

# Businesses are not inherently academic, so why are degrees becoming the prerequisite skill?

Adam Tugwell | 11 June 2012



Latest news suggests that [without more degree level education based skills, the UK will experience an exodus of jobs overseas to emerging economies](#). But when we already have students doing degrees just for the sake of doing them and a basic education system which sees school-leavers failing to possess even basic literacy and numeracy skills, should we really be thinking about pushing more through a university education as the immediate priority?

Like it or not, many young people are neither cut out nor ready for an academic pathway from or even during secondary education. Simply creating more courses to include a wider selection of students is hardly the answer and is fast leading to the existence of meaningless degrees, which won't help business, and don't help the students themselves who these days will have had to sell their soul to get it.

One of the greater injustices of recent political times is the idea propagated by New Labour during the 1997-2010 period of Government that everyone could be the same and do the same things. Such socialist ideology permeates itself by changing – or rather levelling systems throughout society to treat everyone the same under the ideal that to do so is providing 'equal opportunities'. However, as we are all different – and often in ways that cannot be seen with the naked eye – this method is not only obtuse in the extreme, it has contributed to the creation of a society where younger generations are becoming lazy and without ambition. When you add to this the burden of taxation which is placed upon higher wage earners for daring to do well and the resentment they experience if they do so, neither do you leave in place any real motivation to be any different or encourage the social mobility that the same idealist meddlers suggest to be a milestone of progress.

The good behind many ideas, policies and concepts is often lost when change is enacted simply for the sake of change and this is no less so within education as elsewhere. Whilst the technology age has altered the requirements for skills throughout the industries, the historic format of leaving school at 14 and becoming 'apprenticed' was a much better way to foster learning in those who were more 'hands than head' at the time, and could as such provide lessons in forming the basis of a very radical and effective way to change the way that we develop our National skills base for business and industry.

Why not:

- Remove the burdens of red tape which govern the working environment for younger people.
- Develop an effective subsidy allocation and training scheme to assist participant businesses to replace unused school places, 'young to work' schemes and unemployment benefits.
- Give business a cost-effective motivation to support vocational or 'on-the-job' training for 14-21 year olds who in that time, may well have attained the equivalent of academic training in parallel skills and real-world experience, which may in fact have far more use to companies than 'green' graduates who refuse to stuff envelopes because they have a degree.

Business can only get the best from employees if they have been nurtured within a system which allows and encourages them to be their best – in whatever way that may be. Even the suggestion that you must have a degree level education to make an effective contribution is not only short sighted; it fails to recognise that a true acceptance of diversity goes way beyond embracing race, impairment, sexuality, location or social group and that each pathway to learning can be highly beneficial to society with real opportunities put in place to appreciate it.

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