**IT Work**

For our choice of an IT professional, we decided to interview Glenn Goodwin - Executive Director of Information, Communication and Technology at the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Glenn is also an advisor on two advisory boards for the Australian Cyber Security Centre and RMIT Centre for Cyber Security Research and Innovation.



*Glenn Goodwin’s LinkedIn Profile:* [*https://www.linkedin.com/in/glenngoodwinau/*](https://www.linkedin.com/in/glenngoodwinau/)

We conducted a half-hour interview with Glenn, asking a range of questions about his role, work, interactions, challenges, and insights. It was an extremely valuable experience, having the opportunity to gain first-hand impressions from an executive role in IT, as opposed to managerial, senior, or entry-level roles.

Glenn works in the Corporate ICT industry, which is primarily focused on maintaining and improving the ICT components of a company. The overview of his role and duties was extremely broad and intensive. Firstly, he is involved in every IT component in an organisation, whether this would be networking, enterprise solutions, software development, procuring devices etc. As he put it informally, *“If it’s got a plug in it, it’s my problem.”* Therefore, it is necessary that he has a foundational understanding of all aspects of ICT to perform his role effectively.

When enquired about his primary focus in his duties, he answered “Can I say all of the above?” signifying just how important every aspect of his duties is.

One of his main duties he expanded upon involves managing human resources, resource allocation, and budgeting for the IT department. He must ensure his department delivers on their outcomes, have the capacity and resources to deliver effectively, and are heading in the right strategic direction. He also has staff run day-to-day projects and sets daily goals/tasks for the teams to achieve. Glenn mentioned however, that he leaves the decision-making of how they achieve these goals to his teams and their managers.

Stakeholder management and engagement are another key duty Glenn’s role spends majority of its time on. Glenn advised that at a senior level, good relationship management is a must-have to succeed. His primary interactions are with internal stakeholders. The nature of the Corporate ICT industry focuses most interactions with other teams within the organisation and ensure the delivery of their needs and vision. These interactions are broad and typically address any IT issues or requirements these teams have.

However, it was specified that within any organisation, there are generally 4 individuals to prioritise and ensure their satisfaction. Number one is the CEO, an immediate priority to attend whenever there is a tech issue. Glenn highlighted the urgency and importance of these cases, saying *“I’ll go heaven and earth to get his laptop working.”* He went further to explain that if the CEO is unhappy with their performance, then the jobs of the IT department are at risk. Number two is the CFO, who is responsible for the overall finances and budget of the entire company. The IT department spends a significant amount of money and resources, therefore an uneasy relationship with the CFO is ill-advised. It can potentially lead to not having an approved budget, resulting in the IT department not delivering on their outcomes, and eventually even the loss of their jobs. Number three was the Corporate Service Manager or whoever the IT department reports to. In Glenn’s current job, he reports directly to the CEO. Surprisingly, number four was the Executive Assistant (EA) to the CEO. Glenn has personally witnessed in his previous roles, individuals losing their jobs because the EA could not print their documents or could not perform other tasks due to tech issues. When the EA is unhappy, they complain to the CEO, and when the CEO is unhappy, this can again lead to people losing their jobs.

Typically, there are not any interactions with clients or investors in the Corporate ICT industry. External stakeholders that the role primarily interacts with are external providers such as telecommunication companies or website developers and other IT professionals. These stakeholders are particularly important to deliver solutions that the team do not specialise in and/or cannot deliver themselves. One of the difficulties Glenn faces for this task, is ensuring that products/services he contracts and purchases, are being delivered at a cost at value.

Firstly, this means finding good providers, pay them fairly, and ensure they will deliver effectively. This requirement necessitates maintaining a balance between holding providers to account and being lenient. An aggressive approach with providers can lead to them cutting corners and delivering lower quality products and services. This type of approach is typically avoided since providers can do the same in reverse and therefore impede the capacity for the IT teams to deliver outcomes.

On an individual basis with other IT professionals, Glenn’s success managing these relationships is attributed to building trust, networking, and fair treatment over the course of many years. A concept and strategy Glenn advises to employ is to be positive and encouraging to these IT professionals. He explains that most IT professionals do not react well when pushed too much. This can often lead to them delivering less/lower quality service than expected. By being more positive, encouraging, and playing to their egos, Glenn has had many successes leading these IT professionals to deliver a greater product and service.  
  
Due to the nature of the role, the tools typically used are HR/management related. The tools used to achieve all these goals and tasks are primarily the Microsoft Office Suite. Word is used for writing up documents and reports, Outlook for emails and Teams for Meetings. Collaborative tools, task tracking tools, and project management tools are also deployed such as Azure DevOps. Glenn occasionally springs from different tools depending on the nature of the task but he mostly avoids any task-based tools like Visio or Visual Studio which his teams often use.

When asked what the most challenging aspect of his role was, Glenn answered the following. *"The natural enemy of IT, ... is the marketing team”* and they are “*bleeding edge.*” It was described as an insurmountable challenge to deliver upon the marketing team’s needs and vision. This challenge was noted to be present in almost any job in the IT industry. The marketing team have extremely high visions and expectations, demanding the latest state-of-the-art technology, whilst complaining that friends or other organisations like Google have them. Furthermore, the IT department have a priority to deal with ‘hygiene’ issues like allocating laptops to staff as opposed to marketing’s request to implement QR codes or purchase VR headsets. This thereby leads to the marketing team’s dissatisfaction with the IT department for not delivering upon their requests and vision.

Closer to the end of the interview, we started asking about Glenn’s insights on a few upcoming IT industries/aspects. These included Cyber Security, emerging technologies, and AI.

On Cyber Security, we were optimistic for his insight especially given his secondary role as an advisor for two advisory boards for cyber security. Glenn did not disappoint, providing an answer that we would not normally find from online research. He stated that for cyber security, *“We’re in the 1920s with motor vehicles.” and “still a little bit in the Wild West”.* The context of this statement was that during that period, there were no compliance standards that needed to be followed. One could simply "start your own car manufacturing business... And a few people would dry along the way.”   
With a new industry that is still evolving, Glenn believes that compliance is the direction that cyber security will evolve to as well as the enforcement of compliance. Like engineers who cannot build a bridge without adhering to guidelines and standards, we will reach the same stage when developing software solutions. We will have to adhere to compliance and standards, lest we face severe consequences such as contempt or jail.   
Currently we are at the stage where companies are pushing responsibilities on users, stating that the user needs to be trained more. Glenn compared this to another scenario where “*It’s like going to the dentist and the dentist saying... You need to become an expert in dentistry to look after your own teeth and everybody would just laugh and say that’s ludicrous.”* Glenn concluded like the automotive or engineering industries, the expectation and vision for cyber security is that “w*e need to move away from blaming the users for breaches... and we need to hold companies accountable.*”

When asked about emerging technologies and any he believed might have a revolutionary effect, Glenn stated that he felt there is not anything revolutionary yet. Based on his personal experience and observations, the IT development scene has slowed down quite a lot, and in general, new emerging technologies are marketed very well, but they are not delivering as expected. He highlighted his feelings on cryptocurrency especially, feeling that it was a “*solution looking for a problem rather than actually...solve something real world*.”

Finally on AI, in which most have concerns for a Terminator-like future, Glenn shed some light on this industry and concern. Though true AI may in fact be potentially deadly as many imagine, he explained that current AI are not anywhere close to this future. At its current stage, AI is really an evolution of sophisticated pattern matching and is not true awareness or learning. On the visions and expectations to how AI would impact our future, it was highlighted that many road jobs, low-skilled roles, and production lines would be replaced by robots since they would be more effective and cost-efficient. Though these types of junior roles would start to disappear, "*what we’re ending up with is more skilled, … knowledgeable roles that we need to replace them.”* This means high-skills roles where they program, maintain or diagnose these AI tools will be in high demand. Based on this, we can expect a future where we may provide more support and incentives for people to start working or transition into these types of role.