

TOP-LINE REPORT

2009  
Provincial Government Client Survey

Prepared for:

*BC Assessment*

Prepared by:  
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## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

In spring 2009, BC Assessment commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. to conduct a survey of clients, including Provincial Government clients, Local Government clients, First Nations clients, and Residential and Non-residential property owners. The purpose of the research is to assess the level of satisfaction with services and products offered by BC Assessment. Residential and Non-residential clients are surveyed annually, while other BC Assessment clients are surveyed every 2 years. This report encompasses the results pertaining to Provincial Government clients who maintain a business relationship with BC Assessment. Comparisons to the previous survey (2007) are examined where applicable.

Representatives of BC Assessment and a research consultant originally developed the survey instrument in 2006 with modifications in subsequent years. The main objective of the survey is to build on baseline measures of client satisfaction established in the original survey. To this end, the survey instrument incorporates a series of standardized questions related to various aspects of service delivery. The survey instrument was modified for 2009 and includes a “composite score” designed to measure overall client satisfaction with the quality of service provided by BC Assessment.

### 1.2 Survey Objectives

The main goal of this research is to measure the level of satisfaction among Provincial Government clients that regularly use the services of BC Assessment. The specific objectives of the research are to:

- determine how often this group of clients are in contact with BC Assessment and what method of contact they most often use;
- identify the types of information or service that clients most often use or request;
- measure client satisfaction with the services and information that they use or request;
- gauge client satisfaction with the service provided by BC Assessment staff relating to various service measures;
- measure the level of satisfaction with the overall service clients receive from BC Assessment;
- solicit other comments or suggestions that clients have for the organization, including any other services they would like BC Assessment to offer; and

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- where applicable, compare the results to those obtained in the 2007 survey of provincial government clients.

### 1.3 Survey Highlights

For 2009, the survey was administered using a “mixed mode” approach involving both telephone and online administration. A “mixed mode” approach is considered effective in optimizing the number of completions among well-defined response cohorts. A survey field test was conducted April 6 and 7, 2009 to measure timing and effectiveness of the survey. Full survey administration was undertaken between April 7 and 28, 2009. To enhance the response, follow-up emails were forwarded to outstanding respondents, as well as personal telephone follow-up. Of the 54 completed surveys in 2009, 34 were done online and 20 over the telephone.

#### **Contact with BC Assessment**

- More than half (54% vs. 49% in 2007) of respondents are in contact with BC Assessment at least once a month, including one-quarter (24%) who make contact at least once every two weeks.
- More than 4 in 5 respondents (83%) indicated that the telephone was the method they use most often to contact BC Assessment (either first or second). In contrast to 2007, email communication (44%) supplanted telephone communication (35%) as the first method of contact among provincial clients.
- As in 2007, 92% of provincial government clients said it was clear or easy to determine who to contact at BC Assessment when they need service.

#### **Information and Services Requested**

- More than two-thirds of respondents (67% vs. 47% in 2007) said they requested Assessment and related information, while requests for Policies and Legislation nearly doubled to 51% (vs. 26% in 2007).
- Requests for Legal services also increased significantly in 2009 (14% vs. 5% in 2007), whereas fewer provincial government clients requested Advice in preparing reports (19% vs. 24% in 2007).

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### *Satisfaction with the Requested Services*

- Similar to 2007, provincial government clients reported 100% satisfaction with respect to each service or information request from BC Assessment in 2009.
- Provincial government clients indicated they were 100% (vs. 95% in 2007) satisfied with the quality of service they received in 2009, including 62% who indicated that they were “very satisfied”.
- In all but two instances, staff received an agreement rating of 100% on all measures of staff performance.
- In 2009, BC Assessment achieved an overall composite score of **99.4%**.

## 1.4 Conclusions

The survey results of BC Assessment provincial government clients indicate that satisfaction levels with the services provided remain very high, confirming the favourable results reported in previous surveys. Almost all clients participating in the survey are satisfied with the overall performance of BC Assessment and the organization’s staff. For the first time, satisfaction ratings for various service and information requests made by clients reached 100% in all cases. Satisfaction with staff performance is also very positive, as provincial clients reported 100% satisfaction in 7 of 9 aspects of staff performance.

Satisfaction with the quality of service provided by BC Assessment also hit 100% in 2009, exceeding the 95% target established in the BC Assessment Service Plan. Additionally for the 2009 survey, BC Assessment included a Composite Score designed to measure overall satisfaction with the information and services provided by the organization. As expected, the Composite Score reached a near-unanimous result of 99.4%. These results are particularly encouraging, given the potential challenges associated with a change in policy governing property assessments in 2008.

Notable in 2009 is the overall increase in information requests from provincial government clients and, specifically, requests for information on policies/legislation and legal services. For BC Assessment staff, this translates into increased business activity and a greater strain on staff resources. Based on 2009 results, it would appear that BC Assessment staff have effectively responded to the challenge.

## SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Sample Selection

The survey design consisted of an online and telephone survey with provincial government clients who conduct business with BC Assessment on a regular basis. The database for the survey was provided by BC Assessment and included 79 eligible randomly selected clients from the provincial government, Crown Corporations, and related agencies that regularly use BC Assessment services and information.

### 2.2 Survey Approach

All clients were sent an introductory email advising them of the BC Assessment survey, and requesting their participation. Within one week of the initial email, each client was sent another email that included a link to the survey. BC Assessment's toll-free number and the contact information for the Manager, Audit and Performance were listed at the end of the survey for reference should clients have any questions. A total of 54 clients (68% of the sample) completed the survey during the period of April 7 and 28, 2009.

### 2.3 Data Analysis and Reporting

The margin of error for a sample size of 54 is at most  $\pm 7.6$  percent, 19 times out of 20. In reporting the survey findings, unless otherwise stated, percentages used in the report are based on calculations excluding "Don't know/ Not applicable" responses. As well, throughout the survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or satisfaction with a number of issues. In each instance, the rating system used was a four-point scale, with 4 representing the highest positive rating, and 1 the lowest rating. Percentages that are used to summarize the ratings are the sum of the positive ratings (4 + 3). Calculations of percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole percentage.

### 2.4 Sample Characteristics

BC Assessment provided a list of potential contacts from among the various provincial government agencies and organizations that conduct business with BC Assessment. After editing and cleaning the data file, a total of 79 valid contacts were identified for the 2009 survey. Exclusions from the sample were the result of incorrect or invalid contact

**SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY**

information, or records that were found to be duplicates. Tabled below is the number of completed surveys for both 2007 and 2009.

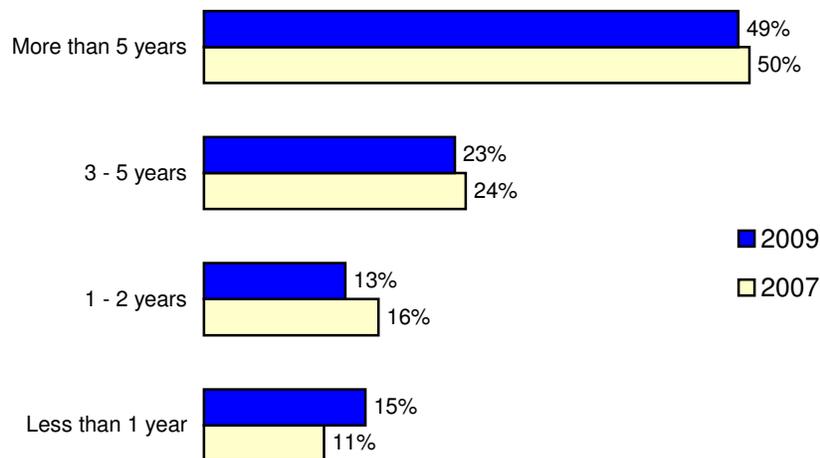
**Table 1:  
Response by Client Organization (2009 & 2007)**

Client Organization	2009	2007
	Completions	Completions
Ministry of the Government	52	37
Commission, Board, Other	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>39</b>

A total of 54 surveys were completed in 2009 for a valid response rate of 68% and a margin of error of ±7.6 percent, based on a 95% confidence level. These results are similar to those attained in 2007, where a sample of 57 eligible respondents were identified for the survey. The vast majority of respondents are provincial government employees.

To provide some insight as to the experience respondents have working with BC Assessment, close to half (49%) have been in contact with BC Assessment for more than 5 years, down slightly from 2007 (see Figure 1). Having this depth of experience helps to improve the quality of the results.

**Figure 1: Length of Time in Contact with BC Assessment**



**SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY**

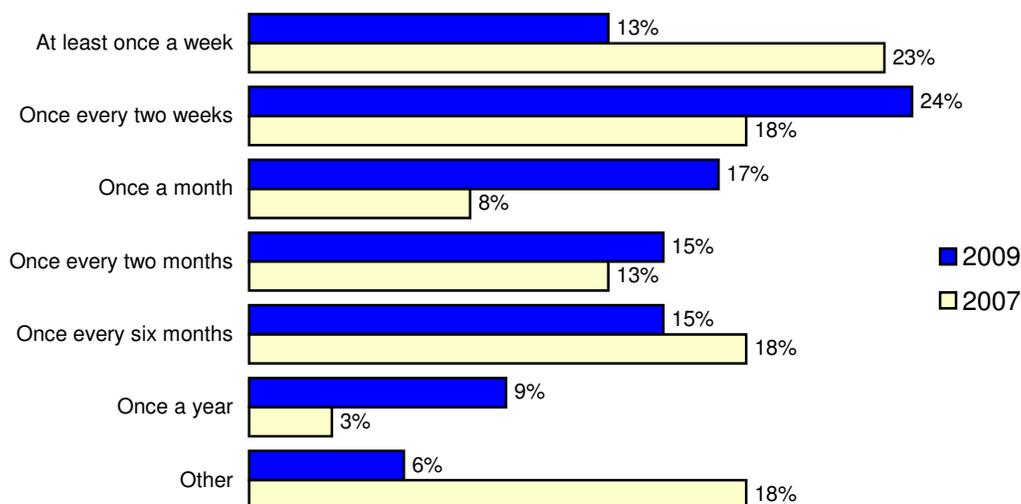
## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

### 3.1 Contact with BC Assessment

***More than half (54%) of provincial government clients are in contact with BC Assessment at least once per month***

As shown in Figure 2, more than half (54% vs. 49% in 2007) of respondents contact BC Assessment at least once a month, including 24% (vs. 18% in 2007) who make contact at least once every two weeks. In other words, while frequency of contact has dropped on a weekly basis, it has increased on a monthly basis. The “other” responses that did not identify a specific frequency included those clients who contacted BC Assessment only during specific periods pertaining to particular projects or reporting cycles.

**Figure 2: Frequency of Contact with BC Assessment**



As detailed in Table 2, more than 4 in 5 respondents in 2009 (83% v. 97% in 2007) indicated that the telephone was the method they use most often – either first or second – to contact BC Assessment staff. In contrast to 2007, email communication (44% vs. 34% in 2007) supplanted telephone communication (35% vs. 50%) as the first method of contact for provincial government clients in 2009. In-person communication also increased since 2007, as did contact through the BC Assessment website.

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

Table 2: Method of Contact with BC Assessment						
Method	Combined Total*		First Method		Second Method	
	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007
Telephone	83%	97%	35%	50%	48%	47%
Email	64%	58%	44%	34%	20%	24%
In-person	34%	29%	15%	11%	19%	18%
BC Assessment Website	13%	11%	2%	3%	11%	8%
Other (BC Online / e-Value)	4%	3%	4%	--	--	3%

\* Totals exceed 100% due to multiple responses

As reported in 2007, the vast majority of respondents (92% in both survey years) said it was clear or easy to determine who they needed to contact at BC Assessment when requesting services or information in 2009. This is supported by the experienced nature of the client group.

### 3.2 Services / Information Used or Requested

*A different pattern of service/information requests appeared in 2009, perhaps driven by changes in policy governing property assessments in 2008*

Clients were asked what service or information they use or request most often from BC Assessment. Based on their combined responses (i.e., services/information used first, second and third most often), more than two-thirds of respondents (67% vs. 47% in 2007) said they requested Assessment information/ Specific assessments/ Data advice, while requests for Policies and Legislation nearly doubled to 51% (vs. 26% in 2007). Requests for Legal services also increased significantly in 2009 (14% vs. 5% in 2007), whereas fewer provincial government clients requested Advice/ Assistance in preparing reports (19% vs. 24% in 2007). A different pattern of service/information requests appeared in 2009, perhaps driven by changes in policy governing property assessments in 2008.

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

<b>Table 3: Service / Information Used or Requested from BC Assessment</b>								
<b>Service / Information</b>	<b>Combined Total*</b>		<b>First</b>		<b>Second</b>		<b>Third</b>	
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>
Assessment information / Specific assessments / Data advice	67%	47%	39%	34%	22%	14%	6%	--
Policies and legislation	51%	26%	29%	16%	15%	11%	7%	--
Advice / Assistance in preparing reports / Information releases	19%	24%	8%	18%	7%	5%	4%	--
Financial and performance information	10%	8%	8%	8%	--	--	2%	--
Agricultural and forestry assessment	2%	5%	2%	5%	--	--	--	--
Legal services	14%	5%	10%	5%	4%	--	--	--
Appeal process / Interpretation of Board / Panel decisions	4%	5%	--	3%	4%	--	--	3%
Service plan report	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	--	--	--
Other (incl. Exempt Status 2007)	8%	19%	4%	8%	2%	8%	2%	3%

\* Totals based on all responses for each service/information; totals may not add due to rounding

When asked what other services they would like BC Assessment to offer, one respondent suggested the provision of an “online retrieval system of historical data”.

### 3.3 Satisfaction with Requested Services

***Satisfaction with the services and information requested from BC Assessment was 100% in 2009***

As shown in Table 4, clients reported 100% satisfaction with respect to each specific service or information request from BC Assessment in 2009. These results are fractionally higher than the 2007 survey, yet those respondents who indicated they were “very satisfied” is somewhat lower for most of the service and information requests in 2009. It should also be noted that the number of clients requesting services/information is small,

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

other than requests for the top two services/information (Assessment Information and Policies and Legislation).

**Table 4: Satisfaction with Service Requests from BC Assessment**

Service or Information	Total Satisfaction*		Very Satisfied		Satisfied	
	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007
Assessment information / Specific assessments / Data advice (n=40)	100%	100%	47%	67%	61%	33%
Policies and legislation (n=28)	100%	90%	60%	80%	44%	10%
Advice / Assistance in preparing reports / Information releases (n=7)	100%	89%	80%	33%	20%	56%
Financial and performance information (n=5)	100%	100%	40%	67%	60%	33%
Agricultural and forestry assessment (n=1)	100%	100%	100%	100%	--	--
Legal services (n=9)	100%	100%	67%	100%	33%	--
Appeal process / Interpretation of Board / Panel decisions (n=2)	100%	100%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Service plan report (n=1)	100%	100%	50%	--	50%	100%
Other (incl. Exempt Status 2007) (n=1)	100%	100%	33%	71%	67%	29%

\* Combined agreement (4 + 3), where 4="Strongly agree" and 1="Strongly disagree"

When asked if there was a better way for BC Assessment to deliver services and information requested by clients, 82% (v. 86% in 2007) said that the current delivery method works well. A small number (6) of provincial government clients felt BC Assessment could improve the delivery of services and information, and offered the following comments and suggestions:

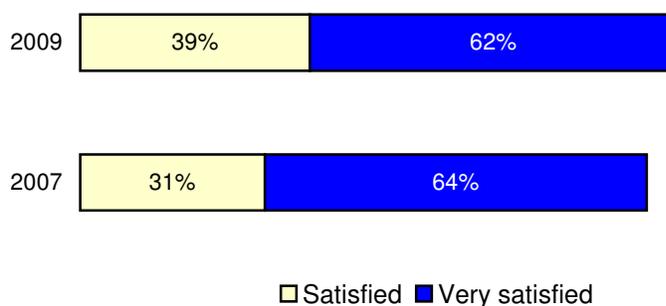
- *An updated contact list for the individual offices would be helpful*
- *Consistency of delivery regarding faxes and emails from all staff*
- *It would seem more efficient in some instances to have direct access to some of the appeal/assessment information instead of having to go through head office*
- *Provision of data for free to provincial ministries*
- *The dialogue is improving but now more openness in thinking is needed*
- *Through a more user-friendly website*

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

***100% of clients were satisfied with the quality of service they received in 2009***

Clients were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of service provided by BC Assessment. As shown in Figure 3, 100% (vs. 95% in 2007) of provincial government clients indicated that were satisfied with the quality of service they received in 2009, including 62% who indicated that they were “very satisfied”. This is the first year in which no respondent felt “dissatisfied” with the quality of service provided by BC Assessment.

**Figure 3: Satisfaction with the Quality of Service**



*Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding*

### 3.4 Satisfaction with Staff

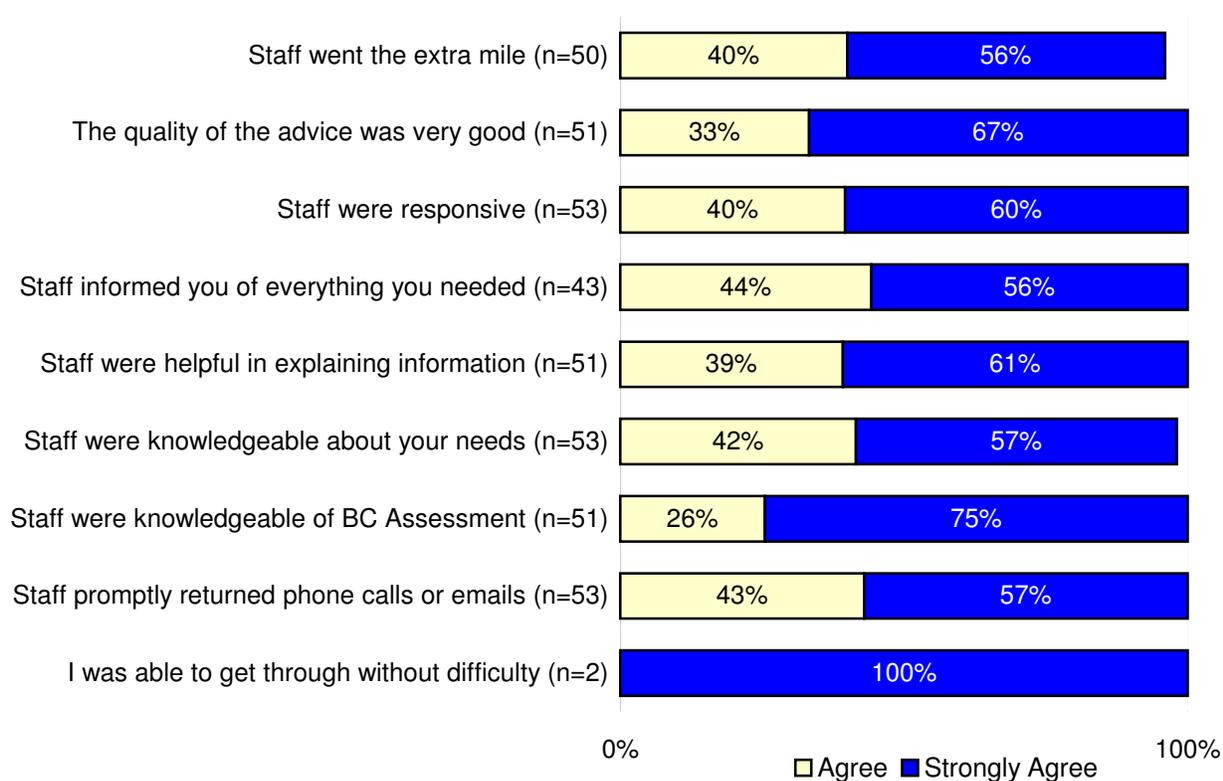
***The vast majority of clients are satisfied with the level of service provided by BC Assessment staff***

In order to gauge client satisfaction with the service provided by BC Assessment staff, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with nine measures related to staff performance (up from five measures in 2007). In all but two instances, staff received an agreement rating of 100%, including a majority of clients who said they “strongly agree” on all measures. These results are particularly encouraging, given the potential

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

challenges associated with the change in policy governing property assessments in 2008 (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Agreement with Aspects of BC Assessment Staff Services**



*Totals may exceed 100% due to rounding*

Two respondents who felt that BC Assessment staff did not go the “extra mile” provided the following comments.

- *I think that a culture change is required*
- *I think it is an issue when things don't go as expected. It is sometimes treated with a 'don't point your finger at us' attitude instead of working together to find a solution*

## SECTION 3: SURVEY RESULTS

### 3.5 Composite Score (Q13 – 21, Q31) & Final Comments

***BC Assessment achieved an overall composite score of 99.4% in 2009!***

As part of the 2009 survey, BC Assessment identified a “composite score” designed to measure overall client satisfaction with BC Assessment. The measure is an aggregated total of all positive responses (4 + 3) divided by the total number of responses (1...4) for Questions 13 – 21 plus Question 31. In 2009, the composite score based on the responses of 54 provincial government clients was **99.4%**.

Respondents were asked for general comments or suggestions for BC Assessment. On the whole, the comments provided are positive and reflect a genuine appreciation for the services offered by BC Assessment staff.

- *Everything I receive is always quality and received in a timely manner*
- *BC Assessment is an important and valuable partner in developing property tax exemptions for <Name>*
- *All of my dealings have been great. Everyone is very knowledgeable and helpful.*
- *Over the years, greatly appreciate consistent collegiality and strong knowledge base Know who your clients are!*
- *The quality of the website is very good!*
- *My staff have had issues around particular areas. I think they need to work on the quality of their advice on data services.*
- *Know who your clients are!*
- *The system is not as user friendly as I suspect it could be*

## Appendices

APPENDIX A: STATISTICAL TABLES (pdf)

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT (pdf)