

Upskilling for business leaders

Level: Advanced (C1-C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Business topics: CPD, life-long learning, leadership, hard and soft business skills

Business language: useful business vocabulary, phrases and expressions, business initialisms

Activities: providing opinions, key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, putting together training offers and sending them out via email or online

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, small groups

Overview: This article discusses why business leaders are returning to business school or seeing the necessity to update their skills in other ways.

1. Warmer

- a. Students discuss what skills they think business leaders (especially those that are in their late 40s and above) should or might have to learn in order to remain in touch with their employees and the company business. Then they scan the article to see what it mentions.

Suggested Key (from the article):

leadership development, diversity and inclusion, digital transformation, change management, innovation and digital skills, cyber-hacking, well-being, sustainability, mathematical tools, big data, AI

2. Key words

a.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>applications</i> | 7. <i>intermingled (with)</i> |
| 2. <i>implications</i> | 8. <i>mentoring</i> |
| 3. <i>upskilling</i> | 9. <i>off-site</i> |
| 4. <i>ambiguity</i> | 10. <i>resilience</i> |
| 5. <i>volatility</i> | 11. <i>boards</i> |
| 6. <i>robust</i> | 12. <i>fellow</i> |

3. Understanding the article

- a. Students answer the questions with as much detail as possible from the article.

You could turn this into a 'closed book' task by asking students to not look at the article to find the information again, but to simply discuss their answers with a partner and come up with as much information as possible between them, only looking at the article if they think they've forgotten something or would like to add more detail near the end of the allotted time.

1. He is from Argentina where he has a chain of shops that sell iPhone accessories. The global shift to online retailing made him realize that he needed to upskill and learn more about data science.
2. He flew to London to the London Business School to take a (good level of education) week-long crash course with other experienced managers from around the world. This not only taught him new skills, but also gave him the chance to network with fellow executives, guest speakers, and business school professors, as well as IT coders from India.
3. Managerial skills are also part of the course, especially those that deal with recruiting and keeping specialists and looking at different company structures, e.g., abandoning top-down "command and control" structures.

4. morning keep-fit sessions, class discussions, workshops, and individual mentoring
5. They are asking to sit in on classes offered to current students in order to keep up to date. They are also asking professors to share their insights and up to date business knowledge.
6. Upskilling courses for management and executives are being provided by online platforms such as LinkedIn, as well as digital start-ups. Consultants and training companies are also offering (local or in-house) training.

4. Business language – useful phrases

- a. Students find multi-word expressions in the article that have the same or a very similar meaning to the explanations given. The paragraph numbers are given to help them.

Key:

1. *gain fresh insights (paragraph 6)*
2. *not confined to (paragraph 8)*
3. *a brief lull (paragraph 11)*
4. *fresh appetite for something (paragraph 11)*
5. *hold someone to account (paragraph 20)*
6. *seek to keep up (paragraph 22)*

- b. Then students should use them to talk about the article – changing the forms wherever necessary.

5. Business language – initialisms

- a. Students first find three initialisms in the article and write them on the lines.

Key:

LBS = London Business School
FT = Financial Times
CLO = chief learning officer

- b. Then they decide what the other common business initialisms stand for and write the words in full.

Key:

CEO = chief executive officer
CFO = chief financial officer
COO = chief operating officer

- c. Finally, they talk about other business-related initialisms. Students can also talk about other initialisms that are relevant to their work or field of study, even if they're not strictly business.

6. Discussion questions

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together, so they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

7. Wider business theme – Continuing professional development (CPD)

- a.-c. Students work with a partner and follow the steps on the worksheet. The email could really be an email that they either post in their group or print out and put up on the wall for everyone to read.