



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN 2008

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Introduction to the Environment Scan

The Ontario Service Safety Alliance produces an Environmental Scan annually to review events that may affect Ontario's service sector. Observations are grouped according to the following categories: Economic; Social & Demographic; Legal & Policy; Technology & Trends; and Health & Safety. Later sections look at the possible impacts of these observations on workplace health & safety, and OSSA's capacity to reduce workplace injuries.

Many of the observations in this document are drawn from OSSA's advisory committees (meetings took place in February, 2008). References to committees have been abbreviated as follows: Retail, Wholesale & Office Committee (RWOAC); Restaurant & Foodservice Advisory Committee (RFSAC); Tourism & Hospitality Advisory Committee (THAC); and Vehicle Sales & Services Advisory Committee (VSSAC). Where other external sources have been used, the source is given in parentheses.

Economic Observations

General Economic Indicators

- Real GDP in Canada grew 2.7% in 2007, a slight decline from 2006. The main sectors contributing to growth were finance and insurance, retail and wholesale and construction (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, March 3, 2008).
- Real GDP growth of 1.5% is predicted for Ontario in 2008 ("2008 Ontario Budget," Conference Board of Canada, March 26, 2008).

Restaurant & Foodservices Economic Indicators

- In 2007, foodservice sales reached \$57.7 billion, an increase of 3.6%. A 3.3% increase is predicted for 2008 (Canadian Restaurant & Foodservices Associations, "Foodservice market share shrinks in 2007," *CRFA website*, March 17, 2008).
- Rising food prices are causing unrest around the world. Since mid 2007, food prices have risen 40% on average (Jonathan M. Katz, "Haitians storm presidential palace in riots over food prices," *globeandmail.com*, April 8, 2008).
- Due to global warming, the world's agricultural production is expected to shrink by 16% by 2020 (The Associated Press, "World food prices to rise, report suggests," *CBC website*, Dec 4, 2007).

Retail & Wholesale Economic Indicators

- In 2007, Canadians spent over \$413 billion on retail goods and services (a 5.8% increase over 2006) (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, April 9, 2008).
- Wholesalers had a solid year in 2007, selling over \$520 billion worth of goods, 4.7% more than in 2006 (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, February 19, 2008).

Tourism & Hospitality Economic Indicators

- Canadians spent \$26.9 billion outside Canada in 2007 (15.5% more than in 2006). Canada's travel deficit with the US was \$7.1 billion in 2007, \$2.8 billion more than in 2006 (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, Feb 28 2008).
- In 2007, international tourism spending in Canada decreased by 3.2%. The number of same-day and overnight trips to Canada declined as a result of higher gas prices, a stronger Canadian dollar, passport regulations and a weaker US economy (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, March 27, 2008).
- Canada's tourism GDP increased by 3.7% in 2007 (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, March 27, 2008).
- A record number of Ontario resorts, inns and hotels are for sale. Some resorts are being turned into condos. A number of smaller inns and motels are being bought by new Canadians who may not have the knowledge to maintain customer service or health & safety standards (THAC).
- The decline in US travelers has affected the theatre industry, but the golf industry remains unaffected (THAC).
- China has not yet granted Canada approved destination status, although it has granted this status to 134 other countries, including the U.S. (Aileen McCabe, "Canada may look to WTO to gain approved destination status in China," *Vancouver Sun*, Jan 7, 2008).

Vehicle Sales & Service Economic Indicators

- Sales of motor vehicles, parts and services increase by 3.6% between 2006 and 2007. Used vehicles sales were strongest, while new vehicles sales were weak (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, April 9, 2008).
- Vehicle businesses that operate illegally are undercutting legitimate businesses (VSSAC).
- The downturn in the US economy is affecting some VSS businesses negatively (VSSAC).
- Drivers are still reluctant to put claims into insurance companies, meaning decreased repair business. Insurance companies have reduced the number of approved repair locations (VSSAC).

Labour Issues

- Service sector businesses are having difficulty finding and retaining staff (due to the aging workforce, but also the draws of high-paying jobs in Alberta and the Olympics in BC) (all committees).
- Many companies are using creative recruitment strategies (e.g., radio ads, bonuses, employee referrals, rewards customized for different age groups), looking to other countries for workers (though there are challenges associated with hiring foreign workers, especially for seasonal industries), or targeting mature or disabled workers (all committees).
- Vehicle businesses are importing workers from other countries, but Canada's regulations on foreign-trained professionals make it difficult for them to qualify as apprentices (VSSAC).

- There has been an increase in the number of automotive apprentices; the problem is getting employers engaged in the apprenticeship process (VSSAC).
- The Conference Board of Canada estimates that by 2030 Ontario will experience a labour shortfall of 560,000 workers due to baby boomers retiring and slow population growth (Conference Board statistics, quoted in Daniel Girard, “Looming labour void ‘will hit like tsunami,’” *thestar.com*, Sept 27, 2007).
- Tourism employment increased by 3.2% in 2007, the biggest job growth since 2000 (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, March 27, 2008).
- In the next 9 years, the foodservice industry will need 181,000 more employees. During this period the number of people aged 18-24 will continue to decrease. Almost half of foodservice employees come from this age group (“Labour Shortage Solutions,” *Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association website*, Feb 22, 2008).

Canadian Dollar

- The strong Canadian dollar has encouraged Canadians to travel outside Canada and discouraged Americans from coming here (THAC).
- The strong Canadian dollar has slowed cross border trucking, as Americans aren’t buying Canadian materials (VSSAC).
- In some cases, the strong Canadian dollar has increased profit margins for retailers. Some retailers have changed prices to due to the pressure of cross-border shopping (RWOAC).

Gas & Oil Prices

- High gas and oil prices have reduced customers’ disposable income (RFSAC).
- The price of gas is reducing the amount of driving people do, and also reducing repair business (VSSAC).
- Some retailers are changing transport methods (using more rail) due to cost of fuel (RWOAC).

Social & Demographic Observations

Service Sector Characteristics

- Small or family-run businesses are prevalent across the service sector (MOL, *Sector Plan*, 2008).
- The restaurant industry is seeing increasing franchise growth (MOL, *Sector Plan – Restaurants*, 2008).
- The Ministry of Labour noted a trend of mergers and consolidations in the retail and wholesale industries (MOL, *Sector Plan*, 2008).

Labour Force Characteristics

- The service sector includes many young, part-time and seasonal workers. Staff turnover is high (MOL *Sector Plan*, 2008).

- There is an increasing number of vulnerable workers in the workforce (e.g. young, aging, and immigrant workers) (RFSAC, THAC, VSSAC).
- Employees of diverse ages and ethnicities find it a challenge to communicate and work together (RFSAC, RWOAC).
- Older workers are staying in the workforce longer. The number of individuals aged 55-64 who were either employed or looking for work more than doubled between 1976 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, "Study: Participation of older workers," *The Daily*, Aug 24, 2007).
- The percentage of the population over 65 is increasing as follows: 12.7% in 2001; 14.4% in 2011; 17.9% in 2021 (Statistics Canada, "Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2000-2026," Cat. No. 91-520, quoted on the Human Resources and Social Development Canada website).
- Many students are learning health & safety in high school (RWOAC), but not all of them are confident about applying their knowledge or asserting their rights (VSSAC).
- In the office sector, there is a growth in home office work (MOL, *Sector Plan*, 2008).
- There is a trend toward employing temporary workers in the office sector (MOL, *Sector Plan*, 2008).

Labour Force Diversity

- It is difficult for Ministry of Labour inspectors to communicate with non-English speaking business owners or enforce health & safety legislation (VSSAC).
- The 2006 Census reported more than 200 different ethnic origins. Visible minorities number over 5 million and account for 16.2% of Canada's population (Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities, place of work and mode of transportation," *The Daily*, April 2, 2008).
- In 2006, South Asians surpassed Chinese as the largest visible minority group in Canada (Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities, place of work and mode of transportation," *The Daily*, April 2, 2008).
- The 2006 Census indicates that one-fifth of the population has a mother tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Immigration, citizenship, language, mobility and migration," *The Daily*, Dec 4, 2007).

Location of Home & Work

- According to the 2006 Census, Canadians are commuting farther to work than in 2001. Ontario workers had the longest median commute at 8.7 km (Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities, place of work and mode of transportation," *The Daily*, April 2, 2008).
- In the search for an affordable home, some commuters (called exurbanites) are going beyond the traditional 905 suburbs to 519 area codes, such as Cambridge (Bert Archer, "Forget the 416," *Toronto Life*, June 2008).
- During the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of people who work in suburban municipalities (Statistics Canada "2006 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities, place of work and mode of transportation," *The Daily*, April 2, 2008). There is

also a trend in Toronto toward “reverse commuting” (living in the city and commuting to the suburbs for work). (Amy Brown-Bowers, “Reverse commuters reflect shift in land use,” *The Globe and Mail*, Dec 11, 2007).

Legal & Policy Observations

Recent Legislation

- Minimum wage increased on March 31, 2008 and will increase again in 2009 and 2010 (“Ontario Minimum Wage Increases 2007 to 2010,” *Ontario Ministry of Labour website*, Jan 31, 2008). According to some advisory committee members, the increasing minimum wages may mean that fewer employees will be doing the same amount of work (RWOAC, RFSAC).
- A new Ontario public holiday, “Family Day” was announced for Feb 18, 2008 (“Family Day a Public Holiday under Employment Standards Act, 2000,” *Ontario Ministry of Labour website*, Jan 30, 2008). Many advisory committee members found that the new holiday cost them money and for some retail chains it led to inconsistencies in which locations were open on the holiday.
- The Law Society of Upper Canada will now regulate and license independent paralegals (Bob Aaron, “Paralegal licensing is good news,” *thestar.com*, April 21, 2007). According to advisory committee members, this change may affect claims management.
- The new *Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005* came into force on Aug 23, 2007. The act will help to professionalize this industry. Practitioners will now be licensed (“Private Security & Investigative Services,” *Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services website*, Oct 3, 2007).
- The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* establishes and enforces standards of accessibility. The customer service portion of this standard was implemented Jan 1, 2008. Any company with at least one employee must comply with the standard by Jan 1, 2012. In future, accessibility standards will be implemented regarding transportation, information and communications, built environment, and employment (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services website, April 9, 2008).
- New regulations were announced to protect consumers from unsafe products (CBC News, “Ottawa strengthens outdated product safety legislation,” *CBC website*, April 8, 2008).
- The GST was reduced from 6 to 5% on January 1, 2008 (The Canadian Press, “GST leaves some retailers scrambling,” *CBC website*, Jan 4, 2008).
- As of July 1, 2007, the 8-hour, time-weighted average noise level that workers can be exposed to was reduced from 90 to 85 decibels (Adam Neave, “Canadian OHS Laws in 2007 – Year in Review,” *OHSLAW Report*, Dec 2007). According to the VSS Advisory Committee, effective noise testing is a challenge.
- As part of the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, retail displays of tobacco products have been banned as of May 31, 2008 (www.e-laws.gov.on.ca).

Proposed Legislation & Policy

- The city of Toronto is proposing a new bylaw on Environmental Reporting and Disclosure (Toronto Public Health, *Environmental Reporting and Disclosure*, January, 2008).
- Health Minister Tony Clement announced a new working group to look at reducing salt in food products (CBC News, “Health minister announces sodium reduction group,” *CBC website*, Oct 26, 2008).
- Proposed Environment Canada legislation will require collision repair shops to switch from solvent-borne to waterborne basecoats by Jan 1, 2009. Facilities may need to upgrade equipment and training (FAQs, *VOC Compliance.com*, April 10, 2008). According to the VSS Advisory Committee, this legislation may cause some repair shops to either shut down or operate illegally.
- A Minister’s action group has made recommendations on protecting vulnerable young people in the workplace. The government will work with the WSIB, OHSCO, and other partners to develop programs to prevent young workers from being injured in the workplace (“McGuinty Government Protecting the Health and Safety of Young Workers,” *Ontario Ministry of Labour website*, July 18, 2007).
- A review is being conducted to determine the impact of requiring compulsory certification for skilled trades that are now voluntary (“Compulsory Certification Review,” *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities website*, Feb 5, 2008).
- The McGuinty government is looking into possible legislation banning the use of electronic devices while driving (Kerry Gillespie, “Premier now open to car cellphone ban,” *thestar.com*, May 27, 2008).

Legislation & Policy Outside Ontario

- Passports are required for air travel within North America (as of Jan 2007). For land and sea travel to the U.S., proof of citizenship was required as of Jan 2008 and passports will be required by June 2009 (at the earliest) (“Traveller’s corner,” *Passport Canada website*, Jan 11, 2008).
- Corporate clients will likely implement new policies on working alone due to new BC legislation on working alone or in isolation. Eliminating alone work requires more staff and resources (THAC, RWOAC).
- A Quebec company has been convicted under Bill C-45 after an employee was killed using an unguarded machine (Norm Keith, “Bill C-45 Alert: First Organization Convicted of New Occupational health and safety Criminal Negligence Offence,” *OHS&LAW NEWSFLASH*, Feb 2008).
- In the U.S., some employers have been held liable for employees who get in accidents while using cellphones for business use while driving. As a result, many employers are prohibiting cellphone use while driving (Donalee Moulton, “Employers liable for employees’ cellphone use,” *National Post*, Feb 22, 2008).
- In BC, police have launched a program to catch drunk drivers at late-night fast food drive-thrus (CBC News, “Drunks at drive-thru find breathalyzer on menu,” *CBC website*, Jan 4, 2008).

Ontario Ministry Issues

OSSA's advisory committee members report these experiences:

- The Ministry of Labour seems to be putting more emphasis on issuing individual tickets for health and safety violations (RFSAC).
- The Ministry of Labour's direction on foot protection is not consistent (RWOAC).
- The Ministry of Labour has been writing orders on MSD hazards and continuing to target high risk businesses (RWOAC).
- The Ministry of Labour hasn't targeted the staffing agencies that are failing to train and protect temporary employees. Bill 161 (regulation of temporary agencies) hasn't gone through (RWOAC).
- The Ministry of the Environment has been inspecting some service sector workplaces (RWOAC, RFSAC).

Technology & Trend Observations

Employee Use of Technology

OSSA advisory committee members made the following observations about technology in their workplaces:

- Employees are getting MSDs from personal computer use (RWOAC).
- There is widespread use of handheld electronics (PDAs, cellphones) for email and texting (either business or personal) (RWOAC, THAC).
- Employers are using internet/social networking sites to check up on employees or investigate claims fraud (RWOAC).
- Some young workers want to wear their ipods or answer personal cellphones while working. Some managers allow this (THAC).

Using Technology to Conduct Business

- Many businesses (39% of those polled) plan to increase video and audio conferencing, while another 28% plan to maintain current usage. Using this technology reduces travel costs and increases employee quality of life, as well as having a positive effect on the environment (Canadian Tourism Commission website, "Businesses planning less travel," Feb 5, 2008).
- Online sales and internet hotel reservations are increasing (THAC).
- Business websites need to be compatible with social networking sites, cellphones and palm pilots instead of just computers (THAC).
- In future, retailers will likely use more mobile marketing and allow payment through cellphones (Ian Harvey & Mitchell Brown, *Canadian Retailer*, Jan/Feb, 2008, p. 48-49).

Risks of Technology

- In 2007, the loss or theft of personal data set a new record (Associated Press, "Personal data theft reaches record levels in 2007: group, CBC website, Jan 1, 2008).

- Retail store chat rooms are often targeted by unions (RWOAC).
- Some businesses are recognizing the dangers (and liabilities) of employees using cellphones while driving (RFSAC).

Technology in Vehicle Industries

- Technology for truckers going through customs has become more sophisticated (thumb print scans, license and criminal record checks) (VSSAC).
- New car technology is constantly changing (i.e. hybrids), making it difficult for technicians to keep up or even access repair information (VSSAC).
- The US is now using tire regulators to monitor tire air pressure, but there is uncertainty about whether this is mandatory in Canada (VSSAC).

Trends in Social Responsibility

- Many businesses are making an effort to be more environmentally friendly (e.g. recycling programs, reducing bags and packaging, decreasing lighting, green cleaning products, green ratings for hotels) (RWOAC, RFSAC, THAC).
- Companies are increasingly using Corporate Social Responsibility programs to attract both employees and investors (Peggy Cunningham, “It pays to be socially responsible,” *Financial Post*, Nov 12, 2007).

Health & Safety Observations

General Health and Safety Concerns

- A bad winter has led to increased motor vehicle accidents and slips and falls (RWOAC).
- Violence is a concern (everything from working alone to customers spitting on employees) (RWOAC).
- Office printers emit fine particles that may be a health hazard (“Office printers emit hazardous particles; CBC special report,” CBC website, Oct 22, 2008).

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

- MSD prevention has been an area of focus for Ontario’s health and safety system (e.g. OHSCO’s MSD guideline, MOL inspections). Many employers struggle with the complexity and scope of dealing with MSDs and don’t know where to start. There is a perception that addressing MSDs will be costly (all committees).
- MSDs are an issue for older workers in the vehicle sector, but often they do not report them. Younger workers are more likely to put in a claim for a work-related MSD, but they don’t always tell their employer ahead of time (VSSAC).

Health and Safety Programs

- Advisory committee businesses are looking for health and safety training that is brief and offers flexibility in how it can be delivered (RFSAC).

- Many advisory committee businesses have been implementing wellness programs (RWOAC).
- Assessing physical requirements of a job and hiring according to those requirements has reduced injuries for one retailer (RWOAC).

Aging Workers

- Aging workers are at increased risk of injury and sometimes require accommodation. Providing accommodation can be challenging (RWOAC).
- Aging workers are not always interested in health and safety; they just want to get the job done (RWOAC).

Health and Safety Risk Perception

- Almost half (46%) of businesses in the vehicle sector are not registered with the WSIB (RWOAC).
- Many service sector employers continue to view their businesses as low risk.
- Small businesses often do not give high priority to health and safety (VSSAC).

Major Hazards & Key Issues Identified by the Ministry of Labour

- Major hazards for office businesses are: ergonomics; strains, sprains and lifting; indoor air quality (including mould); violence in the workplace; stress; slips and falls; chemicals; machine guarding/lockout; contact with energized equipment; and material handling and storage of goods (MOL, *Sector Summary – Offices*, 2008).
- Key health and safety issues for office businesses include: motor vehicle accidents; employment of young workers; lack of knowledge of the *Act & Regulations*; temporary workforce (agencies); and lack of training (MOL, *Sector Summary – Offices*, 2008).
- Major hazards for restaurants are: slips and falls; mixers; electrical contact; heat stress; strains, sprains, and ergonomics; lifting and carrying; minimum age; and violence (MOL, *Sector Summary – Restaurants*, 2008).
- Key health and safety issues for restaurants include: motor vehicles accidents; employment of young workers; and the aging population (MOL, *Sector Summary – Restaurants*, 2008).
- Major hazards for retail businesses are: ergonomics and overexertion; material handling (increasing use of forklifts); material handling and storage of goods; slips and falls; use of ladders; electrical contact; being caught in machinery (meat grinders, dough mixers); machine guarding/lockout, WHIMIS, OELs, and carbon monoxide (propane powered equipment used in doors); working alone; and violence (MOL, *Sector Summary – Retail*, 2008).
- Key health and safety issues for retail include: employment of young workers; lack of knowledge of the *Act*; and lack of training (MOL, *Sector Summary – Retail*, 2008).
- Major hazards for tourism and hospitality businesses are: chemical handling/WHMIS; working safely with fuels; slips and falls; ultraviolet radiation (outside work); OELs; strains, sprains, and lifting (ergonomics); electrical contact, being caught in machinery; drowning; heat stress; operation of motorized recreational vehicles (snowmobiles, all

terrain vehicles); working in remote areas; and working alone (MOL, *Sector Summary – Tourism and Hospitality*, 2008).

- Key health and safety issues for tourism and hospitality include: motor vehicle accidents; employment of young workers; and lack of training (MOL, *Sector Summary – Tourism and Hospitality*, 2008).
- Major hazards for vehicle sales and service businesses are: lifting devices and hoists; improper blocking; vehicles moving in gear during repair; tire inflation and explosions; noise; solvents, OELs, DSRs, carbon monoxide, and isocyanates; falls from ladders or trucks, slips on floor; burns from exposure to flammables; and traffic control (especially within tow truck industry) (MOL, *Sector Summary – Vehicles Sales and Service*, 2008).
- Key health and safety issues for vehicle sales and service businesses include: motor vehicle accidents; lack of training; unloading of auto carriers; employment of young workers; lack of knowledge of the *Act*; Certificate of Qualification (MOL, *Sector Summary – Vehicles Sales and Service*, 2008).
- Major hazards for wholesalers are: slips and falls; moving vehicle traffic (lifting devices); falling materials; being caught in moving machinery (conveyors); carbon monoxide (propane power equipment used in doors); ergonomics (sprains, strains, lifting); heat stress; machine guarding; material handling; and ladder use (MOL, *Sector Summary – Wholesalers*, 2008).
- Key health and safety issues for wholesalers include: employment of young workers; temporary agency workers; and lack of training (MOL, *Sector Summary – Wholesalers*, 2008).

Impact of Observations on Workplace Health & Safety

Positive Impacts

- The fact that some businesses are turning to flexible training methods increases the chances that employees will receive health and safety training.
- The increased focus on MSDs within Ontario's health and safety system may help to reduce overall injury rates in Ontario.
- The increasing number of workplace wellness programs may have a positive effect on employee health and safety.
- Many students are learning about health and safety in the school system and are bringing this knowledge into the workplace.
- Ministry of Labour inspectors issuing tickets to employees may encourage them to comply with health and safety practices and wear PPE.
- Licensing for security personnel should ensure that they are better qualified to work safely and avoid injury.
- A trend within some companies toward banning the employees' use of cellphones while driving may increase driver safety and reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents.

Negative Impacts

- The increasing number of older employees in the workforce could result in higher injury rates. Older workers whose limitations are not accommodated could be at greater risk of injury.
- Vehicle sales and service businesses that are either operating underground or not registered with the WSIB are less likely to be forced to comply with health and safety legislation. Workers may be subjected to unsafe conditions, or receive little support if injured.
- Foreign-owned businesses may be unfamiliar with health and safety legislation, and may not provide employees with safe working conditions or training.
- Low risk perception prevents service sector employers from dealing with workplace hazards.
- High staff turnover makes service sector employers reluctant to invest in health and safety training for employees.
- Labour shortages resulting in understaffing may lead to higher workloads for employees and less time for health and safety training.
- Businesses that have been negatively affected by various economic factors may have less money to invest in health and safety.
- The number of vulnerable workers (such as older, immigrant, or temporary workers) is increasing. These workers are often at greater risk for injury.

- The use of handheld electronics (for either work or personal use) may be increasing the number of injuries caused by gripping, repetitive motions and awkward wrist postures. It is often difficult to determine whether an injury is work related.
- Workers who wear ipods or answer cellphones while at work are at greater risk of injury because they are distracted and less aware of their surroundings.

SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis looks at how OSSA is positioned to address the observations and to reduce injuries in the service sector.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our improved internal H&S program makes us a model for clients. • We have a comprehensive strategic plan to guide our next five years. • Our recent company reorganization has put us in a position to grow. • Our flexible H&S training options can meet many business needs. • We have products to help the service sector address MSDs. • Our new CRM is improving our ability to serve clients efficiently. • We are working on a comprehensive emergency and pandemic plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are unable to reach all 81,000 member firms with existing staff and funding. • We cannot identify firms operating illegally or without WSIB registration. • We need a resource for helping clients to establish a safety culture. • Many service sector businesses are still not aware of OSSA. • Our products and services are not available in other languages. • Our budget and resources for online products and services is limited. • We do not have enough resources to support our growing involvement in H&S-related research.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can promote H&S as a method of staff recruitment and retention. • We can help our members to present H&S as a profit centre. • Our new safety groups allow us to reach more clients (especially high risk clients) and have a greater impact on injuries. • A greater emphasis on trade association partnerships will give us more access to, and influence with, our members. • Increased cooperation with H&S system partners will give us more resources for less investment. • Our custom product business has expanded greatly, with potential for more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not always have enough people or resources to meet growing client demands for consulting, products, and services. • Client pressure to reduce H&S training time could reduce training quality.

Strategic Response

In late 2007, OSSA completed a comprehensive, five-year strategic plan based on input from our stakeholders. Our vision for the next five years is “A health and safety culture where workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses are unacceptable and preventable, and are eliminated.” Our mission is to raise health and safety awareness, provide knowledge and services, and build partnerships to support the Ontario service sector.

Over the next five years, OSSA will pursue the following strategic directions:

- Develop and leverage strategic prevention partnerships to effect positive change in the cultural values and behaviours in boardrooms and workplaces).
- Utilize a risk-based approach to allocate resources and align our products and services.
- Be the voice of health and safety for prevention research, programs and services.
- Continue to pursue operational excellence and efficiency that sustains our long-term viability and enables us to extend our reach.
- Sustain a healthy and safe culture and environment for our staff and visitors that will serve as a model for others.

To better support our strategic directions, OSSA commissioned an organizational roles review in early 2008 and initiated a reorganization based on the results. We are now in a position to make efficient use of our existing resources and expand our organization to better meet the needs of Ontario’s growing service sector workforce.

Internally, we have improved OSSA’s health and safety program in order to be a model for our clients. We have become more involved in health and safety research relevant to our sector. We are spending more on time building partnerships with other safety organizations and trade associations, which included starting up several industry specific safety groups.

OSSA has placed an increased priority on using technology to allow us to serve a greater number of clients more efficiently. In early 2008 we implemented a new Customer Relationship Management system. In addition, we have an e-solutions strategy and a plan to increase our online resources.

OSSA continues to develop consulting services, products, and training (including a growing custom product clientele) to meet the needs of clients, support Ministry of Labour initiatives, and generate a renewable revenue stream.