## Interview Transcript

[Brent]

Alright John, welcome mate, we are the Meme Team were studying at RMIT university. Thanks for joining us and thanks for being an interviewee candidate.  
  
First off, do you want to introduce yourself mate, tell us who you are, where you’re from, what you do?  
  
[John]

Yeah, no problem. So, my name is John, been working as a junior systems admin for a little over a year and a half now. So basically, the company I work for is an MSP, a managed service provider so companies contract my company to basically be their hands-on IT company. So, whether it's you know software is not working something like hardware wise isn't working or what have you, they call us up and we basically kind of go to bat for them so yeah.

[Brent]

What are some of the most common problems within your field?  
  
[John]

User error. I would say 90% of the stuff is going to be user error, No. Honestly it's gonna be big patches, like when Windows, Microsoft, when somebody does patching through OS or software. I know like right away I think like right when I started they were trying to make Microsoft was making the transition from Skype for business to Teams and like, nobody, Teams were so bad like, in its early form so a lot of people are having issues with that. So, I would say day to day it's going to be typically like you know. Basically, from the customer's point of view, it's going to be, you know, yesterday it was working, but today it's not. Why? What is that? So, it's lot of troubleshooting, a lot of repetition. I do a lot of server work, server maintenances, deployment, stuff like that. Do network migration, like a company will move into a new office, so move their entire server and their entire network, all the workstations, everything. Yeah, UAP’s, wireless access point. Stuff like that, and we move it all to a new building. So it really keeps me busy. there's a lot of different stuff to do so no two days are the same for sure.

[Brent]

Yeah for sure. What’s the most rewarding part about your job?

[John]

Probably closing a ticket and saying I'm done with something. Most rewarding I, honestly, I like helping people like you know when someone comes in like hey like we got this crazy problem like, and you have to find a way to get from whatever their problem is you have to find a way to get to a solution. So you know it's it might take you know 1/2 hour. It might take a couple days, might be a long \*\*\* project. Sorry. it might be a long project that goes, you know it starts off is one thing and all of a sudden like OK, well then, we're going to get this, had to buy one of these you know. Not to get too specific but things can evolve and it's like at the end it's just like that sense of accomplishment like you help somebody, you know, and especially when it's like, even like a small team you know they're just trying to do their jobs and you help make people get paid to do their jobs. It's good stuff.

[Brent]

That’s what you want. Thanks for that mate. So, Michael?

[Michael]

Good day John, how you going? Is it working now?

[John]  
Yeah

[Michael]

Cool. Obviously just got a few questions of me to ask here, but, during your studies, did you find a particular field that grabbed your attention more than one of the others, say like game development, web development, or IT solutions moving forward in that field of study.

[John]

So full transparency, I did not go to school for IT. I started as like an intern basically. So it was kind of a who you know, kind of thing. My fiancé was working and that actually the company that hired me was their IT people, so they found out what I had been doing. Just you know what I what I've been doing. I've built a lot of computers. I've done a lot of networking stuff for my parents in my own home. You know, I did a couple skills tests and they were really impressed. They brought me on as an intern, so I started out just doing answering phones and just fixing computers that people brought into the shop and a year and a half later, I'm doing a bunch of service stuff, I'm working with like gold managed customers for whatever issues they have. So Full disclosure, no schooling man. It just kind of seeing where the path takes me, but right now it's like, you know, now it's handling like the higher tier customers and their daily needs, and also onboarding new clients too. and that's my favourite part actually, 'cause you know you inherit some people's crappy network and then you have to make it work for them, You know, so that's kind of that's kind of fulfilling.

[Michael]

Sounds fun, sounds fun. So in the current field, obviously you said your favourite parts, obviously, making people's networks work, but what would be the most challenging along the path you've gone in relation to daily basis and having to learn new stuff?

[John]

The hardest part is probably that initial email or phone call or whatever, like the hardest, is probably on site like hey, why doesn’t this work? You don't have time to Google, you don’t have time to ask, they're asking you straight up face to face like why is this not working? That's probably one of the most challenging things, but like day to day it's probably you fixing something and the client breaking it again. Swear to God it happens weekly man. I just spent hours fixing this and you guys broke it again. I don't know how, but it's, you know, it's a lot of repetition. Eventually down the road it's like oh actually I remember doing this and this, so it makes it a lot easier. But yeah, user error and operator error is definitely, probably the most taxing annoying thing for sure.

[Michael]

I can understand that. In your current line, do you use any cloud services? And if you do, what cloud services do you use?

[John]

Um, so actually our company as it is, we don't, I mean, we have our own cloud backups, but the only thing that really worry about is Azure probably and just mostly, it's just troubleshooting it for other people like a lot of people their switching. Drop box is huge, ever since everyone started working remote. You know, Dropbox, One Drive, Google Drive all that kind of stuff is huge now so a lot of people they just kind of said here, figure this out and so we had to kind of walk them through it. I mean I've used Google Drive but I had to learn Dropbox, One Drive, Azure, all that kind of stuff. You can learn on the fly, but it takes a little bit for sure.

[Michael]

That probably it for me. I had one more question, but it was more going down where you feel cloud services would be going, but as you said, you don't really use them in your current field at the moment, so I'll pass it over to Leo.

[Leonard]

Hi, hey John. You said you didn't go to school, but my question was about if you had an IT goal, career goal and I was thinking more in line of if you're in school what you're aiming towards but say when you first started in the IT field, what would you say was your career goal if you had one?

[John]

I think it would definitely be along the lines of like the network migration and set up, a server deployment. That kind of thing because that's like the nuts and bolts of a network to be able to lay the groundwork for that and starting literally with just like a blank server, and making, it's basically just the canvas like you can make everything in like filling out a whole Active Directory, getting all the raids setup for backups and everything like, just starting from scratch and literally just building from the ground up, I really enjoy doing that. The network migration, like it's very tedious and you actually have to obviously make sure everything is right as it was before so that everything is working once they get to the new office location. But that's probably my favourite, It’s probably the server deployment and network migration and setups.

[Leonard]

Is that like the physical part of it?

[John]

Yeah, that's literally like, you have the wire rack and everything you know you got all the different switches and it's like well you got all these computers how you going to get Internet so you have to work with the different people as the buildings being constructed. Like the electricians and networking guys, cable guys, you're working with everybody and you're making you know that whole office building have their network. So it's definitely not for everybody, but it's pretty interesting to me, Yeah.

[Leonard]

And just my other question was, have you found yourself moving into different IT fields than you had originally set as your goal? But I think you've kind of stayed in kind of the same field, right?

[John]

Yeah, I think the only thing that's really changed that I really wasn't expecting is, just because everyone was working from home and I'm in the US, which I didn't say that, so we are coronavirus ground zero. So everyone is working from home, so we had to do all this on site work but we weren't allowed to go onto sites for a long time so we had to learn how to do things that we did in person remotely with people who didn't know how to do that, which was really, really difficult. But so we’ve actually switched to where we are about probably 5050 now between remote work and physical on site, so that's a little bit different, because you know, it's easy just to go in and do something for somebody, you know. But having to walk them through something like, if you don't have Internet how are you supposed to remote in. So, you literally have to walk them through something like on the phone, and that was, yeah.

[Leonard]

Oh wow, difficult, right. Yeah, OK that was my questions thanks. I'll pass it on to Steven now.

[Steven]

Hi John, nice to meet you. So my questions are more based around the future of your career. First one would be is there any technologies, they may be ones that are in development or ones that you could foresee that you think could help enhance your job currently?

[John]

Yeah, and actually this is something that we just went through. So, we just on boarded a very, very large client, I think they have about 120 workstations, 2 servers and just tons and tons of other fun things. They have a lot of people that travel a lot, so they have tablets that are part of the network and all that kind of crap. So basically, they were with another IT company and they switched over to us and you would think that a lot of this stuff is pretty easy to transition but for some reason or another there's no easy way to switch. Even like pulling antivirus’s off, like you have to run like PowerShell commands and \*\*\*\* like that. Sorry. And it's just, removing software from one company and transitioning to another, which it happens a lot like you know what like, times are tough, people can't afford one company, or they can't afford us, so they're going to somebody else. So people are trying to actively find, you know, room for IT in their budget because you have to have it. People can't work remotely without IT support. But when we were on boarding this client like it was just so difficult to kind of just get everybody’s software from the other company off and getting everything from our company on there at least as far as like remote access, antivirus, stuff like that. The different software that we have just attracts like, OK, this computer hasn't been on-line like what's going on with it, it has diagnostics, it has all the hardware stats and stuff like that. It sounds really boring, I know that some of the IT stuff is not as exciting as I know you guys will think about like app development, software development, but yeah. That's just something that If we could find a nice way to transition all that stuff, that would be that would be the dream for me.

[Steven]

Yeah, well it sounds tough. So, this is a sort of typical job interview question I guess, but I'll go there anyway. Do you see yourself in the same career path in five years? Same line of work.

[John]

Uh, I'd stay in IT, but at the same time, like, I know that just because people's needs are evolving too, like companies, I think, probably 80% of our clients right now are still working remotely. I mean 'cause still a lot of the US is still shut down, I don't know how much you guys pay attention in the news, but I mean it's still a lot of people that are still working from home. But I think just because more people are relying on their computers, now more than ever, I think I ideally in 5 years, I would probably want to be more into like the client acquisition kind of thing like getting more people to sign up with our company like you know that's kind of the, maybe the people person in me, like I enjoy working and helping people so that would probably be something that's more tailored towards my own personality and my own interests.

[Steven]

Well, thank you for your answers. I'll pass you off to Thomas.

[Thomas]

Hello John.

[John]

Hey Tom.

[Thomas]

Generalized questions, as everyone else has thrown at you. Did you have a type of technology or a person within your field of IT that inspired you towards it? Or is it simply something that you felt the need to do? Is it like, yeah, how are you driven by this?

[John]

I think it's just, it starts out really simple like the first few computers I built, maybe about 10 years ago. It just starts as something simple, something basic and just seeing, kind of, you know, everyone's like, oh, how did you do that? It's like it's really not that hard like it's actually kind of fun. I enjoyed it, just troubleshooting. I've always liked the critical thinking, problem solving, and stuff and it actually was one of my high school teachers, actually, we wrote our own website in HTML code, like by hand. And just doing that and that is actually the same, coincidentally the same time when they built the computer, I think from then I was always kind of interested. And then I got an opportunity with this company and I've just kind of honed it sense. But yeah, I think we're writing that first website with the, back like I think in my Senior High School, it was is really exciting. I mean I never ended up going into coding, but that's kind of the first. I was like, wow, I like this. This is real stuff, this is going to be big.

[Thomas]

Yeah, that's really cool dude. Beyond that, is there any specified skills, you mentioned coding and critical thinking and that, do you find any specific skills of prevalent within your day-to-day work that you would find a necessity to IT work.

[John]

Patience. Patience, number 1 hands down. I think just being able to think objectively, because you're going to be presented with problems, you're going to be handed info that may be incomplete or incorrect. People might say like hey, I don't think my motherboards working, it’s like no you just unseated your RAM dumb, dumb. You have to take everything people say with a grain of salt that it's going to be, basically, one of my bosses actually even said, like when someone calls and gives you an issue, just assume that they're lying. Just try to figure it out, think objectively and just try to start with your point A and just kind of troubleshoot and working through that. And then, I mean, once you do that kind of stuff for a while, I mean it's just, you start, your mind just starts like the person still describing the issue, or like describing the problem and you're already kind of working through it. It's like, OK, well, it can't be the router, you know your kind of working through, OK, OK, well maybe you know. you just keep kind of thinking of different scenarios and I mean that honestly, just constantly being patient and understanding people and then also just you know, being willing to troubleshoot and be wrong.

[Thomas]

Really, that's awesome. Yeah, I found that really insightful. Thank you. I'm gonna pass you over to Lochie now. Thank you for your time.

[Lochlann]

Hey man, so what I want to know, do you have any IT projects which you want to work towards? Whether it's like for a career or for personal reasons that you've kind of been able to work towards in your current job? Sorry if that doesn't make any sense.

[John]

Ah, like projects within, like that I'm doing for companies or stuff that I'm doing personally or what are you thinking here?

[Lochlann]

Well, either way, like for companies or just personally like, say if, like I don't know you're setting up like a personal server for yourself or something like that, like at home, or anything like that, that has helped your career.

[John]

So, the owner of my company and the manager I report to, they both have their own media servers at home, so they each have their own dedicated Plex server. So, they have their own network, and they have like, simply to say, that's probably one of the perks. Like I think this was one of Brents questions that he was kind of showing me. It's like one of the perks. You have access to software; you have access to hardware. You've got access to things that most people probably don't, and I mean it's obviously, for most of us, either really cheap or for free. So, I actually did pick up a server about a week ago and I've been kind of working it just to just to kind of customize it for my own house. So yeah, that's weird that you ask that.

[Lochlann]

And also, what was the hardest point in your career and how did you overcome it?

[John]

Hardest point, hardest point. OK, so this, I don't know how much you guys work with like servers and live networks, but we had one of our bigger clients right downtown here in the city and we basically, long story short, we had to unplug their server. And we had about like 40 seconds to do what we needed to do before we had to plug it back in and just knowing that their whole network, while they're still working, we had to make this switch over from the old server to the new server. And then just not having this amount of time like, it was just a lot of pressure. And you know that it's like everything is kind of riding on that, and I was by myself. So, I mean, yeah, there's situations like that where you know, like you're working with somebody, especially if it's a larger company, there's a lot at stake, whether it be time being a factor or if you break their stuff, like you are held accountable. So, it's just kind of having those kind of pressure situations and I mean, it would be cliche to say don't let it get to you, but it's gonna get you. But just get the job done and do it right.

[Lochlann]

Sounds rough. That was the only two that I had. I’ll pass it back to Brent

[Brent]

Yeah, well on behalf of the Meme Team. We would like to thank you for joining us. Even just in joining us, you obviously displayed your position as a systems admin pretty well by troubleshooting our call problem.

[John]

If you want one piece of advice, no matter what field you’re in, if something is not working, turn it off and turn it back on. It sounds so stupid, it's so cliche. I'm telling it will solve like 70% of your problems.

[Brent]

Yeah, well, we'll take that on advice on board. And yeah, we appreciate your time with us. It's been good mate. It's been really insightful and yeah, hopefully it will go a long way to helping us learn and do well in this uni course. So, thank you very much. We appreciate it.

[John]

Goodluck guys, take it easy.