

Digital Podcast Show Notes

Episode 56 with guest Lisa Thomson

Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison

(disclaimer: Show notes are approximations of topics discussed, not word for word exact quotations).

Greetings section

BR: Hello and welcome. Hi Ian, what is your trivia this week.

IA: This week, coffee... a new study shows that drinking coffee leads to a reduction in death from 'any cause'. So we're all drinking a lot today,

BR: Here's our guest...Lisa introduce yourself.

LT: Hi, I had a career running HR in a number of tech business. 9 years ago I set up an HR consultancy, providing HR services to small and tech businesses, often entrepreneurial and startup.

BR: Welcome

Main Bit

BR: As you are the HR team for lots of organisations, do you see much about Employee Experience being relevant. What is the bigger picture around retaining and managing staff.

LT: Yes, starting with the name of HR is changing to People and Culture, and a new role 'Employee Experience Manager' - someone whose whole role is about managing the experience of the employee from hiring throughout their career. Particularly in technology this is relevant.

IA: So is this about HR changing from reactive events to keep constant contact throughout the employment life of an individual. You can see the same with ITSM needing to change to constantly be aware of the digital employee experience. The whole journey.

LT: Yes, there are tools used more now to understand this. It's also important to make sure that managers are keeping in good contact with their staff.

IA: What about monitoring 'bossware' that track clicks and activity to prove that people are working?

LT: This is coming from a position of lack of trust. We focus on culture and values and trust. Lots talk of Trust as a value, but using tools like that shows a lack of trust. People now are more likely to work where they want to be, and may vote with their feet if the culture and values are bad. You need to empower to achieve.

BR: I am interested in the entrepreneurial focus to set up a new business, which requires agility and fast moving but often less structure. Do you see people needing help to introduce structure ?

LT: Yes, Let's look at startup founders first. They are willing to take risks, and to challenge norms. Those people are not always the best people managers. To be able to build a business you need people skills as well as technical. So you see two paths - entrepreneurs that are willing to invest in their skills and develop their skills in that side. Equally, some recognise their gaps and build a team to fill those gaps around them.

The second area to look at is structure and consistency and fairness. As a team grows you have to look at process and procedure and there are ways you can do that without being bureaucratic.

IA: it's a sign of maturity - not just financial success but human value.

BR: In terms of employee satisfaction, from the HR perspective, are you seeing companies following up on this? Is it really changing?

LT: Yes it is definitely changing. We are seeing a shift. In interviews, often the candidate is also interviewing the company to understand: What is your career progression, what is flexible working etc.

IA: Do you see changes in working from home bringing new HR challenges recently?

LT: definitely. Much has changed. We see a challenge in the balance between needs for people at different stages in their careers. More mature people are happier at home with family around them, whereas younger at an earlier stage need the social factor and need to meet people more at work.

IA: People need social contact, especially those at earlier stages. I remember going to the pub after work was an important social part of work.

BR: What do you say to companies to help them manage remote working?

LT: I ask them what is working today and what is not. Don't break things that are working. Also if you request people in-office 2 or 3 days a week, make sure that you, as a manager, are seen to do exactly that. And watch out for poorly coordinated office days when people come in and spend the time alone with no one else in the office. Use office days to coordinate and connect people.

IA: I've seen people in offices alone, you have to wonder, why come in if not taking advantage of other people.

BR: what about IT? Roles change in IT a lot? How do orgs manage that.

LT: Tech sector has technology changing very quickly, very fast pace of change. Good managers are looking ahead and planning for the future. And they should avoid 'rebadging' job titles to do the same job.

IA: Change is disruptive. Switching team structures and org structures can stop people being excellent at what they do.

IA: Who does the HR for Purpose HR?

LT: We were acquired and our acquiring company has an HR department. This is good and works well.

BR: there is a big relief when you become part of something bigger. Next, are we moving towards a more ethical business and industry?

LT: For our clients, tech startups are very focussed on solving problems, it's not just about making money only. Employees need a value proposition, and working for a company that has a mission and is making a difference is good. Diversity and Inclusion is next, and tech traditionally has struggled here in the past, but I see Tech is leading on improving and striving to get better around diversity and inclusivity.

IA: Good to see Tech moving away from old "tech bros" culture.

LT: Startups can be intentional about that from the outset and can build an organisation that is values driven.

BR: Great stuff! Thank you lisa!

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Useful Links

- Lisa on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisapurposehr>
- Website: <https://purposehr.co.uk/>

Bar Bio

- It must be exhausting starting a startup consultancy that provides HR services to startups and small tech companies. There probably isn't enough time to focus on HR services for employees of your HR consultancy. Luckily Lisa's company has a parent company that provides HR services to her company that provides HR services to other companies. Imagine if one of Lisa's clients was actually the parent company, then she'd have a fully cyclical HR stream where she can finally sit back, relax and enjoy a well earned glass of prosecco!