**Interview with an IT professional by Kanav Atri**

QUESTION 1: Please tell us about your I.T work and what do you do?

Answer: My particular role is portfolio manager. Building credit systems here at Optus. The portfolio manager is generally the top party responsible for those particular systems. In my portfolio we have typically 40 to 50 applications but if we talk about what we use day to day we probably use closer to 20 apps, when we talk about really critical apps that are needed 24\*7 and need to get regularly updated we are looking at closer to 10 main core applications. My role is with in core systems within Optus. Core systems are mainly split up between customer care, ordering and provisioning systems and my systems handle the backend the billing etc. My job in particular is responsible for any ongoing issues, maintenance of those systems. My job is to make sur we have the right support in place, right processes in place and right monitoring in place. We manage that by working with the support team. Interacting with different systems and also interacting with the vendors who provide these systems as well, planning with them, ongoing support, capacity management etc.

Question 2: Please tell us about the industry you work in?

Answer: I have been in the telco industry for over 10 years. Worked at probably 6 different telco providers. I have always been in the billing area. Telco systems in general, when we talk about IT systems are very complicated systems. If you compare them to the most of the other IT systems, generally most of other IT companies have CRN systems but the major difference is that the services that we are providing to our customers is also provisioned and maintained and serviced by our systems. The Telcom systems are much bigger as we are doing everything from managing the customer to billing to managing the service and the product you receive as well.

Question 3: What sort of knowledge or skills one would need to work in this area?

Answer: Depends on the area you want to go for, typically speaking it starts off with coding, understanding logic and the type of decisions to be made. Once you start off from those coding skills you can go to all assort of areas such as functional design, data hub, business analysis, data warehousing etc.

Question 4: What sort of external stake holders you interact with on daily basis and can you tell us more about the type of interactions you have with them?

Answer: I would say there are specifically three different groups when you talk about companies out of Optus, you can have outsourced staff, second would-be vendors who provide us applications and we would get support from them. When you have minor issues or L2 level work our support staff would do the job but when we have L3 level work or major issues that’s when we will approach vendors and they would provide us the support that we require, third party are usually suppliers such as suppliers of software.

Question 5: Do you also have to interact with out IT departments within the company or collaborate with them to work on projects? What type of IT other IT teams you would interact with on daily basis internally?

Answer: Yeah, that would be large part of my job. The departments within IT area are divided into different I.T sectors depending on different systems, roles and responsibilities. When there is a new product rolling out typically it would touch a lot of different systems ,its going to touch everything from customer service through to marketing to billing to digital portal etc so we work with other teams in alignment and make sure we all have the same goals and inputs ,outputs etc .

Question 6: What aspects of your role you find most challenging?

Answer: In my area its more about live performance of the system, to make sure usage is getting recorded correctly and on time. People are receiving usage notifications on time, people are receiving their bills correctly, we are debiting people on time etc. All of this is to be maintained and kept up to date 24 hours. Also, upgrading systems, patching systems always working on finding better ways to improve performance of the systems.

Question 7: Finally, can you share the work you do that best captures with essence of the IT industry?

Answer: IT is just creating products in itself. Things like Netflix or Stan then the content itself. Today tech companies can grow exponentially because they can create products pretty much out of anything. That is also what we also see at Optus. If we look at very basic such as network towers and all the different types of products that people may want, we can design it e.g., we got shared data plans etc. You can just make up anything that you think will suit the customer and you can just go ahead and build it.