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TABLE 1: DATA SOURCES

Data Source	Samples	Average Number of Employees	Average Payroll \$M
BMS = Benchmarking Service Organizations	BMS		
Samples for 1999 to 2002 come from ASTD's Benchmarking Service, which is used by a broad cross section of U.S. organizations. The 2003 sample includes additional organizations that completed a special survey on key indicators in August 2004.	2003 (n = 344)	6,866	290
	2002 (n = 276)	6,661	451
	2001 (n = 270)	4,961	222
	2000 (n = 394)	3,859	161
	1999 (n = 405)	2,672	98
BMF = Benchmarking Forum Organizations	BMF		
ASTD's Benchmarking Forum is a group of large Fortune 500 companies and public sector organizations that share data and best practices with one another. These organizations submit detailed data on their training investments and practices each year. Only organizations that submitted enterprise-wide data are included.	2003 (n = 26)	100,168	4,930
	2002 (n = 17)	66,823	6,175
	2001 (n = 25)	63,259	4,213
	2000 (n = 26)	122,302	3,015
	1999 (n = 27)	71,008	3,207
BEST = BEST Award Winners	BEST		
Organizations that were honored for their exceptional efforts to foster, support, and leverage enterprise-wide learning for business results.	2004 (n = 24)	40,883	
	2003 (n = 23)	18,572	

- The three samples for which data are presented in this report provide three groups against which you can benchmark WLP investments and practices in your organization. The BMS sample includes the broadest range of U.S. organizations in terms of size and industry and should be interpreted as the U.S. norm. The BMF sample represents very large and mostly global organizations, most of which are based in the U.S. Between one and three BMF organizations are based outside the U.S. in any given year.
 - New this year is the sample of organizations that won ASTD BEST awards in 2003 and 2004. The BEST awards program recognizes organizations that demonstrate a clear link between learning and performance. Through a rigorous blind review process, 23 winners were selected from 76 submissions in 2003, and 24 winners were selected from 83 submissions in 2004. There were three non-U.S. winners in 2003 and five in 2004. The winners were selected based on the following criteria:
 - evidence that learning has value in the culture
 - evidence of a link between learning and performance
 - evidence that the organization has leveraged technology in learning
 - evidence of innovative learning initiatives.
- For this report, we reanalyzed the winners' data to identify commonalities in their learning investments, strategies, practices, and performance outcomes.

- The average annual *expenditure per employee* in ASTD's broadest sample of organizations (BMS) has remained steady at about \$820 since 2002. Average expenditure per employee in our sample of large organizations (BMF) was consistently higher, but decreased from \$1,366 in 2002 to \$1,190 in 2004. The average expenditure per employee in organizations that won ASTD BEST awards in 2003 and 2004 was more than \$2,000 each year since 2002.
- The average *percentage of payroll* invested in learning increased from 2.2 percent in 2002 to 2.52 in 2004 in BMS organizations, but decreased from 2.47 in 2002 to 1.99 in 2004 in our sample of large organizations (BMF). The average expenditure as a percentage of payroll in BEST award winners was considerably higher, ranging from 3.2 percent in 2002 to 4.16 percent in 2004.
- The *percentage of expenditure for external services* has risen steadily since 2002, with the average now being 27 percent in BMS and BEST organizations, and 36 percent in BMF organizations.
- The number of *hours of formal learning per employee* has averaged about 28 hours in BMS organizations and about 38 hours in the larger BMF organizations from 2002 to 2004.
- The average *number of employees per WLP staff member* in 2004 was 194 in BMS organizations and 325 in BMF organizations in 2004. The average number of hours of content provided per WLP staff member was 541 in BMS organizations and 505 in BMF organizations in 2003.
- The average *cost per learning hour provided* was \$596 per hour in BMS and \$1,430 per hour in BMF organizations in 2003. However, the average *cost per learning hour received* was \$56 in both BMS and BMF organizations, because BMF organizations, being larger, have greater reuse of each hour of learning that is provided.
- *Expenditure per employee group* was greatest for customer service employees in 2003, with an average of 18 percent of expenditure going to that single employee group. However, an average of 28 percent of learning expenditure went to employees with managerial responsibilities (first-line supervisors, middle and senior managers, and executives combined).
- In both BMS and BMF organizations, managerial and executive development combined were allocated the most *learning content* in 2003 and 2004, followed closely by information technology, business processes, and industry-specific content.
- *Use of technology* for delivering learning continued to increase in all samples (BMS, BMF, and BEST). The projections for 2004 are 29 percent in BMS, 35 percent in BMF, and at least 29 percent in BEST organizations. More than half of technology-based delivery was online in 2003 and 2004, and at least 75 percent of online learning was self-paced.
- The percentage of BMS organizations doing Level 1 *evaluation* in 2003 was about the same as in 2002 (74 percent), but the percentage doing Levels 2, 3, and 4 declined in 2003, to 31, 14, and 8 percent respectively. The case is very different in BEST organizations; all BEST organizations are doing Level 4 evaluation to demonstrate the link between learning and organizational performance.
- *Common characteristics of BEST winning organizations* were
 - high level of investment in learning (although some spend less than the norm)
 - measurement and demonstration of efficiency and effectiveness of the learning function
 - alignment of learning with business needs and individual employee competency needs
 - provision of a broad range of internal and external formal and informal learning opportunities
 - chief-level (or C-level) involvement and support for learning
 - combination of learning with other performance improvement solutions.