



## **Workers Unprepared for Jobs - March 2009**

HR executives report a lack of confidence in the ability of first-line managers, sales representatives, customer support representatives, and entry-level employees to successfully execute their jobs. In an analysis of trends in corporate talent management by Bersin & Associates, Oakland, Calif., the research showed a wide variation in confidence. Top executives scored highest when it came to perceived readiness for the job and line managers scored lowest.

"The pressures and stresses of downsizing and reorganization are definitely felt most acutely at the bottom of the corporate ladder," said Josh Bersin, president of Bersin & Associates, a research and advisory firm focused on enterprise talent management and learning. "Supervisors and first-line managers are typically thrown into situations for which they're ill-prepared and required to make very difficult, often life-changing decisions about the people they manage."

Not surprisingly, findings of the winter 2009 survey reinforced the generally dismal state of business. The research also revealed how significantly the economy has changed HR priorities.

- Almost 40 percent of respondents said they are grappling with issues related to layoffs and downsizing, up from 17 percent in the fall.
- Creating a performance-driven culture, which entails re-engaging employees, increasing productivity, and improving performance, is the top priority for HR this quarter, with 71 percent of respondents citing this as urgent or important.
- Over 60 percent cite cost reduction as the top business challenge this quarter, compared to 37 percent three months ago.

"When times are tough, it is critically important for organizations to build and develop from the bottom up," said Bersin. "This research shows significant vulnerability in the skills and readiness of first-line managers and entry-level employees. We strongly advise HR and business leaders to focus their training, communication, and support resources on these critical audiences."

**WP**