

Upskilling for business leaders

Level: Intermediate (B1-B2)

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

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 decide what upskilling means.

Key: 2

- b. Students read the statements and say which they most agree with and why.

2. Key words

a.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <i>applications</i> | 7. <i>mentoring</i> |
| 2. <i>priorities</i> | 8. <i>cynicism</i> |
| 3. <i>ambiguity</i> | 9. <i>off-site</i> |
| 4. <i>volatility</i> | 10. <i>resilience</i> |
| 5. <i>squad</i> | 11. <i>disruption</i> |
| 6. <i>coders</i> | 12. <i>boards</i> |

3. Understanding the article

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

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 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 (as well as class discussions, workshops, 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 also 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 rearrange the letters in italics and write them on the lines to create multi-word expressions from the article. The paragraph numbers are given so that they can check their answers.

Key:

1. *a broader shift (paragraph 4)*
2. *gain fresh insights (paragraph 6)*
3. *a brief lull (paragraph 11)*
4. *fresh appetite for something (paragraph 11)*
5. *cater to something (paragraph 11)*
6. *hold someone to account (paragraph 20)*

- b. With a partner, they should use them to talk or write sentences about the article.

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 – especially ones that are relevant to their work or field of study.

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 that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

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

- a. Students work with a partner and follow the steps on the worksheet. Hold a class feedback discussion after the task. If you'd like to extend the task, have students write up their suggestions.