

NORTH WEST'S FAVOURITE BOSS REVEALED

- New research reveals Richard Branson to be the North West's favourite boss
- Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of people in the North West want to work for an employer who demonstrates a commitment to training
- Over three quarters (77 per cent) of people questioned feel that they would benefit from more training
- Half (50 per cent) believe that the perfect boss is someone who believes in their employees' futures by encouraging professional development

Date of issue 29 July 2008
Press release number NWR- 341

New research into Britain's best bosses, released today by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to celebrate Skills and Apprenticeships, reveals that 50 per cent of the North West's workforce would most like to work for the tycoon Sir Richard Branson. The well-known businessman beat a host of household names including Sir Alan Sugar, Gordon Ramsay and Sir Alex Ferguson to take the prize.

The survey also unearthed the main characteristics we look for in a perfect boss. Results showed that a boss who gives us credit for great ideas topped the poll, with 62 per cent of respondents stating it was the most important characteristic for them. Employers that take the time to show their employees new techniques and help them learn (56 per cent) were voted a close second. And bosses who demonstrated a commitment to training and teaching us new skills and techniques (50 per cent) completed the top three most popular characteristics.

Conversely, an employer who does not impose any dress code restrictions (15 per cent), regularly organises compensated social events (16 per cent), or lets you leave work at 4.30pm on Fridays (16 per cent) appeared at the bottom of the list – demonstrating that, on the whole, North West employees are much more interested in working for people who invest in their future and encourage development than those who operate a relaxed and social working environment.

Interestingly, while over half of respondents (51 per cent) felt that they worked for people who encouraged professional development, over 77 per cent felt that they would benefit from more training and over 63 per cent of us would like to see our employer commit to more training. In fact, an overwhelming 84 per cent of respondents stated that if they were thinking about changing jobs, they would be more likely to choose an employer who invests in more staff development and training.

James Caan, star of Dragon's Den, says that not only is it essential for employee development to offer training, but it also has a positive impact on an organisation's bottom line. He says: "As an employer I want to get the best from my staff, and I always encourage them to succeed. A great way to ensure this is to offer training on a regular basis. You will find the results enlightening – not only will your employees become more motivated; they will be more productive and display more loyalty to the company. Unlocking the talent of your employees through training will undoubtedly have a direct impact on your business, allowing it to flourish and stay competitive in the long term."

David Lammy MP, Minister for Skills, says that training and a commitment to learning new skills is crucial to the future success of the nation:

"Skills lie at the heart of both economic development and personal success so it is critical that employers across England provide their staff with the opportunity to learn new skills and develop existing ones; Apprenticeships are a fantastic example of how this can benefit both businesses and their staff. It is important that, as a nation, we remain

competitive on a global scale and training or learning new skills is the best way to ensure this.”

John Korzeniewski, Regional Director, LSC North West, says: “These findings are really encouraging as we can see employees are placing a high value on the importance of new skills. Many employers are also leading the way, seeing that training is helping to shape the future of their businesses. The challenge now is to encourage more employers to invest in their staff in this way and the LSC is working hard with our partners to help this to come about through Train to Gain, Apprenticeships and our other services to employers.”

Often, employers offer funding or in-house training schemes to their employees. With the LSC’s ‘Train to Gain’ service, businesses are advised on how training can improve the skills of their employees and raise business performance. This is good news for would-be learners, with 78,000 employers already on board. Many of Britain’s leading businesses have also signed the ‘Skills Pledge’ to demonstrate their commitment to training and supporting their staff. More than 3 million people across the nation are already working for companies who have signed up.

With so much support available, what’s stopping you from updating your skills? To find out more about training and funding options available to you, talk to your employer or visit <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk>

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Notes to Editors:

The Learning and Skills Council Top 5 Boss List

- 1) Sir Richard Branson (51 per cent)
- 2) Gordon Ramsay (15 per cent)
- 3) Sir Alan Sugar (14 per cent)
- 4) Sir Alex Ferguson (8 per cent)
- 5) Fabio Capello (5 per cent)

Research

The research was conducted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by 72 Point, based on a survey of 2,013 people in England.

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, to gain the skills they need to succeed, secure their future or grow their income. For example, you could receive the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) for your decided course, a grant designed as a helping hand for adults thinking about learning but worried about the financial barriers standing in their way. ALG provides low income adult learners with up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs of learning. Since the grant became available, over 43,000 people have received ALG. You could also access training at work through the LSC's flagship programme for employers, Train to Gain.