

The Survey Sample

The sample consisted of Personal Members of AIM-WA who were sent an electronic questionnaire via email. 573 Members, representing a response rate of 8%, responded to the survey.

Both this sample and that surveyed in April 2004 were not necessarily representative of the WA business community at large in that respondents were drawn from proportionally more large companies, and from reportedly more senior positions than is typically the case in the general WA workforce. The results should be considered in the light of this skewed sample.

Survey on Training & Development Activities

An electronic survey was conducted in June 2005 with Personal Members of the Australian Institute of Management in Western Australia (AIM). The purpose of the survey was to gather data on organisations' Training and Development activities, with the focus on management and supervisory training rather than technical or industry specific training.

The same survey was first conducted in April 2004, and repeating the survey a year later has allowed for the identification of any broad shifts over time that might exist.

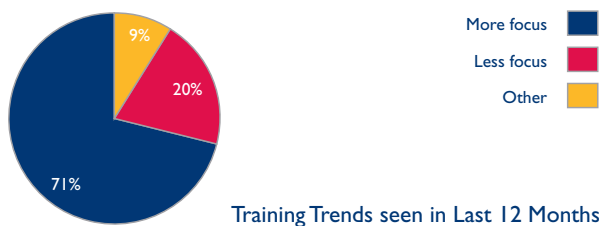
The findings of this survey reinforce how strongly committed organisations remain to the importance of management and supervisor training and development, and intentions to continue with this commitment clearly exist. However, time constraints remain a significant barrier to doing more training, and the area of assessment of training continues to represent a broad challenge.

AIM would like to thank respondents who completed the survey. Participation increases our collective knowledge of the issues concerning training and development activities.

All questions concentrated on management and supervisory training rather than technical or industry specific training. All charts shown in the report that follows are reflective of the current survey findings only, although the accompanying text also refers to similarities and differences with last year's survey.

Training Trends

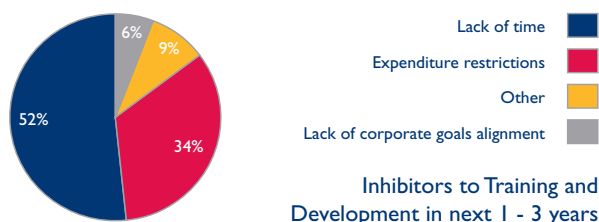
Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) had noticed more energy in their organisation's training and development activities in the past year, whereas only one in five thought they had seen less focus. These findings were in line with the previous year's research.



Training Trends seen in Last 12 Months

Factors likely to inhibit training

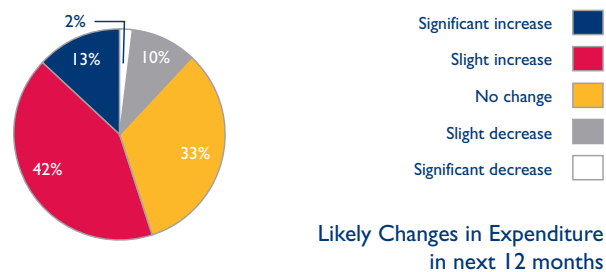
The majority of respondents, both in the current survey and in the previous research, perceived the biggest inhibitor for an organisation's commitment to training to be either a lack of time or a lack of money. The relative frequency with which these two factors were cited was equal in the previous finding (40% stating time and 42% stating money), whereas the current survey appears to indicate a comparative increase in the importance of limited time (52% stating time and 34% stating money - see graph below). If this trend continues in future studies, it would reinforce the anecdotal picture of an increasingly time-poor business community which struggles to fit vital training and development initiatives into organisational priorities.



Inhibitors to Training and Development in next 1 - 3 years

Expected changes in training expenditure

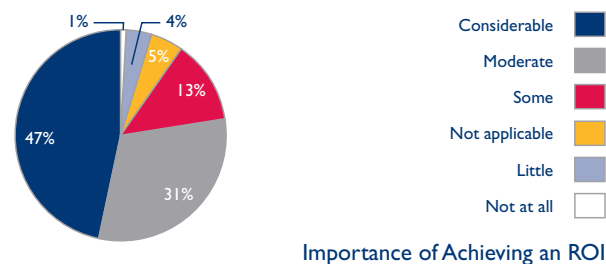
Over half the sample (55%) in the current research survey, and exactly 50% in the previous survey, anticipated an increase in their organisation's expenditure on training. A third of each sample considered there would be no change.



Likely Changes in Expenditure in next 12 months

Importance of achieving an ROI?

Perhaps not surprisingly, nine out of ten respondents regarded achieving a tangible ROI as important, to a greater or lesser extent. Only 5% viewed ROI of negligible or no importance, and another 5% considered it not applicable in their organisation.



Importance of Achieving an ROI

Methods for assessing training?

In the previous survey 11% of respondents used no methods at all to assess the effectiveness of their training. This has only increased in the current survey, with 16% of the sample stating no measures are used. However, this still leaves more than four out of every five respondents using assessment methods with the most frequently mentioned being course review sheets, and then competency based assessments. Respondents also use participant reports, comparisons of behaviours before and after training, and (in a minority of cases) financial ROI calculations.

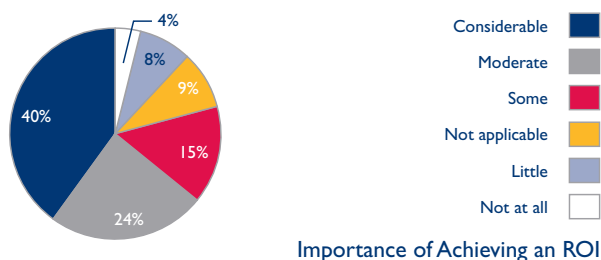
The main benefits in using such assessment measures appear to be that they provide a way of reviewing the standard of the training provider, and to ensure participants focus on what they have learnt, including applicability. Measures used generally need to be easy to employ, with assessments considered helpful for formal and informal staff reviews (and in some cases, salary reviews).

For every organisation reducing its training activities recently, there are over three organisations increasing theirs

Barriers stopping more use of assessment techniques centred around limited resources (time, money, personnel), and for this reason there was a trade-off for some between effort in appraising training versus the type of training being assessed. For example if the training was for “commodity skills”, then a high level of detail was regarded as unnecessary. Similarly, ROI calculations were considered by some to be too expensive to set up.

Links to National Competency Standards?

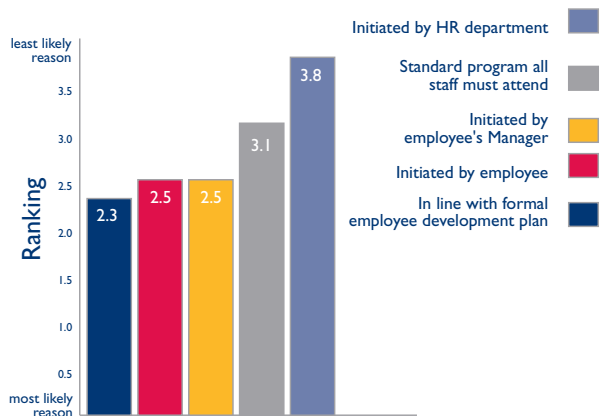
Virtually two-thirds (64%) of the sample considered it important (to a considerable or moderate level) that their organisation’s training was linked to National Competency Standards. This was more than the 56% found in last year’s survey. This year’s findings are charted below.



Assessment of training continues to be a significant challenge.

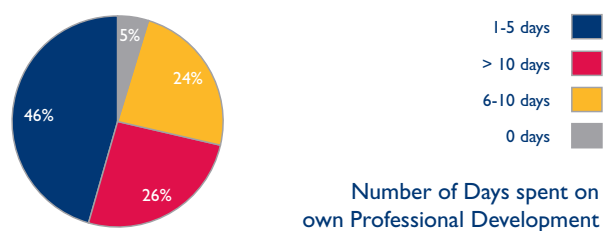
Reasons for training

As the chart below shows, the least likely reason amongst respondents for a person to attend training was due to the HR department initiating it. This was the same in the last survey. The most likely reason of those provided was that the training was part of a formal employee development plan.



Respondents' own professional development

The breakdown in the number of professional development days respondents had spent on themselves is shown in the chart below, with the findings similar to last year’s survey. It is concerning that even a low percentage like 5% spent no days at all on their own professional development.



Summary

The outcomes of this survey indicate a continued strong commitment to management and supervisor training and development. For every organisation reducing its training activities recently, there are over three organisations increasing theirs, and the vast majority expect their training expenditure to increase, or at least to remain unchanged. However, it is dismaying to see a small but consistent percentage of people are undertaking no professional development of their own.

Linking training to national competency barriers continues to be of widespread, and growing, importance. Perhaps not surprisingly an organisation’s HR department continues to be a driving force behind initiating training, whilst barriers to training include a lack of time and money, and particularly the former.

Assessment of training continues to represent a significant challenge for some organisations, and it is concerning to see a comparative growth in the number of organisations using no tools to measure the training they undertake.

It will be interesting to see, when this survey is next repeated, whether trends identified continue to build, or if strategies to assist the barriers and limiting factors identified have been implemented.

For further information on this survey and other AIM research, call the Australian Institute of Management on tel: (08) 9383 8088 or visit the website on www.aimwa.com

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