

Training Targets Frontline Managers

By Michael Laff

MANAGEMENT TRAINING is making a strong comeback, according to a recent survey.

Novations Group, a Boston-based consulting firm, asked more than 3,000 United States senior human resources executives which employees will receive training and development in the next year. Frontline managers topped the list at 90 percent—meaning they are scheduled to receive some kind of training in the next year.

Frontline managers are low-level or middle managers who work directly with staff members.

“There’s a lot of emphasis on talent management and retention, and the frontline manager bears a lot of responsibility for whether employees like the organization or not,” says Paul Terry, a Novations vice president.

While the survey did not ask specifically what kinds of training that the organizations selected for frontline managers, Terry believes it is for the intangible people management skills, such as giving coaching support and motivating staff.

When he asks clients about the types of individuals who are most often promoted to management, Terry reports that the overwhelming response is the “technically brilliant.” A side effect of such decisions is that many of the same high achievers do not possess innate leadership skills or past experience managing a staff.

“A psychological transition has to take place where the manager goes from being an individual contributor to one who

contributes through others,” Terry says.

Terry believes that the high percentage of survey respondents who said training will be offered is a true portrait and not simply an inflated figure proffered by organizations wanting to

say they offer training. The healthy economic climate and changing workplace demographics, along with the pending retirement of baby boomers, contributes to increased calls for training.

“We’ve noticed a heightened interest in training,” Terry says. “It dropped off a few years ago, but now the economy is in better shape.”

As the demands for training have heated up in recent years, Terry notes that more organizations are outsourcing their training functions, either because HR departments are smaller or because they lack the in-house resources to handle training and development. He added that while the buzz regarding e-learning may be hot, it has not replaced the classroom as the preferred training mechanism.

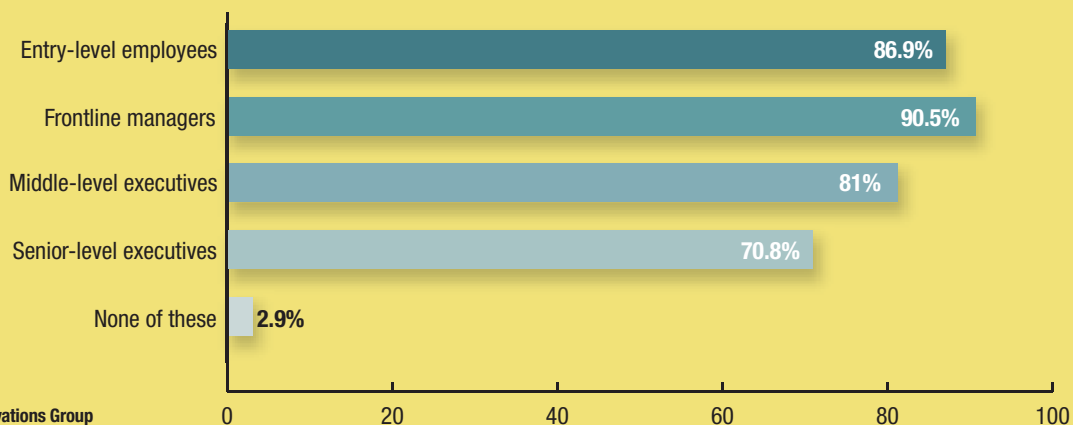
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The BIG Number...



of frontline managers are scheduled to receive training in the next year.

Which of the following employee categories at your organization will receive training and development during the year ahead? (Please select all that apply.)



Source: Novations Group