

Richard Edwards: Web Design

Competed in: WorldSkills Calgary 2009 – Team UK
Awarded: Medallion for Excellence
Home town: Milton Keynes
Region: South East
Date of birth: 08/03/1990
Age at competition: 19
Learning provider: Milton Keynes College

Qualifications

- BTEC National Diploma for IT practitioners



What was your route into Team UK?

Richard was talent spotted by his head of department at college and then introduced to Jennie James, the WorldSkills Expert and Training Manager. Jennie then explained the competition to Richard and invited him to the Squad Selection event. Richard went from strength to strength during his training and successfully made it through both the Squad and Team Selection to win his place in Team UK.

Why did you choose to get involved with WorldSkills?

Pursuing his career as a web designer, Richard realised how much he could potentially gain from taking part in the WorldSkills competition.

“At the time I was trying to build my skills as a freelance web designer to start my own business. It would be a real selling point to clients that I had taken part and competed at a world class level.”

What training did you undertake as part of your journey to WorldSkills and what impact did this have on your life?

In the beginning, Richard did two days training per week which essentially meant taking time off college and losing a free day.

“Training meant getting up at 6:30 each morning to get to the office, so it definitely had an impact on my sleeping pattern! Being able to work in the industry and really enjoy myself was a good sign that I had picked the right career.”

Richard’s enthusiastic attitude towards his training developed as he began to use every opportunity to improve his skills, including the journey to and from the office. This self motivation had a real impact on both Richard’s studies and training.

“I was determined to finish my college work quicker and to a higher standard so that I could do even more training. This resulted in me getting distinctions throughout my second year.”

What was WorldSkills like?

“The event was a lot bigger than any impression I had. The size pales into insignificance though as competitor because you are so focused on the actual competition itself. In terms of the visitors’ experience WorldSkills is fantastic. Walking around myself and seeing all the skills in action was really inspirational”

What did you have to do during the competition?

Richard’s competition involved building a website for Skills Canada within the 22 hour deadline. The website was to act as an employment portal for both employees and employers of the skilled workforce.

“I had a huge task ahead of me to design the whole system and interface within the timeframe given. I had a really emotional second day when the task was becoming a bit daunting, but I came back the next day and knuckled down and got on with it.”

Richard then had to present his final concept and design to the experts from around the world on the last day of competition.

Who inspired you during your journey to WorldSkills?

Being the first web design competitor to represent the UK at WorldSkills Richard didn't have any predecessor to look to for inspiration. Richard's associate trainer Chris Ridgeon was, however, a big influence on his journey.

"What was amazing was that we both had a similar journey and he has become very successful. This was really inspiration for me as I strive to achieve the same level."

What did being part of Team UK and competing at WorldSkills mean to you?

Arriving at the event Richard found himself becoming very patriotic.

"Representing both yourself and the UK encourages you to do well. I really wanted to bring something back for the UK."

The competition was made easier for Richard with the support of the rest of Team UK.

"When you arrive the group begins to tighten as you embark on this unique experience together. It's great that I can now say I knew all these people who are the best at what they do in the UK. If I ever need anything I know exactly where to go!"

How did it feel to receive a Medallion for Excellence?

"It was amazing! After the struggle I had during day two it was all or nothing, so I worked my socks off to get as many marks as I could. I was over the moon that I was able to bring a medallion back to the UK."

What has competing done for you both personally and professionally?

Richard's approach to work has seen a dramatic change after returning from the competition.

"I'm much more focused and can handle a greater workload. I'm also better at taking on information and getting the details right. This will help me in professional life as I can say confidently that I'm one in the best in the UK, which in turn builds confidence in a client or employer."

What is the dream?

Since returning from the competition Richard has started a degree in Aerospace Technology with pilot studies at university.

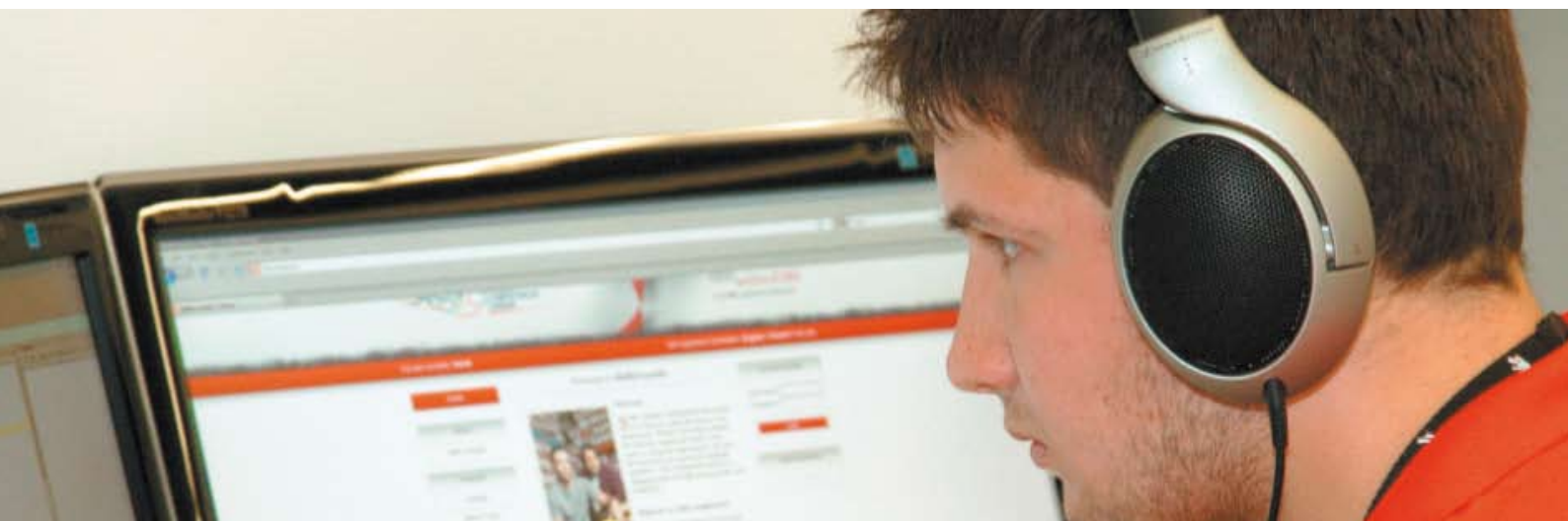
"If I was able to be a web designer during the week and a pilot at the weekend I'd be a happy man. It's not the easiest course that I could have gone for but which WorldSkills competitor chooses an easy life?"

Would you encourage others to get involved in WorldSkills?

"Absolutely. I'm constantly recommending the competition to skilled people I know. It is something that I think everyone should try and I'm more than happy to help them."

What do you think of the event being held in London in 2011?

"I think it's fantastic. It will be great that Team UK has the home advantage and a chance for our team to keep on improving; maybe we can even make it to the top three this time! Hosting the event will hopefully bring Team UK the same status as Team GB has for the Olympics"



For more information about the WorldSkills, UK Alumni, contact the UK Skills communications team:
T: 020 7429 2806 E: ukskills@ukskills.org.uk W: worldskillsukalumni.org.uk

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