

# CASE STUDY

## THE HENLEY LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



**Nick Smith**  
Head of Terminal Operations  
Red Funnel

*"I can't speak highly enough of the programme. It is exceptional"*

*"Going to Henley is like going to rehab... It forces you to reflect and focus. But it will change your life for the better"*

### **Nick, how did you first decide to attend The Leadership Programme?**

'As part of my own professional development, and in line with my new role at Red Funnel, I wanted to learn more about myself, and how I could hone my skills in leading and inspiring a team. A colleague of mine had attended a programme at Henley and recommended it highly, so I looked at their various leadership programmes and this one seemed to suit the bill.'

### **So what were your expectations, and how did the programme differ?**

'I expected it to be quite theoretical, like other programmes I'd been on elsewhere, but this was just so different. It was totally life changing for me, in and outside of work.'

'Firstly, it was very practical. But the thing that really hit me was the focus on reflection, and assessing what I'd done well in my career. Just thinking about how I behaved when I was at my very best was a revelation. It was really powerful and there's something about that that allows you to gain inspiration from within.'

'We did an exercise based on drumming which proved to be a great metaphor for teamwork development, and another session in which we had to arrange planks of wood on a grid. Although my team won the task, I recall feeling that we'd over-analysed the whole thing, and being terribly disappointed that we hadn't involved every member of the team. It hit me hard, and was a very important moment. It was a lesson I won't forget.'

'I'd also never made the connection between my physical wellbeing and my performance at work, so I started to put more emphasis on a better diet, and taking more rest. I can't speak highly enough of the programme. It is exceptional.'

### **And how have you been able to apply the things you learned?**

'It hasn't always been easy, but I know that I'm now a much better listener. I really try to engage each member of the team, and we make a point of reflecting on the collective decisions we've made. Previously, this would only happen when something went wrong, but now we make the time to celebrate our successes. And when things don't go to plan, we figure out why, and how we can improve next time, rather than just apportioning blame.'

'As a result, you can see that everyone is more confident. They're not afraid to make decisions. 'Outside of work too, I spend more time with the family, and I don't answer emails or the phone when I'm with them. The human being I am now is 100% different to the one I was. I'm calmer, less agitated, and I know what's really important – people.'

### **So what advice would you give to anyone considering the Leadership Programme at Henley?**

'Be ready to focus honestly on your own performance, and unlearn what you think you know. Keep an open mind. Realise that it's okay to get angry or upset, but that you can learn to deal with challenges in a new way.'

'And going to Henley is like going to rehab (or how I imagine it to be!). It forces you to reflect and focus. But it will change your life for the better.'

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