

# CLOUD REALITIES

CR113

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gap in a complex world with  
Mike Naylor, AWS**

Capgemini 



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# Bridging the digital skills gap in a complex world with Mike Naylor, AWS

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[00:00:00] He is a good player of the clarinet. Wow. So they'll just abuse that man. That makes you a polymath rocker does it Really? Don't say that.

Welcome to Cloud realities. An original podcast from Capgemini, and this week a conversation show about the digital skills gap starts with children and [00:00:30] goes all the way into late careers. And it's been something we've been wrestling with for decades now. We're gonna hear from AWS about something going on in the UK with the UK government about trying to address that skills gap.

I'm Dev Chapman. I'm Esmee van de Giessen and I'm Rob Kernahan. And joining us today to talk about what we're doing is Mike Nayler, who's the director of National Security. Defense and public safety at AWS. Mike. Hiya. How are you doing? I'm great, thank you. Thanks for having me on. Our pleasure. Thanks for making a bit of [00:01:00] time for this, Robert.

How are you doing? I'm all David, you good? Living the dream. Living, living the dream. The dream. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Esme? Yeah. You all right? Yes. Yes. You're set to go. Yes. Ready? Yeah. I'm excited. Skills learning. I love the topics. So it's that you love the, uh, the human Yep. The human part. Yeah. Anything to do with humans. I like the digital as well, but I, yeah, yeah. Digital. I'd rather talk about human. Yeah. You're not cold and transactional like me.

Well, you're just, you're a level four architects.

What do you expect? You know, autocratic, [00:01:30] I'd say yes. Autocratic systems. Maybe a bit ivory tower. Yes. No, no. What we worked out was we need an ivory tower elevation. So there's an ivory tower. I, the ivory tower. I think ired layered ivory towers. Single ivory towers. Not good in the front enterprise section. No, no. It's like it build an ivory tower on top of the existing ivory tower. That's level five. Uh, would you like to share with us, Robert, while we're on this subject?

Yeah, yeah. The results of a recent Gartner survey into the, the pros and [00:02:00] cons of enterprise architecture.

Uh, so the, yeah, it wasn't kind David. Let's be honest. Um, it, it didn't, it didn't go well for architects. Essentially. They did a blind response, so completely anonymous. Yeah. Ask the CEO what they thought about enterprise architects.

Raise yourself, Mike, this is rough. Even if you're not an enterprise architect, this is gonna make you win. Yeah, it hurts. This hurts. Oh no. There was a couple of the obvious ones. Superfluous, uh, high friction. And there was a couple of crackers, like high friction, high friction. [00:02:30] There was a co, there was a, um, there was a, a good one which was funding black hole.

I really like that. The, the police, the enterprise police, it went on and right in the middle was autocracy. It was like a word cloud. It was like a word cloud. They presented. You go and you just sort of think maybe we should, as a community manage upwards better. Yeah. I think you need a new, or I think you need a new mission statement. Yeah. You know, when like things that have gone wrong try to rebrand [00:03:00] themselves or something like, maybe like a. A, a sun as the logo or something. Something bright and cheery. Yeah, something cheery. Yeah. Be cheery about enterprise architects. Or it could be like a, a little cartoon man. Helping somebody. Helping someone else. So, you know, I'm a great fan of Joel's Verne, but the Morelocks and the Eloy, yeah. We are the, like the, the, the Morelocks a necessary evil. That's the way I always like to, that's say, oh, that's a necessary evil. Necessary evil driving transformation. Evil with evil, necessary evil. I like it.

There you go. [00:03:30] Anyway, what else is confusing you, mate? So, uh, we're gonna be talking about skills today. Mm-hmm. So I thought I'd bring up the conundrum that is, or the



confusion around the prompt engineer. Oh, as a discipline. So year and a half ago, two years, we didn't recruit prompt engineers. Yes. Now we have prompts engineers.

Mm-hmm. AI is replacing the prompts engineer. It could be one of the shortest lived disciplines we've ever had. It. It rose and fall in like a two, three year cycle. Let's do two things before we dig [00:04:00] into this. First of all, what's a prompt engineer? And second of all, how is AI now replacing the prompt engineer?

So, uh, a prompt engineer for those, uh, uh, who want the explanation is essentially somebody who is. Yeah, very good at optimizing the request to the AI to get the best answer out of it. Mm-hmm. So you put, you put rubbish into an AI engine, it'll give you a suboptimal response, you can write a prompt that's two pages long, and you get these incredible, very vivid, very, you know, powerful responses out of it.

So it's a skill. So we, we all want prompt tension here. Is that the [00:04:30] sort of thing that if you wanna picture, save Marcel with a beard. Yeah. Yeah. You send us all on WhatsApp. Marcel doesn't have a beard. So I would, he did a picture with a beard. I know that is, that was, it was traumatizing.

Well, so it's a bit more complicated than that.

But if you are, if you're getting AI to say, create a report that might be 50, 60 pages long. Yeah. You need to give it a very good instruction. Now what's happened is the clever engineers have actually got prompts, prompts. To train you and build prompts for you. So I prompt a prompts to build a prompt [00:05:00] type thing.

Um, and so I've lost it. This is where the enterprise architect is losing people. No, no, no, no, no. I think the, no, this is where it happens. So this makes sense to them. Yeah. Yeah. This makes sense to them. Superfluous to this, right? No, but the idea is there's now an AI to build the prompt for me. Yeah, that I have a conversation with and it writes the two pages and off you go.

So the prompt engineer's role is no longer needed 'cause AI will build me an agentic prompt engineer. Any comments on that, Mike? Um, unpick [00:05:30] that, I dunno exactly how to respond to that one. No, I, I, that's why I'm confused. That's the confusion you're saying, but we're in the same place. I can, I can, I can see it though. I, and I think this, it's actually, um, uh, quite an interesting use case because how does AI replace the job that you built? The AI.

Yeah, to do this is great with within a 12 month cycle. Yeah, that's fantastic. I love that. But, but I've tried it, so I've tried, uh, asking the AI what I should ask the AI to get the best outcome. And now what was your experience on that? Pretty poor, to be fair. [00:06:00] Actually, no. I, I prompt engineers safe for a while then maybe that's the, there is give, there still, there's still an element of, uh, art rather than, uh, than science in it. So yeah, it is also. AI's prompting other ais, what's your thinking, what's your thinking on that?

So there's a lot of, there's a lot of work going into, um, it will be a lot of little things interacting that will create the better outcome than big models. Yeah. You know what, I think this needs? Mm-hmm. Bottle of [00:06:30] wine.

Oh no. Both a bottle of wine and some bottle of, bottle of wine in architecture. Yeah. Maybe that could be your, maybe that new slogans. Maybe that's how we get the, uh, the, the, the C-suite to like enterprise architectures. Every meeting involves like wine, wine. And canopies and stuff, and then they'll want to

talk to us more. That's the answer, isn't it? Yeah. I'm gonna take that back to, um, enterprise hq. Enterprise Architecture hq. I think this is the modern version of bringing a packet of biscuits to it. Exactly, [00:07:00] yeah. Yeah. Literal canopies. Canopies. You would expect the



architect to make it overly complicated and more expensive, which is what I've just done.

Well, I don't think we got to the bottom of the AI prompt engineer confusion, but I think we've fixed it. The, uh, the, the ea uh, reputational issue. Yeah, I think we, well, I'm not tied. I think you, I think you've got a path forward there.

Uh, you could be a pioneer in this. A, a pioneering ea. Yes. Dunno about that. Come on. I think you do. I need to consult the other EAs to make sure we have [00:07:30] a confusing consensus of messages.

Could trek back up the ivory tower. Of the meeting at the top. We'll get back to you in uh, 18 months on an answer on that, Dave. There's a lot of governance we have to go through as we construct that response.

But by his time, the AI will have done it anyway. Exactly. And in the meantime, let's fix the digital skills gap. 'cause I think that'll probably happen faster than, uh, what he's talking about. I agree. And on that note, let's, let's, let's pivot into the world of digital skills. So Mike, let's, let's just start with a [00:08:00] portrait of the skills gap. Ishi. Yeah, so it, it feels like it's been around for a long time. I'm relatively new into the IT sector.

I'm only seven or eight years into my career, but it feels like it's gone back a bit further than that. So set out for us, like, how are you holding it at the moment?

Yeah, so I think the digital skills level that we see today in the general population is incredibly high, uh, and they very often don't even realize it, right?

They're carrying a, you know, a very complex computer around in their pockets. Uh, it [00:08:30] is giving them generative ai. It's giving them all sorts of capabilities, and they're just using it because it's doing the things they need to do. Telling them where to be and where to go and how to do things. What we're lacking though, particularly across the public sector is, is digital skills that are focused on mission outcomes.

Mm. So really how do we apply those skills? How do we apply that in a mission sense? And that's something that I think we are really keen to, to, to continue to develop.

Right. And, and if you look at [00:09:00] the, a digital skills issue, it's not as simple. Is it, or, or maybe it is that, you know, I could retrain say I'm, you know, I could retrain by just going onto the Amazon website and doing a, a few courses and then say, convert my career.

It goes back further than that, doesn't it? You have to think about it almost from a school's pipeline perspective. Yeah, very much so. So I think, I mean, whilst I would advocate to anybody to go onto the Amazon website, oh, I've got naturally, naturally, um, you know, you should always do that. And I,

I'm on amazon.com the [00:09:30] whole time. Is that the same thing? Oh, thank you for your business. Yeah. Um, no, I think it's really important that, that people. You know, continue to learn. Actually, Amazon Week, one of our leadership principles is to learn and be curious. Mm-hmm. And that's something we advocate for everybody. Right. But I think if we are really setting a foundation for the future growth of the uk, then we have to start early.

Mm-hmm. We, we have to bring those digital skills in from primary school really right the way through. And so, um, making sure that our education and academia are keeping up with [00:10:00] the pace of technology and the pace of the kind of skills that we need in, in industry and in public sector.

And if, if you look at like. The average school curriculum. Yeah, yeah. There is computing you can elect as an option. Yeah. But they don't actually teach basic digital skills, understanding of how things work. So you sort of go, well. I mean, that's when you have to catch 'em isn't, it



doesn't have to be a massive curriculum or anything else, but interventions that explain what it is so you can be secure.

You understand how to use it, you can interact with it. It's just nothing in the schooling system. It's, it's interesting because like back when I was at uni [00:10:30] in the guard lit, let, late 1948. Yeah, yeah. Just as in, just as university open. I caught you earlier. Seven year career. Pinocchio, I'm on you. I. The, I I'm really thrown up a smoke screen about a G, but the, it's worked in the late eighties.

They started like IT degrees Yes. Which sort of mirrored computer science degrees. And in my mind, one side of it was like the slightly more academic technical side of, of, of technology and the other side of it was more like applied technology. And that just seems to. [00:11:00] Somehow not developed. Well, this is very interesting.

Interesting. The, the, uh, in the sixties and seventies academia control computing. Mm. In the eighties and nineties, enterprise control computing and now consumerism controls computing. Wow. This is a, this is a hot take. This is really good. This is a hot take from Rob. So what you've got is you've lost. That academic sense around technology that's being driven by market forces, right?

Capitalism, et cetera, blah. There's lots of money in it. It's integrated in, right? So we've, we've probably, because we've lost that, [00:11:30] it's not maybe in the education mindset. Mm-hmm. See, good luck with that, Mike.

I'm not entirely sure how to respond to that one, but, but I look, I, but, but I think that point of, of, and I think it jumped off where you were, which was, is acade, is academia prepping people correctly, whether it be the academic route and the technical route of, of technology or the, or the appli, the application of technology.

Well, I think it, uh, uh, these days it's a basic life skill, and that's something that, that, uh, [00:12:00] traditionally early academic, uh, career, you know, from, from the very youngest age has been hard to get a grasp of that, that just, it's a life skill. You know, you can't do your banking these days unless you're doing it on an app and doing it through technology. Yeah, yeah.

Uh, you know, every, everything we do is driven now through technology. So, um, as I say, a basic life skill, but. I think what we're looking for though, as we develop is, and that's the thing, technology is changing at such a [00:12:30] rapid pace and businesses and, and government is trying desperately to keep up with that.

And the skills gap is one of the things that is holding them back. Right. But. Schools and colleges and, you know, education needs to keep up with that pace.

And, and how, how have you guys been quantifying what the gap looks like? Have you done an exercise that says, I dunno, end million people or something like that?

What does, how, how does it quantify for you?

What we've really said is we think we can help by supporting the development of, of [00:13:00] skills into, into education. We're offering, as you rightly said, you know, through the website, uh, people can jump on their access. A whole range of courses, extremely co never been more accessible to information learn.

Absolutely, yeah. Of, I mean, it's, it's at there, but it's just not being, how are we not pushing more people towards it? Yeah. And, and what you get of course is you get those people who you know are self-starting, are, are prepared to do it, will will get on there and they'll learn and they'll develop new skills.



What we really need to do is make sure that our children are getting that at an early [00:13:30] enough age, I think, to bring them through.

And there's basic, sorry, just to go the point, but there's, there's basic risk around this, which is not having a good understanding of cyber. You know, phishing and all that sort of stuff.

It, it has a, it has a material impact on the human if, if they get, you know, well, it, well, it has attacked, it has individual and human impacts. Yeah. It could be very serious as well. Yeah. Yeah. To, to, to your point about Mike, about life skills that that exists at the individual's level, then you have got the commercial impact organizations not [00:14:00] being able to staff up.

Appropriately. Yeah, with the right capability, particularly as the rate of technical innovation is constantly increasing and will not stop over the foreseeable decades, but then you've got the national level, particularly in a world where things like sovereign technologies are becoming important.

Yeah, you need the skills in your, in your geo local, don't you, to be able to be able to serve a supply chain actively. Exactly, exactly. Especially if you need to then [00:14:30] develop local technologies. Yeah. And that's where I, that's I think, you know, as we touched on, I think that's where we really need to be bringing through local, local colleges, local schools to, to engage with their local industry, to engage with, you know, government in their local areas so that those skills are coming through for the whole population, for that whole area.

Yeah. But, and we're also not, I know we're talking about education a lot, but there's also the elderly. People with disabilities, there's [00:15:00] entire groups that are still left out.

Totally. Yeah. Yeah. Like my mom and dad, like who's gonna them and, and they stare at this, this impenetrable wall. Mm-hmm. And you sort of think governments are working very hard to digitally enable everything and all the services.

Yeah. And is there an, is there an exclusionary part here which says that actually you can't get hold of what you need or you're missing out because you didn't realize that's the way to go? Do it, are you working on inclusiveness, like as how can you actually make it available for Yeah, very, very much [00:15:30] so. And, and, and particularly, although, you know, we have graduate schemes, we look at, we look at, uh, uh, young people coming out of university. What we also do is focus very, very much on the higher education and, and lower levels of education because we, we need people across the workforce. Mm. You know, so it's, it's great to recruit, you know, really highly skilled graduates, but it is also really important that we have that ubiquitous understanding and we bring the level up across the whole population.

And it's a conversation we had recently, which [00:16:00] was, if I cross train somebody from a different industry, they have empathy with that industry and then delivering digital. Solutions back to them are, are better because they've lived in that world and now they live in this world. And I understand the empathy between the two.

So there is a sort of, there is a value to cross training as much as you can send somebody straight through the education system and they can do ai. There's this other thing about cross training over actually might have a better experience at the end of it.

That's true, and I think it's, it's also, it's not just about the technology.

It, it's about having [00:16:30] adaptability, the ability to change, the ability to move at the times much more rapidly than we ever have done in the past. Yes. Resilience is often called out as one of the things that, that we worry about in, in, in a younger generation. It's not their ability to learn. These kids, you know, young people today are far brighter, far more clever than than we ever were, uh, uh, 50 years ago.



He got you there, Dave. He's got you there. 40. I was there, Mike, but, uh, I've read books about it. You, yeah. Yeah. But it's that adaptability, that resilience that we, us, you [00:17:00] know, I think we're generally all concerned about more, more than the technical skill itself. How do you do that? How do you train on resilience? That's a great question. Uh, I wish I had a great answer. That's why we have on the pod me, Dave rubbish. You asked all the insightful questions. I wish I had the answers. Lost my one minute of fame. I think

I, I, I, my answer are, I, I think it's through challenge. We have to challenge people. We have to, you know, give them challenges that they can rise to.

If we, you know, the old adage about of we've taken competition away from schools and sports and those sorts of things. Actually, the more we [00:17:30] deliver those things, right, gives people challenge.

Yeah, the, the, the softening in younger years, I'm not sure is healthy as this. Is it? What do you think about that? It's a highly, it's a hotly debated point. Yes. The, the, you get, everyone gets a medal for participating type not for Yes. What do, what do we think about that? Well, I can tell where you stand on this front. I, I'm gonna be, you know, you often accuse me of being like Switzerland. I do. I'm gonna elect to be like Switzerland at this exact moment.

I think we know where Rob is on this. Well, I think you built,

you, you built resilience by having. [00:18:00] To experience disappointment. Yeah. You know, losing a game and it's, it's not all about winning and, and being okay with that is being okay with life. You know, it's, you can't,

are we not prepped for disappointment early enough and then actually when it does occur? Yeah. Yeah. We're in trouble. Flatten the newer generation. Yeah. I think, yeah. And, and, and if you come into, sorry. I, I think if you come into, you know, the business world, uh, Amazon prides itself and it, its culture of innovation. Mm-hmm. You know, we, uh, our, our whole role, uh, and our whole success has been built on [00:18:30] enabling people to innovate.

Now, what that means is we're prepared and expect them to get it wrong. Yeah. Yeah. I is, they fail, but fail fast. And fail and learn from the failure. Mm-hmm. If you learn from the failure, your next thing is gonna be a huge success. And that's something that's been very distinct in your culture. Prepare the builders.

It's always about the builders, isn't it? Yeah. And that's a, that, and you've, uh, struck very firm to those roots. And it's, it basically, I have the capability that you provide and then I can go do great things. Mm.

And you have, but you [00:19:00] have to empower people to fail. Yeah. Because if you, as soon as they fail, you criticize them or you throw them out, or you know, you know, you, you make it a problem, then uh, they won't try again. It needs to be safe. And that's to that resilience point. Yeah. You need to spend, uh, 24 hours with Dave for you to understand failure very well. And

we've got quite some resilience because of Dave. Because of Dave. He's built me up to be highly resilient. I like to think that I'm helping close the skills gap down. I'm starting to catch on to the, uh, dynamics. Okay, let, but [00:19:30] let's talk about other. Programs that are trying to address the skills gap. And let's talk about Tech First. So I believe that you, you guys are getting involved in a UK government initiative around that?

That's right. So Tech First is, is a fantastic initiative and we're really leaning in to really support the development of digital skills in particular, uh, for across government.

Actually yesterday I was really privileged to, to, uh, sign a memorandum and understanding with the MOD on, uh, their digital skills program and how we can lean in and support them.



As a part [00:20:00] of that broader tech skills program. Mm. And I think, you know, that's where it, it's important for companies like ours.

Big digital companies to really give back into the broader public sector and government and make sure that we are developing those skills. Because what we're looking for is people who can have much more permeable careers. Mm. They could go from private sector to public sector and back again without being penalized.

Right. Right. It's good. It's, it's a sort of circular thing, so if you are investing in the skills and training, what that creates is [00:20:30] better skills for you to be able to build the business that you are in as well, which is providing compute and great services. So it's that. It's that sort of. Feedback loop, isn't it?

You're trying to get the energy into it. That's quite important. I it does feel like maybe some have lost, lost that momentum and now we're coming out of a lull.

A couple of stats as well about Tech. First is it's 187 million pound initiative, which is targeting 7.5 million UK workers to gain. That's a lot of people essential AI skills by [00:21:00] 2030.

Yeah. And I think that, you know, you, you, you've touched on AI for the first time there, and I think that's really important as well, is since the first computer people have been worried about the next generation of technology will get rid of people's jobs, right? People will lose the jobs because, uh, some new technology has come along, what we've seen in, in since the first computer came out.

You know, there's no reason for us to fear, uh, generative AI or a AI ml, uh, as something that's all of a sudden gonna take away everybody's jobs, right? But it's. It [00:21:30] is a defining moment that has shown the sheer pace of the change of technology.

Yeah, yeah. You know, and, and I find that incredible. We have this, these amazing tools, as I said in our pockets, these, these mobile phones.

Now, whichever flavor you choose, uh, is, is driven with, with AI in the background. And, and I think it's just amazing that we are seeing that, as I say, pace. Accelerate almost daily. And what we have to have is a, a workforce, uh, that are able to adapt and change at that [00:22:00] pace. I would probably have made this argument for cloud had we, were we having this conversation even five years ago? Yeah. I think it's more acute with AI now and, and the need for not only organizations to build commercial knowledge around AI and how might get used, but it's important for. Nations states to build that capability, isn't it?

Very much so, as we know, to stay competitive, then absolutely we need to be there. And it means we may have to make some decisions. And, and it, it, I mean, you take the point about Cloud David, but the [00:22:30] AI one is even a, a bigger conundrum because cloud never introduced ethical issues. Into the situation and moral issues. Whereas AI represents a, a sort of, we need a, a conversation in society about what is it we want to be and what is it we're going to do.

Mm. So, and then where do we direct the investment? 'cause we've got hard choices to make. So you've got this, this skills problem, and then it's plus, plus plus. 'cause there's a, there's a, there's a underlying societal impact, which we need to. It is much more profound. It is. And I think to that point that you made, which was that [00:23:00] we, we've not had a situation like this where technology has presented a moral and social conversation in the same way.

So let's talk about advice. Maybe just to wrap up the, the first part of the conversation. What kind of advice would you give to I, I think two groups. I think the first group would be maybe people who are listening to this. And we are lucky enough to have quite a broad listenership.



So maybe, maybe listeners that might wanna.

Pivot and convert what they're doing on individual level, but also [00:23:30] like what, who are the bigger body that you think are accountable for dealing with this problem? Because to me it doesn't feel like it's just a governmental problem and it's good to see AWS leaning in, but it's also not just an AWS scale problem, is it?

No, no. It's all, and I, I, uh, I think answering the second one first, uh, uh, it, it is the responsibility of, of business government. The public sector working together to develop those skills. And, and that's going to be important for us, for all of us as we [00:24:00] move forward. And I think to your point earlier, uh, a rising tide floats or ships Yeah everybody, uh, will benefit from this. So it doesn't matter really matter who does the investment as long as everybody does the investment. Right. If that makes sense. Right. I think for any individual who's. Listening to this and thinking quite bizarrely. Mike might have made a good point there, but, um, I, I'll be surprised if they do, but, but even if they, uh, if so we've got 150. These, we we're still waiting for our point, so Yeah.

Clearly. Yeah. It's getting, I, I like it. But if, if, if they're [00:24:30] interested in getting into understanding, you know, these technologies, there is a wealth of, uh, of information out there, uh, you know. AWS would, could be a good starting point, but you know, I'm gonna speak for the whole technology industry and say we are all looking for those skills.

Yeah. But so is government. Yeah. Everybody is looking for those skills, so, you know, there's, there's plenty of places to go find the right, the right way that you want to learn. Now whether that be. Online, in person, you know, through an AI tool, however that might be. Find [00:25:00] the way that you learn best and then apply that in a technology way.

Yeah. So we're talking about a gap here. Is the gap maybe bigger between the skills that people already have and the institutions? That they actually work in, you know, because if you continue to focus on the developing the skills, [00:25:30] but the institutions and organizations themselves do not adapt. Is isn't that the skill that, uh, the, the system isn't ready to really fully utilize all those digital skills that the individuals have?

Well, I think in, in, in the private sector, this is no different to any other generational change of technology is some businesses will, uh, adopt those things. Some, some of them will run towards it and they will be successful, so others will wait. To see if [00:26:00] it's really the next big thing or not, and they'll fall behind.

So it, it's all about appetite for risk in private industry that's easier to quantify 'cause you could drive that to the bottom line and see where those benefits are coming. Mm-hmm. In the public sector, that's slightly harder to, to define in a sort of pence, shillings and pence kind of way. But I, I have seen is a general realization across government, across government departments that they do need to.

Stay ahead of the curve. Um, so I'm pretty confident that institutionally they [00:26:30] understand they need to do it. Whether they do it quickly enough, I think is the big question.

Was it if you take the, the need for change, so to your point and is, is, um, if it was 20, 30 years ago when you came into industry, you probably saw a pace of change that you're used to.

Yeah. And then you've grown up, you are now in the leadership. Echelons of your organization, are you capable of understanding the impetus to need to go faster? And maybe that's, I, I sometimes see there's this, [00:27:00] it's not, not wanting to do it, it's just thinking that you've got more time to do it and you sort of see certain things rising and you go, do you realize if you don't start to move fast, you might actually be.



On the zenith of your organization's. Uh, so is, is, is is the point you're making there that you might be spotting things, you're either spotting them maybe too late, or your response to them is too traditional. You think you've got more time. Yeah. Yeah. There's thing, there's this thing that think, oh, I've got time to deal with that because, you know, we did this 10 years ago and we took two, three years to do it. Now [00:27:30] it's like, no, no, you've got six months in your industry.

There's definitely a, a need, I think, to be sort of. Smaller and almost more viral in your responses to things. So you, you're not overthinking stuff. You're going, yeah, that looks like it could be. Right. Look, we should follow that. We should follow that. Not all things might necessarily pay off.

Yes. Uh, I think that's, that's absolutely true. And, and again, it comes back, uh, I mentioned before, uh, at Amazon we're very lucky. We have this culture of innovation. One of, one of the ways we manifest that is we, we have this idea of a two [00:28:00] pizza team. Yeah. So we, we break down every task, every, every project, every activity.

Right? And, and if you, if you have a team that's bigger than the ability to feed with two pizzas, then your team is too big. Mm. So what that does is it drives that agility that I think you were talking about. It is you're then also not expecting the organization writ large to be the innovator, to be the changer.

What you do is you give people the empowerment to change at a much lower level in small teams. Uh, and for me, that's what drives. [00:28:30] A pace of change. It drives the, the thinking around innovating. And to come back to a point you made earlier, I think is what you really need to do with those teams is make sure you have the diversity across the thinking.

So have you got people who are prepared to challenge the norm? Yeah. Prepared to break the mold. 'cause if you don't break what you're doing today, you won't find the new thing that's successful.

What do you see on a leadership level? 'cause I absolutely agree on a team level, but where, what I see a lot these days [00:29:00] is a lot of frustration inside the team.

You know, they understand the agility part now, but then they come across against all the ceilings and the obstacles and the silos within the company. Do you do something different on a leadership level to help. Also change structures, maybe even, or organizational structures to get those skills in the right place.

Yeah. So I think for, for us, that is easier because we have, uh, our, our core leadership principle is referred to as customer obsession. So rather than being led [00:29:30] by some sort of quarterly output that one, one needs to report on, we are led by what is it the customer needs? What is the mission? You know, the, the, the part of the, the business that I look after, national security and defense, it's easy because we talk about the mission.

Mm-hmm. We talk about our customer's mission and it's the outcomes that they're trying to get to. Hmm. So. What, when that, when that drives your activity actually changes straightforward because, and in

and in your industry, there's a lot of purpose. 'cause you understand what you need to get done. Mm-hmm. Yeah. So you [00:30:00] can get behind an idea or a concept. I think corporates have sometimes lost their way on what they are. Is there an identity crisis going on? And that I think creates the environment you talk about where is just confusion generally.

If you think about all the partnerships that you, you need to get everything in place and to continue. That continuous learning curve, what would you think is like key but is still missing



in those partnerships? Ooh. [00:30:30] Um, as always asks really complicated, insightful questions and they're hard to, uh, yeah, you gonna, so I think, you know, partnerships is, is. One of the most important themes of work that we do right now is, and, and that comes from a real understanding that no one company or no one organization can deliver everything. Mm. You know, back in the day when you would go to a company and say, deliver me everything, all, everything in the stack right the way through from an application, right the way through to the computer at the [00:31:00] back end, and, um. Uh, uh, you know, in, in, in my world now what we're saying is let's find the, the best athlete to deliver a particular part of that.

You know, so actually bringing in partnerships is so important to the way we do our business. Uh, we, we couldn't, we simply couldn't do it without a whole range of great partners. You know, we are working with some. Some of the industry's biggest players in manufacturing, in uh, consulting, in project management, but also in [00:31:30] delivering some really niche innovative tech.

And what is missing? What is missing? Or is there that's quite maybe a negative, maybe It's all lovely dove. I dunno about lovey-dovey, but I think it's, it's self-fulfilling. It is. You build the partnership you need to achieve the mission outcome you're trying to get to.

So I, yeah, and I, I think if for some build understanding that it's partnerships that will allow you to win and allow you to move forward in this very complex world we now face, [00:32:00] I if you get it, it, it is very powerful.

If you think you can go alone, then I think there's gonna be a lot of disappointed people. Okay. Yeah. And if I, if I reflect, you know, this week I've, uh, I've been working with the, uh, the Ministry of Defense. They are changing the way they operate and have identified their need to include industry as part of their ecosystem going forward far more than they ever have done in the past.

In the, I I think though, like the, the, the thing I've been [00:32:30] distracted with all the way through that conversation as somebody who sat. You know, about two feet away from Rob last night. Oh. And watched him eat a p eat, eat a single pizza entirely by himself in, in about seven minutes. I'm slightly concerned about the two pizza metric as a team sizing thing.

'cause I think it would mean like one and a half people, wouldn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Well, you'd just have me, wouldn't you? That would be a small unit. I mean, uh, perfectly formed though David and May very effective. Rob, uh, yeah, maybe [00:33:00] you have to remember, Dave, that we're talking about an American company, so it's a, these are pretty big American pizzas, right?

Very kind of, you know, I won't say how big Rob's pizza was. It was perfectly, uh, appropriate for an individual, and we'll leave it at that. David, let's say that. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Mike, thank you so much for spending some time with us today and sharing your insights. I've really enjoyed it. Thank you for having me.

Our pleasure. And now we end every episode of this podcast by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. That could be something [00:33:30] in your personal life, like you've got a great restaurant book to the weekend, pizza restaurant, although you know, Rob's got that monopoly, or it could be something in your professional life, or a little bit of both.

So, Mike, what you're excited about doing next. So I have just. Enrolled on the Royal College of Defense Studies. So at the age of 55, I've gone back to college. Cool. Uh, I am now, um, having to write essays. Uh, so yeah, for the next 10 months I'll be, uh, work, working



[00:34:00] part-time, a couple of days a week here and there at the Royal College, as well as carrying on with my business.

Pretty exciting that. Yeah. What'd you get at the end of it? What's the diploma?

So we actually, the industrial place placements on, on the course don't get a diploma, but, uh, many of the civil servants and military staff and politicians even who are on the course, they come away with a masters and they may Oh wow. Cool. Yeah. Fabulous. Are you managing to cover up your use of gen AI in your essays?

There were some very strict rules about that when [00:34:30] we, when we joined and everyone of course immediately tried to work out how to break the rules. Course the education system is coming up with ever more increasingly affy ways to try and spot ai.

Then the latest one is you have to. I think we talked about before. Yeah. They, they're monitoring the cursor rate and the document, and it's an engine you have to write into, but then somebody just went, well, I can just get AI to pretend to be a human as it's writing in. And it's like, this is like an, it's always, it's just gonna be like a Russian doll. Yeah. Yeah. Keep going. Keep building it up. Uses of ai. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You, [00:35:00]

if you would like to discuss any of the issues on this week's show and how they might impact you and your business, please get in touch with us at [Cloudrealities@capgemini.com](mailto:Cloudrealities@capgemini.com). We're all on LinkedIn and on Substack. We'd love to hear from you, so feel free to connect and DM if you have any questions for the show to tackle.

And of course, please read and subscribe to our podcast. It really helps us improve the show. A huge thanks to Mike, our sound and editing wizard, Ben and Louis, our producer, Marcel, and of course to all our listeners.

See you in another reality next [00:35:30] week.



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