Digital Podcast Show Notes

Episode 38 with Sally Bogg

**Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison**

**Guest: Sally Bogg**

**Greetings section**

BR: Welcome

IA: Trivia - the old text new service called CEEFAX is now available at NathanMediaServices/Ceefax. Old tech brought into current day.

BR: Here’s Sally. Tell us about yourself Sally

SB: Working in ITSM since 2006, in higher education (Universities - Leeds University and Leeds Beckett University, Service Desk Manager, Head of Service Support and strategy. Then moved to NHS Digital just as COVID arrived. NHS Digital and Live Services is technical data and services provider for the UK national healthcare system (NHS).

NHS Digital provides many of the services that are integral to COVID services and data such as the shielded patient list, vaccination service, test and service dashboards that you see on the web sites.

Sally’s focus is involved in the cross-cutting functions - customer service and service desks, core ITSM processes (Change, SCM, Delivery etc).

The real changes with things like the NHS App is that we are putting healthcare records into the hands of citizens. Even kids are interested because its started to be needed to enter festivals etc.

Traditionally this was internal facing, but now much of it is consumer and citizen facing.

(BR: looks up his health record and notes how many drugs he has taken)

**Main Section**

BR: Tell us more about the usage changes from COVID pandemic.

SB: Behind the app is a service called NHS-Login. That has gone from about 500,000 users to over 60,000,000. Scalability required to do this is amazing.

BR: How has the organisation coped with that growth?

SB: Yes it has been a challenge. The key is our incredible workforce, an army of civil servants that has been working tirelessly through the pandemic.It was that commitment and that passion and that drive. Everyone understands what we deliver and the value of what we deliver. Everyone understands the importance and there is great commitment. We have had to de-prioritise lots of work to focus on COVID work, and worked with a new range of suppliers. Overall… commitment and drive.

It is tough also. We were planning for recovery but then Omicron came in.

BR: You mentioned people and passion, and NHS is regarded as a national treasure. Have you been able to leverage your service management skills across the organisation?

SG: Yes we have learned that we can work faster and more flexibly because we had to. That was a change for service management. We’ve had to think outside the box and work flexibly. It’s been adapting, and doing it differently. Some things have been run totally differently, some clinical systems have very high assurance levels, but service management can be flexible.

IA: Has service management been an enabler or a barrier?

SB: It’s probably a barrier, but the drive to overcome it came from commitment of the people.

IA: And the people are all working from home. And this is big change. Traditionally, big change is hard across an organisation. How was that done?

SB: What I saw when I joined in May 2020 has already changed. But the message was clearly that ‘we can’t fail’, That change our risk profile and our decision making changed. Work from home is a real challenge. Some teams were entirely office based before, and they are never going to go back now. Many were worried. But they established basic things to work fast and quick - they have multiple fast standups every day. I do find WFH interesting and polarising. We’ve proved that we can work from home, so why would we go back? Imagine the pandemic without Teams or Zoom.

IA: And of course the technology made all the COVID responses possible, imagine how it would have been 10 years ago.

SB: We use productivity tools and ITSSM, and Jira and Confluence - tech is a big enabler.

BR: What are your thoughts about taking that way of working and going beyond IT? Is NHS Digital IT only?

SB: We were commissioned to deliver various services. We have a directorate which does all the user research and thats important for citizen services. And we have to design services that also work without digital tools for the citizens.

BR: Has it helped to close the divide between development and IT.

SB: We are moving from being program-led, but now we have services being developed more rapidly. I don’t think service management is the ‘cool kids’ any more. We have some challenges. But we did come together to deliver.

We also need a better language. Service Design in ITSM is different to Service Design in product teams. These are both valid, but it causes issues. The product world and the service world are both vital. We need to come together.

IA: Yes, these are converging worlds. Vendors and national services are basically in the same area. Is there any ‘roadmap’ to your plans, or is it all very reactive?

SB: Yes, but they can change rapidly. 3-6 month roadmaps. National Testing Services - has developed so much and delivered more than ever before. I was used to a 5 year strategy and roadmap from Education. I have learnt to expect the unexpected and to re-prioritise frequently.

BR: You have to have agility but also quality and assurance.

SB: yes we have some things that release 1 - 4 times a year, but the national testing service releases 2-3 times a week. Going back to convergence… we recruit Service Managers, but looking at Product Managers, what’s the difference?

IA: Agrees passionately.

SB: They are the same people.

IA; Successful SM professionals should study modern product management techniques.

SB: Yes we are doing that. We want the same outcomes.

BR: I think there are many different Service Managers.

SB: It’s changing, and the way we have delivered services has changed.

BR: What would you say we should do in the wider industry - how do we bring things together?

SB: Having an absolute sense of purpose and direction. Learn to work flexibly and differently. Avoid rigidity. Sometimes let go of being ‘doers’ and become ‘enablers’. For example Product Teams can be change managers too. And ask, what is the Value of Service Management. I worked in higher education and health and the sense of purpose and direction is important in both. Understanding your value is really powerful. I know what I’m here for, I know why I’m doing it, and I know what the value is.

**Sally’s Recommended Drink**

* Gin and Ginger Beer - Rhubarb Gin with a ginger beer

**Useful Links**

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sallybogg>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sally-bogg-64a9a46>

**Bar Bio**

Sally is a tea drinking, straight talking, no-prisoner-taking, proud northern lass with a keen interest in Health Tech, Customer Service Excellence and Higher Education. Also she is Head of Live Services at NHS Digital, so, you know, pretty darn important. All the UK health apps and dashboards and stats and services …. Yeah, that’s Sally. Carrying that burden on her shoulders while retaining a smile and a spring in her step is impressive, and I suspect that comes from her love of her favourite drink - a gin and ginger-beer. A big Cheers! to Sally and all the NHS health pros for their work over the COVID pandemic. Drinks all round!