

Making the Business Case for Executive Learning and Development

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Three quarters of executives have clear developmental goals
- Most companies are supportive of executives' continued development
- Self-development is the individual's responsibility



61%

OF EXECUTIVES CONSIDER THEIR ORGANIZATION TO BE SUPPORTIVE OF CONTINUED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Have you ever asked the head of HR at your organization or your supervisor to send you to an executive training program? Or maybe your organization provides continual learning programs to help keep executives abreast of strategic and leadership essentials?

Recently, ExecuNet surveyed approximately 2,000 executives and found that 61 percent consider their organization to be supportive of continued learning and development. But exactly what types of programs do most companies seem to support?

It clearly helps if a learning program is connected or aligned to the strategic goals and specific needs of the organization. The majority of executives surveyed cited routine on-the-job experience, on-the-job training, and coaching by line managers and peers as the primary tools used by their organizations to develop executives. When asked which of these tools they find to be the most effective in helping them perform their role, again most cited programs offered by their organizations. And, when asked to rank the reasons why they prefer these tools, the top answer was “flexibility.” Sixty-three percent of respondents suggested their companies are less likely to approve programs that require time away from the job. The cost-effectiveness of on-the-job training was offered as another important consideration, as 60 percent of business executives say they have no budget to draw from for their educational needs.

87%

understood how their continued personal development can contribute to the overall success of the organization.

REPORTED THEY THEMSELVES ARE CLEAR ON THEIR OWN DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS.

76%

If you are considering pursuing executive development outside of your organization, make sure you're clear on where you need to develop, and ensure your development tracks to your company's goals and priorities.



You should feel confident seeking your organization's support (e.g., time away, tuition, etc.) if your learning maps with the organization's goals.



It is incumbent upon employees to seek out programs both in-house and externally and use that mapping to make their case.



Peer learning/in-house training is appealing, but executives don't feel their companies provide a sufficient mix of programs.

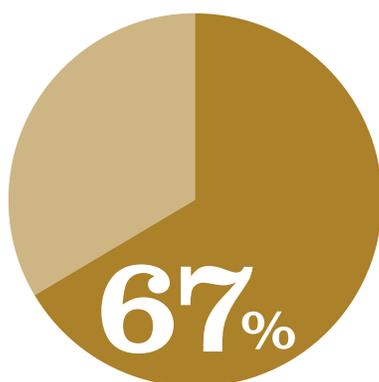
“It’s up to me to keep my skills sharp and remain competitive in the market. My boss will fund my preferred learning program if the ROI is directly connected to the organization’s strategic priorities.”

- Thomas W, EVP, Business Operations & Development

This is not to say executives are satisfied with the selection of in-house continual learning programs. Fifty-four percent said they would like to experience a greater variety of programs than those offered within their organizations. Over half pointed to learning programs found *outside* their organizations: e-courses, workshops and other programs offered by educational institutions.

What role do supervisors play in executive learning and development? Luckily, many recognize the value of ongoing executive education; 65 percent of respondents said their supervisors support their efforts to seek out educational experiences. However, roughly half of the respondents said their supervisors are unclear about how executives’ professional development actually ties in to the organization’s goals, and only 40 percent feel their supervisor actively assists in identifying learning and development needs.

Finally and most significant, 76 percent of executives surveyed reported they themselves are clear on their own developmental goals, and 87 percent said they understand how their continued personal development can contribute to the overall success of the organization. In the end, it appears it’s for the individual executive to assess what additional skills or knowledge they may need to develop to work at their level best. ■



of executives felt acknowledging their developmental needs would not undermine their supervisor’s confidence in them.



Men were 6% less likely to verbalize their developmental needs than women.

56%

of supervisors support time out-of-office for developmental opportunities