
Business Management for HR and Learning Leaders: Strategy, Finance and Change Training Course

19 – 23 October 2026
Cape town





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Ref: 425_24940 **Date:** 19 – 23 October 2026 **Location:** Cape town **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Business management for HR and learning leaders is the subject of this one-week training course for senior people and development executives, ending in a business case for one people investment. HR and learning functions are judged on how they strengthen strategy, protect margins and enable change, so leaders need the language of finance, operations and markets. The programme moves from business principles, through diagnosis of the function, to design of proposals and then application to a single decision. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this business management programme for HR and learning leaders.

The Business Case

People functions often struggle to win budget because proposals are framed in HR terms, not in the measures boards use. Leaders who can read accounts, size a market problem and sequence a change programme present investments as business decisions and defend them with evidence.

- Budget Approval Rate: Improves as proposals carry costed benefits and risk assessments.
- Workforce Cost Visibility: Increases as payroll, hiring and learning spend are tied to operational drivers.
- Change Adoption: Strengthens as initiatives are sequenced against capacity and stakeholder readiness.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Balanced Scorecard: It links people measures to financial, customer and process results and structures the strategy work in Sessions 1 and 2.
- Ulrich HR operating model: It defines the strategic partner, change agent and administrative roles reviewed in Sessions 2 and 4.
- Kirkpatrick four-level evaluation: It frames the way learning spend is tied to behaviour and results in Session 3.
- ISO 30414 human capital reporting: It supplies the workforce measures used to build the business case in Sessions 3 and 5.

Intended Participants

- Executives who lead an HR or learning function and present its plan to a board or executive committee.
- Senior managers who own people budgets and must justify headcount, pay and development spend.
- Leaders who shape workforce strategy with finance, operations and commercial colleagues.
- Learning heads who link development spend to business targets.



The programme serves manufacturing, banking, healthcare and public bodies, and suits mixed groups.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to evaluate an organisation's strategy and market position to locate the contribution of its people function.
2. Participants will be able to interpret income statements, balance sheets and cash flow to assess workforce cost.
3. Participants will be able to diagnose operational constraints that limit workforce productivity.
4. Participants will be able to construct a costed proposal that links a people investment to a business measure.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise change initiatives against capacity, risk and stakeholder readiness.
6. Participants will be able to justify a people investment to a finance committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Business Strategy and Market Foundations

How does the organisation create value, and where do people shape it?

- Value Chain Mapping
- Competitive Position Analysis
- Balanced Scorecard Cascade
- Customer and Market Segmentation Brief
- Strategy Map for a People Function

Day 2: Diagnosing Financial and Operational Performance

What do the accounts and operations reveal about workforce cost and productivity?

- Income Statement and Balance Sheet Reading
- Cash Flow and Working Capital Review
- Workforce Cost Ratio Analysis
- Process Bottleneck and Capacity Review
- Ulrich Role Audit of the HR Function

Day 3: Designing the Investment Case for People Initiatives

How is a people investment costed, measured and compared with other claims on budget?

- Cost-Benefit Model for People Initiatives
- ISO 30414 Workforce Measures Selection
- Kirkpatrick Evaluation Plan for Learning Spend
- Scenario and Sensitivity Table
- Risk Register for the Investment



Day 4: Designing Change, Communication and Stakeholder Plans

How are change and stakeholders managed so the investment is adopted?

- Stakeholder Influence and Interest Grid
- Change Readiness Assessment
- Sequencing Roadmap with Capacity Limits
- Internal Marketing Message Brief
- Governance and Reporting Cadence

Day 5: Applying the Methods to One Business Decision

Is the business case ready for a finance committee?

- Applying the Session 2 Ratios to the Chosen Decision
- Testing the Session 3 Cost-Benefit Model
- Fitting the Session 4 Roadmap to Capacity
- Rehearsing the Finance Committee Challenge
- Completing the Business Case Document

Methodology

The programme uses case analysis built on anonymised accounts, workforce data and board papers from several sectors. Participants work in small groups to read figures, test assumptions and draft proposals, with peer and facilitator feedback on each work product.

- Suggested activity: Reading a sample set of accounts and identifying the workforce cost drivers.
- Suggested activity: Building a cost-benefit table for a learning investment and testing its assumptions.
- Suggested activity: Playing a finance director who challenges a people proposal.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a business case for one people investment. It holds a strategy link, a ratio summary, a cost-benefit table, a risk register, a change roadmap and a committee presentation outline. The document is used to brief executives, request budget and agree the measures that will report progress.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is business management for HR and learning leaders suitable for leaders without finance training?

Yes. Business management for HR and learning leaders begins with reading basic accounts and assumes responsibility for a people function, not a finance background.



Which models does business management for HR and learning leaders rest on?

Business management for HR and learning leaders rests on the Balanced Scorecard, the Ulrich HR operating model, Kirkpatrick evaluation and the ISO 30414 human capital measures.

How is the business case from business management for HR and learning leaders used at work?

You use the business case to brief executives, request budget for a people initiative and agree the measures that will report its progress.

How does business management for HR and learning leaders differ from a programme on HR strategy alone?

Business management for HR and learning leaders adds finance, operations and change planning to people strategy, while an HR strategy programme centres on workforce policy.