



Case Study: Richard Burgess

THE INSTITUTE FOR WORK BASED LEARNING (IWBL)

Work Based Learning at Middlesex University is a modern way of providing university-level learning in the workplace. As every place of work is unique, IWBL offers customised learning programmes tailored to the specific needs of the organisation and the individual.

Work Based Learning (WBL) changes lives and improves businesses, through work, in work, for work, at work. WBL studies benefit all business sectors and industries, individuals and organisations.

IWBL recommends that organisations should work strategically to support and achieve their overall business goals; aligning learning interventions with organisational strategy. A strategic approach to Learning, Training and Development for your staff will develop a more skilled, motivated and loyal workforce, better able to respond in a changing world.

Learning is work based, and will be tailored to meet the specific requirements of an organisation, so that new knowledge and skills are highly relevant. You'll be able to offer the same standard of training across your organisation, even on a regional or national basis.

In WBL studies work experience plays a key part, utilising both previous and current experience. We assess prior learning in the workplace for academic credit. This may form part of a programme, reducing the length of time and number of modules needed to achieve a target qualification. Work based learning formalises a range of real activities, bringing them together in the overall learning process.

Work Based Learning (WBL) can be most simply described as achieving learning through work and can be undertaken in many different ways; it describes a situation where the majority of the learning takes place away from a classroom. This does not mean that that all the learning takes place "on the job"; it still involves research, investigation, analysis, evaluation and reflection, and it does require the investment of personal time - all the things that are expected in an academic programme.

We offer Work Based Learning at every level of Higher Education:

- Accreditation of your in-house programmes
- HE Certificates and Diplomas
- Foundation Degrees
- Honours Degrees (BA, BSc)
- Post Graduate Certificate and Diploma (PGCert, PGDip)
- Masters Degrees (MA, MSc, MProf)
- Research Degrees (MProf, DProf)

IWBL pioneered the development of work based learning at higher education level, and is a nationally recognised Centre of Excellence and a Queen's Anniversary Prize winner.

Benefiting Business

WBL provides excellent development routes for the key people in the business. Its focus on increasing personal and business performance is intended to bring benefits straight away.



Middlesex Organisational Development Network:

Working with our MODNet partners we offer a portal for organisations seeking learning solutions from initial Entry Level to Professional Doctorate level, Level 1 to Level 8. This is a specialist advisory service on the use and development of learning as a resource to achieve business objectives. IWBL offers accredited training, research and consultancy services; we can also accredit existing in-house training and extend its impact through customised work based projects.

Contact IWBL Business Development to discuss how WBL can start supporting your objectives.
T 020 8411 5050
E business@mdx.ac.uk
W www.mdx.ac.uk/wbl
W www.modnet.mdx.ac.uk

Richard Burgess, Managing Director of construction project specialists Clarson Goff Management, has worked in building and construction management for nearly 30 years. His expertise in managing major projects stretches across many sectors – transport, education, health, aviation, retail and commercial property. He joined the industry from school and took a series of City and Guilds day release and training courses, building up his knowledge and skills over a five-year period. He then took on a role as trainee manager, progressing to roles as site engineer, site manager and then contracts manager with key contractors such as Bovis and Trollope & Colls. Since 1997 he has focused on senior project management and consultancy roles, and in 2007 was appointed by Clarson Goff Management.



WBL graduate
Richard Burgess

Richard attained accreditation as a Chartered Builder and Project Manager through his training. He later took a Postgraduate Certificate in Construction at Middlesex University and has since completed a Masters in Project Management through the University's Institute of Work Based Learning. He attributes much of his career success at Clarson Goff to the knowledge and perspectives he gained on the WBL programme.

Clarson Goff was one of the first project management businesses to start up as specialists. Project management is the company's sole service, so its development and marketing strategies are totally focused on this function. Clarson Goff's services include negotiations, procurement strategy, options appraisals, management of the design and its implementation. Clarson Goff works with a variety of private and public sector clients, and has particularly strong experience in education and regeneration projects.

Richard's brief at Clarson Goff is wide-ranging and includes income generation, staff appraisals, landlord matters, and salaries. On joining the company, he carried out a review of its processes and

made changes to a number of systems but his main focus is on managing and developing the business. He is answerable to the Board for all aspects of the business.

Richard's first experience of Work Based Learning was the Postgraduate Certificate in Construction Management at Middlesex – his employer at the time, Bovis, had a link with the University. Later, as senior projects manager at GVA Grimley, he undertook a Masters degree in Project Management, again as a Work Based Learning programme with Middlesex University. For his research, Richard chose to develop a procedures manual for the implementation of projects. Richard found developing his research project was very useful and he felt that his research programme and newly-gained knowledge repaid the company for their commitment to his study programme. "The process makes you more effective ... each aspect helps to improve your skills as a manager", he commented.

Richard is convinced his Masters in Project Management has had a great impact on his career. "Without a doubt it has opened doors that would otherwise have been closed," he said, going on to speculate, "without it, it is unlikely that I would be in my current position". He sees his attainment as something of a 'calling card', saying, "It makes a statement about you and your employer, of ability, authority and professionalism that clients recognise and expect of someone in a senior position ... It allows you to make a statement about yourself that others recognise and understand, it has validity".

He often refers to his Work Based Learning when introducing himself to potential clients and when networking and doing marketing development, and has found that people recognise the qualifications and all that it represents. He commented: "Without the right qualifications, I do not believe that some clients would necessarily be prepared to engage with me ... it opens doors and starts discussions, which leads to developing relations and eventually new business".

Clarson Goff's perspective on training and professional development is to focus on training which will enhance the individual, the company and the expertise available to the company's clients.

The website is a key marketing tool for Clarson Goff, acting as a 'window on the company', where clients can view details about the company and its staff. Richard feels his Work Based Learning Masters qualification really assists in promoting the company. "People see that you have certain qualifications and a statement is made and understood", he commented.

Work Based Learning candidates often find fitting study in with work, social and family life can be a challenge. Richard found he was able to plan and set his study timescale around his working day and social life, which helped him meet the challenge: "It allowed me to have the confidence that I would succeed in the task I set myself". He advises others embarking on a WBL study programme to plan their time, pace themselves by setting a realistic timeframe and sticking to it, "otherwise you will fall behind and always be playing catch up, putting yourself under unnecessary pressure, which results in poor work".

His advice to businesses considering investing in Work Based Learning for their employees is to ensure "that the person is committed, that they are prepared to see it through, as it takes a considerable time, and that the topic is relevant to the individual, the employers and clients". He feels Work Based Learning is an effective way of nurturing skills and expertise for the benefit of the business. "In the long run it improves the skills of the individual, assists in marketing them, which in turn makes the employee more saleable, which is good for the employee, company, and client".

The Business Development Team, IWBL
E: business@mdx.ac.uk
T: 020 8411 5050
Institute for Work Based Learning
www.mdx.ac.uk/wbl

"Rather than expressing frustration over management and individual capabilities, business leaders must implement effective learning and development programmes, and performance management tools to enable them to enhance their performance."
IWBL, 2009

Case Study: Richard Burgess