

SPORT | LEISURE | HOSPITALITY

UP

Unique People

Intelligent perspectives for sector leaders
Issue 1

In this issue:

Through crisis
comes opportunity

Capturing sports
fans attention
'off' the field



with **Holly** Murdoch,
General Manager of St. George's Park,
the FA's National Football Centre

JUSTIN LANGER

We catch up with Australia's national
men's cricket coach and former cricketer
to discuss his career transition and
view on authentic leadership



**Brewster
McBride**

Part of the Brewster Partners Group of Companies

Leadership
& Management
Search



Contents

UP Magazine is published by Brewster McBride, part of the Brewster Partners Recruitment Group.

The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. If you have a comment or query about this publication or any service offered by Brewster Partners Recruitment Group, please call 01302 308 040.



Q&A with Justin Langer

Australian national men's cricket team coach and former cricketer.



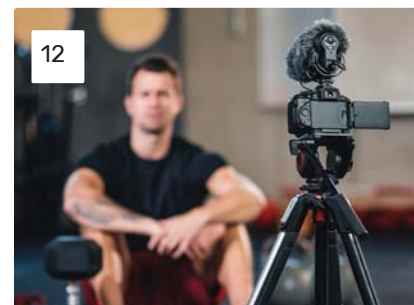
Q&A with Holly Murdoch

General Manager of St. George's Park, the FA's National Football Centre.



Through crisis comes opportunity

Ian Taylor, former Head of Communications, at QPR and Team INEOS, discusses the potential opportunities to be had during a crisis.



Game changer

We discuss capturing sports fans attention 'off' the field.



How you can help new leaders to succeed?

Tips for employers on how to help employees transition to leadership.



Q&A with Stuart Cain

CEO of Warwickshire CCC, specialist in business strategy, leadership, commercial affairs and media & digital talks about a career in sports and entertainment.

Welcome to the first edition of Unique People: Sports, Leisure and Hospitality

We are delighted to introduce the very first edition of Unique People: Sports, Leisure and Hospitality aimed at providing intelligent perspectives and industry insights from fascinating leaders in the sports and leisure world.

In the final few months of 2019, we established our new Sports and Leisure practice headed up by our Head of Executive Search, Neil Edwards. As a former professional sportsman, Neil's experience and deep network make him the ideal person to lead our team of specialist consultants and researchers who are well equipped to find the very best talent in the sector.

Now, nobody could have predicted the extraordinary six months we've gone through as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus and the subsequent social distancing measures imposed by the government have had an incredible impact on the sector, with many hospitality and leisure organisations having to temporarily close and competitive sports being postponed, much to the disappointment of participants and fans world-wide.

What remains clear, perhaps now more than ever before, is that sports and leisure play a critical part in the lives of so many, both professionally and personally. As we adapt and push through the current challenges and head into a new period of normal (however that may look) we are all still tasked to protect, grow and maintain our organisations and, in doing so, we must rely on the talent we engage with, and the strength of the industry supporters.

In this edition of Unique People, we were delighted to interview the Head Coach of Australia men's national cricket team, Justin Langer. As one of Australia's most successful batsmen, Justin shared with us his career journey insights from professional player to Head Coach of one of the worlds' best sporting teams.

We also caught up with Holly Murdoch, General Manager of the FA's £105m National Football Centre, St George's Park. Holly talks us through her wealth of experience and the leadership insights she's learnt that help her with her daily management of over 200 individuals.

In these uncertain times, we look at some of the industry insights and current trends in the Sports and Leisure industry and we take a look at some of the 'Game Changing' new developments that serve to change the way we look at sporting spectatorship.

Ian Taylor, former Head of Communications at QPR & Team INEOS, discusses the potential opportunities to be found during a crisis. And finally, Stuart Cain, newly appointed Chief Executive of Warwickshire CCC, shares the unique career journey he's been on that has led to his most recent successes.

If you would like more information about any of our events, or you would like to share your unique story, or that of your organisation in a future edition of Unique People: Sports, Leisure and Hospitality, please feel free to get in touch with us directly.

As always, we gratefully welcome any feedback you may have to make our publications as valuable as possible.

Nigel Brewster, Partner and Chief Executive

Neil Edwards, Client Director



Nigel Brewster,
Partner and Chief Executive,
Brewster McBride Leadership
& Management Search

@ nbrewster@brewsterpartners.co.uk

07758 112 002

LinkedIn with Nigel Brewster



Neil Edwards,
Client Director,
Brewster McBride Leadership
& Management Search

@ nedwards@brewsterpartners.co.uk

07858 518 415

LinkedIn with Neil Edwards

Industry insights

The rise of technology and virtual reality

One particularly exciting trend facing the sports and leisure industry is the continued rise in virtual reality and technology. With VR headsets and virtual sports programmes becoming available, we can expect to see a shift in the way individuals experience sporting activities.

With the inability to participate and view live sporting events due to COVID-19 restrictions, online gaming and virtual sports have taken a front seat. The need for physical gym classes, face-to-face personal training and group sports sessions will undoubtedly continue and grow in favour once lockdowns are lifted, however, this technology will enable people to be much more self-sufficient in accessing training and their sporting development.

Enhanced viewing experiences using VR, including ideas such as adding 360-degree cameras on helmets of racing drivers could dramatically alter the way we immerse ourselves in sports entertainment in the future.



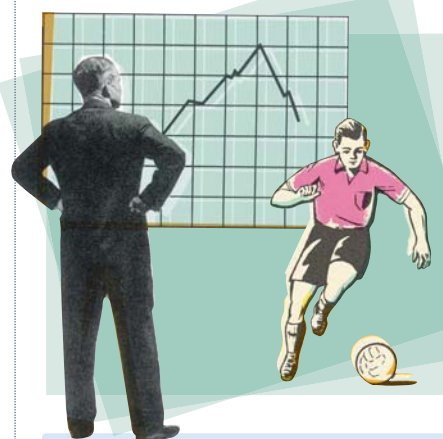
The continued rise of women's sports

Although many live sporting events are on the back burner as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, conversations around inclusivity in sport are still very much being had. Following on from the 2019 Women's World Cup and the success of young female sports stars such as Coco Gauff, women's sports is continuing to gain momentum.

We expect to see this momentum harnessed by both sponsors and broadcasters who will look to capitalise



on the growth. As a result, many organisations are looking to be more inclusive and gender equal with their hiring processes. Where women's sports may have previously been modelled and based upon men's, there may be a strategic push to highlight and embrace the differences; we can expect this will have an impact on the recruitment of both senior business roles and practical coaching roles.



Statistics are changing spectating

The quality of statistics and information available to sports fans continues to improve. Statistical analysis has now become part of sporting commentary and allows fans to have an informed view of their favourite sports. As well as providing another layer to spectating, technological advancements serve to provide more accountability for club owners, coaches and key decision makers.

Sports and fitness – intrinsically linked with mental health and wellbeing

Where self-isolation and social distancing have become the new, albeit strange norm, one thing that has remained steadfast is the close link between fitness and mental health. For many, it has become more of a holistic wellness experience linked with improving mental health.

During the current pandemic, the Government's advised daily form of exercise has been incredibly important to people and more organisations are considering the need to provide support on mental health. This has led to many leisure industry providers increasing their service offering to cover this important need. This will likely continue and increase after social restrictions are lifted.



Public opinion on sponsorship and image

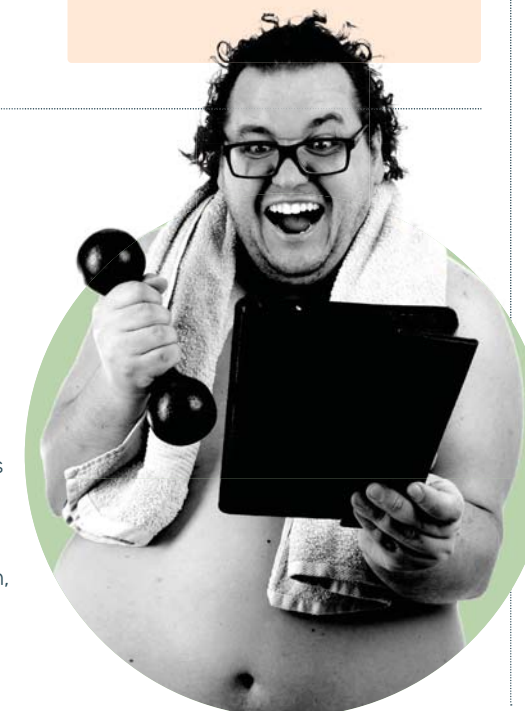


In 2019 we saw the relationship between the sports industry and betting companies face significant changes due to tighter restrictions. GambleAware's Bet Regret campaign, highlighted that only 13% of football fans were happy for their club to be sponsored by a gambling organisation.

There are clear indicators that consumers and sports fans show a greater interest and care for the way their teams and organisations are represented and supported. This could have a potentially big impact on the generated income of clubs and organisations from sponsorship and wider partnerships which is all the more crucial in the period of uncertainty that lies ahead post-pandemic.

ONLY
13% of football fans
were happy for their club to be
sponsored by a gambling organisation

THINK TWICE OR
BET REGRET
BeGambleAware.org



Flexibility is key

We can expect an increased need for the sports and leisure industry to be more diverse and flexible in how they make their facilities and service offering accessible to all. This has certainly been the case in recent times with the temporary closure of leisure centres and gyms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This means more and more organisations are offering additional services such as home workouts, live online classes and adaptable programmes. Technology is playing a huge role in making this happen, so we can expect an increase in the recruitment of tech-minded individuals to add diversity to the sports and leisure industry service offering.

Opening the doors to the back office

As many sport and leisure organisations are navigating through the impact COVID-19 has had on the industry, fans and consumers are following their management and progress closely. The recent and very popular 'All or Nothing' series by Amazon, forms part of the trend for more accountability and visibility in the business side of the sports and leisure industry.

Fans and consumers are showing a wider interest in the strategic running of organisations rather than just following performance of the sporting teams themselves. Podcasts such as the 'The Price of Football' put a spotlight on the finance functions of sporting organisations and encourage the wider public to further scrutinise and assess the industry.

Elevating experience

Where individuals once had to travel and purchase tickets to watch a live sports fixture, they now have the option to view through various technological means. These kinds of advancements are proving more and more valuable due to so many events looking to take place behind closed doors due to COVID-19.

As a consequence, we can expect a strong push and focus on organisations strategically focusing on delivering the best customer experience, by offering new, innovative ideas and options to add to the run-of-the-mill offerings in the future.





with **Justin Langer**
Australian national men's cricket
team coach and former cricketer



Justin is best known as one of Australia's test opening batsmen during the early and mid-2000s and as is considered one of their most successful ever. He has also represented Western Australia and played English county cricket for Middlesex and Somerset.

Neil Edwards, Client Director at Brewster McBride, caught up with Justin to discuss his career, his aspirations and the leadership lessons he has learnt during his journey so far.

Q You've made the transition from a professional cricketer to becoming Head Coach for the Australian Cricket Team. Tell us about your journey.

A When you retire from playing professional cricket it's almost similar to when you leave high school, sure you have a few more life lessons under your belt, but it's almost a question of whether you continue to study or have a gap year. This was such an interesting time for me. In my last year at Somerset County, Ricky Ponting's side

and work with us and do some batting coaching or something?". At the time I didn't think much of it. The day after I actually retired, I got a phone call from Australian Cricket, Ricky Ponting was the captain and Tim Nielson the coach, both of whom are great friends of mine. They said "Listen, why don't you work with us?". I didn't really know if I wanted to be

I had also applied to become the Head Australia Coach one year after doing the assistant job. It was like trying to become the President of the United States – it blew me away that I had to go through such a process to get those positions. I am so grateful now that I missed out on that opportunity, it was one of the greatest lessons I've had.

were playing a One Day International at Lords, and I went along to commentate on the game and have a beer with them afterwards. They started to say to me... "When you finish at the end of the year..." before I cut across them and told them I hadn't retired yet. They then as much as told me "Yeah, but you're going to!" and said "If you do retire, why don't you come

a coach, and when it first happened I had come from earning very decent money as a player to being on an apprentice coach salary and I nearly fell over. Christ, it was one of the biggest lessons I had to learn. I was lucky in that I was fortunate enough to go straight into the Australian cricket team and did what I call 'a coaching apprenticeship'.

Continues overleaf →

Fact file

Full name:	Justin Lee Langer
DOB:	November 21, 1970, Perth, Western Australia
Major teams:	Australia, Middlesex, Rajasthan Royals, Somerset, Western Australia
Nickname:	JL, Alfie
Playing role:	Opening batsman
Batting style:	Left-hand bat
Bowling style:	Right-arm medium
Fielding position:	Third slip
Height:	1.78m





with Justin Langer (continued)

From there I went to a few interviews, there was a Head Coach role that I missed out on and that interview process was a great lesson in itself. I had also applied to become the Head Australia Coach one year after doing the assistant job. It was like trying to become the President of the United States – it blew me away that I had to go through such a process to get those positions. I am so grateful now that I missed out on that opportunity, it was one of the greatest lessons I've had. If I'd have done that job nine years ago I'd be dead now! So, I did a couple more years as Assistant Coach before I become Head Coach for Western Australia Cricket during a real crisis time for them.

When I took over, Western Australia Cricket was at rock bottom, and frankly it was the best time to take over as I could be really clear with my style. One of the most important things you can do as a leader is work out your own style, what you're about, what your vision is, and what you stand for. If you're clear on these things, particularly in an organisation that's at rock bottom, you can start stamping your influence straight away.

I did seven years at Western Australia and then when Australian Cricket hit the crisis point with Sandpaper Gate in South Africa, I didn't go through any processes I was just offered the job based on what I'd done for those past seven years with the West Australian side. It was a great apprenticeship – I'm so glad I did it because there's no way I would have been able to handle the pressures in my current role now.

When I was 25, I'd been dropped from the Australian Cricket team and so for a time I was playing state cricket. At that time I went to become a Scholarship Coach with Rod Marsh, whilst still playing. So, the point really is that there must have always been some part of me that had considered becoming a coach. I still trained and played, but those 12 months that I did scholarship coaching with Rod Marsh were absolutely incredible.

Q What were some of the standout moments that you think put you on the track to where you are now?

A Believe it or not, it was when I was at Somerset. I had retired from international cricket and my hunger had developed to an extent where it wasn't so much for the runs, it was more the project, and taking Somerset from rock bottom in the second division by making some real

Three big lessons that I've learnt are:

1. You've got to be absolutely disciplined and direct with the people around you. Whether that's the players you select, the people that you have in your support staff, or those you report to.

You have to be so disciplined with what you say in the media, because when you're in a position that I'm in, you will get crucified if you're not.

changes. I learnt that if leadership works together and if everyone is trying to go in the same direction, it can be so powerful. If everyone is trying to go in different directions, then it really is a nightmare. There were two things there that I really did learn. The first is that you can't do everything yourself, and the second is that it's really important to know what you stand for. If you can do that, then you're halfway through succeeding in your job as a leader.

2. You have to be so disciplined with what you say in the media, because when you're in a position that I'm in, you will get crucified if you're not.
3. Don't listen to what anyone else thinks about you, if you do you're dead. As long as your friends and family know who you are then, that's really what matters. You've got to spend time building relationships with people.

Q You achieved great amounts as a player and players don't always follow into coaching – what do you think makes a great player a great coach?

A There's a really great coach Steve Rixon – He's a tough old so-and-so and he once said to me..."Mate, just because you were a great player, it doesn't mean you're going to be a great coach". And I agreed with him but I also knew that just because I was a good player it didn't mean I wasn't going to be a great coach either. What being a good player gave me was instant respect when I walked

through the door, but that's where it stopped. You have to work your arse off because if you don't, people will smell it a mile away. Having played for so long there wouldn't be much that I hadn't seen before I can empathise.

Being a parent helps me as a coach as well because it's a challenge – parenthood – it's really one of the hardest things in the world.

JL fact

Justin made his Test debut against the West Indies at the Adelaide Oval, in January 1993. After only managing to score 20 in the first innings, Langer top-scored for Australia with 54 in the second, a famous chase by Australia that fell just two runs short.



Q If you weren't a cricket coach now, what would you be doing?

A I love writing, I would probably look at journalism. Wait no, that wouldn't work. It's a very good question. If I get sacked from my job come and speak to me then!

Q What would you tell your 20 year old self?

A If I could go back and give myself advice I would tell myself not to worry so much. I've got so much better at it as I've got older, but I used to put so much pressure on myself and constantly worry. You can easily worry about process and outcome, I see it all the time with my children. They worry about the past and they worry about the future that much that they aren't living in the now. It's so true. I'd tell myself to keep working hard, keep setting goals and everything will work out OK.

Q If you could do one thing differently, what would it be?

A Play off spin better. It sounds so silly but it was one area of my game that haunted me, I wasn't very good at it. It might sound like a silly thing to say but I got so much stress out of it. It's a little thing, but the lesson out of it is to keep concentrating on improving little things. Do the little things really well and then it won't turn into a bigger issue for you.

Q What do the next five years hold for yourself?

A With everything that's happening with COVID-19, I think sport and life itself has got a bit fat. We've got a big opportunity to become a lot leaner and meaner in business. There are so many things that have been 'nice to haves' because there's been a lot of money. It's time to start focusing on the big rocks and priorities. I watched Braveheart at the weekend, it's one of the greatest movies of all time. In the film William Wallace has just been Knighted and all the council start bickering about who's getting land etc. and he just walks out. As he's leaving they ask him what he thinks and he practically says "I'm not getting caught up in this, I'm gonna take on the world, I want freedom for Scotland" which is a clear example of him choosing to concentrate on the big

rocks while everyone else bickers about the little, non important stuff. We'll learn about different ways of communicating,

Ultimately, the next five years for me are about making the Australian Cricket team a leaner and meaner outfit.

for example, if you're in Nottingham and I'm in Western Australia, it's awesome – I'm making decisions from the comfort of my home. So, ultimately, the next five years for me are about making the Australian Cricket team a leaner and meaner outfit.

Q In your career who would you say has inspired you the most?

A Honestly, it would be impossible to choose who has inspired me the most. One thing I've learnt and have been open to in my life is having heroes and mentors. Without them I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you now. If I just name one person it would be too hard to do. I've had incredible mentors in my life

should do tonight son, is go home, open your journal and write down the 10 best coaches you've ever had in your life, and write down what you liked about them."

I could've written down 50 people when I did the exercise and he told me; "What that'll be is the kind of coach you'll become and the person you'll become".

One thing I've learnt and have been open to in my life is having heroes and mentors. Without them I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you now.

and heroes too. One of the great lessons I learnt when I first started coaching was from an AFL coach called Kevin Sheedy. It's a great exercise for people to do. I'd been in the Head Coach role for about a week and he said to me; "What you

I've still got one of my first red moleskins, I've now filled about 50 of them as it's a great idea to write down who, or what has inspired you.



with Justin Langer (continued)

Q What makes a great leader for you?

A They walk the talk. There's an old saying that 'if you preach excellence and walk mediocrity you're nothing but a common liar'. Anyone can talk a good game, anyone. You must live the value, and know what you stand for, every day of your life. The pain of discipline is nothing like the pain of disappointment – It's my favourite saying.

You've got to be disciplined to make the right choices that's all. Have honest conversations, they'll build trust and trust builds more honest conversations it's an upwards spiral. You absolutely have to have empathy and care about people too, it might actually be the number one thing and the number one trait of great leadership. Care for other people.

Q What stands out for you as the highlight of your playing career, coaching career and life?

A In general life it's the birth of my children.

In my playing career it's having such longevity and playing for so long. The ability to play for so long is amazing. I finished at 40 years old, for an Australian player that's a bloody long time.

Recently, I emailed a young kid who had just lost his first professional contract. He's 20 years old and it was the end of the world for him. I said to him that it doesn't have to be. We all go through tough times in life and our careers – I was written off my whole career. People kept telling me all the things I couldn't do, rather than what

I was written off my whole career. People kept telling me all the things I couldn't do, rather than what I could. In times of adversity, if you can learn anything from me, you have a choice. You can quit, or you can ask yourself; "How can I get better?".


As a coach I'd say the highlight is that when we set out on this journey two years ago we were in crisis and after a month what we stood for was to make Australians proud of us again and earn the respect of other people around the world. I walk into the supermarket and it's tangible that people are really proud and like Australian cricket again. Through the documentary 'The Test' the number of people who've contacted me around the world and said they have respect for what we do and for some of our people. That makes me very proud.

I could. In times of adversity, if you can learn anything from me, you have a choice. You can quit, or you can ask yourself; "How can I get better?". I've had that through my coaching career and my playing career. Each time I've had a smack in the mouth, I've asked myself that question.

Learning from the toughest times is how you get more layers to your character and personality. You need a thick skin sometimes and the ability to keep bouncing back.



Australia's most prolific batting partnerships in Test Cricket history



Matthew Hayden & Justin Langer

Era:	1997-2007
Innings:	122
Runs:	6,081
Average:	51.53

The left-handed pair who led from the front in the all-conquering Australian team that straddled the turn of the century, Hayden and Langer were consistency personified against the new ball.

Langer provided a gritty counterpoint to the domineering Hayden, though both shared an unquenchable thirst for runs. When Langer got moved up to open at The Oval in 2001 following Michael Slater's loss of form, the pair put on 158 together and never looked back, amassing 5,655 runs together at the top of the order to take their total runs in tandem to 6,081.

Their highest partnership was 255 against Sri Lanka in Cairns in 2004, on a flat pitch where Hayden completed hundreds in each innings, but similar heights were scaled time and time again. Coming in fourth on the list of highest runs scored in partnership, they top the table for the most partnerships of 200 or more with a remarkable six double-century stands, nearly half of the 14 stands they shared that passed 100.

Source: bleacherreport.com



Justin Langer (Batsman) playing career stats

Career Batting Stats
Left-Handed Batsman

Format	M	Inn	NO	Runs	HS	Avg	BF	SR	100s	50s	
Test 1993-07	105	182	12	7696	250	45.3	14192	54.2	23	30	
ODI 1994-97	8	7	2	160	36	32.0	180	88.9	0	0	
1st class 1991-09	360	622	57	28382	342	50.2	46388	-	86	110	
List A 1992-09	239	226	22	7875	146	38.6	10071	-	14	53	
T20 2006-09	41	38	2	1015	97	28.2	744	136.4	0	5	

Career Bowling Stats
Right-Arm Medium Bowler

Format	M	Inn	B	Mdn	Runs	W	BB	Econ	Avg	SR	4W	5W
Test 1993-07	105	1	6	0	3	0	0/3	3.00	-	-	0	0
ODI 1994-97	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1st class 1991-09	360	26	386	18	210	5	2/17	3.26	42.0	77.2	0	0
List A 1992-09	239	8	193	0	215	7	3/51	6.68	30.7	27.6	0	0
T20 2006-09	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Career Fielding Stats

Format	Catches	Run Outs	Stumpings	
Test 1993-07	73	4	0	
ODI 1994-97	2	0	1	
1st class 1991-09	324	6	0	
List A 1992-09	113	14	2	
T20 2006-09	8	0	0	

Source: Google statistics

Q What do you do to get away from work and how do you relax in a high pressure environment?

A In January we finished the test series against New Zealand. I was quite unwell and I didn't know what it was. The problem as a leader sometimes is that you have to put a brave face and mask on, so only my family could see how unwell I was. I saw a neurologist who tested me as I'd been sick for months. He told me I'd got vestibular migraines and he gave me some medicine which changed my whole world. What had an even bigger impact was when I drove down to our holiday home afterwards and stayed there for two weeks. It made me realise how unhealthy

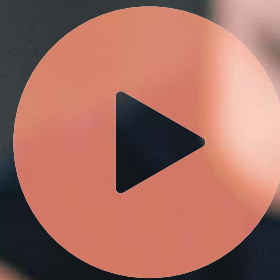
I did a professional development piece with all my staff and they asked me what my professional development goal was. I told them it was to play more golf. They all started laughing, but I was dead serious, everyone has to have another interest.

my lifestyle is. I'm in hotels 10 months of the year with air conditioning, I'm flying places a lot and I use Uber Eats or room service and eat restaurant food for most of the year, and that's even before I talk about the stress of the job. In those two weeks I was away I recognised how unhealthy my lifestyle was. I did a professional development piece with all my staff, they all know what my work ethic is like and they asked me what my professional development goal was. I told them it was to play more golf. They all started laughing, but I was deadly serious, everyone has to have another interest. I also love my garden and love being in it and I've also started training hard again. If I could give anyone similar advice on how to stay relaxed as a leader, it would be to get into a routine and stick to it, it changes your life.

I'm taking the positives out the current situation, I'm at home with my children, I can eat home cooked dinners, I'm out in the fresh air as much as I want, I work from home and can get into a routine. Routine can really change your life.



Game changer



Capturing sports fans attention 'off' the field

by Neil Edwards, Client Director, Brewster Partners



When it comes to sports, whether it's an elite, globally popular team or a lower league outfit, one of the biggest challenges is keeping fans engaged when games aren't being played.

One of the most powerful ways of doing this has been proven to be through sharing smart video content via online platforms. Sharing unique video content with fans encourages authentic engagement and keeps fans coming back for more, thus opening up new and diversified revenue streams.

Fans want to consume content that keeps them close to their club. They want to feel as though they have a real relationship with the players they admire, get to know their personalities and get 'behind the scenes' glimpses into life at their favourite club or of their preferred athletes.

It would also be fair to suggest that supporters want to feel as though they have a direct line to the inner workings of their club and video content is the perfect way to offer this.

Every club or sports star has special moments that can be captured on film and shared online for fans to consume, from impressive skills to fan celebrations, entertaining interviews and unforgettable moments that can be watched over and over again. When clips like these are effectively used, they allow fans to connect with their club or sports star on a different level.

Having a smart video content strategy is the key to success. Simply sharing poorly taken videos won't be enough.

Content must be captured, edited and put together in the right way to ensure it truly is valuable content that people will want to watch, share and comment on. This prime advertising space can be used to present a humanised version of athletes and sports stars and gives fans 24/7 access to their favoured sports.

Sharing video content in this way means fans can watch it at a time that suits them. This is especially important for Millennials and Gen Z fans who crave a more intimate relationship with teams and who watch more video content than any other age bracket.

Having fans consume content in this way and connect with their club like this opens up new revenue streams and can

also capture new supporters. It's down to leagues, teams and players to embrace this and begin creating accessible video content for potential fans of all ages.

Sports teams, or sports stars who recognise this content consumption shift and invest in video content will soon see the benefits. It's imperative to do this in a world where audiences can become easily distracted elsewhere and

One of the most crucial things beyond having great video content is having content that's tailored to the platform it's being shared on.

not with the official brand or individual in question. When fans do become engaged elsewhere, this takes away potentially valuable revenue streams and community engagement opportunities.

One of the most crucial things beyond having great video content is having content that's tailored to the platform it's being shared on. Sports teams must be aware that what works on Twitter may not work on Facebook, and what works

on Facebook may not work on Snapchat, Instagram or the increasingly popular TikTok. This means there's a real need to stay nimble and aware of what content fits each individual platform.

Getting it right on each and every platform that content is being shared across is imperative to the whole video content strategy. Perfecting this means sports organisations can easily attract

and grow an authentic audience of fans who are truly invested in their team and players. This can then be monetised and provide the brand with another lucrative revenue stream.

So, if they haven't already, now is the time for sports teams and sports stars to embrace video content and grow a community of fans whose loyalty extends beyond the final whistle or buzzer.

You Tube

Sports content grew by

9% on YouTube in 2019

in part fueled by live events

with cricket and wrestling surprisingly owning some of the top live sports videos.

Source:

tubefilter

www.tubefilter.com/2019/07/19/sports-brands-online-video-views/



Holly Murdoch
General Manager of St. George's Park,
the FA's £105m National Football Centre.



Based in the heart of the country, St. George's Park is the National training home for all 27 England Teams as well as the home for the FA's Coach Education Programme. Having worked in the sporting industry throughout her career, Holly has built a wealth of crucial experience which helps her with her daily management of over 200 individuals, and the key operational management of such a prestigious national facility.

Q Can you talk us through your career to date?

A I have been fortunate to have worked in the sports industry throughout my career and what a privilege to work in an industry you are passionate about personally, as well as professionally.

I studied foreign languages at university, mainly because I was good at them at school. Like most 18 year olds, I really wasn't sure what I wanted to be when

corporate hospitality packages for their upcoming 'Ladies Day' – working there for the four weeks I was home from university.

It was a great team, a great atmosphere and a great sport – a foot in the door to an industry I had a passion for. I turned down my graduate scheme placement and accepted a full-time role working at the track once I had completed my degree.

I was brought in to work as part of the leadership team building the commercial strategy working with the operating partners and helping to write the manual of how to run the country's first National Football Centre.

I grew up.' During a gap year in Spain I worked for a logistics company in their marketing department – the buzz of the business world was exciting and therefore, during my final year I decided to add some additional business qualifications to my language courses. It was something that came naturally to me and luckily, I excelled in these areas.

During my Easter break before my finals, I rang a number of marketing agencies in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire – close to my family home – to offer my time to gain more experience. I stumbled across a temporary role at Hereford Racecourse, selling their

At the time, Hereford Racecourse was owned by Northern Racing PLC – who owned and operated nine racecourses across the country. It was an exciting place to work: the large events, challenging commercial targets and a strong one-team culture, which the leadership team lived and breathed.

After four years at Hereford and a series of National Sponsorship deals under my belt with ASDA, B&Q and a number of the large bookmakers, I was highlighted as a high-achiever and offered a promotion as the Group Commercial Manager, leading the group's sponsorship strategy and national ticketing campaigns.





with Holly Murdoch (continued)

I missed the buzz of working at the tracks – having a team and the large events, however, I enjoyed the company and its ethos. I therefore took another internal promotion to lead the Sales and Marketing team at Chepstow Racecourse, working on the Coral Welsh National, the broadcast arrangement with the BBC at the time, and driving commercial success for one of Northern Racing's largest tracks.

Being driven and ambitious, I was then given the opportunity to run my own track after being offered the General Management position at Bath Racecourse. A smaller track, smaller team, smaller targets, but it was mine – something that I could take ownership of.

I was at Bath Racecourse a year overseeing a record-breaking season, re-engaging the city with its racecourse, attracting record-breaking crowds and exceeding all our budgetary targets. It was a fabulous year, which was possible with the amazing team I had at the track and the support and buy-in they gave to me. I was nominated Bath's Women of the Year and thoroughly enjoyed every moment at the track.

Q Was there ever a stand out moment that your think put you on the track to achieve what you have?

A Taking on the role at Bath Racecourse. It was a huge step for me to go from working as part of a team – to leading a team. The tracks were run autonomously, therefore, I had complete ownership over the business and how it was managed.

At the time, I was the youngest Racecourse Manager in the UK. The role gave me confidence, but also resilience, as we had challenges along with the successes. It also gave me the confidence, that I was good at what I did – that I was capable.

With success comes reward, and again I was promoted to take over at Fontwell Park Racecourse in West Sussex, a track that had recently received large capital investments from the organisation and therefore had a challenging business plan that came along with it. Fontwell was a beautiful track.

Whilst at Fontwell I was approached to join the management team at St. George's Park (SGP), the FA's National Football Centre that was due to open. I was brought in to work as part of the leadership team building the commercial strategy working with the operating partners and helping to write the manual of how to run the country's first National Football Centre. The FA had committed that SGP would be delivered, not be a cost to football, and therefore needed a robust usage and commercial plan to cover its operating costs.

In 2017, I was promoted to General Manager at SGP – a role that I am immensely proud and passionate about. SGP is truly a special place and I look forward to continue to play my small part in developing football in this country.



Obviously joining the team at the FA and being part of the team that opened the first ever National Football Centre was a huge career highlight: planning and delivering the launch event; gaining international recognition; securing media coverage; delivering the highest profile of guests, including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and being part of delivering the launch of a national iconic venue, which has ultimately helped to drive success on the pitch.

Q What career advice would you have given your 20 year old self?

A Don't try and do it all at once – stop and enjoy the high points.

I wanted to run before I could walk on many occasions, which in some ways has helped me get to where I am today.

Thoroughly think through the consequences of each of your decisions and actions – you don't realise the impact you can have on others, both positively and negatively.

And finally, I have definitely toughened in many ways from when I was younger, however, I feel I have learnt empathy and humility which are great strengths, and I hope I use these attributes wisely.

Q What one thing would you have done differently?

A Just one? There are lots of things. I look back and wonder if I had made different decisions personally and professionally where would I be now, but ultimately I am proud of my accomplishments over all.

Q Given everything you have achieved – what does the next five years hold for you?

A I hope a continued career in the sports industry – building on the successes we have had at SGP over the years and continuing to use the venue as a vehicle to promote positive engagement with all participants in the game.

I am ambitious and determined – I want to look back at my career and feel proud of my achievements and ensure that my family are proud of my contributions.

Q Is there someone you have worked with that has really inspired you?

A Many people for many reasons. Julie Harrington, current CEO at British Cycling, for making me see that you are the creator of your own destiny and feel like opportunities are endless.

Martin Glenn, previous CEO of the FA, for making transformational changes for the good of the game in this country, and Gareth Southgate, for his humility but steely determination.

I have also worked with some truly inspirational individuals, who may not

have had the most senior positions in organisations that I have worked in, but have shown resilience, passion and a bags of personality.

Stella Royale, our Head Receptionist at the Football Centre is one of the most inspiring ladies who I have had the pleasure of working with – I hope she won't mind me saying that she is 70, but has the resolve and energy of a 25-year-old and is loved by all that she meets.

Q What do you think makes a great leader?

A Clear direction, excellent communication with their workforce – ensuring every individual knows the important role they play in the success of your organisation.

Strong leadership and visibility – making sure you make time for people – even when you are under pressure.

Creativity when needed, but also being self-aware of your own strengths and weaknesses, and building a team around you that supports this.

Q What do you think other could learn from your experiences?

A Although it sounds like a cliché, you can do anything that you put your mind to and you can work in any industry you wish to.

If you have a passion and a dream, go for it and never give up. Be a bit cheeky, ask a lot of questions, meet a lot of people, but be kind, honest and engaging.



Home to England's 27 national teams, St. George's Park provides a world-class training environment for any team, athlete or business striving for excellence.

Set in a single, secure location across 330 acres of idyllic Staffordshire countryside, the £105 million facility boasts a range of outstanding training pitches, a four star Hilton hotel, a state-of-the-art performance centre as well as an outdoor team building complex.

Now established as a leading conference and events venue in the midlands, since opening in 2012, we have already hosted over 6,200 events for the likes of Nike, BT, Premier League, Continental, Molson Coors, Vauxhall and many more.

St. George's Park is also the home of FA Education and delivers all FA national coach education courses.

Physical preparation and sport science is integral to the National Football Centre. The state-of-the-art performance facilities incorporate cutting-edge technology and outstanding apparatus, providing the ultimate training and rehabilitation hub for teams.

The Outdoor Leadership Centre, operated by Grahame Robb Associates, delivers development programmes in the areas of leadership, management and team building.



Built in 2012 and set in 330-acres of stunning Staffordshire countryside, St. George's Park is the home to all of England's 27 national teams.

How you can help new leaders to succeed?

The transition from employee to leadership position can be a difficult one and is much more complex than many people appreciate. In fact, four out of ten newly promoted managers and executives fail within the first 18 months*. So, just why exactly is this, and how can we work to help new leaders succeed and flourish?

Firstly, it's crucial to note that the skills and attributes that meant an employee was successful in their previous role won't necessarily transition to mean they become a naturally great leader. A high performing employee can easily become a mediocre manager, something that no organisation wants to be burdened with. This means it's vital to ensure these new leaders get the support they need to shift into being fantastic leaders who can take the reins and become successful leaders who your organisation can rely upon.

75% of new executives and managers fail because they fail to establish a cultural fit. This means they don't fit in with the culture that already exists within the organisation they become part of, or are promoted within. This means organisations should be making their company culture clear right from the beginning of the hiring process. Their culture should come across clearly and simply in their job advertisements so that they attract the right candidates who do fit in with their culture and will work effectively within their organisation.

Having the right support is one of the most important things for new managers, leaders and executives. They must have the right support and assistance to allow them to properly transition into this role. Directors, HR departments and other Senior Leaders and Managers all need to support the new hire in their role, and new leadership position, in order for them to have the best chance to succeed.

Showing your new leaders that they are supported can lead to higher job satisfaction levels and a greater commitment to your organisation, making them less likely to leave to find a new role elsewhere.

One effective way to make your new leader feel supported by those around them is by creating a learning network, or mentor network. This can be as simple as assigning someone in a senior position to meet with the newly hired or promoted leader once a week to discuss any issues they're facing.

If you have any Directors, Senior Leaders or Managers who have transitioned from employee to a leadership position, they're the ideal candidate for a mentor role as

Celebrating your new leaders successes is also an important step towards helping them make the transition. Acknowledging any success, no matter how large or small, can help to motivate your new leader onto further triumphs in the future.

they can use their own experiences in the same situation to help their mentee and contribute to the new leaders success.

The mentor should also make it clear they're available anytime to discuss problems, give advice and act as a sounding board. This will go a long way to making them feel supported and valued by your organisation and help them feel as though their transition from employee to leadership role is destined for success.



Another reason new leaders often don't succeed is because they aren't given any training to help them adapt to their new role or, if they are given training, it's not the right fit. It's crucial that if you are delivering training to a new manager that it is tailored to their role and relevant to them. This means any generic leadership training should be avoided, as it's a poor use of time for the person delivering the training and the new leader who is receiving it.

Instead, be deliberate about any training you provide. Address the specific challenges that first time managers face, any challenges that may come up in their individual new position, and help them feel best prepared to approach their new role.

New leaders should also have time set aside in their schedule for development. A recent study* showed more than a quarter of employees said the most likely reason they would leave a job is because they weren't given the opportunity to learn and grow. Ensure you retain your new leaders (and all of your other employees), by setting aside dedicated development and learning time to allow people to learn and flourish.

Uninterrupted time for new leaders can be devoted to training, learning and furthering their skills to allow them to develop into the type of managers and leaders that your organisation can depend upon. This time should be in their schedule and shouldn't be overlooked in favour of meetings or other tasks. Instead, show your organisation's commitment to their development in their new role by allowing them the time they need to make the transition successfully.

4 out of 10

newly promoted managers and executives fail within the first 18 months*



Celebrating your new leaders successes is also an important step towards helping them make the transition. Acknowledging any success, no matter how large or small, can help to motivate your new leader onto further triumphs in the future. The fact that their success is recognised will also show that they are valued and appreciated in the workplace and that the work they do matters. This will help to instil a positive feeling in the workplace and strengthen their loyalty to your organisation.

Whilst celebrating successes is important, it's also crucial to discuss any areas where new managers haven't been successful. When failure occurs, you are given the opportunity to talk through this with them, discuss how it could have been handled better and establish critical takeaways they can learn from and use to help them succeed the next time.

Don't set your new leaders up for failure. Instead, set them up for success and you'll have a much lower rate of staff turnover in leadership roles and leaders who can lead with courage, confidence and positivity.



Through CRISIS comes opportunity...

Ian Taylor
Former Head of Communications,
at QPR and Team INEOS

Albert Einstein once said: “In the midst of every crisis lies great opportunity.” Of course, there is little doubt that the current crisis the world is facing owing to COVID-19 is as worrying and scary, as it is unprecedented, and as time will no doubt show, historic.

But for businesses, and for the purposes of this piece, I'll look at it from a communications point of view in professional sport. With diligent planning and preparation in the midst of a crisis, comes opportunity. There is an opportunity in every crisis and the deeper the crisis, the greater the opportunity.

A little bit on my background first, before I offer my own views on this subject.

After graduating from university in 2002 with a Sports and Media Studies Degree, and after initially learning my trade as a sports reporter on a local newspaper, my first big break in professional sport was at Queens Park Rangers Football Club, whom I joined in 2005. I spent over 12-years working for the R's in the Premier League and Football League, overseeing an award-winning media department – before joining Team INEOS (formerly Team Sky), the most successful cycling team in the world, as Head of Communications in 2018, whom I served for nearly two years, before leaving the team just before the COVID-19 crisis hit the UK.

During those times, I experienced many highs – promotion to the Premier League via a last-minute winner in the Play-Off Final at Wembley Stadium (thank you, Bobby Zamora) an obvious highlight;

as well as two Tour de France titles in the two years I worked for Sky/INEOS.

There were, of course, many lows as well. You only have to watch QPR's 'The Four Year Plan' (available now on Amazon Prime – a must-watch during this lockdown period) to know that! Those lows included, but were certainly not limited to, Financial Fair Play irregularities; relegation dog-fights; the untimely deaths of two young, rising starlets; and the Grenfell Tower Fire tragedy during my time with the Super Hoops; and Chris Froome's near-fatal crash during a recon ride at the Criterium du Dauphine in June 2019 in my time in cycling.

The highs, of course, are generally always more memorable than the lows, as they are in all walks of life, especially sport. But with the lows, or crisis' if you prefer, come opportunities.

For that reason alone, whenever I'm pulling together communication plans, be it for day-to-day tasks or longer-term projects, I always consider the impact any external negativity, unknown stumbling blocks or outside influences, to name but a few, could have on delivering the overall objective.

Crisis comms planning is of paramount importance and a pre-agreed reactive communications plan should be in place before any strategy evolves.



Pictured, Ian dealing with the media in his role for Team INEOS



When the Grenfell Tower fire hit the West London estate in the summer of 2017, QPR were amongst the first to act, as the nearest professional football club to the devastated area, just over a mile from the stadium as the crow flies.

Of course, the primary concern on that fateful June morning was aiding the recovery effort, but as the hours, days and weeks passed, we – as a comms team, working with the local community as well as internal and external stakeholders – looked at ways to turn a crisis into an opportunity.

Fast-forward to September 2nd (2017) and the great and the good from the world of sport, music, film and entertainment were lining up at a sell-out Loftus Road, in front of millions, watching live on Sky One, to play in a charity fundraiser

#Game4Grenfell was born. Fast-forward to September 2nd, 2017 and the great and the good from the world of sport, music, film and entertainment were lining up at a sell-out Loftus Road, in front of millions, watching live on Sky One, to play in a charity fundraiser, attended by the family and friends of those who tragically lost their lives.



The #Game4Grenfell celebrity team line up for a minutes silence at a sold out Loftus Road

Throw in some live half-time entertainment from Marcus Mumford, Rita Ora and Emeli Sandé, and the drama of a penalty shoot-out which saw Ollie Murs score the winning spot-kick past Jose Mourinho, and over £1million was raised, distributed to survivors between the London Community Foundation and the Evening Standard Dispossessed Fund. More importantly than that, however, after months of hurt and despair, smiles returned to the faces of the Grenfell community, many of whom had not been able to find such solace since that fateful day in June.

Through crisis came opportunity... and whilst many crises' are unimaginable,

having a process in place and some basic principles to align to, can – in many instances – prepare you to cope with the very worst-case scenarios, which in turn can, as #Game4Grenfell proved, bring some glimmer of light at the end of a dark tunnel.



Peter Crouch leads the #Game4Grenfell team celebrations



with **Stuart Cain**

Current CEO of Wasps Holding LTD,
New CEO of Warwickshire County Cricket Club

Stuart has recently been appointed as the new CEO at Warwickshire Country Cricket, a role he starts in August 2020. As the current CEO of Wasps Holdings Limited, Stuart has over twenty years' experience in sport and entertainment having worked internationally across sport's rights holders; consultancy; venues and FMCG brands.

Warwickshire
County Cricket Club



Q Can you give us an overview of your career to date?

A I started off, much to my dad's regret, by turning down a place at university to go and work at a small advertising agency in Wolverhampton. After a few years I moved to Birmingham to work for different PR agencies and whilst there was approached by Bass Brewers to work in their Communications Department. I was a 25 year old lad who was offered free beer so... "Where do I sign?" I said. Off I trotted to Bass, (it became Molson Coors later), and I soon moved across into the marketing team and ended up as the Head of Sponsorship. I looked after the relationships with the Carling Premiership, Carling Cup and we sponsored the British Lions. We also had the Rangers and Celtic shirt sponsorships.

As I progressed, I soon became the European Marketing Services Director - this was when Molson Coors took over. I was responsible for driving the strategy for Carling and Grolsch brands, and a large part of that was based around exposure in sports & entertainment.

When Molson Coors took over the business it was brilliant but they were based in Colorado, so, for the senior team there was a lot of jumping backwards and forwards. It was difficult being in Colorado with a young family back in Staffordshire. I started to think about trying to find a new role closer to home.

when you went from Carling to Wolves, but we thought we'd wait and watch for a bit, you see a lot of people go into the commercial world of sport and don't last". They asked if I wanted to join them at Rangers as Commercial Director. At the time they were in the Champions League and my family are Scottish - so I moved up to Rangers.

My next move was to Mindshare, a global marketing consultancy and part of WPP which was brilliant. It was an international role and I quickly got a reputation for contract negotiation so ended up working in America with the NFL and MLS, FIFA in South Africa and took Arsene Wenger to Beijing, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Then my wife said: "Come on you've done it again - got yourself a job where you're away, more than you're at home." So, I started looking for something which involved less travel and was introduced by a music-Promoter friend to Paul Thandi, Chief Executive at the NEC Group. He asked me to join, looking after music and venue marketing for a range of business and entertainment venues. I was then promoted to Managing Director of a new business unit - Commercial Marketing - where I developed The Ticket Factory into a national ticket agency and launched Eight Feet Tall, a specialist events media and sponsorship agency.

I was responsible for driving the strategy for Carling & Grolsch brands, and a large part of that was based around exposure in sports & entertainment.

I knew the Chairman at Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, Sir Jack Hayward. Over the years, I'd done the beer deal with Carling at Wolves. He said to me: "Listen, we've just been relegated from the Premier League, would you like to join us?" I'd enjoyed the sports marketing side, the role I'd done with Carling, so I joined Wolves as Commercial Director.

I worked with Wolves for a couple of years, which was fantastic. Back in my Molson Coors days I lead the sponsorship deals with Rangers and Celtic, I was approached by Rangers' Chief Executive, Martin Bain, who asked me to join the club saying "We thought it was interesting

After seven years at the NEC Group and seeing it go from local authority to private equity ownership it was time to move on. I met with Derek Richardson at Wasps Rugby who said: "Come and join us - you've got a strange mix, you've got the sports experience, also the exhibition and events experience, why not use those together and help us at Wasps & the Ricoh Arena.

Having spent the last three years at Wasps/Ricoh, an opportunity presented itself to join Warwickshire County Cricket Club as their new CEO. Roles like this don't come up all too often and I was delighted to be offered the chance to join the club and start my new role there in August 2020.



Q The country and industry are currently experiencing unprecedented times, how is the business adapting?

A It's been interesting. The NHS set up our area's first Coronavirus Testing Centre at the Ricoh Arena, which went live on Monday 20th April. That's been really good to be involved with and they've been very engaging with lots of communication.

A week after opening, Public Health England took over the operation and they're very different, they now handle everything with very little need for us to be involved after helping them expand their operation.

Across the Arena we have gathered a substantial amount of excess food & drinks stocks that we hold in the hospitality areas, normally reserved for match days and events. The Wasps Rugby Squad have been dropping off food packages to shelters, charities and organisations across the city. We will do everything we can as an organisation to support the local community at a time like this. We have used our digital channels to communicate and engage where we can.

You see some organisations doing that a lot better than others at the moment, but the industry is doing the best it can with the resources it has available.

Continues overleaf →



with Stuart Cain (continued)

Q You currently have NED roles at UK Athletics and the Rugby League World Cup 2021. What was your reasoning behind taking on the additional responsibilities alongside your role at the Ricoh Arena?

A I wanted to broaden my experiences and learn what it felt like to sit on the other side of the Board Room table as a Non-Exec Director. It's also helped me develop new perspectives and expand my network as I've met people I just wouldn't come across in day-to-day life.

Working with the Rugby League World Cup or UKA you're suddenly sat in board meetings chatting to people and sharing ideas. Ideas where you think "Bloody hell, I could do that back at Wasps". I always treat those roles as part of my ongoing development really. Where you can learn things and meet new people. I think sitting on a board, rather than being an executive reporting to a board, is very different. I've learnt a lot about what I can do for the Directors at Wasps, so I think it's good for people to have another interest if they can fit it in. It's a bit like having a hobby, it's a bit of a breathing space,

and these are different people and different conversations that can refresh you every now and then.

It's a game of balance, I probably wouldn't have two NED roles at the same time as my role at Wasps normally, but it's just timing as the UKA role came up last year and it's an opportunity that really interested me. I can keep a balance between the Non-Exec role and the CEO role, I think that's important for people when you get to a certain Exec level. Try and have something that's slightly different and just gets you out of your comfort zone.



Q What career advice would you have given your 20 year old self?

A Hard work only goes so far, you've got to stop and look at the bigger picture every now and then. I think some of the most successful people I meet don't go 100 miles per hour, 10 hours a day, but they pick the right things to do at the right times and some of the most successful people I know work hard but that might only be for three or four hours a day. They then find time to relax and play golf etc, but those three or four hours a day have been spent doing the right thing and driving the right result.

When you start your career, you're still very task driven, you think 'What am I going to do today', then you plough through it. That's brilliant, but you've got to sometimes step back and think about if you are focusing on the right things, am I doing the right things, and am I getting the right result? I've learnt to take time to enjoy what you do, especially in the sector we're talking about.

We shouldn't forget that our jobs could be a lot worse. We're dealing with sport and entertainment - look at the pressure the NHS and key workers are under at the moment. So, when I see people in our world stressed and getting a bit precious I try to help them retain perspective.

A great example was the recent draw for the Rugby League World Cup with Prince Harry at Buckingham Palace. The event was planned meticulously by the team and when you've got royalty, a live TV broadcast and the world's media watching (it was his last public engagement) then it's easy for small things to become major problems. Just before Prince Harry arrived, Jon and I went in to a small room on our own and I said that we should just relax, take in the surroundings and remember where we are and what we're doing. It's probably not an experience either of us will have again so we should spend some time to be present, enjoy the

Q How do you combine the three roles? Do the NED roles offer flexibility in regards to the amount of time you have to commit to them?

A You can juggle it and fit it in, I do chunks of work at the weekend and evenings but they're all related really within sport. You may be dealing with different people, but it's still the same type of mentality, so you haven't got to flip from being a Non-Exec of an insurance company one week to an exec of a manufacturing business the next. You don't have to compromise yourself, that's why you have to put the effort in, you can't let your Non Exec job effect your day job.

moment and create a positive memory for ourselves and our families. Taking that time just helped us both reset and focus on what was important and the moment. Needless to say, it went brilliantly and was a great platform for the draw.



So, I do think people in any sector should sometimes stop, take stock, appreciate what's important and re-focus. For us at Wasps, that's stop and watch the rugby for twenty minutes or take in a few songs at a concert.



Q Is there anyone you have worked with that has inspired you?

A I've worked with some really good people, Julia Willoughby at a PR agency in Birmingham taught me about entrepreneurialism - she's a great lady. Julia established her own business, built it very successfully and I think she gave me some of my commercial attributes.

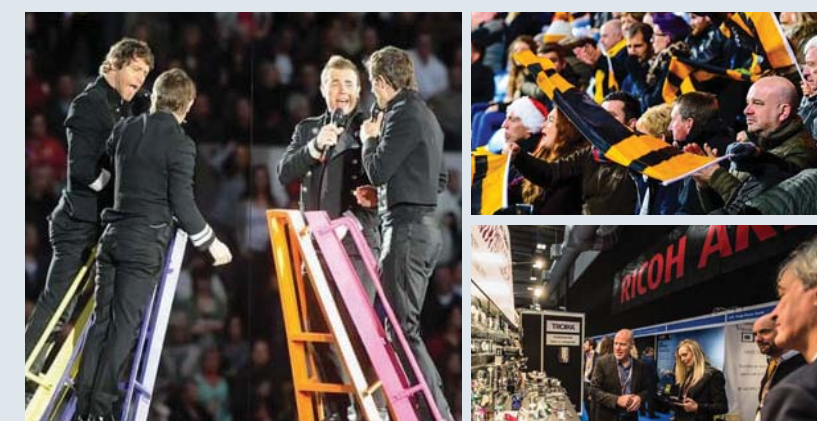
The formative years for me were spent at Bass/Molson Coors. I worked with Mark Hunter for a while, he ultimately became Chief Executive. Mark was really good, he helped me with the people side of the role and he had a particular phrase he used. I won't lie, I was a bit of a character when I was younger, he pulled me to one side and he just said listen... "You can't ride your Grolsch bike around the office anymore (the bike was a promotional tool we used for the brand). When you reach the level of chairman's list, (which is the level beneath the main board) you have to remember now that you cast a big shadow, whatever you say and do now will get over analysed because you're part of the leadership team."

I didn't quite know what he meant when he first said it. But over the years I've learnt that if you're the Chief Exec of a business or a senior leader and you walk around the business

and make a sarcastic, throwaway comment that you think means nothing and somebody hears that, it could mean everything to that person.

When you reach a leadership level you really do cast a big shadow, and you have to think really carefully about how you act, what you say, and how your words and actions are interpreted, because they take meaning 'in a life of their own' which they didn't have when you're at a more junior level. I think that's made me a lot more careful about how I do project myself, and I have to check myself every now and then because I still have that thought of going round the office on my bike. So, I've got to be a bit careful.

I think Jez Moxey at Wolves FC was great for me as well, he's very commercially astute and he probably hardened me up a bit. Jez deliberately put me in some tough situations where I had to either sink or swim, which was great. Paul Thandi at the NEC was good as well. He was exceptionally charismatic but amazingly disciplined and exceptional at keeping track of what's important and then refocusing the business as well as key people - including myself. I think that ability to re-focus is a key leadership skill.



The Ricoh Arena in Coventry, England, is a complex which includes a 32,609-seater stadium, used by Wasps Rugby Union Club, a 6,000 square metres exhibition hall, a hotel and a casino. The site is also home to Arena Park Shopping Centre, containing one of UK's largest Tesco Extra hypermarkets.

Q What are the key traits that you think make a good leader?

A Ability to keep your eye on the prize, focus and refocus. Are people doing things in the right way at the right time to get the right results. That constant focus and refocus on what's important and the ability to transfer this focus to teams properly, so you get everyone walking in the same direction.

You also need to manage the tempo, you can speed things up when you need too, you can slow things down, you can make it louder, you can make it softer, but you've got to create that orchestra conductor mentality. You need to get that balance right and be able to stand outside the business and work out when to turn the temperature up, or speed things up, or down. You also need to really understand the business you're in. Get to know the processes, understand how things work, get out to see the customers and suppliers. I've been caught out a few times in the past by not having a firm enough grasp on how things work in the real world and that's a problem if those in the Board Room tasked with making decisions don't really understand the implications.

People skills are obvious - being able to talk to people at all levels and also being able to listen. This goes back to what I said about understanding the business. A guy on the shop floor can quickly tell you if something will work or not. Listen, it could save you a lot of grief.

Finally, I would say that you have to wear the crown well, don't let the pressure get to you and show too much. Sometimes it doesn't hurt to show a little bit of anxiety but there's times where I've walked to the coffee machine with the weight of the world on my shoulders and a colleague who is a really important guy in the business wants to stop and talk for a minute and you think "Does he realise I've got all this stuff to sort out and you want to talk about the bars on Saturday and how we stock the fridges, this isn't important." But actually, it's everything to him, so try and wear the crown well and give that person the time they need.

Continues overleaf →



with Stuart Cain (continued)



Q The Ricoh Arena is a unique venue with the stadium, hotel, indoor arena & casino etc. As a leader what are the day-to-day challenges that you have in a business like that?

A Operations like the Ricoh Arena and the NEC are about large-scale events and large scale gatherings whether it be about sport, trade exhibitions or concerts. The logistical principles are the same, how do you get large amounts of people into a space quickly. Whether it be a rugby game, a concert for forty thousand people or a trade exhibition for ten thousand - there are some core obstacles across all of them. You start to think, how do you talk to different audiences and you have slightly different logistics around different events, but overall, it's the same conundrum.

It's about safely getting people in to have a great time then getting them out again.



Q Was there a stand out moment that put you on the track to achieve what you have?

A Back in my Bass days, I was relatively young, running at 100 mph, ten hours a day, drinking Carling and enjoying life! But it was Richard Scudamore at the Premier League that made me think more about the bigger picture and what's important, particularly when it comes to the role of relationships in business.

As sponsor of the Carling Premiership we would take journalists to Europe each year on a PR exercise. We went to Porto one year, just as we were re-negotiating the Carling Premiership deal and it was a tough time in terms of what both parties wanted from the deal.

We invited Richard Scudamore and understandably he couldn't make it due to other commitments. However, he turned up out of the blue with Keith Pinner - one of football's great behind-the-scenes characters - and said: "Listen I'm really sorry I can't stay for the whole event, I've got to fly back tonight but I wanted to have a few hours with

you, discuss where we are and show to journalists that your relationship is important to us."

We sat and talked then when he left I realised that he didn't have to do what he'd done, but he understood the importance of the relationship and making a symbolic gesture. He could also see the bigger picture and saw this as a good investment of time.

Him making that effort to jump on a plane definitely helped us get one of the biggest sponsorship deals in British sport at the time, over the line. It taught me not to fill my days with tasks but what was important and never to under-estimate the power of a gesture or the need for strong relationships in business.

I've tried to remember this in every job I've had. Maintain focus, build strong relationships and do the right thing. I've probably got Richard Scudamore to thank for that and he doesn't even know it.

Q Is there one thing you would change or do differently looking back at your career?

A Career wise, not get distracted. It's easily done in sport/entertainment as there are always new opportunities on the horizon, particularly in your career. You can get a call and think 'Oh, I quite fancy that' or 'that could be fun' and there was a period in my career where

For a period of time I was a bit like a magpie. It's quite easy to take your eye off the ball a bit and you forget that the grass is often greener where you're actually standing. I'm not saying don't pursue opportunities, but pursue them carefully. There was a time whenever the phone

There was a time whenever the phone rang, I'd think that sounds great, and then go on a wild goose chase for two months, and it isn't worth it. Know what you want and go for it but don't get distracted.

the phone was ringing quite a bit. You get distracted and stop focusing on your job properly. Yes, if someone rings up and it's the right thing, grab it. But if it's not, don't just do it for vanity, because you're wasting yourself and other people's time, and more importantly distracting yourself.

rang, I'd think that sounds great, and then go on a wild goose chase for two months, and it isn't worth it. Know what you want and go for it, but don't get distracted.

Q You are set to join Warwickshire County Cricket Club in August as their new CEO, what appealed to you about the role, and what are the specific challenges ahead for the club and venue?



A I've had a brilliant three years at Wasps but this is a chance to work with a great Sporting Director, Paul Farbrace, and help him and the team at Warwickshire CCC return to winning ways on the cricket pitch.

Off the field, there's an equally impressive team and plans to continue the development of Edgbaston as a world-class facility. They have ambitious plans for the wider estate masterplan and we share a similar view on the role of sport in the community, particularly when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

Cricket is also going through an interesting time as it launches new formats such as the Hundred. Add all of this together and it was the right time to move. Won't lie, it's going to be challenging, particularly as all sports try to navigate a way through the COVID-19 pandemic, but behind every great challenge is an opportunity. Not sure who said that, but admire their optimism.

Warwickshire
County Cricket Club



Ricoh Arena is a world-class exhibition, event and conference centre based in the vibrant city of Coventry, just a 20 minute drive from Birmingham, with over 2,000 parking spaces.

Q What are the challenges facing the sports and entertainment sector, Post COVID-19?

A I'd probably say there are about four key ones, the first being what's your purpose? I do think the whole 'community' piece is going to come out more and that organisations are going to demonstrate what more they can bring to society & wider community. So, I think finding the purpose of the role that we play in a corporate community, as well as the social community, is crucial.

Then you've got to work out how that purpose can be integrated into your business model. It's one thing saying this is what you do, but you have to facilitate it. So, people have got to start looking at their business models again. If we can't play to crowds until January 2021, then what does a season ticket look like. Do you still sell season tickets for a season that kicks off in September or do you save it until the season can kick off and how do you market that?

You've got to look at the operational side of your business and what the social distancing will look like for sports and concert halls. How do you serve food and drink, do you have it served to seats, click and collect so you don't have queues, mobile payments only so there's not cash handling? If you've got staff working behind the counters in tight spaces and fans in queues on the other side, how do you manage that safely for both parties? That will change the shape of your business in terms of staff numbers but also revenues if the speed of sale goes down.

The last bit is around confidence, how do you give the visitor confidence that it's safe to come to your venue. I do think even when restrictions are lifted, there's going to be a large number of people that will be nervous about attending large scale events with lots of people. So, how do you give the customer, client, or fan the confidence to come back into your venue?



We get **Unique People™**

Brewster McBride is a leading Executive Search and Interim Management firm with specialist practices covering a breadth of corporate & executive leadership positions.

Our specialisms:

Board Practice

Trustee & Non-Executive Practice

Sports & Leisure

For further information:

t: 0114 399 0590

www.brewstermcbride.co.uk

