

Officers are interested in exploring the idea of putting a value on the level of effort required in the various aspects of their work, and asking users to assume some of the costs of the service. For example, if DFAIT can provide better quality information than can the global information highway, then that information has added value. By balancing services and fees, such a management system could control unchecked demand, encourage differing levels of service with different associated costs, and provide information that could help DFAIT in managing its human rights work. It would also begin to structure a mechanism for feedback from those served, and establish the worth of human rights work for both producers and consumers. Alternatively, users of DFAIT services could be provided with nominal budgets for a determined amount of value-added services. DFAIT could contract out the functions to which it adds little value or which could be delivered more efficiently by others.

2.5 More decentralized decision-making and resource management could improve DFAIT's performance in managing human rights issues.

It appears to us that decision-making is often pushed to too high a level, and that there are too many layers involved. An important principle in contemporary management is to empower those doing the front-line work and do so by encouraging them to make decisions through a distributed leadership approach. Properly executed, such models improve performance.

Decision-making related to resources is particularly important. Most people we consulted felt that they could not possibly do what they now do with any fewer resources. In our view, they need to consider more cost-effective alternatives to the way things are done. Traditional bureaucracies centralize resources and allocate them top-down. Modern organizations transfer budgets to key line managers such as directors, and hold them accountable for results commensurate with their capacity to respond. Furthermore, unless people are trained as resource managers at lower levels in the department, there will continue to be insufficient nurturing of resource managers able to serve the senior leadership needs of DFAIT in the subsequent generation. Of course, at the senior management levels, decisions also need to be made about where DFAIT should invest most given its overall constellation of objectives.

2.6 Improving DFAIT's performance in managing human rights issues will require proactive change management.

These are difficult times for those employed in government departments, no less so in DFAIT. Increasing demands, decreasing resources and limited opportunities are causing concern among officers. People recognize the need for fundamental change, but they are fearful and resistant to change — not knowing its consequences. Some approaches to change involve rearrangements of structures, relocation of people and/or re-definition of an organization's mission and mandate. Past attempts at change within DFAIT have tried to garner support first, with the degree and nature of change depending on the support for it. The related study on the country desk approach of P Branch suggests one successful model of this type of change management.

The study of our data, especially listening to political and economic officers, leads us to believe that the type of fundamental change suggested here will not be enacted from a bottom up or consensual approach. Rather, it will need to be guided by a clear vision of a new foreign service — one that bases priorities on realistic and coherent policy objectives linked to a realistic view of resources, and backed by solid political support over the long term.