

Ambassador Profiles

Name **Dr Michael Edmondson**

Occupation:

**Business Manager and Senior Technologist at the National Nuclear Laboratory**

What were your interests when you were at school?

**I've always had a keen interest in STEM subjects. At school I also enjoyed drawing and wanted to be an architect. However, as I got older I found that the creative flair that initially inspired a budding architect was also important in science and engineering and I eventually followed a chemistry career.**

As a student were you able to take advantage of any STEM type activities outside the usual school timetable?

**There were very few extra-curricular STEM activities at my school which is one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about supporting them now. My dad was an engineer so I often helped him on fixing cars etc. and I was an avid follower of science programmes on TV – tomorrow's world and programmes with Johnny Ball.**

If so, how did this influence your career path?

**I was lucky to have good teachers that inspired me in class and peers who were also interested in science. I think this drove us all to be better and fuelled our enthusiasm. I discovered I had a flair and passion for understanding chemistry and it was therefore a natural progression.**

What are your roles and responsibilities in your workplace now?

**I have recently taken on the role of business manager where I manage a number of scientists and engineers, ensuring that they are delivering the best solutions to challenges in the nuclear industry. My role involves checking quality, demanding timely delivery and challenging their approach. I still retain some of my previous role as expert in the chemistry of Highly Active Liquor – the concentrated waste liquor that results from generating electricity (it's about 3% of the original fuel), my job is to ensure we maintain this self heating liquor under the correct conditions so that it can be turned into a glass waste form for permanent disposal..**

Why did you decide to become an STEM ambassador?

**STEM is brilliant! I want everyone to appreciate that. It's what makes society such an exciting place to live. To me there is nothing better than being able to explain how and why something works. Britain has a fantastic history of science and engineering – it's one of the things that makes us Great! I want this legacy to continue and enthuse the next great inventor.**

What do you feel are the positive outcomes of being a STEM Ambassador?

For yourself?

**I get to play with cool science stuff! It also reminds me of basic principles which are the foundation of all the work I do. It allows me to meet with new and interesting people – both students and other ambassadors and can often**

**spark new ideas and/or collaborations.**

*For the pupils taking part in the activity?*

**I hope that a little of my enthusiasm rubs off. Most of the activities we do are exciting and interesting. We're not restricted by school syllabuses or exam targets so we get to do the interesting stuff. Hands on practical stuff that you might otherwise only see on TV.**

*For the teaching staff accompanying the pupils?*

**It proves that it's not just school work. This stuff is in use every day, in everything we do. People work in STEM subjects! I'd hope that means that the students will return to the classroom inspired and enthused.**

*Which STEM activity have you enjoyed the most and why?*

**Difficult one! I love loads of the things we do. Science busking is fun because you get to impress the unsuspecting public and I love the imaginative ideas that students come up with when building robots for the robodance competition. My favourite has to be water rockets though. To build something that can fly so far with such basic apparatus is so much fun and always excited those taking part.**

*What was your role in this activity?*

**I have been involved in all aspects of the water rockets from setting up to building the rockets. These days I tend to stand at the front and do all the shouting!**

*Do you think being a STEM Ambassador has enhanced your career in anyway?*

**It's certainly not held it back! It keeps me motivated and enthusiastic about what I do, it's also an important part of the business to demonstrate their commitment to the community and inspire the next generation of employees to the values in what I do is appreciated by our executive. That appreciation has allowed me to interact with the members of the executive and management more so that they know me when considering new opportunities.**

*Do you have any advice for people who are considering becoming a STEM ambassador?*

**Do it! It's good for you, your career, the students, the teachers, the country and the world!!! What's stopping you?!**

**The key is energy, enthusiasm and just getting stuck in. Swallow your inhibitions, if you throw yourself in with enough energy and excitement about what you're doing you'll inspire irrelevant of whether it all goes wrong or not!**