



Are UK managers equipped for tough times ahead?

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New research from the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) reveals that 60% of UK managers did not choose to go into management, while one in four question their own capabilities.

With the UK teetering on the brink of the worst recession for a generation, organisations need strong leaders and competent managers to help them survive the turbulent times ahead.

However, new research from ILM reveals that 60% of the UK's managers didn't choose to become a manager, and many feel stressed and lack confidence in their own abilities.

At a time when leadership and management skills are more critical than ever, ILM chief executive Penny de Valk is concerned at reports that some employers are looking to cut management development budgets.

De Valk said: "Strong leadership and competent managers are vital if businesses are to survive the turbulent times ahead. A whole generation of managers in the UK are working in unprecedented circumstances.

"With the majority of managers not having made an active decision to move into management, and many feeling less than confident in their own ability, there is a real business need to provide them with extra support and development at this critical time. Securing strong people skills through management development is the single most cost-effective investment an organisation can make to improve the performance and efficiency of its staff."

Over 1,000 managers were surveyed for an ILM research project into what it means to be a leader and manager of people in the UK in 2008. Almost two thirds of those polled revealed they were reluctant managers – progressing into the role for more money or because it happened to be the next rung on the career ladder, rather than a desire to manage – while 27% said they were unsure of their ability to manage others.

Fourteen per cent of managers also struggled with managing their workload, while 13% cited that the responsibility of leading others was the most challenging thing about management.

The research also found that 34% of managers believe that the most challenging thing about management is stress.

De Valk said: "When we are under stress we often revert to type which can prevent us from drawing on the repertoires of skills we need to impact as managers. So it is even more important that we invest in management development to ensure this self-awareness.

"In turbulent times, business leaders who invest in their managers will make a real difference. Managers and their development are critical to ensuring organisations are able to respond to and weather the economic and

competitive climate confronting them so investing in their ability to do this better will pay real dividends in both the short and long term.

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Notes to editors:

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From industry-leading qualifications and membership services to specialist learning resources, all ILM products and services are built on in-depth research and benchmarked against best practice standards. Supporting a fast-growing community of over 30,000 practising leaders and managers, ILM's membership services are designed to provide ongoing continuing professional development throughout every stage of a manager's career.

Backed by an in depth programme of thought leadership research, ILM operates internationally, improving leadership and management skills, knowledge and outputs across all sectors, from corporate finance to the armed forces.

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