

# ERC Training & Development Practices Survey

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**Conducted by ERC**

6700 Beta Drive, Suite 300, Mayfield Village, OH 44143  
440/684-9700 | 440/684-9760 (fax)  
[www.ercnet.org](http://www.ercnet.org)



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## Overview

In February of 2010, ERC conducted a survey on organizations in Northeast Ohio to determine trends in administering training, identifying and prioritizing employee training needs, annual training activities, evaluating training, and other employee development practices. The results show several key trends among Northeast Ohio employers in terms of their training and development practices.

## Key findings in the survey

- External consultants, trainers, or specialists tend to provide the majority of training for organizations.
- Content of training, costs/pricing of training, effectiveness of program, and needs of participants are the most common factors influencing organizations' decision to outsource training.
- Most organizations do not require employees to participate in a specific number of training hours or courses annually.
- The most common methods of delivering training are on-the-job, classroom, webinar, and self-study aid methods.
- Most organizations have a training budget that is 2-3% of payroll.
- Several organizations use follow-up tools including job aids and action plans to help employees transfer training to the job.
- The most common way organizations assess the effectiveness of their training is by measuring performance improvement/behavior on the job.

## Administering Training

Most organizations' human resources department is responsible for coordinating training. Some organizations (26%) say their training department is responsible for coordinating training and others (19%) say supervisors and/or managers are responsible for coordinating training. Supervisors, managers, directors, and executives appear to be primarily responsible for approving training, according to respondents. Twenty-eight percent of respondents say their human resources department is responsible for approving training. Other departments cited as being responsible for coordinating or approving training were individual departments, operations, training coordinator or manager, and discipline heads.

**Figure 1 | At your organization, who is responsible for coordinating training and approving requests for employee training?**

	Coordinating Training	Approving Training
Human resources department	72%	28%
Training department	26%	13%
Organizational development department	2%	0%
Supervisors and/or managers	19%	56%
Directors and/or executives	6%	41%

External consultants, trainers, or specialists are most commonly used to facilitate supervisory/managerial and leadership training at organizations. They are also used to facilitate technical, sales/customer service, and non-technical (soft-skills) types of training. Internal subject matter experts are most commonly used to facilitate technical training and internal trainers are typically used to instruct on technical, non-technical (soft-skills), and supervisory/managerial training. Local colleges/universities are less commonly providers of training, among respondents.

**Figure 2 | Who provides the majority of training for the following categories/types of training at your organization?**

	Technical	Non-technical (soft-skills)	Sales/Customer Service	Supervisory/ Managerial	Leadership
Internal trainers	50%	46%	35%	41%	24%
Internal subject matter experts	63%	28%	26%	22%	13%
External consultants, trainers, or specialists	50%	37%	41%	61%	63%
Local colleges/universities	22%	19%	7%	24%	28%

The most common factors influencing an organization’s decision to conduct training using external providers is the content of the training, costs/pricing, effectiveness of program, needs of participants, and subject matter expertise. Less common factors were location convenience, quality of trainers, reputation of provider, ease of administration/registration, and training resources, equipment, and technology.

**Figure 3 | What factors influence your organization's decision to conduct training using external providers?**

	Percent
Content of training	76%
Costs/pricing	76%
Effectiveness of program	65%
Needs of participants	65%
Subject matter expertise	61%
Location convenience	35%
Quality of trainers	35%
Reputation of provider	35%
Ease of administration/registration	11%
Training resources, equipment, technology, etc.	11%

The most common way in which the majority of respondents track training activities and related information is by using Microsoft Excel, stated by 41% of respondents. A learning management system is used by 27% of employers. Types of learning management systems cited by employers include Plex, ABRA, Adobe Connect Pro, KnowledgePresenter, Lawson, Plateau, Thing and UltiPro.

**Figure 4 | How does your organization track training activities and information?**

	Percent
Microsoft Excel	41%
Learning Management System	27%
Internal Database	11%
Microsoft Access	8%
Training Matrix	8%
Individual Personnel Files	5%

## Assessing Training Needs

Most respondents identify training needs through supervisory and managerial observation/feedback, change requirements (new technology, legislation, etc.), employee feedback/requests, developmental goals/discussions, and performance appraisal results.

**Figure 5 | Which of the following best describes how your organization identifies employee training needs? Please rank the following sources of information about training needs in terms of those most frequently used (1 = most frequent; 10 = least frequent).**

	Average	Most Common Rank	Rank in Top 5	Rank in Bottom 5
Supervisory and managerial observation/feedback	3.2	1	17%	4%
Change requirements (new technology, legislation)	3.7	1	17%	4%
Employee feedback/requests	4.9	3	13%	7%
Developmental goals/discussions	4.5	6	13%	7%
Performance appraisal results	4.5	4	13%	9%
Performance records (quality, productivity, etc.)	5.6	7	9%	11%
Promotion decisions	6.8	8	4%	15%
Workforce/succession planning	7.3	9	4%	16%
Training needs assessments/surveys	7.0	10	6%	13%
Top performer interests	7.2	10	5%	14%

Most organizations identify employee training needs as employee requests or needs pertain, on-going (more often than quarterly), or on an annual basis. Few organizations evaluate their employees' training needs less than annually.

**Figure 6 | How often does your organization identify employee training needs?**

	Percent
As needed (as employee requests or needs pertain)	34%
On-going (more often than quarterly)	26%
Annually	23%
Bi-annually	11%
Less than annually	4%
Quarterly	2%

## Training Delivery

The majority of organizations (84%) do not require employees to participate in a specific number of training hours or courses annually. It is not a common practice among respondents to set professional development or training requirements for employees.

**Figure 7 | Does your organization require employees to participate in a specific number of hours or training courses annually?**

	Percent
No requirement	84%
Require employees to participate in a specific number of training courses annually	11%
Require employees to participate in a specific number of training hours annually	5%

Organizations provide external training specific or customized to their organization in many different categories, most predominantly technical, license/certification renewal training, and supervisory/management training. Providing external customized training in non-technical (soft-skills), sales and customer service, and leadership topics was also fairly common. Manufacturers were more likely to use external customized training especially for technical, non-technical (soft-skills), leadership, and license/certification renewal than non-manufacturing organizations. Non-profits were less likely to use external customized training in most types of training except license/certification.

**Figure 8 | In which of the following categories does your organization provide external training specific or customized to your organization?**

	Percent
Technical training	73%
Non-technical (soft-skills) training	43%
Sales/customer service training	53%
Supervisory/management training	60%
Leadership training	53%
License/certification renewal training	63%

The most common methods of training delivery used by respondents include on-the-job training, classroom training (both internal and external instructor-led), self-study aids, and webinars. Less common methods of training delivery include communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups, professional publications, professional association membership, conferences, and tuition reimbursement.

**Figure 9 | Types of training and most common delivery methods**

Type of Training	Delivery Method
Technical training	On-the-job, classroom, certification programs, self-study aids
Non-technical (soft-skills) training	On-the-job, classroom, webinars, audio/video/CD, self-study aids
Sales/customer service training	On-the-job, classroom, self-study aids, webinars
Supervisory/management training	Classroom, self-study aids, webinars, audio/video/CD
Leadership training	On-the-job, classroom, self-study aids, e-learning
License/certification renewal training	Classroom, certification programs, association membership, webinars

It's important to note that classroom training was frequently used in all types of training offered by employers, cited as a common delivery across technical, non-technical, sales/customer service, supervisory/management, leadership, and license/certification renewal training.

### Delivery of Technical Training

Technical training is delivered using many different delivery methods among respondents, particularly on-the-job training, classroom training, certification programs, self-study aids and e-learning. Communities of practices/knowledge sharing groups, audio, video, or CD, professional publications, professional association membership, conferences, and webinars were less commonly used to delivery technical training.

**Figure 10 | How is technical training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
On-the-job training	100%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	63%
External instructor-led classroom training	60%
Certification programs	53%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc	53%
E-learning	50%
Tuition reimbursement	43%
Webinars	40%
Conferences	40%
Professional association membership	33%
Professional publications	30%
Audio, video, or CD	30%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	20%

### Delivery of Non-Technical (Soft-Skills Training)

Non-technical (soft-skills) training is commonly delivered using on-the-job training, classroom training, and webinars. Communities of practices/knowledge sharing groups, certification programs, conferences, professional publications, tuition reimbursement, and professional association memberships were less commonly used to deliver training in non-technical soft-skills.

**Figure 11 | How is non-technical (soft-skills) training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
On-the-job training	57%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	53%
Webinars	50%
External instructor-led classroom training	47%
Audio, video, or CD	47%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc.	47%
E-learning	33%
Professional association membership	23%
Tuition reimbursement	20%
Professional publications	20%
Conferences	17%
Certification programs	17%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	10%

### Delivery of Supervisory/Managerial Training

Supervisory/managerial training is most commonly delivered via on-the-job training, classroom training, self-study aid, and webinars. This training is less commonly delivered via communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups, certification programs, tuition reimbursement, professional association memberships, e-learning, and professional publications.

**Figure 12 | How is supervisory/managerial training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
On-the-job training	70%
External instructor-led classroom training	63%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	50%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc.	47%
Webinars	43%
Audio, video, or CD	43%
Conferences	40%
Professional publications	37%
E-learning	33%
Professional association membership	30%
Tuition reimbursement	20%
Certification programs	17%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	17%

### Delivery of Leadership Training

Leadership training is primarily delivered via classroom training, self-study aids, webinars, and audio, video, or CD. Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups, tuition reimbursement, certification programs, e-learning, and professional association membership were less commonly used to delivery leadership training at local organizations.

**Figure 13 | How is leadership training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
External instructor-led classroom training	53%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	43%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc.	43%
Webinars	40%
Audio, video, or CD	40%
On-the-job training	37%
Conferences	37%
Professional publications	30%
Professional association membership	27%
E-learning	20%
Certification programs	17%
Tuition reimbursement	17%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	17%

### Delivery of Sales/Customer Service Training

Sales/customer service training is predominantly delivered via on-the-job training. Other forms of training were also moderately used in delivering training. Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups, certification programs, tuition reimbursement, professional association membership, and conferences were less commonly used to deliver sales/customer service training.

**Figure 14 | How is sales/customer service training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
On-the-job training	77%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	43%
External instructor-led classroom training	40%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc.	37%
E-learning	33%
Webinars	33%
Audio, video, or CD	33%
Professional publications	20%
Conferences	17%
Professional association membership	17%
Tuition reimbursement	13%
Certification programs	7%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	7%

### Delivery of License/Certification Renewal Training

License/certification renewal training is primarily delivered via external instructor-led classroom training, certification programs, and professional association membership. Audio, video, or CDs, professional publications, communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups, internal instructor-led classroom training, and on-the-job training were less commonly used to deliver this training.

**Figure 15 | How is license/certification renewal training delivered at your organization?**

	Percent
External instructor-led classroom training	57%
Certification programs	50%
Professional association membership	47%
Webinars	30%
Conferences	30%
Self study aids, books, literature workbooks, worksheets, etc.	30%
Tuition reimbursement	27%
E-learning	23%
On-the-job training	17%
Internal instructor-led classroom training	17%
Communities of practice/knowledge sharing groups	13%
Professional publications	13%
Audio video or CD	13%

## Training Activities

The majority of respondents deliver a higher percent of technical training in their organization compared to other types of training.

**Figure 16 | Please specify what percent of training content is delivered in your organization as indicated by the following categories.**

	Average Percent
Technical training	41%
Non-technical (soft-skills) training	18%
Supervisory/managerial training	19%
Leadership training	13%
Sales/customer service training	21%
License/certification renewal training	16%

Most organizations (56%) have an annual training budget of 2-3% (as a percent of payroll). Fewer organizations set their budget at 4% or higher.

**Figure 17 | What is your organization’s annual training budget as a percent of payroll?**

	Percent
0-1%	30%
2-3%	56%
4-5%	15%
Over 6%	0%

In addition, the majority of organizations (54%) have no specified budget per employee for training. Some organizations, however, do specify a budget per employee for training, but it's usually under \$1000.

**Figure 18 | What is your annual budget per employee for training?**

	Percent
No specified budget	54%
Less than \$100	11%
\$101-\$500	7%
\$501-\$1000	7%
\$1001-\$1500	0%

Organizational size was not related to training budget. In fact the respondents that had the most employees did not necessarily have the largest budgets, and the respondents with the least number of employees did not necessarily have the smallest budgets. Those employers with larger budgets for training evaluated training at higher levels including performance improvement/behavior on the job, business results, and return on investment. They also assessed training needs on an on-going basis. Those employers with lower budgets assessed training needs on an as needed basis or annually.

## Transfer and Evaluation of Training

Most organizations use follow-up training tools and job aids to help employees better transfer their learning from training to the job. In addition, slightly over one-third of organizations use action plans. Blending learning and learning contracts were less commonly used by respondents.

**Figure 19 | Does your organization utilize any of the following to help employees better transfer their learning from training to the job?**

	Percent
Follow-up training tools/job aids	40%
Action plans	34%
Blended learning	19%
Learning contracts	4%
Other	2%

The majority of employers (83%) measure the effectiveness of their training programs by performance improvement/behavior on the job, program evaluations/satisfaction, and employee feedback (interviews, focus groups, and surveys). Though less common, some employers (37%) also use pre/post testing to measure the acquisition of skills, attitudes, or behaviors. Fewer employers measure the effectiveness of their training programs by analyzing business results or return on investment.

**Figure 20 | How does your organization measure the effectiveness of its training programs?**

	Percent
Performance improvement/behavior on the job	83%
Program evaluations/satisfaction	77%
Employee feedback (interviews, focus groups, surveys)	70%
Pre/post testing on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behavior	37%
Business results including productivity or quality metrics/improvements	17%
Return on investment (ROI)	3%
None of the above	3%

## Development

The most common types of development services offered to employees are development feedback or coaching, supervisory/management training and development, and individual development plans. In addition, job rotation, job shadowing or cross-training, career goal setting, assessments or tests, information about career and job opportunities, and action planning are also somewhat common developmental activities according to respondents. Stretch assignments, mentoring programs, career planning education, counseling, or formal guides, and workbooks/worksheets were less commonly used by employers when developing their employees.

**Figure 21 | Does your organization offer any of the following development services to employees?**

	Percent
Developmental feedback or coaching	70%
Supervisory/management training/development	57%
Individual development plans	50%
Job rotation, job shadowing, or cross-training	47%
Career goal-setting (short and long term goal setting)	43%
Assessments or tests	40%
Information about career and job opportunities	40%
Action-planning	37%
Leadership/executive formal training/education programs	33%
Career paths tracks or ladders	23%
Stretch assignments	17%
Mentoring program	17%
Career planning education, counseling, or formal guides	13%
Career planning workbooks, worksheets	3%

At many responding organizations, all employees or high potential employees are offered development services. The majority of employers (57%) offer them to all employees. It appears that most employers do not offer development services based on management level or salary and hourly differences.

**Figure 22 | What types of employees are typically offered development services?**

	Percent
All employees	57%
High potential employees	27%
Manager level and above	13%
Only some high potential employees	10%
Only salaried employees	10%
Director level and above	10%
Only hourly employees	3%

Those employers that only offer development services to high potential employees report providing a larger number of services (average = 6 services) than those that offer development services to all employees (average = 4 services)

**Figure 23 | Types of development services offered to high potentials versus all employees**

	High Potentials	All Employees
Career paths, tracks, or ladders	50%	18%
Career planning education, counseling, or formal guides	0%	18%
Career planning workbooks, worksheets	0%	6%
Career goal-setting (short and long term goal setting)	38%	47%
Action-plans	50%	29%
Assessments or tests	50%	47%
Developmental feedback or coaching	63%	76%
Information about career and job opportunities	50%	47%
Job rotation, job shadowing, or cross-training	38%	53%
Stretch assignments	38%	6%

	High Potentials	All Employees
Leadership/executive formal training/education programs	63%	18%
Supervisory/management training/development	75%	35%
Mentoring program	25%	18%
Individual development plans	63%	41%

## Training Plans

Many organizations plan to maintain or increase training in 2010. The types of training respondents are planning to increase are supervisory/management, leadership, and non-technical (soft-skills) training. Respondents were more likely to maintain their technical and sales/customer service training.

**Figure 24 | What are your organization's training plans in 2010?**

	Increase	Maintain	Decrease
Technical training	37%	57%	7%
Non-technical (soft-skills) training	43%	47%	10%
Sales/customer service training	33%	59%	7%
Supervisory/management training	48%	45%	7%
Leadership training	45%	45%	10%
Continuing professional education (CPE)	5%	85%	10%

In terms of specific training topics employers plan to provide training on during 2010, these were most commonly cited by respondents:

- Supervisory and management
- Sales and customer retention
- Technical training
- Regulatory, compliance, and ethics
- Safety, security, and disaster preparedness
- Various soft-skills (time management, communication, coaching, performance management, cultural awareness, meeting management)

## Respondent Demographics

Fifty-four (54) organizations in Northeast Ohio participated in the survey; a breakdown of the industries and sizes they represent is provided below.

**Figure 25 | Respondent demographics by industry and organizational size**

	Percent
<b>Industry</b>	
Manufacturing	48%
Non-Manufacturing	32%
Non-Profit	19%
<b>Organizational size</b>	
1-50	13%
51-200	55%
201-500	16%
501+	16%

## **About ERC**

ERC is Northeast Ohio's largest organization dedicated to HR and workplace programs, practices, training and consulting. ERC membership provides employers access to an incredible amount of information, expertise, and cost savings that supports the attraction, retention, and development of great employees. We also host the nationally recognized NorthCoast 99 program and sponsor the ERC Health insurance program. For more information about ERC, please visit [www.ercnet.org](http://www.ercnet.org).

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