

## Naomi Moura, BBC Studios – Podcast – Master

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**Interviewer:** Welcome to the Real Skills for Real Careers Podcast. In this series we speak with some of Australia’s most exciting global companies in fast growing industries. We sit down with leaders in human resources and training to get their advice on how to land a great job and successfully navigate a meaningful and rewarding career. We also learn what these organisations believe they need to be competitive for the future of work and the types of candidates that will help them achieve this.

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**Interviewer:** In this episode, we meet Naomi, Head of H.R. for BBC Studios in Australia and New Zealand. A VET graduate yourself, Naomi tells us what it takes to stand out amongst the masses. Why being patient pays off, and fills us in on the future challenges of organisations that rely on being ahead of the curve.

Hi Naomi, it’s great to be here at BBC Studios today. Thank you so much for having us. So the BBC is a very well known brand in the U.K. Can you tell us a little bit more about what the company does here in Australia?

**Naomi:** So BBC get T.V. shows from the U.K. and we either sell them to T.V. channels here in Australia and New Zealand, or we put them on our own channels, which we have on Pay T.V. And then we do a bunch of other things related to those shows, so we might do some live events or sell some D.V.D.s. There’s about 120 employees working for BBC Studios in Australia, and globally, well it depends. So globally in the U.K. there’s something like 20,000 that work for BBC Public Service. We work for BBC Studios, which is the commercial arm. And there’s probably about three or four thousand in total around the world.

**Interviewer:** And how long have you worked here?

**Naomi:** I have worked at BBC Studios for about nine years. I did two of those years living in London, and then I moved back home to Sydney. So I’ve been working the rest of the time here.

**Interviewer:** And in terms of your current role, what’s your main responsibility?

**Naomi:** My current role is all things H.R. So it’s recruiting people, it’s onboarding them when they join, it’s ensuring they’re developed while they’re with us, that there’s performance management, that we look at reward and we look at the whole lifecycle of an employee up until they exit.

Interviewer: So when you're recruiting people without much work experience, like a new graduate, what is the process here at the BBC?

Naomi: In terms of employing new graduates, we don't have a formal graduate program, we're quite small. But what we do is we have certain roles in our organisation that are really suited to fresh graduates. We don't have really any expectation of previous experience, so we try to really focus on those roles and bring in people that are looking for that first opportunity.

Interviewer: And what kind of things are you looking for in their application?

Naomi: We look quite closely at their application letter in that case. We ask for an application letter. Mostly because what we're looking for then is why apply for the role? Why BBC Studios? Why do you want to work in T.V.? What is their personality, which you often see in the application process. Or that's what you hope to see. But what we're looking for there is a passion for the industry or, and better, our brand and our shows. And when people can demonstrate that they know who we are, that they know what we do, they certainly tend to hit the top of the pile.

Interviewer: And so there's definitely a debate around the relevance of a cover letter and whether it's important or not, but from what you're saying, it's incredibly important for new graduates.

Naomi: For us. We really rate cover letters. I know other employers look at submitting videos and that's probably our next step, but at this stage we look for the personality in the cover letter, because we know the cover letter is where they have an opportunity to kind of speak to us and that's where we look for what is their passion for the industry? What's their passion for BBC Studios and how can they demonstrate that they know who we are and they really want to work here?

Interviewer: And how would you say a good candidate would go about standing out?

Naomi: So a good candidate would stand out by being really prepared for the application. So the application letter should have things in it that demonstrate that they've read the job ad, that they're addressing what's in there. Their C.V. could even highlight pieces of work or things that they've done that might relate to the role. They need to make it look personalised for the job, to really stand out. What happens sometimes unfortunately is there's a little bit of copying and pasting that goes on and a bit of a template and they don't always get it right, so it's not uncommon that we like Hello Nat Geo, and people are really screwed up.

Interviewer: I've received one or two of those myself. And so assuming they've made a good impression to get through to the interview, is the process for new graduates different than those with more experience?

Naomi: It's pretty much the same. What we do do is pay attention to other questions that we might ask, rather than the usual tell me a little bit about your work experience, because obviously that's limited. And we do insert a task of some description, just to get a sense of what they're able to produce and how their mind works when it comes to what we would see as the tasks of the role.

Interviewer: Application for knowledge is such a great phrase here. So how important are practical skills compared to say theoretical knowledge?

Naomi: You want to hire someone with strong practical skills. Theoretical knowledge is great, but as often is the case, there's the theory of something and then there's how it plays out in real life. So we always rate practical skills as high, and that's why a degree doesn't always play a role especially if a person comes with a year or two of experience. We'd always rate that experience over a degree.

Interviewer: It's interesting you say that because we're actually hearing a lot of students feeling really pressured often by their parents or carers, to get that degree and follow a very linear path. If you could speak to those parents, what would you say?

Naomi: I guess the advice I'd give parents who are helping their children through study and making those decisions would be to not fixate too much with a career path. I think we feel a lot of pressure to decide very early on, this is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life, but even if they reflected on their own careers, they'll have seen that you know sometimes it takes a detour. Sometimes what we really enjoy and we're good at in the early stages of our career, along the way we discover something else completely that we're much better at. And so really the key thing is for that student to do the best that they can, to show resilience through that process, because they'll need that through work and to just follow the path that seems appealing to them. Because I've definitely seen passionate people get very good at something that doesn't seem a natural fit and I've seen people that have got very good talents not pursue them because they don't have the passion for it. So just to let some of that nature take its course.

Interviewer: We know starting work can be a really daunting time. How do you think young people can best prepare themselves for the workplace?

Naomi: I think young people can prepare themselves for the workplace by really getting very good at what it is that comes so naturally to them, because the minute they enter the workforce they are on the younger end of the workforce spectrum, and they often have skills and knowledge about things that nobody else really in the company does. So how do they get those skills and knowledge deep enough, and how do they find a way of presenting it to the workplace so that it's able to be kind of consumed? We recently, we've started a Next Gen Board, sort of team committee for people under 30 in the office, and they are bringing together what sort of things are they consuming? What are some of ideas that they've got that they could bring to the rest of the organisation that we're probably just not really familiar with.

Interviewer: So it's really about embracing what you bring to the table as an individual. And what about progressing in their career? What advice would you give someone who was a few years into their career?

Naomi: There is something there about being patient for opportunities. Working hard is important and then waiting for some opportunities to become available. I think people often think there's no opportunity here that they can see, so they leave a job and go to another job that seems better. I feel like sometimes it's worth sticking it out because you never know when someone just resigns and there's an opportunity that becomes available. In the meantime, learn as much as you can.

Interviewer: On learning, how do you think styles of learning will change over the next five to ten years?

Naomi: I think styles of learning are already changing and I think they will continue to change more. We know that people don't want to take a load of time out to study. People don't really want to take a load of time out even to attend courses. People want in-time learning as they need it. We've got to get to a point where we have an internal style You-Tube where people can just look up something that they need in the moment and learn as they go. So I'm seeing that that's going to be the real challenge for us in the future. How do we convert what we have as knowledge into bite-sized pieces that are available to people when they need it?

Interviewer: Do you believe we will recruit differently in the future?

Naomi: The interesting thing about the future around recruitment will be reputation. I hate the idea of being like an Uber for an individual, but you can see Linked In is kind of going that way. So how do you gather enough information about your reputation online and will we ever just get a rating for who we are at work? I don't know, it sort of seems like it's kind of going down that path.

Interviewer: Your digital brand and your online presence and reputation will be increasingly important. I would have to agree with that. What about skills and traits? What do you think employers, and in particular yourself, will be looking for in the next five or ten years?

Naomi: I think employers in the future will be looking for how well we can adapt and provide solutions to a changing environment. For us the big thing is how can we figure out ahead of time what's going to happen and be ahead of the curve and keep that up? The people that work here impact us because they're the people that not only know what we're trying to do, but they're also consuming our product, so they get an opportunity to help us understand how we should adapt and innovate our products and how we present to the world to ensure that we don't just disappear in amongst a market that's changing so much.

Interviewer: Well Naomi, I think that's a great note to end on. Recognising the real impact that an individual in your organisation can have on the future direction of the business. We all do have an impact and it's an important message for VET and university graduates to understand. You might just be starting out or looking for the next step, but your contribution is really valued. And so thank you so much for your time Naomi, we really appreciate it.

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