IT Matters - Ep26

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SPEAKERS

Keith Hawkey, Narrator, Chintan Patel

N   **Narrator**   00:07

Welcome to the IT Matters podcast, where we explore why IT matters and matters pertaining to IT.

K   **Keith Hawkey**   00:15

Welcome, everyone to the IT Matters podcast where we talk to IT leaders that are making an impact. I'm your host, Keith Hawkey. Aaron is out sick today, so I think I'll be able to handle the conversation with a very special guest we have. We have the pleasure of speaking to a digital transformation savant of the logistics industry. Chintan Patel is the current CIO of National DCP. Chintan, welcome to the IT Matters podcast. How are you doing?

C   **Chintan Patel**   00:50

Doing well, thank you, thank you for inviting me over, I'm excited to be here.

K   **Keith Hawkey**   00:54

It has been a busy week in the tech industry. I know you've had a lot of stuff going on. What have you been up to lately.

C   **Chintan Patel**   01:01

From our perspective, it's always you keeping your eyes and ears open for you know, what's what's new, what's next. But also from a security perspective, you're always keeping your eyes and ears open, because that can come and you know, really upset things in a matter of seconds. So always keep my eyes and ears open for those kinds of things, things and events.

Keith Hawkey 01:22

Cybercriminals never sleep, that's for sure. We are all very grateful for the job that you do. And, you know, we'll get into a little bit a little bit of that today, the logistics industry has a number of challenges besetting it here in 2024. A lot of the a lot of these actually are, you know, I know that National DCP deals mostly with the truck loads that are on the road. But we have international news of whether it's a war or a conflict of trade routes being cut out because of international struggle. So it's certainly top of mind for most people that are not even associated with the logistics industry. One of your largest customers today, that you service is Dunkin Donuts. That's where you've been able to deliver a tremendous value. What are some of the like the high level challenges that are presenting the logistics industry today, particularly when it comes to truckload and what you're doing?

Chintan Patel 02:24

The margin of error for us is very low, right? To get your hot cup of coffee at Dunkin at 6am. You know, we have to make sure that we get that truckload of you know, of fresh produce and everything along with it at a certain hour and that margin of error is very low. External factors are always you know, something that we are battling with in terms of whether it's a weather event, or it is you know, international events that could impact our supply, there's always these external factors that you know are going to come in the way and we plan ahead for that right and knowing that these kinds of things can come we are you know, hedging against these kinds of things, external events, we're trying to, you know, get our supply locked down for a you know, period at a time so that we know that we can survive these kinds of ups and downs that might be coming along the way. The biggest thing for us is making sure we know there's a very slim margin for error and making sure we're over prepared to compensate for an event like this, which we know would would come along the way.

Keith Hawkey 03:26

Piggy-backing off what you said, it certainly takes a dedicated team from a business leadership standpoint and also from a technology standpoint, I mean, your your team and the back end technology that delivers that cup of coffee that Dunkin Donuts wants to create. It's no small task and one thing I'd like to highlight is National DCP won Dunkin brand's partner of the year, three times over the last decade. There are more than 13,200 Dunkin stores in over 4440 markets. You know you leading the technological innovation at National DCP, what technologies have made the most impact for your organization to have the accolade of winning Partner of the Year at one of the world's most trusted brands.

Chintan Patel 04:17

That's a great question because Dunkin indeed is America's you know, beloved brand. And while we all know that America runs on Dunkin, not many people know that Dunkin runs on National DCP. So, to serve a brand like Dunkin at scale, innovation is built into our culture right? Every day we're looking at ways to serve our franchisees more efficiently, providing world class service at a sustainable cost. And the way we do that at scale is to lean on to technology

systems at every step of the process, right, whether it's from cleaning, procuring, payments and receipts, selling and delivery. Technology is built into every single aspect of that process and you know, all the way through our back offices as well as our nine distribution centers, we're constantly exploring and piloting new technology that can really help us with operational efficiencies in the warehouses. For example, drones is, you know, something that we're piloting right now, it really helps us kind of, you know, the drone will fly through the aisles and do a cycle hound on the fly. Quite literally, in this case, if we have to do that manually, you know, it takes us it's an arduous, time consuming process and the accuracy might not be to, you know, the degree with which we can get it from a drone. So there's lots of different technologies that we're piloting and trying to see if this makes a good use case and there's synergies with what we're doing on a day to day basis. Another example is, you know, we're looking at automated palette jack systems that allow remote operation of a palette jack without ever stepping foot into the warehouse. This really helps us mitigate some of the labor challenges that we've seen over the past since COVID has hit. We're looking at technology that truly can make a difference, top level, bottom level efficiencies, or new ways of, you know, expediting things, that's that route, but all around you, technology is at the core of us serving our customers.

K **Keith Hawkey** 06:13

You make some great points, particularly around the labor shortage occurring in the logistics industry, among others, it doesn't take long for you to be driving on the highway and to look at the back of a truck. Basically all the logistics companies are making their pitch to join their company, in banners on the back of their dry vans, like hey, looking for a job, come join blank company. It's definitely no secret that there's a shortage in the industry and innovating in a way to reach the young, more millennial, I use, I'm a millennial. Millennials used to be young at one point. I guess, we're, we have children now and where we have a little bit more decision making power when it comes to the business but the young, younger generation, you know, gamifying, the workplace allowing I mean, it's, it is a tall feat, to be able to pull off remote working when you're in a warehouse. And you mentioned drones being a part of this. Yeah, you mentioned the ability for a remote worker to be in their living room doing their work, while controlling a effectively a drone or robot, that's there in person in a manufacturing plant. I can definitely see how that impacts the labor market. You're able to access a pool of talent that normally wouldn't be available to many manufacturing, logistics, that work hand in hand. Can you talk a little bit more about that program? What what what gave you the idea that this was a labor opportunity?

C **Chintan Patel** 07:52

We're constantly looking and going to conferences and you know, different areas where we can understand what's new in the market? Right? And how does it impact our business directly? There's, you know, there's a lot of different robotic solutions that are out there, but not everything is a good fit for us. So we'll we'll pilot it and see it and say, Hey, does it make good sense, business sense? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. So we're constantly on this journey of trying to find the right fit. where it makes sense from a from a numbers perspective, as well as efficiencies perspective. This one in particular, you know, with COVID coming in, everyone's kind of definition of the work ethic, if you will, or you know, work life balance has has changed dramatically right, sometimes for the better, sometimes, you can argue against it. Typically, if you see how a warehouse is built, it's gonna be in an area where there's gonna be multiple

warehouses around it. And there's always a, you know, pool of talent that they're going after, where if someone else next door is paying, you know, $2 $3 more, they're gonna jump ship. There's not a whole lot of loyalty associated with a warehouse employee, unfortunately. So for us, it was important to kind of come up with a way to use technology to differentiate ourselves and kind of mitigate some of those challenges. And using a remote palette operating system really helped us kind of target, hey, while we're not now limited to the pool that's within that vicinity, we're also can tap into, you know, disability or veterans who might be able to then you know, have solid work ethic that we can tap into them to kind of get into our warehouses without literally getting them into our warehouses and still being able to get our work done. So that's really where this idea came from, is hey, this can be a really great match, given some of the challenges we're facing and technology is right at the forefront in helping solve that challenge.

K Keith Hawkey 09:46

From a security perspective, IoT is an avenue for malicious cyber criminals to access networks and access the marketplace or access a company's sensitive information. How do you think about security when you're, I mean, you have your your talent, that's working remote, they're accessing a, you know, they have control over a drone or a machine that they could certainly cause havoc if it's not properly managed and there aren't guardrails and thresholds and from a cybersecurity perspective isolated to just that employee, what kind of security challenges open up when, you know, understand, understandably, a lot of companies since COVID, had moved to remote work. The risk factor of a remote worker is generally pretty low for what you might consider a knowledge worker that's working on the computer, that's building Excel files or making calls. When it comes to managing heavy heavy machinery, heavy equipment and manufacturing or a warehouse space, that opens a whole new level of risk to the organization. How does a company like National DCP continue with that level of risk? What are your thoughts on that?

C Chintan Patel 11:03

With COVID, the mobile workforce, you know, it's all remote, right? Your your workforce is really it's mobile, in our case, it is mobile, because, you know, along with our workers in the warehouse, we also have drivers on the trucks that are on the road at all times. And we have, you know, software on the trucks, IoT devices on the trucks. So we have to, you know, have a comprehensive strategy on how we're securing all of this when our assets are all over the place, right, they're not within a warehouse, necessarily, or within a office, they truly are all over and sometimes just on the go. So we build our fortification around it, right, every single asset is monitored and we have a view of it at all times. We have also, what we also try to do is for you know, every remote worker, obviously, we are having VPN tunnels so that they are coming in securely into our systems. Outside of security, the other thing also that I think is good to touch upon is with these kinds of remote operations, safety is another critical aspect that we look at, because these big devices are being manned, you know, off the off site, and you want to be really vigilant around safety as well. So AI comes, you know, quite handy in that where these remote systems, the more they use the certain routes that are charted out for them, they are learning those paths and are learning you know, when there's things coming in front of them, or how to stop and things like that. So there's a lot of you know, work that's

going behind making sure we're comfortable before we launched this wide across the network. But but that's the beauty of, you know, technologies that you can test and pilot and you know, use AI to learn until you feel comfortable that it's ready for primetime.

K **Keith Hawkey** 12:56

That's an excellent segue into how generative AI and artificial intelligence in in general, has impacted every industry and every category in every business from the smallest all the way up to your largest enterprises. We talked a little bit about how AI is making an impact when it comes to the drones you're deploying. How else are you seeing artificial intelligence impact your business, the way your team operates, and how does National DCP take the most advantage of some of these more recent innovations in the space?

C **Chintan Patel** 13:37

AI has certainly been a top of mind for us, has gained, you know, momentum at a global level over the past year. And as with any new technology, we're always looking at ways and use cases that make sense for us and find those synergies. For us, you know, Transportation Management has been a big area that we're looking at and piloting where we can optimize our routes. So, you know, it helps us say there's an external event, a weather event, then it can quickly help us optimize our routes and say, Hey, what how can we reroute our routes so that we're still staying within our SLAs etc. It also helps us, you know, look at our master routes on a more frequent basis. Typically, that's again, a manual process happening every month. With AI, we're able to revisit that much more frequently to say, Hey, how can we reuse this capacity that we have within our routes? Or if there's empty routes coming back, how can we reroute them to be able to take full advantage of the capacity at you know, going in inbound, outbound, etc. So it really is there are some synergies that we're finding there that impact the bottom line for sure. From in terms of how our teams are working, you know, we're we are being a bit you know, I think the right word is optimistically cautious, because you know, there is the concern of, you know, security and privacy, that are coming up with these new AI tools that are in the market. So, you know, we do put in policies, AI policies, around the tools that you can use and educating our teams around the, you know, the some of the privacy concerns or the security concerns that come along with the technology that's kind of in its infancy in reality, right. Despite its meteoric rise, it still is in its infancy. There are you know, it is in it's hype cycle, it's going to come down and it's gonna, you know, have to learn from the mistakes it's making, and then it's going to get ready for primetime. So we're kind of in that same phases, where we're seeing a direct impact, we are, you know, going after those use cases, and then in certain areas, you know, we're educating our teams, our employees and kind of waiting in, in some cases to let the dust settle, and then take take advantage of it. So that's, that's kind of our position optimistically cautious from an AI perspective.

K **Keith Hawkey** 16:06

I think you're prudent to take that perspective. I work with a, I work with countless IT leaders and they're split, you know, half of them are driving full throttle into building some kind of chatbot, or some large language model trained on their data. Others are hosting, others will use Chat GBT, they'll they'll put an Excel document up into a, you know, in Chat GPT and ask it

to draw analytics. And then others are much more cautious, like, like you are, that would like to watch the others potentially fail and then learn from their mistakes, and then come out with a more mature framework to deploy it. You mentioned route optimization, where else do you see AI landing in the most immediate future in the logistics industry?

C **Chintan Patel** 17:01

From a logistics perspective, and from running the entire business, there's use cases across the board, right, there's use cases from an HR perspective onboarding, you know, new employees, offboarding employees, there's ways to make things more efficient. There's use of AI, you know, from financials and ERP side of things, how can we close our, you know, monthly financials faster? If we're taking three days how can we cut it down to two days, there's use cases from a security perspective, how can we use AI for, you know, five, fraud prevention, so there's a, you know, multiple areas within the business where we can take advantage of, of AI. From a logistics perspective, you know, specifically, like I said, we're we're looking at from Route Optimization. But there's also, like I had mentioned earlier, there's ways where we can use robotics, she started learning more than, you know, be more intelligent than what it truly does today is, you know, felt you're you programmed it to do certain things, now you're adding that layer of intelligence on top of it, which really gives you that power that we didn't have before. So that's an area where we're seeing that could potentially you know, as as things iron out a bit, we're gonna see a lot of efficiencies and where we're, we're thinking the future is, in our industry, for sure. Is that intelligence being baked into some of the automation or robotics that that is already out there.

K **Keith Hawkey** 18:25

That brings me to another question that I have Chintan. Switching gears entirely. Let's say you're a newly hired CIO, by a global logistics company with hundreds of warehouses across the globe, you have international clients, you have IoT to worry about you have security you're worried about, your personality, and you know, you're trying to embed your team and various departments to learn how to best serve the needs of the business leaders across the board. What advice would you give a newly hired CIO of a logistics company that had no experience in the logistics industry? What would you tell them in order to wrap their mind around the task they just signed up for?

C **Chintan Patel** 19:15

I think the beauty of technology is that you can apply your learnings to almost any problem regardless of the industrial verticals. That's also what keeps it interesting because it keeps you on your toes and you're constantly learning you know, industries and verticals. I believe Logistics is no different from you know, freight sale or software or banking, your business processes you know, no matter what vertical you are in, they start at A and they end at Z and along the way you're using technology to automate that process or gain efficiencies or get data insights that can help you grow your business or use that technology to better your customer experience. And at the end of the day, you know, technology is, in my mind, it's a data journey from A to B, and how efficiently you get there. And, you know, does that data help you build a forward looking strategy because you're able to, you know, mine that data or use AI to, you

know, build models around at the end of the day, you're using technology to kind of look into the future while optimizing, you know, what you're doing today. And that's how you how you grow your business. So I mean, the one thing if I had to say, to someone coming new into this industry is the knowledge from a technology perspective is very transferable. But don't forget the human element. You know, when you walk into the warehouse, that energy and the human element is completely different. It's a 24 by seven massive operations. And if you if you don't understand the ins and outs, stuff, you know, how you know how the clock works, how things are ticking, when you're in that, you know, all this, you know, 1000s of SKUs coming in, and you're slotting them, and they're going, you know, there's 50, 60, different systems from a technology perspective, that have to work in tandem, for all of that product to come from, you know, point it to be sourced, and come and deliver into inbound into your warehouses, to be slotted, and then picked, bagged, and ready, and optimized to be sent on to that truck that's going to that Dunkin that's taking in that product and making your coffee the next morning. So there's tons of technologies that work in tandem to make that happen. And there's a lot of human element to that where things can fall through the cracks, if you don't understand what goes behind making that technology work, when there's so many hands being exchanged to get from point A to point B. So that can be a blind spot that I would say, you know, for anyone coming new, visit the warehouses, do a day in life of a warehouse worker, whether it is inbound, you know, receiving or outbound pick back and getting those products on a truck, get on a truck and work with your driver to see how they make stops and how they're unloading there. You know, it's just understanding that that human element sign of it, I think, is the biggest thing I would say coming in for someone new, make sure you understand that so you understand your, you know, you understand the pain points at every level, because that's the way you understand how you can use technology to truly make a difference is if you understand the pain points on the day to day processes of what of the humans that are using your technology.

K Keith Hawkey 22:34

Yeah. Because how else are you going to make their lives easier unless you understand their day to day. And then and the struggles they deal with and the fore sight into if we do engage in a project, let's say I'm just spitballing here, but building an application that might serve some of your some of your clients that they're very used to a certain way of doing things and very used to a certain manner of doing business. It reminds me of a story that you told me before about, yeah, an adventure into developing a new application. I think this is a part from where you are today as as far as far as your employment. But what are some of the lessons that you've learned in digital transformation? I think this particular project had to do with developing an application that your clients would use, or your stores would use to procure orders and to to engage with their customer base and some of the expectations in the near term, we're not net as as tightly as as expected. Can you share that story that he shared with me before

C Chintan Patel 23:50

Any leader right in your professional journey, you're gonna have some of those data misfires, and you fully go back and think, you know, my career would have been in a completely different trajectory, if I never kind of saw those kinds of failures. And I truly believe this is one

of those right? Where I, I completely had a different approach to technology going forward. Because of, you know, kind of the, I wouldn't call it a misfire in my mind, I think I like to call it a pivot opportunity.

K   Keith Hawkey   24:20
That's right.

C   Chintan Patel   24:22
In my previous life, and I was brought in to launch an e-commerce business, we went through the rounds of you know, talking to customers understanding what we wanted to build for them. We were very clear, we thought we need an e-commerce business. It's a great opportunity and new sales channel. This is this is going to be great. So we start by, you know, going through the rounds of defining requirements, selecting a technology partner implementation partner, and then we go through the actual implementation wanting a new e-commerce business. On time, in budget, we start throwing a great, you know, successful Launch Party and and we're waiting for the money to start rolling in. And we wait a month, and we wait two months and three months, and there's no change. I mean, we're barely getting any traffic to our website, hardly any orders coming in, like in our mind, this was such a great tool we're giving our customers. They don't have to walk into the store and wait in line for 20 minutes to place their order. Like who wouldn't use this time saving tool? In my mind? It's like it's a slam dunk, this is a greatest thing that we've you know, given to you guys, and you're not using it. And then, we took a step back and and started thinking, well, we can see all these, you know, great benefits, but we haven't really kind of sat down with them and understand like, what's in it for them? Or we haven't really kind of could put ourselves in their position and thinking, yes, there's this new tool, but there's a million different apps that they have on their phone, why? Why should they truly get another app from our side and use it. And that's when we said okay, let's watch our customers. So rather than you know going and talking to them, where they may not be that open with us on why they're not using it, we just decided to kind of get our teams into our stores and watch these, watch our customers. And what we found was our customers are coming in and you know, getting a cup of coffee and peacefully waiting in line till they're able to talk to their sales agent. So truly, they're what we were thinking was it's a waste of billable hours for them waiting in line for 20, 25 minutes, in their mind that was the highlight of their day. They're coming into our store, getting a coffee, waiting in line, chit chatting, and then going to, you know, their sales associate, and asking them all sorts of questions about how to run their business. So it was a landscaping business that that I was at and our customers were waiting for you to getting tip the tips on how should I run, how should I clear up a soccer field with chemicals if it's going to rain the next day? Or what should I use to treat you know, this kind of grass or that kind of weed? There's all these different questions. What they were truly coming in for was this intel that our website was not providing at all. Our website was simply giving them the ability to order products. But what we were missing is that they needed to know what kind of products, so there was a whole learning element that was happening in our stores, which we were not providing online. So that was the aha moment for us was, it's not about what you think is the benefit to the customer. It's about what truly the customer might not even know that this is why they're coming to you. Until you know you you kind of observe them and then you think, Okay, this is what's missing for us,it's not a way to transact. So that relationship that they have with their sales associate is truly what's bringing them and that's

that's our secret sauce. And we're not translating that on that app. So that was the aha moment for me and and our team to go back and saying, Hey, let's Is there a way to build this out where we can you know, provide that experience right? The knowledge base that tells them exactly what to do, how to treat their lawn, how to care for fields, how to do if it's rainy. So we started it before going with the customer directly we started going to the to the sales rep and saying hey, what exactly what data are you, knowledge are imparting them that we can help build on our application. And then when we do this, this is going to help free up your time so you can actually use your time to upsell to the customers increasing your book of business and you're the ones who are going to sort of start marketing this tool. When it comes from you, there's that trust that the customer already has with you and then they see the value of using this app. So it's a win win it, you know, reduces time spent on your end so you can increase the book of business while it reduces the time for the customer as well. They can do all of this work, you know at at night after the kids are in bed. So they're it was a win win at that point. So I think that mentality when you go out and you're gung ho about solving a problem, you know, technology can do this, but not quite understanding that human element. What are you targeting, right? How do you understand what truly the customer wants and not what you think they want, to hone in on that is very important. And how do you attack change management, right, adoption. It's not about you know, just marketing and throwing marketing dollars but it's kind of understanding that there's a trust factor of who it comes from, how it comes from, how you tell them what the benefits are. And that's when the adoption truly starts. So after that, I think before I start any project, for me, the biggest lesson is, you know, who is our target audience? What are they going to get out of this? Is that truly a pain point? And how, who are they going to trust if we try to solve it for them to get it in front of them? And the change management adoption is is critical before you know in building that into your project plan, your ROI is is critical before you start any project. So lesson learned, pivot opportunity, and able to, you know, move past it. But definitely an important lesson.

K Keith Hawkey 30:43

I really appreciate you sharing that story Chintan, it, it reminds me of the generational gaps in terms of the willingness to adopt new technologies. I'm not sure how old you are. But I remember the days where I used to chat on AOL Instant Messenger. And you know, that was brand new at the time we we could actually communicate with our friends via a computer and talk about our anxieties in high school and everything we were we're dealing with at the time and, you know, planning planning a trip, I was actually I was talking, I was speaking to a friend the other day about, you know, we used to communicate through like AOL, we didn't have phones at the time. And we'd say, Okay, do you what we're gonna meet here, we're gonna meet at this time, we're going to the movie theater. And then if you didn't comprehend, or really understand what the directions were, you would arrive somewhere, no one would be there and you couldn't communicate with anyone.

C Chintan Patel 31:46

I remember those days.

K Keith Hawkey 31:48

And now and now it seems like we have so many fail safes of having this device in our pocket

to resource information. And before my time, you know, my parents would be would have to use a corded phone to communicate with their counterparts. And then before that, there's nothing. So considering your client base, your client base and the their, what are they comfortable with? Where they grew? What kind of technologies did they grow up with? I imagine a lot of your customers dealt with business transaction transactions, from a face to face perspective. There's an underlying level of trust that they had with their sales representative, or the store manager, that was underpinning the decisions they were making, as they were acquiring various fertilizer or other chemicals they would use out when they're, when they're building or on the on the farm. But if your client base grew up with AOL, or today, TikTok or whatever it might be that and they don't want to talk to anyone, you know, they're actually they prefer not to engage face to face and there's more, they're less socially tuned, there's more social anxiety because they, they they're able to occupy themselves alone, much more effectively, today. They may prefer an application. They might say thank goodness, I don't have to go to the store. I don't I don't have to go to go to the bank and make small talk that I don't want to make, I can just do my transaction to this banking app.

C **Chintan Patel** 33:28

That's true in any sector as well. Right, you have that the target audience, you know, definitely is changing. The older generation, I think there might be a bit longer to adopt to this technologies. But I think thanks to you know, Amazon, and everyone just being comfortable, sometimes it goes the, you know, in the opposite direction, where everyone expects a Amazon like experience on your apps, and you're thinking, Oh my God, it's the complete opposite. Because, you know, you don't have the budgets of the Amazons of the world where you're going to be able to have a seamless experience like Amazon, but that has become the de facto expectation, because that's what they're, you know, what everyone is seeing outside. So there's two extremes, right? There's some where, you know, like you said, the younger generation who's it's it, unless you do business that way, I don't even want to bother working and doing business with you, because I'm so used to running my entire business on my phone and on the go, so you have to cater to that audience. And then there's the others who are getting used to it but, you know, in their personal lives, they're getting used to it just fine. They don't quite trust getting used to it with their professional lives. So that's where the adoption is something that you really, truly have to find a way to gain their trust to be able to start using your technology. So it's a balance that you know, we see and in our mind, in the Dunkin side of things, it's a you know, it's a natural churn, I think that happens when our franchisees aging out, and they might be, you know, handing off their small business or their franchises to their to the next generation. So that generation is truly coming in and adopting it much faster. So that natural churn happens but we know that we have to stay ahead of the curve. Because unless we do that, as we're sitting on, you know, this this churn happening, we'll be we'll be left behind. So in our mind, we all constantly got to cater to two types of audiences that we cannot lose sight of, hey, over time this churn happens and we have to cater to them while trying to find a way to gain the trust and make sure it's been adopted up the other side of the spectrum as well.

K **Keith Hawkey** 35:41

One question I like to ask all the IT leaders that come on to the the IT Matters podcast show is if if you could display a message on every billboard in the world, and only IT leaders could see it, what message would you send an IT leader that was looking to stay ahead of the curve? What

do you think is missing? What what what is being overlooked today? What do you feel passionate about? What what would you you know, in a small message format that would fit on a on a on a billboard?

C Chintan Patel 36:15

Don't forget to sell for yourself, you've got to be your own marketing champion. Sometimes people think of IT as a back office, and it's just running things. I think there's truly transformational abilities to grow your business, if you're able to get that alignment with your leadership, and that comes from relentlessly, you know, marketing the work IT does. It's not a natural tendency for IT leaders to be able to think in those terms because we are, you know, we're at the at the heart of it, you know, we're technology people who likes to get things done. And you know, I grew up from a programming background. So I was a developer and you know, hands to keyboard, want to get things done. And then that's your mindset. But I think it's really important if you're able to market the work that you're doing, because that's how you get alignment. That's how, you know, the other leaders in your organization see the benefit that comes out of technology to propel their areas, right. And when you start gaining that alignment, and trust from the other leaders at the board level, that's when you can truly use technology to propel you know, the business, from from where it is today to being able to, you know, whether it is from data and analytics from AI or other areas, you truly can be a differentiator in your industry, when you rely on on technology.

K Keith Hawkey 37:42

I think you're exactly right, you know, marketing the vision, not only yourself, but but the vision of of the future is, is it's certainly a muscle that most IT professionals in the early in their career have to develop, for the most part not not as natural to a traditional programmer, or someone who was technical and, and, but but but you have to in order to, you know, be a leader in the business to move the business forward in a transformational fashion, and get visibly get the board excited about your plans. And to get their buy in, you're going to have to learn how to how to how to market this in a way that's effective. Chintan I think this has been an incredible conversation and I know our listeners will will agree. Where can our listeners find you if they have a question about one of the topics that you listed today? Where or how can you be reached?

C Chintan Patel 38:46

I am definitely on LinkedIn. So that's a great way to reach out. I'm in Atlanta so feel free to you know, give a shout out anywhere if you're nearby, we'd love to at the national DCP offices, would love to meet with new people and learn about their journeys. But LinkedIn is a great way otherwise to to get in touch for sure.

K Keith Hawkey 39:09

Well I'll make sure to include your LinkedIn in the show notes and as always, thank you for tuning into the IT Matters podcast and again Chintan thank you for offering your insights and

taking some time out of your your day.

C Chintan Patel 39:24

Really glad to be here and thanks for the opportunity and inviting me, really had a good time. And you know looking forward to being able to you know follow through the podcast and listen to other leaders.

K Keith Hawkey 39:38

Well take care everyone, have a wonderful rest of your week.

N Narrator 39:43

Thanks for listening. The IT Matters podcast is produced by Opkalla, an IT advisory firm that helps businesses navigate the vast and complex IT marketplace. Learn more about Opkalla at opkalla.com.