

Investing in young managers makes business sense

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New research shows that investing in high potential young talent in an organisation can boost talent retention.

Young managers that are not given enough support in their jobs are more likely to leave the organisation - wasting precious HR hours and resources - says new research. One way to remedy this, says Jenny Carter, director of The New Manager, a leadership programme for first-line managers at the UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB), is to invest in more training and development at this level.

A recent Harvard Business Review study, presented in the article *Why top young managers are in non-stop job hunt*, showed that offering professional development to high-potential managers boosts talent retention, says Carter.

To conduct the study, article authors Monika Hamouri, Jie Cao and Burak Koyuncu asked young managers what their employers do to help them grow in their jobs and what they'd like their employers to do, and found some large gaps. The survey of 1200 employees showed that employees' main dissatisfaction comes from not receiving enough formal training and development.

As a result, the authors concluded that three-quarters of high potential employees are constantly on the look-out for opportunities elsewhere.

Carter says that too often people are promoted into management positions and left to sink or swim. In addition, she says that she has noticed a clear shift in demands being placed on new managers in recent years for which they often don't have the skills or experience to deal with. "As organisations flatten and move away from hierarchical structures, so we hear from our students that they are being required to take bigger and more responsible decisions much sooner in their careers and for this they need an expanded skill set," she says.

Carter said that as the demands on new managers grow, short courses are proving to be the most cost effective and targeted means to develop the critical skills needed. This is in line with government's increased emphasis on credit-bearing short courses as a way to achieve this.

Graduate of the The New Manager programme at the GSB, Billy Elliott, Business Relationship Manager: Middle East and Africa at the CRF Institute, is being groomed for a new manager position, and said that he wanted a holistic programme that would give him the skills to meet his new responsibilities. "It was a fantastic experience - two weeks of non-stop jam packed learning, covering a variety of subjects offering me the skills I needed. Despite having classmates from different work backgrounds - the course design meant that no matter the field one worked in, the skills were extremely relevant. The programme definitely gave me the grounding I was looking for," he said.

The programme combines practice and theory so that first-line managers are able to confront many of the significant challenges they might encounter, head-on.

It also places emphasis on understanding how perspectives work in relation to others, and what this means for leadership. "Until the programme I had not realised how important it is to know my personal strengths and weaknesses and to be comfortable with my uniqueness. Understanding the self assists you to be a better leader to others," says another graduate of The New Manager, Nondwe DeCaires.

DeCaires described it as the best training experience she has had, and said that for any managers who want to undergo training, the course will develop their leadership skills, and give them the practical skills needed to deal with the challenges

of leading a team.

The New Manager includes rigorous assessments and 150 notional hours of contact time, presentations, assignment work and preparation. Delegates who complete the short course and submit an assignment that is assessed to be competent will receive a UCT certificate of completion in continuing professional development. It is now a credit-bearing short course run by UCT at NQF level 6 at 15 credits.

Carter says that a credit-bearing short course satisfies both the employee and the employer at the same time.

"It allows the employee to be able to develop their skills formally, while following their employer's workplace skills development plan to develop high-potential talent for the ever-changing business environment," she says.

The New Manager runs at the UCT GSB from September 29 to October 11, 2013. For more information contact Tracy Kimberley on 021 406 1346 or visit www.gsb.uct.ac.za/newmanagers.

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