



Retention & Attrition Research: Overview of the Canadians' Perspective

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Outline

- Background
- Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future
- Attrition and Retention Team (A & R Team)
- CF Retention Strategy





Background

- “Having the right person, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time”
- Current Canadian Forces (CF) strength is approx. 67,750 Regular Force and 26,000 Reserve personnel
- Recent directions requires growth in the CF to 70,000 Regular and 30,000 Reserve force personnel by 2025



Background

- Building and sustaining a retention culture remains a priority because:
 - Internal changes in the CF:
 - 1990s Force reduction (Experience Gap –due to downsizing and lower recruitment)
 - Force expansion (recruit-retain continuum)
 - Large cohort approaching key ‘gates’ (20, 25, 30 years of service (YOS))
 - Rising training costs drive need for better ROI
 - Above-average attrition in many occupations
 - Recent increase in voluntary attrition, particularly in early stages of career
 - Demographic challenges
 - Societal or external changes



Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future

- Two aspects:
 - HR Management (proactive)
 - Monitor attrition rates
 - Conduct surveys of both serving members and those who are voluntarily releasing
 - Retention of Stressed Occupations
 - Identifying stressed trades
 - Diagnosing problems
 - Long and short-term solutions



Attrition and Retention Team

- **Mission:**

To conduct attrition and retention related research and analysis in support of HR policy, planning and programs.

- **Sponsors:**

Chief Military Personnel and Environmental Commanders

- **Objectives:**

Using both quantitative and qualitative tools:

1. Identify the key relationships among satisfiers, dissatisfiers and commitment to the CF
2. Identify important factors related to propensity to leave
3. Describe historical, current and forecast attrition patterns



Why is it important?

- Knowledge of attrition is crucial to CF Personnel management. Attrition drives recruitment, training and promotions.
- Attrition projections are used to inform decisions regarding:
 - Recruitment targets
 - Training flow & numbers in training
- Analysis of historical attrition trends and factors assists in:
 - Identification of key attrition/retention issues
 - Insight to focus retention initiatives (policy development)
 - Direction for future research



Activities / Projects

- RegF Attrition Reporting & Forecasting, such as
 - Support to Annual Military Occupation Reviews (AMORs)
 - Attrition by geographic region, by gender, deployment experience, etc
- Methodological and tool development for attrition forecasting
- Geomatics Information System (GIS)
- CF Retention Survey
- CF Exit Survey
- Early Attrition
- Participation in retention-related working groups
- Analysis of civilian attrition, career progression, growth



Reg Force Attrition Forecasting

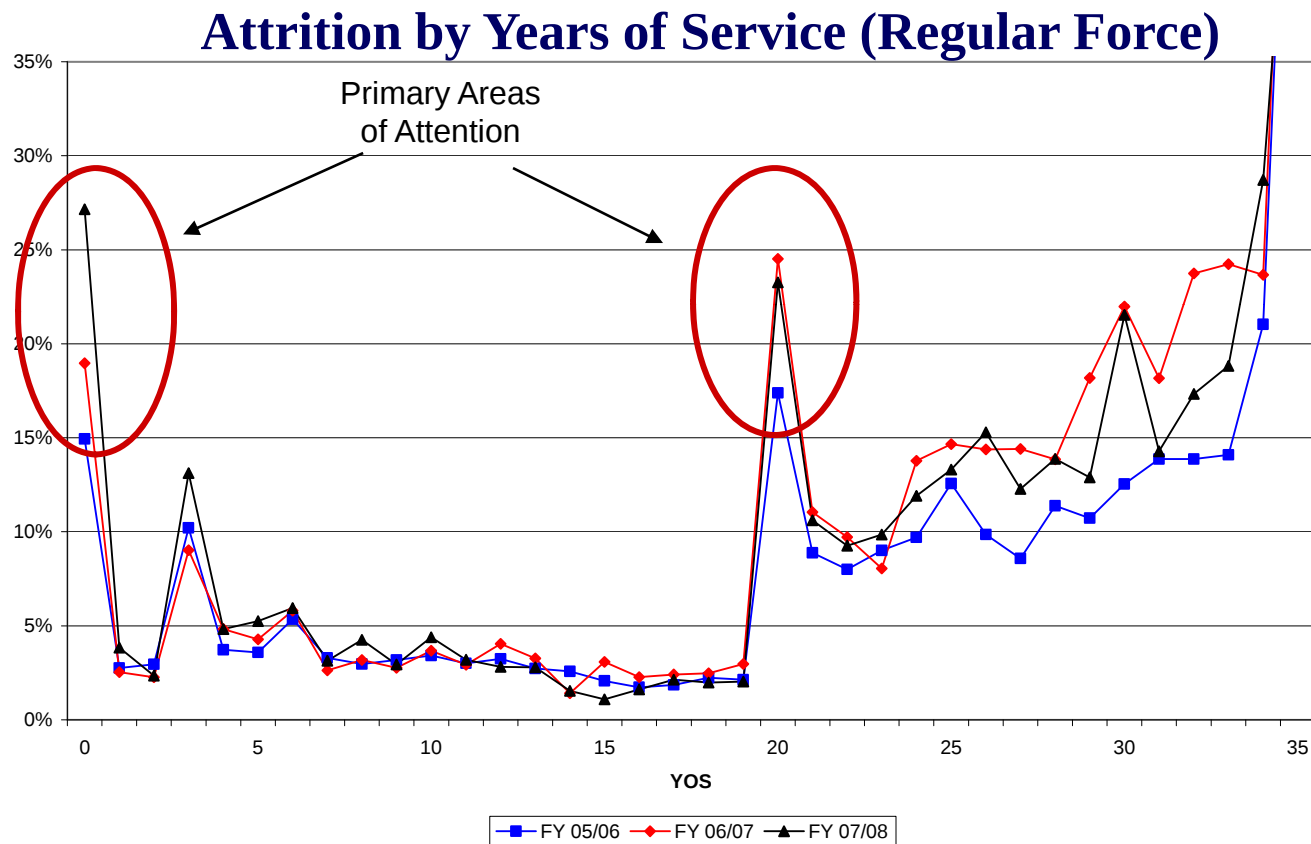


Attrition Forecasting

- DGMPRA attrition forecasting is based on a 'Propensity-to-Leave' attrition rate model
 - Simplest useful model to predict attrition
 - The proportion of a population that will leave within the next year is correlated to the Years of Service (YOS) profile of that population

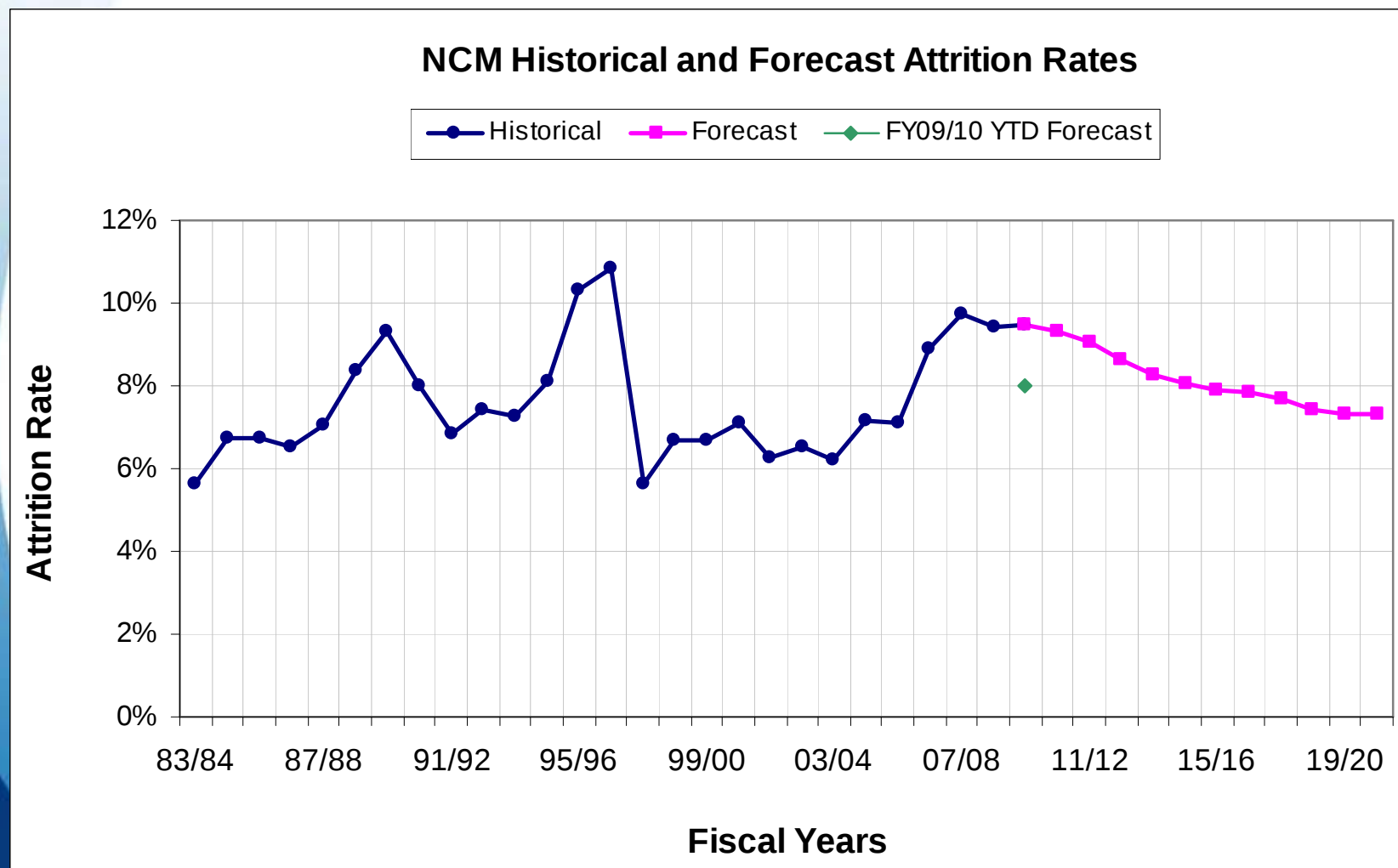


Conducting Analysis of Attrition Trends



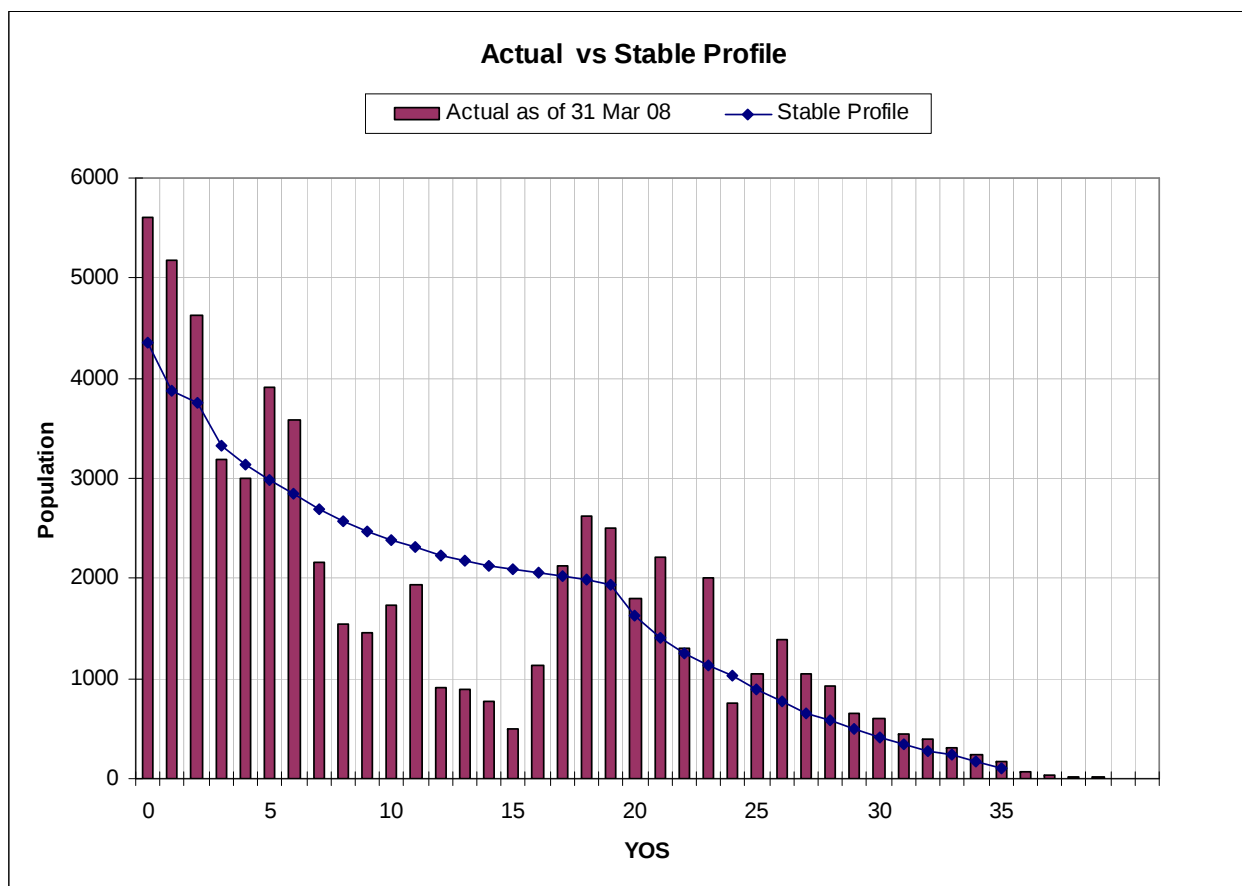


CF Attrition – History and Forecast





CF Year Of Service Profile





CF Surveys



CF Surveys



- Two key tools used to inform retention strategies:
 - CF Retention Survey
 - Exit Survey
- Objective is to identify key factors associated with retention and voluntary attrition.
- This information can be used to inform decision about training, employment of personnel and policies (e.g., compensation and benefits, recruitment/retention bonuses, etc.)



CF Retention Survey

- CF Retention survey is based on a theoretical model developed after an extensive review of the organizational psychology literature on attrition/retention
- Administered bi-annually to members in selected military occupations
- The survey enquires about career intentions as well as the level of satisfaction with over 30 retention-related factors in one of the following categories: role issues, Job Attitudes, Organization commitment, satisfaction with Pay/benefits, satisfaction with job and other job concerns, relationships and the CF.



CF Exit Survey

- The CF Exit Survey's objective is to understand why CF members choose voluntary release.
- This is done by assessing departing members' satisfaction with several organizational issues as well as determining the extent to which these organizational issues and dissatisfiers influence their decision to leave the CF.
- This survey is given to *all Regular Force members who are leaving the CF voluntarily* and is completed electronically. Stand-alone computer versions are also available.



Attrition Themes

Problem Areas:

- Dissatisfaction with Career Progression (Fairness of Personnel Appraisal System);
- Career Management (Succession Planning, consideration of member's input and aspirations);
- Dissatisfaction with Posting (Impact on family & spousal employment);
- Dissatisfaction with the fairness of the CF;
- Sense of being valued; and
- Ops TEMPO/Institutional burnout
- Lack of challenging work

These issues are mostly relational

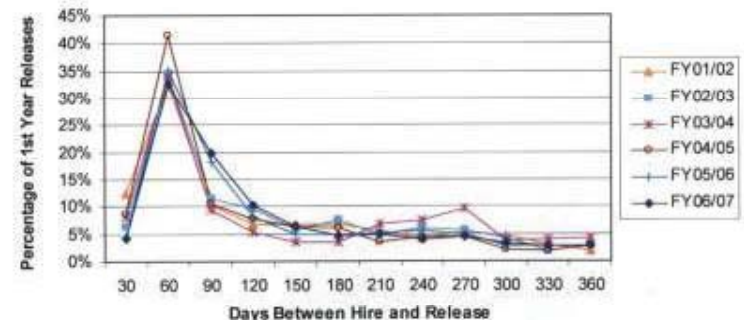
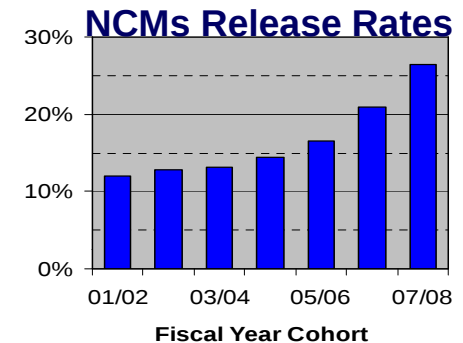


Early Attrition



Early Attrition

- Early attrition is a concern for the Canadian Forces (CF)
 - First year releases are contributing significantly to total attrition. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of all releases in the past 8 years were of recruits in their first year of service.
 - First year attrition rates for NCM recruits have significantly increased since 2001
 - More than half of these occur in the first 3 months of service





Methodology: Procedure

- Focus Groups
 - Questionnaire
 - Demographics (age, gender, education, etc.)
 - Roundtable discussion on :
 - Initial expectations and recruitment experiences
 - Reasons for leaving
 - Injuries
 - Perception of training and CF Express Requirements, Warrior Fitness Training (WFT)/Adapted Warrior Training (AWT)
 - Recruits' recommendations on improving Basic Military Qualification (BMQ)
 - Positive aspects of BMQ
 - Recruits' future plans



Results

- Main reasons of leaving during BMQ training:
 - Family issues
 - Injuries and related mechanisms to foster recovery
 - Not feeling suited for the CF
 - Wrong occupation choice, going back to school and other opportunities

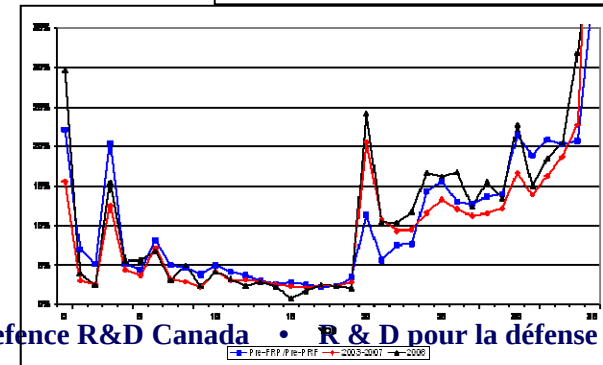
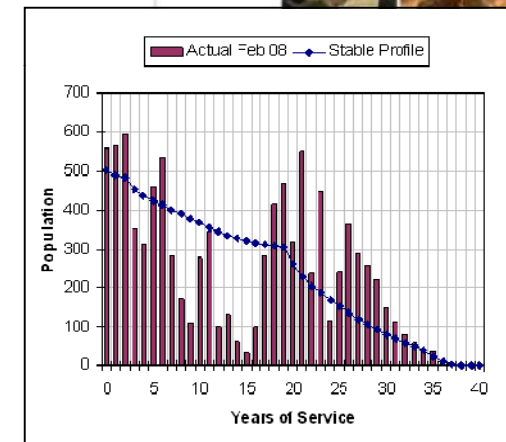
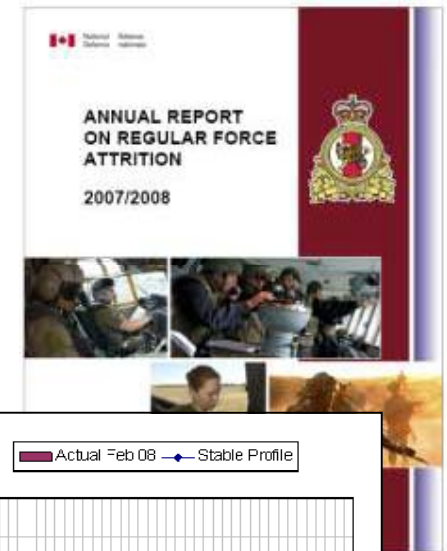


Reporting



Annual Attrition Report

- 1st annual report produced last year
- Attrition
 - Volumes, Rates,
 - Behaviour changes,
 - Forecasts
- Summary of recently completed research





CF Retention Strategy



Division of Responsibilities for Retention (Armed Forces Council 2001)

Like recruiting, retention is also everybody's business.

Level	Responsibilities	Illustrative Activities
Pan-CF (CMP)	CF monitoring & analysis; development of common solutions	Pers Mgt Report; Retention Survey & Strategy; Term of Service policy
Occupational (CFd & Occ Authorities/ Advisors)	Occupation monitoring & analysis; proposing tailored solutions	Customized attrition research; occupational get-well programs
Unit	Local monitoring & analysis; individual interventions	Creating positive unit climate; Unit Morale Survey; early individual intervention



CF Retention Strategy

The primary focus of the CF Retention strategy is: Building a retention culture through relational measures:

- Give more choice and influence to members
- Build commitment by fostering values such as
 - Recognition
 - Fairness
 - Consideration
 - Respect

The secondary focus of the strategy is: Addressing critical short-term pressures through transactional measures:

- TOS conversion incentives, other benefits
- No consensus among ECs on the use of bonuses

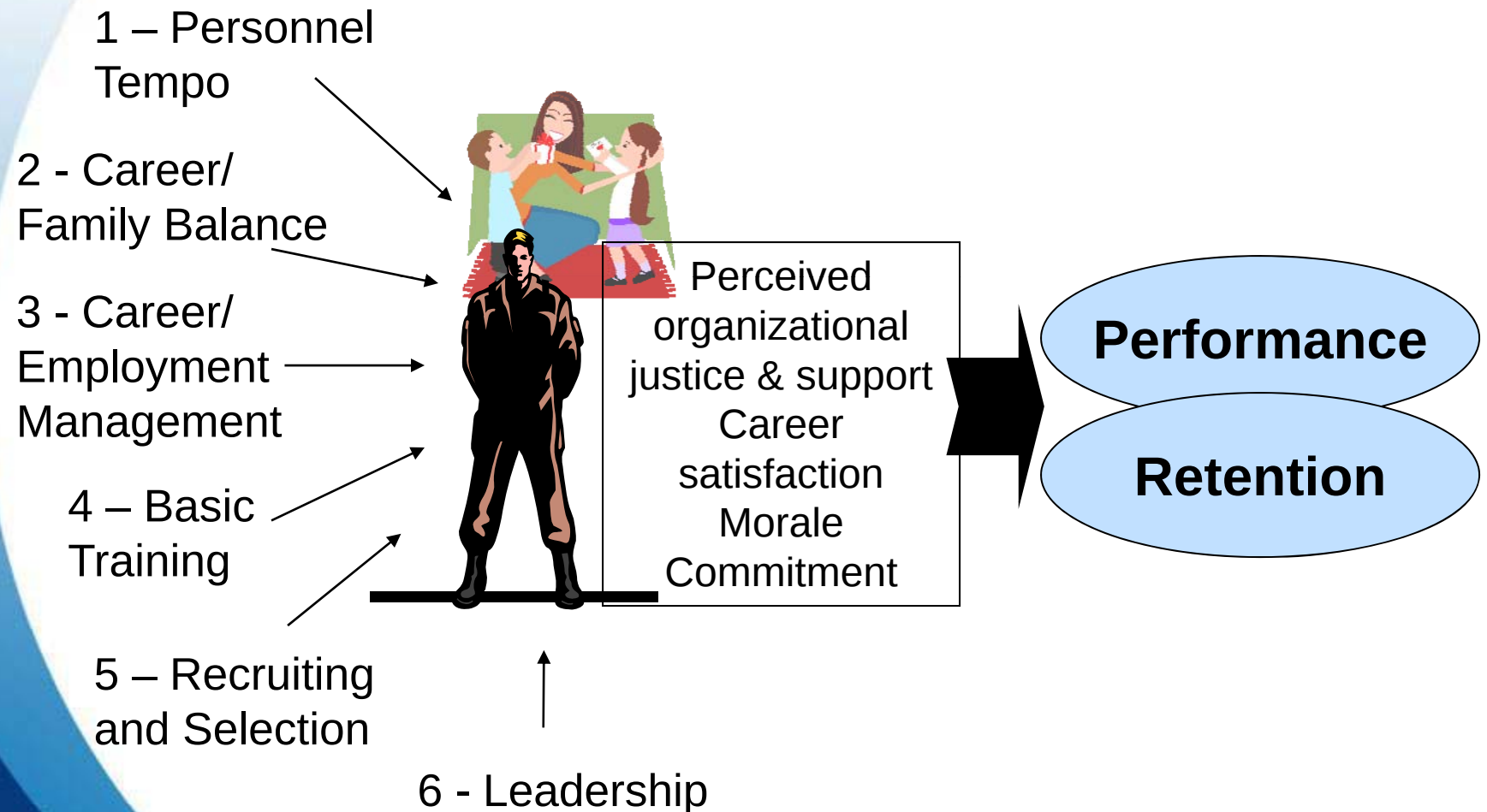


Principles

- Four principles to guide strategy implementation:
 - Leadership Responsibility
 - Strengthening individual CF-Fit
 - Valuing member aspirations and Need
 - Supporting the Family



Strategic Lines of Operation and Strategic Effects





Summary

- The CF is facing significant HR challenges that implicates several HR lines of operation
- There is no silver bullet; need to advance on a number of fronts
- Some initiatives can be implemented sooner than others
- Some initiatives are more urgent than others
- The A&R Team and DGMPRA will continue to support and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of these initiatives!



Questions?

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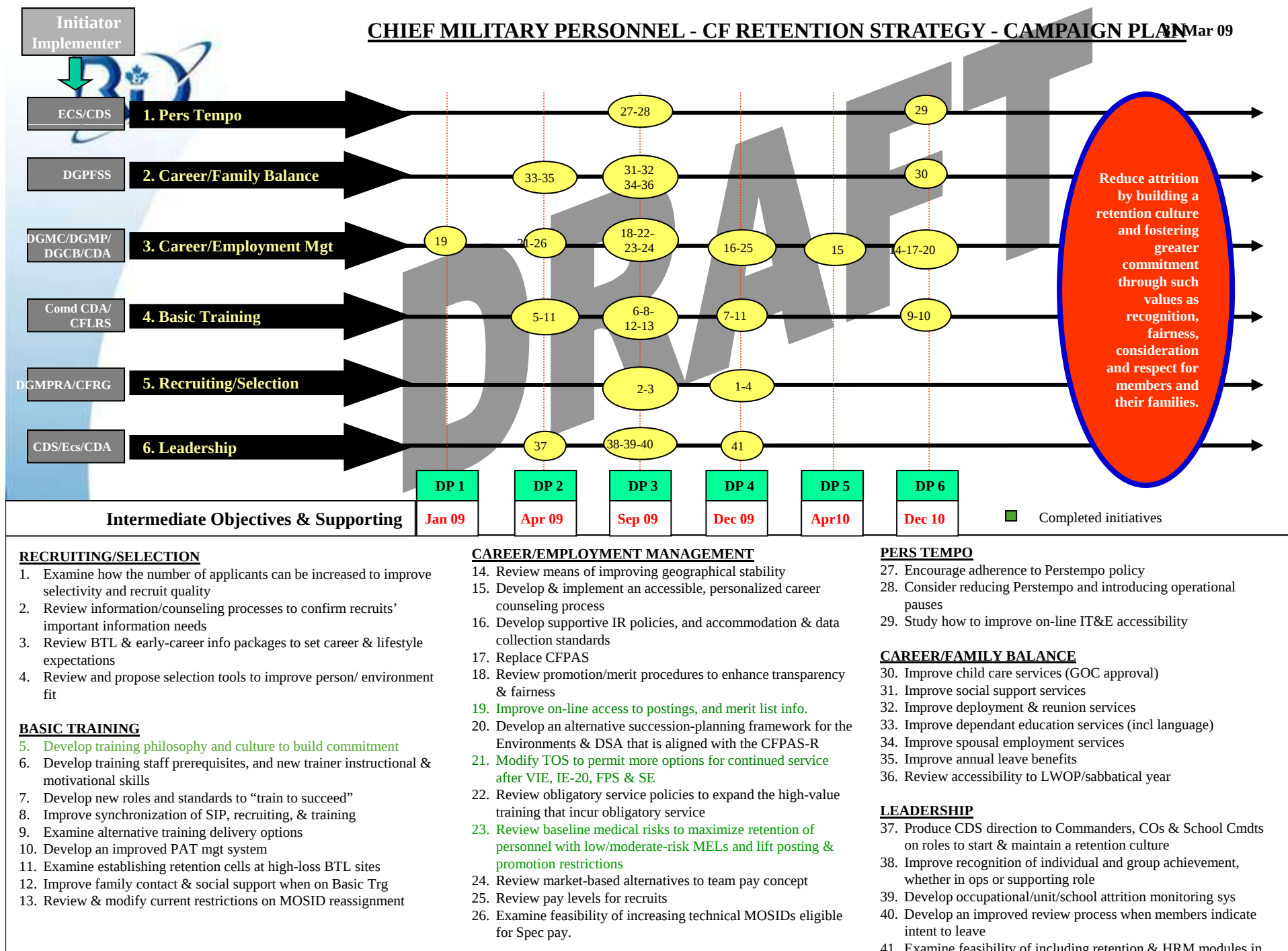
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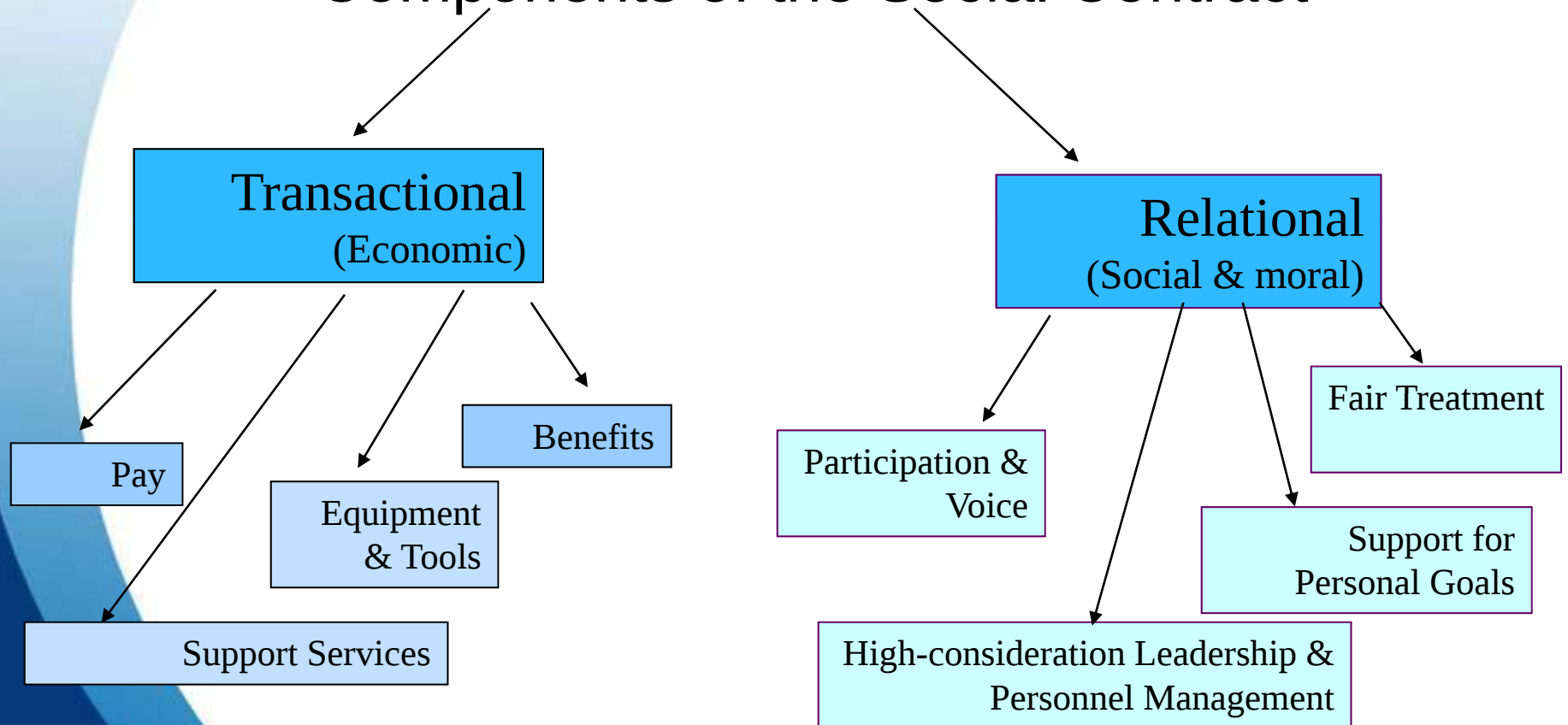
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FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTRITION

Components of the Social Contract





Retention Framework

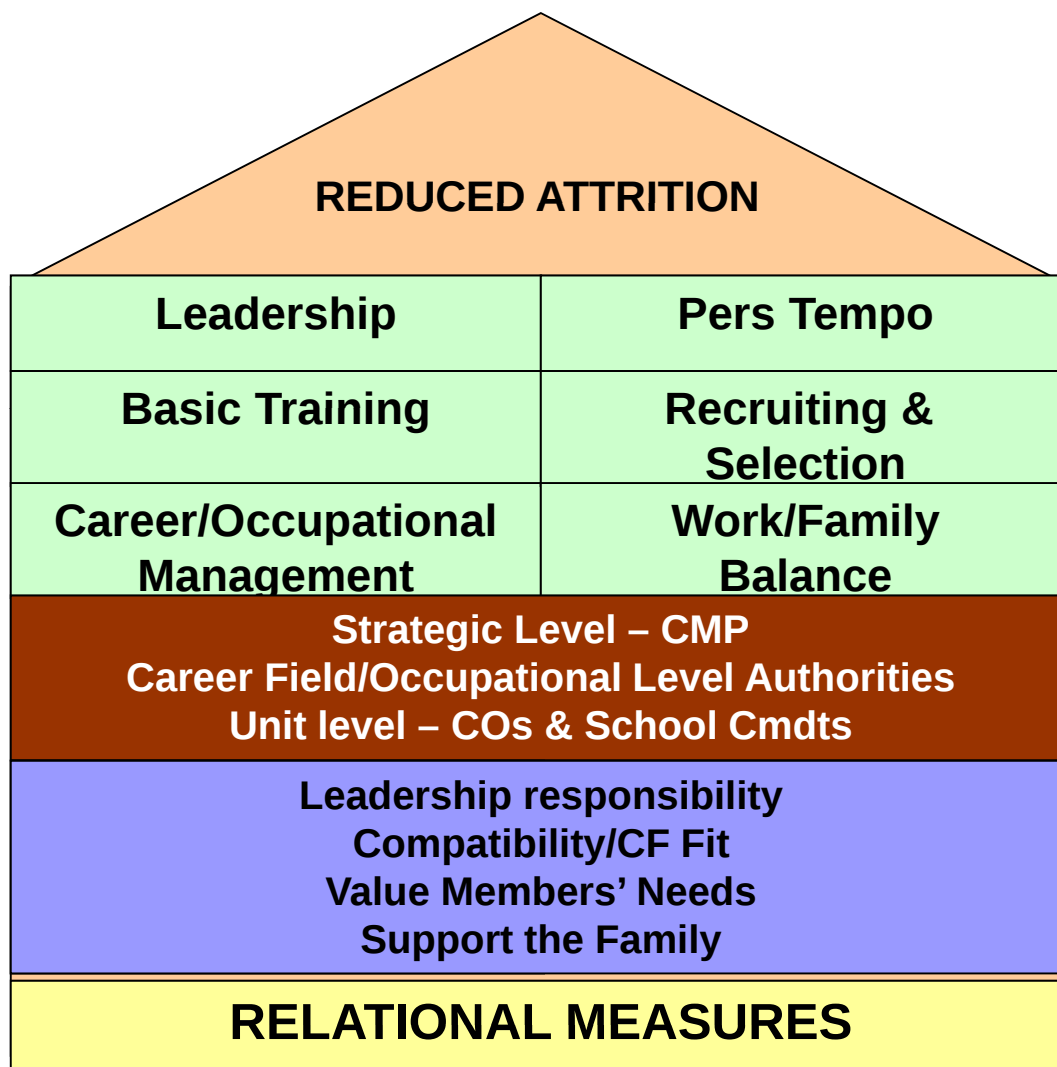
Strategic
Effect

Lines of
Operation

Responsibilities

Principles

Strategy





CF Exit Survey Respondents: Postings

	Satisfaction		Influence	
	% dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied	Mean	% very or extremely influenced	Mean
CF support for my family during my extended absences	25.0	3.79	23.7	3.76
The effect my posting have had on my partner/spouse's employment	37.1	3.29	36.7	3.19
The effect my postings have had on my ability to maintain family stability	33.1	3.49	39.3	3.16
The effect my posting have had on the opportunity to settle down in a certain area	26.3	3.67	30.4	3.44

- CF support for my family during my extended absences was the **highest source of satisfaction** across departing members (~*satisfied*)
- In addition, they were *somewhat satisfied* with all the other factors related to the effects of postings.
- About a third or more of CF respondents were dissatisfied with the effects of postings have had on partner/spouse's employment, their ability to maintain family stability and the opportunity to settle down in a certain area.
- A similar proportion indicated that these effects of postings were very to extremely influential on their decision to leave.

Numbers in table correspond to % indicating being dissatisfied to completely dissatisfied; % indicating very to extremely influential to decision to leave; and the average ratings Please note that the higher the score on the influence to leave response scale, the less influence the item has on their decision to leave the CF.