

Transcript for Group B: Participant 10

Interviewer: [...] thank you for participating in this interview. Let me start by giving a short definition of micro credentials so that we can all be on the same page. So micro credentials can be defined as short, verified courses, where successful candidates are presented with a digital certificate or a digital badge after the completion of the course. You can start now. So the first question I have is what are the technological skills that you think entrepreneurs need to acquire micro-credentials?

Interviewee: OK umm I believe entrepreneurs should focus on acquiring skills such as coding, website development, and proficiency in software applications relevant to the industry they are in. I think that's basically what I think I'm sure there are many other technological skills but these are the ones I can think of right now.

Interviewer: Alright thank you for that, the next thing we can talk about is how much effort do you think it take to acquire a micro-credential? I mean these short courses are usually um they're very short so they don't take that much time if I can say, but in terms of effort just how much effort would you say you would need to finish a short course?

Interviewee: Yeah you're right it doesn't take that much time I don't think it does but I think it definitely requires significant effort and a lot of consistency. Think I'm doing training on your own is quite difficult because you really need to be self-motivated otherwise you won't finish a thing you know, so really it's up to you, how much effort you decide to put into this course, it's entirely up to you and how driven you are.

Interviewer: I think that's a very fair point thank you for that. Moving on let's talk about the facilitating conditions so basically I mean what sort of things you need to complete a micro credential course. I mean you might need things like uh just to give you an example, you definitely need time, you need, if you are doing it online you need the internet. So what other things can you think of that you need to complete a short course.

Interviewee: I think you definitely need to have good time management skills so that you can juggle both things you know so you can juggle your training which is your micro credential course and you can also manage other things that you need to do in your life so definitely good time management skills are a must apart from that like you already mentioned you obviously need good Internet connection because I know a lot of the content is usually shared via some sort of platform online even if you have your training in person sometimes you have maybe some slides or some sort of content which you will need a device like a laptop to access so you will definitely need good Internet connection like you mentioned already.

Interviewer: that is a very good point that you mentioned on time management, thank you for that. Moving on to the next question, how easy do you think it is to

access a micro credential program, do you think these are easy to find or that it's difficult to find them?

Interviewee: Yeah so personally I think it is very easy to find micro credential programs because honestly they're all over the Internet they're all over these platforms you know your social media your learning platforms whatever you want to call them I think they're very easily accessible and they are usually actually tailored to you I think there's an algorithm that is in charge of these things or that is in control of these things and it tailors these things based on your interests and the things you search on your phone for example so I think it's quite easy.

Interviewer: I think that is quite true because information has become very easy to find these days because of the internet, thank you for that point. The next question we have is how do you think getting micro credentials contributes to an entrepreneur's skills, do you think it helps the entrepreneurs to increase their skills or maybe, I mean what do you think about that?

Interviewee: OK that's a good question. I think that micro credentials are very beneficial in so many ways. Like for example, they obviously give entrepreneurs specialized, specific knowledge and skills you know, that they need, I mean skills that are actually relevant for their businesses so I think that is a big plus, a big bonus. They can also get skills like problem solving skills, decision making skills, I know there are so many micro credential courses that are available where entrepreneurs can get so many different sorts of skills that they actually need for their businesses so I think in that sense micro credentials definitely help entrepreneurs to increase their skills.

Interviewer: thank you for that point I think that is very valid. Talking about training, how is training currently being conducted in your business, how do you currently do it?

Interviewee: So before, we used to have our training mostly online but now things are slowly moving towards a more hybrid approach. I think a lot of people are actually doing this whether it's for work or whatsoever, people are mostly now doing a hybrid approach where things are done half online and half in person so that is also how we do our training, we have some theoretical sessions those usually happen online um so that everyone can do them in their own time and then the more practical things require your physical presence. So that's how we do it at the moment.

Interviewer: that is very interesting thank you for mentioning that. Then if you were to get some micro credentials which skills would you want to improve through that course?

Interviewee: Umm since the world is very technological and everything is just leaning towards technology, I really want to improve my skills in that direction, another thing that is also very important is data, so my goal is to work on getting

skills in data analysis, I also want to improve my digital marketing skills, my planning skills, my general business management skills, so that I can manage my business better so that it can grow and be profitable you know. I definitely have a long list of skills but I'm pretty sure other people as well, but I think these are at the top of my list.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing that, in addition to that question, how long does it usually take to complete a micro-credential?

Interviewee: So the length of the period it takes you to complete a micro credential course I think there's no set period Because it really depends on different people and how they go through the course content so I think it depends on the complexity of the content so the amount of time it will take will depend or vary from person to person. For one person it can take them two weeks for another person it can take them four weeks but I think another thing to also bear in mind is the actual set duration of the course. So if the course says it needs to be completed in three months then you have three months that is the maximum duration you get then now it's up to you to utilize the full three months, or to finish in in a shorter period of time so it all depends on you I think so depends on you and it depends on the course content.

Interviewer: that is a good point that you raised there. The next question is do you think it's valuable to get micro credentials as an entrepreneur instead of getting a traditional university degree or some sort of college qualification, what do you think is best for entrepreneurs, as an entrepreneur yourself?

Interviewee: so I think getting micro credentials I have not gotten any myself but from this conversation and from what I've heard from my peers I think there's definitely some value there because I can see that micro credentials are shorter, they are cheaper, they are more flexible, because you can do the make your own time so I think there's a lot of value and the fact that you can get specialized focused you know specific skills that are relevant to you I think that is definitely valuable. Whereas a university degree I think it takes a long time and it's also very expensive and as an entrepreneur you're trying to make money not spend money so I would say I think micro credentials are definitely something I also want to explore.

Interviewer: Good point thank you. Now that we are talking of exploring micro credentials if you were to enroll in a micro credential program, what sort of things would you look at before you choose a program to pursue. And by that I mean what sort of things or factors will help you decide which course is right for you?

Interviewee: OK so personally I really like a more hands on approach so I like the more practical things I think I learn better that that way, so when looking for a short course I would definitely look at the structure of the course and see what sort of content is the course made out of I know theory is also important but I also value the practical side so I would look at something that has you know a bit of theory and also the practical side because I just learned better that way and there are lots of

other things to consider, obviously the cost needs to be relevant to my needs so it depends now on what skill I actually want to improve if I want to work on my marketing skills then I would look for a course that is focused on marketing you know what I'm saying so I think those are some of the things I would look at another thing I would look at is the time actually and by that I mean the duration how long would this course take because life is so busy we have so much to do you know in addition to our businesses we also have other things going on the side, other responsibilities be it family be it whatever it may be so I need to know how long this course is going to run for so I can plan accordingly so these are some of the things that I would look at before I decide.

Interviewer: Thank you for that point. I think it's very important to balance your personal life and your training and your career and things like that so I think it is very important that you mentioned that you look at that before you decide on what course to pursue. Another thing I would like us to talk about is how you measure your skills. I know people use different things some businesses have set KPI's that they look at, what do you look at?

Interviewee: OK that is an interesting question, so I think I look at a combination of factors let's say so OK things like your experience in the field I think that is very important how much experience do you actually have in your field and then education also plays a role but I think experience actually is more important than your education because there are people with no education but they have lots of experience and they're still very efficient at doing their jobs or at doing the tasks that they need to complete in a business or organization so I think that is very important another thing is also like reviews you know like feedback from like performance reviews I think those are also a good indication of a person's skills because the people around you the people you work with every day can see the things you're good at they can see the things you're struggling with in that way you can measure how well you're doing.

Interviewer: those are very interesting points that you raised there. Thank you for that. Another thing we have here is what do you wish to get from your micro credential program if you were to do one, what would you hope to get out of it?

Interviewee: I think for me I just want to be better for my business for myself so if I was to do a short course it would definitely be to better my skills, to improve my business skills and I need to do that through an institution that is well recognized so that my credential can actually have value and it can be recognized by other people. I seek validation of the knowledge and skills through recognized certification or accreditation.

Interviewer: all right, and how much flexibility you think micro credentials give you, that is if we are comparing to the more traditional qualifications like your degrees and diplomas?

Interviewee: I think we already touched a little bit on this in our past conversation, but just to reiterate I'll say again I have not done any micro credentials yet but I hope to do them in the near future from what I got that I think micro credentials are very flexible compared to university degrees for starters a university degree has a set period of like three years, four years. I don't think there are any degrees that are shorter than three years, so you need to be doing that qualification for three years of your life whereas if you do a micro credential course you can be done in just a few weeks or a few months and you would have gotten the skill that you need at that time, the skill that you that you need, that is actually relevant at that moment. The other thing as well with the micro credentials is I think we mentioned earlier how you can do them online, meaning you can do them in your own time I think that is a great deal of flexibility.

Interviewer: I think that is quite true. Thinking of credibility, would you say micro credentials are just as credible as degrees?

Interviewee: I think degrees I just you know easily acceptable in the society. And by that I mean some people, I mean, they probably value degrees more than short courses because it feels like people with degrees are more educated than those that have only done short courses. I think this is not the case, so I think micro credentials are actually credible but now it depends I think on a couple of factors because you can just do any course and claim to have that skill or to have that knowledge. I think the course needs to be from an accredited institution so a good school, an institution with a good reputation for example if your short course is from UCT I don't think anyone would have a problem with that. But then again you know society I think not everyone has warmed up yet to micro credentials I have not done them yet, not because I don't think they're credible but it's just something I was like oh I'll do it later, I'll do it later you know, but I'm actually quite interested in them.

Interviewer: all right thank you. Do you think micro-credentials accurately depict a person's skills levels?

Interviewee: this one is a bit difficult for me. I'll have to get the micro credential myself first and then I'll come back and tell you.

Interviewer: All right that is not a problem. We can just move on to the next question. How do you think micro credentials can increase a person's employability?

Interviewee: OK that's a good question I think they probably help people to be more employable because I think employers value micro credentials I think they are slowly warming up to that. And I think getting micro credentials shows that you are continuous learner it shows that you want to continuously be improving yourself be better in yourself which I think is a good thing for employers when they're looking to employ someone. I also think it looks good on your CV.

Interviewer: This is an interesting one which method of learning do you prefer between game-based learning or traditional learning?

Interviewee: OK call mom I actually prefer game based learning I think there's a lot to it it's also new because I haven't heard much about it but I would assume if you're learning through a game I think it's easier to remember things that way because I'm thinking about the normal games that you play you know you almost have that memorized in a way so I think would remember things better if I learned through games.

Interviewer: That is interesting thank you. What are some of your business goals and would you need to better your entrepreneurial skills to acquire those goals?

Interviewee: so essentially I just want my business to grow and grow and grow. I wanted to expand and become really successful I also wanted to not rely on me too much or to rely on my involvement too much so I needed to be sustainable in a way and I think in order to achieve that, I will definitely need to improve my skills which is not where I want it to be yet so I definitely need to do something about my skills development.

Interviewer: All right, I think a lot of entrepreneurs even the ones that have made it, also need to continually upskill themselves. Then do you think micro-credentials can assist you in achieving some of your business goals?

Interviewee: Oh yes, micro credentials I think they can definitely help me here I will have to try them definitely especially because they're affordable and they don't take too much time I think I have nothing to lose if I give this a shot.

Interviewer: For interest' sake, does your business use any form of technology for any of its operations?

Interviewee: I can't say we have any like special technologies that we use in my business not yet everything is still very much old-fashioned if I can call it that, but we do obviously use your basic things like your word your excel I use that for some of my documentation and reports.

Interviewer: Wow, thank you very much for your time today, this has been very insightful.