

# Senior Managers Absent From Training Table

By Michael Laff



Unlike their staff members, senior executives don't need to call in sick to avoid a dreary training session. They can just opt out of it.

And that's what they're doing in comparison with their colleagues, according to a recent survey, which indicated that senior managers receive less training than the remaining ranks of the workforce.

It's no surprise that organizations are devoting most of their training efforts to frontline managers, according to a recent survey by Novations, a Boston-based training consultancy. When asked which employees will receive the most training, 90 percent of HR and learning officials reported frontline managers. Senior-level executives rated the lowest, at a still relatively high figure of 59 percent.

"Sometimes senior managers just don't value training," says Paul Terry, vice president for talent management at Novations. "They think it's for somebody else and not them. They would rather get a two-hour overview."

Senior managers' resistance to training reflects the prevailing sentiment in organizations that top executives require the least amount of training. According to the survey, the percentage of organizations that view the transition from supervisor to senior manager as difficult—18 percent—was ranked at

nearly the same level as those organizations that viewed the transition from entry level to seasoned professional as challenging—17 percent.

Even if senior managers are opting out of training or e-learning sessions, it does not mean they don't receive training. A larger number of senior managers receive some kind of special training—either through coaching or peer strategy sessions.

Despite the increase in the amount of coaching and mentoring, there is a lack of training for employees who transition into senior positions in their organizations, according to Terry.

"A lot of organizations believe that you either have the skills to be a leader or you don't," he says. "They prefer to buy talent rather than provide ongoing development of potential leaders."

Overall, organizations continue to report that a high percentage of employees at all levels will receive training. However, Terry acknowledged that few, if any, organizations would report that they are not planning to train their employees.

"Training is paved with good intentions, but then budget realities hit," he says. "A lot of times it just means sending someone to a course rather than creating a development plan. It's a one-shot event."

## The BIG Number

# 18%

of HR and learning professionals believe the transition from supervisor to senior executive is the most difficult workplace transition.

>> Which of the following employee categories at your organization will receive training and development this year?

Frontline managers	90%
Entry-level employees	82%
Middle-level executives	76%
Experienced staff	75%
Senior-level executives	59%

>> Which of the following career transitions is most difficult for employees?

Seasoned professional to supervisory/managerial	65%
Supervisory/managerial to senior management/executives	18%
Entry level to seasoned professional	17%

Source: Novations Group survey by Equation Research

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