

HAVE YOUR SAY

Are restricted management capabilities holding Irish companies back?



Irish companies are not being held back, as generally there isn't a shortage of skilled senior managers in Irish business. However, Irish companies don't always find it easy to access this talent. As the economy has diversified, we've seen a broader range of management skills across all sectors. Perhaps the greatest development has been the number of Irish senior managers with international experience returning home. We are also seeing non-Irish senior executives securing key roles. It can take time to recruit the right senior people, but patience is rewarded and, given the expertise available, roles are generally filled to everyone's satisfaction.

— **John McCullough**, managing director, **KPMC's Executive Search & Selection**

In the context of the Enterprise Study Group's estimate that 80pc of people in the private sector in Ireland are employed in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), managers are responsible for more than their area of primary competence. This holds many companies back. There is a theme in recent policy documents of the need to provide support to the management of small Irish organisations. Leaders who know how to drive business in a competitive, global environment recognise that a trained workforce improves performance and lead in training for themselves.



— **Sinead Heneghan**, director, **Irish Institute of Training and Development**



Many small to medium Irish companies that have grown organically need to look at their management structure and identify gaps. As a company matures, so too should expertise in strategic areas. As an owner of a company, it is difficult to hand over responsibility for key areas, but this is central to the growth and success of any small business. Recently, PC Cubed employed an operations director. As the company grew from two staff members in 1994 to 15 in 2007, it was necessary to review staffing and internal communications.

Management has to be aware of its weaknesses as well as its strengths. Recognising the need to employ additional management to fulfil strategic functions is central to our development.

— **Celine Hackett**, managing director, **PC Cubed**

The OECD has identified managerial weaknesses as key in the failure of small businesses (up to 50pc) — not just in Ireland, but across the globe. The success of any business depends on the skills of managers, making the current situation of poor management skills an acute problem here. Competition is the name of the game. If owner-managers ignore the opportunity to upskill themselves or senior management, they are ignoring the opportunity to be better than their nearest competitor. The recently established Small Firms Association (SFA) National Centre of Excellence aims to provide SME owner-managers with a competitive edge.



— **Patricia Callan**, director, **SFA**

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