



Trendwatch

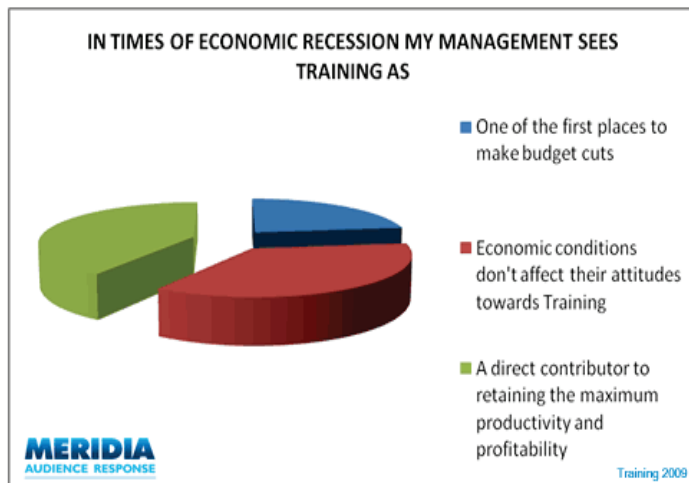
ECONOMY & TRAINING

MERIDIA AUDIENCE RESPONSE SYSTEM

At Training 2009 in Atlanta, prior to the Keynote Speeches, **Meridia Audience Response's** systems supported **The Training Magazine** to collect data on **Economic & Generational Trends in Learning**.

The audience participants spanned four generations, with a predominate attendance of Baby Boomers born 1946-1964 (**56%**) and Gen X born 1965-1980 (**37%**), with representation of Traditionalists born before 1945 (**5%**) and GenY born 1981-2000 (**2%**).

Data was collected prior to the keynote speeches from 92% of attendees using Meridia Audience Responders.



There is an old theory that training is among the first things cut during hard times. With the world in a global recession, we wanted to understand how participants felt their organization saw training.

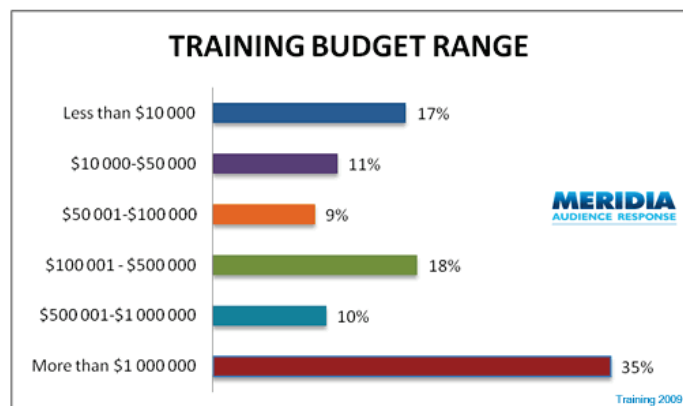
(Key Finding)

41% saw training as a direct contributor to retaining **maximum productivity and profitability**, and **36%** said that **attitudes hadn't changed**, **23%** however did report that training was one of first places to make **budget cuts**.

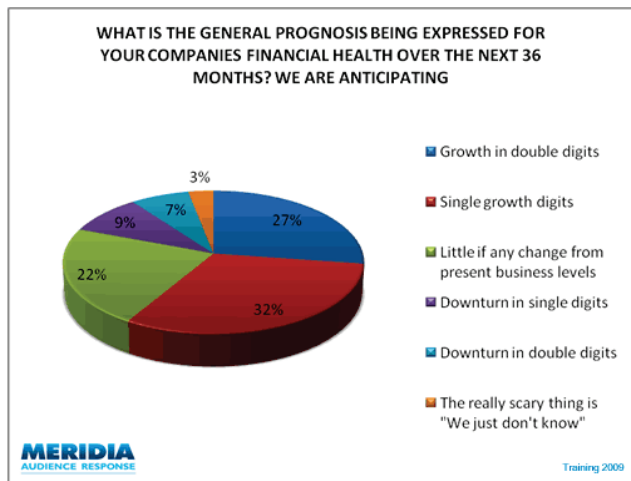
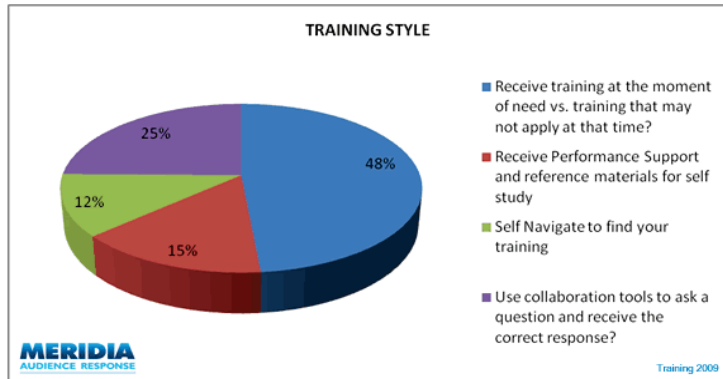
The previous statistic is supported further when we asked a question relating to current training budgets, with 35% of our audience members still reporting budgets of \$1m or more.

(Industry Trend)

Analysts researcher blogs and reports demonstrate that companies have started to change their training program priorities; and are using budgets to move towards informal learning, collaborative activities and other less-costly training methods. Companies with lower budgets are looking to introduce social media and levels of performance support, enabling them to capitalize on training materials already developed and reutilize existing materials when repurposed for other training mediums.



Validation of this trend was implied when the audience was asked to respond to their preferred Training Style. An overwhelming **48%** wanted to receive training at the **moment of need vs. training** that may not apply at that time, and **25%** wishing to use **collaboration** tools to ask a question and receive a correct response.

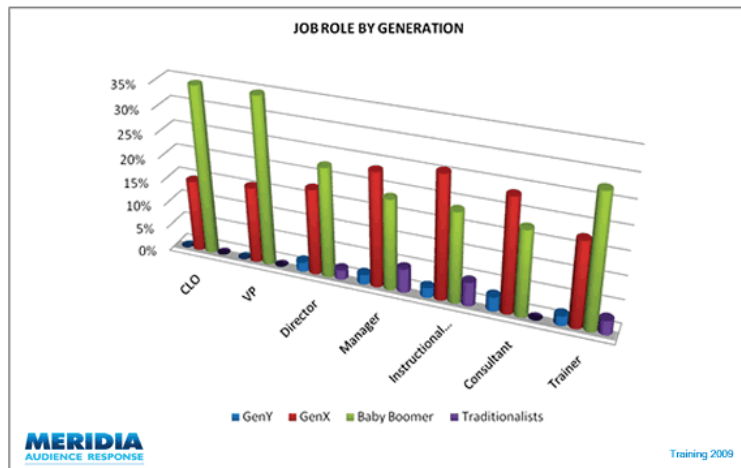


When queried about company's financial health, **32%** expected **single growth digits** in their companies health whilst, **27%** projected growth in **double digits**. Please note that the question was asked for a **36 month period**, based upon the feedback, it is suggested that some people feel that the recession isn't going to be that short lived.

The data collected, significantly displays the thoughts of Baby Boomers and Generation X, who represented a predominance of upper management.

(Key finding)

Feedback indicated strong budgets, effective senior management and recognition towards a trend to redefine and repurpose training to support a higher level of productivity and performance.





EMMA KING, CHIEF LEARNING STRATEGIST FOR MERIDIA AUDIENCE RESPONSE SYSTEMS SUGGESTS:

In this current economic environment, industry specialists are talking about the need to rethink your training initiatives and rethink the way you run your training department. But before you start reorganizing staff, have you thought about carrying out a “Health Check” of your existing systems?

If we think about the traditional annual physical exam, we carry it out as we maintain our personal health. Our doctors give us a physical and aid our health by suggesting preventive or corrective care. This in turn helps one focus on remediation of any negative findings and allows one to focus solutions on maintenance or increase health. The same can be said regarding your learning initiative, delivery mechanisms, end user learning requirements and retention scales.

Enterprise e-learning technologies can be quite complex. Often, it is hard to know if you have utilized the best tools in the marketplace, or the best technology infrastructure to host/deliver or manage your Learning Environments. It is essential that you review what you have before investing in another tool!

As a consultant, I find it so frustrating to see approximately 65% of clients only utilize a fraction of the features and functionality that the tool can offer. Often this is due to time constraints of projects, and tight deadlines, meaning that the cutting edge features that were fought for at procurement have been overlooked, just to get the job done. In turn, the rich ROI promise that they sought when making the decision to purchase the tool, holds no return.

It is crucial to review training after a major rollout. Training needs to be evaluated for its ability to train and educate your end users. All too often, training goals are missed, training becomes too verbose and end users are not reaching their Return on Information, and despite, investing \$\$\$ in your training programs, their Return on Investment is way off target.

Is this sounding all too familiar? Below I have listed five key items that we carry out when doing a Learning Initiative Health Check for our clients.

1. **Review existing training program** - review the length of courses, the content and analyze feedback forms from classroom training. Are they meeting the needs of all your staff?
2. **Review software portfolio** - have you utilized the software to its full potential to meet ROI? Have you utilized the true capacities of the product you purchased?
3. **Experience the courses** - take a subset of the courses to evaluate retention levels of existing material.
4. **Analyze the network infrastructure** - if end users find the systems difficult to understand, systems are slow to load or inaccessible due to bandwidth issues, your training initiative will not succeed.
5. **Evaluate feedback** - review feedback from your trainees. Ensure that they are retaining information.

Recession = Review. Learn more about how to carry out your own learning content Health Check at <http://www.meridiaars.com/healthcheck/> and rethink how your training budget dollars from 2007/2008 can be re-utilized in 2009.