Building Collaboration Between IT and the Rest of the Busine...

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SPEAKERS

Aaron Bock, Keith Hawkey, Narrator, Kevin Hughes

N **Narrator** 00:07

Welcome to the IT Matters podcast, where we explore why IT matters and matters pertaining to IT. Here's your host, Aaron Bock.

A **Aaron Bock** 00:17

Welcome to the show. Thanks, everyone for joining. We've got another exciting episode on the IT Matters podcast today. I'm joined by my co-host, Keith Hawkey. Keith, how are you doing today?

K **Keith Hawkey** 00:28

Wonderful, right back at you Aaron;

A **Aaron Bock** 00:31

I know, it's been a busy time over the last couple of weeks. Today on the podcast, we are lucky to have Kevin Hughes on the podcast, He's at Sharonview, Federal Credit Union. He's the Vice President of IT operations. Kevin has a long background we're gonna get into today. But Keith and I we know Kevin, we've talked to him a little bit before this. And we were talking about some of the things that we know our listeners like to hear and like to listen and learn about. And a couple of things we're going to address today that I'm excited to talk to Kevin about is getting it and in the business working together more and how you do that strategies around it. And then also the buzzword digital transformation. What does that mean? Everyone says it? Gardener loves it. I think Google loves it at this point. So will talk a lot about that today. So Kevin, welcome to the show.

K Kevin Hughes 01:23

Hey, thank you. I appreciate it. I'm excited to be here. Looking forward to our conversation today.

A Aaron Bock 01:29

We are very excited as well. I guess Kevin, let's start off with why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about yourself personal professional, everything in between that you want them to know? Sure.

K Kevin Hughes 01:43

So I've been obviously in the IT industry for a little over 25 years at this point, starting at ground level of break, fix and working up to where I am today. So I always enjoyed IT. I've always enjoyed troubleshooting and problem solving. All the things that are the funny games of IT. So that's my work life. I live in Pineville, North Carolina, married with my menagerie of household animals, which I'll just cap off at two dogs at the moment. And then some cats, I'll leave it at that. But as far as personally, I enjoy music I love music. I've always had a passion for music, as well as Keith pointed out earlier the Sharon FC scarf behind me I do enjoy our new MLS soccer team here in town and have enjoyed the games this year. So it's been a pleasure to attend those.

A Aaron Bock 02:37

What's your favorite kind of music?

K Kevin Hughes 02:41

I'm a rock guy at heart. So I tend to be all over the place as far as what I like musically, but I like just about anything. And it's my running joke is I'm a bit schizophrenic in my music because you might catch me listening to hard rock one minute classic the next that could be jazz or than reggae or who knows it's just all over the place. But in my heart and soul it's it's usually rock based.

A Aaron Bock 03:05

Very cool. Yeah, you should check out. There's a new show on Netflix called the playlist that I'm watching right now. And it's kind of about the starting and the founding of Spotify, from CDs to when there was a lot of torrent based downloading that got a lot of heat for being illegal, and then how Spotify was formed, I think you'd find it pretty interesting. So Kevin, you mentioned where you're at today, how you got there your experience, you have a unique kind of background, you actually are one of the few people that I think I've met where you were at an organization, you left for a couple different gigs. And then about eight to nine years later, you

actually joined back an organization in a higher role, etc. I know a lot of people especially in this day and age, I think they call it boomerangs depending on who you're talking to. But maybe describe that Was it weird coming back? You know, why did you go back? Did you learn? Did you feel like you learn a lot coming back into an organization you were previously?

K   Kevin Hughes   04:10

No, absolutely. So I did. I worked for Sharon view previously as an engineer, basically supporting the organization and that engineering type of role. I had an opportunity that came along that just gave me a much broader potential for knowledge. Then I was going to get within Sharon view and it was not something I was looking for, but just sort of fell on my lap and it was just too good of an opportunity to pass up. In hindsight, it was probably the best career move I could have made. As I left I went into this new role I started off in a semi managerial role, ended up progressing then into more of a leadership type role. That was with a smaller boutique consulting firm here in Charlotte that eventually got bought out by A much larger NTT DATA organization that then certainly changed my trajectory and gave me a lot more opportunity from a leadership role that then enabled me to really expand my skill set. And gave me exposure to a lot of mentors. A lot of people that helped my career kind of continued to progress. In the process, I had always kept ties with some of the people I've worked with Sharonview, the credit unions are wonderful organization. for those that aren't familiar with them, it's very much a family type environment. And you tend not to lose contact with those folks. So I had always maintained a relationship over the years with several people. Within Sharon view, and there was an opportunity that came up for a role in leadership within the IT department back at Sharon view, again, this provided me an opportunity to get back into working for an organization that was familiar with, I absolutely loved working for to get back into loosely doing something more than just IT Stuff because you do with a credit union, it is nonprofit, you are having an impact on the community. So you're trying to improve members lives, you're trying to provide benefits and opportunities for them as well. So it did allow me to get back to that venue, again, which I always did enjoy in the past. Plus, it gave me an opportunity to work with some people that I was very familiar with. I knew what a great team I had, a number of the folks that were there. When I worked there, were still there, I had an opportunity to work with them again. And it's been fantastic to jump back into the credit union right again, and kind of really just continue to see this organization grow and expand.

A   Aaron Bock   06:49

And I think for some of the listeners out there, I think we all have seen or know what a credit union is, in theory, what it does? Maybe help our listeners understand, from a technology perspective, what makes a credit union maybe unique from either like a local bank, or maybe it's not unique, and explain that. And then what are some of the technology challenges that, I would say a smaller, more regional financial institution, like Sharon view, deals with that are challenges that you face every day?

K   Kevin Hughes   07:23

Sure. I think from a technology standpoint, there's not a lot of difference. With the credit unions, we have the same opportunities, I think, is your banks, where that comes in more to play, what you touched down as far as what are some of the challenges. So with credit unions,

basically you're not for profit. So your bottom lines are always going back to your members. So anything that we make, we're going and redistributing back out either with, lower interest rates, higher interest rates, loans versus deposits, that type of approach. But with that, of course, it's very budget conscious. So making sure that every dollar we spend is an intelligent dollar spent? And does it make sense to push this technology? Does it make sense to implement the security measure whatever the case might be? That's always a conversation that we have is to make sure we're spending our members money in the best possible place. So you know, I think I look back at credit unions in the past versus kind of where we are today. I think, now more of a focus on realizing we need to be closer, we're certainly never going to be bleeding edge technology wise. But we do need to be closer to that, especially in the security realm. You know, in today's day and age, you can't turn the TV on without hearing about some type of a breach or some kind of security incident. So it is always first and foremost in our mind, Hey, how can we how can we protect ourselves, our members data more efficiently?

K **Keith Hawkey** 09:00

Going back to transitioning from the engineering side of the business, to more of a leadership role? You said that you had some mentors earlier in your career, perhaps a chair of view, perhaps some other places that influenced you? And it probably had some insights that helped you along the way with this transition? I guess. Could you talk a little bit about what some of that advice or insight was what has helped you make a transition and to where you're half one foot in the technology side, one foot in the leadership side? And why that's important today?

K **Kevin Hughes** 09:39

So I think , probably over the last 10 years, we've seen a bit of a shift in leadership in the past, it was very much a : â€œI'm your leader, you do what I say that said I don't care and end of storyâ€ and it's shifted more into there's a quote that I love: â€œpeople don't care about what you know until they know you careâ€. And it's caring about your people making sure that you're taking care of those folks. How are you growing your people as well, that was something that was kind of instilled early on by a mentor. And something I still look at today is how do we find what is the best trajectory for folks. And we're always trying to prepare people for that next step, you always hope it's within your own organization, but even if it's not, I want to make sure they're as prepared as possible for that next role. So I think from that perspective, it's how do you develop people? How do you keep them engaged? I think the the technology and the engineering side of a house is somewhat easy. That's training, and most folks in IT, are there because they enjoy technology to begin with. So they're going to kind of drive for that. I think, from a leadership perspective, our challenges are more of how do you get them to that next level? What is it that they're looking for? How do you how do you pull out of them what their passions are, and make sure people are working in the direction of their passions? Because that's always where they're gonna succeed.

K **Keith Hawkey** 11:10

Has that been easy for you? if you think of your entire IT staff, and those that have a plan and want to ascend up to more of a business role that it's a little bit half and half? Are there questions that you asked during an interview process to see that that's a path that they want to

go down? Are there assessments that you do along the way? I guess like how do you engage each individual to figure out where they want to go and what they want to do? Sure.

K Kevin Hughes 11:51

I think for the most part, what you've got to do is you let them drive the conversation, but you give them a little bit of freedom, you provide a little bit of a nudge to kind of get started, but understand that and it can be simply as easy as: â€œHey, kids, what's your passion? What is it that you get out of bed for every day? What makes you get out of bed? Chocolate? All rightâ€. So let's talk about chocolate. Maybe we need to look at a chocolate tea or type of a world for but really understanding where their passions lie, you've asked some of those leading questions, but really is letting them discover it. And I think that's always the challenge is you, you don't want to lead them necessarily to an answer. But you want to give them enough to start talking to start thinking about, I've never really thought about what is it that I want to do, we had 10, 15 years ago, 20 years ago, even the standard interview question was: â€œ where do you want to be in five years?â€ it's well worn, and not used a whole lot anymore, and rightly so. But I think it's asked a little differently. And I think that's where you're still looking for the same type of an answer with: â€œHey, tell me about your passions? What are the things you enjoy doing?â€ And conversely, â€œwhat are the things you don't enjoy? What are the things that you really don't like, because if you don't like certain things, then hey, this may not be a role for you, and we might not want to look at going down that roadâ€. So really, it's just understanding where people's passions are.

A Aaron Bock 13:19

I think that interview question died also with the question of what's your spirit animal that I feel like used to get asked in an interview questions, maybe it still does, but I haven't heard that one in a long time. So -

K Kevin Hughes 13:32

I think we've used variants of that before. But

A Aaron Bock 13:36

Yeah, I think so, So Kevin, actually, kind of related to what Keith just asked you, but sort of in a different way of asking it. So you just said during an interview process, you kind of not lead them, but you help understand what do they want to do? One thing that's curious to me from our conversations previous to this is that, IT has a wide range of positions ranging from super heavy developers, which the stereotype is that they're in dark rooms with 90 screens, and they're barely eating and whatever. There's that all the way to the help desk that has to be front forward facing the IT manager. But I think there are people who are very good at IT, if you will, the skill set that maybe would not be that interested initially or do not like having to go converse and figure out the business, they want to do IT. But I know, your big passion is getting people to understand the business more understand how do we support them, because at the end of the day, they are our customer? So I'm curious, when you have someone who maybe

isn't good at that, what are some ways to coach them to get better at it and some ways to kind of help them understand this is why we do it because it's going to make you a better blank developer, DBA, ect?

K **Kevin Hughes** 14:48

Sure. No, I think so. Part of that is again, understanding the individual and in some cases, it's okay, you you may have some folks that really are best designed for that backroom type role. And that's perfectly okay. They may have no desire to go outside, you can stretch them a little bit. But if you start talking about putting them out, as you know, talking to other leaders talking to business people, they're visibly shaking at the thought of this. So that may be too much of a stretch. But I think, on the other side of that is you do have folks who are, you kind of described the the stereotypical IT person, we don't communicate well, we're all introverts, we hide away in a dark room in a closet somewhere and our 20 monitors in front of us, but I think that is changing a lot as technology changes, as well as the opportunities are changing. And that's where we have really looked at, I've tried to kind of push people is to say: â€œOkay, you have a little more of the capability to have interactive conversations with folks. And you're okay with it, right? You understand it, you're comfortable having those, so then continuing to talk to them and push them through â€œ, in those passion, conversations, maybe you find out that an individual. You know what numbers have always kind of fascinated me. â€œhey, you know what, maybe we'll let liberal get you interacting a little bit with accounting, understand kind of what their job is, what their role is, kind of again, nudging, trying not to be a full on push, but just nudging folks into areas of where their passions lie. And then stretching them a little bit. Okay, spend a little bit of time understand what is month end closing? What are they looking at? What comes to that time? what are their challenges for that?â€ And then, okay, you have a technology background? And you how do you take that with the business knowledge that youâ€™re understanding that of their business now? And how do we marry those two together and provide solutions for them that help them along?

K **Keith Hawkey** 16:56

That's great, that's actually a perfect side to side way to what I wanted to talk about next is combating shadow IT and the importance of developing IT people that are integrated in the different departments that often want to go their own way and onboard their own tools. And think it doesn't have any relevance to the IT department because they don't have to manage it, or they don't need the IT department to install it on our computer. You must have a sort of success story around developing someone to be a business technologist. Maybe there's a better title for it. But do you have any examples of maybe accounting or other areas where you had a successful? I guess, implant might not be the best word. But so is interfacing with the different departments?

K **Kevin Hughes** 17:51

Yeah, no, of course, that's perfect. We did. And we've been kind of on this journey for about five years now that I've been in Sharon view. And we had an engineer on the team who had a consumer lending background, and really was coming into IT, I think initially is more of a q&a type role. But as we started talking about it, we looked at the opportunities, and she was an

individual who had a tremendous knowledge in the consumer lending platform. And we started kind of, at that point, having conversations around, "okay, how do we take this now, rather than just saying, this is somebody in IT?" Let's understand the business. They had a system that was installed very much, kind of, as you described, that was a shadow IT installed system. vendor, of course, sold a cloud platform, you don't even need IT for this. It's perfect. It's fantastic. That's always the first red flag, you don't need IT. We're going to need it. But I think, we saw some opportunities within the system that, "hey, we can take an IT approach, but also understand the business needs. And then how do we put these together?" So we started introducing things like change management into their processes that in the past, without an IT background they're not familiar with, which is why, any changes would get implemented, things would break. systems were just similar. Nothing reacted the way they thought, we took an approach of saying, " hey, let's implement some of these IT methodologies into this, bringing the business aspect in as well to understand alright, what are your challenges? What are some of the big issues that you've got?" And we realized, "hey, this started working phenomenally". We had a tremendous response from the business. We started to see improvements and processes on the business side of the house as well. And so we really kind of took this then, that was sort of a prototype and started then from there because that was such a Success, moving on and looking at doing that within other departments.

Aaron Bock 20:03

And on the flip side of that, we ask a lot of times people who are different parts of IT or who have or somehow integrated with IT. We a lot of times will ask, what is the biggest mistake, I would venture to guess one of your mistakes that you would see with someone in IT, in the management is that by not involving the business, it's a huge mistake, and not involving IT is a huge mistake, I guess, maybe speak to that, like, what happens when you don't involve the business? Or when you don't get the opinions of IT? Like when they don't really work together? Well, what do you see, and I'm sure you've seen it with consulting in your past?

Kevin Hughes 20:42

Yeah, I think you guys called it out earlier, it's shadow IT. At the end of the day, that's what the end result is, if the business is not getting involvement from IT, and getting the technology that they need, they're gonna go find it on their own. And if they're going out and find it on their own, and not involving IT, again, we have no input into it good, bad, or indifferent. Whatever the system is, we can't help. They're on their own, of now having to support this system, doing things that they're not normally used to doing. And at the end of the day, it just causes that rift to almost continue to grow between the IT department business, I think, in the past, that was an acceptable model for IT, "hey, here's your technology, we've given it to you take it and go do your job", the model that we're really trying to go after now is more of, "hey, what do you need to do your job?" And then understanding from that, okay, here's the technology that we think we can provide, making it that partnership to provide technology that they need, but they're giving that information back of what the business needs, and what are their challenges,

Aaron Bock 21:52

just to make sure that everyone understands and is on the same page when you say shadow IT,

because we've referenced it twice now. And there might be folks out there who, who have different variations of what that is, what do you consider is shadow IT, like how would you define that? What is it and I'm sure you're laughing because it's a million things. But

K Kevin Hughes 22:10

it's another one of the buzzwords, that means something different to everybody else,

A Aaron Bock 22:14

It means a ghost is running your IT, that's what it is. No, Iâ€™m just kidding;

K Kevin Hughes 22:18

Actually, you're not too far off. It's really any type of IT operation that is functioning within your organization that is outside of IT. So if you have applications that are being maintained outside of ITâ€™s view, if you've got, whether it's administration, any of those types of support activities outside of IT, that becomes sort of a shadow IT and you lose that the benefit of the technology, knowledge methodologies, all of that framework that you have built up within your IT department, you've now got people doing things that they're not well versed at, and eventually will cause something to implode, it may not be today or tomorrow, but eventually, things are gonna get so bad, it's just not gonna work out. Well,

A Aaron Bock 23:04

you know, that makes sense. And, I know, weâ€™re gonna go to digital transformation. But a quick Funny story, I used to audit a big four accounting firm, and I would come in and do the, like SDLC, where they did an implementation of a large ERP. And I remember, one of the largest issues we dealt with almost every time was like, did you have IT Look at this, did you have IT test this? Did you have IT even vet it? , â€œOh, well, no, it's really an accounting or it's a finance or it's not really their thing. It's just something we useâ€. that is every IT departments worst nightmare. So it's been happening for me, this 10, 12 years ago. So it's been happening forever, as long as you could basically download something or do something on your own. So I think all organizations struggle with it to some extent, some have it under control better than others. But there's a balance between not limiting people too much, and making sure that they follow the best organizational practices. And I think it's just a tough balance to kind of stay in.

K Kevin Hughes 24:06

And it's communication. I mean, at the end of the day, if you want to oversimplify it, it's communication, if you have that communication back and forth between the business and IT, then you can have those conversations to understand needs. You know, there may be security implications that IT department has, that the business never would have thought about, any number of things, but I think as long as you guys are communicating, and these things don't happen in a vacuum, I think it solves that problem.

K Keith Hawkey 24:38

That is leading into a great conversation around digital transformation, which is another one of these buzz phrases. Here at IT matters. We like to cut through the buzzwords and just get to what they mean with their meaningful descriptions as much as possible. And earlier, Kevin, I remember you alluding to, how budget conscious credit unions are. The idea of being an early adopter in the technology cycle doesn't fit your business model, for the most part, you want the early adopters, whoever is going to do this work to ride the technology trend, or you want to make sure it's not a phase. And once you start to see results, then you guys can take a harder look at does this technology make sense for us? Does it improve our bottom line? Does it add value to our employees? It sounds like cybersecurity, perhaps you have to think of that category in a little bit of a different way, since the consequences are more dramatic than a 2% increase in efficiency or something like that. Could you describe what digital transformation means to you what it means to Sharon view how you've thought about bringing this about?

K Kevin Hughes 26:03

Sure. And I think honestly, it ties back even to our previous conversation as well about how we were integrating with the businesses. At the end of the day. For us digital transformation is really driving efficiency. How can we drive innovation, to improve efficiency, make it sustainable, using technology, at very simplistic definition of digital transformation. That's the way we're looking at it. So you know, the only way you can drive efficiencies, you have to understand what the business is, you can't improve what you don't know. So there's no way you can go into this and say, "Hey, we're gonna drive this digital transformation from an organizational perspective. But we don't know what the business needs". So that's where our involvement and our ties into the business and understanding it's there. How do we do that? So it's process improvements. How can we take, once we've dealt with a particular business unit, understanding some of their challenges, we've got some archaic processes, we have some things that I think like a lot of organizations we fall victim to, well, this is the way we've always done it. One of the the pros and cons to being a great organization to work for is you tend to have people that worked for you for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 years, which is fantastic. You love that longevity and people's passion for your organization. But with that, you can also fall into that pitfall of, well, this is the way we've always done it. So I never thought about it, why should we do something different? And that's where it now kind of with IT get in involved? We're getting into some of these processes and understanding: "Wait a minute, hey, I think we can solve this with technology, maybe we don't necessarily need what signatures everywhere. We don't have to ferry documents back and forth all over the place, we can start looking at electronic signatures , and do things, again, in a more efficient way. Any opportunity we have to programmatically solve an issue. Let's take that approach. Of course, any solution that we really dive into it's got to be sustainable too. Right? it's not something that we can just jump in. And Alright, let's solve this today. That doesn't really fit that digital transformation model. It's okay, this is sustainable, long term with whatever our process improvement is with technology.

A Aaron Bock 28:34

Yeah, it's certainly as you're saying, it's far more than turning paper forms into bits and bytes. It's a holistic approach, utilizing those business technologists that you helped develop , in all

forms a picture, that digital transformation can help illustrate. Do you have an example that you have undergone recently of a digital transformation that's been impactful for Sharon view? What has been one of the more impactful transformations that you have left recently?

K Kevin Hughes 29:15

So we've had a few and again, I think, part of the the challenge of defining digital transformation is, it really can be across the board. It could be as simplistic like you said as getting rid of what signatures and getting documents into electronic management systems, things like that, or it can be more systematic. And I think that's what we're trying to look at as well. I'm gonna take the long way around to answer your question. So bear with me for a minute, but I think in the past, what IT has done historically is we have those ad hoc projects We jump in, we take care of : â€œhey, this came up as a project, we do this, then we do that there's no real methodology behind anythingâ€. And it's just all over the place, then it's gotten to where we were a little more organized, we had a little more of a strategy for my IT department of,â€ Hey, these are the things that we want to do strategicallyâ€. And then the next step, which is kind of where we are now is understanding from the business. Okay? What does the business need, this is no longer just an IT project. This is more of a business related project. And that's kind of our next step in the journey. So with that we spent a lot of time building some framework around our Cloud Vision. What do we keep on prem? What do we put in the cloud? What makes sense. And of course, that's a big discussion. That's everything from dollars and cents, to security, you're talking hardware, all the way down to having financial discussions of that changes your whole financial perspective of op x versus capex, and what those challenges are, but I think for us, we have migrated some systems and probably more specifically, our core banking system to a cloud based system that really alleviated a lot of pain points for a lot of the organization, not just IT. So it's enabled us to alleviate some of the challenges with hardware maintenance, we're dealing with upgrades, and after hours, upgrades, and all of those fun things that we love to do in IT. But it's also allowed us organizationally to move quicker. So if there's things that we want to do, now that we're not having to manage the back end systems so much, we're able to react quicker to business needs. And we can provide those solutions much quicker today than we could before when we own the system and a lot of the administration on the back end. So that's probably, I would say one of our bigger wins here recently is that migration really to the cloud, and understanding where that solution provided more benefits than just did IT benefit, it was an organizational benefit.

A Aaron Bock 32:12

Yeah, and I think for all the listeners, we've talked about this with previous guests, but the fact that cloud seems to be coming up, more and more because SAS platform as a service, moving into a hyper, scalar, cloud, private cloud, etc. A lot of people are trying to get out of the data center and manage it themselves. And I think too many times that gets kind of coincided with digital transformation, that can be a part of it, but there's usually got to be a reason behind it. So I love that you talked about how there's a why behind it. This is what it's helping us do, to focus on blank better. And so, we also kind of asked you look ahead. So look 5, 10, whatever, how many years ahead. I'm curious, your perspective on let's just call it Rural Financial institutions, regional banks, credit unions, other types of financial institutions that are kind of chain based, sort of, like you guys are, what are some of the trends that you think you're going

to see that people need to be watching out for? What are some of the concerns you have in IT over the next couple years? Just talk about, the next five to 10 years? And what you expect to see in the credit union and rural bank space?

K Kevin Hughes 33:26

I think, this is a reflection of, I think, changes in society. But of course, goes back to the credit union in the business that we deliver, but is our ever increasing need for everything immediately. It used to be acceptable, â€œhey, if I need something, it's okay. If this is a day, or you know what, if it's a week, that's okay, that's fine. No problemâ€. Now, if you have to wait five minutes, people are complaining sometimes, And that's where we're seeing deliverables. And I think there's going to be a need for continued to prove efficiencies. That's why I think the digital transformation from the aspect that we're talking about, will continue to be a hot topic and a hot button of how can we deliver new products as quickly as possible more efficiently as things change, and the economy changes? And we need to be, in those cases reactive. How do we make those changes? And how do we deliver those services? The pandemic was probably a great example of that for us on the credit union side of, â€œhey, we went into this pandemic, and all of a sudden the world's turned upside downâ€. There were some financial things that we had to do for our members that we had to do very quickly. And I think that was a little bit of foresight into the future for us that that's not going to be a one time event. We're going to have things that are going to come up to where we need to be reactive to what is happening in the world what is going on either in the economy world events, whatever the case may be. So absolutely the ability to deliver change quickly, I think is going to continue to be more and more important as we move forward over the next five to 10 years. What I will be interested to see is right now, cloud solutions provide you a lot of that ability to do that. But as everything in IT tends to be cyclical, at what point are we going to start rotating back to wanting to bring everything back in house again, it's going to become cost prohibitive. And we've already seen it in some cases, with the mad dash to the cloud initially, where all of a sudden, it became cost prohibitive. And we suddenly realized, â€œwhoa, wait a minute. Hey, guys, everything makes sense in the cloud. And depending on billing structures, it may be far too expensive to do this, we need to bring this back on prom. I'm curious to see how that develops over the years.

A Aaron Bock 35:58

You just made Michael Dell's ears perk up and you made him smile really big that people are going to come back into the data center. I have to ask because you said okay, everything's cyclical. What if we start bringing things back in house, which Keith and I, we see customers who are going coming back, etc. What about blockchain? Blockchain for financial institutions? It's a huge, it's a loaded question. So I'll kind of throw out it like, alright, say people are in the cloud now. But we want to go to a more distributed environment than even the cloud is today. So there's come back on prem, and manage it ourselves. There's the cloud. And then there's this whole blockchain thing, which has been sort of we've seen the first kind of boom, and then now we're in a bust right now. And I think a lot of people are speculating, like, what's going to happen with it? How do you think that affects Sharon view and other financial institutions? And what do you expect to be dealing with the blockchain?

K Kevin Hughes 36:55

And that's interesting, because I think, again, every new technology, we see the same type of approach. There are the bleeding edges, that are the cutting edges that are running to it immediately, and saying, Hey, this is the wave of the future. And then we find out that it's not. And so then there's a mad dash retreat. And then there's a slow migration of understanding what is the real application for this technology? Where does it make sense where it doesn't make sense? Again, we've seen it over the years, with hardware, we've seen it now with Cloud, I think blockchain is the same way I think there's a time and place where it makes sense. Is a catch all solution for everybody? For all things? I don't think so. But I do think there are some opportunities for it that does make sense. And I think that's what we'll see. It'll continue to be another cog in the machine that will provide solutions for people but I don't think it's a catch all.

Aaron Bock 37:57

Okay, so you heard it here. First, Kevin is not suggesting putting all of your future savings into a random altcoin that you have no idea what the application utility is? That's a fair advice. No, we are not financial advisors on the IT Matters podcast. So take nothing we say about the financial predictions with a grain of salt. But uh, Kevin, this has been a great conversation, and we really enjoy having you on. And I think there will be others that would would like to have you back on to talk a little bit more specifically on some of these. We leave all of our guests with one final question that we have them answer. And, this question is around if you had a platform, and you're standing in front of 10 million people, or you're giving the State of the Union, so it's as Kevin State of the Union, you're talking to people of all different backgrounds, etc. What is your best advice to them as it relates to technology?

Kevin Hughes 38:54

I think it's really it goes back to and it's our entire conversation today. With technology. It's a wonderful tool, but understand the business, you've got to have an understanding of how to use the technology, and involve the people that need to utilize the technology in determining what that technology is. So I think unless you have conversations with people unless you understand what their needs are, what are their challenges, how can you use technology to assist them? I think it's a recipe for disaster to just throw technology at problems. You have to have those business interactions understand what your customers, whether it's internal external, what have you understand what their needs are, and then start talking technology but until you understand what they need, keep technology in your back pocket.

Aaron Bock 39:46

I love it. Kevin, what's the best way for someone to get in touch with you if they're following up from the show?

Kevin Hughes 39:52

You can reach out to me via email. That is fine. It's Kevin.Hughes. That's H-U-G-H-E-S@Sharonview.org S-H-A-R-O-N-V-I-E-W dot O-R-G. Please feel free to reach out via email.

A Aaron Bock 40:09

Yeah. And we'll put that in the show notes for you folks. And I know Kevin's on LinkedIn as well. Keith, thank you for joining the show. To all our listeners. Thank you for joining us. Make sure to follow us on Apple podcast, Spotify or other platforms you listen on, please share with your friends and family. We hope that you have a wonderful rest of the day. Kevin, thanks again. It's been our pleasure and thanks for listening to the IT Matters podcast.

K Kevin Hughes 40:33

Pleasure's all mine. Thanks, Aaorn. Thanks, Keith.

K Keith Hawkey 40:35

All right, have a good one.

N Narrator 40:39

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