

“EMPLOYER OF CHOICE” SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

What is an “employer of choice”?

“Employers of choice” are organizations that exemplify such innovative and effective human resource management principles and practices that the most highly qualified and desirable employees choose to work for them rather than anyone else. They are industry leaders and their organizational structures, cultures and systems set the benchmark standards of excellence for others in their industry to follow.

What is this Self-Assessment Tool about?

This Self-Assessment Tool identifies the leading human resource practices and strategies that organizations are encouraged to implement if they are to be perceived as “employers of choice” in human services in Alberta now and in the foreseeable future. The standards are bundled into seven Recruitment Factors and eight Retention Factors derived from extensive review of human resource and rehabilitation management literature. Many of these strategies are already being practiced by leading human service and not-for-profit organizations in Alberta. The list of strategies in this tool is extensive, but not comprehensive; your organization may be doing activities that go beyond those that are listed here. The intent is to give you an idea of the vast scope of activities that can be implemented.

What does it measure? What does it mean if I score high or low?

The objective of the tool is to provide organizations with a simple gauge to measure how close they are to being “employers of choice”. The intent of the tool is not to “pass” or “fail” your organization, but to bring to your attention the complex and diverse bundle of strategies required for effective recruitment and retention. By making you rate your organization separately on each of the seven Recruitment Factors and eight Retention Factors, the tool will help you identify your organization’s strong points as well as areas in which there is room for improvement. We encourage you to use this tool as part of your human resources and strategic planning processes.

Who fills out this tool?

The Self-Assessment Tool is intended to be used primarily for planning and internal evaluation purposes related to the organization’s human resources activities and strategies. It would typically be used by the organization’s top leaders and decision-makers (i.e., executive directors, senior management team or board members). It may also be used to gauge the perspectives of employees at other levels of the organization. The objective is to get an honest appraisal of your organization’s practices. How you use the tool, who fills it out and how often you conduct the exercise is up to you. You may:

- Conduct the assessment by yourself.
- Conduct the assessment in a team setting (e.g., all members of the executive team). Option 1: Each person begins by conducting the assessment independently, and then compares and discusses the results with the rest of the team to arrive at a score everyone agrees with. Or, Option 2: Team members begin by discussing each factor and arrive at a commonly-agreed upon score without conducting an independent assessment.
- Request employees at various levels of the organization to submit their scores, and compare the results received. This would be an interesting exercise in surfacing potentially different perspectives across the organization, especially if the senior executive team’s scores differ from those of staff.

How does one work through the tool?

The Self-Assessment Tool has two sections, Recruitment and Retention, each with a set of applicable factors and examples of benchmark standards. The research shows that recruitment and retention outcomes improve if these strategies are in place.

- Step One: For each of the factors, rate your organization on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), using the benchmark standards as guiding indicators. You can decide who you want to compare yourself to, e.g., other rehabilitation agencies in your area, human services across the province, etc. It all depends who you think is competing against you for qualified staff. The more practices your organization is engaging in under each factor, the higher the score you can assign to that factor. Our list of examples is not comprehensive; your organization may be doing more than the list, or things similar to those on the list. Take that into consideration when you assign the ratings. After you have completed each section, add up your total score for that section.
- Step Two: For each section, identify the factors in which you have high scores (4 or higher) and those in which you have low scores (3 or lower). For areas in which you scored high, consider acting as a resource to other organizations, thus enhancing the human resource capacity of the industry as a whole. For areas in which you scored low, consider implementing some of the benchmark standards that are most applicable to your organization's strategic goals and capacity.

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RECRUITMENT						
	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know/ Does not apply (0)
<u>1. Fair Compensation</u> The organization provides fair and equitable compensation, including competitive/progressive benefits, e.g., entry-level and part-time positions are eligible for same benefits as others.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>2. Flexibility</u> The organization has policies and practices that offer flexibility in work arrangements and structures. Alternative work practices are explored and creative solutions to functional requirements are accepted.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>3. Workforce Diversity</u> The organization values and encourages diversity; it has strategies to attract non-traditional labour pools, e.g., engages in targeted marketing, offers part-time, flexible work arrangements for people 55 or older. The organization has policies that demonstrate cultural awareness and accommodative practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>4. Value Congruence</u> The organization espouses prevalent or progressive social values, e.g., equity, justice, democracy, empowerment. The organization has a clearly articulated philosophy/value statements. There are processes to ensure organizational values reflect and are consistent with employee values and consumer/family values, e.g., through stakeholder engagement and participatory mission/vision setting exercises.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>5. Initiation and Orientation</u> The organization offers pre-service training, apprenticeships or volunteer programs that provide potential new entrants into the field opportunities to learn core competencies and explore the job/career. Orientation processes are well-defined and comprehensive, e.g., new recruit is paired with a more experienced “buddy”, and receives clear instructions on roles/responsibilities, organizational information, reporting structures, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>6. Job Match</u> The organization has processes to determine if there is a fit between the job requirements and employee’s skills/interests, e.g., using realistic job previews, including potential team members/ consumers in the interview process.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
<u>7. Customer Service and Product Excellence</u> The organization is committed to understanding customer needs, providing effective services and having quality products and services. The organization is seen as a benchmark of excellence in its products and services (positive brand recognition).	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Add up the number of check marks for each column and calculate the total score for this section (A + B + C + D + E)	$\frac{\quad \times 5}{(A)}$	$\frac{\quad \times 4}{(B)}$	$\frac{\quad \times 3}{(C)}$	$\frac{\quad \times 2}{(D)}$	$\frac{\quad \times 1}{(E)}$	$\frac{0}{(F)}$
(A + B + C + D + E) Total Recruitment Score						

Comments/Notes: _____

RETENTION

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Don't know/ Does not apply (0)
<p><u>1. Fair Compensation</u> The organization provides fair and equitable compensation, including flexible benefits/family-friendly policies responsive to the life stages and needs of employees, e.g., child/elder-care resources, flexible work schedules, fitness centres, home loan assistance, educational loans/grants, time off for family illnesses.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>2. Employee Health and Work/Family Balance</u> The organization demonstrates a firm commitment to valuing employees and fostering employee satisfaction/health, e.g., via policies, practices, strategic plans and communications. The organization exhibits interest in employee's personal life, e.g., family composition, life style, values and career/personal goals.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>3. Resources and Environment</u> The organization provides the basic requirements for employees to succeed in their positions, e.g., training, proper technology and equipment, information, relevant authority, opportunities for teamwork and cooperation, safe and healthy work conditions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>4. Communication and Participation</u> The organization has effective and multiple mechanisms for timely, two-way information transfer. Employees can contribute their opinions and knowledge to decision-making processes. Employee feedback is sought and responded to.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>5. Self Actualization and Growth</u> Employees have meaningful and fulfilling work. There are multiple training opportunities and a strong relationship between training/advancement and the employee's career/growth aspirations. Training recognizes and rewards valued skills. There are well-defined career paths and accurate skills inventories.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>6. Leadership Skills and Support</u> Supervisors and mid-managers have strong leadership and people management skills, e.g., are supportive of employees, make staff feel valued, advocate for employee needs and are effective at influencing upper management decisions impacting on their staff. Leadership development and succession planning are part of the organization's strategic goals and objectives.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>7. Role Clarity and Performance Recognition</u> Employees understand their roles/responsibilities, and receive performance feedback through formal and informal mechanisms in a timely, supportive and constructive fashion. Reward systems are fair and appropriately recognize employee contribution.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p><u>8. Creativity and Innovation</u> The organization values and provides flexible mechanisms and resources for employees to engage in activities that promote learning, knowledge and innovation, e.g., partnerships with educational institutions, peer mentoring, teamwork, job shadowing, job enrichment/job enlargement. Creative problem solving and innovation are encouraged; risk-taking is supported.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<p>Add up the number of check marks for each column and calculate the total score for this section (A + B + C + D + E)</p>	$\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 5$ (A)	$\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 4$ (B)	$\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 3$ (C)	$\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 2$ (D)	$\frac{\quad}{\quad} \times 1$ (E)	$\frac{0}{(F)}$
(A + B + C + D + E) Total Retention Score						

Comments/Notes: _____

RESULTS SUMMARY and FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

RECRUITMENT SCORE: _____ (maximum: 35 points)
RETENTION SCORE: _____ (maximum: 40 points)
OVERALL SCORE: _____ (maximum: 75 points)

RECRUITMENT

STRONG POINTS

(Factors with scores of 4 or higher)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

AREAS OF WEAKNESS

(Factors with scores of 3 or lower)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

RETENTION

STRONG POINTS

(Factors with scores of 4 or higher)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



- **Maintain these HR practices, and strive to be on the leading-edge**
- **Provide leadership to other organizations, e.g., by acting as a knowledge and training resource**

AREAS OF WEAKNESS

(Factors with scores of 3 or lower)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



- **For each factor, using the example benchmark standards on pages 2 and 3, identify potential activities to incorporate into your organization's strategic plan to become an "Employer of Choice"**

Comments/Notes: _____

