



# CAREERS MENTORING PROGRAMME CASE STUDY

## Jeff Hunter from MiCiM

Jeff Hunter is Engineering Director for MiCiM, which offers technical, construction and project management services to the data centre and mission critical industries. He looks after the infrastructure that supports the data - design, installation, testing and commissioning of the systems that support the app data applications. "What I do is manage disasters on a day-to-day basis on multiple projects," he says.

### What makes a good mentor?

Someone who is able to listen and who is very patient. My group, they're not very forthcoming – they seem to fear being criticised by their peers. But I'm patient, I listen to them, I've got a lot of knowledge, not only in business, but in the world sense. I can talk to them and I'm inter-ested in their aspirations for the future. We've just got to work on their confidence.

### What are you hoping to pass on?

I don't believe there should be a ceiling to learning – I'm 60 and still going to college. So I'm encouraging them to keep learning, pushing themselves. A lot of kids grow up scared that if they don't pass an exam, they'll not get on in life but that's not true. If you've got determination and courage then nothing's closed to you.

Facebook has a sign: go fast and break things. You mustn't fear failure, because that's how you learn – it's not about the mistake, it's how you fix it.

### Isn't that costly in your line of work?

You're talking millions, sometimes billions of pounds. So for me it's about how do you assess risk? How do you put in plans to mitigate the risk and what do you do to monitor those plans during the time that you're doing this work?

To put it into context you could spend

£100million on a system. One bit could cost you €20, but you missed that out and it won't work. So the whole thing is about detail and assessing risk. Your experience comes from making these massive mistakes, but learning from them.

### How have the mentor sessions been?

We talked about technology in our last session. They had a great interest in what I do as a business because it's all about data and phones and WhatsApp and emails etc... They also had a strong interest in the environmental impacts [of data centres] – typically a campus data centre uses 134MW power - about the same power that Birmingham uses daily. We looked into the possibilities for green power, atomic power, hydrogen, wind, wave, capture, solar – where that was going and what careers might be available in the future.

### What do you want the kids to get out of their mentoring time?

Enjoy it. I want them to know when this is over they can phone me up for career advice, introductions, engineering problems, whatever. I'd really like them to come away feeling inspired to think about what they want to do. I'd also like them to become a bit more confident. They need to develop a way of portraying confidence to others that they've got the skills to do whatever it is they want to do.

### Did you have a mentor?

Sort of – as an apprentice I was assigned to a foreman. But my mentor was an alcoholic, so he'd go to pub and I'd be left with massive engineering problems that I had to solve. By the second year I'd taught myself so much so quickly that I didn't really need him anymore. So again, from adversity I grew.