

# Achieving personal growth

Jo Gausden

Having completed her MSc in People and Organisational Development at Roffey Park, Jo Gausden, Development Executive at the BBC, says it was a life-changing experience. "I gained a huge amount of self confidence and personal growth through the programme," she said. "I've become a lot more considered, more informed and more competent."

Before starting her MSc, Jo had worked at the BBC for 12 years, the last three of which had been in a development role. "I wanted to build up my theory base, my practical skills and my general knowledge," she said. "Roffey Park's MSc came highly recommended." She has subsequently changed divisions internally and broadened her remit. "When I started the MSc, I was working in development for the BBC World Service," she said. "I'm now covering three divisions: marketing, new media/technology and sport." Jo is responsible for training strategy and she works with HR and internal communications teams - and leaders - at the BBC, to ensure that staff have the appropriate skills to meet the organisational objectives.

In her MSc, she concentrated on performance management and coaching. Her dissertation was on 360-degree feedback and she undertook a research project on issues around giving and receiving feedback in central and eastern European cultures. "I was able to use the programme to dovetail with what the organisation needed," she said. "I now work across areas which interest and challenge me and I try to add value in places where I feel I can make a difference."

One of the great strengths of the programme, for her, was working in a Learning Set. "We really bonded as Set members and I made some incredibly strong friendships," she said. "We were a very supportive group for each other and even though we've now finished the programme, we're carrying on our Learning Set meetings." She adds that the assessment process was surprisingly powerful. "Peer assessment is certainly not an easy option," she said. "It can be frustrating to begin with but it is incredibly gratifying. The fact that other people - with different views and interpretations - read and comment on your work definitely makes it better. But when you first get feedback on work you've spent hours on, you naturally get very defensive if people pull it apart. You have to learn to deal with that and realise that people are trying to be constructive."

She advises anyone considering the MSc to think very carefully about the time commitment involved. "This programme is tough and it takes lots of dedication and commitment," she said. "But if you have an open and enquiring mind, you'll do it. If you're used to working autonomously and managing your own deadlines, it's easier. I wouldn't hesitate to do it again but it's easy to be totally consumed by the work. You need to compartmentalise it."



At the end of the day, if you're interested in people and organisational development, Roffey Park is a great environment in which to learn and this programme is a fantastic opportunity. You'll get support, you'll make friends and it'll change your life. But be prepared for the challenge."

Roffey Park holds regular free open events where you can find out more about the MSc in People and Organisational Development. For more information:

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