

Digital Podcast Show Notes

Episode 6 with guest Aprill Allen

Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison,

Guest: Aprill Allen, @knowledgebird

BR: Intro, welcome and what's been happening?

Hi to Aprill - what are you up to these days?

AA: I am... "KnowledgeBird" boutique consulting specialising in Knowledge Management to Enterprise IT. Also Tractor Ventures - investment, helping smaller portfolio companies with processes and customer service functions. Also, painting and art too!

(Aprill.Allen art on instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aprill.allen/>)

Other news

IA: sun shining and lockdown easing. Salty Seadog and Seashanties abound.

Main discussion

BR: Where does knowledge fit in to Service Management ? How are organisations approaching the use of knowledge?

AA: Its still silo'd. Some Orgs have a chief knowledge officer, but they are Engineering/Internet firms only. You do need a knowledge manager at executive level, but those that do tend to focus on the Internet side more the Service Management use of Knowledge.

BR: What does a Chief Knowledge Officer actually do?

AA: It's still unclear. KM is a practice that is broad and described in multiple ways. Hard to create a definition that everyone relates to. Differs by company, not standard definition or strategy. Falls lower down the rung of importance.

IA: ITSM has ITIL, but what does KM have? Does Knowledge Centered Support (Service) KCS have relevance still?

AA: Yes, its is finally becoming more relevant and more common. With the rise of Automation we see more platform vendors introducing KCS features. It is improving but there is a way to go yet.

IA: Agreed on KCS value and slow adoption over time. However do you see new automation features actually taking away some of the structural value of KCS? More towards the Google model of everything is unstructured and can be searched?

AA: Nope, because knowledge is about the behaviours that create knowledge. Look at chatbots (fronts for search), if the content isn't there then all automation is doing is making wrong decisions happen faster. Knowledge behaviours help with understanding reuse. Get enough using self service, and enough are searching for the same phrase then you should be catching that and using it to create good content. You need human behaviours to serve the automation.

BR: Can you give us a 1 minute summary in KCS? What is it?

AA: Knowledge Centered Service. Knowledge is produced as a byproduct of knowledge solving. Opens up capture and reuse of knowledge to the support staff. Searching is used to

build knowledge as well and solutions. Good structure is important and it needs strong leadership to get good behaviours and full buy in. Culture of team ownership and 'how we get the job done'.

BR: what about the silo thing? Are silos a problem with knowledge?

AA: yes, let me tell you a story. A client using multiple tools for sales, support, customer success, internal comms (Teams, Trello, Confluence etc) all being used by different departments. This causes things to be missed and sharing to fail. We did a customer journey exercise to show where there were big knowledge gaps. Support couldn't connect to Development, Sales were isolated. We got them together and they took ownership of closing the gaps, but afterwards they were all engaged and involved in the same focus, That's what KVS does.

BR: Yup, that's what good leadership does. What would be your top Dos and Dons for knowledge Management?

AA: Start with strategic goals. Understand the long term goals. Then look at the 8 pillars of knowledge management... includes KM-audit. And SocialNetwork analysis. And Mentoring. Second tip is 8 pillars cheat sheet. We are all knowledge workers.

Third: Look at what you are measuring. Transactional measures do not encourage collaboration. You should incentivise team outcomes. But don't put goals on cases being closed. Outcomes, not activity.

BR: We discussed that in a previous podcast.

Knowledge workers is important. We are all knowledge workers.

Does knowledge management have any relevance to product management?

IA: Yes - it's just as important. Those in ITSM/ESM are leading with KCS, and product managers need to think about how they can learn and share more as a by product of their work.

Also, we were talking about ESM needing core starting point with self service and knowledge. Do you think Knowledge is one of those important starting points for ESM to work?

AA: Yes, in an ideal scenario each team does have a part time knowledge manager. A community of practice, they get together and share advice and tips. SM becomes a layer cover the top to reduce friction. SM is there to reduce friction. SM has a big opportunity.

IA: I'm taking away 'community of practice' makes ESM work.

BR: If it's called IT Service Management, it's not strategic enough.

BR: should we look for the right tool or the right format?

AA: the tool doesn't really matter as much as the behaviours and the reasons. Even with a basic tool you can have a big impact and can create knowledge.

BR: ah, yes, knowledge workers are also knowledge creators.

Key Lessons from Aprill Allen

- 1 - We are all knowledge workers.
- 2 - KCS is important
- 3 - If it's ITSM, it's not strategic enough
- 4 - Communities of Practice
- 5 - Knowledge Workers are Knowledge Creators
- 6 - Spend a day a week painting

Aprill Allen's Top Drink Tip: Spicy Bloody Mary.

Chilli infused Vodka, Tomato Juice, Worcestershire Sauce, Celery Salt, Lemon.
Yum yum!

Useful Links

Aprill on Twitter : @knowledgebird

<https://Knowledgebird.com>

<https://tractorventures.com>

Aprill on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/aprillallen/>

Aprill on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aprill.allen/>