

# LEADING IN HARD TIMES

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**PROFESSOR  
TIM MORRIS**  
Director, Oxford Diploma  
in Organisational  
Leadership

The first Oxford Diploma in Organisational Leadership will run in January 2009 and will focus squarely on the reality of leadership in hard times.

“Leadership in the uptimes is easy,” says Professor Tim Morris who directs the programme. “In the downtimes, it is about delivering the hard messages while maintaining motivation and focusing on essentials – while also watching out for the big things that could blow you off-course.”

The Diploma sets out to address what Tim Morris sees as a major problem – “the experiential gap” among executives who may never have faced bad times as a leader.

The Diploma is based on the conviction that leadership is all about developing a broad repertoire. For Morris, Gordon Brown is a classic case of someone who failed to make the “hard transition” from operational executive as chancellor to leader. But, he says, leadership is not so much about personal charisma, vision and inspiration, as about a practical response to the ‘here and now’ – empowering teams to bring their skills and insights to the table to do what needs to be done.

In these challenging times, leadership is also more than ever about managing complexity – both of the organisation and of the external environment.

“Leadership is incredibly complex,” says Morris. “While it is about transmitting clear and simple messages, it involves far more than a single recipe. The Diploma is designed to help leaders develop their aptitude for handling complexity and diversity. We have taken the critical leadership elements from the Oxford MBA and blended them to create a very focused leadership incubator for all those who want to face the challenges of leading their organisation in the future.”

The Diploma comprises four modules in organisation development, organisational design, strategy and leadership. The Oxford academics delivering the programme are leaders in their fields, engaged in boundary-extending research on key management issues – they include Owen Darbshire, Sue Dopson, Chris McKenna, Marc Ventresca, Richard Whittington and Tim Morris.



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