

# Managers Have Learning Needs Too: CCPE's Perspective

The Council for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education (CCPE) details the history, process and benefits of the accreditation process

Discussion with Marc Lalonde, CCPE General Manager



## *The status of professional development with pharmaceutical managers*

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and understanding. This happens through study and experience and it leads to changes in behaviours and attitudes. Although managers at all levels of an organization acquire a great deal of "on the job" experience, the study component of the learning process is often overlooked and for good reason.

We are all pressed for time and finding time for structured learning programs is challenging. A recent national benchmarking survey was conducted by CCPE<sup>1</sup> with 24 pharmaceutical companies. Results have indicated that

despite the fact that recently promoted pharmaceutical professionals have great learning needs, little is done to meet these needs (Figure 1). Looking further at formal training initiatives:

- Less than 50% of companies offer a formal initial training program for sales managers
- Fewer than 25% of companies have a structured development program for high potential candidates.
- Less than 17% have a formal initial training program and even fewer offer development programs as brand managers gain more experience.

The benchmarking survey has also confirmed that learning and development training programs, for other management positions within Canadian pharmaceutical organizations, are equally lacking.



Figure 1. Proportion of pharmaceutical companies offering managerial training.

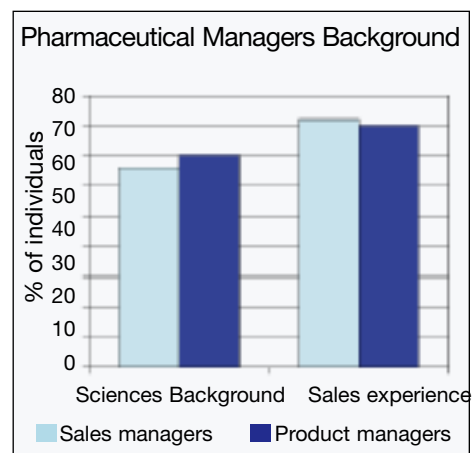


Figure 2. Pharmaceutical managers' background.

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Table 1

**Progression through pharmaceutical management**

Year	Position	Challenge	Learning initiatives	Outcomes
1989	Sales training	Had only a weekend to prepare for my first initial training program	I was too busy and probably had no idea of what I needed to learn	I was a good subject matter, but a poor trainer
1990	Sales management	The new job did not come with a user's guide	I eventually spent a few days in Toronto to be exposed to corporate policies and the handling of expense reports	I was so busy that I could not fit in any development days to learn or address development opportunities
1996	Product management	Still no training offered with the new position	Luckily for me, my supervisor encouraged me to stop, assess and learn	I spent at least 10 days annually attending various programs to develop my managerial skills

Table 2

**Managerial training**

Manager types	Contribution of external vendors
Sales Managers	More than 60% of training for Sales Managers is outsourced
Higher Management	Needs assessment, the design and the delivery of the program are most often outsourced
Product Managers	90% of formal training is outsourced

*The typical progression of pharmaceutical managers*

Many people are baptized by fire as they access new roles. Table 1 illustrates my own progression during my 15 years of pharmaceutical management. My experience most certainly resembles yours. In 2000, when I moved on to other managerial roles, there was not a single year when I did not stop and take the time to “sharpen the saw.”<sup>2</sup> How about you? You may be a subject matter expert with your drug or therapeutic area. If your job is about managing, how are you going to develop your management skills?

CCPE’s benchmarking survey<sup>1</sup> has indicated that a minority of pharmaceutical managers have managerial or marketing backgrounds (Figure 2).

*How does managerial training take place?*

Current managerial training is typically delegated to external training companies who are displaying a great deal of experience and skills in specific application areas (Table 2).

Although the group facilitation is often dynamic and stimulating, the programs are conducted over several days. These courses are often expensive, not specific to the pharmaceutical industry and lack any sort of formal evaluation. Worst of all, retention rates are generally very low.

*Help is on its way?*

CCPE has proven to be a valuable partner to the pharmaceutical community. Especially now with a growing number of leading-edge, flexible, cost and time-effective Management Training Programs. The CCPE curriculum is characterized with high industry content and is designed specifically for adult learning. Best of all, there is an application-oriented evaluation process that can support knowledge retention (Table 3).

Table 3

### Process supporting knowledge retention

	External companies	CCPE offering
Duration	3 to 5 days	15 to 20 hours
Formal evaluation of learning or application	No	Yes
Accountability to demonstrate ability to apply learning	Little	Yes
Pharmaceutical specificity	Not always	Yes
Learning transfer or retention	Usually < 20% <sup>3</sup>	Usually around 50% <sup>3</sup>
Cost	\$2,000 to \$3,000	\$500 to \$650
Other expenses	Housing, meals and transportation	None
Hidden costs	Off territory	Flexible scheduling

Through a recent alliance with CMR Institute (CCPE's US sister organization), CCPE can now access an attractive management curriculum. Local subject matter experts have adapted the content of courses for the Canadian pharmaceutical community. Furthermore, the content was also validated by a group of Canadian Pharmaceutical Sales Managers from 10 organizations.

The first two management courses were launched in May 2007, namely:

- Managing People and
- Field Sales Management.

The courses are intended for managers and management candidates who seek to become the best in their field. Each course was designed to offer a distance learning experience for busy individuals. **CPM**

#### References

1. CCPE 2006 Benchmarking Survey on Canadian best practices in pharmaceutical training.
2. Covey SR: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press, New York, 2003.
3. McKeachie WJ: *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research and Theory for College and University Teachers*. Ninth Edition. Houghton-Mifflin, New York, 1998.



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