

CASE STUDY

“We’ve all seen the benefits to our business”



Business and Strategic Leadership MSc

Our Business and Strategic Leadership MSc aims to equip individual managers with the knowledge, skills and behaviour to reach their leadership potential. By the end of the programme, participants are fully prepared to help shape and drive forward their organisation's strategic agenda.

For one leading engineering consultancy firm, encouraging four employees to study at Cranfield has had a profound effect on the business as a whole, as well as on each of them individually.

The course helped project manager Helena Turner to better understand her team. She said: “When I started the course, I was quite good at reflecting, but it was from my own perspective.”

“In my day-to-day role, I do a lot of people management and I’m constantly dealing with issues and problems that people have,” she added. “I’ve used the psychometric tools from the course to understand how I behave and how I react to people. But I’ve also been able to apply that to other people as well. So it might be that someone might struggle with a particular task, because that’s not their strength, so I’ll look at how we can allocate the work slightly differently potentially, or if they’re struggling with a particular person then it’s maybe understanding why people work differently and getting people to understand their different perspectives.”

“The course is hard work, but we’ve all seen the benefits.”

For divisional director David Fullman, studying at Cranfield gave him an opportunity to challenge a leadership style gained from 30 years spent in the military.

“Leadership in the military context is very unique and I wanted to challenge that,” he explains. “It’s been enormously beneficial in terms of how I can manage myself and in so doing manage teams, because if you get a better understanding of yourself then you’re far more capable of leading others along the same journey.”

“We are a solutions-based organisation and previously I was solutions-based,” he added. “Now I am able to pause and permit others to take the lead. I value the ability to be comfortable in that and be more open in my strategy. Rather than being structured and process-driven I have been more collaborative and genuinely empowered others to drive things forward and find a solution, which has felt good from my perspective and has allowed them to evolve and develop as well.”

Studying for the MSc has improved divisional director Rachel Wilson’s confidence and broadened her horizons.

“When I started this course, I was questioning myself all the time,” she said. “Do I deserve to be here? ‘Why am I here?’ ‘Everyone else is really good – I’m not.’ The biggest thing for me is I now believe I do deserve to do this. I’ve got the skills and I have something to give.”

“I work in a small office within the company, quite an isolated team,” she added. “But I’ve been going across the company, talking to loads of different people, increasing my network. I’ve had the opportunity to present to the senior leadership team and people are listening.”

For senior project manager Simon Yeo, it was the practical application of the theory learned on the course that made the difference.

“I’ve used it as an opportunity to get more feedback from people,” he said. “And to have more courageous conversations.”

“In a business like ours, where there are multiple pressures and numerous constraints upon your time, we don’t always make the right time for these conversations. We’re often running around at 100 miles an hour. Often a step back is a critical exercise to better understand how we might improve things.”

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Helena Turner (Project Manager)

