

Over Three Quarters of Newly Appointed FTSE 100 CEOs Have Strong Financial Experience

Leaders With A Background In Finance Prized At UK's Top Companies, Robert Half Analysis Suggests

23-March 2009: London – Based on the latest reshuffle of the FTSE 100 index that comes into effect today, specialist financial recruitment firm **Robert Half** reveals that 12 of the 15 UK CEOs appointed within the last 12-months, have strong financial backgrounds*.

Analysis of today's FTSE 100 leaders also found that:

- Women remain underrepresented on the FTSE 100 list, with only four female CEOs versus three this time last year
- Of the 13 companies who have joined, and managed to remain on, the FTSE 100 in the past 12 months, 10 CEOs hail from outside the UK, from countries ranging from Sweden to Syria
- The average age of a FTSE CEO is now 52, an increase of one year since equivalent research last year

The Value Of A Financial Background

Very few students ask their careers advisor “What course should I take if I want to become a Chief Executive?” But, according to the latest analysis of the FTSE 100 by **Robert Half**, a career in accounting and finance, above others, could be the best way to ‘fast track’ to the top jobs in UK business.

Research by **Robert Half** found that of current FTSE 100 CEOs, (51%) have a financial background, compared with 39% this time last year, an increase of over 12% from 2008; suggesting that as the global financial crisis keeps businesses in its grips, top UK firms are looking for leaders who, among other attributes, bring strong financial stewardship to the role.

Phil Sheridan, Managing Director of Robert Half UK, said “*Executives who possess strong financial backgrounds are actively being sought to lead some of the UK's most recognised companies. As global economic uncertainty continues and British boardrooms brace themselves for a tough immediate future, accounting and finance expertise is clearly regarded as a key ingredient for successfully navigating challenging business conditions. For those just setting out in their careers, but who have their sights set on the top job, a career in accounting and finance provides a solid foundation in achieving this goal.*”

Who's Who in UK Boardrooms

Among the UK's most notable business leaders whose careers have been built on a background in finance are Ian King of BAE Systems, a qualified accountant who spent six years as Finance Director of Marconi Defence Systems prior to his appointment as CEO, and BT Group's Ian Livingston, who qualified as a chartered accountant in 1987.

Phil Sheridan continued: *“Our analysis of what’s going on in the boardroom is a reflection of what we are seeing across all levels within organisations in the UK. Experienced financial professionals, in particular those who have a proven track record of managing in prior downturns or who have experience in corporate restructures, are the ones companies are now increasingly calling upon to help minimise the risk and uncertainty that British businesses currently face.”*

The *Robert Half FTSE 100 CEO Tracker* is conducted each year in March. Research is conducted using company websites, annual reports and CEO appointment news coverage.

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About Robert Half

Robert Half pioneered specialised staffing services and today is the world’s leader in the field. Founded in 1948, the company is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (symbol:RHI) and operates four separate divisions in the UK, each serving distinct markets. They include: Robert Half Finance & Accounting and Robert Half Management Resources, for temporary, full-time and project professionals, in the fields of accounting and finance; OfficeTeam, for highly skilled temporary administrative support; and Robert Half Financial Services Group, for high-calibre finance and banking professionals.

There are more than 360 Robert Half locations in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. www.roberthalf.co.uk

About FTSE 100

The FTSE 100 share index is a stock market index made up of the 100 largest UK registered companies in terms of their market capitalization. www.ftse.com

*Financial experience / background signifies those with a qualification in accountancy (for example a Chartered Accountant), those who have held a previous FD, CFO or similar financial role (for example financial controller) or those who have worked within the banking industry