Digital Podcast Show Notes

Episode 31 with guest Rob England

**Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison,**

**Greetings section**,

Blah blah blah… today’s trivia was about a fungus that turns beetles into sex zombies.

Let’s meet Rob! He’s having a great year, based in New Zealand in consultancy Teal Unicorn, focussing on Humanistic Ways of Working.

**<mainbit> (very shortened and summarised)**

BR: How can IT get better at being business focussed?

RE: IT has evolved from being Things processed, and lately there is an influence of agile and social factors. Cultural and social changes that are affecting us all at an ideological level. Social change. IT is growing up at the same time that society is changing. It’s an exciting time.

IA: Coronavirus?

RE: It’s shaken everything up. We’re not going back to normal.

IA: What are your customers looking for from you?

RE: Well, we don’t market. People come from word of mouth and networks. People come to us saying they want to improve the culture of their organisation.

BR: How do you start?

RE: we focus on starting where you are now, and start experimenting. The headroom and capacity, the management and getting management to realise that they are the problem and the answer.

IA: change can’t succeed without leadership.

RE: Absolutely. Cherry Wu works with CEO and I work with CIO downwards.

BR: So how do you do that work?

RE: Make the system visible and take the managers to the system. See if they ask ‘Are we the baddies’? Show them the system and encourage a desire to improve the system. Teach them that managers can be nice, not bastards.

BR: Historically managers were trained to be bastards. Are there more roles across the organisation like organisation architect?

RE: we see that. The agile quarterly planning cycle is there a lot. And enterprise architects, and Product Management across the organisations.

IA: Yes. Anything you see from IT background that works outside of IT?

RE: The other way, IT is learning from outside of IT. Also, however, IT is pioneering some areas. The flow of work, and kanban are being taken across the business.

BR: Is agile working more accepted now because of cultural changes?

RE: People are looking for new ways and that makes them open to these ideas.

BR: Tell us about ‘Standard and Case’.

RE: My only good idea. Case management is different to standard work. They need to be progressed differently. We should not be trying to make the whole world standard. Embrace the Case. I’m trying to rewrite the book as it is still relevant.

IA: There’s a tension between command and control and humanistic ways. It’s like standard vs case.

BR: Example where a company tried to go agile from top down, and it failed. Any examples on how an organisation can move out of the old ways.

RE: you can create bubbles with a courageous manager. That can work. One example of where a bubble in a large org affected the rest of the business overall by being so successful.

BR: Or, ‘be a bastard’. Is there a future for standard and case?

RE: No idea, I’d love to do something one day.

BR: Will IT continue as it is? Or will it be merged?

RE: there is always a place for specialisation. The flow of work will be more democratised.

**Rob’s Recommended Drink**

Vietnamese coffee (made with condensed milk)

**Useful Links**

Rob on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robenglandattwohills>

Rob on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/rob_england>

**Bar Bio**

Rob is lucky enough to live in Middle Earth. Well, New Zealand, but it’s pretty much the same thing. He’s moved from a position of IT skepticism to embracing Humanistic Ways of Working. And he loves being agile. I guess that means he’d be pretty nimble if he was chasing you across the mountains to give you a warm and caring hug. All that agility is probably also enhanced by his love of Vietnamese coffee.