

BEING A **USER** OF **TECHNOLOGY IGNITED** MY **PASSION** FOR IT

An interview with Michael Leak – Head of Product Delivery at Adapt IT Telecoms
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Technology is not static; it evolves with time, adapting to or promoting new trends and lifestyles over centuries. In this regard, Adapt IT Telecoms continues to “ADAPT” to the “IT” field by delivering advanced solutions and keeping abreast of the technological advancements that will shape the future. In this interview, read the narrative of Michael Leak, Head of Product Delivery at Adapt IT Telecoms.

Everyone has a story about what got them interested in the Technology sector and a career in IT. What’s yours?

I had no interest in computers when I was younger, and even when my high school purchased their first computers, I assumed I would never use them because I was definitely not a computer nerd. However, this all changed when I moved to Cape Town, my very first job was with a company that supplied application and database development tools. That company became the first in South Africa to sell client service software and executive reporting tools. I think that’s where my love for report generation came from.

I believe my interest and passion for this sector has grown as a result of using Technology. Being a user and consumer of Technology has enhanced my interest in it.

Today, I can’t go anywhere without my smartphone. I no longer carry a physical wallet around with me. I’m even considering purchasing smart glasses when my current prescription no longer serves me. Twenty years ago, some of the programs that featured technology seemed futuristic and now, we see it materialising before our eyes today. That’s why I like Technology.

What’s your role in Adapt IT Telecoms, and which part of your job makes you the happiest?

I work with Adapt IT Telecoms as the Head of Product Delivery. I consolidate core product requirements for our Solutions Stream Owners and Product Owners. I work closely with product teams to assess business and

product requirements. Collectively, we scope, plan, and prepare the necessary to deliver them. I create product development road maps that Solution Stream Owners and product owners can use to market our solutions and to make commitments to customers. I ensure the right people and processes are in place for developing, testing, and delivering high-quality products on time, as well as confirm that the people behind the technology are engaged and satisfied in their work.

Serving on the Telecom Manco allows me to contribute to our business’s overall success, which requires me to encourage synergy across product development teams in order to extract the best value to support our business and customers. On an ongoing basis, I review and promote the use of cutting-edge technologies such as ChatGPT to ensure we constantly improve efficiencies within our product delivery and development teams.

I believe that expectation management is a large part of what I do, whether with Developers, Product Owners, Solution Stream Owners, or issues that directly affect customers.

What really makes me happy is when we successfully deliver quality new products, functionality, or feature enhancements, close to the original timelines as it shows we have planned effectively and managed challenges, issues, and risks over the course of the development lifecycle. I appreciate having a strong working relationship with people, as I believe caring about the people is more important than their job or role and therefore, I try support team members to pursue their career goals and interests within the context of our business’s goals and objectives.

What are the 5 Technologies that will change the future?

Artificial intelligence has already begun to alter the way we live and work. It's simply revolutionising the way we connect with technology and systems, as well as providing us with information on how to communicate with people much easier. Years ago, when we heard about AI on TV, it appeared unreal and unachievable. Seeing it today is mind-blowing.

Blockchain is another area that I have not been involved with but believe, will impact the future. **I believe that blockchain, as a decentralised ledger technology, has the ability to disrupt the way businesses from finance to logistics interact and operate.**

The third will be the Internet of Things (IoT). We've been talking about the Internet of Things for a long time at Adapt IT as we work in the Technology space. The way automation impacts industries is powerful. **Multiple devices can now be connected to the Internet.** IoT is all about controlling objects remotely and proactively. It gives us the power to do so.

The fourth one, I will say 5G. This upcoming generation of wireless communication will offer the fastest wireless connectivity to the man on the street, even with numerous technologies or programs connected to the Internet. **I believe that human-technology interaction is a blessing because we all want everything now.** We naturally want everything to be faster. I believe that from a 5G standpoint, implications for everything from Virtual Augmented Reality to Autonomous Vehicles and Smart Cities are the way; it's the future. **I'd be so excited about seeing an actual smart city operates;** I think that would be great.

The last one is **Quantum Computing**, a new type of computing that uses quantum computing mechanics to process information. That, in my opinion, speaks to the speed and absolute power of applications and technology, assisting individuals in finding solutions to issues currently handled by existing computing systems. As it has the ability to revolutionise numerous fields of science and technology.

What is the difference between "People BEFORE Technology" & "People BEHIND Technology?"

People Before Technology has two parts, and one could relate to the fact that **people existed before technology.** Through our intellect and problem-solving abilities, we have improved our lives through the use of technology. This means that all of the technology in use today was produced by people. That's reality. The second part, I believe, is that when decisions about manufacturing; implementation and technology use; are made, **the impact of technology on people should be considered before the advantages Technology could bring to people.** Human rights and ethical usage must

be considered so that we can always put people before technology.

In terms of people behind this technology, I believe it speaks to the fact that **there are actual people behind the innovation, development, and execution of Technology.** There are clearly some innovative giants who have the finances to bring their creativity to fruition. I'm talking about Richard Branson, Elon Musk, Steve Jobs, and Bill Gates. Just because Technology exists does not mean it just happens or fell from the sky. We rely heavily on real people behind technology to bring it to life, solve problems that our clients want us to solve, and solve all manner of difficulties that may develop with the numerous touch points when Technology is enabled.

I'd like to use this opportunity to express gratitude to the people behind the Technology, namely the 21 people reporting to me. The Telecoms Team has amazing people behind our technology, and I would not be successful in my role if it weren't for them. Thus, **I would like to acknowledge the people who work on the Advanced Analytics, CXM, NGV, and Fintech Teams** for their commitment to their projects, passion for their families, and overall dedication.

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How does Adapt IT empower the Telecommunication industry?

We provide Connectivity to people and Technology. We make integration available between people and solutions. We offer innovation and journey forward with our customers. We provide insight that changes the future. Our commitment to these areas enhances the Customer Experience and **positions us as the solution provider of choice today and in the future.**

What is your message for the young, IT-oriented generation?

My message is; we live in exciting times; **Technology is the future.** And the possibilities are endless for creators, innovators, providers and consumers. Embrace it. **Use it to do good for the world. But do not let it possess you.** It is not better than you and cannot define who you are, and it cannot replace anything truly human. **You still need to exist** in a world where connection with the self and others are far more important and will serve you beyond technology.