

Immelt embraces the uncertainty

[Print](#)

By Emiliya Mychasuk and Emiko Terazono

Published: June 30 2009 03:00 | Last updated: June 30 2009 03:00

Asked about the qualities of a good business leader in 2009, a fairly blunt GE boss **Jeff Immelt** told a star-studded London Business School crowd they should embrace the current uncertainty.

In fact, they should ask themselves how they would feel "if it is the same in five years - if it is exactly as it is today".

He told the packed LBS global leadership summit audience, already sweating slightly in warm conditions, that if it made them feel uncomfortable, they should embrace the thought.

Adaptability and leaders who knew how to be more personal and connect with stakeholders were also part of the answer. Business had been faceless and in the "reset world" was going to have to be more personal, transparent and open. As for greater public and media scrutiny, he advised business leaders to be "confident with yourself and being criticised - I just say: 'To hell with it.'"

Earlier, he said GE's answer to generating growth was to plan the launch of more new products at more price points than it had ever offered before.

GE would pursue the "two seismic themes" of the 21st century - green energy and affordable healthcare. This meant government partnerships, said the man who had that morning handed a £4.8m donation to the Homerton hospital in Hackney, the closest to the Olympic site.

As for financial services, it probably "wasn't going to be the same in my lifetime", with tighter regulation. "The government has moved in next door and they're not leaving."

people@ft.com

Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2009

"FT" and "Financial Times" are trademarks of the Financial Times. [Privacy policy](#) | [Terms](#)
© Copyright The Financial Times Ltd 2009.