

When I embarked on the master in Fundraising at the University of Bologna I gave up my well paid job as Head of Communications for an NGO, because I knew that after years as a communications professional it was time to get my hands in the sink and start changing the world. Now, six months into my role as Philanthropy Manager and up for promotion as Head of Philanthropy, Scotland, for one of the UK's biggest and most well-known charities I am proud to say that I will have some big numbers against my name at the end of the financial year that represent not how much profit I can make for a company but how much change I can help to make in the lives of homeless families in the country where I grew up.

I wouldn't have been able to do any of this without the practical training and hands-on support that I received at the Master in Fundraising.

I was taught by some of the most recognised and accomplished fundraisers from around the globe. They openly shared technique, creativity, networks and experience but most importantly they shared their passion for fundraising: an unshakeable knowledge that to be really brilliant fundraisers we have to believe wholeheartedly in what we are doing and live it for everyone to see. This has been the lesson that I have taken with me every day into work since June and which I firmly believe has been the key that has helped me unlock more than £2 million in donations to Shelter from high net worth individuals and trusts and foundations in under six months. There are another £700,000 of Ask still on the table....so it could be a very profitable first year of fundraising for me!

Here are just a few practical examples of how I have applied the Master in Fundraising to my new job so far...

Thanks to the database and analytics course within the Master I have been able to contribute to the discussion and choice of a new database in Shelter which had already begun when I joined in June 2014. My newly acquired skills in this area will ensure that the new database will be able to support my growing major gifts team in building a moves management system that is easy to use and suited to our needs from inception. I believe this will play a crucial role in ensuring that my targets are met in the coming years because my prospect research team will be able to accurately prioritise and segment the new CRM with greater ease and most importantly extract the information we need to understand our progress and make changes necessary to the major donor programme according to the data in the CRM.

The portfolio work we undertook as part of a team within the Master was a theoretical exercise that caused me much angst, despair and frustration during the master but since entering the real world of work at I have had to present no less than four different fundraising business plans complete with tables of gifts, budgets for the coming 5 years and investment plans. I have returned to my text books multiple times, returned to my notes taken during Melandri's classes and I am thrilled to say that because of these business plans a further £100k is being invested into the major gifts team in Scotland and I am about to start hiring a further two team members for the major donor and trust teams.

Undoubtedly the Professor who had the most profound effect on me during the Master was Guy Mallabone. He recognised a major donor fundraiser in me and gave me the confidence to believe that I could walk into a room and ask them to hand over a 7 figure sum of money with a smile on my face. Giving people the opportunity to change the world through their generosity is an enormous joy and I can honestly say it is the most fun I have ever had at work. I used to interview famous musicians about their albums and CEOs about their businesses as a broadcast journalist, now I get to ask them to give me their money to change the world. It feels great.

I think I will always love major giving more than the other aspects of fundraising because it is the area where I feel I am best suited AND where you can see the biggest results in the shortest time! However, thanks to the Masters I have a toolkit of skills learned from Stephen Pidgeon, Richard Radcliffe and all of the other teachers. These skills have been consistently useful when effectively communicating with other fundraising departments and in constructing strategic objectives for my own team. In fact, understanding that fundraising is at its most successful when fully integrated with all fundraising strands, communications, branding and pushing the need for fundraising departments to work together has enabled me to work effectively in Shelter. I have actively encouraged a cross departmental, integrated approach to fundraising since joining because I know that it will bring the greatest success overall and this was clearly explained to me (before I really knew what I was reading) in Daniele Fusi's book.

I hope that it is clear from this brief statement how much I have learned from the Master in Fundraising. For me the Masters was a diving board from which I have leapt wholeheartedly into a career that I hope will last a lifetime. I am so very grateful to have found a place in the world of work that finally fits with my personal aspirations for a more equitable and peaceful world. Who knows if I ever would have found it if I hadn't been living in Forlì!

It would be my pleasure to come back at any time to speak about how the Master has influenced my life and I want to thank you again Valerio for helping me through the journey be generously awarding me a Scholarship at the start of the year. I simply wouldn't have been able to take part in the course without that financial assistance.

Sincerely,

Harriet.