Digital Podcast Show Notes
Episode 13 with guest Margo Leach

Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison,
Guest: Margo Leach

BR: Intro chit chat. Life keeps getting busier. Let's meet our guest… Here is Margo - Chief Product Officer at Axelos. Tell us about yourself. How did you end up running ITIL?

ML: I have been in the Product Management space for years. Digital products and working with Service Management. Working with ITSM people and ITIL and prince2 and Axelos. Then… head of Product Management and then CPO. Lead the update of ITILv3 to ITIL4

BR: Interesting that ITIL 4 was produced using Product Management, not project. Was that deliberate?

ML: Yes, that's my background - prototype, architecture, alpha, iteration, beta, close customer relationship and feedback… That's how we did ITIL4.

IA: <says something about the cyclical nature of existence and Product Mgnt and Service Mgnt and how they are linked>.

Main Bit

BR: **Ian, whats the Product to Service relationship thing?**

IA: I've seen that modern product management practices are very close to ITSM practices. Surely ITSM people could be taking advantage of Product Management practices. **Is that what you see?**

ML: Yes. Everything is a service, Bring Service into Product, and bring Product into Service. The problem with Product only is that you may be missing the ongoing support and ongoing customer usage,

IA: But most SW products now are cloud, they all are continually operating in the same way as service. It's like service was there first, but then modern product management defined the practices, and now is the time for service people to learn from that.

WL: We like service blueprints too.

IA: yes, blueprints, roadmaps, vision, strategy.. All these 'Product' things can help Service value creation.

WL: Your employee is consuming the services. You want them to have a good experience. And that affects the customers of the whole business. It's a virtuous circle.

BR: how do we define the difference between customers and users and partners? It doesn't matter. <worlds longest question>.... Something about digital transformation… **how do we get the message across to the people outside of IT about the value of service (and product) management?**

ML: I just got off a call about this! 'How do we sell the value of these things;? You can try and avoid the use of IT, or you can lead with IT, lean into that. We are here to help you. Technology will help you to do that. That's the value stream idea. It puts IT at the center.

IA: this has come up before… in a previous podcast we said 'don't mention IT' but you are saying lead with IT because IT has become brilliant. And you are redefining the way a whole business works. **Do you see the people in IT changing?**

ML: I think so, but over recent years people are excited about technology. Maybe the pandemic has influenced that.

BR: I've seen that recently. The profile of service management ops has been massively improved. They were needed and they delivered. <then, strangely, Barclay and Margo quote Monty Python for a while>.

In other areas Covid has been a horrible disaster, but it has pushed IT and technology forward very fast. **What else do we need to say about it?**

ML: Focus on the benefits. Look what can be accomplished. The pandemic has shown people what was there already but people didn't notice, now it is obvious.

IA: What's next? **Where does axelos and ITIL go next?** Can you tell us?

ML: yes but no. Sustainability, Cloud. We signed up to Race to Zero.

IA: Yes - a company's profile is now very important. It's also about attracting talent by being a great company in other ways. Sustainability, community, culture.

BR: **Ethics is emerging much more. Do you see that Margo?**

ML : Sustainability is all about the triple bottom line:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_bottom_line. Social, Ethics, Financial.

Also, attracting talent to an organisation needs a great experience. Experience is an important part of this.

IA: And, Product Management focuses on the Experience too. What does it feel like? And that goes to employees and to customers. <more cyclical reference>

BR: OK, rounding this out. **As a Service Manager what should I look out for?**

ML : Service Managers, focus on the humans, what is their pain? To Product people, remember this is an ongoing experience not a build and ship. And your service desk is the front line to your customers.

BR: absolutely!

Endbit
Margo's recommended favourite drink:
Margo actually suggests two drinks (maybe she likes a few drinks):-
Amaretto sour. Make sure you have smokey whiskey.
Margarita

Key Lessons from Margo Leach
1 - Everything is a service, so bring Service into Product, but also bring Product into Service.
2 - Lead with IT, lean into that. We are here to help you. Technology will help you to do that.
3 - It's all about the triple bottom line now (and good experiences)
4 - Retaining talent is important.
5 - Focus on Humans

Useful Links
Margo on Twitter: @margoleach
Margo on linked in: https://www.linkedin.com/in/margoleach/
Those Axelos people: https://www.axelos.com/