

The Leadership Deficit

Survey Results Brief Synopsis (free)

In 2013, 547 participants representing a variety of industries and organizations completed a survey on the current state of leadership at their organizations. The average survey participant in this study is a college degree holder, has been in the work force for more than two decades, holds a manager or director level position, and has nearly a decade of tenure at their current employer. These survey findings aim to build on existing leadership survey research by seeking answers to the following questions.

- ▶ To what degree are organizations experiencing a leadership shortage?
- ▶ What is driving organizations to experience leadership shortages?
- ▶ What organizational practices might effectively minimize leadership shortages?

This article is a brief synopsis of the findings. For additional detailed information, see the full report: [The Leadership Deficit](#).

THE LEADERSHIP PROBLEM

Leadership skill deficiencies are many and big

The results of our analysis show that most organizations have leadership skills gaps in all of the skills we surveyed. The top leadership deficiencies in organizations today are:

1. strategic planning,
2. change management,
3. knowledge sharing,
4. listening, and
5. emotional intelligence

The only leadership skill that organizations are not significantly deficient in is authoritativeness; survey respondents report that employees have too much of this skill.

Leadership development is a low priority and ineffective

In this survey, 46 percent of participants said that their organization places a little or no priority on leadership development. Though there is little to no priority placed on leadership development, only 21 percent said their organization's leadership practices are quite a bit or extremely effective.

Concern is about a deficit in the future not today

Participants were asked about their concern over the leadership skills deficit today, in one to two years, in three to five years, and in five to ten years. Forty percent were a little or not at all

concerned about a leadership skills gap at their organization today. However, 55 percent were very concerned about a leadership skills gap at their organization in the next three to five years and 55 percent in the next five to ten years.

ITS CAUSES

Leadership style is outdated

The results of the survey analysis show that 79 percent of participants agreed quite a bit or extremely that current business challenges require a different leadership style.

Leadership is underfunded and leadership style change resisted

The top predictive causes of leadership skill deficiencies in this survey include:

- ▶ organizations underinvesting in leadership development;
- ▶ selection, development, and reward practices encouraging an outdated leadership style;
- ▶ current leadership challenges requiring a different leadership style; and
- ▶ leaders being resistant to changing their leadership styles.

THE SOLUTION

Develop leadership capabilities in all employees

APQC surveyed a number of potential solutions to the leadership skills deficit. The number one solution that predicted a smaller leadership deficit is developing leadership capabilities in all employees yet few organizations are doing this—only 8% of participants said their organization is doing this quite a bit or to an extreme extent.

Empower all employees to take part in a more dynamic, collaborative style of leadership

Developing leadership capabilities in all employees, not just a select few employees, provides a large base of employees from which organizations can choose when selecting candidates for formal, high-potential leadership development opportunities. More importantly, however, this large base of potential leaders positions an organization to transition to a more fluid, situation-based style of leadership which survey participants indicate is what organizations need today and will continue to require in the near future.

ABOUT APQC

APQC is a member-based nonprofit and one of the leading proponents of benchmarking and best practice business research. Working with more than 500 organizations worldwide in all industries, APQC focuses on providing organizations with the information they need to work smarter, faster, and with confidence. Every day we uncover the processes and practices that push organizations from good to great. Visit us at www.apqc.org and learn how you can make best practices your practices.