



LEARNING CONSULTANCY PARTNERSHIP

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*Partners for Performance*

**What companies are doing to develop their  
senior leaders**

**September 2008**



## Acknowledgements

Learning Consultancy Partnership would like to sincerely thank all the companies who took part in the survey and made this piece of research possible.

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## Introduction

This report presents the findings of an online survey, undertaken between April and July 2008, by Learning Consultancy Partnership (LCP), learning and development consultancy firm based in the South East of England.

It is hoped the findings will be of interest to participating organisations by providing them with information against which to benchmark their senior leader development practices.

### Purpose and aims of the research

The purpose of this study was to identify the activities organisations are using to develop their senior leaders and which of these are deemed by senior managers to be most useful and relevant to their needs.

The secondary aim was to discover the extent to which senior leaders see their development needs as unique.

## What the research says

Which methods are most effective for developing senior executives and leaders is a popular topic of debate, including whether or not their development needs are significantly different from the rest of the leadership population. This literature review will provide some context for these results by exploring some of the issues and discussion surrounding senior leader development.

## Is teamwork important?

It is no surprise that there is a fair amount of evidence to link senior leader effectiveness to organisational performance. For example, a study by Ernst and Young (Low & Siesfeld, 1998) found a direct link between the performance of the top team and a company's valuation. Others, however, (e.g. Vey, Stergois & Thomas, 2005), argue the relationship between the senior leadership team is far more complex and there is no simple recipe for success. In fact, they suggest that just because a top team is cohesive it does not necessarily result in high performance; on the contrary, they propose many successful senior leaders do not work well together at a team level.

A study by the Hay Group (2001), disagreed arguing that it is essential to unify senior teams and encourage them out of their silo mentality.

**'A team has a collective task that demands a high level of interdependency among its members, something that can only be accomplished together'.**

Hay Group 2001

Ancona and Nadler (1989) agree, stating the purpose of the executive team is to create synergy by effectively co-ordinating resources and activities across functions so that the performance of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They argue that collaborative effort adds value and improves organisational performance. Their model suggests that the amount of teamwork required is dependent upon the level of internal coordination needed and the complexity/instability of external demands. So the importance of teamwork needs to be considered in context.

		Structural Context (Internal coordination requirements)	
		Low	High
Environmental Context (Complexity/instability of external demands)	Low	Minimal work management (information exchange)	Internal work management and relationship management
	High	External boundary management	Multiprocess management

Ancona & Nadler (1989)

### Unique needs

Ancona and Nadler (1989) also believe that executive teams are significantly different from other teams within the organisation and this poses challenges for the CEO in terms of structuring, developing and managing them. The key differences they quote are:

- **Salience of the external environment.** Executive teams are unique in terms of being influenced by more external forces such as customers, competitors, financial markets, Board of Directors and shareholders.
- **Complexity of the task.** Executive teams deal with issues that are more complex than other teams.

- **Intensified political behaviour.** Executive teams deal with power and are able to influence the behaviour of others so the presence of politics is much more pronounced.
- **Fixed pie reward contingencies.** There is only one CEO role so if one person is promoted the others lose out by default.
- **Increased visibility.** The actions, interactions and dynamics of the team are carefully watched by many others in the organisation and this may magnify the perceived win- lose dynamics among individual members.
- **Composition.** Often individuals become members of the top team through individual achievement rather than their work through teams so may have an individualistic approach which means less of an inclination to work as a team member.
- **Special meaning of team membership.** Inclusion in an executive team has a special status and symbolism so who is in and who is out becomes more of a concern than in other teams.
- **Unique role of the CEO as team leader.** Because of the unique position of the CEO, there may be more distance between the team leader and team members than in other teams. There is no recourse beyond the CEO and if there are relationship problems there is often nowhere for team members to go.

Cunningham (2007) also proposed that senior managers have different needs from the rest of the management population. One point he raised is that there are fewer of them, so standardised approaches to development may not be appropriate and often senior leaders go outside of their own organisation for inspiration and support.

Rogers and Smith (n.d.), agree that various skill sets are needed at different stages along the leadership pipeline and put forward the idea that there are certain criteria which can be used for predicting success at executive level. The first is *leadership*

*promise*, the propensity to lead and bring out the best in others; the next is *personal development orientation*, the continual search to be better, together with, the ability to reinvent themselves when necessary; *mastery of complexity*, the ease with which they navigate ambiguity through adapting their approach and conceptual thinking and finally, *balancing values with results*, the ability to work with the organisation's culture whilst maintaining a passion for results.

### Criteria for predicting executive success (Rogers and Smith)



Charan, Drodder & Noel (2001), in their book, *The Leadership Pipeline. How to Build the Leadership Powered Company*, explore six key leadership passages that leaders may experience and suggest that at each passage a leader requires specific support and development in order for them to transition to the next phase of their career successfully. For example, when leaders start to manage through two layers of managers Charan et al, argue they will need to be able to manage activities outside of their own experience leading to a much greater need to delegate, which



can be a difficult transition for some, particularly if they have gained their seniority through being a subject matter expert such as in professional services.

At the next passage, where they start to lead more than one business, the focus moves to evaluating the strategy and success of others' ability to deliver against business goals. So at this passage their ability to analyse and evaluate data becomes increasingly important. Whereas at CEO level the focus is on strategic decision making, developing the senior team and ensuring that efforts are aligned to the long term strategy and vision.

Vey et al (2005), state that senior leaders need to be ambidextrous so they can adjust their behaviour, working styles and decision making processes as required. They propose top executives need to be able to monitor the environment and take action as necessary. The advantage of being ambidextrous is their ability to respond rapidly to change and adjust to circumstances which are often complex, meaning they can work at a dizzying pace of change in order to stay ahead of the competition.

In one study of top executive teams Ernst and Young found that senior leaders showed empathy, integrity, self-control, emotional intelligence and good self-awareness. In addition they were comfortable with productive conflict.

So the research does seem to imply that senior leaders have different needs to other management groups and in the next section we will review some of the development activities that are being used for this population.

## **Senior leader development activities**

Development activities for senior leaders are provided at a number of levels from focussing on the needs of the individual through to managing the talent pipeline in an organisational context, resulting in a diverse range of activities in a variety of situations.

## On the job development

To be truly effective at the executive level, leaders need to demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge and this can be fast tracked by providing them with a range of tailored, on-the-job, experiences aimed at developing their skills and knowledge gaps. Berger and Berger (2004), recommend development activities such as interim placements, job rotation and emergency assignments should be carefully profiled in terms of responsibility, skills and behaviours so they provide the right stretch without going so far that the individual snaps under the pressure. Charan et al (2001) agree that leaders need the right assignments, at the right time, to help them move up the career ladder.

**'The best developmental approach provides carefully selected job assignments that stretch people over time and allow them to learn and practice necessary skills'.**

Charan et al (2001)

They propose that missing a developmental passage in the pipeline can result in poor performance as the individual will fall short in terms of the knowledge, skills and experience needed to deliver in the role.

In a less structured form senior leaders can be developed in their normal day-to-day activities, for example, meetings and forced reading. Berger and Berger (2004), state that routine meetings hold little interest for top performers and meetings can be much more productive if they are used as a developmental arena; facilitating productive discussion, innovation and conflict resolution. In addition, by supporting membership of professional bodies leaders can be encouraged to keep up to date by reading periodicals and attending conferences. Many professional institutes have clear guidelines on continuing professional development for their members which can be incorporated into development plans.

An area which can be developmental but which is often overlooked is using senior leaders as teachers by encouraging them to share their knowledge and expertise with junior managers. Teaching as a learning activity can build confidence and presence as well as being a productive way of giving back to the new generation of leaders. In order to make a teaching assignment a learning tool, Berger and Berger (2004), advocate having a defined outcome which is followed up with feedback from a trained facilitator.

Other on-the-job activities include shadowing, which can provide exposure to new business strands and self-directed learning sets where a group of leaders work on their development needs with the help of a skilled facilitator.

### **Extra-curricular activity**

Sometimes, due to internal politics or lack of opportunities, senior leaders prefer to look for development opportunities outside of their own organisation. According to Cunningham (2007), external assignments are often welcomed by executives as they provide situations where they can share ideas and experiences with their peers, without the normal constraints of their own business. Networking events are an example of how senior leaders get to mix with their own peer group.

Another advantage of external assignments is they can provide a greater breadth of experience as they allow a leader to work in a completely different industry or sector, for example, co-ordinating a charitable project or chairing external groups. Not only is this useful in development terms, it also builds productive links with the community which is an important organisational goal.

### **Formal education and training**

Many universities and business schools offer intensive executive programmes which can be used as part of a degree such as an MBA. They also offer shorter courses aimed at supporting leaders who are moving up the organisation or crossing into

another discipline. Some larger companies have their own internal corporate university which they run in partnership with a local college or university and is based on the specific needs of the business. Charlton and Kuhn (2005), reviewed the return on investment of executive education in the UK and Europe and found that although business school programmes were well regarded by clients, there was little evidence of evaluating their effectiveness beyond the initial participant reactions.

Cunningham (2007), suggests senior leaders often doubt that their more junior, internal trainers understand their needs so are more predisposed to use external consultants to facilitate learning activities.

## Coaching and mentoring

As leadership challenges are becoming more complex Berger and Berger (2004) propose that coaching is a sound investment as it is contextual and relevant.

**'Since many leaders are using a coach, there must be a convincing case for coaching. There is: quite simply, coaching works and when it works well, it raises both individual performance and outcomes and their implied operational efficiencies and bottom-line reflections for the organisation'.**

Berger and Berger (2004)

Coaching is focussed on supporting personal growth and change and therefore offers opportunities for feedback and self-analysis. They also argue that although the focus is on the individual the outcomes of coaching also benefit the organisation in terms of retention, productivity, employee satisfaction and achievement of goals and objectives.

The Hay Group (2001) found that outstanding senior team leaders provided ongoing coaching and supported their top teams by regularly reviewing their performance and helping them to learn from their mistakes.

Mentoring has a different focus and can be used to support development by providing leaders with a more experienced individual who can empathise with their situation and understand the issues they face. The mentee can then use them as a confidential sounding board and source of advice. Many professional institutions, such as the Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals, provide a database of mentors that mentees can contact for support.

This literature review has shown that development of senior leaders is complex and varied. There seems to be a general consensus that the needs of this population are unique and a traditional management development approach may not address their particular requirements. Rather a planned, long-term strategy that supports them through the transitions in the leadership pipeline may reap the best rewards in terms of performance and organisational payback.

# Methodology

## Design

The study used a self-completion, online, survey design for collecting retrospective data regarding the development activity for senior managers and leaders.

## Participants

A random sample of participants was used and they were recruited in three different ways:

- Some were already known to LCP and were invited to take part.
- Others were recruited from the website.
- The final group were invited to take part by email.

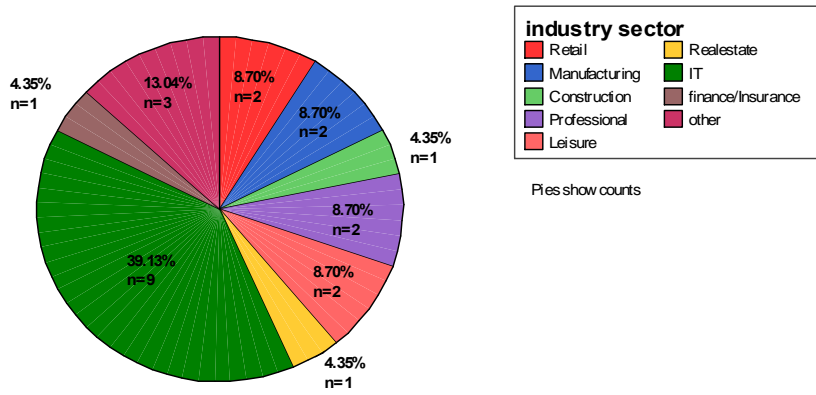
In total, 604 companies were contacted, of which 23 useable responses were returned giving a 3.87% response rate. This percentage is less than our previous research in 2007 which had a 4.47% response rate.

The 23 respondents in the sample came from a variety of industry sectors.

By far the majority of responses came from information technology, 39% (n=9). The rest were from other (13%, n=3), manufacturing, leisure & hospitality, retail/wholesale, professional services (9%, n=2), finance/insurance, construction and real estate (4%, n=1).

**Figure 1: Industry sector**

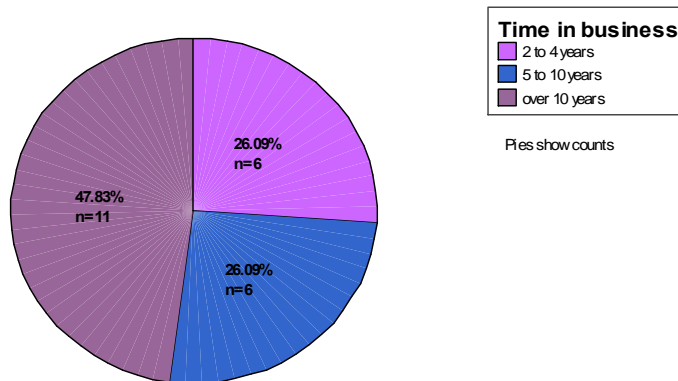
**Industry Sector**



Nearly half (48%, n=11) of respondents had been in business for over ten years; and just over a quarter had been in business for between five and ten years and two to four years respectively (26%, n=6).

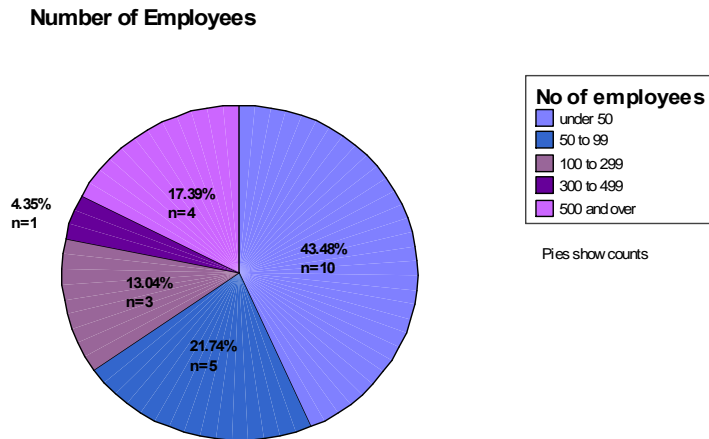
**Figure 2: Length of time in business**

**Time in Business**



A total of 43.5% (n=10) of organisations employed fewer than 50 people; 22% (n=5) employed between 50 and 99; 17.5% (n=4) employed over 500; 13% (N=3) employed between 100 and 299 and 4% (n=1) employed between 300 and 499 people.

**Figure 3: Number of employees**



## Materials

The study used an online, self-completion survey which comprised a mix of multiple-choice, rating, numerical, Likert and open-ended questions. A full copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Other materials used for the study comprised:

- an email inviting organisations to participate in the survey (Appendix 2 )
- an introduction confirming participants right to withdraw (Appendix 3)
- an acknowledgement restating confidentiality and the right to withdraw (Appendix 4)



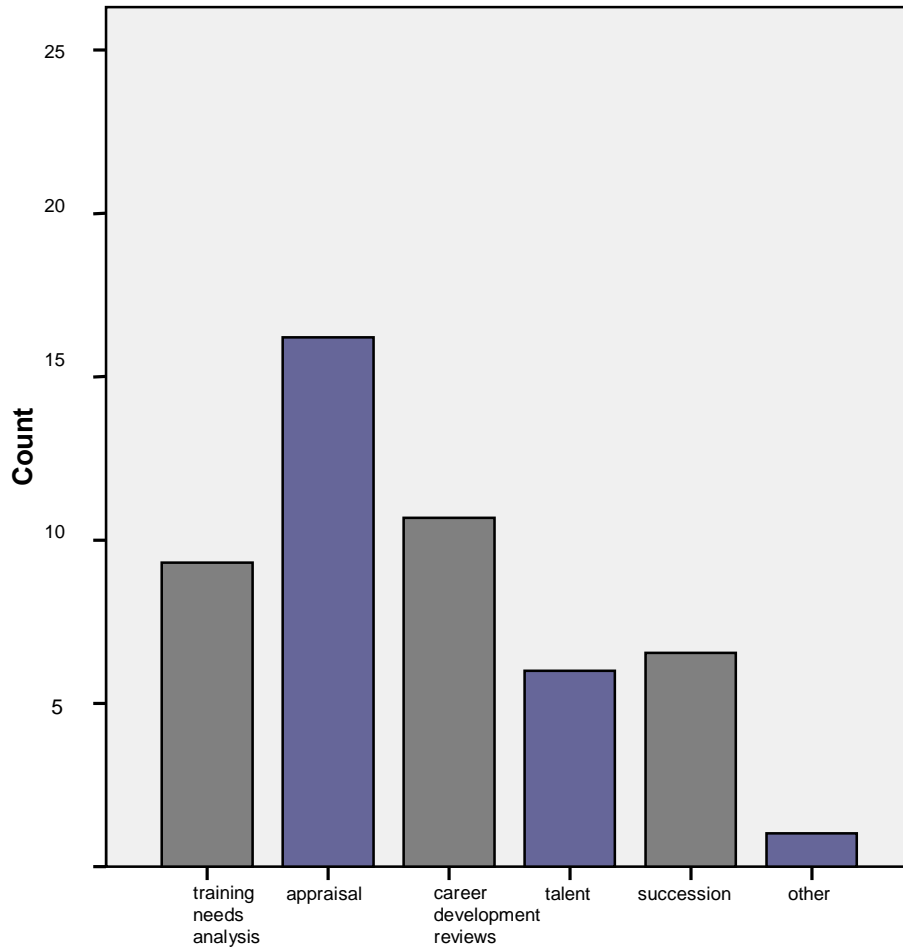
## Analysis

The results were analysed using SPSS version 15.0.

# Results

## Training and development activity

**Figure 4: Processes used to identify development needs for senior leaders**

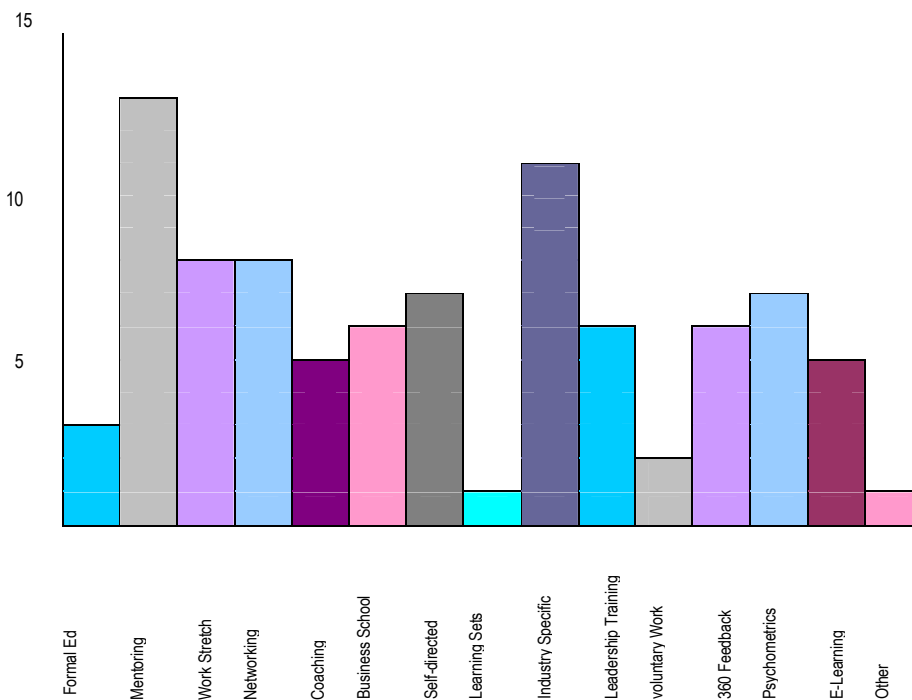


The most popular method for identifying senior leaders' development needs was through the appraisal process (70%, n=16) although this was far lower than our previous research into training and development which had (84%, n=21) using the appraisal process . suggesting senior leaders do not rely on the appraisal process

as heavily to identify their development needs. Career development reviews (48%, n=11, and training needs analysis 39%, n=9) were also used to identify needs as, to a lesser extent, were succession planning processes (30%, n=7) and talent management programmes (26%, n=6). The other process cited was board level reviews.

Next, participants were asked what development activities they had provided for their senior leaders over the previous 12 months and which activities they perceived as most useful and relevant.

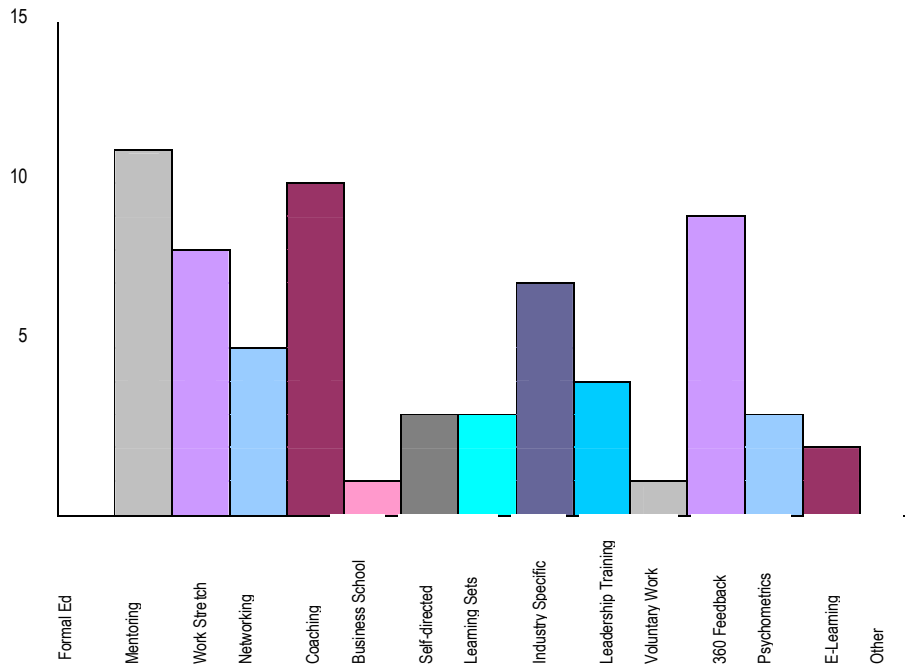
**Figure 5: Development activities provided for senior leaders during the previous 12 months**



The most popular activities undertaken were mentoring (56%, n=13) and industry specific training (48%, n=11). Work-based stretch assignments, networking (35%,

n=8), self-directed learning and psychometrics (30%, n=7) were also used. Voluntary work (9%, n=2) and learning sets (4%, n=1) were the least reported activities.

**Figure 6: Development activities seen as most useful and relevant for senior leaders**

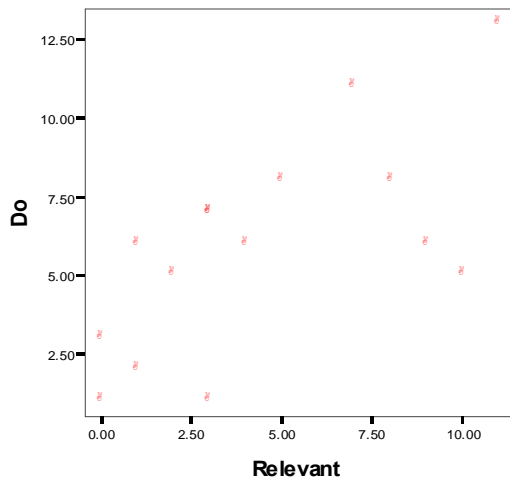


When asked which of these activities were useful and relevant, mentoring again was the most popular (48%, n=11) and executive coaching was a close second (44%, n=10). Three sixty degree feedback (39%, n=9), work-based stretch assignments (35%, n=8) and industry-specific training (30%, n=7) were also popular. Business school programmes and voluntary work were the least popular (4%, n=1).

A scatter plot was done to see if there was any relationship between the current development activities and those reported as relevant and useful.

The diagram showed a positive relationship so further analysis was undertaken.

**Figure 7: Scatterplot: Current development activities provided for senior leaders compared to those seen as relevant and useful**



Pearson's Correlation (2-tailed) was used to evaluate the linear relationship between current development activities and those reported as relevant and useful. As Table 1, shows, this indicated that there is a significant and positive correlation ( $r = 0.672$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ,) at the 0.01 level ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the current development activities and those reported as relevant and useful, which suggests the senior leader development activities being undertaken are those seen as useful and relevant by the participants. This could indicate that senior leaders are more discerning about which development interventions they will agree to.

**Table 1. Pearson's Correlation (2-tailed) of the total number of current development activities and those seen as relevant and useful**

		Currently do	Most important
Currently do	Pearson Correlation	1	.672(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	15	15
Most important	Pearson Correlation	.672(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	15	15

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

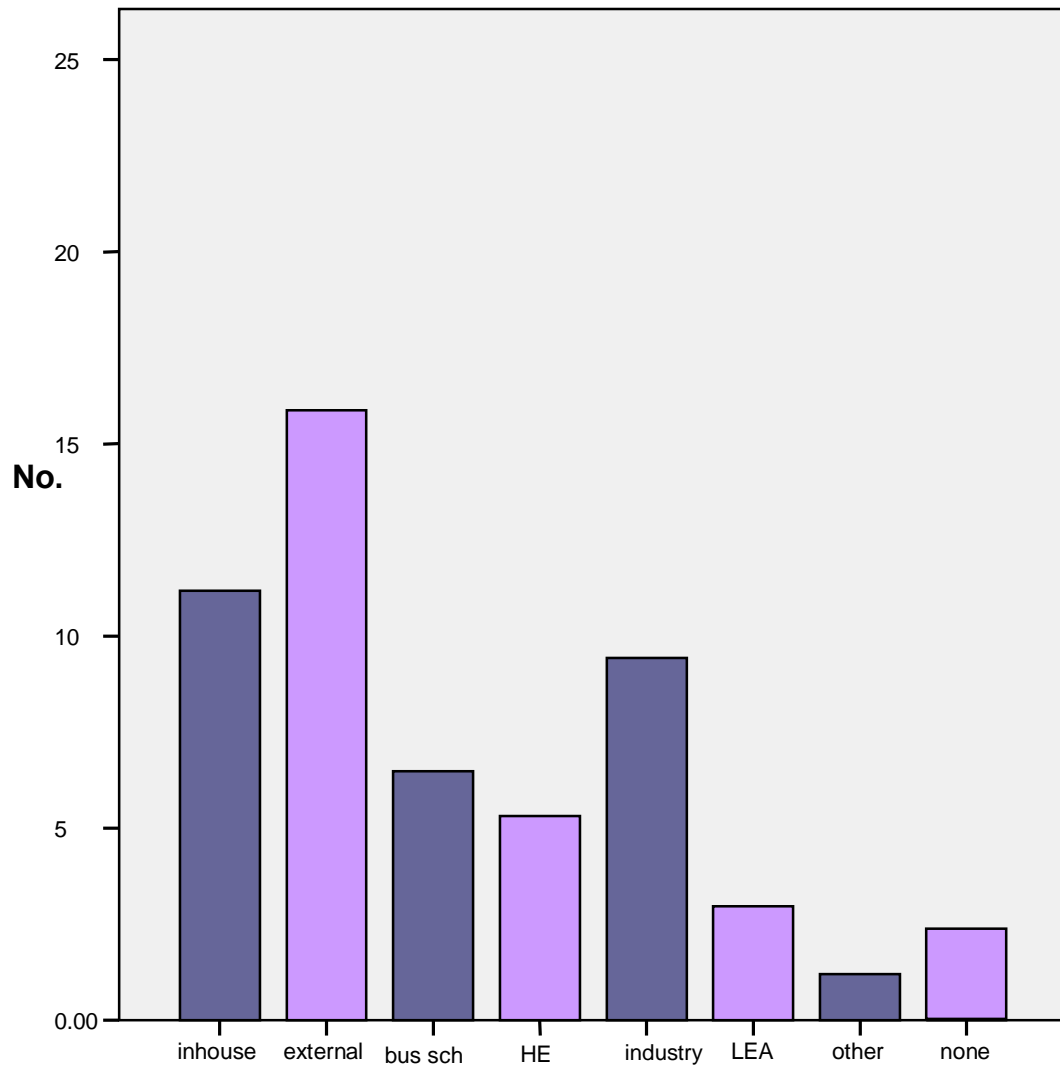
## Training providers

Respondents used a mix of training providers. The most popular were external, private training providers (70%, n=16) and in-house training staff (48%, n=11). Less popular were the Colleges and Universities (22%, n=5) and Local Enterprise Agency (13%, n=3). Over a third (39%, n=9) used industry specific training organisations.

**Table 2: Training providers used over the past 12 months**

	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
In-house training staff	11	48	12	52
External, private training providers	16	70	7	30
Business Schools	6	26	17	74
HE Colleges/Universities	5	22	18	78
Industry specific training organisations	9	39	14	61
Local Enterprise Agency	3	13	20	87
Other	1	4	22	96
None	2	9	21	91

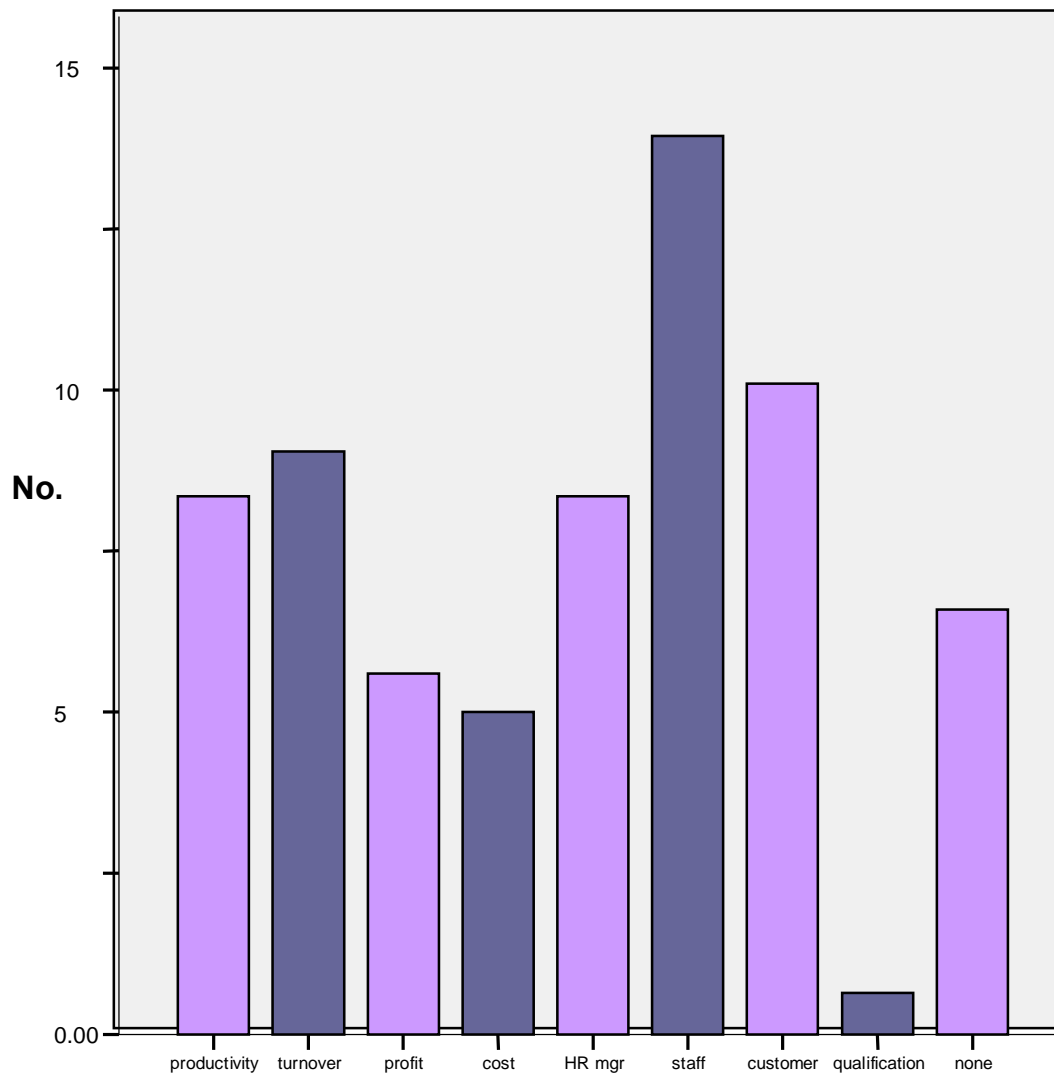
**Figure 8: Training providers used over the past 12 months**



### Impact on business performance

As well as exploring what training and development activity had been taking place, we were interested in how organisations measured the benefits of their senior leader development activity and which activities they perceived to have the greatest payback to their business.

**Figure 9: Measures used to assess the return on investment of senior leader development activities**

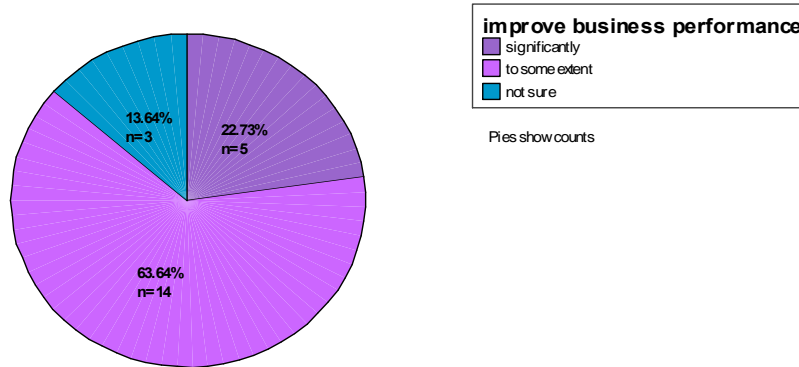


The most popular measures used were staff feedback (61%, n=14) customer feedback (44%, n=10) and turnover (39%, n=9). Qualifications achieved was only used by 4% (n=1) and 26% (n=6) had no measures in place.



**Figure 10: The extent to which respondents felt developing their senior leaders improved their business performance**

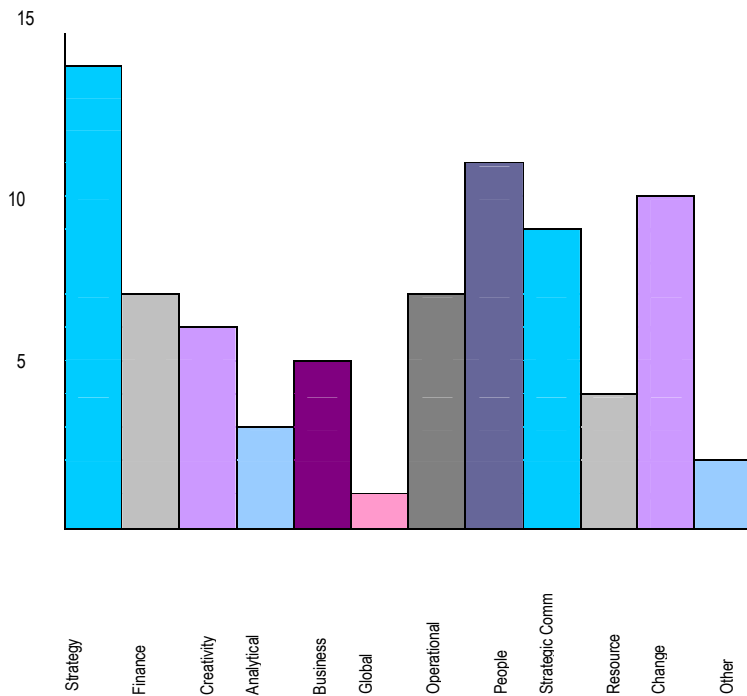
**Improve Business Performance**



A total of 64% (n=14) felt that training and developing their senior leaders improved business performance to some extent, 23% (n=5), answered significantly and 14% (n=3), reported that they were not sure. No respondents answered to a little extent or not at all.

Next, respondents were asked which topics they perceived as most important for senior leader development.

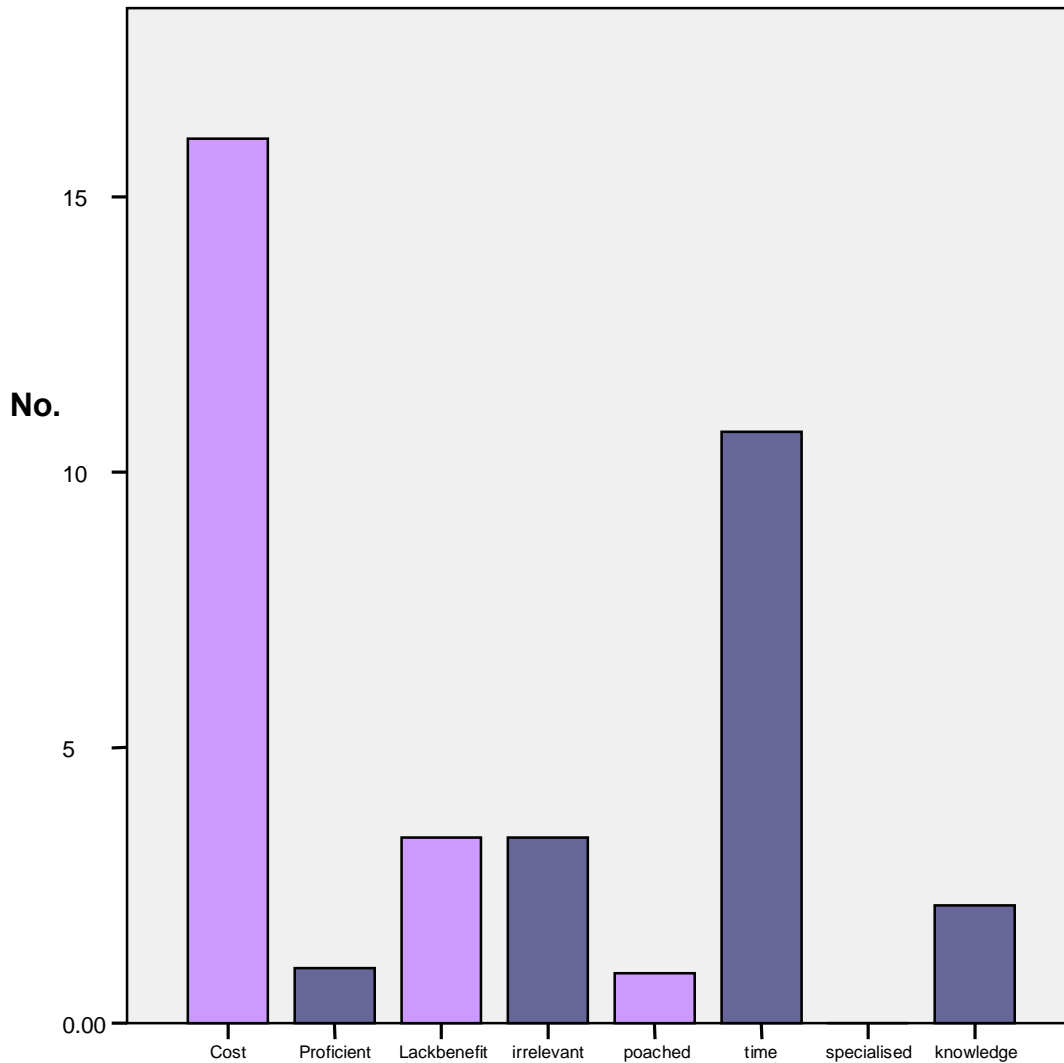
**Figure 11: The most important topics for senior leader development**



Strategy formation was reported to be the most important (61%, n=14), followed by people development (48%, n=11) and leading/facilitating change (44%, n=10). Analytical capability (13%, n=3) and global knowledge (4%, n=1) were reported as the least important topics.

Participants were asked about obstacles to undertaking senior leader development, and as with our previous research (LCP, 2007), the two biggest perceived obstacles were the financial cost (70%, n=16) and lost working time (48%, n=11).

**Figure 12: Serious obstacles to undertaking senior leader development**



### Different development needs?

Next, participants were asked 'How are the development needs of senior leaders different from that of other managers?' Over half, (56%, N=13) agreed they were and for a full list of their comments see Appendix 5. Almost a quarter, (22%, n=5) believed they are not significantly different from other managers needs and another 22%, n=5, did not respond to the question.

## **Main gaps in senior leader development**

Participants were asked what they saw as the main gaps in senior leader development and the responses were varied, 13% (n=3), reported a lack of suitable courses/programmes; 9% (n=2), cited leading change and being a leader rather than a manager respectively and the rest were individual comments covering a range of topics (see Appendix 6). Over a quarter (30%, n=7), did not respond to this question at all.

## **Top priorities for the coming 12 months**

The last question in the survey asked participants to list their top three priorities for developing senior leaders for the coming 12-months.

The list was mixed, but 30%, (n=7) had strategy and leadership development in their top three and over a quarter (26%, n=6) had communication as a top priority.

**Table 3: Top three priorities for developing senior managers in the coming 12 months**

Priority	First		Second		Third	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Strategy	3	13	2	9	2	9
Leadership	2	9	3	13	2	9
Communication	3	13	2	9	1	4
Leading Change	2	9			1	4
Team Building	2	9			1	4
Sector Skills Training	1	4	1	4		
Targets			2	9		
Influencing Skills	1	4				
Top Talent Development	1	4				
Marketing/networking	1	4				
Coaching			1	4		
In-house Training			1	4		
Business Growth			1	4		
Accountability			1	4		
Audacity			1	4		
Time Management/Organisation					2	9
Inspiration					1	4
Business Goals Alignment					1	4
Individual Development Plans					1	4
Client Development					1	4

## Discussion

The purpose of this research was to identify what development activities are being used to develop senior leaders and whether or not senior leaders see their development needs as unique compared to other managerial groups.

Our findings show that senior leaders identify their learning and development needs in a variety of ways, the most popular method being the performance appraisal process, although nearly half (48%), used career development reviews and other popular methods were succession planning and talent management processes. This indicates there is a longer-term perspective for senior leader development, with a greater emphasis on career development.

The development activities taking place again, are varied, with mentoring and industry-specific training playing a key role. Surprisingly, leadership training was not

popular both in terms of what is happening and what senior leaders see as useful and relevant, suggesting they do perceive their requirements to be different from other managers and that traditional management development programmes may not be as appropriate at the executive level. Approximately a quarter of respondents (24%), use business schools for their senior leaders but when asked if they are useful and relevant this number plummeted to just 4%, so this is an area where further investigation could provide some useful insights.

Mentoring was by far the most popular intervention and this supports the research about the importance of the CEO as coach and facilitator. Coaching too was seen as useful and relevant with nearly half (44%) of participants rating it, but in practice less than a quarter (22%) reported coaching activity happening in their own organisations. As coaching is not always the cheapest option this could be related to cost as this was reported as the main barrier to undertaking senior leader development by 70% of respondents.

Despite these anomalies, there was a significant relationship between current development activities and those perceived to be useful and relevant, indicating senior leaders are discerning about which activities they participate in.

In terms of which providers senior leaders use for their development, it was not surprising that external providers were the most popular (70%), which supports Cunningham's (2007) idea that senior leaders prefer to go externally for support, although nearly half (48%), reported using their own in-house training teams. Other providers included business schools, colleges and universities as well as industry-specific organisations. Berger and Berger (2004), explored the growing popularity of partnerships between organisations and universities to provide senior leaders with more tailored programmes which can be credited towards academic qualifications and maybe this is a way to align qualifications with business development activity which is seen as relevant and useful. However, when asked about how senior

leader development activities are evaluated, only 4% reported using qualifications as a measure.

When questioned about the extent to which developing senior leaders contribute to business performance the majority of respondents (64%), said ~~to~~ some extent and less than a quarter (23%) answered ~~significantly~~. Research has shown there is a link between senior leaders and organisational performance (e.g. Low & Siesfeld, 1998) and so having less than a quarter answering ~~significantly~~ is not ideal, implying there needs to be a change in either the type of development activity taking place or clearer measures in terms of how the activity is impacting senior leader performance. For example, a challenge in the coaching world is how to evaluate the success of executive coaching as it does not sit well with return on investment evaluation models due to its more holistic nature.

Strategy, people development, communication and change were identified as the most important topics for senior leader development and this was backed up by a number of the comments regarding the gaps in executive development (see appendix 6). Another gap recorded was the lack of suitable programmes available and these topics fit well with the idea that stretch assignments can be a useful development tool (e.g. Berger & Berger, 2004). Strategy, leadership development and communication were also topics identified in the top three priorities for the coming 12 months.

Concerning obstacles, cost (70%) and time (48%) were reported as the main challenge, which is not surprising as senior leader development can be expensive and their time is precious, in some instances they are fee earners which means taking time out results in a substantial loss of income.

Finally, in agreement with the research, nearly half of the participants thought senior leaders do have unique requirements from the rest of the leadership population.

There are limitations to this study, such as the small sample size and the fact that under 4% of those contacted responded, meaning they may not provide a representative sample of the population. However, despite these limitations, many of the results are similar to the previous research which is useful for benchmarking purposes.

## Conclusion

These findings support the idea that senior leaders development requirements are different and a variety of initiatives are being used by organisations, ranging from coaching and mentoring through to professional or academic qualifications. The results also support the idea that senior leaders are participating in development activities they view as relevant to their needs.

An area which is less tangible is the extent to which senior leader development is contributing to business success and further study on this topic may produce some interesting findings.



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# Appendix 1- Senior Leader Development Questionnaire

## 1) Which of the following industry sectors best describes your business?

- Public Sector
- Voluntary Sector
- Retail/Wholesale
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Media & Publishing
- Utilities
- Leisure & Hospitality
- Housing, Real Estate, Renting & Business Services
- IT/Telecommunications
- Finance/Insurance
- Other

## 2) How many people does your organisation employ?

- Less than 50
- 50 - 99
- 100 -299
- 300 . 499
- 500 and over

**3) How long has your business been in operation?**

Under 2 years

2 . 4 years

5 . 10 years

Over 10 years

**4) Which of the following processes do you use to identify the development needs of senior leaders? (Tick all that apply)**

Formal training needs analysis

Appraisal process

Career development reviews

Talent management reviews

Succession planning forums

Other (please specify)

No formal process used

**5) Which of the following development activities have you provided for senior leaders over the past 12 months? (Tick all that apply)**

Formal education e.g. MBAs

Mentoring

Work based stretch assignments

Networking

Executive coaching

Business school programmes

Self-directed learning activities

- Learning sets
- Industry specific training
- Classroom based leadership training
- Voluntary work/secondment
- 360 degree feedback
- Psychometric instruments
- E-learning
- Other (please specify)

**6) Which of the following development activities do you think are most useful and relevant to senior leaders (*Tick 3 only*)**

- Formal education e.g. MBAs
- Mentoring
- Work based stretch assignments
- Networking
- Executive coaching
- Business school programmes
- Self-directed learning activities
- Learning sets
- Industry specific training
- Classroom based leadership training
- Voluntary work/secondment
- 360 degree feedback
- Psychometric instruments
- E-learning

Other (please specify)

**7) Which of the following providers have you used for senior leader development over the past 12 months? (Tick all that apply)**

In-house training staff

External, private, providers

Business schools

HE colleges/Universities

Industry specific training organisations

Local Enterprise Agency

Other (please specify)

None

**8) How does your organisation measure the return on investment of senior leader development activities? (Tick all that apply)**

Productivity measures

Turnover measures

Profit measures

Cost measures

HR/line manager assessment

Employee feedback

Customer feedback

Qualifications achieved

No measures in place

**9) Does investment in the development of your senior leaders improve your business performance?**

Significantly

To some extent

Not sure

To a little extent

Not at all

**10) Which of the following are the most important topics for senior leader development? (Tick 3 only)**

Strategy formation

Financial planning & budgeting

Creativity & innovation

Analytical capability

Business sector knowledge

Global knowledge

Operational knowledge

People development

Strategic communication

Resource deployment

Leading/facilitating change

Other (please specify)

**11) Which of the following are serious obstacles to undertaking senior leader development within your organisation? (*Tick all that apply*)**

- Financial cost
- No need for development . senior leaders are proficient
- Lack of tangible business benefits
- Not relevant to business plan
- Senior managers may be poached by competitors
- Lost working time
- Work is too specialised
- Don't know what is available

**12) How are the development needs of senior leaders different from that of other managers?**

**13) What do you see as the main gaps in senior leader development?**

**14) What are your top 3 priorities for developing your senior managers in the coming 12 months?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**15) Any other comments?**

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## Appendix 2 – email invitation

Dear

As you are a senior leader I am writing to request your help with some research my company is undertaking. I appreciate your time is valuable, so will keep my request as brief as possible.

I am the managing partner in a learning and development firm which conducts research into the specific needs of medium-sized, growth businesses. For copies of our previous research please visit [www.lcp.org.uk/articles.html](http://www.lcp.org.uk/articles.html).

Our current project concerns the specific development needs of senior leaders as we have identified a gap in the research in this area. As a result, we are now conducting a survey aimed at:

- Identifying the tools and activities medium-sized businesses are using to develop their senior leaders.
- Discovering which of these tools and activities are seen by senior leaders to be useful and relevant to their personal development?
- Identifying the extent to which senior leaders see their development needs as unique.

We would be most grateful if you would agree to participate in a short online questionnaire, lasting approximately five minutes. Your responses will be anonymous and a copy of the results will be provided to you and all other respondents taking part which will enable you to use the data to benchmark against your own development activity.

If you would like to take part please click below to complete the survey online.

Kind regards

Claire Walsh

Managing Partner  
Learning Consultancy Partnership  
[www.lcp.org.uk](http://www.lcp.org.uk)

<http://www.lcp.org.uk/survey.html>

The Learning Consultancy Partnership provides bespoke coaching and development solutions to meet the specific needs across all levels of an organisation. To find out more, please visit our website at <http://www.lcp.org.uk>. To unsubscribe from future emails please email: [unsubscribe@lcp.org.uk](mailto:unsubscribe@lcp.org.uk)



## Appendix 3 – email right to withdraw

Thank you for taking part in this survey, if you have any questions, please contact [clairewalsh@lcp.org.uk](mailto:clairewalsh@lcp.org.uk). If you wish to withdraw your data, please let us know within 4 calendar days. After 4 days we will no longer be able to withdraw your data as we will not be able to identify which organisation completed it once it has been entered onto the database.

A summary of this research will be sent to you within the next four months.

## Appendix 4 – email acknowledgement

Dear

Thank you for taking part in our survey regarding senior leader development activities in growth businesses. Just to confirm that your company information will remain confidential and will not be passed to any third parties. If you wish to withdraw your data please email me within the next 4 days, as after that we will not be able to identify which company provided the data. A summary of the results will be sent to you within the next four months and if you have any questions please contact me.

Thank you once again for completing the survey.

Kind Regards

Claire Walsh

Managing Partner,  
Learning Consultancy Partnership.

## Appendix 5 – Responses to “How are the development needs of senior leaders different from that of other managers?”

We all work with an owners eye and all our needs differ

The needs of senior leaders often revolve around people management and communication, which are less important for other managers

Senior leaders needs are around future focus, visioning that creates inspiration for others and leading change

Senior managers need to give greater consideration to the business objectives, not just day to day staff needs. They have to achieve a good balance between the two and be able to analyse and assess the impact staff have on the business achieving its objectives. They must be able to motivate and inspire staff to be the best they can as opposed to just making sure they carry out their daily duties

Their detailed knowledge and experience means that individuals need very specialist help

Less time, more intangible

Broader training needs

More specialised and individual

Higher level, wider spectrum

Stronger coaching from myself. Greater investment. Skills to be a leader rather than a manager

Being fully accountable

## Appendix 6 – gaps in senior leader development

- Lack of good courses/programmes
- Leading rather than managing
- Leading change
- Time and resources
- Communication
- Global perspective
- Influencing skills
- Refreshing new ideas
- Business strategy and links to the bottom line
- Motivation and follow up
- Cohesion