

Does the Management Academy for Public Health Develop Disaster Readiness? Survey Results

Managers overwhelmingly credit Management Academy with improving their performance in several critical skill areas that relate to disaster preparedness, especially partnership, people management, communication and strategy development skills.

In December 2001, this survey asked if the management skills that graduates gained during MAPH have contributed to their ability to do disaster and bioterrorism-related work since September 11. All MAPH graduates from the first two years of the program for whom MAPH had a usable email address (N = 262 out of 295 graduates) were asked to complete the survey online. Of these 262 graduates, 100 (38%) completed the survey.

The majority of respondents (74%) indicated that they have been doing some activities that relate to Disasters and Bioterrorism since September 11 (Figure 1). Of the 74% who have been directly involved in Disaster and Bioterrorism-related activities, 90% say that MAPH contributed to their ability to respond (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Managers involved in activities related to disasters and bioterrorism

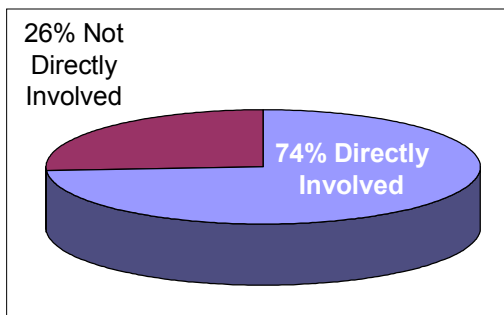
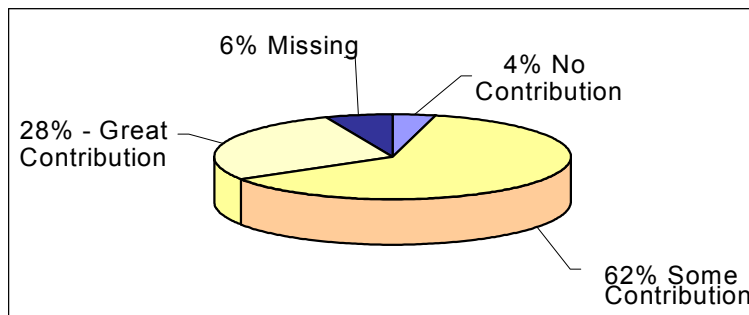


Figure 2: Overall MAPH contribution to personal ability to do disaster and bioterrorism-related work



Graduates described the greatest specific MAPH contributions to their skills in six key areas:

- **partnerships**, networking and negotiation
- **communication**, including public speaking and writing plans
- **planning**, including strategic and business planning
- **managing people**, delegating, and team building
- **managing projects**
- **personal confidence**, including time management, leadership and priority-setting

Through coursework MAPH manager teams develop skills in planning, partnering, communicating, and managing. Each team then practices and implements those skills as they develop their own business plan with community partners.

The findings presented here reinforce previous findings that the MAPH curriculum design helps managers to transfer skills to the work setting. Further, these findings indicate that developing general management skills helped managers and their organizations respond effectively to bioterrorism and disaster planning needs.

Survey comments show how MAPH graduates effectively transfer new skills to the workplace:

“**Networking** skills presented at MAPH serve as the foundation for all efforts in our response to disasters and bioterrorism.”

“The **collaboration and partnering** experiences through MAPH were extremely beneficial in having already established rapport with internal resources and other agencies working together in response to bioterrorism.”

“MAPH teaches public speaking and **presentation skills**. These have really helped in my interview on the local cable channel and the presentation I did at the town meetings held at the local university.”

“[MAPH] provided a much greater comfort zone in **planning, developing and presenting** plan. Felt I was able to do a better job because of training.”

“The greatest contribution has been in **forging a management team** that knows and respects each other's abilities and works well together - we went to UNC as a team and this has been the biggest benefit.”

“I believe [the greatest MAPH benefit was] the ability to provide **leadership**; the **confidence** to step up to the plate and do something.”

Although MAPH develops general management skills, this survey data suggests that the course curriculum, team structure and business plan project help managers effectively transfer skills to the workplace and apply them broadly to new management challenges.

The Management Academy for Public Health (MAPH) is a nine-month team-based management development program for public health professionals delivered by the School of Public Health and the Kenan-Flagler Business School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources Services Administration, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Kellogg Foundation. The program teaches skills in managing people, data, and money through classroom work, distance learning, and an extensive Business Plan development project.

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