

2010 - The Year of the Company Chairman

Dermot Hill, Director of Boardroom Appointments at Intramezzo, explores the prospects for the highly sought after group of Company Chairmen.

With a set of economic conditions in the UK not experienced before in our lifetimes, 2010 will be the year of the Company Chairman. As an opinion, today's society is not yet producing the political leadership from any party which provides the confidence that good economic conditions will return any time soon.

While the main political parties are sorting out the 'winning' content of their manifestos, the pressing challenges the country has economically will in the main lie dormant until the next government is elected. Whilst all this is going on the great, and to a large part unsung, champions of economic recovery – the Company Chairmen will be focusing on how their companies can continue to ride the recession and come out of it in a strong enough position to exploit the upturn in the economy.

At the top of their agendas will be how best to declare a good commercial performance in the next 12 months. In so many cases the very survival of the business and the livelihoods of stakeholders are at risk. For others this will be about growth and capitalising on the pockets of opportunity which exist and grow as we move into a post-recession stage. Either way the stakes are high and the challenges vast.

UK Plc depends on the 'tax take' to run the country and pay for our public services. This makes the political and corporate communities inextricably linked. Without successful companies the primary source for all income to maintain the standards in law and order, public services etc becomes challenged. Further exacerbating the situation are punitive tax changes which are predictably forcing many organisations particularly in the city to look at overseas tax systems with considerable interest.

The question that could reasonably be asked is "Are we in economic meltdown?", with some fundamental changes being applied by politicians who appear not to understand the sheer and essential value of business and commerce to bring the economy back to a point where the books will once again balance. The plain fact is that we are here and we need firm direction to put businesses of all sizes onto a fast track to recovery, and it will be up to the Chairmen to light the way.

It is to the Corporate Chairmen and Britain's great businesses that society must turn to rebuild the economy and restore the reputation of UK plc (and the government that runs it). With the return in prosperity comes this all important 'tax take', necessary to pay for all the electorate's representatives in government.

It is therefore the co-existence of commercial interest and thriving businesses with the country's political ambitions that will make the difference in the next five years.

The Chairmanship qualities being sought for the successful business today are so much more than just a figurehead and include the vision and leadership to bring ambitious business plans to fruition. During these coming months when politicians do their best to capture the limelight, consider the hard-working and dedicated Company Chairmen and their boards everywhere who are making the contribution to bring the UK to a stable and more affluent place. Our shared challenge is to return the country to its status in the world as one of the most successful economies and a shining example to enterprise as a whole.

Intramezzo wishes the very best of success to all company Chairmen in 2010 as much depends on them. During this year and onwards we will be supporting their quest to return UK Plc to a world class economy.

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