

## **Topline Results**

### **Skills and Training Grassroots Survey**

#### **General**

1. 87 companies took part in the survey as follows
  - BARA 4
  - BTMA 7
  - CBM 12
  - GTMA 18
  - MTA 25
  - PICON 11
  - PPMA 10
2. Company split is 93% SMEs, 7% large firms.
3. Firms' average age is 43 (28 to 68 at the extremes!)
4. One third are using foreign workers, half have someone specifically responsible for training
5. Business outlook: nearly 3 in 5 expect 2008 to be better than 2007.
6. In terms of future success the priority is to develop new customers (average position 1.9). Skills (2.9) come in second place with cash flow (3.2) and new products, processes and services (3.3) all very close (and presumably competing for management time and resources). Investment in new machinery (4.2) and lastly the cost of external finance (5.2) follow at some considerable distance.

#### **Training**

7. Nearly half the firms increased their training spend in 2007 and a similar proportion plan to do the same in 2008.
8. A third of all companies organise annual training for all their staff, while half do it for skilled staff. However, not quite 2 in 5 firms run apprentice or other structured training programmes. Half of these benefit from government support while the other half are fully paid for by the firms themselves.
9. Half the companies running these programmes target 16-18 year olds while fully three-quarters of them run them for 18-24 year olds. Completion rates are highest amongst the 16-18 year olds. Completion rates for the 24+ age group are high (nearly 4 in 5) with again about half the firms offering training to this group.
10. Two-thirds of all companies offering training use national accreditation and NVQs for all three age groups. However, in addition nearly a third of the firms running schemes for 24+ offer company specific recognition standards.
11. On average companies rate shopfloor training as having the biggest influence on their future success (25%), followed by sales (19%) and management (18%). (Supervisors (14%), design (11%) and IT (13%) are all seen as somewhat less significant).
12. By far the most popular training formats for all categories are in-house and external trainer. However over a fifth of firms also use day release and college for shopfloor training, and day release for management development.

#### **Familiarity and ranking**

13. Respondents familiarity with the organisations involved in delivering training is very low indeed. Between 60-80% of respondents have no or very little knowledge indeed of the groups mentioned except for private training providers and accredited training organisations.
14. With such low profiles in the minds of the respondents only private training providers achieve a solidly positive rating, while most of the others are just able to raise positive reactions, the exceptions are the skills brokers (where only one tenth of respondents are familiar with them).
15. One third of the firms are aware that the government is putting in £3 billion to help firms with their training. However, over half of these same firms think that this will not be very useful or worse.

AGREE/DISAGREE	SCORE	STATEMENT
Agree strongly	3.5	"We need simple, direct information about training"
	3.4	"We have to train to survive"
	3.4	"We struggle to find the people we need"
	3.4	"Employers are sceptical about government announcements, including about training"
	3.3	"If I know how to access government funds to train my people I will use them"
Agree	3.0	"We are better off arranging our own training"
	3.0	"Trade associations should be more involved in delivering training in my sector"
	2.9	"After so many changes in training standards, we need some years of stability"
	2.9	"NVQ level 2 is not where we want to be"
	2.6	"I am surprised so much public money is being spent on training"
Disagree	2.2	"We have a good understanding of the training support available to us"
	2.1	"Our company is going to do more with local schools"
Strongly disagree	1.9	"National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) meet our needs"