BRITS LOOK TO TRAINING AS GOING GETS TOUGH

Nearly half the country’s workforce say the current climate has made them think about training or learning a new skill

- National survey reveals current levels of job security and career aspirations of workforce
- Nearly half those surveyed recognise an increase in skills is the key to safeguarding their career during an economic downturn

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A new survey, conducted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), shows that over half the country’s workers (57 per cent) are worried about their job prospects as a result of the current economic crisis.

However the survey also shows that over half the country’s workforce remain confident that they would be able to keep their jobs and that they would be concentrating on training to improve their careers prospects and job security (51 per cent).

The survey shows that the recent period, which has seen retail giants, such as MFI and Woolworths experience major crises, has not yet had the demoralising effect on the nation’s workforce many experts expected.

In fact, while the survey identifies the current economic problems to be the number one cause of the current insecurity in the workplace (42 per cent); it also demonstrates that the current situation is inspiring many people to rethink their career paths in a positive way, with over three quarters of respondents (77 per cent) recognising the room for improvement in their skill levels and indicating a willingness to seek advice about improving their skill base. Two thirds of workers actually stated they felt learning a new skill would help make them feel happier and more secure in their jobs (62 per cent).
Nearly half of those surveyed (44 per cent) also stated that they believed an increase in their skills levels or training would help them to safeguard their current careers. Only 15 per cent of workers thought a complete change of career or retraining would be necessary.

Interestingly the top three skills respondents felt they could do with learning or refreshing were communication, IT and literacy (32 per cent); problem solving (26 per cent); and self-management skills (22 per cent). A quarter of respondents (23 per cent) added they felt that an individual’s skills competency was the number one ingredient to job security.

Skills Minister Lord Young said: “It is more important than ever that people have the opportunity to improve their skills to help them in the workplace. We are investing over £4 billion in further education and skills this year alone and Government is committed to making sure that everyone has the opportunity to gain new skills. I would encourage everyone who wants to maximise their skills to take full advantage of this investment.”

Chris Banks, Chairman of the LSC, says that learning new skills is crucial to weathering the current economic climate: “It’s true that learning new skills and retraining can lead to a refreshing career change, but it’s also important to realise that employees with transferable skills are often seen as the biggest assets to employers. A small investment in learning new skills will make you better prepared to tackle any eventuality, particularly in a tough economy.”

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The Learning and Skills Council offers a host of services to help you ensure you have the skills you need to persevere and succeed. Visit lsc.gov.uk/inourhands or call the Careers Advice Service helpline on 0800 100 900 for more information.

ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

Learning and Skills Council:
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, to gain the skills they need to succeed, secure their future or grow their income. For example, you could receive the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) for your decided course, a grant designed as a helping hand for adults thinking about learning but worried about the financial barriers standing in their way. ALG provides low income adult learners with up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs of learning. Since the grant became available, over 43,000 people have received ALG. You could also access training at work through the LSC’s flagship programme for employers, Train to Gain.

The survey also revealed the jobs Brits would like to do if they had the chance in the current climate. Surprisingly becoming a travel writer topped the list at 17 per cent, with zoo keepers and school teachers tying for second place at 14 per cent each.

List of Top 10 Jobs**:

1. Travel Writer (17.05%)
2. Zookeeper (13.85%)
3. School Teacher (13.65%)
4. Taste Tester (11.60%)
5. Test Driver (8.75%)
6. Garden Designer (8.60%)
7. Costume Designer (7.45%)*
8. Florist (7.45%)*
9. Run fishing trips in the Caribbean (7.15%)
10. Scuba Diving Instructor (4.45%)

* indicates a tie
** Survey completed by OnePoll on behalf of the LSC 27.11.08

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7754423.stm