

CASE STUDY

David Mycock

Institute of Sport and Exercise Science
BSc Sport and Exercise Science (2003-2006)
MSc Sports Coaching (2006-2008)



David Mycock

Q: Tell us about your background. Where have you previously worked or studied?

A: "I left school and played professional football for Bolton and Rochdale. Unfortunately my career ended prematurely but this gave me the opportunity to work in other sectors. I did lots of football coaching and gained qualifications from national governing bodies. Then I fell out with sport a little bit in my late-20s by which time I'd been in the business for 12 years. I went into retail management, got married, and had two children. Then I got to 32 and started to wonder what I could do next. Sport was still a big passion and the only way I was going to get into an area that was suitable for me was to re-train and re-qualify. So I came to the University of Worcester to study for a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science as I thought that becoming a PE teacher would be a safe career route. I gained first class honours.

Q: How did you get involved with enterprise at the University of Worcester?

A: "I've always had some involvement in business as friends of mine have done well as entrepreneurs and I'd helped them at exhibitions, setting up shops, and working in Las Vegas at big conferences. I'd spotted a gap in the market as a result of my coaching experience and qualifications and entered BizCom in 2005, coming runner-up. I did it purely for the money to start with as I was a full-time student but since then I've been to see a draftsman, and an intellectual property specialist and have chased a few ideas around so it's ready to go when I get a bit more experience, money and time! In 2006 I collaborated with three other students on another BizCom entry with a fitness testing idea that came out of some research I'd read on obesity levels, and we came runner-up again."

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Q: Did your studies and enterprise activities complement each other?

A: "It gave me a good avenue to apply what I've learned. Rather than being a paper document I could bring in some real experiences. It was very useful to explore business ideas under the University banner. It linked the intellectual property with research and teaching and has helped me to help my students to embrace opportunities at the University. I use this to work with students to develop ideas which they might be able to turn into a new toy or a new facility. They've invented all sorts of things including a peashooter-type arcade game and they were measuring heart rates when you hit scores and seeing how this was elevated by success or diminished by failure. This approach really helps their problem-based learning. I've also steered people who have clear ideas about what they want to do towards people who can help them. I've also been used as an example to University staff and students because of the enterprise activities I've been involved with. I've always used the help and advice I've been given and fed it back into my teaching to help my students. This experience has helped me to get interviews and has been targeted by employers who like the qualifications but get really interested in the intellectual property and business areas I've explored. It shows that you're not just pottering along on an academic treadmill but that you're looking to inspire, innovate and encourage others. This helps you to talk to a different type of audience. I learned a lot just from the process of writing a business plan and developing financial forecasts, all at no cost and with no risk!"

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Q: What were your greatest challenges and how did you deal with them?

A: "Studying part-time on my MSc, lecturing and leading some modules, doing my teaching qualification, external consultancy, additional coaching roles, this was a huge workload. At first I thought I was going to die but you learn to cope. You learn to plan your workload rather than try to do many things at the same time. Now I think it was a fantastic experience that will really benefit me."

Q: What's happened to you since graduation?

A: "With my coaching qualifications and contacts, along with my degree, lots of opportunities started to come up. When I graduated in 2006 I got an opportunity to do a two-year studentship towards an MSc in Sports Coaching which also gave me some lecturing experience. I had some consulting experience with Premier League football clubs working on their fitness, and I also coach the Great Britain and England Paralympics Teams."

Q: What has been your impact on others?

A: "I think I've been able to empathise with students as even though I am quite a bit older than them I've just gone through the same things they're about to do. So it helps that I talk their language. I think I'm also unique in that I offer my time freely to students and go the extra mile for them and I find that you get it back tenfold from them. A little word of encouragement or a bit of extra time, the loan of a paper or a book gives the student a great reward. With lots of students it's important to think of them as individuals. I also take students out for work experience with some of my consultancy clients and encourage them to get involved with the Paralympics team. This leads to a mutually beneficial relationship. I learn as much from the students as I teach them."

Q: How do you measure your success?

A: "This is difficult as I feel that my work is never finished. I have lots of projects that are going on for 6, 12 or 18 months. I do set SMART goals but they end up being quite flexible. I measure myself by how I feel generally – whether I'm upbeat, whether I'm into things, whether things are happening, whether people are knocking on my door. It's measured in a humanistic way rather than ticking boxes. I'm happy-go-lucky, Northern, down to earth, live and let live, but have the attitude that let's have a go at it if we're going to have a go."

Q: On reflection is there anything you would have done differently?

A: "I wish I could drop this period of my life of 30-38 into 20-28 because in the next 10 years I could get a PhD and become a Professor, but I don't look at it with regret. I'm in a position where I can't lose. I've gone from professional football to driving a van part-time, working in a foundry pouring molten metal, and working for Manchester Football Association as an Area Director for Coaching. A mixture of things that you'd look at now and think that I must have been mad!"

Q: Where do you go from here (2-3 years)?

A: "I've looked into a few business ideas including property investment and franchising but nothing's really grabbed me yet. So I'm still swirling around at the moment and haven't been able to focus as I've been snowed under with my other commitments. I'm having a good look around before I decide which way I'm going to move. I'm writing a Psychology of Football book that should be out next Summer, and three journal articles. I'm also looking into doing an inter-disciplinary Doctorate which could be part-funded by the Professional Footballers Association. In the next few years I'd like to have a full-time position in a professional football club at academy or first team level, or be working as a Senior Lecturer with a possible route to do a PhD. I'd also like to get hold of my original BizCom idea and get it to market because I think it could be big."

Q: Who would you like to thank for their support and encouragement?

A: "Mick Donovan got me into some good schools for coaching experience. Derek Peters has been very good. Paul Castle. Julia West has been my personal tutor. I really respect Louise Martin – I think she's fantastic. Karen van Berlo has been a real friend. They've all been great for me."

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