


## Museums & Archives

### Case Study

**Providing programmes that would help reach the highest standards in exhibition content and presentation, education, outreach services, collections management and other key museum activities.**

FPM created a bespoke development programme for leaders and managers of museums in the South East, supported by Renaissance South East. Having met the client to agree the aims of the programme, we delivered 2x two day modules to a group of 20 current or future managers from museums in the region in March/April 2008. Participants completed the Miles-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) process beforehand and an action learning set a year later.



It helped them make sense of their organisations and where they fit in. Overall, I think it showed them that their approaches to leadership were heading in the right direction.

Helen Gibbons

The course highlighted the difference between crisis management and open management and the need to get involved during a crisis. I stepped in and dealt with the situation with new-found confidence.

**Mathew Sheldon**



#### **Matthew Sheldon**

Matthew manages a team of 7 in the Curatorial Department at the Royal Naval Museum (RNM) in Portsmouth. His team is responsible for the care and development of the museum's collections and exhibitions. Matthew has been at the RNM for 14 years, with 6 in charge of the Curatorial Department. His previous workforce development includes an MA in Museums Studies and various one day seminars.

We spoke to Helen and Matthew a year after the programme was delivered to discover the impact it had on individual participants and the organisations they work in.

**Contractor:**  
Helen Gibbons  
Museum Development  
Service Manager,  
Renaissance South East

#### **Helen Gibbons, Contractor**

*Why did you approach FPM to deliver this course?*

Well, we had funding available for leadership training and I wanted to make sure we used it effectively. I was aware of the success and quality of the Leading Archives and Museums (LAM) programme (funded by MLA) and wanted to make similar training available to more staff in the South East.

I think four or five managers from museums across the South East attended LAM but that's a tiny proportion of the 4,000 paid museum staff across the Region. Although 20 isn't a huge amount, it went some way to meeting the huge demand for leadership training in museums, especially among curators – we had a long waiting list for the course!

*What did you expect to achieve as a result of running the programme?*

It's clear that managers working in museums in the Region are doing a great job, but often without any formal leadership training. I wanted the training to affirm their good work and give them a confidence boost. I was also hoping they would benefit from networking with colleagues across the region and build a peer support network.

The Museum Development Service tends to focus our training on more practical museum-related issues. The majority of the 262 museums in the Region are small to medium sized, so their needs are our main focus when organising most training. I therefore wanted something that also met the needs of those working in larger museums that wasn't just about museum practice.

*Did it meet your expectations?*

Absolutely. I sat in on the day when they received their MBTI results and the course participants were buzzing with enthusiasm. There was a sense of realisation about themselves as individuals, managers and leaders. They were given support and understanding, not just from the trainer but from each other.

It helped them make sense of their organisations and where they fit in. Overall, I think it showed them that their approaches to leadership were heading in the right direction.

#### **Matthew Sheldon, Participant**

*Why did you apply to attend the training?*

I had an historical interest in museums which led me to the position I'm in now but I realised that I needed stronger leadership and management skills to move up in the organisation.

Helen mentioned the programme as she knew how passionate I am about the museum. We have access to Naval training courses but they aren't really aimed at us and we aren't big enough to run in-house courses on our own. So we don't often get the opportunity to do this sort of training.

*What effect has it had on your team?*

The programme focused on different ways of managing and leading. Now I realise how important it is to apply different styles and techniques to different members of my team.

I've made a conscious effort to make myself more available to them and have found more ways to communicate. I now have a more structured approach, which the team have certainly benefited from, and am much more aware of their needs.

We had a crisis shortly after the first module and I was able to put what I'd learnt into practice straight away. The course highlighted the difference between crisis management and open management and the need to get involved during a crisis. I stepped in and dealt with the situation with new-found confidence.

*How did this course compare to other training you've attended?*

I've never been on a course this long or intense before. I normally attend one day seminars which have quite a narrow focus. This was therefore outside my comfort zone but I really benefited as a result.

It was very enlightening to focus on the bigger picture and on a national scale for a change. Meeting colleagues from other types and size of museum was also very interesting. We're all facing similar challenges but dealing with them in different contexts.

I can't think how the course could have been improved. I would have said a follow-up day but that's been covered by the action learning set. It was a fantastic course and has given me much more confidence to do my job.

**FPM** Policy to  
Performance

7 Jarrom Street, Leicester LE2 7DG  
T 0116 249 5000 F 08707 059361

Registered in UK: 73702811

**FPM, transforming services for the public through:  
Specialist Training and Development**

Leadership and management development  
Practitioner training

**Contextualised Service Design**

Innovative delivery models - co-ops, mutuals and  
shared services

Design and implementation of cost reduction plans