IT Professional Interview Transcript

**Interviewer: Jake Kent**

**Interviewee: Scott Robertson**

**Interviewer:** Hi my name is Jake Kent and this is the IT interview for Introduction to IT assessment number 2. So, let’s get started. What is your name and what IT company do you work for?

**Interviewee:** My name is Scott Robertson and I work for Dropbox.

**Interviewer:** What’s Dropbox role in the IT industry?

**Interviewee:** So Dropbox primarily provides a storage space in the cloud, it’s a cloud storage provider, however the intent of Dropbox in, I guess, in it’s space is to enable collaboration between various parties, usually people within companies, but also between companies and other organizations as well.

**Interviewer:** Cool. So what is your role at Dropbox?

**Interviewee:** I am a Customer Experience agent, which is primarily product support.

**Interviewer:** Cool. Who are the different people you interact with in your work? Tells us a little bit about them.

**Interviewee:** So there are lots of people that I would interact with. There are other members of my team, so other product support representatives, which is split in two, there are advanced support agents who deal with escalated cases, and there are enterprise agents as well. We also deal cross functionally with other areas within customer experience, so for example there’s a team who’s entire job is customer education. We also then deal with members of the customer success team, who are in charge of managing the larger customers and dealing with their needs, any product feedback that they might have or things they want to see in the product. We also deal with our engineering team, which actually, our engineering team is the largest team, they’re the ones who built the product. And there are many many levels, many role of engineers that we have deal with as well. I think that’s the bulk of it, but then we also have marketing, PR, our legal teams.

**Interviewer:** What was your experience prior to working at Dropbox?

**Interviewee:** So prior to Dropbox I worked in the internal IT department of an advertising agency, so that was not dealing with any external customers. I also worked for Aarnet, which is the internet service provider for universities and other educational institutions, and that was product support with external customers. And right before Dropbox I worked for Winston the blinds company in their internal IT department, a mix of internal and external IT support.

**Interviewer:** Awesome. What are your current interactions with other IT professionals?

**Interviewee:** In my role as a product support representative for Dropbox when it comes to supporting customers that are reporting issues with the product, that most of the time is dealing with IT Admins. So the admins of IT departments in larger organizations. So that would be most of my interactions with IT professionals. Prior to that it would have been dealing with external vendors majoritively.

**Interviewer:** Cool cool. And what are your interactions with clients normally like?

**Interviewee:** So right now as being in support it’s normally clients writing in, calling in, or chatting in with a problem with the product. So, almost all of my interactions are based on product support where something isn’t working right, or feedback for how they would like the product to work, sending feature requests. It’s almost entirely contained in a support aspect - perspective.

**Interviewer:** Cool. How would you describe the working environment of Dropbox?

**Interviewee:** The working environment of Dropbox is one that I would call professional casual. It is a very supportive environment, it’s not overly professional, people aren’t walking around in suits except for the salespeople of course you do have to present a particular image when you are selling things. It’s also one where they do emphasize a work life, balance, it’s not the kind of place where if you are working, if your shift finishes at 5 or 6 and you are working until 10 every night, it’s not the kind of behaviour that gets rewarded. Yeah, it’s a healthy and very supportive work environment. Not ridiculously professional

**Interviewer:** Sounds nice. So, what types of issues do you face on a daily basis?

**Interviewee:** Because it’s, I guess, support, most of what I do is support work the issues that I face are support related. Usually it’s customer’s issues where the product isn’t working for them as expected, and investigating that. There’s a lot of back and forth with screenshots and such. But in saying that the tools that we have can also fail, I use a virtual desktop because I use a Mac but I have to support Windows customers as well. I have multiple virtual desktops One of them is through amazon, and every time there are updates for that I can’t log in. So, that’s something that is common as well, so it isn’t just our customer's tooli9ng, that we provide them fail sometimes our internal tools will fail. Also so we work in Sydney but Dropbox is a global organization which is based heavily in the United States, but also the next largest grouping of our employees being in Ireland, so if we have an issue that the Sydney team, our ability to support things isn't huge, we don’t have engineers in Sydney, we do also deal with what I like to call the Tyranny of Distance, and also time zones, where we will need to get an answer from someone but we will have to wait until they are online unless it’s desperately urgent, in which cause we will wake someone up in the middle of the night.

**Interviewer:** Damn, that wouldn’t be fun at all.

**Interviewee:** Probably not for them.

**Interviewer:** Cool. Which aspects of work do you normally spend the most time on?

**Interviewee:** Being support the most of my job is handling customer support requests. There are, there is project work that I get to do on the side as well, there will be meetings and there will be training. But the majority of it is supporting customers in their use of Dropbox as a product.

**Interviewer:** Are there any aspects of supporting customers that you find the most challenging?

**Interviewee:** Yes, there are a surprising number of areas where the product of Dropbox is not just the application that people download on their desktop. There is billing, there is the web interface, but I say the most challenging aspect is when the Dropbox application isn’t working because even inf you have a coding background and you know what’s going wrong on someone’s device. We can’t change it. So one of the most challenging aspects is, anything to do with the desktop application and dealing with, trying to find, what the issue is. I don’t have a coding background so me going in to look for a line of code is additionally difficult, because I have no idea what I’m looking at. Definitely the thing that is most challenging is when you see something that you’ve never seen before and it doesn’t quite make sense. With software it comes up quite a bit, it turns out.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any professional achievements that you are proud of?

**Interviewee:** I think getting employed at Dropbox in itself is a professional achievement I am proud of. I definitely suffered from impostor syndrome the first yet of working there, thinking “this doesn’t feel like a place that I should be working, why have they employed me?” But yes, overcoming impostor syndrome is actually a thing I am quite proud of, I do now feel like I fit and belong in this company.

**Interviewer:** That’s excellent.

**Interviewer:** Outside of that I was in charge of the deployment of the Windows operating system to devices in my first IT job, eventually – not once I had started the job, and figuring out how that worked with very little documentation, and also getting that onto bootcamped Mac OS devices. That’s something that I’m also very proud of.

**Interviewer:** That does sounds like an achievement.

**Interviewee:** It was not straight forward. The internet was helpful but not so helpful.

**Interviewer:** Does working at Dropbox encourage you to learn more about the cloud and storage spaces?

**Interviewee:** I would say so. I was already an avid user of the cloud prior to working at Dropbox. But yeah, everything that Dropbox does; so initially Dropbox once upon a time used to host all of its, all of its storage space was hosted in Amazon’s AWS, and just the process of moving into our own internal storage, like that does pique my interest and that does you know lead to me then looking up a bit more about how it works, or customers asking “where is my data stored?” Yeah, it does promote, at least to me, wanting to know more about how it all works.

**Interviewer:** Do you use the skills and practices you’ve gained at work for your home life?

**Interviewee:** Yeah to an extent. Just the general working in IT support, in every house or apartment I’ve lived in I feel like I have taken it upon myself to set up the home network. I have a network area storage unit that, again is something that, knowing and having an IT background, makes, like, there’s no jargon that when you go into the settings for all of these things it’s not like “I have no idea what that is”, everything that I see makes sense to some extent. And then obviously as I’m sure anyone who works in IT is familiar with. When other members of your family get the slightest whiff of “ooo you’re an IT professional”, you are frequently bombarded with questions about “how do I do this? How do I do that?” So I don’t necessarily know if that’s a positive. You do feel obliged to help your family and friends but you are also kind of doing it for free, but it is nice to help people. It’s just that I don’t have the problems specifically that sometimes saying no to people when they ask too much, I guess it’s something that some people may need to work on.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, definitely. Do you have any future IT goals that you are working towards?

**Interviewee:** Yes. So I don’t see myself working in customer, in a customer facing role, to the day I retire. So one thing I would like to get into is working on our product launches, working in teams that work between engineering and customer experience to communicate new roll-outs of products and to prepare, basically to prepare people in my role to support new features that come out. Which historically there have been things that have been rolled out which we then have customers writing in about, but we’re like “oh no we don’t know what this is. We just heard about this this morning.” So product launch and readiness, which still qualifies as an IT role, product operations, project management is where I see myself working towards.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Can you share an example of the work you do that best captures the essence of the IT industry?

**Interviewee:** Oh that’s very broad, the entire IT industry. I think a lot of people when they think of IT they do think of, you know, they think of the experience that is portrayed in like the IT Crowd, calling helpdesk. People don’t think of IT and they think of network managers or systems admins, they literally think of support people. The nerdy IT guy, you know the, of those, Nerds 2 You, those sort of businesses. That’s what people think of when they think of IT. So I guess, we have customers that for whatever reason their team gets downgraded because of a billing issue, I don’t know if it necessarily captures the whole essence of the IT industry, but just the sense of like thanks and relief that customers then portray when we are able to fix something for them. They’re then able to plod along and then I don’t hear from them for 6 months. I think that, captures an essence of the IT industry. Maybe also the sense that people only really think of IT when something is wrong. And the hallmark of any good IT provider, or any sort of IT operation, is people not knowing you’re there. People not really thinking about IT, which it is in and of itself, is a good thing because people only tend to speak up when there’s something wrong and they’re complaining. Also potentially a negative thing if, when it comes time for IT departments to want to upgrade things, and it’s like “oh but everything is working”, like it’s easier to justify spending lots of money on something when it’s broken. I guess it’s a double edged sword… I guess every sword has two edges, I don’t know the saying. But you know, like there are two sides to it, but yeah, that relief and thankfulness when things go back to working and you don’t hear from them for 6 months is at least from my perspective, I think that captures at least part of the essence of the IT industry.

**Interviewer:** Definitely. Well, thank you for letting me interview today.

**Interviewee:** You’re very welcome.

**Interviewer:** I’ll let you get back to work.

**Interviewee:** Only if you have to.