

The Role of Training in Continuous Improvement Initiatives

Survey Results

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Survey Highlights

The Role of Training in Continuous Improvement Initiatives

Training Industry, Inc. and TBM LeanSigma Institute partnered to survey corporate training leaders on the role of the training function in the success of continuous improvement initiatives (CI). The survey was taken in February 2008 by 71 training leaders from the service (44%), manufacturing (21%) and other (35%) industry segments across a broad range of company sizes.

Key Findings

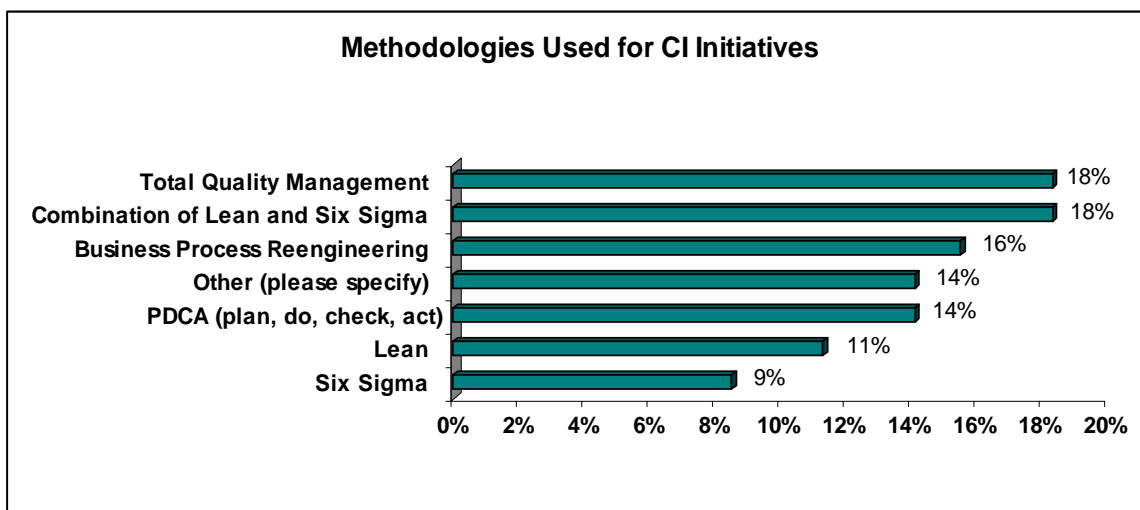
- 1. The more involved the training function is with continuous improvement initiatives, the more satisfied senior management are with the progress their companies have made.** In companies where senior management was very satisfied, 78% of training functions were involved in the roll-out plans and 72% were involved in developing the content. In companies where senior management was dissatisfied, only 22% of the training leaders were involved in either the roll-out plans or developing the content. More involvement in sourcing training to external suppliers is also associated with both higher senior management satisfaction and training leaders' own beliefs that company training was appropriate. "Involve training at the beginning to partner in designing the training with the initiating function," said one respondent.
- 2. The broader the scope of the CI initiative, the more senior management was very satisfied with the progress of the CI initiative.** 34% were very satisfied with company-wide initiatives vs. only 27% and 20% for functional and business process initiatives. Of the methods used for company-wide programs, Lean, Six Sigma, or a combination (32%) and TQM (29%) were used most frequently.
- 3. Learning leaders emphasize the importance of company leadership to CI initiative success.** The greatest number of comments on how training leaders would redesign how their company provided training for CI initiatives was in the area of leadership. They advise that company leaders need to own the initiative, integrate it into the company culture, "walk the talk," and make CI results public. Training leaders further suggested that companies should "involve senior management in CI training" and that upper management should "reinforce the application of training material."
- 4. The more specific the continuous improvement training, the better.** For specific content, respondents recommended focusing on operational processes, key competencies and performance objectives that the training should impact. "Conduct training on the what, how and why of continuous improvement, and how it ties into profitability and company success," one learning leader added.
- 5. Training leaders recommend that most CI training should continue to be instructor-led but that it is complemented with a blended approach with more interactive technologies.** They also suggest that the following types of training be used for different employee groups:
 - On-the-job training for frontline and shop floor staff.
 - E-learning and blended learning for team leaders and senior managers.
 - Experiential, project-based training for team leaders.
 - Summary discussion groups, workshops and seminars for senior management.

Detailed Survey Results

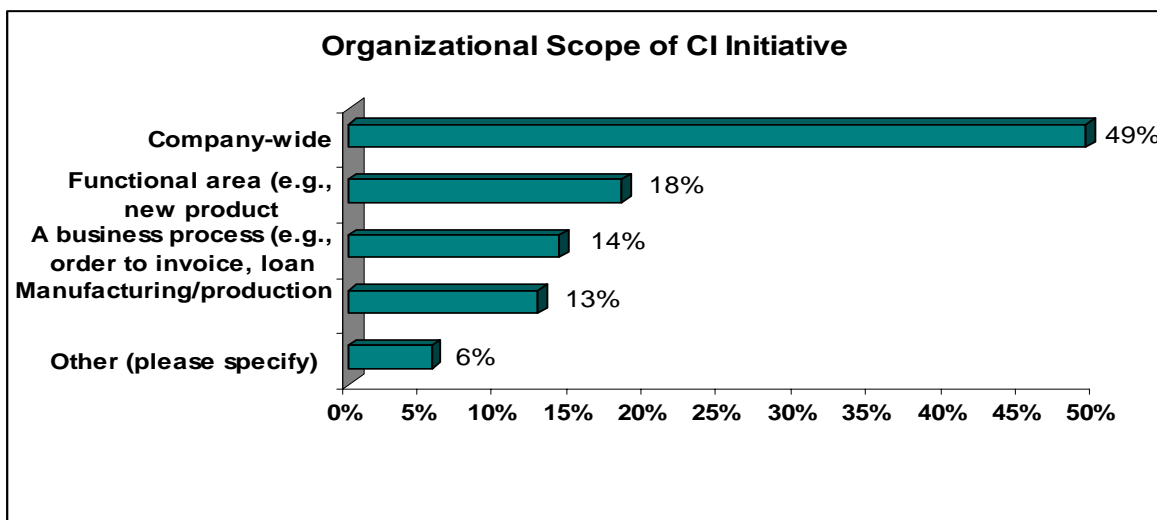
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1. Think about a CI initiative in your company where your training department is involved. Which of the following methodologies was selected for this CI initiative?

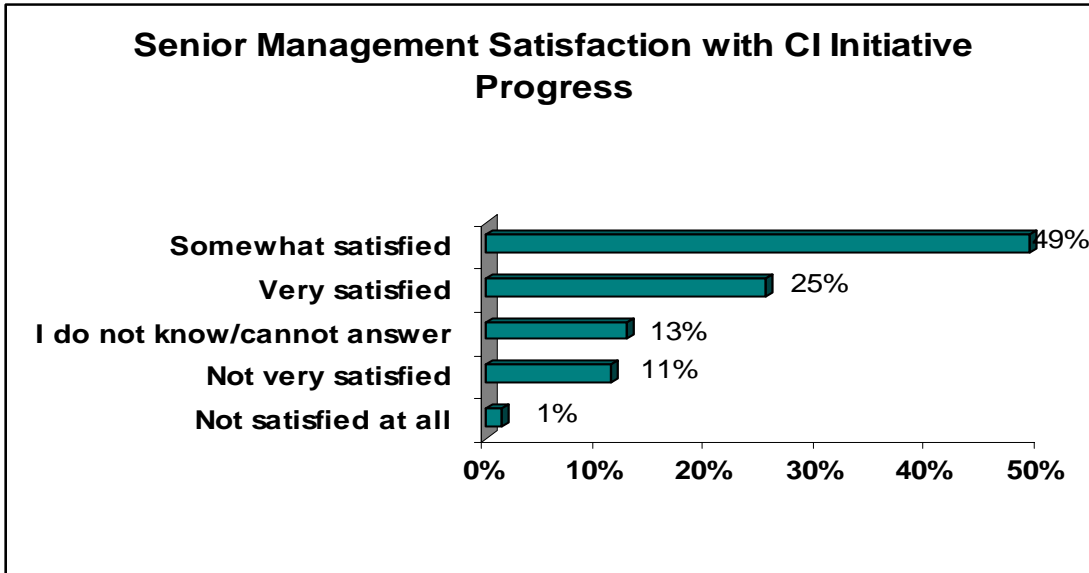
2.



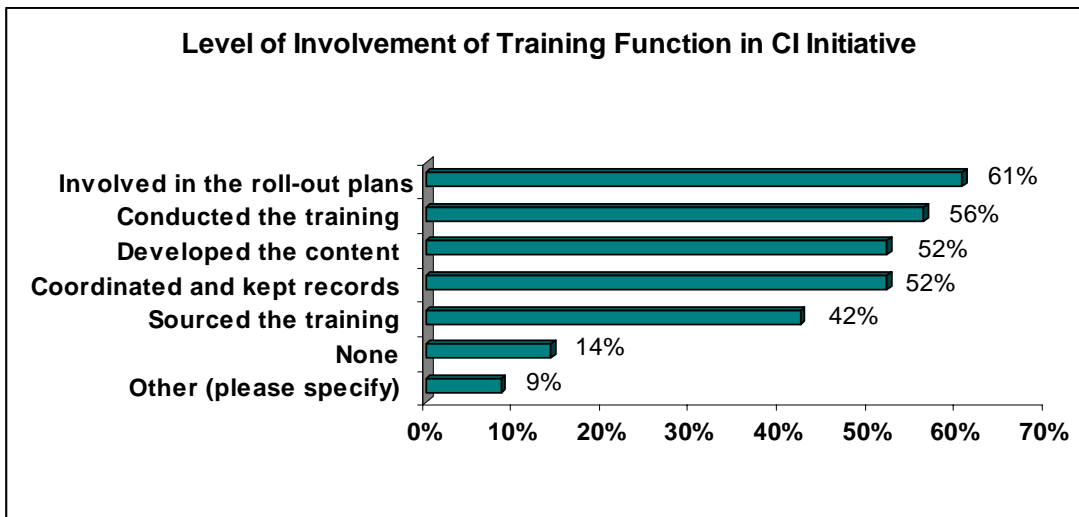
What is the scope of the organizational focus of your CI initiative?



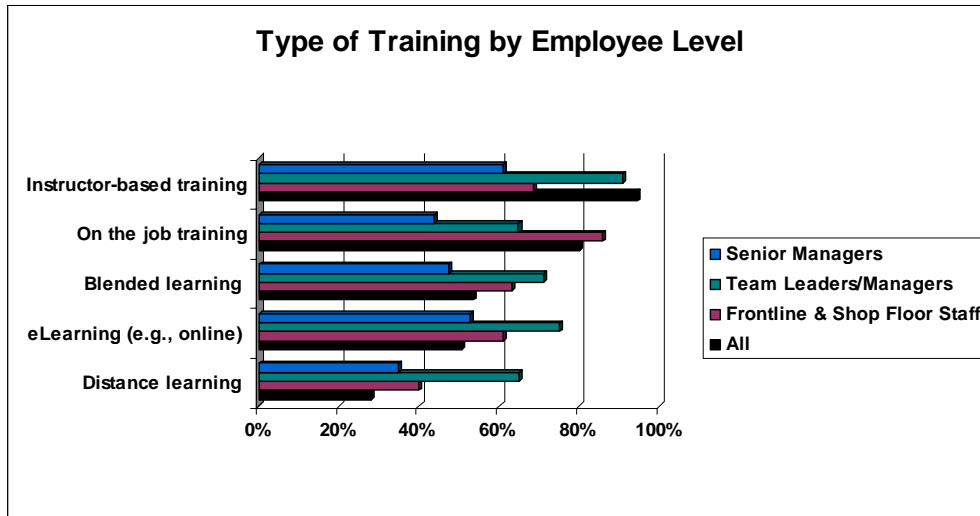
3. How satisfied is your senior management with the progress your company has made to date through this CI initiative?



4. In what ways has your training or learning function specifically been involved in training for CI initiatives? Check all that apply.



5. What types of CI training do you or any vendor offer and to which groups of employees are they deployed? Select all that apply.

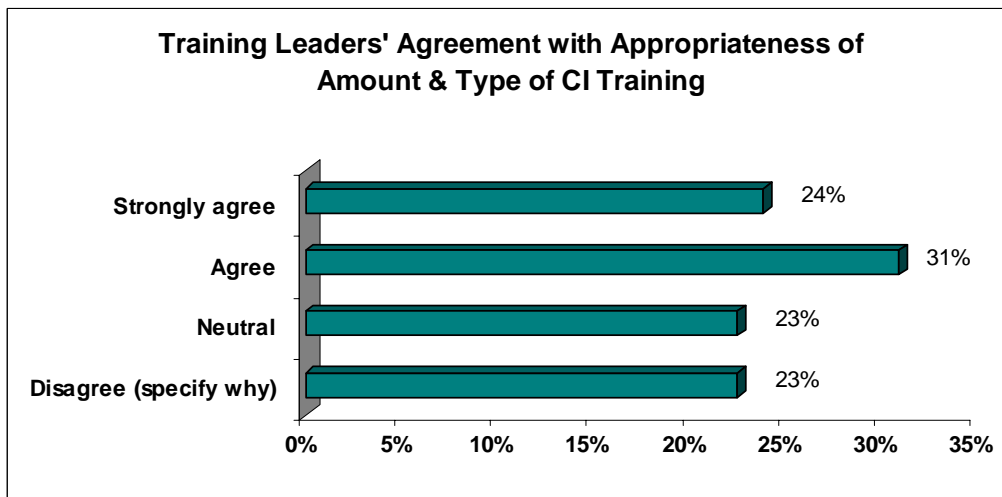


6. Based on your experience, which types of training are most appropriate for each group of employees?

Summary of Qualitative Analysis:

- Instructor-led training (ILT) continues to be the training of choice for embedding a CI initiative in an organization for all levels of employees. Many respondents also indicated a preference for more blended learning for all parties.
- For frontline and shop floor staff, respondents strongly prefer on-the-job training.
- For both team leaders and senior managers, training managers suggested both e-learning and blended learning as appropriate methods to complement ILT.
- For team leaders, respondents recommended experiential project-based training.
- For senior managers, training managers suggested summary discussion groups.

7. Please rate your agreement with this statement. “The amount and type of CI training our company uses is appropriate for ensuring the success of our CI initiative.”



8. If you could re-design how your company provides training for CI initiatives, what specifically would you do differently?

Examples of training managers' responses to this question are listed under four main categories:

Involvement of Training Function:

- Include training development as part of business performance objectives.
- Incorporate training and communication into the overall roll-out plan and implementation.
- I would involve the training and organizational development team at the very beginning to partner in designing the training (with the initiating function).
- The training should be customized to our organization, but should have input from some expert in the topic.
- Have content developers (from training function) on the project teams.

Leadership:

- I would create an overall plan, beginning with senior management and involving new employees as well as all employees on a frequent basis.
- Have top management "walk the talk" and continually emphasize the strategic importance of the initiative.
- Ensure that management fully embraces the process and will continue to support the initiatives throughout the highs and lows of the company.
- Build on small wins.
- Make sure supervisors and key managers "own" the initiative and are rewarded for successful integration into the organization's culture.
- Get the executive team involved in CI training.
- Have upper management reinforce application of training material.
- Show more benefits, ROI investment data where available.
- Leverage learnings, capabilities, successes across all business units.
- Make the results more public.

Content Development:

- More specific content, directed at those who will be involved in the process.
- Ensure that all CI training relates to specific operational goals
- Conduct training on the CI cycle itself so employees understand the what, how and why of continuous improvement, and how it ties into profitability and company performance success.
- Clearly state the key competencies that are being targeted or the specific performance objectives of the training, and in turn design the training to support this.

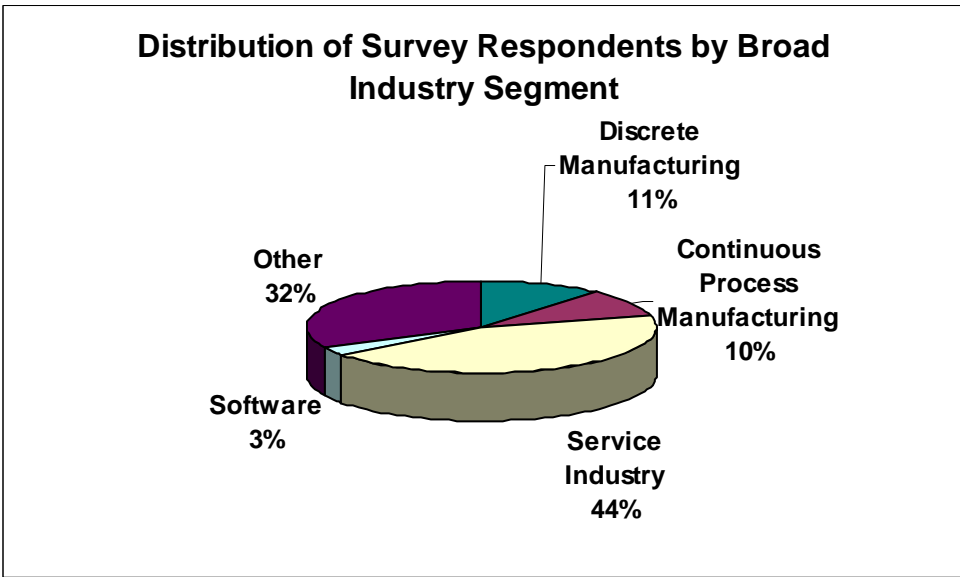
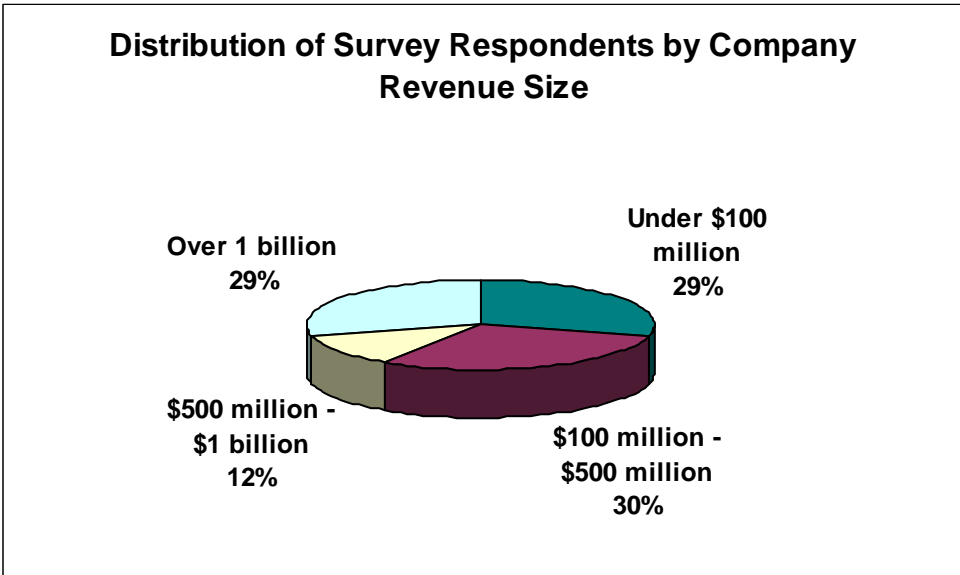
Delivery:

- Use various types of training for each audience.
- Develop more interactive technologies to address the younger generations within the work force.
- Provide eLearning modules with option to back them up with mentoring or instructor led training.
- Create a blended learning strategy that is Just in Time delivered to personnel prior to participating in CI activities.
- Chunk the information into various and more modern modes (wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds)
- Provide in-class practice exercises and evaluations that test the ability to apply the content presented in each course.
- Do follow-up with each CI team to ensure understanding of the process at specific points along the way.

9. Please provide the following contact information so that we may send you a copy of the survey findings. We will not associate any of your contact information with your responses.

[Responses are confidential. Data was collected so that results could be shared with respondents.]

10. Please select the appropriate industry and company size categories.





About the TBM LeanSigma Institute

TBM Consulting Group, Inc. is a leading global training and consulting company helping companies on five continents use LeanSigma® methodologies to achieve dramatic levels of efficiency and productivity. The result—rapid improvement in business performance and the removal of obstacles to realize their full potential of consistent, sustainable growth in sales and earnings. Their training arm, the TBM LeanSigma Institute, provides companies with essential, experienced-based LeanSigma training through a wide variety of alternatives including classroom-style workshops, customized learning, user conferences and web-based online learning.

For more information, see the full course catalog online at www.tbminstitute.com or call Michael Zsitnyar at 800-438-5535 x823 or mzsitnyar@tbmcg.com.

About Training Industry, Inc.

Training Industry, Inc. is an objective and trusted expert on the marketplace for learning. Our mission is to make the marketplace more efficient through the world's largest online community of training communities and through services such as TrainingIndustry Conferences, TrainingIndustry Webinars and TrainingIndustry Research.

TrainingIndustry.com provides news, articles, and strategies, practices and processes through its learning community portals, webinars, conferences, publications and research. Through its communities, services and the industry knowledge of its staff and supporters, Training Industry, Inc. facilitates mutually beneficial partnerships between training suppliers and corporate executives.

For more information, go to www.TrainingIndustry.com or contact Tracy Hollister at 919-653-4994 or thollister@trainingindustry.com.

About This Research

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