



Survey of IT Training Buyers

February 2009

Introduction.....	1
The IT Training Manager's Mindset.....	2
Skills Requirements.....	4
IT Professionals	5
IT Users	6
Certifications and Qualifications	9
Training/Learning Provision.....	11
Training Providers.....	11
Live Web.....	13
e-Learning.....	13
Blended Learning.....	14
Informal Learning.....	15
Demonstrating Value.....	17
And finally – spare a thought... ..	19

Prepared for the Learning Directors Network by:

Pardo Fox Ltd

32 London Road
Guildford
GU1 2AB

01483 454363
www.pardofox.com

Introduction

This research report has been prepared for the members of the Institute of IT Training's Learning Directors Network.

The aim of the research was to ask senior buyers of training about the changes and trends they are experiencing now and/or those they expect to see during the course of 2009. We hope our findings will enable providers of training services and products to develop their offerings so that they more closely match the needs of the market.

Input was collected via

- a) a Focus Group of eight senior training buyers (IT Training Managers or similar) on 20 February, chaired and facilitated by Donald Taylor, and
- b) extended one-to-one telephone interviews with individuals of similar responsibility, conducted over the period 16-27 February.

Participants were also asked to complete a short 'tick box' questionnaire, to provide numerical data on skills requirements and training/learning provision.

The report incorporates many verbatim quotes from the contributors. These quotes invariably capture the preoccupations, priorities and concerns of the buyer population in an incisive and sometimes amusing manner.

Each topic area is followed by a series of Key Points, in which we have endeavoured to draw together the main messages that we believe will be of interest and value to those on the supply side of the industry.

We are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to this research.

The IT Training Manager's Mindset

In the course of the interviews, there were various comments from the contributors that provided evidence of the climate in which IT training managers are operating. This is selection of those comments:

"I have a huge number of projects on my plate this year."

"Our challenge is how to deliver this training to so many people, to so many groups of staff, in time. We have 10,000 people."

"We have too much to do. I have seven or eight staff to train 2,000 people."

"I've been told my remit is to increase training penetration and hit rate five-fold as a minimum!"

"Our IT training increased by 52% in the last 12 months – there was a lot of training for clinicians, for example."

"Instead of training being a push from us, there is now a pull from the user base. They are keen to have IT training."

"We're kicking off a huge infrastructure programme, consisting of eight projects. We're moving from Windows 2000 to Vista, Sharepoint and Office 2007. The training has to be up and running by Easter, and delivered by the end of the year."

"We're seeing an urgent need now for training services for our clients."

"We bought [a rapid e-learning development tool] just before Christmas. Our very first project was for a client – we're providing a formal, supported service."

"There have been redundancies in other parts of L&D – but not in the IT training team."

"Our business is only minimally affected by the fact that there's a recession on."

"I get the impression that training is in a slightly safer position than it has been in previous recessions."

"We've come less under the spotlight than other L&D teams have."

"We're about to merge – we shall have to merge training offices, staff and solutions."

"I've just been made redundant – training is no longer seen as a key shared service."

"My colleagues and I have launched e-learning, and now we've been made redundant. They've brought in a really cheap alternative."

"They brought in a Training Admin system, made the manager redundant, and now they have no internal training department and no training strategy – they've just formed a committee to write one."

KEY POINTS:

1. The majority of IT Training Managers are not worrying about recession – they are too busy handling growing demand.
2. Many are working on major roll-outs, often in Windows Vista, Office 2007 or business applications.
3. Some firms are seeing significant demand to provide training for their customers.
4. A minority of organisations are cutting staff in IT training, presenting further challenges in developing and maintaining the appropriate IT skills base.

Skills Requirements

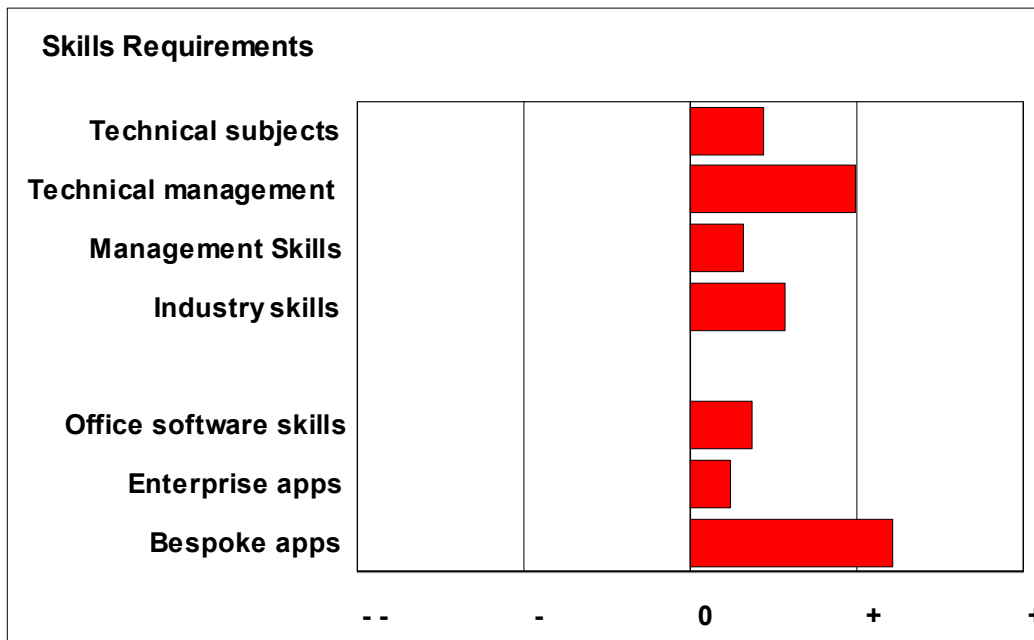
How are your organisation's IT skills requirements changing in 2009, compared with 2008?

For each row of the following table, please tick one box to indicate the change on a five-point scale from **++** (a very significant increase) to **--** (a very significant decrease).

Results (percentages of respondents who ticked each box):

IT PROFESSIONALS	--	-	0	+	++
Technical subjects (generic, product-/vendor-specific, methods etc)	0%	9%	45%	36%	9%
Technical management (project management, ITIL etc)	0%	8%	17%	42%	33%
Management skills (general mgmt, interviewing, appraisal etc)	0%	17%	42%	33%	8%
Industry skills (related to the organisation's business)	0%	8%	33%	50%	8%
END USERS					
Office software skills (e.g. Microsoft Office)	0%	23%	38%	15%	23%
Enterprise applications (CRM, ERP, BI etc)	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
Bespoke applications (organisation- or business-specific)	0%	0%	15%	46%	38%

Results in chart form:



In general

"We're very keen to train the people we have, rather than recruiting to get the skills from outside."

"We've still got the same requirements we've always had."

On IT Professionals' requirements

"We want to professionalise the IT service function, and for it to be recognised as such in the business, so things like ITIL and – to a lesser extent – PRINCE2."

"In the past we might send someone off on a PRINCE2 course, but there was no formal standard for project management. But now the regulatory side of the business wants us to have an organisational project management methodology."

"We've had for several years a project management methodology, but until now it's only ever been paper-based."

"There's a big push on at the moment around project management and project management tools – and web collaboration thereof – we're about to deploy an online hosted PM tool called [tool]. The training is about bringing the IT team, and people from across the business who come in to run projects, up to speed so they all sing off the same hymn sheet with regard to the methodology, the tool set and the reporting mechanisms."

"For our Project and Programme Community, key skills are PRINCE2, MSP and Management of Risk. ITIL is also important, as is managing the business interface."

"We have a lot of graduates coming on board, and they are all given project management training."

"Project management training is not in decline – it's just not as much on the up as it used to be."

"Definitely ITIL – we're just running an ITIL project at the moment, so we're running an ITIL awareness course for all our IT staff. On the back of that we're bringing in a new service desk system."

"We're still investing in ITIL training for our IT staff."

"There is an increasing need for IT people to have management and soft skills training. We have our own competency framework for managers, and all managers are assessed against this on an annual basis. This is what leads to their individual training and development plan for the year."

"We do provide training in management skills for IT professionals, but it's down to the individual to say 'I want training on this'."

"IT are not that fussed – they're wrapped up in their own IT world – but we do encourage every member of staff to learn about the business. Obviously the guys who support the share dealing or portfolio management systems have a fair amount of knowledge, but someone in desktop support doesn't need to know as much about the business."

"We're about to deploy Office 2007, coming from Office 2003."

"Most of our needs are at the networking level rather than the desktop level."

"We have needs in the Microsoft Server and Cisco areas."

"Key areas this year are data protection, data management, document management and project governance."

"Security is important. There are certain technologies to be put in place, and certain behaviours."

"We can normally find the training we need, but there are a couple of areas we struggle with: Sharepoint development is one of them. We've got the names of a couple of freelancers we can use, but we're still finding it difficult to get it from commercial training companies."

"It's been difficult to find training on Adobe Captivate. When we did manage to find a course, the trainer knew his stuff but had no idea how to teach."

On IT Users' requirements

"People coming into the organisation now are bringing in more IT skills than was the case in the past. There is an expectation that when people get here, they will already have at least basic Office skills. So what they need is support rather than training."

"At the basic entry level, a lot of people think they don't need training – but they do!"

"We have a high turnover of staff – such as caterers or cleaners – but they still need basic training in email, the Internet and using a mouse."

"Many new recruits now know Word – but they still need training."

"Graduates can use Powerpoint – but they use way too much clipart, for instance. They also need to learn that email is not the same as text."

"I think people joining our organisation are at the same sort of level [in IT user skills] as they've always been. They still need the same skills set to be instilled when they join. Perhaps it's because we're public sector?"

"For end users, it's very much about consolidating and leveraging what we've got. We recognise that we're not getting the maximum benefit that we could get out of the IT systems we've currently got."

"Key areas for us in 2009 are Vista, Office 2007, Exchange 2007 and Instant Messaging."

"Microsoft classes are more popular than ever."

"For end users, we're finding Microsoft classroom courses are less popular."

"Many users need higher levels of Microsoft skills now."

"We train all the Microsoft Office applications up to Master level."

"There is a bigger requirement now for Excel training – that's probably our best attended course."

"All Council staff used to be allowed to go on one course per year, so they did – we had traffic wardens going on Excel courses."

"The next big push is that we're migrating everybody to Lotus Notes 8.5, which is a big shift in functionality of the tool and much more Web 2.0 enabled, linking in with collaboration tools."

"We need to get people using Lotus Notes effectively. We've been starting to make training available, and where we have been able to take that out to people there's been a big uptake."

"We have to do a lot of training on Electronic Patient Records and 18-week Pathway. We have to train them on the IT system, but also teach them about the overall process."

"There's been a big push to get people to follow process on SAP in procurement and in engineering."

"We have a mandatory course that people must attend before they get access to our Document Management System."

"Document management"

"We work with government clients. We have one that is still on Windows NT, and one that doesn't even have PCs yet!"

"There's a lot of focus now on Moodle and open source."

"The Council is leaving Microsoft altogether and going to Linux. Microsoft is just so expensive."

"Open source is really starting to take off in the public sector."

"We're looking at open source, but have security concerns."

KEY POINTS:

1. With little or no recruitment allowed, organisations need to build and maintain the skills of their existing staff.
2. Buyers perceive an increasing need for skills in all areas. The strongest growth is expected in business applications and technical management.
3. There is a definite trend towards greater discipline, rigour and professionalism in the use of IT methods and standards.
4. There is continuing high demand for training in project management, PRINCE2 and ITIL.
5. Organisations are continuing to demand increasing levels of management and business skills for IT professionals. In fact this trend is reinforced by points 2 & 3 above.
6. Most organisations have training needs in specific technical areas – some mainstream, some not.

7. There is a lack of consensus regarding how much (or how little) entry-level IT users typically know, but general agreement that virtually all recruits need IT training – at the very least in local flavour and standards.
8. Some user training projects – such as Office 2007 roll-outs – can involve very large numbers and therefore resourcing challenges.
9. Some IT users now require increasingly advanced skills.
10. Compliance is a major driver of user training – not just to meet external mandates, but for access to internal systems.
11. Open source is still/again on the agenda in the public sector.

On Certifications and Qualifications

During the conversations on training and requirements, the topic of certifications and qualifications for both IT professionals and end-users naturally arose.

"Within the firm, IT professional certification is seen as important."

"Our business promotes the right qualifications for the person in the role, so if you're a network engineer they will put you through MCSE. That approach is the same now as it's always been."

"Everybody here wants to do the PRINCE2 certification at the moment. With some redundancy going on, I think currently people are very conscious of their CVs."

"There's been a big drive for ITIL across the organisation, and most of our technical department now have that qualification – it's a standard on their job spec now. Anyone who joins from outside will be expected to have it already, or to get it very quickly."

"We need them to have certification when we're recruiting, but we don't care once they're in."

"We don't tend to push it [certification]."

"One advantage of working in the public sector is that although we don't pay much, they can get certifications – ECDL, MCSE and so on."

"Certification is more important now. We put all staff through ITQ and fund them – it's a 'value-add' on their employment in the public sector."

"We use ITQ – it helps us to keep staff."

"The Council is taking on more Apprentices, so we must do NVQs."

"We have our own NVQ for IT systems."

"We do ECDL. We're an ECDL accredited test centre."

"We use ECDL, as part of our open learning strategy. In some areas the managers strongly encourage it, in others it's just not used".

"ECDL is not a high enough standard."

"We have thought about using ECDL or MOS, but they're too general and not complex enough."

"We set about designing our own tool to find out whether job candidates were up to the standard we required – the recruitment agency's own tests were not stringent enough. The idea was to use an e-learning model, with an assessment built-in. But it's been under development for two years."

"We won't pay for training, so we certainly won't pay for certification!"

KEY POINTS:

1. Attitudes vary but in the majority of organisations, certification for IT professionals is not seen as a priority for existing staff.
2. Certification is afforded greater importance in the recruitment process.
3. Even though employers are ambivalent, IT professionals are still keen for certification.
4. The public sector has a (financial) inferiority complex, and sees certification as a perk it can offer its staff.
5. Attitudes to IT user certification are also mixed; some organisations now regard ECDL and MOS (sic) as too simple or too general.
6. Those who have embraced the concept of custom (organisation-specific) certifications have seemingly made little headway in implementing them.

Training/Learning Provision

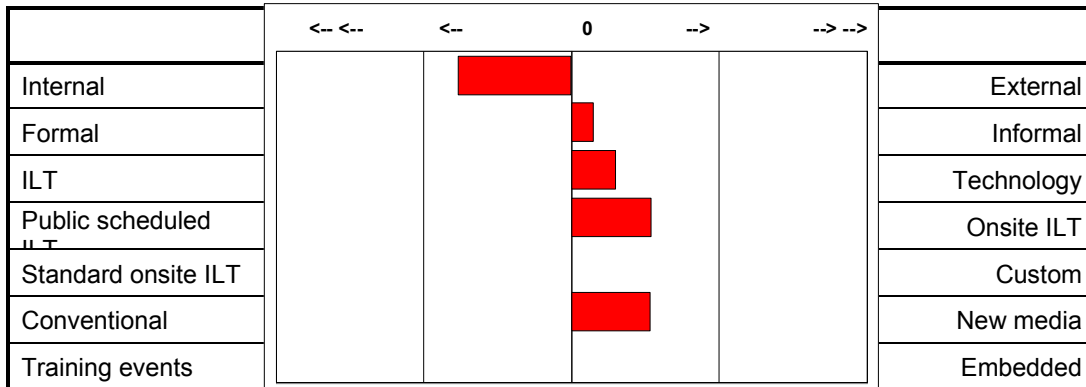
What changes do you expect to see in 2009 in the balance between the following alternatives?

For each row of the following table, please tick one box to indicate the change on a five-point scale from ←← (a very significant shift to the method on the left) to →→ (a very significant shift to the method on the right).

Results (percentages of respondents who ticked each box):

	←←	←	0	→	→→	
Internal training dept	38%	23%	23%	8%	8%	External suppliers
Formal learning	0%	31%	23%	46%	0%	Informal learning
Instructor-led training (ILT)	8%	15%	15%	62%	0%	Technology-based learning
Public scheduled ILT	9%	0%	36%	36%	18%	Onsite ILT
Standard onsite ILT	8%	31%	23%	31%	8%	Custom/bespoke onsite ILT
Conventional methods	8%	8%	8%	77%	0%	New media (blogs, social net'g)
Training events	15%	0%	54%	31%	0%	Embedded learning(EPSS etc)

Results in chart form:



On Training Providers

"It's probably the technical IT stuff that we'll send external."

"Most of the stuff we deliver in-house is for end users. The more specialist courses we outsource to outside providers – we don't have the knowledge or the resources to do those."

"Our use of external training tends to be pretty ad hoc, and I don't see that changing. The needs are usually identified by line managers, and filtered through to me."

"Most of our training is called off against a long-term central contract."

"It used to be that 60-70% of training was done in-house, and only 30-40% was bought in. That has been changing, rather more is being outsourced."

"Our guys much prefer to learn in-house, so if we go to external training providers we ask them to come in and run it."

"Our technical IT training is completely outsourced – we have five suppliers. The HR department runs it, but they don't know anything about it – I'm pushing for a single technical training provider."

"We found we couldn't use just one supplier – it was too big a problem for things like Cisco training."

"I can't see us ever being able to outsource our training."

"I think the [IT training] industry is quite mature now, though I have some concerns around what I see as consolidation with a lot of companies getting locked up under one umbrella – I think we all know who I mean!"

"What I would like to see from commercial providers is higher standards of delivery from some of the larger ones. I think if you go a small independent one – like [TP1] – they're brilliant. If you go to someone like [TP2] or [TP3] they're not so good because they're very, very big, and don't seem to have as high a quality."

"Training companies are all the same. They just call you up – I must get five calls a week. It drives you potty."

"We sent someone on a management course there even though we had very low expectations, based on feedback from an earlier ITIL course – but in fact the course was excellent."

"We are using a commercial provider [TP4] to deliver the roll-out training. The communication needs to be in culturally familiar terms, so trainers and floorwalkers have to be brought up to speed on our standards and methods."

"We never use grey suppliers."

"We use small companies – not the big majors – plus we have a number of freelancers we use regularly."

"If we need training from outside, we use single freelancers – we maintain our own register of them."

"We use freelancers – I've block-booked them from March through to June."

"We may establish an IT Training branded learning portal, so staff can go directly to see what's available and to book."

"We've started working with a brokerage. We get it cheaper, because they can push for big discounts"

"Any requests I get for Microsoft training, I just farm out to the guys at [training broker]. They're IITT accredited, and I use them because we have users all over the country. The results we get are generally good, and the feedback's good, because we're going to

recognised national providers – and we're getting the discounts that [the broker] can leverage, so typically I'm seeing 40% discounts."

"We get double discounts. We buy vouchers from a broker, and then approach the supplier directly and say 'Can you beat it?'."

On Live Web

"We see big potential in virtual classroom, and in web forums."

"Everyone wants to deliver web conferences and webinars – it's gone right to the top of our list of priorities."

"We are making extensive use of [conferencing tool] for web conferencing. It's very much the coming thing."

On e-Learning

"They're developing systems so fast, we can't keep up. We have to look for alternative methods of delivery."

"e-Learning was around eight years ago, but it never really got established. Now it's on the up – it's partly because of money, but partly because we have too much to do!"

"The preferred model for receiving training in this organisation is still classroom, but that is not delivering the volume and the benefits that we need to."

"We're planning a big roll out – we have about 7,000 users – so we don't have (and are not going to get) the resource to do it using classroom training."

"We've had a big shift towards e-learning. We author our own e-learning content – a day's work will give us a 15-minute module. It helps us to make the learning more available, because we cover a big geographic area."

"The big thrust for us in 2009-10 is how we can move towards a more learning technology-enabled service. At the moment, because we are effectively virgins in that territory, everything is possible until we've tried some of the options and seen what works."

"We need to explore the possibilities with these tools, and we are basically starting from scratch."

"We have systems that we've bought in, and we get the software provider to come in and do the training. But that costs a bit of money, so we're looking at more cost-effective ways of delivering that."

"We have a number of Open Learning Centres offering computer based training, interactive video, DVDs and so on; now we're starting to look at e-learning, to see if we can develop some stuff in-house."

"We plan to bring in a more formal e-learning structure. We are currently looking at Moodle as a possible baseline, as it appears to offer a lot of the features we want."

"We expect to move from a split where our training now is 70% classroom and 30% e-learning, to something like 40% classroom and 60% e-learning."

"We specialise in large government contracts. For anyone who wants IT training, our first choice is to offer e-learning."

"There is definitely a move to e-learning. It saves money. Then someone comes round later to offer help."

"Our e-learning has been targeted at end users when they join the organisation. We're getting about 80% uptake in the first week."

"We have a contract with Skillsoft. Just in the last 12-18 months we've started to experience a pull from the users."

"I'll use the term blended learning – I try not to call it e-learning!"

"e-Learning is tainted in the eyes of the staff."

"People's view of e-learning at the moment is of a slide show on their PC and they get bored with it after five minutes. We need to change that perception, and that's why we don't like to call it e-learning."

"We've had a number of licences for e-learning, but they haven't been well used."

"You can't do an hour here and half an hour there and another half an hour a week later – you have to have a run at it."

"GPs and consultants don't want anything to do with e-learning."

"IT staff would rather go and sit on a 3-day ITIL course than take it online and try to fit it in around their job."

"With e-learning, 'the shorter the dirtier!'"

"Our training is more hands-on – always has been, always will be."

"If you use e-learning, it must be blended."

On Blended Learning

"A lot of training – particularly for compliance – is being driven by people who just want to put a tick in the box. For those who want something that actually works, we need something more."

"We don't believe in delivering just one way – we have four alternatives: classroom (but no unit can be longer than 3 hours); online; floorwalking; and self-study modules with telephone support."

"We *have* to have a classroom as an alternative, because of diversity requirements."

"The culture within the business is very much traditional classroom. Obviously we want to move more towards blended learning. We have a project at the moment – some of us have been on some courses on facilitation of blended learning – and over the next twelve months we'll start introduce that within the business so people get the idea of learning at their desks."

"We are using a blended learning approach, with face-to-face classroom sessions, one-to-one mentoring and e-learning modules. There will also be floorwalking available, and Quick Reference Guides."

"IT Training will move more into IT learning design, with support for a more enabled network of champions and superusers, working back within the business with us supporting them from the centre – so we can still partly address their preference for the face-to-face model."

"We've identified three major groups for blended learning: one is new starters and those coming in on graduate programmes; another is the technical IT department – because if we are going for an e-learning solution then we'll need a lot of help from the IT department, so we're keeping them sweet with some stuff for them; and third, support staff in the back office – though not the fee earners, who are very much 'I want it in the classroom or I can't be bothered, and I already know it all anyway'."

On Informal Learning

"We do envisage using informal and/or social networking approaches."

"We're going more into informal learning, because we're trying to get people to take responsibility for their own learning so we're encouraging them to go out and find it for themselves. And as well as classroom, we want them to look at other alternatives – perhaps on-the-job training or self-help stuff."

"We're now training paramedics on Second Life." [!]

"We don't currently have the technology infrastructure to be able to consider blogs and wikis and so on. I'm sure we will use it in the future."

"If I go to one of our users and say 'Have a look at a wiki' they'll give me a blank stare."

"I went to a workshop on Web 2.0 technologies in training – blogs and wikis and Second Life. We've started a wiki as a pilot, but no-one has used it except me!"

"We want to develop more context-sensitive help. We've had real difficulty finding a suitable product for EPSS."

"We looked at a product called [EPSS product]. It was supposed to be able to tell what the user was trying to do, and help them with that particular type of transaction – but when we saw it, it didn't actually seem to do that. So we decided to drop that."

KEY POINTS:

1. On balance, buyers expect some shift from external to internal training, from ILT to technology-based delivery, from conventional to new media, and (within ILT) from public scheduled to onsite.
2. Almost all organisations use external suppliers – more for technical (IT pro) training than for users.

3. Commercial arrangements vary from the ad hoc to full managed training services.
4. To most buyers, the term 'outsourcing' simply means using an external supplier.
5. Training providers (particularly large ones) are not held in universally high esteem by the buyer community. Nor do the buyers see much differentiation between different providers.
6. Some buyers prefer to use smaller training providers.
7. Buyers are making extensive (and increasing?) use of freelance trainers.
8. Brokers are a significant player in the market, and will often provide the lowest-priced option.
9. Buyers can't always claim the moral high ground in their dealings with training providers. Some of their practices betray a cynical attitude to learning and development.
10. Live web for virtual classroom/conferencing is taking off, and appears to be well accepted.
11. There is a strong push towards e-learning, driven less by cost considerations than by the challenge of reaching a large and widely distributed audience.
12. Many organisations are still at the exploratory or pilot stage in e-learning adoption.
13. There is a definite trend to developing e-learning in-house, but this can be very labour-intensive.
14. There remain obstacles to overcome in achieving acceptability and uptake of e-learning, mainly due to the disappointment and disillusionment that followed earlier attempts. Many IT training managers avoid using the term 'e-learning'.
15. Some organisations are using e-learning mainly for compliance training, to get the 'tick in the box'.
16. There is widespread (but not universal) acceptance that e-learning needs to be blended with appropriate support including some form of live interaction.
17. There is rising awareness of informal/social networking media, but there is currently little use being made of them – due mainly to uptake and/or quality.
18. Many internal IT training departments believe their roles are changing. This trend has implications for external providers.

Demonstrating Value

In 2009, how do you aim to demonstrate the value to your organisation of (a) individual learning interventions, and (b) the learning function as a whole and how has this changed since 2008?

"Measuring the impact is still the key."

"You can't just count bums on seats any more."

"It's not about happy sheets."

"Training is regarded as a cost."

"The problem is to get the business to recognise the value of what we're doing. It's very difficult to demonstrate how attendance on a training course leads to improved business performance."

"We're not really called upon to justify our own existence. I find it a little unrewarding in that respect."

"We are pushing for 360° evaluation. It tends not to happen as yet."

"We send Key Performance Indicators off every month. We have to demonstrate that we've delivered what we said we would."

"We're going back to managers and asking: 'Right, you sent Fred on that course – has he used it, what's his output like?' and so on."

"We've revamped our evaluation, we've got three-monthly evaluation reports that go back to managers."

"We go back to people three months after the course, and do a level 3 evaluation."

"How do you measure floorwalking? If the users *think* it's working..."

"We're trying to sell it a bit more – I think that's the way to demonstrate the value."

"We are measured on how busy we are – our activity and our visibility."

"We are targeted to achieve IT self-sufficiency for every office."

"I make it my job to demonstrate the value to the business of what we're doing."

"We have an L&D evaluation policy. We have 'happy sheets' and 3-month reviews, but it's not well embedded into the system."

"I report to my manager on the training that's been done, the satisfaction ratings and what that equates to in time and money savings, but how much gets passed up the line I don't know."

"If I wanted training in my previous organisation, I had to go down on bended knee and beg for it. Here we practically throw training at people. But we are looking now at ROI, and we're trying to use a method that will apply to technical training and soft skills training."

"We're measured using the Internal Compliments service, via Customer Service."

"We need to show that the training we're providing is taking the minimum time away from the job."

"Being able to demonstrate a business result is not enough to prove the effectiveness of the training."

"My boss doesn't ask for it, but we use business figures – pre- and post-training data for ticket sales, for example – and customer satisfaction reports."

"We go back to our [internal] customers regularly – to the individuals and their managers – and evaluate the training and check that it's been applicable in the workplace."

"I did a level 3 evaluation survey – initially to the managers of the people. We got a 67% response, and the general consensus was 'Great – give us more of this!'."

"We ran a survey of staff to find out what learning methods they actually prefer. 45% like the workshops, 35% want private coaching sessions, 10% the intranet [e-learning] and 10% reading reference material."

"We ran a survey before the roll-out, to find out what training people actually needed."

"We put in a new [operating] theatre system, and had 420 people to train. We were able to measure the effectiveness of the training in terms of people's speed in using the system – it was clearly worth the investment."

"We provided training in the use of a new tool. The key measure for management was not the *use* of the tool, but the users' positive *satisfaction* with the tool itself. People who had been trained were more likely to be happy with the system. It's very subjective."

"We were able to measure a 25% reduction in Help Desk calls."

"We were judged by the visibility of our delivery and our floorwalking. We were there with our users 24x7, at nights, at weekends – we earned their respect."

"Because we've been able to show value in training, we've gone from a limit of two hours per person (across the whole firm) to full training to provide self-sufficiency in IT. The two-hour rule was last year's panic!"

"As we move into more technology-based training, I will at least be able to report higher volumes."

"IT skills have had a much higher profile over the last 18 months or so. This was a direct result of the [government] agency migrating to Office 2003, and from Groupwise to Outlook. There had never been a full-scale roll-out, but this went so well that senior managers were able to see the connection between IT skills and productivity."

"The system is only as good as the training. Without the training, you might as well not have the system. So training is a must – there's no doubt about that. It's very valued."

KEY POINTS:

1. There is very little evidence that strategic HR initiatives (HCM, talent management etc) are impacting on the way the IT Training function is managed or evaluated.
2. In the majority of organisations, measuring and demonstrating the value of training is regarded as important.
3. A wide range of measures are applied, including Level 3 evaluation, ROI or KOIs based on activity levels. In some cases evaluation is subjective and based on visibility.
4. A lot of evaluation is of the individual (IT Training Manager) rather than the learning itself or the IT Training function.
5. Success breeds success. Where measures are applied they do generally demonstrate that the training is well worthwhile – which can bring real change in the organisational culture regarding attitudes to learning and training.

And finally – spare a thought ...

"I'm not convinced anyone would notice if we packed up and went home tomorrow."

"Expectations of trainers are higher than for other support staff such as engineers or Help Desk. Trainers are *expected* to get top marks; for the others, delivery is a 50% chance of hit or miss."

"I'm getting tired of going to conferences and hearing people tell us how crap we are and how we need to change and do things differently. But in the real world it's never as clear-cut as that, Nigel!"