

## It really is time business stopped trying to free-ride

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The [Guardian reports this morning](#) that:

*Britain's manufacturers are struggling to recruit skilled workers and keep pace with global technology, according to an industry report that criticises the government for lack of support.*

*Three-quarters of companies say they have faced difficulties finding the right workers in the last three years, according to business group EEF. It warns a skills shortage is putting productivity growth at risk and adding to pressure on manufacturers as they battle a host of pressures in domestic and overseas markets.*

Let's just deconstruct that for a moment.

Business wants a flexible labour market, and the right to hire and fire.

But that means it is not worth investing in training.

What is more business does not want to pay tax.

But they do want the government to ensure that the employees business refuses to train are readily available, on tap, when required.

The words cloud, cuckoo and land come to mind.

It really is time that those writing reports of the type referred to realised four things.

The first is that if they want to make profit they must invest.

Second, the biggest investment required in a skills based economy is in people.

Third, government is good at providing training but it is bound to be generic: it cannot be as specific as most businesses need.

And fourth? Training has to be paid for. And logically the person to pay is the person

requiring the skill.

It really is time business stopped trying to free-ride everyone else and then blame anyone but themselves for the consequences.