

Digital Podcast Show Notes

Episode 59 with guest Duncan Watkins

Hosts: Barclay Rae, Ian Aitchison

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

Greetings section

BR: greetings

IA: This week's podcast starts with a question - Please tell me what do these three have in common? Snoopy, Shaun the sheep, and Lego minifigures?

Those 3 characters were all taken on board NASA's Artemis 1 Orion spacecraft, which took off recently on a mission to the Moon.

BR: And on to today's guest... Hello Duncan Watkins, tell us about yourself.

DW: After 20 years in the IT industry moved to Forrester consulting, Principal Consultant. Not writing the research papers but using them for customer engagements and helping them overcome specific challenges.

BR: Do you see ESM and Experience Management often?

DW: Yes we have always been customers obsessed, and we now see that being more important and providing a North Star for our customers – delight their customers and improve their employees digital experiences.

BR: You are often involved in industry ITSM events still?

DW: yes, SDI, ITSMF , trying to keep on top of what's happening and the trends.

Main Section

BR: Lets start with the differences between employee experience and Customer Experience.

DW: We talk about ESM in the wider sense. And that involves thinking about all customers and employees from the perspective of all the different groups, but Customers and Employees are different and should not be approached in the same way. With Customers it is about getting them to buy a product or a service or to be loyal to your brand. Long term relationships, yet also transactional.

With employees it is more 'how do I get them? How do I get them engaged? Improve their experience at work, helping them do the things that they need to do. There are crossovers. But they are different groups doing different things.

IA: In ITSM we still talk about employees as Customers of IT, but there is a big difference – They are not paying for your service. They are being paid to work.

DW: There was value in thinking that way to change mindsets, but they are different. You still care about their experience and delivering value, but a real customer is paying for a transaction of some type.

But employees make your organisation tick and it is a long term relationship.

IA: As a customer of some commercial services, my experience is only when I interact or transact. But as an employee, the technology I use to do my job is there all the time. More than going to a self service portal and filling in a form, it is... laptop working? Apps working? Camera working?

DW: And also the environment is part of employee experience, the building that they are in etc. And of all those parts, which can you change, and how can you connect that to the wider overall experience. For example, access to the right data from other departments to do your job. Working with other parts of the business is another part of the employee experience.

BR: And there is another level. Employees/.colleagues that are end users of a service, but also employees and colleagues that are part of the IT organisation delivering that service. Do they have the tools they need to do their job? Are we giving those IT colleagues and employees a good working experience?

DW: What's changing is how we decide what to deliver. I think we are getting a switch from monitoring to observability. More information about the experiences gives us insight into decisions we should take and how to act. And it's not just about the data, but knowing the physical experience is important.

The inputs are changing.

BR: If I was a senior management and said 'right we are going to focus on experience management and becoming all digital'. they may not really know what that means, they have an idea. How do you position that, what artefacts and practices?

DW: You need an example first to address that. You need to understand where you are, measure where you are first. And post-pandemic this is very different. Things like office and home work.

BR: Lots of this is personalised. Where do Experience Level Agreements come in this? XLAs are coming in, SLAs have done badly.

DW: Firstly, some XLA practices are making the same mistake as made with SLAs. We've seen a move to a product management style from a service management style. That helps understand and deliver a better digital experience.

IA: there seems to be a lot of interest in XLAs. Some do great, some need to get started. How do they start? What do they measure?

DW: Understand what sort of business it is. In manufacturing it is different to software or pharma. In manufacturing, there are real things being created which are different to a call centre.

IA: So, quantifying relevant metrics to their business type, then setting an ambition, and putting in changes, and an agreement on what to expect from that. Do you see more people engaging with measuring Experience?

DW: Yes, measuring constantly. How a laptop performs is constantly measured, but how a person interacts with their team may not be constantly measured.

IA: Yes, an unstable laptop affects my experience, but also am I happy in my work?

BR: What about those different sectors? You work for a research company, do Forrester have any data on what different experiences should be across sectors?

DW: Yes we have the EX index which is a set of metrics across different organisations.

BR: What might be different?

DW: Physical vs virtual, physical space and objects makes a big difference.

It helps to focus on individual things.

IA: I see data being used to focus on key spikes and use cases where improvements can be made. It is very much focussed on improving one thing at a time. Experience is about targeting where improvements can be made, whereas Service is about improving the overall service. More use case focussed?

DW: Yes, very scientific in approach.

Ultimately employees love autonomy. Why do they come to work? Getting things done.

Achievement. Good experience must enable that.

BR: For me it is about being successful and making a difference.

I was also going to mention that at ITSMf event recently I chaired two events – one online car trader, the other a UK passport office. One about attracting customers, the other about a proper safe and secure reliable service. Commodity vs Service. Not a choice.

IA: yes, passport costs are not buying a passport. You are not a customer. You are entitled to the passport.

DW: I am motivated by helping people. I get to do that at Forrester. Helping people. Getting past symptoms, finding problems and helping them solve them.

BR: Any further tips?

DW: You never get burnt out being a customer. You can get burnt out as an employee. There is a degree of responsibility to consider there.

IA: Very good, burn out is important for employee experience. We can't lose valuable people.

BR: Different approaches, different drivers, different results.

Duncan's Recommended Podcast Bar Drink

- I really like a Sour Beer

Useful Links

- Duncan on twitter: @DuncanWatkins
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/duncanwatkins>

Bar Bio

- Duncan gets close to his customers. He likes to help people, look beyond symptoms, find problems and solve them. You might think he should be a doctor, but the ailments that Duncan solves are all about organisation, IT, ITSM, Experience, Transformation and more. He's a regular at ITSM industry events, often presenting. And he is not bitter. He like his beer, and he likes it.. sour. (I know, weird huh?).