

OC OF THE MONTH

April 2018



BEN HOCKMAN (NG 2001)

A LEVELS: ECONOMICS, MATHS AND GEOGRAPHY

UNIVERSITY: UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM, ECONOMICS

HIGHGATE

1. Tell us about yourself – where do you currently work, and how did you get into that?

I currently work for myself on a number of projects, the principal ones being:

- Legal consultant for Universal Music, where I'm responsible for legal and business affairs at two record labels. This involves, amongst other things, structuring and negotiating artist signings for artists ranging from Glass Animals to Iggy Pop, Underworld to Van Morrison and Sharna Bass to Warpaint.
- Investor in and adviser to Soul Circus, a yoga and wellness festival and events company. Soul Circus is entering its third year as a summer festival and is starting to offer surf and yoga retreats in France.
- Personal trainer, training clients in and around north London.

I initially trained as a lawyer in the City qualifying as a competition/antitrust lawyer in 2010. I then moved to an in-house legal and business affairs role at Universal Music Group, where I was responsible for a range of corporate and commercial matters, including mergers and acquisitions, competition and litigation work, government affairs, record label signings and anything else that came across my desk!

I decided to leave full-time employment with Universal Music at the end of 2016 to explore opportunities in the health and fitness space, although, as mentioned above, I still work for them on a consultancy basis.

I qualified as a personal trainer at the beginning of 2016 after completing the Level 3 Certificate in Personal Training with Premier Training (now Premier Global NASM).

2. What are some of your proudest achievements since graduating?

My proudest personal achievements since graduating are:

- representing Great Britain in football at the Maccabiah Games in 2005;
- spending time coaching an academy football team in Ghana;
- reaching a lower intermediate level of proficiency in Mandarin after spending some time in Shanghai; and
- starting a family

Professionally, I am proud of:

- qualifying as a lawyer;
- being part of the core team that after almost two years of hard slog got Universal's acquisition of EMI approved by the European Commission; and
- spending time in Mumbai structuring and negotiating Universal Music India's involvement with Enchanted Valley Carnival, India's first multi-genre music festival.

Oh, and finally, after 10 years of trying, regaining control of my work/life balance.

3. What advice would you give someone who is looking to follow a similar career path?

If you think you are interested in becoming a music or any other type of lawyer then the first thing to do would be to speak to as many people as possible so that you can find out what it's really like. Feel free to reach out to me and don't be afraid to send emails to other lawyers that from your research appear

to work on interesting matters. Also, try and seek some relevant work experience, as that will give you a better understanding of what it is like in practice.

Additionally, don't feel as though in order to be a lawyer that you need to do a law degree at university. As with many professions, it is possible to switch to law after university and so I would advise choosing the university course that interests you the most. If after that you still want to pursue a legal career, then consider doing a law conversion.

If a career in health and fitness appeals to you, then a course can be a good way to start, i.e. in personal training, nutrition, yoga, strength and conditioning etc. There are lots of courses available and it is a great way to dip your toe in without over-committing.

4. Which A Level subjects did you choose at Highgate, and do you have any advice for pupils currently choosing A Levels?

I studied Economics, Maths and Geography.

I would advise studying subjects that you enjoy the most as you will be more likely to do well in those subjects.

If you have a specific degree or career path in mind then speak to the school and your teachers for guidance on the best subjects to choose.

5. Where did you go to University? What did you study? Do you have any advice for pupils currently thinking about University options?

I went to the University of Nottingham and studied Economics. I chose Nottingham because for me it was the perfect combination of city and campus and it was also highly regarded for its Economics course.

As for what to study, I would recommend choosing a subject that you enjoy and that interests you.

In terms of where to go, I would advise visiting all the universities that you are considering as this will help you to make your decision. Once you've decided your degree subject, think about whether you would prefer a campus or city university life as this will filter your options fairly quickly.

6. Did your time at Highgate help you? If so, how?

It certainly did. First, it has given me a lifelong and solid group of friends that I still count as my closest. It also provided me with the platform to reach my academic and sporting potential, which I don't think I would have necessarily reached elsewhere.

7. In three words, how would you describe Highgate?

Diverse, supportive and empowering.

8. What is your strongest memory of Highgate?

I have many good memories but an overriding one is the feeling I got when I visited the school to take the entrance exams and I realised without any doubt that it was where I wanted to be. Before that I had been all set to go to another school nearer to home.

9. What drives you?

Making my family happy and being happy myself. If I can achieve this, then everything else should (in theory!) fall into place.

10. What's next?

Finalising everything for Soul Circus 2018, which is taking place in August.

I'm also exploring a couple of new projects in the fitness space – I'm in the early stages of helping an influential fitness expert set up a fitness studio and expand her brand - and legal space.