

Hamilton Bradshaw

James Caan leads business coalition calling for re-evaluation of soft skills, worth £88bn to UK



- For the first time economic research reveals £88 billion economic contribution of soft skills – such as communication, teamwork and time management – to the UK economy

- Leading organisations including the CBI, Federation of Small Businesses and National Youth Agency join entrepreneur James Caan to unlock new ways to recognise and improve soft skills –

consultation opens today

- More than half a million workers will be held back by a lack of soft skills by 2020

- UK employers and workers highlight the importance of soft skills to individual and commercial success, yet admit lack of confidence and knowledge to promote them

James Caan and McDonald's UK launches a new campaign to drive recognition and promotion of soft skills – such as communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork, and time- and self-management – as, for the first time, research demonstrates the £88 billion contribution these skills make to the UK economy.

Backed by entrepreneur James Caan and leading organisations including the CBI, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), [McCain] and the National Youth Agency, McDonald's is calling for a wholesale re-evaluation of the value of soft skills.

Through the campaign, this coalition of supporters will invite businesses, policy experts, campaign groups, trade associations and academics to help create and share new ways to recognise and improve soft skills in the workplace. A three-month consultation is now open, and the findings and a series of long-term recommendations will be published later in 2015.

Hamilton Bradshaw

New research highlights potential consequences of failure to take action

New economic research commissioned by McDonald's to inform the campaign reveals that soft skills contribute £88 billion to the UK economy today. The report, produced by Development Economics, forecasts that this will increase to £109 billion during the next five years.

The research also highlights a series of early warning signs that employers, government and educators are not currently supporting soft skills sufficiently to realise their potential contribution. According to the economists, over half a million UK workers will be significantly held back by a lack of soft skills by 2020 – an issue forecast to affect all sectors. The accommodation and food services, retail and healthcare industries are named as most at risk.

UK employers and workers echo this anxiety about the future. Whilst 97 per cent of employers believe soft skills are important to their current business success – and more than half rate them more highly than academic qualifications – three-quarters believe there is already a soft skills gap in the UK workforce. (1)

Meanwhile, UK employees say they struggle to sell their soft skills. One in five would not feel confident describing their soft skills to an employer and more than half (54 per cent) have never included soft skills on their CV. (2)



Jez Langhorn, Chief People Officer, McDonald's UK & Northern Europe

“Soft skills like communication and teamwork are incredibly important to our business because of the impact they can have on our customers’ experience. As integral as they are to the performance and progression of our employees, I know that we can do more to recognise their importance which is why we are launching this campaign. In conjunction with James Caan, and a wide range of businesses and organisations I want to find ways in which we can better recognise soft skills and I’m calling on others to join us in re-evaluating and improving these skills.”

Hamilton Bradshaw

Consultation to create practical ways to resolve the soft skills gap

McDonald's has invited entrepreneur James Caan to jointly lead a three-month consultation on current practices and attitudes towards soft skills. People can find out more and take part at www.backingsoftskills.co.uk. The consultation will result in a series of recommendations published later in the year to improve, support and promote soft skills in the workplace.

"Soft skills matter – to individuals, to businesses, and to the wider UK economy. Part of the success in my journey wasn't about my qualifications or experience, but it was the value I gave to soft skills that helped me to get where I am today."



James Caan, businessman and entrepreneur

-
1. *Development Economics, January 2015.*
 2. *YouGov Plc, September 2014.*
-

Notes to Editors

Media enquiries please contact:

- McDonald's press office – 020 8700 7320
- Blue Rubicon – 020 7260 2700 / mcdonalds@bluerubicon.com

About soft skills

McDonald's defines soft skills as:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Time- and self-management
- Decision-making and initiative-taking
- Taking responsibility

Hamilton Bradshaw

Coalition members:

- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD)
- Federation of Small Business (FSB)
- National Youth Agency (NYA)
- Plotr
- Gelder
- Association of Colleges
- LearnDirect
- City & Guilds
- NIACE
- Work Foundation
- Barclays
- Ginsters
- People 1st
- Impetus Trust
- EdComs
- Prospect

About Development Economics

Development Economics Ltd provides robust economics and demographics research, market analysis and strategy advice for private and public sector clients. Led by professionals with over 20 years' experience of developing strategies for businesses and public sector clients, the company possesses expertise in undertaking economic impact assessments, feasibility studies, workforce development and regeneration strategies.

Commissioned by McDonald's, Economics Consultancy Development Economics undertook extensive research to model the current value of soft skills to the UK economy and to project what level they could reach by 2020 and 2025. The report was published today (14 January 2015). More details on the methodology and the full report is available on request.

YouGov surveys among UK employers and UK workers

Survey of UK employers: Conducted by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 669 senior managers and above in businesses with 2+ employees. Fieldwork was undertaken 15th-19th September 2014. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of GB Business size excluding sole traders.

Survey of UK workers: Conducted by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,350 adults, of which 2,180 are employed. Fieldwork was undertaken 17th-19th September 2014. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).