



**The Value of Professional Development
Summary of Research Results
February 2020**



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Methodology

- Screeners: Canadian business leaders
- # of completes: 243. Shown below are total answering for each question
- Length of survey: 13 minutes
- Dates of Fielding: December 2019 – January 2020

Screeners

1. Which of the following best describes your position in your business or organization?
 - The survey was answered by Senior Leadership, 41% and HR management, 52%

Q1. Which of the following best describes your position in your business or organization?	
LEADERSHIP	41%
C-suite executive (CEO, COO, CHRO)/Signing officer/Chairperson/Owner/Principal/Partner/President	9%
Vice-President/ Director/ Senior Executive Management	21%
Other senior management (please specify)	4%
Other management (please specify)	7%
HR Management	52%
Other	7%

2. What are your biggest business challenges for you or your organization? What keeps you up at night?
 - Attraction and retention is the #1 business challenge, cited by 71% of business leaders
 - 75% of HR specific titles
 - Skills development/ professional development is a business challenge for 40% of business leaders

Q3. What are your biggest business challenges for you or your organization? What keeps you up at night?	
Attraction and retention of staff	71%
Skills development/ professional development	40%
Remaining competitive	31%
Business development/Growth	29%
Profitability/costs	28%
Productivity	19%
Risk management	18%
Brand and corporate reputation	18%
Labour relations	18%
Regulations and red tape	15%
Technology disruption	12%

CURRENT STATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3. In your opinion, what are the key benefits of a robust professional development strategy? Not just at your organization, overall?
- Universally, 99% of Canadian business leaders believe that a robust professional development strategy returns benefits
 - The top 3 cited benefits of a robust professional development strategy are: #1 Improved worker engagement generally / workplace culture, #2 Keeping skills relevant/updating skills and #3 Keeping best talent
 - Improved worker engagement is cited most frequently by VP level, medium businesses and East
 - Keeping skills relevant/updating skills is cited most frequently by those who support a marketing designation, smaller businesses, West
 - Keeping best talent is cited most frequently by HR titles, those who support a marketing designation, Medium and Large businesses, those with some unionised staff

Q4. In your opinion, what are the key benefits of a robust professional development strategy? Not just at your organization, overall?	
Robust Professional Development Returns Benefits	99%
Improved worker engagement generally / workplace culture	81%
Keeping skills relevant/updating skills	67%
Keeping best talent	65%
Helps with succession planning	61%
Reduced employee turnover	60%
Makes me a more attractive employer	52%
Improved productivity/ customer satisfaction	44%
Aligns with our organization values	42%
Reskilling existing employees	39%
Improved bottom line	30%
Improved reputation with clients/in my industry	23%
Networking opportunities	16%
Other - Write In	1%
I don't believe it returns benefits	0.4%

4. Thinking about your organization’s budget for professional development, about how much is spent in an average year? If you are not sure, please give your best guess
- More than 9 out of 10 companies do not spend their entire professional development budget
 - On average every year, 36% of professional development budgets are left unspent
 - Those with the highest unspent professional development budgets are HR titles, non-union and Ontario

Q8. Thinking about your organization’s budget for professional development, about how much is spent in an average year? If you are not sure, please give your best guess	
Less than 100% of Budget	92%
100%	8%
75-99%	29%
50-74%	26%
Less than 50%	38%
Average % of budget spent	63.8%
Average % of budget left unspent	36.2%

5. In your opinion, is the value of having a professional designation:
- 90% of business leaders agree that the value of having a professional designation is increasing or remaining constant

Q10. In your opinion, is the value of having a professional designation:	
Increasing or maintaining value	90%
Rapidly increasing	11%
Steadily increasing	35%
Maintaining constant value	44%
Steadily declining	9%
Rapidly declining	0%

6. Please select the top three aspects of professional designation programs that are most important to you.
- Key aspects of a professional designation programs are related to level of knowledge 74%, indication of experience, 45% and Canadian 39%
 - Knowledge cited most often by Medium revenue companies, and East
 - Indication of experience cited most often by VP titles, those who support a designation for marketing, Medium revenue businesses, and those who have some unionised employees
 - Canadian designation is cited most often by C-Suite and HR titles
 - Code of conduct ranks 5th
 - Cited highest among medium business and East
 - Note that the cost of the designation is a factor for only about a quarter of business leaders
 - Understandably, cost plays a higher role in smaller companies 31%

Q11. Please select the top three aspects of professional designation programs that are most important to you	
Level of knowledge and learning offered/ Expertise of trainers /Relevance of content	74%
Indication of experience	45%
Canadian designation	39%
Type of training (options such as mobile, online, flextime, part-time, etc.)	36%
Code of conduct /ethical standards	35%
Prestige of certification body	28%
Cost	26%
Indication of connections in the industry/partnerships	16%
Global applicability	14%
Other - Write In	1%

7. When thinking about an applicant with a professional designation, how would they compare to a similar applicant without a designation?
- Nearly universally, 95% of business leaders view applicants with a designation as more desirable than those without
 - Those most likely to consider an applicant with a professional designation as much more desirable are large companies, those with some unionization, and those in Ontario

Q12. When thinking about an applicant with a professional designation, how would they compare to a similar applicant without a designation?	
More Desirable	95%
Much more desirable	21%
Somewhat more desirable	74%
Somewhat less desirable	4%
Much less desirable	1%

8. An applicant with an industry recognised/validated professional designation....

- 86% of business leaders view applicants with professional designations as having great value
- 80% of business leaders understand that an applicant with a professional designation will command a higher salary
- Business leaders nearly universally, 87% agree that an applicant with an industry recognised/validated professional designation will have a breadth of skills and contribute to overarching business strategy

	Agree (net)
Will have a breadth of skills and contribute to our overarching business strategy	87%
Has great value	86%
Will comply with ethical and code of conduct standards	85%
Reduced our organization risk (compliance etc.)	84%
Means better job opportunities	82%
Commands a higher start salary/ promotion/raise	80%
Means enhanced business networks	75%
Will elevate our entire team	75%
Means better understanding of business environments	69%
Will align with our business objectives	68%
Means greater effectiveness at work	65%
In our business, is a necessity not a “nice to have”	54%

9. Please rate the following

- 100% of business leaders agree that the wrong hire is costly to an organization
- 96% of business leaders agree professional development contributes to business success
- 93% of business leaders agree robust professional development reduces employee turnover
- Nearly 8 in 10 business leaders say that certified professionals get special consideration in terms of salary, selection, retention and advancement

	Agree (net)
Making the wrong hire is costly to the organization	100%
Professional development of our employees contributes to business success	96%
Having a culture of professional development is key to business growth/sustainability	96%
A robust professional development strategy reduces employee turnover	93%
A robust professional development strategy allows us to attract the best and brightest	91%
My organization makes an effort to reduce employee turnover	90%
Certified professionals get special consideration as it relates to salary, selection, retention and advancement	78%
The leadership of my company understands the link between a professional designation and business performance	75%

10. Marketing as an industry needs a professional designation

- Two thirds of business leaders support a professional designation for the marketing industry
 - Support is highest among C-Suite 80%, HR titles 73%, Medium companies 74%, West, 77%

Q25. Marketing as an industry needs a professional designation	
SUPPORT	66%
Completely agree	13%
Somewhat agree	53%
DO NOT SUPPORT	34%
Somewhat disagree	24%
Completely disagree	10%

DEMOGRAPHICS

11. To the best of your knowledge, how many full-time and part-time employees does your organization employ in Canada (including yourself)?

- Companies surveyed included all sizes: Small (1-99) 26%, Medium (100-499), 41% and Large (500+) 33%

Q26. To the best of your knowledge, how many full-time and part-time employees does your organization employ in Canada (including yourself)?	
Small	26%
1-5	1%
6-19	7%
20-49	7%
50-99	11%
Medium 100-499	41%
Large	33%
500-999	6%
1,000-5,000	17%
Over 5,000	10%
Average # of Employees	1,456.8

13. How many years have you worked with your current organization?

- Just under half of respondents, 44% have worked for their company more than 6 years.
- On average 9.1 years

Q29. How many years have you worked with your current organization?	
< 6 YRS NET	44%
<1 year	10%
1-2 years	16%
3-5 years	18%
6+ YRS	56%
6-10 years	20%
11-20 years	23%
20+ years	13%
Average # of Years	9.1 years

14. Is any part of your workforce unionized?

- 38% of respondents have at least a portion of their workforce unionised

Q30. Is any part of your workforce unionized?	
Yes	38%
No	62%

15. Which of the following is closest to that of your company's total annual revenue?

- More than half of companies surveyed have revenues of over \$25M, including 26% with revenues of more than \$250M

Q31. Which of the following is closest to that of your company's total annual revenue?	
< \$25M NET	48%
Less than \$1M	7%
\$1M to \$9.9M	21%
\$10 to \$24M	21%
\$25M-\$249M	26%
\$25 to \$99M	12%
\$100-\$149M	8%
\$150-\$199M	1%
\$200-\$249M	5%
\$250M+ NET	26%
\$250-\$499M	6%
\$500-\$1B	10%
More than \$1B	10%
Average Rev \$M	\$438.5M

17. In which province is your place of work located?

- Companies surveyed operated in all provinces. 6% of surveyed companies operate nationally

Q33. In which province is your place of work located?	
N=	157
EAST	7%
Newfoundland and Labrador	0%
New Brunswick	1%
Nova Scotia	1%
Prince Edward Island	1%
Quebec	4%
Ontario	56%
WEST	31%
Manitoba	2%
Saskatchewan	5%
% Alberta	10%
British Columbia	15%
Yukon/NWT/Nunavut	<1%
Operate Nationally	6%