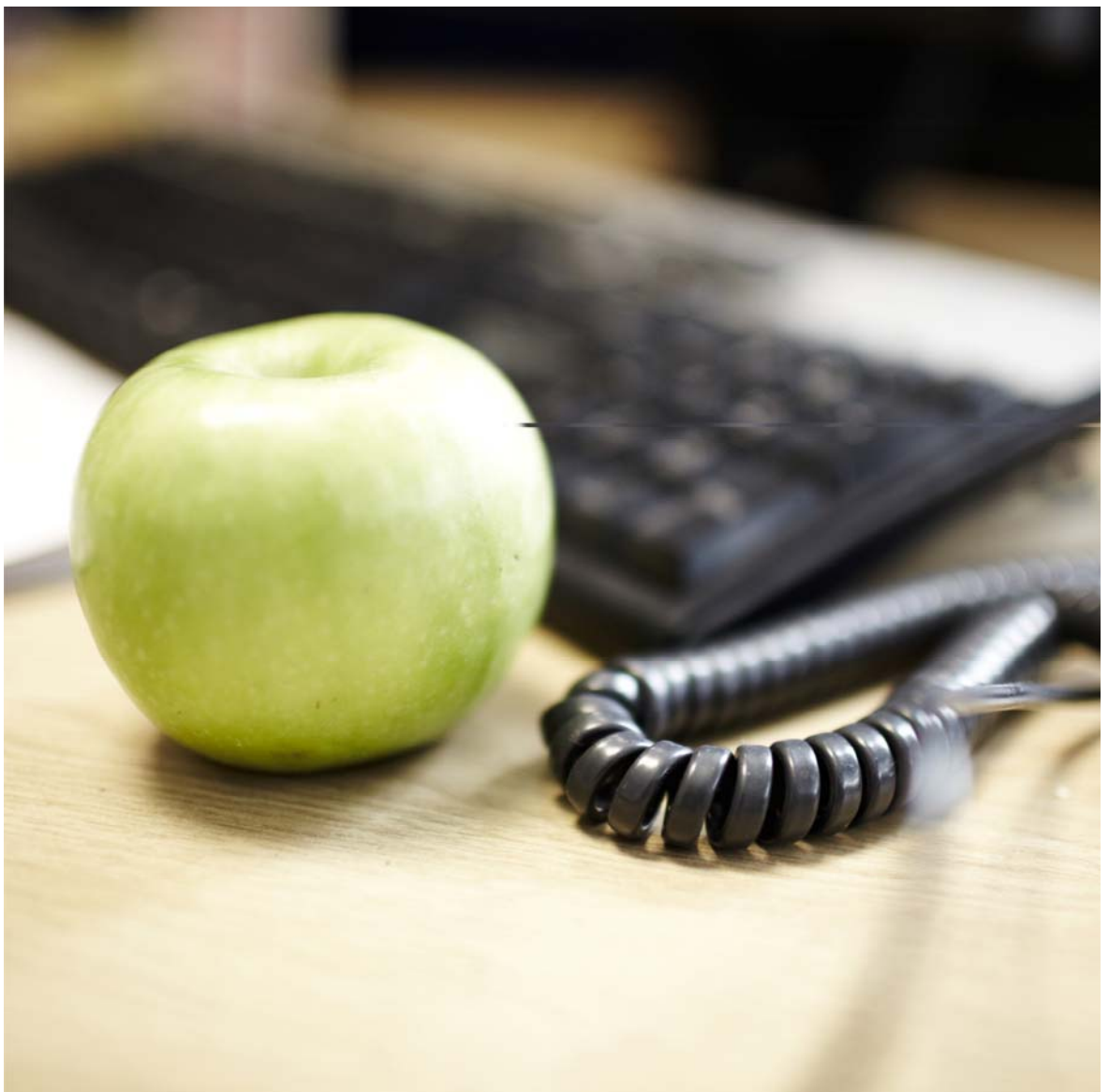


Report Management and Supervisory Skills Research

Prepared for **CITB-ConstructionSkills**

By **IFF Research**

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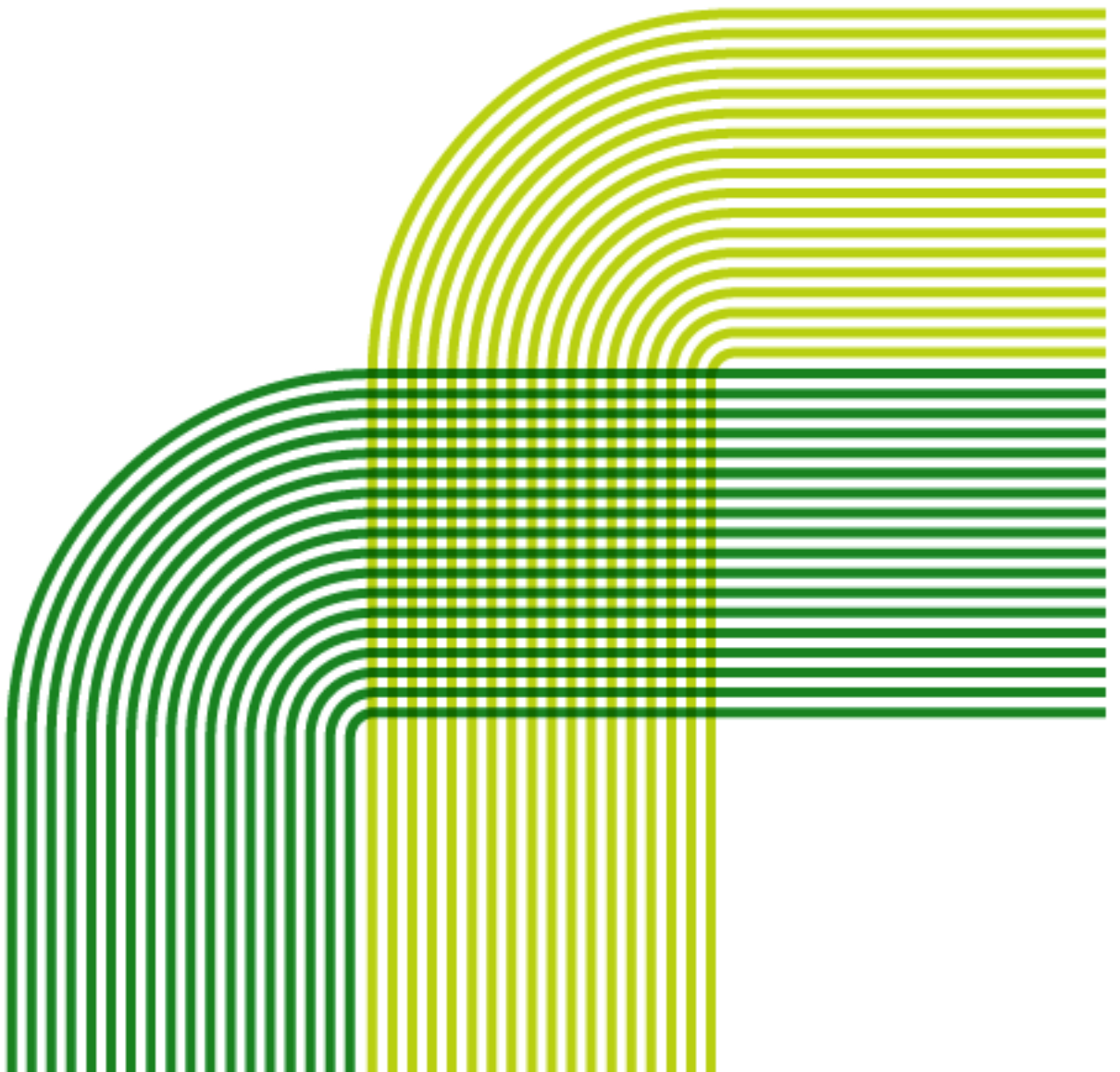


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Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Management Summary	10
3	The management and supervisory workforce	14
4	Current training for managers and supervisors	20
5	Skill gaps among managers and supervisors	37
6	The training implications of introducing new products or processes and of emerging 'green' job roles	45
7	Awareness, Impact and Views of the Management and Supervisory Development Programme (MSDP)	49
	Annex 1: Federations covered in the current and the 2007 surveys	58
	Annex 2: Detail of the skills gaps encountered by employers	59



1 Introduction

1.1 CITB-ConstructionSkills was established as the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the construction industry in September 2003, and re-licensed in 2010. It covers a wide range of activities in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of the built environment. As an SSC, the strategic objectives of CITB-ConstructionSkills are to:

- Reduce skill gaps and shortages, for example through influencing the supply of education and training;
- Improve business performance and productivity;
- Provide increased opportunities for training and development of the sector's workforce, and to bring in a diverse range of people into the sector;
- Improve learning supply through developing professional occupational standards, and through improving apprenticeships, further and higher education, so that learning and training infrastructures across the UK meet the needs of the industry in terms of quantity, quality, location, mode and funding mechanisms.

In summary, CITB-ConstructionSkills is working towards ensuring that the industry has the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

1.2 The Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) is one of the key mechanisms by which the organisation aims to achieve these ends. The industry's SSA has been negotiated by CITB-ConstructionSkills, and is a series of agreements and collective action plans between training providers, employers and Government designed to address the sector's current and future skill challenges. The SSA covers the whole of the construction sector, from craft to professional, and from new build to repair and maintenance. It covers the whole of the UK, with separate agreements for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1.3 The priority skill areas identified in the Agreements are:

- Attracting and retaining talent
- Developing talent
- Improving business performance
- Strengthening the skills infrastructure across the nations.

1.4 Within the area of improving business performance, a key focus of the SSA has been the need to improve supervisory, management and leadership skills in the industry. Since 2001 CITB-ConstructionSkills' Management and Supervisory Development Programme (MSDP) has worked with construction federations and employers to provide financial support for the immediate development of management and leadership skills, and, since 2009, for the long-term development of skills and knowledge that support innovation and sustainability critical to an organisation's success.



- 1.5 In 2010 a total fund of £2.1m has been available, and to date more than 400 projects have received funding through the programme. Applications have to be submitted through one of the construction federations or directly by an employer, and to qualify for funding, projects have to meet a number of criteria, demonstrate a need for funding and show how it will be utilised. The aim is also that there are tangible, sustainable and measurable outputs from the training such as training materials, qualifications, research reports and toolkits, so that other businesses not directly in receipt of the training can benefit.

Research aims and objectives

- 1.6 Research was conducted in 2007 among consensus federated employers to provide an evidence base to guide the development of the application process and to support resultant discussions concerning applications. The research explored the nature of employers supervisory and management skill needs and their preferred delivery methods for management training. The current research was commissioned to update, and provide reliable data on, the skills needs of managers and supervisors, recognising that the construction industry has changed considerably since 2007 particularly in areas such as innovation and sustainability, with resulting changes in skill needs. The findings will underpin CITB-ConstructionSkills' strategic decision making around the MSDP and inform the delivery of the SSA.
- 1.7 More specifically the objectives of the research were to:
- Identify, quantify and analyse the size, qualifications, training activity and skill needs of the management and supervisory workforce of employers represented by the construction federations, focussing particularly on innovation and sustainability
 - Identify how managers' skill needs have changed and are changing over time
 - Explore the impact that MSDP has played in supporting training

Methodology

- 1.8 The research involved a number of elements:
- Interviews with 22 federations, discussing among other issues the impact of the MSDP, and how they felt its impact might be increased
 - A quantitative telephone survey of 1,450 employers that are members of one of 20 federations covered by the research (the list of federations is shown later in the table at paragraph 1.16).
 - A small-scale qualitative exercise conducted by telephone involving:
 - 5 interviews with federations about specific projects for which they had received funding through MSDP
 - 8 employers that had attended MSDP-funded training that had been organised by federations
 - 7 employers that had received MSDP funding direct



The quantitative survey

- 1.9 The quantitative survey involved telephone interviews with 1,450 employers that were members of the 20 federations covered by the research.
- 1.10 It used a structured questionnaire (appended at Annex A), with interviews lasting on average 22 minutes. A pilot exercise involving 18 interviews was conducted prior to the main fieldwork, and a number of changes made to the questionnaire as a result. Each federation was also offered the opportunity to add a small number of questions for their own employers. These additional questions are not covered in this report, although results from them have been supplied to each federation.
- 1.11 The sample of employers was initially drawn from CITB-ConstructionSkills' levy database. Part of the interview with each federation involved a discussion as to whether the number of employers this generated matched their membership figures or was sufficiently close, or whether their own membership lists were more comprehensive and could be used instead or alongside that provided by CITB-ConstructionSkills. Some federations passed on their membership list, in some cases their website listed their membership and this was used to supplement the list from the levy database or was used instead, and in others the federation contact checked the levy list to update it (e.g. with companies that had gone out of business).
- 1.12 Although the federations differ greatly in terms of the size of the membership, the aim was to achieve a broadly even spread of interviews across the different federations. This would have meant an initial target of around 75 interviews per federation. Where the membership size did not support this number of interviews then these interviews were re-allocated to those where a target in excess of 100 was feasible. The table at paragraph 1.16 shows the number of interviews conducted for the telephone survey within each federation.
- 1.13 The survey data has been grossed up to the approximate number of employers within each federation – this has been shown in the middle column of the table at paragraph 1.16.
- 1.14 Fieldwork took place from 25th November 2010 to 18th February 2011. All interviewing was conducted from IFF's telephone centre in London by experienced business-to-business interviewers.



1.15 The size and home nation of the establishments covered in the quantitative research are shown in the following table. The first column of data shows the number of interviews conducted, the second shows the profile of the sample once the survey data was grossed up to the total number of employers within each federation. The final column of data show the comparative profile in 2007: the current survey has a higher proportion of employers with fewer than 10 staff, something likely to be indicative of the impact of the recession and the continuing challenging trading conditions with the sector. It is worth noting that the current and the 2007 surveys covered slightly different federations (see Annex 1).

Employer profile by size and home nation			
	No. of interviews	Weighted number of employers	Weighted number of employers (2007)
	1,450	17,892	27,194
<i>Number employed by the organisation in the UK including agency workers, the self-employed and labour-only sub-contractors:</i>			
1	54	7%	5%
2-9	488	47%	38%
10-24	356	21%	30%
25-99	384	18%	20%
100-249	105	5%	4%
250+	63	2%	3%
England	1,078	85%	82%
Scotland	303	11%	11%
Wales	64	4%	5%
Northern Ireland	5	*%	2%



- 1.16 The number of interviews by federation is shown on the following table, together with the grossed up number of employers and, in the final column, the number of staff (including the self-employed and labour-only sub-contractors) that this generates in each.

Employer profile by size and home nation			
	No. of interviews	Weighted number of employers	Number of staff (including self-employed & LOSC)
Federation of Master Builders (FMB)	133	11,000	156k
Painting and Decorating Association (PDA) *	133	1,700	21k
National Federation of Builders (NFB)	133	1,038	25k
Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA)	134	871	42k
Scottish Building Federation (SBF)	117	512	10k
Association of Interior Specialists (AIS) *	100	412	19k
Scottish Plant Owners Association (SPOA)	64	330	14k
Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)	107	306	52k
British Woodworking Federation (BWF)	104	306	6k
Hire Association Europe (HAE)	55	211	5k
Scottish Decorators Federation (SDF)	49	200	4k
Stone federation	75	197	7k
Federation of Plastering and Drywall contractors (FPDC)	49	157	6k
National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC)	49	156	8k
National Association of Shopfitters (NAS)	60	150	8k



Home Builders Federation (HBF)	11	134	22k
Homes for Scotland	12	62	3k
Road Safety Markings Association (RSMA) *	27	61	6k
The Resin Flooring Association (FeRFA) *	24	60	5k
British Drilling Association (BDA) *	14	29	2k
<i>Selected National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC) members (those marked with a * in the table)</i>	298	2,262	53k

The qualitative survey

- 1.17 The qualitative survey involved depth interviews conducted by telephone with 5 federations that had received MSDP funding, 8 employers that had attended training funded through MSDP run by federations, and 7 employers that had received MSDP funding directly. The depth interviews lasted approximately 20-25 minutes and focussed on the quality and impact of the training funded through MSDP, and whether the course would still have gone ahead without the MSDP funding.
- 1.18 The sample of federations and employers was provided by CITB-ConstructionSkills and all interviewing was conducted by the IFF research team and senior executive IFF interviewers.



2 Management Summary

- 2.1 This report presents the findings of research among federated employers examining the issue of the size and nature of the management and supervisory workforce, the training provided to such staff and the preferred means of delivering training solutions, and the extent and nature of any management and supervisory skill gaps. The study involved 1,450 telephone interviews with employers from a wide range of federations (see the table at paragraph 1.6 for the full list). Interviews were conducted from late November 2010 to mid February 2011.

The management and supervisory workforce and qualification levels

- 2.2 There are approximately 18,000 employers within the federations covered by the research, employing some 420,000 workers (including the self-employed, agency workers and labour-only sub-contractors). Results indicate that they employ a total of some 116,500 directors, managers and supervisors / foremen, representing just over a quarter of the total workforce (28%, very similar to the 25% found in 2007).
- 2.3 The proportion of staff that have a managerial or supervisory role decreases with size of firm from two-fifths (40%) where 2-9 are employed in total, to a third (32%) where 10-24 are employed, down to a quarter (25%) where 100 or more staff work for the company.
- 2.4 In terms of broad function approaching two in five of the management team are described as directors and senior managers (37%), just over a quarter work as middle managers (27%) and just over a third work as supervisors / foremen (36%). These results are very similar to 2007.
- 2.5 A quarter of managerial staff were reported as having a level 4 or 5 qualification (25%) and three-fifths have at least a level 3 qualification (59%), compared with just 7% that had no formal qualifications. Directors / senior managers and middle managers were particularly likely to have level 4 or higher qualifications (33% and 34% respectively, compared with 11% of supervisors), but supervisors were the most likely to have at least level 2 qualifications (79% compared against 66% of directors and senior managers). Directors and senior managers were the most likely to have no formal qualifications (13%), compared with just 3% of middle managers and supervisors.
- 2.6 As in 2007, larger firms tend to have more management staff with qualifications. Among micro firms with 2-9 staff 15% of the management team were described as having no formal qualifications, falling to 5% among those with 25-99 staff and 3% of those with 100 or more staff.

Current training for managers and supervisors

- 2.7 Half of employers had provided training or development (including self-learning and structured on-the-job training as well as more formal courses) for any of their managerial staff over the last 12 months, similar to the level in 2007 (53%). The incidence of training the management team varies widely by size of employer: just 6% of sole traders had put themselves through training in the last 12 months, rising to a third of those with 2-9 staff, three-fifths of those with 10-24 staff, and well over four-fifths of those with 25 plus staff. The pattern by size is very similar to 2007 other than there being a large fall in the proportion of sole traders undertaking any training (6% compared with 21% in 2007), suggesting these sole traders have been forced to cut back in this area as a result of the recession.
- 2.8 Half the directors, managers and supervisors had received training in the last 12 months (49%). Far fewer of the management team receive training within firms of 2-9 staff (27%) than is the case among larger firms - the proportion of the management team trained is broadly similar between firms with 10-24, 25-99 or 100 or more staff. A lower proportion of the management team has received training over the last 12 months than was the case for the 2007 survey (57%).



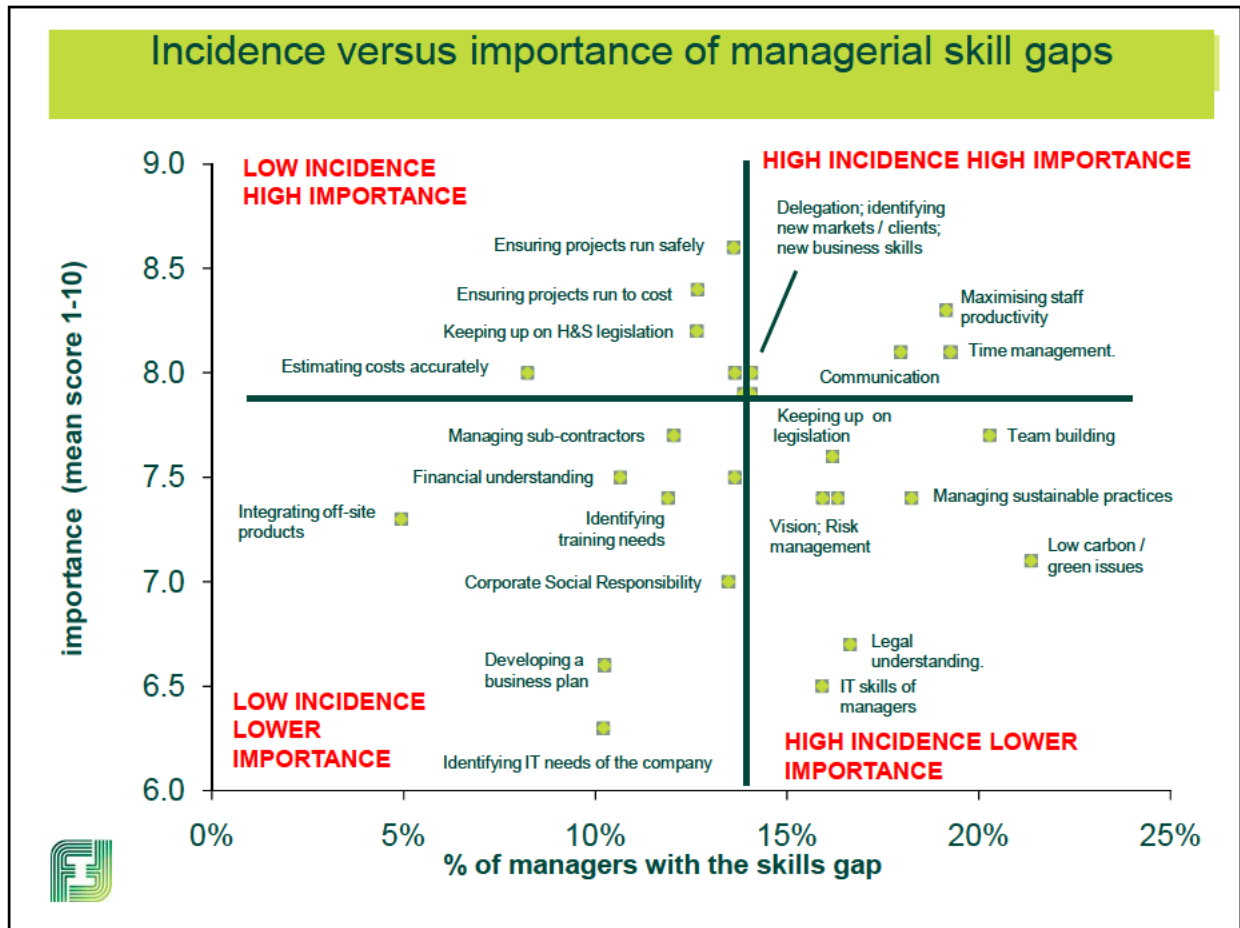
- 2.9 A far lower proportion of directors and senior managers had received training over the last 12 months (37%) than middle managers (52%) or supervisors (62%).
- 2.10 Training for managerial staff tends to focus on immediate, technical and job-specific issues (including health and safety) rather than strategic, broad management and leadership issues aimed at enhancing business performance.
- 2.11 Spontaneously relatively few employers mentioned management training being aimed at developing environmental, green or sustainability skills. However, when prompted just over a fifth of employers providing any training to their management team (22%, equivalent to 11% of all employers) said they had provided any such training to managers in the last 12 months.
- 2.12 A minority of firms training their management team in the last 12 months had trained any of their senior staff to formal qualifications (41%, virtually unchanged from 2007), though this increases considerably among larger firms. A wide range of qualifications had been achieved or were currently being worked towards. These tended to split between health and safety specific qualifications (Health and Safety certificates, SMSTS, IOSH Managing Safely etc) and then more academic qualifications such as NVQs (especially level 3 and level 4 or 5) and degrees
- 2.13 Reasons for not training managers and supervisors generally relate to senior staff being seen as not requiring further training or their being fully skilled (53%), or not being able to spare managers being off on training (28%). These results are very similar to 2007, however there has been a large increase in the proportion mentioning the cost and expense as a reason for not training their managers or supervisors, up from 8% in 2007 to 19% in the current survey.
- 2.14 Just over a quarter of employers (28%) would have liked to provide more training for their managerial staff over the last 12 months (similar to the 30% in 2007). This is higher among trainers (37%) than those that had not trained any of their managerial staff (19%). The areas where these employers would have liked to provide (more) training focus on Health and Safety training, job-specific training and broader general and strategic management training.
- 2.15 Around half of employers were unable spontaneously to think of what might stimulate more / any management training within their firm: trainers and non-trainers of managers were both most likely to mention more grants being available (25% and 9%). Once prompted, three quarters of employers agreed more grants would stimulate more managerial training (76%), and around three-fifths mentioned that if management training was more flexible (63%) or more industry specific (59%) then it would have this affect. These three factors were also the most likely to be mentioned in 2007.
- 2.16 There was little consensus on what type of greater flexibility was wanted, with similar proportions mentioning provision in the evening, at weekends, training delivered on-site, and delivered closer to their sites(s). Small firms with 2-9 staff wanting increased flexibility were generally quite open to the idea of evening and weekend provision, while this was rarely of interest to the largest employers.
- 2.17 Confirming these findings, when employers were asked as a prompted question how interested they were in a number of methods of delivery of management training, it being delivered by an external supplier at their premises was the type of training of most interest. Online or computer based training were relatively popular (32% of employers expressed high interest in such training). The training delivery methods of least interest were lunchtime seminars at a local venue, which clearly interrupt the working day, and training delivered on smartphones or other mobile devices (of high interest to 6% of employers).



Skills gaps and priority areas for skill development

- 2.18 When respondents were read a list of 27 skill areas nearly all employers recognised that skill gaps existed in their management team. Gaps were most commonly reported for: understanding the importance of and implications of 'green' issues (43% of all employers reported such gaps; 37% also reported gaps regarding managing sustainable practices in their firm); keeping up to date with environmental legislation and health and safety legislation (43% and 35%); IT skills (43%), identifying and winning new business opportunities (39%); and risk management (38%).
- 2.19 A number of skill areas have become more important compared with the previous 2007 survey:
- There has been an increase in the proportion of employers with skill gaps relating to green / low carbon, sustainability and environmental issues. The proportion of employers with skill gaps amongst their management team for being able to manage the delivery of sustainable practices in the company's work has increased from 21% in 2007 to 37% in the current survey.
 - Presumably related to continuing financial pressures, there has been an increase in the proportion of employers facing skills gaps for identifying potential new markets or clients (39% from 27% in 2007), winning new business and general selling skills (34% from 28%), and for developing and creating a clear strategy and vision for the business (34% from 27%).
 - For nearly all the skill areas investigated at least a quarter of employers were experiencing shortfalls in the skills of their management team. Hence in many ways the key consideration in terms of where MSDP can be of most benefit is the importance attached to the skills area, rather than simply the prevalence of each skills gap.
- 2.20 In terms of the proportion of managers and supervisors that employers believe need their skills developing in the specific areas discussed, the most prevalent skill gaps were for understanding the implications for the business of the low carbon agenda and the increased importance of green issues (affecting 21% of managers / supervisors), team building (20%), maximising staff productivity (19%), improving prioritisation and time management (19%), managing the delivery of sustainable practices (18%) and communication (18%). Most of the remaining skills areas explored were seen as needing improving for between 10% and 16% of all managers and supervisors.
- 2.21 Clearly the most prevalent skills gaps may not be the most critical ones for the organisation. The skills of most importance (among those experiencing gaps in each) generally relate to winning new business and delivering this work safely and to cost: ensuring projects run safely (a mean score for importance of 8.6 out of a possible 10); ensuring projects run to cost and managing project finances (8.4); maximising staff productivity (8.3); keeping up to date with health and safety legislation (8.2); Time management and prioritising (8.1); communication (8.1); identifying potential new markets and clients (8.0) and winning new business and general selling skills (8.0), and estimating costs accurately (8.0).
- 2.22 Results are summarised on the following chart which shows on the vertical axis the mean score for importance of each skills gap among employers experiencing each one, and on the horizontal axis the proportion of all managers and supervisors needing their skills improving in each area: the further right the higher the density of skills gaps. For simplicity not all the skills gaps are labelled (this applies to those which appear near to the 'average'). Maximising staff productivity, improving time management and prioritisation, and communication are three skill areas with above average prevalence and importance.





The balance between Management and supervisory skills versus innovation and sustainability

- 2.23 Almost seven in ten employers (69%) felt that the MSDP programme funding allocation of approximately two thirds towards projects to develop management and supervisory skills, one third to those that focus on developing skills related to innovation and sustainability was a suitable balance. One in nine (11%) felt the balance was wrong, while quite a large proportion, 20%, felt unable to comment. Among those feeling the balance not right, the general sentiment was that slightly more should be spent on innovation and sustainability.
- 2.24 Federations generally felt that the balance between the two elements was reasonable. Some felt it could be higher for innovation and sustainability, while others thought around a third was the most they would want it to be, but few opposed the idea of a substantial element of funding being for sustainability and innovation. One or two did feel it represented a 'distraction' from the core aim of MSDP (and if it was critical should be set up as a separate fund), or felt there were more currently more critical skills issues for their members relating to business survival.



3 The management and supervisory workforce

3.1 In this chapter we look at the number of managers and supervisors employed, their broad function (split between directors and senior managers, other managers and then supervisors / foremen), and the qualification levels of the management team (we use the term 'management team' to cover the combined group of directors, managers, supervisors and foremen).

Numbers of staff and managers/supervisors employed

3.2 As discussed within the methodology, the survey data has been grossed up to the population of employers within the federations covered by this report (see the table at paragraph 1.16 for the list of federations and the approximate number of employers in each). This is a total of almost 18,000 employers. Survey results suggest that these companies employ:

- **Around 420,675 staff across the UK**, a figure which *includes* agency workers, self-employed and labour-only sub-contractors. This is an average of 23.5 staff per company.
- **Almost 116,425 managers and supervisors**, an average of 6.5 per company, and representing a quarter of their overall workforce (28%).

3.3 The distribution of these staff and management team by size of firm is shown on the following table, with comparison to 2007 results.

Staff and management team numbers and profile by size of firm (2007 results in brackets)					
<i>Base: all (1,450)</i>	% of all federated employers	Number of staff (to the nearest 25)	Number of managers / supervisors	Average number of managers / supervisors	Managers / supervisors as a % of all staff
Total	%	420,675	116,425	7 (6)	28% (25%)
1	7	1,325	1,325	1	100% (100%)
2-9 staff	47	40,275	16,275	2	40% (44%)
10-24 staff	21	55,250	17,600	5	32% (30%)
25-99 staff	18	144,275	36,225	11	25% (24%)
100+ staff	7	179,550	45,000	38	25% (20%)

3.4 Results on the proportion of the overall workforce that have managerial / supervisors roles, and how this varies by size of firm, are very consistent with 2007, despite the fact that a slightly different set of federations were covered in the two surveys (see Annex 1). In both surveys around a quarter of the overall workforce have managerial / supervisory roles, and in both this proportion is much higher in small firms.



- 3.5 While firms with 100 or more staff across the UK account for a relatively small proportion of all employers covered by the survey (7%) results indicate that they employ around two-fifths of all staff and all managers / supervisors covered by this research (43% and 39% respectively). As the final column of data on the previous table shows, while overall a quarter (28%) of all staff employed are in managerial or supervisory roles, among firms with 2-9 staff this rises to two-fifths (40%) compared with a quarter (25%) among those with 25 or more staff.
- 3.6 Results by federation are shown in the following table, ranked in descending order of the total number of managers / supervisors.
- 3.7 Reflecting both the very different membership sizes and the average size of typical member organisations, results suggest that the number of managers and supervisors employed across the different federations varies hugely, from around 1,000 in SDF, Homes for Scotland and FPDC, up to around 41,500 in FMB. Related to this there is quite wide variation in the average number of managers and supervisors per employer across different federations, and this is particularly high for CECA, HBF and NAS. These are all federations with a relatively high proportion of large employers.
- 3.8 However, the actual proportion of staff employed as managers and supervisors varies relatively little between federations, and ranged from 22% to 39%, though most were in the 25% - 35% range (this is shown in the final column of the following table, which ranks federations in descending order of the number of managers and supervisors in each as suggested by the survey results).



Staff and management team numbers by federation					
<i>Base: all (1,450)</i>	Total no. of staff employed	Average no. of staff	Total number of managers / supervisors	Average no. of managers / supervisors	Managers / supervisors as a % of all staff
Total	421k	24	116k	7	28%
FMB	156k	14	42k	4	27%
CECA	52k	171	18k	58	33%
NSCC (PDA, AIS, RSMA, FeRFA & BDA)	53k	23	16k	7	30%
CPA	42k	49	9k	10	21%
NFB	25k	24	7k	7	28%
HBF	22k	167	5k	35	21%
SPOA	14k	42	4k	11	25%
SBF	10k	20	3k	5	26%
NAS	8k	50	3k	17	34%
NFDC	8k	49	2k	14	28%
Stone Federation	7k	35	2k	11	30%
HAE	5k	26	2k	9	34%
BWF	6k	18	2k	6	31%
SDF	4k	18	1k	7	39%
FPDC	6k	40	1k	9	22%
Homes for Scotland	3k	40	1k	15	36%



3.9 Information on the broad function of managers was split into three categories: directors and senior managers involved in running the business, other managers, and then supervisors and foremen. Nearly all companies employ a director or senior manager (98% - while a figure of 100% might be expected respondents in multi-site firms could answer about the site at which they worked rather than the whole organisation), though only three in ten have other managers, and half have supervisors / foremen. The numbers of each type of staff employed are shown in the following table. 'Directors / senior managers' and 'supervisors' each account for around three in every eight of the management team, while middle managers make up just over a quarter of the managerial workforce (27%). Results are very consistent with 2007.

Management function (2007 results in brackets)			
	% employing any such staff	Total number employed	% of the management workforce
<i>(2007 figures in brackets)</i>			%
Directors and senior managers	98% (100%)	43,900	37 (38)
Middle managers	31% (39%)	31,100	27 (25)
Supervisors / foremen	51% (53%)	41,425	36 (37)

Qualification levels of managers

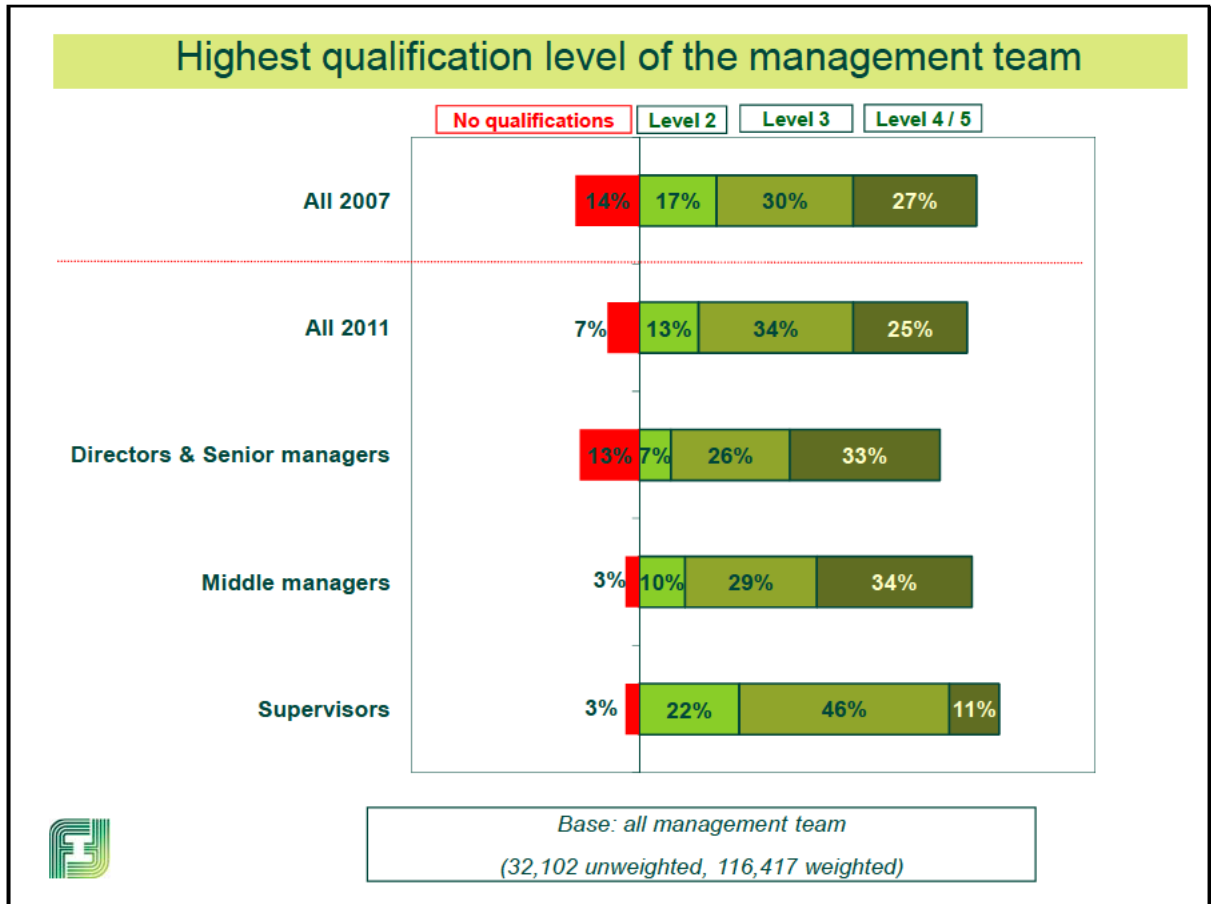
3.10 Respondents were asked how many of each category of management staff that they employed (directors and senior managers, other managers, and supervisors / foremen) had highest qualifications at the following levels:

- Level 4 or higher, described as being such qualifications as an HND, a BTEC higher, a degree, MBA or an NVQ level 4 or 5
- Level 3, described as covering such qualifications as Modern Apprenticeship, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, and ONC or OND, a BTEC at National Certificate or National Diploma level.
- A level 2 qualification, covering foundation level Apprenticeship, a City and Guilds craft, a BTEC first or general diploma or an NVQ level 2.

We also asked how many had no qualifications.



3.11 Results are summarised in the following chart. As a note rows do not add to 100% both because some managers may have qualifications at below level 2 as their highest and because some respondents were unsure about the highest qualification levels of their staff. Because of the latter point the figures under-represent those with each qualification level as their highest (though it should be noted that answers for level 2 or higher and no qualifications cover four-fifths of all managerial staff).

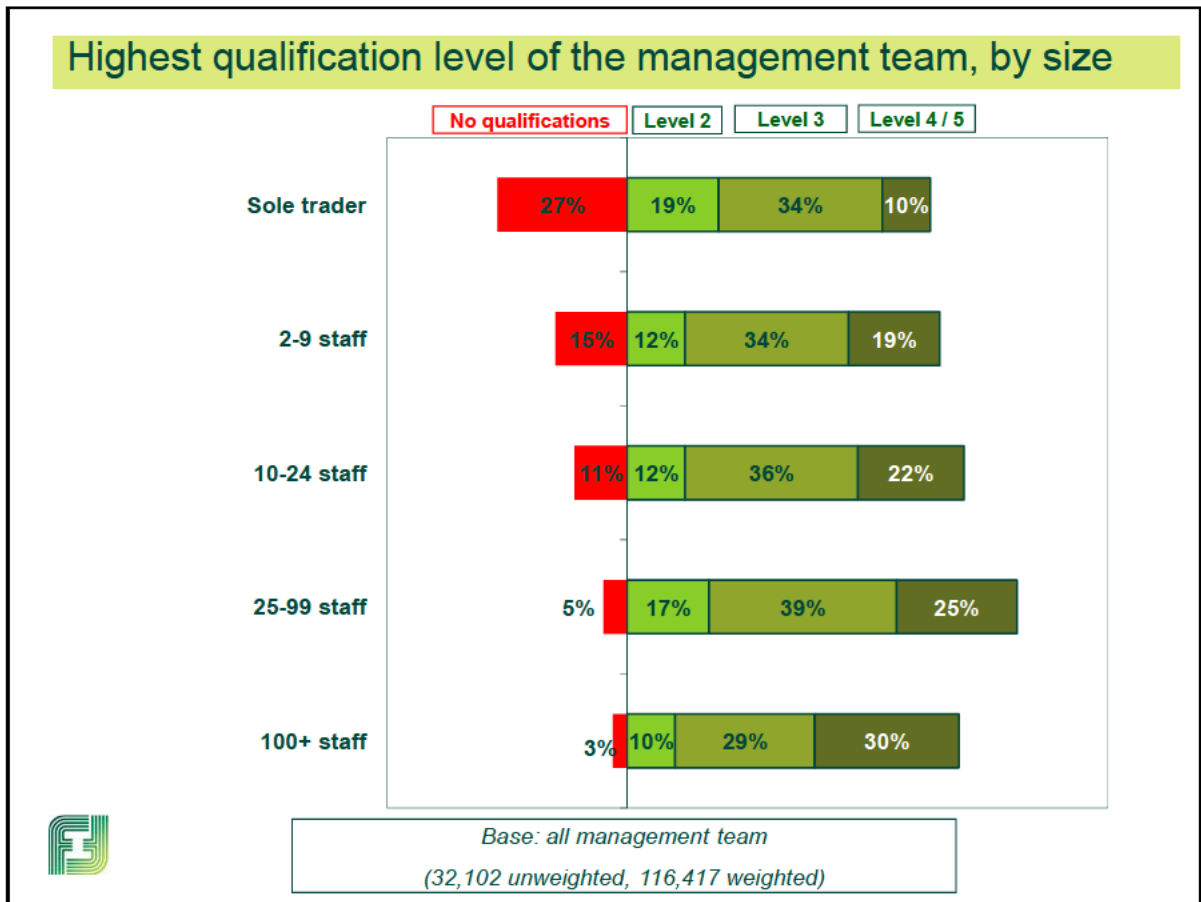


3.12 Results suggest that:

- Just 7% of the management team have no qualifications at all. This is a fall compared with 2007 (when the figure was 14%); this reduction has occurred across all three of the management groups, though the fall in the proportion of those with no qualifications has been particularly marked for middle managers (3% from 10% in 2007) and supervisors (3% from 14%). It remains the case that directors and senior managers are the group most likely to have no qualifications.
- There has been little change in the proportion with level 4 or 5 qualifications: a third of directors, senior managers and middle managers have these ‘degree level’ qualifications, as do one in nine supervisors.
- Three-fifths of the management team (59%) have at least a level 3 qualification (no significant change from 2007), a figure which varies little between the three management groups
- Supervisors are the most likely to have at least a level 2 qualification (79%), directors and senior managers the least likely (66%).



3.13 By size of firm there is a very clear pattern, as in 2007, that the smaller the firm the more likely it is that the management team have no qualifications at all, and the larger the firm the more likely they are to have qualifications at level 4 or higher.



4 Current training for managers and supervisors

4.1 In this chapter we examine issues relating to the extent and nature of training provision for managers and supervisors within the federated employers covered by the research. The issues explored are:

- The proportion of employers that train their managers and supervisors, and how this varies by size of employer
- The proportion of managers and supervisors receiving training over the last 12 months
- The nature of this training, the skills it has sought to develop, whether it has led to any qualifications and the methods of training used
- What might stimulate more training activity
- Reasons for not training.

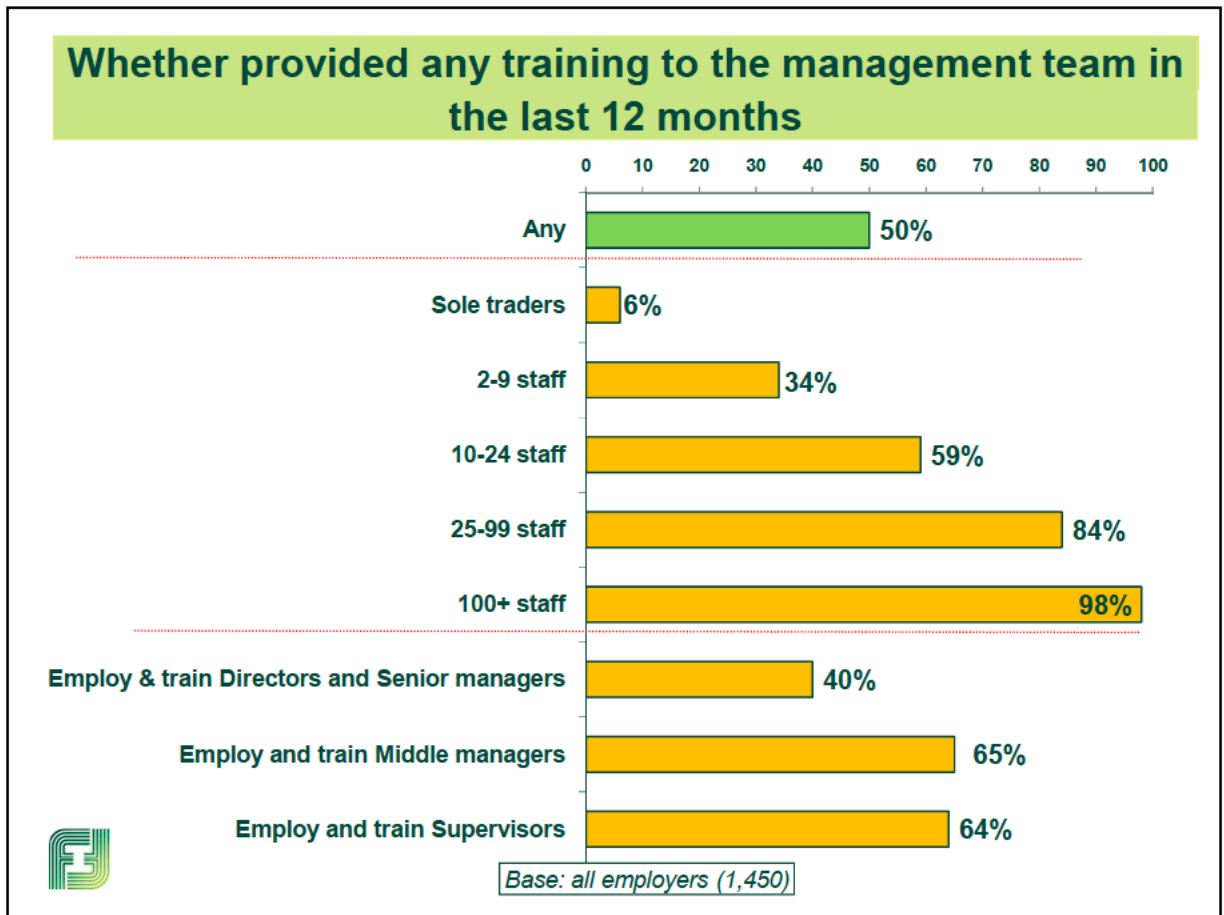
The extent and nature of current management training practices will shed light on where skills gaps are felt to exist currently, something examined explicitly in chapter 5, while an analysis of barriers to, and what might stimulate more training will give an indication of the role that MSDP may play in increasing innovative training practices.

The incidence of management team training and development

4.2 Exactly half of employers (50%) had provided training in the last 12 months for any of their management team, very similar to the 2007 result (53%). It should be noted that training and development was described in the broadest terms to employers as covering not only informal courses or training leading to a qualification, but also informal learning that can be carried out on-the-job, and self-learning conducted by staff in their own time using books, CD-ROMs or the web. The incidence of training the management team varies widely by size of employer: just 6% of sole traders had put themselves through training in the last 12 months, rising to a third of those with 2-9 staff, three-fifths of those with 10-24 staff, and well over four-fifths of those with 25 plus staff. The pattern by size is very similar to 2007 other than there being a large fall in the proportion of sole traders undertaking any training for themselves (6% compared with 21% in 2007), suggesting these sole traders have been forced to cut back in this area as a result of the recession.

4.3 Results are presented in the following chart. This also shows the proportion of firms that employ each category of management staff that train each group: firms employing supervisors and foremen (64%) and middle managers (65%) were more likely to have provided training to these staff (64% and 65% respectively) than they were to directors and senior managers (40%). This exactly matches the pattern of 2007.





4.4 Given the differences in the average size of employers within different federations discussed in the profile section (see the table at 1.16), it is not surprising that the incidence of management training varies widely between the consensus federations. Providing any training to managers / supervisors was most common among NFDC, CECA and HBF employers. This compares with fewer than half of employers training any of their management team within the following federations: FMB, SDF, SBF, BWF and PDA (the first four were highlighted in the 2007 research as having a minority of employers that train their management team, while the PDA was not covered specifically in the 2007 research). Results are summarised on the following chart.



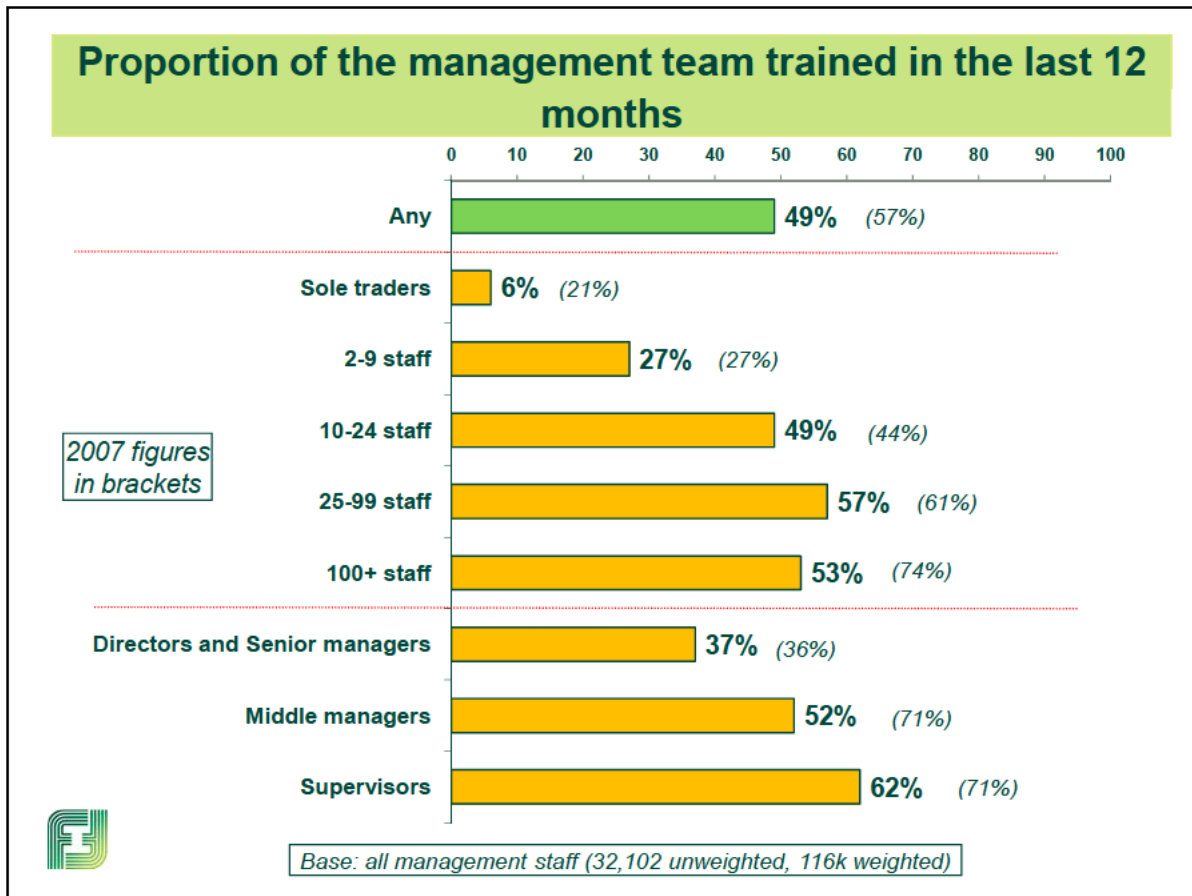


4.5 Geographic differences were less marked, and in most regions / countries between 47% and 57% of employers had trained any of their management team in the last 12 months. Employers in the East and West Midlands were the most likely to provide such training (each 58%), those in the South East (35%) and Wales (44%) were the least likely.



Proportion of the management team trained in the last 12 months

- 4.6 Half (49%) the directors, manager and supervisors within the federations had received training in the last 12 months. Far fewer of the management team receive training within firms of 2-9 staff (27%) than is the case among larger firms - the proportion of the management team trained is broadly similar between firms with 10-24, 25-99 or 100 or more staff, as shown in the following chart.
- 4.7 A lower proportion of the management team has received training than was the case for the 2007 survey, when approaching three-fifths (57%) had been trained in the previous 12 months. The fall between the two surveys is particularly marked among sole traders and within the very largest companies with 250 or more staff across the UK. In the following chart results from 2007 are shown in brackets.



- 4.8 A lower proportion of directors and senior managers were trained (37%) than middle managers (52%) or supervisors and foremen (62%). This pattern is similar to 2007, though it is interesting that the proportion of directors and senior managers trained is little changed between the two surveys, and the overall fall in the proportion of the management team trained is a result of a lower proportion of supervisors and particularly middle managers than in 2007 being trained.
- 4.9 Results vary quite widely by federation, and in the following federations at least three-fifths of the management team received any training: NAS (68%), CECA (65%), Homes for Scotland (65%), RSMA (64%), FPDC (63%) and AIS (60%).



The nature of management training

- 4.10 Employers were asked what skills the training for each level of management had sought to develop. This is of interest for a number of reasons. For one it is likely to indicate the areas where skills may be deficient (employers were asked explicitly about skills gaps among their managers, and this is discussed in detail in chapter 5). It is also key to see the extent to which training for managers has been specifically designed to improve management and leadership skills, as opposed to more immediate or tactical issues.
- 4.11 The nature of the training provided was asked as an open-ended question, and answers have been coded into broad classifications. Results are summarised on the following table for each of the broad management groups.

Skills that management training has sought to develop			
	Directors & Senior managers	Other managers	Foremen
<i>Base: those training each group</i>	%	%	%
H&S knowledge	48	46	46
Job-specific	31	39	53
Management / leadership	21	17	17
Business / accounting / legislation	13	10	6
First aid	10	19	17
IT / computing	3	4	2
Environmental / sustainability	2	2	1
Organisational (e.g. time management)	2	1	1
Other	6	3	2



- 4.12 As in 2007 training to improve health and safety knowledge and technical / job-specific skills dominate: for the former approaching half of employers training each management group over the last 12 months had provided training in this area; job-specific training was common among all three groups but particularly for supervisors and foremen. While these two broad areas of training can be important for productivity and performance (accidents can cause staff absence, site closure, prosecutions and lost production time), it is not in the broadest sense about developing the business strategically. Still around a fifth of employers training each management group had funded or arranged training seeking to develop these broader skills, and around one in ten that had trained managers had sought to develop skills and knowledge around business / accounting / legislation. First aid training was also not uncommon, especially among those providing training to middle managers and supervisors and foremen.

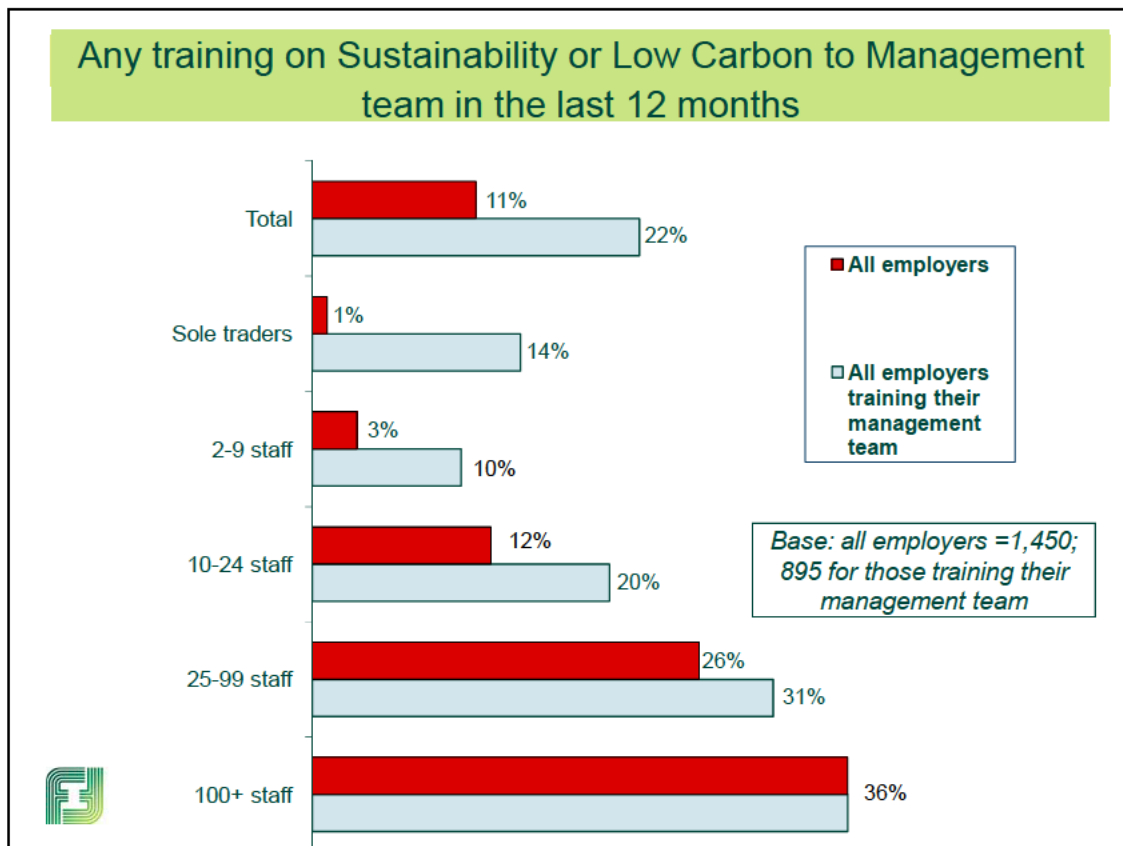
4.13 Examples of some of the more strategic management training included the following:

- “Strategic direction of the business and managing in a recession and downturn”*
- “Negotiation, time management, assertiveness, director level health and safety”*
- “Motivation, leadership and team building skills”*
- “Management skills, time management, contract awareness.”*

4.14 The pattern of training between the three different job types was broadly similar, with health and safety training common among all three groups, though with more of an emphasis on broader management skills for senior managers, more concentration on job-specific skills for supervisors, and with middle managers falling somewhere between the two.

Training on sustainability and low carbon skills

4.15 As shown on the previous chart, when asked to say what training they had provided for their management team relatively few spontaneously mentioned training aimed at developing environmental, green or sustainability skills or knowledge. However, when prompted as to whether they had provided any training in the last 12 months ‘aimed to develop sustainability or low carbon knowledge and skills such as carbon reduction, reducing waste, reducing energy consumption, or installing low energy solutions’ just over a fifth (22%) of employers providing any training to their management team said at least some of their training to these staff had covered these issues – this is equivalent to 11% of all employers providing such training to their management team. Results are shown on the following chart which shows for different size of employer the proportion of all respondents that have provided any sustainability / low carbon training to their management team, and then the proportion of those training any of their management team that have provided this type of training in the last 12 months.



- 4.16 Sustainability or Low Carbon training covered a wide range of topics including waste management, calculating and reducing carbon footprint, use of environmental friendly products and materials, renewable technologies, innovations in sustainability and keeping up with environmental legislation:

“Awareness of the sustainable products which are available on the market and how to reduce waste within the company.”

“It was mainly site waste management and the reduction of our carbon footprint, and I’ve been involved in the construction of buildings and how to get the best use of materials and designing houses that are eco-friendly.”

“General ideas for improving sustainability. We’ve been investigating making one of our housing projects powered by renewable and sustainable sources...”

“Designing systems for clients installation of Photovoltaic cells, solar heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, and designing “green” systems for clients.”

“Geothermal heating, solar panels, code 3 & code 4 of the sustainability code.”

Training to qualifications

- 4.17 For the majority of firms that trained any of their management team over the last 12 months this training did not lead to any formal qualifications. Overall two in five firms that provided training for their management team said this activity had led to a formal qualification (41%, virtually unchanged from 2007), equivalent to one fifth of all employers in the survey having provided training for any of their managers in the last 12 months which was intended to lead to a formal qualification. Predictably larger firm are much more likely to train to qualifications.

Whether training for managers over the last 12 months has led / is leading to a formal qualification by size of firm		
	2007	2011
<i>Base: those providing training (1,544 in 2007; 895 in 2011)</i>	%	%
All	40	41
Sole trader	24	24
2-9 staff	33	23
10-24 staff	35	42
25-99 staff	42	46
100+ staff	71	69



- 4.18 A wide range of qualifications had been achieved or were currently being worked towards. These tended to split between health and safety specific qualifications (Health and Safety certificates, SMSTS, IOSH Managing Safely etc) and then more academic qualifications such as NVQs (especially level 3 and level 4 or 5) and degrees. Results are summarised in the following table, which shows the proportion of employers that train to formal qualifications using each one (both overall and specifically for large firms), and then the proportion of all firms that have trained management staff to these qualifications over the last 12 months.

Qualifications that management training has / is leading to			
Base:	Those providing training to a qualification		All employers
	All	100+	All
	%	%	%
NVQ 3	27	33	5.4
H&S certificate	24	27	5.0
NVQ 4 or 5	24	35	4.9
CSCS card	23	33	4.8
SMSTS	17	26	3.5
IOSH Managing Safely	16	19	3.2
NVQ 2	11	11	2.2
Degree	7	10	1.5
Qualifications from professional bodies (PASMA, IPAF, CIOB etc)	7	17	1.4
HND	3	8	0.7
MBA	3	13	0.6

- 4.19 Training to high level qualifications is not uncommon, and include NVQ level 4 / 5 (5% of all employers), degrees (1.5%) and MBAs (0.6% of all employers).



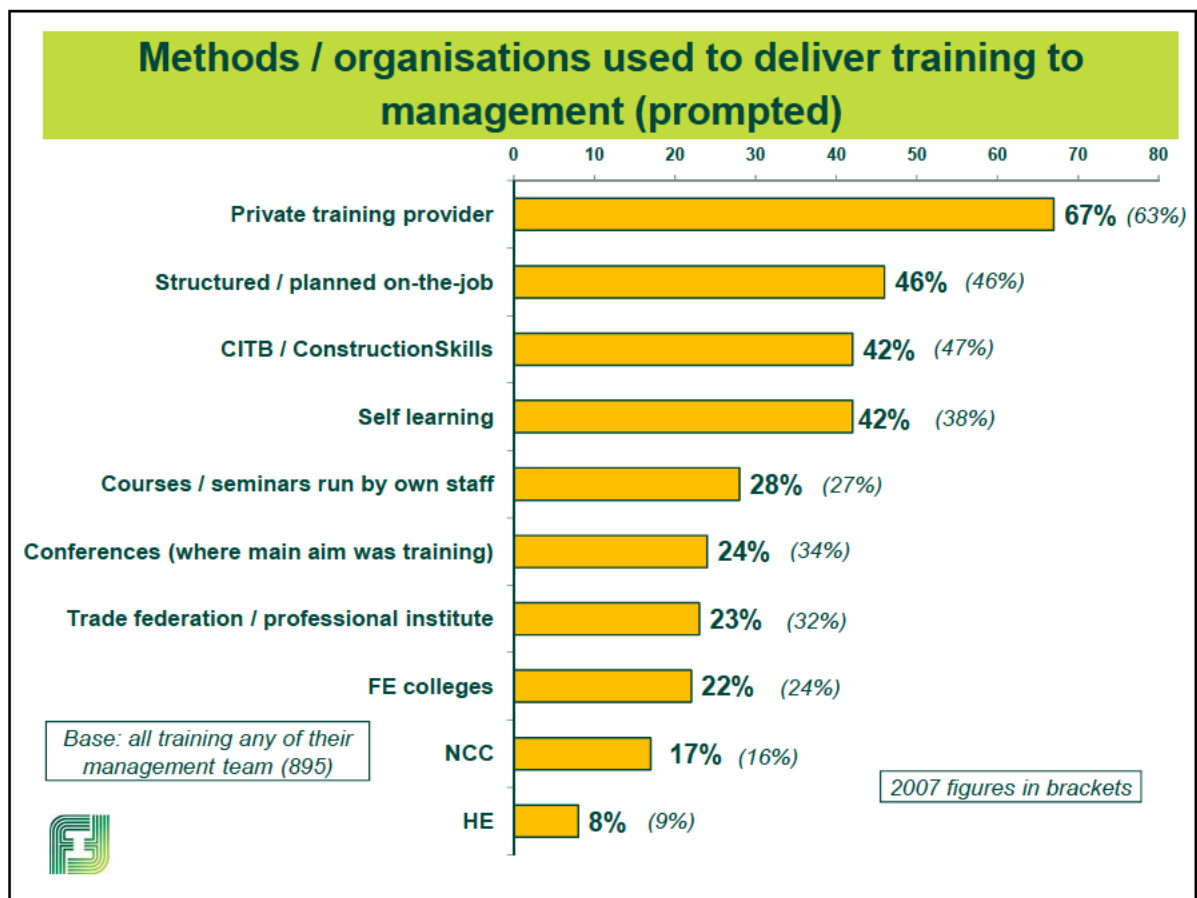
4.20 Compared to 2007 there appears to have been a particular rise in the proportion of employers training management staff to NVQ level 3 (5% of all employers, up from 2% in 2007).

Methods used to deliver management training

4.21 The most common means of undertaking training for managerial staff is the use of private training providers (67%), followed by structured and planned on-the-job training where a more experienced worker demonstrates techniques and skills (46%), the use of CITB-ConstructionSkills courses or training materials (42%) and self-learning (42%).

4.22 Trade federations / professional institutes are also quite widely used (23%), especially in a number of federations, in particular NFDC (by 71% of members training any of their management team, it was also the most widely used in this context in 2007), FeRFA (53%) and NAS (47%), but also SBF, NFB, SDF, Stone Federation and RSMA (each 40% - 43%).

Results are summarised in the following chart, with comparative 2007 figures in brackets.



4.23 Large employers that train are much more likely to use each method. For example 92% of those with 100+ staff had used a private provider for management training in the last 12 months, more than two thirds had used CITB-ConstructionSkills (68%), approaching half had used the National Construction College (46%) and only slightly fewer had used an FE college, and a quarter had used a university or HE institution (26%) for their management training.



Reasons for not training managerial staff

- 4.24 We have seen that half (50%) of federated employers had not provided any training to their management staff in the last 12 months. The most common reason for this given spontaneously is that the management team are considered to be fully skilled and hence there has been no pressing need for training. Just over half of non-trainers cited this as a reason (53%). It is interesting though, as we see in the next chapter, that nearly all employers when asked specifically about a range of management skills admitted that there were areas where there were gaps between what the business needs and the skills of the existing management team. Hence there is a sense in which when employers say they have not trained management staff because they are fully skilled they really mean by 'fully skilled' adequately skilled to meet the immediate needs.
- 4.25 Almost three in ten firms that did not train managers (28%) cited the fact that they find it hard to spare the time for managers to be absent on training. These employers find it hard to justify the longer term benefits of training with the more immediate requirements of meeting tight client deadlines, but clearly the danger is that they do not make time for the strategic running of the business.
- 4.26 The proportion of employers citing these two reasons for not training their management team are very similar to 2007 (within 3%). However, there has been a very large increase in the proportion mentioning the cost and expense as a reason for not training their managers or supervisors, up from 8% in 2007 to 19% in the current survey. Although this issue affected all sizes of employer, it is perhaps surprising that it was most likely to be mentioned by firms that did not train their management team with 25-99 staff (66%). The results are a clear indication of the financial pressures facing many employers.
- 4.27 Given the mission of CITB-ConstructionSkills to ensure that the quality and availability of training provision meets the needs of industry, it is interesting to see that few employers cite failures of training supply as the reason for not training their managers: just 2% spontaneously mentioned not being able to find relevant or suitable management courses as a factor. Of course these results may somewhat underestimate failures of training supply for example because many non-trainers will not have actually sought external training provision, or because other factors are more top of mind.



Training that employers would have liked to provide

- 4.28 Overall 28% of federated employers feel there has been learning and training over the last 12 months that they would have liked to provide for their management but have not been able to do – this is no significant change from 2007 (30%).
- 4.29 Employers with between 25-99 and 100-249 staff (42% and 43% respectively) were the most likely to have been constrained in the amount of management training they have been able to deliver. The figure was also higher for employers within the following federations: NAS (52%), AIS (46%), HBF (45%), Stone Federation (44%), FeRFA (42%) and NFB (40%).
- 4.30 It remains the case as in 2007 that employers that had trained managerial staff over the last 12 months were more likely to have wanted to undertake more such training (37%) than non-trainers were to have wanted to provide any training for their management team (19%).
- 4.31 As to the sorts of skills they would have liked to develop further, the areas largely reflect those that employers that had trained had delivered, and Health and Safety (37%), management and leadership related skills (30%) and job-specific / technical skills (24%) were the three most commonly mentioned. Responses given by at least 2% of these employers are listed on the following table.

Skill areas that employers would have liked to have delivered over the last 12 months but been unable to do so	
<i>Base: all those who would have liked to deliver more management training in the last 12 months (480)</i>	%
Health and Safety (including first aid)	37
Management and leadership	30
Job-specific / technical	24
Business skills (i.e. business development, contract management, marketing skills, legislative knowledge)	14
Environmental skills / knowledge	9
General IT skills	7
Understanding the financial side of the business	4
Time management	2



What would stimulate more training

- 4.32 All employers, whether they train their management team or not, were asked what might make them undertake more training amongst their management team. This was asked both as a spontaneous and a prompted question. Results to the spontaneous, top of mind question are shown in the following chart, with results presented for all employers, then those that trained their managers / supervisors over the last 12 months and those that had not done so.

What would stimulate (more) training of management team (spontaneous)			
		Whether trained any of their management team in the last 12 months	
		Yes	No
	All firms		
<i>Base:</i>	1,450	895	555
	%	%	%
If there were more grants available for training	17	25	9
If we had more (management) time to organise it	6	7	5
If workloads increased e.g. had to take new managers / supervisors on	6	4	7
If training for managers and supervisors was cheaper	5	7	4
Increased legislation / legal obligation (if we have to)	4	4	3
If training for managers or supervisors could be delivered in a more flexible way	3	3	4
If the training was industry specific	3	3	2
Demands of the industry i.e. client demand, new products, services, techniques in the industry	2	2	2
If the training was free or cheaper (including a simpler process for applying for grants)	2	4	*
If we had better quality providers locally	1	1	1
If there was more information about what training was available for managers and supervisors	1	1	1
Better economic climate	1	1	*
Nothing / don't know	47	36	58



- 4.33 By far the most common top of mind stimulus to increasing training activity would be more grants for training (17%), something particularly likely to be mentioned by those that had provided some training to their management team in the last 12 months (25%). Other factors mentioned included having more management time to organise training (6%), workloads increasing and for example new managers or supervisors being taken on (6%), if management training was cheaper (5%) or if legislation required it (4%). The proportion mentioning grants spontaneously as a stimulus has increased considerably compared with 2007 (8%), indicative of financial pressures being faced by many employers.
- 4.34 Spontaneously, around half of employers (47%) were unable to think of anything that might stimulate or increase training activity for their management team: non-trainers find it harder to think of things that would lead them to start training their managers than current trainers do to think of things that would lead them to train their managers more.
- 4.35 Once prompted with a range of possible factors that might stimulate more management training activity, the availability of more grants (76%) was the most common response. Results are summarised below. The order in which the statements are mentioned is exactly the same as in 2007, indeed the actual figures are very similar (each within 5%; the proportion mentioning grants has gone up slightly from 71% to 76%, those mentioning increased flexibility has fallen by 5 percentage points).



- 4.36 While the high level of mentions for grants is predictable, supply-side issues are also commonly raised. Around three in five feel they would deliver more management training if it could be delivered more flexibly (63%) or if it was more industry-specific (59%). Around half feel that more information on the management training available, better quality provision, and or the availability of advice about training needs and developing a training plan would serve to increase their training activity (each 45%-51%).



4.37 All these responses were mentioned by broadly similar proportions by size of firm, though perhaps surprisingly the availability of more grants for training was more likely to be mentioned by the very largest firms (92% of those with 100 or more staff, compared with 66% of sole traders).

Interest in various means of delivery

4.38 A key role of CITB-ConstructionSkills is to ensure that training supply meets the needs of employers, and in this context MSDP funding seeks to support training which is delivered in innovative and effective ways. In this section we examine results on a number of questions which look at the methods of training which are believed to work well for managers and supervisors, and employers' interest in different training methods.

4.39 First we look at ways in which employers feel training provision could be delivered more flexibly: we have seen that 63% of all employers indicated once prompted that if training could be delivered more flexibly this would stimulate more training activity for their management team. These respondents were asked as an open question what sort of flexibility they wanted.

How training could be delivered more flexibly (spontaneous)	
<i>Base: all saying increased flexibility would increase management training activity (981)</i>	%
Evening provision	25
Weekend provision	21
On-site / trainers come to us	20
Closer / more local	17
Training provided on a part-time basis or in shorter modules	9
Start times should be more flexible	8
Flexibility around scheduling	8
Distance learning / more self taught packages	7
Daytime provision	5
Out of normal office hours	4

4.40 Clearly improved flexibility means different things to different employers, with no one particular answer dominating. Some are looking for provision which is closer to save on travel time, others want evening or weekend provision, and others want providers to come to them.

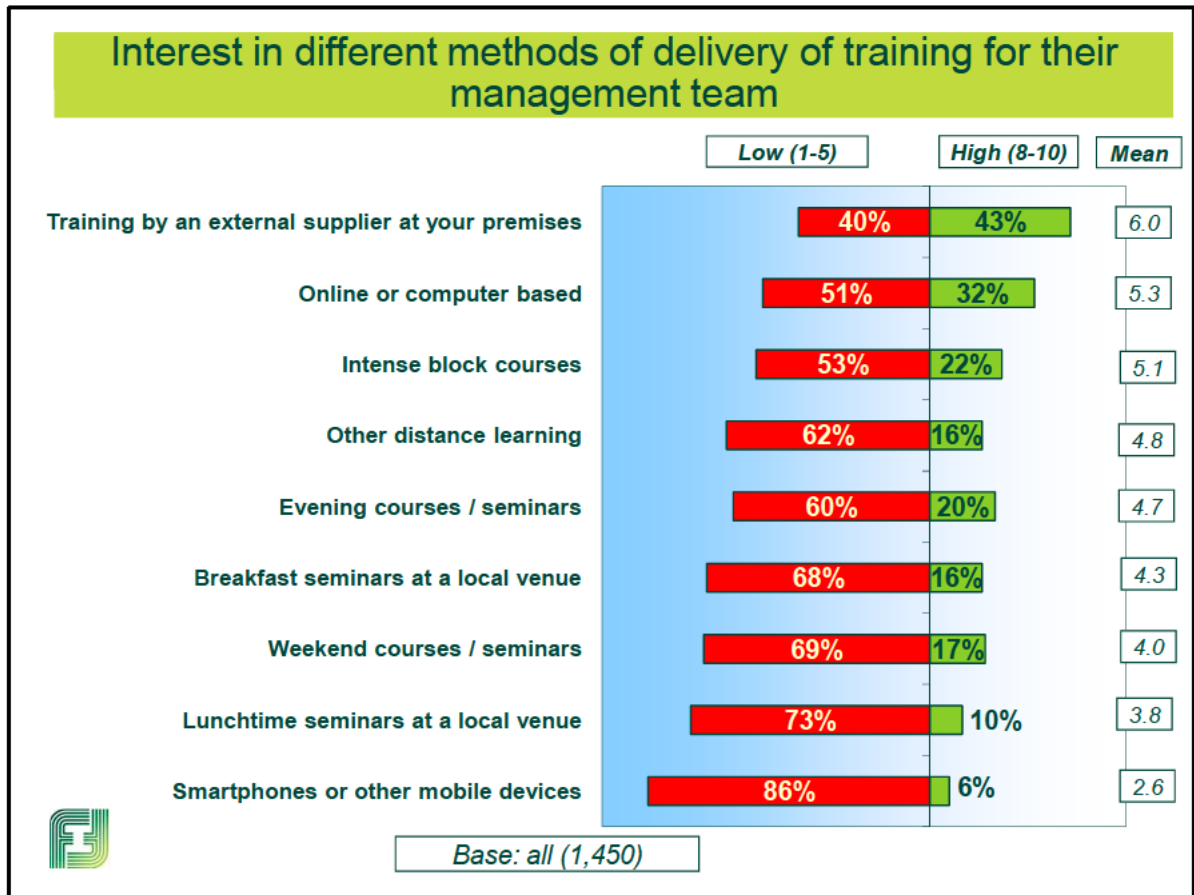


- 4.41 There were some marked differences by size of firm. Small firms with 2-9 staff wanting increased flexibility were generally quite open to the idea of evening and weekend provision, while this was rarely of interest to the largest employers. Distance learning was of particular interest to sole traders (25% of such firms wanting more flexibility cited this as of interest).
- 4.42 As an open question, employers were asked which approaches or methods of delivering learning and training work particularly well for their management team. Employers were most likely to mention on-the-job, practical training (23%) or classroom-based training away from the workplace (18%). Differences were relatively slight between those that had recently trained any of their management team and those that had not.

Methods of training which do or could work well for managers (spontaneous)			
		Whether trained any of their management team in the last 12 months	
		Yes	No
	All firms		
<i>Base:</i>	1,450	895	555
	%	%	%
On-the-job, practical training	23	22	24
Classroom environment / away from work	18	20	15
On-site training	6	9	3
Online training	6	5	7
Distance learning (e.g. CD ROM)	5	7	4
One-to-one training	4	5	4
Job-specific, tailored training	3	2	4
Working in small groups	2	3	1
Other	9	12	6
No specific methods / no preference / varies too much to say / don't know	33	28	39



4.43 As a prompted question, all employers were also asked how interested they are in a number of methods of delivery of management training. For each one, respondents were asked to give a 1 to 10 rating where 1 meant not at all interested and 10 very interested. On the following chart we show the proportion giving a 1-5 (low) and an 8-10 (high) rating, plus a mean score (from 1 to 10).



- 4.44 Training delivered by an external supplier at their premises was the type of training of most interest: more than two-fifths of employers (43%) gave an 8-10 rating for this type of activity, rising to 60% among those employing 100 or more staff.
- 4.45 In relative terms online or computer based training where managers or supervisors work through training packages in their own time were relatively popular, and a third of employers (32%) expressed high interest in such training.
- 4.46 The training delivery methods of least interest were lunchtime seminars at a local venue, which clearly interrupt the working day, and training delivered on smartphone or other mobile devices (of high interest to only 6% of employers).
- 4.47 For the other methods of training delivery discussed with respondents, such as block courses, and breakfast, evening and weekend courses / seminars, results were very similar with between 16% and 22% particularly interested in each.



- 4.48 As found in 2007, the very largest employers are particularly keen on intense block courses where the training is done over a whole day or days (48% of those with 250 or more staff are very interested in this method of delivery). On the other hand it was noticeably that small employers had above average levels of interest in training methods that did not interrupt the working day:
- 32% of sole traders and 23% of those with 2-9 staff were very interested in weekend courses (compared with 9% among employers with 10 or more staff)
 - 31% of sole traders and 25% of those with 2-9 staff were very interested in evening courses (compared with 13% among larger employers).
- 4.49 Results have changed very little since 2007 either in absolute or relative terms: as found for the current research, the area of most interest in 2007 was training delivered at their premises (though this was only asked of large employers), followed by computer based training packages (28% were very interested in this in 2007, compared with 32% for the current survey); lunchtime sessions were the area of least interest (14% giving an 8-10 rating, compared with the 10% in the current survey – delivery via smartphones was not tested in 2007); and there was little difference between the other methods discussed.
- 4.50 Respondents giving any positive (8-10) rating were asked why they were interested in that or those methods. The key reasons why particular means of delivery appeal are the convenience and flexibility they offer, such as it allowing people to do the training at their own speed where and when they want (mentioned by 54% of those rating at least one method highly, though by 74% of those rating online or computer based training highly), that the method does not interfere with the working day (mentioned by 30%, though by just over two-fifths of those rating weekend or evening seminars highly), or being able to do the training onsite or at local venues (mentioned by 19% of those rating at least one method highly).
- 4.51 Other less common reasons why training delivery methods appealed included block sessions enabling you to study without distraction (mentioned by 9% overall, but 22% rating this particular method highly), the method being less generic and more tailored to your needs (6% overall), it giving you more control over what and when you learn (3%) and it being cheaper (3%).



5 Skill gaps among managers and supervisors

5.1 In this chapter we examine the areas where employers say gaps exist in the skills of their management team, the number of the management team that lack these skills, and the extent to which eliminating or reducing these skill gaps are a priority to enable them to develop and grow the business over the next few years. This is in many ways the critical part of the research given the role of MSDP in funding training that will improve business performance.

Five key main priority managerial skill gaps (spontaneous)

5.2 Respondents were asked as an open question what the five main skills were that needed developing and improving among their management team to help grow the business in the coming years. Results are shown on the following chart which presents the skill area considered of highest priority, those mentioned in the top 2 most important, and then the proportion of employers mentioning each skill area within their top five skill areas that need developing.

5 main priority skill areas for management team (spontaneous)

1 st main priority	Top 2 priority skills (cumulative)	Any mention as a top 5 priority
Leadership/people management skills e.g. delegation, motivation (11%)	Leadership / people management skills (16%)	Leadership / people management skills (20%)
Health and Safety (9%)	Health and Safety (14%)	Health and Safety (17%)
Business skills e.g. marketing, tendering, business development (7%)	IT / Computer skills (11%)	Business skills (15%)
Written or oral communication skills (7%)	Business skills (10%)	IT / Computer skills (14%)
IT / Computer skills (7%)	Organisational skills (10%)	Organisational skills (12%)
Organisational skills e.g. time management (4%)	Written or oral communication skills (9%)	Written or oral communication skills (10%)
Job / industry specific skills (4%)	Job / industry specific skills (7%)	Job/ industry specific skills (10%)
Keeping up to date with legislation (3%)	Accounting/bookkeeping (6%)	Accounting/bookkeeping (9%)
Accounting / bookkeeping (3%)	Environmental skills (5%)	Keeping up to date with legislation / regulation (7%)
Environmental skills (3%)	Keeping up to date with legislation / regulation (4%)	Environmental skills (6%)
No skills need improving (30%)	No skills need improving (30%)	No skills need improving (30%)
Don't know (13%)	Don't know (13%)	Don't know (13%)

5.3 Quite a large proportion of employers feel there is no skills area that needs developing within their management team (30%), or were unsure what the key skills areas were that were needed to help them grow their business (13%). The most commonly mentioned skill areas that need developing are: people management and leadership skills such as delegation and motivation; health and safety; business skills (such as marketing, tendering, business development); IT and computer skills; time management and organisations skills; and communication skills. Each was mentioned as one of their top five priority skill areas by between 10% and 20% of all employers.



5.4 There were some differences by size of employer on this spontaneous question as follows (figures show the proportion mentioning each skill area in their top 5 priority skill needs):

- People management and leadership skills and were particularly likely to be mentioned by large firms with 100 or more staff (42%)
- Business skills like marketing and business development were particularly key for sole traders (30%) but also the very largest companies with 250 or more staff (27%)
- Time management skills were one of the key priorities for medium sized firms with 25-99 staff (22%)
- Communication skills are more important than average among those with 100-249 and particularly 250 or more staff (18% and 32% respectively)
- Developing accounting and bookkeeping skills is more important than average for small employers with 2-9 staff (16%).

The proportion of employers experiencing specific skill gaps

5.5 As well as the spontaneous measure, respondents were read a list of 27 skill areas and asked to indicate those where a gap exists between the skills that the business needs and the skills of the existing management team.

5.6 The following table shows the proportion of employers saying the management team have skills gaps in each area, with comparative figures in brackets for 2007 where applicable. Generally speaking the figures are very consistent with 2007, though we have highlighted in bold those skill areas where the proportion of employers experiencing these skill gaps is at least 5% higher than in 2007. Clearly a change over time can arise both through losing skilled management staff or through changing skill needs which reveal staff lack these new, emerging skills.

5.7 The general conclusions are:

- Most employers have managerial skills gaps across a range of areas (employers typically had skills gaps in 9 of the 27 areas covered).
- There has been an increase in the proportion of employers with skill gaps relating to green / low carbon, sustainability and environmental issues. Understanding the implications and increased importance of low carbon and green issues was the skills area where most employers reported any managerial skills gap (45%), and there has been an increase in employers reporting gaps for being able to manage the delivery of sustainable practices in the company's work (from 21% in 2007 to 37% in 2011).
- It remains the case that many employers say at least some of their management team do not have IT skills to the required level (43%).
- Presumably related to the recession and the financial pressures many employers face, there has been an increase compared with 2007 in the proportion of employers facing skills gaps for identifying potential new markets or clients (39% from 27%), winning new business and general selling skills (34% from 28%), and for developing and creating a clear strategy and vision for the business (34% from 27%).
- For nearly all the skill areas investigated at least a quarter of employers were experiencing shortfalls in the skills of their management team. Hence in many ways the key consideration in terms of where MSDP can be of most benefit is the importance attached to the skills area (which we look at later in the chapter), rather than simply the prevalence of each skills gap.



Proportion of employers with specific managerial skill gaps (prompted) – 2007 figures in brackets

Understanding the implications and increased importance of green issues	45% (n/a)
Keeping up to date with environmental legislation	43% (37%)
The IT skills of senior staff themselves	43% (40%)
Identifying potential new markets or clients	39% (27%)
Risk management	38% (33%)
Legal understanding of contracts	38% (38%)
Managing the delivery of sustainable practices in the company's work	37% (21%)
Keeping up to date with Health and Safety legislation	35% (36%)
Winning new business and general selling skills	34% (28%)
Developing and creating a clear strategy and vision for the business	34% (27%)
Managing their time effectively and prioritisation of tasks	33% (32%)
Identifying the IT needs of the organisation	33% (28%)
Maximising the productivity of staff	33% (33%)
Keeping up to date with the latest innovations, products or techniques	32% (26%)
Identifying the training needs of staff, and developing their skills	32% (30%)
Ensuring projects run to cost and managing project finances	31% (27%)
Team building and getting staff to share the same goals	30% (29%)
Writing a business plan	29% (25%)
Estimating the cost of a project accurately	28% (25%)
Understanding and implementing Corporate Social Responsibility	28% (20%)
Financial understanding	28% (28%)
Communicating effectively	27% (23%)
Managing client expectations and maintaining high customer satisfaction	26% (27%)
Ensuring project work is carried out safely	26% (26%)
Effective delegation	26% (26%)
Managing suppliers or sub-contractors effectively	23% (25%)
Capability to ensure off-site products are integrated on-site	14% (n/a)



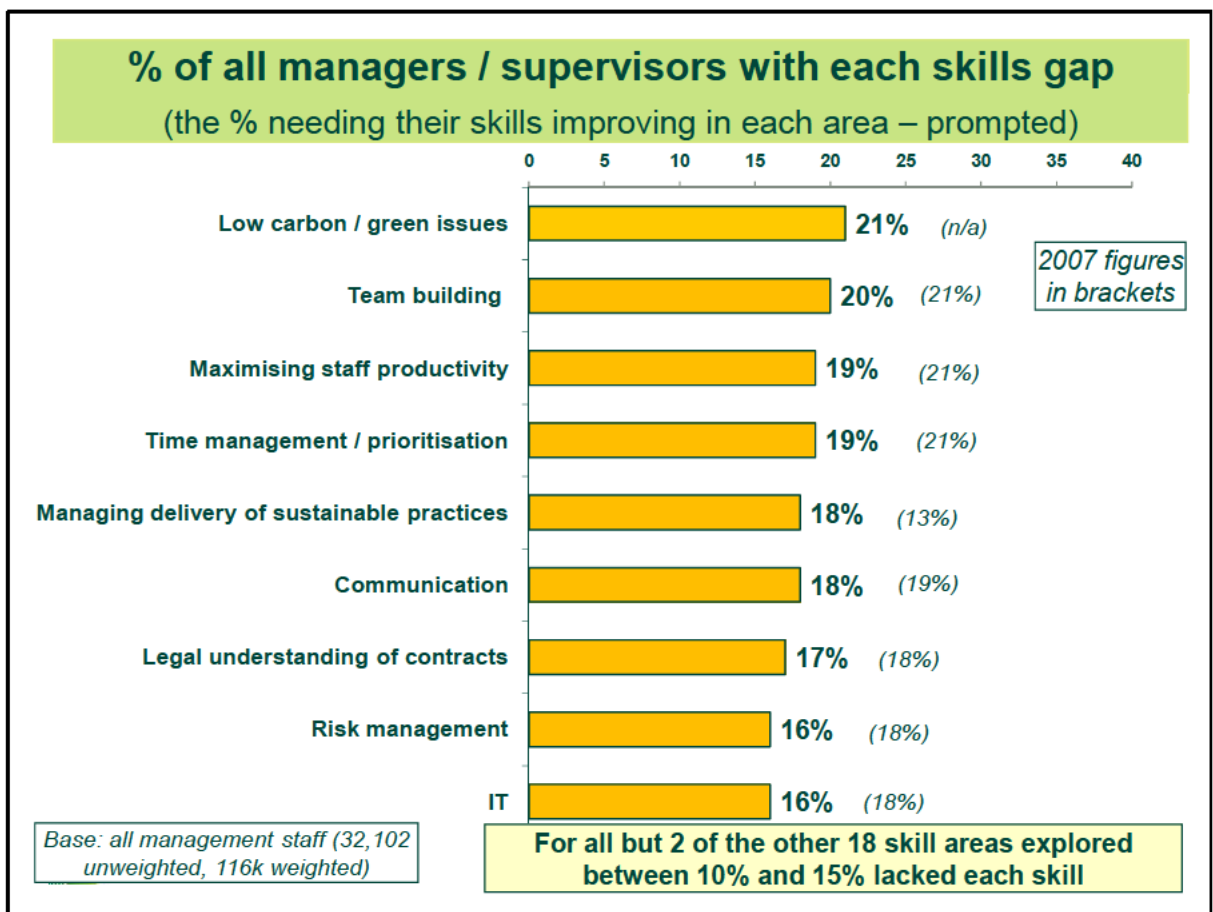
5.8 For many of the skills areas there is a marked size effect, often related to the fact that large employers have more people management related issues for managers to deal with. Effective delegation, communication, and team building were all much more likely to be mentioned by firms with 100 or more staff, as were skills related to winning new business and managing their time effectively.

The proportion of managerial staff lacking each specific skill

5.9 Employers were asked how many of their management team lacked these skills. Results ranged from 5% of all managers and supervisors being seen as having a skills gap in regard to having the capability to ensure off-site products are integrated efficiently on site, and 8% needing to improve their ability to estimate project costs, up to 20% of all managers needing to improve prioritisation and time management and 21% having a gap in regard to understanding the implications for the business of the low carbon agenda and the increased importance of green issues.

5.10 For 18 of the 27 skill areas explored, between 10% and 16% of all managers and supervisors were described as lacking skills in this area.

5.11 The following chart looks at the skill areas with the highest proportion of all managers and supervisors described as needing their skills improving. Results for 2007 are also shown where applicable. These are remarkably consistent with 2007: three of the four skill areas affecting the largest number of managers / supervisors in the current survey (team building, maximising staff productivity and time management and prioritisation) also affected the highest proportion of the management team in 2007 (the fourth item was not asked in the earlier survey). Also the proportion of managers lacking each skill on the following chart is, with one exception, within 2 percentage points of the proportion in 2007.



5.12 Small firms with 2-9 staff are particularly likely to have a high proportion of managers and supervisors with a number of the skills gap, as follows:

- Understanding the implications of the low carbon agenda and green issues (41% of managers lack this skill in the smallest firms)
- Keeping up to date with environmental legislation (36%) and Health and Safety legislation (31% of managers lack this skill in the smallest firms)
- Legal understanding of contracts (36%)
- Risk management (32%)
- Identifying new markets or clients (32%)
- The IT skills of senior staff (36%) but also their being able to identify the IT needs of the organisation (29%).

Priority management skill areas

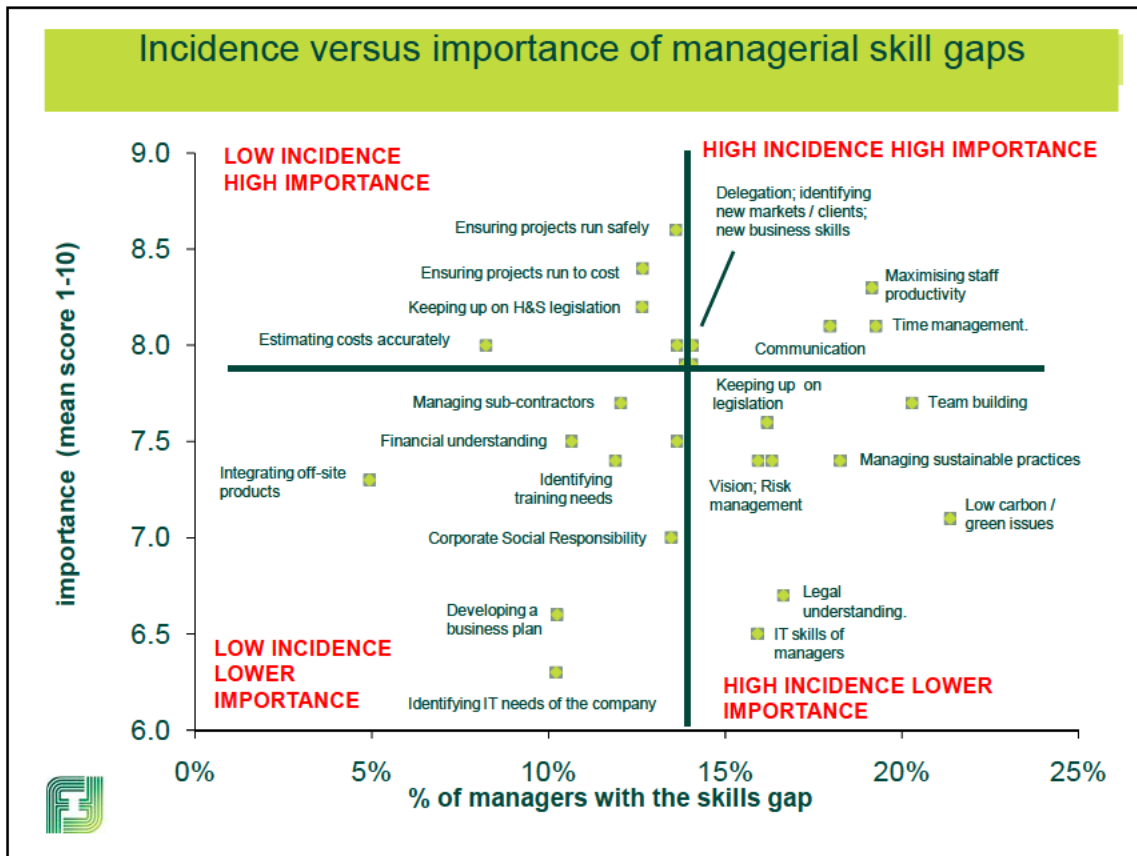
5.13 A higher than average proportion of managers being affected by a particular skills gap does not necessarily mean that that or those skills areas are the most critical ones for employers. And clearly some of the skills areas discussed, such as creating a vision and strategy for the company, or developing a business plan, are not ones that would be required by all the management team in an organisation. To this end respondents experiencing each skills gap were asked how high a priority they were for developing and improving the business, using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all important and 10 means vital.

5.14 Results are summarised on the following chart which shows:

- On the vertical axis, the mean score for importance of each skills gap among employers experiencing each one. The higher on the vertical axis the more important the skills gap.
- The horizontal axis shows the proportion of all managers and supervisors needing their skills improving in each area: the further right the higher the density of skills gaps.

For simplicity not all the skills gaps are labelled (this applies to those which appear near to the 'average').





5.15 The skills of most importance (among those experiencing gaps in each) are:

- Ensuring projects run safely (a mean of 8.6 out of a possible 10)
- Ensuring projects run to cost and managing project finances (a mean of 8.4)
- Maximising staff productivity (8.3)
- Keeping up to date with health and safety legislation (8.2)
- Time management and prioritising (8.1)
- Communication (8.1)
- Identifying potential new markets and clients (8.0) and winning new business and general selling skills (8.0)
- Estimating costs accurately (8.0)

Broadly speaking these all relate to the ability to bring in new business, and then to deliver it safely and to cost.

5.16 It is worth noting that all 27 of the skills explored in the survey were felt to be important by those experiencing gaps for each, with mean scores for importance of at least 6.3 out of a possible 10. Relatively speaking the least important issues related to IT skills, both the actual IT skills of managers (a mean of 6.3) and being able to recognise the IT skills of the organisation (6.5).



- 5.17 Looking at how importance ties in with how many managers are affected by each skills gap, as presented in the previous chart, suggests that particularly critical to tackle, and areas where one would expect high demand or interest from employers, are those considered of higher than average priority and with higher than average density of managerial skill gaps. This applies to:
- Maximising staff productivity
 - Time management and prioritising tasks
 - Written and oral communication skills.
- 5.18 Following these skill areas, there are those which are of similar importance but which affect fewer managers and supervisors (such as ensuring projects run safely and to cost, keeping up to date with health and safety legislation, delegation, and identifying potential new markets or clients and then related selling / marketing skills), and those of lower importance but affecting quite a high proportion of the management team (these include team building and ensuring getting staff to share the same goals, managing the delivery of sustainable practices, and understanding the implications to the business over the coming years of the low carbon agenda and the increased importance of green issues).
- 5.19 Annex 2 provides additional details about the sort of skills lacking in each specific skill area. In some areas employers emphasised that it was not so much skills lacking as not having the time to devote to some of these tasks, and this often related to issues such as delegation and time management among senior staff being key to free them up for more strategic aspects of running the business.
- 5.20 The following table shows skill priorities by federation: for each federation the three main priority skill areas are listed, based on the percentage of all employers interviewed in that federation rating that skills area as 8 or more out of 10 for importance. Federations are presented in alphabetical order, and we show those federations where we conducted at least 20 interviews.

Three main priority skill areas by federation	
(% of employers rating each as an 8-10 / 10 for importance)	
AIS	New business / selling (31%); Keeping up with environmental legislation (28%); Keeping up with health and safety legislations (27%)
BWF	Maximising the productivity of staff (36%); New business / selling (29%); Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (29%)
CECA	New business / selling (31%); Communication (30%); Time Management (27%)
CPA	Maximising the productivity of staff (22%); Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (22%); Keeping up with environmental legislation (20%)
FeRFA	New business / selling (38%); identifying training needs (33%); communication (29%); Team building (29%); managing client expectations / maintaining satisfaction (29%)



Three main priority skill areas by federation (continued)	
FMB	Keeping up with environmental legislation (29%); Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (26%); Identifying potential new markets / clients (28%)
FPDC	Time Management (37%); Ensuring projects run to cost (31%); Maximising staff productivity (29%)
HAE	New business / selling (33%); Identifying new markets / clients (25%); Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (22%)
NAS	Legal understanding of contracts (30%); Managing client expectations / maintaining high satisfaction (30%); New business / selling (28%);
NFB	Maximising the productivity of staff (31%); Winning new business and general selling skills (30%); Keeping up with environmental legislation (29%)
NFDC	Managing client expectations / maintaining high satisfaction (31%); Developing and creating a clear strategy and vision (27%); Identifying potential new client / markets (27%)
PDA	Identifying potential new client / markets (29%); New business / selling (25%); Keeping up with health and safety legislations (23%)
RSMA	Team building (41%); creating a vision and strategy (33%); ensuring projects run to cost (33%); communication (33%); maximising staff productivity (33%)
SBF	Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (35%); Keeping up with environmental legislation (29%); Risk management (27%)
SDF	New business / selling (33%); Identifying potential new client / markets (31%); Keeping up with Health & Safety legislation (24%); legal understanding of contracts 924%;
SPOA	Time Management (30%); Ensuring project work carried out safely (25%); Delegation (23%); Communication (23%);
Stone federation	Identifying potential new client / markets; Estimating the cost of projects accurately; Maximising staff productivity; Keeping up with H&S legislation; Time management (each 24%)



6 The training implications of introducing new products or processes and of emerging 'green' job roles

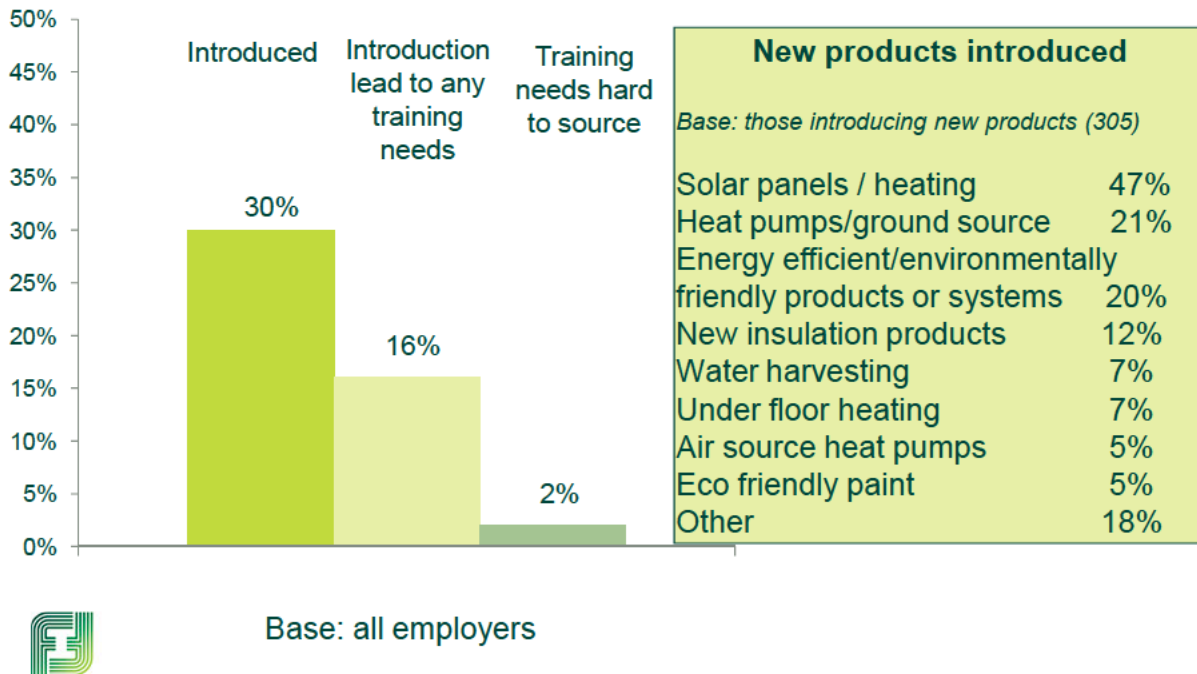
- 6.1 In this chapter we explore the extent to which the introduction of new products or services (mentioned as being 'for example renewable technologies such as solar heating') or new processes ('such as lean working or new organisational approaches') had led to any training implications, and if so whether this training was hard to source. In a similar way we look at whether firms employed staff in six specific 'green' job roles, and if so where these staff had been recruited from, and whether they have specific training requirements for these occupations which they are finding hard to source. These questions were new to the current study.

Introduction of new products and or processes, and their training implications

- 6.2 Employers were asked whether in the last 2-3 years they had introduced either new products into the services they offer clients, for example renewable technologies such as solar heating, and / or new processes such as lean working or new organisational approaches to their business operations, and if so what these changes were and whether they had any training implications.
- 6.3 Employers were more likely to have introduced new products into their offer (30%) than to have introduced new processes or organisational approaches in the last 2-3 years (13%). The likelihood of having introduced new products varied by size: sole traders were the least likely to have done so (22%) and the largest employers with 250 plus staff were the most likely (41%), but otherwise results were very similar between those with 2-9, 10-24, 25-99 and 100-249 staff. The likelihood varied widely by federation: it was high for house builders such as Homes for Scotland (50%) and HBF (45%), and also for the BDA (50%), though in each case a low base size should be noted, whilst it was much lower than average for members of the CPA, NAS and NFDC (10% or fewer).
- 6.4 The main new products that employers have introduced in their offer to clients are listed in the following table: clearly employers took the example given in the question ('for example renewable technologies such as solar heating') at face value, and nearly all the product examples given related to 'green' measures, with solar panels, solar heating and photovoltaic cells particularly likely to be mentioned.
- 6.5 The chart also shows the proportion of all employers that say that introducing the new products lead to their having training needs for staff, and the proportion that found this training hard to source.
- 6.6 Around half of employers that had introduced new products in their offer in the last three years (equivalent to 16% of all employers) said this had had training implications for staff. Relatively few though had found the training they wanted hard to source: 15% of those saying the introduction of these new (green) products in their offer lead to training needs had found the training hard to source, equivalent to 8% of all those introducing new products, and 2% of all employers.
- 6.7 Employers based in London appear to be particularly likely to have had difficulties finding appropriate training: 16% of all employers in the capital indicated that training relating to the introduction of new products in their offer had been hard to source.



Whether introduced new products into the services offered to clients, for example renewable technologies such as solar heating, in the last 2-3 years

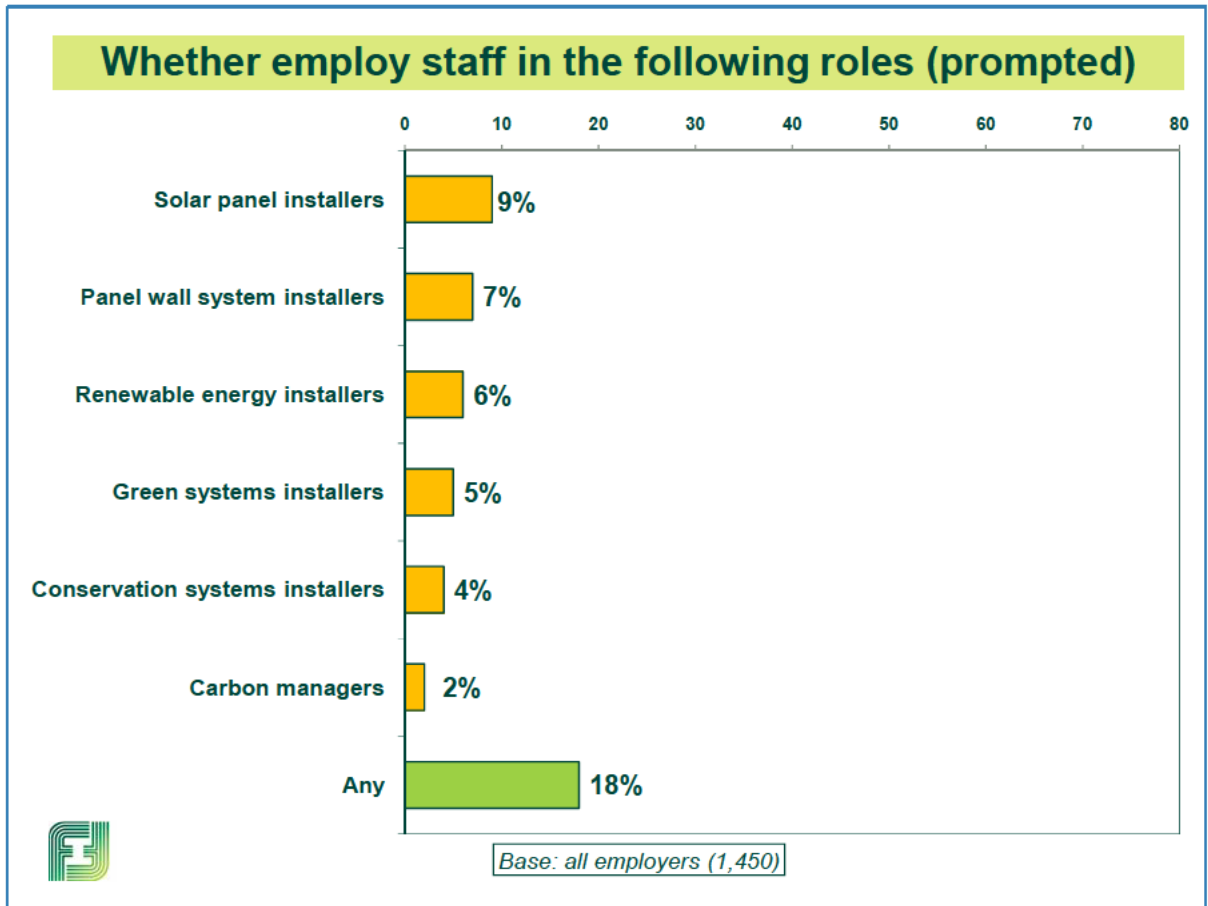


- 6.8 As mentioned, around one in eight employers (13%) had introduced new processes into their business operations in the last 2-3 years. This was higher among employers with 100 or more staff (33%) and among particular federation (26% - 29% for BWF, CECA, NAS, AIS, RSMA, and at similar levels though on low base sizes for Homes for Scotland, BDA and HBF).
- 6.9 A wide range of new processes had been introduced, including: increased use of technology; increased recycling / waste reduction; formal quality standards; changes in working hours; lean working; new energy efficient machinery, and management restructuring.
- 6.10 Over half (57%) of those introducing new processes in the last 2-3 years said this had had training implications but only 7% of those introducing new processes (equivalent to just 0.8% of all employers) indicated that any training needs had been hard to source. Hence across the industry as a whole the introduction of new business processes is rarely the cause of unmet demand for training.

Green job roles and any training implications

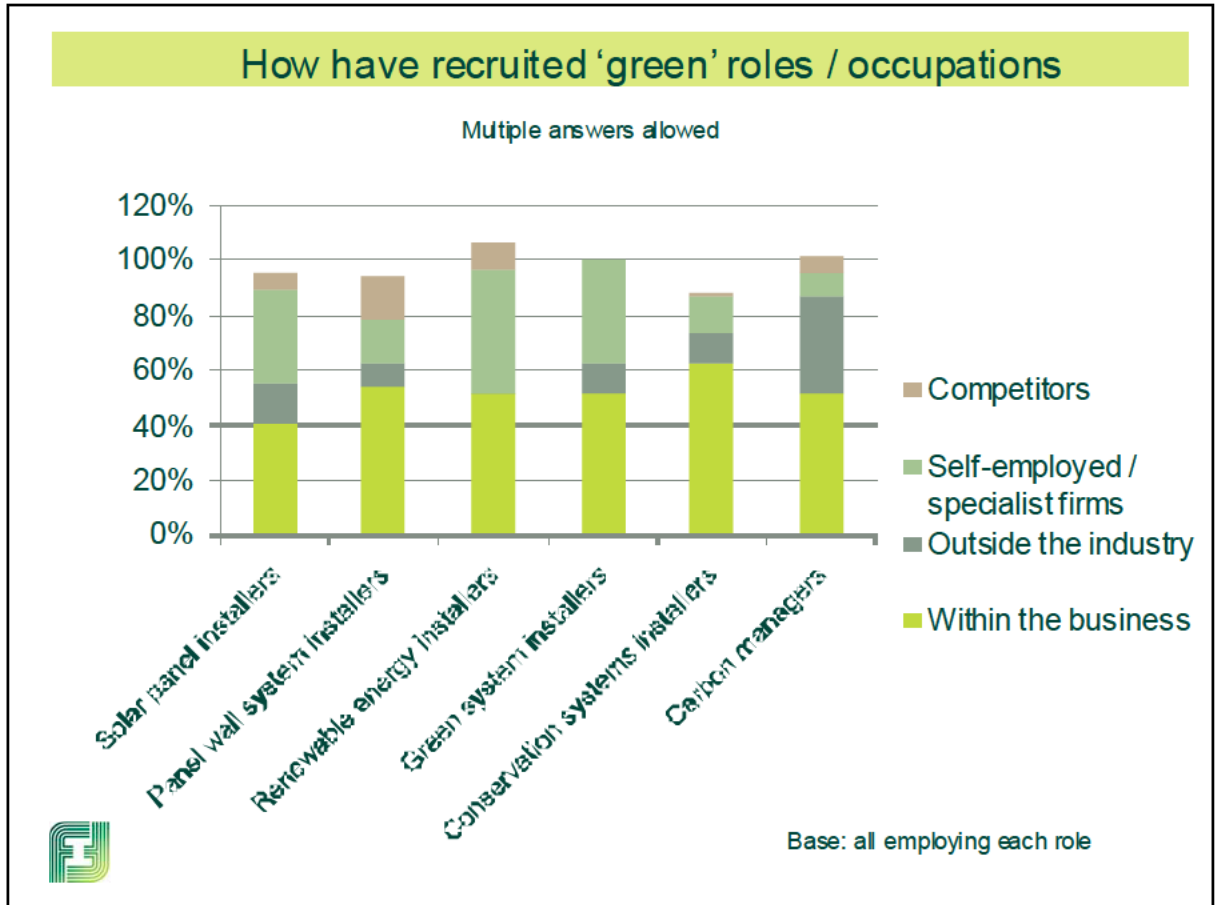
- 6.11 Overall almost one in five firms (18%) employ people in at least one of the six specified job roles listed in the following chart. This was most commonly solar panel installers (9%), panel wall system installers (7%) and renewable energy installers (6%). Intuitively the figures seem high: however, responses on the question of where they recruit people in these occupations from (discussed later in the chapter) indicate that many respondents took the question to mean their employing such staff directly or indirectly by bringing in specialist sub-contractors or self-employed staff in these roles as and when needed. Hence the figures are best viewed as the proportion of companies that ever have a need for these roles, not those that have their own employees in these specific functions.





- 6.12 Predictably large employers with 250 or more staff are more likely than average to need people in each role, with the difference particularly marked for carbon managers (20%), panel wall system installers (17%) and renewable energy installers (16%) – overall two in five of these large firms (39%) had or needed staff in any of the six roles.
- 6.13 Results vary by federation: none of the firms interviewed that were members of HAE or FeRFA had or used any staff in these roles, and the figure was low (5% or fewer) within PDA, NFDC, Stone federation, BWF and CPA. Results were noticeably higher among some federations including BDA (with a high proportion having renewable energy installers, which includes ground source heat pump installers), HBF (concentrated in renewable energy installers) and AIS (concentrated in Panel wall system installers).
- 6.14 Respondents were asked whether they had recruited those working in each of the job roles from competitors, from within their business, from outside the construction industry or elsewhere. As results presented in the following chart show in most cases they were developed from within the business or employers used specialist firms or the self-employed to deliver this activity.





6.15 Just 8% of those using / employing people in any of the green job roles said they had specific training requirements for any of these occupations which they found difficult to source; this is equivalent to 1.5% of all employers covered by the survey. Among the six respondents, the following training had been sought:

"Heating and ventilation, particularly the installation of solar ventilation systems."

"I would like to learn more about it i.e. the ground source, ecological and renewable side. You speak to one person and they say 'our products are the best' and then you speak to someone else and they claim theirs is the best and I am none the wiser ... I'd like to know which are the best products and systems."

"I've looked and not managed to find anything like a suitable course in this field."

"Just want general environmental training in the construction industry."

"Training about carbon and green energy, solar and such like."

"What we find is that some of these skills are too focussed. We heard a rumour there is a new qualification for the development of pre-fab structures and there was a meeting for NVQ but we went to the meeting and found the training was too narrow, it was too specific."

6.16 Again the findings suggest that across the industry as a whole the use of specialists in green roles (whether employed directly or indirectly) rarely has significant training implications that employers find hard to source.



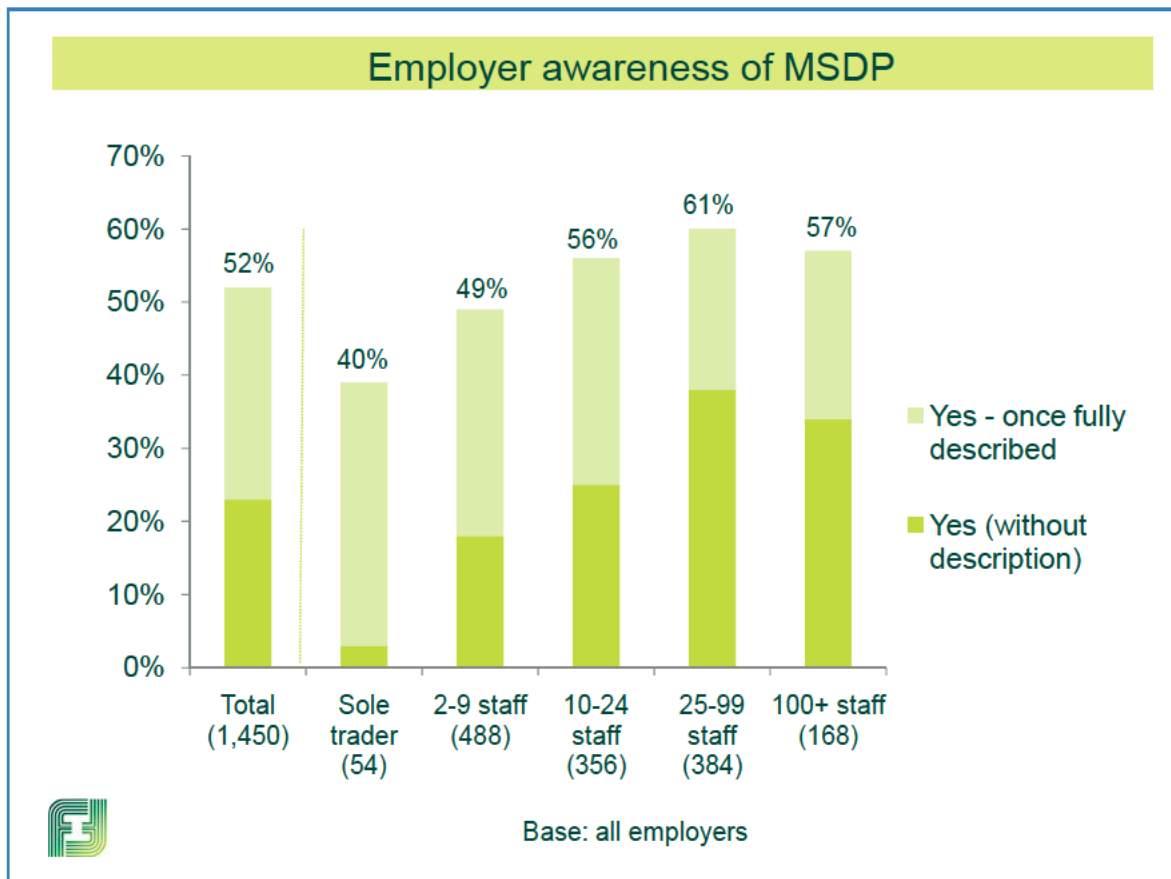
7 Awareness, Impact and Views of the Management and Supervisory Development Programme (MSDP)

7.1 In this chapter we look at overall awareness among employers of the Management and Supervisory Development Programme (taken from the quantitative stage), views regarding the current split between funding of management and supervisory skill development and innovation and sustainability, (taken from both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study), and then we discuss the perceived impact of the MSDP using findings taken from the qualitative work conducted among federations and among employers attending MSDP funded training. Finally we present some overall comments about the fund and potential areas for improvement.

Awareness of MSDP training

7.2 Applications for receiving funds from the Management and Supervisory Development programme in nearly all cases come from federations rather than directly from employers, and as such MSDP is not something directly marketed to employers.

7.3 With that in mind, awareness is reasonably high: just over half of respondents (52%) had heard of MSDP, split relatively evenly between those replying that they had heard of 'the Management and Supervisory Development Programme operated by CITB-ConstructionSkills' (23%) and those that felt they had heard of it once a fuller description was given¹ (29%). Predictably awareness is lowest among sole traders and micro employers.



¹ 'The Management and Supervisory Development Programme was set-up in 2001 and provides financial support for federation members and employers for the development of management and supervisory skills, and, since 2009, to projects which focus on innovation and sustainability, i.e. zero and low carbon, waste management, modern methods of construction etc.'



- 7.4 Employer awareness of MSDP may well be a result of activity by each federation. In fact awareness varied relatively little across the 20 federations covered by the research and tended to fall in the 44% - 58% range. It was noticeably higher among members of the BDA (86% though on a low base of 14 respondents), CECA, NFB and FPDC (60%-64%), and lower among HAE and FeRFA (each 33%).

Views on the balance between Management and supervisory skills versus innovation and sustainability

- 7.5 For the quantitative study all respondents were told that the programme has been allocated approximately two thirds of funding towards projects to develop management and supervisory skills, and one third to those that focus on developing skills related to innovation and sustainability, and asked whether they felt this was a suitable balance. Almost seven in ten (69%) felt the balance to be appropriate, compared with one in nine (11%) that felt the balance was wrong (quite a large proportion, 20%, felt unable to comment). Sole trader were the most likely to feel the balance was not appropriate (28%), though still half (50%) felt the split between developing management / supervisory skills v. innovation / sustainability was right. In comparison just 4% of employers with 25 or more staff felt the balance was wrong.
- 7.6 Among the 111 respondents feeling that the two-thirds, one third balance not right, the general sentiment was that a higher proportion should be spent on innovation and sustainability: the mean average among these employers was that 44% of MSDP funding should be spent on developing skills in this area. Three-fifths of those feeling that the balance was wrong felt at least half the MSDP budget should be allocated to innovation and sustainability.
- 7.7 Respondents from the federations generally felt that the balance between management and supervisory skill development on the one hand, and innovation and sustainability on the other was reasonable. Some felt it could be higher for innovation and sustainability (“Historically the construction sector has been very poor on its environmental responsibilities. 30% is the minimum they should be spending. I’d like to see it rise to 40% in the next 2-3 years”) while others thought around a third was the most they would want it to be (“It could be 20% and possibly not damage it that much, it would still have the desired effect. I certainly wouldn’t want it to be above 30%”), but few opposed the idea of a some element of funding being for sustainability and innovation. This even applied to a number of federations that said the issue of sustainability was very low down the agenda for their employers because of their specific area of activity, especially on the plant hire side of things.
- 7.8 The following quotes from different federations show some of those that relatively sceptical about the innovation and sustainability element, or who feel it is a distraction from the core purpose of the MSDP.

“Mention sustainability and our employers ask ‘what’s that?’ We did something on this last year, an environmental practices course. [It was quite] popular but many don’t feel it’s important. Cash flow and the bottom line are key at the moment. Innovation and sustainability: I can see why they [MSDP / CITB-ConstructionSkills] do it. When they get funding from government, they, the government, set the agenda.”

“We’re probably a bit sceptical about innovation and sustainability but we will go along with it. Perhaps we should think more about what does sustainability and innovation mean for us and can we lead it more. The big thing is we need to translate it to something meaningful for our members.”

“The innovation and sustainability side is a bit of a distraction. For our federation you could argue anything we’re doing is innovative as we’re suggesting it because none or few of the companies are doing it themselves.”



"I thought it was a bit hijacked [by innovation and sustainability]. I think that while the issues are important perhaps CITB-ConstructionSkills got too much on the band wagon. It was almost an attempt to re-label it as a sustainability fund. Yes the issue has its places but other issues are equally important. If they want a sustainability fund they should set one up. Adding sustainability and innovations means less for management and supervisory. And it's definitely the case having worked in other sectors that the management and supervisory skills of the sector leave a lot to be desired."

"The innovation part of it is a joke. It's a distraction. It's not at all clear what innovation is and they won't tell us. I really feel the MSDP needs to concentrate on what it's supposed to be, a fund to support management and supervisory development."

7.9 Other comments from federations on this issue included:

- One felt that while innovation and sustainability is supposed to be around a third of funding it appeared to them that it was needed for every bid, which led to a running though amicable battle with their MSDP contact on the issue. Related to this, one federation talked about how they didn't see the two elements as separate, and in their bids they emphasised the environmental aspects whether it related to innovation and sustainability or not.
- One mentioned that while developing management and supervisory skills is critical for the industry, there is already a lot of this kind of training out there already, and it is hard to develop new or innovative management and supervisory training (as sought by MSDP).
- One commented that the criteria will, and if not should, move from sustainability to low carbon: *"sustainability has been done to death, and the government's emphasis is now more on low carbon."*



Impact of MSDP training

7.10 Findings discussed in this section come from the qualitative element of the study, covering federations and then employers that either attended federation MSDP-funded training or received MSDP funds direct. Firms were asked to describe how successful the programme delivered with MSDP funding had been and the impacts on skills levels within the company and across the industry as a whole.

7.11 Federations were very positive about the additionality that MSDP funding provides in terms of it enabling training activity that would not otherwise have taken place, or would not have taken place as quickly. Examples of the additionality included:

- MSDP funding often being used to reduce the cost of training to employers and this either meaning more individuals were put through the training than would otherwise have been the case, or in some cases this increased take up meant there was sufficient interest to justify putting the training on (i.e. with lower numbers it would not have been put on at all).

“On the environmental side, we would not have gone ahead without MSDP. The money meant I could sell it to our board (saying that CITB-ConstructionSkills were willing to give us financial support). We would have held back otherwise. It has helped us be ahead of the game, helped us define environmental performance.”

- MSDP funding meant the training happened sooner (*“It might have happened anyway, but probably over a 2-3 year period.”*). In one case this was because they were a small federation with limited staff resources – the funding meant they could employ an external consultant to organise the training.
- MSDP funding improving the quality and the usefulness of the training, usually because it meant training could be tailored to the needs of employers in that specific sub-sector of construction. One federation described MSDP as being critical in allowing them to develop unique courses

“It enables federations to deliver training they could not otherwise deliver, so it’s very very positive...The real need at the moment is regarding stuff to do with issues on employment and contracts, poor management practices and poor communication.”

In the same way another commented *“it means that something demolition-specific can be delivered. It’s fantastic. We couldn’t have delivered the training each year without the fund. The demolition industry usually has to make do with construction training, so this means we can deliver something specialist.”*

“It means we can put on training that’s not in the market.”

7.12 Federation contacts were generally very positive about the impact that the MSDP funded training has had, though clearly this varied widely depending on what training had been funded. The impacts were expressed in terms of updated or new knowledge or skills, qualifications being achieved, and managers / supervisors getting the opportunity to think in a more strategic way about the running of their business. Many felt that maintaining the skills levels of the construction industry was vital in preparing for the eventual up-turn in the economy.

“The ‘initial sell’ was the NVQs that they would gain. Although it also gave them new skills, which was excellent as managers were then looking at business with a ‘new set of eyes’ and looking to improve it.”



“We need to push for better managers and leaders. There is a real danger that training will be cut in the recession and then when we come out of it in a couple of years we’ll have skill deficiencies and skill gaps, and we’re back to square one.”

“The industry is moving to a situation where some of the key asset holders who already ask for staff to work on their sites, on their equipment or property, must be qualified to a level 3, may soon be asking for supervisors to have a level 3 in supervisory so getting this will allow employers to access sites that otherwise they might not have been able to.”

- 7.13 While it was hard for some federations to know exactly the impact of the training for their employers, most were able to point to positive feedback they had received from those that had attended training as indicative that MSDP funding must be supporting the right areas. And generally it was seen as important to support good management practice in a sector where these skills have traditionally been lacking:

“It’s an important area for our sector – we have a lot of small businesses run by people who were good tradesmen, but with no real experience in running a business. Things like business planning, target setting, performance management, setting KPIs, marketing etc really important stuff. It gives them greater confidence.”

“I think it has a significant impact... it’s pump priming I suppose. As an industry, craft and trade training takes the lion’s share, and it’s very important we maintain the management side of things. There’s no point having the skills if there are no management and leadership skills to direct this.”

- 7.14 One of the few negative or at least neutral comments was from one smaller federation that felt those that had attended the MSDP supported training had been the more active employers within the federation (who already train and who already had a reasonably strategic outlook), and they had failed to engage with employers that were less involved in the federation who needed the training the most. Others admitted attracting the number of employers and or candidates that they had anticipated was harder than expected, or had not been achieved, but this was in part down to the recession, and partly down to traditional employer reluctance to provide training (something that emphasised the continued importance of promoting training).

- 7.15 Employers themselves confirmed both the importance of cost in their decision whether or not to undertake the training (it was clear that many would not have attended training if it had been offered at market prices), the high quality of the training received, and the positive benefits gained from the MSDP training. The following two quotes show examples where the MSDP funding meant either the training took place when it would not otherwise have done, or the quality of what could be offered was enhanced.

“We had cut backs in training budgets so the funding has enabled us to create this great programme which will in turn develop people and ensure they are the best in the industry.”

[A large UK construction group providing civil engineering and construction services, building refurbishment and new build property. They needed training after diversifying into photovoltaic panel installation (PVP), and also wanted to understand about lean project delivery techniques and skills required on-site for large scale projects. The project has enabled the company to expand into the renewable technology market, win new business, whilst also having a positive impact on the environment.]



“It was absolutely essential, it wouldn’t have gone ahead without the funding. We needed industry experts and they don’t come cheap.”

[From an independent training group which had applied for MSDP funding to arrange courses on resource efficiency and sustainable building. The training included site visits and a series of 5 workshops focusing on environmental management techniques, and 3 accredited training days. Upon completing the course each firm also received an environmental management system to set out on-going targets for the company. They reported very positive impacts on the carbon emissions and waste management for the companies that attended].

- 7.16 Regarding the quality of the delivery of training, respondents felt that they were presented in an appropriate way with a good balance between the theoretical and practical, and with relevant and up-to-date content. Suitable material to take away was also valued.

“The course was good. It had a number of presenters, with different styles. One person presenting would have been quiet boring.”

“There was the theory behind all the processes and there were illustrations of where they’ve been practically used. There were also discussions and debates amongst the presenters, and with the audience. One could see that it wasn’t just theory, it was related to case studies and examples where products or techniques have been used.”

“I thought it was very up to date. The references that were made to the current economic climate and the way we could access information was in tune with the industry.”

“It was well tailored, because we were all members of CECA, to the civil sector rather than house building sector”

“There were some basic Power Point presentations, visuals and we’d also been given memory sticks with a whole lot of information to look at on them. I think it’s a very good way to communicate and keep information”

- 7.17 As to the impact of the MSDP supported training, employers usually focused on increased management knowledge, skills, or confidence. Sometimes this related directly to sustainability training and environmental awareness, which some saw as an ‘upcoming area’ to expand into but needing extensive up-skilling.

“The main impact is that it has broadened my awareness on techniques, processes and products for sustainability”.

“At the moment in the industry we’re being pressurised on these issues so it was very relevant to the current climate.”

“The sort of thing the MSDP funds is very good, the renewable area is especially good as it is an upcoming area and helps make savings on people’s energy bills and the training helps improve the level of understanding and awareness in the industry.”



- 7.18 In addition many of the firms that had put staff through training funded by the MSDP had also gained many 'unplanned' benefits including better planning and time management skills, and improved communication with the wider construction sector.
- 7.19 Other employers spoke of benefits relating to improving their understanding of business opportunities, and it reducing inefficiencies.

"It's becoming more and more difficult to win new business in the current economic climate, particularly in our industry. The benefits we hoped the course would bring were to help us source other opportunities, look at other options, to see what we're doing right and what we're doing wrong and develop those areas. Business development is a necessity if you want to grow your business."

"It has brought them [site managers] knowledge and understanding of inefficiencies and how to get the best out of people."



Overall views of MSDP and potential Improvement

7.20 Perhaps predictably firms that had received MSDP funding direct would have liked more money to be available through the fund, though this was coupled with realism that funding in the industry is very tight and MSDP faces many competing claims. And while these firms felt that the impact of MSDP could be improved by publicising it more to the industry there was a realisation that the size of the cake was limited and publicising it more would either lead to smaller slices or more dissatisfied applicants.

7.21 Federation contacts had a wider range of comments about MSDP:

- A couple of smaller federations were surprised (and one was explicitly annoyed) that they had only recently heard about MSDP. They were unclear why this should have been the case, and the implication was that they felt their federation had 'missed out.'
- Others commented that the distribution of the fund between federations did not always seem to be fair, with some feeling that it can seem to be distributed to those who shout loudest. One admitted that all federations probably feel that they get less than their fair share. One said that they would prefer a system where they were told that their federation could potentially receive up to a certain amount, and if this was not successfully applied for within a certain period of time, then this would be re-assigned to other federations. At least this would ensure that the initial distribution between federations was clear and explicit.
- Related to this, there was occasionally annoyance resulting from being told that they would not be funded for something they had applied for (assumed to be because their request had not met the eligibility criteria), and then finding out that another federation had received funding for almost the identical thing.
- There was interest in more information on the training other federations had funded through MSDP and the benefits gained and lessons learnt. In part this was about transparency but such information would also be useful to spark ideas as to potential appropriate training for their own members.
- There was a sense that applications for funding appeared to be quite rushed as MSDP / CITB-ConstructionSkills decide the size of the fund and the priorities for the coming year late in the day, leaving little time for considered discussion with their employers as to the key current and upcoming skills needs. One described this process as needing 3 months. Instead there always appeared to be something of a rush to get bids in. As much notice as possible was considered preferable, though some felt this was an issue more for CITB-ConstructionSkills in the long term than MSDP specifically.
- There was positive feedback on to the move to saying how much funding particular activities could receive through MSDP. Federations want as much information as possible about what is likely to be successful when bidding (both in terms of what will be successful, and also the amount they can ask for) so that time and effort is not wasted. Informal conversations and guidance by telephone on this in the past has been very welcome, and one specifically requested the opportunity to discuss draft proposals before they are rejected. Some federations also spoke about the goal posts appearing to move on what will and will not receive funding, being told one thing at one point, and another thing soon after. Consistency and clarity is clearly the ideal.



- Some wanted MSDP to be expanded to cover not just current managers and supervisors but also those that will be moving into these positions.

“Ideally it would be about recognising potential, and developing craftsmen. It may take 2-3 years to pay off but we can’t leave it to a Monday morning to say now we need our craftsmen to be supervisors. We need to start now so that when we pull out of the recession the industry is ready. I like the UKCES Women and Work idea (where they fund women in sectors where few of them are at supervisory or managerial level to develop their talent). [MSDP] Should be more like that funding, and about releasing potential.”

- One commented that most employers undertaking training funded through MSDP via federations would not be aware of the contribution of MSDP or CITB-ConstructionSkills, and given negative views of the levy, it appears to be an opportunity missed in terms of publicising the positive role of CITB-ConstuctionSkills.

7.22 All these comments need to be considered within the context that the MSDP is highly valued by federations. One federation put it as follows:

“MSDP is as close as CITB-ConstructionSkills gets to how it should be operating. There is a pot of money available, people in the sector then devise how it is spent, and CITB-ConstructionSkills with the lowest possible level of necessary checks and balances approve it. It works. It has a lightness of touch.”



Annex 1: Federations covered in the current and the 2007 surveys

Federations covered in 2011 and in 2007, and the number of interviews in each		
	2007	2011
National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC) – in 2011 survey this covered PDA (133), AIS (100), RSMA (27), FeRFA (24) and BDA (14)	536	298
Federation of Master Builders (FMB)	472	133
National Federation of Builders (NFB)	336	133
Construction Plant Hire Association (CPA)	254	134
British Woodworking Federation (BWF)	225	104
Hire Association Europe (HAE)	210	55
Scottish Building Federation (SBF)	202	117
Home Builders Federation (HBF)	167	11
Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)	76	107
Scottish Plant Owners Association (SPOA)	71	64
National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC)	61	49
Scottish Decorators Federation (SDF)	59	49
National Association of Shopfitters (NAS)	43	60
Federation of Plastering and Drywall Contractors (FPDC)	n/a	49
Stone Federation	n/a	75
Homes for Scotland	n/a	12
Total	2,712	1,450



Annex 2: Detail of the skills gaps encountered by employers

Developing and creating a clear strategy and vision for the business
<i>This covered a range of issues regarding where to take their company and how best to get there.</i>
General planning and moving on from just day to day work right the way up to planning exit strategies.
They need a broader overview of how the business is run.
Economical awareness and the future of the business.
We need to have a clear strategy to improve profitability. We need to iron things out.
Ability to manage time better to enable training. This will have a knock on affect on the whole company.
Because there is more competition we need to improve ourselves and understand the competition to put forward the best strategies. We need to be forward thinking.
Forward planning and knowing what projects we have so we can work out the best way to achieve it.
Strategic planning of looking at the bigger picture within a large organisation.
Taking the time to sit down and plan for five years time.
We have never been trained to create a business plan.
Communication skills among the supervisors with sub contractors.
We are just thinking of new product areas, its marketing skills as well, we are thinking of changing from just builders to product developers, so it's Marketing and Product Development skills.
Writing a business plan for the organisation
<i>The key skills challenge is simply not knowing what a business plan should cover and what it involves, though for some it was getting more of the team to share and own the vision and plan.</i>
I don't know how to write one, I don't know where to begin with something like this.
We need someone within the business who can understand cost and how to manage cost.
Having the same goals so that we can write a business plan.
Never really wrote a business plan. Would help in getting a vision for the future. A lot of money goes out but not much coming in.
A bit more knowledge about what it entails. To know where we are going with it and knowing what the implications are.
We have not been trained in writing a business plan. We need to know the dos and don'ts as I presume the trend on how to create them changes every year.
General awareness of that area. A general awareness of the types of language and the format needed for a business plan.
Honesty and better preparation. Need to be honest with oneself.
We write one but don't get enough people involved and don't communicate it.



Legal understanding of contracts
<i>Issues here cover all aspects of contracts from legal obligations (such as health and safety) to payment issues; in the main employers are looking for a relatively basic understanding so that senior staff have working knowledge of the area and are aware of key recent changes.</i>
The whole legal system is a minefield, it needs to be looked at constantly.
Just need to know the basics. When I read through contracts there are one or two sentences I don't understand and have to ask someone else what it means.
Keeping myself out of jail – I just need a basic understanding.
It's an overall understanding of the supplier contracts and understanding the legal jargon associated with contracts.
Well, understanding contracts, the financial terms of a contract and keeping up to date with the Health and Safety issues of a contract which are changing all the time.
Clients are always looking for loopholes. Some of the bigger companies have high-power lawyers. Finding ways they can hold payment. More workable knowledge of contract legislation.
Quite often people just end up having to wait until someone's ready to pay me rather than knowing how I stand legally. We need to know how to enforce payment. Builder owes me £8,000 since last August.
Well, in today's environment, it is necessary to be aware of the legal obligations running a business. This includes the contracts we're involved in, the contractual terms and keeping up to date.

Identifying new markets and new clients & Winning new business and general selling skills
<i>Smaller companies have often had no formal training in how to go about winning new business and have relied on word of mouth, hence the need is often relatively broad about the best approaches to do this. Others mentioned more specific areas e.g. presenting, and advice on marketing.</i>
Where to attract new business, most of my business comes from referrals.
There is so little work about at the moment you have to find it. In this area it's dead.
Seeing where the industry is going in the next couple of years. Needing to get up to speed with the way the bigger companies are working. For example, things like e-billing.
Knowing what advertisement route to take and things like that and making sure the name of the company is put about efficiently.
Looking at the range of clients we have a possibly deciding in which areas we might like to expand.
Working out the best way of doing this. Who to contact, getting a portfolio together, marketing pack and figuring out the most effective and most cost efficient way of doing this.
All comes down to communication skills. Having confidence to promote the business, presentation of business to clients and the communication skills. Having the confidence to promote business.
I think inexperience and lack of social skills plus age barrier is making my life hard - people still feel it's a man's world. I'm a 34 year old girl and nobody can believe I know as much as them.
I think especially in our industry you build up a rapport with customers over decades - when you're young and been here a few years you haven't got the contacts - so don't know where to get the work.
Accessing them, competing with the bigger companies, making sure that we are armed with the right skills and accreditation.
Finding clients, making them available, and get rid of all the people promising they can do it. Marketing people i.e. builders profile, membership schemes.
Marketing skills and the ability to contact people, being aware of modern methods of communicating like the internet and websites.
I think it's an ongoing thing. You must never be complacent. You've always got to be looking at new markets and the changes in the industry, market changes.
Need to be more proactive, when there is slight door opening to leap in and to let everyone else know to wait. With jobs like that it's only me and my husband who bring in work.
We are a small company so our presentation skills may not be as good as the bigger firms. We need to close that gap there.



Managing client expectations and maintaining high customer satisfaction
<i>The comments made by employers suggest that this is seen in part as a specific part of good communication skills in making sure client expectations are understood and in part having customer satisfaction at the centre of the company's ethos.</i>
The handover of jobs need to be more professional and tidier.
Finding out what the client really wants, especially when they say they want something else, i.e. knowing what the customer wants even if they don't know it themselves.
More of an understanding and regular communication, keeping them informed etc feedback and stuff so we can improve the service. Finding out if problems to solved.
General communication with clients and general customer service.
Just making sure that we give feedback on contracts and the way we deliver our communication.
Better communication with clients and also work better together and towards a more collaborative team effort as opposed to the blame culture we have.
After service needs to be looked at as in our after service the customer service could be better. When jobs are finished we tend to neglect customers once we have completed work for them and not deal with their queries as thoroughly or quickly.
Some of the younger staff are hot headed and don't know how to converse with clients.
Communicating realistic target dates. Quality must meet requirements and the quality control is lacking from a production point of view.

Managing suppliers and sub-contractors to ensure that they deliver what is expected
<i>Employers generally see the key skills needing improving in this area as being improved communication and people management, assertiveness, and negotiation skills.</i>
Trying to get the best cost out of the suppliers and best practice and best value.
Formalising control over the sub contractors and tying them into a contract. If there is a problem ensuring we are covered. Checking all documentation.
Sometimes the suppliers need to be shaken a little bit and woken up. Our management staff can be a bit too nice, they should learn to be more assertive with the supplier.
Just more aggressiveness - suppliers give you second-rate lines to palm you off. Need to learn how to deal with them more effectively to deliver when we need them.
We need to negotiate harder with prices and make sure we get the best possible deals on materials and make sure the timing of deliveries is more suited to when we need it.
Effective communication with sub-contractors, contract, liabilities, responsibilities and general performance of contractors. More assessment and monitoring of what they do.
Trying to get a better understanding of the sub contractors role and knowing we have a structure in place which is there to help them with their work, rather than trying to do it all by themselves.
Again its building long term relationships with suppliers we tend to go with the cheapest at the moment and lose out in other areas, i.e. you don't build up a trusting relationships so if you have any problems you can go back to them to resolve these issue.
Need to be more aware and check more what they tell us. Go and see for ourselves.
We have old systems in place relating to the communication of certain sorts of knowledge and there is also duplication of work caused by our dual location.



Financial understanding of such issues as cashflow, raising capital, insurance, tax etc
<i>The most common desire was for improved general understanding of financial issues relating to running a business, in particular managing and improving cashflow.</i>
Understanding finances more. How the downturn has affected us. Understanding cashflow better.
Our two senior staff need to be more financially astute.
The opportunity to keep up to date, where the managers could go to a training session or seminar where you can speak to someone face to face about finance matters.
Knowing the implications on a balance sheet. Knowing how the other accounts affect the balance sheet.
It's not specific skills it's just the market place at the moment everyone is suffering it's not just the company, everyone is holding on to their money longer before giving it to the contractor.
People don't pay on time in the building trade so we need agreements.
Some of them haven't got the basic understanding of how cashflows operate and they need to understand for it to work properly.
Not enough high enough profile in their way of thinking. Cost element is not high in the organisational process. Not high enough profile in our managers way of thinking.
All documents need to be managed on a weekly to monthly basis to have less burden all documents need to be managed on a weekly or monthly basis so we know what cash is available when needed and to have less burden on our cashflow.
The different job roles in the company are not interlinked so some staff will be told what the estimate will be instead of knowing how to do it themselves.
Just the lower supervisors could have a better understanding of money management.
Just generally understanding the finances of the company and how costs can escalate and keeping control of them.
We're not communicating especially what's happening with the business. While things so rocky, people start get worried about their jobs when no real need in many cases. Need clear and positive messages.
We have an ageing management team so for the next generation there are skills gaps in most financial aspects of the business.
Risk management
<i>Most employers mentioning this factor took it to relate directly to keeping abreast of health and safety legislation, and/or the writing of risk assessments</i>
Awareness and recording certain things to be able to make appropriate decision.
The environmental risk is the biggest skills gap.
Just an all round general knowledge of the risk management for the business; keeping up to date with the health and safety risk.
It's an area that can always be improved on, it's a continual moving target, legislation changes, it's something you can't stagnate on.
Identifying risks and what they are and writing a risk assessment and understanding the whole concept.



Estimating the cost of projects accurately
<i>On this issue employers recognise its crucial importance and are clearly looking for this to be done on a more 'scientific' basis, often needing improved IT skills.</i>
I am a project manager and not an estimator, I need the ability to look at a project and estimate the overall impact of the cost prior to starting
Well, enabling to get the price competitive enough but not too low so you don't make a profit.
To make sure that we are putting enough in to make sure we make a profit. It can be a bit of a guesstimate.
Using computer systems to help with estimating.
It's what our client asks for nowadays, we put a price in and our competitor come in with a lower price...difficult to know if we're going to be too low or too high.
This ties in with our IT. We have a job costing programme which is not used efficiently.
I think it's just focus and logical thinking, having a system that works.

Ensuring projects run to cost and managing project finances
<i>This skills area is generally seen as a combination of other factors including accurately estimating the job correctly in the first place, good project management skills, and close monitoring of sub-contractors and suppliers to ensure they are delivering what is expected</i>
Actual quotation side. To actually make sure the costing is right. Go round to all suppliers and nail them down to best prices. Sometimes not keep their word on the price they offer.
Time to ensure that what's been budgeted is actually applied instead of just getting materials and seeing what happens.
Costing, estimating - certain skills are lacking, such as being able to produce competitive quotes or price jobs accurately.
Getting value for money and working when the profit margin is so much smaller now.
Up to date with real costs of materials and supplies. More awareness of professional fees.
Gap between the fact that it's estimated and then moved on to the project managers - not enough awareness of the budget. Decision making should change as a result.
Being on top of the job - having the time, and delegation. If trying to do too many things, not giving each project 100%.
Budgetary control. Shopping around, getting best prices, rather than going for the first or second one you come to.
Not looking at the big picture, they are more reactive than proactive. More planning skills.
Commercial awareness and implications of cashflow, wastage and implications of actions if not done properly.
The ability to read accounts accurately and to decipher what they mean.
Lack of experience in the financial. Staff have been promoted who were perhaps lacking in experience and unprepared to deal with the difficulties of the current economic climate.



Ensuring project work is carried out safely
<i>This was not an area where employers appeared to be pointing to specific skill shortages, rather ensuring project work is carried out safely is merely an extension of the need to keep up to date with changes in health and safety legislation, and then meeting this legislation through on-site controls.</i>
Highlighting the current legislation with regard to health and safety.
Just need to bring us up to date with health and safety regulations but they change every five minutes- not for the good either.
Laziness in the other lads. They know what to do but it's too easy to cut corners.
The little things like keeping the site tidy and making sure tools are put away.
Refreshing staff because the standards are always changing and if you don't keep yourself up to date then you can find yourself slipping behind legislation.
Overall understanding of how little things can turn into big things. Need to report everything.

Identifying IT needs of the organisation
<i>Comments here tended to focus either on making better use of the existing packages that the company has or developing a more general understanding of what IT is available and how it might help the business.</i>
Knowing what infrastructure should be used to see the larger picture. Best way to run the company from an IT point of view.
Web marketing development or spreadsheets, and internet use.
Understanding basic technology at this point and where it is going in the future.
Awareness of what is available, other software packages could be doing much more, just need the experience.
Understanding of the existing capability of the system and the technology and making it fit within the budget.
The actual functionality of the IT department to improve the structure for the organisation. The skills of the individuals working.
Understanding how IT has moved on because you get to a competent level and it changes.

The IT skills of senior staff themselves
<i>The range of IT skills lacking among management was varied but was generally concentrated at quite a basic level, and use of standard office packages and spreadsheets.</i>
My general IT knowledge is rubbish, to be honest. I can turn the computer on, email, but I'm not very good at Excel, knowing how to update the website, just general know-how on the computer
Accountancy and web design online.
Software on excel, email communication, and C.I.S specifically.
General IT skills. They need to be more aware of the opportunities and benefits which are offered by IT.
Further training on existing programmes and utilising what we have.
We outsource most IT, so it's a lack of knowledge and a lack of time to get to grips with it.
They could all do with a little training on how to use the computer properly.
Keeping programming up to date with technology.
Our directors have all been in the industry for years but don't embrace technology in the way that they should. For example we now have a fully integrated company accounts system. When they need some numbers running they could access this from their own.
They need training to get their head around spreadsheets.
Making sure all staff can use IT to its full capacity.



Communicating effectively
<i>A lack of communication skills was seen as affecting a variety of relationships, including with clients, suppliers but most often other staff. The challenge internally was making sure all parts of the company are kept fully informed.</i>
The ability to communicate effectively, motivating and direction and being forceful with direction.
I find that when I give instructions I find out they've misinterpreted what you want doing.
A bit more advice with the communication between management team and site management.
Ties into the business plan, feeding down through every sector what the management team are striving for.
Training in mannerisms in talking to clients. Being professional to ensure business.
Professionalism and the way we deliver things and take things on board may not always be in the right manner.
General day-to-day communication. Not assuming that people have been informed and updated. Making sure - following up.
We need better communications between the management and supervisors and shopfloor workers. getting our wishes through to the shop floor is vital.
Down the chain. OK at the top but not pass the information down.
Ensuring that everyone gets the message they deliver and understand it clearly rather than it being down to interpretation.
No forum for managers to communicate and put their ideas across or link-up between client and board.
Team building and getting staff to share the same goals
<i>This was an area where employers were generally able to say what end they wanted (better team working) without usually being able to be specific about the skills that are lacking, though for some it was about better communication and / or better people management skills.</i>
We need to agree on the direction that the business should follow.
Getting people to appreciate that the things they do affects profits.
To know more about the structure of things going on. A better way of getting staff to understand what is going on with the whole job. Everyone being more in-tune.
Getting everybody to pull together. We subcontract everything, but getting all the subcontractors to work together and pull towards the same goals is difficult.
All the skills that are associated to team building - motivational skills, presentational skills. Just being able to present information better, and practical advice.
People management skills. Understanding the team dynamic.
Maximising staff productivity
<i>This was clearly considered a key area though the skills required were often closely tied with others in relation to better communication to staff, team working and being able to motivate staff, and planning</i>
Just how to manage better. How to improve productivity of staff.
Helping guys being able to see the most efficient way that things are done and improve their process at work.
Possibly try and think what we could do to try and motivate them better.
Managing work flow in advance just in time methods. Instilling enthusiasm in staff.
Keeping eyes open and keeping aware of employee behaviour and stamping on time wasting as and when it's seen.
Identifying issues and ensuring people are assigned jobs to which their best suited.
General knowledge, commercial awareness. Leadership and communication.



Identifying training needs of staff and developing their skills
<i>For some the gap was knowing what training is available, for others it was about being clear on how beneficial training is likely to be, and for others it focussed on being able to identify who in the company needs what training. For many it was clear that training was ad hoc and rarely part of a planned activity.</i>
Lack of knowledge about training. I've no idea what training is out there for managers.
Being able to identify what training is necessary or beneficial.
Being made aware of what's available and what legislation there is.
A better laid-out structure of what training is available and what employees need.
Knowing what training staff should have and the importance of it.
A greater knowledge of potential training which our employers might require us to do.
Some people don't have qualifications they pick up throughout the years and NVQs take 2 years and they are not tradesman and they need to be identified. We need to be able to spot peoples' skills very early on as there is a big difference between some.
There are times when we should have trained people and haven't, it comes down to time management.
Just getting the management team to admit that there is a skills shortage.
Need to keep one step ahead of competitors. Training in new techniques and designs.
Gauging what skills are missing from each individual and improving them.

Keeping up to date with the latest products and techniques
<i>Employers tended to emphasise the same broad point that it is time consuming to keep up to date on this, and many don't know where to look for this information. Small employers particularly struggle with this.</i>
Just keeping up with the new innovations and techniques as its always changing all the time.
Being on the ball and being aware of new updates and new ideas.
There are all sorts of new products coming out and I am 52 and haven't done any training in about 30 years. I go to shows and see productions but we need to know how it's done.
It's the time factor more than anything that is the problem.
We need more help for smaller business...I don't get the full benefit of putting staff on training, as a small business.
Manufacturers bring out new products. Manufacturers don't always test things out. They bring out products and wait for the market itself to identify the problems.
There are always new products coming out so to keep abreast of them all is virtually impossible.
Time management to give us the opportunity to look at these things.
It is making sure we are keeping on top of the latest innovations from different products to techniques.

Keeping up to date on Health and Safety legislation
<i>As with other areas of legislation the issue was usually described in general terms of the continuous challenge of keeping abreast of health and safety legislation. To some this was an information gap as much as a skills gap.</i>
Keeping up to date with the legislation as there is new stuff coming in all the time. It could do with being better publicised.
It's just that legislation changes all the time, so keeping up with kite marks.
The correct information being passed onto people to make sure everything is above board and legal.
It is important to keep up to date with legislation and any changes to avoid any fines.
We need to read more and understand the issues. We also need practical training.
IT is where you are going to find out where it all is right now and you've got to be computer literate.
General awareness and just being aware that the government are always moving the goal posts and you never know what you can and can't do.
Keep doing all we can to bridge the gaps. Generally a knowledge gap. Having the resources to formalise training to pass onto apprentices.



Keeping up to date on environmental legislation
<i>Employers discussing this skills gap nearly all focussed on the same issue, simply that it is a fast changing area which takes time to keep on top of</i>
If something has changed where you have to follow certain guidelines we would need to know this, especially if there are fines involved.
I'm aware of environmental issues but I don't know the exact details of what I have to do to comply. Everyone has a different view. It needs to be spelled out in simple terms with no jargon, no-one knows what the British standard is.
Just being told how to look for information and what part of the legislation is relevant to our sector.
More immediate training and being kept up to date on any new or changed legislation in reducing our carbon footprint.
Well, I think the problem with the environmental situation is that it changes from week to week, so it's one of these things that you've got to keep at all the time.
Using different paint, alternatives paints and materials, overcoming a fear of change
An improvement with the information and intelligence with environmental building systems and being able to translate into increased business. When a project comes up that's when we tend to do a bit of research, being able to analyse clients requirements
I don't think any of us have got any skills in the environmental area and we need to look in to it.
Generally there's not much awareness at all. Needs more awareness of the current legislation and environment and site waste management plans.
Gaining knowledge of what's required and fitting it in to our business, knowing how to protect the environment of our work.

Managing time effectively and prioritisation of tasks
<i>Examples given of skills issues are fairly self-explanatory, and particularly affect small employers</i>
Prioritising jobs so the most important ones get done first and less important get postponed.
Small but very busy. Could gain experience from managing time a lot better.
I work 70 hours a week and get paid for 40. There is so much work you have to do which is unpaid. The admin side is a complete nightmare. All the health and safety and the tax system. It's too much of a burden.
I spend too much time typing things out. I need a database but am only a small business.
It's such a small company we are always running around and not having the time to fully devote ourselves to the tasks and what we really need is someone to help us install the systems to help us manage our time more efficiently.
Prioritising jobs, putting things off, and managing time slots for certain jobs.
Just being busy and prioritising what's necessary. Often it's just the general workload, and knowing how to deal with it in.

Capability to ensure 'off site' products are integrated efficiently 'on site'
<i>Comments focussed on team work and communication skills</i>
Getting the team working together.
Basically just the full communication with suppliers on site.
Making sure the sub contractors are advised 100% on what to do and know what is required of them with regards to responsibility.



Effective delegation
<i>The skill gap sometimes relates to a lack of assertiveness, and is part of communication and people management skills</i>
Where to draw a line. So that it allows the management team to get on with other work.
Most supervisors tend to do a lot for work themselves instead of trying to delegate and use their workforce appropriately.
Communication of the message and instruction and what has to be done.
Just delegation, people in management positions who are good at their job but not good at managing people.
More a promotional role when staff have been promoted and find it difficult to delegate to their former colleagues.
Management need to delegate more as opposed to taking all the responsibility themselves.
Communication at a higher level or assertiveness.
Not being scared to delegate and realising that people will pick up skills if they do.
The understanding of the difference between delegation and abdication given responsibility is still yours.
Needs guidance to help learn to delegate.

Understanding the implications over the coming years of the low carbon agenda and the increased importance of 'green' issues
<i>The skill gap commonly relates to understanding the basics of 'green issues', improving knowledge of low carbon regulations, and environmental practices for reducing environmental impact. Many saw this area as an up-coming issue.</i>
Just what's available and how to get it, people are asking about it more often.
General knowledge of the whole thing of what's actually involved and what should be complied with.
How it will affect the company in terms of new opportunities, also responsibilities.
We think we do everything but it's more the training and keeping up to date with things.
Having better and more complete information so we can steer our business in that direction.
Understanding the code for sustainable homes. We have not found any courses which explain the code and how to implement it.
Knowledge - we lack the information and don't know where to find it.
More information on buildings regulations for zero carbon builds.
Knowledge of alternative practices which would reduce the environmental impact.
The whole business of understanding green issues, and its importance, everybody needs to be more aware of it.
General knowledge and keeping up to date with changing government policy. Being able to explain that to the supervisors.
Really comes from green issues and management waste and purchasing of products from ethical sources.
Just understanding the issues and the reasons why we need to improve our carbon footprint. Plus the best ways to do it as a business.
Because it's becoming a high priority area with clients and I feel we are slightly behind and there may be a gap there.



Managing the delivery of sustainable practices
<i>Generally comments on this issue relate to the fact that employers know of the issue but have no detailed understanding about what it is or how to implement it.</i>
Awareness of the necessary legislation, finding ways of making us aware.
Just having the time I am not even sure how we would go about improving our carbon footprint.
Knowledge background. Most of it is general but hard and fast rules not always available. Unless specific to work we are doing it is difficult to keep up to date.
Not sure of all the best methods of disposal and want more information on what we should be doing.
Trying to understand what's involved with carbon footprints and how they can be reduced.
Learning more about reducing waste and reducing energy consumption.
They're responding to demands of others, which they're not able to influence - understanding what to advise clients where they need to be compliant.
General understanding of separation of waste materials and what you can dispose of and what you can't.
Really just a general sense of awareness finding out what we can do and how we can do it.
Trying to make people aware and show what the effects are. Then cascading it down to the people on the floor. Raise awareness of the issues and putting it over in layman's terms.
Getting better at finding information on how to be more sustainable within the business and then putting these skills into practice.
Ways of measuring and implementing what we need to do.
General awareness and some ideas of how to do that and what areas we should be looking at. Some examples of what other companies have done.

Understanding and implementing Corporate Social Responsibility
<i>Comments on this issue tended to relate to needing better understanding of what company's responsibilities are. For some it seemed to be seen as relating to obligations to their employees, to others it was more outward looking, for example in relation to the impact on the environment.</i>
More knowledge on the whole subject of social responsibility.
General understanding of our position and where we fit in. Know where our responsibility is but not sure how we fit in with stakeholders.
An understanding of what effect we have on the world around us (global warming).
Overall responsibility for moral duty. Treating employees as an individual.
A clear understanding of the legal requirements and obligations and how important it is.
Knowing everything that relates to the knowledge of corporate social responsibility.
Go the extra mile. We don't want to be the minimum standard we want to be above it.
More understanding and information on the impact on public.
More education and understanding of what corporate social responsibility is and what it means.
It's the clients who are expecting more and more from us and our understanding of corporate social responsibility needs to improve.
I would say the understanding of diversity, work-life balance.

