



How Companies are Centralizing Training Functions

By Kathryn Rebilas

The world continues to become more interconnected, and the learning and development field is no different. TGaS Advisors recently conducted a deep-dive analysis on how life sciences companies are approaching the rapidly growing trend of global learning and development. A total of 10 participants responded to a survey that included topics about team structure, processes and training topics. All respondents are from mid-to large-tier life sciences companies and all are responsible for learning and development at a global level. Most have been in their current position for less than three years but have three-to-10 years' tenure in learning and development. In-depth interviews were also conducted with select respondents.

Why Are We 'Going Global?'

Behind the push to "go global" is the realization that in order to stay competitive in the dynamic life sciences industry, companies must drive consistency throughout the entire organization. Global organizations are moving toward the creation of centralized functions that allow the entire company to work toward unified goals, share best practices and minimize redundancies. The goals of global learning teams are to streamline processes and create efficiencies across the entire organization worldwide. Given the novelty of the global movement, organizations are still learning what an optimal structure may be, who their stakeholders are and what

FIGURE 1 TEAM SIZE

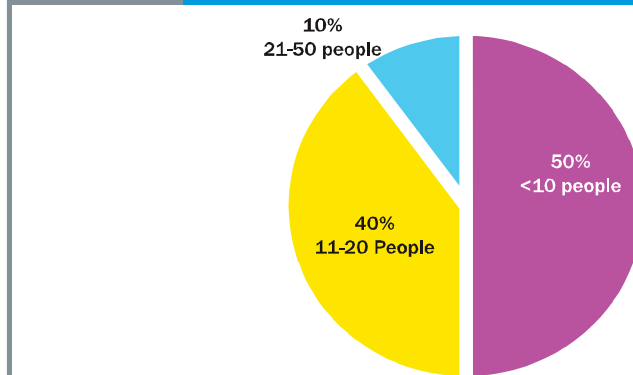


FIGURE 2 CENTRALIZED VS. DECENTRALIZED

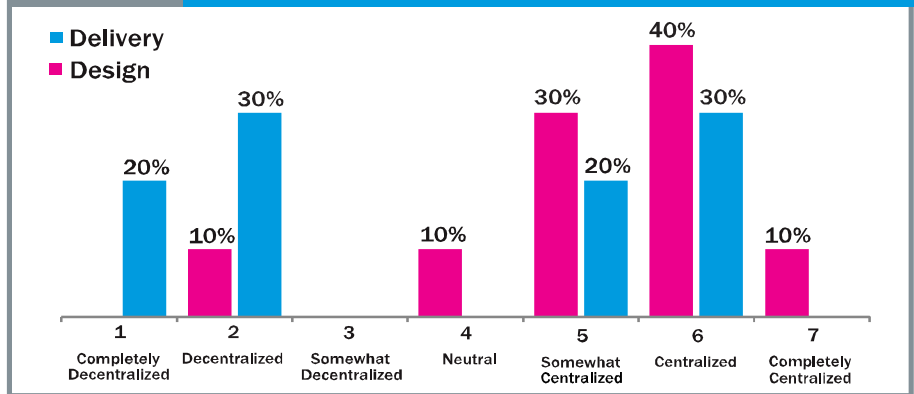


FIGURE 3 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES TRAINED

Role	Min	Max	Avg
Sales Reps	300	27,000	6,778
First-Line Managers	10	2,800	679
Marketing Professionals	45	1,000	233
Managed Care Professionals	10	500	193
Field Medical Professionals	25	300	125
Leader of Leaders	20	500	104
Non Customer-Facing Employees	15	100	58
SFE Managers	20	20	20

processes and content work best on the worldwide stage.

Structure

The majority of companies have fewer than 20 people in their centralized global training team. (Figure 1: Team Size) Most teams focus on the design and development of core content, leaving the content delivery to regional functions. (Figure 2: Centralized vs Decentralized) As one respondent notes, finding the “right balance of centralized and decentralized results in efficiency and effectiveness.” Using one streamlined design and development process can create efficiencies and paves the way for consistent content and messaging. It also makes sense from an economic standpoint, reducing the risk of redundancies.

It is important to note the importance of localizing training content to meet a region’s specific needs. Without some level of content customization, organizations risk not adequately preparing their audience for the task at hand. Leaving content delivery to regional training functions allows them to teach the content within the context of a region’s unique circumstances, while respecting an individual culture’s sensitivities and communication style.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to a smaller centralized structure. Lower headcount can allow for greater flexibility, efficiency, communication and the ability to focus on a few high-value learning experiences. One common challenge is demand exceeding capacity, often resulting in heavy reliance on external consultants, offsetting economic advantages. Other issues can include difficulties with prioritization among regions/country partners, slower completion time and the challenge of creating materials that satisfy the majority of markets.

FIGURE 4 GLOBAL TRAINING CONTENT

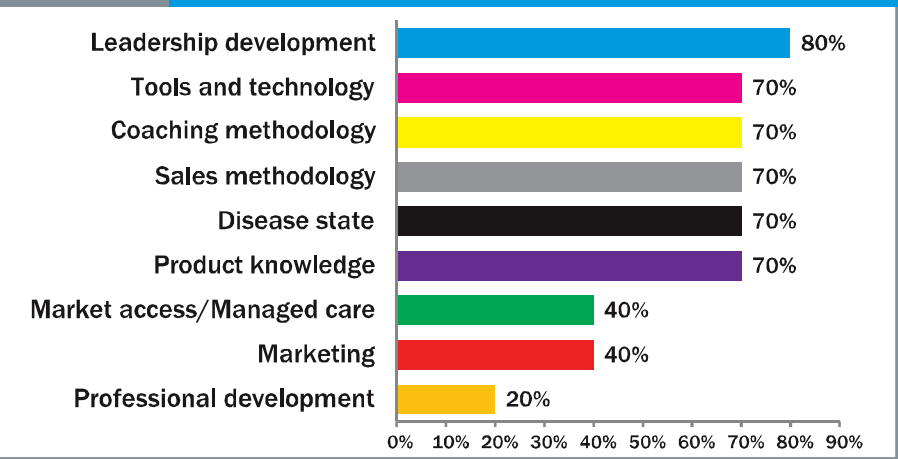


FIGURE 5 TYPES OF PROGRAMS DEVELOPED GLOBALLY

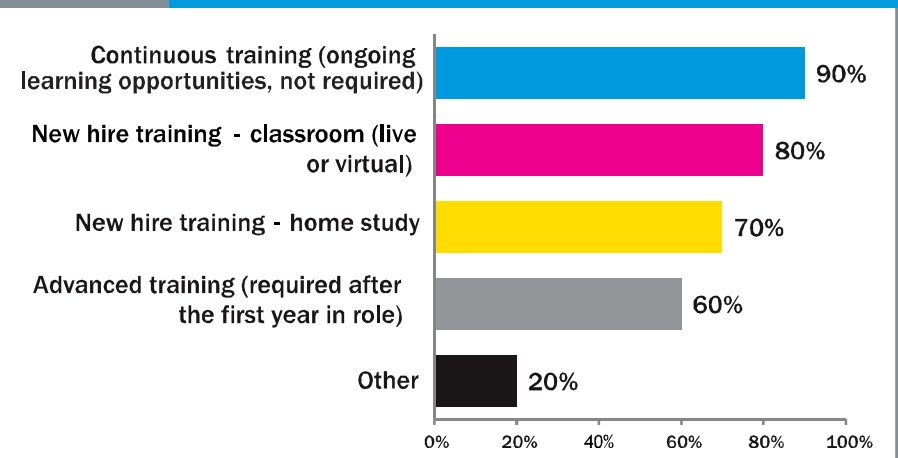
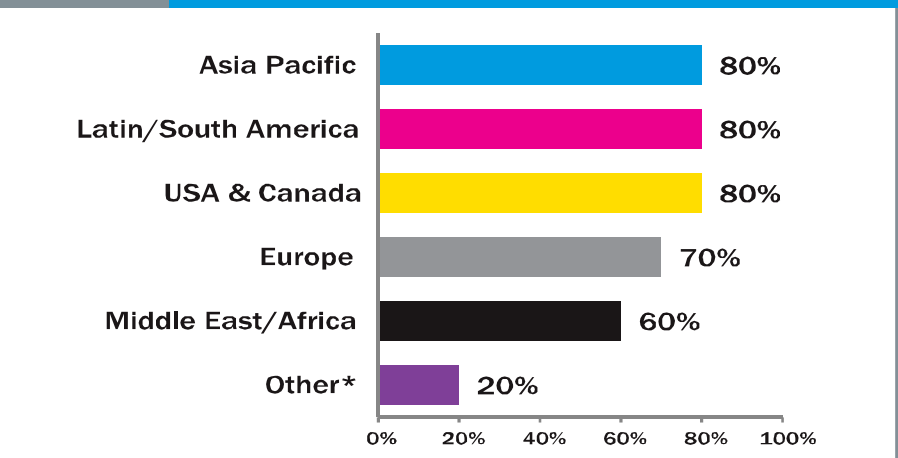


FIGURE 6 GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS UNDER SCOPE



Spend

The range of dedicated budget for global learning and development varies widely. Participating companies allocate between \$200,000 to \$10.5 million, with an overall average of \$3.2 million for their centralized training function. Global learning and development budgets typically cover design and development of content, including vendor and consulting contracts, staff development and training and assessments. Most (80%) participants stated that each region has a dedicated budget, which covers localization, translation and execution of training content.

Stakeholders and Content

As organizations move toward global sales models, greater emphasis is put on education to ensure sales personnel at all levels execute a unified sales strategy and deliver

consistent messaging. Responding companies noted that their centralized training teams provide training for an average of nearly 7,000 sales representatives and 700 first line managers around the world. (Figure 3: Number of Employees Trained)

“Soft skill” topics based on a common company-wide framework, such as leadership, coaching and selling skills, are the most popular topics on a global scale. Product and disease state education is also prevalent. Many topics are scientifically based and consistent across countries and cultures. (Figure 4: Global Training Content)

The most common types of training programs created are those that meet standard needs among sales organizations, including continuous training, new hire classroom training and new hire home study programs. (Figure 5: Types of Programs Developed Globally)

Because learning occurs through the lens of culture, regions with underlying cultural similarities tend to be best suited for global learning frameworks. Markets served include Asia Pacific, Latin America, South America, Canada, United States, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. (Figure 6: Geographic Regions). ■

About this Study:

Working in partnership with LTEN, TGas Advisors, a benchmarking and advisory services firm, conducted studies of training and development leaders in life sciences companies, distributed among broad portfolio, focused portfolio, and medical device and diagnostic organizations. For more information on Globalized Learning trends and best practices or other questions, please contact Kate Earle, Kate.Earle@tgas.com.



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