

BusinessToday

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BOARDROOM MATTERS

BECAUSE THEY'RE WORTH IT?

EXECUTIVE PAY UNDER SCRUTINY



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PASSION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSPIRES NEW BUSINESS EVEN IN TOUGH TIMES

You'd be forgiven in thinking that launching a training company at a time when organisations are battling through the recession is too big a challenge. Yet newly launched training company, Instructus, is bucking the trend by pursuing the learning and development agenda and influencing businesses to continue investing in people.

In fact, the need to nurture skills is what, Instructus argues, will see businesses through tough economic times. Perhaps adapting to changes in how businesses approach training is the answer. "We won't lose our passion for professional development because learning is a life-long business," says Instructus CEO, Jenny Hewell.

The training company is an extended arm of Instructus, a registered charity based in London and parent company of a group of educational charities, with a mission to promote learning and professional development.

The concept for an Instructus group structure grew from a passion to provide high quality and cost effective learning in business disciplines. Instructus focuses on developing and improving skills in a wide range of Business areas including Administration, Customer service, Governance, Leadership and Management.

Now its training arm has established the group's ethos as a benchmark of excellence in business skills further - by delivering them. Their range of work-based training courses meet national occupational standards for today's employees and cover key business skills like Leadership, Project Management, Communication Skills and Stakeholder Negotiations.

Jenny said: "I have always had a great passion and interest in business performance and developing individuals to meet their potential. It's what my own professional life, and development, has focused on."

Jenny's career has spanned across many years in the business education sector. She has an MEd from Exeter and, before joining the group, worked as Head of the Distributive Occupational Standards Council. Earlier in her career, she worked as Head of Retail in further education, following ten years commercial experience in her family's business in manufacturing, retailing and distributing furniture to European, US and Middle East markets.

It was in 2003 when she was appointed as Chief Executive of Skills CFA, the leading skills council for business skills across the UK and one cog of the Instructus group.

The training arm of Instructus, however, was the brainchild of James Turner, Chief Operating Officer of Instructus. Having worked with Skills CFA since 2005 as a strategic HR consultant advisor, he supported Jenny to develop the organisation.

As a result, Instructus grew from taking control of the IAM in 2007 and the IQPS (later known as the IPA) in 2008.

"The organisation has seen a lot of change throughout the years which has contributed to its growth," James said. "My focus has always been on enabling employees to develop their potential, deliver against their corporate objectives and add real value to their organisation's financial performance."

He has more than 25 years of experience in Operations and HR within the commercial sector. Having developed his skills in catering and retail industries, he spent the past ten years as MD of his self-established HR consultancy, The Performance Group Limited.

His prowess at assisting organisations in adopting commercial approaches to their business activities prompted his position and drives the development of the Instructus training company - in spite of tough economic times.

That's not to say the minds behind Instructus haven't thought about the impact of the recession. Findings from the Learning and Talent Development survey (2010) from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development show that funding for learning and development has decreased in 54% of organisations in the public and private sector. For 36% and 39% of organisations in the private and public sectors respectively, funding has stayed the same and only a minority of organisations have increased their funding.

The study shows that as budgets for learning and development reduce, it is largely the approach to training that has seen the most change. Learning and development professionals have to make the case for training much more effectively than they might have done in the past.

Instructus has responded by offering services that suit these revised approaches. Their practical, endorsed and concise training courses only take employees out of the business for two or three days to relieve the strain on employers. But not at the price of quality - the training courses are all endorsed by national awarding body, IAM, and delivered by professionally qualified IAM Endorsed trainers.

James said: "We believe training is a key way for companies to maintain their competitive edge. Developing staff skills will help organisations recover from the recession.

"By nurturing managers you retain talent, by developing your workforce you increase productivity."

As Instructus continues to spurn new business areas, its mission lives on. The extension of business opportunities extends the group's footprint across the UK business community, which the IAM and Skills CFA also support.

For more information, please visit instructus.org or call 020 7091 2610.

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Jenny Hewell, Chief Executive, Instructus



1971 – 1979
Business Executive,
Walls and Hewell Ltd

1986 – 1994
Head of Retail and Distribution,
Trowbridge College

1994 – 1998
Head of Distributive Occupational
Standards Council, Council Distributive
National Training Organisation, London

1998 – 2000
Director, Hewell Taylor Freed &
Associates

2000 – 2004
Business Inspector, Associate Adult
Learning Inspector

2003 – present
Chief Executive, Skills CFA

2010- present
Chief Executive, Instructus

James Turner, Chief Operating Officer, Instructus



1980 – 1985
Five-year
apprenticeship
in catering

1985 – 1987
Opened three restaurants for
entrepreneurs as head chef

1987 – 1989
Lecturer teaching professional chefs at
Lewisham College

1990 – 1991
Personnel & Training Manager,
London Zoo

1992 – 1994
General Manager of Catering Services,
Mirror Group Newspapers

1994 – 2002
Head of Human Resources,
TM Retail Limited

2002 – 2012
Managing Director,
The Performance Group Limited

2012 – present
Chief Operating Officer, Instructus