

Supplement A

ASTC PD Survey: Executive Summary

Overview

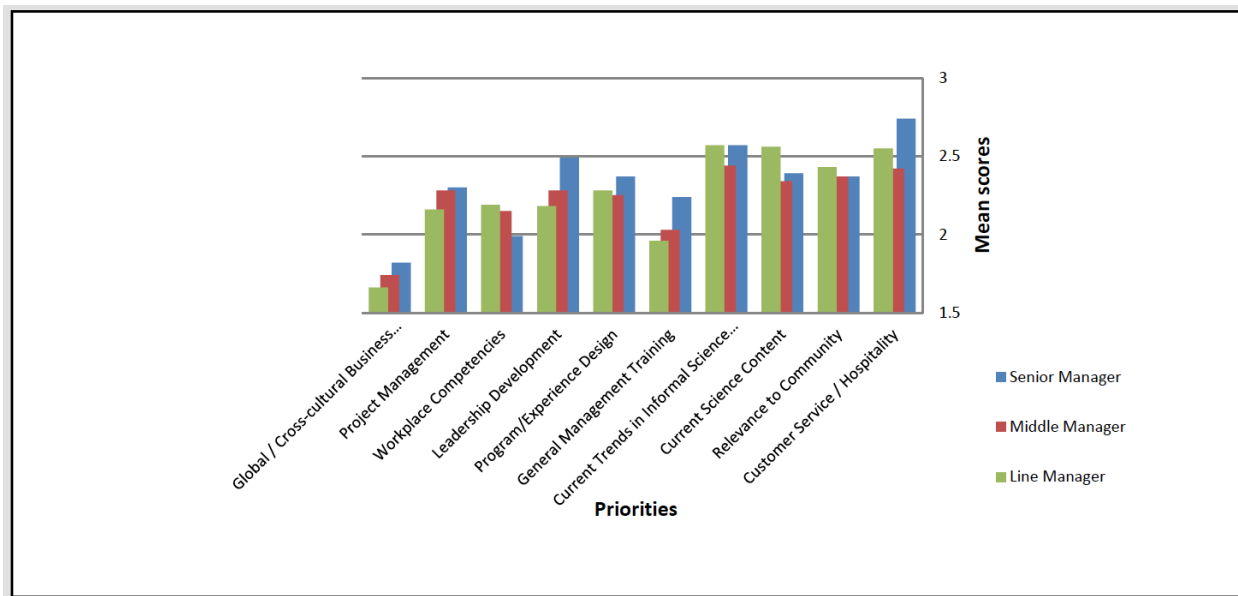
In April 2013, ASTC commissioned Julie Johnson (JR2R Leadership & Change Associates) to undertake an independent and extensive survey of museum professionals designed to gain a better understanding of the training and professional development (PD) needs of science center and museum staff. This summary compiled by ASTC illustrates specific content and skill needs and interests by staff at various job levels.

Responses from 529 ASTC members via SurveyMonkey were obtained. 82% of the respondents were from science centers/museums and 11% were from multidisciplinary institutions. 71% of participants were from large institutions, half of which had a staff of more than 250 employees. Senior Managers represented 36% of respondents and 37% were Middle Managers. Non-Managers made up 17% of the pool. 43% of respondents indicated that they had responsibility for multiple areas. Most Senior (69%), Middle (64%) and Line Managers (55%) had been in the field for more than ten years.

Content Drivers for Training and Development

Senior Managers identified *customer service*, *current trends in informal science learning*, and *leadership development* as their top three priorities for training and development (Table 1). Middle Managers chose *current trends in informal science learning and programming*, *customer service* and *relevance to community*. Line Managers added *current science content* to their top three choices.

Table 1. Participants reporting on priority for training & development



Respondents could also identify additional topic areas that should be given high priority. Responses identified an array of areas of which *collaboration, finance, research and evaluation, and technology* were mentioned most.

Managers identified the following criteria they use to determine the training and development needs of their staff: *being opportunistic about training and development opportunities; annual performance review process; personal observation by the manager; and ramping up for a new exhibition or program change.* Interviews with CEOs and human resources staff indicated that there was a clear need for finances to be allocated to professional development. ‘Relevance’ was raised many times as a goal ‘but no one is able to unpack the skills/knowledge needed across the institution that could build capacity in this goal.’

What Participants Say About Job Skills

Survey participants were asked a series of questions to establish performance related needs. Just 42% were consistently confident in their ability to perform job-related skills. Only 34% of the respondents felt they consistently have the right information for their job. 15% of respondents felt they consistently have access to resources for their job.

Participants were asked to select from a list of all the skills that they felt were important for their jobs today and in the near future (Table 2). They were then asked to identify the four that were most important for the next 12-18 months. The list contained 14 broad categories of skills which represented 36 knowledge, skills, or attitudes that were derived from conversations with museum HR professionals, responses captured during the pilot of the survey, and the literature on human resource development.

Table 2. Categories of Job Skills and Knowledge

Broad Categories	
• Employee Recruitment/Retention	• Project Management
• Management	• Board Development
• Talent/Performance Management	• Innovation
• Leadership	• Working with Communities & Various Constituencies
• Financial Acumen	• General Business Acumen
• Audience/Visitor interaction (engagement)	• Diversity/Inclusion
• Practical Skills	• Global Trends and Issues in Science Centers and Museums

Needed for Their Current Job

Data was examined for participants overall, by functional position, and by museum type and size. Each of the 14 categories was selected by multiple respondents; no category was left unchecked. Across all 528 survey respondents the top four skills identified were *practical skills* (n=347), *project management* (n=339), *talent/performance management* (n=327), and *leadership* (n=325). The number of respondents selecting these categories represents over 60% of the total respondent group.

Most Important in the Next 12-18 Months

The top three categories identified by the respondents were *global trends and issues in science centers and museums* (n=229), *innovation* (n=219), *leadership* (n=209), and *general business acumen* (n=205). These responses represent roughly 41% of the total respondent group. This may be an indication that people are not sure of the skill sets needed in the near future.

Expectations of Outcomes for Professional Development

Participants were asked to describe the changes in behavior and performance they would like to see in themselves after a training or development experience. 303 participants responded to the question. Text analysis of the data revealed several themes in the responses; the themes in order of frequency mentioned are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Themes about the desired outcome(s) for PD

Improve in current position
Incorporate new skills (transfer)
New skills/knowledge/attitudes (KSAs) / New ideas in general
Improve as leader, mentor, or manager
Improved skills (time management; organization, communication, etc.)
Implementation plan - action steps for using new KSAs
Confidence / Innovation / Risk-taking
Networking / Community / Team building
Change in thought process / perspective
Have resources to use in work
Motivation / enthusiasm / interest / creativity
Support for using new SKAs
Trends / Developments / Issues in field or other institutions
Gain organization/business perspective
Increase sphere of influence
Meet changing demands
Reflection time
Skills for career advancement / recognition

Sample statements from selected themes are identified below along with the respondent's position level:

Statements about improving one's current position

- *"An increased ability to develop highly engaging inquiry based activities."* – Middle Manager
- *"If the training focused on communication skills, I would hope that I would be more aware of how I communicate and then use what I learn to adjust my performance."* – Middle Manager

Statements about incorporating new skills into one's job

- *"That I am actually able to apply and use what I have learned; that I don't just fall back on old habits, but change my approach of method of doing something and can see positive results."* – Senior Manager
- *"Knowledge, skills, ideas that I'm able to immediately put into use."* – Non-supervisor

Statements about motivation, enthusiasm, interests, creativity

- *"More interest and energy in my work."* – Senior Manager
- *"Renewed motivation, sense of purpose. Renewed energy."* – Senior Manager
- *"I would like to feel revitalized and energized, with tools and a plan to use these tools to improve my programs and my institution."* – Line Manager
- *"To be inspired to be more creative."* – Non-supervisor

Recommendations to ASTC

In terms of STEM-specific content areas on which to focus, participants identified *current trends in informal science learning, current science content, and relevance to community* as priority topics.

Participants identified *global trends and issues in science centers and museums, and innovation* as future STEM-specific skills required.

Respondents from different size museums identified *innovation, global trends and issues, audience/visitor interaction, and working with communities and constituencies* as areas for ASTC focus.

Participants also desired help in prioritizing professional development at their institution. *"I would love to know if ASTC has materials that support/prove the benefit of investing in training and development for our staff – something that I could use to justify putting funding for that in all of my budgets."*

Participants overall support focused professional development for the science center/museum field: *"When [PD] is neglected (as I feel it currently is), it creates 2 distinct groups – those who do the minimum and are not moving the field forward and those who search out new opportunities to advance and innovate. Having these two groups in a museum can lead to divisions that are not fruitful. Cultivating a culture of currency and skills development is essential to a vital workplace and sustainable museum organization,"* – Non-Supervisor