

Austin Murdock: My name is Austin Murdock and I'm a IT systems engineer. I didn't really start off from a IT background, so it's all really fresh to me. I've only been in the business or the IT world for about a year.

What I really like right now is the possibility of just where the IT landscape is right now. There's so many different possibilities, so many different avenues that you can go into, [00:00:30] and I think for me at least the admin side I've been enjoying, but to continue on in that admin route and maybe go into a IT manager or even a CIO would be the end goal for me, I would say.

My story of getting into IT is a little wily one, so I really wasn't computer adept, probably at all. I think there was [00:01:00] one time when I was a little kid on my laptop at home trying to watch a TV show. My laptop at home was completely locked out. You couldn't get in, it was ransomware basically. I got nervous. I called my mom, I said, "Hey mom, the CIA's trying to get into my device. I need a credit card or something." And she said, "No, Austin, no. That sounds like it's just a virus or something."

I actually went to Clemson University and [00:01:30] I graduated with a degree in biological sciences, so completely different major. It didn't really seem like it's what I wanted to do. I'm actually a pretty big gamer, I would say. I play a lot of video games and so I talked to a buddy of mine and he said he was really into PC gaming and I hadn't done any of that before. I had just done Xbox or PlayStation in the past. He said, "Well, if you're going to have a PC, you should build it by yourself." So I said, "Okay."

I had no idea what [00:02:00] any of the parts did. I didn't know what a CPU did, I didn't know what RAM does. This is actually, I guess where the turning point was for getting into kind of computers for me. I sat down probably for a week and I just took notes and I don't take notes, and that really had me thinking, like, "Man, this might be actually something that I could see myself doing. This might be the thing that I've been looking for to get me interested and not just having just a mundane everyday to day job."

[00:02:30] Right, so the skills that I brought into the table that were already helpful were my ability to research on the fly and maybe I got that from my biology background doing some research there, but I was able to get in and see a problem and say, "Okay, well let's search online. Let's see how these people solved it." So I was able to really pick up on that easily and translate that into the IT field. Another thing that I would say [00:03:00] was a big help going into IT, I think would be communication skills, and I guess that's not something you would really think of in IT. I'm sure some people think of just some desk jockey all day typing away, but I think a lot of times, especially in system administration, you need to be able to communicate well between yourself and your team and between yourself and your employees or your customers.

[00:03:30] In order to prepare for the job that I have currently, I would say one of the biggest things that have been helpful for me, I received some of the IT certifications from CompTIA, and I wouldn't say that they're essential by any means in order to step into the field, but anything to further education, especially if you're lacking education or formal education in the IT field when coming into [00:04:00] it. Some of those certificates were actually really helpful, progressing in my studies and in my education in the IT field. And the ones that I got were the CompTIA A+ as well as the CompTIA Network+ exam, and I'm actually currently working on getting the Security+ certification as well.

I think the ability to just be collaborative [00:04:30] with a team or with anyone else that you're working with, if you have people coming in to work on your systems or something and you need to be able to communicate well. Another trait that I would say would be good for IT is to be able to multitask really well. That is definitely something that comes with the job and you really have to be able to handle a couple of things at once and not be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

[00:05:00] The first thing I really actually do is immediately check in with my team and say, "Hey, is there anything going on today? Has anyone seen anything within the news or IT related?" Because we like to keep up on anything happening. Cybersecurity in the news. I'll get into the office and I'll get on my computer, my laptop, check some emails, check the help desk, see if anything's come in overnight. After that, I'll [00:05:30] follow up on those emails, obviously check with the help desk and follow up on those tickets and everything, and then I'll check the backups in the morning just in case anything went awry the night before and just make sure everything's running smoothly. By the end of the day there's usually more things that come in for me, and then I'll also be working on projects here and there. So it's really dynamic in the fact that there's not really one thing or [00:06:00] some specific things I do every day.

For someone looking to do what I do or looking for cybersecurity or system administration, any of the IT field. I really think it's a good job to progress forward in. I think a lot of the times when you think of a job, you think of just something static or something that you just get in and just do the same thing [00:06:30] mundanely over and over again every day, but in the IT field, there's so many different areas to branch out into, so you're really not confining yourself to really one thing at a time.

I think another thing would be if you're looking for a work environment that is pretty dynamic, I would say this is the field for you. A lot of the times I have no idea what's going to go on during the day. I go into work just completely clueless of my day and it's exciting. [00:07:00] It's really nice to be able to get in there just with a fresh, clean slate and just really see different opportunities, I would call them, come in and be able to handle those on the fly. So it's really a fast-paced work environment when it needs to be, and it's really something that I consider myself lucky to be a part of.

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