

PRESS RELEASE

Survey by Mercuri Urval of 840 managers in 8 European countries

**Manager survey: Customer orientation
top growth driver in Europe**

Eight out of ten European business leaders consider strong customer orientation to be the most important factor for sustainable economic growth in 2010. Better customer retention, greater customer loyalty and a higher quality of service are viewed as the core tasks of the future. These are the results of an online survey of more than 800 business leaders in eight European countries conducted on behalf of consulting group Mercuri Urval.

4 February 2010 – Continuing economic challenges are bringing about a return to stronger customer orientation in Europe's industrial and services sectors. According to the survey, 76 percent of chief executives and managers polled agree. New customer acquisition is identified as the most important driver of growth (a European average of 71 percent) ahead of profitability (66 percent) and frequency of innovation (63 percent). Generally speaking, there is more optimism concerning economic prospects in 2010.

New management practices

77 percent of the business leaders surveyed see the economic crisis as an opportunity to bring their management practices in line with reinvigorated customer orientation. Important trends towards sustainable growth identified by the survey:

- The ability to listen attentively to customers, offer new services, achieve an increase in value, provide better customer service and mobilise the intellectual capital of employees.
- The ability to step up the creation of value, particularly in the area of sales.
- The expectation that companies are pushing forward and speeding up research and development.

More than 840 respondents

Between mid-October and the beginning of December 2009, international consulting group Mercuri Urval polled 844 business leaders in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria and Switzerland on key factors for future growth as part of an online survey.

New priorities

In all of the countries surveyed, plans aimed at combating the economic crisis were initiated by companies in the previous months. In Switzerland, these moves came slightly later. These companies are now rapidly setting new priorities aimed at boosting growth and advancing into new international markets.

New focus impacts organization and employee

Particularly in the Netherlands, customer orientation, a focus on core competencies, innovative strength and the improvement of employee motivation are already far advanced. In Germany, France and Belgium, the tendency is to wait for human resources management to improve companies' customer orientation.

For a media background text about the online survey see:

www.mercuriurval.com

Mercuri Urval is an international consulting firm with more than 80 offices in 24 countries. It supports its clients in implementing their strategies, solving management issues, identifying and optimising people capabilities, through: Executive, Assessment, Business Coaching, Talent Management, and Strategic Recruitment. Founded in Sweden in 1967, Mercuri Urval is an independent privately owned company.

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