

This transcript was exported on Nov 10, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Lana Fried ([00:00](#)):

My name's Lana and I'm the host of Get Hungry. I was born and grew up on Boonwurrung country and also have a very personal connection to my own Jewish culture and heritage. On behalf of the team producing this podcast, we pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, the traditional owners of the land the Australian Swinburne campuses are located on, and where this podcast was recorded.

([00:21](#)):

We also pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and aspirations of Aboriginal Australia. We must remember that under the concrete and the asphalt, this land is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land. The rich storytelling history of the world's oldest living culture is what we proudly pay homage to when we share stories on this podcast.

([00:50](#)):

This is Get Hungry, a show where we give you a taste of what career success looks like by talking to some of the most successful people in different industries and learn how they got to where they are today. I'm your host Lana Fried, and I'm a psych student at Swinburne University of Technology. And like a lot of you, I often wonder what it is that makes a person successful. In this show, I'm going to talk to people from different industries who've asked themselves the same questions as you and I. Where am I going and how do I get there? We'll grab a bite of food or even a coffee from somewhere near Swinburne. Then we'll find a spot on campus to have a chat. We'll talk about everything. We'll explore the successes that they've had, and just as important, the mistakes and missteps that they've learned from. So let's get into it.

([01:40](#)):

Today I'm catching up with Adrienne Maxted, from Deloitte. Now, if you don't know, Deloitte is one of the biggest companies in the world and they do heaps of things, from financial consulting to risk advisory. But one thing they're famous for is cybersecurity, and Adrienne is an absolute master in this area. When she started her career, she was one of only a handful of women in the cyber industry. And since then, she's gone on to find her specialty and climb the ranks at Deloitte.

([02:06](#)):

In today's episode, you'll hear how finding an area to specialise in can really help your career. Adrienne will talk about how she found her specialisation at work, she'll pass on some advice to help you find your niche and she'll share the story of how she accidentally stumbled into cybersecurity on her first day at uni. Today we're meeting at Cafe Gomez, which is actually on the Swinburne campus. So let's go.

([02:41](#)):

So I'm here at Cafe Gomez, on campus. This one has got me through many a solo study dates. Very much a industrial vibe cafe. You've got some gorgeous little quirky couches on the sides. Very homey. I think I see Adrienne waiting for me over there. Adrienne, is it?

Adrienne Maxted ([03:01](#)):

Yes it is.

Lana Fried ([03:02](#)):

Hi, I am Lana.

This transcript was exported on Nov 10, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Adrienne Maxted ([03:03](#)):

Hi Lana, how are you?

Lana Fried ([03:04](#)):

I'm good, thank you. How are you?

Adrienne Maxted ([03:05](#)):

Great, thank you.

Lana Fried ([03:06](#)):

I'm so glad that we were able to carve out some time in your busy schedule to have an interview with you today.

Adrienne Maxted ([03:11](#)):

Yes. Looking forward to it.

Lana Fried ([03:12](#)):

Amazing. Well, why don't we get straight on into it.

Adrienne Maxted ([03:14](#)):

Perfect.

Lana Fried ([03:21](#)):

So we're going to dive into the interview in a moment. But first of all, I just wanted to ask you if you had a preferred caffeinated beverage that you'd like to prepare yourself going into a day of battling cybersecurity threats?

Adrienne Maxted ([03:34](#)):

So I am a latte girl and probably two or three.

Lana Fried ([03:38](#)):

That is a lot to get through then.

Adrienne Maxted ([03:41](#)):

And normally an extra shot.

Lana Fried ([03:43](#)):

Wow. Well I guess you are sufficiently buzzed to get started with the interview then.

Adrienne Maxted ([03:47](#)):

I am, indeed.

Lana Fried ([03:48](#)):

Amazing. So with both of us very caffeinated, we found our way to a lecture theatre and made ourselves comfortable. To start out the conversation, I asked Adrienne about her first day at university, the moment she discovered cybersecurity.

Adrienne Maxted ([04:12](#)):

Yes, on my first day at uni I was lining up to register and I think the course that I was doing was a bachelor of business, but the university decided to open a double degree with computer science and they were looking for additional students to join that double degree of computer science and bachelor of business. And they were going along and just looking at four people that had the scores to have that opportunity really, or consider taking on a double degree. And I was tapped on the shoulder, literally was explained what the course and the opportunity was and I guess that was the start of what really was unknown for me, being a computer science degree, having very limited experience with computers. And just took that opportunity and said yes and I guess went through a four-year degree instead of a three-year degree and come out with a double degree.

Lana Fried ([05:03](#)):

And you say that you didn't have much experience in computers going into the business degree. Did you have much of an interest in it back then?

Adrienne Maxted ([05:10](#)):

Absolutely not. I grew up on a country farm, 5,000 acre farm. Computers were certainly not in my family. It wasn't something we grew up with. Nowadays, you look at the future pathways of our children and look at all the new jobs that are going to be, we probably didn't have those discussions with our parents about new jobs., But in fact computer science and programming was I guess the future for us.

Lana Fried ([05:35](#)):

Yeah. That's pretty amazing. I guess the timing and everything, how it lined up to get you where you are today. What did you feel gave you the courage to step into this new and blind opportunity?

Adrienne Maxted ([05:45](#)):

I think it was probably just the curiosity, or just taking opportunity and trying something. And I probably grew up with just a bit of persistence and giving everything your all and it was very foreign. Like it was sitting in my first lecture learning Pascal programming, wondering what this was all about. I think the first two or three weeks we were all like deer in headlights.

([06:10](#)):

And there were probably 30 or 40 of us that were pulled into this double degree programme, which was really funny because we were all just wondering what we'd done and there was a really high dropout rate in that first three weeks. So our class was significantly smaller after that first month. It was a bit of a challenge. The ones that were doing the double degree sort of all come together because we were in the same boat that this wasn't what we started out to do. So we all got together, we were working through having this extra workload of a computer science degree and really learning programming for the first time. So we sort of formed a bond fairly quickly.

Lana Fried ([06:50](#)):

So when you were going through it, how many women were there in your course. And of the ones who started, how many were there who graduated?

Adrienne Maxted ([06:56](#)):

There were around 15 women that started in the double degree and we had three that graduated after the four years. And we as a group really did stick together. So we were friends through our degree, both in the business side. And we didn't get a lot of optional subjects, so we were in the same subjects in every year. So we were there together through the thick and thin of it all. So I guess we did get to know our crew.

Lana Fried ([07:26](#)):

It makes sense why you've still got that bond after you've gone through it as well. I've heard if you want to be successful in your career, then finding an area where you can be an expert can really make a difference. And from what I know, that was very true for you. So how did you figure out what you wanted to specialise in?

Adrienne Maxted ([07:43](#)):

I started my career I guess wanting to make sure that I use both of my degrees, computer science and bachelor of business. So I started in IT audit, but what I quickly realised was that I probably didn't like the audit and checking other people's work. I was really interested in designing and building and coming up with solutions and problem solving. And I went full-time into IT audit and from there, I went into consulting. It was more fulfilling to be solving the problem for the client. And so I went on large scale, what we would know now as business transformation type programmes where there were sometimes hundreds of people and they were building processes and making changes to their systems in large scale. And so I just loved big teams and collaboration and designing and solving problems. And very quickly, once you were living, eating and breathing that security and that application and those systems, you've built up this expertise and this area of specialisation. And everyone had their field or the area that they were working in. Just happened that I was working in security and this controls focus, managing risk of organisations.

Lana Fried ([09:09](#)):

So I guess you were just touching on this with what you were saying, but knowing that there is so much diversity in so many areas within cybersecurity as a whole, do you find that having I guess a niche within it is helpful to help you be successful and not only find opportunities but really find your place within the field as well?

Adrienne Maxted ([09:27](#)):

I think as your career progresses, you go through different waves and through the different roles that you play within your career. So definitely, finding a niche or a specialisation helps you professionally. And just from a confidence perspective, you become the expert or the go-to person or the contact person for a particular subject and that just helps elevate your role, your ability to contribute to discussions, whether it be internal or with clients or in media, at conferences. I think it really helped me.

Lana Fried ([10:04](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. From your perspective, being someone who now has opportunity to hire graduates, are there any particular areas that you find are either always looking for people or ones that might be a little bit more niche to get into?

Adrienne Maxted ([10:17](#)):

I think there's all opportunities. So we do have very technical roles and really specialist skills. But we also have those skills that are just requiring the liaison between business and technical speak and just being able to apply it in the context of a particular business or a particular industry. So there's all sorts of roles and I spoke even just about culture and education and awareness around cyber. There's different roles that everyone can play and have different backgrounds. So we do have people that come in that were previously teachers, that were previously dentists. So they come from all walks of life and wanting to have career changes. We have a lot of graduates actually come in that have not even done a cyber degree, but they might have done business and might do a cyber master's degree and only for a year. So they really don't know what it's all about. They just know what's the place to be. And so they come in very excited knowing that it is sort of the place to be for the future and willing to try everything.

Lana Fried ([11:20](#)):

I guess with so many pathways into it, it really does open up where people could find themselves down the line. Like you've mentioned to me before about how there's integration of a lot of different industries in cyber. So it is quite eyeopening to know that you might have no intention of going down that road, but it'll potentially end up being some people's futures.

Adrienne Maxted ([11:42](#)):

I think that the diversity of a cyber career nowadays is far wider and deep than it probably was back 25 years ago. A long career in cyber is a very different and varied career. So we do have a lot of graduates that will come in and are really excited about pen testing and ethical hacking, and we have our cyber labs. And you can sit in there and code and hack and things that you do learn at uni. But we do find that people do move through the different areas of cyber. So we have our cyber intelligence centres, which is a lot of research and development. It's our response and detection for attacks on organisations. So we are the respondents to those cyber attacks. So that's a fairly high intensity area where you're sitting in the centres to respond to attacks and have plans for ransomware and how you respond to those.

([12:43](#)):

We have amazing different practises where we're actually setting up the strategy and the control environments to protect the organisations from a cyber attack. And then in between, you'll have identity and access management. You'll have data loss prevention, you'll have application protection. There's so many different layers to cyber career. And over time, you can move between these different areas of being a secure and vigilant and resilient organisation. And that's what I guess the game of cyber is just helping and protecting both our organisations and now more recently, really around citizens and protecting our citizens and their data and their identities in the world. And that's the education of our children and our parents and our family and our friends, to educate and make them aware of how we do help protect our data and our assets.

Lana Fried ([13:42](#)):

I think one of the stereotypes of when people think about cyber, you do have the hacking and everything that you've talked about, which is like the exciting aspect of it. They can also be a stereotype

of it being a bit of an unwelcoming space, especially for women or people of colour. Do you find that on the inside of it, it's different to what the stereotypes are or have you found that some of them can be a bit more on the true side?

Adrienne Maxted ([14:06](#)):

I think in the past there has been guys in hoodies, in dark rooms, in front of multiple screens. But certainly now, there is a big shift. There's certainly diversity in our teams and there's no doubt that people from different cultures learn different things at different ages. And so I would say that we have different groups of people that learnt coding and IT way before what our children do in Australia. So they bring years more of information and knowledge and experience to our teams because they've grown up with this compared to some conversations I'll have with our local Melbourne kids. I'll say, "Did you do IT or computer science or coding in school?" And they said, "Oh look, I picked it up in uni." And the stereotyping of girls that code or cyber is all about coding, it's very different to that and we've moved a long way on from it's all about code and techie.

[\(15:05\)](#):

So there's far more opportunities that you don't have to be... a lot of information security courses now are not about coding, it's about data and analytics and identity management, data protection and a whole heap of different things, away from the pen testing and ethical hacking.

Lana Fried ([15:24](#)):

And then I know something that you've been really passionate about with your career as well is opening doors for women, especially going into cyber. So you have championed the Deloitte Women in Cyber programme. Do you mind speaking a little bit about I guess where that programme came from and sort of how it's evolved over time as well?

Adrienne Maxted ([15:42](#)):

Yes. So I was lucky enough to go to our global Women in Cyber inaugural meeting in London, right before lockdown with Covid. And look, we've recognised for years now, this is not something new, that women are a minority in the cyber industry. And we've had round tables and lunches and bringing that minority to the table, and just recognising, I guess, what women do in cyber and the difference that they can make and just the different avenues that they can play within programmes and on teams.

[\(16:21\)](#):

I am very passionate about women in cyber and the programmes that we can run. And it's not just about young women. We have lateral hires that are coming in that have been in male dominated banking sectors or different mining industries that just haven't worked in big teams with women. And as we get all of these different diverse areas of working in cyber, you do get collections of women in different areas, like privacy and data protection is more of coming from a legal background. And so it's more attuned to having women in law coming in and then just being able to be elevated and make a big difference in areas of privacy that is key to cyber and data protection. So over time, we've got over 150 women in our cyber team and probably growing towards 200 women. So it is amazing. There's no doubt that we've still got work to do and there are still low numbers coming through traditional computer science degrees, but the masters in cyber, the attention on making sure that we are getting content and different avenues for women to join the cyber industry.

[\(17:32\)](#):

And it's not just about women, it's about champions of change and having those really strong men that are standing up and supporting women and giving them opportunities and highlighting the success stories and where they've come from and what they contribute. So it is a really exciting programme, just working in the industry and seeing what is being done around the different recognition and different programmes that are being run. So it's exciting to be able to run within Deloitte, Women in Cyber. It's opening networks of not only women in cyber, it's women in technology, women in consulting. And so I guess there's lots of different opportunities for women to network and be supported and grow their careers and opportunities.

Lana Fried ([18:16](#)):

I think the way that you phrased it as champions of change. That's a fantastic way of really putting into one phrase what you and other people in this industry are doing. So absolutely, you are a champion of change as well. I hope you know that. I know you also have the cadets programme for, is it high school graduates or current year 12s?

Adrienne Maxted ([18:36](#)):

So we have just started the cyber academy and it is all about just being more accessible for kids coming out of school. And I think we talked before about 17 and 18, you just don't know what you want to do.

Lana Fried ([18:50](#)):

Absolutely.

Adrienne Maxted ([18:51](#)):

Yeah. It's really exciting that we've bring in kids that are coming from diverse backgrounds out of year 12 and partnering with Swinburne around a cyber degree that's a cadet internship. So we have our cadets working in industry, in the cyber field, three days a week doing university two days a week. So it's really exciting. They've been to bootcamp for six weeks and now they're into our offices and they're going to be working three days a week with us. So it's really exciting to see where this really goes.

([19:21](#)):

I think this cadet programme is really letting people get their hands on the tools really early. And there's no doubt there'll be many of those cadets that are already deep into the cyber industry and the curiosity of what's going on and how they just don't know the power of what skills they've got. And it's really harnessing and shaping and influencing where they can do good.

Lana Fried ([19:46](#)):

That's incredible. Are there any women out there listening to this who are either starting a degree in cybersecurity or it's something that they're considering? Is there any specific advice that you would give to them?

Adrienne Maxted ([19:58](#)):

The advice is to be curious, research, ask questions and connect to people. There are plenty of forums, there's courses that you can do, there's networking courses to do. And talk to your family and friends. There are always people in the IT industry and in cyber. But it is about finding people that are willing to help make introductions. Often, it's not what you know, it's people that you get to know that can open doors for you. And there are plenty of men and women in the industry that are looking for people that

This transcript was exported on Nov 10, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

are really interested and passionate and looking for just that one chance. So it is really about connecting.

Lana Fried ([20:39](#)):

That's really fantastic. Obviously, it would open up so many doors for so many people who might have that interest but not really know where to start. So absolutely, it's a fantastic thing that you are doing and it's been really incredible to have this chat with you today and be able to understand more about the cyber industry and how genuinely rock and roll it is. That sounds so daggy, but it is.

Adrienne Maxted ([21:01](#)):

It's really exciting, it's fast moving. It can be intense, but it is a lot of fun and you're with like-minded people that are solving problems. And it is really exciting. Like you say, a little bit spy-like. So it's a great industry to be in.

Lana Fried ([21:18](#)):

So now it's time for our quick fire round. I've got five at food related questions that I'm going to ask you in rapid succession. The rules to this round are you have 10 seconds to answer each question and you have to answer with the first thing that comes to your mind. Okay. You ready?

Adrienne Maxted ([21:33](#)):

I think so.

Lana Fried ([21:34](#)):

So question one, if cybersecurity was a food, what would it be?

Adrienne Maxted ([21:38](#)):

Hot, spicy pizza.

Lana Fried ([21:39](#)):

Why do you think cybersecurity is a spicy pizza?

Adrienne Maxted ([21:42](#)):

I think it's just because there's so many varieties and everybody has a different pizza that they like. Look, I think it's just, I guess it comes back to it's a bit of spice in life and that you like the variety and you know the speed and intensity of the industry that we work in is, I guess, similar to that hot, spicy pizza.

Lana Fried ([22:05](#)):

What is your favourite condiment?

Adrienne Maxted ([22:07](#)):

Salt.

Lana Fried ([22:08](#)):

What's the most unique or exotic dish you've tried and did you like it?



This transcript was exported on Nov 10, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Adrienne Maxted ([22:11](#)):

I would say snails.

Lana Fried ([22:14](#)):

Oh, okay.

Adrienne Maxted ([22:14](#)):

When I travelled overseas to Europe. But when we travelled around Australia, we tried everything from pearl meat to crocodile.

Lana Fried ([22:22](#)):

Pearl meat?

Adrienne Maxted ([22:23](#)):

Pearl meat.

Lana Fried ([22:24](#)):

Like the pearl in an oyster?

Adrienne Maxted ([22:26](#)):

Yes.

Lana Fried ([22:26](#)):

That is incredible.

Adrienne Maxted ([22:27](#)):

Over in Broome.

Lana Fried ([22:28](#)):

Wow, amazing. What is the secret sauce to your success?

Adrienne Maxted ([22:32](#)):

I think it's to be open and genuine and curious.

Lana Fried ([22:37](#)):

Absolutely. And then the final question, this is probably the most trivial of all, does pineapple belong on pizza?

Adrienne Maxted ([22:43](#)):

Absolutely.

Lana Fried ([22:45](#)):

Oh, you lost me there.

This transcript was exported on Nov 10, 2023 - view latest version [here](#).

Adrienne Maxted ([22:46](#)):

Oh, we were getting on so well.

Lana Fried ([22:47](#)):

Well, thank you again so much for coming in today. I really, really enjoyed this chat with you and it was absolutely fantastic to meet you.

Adrienne Maxted ([22:53](#)):

Thank you so much. It was quite fun.

Lana Fried ([23:01](#)):

Thanks for listening to Get Hungry, a podcast from Swinburne University of Technology, where you get a taste of what career success looks like. If you like what you heard and you're keen to study at Swinburne where you can get your own real industry experience, then head to the website, [Swinburne.edu.au](http://Swinburne.edu.au).

([23:19](#)):

To make sure you don't miss an episode of Get Hungry, be sure to subscribe to or follow the show in your podcast app. And while you're there, leave us a five star review. It really helps others to find the show. This show was recorded in and around the Swinburne campus in Hawthorne, on Wurundjeri land, featuring some of the great cafes and most interesting buildings. The show was produced with strategy and production support by Wavelength Creative. I'm your host, Lana Fried. And thanks for listening to Get Hungry.