



ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVES
OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

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I am both honoured and excited to embrace the role of Chair of the APEX Board of Directors. Since my election to this position in October 2023, I have continued to be truly impressed by the resilience and dedication of our executive community, the APEX team, and my fellow Board members.

Looking back over the past year, APEX’s achievements reflect our collective commitment to its mission. We have seen membership growth, successful execution of major events, and progress in advancing core priorities. I am especially proud of APEX’s advances in strengthening partnerships and connecting executives across regions.

A major highlight of this year has been the strategic enhancement of APEX’s approach to equity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion, as well as its ongoing reconciliation efforts. The introduction of a Chief EDI Officer represents a key step in embedding these values into its strategic direction. Additionally, the appointment of APEX’s first Chief Information Officer is a significant move toward modernization and operational excellence.

Effective governance is vital for transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment, and important strides were made to enhance APEX’s governance framework. This year, members voted to create a new Board position - Director of the North – to represent and address the unique needs of our Northern executives.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Carl Trottier, who will be concluding his tenure as CEO in October 2024. Carl’s leadership has helped guide APEX, and his contributions have laid a solid foundation for its future.

Looking ahead, APEX’s focus will be on refining its strategic vision and strengthening advocacy and support for the executive community within the federal public service. The development of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan will guide us in balancing individual support services with collective empowerment, building stronger national community connections, and advancing APEX’s mission to promote executive well-being.

As we move forward, the Board remains committed to providing the strategic guidance needed to navigate new challenges and opportunities. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and support to leadership excellence. Together, we will build on our successes and advance APEX’s mission with renewed purpose and energy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geneviève Binet".

Geneviève Binet
APEX Board Chair

I am honored to present our 2023-2024 annual report, marking a culmination of our collective achievements and milestones over the past year. This report holds particular significance as it also marks my final year as CEO, with a new leader set to assume this role in October 2024.



As I reflect on my tenure at APEX, I have witnessed significant growth in the APEX brand and increased recognition among Public Service executives. Our outreach efforts have expanded our presence in the regions, enhancing engagement and strengthening our advocacy on critical issues such as total compensation. APEX has evolved into a formidable organization supporting and advocating for Public Service executives, ensuring that our voice is heard and respected in national discussions.

Underpinning our achievements this year is the dedication and commitment of our teams across the organization. We have made notable strides in advancing reconciliation, equity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion, emphasizing the importance of measurable progress and concrete goals. The Advocacy and Research Division has advanced in applied research, reinforcing our commitment to leveraging research as a cornerstone of informed advocacy.

Additionally, our focus on executive health and wellbeing has been central, prioritizing social supports and addressing the profound impacts of organizational culture on our executives. Our Advisory Services Division continued to provide invaluable support for executives, addressing complex challenges they face. Meanwhile, Professional Development remained central to our mission, empowering the public service executive community through signature events and learning opportunities that foster leadership excellence and growth.

Over the last five years, our strategic plan, "Delivering Community Value," has provided a robust framework guiding our efforts to advocate and engage and has been instrumental in driving our initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity, equity, integrity, empathy and a culture of trust. Looking ahead, we eagerly anticipate the development of our new strategic plan for 2025-2028, which will serve as a renewed framework for advancing our mission and meeting the evolving needs of our members.

I am confident that APEX will continue to thrive under new leadership. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and the fresh perspectives that the incoming CEO will bring to build upon our achievements and further our organizational goals. It has been a privilege to serve alongside our dedicated Board of Directors, staff, and members, and I am grateful for their unwavering support throughout my tenure.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership. Together, we have achieved remarkable progress toward our mission of inspiring executive excellence in leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Trottier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Carl Trottier
APEX CEO

Welcome to APEX's 2023-2024 annual report, a testament to our ongoing commitment to supporting excellence in public service leadership across Canada. Over the past year, APEX has continued to advance its mission of inspiring executive excellence in leadership through strategic advocacy, research, professional development and advisory services for the executive community of the Public Service of Canada.

This report highlights our significant achievements in enhancing organizational effectiveness, promoting advocacy on critical issues, and expanding our reach and impact nationwide. As we reflect on our accomplishments and look forward to future opportunities, we remain steadfast in our dedication to supporting and empowering public service executives in driving innovation and excellence.

Through these and all our achievements over the past year, APEX is committed to supporting and empowering executives in the federal public service. Our advocacy for fair compensation and inclusive engagement reflects our dedication to fostering positive change. Looking ahead, we remain focused on meeting the evolving needs of our executive community.





APEX At A Glance

- APEX grew its membership base to 3,291 members at March 31, 2024.
- The 2023 Leadership Summit was delivered using a hybrid model with 1,300 participants and guests making it the most attended APEX Leadership Summit.
- Accepted a combined 57 nominations for the 2023-24 APEX Awards of Excellence.
- APEX hosted 17 hybrid learning events in 2023-2024, attracting a total of 4,190 registrations.
- The 2023 Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks ceremony marked the largest in APEX's history, with over 580 participants, including Deputy Ministers and senior representatives.
- Supported more than 600 clients through the Confidential Advisory Service for Executives.
- Partnered with the Canada School of Public Service to deliver Mentoring Circles connecting 81 executives at the EX 1 and EX 2 levels together with 19 senior management mentors across 28 Mentoring Circles.
- Productive engagements with Treasury Board Secretariat led to economic increases for executives from 2022-2024 announced in July 2023.
- Published monthly (or more frequent) updates on the implementation of economic increases.
- APEX experienced a 50% increase in demand for assistance in 2023-2024, with over 160 executives seeking guidance on issues such as overpayments and retirement.
- In 2023-2024, APEX demonstrated its commitment to advancing member services and organizational effectiveness by introducing three new, pivotal executive roles: Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer and a Chief Marketing Officer.
- APEX's network of Organizational Ambassadors includes 80 representatives from 61 organizations across the Core Public Administration, Central Agencies, CRA, and other entities.
- Regular monthly meetings and two Ambassador Workshops were conducted in 2023-2024.
- Achieved record levels of external sponsorship for APEX programs and events.
- Responded to over 20 organizational requests for APEX presentations in 2023-2024, frequently engaging with senior leaders, Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs), and Deputy Ministers (DMs).

Our Values

Professionalism

Continually striving for high quality and the promotion of excellence within the organization and in support of our executive community of leaders.

Collaboration

Participating fully and collegially in all workplace initiatives, as equal team players, offering ideas and time to benefit individual colleagues and the organization as a whole. This extends to our consultative and collaborative approaches to working with external stakeholders as we create mutual alliances that benefit public service executives.

Innovation

Constantly developing new ways to improve the way we work and proactively addressing the needs of our executive community as they experience new trends and challenges.

Inclusivity

Every employee feeling valued, supported, and respected in our workplace. We bring people together while striving for an environment that represent a diverse workforce. This extends to a community network of executive leaders with system-wide representation that readily participate in knowledge sharing and professional development.

Integrity

Without wavering, we will behave honourably and uphold the highest ethical standards in all aspects of our work such as, decision making, interacting with colleagues, and in our service to the executive community. We will lead by example, exercise open communication, and be accountable for our actions. Each day, we will “do the right thing”, “walk the talk”, and close the “say-do” gap.

Empathy

We are self-aware of the impact of our words and actions when dealing with colleagues and clients. We will ensure time for reflection and the understanding of what it is like to “walk in someone else’s shoes”.

Culture of Trust

We support open discussion, share information and easily have difficult conversations in a climate of trust. This extends to an environment that is a safe space for individual public service executives to access for support.



Vision

An executive community with elevated wellness, elite leaders and extraordinary impacts through partnerships.

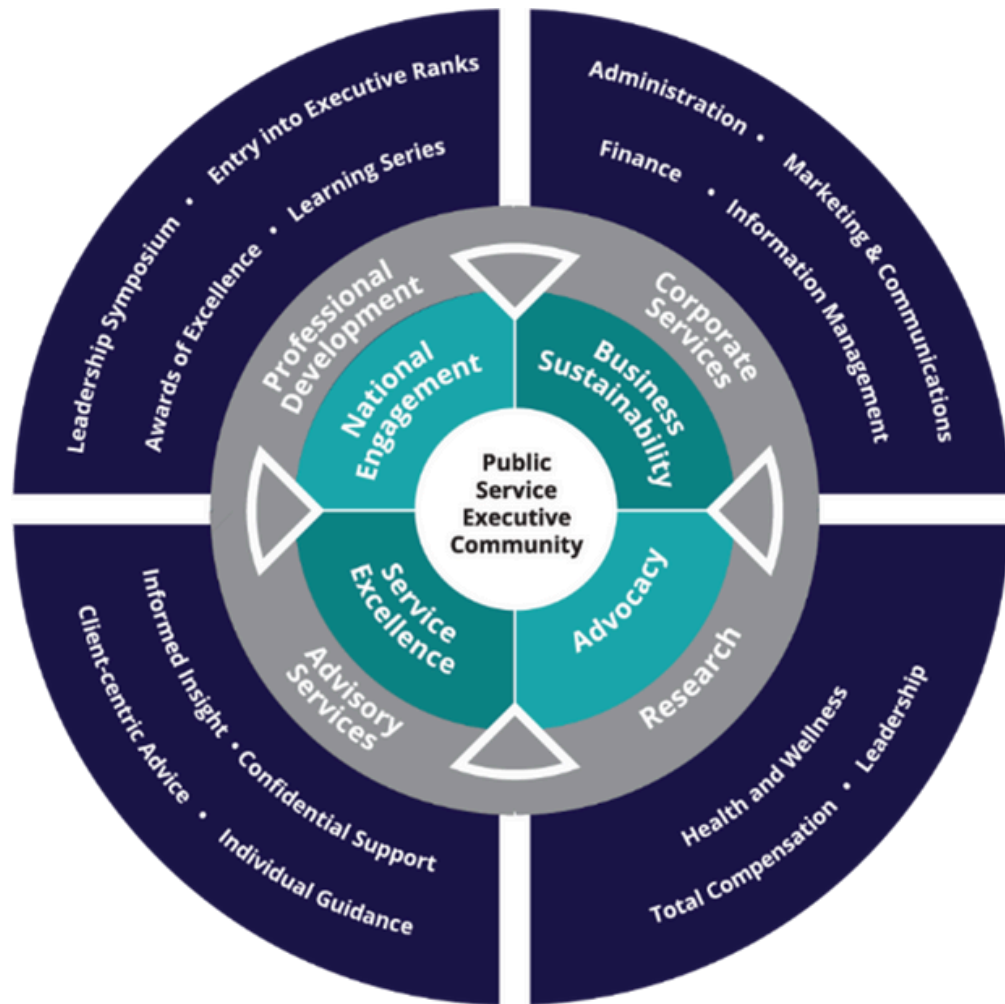
Mission

We will be a vibrant national organization that inspires executive excellence in leadership through strategic advocacy, research, professional development and advisory services. We will be the preeminent voice for the executive community of the Public Service of Canada.

Our Brand Promise

Together and individually, we are committed to excellence, trusted service, and meeting the needs of our executive leaders.

The **APEX Strategic Plan for 2020-2025: Delivering Community Value** provided the right foundation to adapt and innovate during the pandemic. As we look to the future, this Plan continues to be our ‘North Star’ as we evolve as a modern and effective organization that provides continuous value to its members.



APEX acknowledges and values the continuous support we receive from the Clerk, Deputy Ministers, and Deputy Heads, whose active engagement and attendance at our events are greatly appreciated. Their critical role extends to approving multi-year salary and operational funding plans that sustain our operations and enable us to support federal public service executives effectively. Additionally, their endorsement of Interchange Agreements facilitates executives' involvement with APEX, leading pivotal projects and initiatives for the executive community.

Throughout the dynamic challenges of the post-pandemic era, the APEX corporate secretariat has served as a cornerstone in modernizing our operations, services, and event platforms. Our foremost priorities remain ensuring the health and safety of APEX staff while maintaining the association's sustainability to provide uninterrupted support to federal executives.

In 2023-2024, APEX welcomed five new executives, including two in newly created roles, reflecting our commitment to evolving alongside the needs of our members. Furthermore, three new permanent staff members joined our team as part of ongoing efforts to optimize our organizational structure and enhance support for our mandate.

APEX continues to evolve, reviewing and redesigning our organizational framework to accommodate growth effectively. This adaptability ensures that we remain agile in fulfilling our mission and meeting the diverse needs of public service executives across Canada.

Governance

Effective governance is the foundation of APEX as an organization, ensuring transparency, accountability and strategic alignment across all initiatives. Governed by a robust set of policies and procedures, APEX upholds high standards to foster trust among its stakeholders.

Board of Directors

The APEX Board of Directors is comprised of 16 Directors including:

- 1 associate member who is a former EX or EX equivalent in the Federal Public Service
- 9 regular members who are permanent residents of the National Capital Region
- 6 regular members who are permanent residents in each of the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia, and the North

Directors are elected by the members for a term of three years, commencing on the date of the Annual General Meeting and are eligible for one additional consecutive term of three years. The Executive Committee of the Board includes the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Officer-at-Large and CEO. The Board of Directors meets 6 to 8 times a year and plays a key role in setting the organization's strategic direction.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Board held Annual Planning Meetings on December 4 and 5, 2023, to review the association's key accomplishments and to begin the process of developing the next APEX Strategic Plan for 2025-2028.

In 2023-2024, the Board saw the departure of 3 members:

- Former Treasurer & NCR Director, Emilio Franco
- NCR Director, Bojana Zizic
- Prairies Region Director, Doug Zolinsky

We thank them for their tireless contributions to support APEX and the executive community.

The Board also welcomed five new members, Patrick Barthold (NCR), Christian Bertelsen (North Region), Karim Fala (Quebec Region), Liane Sauer (NCR) and Julie Thorpe (Prairies Region) and we look forward to working with them in the coming years.

Three members were up for re-election, Darlène de Gravina (NCR), Anthony Sheehan (NCR), and Lilia Trombetti (NCR) and all were voted back in for their second (and final) term by the membership at the Annual General Meeting held in October 2023.

Following the 2023 Annual General Meeting, the Board elected Genviève Binet as the new Chair, succeeding Daryell Nowlan. We extend our sincere thanks to Daryell for his dedicated leadership and valuable contributions during his tenure. Daryell will continue to serve as a Board member, ensuring a smooth transition and ongoing commitment to our mission. The Board also elected Tabitha Stubbs as the new Vice-Chair, Ziad Shadid as Treasurer and Kent Estabrook as the Officer-at-Large. Martin Béliveau remains in his role as Secretary.

Annual General Meeting

The APEX Annual General Meeting was held on October 17, 2023. Key agenda items included the 2022-23 APEX Annual Report, the Auditor's Report and Financial Statements, the election of Directors to the Board (including the creation of a new Director for the North), and amendments to the APEX By-laws.

The resolutions to approve the association's Audited Financial Statements for the period ending March 31, 2023, and to appoint the auditor for the 2023-2024 fiscal year were approved. Additionally, the amended By-Laws and the proposed slate of candidates, re-electing existing members Darlene de Gravina, Anthony Sheehan, and Lilia Trombetti, were also approved.

Enhancing Organizational Capability: New Executive Positions

In 2023-2024, APEX demonstrated its commitment to advancing member services and organizational effectiveness by introducing three new, pivotal executive roles: Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer and a Chief Marketing Officer.

APEX Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Established to fortify APEX's internal operations and information management, the CIO was appointed in April 2023 and now oversees the strategic direction of Information Management and Information Technology (IM/IT) across the organization. Tasked with enhancing APEX's technological infrastructure, the CIO spearheads initiatives to optimize user experience, streamline operations, and bolster cybersecurity measures.

By implementing cutting-edge IT strategies and fostering collaborations with government departments and IT providers, the CIO ensures APEX remains at the forefront of digital innovation. This role empowers APEX by supporting efficient and effective member engagement and interactions.

In the coming year, APEX will transition to a new digital platform and enhance its IM/ IT services, aimed at delivering a more interactive and secure online environment. These efforts underscore APEX's dedication to leveraging technology to better serve its members and uphold its leadership in supporting the public service executive community.

APEX Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Despite the proliferation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and programs in both the public and private sectors since 2020, many organizations are struggling to demonstrate progress with clear and tangible goals. APEX recognizes the importance of the ability to measure progress, to be transparent in our efforts and to be accountable to our stakeholders in advancing EDI.

Recognizing the need for measurable progress and clear goals, APEX appointed its first Chief Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Officer in September 2023. This strategic role supports executives both as individuals with diverse identities and as leaders fostering inclusive teams. Moreover, the EDI Officer guides APEX in implementing inclusive policies and programs across our organization.

Looking ahead, these new executive roles are pivotal in propelling APEX's mission forward, ensuring we meet the evolving needs of our members and maintain our position as a trusted advocate and resource within the public service executive community. By investing in internal capabilities and strategic leadership, APEX is poised to achieve sustained growth and impact in the years to come.

APEX Chief Marketing Officer

In 2023-2024, APEX identified the need for and conceptualized a new Chief Marketing Officer role that underscores its commitment to enhancing brand value and community loyalty. Anticipated to have an executive appointed to this position in 2024-2025, this executive will lead the development and execution of comprehensive marketing strategies aligned with APEX's mission and member needs. Central to their responsibilities is the stewardship of APEX's brand integrity, ensuring all communications resonate with our values and objectives.

Through data-driven insights and innovative marketing techniques, the Chief Marketing Officer will enhance member engagement and promote APEX's visibility within the executive community. Their strategic leadership is intended to drive awareness of and participation in APEX events and initiatives, ultimately fostering a stronger sense of community among public service executives.

Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

APEX's outreach and stakeholder engagement activities are designed to engage individual executives, the broader executive community, networks, partners and stakeholders. These efforts aim to bring awareness of APEX services and provide expertise and knowledge to address particular topics that are important to the executive community.

The primary goal of our ongoing outreach endeavors is to articulate the distinct benefits and value proposition that APEX offers to the executive cadre. This approach underscores a commitment to fostering engagement and facilitating meaningful two-way communication. Outreach activities encompass diverse formats, including in-person and online presentations, interactive kiosks, workshops, site visits, and dialogues with networks and partners.

Regional Engagement

During 2023-2024, APEX conducted several regional engagement initiatives in collaboration with Regional Federal Councils, Ambassadors, and the National Managers Community.

APEX led engagement efforts with executives and prospective executives in three key regions:

- **Iqaluit, Nunavut:** Partnered with the Canadian Northern Development Agency, the National Managers Community and the Nunavut Territorial Table, a component of the Northern Federal Council.
- **Vancouver, BC:** Hosted an in-person event with 80 executives, in partnership with BC Federal Council.
- **Gatineau, Quebec:** Conducted an in-person session with 15 participants, in collaboration with Conseil Federal du Quebec (CFQ) and the Réseau des Cadres du CFQ.



Participants emphasized the significance of networking as a key and highly valued aspect of these gatherings. These engagements provided APEX with crucial insights into common challenges faced by regional executives, including barriers to career advancement, official languages, talent and performance management, and recognition of regional leadership competencies. This feedback will inform APEX’s advocacy efforts aimed at enhancing understanding among central agencies of the needs and expectations of regional executives.

Additionally, each region identified unique challenges. For example, the specific challenges of living and working in Northern regions prompted APEX to initiate collaborative efforts with northern executives and federal council tables to develop a tailored Northern Engagement Strategy.

Engagement with Departments and Other Networks

Our approach presents a dual opportunity: firstly, to elevate awareness of APEX’s offerings and their value to individual executives and the broader community; secondly, to actively listen to executives’ concerns and priorities. In 2023-2024, APEX responded to over 20 organizational requests for presentations, frequently engaging with senior leaders, Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs), and Deputy Ministers (DMs) across government, but also with non-EX communities of practice like the National Managers Community and the Young Professionals Network at the Canada Revenue Agency. More than half of these engagements have been with the executive community within organizations, reflecting a shared interest in enhancing support for executives and ensuring that APEX understands their needs to effectively advocate on their behalf.

“The National Managers’ Community (NMC) values its close partnership with APEX, in helping support aspiring executives through key events and resources. Managers and executives in the Public Service seek to embrace collaboration as they navigate similar complex challenges. Being able to showcase the work and services of APEX to aspiring executives is beneficial in shaping our collective public service future”.

– **Camille Beausoleil, President of the National Managers Community**

Organizational Ambassadors

APEX's network of Organizational Ambassadors plays a pivotal role in advancing our mission and vision by amplifying APEX's initiatives and enhancing our reach, while improving understanding of the needs of executives across the federal public service organizations they represent.

In 2023-2024, APEX had 80 Ambassadors representing 61 organizations, spanning the Core Public Administration, Central Agencies, CRA, and smaller entities, including 10 Federal Councils, Regional Economic Development agencies, and other networks.

The Ambassador network continues to flourish, evolving into a dynamic resource for executives. Its growing utilization and the inclusion of multiple representatives from several organizations underscore the network's value. APEX enhanced its efforts during the year to incorporate regional perspectives, notably by involving regional economic development agencies in the Ambassador Network, directly contributing to the success of regional tours.

Throughout the year, the Ambassador network maintained regular monthly meetings and APEX hosted two well-attended Ambassador Workshops. Notably, Ambassadors have prominently represented APEX at our signature events, actively contributing to branded roles defined by specific event guidelines.

APEX values the proactive engagement of our Ambassadors, whose dedication and involvement play a crucial role in fostering connections, promoting understanding, and advancing our organizational goals.

“The APEX Ambassadors Network provides a vibrant space to work on critical issues facing GoC executives. It’s a privilege to represent the perspectives of my own departments’ leaders and to benefit from the experiences of other Ambassadors. It has been both deeply impactful, energizing, and fun to benefit from the expertise of my ambassador colleagues. Personally, this has been a fulfilling role where I have felt I have made a significant impact.”

– **David Henry, APEX Ambassador, ECCC**

Membership with APEX

APEX operates as a member-based, not-for-profit organization with an annual membership fee structured into two categories:

- **Regular Members:** This category encompasses active public service executives, where new executives receive a complimentary one-year membership.
- **Associate Members:** This category encompasses former or retired public servants.

Membership eligibility requires individuals to hold an executive appointment or an equivalent position, including those who are subject to EX-terms and conditions of employment.

In 2023-2024, APEX grew its membership base from 3,039 to 3,291 which now reflects 37% of the executive cadre within the core public administration, consistent with last year. Our membership distribution roughly aligns with the geographic spread of executives across the public service, comprising 60% in the National Capital Region and 40% in regional offices. Notably, regional members constitute approximately 25% of our total membership. APEX remains committed to enhancing regional executive representation to mirror the broader executive cadre within the public service.

New executives play a pivotal role in APEX's membership base, constituting one-third of our total membership. Newly appointed executives are offered a complimentary one-year APEX membership, in addition to an invitation to participate in our annual, signature event recognizing their induction into the executive cadre of the public service. In 2023-2024, over 900 new executives were inducted into the executive ranks of the public service and were offered a one-year complimentary membership at APEX. This represents a significant opportunity for membership growth through effective retention strategies for these new executives. APEX aspires to achieve or surpass a 50% membership target by March 31, 2028.

“APEX membership means not only access to exceptional support as a leader—from education to events to confidential advisory services—it also means access to a huge network of colleagues in the public service. The human connections that we make as members, and the opportunities that we have to connect together, all thanks to APEX, is what makes membership truly special and invaluable.”

– Eric Joyce, APEX Member, CRTC

APEX continues its focus on enhancing our online membership renewal and registration portal, alongside improvements in our online event registration system. These enhancements are aimed at streamlining services and facilitating seamless member engagement. Our strategic objectives center on reinforcing the value of APEX membership, promoting annual renewals, and encouraging payroll deductions for membership fees. These efforts are crucial in strengthening member engagement and fostering sustained growth within the executive community.



Affinity Program and Member Benefits

The affinity program continues to attract new subscribers monthly, with a notable focus on the Perkopolis member perks program, which currently serves over 400 active APEX members, representing approximately 12% of our membership. Partnerships such as TD Insurance have shown strong member uptake, contributing \$13,000 in sponsorship revenue to APEX this year. Similarly, GoodLife Fitness has garnered significant member interest and provides substantial savings. However, the NCR-based offerings for members have shown lower utilization.

Results from the marketing research survey conducted in 2023-2024 affirm that member perks hold significant value and interest among our members. Maintaining accurate membership information is crucial for members to fully benefit from these programs, and the potential loss of perks due to non-renewal of APEX membership is a key factor influencing renewal decisions.

Looking ahead to 2024-2025, the affinity program will undergo further evaluation to optimize offerings that best support APEX members. This assessment aims to ensure that our programs continue to meet member needs and enhance overall membership satisfaction.

Marketing Insights

In alignment with its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, "Delivering Community Value," APEX conducted its inaugural comprehensive marketing survey to better understand the perceptions, needs, and expectations of public service executives. Conducted by Nanos Research, this survey provided invaluable insights into how APEX is viewed and the areas where we can improve to better serve our community.

The survey reached 860 executives, providing a robust data set with a response rate of 11%. These are the five key findings of the report:

1. **Brand Perception:** APEX is perceived as a trusted advocate offering valuable support and learning opportunities to executives with over 80% agreeing that APEX is a "trusted source of information" and an "advocate for executives". Both members and non-members identified APEX as a trusted source and voice for executives. 80.5% of members indicated that APEX has met or exceeded their expectations.
2. **Service Satisfaction:** 81% of members indicated that APEX has met and exceeded their expectations, affirming the effectiveness of our current offerings while identifying areas for further enhancement.
3. **Identified Needs:** Executives expressed a need for additional support in areas such as work-life balance, competitive compensation, timely resources, mental health support, developing leadership skills and managing organizational austerity.
4. **Membership Value:** Current members rated the value of APEX membership at 7.3 out of 10, whereas non-members rated it lower at 5.0 out of 10. Notably, members are highly likely to recommend APEX membership to colleagues, reflecting a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of +74.[1]
5. **Membership Fees:** The survey provided increased understanding of the range of membership fees that executives would be willing to pay, informing APEX's considerations for future adjustments.

These insights are instrumental in shaping our current positioning and promotional strategies, particularly aimed at new executives and non-members. Moreover, they are guiding our strategic planning efforts for the 2025-2028 period, focusing on enhancing our responsiveness to evolving member needs and priorities.

“APEX's greatest strength and biggest opportunity:
Advocacy”

– **Nik Nanos, Chief Data Scientist and Founder of the
Nanos Research Group**

[1] The NPS is a widely used metric for gauging customer loyalty and satisfaction. It is calculated based on responses to the question, "How likely are you to recommend our organization to a friend or colleague?"

Communications

Effective communication with our diverse executive community remains fundamental to APEX's mission, especially as the landscape around digital communications is evolving so rapidly. The past year has underscored the importance of modernizing our communication strategies to better serve the needs of our members. Our communications approach emphasizes leveraging innovative digital platforms and tailored messaging strategies to ensure clear, timely and relevant communication with our members.

Digital Communications and Media

While APEX's commitment to enhancing digital communication remains constant, we acknowledge the complexities encountered in engaging our audience effectively. Despite ongoing efforts to deliver timely, relevant, and insightful content, we have faced challenges, such as declining newsletter engagement and reduced website users. LinkedIn continues to be a cornerstone for professional engagement, with a steady increase in followers and post engagements, yet we recognize the need for continuous improvement across all communication channels.

The monthly APEX Newsletter remains at the centre of our communication strategy, providing a preferred platform for articles, updates on advocacy and research, and insights directly from our community and partners. Although engagement and readership remain stable, we have observed a slight decline in our newsletter's average open rates compared to previous periods. This decline underscores the evolving challenge of capturing and maintaining our audience's attention amidst competing demands.

Similarly, as we reflect further on our digital presence, we acknowledge the challenges encountered this year with reduced website traffic and session durations compared to previous periods. While these metrics indicate a decline in user engagement, they also highlight an opportunity for improvement in enhancing user experience and content relevance.

Recognizing the critical role of effective communication, APEX is committed to enhancing both our newsletter strategy and web presence to reinvigorate interest, utility and engagement for our audiences. We are actively exploring innovative approaches to deliver timely, relevant, and compelling content that resonates with our audience, while refining our content curation, optimizing email delivery schedules, and incorporating interactive elements to enhance user experience. Through ongoing analysis of analytics and member feedback, we aim to strengthen the impact of our newsletters as a primary communication channel.

Additionally, we will focus on addressing these challenges by advancing our IM/IT modernization strategy. This initiative is paramount to revitalizing our online platform, ensuring it evolves to meet the dynamic needs of our audiences and enhances accessibility to valuable resources.

Digital Communication Highlights

- Published 12 monthly newsletters with a 29% average open rate. The January 2024 edition had the highest open rate at 68.6%. Economic increases/compensation and advisory services for executives were the most clicked sections, with economic increases/compensation being the most popular category throughout the year.
- Published 410 LinkedIn posts, with 320,160 engagements and 1,884 new followers for a total of 5,845 followers.
- Total active website users: 53,213 and 333,229 page views.

Advancing Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion

Central to our efforts in 2023-2024 is the introduction of the APEX Maturity Model for Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion (READI). Developed in consultation with various Government of Canada employee networks representing historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, 2SLGBTQIA+, Persons with Disabilities, and Neurodiverse individuals, this model aligns with best practices, articulates our objectives and defines success at each stage of our journey.

APEX tailored this model to our unique role as a national professional organization, incorporating distinct aspects such as Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and Accessibility into the READI framework. The model comprises nine key components—Organizational Commitment, Training, Data, Engagement, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Reconciliation—each outlining stages of growth from foundational to ideal states. These components span APEX's governance, employment practices, operational procedures, physical workspace, and member support programs.

To foster ongoing dialogue and collaboration, stakeholder engagement will inform specific year to year priorities for APEX and how we should strive to operate in the long term. Additionally, [our website](#) now features curated resources and contact information for various community networks, ensuring executives can easily access relevant support and information.

APEX remains committed to promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, thereby reinforcing our role as a leader in advocating for READI principles within the public service executive community. Through structured frameworks and strategic partnerships, we continue to advance towards our vision of a more inclusive future.

Applied Research and Leadership

APEX's desire to undertake research and utilize evidenced-based information can be traced to the Association's founders, who, in 1984, conducted an initial survey of executives to gauge the interest for creating the Association, its initial mandate and objectives.

The APEX 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, titled "Delivering Community Value," emphasizes principles and priorities that underscore the importance of research and evidence-based advocacy. Central to this vision are three Advanced Focus Areas- Leadership, Health and Wellness and Total Compensation designated as Centres of Excellence (CoEs), reflecting APEX's commitment to advancing discovery, creative work and new insights.

Throughout 2023-2024, APEX strengthened its commitment to research by developing and approving an updated research plan. This plan delineates upcoming leadership research initiatives slated for 2024-2025, laying the groundwork for the forthcoming 3-year Strategic Research Plan spanning 2025-2028. These initiatives align closely with APEX's evolving strategic priorities and underscore our dedication to leveraging applied research as a cornerstone of informed advocacy.

Research and Advocacy Impact

Building on the foundation laid out in the 2020-2023 Strategic Research Plan, APEX took several steps in 2023-2024 to leverage research and thought leadership that merges the organization's best thinking and applies it strategically to build brand power, demand for services, create new opportunities and drive executive community loyalty.

The Leadership CoE played a pivotal role during this period by curating themes, program content, and securing globally renowned thought leaders for flagship events such as the Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks ceremony and the APEX Leadership Summit and Awards of Excellence Ceremony. Additionally, the APEX CoE Forum functioned effectively as an internal platform for cross-functional discussions on operational matters, enabling the formulation of recommendations directly to the APEX CEO.

Driven by a commitment to elevate advocacy and service excellence, the CoE Forum convened regularly to address crucial topics including compensation, health and wellness, leadership strategies, applied research, marketing initiatives, professional development, communications, outreach, engagement, and membership growth. Notably, key exploratory leadership research was conducted in collaboration with global expert Dr. Randall White from HEC Paris, involving 600 federal executives. This research focused on evaluating executives' capacity to navigate change, ambiguity, and uncertainty, culminating in a detailed [report of key findings](#) published on the APEX website.

Furthermore, APEX initiated a comprehensive multi-method case study exploring executives' readiness to adopt digitization as a strategic imperative in the future of work. This collaborative effort engaged researchers from École nationale d'administration publique and Carleton University's School of Public Policy and Administration. Preliminary findings were shared with executives from two federal organizations, marking a significant step towards informing future strategies and policy decisions.

Advocacy and Total Compensation

Throughout its 40-year history, APEX has been a constant voice for executives with departments, central agencies or third parties working on behalf of the Government of Canada. Guided by its unwavering commitment to public service excellence, APEX plays a crucial role in empowering executives to navigate complex and transformative initiatives that serve Canadians effectively. In this context, APEX actively advocates with the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) for the executive cadre to be valued, rewarded, and recognized fairly.

In 2023-2024, APEX continued its advocacy efforts aimed at ensuring fair, objective, transparent, and timely processes for determining executive total compensation. These initiatives included productive engagements led by APEX CEO Carl Trottier with senior officials at the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), resulting in the announcement of economic increases for the executive cadre from 2022-2024 in July 2023. Notably, this marked a significant milestone as executives received advance notice of forthcoming rate adjustments, complemented by regular updates provided by APEX on the implementation progress, initially monthly and eventually after each pay cycle, with specific inquiries addressed promptly.

APEX's advocacy extends beyond economic matters to encompass a wide spectrum of executive concerns, such as overpayments, retirement, leave provisions, disability benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. In 2023-2024, APEX experienced a 50% increase in demand for assistance, with over 160 executives seeking guidance and clarification on these critical issues. Particularly, executives appointed since 2018 sought APEX's support to understand and validate their starting salaries within the executive group, amidst retroactive pay adjustments in their former groups and the retroactive economic increases for the EX group.

This ongoing advocacy underscores APEX's commitment to supporting all members of the executive community. Moreover, APEX actively promotes the health and well-being of executives, advocating for improvements based on insights from initiatives such as the Executive Work and Health Study and the Advisory Service for Executives. Through consistent dialogue and collaboration with the Treasury Board Secretariat, APEX maintains a constructive partnership focused on enhancing executive terms and conditions of employment, including compensation, by sharing crucial information and data.

“Thanks for this explanation (about my salary) – this is the first time in the last six months that I have received information that made sense of my situation. Very much appreciate the time you spent on this.”

— Executive who reached out with question on their compensation

Executive Health and Wellbeing

APEX's remains committed to understanding and improving organizational culture's impact on individual health across the federal public service. Over the last 27 years, APEX has examined workplace dynamics that foster healthy organizations, leadership, and leaders. This dedication has positioned APEX as a pivotal advocate and contributor to an industry research shift focusing on collective determinants rather than individual risks.

In 2023-2024, APEX embarked on the first year of the three-year cycle for the 2024 Executive Work and Health Study (EWHS) where APEX focused on preparing for the official launch of the 7th EWHS in May 2024. This endeavor involved establishing strategic partnerships and securing ethical approvals from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board, to maintain research excellence and integrity in epidemiological modeling.

In tandem with its research initiatives, APEX continued to answer the call of departments by advising various executive tables on enhancing organizational and executive health and well-being. Leveraging evidence from the 2021 EWHS results and other relevant research, APEX shared key areas critical to improving organizational and executive health outcomes:

- **Realize the importance of organizational culture and organizational climate:** The role each plays in supporting healthy outcomes for executives' wellbeing is also shaped by many. Although deputy heads set the culture of the organization, the direct supervisor shape organizational climate and the everyday behaviors that contribute to burnout or prevention.
- **Increase inclusion:** APEX considers inclusion as having a sense of belonging, a voice at the table, a role in decision making, and concrete investment(s) in the development of the executive on the part of the organization. Increasing supervisor support and fostering psychological safety within teams are essential steps toward achieving greater inclusion.
- **Increase recognition:** The 2021 EWHS illustrates that the lack recognition is the most potent driver which creates the most negative effects by both increasing undesirable outcome and by reducing desirable ones. High demands may not by themselves lead to negative outcomes as long as executives see them as balanced by equally high rewards.
- **Reduce interference between work and home:** A significant finding from the 2021 EWHS was the increasing interference between work and home life, particularly affecting women executives. APEX stressed the need for policies and practices that support executives in meeting personal obligations and ensuring adequate downtime for recuperation.

Mentoring Circles

The impact of social support from colleagues and superiors on executives' experiences cannot be overstated. Positive relationships and social support have been shown to be an effective buffer against adversity and stress. Conversely, negative interactions, or in the worst cases, disrespect or even harassment, can have significantly negative effects on individuals and organizations.

“I liked everything about my experience, which surpassed my expectations. In particular, the way these sessions were structured were very targeted, and beneficial. I also liked hearing the journeys of other executives, and the advice from the mentors-which gave me a sense of belonging to a community of executives. I have already grown in many areas since I started these and hope to continue to grow and develop more. What a great initiative, and collaboration between APEX and CSPS. Kudos to the entire team.”

– **Quote from mentee**

To support executives, APEX renewed its partnership with the Canada School of Public Service to facilitate Mentoring Circles. These circles brought together 81 executives at the EX 1 and EX 2 levels together with 19 senior management mentors across 28 Mentoring Circles. Participants shared lived experiences and practical insights to support the challenges and opportunities with:

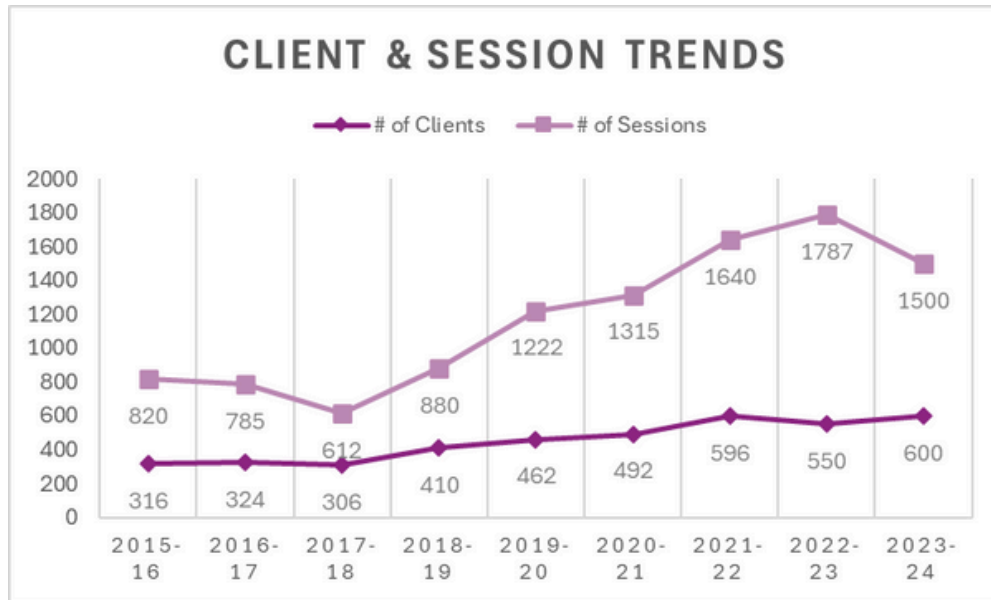
- Setting boundaries
- Dealing with conflict (e.g., diverse personalities and generations in the workplace)
- Building resilience
- Asking for and receiving meaningful feedback from superiors
- Building psychological safety and trust

“I loved the opportunity to hear from Executives with different backgrounds and challenges. I enjoyed the materials I got beforehand, the format and the opportunity.”

– **Quote from mentor**

Executives should never feel alone. Advisory Services for Executives (ASE) is a confidential, bilingual, and complimentary service available to all public service executives with the distinction that APEX members receive unlimited access to ASE. Our team of advisors are seasoned executives with diverse expertise and lived experiences. They employ a human-centered and empathic approach to foster trust with their clients and explore tailored strategies, options and solutions to benefit their clients.

Executives frequently seek guidance on various topics, including career reflections and planning, conflict management and resolution, harassment, workplace safety, complaints, investigations, people management strategies, performance and talent management, retirement planning, terms and conditions of employment, wellness, and work-life integration.



In the fiscal year 2023-2024, over 600 executives accessed the service, with 540 using it for the first time.

On average, APEX members accessed the service approximately five times annually to address complex issues, provide updates, or seek ongoing support. The total number of client sessions conducted during this period reached 1,500.

"I appreciate the frank, honest, authentic, safe conversation, where I felt heard, validated and was offered practical support and advice."

– ASE Client

Advisory Services Partnerships

APEX values its ongoing partnerships with various government communities and external service providers, focusing on mental health and wellness, leadership development, professional coaching services and legal services.

Advisory Services for Executives hosted several learning events in 2023-2024 in collaboration with mental health experts on building resilience, fostering belonging and igniting innovation and leveraging our largest untapped mental health resource- our people, with more than 250 executives in attendance.

In 2023-2024, APEX partnered with Health Canada's Decompression Program to support executives seeking specialized resources for workplace wellness and mental health. This initiative encouraged executives to enroll in a customized 2-week program led by mental health professionals, tailored to assist leaders and their teams following prolonged periods of operational stress.

APEX also contributed to and tested the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer's new [back pocket guide for executive supports](#), promoting its utility across the executive community. Leveraging relationships with federal ombuds offices, Heads of HR, Heads of Executive Services, and APEX ambassadors, collaborative efforts focused on developing strategies, best practices, and resources to enhance executive support and address systemic challenges.

APEX Leadership Summit

The 2023 APEX Leadership Summit, themed "Serve with Purpose, Lead with Clarity, Drive Positive Change," marked a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to executive development. Taking place from May 30-31, 2023, the summit brought together thought leaders, seasoned practitioners, and subject matter experts to inspire participants to embrace the mission of purpose-driven public service, navigate their leadership journey with clarity, and contribute to meaningful change during a period of extraordinary transformation.

The 2023 summit achieved record-breaking attendance, with over 1,300 participants and guests who came together to learn, network, and be inspired by an exceptional agenda featuring a diverse array of public sector and private sector speakers, as well as renowned scholars. The event underscored APEX's dedication to fostering a community of leaders equipped to drive positive change in the public service.

“Summit 2023 was relevant, interesting and well done virtually. The speakers were both thought-provoking and timely. Many thanks to APEX for organizing yet another successful must attend event for PS execs!”

– 2023 APEX Summit participant

The summit not only highlighted the importance of visionary leadership, but also reinforced the collective commitment of our executive community to serve with integrity and excellence. The success of this event reflects APEX's unwavering focus on providing high-quality professional development opportunities that address the evolving needs of public service executives.



APEX Awards of Excellence Ceremony

The APEX Awards of Excellence Ceremony holds a prestigious position within the executive community, serving as an annual forum to recognize outstanding contributions of executives to the Federal Public Service. This esteemed program is supported by APEX's partnership with Heads of Human Resources, departmental awards champions, and generous corporate sponsors.

In 2023, APEX received 57 nominations, reflecting the high caliber of talent within the public service. The ceremony featured Chief Human Resources Officer Jacqueline Bogden and APEX Board of Directors Chair Geneviève Binet, who, in collaboration with private sector sponsors, presented awards to eight deserving recipients. This event not only celebrated individual excellence but also reinforced the critical role of executive leadership in the Federal Public Service.

Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks

On November 15, 2023, APEX proudly hosted the highly anticipated annual Recognition of Entry into the Executive Ranks Ceremony at the Museum of History in Gatineau, QC. The 2023 hybrid event, dedicated exclusively to Canada's Federal Public Service executive community, honored and celebrated 939 new executives inducted into the senior ranks of the Federal Public Service. The theme, "New Executives: Leading with Authenticity in Challenging Times," highlighted the significant potential of new executives to effect positive change in their roles. This theme underscores the inspiration these leaders provide to future generations of public servants and their commitment to serving Canada and its citizens with pride and excellence.

The 2023 ceremony marked the largest in APEX's history, with over 580 participants, including Deputy Ministers and senior representatives and highlighted our dedication to recognizing and fostering leadership within the Federal Public Service.



APEX Learning Events

In 2023-2024, APEX continued to enhance its professional development programs, transitioning from a post-pandemic environment to a more robust and accessible learning delivery platform. This transformation included upgraded learning delivery systems and the development of comprehensive post-event resources and materials. These improvements provided executives with timely and relevant learning opportunities, available both synchronously and asynchronously, to support executives at all levels and in all regions.

New learning partnerships with corporate organizations and academic institutions were forged, maximizing support for the executive community. These collaborations demonstrated our partners' commitment to public service executives and enhanced APEX's internal capacity to provide superior professional development opportunities.

APEX hosted 17 hybrid learning events in 2023-2024, attracting a total of 4,190 registrations. Participation in many events saw significant increases from outside the National Capital Region. Additionally, a regional learning event was introduced as a pilot initiative to demonstrate APEX's commitment to regional learning and laying the groundwork for future regional opportunities.

The learning events focused on a range of pertinent themes and priority areas, including mental health, wellbeing, inclusive leadership, performance and productivity, and leading with a dynamic mindset. This comprehensive approach ensured that the programs addressed the current and pressing issues faced by public service executives.

“Thanks so much to APEX and all the panelists for this great learning session! It was extremely beneficial, and I am leaving with many valuable takeaways! “

– 2023 learning event participant

Strategic Partnerships

In 2023-2024, APEX reinforced its commitment to building effective partnerships with diverse public, academic, and private sector organizations, all aimed at benefiting its members. This year, APEX achieved its highest-ever level of external sponsorship, funding which significantly supported a comprehensive program of high-quality events, ceremonies, and learning activities for executives. This sponsorship also facilitated the organization's swift transition to online platforms and enhancing our digital capabilities and hybrid learning approach.

APEX established new internal sponsorships and collaborative relationships focused on the operational delivery of events and the modernization of executive programs. These efforts are pivotal in our mission to deliver top-tier programming for executives, ensuring that our offerings remain relevant and impactful.

As we reflect on the successes of the past year, APEX is poised for exciting developments in the year ahead. Our focus will be on enhancing IM/IT modernization to improve user experience and better serve our valued members. We are committed to elevating our digital communication strategies to provide more robust interactions with our members, the executive community and other stakeholders as well as engagement opportunities for our members, ensuring our advocacy efforts remain our strength and a top priority.

In the upcoming year, APEX will renew its membership value proposition, reinforcing our commitment to supporting executives across the public service. Marketing and communications will play a pivotal role in revitalizing our image and brand value, effectively communicating our mission and achievements to stakeholders. Anticipating increased demand, ASE will strive to expand their capacity to meet the evolving needs and demands of our growing community.

We eagerly anticipate the completion of our new strategic plan for 2025-2028, which will serve as a renewed framework for advancing our mission and meeting the evolving needs of our members. Central to our strategy will be amplifying our presence and community building, striking a balance between individual support through ASE initiatives, learning opportunities, and signature events, and collective empowerment through robust advocacy efforts. By fostering a strong sense of community and advancing our collective goals, APEX will continue to lead in inspiring a dynamic future for public service executives.

