

Transcript for Group A: Participant 7

Interviewer: Good morning [...] since we're ready to start. Let's dive right in. I have some questions to guide our conversation but you know, you are welcome to share anything that you'd like to. Alright, not to take up any more time, what are the technological skills that you think entrepreneurs need to get micro-credentials?

Interviewee: I think the technological skills such as digital marketing, data analysis, and some sort of knowledge in productivity tools like spreadsheets and project management software's are crucial. Something like that, does answer the question?

Interviewer: Oh please feel free to share your thoughts. Just to add to what you mentioned, so in terms of things like, what can I say, the know-how that you need to go through your course content. What are your thoughts on that?

Interviewee: Okay, I mean obviously you need to know how to use a computer, you also probably need like basic literacy.

Interviewer: Good point, thank you. Then how much effort do you think it takes to acquire a micro-credential?

Interviewee: Like I think acquiring a micro-credential requires a lot of dedication and you need really good time management otherwise you'll struggle to finish. But also depending on the complexity and duration of the course, it might take a lot of effort or little effort, it depends on a few factors.

Interviewer: Mmm that makes sense, thank you. Then what are the facilitating conditions you need to get a micro-credential, and by that we're about the things you need to complete the course, is it for example, time or money, you know things like that?

Interviewee: Okay I think, you know, I think if you want to get micro-credentials, then you need access to reliable internet connectivity, you'll definitely need a suitable device like a laptop or tablet or some sort of smart gadget, you also have to be careful about having a conducive learning environment. So you need that quiet space you know, otherwise you can't focus. Then on top of that, I think you need a little budget for course fees and some things you will need to buy to make your course journey smoother.

Interviewer: Alright, those are great points, thank you. How easy would you say it is to access these short course which give you a micro credential when you're done with the course?

Interviewee: Quite easy actually, because I mean, there are so many micro credential courses available online, all you have to do is search for them and voila. So personally I think it's very easy and find these courses and to complete them also.

Interviewer: That's quite important to note, because I mean I think that's a great benefit for entrepreneurs right, they don't have to struggle so much since the courses can be found very easily on the internet. Thank you for that point, moving on, how does acquiring micro-credentials contribute to an entrepreneur's skills levels? Do you think these credentials contribute at all or that they don't make much of a difference?

Interviewee: Okay that's a good question, so I think that getting these micro-credentials improves an entrepreneur's skills definitely, I mean they can get specific knowledge on certain things, and then they can apply that knowledge in a real sense, so put those skills they learn to use. I know there are some courses on marketing, financial management, and business management, I'm sure there are a lot more on many different things.

Interviewer: Alright, I think we both agree on the value of training right, so how is training currently being done in your business, do you usually have it in-person, how do you do it at the moment?

Interviewee: I mean I don't know if anyone wants to do in-person training nowadays, especially if they have other things to do you know, like they're maybe a full time entrepreneur or they have a full time job and they're trying to get some skills on the side for their side business. I don't think people have that much time anymore.

Interviewer: Hmm that's a fair point on how busy everyone is, I mean I understand why some people would not have time to have physical training because it means they have to drop what they're doing during the day to have training since in-person training doesn't happen in the evening, if you know what I mean. What do you prefer though?

Interviewee: Personally, I like my training to be done online because I want to be able to do it when I get the chance, so normally in the evening, you know, after hours, I can do a bit, then carry on later.

Interviewer: Yeah that makes sense to me. Then moving on, which skills do you aim to improve through micro-credentials?

Interviewee: Huh interesting, I have a long list but at the moment I want to focus on my business a bit more so I need to improve my skills in areas such as digital marketing, this is an important one you know because when I get that skill I can market my business more and get more customers and make more money. Then I'll need financial skills as well, its very easy to be irresponsible with money but then that stops your business from growing so I need this skill, then you know, another important one is project management because honestly, my business runs on projects, so I have to know how to manage each project, currently I just do what I think is logical but I want to you know, like have the actual skills to manage my projects well. I think I'll be more successful if I do this.

Interviewer: Alright, I think those are some important skills you spoke about there. Okay, how long does it usually take to complete a micro-credential course, how long do you think it takes?

Interviewee: Okay I think how long it takes to complete the course or the program that you choose probably depends on the structure of that course and also like the pace at which you study at, I mean if you're slow right, it will probably take you longer to finish your course, and if you're fast it'll take you not a long time I think. But typically, just from the top of my head I think micro-credentials range from let's say few weeks, like from 2 weeks to a few months, like 6 months, some go to 12 months but if it takes a year is it still a short course? Just wondering

Interviewer: That's interesting. I think if you're comparing the one year course to a 3 year degree then maybe we can still classify it as a short course.

Interviewee: [...] Hmm think about it.

Interviewee: Alright, moving on, do you find value in acquiring micro-credentials instead of a traditional university degree? Which one do you is more valuable for an entrepreneur?

Interviewee: So yes, I see value in getting these micro-credentials alongside a traditional university degree. Because I can get the general foundation from the degree and then the specialised knowledge or skills from the micro-credentials, but I think this is more important in the job market, as an entrepreneur and employer myself, I think micro-credentials are more helpful actually

Interviewer: That's interesting, thank you. If you were to do a short course how would you decide which course to go for? What are the factors I mean, like the things which you would look at first?

Interviewee: Hmm let me see, I would consider a couple of things such as how relevant is the course to my career goals, the reputation of the institution that is offering the course because I think that is very important because like it shows me how credible the course is, like I wouldn't doubt a course from Udemy because it's a well known platform now, but any other one that I don't know, I'd have many questions. Then okay, also is the course affordable, is it flexible enough so that it can accommodate my busy schedule? Those are some of the things I'd say to myself before I choose the course.

Interviewer: Very valid points there. Then how do you measure your skills levels? I know different entrepreneurs measure it differently because of maybe different industries so the things they value are different

Interviewee: Yeah so as of now I look at the number of years of experience, but I know there is probably a lot more to it, but at the moment that is good enough for me.

Interviewer: Alright, and what do you want to gain from a micro-credential if you were to get one?

Interviewee: Yeah I think I sort of answered this one already previously when we spoke about what was it, my marketing skills, finance skills and I think I also mentioned my project management skills right.

Interviewer: Oh yeah I remember that, it was sort of tied to a previous question, Okay, we can move on then. How much flexibility does micro-credentials allow you in comparison to a traditional university or college degree?

Interviewee: Oh I think they are definitely more flexible, you know, I can have self-paced learning and I can balance my other commitments such as work or family responsibilities and other things I need to do, I can actually balance that with training, so it's very good actually.

Interviewer: Alright, then coming to credibility, I think you touched on this when you were talking about the things you look for in a course before you choose it. Would you say micro-credentials are as credible as qualifications acquired from universities and colleges?

Interviewee: Yeah I mentioned that right, the institution offering the course is important, you have to make sure they're the real thing, that they have a good reputation, if there are reviews, read those, see what other people are saying about the course.

Interviewer: Yeah I think that's important before diving into the thing. The next question I have here is do you think micro-credentials accurately depict a person's skills levels?

Interviewee: Honestly, I believe so, because I think micro-credentials can sort of show the practical skills that someone has, of course you need the physical evidence too in terms of the actual output, or what can I say, the actual results that of that skills

Interviewer: Interesting, then how can micro-credentials increase a person's employability?

Interviewee: Okay so because you can get actual specific skills which are relevant to your job or to your industry, I think this make you more employable, it definitely increases your chances I think.

Interviewer: Good point, then moving on, which method of learning would you prefer between game-based learning or traditional learning

Interviewee: Personally, I prefer a combination of both game-based learning and traditional learning methods. So sort of like a hybrid approach, I think I would get the most out of the course if it was done in a hybrid way

Interviewer: Alright, there's an interesting one here, what are some of your business goals and would you need to better your entrepreneurial skills to acquire those goals?

Interviewee: Yeah definitely, I would love to achieve Forbes under 30 through my business and I definitely would need to better my skills in order to get there in life.

Interviewer: Oh yes! That is very possible, and do you think micro-credentials can assist you in achieving some of your business goals?

Interviewee: Most definitely, I think the more micro-credentials I do the better I can become a better entrepreneur and grow my businesses you know. There is really a lot of benefit in these courses, we're just too busy to give it some attention sometimes.

Interviewer: That's true. Does your business use any form of technology for any of its operations?

Interviewee: Yeah yes, currently we use some cloud services for things like storage and to also collaborate on projects. We also use things like Zoom for our meetings and things.

Interviewer: Oh interesting [...] thank you very much for your time today. I appreciate it.