

a passport, location of Passport Offices, ease of application, or the weather. This type of demand is difficult to forecast accurately.

In 1997-98 the Passport Office issued a total of 1,518,838 travel documents (including foreign operations), an increase of 10 percent over the previous year—the main reason being that the Canadian economy performed well in 1997-98. There was strong economic growth, a steadily decreasing unemployment rate, and a Canadian dollar that held against several European countries. Consumers had a high level of confidence in the future and, therefore, they increased consumption and travel expenses. The real disposable income used for travel purposes has increased significantly over last year, not only because Canadians have reduced their savings, but also because they even have increased their debt level in order to sustain their current life style. All of this confirms that Canadians are confident about the future. Also contributing to our growth were the hundreds of thousands of early retirements last year.

PRODUCTIVITY

Historically, the productivity rate has been an important efficiency indicator within the Passport Office. Senior management use productivity targets to allocate resources, monitor efficiency and develop short- and long-term objectives.

Passport Office: Performance Targets, 1996-97

Turnaround Target	1997-98 Forecast	1997-98 Actual	1998-99 Forecast
Applications received	97% in 10 days	97% in 10 days	97% in 10 days
by mail	100% in 17 days	100% in 17 days	100% in 17 days
Applications received	97% in 5 days	97% in 5 days	97% in 5 days
in person	100% in 7 days	100% in 7 days	100% in 7 days
Productivity Target*			
All employees	2,423	2,782	2,392
Production employees only	3,221	3,550	3,142

* Productivity is expected to decrease initially during the pilots and rollout stages of the new information archiving and retrieval system.

The productivity rate is defined as the number of travel documents issued per person-year. There are two variations: the first takes into account all employees (corporate and operational) and the second includes operational employees only.

The productivity rate is influenced by the seasonal fluctuations in the demand for passports. As most travel occurs in the last quarter of the fiscal year, more staff are required to process applications at that time. (see figure 1)

The unexpected increase in demand resulted in higher productivity. The Passport Office was able to maintain consistent productivity given the fluctuations in demand for the passport as well as for seasonal variations in demand.