

Where do managers need training? Find out with a survey

Common scenario: Your organization promotes a top-performing employee to a management position. Soon, it becomes clear his management skills are mediocre at best.

He finds it awkward to supervise former peers. He fails to delegate responsibilities and starts micromanaging every project in a know-it-all manner. This quickly turns off his staff.

More U.S. employers will face such scenarios. *Reason:* The demand for good managers exceeds the supply. Aging baby boomers are retiring or have been promoted beyond management positions. And the people replacing them lack skills and abilities to lead. *The result:* Poor morale and high turnover.

That's one reason organizations are increasing their training budgets. Corporations now spend an average of \$1,202 per employee on training. Finance and insurance firms spend the most, retail spends the least, according to a report by Bersin & Associates, a California-based learning management firm.

E-learning has grown dramatically. The use of self-study e-learning now accounts for 20% of employee training, up from 15% last year, the study says.

Manager training programs account for one-third of the spending.

Advice: If your organization can't increase its budget, target it more wisely with a survey to pinpoint where managers can benefit most from training. Training assessment surveys help you aim money at programs that improve productivity and match strategic objectives. That impresses top executives, who are demanding better results from training programs.

Use the sample questions below to help create a survey. If yours is a smaller organization, skip the formal survey and ask such questions in one-on-one meetings with managers.

Don't accept a shopping list of answers to open-ended questions. Push managers to choose which answers are most important to them.

If you already have an idea of areas where managers need training, use a multiple-choice format to encourage them to rank certain areas.

1. Which of your management skills would benefit the most from training?
2. What new skills do you need to do your job more effectively?
3. Name the barriers to doing your job effectively.
4. What are the organization's three most important training needs?
5. If you could choose only one type of training to receive, what would it be?
6. Describe a job situation you could have handled better if you had received training. What type of training could have helped you in that situation? What could be the consequences of not receiving such training?