



Money and Time - Most Trainers Don't Have Either

By John Quincy, Editor of *WorkplaceXpert*

That is the message for the year, according to results of *WorkplaceXpert* Newsletter's recently concluded *Training Products and Usage Survey*. Readers were asked to participate in a special survey, intended to learn about the various types of training being conducted in their organizations, the media used to deliver the content and explore some of the obstacles facing them in their jobs.

The findings reinforced what we have all been hearing for the past couple of years. **Budgets are tight** and **resources are stretched**. The two things everyone needs more of are Time and Budget. So, what else is new?

Well we were heartened to learn there is a lot that is new. **Readers appear prepared to activate many new initiatives**, as well as **maintain high levels of usage** in many areas of training delivery. Investments, even large ones, will be made as soon as possible in 2004.

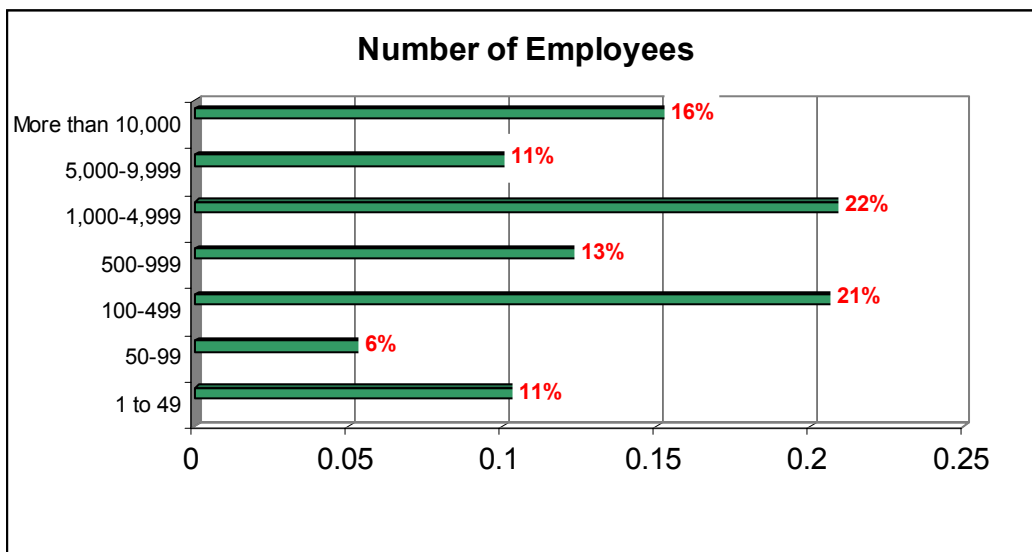
The following are the results from the survey. We trust you will find the information helpful, as you plan your 2004 training initiatives and try and squeak out some more projects from your budgets. Understanding how your fellow training/HR and learning professionals deploy their limited resources in order to achieve the highest return on investment is valuable information.

WHO RESPONDED

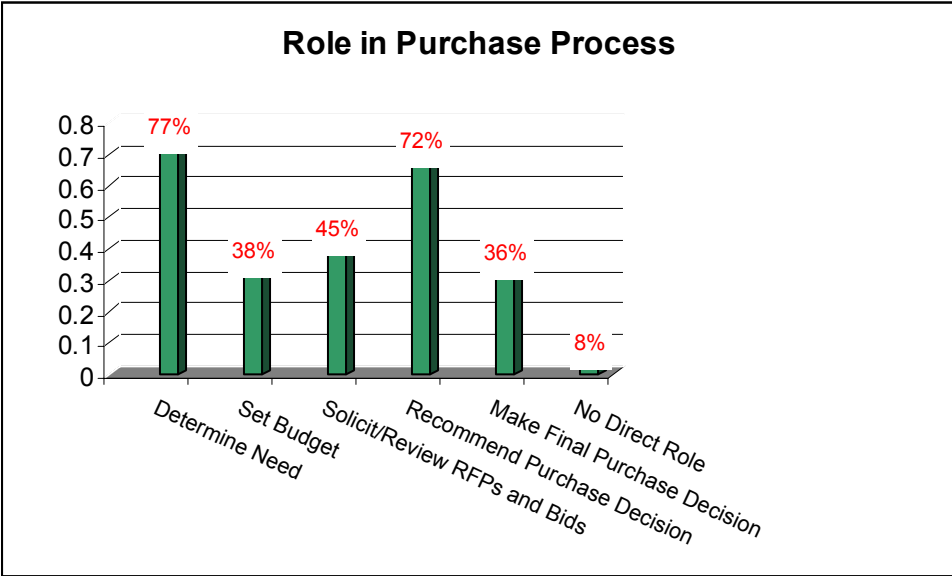
We heard back from a very representative group of our readers. These professionals are well-placed in the training organization and have diverse and active roles in the identification, delivery and purchase process of training products and services. **99% of reader organizations conduct training in some way.**

The size of the organization varies.

- 35% were from companies of 100-1000 employees
- 31% came from organizations of 1,000 – 10,000 employees.
- 17% are from small companies (less than 100 employees)
- 16% represent super-large organizations, with more than 10,000 employees.



More than 90% of respondents have some role in the purchase process. More than three-quarters of you determine need in the organization, while more than 70% make the purchase recommendation/decision for training products.



TYPES OF TRAINING BEING PROVIDED

An extensive list of types of training was presented to readers in the survey, seeking to get a feel for the extent various types of training are being provided by organizations. Trainers seem to be offering a wide-variety of employer-sponsored training, even in spite of economically challenging times. It would seem that training, when mandatory or considered core to individual performance is being deployed by the vast majority of organizations.

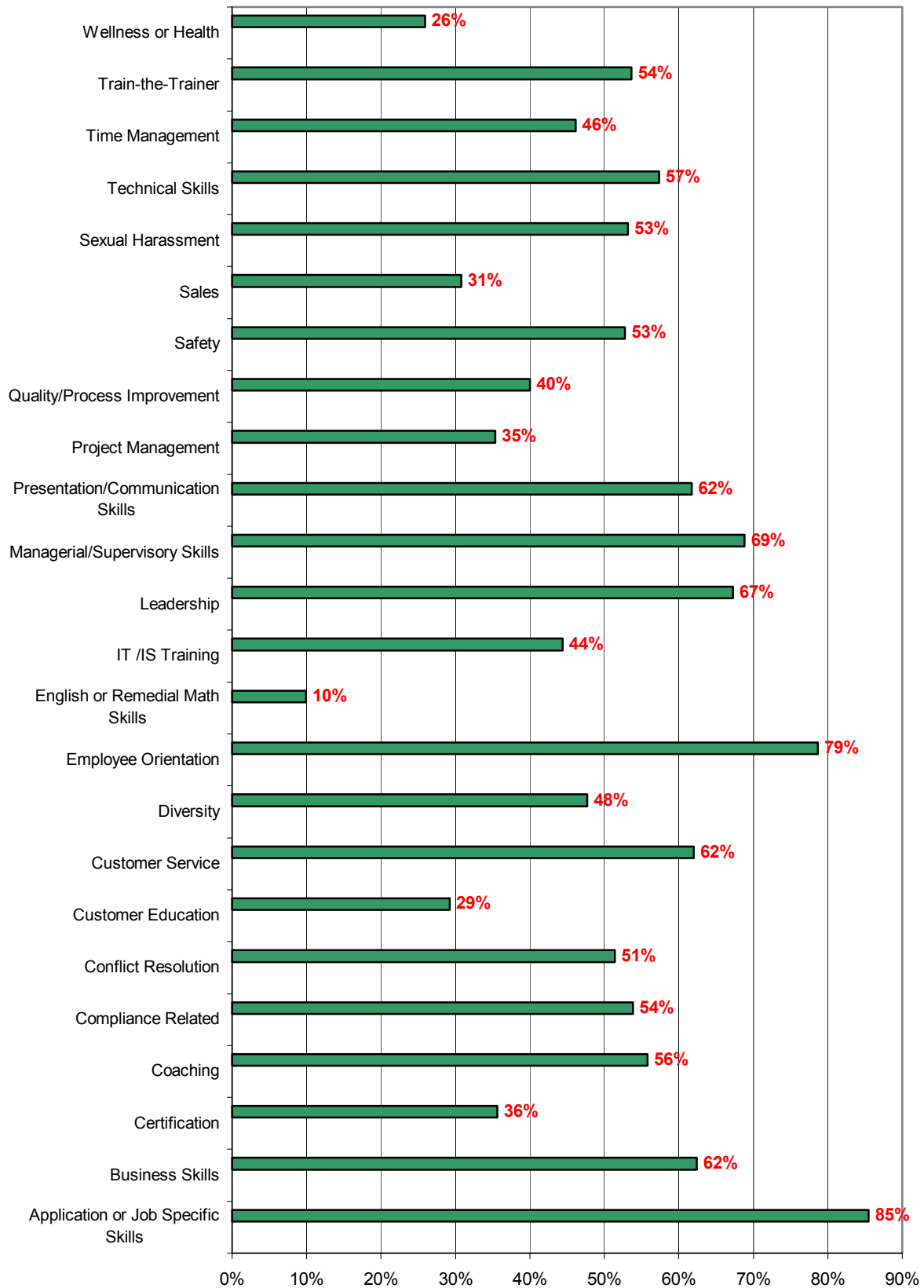
For example:

- Applications or Job Specific Skills Training – 87%
- Employee Orientation – 80%
- Managerial/Supervisory Skills – 69%
- Leadership Training – 67%
- Customer Service Training – 64%.

Readers responded that training such as: Remedial Skills Training (10%), Customer Education (29%) and Sales Training (33%) were not being conducted as frequently as other efforts.

The traditional “Soft Skills” types of training are still being delivered in organizations, but not at the level they enjoyed in the mid to late 1990’s. These types of training clearly have their purpose and value, but in light of reduced budgets and limited staff resources, the majority of survey respondents are focusing on maintaining delivering these types of training at 2003 levels.

Types of Training



TRAINING DELIVERY PLANS

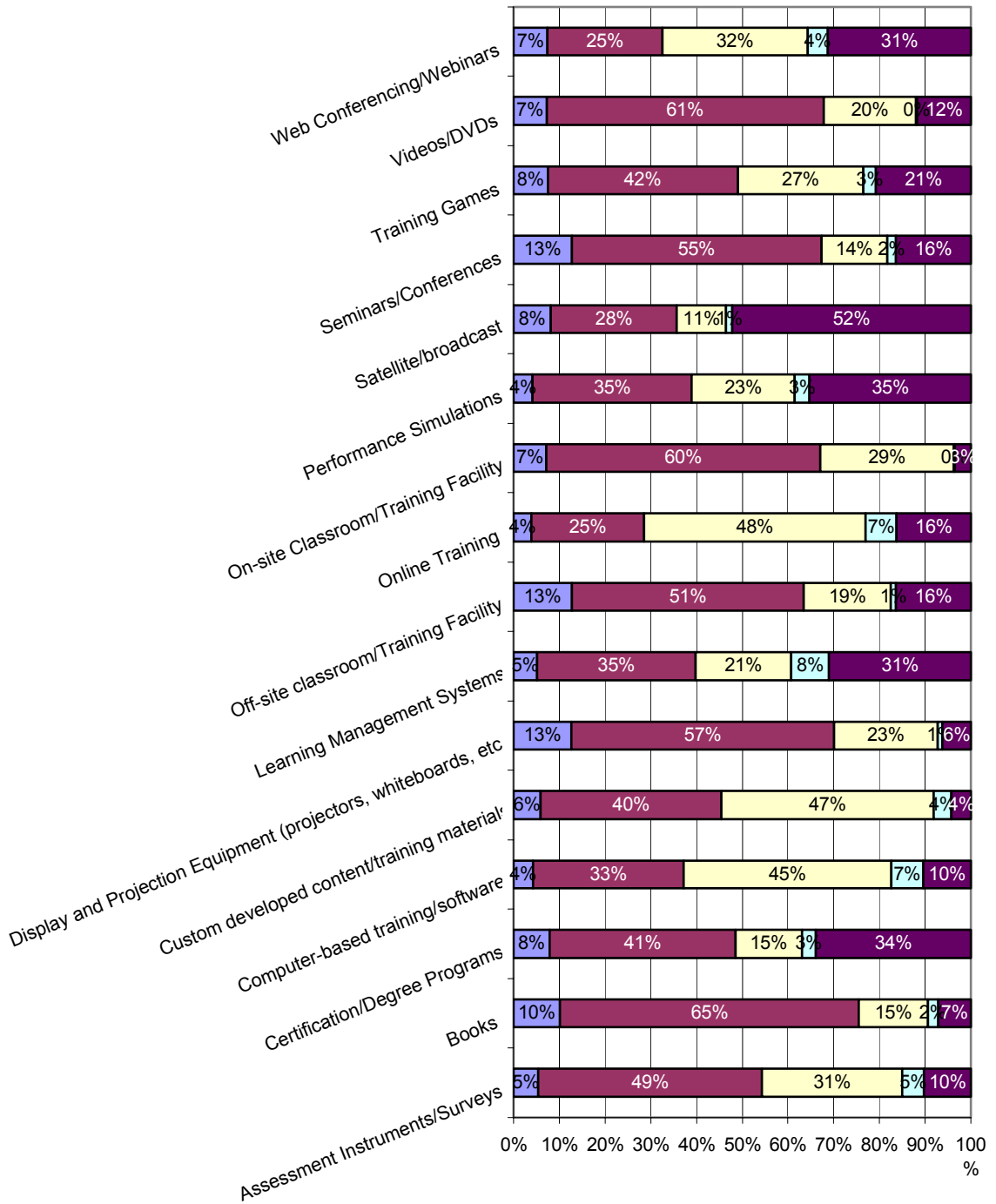
As training needs are identified, resources allocated, and curriculum developed – the age-old question, “How to best deliver the content?” has to be asked.

- Are the traditional delivery methods of books, videos and manuals outdated?
- Are new technologies still too hard to implement and too expensive to buy?
- How about the overhead projector – have you seen one in the closet lately?

We learned that in fact, online learning, computer-based training, custom-developed content/training materials all represent growth opportunities to the industry, as they were identified by professionals as areas they intend to use more in 2004 than they did in 2003 – and – in many cases, they plan to use these delivery methods for the first time, finally pulling the trigger on stalled purchase plans of the recent past.

The following chart illustrates the anticipated usage of training delivery plans.

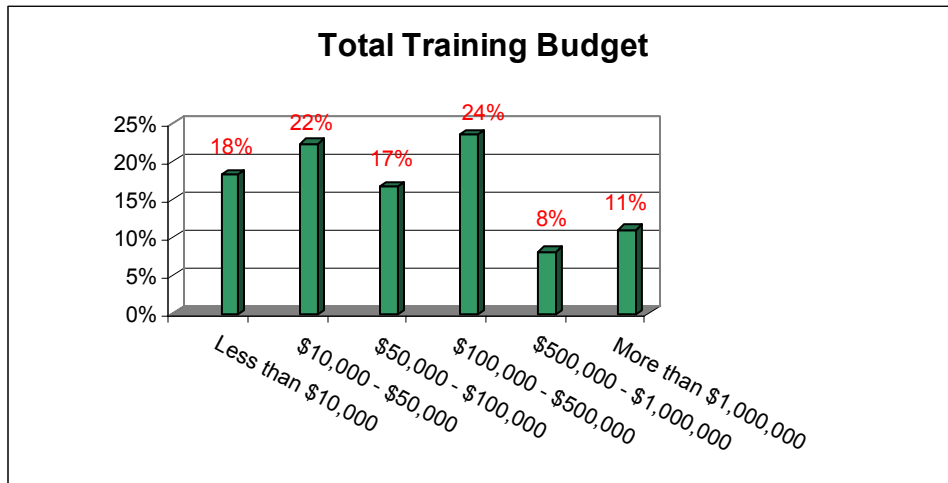
Training Delivery Plans



■ LESS in 2004 than 2003
 ■ About the SAME in 2004 as 2003
 ■ MORE in 2004 than 2003
■ Plan on using for FIRST TIME in 2004
 ■ N/A

Training organization budgets continue to be relatively well funded.

- 39% of respondents reported having budgets between \$10,000 - \$100,000
- 31% reported budgets between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000
- 12% of readers represent organization with more than \$1 Million dollar training budgets

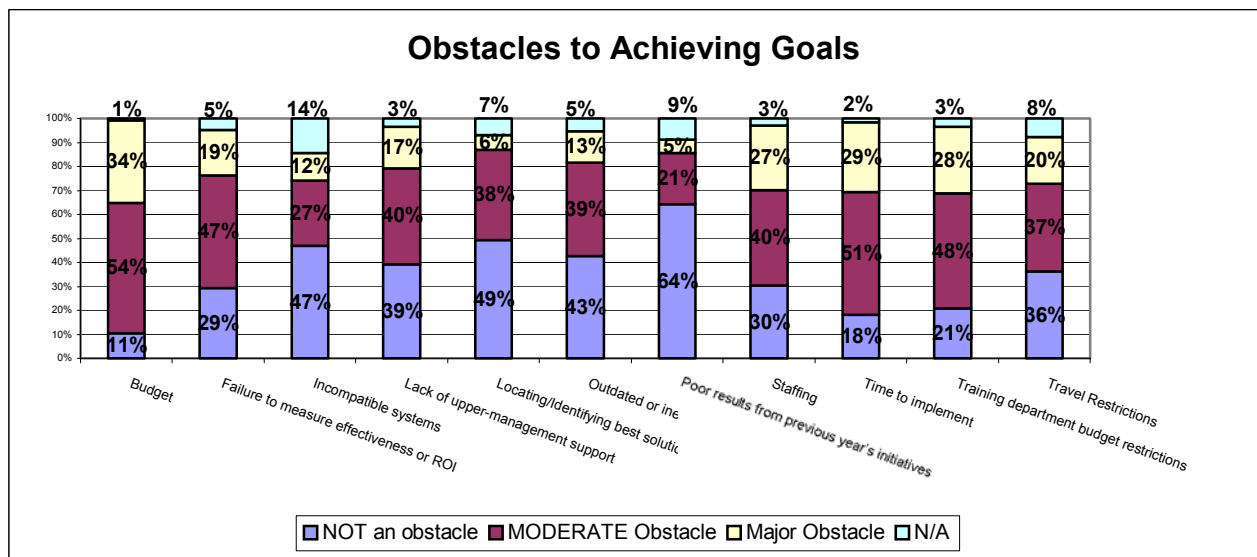


OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING TRAINING OBJECTIVES

There has been some change in “obstacles” being identified by respondents to this year’s survey. Similar questions have been asked in the past two years about obstacles. Past results have shown major obstacles as: Lack of ROI, or lack of management support as key challenges.

This year, the answer is loud and clear. The largest obstacles are clearly related to budget – either corporate budget limitations (88%) or department budgets restrictions (71%) followed closely by Time to Implement (82%).

Poor results from previous years (62%) Locating best solution providers (50%) and Incompatible systems (42%) where the items that readers identified as NOT being obstacles to their achievement of training objectives.



In their own words:

In addition to the obstacles we outlined as suggestions, we heard from many professionals about some of the bigger challenges they are facing. Trainers are trying hard to deliver quality learning to the organization, as efficiently as possible. They face internal pressures and budget restrictions, as well as changing information needs of workers.

For example:

“My biggest obstacle is the lack of commitment from supervisors on up. Everyone wants a top-notch training program with all the bells and whistles, and they have some pretty unrealistic expectations of what a one-person training department can actually do, without any effort on their part to contribute. It seems like they think that comprehensive, organization-specific training programs come in the just-add-water-and-stir version!”

“Rapid change in industry means that learners are constantly bombarded with new information on a daily basis - on several levels. Hard to learn so many different things all at once.”

“Corporate office requires the training department to be revenue generating. This pressure severely limits research and introduction of new methods.”

Many people commented that they are having attendance issues. As resources are stretched thin within organizations, taking the time to participate in training, no matter how wonderful it may be, is a precious commodity and often overlooked.

“My biggest problem is getting people into the classroom. Training isn't mandatory so there is no incentive to come to class. As of late I've had to hand out tips sheets on topics I would ordinarily and prefer to teach.”

“Staff apathy. I have a core group who attend everything. For others, it's a challenge to get them into services.”

“People not having time to attend; high no show or cancellation at last minute due to staffing or project deadlines; not able to plan coverage.”

Thank you to all those readers who took the time to respond, especially in light of the fact you are all so busy and your time is more valuable than ever. **WorkplaceXpert** will continue to try and help provide readers with actionable information from the industry's leading publications and resources. We are all in this together!

Do these findings resonate with you and your organization's experiences in delivering training? We welcome your reactions, input and suggestions for future survey projects.

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