



Episode 253

Michael Meyer

Founder & CEO, M31 Consulting
Author, *Weird is the New Normal*

Why Weird Leaders Will Win in the Age of AI

In this episode of the [DevReady Podcast](#), host [Anthony Sapountzis](#), CTO and Co-Founder of Aerion Technologies, welcomes [Michael Meyer](#), Founder & CEO of [M31 Consulting](#), for a thought-provoking conversation on digital leadership. Michael brings nearly three decades of experience across infrastructure, data, and software, with a mission to help business leaders reframe how they lead in a world increasingly defined by the virtual. As the author of *Weird Is the New Normal*, Michael blends imagination, strategy, and storytelling to empower leaders navigating complexity, digital disruption, and the rise of artificial intelligence.

Michael reflects on his journey from help desk support in the '90s to executive leadership and consulting, unpacking how value creation has shifted from physical assets to soft assets like intellectual property, speed, and adaptability. He challenges the outdated perception of IT as a cost centre and urges businesses to harness the full power of their tech teams. Using the example of visionaries like Steve Jobs, Michael highlights the value of conviction, curiosity, and the ability to interpret a world we can't always see: a world that operates through screens, data, and distributed systems.

Drawing rich parallels with fantasy narratives like *The Lord of the Rings*, Michael explains how leadership in the digital economy often mirrors an unpredictable quest. He explores how traditional organisations struggle with black-box decision-making, siloed departments, and missed opportunities, often because leaders unknowingly give away their power when delegating technology decisions. Using powerful metaphors like steamboats navigating rapids, Michael reframes digital transformation as something that must be both imagined and steered. His call for stronger digital leadership literacy is a reminder that technology alone isn't enough and humans must lead it with clarity and intent.

Michael also cautions against the dangers of hype-driven adoption, particularly with AI. He shares a sobering real-world example of a company laying off 700 employees after poorly implementing AI, only to rehire many of them after realising the damage caused by rushed, uninformed decision-making. Rather than chase trends, he urges organisations to focus on empathy, systems thinking, and long-term human value. Tools like Scrum, he argues, offer transferable frameworks for adaptability and should be applied beyond tech into broader organisational strategy.

As the episode wraps, Michael offers leaders a lasting mantra for navigating this uncertain and ever-changing world: "Be curious. Be weird." Curiosity, he says, unlocks growth and drives innovation. In an era where AI can generate code but not lead people, and where unexpected consequences are the norm, embracing our own weirdness and asking better questions is more valuable than ever. If you're a business or tech leader grappling with the fast-moving digital world, this episode will challenge your thinking and leave you inspired to lead differently.

Topics Covered

- Michael Meyer's background in tech and leadership
- The evolution from physical assets to digital and soft assets
- The role of leadership in a virtual-first, digital economy
- The IT organisation as an untapped strategic asset
- The gap between business leadership and tech teams
- Digital leadership literacy and why it matters
- The power of storytelling and imagination in leadership
- Avoiding unintended consequences in tech implementation
- AI adoption, hype cycles, and human-centred decision-making
- Curiosity and weirdness as tools for modern leadership

Important Time Stamps

- From Help Desk to Leadership: Michael Meyer's 30-Year Tech Journey (0:07 – 3:23)
- What Steve Jobs Can Teach Us About Leading in a Virtual World (3:24 – 7:46)
- The Real Challenge? Leading What You Can't See (7:47 – 14:51)
- If You Don't Understand Tech, You're Handing Over Your Leadership (14:52 – 22:41)
- AI Alone Isn't the Answer: It's Who Wields It That Matters (22:42 – 29:07)
- Be Curious. Be Weird. That's How You Lead in the AI Era (29:08 – 30:18)

Useful Links

[Michael Meyer | LinkedIn](#)

[M31 Consulting | LinkedIn](#)


[M31 Consulting | Website](#)

[Weird is the New Normal | Website](#)

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