

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY



*A review of current employer demands for
professional learning and skills development*

March 2018

Acknowledgement

The University of Exeter Business School would like to thank the employers who took part in our research anonymously, without whom this report and the development of our future executive education (ExecEd) strategy would not have been possible.

In the preparation of this publication, the authors have drawn on insight from several published reports and research articles. For reference, these include:

- ▶ *Learning and Development Annual Survey 2015*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), May 2015
- ▶ *The 20th Global CEO Survey*, pwc, January 2017
- ▶ *CIPD and Hays 2017 Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), June 2017
- ▶ *Corporate Learning Pulse 2017: Global Perspectives of Corporate Learning and Leadership Development*, Financial Times/IE Business School/Corporate Learning Alliance, June 2017
- ▶ *Corporate Learning Survey 2017*, Henley Business School, September 2017
- ▶ *The Impact of Executive Education*, Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS), December 2017
- ▶ *Assessing the early impact of the apprenticeship levy – employers' perspective*, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), January 2018
- ▶ *'The Best Response to Digital Disruption'*, Jacques Bughin and Nicolas van Zeebroeck, Sloan Management Review, MIT Sloan School of Management, Volume 58, Issue 4, 2017

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Professor David Bruce Allen
*Pro-Vice Chancellor and
Executive Dean*



Dr Bill Russell
Director of Executive Education

It is an interesting time for businesses of all sizes in the UK. As the Brexit negotiations continue, uncertainty surrounds our future economic and wider political relationship with Europe. The eventual outcome will undoubtedly also impact our dealings with the rest of the world.

Amid this unpredictability, organisations must manage their way through a rapidly changing environment where technology is breaking down global barriers, creating new opportunities for trade, bringing unexpected competition and fundamentally redefining the way we live, learn, work and earn.

To respond to this change successfully requires the kind of adaptability and agility which can only come from continuous learning. Our research with regional, national and international businesses has reinforced the belief that investing in staff development and training is a recognised benefit, but needs to deliver more obvious returns.

The University of Exeter Business School is ready to respond to the challenges and requirements highlighted within this report. As a vibrant group of researchers and a learning provider, we recognise that business schools must change too – executive education (ExecEd) needs to be focused clearly on supporting your organisation over the medium and long term.

Through the development of the University of Exeter Business School, we intend to build positive relationships with ‘partners’, providing training and ongoing support driven by your needs and individual circumstances both in the UK, and globally. Our goal is to offer tailored career development that supports business growth, motivating and developing professionals with a mix of strategic, specialist, technical and soft skills.

Professor David Allen
Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, University of Exeter Business School

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People lie at the heart of any business. Nurturing and retaining talent often makes the difference between success and failure. We appreciate that developing your workforce can be challenging and costly. That’s why our goal is to develop a variety of flexible, tailored offerings that can work for you, your business and the learners themselves.

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At a glance

Global politics and volatile domestic economies have created uncertainty, while digital disruption is transforming industries and the way we do business the world over. To be successful requires a new breed of leader – the '**rounded professional**'. These are individuals as comfortable with concepts of the circular or gig economy and asset management, as they are with artificial intelligence and big data.

Concerns about the UK's growing skills gap have placed talent recruitment, development and retention at the top of the corporate agenda. Businesses across all sectors acknowledge learning and development will be vital to the achievement of business goals. They also recognise the role of leadership training and executive education (ExecEd) in driving future innovation and competitive advantage.

Scepticism remains, however, over the likely effectiveness and impact of training programmes, which regularly fail to live up to expectations. Organisations are interested in more flexible and work-based training opportunities, so many are keen to see how degree apprenticeships and other experiential learning can assist them. The need for cost effectiveness is a given, with meaningful measurement and demonstrable return on investment key elements in meeting increasing customer expectations.

Learning and development budgets look set to rise, but the pressure is on training providers to invest the time to get to know their clients' business strategy and needs, customising training accordingly and ensuring content is continually updated to deliver value and currency. Employees will need training to prepare them for challenges being faced today, tomorrow and into the future.



The University of Exeter Business School is one of the UK's leading institutions, ranked top 10 in the UK for Business, Accounting and Finance in the 2018 Complete University Guide. Our mission is to deliver outstanding and innovative business education and research that address the major challenges confronting businesses and society. Our ambition is to become a leading business school – not just in the UK, but in Europe and across the wider world.

School history

The University of Exeter Business School was launched in 2008 with a £21 million investment to support its creation, expansion and internationalisation. Since its inception, the School has taken pride in developing an international, world class educational experience; one that is firmly rooted in practical and professional relevance.

Accreditation has been secured with organisations including: Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA); Institute for Fiscal Studies; Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD); and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). The School was first accredited by the Association of MBA's (AMBA) in 1999 and by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) in 2013, and both were most recently re-accredited for five years in 2018 and 2016 respectively.

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We strive to provide a professional platform for leadership learning that is closely connected to ‘real world’ business practice. It is critical to work in partnership with organisations of all shapes and sizes, not only to ensure that we learn from and respond their changing needs, but also to offer our own academic and research expertise to develop innovative new solutions to boost regional, national and economies.

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Professor David Bruce Allen,
Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, University of Exeter Business School

Our ‘**partner centric**’ approach involves working with organisations to understand their needs and find the most appropriate solutions within the School or by tapping into the wider resources of our Russell Group University. Connections have been developed with over 400 organisations: from multinationals, such as Google, SAP and Marks and Spencer, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social enterprises like The Fairtrade Foundation or Oxfam, and a wide range of companies with a strong local presence, including Apple, Black Swan, Centrax, Eaton and Bott.

Having offered our award-winning Master in Business Administration (MBA) since 1988, **The Exeter MBA** is now widely regarded as one of the best in the world, recently topping the Corporate Knights Better World MBA ranking. Hosted by the School’s Centre for Leadership, the **Exeter’s Leaders Forum**, which has been running for over 20 years, brings together leaders and aspiring leaders to stay up-to-date with current trends.

Future vision

The arrival of Professor David Bruce Allen as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the School in September 2016 prompted a comprehensive strategic review and exciting new direction for the School.

Our aim is to be recognised globally for bringing together outstanding students, faculty and corporate partners to develop exceptionally able and employable graduates, and create distinctive research of the highest calibre and relevance. A crucial strand of this new strategy is to support the development of employer-driven executive education and training, building on the highly successful track record which first began with the MBA.

Demonstrating the extent of the School's commitment to delivering training and professional development, Dr Bill Russell was appointed to the new position of Director of Executive Education in March 2017. He first joined the Centre for Innovation and Service Research as a lecturer in 2012, having worked in globally focused marketing, commercial and Board positions for 27 years.

This dedicated role was purposefully created to envision, design and successfully execute high-quality ExecEd training programmes, and to review our existing offer, which includes the MBA, degree apprenticeships, short course workshops and education days.

To do so, our immediate priority – realised through the research project described in this report – has been to assess the needs and requirements of ExecEd in consultation with our many partner organisations.

We asked businesses to consider the many influencing factors and barriers, such as change, context, culture and cost, as well as their current capacity for and past experiences of staff development. Together, we reviewed some of the strategic and operational challenges facing business within the global marketplace: the need for innovation to prompt greater productivity, cost effectiveness and better customer service, and the restrictions imposed by ever-expanding, complex regulatory frameworks.

The purpose of this report is to share the results and findings of our research with the business community. The detailed insight is already being used to inform our future ExecEd strategy so that the University of Exeter Business School is positioned to help your staff realise their professional potential and, in turn, enable your continued business success.

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The importance of executive education is clear. St Gallen University conducts a regular assessment of the executive education market and in 2016 found that 93% of respondents put executive leadership development as their first or second priority for their organisation in terms of its future success.

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The Impact of Executive Education, Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS), December 2017



Research approach

To inform the development of our ExecEd offer, the University of Exeter Business School wished to gain a greater understanding of the needs of organisations, both those we currently work with and those who may benefit from future support.

Specifically, we sought to determine:

- ▶ What type of ExecEd do they source currently?
- ▶ What ExecEd providers do they use?
- ▶ How do they rate ExecEd?
- ▶ What are their impressions of business schools?
- ▶ What are the major challenges facing their organisations connected to people?
- ▶ Where is the biggest skills gap?
- ▶ What are their success measures in terms of ExecEd?
- ▶ What service aspects would they like to see from providers?

“ I would be interested in Exeter as a potential provider with a good reputation and location. ”
HR Director, Legal Services

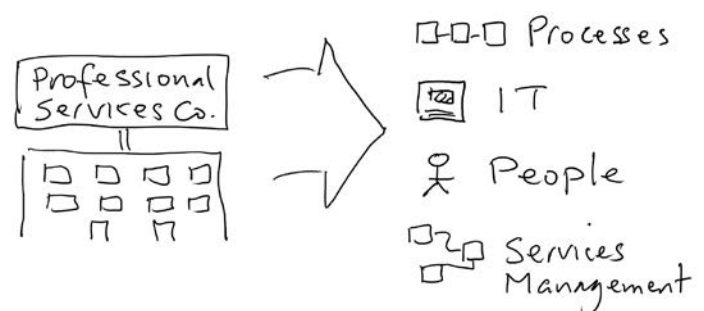
The Business School commissioned the support of Codexx, a consultancy firm, which specialises in assisting businesses to innovate and transform, to conduct the following activities:

- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Face-to-face or telephone/Skype interviews with 30 employers, which included large multinationals and medium-sized regional firms
- ▶ Design and secure responses to an online questionnaires (48 were completed)

Major external forces on professional service firms



Key transformational themes for professional service firms



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The learning landscape

There is widespread recognition of the long-term benefits of learning and leadership development – senior leadership teams view it as a future area of emphasis for their business. Even so, training isn't always the top priority when it comes to budgets. Most employers feel it hasn't lived up to expectations, saying they want to improve evaluation.

The *Financial Times' Corporate Learning Pulse 2017* survey of almost 1,000 executives from nine countries in Europe, the Gulf and Asia found that over half (58%) of senior professionals believe that executive education and leadership development are the keys to holding onto their best employees. Similarly, 53% agree that investing in their employees in this way drives change and innovation, delivering tangible and intangible value to their organisation. Such training not only improves their business knowledge, competencies and confidence, but is also vital to achieving business goals.

However, less than half of senior professionals (47%) are highly satisfied with their current corporate learning programmes. They want reliable approaches to determine the positive impact of development programmes on: organisational change; understanding of their company's strategy and vision; employee engagement; revenue, profit and margins; customer engagement and satisfaction; and attracting top talent.

Investment and purchasing considerations

The lack of confidence in measurement may be one reason why, despite the value placed on learning and development (L&D), training budgets have remained static. Since 2014, around half of the 400 or so businesses taking part in Henley Business School's annual *Corporate Learning Survey* said their budgets were likely to stay the same, though 2017 saw the first rise in the number of respondents (35%) who said their budgets would increase.

The most recent *Learning and Development Survey* from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), published in May 2015, revealed the median annual L&D budget ranges from £201-250 per employee, while one in seven of the 541 organisations responding had a budget of more than £700. Our research participants felt training budgets would rise in the next three to five years, though they may match inflation only.

Almost three years ago, the CIPD found the major considerations for L&D procurement were “closer alignment with the business strategy and more emphasis on monitoring and evaluation”. Not much has changed since then. The top programme considerations for respondents of the *Corporate Learning Pulse 2017*, echoed within our own research, were:

- ▶ measurable outcomes
- ▶ a customised approach to meet their needs
- ▶ an understanding of their organisation
- ▶ alignment with their organisation's strategy and vision.

“ Training and development needs to pull from the needs of the individual lawyer, not pushed on them. ”

Director of Knowledge Management,
Legal Services

What became clear from our dialogue is that regional and medium-sized organisations can be disadvantaged when

compared to their national or global counterparts in their ability to plan L&D in advance, simply because they are less likely to have a longer-term strategy for talent development. Needs vary, between more investment in professionals to more investment in senior executives and partners.

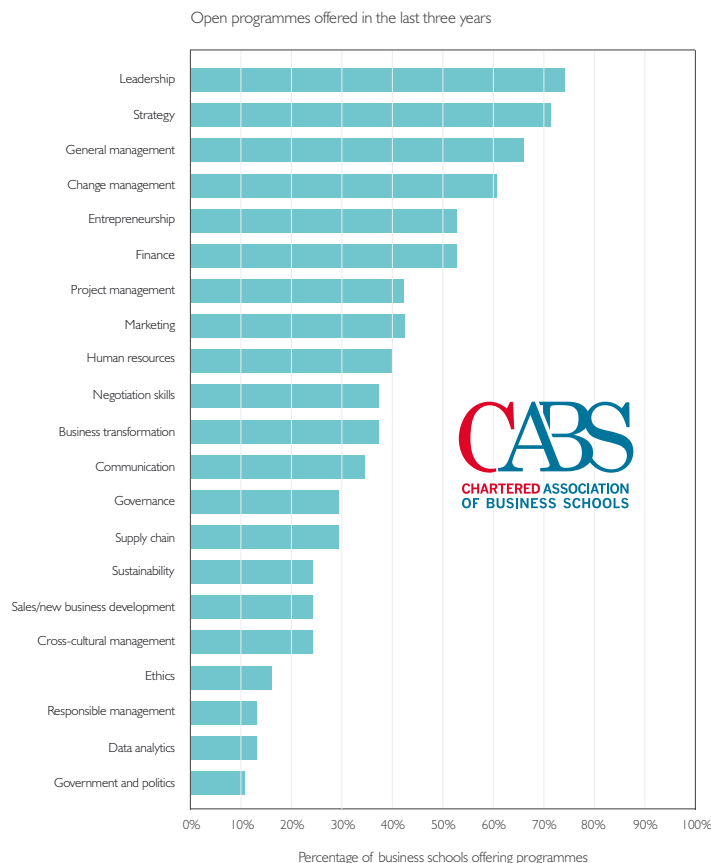
ExecEd providers

Training approaches varied considerably among organisations who participated in our research, depending on the size of the business and the budgets available. Some of the major companies had their own well-sourced L&D teams and established training academies, while others used niche training providers and one outsourced all its training and delivery.

Business schools are viewed as a core provider of executive education (ExecEd), though 'brand' and reputation are particularly important factors for decision making, more so for professional service firms.

Reviewing the current practices and trends of 49 of its member business schools, the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) found just under half had provided ExecEd for more than 10 years. For the majority, ExecEd took the form of short non-degree courses or customised programmes developed for an organisation, typically drawing on existing content in both cases, while 44% offered an Executive MBA.

The Impact of Executive Education, published in December 2017, also demonstrated the impact technology has had on the way ExecEd is delivered in recent years, with some programmes entirely online or in a 'blended' format, combining various forms of distance learning and face-to-face teaching. While almost all the schools surveyed used classroom teaching to deliver their programmes, more than 60% also use experiential learning, coaching and/or digital/online learning.



According to the CABS research, the greatest increase in demand within the Higher Education (HE) sector has come from apprenticeships and middle management. Over the last three years, business schools recruited 60% of their ExecEd participants to leadership programmes, and 35% of learners focused on general management. Change management, entrepreneurship and finance were also popular across the board, while project management, sustainability, governance and supply chain were identified by one school as being its most popular programmes.

The chart above is taken from 'The Impact of Executive Education' report and has been reproduced with the kind permission of the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS).

Apprenticeships

Only 14% of the CABS respondents' incorporated Level 7 Apprenticeships (equivalent to a Master's degree) within their ExecEd offer, though this is likely to rise in line with the UK Government's target of three million new apprenticeships by 2020.

The apprenticeship levy, which came into effect in April 2017, was a **'burning issue'** for many businesses we approached, most of whom were keen to see contextualised industry programmes being developed. Though the concept of apprenticeships was better understood, and lower level provision well established, within product based and manufacturing firms, most organisations were keen to investigate the potential to use the levy to develop compliant management and MBA apprenticeships.

Payable by all UK employers with a pay bill of over £3 million per year, the levy is set at 0.5% of the value of the employer's pay bill, minus an apprenticeship levy allowance of £15,000 per financial year. The levy, supplemented with a 10% Government top-up, is paid into an apprenticeship service account. It was designed to counteract the long-term decline in employer investment in training in the UK, expected to raise an estimated total of £2.6 billion in 2017/18, rising to £2.8 billion in 2019/20.

A recent CIPD survey of more than 1,000 business leaders and HR professionals, a third (34%) of whom pay the levy, found that just over four in ten organisations offer official apprenticeships. The bulk of provision, from over half (53%) of employers, offers qualifications at Level 4 – similar in level to BTEC Professional Diplomas, Certificates and Awards, NVQs at Level 4, Key Skills Level 4 and Certificates of higher education – and above. A quarter (26%) offer Level 4 and 5 higher apprenticeships (equivalent to a higher education certificate, diploma or a foundation degree). One in seven (13%) offer degree apprenticeships and just 13% of employers provide progression to a higher qualification.

The *Assessing the early impact of the apprenticeship levy* report, published by the CIPD in January 2018, also revealed that nearly half (46%) of levy-payers intended to simply re-badge current training activity to comply with the regulations and claim back their allowance. In addition, a fifth (19%) of levy paying firms, including 35% of SMEs, did not plan to use the levy at all to develop apprenticeships, but simply write it off as a tax.

Anticipated ExecEd changes (% of business schools agree)

- ▶ Rising competition (97%)
- ▶ Price pressures (80%)
- ▶ Rising revenues (87%)
- ▶ Increase in custom clients (73%)
- ▶ Increase in individual participants on programmes (53%)
- ▶ More international clients (77%)
- ▶ Technology used more for delivery (93%)
- ▶ More online delivery (90%)
- ▶ Course lengths will shorten (57%)

The Impact of Executive Education,
Chartered Association of Business Schools
(CABS), December 2017

“ I see an increase in the percentage of lawyers coming via apprenticeships compared to the conventional degree route. ”
HR Director, Legal Sector

“ In the meantime, we will seek to convert other development needs into apprentice programmes – where it is appropriate to do so. ”
Director Training Academy, Defence Services

As we navigate the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), doing business has never been more challenging – or exciting. New technologies have the potential to reshape entire industries and transform day-to-day business transactions, while interconnectivity and globalisation have facilitated a borderless economy packed with prospective global customers and suppliers.

Alongside this technological change, the world is reeling from ongoing geopolitical upheaval – not least the after effects of the UK referendum on EU membership in June 2016 and the US presidential election in November 2016. Within this external environment, we noted common challenges confronting the knowledge intensive and service firms, as well as product based and manufacturing firms we consulted.

Top 10 economic, policy, social, environmental and business threats to growth prospects

- ▶ Uncertain economic growth
- ▶ Over-regulation
- ▶ Availability of key skills
- ▶ Geopolitical uncertainty
- ▶ Speed of technological change
- ▶ Increasing tax burden
- ▶ Exchange rate volatility
- ▶ Social instability
- ▶ Changing consumer behaviour
- ▶ Cyber threats

The 20th Global CEO Survey, pwc, January 2017

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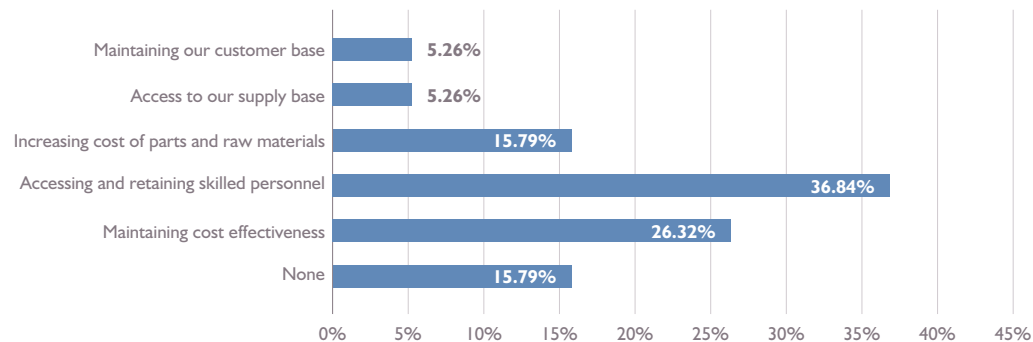
We need to develop individuals with the ability to move into new areas, who are able to undertake ‘different’, digitally enabled work effectively, and then motivate others to perform in new and uncertain environments.

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HR Leader, Talent Acquisition, Multinational Technology Company

- ▶ **Brexit:** Uncertainty is affecting the ability of organisations to plan. Most expect the real impact to come as a knock-on effect of their clients' experiences. They fear economic slowdown, an increase in the price of imported materials and the potential threat in accessing skilled personnel may lead to falling demand and pressure on prices.
- ▶ **Digital transformation:** Technology is having a major effect on both operational and management processes. The IT skills needed within firms are moving fast and organisations are struggling to keep up, confused over which new technologies to adopt and finding it hard to source knowledgeable talent.
- ▶ **Big Data:** Businesses appreciate the huge potential available in using increasingly sophisticated and real-time analytics to improve business performance and customer satisfaction. They want to understand how to connect data to decision making and be able to ‘think digitally’.
- ▶ **Changing business:** Mergers, acquisitions, new ventures and more are causing frequent changes in ownership and leadership within the business world. This brings its own challenges – recruiting and training CEOs, MDs, Boards and Managing Partners, managing relationships and leading across changing networks and often via digital mediums.
- ▶ **The ‘gig economy’:** As permanent employees are replaced by contractors and temporary positions, succession planning, organisation and skills development will become more challenging.
- ▶ **Legislation and compliance:** Organisations are anxious about the impact of new rules and regulations which govern all aspects of business. They need to stay abreast of changes in legislature and be mindful of the latest environmental thinking, as the public shines a spotlight on corporate social responsibility.

What do you consider to be the new challenges that economic and political level of uncertainty creates for your business?

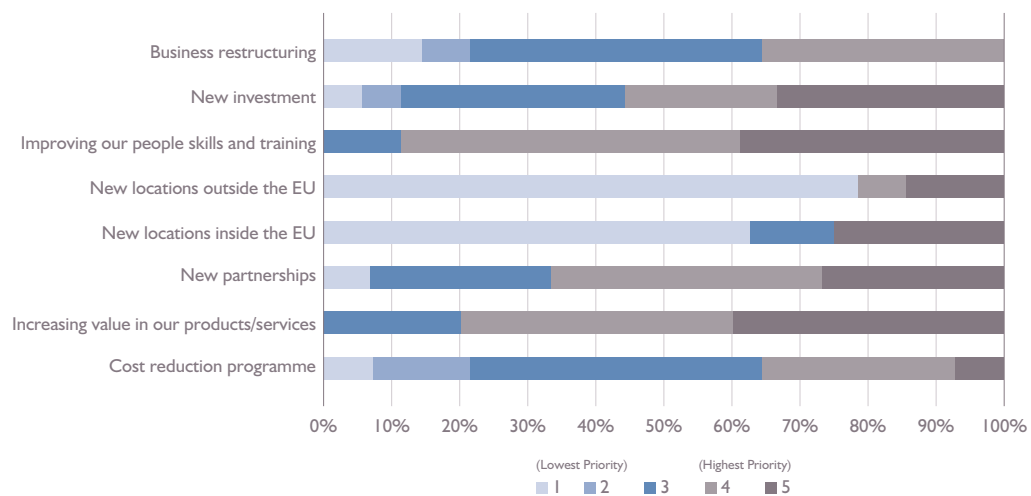


Accessing and retaining staff is a key priority during uncertainty (Exeter University ExecEd research, 2017)

While cost, as might be expected, features prominently among business concerns, the single biggest challenge identified by our survey participants, illustrated in the chart above, was the ability to access and retain skilled personnel. This echoes the findings of pwc's 2017 Global CEO Survey, in which 77% of the 1,379 respondents from 79 countries were concerned about the availability of key skills, only marginally lower than the top two concerns of economic uncertainty (82%) and overregulation (80%).

Businesses told us they are using various strategies to tackle issues head on. Most important to them, as evidenced in the chart below, is the ability to increase the value within products and services, followed closely by the need to improve people and skills training.

What are the main ways you plan to respond to the emerging business challenges of the next 3-5 years?



Increasing product/service value and improving skill levels and training are top priorities (Exeter University ExecEd research, 2017)

A focus on people, not just products

Today's hyper-competitive work environment is forcing businesses to find new sources of commercial advantage. Organisations and individual professionals must continuously expand their knowledge, perspectives and skills to identify and deliver new market opportunities. Success and competitive advantage is inevitably linked to the capability and competency of their people.

One of the biggest recent trends among HR professionals, identified in CIPD's annual *Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2017*, has been a shift towards developing more talent in-house and a focus on retaining rather than recruiting talent. Our own research revealed there is a common desire to improve executive and professional skills to align with the new business challenges – **a focus on people, not just products**. They fall into the following key categories of activity.

- ▶ **Innovation and entrepreneurship:** There is wide recognition of the need to broaden skills and develop potential across the full payroll spectrum, from technical experts to business professionals. Enlightened firms want to encourage their staff to think and work differently, so they are better placed to exploit the opportunities for digitising services and business processes.
- ▶ **Leadership and change:** In times of change, organisations were conscious of the need to avoid unclear or poorly communicated strategy, which could result in confusion and weak decision making. Management needs to understand how to lead, motivate, manage and maintain effective relationships in an increasingly digitally intermediated world across multiple stakeholders, networks and ecosystems.
- ▶ **Self-upskilling:** There is an increasing trend (something desired by management) for self-driven and proactive learners. Research released from Groupon last year found that nearly a third (30%) of UK workers had actively taken measures to upskill through extra training and qualifications in the past five years. Motivations for upskilling included: self-improvement (52%), refreshing their skillset (33%), and protecting themselves from automation due to fears their current job may become obsolete (5%).
- ▶ **Lean business:** All organisations are turning to 'lean' management approaches, seeking to create ever more value for customers while using fewer and fewer resources. While the demand for ExecEd is likely to increase, so too is the pressure on internal resources and budgets. Organisations will want value for money from their training partners and clear ways to measure return on investment.

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Our Chief Technology Officer has driven more focus on Learning and Development – ‘people, not just products’.

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HR Business Partner,
Environmental Services

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Specialists need to improve their consultative skills to complement their deep technical skills to make them more effective in client businesses.

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Learning Services Manager, IT Services

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There is a need to equip senior partners with a broader business view.

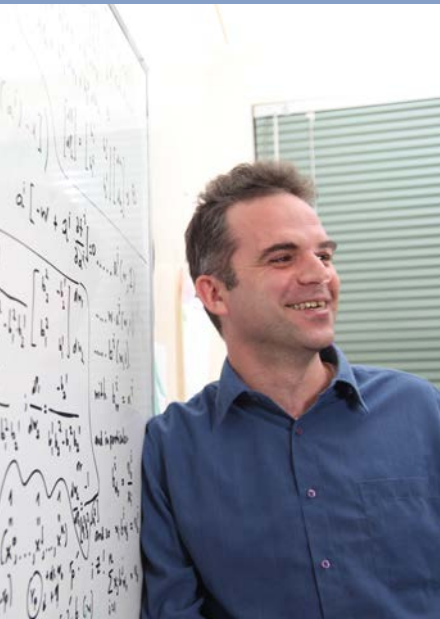
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Director of Knowledge Management, Legal Services

The best response to digital disruption Three clear messages

- ▶ Incumbent companies are usually better off reacting than not reacting.
- ▶ On average, bold, at-scale responses pay off twice as much as semi-bold reactions and three times as much as medium reactions.
- ▶ To do better than just break even on digital disruption, companies must also integrate digital strategy into their corporate strategy.

'The best response to digital disruption', Jacques Bughin and Nicolas van Zeebroeck, Sloan Management Review, April 2017



Training for today and tomorrow

There is understandable concern about whether training programmes can keep up with the fast pace of change; employers worry that by the time the training is delivered, things have already moved on. In the same way that leaders need the ability to change and adapt quickly, always keeping an eye on future possibilities, so too does their training.

Firms are also confronted with what can appear to be a 'catch 22' situation when considering training needs – they need to prepare for what may happen in the future, while dealing with what is happening now. In this case, experiential – or work-based – learning is an increasingly attractive solution. Learners invariably relate their workplace experiences to strategies and tactics being taught in the classroom, but practical research and projects provide an opportunity to directly link work issues and work performance with learning. This enables learners to put in practice learning today, while at the same time developing their skills and knowledge in preparation for the future.

The Rounded Professional

When it comes to in-house talent, firms are moving beyond the requirement for technical competence alone. They now seek a more rounded professional who can demonstrate commercial knowledge, client relationship building skills, new product development ability, and outstanding leadership and management capability.

Our research identified the key skills required of 'The Rounded Professional':

- ▶ Sector specific 'technical skills'
- ▶ Innovation and entrepreneurship
- ▶ Leadership and change
- ▶ Strategy development and implementation
- ▶ Integration of digital technologies
- ▶ Lean (re-engineering)
- ▶ Service design and delivery
- ▶ Project management
- ▶ Client empathy
- ▶ Strategic relationship management across changing networks
- ▶ Flexibility to adapt to 'different' work and work environments
- ▶ Communication skills

Conclusions and next steps

Our world is becoming more connected, yet more complex. Change is bringing challenge and opportunity. Now more than ever, businesses need to stay abreast of new developments, strengthen their resilience, expand capabilities, and learn to reduce the impact of threats and capitalise on market opportunities.

Our research identified that there is little doubt that the demand for ExecEd will grow, but providers need to meet increasing customer expectations and avoid a 'one size fits all' approach.

A fifth (21%) of businesses who participated in the research project felt that uncertainty within the business environment created **'a sense of urgency for us to improve'**. The need to enhance people skills and develop in-house talent to respond to market opportunities and digital advances is creating significant demand for ExecEd. That said, employers want any development to be customised to their industry and work successfully for their individual organisations and the individuals within them. They need more 'rounded professionals' with a mix of technical, strategic and soft skills.

The biggest obstacles, where past approaches have been unsatisfactory, relate to the cost of the service and the ability for businesses to understand the impact and benefits of the learning. Less than a quarter of our survey respondents felt these were areas that are currently highly effective. There is also room for improvement in the method and timing of training – with increasing use of digital on-demand training for specialist content, which has benefits in lower cost and flexible access to material versus conventional classroom training.



“ A key challenge is determining and realising the strategic changes in our organisation skills mix to meet the needs of future years and the impact of new technologies. ”

People and Engagement Manager, Utility

“ Learning and Development strategy needs to align with the business needs. ”

*Head of Learning and Development,
Legal Services*

Things to get right in ExecEd

The biggest takeaway from the research was the desire on the part of organisations for a genuine long-term partnership with their training provider, one which acknowledges the mutual benefit and demonstrates a shared interest in getting it right.

All organisations want L&D suppliers to invest more time in learning about their business context, strategy objectives and operational challenges so that training can be appropriately aligned. They want it to be tailored to their needs, not an 'off-the-shelf' proposal provided to multiple organisations.

Learning programmes must offer relevancy, practicality, expertise, currency and value – but not be **'too academic'**. There must be flexibility too in terms of the timing and location of delivery: employers would like to see more on-site delivery with greater use of online learning materials and training support.

Investment of any kind needs to demonstrate a return, more so than ever in a difficult financial climate. Firms need to be given a clear means of evaluating the impact of training on the business up front. They would also like to see more personal follow-through and aftercare offered, both to training participants and management.



“ Training and Development providers need to design programmes that provide a number of interactions and follow-ups/mentoring with trainees. ”

Head of Learning and Development, *Legal Services*

Moving forward

The process of designing our ExecEd service offering is now well underway. We have already announced plans to add two new degree apprenticeships to our portfolio and are currently enlisting the support of businesses to help co-design these programmes.

The 36-month part-time **Chartered Manager (Level 6)** will lead to a BSc (Hons) Applied Business degree, while the 24-month part-time **Senior Leader (Level 7)** apprenticeship results in the Exeter MBA. Both benefit from dual accreditation by both the University of Exeter and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), the leading authority on management and leadership training in the UK.

As the map below demonstrates, the University of Exeter has the opportunity to build on its relationships with larger organisations in the South West of England. Organisations with a turnover of more than £30 million and/or more than 250 employees are also more likely to have a long-term plan for staff development and therefore greater immediate need for our ExecEd. We believe we can add value by using our **‘convening authority’** as a major University, bringing dispersed organisations and their leaders together to share experiences and learn from each other.

“

The University of Exeter Business School is committed to working with organisations to customise learning and development interventions that transform managers and leaders into rounded professionals.

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Dr Bill Russell, Director of Executive Education, University of Exeter Business School

South west organisations with over 250 employees



You can keep up-to-date with all our events and new activities at **business-school.exeter.ac.uk**
If you would like to discuss your training needs, please contact:

- ▶ Dr Bill Russell for all executive education enquiries: w.e.russell@exeter.ac.uk
- ▶ Adele Dawson to find out more about degree apprenticeships: a.j.dawson@exeter.ac.uk

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