

Interpreters as Leaders

Amy E. Seiberlich

University College University of Denver

COMM 4901: Capstone Project

October 27, 2006

Robert Melvin
Capstone Advisor

Denise Pearson
Academic Director

Upon the Recommendation of the Department

Jim Davis
Dean

Abstract

This project examines leadership readiness within the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Findings report that leadership training and experience did not affect one's perception of readiness to lead, that there is a lack of formal, ongoing leadership training opportunities within RID, and that there is a positive correlation between trainings being provided and topics of interest. Findings are based on the results of a web-based survey distributed to RID state and local affiliate leaders. The survey was drafted based on the perception that these leaders lack the skills and knowledge needed to lead in the midst of enormous change and that leadership training can provide them with some of the necessary tools.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	3
Design and Implementation	18
Results	27
Discussion	55
References	59
Appendix A (Survey).....	62

Introduction

The National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) is an organization of people with a very unique skill - the ability to interpret between American Sign Language (ASL) and English. In its short forty-two year existence, RID has sealed its place in history as the largest volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the profession of interpreting and transliterating of ASL and English. This project explores what training RID leaders may need to sustain success in a rapidly changing marketplace.

At RID's founding meeting in 1964, sixty-four people declared themselves "members." These early RID members were born into families belonging to the Deaf community's "inner circle," but had no formal interpreter training and were rarely paid to interpret. This gave them a distinct mindset – one that has prevailed despite the fact that RID now has over 20,000 national and affiliate chapter members – most of whom, unlike their predecessors, are formally trained and compensated for their work but are not intimately connected to the inner circle. RID's rapid growth and changing membership are just two challenges that were successfully handled under the original leadership strategy.

As the leaders that worked within this original paradigm transitioned out of their positions, a new generation of members stepped to the plate. I am of that new generation of leaders – and recently completed a four-year term as President of the Colorado RID chapter. By the time I took office

memories of previous leadership successes had fallen by the wayside - overshadowed by stories of struggle and strife. RID's sole history book, *Silver Threads: A Personal Look at the First Twenty-five Years of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf* by Lou Fant (1989) paints a portrait of a passionately elite, back-biting and judgmental organization. And unbeknownst to many new leaders this paradigm continues to control perceptions, attitudes, behavior...and RID's future.

In addition to contending with the rarely discussed historical dynamics of a different generation of interpreters, new leaders have to contend with unprecedented levels of legislation /regulation and the advent of new technology. While RID recognizes the need for strong leadership, it has very little in place to help develop such. The historic reactionary style of leadership is no longer sufficient to sustain success in a rapidly changing and increasingly segmented market.

This project examines the perception that state and local leaders lack the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the challenges the field is facing, and that it can be acquired through training grounded in leadership theory. Project goals include identifying current leaders' perception of their own leadership competence, leadership training needs, and potential leadership models capable of meeting and sustaining these needs. Project results will be shared with national RID leaders in the hopes that training opportunities based on expressed needs will be developed and provided.

Additionally, this project will serve as the philosophical foundation of the *Leadership Institute: for Interpreters* - a new for-profit company providing leadership coaching, consultation and board retreats for leaders in the field.

Literature Review

The field of Sign Language Interpreting is a relatively new and highly specialized field. As such, information and resources on interpreting and transliterating are well cocooned within the field and not readily available via academic databases. Information on leadership within RID is even less available; very little historical information exists. Even so, the information that was uncovered was rich enough to provide a strong basis for this project.

The sum total of the literature review seems to confirm; that there is a lack of leadership training for interpreters on a state and local level, that such training is important, and that possible training approaches for a new generation of leaders exist. The three main themes that emerged are: 1) There is a discrepancy between what RID says and does regarding affiliate chapter leadership, 2) RID's original leadership paradigm is no longer sufficient to sustain continued success, and 3) There are leadership models available to move RID forward in a positive spirit of inquiry.

The first sources consulted for this project were the Business Source Premier, Academic Search Premier and Communication & Mass Media Complete databases using the following combinations of key words:

“leadership + interpreting,” “leadership + sign language interpreting,” “leadership + non-profit organization,” “leadership + non-profit organization + volunteer” and “leadership + interpreting organizations + volunteer.”

This search returned information on “Servant Leadership” and the relationship between directors as leaders of non-profits and their commitment to, and performance in, the organization. Information on the role and accountability of boards in non-profit organizations was gleaned and incorporated into this project, but no information on leadership within organizations that mirror the unique nature of RID as a volunteer, female-dominated professional non-profit organization with strong ties to a historically oppressed community was uncovered.

The fact that interpreting is a female-dominated field then led to a refined search of the Gender Studies, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO and SocINDEX databases in the hopes that it would turn up some information on female leadership trends. Again, the following key words were used: “leadership training + non-profit organizations + volunteer,” “leadership training + non-profit organizations + female” and “female leadership + non-profit + volunteer.” These searches returned no useable results.

Generally speaking, internet searches return results that are less academically reliable /valid than searches conducted through academic sources. However, given the fact that little to nothing was available in earlier search efforts a Google search was conducted using the keywords

“leadership in interpreting.” The only pertinent results returned directed the user to information on leadership classes being developed for a local University BA program – by this researcher!

As expected, all roads pointed to RID and scholars within the field as the two primary sources of information on interpreting related data. RID sources reviewed include the monthly *RID Views*, the annual RID Journal of Interpretation, the Affiliate Chapter Handbook, informal and unpublished summaries of research conducted by the RID Affiliate Chapter Relations Committee (ACRC) and the RID website, www.rid.org. Other special RID publications were solicited from long-time RID members, leaders and scholars including Fant, Johnson, Stauffer and Witter-Merithew.

The information gleaned from these sources provided a wealth of insight into RID’s organizational culture and original leadership paradigm, summaries of recent leadership training and needs assessments, and national office expectations for local and state affiliate chapter leaders.

RID started as a group of “interpreters who worked at some job and interpreted when available for free” (Fant, 1989, p.14) but has transformed into an organization of professionals who earn a living as interpreters and/or interpreter trainers, and who serve as RID leaders when available for free. This shift from “volunteer interpreter” to “Professional Sign Language Interpreter” began on June 17, 1964 at the Workshop on Interpreting for the

Deaf at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana. The purpose of this workshop, and later of RID, was

“...to establish standards for interpreters for the deaf; to suggest training, curricula, and criteria for admission to training courses for interpreters; to develop a manual and/or other guidelines for interpreters for the deaf, both for the hearing and the deaf individuals involved; and to collect and identify the manuals and booklets dealing with dactylogy” (Fant, 1989, p.2).

The two men credited with the idea to form an organization of interpreters also recognized that there was a need for an organization that “could assess interpreter competency and maintain a registry of them so consumers could be assured of receiving quality service” (Fant, 1989, p.1-2).

A look into the RID history books reveals that the field is still struggling with many of the same national concerns faced in 1964. While progress has been made, Fant (1989) states that RID operated out of expediency rather than thoughtful, purposeful action. In my opinion, the lack of information in the RID history books about how leaders were selected and what, if any, training they received, may speak to why RID developed this type of reactionary leadership style and why we are still spinning our wheels.

RID’s original mission, when combined with it’s history of reactionary leadership, sheds light on the current state of leadership affairs as outlined by former RID President Janet Bailey in Section 9.1 of the RID Affiliate Chapter (AC) Handbook - *A Glimpse at Affiliate Chapter Board Service:*

Affiliate chapters tend to experience cycles with periods of healthy participation and times of relative inactivity. Some local leaders take the responsibility, run with it – often successfully – but then become burned out when they realize they cannot do it all. When a new member steps up to take on a leadership role, everyone gives a long sigh of relief and disappears – leaving the new “leader” to do it all.

...RID has been around for many years and yet because of the volunteer status, the nomad existence of running an organization without walls, and the constant changing of personnel, our affiliate chapters rarely have the luxury of developing beyond adolescence.

...Many joke about the lack of contested elections within RID...there have been many, myself included, who took on the responsibilities of an office because no one else was willing. The new uninitiated leader is expected to figure out what to do next. Because most affiliate chapters have no physical office, the administrative reigns are often turned over (unceremoniously) with the passing of assorted ring binders, file folders and boxes from the home office, basement or car trunk of the previous officer....With no official training, we roll up our sleeves, take a deep breath, and **fake it**” (RID, 2004, p. 76-77).

Linda Stauffer, author of Section 25 of the AC Handbook – *Leadership:*

Keeping it Alive, Well and Active! – adds further color to the picture Bailey began to paint:

Imagine...an RID affiliate chapter where a nominations committee (usually a committee of one) makes numerous calls and is still unable to find at least one person willing to run for every board position (forget about running for committee positions!). Imagine that the thought of elections keeps people home and away from meetings (somebody might nominate me!). Imagine that people are nominated from the floor for board positions and are pressured by their peers to accept (but might be genuinely enthusiastic about running at a different time). Imagine the membership’s relief when someone agrees to run so they don’t have to think about leadership for another two years.

Imagine...an RID affiliate chapter where leadership, board elections and committee positions are easy to fill because

everyone is involved, where leadership transition is planned and known by all! Imagine knowing those who want to serve their professional organization now and in the future, and imagine if each of these persons had a personal plan for leadership growth! Imagine the benefits to the organization if leadership transition included providing skills building and mentorship to those who will serve next, and training behind by those now serving! (RID, 2004, p.190).

Stauffer goes on to say that "Leadership decisions and choices should be made...as a part of a positive process that provides individuals with specific information, training opportunities and excellent models long before an individual accepts the nomination to run for office. Leadership training should be a continual part of every leader's responsibility" (RID, 2004, p.190).

Even so, current RID policy supports the first vision articulated above. Stauffer (2005) reports that two of the reasons most cited for leadership being "scary" are: it requires specialized skills members don't have and members will not know what to do. This may be due to the fact that the only requirement for national leadership service is a minimum length of membership: "All candidates for the Board of Directors, except the member-at-large, shall have been certified members in good standing for at least four consecutive years immediately prior to candidacy" (RID Bylaws, 2004, p.2-3). State affiliate chapters tend to model their bylaws after their parent organization's and as such have no requirements for leadership service outside of a minimum length of membership.

In addition, RID currently offers no formal leadership training for leaders on a state and local level. Conversations with a former President of the Colorado RID affiliate chapter (CRID) revealed that in years past RID offered leadership retreats for state AC Presidents but these retreats are no longer funded. (Terri Jaussi, personal communication, June 20, 2006). CRID hosts yearly leadership retreats for its local and state officers; however, this is a state specific initiative funded by the AC - such practice is not routinely followed in other states at this time.

In lieu of funding leadership retreats, RID created the Affiliate Chapter Relations Committee (ACRC) – whose work is referenced above and expanded upon later. The committee’s charge is to: revise and update RID's Affiliate Chapter Handbook, advise the Board of Directors on AC issues, and accept other duties as assigned by the Board of Directors (www.rid.org). The committee’s main product, the RID Affiliate Chapter Handbook, serves as the primary document supporting state and local leaders. The intended purpose of the handbook, as stated in the foreword is “to assist affiliate chapters in developing and maintaining a functional chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.” (RID, 2004, p.2).

A closer look at the contents of the handbook reveals an emphasis on the *management* (logistics) of an RID AC, but the handbook authors clearly suggest the provision of “regular leadership training” (RID, 2004, p.191). There is no mention of how this training should be provided or what it should

include. The only leadership training provided in the past five years is a handful of workshops presented at RID regional and national conferences. Stauffer and James are currently two of three people presenting on this topic and while their work has begun to touch on leadership models and theory there is no regular training on such. Furthermore, RID's strategy for achieving its mission and goals makes no mention of leadership training as a tool for success.

As the ACRC began to grapple with the charge of advising the Board of Directors on AC issues they conducted an informal Affiliate Chapter Needs Assessment (RID, n.d.). The results of this assessment and subsequent informal follow-up discussions provide the organization with its first look at what the leaders themselves identify as helpful and needed. These unpublished summaries represent the opinions of approximately 50 leaders in four out of five RID regions.

At the time that the needs assessment was conducted (2001-2002) the AC Handbook was the only published source of information available to leaders. Even so, more than half of those responding to the needs assessment indicated that their board had never used the handbook. The sections listed as being most helpful for those that did use it were logistical in nature, meaning that they helped guide leaders through the day to day operations of the organization. These sections included information on conference planning, explanation of forms required by the national office and

federal government, sample documents and other information directly pertaining to national office requirements of affiliate chapters (RID, n.d.).

Leaders were also asked to provide information on what they would like to see included in upcoming versions of the handbook. It is here that the first glimpse of leadership skills not purely logistical in nature surface including; developing and running leadership/board retreats, teambuilding and dealing with difficult members (RID, n.d.).

Upon further examination of the results of this assessment one finds evidence of both pictures painted earlier by Stauffer, and telling of the current leadership paradox. When leaders were asked to describe changes in how their chapter functioned over the course of the past three years, two completely different set of answers emerged:

- No significant changes
- Stagnant
- Member participation has dropped every year for the past 7 years at least
- Slow demise...burnout...lack of volunteerism
- Trying to get on our feet again and again
- Going through a lot of growing pains right now
- We closed local chapters

And:

- New member officers with renewed energy – improving everyday!
- New, motivated board members with new ideas
- Moving from maintaining the status quo to creating a forward-moving organization
- We have new board members who are excited and eager but do not have clear directions (RID, n.d.)

In my opinion there have been no significant changes in our organizational structure or leadership training (outside of ACRC efforts to create the handbook and survey leaders.) And based on personal experience and conversations with other leaders, I believe this paradox still exists.

Other key findings from the ACRC needs assessment summaries are that members do not willingly assume leadership roles more than half of the time, and that leaders, almost two to one, requested topics that would help them deal with the day to day operations of managing the organization versus topics that would help them to create positive change and move the organization forward (RID, n.d). This suggests that the historical precedent of reactionary leadership still existed well into the early part of the millennium.

Later work by the ACRC suggests a slow shift in what leaders wanted to see in terms of training. Leaders polled at the 2003 RID National Conference identified less logistical training needs and more training in the areas of collaborating, building relationships and providing board retreats. This shift continues to be evidenced in two other summary documents generated by the ACRC in 2004 (RID, n.d.). Furthermore, one of the workshops presented at the 2005 RID National Conference listed the following educational objectives: "identify four leadership styles and effective leadership qualities as well as ascertain their own leadership style, identify

strategies for fostering membership involvement and motivation” (Stauffer, 2005, p.2). This continues to suggest movement towards training in non-logistical areas.

Going back to the original national concerns that sparked the formation of RID, the fact that we seem to be spinning our wheels, that changes in the field are happening at breakneck speed and that these changes are becoming state specific, the reactionary leadership paradigm ceases to be sufficient. Both Fant (1989) and RID (2004) recognize the importance of strong affiliate chapter leadership in this changing environment, but without policies and training in place, local and state leadership practice varies from state to state.

Witter-Merithew (2004) states that this current variation is no longer sufficient to address the issues that lead to market disorder; where the field looks to government to establish policies and laws that will lessen the detrimental effects of our inability to control the variables that affect delivery of services. Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2005) point out that we must grapple with the challenges presented by changes such as the advent of Video Relay Service (VRS) technology.

Mordaunt and Cornforth (2004) remind us that boards play an important role in managing change and that leadership skills are needed to play that role. One study concluded that a common characteristic of organizations that began to fail – meaning that “at least some of the key

stakeholders in the organization believe the problems or crises it faces seriously threaten its legitimacy, resource base or even its survival” – is lack of board development and an inability to spot external changes. In failing organizations work was not done to build a common purpose and vision. Gradual crises are difficult to spot and even when recognized, “getting the board and executive to address them may be problematic” (Mordaunt & Cornforth, 2004, p.230). This describes the current climate of RID specifically in regards to the advent of VRS technology and requests by the K-12 interpreter contingency to begin providing more specialized support. The authors go on to discuss the importance of leadership development in organizational turnaround.

In addition to the interpreting specific literature reviewed above, current academic leadership texts were consulted for information on leadership theory, coaching, organizational culture and leading through change. Psychologist Mike Harvey’s work on interpreter dynamics was also reviewed and texts and articles on a strengths-based approach to organizational change called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) were consulted; articles were retrieved from <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>.

There are a multitude of leadership models “on the market” – Northouse (2004) outlines ten approaches and theories, Carroll (2005) presents a “Servant Leadership” model, Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl (1998) offer a “Coaching” model and Cooperrider, Watkins & Mohr

(2001) and Hammond (1996) present "Appreciative Inquiry." These models, along with leadership concepts and topics presented in graduate classes at University College at the University of Denver, served as the foundation for the training topics chosen for the project survey.

According to *The Economist*, 500-600 colleges in America offer some sort of leadership program. However, at present time, none of those colleges offer leadership classes as a part of interpreter preparation curriculum. Leadership Coaching is a one-on-one process that can serve in place of formal leadership training. Senge (1990) raises the point that in order to lead others, you must first be able to lead yourself. Coaching is like "having your own personal navigator for the journey of your life: someone who will help you find your way and stay on course" (Whitworth et al, 1998, p.xvii). "The coach's job is to help clients [leaders] articulate their dreams, desires, and aspirations, help them clarify their mission, purpose, and goals, and help them achieve that outcome" (Whitworth et al, 1998, p.5).

Burns (1979) puts forth a model of Transformational Leadership which takes an individual's ability to lead self and translates it into leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers. Northouse states that this relationship "involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them" (2004, p.169). It emphasizes the needs, values and morals of followers and focuses on the exchanges that "create a connection that raises the level of

motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (Northouse, 2004, p.170). Fant (1989) outlines RID member’s historic struggle to get along and Harvey (2001) validates the sometimes cruel nature of our profession in his investigation into the effects of vicarious trauma on interpreter interactions. Lastly, during the course of former RID President Daniel Burch’s term (1991 – 1995) he continually called for a “kinder, gentler organization” (Witter-Merithew, personal communication, October 26, 2006) – these two models provide the means to offer such.

The combination of the leadership coaching and transformational leadership models can further be wrapped in the blanket of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a way to create a more current leadership paradigm for RID. According to Watkins & Mohr (2001), Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based approach to creating positive organizational change. It is a perspective of organizations as human systems, complete with all of the strengths and resources necessary to create whatever future the organization desires. And it is a habit that seeks out the life-giving forces of the organization and in doing so, further energizes those very forces. AI “is not about denying the negative and destructive. It is, rather, about focusing on the positive and creative as a force for building a more positive future” (Watkins and Cooperrider, 2000, n.p.). It affirms that when we choose to feed the organization’s strengths through appreciation, the organization becomes stronger.

Building an AI framework into leadership training enables the creation of a community of leaders and followers – bound together by a belief in possibility and an ability to recognize the strengths they already possess – that are working to create their desired future. Cooperrider (2001) and Kotter (1996) suggest that organizations need a guiding image of the future. Kotter (1996) states that although the vision is created by the organization as a whole the effort is led by those in charge. Goleman (2000) offers information on the emotional intelligence competencies necessary to create such a vision and guiding image, and speaks to the importance of understanding which emotional competencies leaders are driven by and which ones they lack. All of this can be accomplished through leadership coaching, the transformational leadership model and an AI paradigm.

Although much can be accomplished through application of these leadership models, it is important that what can be accomplished is what is actually needed. The specific leadership topics outlined as important by local and state leaders in the past six years that were brought to light earlier in this literature review speak to the fact that training based in this type of theory is necessary. These topics, as presented in the ACRC Needs Assessment Summaries (RID, n.d.) include but are not limited to:

- Team building
- Communication
- Interpersonal dynamics
- Conflict negotiation
- Training behind
- Collaborating

- How to get past the past (especially things that happen to our profession that are not in our control)
- Specific coaching on how to be the best board member you can be
- Getting “buy in”
- Membership apathy
- Dealing with difficult members
- Making leadership fun and feeling pride in our work as leaders
- Board retreats / Board cohesiveness
- Outreach to Educational Interpreters in rural areas
- How to handle growth
- Building partnerships

While not a comprehensive list, the leadership models identified above all have a hand to play in providing guidance on these topics.

Design & Implementation

The first step in the development and provision of leadership training for RID leaders on a state and local level is to confirm the perceived lack of training on what this paper refers to as “soft” leadership skills. In my opinion, a “soft” leadership skill can be defined as an attitude or behavior that focuses on embracing individual, group and community perspectives and motivations, and that enhance a leader’s ability to create positive change in the midst of competing perspectives and motivations.

It is the researcher’s perspective that what training does exist is focused primarily on “logistical” leadership skills – again, in my opinion defined as those skills needed to keep the organization up and running. Although there is an increasing number of training offerings in this category, the training and subsequent results are not well documented, therefore, there is no secondary research available on this topic. In light of the

inability to conduct a study based on secondary research, primary research options were considered and a web-based survey was selected as the method of inquiry.

According to McQuarrie "if you need a fairly exact factual description of the behaviors and simple perceptions of some customer group and if such data cannot be gleaned from existing secondary research, then it may make sense to execute a survey" (1996, p.31). McQuarrie goes on to say that the goal of an exploratory survey is discovery and that discovery "tend(s) to coincide with information needs early in the decision cycle" (McQuarrie, 1996, p. 7). This survey represents the first formal exploration into this topic within the field of interpreting and has the potential to serve as the foundation upon which future training needs are decided.

Brace (2004) further supports the use of a survey as an appropriate method of inquiry when the sample of respondents is large (over 100) and represents a population with specific characteristics. The targeted participants in this survey are those individuals currently serving as state or local affiliate leaders as defined in the sample survey in Appendix A. According to the RID website there are 52 State Affiliate RID Chapters and approximately 500 state and local leaders. All those on record as serving as a local or state leader were targeted in the survey.

The survey utilizes four different types of questions; closed, multiple choice, spontaneous and rank order. According to Brace, closed questions

are those that return a predictable and small set of answers, such as yes /no questions, or those “where the respondent is asked to choose from a number of alternative answers” (2004, p.56). Multiple choice questions are simply “closed questions with more than one possible answer...there is a finite number of answers; the range of possible answers is predictable; and the question does not require respondents to say anything in their own words” (Brace, 2004, p.67-68).

Spontaneous questions, according to Brace, are those in which the respondent is not given a list of possible answers to choose from – they are used when the survey writer “does not know what the range of responses is likely to be, or wants to collect the responses in the respondent’s own words (2004, p.57). Lastly, rank order questions, as defined by Brace (2004), ask respondents to put categories in order according to some criterion contained in the question.

Closed questions were used to collect demographic information about respondents; current leadership title, region and years of leadership experience (questions 1, 2 and 3). Closed questions were also used to solicit yes or no responses to whether respondents received leadership training either before becoming an officer or while an officer, and if they felt that more training would be helpful (questions 4, 7 and 10).

Closed questions comprise the bulk of this survey because it seeks answers to questions in which there is a predictable and small set of

available answers. Brace indicates that the popularity of closed questions centers on the fact that "there is a set of answers known beforehand that can be listed on the questionnaire." He goes on to say that "a questionnaire that measures behavior is likely to consist mostly of closed questions" (Brace, 2004, p.56). The bulk of this survey attempted to analyze just that; leaders' behavior in regards to leadership training.

Multiple choice questions were used to determine what leadership topics respondents had been exposed to, and where (questions 5, 6, 8, and 9). The last survey question is the sole spontaneous question and is designed to gather information, in the respondents own words, about what type of training would help them better perform the duties of their office. In my opinion, this type of question is important in terms of providing direct member feedback to the RID national office; verbatim commentary is sometimes more powerful than statistics that attempt to prove the same.

Brace does indicate that there is one drawback to the spontaneous question – "the amount of effort that respondents are prepared to make with spontaneous questions varies depending on how interested they are in the subject" (2004, p.57). For this reason, only one spontaneous question was included in the survey.

The final type of question utilized in the survey is rank order or what Brace refers to as "comparative scales" (2004, p.71). Questions 11 and 12 utilize ranking as a way to determine if there are certain leadership topics

that leaders felt are more important, useful or interesting than others, and if leaders indicated a difference in the importance, usefulness and interest between soft and logistic leadership topics. While this technique put the data in nominal order, it told the researcher “nothing about the distance between the points...whether the last choice...is actively disliked and would never be chosen by the respondent” (Brace, 2004, p.72). Even so, ranking is a way to force differences that would not be apparent with other types of scales and since these two questions sought to measure the difference between two sets of data, rank order was the question type chosen.

As mentioned earlier, the survey was distributed via the web. The disadvantages of conducting a web-based survey as the primary methodology for this study were carefully considered before this approach was chosen. The survey asks participants to recall training that may have been provided several years ago; the accuracy of their responses was dependant on the accuracy of their memory. Brace cautions that “memory is notoriously unreliable regarding past behavior” (2004, p.19). He does, however, go on to say that the accuracy of recall will depend on many factors including “the significance to the individual of the behavior in question” (2004, p.19). It is the researcher’s experience that those individuals serving in leadership roles in RID view their duties as significant thus canceling out some of the possible negative consequences of relying on respondent’s memories.

Brace (2004) raises one other red flag that may be pertinent for this particular group of respondents; the concept of social desirability bias (SDB). "SDB arises because respondents like to appear to be other than they are. This can occur consciously, because respondents want to manage the impression that they are giving of themselves in terms of social responsibility, or subconsciously, because they believe themselves to be other than they are, possibly a form of denial." Brace then cites a 1982 Sudman and Bradburn study that identifies being a good citizen, being well-informed and fulfilling social responsibilities as areas in which behavior is likely to be over-reported (2004, p.181-182). These areas are of especially high value in social services or "helper" fields such as interpreting; it was therefore noted that there was a chance that SDB would bias the data.

Additional concerns about conducting a web-based survey included survey accessibility to all targeted participants, especially to those that live in rural areas where the need for training may be the greatest. And by offering specific response options to sample questions 5, 6, 8 and 9 participants may have limited their responses to the options provided rather than search their memory for alternate responses not provided.

Given the type of information this survey sought to gather - namely nominal data - the advantages of conducting a survey outweighed the disadvantages. Due to the fact that this was an online survey, "there is less SDB and the respondents [may] answer more honestly" (Brace, 2004, p.39).

Additionally “most studies of how people respond to Web-based questionnaires have found that they are completed more quickly than their equivalent telephone or face-to-face administered versions” (Brace, 2004, p.40). This standardized approach was a low-cost and efficient way to collect information from targeted participants distributed throughout the country.

Although there was some concern about access to the web in rural areas, communication via email and over the internet has become the primary means of communication among leaders in RID. In fact, out of the 52 State Affiliate RID Chapters listed on the RID website, only nine do not have website links. And many of the Local Affiliate Chapters also have their own website, indicating that the vast majority of leaders are accessible via the internet.

Another factor that supported a web-based survey as a viable methodology is that RID has a well developed communication protocol for disseminating and collecting information from leaders. As a former State Affiliate Chapter President, I had access to disseminating information utilizing this protocol. I also had the support of the current President of our parent organization, RID, who was willing to help ensure this information reached the target audience.

Finally, given the nature of how RID conducts business (at a distance and primarily via email and the internet) I believed that a web-based survey

could be successfully distributed. Given responses to leadership trainings I have conducted, it is clear that the topic is of strong interest to leaders and I believed they would take the time to respond.

Survey reliability, defined by Burns & Bush as “consistency of responses to a question” was established through the employment of a three step approach (1998, p.307). The survey was piloted with a small test group of former local and state leaders in Colorado. Questions were revised per the pilot group’s feedback and the final survey was sent to the RID National President for distribution. The survey was then forwarded to all AC Presidents who were asked to forward on to their state and local leaders. Two reminder emails were sent to the group using the same distribution system. A week after the response deadline the survey was resent to the target group following the same procedure.

Validity, defined by Burns & Bush as “the accuracy of the measurement...an assessment of the exactness of the measurement relative to what actually exists” was determined in the first step of the three step approach (1998, p.310). The pilot survey returned results that confirmed its face validity – in other words, it measured what it was supposed to measure (Burns & Bush, 1998, p.311) – the respondent’s leadership background and experience.

The results of this survey were expected to yield the first global look at the leadership training that RID state and local leaders receive and isolate the following:

- Average length of service among current officers,
- Correlations between length of leadership service and training received,
- Type of training currently being offered – soft versus logistical,
- Source of leadership training,
- Perception of need for training,
- Differences in perception of leadership preparedness for those that have training prior to serving as an officer in RID versus those with no training prior to becoming an officer, and
- Ideas for additional training topics.

The data gathered in this survey serves as the basis from which an interpretive report is constructed and presented to the organization for review and planning purposes. The project findings will assess; the leadership training that is currently being offered to RID local and state level leaders and whether the existing training focuses on soft leadership skills, logistical leadership skills, or some combination of both. The results of the project survey will, for the first time, allow RID to look at what is being asked of leaders in light of the resources they are provided. Furthermore, this research opens the door for further studies into the types of leadership training best suited for RID leaders and will hopefully serve as the foundation for a leadership program capable of changing our existing organizational paradigm and of equipping leaders with the tools needed to carry out RID's mission.

Results

Surveys were distributed, and returned, via email. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was created for each question, and each respondent's answers were recorded on the appropriate spreadsheet. Totals were calculated for all responses to each question, and charts and graphs were created to visually represent those totals. Responses were analyzed per question as well as by cross-referencing the totals of more than one question.

The following results are based on 50 completed surveys. This represents a 10% return rate assuming that the survey reached all 500 target recipients. The mechanism used to distribute the survey was the only mechanism available that would ensure that the entire target group could be reached given project constraints. However, there was no way to guarantee that the survey, once in the hands of the AC Presidents, would be passed on to board members. Another factor impacting the rate of return is the nature of volunteer leadership – some leaders have a higher sense of urgency and more time to devote to all things interpreting than others.

Although the return rate was not as high as anticipated it is indicative of the sometimes lackadaisical nature of our organization. And if one considers that concerted efforts by the ACRC to meet face to face with leaders throughout the country yielded the same number of responses, I believe that the return rate for the survey is sufficient to begin assessing the

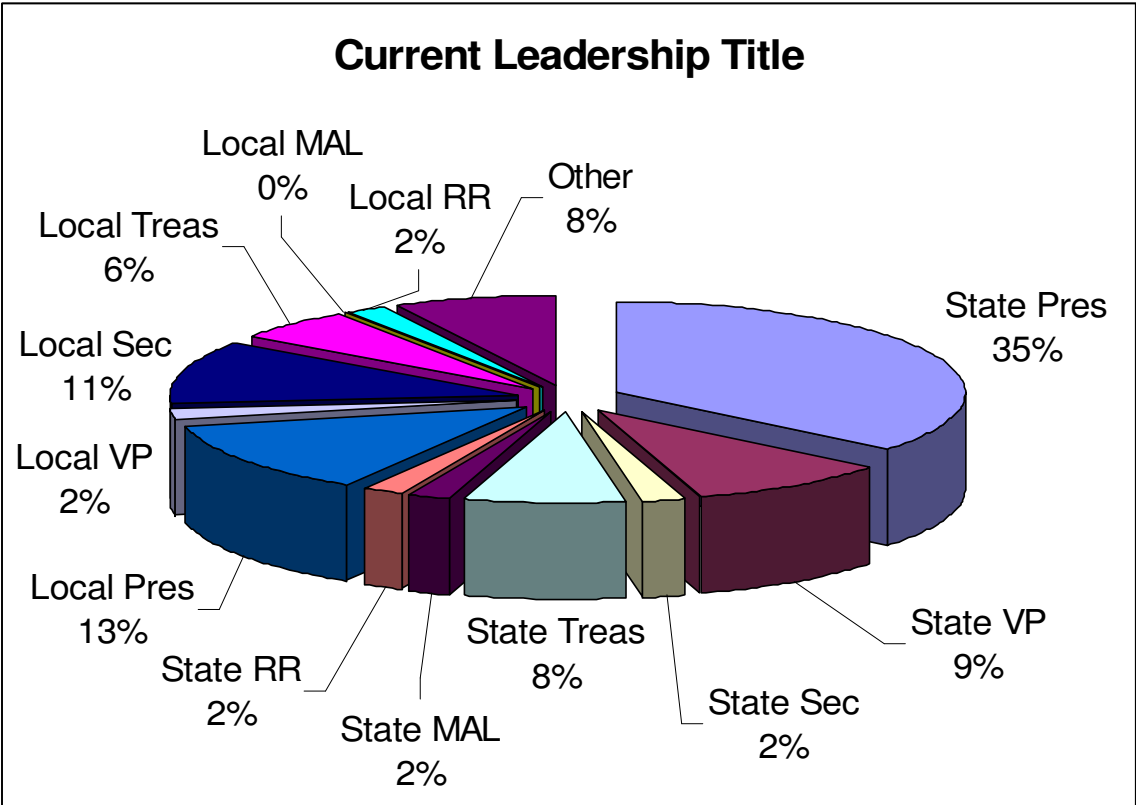
current and desired state of leadership affairs. The survey appears in Appendix A and utilizes the following vocabulary key:

State Pres:	State Affiliate Chapter President
State VP:	State Affiliate Chapter Vice President
State Sec:	State Affiliate Chapter Secretary
State Treas:	State Affiliate Chapter Treasurer
State MAL:	State Affiliate Chapter Member at Large
State RR:	State Affiliate Chapter Regional Representative
Local Pres:	Local Affiliate Chapter President
Local VP:	Local Affiliate Chapter Vice President
Local Sec:	Local Affiliate Chapter Secretary
Local Treas:	Local Affiliate Chapter Treasurer
Local MAL:	Local Affiliate Chapter Member at Large
Local RR:	Local Affiliate Chapter Regional Representative

The first three survey questions assess respondent demographics.

They are summarized as follows.

Question #1 - What is your current leadership title?



A total of 53 responses were tallied; 3 respondents recorded serving in dual roles. Thirty five percent of those that responded are State AC Presidents. The percentage of response in this group is higher perhaps due to the fact that they received the survey first. However, with 52 RID ACs, the 35% State AC President response rate is proportionate to the percentage of possible State AC President responses - 19 out of 52 or 37%.

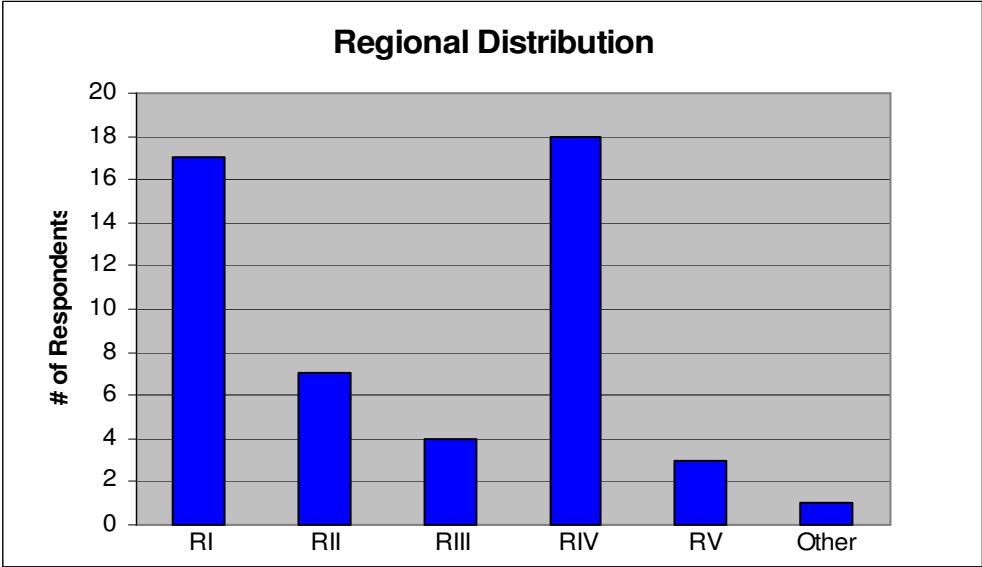
Nearly half of the respondents were state and local presidents - 48%, vice presidents comprised 11% of respondents, 13% serve in a secretarial position and 14% serve as their chapter's treasurer. These four positions typically comprise what is commonly referred to as the chapters "executive board" and total 86% of responses. Since these four positions are generally the most actively involved in the leadership effort this is a significant result.

The low number of responses from the state and local member at large (MAL) and regional representative (RR) categories - 6% - is more than likely due to the fact that very few states actually have such positions. These categories were included in an effort ensure that the survey captured all possible state and local leadership positions.

"Other" responses included:

- State Affiliate President Elect
- Professional Development Committee Chair
- Immediate Past President of State Affiliate Chapter
- State Affiliate Chapter President Ex-Officio

Question #2 - In what RID Region are you currently serving as a leader?



The table above indicates what region respondents are from. As seen in the table below, the percentage of survey responses per region is not proportionate to the percentage of members per RID region as published in the November, 2005 issue of the RID Views (p.22).

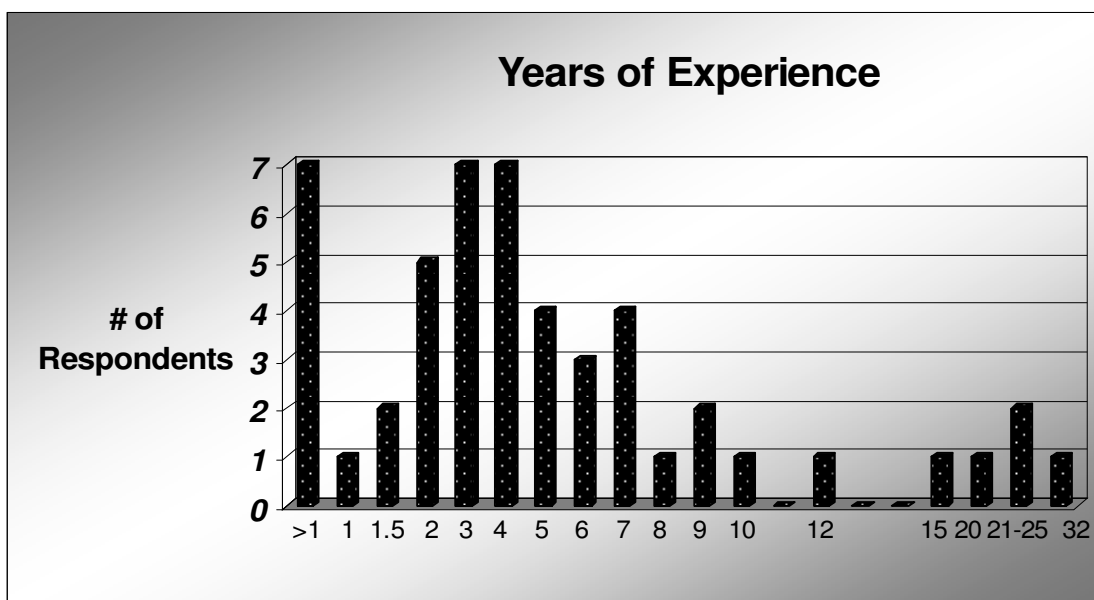
Regional Distribution of Membership vs Survey Result Distribution						
Region	RI	RII	RIII	RIV	RV	Other
Survey Responses	34%	14%	8%	36%	6%	2%
RID % of members	21.1%	21.7%	21.1%	14.6%	21.3%	-

The highest percentage of responses came from RIV even though RIV hosts the lowest percentage of overall RID members. This is assumed to be because the researcher is a former RIV officer, has a degree of name recognition not present in other regions, and that target respondents will more likely complete a survey distributed by someone he or she knows.

RI represents the northeastern United States – and the second highest percentage of survey responses. RII, the southeast, comes in at third despite the fact that it boasts the highest number of RID members. RIII is comprised of the mid-western states and although it is tied with RI for the third largest RID membership, a low percentage of surveys were returned from this region. And despite Region V being home to the second largest contingency of RID members, it returned the fewest survey results. The “other” category represents responses from Canadian provinces.

Other than the rationale offered above for the high percent of responses from Region IV, there is no apparent rationale for the discrepancy in return rates by Region.

Question #3 - Approximately how many years of total leadership experience in any RID local or state affiliate chapter do you have?

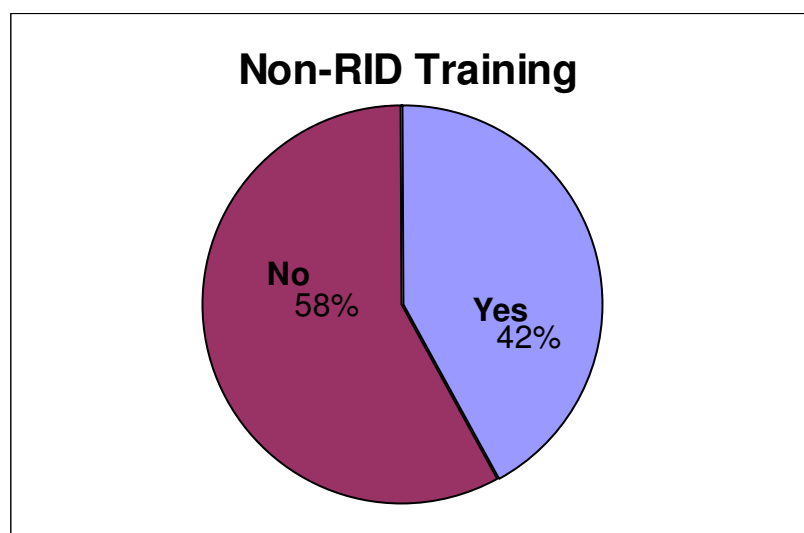


The average length of service among respondents is 5.9 years. This was determined by totaling the respondents' years of experience and dividing by the total number of respondents - 50. Those with less than one year of service were given credit for .5 years, those with 21-25 years of service were given credit for 23 years.

While calculating the average is helpful, it is more telling that 66% of respondents have five years or less experience in an RID leadership role, 22% have 6-10 years, and 12% have 11-32 years. This statistic is significant, especially as it pertains to the types of leadership offerings perceived most desirable and useful (discussed in questions 11 and 12).

Questions 4-6 refer to training received prior to becoming an officer in RID and not provided by RID or an RID affiliate chapter.

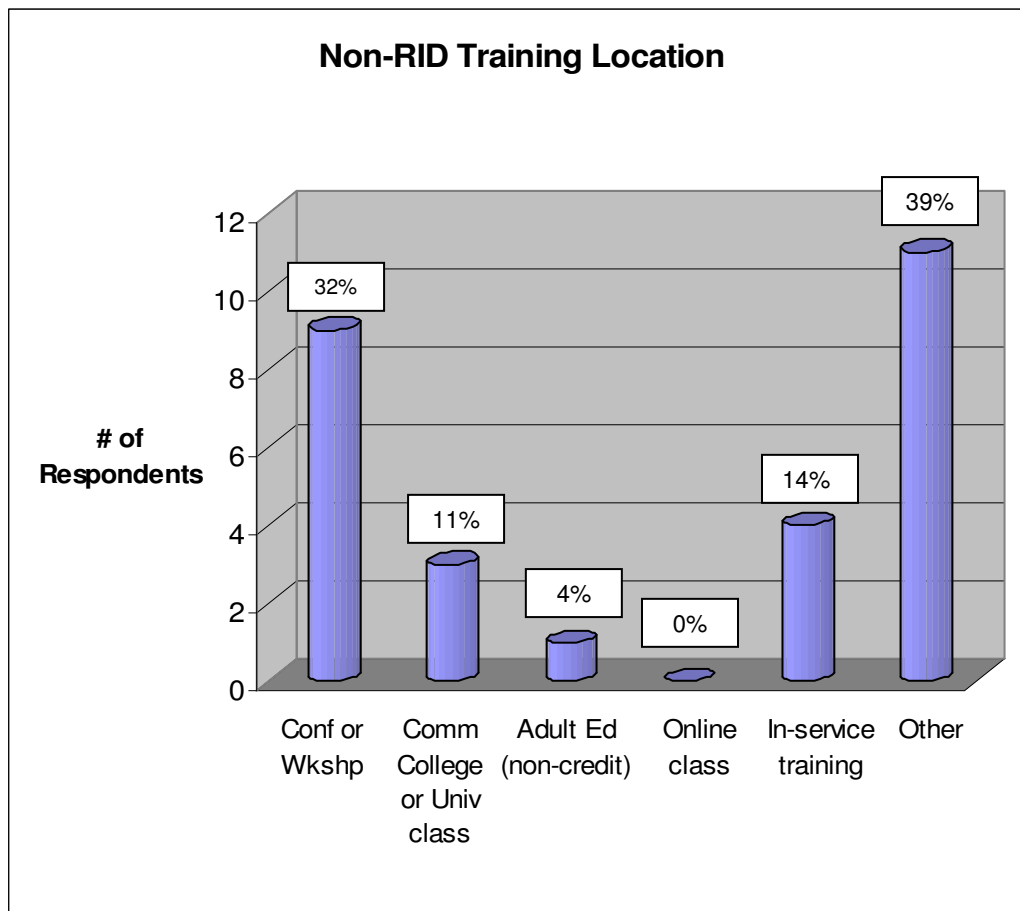
Question #4 - Did you receive any **non-RID sponsored** leadership training prior to becoming an officer?



The majority of respondents had no leadership training prior to becoming an officer in RID. This indicates that 58% of current leaders may rely on RID to receive training.

Of the 42% that did receive training, 72% are leaders with five years or less experience within RID. The remaining 28% that received training have been in an RID leadership position for 6-32 years. This seems to suggest a trend towards new leaders coming into the organization with some type of leadership preparation.

Question #5 - If so, where did you receive the training?



Forty-two percent of respondents indicated that they had received some type of leadership training prior to becoming an officer in RID. A total of 28 responses regarding where this training took place were recorded.

The highest percentage of responses fell into the "other" category; these responses are:

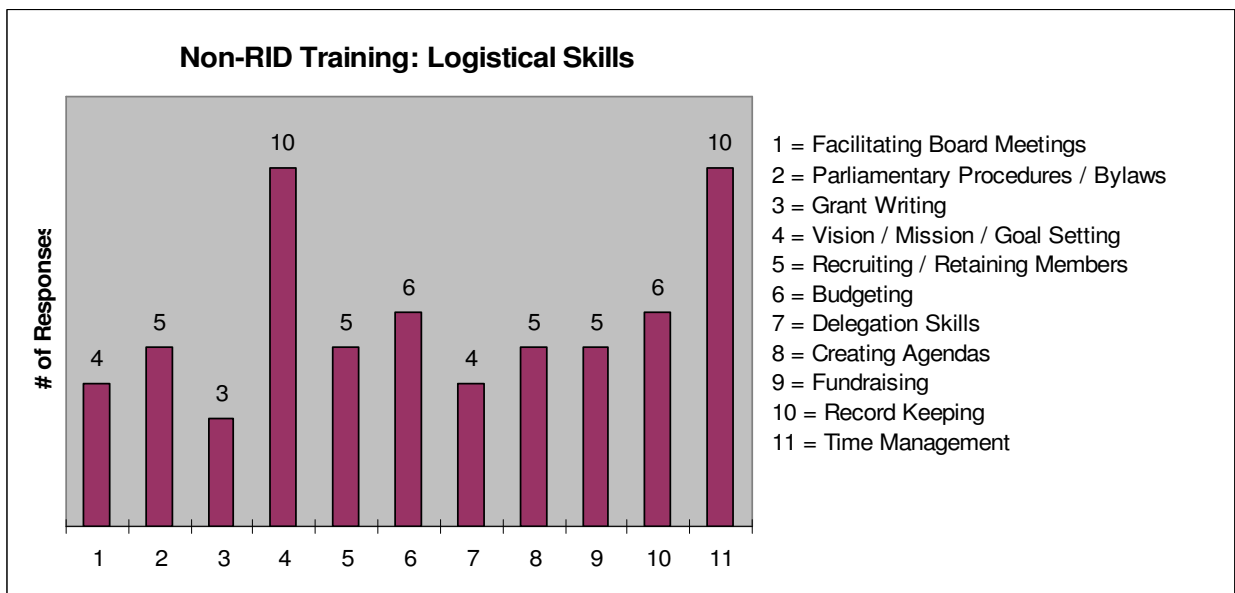
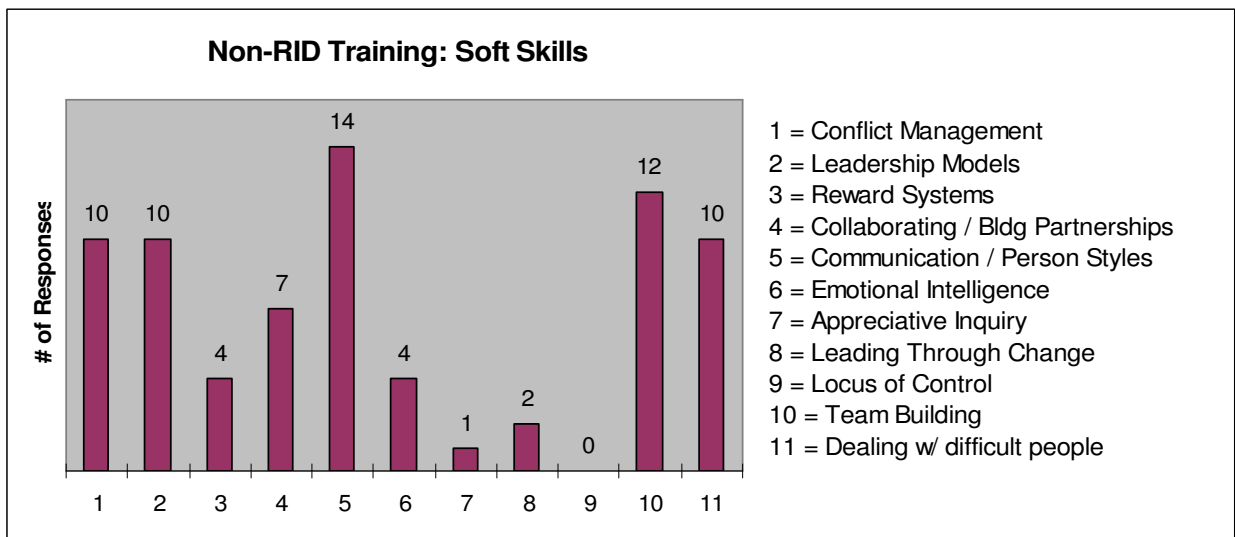
- Dale Carnegie Course and experiences in 4-H and Grange
- Church leadership training
- On the job training
- 5 years as a restaurant manager
- In the business world in the 1980's
- Boy Scouts of America leadership training - multiple leadership roles in Cub and Boy Scout troops
- Observation of great leaders I have interpreted for, hearing and Deaf
- Local chapter experience in 2 states plus training for my work
- Thru my membership in Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (outstanding women educators society) and then my board involvement with Hearing Loss Association of America (formerly SHHH)
- NEIA Leadership Conference in Denver / DO IT Center EICP
- Past military experience

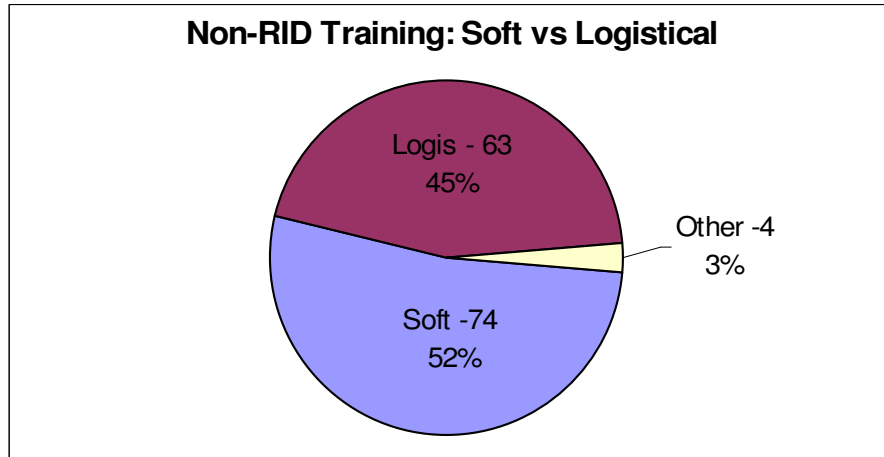
College, university and adult education classes represent only 15% of the leadership training source. This indicates a very small percentage of leaders coming in with at least one formal, ongoing training experience.

Conference and workshop training, while returning a high percentage of responses, are typically short-term, less formal and one-way in nature - meaning that information is disseminated but participants need not necessarily do anything to incorporate the knowledge presented. Lastly, of the training locations listed in the "other" category, the majority are informal albeit ongoing training opportunities.

Question #6 - Of the following leadership topics listed below check the ones that you have received training on outside of an RID venue, and prior to serving as a leader of your local or state affiliate RID chapter.

(An equal number of soft and logistical training topics were listed for respondents to choose from; none of them were coded as such on the actual survey.)



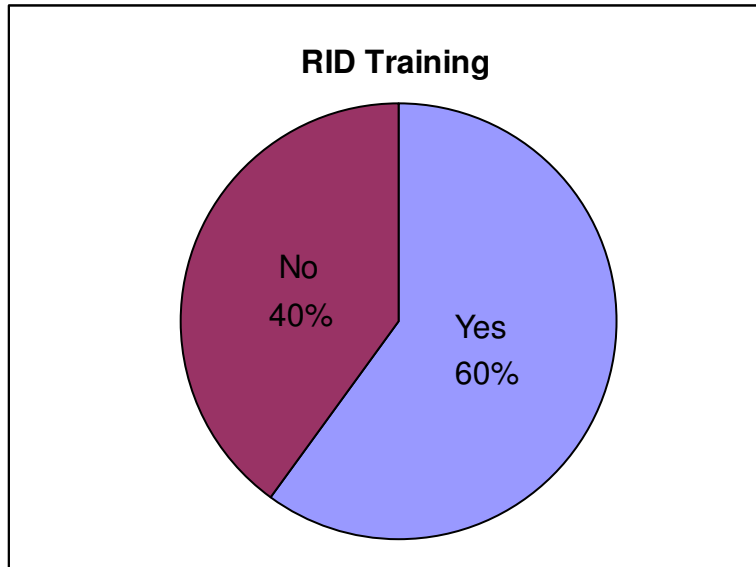


Respondents indicated exposure to a good balance between soft and logistic leadership topics. Since much of the training was received in a for profit business context this is not a surprising result. When combined with the fact that 72% of the leaders with prior training have been in the RID leadership structure for five years or less, this indicates a possible move towards new leaders coming in with a balanced exposure between the two types of topics.

Of the soft skills training received 62% were based on topics that deal with relationship dynamics – which, as noted by Fant (1989) earlier, is one of the biggest historical leadership challenges in our field - this may be an indication that newer leaders have more tools at their disposal. Of the logistical skills training received, “Time Management” and “Vision /Mission /Goal Setting” received the highest number of responses.

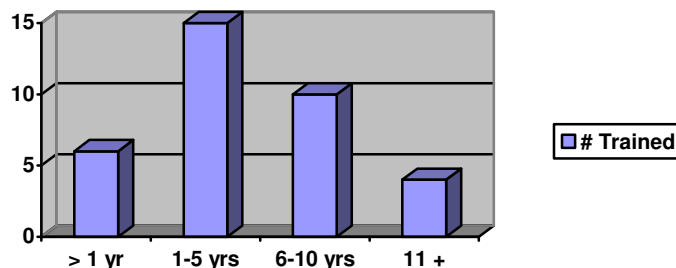
Questions 7-9 refer to training received while an officer in RID and provided by RID or an RID affiliate chapter.

Question #7 - Did you receive any leadership training while an officer in RID?



The fact that 60% of respondents received training while in office looks hopeful but it is worthwhile to note which 60% they are. Of the 7 leaders with less than one year of experience, 1 (14%) received RID training. Leaders in office from 1-5 years fare better; 15 out of 26 (58%) received some type of training. Those in office 6-10 years fare the best; 10 out of 11 (91%) received training. And of the 6 respondents with 11-32 years of experience 4 (66%) received training.

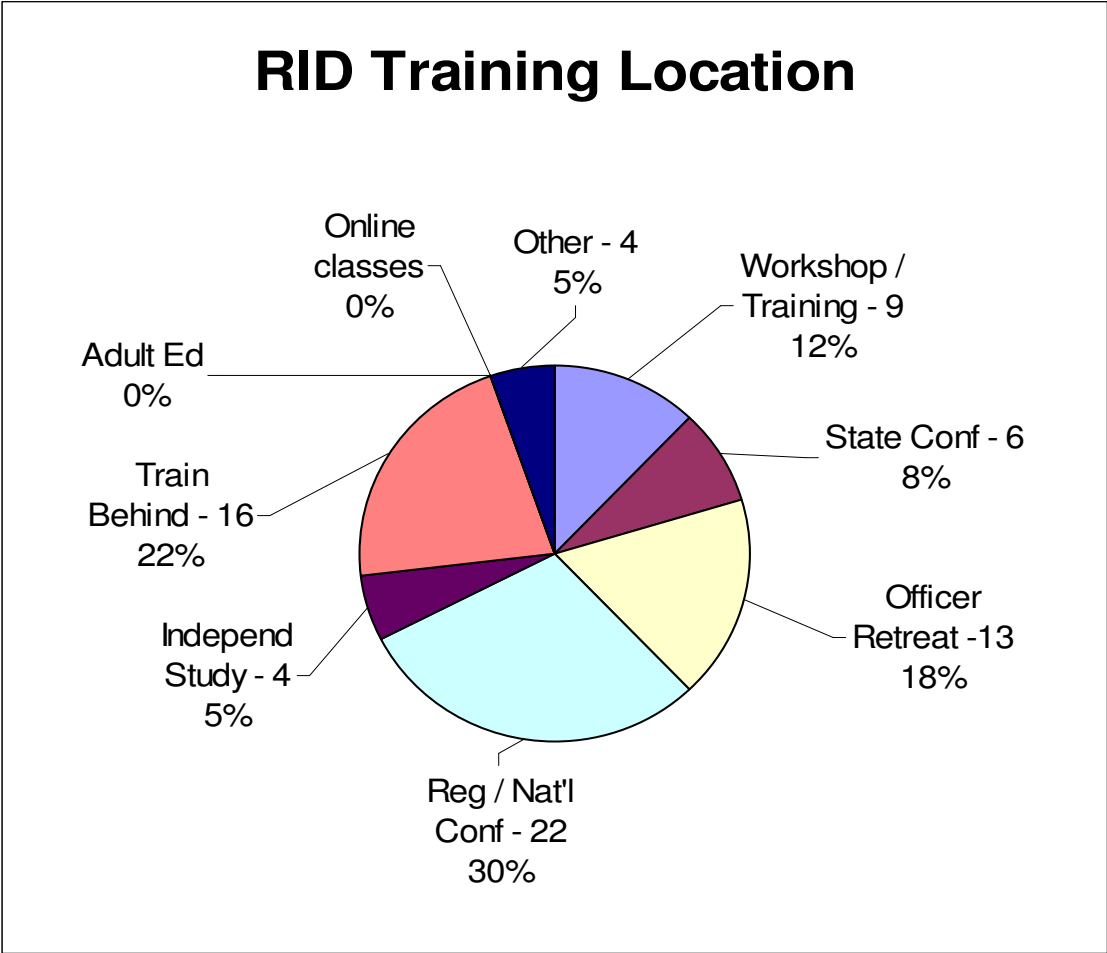
Number of current leaders trained while in RID by years of experience:



As noted in question 4, 58% of current leaders had no prior leadership training and rely on RID for such. Of those 29 respondents, 59% received training while an officer. Again, the 6-10 year category had the highest training rate; 86% that had no prior training received training while in office. Those in office less than a year with no prior training received none while an officer. Of those in leadership positions from 1-5 years with no prior training, 58% were trained. And of those leaders with 11-32 years experience but no prior training, 75% received some type of training.

The most significant finding here is that it takes leaders approximately 6-10 years to receive RID training; the average length of leadership experience for this group of respondents is 5.9 years. This indicates that as leaders gain more time in their positions, they also gain more opportunities for training.

Question #8 - If so, where did you receive the training?



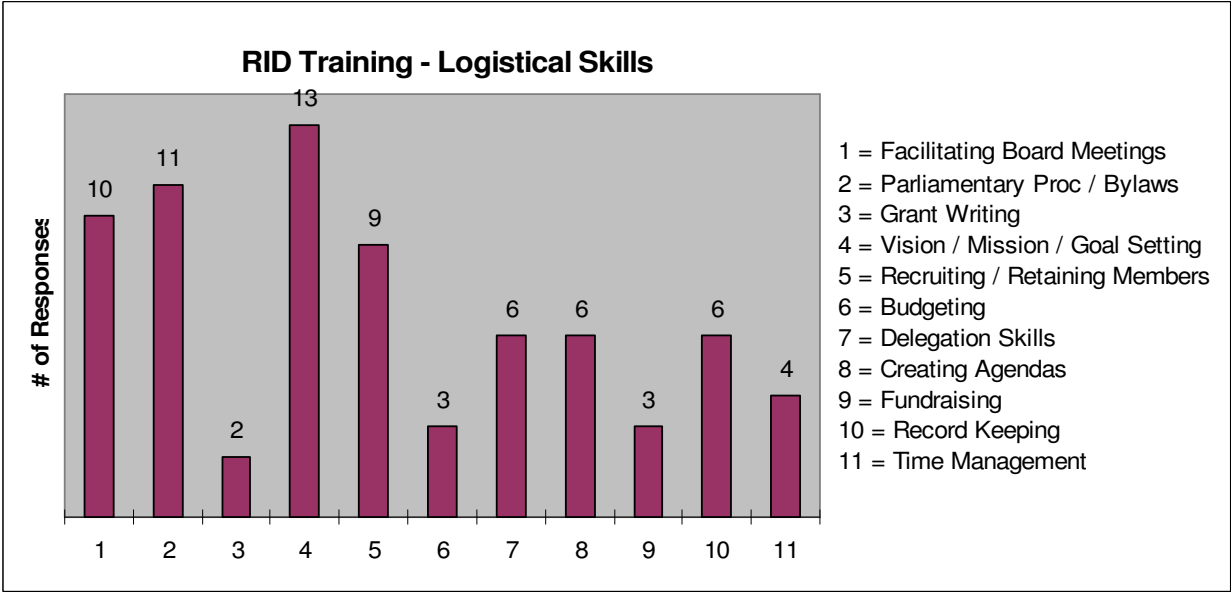
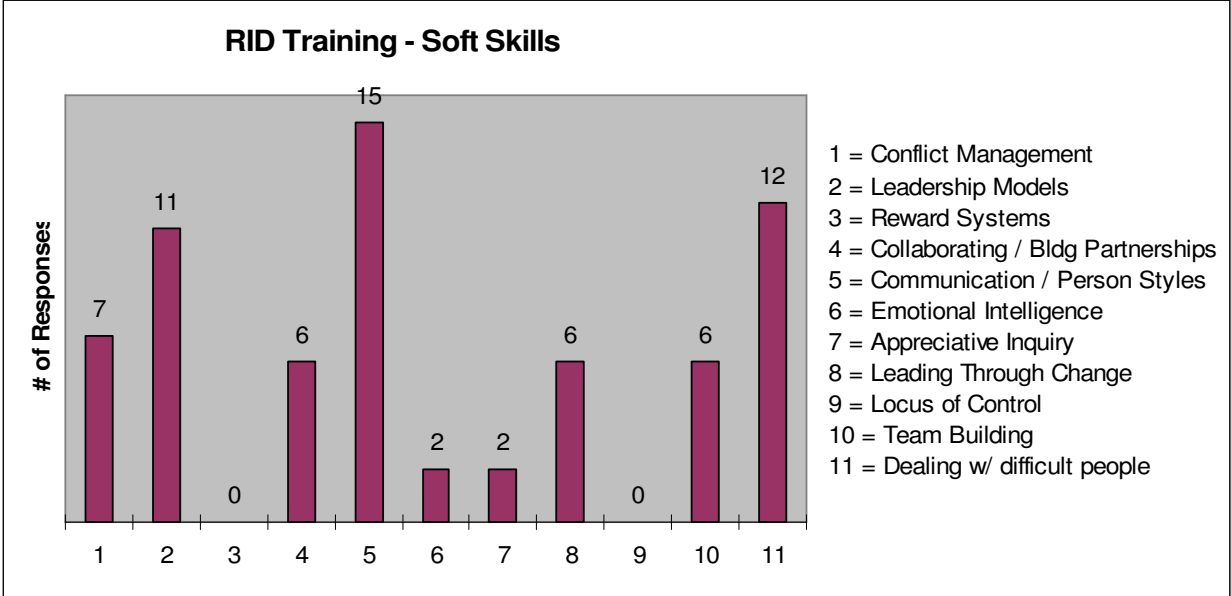
A total of 74 responses were recorded indicating where leaders received their RID training. The most notable finding is that 82% of the training was short-term: state or affiliate sponsored workshops, state /regional /national conferences, independent study, training behind and other categories. These types of trainings tend to be 1 ½ - 3 hr workshops that disseminate information only. Independent study, train behind and other categories are listed as short-term based on the following respondent comments:

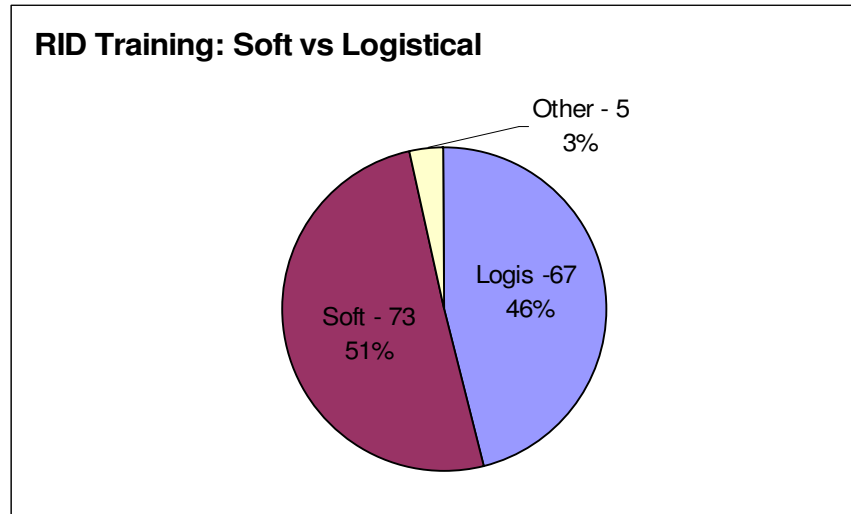
- Independent Study – “Reading on own on topics, not for CEU credit.”
- Train behind - “I met with the former Treasurer for about an hour and a half. She shared with me all the ‘requirements’ in terms of paperwork and what the role entailed. She also shared with me things to make the job easier, that she learned along the way. She was treasurer for the two years prior to me.”
- Other – “Retention of info from interpreting in various workplace trainings and college classes, training provided by employer and Video Relay Service Workshop.”

One “other” response listed a leadership retreat as the source of training; this would be considered a more formal, long-term training opportunity as leadership retreats tend to be two days worth of ongoing, interactive training. Formal training opportunities represent only 18% of the training taking place.

So while it is true that RID is providing some training leaders must typically be in office for 6-10 years before they get training, and even then the training received tends to be short-term, one-way opportunities to gather information.

Question #9 - Of the following leadership topics listed below check the ones that you have received training on while serving as a leader of your local or state affiliate RID chapter.





As with question #6, an equal number of soft and logistical training topics were listed for respondents to choose from; none of them were coded as such on the actual survey. And again, respondents indicated exposure to a good balance between the two types of leadership skill sets although soft skills were indicated slightly more often than logistical. This is a surprising result; the project's hypothesis was that the majority of training being provided within RID is logistical in nature.

This result may be a direct response to the types of trainings that the ACRC's needs assessment identified. Out of the 16 responses listed on pages 20-21, 15 are soft skills. The balance seen between the soft and logistical leadership topics being offered is more than likely a direct result of the request to provide such.

One other interesting result is that nearly one-third of the logistical skills noted come from two categories; facilitating board meetings and parliamentary procedures and bylaws. These topics tend to be ones that

newer officers need and want more training on, especially those with no prior training; the fact that two-thirds of the respondents have five or fewer years of experience validates this result.

When looking at the number of topics pertaining to relationship dynamics the percentage drops from 62% for prior RID training to 55% while an officer in RID training. This may be an indication that RID places less emphasis on the importance of this area than the general sector. For an organization that struggles with relationship dynamics this number may need to be significantly higher in order to put us on equal footing with the general business sector.

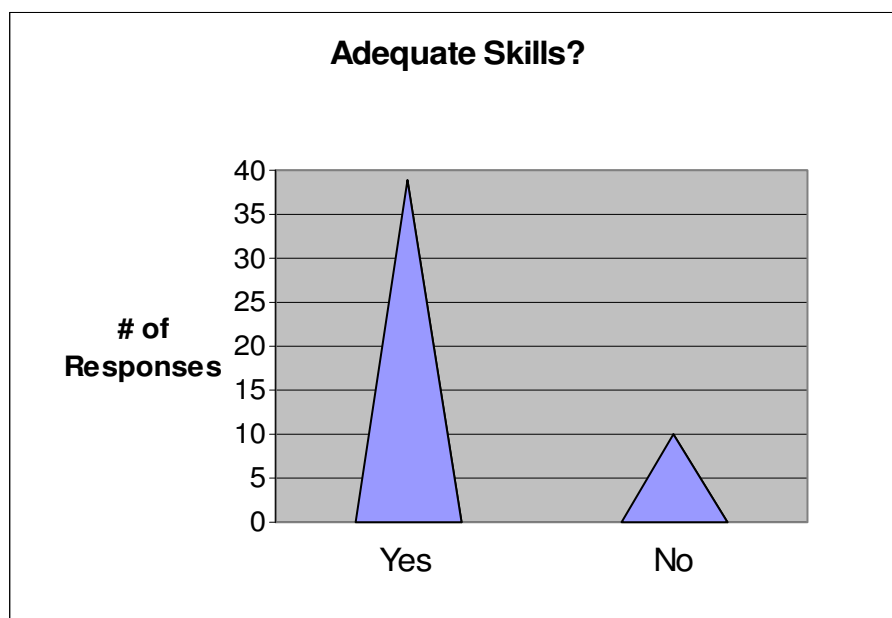
One other poignant finding from the soft skills training chart above is that "Leading through Change" accounts for a mere 6 out of 72 responses and may speak to the continuance of our reactionary leadership style.

Of the logistical skills training received, "Vision /Mission /Goal Setting" came in as the number one received training topic – which mirrors the results in question 6. This may be a result of a recognized need to set some direction given our recent rapid growth. Even so, the paradox still seems to exist; we recognize the need to set goals, but are still not cognizant of setting goals that prepare us for a changing future.

Finally, there was one interesting respondent comment that defines our organization's view of the training behind concept, and that mirrors Janet Bailey's earlier comments about leadership transition.

While we talked about most of the topics listed either at a regional conf or within the leadership (current Board and training behind), I don't feel like I was specifically trained in any area. It seems to be more like "these are things you should look into or consider" not "this is how you do this." Most of the training behind I received was the day-to-day how to run the organization stuff, not these broader topics.

Question #10 - Do you feel that you have adequate skills and knowledge to perform the duties of your position?



A total of 49 responses were tallied for this question – 80% of those responses were affirmative. Given the fact that 66% of respondents have five or fewer years of experience, 58% had no prior training and 40% have had no training while an officer, this result is surprisingly high. This could be due to a concern stated earlier in the methodology section, that SDB came into play, especially as it pertains to the new leadership category. It is worth repeating here that "SDB arises because respondents like to appear to be other than they are" (Brace, 2004, p.181). Leaders, especially those new

to office, do not like to appear as though they do not have the skills and knowledge it takes to get the job done.

The results are even more interesting when you correlate the years of experience with the leader's perception of their own readiness. For those in office for less than a year, 5 out of 7 felt they had adequate skills and knowledge to serve as a leader despite the fact that 4 out of that same 7 had received no prior training and 6 out of the 7 received no training while in office. The one officer that did receive training while in office indicated that he/she did not feel prepared.

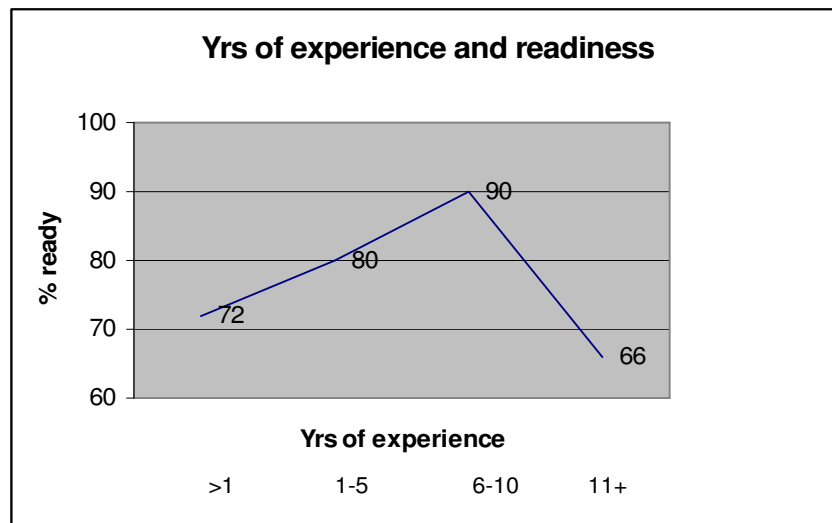
For those in office for a total of 1-5 years, 21 out of 26 felt prepared. Of the five that did not, three had no training while in office. Out of the 12 respondents that had prior training, seven had training while an officer and felt adequately prepared. Four did not have RID training, but felt prepared. One did not have RID training and did not feel prepared.

Of the remaining 14 with no prior training, four did not receive any RID training but still feel adequately prepared. Six received training while in RID and felt prepared, and the remaining four did not feel prepared regardless of whether they had received RID training or not.

In the 6-10 year category, 9 out of 10 feel prepared (one respondent left this question blank). The one that does not feel prepared received training while an officer, but none prior.

For those with 11+ years of experience, four out of six feel adequately prepared. The two that do not have had no prior training, and only one had training while an officer.

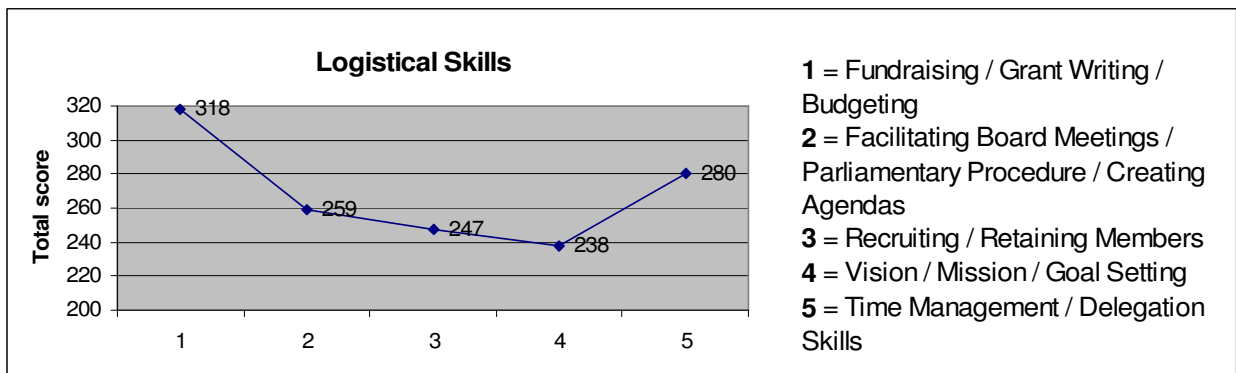
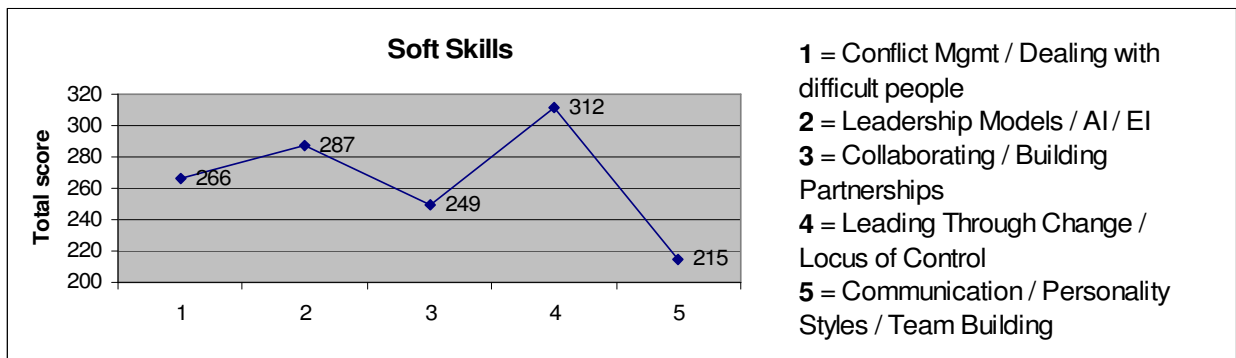
Given all of the variables, it seems difficult to conclude that there is a direct correlation between the training provided while an RID officer and one's presumed readiness. However, there is indication that as one's years of experience increases, so does one's perception of readiness.



Question #11 - Please rank the following leadership topics in order of importance and usefulness to you as an RID leader, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

Questions 11 and 12 utilized the same measurement tool. Like items from question 9 were combined into five categories per topic set – soft and logistical. Respondents ranked 10 items using a 1-10 scale with 1 indicating the item of greatest importance and usefulness and 10 indicating the least.

Each response was given a numerical value equivalent to its ranking. Each item's values were then totaled; the lower the number the more respondents felt that the topic was important and useful. The three digit number on the Y axis represents the total score for each item, or topic. Again, the lower the total score the more important and useful the topic area.



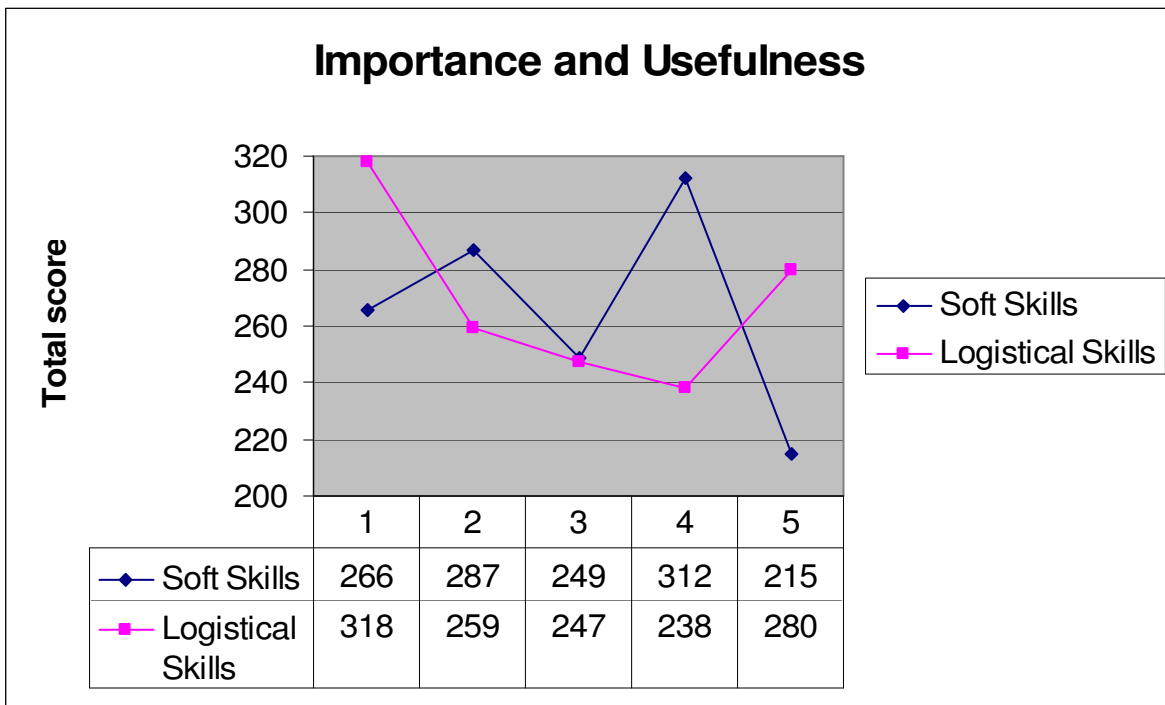
These first two charts show the value breakdowns per soft and logistical skill sets. Within the soft skills the "Communication /Personality Styles /Team Building" topic group ranked the most useful and important by over 30 points. "Collaborating /Building Partnerships" took the second spot and "Conflict Management /Dealing with Difficult People" came in a close third.

When comparing this outcome to the training topics that were reported as being received it appears that what is being provided is what leaders deem useful and important. Question 9 identifies "Communication / Personality Styles" and "Dealing with Difficult People" as two of the top three topics leaders have received training on. This may be a direct result of response by the organization to the ACRC Needs Assessment Survey results, and may also indicate that the organization still has work to do in the area of becoming a kinder organization.

One final observation in regards to the soft skills topics – "Leading through Change /Locus of Control" was seen as the least important and useful topic. I believe there are a few reasons for this; as stated earlier we are a reactive organization and do not place a great deal of emphasis on preparing for change. The other is that these two topics are relatively new to leaders – the low scores may simply be an indication that they have not been exposed to these topics and therefore do not understand their importance. In fact, none of the respondents reported receiving training on "Locus of Control" and only 6 responses were tallied for "Leading through Change" in question 9.

The top ranking topic in terms of usefulness and importance in the logistical category is "Vision /Mission /Goal Setting" followed closely by "Recruiting /Retaining Members" and "Facilitating Board Meetings /Parliamentary Procedure /Creating Agendas." Again, this closely mirrors

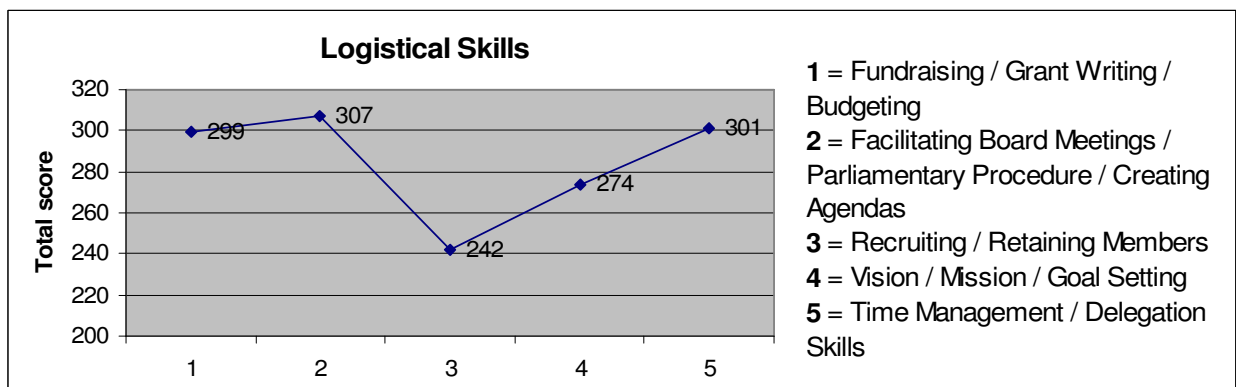
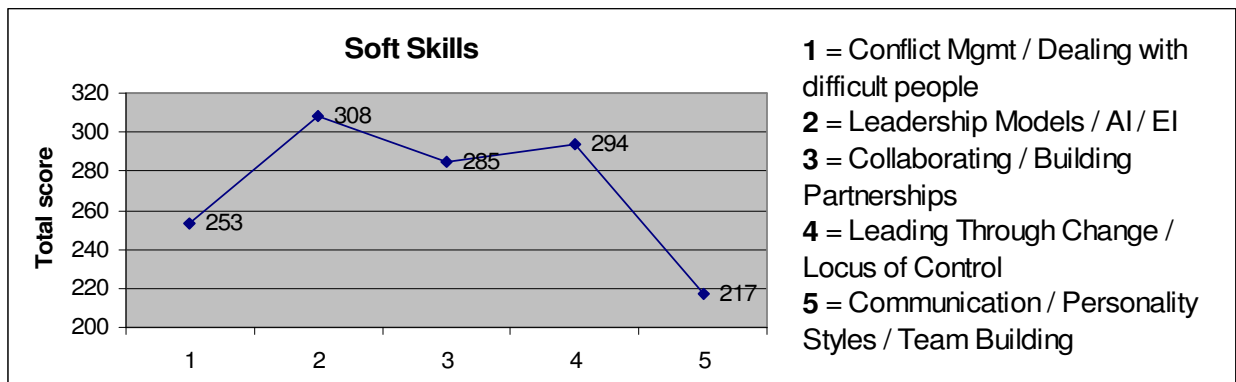
how respondents reported these topics in terms of training received. I find it fascinating that despite the fact that we tend not to be a forward-thinking organization that "Vision /Mission /Goal Setting" scored the highest in terms of logistical skills training received, and was also identified as most important and useful. There seems to be no correlation between length of service and the perception of importance and usefulness of this topic which may suggest that state and local leaders may be seeing the need for a change in priorities.



The graph above compares the soft and logistical topics categories in regard to importance and usefulness. Again, the most surprising result is that although individual topics vary greatly, there is only a 13 point difference in total ranking value between the two sets.

Question #12 - Please rank the following leadership topics in order of interest to you as an RID leader, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

As in question 11, the lower the score the higher the interest.

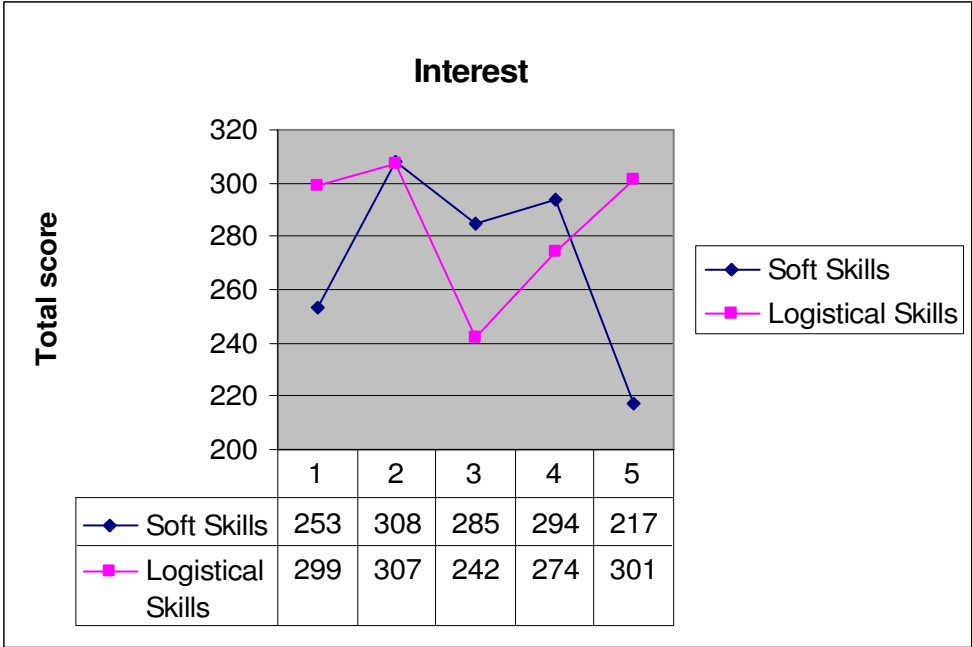


When comparing usefulness and importance to interest in the soft skills category, the top spot is occupied by the same topic – “Communication /Personality Styles /Team Building.” “Conflict Management /Dealing with Difficult People” takes the second spot and “Collaborating /Building Partnerships” comes in at third. Again this seems to suggest a strong interest in dealing with relationship dynamics – a further reflection of our historical struggle to get along.

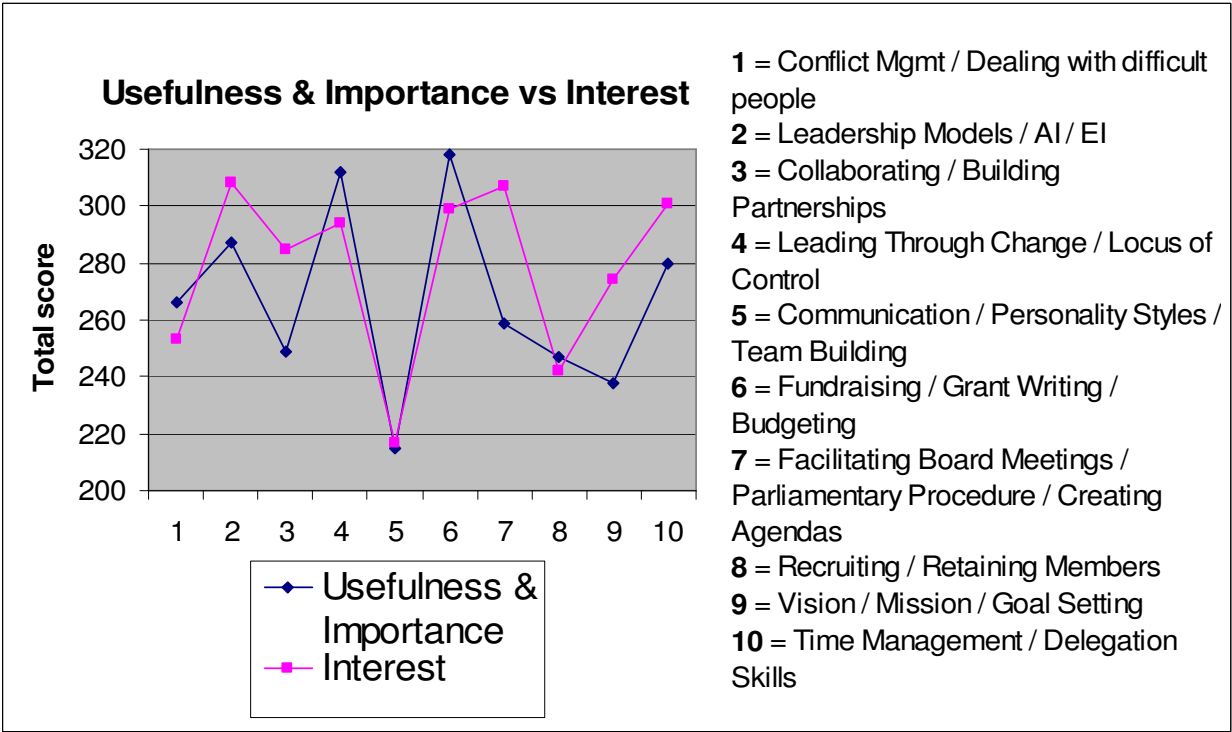
As mentioned in question 10, the lower interest scores for "Leading through Change /Locus of Control" and "Leadership Models /Appreciative Inquiry /Emotional Intelligence" is more than likely due to the fact that with the exception of "Leadership Models" leaders have received little to no training on these topics. It is hard to measure interest in a topic that respondents may not realize exists.

Looking at usefulness and importance versus interest in the logistical skills category yields an interesting result; "Recruiting and Retaining Members" ranked the highest in terms of interest by more than 30 points, but only nine respondents recorded having received training on this topic. "Vision /Mission /Goal Setting" was ranked second in regards to interest. These two topics also occupied the top two spots in regards to usefulness and importance.

The only major difference between usefulness and importance versus interest was in the "Fundraising /Grant Writing /Budgeting" category which came in last in terms of usefulness but third in terms of interest. Even so there is less than a 20 point difference. This all seems to suggest that there is not a major discrepancy between what leaders find useful and important versus what they find interesting.



There is a slightly larger point spread between the interest in soft and logistical leadership topics than importance and usefulness, 66, but still not significant enough to say that one area is of more interest than the other.



As the chart above indicates, the results for questions 11 and 12 are very similar. The most noticeable discrepancy between usefulness and importance, and interest is in topic 7 – “Facilitating Board Meetings /Parliamentary Procedure /Creating Agendas.” Of the 140 responses tallied for training topics received while an officer 20% fall into this topic; it ranks 48 point higher in terms of its usefulness and importance than it does interest.

The second largest discrepancy occurs in two categories; “Collaborating /Building Partnerships” and “Vision /Mission /Goal Setting.” In both cases interest scores are 36 points lower (indicating higher interest) than usefulness and importance. This contradicts what is being offered: “Collaborating /Building Partnerships” accounts for only 4% of training offered; “Vision /Mission /Goal Setting” accounts for 9% of training offered. The only categories in which usefulness and importance closely mirror interest are “Communication /Personality Styles /Team Building” and “Recruiting and Retaining Members.”

Question #13 - What other leadership training topics, if any, would help you perform the duties of your position?

The following list was provided by respondents:

- How to create a smooth transition from one board to the next.
- Committee Leadership: how to chair a committee.
- Organizing: how to organize all the emails, reports etc for the next leader

- 501 C3 status: how to apply etc
- How to work collaboratively with board members with effective communication skills and dealing with conflict.
- I wish I had someone from a larger corporation or a meeting with National RID's Treasurer to make sure the information I received from the past local treasurer was indeed accurate, and not just what the last person told her and was told before. I wish someone would have shown me how to deal with tax exemption forms, dealing with vendors, and how to create a proper budget. These were all things I had NO idea how to organize previously and had to learn along the way, with intermittent advice from the previous treasurer. To some extent, I had to cross my fingers and hope her information was indeed accurate.
- Recruiting new leaders and convincing members who are qualified to step up.
- Filing IRS forms
- For the Treasurer, a person should be trained on how to prepare the Form 990 and to do the required reports for the national office.
- There should be training available on how each of these position functions are performed. For example, I was pretty much thrown in the fire. There wasn't a lot of information from past chair persons on previous workshops, contacts, etc. It has made me wonder how much information is passed on to whomever is taking over a position. A general training on each leadership position would be beneficial.
- Accountability of board responsibilities.
- I would like to have a video of what I ought be doing. Reading the manual SUCKS. Things like reporting and NO roles and responsibilities...
- I feel it's essential for a leader of an RID AC to be very familiar with the AC requirements and the national RID as an organization. Training on the RID AD Handbook is very important in order to have a thorough understanding of the workings of RID. Also, I would recommend a training session on how to be a leader of and serve

the members of an AC. It is essential that the leaders of RID/ RID ACs present themselves as representatives of their membership's consensus.

- Getting members more involved, getting member commitment to serving RID - same few do it all! How do we lead an apathetic group?
- Training directly focused on small rural communities. Their needs, resources available to them, how to keep them networked with other interpreters, etc. (Some of these areas don't have internet access.)
- I believe that all officers, not just the president of the affiliate chapter, should be trained on how to put together the end of the year report. At this time, I am putting together the report with no input from the outgoing board. This is my first time as well as the first time for my board members, and quite frankly, I am nervous at the premise of not providing everything needed.

Of these 16 suggestions, 13 are logistical in nature.

Discussion

The most surprising result of the survey is that despite the changes our field is facing and the fact that the majority of the respondents have had no formal, in depth leadership training they feel as though they have adequate skills and knowledge to fulfill the duties of their office. However, 78% of respondents stating they had adequate skills and knowledge have been in office for five years or less. And the majority of training leaders are exposed to seems to occur between the 6-10 year mark. One possible reason for the high perception of readiness is that new leaders often do not know what they do not know, and after in office for a while begin to realize what training needs exist.

It is also surprising that there is such a balance between soft and logistical skills across questions that distinguish between the two categories.

This may be due to a few factors:

- There were two respondents that duplicated their rankings on both questions 11 and 12, suggesting that some topics carried the same weight.
- One respondent left the importance and usefulness scale blank.
- Nine respondents completed both rankings the same.

This is a total of 12 surveys, or 25% of the responses that were filled out in a manner that may have skewed the data. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that the soft and logistical topics categories are actually given the same weight as the results indicate.

One other notable result is that 36% of responses came from within RIV; leaders within RIV have had recent leadership training in soft skills topics. The large percentage of responses from this region may also have exaggerated the amount of training actually received throughout all regions.

While RID is offering training, the overwhelming majority of the burden for training is falling on the shoulders of the state and local affiliates, and is short-term in nature. RID espouses the importance of leadership training, but on a national level seems to do little to ensure that formal training is provided.

Lastly in regards to the statistical information gathered by the survey, there is very little discrepancy between the topics that are being provided by RID, and the topics that leaders find useful, important and interesting. This seems to suggest that the work being done by the ACRC in terms of matching trainings with perceived needs has been successful. However, given the amount of change we are experiencing in the field, very little is being done to prepare leaders to guide members through those changes.

While there is much more to be done in terms of assessing the state of leadership within RID, this project offers a glimpse at areas for further training development. RID appears to be doing a better job of balancing soft and logistical training topics and responding to what leaders identify that they. However, we still have a long way to go in terms of preparing our leaders for change. There are also opportunities to introduce them to soft skills such as Emotional Intelligence, Appreciative Inquiry and Locus of Control – leadership models that have the power to encourage accountability and spur on positive change efforts.

This project also raises questions for future research including:

- What is the average length of leadership service within RID? And if it typically takes 6-10 years for leaders to receive training within RID, are leaders transitioning out of office before they have had a chance to receive training? Is lack of training one of the reasons that people leave their leadership position?

- Why do state and local leaders with little leadership preparation and training feel adequately prepared to serve in a leadership position?

One final thought...despite the fact that there are models of leadership available to us such as Appreciative Inquiry, Transformational Leadership and Leadership Coaching, this project begs further exploration of which model or combination of models can propel us forward. Are these models sufficient? Or do we need to create a model as unique as our organization? Perhaps, as Janet Bailey says in the AC Handbook, the only way to stop our vicious leadership cycle is "for a **group** to step up to share the responsibilities" (RID, 2004, p.76).

One thing is certain; the majority of our state and local leaders receive no formal leadership training and support. We have an opportunity before us to start providing such. Will we take the opportunity or continue in our tradition of reactivity? What kind of organization *do* we want to create? We must create it consciously...our history starts now.

References

- Brace, I. (2004). Questionnaire Design. Sterling, VA: Kogan Page
- Burns, A.C. & Bush, R.F. (1998). Marketing Research. (pp. 282-315). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Burns, J.M. (1979). Leadership. (pp. 141-254). NY, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.
- Carroll, A.B. (2005). Servant Leadership. *Nonprofit World*, 23(3), 18-20.
- Cooperrider, D.L. (2000). Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change. (pp. 29-53). Champaign, IL: Stipes.
- Cooperrider, D.L. (2001). *Positive Image, Positive Action: The Affirmative Basis of Organizing*. Retrieved Jun 20, 2006 from <http://www.stipes.com/aichap2.htm>
- Fant, L. (1989). Silver Threads: A Personal Look at the First Twenty-five Years of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.
- Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that Gets Results. *Harvard Business Review*, March-April, 78-90.
- Hammond, S.A. (1996). The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry. Bend, OR: Thin Book Publishing Co.

Harvey, M.A. & Gunther, P.E. (n.d.) *The Effects on Interpreters of Witnessing Oppression: A Tribute to Elie Wiesel*. Retrieved February 6, 2004, from Email.

Harvey, M.A. (2001). Vicarious Emotional Trauma of Interpreters: A Clinical Psychologist's Perspective. *2001 Journal of Interpretation, Millennial Edition*, 85-97.

Hoffman, R. (1995). Leadership Resource Development for Non-profit Organizations. *Fundraising Management*, 26(1), 30-35.

Kotter, J.P. (1996). Leading Change. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

The Leadership Thing. (1995). The Economist, 337(7944), 23-24.

McQuarrie, E.F. (1996). The Market Research Toolbox. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mordaunt, J. & Cornforth, C. (2004). The Role of Boards in the Failure and Turnaround of Non-Profit Organizations. *Public Money & Management*, August 2004, 227-234.

Northouse, P.G. (2004). Leadership Theory and Practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

RID (n.d.). *Affiliate Chapter Relations Committee: Affiliate Chapter Needs Assessment*. Retrieved October 2, 2006 from Email.

RID (2004). Affiliate Chapter Handbook, Second Edition. Silver Spring, MD: RID Affiliate Chapter Relations Committee.

- RID (2004). Association Bylaws. Retrieved June 22, 2006 from www.rid.org
- RID (2005). *RID Views*, 22(10), (p.22). Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.
- RID (2006). *RID Views*, 23(6), (p.3). Silver Spring, MD: RID Publications.
- RID (2006). *About RID*. Retrieved June 22, 2006 from www.rid.org
- Senge, P.M. (1990). The Fifth Discipline. New York, New York: Doubleday.
- Stauffer, L.K. (2005). *Leadership Training: Ya Got Potential!* Paper presented at the RID National Pre-Conference, San Antonio, TX.
- Watkins, J.M. & Cooperrider, D. (2000). Appreciative Inquiry: A Transformative Paradigm. *Journal of the Organization Development Network*, 32(1), (n.p.). Retrieved July 5, 2006 from <http://www.odnetwork.org>
- Watkins, J.M. & Mohr, B.J. (2001). Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H. & Sandahl, P. (1998). Co-Active Coaching. Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.
- Witter-Merithew, A. (2004). Market Disorder within the Field of Sign Language Interpreting. *2004 Journal of Interpretation*, 19-55.
- Witter-Merithew, A. & Johnson, L.J. (2005). Toward Competent Practice: Conversations With Stakeholders. Alexandria, VA: RID Publications.

APPENDIX A LEADERSHIP SURVEY

The following survey inquires into leadership training for local and state officers of RID affiliate chapters. The information gathered will serve as the foundation for my Master's Degree Capstone (Thesis) Project. Project results will be shared with RID, but individual responses will remain anonymous. The survey should take approximately 7-10 minutes to complete. Your prompt response to this survey is greatly appreciated.

For the purpose of this survey please note that leadership categories are defined as follows:

State Affiliate Chapter Leader: President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, Member-at-Large or Regional Representative of an RID State Affiliate Chapter i.e. State President of Montana RID

Local Affiliate Chapter Leader: President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, Member-at-Large or Regional Representative of an RID Local Affiliate Chapter i.e. President of the Mile High Chapter of the Colorado RID.

1. What is your **current** leadership title?

- State Affiliate Chapter President
- State Affiliate Chapter Vice-President
- State Affiliate Chapter Secretary
- State Affiliate Chapter Treasurer
- State Affiliate Member-at-Large
- State Affiliate Regional Representative
- Local Affiliate Chapter President
- Local Affiliate Chapter Vice-President
- Local Affiliate Chapter Secretary
- Local Affiliate Chapter Treasurer
- Local Affiliate Member-at-Large
- Local Affiliate Regional Representative
- Other _____

2. In what RID Region are you currently serving as a leader?

- Region I
- Region II
- Region III
- Region IV
- Region V

3. Approximately how many years of total leadership experience *in any* RID local or state affiliate chapter do you have? _____

Questions 4-6 refer to training received **prior** to becoming an officer in RID and **not** provided by RID or an RID affiliate chapter.

4. Did you receive any **non-RID sponsored** leadership training prior to becoming an officer?
 Yes No (skip to question 7)

5. If so, where did you receive the training? (*Check all that apply*)

- Non-interpreting related conference or workshop
 - Community College or University class (for credit)
 - Continuing education / Adult education class (non-credit)
 - Online class
 - In-service training
 - Other
-
-
-

6. Of the following leadership topics listed below, check the ones that you have received training on **outside of an RID venue**, and **prior** to serving as a leader of your local or state affiliate RID chapter:

(*Check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Models of Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Delegation Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating Board Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating Agendas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parliamentary Procedures / Bylaws | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reward Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciative Inquiry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Leading Through Change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / Mission / Goal Setting | <input type="checkbox"/> Locus of Control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating / Building Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Teambuilding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication / Personality Styles | <input type="checkbox"/> Record Keeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting and Retaining Members | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Difficult People |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please list</i>) | |
-
-
-
-

Questions 7-9 refer to training received **while** an officer in RID and provided by RID or an RID affiliate chapter.

7. Did you receive any leadership training while an officer in RID?
 Yes No (skip to question 10)

8. If so, where did you receive the training? (*Check all that apply*)

- State or local affiliate sponsored workshop or training
 - State conference
 - Officer retreat
 - Regional or national RID conference
 - Independent Study
 - Immediate past or current officer (“training behind”)
 - Continuing education / Adult education class (non-credit)
 - Online class
 - Other
-
-
-

9. Of the following leadership topics listed below check the ones that you have received training on while serving as a leader of your local or state affiliate RID chapter:

(*Check all that apply*)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Models of Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Delegation Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating Board Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Creating Agendas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parliamentary Procedures / Bylaws | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reward Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciative Inquiry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Leading Through Change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision / Mission / Goal Setting | <input type="checkbox"/> Locus of Control |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating / Building Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Teambuilding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication / Personality Styles | <input type="checkbox"/> Record Keeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting and Retaining Members | <input type="checkbox"/> Dealing with Difficult People |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please list</i>) | |
-
-
-

The remaining questions assess your current perspective of the importance, and your interest in, leadership training.

10. Do you feel that you have adequate skills and knowledge to perform the duties of your position? ___ Yes ___ No
11. Please rank the following leadership topics in order of **importance and usefulness** to you as an RID leader, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.
- ___ Fundraising / Grant writing / Budgeting
 - ___ Conflict Management / Dealing with Difficult People
 - ___ Facilitating Board Meetings / Parliamentary Procedures / Creating Agendas
 - ___ Models of Leadership / Appreciative Inquiry / Emotional Intelligence
 - ___ Collaborating / Building Partnerships
 - ___ Recruiting and Retaining Members
 - ___ Leading through Change / Locus of Control
 - ___ Vision / Mission / Goal Setting
 - ___ Time Management / Delegation Skills
 - ___ Communication / Personality Styles / Team Building
12. Please rank the following leadership topics in order of **interest** to you as an RID leader, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.
- ___ Fundraising / Grant writing / Budgeting
 - ___ Conflict Management / Dealing with Difficult People
 - ___ Facilitating Board Meetings / Parliamentary Procedures / Creating Agendas
 - ___ Models of Leadership / Appreciative Inquiry / Emotional Intelligence
 - ___ Collaborating / Building Partnerships
 - ___ Recruiting and Retaining Members
 - ___ Leading through Change / Locus of Control
 - ___ Vision / Mission / Goal Setting
 - ___ Time Management / Delegation Skills
 - ___ Communication / Personality Styles / Team Building
13. What other leadership training topics, if any, would help you perform the duties of your position?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!!!