

Case Study

Henley Professional Certificate in Coaching MSc in Coaching & Behavioural Change



Michael Hobbs

Freelance actor and presenter;
professional coach

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Michael, how and why did you choose to study for the Professional Certificate in Coaching at Henley?

‘I’d already completed an MBA at Henley, so I knew what a good learning experience it would be.

‘I’ve always tried to do some formal learning each year, and recently, alongside my acting roles, I’ve been delivering corporate training which combines my performing experience with my leadership consultancy expertise.

‘In particular, I’ve been working with a leading HR company to deliver a coaching programme to a bank, but I always felt that I wanted to know more about how and why coaching works. And as much as anything, I wanted the accreditation that would allow me to join the Coaching Association, because I knew that would be an important credibility factor in helping me to gain and develop clients.’

So what were your hopes and expectations for the programme – and did it live up to them?

‘I hoped that I would learn about the tools and techniques of coaching, and get some more structure around it; find out the do’s and don’ts and understand more about the theory behind effective coaching.

‘It’s a very challenging programme, and I found the emphasis on self-reflection frustrating at first. But gradually I came to realise the importance of this, and what I gained from the programme has been immensely useful in all my subsequent business and personal interactions.

‘During the programme, we coach each other and have assignments between the residential modules during which we coach and are coached. Over the course of the programme, I began to recognise my coachees’ anxieties and learned a whole range of tools and techniques for dealing with them.’

What difference has the programme made to you, both professionally and personally?

‘It had never occurred to me to do a masters degree, but almost by chance I realised that the PCiC was a part of the degree course, and it didn’t take much to persuade me to sign up for it. I knew that a proper university-backed degree would give me even greater credibility, and even though I had to think carefully about how I would fund it, I knew it would be powerful.’

And what impact did it have?

‘I’m now much more confident in the way I approach my coaching; I know what it is and what it isn’t. I’m much more able to start in a productive way and to get it back on track quickly when I identify that it’s veering off course. And I’m much calmer and more confident in the way I deal with the silences, which can be a big part of the process.

‘The phrase that resonated with me most was that, as coaches, we don’t provide the key – rather we help them to search in their bag of keys for the right one. We can’t ever know how to solve someone else’s issue, but we do have the power to help them solve it; and we must never raise ourselves above them and think we have an answer.’

Finally, what advice would you give to anyone thinking about joining the Henley programme?

‘Be prepared to challenge every assumption you’ve ever made about yourself. I honestly think that the tougher you find it, the more beneficial it will be.’