

Interest-Holder* Analysis of the
Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training

By

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1991

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*The word “interest-holder” replaces the word “stakeholder” in this report, except where cited from other sources. The word “stakeholder” has been identified as a colonist word that is insensitive to Indigenous populations (Reed, 2022, August 2). In the process of writing this report, several terms were tested such as “community” and “interested parties.” However, in the researchers’ practice in social services in Canada, the term “interest-holder” is gaining popularity as a substitute for “stakeholder” at the time of writing this report.

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Statement of Positionality

The researcher has served as the Chief Executive Officer at the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT) since June 2016. Before ASPECT, she has worked in nonprofit leadership positions since 2004 and for nonprofit organizations since 1998.

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Glossary

ASPECT	The Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training is a member-based umbrella organization representing employment service provider organizations throughout the province of BC.
BSC	The Balanced Scorecard framework was created by Dr. Robert Kaplan of Harvard University and Dr. David Norton (1992). It is a framework in which four perspectives of an organization can be considered at once: customer, internal business, innovation, and learning, and financial (p. 72).
Contractors	Organizations contracted by the governments of British Columbia and Canada to deliver employment services and wraparound supports.
Interest-Holder	The word “interest-holder” replaces the word “stakeholder” in this report, except where cited from other sources. The word “stakeholder” has been identified as a colonist word that is insensitive to Indigenous populations (Reed, 2022, August 2). In the process of writing this report, several terms were tested such as “community” and “interested parties.” However, in the researchers’ practice in social services in Canada, the term “interest-holder” is gaining popularity as a substitute for “stakeholder” at the time of writing this report.
ESP	Employment Service Provider. ESPs are organizations contracted by the provincial and federal governments to deliver services and supports within their communities and are members of ASPECT.
CDP	<p>Acronym for “Career Development Professional” or “Career Development Practitioner.” Further, the Canadian Career Development Foundation released the following definition in 2021:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Career Development Professionals help individuals navigate learning and employment transitions across the lifespan. They help individuals to manage learning and employment, acquire and enhance skills, seek and create employment, and access community services that support personal and professional growth in an increasingly complex, interdependent and changing world.</i></p> <p>(Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2021, p. 3)</p>

Workforce Development	Refers to strategies, policies, and programs aimed at enhancing individuals' skills, employability, and overall readiness to participate in the workforce effectively. It is designed to prepare individuals for employment, help them acquire new skills, and improve their prospects of finding and retaining suitable jobs. It is a vital component of economic growth and prosperity, playing a crucial role in addressing skills gaps, promoting social mobility, and supporting economic resilience in the face of technological advancements and economic changes.
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Executive Summary

Introduction

For 33 years, ASPECT has advocated, offered professional development, and provided leadership in the employment service sector. Representing 97 organizations with government contracts, it has contended with declining membership since 2011 due to contract changes, resulting in operational deficits and dependence on a 2008 surplus. This research and report offer ASPECT's board an updated interest-holder analysis to inform strategic, business, and operational planning amid membership and viability challenges.

Methodology and Methods

After a literature review of the stakeholder theory and the Balanced Scorecard framework, the researcher conducted one-on-one virtual interviews with 13 sector leaders. These leaders represent diverse agencies across BC's urban, rural, and remote areas. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed into five themes: advocacy, learning, connection, building, and the future of employment services.

Key Findings

Key informants noted that ASPECT meets many of their needs and is well respected by its members, government representatives, and others in the sector who are not ASPECT members and other provincial and federal umbrella organizations. However, there are several opportunities to improve and build on ASPECT's current position by refining its advocacy work and expanding its professional development offerings, all while providing members with opportunities to connect. Four themes within the data emerged – advocacy, learning, connecting, and building. Some of these themes emerged in all perspectives as determined by the number of times they are repeated throughout the interviews.

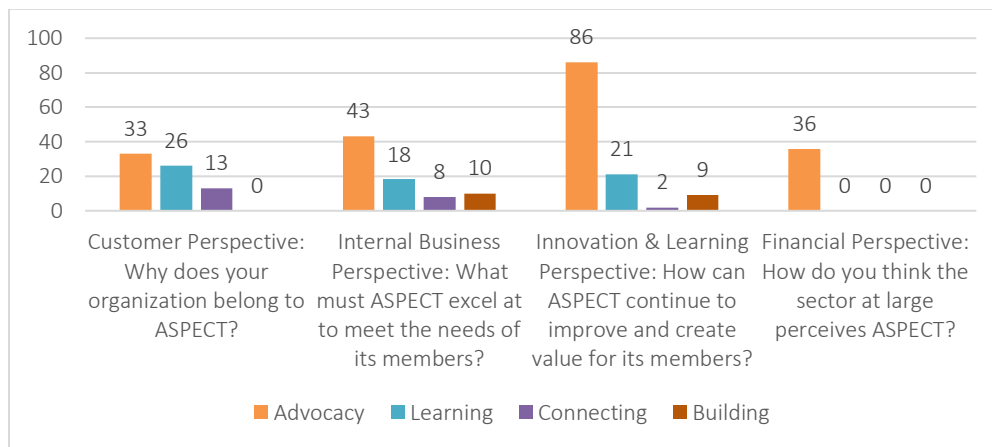


TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF THEMES MOST IMPORTANT TO KEY INFORMANTS – TIMES MENTIONED

Recommendations

Creating a centralized hub for member updates and conducting issues-focused surveys of its members can improve ASPECT's advocacy services. To expand its professional development services, ASPECT must look for outside funding to invest in staff through a learning specialist. Networking services can improve by expanding staff, topic-targeted virtual meetings, and regional events can bolster sector connections.

Conclusion

This interest-holder analysis guided ASPECT's strategic planning in 2022, covering customer, internal business, innovation and learning, and financial perspectives. ASPECT's roles as advocate, professional development provider, and network facilitator align with member expectations, with additional resources needed to fund long-term growth.

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to conduct an updated interest-holder analysis for the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT) and present the findings to the ASPECT board of directors to inform their strategic planning goals.

For 33 years, ASPECT has advocated for the employment services sector in British Columbia. ASPECT members are organizations that deliver government-funded contracts for pre-employment services and supports (About Us, n.d.). Since 2008, ASPECT has struggled to be viable and is at risk of dissolution. This project provides an updated interest-holder analysis to the ASPECT board of directors to inform future strategic and business planning. According to Bryson et al. (2011, p. 99) and Bryson (2007, p. 22), understanding key stakeholders' needs and the political landscape is necessary for good strategic planning. Further, Freeman (2010, p.34) suggests that a comprehensive stakeholder analysis is vital to future strategic or business planning legitimacy, deepening understanding of strategic goals and tasks.

General Problem

There are two significant threats to ASPECT impacting its future viability: declining membership and a changing contracting environment. An interest-holder analysis is necessary to better understand this environment and inform how ASPECT can thrive for the next 33 years.

Starting with 35 members in 1990 and ballooning to 188 in 2011, ASPECT now has 97 (Nichol, 2022). ASPECT supports its operations through membership dues, funding from research projects, revenues from an annual conference, and professional development workshops and webinars. Despite these efforts, ASPECT continues to struggle financially and is currently funding its operations through a 2008 contract slippage (ASPECT Business Plan 2018-2022). At current operating levels, ASPECT has enough capital to continue for 3-5 years.

The changing contracting environment is also impacting ASPECT's viability. Fewer lucrative employment service contracts for its members mean fewer members who maintain their membership in ASPECT. For example, a procurement process for the \$2.5 billion WorkBC contract in 2019 decreased prime contractors from 73 organizations to 45 organizations (MacLeod, 2019, February 18). The new financial and working relationships between prime contractors and their sub-contractors have also changed. Sub-contractors provide specialized services and, under the previous contract, were given a guaranteed flow-through payment to offer these services. However, under the new contract, prime contractors are no longer required to use sub-contractors and instead hire part-time specialists within their organizations. The result is that some community-based organizations that once relied on this flow-through were forced to restructure, leave employment programs, or close wholly (MacLeod, 2019, January 31).

The result is that there are now fewer organizations delivering employment services and, by extension, fewer customers for ASPECT's professional development offerings, which is a crucial revenue source for ASPECT.

Analysis Needed

An interest-holder analysis of a sample of its existing members provides ASPECT's leadership with updated information to make strategic and business decisions necessary to meet the current and future needs of the organization. Using a balanced scorecard framework (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) to organize the research data will enable ASPECT's leadership to focus on four viewpoints: customer, financial, internal business, and innovation and learning perspectives (p.72). This project aims to provide the client with a clear report of what members think of ASPECT, their wants from the organizations, and opportunities for ASPECT to add value to membership offerings. Organizing this information within the balanced scorecard framework enables ASPECT to easily transition the information from analysis into strategic and business planning.

Purpose of Association

The Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT) provides leadership, education, advocacy, and public awareness to support community-based employment service providers. ASPECT works with government and other community groups to ensure that the needs of those seeking a meaningful and sustainable livelihood - the clients who access employment services - are met by informing program and social policy development (ASPECT BC, *About Us*, n.d.).

Background

ASPECT is an umbrella provincial advocacy organization representing the interests of 97 organizations throughout the province of BC. These members provide community-based employability supports and training for clients preparing to enter the workforce into sustainable and meaningful jobs. ASPECT advocates to the government on behalf of its members and their clients, helping the government test and refine employment contracts and social policies. ASPECT works with both provincial and federal governments, most closely with the Ministries of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation in British Columbia, and with Employment and Social Development Canada. ASPECT works in collaboration with other social service umbrella organizations and advocacy organizations with overlapping mandates to ensure the interests of its members are addressed and to anticipate changes that will directly impact its membership (ASPECT Advocacy & Relationship Map: We Work Well with Others, 2022, June).

Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

Interest-Holder Analysis and Its Application to Strategy

This literature review focuses on three themes: the definition of a stakeholder and how it may pertain to ASPECT, considerations for moving from stakeholder analysis toward strategy, and adaptation of the balanced scorecard framework to organize the stakeholder data to inform future strategic planning.

Definition of a Stakeholder

Dr. R.S. Freeman (2010), citing his 1963 Stanford Research Institute article, defines a stakeholder as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist "(p. 31) and through his stakeholder theory posits that applying stakeholder needs is necessary for strategic management (p.48). It is germane to the current project because it helps answer "what's next?" once an interest-holder analysis is complete. It gives a clear path forward, translating the data into action.

Of course, Freeman's Stakeholder Theory was designed for a business application, but it applies equally to a nonprofit organization. Without shareholders and dividends, the community's needs are paramount for an impact organization such as ASPECT. As a nonprofit, member-based organization, ASPECT would cease to exist without its stakeholders or, in this study, members.

Several scholars have built on Freeman's stakeholder definitions. John Bryson et al. (2007, p. 22) refer to stakeholders as "persons, groups or organizations that must somehow be taken into account by leaders, managers and front-line staff." Further, within the same publication, Bryson (p.27) adds that a stakeholder lays claim to an organization's focus, finances, and activities (also in Lewis, Hamel, & Richardson, 2001; Van Puyvelde, Caers, DuBois, & Jegers., 2012). The idea of "laying claim" to an organization fits well for an organization such as ASPECT since the association exists only because of its members. Through their collective membership dues and engagement with the association, they are shareholders, similar to the wording used by Freeman. However, the dividend "paid" to members is the ability for ASPECT to deliver on its mandate.

Considerations for Moving Through Stakeholder Analysis Toward Strategy

Leardini, Moggi, and Rossi identify the link between an interest-holder analysis and legitimacy as a necessary consideration for public and nonprofit organizations (2019, p. 529), and Bryson (2018, p. 128) adds that a well-executed strategy challenges member assumptions, which are integral to stakeholder loyalty and engagement. Further, a better understanding of this member-organization relationship and the members' needs guides strategy and business planning. In

other words, not all stakeholders are equal, with varying degrees of power and interest. Colin Eden and Fran Ackermann’s stakeholder power/interest grid can be used to plot out the stakeholders (1998, p. 122), as shown in Figure 1 below.

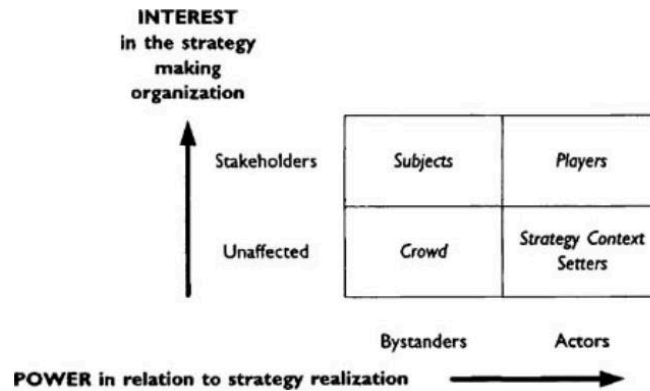


FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS POWER/INTEREST GRID (EDEN & ACKERMANN, 1998, P. 122)

Bryson adds that identifying stakeholders and tapping into the intensity of knowledge analysis should be drawn from those who understand the organization's political landscape, how the organization interacts with other organizations, have good industry knowledge, and possess individual expertise (2004, p.36). Therefore, for this project, care was taken to interview key informants who possess knowledge and expertise of the employment services sector to be able to see beyond their own work and organization, understanding the entire landscape of employment services in BC.

The scope of this interest-holder analysis limits the inquiry to ASPECT members in good standing, i.e., have paid their membership fees, and those in leadership roles within their organizations, i.e., executive officers or directors of employment. Further, the research focuses on interviewing individuals engaged with ASPECT through volunteering on the board of directors, contributing to the ASPECT conference, participating in government consultations, and working in the employment services field for more than seven years. These stakeholders would fall into the upper right quadrant of Eden and Ackermann’s grid as they have high interest and high power within their organization and the sector. They are the “players.”

Stakeholders, or interest-holders, not included in this project are those organizations that do not maintain membership in ASPECT but benefit from its work, other provincial organizations that collaborate with ASPECT on advocacy issues and projects, and public and political community members on which ASPECT’s work in social policy development depends. A more extensive study including other community members may be an opportunity for future research.

BSC for Nonprofit Organizations

Once the information is collected and evaluated, the challenge then becomes how it can be best applied to strategic and business planning. In this case, how the ASPECT board of directors keeps the needs and expectations of their members at the forefront of their planning and how ASPECT can utilize an interest-holder analysis framework to map its members' wants and needs.

Freeman, in his stakeholder management framework, suggests that there should be three levels of stakeholder analysis considered: rational, process and transactional (2010, p.53). The rational perspective focuses on identifying the groups and people impacted by the organization and how they are mapped (p.54). His model puts the organization at the centre with lines and arrows pointing back and forth from the centre (p. 55). The process perspective focuses on the ability of organizations to operate and meet the needs of the stakeholders (p.64). Finally, the transactional perspective focuses on how the organization interacts with its stakeholders (p. 69-70). All three perspectives confirm or deny whether the organization is doing what it needs to meet the needs of its critical stakeholders. How these perspectives translate to strategic planning is shown in Freeman's adaptation of Lorange's (1980) process schematic in Figure 2 below:

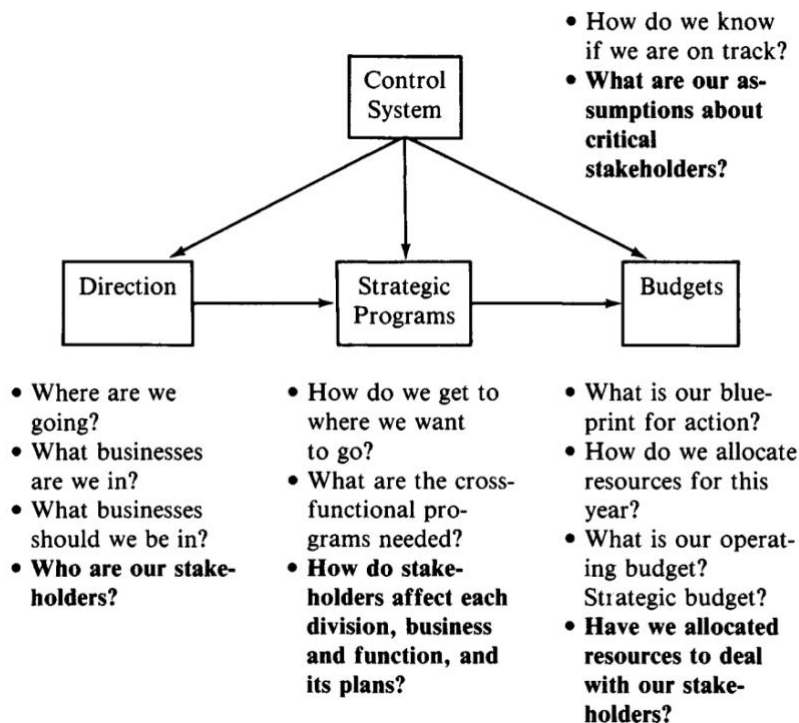


FIGURE 2: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT SCHEMA (FREEMAN, 1983, P.127)

In the researcher’s experience working in nonprofit leadership for nearly 20 years, this model brings shortcomings in the transition from interest-holder analysis to strategic planning to implementation.



FIGURE 3: TYPICAL NONPROFIT STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The silos created from Freeman's model in Figure 2 translate to the next step of the strategy implementation and measurement. For example, in 2016, ASPECT completed a full day of strategic planning only to learn after the fact that advocacy, which is, as we show in this analysis, paramount to ASPECT's *raison d'être*, was wholly excluded from the plan. Since advocacy has no direct financial benefit and because the board of directors was focused on building revenue, advocacy was not discussed at all that day. For the board of the time, measuring success was all about creating financial viability and measuring financial viability was the metric used to determine the organization's success (ASPECT Business Plan 2018 – 2022).

Because nonprofit boards are volunteers and not engaged with the planning process apart from strategic planning, crucial activities can be forgotten as the organization implements the plan. Further, the chief executive officer must find ways to communicate the complex alignment of all operational facets of the strategic plan to the board. These priorities must also be aligned with a revenue stream to support such activities. There then becomes a gap between the feasible goals and which ones must be delayed or omitted.

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework introduced by Drs. Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton enables decision-makers to see the health of a business or organization at a glance with room for competing needs and perspectives (1996; Kaplan, 2001). It is designed to look at an organization's past, present, and future versus past financial performance (p. 71). In Figure 4

below, Kaplan and Norton use the term "shareholders" versus "stakeholders," but for this project, they are one and the same for ASPECT.

What is exciting about this framework is that four perspectives can be viewed at once and consider the financial (How do we look to shareholders?), the internal business (What must we excel at?), innovation and learning (Can we continue to improve and create value?), and customer (How do customers see us?).

The Balanced Scorecard Links Performance Measures

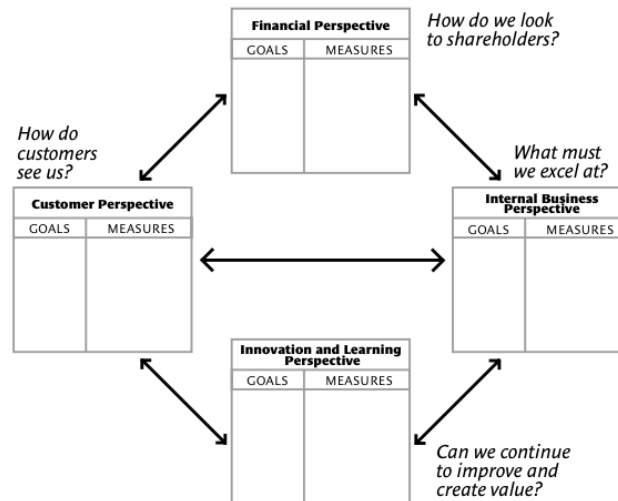


FIGURE 4: BSC FRAMEWORK CREATED BY KAPLAN & NORTON (HBR, 1992, P. 72)

This framework provides an opportunity to remedy some of the challenges of past reporting and success measurements for an impact organization such as ASPECT with a volunteer board of directors. The BSC framework allows overlapping and competing priorities, adjusting strategy as work moves forward without neglecting integral focus areas (p. 72). Dr. Kaplan later published an updated BSC with an application to nonprofits that places mission and vision at the centre of the framework (2001). In it, he identifies some of the unique challenges that impact organizations face, such as identifying the organization’s strategy, channeling various ideas into a few easily understood themes, making space for personal agendas versus group agendas, and understanding that the organization may not be able to do everything its stakeholders want and need (p. 358).

To avoid these pitfalls, the one-page view produced by a BSC framework shows how various aspects of the organization fit together, keeping all organizational activities on track while providing a quick way of communicating it to the board. In an organization such as ASPECT, where its future viability is at risk, it is even more important to align the mission and vision goals

with the financial and future goals, especially within the current dynamic labour market. It provides an opportunity to organize and arrange the information in one place, thus linking all goals and perspectives while remedying some of the disconnect noted above in figure 3.

This project's scope is limited to the first step in the organizational planning process – the interest-holder analysis – to set the groundwork for the next steps. The BSC conceptual framework organizes the research questions using the following paths of investigation:



FIGURE 5: ASPECT INTEREST-HOLDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS (ASPECT STRATEGIC PLAN, 2022, P. 1)

Once the data analysis was complete, this framework provided the client with a clear representation of what members think of ASPECT, their wants from the organizations, opportunities for ASPECT to add value to membership offerings, and considerations for the future of ASPECT.

Methods

Research Design & Data Collection Strategies

The researcher collected qualitative data through one-on-one interviews with ASPECT member leadership, which included nine board members and four members who were identified through the ASPECT member database. Special care was used to include those from various regions of the province, including large organizations with over fifty people working in employment

services, medium-sized organizations (11-49 employees), and small organizations with fewer than ten people. This information is tracked through the ASPECT database (ASPECT Data Base, retrieved December 12, 2021). Additionally, the key informants represent a mix of organizations from rural and remote (fewer than 200,000 population) and urban (more than 200,000 population) areas. Regardless of the size or location of member organizations, representation is the heart of ASPECT’s work and, therefore, an important consideration to include in this study.

Size and Location of Organizations Represented in the Key Informant Interviews			
Organization size by number of employees delivering employment services		Urban or Rural and Remote Services	
Number of organizations represented with more than 50 employees	3	Urban organizations (located in communities with 200,000 or more people)	4
Number of organizations 11-49 employees	6	Rural and Remote organizations (located in communities with fewer than 200,000 people)	9
Number of organizations with fewer than 10 employees	4		
Total Interviewed	13	Total Interviewed	13

TABLE 2: SIZE AND LOCATION OF ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Sample

The researcher conducted thirteen one-on-one interviews with key informants through Zoom video conferencing. These interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, consisting of open-ended questions for this research (Appendix A). The first ten interviews took place in April and May 2022, and the final three in September and October 2022. All key informants hold leadership positions within their organizations, either chief executives or directors of employment programs. Key informants were identified by their position on the ASPECT board of directors and through access to the ASPECT database, for which the researcher has permission from the client to access and use for this research. The researcher invited twenty-five members by email to participate, and thirteen participated. All invited were provided with the questions in advance of the interviews, and those interviewed signed a Participant Consent Form in accordance with research ethical standards (Appendix B).

Design of Instruments

Software needed to undertake this research was DocuSign for informant participant and confidentiality agreements, Zoom Meetings for the interviews and recordings, Microsoft Word to for interview transcription and project report, and PowerPoint to create the client presentation. Canva.com was used to create graphics and figures. No specialized analysis software was needed because the researcher organized the questions within the BSC framework, and all interviews were transcribed. Emerging themes were highlighted in different colours within a Word document to identify frequency.

The research tasks were as follows:

1. Conduct a literature review.
2. Create a list of interview questions along with a detailed research protocol.
3. Submit to the University of Victoria's Ethics Review Board for approval.
4. Identify and invite key informants to participate in the research.
5. Conduct interviews, limiting the span of interviews within few months to provide a snapshot of the sector.
6. Analyzed transcription and coded for emerging themes. Mapped concepts using a balanced scorecard framework, pulling quotations from informants to support the various themes.
7. Produced knowledge mobilization infographic and PowerPoint for the board members and academic defense.
8. Review data with the client and discuss considerations for strategic and business planning.
9. Submit project report to the client and academic advisor.

Methods of Analysis

With participant consent, the researcher recorded the interviews, which were then transcribed using Microsoft Word's transcription function. Next, the transcripts were analyzed, correcting transcription errors and identifying the questions asked and where they appear in the BSC framework: customer, internal business, innovation and learning, and financial perspectives. A third and fourth review revealed reoccurring themes and topics for further investigation. These themes were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, grouped, and ranked by those most identified by the key informants (Appendix D). Themes are counted multiple times if the respondent repeats their answer during the interview to reiterate its importance to their organization. Finally, a fifth and sixth review of the transcripts yielded quotes from the key informants identifying their thoughts on the themes and ideas for improvement or further focus.

Some of the coding notes and decisions are as follows:

Challenges:
1. Semi-structured interviews allow for free discussion, making it more difficult to code data.
2. Except for BSC questions, not all respondents were asked the same questions in the prompt.
3. Because key informants were given the questions ahead of time, respondents jumped between questions.
4. There is some overlap in the responses from question to question.
5. There were multiple answers for each question, and answers were repeated.
Steps:
1. Reviewed the transcripts
2. Identified and highlighted questions
3. Applied BSC Framework to questions
4. Highlighted answers for each perspective
5. Highlighted responses to questions
6. Coded answers in a spreadsheet by BSC perspective and questions.
7. Consolidated answers, i.e., advocacy and advocacy on specific issues together
8. Tracked assumptions within the transcript, i.e., intended meaning versus text of what was said
9. Themes grouped and ranked by most popular answers
10. Pulled quotations and applied them to themes.
11. Reviewed again for ideas and suggestions for ASPECT to form recommendations.

TABLE 3: THEMATIC CODING CHALLENGES & RECORD OF DECISIONS

Findings

Introduction

The objective of this project is to carry out an interest-holder analysis for ASPECT to provide valuable insights to the ASPECT board of directors to enhance their strategic planning endeavours. This comprehensive analysis encompasses an assessment of ASPECT's strengths and areas for improvement. The researcher interviewed thirteen prominent organizational leaders in the ASPECT membership to gather this information. The interviews were structured around the balanced scorecard framework and aimed to address the following questions:

1. Why does your organization belong to ASPECT? (Customer perspective)
2. What must ASPECT excel at to meet the needs of its members? (Internal Business perspective).
3. How can ASPECT continue to improve and create value for its members? (Innovation and learning perspective)

4. How do you think the sector at large, including government, non-members, and other provincial organizations, perceive ASPECT? (Financial perspective)

Thematic Analysis

In a review of the transcripts, five reoccurring themes emerged: advocacy, learning, connecting, building, and to a lesser extent, the sector's future.

The theme of "advocacy" includes all its forms and functions. Advocacy was mentioned by the key informants the most, and it includes activities such as ASPECT speaking to government with one voice on behalf of its members, collaborating with other members on the issues, connecting with other organizations with shared mandates on issues, relationship-building with the political and public constituents, and providing leadership on emerging issues. In many cases, advocacy was referred to generally as all-encompassing of this theme.

The theme "learning" includes professional development activities such as the ASPECT Conference, workshops and webinars, and other opportunities to develop smart practices within the work area.

The theme "connecting" focuses not on the relationship-building associated with advocacy but more on the relationship-building amongst employment service providers and includes networking, talking about the issues and collectively looking for solutions, building relationships for future funding partners, and having open discussions with others to build understanding and trust.

The theme "building" focuses on financial building, such as developing new products or services, certification infrastructure, and positioning employment services for the future. It also includes building the viability of individual employment service providers and the sector.

The theme "future of the sector" focuses on changes within the labour market, current programs and funding shortcomings, and thoughts about what may be needed for future employment services. These comments are largely outside the scope of the current analysis framework but provide information that may be helpful for the client in their future planning and advocacy work. The topics addressed in this section are program design, procurement, supporting employers, and the changing client base.

Included in these findings are quotations from the key informants. All quotations are referred to below with the letter K for key informants and by the order in which they were interviewed. For example, K3 is the third interviewee. Per the stipulations of the ethical review process and expectation of confidentiality by the key informants, the verbatim transcripts of the interviews are omitted from this report.

1. Customer Perspective: Why does your organization belong to ASPECT?

ADVOCACY

Key informants often had several reasons for being an ASPECT member, and this basket of opportunities and services encourages them to renew their membership every year. Advocacy and discussion pertaining to sector representation were the most highly identified reasons for being a member of ASPECT, so much so that the topic emerged frequently throughout all interview sections.

Oftentimes ASPECT, I'll find out that information first because of the direct relationships that they have with the variety of ministries, particularly the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training¹ and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. So, those are great benefits. The other benefit of being a part of ASPECT is that it allows us an opportunity to channel any concerns that we have or, the unhappiness we may have with a particular direction the government is going. ASPECT allows us to have that one voice that's representing the employment sector in British Columbia to be brought to the attention of government. (K3)

While ASPECT's efforts to communicate its advocacy work through weekly newsletters, emails, and virtual meetings were well-received, there is an acknowledged issue of inconsistency in information distribution, coupled with a lack of clear recognition of the various advocacy priorities. Respondents offered suggestions to enhance this aspect by proposing more structured methods for collecting, prioritizing, and effectively disseminating ASPECT's advocacy progress.

I know that everyone is tired of surveys, but once a year or something to do some kind of a polling, like what are the most pressing concerns or I wonder if there's a way to prioritize options in some way, like having a running list of things that might be urgent or you know, what're your top contracts or concerns going into this year and it might be I don't know like I'm thinking about us well volumes and

¹ The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training is now called the Ministry of Post-Education and Future Skills resulting from a cabinet shuffle on December 7, 2022 (BC Government News, December 7, 2022).

our fixed fee or like operating fees and then and then you'll have to use discretion.
(K13)

LEARNING

Professional development and opportunities for sharing smart practices were mentioned as another reason for being a member of ASPECT. Although workshops and webinars were mentioned as helpful, many respondents identified the ASPECT conference as a key reason for being a member. Further, several mentioned the relevancy of the conference learning content and the ability to connect with others to discuss smart practices.

Well, I think you know the reason why you join is one thing, but what you also get is something else, right? So, the professional development has been great. (K1)

Not that you couldn't go to the conference if you weren't a member, but it's cheaper to go to the conferences if you are a member generally, so I didn't mention conferences. But also conferences is another piece in that professional development part with BCCDA², the professional development part is a fairly big piece because we put people through the theory and ethics and so some of those pieces around having basic understanding of the sector and sort of not necessarily the credentialing itself, because we're not a credential organization, but making sure that people have a standard of this is what career development should look like is important to us so. (K2)

CONNECTING

Expanding on the feedback regarding learning, key informants highlighted the ASPECT conference as a platform to engage with peers in the sector and connect with government officials. Given that numerous contracts require reliable collaboration, the ASPECT conference is a valuable opportunity to network, establish connections, and form partnerships for ongoing and upcoming projects.

² BCCDA is the BC Career Development Association. An organization that provides credentialing for career development practitioners.

The conference is great, obviously. But even just more so, it's that ongoing communication that sense that there's always somebody really willing to share information that we all need. (K4)

Our organization operates a WorkBC contract as well as a few federal employment contracts, and we belong to ASPECT because of the opportunity to network with other service providers to look for best practices. To attend the conferences. To look for educational opportunities. I would say just in my conversation we view ASPECT as almost a lobbyist for with government for our groups. (K6)

The need for connection through ASPECT was cited many times. Key informants described the importance of connecting to the larger sector and the impact it has on their work and the success of their organization.

Being a member of ASPECT allows us to stay connected with other organizations from across British Columbia networking offer. Communities also we stay up to date with respect to things that are coming down the pike. (K3)

It's really about staying on, keeping our finger on, the pulse of things that are emerging to innovative trends in education related to employment, services and programming. Not just locally, but on a national level. We rely on ASPECT to bring us news of what's happening in other provinces as well. To bring together all the agencies from around the province to meet discussed areas of concern. It's where we get some of our news related to our industry. (K6)

I think the ASPECT, the community-based mandate of the organization meaning that sense that it is for all organizations in communities, I think, is one of the key things I think for so many years it has been very inclusive of the different types of organizations that do this work in this sector. Not for profit organizations, which I was a representative of for most of my career, a number of different, not for profits. And also, private companies and businesses as well, and ...ASPECT (has been) able to make a room at the table for all of those different organizations bringing what is common among between all of those to the forefront in terms of how we have to do business. That's an essential piece and I typically am in organizations that represent marginalized individuals, whether they be the not for profit or the business side of things. In rural and remote communities and there's room for us at the ASPECT table....I think the excellent communications the relevant communications, meaning that what we get shared in emails or opportunities to have meetings and discussions. It's relevant always...If I'm

thinking of the north and rural and remote and that's communicated, but I think overall it would be the level of communication. The relevance of communication, and the opportunity to come together. That would be, I'm thinking of the meetings that during the pandemic and during you know those opportunities to have those virtual connections and the workshops. (K4)

BUILDING

Generally, all key informants agreed that ASPECT plays an essential role in the sector that is not replicated by any other organization that focuses on employment service provision under government contracting. ASPECT is unique within BC.

We don't have another organization that I'm aware of that does it as comprehensively and as relevantly to what I need. (K4)

I see that important advocacy piece, or the important advocacy part being done by ASPECT. There is obviously the BC Career Development Association as well, but I don't see their role being the advocacy piece and that's what ASPECT (does). In, terms of what we're trying to achieve here. So, to answer a question in terms of "do I see any other organization doing similar work with ASPECT?" I would say "no." I would say ASPECT is unique in that way. (K3)

The multifaceted benefits of ASPECT membership significantly underscore its value, motivating consistent renewals. Advocacy plays a pivotal role, resonating across interviews and reiterating ASPECT's purpose. The organization's relationship-building with the government gives members insights, enabling effective government influence. ASPECT helps to address policy gaps, fostering policy effectiveness through collaboration among contractors and connecting policy to practice. The ASPECT conference promotes learning and best practice sharing, enhancing professional growth and connection through building a community of practice. These elements combine to encourage organizations to join and continue their membership. ASPECT's uniqueness in British Columbia exemplifies its vital role in advocacy, policy enhancement, and fostering sector unity.

2. Internal Business Perspective: What must ASPECT do to excel at or to meet your needs and expectations?

ADVOCACY

Once more, advocacy surfaced as a top concern for key informants and a focal point for ASPECT to fulfill member expectations. Informants describe advocacy as significant because it drives

change, raises awareness, gives a voice to those who are marginalized, influences policy and legislation, fosters accountability, supports vulnerable populations, and promotes community engagement. Notably, key participants express satisfaction with the endeavours of ASPECT's work. Additionally, they have put forth potential benchmarks for gauging success in advocacy:

I mean, I guess I'm really impressed with some of the projects that have been taken on last year. I feel like the White Paper, the Rural focus group, those are things that it really feels like we're not just moaning and complaining. That there's a very professional approach being taken here and there's a process that's being gone through. I think that even the fact that you were invited to a recent WorkBC call shows that there's a level of respect and professionalism to the approach and that's really important to me. I think that's an area that ASPECT has really excelled at this last year. (K13)

[ASPECT] maintains its relationships with government and its sectorial tables. I think those are critical. ... You know as an organization. I mean, I think there needs to be just sort of like ongoing recognition of the kinds of challenges that rural agencies experience... I recognize we're addressing that through the very committee that we're sitting, but I think that's really important. That's a that's a critical piece and then going back to your previous question, I'm I feel, heard so you know, sometimes it feels like the voice in the wilderness. (K1)

Several informants mentioned that they look to ASPECT to speak on their behalf to the government, especially when a new program or policy is released. Contractors can quickly identify shortcomings if there is an unintended consequence of the policies. Because the policy interpretation can be diverse, ASPECT brings contractors together and returns what is heard to the government.

Some of these [employment] contracts can be very tricky and ... especially as we're continuously rolling out new versions of it, so it's an opportunity to get more information of what you know, the type of work we're doing opportunity to connect with government that we may not always get asked is good about bringing that together. An opportunity to share best practices as we roll out new programming. (K6)

CONNECTING

Although the key informants repeatedly identified the weekly virtual member meetings to connect with other employment service providers and share information, several noted that the

free-style discussion could be fine-tuned to provide a more targeted theme. One respondent eloquently questioned the current format, “I recommend that the weekly meetings be partially open discussion, but also have an agenda to members. Do you have a sense of whether attendance is the best use of their time?” (K6).

In light of this feedback and the gradual easing of pandemic restrictions, ASPECT transitioned its member meetings frequency from weekly to monthly. Furthermore, they now pinpoint emerging concerns to serve as overarching themes for each of these gatherings.

BUILDING

A few participants expressed dissatisfaction with ASPECT's existing capabilities, citing insufficient human and financial resources to address the sector's present requirements adequately. Certain key sources highlight the necessity of bolstering the organization and its members to secure enhanced funding and increased influence.

I think it (ASPECT) is satisfying some of our expectations. I think there's always room for growth and opportunity, but I do think it's satisfying some of the expectations we have. We have others, certainly that I think we could see more of, for example, ...in the past before WorkBC, I think it really was an advocacy organization, advocating for change in the community-based sector. So, looking for growth and capacity and kind of respect in a way of the community-based sector and bringing funders together with providers. (K5)

Further, respondents provided some suggestions for how ASPECT could build capacity.

If ASPECT can receive funding directly from the ministry, there's an opportunity for or ASPECT potentially being able to ... continue the great work that we're doing. I think that's important...It's not going to happen overnight, but I think, that's an important dialogue to have to ensure that that that that there's continuous funding there because you know the world that we live in is, you know, we're trying to collect dues and we're trying to collect the conference fees and that kind of stuff, but you know that continuous funding goes a long way in terms of ensuring that our basic needs are being met every year. (K3)

I don't know if I don't believe ASPECT is well enough resourced like when you think of all the things that we would like to do or we you know that people are probably bringing up to you. (We) should charge an organization one fee for the year to get all of this. Doesn't make sense to me. To be quite honest like you know, some

organizations they want \$500 a year and there's a huge expectation around what that \$500 actually will provide. I think if we're going to look at this is me coming back as a board member now if we're going to be providing all the things that people seem to want, there needs to be a different funding model for the organization. Because we can't be all things to all people for \$500 here. (K6)

3. Innovation and Learning Perspective: How can ASPECT continue to improve and create value for our members?

ADVOCACY

Participants put forward various recommendations to enhance ASPECT's offerings to generate value for its members. Once more, advocacy emerged as a prominent topic in these discussions. In addition to their overall satisfaction with ASPECT's efforts, respondents furnished concepts for gauging accomplishments and pinpointed areas that could be further refined.

We are getting a lot of what we want from ASPECT. So, thinking about what more could be done, you know potentially if the organization was larger... [we could bring] pressure to bear on the politicians. (K1)

And I think there have been some indicators of success already, like the fact that you've been invited to join these calls and you're having regular meetings with [government contact] and she's sharing information with you. I feel like those are indicators of success. (K13)

But when I think about advocacy, I'm thinking about a couple different things. So one is the information. The information that we're providing to people so that could be information that we're providing to media. The information that we're providing to government, the information that we're providing even just in terms of like papers and briefs, and reports and things that people would absorb to build up their picture of what it is that either that we do or that the labor market is doing or who is struggling, or all of those different pieces. And so, when I think about good advocacy, I think about something that's really well thought out where we're thinking, 'OK, we're going to release this piece of information because this information is going to impact this, and we want people to think this.' (K2)

LEARNING

Key informants proposed that ASPECT has demonstrated leadership in providing learning opportunities. However, they also propose that there is potential for ongoing expansion in this area.

Training is great, like I think conferences and opportunities for people to get together and meet and share ideas is really important, and I also think like, I don't know exactly how to articulate this, but just even just sort of like a sense of community. (K2)

They also provided suggestions of how ASPECT could expand its learning opportunities.

I like the courses that are offered those kinds of things, professional development opportunities I think would be excellent. You know trying to find things like things that can lead to the career development practitioners' certification and not have to go through. You know, certain different college levels and trying to access all of those kinds of things if it could be sort of shorter (and) easier access... It's not as if I expect that that should be happening right now. I realize that that it can't come, so I guess my biggest goal would be to see its expanded with more financial resources and more staffing to be able to support objectives and big picture ideas. (K4)

CONNECTING

Key informants suggested that ASPECT can continuously improve and provide value to its members by convening around existing and emerging issues while finding common ground for the majority of its members. Trust-building amongst its members at these connecting opportunities was also noted.

Some meetings that are, I guess, kind of already touching this with some meetings that are more generic future employment services and some topics that are more targeted like, and I think you're already kind of doing this many in many ways with the White Paper and rural remote meetings. But yeah, I just wonder if there are others. I guess maybe what I'm saying is carry on with finding topics that apply to everyone and topics that don't apply to everyone. (K13)

I think the professional development opportunities again with the criteria with them you know the disclaimer that we've just discussed, understanding that that's

not a doable thing without resources. I think I think really there really isn't anything that I can put my finger on that. Really, we could look at improving that's already being done. ...But as someone who truly does value connecting and networking and partnering. I come to ASPECT's networking sessions and I don't fear that I'm having to always be guarded that something I say is going to be used against me. (K4)

BUILDING

Several key informants suggested that ASPECT could provide value by helping smaller organizations compete with larger multinational organizations for contracts. This is an ongoing concern as social service needs and government programs designed to address the challenges become increasingly complex.

When we think even into rural communities or smaller agencies within urban centers, their agency is less because they just don't possess that capacity to go up against multinational corporations. (K1)

Moreover, certain individuals recommended that ASPECT consider selectively restricting access to some of their information. This approach could add an extra advantage to membership, as opposed to the current strategy of widespread sharing.

And I think there has to be a perk for people to be going to become aspect member, because if I wasn't an ASPECT member, but I got all the same information anyways then I don't know. I might not have the same intrigue or level of motivation to join, right? (K13)

FUTURE OF THE SECTOR

According to some key informants, there is an opportunity for ASPECT to take a more prominent role in advocating for employment service providers during the evolving shifts in the labour market. Given that member organizations are closely linked to their clients, employers, educational institutions, and community economic development entities, ASPECT possesses the potential to furnish the government with firsthand insights and intelligence.

There needs to be a lot more consideration for the labor market and what types of services are required to and quite frankly, bureaucrat and this is just my inside voice coming out between you and me. Bureaucrats sitting in a government office

with no understanding, or I come from it from a vocational rehabilitation perspective working with people with mental health disabilities and so forth. (K6)

There is also an opportunity to be more proactive in convening roundtable discussions amongst service providers to find innovative ways to attract funding and meet future labour market needs.

Some of us bid and some of us weren't successful, and some of us had to partner and some didn't like who the other people partnered with, and it was really a challenge to keep that professional professionalism, so networking is sometimes a challenge because you really are only coming together to the table to hear what everyone else is doing. (K3)

4. *Financial Perspective: How do you think the sector at large, including government, non-members and other provincial organizations perceive ASPECT?*

ADVOCACY

According to nearly all key informants, ASPECT has a good reputation with government, non-members, and other provincial organizations.

I would say that there's a high level of respect for the organization. Reputation of the organization is one of you know some value people see it as professional. The greatest strengths of the sector lie in the professionalism and the passion of the people working within it. (K1)

I think that people view ASPECT as a leader in our sector. That's the impression that I get. I get the impression that government does as well like that they're interested in listening to things that that ASPECT has to say. (K2).

Nonetheless, a participant who doesn't hold a position on ASPECT's board pointed out that there is an ongoing effort required to strengthen ASPECT's relationship with the government.

I think they're cautious, I think. I believe that they respect ASPECT as well, but they don't want to have a close relationship and want to keep ASPECT at arm's length a bit. Again, I think it's because of the lobbying role. (K6)

And I think that that's an important the way that it's (ASPECT) viewed. I think it is also (with) credibility and competency is also recognized credibility and that the

information it's giving is accurate. And it's not pro government. It's true advocacy... It's very clearly credible and accurate. (K4)

Finally, key informants were asked about the future of the sector as a means to identify emerging issues and opportunities for ASPECT to anticipate their needs. Within the following comments are ideas for future investigation and action. This section is divided into program design, procurement, supporting employers, and general concerns for the future.

PROGRAM DESIGN

While government funders bear the responsibility for program design, ASPECT, along with the insights it gathers from its members, presents an avenue to exert influence over modifications that can enhance the alignment of employment services with the needs of the clients they serve.

I'd say that the weak, the biggest weakness inside of the sector is ultimately, poor program design at the government level. I don't know if you want me to spend much time talking about that, but I just recognize how programs that are a cookie cutter approach. They design one program and apply it to the whole province, fail to serve the complex needs of clients. (K1)

Yeah, should have that portability and should have larger consideration I guess around how we're delivering program to meet the needs of whoever it is that we're delivering to regardless of. Where we're delivering it, I guess, yeah. For sure, but if you think about it from a like, an employment and employability like an employment perspective in terms of our ability to support a sector to like you know, there's. The government has released all these plans that are fantastic, but the infrastructure doesn't exist. If they can come to our sector. (K2)

PROCUREMENT

One of the ongoing challenges identified by most key informants is the current procurement process through government. Although ASPECT is working on this issue through the Social Services Sector Roundtable (Government of BC, 2023, June), many voiced their frustration and wondered if there was a more collaborative way to approach procurement.

But like people stealing contracts from one another and ideas and the competition in the sector can be quite challenging at times. It doesn't need to be like that. There're ways that we could work together. There're so many different types of needs for employability and there's so many different types of specializations and

partnerships that we could develop. And yet the system is set up in such a way that forces us to compete. (K2)

SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS

The traditional supply and demand equation that has typified the labour market in the past has changed, and according to key informants, has had employers requesting services from ASPECT members in numbers never seen before. Also, the types of clients that agencies are serving are significantly multi-barriered, requiring more interventions to help them become work ready. Except for wage subsidies and some minimal funding within the contacts, many organizations are going uncompensated for the work they are doing with employers.

The reality is that employability used to exist primarily to help people who are struggling to find employment to get employment, well, that's now changed because it's we're helping people who need workers. (K1)

There was advocacy that was happening even just in terms of teaching employers. Hey, guess what like? I have funding to be able to run programs to train people to work literally at your company if you want, because right now the flexibility looks like that. (K2)

The government is moving in the direction or with the last number of sort of bids that came out there was more emphasis on working within sectors, and so whether that be healthcare or like we've got one right now. The last sectoral initiatives one that came out where we applied to do food like they had against specific sectors, and it was food and hospitality. Food and beverage work and a lot of the work that we're doing now that we're finding more successful is things that are specific. So, we've done the ECA training. We've done recreation attendant training. We have worked with Paladin and Cactus Club and different employers and this is mostly in our YTS contract, but to basically train people for specific companies, and the reason for that is because we're finding that when we try to run off the work placements or like the wage subsidy work placements we're not getting them and so we're needing as a sector to be much more strategic about how or who we're working with so that we can guarantee those placements. (K2)

GENERAL

Key informants suggested areas that the sector, and ASPECT as a leader within the sector, can expand its work outside of traditional pre-employment contracts. In addition to their role helping employers, they also identified changes within the workforce in general.

It feels like as employment service delivery organizations, we should be at the forefront of some of these trends that are happening. (K13)

Sorry, there seems to be a current trend in employment services to our clients and in virtual fashion while also supporting low skilled clients who need a lot of extra support in person. Organizations need to push themselves to develop delivery of services to meet both of these demands... Advocating to funders that milestones achieved for multi barrier clients look different than milestones for other clients and that fees for delivery of service models may need to change to reflect that. Additionally, a shift to a focus of supporting employers, and that's what I said in their hiring needs and how to create positions and measurements that people want to commit their work hours to. (K6)

Findings Conclusion: What's Most Important to Key Informants

The researcher notes that nine of the thirteen key informants are ASPECT board members and have a more intimate knowledge of the organization than the average ASPECT member. Still, because these board members work collaboratively within the board, these interviews were the first time for most of them to speak frankly about their thoughts about ASPECT. What is telling in their comments is the number of times the various times a theme is identified, demonstrating how important that theme is to the key informant.

Again, the themes repeatedly emerge within the discussions across all perspectives of the balanced scorecard framework. The researcher counted the number of times a theme was mentioned within the interviews.

To demonstrate the frequency of answers in any one thematic area, the researcher applied key informants' remarks to the balanced scorecard framework and counted the number of times the informant made remarks related to each theme. This data is organized in table 1 above and in figure 6 below, ranking themes at the front of the members' minds. Again, if key informants reiterated a theme within their answers, the researcher counted repeated responses. This organization of the data allows the ASPECT board members to see the results briefly.

For example, advocacy work in practice includes the ability for members to collaborate on the issues and to speak with one voice. Virtual member meetings allow members to network, collaborate, and connect with other organizations. Finally, because of the complexity of offerings through the ASPECT conference, members receive opportunities for professional development, networking, collaboration, speaking with one voice to the government, and building connections between organizations and the sector. ASPECT designs and markets its conference to offer all these opportunities to delegates on the ASPECT conference website (ASPECT – Conference-23, n.d.).

The data shows that across all perspectives that advocacy is top-rated in all perspectives, followed by learning, connecting, and building. The application of these answers, measured in percent of total theme, is organized within a balanced scorecard framework in figure 6 below, providing a visual representation of what matters most to key informants.

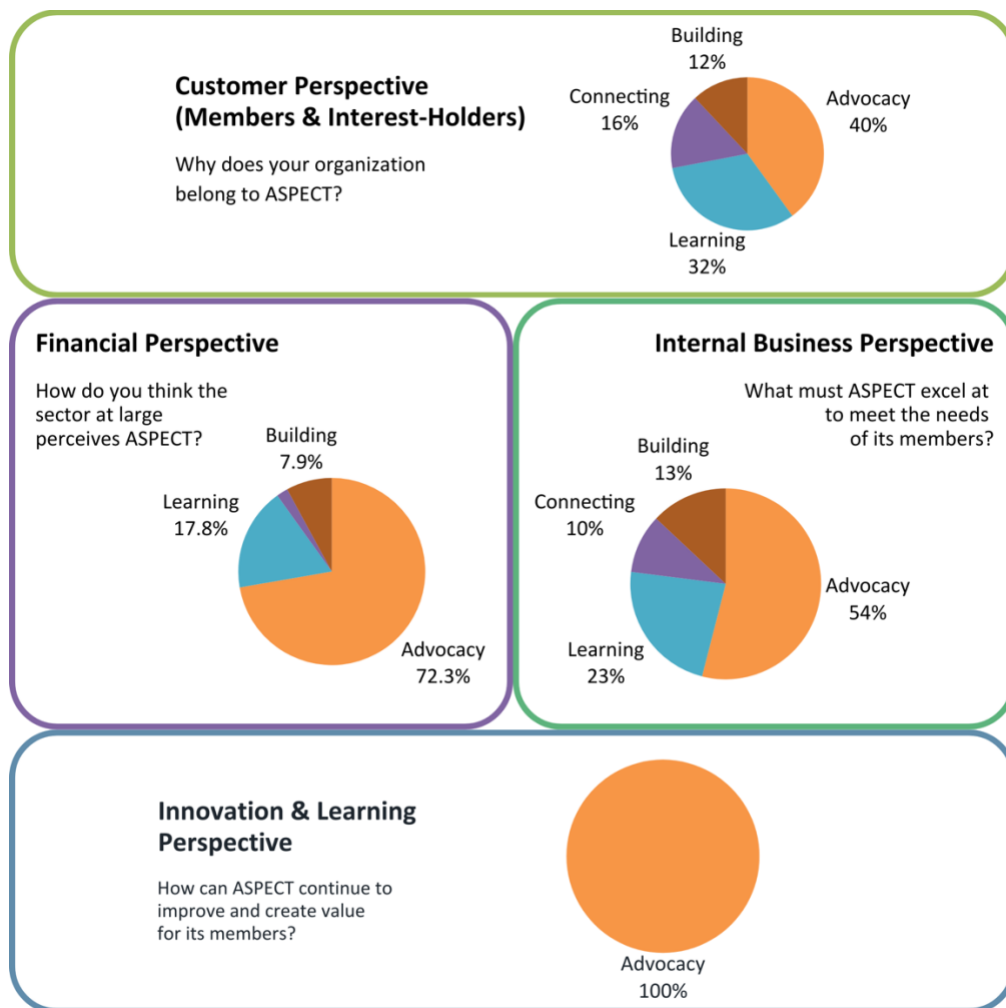


FIGURE 6: THEMES MOST IMPORTANT TO KEY INFORMANTS APPLIED TO BSC FRAMEWORK IN PERCENT

When asked, “what do you think the future of employment services will look like?” key informants who answered this question listed the following opinions:

1. Increase in online service and need for digital literacy.
2. Increase in non-traditional workers, i.e., more clients with barriers to employment.
3. Fewer clients resulting in lower contract payments and outcome measurements.
4. Change in the world of work, including the redefinition of work and its disengagement from local communities.
5. Increased supports for employers and employer-specific training

The data suggests that key informants fully know that the changing labour market will impact how they deliver services to their clients and, by association, the possible impact on their contract funding. They noted that ASPECT is well respected by the government, non-members of ASPECT, and other provincial organizations, and there is a significant opportunity for the association to further build its impact and reach. Some worry about the future of employment program funding and the need for transformation in the sector. Accordingly, ASPECT is well positioned to show leadership within the changing labour market by acting as a conduit between government policymakers and the experiences generated through local labour markets via ASPECT employment service providers.

Discussion

ASPECT faces two significant threats: declining membership and a changing employment service contracting landscape. Despite having 188 members in 2011, it now has 97 and struggles financially, relying on a dwindling contract surplus from 2008 to operate. The contracting environment is shifting, with fewer lucrative employment service contracts and resulting in reduced membership. To address these challenges, the ASPECT board needed an interest-holder analysis of its members to understand member perceptions, needs, and how to enhance membership value to inform strategic planning.

With the introduction of the Balanced Scorecard framework, the researcher organized the research results to aid the board’s strategic planning process and the business plan and operations plan later that year. The researcher sought to answer the questions:

1. How do members see ASPECT? (customer perspective)
2. What must ASPECT excel at to meet the needs of its members? (internal business perspective)
3. How can ASPECT continue to improve and create value for its members? (innovation & learning perspective)
4. How does the sector at large perceive ASPECT? (financial perspective)

The findings of this study show that the community's reactions align with what ASPECT aims to do, which is to advocate for and lead the employment services sector. This is positive news for ASPECT because it means no significant organizational changes are needed for the immediate future of the association, an outcome of the research that is surprising to the researcher and a relief to the organization's leadership. ASPECT can now work on improving its current activities to better serve its members and excel in areas where necessary with immediate effect, allowing ASPECT to concentrate on finding ways to benefit its members and ensure the organization remains viable.

From a customer perspective, the respondents identified advocacy and ASPECT's work informing the government as their collective top priority. Further, they identified advocacy for rural and remote employment service providers, WorkBC contractors, and procurement issues as being of current concern, of which ASPECT has already been active.

Equally important to members are opportunities to network and the ASPECT conference, which encompasses all desirable activities identified by key informants. It is heartening to see that the results do not dramatically alter the trajectory of the association's work but rather reinforce the mission and vision that has been in place since ASPECT started in 1990. Key informants did identify what ASPECT is doing well and provided practical suggestions for areas for improvement.

From an internal business perspective, ASPECT currently offers its members opportunities to advocate, learn, connect, and build the sector. However, key informants identified opportunities to do more and the demand for these opportunities providing areas of potential revenue. Some identified pursuing core funding, additional research grants, and expanding existing learning services through a biannual conference, virtual conference, or developing content for a learning management system with pay-per-use gated content. However, within the current capacity of the organization, it is challenging to develop these activities without increased funding.

From an innovation and learning perspective, ASPECT can further claim leadership in the sector in BC since there is no other organization similar to ASPECT in the province and because of ASPECT's involvement in pan-Canadian employment services endeavours through CERIC, Canadian Coalition of Community-Based Training, the Career Development Professional Centre, as well as others, ASPECT is well positioned. Whatever ASPECT can develop in terms of its offerings of advocacy, learning, connecting, and building, the sector has the social capital to expand beyond the current ASPECT membership. Again, capacity-building investment is needed to support these activities.

From a financial perspective, key informants identified that ASPECT does have a strong reputation within the government and with other social sector interest-holders. This social capital provides more opportunities for ASPECT to share its advocacy work and learning

opportunities with a broader audience, attracting funding and partnership opportunities. This positive reputation is an admirable position for ASPECT to be in. However, key informants identified the challenges of the current dynamic labour market, changes in the contracting landscape, the rise of multi-barriered clients, and helping employers understand the new world of work will require ASPECT to have the capacity to mobilize professionally in this environment.

Limitations

Although the research provides a clear picture of ASPECT members' wants and needs of the association, there are limitations to the analysis:

Small Sample Size: One notable limitation is the relatively small sample size of participants involved in the study. While efforts were made to include a diverse range of perspectives within ASPECT, the findings may not fully capture the entire spectrum of viewpoints within the organization. In this study, all respondents fall in the "players" quadrant of Eden and Ackermann's interest/power grid, but it might be helpful to hear from the key informants who are not as engaged with ASPECT and its activities. The "subjects" could identify gaps in understanding and may provide valuable information to refine ASPECT's value proposition for membership in ASPECT. A helpful question could be, "Why aren't you an ASPECT member?"

Bias in Interviews: Interviews were conducted with individuals holding key positions within ASPECT: board members, and long-time members, including the CEO. These participants may have inherent biases or vested interests in the organization's outcomes, which could influence their responses and potentially introduce bias into the study. The findings might not fully represent the views and needs of members who are less involved or unaffiliated with ASPECT.

Challenges in Implementing Balanced Scorecard (BSC): The practical implementation of the Balanced Scorecard framework comes with its challenges, including time constraints, potential duplication among perspectives, and a need for expertise in navigating the framework. Additionally, adapting BSC practices from the public realm to the nonprofit sector may require a learning curve and adaptation to a new language. It would be helpful to see how ASPECT's adaptation of the BSC would compare to another similar organization's adaptation to glean some learning from the BSC's implementation.

For this study, and the quality of information provided to the ASPECT board of directors, data collected from key informants representing 13.4% of the total membership was likely a large enough sample for the board to make decisions about the future of ASPECT. From the June 2022 planning sessions and the subsequent development of the strategic, business, and operations plans, the board responded that they were comfortable with the study results and using the BSC framework. It is essential to note that ASPECT hired a strategic planning facilitator who had

worked extensively with the balanced scorecard. Between the researcher's presentation and that of the strategic planning facilitator, the board had the knowledge they needed to make plans for ASPECT's future, but a deeper practical understanding of the BSC would have been helpful.

Recommendations

A common misconception about nonprofit organizations is that they do not run like businesses. The language used to describe the work may be slightly altered, as evidenced by the adaptations made to the balanced scorecard framework. However, this analysis shows that members are customers as through their membership fees, they buying a product with expectations and needs from ASPECT.

The products that ASPECT is selling is advocate services, professional development services, and networking services. Additionally, ASPECT provides a sector-friendly health benefits plan and opportunities for members to promote their agency through sponsorships, advertising, and physical space at the ASPECT conference. The following recommendations focus on advocacy services, professional development services, and networking services and look at what is currently being offered with recommendations for improvement, including longer-term considerations.

Advocacy Services

According to all key informants except one, ASPECT does well on the advocacy front by communicating activities through various means, including the weekly Aspectives newsletter, the CEO Blog, member email updates, and during conferences and virtual meetings. What is missing is a consistent means of providing updates all in one place so that members can see the latest progress on any issue. The challenge with government relations and advocacy work is to gain access to government decision-makers. The CEO must build a relationship based on trust, and often, confidentiality. Another challenge is to determine who receives advocacy information: only members? Or should the entire sector have access? Perhaps by limiting access, ASPECT could also limit the association's ability to attract new members because they may not know what they are missing.

Currently

- Produce Aspectives weekly newsletters.
- Produce CEO Blog on the ASPECT website between 25 to 35 posts per year.
- Send member email updates as needed.
- Hold virtual member meeting verbal updates (not recorded) monthly.
- Produce CEO confidential report to the board monthly.

- Announce issues updates and hold consultation session at the ASPECT Conference (not recorded).
- Produce research reports and white papers on issues of concern, such as [Competency of Career Development Practitioners for Virtual Services](#), [A Needs Assessment of Virtual Career Practitioners](#), [Refocusing the Urban Lens for Rural & Remote Employment Services](#) and the WorkBC white paper.
- Produce and update an annual report and one-pager distributed at the ASPECT AGM and on the ASPECT website that lists advocacy work.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Invest in increasing staff capacity to consolidate and manage advocacy communications.
- Create a webpage on the ASPECT site that provides an update on the issues and the advocacy work ASPECT does on members' behalf.
- Produce an annual members-only survey to determine their top advocacy issues of concern. Align this survey within the Balanced Scorecard framework to create a feedback loop on the roll out of the strategic, business, and operational plans.

Longer-Term Considerations

- Produce a quarterly document of advocacy issues and activities.
- Create an action tool kit for members to help move issues forward to government.
- Create privacy policy language to use for advocacy work to protect those in government sharing information and what information can be shared with the sector.
- To financially support advocacy activities, investigate adding a separate advocacy fee for issues that only impact a part of the ASPECT membership, such as a "WorkBC fund" for those that have prime WorkBC contracts.

Professional Development Services

According to key informants, ASPECT has done well in its professional development offerings through the ASPECT conference offerings, procurement workshops, and webinars. However, there is a need for career development-specific training that is difficult to find or too expensive to access. During the pandemic from 2020 to 2021, ASPECT partnered with other organizations and agencies to offer frequent free or almost free offerings. However, in the most recent year, it has offered little because of staff capacity issues.

Currently

- The ASPECT conference is well attended and has sold out in the last two years. Feedback from attendees is that the learning content is relevant and engaging.

- ASPECT has access to a learning management system and recorded content that could be utilized to create on-demand content.
- ASPECT has relationships with funders who could possibly support the development of more professional development content.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Invest in increasing staff capacity by hiring a learning specialist to coordinate and deliver increased learning opportunities. Invest in grant-writing and marketing expertise to obtain start-up funding and attract registrants for the professional development offerings.
- Survey ASPECT member leaders to find out their professional development needs.
- Utilize the existing learning management system to create a one-stop location for employment services learning.
- Create and implement a business plan and administrative system that funds professional development offerings and raises funds for ASPECT.

Longer-Term Considerations

- Apply for and obtain funding to develop an online community of practice.
- Partner with those currently offering training to promote their professional development offerings on the ASPECT learning management system and community of practice.
- Develop and implement a business plan and administration system that funds these activities.

Networking Services

According to key informants, they belong to ASPECT to be a part of a larger community, to meet and share ideas that they can take back to their agencies. The annual ASPECT conference and the virtual member meetings have been helpful for people to make important connections with others in the sector. These connections help service providers identify contract partners and sometimes find qualified staff for their agency. ASPECT is doing well, but according to the research, there are areas for improvement:

Currently

- Produce and present the 2-day ASPECT conference in-person annually, in Victoria on even years and Richmond on odd years. A focus on networking with half-hour coffee breaks, catered meals, and a welcome reception on the first night, provide opportunities to discuss issues in consultation sessions. Invited government politicians and bureaucrats deliver presentations to delegates and attend the sessions.

- Host monthly virtual member meetings where attendees are encouraged to introduce themselves and share their thoughts on service delivery and advocacy issues.
- Host subject-specific discussion sessions on procurement, rural and remote contract delivery issues, and the WorkBC contract give members opportunities to introduce themselves, break out into smaller groups, and report back to the larger group on their discussions. A scribe in each group is tasked with taking notes and sharing with others. ASPECT builds on this information to create community-based research and publishes reports for government.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Invest in increasing staff capacity by hiring a learning specialist, event manager, and communications and marketing manager to offer more in-person and online networking opportunities.
- Key informants suggest being more strategic in the virtual member meetings by sharing the discussion topics in advance so that staff with expertise or interest can plan to attend.
- Produce a calendar of meeting topics well in advance of the meetings.
- Create and host regional meetings to attract smaller groups with common connections.

Longer-Term Consideration

- Investigate the financial viability of offering a second conference a year more focused on a specific section of members such as agency leaders, frontline workers, and rural and remote service providers. Also, investigate partnering with organizations such as the BC Career Development Association, Career Education Society, BC Prior Learning Action Network, or the BC Chamber of Commerce.
- Investigate different venues or one-day events to decrease the costs of having a second conference and build more revenue for in-person events.
- Apply for and obtain funding to develop an online community of practice.
- Develop and implement a business plan and administration system that funds these activities.

In terms of advocacy services, making a single place where members can get updates about important issues and giving them access to the entire industry could make the organization more effective. Also, using member surveys based on the Balanced Scorecard framework could create a structured way to gather feedback and update the strategic plan as needed.

For professional development, investing in staff capacity and a dedicated learning specialist can help ASPECT provide more accessible and tailored career development training. Utilizing existing resources, such as a learning management system and funders' support, can significantly contribute to this endeavour.

ASPECT's efforts in facilitating connections and collaborations within the sector have been valuable for networking services. Expanding staff capacity, strategic planning for virtual member meetings, and hosting regional meetings can further strengthen the network and engage a broader range of members.

Looking ahead, ASPECT could explore the feasibility of hosting a second conference focused on specific member sections and consider partnerships with relevant organizations to enhance its offerings. Pursuing diverse venues and funding opportunities can help sustain and expand in-person events.

Conclusion

The results of this study provided the ASPECT board of directors with an updated interest-holder analysis that helped inform strategic planning activities. The researcher used a balanced scorecard framework to organize the study findings from a customer perspective (Why do members belong to ASPECT?), an internal business perspective (What ASPECT must excel at to meet the needs of its members?), an innovation and learning perspective (How can ASPECT continue and grow to create value for its members?), and finally, a financial perspective (How does the sector at large perceive ASPECT?).

First and foremost, ASPECT members look to ASPECT to advocate on their behalf to the government and other organizations within the workforce development and social service sector. They look to ASPECT to provide professional development offerings and opportunities to network with others in the sector. Finally, they rely on ASPECT to help prepare them for emerging issues and changes in workforce development. According to the research, ASPECT has been fulfilling its mandate, but there are areas for improvement for the board's consideration. The researcher recommends that ASPECT build capacity through expanding staffing, increasing funding opportunities, and building on ASPECT's current offerings. The researcher also provides longer-term considerations for taking ASPECT to the next level of services and financial viability.

In conclusion, ASPECT's commitment to serving its members as customers is evident across advocate services, professional development, and networking opportunities. By implementing the recommended improvements and considering longer-term strategies, ASPECT can continue to evolve as a responsive and valuable resource for its members, fulfilling its mission and vision as a nonprofit organization while operating with a business-like approach. By improving and

building on what it is already doing and by financial investment now in organizational capacity, ASPECT has the potential to thrive for another 33 years.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: ETHICS REVIEW BOARD CERTIFICATE



Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board
 Michael Williams Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
 T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8960 | uvic.ca/research | ethics@uvic.ca

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	Barton Cunningham (Supervisor)	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER	21-0431
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT	Janet Morris-Reade Master's student	Expedited review - delegated	
UVIC DEPARTMENT	Public Administration PADM	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE	26-Nov-2021
		APPROVED ON	26-Nov-2021
		APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE	25-Nov-2022

PROJECT TITLE Stakeholder Analysis of the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS
Val Meaney - Client organization representative, ASPECT

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING None

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL
 Appendix 2 - TCPS2_ethics_core_certificate copy.pdf - 11-Oct-2021
 Appendix 3 - Participant Recruitment - Application 21-0431 - V2.pdf - 26-Nov-2021
 Appendix 1 - Client Approval.pdf - 26-Nov-2021
 Appendix 5 - Participant Consent Form - Application 21-0431 - V2.pdf - 26-Nov-2021
 Appendix 4 - Interview Guide - Application 21-0431 - V2.pdf - 26-Nov-2021

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

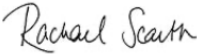
Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.



 Dr. Rachael Scarth
 Associate VP Research Operations

Certificate Issued On: 26-Nov-2021



**University
of Victoria**

Participant Consent Form

Stakeholder Analysis of the
Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Stakeholder Analysis of the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training (ASPECT).

My name is Janet Morris-Reade, and I am carrying out a stakeholder analysis on behalf of the client, ASPECT. I can be contacted at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED]. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of a master's degree in community development. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. J. Barton Cunningham at [REDACTED] or by phone at [REDACTED]. You may contact either of us should you have questions about this research.

Val Meaney, president of ASPECT, is overseeing this project on behalf of ASPECT's board of directors.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to better understand how ASPECT can remain viable within the changing employment services environment. A stakeholder analysis of a sample of its existing members will provide ASPECT's leadership with updated information to make strategic and business decisions necessary to attract new members and expand its membership reach. The research will focus on member perceptions of the work ASPECT is doing and what ASPECT could be doing to add value to their membership.

Importance of this Research

This research is important as a stakeholder analysis using a balanced scorecard framework (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) will enable the researcher to present various perspectives to ASPECT's leadership that consider the customer, financial, internal business, and innovation and learning concerns (p.72). Once this analysis is complete, the researcher will provide ASPECT with a clear

representation of what members think of ASPECT, their wants from the organization, and opportunities for ASPECT to add value to its membership offerings.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because your organization is an ASPECT member and because you hold a position of leadership for employment programs within your organization.

What is Involved?

The researcher is seeking input through one-on-one interviews from those holding the position of director of employment or executive director within an ASPECT member organization. The researcher expects to interview approximately 10-15 participants.

These interviews will last between 45-60 minutes and require you to reflect on ASPECT products and services, the state of the employment services sector, and the needs of workforce development as it pertains to the participant's organization and the clients they serve.

Interviews will be conducted over Zoom Meetings and recorded for transcription purposes. In transcribed data the participant will be assigned a pseudonym and only this pseudonym will be recorded in notes and any published information. While Zoom recordings do include both audio and video, only the audio file will be used by researcher. Explicit consent for this recording is needed [below](#). All recordings will be stored on the researcher's computer and personal cloud account that is password protected. The computer is stored in a locked office that only the researcher has access to.

Please be advised that information about you that is gathered for this research study uses and online program located in the U.S. As such, there is a possibility that information about you may be accessible without your knowledge or consent by the US government in compliance with the US Freedom Act.

Recordings will be stored temporarily in a password protected account accessible by only the researcher, who is also the Zoom account system administrator. Once a transcript is created, the original recordings will be deleted. While no absolute guarantees can be made regarding security, these measures provide safeguards against outside agents accessing the electronic data.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including your time to review the pre-interview documents (10-15 minutes), participate in the interview (45-60 minutes), and to answer any follow up questions the researcher may pose (10-15 minutes).

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

Questioning interviewees is intended as a reflective exercise. A reflection on past successes and challenges that may enhance a person's insight and ideas as to what ASPECT resources are available to their organization and how they engage them.

Voluntary Participation

Your input is greatly appreciated; however, participation is strictly voluntary. There is no requirement to participate. Your employer will not know whether you participated in this study unless you tell them. All responses will remain completely confidential; any identifying information provided will be separated from your responses. If at any time you'd like to discontinue your participation in the interview, simply leave the interview at any point and contact the researcher afterward to remove your contributions from the data analysis. You may withdraw from the interview without harm to your relationship with the researcher, or the organization, ASPECT BC. There will be no negative consequence to a decision not to participate.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

The researcher may have a relationship with potential participants in her capacity as chief executive officer of ASPECT. To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the researcher will share the interview questions with potential participants prior to the interview. The participant will be reminded that they can refuse to answer any of the questions posed to them at any time during the interview or in any follow-up questions after the interview.

On-Going Consent

To ensure your continued to consent to participate in this research, your confirmation of this consent form will cover the one-on-one interview and any follow-up questions the researcher may have after the interview.

Anonymity

Your personal identity will not be included in the finished project or disclosed to any other party for any purpose. Since all data will be anonymized, participants and the client (ASPECT) will not be able to guess the identity of the participants from the way the results of the study will be presented.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring that all data is stored on the researcher's password protected computer and cloud storage and within the researcher's secure office. Notes and transcripts will not refer to you by name, though you will be assigned an initialed designation based on the time and date of your interview (e.g., 2021-11-05-11:00) for working purposes.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Inform the ASPECT board of directors in advance of its strategic and business planning.
- Academic report and presentation to the University of Victoria to satisfy degree-granting requirements and ongoing academic investigation.

Commercial Use of Results

This research may lead to the development of commercial products or services. The nature of commercial use is professional educational development and member benefit products that will wholly support the future viability of ASPECT.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of by deleting files from the researcher's computer and cloud storage.

Visually Recorded Images/Data

Participants are requested to provide initials, *only if you consent* to the following:

- I consent to videos may be taken of me for analysis only _____ (Participant to provide initials).

1. How do members see ASPECT? (Customer Perspective)

As a leader within your organization, tell me why your organization belongs to ASPECT?

Prompts

- What is it about the work we do on your behalf that motivates you to renew your membership every year?
- What benefits do you appreciate most? What benefits do you appreciate least?
- Do you rely on other organizations that do similar work as ASPECT?
- Is ASPECT satisfying your expectations?
 - If yes, in what way? Please provide examples.
 - If no, in what way? Please provide examples.

2. What must ASPECT excel at to meet the needs of its members? (Internal Business Perspective)

In your opinion, what must ASPECT do to excel at to meet your needs and expectations?

Prompts

- What are some areas for improvement? Please explain using examples.
- How does ASPECT compare to other organizations your organization belongs to?
- What do other member organizations do that you wish ASPECT would do?

3. Can ASPECT continue to improve and create value for our members? (Innovation & Learning Perspective)

In the past, ASPECT has focused on advocacy, research, professional development, and providing networking opportunities for its members. Tell us how we can improve and create value for your organization? And for the sector at large?

Prompts

- What does successful advocacy look like to you? How would you measure this success in this area?
- Is research about the workforce development practice in BC important? Please explain.
- What do you look for in professional development opportunities for you or your staff? Online? In-person?
- Is networking with other service providers important to you and your staff? Please explain why or why not?

4. How does the sector at large, including government, non-members, and other provincial organizations perceive ASPECT? (Financial Perspective)

How do you think the sector at large, including government, non-members, and other provincial organizations perceive ASPECT?

What do you think the future of employment services will look like? Can you provide examples of these changes within your organization?

Prompts

- What do you see as the biggest strengths of the sector?
- What do you see as the biggest weaknesses of the sector?
- What do you see as the biggest threats to the sector?
- What are the biggest opportunities for the sector?
- Do the overlapping jurisdictions because of virtual delivery create challenges for your organization? Please explain why or why not?
- What do you think ASPECT could do to support your organization's viability?
- What do you think ASPECT could do to support its viability?

Thank you for your time today and for your thoughtful answers. Do you have any questions for me? Or about the process?

Appendix D: Thematic Analysis & Ranking

BSC Perspectives - Data Coding Sheet - n=13

Customer		all													all				
Why belong/renew?	Advocacy/channel concerns to govt, advocate for rural & remote, advocate for work BC, advocate for procurement.	20	2	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	Other Orgs?	No others like ASPECT	9	Satisfied?	Yes	13
	Virtual meetings	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		BCCDA	8	No		
	Conference	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Local organization	3			
	Pro-D	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Community outreach	1				
	Networking	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		CERIC	1				
	Able to collaborate on the issues	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2		Vocational Rehabilitation Association of Co	1				
	Speak with one voice/	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Individual prof orgs	1				
	connected with other orgs	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Living Wage	1				
	stay up-to-date on emerging issues & trends	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		Great Place to Work	1				
	Always belonged	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	credibility to the sector	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	Listen to concerns/share info	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	direct relationship with Ministres	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	one voice/collective response	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	Place for sector information	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	connected to funders	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	newsletter	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	understand sector	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	job postings	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	partnerships with others	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	excellent communications	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	Always relevant	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	resources	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	National sector news	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	Best practices	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	umbrella org for the sector	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	community of practice	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	Conference discount	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	professional standard for sector	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	community-based mandate	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	inclusive of other organizations	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	shed light on under-represented client issues	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	frequent & relevant communications	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	support for bidding on smaller contracts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
	opportunity for all in ESP to grow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							

Internal Business		all																	
What ASPECT do?	advocacy	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	pro-D	5	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Community voice	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Conference	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Community with other ESP	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	recognize issues	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	listen to members	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	expand capacity to take on more work	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	maintain its relationships with government	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	advocate for rural and remote orgs	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Look for gov't funding opps	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Continue to be organizing body ES	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Speak with one voice	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	excell at intelligence gathering from govt	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	consult with members consistently	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	impact govt policies process & procurement	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	advocate for community-based services	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	sectoral tables	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Identity of sector	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	maintain good reputation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Orgs unaware of ASPECT / Build reputation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	have meetings/conferences outside urban	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	secure core funding from government	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Develop funding opps with employer assoc./BCCDA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	create onboarding certification	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	expand on past pro-D opps with CDP creds	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	easier access to ESP/CDP training	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	member meetings be partially open discussion	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Excel at govt and funder relationships	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	provincial and national level pro-d opportunities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	be better resources to meet sector needs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	increase member fees	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	different funding model for ASPECT org	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	communicate to members	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Track and share funding opportunities for members with timelines	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	high level of trust in how ASPECT uses info	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	regular conversation with members to inform policy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	advocate of increasing contract money	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	develop loyalty from members for ASPECT pro-d	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	encourage members to bring projects forward to ASPECT	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Communicate the process of advocating for an issue	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Be the voice of the sector	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Voice with govt	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Track what's happening govt fed & prov	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Anticipate future lens on sector	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	inclusive org for all ESP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	Does well advocating for all with diff opinions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						
	White paper & research	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1						

Innovation & Learning																		
	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	#		#		#
How create/add value?	8	5							1	1				4	Successful a	4	invite to consult	3
Advocacy	4													2	report back to members on issues pre	2	count # issue brought forward	3
more pro-d opps	3	1												2	count # issues addressed	2	create/develop partnerships	3
Trends & LMI	3	1												2	Log follow up concerns	2	develop leverage & influence	3
advocate for bldg prgms virtual delivery, rural remote, connectivity	3	1												2	Create position papers & white papers	2	secure direct/core funding	3
Help government listen	3													2	Successfully set meetings with govt	2	Help govt bureaucrats understand big picture	3
develop pro-d plan for ESP staff	2	1												1	Bigger org	1	maintain good relationships with govt	3
relevance	2	2												1	influence politicians	1	Be known by government	2
remove competition from contracting	2	1												1	aspect conf speaker	1	be at government table	2
advocate for supporting employability infrastructure	2	1												1	more training	1	concerns heard by funder	2
anticipate workforce trends and anticipate pain points	2	1												1	help with Work BC	1	Rural and remote report	2
staff training resources	2	2												1	hire proposal writer	1	create white paper & reports	2
create networking and partnership opps	2	1												1	more resources to help members	1	Show research behind advocacy	2
Poll members to collect advocacy issues	2	1												1	sharing proposals	1	sharing lived experience	1
Report back on advocac issues addressed	2	1												1	Connect with other orgs	1	bring people together	1
Show advocacy work on multiple levels	2	1												1	consultation lived experience	1	sharing information	1
conduct wage surveys	2	1												1	inform gov	1	following labour mkt trends	1
More research - build credibility	2	1												1	LMI	1	develop key messages	1
Maintain good relationships /connections	2	1												1	key messaging	1	follow issues that impact employment (childcare)	1
Communicate issue so not alone	2	1												1	creating partnerships	1	teach employers what's needed	1
Listen to issues/concerns	2	1												1	influence employers	1	identify barriers to participation	1
webinars & inexpensive pro-d	2	1												1	sector tables	1	Let govt know our POV	1
Help smaller orgs attract large contracts	1	1												1	successful at business	1	measure # mtgs with govt & govt above	1
Work together	1	1												1	provide members with govt rationale	1	appeal to bureaucrats for funding	1
Advocate remove competition	1	1												1	finding common advocacy issues	1	govt address concerns	1
leadership	1	1															encourage govt to engage with ESP	1
certification body	1	1															provide funders bigger picture	1
ASPECT Conference	1	1															Ensure prgms besides WorkBC represented	1
joint conference bccda	1	1															Contract advocacy development	1
already getting what we want	1	1															Draw attention to those with disabilities & mental health	1
bigger organization	1	1															Contact before there is an issue	1
pressure to bear on politicians	1	1															govt listens to us	1
Proposal workshops and training	1	1																
WorkBC issues leadership	1	1																
capacity to hire prof. proposal writer	1	1																
work to streamline public proposals	1	1																
Procurement create resources to help members	1	1																
Set up proposal sharing with members	1	1																
Support indigenous & women organizations	1	1																
Build capacities compete with multinational corps	1	1																
Find collective solutions to problems	1	1																
leadership	1	1																
sector representation	1	1																
developing portability of programs to other communities	1	1																
Join with BCCDA	1	1																
more conferences	1	1																
improve/increase past training	1	1																
Be at govt table - ask hard questions	1	1																
networking in competitive environment	1	1																
represent workbc contractor issues	1	1																
Review new contract models and advise	1	1																
leadership role to sharing client stories	1	1																
Promo clients barriers, T&R, JEDI in employment services	1	1																
offer education, webinars, resources go beyond employment services	1	1																
Offer more sessions with experts, lawyers, HR, etc.	1	1																
ASPECT role to disseminate info for government	1	1																
Create community-based think tank for ESP	1	1																
Provide big-picture view for ESPs	1	1																
Advocate to move away from OES as first point of contact for client	1	1																
Advocate for good user experience with govt online	1	1																
Create advocacy briefing document	1	1																
member meetings good	1	1																
more opps for networking	1	1																
develop leadership plan pro-d	1	1																
more educational marketing of value of ASPECT	1	1																
organize working groups/discussions	1	1																
poll members on issues	1	1																
Host small discussions without ASPECT	1	1																
Share member resources for procurement	1	1																
Policy sharing for smaller organizations	1	1																
Sharing HR resources with other ESPs	1	1																
Resource templates for the ASPECT website	1	1																
Good relationship with govt	1	1																
wage survey	1	1																
JCP funding for contract/research project with members	1	1																
Access funding for pro-d training	1	1																
Show that ASPECT is listening to members	1	1																
develop CDP onboarding program	1	1																
Community of practice	1	1																
Get answers from government	1	1																
demand action from research	1	1																
access to pro-d	1	1																
advocacy around procurement	1	1																
advocate for community-based services	1	1																
advocate for limiting orgs to 5 catchments	1	1																

Financial												all											
How do others view ASPECT?												ASPECT Strengths?											
#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
good reputation/high respect	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	professionalism and the passion	2	Weakness	poor program design (by gov't)	1							
Org leaders not in employment/non-members may not realize value of A	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	conference	2	cookie cutter approach (gov't)	1								
Face of the org	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	flexibility in the funding	2	unnecessary workshops for clients	1								
government listens	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Research to action	2	difficulty accessing clients	1								
professional	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	work well estab partnerships	1	unnecessary data gathering (government)	1								
Well-connected to the sector	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	culture of creativity and innovation	1	prescriptive paternalism to programs (gov't)	1								
High respect	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	sector is resilient	1	colonial structures (gov't)	1								
leader	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	good at advocating to government	1	restrictive programs and funding	1								
Advocate	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	good at pro-d	1	admin flat rate worst decision	1								
credible	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	good online presence	1	admin reporting and calculations labourious	1								
Some ministries appreciate ASPECT more than others	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	accessible to all members	1	provincial programs financially risky	1								
Value to members	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	support R&R ESPs	1	Using same measure for all programs bad	1								
sectorial tables	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Clear call to action for gov't	1	Pathway outcomes v job outcomes	1								
excellence	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	understands the issues	1	WorkBC - fixed v performance fees	1								
non-members listen	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	reliable source of information	1	ESP fighting for small amt of funding	1								
unsure of membership	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			smaller orgs cannot compete on RFPs	1								
ASPECT conference coveted staff opportunity	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			contracting design difficult for R&R	1								
useful way to share mass information	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			Move to large orgs not in community	1								
keeping ESPs accountable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
inclusive	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
credible	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
Not pro-government/apolitical	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
accurate	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
aware of benefits of membership	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
government is cautious of ASPECT as lobbyists	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
ASPECT can help gov't do better at their jobs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
traditionally ASPECT had unfavourable reputation with gov't	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
Too advocacy heavy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
knowledgeable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
well known provincially & nationally	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
solutions focused	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												
transparent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1												

all												all											
Future of ESP?	6	Threats?	virtual serv - funders require sq ft of office	2	Chg in your org for future?	Work with employers	2																
more non-traditional workers	5	Diminishing fund for office space	2	business org relationships	2																		
chg in work world - redefine work	5	keep services in community	2	move more to virtual services	2																		
incr digital competency	4	Not enough CDPs	1	Advocate to gov't for contracts	2																		
employer-specific training	3	CDPs lack foundational skills	1	Changes to social procurement	2																		
move back to soc. Serv from fee-based	3	lack of knowledge of career services	1	community relationships	1																		
change in how deliver programming	2	ESPE staff engagement waning	1	community strategies	1																		
fewer clients	2	Programs not long-term sustainable	1	provide clients more digital literacy opps	1																		
disengagement from local workforce	2	ESP leadership burnout	1	workshops back to in-person	1																		
chg in fixed v. performance fees	2	changing employee perspective to work	1	fewer staff working in office	1																		
employer-specific recruiting supports	2	Larger catchments need for more ESP travel	1	delivering more prov-wide contracts	1																		
Immigrant prg incr	1	Govt looking for cost savings	1	lack of connectivity hinder services	1																		
cross sector-focused prgms	1	amalgamation of catchments	1	More pro-d opps for staff	1																		
guaranteed jobs post training	1	remove price from procurement	1	Connect more with other prov.	1																		
HR services SME	1	funder demand for partnerships	1	More business coaches/bus dev	1																		
AI play greater roll in esp	1	incr competition for contracts	1	More wage subsidy prgms	1																		
funders scrutinize office exp	1	Move away from CBS	1	More immigration	1																		
funder cost cutting	1	Replace ESP with tech	1	cultural sensitivity training	1																		
contract only for large orgs	1	fewer clients gov't pull \$	1	incr in self employment	1																		
retiring earlier	1	chgs in resource-based labour mkt	1	Preparing employers for clients (customized)	1																		
rely more on unions	1	boom-bust local economy	1	incr financial viability of contracts	1																		
employers need to be less authoritarian	1	govt stop listening	1	incr access to Pro-D (set fee for use)	1																		
12-week work experience with certifications	1			colleect real client stories	1																		
employer focus "screen in" v. "screen out"	1			Pro-d on reconciliation	1																		
more community funded v. gov't funded programs	1			Partner with other organizations	1																		
program design to fit employer need versus funder needs	1			Pro-d on trauma informed practice	1																		
AI emergence	1																						
ESP orgs getting bigger	1																						
Give points for community-based when eval RFP	1																						
moving away from devolution	1																						
using apps for services	1																						
better connectivity & services for rural remote	1																						
more funds for connectivity	1																						