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# Arresting idea

**Police and business tailor programs to better serve their employees**

By Moira MacDonald, Financial Post

In an ever more-complex and efficiency-based economy not even the cops are immune. Gone are the days when it was enough for the police to just catch the bad guys. These days, police organizations are realizing the bad guy can be inefficiency and mismanagement itself.

Recognizing that -- and an expected spate of about 300 senior officer retirements over five years by 2004, with even more to come in the next five

Years -- the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police entered a partnership last year with University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

Together they created the Police Leadership Program to give rising Ontario policing leaders an intensive four-week-long, MBA-style training in strategy, financial management, human resources, leadership, police service, community knowledge, political astuteness and communications.

It is the only such program in Canada specifically tailored to policing and has already attracted interest from forces outside Ontario, including the country's military police. The class size has nearly doubled with about 30 officers starting the third cycle of the program in April.

"There's going to be a lot of corporate knowledge leaving the profession and we also felt certain competencies needed to be enhanced," says Bruce Herridge, York Regional Police superintendent, a program graduate and chairman of the OACP's training and education committee. However, "we're not in the business of delivering executive education in an intense way. Who does that? The business schools."

The demographic bubble pushing Baby Boomers toward retirement in the next 10 years has meant succession and replacement training is a common reason for businesses to turn increasingly toward business schools to create management development programs tailored for them.

While many business schools offer open executive development programs -- York University's Schulich School has nearly 60 of them serving about 8,000 people a year -- some companies say paying for these "canned" courses does not cut it because the training is not consistently related back to the company's particular challenges.



Carlo Allegri, National Post

**TARGET PRACTICE: Bruce Herridge, superintendent of the York Regional Police, says tightly focused MBA-style training will help future police leaders hone their management skills.**

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The University of Calgary's faculty of management does about 10 to 12 customized programs a year, business that forms about 70% of its executive development programs. Four years ago, that figure was only 10%. Fees can range from \$5,000 to as high as \$20,000 a day, depending on the amount of customization needed. It is time away from the office, rather than fees, that are often a company's biggest concern, however.

"Businesses always want to do it the quickest possible way," says Doug Bowie, manager of the faculty's custom programs. "The longest [training course] I've seen is a week. It's usually three days, two days."

Bantrel Co., a Calgary-based engineering and construction firm focused on the energy industry, turned to the university 2 1/2 years ago to design a continuing training program for its emerging leaders as part of its succession plan. The company expects to have about 20 employees in the program at all times who will attend a weekend session every quarter for up to three years. There, they will work on skills in areas such as leadership, finance, human resources and business development.

In the past, "we've often brought in the consulting firm or a consultant to deliver training," says Ken Burrill, a Bantrel vice-president and manager of business development. "I think the university probably delivers better value. They have a broader base of faculty and they're very client-focused."

The University of Victoria has also offered custom programs for years but is trying to open up a new market, called consortium programs. These take the customized approach but will allow small, high-tech firms on Vancouver Island to share the cost and co-operate in the development of them with one or two similar companies with whom they do not directly compete.

As with other forms of executive training, customized programs also help fill in knowledge gaps managers without formal business schooling may have, especially if they have risen through the ranks in technically oriented companies. They may know everything about engineering a pipeline, but find corporate finance or organizational development a mystery.

But beyond that, companies are increasingly seeking out customized programs as a way of retaining their most coveted staff, says Barbara Dickson, director of custom programs at the University of Western Ontario's Ivey School of Business.

"The employees themselves are looking for it. They know if their company won't sponsor them, another will," she says.

Ivey has just helped Siemens Canada design its corporate university -- a collection of tailor-made staff development programs that will periodically bring Siemens employees to Ivey's London, Ont., campus for five-day sessions. Demand for customized programs at Ivey leaped from 10 courses in 2000 to 25 last year and cost about \$20,000 a day.

Even while businesses realize continual training and development is key, the economic downturn means some may be becoming more discriminating about turning to business schools to get it, suggests Nancy Semkin, senior manager for leadership and development at the Royal Bank of Canada.

The bank recently partnered with the Rotman School to create a customized program called Creating Value at RBC. The program is aimed at RBC's up-and-coming managers to help them think more broadly about ways of getting the bank's various businesses working together better to increase profits for shareholders.

However, the program is the only external one the bank is now doing after discovering its managers -- many of whom already have formal business training -- were more interested in learning directly from the bank's executives than going to expensive outside courses.

"There is still a technical component of leadership that academic programs are vital for," says Ms. Semkin. But, "the theoretical is meaningless unless it relates back to the business."