

# Case Study

## The Board Directors' Programme



**Mike Harwood CB CBE MA**  
The Military Mutual

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*"it's broadened my network of genuine experts"*

### How did you come to be on the programme in the first place?

'I had accepted a role as a non-executive Director on the Board of a new company, The Military Mutual. Starting any company is tough; starting one that works in the area of financial services is even tougher. Wanting to stay 100% on the right side of the law (and FCA 'guidelines') isn't just a matter of 'doing the right thing and being honest'; serious study is required.

'So I looked around at things on offer, but, ever faithful to Henley, where I'd presented and attended programmes previously, was very pleased to see something there, and it fully met all my expectations. The price had to be right too as I was paying for this one myself!'

### What were the highlights for you?

'The pre-programme task was especially interesting, but Professor Andrew Kakabadse's session on the Nature of High Performing Boards was the best of all of them, for me. It pulled together all of the other modules and just made complete sense.

'The other people on the course were such an inspiration too, and being in the friendly convivial environment of Henley meant that I didn't want to go to bed at the end of the evening, even though it had been a very long day!'

### In what ways have you and/or your working practices changed as a result of the programme?

'I'm far more confident than I would have been about challenging those folk who provide us with data that shows the roses in our garden. Non-executive directors need to have the determination to dig and keep digging and not be fobbed off.

'I'm also much more aware of the best-of-breed literature for directors, NEDs and boards. And it's broadened my network of genuine experts.'

### What impact has this had on your organisation?

'At one level, I doubt that many of my colleagues would have noticed because they thought highly of me before and didn't realise that any contributions I have made in my life have always been based on continually being prepared to learn.

'At another level, I'd like to think that one of the impacts has been being a more effective member of the Board.'

### What advice would you give to anyone considering enrolling on this programme?

'I would encourage them. The Board Directors programme offers a rich menu for those with board aspirations and those who have been there for a while. Not only will you discuss the 'received wisdom', but the eclectic class contribute invaluable real-world experience.

'It also really matters that the course is run by a credible individual and that the very best people are brought in to provide briefings. We all know how important lecturers, speakers and facilitators are, and based on my own experience, I would definitely recommend it.'

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