

One Knight in Product - E127 - Nicole Reineke

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SPEAKERS

Nicole Reineke, Jason Knight



Jason Knight 00:00

Hello and welcome to the show. I'm your host Jason Knight and on each episode of this podcast I'll be having inspiring conversations with passionate product people. This episode is sponsored by skip level. Now on to me this Do you struggle with communicating with dev teams and understanding technical terminology and concepts? On episode 98 of this podcast I hosted Irene Yu, founder of Skiplevel, an on demand training programme that helps professionals and teams become more technical in just five weeks, all without learning how to code. You can learn the knowledge and skills you need to better communicate with devs and become more competent in your day to day role with the skip level programme. You can go to <https://skiplevel.co> and use code OKIP75 to get \$75 off the programme by the 15th of June 2022. That's <https://skiplevel.co>, code OKIP75. Check the show notes for more details. On tonight's episode we talk about compassion driven innovation and how we can systematically avoid innovation failure. We talk about the four reasons for innovation failure. What these reasons are and how we might avoid them via a four step plan that ensures we have alignment and buy in and avoid the hovers of discovery theatre, internal political sabotage, and want to be superheroes that can all lead to failed products. We also pondered on whether we finally found a solution to both the innovators dilemma and the hippo effect. For all this and much more please join us on One Knight in Product.



Jason Knight 01:26

So my guest tonight is Nicole Reineke. Nicole is an author and innovation needed with over 75 pending and approved patents or patents if you're American. Aside from her innovation portfolio Nicola has an artistic side and has appeared at least one movie and once to performed on Disney's acclaimed movie ride, which is apparently a dark ride through tunnels punctuated by occasional flashes of imagination. Speaking to that, Nicole is trying to get us to step out of the darkness of failed innovation pipeline to bring compassion to our product development efforts to stop us going off the rails of the great innovation ride. She's here tonight to discuss

her book, compassion driven innovation and how we might put people first to drive the best results in our product development and execute on our strategy. Hi, Nicole, how are you tonight?

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Nicole Reineke 02:03

I'm great. Thank you so much for having me today.

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Nicole Reineke 02:06

Problem. It's a pleasure to have you here. And I'm looking forward to finding out a bit more about that movie at some point as well. Because the guy that you said you started with has been like in 1000 movies or something like that. So it's quite difficult to go back for it.

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Nicole Reineke 02:18

Oh yes. It was before IMDb was online.



Jason Knight 02:21

So the books been out since January, I believe? Got 100%, five star reviews on Amazon. Amazon's not the boss of me, are you. So in your own words, how's the reception been?

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Nicole Reineke 02:36

It's been great. I think the most exciting part of it is the people who have actually started to adopt it and use it within their organisations, it's really easy to see how just a few changes in your current behaviour can absolutely shift your relationships internally, and then shifts the adoption level of your innovation internally and externally. So it's a really easy read. And it's really easy to bring into your vernacular and into your everyday life, which is great.

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Nicole Reineke 03:04

No, that does sound great. And obviously, it's good to get that feedback. But on that feedback, has there been any specific feedback that you've got from people either in a review? Or maybe they've contacted you afterwards? And given you some of those good news stories that you just touched on? Like, has there been anything that's specifically resonated with you or like a story that really warmed the heart and made you feel like this was all worthwhile?

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Nicole Reineke 03:25

Yeah, I think one of my favourites was, there's a person who is in a very high level position at HP. And they read the book and they said, you know, if I had read your first paragraph, 20

years ago, you would have saved me a lot of heartache. Because they had continually gone out and tried to invent innovate in areas that the business had no business in, right. So just being able to understand you have to have some situational awareness and recognise that, you know, you may be an amazing inventor, but it's unlikely to get adopted by the larger business. If you go after these things, like even just that simple perspective is really, it's really mindset shifting, which is a lot of fun. Then it came about because I did a series of research over a period of years, we're actually interviewed leaders from across the globe, people who are running innovation teams, and who are running really high stakes implementations. And I started trying to figure out why do some of them fail? And why are some of them succeeding? And I discovered there were really four common failures globally. And being able to understand those four common failures globally absolutely shifted my perspective on why some of the things we were doing worked incredibly well, is because they addressed those four things.



Jason Knight 04:39

So one of the things that kind of occurs to me from that and reminds me a little bit of another book, which you're probably aware of the Innovators Dilemma on innovation topic, the idea that it's really hard for certain types of companies to innovate at all given their market conditions and the maturity of the company and the maturity of the practices of the company, and in many ways that it's even It's not even bad management that stopped them innovating. It's actually really good management from the perspective of the company. It's just the events overtake them. So I guess, off the back of that the question is a does this book help to solve the innovators dilemma? And I can actually pause it does that is Is this the solution, do you think?



Nicole Reineke 05:18

it is one solution, right? If you look at the innovators dilemma, there's this big gap that they forget to recognise, there's what happens when you set strategy, which is sort of this thing that happens on the far left hand side, some sort of like, Hey, this is our strategy, we're going to go after it. And then everybody thinks you go directly from strategy into, like design thinking and product creation. And what most organisations fail to realise. And what the innovators dilemma feels, also fails to recognise is that there is this space that happens between setting strategy and actually doing Product Design and Innovation and Implementation in that space needs to be acknowledged and recognised. And that's the space where our book fits. It's that spot between the two.



Jason Knight 06:01

Yeah, it's the bridge between the old world and the new. But what's the target audience for the book? Is it mainly aimed at product managers, product designers, like the people that are setting the product level strategy and the execution that you just touched on? Or is it wider than that? Is it basically aimed at executive leaders and people that are found in companies like, what's the sweet spot, and really, who should pick this book up?



Nicole Reineke 06:23

Whoever owns the business, right? So in some organisations, the person who owns the

whoever owns the business, right? So in some organisations, the person who owns the business is a product leader, or a product manager, or Chief Product Officer, in some organisations, if they're smaller, the person who owns the business, actually typically the business owner, themselves. So we have examples of the person who's the business owner using this. And that's built into the book, we also have examples of Product Managers using this to actually run their teams effectively. I actually wrote the book with a woman who is a leader in a UX organisation. And this is incredibly effective, and how to figure out how to product management work effectively with UX. It's different than a design thinking book, right? Because that's not what we are. Yeah, it was very effective in helping bridge that communication gap. And we also wrote it the other person who wrote it is a marketing expert, or marketing communications expert. So there is an audience there for somebody who's in the communications industry to actually understand why are we doing things? How do we communicate with it? And how do we bridge that gap for unsupported moonshots?



Jason Knight 07:21

Yeah, that's really interesting, actually, the idea that you've got, I mean, obviously, I noticed that you had the three authors do yourself and to others, but the idea that you've got various different disciplines contributing to a strategy book to basically, as you put it, cover all angles. So do you think that that really helps make a difference there? Like, would it have been the same book if you'd have cranked out yourself and just use the experience that you had versus getting these extra collaborators in? Because collaborating with other authors doesn't necessarily sound like the necessarily easiest, most stress free way to write a book, right? I'm sure that it's difficult to collaborate and coordinate, and then maybe have disagreements as you go. But do you think that that was worth it, given the result that you got out of it?



Nicole Reineke 08:03

Yeah. And the reason is, because if I had written the book on my own, it would have been a product management book. And yeah, it would have continued to fail to be adopted by the business. Right. I've done startups, I've done successful startups. And I've followed my process in startups, but it's never alone. It's always in collaboration with somebody who ran marketing, and somebody who actually ran implementation or the UX part of it. And even though I never understood that was why these things were successful. I've also done it in cases where it failed, it failed miserably. And it was always because I failed to have that left hand, you know, marketing person, communications person, and I failed to have that UX implementation person. So that was actually, it could only have ever happened with these three skill sets brought together. Otherwise, we'd end up in the same position that most companies are in where you have a lot of great innovation that's happening and not getting adopted, or you just have, you know, continual point releases with no real innovation in them.



Jason Knight 09:03

Yeah, no, that makes a lot of sense in this kind of a lesson to put up people around the world as well, like, you often get tales from product managers out in the field are struggling to get their voices heard or struggling to make an impact in their businesses in their companies. And yeah, I guess we shouldn't forget the fact that we do need each other, like we need the marketing team and the we need the sales team, even then, like all these other teams that there are out

there. And if we don't all come together and work out a way to meet in the middle, then we're not going to get anywhere, as you say, but you didn't really talk to the disagreement part. Was there any major source of disagreement or where you're pretty aligned and just kind of harmonious it came into a book at the end of it, there must have been at least one, come on.

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Nicole Reineke 09:44

No, actually. So I handpicked the people who I wanted to write the book. I had done a couple years worth of research, as I was saying earlier, and came up with a lot of the statistics and a lot of the proof surrounding the process that we use, and I'd actively worked on the process with hot A Yehuda, who was one of the co authors. So she and I know exactly what we needed to talk about and how we did things together. And we had written or I had written a white paper a year prior and run into Deborah. And Deborah is by far the best single writer I've ever met in my entire life. So we eat very clearly understood and had our roles. And that made it very easy for us to collaborate.



Jason Knight 10:25

Sounds good. So I'm looking forward to to them.

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Nicole Reineke 10:29

Absolutely, I think both of them are gonna roll their eyes when you hear they hear that, for sure. I enjoyed it.



Jason Knight 10:35

Well, I'm gonna try and get them on as well and see if they did too. But you're a busy person, right? And you or you were when you were writing this, and I'm sure you remain now. You are working at Dell in their innovation team. Yep, I know that you've now moved on to Iron Mountain. But of course, writing a book, even with two co authors is a somewhat hefty endeavour that you've got to put the research in, as you said, You've got to actually get it written, you've got to go and get it published all of that stuff. Why on earth? Would you decide to do that in when you're in such a high powered job in a big company, doing all the stuff that you're doing? And did that kind of impact that? Or do you feel that was a positive experience?

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Nicole Reineke 11:11

Yeah, you know, I wrote the book I needed to read. And I needed to, I needed to write down exactly how we had managed to become so successful in such a short period of time, the 75 patents were not an accident, I had not read them hadn't, until I was in my 40s, which was pretty recently. And in a period of three years, I was able to write 125 patents 75 of which were filed. Nice. And I, I needed to write down how that had happened, because it just absolutely blew my mind that it had happened. It was a lifelong dream to write one. Nevermind. So I felt compelled to actually write down here's exactly how I did it. Here's how we derive value. Here's

how we derive meaningful value value that was meaningful enough for an organisation to invest 10s of 1000s of dollars to protect it, and then to bring it to market. So I felt, I felt an obligation to actually say, this is how we achieved it, you can too, and he wrote it in such a way that I believe everybody who wants to be an innovator and inventor should be one. And this is exactly how you can go from A to Z..



Jason Knight 12:20

Does that then nosies here? Okay, so you talked about it a little bit earlier. And it's in the beginning of the book as well, you where you list out some of the reasons that innovation attempts fail. And I'm sure we're gonna get to a bit in a minute when we talk about how compassion driven innovation is the way that we're gonna fix that. But before we do that, what are those primary ways that the primary four ways that innovations fail?



Nicole Reineke 12:46

Yeah, they fail because of exclusivity, right, you have one type of person who is assigned to do the innovation, or one person who's trying to work alone. That's the biggest reason for failure. The next one is you may invent, but you don't identify the most pressing challenges. So you actually miss the issues that are happening in the market. And that's called missing the most pressing challenges. The third reason is because you overestimate the value of what you're bringing to the table. So you've decided what you've invented is amazing. Or even if it's amazing, that's actually just, there's a workaround, nobody really needs this. That's a huge fail. And then the fourth is really the most harrowing and, and devastating, and I've seen this spring down entire organisations, is if there's an unsupported moonshot, so you're working on something, you think it's amazing, your customers think it's amazing. You've got like this click that happens. And then you go to bring it to market and the rest of your companies like yeah, not into it. And that that is absolutely the worst thing. Like I've seen Entire divisions get laid off because of these unsupported moonshots. That's really the worst.



Jason Knight 13:53

Yeah, so that's the worst. And it does sound bad. And obviously, yeah, there's plenty of past experience that we could probably draw on where this very ambitious, over optimistic vision just doesn't work out. I mean, I've certainly worked on some myself in the past, which definitely sounded amazing, like you just look at it and you go this, how could anyone not want this? And then they don't, it's just very disappointing. And it's always, I mean, I guess in some ways, it's almost testament to the power of maybe using more sort of lean or agile approaches to try and work out as soon as possible, rather than just throwing six 912 months of effort behind something and then finding out but obviously, it's even better if you don't have the idea in the first place, or don't support it. As you know, as you say, it's an unsupported moonshot. Let's support it before we decide to do anything with it. But do you think that it's more common to have any one of those particular types or based on your research? Is it kind of just all over the place? Like there's kind of pockets of each of those things? And I guess also on the back of that, are there any, or have there been any situations that you've seen where someone had like all four at the same time?

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Nicole Reineke 14:55

Yeah, I've seen many all four at the same time. That happens a lot with others. To the larger organisation, they there are, there are multiple pockets of all four happening at the same time working on the same project, which is amazing. That's always fascinating to me, as you. So the most common really is the exclusivity where people try to invent in a bubble, or they tried to be innovative in a bubble. And a lot of that is this, this need to be important or to be seen as the inventor has to be seen as the innovator. Yep. Right. And, and that is really sad. Because an idea has to start with one thing. But in order for an idea to become innovation, it has to actually start to gather momentum, and to gather momentum, you have to gather people, and you have to be able to share ownership. Right, you have to create that competitive, the reason we use the word compassion is because compassion is that internal drive to actually do good. Whereas, you know, empathy is, Oh, I see your problem. And I feel for your problem, compassion is, oh, I, I feel this and I need I feel compelled to move forward. And so in order to be successful, you must have a group of people who are compelled to move forward, and that group of people has to have enough influence, that it can create an entire organisation to move forward. And that's truly where I see so many people just fall flat on their face from the beginning. And that leads to burnout, it leads to people quitting jobs, it's terrible to see. And it actually creates this really negative energy internally as well. Because people start protecting their little areas and getting defensive when anybody else wants to look at a project. That's really the most common. If somebody's lucky enough to get past that, then, you know, the unsupported moonshots probably the next big issue, where even if you figure out something great, you haven't been able to connect it to the business in a way that they feel ownership for that they feel compelled to move it forward.



Jason Knight 16:56

Yeah, again, I can definitely think of experiences in my life where some of those things have happened. And it's not a pleasant one. So maybe we should move on a little bit. But is the listing of those four things exclusive, or have you done even more of a search since then, and kind of come up with some more candidates that could come into version two of the book that you might be writing with these people?

N

Nicole Reineke 17:17

I think the next version of the book is going to be more about that I'm the creating the community, because that is a really big challenge that I see everywhere. So if, if you're in a small organisation, and you're part of starting that organisation, right, that is an exceptional opportunity, because everybody's coming in together, they have a common vision, you're moving things forward, as you get into a larger organisation, it becomes incredibly complicated to actually shift the paradigm. Because there's a lot of a lot of Kingdom building that happens. And a lot of threat that happens when you try to introduce change. And, you know, there's a lot of self management that you have to do as an innovator and as a product leader, to just keep standing back up. So I think there's an entire book around, you know, self self management, to figure out how do you continually stand back up when you are constantly being, you know, our hidden walls, I guess, is a good way of saying that. 100%



Jason Knight 18:21

Yeah. All right. So I'm assuming then the book, your book is going to help us solve all that. So elevator pitch time. What's Compassion Driven Innovation?



Nicole Reineke 18:31

Yeah, so at its simplest, it is a way to create situational awareness, agility, value validation, and then to create phased visions. In order to bridge the gap between strategy and development.



Jason Knight 18:44

Trips off the tongue. So the book calls out four stages. And obviously, we don't want to give away all the book Secrets, because we want people to go and buy it after this, hopefully, or at least consider buying it. But let's give people a taste. So they might do that. So the first step is include. So what does that step include? No pun intended?



Nicole Reineke 19:04

Yeah. So it's all about identifying the right people inside your organisation that needs to be part of the project? And how do you start to create buy in from the very beginning, decide on the innovation type that you want to work on, decide on the disciplines that you need, and then figure out what exists. So there's a lot of what is state of the art in the market, understanding initial research on what's rational within your industry and within your vertical, and then crafting your theme based on that information. So once you've done that, you can actually start making a whole lot of assumptions that you think of as a product manager. So from that sort of state of the art recommendation and understanding as a product manager, I can now identify my proto personas, I can identify my prototype maps. So what are the relationships that happen between those personas, and then I actually start to create a list of assertions and assumptions. This is really important. So it is incredibly inexpensive to go out and validate your assumptions. It is wildly expensive to go out and validate an idea. So start by writing down all of your assumptions, validate your assumptions, fix those first. And that has to be done in that first phase. So that's the include face. Who do I know? What do I know? What's real and not real? So phase one should be pretty quick and easy.



Jason Knight 20:26

Well, yeah, can you say quick and easy? I mean, some companies seem to be pretty allergic to the idea of doing any kind of research and just want to keep sprinting for wherever they think they're headed. And God knows where that'll be. But how long are we talking in for an average include step like if you're gonna put it in a finger in the air? number of weeks that you'd expect that to take?



Nicole Reineke 20:46

Yeah. I try my best to do everything in less than two weeks Sprint's I think that two weeks is a

...and that's a pretty long time.



Jason Knight 20:51

Oh, it certainly is. So two weeks, we've we've done the include step, we've got the first outputs. And we move on to the next phase, which is the Discover phase. Now, product discovery is on everyone's lips these days, in the product management community. It's a fairly on trend topic. And there's loads of great books, there's loads of great articles and videos and people out there, basically advocating to do it. And it's no secret that product, people want to go out there and discover stuff and ask questions of people and do experiments with people to make sure that what they're going to be building is what people want. Is that the type of discovery you're talking about? Or is it something a bit more higher up the funnel than that?



Nicole Reineke 21:30

Yeah, so that's part of it. But I actually believe in stepping left just a little bit and validating your understanding. So as we talked about, you're listing out your assumptions. So from there you were, you would go out and do non leading question development, scripting, your interviews, and then conduct research, just validating your assumptions with the very clear goal of creating an effective journey map. So you know, what the customers journey is from beginning to end, and then creating what's called a challenge map. So what area you're going after? What are their pain points, do not start talking about solutions yet. Everybody I've talked to they make this mistake, and it makes me absolutely crazy. Talking about solutions, what you want to do is you want to validate the challenges. And then you analyse the data. So the output of this discover phase is effective journey map, effective challenge map and a new set of assumptions that are based on reality and not just your opinion. And that's all you have to do for this second face.



Jason Knight 22:30

All right, so that sounds pretty quick as well, it was a two week process, or do you let people have a little bit longer for that?



Nicole Reineke 22:36

Yeah, so the long pole and that is recruiting people to talk to. So if you have a great recruitment process that can also be done in a week or two? If you have a longer recruitment process, then you give it some extra time.



Jason Knight 22:48

How many people do you normally expect to talk to? Is it the kind of the five people cliché or do you go a bit bigger than that, or was five or so enough?

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Nicole Reineke 22:56

I think between five and 10, you can usually get a pretty good idea. And one of the challenges with that is it depends on the scope of the project you're looking at. If you're looking at a project that has, you know, multiple verticals, and multiple personas, you're probably going to want five within each say, scope your project, right, and you can get away with 10.



Jason Knight 23:13

Fair enough. So we're cooking with gas so far. But we're now moving on to the next phase, which is enlightened. So it's starting to sound like he's getting a bit deep now. deep and meaningful. So what sort of activities that we undertaken at the Enlightened stage?

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Nicole Reineke 23:28

Yeah, so this phase, what you've really done is you've said, I understand the challenges I'm going after I understand who I'm solving the problem for. And now you can actually start stealing from, you know, Pixar, and from all of the movie animation studios. And you can say, well, if this were to be solved, what would the ideal experience look like? This starts to feel a lot like design thinking, right? So if I think from the the endpoint, like what do they really want in the ideal world, that's sort of your run map. And then you're going to take a step backwards, and you say, okay, my customers in my company, they have never going to understand what run needs, right? It's too far out there. They're going to take it science fiction, and nobody's going to connect to it. This is where that compassion for the moonshot comes in. So now you have to say, what can I do to take one baby step towards that run? And then you're going to try out a storyboard just like they would in a movie, to say, if I took the first step, what are the challenges that we would solve? And then what would it look like what that experience look like for my customer? And you're gonna draw that storyboard out, and then you're gonna find something in between the two. So now you've got your crawl, walk and run storyboards. Then you take that back out to customers, now you can actually start talking about solutions. And you say, Hey, listen, if this was your experience, did we solve all your problems? Did we miss something else? What aren't we thinking about? And that's going to give you a great story to tell and you can actually get some qualitative information to say we really do need to support fixing these three things First, here's what that fixing looks like. And then we can start to go in and say, Well, what do we do? What technology do we bring together to actually make this experience true. And that's when you start to really do innovation, which is like the technology, the building the proof of concept, the pilots, and creating that, that experience and making that reality



Jason Knight 25:21

That does sound indeed enlightening. But after that, we're at the activate stage. So the final step of the process, which sounds like again, to the business end, like we've done all the good thinking about it, and now we're going to do something who's not thinking about stuff isn't doing something, obviously. But what are we specifically activating and how we activating it?

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Nicole Reineke 25:39

Yeah, this is how do you build your internal relationships? How do you communicate the vision? How do you how do you go back and pivot where you missed things? Right. So a lot of times, this is where that supportive moonshot comes into, you may have failed to include a critical part of your business. And if you did, and you don't give them a chance to get feedback. And to actually incorporate that in before you start building a product, ID, they are going to sabotage you down the line. So you've got to recognise that upfront. So build internal relationship maps, communicate the vision, incorporate feedback, right, conducted by in meetings, and then you had to figure out what do you need? How do you actually ask for funding? What does that mean within your organisation? And then how can you get something to market to scale? So you have to, you have to actually think through this formal aspect of getting something into the market. And a lot of innovators don't like thinking about this. But a lot of product managers don't like thinking about this. But the reality is, if you don't do this part, you don't have a product in the market. And that's really sad. So, so that's what this is all about is like, how do you how do you understand who you need? What do you need to communicate to them? And how do you how do you communicate to them.



Jason Knight 26:53

And then after that, we build it, and we make a million or a billion dollars, or whatever it is, to be successful these days.

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Nicole Reineke 27:00

That's right, after that you actually have a better chance of building something that somebody wants, and people won't sabotage. So that's always a good.



Jason Knight 27:09

Yes, it is. But it's not a linear process, then, or there kind of loop backs and side quests that you can go on as you work your way through the process. And, obviously start to uncover things and learn new things as you go.

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Nicole Reineke 27:21

Yeah, it's very iterative, especially in that second and third phase. So state of the art doesn't change much, right. But as you learn what you have to solve, you may have to go back and start over and say, Okay, well, we're actually solving a different challenge than we thought, what does that look like in the market? So it's very iterative. In practice, you know, much like any agile process would be, this just gives us a good way to think through what are the components that we need to think about in order to have a cohesive beginning to end strategy for innovation?



Jason Knight 27:53

And are there any watch outs or signs that stuff is kind of going awry? As this is going on? Like any common pitfalls, that maybe as you're working through this process, you might have to almost pull the emergency brake and, and stop and abort? And maybe think again? Or is it kind of designed to smooth some of that stuff out as you go? Like, when do you know that is going wrong?

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Nicole Reineke 28:16

Yeah, so you know what's going wrong when people stopped talking? I don't know if you've ever experienced this? Yeah. I mean, the the technology is the easy part. Right? So when you have customer conversations, it's really easy to tell when you've built something that's not resonating. Like that's not an issue. If you're lucky, they smile and nod and they're like, oh, maybe, but typically, you know, when that part's gone off the rails, where you have to be careful where you have to watch for is including the wrong type of person on the team. So have you accidentally included somebody who's slightly toxic? Or is a lone wolf, that's always very dangerous. And the people who are there to come in, they smile and nod and say, oh, okay, yep, I'm totally on board. And then you find out there was a second conversation after the meeting, where they told everybody that what you're doing is terrible and never going to succeed. And then they sabotage you from that side. That's a big issue. And so part of the way we set up these conversations, and the way we set up these projects, is we have artefacts that come out from each stage. And these artefacts are openly reviewed, and a decision point is made, and they're publicly posted, so that you know why decisions were made and with what information and that helps reduce the amount of negative impact that can occur. When somebody does this sort of backdoor behaviour. It doesn't eliminate it entirely. So you do have to have some people who are politically astute, who can actually start to watch for it and make the right relationships so that if we're working on something nobody wants, we pivot and work on something different. So that's one of them. The other part that's really challenging is that you get people who are very attached to an idea. Oh, yes, even more dangerous, because the whole point of innovation is pivoting. Right? Yeah, you get information, you make better decisions, to get information to make better decisions. And if you can't get yourself to make better decisions, even in the presence of all of this additional information, then you're not an innovator. What you are is an implementer. And that's okay. To change jobs.



Jason Knight 30:27

Yeah, I was talking to someone recently, he was pretty much going along the lines of, if you're going to do all this discovery, and then not change your behaviour, because of it, you might as well not do discovery, he might just own up to that fact. And carry on, as you say, just implement whatever, be a project manager or Delivery Manager or whatever it is you need to be. But there's no point playing like discovery theatre for the sake of just to say you've done it, if you've never made a decision based off the back of that.

N

Nicole Reineke 30:53

Yeah. Yeah, that one really gets me. The other one that gets me is when you, you go out and you do all this discovery, and you never bother looking internally. It turns out there were three other products internally that do the exact same thing. That when that also gets me. So I think

there's a lot of importance and understanding what you have and why you have it.



Jason Knight 31:15

Yeah, no, I think a lot of this boils down to alignment as well. And just the continual drive that you need to have within any company to make sure that you're pointing in the same direction, and not just all going off in random places, just because different people have different ideas. But a lot of what you've been talking about there does speak to the very political company, do you think that's something that is common across all types of companies? I mean, I personally think that politics starts surprisingly early within a company like he was not just the preserve of large multinational corporations, it tends to worm its way into organisations pretty quickly. But is that just a thing that has to be surmounted? Or do you think that there are certain types of company maybe certain types of industries or certain stages of company that have maybe managed to avoid that so far?



Nicole Reineke 32:01

So having founded a company, I can tell you that we didn't avoid it. It was a company of, you know, a number under 20. I think at that point, you sort of get the the, the hippo effects, right, if he's the highest paid person in the room, and their behaviour will dramatically impact any innovation or any innovation processes or product management processes for that matter. So what they believe, can bring into play the same amount of politics as a large organisation.



Jason Knight 32:31

So is this book then the antidote to the hippo effect? Or is nothing strong enough to be a true antidote for that sort of thing?



Nicole Reineke 32:39

This book gives you enough artefacts and data points to help you counteract the hippo effect. That's what the goal is that can you put together enough true information and back it with research to help make more informed decisions in a more public manner?



Jason Knight 32:55

There you got? It is I mean, you say you've used this yourself before in some of your own innovation efforts. And I'm sure some of those are very secret. But are there any examples of times either that you've seen this yourself or stuff, you've heard from other people where they've used this approach, or you've used this approach, and can kind of use as a shining example of basically the efficacy of this approach.



Nicole Reineke 33:18

So one example we can talk about, if you look at the organisations that are in the book, there are some really great shining examples of how this process can dramatically improve the lives of a company and of the customers and gutter techs is a really interesting example. So better text is a very small organisation, it was maybe 10 people now think it's up to about 30 people. And they had to rethink how they were engaging with customers generally. And this was several years back, this was prior to the pandemic, because the way that a lot of service organisations engaged with the company, especially with housing services, is is a very high touch. It's very personalised, you know, people show up at your door, and you have to walk around and, and be friends with them. And they're finding that that wasn't the ideal way to, to get enough business in enough enough of a backlog of business. And it wasn't comfortable for the installers. And it wasn't necessarily comfortable for a lot of the customers who are in different situations. So they actually took the step back, mapped out what the customer experience should be mapped out where the challenges were, and completely shifted their way of doing business prior to the pandemic happening. And so, we really thought through, like what are the situations that we can avoid, as part of the sales process that other people just take for granted as having to be part of it. And so they had touchless estimates and touchless installations happening even before the pandemic hit. And when the pandemic hit, they were well poised and well positioned to actually continue growing, where many other organisations just completely stopped. So that's a really great example of how a small organisation can Use this to just rethink what is that experience? And what challenges do I solve? Because otherwise, they could have just thrown technology at their business. And they never would have actually solved the friction points, which was that sort of very beginning phase of the interaction, and that closing phase of the interaction. But instead, they actually solved the real problems, which was great.



Jason Knight 35:19

There you go, I'll buy two copies for where can people find you after this, if they want to find out more about the book more about compassion driven innovation? Or maybe even try and work out of you? Which of those films you were in when you were growing up?



Nicole Reineke 35:33

Yeah, so I am active on Twitter. I'm @nicolereineke, on Twitter, and I'm pretty active on LinkedIn. So feel free to grab me on either of those places.



Jason Knight 35:41

All right, well, I'll make sure to link that all into the show notes. And hopefully, some interested people will come and find you and learn a little bit more. Well, it's been a fantastic chat. It's obviously really great to hear some of your thoughts and some things that people can try new product development efforts, and hopefully they can start to bring a bit more compassion into their innovation. Hopefully, we can stay in touch. But yeah, that's for now. Thanks for taking the time.



Nicole Reineke 36:03

I loved it. Thank you very much, Jason. This was great.



Jason Knight 36:07

As always, thanks for listening. I hope you found the episode inspiring and insightful. If you did again, I can only encourage you to pop over to <https://oneknightinproduct.com>, check out some of my other fantastic guests. Sign up for the beta missiles live on your favourite podcast app and make sure you share your friends so you and they can never miss another episode again. I'll be back soon with another inspiring guest but as for now, thanks and good night.