

Take a 'coach' to weather the economic storm

An open letter to UK employers published as a full-page advertisement in national newspapers pointed out recently that when times are tough there is always a temptation for businesses large and small to cut spending on training.

Entitled "Now is the time to invest in skills", the letter from UKCES (UK Commission for Employment and Skills) was signed by five of the most influential personalities from the UK business world (major businesses, business organisations and trade unions).

Crucially, the letter confirmed that firms that fail to train their staff are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those who do. It added that the present was "precisely the time to keep investing in the skills and talents of our people".

It is well known, especially to those who witnessed previous downturns in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, that it was the firms that invested in their staff (their most valuable resource) not only coped best but were best placed to take advantage of improving conditions when growth resumed. Equally, those individuals who took advantage of 'downtime' and the injection of training opportunities – many of them publicly funded – were the best prepared to take advantage of future employment opportunities.

As a business and life coach, my mission is *"to work with people to help them achieve success and continuously improve their life and work potential"*. In times like those we are currently experiencing, coaching – like training – will be seen by some as a luxury that can be dropped.

In truth, though, those who are serious about weathering the storm and staying the course to achieve recovery, not just survival, will take full advantage of the opportunity to review their current skills and avail themselves of all the training and learning opportunities they can find. As a result, they will cope best and be best placed to take advantage of returning growth. They, too, will be the people best placed to achieve their goals, aspirations and long-term success.

When we set out on a well-charted journey we know we will leave at a particular time and take a particular route and a particular mode of travel or series of vehicles to reach our journey's end. These times of uncharted economic and financial chaos, though, will impact on all of our plans, all of our aspirations and all of our lives.

Many people will be faced with changing their journeys' ends, many people will be faced with changing their particular route and all of us will be faced with reviewing our mode of travel. If you are somebody who takes control of planning your journey and defining your journey's end then coaching is a sure way of charting your path through the current storm.