



EMBRACE THE GOLDILOCKS CHALLENGE

NAVIGATING THE JOB HUNT JOURNEY

Neil Catton

LEADER

Too Much, Too Little, Just Right - but finding that balance is becoming an almost impossible task.

I've been trying to think of a way of explaining experience and what it actually can mean, not sure this works but I'm seeing it akin to my Driving experience. Stay with me on this.

I passed my driving test a long time ago and it was only after passing that I started to truly gain the skills needed for a lifetime of driving ability. Passing a test (or exam) does not mean you are any good, it just means you have been able to provide the correct response to a situation or question.

Over the years I've gained more and more experience of driving which covers, both manual and automatic, small 600cc cars through to monster V12s, ordinary cars to limited production run supercars, on-road and off-road, normal driving and racing/rally driving, Uk roads and European ones. Throughout all of this it has been about my abilities to drive, which have constantly evolved and changed throughout the years.

Today my current car doesn't have a gear level of any description - it has buttons as it is drive-by-wire, hell I don't really have a key as it is a wearable. Can I drive this, yes, did I need loads of training and past experience of driving that exact vehicle - no - my core skills and experience means I don't need it. 5 mins handover to cover where all the controls are and that's it. Just as I don't need to know all the low level details of every business or technology - I can use my foundational skills and built up experience to operate in any environment.

But, someone who has just passed their test today in a modern car with all the automated controls would have serious issues driving something which is manual, requires double declutch, cadence breaking, and has no ABS. If they passed a manual driving test they could figure it out, but an automatic not a chance. Hiring someone without the breadth and depth of experience will hinder any chances of driving true change, or being able to work with technology they have never used. Just as someone who has only ever have driven one vehicle, hiring someone who has only ever done that same role means you get the same safe things.

My experience goes further, I used to service all my own cars - I know what and how and when to do things, but in today's world I know to get someone trained. Why? Well because something as simple as changing a battery now requires an ECU reset. In the world of technology, I know when to call upon people who have the detailed skills needed, I know what to ask and the outcome and understand how it needs to be done.

Experience goes even further - I know for example that modifying a car for performance doesn't start with the engine. You start with brakes, suspension, steering, wheels, tyres, hoses, liquids, air intake, exhaust, engine (clutch, drive shaft), then ECU. Why? Because dumping a load of power into a car by updating the ECU means things will break as they cannot take the power. Just as I know how to build and deliver projects - I know the order things are needed and why it has to be done that way - skip a step and things can go bang.

The other week my car had a service with some recall work thrown in, no problem and the garage said the system said 4-5 hours. So I plan for that time, what happens when I turn up at the garage - the service manager says it's 9 hours, wait...what? Turns out the computer system has a recall job as 2 hours, but the person who actually does the work knows it's 7 hours. This is the difference for me between knowledge and wisdom based on experience, human centred design makes a big difference when building solutions.

But experience is also knowing what works and what doesn't, for example I know the automatic gears on a Range Rover Evoque are terrible on kick-down and can leave you stuck between gears; I know the intelligent lighting on a Mercedes is way better than my current car; I know that upgrading a car means a much bigger TCO as it needs more maintenance; and on. Same as I know about companies taking on monolithic ERP solutions will result in overly complicated processes, shelf ware and bloatware - as well as costing a fortune; as I know jumping on the technology hype craze is a recipe for problems; and companies forget to update things like BCP when bringing in new technologies; and on...

I've never been asked by a garage when I'm looking to buy a new car for proof of my entire driving history - I can literally walk into a Bugatti showroom and drive away with a new car (if I could afford it!). There is an automatic assumption that I can drive. So why is our work experience all about history - the past - what we have done; and not what we are capable of doing? I can (and have) install high-end car alarms and audio

systems, just as I can (and have) coded in more 2GL/3GL/4GL... languages than I can remember. I wouldn't do it today because my career has moved on, just as my needs from my cars has moved on.

My driving experience includes small 600cc cars through to HGVs, and what I've driven has been dependent upon my needs, requirements and outcomes. Just as my work career has changed and evolved.

So yes I can drive a race car at silly speeds but I don't do it now, but I know how you need to change your entire driving style. I know my limits as well. Just as I know what I can / cannot do in the world of business and technology.

I started this out as a quick post, but it kind of morphed into something else. Experience is not the evil incarnate companies are tarnishing it with, it is more than just skills on a page, it is the real world of knowing the difference between Skills, Intelligence, Knowledge and Wisdom.

For me my experience allows me to bring that practical and real Wisdom to any situation or organisation that I work with.

Neil Catton is an experienced strategist and recognised thought leader on the ethical and structural implications of emerging technologies. Through his *Next Evolution* series, Neil explores how legacy institutions must adapt to remain relevant in an era shaped by AI, spatial computing, quantum systems, and digital transformation.

He is a trusted voice on responsible innovation, with a distinctive narrative style that blends systems thinking, moral foresight, and practical governance insight. Neil's work spans public service redesign, cyber resilience, digital ethics, and ambient technology — always grounded in purpose, people, and long-term value.

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