MANAGEMENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND TRAINING NEEDS WITHIN SELECTED BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS IN OKLAHOMA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined management training needs and current training activities of selected organizations in Oklahoma. Managers, plant managers and chief executive officers from business and industry organizations in Oklahoma were surveyed. Three hundred and ninety three (92.03%) managers participated in the study. The results paint a clear picture of how many organizations in the defined population have a training and development specialist, what management training activities are taking place, how much management training is offered, how the current management training initiatives are being delivered, what limits training opportunities for managers, how many organizations assess their managers' training needs, and the preferences these organizations have concerning type, source, and method of training.

The Oklahoma Department of Vocational/Technical Education has made an effort to focus on an element vital to the success of business and industry—the development of an organization's human resources, specifically the development of management and supervisory skills. Employers in Oklahoma business and industry organizations acknowledge the need for such skills and have developed and delivered training to meet this need. However, the training developed and delivered must be periodically assessed to determine what the current training needs are and if these particular needs are being met. To acomplish this task, it is first necessary to examine the training needs of the organizations served and determine if the work being done is focused in the direction of need.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The demand from the marketplace for speed, quality, customization, timeliness, and variety of products and services has changed the landscape for doing business. The use of technology, the relentless speed of change, and the skills that working people need have changed the nature of work itself. The increasing pressure from these forces drives a constant search for better performance, from the simplest task to the most complex corporate strategy. The new reality is that the dynamic nature of individual learning and performance, particularly at the management level, turns this into a race without a finish line. To even begin the race, we must first answer the question: What do business people mean when they talk about individual learning and performance? At the broadest level, individual learning and performance refer to the ability to achieve results that keep a company ahead of the competition. It is the answer to the question "How are we doing at the things that make us a successful business?"

Companies measure performance in terms of progress toward specific business goals such as greater market share, improved customer satisfaction, better returns to shareholders, production, throughput and so forth. To claim that individual learning and performance has improved, there must be measurable change according to the yardsticks the company has set for itself. Performance, however, is not simply a matter of selecting meaningful results and measuring progress toward them. It is also a matter of how employees achieve those results. The most effective methods for improving performance require leveraging the employees' knowledge, skill, and behavior through all the invisible systems and processes which are the fiber of any organization.

The concepts of individual learning and performance have evolved over the last several years. Improving individual learning and performance in the workplace is a challenge that resists simple explanations. Research conducted by Hatcher and Ward (1997) demonstrates in detail that although there is an intellectual construct called high performance work, it does not have a common definition nor a universally known set of tried and true practices to apply to organizations. The most that research (Ellinger, Watkins & Barnas, 1996; Hatcher & Ward, 1997; Hirsh & Wagner, 1995) says at the moment is that many high performance work organizations have these characteristics:

1. Flatter, horizontal structures
2. Work done by teams organized around processes
3. Highly skilled workers empowered to act
4. Collaboration among teams, between labor and management, and with suppliers
5. Focus on quality, customers, and continuous improvement
6. Flexible technologies
7. Formal change management

As we enter the 21st century, organizational leaders are realizing the competitive advantage of competent and committed people. "The value of people's judgment, creativity, and thinking has increased because the ratio of knowledge work to manual work is increasing, and continues to rise as technology takes over more and more routine and dangerous tasks" (McLagan, 1989, p.1). According to Perelman (1984), by the turn of the century, ¾ of the jobs in the U.S. will involve creating and processing knowledge. Knowledge workers will find that continual learning is not only a prerequisite of employment but is a major form of work. "The informated and knowledge

based organization is a learning institution, and one of its principle purposes is the expansion of knowledge—not knowledge for its own sake, but knowledge that comes to reside at the core of what it means to enhance performance. Learning is the new form of labor" (Zuboff, 1988, p. 349). The concepts of continual learning and the learning organization are becoming reality, and the "organizations that aspire to become learning organizations must encourage managers to adopt new roles as coaches, trainers and educators if learning is to become distributed and continuous at multiple levels within the organization" (Ellinger, Watkins, & Barnas, 1996, p. 14).

In 1998, a study conducted by *Training Magazine* reported that U.S. organizations with 100 or more employees budgeted over $58.6 billion for training—a 5% increase over 1997. Outside expenditures comprised of seminars/conferences, hardware, off-the-shelf materials, outside services, and custom materials accounted for 13.6 billion, 23% of the total budget. According to the study, 70% of U.S. organizations will offer some training to first-line supervisors in 1999. Employers that train supervisors will train an average of 31 individuals, meaning 4.4 million supervisors will receive some training in 1999. These estimates result in 148.3 million hours of training, based on an average of 34 hours per supervisor. As we attempt to address this situation, an obvious place to start is to assess management training activities and determine training needs. An examination of the general perceptions of targeted organizations concerning management training activities and needs will benefit participating organizations and those interested in the efficiency, productivity and growth of those organizations. The organizations can use the results of the study to identify strengths and weaknesses of current activities and tactics to address current business needs in similar organizations including source and method of delivery.

PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

Information was needed regarding the current management training activities and training needs of selected business and industry organizations. Such information can inform scholarly work and practical application in the delivery of effective management training for today's competitive business environment.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The basic focus of this study was to determine what management training needs exist and what current training activities are taking place within the defined population. The following questions were developed to provide direction to the study:

1. How many organizations in the defined population have a training and development specialist?
2. What management training activities are taking place?
3. How much management training is offered by these organizations?
4. How are the current management training initiatives being delivered?
5. What limits training opportunities for managers?
6. How many organizations assess their managers' training needs?
7. What preferences do these organizations have concerning type, source, and methods of training?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The following scope and limitations applied to the study:

1. The population was limited to the business and industry organizations in Oklahoma who participated in the Training for Industry Programs (TIP) since 1968.

2. The mail out survey limited the kind of response and the raw data.
3. The results of the study may only be applicable for organizations within the population.

METHOD

The methodology was comprised of three segments: (1) identification of the population; (2) instrument design and development; and (3) data collection and analysis.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE POPULATION

The list of business and industry organizations in Oklahoma was compiled by identifying organizations that had participated in the Training for Industry Program (TIP). This program is administered through the Oklahoma Department of Vocational/Technical Education. Furthermore, the list was validated by the State Coordinator of TIP, Technical Training Specialists responsible for maintaining the established TIP contracts, and Industrial Coordinators at the area vocational/technical schools who worked with the identified companies. The list contained specific information on a total of 427 organizations. The database was organized according to participation in the TIP from 1968 to June 1998.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

After reviewing several studies that were similar in nature (Dionne, 1996; Elenburg, 1986; Goldstein, 1986; Lane, 1995; Tannenbaum, 1992), an instrument suitable for the purpose of conducting this study was developed. Questions were developed from a series of questions adapted from the literature review and submitted for critique to 28 professionals representing the population to be studied. The reviewers were identified through the American Society for Training and Development and the training and development activities in which the researcher participated. A team of seven subject matter experts in management training, research, and statistics further refined the questionnaire. The subject matter experts compared the questionnaire to the purpose of the study and research questions and attested to the content-validity of the questionnaire. The questions were forced-response items with specific statements for response by participants. The questionnaire was designed with the following assumptions:

1. Organizations that are large enough to have managers other than the owner but too small to support a part-time or full-time training specialist have similarities in management training needs.
2. Most managers in mid-sized organizations have preferences for type and source of management training.
3. Organizations with more than 1000 employees have a greater need for a training specialist. Their management structure would most likely be indicative of a large organization.
4. Organizations with fewer than 50 employees have an owner/manager who is the policy/decision maker.
5. The decision-makers in the defined population do not all possess the same title; therefore, the questionnaire was intended to be completed by the individual directly responsible for management training. Accordingly, the questionnaires were directed to the following titles depending on the structure of the organization: President/CEO, Human Resource/Training Manager, Owner/Manager responsible for management training and/or development.

The final revisions to the questionnaire were completed by the researcher's dissertation advisor, a representative from the research division and the business and industry division of the Oklahoma Department of Vocational/Technical Education, and a team of six plant managers/ CEO's. It was then pilot tested in six organizations representative of the defined population. The final questionnaire consisted of 22 items in a 4-page booklet format. The questions required specific responses by participants. The final revision of the questionnaire consisted of three basic parts or sections. The first section requested demographic information from each participant in the survey. The second section consisted of questions to establish the local level of participation in management training programs. The third section consisted of questions concerning the present and anticipated future utilization of management training. Methods suggested by Dillman (1991) were incorporated to address non-response and to encourage participant response. Methods used included design of the questionnaire for speed and ease of completion, the cover letter, and recognition through the Oklahoma Department of Vocational/Technical Education and Oklahoma State University as the source of the research.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Questionnaires were sent to the selected organizations and inconspicuously coded so that a follow-up mailing could be conducted. The first mailing of 427 questionnaires resulted in 276 (55.2%) usable responses. Of the 427 questionnaires mailed, 25 (5.1%) were returned undeliverable. The researcher determined a second mailing was needed to increase the rate of return. A second mailing to the 126 non-respondents from the first mailing was completed six weeks later. Of the 427 total questionnaires mailed, the second mailing resulted in 117 (23.4%) usable responses, with 9 (1.7%) returned undeliverable. Thus, the original 427 questionnaires delivered resulted in a total return of 393 useable questionnaires. The researcher accounted for 100% of the organizations on the original list of 427 through either a response or an undelivered return. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, percentages, mean scores, and cross tabulations. Each specific question was analyzed based on the number of responses to that particular question since all respondents did not respond to all questions.

RESULTS

The results of the study are divided into seven sections based on analysis of 393 responses. The seven sections are the seven research questions for the study. Of those reporting, 7.09% indicated they were from organizations of less than 50 employees, 11.81% from organizations of 50-99 employees, 29.17% from organizations of 100-249 employees, 31.5% from organizations of 250-499 people, 14.92% from organizations of 500-999 employees, and 5.51% from organizations of more than 1,000 employees.

DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS

To define how many organizations have a training and development specialist, questions five and six on the questionnaire were asked. Question five was divided into two parts. The first part asked: Do you have a staff member who administers or coordinates management training? If so, what is the person's title? Those responding (n=393) reported a stronger tendency toward "Yes": 60.56% said "Yes"; 39.44% answered "No." Those responsible for training were most frequently in positions identified as trainer, manager of management development, education development specialist, director of employee improvement, human resources manager, training manager, and

quality training manager. A cross tabulation of the size of the organizations with whether or not they have a staff member responsible for management training indicated about an even division between those who did and those who did not for organizations employing 100-499 employees. Of those employing 500-999 employees, 86.5% of the respondents indicated that they did have a staff member responsible for management training. Additionally, those employing less than 50 employees strongly indicated that they did not generally have a staff member responsible for training (60.72% said "No"). Of those employing more than 1,000 employees, 92.5% (20 organizations) reported that they did have a staff member responsible for management training. A cross tabulation of type of organizations with whether or not they have a staff member responsible for training indicated about an even division between those who did and those who did not, except for manufacturing, transportation/utilities, and public administration.

Question six asked: Is training his/her primary responsibility? To whom does that person report? The person to whom the trainers most frequently reported was the human resources manager, president, training division director, owner, or training manager. A cross tabulation of the size of the organizations with whether or not they have anyone whose primary responsibility is training indicated a consistent "No," with the exception of organizations larger than 1,000 employees where 92.5% said "Yes." As the organizations grew larger, the percent of those indicting "Yes" significantly increased. Organizations with 500-999 employees indicated that 32.4% employed someone with management training as a primary responsibility. However, retail trade, business services, manufacturing, transportation/utilities, banking/finance/insurance, and health services ranged from 24-42% "Yes" and public administration indicated 94% "No." Wholesale trade indicated a 100% "No."

MANAGEMENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Question 22 on the questionnaire was designed to gather information about what management training activities are taking place. This question was divided into two sections, one to determine when the training was offered—past, present, or never. The second section was designed to determine the type of benefit received from the training—tangible, intangible, or none. Respondents chose from a list of 22 program areas categorized according to the following types: management/leadership, marketing, company-specific, personal development, and systems training. The area they named as presently being offered most frequently was Computer Operation (63.27%). Computer Operation was also ranked as number one (63.92%) with the highest perceived tangible benefit received from the training. The second area named as being offered most frequently was Policies and Procedures (53.47%). Policies and Procedures were ranked number 2 (57.3%) in perceived tangible benefit received from the training. Due to the emphasis placed on bottom-line profit and the return-on-investment dollar, the tangible column from Table 1 highlights and ranks the respondents' choices in order of perceived tangible benefit received from the training presently being offered. For the purposes of this study, tangible benefits are defined as substantive, concrete benefits that can be directly credited for the enhancement of job performance or job competency. Intangible benefits are defined as abstract, indefinite benefits. While they do impact performance, the direct impact is immeasurable. Examples would be employee morale or self-confidence.

TRAINING CURRENTLY OFFERED

The identification of training currently offered by these organizations was addressed by questions four and eight through 11 on the questionnaire. Question four asked: Does your company budget funds for management training? Of those responding, 64.63% answered "Yes" and 35.37%

Table 1

Summary of Training Offered by Organizations and Perceived Benefit Received from the Training

	WHEN TRAINING OFFERED						BENEFIT RECEIVED FROM TRAINING					
Type of Training	Present		Past		Never		Tangible		Intangible		None	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Computer Operations	249	63.27	144	36.73	0	00.00	251	63.92	0	00.00	142	36.08
Policies and Procedures	210	53.47	170	43.27	13	3.26	225	57.30	168	42.70	0	00.00
Motivation	148	37.56	167	42.37	79	20.07	212	53.95	181	46.05	0	00.00
Product Dev.	64	16.36	53	13.58	275	70.06	187	47.62	0	00.00	206	52.38
Prod/Serv. Quality	68	17.40	80	20.36	245	62.24	180	45.78	0	00.00	213	54.22
Decision Making	139	35.40	249	63.40	5	1.20	158	40.26	218	55.38	17	4.36
Financial	139	35.47	162	41.31	91	23.22	153	38.94	234	59.56	6	1.50
Legal Regulations	125	31.73	172	43.65	97	24.62	153	38.94	240	61.09	0	0.00
Time Management	172	43.75	201	51.27	20	4.98	151	38.46	234	59.43	8	2.11
Performance Appraisal	156	39.64	168	42.85	69	17.51	148	37.54	245	62.46	0	0.00
Customer Relations	171	43.56	213	54.32	8	2.12	135	34.28	128	32.67	130	33.05
Delegating	128	32.50	167	42.37	99	25.13	131	33.26	247	62.84	15	3.90
Inventory	100	25.34	123	31.29	170	43.37	121	30.73	0	00.00	272	69.27
Sales	85	21.56	121	30.82	187	47.62	100	25.37	213	54.31	80	20.32
Accounting	52	13.12	144	36.54	198	50.34	96	24.38	0	00.00	297	75.62
Setting Priorities	151	38.48	214	54.36	28	7.16	96	24.38	280	71.26	17	4.43
Conducting Meetings	173	43.95	214	54.39	7	1.66	94	23.94	61	15.47	238	60.58
Staffing	168	42.70	202	51.49	25	5.81	84	21.47	309	78.53	0	0.00
Interpersonal Communication	170	43.28	187	47.58	36	9.14	62	15.83	331	84.17	0	00.00
Employee Relations	187	47.50	158	40.31	48	12.19	58	14.72	335	85.28	0	00.00
Record Keeping	93	23.57	129	32.84	171	43.59	58	14.72	0	00.00	335	85.36
Written Communication	160	40.72	172	43.89	60	15.39	54	13.85	339	86.15	0	00.00

answered "No." A cross tabulation of the size of the responding organizations with whether or not they budgeted for management training showed that larger organizations more frequently budgeted for training. Organizations with 50-99 employees were about evenly divided between those who did (49.3%) and those who did not (50.7%) budget for training. Organizations with 100-249 employees were almost evenly divided between those who did (58.7%) and those who did not (41.3%) budget for training. Organizations with 250-499 employees indicated that 72.4% did budget for training and 27.6% did not. Organizations with 500-999 employees reported that 84.2% did budget for training and 15.8% did not. Of the organizations responding with 1,000 or more employees, 100% (21 organizations) reported that they did budget funds for management training.

Question eight asked: What percent of your managers received training this past year? Answers to questions four and eight indicated that about 50-60% (mean average 53.85%) of the responding organization's managers received training and that the larger companies were the ones that tended to budget for the training. A cross tabulation of the size of the organizations and the percent of their managers trained indicated that the size of the organizations made little difference in the percentage of their managers trained.

Question nine on the questionnaire asked: How much did you spend training managers this past year? Of those responding, 39.4% spent under $2,000; 28.4% spent $2,000-$5,000; 17.5% spent $5,000-$10,000; 5.4% spent $10,000-$20,000; and 9.3% spent over $20,000. A cross tabulation of the size of the organization with the amount spent in training indicated that the larger the company, the larger the expenditure for training. Of the 393 respondents to the question, 28 were members of organizations with less than 50 employees; 46 were members of organizations of 50-99 employees; 115 were members of organizations of 100-249 employees; 124 were members of organizations of 250-499 employees; 59 were members of organizations of 500-999 employees; and 21 were members of organizations of 1,000 or more employees. Almost one-third (31.4%) of the respondents in organizations of 500-999 spent over $20,000 on training. More than half (54.2%) of the respondents in organizations of 50-99 spent less than $2,000. Over one-third (39.5%) of the respondents in organizations of 100-249 employees spent under $2,000. Of the respondents in organizations employing 250-499 staff, 39.2% spent under $2,000 and 6.3% spent over $20,000 on training. A cross tabulation of type of organizations and what they spent on training indicated that wholesale trade spent the least. Manufacturing and transportation and utilities spent the most. Although a significant number (73.68%) of health services indicated they budgeted for management training, 61.6% indicated they budgeted less than $5,000. More than 60% of all types of organizations indicated they spent less than $5,000 on management training.

Question ten asked: How many total hours did your managers spend in training this past year? The mean for total hours by organization was 268 hours and the mode was 1000 hours. The mean percent of managers receiving training was 53.85. Due to probable misunderstanding of the question, the range of responses was 3900 hours (high 4000 - low 100). This variability possibly could have been attributed to the interpretation of the question as a single manager or as a total group of managers. The mean number of managers in the organizations was 26. The mean number of managers receiving training was 14. The mean number of total hours a single manager spent in training was 19.14.

Question eleven on the questionnaire asked: Do you feel your managers receive adequate training? Those responding indicated the training was "fairly adequate" (62.2%). Another 29.13% felt the

training was "inadequate." However, only 8.66% felt the training was "very adequate." A cross tabulation of the size of the organization with the adequacy of training indicated larger organizations were least satisfied with management training adequacy. None (0)% of the organizations with 500-999 employees indicated the training as "very adequate." Organizations with 250-499 employees were closely divided between "inadequate" (41.3%) and "fairly adequate" (54.3%). Organizations with fewer than 250 employees indicated fairly adequate manager training as the dominant response.

DELIVERY OF MANAGEMENT TRAINING

To define how current management training initiatives are being delivered, the respondents (N=393) ranked in order of priority and indicated the following sources of training programs:

1. 68.4% (N=269) In-house, company developed and presented training programs
2. 49.5% (N=195) In-house, private firm developed and presented training programs
3. 37.4% (N=147) Off-site, company developed and presented training programs
4. 27.4% (N=108) Off-site, private firm developed and presented training programs
5. 25.4% (N=100) Training delivered by a vocational-technical school
6. 22.4% (N=88) Training delivered by a college/university, and
7. 15.3% (N=60) Other—professional organizations most frequently cited.

TRAINING LIMITATIONS

Question 16 on the questionnaire was asked to define what limits or interferes with training opportunities for managers. Time it takes to train was most frequently cited (38.5%). Second most frequently cited was lack of staff to offer training (26.3%). Location of training was third under "frequently" (25.3%). Cited first under "some" was lack of time to plan training (49.5%). Time, no staff to offer training, and location were the top three under the combination of both "frequently" and "some." Cited least for interference in training was manager unwillingness.

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Research question six was asked to define how many of the organizations assess their managers' training needs. Questions 12-15 and 21 were designed to answer this question. Question 12 asked: Do you know what your managers' training needs are? On a scale of 1 (no) to 5 (yes), the mean was 3.6. More of the respondents said they knew their managers' training needs (92.21% "somewhat 3" to "yes 5") than said they did not know their managers training needs (7.79% "somewhat 2" to "no 1").

A cross tabulation of size of organizations with whether the organization knew the managers' training needs indicated that the organizations employing 500-999 employees chose "somewhat" (55%) more than any other size organization. Not a single respondent in the 500-999 and 1,000 or more size organizations reported they did not know their managers' training needs. The other organizations were more evenly distributed between "somewhat" and "yes" when asked if they knew their managers' training needs.

A cross tabulation of type of organization with whether the organization knew their managers' training needs indicated that more than 50% of the organizations felt they knew their managers training needs. Public Administration indicated the strongest "yes." Manufacturing indicated the fewest "no" responses. Health services and wholesale trade had the most "no" responses.

Question 13 asked: Has a needs assessment been performed in your company within the past three years to determine managers' training needs? The 393 respondents answered as follows: Yes = 25.4% (N=100), No = 66.3% (N=261), and Don't know = 8.3% (N=33). A cross tabulation of size of organization with whether they had performed a needs assessment indicated more than 50% *had not* or *did not know* in organizations less than 999 employees. Those with fewer than 250 employees most strongly indicated that they did not perform needs assessments. Organizations employing 500-999 were more evenly divided between those that had performed needs assessments and those that had not. Those with greater than 1000 employees most strongly indicated that they did perform needs assessments (51.6%).

Question 14 asked: Which criteria are used to determine manager-training needs? The respondents ranked the criteria as follows: need for performance improvement, new hire required, manager requests, and new technology required.

Question 15 asked, Who determines which managers receive training? The respondents' (N=393) answers in rank order follows:

1. 67.8% (N=266) Chief Executive Officer
2. 48.6% (N=191) Personnel Department
3. 45.8% (N=180) Immediate Supervisors
4. 32.6% (N=128) Manager himself/herself

Question 21 asked: Does your company evaluate manager training? Formal evaluation? Informal evaluation? Those responding (N=393) indicated "Yes" (69.98%; N=275) more than "No" (30.02%; N=118). The evaluation, according to those who answered "Yes," was more "informal" (76.45%; N=300) than "formal" (23.55%; N=93). A cross tabulation of size of organization with whether they evaluated manager training indicated a significant increase in those that did evaluate manager training when the organizations employed 250 or more employees. Organizations with fewer than 250 employees were about evenly divided between those who did and did not evaluate manager training. A cross tabulation of type of organization with whether they evaluated manager training indicated about an even division between those who did and those who did not. Wholesale trade, retail trade, and health services organizations indicated they evaluate manager training more often than other organizations.

TYPE, SOURCE, AND METHODS OF TRAINING

To address what preferences these organizations have concerning type, source, and methods of training, research question seven was asked. Questions 17-19 and 20 on the questionnaire were designed to answer this question. Question 19 asked: Which of the following types of training would you like to offer or continue to offer your managers? Respondents chose from a list of 22 program areas categorized according to the following types: management/leadership, marketing, company-specific, personal development, and systems training.

The following list ranks the respondents' choices (N=393) in order of preferences:

1. 73.4% (N=288) Planning/Decision making (Management/Leadership)
2. 70.2% (N=275) Delegating (Management/Leadership)
3. 69.4% (N=273) Time management (Management/Leadership)
4. 68.5% (N=296) Employee relations (Personal)
5. 67.3% (N=264) Motivation (Personal)
6. 66.2% (N=260) Setting prioritiese (Management Leadership)

7. 65.2% (N=256) Computer Operation (Systems Training)
8. 64.1% (N=252) Performance appraisal (Management/Leadership)
9. 61.3% (N=241) Customer relations (Personal)
10. 58.4% (N=230) Interpersonal communication (Personal)
11. 55.2% (N=217) Written communications (Personal)
12. 53.2% (N=209) Policies and Procedures (Company - Specific)
13. 50.5% (N=198) Sales (Marketing)
14. 48.7% (N=191) Staffing (Management/Leadership)
15. 47.3% (N=186) Financial/Budgeting (Management Leadership)
16. 44.6% (N=175) Conducting meetings (Personal)
17. 44.5% (N=174) Product/Service quality (Marketing)
18. 42.3% (N=166) Legal regulations (Management/Leadership)
19. 41.5% (N=163) Record Keeping (Systems Training)
20. 40.4% (N=159) Inventory (Systems Training)
21. 26.4% (N=104) Accounting (Systems training)
22. 22.5% (N=89) Product development (Marketing)

Question 20 asked the respondents to rank sources and methods of training they would choose to satisfy managers' training needs. Self-paced or self-instruction (books), computer-assisted, packaged (video/audio assisted), and classroom (lecture/discussion/activity) were the method choices given the respondents. The method they named as first choice for all types of training was classroom (lecture/discussion/activity). The second choice of method, for all types of training except systems and personal, was packaged (video/audio assisted). The third choice was computer assisted. The source of training choices given respondents were area vocational-technical schools, university/ colleges, their own company (in-house), or private consulting/training firms. The source of training the respondents named as first choice for management/leadership training was private consulting/ training firms. The first choice for marketing and company/specific training was in-house. The first choice for personal, systems training, and management/leadership was area vocational-technical schools. Second choice for management/leadership and systems training was in-house. For management/leadership training the third choice of sources was private firms. University/college was consistently chosen fourth as a source of training.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The focus of the study was to determine what management training needs exist and what current training activities are taking place within the business and industry environment in Oklahoma. Indicators suggest that large business and industry organizations do most of the management training. While this is evident, smaller organizations have a need for management training as well. However, they do little training with the current resources available. The review of literature indicated that small and mid-sized organizations have a higher need for management training. However, until recently this size of organization has not seen the usefulness and/or financial return from this type of training (Ellinger, Watkins & Barnas, 1996; Training Magazine, Oct., 1998; Watkins & Marsick, 1989; Wirth, 1992). The literature review also indicated that organizations without an individual directly in charge of management training are the ones with the most obvious need.

The study was designed to provide information to two groups: organizations wanting to provide management training to their employees and training providers wanting to assist thoseorganizations in their management training, particularly the Oklahoma Department of Vocational Technical

Education. The study will enable those providing training programs to choose the most appropriate training for a given situation, determine how much to budget for the training, and determine what training methods are best suited to meet individual participant needs. They can also discern how they compare with organizations of like size in their efforts to provide management training. Those providing the training can use the information in this study to determine the types of management training programs to offer and the methods to use when delivering the training.

CONCLUSIONS

The number of organizations that have a coordinator whose primary responsibility is training and development indicated that management training was a priority in organizations with 500 or more employees. However, the number of managers trained the past year, the number of organizations budgeting for the training, and the dollars spent indicated a lack of emphasis on management training in organizations with fewer than 500 employees. Management training currently being offered includes the following: computer operation, motivation, product development, product/service quality, planning/decision making, financial management, and legal regulation. Respondents indicated that these topics presented the most tangible benefit to the organization and employees.

The size of the organization has the biggest effect on the amount and variation of training offered managers. At least half of the managers in all of the organizations in the past year were trained. The larger the organization, the more likely it was for a manager to receive training and for the organization to budget funds specifically for management training. The size of the organization made little difference in attitudes toward adequacy of the management training. The addition of training coordinators in larger organizations made little difference in attitudes toward the adequacy of training.

It was further apparent that lack of time to plan training, lack of staff to offer training, and cost of training most commonly interfered with management training. This is very similar to factors cited in the literature review as affecting the amount of management training provided in organizations. Also, the majority of the organizations have no recorded process for determining training needs but do evaluate the impact of the management training they provide. The absence of needs assessment over time seems to indicate a lack of commitment toward management training. The majority indicated they evaluate management training, but over three-fourths said it was an informal evaluation.

It was apparent that management training was perceived as needed and that larger organizations have a greater understanding and desire to accommodate that need. It was also obvious from the findings that the areas of management training needed were in leadership and personal development skills, while preferences for training and methods of delivery were in-house with vocational-technical schools providing the training in a classroom setting.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Trainers and organizations delivering training must realize that in order to achieve success they have to understand more than expressed needs. The appropriateness of the training provided to individuals and organizations must be based on an understanding of support systems and organizational needs—many times transparent. All organizations must come to better clarify their training activities and realize that the success of training programs cannot be evaluated on an activity-by-activity basis, instead they must be viewed as an investment. Those who deliver

training must educate consumers of training programs to understand that training is an investment. Subsequently, they must be prepared to show a return-on-investment. Evaluation of training through return-on-investment would allow organizations to judge whether the training has met their needs or will be useful in similar situations in the future. Additionally, the area of return-on-investment represents a potential for further study. The effectiveness of the training being delivered in comparison to the number of dollars being spent on each manager each year is a critical concern.

Organizations that offer management training and those that request it should recognize the differences in delivering training to large, mid-sized, and small organizations. By offering multi-client programs where costs are shared between small to mid-sized organizations desiring management training, smaller organizations will have an opportunity to receive the same quality of management training once reserved for large and wealthy organizations. This approach would help to eliminate the constraints that preclude mid-sized to small organizations from participating in management training—specifically, the cost of training and the lack of staff to offer the training.

Those who deliver training must offer the management training topics reported as preferences through a well designed and theory-based approach to needs identification. Emphasis should be placed on critical and strategic thinking skills. Programs offered to business and industry management personnel must broaden interests and extend the habit of inquiry and reflection; must sharpen awareness of the organizations' current social, political, and economic climate; and must lay the groundwork for a continual program of self-development.

A final area that represents potential for further study is the preference for source of training. Many private and public organizations have entered the field of training and development. Those in the public sector have been accused of duplication of resources. This study addressed the Oklahoma Vocational Technical System as a provider of management training. Several respondents listed the university system as their preference for training providers. Therefore, an area of potential study would focus on how well the university system is doing as a provider of management training and are they duplicating a service that already exists. This study was the first time management training in Oklahoma has been examined from a group focus. The amount of interest that it has generated from the participating organizations is an indication that a more intense effort to examine training being delivered and to determine training needs present is desired from the business and industry community. The participating organizations reported need for a more effective approach to organizational and management development. The organizations involved in the study offer the Oklahoma Department of Vocational Technical Education an opportunity to enhance the quality of their management development and professional services to satisfy a growing and critical need.

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