



CHRIS EMSLIE

Industry: Optical Fibre & Industry

CURRENT ROLE

- Retired

EDUCATION & CAREER PATH

- **BEng in Mechanical Engineering** – University of Sheffield
- **PhD in Polymer Optical Fibre Fabrication** – University of Southampton (also held a Research Fellowship)
- **Marketing Executive** – York Ventures & Special Optical Products (a university spin-out)
- **Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing (Dip.M)** – Southampton Institute
- **CEO of Fibercore Limited** – Led the company for 18 years, overseeing five acquisitions, global expansion, and growth across multiple industries
- **Final decade focused on mergers, acquisitions (M&A), and finance** – Fibercore was sold to Amoco Technology Inc., Scientific Atlanta Inc., Cisco Systems, and H.I.G. Capital, where I became a co-owner before a final acquisition **by Humanetics**

HOW HIS PATH DIFFERED FROM EXPECTATIONS

- I didn't plan to do a PhD—it was a practical decision after struggling to find a job that truly interested me. It gave me time to explore my options, and instead of academia, I ended up in a commercial role at a university start-up.
- That move changed everything. I never expected to become a CEO or lead a company through multiple acquisitions, but the entrepreneurial path turned out to be a perfect fit.

CAREER INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

- I found my career incredibly fulfilling. It allowed me to work at the highest levels across multiple industries, from communications and medicine to aerospace and defence. I thrived on the variety and challenge, especially as I moved into mergers and acquisitions.
- Leading Fibercore through global expansion was a major highlight. I enjoyed blending technical innovation with business strategy, working with world-class teams to drive growth. Most importantly, my career gave me the freedom to retire early and spend more time with my family, which has been the most rewarding part.

FUTURE PLANS

I'm officially retired, but I like to keep my brain active, so I still take on a few things:

- Expert Witness work for a London-based law firm
- Delivering STEM career talks at local schools
- Serving on an IEEE Industry Awards Committee

It's just enough to keep me engaged without the pressure of full-time work.

ADVICE FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS (ECRS)

- ☒ Finish your thesis before moving into industry. Once work takes over, it's much harder to go back and complete it.
- ☒ Be open to opportunities. The best career moves often happen unexpectedly. Don't dwell on what could have been—focus on what's ahead.
- ☒ Money isn't everything. After a certain point, job satisfaction matters more than salary. Find work that excites and motivates you.