

Working with Attitude

Summary Report



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INTRODUCTION

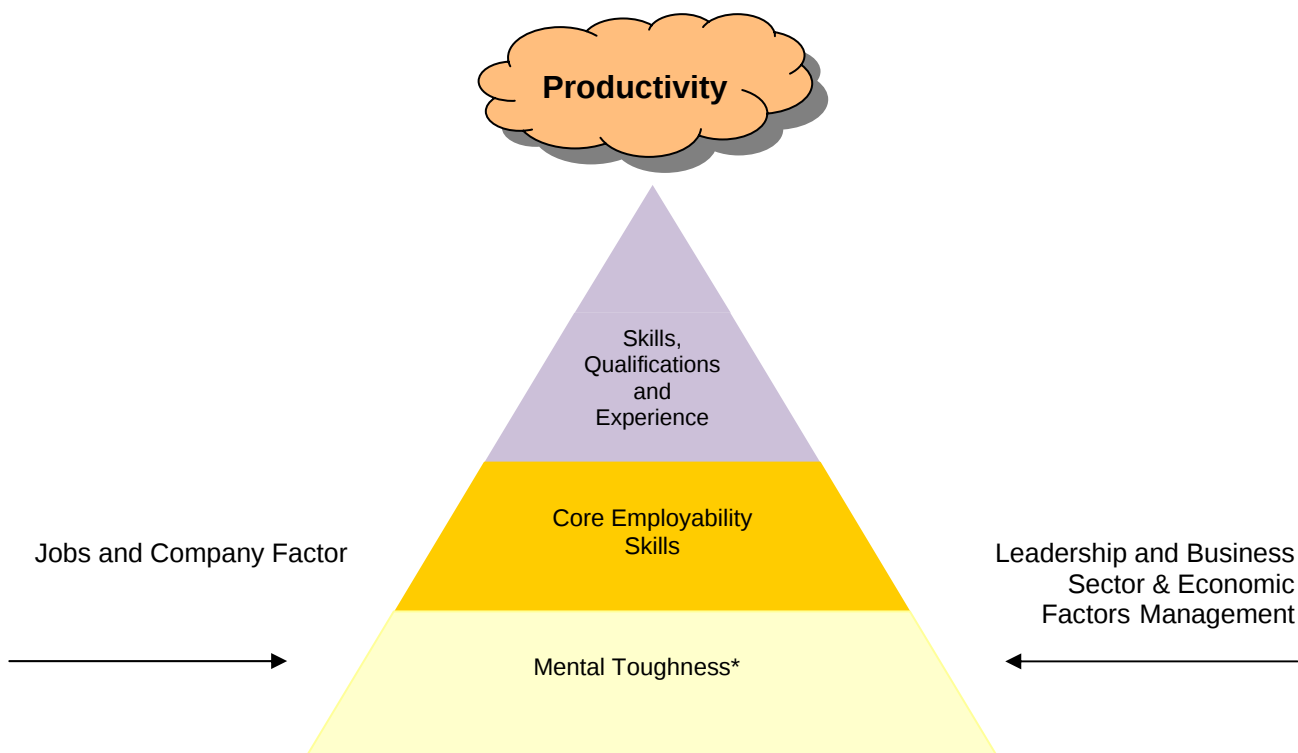
“Our strong performance on skills and qualifications does not feed through effectively to productivity. It is essential that we empower our current and future workforce to use their skills creatively and innovatively in our economy.”

(Scottish Government, 2007, *The Government Economic Strategy*, p.14).

The Working with Attitude project is one of 12 projects supported by the Scottish Funding Council during 2010 to explore aspects of skills utilisation and inform future curriculum and training course development. It was carried out in a public policy context which places skills utilisation at the heart of the drive to ensure that Scotland's investment in education and training is reflected in economic growth.

Working with Attitude has investigated the role of various factors in relation to individuals' performance in the workplace. The project partners were Stevenson College Edinburgh, Scottish Funding Council, the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils, Skillset, People 1st and Adam Smith College. It therefore represents a partnership between education and industry aimed at developing a deeper, joint understanding of how employees' skills are utilised in the workplace. The results will feed into future policy development to help Scotland maximise its skills and grow its economy.

The project is rooted in Human Capital Theory and takes as its premise that a number of elements, illustrated in the diagram below, are contributory factors to an individual's skills utilisation.



* Mental Toughness refers to an individual's resilience and inner drive to succeed, particularly when the going is challenging. Dr Peter Clough, Head of Psychology at Hull University, has identified four key components of Mental Toughness: Challenge, Commitment, Control and Confidence.

Key questions considered by the project were:

- *What is the extent and level* of education and training among employees and their managers?
- How relevant to their current jobs do they consider their training to be?
- How do they rate themselves in terms of vocational competences (National Occupational Standards) and core employability skills?
- Do they receive the management support that enables them to perform effectively?
- Do they have the Mental Toughness to cope with the pressures and challenges of the workplace?

Project Activity:

A consultant worked with each of the Skills Councils (Skillset and People 1st) to recruit participants, gather data and make subsequent reports.

Creative Media Editors: 31 company employees and 4 managers representing 5 companies, plus 9 freelancers

Hotel Housekeepers: 39 employees and 32 managers representing 12 establishments

Employee/freelancers completed a Skills Utilisation questionnaire which asked them about their educational level, formal and informal training, vocational and core employability skills and managerial support. They also completed the MTQ48 questionnaire which rated their overall Mental Toughness and its component elements of Challenge, Commitment, Control and Confidence.

Managers undertook a 180° exercise, giving their ratings for their employees.

Managers also completed the Skills Utilisation questionnaire and the MTQ48 questionnaire on their own behalf.

The questionnaire responses were analysed and the results are summarised in the following section. These are augmented by participant reflections.

Finally, some key messages are suggested, informed by the reflections of the consultants who met with the participants.

FINDINGS FOR CREATIVE MEDIA EDITORS

In this section, the findings are summarised for:

Employee Editors + Managers 180°	Skills Utilisation Questionnaire
Employee Editors	MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire
Managers	Skills Utilisation Questionnaire
Managers	MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire
Freelancers	Skills Utilisation Questionnaire
Freelancers	MTQ48 Questionnaire

These findings should be read with the relatively low number of participants in mind. No inferences of generalisability across the wider sector or to other sectors should be made, though it is hoped the study will illuminate the landscape.

The findings are interspersed with the reflections of participants, shared with the consultant in interviews. While these are simply the views and perceptions of individual participants, it is hoped that they shed some light on the perspectives underpinning the quantitative data. The key messages are also informed by participants' comments and by the reflections of the two consultants

CREATIVE MEDIA EDITORS

Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

	Employees	Managers
Overall Skills Utilisation	Generally high self ratings, with a minority (29%) giving lower ratings	More middle range responses
Message	No significant skills utilisation issues for most, but some feel their skills could be better utilised	Managers, more than employees, feel there is scope for better skills utilisation
Qualification Levels	96% qualified to SCQF Level 7 or above	Broadly in line with employee responses
Message	Employees' level of qualification is known by managers	Managers are aware of the level of qualifications held by staff
Non-certificated Training	Most (61%) have completed some form of non-certificated training covering a wide range of topics	Acknowledge some non-certificated training but cite a narrower range
Message	Non-certificated training is a significant form of skills development for the majority of employees, but was not cited by a minority of 39%. It may be that training which is non-certificated does not always 'register' with employees, or that such opportunities are not being made available to some employees	Managers may be unaware of the full range of non-certificated training employees have undertaken, with consequences for skills utilisation

Barbara's Reflections

A lot of training is not recorded or measured, especially in IT. Most editors work at home learning Photoshop or other programmes that will help them to get a job done. Most training is self training. Editors are expected to develop themselves and not rely on employers for training, so it's essential that training options are individualised and accessible online. Editors already use online forums such as Creative Cow for information. I train myself as needed and use online forums – mainly American ones, as they tend to be ahead in terms of new technology and software.

Today, it's about on-the-job training, but that's haphazard and there are no formal apprenticeships. Wider knowledge and deeper editing skills are being lost, as there just isn't time on the job to learn new skills or for older editors to pass on knowledge.

Maybe some kind of mentoring scheme would help.

	Employees	Managers
Placements	13% have undertaken some form of placement (though 18 years ago, in one case)	Generally aware of the nature of placements undertaken by employees
Message	It seems that editors lack opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills by learning about how the job is done in other organisations.	May wish to consider placements as a vehicle for developing editorial staff
Bursaries	Only one example of financial support (Erasmus, for a certificated course)	Indicated no bursaries for training
Message	Financial support for training may be an issue	The issue of finance for training and whether this is a barrier is one that requires further investigation
Formal Training	39% have participated in some form of formal training in the last 12 months and cited a wide range of industry-related courses	Cited a smaller range of formal training courses undertaken by employees and these were generally different from the ones cited by employees themselves
Message	Most employees have not undertaken any formal training in the last 12 months and mechanisms for making managers aware of what has been undertaken require examination	Managers may be unaware of the full range of formal training undertaken by employees, with consequences for skills utilisation

Craig's Reflections

There's a lack of formal training in the industry today. In the past, you would maybe have formal training at the BBC for 3 years and then move out into the wider industry. That doesn't happen now. There's no time or opportunity for formal training; there is no budget and no time available. The emphasis is on self-development. We're constantly fire-fighting. It's a combination of self-taught and peer training on a 'need-to-know basis'.

In the past, I guess the BBC was regarded as the trainer for the industry, but there's no longer any defined trainee pathway into the BBC. The onus is on the individual to punch their way through. You need a lot of persistence and an encouraging manager.

I think older editors are more likely to be better qualified; younger ones are more likely to be at HND level.

Brian's Reflections

You can't learn to be an editor at college. The only training that's worthwhile is on-the-job training. Many in the industry have very low regard for tertiary education, it's definitely an issue. They think the courses tend to be set up by enthusiasts rather than those with industry experience.

There's too big a gap between what industry requires and college training courses. Changes in the industry take too long to filter through to colleges. I think more needs to be done to train the lecturers before they start teaching students. Is anyone doing anything to organise industry-led events for colleges? There needs to be more communication between education and industry, and industry placements for college staff. Perhaps future training should be a combination of college and structured placement in industry, but this would require industry buy-in.

	Employees	Managers
Informal Training	45% report having participated in informal training in the last 12 months. They cited a wide range of industry-related topics.	Cited only 3 examples of informal training (compared with employees' list of 19).
Message	A majority have not undertaken any informal training in the last 12 months (or are unaware of having done so). It is possible that some employees have not undertaken any formal or informal training, certificated or non-certificated, in the past 12 months.	Again, managers seem unaware of the full range of informal training undertaken by employees, with consequences for skills utilisation.

Clare's Reflections

Training is too informal. You're expected to go and 'play' with the software and then maybe you need to use it on a production – you're left to figure it out on your own. It's difficult to find the time to do this and I don't really think it's acceptable to have to use new skills and resolve problems on the job.

Lots of expensive packages, like Adobe CS4 and 5 for example, are not used because it's too expensive to train people to use it. Here, Management want to put in place a series of training courses, but it hasn't been signed off by Finance. It's not that training is undervalued, it's about money.

Some companies take on younger, cheaper editors who have no formal training at all and I feel this diminishes the role.

	Employees	Managers
Relevance of Skills and Training	The majority rate highly the relevance of their skills and training to their current job role, with 26% giving it a low or mid rating.	Managers generally think employees' skills and training are relevant to their current job roles but see room for improvement
Message	Although three-quarters of employees think their skills and training are highly relevant to their jobs, for one in four employees to be of the view that they have low relevance is a cause for concern.	Employees rate the relevance of their skills and training more highly than managers. This may be related to apparent gaps in managers' knowledge of training undertaken by employees.

Malcolm's Reflections

Editors' contractual arrangements are such that they are seen as a schedulable resource; they barely have time to read e-mails. There's no time for peer learning or shadowing. If they're not on a production, then they're at home. There isn't even anywhere for them to come together to discuss things and so they don't feel like they are part of a team. They work mainly alone and to production.

Editors should be looking to benchmark themselves against the wider sector, but they don't think of themselves as part of a wider sector. I wonder if they would be confident to put themselves up against editors from London or LA. That's a key question – how do you benchmark skills and talent? It's all very well to say we want to be a centre of excellence with state of the art facilities, but how do we know if we have the talent to match?

I think there are huge issues with training in the sector, especially with the smaller edit facilities. In Scotland, there seems to be a general perception that there isn't much work in the sector so it's very competitive. In contrast, there's a professional body for edit company owners in London – CHEEFS – where they share information on technology and co-operate to enhance the sector. Maybe we could learn from that.

	Employees	Managers
National Occupational Standards	Gave themselves low rankings in five of the NOS and indicated lack of training in six. They rated themselves highly in 10 of the competences.	Agreed with employees' low ratings for three of the NOS but rated employees more highly for two. For two of the competences in which employees said they had not been trained, managers disagreed.
Message	The areas of low self-ratings should inform future training plans, taking into account that some NOS may not be relevant to the work of some editors	Perceptions of competences might form a useful starting point for performance review activities.

David's Reflections

I think the NOS may be at too high a level. And they're out of date. There are references to film cutting rooms and linear editing. Linear editing is not used unless in Sport or News, and even then it's going by the wayside. They're obviously written by a film editor rather than TV. The NOS terminology is not appropriate to non film editors.

Anyway, how can you list the competences in this way when there are so many specialisms within the sector? They don't capture editorial skills, only the technical ones. Maybe there should be NOS for different editor jobs, particularly as more work for the Web comes along.

	Employees	Managers
Core Characteristics	Scored themselves highly against most characteristics, an exception being Self Development	Also rated employees' core characteristics highly, though they rated different competences most highly. Again, their lowest rating was for Self Development
Message	Employees are generally confident that they perform well in terms of the core and soft skills required in the modern workplace	No significant concerns for managers with regard to employees' core characteristics. Lack of core and soft skills does not seem to be an issue regarding the productivity of the Creative Media editors.

Julie's Reflections

Most editors concentrate on their technical skills. It might be a good idea to develop some non-technical skills training courses specifically for the Creative Industry context. I'm thinking of things like successful communication between craft and production, or strategies for managing upwards.

You may be very flexible on the job but you can be perceived as 'inflexible' if you have other commitments, for example if you have caring responsibilities. And sometimes it's not that you're not adaptable, it's that the deadlines set by Production are unrealistic.

You have to be a good time manager in this role. But times and deadlines are dictated by budgets and are sometimes unrealistic, so struggling to meet a deadline may not be a reflection of the editor's skill.

	Employees	Managers
Job Description and Job Appraisal	Most (87%) say they have a job description and most (71%) say they undergo an appraisal with their manager in which their achievements are measured against their last set of objectives.	Three of the four managers said employees had a job description. All four said employees undergo an appraisal with three confirming that this includes discussion of achievements against objectives
Message	Lack of awareness of what is expected in their job role should not be an issue for most employees but may be for the few who do not have a job description. Some appear to lack structured opportunities to discuss performance against targets and training needs in appraisal interviews	The differing perceptions of managers and employees as to whether an appraisal has taken place or not requires further investigation. It may be that some are so informal and unstructured that employees do not recognise them as such. It would seem that in one case, appraisal does not include discussion of achievements against objectives so it may be that development of this aspect of management is required

Maggie's Reflections

I set objectives for my staff as part of the appraisal system, but I know it's unlikely they'll be able to get the time to do any training. This is documented, but there's nothing I can do about it.

Some staff may feel that the manager is not allowing them to deploy their skills, but it's about stepping stones – you don't put forward the less experienced editors for certain jobs - and some employees think they are better than they actually are. Also, matching personalities and relationships is key; it's not just about technical skills.

	Employees	Managers
Management Support	Most gave mid to high ratings for most support elements but there were some low scorings.	While there was some agreement, other responses contrasted with those of employees. Their highest self-ratings were for elements some employees rated lowly.
Message	Employees generally feel supported by their managers to carry out their jobs well but there is room for improvement in some areas.	There is some disparity between employee and manager perceptions of the support provided by managers and this may be a potential training need area.

Chris's Reflections

There is limited support from management. My own manager was an editor and has had no formal management training. Most people are promoted from within and this may be part of the problem.

There's a lack of communication generally. I know that positive feedback from clients isn't passed on, and Management are only in touch when there's a problem.

But it's not just a question of management; it's also about the context. There are so many people involved in the production chain. A poor production team will affect your ability to do the job and the quality of the work produced.

CREATIVE MEDIA EDITORS

MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Overall Mental Toughness	69% of employees fall within the mid range, suggesting that they are generally confident, able to cope with challenges, focussed on goals, comfortable in most situations and willing to contribute. These qualities may be tested in more difficult situations, however.
Challenge	A wide spread of scores, with most (63%) falling within the mid range, suggesting that the majority of employees are able to cope effectively with most of life's challenges. Those scoring at the high end (28%) respond well to challenges. They may, however, become bored with mundane, repetitive tasks and be more attracted to those which offer interest and challenge. In so doing, they may neglect more mundane tasks and fail to complete more challenging ones. The few scoring at the low end (9%) may feel intimidated in difficult situations and will try to minimise their exposure to change. They are likely to perform best when they have a routine and have a partiality to predictability as opposed to unpredictability. They may be slow to react to changes.
Control: Overall	78% of employees fall within the mid range, suggesting that they feel in control of most situations. Those scoring at the high end (16%) believe they can make things happen but may become frustrated in situations where they are not able to make a difference.
Control: Life Control	78% fall within the mid range, indicating that these employees generally believe that they can make a difference. Those scoring at the high end (13%) tend to feel they can make a major difference and rarely feel they are just 'going through the motions'.
Control: Emotional Control	68% fall within the mid range, indicating that while they may worry about important aspects of their lives, they remain calm and collected most of the time. Those scoring at the high end (16%) do not worry unduly and tend not to 'lose their cool' in stressful situations, while the 16% scoring at the low end tend to be anxious and more easily upset than others.

Commitment	63% fall within the mid range, indicating that in everyday situations, they will normally stick to the task in hand, are relatively resilient, motivated and enthusiastic A significant minority (34%) scored at the high end of the scale. These individuals will complete tasks even in the most difficult situations and so tend to be trusted with key projects. However, because they are very goal-oriented, they may appear intolerant of weakness and this may impact negatively on relations with colleagues. Only one employee scored towards the lower end.
Confidence	Scores are well distributed across the range, with the majority (68%) falling within the mid range, suggesting they are generally self-assured, with moderate levels of self-confidence 16% scored more highly and will tend to be high achievers who succeed where others might fail. 16% scored towards the lower end, suggesting that they are less likely to be able to persist in the face of setbacks.
Confidence: In Own Abilities	Employees are generally moderately to extremely confident in their own abilities. 68% fall within the mid range, suggesting they have the self-belief to attempt most tasks but may on occasion fail to tackle challenges that they are in reality capable of handling. The 19% falling within the upper range typically have the self-belief to tackle tasks that may be considered too difficult by others. They are therefore more likely to accept new and difficult assignments with the expectation of success and are unlikely to dwell on mistakes.
Confidence: Interpersonal	A wide spread of scores, with 66% falling within the mid range, suggesting these employees feel comfortable in groups but may not always speak their minds. They may sometimes be willing to take charge of a situation and will play their role when working with other people. A quarter (25%) fell within the low range, indicating that these employees can feel intimidated when working in groups and will sometimes back down even when they feel strongly. They will not seek to take charge of a group or situation, preferring to take a 'back seat'. Three individuals (9%) have high interpersonal confidence. They are willing to take charge of a group or situation and can express their views and pursue an argument in the face of contrary opinions.

Sue's Reflections

Editors work very long hours in rooms with no natural light and work mostly alone. It's hard to feel you have control. You're told what to do by Production and editors are not encouraged to share their opinions and expertise.

Editors are supposed to be fixers of all problems as they are the last ones in the chain – the “Don't worry about filming things correctly, we'll sort it out in the edit” mentality. Sometimes you feel you're put in a situation where the job is unachievable – it's not to do with an individual's ability to deploy their skills. And you don't want to stick your neck out and complain or you'll be seen as a failure.

Jean's Reflections

I'm frustrated by the lack of control I have over the work I do. Management choose the jobs for me.

I like working on my own and I like to bring creativity to the job, but I know I am probably too quick to react when asked to do something that I don't agree with creatively.

In summary, most employees consider themselves to be reasonable mentally tough, that is, able to cope with most situations, though challenged by particularly difficult ones. Significant minorities score highly for Commitment and Challenge while Interpersonal Confidence is an issue for others.

While there is undoubtedly scope for helping some employees improve their Mental Toughness and thus deal with the challenges of the workplace more effectively, it does not, appear, from this limited study, that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving the productivity of editors in the Creative Media sector.

FINDINGS FOR CREATIVE MEDIA MANAGERS

Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

The four managers also undertook the skills questionnaire and the MTQ48 questionnaire on their own behalf, with the following results (percentages are not given here, due to the low number of respondents).

Overall Skills Utilisation

Mid to high self-ratings, suggesting that managers do feel their skills are being well used, albeit with some room for improvement.

Qualification Levels

Ranged from SCQF Level 8 to 10, broadly in line with employees, though two employees are qualified to Level 11, i.e to a higher level than their managers.

Non-certificated Training

Most (3 out of 4) had completed non-certificated training and listed a wide range. As might be expected, most of these are management-related

Placements

One manager has undertaken two placements

Formal/Informal Training

Half have participated in formal training during the last 12 months and one of the four has undertaken informal training.

Relevance of Skills and Training

Three managers agree their skills and training are relevant to their job roles (none strongly agreed) and one gave the lowest rating. Further discussion with managers is required to ascertain in which areas they feel they lack skills and what training is required to close this gap.

National Occupational Standards

Managers generally rate themselves highly against the NOS, though half gave low scores for *Manage redundancies* and *Prepare sales proposals and deliver sales presentations*. Their perception, then, is that they do possess the competences required to carry out their job, though there is room for improvement in some cases. The areas attracting low scores from two respondents seem important gaps, particularly in the current financial climate.

Managers did not indicate whether they had been fully trained, partly trained or not trained in the competences.

Core Characteristics

Managers' perception is that they perform well in terms of the core and soft skills required to carry out their job; no low scores were given.

Job Description and Job Appraisal

Three of the four managers have a job description and are given a job appraisal in which their achievements are measured against their last set of objectives. So, these should be clear about what is required of them and have the opportunity to discuss their performance and training needs with their own manager. The fourth manager may be less clear about expectations, performance and training opportunities.

Management Support

Respondents generally feel their managers give adequate support, although there were areas for improvement. These weaker elements related to: communicating work priorities and tasks clearly; giving constructive feedback on work; and managing the team.

CREATIVE MEDIA MANAGERS

MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Overall Mental Toughness	2 managers fall into the mid range, suggesting that they are generally confident, able to cope with challenges, focussed on goals comfortable in most situations and willing to contribute. These qualities may be tested in more difficult situations, however. Their levels of Mental Toughness correspond with those of the majority of employee respondents. 2 fall into the high range, suggesting they have they have high levels of confidence and the capacity to bear a significant amount of pressure
Challenge	Again, half fall into the mid range, suggesting that they are able to cope effectively with most of life's challenges. The other half scored at the high end and respond well to challenges. They may, however, become bored with mundane, repetitive tasks and be more attracted to those which offer interest and challenge. The potential danger is that they may neglect necessary but mundane tasks and fail to complete more challenging ones.
Control: Overall	Again, half fall into the mid range, suggesting that they feel in control of most situations, and half fall into the upper range and believe they can make things happen.
Control: Life Control	The split is the same. Those in the mid range generally believe they can make a difference but on occasions may feel they are just 'going through the motions'. Those scoring at the high end tend to feel they can make a major difference and rarely feel they are just 'going through the motions'.
Control: Emotional Control	The scoring pattern differs here, with all four managers scoring in the mid range. So, while they remain calm and collected most of the time, they may worry about important aspects of their lives.
Commitment	Half fall within the mid range and half fall within the upper range. Those in the mid range will stick to the task in hand and demonstrate resilience, motivation and enthusiasm. Those at the higher end will complete tasks even in the most difficult situations, and so tend to be trusted with key projects. However, because they are very goal-oriented, they may appear intolerant of weakness and may overlook the achievements of staff. This may be reflected in their management style.

Confidence	All four managers scored within the mid range. They are generally self-assured, with moderate levels of self-confidence. However, if they are subjected to a series of setbacks, their confidence may wane.
Confidence: In Own Abilities	Managers are moderately to extremely confident in their own abilities. They have the self-belief to tack most tasks with the expectation of success and, in one case, will tackle tasks considered too difficult by others.
Confidence: Interpersonal	While still falling within the mid range, the scores here are weaker than those for the other sub scales. The four managers should feel comfortable in groups but may not always speak their minds. They may sometimes be willing to take charge of a situation and will play their role when working with other people. However, they may not speak out, even when they think they are right, and this reticence may come across as weakness to others whose opinions may then dominate.

Lucy's Reflections

I recognise myself as a 10 for commitment, but I also recognise that that's not always a good thing. It's made me think about driving through unrealistic deadlines set by Production and reflect on how other people in the group may respond and what motivates them. I think I need to make my health my primary concern and negotiate realistic deadlines with production teams. I'll certainly use the anxiety control and fatigue management exercises.

Steve's Reflections

Editors may think they have no control over their work, but most skills are matched to the productions. Sometimes editors are not aware of this and there is an issue of perception.

I'm a bit alarmed at the low Interpersonal Confidence score for the group but will monitor it and pass on the MTQ exercises to staff. We'll use them at one of the group team building away days soon.

In summary, the managers perceive themselves to be reasonably or highly mentally tough, scoring in the mid or high range for all the sub scales. Their weakest areas appear to be Emotional Control and Interpersonal Confidence.

So, while there may be scope for helping some managers to improve their Mental Toughness and thus deal with the challenges of the workplace more effectively, it does not, appear, from this limited study, that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving managerial effectiveness in the Creative Media sector.

CREATIVE MEDIA FREELANCE EDITORS

Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

Nine freelancers undertook the skills utilisation questionnaire and six of these completed the MTQ48 questionnaire, with the following results (percentages are not given here, due to the low number of respondents).

Overall Skills Utilisation

Freelancers generally feel their skills are well or very well utilised. One gave a low rating, suggesting this individual feels their skills and training are not being used to their full potential.

Qualification Levels

Ranged from SCQF Level 6 to Level 10, broadly in line with employees and managers.

Non-certificated Training

The majority (8 out of 9) had completed non-certificated training and listed a wide range of training episodes, chiefly focussed on technical skills.

Gordon's Reflections

There is no opportunity to take up training. It would have to be evenings or weekends or even online modules. Time is money!

Plus, there are differences in the ways different organisations use technologies and what technical specs they demand. As a freelance, this is challenging, as you are starting fresh every time.

Placements

Five placements were cited, ranging from 1 to 45 weeks.

Bursaries

Only one freelancer indicated receipt of a bursary. However, this appears to be a start-up grant from Scottish Enterprise and not a training bursary.

Formal/Informal Training

Only one of the nine freelancers reports having participated in any formal training during the last 12 months (a 3D course) and only two have undertaken informal training (Motivational Training and Apple Motion). It appears, then, that freelancers are less likely than their employed counterparts to undertake formal or informal training, perhaps because they have to bear the cost themselves.

Alan's Reflections

As a freelance, it's very difficult to get hands-on experience of using new technology or software. You can read about it, but it's not the same as practical experience. You end up having to use new skills for the first time on the job and that's not ideal.

For an individual, the cost of equipment to train on is prohibitive. And you need experience of using the equipment to get a job. Experience is an issue – because you have no opportunities to use the equipment, you can't get work. Throw into the mix the fact that technology is constantly being updated, and you have a difficult situation for anyone to crack.

Relevance of Skills and Training

Most freelancers feel that their skills and the training they have undertaken are relevant to their current job role. Given that they generally have to pay for their own training, it is likely to be tailored to their own, specific needs.

National Occupational Standards

Though most NOS received mid to high ratings, freelancers are generally less confident than their employee counterparts in their NOS competences. A minority of one or two freelancers gave low ratings for the following NOS:

- Monitor and maintain post production equipment and environment
- Transfer materials to broadcast format
- Set up and maintain film cutting rooms
- Play, cut and join materials
- Edit materials using non linear equipment connected to newsroom system
- Ingest materials for fast turn around editing
- Prepare fast turn around editing
- Edit recently shot materials for immediate television transmission
- Conform pictures

Like the managers, the freelancers did not indicate whether or not they had been fully trained, partly trained or not trained in any of the competences. However, a minority did indicate that they felt a number of the competences were not applicable to their current job role.

There seems, then, to be scope for improving the vocational competences of freelancers and for exploring the relevance of the National Occupational Standards to all job situations.

Core Characteristics

Freelancers' perception is that they perform well in terms of the core and soft skills required to carry out their job. Unlike their employee counterparts, they scored highly for Self Development, reflecting the need for self-reliance in freelance work. Only one low score was given – for IT skills.

Stuart's Reflections

Getting a job today as a freelance is about who you know in the industry and about having successful working relationships with those people, so you have to have good people skills.

Even so, if you are no good, you just won't get hired again. There's no constructive feedback, no second chances.

Job Description and Job Appraisal

Seven of the nine freelancers have a job description, so should be clear about what is required of them. Only two had a job appraisal in which their achievements are measured against their last set of objectives, which is perhaps to be expected for freelancers, who therefore lack structured opportunities to discuss work performance and training needs.

Self-management

In the absence of a manager, freelancers were asked about their own abilities to manage themselves. They rated themselves in the mid to high ranges for the majority of elements, with a minority giving low ratings for: identifying their own training and development needs; promoting their own achievements; seeking/finding work and negotiating contracts; selling themselves and keeping reputation and knowledge up-to-date. For these individuals, these gaps are potentially damaging to continued success.

CREATIVE MEDIA FREELANCE EDITORS

MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Overall Mental Toughness	Most fall into the upper range, suggesting they have they have high levels of confidence and the capacity to bear a significant amount of pressure – crucial for freelancers, who are under pressure to impress in the workplace. Those falling in the mid range are generally confident, able to cope with challenges, focussed on goals comfortable in most situations and willing to contribute. These qualities may be tested in more difficult situations, however. On the basis of this small sample, freelancers display higher overall levels of Mental Toughness than their employee counterparts, again reflective of the demands of their mode of employment.
Challenge	4 fall into the mid range, suggesting that they are able to cope effectively with most of life's challenges. 2 scored at the high end and respond well to challenges. They may, however, become bored with mundane, repetitive tasks and be more attracted to those which offer interest and challenge. The potential danger is that they may neglect the necessary but mundane tasks and fail to complete more challenging ones. This could be particularly serious for freelancers.
Control: Overall	Half fall into the mid range and feel in control of most situations, and half fall into the upper range and believe they can make things happen.
Control: Life Control	All but one scores at the high end (the other scoring in the mid range), and so fare well in comparison with both employees and managers in terms of Life Control. This is perhaps not surprising, given that freelancers have some freedom in selecting the projects they work on.
Control: Emotional Control	Again, freelancers score more highly than employees and managers in this category, with no scores below the mid range.
Commitment	2 fall within the mid range and 4 fall within the upper range. Those in the mid range will stick to the task in hand and demonstrate resilience, motivation and enthusiasm. Those at the higher end will complete tasks even in the most difficult situations, and so tend to be trusted with key projects. However, because they are very goal-oriented, they may appear intolerant of weakness and may overlook the achievements of others. It could be potentially damaging to a freelancer if they get a reputation for upsetting people in the course of getting the work done.

Confidence	Unlike their employee counterparts, no freelancers scored in the low range. Those in the mid range are generally self-assured, with moderate levels of self-confidence, though that confidence may wane if they are subjected to a series of setbacks. The two who scored in the high range will tend to be high achievers. They will often succeed where others fail but may 'go for it' in situations where this is not advisable.
Confidence: In Own Abilities	Two fall within the mid range and the remaining four within the upper range. Freelancers are moderately to extremely confident in their own abilities. They have the self-belief to tack most tasks with the expectation of success and some will tackle tasks considered too difficult by others. They have a generally positive outlook and will not allow mistakes to get them down – important attributes for those seeking contract work.
Confidence: Interpersonal	In common with managers and employees, the scores here are weaker than those for the other sub scales, though only one rating was in the lower range.

In summary, these freelancers, like the employees and managers, perceive themselves to be reasonably or highly mentally tough, scoring in the mid or high range for all the sub scales and better than their employee counterparts in some areas.

For all three groups – employees, managers and freelancers – the category of Interpersonal Confidence attracted some low scores and may be an area for development work.

So, while there may be scope for helping some freelancers to improve their Mental Toughness and thus deal with the challenges of the workplace more effectively, it does not, appear, from this limited study, that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving the performance of freelance editors working in the Creative Media sector.

Key Messages

- While editors appear to perform well in terms of level of qualification and vocational competences, there seems to be no mechanism for benchmarking these against the wider sector or other countries in order to compare performance.
- Time and cost are major barriers to the take-up of training, particularly for freelance editors. This can result in editors learning on a 'need to know' basis and using skills for the first time on the job, with no opportunity to practice in advance
- Because so much training is informal/non-certificated and often self-financed, managers may not be aware of the full extent of the knowledge and skills possessed by editors, both employed and freelance. They may even be unaware of formal training undertaken by editors and are thus unable to fully utilise the skills gained to improve business performance. A mechanism for recording the full training history of employees should be considered.
- Discussion of performance against targets as part of a structured review is not universal. Improvement in this area would help to ensure that managers are aware of editors' full range of skills and give opportunities to discuss barriers to effective performance and training needs.
- One consequence of the move away from more formal training and apprenticeships towards on-the-job learning and solitary working is a lack of opportunity for new editors to interact with and learn from more experienced editors. Consideration could be given to a mentoring scheme.
- There is a perception that college courses do not equip student editors effectively for the workplace and that college lecturers do not always possess the necessary knowledge or industry experience. The question of how to improve communication between education and the industry and how to ensure staff and courses are fit for purpose should be addressed.
- There are concerns about the National Occupational Standards in terms of level, currency and relevance. This requires further examination.
- Editors and their managers generally perceive themselves to be reasonably or highly mentally tough and so, from this limited study, it does not appear that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving the productivity of editors. Interpersonal Confidence is the area where editors and managers feel weakest and is therefore a potential area for future development work.

FINDINGS FOR HOTEL HOUSEKEEPERS

In this section, the findings are summarised for:

Housekeepers + Managers 180°:Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

Housekeepers: MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Managers: Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

Managers: MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

These findings should be read with the relatively low number of participants in mind. No inferences of generalisability across the wider sector or to other sectors should be made, though it is hoped the study will illuminate the landscape.

The findings are interspersed with the reflections of participants, shared with the Consultant in interviews. While these are simply the views and perceptions of individual participants, it is hoped that they shed some light on the perspectives underpinning the qualitative data.

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPERS

Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

	Employees	Managers
Overall Skills Utilisation	Mid to high self-ratings with, with a minority of respondents (20%) giving lower ratings	Generally in the mid range. No low ratings given
Message	No significant skills utilisation issues for most housekeepers, but some feel their skills could be better utilised	While there may be scope for better skills utilisation, managers did not perceive under-utilisation to be a serious issue.
Qualification Levels	In the responses, the full spread of SCQF levels – from 1 to 12 - was represented, with peaks at Level 7 (21%) and Level 4 (15%). 15% are qualified below Level 4, with 4 respondents (10%) qualified at the lowest level, Level 1. In addition 5 (13%) rated themselves as a zero, i.e. no formal qualifications at all. A further 15% possess a degree or post-graduate qualification.	Managers' perception is that Level 7 is the highest qualification of staff (it is 12) but are aware of the low levels achieved by some staff.
Message	The spread of qualification level covers the full range, from Access 1 to doctorate level. This suggests there are housekeepers both seriously under-qualified and seriously over-qualified for their job role.	Managers seem unaware that they have staff qualified to HND level and above and so may not be fully exploiting the skills and knowledge of well-qualified housekeepers. However, they are aware that they have staff who may struggle with basic skills.
Non-certificated Training	Two examples of in-house training were cited.	Managers cited a wider range of non-certificated training than housekeepers, including: fire training, health & safety, COSHH, customer care and manual handling.
Message	It may be that training which is non-certificated does not always 'register' with employees, or that such opportunities are not being made available to some housekeepers.	Managers may need to raise awareness and profile of non-certificated training completed so that both they and housekeepers can better utilise the skills and knowledge gained.

Martin's Reflections

I think we do have a real issue here about not exploiting the skills staff have. I mean, Irena, a Polish colleague, is really well qualified. I don't know what her degree's in, but she must have more of a contribution to make. A lot of foreign workers working as housekeepers have degrees – they're often better qualified than their managers. It's a shame, really. I don't know how we get that recognised and used.

	Employees	Managers
Placements	Three report having undertaken some form of placement in the past, but these were not linked to their current job role.	None indicated.
Message	It seems that housekeeping staff lack opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills by learning about how the job is done in other organisations.	May wish to consider placements as a vehicle for developing housekeeping staff and benchmarking standards.
Bursaries	Four housekeepers did cite financial support they had received in the past, but these seem unrelated to their current job role.	One indicated that employees may have received college/SVQ bursaries.
Message	It may be that employees are unaware of funding that they can access (e.g. Modern Apprenticeships, ILAs).	The issue of finance for training and the extent to which it is a barrier is one that requires further investigation. Managers, also, may lack knowledge of Modern Apprenticeships, ILAs, etc.
Formal TRAINING	All who responded to this question said they had participated in some form of formal training in the last 12 months and cited a wide range of job-related courses. Most formal training is occupationally-specific and is undertaken to meet statutory obligations (e.g. fire safety, health & safety, COSHH)	Cited a smaller range of formal training courses undertaken by employees, generally overlapping with those cited by employees, i.e. those required to meet statutory obligations.
Message	Formal training is widespread and recognised by staff.	Managers are generally aware of the types of formal training undertaken by employees, so should be able to help them utilise the skills and knowledge gained.

	Employees	Managers
Informal Training	Most report having participated in informal training in the last 12 months and again cited a wide range of job-related topics.	38% of manager respondents were able to cite informal training undertaken by housekeeping staff.
Message	Informal training is a significant mechanism for developing the job-specific skills and knowledge required by housekeeping staff and seems to be regularly updated.	The distinction between formal and informal training is not always clear to either staff or managers. This may not matter, so long as training is overt, valued, recorded and exploited.

Sarah's Reflections

Really, I feel I'm in a bit of a bind. It's so hard to get staff who are reliable and turn up, you don't want to lose them, so sometimes you just overlook things. If I'm honest, I'll sort their mistakes rather than take time to train them to get it right. It's not that I don't know they need training, it's just that I haven't got time to train staff on top of everything else I have to do.

	Employees	Managers
Relevance of Skills and Training	The majority (56%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that their skills and training are relevant to their current job role, with 44% giving it a low or mid rating.	Managers were broadly in agreement with staff, with some responses in the low to mid range.
Message	The fact that almost half of the respondents rate the relevance of their skills and training in the low to mid range requires further exploration. One explanation may be that some respondents have gained skills/qualifications in other contexts and, indeed, other countries, sometimes to a high level, and do not immediately see their relevance to their current position.	The sector attracts recruits from a range of backgrounds and nationalities. Where they have acquired skills and knowledge in other contexts and disciplines, they could be helped to understand the transferability, and thus relevance, of these experiences to the Hospitality sector. Managers, too, could work on exploiting these transferable skills.

	Employees	Managers
National Occupational Standards	High self-ratings in 10 of the 16 competences. Low ratings/not applicable for: clean and service a range of areas; clean carpets and soft furnishings; clean windows from the inside; deal with customers across a language divide; maintain customer service through effective handover	Gave fewer high ratings than staff and more low ratings/ not applicable. For two of the competences in which employees said they had not been trained, managers disagreed.
Message	The areas of low self-ratings should inform future training plans and the review of the NOS.	It seems that staff are more confident about vocational competences than managers. Perceptions of competences might form a useful starting point for performance review activities. The Sector Skills Council is currently reviewing the NOS at Levels 3 and 4.
Core Characteristics	Scored themselves highly against most characteristics, an exception being IT Skills which was rated low to mid by 62% of respondents.	Rated employees' core characteristics less highly – though generally well - giving fewer top ratings and more low ones.
Message	Employees are more confident than managers that they perform well in terms of the core and soft skills required in the modern workplace.	Every category attracted low scores from at least one manager, suggesting that there is a number of employees, albeit small, who face serious challenges with regard to the core characteristics and soft skills required in the modern workplace.

Wilma's Reflections

I rated myself low for IT skills probably because that term makes me think of people who can programme and things – 'anorak' types. But now I think about it, I do use the computer for things like online shopping and booking holidays and for sending e-mails at work, so I'm probably better than I think. I just wouldn't have confidence to do anything complicated.

Drew's Reflections

Some staff really do have poor literacy and numeracy skills. There's a perception that you don't need these for housekeeping jobs, but that's just not true, and you certainly need them if you want to progress. But I think some of the staff who rated themselves lowly are really better than they think – they're perfectly capable of adding up bills, working out tips, etc. It's about confidence, really. Maybe it's a legacy from school. They've got it into their heads that they're bad at these things and they overlook all they've learned as they've got older. So I don't think the ratings are always accurate, though we should be helping those who do need help with basic skills.

	Employees	Managers
Job Description	54% say they have a job description, 46% do not. Of those who did, interviews revealed that very few were knowledgeable about its content or placed much value on it.	58% claimed their employees had a job description.
Message	Lack of clarity about what is expected in their job role may be an issue for those who do not have a job description and may impact on job performance. Equally, the apparent low value placed on job descriptions by those who do have them merits further investigation.	Reasons for the apparent low value attached to job descriptions to make expectations clear require further investigation.
Job Appraisal	74% say they have a job appraisal, 36% do not. When asked if achievements are measured against targets, only 17% of respondents said yes, with 83% saying no.	54% claim employees undergo an appraisal. However, only two of these stated that this involves measuring achievements against targets.

Message	Although daily targets may be set, there seems to be a significant absence of structured opportunities for staff to discuss performance against clear targets or to discuss training needs. This has potentially serious implications for staff effectiveness. High turnover of staff may be a factor here.	It may be that review takes place but in a very informal and unstructured way. The area of performance review seems to be an aspect of management requiring urgent attention. Such consideration needs to be set within the context of high turnover, seasonality, the employment of casual staff and outsourcing.
Management Support	Housekeepers generally rated highly the support they receive from managers. The category: <i>encourages you to develop your skills</i> received most low scores (15% of respondents).	Managers rated themselves less well, giving fewer high scores and more in the middle range.
Message	Employees generally feel supported by their managers to carry out their jobs well, though there is room for improvement in some areas.	Managers tend to see the support they give staff as adequate rather than excellent. This may be a question of perception or it may be that there are management training needs which require to be met.

Alex's Reflections

I joined the hotel about 18 months ago and I knew things needed to change. One of our biggest problems was staff turnover, but we now have really quite a stable workforce. In the past, we have tried most things: casual and temporary staff, out-sourcing and agency but, to be honest, the way we work now seems to have given us the stable workforce we need and also the standards we expect.

We started by only employing people we thought would stay. It seems a bit obvious, but in the past, the hotel tended to pick people to plug immediate gaps, and this led to picking people who were wrong. People coming and going in the team was unsettling for everyone, and the team struggled to keep up standards.

Recruitment is now not really an issue for us, and when a team member does leave, we take our time to fill the post and we cover the lost hours by paying our staff more to fill the gap. It seems to work for us. There was a transition between the two approaches, and we were lucky with our long-term agency staff, but I think it was worth the pain of going short at times to get the better workforce we need.

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPERS

MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Overall Mental Toughness	A wide range of scores, peaking in the mid range (61%), suggesting that these individuals are generally confident, able to cope with challenges, focussed on goals, comfortable in most situations and willing to contribute. These qualities may be tested in more difficult situations, however. 15% fall within the upper range. These employees tend to have high levels of confidence in their abilities and are more likely to take on more challenging tasks, managing any obstacles that arise. Almost a quarter (24%) fall within the lower range. These employees may find it difficult to cope with stressful environments or criticism from others. Lack of confidence may lead to their avoiding challenge through fear of failure. They may therefore be unlikely to take advantage of opportunities for further development.
Challenge	Again, the full range of scores is represented, with most (61%) falling within the mid range, suggesting that the majority of employees are able to cope effectively with most of life's challenges. Those scoring at the high end (9%) respond well to challenges. They may, however, become bored with mundane, repetitive tasks and be more attracted to those which offer interest and challenge. In so doing, they may neglect more mundane tasks and fail to complete more challenging ones. Almost one-third (30%) score at the low end. These employees may feel intimidated in difficult situations and will try to minimise their exposure to change. They are likely to perform best when they have a routine and have a partiality to predictability as opposed to unpredictability. They may be slow to react to changes.
Control: Overall	58% fall within the mid range, suggesting that they feel in control of most situations. Those scoring at the high end (18%) believe they can make things happen but may become frustrated in situations where they are not able to make a difference. Those in the lower range (24%) may feel they are not in control of their future but are at the mercy of things and people around them. They may be tense and anxious and tend to undervalue their contribution.

Control: Life Control	Again, 58% fall within the mid range, indicating that these employees generally believe that they can make a difference. Those scoring at the high end (12%) tend to feel they can make a major difference and rarely feel they are just 'going through the motions'. Those in the lower range (30%) may rely on others to help them control a situation and may not believe that what they do really makes a difference.
Control: Emotional Control	64% fall within the mid range, indicating that while they may worry about important aspects of their lives, they remain calm and collected most of the time. Those scoring at the high end (12%) are not prone to undue worrying and are unlikely to 'lose their cool', even in stressful situations. Those in the lower range (24%) are anxious people who find it hard to relax. They will reveal their feelings to other people and are more easily upset than others.
Commitment	Again, a wide spread. 60% fall within the mid range, indicating that in everyday situations, they will normally stick to the task in hand, are relatively resilient, motivated and enthusiastic 19% scored at the high end of the scale. These individuals will complete tasks even in the most difficult situations and so tend to be trusted with key projects. However, because they are very goal-oriented, they may appear intolerant of weakness and this may impact negatively on relations with colleagues. 21% scored at the lower end. They may be easily diverted from the task in hand and may give up easily in adverse circumstances, without seeking help or support. They can overemphasise negatives – such as the low status attached to a job - and convince themselves that something is not achievable when it is.
Confidence	Scores are distributed across the range, with the majority (58%) falling within the mid range, suggesting they are generally self-assured, with moderate levels of self-confidence 21% scored more highly and will tend to be high achievers who succeed where others might fail. 21% scored towards the lower end, suggesting that they will tend to underachieve and avoid volunteering for tasks, despite having the skills and ability.

Confidence: In Own Abilities	Most respondents are moderately to extremely confident in their own abilities. 49% fall within the mid range, suggesting they have the self-belief to attempt most tasks but may on occasion fail to tackle challenges that they are in reality capable of handling. 30% fall within the upper range and typically have the self-belief to tackle tasks that may be considered too difficult by others. They are therefore more likely to accept new and difficult assignments with the expectation of success and are unlikely to dwell on mistakes. The 21% scoring at the lower end tend to expect things to go wrong and avoid difficult tasks. They may get mistakes out of proportion and allow negative self talk to dominate their thoughts.
Confidence: Interpersonal	Scores are distributed across the range, with 64% falling within the mid range, suggesting these employees feel comfortable in groups but may not always speak their minds. They may sometimes be willing to take charge of a situation and will play their role when working with other people. 9% have high interpersonal confidence. They are willing to take charge of a group or situation and can express their views and pursue an argument in the face of contrary opinions. Over a quarter (27%) fell within the low range, indicating that these employees can feel intimidated when working in groups and will sometimes back down even when they feel strongly. They will not seek to take charge of a group or situation, preferring to take a 'back seat'.

Kate's Reflections

I really love my job, I enjoy the responsibility. I'm 21 and I've already had a couple of promotions. My goal is to become a Head Housekeeper in a top hotel and I'm determined to reach it. I always get good feedback from my manager because I'm never off and I'm really committed to doing a good job. But I know my reading and writing isn't great and I'm worried that might get in my way. I'd like to do something about it, but I don't really know where to go or who to talk to – it's not something you want to tell everybody. It would have to be something I could combine with my job.

Graham's Reflections

I have one member of staff, Nicola, who I'm sure will score really highly. She's very confident and self-assured and also very capable – she's a floor housekeeper. She could go further, and I've tried to persuade her to have a plan for progressing her career, but she's not particularly interested. She's says she's happy with her life as it is, working here and living at home. So you can be really confident and resilient, but not driven by ambition, and maybe that's OK.

In summary, most respondents consider themselves to be reasonable mentally tough, that is, able to cope with most situations, though challenged by particularly difficult ones. They feel most secure in the area of Confidence in Abilities and least confident in the areas of Challenge, Life Control and Interpersonal Confidence.

For every category, a significant minority of at least 21% of respondents scored in the lower range, suggesting that developing the Mental Toughness of these housekeeping employees may help them to cope with the stresses and challenges of the workplace and thus improve their performance.

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING MANAGERS

Skills Utilisation Questionnaire

Overall Skills Utilisation

Managers overwhelmingly agreed (84%) that their skills and training are well or very well utilised.

Qualification Levels

Ranged from SCQF Level 1 to Level 11 i.e. broadly in line with employees. Most are qualified to Levels 5, 6 or 7 (up to Higher National Certificate), but as many as one-quarter of managers have as their highest qualification an equivalent of Access 1, 2 or 3 (Standard Grade Foundation Pass). This raises questions about the capability of some managers who are operating at a basic skills level and may be supervising staff who are much better qualified than they are, perhaps even in terms of management training. This raises questions about the availability of occupationally specific higher awards in Accommodation and the promotion of the benefits of learners to older workers in the sector.

Non-certificated Training

Most (68%) had completed non-certificated training of, mainly, management related courses (e.g. interview training, supervisory training, coaching and mentoring).

Placements

Managers cited nine placements, they had undertaken, though not all of them related to their current job. It seems, then, that managers are more likely than staff to have had the benefit of development opportunities that placements afford.

Bursaries

Like housekeeping staff, managers cited a number of sources of financial support they had received, again, not all of them related to their current job.

Formal/Informal Training

The lists of formal and informal training episodes managers have undertaken over the last 12 months are extensive. Many, as for their staff, relate to statutory obligations: Health & Safety, COSHH, etc, but others related to Management and 'softer' skills (e.g. Relationships and Work, Confidence Building). There is some overlap, reflecting that some staff have undertaken both formal and informal training in the same area (e.g. an IT course following by some peer coaching).

Managers, then, appear to have extensive opportunities to undertake short training courses. It may be, though, that this is more true for those working for the larger chain hotels with structured training programmes than for managers in small organisations.

Relevance of Skills and Training

All managers agree their skills and training are relevant to their job roles with 66% strongly agreeing. No low ratings were given. This is perhaps to be expected, given that the episodes cited are generally very vocationally relevant.

National Occupational Standards

Most managers rate themselves highly against eight of the 30 NOS but indicated that a number did not apply to them in their current job situations (e.g. those related to food and drink service, handling reservations, bookings and payments, portage and functions).

More occupationally-specific NOS are now under development.

Core Characteristics

Managers' perception is that they generally perform well in terms of the core and soft skills required to carry out their job, though there is room for improvement. However, low scores were given by a minority for: dealing with authority, IT skills, literacy skills, numeracy skills, problem solving, self development and time management. IT skills was ranked weakest, attracting low scores from 15% of managers.

Given the low level of qualification already noted for some managers, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are some fundamental skills gaps for a minority.

Job Description and Job Appraisal

87% of respondents have a job description and all of these are given a job appraisal. Again, this may be linked to the type of employer – large chain or small operation. However, only 56% said their achievements are measured against their last set of objectives, suggesting that appraisals may be less structured or less developmental than they might be. These managers should be clear about what is required of them and have the opportunity to discuss their performance and training needs with their own manager. The minority who lack both job description and review opportunities are likely to be less clear about expectations, performance and training opportunities.

Fiona's Reflections

As the new manager of the team, I was aware that there was a bit of history in feedback being a little blunt, direct and unsupportive. Working with the supervisors was important to me as I wanted to change that approach. I don't believe you can maintain your standards and keep your team together if your workforce is unhappy, and that sort of directness needed to go. Change is hard for some people and we did lose a supervisor, but I promoted from within and the changes have made a real difference.

I think the staff management of a team as large as mine is really important, and it's a bit overlooked too. It's not just the results that matter, it's how you get there.

Management Support

Respondents generally feel well or very well supported by their managers. The area with most scope for improvement is: *Encourages you to develop your skills* which attracted scores in the low range from 16% of respondents.

HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING MANAGERS

MTQ48 Mental Toughness Questionnaire

Overall Mental Toughness	57% fall into the mid range, suggesting that they are generally confident, able to cope with challenges, focussed on goals comfortable in most situations and willing to contribute. These qualities may be tested in more difficult situations, however and they may find it hard to make difficult decisions as criticisms from others may upset them. 43% fall into the high range, suggesting they have they have high levels of confidence and the capacity to bear a significant amount of pressure. No managers scored in the low range for overall Mental Toughness.
Challenge	65% fall into the mid range, suggesting that they are able to cope effectively with most of life's challenges. 26% scored at the high end and respond well to challenges. They may, however, become bored with mundane, repetitive tasks and be more attracted to those which offer interest and challenge. The potential danger is that they may neglect necessary but mundane tasks and fail to complete more challenging ones. 7% fell into the lower range and are likely to feel intimidated in difficult or unpredictable situations.
Control: Overall	The majority (74%) fall into the mid range, suggesting that they feel in control of most situations. 22% fall into the upper range and believe they can make things happen. 4% fell into the lower range.
Control: Life Control	Again, the majority (70%) score in the mid range. They generally believe they can make a difference but on occasions may feel they are just 'going through the motions'. The 17% scoring at the high end tend to feel they can make a major difference and rarely feel they are just 'going through the motions'. Only one manager scored towards the low range. 13% scored towards the low range; they may not believe that what they do really makes a difference.

Control: Emotional Control	74% of managers scored in the mid range for Emotional Control. While they remain calm and collected most of the time, they may worry about important aspects of their lives. The 22% scoring at the high end tend to 'keep their cool' and are not prone to undue worrying. 4% scored towards the lower end for Emotional Control.
Commitment	82% of managers fall within the mid range for Commitment. They tend to stick to the task in hand and demonstrate resilience, motivation and enthusiasm. 13% fall within the upper range. They will complete tasks even in the most difficult situations, and so tend to be trusted with key projects. However, because they are very goal-oriented, they may appear intolerant of weakness and may overlook the achievements of others. This may be reflected in their management style. 4% scored towards the low range and may give up easily in adverse circumstances.
Confidence	74% of managers scored within the mid range. They are generally self-assured, with moderate levels of self-confidence. However, if they are subjected to a series of setbacks, their confidence may wane. The 26% who scored in the upper range tend to be high achievers who succeed where others might fail. No managers scored in the lower range for overall confidence.
Confidence: In Own Abilities	The majority (65%) of managers have moderate levels of self-belief and can be relied upon to deliver to a satisfactory standard most of the time. 30% scored in the upper range and have the self-believe to tackle tasks considered too difficult by others. 4% scored in the lower range.
Confidence: Interpersonal	61% fall into the mid range and should feel comfortable in groups but may not always speak their minds. They may sometimes be willing to take charge of a situation and will play their role when working with other people. However, they may not speak out, even when they think they are right, and this reticence may come across as weakness to others whose opinions may then dominate. 30% have high levels of interpersonal confidence and are able to take control of most group situations. 9% fall into the low range; they tend to back down, even when they feel strongly, and prefer not to take the lead in groups.

In summary, the managers perceive themselves to be reasonably or highly mentally tough, scoring in the mid or high range for most of the sub scales and particularly strongly for Confidence.

So, while there may be scope for helping some managers to improve their Mental Toughness and thus deal with the challenges of the workplace more effectively, it does not, appear, from this limited study, that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving managerial effectiveness in Hotel Housekeeping.

Key Messages

- Managers seem unaware of the higher level qualifications held by some housekeeping staff and so cannot fully exploit their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the organisation. Structured reviews would help to ensure that managers are aware of employees' full range of skills and give opportunities to discuss how these might be exploited and further developed.
- There would also be benefit in managers recording non-certificated/informal training episodes and taking opportunities, in review interviews for example, to make these overt and valued.
- Increased use of placements should be considered as a way of extending staff skills (both employees and managers), sharing best practice and monitoring standards.
- Staff qualifications cover the full gamut of the SCQF levels. It is not clear how the job roles match to these levels. Such a matching exercise would provide a clear picture of career pathways and would help inform training strategies. The Skills Council's work on functional analysis and occupational mapping is therefore to be welcomed.
- Skills utilisation might be improved if businesses took a more holistic view of applications, taking into account applicants' skills, behaviours and knowledge before allocating them a specific role (which may not be the one they have applied for).
- Benchmarking qualifications and vocational competences by comparing performance against the wider sector and other countries would also inform training strategies. Again, the Skills Council's activity in this area is to be welcomed.
- Staff are trained in a wide range of occupational-specific competences, but it is not clear to what extent these training episodes form part of a considered training plan and to what extent they happen on a 'need to know' basis, bearing in mind that much of the training is carried out to fulfil statutory requirements. This may, in part, depend on the nature/size of the organisation.
- Increased use of job descriptions would bring greater clarity, in terms of roles and expectations, which is likely to have a positive impact on performance.
- There is also a significant absence of structured opportunities for staff and managers to review performance against clear targets and to help them meet these targets by providing relevant training episodes.
- Some staff possess poor basic skills and are therefore likely to be hindered in developing the occupational skills the industry needs in order to improve. This may be particularly serious for those employed in managerial positions. Clear routes to support in this area are required as a first step to improving the productivity of these individuals.
- Other staff may rate themselves more poorly than their real skills levels warrant due to lack of confidence. The issue of accreditation of prior learning may be relevant for those whose learning has overtaken that reflected in their low-level formal qualifications.

- Efforts are required to encourage older, experienced staff with low-level qualifications to upgrade their training and qualifications.
- Understaffing and consequent work pressure can mean that time is a major barrier to training. This can result in managers tolerating low standards and 'papering over cracks' rather than dealing with the fundamental training needs.
- There are concerns about the relevance of some National Occupational Standards and the Skill's Council's current efforts to address these are to be welcomed.
- A significant minority of housekeeping staff would benefit from development of their Mental Toughness. Gaining the ability to deal more effectively with the stresses and challenges of the workplace is likely to impact positively on their performance. Therefore, employers should work with providers to identify appropriate programmes and should evaluate impact.
- Managers generally perceive themselves to be reasonably or highly mentally tough and so, from this limited study, it does not appear that lack of Mental Toughness is a major obstacle to improving the productivity of managers in this sector.
- Overall, managers scored more highly for Mental Toughness than employees

ENDNOTE: Early Outcomes of Working with Attitude Research

One of the outcomes of this research has been a recognition of the clear need to look again at how managers within the accommodation sector are trained and what kind of qualifications are currently available. Following the review of qualifications, the Sector Skills Council has established the requirement for a new approach to developing the workforce in housekeeping and accommodation management and has therefore recommended the development of a Professional Development Award in Accommodation Management, the first of its type for the sector. PDA's are higher level awards, written in a way that supports both learning and employment, and the PDA currently under development is a collaboration between People 1st, VisitScotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the industry.

A further outcome of this research is a better understanding that the knowledge required by housekeeping managers is highly specialised and that the current qualifications provide neither the scope nor depth required to manage the myriad of areas that a modern housekeeper has to deal with. In discussions with the interviewees, there was a consistent view that a specific award with focussed and contextualised training was needed and People 1st are currently facilitating partnerships to bring this to market by August 2011.

Given that tourism is consistently of Scotland's biggest industries, it is vital that the accommodation we offer our visitors is of the highest standard. This research has played an important part in determining a new approach to developing the workforce.