

**Presenter: Mr Simon Terry - 2018**

**Title: STEM skills in action: How can STEM capabilities better enable your next career adventure? (12:17)**

<i>Time</i>	<i>Dialogue</i>
00:14	Hi, my name's Simon and I'm here today to talk to you about the role of STEM skills in full filling your career opportunities and realising the career adventures you've got ahead of you. For many people starting out at the beginning of their career or actually on the journey through their career it can be a daunting exercise because actually one of the big challenges about our careers and the things we take on in our work is often things don't make sense until we look back across what has already happened to us.
00:47	I can remember being a high school student who studied science and maths and was thinking about what I wanted to choose in University and what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. I picked the kind of easy option. I put aside my interest in Science and took on a new challenge in terms of the kind of career I wanted to have. But oddly enough my career has actually led me back to working in technology to working in entrepreneurship and what I want to do today is share some of that journey.
01:28	What I learned across that experience and some of the things you can take forward in your careers. I really want to focus of a couple of the key skills that came out of the <a href="#">Foundation for Young Australians report</a> into the future of work. The Foundation for Young Australians has shared a number of key enterprise skills which are very closely related to STEM skills. Their things like critical thinking, things like problem solving, communication, presentation and these skills are fundamental to the way we go about our careers.
01:57	One of the key things that I learnt in my career was you need to keep applying these skills. When I left University I really wanted to be a CEO (Chief Executive Officer). I really wanted to be a CEO of a business. I had these bold ambitions. I was incredibly ... maybe arrogant, certainly ambitious. And about ten years after I left University I actually had a bit of a crisis. I actually had a moment where I questioned what I was trying to do and the reason was I had been working away trying to get my foot on the various rungs of the ladder.
02:33	Step after step and to be honest I had spent 10 years stumbling. I'd spent 10 years missing out on the opportunities I really wanted. Maybe I was chasing things for the wrong reasons but what I did at that point was I actually reflected on what I was trying to achieve and I went back to some basics. I went back to some of the core things and one of the funnt things that happened was that when I explicitly gave up on that goal of being a CEO, two years later I was appointed CEO of <a href="#">HICAPS</a> a health claiming platform in Australia.
03:07	So sometimes funny things happen. One of the key things I did when I had that transition in my career was I refocused on solving problems. Entrepreneurs, business people careers are based around solving problems every day and the STEM skills you have make you ideally placed for this opportunity. One of the reasons I needed to move beyond my legal career was I had a very early experience where one day a client rang me up and wanted me to document a deal they'd done and I realised while they were talking to me that I was far more interested in their job than my job.
03:52	I wanted to solve the problems they were solving, not the legal problems I had to solve and so immediately I had to start thinking about a change in career. Now some 30 years later I now lead a global network of consultants in <a href="#">Change Agents World Wide</a> and at the same time I am working with a start-up here in Australia called <a href="#">Lantern Pay</a> running its growth in a really important initiative which is to bring a new claim payment platform to Australia to enable easy and simple financial transactions in the Health Care, Disability and Age Care sectors.

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04:33	You could not have predicted that I would end up where I ended up from where I started. To be honest the last ten years' worth of my jobs didn't exist when I began in my career. So it's important to just focus on solving the problems in front of you and continuing to add value as you work along. One of the big things you discover when you tackle problems is you realise that the best problems are bigger than one person. Collaboration is so essential to get things done.
05:05	Isaac Newton spoke about his amazing achievements being because he "stood on the shoulders of giants" and I think we all have this incredible opportunity to learn from others, to work with others and with the technologies now available to us that opportunity exists all around the world. Those technologies didn't exist when I started my career. In fact I was working in a media company in the 1990's when the World Wide Web was created and I can tell you one of the things that I found incredibly powerful was diving into brand new online communities.
05:42	Just to work out what this thing was and what our media company would be able to do with it and I continue that today. Change Agents World Wide is a global network of consultants who focus on the future of work. We work together to share best practices, to collaborate and that's fundamental to not just do the best work that I can do but also learn from the best work around the world. And each of you can think about how your networks and communities can foster that change.
06:17	Learning by doing is really a core piece. If you have been studying science or technology or engineering or mathematics you have been practicing this in experiments and other exercises but it needs to go on your whole life and one of the core reasons that happen is sometimes those experiments fail. Some of the best things that can happen in your life is the result of failed experiments. Many of you would know of companies like Twitter and Slack which are global giants now.
06:50	They are actually both the results of failed experiments. Start-ups that didn't work and they have moved on to other things. So I had this experience early on and have learnt on the job ever since and in fact I have even pushed myself to go into opportunities that I don't necessarily have the skills to succeed and learned from that environment. I even once took on the job of being the marketing director of a Toy company with no marketing experience.
07:20	My boss told me not to say anything in meetings for the first month because I was literally dangerous. I had to study at night. I had to learn from my colleagues. I had to work really hard to develop my skills but it was an amazing experience in growth of understanding and gives me skills that I still use today. If you are having a career in STEM you must be a curious person. Leverage that curiosity through your whole career.
07:50	At one point I wanted to learn more about how the internet worked. I had to teach myself <a href="#">html</a> (Hypertext Markup Language). I had to pull out code books. I had to join online communities. I built a few websites. Most of them were awful but what I learnt from that experience was an ability to leverage curiosity to understand how things plug together and I continue to use that expertise today.
08:16	At one point in my career I was the sales and marketing director of an early e-commerce start-up in Australia called <a href="#">Wishlist.com.au</a> . If you remember back to web 1.0 most of them crashed and burned. Wishlist didn't and it was the curiosity that we had in Wishlist that enabled us to survive. All of our competitors were collapsing around us and what we were doing is asking ourselves really hard questions about how we could make this business survive. It turned out that we were too early for e-commerce in Australia.

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08:53	But the capabilities we had in terms of websites, data bases of products, warehouses actually proved to be perfect for fulfilment of loyalty programs and other peoples commerce and so that business survived. So retain your curiosity and keep working forward. Learning is fundamental. Look for the opportunity to stretch yourself and learn new skills. About halfway through my career I was given the chance to lead National Australia Banks' launch of its new corporate University.
09:29	And the key thing I took about this was the opportunity to learn about learning. All of a sudden I was stretched into how do I help 40,000 people learn their jobs more effectively? One if the key concepts I took away from this was the idea of mastery. Don't see skills as achieving a fixed level of attainment. See your sills as something where there is ever greater ability to improve and perform and to continue to grow and develop. Mastery is a fundamental concept and it's at the heart of all great performers.
10:05	So as you go forward there are plenty of great problems and challenges to solve in the world. The key opportunity that each of you have is to go out and create your own change and creating change in this world is surprisingly easy. Many years ago three friends and I who were passionate about sharing work out loud decided in a somewhat light hearted conversation that we wanted to establish an international Working Out Loud Week ( <a href="#">#WOLWEEK</a> ).
10:39	We wanted to advocate this concept to the whole planet. We didn't ask ourselves what authority was required to launch International Working Out Loud Week. We just went out and wrote some blog posts, shared it on social media and started. Our initial goal was that it would be a success if the three of us stuck it out for the whole week. Amazingly by the end of that first International WOLWeek we had over 3 thousand people around the world joining in with us and advocating the concept of WOL and sharing their work and practice.
11:13	It's now six years later and the last WOLWEEK we had had over 20,000 people involved in it and there are major WOL movements in Germany, in Spain, in Italy and Austria and all around the world. To see a little idea which began as three people having a bit of fun to actually reach out and have a global impact shows you the power of what you might be able to do if you start to tackle some change in this world.
11:42	And last but by no means least remember to have fun along the journey. Careers can feel like serious endeavours but it's actually the fun and the adventure and the achievement that you are really going to remember as you go through our career. And those experiences are ones you have with other people so think about how your networks are going to enable you to have fantastic fun in the adventures that lie ahead.
12:11	So thank-you very much for the time today. I wish you all the best with your career adventures and good luck.
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