

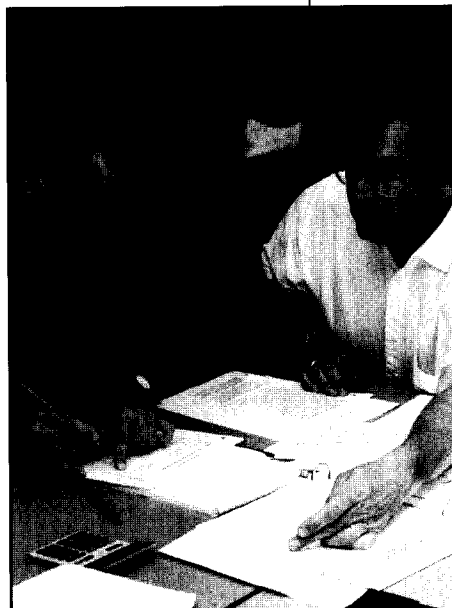
# Management- Development Programs

When Canadian hospitality managers were asked about management-development programs, their answers revealed that they want relatively brief and inexpensive programs.

A Canadian

Perspective

by Margaret Shaw and  
John Patterson



Cornell's HVS Professor of Hotel Finance and Real Estate, James Eyster (right), teaches hospitality executives and managers during the hotel school's various management-development programs. (Photo by Charles Harrington, Cornell University Photography.)

**M**anagers across a variety of industries are returning to the classroom for executive-education and professional-development purposes. As a result, continuing-education and training programs in hospitality management continue to proliferate while existing programs seem to get bigger. Universities such as the University of Western Ontario, University of Guelph, and Cornell University; associations such as the American Hotel & Motel Association and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association; and consulting groups such as Gilmore & Associates and Group CFC, Inc., of Montreal, offer a number of management-development programs. And at least one

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writer noted recently: "As businesses face globalization, rising costs, and leaner, meaner markets, many are turning to executive education to ensure that their employees are equipped with leading-edge strategies."<sup>1</sup>

The study presented in this article gives a Canadian perspective on what hospitality managers are looking for in management-development programs. The study's purpose was to identify in which areas of hospitality management practitioners would like to see more education and training programs. We investigated perceived management requirements in such areas as human resources, sales and marketing, accounting and finance, and computer technology. With respect to actual education-program structures, we looked at pricing, program duration, and respondent profiles. The focus of our study was on external management-development programs rather than on an organization's internal or company-specific training.

**Methodology**

This study used the mailed-questionnaire survey method. Scales of measurement included nominal- and ordinal-data collection for respondent profiles, price sensitivities, and program duration. The Likert scale was selected for the importance ratings of subject areas. For each of the areas, a five-point scale was used with 1 = desirable and 5 = greatly needed. Respondents also had the option to rate a subject area zero (0) to mean "no interest."

The questionnaire was pretested for consistency and clarity with both unit- and corporate-level management in the lodging, food-service,

and health-services sectors of the Canadian hospitality industry.

Survey participants were selected from among subscribers to *Food Service and Hospitality*, a national Canadian publication. Specific subcategories selected from this listing were lodging (hotels and resorts), food and beverage service (commercial multiunit operations, head offices, chains), and noncommercial operations (hospitals, institutions, rest homes, universities).

A weighted random sampling process was used to ensure a minimum number of mailings for each of the subcategories. For example, the food and beverage listing comprised 18 percent of all subscribers for the three subcategories.

For the survey we increased this to 30 percent of our mailing, or approximately 600 actual mailings to food and beverage subscribers. We also raised noncommercial from 12 percent to 20 percent, and lowered lodging from 70 percent to 50 percent. The resulting ratio of 30:20:50, while artificial, was intentionally chosen to prevent the lodging sector from dominating the results of the survey.

The final survey included 1,972 questionnaires mailed across Canada. Of 1,895 delivered mailings, 346 usable responses were received, yielding a response rate of 18 percent. In the exhibits that accompany

this article, however, the totals may not always equal 346 because even among the usable surveys, not all of those respondents answered 100 percent of the questions.

**Results**

A profile of respondents is shown in Exhibit 1. As can be seen, there was a good mix of lodging (39 percent), food-service (27 percent), and health-services managers (31 percent) in our sample. The varying sizes of organizations and levels of management also are representative of Canada's hospitality industry.

**Importance ratings.** The mean ratings of importance for the selected subject areas ranged from 2.6

**Exhibit 1  
Respondent profile**

	Number of respondents	Percent
<b>Type of Organization</b>		
Lodging, accommodations	134	39
Food service	94	27
Health services	107	31
Other	11	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Size of Organization</b>		
10-100 employees	161	47
101-500 employees	100	29
501-1,000 employees	29	8
1,000-5,000 employees	35	10
5,000+ employees	19	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Management Position</b>		
Corporate level	80	24
Regional, district	22	6
Unit, general manager	151	44
Line, staff manager	87	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>		
High school	59	18
Community college	102	30
Bachelor's degree	157	47
Master's degree	19	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: The totals do not match because not all 346 usable surveys were completely filled out.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Soloman, "Polishing the Brass: A Growing Number of Executives Taking Time to Hone Their Management Skills in University Classrooms," *The Globe and Mail*, April 28, 1992, p. B24.



<b>Exhibit 2</b> <i>Importance ratings of subject areas</i>			<b>Exhibit 3</b> <i>Importance ratings of subject areas by hospitality sectors</i>			
<i>n</i> = 335	Mean	Standard deviation	Lodging <i>n</i> = 134	Food service <i>n</i> = 94	Health services <i>n</i> = 107	
<b>Subject areas</b>			<b>Subject areas</b>			
<b>Marketing</b>			<b>Marketing</b>			
Personal selling	2.7	1.8	Personal selling*	3.3	2.8	1.8
Advertising	2.6	1.6	Advertising*	3.1	2.7	2.0
Public relations	3.3	1.4	Public relations	3.3	3.4	3.1
Marketing planning	3.3	1.5	Marketing planning*	3.7	3.2	2.7
Marketing strategy	3.4	1.5	Marketing strategy*	3.8	3.2	2.8
Service quality	4.1	1.3	Service quality*	4.1	4.3	3.9
<b>Finance</b>			<b>Finance</b>			
Managerial accounting	3.1	1.5	Managerial accounting	3.2	3.0	3.0
Financial management	3.3	1.5	Financial management	3.3	3.1	3.3
Budgets and forecasting	3.7	1.4	Budgets and forecasting*	3.7	3.3	3.8
<b>Human Resources</b>			<b>Human Resources</b>			
Interpersonal skills	3.7	1.2	Interpersonal skills	3.7	3.8	3.7
Motivation and training	4.1	1.1	Motivation and training	4.0	4.2	4.0
Hiring, dismissal	3.5	1.3	Hiring, dismissal	3.3	3.5	3.5
Communication skills	4.0	1.1	Communication skills*	4.0	4.2	3.8
<b>General Management</b>			<b>General Management</b>			
Strategic planning	3.6	1.3	Strategic planning*	3.7	3.4	3.5
Business ethics	3.1	1.3	Business ethics	3.1	3.1	3.0
Leadership	3.8	1.2	Leadership	3.8	3.9	3.8
Research methods	2.6	1.5	Research methods	2.7	2.5	2.6
Computer applications	3.4	1.5	Computer applications*	3.2	3.0	3.8
<i>Scale used:</i> 1 = desirable to 5 = greatly needed			<i>Scale used:</i> 1 = desirable to 5 = greatly needed		<i>Scale used:</i> 1 = desirable to 5 = greatly needed	
			* One or more group means are significantly different at the .05 level			

to 4.1. They are shown above, in Exhibit 2.

The highest-rated subject areas included service quality, motivation and training, and communication skills, with means at 4.0 or above. At the bottom of the range were advertising, personal selling, and research methods, all with means of 2.7 or less. Standard deviations for the low- and mid-range means are larger than those for the higher-rated subject areas. Thus, it is not a surprise that a different picture emerges when the data are analyzed from an industry-sector perspective, as shown in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3 shows the results of overall mean ratings for each sector

surveyed: lodging, food service, and health services. Duncan's multiple range test, in conjunction with one-way analysis of variance, was used to determine significant differences among the three groups, and half of the subject areas measured showed significant differences among the mean ratings depending on the industry sector being measured.

Marketing topics, in particular, were rated more important by the lodging-sector managers than by the food-service and health-services managers. Strategic planning and budgeting and forecasting were also rated more important for inclusion in management-development programs by the lodging-sector

managers than by the other sectors' managers.

The health-services group rated computer applications significantly higher than the lodging and food-service respondents. They also rated service quality and communication skills significantly lower than did the lodging and food-service respondents—but the ratings for service quality and communication are nevertheless relatively high among the health-services managers' responses.

There were no significant differences among the three sectors in their ratings of leadership and motivation and training. Moreover, each of the three groups consistently rated managerial accounting, finan-

cial management, and business ethics in the mid-range.

Tests of significance were also conducted for varying levels of management—that is, for corporate, regional, unit, and line-management positions (at the .05 level). Only a few significant differences emerged. Personal selling was rated more important by corporate and regional managers than by line managers, with mean ratings of 3.0 and 3.3 for the corporate and regional managers compared to 2.3 for line managers.

Computer applications were more important to line managers than to corporate managers, with mean ratings of 3.6 and 3.1.

Attitudes about motivation and training shared significant differences as well. Line managers (4.2) and corporate and unit managers (both groups scoring 4.0) rated motivation and training significantly higher than did regional managers (3.7). Nevertheless, the overall ratings are relatively high regardless of the management position held in the organization.

**Program duration and cost.**

Respondents were asked what length of time was most preferable for a management-development program. As shown in Exhibit 4, a two-day MDP was most preferable and 70 percent of the respondents indicated a preference for three days or less.

An attempt to measure price sensitivity was also included in the study by asking respondents about their company's budget restrictions. Not surprisingly, most of the respondents chose the least-expensive category of \$500-\$750 for a two-day MDP as the amount that their company would allow. It is interesting to note, however, that about 25 percent of respondents indicated that they did not know or were not sure how much their organization would be willing to budget for an external management-development program. It should also be noted that there

**Exhibit 4**

**Preferred length of program and price sensitivity**

	Number of respondents	Percent
One day	51	15
Two days	117	34
Three days	72	21
Four days	8	2
Five days	11	3
Depends on program topic	84	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>100</b>

Length of program in days that is most preferable to respondents.

	Number of respondents	Percent
\$500-\$750	212	63
\$751-\$1,000	39	12
\$1,001-\$1,500	7	2
\$1,501+	2	0
Don't know or not sure	76	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100</b>

Amount respondents' organizations will budget for a two-day management-development program (including two nights' accommodations, meals, coffee-breaks, program materials, instructor fees).

were no significant differences among industry sectors or among levels of management in response to this question.

**Desirability and attendance.**

Respondents were asked to use a 5-point scale to indicate whether they would *like* to attend and whether they *expect* to attend a management-development program in the next 12 months. Additionally, they were asked if they had attended an external MDP in the past three years and, if so, to indicate their level of satisfaction with that program. The results are shown in Exhibit 5.

Overall, respondents' ratings ranged from 3.1 to 4.3 (where 1 = low and 5 = high) for both questions, and "very much would like to attend an MDP" was slightly higher than "very much expect to attend." Line managers' ratings for "would like to attend" were signifi-

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## Exhibit 5

### *Desired, expected, and actual participation in management-development programs*

	Corporate managers	Regional managers	Unit managers	Line managers
	<b>Means<sup>†</sup></b>			
Very much would like to attend an MDP program*	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.3
Very much expect to attend an MDP in next 12 months	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.6
	<b>Percentages</b>			
Have attended an MDP within the past 3 years	74	73	70	75
	<b>Means<sup>†</sup></b>			
Satisfaction with the MDP attended	3.9	4.3	4.0	4.2

\* One or more group means are significantly different at the .05 level

† Scale used: 1 = low to 5 = high

cantly higher than unit and corporate-level managers' responses. The health-services sector (4.2) was significantly higher than both the lodging (3.8) and food-service (3.8) sectors. There were no significant differences in the expectations of attending an MDP among industry sectors or among levels of management.

As shown in Exhibit 5, at least 70 percent of the respondents had attended an external MDP within

the past three years. There were no significant differences among levels of management. For industry sectors, health services ranked significantly higher than food service, with 79 percent versus 62 percent participation in management-development programs. For those who had attended an MDP, satisfaction levels ranged from 3.9 to 4.3, which seems to us to be quite positive. There were no significant differences among levels of management or among industry sectors in responding to the question of MDP satisfaction.

### **Implications of the Study**

The results of the study have both direct and indirect implications for management-development programs external to Canadian hospitality organizations. The direct results indicate that hospitality managers in the three sectors we sampled are willing and able to secure funds to attend management-development programs that are both short and reasonably priced.

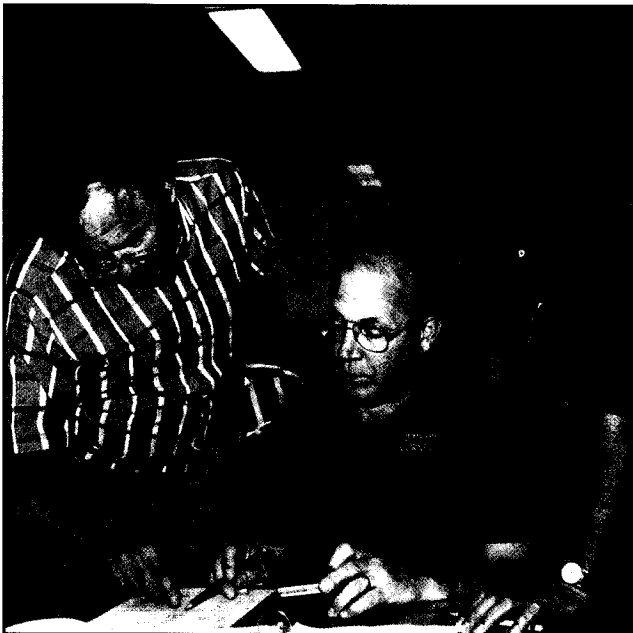


Photo by Charles Harrington, Cornell University Photography

*Cornell's Professor Robert Chase (left) teaches organization-management concepts to hospitality managers during the hotel school's Professional Development Program.*

The results show a strong desire across all industry sectors for a two- to three-day program duration, a \$500-\$750 fee for a two-day program, and a general desire and expectation to continue attending management-development program offerings.

Target-marketing opportunities also emerged as a direct result of the study. For example, lodging-sector managers showed a much stronger preference for programs focused on marketing topics, whereas the health-services managers indicated a stronger preference for computer-application training. Program offerings could be developed to meet the specific needs of target markets. For areas such as motivation and training, program offerings could be developed to appeal to all three of the sectors that we studied. Overall, future development for external management-development programs needs to pay special attention to members of the target markets—who they are and what they really want.

### Closer Scrutiny

The direct results of the study are helpful. However, closer scrutiny of the study's results reveals questions that need to be raised. Does focusing on just the higher-rated subject areas serve the needs of the industry? Are managers at various levels of an organization really likely to agree with each other about required training? Does the preferred program length of two days make sense?

Leadership, communication, motivation and training, and service quality are the highest-rated subject areas—more so than more traditional functional areas such as sales, accounting, and finance. As professional educators, we agree with the respondents that those highest-rated areas should be given priority for professional education in the hospi-

ality industry. Excepting motivation and training, the hospitality managers we surveyed all agreed on those priorities regardless of their level of management.

### Program length.

Those in the field, whether in corporate, regional or unit-level management, prefer two- or three-day programs. Seventy-five per cent of all respondents wanted programs of five days or less. We think those findings are reasonable, considering that many executives and managers don't want to be away from their jobs for much longer than two to three days. A somewhat disturbing finding, however, is that only 25 percent said that program length may be related to the program's topic.

We question why so few consider program topic important when assessing how long a management-development program should be. Can one really teach leadership in three days? Traditional functional areas are often taught in two- to five-day modules, such as Cornell's Professional Development Program (PDP) and Guelph's Hospitality Management Development Course (HMDC). The industry has apparently become accustomed to this approach and appears to be satisfied. But as demand grows for the more complex study of leadership, service quality, and the like, are hospitality managers willing to invest the time and money that may be needed to study effectively such complex subject areas? Are they aware that three days may not allow enough time to truly grasp what leadership skills are all about? Hospitality managers' awareness of and desire for critical program topics are, we believe, moving in the right direction. Those

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managers, however, may not yet be aware of the complexity of teaching and developing high-level managerial skills.

In this study we asked hospitality managers what they were looking for in management-development programs, and they told us to focus on such topics as communication, interpersonal skills, strategic planning, and service quality. The future of the hospitality industry requires educators to move on from the study of traditional management functions and to focus on the attributes of leadership.

This is best done by going beyond asking managers about areas of interest and program-topic preferences. Educators need to learn more about managers' goals and desired outcomes; that is, what do managers hope to accomplish by investing their time and money in management-development programs? Knowing that may help teachers and trainers better understand what it is the industry *really* wants—just another three-day seminar or better management skills for tomorrow. **CQ**