace and we play a principal role in effecting this change.
- When a worker is injured, our priority must be the rehabilitation and return to work of that worker.
- We must be driven by a service orientation that is attained through effective delivery of WCB programs and services. In doing so, we are dedicated to empowering our front-line staff through support and ongoing development and training opportunities.
- We must preserve the financial integrity and stability of the system.
- We must add value to the workers' compensation system and be an asset to our stakeholders and to the province of B.C.
- We must remain sensitive to the strategic priorities and comply with the legislated directions of the B.C. government.

For a complete list of our guiding principles and premises, see Appendix B on page 20.

Our enablers

To fulfill its mandate, the WCB is enabled by:

- Transparent and accountable policies and regulations that define the type and amounts of compensation paid to injured workers, prescribe occupational health and safety standards, and determine how the system is funded and administered
- A full range of responsive programs that meet the individual prevention, compensation, assessments, and rehabilitation needs of stakeholders
- Professional, compassionate, and highly trained people working together to deliver quality service
- Effective and efficient processes that ensure quality and service excellence and eliminate bureaucracy
- Innovative and responsive products designed to meet the needs of stakeholders throughout the system

Those we serve

The WCB is an independent statutory agency that serves nearly two million workers and approximately 173,000 employers throughout B.C. It is funded by insurance premiums paid by registered employers and by investment returns. In administering the *Workers Compensation Act*, the WCB remains separate and distinct from government; however, it is accountable to the public, through government, in its role of protecting and maintaining the overall well-being of the workers' compensation system.

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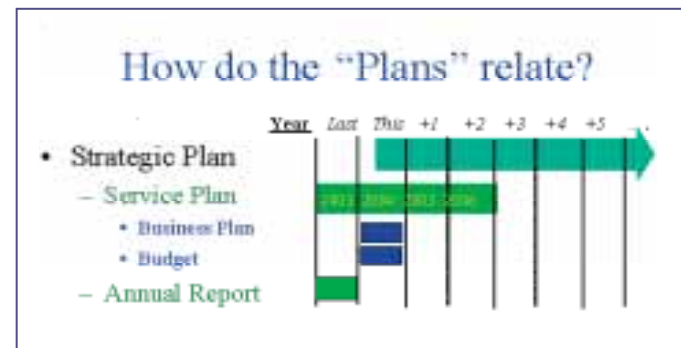
Workers' Compensation in 2010 and Beyond: A Strategic Plan

The Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. is dedicated to working with our partners to achieve our vision: workers and workplaces safe and secure from injuries, illness, and disease. Our mandate to provide insurance coverage to employers and compensation to injured workers and their families is just the beginning of our commitment. Our mission is to assist the workers and employers of British Columbia to create and sustain a culture of health and safety in the workplace through our compassionate and supportive services, sound decisions and advice, and solid financial stewardship. This is more than our mission; it is our passion.

Through our annual business plans and three-year service plans, we look ahead – plan for the immediate future – to improve in all that we do for the workers and employers of this province. Beyond the intermediate horizon of the next two or three years lies a future that is less defined but no less important. It is a future that can only be shaped in a new way, where the mandate and practice of workers' compensation are fundamentally altered to take advantage of new technology and innovative ideas. That future is the subject of this plan.

Why a strategic plan? By many standards, the WCB of B.C. is already among the best workers' compensation systems in North America. Despite our accomplishments and relative success, stakeholders and reviewers (particularly those involved in the royal commission, administrative inventories, and core reviews) have identified areas for improvement. Internal reviews and focus groups with workers and employers also identify the need for change. We are committed to service and continuous improvement and an overarching, longer range plan will help take us there. If we are passionate about what we do and work toward our shared vision for the future, our stakeholders will share in creating a workers' compensation system that is second to none. Most importantly, our strategic plan keeps us focused on making workplaces safer and healthier and the future more secure for workers and their families.

What should that future look like? What actions should we take today to move us toward a new way of operating, delivering services, and supporting our stakeholders in our quest for workplaces safe and secure from injury, illness, and disease? The following sections explore the possibilities



by proposing what that future will look like and defining, in broad terms, the strategies to carry us there. Our annual business plans and three-year service plans take us part of the way each year.

The front and back covers of this document contain our mandate, mission, and our guiding principles and premises. These statements provide the foundation for our strategy. B.C.'s population and economy provide the context in which our strategy must operate and be effective. That context is changing. Our population is aging, our workforce growing, and our economy shifting and expanding. This context carries the potential of increased injuries and duration of disability. This strategic plan sets out our course and commitment to a common view of a shared future.

Moving from good to great: Building for our future

We have a solid foundation upon which to build:

- A focused and forward-looking Board of Directors committed to furthering the best interests of the workers' compensation system
- A skilled, dedicated, committed team with solid values and a common will to make change
- A declining injury rate
- A solid financial base supporting stable rates for a growing B.C. economy
- Much-improved business processes and information systems infrastructure, and the best business intelligence capability in our industry

Despite this, not all of our stakeholders view the WCB as an asset. Operating silos have contributed to the appearance of a fortress mentality. Our value proposition is not well understood nor are we perceived by all stakeholders to be adding value. Since we don't strive for "return customers," we have lacked a customer service focus and have not always "finished" each service transaction in a way that earned appreciation.

Our goal is to earn the trust and respect of our stakeholders and play a strong leadership role in championing safety and disability prevention in B.C. If we are to take the WCB to the next level, to move from being "good" to "great," we must earn that respect and be perceived as an asset.

The future state of workers' compensation in British Columbia

The first step to creating a new reality is describing it. The future state of workers' compensation in British Columbia will be defined by performance that builds upon past accomplishments and current efforts. By comparison with other similar agencies, the WCB of B.C.'s performance is among the best in Canada and comparisons on an international scale confirm that the B.C. workers' compensation system provides excellent, cost-effective benefits to workers, employers, and citizens. In its future state, the functional activities and services of the WCB will have changed. Rather than focus on the detailed structure and programs, the following section provides a narrative functional description of the WCB as the strategies described in later sections reach their full impact. Many of the features of this future state will be in place shortly, while others will evolve over time.

This future state is not an end point. This strategic plan defines where we intend to be by 2010 as we work with our stakeholders and customers toward achieving our shared vision of workers and workplaces safe and secure from injury, illness, and disease.

Prevention focused

Our vision for 2010:

- Society has changed and there is a common acceptance that preventable workplace injuries are not an inevitable and acceptable cost of doing business. Owners and CEOs of firms are proud of their safety records and view excellence in health and safety as a valuable company asset. Reports of the joint health and safety committee are transmitted to boards of directors, and public accounting for the health and safety of employees is a standard part of companies' annual reports.
- Prevention of injury, illness, and disease is built into all companies' strategic planning, bid processes, and collective agreements.
- The best scientific, medical, and psychological evidence is available from the WCB on any health and safety topic needed by workers and employers.
- Industry works with the WCB to identify potential future hazards, risks, and mitigation strategies.
- Emerging issues and trends are identified by sophisticated data mining and medical research techniques. New materials and medical evidence that lead to the identification of probable agents of illness and disease are tracked, linked, and used to inform prevention strategies in the workplace. For conditions with low incidence, the data from many jurisdictions is pooled to gain statistical power and confidence about conclusions. Action to prevent exposure is taken early.

- Regulation reform is a continuous and routine feature of the system with workplace partners involved and engaged in the development of new requirements and the revision or retirement of outdated ones.
- Co-operative and collaborative methods are used in industry; the WCB is a support, a resource, and an adviser to the workplace parties and its input and advice are sought and valued.
- Predictable, consistent, and fair enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation has a profile that is respected as an important and necessary component for accident prevention in the workplace.
- Industries develop standards of practice and qualification that foster and support safe workplaces. Industry associations promote the WorkSafe message and are advocates for both primary and secondary prevention.
- Intentional or negligent practices that could lead to harm are not tolerated by society. There is an expectation of accountability and the WCB is respected as the authority to enforce that accountability.
- Our school systems continuously educate and graduate young people for whom wearing protective gear and identifying workplace hazards is as automatic as looking both ways before crossing the street. This safe generation of young workers has beliefs and attitudes that lead to safe work practices and help foster safer workplaces, homes, and communities.

Service/customer centred

Our vision for 2010:

- The WCB is known for its service culture with stakeholders expressing high levels of satisfaction with WCB automated, personalized online, telephone, and in-person customer service channels.
- Timeliness of service is a hallmark of the operation. Customer input determines the relative importance of various aspects of service (such as payment timeliness, courtesy, accessibility) and customer input also determines the standard for each of these measures. Constant monitoring, feedback, and process improvements allow the WCB to meet and exceed the standards for these measures.
- Workers, employers, family members, and the public receive outstanding service; the resources/energies of the organization are directed toward meeting that need. Whether it is through the provision of payments or information, service delivery drives organizational efforts.
- The WCB has an effective system for measuring demand for its services and the capacity to meet that demand.
- The WCB is one organization and acts as one with its customers. Services are aligned to meet the needs of our stakeholders. Every employee, regardless of function, has the tools and knowledge to respond without delay to 90 percent of issues raised by our stakeholders – and the means to find the right assistance for the remaining 10 percent.

- Relationship-management technology places the information needed at the fingertips of decision makers and service delivery officers within the WCB and its related agencies.
- Stakeholders have confidence about the security of their information and how it will be used. The WCB is respected for its commitment to accessibility as well as privacy.

Competent/committed staff

Our vision for 2010:

- People caring for people – that is what the WCB is about. The WCB’s staff are described by customers and stakeholders as “committed” and describe themselves as being proud of what they do. This pride, commitment, and job satisfaction rivals that of the best companies in Canada and is based on sound knowledge and continuous feedback.
- Customers can expect highly qualified individuals to provide them with service and make decisions on their cases. Recruitment, retention, training, and development of our human resources ensure that each staff member has the knowledge and tools to do his or her job effectively and to develop personally and professionally.
- New forms of job and/or employment status will provide new opportunities for individuals and new ways to improve service to customers.
- Continuous learning is a hallmark of the organization. Training and professional development are considered to be essential strategic investments. From in-service training to the support of advanced education to participation in research, the opportunities provided for continuous learning underscore how much the organization values its employees and the respect it has for their knowledge and professionalism.
- People are developed at the WCB in an environment that stimulates creativity, rewards commitment, and celebrates successes. Staff members feel empowered to go the extra mile and try something new without hesitation for fear of failure or repercussion; there is a culture where innovation is valued and rewarded.
- The quality of work performed reflects the competency of the staff. Not only do independent audits confirm the quality of decision making with its high adherence to law and policy, but they also find that those we serve rank our quality among the highest of comparable industries.
- The work the WCB does is noble but it can take its toll on staff and their families. The WCB is known for its internal compassion and accommodation of its employees, and its willingness to adapt and support staff in crisis and protect them from harm. The WCB is known as a place that promotes wellness and well-being, that leads by example, and that makes the health and safety of its own employees a priority and responsibility at all levels of the organization.

Forward-thinking, progressive, and innovative

Our vision for 2010:

- Continuously scanning the horizon, the WCB identifies trends and opportunities along with strategies to address them.
- Through continuous examination of other systems, benchmarking performance, and engagement in inter-jurisdictional research, the WCB leverages the advances in other organizations to generate continuous improvements for the stakeholders of the B.C. system. The challenges and experiences of other jurisdictions serve as a means of detecting what is on the horizon and of providing insight into actions that must be taken.
- As with the run up to the Olympics and the expansion of oil and gas, the WCB continues to demonstrate its flexibility, adjusting its workforce and processes to meet demands.
- Population demographics, changes in the economy, and labour force dynamics are projected and built into service and organizational demand models for the WCB. Anticipating these changes allows for effective workforce allocation and program design.
- The WCB is seen as a champion of persons with disabilities and both an example and a resource for other employers regarding the best practices of accessibility, disability prevention, and workplace accommodation.
- The standard insurance products we offer meet the needs of our customers, offering choices and arrangements that reflect the best product offerings in the world of workers' compensation insurance.

- Technology is applied to connect those we serve with immediate, accurate, and complete information in a way that is tailored to the needs of the user and augmented with live, individualized service whenever and wherever needed.
- Every injury and significant incident immediately becomes part of a dynamic data warehouse which is continuously "mined" to identify trends and also to detect patterns of abuse or misuse of the system.
- The B.C. WCB is recognized as a centre of excellence, a progressive leader in developing and delivering service and quality.
- Those we serve have multiple communication-channel choices and business access points that keep pace with developments in technology.

Fiscally sound

Our vision for 2010:

- Financial integrity is a hallmark of the B.C. workers' compensation system. The target range for full funding (between 90 and 110 percent including reserves) preserves the balance between cost to employers and protection of benefits to injured workers and their families.
- Rates per \$100 payroll remain in the lowest decile of those measured in North America, while benefits for temporary total benefits remain among the highest.
- Rates for workers' compensation coverage within rate groups are stable with fluctuations for the average rate group of less than 10 percent.

- Those who defraud the system are dealt with to the full extent of the law. Whistle-blower protection is in place and all participants in the industry are aware that this is a mutual insurance system where everyone suffers the consequences of under-reporting, claim suppression, misrepresentation, and abuse.
- The future risks of occupational disease are continuously defined and reserves appropriately adjusted to match these risks, ensuring that each generation of participants in the B.C. economy contributes fairly toward those risks and that intergenerational transfers are minimized.
- Operating efficiency remains above average compared with other Canadian jurisdictions and investment performance is better than its benchmarks. Investments – both at the accident fund level and operationally in the people, systems, and properties – reflect sound judgment and a continuous focus on the future environment.



Organizational structure

Our vision for 2010:

- Organizational structure is responsive to the needs of our customers.
 - Structure is flexible and resources are redirected as strategy dictates. Interdisciplinary teams are the norm, providing the best resources for each initiative and ensuring high quality outcomes for those we serve.
 - Virtual structures and organizations are part of the overall system with geographically separated resources collaborating on developments and service.
 - While priorities and strategies shift, fundamental principles remain. Our structures reflect our service principles and values. In every structure, responsibilities for these values are shared and the communities of stakeholders, both internally and externally, understand their roles.
- Regardless of formal structure, each professional specialty has a formal champion, a designated “chief,” an advocate and voice at the senior levels of the organization to ensure that important issues and points of view do not fall through the cracks. Just as we have a Chief Financial Officer and Chief Information Officer, the roles of Chief Officer for Medical, Vocational Rehabilitation, Review, Prevention, Ethics, and Service are a constant feature of our organizational structure.

Future state summary

That’s what the future looks like to us. Getting there is what this strategic plan is all about. Strategy is about direction and the strategic statements noted on the inside cover of this document provide the compass that guides us.

Getting There: Strategic Initiatives

Achieving the plan takes a multi-year, multi-stream effort. The various streams that will take us to our desired future state are located in Appendix A on page 13. In the more immediate timeframe, we will be focused on the following five strategic initiatives:

1. *Keeping the health and safety promise*
2. *Making a difference, one human being at a time*
3. *Matching organizational capacity to customer demand*
4. *Transforming societal attitudes*
5. *Protecting the financial integrity of the system*

Keeping the health and safety promise: Workers and workplaces safe and secure from injury, illness, and disease

Our future state must be one in which the prevention of workplace injury, disease, and death is everyone's priority – not just the purview of officers with special training and manuals. Our guiding principles and premises define the promotion of healthy and safe workplaces as our principal focus. Preventing disability must become everyone's cause, first by preventing the accident and, where that fails, by preventing the physiological, vocational, and financial consequences from becoming a disability. Workers and employers prevent injuries – we must support and assist them. Our future state must encourage and model a consultative, co-operative approach to workplace safety. We won't shy away from our regulatory and enforcement responsibilities. We will be present in more workplaces, not only on routine and random occasions but also following injuries, with the primary goal of assisting our workplace partners to prevent

recurrence and mitigate future risks. We will improve our capacity to investigate workplace fatalities and serious injuries.

The first priority of the WCB continues to be health and safety. We want to instill that safety culture in every workplace in B.C. In every contact across all lines of business, safety and health will be the dominant reason behind our actions. As the B.C. population, economy, and workforce grow, so does the threat of increased numbers of injuries. Assuming a similar mix of industry and participation rate in the economy, only a continuously declining injury rate will keep the number of claims from rising (see table below). Changes in the mix of industry, lower unemployment, and increased population growth all have the potential to increase the human and financial cost of workplace injury and disease. If the injury rate remains constant, claim volume

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
BC Population Projection	4,170,825	4,225,065	4,274,355	4,325,595	4,378,746	4,433,265	4,490,458
BC Labour Force (based on 65-68% participation rate)	2,308,025	2,349,164	2,387,317	2,433,642	2,476,208	2,518,827	2,560,537
WCB Covered, Employed Labour Force (based on 83.4% coverage and 6.5% unemployment)	2,015,374	2,051,527	2,084,819	2,125,375	2,162,447	2,200,539	2,238,091
Number of claims if injury rate held at 3.0 per 100 person-years of employment	60,487	61,546	62,545	63,758	64,873	66,016	67,083
Injury rate required to hold claims volume at 60,000 per year	2.98	2.92	2.88	2.82	2.77	2.73	2.68

will increase by more than 10 percent in the next six years. A shift in the industrial mix (an increase in construction, for example) will put upward pressure on the overall injury rate and injuries, even if the actual injury rate falls in all sectors.

The only acceptable injury rate is zero. While real reductions in injury rates have occurred in the past, each incremental improvement in injury rate will require greater effort. The WCB is committed to working with our workplace partners and other agencies to prevent and mitigate these potential human losses and their attendant financial costs. As our guiding principles and premises state, the WCB is most effective in this task in facilitating co-operation among workplace partners.

Some of the activities associated with this initiative are briefly described in Appendix A beginning on page 13.

Our service commitment: Making a difference, one human being at a time

In our future state, injured workers, families of fatally injured workers, and employers will be provided with a higher level of service tailored to meet their needs – service that meets or exceeds the WCB’s statutory mandate. Personalized, supportive, compassionate service will be our hallmark, valued by our stakeholders and rewarded within the organization.

Our shared goal will be to see injured workers returned to employment – to real sustainable jobs – and not just to a level of employability. While we may not be able to guarantee this outcome in every instance, it will be our goal in every case. We will intervene early with injured workers to achieve a shared understanding of the recovery and return-to-work process.

Our guiding principles and premises are clear: We must be driven by a service orientation. When a worker is injured, our priority must be to meet the needs of that worker from the moment of first contact through rehabilitation and return to work. Every customer deserves service that meets his or her needs. For some, that means delivering self-serve applications that make the services of the WCB accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week by voice or electronic means. For others, there is no substitute for personal contact: a caring, compassionate, knowledgeable member of the WCB with a mission to make a difference for that individual through a single “window” of service. To achieve this strategy, the WCB is implementing new methods of engaging our customers and giving them a voice, not just in anonymous surveys but in active feedback sessions and forums that will help us shape our services to meet the needs of the specifically identified segments of our customer base. Through our training processes, we will instill a discipline that seeks to learn from our customers and stakeholders. Our service will differentiate us from others.

As a regulator and adjudicative body, the WCB must, on occasion, say “no.” By designing our programs to meet the needs of our customers and defining expectations for service as well as the limitations of law and policy, even when the answer may not meet the desires of our customers, the way that answer is delivered and the help we can provide within the limit of our mandate will be reflective of our service promise.

This initiative will allow our local offices to meet the needs of local workers and employers. One size does not fit all, but innovations and ideas fostered in one area may help improve service in others. The

WCB is committed to allowing front-line initiatives to make a discernable difference in every customer interaction. (For more detail on specific strategies, see the Service/Business Process Stream section beginning on page 14.)

Our commitment to our team: Matching organizational capacity to customer demand

An organization must meet its customer demands through people. The WCB’s human resources meet that demand by listening to the voice of their customers and responding to their needs from a position of skill and knowledge. The success of our strategy requires a team effort and our team of professional, compassionate, and highly trained people working together to deliver quality service is an essential enabler. Our strategy includes the planning and support needed by our people to make a difference for our customers. Continuous learning is a key component of the success of the organization and integral to the knowledge management imperative of our information-intense organization. Continuous improvement is a goal in everything we do – we want staff to be empowered to achieve the goals of our organization.

Increasing demands will be placed on our WCB workforce by customer expectations, growth, and requirements to continuously improve the quality and timeliness of our services. We must also meet a higher than usual attrition rate over the next several years, driven by the retirement of knowledge workers. The following key initiatives will be undertaken to respond to these challenges and improve the organization’s skills base, flexibility, and resilience.

Led by the Human Resources and Program Design divisions and under the auspices of a senior level corporate Organizational Capacity Committee, the WCB will identify and implement a system to align organizational capacity to demand, invest significantly and continuously in staff training and development, and provide tools that foster excellent and cost-effective service.

WCB staff will require the tools, training, and development to maximize their effectiveness. Targeted and strategic investments in training and maintenance of a healthy balance between work and other activities are essential to the sustainable success of our people. The WCB is committed to allowing front-line staff to better manage their time so that the needs of their customers will be met.

Finally, the organization will embark on the task of designing and filling a “leadership pipeline” through which future management and senior officers of the WCB will be identified, developed, and mentored in such a way that our future capacity will be homegrown. All great companies have a leadership pipeline that is actively filled and developed. This entails an intake program that identifies potential, and an ongoing development program that stresses broad cross-functional training and assignment. (For more on this theme, see the Human Resources Stream beginning on page 16 and the Stakeholder Communication Stream on page 15.)

Transforming societal attitudes: Work-related death, injury, illness, and disease are not an inevitable and acceptable cost of doing business

There can be no compromise. Work-related deaths, injuries, and diseases are unacceptable. That message is shared by everyone who works at the WCB but it is not yet firmly embedded in the minds of all workers and employers. We see the consequences every day; we see the human and financial cost of past incidents and exposures for decades after they occur.

As our guiding principles and premises state, societal and cultural change is essential for creating a culture of health and safety in the workplace. The challenge for the WCB is to help society understand the consequences of not having that culture. The prevention of work-related injury and exposure must be perceived as having the same importance as the prevention of drunk driving. The WCB plays a principal role in carrying this message beyond those dedicated to workplace safety to the broader society.

As the champion of workplace safety and health, the WCB will and must be the catalyst to change societal attitudes so that injuries are no longer regarded as an acceptable part of the cost of production in any industry. Raising awareness, changing attitude, and changing behaviours is a multi-year commitment. (See page 15, the Cultural/Societal Change Stream, for more on this theme.)

Protecting the financial integrity of the system

Our mandate has at its origin a Historic Compromise, the common basis for workers’ compensation in Canada. That compromise entails commitments to both workers and employers. Employers are granted protection from lawsuits in exchange for funding the system; workers are assured that work-related injury, illness, and death will be compensated without the expense and delay of having to sue for damages. The stewardship of the funds rests with the WCB. The sustainability of the system relies on how well the Accident Fund performs. Managed appropriately, future generations of employers will not have to fund any shortfalls in the Accident Fund. Ensuring solid financial stewardship of the Accident Fund also maintains our commitment to compensation of workers and their families now and in the future. The WCB’s current fully funded status must be managed on three fronts: investment strategy, full collection of premiums, and sustainable compensation practices and payments. Our policies, programs, and support each contribute to that financial integrity. (See pages 16 and 17, the Policy Effectiveness Stream and Support Stream sections, for additional detail on strategic initiatives in support of this theme.)

Assuring Quality Excellence

Our mission statement includes reference to adding value to workers and employers through our actions, including the delivery of quality decisions and compassionate, supportive services. Overlaying the strategic initiatives is an organization-wide approach to quality and service excellence. An organization of this size and complexity needs a framework to help it stay on track as it continually improves on various fronts over numerous years. Therefore, the WCB is committed to applying quality principles to levels/trends/outcomes of efforts, employee satisfaction/morale, and organizational results, in addition to the more traditional areas of financial performance, stakeholder satisfaction, and service/product

quality. This balanced approach to quality focuses on leadership, planning and process management principles, and best practices for an organization's staff, its customers, and its suppliers/partners.

It is our intention to benchmark our quality against rigorous criteria and compare our performance with the best of service organizations in Canada. Over time, such assessments will provide internal and external stakeholders with objective measurement of the overall quality of WCB operations and programs.



Conclusion

This strategic plan provides a high-level overview of the WCB's direction. All such plans are dynamic and subject to changing conditions and imperatives, but this plan provides a basis for development of nearer term and intermediate operations to meet the conditions of a changing province, economy, and society. The following appendix describes some of the current activities and priorities; these will evolve and change over time. The *WCB 2003 Annual Report and 2004-2006 Service Plan* comments in more detail on the risks and opportunities inherent in the nearer term.

Your comments and input to this plan are essential to its development. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please e-mail the WCB Director of Corporate Planning and Development (TBogyo@wcb.bc.ca).



Appendix A: Strategic Streams

Transforming the present workers' compensation system into its future state takes momentum, something that is generated by strategic activities. Like the tributaries of a river, these strategic streams of activity combine and reinforce each other, adding to the momentum of change and progress toward our strategic goals. Each year, the Service Plan charts the near-term (current to three-year) performance targets and the priorities of the Board of Directors. Strategic activities and initiatives within the following streams will adjust with each revision in the Service Plan to meet the tactical operational realities of day-to-day workers' compensation management.

There is one issue that cuts across all streams: abandonment. Far from a negative, abandoning outdated or less productive activities to further the overall strategy is essential and a positive form of renewal. Abandoning physical files, for example, created new opportunities to redeploy staff and provide improved service to workers and employers by allowing real-time, simultaneous access to electronic files. Abandonment does not negate the value of what was done in the past. For example, the Rehabilitation Centre, operated by the WCB for half a century, fulfilled an important and valuable role; it is only the relatively recent development

of local providers' networks that allowed the WCB to provide equivalent quality care closer to home. Where it makes sense, where it improves the outcomes for our stakeholders, and where it provides our staff with more time to deliver quality services to our customers, abandonment of some processes will be considered.

The following sections outline a fraction of the current strategic activities and initiatives underway or planned by the WCB. Major initiatives will involve extensive consultation with stakeholders and some of these initiatives will evolve and change as they are investigated and developed.

The prevention stream

The primacy of the prevention imperative drives WCB strategy, policy, and operations. The challenges to be met include an aging workforce and projected skilled worker shortages at a time of increased economic activity. As well, while the overall injury rate has declined by a substantial 40 percent over the past eight years, the serious injury rate (amputations, spinal severes, multiple fractures, head injuries, and third-degree burns) has been more stubborn and death from disease is on the rise. Surmounting these challenges by realigning investigative resources in the organization, shifting

resources to focused field work, following up on more workplace injuries, engaging industry and labour to take ownership of health and safety, and creating the right balance between consultation, education, and enforcement are some of the objectives of this stream.

- **Industry and Labour Partnerships**

Partnerships build industry and labour commitment and organizational capacity to address occupational injury and disease prevention. Continued investment in and expansion of partnerships and safety associations will be used to promote accessibility of workplace health and safety programs, disability management and safe return-to-work programs, as well as worksite occupational health and safety information, training, and services.

- **Small Business Strategy**

Small businesses represent the largest group of employers and are a growing sector. They are traditionally the hardest to reach. The Small Business team leads the efforts to improve health and safety and return to work in small business workplaces by providing forums for ongoing consultation and developing industry-specific, easy-to-use tools and information, by

partnering with small business associations to distribute these resources, and by partnering with firms to share best practices with their small business counterparts.

- **Raising Public Awareness**
General and industry-specific campaigns are designed to focus public attention on the tragedy of workplace injury and death and to create in the hearts and minds of the general public a belief that work-related injury, disease, and death are unacceptable. Holistic campaigns are targeted at specific occupational health and safety issues and injuries, employing multi-media opportunities such as media events, trade shows, conferences, and consultation forums; the Internet; and trade publications, videos, stickers, contests, and publications.
- **Young Worker Provincial Program**
To prevent injuries to young workers and to create a generation of safety-conscious young workers, a multimedia approach is taken which involves consulting with and providing educational materials to all those who interact with young workers, including schools, parents, employers of large numbers of young workers, unions, young people's clubs and associations, as well as young workers themselves. Peer-to-peer programs and an Injured Young Worker Speakers program create opportunities for young workers who have been injured in the workplace to visit schools and worksites to tell their story and share their experiences with other young workers.

Several workplace strategies focus on industries and firms with high risk of injury and/or disease:

- **High Risk Strategy**
A predetermined portion of prevention resources and officer field time will be focused on workplaces in specific classification units that have the highest risk of injury and/or disease. This strategy employs typical field activities (i.e., education, consultation, and enforcement) in concert with one or more of the following applicable workplace strategies.
- **Focus Firm Strategy**
Prevention officers will work with employers who are experiencing injury rates that are higher than their sector average, and those who, because of their size, produce higher claim volumes. Emphasis is also placed on firms having a significant number of young workers or a high number of musculoskeletal injuries.
- **Integrated Compliance Strategy**
Prevention officers' field activities (educate, consult, and enforce) will focus on risk patterns identified through data mining to raise awareness and compliance with the regulation and related injury-prevention measures.

Other workplace strategies focus on identifying and addressing the causes of serious injuries and/or diseases:

- **Fatal and Serious Injury Reduction**
A designated team of prevention officers will focus on investigating workplace incidents involving fatalities and serious injuries in order to identify causation factors and make recommendations for prevention of future injuries. These recommendations will be communicated through the Lessons Learned Project.

- **Lessons Learned Project**
This is a coordinated communications and education strategy to provide industry, workers, and the public with preventive information and knowledge gained from investigation of fatal and serious injury incidents. The goal is to provide timely and comprehensive information that stakeholders can use to prevent serious injuries.
- **Occupational Disease Prevention**
In partnership with the BC Centre for Disease Control and the University of British Columbia, we will pursue a focused approach to occupational disease prevention, by evaluating the risk of work-related disease to workers and working co-operatively with employers and workers to implement strategies to minimize those risks.

Service/business process stream

Reorienting the functions toward stakeholders is an important and key element of the overall strategy. Borrowing from the research into the market-segmentation approach, this stream seeks to meet customer needs. Using account management and specialized teams, for example, business processes will provide one-window access to services.

- **Integrated Service Teams**
These teams have expertise in health and safety, claim management, risk management, and complete knowledge of WCB product and service offerings. Business intelligence systems and expert support groups ensure these teams have the ability to “work smart.”

- **Workplace Aligned Teams**

Teams are aligned so they develop knowledge and expertise with industry and worksite issues and are seen as expert consultants who add value by assisting with developing health and safety and disability management programs.

- **Small Business Support**

An array of specialized services will be available for employers and workers requiring more assistance due to size and nature of the worksite. Recognizing the pressures and limitations of this sector, service offerings will be designed to fill the gap that exists as compared with larger corporations.

- **Customer-Population Segmentation**

Personalized service offerings will be available to meet the needs of the injured workers and their families. Specialists will be available to assist with clinical or rehabilitation support that will be designed to assist with achieving timely, durable return-to-work outcomes.

- **Construction ramp up to 2010**

The WCB office is providing support for workers and employers engaged in preparing the province of British Columbia for the 2010 Olympics. Construction and hospitality workers as well as volunteers will have dedicated staff to assist them and their employers to ensure our lead up to 2010 is safe and secure. In addition to the Olympics, there is currently an unprecedented increase in other construction activity that needs to be similarly supported.

Stakeholder communication stream

Building on the research in public- and private-sector customer relations management and communications, this stream is driven by customer needs. Every interaction and communication between the WCB and the outside world – regardless of its channel – carries a message beyond the content of the transaction.

This stream is about building a common identity, creating a focus so that every interaction or communication carries with it the promises of the organization. Through this stream, the WCB's name and corporate identity will become synonymous with excellence in service and programs. Consolidating our messaging both internally and externally will help us build toward the future described above.

Engaging our customers in the design of communications that meet their needs is critical to this strategy; it is just as critical that those involved in such processes see themselves as being associated with and involved in an organization that is known for its commitment, integrity, innovation, authority, and service.

- We will communicate with and to our employees, customers, and stakeholders in a meaningful, relevant, and timely manner. We will adopt a broadcast programming approach to our communications to firmly establish our safety role and our service-centred approach to customers. Our objective is to make our web site, Worksafebc.com, the preferred channel of safety news and networking for our customers.
- We will adopt and implement a customer value measurement framework and establish a

line-of-sight connection between our mission, our employees, and our customers. This will include consistent and meaningful customer satisfaction surveying, focus group contact, and account management feedback in order to share customer expectations and experience with our employees so that they have direct appreciation of their role in customer value measurement.

- We will communicate continuously on a two-way basis with our employees on the organization's plans and progress, and arrange forums for open dialogue on operations. This will include a suggestion box program to encourage innovation and ideas.
- We will be honest, forthright, and transparent in our dealings with media, employees, customers, and stakeholders.

Cultural/societal change stream

Employees in the workplace and their families have the right to expect to be protected from workplace accidents, disease, and death. It should be a promise that all employers make to each and every employee and should be the societal norm. Our mission is to bring that message home to all the parties involved, much like MADD and Drinking Driving Counter Attack have done with their messages.

- We will identify partners, sponsors, and affected individuals to develop powerful programs that communicate the message that workplace death and injury is unacceptable and unnecessary.
- We will mass-market the Young Worker Safety program to the B.C. education system. We will involve young people who will act as champions for the message.

- We will encourage CEOs and managers to include workplace safety performance in the societal reporting segments of their annual reports.
- We will enlist active and vocal participation of CEOs and company owners in public events such as the Day of Mourning.
- We will partner with organizations such as the Vancouver Board of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, the B.C. Federation of Labour, and the National Quality Institute to sponsor annual safety awards that honour employers and employees who exemplify the culture of safety.

Human resources stream

Recruiting, developing, and retaining people with the right skill sets for the right positions will be essential to the overall success of the strategy. Reinforcing skills to deliver quality service and to inspire and support excellent performance are part of this stream. It is through people that we serve people.

- **Service Culture** – Building a successful service culture requires an organization-wide commitment to exceptional service, consistently high technical and service performance, and alignment of employees' goals with those of their teams, divisions, and the corporation. This initiative is designed to increase employee confidence and satisfaction in working for the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. The initiative will focus on recruitment, recognition, performance development and feedback, training, and career development. Through programs to train managers and staff, and to celebrate their success as individuals and

teams, a superior service culture will emerge. Employees and managers will be creative and flexible to individual needs, and will help customers to effectively resolve issues that currently require multiple points of contact.

- **Future Focus** – The organization will proactively research and anticipate internal and external forces that might affect our future. Initiatives in this area will reduce competency gaps across the organization and ensure capacity to respond to demographic and other changes that could affect our ability to staff properly and deliver service. This will be accomplished through industry surveys and other research efforts, workforce planning, succession planning, recruitment and selection processes, and career development initiatives.
- **Strategic and Skilled Leadership** – Leaders in the new organization must be effective mentors, facilitators, and motivators, respected and appreciated by staff. This initiative, which Human Resources shares with Program Design, will focus on strong leadership development in technical and general management skills to ensure success.
- **Accountable, Motivated, and Performance-based Workforce** – In order to realize the full advantage of our most valuable asset, all staff must be well qualified, well trained, and focused. A productive, engaged, and creative workforce is encouraged and rewarded. As knowledge-based workers, staff must understand the technical and administrative aspects of their job, be clear about departmental, divisional, and corporate expectations, and have the independence to successfully perform their responsibilities. This initiative will focus on change management, knowledge management,

and effective employee and labour relations approaches, including recognition and performance feedback.

- **Flexible and Adaptable Workforce** – Management and employees will seek opportunities for positive change and willingly participate in such change, supported by change management endeavours and transition process management as issues arise. The WCB will also, through leadership development and employee training and development, prepare all employees for organizational, legislative, or cultural change.
- **Values and Respect** – All staff are treated with respect, fairness, and dignity. The workplace is safe and supportive. The climate is a positive one of satisfying work in a learning environment where diversity is valued and achievement is recognized. This initiative will be accomplished through disability management, performance development, reaffirmation of core values, leadership development, employee orientation, safety and wellness programs, and diversity initiatives.

Policy effectiveness stream

The WCB has a legislated mandate; it is required to develop and publish policy and regulation. Ensuring that the organization's policies and practice minimize bureaucracy and support a new service orientation is equally important. Developing a more proactive, user-centred policy development process that connects law, policy, research, and risk management is key to this stream.

Our goal is to make the development of WCB policy, regulations, and procedures simple, flexible, timely, defensible, authoritative, credible (internally and with external stakeholders), usable, and value-adding. Our research program will contribute

to both short- and long-term strategies and the library will be recognized as a key resource in the development of our knowledge management strategy. This will require strong leadership and agreement on priorities and approaches across all parts of the WCB, and between the Board of Directors and the administration.

We will bring our planning horizon in line with the WCB's service plan and develop a rolling three-year plan to guide the development of the legislative, policy, regulation, and research agendas. A number of specific initiatives have been identified that will further the policy effectiveness stream.

- **Simplify priority setting and approval processes.** This strategy deals with the process we use to set priorities and approve proposals.

Priority setting: Priority setting will be done in an open and transparent way, with regard for both internal and external concerns, resource requirements, and availability. Once priorities have been approved by the organization, they will be communicated internally and externally, along with reasons why proposed items were included or not included. Priorities will be determined with regard for the WCB's overall strategic direction.

Approval processes: Approval streams appropriate for the issue in question (i.e., policy, procedure, regulation) will be established. The overall goal will be simplification.

- **Align and integrate products and services with WCB strategy and divisional business plans.** This strategy will ensure that everything we do aligns with and furthers the WCB's overall strategic direction. To achieve this we will:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities, including provision of expert resources
- Ensure that end-users are involved in the design of policy, regulation, and operational materials and are provided adequate training once materials have been approved
- Communicate progress on the plan to internal and external customers
- **Contribute to the knowledge management and transfer strategy.** Policy effectiveness has a clear link to knowledge management and transfer. This strategy recognizes that there is a need to ensure, for example, that the policy, regulation, and research agendas link to the corporate knowledge management initiative.
- **Simplify and rationalize existing policy, regulation, and research delivery mechanisms, and where necessary, develop alternatives.** This strategy recognizes that we have different customers, both internal and external, who have different needs. Key actions will:
 - Identify our various customers, clarify their needs, and define gaps in how we deliver policy, regulation, and research products and services
 - Create delivery mechanisms that suit the product and its use
 - Ensure policy effectiveness is a consideration in the development of new delivery tools (e.g., claim management system)
- **Develop an integrated research strategy.** Research is fundamental to policy effectiveness, as well as program design and development. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all WCB research initiatives are co-ordinated and

are aligned with organizational objectives. It will also focus on building partnerships between the WCB and other agencies to:

- Capitalize on existing resources (people and data)
- Share systems, data collection, etc.
- Develop appropriate delivery mechanisms to communicate research results to internal and external groups
- Contribute to knowledge management strategy

Support stream

People care for people, but systems and structures give our people the tools they need to provide that care. Putting in place the systems and structures necessary to manage the transition, free resources from clerical tasks for operations, and allow all officers to meet customer needs through effective relationship management is what this strategic stream is all about. This stream has three main strategic themes:

“Information anytime anywhere, and on any device”

- **Access to the WCB's services –** This strategy deals with the underlying technologies (i.e., infrastructure) that enable stakeholders and staff to access the services created for their use.
 - **Improved access:** The ability of stakeholders, particularly employers, to contact the WCB from their office location, while on the road, or at the job site.
 - **Self-service support:** Stakeholders will be able to submit and retrieve information as well as access information needed to

do business with the WCB. They will help themselves to information on how to solve problems, what processes to follow, or what workplace practices are recommended, and will be able to access this information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

- Multi-channel communication: Multiple methods to interact with service representatives will be supported including evolving concepts such as two-way video communication.
- E-learning: As above, the same applies to modes of e-learning that could be enlivened through the use of streaming video and audio.
- Wireless technology: This enables our field staff to access information from any location.
- E-WCB – A virtual WCB, provided through the Internet, will enable workers and employers to deal with the WCB at their convenience – when needed and from any location. Two-way interaction with the WCB will be provided to enable access to services around the clock. Via this accessible medium, the WCB will be able to provide a variety of related services that will be transacted during the web session. For example, injured workers will be able to register a claim, immediately get a claim number, and then get additional information about any specialized medical services or referrals that would help them recover from their specific injury.
- Decision support – Stakeholders require access to WCB information that cannot be provided through systems designed for operational purposes. The evolution of the data warehouse concept will allow authorized groups, both from

internal and external communities, to leverage this data. The accumulated data captured in the data warehouse will become the foundation for the hard data required for business support and business intelligence. This strategy will enable stakeholders to access information that results from many of the day-to-day operations and proactively manage their accounts. It will include the creation of employer and corporate scorecards which can be used to improve working environments. Privacy of information will be protected.

- Knowledge management strategy – This is a strategic approach focusing on using soft knowledge to complement decision support's management of hard data. It will embed clear and consistent practices for building, sharing, and using knowledge resources across the organization. It will champion the sharing of specialized expertise such as in experts' minds or implicit in policy and law. Supporting tools such as discussion groups will be delivered through the WCB's intranet.

“The next generation of claims management”

- Single window – The purpose of this strategy is to make it easier for stakeholders to do business with the WCB. This will be accomplished by developing one-window service for our customers. This will consolidate the support functions currently provided within the separate Compensation, Assessment, Prevention, and Information Services divisions. The benefits of centralizing operations will be proven by how the changes simplify stakeholders' contacts with the WCB. A related benefit will be the level of consistency in the responses given. For staff, the representative providing the service

will have the information to assist and even anticipate the stakeholder's needs. This also applies to the channels our customers use to communicate with us. Whether through an e-form, letter, or voice interactive message, all information will be available to specific decision makers so that our customers' needs can be met.

- Claim management – The long-term plan is to continue to integrate and streamline services to stakeholders by leveraging a new, unified claim management system for processing claim. The new system will provide flexibility to enable the WCB to better meet evolving stakeholder service expectations and adapt as legislation changes. Key functions include:
 - Business rule-driven automation of processing routine claims and assistance for knowledge workers to improve consistency and timeliness of service
 - Workflow-driven routing and queue management to enable proactive management of service levels and alignment of staffing levels to service volumes
 - A new common payment engine to enable integrated management of payments to third-parties

In addition to the claim-related improvements, the new system's framework will be extensible to support other stakeholder services such as assessment and prevention.

- The Appeals Integration project will be the first project to use the claim management framework. It will improve responsiveness and

consistency for workers and employers going through reviews and appeals. In the longer term, it will also target areas such as:

- Improved self-service functions for workers as their use of technology spreads.
- Better online guidance and decision-assist tools for WCB front-line decision makers. Online assistance will be customized to the specific issues and needs of individual decision makers.

“Streamlining processes and improving productivity”

- Health care – The WCB will reduce costs and improve management of health care programs by continuing to consolidate health care billing and payment through a third-party service provider. This will provide stakeholders with a simpler, more consistent way of obtaining WCB-funded health care services and a more predictable schedule. The WCB will reduce costs by avoiding payment of duplicate invoices, while still retaining full control of payment rules and detailed information.
- Collections and receivables – This is part of the overall strategic direction to simplify and streamline the account life cycle for employers. It builds on previously completed work to reduce WCB reporting frequency requirements, simplify business processes, increase customer choices by offering most WCB services through a number of channels (e.g., web, IVR, etc.), and thereby extend WCB hours of service.
- Administrative productivity – This includes initiatives that will improve administrative efficiency and provide services that better

meet stakeholder needs. Processes will be simplified to reduce the red tape faced by staff and management, supported by improvements to internal self-service administrative systems. For example, the user interface for self-service administrative functions will be simplified and integrated to be more intuitive.

These strategic streams are not the only activities key to the strategy. Continuous scanning of emerging issues and developments in other jurisdictions, aggressive adherence to sound financial practices, maintaining a solid financial position, evolving our technologies, providing funds, facilities, and security for our staff – all these activities are fundamental to our success. These are the hallmarks of a solid, forward-thinking, value-adding organization and necessary for the overall success of the WCB’s desired future state.

Appendix B: Our Guiding Principles and Premises

A shared internal consensus and understanding of key guiding principles, premises, and operating assumptions are essential elements in the strategic performance of an enterprise. In an organization like the WCB, whose primary activity is in the area of human services and enforcement, direct attention to these fundamental understandings (especially with a new government, new Board of Directors, and significant adjustments to its mandate) is especially critical to unified organizational effectiveness.

We, the officers and agents of the B.C. Workers' Compensation Board, believe that:

- Our principal focus as an organization is WorkSafe – the promotion of healthy and safe workplaces in B.C. It follows that safety and prevention of injury, occupational disease, and fatalities are our primary concerns and that all other concerns must support our WorkSafe commitment to workers and employers in their sustaining workplace health and safety.
- Societal change is essential to creating a culture where workplace injuries, diseases, and fatalities are seen as extraordinary but preventable events, and where workers are entitled to return home in the same condition in which they went to work. We play a principal role in promoting public awareness of matters related to occupational health and safety and the occupational environment in order to effect this societal and cultural change.
- We must uphold and preserve the financial integrity and stability of the workers' compensation system by acting in a financially responsible manner and planning for the future in order to secure benefits for workers; make available and encourage education activities and programs to prevent injuries, diseases, and fatalities; and minimize the costs of work-related injuries, diseases, and fatalities in order to enhance the competitiveness of British Columbia in the Canadian and world economies.
- The best service we can provide to workers and employers is to do everything we can to prevent injuries, diseases, and fatalities from occurring in the first place. Toward this end, we will be forward-looking and responsive to new and emerging workplace environments and will proactively research and evaluate occupational health and safety issues and invest in prevention technologies.
- In carrying out our functions and duties, we look to add value to the workers' compensation system and to its stakeholders; we also foster a co-operative and consultative relationship with workers and employers that encourages ongoing feedback and advice.
- WorkSafe is really a system, driven by a number of essential partners: workers; employers; and (by extension) their professional, labour, industry, and safety associations; and government. In this alliance the WCB – as a legislatively mandated participant – will assume important support, enforcement, and direct service roles.
- As a provincial public-sector agency, we must remain sensitive to the strategic priorities and comply with the legislated directions of the B.C. government in our development and implementation of plans, policies, and programs.
- The prevention of workplace injury, death, and disease is our top organizational priority. However, prevention can only succeed through the independent and lead performance of the workplace's direct agents – employers and workers. In this arrangement, we will assist and support workers and employers in creating safe workplaces by promoting a culture of commitment to a high standard of occupational health and safety; by encouraging the education of employers, workers, and others regarding

occupational health and safety; by ensuring that those who are in a position to affect the health and safety of workers share that responsibility to the extent of their authority and ability to do so; and by monitoring and enforcing compliance with occupational health and safety legislation and regulation.

- When a worker is injured or becomes ill as a result of his or her work, the priority of the system must be the employability of that worker. The no-fault historic compromise whereby workers gave up their right to sue in return for a legislated benefit scheme funded by employers remains as the most effective response to such incidents and their conditions. Each of the system's partners must assume key roles in this prerogative – a collaborative exercise of the worker's will and efforts toward rehabilitation and return to work; the employer's duty to accommodate return to work and work continuity; and the WCB's expertise in marshalling rehabilitative and compensation measures.
- A primary expectation of government organizations is to support service to citizens as customers, enhanced through one-window organizational structures and management practices. Thus, as a public-sector agency, the WCB must be driven by such a service orientation and our goals attained through an organization-wide commitment to and support for the effective front-line delivery of WCB programs and services. Since front-line staff will be the WCB locus of a customer-focused service delivery, they must be delegated a high level of situational program authority and management

support in performing such a role. "If we can't serve the customer, we will serve those who serve the customer."

- We must focus our organizational energies and resources on our core mandates – prevention, rehabilitation, and compensation – and that other program and support functions, subsidiary to these core functions, must be managed in such a way as to not distract the energies and attention of the WCB organization and resources from its core functions. "Where your attention goes, your energy goes."

