



**Alumnus
Subject
Graduated
Place of Work
Position**

Simon Brown
Management
1997
Lloyds Banking Group
Head of Learning Transformation



Lloyds Banking Group is the largest retail bank in the UK, with one in three using their banking services. Simon's role involves leading one of the world's largest learning transformation programmes for around 100,000 employees globally. This includes implementation of Groupwide Academies, new Learning Operating Model, new Technology Platform, Organisation Design and all associated change activities.

Great minds *go on to* great places

Why did you apply to study Management at Royal Holloway?

I'd decided that I wanted to have a career in business of some variety, and so Management Studies seemed to be an appropriate course in order to pursue that. I had done some research and been to a few Open Days, but early on Royal Holloway stood out as being the favourite. Looking at the Management School, what they offered in terms of the course, as well as the location: everything indicated that it was a good one to choose and I have no regrets about making that decision.

What in particular did you enjoy about the course?

The one thing that sticks in my mind was a course called 'LIEs' [Leadership, Innovation and Enterprise] that was taught by Alec Reed, the founder of Reed Employment. Because he had built his own successful company, he had credibility in talking about those topics; he also brought in several interesting people to talk to us about their own businesses. The theory that you learn is helpful – there have certainly been instances in my career where I have related back to what I learnt; but you can't beat the practical application of that, which is where Alec Reed's journey helped us make the link between the two.

Were you part of any clubs or societies?

I was part of the Sailing Club, the Investment Society and I used to work at the Stumble Inn. Sometimes it was difficult getting the balance – at one point I had three jobs at the same time as studying. In my third year, I obtained a placement at British Airways based at Heathrow as a translator, which came about through the College as I had been studying Management with German in my first and second years. I also had a summer job with Skandia working with their trade settlements team. It was tough, but it all worked out well in the end. I balanced putting in sufficient time for my studies with making the most of being at university, and certainly enjoying university life.

What do you think about internships now?

It is definitely different to when I was a student. For instance, I got the position at Skandia through a temping agency and, though the BA placement was linked to the College, it was not an internship like we have now. From what I can see, internships are hugely important now, more than ever, because you have to differentiate yourself. They can give you a flavour of the organisation and also a taste of what that particular profession is really about, and whether it is really right for you. They are particularly good at helping to build your CV. Since so many graduates have the necessary skills, and

many can demonstrate extra-curricular experiences, it is about how you are going to stand out for the best jobs.

What did you do after graduating?

I had dropped German in my final year and switched to straight Management; though the language was a useful element it was not foremost in importance in terms of my future career. I initially wanted to go into consulting after graduating, but the Careers Service recommended that I go down the accountancy route because an accountancy qualification would be a good foundation for progression. I took a job with what became PricewaterhouseCoopers and, after doing that for 18 months, I decided that I didn't want to go fully into accounting so switched to consulting, specifically in the emerging use of technology for training, or e-learning as it then became known. I worked with clients like Barclaycard, Centrica and the Child Support Agency, designing and implementing e-learning solutions in their organisations. At that point, a colleague and I realised that there was a gap in the market for a company making good quality e-learning products that could be delivered for use by companies like PwC, so ended up founding an e-Learning start-up.





people with passion

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Tell us about starting your own business.

I left PwC in 2001 to set up my own business with a colleague. The business is called BrightWave, and specialises in computer based training and learning. There are a lot of challenges in setting up your own business. Around the time we were getting started, many new businesses had already secured quite a lot of venture capital funding, but the dot.com bubble was beginning to burst and the source of that money was starting to dry up. We decided that we would build the company off the back of successful projects rather than taking significant funding; through gradual growth, rigorous cost control and being careful not to run too fast, we were able to survive where other new businesses had failed. The best part was seeing something grow, to start from nothing and then see a company standing on its own two feet with some really great people delivering quality projects on time for clients. BrightWave was awarded 'e-Learning Company of the Year' a few years ago, which was a proud moment.

What was your next career move?

I left BrightWave in 2004. The company had grown to about 30 people and we had employed some great people, so it felt like the right time for a change. I went to work for Accenture, as it is one

of the largest consultancies in the field of learning and immediately started working on a project with the NHS, which at the time was the largest IT project in Western Europe, ever. The scale of operating was completely different, going from our largest project at the time at BrightWave of about £1m, to a £6bn project with the NHS so I learnt a huge amount very quickly. After that I moved onto a number of different projects such as learning strategy at BT, academies at Canon, a number of different learning projects at Microsoft, HSBC and Barclays. The great thing about Accenture is you get access and insight to the world's leading organisations at a relatively senior level.

How did you come to work at Lloyds Banking Group?

The Lloyds project was one of the best projects I worked on in the sense of starting it as a consultant, but then getting the opportunity of owning it and seeing it through to completion on the client side. Initially the academies project defined the strategy for how all 100,000 employees access training, what training they need to do, what their key capabilities are and need to be, the career paths between different roles, and the professional qualifications required across the company. Lloyds then approached me to lead on

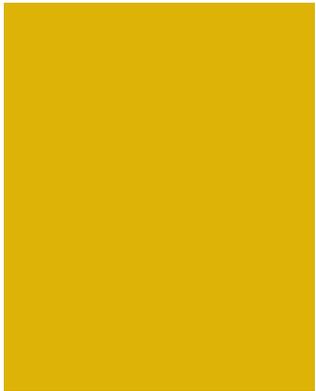
delivering that project. I joined Lloyds in 2010, soon expanding the role to encompass learning transformation and delivering the Academies component in June 2012, with transformation running through to mid-2013. Lloyds Banking Group is a hugely interesting place to be right now; there is a spotlight on the industry, and on Lloyds as a company, particularly with a relatively a new CEO and strategy, so in terms of a challenging environment it has everything.

How do you get into consulting?

It has been hugely useful to have the financial accounting background, but there are probably other ways that I could have got that. You can go straight into consulting but there is always a question of credibility if you are advising someone with 30+ years more than you in the business. Having some other experience is certainly valuable.

What is your outstanding memory from your time at Royal Holloway?

My lasting take away is that Royal Holloway is where I met my wife. We were in the same year studying Management, but got together after we left. We had our tenth wedding anniversary this year and have two children together.



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