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Students Question Managing Director at Barclays in Latest Distinguished Leader Series

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Douglas Johnson-Poensgen, the Managing Director of Barclays to You, visited Birmingham Business School on 6th February 2013 as part of the MBA and Alumni's Distinguished Leaders Series. Douglas is responsible for workplace banking and helping employers offer their employees an attractive package of financial benefits. He joined Barclays to set up this new business 7 months ago.

Douglas's lecture was entitled "How good leaders effectively motivate followers" and we managed to speak to him prior to the lecture to ask him why he chose to partake in the Distinguished Leader Series and what he hoped to get from the evening.

Student Q&A Session

As part of his visit, Doug took part in an intimate Q&A session with a small number of students to give them the opportunity to quiz him before the lecture. The session allowed the students to question Doug on his experiences developing a successful career, which has incorporated several senior positions within the Banking and Services sectors. The students in attendance for this unique opportunity were:

- **Joshua Turner**, Business Management
- **Xiaofei Cao**, MSc Human Resource Management
- **Albert Howard**, First Year Economics
- **Tom Parry**, Third Year Business Student
- **Lydia Brian**, Second year International Business with French
- **Nicholas Smith**, MSC Development Management with Human Resource Management

During the session, Douglas described career progression as more like building blocks than a ladder, with a need to "bolt-on" additional skills so you are able to offer a broader skillset. When asked about how to differentiate yourself in the job market, he said that "*employers assume a level of academic success*" so it's the additional attributes that make you an appealing job candidate such as showing an ability to lead, entrepreneurship, a desire to make a difference and a willing to take a personal risk to make that difference.

> "The people I have found most motivating are those who help me to learn, let me make mistakes"

Douglas Johnson-Poensgen

When questioned about banking, Douglas said that the current economical model is an unaffordable one since high street branches are the highest costs for a bank, yet they serve their lowest source of income. Discussing social media, he said the technology is fundamental in changing the way that people bank and can be used for financial education, to build loyalty and help people meaningfully.

On the topic of leadership, Douglas said that leaders need to "*tell people what to do, not how to do it*" and he believes that you need to be visible as a leader and lead from the front, citing the time he and other members of management spent an afternoon generating leads through cold-calling as an example.

Notes

- The Distinguished Leader Series features high profile leaders from a range of industries across the world reflecting on their personal journey and discussing the qualities of a great leader. Find out more about Birmingham Business School Alumni Relation's Distinguished Leaders Series.

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