

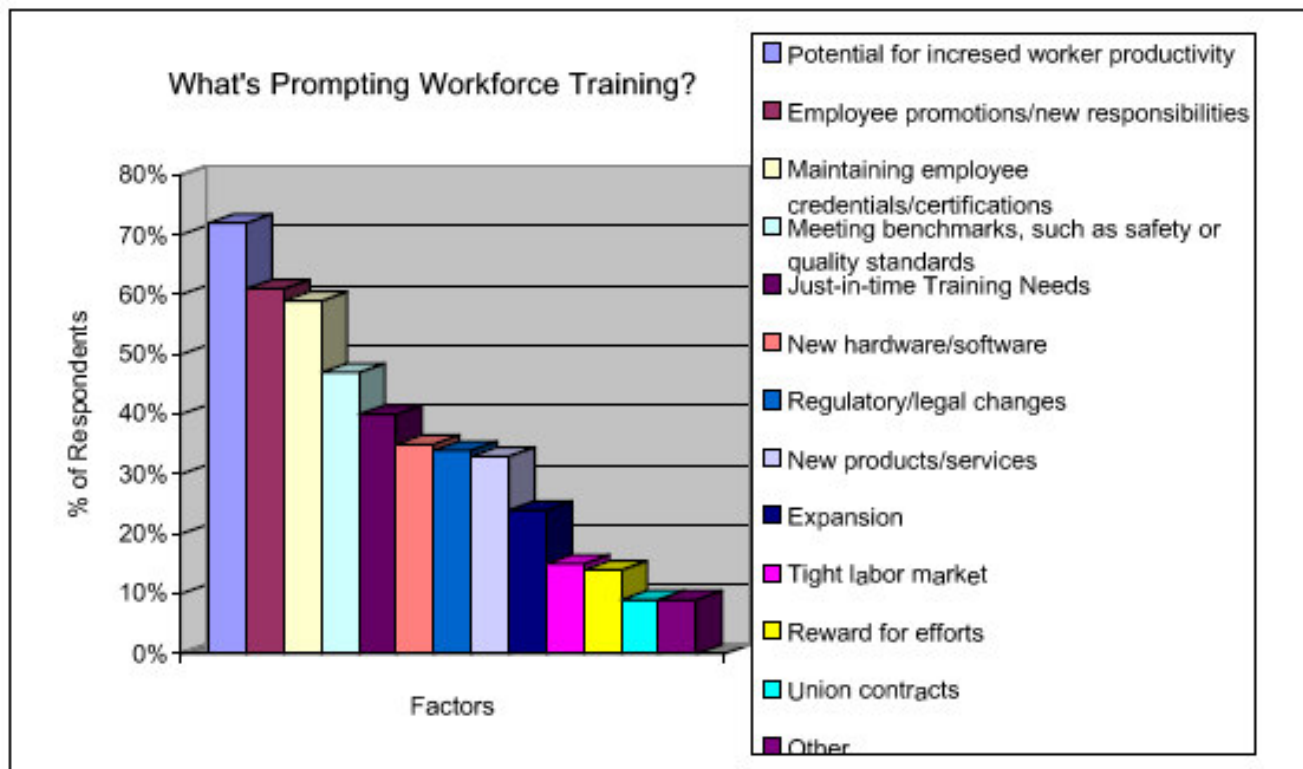
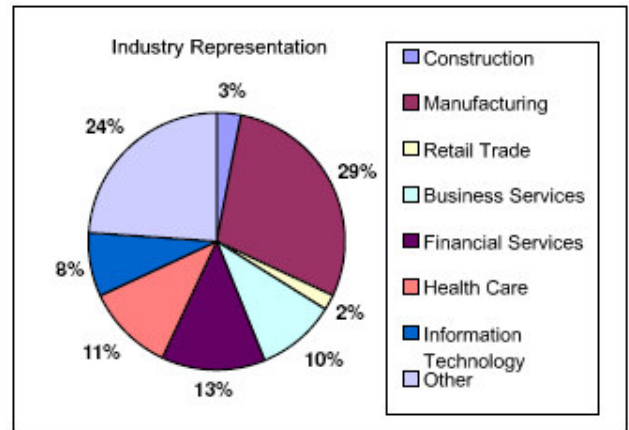
In an effort to better understand investment in training decisions, we at the UW-Milwaukee School of Continuing Education's Center for Workforce Development undertook an online survey of largely human resource professionals in SE Wisconsin in the spring of 2004. We sought to learn more about how these individuals make decisions on training for employees in their organizations. The respondents were asked to respond to fourteen questions. The survey results describe several elements of their decision-making process. These survey results enabled us, as creators of Workforce Enterprise, to better design the content of this online training resource.

Some 106 individuals representing employers in SE Wisconsin responded to the survey. Employment at the 106 responding organizations varied in size from 1 to over 10,000 employees. They were located in a variety of industries, mostly Manufacturing (29%), Financial Services (13%), Health Care (11%), and Business Services (10%). A few were in Government (6%), Construction (3%), Retail (2%), and Information technology (8%).

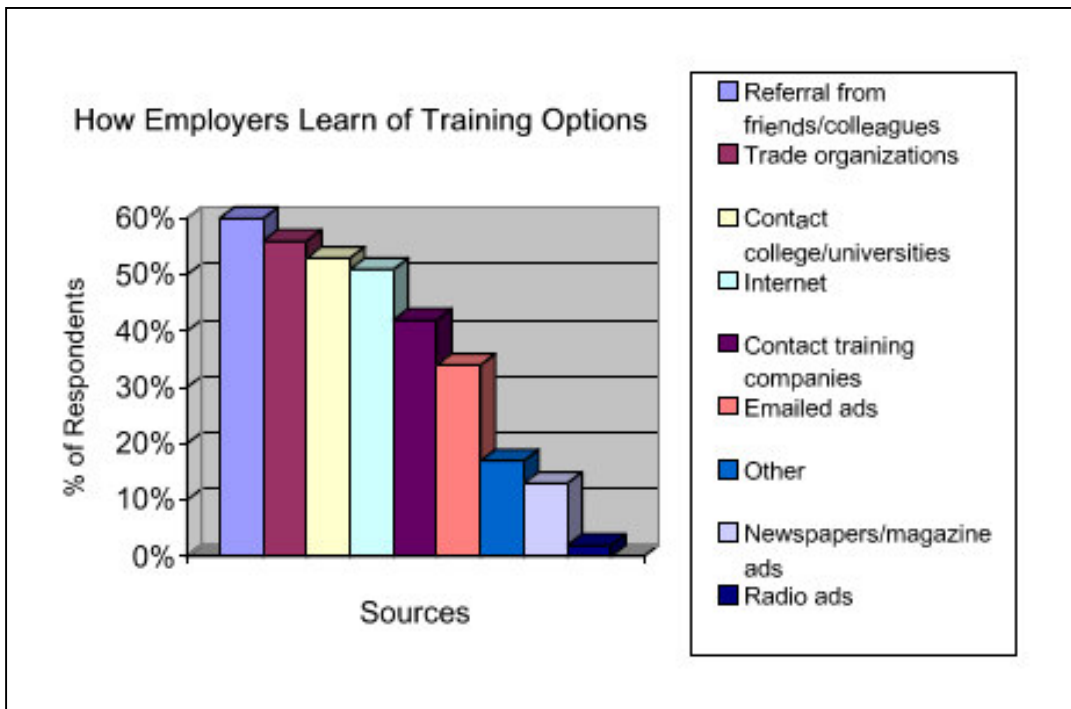
These lessons are spelled out below in no particular order.

- Although overall workforce training in 2004 merits close to the mid-range on a five-point scale of an organization's priority: 43% of respondents give it a highest or second highest priority. That percentage increases to 46% in 2005. Such numbers imply a pretty high level of interest this year and even higher next year.

- In terms of what prompts investment in workers, by far the most important reason is to **increase worker productivity (72%)**. The second most common reason was **the need to train those employees who are given new responsibilities and/or a promotion (61%)**. The third most important reason (59%) was to **maintain employee credentials/certifications**.



- Training will occur in the absence of federal funding. The majority of employers (63%) indicate that training subsidies matter not at all or are not critical to their decision to provide training. Only 24% said that subsidies were very important.



- Relationships and having a very good reputation are extremely important to choosing which institutions are used for training classes. Some 60% of respondents say they learn about appropriate training from friends and colleagues. Almost as important are trade organizations (56%).

- Contact with colleges and universities is also a common source (53%) of knowledge about classes. The use of the Internet (51%) is increasingly important, and emailed advertisements (34%) are commonly being used.
- Certain elements of training add appeal to those seeking training. Having the training offered **locally** matters to 91% of respondents as very important or important. Having **very good instructors**, the reputation of which matters a good deal to 73% of the respondents. Courses that can be **customized** are important or very important to 72% of respondents. What was not very important (important or very important) is the option of training being on line or on a CD (43%).
- The top training priorities by far in 2004 were IT related courses (17% of responses), customer service related (8%), leadership (8% of respondents), communication skills – writing or sales (7% of respondents).
- By far the majority (72%) of their training dollars are spent on non-credit (as opposed to for-credit) courses for their employees.
- Some 33% of respondents were not inhibited in their 2004 spending on training. That is good news. Of the 67% that were inhibited, the majority (some 53% of all respondents) is constrained by a limited budget.
- Some 65% of respondents used private, for-profit firms for employee training in the last three years. Internal training was the second-most used (59%). Third were colleges and universities (53%). Technical colleges came in fourth (49%).

- In terms of popularity among 12 different subject areas, two stand out as the most commonly utilized: **Interpersonal communication** (conflict resolution, dealing with difficult people, diversity training, teamwork) and **managerial/supervisory** skills (HR, project management, process management). Both were utilized by about 65% of the respondents.



- Not far behind in usage were **Executive Development** (leadership skills, strategic planning) and **Information Technology** skills at 56% and 54% respectively.
- When asked to note some specific training experience that they thought was particularly positive; some 41% of respondents offered their two cents. There was little overlap among the responses. The responses indicate that there are diverse needs being met and that there are a number of good training courses offered to employers in Southeast Wisconsin.