

Invigorated managers a key 2010 priority

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New research has revealed that nearly seven in ten HR professionals have identified a "huge need" to ensure managers have the skills to manage, inspire and lift organisations in 2010.

According to the Report, carried out by the UK's Henley Business School and featured in *Personnel Today* last month, HR professionals see a great need to ensure managers have the skills to manage the aftermath of the recent economic troubles - 67% mentioning this as a priority.

"Rather than axing development budgets and cutting leadership development, they have focused effort on those individuals who they expect will lead their organisations into a future yet to be created," said the Report.

"Softer skills - in leadership styles and coaching, for instance - that bring out the very best in people and facilitate team working, are also now a priority."

According to Jenny Carter, Director of the New Managers Programme (NMP) at the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB), the findings are not unexpected and managers in South Africa will also be called on to take responsibility for lifting people and organisations here in 2010 as optimism grows and the economy recovers.

"Managers - particularly those entering management in this context - will need to be skilled for the job at hand. There are immense challenges and even existing managers need to rethink and refresh their management approach - essentially, organisations are calling for a new type of manager to give fresh impetus," said Carter.

Carter cites the NMP as an example of the type of programme which is geared to addressing these contemporary challenges. "As well as teaching the fundamentals of management and an understanding of key functional areas such as finance, marketing and operations, the course focuses quite extensively on personal mastery and building confidence," she said.

"There is also a big emphasis on leading the team - including how to coach, delegate, manage conflict and give constructive feedback."

Targeted at mainly entry-level managers seeking to progress in their career or experience a new, fresh way of thinking about leadership, the programme's transformational approach and track record of producing re-invigorated, new thinking has made it one of the country's leading management development short courses.

Mohamed Bray, an Analyst at IT consultancy Barone, Budge & Dominick, and a graduate of the NMP in 2009, is not surprised that organisations are crying out for not only functionally excellent but also inspirational managers.

"Being a good leader today is more about empowering others to be their best and inspiring them to follow your lead, not enforcing it through hierarchy," said Bray, who added that learning these insights as a young manager can be a great set-up for future success.

"I have a whole new perspective on what it means to be a manager thanks to the business school training - instead of jostling for a particular position you can instead focus your energy on the relationships you form with people along the way, on building faith and trust. Knowing this early on in your career can give you more freedom and allow you to be creative in your working life instead of being too narrowly focused on getting to the top."

The New Managers Programme runs at the UCT GSB from 16 to 28 May. Contact Mario Pearce on 021 406 1268 or for more information.

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