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CPRN RCRPP

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE? WORKPLACE INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

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Human Resources in Government Project*

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Human Resources in Government Study: **6 components**



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1. *A Survey of Workplaces Issues in Government*, which offers a rare glimpse from a managers' perspective into how front-line units were restructured in a three-year period (1996-1998);
2. *a Survey of Union Representatives*, which examines from a union perspective the process of change within work units during the same period and its impact on labour relations, union members, and unions;
3. an analysis of government employment trends since the 1970s;
4. a comparison of pay differences between the public- and private sectors;
5. a study of the transformation of labour relations in government at the federal and provincial levels during 1990s; and
6. four case studies that illustrate the impact of workplaces changes on how government employees do their work and are managed.

Human Resources in Government Study: *insights to guide change*



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- ✓ Moving beyond government restructuring (cost and service focus) requires a future workplace and workforce agenda
- ✓ Demographics, rising skills requirements, and the negative effects of downsizing demand new ways of doing government work
- ✓ Workplace innovation is crucial for recruitment, retention, and skill development and use
- ✓ Managers, employees, and unions must collaborate to meet the demands for service effectiveness *and* better quality work-life



#1 Pressures to do government work differently

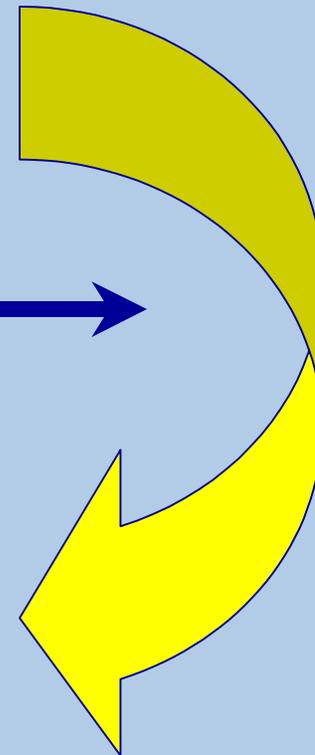
An integrated approach to public service reform

- Changing public needs & sense of citizenship
- Shifting political agendas post-deficit

Workplace innovation
& Workforce renewal

Public services that are:

- cost-effective
- accountable
- responsive
- creative
- knowledge-based

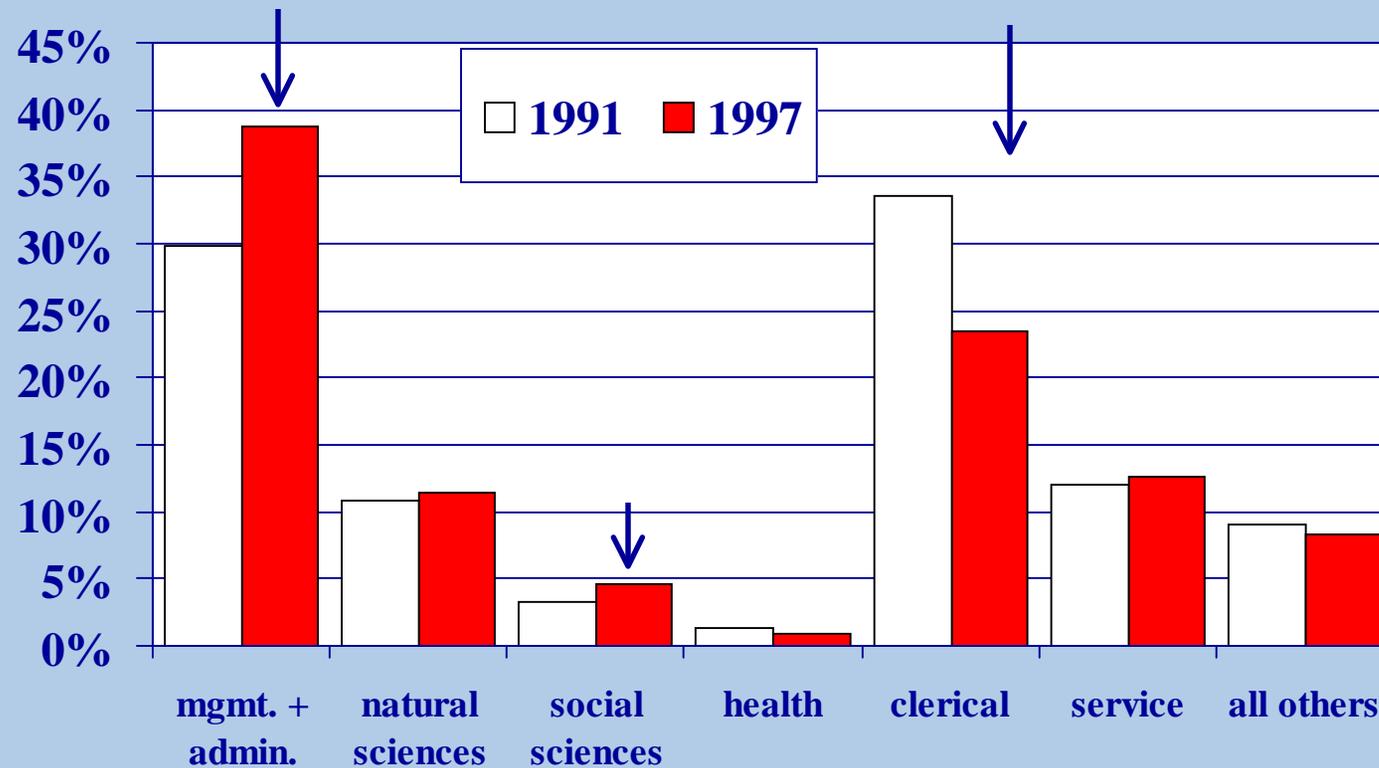




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More knowledge workers

Changing occupational composition of the federal public service, 1991 and 1997



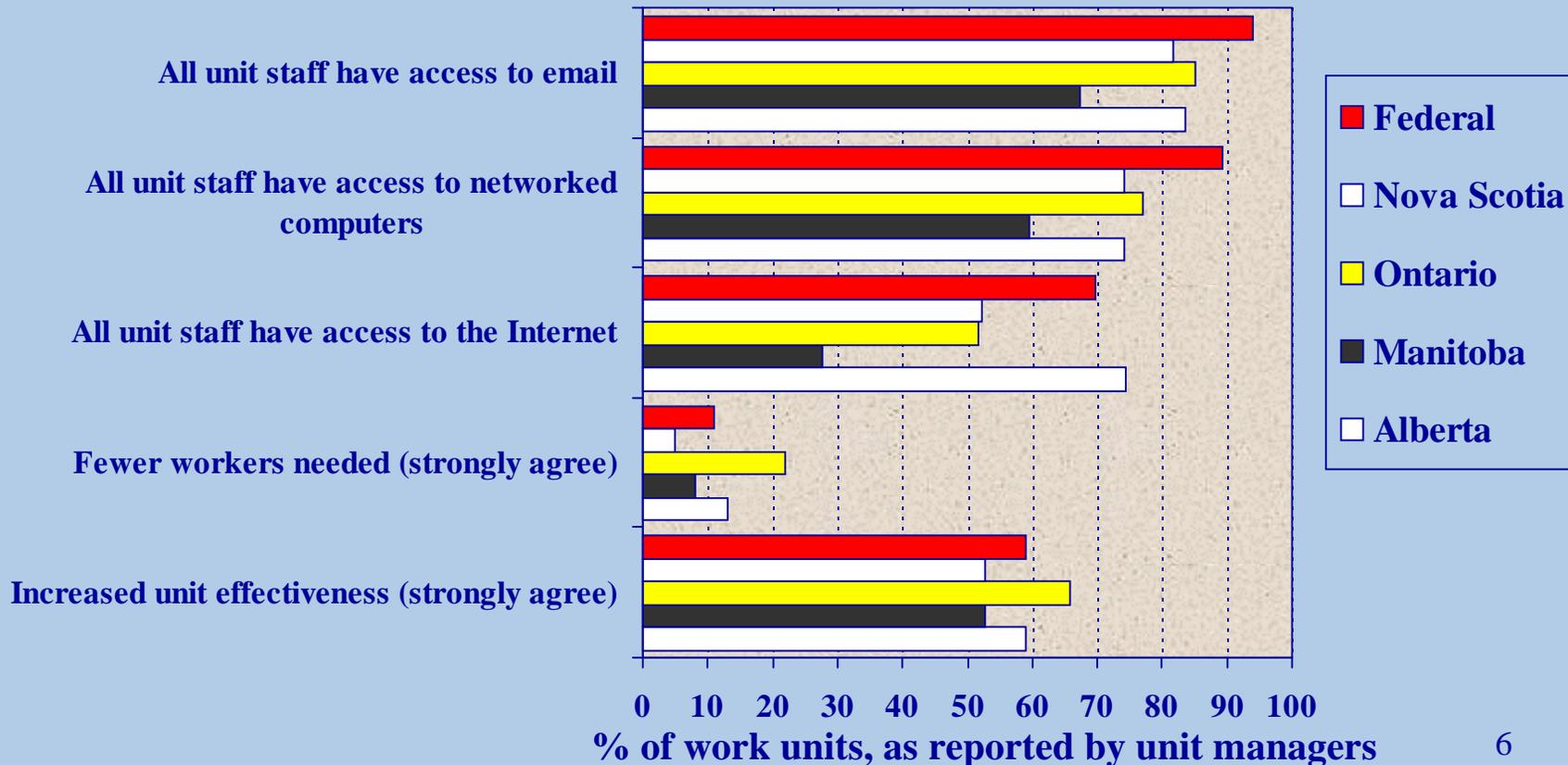
All public employees must become 'knowledge workers'

Governments have become information-technology intensive



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Use and impact of information technology by HRG Project jurisdiction, 1998



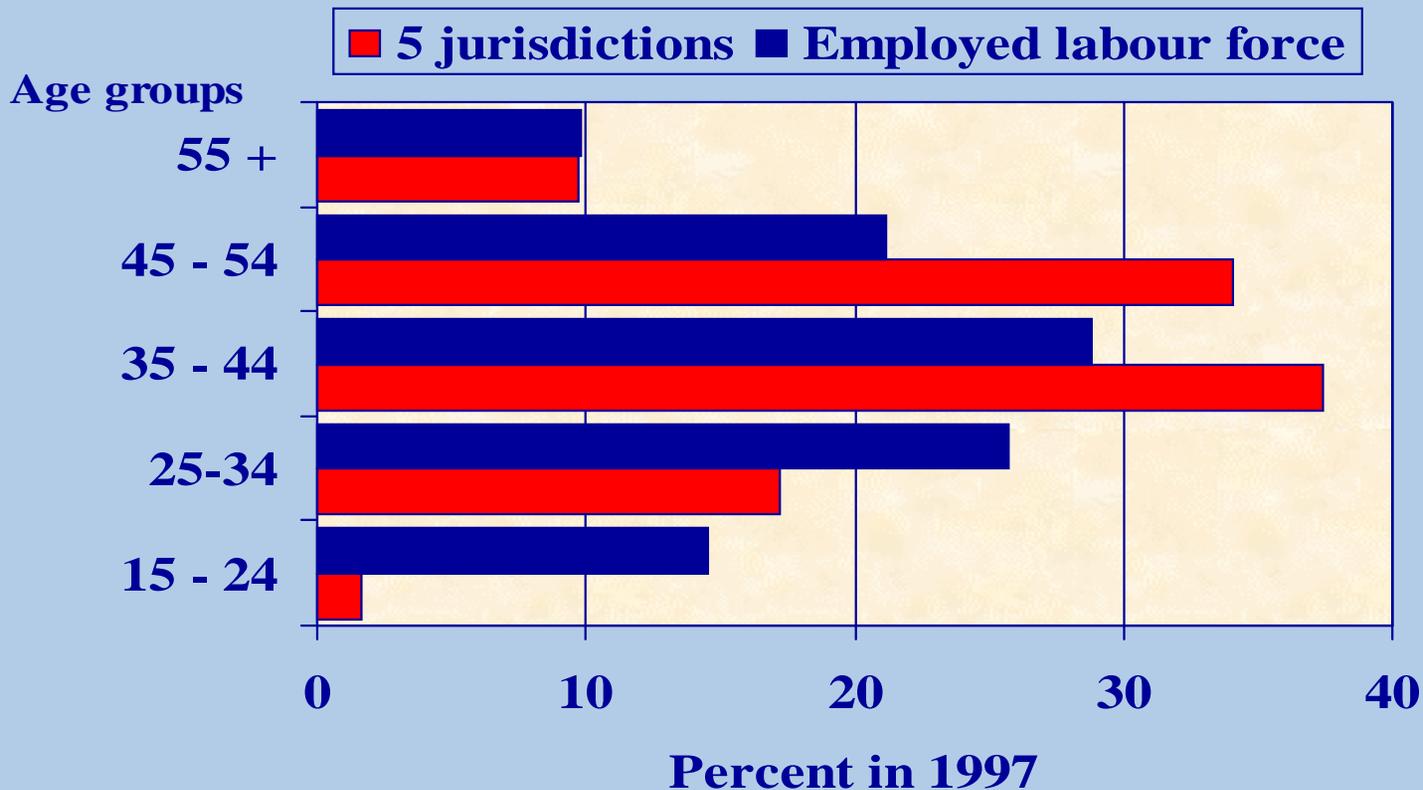
Source: Survey of Workplace Issues in Government.

The renewal crisis: age profiles of government and national workforces



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The youth cohort is shrinking in relative size. By 2010, the retiring cohort (54-64 years) will outnumber youth, creating conditions for major labour shortages.



The generations converge on job quality goals



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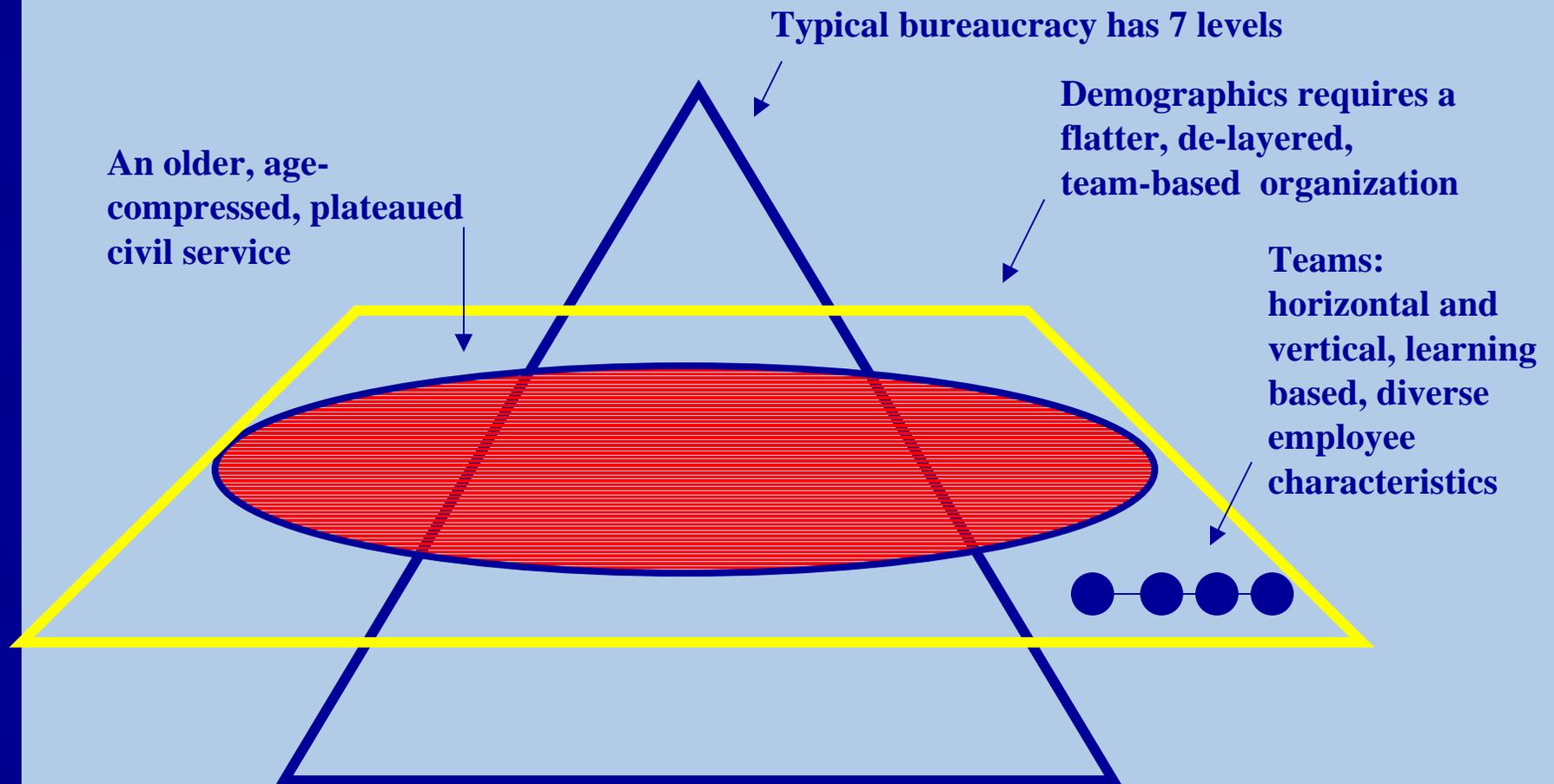
- Job quality problems first seriously raised when baby boomers entering job market in 1970s
 - Needs urgent attention in an era when human resource development and ‘life-long learning’ and ‘knowledge’ really matter
 - The same basic management and organizational barriers exist today as in 1970s
- **KEY IMPLICATION:** Work rewards and working conditions that will attract and retain youth also desired by older workers
 - In this respect, there is continuity across the generations
 - However, there’s always been age differences in job expectations and satisfaction, because workers adapt to their changing circumstances and diminishing choices over time as they move through the life course (e.g., youth are more ‘critical’)
 - Also, the desire for participation increases with age
 - This approach avoids the internal inequities created by emphasizing the needs of one age group over another

DON'T FORGET WORK AND LIFE NEEDS OF 35, 45 AND 55 YEAR OLDS!



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Bureaucracy, downsizing and demography collide: pressures for organizational redesign



Challenge: how to reshape the organization to fit current and future demographics?



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#2 Impact of restructuring on work

Research findings:

- 82% of managers reported that their unit's work volume had increased between 1996-1998
- over half of the units experienced work intensification (staff size and work volume combined)
- only 16% of units were doing the same work in the same way in 1998 as 3 years earlier



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Future challenges for managers

- The managers surveyed identified 4 future challenges:
 1. employee burnout / fatigue
 2. loss of experience / corporate memory
 3. morale
 4. hiring / staffing



Challenges from the unions' perspective

- Workloads, work pace, and stress have increased among union members
- Quality of work life has deteriorated
- Technical and problem solving skills have increased, but little evidence of employee 'empowerment'
 - ➔ Unions reps and managers focus on quality of worklife
 - ➔ This is common ground for management-union 'future workplace' initiatives
 - ➔ BUT little or no union involvement so far
 - ➔ Must find a role for unions in reform and renewal

Old and new workplace models for governments



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Declining



Emerging

THE BUREAUCRATIC WORKPLACE

Implemented in the early 20th-century to eradicate patronage and create a career civil service:

- multi-layered, rigid hierarchical structure
- top-down chain of command
- specialized division of labour, narrow job descriptions
- majority of workers performed routine administrative tasks
- driven by rules and regulations
- training
- vertical career mobility for a minority
- work environment issues not important

THE FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE

International research shows that when 'bundled', these practices can improve performance and the quality of work life:

- flatter, more fluid organizational form
- employee participation in decisions, shared information
- extensive team work
- more skilled and knowledge-intensive jobs
- delegated responsibility
- learning
- horizontal and spiral career paths
- healthy, supportive work environment



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#3 Signs of workplace innovation

Despite downsizing and increased workloads, some managers and units have begun to innovate in the areas of job design and human resource management practices.

- Workplace innovation has the potential to improve organizational effectiveness *and* working conditions
- Workplace innovation contributes to recruitment and retention goals
 - How extensive is workplace innovation?
 - What factors encourage and prevent innovative change?



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Defining workplace innovation

28 % of units surveyed scored 'high' on at least 3 of 5 five indicators:

- 1) **Functional flexibility** (% of unit's non-managerial employees participating in one or more of job enrichment, job enlargement, multi-skilling/job rotation, self-directed work teams, quality circles/problem solving teams)
- 2) flexible schedules (regular use of flexible working hours)
- 3) training (% of unit's employees trained in past year)
- 4) formal participation programs (% of unit's non-managerial employees taking part in one or more of employee suggestion programs, attitude surveys, direct information sharing)
- 5) information sharing (on strategic planning, budgets, workforce reductions and quality issues; at an early stage in process)

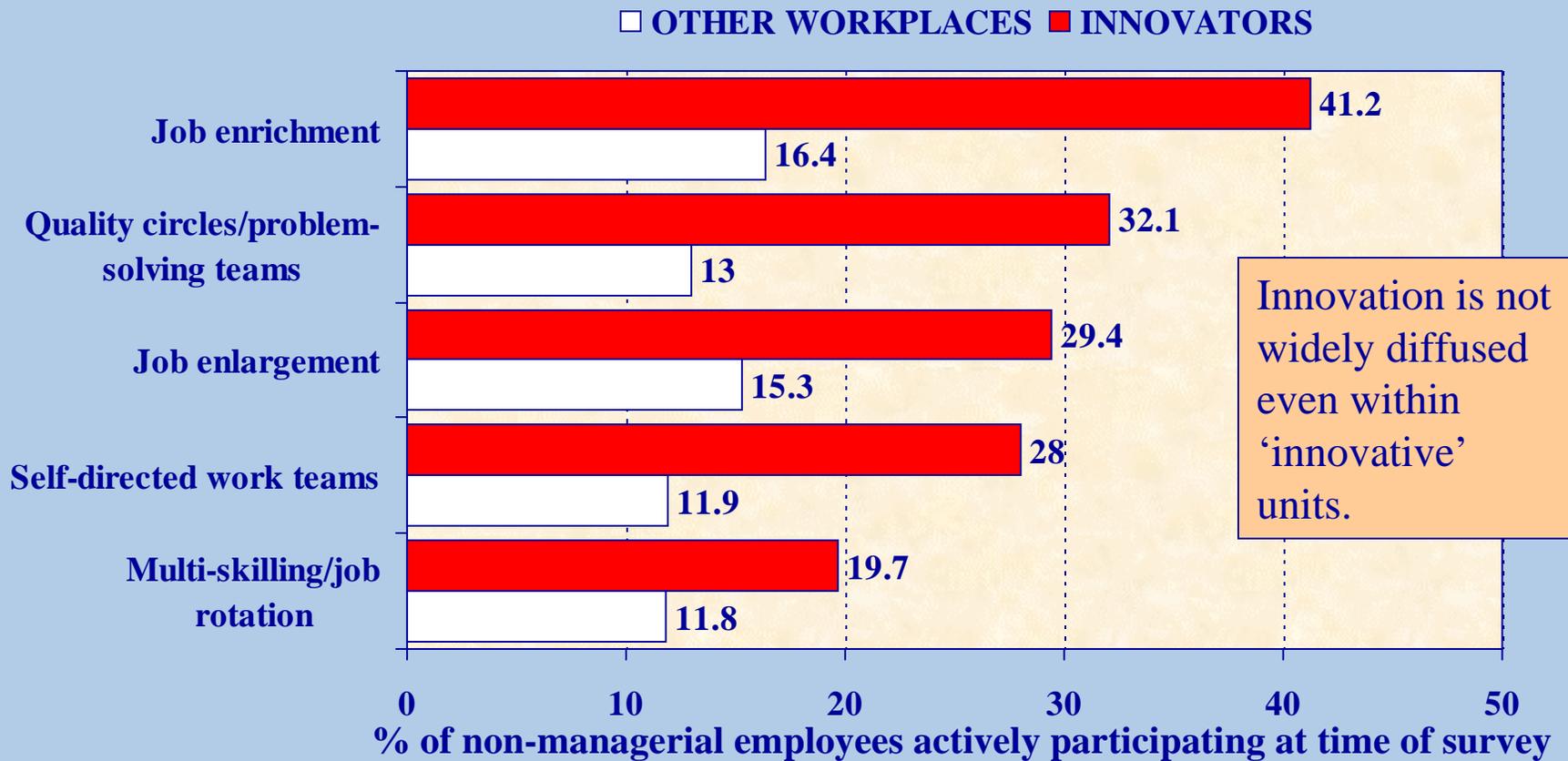


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Creating workplace innovation

- Flexibility is bundled with other workplace human resource management practices, such as training, flexible schedules
- Flexible work design (“functional flexibility”) is the key to workplace innovation
- The unit manager plays a pivotal role in creating workplace innovation
- Characteristics of the most ‘innovative’ units: greater manager autonomy; big changes in work content; more information-technology intensive
- We also found some positive links with unit performance

Participation of non-managerial employees in flexible job designs, comparing 'innovative' workplaces with all other workplaces, five HRG Project jurisdictions, 1998



Source: Survey of Workplace Issues in Government.



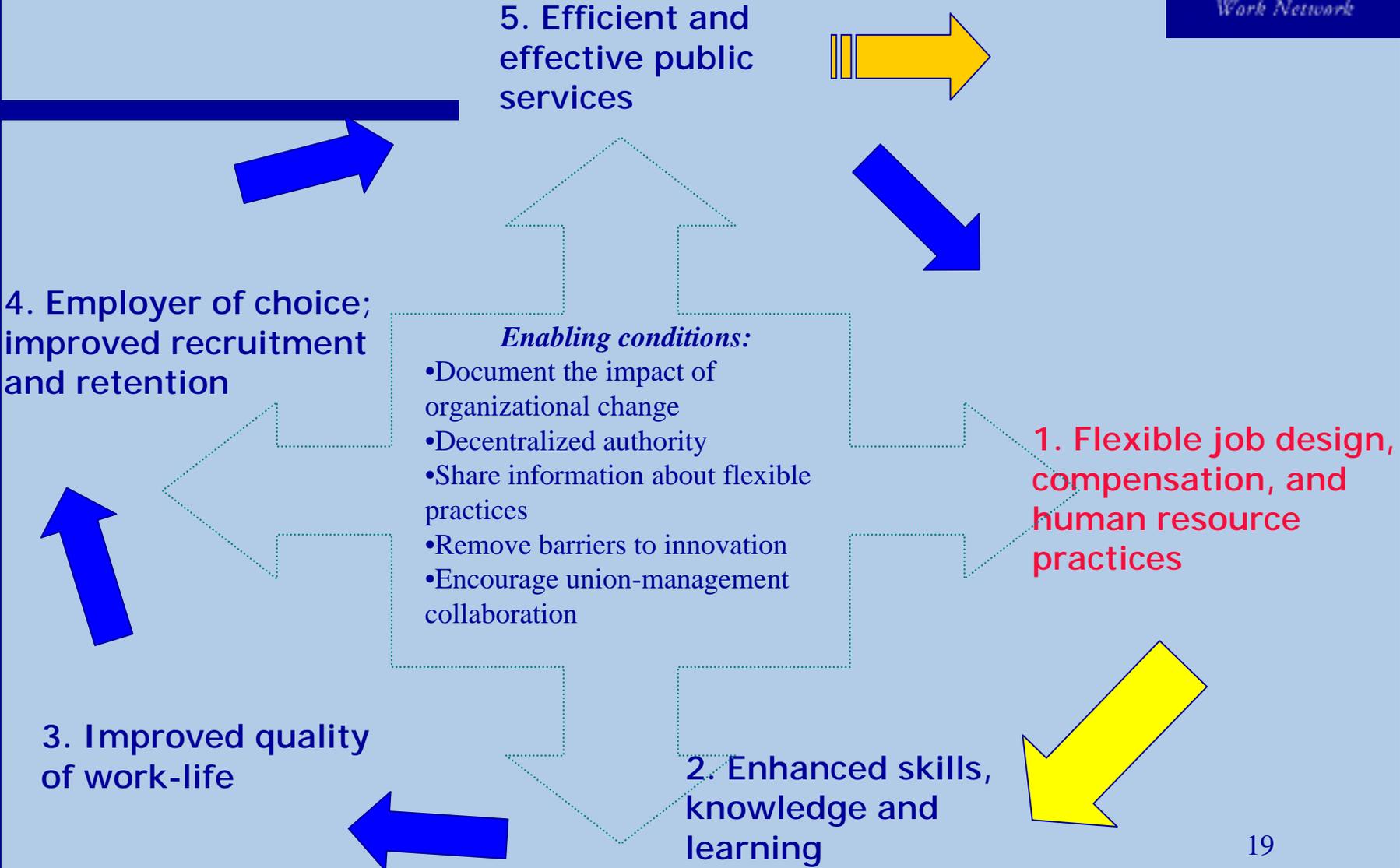
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#4 Linking innovation to public service renewal

Across Canada, public service renewal initiatives have set these goals as high priority :

- government as the “**employer of choice**”
- knowledge-based
- continuously learning
- multi-skilled
- flexible & responsive
- creative
- collaborative

The virtuous circle of workplace innovation





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Assessing progress on workplace renewal

- ✓ The 5 governments in the HRG Project have not moved very far on the enabling conditions. Central agencies can do a lot more to foster a climate of workplace renewal, especially in terms of labour-management collaboration and the delegation of authority to work unit managers.
- ✓ While training and information technology – foundational for knowledge-based organizations – generally are in place, some governments (and work units) lag behind and so must quickly catch up.
- ✓ While innovative workplace practices are progressing at a fairly impressive pace in government, there remains a large untapped potential for organizational reform that will improve the quality of working life and contribute to more effective public service. Thus it is especially important that every government work unit reflect on how flexible, innovative practices can be adopted.

A checklist for workplace innovation



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<i>Type of Innovation</i>	<u>5 jurisdictions in HRG</u>			<u>Your workplace</u>	
	<u>Project*</u>			Used now ?	Needed ?
	Low diffusion	Moderate diffusion	High diffusion		
ENABLING CONDITIONS:					
Labour-management collaboration	✓				
Document impact of org. change	✓				
Decentralized authority	✓				
Open communication about workplace changes		✓			
Remove barriers to innovation	✓				
WORKPLACE TOOLS:					
Information technology			✓		
Training			✓		
WORKPLACE PRACTICES:					
Flexible work arrangements		✓			
Job enlargement		✓			
Quality circles/problem-solving teams		✓			
Job enrichment		✓			
Self-directed work teams		✓			
Employee involvement		✓			
Flexible pay and incentives	✓				

* The low, moderate and high rates of diffusion indicated in this figure summarize various findings from the two HRG surveys.



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First steps toward doing government work differently...

- ✓ Treat quality of worklife (workloads, morale, stress, etc.) as a renewal and effectiveness issue
- ✓ Balance higher skill requirements and responsibilities with employee consultation and empowerment
- ✓ Take an integrated approach to technology, training, job design, staffing, compensation, and other HRM issues
- ✓ Foster cooperative labour-management relations to support innovation



Strategic HRM challenges

- **Support:** existing innovative practices
- **Leadership:** create 'change champions' at all levels
- **Process:** developmental and participative
- **Diffusion:** identify, encourage and reward the use of effective HRM practices



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