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Training Programs Used by Small Businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia

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TRAINING PROGRAMS USED BY SMALL BUSINESSES ON THE PENINSULA OF HAMPTON ROADS, VIRGINIA

A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE MASTERS OF SCIENCE

BY

DEBORAH Y. YEHLEN

JULY 2003
SIGNATURE PAGE

This project was prepared by Deborah Y. Yehlen under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies.

It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree.

APPROVED BY:

Dr. John M. Ritz
Graduate Program Director

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Date
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Tables</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of Problem
2. Research Goals
3. Background and Significance
4. Limitations
5. Assumptions
6. Procedures
7. Definition of Terms
8. Overview of Chapters

### II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Generalizations
- Company Decisions
- Employee Input
- Coordination and Delivery
- Future Needs
- Summary

### III METHODS AND PROCEDURES

- Population
- Instrument Design
- Method of Data Collection
- Statistical Analysis
- Summary

### IV FINDINGS

- Presentation of Data
- Results
- Summary

### V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Summary
- Conclusions
**TABLE OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Types of Training</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Topics of Recent Training</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>General Training Practices in Hampton Roads</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For generations scientists and researchers have proven repeatedly that humans are naturally curious creatures. From the moment a newborn enters this world, he begins to look at the surroundings. As vision becomes more focused, he is intent on studying his environment. With each stage of development, the need and will to learn becomes more evident.

This inherent need to learn does not change as one enters adulthood. Interests usually become more focused than generalized. Zig Zigler, famous motivational speaker and author of several books on personal growth, performance, sales, and success, has a basic philosophy toward training activities. He calls it a restatement of the golden rule: "You can have everything you want in life if you help enough people get what they want". (Nations' Business, Love, August, 1998)

During the last decade, employers took more strides toward worker development. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) in Arlington, Virginia, conducted a survey in 1996 of 40 publicly traded companies, dividing them into two groups based on how much was spent on training. The top half invested an average of $900 per employee for training during the year, while the bottom half spent $275 per worker. When researchers reviewed the results during the first part of 1997, it was concluded that companies spending more on training had higher net sales and annual gross profits than the companies that spent less on employee training. (Business & Health, Reese, 1999)
Statement of Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the training programs used by small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Research Goals

In order to determine answers to this problem, the following research questions were established:

- What type of training was used?
- How does the company make decisions on topics for training?
- What were topics of recent training?
- Did employees have any input of their needs for training? If so, how was that accomplished or expressed?
- Who was responsible for coordinating the training programs?
- Who delivered the presentations?
- What were the projections for future needs of training in terms of cost, productivity and manpower?

Background and Significance

At the present time, no definable data were found to be documented concerning the training policies and procedures of the small businesses of Hampton Roads. Ann Marie Keech, Training Consultant in Newport News, Virginia, reported that most of her training has been contracted with federal and state government agencies. (phone conversation, February 14, 2003) The Peninsula Chamber of Commerce was not cognizant of any information regarding training in their small business membership.
Robert Kipper, President of RJK Associates, a training and security company also in Newport News, Virginia, feels that training is one of the most valuable assets a company can provide its employees. He stated however, that today's management, the Baby Boom generation, needs to get more in touch with their workers. "Just because it was not provided for them when they were coming up the ladder, doesn't mean they (management) can treat the current workforce the same way", stated Kipper. (phone conversation, February 19, 2003)

In the 2001 Randstad North American Employee Review, it was reported that 80% of employees surveyed in a recent study deemed training important for increasing job skills and satisfaction. (Training and Development, July, 2001)

Richard Teerlink, former chief financial officer of Harley-Davidson, found that understanding the importance of the human resource department was a critical factor in pulling the company out of financial despair. (Industry Week, Verespe, February 1, 1999)

As Teerlink asserted:

We knew that we had to create an organization where all people feel important because the only sustainable competitive advantage is people. You have to invest capital and systems to support the investment in people. You need to create an ongoing, lifelong learning environment. As a leader, your principal job is to create an operating environment where others can do great things. (p. 34)

Robert Reich, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, stated "Globalization has clearly shifted the balance of competitiveness toward human talents and skills. The core of the new enterprise in the 21st century will be talented people capable of quickly assimilating new knowledge and learning from one another". (Industry Week, Verespe, February 1, 1999, p. 34)
Even though research points to the importance of training, little has been discovered from the businesses on the Peninsula. As Robert Kipper pointed out, today's workers want and need training but in the current economic crisis, employers are cutting funds that back such programs. In the past five years, The Daily Press, the newspaper of record on the Peninsula, reported fewer than fifteen stories about the training practices of small businesses.

**Limitations**

This study was conducted in one hundred randomly selected small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia, during the months of May and June 2003. A small business was defined as one with 150 or less employees. A variety of businesses ranging from professional services such as architectural firms and veterinarian practices to skilled labor forces such as construction firms and printing services were chosen for the study.

**Assumptions**

It was assumed that most small businesses would not have a separate in house trainer or training department. Due to budget constraints, particularly in today's economy, small businesses contracted for training needs with consultants or used local resources such as community college courses. Businesses with more employee turnover invested in software and/or videos, which could be used more than once or had no scheduled training practices. It was also assumed companies spending more on employee training had lower attrition than those that spent less. Human resource departments or business owners made the decisions and coordinated the execution of training programs.
Procedures

One hundred companies were randomly selected from the Business and Industry Directory of the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. Effort was made to include as many different categories as possible, i.e., engineering firms, architectural companies, advertising agencies, home health companies, etc. Letters were mailed to the Director of Human Resources or Office Manager in each of these companies. An explanation of the study including questions to be answered was included in the correspondence. A follow-up phone call was made one week after the mailing to make an appointment with the appropriate individual at each business. Interviews were held in person to obtain the information sought. If personal interviews were not possible, telephone conferences were substituted.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were important to note:

- ASTD - The American Society for Training and Development is a professional organization devoted to developing people and their performance through learning.

- ROI - A return on investment is a factor that companies consider for training purposes. Companies want to be able to justify cost of training with employee productivity.

- IDP - An individual development plan is a blueprint for each worker to strengthen skills and enhance job performance.

- E-learning - Electronic learning is computer-based training. Some companies find the use of software or long distance learning to be more cost effective.
Overview of Chapters

Chapter I stated the problem of the study. Its content gave a summary on the need and framework for conducting this study.

Attention was directed in Chapter II to an overview of training in the workplace. Material was reviewed to give a generalized picture of what small businesses, not just in Hampton Roads, do to construct training goals. Data concerning training topics and delivery were reported.

In Chapter III, the method of how the data were collected was described. The procedures, including information on who was interviewed at specific companies, was documented.

Next, findings were noted in Chapter IV to account for the topics and type of training that small businesses of Hampton Roads currently used. Discoveries of who was in charge of training and how it was delivered were also reviewed. Projections for future training needs of these businesses were given.

In Chapter V, research findings were summarized and conclusions were drawn about training questions. Based on the data presented, recommendations were made concerning future training needs for the small businesses of Hampton Roads, Virginia.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The problem of this study was to determine the training programs used by small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. A review of literature found that while training in large and small business can share similar needs, the approach to satisfying those needs were vastly different. This study attempted to examine those differences and analyze how small businesses respond to the need for training. Chapter II reviews literature according to the following topics: Generalizations, Company Decisions, Employee Input, Coordination and Delivery, and Future Needs.

Generalizations

Small businesses are the major component of the economic engine of the United States. During the 1980's, large companies reduced their number of employees, while small businesses created more than six million jobs. Almost all businesses in the United States, a shocking 98%, employ fewer than 100 employees. (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999) With such a high percentage of workers employed in the small business structure, it is crucial that these workers are trained in order to be productive and competitive in this new century.

A United States government report in 1999 disclosed that adults took one-half of work-related training and education courses. Employees who participated in employer sponsored training were less likely to leave for other employment. However, small businesses were less likely to train. The inability to spread the costs over the employee base, limited opportunities to retrain and promote workers, and a lack of expertise and
technical resources to design and implement training were hindrances for the small business. (U.S. Government document, 1999)

Acknowledging the financial crunch for small business training, some state and local governments as well as private organizations have created training resources for workers. The state of Florida created a new workforce system in July 2000, by offering a variety of training services to both individuals and businesses. This was welcomed by small businesses for it alleviated the need to pay high consultant fees or on-site trainers. (Florida Trends, Jennings, July, 2001) In California, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley launched a Training Alliance program, which allowed small businesses to consult and use their panel of experts, qualified teachers and administrators. The panel was developed from four local colleges and community colleges. Small businesses could receive state funding to help with costs. (San Fernando Valley Business Journal, Fox, June 11, 2001) In Lima, Ohio, the Apollo Career Center designed the Adult Workforce Education (AWE) program. This center provided full services to meet the needs of 7,500 adult students each year. (Techniques, Claypool, January, 2003)

Company Decisions

Careful consideration should be given to who, what, when and how aspects of company training occur. The overall purpose for training and education is for employees to acquire knowledge and skills to help them accept and adapt to challenges of today's evolving jobs. Training should be designed to match the needs of a company's direction and purpose. (National Jeweler, Peters, January 1, 2003) One of the advantages of a small business is that the owner or president is able to have a close working knowledge of each employee and his/her training needs. The owner/president can determine the type of
training needed to meet the company's objectives and employees' training needs. This informal evaluation technique is less costly than the sometimes long, tedious process large companies must complete in order to determine training needs. (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999)

Workers with advanced skills are a key investment for competitive business performance. Company support of training expands a pool of workers from which it can promote. Studies have shown that properly matched training can increase productivity by 15 to 20%, increase competitiveness, and make a difference in the bottom line. (U.S. Government publication, 1999)

With the majority of American workers employed in small businesses, and the evidence, particularly from large corporations, that training is critical to business performance and competitiveness, one would conclude that owners would be racing to provide training for their workers. Sadly, this is not the case. Slightly less than one-half of small business owners report providing training for workers. Most of this resulted from a "we gotta fix it" mentality. Inadequate skills and lack of training were cited as reasons for the high rate of small business failures. (Tovey, 1997)

By evaluating the needs of a company according to its mission, a small business owner can become proactive rather than reactive. A proactive approach includes forecasting performance improvement with a business plan. A plan of action involves methods, pre/post tests, checklists, and observation of employee needs. One must also be able to transfer the knowledge to job performance. Once this proactive stance is taken, the process then is not just about training, but relationships with the employee and the customer. (Managing Training and Development, January, 2003)
Today's economy is a knowledge-based economy. Exploitation and effective use of all types of knowledge play a predominant part in the creation of wealth. The world is moving away from its industrial structure and into a technological society. Technology makes human skills and knowledge the only source of sustainable competitive advantage. The pace of the knowledge-based economy is a challenge for small businesses. Small businesses are critical for success of the global economy. A company must make training decisions on what, knowledge about facts; on why, scientific knowledge of principles and laws of nature; on how, skills or capabilities to do something; and on who, information about who knows what and who knows how to do what. (Tovey, 1997)

At the Summit on 21st Century Skills for 21st Century Jobs, January 12, 1999, Vice President Al Gore summarized the need for training with these words:

America's competitiveness and the prosperity of our people in a changing economy depend increasingly on high-skilled, high-wage jobs. Realizing our potential will require investing in education and learning for all of our people throughout their lifetimes. (U.S. Government publication, 1999, p. 23)

**Employee Input**

People will go where they are welcomed and stay where they are appreciated. Employers who want to retain workers must rid themselves of the "they need us" mentality. Today's workers are looking for education and development as part of a benefit package. David Gratz of Gratz & Associates, Ltd., a management and development service company in Lima, Ohio, states:

Companies need to align business strategy with their people strategy. The real challenge in developing a people strategy lies in making sure the strategy supports and elevates business performance. When money gets tight, the first thing to go is non-technical training. But even in a tight economy, productivity depends upon people knowing how to work with each other getting the most outcomes for the resources. (Techniques, Claypool, January, 2003, p. 56)
The Lawyers' Bar Association in the state of New York conducts a survey at the beginning of each calendar year to assess past and future training for employees of law firms. Included are questions about in-house versus outside training, ways to improve training, rating methods of training (i.e., discussion groups, lectures, individual study, mentoring, etc.) and topics needed for training. Included in the top three topics were verbal and written communication skills, time management, and project management. (IOMA's Report on Compensation and Benefits for Law Offices, New York, January, 2003)

Piedmont Associated Industries, a training company based in Greensboro, North Carolina, has found through numerous employee surveys that communication skills, both written and verbal, top the list for worker requested training. In this era of corporate scandals, budget cuts, and frequent layoffs, workers must have the skills to handle volatile emotions. Coping with change and managing emotions are topics of interest for today's employees. (The Business Journal, Somerville, February 2003)

According to the American Institute of Management and Administration, employees in the new millennium must be aware of potential workplace violence and terrorist activity. Training for violence awareness, including how to identify signs, how to maintain behavior, and how to protect one's self, has never been more important. (Managing Training and Development, February, 2003)

Employees bring to the table their current knowledge and past experiences. This influences their learning activities and attitudes towards learning. A trainer must be knowledgeable and qualified to understand the learning differences. This is particularly
important in a small company where teamwork is vital due to close proximity of working environments.

**Coordination and Delivery**

Small businesses tend to use what is considered to be informal and incidental sources of learning. Some ad hoc sources include publications, suppliers, handbooks, and colleagues. Views held by the owner/president determine how training is accomplished. (Tovey, 1997) All companies, regardless of size, need a strategic plan to provide direction for the functional areas of the organization. Strategic planning is the development of long term objectives, and a plan to pursue the organization's mission. A small business can develop such a plan by answering a few questions.

1. Why are we in business?
2. What are we trying to accomplish?
3. Who is our competition and how can we beat them?
4. What sort of ground rules should we be following to get the job done right?
5. How should we organize ourselves to reach our goals and beat the competition?
6. How much detail do we need to provide so everyone knows what to do?
7. What are the few key things that will determine if we make it? How should we keep track of them?

This planning and analysis will help to focus on the "right" training. It is easier to execute and implement in small firms. With a smaller number of employees, there is less anticipation to consider and fewer problems to prevent. *(The Business Journal, Somerville, February 2003)*
Future Needs

Global competition, the Internet, and widespread use of technology have created challenges as well as opportunities for employees and workers in the 21st century. From about 1950 to the mid 1990's, the division in the workforce was 20% professional, 20% skilled workers and 60% unskilled workers. By 1997, that division had completely changed in the skilled and unskilled workforce. To deal effectively and efficiently with these changes, today's workers must have training and education for skills to be successful. (U.S. Government publication, 1999) Small companies must realize that the collective skills and knowledge of their workforce is human capital. The firm's human capital is a form of wealth that will create more wealth. A company's understanding between human capital and their value will position them for the future. (Aldisert, 2002) A concise and comprehensive explanation of the need for training in the new millennium is stated as follows:

As we approach the 21st century, it is expected that the emphasis on high-performance training will continue with a steady shift from isolated skill building and information transfer to performance improvement and support. Learning will be much more integrated with the actual work being performed. Additionally, employees will be encouraged to interact more with others, putting greater emphasis on those group-training events used to motivate and generate teamwork. Small businesses are projected to rely increasingly on partnerships with other small companies, community colleges, and government and civic organizations to meet training needs. Furthermore, technologies that change how, when and where people work will also change how they learn. (Arthur, 1995, p. 131)

Summary

The need for training in small businesses of Hampton Roads, Virginia, is crucial to stay competitive in today's global economy. Businesses have many challenges in identifying needs, developing curriculum, and allocating funds for training purposes as the research defines. The focus of the current study was to identify training programs
used in small businesses of the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. Chapter III contains the methods and procedures used to collect the data for the research in this study.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of this study was to determine the training programs used by small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. This chapter will focus on the population selected, the design and use of the instrument, the method of data collection, and statistical analysis of the data. A detailed discussion of each of these topics will follow.

Population

The population of this study was comprised of persons responsible for training in small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads. Of the one hundred participants, some held the title of Human Resource Director, some were Training Managers, and some were the President or CEO of the company. A variety of businesses were randomly selected from the membership directory of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Types of businesses included plumbing and air conditioning, real estate, manufacturing, architectural/engineering, medical offices and facilities, mortgage banking, automotive services, computer information services, public relations and advertising, accountants, and defense/government contractors. The only common characteristic of the small businesses was that each had fewer than one hundred-fifty employees.

Instrument Design

A survey was designed that consisted of questions regarding the training policies and procedures of the businesses selected. It was comprised of a combination of open and closed format questions. The information sought from these questions was based on
research of training practices found among businesses in the past five years. Questions were designed from the research goals. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix A.

**Method of Data Collection**

A cover letter, Appendix B, was mailed to the Human Resource Department of each business on May 23, 2003. Follow-up phone calls were made during the weeks of May 30 and June 2, 2003, to verify receipt of the letter and to make interview appointments. Interviews were then held via phone or in person. The final date for data collection was June 15, 2003. The data were tabulated and evaluated to determine the training policies and procedures of the participating businesses.

**Statistical Analysis**

The numbers of responses and the frequency of answers were tabulated to show the training practices of businesses taking part in the study. Percentages of categorical answers were reported. The information was evaluated using the mode response to each question.

**Summary**

By randomly sampling the population, a variety of training practices of small businesses were surveyed. The population was defined, method of data collection reviewed, and statistical analysis was discussed. Findings will be analyzed in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The problem of this study was to determine the training programs used by small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia. The findings presented in this chapter are the results of interviews with persons responsible for training in their respective companies.

Presentation of Data

The first set of data divides each question submitted to the company representative into subsets. Of particular interest was the type of training offered (Figure 1) and the topics of most recent trainings (Figure 2). Attention to these questions gives an overall representation of training practices of the small businesses participating in the study.

The second set of data records the mode of each question presented. This offers a typical representation of the training procedures studied (Figure 3).

Results

One hundred surveys were sent out, with four being returned with undeliverable addresses. Follow-up phone calls were made to remaining businesses, with three numbers found to be no longer in service. Attempts to locate these businesses through Directory Assistance and the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce proved unsuccessful. Of the ninety-three businesses remaining, only seventeen (18%) participated in the survey. Five businesses expressed no interest in participating. In follow-up phone calls to the remaining businesses, the researcher was unable to make contact with the responsible
party and requests for return calls were not answered. The following narrative reflects the responses of the participating company representatives.

**Types of Training**

![Types of Training](image)

Figure 1: Types of Training

Question 1 listed types of training used by companies. Eleven companies used individual self-study. Nine reported use of computer based training. Eight organized small group instruction. Eight conducted workshops with one using only on-site workshops and one using only off-site; the other six used both. Twelve businesses paid for their employees to attend seminars and/or conferences. Six provided tuition assistance. Fourteen trained for job specific skills. Seven required certification training. One used apprenticeships as training and two had opportunities for internships (Figure 1).

Recent topics of training in small businesses were reported from Question 2 as follows: One company trained in basic language skills. Eight provided customer service training. Ten companies required training in communications with phone etiquette (seven), written skills (two) and interviewing skills (three). Only ten companies provided regular orientation classes for their employees. Eight companies held diversity classes and nine companies reported sexual harassment training. Seven companies, all of which
were construction or medically related, reported safety-training sessions. Seven held performance expectation sessions. Those reporting sales training included two real estate and two product related companies. Six companies held classes in relationship training which included topics of working with others (six), coping with difficult people (six), resolving conflict (one), stress (one), and working with disabled populations (one). Only four companies participating provided leadership or management training. One company reported training for topics specific for government funding and one medical facility held classes for elder abuse and specific diseases.

![Topics of Recent Training](image)

Figure 2: Topics of Recent Training

Question 3 asked for an average cost per employee annually for training. Four companies spent less than $200, seven estimated a cost of $201 to $500, four reported $501 - $1000 and three had expenditures of more than $1000.
The focus of Question 4 concerned employees' input for their training needs. Thirteen companies regarded employee input as part of their planning for training; however, only two of those used a systematic approach. One company used an organizational survey once a year to determine employee needs and one company had space on the annual evaluation form for the employee to document training requests. All others reported employee input was by verbal request to managers or supervisors. Five companies did not use employee input in developing training practices.

Question 5 was designed to determine who was responsible for coordinating the training programs for businesses. Two companies reported that the President or CEO determined the training practices, the Human Resource Director was responsible in five businesses, one business had a full-time Training Director, and nine reported others responsible including department managers, office managers, physicians, nurses and the operations director.

Nine businesses targeted specific employees such as department managers or technical support staff members to deliver training to their employees, the topic of Question 6. Three made use of outside consultants, two companies reported that training was delivered by the President or CEO, while two used their Human Resource Director. The one company with a full-time Training Director used her for delivery of all programs.

Only six participating companies expressed projections for future training needs, the focus of Question 7. Topics included employee skills, understanding job expectations and goals, leadership, sexual harassment, affirmative action, new software programs, property management, safety issues, CPR, and problem solving skills. Three companies
reported that if they had a full-time Training Director, the need for program development was there; however, budgets did not allow for additional manpower at this time.

![General Training Practices in Hampton Roads](image)

**Figure 3: General Training Practices in Hampton Roads**

**Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of training practices of small businesses in Hampton Roads, which was accomplished by a survey and follow-up interview. Chapter V will summarize previous chapters, draw conclusions on the findings and make recommendations based on the research.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will provide a summary of the research study. The researcher will draw conclusions based on the data reported and make recommendations for future studies.

Summary

The study was conducted to determine the training practices of small businesses in Hampton Roads, Virginia. This was accomplished by mailing surveys to one hundred random businesses and conducting telephone interviews with company representatives deemed responsible for training.

To determine the training practices of small businesses, the following questions were asked to determine the goals of the study: 1) What type of training does the company use? 2) What were topics of recent training? 3) How much money is spent per employee per year for training? 4) Do employees have any input of their training needs? If so, how is this accomplished? 5) Who is responsible for coordinating the training programs? 6) Who delivers training presentations? And 7) What are the projections for future training needs in terms of topics, cost, productivity and manpower?

The limiting factor of this study was that the research was conducted with companies of 150 or less employees. Assumptions were made that due to budget constraints, most businesses would not have in-house trainers but would make use of outside consultants, local colleges and/or software and videos for their training.
Data were collected from employees responsible for training in their respective businesses. Interviews were conducted by telephone. The data were tabulated to show the frequency and mode of the responses.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were based on the research study goals. 1) **What type of training does the company use?** The review of literature determined that small businesses were the economic engine of our country, with 98% having fewer than 100 employees. However, due to budget constraints, small businesses were less likely to train. In turn, this limited employee opportunity creating high turnover. The researcher concluded that small businesses in Hampton Roads relied heavily on self-study or job specific training. Even though job specific skills are critical to performance, most businesses did not meet the needs of the whole employee.

2) **What were the topics of recent training?** In the Review of Literature, less than one-half of all small businesses use any training. Those that do approach training do it with a "we gotta fix it" mentality. The researcher found this to be a recurring theme of local businesses.

3) **How much money is spent per employee per year for training?** It was concluded that businesses were most likely to spend between $201 and $500 a year for training each employee.

4) **Do employees have any input of their training needs? If so, how is this accomplished?** Most businesses participating were open for employee input, but only two had any formalized system for requests. According to information found in the
literature review, companies which provide a means for employees to be active in planning for their training have higher morale and retention rates.

5) **Who is responsible for coordinating the training programs?** The majority of businesses reported that the responsibility for planning and organizing training was distributed throughout the companies. With numerous tasks involved in running an office or department, training is low on the priority scale.

6) **Who delivers training presentations?** Of the participating businesses, the majority (44%) used department managers or technical support staff employees to present training. Most of these companies used the "train the trainer" approach. With the strain on the economy, businesses felt that this was the best financial route to provide needed instruction.

7) **What are the projections for future training needs in terms of topics, cost, productivity and manpower?** Only 6% of participating businesses had future projections for training needs. In the review of literature it was noted that human capital is a form of wealth which will create more wealth. A company's understanding of its human capital will position them for the future. Clearly, the participants were not focused on this opinion.

**Recommendations**

Due to the poor response to this study, this researcher recommends that a follow-up study be conducted to gain a better perspective of the training practices of small businesses in Hampton Roads. It is also recommended that an interactive survey be developed and delivered via the web. Considering the time an employee spends at a computer terminal, there might be a greater chance of a survey being completed than
losing a piece of paper in the shuffle. Consideration might be given to include employee turnover in the study's goals. It would be interesting to determine if lack of employee training had anything to do with employee retention.

Also, based on the data collected, it might be interesting to design a local resource center which small businesses could contact for their training needs. Topics of interest would be planned and delivered by a central source.
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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH SURVEY
SEND COMPLETED SURVEY TO: ODU/Occupation & Technical Studies Dept.
c/o Deborah Yehlen, 17 Bannister Ct., Poquoson, VA 23662
OR FAX TO: (757)683-5227

SURVEY OF TRAINING PRACTICES OF SMALL BUSINESSES
IN HAMPTON ROADS, VIRGINIA

Name of Business ____________________________
Person Completing Survey ____________________________
Title ____________________________________________
Date ____________________________________________

Directions: Please read each question below and check any applicable answer. More than one may be checked on specific questions. All responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you.

1. What type of training does your company use?
   - Individual self-study
   - Computer based training
   - Small group instruction
   - Workshops ___ on-site ___ off-site ___ both
   - Seminars or Conferences
   - Tuition Assistance programs
   - Job specific training
   - Certifications
   - Apprenticeships
   - Internships

1. What were topics of recent training?
   - Basic Math and/or Language Skills
   - Customer Service
   - Communications ___ phone etiquette ___ written skills ___ interviewing
   - Computer Skills
   - Orientation
   - Diversity
   - Sexual Harassment
   - Safety Skills: please be specific
   - Performance ___ expectations ___ motivation ___ time management
   - Sales: please be specific

   - Relationships ___ Understanding self attitudes ___ Working with others
     ___ Coping with difficult people ___ Resolving conflict
     ___ Stress ___ Other ______________________________

   - Leadership or Management: please be specific
   - Other: please list

(Please see back to complete)
3. Approximately how much money does your company spend on training (per employee annually)?
   - Less than $200
   - $201 - $500
   - $501 - $1000
   - More than $1000

4. Do employees have any input of their training needs?
   - Yes
   - No
   If yes, how was that accomplished or expressed?

5. Who is responsible for coordinating the training programs?
   - President or CEO
   - Human Resource Director
   - Training Director
   - Other (please name title)

6. Who delivers the training programs?
   - President or CEO
   - Human Resource Director
   - Training Director
   - Outside Consultant
   - Other (please name title)

7. What are your projections for future needs of training in terms of topics, cost, productivity and manpower?
May 23, 2003

Dear Human Resource Director:

My name is Deborah Yehlen. I am currently conducting research for the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies at Old Dominion University to determine the training programs used by small businesses on the Peninsula of Hampton Roads, Virginia.

In order to conduct this study, it is critical to identify various aspects of training programs currently used by small businesses on the Peninsula. As the person in charge of employee management, your experience and knowledge of employee training will provide valuable information to this study. Your cooperation and participation will be greatly appreciated, as it is vital to the success of this study.

Enclosed is a copy of the survey for your review. I will call your office within a week for an appointment to speak with you in person or by phone. Taking into account that your time is valuable; the interview is set for approximately fifteen minutes. At the completion of the study, I will share my findings so that you can compare your training practices with businesses of similar size.

The success of this study depends on your input. If you decide to participate, please be assured that all responses will be held confidential. My target date for completion of interviews is June 1. I look forward to talking with you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Deborah Y. Yehlen
Graduate Student

Dr. John M. Ritz
Program Director
Department of Occupational & Technical Studies

Enc: Survey