



## 08 Establishing Trust Within Your Team with Paul Harvey

### TRANSCRIPTION

**Brett Cribb:** Hi, my name is Brett Cribb, managing director and founder of Resources Unearthed and welcome to *Resourceful: Stories from the Site*. Today I'm joined by Paul Harvey. I've known and worked with Paul for over seven years now and found him to be a highly effective strategic thinker with a caring approach. Paul's the COO of South32, chief operating officer of South32. He's worked in many operations around the world.

He's well known as having a world-class and highly ethical operator. Having had to make some very hard decisions along the way that show his no-compromise approach to safety and values. His time in his CV includes time at BHP as asset president of Ekati Diamonds and Nickel West and now at South32 as chief operating officer. Paul has a wealth of experience in mining, particularly in operations and corporate management. I believe you as our listeners would be interested in exploring some of his most memorable stories from the site, so wherever you are, sit back, relax and enjoy this episode of *Resourceful*. Welcome, Paul, and thanks for joining us today.

**Paul Harvey:** Thanks, Brett. It's my pleasure.

**Brett:** Perhaps, Paul, to begin with, could you tell us how and where you started in the mining and resources industry?

**Paul:** Yes, I grew up in Western Australia. I grew up in the '70s at a time when a lot's happening iron ore, a lot's happening in nickel, a lot's happening in gold, of course, bauxite. It was just present in life in Western Australia in the '70s. When I finished school, I thought well, what better thing to do than to join the industry? So I joined the WA School of Mines and started my studies up there.

**Brett:** Then where did you start in the industry? Where'd you work?

**Paul:** I was really lucky. When we graduated, most of us at the School of Mines were either going to WMC down in Kambalda or we were going up to the iron ore mines in the Pilbara. During my last year at uni, we had a professor from Fitz University in South Africa, came to the School of Mines to help us get our course accredited as an engineering degree. We became friends, and he said if I wanted to work in South Africa after graduation, he might be able to help me. That was my start. I thought well that's a great opportunity to try and travel and work somewhere different.

South Africa always had this immense reputation, particularly for underground mining. It was the place to be. So that was a great opportunity for me. That's how I started. I jumped on a plane as a 21-year-old and headed across to South Africa to start my career. That was the first step.

**Brett:** It was an interesting place that certainly I spent three months there as an undergraduate as well. Really interesting. Did you work on the gold reefs or where did you work to start with?

**Paul:** I actually arrived the day that the US government imposed sanctions on South Africa. That was quite a dynamic time, 1985. I worked for four years with a company called Rand Mines who've now was subsequently broken up into various companies including Durban Deep and Harmony Gold. I was on the gold mines for four years. Typical working through as a miner and a shift boss and a mine captain. Then I moved across to De Beers and had three years working at Finsch. Also underground in one of their diamond mines in the Northern Cape.

Seven years all up in South Africa which really for me that was the pivotal start to my career. It taught me a lot of things about how can you be successful in a completely alien environment? Adapting to a different culture, having to learn different languages at the same time that you're actually learning what your job is. To me, that was the foundation that really gave me a great start to my career.

**Brett:** I think it's Fanagalo, wasn't it? Fanagalo?

**Paul:** That's the one. I learned a lot of Afrikaans too because I was living down in the Free State but it was all good.

**Brett:** Really interesting because I didn't even realize you'd work for Rand Mines, which was who I worked for when I went to South Africa as well. So there you go. How did you progress to where you are now and are there any particular skill sets that led to your career advancement over time?

**Paul:** Certainly, in my early years always, I loved the underground. I was thinking about where can I go and where should I go next with an underground focus. The one thing that's always been most important to me and it was actually necessary in South Africa as a foreigner coming into the country is the importance of connection and the importance of relationship. I was in an environment completely out of my depth, didn't know the language, completely different culture. I had no experience at all other than what I've done as a vac [vacation] student.

I learned the value that it doesn't matter what level you're at, doesn't matter what level of leadership you're at, you can only be successful with the support of the people around you.

That's perhaps been a core principle for me right through my career, that understand the people you work with, get to know them. We're all people, we're all equal, we're all the same. We all go to work to earn a living and to do the best for our family and to try hard and to have fun. That connection, establishing that relationship, for me, that's always been pivotal because from that comes trust. Once you've got trust, then you can build on it and anything can happen if you have trust as a starting point.

**Brett:** It's really interesting to reflect on some of those things and that without having thought about it, that's probably what we all do or what significant amounts of successful businesses do. Build that relationship with people and work on trusting each other and then be able to allow people to evolve. I think it's probably what you've been certainly very successful at in what I've seen.

**Paul:** All right, thank you.

**Brett:** How did your interest in leadership and management evolve through your career?

**Paul:** It's an easy one. People often ask, "Did you have an ambition or did you have a goal?" Of course, I did but the first thing I would say is one thing I'm very conscious of was actually planning my career. Those of you who work in mines or in process plants or oil and gas or wherever it is you work, any business needs to have a plan to work towards and it's the same with your personal life and your career. You need to have a plan. One thing I spent time doing was thinking about what am I doing now? What would I like to do next? Where is that? So targeting two or three places where I thought I might get that and trying to put myself in a position where I had the opportunity to take those chances.

That was the path I followed but perhaps another pivotal stage for me was being given an opportunity to go to Canada to have responsibility for developing the underground mines that BHP had in the Arctic in diamonds. Given that opportunity by someone who saw something in me that I didn't see. I didn't think I was ready for it. Someone took a chance on me and gave me that responsibility and supported me. Ultimately, I think we had a great team, and we achieved a lot of good things.

That was a really strong leadership lesson for me, is that we all at some point have had someone take a chance on us that's enabled us to take a step up or to do something that we didn't think we could do. Now that's one thing I try and do. I make a point of doing is looking for talent in the business and giving them a chance. Because if we don't give someone a chance to take a step up, then maybe they never get that chance. That was an example of leadership that I really admired and inspires you to want to be more, to be like that type of person.

**Brett:** Interesting you talk about planning your career and where you work and what you do and your strengths and what evolved. We've talked before in this podcasts about the hedgehog theory and working towards the things where you-- What you like doing, what you're good at and what drives your economic driver or your personal driver and trying to work in those areas. Clearly, you must have worked that out that leadership and management was a real one of those strengths and one of those areas that you enjoyed doing.

The other bit was taking a chance, and we've heard in people like Ian Goodman, who you know, talk about having had that chance and provided to them and then taking the leap of faith to have a crack at it and do it.

**Paul:** One of the experiences that's been pivotal for me was when I worked for De Beers, I joined Finsch Mine, it was going from an open pit to an underground. It was a major capital project to prepare the underground to take over from the open pit. The guy who'd been selected to run it, he became a mentor of mine. He's such a great leader because he was an electrical engineer in a mining environment. All my experience, up until then, had been that you're a mining engineer, you do your time underground, whatever the case may be, you come up through supervisory ranks. That's how you become a leader.

He was a great guy. Rob Smart was his name. Had done a bunch of things but was leading a major underground construction project without having the background that I thought you needed to have. It

was just such a powerful message for me that if you've got the right leadership skills-- Because he was calm, he was thoughtful. He never lost his temper. He paid attention to details. He was really strong with people. He got that job done without having had done something like that before. This is a billion rand plus project in those days, 25 years ago.

I thought, well, that's leadership in action. You don't have to be a technical expert in everything. You've just got to take time to know people, support people, be positive. That's what he was and he became a role model of mine again. These are some of the traits that I decided I wanted to develop to be successful because I saw what he achieved by being that type of person.

**Brett:** Interesting you talk about mentors. We've had people like Ian talk about mentors. People like Richard talk about mentors had always been on the lookout as a young professional looking out for mentors and how that can assist you and those talents in leadership. Really interesting.

**Paul:** If you're a young person, you'll know them when you see them. Because it's got to be a natural connection. You cannot force a mentor and mentee to have a relationship together. It's got to happen naturally. Look out for them, you'll see them, you'll feel them. Have the courage to contact with them and form a relationship. I'm sure you'll find-- Mentors love it. They feel proud that young people actually are interested in getting their advice and their input. So approach them and you'll be surprised how positive the support will be.

**Brett:** Yes, and that's 100% the case. All of them that have talked to us on this podcast have all said they love doing it. A lot of people are just willing to give up their time for that sort of stuff. Could you tell us a little bit more about a difficult or interesting time in your career including any advice you'd like to pass on to your younger self?

**Paul:** I'll probably talk about one particular phase but the first thing I'd say is be true to yourself. I've been in a couple of situations, I've been in places or locations or situations where there's stress for whatever reason stress because in South African case, didn't know the language, didn't know the mining methods, different country. I'd always found that if you're true to yourself, that's the foundation that's going to make a difference. If you're not being true to yourself, if you're trying to be someone else, if you're trying to be what someone else wants you to be, you'll always be less authentic than you are. If you're not authentic, people will see right through it.

My single piece of advice would be true to yourself no matter what the situation. In terms of an interesting period of my career, a challenge, I have had the great opportunity to work in a couple of very challenged businesses and had to make a significant change in those. One particular business really struggling. We had to half the workforce in this business from four and a half thousand down to two and a half thousand. Which is tough.

Every one of those people who leave a business in that situation, they're affected, their families affected, their children are affected. They've got a mortgage. They just decided to send their kids to private school, they just bought a car, whatever it is, they're affected. For me, there has to be a why. If you're going to do difficult things, if you have to make tough choices and impact people, you've got to

have a why. People have got to understand your why. For me, in that situation, it was around--It was an integrated business, fully integrated. Very important to the state where it was operating.

Even though it was tough and even though people lost their jobs during that process, the business itself was so important to the state. Two and a half thousand employees with family members of 10,000 people with the flow on jobs in communities that live off those operations, perhaps another 10,000. You've got a business that maintains 25,000 people's livelihoods. For me, that was the why. It was more important to keep that going and to keep that business and the ecosystem going. That was the most important thing.

It was dreadfully difficult to have 2,000 people lose their jobs as part of that. The bigger picture was more important to a bigger group of people. When you have a why, you have to share that with people with compassion and with authenticity. It's amazing, people understand and if it's for the greater good for one of us a simple term, you can make hard decisions. We had a great workforce in that business and probably the best workforce I've ever been with.

We had a great team, used to hardship, pitching together. All the things that leadership and management are talking about these days around collaboration and care and all those things. We had that 10 years ago. It was inherent in that business. One thing I firmly believe is that is natural in all of us. You don't need management to speak or leadership to tell you that you've got to care about each other or that you've got to have togetherness or that you've got to watch out for each other. That's humanity, that's who we are. The role of leadership is to recognize that and to help that come to fruition. When that comes to fruition, from a business point of view, anything's possible.

**Brett:** I've certainly found in my time in the mining and resources sector and seeing exposure to other sectors that I get these days is that it's a very strong culture in the sector and people are-- We do go through significant hard times in the commodity sector. So it's quite up and down. People do go through those hard times and your message about having a reason for doing things and being genuine, authentic, it's really interesting to see that through some of the really best businesses around the country and you do see that. If the young professionals can take that away in their leadership, that's a fantastic message, Paul, thanks.

We've probably explored some of these things but do you have any key values and practices that work for you that you'd be willing to share with our audience?

**Paul:** Comes down to connection. I'm a firm believer that relationship is the fundamental of any interaction, human interaction. Whether that's work or whether that's personal. In fact, having spent a lot of time working in Africa, in many cases, you can actually get to the work until you establish a relationship. That's the first and fundamental thing for people is I want to see you, I want to know who you are, I want to make a connection with you before you start trying to tell me what to do or ask me a question or inquire about job. Look me in the eye and form a connection with me. To me, that's the fundamental. Every person on the planet deserves to be treated with respect and that's the way to start.

For me, it's that connection, its relationship. That manifests itself through care. One of things we talk a lot about in our organization now is care. We have this call conversation around it's not just being soft or warm and fuzzy. It's not about that. That's part of it but cares also about having the confidence to take tough decisions and holding people accountable for what they're required to do for their safety or for other people's safety.

Care is a whole range of things but it's about putting the individual, putting the person and putting the relationship first. They're some of my core values. That's how I operate. If I've had any success or any positive outcomes with teams, to me, it's because that's the basis of them.

**Brett:** Is there any financial guidance you'd give to someone in your position as a younger person, a younger professional?

**Paul:** I thought I was here to talk about my mining career, now they ask for financial advice. That's what you do Brett. That's what you do for me. You've got to plan for the future. Life comes along and when things get exciting, life happens at pace. So you've got to be thinking ahead. It's too easy to think when you're in your 20s or 30s life's great, enjoy life obviously, build a family, do whatever you do but you've got to be thinking in the future. So that means things about if you have a family if you have children, what's your plan for your children? How are you going to prepare for them? How are you going to manage up to your retirement. Superannuation planning, retirement planning.

You've got to think of those things sooner rather than later. I think if we leave it till our 40s or 50s to do that, often we've missed an opportunity. I think doing that sooner rather than later is important. Just like you couldn't rock up to work as a supervisor or a superintendent or manager without having a budget and being held accountable to work to the budget, same principles apply at home. Have a plan. Know what your incomings are. Know your outgoings our. Plan the simple things in your life so that you have black numbers on your statement at the end of the month, not red numbers.

Again, it's just having a plan, and it doesn't mean being over the top or constraining yourself. You have to live life and do the things you enjoy but have a plan and stick to it.

**Brett:** You were talking before about planning and this isn't about financial planning but about planning your life and planning where you're going and planning your career to consistent theme of good people who you spend a little bit of time on it. It doesn't mean to say you need to spend your life doing it. But spend a little bit of time thinking about strategically and live those values like you're talking about. Your history contains time at Ekati and also in the West and then more recently over at Nickel West and then now at South32. Could you give listeners a little bit of a history about where you've been along your career and what interesting times you might have had along the way?

**Paul:** Yes, sure. As we discussed right at the start, seven years in South Africa which were formative years for me. I was just a boy really when I started work at 21. Those were really powerful years for me. I spent seven years there. Then got married there, had a young family and that's when we returned to Australia. I was really lucky to join BHP. I had a long career with BHP and such a great company, such a large company. Gave me the opportunity to do different things in different places.

I started up at Cadjebut. It was a little underground lead-zinc mine up in the Kimberleys, flying in and out of Broome, which was pretty cool at the time. I then had the chance to move across the Cannington. I was a second employee at Cannington. Got there rather at the start, from sheep station through the first concentrate dropping out off the end of the conveyor.

**Brett:** People like Mark Adams?

**Paul:** Mark Adams, yes. A guy who really instilled in me the importance of values. Mark set up a values-driven organization. That place is still one of the better operations in our country if not the world.

**Brett:** Very interesting because Mark actually gave me the start in mining by giving me a scholarship or organizing me to get in front of a scholarship for MIM. So there you go.

**Paul:** Well there's inspirational leadership right there, someone like Mark Adams. Seven years at Cannington. That was great, gave me the chance to do a bunch of things right through the startup study phase, commissioning operations. That was really tremendous experience. Then I got the chance to go to Ekati in Canada, which was a bit of a shock arriving there, New Year's Day minus 35 or whatever it was. We spent four years there.

As I say, I was given the opportunity to start and to lead the underground projects. So I was a project director which I hadn't done before. So an experience in projects and project construction and building a team from scratch and basically setting up an underground mining business. I was pretty young but that was a tremendous time in our life. It was also it was our children's teen years, so they had the chance to grow up in a really exciting adventurous environment. From my family's point of view too, it was fantastic. That's always been important for me is the family angle, the family dimension with my career, how does that suit the family and trying to make the most of that.

I was then lucky enough to come down back to Australia. 2005, BHP took over WMC and I was dropped into Olympic Dam with Dean Dalla Valle. We were the two of them pulled down. There were three of us BHP dudes dropped in there to make friends with and work with our WMC counterparts. That was a great opportunity, just a fantastic operation there. That's just so complicated, so large, difficult, difficult place to do business. As a result, strong people, lots of energy, lots of intellect, lots of innovation. Really enjoyed my time there.

I then went back to Ekati the second time and that was a bit of deja vu. Landing back in yellow marked airstrip but in the middle of winter and the snow thinking, this is all a bit too familiar.

**Brett:** Minus 30.

**Paul:** Yes. That was an opportunity to run the diamonds business. That's what attracted me there. The one thing I'd always loved about that environment was it's a unique place to work because it's very close interactions with the First Nations in the north. Tremendous people with a lot of history, amazing tradition, such warm open people and the chance to interact with them directly and run a business in a

way that provides as much help as it can to those communities to develop and to grow themselves. That was the unique highlight for me of that part of my career.

Then came back to WA with Nickel West. I had three or four years at Nickel West and that was a big turnaround task. Again, a former WMC operation, a great team of people. We talked a bit about some of the challenges and successes we had there but then I had the chance to move across as part of the merger to South32 and never looked back since that time. It's been a fantastic opportunity to see and to be part of building a new ASX listed company and to all the workarounds just trying to build a reputation and show people that we are highly capable of. We've got great operations, we've got great people, we've had a lot of success and it's been a great journey and it's still going.

I had been lucky to get a lot of variety in my career, different countries, different types of businesses some amazing people. It's been a wild ride and still going and I'm loving every minute of it.

**Brett:** I certainly see that in you. You really seem to enjoy what you're doing but that's always important for anyone and as a message for our listeners, if you're not enjoying what you're doing, you're better off going somewhere else or doing something else or whatever it might be. That's probably a message that you haven't really looked at what your hedgehog is and have a think about that.

**Paul:** Yes, definitely.

**Brett:** Paul, perhaps to finish off with, what is your most memorable or funniest site story?

**Paul:** I never have funniest, but I've certainly had a range of interesting situations with various animals.

**Brett:** Hopefully, it's not an Ekati animal again.

**Paul:** One of them is. The portal for the decline for the undergrads, they're obviously out, it was about two or three occasions from the main complex. I do remember patrolling around in a light vehicle when these grizzlies in and around. We're out there trying to make sure that they don't see the portal as an ice den to go and park up in for the winter. We had a few interactions with the grizzlies including rod at the door, at the back of the dongers. That really reminds you that there are all sorts of hazards in our industry. They're not just rockfall and vehicles. That's an interesting one.

When I was in South Africa, I was in the mines rescue team and I remember it was our first call out. I was on Harmony Gold Mine, and we got called out to an underground fire. It's my first call out. As the rookie, first of all, you have to drag the ice. There's this massive block of ice, which over the course of the time underground melts so you've always got cold water. So I had to drag the ice around and it's probably because you're a rookie, but I also had to carry the canary, so the gold mines and say, I forgot our fiery mines, so we did it. We always carried a canary with us and after we'd finished--

We're laying sprinklers and so on. After we finished, the guys told me to give the canary some water. I'm sure they set this up for all those young guys like me. So I open the cage door and as you would expect, what happens? The canary flies out. He gets out of the cage and now this thing is in the dark, flipping

around this tunnel and we're all running around, obviously, with our cap lamps on. Although they living it to me, it's my job to catch this thing.

**Brett:** Catch the canary.

**Paul:** I don't know how I managed to get my hard head over it, and I caught this canary and got him back in the cage. That was a funny one. Cannington, it's on a floodplain. We grabbed the boreholes, but I think we missed a couple of them. I remember one year we had floods and there's a foot of water all over the plains there across the mine. Sure enough, a big racehorse go in and it gets found down on 90 level, it's been sucked down one of the drill holes and the guys down there are complaining, "How do we catch this massive [crosstalk] lizard thing that's going berserk? I'm going to cut in the ground around the jumbo. Lots of animal stories have been a bit of a joke for us along the way.

**Brett:** I think Richard had a rabid dog in the workshop that had to get shot up at a cottage. There's some really interesting stories about it. Thanks for joining us today, Paul and for giving our listeners some insights into the world of a mining and resource industry executive. It's been great to have you here and thanks very much.

**Paul:** Pleasure. Thank you.

**Brett:** For those listening, if you'd like to speak to Paul, you're more than welcome to connect with him on LinkedIn. You'll see that information on our podcast series page.

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