M – Michael Hanrahan

H – Hamish

Y – Yusuf

H – Welcome Michael thank you for joining us

M – Happy to be here

H – first question that we've got for you is if you could tell us about your IT work, what do you do?

M – Ok what do I Do, it varies on a day-to-day basis a lot of what I do is uh, is uh customising and extending software to meet customer requirements so there's working with customers to build overall architectures, work out integrations of our systems and other people's systems and then also the implementation and helping manage the testing and the delivery of that software.

H – yep alright, so how did you get into that? Like how did you form into that. Did you start there?

M – I mean yeah, I pretty much came into this position straight out of uni. I guess I was doing more of a broad range of development more product stuff at the start, and then the customer implementation. And then that overtime, I got assigned to more and more and I quite like the work and then a few years ago there was the opportunity to specialise.

H – nice, tell us about the industry you work in, what is our industry.

M – what is our industry. I guess I work mainly in the telecommunications domain. So that's either network providers such as NBN or Telstra or something like that, also wholesalers that resell from them. Also, in enterprise things which can be a bit more complicated than your standard mobile network or whatever. And so yeah, it's a very technical and a lot of legacy, there's a lot of old systems that have been around for a while, that you need to work around that provides those sorts of challenges.

H – Perfect, so what other kinds of work do you have to do that you wouldn't expect doing.

M – I think the biggest thing is that there's a lot more not coding than coding. Once you add multiple people working together then there's a lot more overheads around coordination to really make sure that everyone's working together. My work doesn't override your work, because it's usually in the gaps in-between different peoples work where certain issues can arise so there's a lot of effort making sure everyone's moving and yeah progressing on the projects so that we make sure we get the delivery on time, because we you know the cause of a delay in let's say September could have been due to a decision made in march so there's a lot of are we doing the right thing, are we doing it at the right speed and that sort of stuff that is on-top of the actual development.

Y – Ok, thank you

H – so, who are the different kind of people that you interact with, tell us who you work with.

M – yeah so, I guess probably the main few groups are analysts who come up with the business requirements as opposed to the technical requirements they're usually working with the customer to work out the specific business requirements from an end-user perspective. There are architects who do a similar thing but work on more a technical view and usually are responsible for integrating between different systems and working out how we fit in the larger jigsaw of the larger architecture.

There's QA engineers or testers, who are really about making sure that their giving everyone the confidence that what you have built is to the requirements making sure the requirements are complete that we haven't not considered any use-cases or anything like that and building out the full test cases and making sure what comes out at the end is what was requested at the start. And the last big one is project managers who are very uh, well who are tasked with the overall delivery, keeping track of time, keeping track of resources and costs and things like that who are really focused on that side. Then there's also customers obviously, whenever there's technical things involved; a tricky technical problem sometimes its best explained to a customer and providing the different options to them and getting decisions based off that.

H – The next question kind of ties in, so who do you interact with the most out of those groups?

M – On a day-to-day basis it's probably the analysts or the testers when you're in the weeds doing the actual delivery there's a lot of, say you get given a feature to write the first half is dealing with the analysts and then getting towards the end its working with the testers making sure they understand everything. If they've got questions or whatever. It's probably those two they're probably the biggest group we deal with.

H – what are your interactions with clients or investors? How do you interact?

M - a lot of dealing with customers is really about putting things in a way that they'll understand, obviously we have technical expertise but if they're the customer they for what of a better term not that they don't care but, that's not what they do they care about their business they care about their end users. It's about putting it to them in frames of reference that they'll understand how it will impact the user and rather than specific technical things of "oh well this will make things go 5% faster", well this operator on this day in this situation is going to have to do this if we make this decision and are you ok with that. So, it's really about putting it in ways they'll understand, if you go too technical, we can scare them off.

H – yeah of course, and another kind of question. So, what do you spend the most time on in work?

M – yeah, it's a mix of design and the actual coding is probably the most time. It's always cheaper and less time consuming to fix a problem close to the start. So, we spend a lot of time thinking about what we're going to write and how components are going to fit together and how they are going to have knock-on effects. Because if you're going to code it then there's an amount of time there, there's making sure, we do things like code reviews so that once you've written we get other developers to review it, and if it has to be changed then that's time spent to review on it has also been wasted on other people's times on it. A lot of time is sitting thinking about what you're going to build and finding out ways to not build something because the best code is code that doesn't exist.

H – Perfect, so do you usually find this aspect the most challenging or is there other aspects?

M – I think probably other aspects are more challenging, and thankfully they happen less often, it's the trickier stuff of you do end up having maybe not on a small design level but on a larger almost architecture level. Where you have two systems that are essentially movable objects you know, you've got a project to run maybe there's an implementation of another system outside of your control and they've got a project to run designs and delivery's. So, negotiating that is probably the hardest part and ideally if we've done the design and architecture right at the start, then these sorts of things don't happen. But it inevitably does and those can be quite tricky to resolve and requires a lot of conversations and negotiations.

H – Alright perfect, finally last question, can you share an example of the work that you do that best captures the essence of the IT industry.

M – alright I'm going to have to think about that... Sure, I guess one of our earlier implementations for a customer, was around replacing a legacy system that wasn't necessarily working for them. It was actually Fax based, so they had issues where they would lose orders because they would fall down the back of the fax machine, but not just the fax based thing, there were errors in taking the fax forms and entering them into multiple different systems and then data would get unaligned so the implementation we did and one of the early ones I worked on, is we built a centralised system that would allow customers to directly interact with that and that information would flow through to all the different systems. Ensuring data integrity and that it would take a lot less time, end to end. And as a result, it allowed the customers to scale to have a lot more people working and manage the orders. As a result, it greatly increased the experience of the customer and I think having successful outcomes like that and really making a drastic transformation to the customers business is really good encapsulation of things.

H – Perfect, and we're done thank you!