

ROAD TRANSPORT AND MOTOR INDUSTRY
TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

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ROAD TRANSPORT AND MOTOR INDUSTRY **TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS**

Objective

The main aim of this piece of research was to identify if there was a need within the Road Transport and Motor Industry locally for management training. Within this overall objective there were a number of further aims:

1. To identify the skill areas where the need was greatest.
2. To find out the preferred length, frequency and timing of any training sessions.
3. To identify the preferred length of any training courses.
4. To identify whether the respondents would be prepared to pay towards the cost of training.
5. To identify what proportion of the cost of any training the respondents would be prepared to pay.

Methodology

A structured questionnaire was used to canvass the views of managers in the industry. This was sent out during March and April to named contacts at 684 companies in the Vehicle Transport and Motor Repair sectors in Leicestershire: company data was pulled from Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council's Linktrack database. An accompanying covering letter explained the reasons for the research. Due to a low initial level of response this mailing was carried out a second time.

51 questionnaires were received in total from the combined mailings. This represented a response rate of 8%, a fairly low rate but one not unexpected for this type of mailing.

Whilst the results in the report should be treated with caution due to the limited size of the sample, they do give a reasonable feel for the need within the industry locally for management training.

Results

Profile of respondents

Industrial sector

There was similar representation in the sample from both sides of the industry: 47% of the questionnaires received were from the Motor Repair side of the industry and 43% were from the Vehicle Transport side.

Company size

The majority of the companies that returned their surveys, 84%, were 'small companies' employing less than 50 people. A further 10% were medium in size, employing between 50 and 199 people. Just 4%, or two in number, employed more than 200 people.

Importance of skill areas to the running of the business

The respondents were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, the importance of each of 12 skill areas to their business.

The area seen by the respondents as most important to the running of the business was **financial management**, highlighted as being important or very important by 82% of the 51 respondents.

This was closely followed by **quality control**, with 78% of the sample rating this area as being important or very important.

Three other areas gained ratings of more than 70%: **health & safety** and **people management** had values of 73%; and **problem solving & decision making** had a rating of 71%.

Comparing the mean importance - a measure which allows us to compare the relative importance of the skill areas, we see that these five areas also gained the greatest mean ratings:

Financial management, quality control and **health & safety** had ratings of 4.1. **People management** and **problem solving** gained ratings of 4 and 3.8 respectively.

Areas seen as least important to the running of the business were **marketing** and **sales management**. Nearly a quarter of the sample (24%) felt these to be either not important or not at all important.

Table showing the proportion of respondents rating skill areas as being important to the running of their business

| Ranking | Skill area | % |
|---------|-----------------------------------|----|
| 1 | Financial management | 82 |
| 2 | Quality control | 78 |
| 3 | Health & safety | 73 |
| | People management | 73 |
| 5 | Problem solving & decision making | 71 |
| 6 | Employment legislation | 67 |
| 7 | Negotiating skills | 65 |
| 8 | New technology/innovation | 63 |
| | Marketing | 63 |
| 10 | Sales management | 61 |
| 11 | Strategic planning | 59 |
| 12 | Information management | 55 |

Interest in management training in particular skill areas

Respondents were asked to rate, again on a five-point scale, their level of interest in management training in each of the 12 skill areas.

42 out of the 51 respondents said they were interested or very interested in training in at least one of the skill areas. 24 highlighted an interest in seven or more of the skill areas. Six respondents felt they would be interested in training in all 12 areas.

Two skill areas generated the greatest level of interest. These were **employment legislation** and **negotiating skills**: 57% of the sample said they would be interested or very interested in training in these areas.

Three other areas attracted ratings of more than 50%. These were **health & safety**, **financial management**, and **new technology & innovation**. Figures for these areas were 55%, 51% and 51% respectively.

Looking at the mean interest, these five areas also had the greatest ratings. **Employment legislation** and **health & safety** had ratings of 3.4; **negotiating skills** and **new technology & innovation**, 3.3, and **financial management**, a rating of 3.2.

Skill areas attracting the least interest in terms of training were **marketing**, **information management** and **strategic planning**. The proportions of the sample selecting 'not interested' or 'not very interested' for these three areas were 39%, 35% and 35%.

These three areas also attracted the lowest mean interest ratings of all the skill areas, each having a rating of 3.

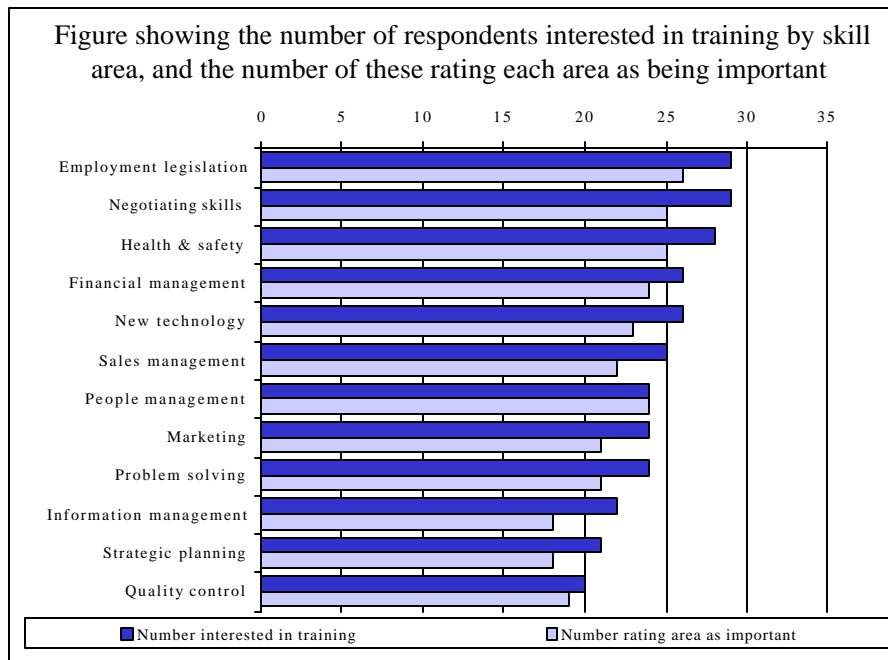
Table showing the proportion of respondents expressing an interest in management training by skill area

| Ranking | Skill area | % |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Employment legislation | 57 |
| | Negotiating skills | 57 |
| 3 | Health & safety | 55 |
| 4 | Financial management | 51 |
| | New technology/innovation | 51 |
| 6 | Sales management | 49 |
| 7 | Marketing | 47 |
| | People management | 47 |
| | Problem solving & decision making | 47 |
| 10 | Information management | 43 |
| 11 | Strategic planning | 41 |
| 12 | Quality control | 39 |

The answers to the question asking for levels of interest in training will obviously point to where training needs might lie. However, if training courses are going to be run, it is important that they are run in areas that are seen as important to the business, not just in areas of need.

By looking at the response to the question about the importance of skill areas from those interested in training, we will get a feel for the extent to which the areas of need are also areas of importance.

The figure over the page shows this by skill area:



We see that for all the skill areas the numbers in the two bars are similar, i.e. there are not significant numbers of respondents expressing an interest in training in skill areas they have rated as unimportant to the business.

Preferred length of training sessions

The most popular length of training session would be half a day. 48% of those that answered, i.e. those that had expressed an interest, highlighted this. A further 43% said they would prefer a full day. 10% would prefer a two-hour session.

Preferred frequency of training sessions

The most popular frequency of any training would be monthly, as noted by 43% of those interested in training. A further 23% would choose fortnightly and weekly, whilst 10% would prefer sessions to take place quarterly.

Preferred length of training course

There was less agreement here. However, it should be noted that lack of consensus over course length is something that we have found in previous research. Whilst nearly a quarter of those interested would prefer any course to last one day, 24% also would prefer a course to run over three months. A further 16% would opt for six weeks. Only four people would prefer any course to last more than three months.

Suitable times

The most suitable times for training would be afternoons or early evenings: only 33% of those interested in training indicated that they would find these times unsuitable. Perhaps

not surprisingly, weekends were seen as being the least suitable time for training to take place: 60% of the respondents would find weekend training unsuitable. The next least suitable time would be mornings, 40% saying they would find training sessions organised then unsuitable.

Would respondents be prepared to pay towards the cost of any training?

27 in number, or 64% of those respondents that had expressed an interest in training would be prepared to make some contribution towards the cost of any training. 33%, 14 in number, said they wouldn't.

What proportion of the cost would respondents be prepared to pay?

24 of those interested in training replied here. Although no one would be prepared to bear more than 50% of the costs of training, ten respondents said they would be prepared to pay half of the costs. Other responses were 40% and 33% (one person each); 25% (selected by four people), and 20% and 10% (one person each). Six people said they would be prepared to make a contribution depending on the overall costs or quality of training.

Number of managers employed in total

80% of the companies in the sample employed between one and five managers; 10% employed between six and 10 managers, and 6% employed more than 10 managers.

Number of people in the business that would benefit from management training

Senior management

29 respondents, or 69% of those who had expressed an interest in training, said that there were senior managers who would benefit from management training in their business. Of these, 17 said that just one manager would benefit.

Middle management

19 respondents, or 45% of those who had expressed an interest in training, said that there were middle managers in their business that would benefit. Four said that one manager would benefit.

Lower management/supervisors

21 respondents, or 50% of those who said they were interested in training, said there were lower managers or supervisors in their business who would benefit from training. Eight of these said that one manager would benefit.

Other staff

Eight respondents, or 19% of those who had expressed interest, said there were other people in their business that would benefit from training. These included technicians, operatives, account staff, juniors and controllers.

Conclusions

The key points coming out of the research are that:

- ◆ There seems to be a need for management training within the industry locally.
 - ⇒ Certainly, 42 out of the 51 respondents were interested or very interested in training in at least one of the skill areas.
- ◆ There seems to be a willingness to contribute, to a degree, to the cost of any training.
 - ⇒ 27 of those respondents who expressed an interest in training would be prepared to pay towards the cost of any training.
- ◆ The preferred format for any training would be:
 - ⇒ Half a day;
 - ⇒ In the afternoon or early evening;
 - ⇒ Once a month;
 - ⇒ With the course to last three months;
 - ⇒ Covering perhaps the six skill areas that generated the greatest level of interest, i.e. employment legislation, negotiating skills, health and safety, financial management, new technology/innovation and sales management.

Appendix One