ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

UPPER NICOLA BAND

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Executive Summary

The Chief and Council of the Upper Nicola Band (UNB) commissioned an independent third-party review of the UNB organization. Its broad goal was to assess operational efficiency and effectiveness, communications, human resources, and resource stewardship.

A key goal of the review was for it to be inclusive. As such, a large number of staff and community members were engaged in the process. Information was gathered in several ways including literature and document reviews, individual interviews, surveys, and community engagement meetings.

The findings revealed challenges and opportunities in nine areas. These included:

- Organizational Culture
- Human Resources
- Communications
- Accountability and Efficiency
- Procurement
- Policy
- Finance
- Organizational Priorities
- Leadership Meetings

The review proposed 25 recommendations which represent implementable opportunities for continuous improvements to the operations of UNB. The recommendations have been grouped according to the degree of impact and ease of implementation in order that they can be easily prioritized by UNB.

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Project Purpose and Methodology

Purpose

The UNB Chief and Council commissioned a third-party to review and assess the effectiveness of its organization. Specifically, the review was to provide information and recommendations that would lead to a more efficient and accountable organization by examining the following areas:

- The effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing governance structure, communications structures, and clarity of roles and responsibilities.

- The effectiveness of the organization to meet its current and future demands.

- The cost effectiveness and efficiency of the current organizational structure, and the division of work within it.

- Whether administrative and management practices and procedures provide good service, are efficient, and provide value-for-money.

- The elements of a productive workplace including delegation of responsibility, staff participation and teamwork, service, quality, individual accountability and ownership, and adaptability to future change

- Human resource management policies and practices in such areas as performance management, recruitment and selection, and compensation.

The goal was to ensure that the organization adopts best practices which will improve the service experience of its members, reduce costs, and ensure that the organization is well placed to meet its mandate. The review's intent is to provide the knowledge and recommendations that will create and promote a high-quality working environment which places the priorities of the UNB at the forefront.

Methodology

UNB Chief and Council placed great importance on the methodology of the review. It was critical that the process be inclusive and that it provide all staff and members of the community an opportunity to provide input and be fully involved with the process.

In order to ensure breadth and depth of participation, information for the review was gathered using the following approaches:

- 32 interviews with staff, council members, and community members, with the average time per interview being approximately 3 hours;

- Administration of an online survey to a random selection of vendors used by UNB;

- Administration of an online survey which was available to all members of the UNB community, whether they were living in the community or not;

- Three community engagement sessions in both online and in-person format, lasting approximately 2 hours each;

- Review of the UNB website and publicly available information regarding UNB;

- Review of 360 documents provided by UNB. This included but was not limited to policies, job descriptions, plans, accords, and agreements;

- Review of comparable external organizations, their organizational structures, and best practices;

- Review of e-mails sent by members of the community who participated in one of the three community engagement sessions, and who did not want to answer certain questions in the public forum, and chose instead to answer through a personal e-mail to maintain confidentiality;

- Attendance at governance meetings; and

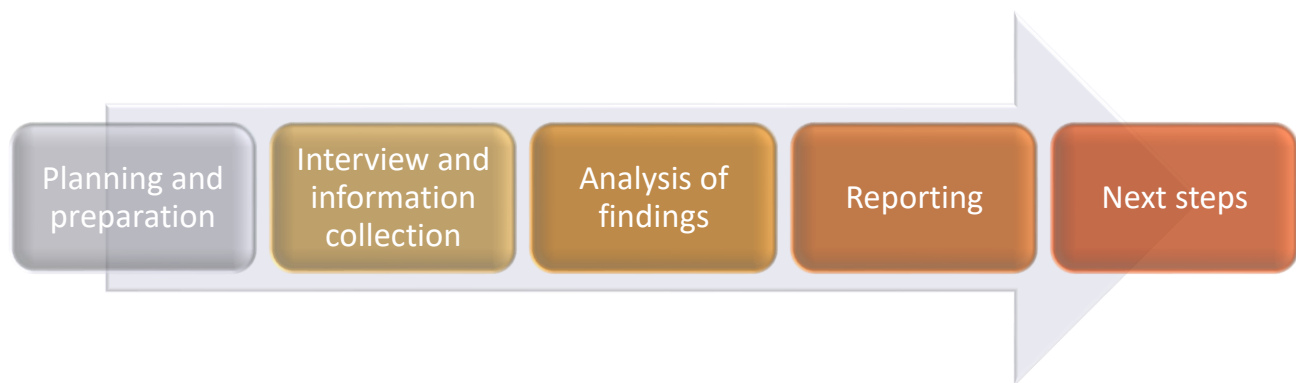- A review of meeting agendas, information packages, motions, and minutes.

The consultation process involved an in-depth diagnostic of the observations and experiences from staff, community members, and vendors. This provided insight into understanding members, staff, Chief and Council, and vendors' experiences and needs.

The methodology used, especially the emphasis on consultation, provides immediate and future benefits for UNB which includes:

- Improved reputation as an organization that proactively seeks the input of staff;

- Increased support and greater buy-in by staff and community members for future implementation of recommendations; and

- Creation of a deeper base of information from which to make informed decisions on priorities and investments.

The organizational assessment was structured into five sequential phases. Phases 1 to 4 are within the scope of this organizational review. Phase 5 drives toward implementation of recommendations and is not contemplated in this review beyond the presentation of a proposed implementation plan.

| Planning and preparation | Interview and information collection | Analysis of findings | Reporting | Next steps |

Phase 1 –Allowed appropriate consideration and validation of the scope of review, key personnel to interview, and intended outcomes.

Phase 2 – Interviews and information collection was performed to gather data on current operations. Interviews were held throughout the organizational and at all levels.

Specific observations and experiences shared during interviews were treated as confidential. Information presented in this report reflects aggregated themes gained from those interviews, from surveys, and from a review of documents and comparable organizations. No identifying information has been shared.

Phase 3 – This represented a deep dive into all the information that was collected and reviewed. The broad objective of the analysis was to identify major themes emerging from the consultation and information review.

Phase 4 – This included documentation of findings and recommendations to assist in decision making and pre-implementation planning.

Phase 5 – Refers to active support for implementation and is out of scope for this organizational review.

Key Themes Identified

There were several key themes which emerged from the research and interviews. These themes impact the majority of staff members, and a large portion of community members. The key themes are broad and aspects of each theme impact all departments and levels of the organization. The key themes identified and that need addressing are under the headings of:

Recommendations are presented for each theme along with a proposed sequence for implementation. This sequence is based on ease of implementation and benefit to UNB.

Policy

The organizational review considered the effectiveness and relevance of UNB's policies and procedures. This review included a thorough examination of existing policies, comments on policy identified by staff and the community, as well as the identification of any gaps or inconsistencies that need to be addressed.

Key elements of the policy review included:

- Review whether the policies align with UNB's goals and objectives;
- Determine if the policies are compliant with relevant laws and regulations;
- Determine whether policies are consistently applied across the organization;
- Gather feedback from policy users to understand their perspectives and experiences with the policies; and
- Assess whether the policies are achieving their intended goals and if they need to be revised or updated.

Overall UNB has robust policies in many areas. These include but are not limited to Finance, Human Resource, Housing, and Information Management.

That said, there are important corporate areas where no stand-alone policies existed, or the policy for a particular area was embedded within another policy. Further, there were areas where a policy was not well understood, or used by staff consistently.

These areas require their own policy which will provide needed direction. For those that exist within other policies, a stand-alone policy will signal to employees the importance and priority that the area has within the organization. It will help to ensure that actions align with goals and values, and it can provide a framework for addressing and solving issues. Additionally, these policies can help to promote consistency, fairness, and accountability.

Recommendations

1. **Develop a Communications Policy**

    As outlined in the communications section of this review, significant concerns over the timeliness, quality, and tone of communication were expressed by staff and the community. A policy is required which will set out specific roles and responsibilities, including who can communicate for the organization and by what means. The policy would also outline the expected tone of communication and how this intersects with UNB's Code of Ethics.

2. **Develop a stand-alone Procurement Policy**

    Current procurement policies are embedded within the Finance Policy. There were several instances where staff and the community expressed concern over procurement not following policy, or policy being insufficient to prevent a fair and transparent procurement process. In some instances those involved with procurement were not aware of the procurement process outlined in the policy.

    A stand-alone policy would highlight the importance of sound procurement policies to staff. It would also be a strong signal to the community that this is a priority of the organization.

3. **Develop a stand-alone Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest Policy**

    Currently the Governance Policy, specifically Appendixes D and E, addresses these areas. These appendixes contain forms which are intended to be signed by employees as part of their orientation process.

    Several concerns and allegations were raised by respondents during the review about these areas. Without an investigation it is not possible to know whether the concerns are valid. However, the perception that the organization does not place emphasis on conduct or conflict of interest has a significant negative impact on employee morale and productivity.

A stand-alone policy will make this topic more visible and signal to employees that this is important. Further, a stand-alone policy would give the opportunity to better outline roles and expectations in these areas. While existing policies cover many essential points, these are not grouped together and it is not user friendly. This can lead to many important points being overlooked.

4. **Delegation of Authority to be incorporated into each policy**

The Governance Policy, specifically Appendix A, outlines delegated authority for corporate functions within the organization. The chart is clear and easy to understand.

The concern is that users may not find the placement of the chart readily apparent. It is standard business practice to have the delegated authority for an area within a specific policy. For instance, the Finance policy should have a section which outlines the delegated authority for financial functions. This has found to be a good practice as this is where most users will intuitively go to find the information.

The fact that UNB has a chart which shows delegated authority throughout the organization is a best practice also. However, the redundancy of placing it within each policy will ensure that it is more visible and that the chance of anyone overstepping their delegated authority is reduced.

Procurement

The organizational review of procurement incorporated a systematic evaluation of UNB's procurement processes, polies, and procedures. Its aim was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of procurement practices, identify areas of improvement, and suggest recommendations to optimize procurement operations.

Key elements of the review included:

- Review of procurement policies and procedures;
- Assessment of procurement processes and systems;
- Analysis of procurement performance metrics;
- Analysis of procurement risks and compliance; and
- Review of supplier relationships and contracts.

The main finding with respect to procurement is the perception that the process is not fair and transparent. In some instances there were specific allegations made concerning "unethical procurement practices". However, these allegations were not proven, and it is beyond the scope of this review to conduct a forensic review of these allegations. In many instances, while there were no specific allegations, there was a perception that procurement was not being administered well.

Whether the allegations are true or not, or the perceptions justified, they present an organizational risk. If in fact they are true then there is the possibility that the organization has not been receiving value for money and/ or procurement has happened with related parties for the sake of financial gain. If none of this is true, then the risk remains that employees remain discouraged by this perception. It saps motivation and weakens the ability of the organization to attract and retain talent.

As outlined in the section of the organizational review concerning policy, procurement requires its own independent policy. This will highlight the topic and the importance placed on it by senior leadership.

While the current procurement policies were found to be adequate, they did not adequately cover all areas of procurement and lacked details in others. For instance, it is recommended that the

policy included more detail on how a competitive tendering process for high value goods is conducted. As another example, there was no adequate provision for sole sourcing of goods and services where there are limited vendors.

Consideration should also be given to the delegation of authority for procurement which is outlined in Appendix C of the Finance Policy. Compared to other similar organization, procurement delegation is quite centralized. Time and operational efficiencies can be found by delegating higher authority amounts to lower levels. This increase in efficiency would need to be weighed against the comfort level associated with loss of internal control. This is standard when considering increased delegation within any organization. Further, unless there are good reasons to do so, there should be alignment between the delegated authority within UNB and its economic development corporation. This can create confusion and/or error for staff who occupy roles in both organizations.

Recommendations

1. **Develop a stand-alone Procurement Policy**

   As already outlined in the policy section of the organizational review, a stand-alone policy would highlight the importance of sound procurement policies internally. It would also be a strong signal to staff and the community that this is a priority of the organization.

   Recommended elements to be incorporated into a new procurement policy include:

   - More detail about the process to solicit and evaluate requests for proposals;
   - Outline the appropriate use of non-competitive bids;
   - Include provisions for open-ended contracts, price agreements, and blanket purchase orders;
   - Include a provision for vendor protests; and
   - Review delegated authority to see if it can be increased at lower levels of the organization.

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2. **Publish a list of contracts awarded over a specific threshold**

   In order to increase trust in the procurement process, it is recommended that efforts be made to make it more transparent.

   A business practice which has met with much success is to publish, typically each quarter, a list of contracts awarded. The list would include the good or service that was procured, the vendor that was awarded the contract, and the amount of the contract.

   While the threshold to use is subjective, for UNB it is recommended that this be set at $10,000. This means that any contract above this amount would be included on the public list. This amount aligns with current table of delegated authority. Further, by setting the threshold at a low amount it demonstrates the commitment to transparency and due process in procurement.

   By publishing a list of contracts awarded, staff and community members will be able to readily see where organizational funds are being spent. Any accusations or rumours concerning procurement to related parties can be easily addressed. It is felt that this recommendation would provide a direct and effective method to address the concerns raised about procurement. This would increase trust in the organization and remove the inefficiency brought about by the distraction this issue causes.

Communications

The organizational review of communications assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of UNB's communication processes, systems, and practices. The goal was to identify areas for improvement and to develop strategies to enhance the quality, consistency, and impact of the UNB's communication efforts.

Communications was analyzed at all levels of the organization. This included internal communications between staff members, communication of senior leadership internally, and how the organization communicates to community members.

Communications was evaluated by looking at:

- Its alignment with UNB's values and strategies;
- Assessing its effectiveness in promoting clear and consistent communication; and
- Determining if communication practices provide adequate guidance and support for employees.

The review found that UNB had many strengths when it came to communications. Of note, the UNB website is of high quality and it contained relevant reports and community information. There is a regular newsletter which is sent to members of the community to keep them informed. Further, UNB uses a variety of communication channels which ranges from websites, to printed material, to community meetings, to its communications app.

The review found that communications could be strengthened in areas. One of the primary concerns was with verbal communication. Many persons who were interviewed outlined how communication often lacked respect or appeared threatening. There was a strong sense that those with stronger personalities controlled the narrative and that few efforts were made for everyone to have a voice.

One important finding was that there was a lack of communications between operations and community members. Many respondents indicated that there was a lack of timely response, or no response, to inquiries they made to the organization. There were several instances where phone calls and e-mails received no response, or the response was cursory and insufficient. It was noted

that all phone calls go to the switchboard but they do not have appropriate calendar access to determine if/when staff would be available.

Often it was unclear who was responsible for a particular issue so inquiries were made to more than one person, which creates inefficiencies. While this is an important communications issue, the recommendation for this is addressed in the accountability and efficiency section of the organizational review.

A review of published information and information presented at leadership meetings showed that it would benefit from plain language writing. This form of writing seeks to present information without using business or operational jargon and in a concise form. It often uses summary graphics and is written in a form that ensures readability no higher than an early high school level. This is considered a best practice. It is used by many monthly publications and government organizations. It ensures that complex information is conveyed to the widest audience possible and that relevant take aways are highlighted.

Recommendations

1. **Develop a staff calendar**

   Community members want to have timely access to staff members. Frustration was expressed by those who called UNB and could not be told when staff members would be available. Due to the lack of a shared calendar, it could be that staff would not be able to respond for several hours, or even days. However, this could not be communicated to community members and thus expectations could not be managed.

   A simple solution would be to have an electronic calendar which is shared with anyone performing reception and/ or switchboard duties. This would allow them to know availability, potentially schedule meetings, and manage expectations concerning service standards.

2. **Develop a Communications Policy**

As already outlined in the policy section of the organizational review, a stand-alone policy would highlight the importance of communications internally. It would also be a strong signal to the community that this is a priority of the organization.

Recommended elements to be incorporated into a new communications policy include:

- Determining who is a designated spokesperson and outlining their roles and responsibilities;
- Provide guidance on how to determine what is confidential information and how to store and dispose of it;
- Outline required communications internally and externally, such as frequency of community meetings, staff meetings, newsletters, etc; and
- Set service and quality standards for communications.

3. **Deliver communications training**

The review found that communications would be enhanced through training. In particular, focus should be placed on respectful communications and how to communicate in difficult situations. Any training should be linked to the Code of Conduct and employee expectations. Employee expectations concerning communication should be defined when setting performance goals.

It is recommended that management have further training on inclusive meetings and communicating with diverse personalities. This would provide tools for managers to ensure that all voices are heard. It would also provide tools to restructure communications so that it is effective irrespective of the characteristics of the person being communicated to, or their position within the organization.

As communications is a two-way street, it is recommended that community members be invited to communications workshops.

4. **Implement plain language writing characteristics into communications**

    To ensure that information is best understood to the widest possible audience, the organization should adopt the principles of plain language writing into all its communication channels. Doing so would involve several steps which include:

    - Provide training of plain language writing;

    - Incorporate the adoption of plain language writing into the communications policy; and

    - Set standards which reinforce plain language writing. As an example, some organizations require a cover page for any agenda item at leadership meetings that is no longer than one page.

Accountability and Efficiency

The organizational review assessed the accountability of the organization. It was found that concerns related to accountability were highly correlated with observed areas where efficiency could be improved. As such, these areas were combined.

For the purposes of this review, Accountability refers to the responsibility of an individual or organization to account for their actions and decisions. Efficiency refers to the ability to produce desired outcomes with a minimum of waste or unnecessary effort.

Accountability and efficiency were evaluated by looking at:

- Whether the organization has clearly articulated goals and objectives;
- Documentation outlining the organization's performance against established goals and objectives;
- How authority for key functions is delegated and communicated;
- How individual accountability was defined and measured; and
- The efficiency of the organization from the perspective of third parties and when bench-marked against similar organizations.

UNB showed many areas where accountability was well defined and communicated. Of note were the many policies and laws which defined roles and responsibilities. Further, job descriptions were available, well written, and clearly showed the scope of work for a position.

In terms of efficiency, operations were generally found to be efficient when compared to other organizations. As outlined in other areas of this review, there are opportunities to improve on this. For instance, operations could achieve even greater efficiency through increased delegation and stronger processes. However, there was little evidence to show that operations were inefficient when assessed globally.

Many respondents noted that they perceived certain areas of operations to be inefficient. When speaking to staff, distribution of work seems to be a leading cause of this observation. It was reported that some staff handle much more work than others. Due to this, those with the higher workload are often less able to respond promptly to requests, which is often seen as an indicator of

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inefficiency. It is recommended that a more robust performance management system be implemented for all staff members. This would include service standards as well as qualitative and quantitative performance measures. This would ensure that there is a more efficient distribution of work, better response times, and more efficient service to clients. This recommendation is detailed in the Human Resources section of the organizational review.

Recommendations

1. **Publish an enhanced organizational chart with contact information for key functions**

   Community members expressed frustration that they did not know who was responsible for several functions. The UNB website does include an organizational chart and staff listing, however these need to be easier to find on the website. The organizational chart showed key roles and the positions that report to them. However, the chart did not show the name or contact information for any of the positions.

   Having an enhanced organizational chart which shows key positions, outlines key functions or the position, and shows contact information would promote efficiency. Community members would better understand who to contact for a particular issue and they would avoid contacting several persons needlessly in an attempt to reach the correct person.

2. **Create an electronic ticket system for service requests**

   It is standard business practice to use ticket systems for common service requests. In this type of system customers are able to call or place a request online. This generates a ticket number which is then assigned to a staff member.

   Ticket numbers allow the organization to easily track the number of requests and what they are about. It is easy to see how best to distribute tickets and ensure that they are allocated equitably among staff. With time, trend data becomes available which allows the organization to predict seasonal demands or other factors that may impact demand. This allows management to staff accordingly and look at the possibility of cross-training to ensure adequate service during peak times.

A ticket system would also allow community members to easily follow up on requests. Information related to the request would be stored centrally so if the lead on a ticket is unavailable, a surrogate could easily open the file and attend to the request.

There are several available off the shelf software ticketing solutions that can be used by UNB.

3. **Create, publish, and report on service standards**

    In order to increase accountability and efficiency, it is recommended that service standards be created and published for all common client service requests. This will allow the organization to manage expectations as it would be clear to community members when they should receive a response. Further, it would set benchmarks for staff which are expected to improve service standards.

    It is common business practice to improve efficiency once base service standards are set. With experience, managers and staff can determine what combination of technology, increased personnel, or process efficiency can lead to improved service.

    Setting and reporting on service standards for each staff member is a tool from which to measure performance and accountability. At the beginning of each performance cycle the standards should be articulated to each staff member and then reported on quarterly. This will help to ensure efficiency in the organization and will allow human resources to easily identify when they should intervene with a performance plan.

    At an organizational level, reporting on services standards will improve the accountability of the organization to the community. They will easily be able to determine how the organization is performing. This would help to prevent negative innuendos of organizational accountability and efficiency. Community members would be able to see the data and develop informed opinions.

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Organizational Culture

The organizational review assessed the organizational culture of UNB to determine whether it was one that was conducive to employee attraction, retention, and excellence.

Organizational culture was evaluated by looking at:

- Understanding the current beliefs, attitudes, and values that exist within the organization as reported by staff;
- Identifying the type of culture that is favoured by employees;
- Assessing the gap between current culture and the favoured culture and determining how to transition to the favoured culture.

The review found that there were varied feelings about the organizational culture at UNB. There were many staff who expressed pride at working for the community and being able to see the tangible results of their efforts. Many expressed that they were excited about their work and happy with the teams they worked in.

There were also many respondents who expressed different views. They reported feeling unease at work. This stemmed from what they perceived as a culture where threats to job security are common. They felt that there was little room to bring up new ideas. Many reported that power was not equitably shared but instead rested with a group of key individuals.

Another key finding was the perceived lack of respect for confidentiality. There was a widely held belief that Human Resource information was routinely shared with persons who were not required to know it. This has greatly eroded trust. It has also helped to create a climate where some staff are not at ease to voice concerns to managers for fear that their concerns will be shared with others.

Those with negative perceptions about the organizational culture found that it adversely impacted their motivation, efficiency, and ability to innovate. Their focus was on job security. They felt that there was no safe process which allows them to voice their concerns and have them addressed.

In recounting their experiences, several staff members told stories which contained serious allegations. It is beyond the scope of the organizational review to determine whether these allegations are true. However the review takes note that the unresolved allegations negatively impact all staff who hear about them. This in turn negatively impacts the organizational culture.

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Recommendations

1. **Provide training on a revised stand-alone Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest policy**

    As articulated in the policy recommendation of the organizational review, a stand-alone Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest Policy is recommended. It is important that this policy become infused with the culture of the organization. To do this, it is recommended that training be provided to all staff and that they sign a new affirmation to abide by the code of conduct.

2. **Create rules and norms for interpersonal interactions**

    It is recommended that the code of conduct be operationalized by creating rules and norms for interpersonal interactions. This can include meeting norms, acceptable language norms, and standardized processes for meetings which ensure that everyone has a chance to voice opinions.

    The completed rules and norms should be distributed and posted widely. Physical posters should be hung in meeting rooms, offices, and other places where staff gather so that there is a constant reminder of the rules and norms.

3. **Create a safe and responsive process where staff can confidentially voice concerns**

    Staff need to feel safe in reporting inappropriate conduct which negatively impacts culture. When they do not, inappropriate conduct is not reported and can quickly become accepted as the norm. Staff participating in inappropriate behaviour need to be identified so that the problematic behaviour will stop through coaching or progressive discipline.

    Effective organizations seek to address concerns quickly and informally wherever possible. It is therefore recommended that UNB integrate a more comprehensive informal resolution process into its Human Resources Policy. It was found that the existing process lacked specifics and did not provide enough assurance concerning confidentiality. A refreshed

informal resolution process will create a robust structure for staff to have concerns addressed as quickly and easily as possible.

There are instances where informal resolution does not work. Further, there are instances where there is fear of reprisal. There are several models in other organizations which have proven effective in addressing these situations. For UNB, it is recommended that a third party ombudsperson be put in place. This position would be on contract and used as required. This position would allow staff to table concerns and the ombudsperson would then have the authority to investigate. If coaching or other corrective actions are required, appropriate members of the leadership team would be informed and tasked with implementing the recommendations.

4. **Administer an annual employee pulse check**

A best practice in many organizations is to periodically take a pulse check of the organization by having staff complete an anonymous survey which asks for their view on organizational culture. It has been found that periodic pulse checks allow organizations to readily determine trends and address them at early stages.

It is recommended that UNB conduct a pulse check to establish a baseline for the organization. Using the results, the organization can them establish an action plan to address findings. Subsequent pulse checks would allow the organization to determine if their actions were effective, and whether other corrective measures need to be implemented. It is recommended that UNB conduct the employee pulse check annually.

Finance

The organizational review assessed the financial functions of the organization to determine whether it was effective in ensuring the financial health of the organization, and whether it adequately supported leadership and operations.

Finance was evaluated by looking at:

- The organization's performance in terms of budgeting, financial reporting, and management of cash flow;
- Evaluating financial policies and procedures, including the quality and timeliness of financial reporting, and the effectiveness of controls for safeguarding the organization's assets;
- Assessing the level of collaboration and communication between the Finance department and operations; and
- Evaluating the use of technology, including financial systems, software, and processes.

The review found that UNB has a good Finance function. The organization has robust policies and procedures. There was little evidence of qualified opinions or unadjusted errors in any of the financial reports. Delegation levels are within business norms. Processes are similar in regard to internal controls and efficiency with comparable organizations.

UNB has achieved Financial Administration Law (FAL) certification. This is a tremendous achievement which speak to the strength and quality of their financial controls and processes.

It was noted that there is strong sense of confidence with existing financial controls. An attempt to defraud UNB was successfully intercepted. Even stronger controls were put in place as a result.

Staff and community members had a positive perception of the finance function. There were no significant issues raised in regard to service levels. UNB has good financial systems. Managers can easily access financial reports in the system which allow them to track their budgets as required.

That said, financial reports were found to be technical and did readily provide a status update of the financial health of the organization. Reports might contain relevant information but it would be difficult for non-financial users to understand. Industry best practice is to create financial dashboards. These dashboards are typically one to two pages in length. They provide critical base

financial information, typically in graphical form. They are designed for ease of understanding by users without a financial background.

Dashboards can be coded into financial systems. This form of dashboard is considered ideal in that it continually updates and users can access data in real time. However, this form of dashboard can be costly to set-up and often requires third-party expertise when changes are made to the dashboard.

For UNB it is recommended that an Excel-based dashboard be created. This would require manual input from the financial system. This is a common set-up in many organizations. When properly designed, the dashboard can be prepared with minimal time commitment.

It was noted that there were notable differences in delegated authority between UNB and its economic development corporation. Unless there are good reasons to do so, the delegated authority between the organizations should be aligned. If this is not done, it can create confusion and/or error for staff who occupy roles in both organizations.

Recommendation

1. **Create a finance dashboard to facilitate the communication of financial data**

    It is recommended that an excel-based dashboard be created and presented quarterly to Chief and Council. This would be in addition to the reporting required under FAL.

    As a future initiative, UNB should develop a similar type of dashboard that can be used to report on the financial health of each division and/ or budget manager.

Leadership Meetings

As part of the organizational review, leadership meetings were reviewed. The review looked to see if the meetings were effective in advancing the strategic priorities of UNB.

Key elements of this aspect of the review included:

- Review of the minutes of each meeting to ensure that all decisions are recorded;
- Evaluate the quality and relevance of the agendas for each meeting, including the level of detail provided for each item;
- Assess the quality of the decision-making process, including the level of input from all leadership members and the time given for discussion and debate;
- Evaluate the outcomes of each meeting, including the follow-up actions taken;
- Assess the agenda to determine whether its structure adequately supports decision making; and
- Evaluate the use of time during the meetings.

Overall, the review found that leadership meetings were well run and supported effective decision making. Agenda packages were complete and sent to participants in a timely manner. There was little evidence of items being added to the agenda last minute, which runs the risk of inadequate preparation for decision making.

Motions were prepared prior to the meeting and were well written. They were clear and sufficiently detailed. Minutes were concise and clearly outlined decisions which were made. Accountability for follow-up actions, and the status of follow-up actions, was clear.

It was noted that agendas were quite busy for the amount of time allotted. Despite this the meeting chair was able to move efficiently through the agenda and finish in a timely manner.

The agenda can be strengthened by having a time allotment for each agenda item. This is considered a business best practice which leads to more efficient meetings. As an example, if a presenter knows prior to a meeting that they will only have 15 minutes for an item, they will tailor their commentary to fit within the timelines. Without a time allotment, presenters may take more time than an agenda item warrants. Also, in giving time allotments, more time and emphasis can

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be given to higher priority items. Time allotments also help the Chair and minute taker ensure that the agenda is manageable and that it can be completed in the time set aside for the meeting.

In order to improve meeting efficiency and allow more time for specific items, it is recommended that leadership adopt a consent agenda. This is considered a best practice in many organizations.

A consent agenda is a specific item on an agenda. This item contains motions and related background materials on routine and administrative matters. Examples can include operational reports which contain no pressing issues, correspondence, acceptance of minutes, and staffing information which does not require approval but is for information purposes. As part of the organizational review, it was noted that one meeting had several motions giving direction to staff to enter into rental arrears agreements. This matter is largely routine and could easily be inserted into a consent agenda.

During a meeting when a consent agenda is tabled, the Chair asks if any participant wants to remove any item. If an item is removed, it is tabled as a regular agenda item and there can be discussion before any motion is approved. For items that remain on the consent agenda, no discussion takes place and all items on the consent agenda are considered in one motion.

The review found that there was little use of in-camera meetings. This is considered a business best practice and provides a forum for confidential discussion on certain matters. Generally in-camera meetings are limited to items which include: contract negotiations, labour relations matters, executive or employee remuneration, litigation, or items under confidentiality agreements. Minutes are not taken at in-camera meetings. Motions are recorded but are not part of the public record. However, regular meeting agendas do note that an in-camera session occurred.

In-camera meetings are necessary to protect the confidentiality of staff, vendors, or community members. In-camera meetings also allow the organization to respect the legal protections given to specific information being made public. Further, in-camera meetings ensure that proprietary information is not released to competitors or to anyone who can personally gain from the information.

Recommendation

1. **Modify agenda structure for leadership meetings**

    It is recommended that UNB modify its meeting agenda structure. This should include:

    - The implementation on in-camera meetings for items which meet pre-defined confidentiality criteria. These criteria should be incorporated into the Governance Policy

    - Assign time allotments for each agenda item. The meeting organizer should ensure that presenters structure any documentation and/ or presentation to fit within the allotted time.

    - Implement the use of a consent agenda which will allow routine and non-contentious matters to be managed efficiently. This will also allow more time to be allotted for higher priority items.

Organizational Priorities

Respondents voiced several concerns over organizational priorities. The review looked to see if UNB's mandate was reflective of the stated priorities of staff and community members.

Key elements of this aspect of the review included:

- Review of strategic documents such as the Comprehensive Community Plan, Strategic Plan, and Four Pillars Framework;
- Evaluate the effective of the organization's structure and resourcing in meeting its priorities;
- Determine if there is a gap between organizational priorities and the stated priorities of staff and community members;
- Assess if priorities are clearly communicated and understood by stakeholders; and
- Determine the feasibility of achieving priorities and if additional resourcing or support is required.

The review found that UNB is involved with several differing priorities. There was general consensus that the organization is working to advance these in good faith for the benefit of the community.

The primary finding from the review was that UNB may not be adequately resourced to advance some priorities. There was frustration from some respondents over the amount of progress made. Often this was viewed as in terms of a lack of efficiency or accountability to the community.

There were two areas where this came up repeatedly. The first concerned the work by Chief and Council on the four pillars. This initiative is highly regarded, it is seen as an innovative and comprehensive framework from which to address numerous community priorities. There was much excitement around the planning for this initiative.

The general theme was that since its inception, there has been little communication concerning the pillars. The sentiment was that apart from the development of the framework it has not really taken off and that it has not produced tangible results. Many respondents commented that there

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have been few meetings concerning the pillars and that they only had access to a draft copy of the terms of reference.

There remains high levels of support for the four pillars at all levels of UNB. However, it appears that resourcing and support are inadequate to meet community expectations. While consideration was given to narrowing the scope of the project, the data does not support this. It is recommended instead that the project be revitalized with defined timelines, and that dedicated resources be allocated to advance the project.

The second area related to the priority the organization places on community safety. During interviews with staff and community members, many significant incidents regarding personal safety were reported. These were primarily incidents which occurred outside of the work environment. Overall, there was concern over personal safety in the community. There was a lack of knowledge of how to manage safety concerns, including how to confidentially report them and where to seek support.

A review of the documentation showed that this finding is already known to UNB. A draft Community Safety Plan dated August 2021 was provided as part of the documentary review.

The plan is well written and incorporates the input of leadership, staff, and community members. The report is comprehensive and outlines four priority areas. The recommendations in the report would address the concerns raised by respondents during interviews.

There was little evidence provided that the draft report was finalized and adopted. Further, there was little documentation to show progress made on each of the priority areas.

Implementation of the recommendations in the report requires significant time and effort. Staff are occupied with their core duties. It is not possible for staff to implement the recommendations in a timely way during lulls in regular activities. It is recommended that UNB refresh the safety plan, including implementation timelines. It is also recommended that UNB allocate dedicated resources to the implementation of the plan.

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Recommendations

1. **Conduct a review of organizational priorities**

   It is recommended that UNB conduct a review of its organizational priorities. This would include an inventory of past commitments. Further a status update on each priority should be completed.

   The timeline for each priority should be refreshed. Also, the necessary supports and resources to complete the priorities within the refreshed timelines should be completed. If there are gaps between necessary supports and resources required and those already allocated, plans should be made to address the gaps.

2. **Create and implement a communication strategy concerning organizational priorities**

   Ensuring that information regarding priorities is readily available will provide assurance to community members that they are being addressed. It is recommended that twice a year a progress report be created and circulated which shows progress against timelines and deliverables.

Human Resources

Concerns relating to human resources (HR) factored prominently during interviews. The organizational review focused on whether human resource functions at UNB were of assistance in attracting and retaining the talent and skills necessary to deliver on its mandate. It also focused on whether human resources was creating a respectful and inclusive work environment which breeds success.

Key elements of this aspect of the review included:

- Review if HR is utilizing effective recruiting and selection methods to attract top talent;
- Determine if HR is effectively addressing employee complaints and resolving conflicts;
- Assess whether there are HR initiatives which promote a positive work environment and high employee morale;
- Determine if there are strong processes in place to manage employee performance, set goals, and conduct performance evaluations; and
- Assess whether HR is effective in supporting the organization and its priorities.

The review found many favourable aspects of UNB's HR functions. There was a strong HR policy which adequately addressed core HR duties. Job descriptions were available and were well written. The job descriptions clearly outlined core duties. As a future step, the job descriptions should incorporate qualitative and quantitative performance metrics which would be used as a base to measure efficiency and individual contributions. For example, a position which processes bills for payment could have a metric which states that they have to have bills approved, entered into the accounting system, and ready for the next cheque run within 4 business days of being given the bill.

One of the main findings of the review is the perception that HR recruitment is not always transparent. Of note, there was little evidence provided to prove the allegations raised and a forensic audit of the recruitment process would be required to determine if the allegations have merit. That said, even if there were no issues found with the recruitment process, the perception that it is flawed undermines trust in the organization.

Best practice from the business community is to increase transparency when these situations arise. It sends a strong signal that the organization is seriously examining the issue, and is willing to

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identify and correct any faults if found. Increased transparency also helps to prevent rumours and inuendo as there is a clear window into how HR operates.

For UNB it is recommended that as first step, a neutral third-party be hired on a contract basis to assist the recruitment process. This would be for a finite period until trust can be restored to the process. The third-party could manage recruitment in its entirety. However, this is not recommended as an infrastructure for HR recruitment already exists. Delegating this function to a third-party would be financially wasteful. Further, it could erroneously signal that the recruitment process is flawed even though any allegations are yet to be proven.

Instead, it recommended that the third-party be used as a panel member in the recruitment process. They would have the same rights as other panel members, including the right to provide input on final selection of candidates. The third-party would also be responsible for ensuring that the recruitment follows policy. Periodically the third-party would provide a report to Chief and Council outlining their activities and whether they noted any items of concern with the recruitment process.

It was noted that policy stipulates that the hiring committee for all positions includes the Band Administrator and Director of External Relations by default. The position of Director of External Relations has not been staffed for some time so while it is included in the policy, in practice this position has not participated in staffing. The committee also includes the relevant Department Manager and HR Manager. It was unclear why the Band Administrator and Director of External Relations need to be included by default as this is not a standard business practice. It is recommended that consideration be given to full delegation to the Department Manager and HR manager as this will increase efficiency within the organization.

The review also found concerns with the wage grid. There was widespread perception that placement and advancement through the wage grid was subjective. The review found that the wage grid was not accessible though it is referenced in the HR policy.

It is considered a best practice to publish wage grids. Therefore it is recommended that it be added to the HR policy as an appendix. Further, the HR policy should better articulate how staff are placed and progressed through the wage grid. Section 13.1-3 of the HR Policy does speak to this, but it provides much latitude in allowing staff to be placed on the grid according to their qualifications and experience. The policy is silent on how this is defined and who makes this decision. Due to this, there was widespread perception that a higher placement on the wage grid often occurs due to

managerial preferences. There were also reported instances of wage inequity where senior positions were being paid less than more junior positions.

The review found that there was no comprehensive classification system for positions to determine their level for the purposes of the wage grid. Work was done by a third-party in 2015 to classify existing positions. As part of this, a listing of job positions, basic job qualifications, and wage levels were provided. There were also some notes for each level which gave limited insight into how a position was classified at a certain level.

The work from 2015 did not include information on how the wage level was determined. Further, there were no guidelines to determine how the classification level for new or modified positions would be determined. While this work can be used as a starting point for classification, it does not provide a high level of transparency or the highest level of consistency. This work should be refreshed and expanded upon so that classification with UNB can be consistently applied and replicated.

The HR policy delegates this function to the Band Administrator and Director of External Relations. The policy does not stipulate that these positions have experience in job classification. This can create a situation where delegation for this function is given to a position even though the person hired was not selected based on having these specialized skills.

Irrespective, due to the sensitivity around job classification and the high risk that it is perceived as biased, job classification is often delegated to third-parties or to a separate HR division which is independent of the administration. The latter option is a reasonable option for larger organizations, it would not be appropriate for UNB. Instead, it is recommended that job classification be done by an external party. This will allow experts in the field to determine the relative weighting of duties within the organization using a standardized approach. The external party should also periodically review the wage grid to ensure that it remains competitive, especially in the inflationary environment we are currently facing.

Performance management was noted as an area of improvement within the HR function. Performance metrics need to be better integrated into a performance management policy and practice. Due to the absence of this, it was widely felt that underperformance is not being addressed. Further, it was felt that this was leading to an unequitable distribution of work. Since performance management was not being addressed, the duties of those who are underperforming

were being given to other employees. This was seen as a significant factor impacting the ability of the organization to promptly respond to community members.

The review found that the scope of control and reporting structure for certain positions could be amended to allow for more efficiency. The Band Administrator position would benefit from increased delegated authority. This has been recommended for Procurement and Human Resources. A further review of the duties and responsibilities of this position and potential delegation to subordinates is recommended. This includes the creation of a position responsible for political affairs which reports to Chief and Council.

It was noted that the Health Director position is on call 24/7 and that the current scope of duties does not allow sufficient focus on strategy and implementation. Functions such as patient transportation are better delegated to other positions in the organization. Job descriptions would need to be revised accordingly.

As outlined in the Accountability and Efficiency section of this review, service standards need to be developed. These service standards then need to be integrated, tracked, and measured when completing the performance management process with staff. This will ensure that early and appropriate interventions can be taken when underperformance is found. It will also help to increase morale as it will address some of the workplace concerns noted by respondents.

Concerns over organizational culture have been noted in many areas of this review. A recommendation concerning a stand-alone Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest policy was outlined in the Policy section of the review. Further, recommendations concerning Code of Conduct training and establishing rules and norms for interpersonal interactions were outlined in the Organizational Culture section of the review. It is recommended that HR take a lead role in the implementation of these recommendations. Further, it is recommended that the mandate of the HR Department be refreshed so that its leadership role and expectations concerning organizational culture are more clearly defined.

Recommendations

1. **Refresh the hiring process**

    It is recommended that UNB contract with a third-party who would be a member of hiring committees. It would be the role of the third-party to ensure that the hiring process remain fair and neutral. Further, the third-party would periodically report on their observations and include any recommendations to strengthen the hiring process.

    Consideration had been given to community members participating in hiring committees. While this remains a possibility, due to the size of the community and concerns over bias, this is not recommended. While community members are expected to act professionally if given this responsibility, there is a high likelihood of perceived conflict of interest. Using a third-party avoids this issue.

2. **Publish the wage grid and refresh wage grid policy**

    It is recommended that the wage grid be published as part of the HR policy. Further, the policy should create objective criteria which would specify placement on the grid and progression through the grid.

3. **Refresh the job classification system**

    It is recommended that a third-party refresh the current job classification system. This will ensure transparency on how jobs are placed on the wage grid. Further, the wage grid should be periodically reviewed to ensure that it remains competitive.

4. **Refresh the performance management system**

    It is recommended that a performance management system with significant reliance on quantitative measures be implemented for all staff. This would require the creation of a

policy document and tools for managers which would be used to set and evaluate performance criteria.

Apart from a refreshed performance management process, HR should periodically use more comprehensive tools. For instance, the use of 360-degree feedback reports has been found to be a best practice for management positions. It is recommended that 360-degree feedback be piloted on the Band Administrator position.

It is recommended that the HR Department provide a lead role in working with managers to detect instances of underperformance and intervene accordingly.

5. **Review the scope and responsibility of key positions**

It is recommended that Chief and Council review the scope and responsibilities assigned to the Band Administrator and Health Director. Where possible, specific duties should be assigned to lower levels within the organization. This would require an update of some job descriptions.

A position responsible for political affairs reporting to Chief and Council is recommended. This position will help to advance issues relating to the four pillars, title and rights, and constitutional issues in a timely fashion.

6. **Refresh the mandate of the HR Department**

It is recommended that the mandate of the HR Department be refreshed so that its role as the lead in organizational culture is better defined. The refresh should include a framework for performance metrics and evaluation.

Implementation and Prioritization

The organizational review outlines 25 recommendations. These have been grouped in relation to 'ease of implementation' and the relative 'potential benefit' it poses to UNB.

The lower the 'ease of implementation' the more difficult the recommendation will be to implement. This is likely due to factors such as:

- Difficulty finding staff resources to complete the task on top of their current workload, and/or difficulty finding third-party expertise which can be procured; and
- The task is likely to take an extended amount of time to research, discuss and/or determine the processes needed to complete the recommendation therefore reducing staff buy-in to the process changes.

The higher the 'potential benefit' of the recommendation the more likely the recommendation will:

- Positively impact the well-being of staff and/or community members;
- Address widespread concerns that negatively impact the organization's mandate; and
- Allow the organization to readily focus on its core operations.

High Benefit and Low Ease of Implementation	High Benefit and High Ease of Implementation
Low Benefit and Low Ease of Implementation	Low Benefit and High Ease of Implementation

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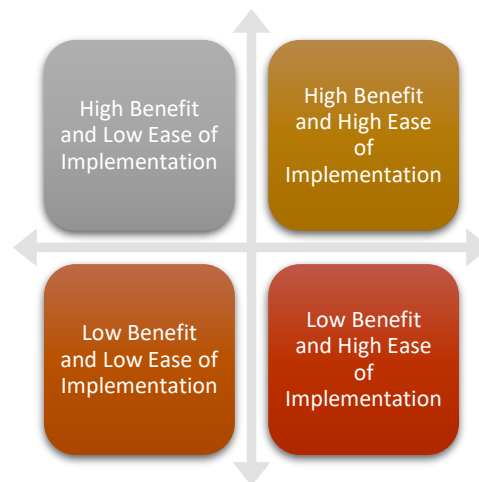
For the purposes of the review, recommendations were not made if it was determined that there was low benefit and low ease of implementation. This is standard practice and deemed appropriate due to the large number of recommendations which provide higher value to UNB.

In the tables below, the 25 recommendations are grouped into three categories to inform implementation planning efforts.

Higher Potential Benefit, Higher Ease of Implementation
Develop a Communications Policy
Develop a stand-alone Procurement Policy
Develop a stand-alone Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest Policy
Develop a staff calendar
Delegation of Authority to be incorporated into each policy
Publish a list of contracts awarded over a specific threshold
Refresh the mandate of the HR Department
Provide training on the revised Code of Conduct/ Conflict of Interest policy
Modify agenda structure for leadership meetings
Conduct a review of organizational priorities
Publish an enhanced organizational chart with contact information for key functions

Higher Potential Benefit, Lower Ease of Implementation

Create an electronic ticket system for service requests

Create, publish, and report on service standards

Refresh the hiring process

Review the scope and responsibility of key positions

Create rules and norms for interpersonal interactions

Create a safe and responsive process where staff can confidentially voice concerns

Refresh the job classification system

Refresh the performance management system

Deliver communications training to staff

Lower Potential Benefit, Higher Ease of Implementation

Implement plain language writing characteristics into communications

Create and implement a communication strategy concerning organizational priorities

 Publish the wage grid and refresh wage grid policy

Create a finance dashboard to facilitate the communication of financial data

Administer an annual employee pulse check

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Conclusion and Next Steps

The recommendations made in this review represent implementable opportunities for continuous improvements to the operations of UNB. Chief and Council, along with senior management, are encouraged to consider implementation of all the recommendations. Such implementation will have a positive effect on the efficiency of operations, human resource operations, and employee morale. A robust plan for communicating the implementation plan will assist in addressing and managing staff and community expectations.

The recommendations made are considered to be fair and within the capability of UNB to implement. Most recommendations carry high anticipated benefit to UNB.

As a next step, it is recommended that UNB assign timelines, leads, and required financial and human resources to each recommendation. Progress on the recommendations can be tracked and reported on quarterly.

Appendix A - Summary Data from Community Member Survey

Do you feel that Chief and Council are effective at meeting the needs of the community both on and off reserve?
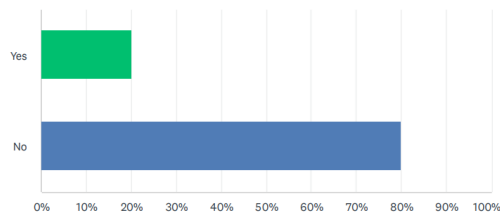
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	4
No	80.00%	16
TOTAL		20

How effective do you feel that Chief and Council have been over their current term?
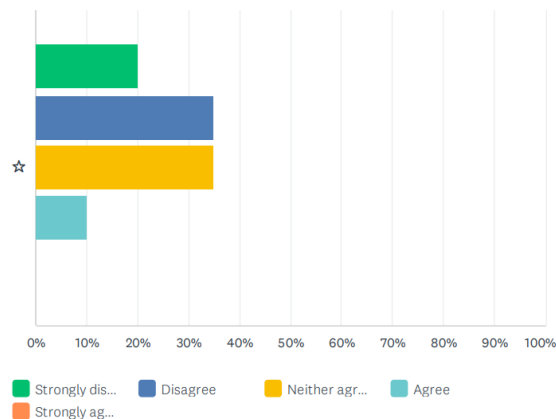
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	20.00% 4	35.00% 7	35.00% 7	10.00% 2	0.00% 0	20	2.35

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Are you satisfied with the level of communication and reporting coming from Chief and Council and the administration?
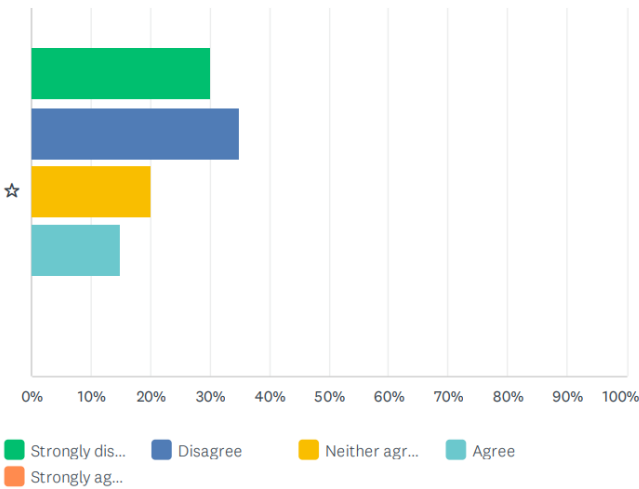
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	30.00% 6	35.00% 7	20.00% 4	15.00% 3	0.00% 0	20	2.20

From the following list, chose one area that could be improved or implemented to enhance communication?
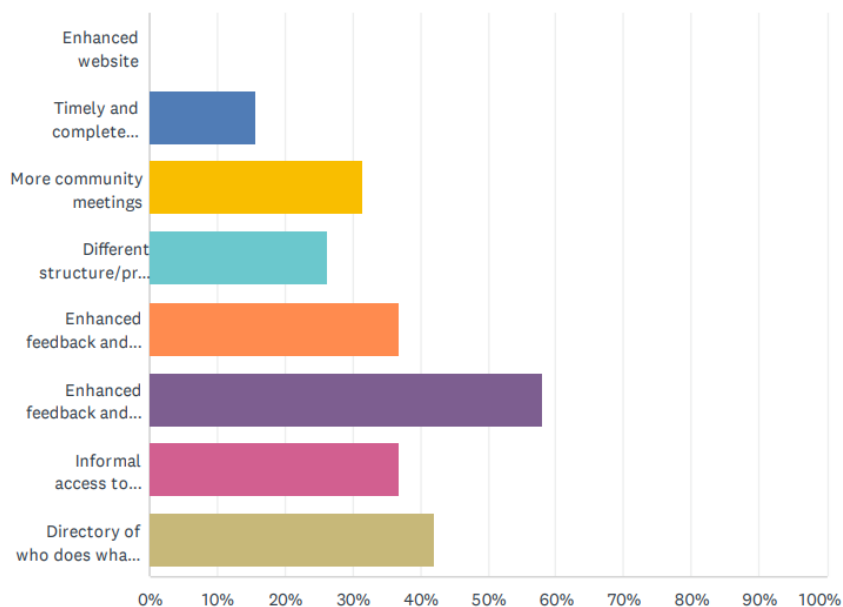
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Enhanced website	0.00%	0
Timely and complete meeting minutes from public meetings, committees, and pillars	15.79%	3
More community meetings	31.58%	6
Different structure/process for community meetings	26.32%	5
Enhanced feedback and communication with administration on their decisions	36.84%	7
Enhanced feedback and communication with Chief and Council on their decisions	57.89%	11
Informal access to decision makers to discuss concerns	36.84%	7
Directory of who does what in administration and their contact information	42.11%	8
Total Respondents: 19		

Do you feel that Chief and Council and the administration are open to hearing community concerns?
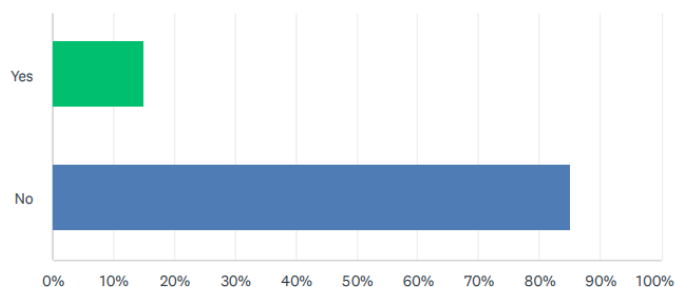
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	15.00%	3
No	85.00%	17
TOTAL		20

Are Chief and Council and the administration effective in resolving community concerns?
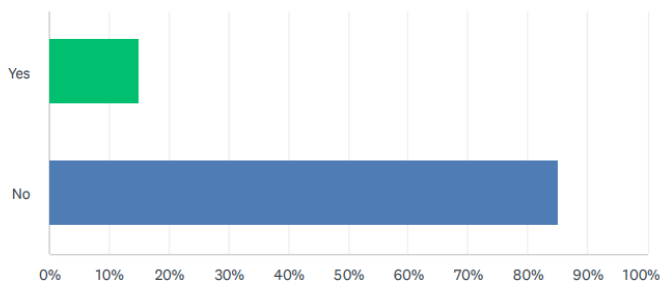
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	15.00%	3
No	85.00%	17
TOTAL		20

Do you have confidence that Chief and Council and the administration are conducting their operation in a fair and understandable manner?
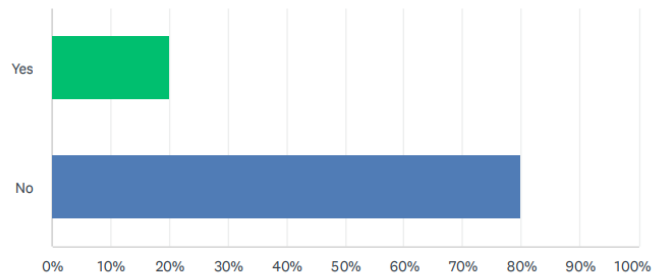
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	4
No	80.00%	16
TOTAL		20

Is the administration responsive to the community, including explaining decision and providing feedback to community members?
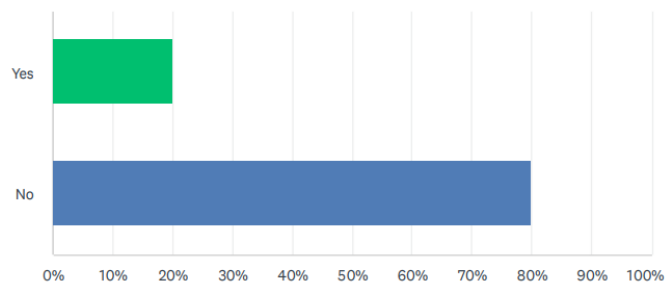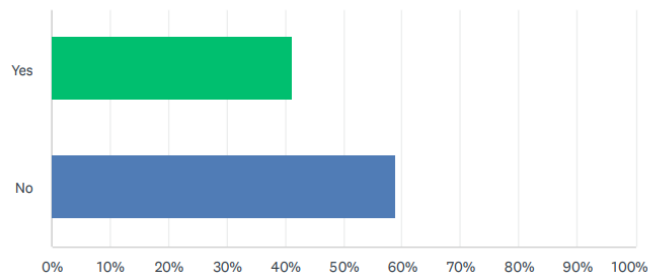

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	4
No	80.00%	16
TOTAL		20

Do you feel that staffing for positions within the administration team is done in a fair and understandable manner?
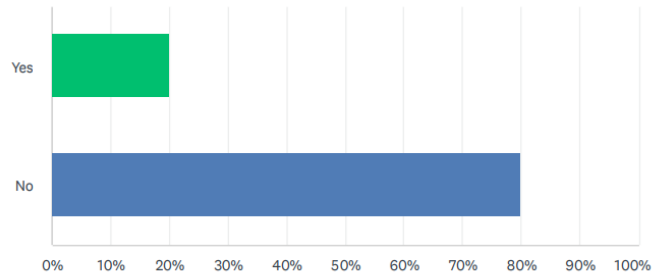
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	4
No	80.00%	16
TOTAL		20

Is procurement for goods and services conducted by the administration in compliance with policy?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.18%	7
No	58.82%	10
TOTAL		17

Do Chief and Council manage the community's monies in a transparent and effective manner?
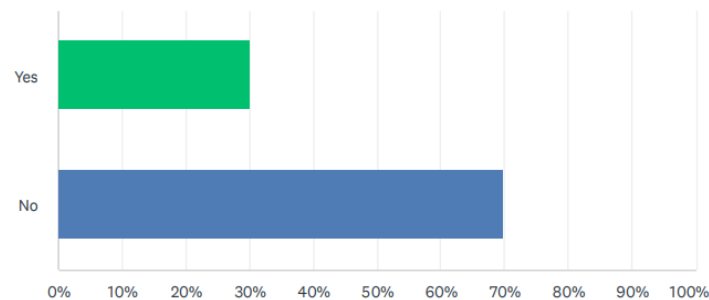
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.00%	6
No	70.00%	14
TOTAL		20

Appendix B - Summary Data from Vendor Survey

For how long have you been working with the Upper Nicola First Nation?
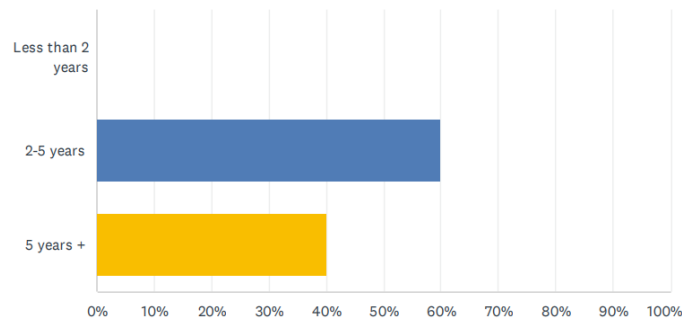
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 2 years	0.00%	0
2-5 years	60.00%	3
5 years +	40.00%	2
Total Respondents: 5		

What is the nature of your relationship with Upper Nicola First Nation?
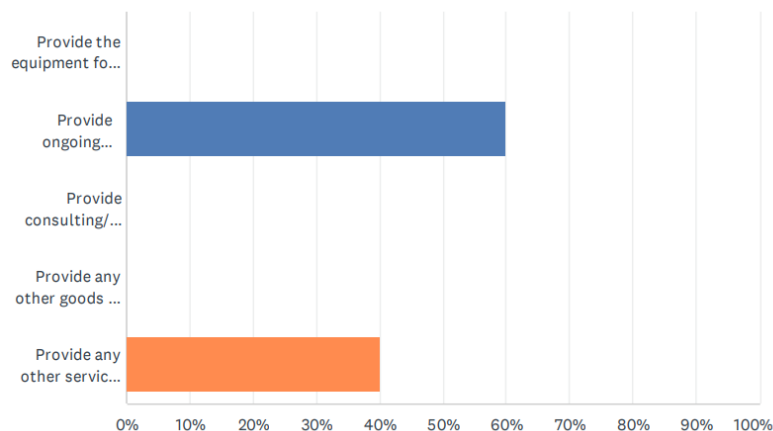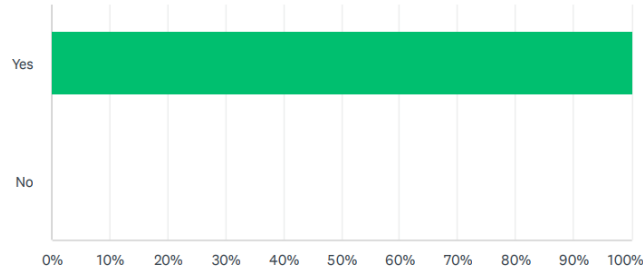

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Provide the equipment for industrial operations	0.00%	0
Provide ongoing consulting/professional services	60.00%	3
Provide consulting/ professional services on an as-needed basis	0.00%	0
Provide any other goods not specified above	0.00%	0
Provide any other services not specified above	40.00%	2
TOTAL		5

Are your business dealings with Upper Nicola First Nation fair and transparent?
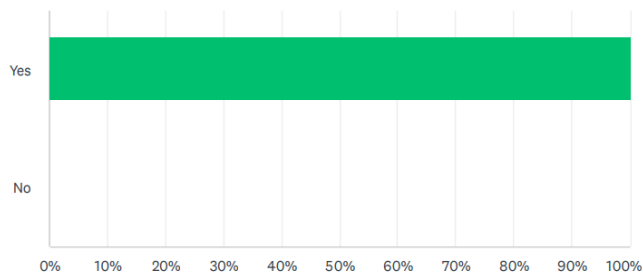
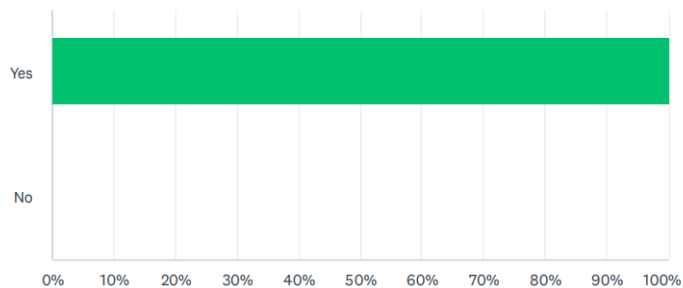| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Do you feel that the Upper Nicola First Nation procurement process is fair? That is vendors are chosen in an unbiased manner and can provide the best value for money.
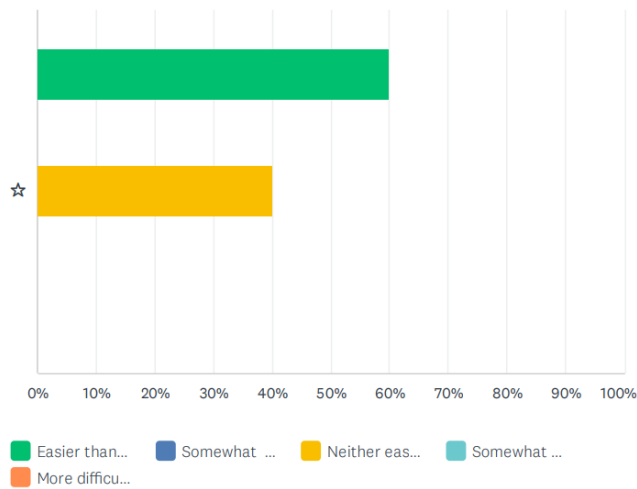
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Is communication with the Upper Nicole First Nation administration timely and transparent?

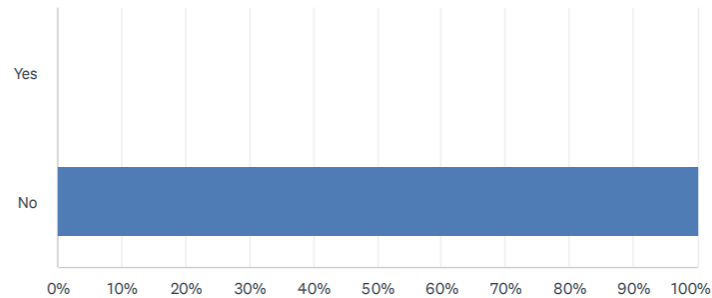| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	5
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Compared to other clients, how would you rate your business relationship with Upper Nicola First Nation?

Easier than... ▮ Somewhat ... ▮ Neither eas... ▮ Somewhat ... ▮ More difficu...

	EASIER THAN MOST CLIENTS	SOMEWHAT EASY	NEITHER EASY NOR DIFFICULT	SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT	MORE DIFFICULT THAN MOST CLIENTS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	60.00% 3	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	1.80

Have you had any significant issues with payment?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	5
TOTAL		5

Are there typically many change orders and/or changes of scope to a contract after it is signed?
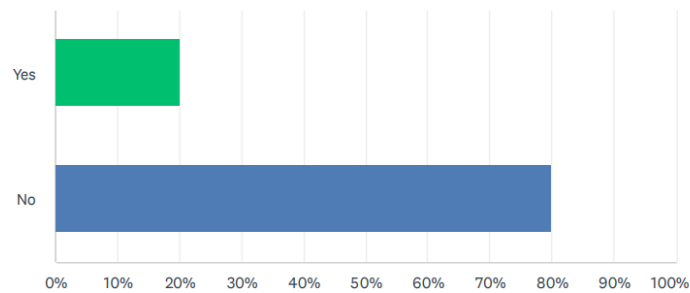
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.00%	1
No	80.00%	4
TOTAL		5

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