

# Case Study

## The Henley Partnership



**Becky Ivers**  
People Director,  
Heathrow

*“Our management is much better informed, and that breeds confidence as well as competence.”*

*“Discovering best practice is immensely useful in moving our own operational strategies forward.”*

### Becky – tell us how you came to be a part of The Henley Partnership

‘I initially came across The Henley Partnership when I was working at Dixons Group, and I was impressed by the range of benefits and by the value it offered.

‘So when I moved to Premier Foods, as Director of OD, I recommended that the company become a member, and subsequently, when I came to Heathrow, it made sense for Heathrow to become members to fit in with our development programmes.’

### So what is it about The Henley Partnership that has attracted you?

‘Henley has always had a great track record and is ideally located for Heathrow, and I wanted senior executives in my organisation to avoid being too insular.

‘The Henley Partnership offers a great opportunity for people to network with others from a range of backgrounds and industries, and to learn from expert speakers on relevant topics. Mixing with other people with such diverse backgrounds is always stimulating, and discovering best practice is immensely useful in moving our own operational strategies forward.’

### So why Henley? What makes Henley different?

‘I did consider other partnerships but Henley’s reputation for developing managers and leaders is second to none. But the thing I really like is the fact that we – the members – define the topics the Partnership covers during the year, which means that all the content is contemporary and relevant.

‘And it just seems to me to be exceptional value. We can send up to four of our senior people to at least 30 events a year, and they come back having significantly increased their contacts and their knowledge in areas such as strategy, leadership, personal brand development or the latest trends in the digital world.

‘The speakers are always first-class, so I think of it as bringing the outside in.’

### And what impact has being a member of THP made?

‘It’s been a huge help in so many areas of the business. Our management is much better informed, and that breeds confidence as well as competence. But I see the biggest benefit as the value we get from our membership. If we were to buy this kind of training and learning anywhere else, it would cost us considerably more.’

### So what advice would you give to anyone considering membership of The Henley Partnership?

‘You have to do what’s right for you and your organisation, but Henley allows you to define the subject matter, so you can be sure it will be directly applicable to your specific challenges.

‘We invite our top 100 people to attend and our leadership alumni, and so many of the events – especially things like leadership, personal branding and digital transformation – are oversubscribed, so we often have to have a waiting list. But whoever goes along, Henley delivers great value. As you can tell, I’m a big fan.’

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### Julie Mackenzie

Senior Organisational  
Capability Consultant,  
Scottish Power

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the calibre of speakers"*

*"The Partnership has  
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to apply"*

### How did you connect with The Henley Partnership (THP) initially?

'The company had been looking around for a suitable partner, and at the same time we were contacted by Henley who asked if we were interested in joining the Partnership. We were impressed by the calibre of speakers, the reputation of the Business School and the fact that it was such a different environment, and one in which we felt our top team could really focus. It seemed like it was meant to be.'

'We also liked the idea of working with such a diverse group of businesses, and could see the value of the networking opportunities that could deliver.'

### So how does your organisation use THP's events? Who comes along, and how are they selected?

'This has changed since we first started working with the Partnership. Originally, we would reserve the places for our top potential candidates, but over time, we realised that we needed to develop our entire top tier of senior leaders – around 150 people.'

'So now we publicise the calendar of events, and allocate the places on a first come, first served basis. However, there are occasions when we might alert an individual to an event that we feel might be especially relevant to their personal development plan.'

'The uptake has been very good, and we get a real range of people putting themselves forward and for various reasons. I can think of one individual who seeks out the most 'edgy' event each year, and says he likes to get out of his comfort zone and stretch his brain!'

### What then, has been most beneficial to your organisation?

'All the feedback I've had tells me that our people have really appreciated the time away from the office, and the opportunity to reflect on the way we operate.'

'Just having those kind of development experiences has had a positive impact on the way they view the company. They feel more valued and believe that their contribution really matters.'

'They also report that the Partnership has provided them with a range of practical tools that they've been able to apply, which have contributed to the improved performance of the organisation.'

### And was there anything that surprised you?

'There was one particular, unintended consequence of our involvement, and that was that several of our executives really valued the opportunity to network with other people from our own organisation! Often, they worked in different areas of the businesses, or different locations and had limited opportunities to interact in the course of their work.'

### So what advice would you give to anyone considering joining The Henley Partnership?

'Do so with the attitude that it is a partnership. Because it really is. You can call them any time for advice, or for an opinion. But equally, we are all part of the team that shapes and defines the event schedule.'

'And think carefully about who you might send; it's important to have a plan in mind, to enable you to get the most from the Partnership.'

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