

## Lifelong Learner Story Series ▶▶



### Paul Andrew Schneider

- ▶ Advisor, Project Delivery at Bentley Systems
- ▶ Pursued courses stackable to FlexiMasters in Project Management

#### Please share with us your professional life's journey and at which point in your career did you aspire to pursue this FlexiMasters?

I didn't start my tertiary learning until later in my career. I graduated high school in the late 80s and started working professionally in the early 90s in the software and IT systems industry. I progressed through my career by learning as technology

developed and never had the need to undertake tertiary studies. I realised that if I am to continue progressing into more senior roles, I must continue to receive up-to-date information and knowledge, and to maintain relevancy for current and future needs of the industry. I also established the need to be flexible in the demands of the market by complimenting my skills with other capabilities. I graduated my Bachelor's Honours degree in 2019 and started pursuing FlexiMasters in Project Management in 2020 with the intent to complete Master of Science in Project Management in 2023 at the age of 54.

#### Which aspect of this FlexiMasters do you like the most?

I most like the ability to progress into the full Master's programme with NTU as well as the alliance with NTU and what the NTU brand offers. The FlexiMasters scheme offers options that suit your own learning journey. The fundamental aspects of project management are fully covered. It allows you to apply what you have learned immediately even before the courses are completed. Along the way, you can decide if you'd like to progress further into the full Master's programme, select other individual courses that may compliment the offered specialisation.

#### What were the challenges you faced when trying to complete this FlexiMasters?

The biggest challenge was to balance study while working full-time on top of personal commitments. Additionally, after a break between the courses, there's the inertia to overcome before getting used to the rhythm of studying. This was overcome by getting organised and planning my week to fit everything in. Developing the discipline to do this was certainly a challenge in itself.

#### Has this FlexiMasters benefitted you in your career development?

This FlexiMasters has definitely helped me with my career development. Given that my career spans 30 years, the confidence that the learning offered by the FlexiMasters has been invaluable and enabled me to further advance in my career with added responsibilities and more senior roles. It has opened doors to work on other projects and contribute at higher levels. Apart from the prospect of being able to show formal certification, the ability to apply your learning in the work environment gets the attention from your peers and seniors. Demonstrating enhanced knowledge, capability and increased performance has been the key to advancement.

#### Has this FlexiMasters been beneficial to you in bringing forth changes in your organisation?

This FlexiMasters provides an excellent foundation of knowledge. Each course is inter-related which helps to distil ideas and attain the confidence necessary when engaging with colleagues and important stakeholders within my organisation. Confidence is especially important as I have found that existing structures and processes need to be challenged with alternative approaches to each problem faced. The foundational knowledge gained in this FlexiMasters provides an academic understanding that when combined with industry experience can be applied to real world situations with greater success. Use of critical analysis and objectivity when addressing challenges has allowed for better engagement, support and business success.