**Nour**

Hi Ryan, thanks for coming in and having this interview with me. I'm going to tell you a bit about myself. My name is Nour, I'm a 19 year old Moroccan who lives in Morocco, and I'm doing an IT course in RMIT. This is my first year in RMIT. So I'm studying remotely due to COVID. And hopefully, once the borders will open, I'll be able to be on campus.

**Ryan**

Perfect. Yeah. So my name is Ryan Ryan worsfold. I am a technical architect with Zendesk. So I suppose that makes me a nice IT professional. Yeah, and just happy to answer any questions you've got. Obviously, I'm based in Melbourne, Australia, so we're quite a distance away. But yeah, ask away.

**Nour**

Nice to meet you, Ryan. I was asked to interview an IT specialist as part of an assignment for an introductory topic in my IT degree, to get a sense of the, you know, day to day work in the IT industry. So if you could spare up to 30 minutes of your valuable time to talk about this. That will be awesome. Also, your comments will be incorporated into our final reports. We're good now.

**Ryan**

Yeah.

**Nour**

Alright. Perfect. So what kinds of work do you have to do?

**Ryan**

Yeah, so I was thinking about this, essentially, the best way I can describe what I do to sort of zoom out and look at the company that I work for. So I work for a company called Zendesk, which is a software as a service, you sort of buy a license, and then you can use it online. And then my role specifically sits inside the professional services team, which is, you know, ultimately, small customers that don't have a lot of requirements, they can kind of come in, you know, Mom and Dad operations, they can come in, and they can buy a license for the software, and they can just get started straight away, bigger companies or people with more complex sort of setups that want to incorporate us into their, you know, their day to day activities. They often have other systems in play, they've got other setups, you know, procedures that they need to follow. And so there's usually a professional services resource in most companies that goes about sitting in the middle and says, you know, we go in, and we say, how do you, you know, what do you currently do? Where do you want to get to what kind of things do you want to bring across, and then we're the experts in our product. So we will tell them, this is how you would use this, this is how you would set it up. And if necessary, in certain situations, you know, we can extend the product beyond what it could normally do, you know, build apps and that kind of stuff. And so my role specifically is technical architect, which is, yeah, essentially in that in the more technical space around if they've got questions around, single sign on or on development, or those kinds of more technical things above and beyond just using the product.

**Nour**

And how long have you been in this industry?

**Ryan**

I have been probably three, three and a half, four years now. So I was originally a developer way, way back when. And then I transitioned, I've had a bit of a weird career path, I transitioned to digital marketing for, you know, three, four years. And then thankfully, because I really love what I'm doing now, I was able to transition back into the kind of the role I'm doing at the moment. So it's been a bit of a ride, if I'm being honest. But it's I think, if anything, it kind of showed me this is really where I want to be.

**Nour**

Was it easy for you to find a job at first when you graduated?

**Ryan**

I became self employed when I first got out of university. So I graduated with a marketing degree. But then I went in, I set up my own development house with a friend of mine, and we sort of did that for two, three years, just building a business, which was rewarding, but incredibly tough. And it's obviously not for everybody, but that was really where I cut my teeth. So you know, we don't in my role necessarily develop, you know, like code that much, you often don't need to be IT professional, but it's given me a good background that I use pretty much every day.

**Nour**

What are all the different people you interact with in your work? Tell us more about them?

**Ryan**

Yeah, um, what do you mean, like my team or the the other teams sitting around us

**Nour**

In general, all the teams?

**Ryan**

Yeah. Okay. So like I said, we're professional services. So we sit in, I'm trying to try to make this interesting, but I'll just go ahead and spill it off. You know, we send the posts outside. So it's always ones that bought the product, or the portable licenses, and then they're trying to it's really, oftentimes Not always, but it's usually once they're already sorted. They haven't started with the product yet, and they're looking at how to use it. How do they make it work for them, and so we sort of sit in the middle of a few different teams. There are Pre sales and sales. So the ones that obviously go out and marketing upfront disorder, the jazz, so we don't deal with them a lot. Pre sales and sales are the ones that sort of sell people on the product and get them across the line. And so my interaction with them is usually in the case of when we're handing, they're handing a project over to us, what our customers don't want us to have to repeat themselves and things get lost in translation. So we'll normally have a hand on the front, the sales team saying this is what they're trying to achieve. This is what we told them we can do. And then they kind of hand us the reins and on the go. And then we've got so then yeah, we usually do the project. And then on the other side of it, once we kind of hand back over once we're done and dusted, they're up and running, everybody's happy. We'll have two other teams that sort of deal with the customer from then on. So we've got advocacy or support. So they're like if somebody is running into an issue, maybe there's a bug in the software, they can call up, or they can chat or they can email him. And that's that team. And so we have a lot of crossover, obviously, it doesn't always it's not a clean finish often with, you know, our project finishing and starting to deal with advocacy, it's often a bit of gray or in the middle. And then there's a team called success, which I'm sure it's called different things in different businesses. But for us, they're, they're responsible for sort of taking on the customer after our engagement. And they'll just make sure that they don't want them to contract, they want them to grow, they want to use more of the product, they want them to be successful. And so they have regular meetings with them. And so we ultimately have to hand it over to them and say, This is what we've done. This is where they go in, you know, and try to try to give some of that knowledge again, so we don't break the chain so that from the customer's point of view, they're getting a pretty seamless experience that they're not looking at.

**Nour**

That’s really interesting, actually, what aspects of your work do you spend the most time on? Tell us more about this?

**Ryan**

Yeah, it's tough. Like as part of my role, I suppose I do a lot of different things. But the probably the largest piece of that would be just an analysis, a super generic sort of statement, but it's consulting for the most part. So like I said, we will, it's a bit of a soft skill. But you know, we'll go in and as part of our job is extracting those requirements. So they come and they want to use the product successfully. And, you know, we can't, it's seems so simple, you just say I'll tell us what you want. But often customers don't know what they want. And so a part of the skill is to ask them what they want, but also trying to dig deeper and say, Okay, well, you know, you're telling us you want this, but is that because of this? What are you trying to get at? Why are you moving to this new system? What do you want to get out of that? And what will you consider success? And then ultimately, so that's sort of the initial part. And then ongoing is sort of managing, you know, throughout the whole engagement, you mentioned the customer, you're trying to set expectations with them. Because there's always the ever looming budget question around, you know, ultimately, we have a contract, so we're going to make sure they know what they're getting the time. So yeah, I'd say probably, that's it, I'd love to jazz it up, it is actually really fun work. Because as much as it's a generic sounding thing, consulting, no one knows what you mean, when you say that it's, it's different with every customer, it's quite a skill involved with it. And it can be really fun. It's almost like problem solving.

**Nour**

And which aspects of your work do you find the most challenging?

**Ryan**

I would say, probably for me, I think in technology in general software, particularly the not only the landscape, I know, like I remember this from university the talking about in some industries don't move I've been you know, in my time marketing, I've been industries like flooring and mining, and they they move, but they move a lot more slowly that technology doesn't change in something like software, particularly in a progressive software company. You know, not only is the product constantly expanding, and we're expected to know the ins and outs of it ultimately, you know, they'll ask us a question, we have to be the experts. But also the sort of the digital landscape is changing too. So, you know, not only is the product changing, it's changing to fit an environment. You know, that's what the customers want. So you're always trying to keep on top of those two different things constantly. And I put it in the bucket, it is a challenge because you don't you can't just do your work. You can't just put your head down, do your work, you actually have to upskill yourself constantly. You have to be you know, if you're not moving forward, you're being left behind. But it's also probably genuinely The most rewarding. Part of it is that you never I've been bought into roles before in other industries and I don't really ever get born into software in it, because it's always changing, and you're just trying to keep your head above water, you know?

**Nour**

Finally, can you share an example of the work you do that best captures the essence of the IT industry?

**Ryan**

Good question. I think, you know, when I think about it, a quintessential thing for me, I've kind of covered it already. But it would all be around the project. You know, I know, this is not how we got, we've got other things that go on. But it's really the thing that captures what I do. And, you know, and catching up, we've got ultimately two very different teams, we've got the team on our side, which is made up of you know, this. So I don't know, just for a bit of context, I suppose there's someone like me, usually on a bigger project, someone a bit more technical, you've also got, we call them engagement managers, but it's similar to project managers, someone that controls the scope and the money and, and often the discussions, and then you'll have a consultant, which is where I started, which is really great role to start, and then it and that they're the people that do this are the hands on work. So that's like really knowing the product, and knowing how to translate requirements. So that'll be on our side. And then, you know, what you find on the other side is just always different. So we work with people from and this would be true across a lot of businesses, but we work with sometimes, you know, on the other side of the zoom, or on the other side of the table is just one person, and they're talking to the entire business. You know, and you're dealing with it, it's kind of intimate and you build reports that are completely different than when we do enterprise engagements where you get in the meeting, and there's 20 people on the other side of the desk, you know, and super specialized. Yeah, and just and just moving through kind of like I talked before around extracting requirements, you can figure them, we ultimately, there's always an element of accountability. So there's a fairly large portion of documentation, solution design and documentation, which again, sounds boring, but it actually can be pretty interesting. And one thing for sure, is it's absolutely necessary, because you know, when you've got a lot of moving parts, ultimately need something to point back at and say that's, you know, that's what we were trying to achieve this was the measures of success. Yes. So I don't know if that answers that question. But that's kind of what I think of when I think of that the quintessential piece of work that I do be sort of an end to end project

**Nour**

Fair to say . Ryan, thanks for joining me and for providing all this information. This is really helpful and eye opening. I appreciate your time. I know you're a busy guy. So taking the minutes to spend with me was very appreciated.

**Ryan**

Oh, you're very welcome.