The SAFE Leader

with Mark McBride-Wright

Ep. 016

Pioneering the Future of Safety Engineering

WITH SIMON BURWOORD
PARTNER

E016_ Pioneering the Future of...Bride-Wright and Simon Burwood

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SPEAKERS

Simon Burwood, Mark McBride-Wright

S **Simon Burwood** 00:02

Is that going? Yeah, perfect.

M **Mark McBride-Wright** 00:08

Welcome back to the next episode of the safe leader. I'm delighted to be joined here today by Simon Burwood, who is a partner at erm, having graduated from Brunel University in 2003 Simon started his professional career as a process engineer at Eastman Kodak. The decline in traditional photography saw a move into the oil and gas sector, where he joined silver tech, now Rockwell Automation as a safety engineer in 2010 he co founded engineering safety consultants, limited ESC and grew the company to 35 staff. The drop in oil price saw Simon lead ESC through diversification in both services and industries served in 2021 ESC was acquired by environmental resources management erm, where Simon now leads the combined technical safety team. Simon is married with three kids, and loves playing his guitar, which I can see in the background there. Yes, indeed, Simon. Thanks for joining me today. No

S **Simon Burwood** 01:18

problem. Thank you.

M **Mark McBride-Wright** 01:20

So take us back to the young Simon. And you know, did you know you were going to do a career in safety engineering in the future? Or where did that start from? What are you now doing? What the young Simon wanted to do?

S Simon Burwood 01:37

Yes, pretty much. I think, yeah, I always, always wanted to be an engineer. I once I learned what an engineer really meant. I was always fascinated by how things worked, and I was always sort of dismantling toys and things. And I remember an instance of dismantling my mom's eye and stopped working to see what was going on inside. So, yeah, I was always, always really intrigued by the way things worked and technology in general. I'd probably be lying if I said I'd always had an ambition to be a safety engineer in particular, but engineering was always the calling for me. Yeah, for sure,

M Mark McBride-Wright 02:14

awesome. And it's, it's, it's, it's, it's a, you've made a really good point there, you know, until I actually knew what an engineer.

S Simon Burwood 02:34

Sorry, Mark, I've lost you. Oh, that's back. Sorry, sorry, I missed that last question. Mark, apologies.

M Mark McBride-Wright 02:39

So yeah, I was being smart and trying to move to this microphone because of the MacBook, and I realized it wasn't on it. So Elio just gonna keep on the MacBook microphone and we'll deal with the audio after. So, Simon, you made an absolute valid point there about what is an engineer back when you're younger, you know the perception of what engineers do. So what was your perception back then of what engineers can do?

S Simon Burwood 03:11

It's a good question. Is it I knew I wanted to be a problem solver. I know I wanted to work out how things worked, and fix things and design things and try and improve things, was big, big thing for me when I was, you know, really, really quite young, and associating that with the idea of being an engineer as a term in itself probably took quite a long time to really sort of fit those two things together. I think the perception of what an engineer really means seems to be different across different countries as well. You know, Germany, for example, what's considered to be an engineer is sometimes different to what we consider it to be here in the UK. You know, we it's not particularly protected term perhaps here in the UK. So it can mean a lot of different things. Yeah,

M Mark McBride-Wright 03:55

yeah. Very, very, very true. Did you always have ambitions to be an entrepreneur, to set up your own, your own company.

S Simon Burwood 04:05

No, no, not at all. No. I sort of sort of fell into it as partly, maybe right place, right time, a little bit. But no, I just not, not particularly, I knew I wanted to sort of have a certain amount of maybe autonomy through my career that was always quite attractive to me, and maybe looking back and reflecting on my own journey, I guess probably I was quite innovative back in the early days, and maybe I was someone that identified opportunities quite well. And I guess that's yeah, so many ingredients for being an

M Mark McBride-Wright 04:41

entrepreneur. Well, yeah, definitely, you need to have grit, determination. Know how to grow something out of nothing. And I guess you know from reading your bio, there it was, you've had to make a couple of pivots. So once, when you saw a client in in photography, you. Walking that, that you know. Some of the people listening to this might, might not even know what you know. 35 millimeter.

S Simon Burwood 05:10

No, indeed,

M Mark McBride-Wright 05:13

yeah. What did you do as a safety engineer in the photography sector? That's fascinating.

S Simon Burwood 05:18

Indeed, yeah. Well, I mean, I joined, I joined Kodak at Eastman, Kodak in London, just outside London, while I was at university, I did a placement there, and then I joined as a graduate a year or so later, and we manufacture, it's a factory, so we manufacture photographic film and paper. So I joined officially as a graduate in 2003 what I thought would be a job for life. You know, fantastic place to work. Brilliant people. You know, real, real challenges to be overcome. And they're very, very open as an organization for change and for improvements and and, yeah, I loved it. It was great as everything I wanted to do as an engineer, really. But yeah, the story goes that Kodak invented the digital camera, which effectively, you know, put the nail in the coffin for Kodak as a traditional photography organization. So yeah, it didn't take very long, you know, sort of three years or so. And there was a pretty significant decline in the in the demand for our products, which was film and paper

M Mark McBride-Wright 06:26

fascinating, there's only been a well, I guess, for every technological advance, there's that risk of not staying ahead competitive advantage. And it can either be the maker or the demise of

your industry if you let the cognitive dissonance set in, off setting in. I remember reading an example of that with Blackberry, and the founder of BlackBerry is like reluctance to even move away from a device that had buttons never, ever believed in smart phone technology, you know, smart screens, but free screens. And then they were just too late by the time they did try and shift to it, you know that that ship had sailed and marked, or was, was was going to Apple and, and so you that, so you started up ESC at a time when, you know the oil and gas price goes up and down, and you're kind of, you know, safety is one of those industries where, in the unfortunate aftermath of the Piper Alpha incident in 1988 you know, it's a it's a sector that it's the first sector I Think of oil and gas, when I think of safety. And I guess not everyone really realizes how, yes, we see safety in our day to day life as we walk around the world as citizens in this world and see construction sites. I'm looking at a construction site right now outside my window, actually, but not everyone's really aware of the breadth of or industries that safety is So part of the culture and Paramount. So you you mentioned there, but your second pivot in whilst you were in entrepreneurship with your company and that you had to diversify industry serve. So what, what did you shift towards? And how was that?

S Simon Burwood 08:21

So one of the big shifts was into into biosafety. So this, this was actually before, before COVID. And what we found are there. There are a lot of lot of common principles to be adopted in terms of containment, for example. So biosafety is a sector, particularly sort of government organizations here in the UK, they weren't necessarily following what we would consider to be traditional process safety principles. It's very much a sort of scientific exercise and laboratories, and it was really driven by a kind of regulation procedure, rather than the principles around we would consider containment and safety systems and and general process safety techniques. So we found that our regulators in the UK were starting to ask questions of biosafety laboratories around, you know, where's your hazard operability study? You know, you're you're reliant upon control systems here to maintain safety. How are you managing that? You know, what? What assessments have you got in place? What measures are you putting in place to make sure that this is adequately controlled, tested, maintained, etc, and that was very new to that industry at the time, so we targeted that and and found that actually we could offer a lot of experience from the process sector into the biosafety sector to really grow our influence in that area,

M Mark McBride-Wright 09:42

fascinating. So then you find like, like in terms of relative percentage income to the business, it replaced oil and gas that shifted to, you know, a significant contribution of the pie chart. Yeah,

S Simon Burwood 09:56

it did. And it changes year on year, and it does to this day. Yeah, but yeah, we, we took, we went from probably about 80% oil and gas down to maybe 40, 50% oil and gas on average, I would say, over that period of time, or or maybe energy in general. There are other sectors we've moved into as well over the years. So huge amount of work we do now is in renewables. You know, renewable energies in particular, also around the support networks, things like battery energy storage systems, doing a lot of work in those sorts of areas. And it's really exciting, because we're working in industries where they don't have, you know, they don't necessarily have the pipe per hour for incidents and the bonds held incidents and Texas City to

rely on, to really understand where the failures around process safety can can, you know, cause catastrophic events. So it's really, it's really quite exciting being able to lean on that experience, the techniques that we've learned over time through experience, and apply those into other sectors. Yeah, something I do find quite exciting.

M Mark McBride-Wright 10:59

That is really exciting. I sort of exited the exited. I feel like, you know, I still feel like an extended cousin, you know, the process safety, like I shifted away from doing process safety my day to day in sort of 2017 so just as the I've lost track of the oil and gas roller coaster place and but I think it was at a point where things were, you know, not looking positive, and moved into another business unit, actually, within my employer at the time, and that's where I've gotten the sort of experience in government services. And I started, I started experiencing the word safety, but in a different way, through the lens of construction design and management. CDM require regulations and a role as a principal designer, I think it was for fault and police on some refurbishment project, you know. So nothing is grandiose and exciting as it used to be when working on hazards and inherent safer design studies for, you know, in the concept phase for new platforms or something, but, but still, you know, an element of safety there and spook that point in time, they opened my eye to the the array of industries that safety touch on, you know, the rail through the aviation sector, the shipping sector, the nuclear sector, that and but, but that, that experience has sort of been frozen in time. And so it's with the progress that we've had since then, in the last, you know, seven or eight years that I've been running my business equal engineers, not focusing on technical engineering, per se, but support in the sector in other ways that you know, the expansion that's been made in, as you say, battery storage, or just renewable energy in general, you know it, it must be A really interesting time to be, to be a safety engineer.

S Simon Burwood 13:03

It is, yeah, it is. We, what's interesting, we find a lot of our, lot of our customers, you know, being energy companies, are trying to diversify, in general, as everyone's well aware. And what we found is, sort of safety teams are still kind of in a process, safety mindset and trying to apply those sorts of principles into, say, wind farms, for example, you can't necessarily always do that. They're not always directly aligned in terms of the methodologies you need to apply. So I think there's an opportunity there which, you know, we're doing our best to lead the way and to pioneer this. This opportunity to sort of develop new ways in which we can, we can tease out the risks and identify those hazards in a more structured way, while taking into account all the experience that we've got in other sectors, but really trying to develop the best available techniques specific to those, those types of installations. And

M Mark McBride-Wright 13:55

do you think, when it comes to skills as well then, and the engineers that have, you know, safety engineers that have been working in oil and gas for, you know, their whole career, potentially. Do you Do you see what you just described, in terms of that mapping, also applying to skill sets, for helping people

S Simon Burwood 14:13

between massively? Yeah, as engineers, we nothing if not adaptable, you know, I see massive opportunities for transferring those skills across, for sure. You know, it's very rare career paths follow a straight line, you know, much like yourself mark, you know, they go up down backwards, and you find yourself in all sorts of directions you never expected to be in. So, yeah, I think it's massive opportunity for transferring those skills across, over into renewables and other sort of similar sectors, for sure, and

M Mark McBride-Wright 14:41

with the work that you're doing right now, is it very much got a simply, a UK lens to it, or are you doing a lot of work internationally, like I'm over here in the United States now, sort of, yeah, fresh, discovering new, you know, making you in. To new new clients, and what have new educational establishments, universities. I find it fascinating to just compare and contrast the difference and similarities as well. So I just Yeah, interested to hear your your take on the profession, the safety profession, give differences between the two the two areas, absolutely. Yeah.

S Simon Burwood 15:24

So what quite internationally, travels always been quite a big part of my job. Yeah. Worked in most, most regions in the world. Probably, I'd say, over the last 20 years or so, I've worked in the mining sector in Australia, I've worked in the aerospace sector in the United States. We do a lot of work in the Middle East. We still, you know, serve the Middle East in particularly in the oil and gas sector. So yeah, some of the differences that I've I've noticed. I mean, I think in the UK, where probably the majority of my work spend, over time, we're a bit more risk based in our approach, whereas some countries are maybe a bit more regulation based, so, you know, a bit more prescriptive with the requirements. Whereas in the UK, our regulators sort of take the the view that you need to make it safe, and how you do that, and demonstrate it to me is kind of up to you, you know, and we'll decide if that's, uh, adequate or not.

M Mark McBride-Wright 16:21

Yeah, yeah. That, that, that that, that that is something that comes through is quite a big, a big difference in in the two, and there's merits in both, and pros and cons, I guess. And then it's applying the best of both to, however, is your design facility or safeguards you're you're putting in

S Simon Burwood 16:41

absolutely I

M Mark McBride-Wright 16:42

was interested. I wanted to chat a bit about as a, as an entrepreneur that went through an acquisition, you know, erm, because that was like, at that point in time, and when, how what you're doing now in the company.

S Simon Burwood 16:57

So it was a tough time. It was, it's quite an intense period of time. You know, you spend a lot of time going through the due diligence process, which takes a really a lot of, a lot of time, a lot of energy out of you as well, and then joining erm and reflecting on it. Now, I mean, we the whole process actually done during lockdown. So we very, we had very, very few actual physical meetings with anyone from erm at the time. But no, my fellow directors were looking to retire, so they were kind of, you know, out to cashing their chips. And I was managing director of the company at this time, and erm just put together a fantastic sort of value proposition to us. And yeah, we joined. They're already an existing technical safety team, as you know, Mark in erm, and we sort of merged him in with that team and developed what we like to consider to be a super group, if

M Mark McBride-Wright 17:50

you like, fabulous. I see. So yes, your company still ran separately. Or is it? Is it fully integrated? No, not

S Simon Burwood 17:59

really. No, we, we, we sort of ran separately legally for about a year or so, but pretty much from day one, it was a case of just integrating everyone all in together. We were relatively small company. You know, I think we were 35 staff at the time of acquisition. So we were relatively small, so bit more straightforward in principle anyway, to to integrate everybody into our new parent company. And yeah, pretty much from day one, from January 2021, it was all about integration and getting everyone, you know, pulling in the same direction, which went really well, and

M Mark McBride-Wright 18:32

looking back on it like you know, since you know, obviously the pandemic shone a light on remote working and the benefits of it. But actually, you know, the point you alluded at there, as I know very well, I got my first job out of university at erm and worked in the practice that you now run. And even back then, you know, I My line manager at the time was based in Manchester, because that's already off. The risk team were based. I don't know what it's like now, but yeah, I had to spend two days a week coming up to Manchester for the first six months that I was there. But the rest of the time I was down in London, and it was a hot desk and facility. There never were enough desks to accommodate everyone was allocated to London office. So actually, they wanted you to work at home or picture of a consultant. You're out on a client's side, you know. So does it make sense to have a desk physically for everyone? Because the the overhead cost for that in central London, St Mary's AX were the headsport was, you know, just would have been, would have been huge. But no, so I look back on it now,

obviously haven't had the pandemic, and now running my own business, which that inclusive cultures. And I. Practice on creating cultures of belonging and trust and what have you actually, erm was, was a bit of an early adopter of that, you know, yeah,

S Simon Burwood 20:10

yeah. I think erm has always been a bit forward thinking in that respect. We're very much the same now really, Mark, you know, we have sort of an expectation you'll be in the office, you know, certain days, but it's like you say, as well, you know, we're face to face with clients a lot to you know? And if we're not in front of clients regularly, we're probably not doing a very good job. So it's, although we do try and get together, and we do try and have these, these face to face interactions, and the the chats that you get over the coffee machine and new ideas getting banded around. You know, we do, we do embrace that. But all in all flexibility, I think, has really been

M Mark McBride-Wright 20:46

the kid. So where, where do you see yourself going, going next? What do you see personally and and professionally? You know, the future for for safety and but the future for you, you know What? What? What is erm working to right now that you can share with some,

S Simon Burwood 21:07

well, technical safety within erm, still quite a small part really, of what we offer as an organization. One of my goals is to, is to make sure that we can increase that presence within erm. You know, we've, we've got so many opportunities with our throughout key client program, for example, to to cross sell our services across different offerings. And, yeah, what keep you awake at night is the idea of leaving money on the table, where we could have a customer out there is absolutely crying out for our services, and we're missing the opportunity to to help them out. You know, that's what really sort of affects me. So it's a case of growing our presence within erm, and we've got some excellent technical safety groups around the world as well. It's not just here in the UK, you know. We've got fantastic teams in Asia Pacific, in the US, in Houston, in South America, too. So it's, yeah, really, really growth is the name of the game for us at the moment, and we're very, very heavily recruiting and investing in new staff at the moment. Yeah.

M Mark McBride-Wright 22:07

Oh, that's fantastic. What so part of the work that we do is looking at the intersection between diversity, equity and inclusion and safety. And I'm personally a big believer that actually dei sitting alongside or being fully embraced by safety will have a lot more benefit for the for the sector, for skills, for retention, for attraction, for the culture in general, but also for safety performance, you know, I think there's a huge opportunity there if we communicate it right. I just wanted to ask a bit about your personal relationship with safety and dei and, you know, as a as a leader in this sector, playing a part in a bringing people in and trying to create a culture where you want people to stay like, what's your view on that, on what I just said?

S Simon Burwood 23:08

Yeah, well, I completely agree about the link with, with, with safety 100% and I think, you know, with diversity and inclusion, it's, it's one of those rare instances of life where nobody loses out. You know, it should be embraced throughout, is going to improve performance in business, performance and safety performance. I mean, I my mindsets probably changed a little bit in the right direction over the last few years. We mentioned a moment ago about us been on a real growth, growth path within erm in particularly in terms of technical safety, technical risk, and I've reflected on, you know, what I can do to accelerate that growth, and it has been apparent that our gender balance hadn't been really quite where we would like it to be. And I think in the past, I've maybe just been a bit too accepting of it, and sort of saying, Well, you know, we're not getting the applicants. We're not getting the female applicants. So there's nothing we can do about it. You know, we'll just sort of crack on and and I guess reflecting on it over times made me sort of think, well, actually, why aren't we getting more female applicants? So rather than just accepting that, what can we do to attract more women? For example, I'm using sort of gender as an example here, what can I do to attract more women into our into our team? And actually, I joined the Women in Engineering Society, and we, we signed up as a corporate member, and they offered advice on how we could go about improving that. And there was lots of different things where we they, they helped us out to really, really, fantastic advice. And I think probably the best and probably the most simple example is things like the way you structure your job advertisements, yeah, so little things like that being sort of designed, written, probably by by men, intended to be read by men. And the example that was given to me was, if you. List out specific roles, like a menus was explained to me, you know. So bullet point A, you must be able to do this, this, this, this, and this. And in general, men will say, Well, I can do A, B and C, and I could probably have a go at D, and therefore I'll apply for it. Whereas some women may look at that and say, Well, I can't do D, so I won't apply for it. Yeah, so the sort of menu approach to job advertisements just isn't the right way to go about it if you're trying to achieve more of a gender balance in your team. So we've taken that on board, and you know, we've, and, yeah, we've, we've seen an increase as well, which is great, you know what we're looking to achieve.

M Mark McBride-Wright 25:39

So you made that adjustment, made that changed. Yeah, we still got

S Simon Burwood 25:43

a long way to go. You know, there's still other things that we can we can do, and we're still working with the Women in Engineering Society to help us in that growth path. But, yeah, we've seen a positive change here, which has been great.

M Mark McBride-Wright 25:55

That's great. That's great. It's really nice to hear companies get advice, take action, apply it, see the result, and then think, right, how can we do this more and feel it out? You know, it's an engineering problem. That's the yes, we just need to treat it like how we treat an engineering

problem. And, you know, we make change to the system. See the impact, if it's had the right impact, do more of that change. If it you go too far in one direction, and then maybe you need to do something else to bring it back to the middle, whatever. You know, it's I was fine that engineers that get scared about oh, EDI, you know this is Oh, you're or I'm gonna stick the wrong or do the wrong thing. It's just another engineering we can solve it like that's what I love about what the women's engineering society do, you know Elizabeth Donnelly, who's their current chief executive, as a systems engineer, by background, you know, and fundamentally, is rooted in that mindset as well. You know, to change the system, we have to take a systems engineering approach. But where the fallibility come in, comes in is that engineers, as much as we think, we're not, we are also human and and are fallible and are emotional, and have emotional responses to things that might be perceived as a criticism or or what have you. And I just think it's really interesting when you frame EDI in a language that engineers are familiar with, and they're more likely to get uptake, and that that's my whole mantra with the safer building on my safety engineering background is to try and look at, can we use these frameworks that engineers are familiar with, take that familiarity with physical safety and extend that, extrapolate that into psychological safety. Can we make engineers aware that the kind of the championing that you get to call out an unsafe act without fear of retribution, is the exact same as being championed to call out a non inclusive behavior without fear of retribution, and actually then seeing the micro aggressions, micro inequities as the equivalent of Miss, you know, slips, trips and falls or near is, you know that we want people to be reporting so we can see the occurrence, but people are not doing it, then we're kind of not really getting the true data similarly. So there's a lot you can do to scaffold on equivalence between we do this on physical safety, and this is on the sort of psychological, cultural safety side. And, yeah, I just, I think there's, well, I don't get on my soapbox now, but I think there's a lot with with maybe there's a project to explore, but you know, companies like yourselves that that have the ear of the engineers in safety teams. And I always thought there. I always think there's like, there's a methodology we could develop within inherent safety. ISD, can we, like, retool doing a workshop that early on in a design like you're supposed to do in ISD workshops at the concept phase? Could we start doing some inclusion workshops, you know, at those phases of the design? And maybe it just means, actually, we need to be doing more ergonomic assessments, and human factors needs to be dialed up. But maybe works to then look at, well, human factors is human factors actually, where EDI sits or, or is it, I don't know. I've not got that yet into my level of analysis or thought leadership development. But there's something in this space for

S Simon Burwood 29:48

sure. We had a recent example, actually, Mark I mean, we so erm, we have a stop work authority. So if anybody sees an unsafe act, they are well within their authority to say. Be, I'm, I'm stopping work. I'm not comfortable with this. We're stopping and, and we've, you know, we've pushed that out to include sort of health, health, sort of incidents to, you know, the sort of, what's the word I'm looking for, well being, I guess, is probably the best way to describe it. If you're, if your well being is being threatened by a particular act within in your daily work, you've, well, you've got the authorization to stop that, you know. And we, we've re emphasized that to our team quite recently as a part of our our leadership group, to say, you know, even if it's even if it's a client, you know, if the client is treating you in a way that is not reflective of our own values as an organization with a zrn, then you've got the authority to, you know, pull the plug on that. Say, No, this is, I'm executing my stop work authority on this basis, and me as a leader, you know, it's my, my role to sort of pick up those pieces and, you know, hopefully get a positive outcome in the long run. But, yeah, I think it's so important to have that authority and to make sure that's communicated. Are

M Mark McBride-Wright 31:02

you seeing employees? You know, obviously I don't expect you to go in a specific example. Are you seeing are you seeing it being used, you know, with its intended manner.

S Simon Burwood 31:18

So we've seen it used more, actually, with some of our younger engineers in our team, there seems to be more of an perhaps more of an empowerment there, whereas some of the guys maybe a bit more experienced, maybe a bit more accustomed to or unaccustomed to the idea of stopping work on the basis of a, you know, a threat to your own wellbeing. Yeah, that seems to be a fairly consistent trend.

M Mark McBride-Wright 31:43

Okay, yeah, maybe there's, yeah, there's probably an underlying psychology there to unpick fascinating. So what? What excites you about the future of safety engineering? Where do you see the opportunities in the future?

S Simon Burwood 32:00

I, I'm, in the camp of being pretty excited by artificial intelligence. I know there's a lot of a lot of people out there, like with any new sort of innovation, that are sort of quite rightly, really concerned about where this might go, but I think in terms of technical safety and how we analyze hazards, how he has analyzed risks, I think there's a lot we can do with artificial intelligence, and I'm just excited, in general, about innovation in the future. I think you know, part of being in being an engineer is to innovate, and being a safety engineer, I think is even more more important. I

M Mark McBride-Wright 32:34

can only imagine how amazing it would be to have an AI co pilot where you've pre loaded all those HAZOP previous hazops and hazards and ISDS and whatever, all those studies that are in the library on the SharePoint. And actually you've then got something that can be called upon to challenge the team dynamically what you probably need the human to in turn? Yeah, absolutely. But it can help do all the you're less you're less exposed to, it's almost a risk mitigation. You're less exposed to just the experience of the risk, professional, safety, professional or leading the study. So there's probably, yeah, probably stuff now 100%

S Simon Burwood 33:23

and we often have this conversation. And you know, if you've got hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hazards sitting on a on a on a bookshelf somewhere, that's not doing anything for

you, you know we need to put that data to good use and and like you say, being able to rely on past experience and other other people's experience, even in other industries, I think it's we're crazy not to make use of it.

M Mark McBride-Wright 33:44

Maybe there is a cross sector AI safety thing that needs to happen, that where it's legally compliant and, you know, risk is mitigated. And I can imagine that being a legal thing that people happening, but, but, you know, in the spirit of shared learning, you know, certainly, even just all the big incidents that have happened, where investigations have had to happen, and just pulling in all the lessons learned from, from, from the loss Prevention bulletin that the I can eat publish, for example, absolutely that would probably have value being able to be trolled by a by an AI tool and, okay, Quick Fire question round, what's one book that's had a lasting impact on you, and there's been lots

S Simon Burwood 34:38

bounce by Matthew said, I would recommend, I think it's a really, some really interesting concepts in there about the idea of there essentially no such thing as talent, and you can achieve anything through through hard work. As a message, I was pass on to my children,

M Mark McBride-Wright 34:51

yes, tea or coffee, I'm a

S Simon Burwood 34:56

massive coffee snob. I like tea, but I'm a, yeah, huge, huge snob. When it comes to coffee,

M Mark McBride-Wright 35:00

what's your favorite engineering marvel?

S Simon Burwood 35:04

Um, I'm going to go with the Clifton Suspension Bridge. I just

M Mark McBride-Wright 35:09

think it's beautiful. If you could have dinner with any engineer past or present, who would it be?

S Simon Burwood 35:16

Simon Burwood 35:16

With my ultimatum, I'd have to say he's bar Bruno. I think,

M Mark McBride-Wright 35:22

what's your goal to productivity? Hack.

S Simon Burwood 35:25

So power automate. I I love, I love ways in which you can improve your day to day processes. And I use power automate for all sorts of things, all sorts of things to, yeah, to improve productivity. So it's a fantastic tool,

M Mark McBride-Wright 35:42

early bird or night owl? Probably more of an early bird, yeah, what advice would you give to your younger self?

S Simon Burwood 35:51

It's a tough one. I think I would. I would probably say you don't always have to fit in. Would be my advice? What's

M Mark McBride-Wright 36:00

your proudest professional achievement?

S Simon Burwood 36:04

I'm really privileged. I've got lots. Fairly recently, one of our one of an engineer that we recruited directly from University, has progressed all the way up from from a graduate all the way up to principal consultant level. That's the first time that's happened. You know somebody that's joined us so early in their careers, and to see them develop and grow and grow in confidence all the way through to principal level is incredibly rewarding. So yeah, I'd go with that.

M Mark McBride-Wright 36:33

And finally, what skill Do you think all engineers should learn?

S Simon Burwood 36:40

I barely go through a day without using spreadsheets. That's such a dull example. I use a spreadsheets for absolutely everything. And I don't know how engineers can go through a significant period of time without developing spreadsheets for various things. I use, I use Microsoft Excel for my shopping lists. You know, I love Island skill. Everyone should know

M Mark McBride-Wright 37:04

that's really good point. Really, really good point. You all these fancy things coming out, but still good Excel skills. Of all, I've really enjoyed our chat, Simon, if people want to get in touch with you find out more about your work, how do they do that? So

S Simon Burwood 37:20

I'm on LinkedIn. So Simon bird, I'm on LinkedIn, please do connect with me and Simon dot Burwood at erm, is my email address in Yep. Please do get in touch on complete Geek on this subject. So I'd love to discuss it. Be more than happy to have a conversation with anyone would like to discuss it any further

M Mark McBride-Wright 37:39

amazing is that simon.burwood@erm.com.com Yeah, thanks, Mark. Just to be clear, lovely. Well, thank you very much, Simon. Really enjoyed today and speak to

S Simon Burwood 37:53

you soon. Thank you. Thanks, Mark. Thanks.

M Mark McBride-Wright 38:00

Cool, right? Okay, long break there. I'm used to like Preston stop record the on the riverside. Thank you very much. Really enjoyed that. Yeah, good, yeah, let's be great to keep in touch. I'll let you know. So, yeah, we've got about, I've got about six films so far. Going to try and do two or three before Christmas, and then pick up the rest in January. I think I did say maybe it wouldn't start until January, but managed to get a few in so, so yeah, we're just going to my new website is going to go live next week, Mark McBride Wright com, and then the safe leader podcast is, is within that, and then build them out, like a newsletter, safe leader insights. And there's just so much happening now in equal engineers that actually need, like a separate space where the safe can can flourish. And, yeah, I mean, we're, we're working with like, a large airport and a large nuclear company on some leadership training, and we're calling it like safe leader training. Yeah, each, each module stands for like, focuses in on each bit of the acronym, share, act, feel and empower. Yep. So, yeah, if there's any technical clients that you meet where you see that actually it's a cultural side, that's yeah, barrier, then we could, we could help there. Yeah. Also got a project on the goal where we're looking at repurposing bow tie diagrams, but for cultural application instead. So interesting, using like barrier methodology to map out that and in the workplace and LGBT, and you know, I'm doing that because of an

experience that I had at erm my first job, Suzanne was my line manager sent me to apt imingham, which was an oil and I had bow tie diagrams from their COVID. A report, and, you know, blank out some of the bits and do an engagement workshop with the staff there. And, of course, it's, it's, it's designed to spark, oh, we don't do that like that anymore, yeah, be not in operational for like, five years, yeah, like, so doing a similar sort of thing with bow tie diagrams, but instead through it through a cultural lens, and then maybe work with some employee networks to use them as an engagement tool for the broader workforce. Yeah, so it's a project we're working on we have yet with any I'm working with David Jamieson at Salus tech. Oh, yes, yeah, it's software to do, you know, because it's nicer than multi XP, do some stuff, I'm still very connected in my process safety background, but I'm just using the experience in a different application there. So any, if you think of any projects or ideas would love support or, you know, if you're putting in bids, you know, if equal engineers, you want to, want us to support you on something, be happy to lend CVS or whatever to a proposal.

S Simon Burwood 41:10

That's good to know. That's very interesting to know. Yeah, okay, first

M Mark McBride-Wright 41:14

off, when you were saying there, took me back to Yes. Erm has the partners who are the magic holders of certain relationships. And the safety team's role is to try and sell the services internally to then try and leverage those, those connections I can see about that that can potentially culture, that can exist between the part. So, yeah. Anyway, I do need to dash.

S Simon Burwood 41:41

Thank you. No problem. Great to meet you. Yeah, yeah, do stay in touch. Thanks a lot.

M Mark McBride-Wright 41:45

Thanks. Amen. Bye, bye.