



Episode 6: From Help Desk to CIO, Career Journey with Sam McIntyre

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Tamara: This is episode number six.

Welcome to the Females In Tech Show, where we help women in tech deliver balanced and purposeful life through a career in information technology.

My name is Tamara and I am the founder of FIIT Collective. In this podcast, I'll explore the challenges females face working in a corporate environment and how to overcome them. Beyond technology, I will also dive deep into self-care practices, how they can improve your physical and mental well-being, and the importance of balancing work and relationships for a sustainable and rewarding career.

Joining me in today's episode is Sam McIntyre. Sam is passionate about helping women excel in the workplace, and has seen first-hand the benefits of having women involved in the decision making process. She has spent 30 years working in tech, and her career journey has seen her progress from IT Help Desk to CIO.

She has worked in Australia, UK, Asia and the US for a variety of retailers and manufacturers including brands such as Tesco, Coles, Woolworths and L'Oreal. Sam loves problem solving, and that technology continues to evolve and change. She has built her career by continuing to learn new skills, being brave and creating solutions that deliver business results.

Sam currently works as Group CIO at the Sussan Group, which incorporates Sportsgirl, Sussan and Suzanne Grae brands. She is on the Advisory Board for One Roof, a women's co-working and networking space, and also has her own startup, BeautiFinda, a marketplace for beautician services. Sam is also a mother to two young boys and loves spending time with them, her husband and her horses.

Tamara: In today's episode, we cover Sam's career journey and how it led her to becoming CIO at Sussan Group. One Roof, and what her advisory role covers. Sam shares a few of her biggest learnings throughout her career in tech. We talk about motherhood, and how it's helped, not hindered her career, and how she juggles a successful career as CIO, being a mother of two and her own side hustle. We talk about some of the challenges women in tech face and how to overcome them. We then discuss her side hustle BeautiFinda, how the business idea evolved, and how Sam and her husband manage two full time jobs, two boys and their own start up, and advice for anyone looking to start their own business.

Tamara: Hey Sam, thank you so much for coming on the show today. I am super, super, super excited to have you on the show.



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Before we dive in, I would like to start the podcast with two really quick questions, the first one being, what is one thing you're grateful for today?

Sam: Terrific. Well, thank you very much, Tamara, for having me.

One thing I'm grateful for today, and I think it's really because I was reflecting on this podcast, was actually probably all the women that have actually supported me in my career over the many years and seen something in me that I probably didn't quite see myself at that time. That really starts back to my first job.

I will just say a couple of names, and some of these ladies I haven't seen or spoken to in years. Judy Mundy at Target, I had Ruth Yates at Coles / Myer, I had a lady named Karen Brown over in the UK, and the formidable Jackie McKeating who used to be at Woolworth's and has retired. They're all incredible ladies that helped me along the way. That is 100% what I am grateful for.

Tamara: Wow, that's beautiful.

The next question, can you tell us about a recent achievement or something that you're proud of?

Sam: Yeah, I think for me recently it's about joining the advisory board for One Roof, which is a women's co-working and networking space, which is owned and founded by Sheree Rubinstein.

I just love the community that she's created there, and to be a part of that business and to be on that advisory board and to work with her as to how she's going to expand that business, I was just super, super excited. She's terrific at what she does, and they've got some amazing plans, and if you are looking for a bit of a tribe and a bit of a help with either your corporate career, or if you're an entrepreneur, then I really urge you to have a look at their website and get in touch with them.

It's just a great community of women that can help you with all sorts of areas of your business, with investing, with the business journey and support for women. Yeah, I'm loving being involved with their business.



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Tamara: Amazing. Congratulations. We will definitely provide a link to One Roof in the show notes if you are interested.

Now we'll get started. When I was researching more about you, Sam, and your career journey, I was honestly so inspired, and I know a lot of women who are listening to the show, or male allies, will also be very inspired.

Can you tell us a little bit more about you and how all of this unfolded?

Sam: Yeah, sure. I hate to say it, but I've actually been in tech for 30 years, so that's showing my age. This is terrible, but I wasn't a great studier at school and I actually really didn't get very good marks. I think my parents got called down to school at one point because they thought something was wrong with me because I was sleeping in class, but actually, there was something wrong with me. It was called boredom.

I at the time wanted to be a travel agent, and you could actually study that at university. I'm not sure whether you can anymore, but I didn't get enough marks to get into that course with VCEs, so my grandfather at the time said to me, why don't you have a look at computers? I think they're going to be around for a while.

Look, this was back in 1999. We weren't even in the 2000s, and so I said, yeah, that sounds like a good idea, rang up university and actually got into a computer science course, which I just don't believe you could actually do these days with the marks that I got. That's how I got started in tech.

Then I went to uni and I just realized fairly quickly that a lot of the other people there had studied tech in secondary school and I hadn't. I didn't do so well the first year, but struggled to get through, and from there I worked in retail on the weekends casually, and when I was finishing uni I saw a job advertised on the job board in the canteen (we really are in the 1999s), for Target and for their Help Desk, and they wanted someone who had a background in stores and also someone with a tech background. That's how it started.

I started by answering Help Desk calls. I can still... I think the store number for Toowoomba is something like 800 TOOWOOMBA. For me, it just went from there to where I am now. Yeah.

Tamara: Amazing. Sounds like an incredible journey, and I can completely resonate with you and your schooling career. I wasn't the same, but I do speak with a lot of university students who are so fixated on their results at university, and I know a lot of my friends who were so obsessed with



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it and studied way too hard and ended up getting really, really sick from it, from the level of stress.

It just shows that you don't necessarily need to get A's all of the time. You can actually achieve your career or your dream job by just getting through. Passes get degrees, right?

Sam: Yeah. Look, I say, because I've got two young boys, and I say to them, if you do better at school, you'll have more options and it will be easier, but I am proof that you can kind of make things happen.

I think it's just about, for me, I could always do work. I've got the work, I like problem solving, and for me work just made sense. At school and at uni I sometimes couldn't see the point of why we were learning something or doing something. I think I try to say to my children now, you've got to put that aside and really try and suck it up. Because I don't recommend necessarily... It worked out okay for me, but I do, I think there's got to be a balance. You don't want to make yourself sick from studying either. Yeah.

Tamara: Yeah. Now you're the CIO of Sussan Group. Can you tell us just a little bit more about the day in the life of how you got that role?

Sam: Yeah. I did work in retail since I was 14 and nine months, and I walked into Target and asked them for a job. I have had many retail roles since then, always building on each other. I've been CIO at a couple of companies before that.

Sussan Group is obviously a female fashion retailer. We're led by women, we're 97% female, and we look after Sportsgirl, Sussan and Suzanne Grae. They're a phenomenally successful retail brand, with iconic brands that everyone knows. I'm sure your listeners have shopped with us or their Mum's have shopped with us. The businesses are really strong brands with great customer loyalty. For me, it's great to work in tech, and also work in fashion.

I spent a bit of my career in the UK and I don't mind a bit of fashion, and so it's great to mix up the tech with the fashion as well, and with great brands. What I love about Suzanne Group is that it's a very female orientated workplace, and tech is very normally male orientated. I have a lot more females in my team at Sussan Group than I've had before, purely based on the fact that we are such a supporter of women. That's great. We've got 550 stores which we look after, but my main focus at the moment is looking after the digital side of our business in terms of its growth and I really love it. It's great.



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Tamara: Amazing. Okay. You did mention a little bit more about you being involved with One Roof, and that role is more of an advisory role. Can you tell us a little bit more about what that involves?

Sam: Yeah. That's working with Sheree and the rest of the board around the growth, and advising her and helping her with the direction that she wants to take with the company and the decisions that she needs to make.

For anyone who's got their own business, setting up a board like that will help you on that journey. Sheree's very savvy. She's got a lot of great people around her. On that board there's one of the founders of Net-a-Porter, there's other business people that have got great backgrounds. She's brought together a group of people with different skill sets who are advising her now.

I said to her, why do you want me? She was like, your tech background. Yeah, we meet quarterly and we get to see how her business is growing and expanding, which is awesome.

Tamara: Amazing. Sounds like a big bunch of inspirational leaders to bounce ideas off. Yeah, it is definitely something that I want to get involved in one day, and I'm sure some of the listeners as well. Thank you for sharing.

Sam: Well, I think just from a networking perspective for myself and for being involved in a different business and understanding and hearing how they operate, and the thought that they've put into it with people with different backgrounds, it's really terrific. Just extending the skillset basically.

Tamara: You would learn a lot from it as well.

Sam: Oh yeah, that's right.

Tamara: You've had an amazing career journey, but we all know with a journey throughout your career there are a lot of learnings. What would you say are some of your biggest learnings that you've had so far?

Sam: I think probably one of the biggest learnings and one of the things that I say to people who reach out to me or people in my team etc, is that you're really in charge of your own career and you can make it what you want.

For me it's really about doing the job that you've got to the best of your ability, and seeking



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feedback on that, and working with your boss and your colleagues on what the expectations are and how you can meet those. But then I think it's also about, outside of that, how are you learning? How you growing? And then, what's next?

For me, when I was on the Help Desk and I'd been there for 18 months and I honestly was sick of answering store calls on their point of sale not working, what did I want to do next?

Sam: Then going around the organization and exploring, and then saying, okay, what's a practical step to get me there? How can I possibly move to the next thing? I'm not going to go from being on the Help Desk to being the CIO, and in those days or the leadership team sat on a different floor, so it was a bit different.

What's a practical step for me from a career perspective? And then how do I also learn outside of work in the things that I'm interested in as well? I very much paid for courses for myself, I very much ask for mentorship, and then just watched and had your ears open.

For me, I contracted in the UK for eight years, and when you contract you're only as good as your current contract. You want to get longevity. If you're enjoying where you're working, you want to get longevity out of that contract, so I would always look for when I was working on.

I worked as a project manager or program manager for many years, and I would always look for more work. When I finish this project, if I want to stay here, what else are they going to be doing? Then I would actively go and put my hand up or show some interest. I've even done that in permanent roles. I was actually about six months pregnant with my second son, I was running IT for the fuel division of Woolworth's, so a reasonably big job. The Woolworth's team was looking for someone to program manage a consolidation of call centers, and I said, I'll do it. They were like, what? I said, I'll do it. We can't find someone, and I think my job at the moment is pretty steady. They thought I was crazy at the time, and I probably was a bit crazy, but they said yes and I worked on that before I went on maternity leave.

Yeah, for me it's always just what can I do, how can I put myself forward? That type of thing.

Tamara: Wow. That is honestly unbelievable. Now you mentioned that you do have two beautiful boys, in fact you took on this role whilst you were six months pregnant. I'm sure a lot of the listeners, like I, think you're Superwoman. How do you manage or juggle motherhood and your career?

Sam: Yeah. I actually came back to Australia when I was heavily pregnant with my first, and so I actually didn't have a job to go back to, and I started looking for work when he was only three



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months old. Because I do just honestly like working.

I think it's around putting in a good support network around yourself. So now he's nearly 12 and my youngest son's nearly nine. And so they're a lot easier these days and want to start doing things by themselves. And they're very good at doing jobs too.

So I have a great partner and I don't think I would've been half as successful if I didn't have him supporting me. And that's something that we probably talked about pretty early on. We did make a rule a very long time ago. Whoever's home first starts dinner and then I just wasn't home first for about 10 years now. Now I don't even cook on the weekends. He cooks. And so, it's just what kind of works for you.

I think I've actually been more successful in my career as a mother than I was previously. And I think that's down to, you've just got less time and things need to be a bit more efficient. But I've also learned, so I had some time off when my youngest was going into prep. And I realized the benefit of really networking with the moms from school who will tell you what your child's up to if you are not around, particularly boys, because boys don't tell you as much stuff. So I think that's quite fundamental.

And in terms of just really creating that support network to help you with the children, whatever that looks like, whether it's a partner, whether it's some paid help, whatever... It's kind of what works for you. And look, sometimes it all goes pear shaped. We completely forgot to go to my sons' parent-teacher interviews last year. So, you've just got to also be realistic and think some things we've got to just drop. But they're still alive. They still get fed.

And I think I have to say as well though, we probably took 10 years to, and I feel sorry for anyone listening, for me to really kind of find myself again. Does that make sense? You do put so much effort into children and to then have... It's not until they're older that you start to get some of that back, I think. And that's what happened for me. So it's kind of a bit of a blur, those first few years.

Tamara: Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing. I know me as a female in tech who also wants to put her career first but also have children, it's really inspirational to hear that you can do both and not only do both but also help accelerate your career.

Like you said, it made you a lot more productive and efficient during the actual work hours. And I know definitely with my partner, he's got two children. And yes, as they do get older, they do become a little bit less reliant. But they also can start to have really intelligent



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conversations and they really start to shape their personality. So it's really beautiful to see that you can have a career and have children and so can your husband. So thank you for sharing.

I am going to put you on the spot a little bit. I did have a question come in from one of my Instagram followers who is currently pregnant and looking for a job and she has struggled to get a job. And I was just wondering if you had any advice on what she could potentially do.

Do you think it is possible that she could get a job whilst pregnant or should she wait? And if she does wait, what do you think she should be doing in her spare time?

Sam: Yeah, keep looking for a job. I think there's certainly a lot of companies out there that, and I think broaching it early on with the organization, you hear the stories of some women in large organizations who have been hired when they're pregnant. So it does happen. And I think maybe sort of focusing on some very female friendly brands that you can see in the marketplace. If they're female friendly, I think that would certainly be a good idea.

And then if she's in tech, then I would be looking at some of the, depending on her skill set, what can she do through some of freelance websites like [Fiverr](#), [Upwork](#), some of those.

Looking at her skill set and saying, okay, so if someone's not going to employ me at the moment, or I can't seem to kind of reach that, I've got a barrier there, from my skillset, what are some of the other things that I can do? What is she good at and what does she enjoy doing? And is there some sort of business idea that she could start? For sure.

Tamara: Yeah. Great. Great. Thank you for that. Okay. So what do you believe are the key challenges women in tech face today? And what advice would you give to overcome those challenges?

Sam: Yeah, so I think, it's not the case where I am at the moment. I've got a very female team, but I have certainly had the issue of feeling like I'm not being heard or I'm not being listened to. And I've certainly had the instance where I've said something in a meeting and a man said it 10 minutes later. Everyone's ignored me and then 10 minutes later someone else has said it. So I think finding, and in those situations, if you are a woman in one of those meetings and another woman has spoken and it's ignored, and then a man says it, then I think saying, "Oh yes, that's what Sarah just said. Isn't that right Sarah?" Sort of backing that woman up so people kind of might hear them better the next time.

I think it's good to have a friend at work or a friend that you can talk to that you trust, that you can run ideas through. I think it's really about having that support network around you in the



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office or a good friend who's maybe in a similar industry that you can just have a really kind of honest chat about challenges or things that are worrying you and get a different perspective.

I know I've been emotional at times and it's maybe something that someone said to me isn't as personal as I think it is, or I've taken it to be at that time. And so sometimes I think just talking things through with someone can give you a better perspective and yeah, I think that's a way to go.

Tamara: Yeah, absolutely. I know I have a few people within my organization, but also outside of my organization that I go to for specific things. And each person can give me a different set of advice based on what I'm facing at the moment. And one person in particular is a really big advocate for me and will stand up for me in the event that I need someone to stand up for me, if that makes sense.

Sam: I think it's really important, does your boss have your back, or does someone else in the organization have your back and can give you advice and support you? And I think I've been the most successful in my career when there has been that senior person who's backing me essentially.

Tamara: Mm Hmm. That's great. So I mean, you're the CIO of Sussan Group. You have an advisory role at One Roof. You have two boys. I mean, surely everyone would think, okay, yeah, she's done enough.

But you've also got a side hustle. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Sam: Yeah, sure. So I've got a side hustle, which is called BeautiFinda, which is a marketplace for beauty services. So if you want to get your hair done for the races, which is coming upon us, then you basically can go on the site and book a beauty professional to come to you.

We're really connecting customers with beauty professionals. It came about quite a few years ago. I was invited to the races and because of my job I was invited to the Emirates tent and it was Cup Day. And I really couldn't find, nothing's open. I couldn't find someone to do my hair and makeup. It was a while ago. And so I think that there's a lot more beauty professionals out there these days as well.

And so yeah, we basically started by just doing an MVP, for both BeautiFinda and actually Fitfinda, which was more about sort of finding a personal trainer.



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I was trying to get a bit more fit at that time as well. And the stats all told us that sort of like when you looked at the market reports on industry size and all that sort of thing, the stats told us that the fitness industry would probably be a better match. But actually, once we kind of created our MVP and launched it to market, we just found beauty professionals who were really interested and customers who were really interested.

So yeah, it started pretty small and grew from there. So I have always had a bit of side hustles. My dad is an entrepreneur, and I packed t-shirts in our lounge room. My dad is actually an aircraft engineer by trade and had his own aircraft engineering business, but he decided to print t-shirts for people for sporting clubs.

And so yeah, from the age of 12, he'd come home on a Friday night with huge big bags of t-shirts, and he decided that my brother and I would be great to pay us 20 cents a t-shirt to pack it in a plastic bag with a little bit of card behind it. And so yeah, I've always just kind of had something on the side.

When I was working, when I was in my early twenties I used to do catering after hours. Like I'd be kind of extra staff at the races. And then yeah I renovated houses and yeah. So I've always just, and I pretty much figured that I work in tech. Why don't we have a go at a tech product, so.

Tamara: Wow. Wow. So how do you manage it all then? So your work, your kids, advisory board for One Roof and your side hustle, BeautiFinda, how do you manage it all?

Sam: That's a very good question. Look, I think I just kind of put it into buckets I suppose. So it is a juggling act and like I said, I do have a very supportive husband who helps. And we're a bit like, okay, you've got something for work tonight. I've got this. Who's thing is more important? So we do a bit of that and kind of a bit of coin tossing.

We work on the business in our spare time and so we'll do something with the boys in the morning, we'll do sports and all that fun stuff. When they're having a bit of downtime, we'll do some work on the business. They then will want to do something again in the afternoon. We'll go out and do that. And then again we'll do something in the evening.

So probably the thing that boils down is I'm probably not a very good friend, so I probably don't see my friends as much as I should. But I will call them in my car on the way somewhere or I kind of utilize my time. Well, I've also tried for a bit of kind of meditation, and so I have a good friend who I horse ride with, so yeah, she sees me probably more than anyone.



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Tamara: Wow. So your husband is involved in BeautiFinda as well?

Sam: Yeah, that's right. So he'll be doing stuff when I won't, and then I'll be doing stuff when he isn't. So it kind of motivates, we sort of motivate one another. One of us will not want to do anything on the business and the other one will be gung ho, and then we will sort of swap.

But I also had some time of my hands to really kind of get it up and running, I did have some time off my full time employment, which kind of really kick started it. And he did as well. He took some time out of his career and also focused on it.

So we, when the kids, and I probably should have said this earlier. When the kids were a bit younger, we both kind of tag teamed a bit, one of us was working full time, the other one wasn't. Then I was again and he wasn't. So we sort of tagged in that respect, which then gave them quite a good sort of stability that one of us was always sort of around. And when they were quite young, I did have a nanny for them as well. And it was purely because at the time I came back to Australia and couldn't get, and we ended up moving to Sydney and we lived in Paddington. And good luck if you live in Paddington and you want to find childcare, because I'm hoping they've got a few more childcare centers. Or if anyone wants to open one in Paddington, I'd really recommended because I could never get my children into childcare there. We had to move suburbs.

Tamara: Wow. So when you say you've got time out with your husband with BeautiFinda, does that mean so you quit your full time job and then you worked on BeautiFinda and then he did the same thing, or was it just annual leave?

Sam: No, no, I had quite a bit of time out. So I had about a year out, and then he had a similar amount. So, yeah. And it wasn't quite that plan, but it's just how it sort of evolved. So, yeah.

Tamara: Amazing. So with BeautiFinda, where is that available at the moment?

Sam: Yeah. So online www.beautyfinda.com.au, you can have a look at us on [Instagram](#) as well or on [Facebook](#) and yeah, you can look for a beauty professional on there and just book directly with someone if you like what their work looks like. Or you can fill out a form, which will come through to us and then we'll organize.

And it hasn't just been us the whole time. We've had some people working for us as well, and it's just sort of ebbed and flowed with the business as well. So, yeah. But it's really a startup and we're very much doing our day jobs as well. And I think that's been the biggest learning for



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me. I think it's great to start your own business and have it grow and we've learned so much from just having our own business and doing stuff ourselves.

There's nothing like setting up your own email campaigns, doing your own SEO, doing your own Facebook ads, just really kind of doubling down on the tools, coding yourself. We had a bit of help out of India for some of our coding, but a lot of it we've done ourselves. We're just actually rebranding the sites, so that's pretty exciting. So we'll have some new look and feel on that. And yeah, we're just really working out all our customer journeys.

Sometimes when you get to being a CIO you're not in the tools as much and technology changes so much that you really do just need to put yourself back in the work to kind of understand the challenges or what goes on or how it works, really. So if we wound up BeautiFinda tomorrow, we both have just learned so much that just helps me in my day to day when I'm working with the digital teams and the marketing department and understanding that from the very ground level.

Tamara: I completely resonate with that. The more senior I've become, the less hands on and more consultative I've become. And also the larger the organizations, I guess the more consulting they need rather than hands on because they've got people who can do the hands on work.

And starting up my business, FIIT Collective, and also The Females In Tech Show, it has just opened my eyes and sort of gave me that hands on experience that I needed again to become a better consultant. So I honestly believe when you do become hands on, it does make you a better consultant or CIO like yourself.

Sam: Yeah, absolutely. Doing it yourself, it just gives you such better appreciation for what it takes to do the job, I think.

Tamara: Absolutely. So just to clarify, is BeautiFinda only available in Australia at the moment?

Sam: Yeah. Yeah, it is. We did have plans of launching overseas. We just haven't quite made it there yet. So, yeah.

Tamara: So soon to come.

Sam: Yeah. Watch this space. Yeah. So we're about three years in and so we have learned a hell of a lot in those three years.



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Tamara: Yeah. All right. Amazing. So what would one piece of advice be for someone who is looking to have their own startup?

Sam: I just think try. And so everyone says, "You really got to kind of move quickly and that sort of thing," which is great. I think just how can you get to the market with the most basic product to see whether there's a desire, and also is that product going to make you money from day one?

And if it's not, then I'd be really thinking about whether you should do it. I see a lot of people going after investment and it's something we chose not to do because you spend a lot of time trying to get investment rather than try to grow the business. And look, this is just my personal opinion.

You look at the Atlassian guys and they made money from day one and now they're multi billionaires and have just continued to kind of improve and improve and improve. And yeah, you see a lot of really great success stories.

I think when you don't have much money to do stuff, you've really got to make the money that you've got go far. And I've seen in corporate where you've got a bit more money to do stuff, you can kind of make some not so great decisions off the back of that. Whereas I think if you've got only a small amount of money, then you've really got to kind of figure things out and learn new skills yourself.

Tamara: Absolutely. It's a great opportunity to learn. I know that I'm very blessed having a partner who also somewhat works in tech and marketing, so I can leverage or lean on him for a few things, but there's been so many things that I've had to learn throughout my journey, and I love that opportunity. It puts me on my toes and steps me outside of my comfort zone.

Sam: Yeah, absolutely. And something which I think is great to do, is use one of the SEO tools and if you're looking at an online business, have a look at how much people are actually searching for what you're thinking of providing. How many people are actually searching for that on a day to day basis and to say, "Is there a need? Am I solving a problem? How is this?"

It's fascinating for us because we kind of started three or four years, how much more we find customers want to engage with us online compared to then, just in terms of we've got the Ubers, just transacting online is even in the last three years so much more. People are so much more happy to do that than say they were three or four years ago, just with Uber Eats and all that kind of thing.



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Tamara: Yeah. Yeah. Well I know for me, I don't like really going in stores as sad as it is. I much prefer to purchase things online just because it's faster, it's easier, and I know what I want. But don't get me wrong, I do sometimes love going into a retail store and going shopping with my Mum and having that fun experience.

Sam: And I think it is about that experience.

Tamara: Okay. So if any of the listeners wanted to support or connect with you, how would they do that?

Sam: Yeah. So you can find me on [LinkedIn](#). I'm Samantha McIntyre, M-C-I-N-T-Y-R-E.

You can follow us on [BeautiFinda on Instagram](#). So it's Beauty with an I and finder with an A. You can contact us at hello@beautifinda.com.au.

And if you really want to, you can follow my personal Instagram, which is [sammijanemac](#), M-A-C, but you're going to get pictures of my children and my horses.

Tamara: Amazing. So I just wanted to change gears a little bit. So before we end the show, just a few quick fire questions. Are you ready?

Sam: I'm ready.

Tamara: So what's one thing we can do to achieve gender equality in the tech industry?

Sam: I think for this, it really starts back at school and encouraging young girls to see tech as a step into any type of industry. And I actually think it really starts with encouraging more females to teach tech.

You do what you see. So if there's no female teachers teaching tech, then it's really hard for girls to see themselves in tech, I think. And I think you need to get the numbers to start from. So a few years ago I was going out to schools talking to young girls, but we're talking to girls when they're about 15, and I think now it's more like nine or 10. So yeah.

Tamara: Wow, that's a huge drop. I definitely agree with that one, starting at school. I know I won awards in computing, but never was I ever told that I could actually have a degree or a career in computing, and it took me so many years to switch roles three or four times before I ended up in tech. So I definitely agree with you there.



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What's one piece of advice you would give yourself at the age of 25?

Sam: So I would say, even though it sounds like I've put myself out there, I would say maybe put myself out there a little bit more, maybe be a bit more kind of confident, and don't worry so much what others think of you.

I'm a bit of an introvert. If I had to go to a function, I would always kind of take someone with me. I didn't really like going to stuff by myself. I've kind of gotten over that in about the last 10 years, but yeah, just have a crack basically. Have a go.

Tamara: I love that. Okay. So what's one thing at school that you wish you were taught, but weren't?

Sam: So, probably to code and to problem solve. So, it really was a rote learning back in my day. And I talked about my sleeping during class.

So yeah, and I did kind of get into university. I was taught to type, which I'm actually pretty grateful for these days. So I can touch type and I find myself quite efficient as a result of that. I can get stuff done really quickly. But yeah, if I was taught to code, then I think that would have been great. I did have a Commodore 64 client. So, yeah.

Tamara: And my last question is, if you could recommend one book for females in tech to read, what would it be?

Sam: So I'm never good with one book. I've got about six on the go. I'm quite bad at half reading books.

I really like [The Moment of Lift by Melinda Gates](#), just in terms of what she's been able to achieve in terms of you lift one woman and that will lift more. And I just found it a fascinating book.

I really liked, it's a little bit old, but I really like [Lean In by Sheryl Sandberg](#). I know that she's gotten a little bit of flack off the back of that and sure, she's a woman of wealth, et cetera, but I do like a lot of her stories.

And the other one that I did like actually as well is [My Year of Saying Yes by Shonda Rhimes](#). So she's hilarious. I actually listened to the audio book of that one and she's such a good storyteller. If you don't know who she is, she wrote Grey's Anatomy. And the other one she



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wrote with Carrie Washington, I can't remember the name of it. So she wrote three major miniseries for American TV. She's just hilarious, but she's just a woman who she's a single Mum, she's African-American and yeah, she just decided that she needed to start saying yes to more things, which I think is great.

And I know this was just one book, but I also really like podcasts. I listen to a lot of podcasts, and I find them really inspiring and motivational as well. And so I really like Mia Freedman's [No Filter](#), and I do like Sylvia Jeffreys' new podcast as well, [Future Women](#). So I think they're two really great podcasts, which I listen to a lot.

Tamara: Yeah. I love Future Women. I follow them on their website and get all of their emails. And I've just recently started listening to their podcast as well, and it's a really good one.

Sam: Yeah. Pip Edwards was great about how she started P.E Nation. I listened to a little bit. Oh, who else did I like? The girl who started, I think it was Start a Plan, what you use for uploading into Instagram. She was amazing. I love listening to people's stories, but basically every time I listen to something like that, I get something out of it.

Tamara: And I'm sure a lot of the listeners today are going to get so much out of your story. So on that note, thank you so much, Sam, for taking time out of your busy schedule to allow me to interview you and share your career story. It has been so inspirational.

Sam: Thank you. Thank you very much for having me. I've really enjoyed chatting. So, terrific.

Tamara: Thank you for joining me today. If you'd like more information about today's show, you can read my show notes and any relevant links at fiitcollective.com/6. That's FIITCollective.com/6.

I am so grateful for this opportunity to serve the Females in Tech community and hope you find the information helpful and inspiring. My goal is to inspire you to reach your goals and provide you with the practical tips on how to be the best version of yourself. If you did enjoy the show, then I'd like to ask for three things in return so that I can educate and inspire more career-motivated women and male allies.

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