



Penna

The Business Benefits of Management and Leadership Development

Executive Summary

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Foreword

How many employers can be confident that they are producing the managers and leaders they need for the future? This ground-breaking report suggests too few are doing the right things to secure adequate returns on their investment in management and leadership.

Historically, there have been gaps in the evidence about how management development influences performance. I was therefore delighted to chair a Steering Board to help guide, challenge and support this project, which helps fill in some of those gaps. It is the largest study of its type, surveying almost 4,500 managers, CEOs, and HR directors, and has generated a wealth of data.

The results highlight strong links between how organisations approach management development and their overall performance. What matters is not simply how much money is spent but how it is spent. Top-performing companies align their development practices closely to their business strategy and they evaluate the effects of their investment more thoroughly. They make clear the organisation's commitment to management development, a commitment which starts with their CEO.

I hope these findings will stimulate fresh debate among employers about management and leadership development. With the economy stalling and the public finances in a precarious condition, the UK has rarely had a greater need for world-class management and leadership. Whether it is unlocking growth in the private sector or creating a more efficient public sector, developing the right management skills and behaviours is absolutely critical.

There can be no doubt that the right development activities can have a transformative effect on people's management abilities. One manager interviewed in this report summed up her experience of an intensive six-month programme by saying, "it provided me with many 'eureka' moments and genuinely changed my life and my expectations for my career... It had a massive impact on my competence at work". We need to give more people life-changing experiences like this to inspire the next generation of managers and leaders.

We cannot leave management development solely to HR teams and training specialists. They have an important role to play, but throughout my career I have seen the difference that the chief executive's commitment to development can make. So I urge CEOs and MDs – of companies large and small, of public services, and of charities – to look closely at how they personally promote better management and leadership throughout their organisations.

I hope this report will spur you all on to create more 'eureka moments' for your people.

Dr Martin Read CBE CCMI

Chair of the Research Steering Board

Non-executive director, Invensys, Aegis Group, Lloyd's and the UK Cabinet Office Efficiency and Reform Board

Introduction

What impact does management and leadership development have upon individual managers' performance levels – and on organisations' performance? And how can organisations maximise that impact?

These questions are at the heart of this study, the largest of its type yet conducted in the UK. It explores the business benefits of management and leadership development (MLD) and addresses issues including:

- current practice in MLD
- individual managers' views of MLD and the impact it has on their performance and abilities
- organisations' approaches to MLD and the impact on organisational performance
- how organisations can increase the business impact of MLD and how individuals may identify appropriate MLD for their specific needs.

The results – and the recommendations which we make based on the findings – will be of interest to employers as they seek to maximise the return on investment from their training and development spending, at a time when budgets are under significant pressure.

They will also be of use to individual managers who want to better understand how development activities might strengthen their skill set and enhance their professional abilities.

Finally, we expect that the research will add to the growing evidence base being considered by policy makers as they examine how management and leadership interventions may be able to support economic growth.

Research context

The literature review undertaken at the outset of this study, which reviewed over 60 pieces of work, found substantial recognition that the development of employees is a key condition for high performing organisations. MLD helps organisations keep pace with increasing demands to boost productivity, retain talent and gain competitive advantage in a faster yet more sustainable manner (Martin, 2009).

In the current climate, with budgets under significant pressure, employers need to maximise the return on investment from their training and development spending. They need to better understand the impact of different forms of MLD and how a range of factors may lead to the desired outcomes for the organisation. One such factor is that of enhanced employee engagement, about which there is increasing evidence for performance outcomes (MacLeod and Clarke, 2009). Another is the increasing research evidence of the importance of the line manager in the achievement of business and people performance (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007).

The research is also timely for individual managers, since the impact of current economic circumstances on the labour market makes it even more important that they understand how development activities may improve their skills, enhance their capabilities and help develop their careers. The individual manager is likely to have different needs at specific stages of his or her career and it is important for

managers to understand how different forms of MLD may be of benefit at particular career stages or management levels.

However, there are relatively few studies that have been specifically designed to assess the impact of MLD on organisational outcomes and fewer still that look at the impact of MLD on performance from both an individual and an organisational perspective (Boaden, 2005; Mabey and Gooderham, 2005). This dual perspective is important since in part organisational performance will be the result of the application of knowledge and skills by the individual, and the development of key attitudes in the workplace. This research seeks to address this need.

Methodology

The research used a multi-layered approach, including a national survey of managers, focus groups, interviews and case studies. The survey was completed by 4,496 people across all levels of management, sectors, size of organisation and geographical areas, including 302 chief executives and 550 HR managers, who were asked a separate set of questions relating to how organisations approach MLD. Respondents were mainly CMI members but the survey was also circulated to Penna's clients, Manchester Business School MBA alumni and to employers via Leadership & Management Wales, the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations and the Chartered Insurance Institute.

The focus groups were held at the beginning of the research among HR directors, MBA alumni, first line managers and middle managers, helping to inform the development of the survey. One-to-one interviews were held at the same time with CEOs, senior, middle and first line managers and consultants across the public and private sectors. An extensive literature review was also conducted at the outset and some of its findings are referred to in this summary.

Finally, case study interviews were carried out among 10 organisations of different sizes, sectors and types of ownership in order to provide qualitative data, primarily looking at the benefits of MLD to employers. Further interviews looked at the experiences of individual managers across a range of sectors and different career stages. These interviews are incorporated within the main report.

Measures used in the report

Throughout the report, we refer to three measures of performance which were developed in order to help us understand and measure the impact of MLD on organisations. Based upon evaluation by CEOs, senior managers and HR directors of 15 specific aspects of their organisation's performance, these three composite measures relate to business, people and organisational performance.

- Business Performance is comprised of financial and growth indicators
- People Performance includes employee engagement and productivity
- Organisational Performance comprises both of these first measures, plus measures relating to turnover and absence.

These performance measures were the basis for grouping responses into High, Medium and Low Performance groups, based on upper quartile, inter-quartile and lower quartile ranges.

Analysis of differences between small, medium and large organisations use standard classifications on the basis of the number of employees. Small organisations are defined as employing up to 49 people, medium 50-249, and large organisations 250 people or more.

Further details of the research methodology and demographic characteristics of the individuals and organisations who took part in the survey are provided in the full report.

Key findings

Nearly half of UK line managers are ineffective

Overall 43 per cent of managers reported that they considered their line manager to be ineffective or highly ineffective, compared to 57 per cent reporting their manager to be effective or highly effective.

High performing organisations report higher levels of line manager effectiveness. Eighty per cent of managers in high performing organisations report that their line manager is effective or highly effective, compared with 39 per cent in low performing organisations.

This finding highlights that there is considerable scope for improving the effectiveness of UK management and that, by doing so, organisational performance will improve. It also suggests that current management and leadership development (MLD) practices are not meeting the need for improved management effectiveness.

Range of management and leadership development

Managers and organisations report using an extensive range of different activities to develop their management and leadership abilities. The research identified 26 different types of development activities. On average managers report having experienced at least six over the last three years.

Mismatch between provision and most effective development

Whilst on-the-job experience is most commonly experienced, managers clearly rate accredited learning and qualifications as having the most impact on their management abilities.

It is significant that the types of training being offered by organisations are not necessarily those activities that managers rate as most effective. There appears to be a mismatch between MLD provision and the type of development perceived as most effective, as reported by managers (see Figure 1).

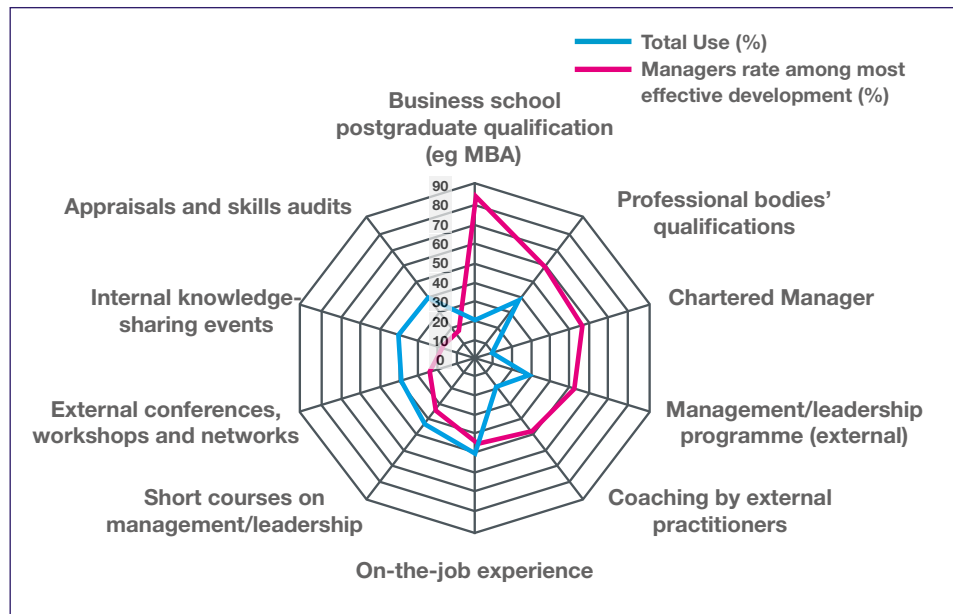


Figure 1: Provision of development and its effectiveness

In addition, fewer than half of all managers (47 per cent) reported that they have current opportunities to use the skills and knowledge they have gained suggesting that organisations are failing to make the most of their investment.

Given the vast range of development routes, it is not surprising that both managers and HR specialists struggle to identify the most effective development activities. Clearly, a 'one size fits all' approach to management development is not appropriate. This research examines in depth how different development activities can be targeted to achieve different outcomes such as improving a manager's approach to work and specific skills and abilities.

Qualifications – hitting the 'sweet spot'

Managers rated business school qualifications, professional bodies' qualifications and Chartered Manager as the top three most effective ways of developing their abilities. Professional bodies' qualifications are viewed as particularly important at the early stages of a management career.

Targeting MLD to meet specific needs

The types of development that are seen as most effective depend on management level, age and gender. On-the-job experience is seen as effective by managers at all levels, but more senior managers are more likely to see external conferences, networks, workshops and short courses as more effective. Professional bodies' qualifications and management and leadership programmes delivered by external providers are seen as particularly effective for those at more junior levels.

Coaching, either by line manager or external practitioners, appears in the top five most effective types of MLD for women but not for men. Coaching by external practitioners is identified by over half of CEOs and senior managers as something they wish they had received earlier in their careers.

Different MLD activities develop different competencies: for example management and leadership programmes delivered by external providers are strongest for developing teams, whilst a business school qualification such as the MBA is particularly strong for developing strategic awareness.

Investment in MLD

The survey found considerable levels of investment by organisations in MLD. The average spend per manager, per annum, is £1,414. High performing organisations invest 36 per cent more than low performing organisations (£1,738 compared to £1,275).

The top five reasons organisations gave for investing in MLD reflect a business-outcome focused approach to MLD:

- to achieve organisational objectives (62 per cent)
- to manage change more effectively (49 per cent)
- to improve managers' performance (47 per cent)
- to increase competitive advantage (46 per cent)
- and to support business growth (41 per cent).

Measuring the impact of MLD

The Management Development Programme introduced by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) contributed to a 15% increase in productivity. It has helped Cafcass meet the challenge of absorbing a 45% increase in care cases since 2008-09 with the same number of staff, at the same time as increasing their employee engagement levels.

Business impact

The research shows that it is not simply a case of making a financial commitment to MLD that leads to business benefits. A range of other factors, in combination, were clearly associated with high performance organisations. Such organisations appear to take a more strategic view of management development, with:

- commitment to MLD – driven by the CEO and senior management
- HR practices that reinforce MLD – such as performance management, leadership succession planning and competency frameworks
- alignment between business strategy and HR strategy – managers' skills are clearly developed to drive business results.

The commitment of senior leaders to MLD, demonstrated through their actions and behaviours, is associated with a 21 per cent difference in 'people performance'.

A combination of these factors – commitment to MLD, alignment to business strategy, and supporting HR practices – was found to explain as much as 32 per cent of the variation in 'people performance'.

Combined with analysis across industry sectors, these factors accounted for 23 per cent of the variation in overall 'organisational performance' measures.

Employee engagement

Management development appears to be further linked to levels of employee engagement – adding to the indirect benefits of MLD upon performance (see Figure 2). In organisations where MLD activity was highest, employee engagement levels were 5 per cent higher. The perceived effectiveness of MLD was also related to higher engagement scores.

Levels of employee engagement were correlated with the perceived skills of individuals' line managers and with career development opportunities received. Given the established links between employee engagement and performance, this study once again reinforces the critical need for effective line management.

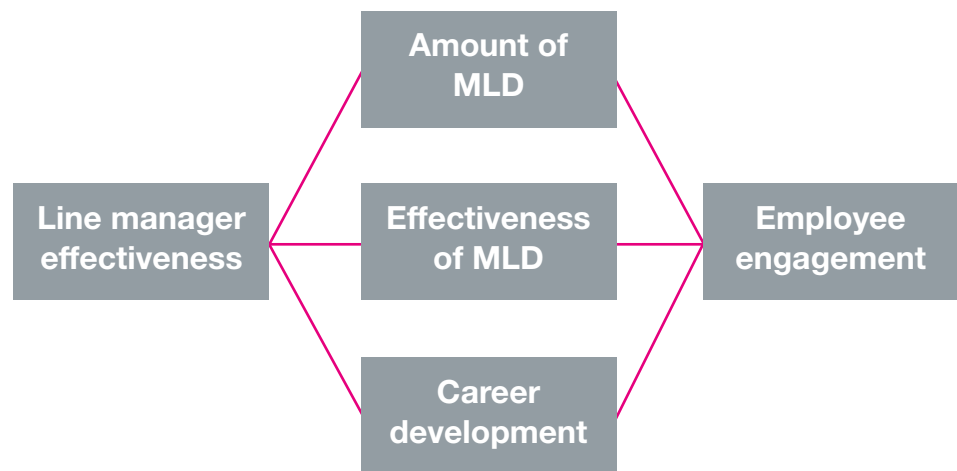


Figure 2: Factors affecting employee engagement

Differences between sectors and size of organisation

Sector

Public sector organisations spend on average £1,515 per manager per year, while private sector organisations spend £1,416 and not-for-profit sector organisations spend £1,133.

Public sector managers report receiving the most types of MLD in the last three years, with an average of 6.5. Not-for-profit sector managers received on average 5.9, while private sector managers received 5.8.

Private sector organisations tend to use more assessment activities than either public or not-for-profit sectors. They also use a wider range of evaluation methods to assess the impact of their MLD with an average of 18 methods, compared with 16.3 to 15.8 in the public and not-for-profit sectors respectively.

Size

The larger an organisation, the more likely it is to provide MLD for its managers – with the exception of qualifications, which are equally likely to be used by organisations of all sizes. Employees in large organisations, on average, report 6.7 different MLD activities over the last three years compared with 5.8 and 5.3 in medium and small sized organisations respectively.

However, small organisations spend slightly more than medium sized organisations with £1,298 per manager per year compared with £1,204. Large organisations, on average, spend £1,572 per manager per year.

Large organisations are more likely to evaluate their MLD using, on average, 18.3 different types of evaluation compared with 14.4 methods in small organisations.

Profile of high performing organisations

It is significant that the 30 per cent of organisations that were self-rated as high performers across a range of performance measures, were based across all industry sectors and sizes of organisations. Forty-two per cent of this group were small organisations with less than 250 employees and 43 per cent were large organisations, medium sized companies were not well-represented at only 16 per cent of the sample. Although the top performers were predominantly from the private sector, 13 per cent were from the public sector and 12 per cent were from not-for-profit organisations. The public sector reported the highest average level of spend per manager, which also indicates that investment alone will not drive up performance.

Thirty one per cent of the high performers had headquarters outside the UK, while international organisations made up only 24 per cent of the overall survey sample. This finding reflects other studies that show higher levels of management and organisation performance among multinationals (Tamkin, Mabey and Beech, 2006).

Conclusion

This research set out to identify the impact of MLD on organisational performance, and because of the chain of impact, the link between MLD and individual performance. The findings provide clear evidence that the level of investment in MLD, the alignment of HR and business strategy and the commitment to MLD within an organisation, alongside effective HR practices and the evaluation of MLD, have a significant impact on organisational performance.

In addition, the amount of effective MLD received by an individual, and the presence of a skilled line manager, has a significant impact on an individual’s competence, approach to work and, above all, employee engagement – which also have a positive impact on the performance of the organisation.

	Low Performance	Mid Performance	High Performance
Level of management effectiveness:			
Effective	39%	65%	80%
Ineffective	61%	35%	20%
Highly engaged	30%	67%	83%
Opportunity to use skills and knowledge	41.3%	52.8%	54.2%
Have the skills and knowledge to progress career	44.0%	45.8%	54.2%
HR alignment (mean scores, max.=30)	20	21	24
MLD commitment (mean scores, max.=15)	8	9	10
MLD activities for employees (mean number of types of activity)	6.2	6.5	6.6
MLD activity for CEOs (mean number of types of activity)	5.2	5.7	6.1
Financial commitment	£1,275	£1,320	£1,738
HR (mean number of practices)	2.44	2.78	3.11
Evaluation (number of ways of evaluating MLD)	14.4	17.5	22.7

Table 1: Key characteristics of MLD provision based on organisational performance

Recommendations

For employers CEOs and Board Directors must take responsibility for ensuring that leaders and managers' skills and capabilities, at all levels, are effective and aligned to the organisation's strategy. The high performing organisations in this study have a clearly differentiated approach that provides clear recommendations for those seeking to gain more impact from their MLD.

High performing organisations' top level managers show commitment to MLD

- Be clear about the organisation's leadership 'brand' and what is expected of all managers and leaders
- Challenge senior leaders on their commitment to developing managers at all levels of the organisation
- Provide role models at the highest level with CEOs and senior managers demonstrating their personal commitment to learning
- Smaller organisations may need to network with other organisations to co-commission MLD and share best practice.

Effective line managers achieve high employee engagement

High performing companies have more effective line managers – who are key to driving higher levels of employee engagement:

- Develop management capability: develop core competencies and knowledge of management practices through formal learning such as qualifications
- Provide bespoke development solutions which are aligned to specific skills and competencies, learning styles and career stage
- Value behaviours: coaching by both line managers and external practitioners was especially valued by senior managers, and something they would have appreciated receiving sooner in their careers
- Ensure managers are able to have effective career conversations to help align personal aspirations with the organisation's goals and values.

High performing organisations spend more on MLD

- Provide sufficient resources and commitment to development, even during tough times. Development is a long-term strategic investment that feeds the leadership pipeline for years to come
- Despite high levels of expenditure, many organisations are not achieving the desired results in terms of improved management effectiveness. All MLD investment should be strategically aligned to the business plan and targeted at managers' specific development needs.

MLD has a bigger organisational impact when aligned with organisational and HR strategy

- Ensure MLD supports the talent pipeline; consider the financial benefits of growing your own leaders who understand the culture from the ground up
- Undertake long-term workforce planning
- Develop HR and learning and development practices to support MLD procurement, design, application and evaluation
- Do not offer development for its own sake – locate the ‘sweet spot’ where organisational aims meet individual career aspirations.

High performing organisations evaluate MLD to a greater degree

- Be very clear what success looks like. What are the critical success factors?
- Align MLD to organisational performance measures to support the development of hard evidence of return on investment (ROI)
- Assess managers against success criteria before, during and after the development intervention
- Be flexible; use evaluation data to improve MLD interventions for even greater impact.

Accredited learning and qualifications are rated as the most effective by individual managers and meet employers’ need for competence

- Review how accreditation can provide employers with clear links to competency standards
- Facilitate greater transfer of learning to the workplace as a result of assessed assignments/projects
- Cater for all levels of management and skills using the appropriate level and depth of qualification from team leading to strategic leadership
- Facilitate evaluation of MLD with accredited learning tools
- Offer recognised qualifications to enhance your employer reputation
- Provide accredited learning to give individuals professional recognition and assist their career development
- Enhance job satisfaction by using qualifications to give individuals the confidence that they are operating at a recognised standard.

On-the-job development is the most prevalent form of MLD

- Create a rich organisational learning environment, providing access to resources to support normal daily business such as e-learning, webinars and professional memberships
- Provide coaching for all levels of management
- Build coaching capability within the organisation at all levels through ‘leader as coach’ programmes and accrediting internal coaches
- Create a culture of learning across the organisation by encourage forums that facilitate knowledge-sharing, idea creation, collaboration, cross-functional working and debate. These may include ‘lunch and learn’ sessions, action learning sets and co-coaching groups
- Encourage participation in external networks such as professional body forums or trade associations.

For Government The research clearly shows how management skills are affecting the UK’s competitiveness. Given that effective MLD can have an overall impact on organisational performance of 23 per cent, any increase in line manager effectiveness could help to drive improvements in public service delivery and economic growth.

In general, both employers and individuals are investing in a range of MLD activities, so this research is not necessarily making a case for more investment in training provision. Indeed, the findings suggest widespread investment by public sector employers. Such spending should be protected in the current and forthcoming spending periods, across an increasingly diverse and localised public service landscape.

However, investment needs to be matched by much greater awareness among employers – both public and private – about how they can maximise the return on their current investment. Given the mismatch between provision and effective MLD, there is much that can be done to raise awareness with employers and to help signpost to effective provision. Both business schools and professional bodies clearly have a valuable contribution to make in raising management standards. It is important that education and business policies consider how best to enable greater access and opportunities for individuals and employers to engage with formal management education.

The research highlights the importance of timing and the fact that many managers would have benefited from support before taking on a management role. There is clearly more that Government could do to promote earlier access to management education, so that young people have an understanding of basic management and leadership tools and practices at the start of their careers.

This research also shines a spotlight on what might be termed the ‘squeezed middle’: that is, mid-cap firms, currently a key focus for policy makers seeking to promote growth. It is notable that medium sized organisations are considerably under-represented in the profile of high performing employers, making up only 16 per cent of this group. They are also spending the least on MLD. While small businesses seem to be making the most of their flexibility and large organisations have the strategies and support structures in place to reap the benefits of their investment, too many medium sized organisations appear to be floundering.

This research intends to ignite the debate about how employers can improve management capability, and consequently organisational performance. Government can play a key role in this by:

- enabling young people to have earlier access to management and leadership development activities by reviewing provision at schools and colleges
- actively recommending high quality management and leadership education and accredited learning that has been recognised for effectively delivering the skills employers require
- providing incentives, support and guidance for medium sized businesses to help these employers prioritise investment in management and leadership development. The UK Business Schools Taskforce, set up by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, could work with professional bodies to play a key role in enabling medium sized businesses to engage with their local university business school and management networks
- maintaining and improving, through effective evaluation, the public sector's own spend on management and leadership; recognising the need to develop the leadership and management skills of the Civil Service and public sector to enable leaders to improve services, achieve efficiencies, and create productive cross-sector delivery partnerships. The new Major Projects Leadership Academy is a welcome initiative but with the National School of Government closing in 2012, further action may be needed to ensure that management and leadership skills are not neglected
- working with agencies such as UKCES, Sector Skills Councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure that leadership and management skills are considered as a key part of their 'skills for growth' strategy.

Concluding comments

This research is based on a substantial data set collected from both managers and organisations. It set out to review current practice in MLD and to examine the impact of MLD activity on individual and organisational performance. It has revealed a rich picture of MLD activity and also provided an understanding of the chain of impact linking MLD and performance. As a consequence it not only offers recommendations to organisations on how the business impact of MLD may be increased but it also makes a contribution to the ongoing debate about the business case for investment in MLD, the development of management and leadership skills in the UK and how MLD may contribute to future economic growth.

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