

Whenever Canadians plan to visit a foreign country, chances are they're going to need the services of the Passport Office. Most often, the first step on their long journey will be the acquisition of a passport. There are few more exciting moments when preparing for a trip abroad than receiving the passport—travel dreams become a reality, business plans become set. This official federal document, recognized internationally by multilateral treaties, has a worldwide reputation for authenticity and the integrity of the issuing process. A traveller who carries this document has a sense of security and protection.

The Passport Office issues the 24-page passport, the most commonly requested passport, as well as diplomatic, special and emergency passports, certificates of identity, and refugee travel documents. The Office is responsible for the revoking, withholding, recovery and use of all of these documents, and provides guidance to missions issuing passports abroad. All of these matters and other issues relating to Canadian travel documents are supervised by the Office, as defined by the Canadian Passport Order. The Passport Office invests great pride, care and commitment in this process, and is persistently seeking new business approaches to making the Passport Office services flawless, this year and every year.

To do this, the Passport Office has three main commitments. First and foremost is our commitment to our clients and the citizens of Canada, and through continuous organizational, technological and resource development, we satisfy their expectations through quality services. Second, our commitment to the government of Canada and its parts and pieces, as citizens believe that the Passport is the main document that represents the people and the nation, and we are therefore responsible for the image, security and safety of this country in co-operation with provincial and federal government organizations. And third, no organization can operate without the efforts and skills of its human resources. The Passport Office respects its people, who in turn exceed our expectations and continue to make our organization a recognizable and visible success.

For the year 1996-97, the Passport Office successfully took several steps towards its short- and long-term goals, and enjoyed positive results in numerous technological, service and organizational improvements. Many long-term projects progressed as planned,

and several pilot projects demonstrated early and rewarding results. As well, government and corporate-wide plans were implemented this year, including the improvement of interdepartmental and intergovernmental co-operation, liaison and information sharing—key factors in managing ever increasing travel demands.

This year tested our ability to respond to rapid changes, from technological developments to the successful management of pilot projects across the country. To clarify our achievements and measure our success this year, the Annual Report is divided into five key sections—each section is a key element of our organization, a foundation necessary for solid services, and represents small steps towards the greater journey. The Passport Office is driven towards achieving superior performance in three areas: quality of services, security and cost effectiveness (Commitment 1). Additionally, two other areas are of concern: the Passport Office strives to contribute significantly to interdepartmental and intergovernmental co-operation (Commitment 2), and to acknowledge the importance of its people (Commitment 3). Through effective development, refinement and consistent improvements, the effective management of these five elements has a direct influence on the success of our year and organization.

Quality of Service

Quality of service is our most client visible attribute. How our clients perceive and respond to our services is a direct reflection of the quality of services. It represents numerous facets of our organization, all aimed at improving our deliverables, and includes such areas as customer satisfaction, service development, and the efficiency with which we provide these services. Some achievements this year included the analysis, development and implementation of new processes and information technologies to increase efficiency. For the near future, items such as Wide Area Network linkages, debit/credit card access, and passport cards for expeditious travel needs are in the developmental or pilot stages. Enhanced communication at the operational level improved the co-ordination of service delivery. Promotional and outreach projects increased our accessibility around the country to address specific needs of our clients.