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Emerging leaders: looking for walk the talk

While the programs discussed in this edition of *Philanthropic Trends Quarterly* are stellar examples of leadership development in action, an informal survey of emerging leaders recently undertaken by KCI shows that their personal experiences have not been so fulfilling.

The vast majority of these up-and-coming leaders reported that conversations about career goals and leadership development are lacking completely. Regrettably, most respondents indicated that their supervisors never broached the subjects of leadership development or succession planning, nor have they initiated discussion about future roles that the employee may play in the organization.

In addition, it appears that many emerging leaders are not getting adequate leadership mentoring or sufficient opportunities to grow in areas where they may need further development. The following quote from one of our survey respondents summarizes this sentiment: "Many of us are thrust in leadership or management roles without training in how to organize structures, management and motivation of staff, conflict resolution, or how we can help shape the vision of our organizations."

The comments we received from emerging leaders reflect the need for organizations to take a holistic approach to developing upcoming leaders, ranging from opportunities to be involved with high level decision making to having greater opportunities to interact with the board. The following were some of the specific areas they cited as important to them.

Mentorship and Coaching. Emerging leaders are looking for opportunities to be formally coached and mentored by someone they trust and respect, either within the organization or outside of it.

Formal Skills Training. Beyond developing their subject matter expertise, emerging leaders are looking for the chance to hone particular skills associated with the ability to lead, and welcome the opportunity to participate in formal training sessions. Commonly cited areas of interest include management skills training, financial management, and strategic planning.

"On the Job" Training. Emerging leaders are itching for the chance to learn from their superiors about what it takes to do their jobs. They would love to be able to learn from their superiors about issues such as how to work with boards, do budget planning and strategies around human resource management.

