2023 ANNUAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH REPORT

Developed in partnership with Jamie Turner and Dr. Jesse Conyers

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THE STATE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Times are tough. If you're like most executives reading this, it's hard to imagine a more challenging time in business.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses face challenges of economic uncertainty, digital transformation, remote work transition, talent shortages, and environmental sustainability.

Studies have shown that [workers feel more stressed than ever](#), with 81 percent reporting they feel at risk of burnout. The "Great Resignation" has intensified the competition for top talent, making employee recruitment and retention even more critical.

The world is changing faster than ever. And in the dynamic landscape of today's business world, the role of leadership has never been more crucial.

Top executives are acutely aware of the intricate challenges of the modern workforce. Many of them are using this as an opportunity to work harder on leadership development programs that can help to recruit and retain top talent.

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2023 WAS A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our survey, conducted with 204 high-level executives, uncovered leadership trends and best practices in North America, Latin America, and Europe.

Here are some of the key findings:

- **The need for training and development remains important:** 83% of survey respondents said the need for training and development is greater today than it was 5 years ago (this increased from 80% in 2022)

- **Training and development budgets are less likely to increase this year:** Only 25% of those surveyed said they were likely or very likely to see an increase in their budgets in the coming year. This is down from 54% in 2022

- **It is easier to attract new employees in 2023 vs. 2022**: In 2022, 79% of survey respondents said it was harder to attract new employees than it was 5 years ago. In 2023, that figure dropped to 69%, indicating that it's slightly easier to hire in 2023 than it was in 2022.

- **Executive teams are less involved in talent development:** 56% of survey respondents said their organization's executive team is very involved in talent development, which has decreased from 74% in 2022.

- **In 2023, organizations were less focused on developing the next generation of leaders than in 2022:** 45% of those surveyed said their organization has a clear focus on developing the next generation of leaders, down from 63% in 2022.

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ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Our research, which was conducted with organizations that had a U.S.-based, multinational, and/or global footprint, provided several other insights:

- **Top management is spending less individual time on training and development:** 11% of those surveyed meet with top management about training and development on a weekly basis compared to 21% in 2022. Another 20% meet with top management on a monthly basis, which is down from 30% in 2022.

- **Organizations are less successful at keeping talent:** 34% of those surveyed said their organization is successful at keeping the talent needed to achieve their business goals compared to 50% in 2022.

- **Fewer organizations provide regular leadership development training:** 57% of those surveyed "always" or "somewhat regularly" have ongoing training and development programs. This decreased from 66% in 2022.

- **Organizations continue to put emphasis on talent development:** 57% of survey respondents said their organization puts a greater emphasis on talent development than it did 2+ years ago (similar to 59% in 2022).

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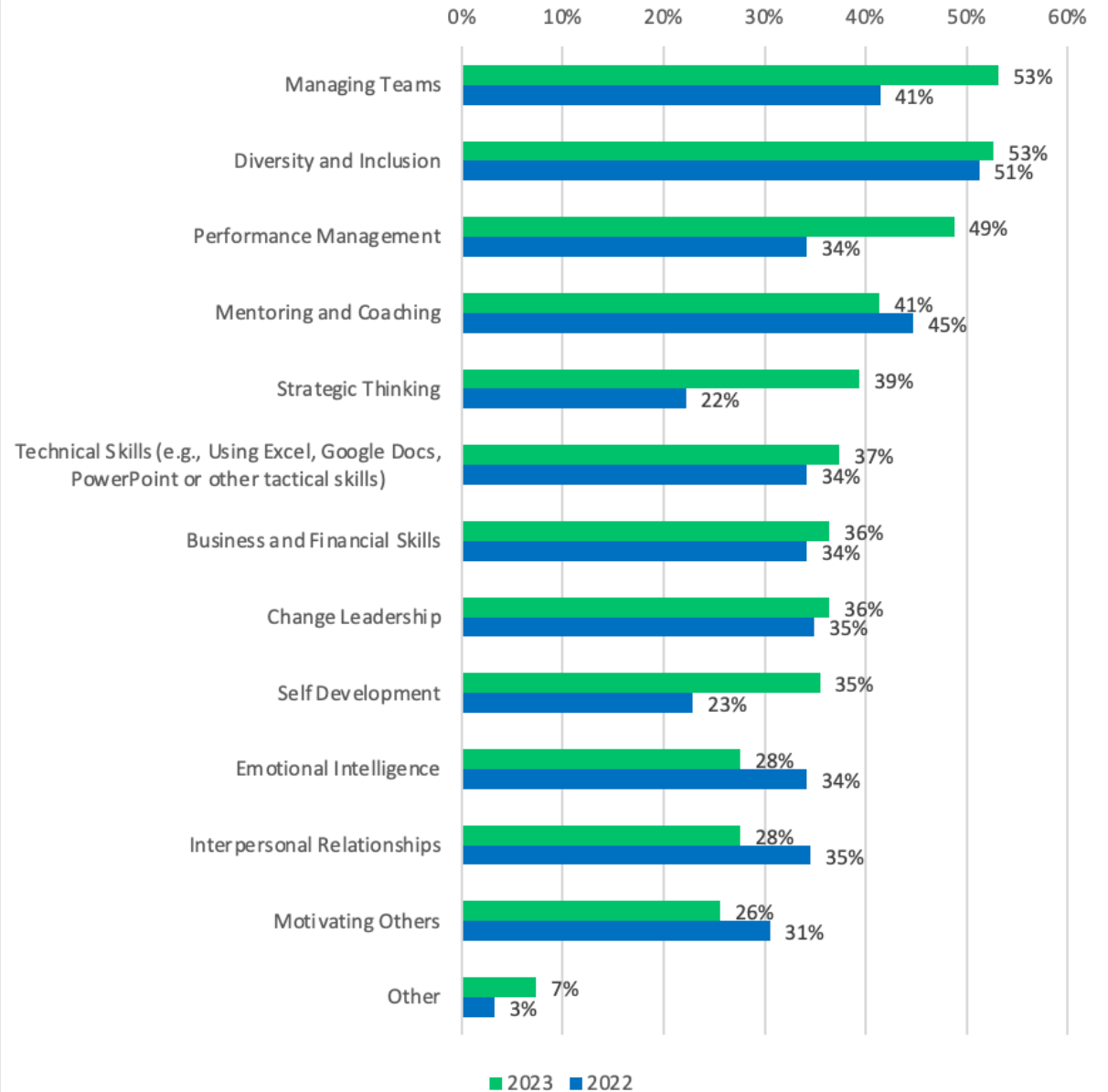# THE FUTURE OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

When asked what topics survey respondents would be focusing on in the next 12 months, **Managing Teams** and **Diversity and Inclusion** remain the top areas of focus. This is consistent with survey data in 2022.

There are several insights that can be drawn from the answers to this question:

- **People skills continue to dominate:** 7 out of the top 10 topics are related to interpersonal skills including Managing Teams, Diversity and Inclusion, and Mentoring and Coaching.

- **High-level thinking and management skills are in demand:** Managing Teams, Performance Management, and Strategic Thinking were more frequent areas of focus in 2023 compared to 2022.

- **Business skills still important:** Business and Financial Skills as well as Technical Skills are still relevant, even though Interpersonal and Team Based Skills, as mentioned previously, are currently a hot topic.

Please select the skills training your organization will be focusing on over the next 12 months (Select all that apply).

Topic	2023	2022
Managing Teams	53%	41%
Diversity and Inclusion	53%	51%
Performance Management	49%	34%
Mentoring and Coaching	41%	45%
Strategic Thinking	39%	22%
Technical Skills (e.g., Using Excel, Google Docs, PowerPoint or other tactical skills)	37%	34%
Business and Financial Skills	36%	34%
Change Leadership	36%	35%
Self Development	35%	23%
Emotional Intelligence	28%	34%
Interpersonal Relationships	28%	35%
Motivating Others	26%	31%
Other	7%	3%

FUTURE DIRECTION: ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

In comparison to our 2022 survey of high-level executives, our 2023 survey provided important insight into the future direction and challenges for leadership development and training:

- **Resources are limited to develop the next generation of leaders:** Only 25% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have sufficient resources, time and staff to develop the next generation of leaders. This is down from 42% in 2022.

- **It is more difficult to attract younger employees into leadership positions:** 39% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are effectively attracting younger employees into leadership positions. This is down from to 53% in 2022.

- **Fewer organizations have a succession plan for key positions:** Only 33% of survey respondents said their organization has identified a succession plan for all key positions, which is down from 45% in 2022.

- **Organizational knowledge may get lost as the current generation of leaders retires.** 36% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they are capturing organizational knowledge as our current generation of leaders retires. This is down from 46% in 2022.

4 KEY INSIGHTS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVES

1. **Economic uncertainty** has created a sense of caution with regard to budgets.

2. **Budgets and resources for training and development are decreasing**, however the need for training and development remains important.

3. Management is spending less time and resources on leadership training and development, however **organizations continue to put emphasis on talent development.**

4. **All of this leads to an opportunity for organizations that decide to maintain or even increase their leadership development budgets.** The need and demand for leadership development hasn't gone away and organizations that meet that need will reap the benefits in the years to come.

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Open-Ended Survey Responses:

When your organization uses outside resources, what are the reasons?

Answers:

"New perspectives and content expertise"

"To offer alternate ideas and different training methods."

"To get the most up-to-date information, strategies and new ways of thinking."

6 ACTION STEPS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

The findings in our research have led us to several insights and action steps you might consider for your organization.

1. **The need for continuous leadership development is real.** Leadership is no longer confined to traditional hierarchical structures; it's about fostering innovation, driving collaboration, and inspiring teams towards shared goals.

   Action Step: Prioritize investing in ongoing training and development initiatives to enhance employee skills and capabilities. Refine existing leadership development programs to meet evolving needs.

2. **Economic uncertainty has affected budgets for training and development programs.** While some organizations are exercising caution in regards to budgets, the recognition of leadership development's long-term value and its potential impact on organizational success underscores the need to find innovative ways to empower leaders without compromising finances. Creative solutions, such as leveraging cost-effective online training platforms, tailoring in-house workshops, or exploring partnerships, can help optimize training initiatives within budgetary confines.

   Action Step: Focus on optimizing existing training resources and seeking cost-effective solutions to ensure effective skill development despite budget limitations.

6 ACTION STEPS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION (Cont.)

3. **Employee recruitment and retention is changing.** With the rise of remote work and increased focus on work-life balance, businesses are adapting their recruitment strategies. Simultaneously, retention strategies are taking center stage, emphasizing personalized career paths, skill development, and work environment. Top businesses are recognizing employee loyalty is built on meaningful engagement, continuous development, and commitment to employee well-being.

   Action Step: Capitalize on the improved ease of attracting new employees by showcasing unique value propositions and growth opportunities within the organization. Implement retention strategies such as tailored career paths and recognition programs to ensure a sustainable talent pool.

4. **Cultivating the next generation of leaders is critical.** Focusing on developing the next generation of leaders is an investment in an organization's long-term success, stability, innovation, and reputation.

   Action: Revise strategies to prioritize development of the next generation of leaders within the organization. Strategically allocate resources, time, and staff to develop the next generation of leaders. Tailor leadership development programs to attract that align with career aspirations.

   (Continued on the next page.)

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6 KEY INSIGHTS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION (Cont.)

5. **In the end, what differentiates your business are the people.** Despite rapidly developing technology, people skills remain the top areas of focus for high performing organizations.

   Action: Design training programs that foster interpersonal skills, team management, and collaboration to enhance leadership effectiveness.

6. **Succession planning is critical.** By cultivating a pool of capable successors, organizations minimize disruptions and maintain a smooth transition, safeguarding institutional knowledge and sustaining momentum. Succession planning not only demonstrates commitment to employee growth and advancement but also fosters a culture of accountability and preparedness, positioning the organization for long-term success.

   Action: Establish comprehensive succession plans to ensure a smooth transition as key positions become vacant due to retirements or promotions. Implement knowledge transfer strategies to capture critical institutional knowledge as experienced leaders transition out of the organization.

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Summary of Key Findings

1. 83% say the need for training and development programs is greater than 5 years ago

2. Only 25% say they were likely or very likely to see an increase in their budgets in the coming year

3. Only 25% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have sufficient resources, time and staff to develop the next generation of leaders

4. Employee recruitment and retention is tied to training. Only 39% feel they are effectively attracting younger employees.

5. Fewer organizations have a succession plan, and organizations may lose organizational knowledge as current leaders retire.

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APPENDIX

Methodology.

204 executives from North America, Latin America, and Europe responded to the 2022 Emory Executive Education Leadership Development survey.

52% of the respondents were from U.S.-based organizations, 21% were from global organizations, and 27% were from multi-national organizations.

43% of respondents work in organizations with greater than 1000 employees. Among organizations with less than 1000 employees, the size was relatively evenly distributed with number of employees fewer than 100 (30%) and between 101 to 1000 (27%).

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Q1 Agree or Disagree: It is harder to attract new employees today than it was 5 years ago.

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1
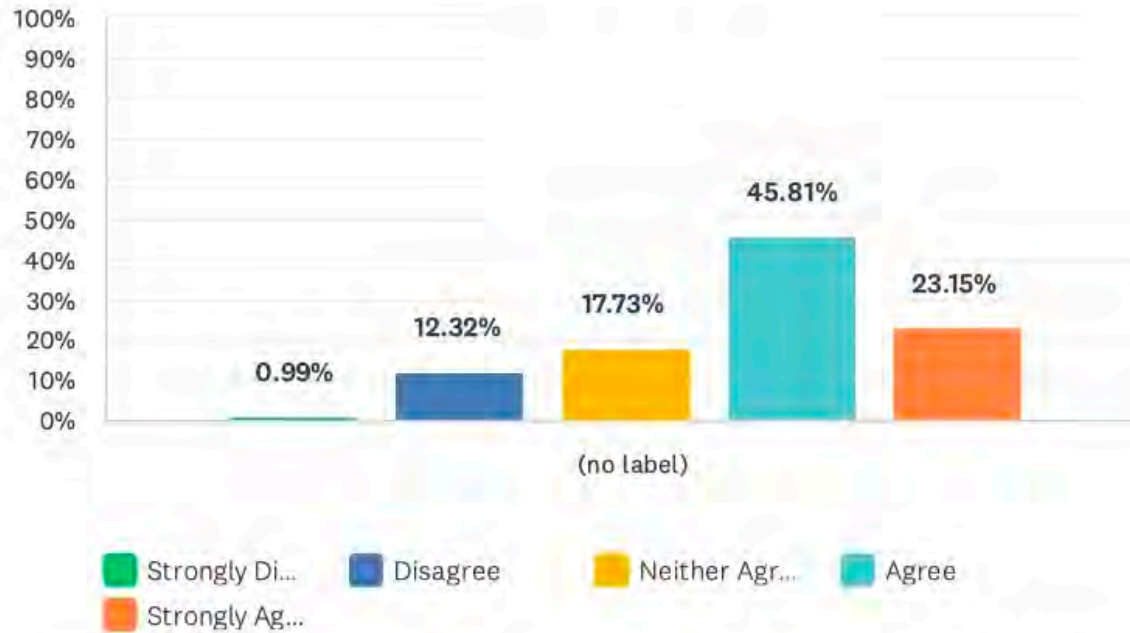
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.99% 2	12.32% 25	17.73% 36	45.81% 93	23.15% 47	203	3.78

Q2 Agree or Disagree: It is harder to retain existing employees today than it was 5 years ago.

Answered: 200   Skipped: 4
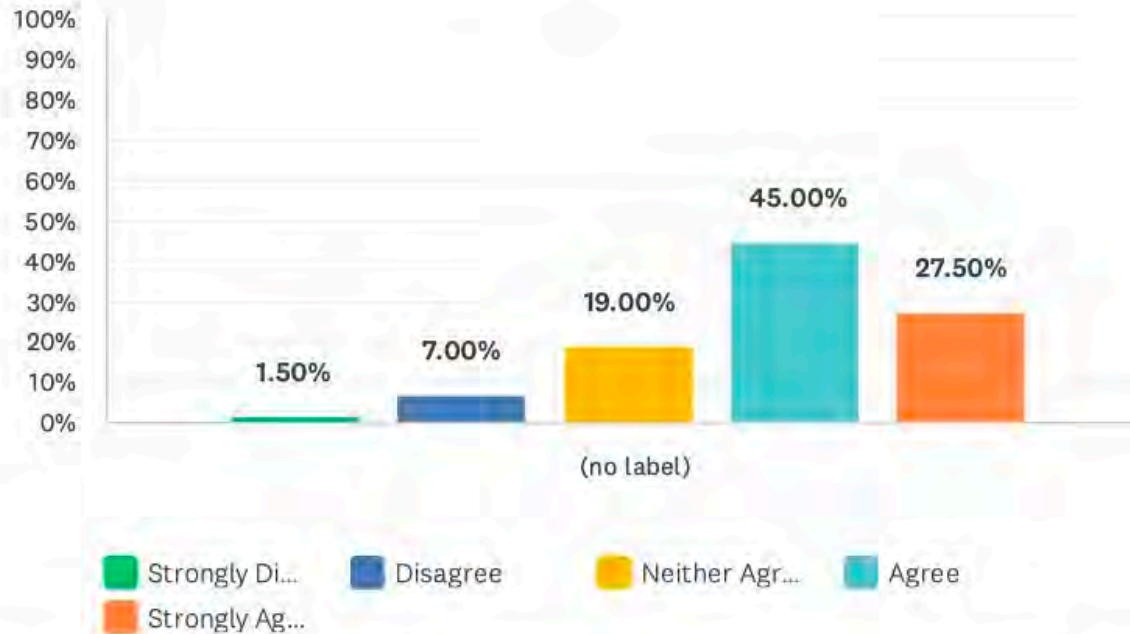
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.50% 3	7.00% 14	19.00% 38	45.00% 90	27.50% 55	200	3.90

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Q3 Agree or Disagree: My organization's executive team is very involved in talent development.

Answered: 202   Skipped: 2
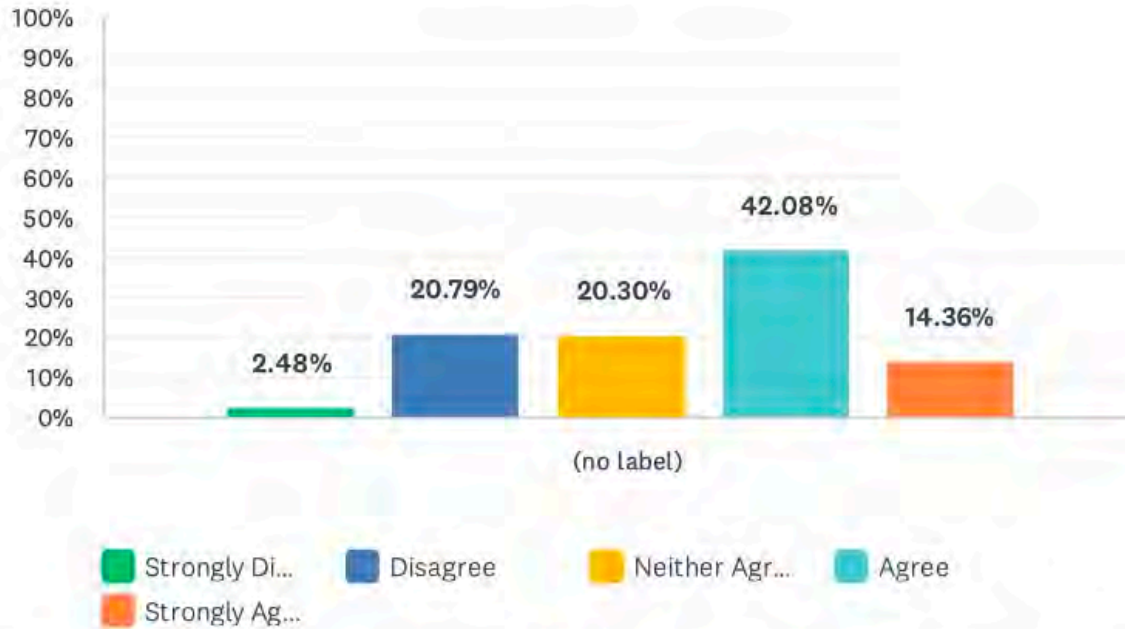
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.48% 5	20.79% 42	20.30% 41	42.08% 85	14.36% 29	202	3.45

Q4 Agree or Disagree: My organization has a clear focus on developing the next generation of leaders.

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1
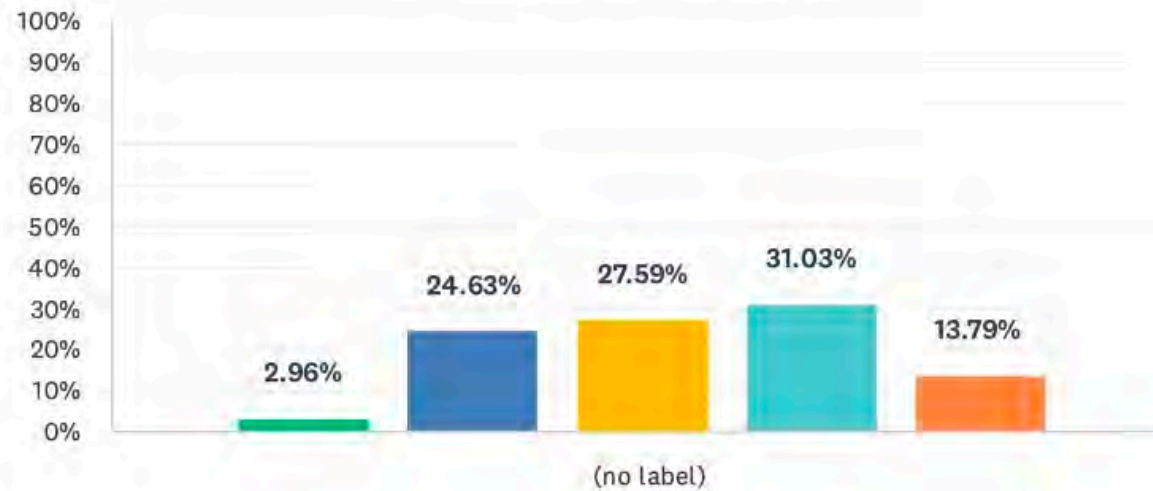
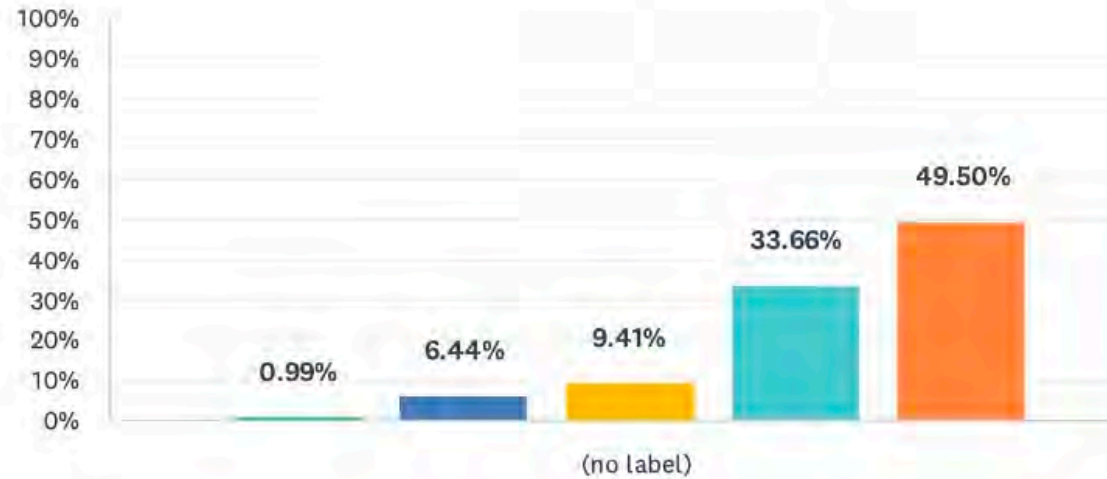|	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	2.96% 6	24.63% 50	27.59% 56	31.03% 63	13.79% 28	203	3.28

Q5 Agree or Disagree: The need for learning and development is greater today than it was 5 years ago.

Answered: 202   Skipped: 2

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.99% 2	6.44% 13	9.41% 19	33.66% 68	49.50% 100	202	4.24

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Q6 What's the likelihood that your leadership and training budget will increase in 2023?

Answered: 201   Skipped: 3
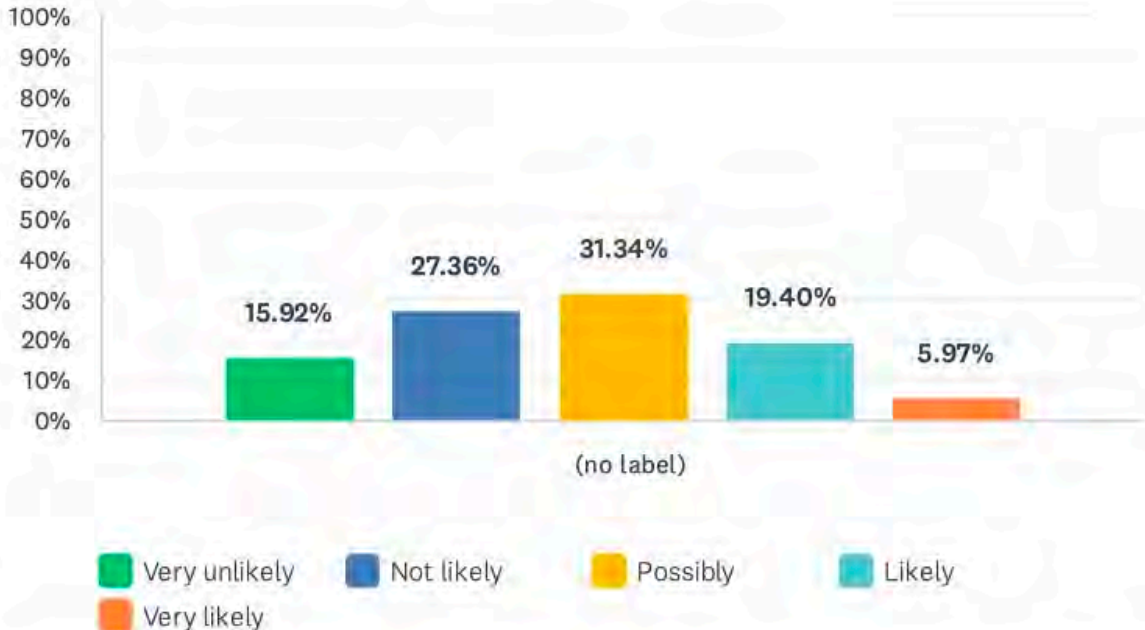
	VERY UNLIKELY	NOT LIKELY	POSSIBLY	LIKELY	VERY LIKELY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	15.92% 32	27.36% 55	31.34% 63	19.40% 39	5.97% 12	201	2.72

Q7 How often do you formally discuss leadership training and development strategies with top management in your organization?

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	6.40%	13
Weekly	11.33%	23
Monthly	19.70%	40
Quarterly	33.99%	69
Semi-Annually	16.26%	33
Annually	12.32%	25
TOTAL		203

Q8 Compared to your competitors, how successful is your organization at keeping the talent needed to achieve your business goals?

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1

	MUCH LESS SUCCESSFUL	LESS SUCCESSFUL	ABOUT THE SAME	MORE SUCCESSFUL	MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	1.97% 4	16.26% 33	47.78% 97	27.09% 55	6.90% 14	203	3.21
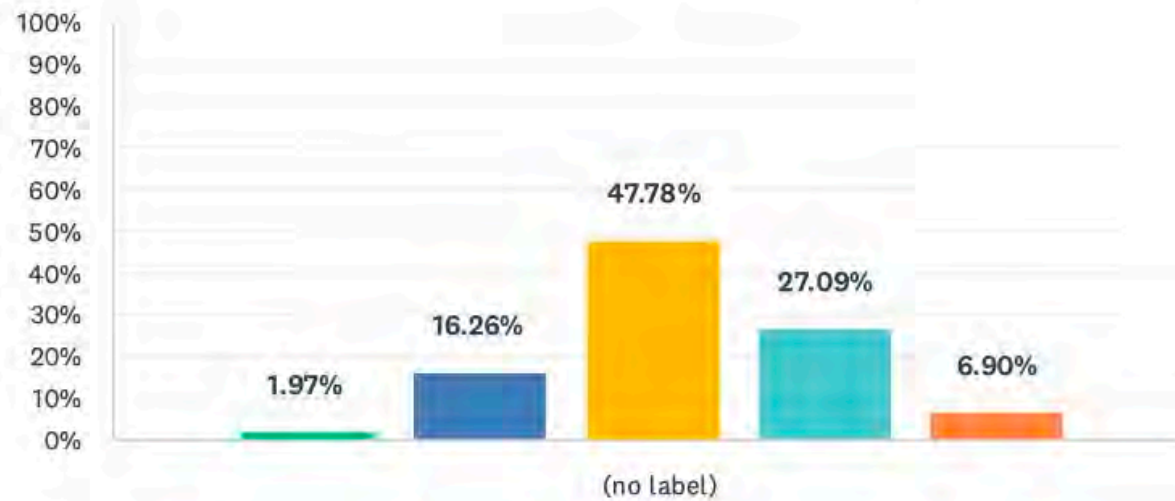
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- More Succe...
- Much More ...

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Q9 My organization provides formal learning and development opportunities (e.g., executive education, online distance learning, live workshops, etc.) for our employees.

Answered: 204   Skipped: 0

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	SOMEWHAT REGULARLY	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	5.39%	37.75%	30.88%	25.98%		
	11	77	63	53	204	2.77

Q10 Agree or Disagree: My organization puts a greater emphasis on talent development than it did 2+ years ago.

Answered: 204   Skipped: 0
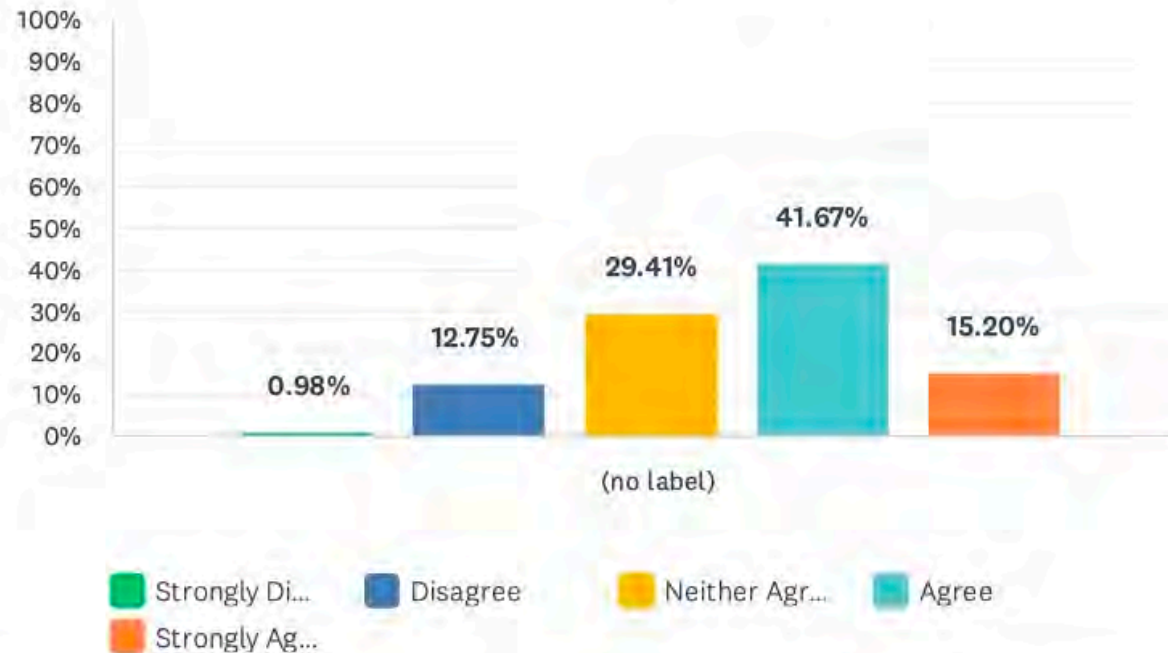
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.98% 2	12.75% 26	29.41% 60	41.67% 85	15.20% 31	204	3.57

Q11 Please select the skills training your organization will be focusing on over the next 12 months (Select all that apply.)

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1

Skill	Percentage
Managing Teams	53.20%
Diversity and Inclusion	52.71%
Performance Management	48.77%
Mentoring and Coaching	41.38%
Strategic Thinking	39.41%
Technical Skills (e.g....	37.44%
Business and Financial...	36.45%
Change Leadership	36.45%
Self Development	35.47%
Emotional Intelligence	27.59%
Interpersonal Relationships	27.59%
Motivating Others	25.62%
Other (please specify)	7.39%
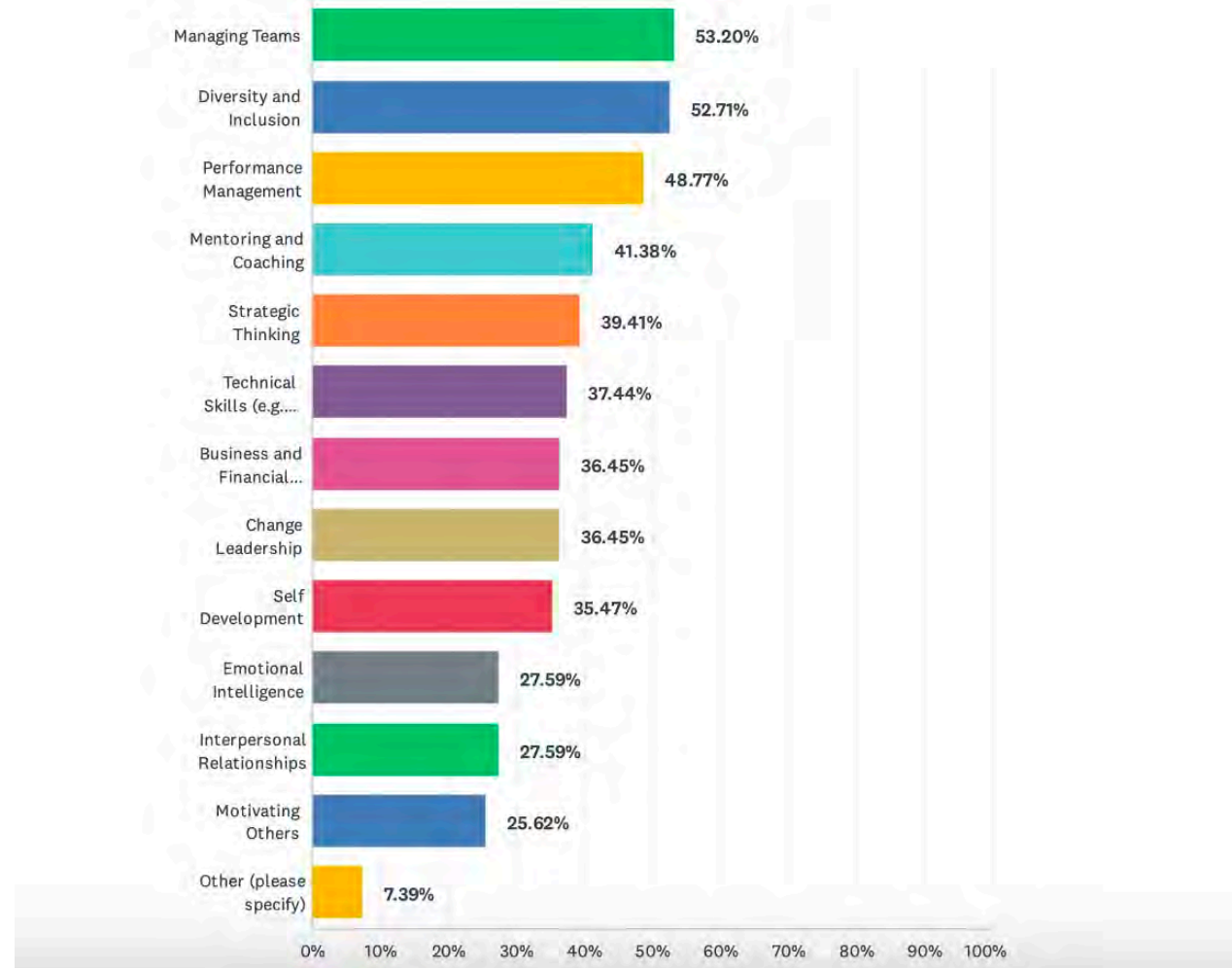
Q12 How would you rate the effectiveness of the leadership development methods you use? (Select only those that apply.)

Answered: 203   Skipped: 1

	NOT EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE	VERY EFFECTIVE	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Instructor-Led Live Classroom	0.56% 1	8.33% 15	30.56% 55	41.11% 74	19.44% 35	180	3.71
Instructor-Led Virtual Classroom	2.17% 4	27.72% 51	45.65% 84	21.74% 40	2.72% 5	184	2.95
On-the-Job Training	0.53% 1	8.42% 16	23.68% 45	38.42% 73	28.95% 55	190	3.87
Mentoring Programs	3.24% 6	16.22% 30	30.81% 57	31.89% 59	17.84% 33	185	3.45
Informal Learning Methods	3.83% 7	28.42% 52	38.80% 71	18.58% 34	10.38% 19	183	3.03
Self-Guided Online Platforms	9.04% 17	37.77% 71	37.77% 71	13.83% 26	1.60% 3	188	2.61
360-Degree Feedback Tools	8.19% 14	21.64% 37	36.84% 63	23.39% 40	9.94% 17	171	3.05
Open-Source Programs (MOOCS, YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)	8.05% 14	28.74% 50	42.53% 74	17.24% 30	3.45% 6	174	2.79
Manager Coaching and Support	2.13% 4	15.96% 30	29.26% 55	36.17% 68	16.49% 31	188	3.49
Job Rotations	8.43% 14	16.27% 27	34.94% 58	28.31% 47	12.05% 20	166	3.19
University/College Programs (Including Executive Education)	4.65% 8	27.33% 47	29.07% 50	31.40% 54	7.56% 13	172	3.10

How do you measure the effectiveness of your leadership development efforts?

Answered: 202   Skipped: 2

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	ALMOST ALWAYS	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Survey participants	11.68% 23	13.20% 26	32.49% 64	30.46% 60	12.18% 24	197	3.18
Interviews with employee managers	7.61% 15	15.74% 31	38.58% 76	30.46% 60	7.61% 15	197	3.15
Follow-up tests with participants	26.56% 51	26.56% 51	29.69% 57	14.06% 27	3.13% 6	192	2.41
Measure the relationship between leadership development programs and achievement of business goals	15.03% 29	18.13% 35	32.64% 63	26.42% 51	7.77% 15	193	2.94
Measure the relationship between leadership development programs and achievement of participant's goals	11.40% 22	16.06% 31	33.68% 65	29.53% 57	9.33% 18	193	3.09

In developing the next generation of leaders, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Answered: 201   Skipped: 3

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
We are able to find qualified candidates to fill future leadership positions	4.98% 10	48.26% 97	29.35% 59	15.42% 31	1.99% 4	201	3.39
We are effectively attracting younger employees into leadership positions	3.00% 6	36.00% 72	35.00% 70	23.50% 47	2.50% 5	200	3.13
We have sufficient resources, time, and staff to develop the next generation of leaders	4.02% 8	21.11% 42	26.63% 53	38.69% 77	9.55% 19	199	2.71
We have strong bench strength of new potential leaders	3.52% 7	37.19% 74	24.12% 48	31.16% 62	4.02% 8	199	3.05
Executives in our organization have prioritized the need to develop the next generation of leaders	11.50% 23	35.00% 70	28.00% 56	20.50% 41	5.00% 10	200	3.27
Our organization has identified a succession plan for all key positions	6.53% 13	26.13% 52	28.64% 57	30.15% 60	8.54% 17	199	2.92
We are capturing organizational knowledge as our current generation of leaders retires	4.06% 8	31.98% 63	28.43% 56	27.92% 55	7.61% 15	197	2.97

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Q17 How would you characterize your organization?

Answered: 198   Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
U.S.-based only	52.53%	104
Multinational	20.71%	41
Global	26.77%	53
TOTAL		198

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Q18 How many employees are in your entire organization?

Answered: 202   Skipped: 2
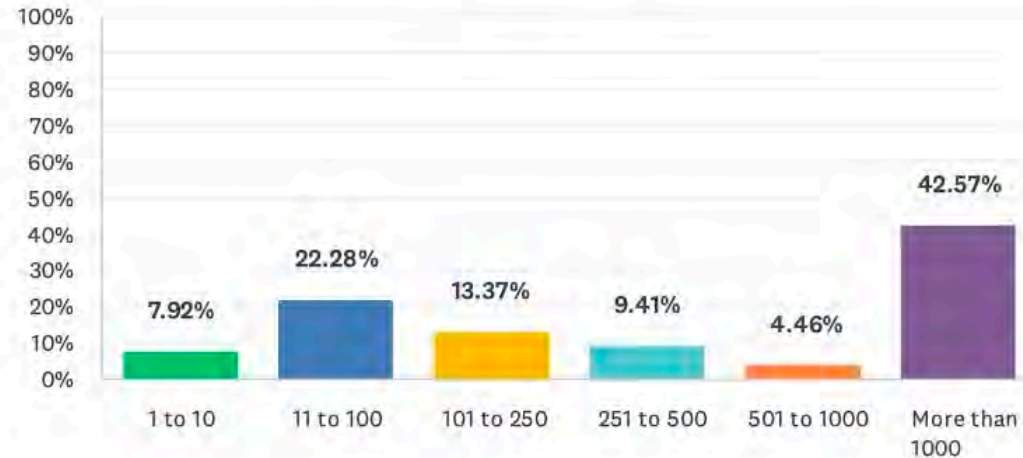
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 to 10	7.92%	16
11 to 100	22.28%	45
101 to 250	13.37%	27
251 to 500	9.41%	19
501 to 1000	4.46%	9
More than 1000	42.57%	86
TOTAL		202

Q19 What is the primary goal of your leadership development program?

Answered: 201   Skipped: 3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To assist in talent acquisition	6.97%	14
To help improve employee retention	24.38%	49
To enable our organization to achieve its business goals	65.17%	131
It is required by law	0.50%	1
Other (please specify)	2.99%	6
TOTAL		201

How much does your company spend on training annually?

Answered: 200   Skipped: 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Nothing	1.50%	3
Less than $5,000	7.50%	15
Between $5,000 and $25,000	17.00%	34
Between $25,000 and $50,000	8.50%	17
Between $50,000 and $100,000	9.50%	19
Between $100,000 and $200,000	8.00%	16
Between $200,000 and $500,000	4.00%	8
Between $500,000 and $1,000,000	3.00%	6
More than $1,000,000	8.50%	17
Not Sure	31.50%	63
Other (please specify)	1.00%	2
TOTAL		200

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THANK YOU

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