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'Contagious Leadership' rife in the UK workplace

New research from ILM, which surveyed 2,000 UK employees in full and part-time work, reveals that employees are strongly influenced by the teams they work with every day – picking up both helpful and detrimental skills from colleagues and co-workers.



Workers imitate colleagues for different reasons, depending on the infecting behaviour.

74% of people who copy

humour

do so to help them work better with others



7296

of people actively

copy the attributes of

those around them

29% of people who copy delegation/organisation

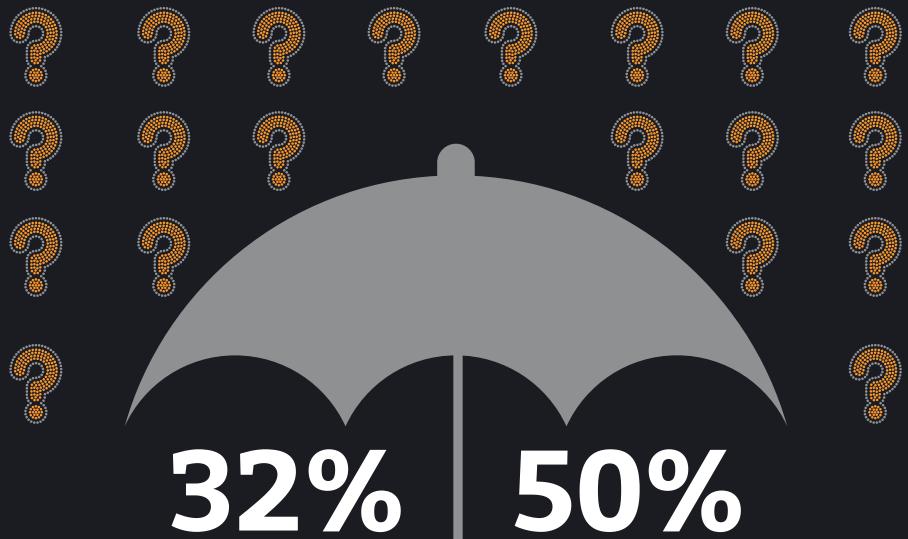
> do so to be promoted or receive a pay rise

41% of people who copy creativity/inspiration/ innovation

> do so to increase productivity

When?

People are most likely to mimic the leadership styles they've seen in colleagues when faced with risky or stressful situations.



when something goes wrong

when in an unfamiliar or challenging professional situation

Who?

People are not influenced by traditional hierarchies when it comes to who they emulate, but mirror behaviours from people across their organisation regardless of their age or seniority.

28% senior colleagues

11%

high profile business leaders

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the people who sit nearest them in the workplace

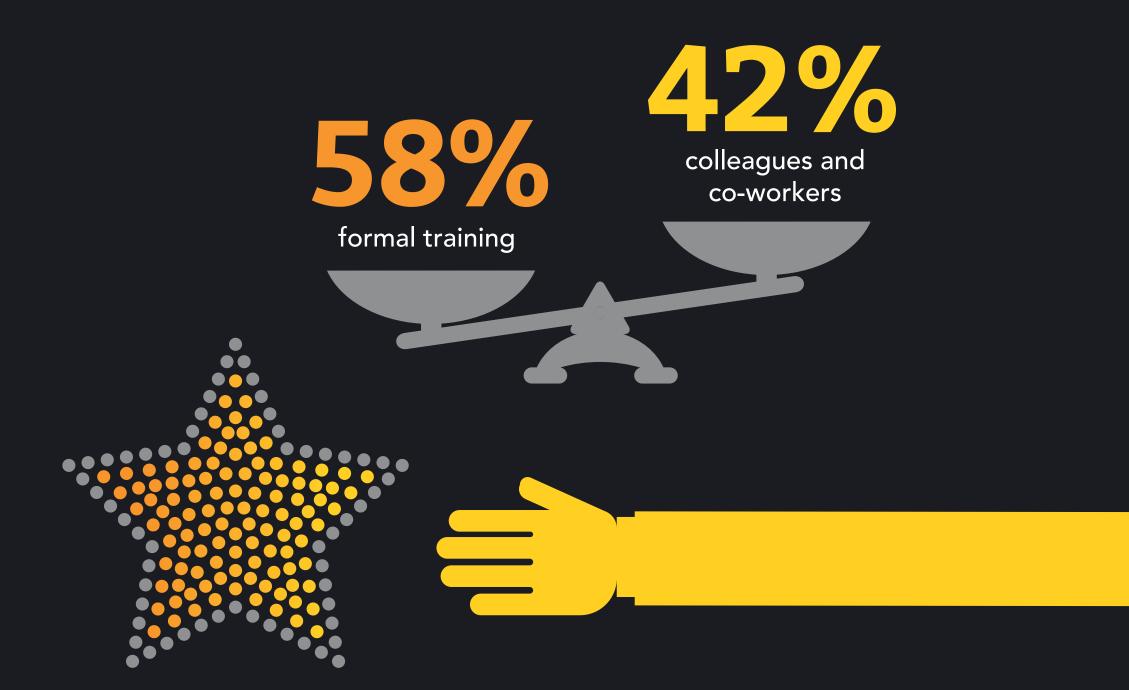
People at work are most influenced by:

50%

the people they work with most frequently

But is contagion the best way to learn?

However, most employees would prefer more formal training and development when it comes to acquiring new skills and capabilities.



"When properly managed, emulation can be a highly valuable way for people to learn. However, organisations should not reply on contagion to upskill employees; with bad habits as likely to spread as good, it is vital that employees at every level of an organisation understand, develop and role model positive leadership skills. By utilising more formal training systems that employees value so highly, businesses can feel confident that their employees will be embodying and transferring to others the skills they really need for success."

John Yates, Group Director ILM