While Leap Year is traditionally the day when women propose marriage, a new survey conducted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) reveals that the UK’s working population has something a little less romantic on its mind this year. The survey, which questioned over a 1,000 managers and their employees across the country shows that while 52% of supervisors want to use the extra leap day for training, half admit that it is often overlooked in favour of other activities.

When asked about barriers to training, 61% of respondents claim that time is the biggest constraint and 49% explain that they are put off by the expense of it.

The LSC’s Train to Gain research also shows that it is just as important for managers to consider their own personal development as well as their employees’. Given the choice, two-thirds (65%) of supervisors would also choose to use the extra working day to improve their own leadership and management skills. Separate research from the Chartered Management Institute\(^1\) shows that training helped 24% of managers gain a promotion; 23% of managers boost their salary and 23% change their career direction.

Responding to this need, the Secretary of State, John Denham, recently announced an expansion of Train to Gain\(^2\) – part of which will help senior small business leaders and managers develop their leadership skills and enable their businesses to grow and flourish. The additional funding will enable 60,000 managers to access Leadership and Management training over the next three years.

\(^1\) Chartered Management Institute – *The Value of Management Qualifications*, page 15

\(^2\) The expansion was announced in Train to Gain – *A Plan for Growth*, in November 2007; see: [http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/Train-to-Gain-Executive-Summary.pdf](http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/Train-to-Gain-Executive-Summary.pdf)
Train to Gain, Director, Glenn Robinson says: ‘These figures show that there is a clear desire and need for supervisors across the board to improve their own skills and those of their workforce. Given that we have an extra working day this year and there is now additional Leadership and Management funding opportunities, employers must get involved and help shape a better future for their business and their employees.

Businesses wanting to take advantage of the new funding available will receive a visit from a Leadership and Management Specialist at a time suitable to their needs. They will then carry out a complimentary and impartial skills diagnostic for the individual to develop a Personal Action Plan and help find appropriate training courses - ranging from formal training, where managers work towards specific qualifications, to informal training, such as coaching and mentoring.

Given that further research shows that an astonishing 41% of managers do not have a Level 2 qualification\(^3\), the need for organisations to take advantage of the new Leadership and Management funding opportunities is clear.

Miles Templeman, IoD Director General said, “IoD members’ organisations place great emphasis on training and recognise the benefits of investing in skills. IoD research has consistently found management skills to be one of the most frequently occurring skills gaps, and managerial vacancies to be some of the hardest positions to fill.

He went on to say, “Managers play a key role in motivating and supporting other employees to perform well. Investing in management training is therefore more important than the benefits it confers on the individual beneficiaries; it is important for the wider workforce and for the organisation as a whole.”

One business which has already reaped the benefits of training is the technical documentation and management service provider, Allan Webb Ltd. Train to Gain’s Leadership and Management training helped them grow their business by 25 employees, boosting their market presence.

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\(^3\) Chartered Management Institute – *The Value of Management Qualifications*, page 2
John Hardcastle, Managing Director at Allan Webb, said: “We are very glad that we got involved in training. It has given us new goals and clear strategies and now it’s up to us to make the business the best it can be.”

Allan Webb Ltd was so impressed with the impact of training that they are now looking at additional courses for even more employees.

To find out more information, visit traintogain.gov.uk or call 0800 015 55 45

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Notes to Editors
Interviews, case studies and photography available on request.

The research was conducted by BMRB, which asked over 260 supervisors on their attitudes towards training during 7th – 11th February 2008.

Train to Gain:
Managed by the Learning and Skills Council, Train to Gain is the government’s flagship service to support employers in England, of all sizes and in all sectors, to improve the skills of their employees, unlock talent and drive improved business performance. An important element of Train to Gain is the skills brokerage service which offers free impartial advice, and helps find the best training solution from high quality and responsive training providers to meet business needs.

Train to Gain is important because skills shortages continue to have a negative impact on UK productivity and competitiveness in the face of fast-growing economies. Train to Gain aims to encourage all businesses and individuals to value and realise the benefits that learning and skills can bring and to invest appropriately. It is expected that by the end of 2010, over 500,000 learners will have achieved a first full Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain.

To find out more about how Train to Gain can help, employers should call 0800 015 55 45 or visit traintogain.gov.uk. Alternatively, individuals and employers can access the information they need on skills via a dedicated phone line and website. The phone number is 0800 011 30 30 or website: lsc.gov.uk/inourhands

Learning and Skills Council:
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Its 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. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

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