Episode 52: "A BI Lens on BI Careers"

with Rhiannon Mosher, Human-Centred Design Researcher with the Behavioural Science Office within the Public Health Agency of Canada.

As an anthropologist by training, Rhiannon Mosher brings a unique perspective to her work in Behavioural Insights. She shares the challenges and opportunities of coming to BI from another field. Rhiannon also shares advice for how to turn a BI lens onto your career to identify and communicate your transferrable skills to make them attractive and easy to understand by managers and potential employers. For more, read Rhiannon's blog post about The Disentanglement Project; for folks changing careers, she recommends the Transition Q&A series.

Transcript:

KIRSTIN APPELT, HOST: Welcome to this edition of Calling DIBS. I'm your host, Kirstin Appelt, Research Director with UBC Decision Insights for Business and Society, or DIBS for short. Today we're calling DIBS on Rhiannon Mosher.

Rhiannon is a human-centred design researcher at the Public Health Agency of Canada. I first connected with Rhiannon when she was working as a Senior Policy Advisor for the Ontario Behavioural Insights Unit, when she was serving on the steering committee for the Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights. And the program is so much stronger for her feedback and guidance.

And today we're actually talking about something slightly different, which is career pivots. And that's something I'm really excited to talk about because I think it's relevant to so many of us in this field and our twisting, winding journeys. So welcome to the podcast Rhiannon.

RHIANNON MOSHER, GUEST: Thanks. Nice to be here.

APPELT: Why don't we start by just having you introduce yourself? Tell us a little bit about yourself.

MOSHER: Sure. So, I live and work in Toronto on the unceded and traditional territories of many Indigenous nations, including the Anishinabek, the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. I'm originally from Nova Scotia so the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaqi peoples. And I moved to Toronto, like many Nova Scotians. But for me, I did it to do a PhD at York University.

So, I am a Social Anthropologist by training. And if you had talked to me about ten years ago about what I did, I would have said, you know, I was interested in migration, national identity, citizenship, voluntourism. I did my doctoral research focussed on experience of citizenship and belonging in the Netherlands. So, I did 13 months of fieldwork in Amsterdam with Dutch language coaching volunteers, and it was really interesting sighting, never intended to stay in Ontario, but I'm still here.

I defended my dissertation in September 2015 and did a bunch of different kinds of contract work before and after that. You know, Research Assistantships, Teaching Assistantships, teaching as an adjunct faculty member at York. But since July 2018, I have been working in the public service.

So I joined the Ontario Public Service, as you mentioned. But I joined via the Ontario Internship Program, which I can talk a little bit more about later. And then in February 2020, I had the great luck to join the Ontario Behavioural Insights Unit, or BIU, as a Senior Policy Advisor, where we first met.

And most recently, since September this year, I have moved over to the Office of Behavioural Science or BeSciO, at the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, as you mentioned, as their human-centred design researcher. But what that means is I'm essentially kind of leading the office's qualitative research program and integrating qualitative research methods into their regular business to really just help support a more fulsome, mixed methods approach to BeSci in the office.

And in my spare time, which I now have now that I'm not a precarious academic, you know, I really like baking, cooking, playing board games and visiting lots of local craft breweries with my partner, our dog, and friends.

APPELT: Awesome. So well rounded, I love to see that. Like you said, academics often are more one track. Nice to hear that you got multiple interests.

All right. Well, as regular listeners know, we usually start by talking about the fact that most of us have winding pathways that lead us to BI. And you've already talked about that a little bit. But since that's our focal topic today, let's dig in more.

What brought you to BI? What was your journey to BI like, beyond just kind of the highlights?

MOSHER: Yeah. So, until probably about December 2019 when I first saw a job ad for the Senior Policy Advisor position at the Ontario BIU, I had never heard of BI or behavioural science, so my career path to BI, as you say, was definitely a winding one.

It started, I guess for me, just going through academia, going through the PhD program, I had always loved school, loved learning. Now I know that's maybe some status quo bias, and decided to do a PhD with the goal of being an academic. Because I saw, you know, especially during my Master's program, the professors and just the life that they lived of doing research, of writing, of teaching, and that's what I wanted. So, that was my goal for a long time.

But as I was kind of finishing my PhD and after defending, I realized that maybe it wasn't the right path for me. I was doing a lot of kind of adjunct teaching and so I didn't really have that job security and also no time or capacity for the other kinds of things. It was just teaching. I didn't have time to do research or barely time to write. And so, I knew that if I wanted to kind of stay in academia, I had to kind of be comfortable with long term precarity. And I wasn't. I wrote about this, I think I shared it with you previously, but in the May 2021 issue of the Canadian Anthropology Society's newsletter, which was called Culture, and my little article is called The Disentanglement Project.

But really my decision to leave academia as a career path, or at least like the main career path that I wanted to be on you know, I think like a lot of people who do PhDs or are in that kind of more academic track. It's overwhelming. There's just “Okay, you're not going to be this one thing anymore. What do you want to do? What do you want to do with your life?”. And so, you know, you just kind of feeling overwhelmed. I think for a lot of folks in that same position, the immediate response is, “Well, I'll just do more school”. You know, again,

that kind of status quo bias of like this is what I've been doing, there must be a way to kind of get where I want to be with another certificate, another degree.

But I don't think that's always the right thing to do, especially if you don't want to be, say, a lawyer or a project manager or whatever it is. And so, for me, I think I did a lot of kind of research and soul searching about what it was that I actually wanted to do with my career. And so, kind of started with the tools I had at hand, you know, the things I could immediately do and really interestingly at York University, there's actually a graduate student career counsellor. So, this is not a common thing.

You know, undergrads get a lot of career support advice, but graduate students definitely do not. And Carolyn Steele, who I think is still there, she actually made this position herself. So, kind of taking her own advice, seeing a gap and saying, you know "This is something that we need". And the university agreed. And she's been kind of working there in this role, this field forever since. And so, the best advice that I got really came from her when I went to go see her. And she said, you know, "You're a professional researcher, treat your job search as you would a research question". And so, for me, that really gave me a lot of confidence that I knew how to tackle this huge question in my life.

And so, taking a researched approach really for me, you know, I use the same tools that I used when I was doing my PhD or my Master's where, you know, started with kind of like the lit reviews. So, a lot of reading. So, what's out there? What's out there on the Internet, news, blogs, articles like I think it's archived now, but from PhD to Life Transition Q&A's, which is published in University Affairs, a lot of great interviews with people who had left academia, who had PhDs, what were they doing, what was interesting to them.

I also read things like different books. Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius have this great book that's been reprinted a number of times called 'So What Are You Going To Do With That?' really geared towards PhDs looking to, you know, not be academics. And then, of course, primary research.

So, for me, that meant informational interviewing. So, talking to friends, talking to colleagues, doing some outreach, cold calling or I guess, cold emailing to organizational contacts, people that I knew through my professional network of anthropologists and just trying to learn more about what it was that they did in their day to day and whether that would be a good fit for me.

And so, after a lot of that research, I decided that public service was likely a good fit for me. And I thought that kind of, you know, off and on a little bit throughout my Master's, and my PhD, but didn't really give it a lot of serious thought. But after doing this kind of research, I decided that I really like the orientation towards the public good. And it seemed like there was a lot of different opportunities in the public service, in a lot of different public services available to me to work in.

So I was in Ontario, so the Ontario Public Service, but also the municipal public service, federal public service. And kind of continued with that researched approach of applying for jobs, seeking feedback when I wasn't successful, where that was possible, learning about how to apply and present myself to different audiences. And there's lots of great public service pools and competitions like across the different provinces, the federal government.

So, the federal government has one called the Recruitment of Policy Leaders, which is like a candidate pool creation program. So, if you get into that, hiring managers might come in and pluck you out and interview you for like a specific job. And I went in to the Ontario Public Service through the Ontario Internship Program. So, I joined the OPS in, as I said, July 2018. I had the great fortune of working at the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs for my first year, which was an amazing introduction to public service, and spent six months at the Ministry of

Intergovernmental Affairs and then finally got this contract at the Ontario Behavioural Insights Unit, which to me just seemed so cool. It was an applied social science research unit, very nerd cool. There was a lot of alignment with methods and my expertise, my interests. And in speaking with the hiring manager, it seemed like there was an opportunity to kind of build out the qualitative research capacity of the team.

But my main role was really as a Project Manager, and then through kind of that experience, I was there for two and a half years, a little bit more, I kind of got this opportunity to join PHAC's relatively new BeSciO and really focus in on those qualitative methods and aspects of the work. So that's my winding path to behavioural insights.

APPELT: So interesting and I love how you approached it like a research question. That's that kind of like surprisingly obvious but hard to figure out for yourself advice that like of course I should treat this as a research report.

MOSHER: Of course.

APPELT: You don't think about it unless it comes from someone else. Yeah, well, I was thinking that there's two great pieces to what you're saying.

One is the idea of, like, how does one think about entering a field that they're less familiar with, but also for folks in BI, because people do come from different backgrounds, I'd love to hear a little bit about what that's been like for you as someone who comes from outside the quote unquote standard fields of psychology and economics, how does that inform how you do behavioural insights?

MOSHER: Yeah, I think that's an interesting question because I'm not a behavioral scientist. I have no background at all in psychology or economics. I never studied those subjects. I am not a quantitative person, you know, ask my partner. And I'm not, my role isn't a behavioral scientist and I don't actually want to be a behavioral scientist.

You know, I thought about that as well, and I don't think that's what would make me happy in my career. But as an anthropologist, I found pretty quickly that there's a surprising amount of kind of cross-pollination of ideas across those different fields with the field that I'm trained in.

First of all, you know, context is so important in BI, it's so, so important. And, you know, anthropologists study context. They want to understand the, you know, cultural context and how people live and work and think and, you know, all of those things in cultural context. So that was, I think, really important to me to kind of feel that resonance with what my, you know, more classically trained BI colleagues were doing and talking about.

I think one of the first projects I had the opportunity to work on at the Ontario BIU, we were talking about reciprocity. And for me that's this early kind of theoretical lightbulb, because every anthropologist and sociologist is familiar with Marcel Mauss's 'The Gift'. And, you know, so it's like “Okay, there's things here that I know, we might be talking about them differently, but there's a lot of like similar things happening”.

I think for me in the role of kind of Project Manager, but also just being part of the team, cultural translation is a huge function that I started playing on that team where it was really about kind of being able to translate scientific knowledge from scientists who are steeped in it and working every day to, you know, our partners in different ministries who are not necessarily, as literate in behavioural science or, you know, quantitative research results or, you know, power analysis. Why do we do them?

So those kinds of things and like speaking kind of to both sides to be able to communicate the importance across that scientific to policy divide, I guess. It's not really a divide, but just, you know, the different kinds of spheres that people are thinking about and what's important in each of those spheres.

So, I think that's kind of something important I brought. Just seeing how everyday practices fit into the larger system. So that's also part of it. And you know, like every anthropologist really, asking questions that intellectual curiosity about, you know, the context of a program that you're working on, but the context of working in government itself and how that works, understanding how those systems work and those pieces come into place.

But I think for me, I was really fortunate that I just happened to join the BI community, at a time when there was so much more recognition about the importance of rigorous qualitative research as part of the mixed methods program of BI practice. So, I was able to kind of bring that niche of qualitative expertise alongside that experience and expertise I was building up through my work in public service in general.

APPELT: Yeah. I love what you're saying about translation because for me, also coming from a PhD background, I was surprised because you are so in your silo, everyone speaks the same jargon, everyone understands what it means. Then you leave that and you're like "Oh, there is this whole translation function, this knowledge exchange, cultural translation of 'X' happens with 'p' less than 0.05". What does that actually mean? What's the impact? What's the takeaway?

And so, I think every stage of the process, whether you're using, you know, RIDE or TESTS or whatever acronym to follow the process, there is this need for translation because you're working so cross-disciplinarily. Is that a word? But across disciplines, across sectors, there is really so much translation that's involved and it's such a huge skill to bring. If you can speak, you know, those two different languages or multiple languages of science and policy or qualitative and quantitative or any of the different pieces that are coming together.

MOSHER: Mm hmm.

APPELT: Well, coming from, like you said, anthropology rather than something psych or economics, were there challenges coming into BI? And if so, what were those like?

MOSHER: Yeah. I think, I thought about this question. I really think it depends on the team. It depends on the context. So, you know, coming into a public service unit, the Ontario BIU, interdisciplinary perspectives were seen as a strength as part of an applied research program. So, I expect that it would be different if I was trying to come into a BI space in an academic context, which I understand is often much more lab-focussed environment, where research priorities are just different.

You know, a lot of researchers might be focussed on building heuristics and kind of those lab experiments. And frankly, in a space like that, I don't think that there's a lot of recognition for what I can offer, except maybe as a Project Manager. So, I think the main challenge in that sense is really being able to find your niche on a team. So, advocating for yourself is I think a big part of that. And having a team and a manager who's open to recognizing what you can bring to the table.

And you know, as I said, I was really fortunate at the Ontario BIU, and now at PHAC's BeSciO, to have that openness and support from my team from my management and the recognition of, you know, what I can bring to the table, the recognition that my expertise as a qualitative researcher is integral to the work that we do or we want to be doing. So I think, yeah, the big challenge is really just figuring out where you can fit in, where you can add value, and making sure that people around you know that.

APPELT: Yeah, I do want to come back to this idea of transferrable skills because I think it's so important. But first I thought just since we asked about challenges, would also ask about opportunities. So, what opportunities does coming from another field present? What strengths are you bringing that wouldn't otherwise be present in the team?

MOSHER: Yeah, I think that's a great question and also a really good question for your students in the certificate program. So, in general, I think we all have skills and expertise that we bring and this can be our skills and expertise that we're building in the BI space. It can also be the experiences built up through our own, you know, work and life experiences. All of that informs what we can bring to a team.

So it could be, you know, a set of research tools, it could be program area expertise, but also as a public servant, it could be things like political acuity, relationship and project management, communication skills, technical skills and knowledge and so and so on.

So, in an applied BI space, I found it to be very collaborative as a team-based environment. You know, this is true at the BIU, it's true at the BeSciO, I think coming from a different perspective, a different field, it enables you to really offer a different lens. It enables you to bring a different perspective to the team, to help recognize some of those blind spots, to ask the questions that aren't being asked, to kind of help fulfill that kind of knowledge and cultural translation role.

And then, you know, just from my perspective as an Anthropologist, obviously bringing in and helping to build out a different set of methodological tools. And personally, I think my gift game is pretty on point in a virtual team environment.

APPELT: Absolutely. I really love what you said about the idea that it's not just your educational background or even your work background, but the life experiences because BI is rooted in solving real world challenges, and because it's cross discipline, and because it is what it is, you really need all of those different lenses. And so, I think there is more than in academia perhaps or more than in some fields, this opportunity to bring more parts of people's lives into the field. I think it's also a place where BI still has room for growth.

Our keynote speaker at Big Difference BC 2022 was highlighting how a lot of times the lived experience isn't valued as much as it should be. But I do think compared to a lot of other fields, it is a place where so many different types of experience are valued and needed.

Going back to the idea of transferable skills, you've clearly thought carefully about your career path, approaching it like a research question, and you've thought about moving between fields. And you already mentioned the idea of it's not just the thinking about the skills, it's communicating them. But I was wondering if we could just step back and even just say, what do we mean by transferable skills?

MOSHER: Yeah, I think that's a good question. So first off, I think it's important to kind of think about workplaces as different cultural environments. You know, every space builds its own little organizational culture. And, you know, as you were saying about academia, like, it can be very siloed. You don't necessarily see what's outside of your bubble. The way that you're taught to think about your labour, your outputs, your interests, it's going to be different in those different spaces.

So, in academia, I found that it was very different than what I was hearing about industry, nonprofit sector, public service. So, the way that we're taught to think about those things, about who you are and how you present yourself very different in different spaces. And so, in cultural inculturation, as an academic, you're

taught to kind of focus on your discipline, your thesis or your dissertation topic, your social theory approach, your methods.

So, for example, if I were to present myself as an academic in the context of like a conference, student meet and greet, a departmental party, I would say something like I'm a social anthropologist, I study the culturalization and neo-liberalization of citizenship in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, through the theoretical lens of Foucauldian governmentality. So that makes a lot of sense in that very particular cultural context of academia, but it doesn't translate very well into other contexts. People are like, "Great, so, alright."

But embedded in all of that cultural learning and training are skills. The actions, the competencies, the knowledge that you've honed over time that can matter on a resume. In other employment contexts, if you only know how to frame them. So, in all of that, what was kind of less important from my academic experience was that I'm able to apply, you know, a dense theoretical lens to my analysis of my research data.

What's more important in talking about my skills to say, the public service environment and industry environment is that I have a lot of research experience, right? I've conducted research from start to finish. I've written successful grant applications. I've been able to publish my research in peer reviewed articles. My experience as a university educator and a teaching blogger all matters more than kind of how I'd frame myself in an academic context. So, it's really about framing those kind of granular skills.

You know, I think behavioural insights folks are really good at kind of picking down to the granular behaviors, and that's kind of the level you want to get to. And those skills really are relevant in a variety of different work contexts. You know, because I have hands-on experience leading social research from proposal through data collection, analysis and reporting. Those are all skills that I put on my resume when I'm applying for jobs in kind of a research field. So, I've developed, you know, clear and persuasive writing skills, which I've demonstrated through, you know, my teaching blog or as a university educator, you know, teaching students these complex social theories and case studies, and also kind of, you know, all those different things about how you present yourself.

It's all in there. It's all in the same package. It's just parsing out how is this going to resonate in a different cultural context, in a different employment context. So, when I talk about transferable skills, it again comes back to a form of cultural translation. So, it's really about looking at your knowledge, your experience, your interests and asking, “so what" from the perspective of a potential employer or potential colleague, in the space you want to be in.

APPELT: Absolutely. And it so resonates this idea that they are different cultures. And to me, the perfect encapsulation of that is whenever I start working with a new project partner organization, I start my new acronym dictionary because it's like, what acronyms are we using here that I'm going to hear and just have no idea, they mean something completely different to me. So, I think that is very important.

And I also wanted to just pull on the idea that we might be tempted to say something like “Oh, I have research skills”, but that's kind of selling yourself short because research isn't a skill. It's like 14 different skills. So, breaking those into the pieces so people can see that it's not just research, it's designing the research, it's working with participants or whatever the case might be. It's the writing up of the research, it's the analyzing the data. There's so many skills baked in there, and I think that applies of other things as well. If you're good at writing policy documents, there's analysis, there's the actual writing, there's the strategic element. So, like you said, getting down to the specifics and not just looking at the behaviours or the skills or the things you do, but getting really granular, like you said, about what is in there and how that's going to be valuable for other contexts. I love that.

Well, when you were doing this process, I know you approached it like a research question, but how specifically did you identify your skills and then figure out how they would resonate with different audiences? Like what was that process like for you?

MOSHER: Yeah, a lot of iteration, a lot of drawing on the help of other people, really. So, I think, you know, going back to, after meeting with the career counsellor, I tried turning my academic CV into an industry formatted resume and it looked ridiculous. I thought I did a pretty good job, but I sent it to a friend of mine and she just kind of wrote back like “Take a look at mine, instead.”. And I realized how far away I was still from, you know, kind of communicating what I knew and what I had experienced and what I had expertise in, in a way that actually mattered to people.

So, I think it's really important to kind of acknowledge that I had a lot of help from friends, from colleagues, from network connections and experts such as that grad student career counsellor in helping to kind of iterate on those early versions into something that worked.

But in doing that work in general, I think an important part of it was taking stock of the skills, not only that I had, but that I wanted to be exercising the most often in my career. You know, there's lots of different skills that we have, but maybe some of them are more interesting and some are less interesting.

So, thinking about the combination of things that drew me to the PhD., the professoriate, but also even to the study of social anthropology when I was an undergraduate student, the research, the writing, the teaching, you know, the social good, all of those things kind of mattered to me.

So, coming back to kind of looking at those questions as a researcher, I did a lot of job ad searching, a lot of job ad applying unsuccessfully, to kind of get a sense of how these things were described. So, you know, kind of thinking about that is like studying the literature, secondary data analysis, you know, communicating in different ways. Being able to talk to stakeholders and partner relationship management all fell under that bucket of kind of writing.

My kind of teaching bucket really tapped into that desire to communicate about knowledge, to make it matter, to be actionable. And also in that teaching bucket, you know, as I was thinking about how can I do these things in a different way, in a different cultural context, really mentoring junior colleagues and sharing my experience and knowledge, like on this podcast, you know, kind of hits that target for me. So, I think informational interviews are really helpful and trying to think about how to think about your transferable skills, how to make them resonate with your potential audiences.

So, getting feedback from colleagues, mentors in the field. As an anthropologist, I really tried to treat each new work experience, so, including all those different contracts, as opportunities for participant observations. So, kind of learning by doing, asking naive questions, observing, deep hanging out.

So, when I started in the Ontario Public Service, my first role was with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. And so, I really, you know, tried to leverage my colleagues, my managers who are also kind of mentors. I was really fortunate to have a great management team who took mentorship really seriously. So, Stephanie Prosen and Sarah De Decker were excellent at kind of leading me along the path of how do I translate what I'm doing into things that are meaningful.

So, for instance, I had, you know, giving presentations. They're like “No, no, no, it's not a presentation. It's a briefing”. And also, you know, the status of the person you're briefing matters. So, if you're briefing an ADM,

put that on your resume in the public service because that matters. And I didn't know that that mattered, right? So, getting I guess, the feedback from people who have that knowledge and are able to kind of share that with you is also really important to kind of making sure that, you know, your skills resonate with your audience.

APPELT: Yeah, absolutely. I remember when I was exploring different options and I to try to change my CV into a more industry resume. And it's just really hard because you're so anchored in your own background and it is hard to adjust sufficiently away from what you've been doing into a different format. So, I love what you were saying there.

I was also wondering more generally what advice you would give for folks who are either hoping to make career changes or perhaps they're developing new skills and want to stay in the same career but aren't sure how to start using those skills. Or their new skills, or underutilized skills. How do you find or create opportunities to use them?

MOSHER: Yeah, that's a good question. I think in a way, for kind of both of those groups of folks, you need to do your homework or your research into, you know, what do you want those changes to look like for yourself? How can you communicate your skills and interests and what career opportunities will let you meet your goals?

So, you need to, I guess, kind of build out the tools that you need to be able to give yourself the opportunity to make kind of an educated guess. So, something I've been thinking about really just that you can say yes to a potential opportunity because you feel like it's maybe the right fit for you. It might not be. An iteration is okay. You can try different things until you find what fits for you. But instead of just kind of, you know, taking it opportunity because it's there.

So, making sure that you do that work, you also have to just ask people, you have to talk to people. So you know, have those coffee chats with people in areas that you think might be interesting or doing things that you want to do or, you know, if you want to stay in your current role, kind of with the folks who might have those opportunities available to you or might not know that you have skills that you feel are underused.

So, like working in the BIU, I found, you know, I was able to kind of create these opportunities to bring in more qualitative research and training for my colleagues who were excellent experts in quantitative but didn't have as much familiarity or expertise in qualitative research. And then also kind of trying to bring that deeper perspective, deeper methodological approach into our regular work. So, kind of looking for those opportunities and having people on my team kind of advocate for those opportunities as well. And you know, in a way kind of creating my role in PHAC BeSciO without knowing it.

So, I think if you want to find or create opportunities to use those under-used skills, in your current opportunity, you have to ask also why your skills are under-used. So, are your skills under-used because there's no opportunity in your current role to exercise them? Or are you just unaware? So, are there potential opportunities that you're asking about? Do you see potential opportunities there? And if there are opportunities there, are you seeking them out?

And if your skills are under-used because you haven't communicated them to your manager or your team in a way that makes sense, maybe think about how to talk about those skills that you're building out. So, what does it mean to you to be a BI practitioner? Is it about being able to apply BI lens, you know, to improve a document, to improve a deck, you know, applying EAST or another framework to just make a document better, to make it more salient, more attractive. Are you looking for opportunities to experiment or build

evidence-based decisions into your work in a different way than you're currently doing? Are there opportunities for that in your current area? So, what do those skills look like in your workplace or what could they look like? I think that's really important to be asking yourself as a starting place to think about, you know, what's next for you if you want to bring more BI into your work.

APPELT: Yeah. And I think in some ways that's a part that's tough with behavioural insights because it is both a big tent, so there's a lot of things that fall under it, but it's also relatively new on the scene. So, if you told your manager, I'm a plumber, they know, okay, these are the skills you have, this is what you're going to do. If you say “Hey, I just developed this BI toolkit!”, they probably don't have a sense of what that is.

And so that comes back to what you were saying about transferable skills and saying, like, I am developing this BI toolkit, this means I can do X, Y, Z. So, breaking it down, I think is going to be hugely important.

MOSHER: Yeah. Because like you have a BI tookit. What does it mean to me? Like how am I going to use that on my team? Okay. Like you can make this document more persuasive, clearer, awesome. You think that there's a way to kind of build evidence, on a small scale, before we roll out this major project, let's talk about that. But people have to know what you're offering.

APPELT: Absolutely. Yeah. Well, I know we're getting close to time, so I'll ask if you have a message for our new BI practitioners in training.

MOSHER: I can only speak to kind of the applied BI space. And I think, you know, applied behavioural science is a really great space to work in because of that interdisciplinarity, because of the collaboration that I've experienced in these spaces, there's so many different skills that make up a strong BI team. You know, obviously quantitative methods are really at the heart of the behavioural science methodology, but there's also a space for qualitative research experts, for human centred-designers, for policy experts, for Project Managers, and so on.

So ,I think BI is really, you know, a lens and a toolkit that in many ways, like my own kind of anthropological sensibility and toolkit can help you add value to an organization by bringing a fresh perspective in approach, even if you're not in kind of BI dedicated shop. So, I think just think about what it is you want and how you want to bring your BI lens, your toolkit into the work that you want to be doing.

APPELT: Yeah. Yeah. I think going back to what you were saying about, you know, turning EAST kind of inward is thinking about how do you make it easy, attractive, social and timely for someone to invite you to use your BI skills. So, I love, I think that's a great message.

Well, any last thoughts, questions I should have asked and didn't? Anything else you wanted to get across?

MOSHER: No, I think I'm good. You know, good luck to all the students, current students and graduated students who are looking for other opportunities. And remember how important qualitative research is in your projects. I think that's all I have to say.

APPELT: Awesome. That's wonderful. Well, thank you so much. It's been lovely to chat. You've thought so deeply about your career journey and transferable skills, and it's just so nice to be able to plumb those steps a bit. And I'm really happy you're in the field, even though it wasn't necessarily where you expected to be. But I love that you're continuing to help how BI is used in Canada and helping strengthen the mixed methods approach.

So, thank you for joining us today, Rhiannon.

MOSHER: Yeah. Thank you.

APPELT: And thanks to our listeners for joining another episode of Calling DIBS.

Calling DIBS is recorded and edited on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations.

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