

IT Matters - Episode 2

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SPEAKERS

Aaron Bock, Sean Farrell, Narrator

- 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 IT Matters podcast. Thank you for joining us today. We're excited to have you all on this lovely spring day here in Charlotte, North Carolina. Joined today by Sean Farrell from QDS, Quality Data Systems, based here in Charlotte, North Carolina. We'll get into Sean's background here in just a second. But for those of you that are not familiar with the IT Matters podcast, we're going to be talking about why IT matters inside of an organization. Also, what are some of the IT matters inside of an organization and out, so why is it important? What are some of the trends? Our guest today, Sean, is the CEO of QDS. Like I mentioned. Sean, welcome to the show.
- S** Sean Farrell 00:59
Hey, Aaron. Thanks for having me, man. I'm excited to be on and look forward to talking about stuff.
- A** Aaron Bock 01:03
Yeah, excited to have you. For those of you who don't know Sean, Sean has been at QDS for 10 years. I actually met Sean probably three years ago, and I consider Sean somewhat of a mentor being the CEO of QDS, who is a couple years ahead of Opkalla. Sean, I guess tell the listeners a little bit more about yourself your background, how you ended up with QDS, what does QDS do, etc.

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Sean Farrell 01:26

Yeah, so Aaron, man, I grew up in Charlotte, been here since I was three years old. So very close to a lifer based on how many people commute here every year, it seems like. I was a baseball player growing up, I never really thought I'd go into the family business. I had a good career at the University of North Carolina, was blessed to be drafted by the Oakland A's, end up tearing up my shoulder diving for a ball in the outfield, so I thought I'd come work while I was rehabbing, never really gotten any better, and really kind of fell in love with sales. And being a competitive athlete, you know, started back in 2003, honestly, with the company as a straight commission, salesperson, and worked my way up, I have been the CEO for the last 10 years here. And we have really moved our company from a company that sold mostly desktop equipment that did not connect to anything, to the majority of our growth has been investing in systems technologies for financial institutions that do connect to their banking core system or their EFT providers. So you know, IT has become a very important part of the solutions that we've implemented through our growth over the last 10 years.

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Aaron Bock 02:40

Absolutely. So that the listeners get a better understanding, how big is QDS today? And how much has it grown over the last couple of years?

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Sean Farrell 02:49

Yeah, I mean, we have been blessed with a huge growth streak probably over the last six years, we've grown from roughly a 5 million business, to we did just under 22 million in revenue last year.

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Aaron Bock 03:02

Congratulations.

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Sean Farrell 03:02

We're spread across 12 states, so we support community banks and credit unions that range from, you know, maybe 10s of millions of assets up to I think our largest account is now 100 billion in assets. So kind of that community and regional size institution. So it's it's a very dynamic environment. And certainly, we'll talk about how banking is shifting these days towards technology.

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Aaron Bock 03:28

Yeah, and maybe before we get into banking, I want to start with you personally and then QDS, and then we'll get into some of the, I guess, industry tech trends, but I kind of want to know personally in your life, what are some of the technologies that are key to you? Or that you use

every day that really help you function? That help Sean as a CEO function? That you couldn't live without?

S Sean Farrell 03:50

Yeah, I'm one of those weird, I think we're called xennials, right? So I was born in '81, so I'm kind of right on that line of you know, I did play Oregon Trail growing up and you know, remember that additional native but you know, technology really runs my life.

A Aaron Bock 04:07

Did you feed your ox meager portions too?

S Sean Farrell 04:10

Probably. I'm sure I died of typhoid or something along the way as well. You never know what's going to happen on that. And if you watch 1883, it brings that whole trend back to life, but you know, unfortunately, you know, as a CEO, I live and die on my phone. You know, I do have an Apple iPhone. So I certainly play with a variety of apps that keep me tuned in, really live and die on my calendar. We have certainly done a lot more streaming as of late. So we have, you know, I have young kids, I have twin three year olds and an eight year old, so Disney+ has become a very big deal in our household and we run a Google mesh internet system to make sure that, you know, Wi-Fi carries throughout the house. So it is normally when I travel for work when that technology tends to break and you always get the call from your wife going, you know, "What's wrong with the TV?" or "Why isn't our internet working?" And it's like, I don't know what I can do from Tennessee today, honey, but you know.

A Aaron Bock 05:06

That's not your fault, you probably could, but that's your fault. You know, I'm just kidding.

S Sean Farrell 05:11

We are very dependent on the internet in our house and my oldest is very into Roblox and some of the gaming communities, so it's definitely a tech dependent environment in my household for sure.

A Aaron Bock 05:24

Yeah. And well, so you also mentioned, you know, we will get into the banking and the community credit unions, but QDS also started working as mostly an equipment for banks for cash management, is what I understand, not a whole lot of technology, I guess, in the

beginning, but you guys have evolved considerably in technology as well. So maybe what was the cause for some of the changes? Or at what point did you guys decide to get, I guess, more technological in support? And the why behind that, maybe?

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Sean Farrell 05:57

Yeah, I mean, so you figure a lot of the legacy products that we used to sell are like the dollar bill counters that you see in the movies that the casinos run. So, you know, like if a bank branch would open, that might be \$2,000 to \$5,000 in revenue, and we might get a couple pieces of equipment, and we'd be happy with that. Well, as we look strategically, you know, a lot of automation technology, and how do we handle cash and coin and check transactions was really moving towards things that integrate to the bank or credit unions core system, offer greater functionality. And those solutions might range from, say, \$25,000 to \$75,000. So, as we became more experts in technologies like that, you know, our deal sizes start to move up. And now, you know, we have multiple deals that are typically in the seven figure realm, which that wasn't an even a, you know, we used to be kind of a rounding error in that equation. And now, you know, we're doing one, two, five million deals with, you know, technology and all these integrations, and it's much more of a IT and software type environment than, yes, it's a physical piece of equipment that has physical motors and wheels and whatnot. So it's been an interesting transition and a lot of expertise that we've had to learn over time. But it's been a wild ride,

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Aaron Bock 07:22

And really opportunity driven, it sounds like you know, there was an opportunity to help people more, grow revenue within QDS. So you guys decided, okay, well, we need to be able to be the thought leaders, be the people to do that for our customers.

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Sean Farrell 07:36

Absolutely. I mean, we are very big on selling with integrity, not trying to get the most revenue, but the right revenue. A lot of what Opkalla is based on as well, frankly. But you know, really trying to help clients achieve results. And the technologies today just happen to be more impactful. And as our industry continues to struggle, like many, with staffing issues, you know, our automation technology can handle a lot of that lift of well, how do we get business done when we're struggling to replace you know, Tammy Teller or whatnot in that environment? So, you know, not only is our equipment counted on, but it has a significant impact on client service and customer experience.

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Aaron Bock 08:19

Yeah, that's a good point. And I want to come back to that, because I'm assuming the last two years have made it even more eye opening for some of your customers with COVID. And the lack of people and the inability for people to come in. But before we get there, let's go back a second. So as a CEO of QDS, right, you all, I think operate like the last time I talked to you is 20-

plus states. You all are somewhere around 80 to 100 employees. When you think of IT as a CEO, how do you guys really consider IT inside your organization? Is it part of every function? Or is it more of an internal function? What is it to QDS?

S Sean Farrell 08:58

Yeah, I would say like any company, you know, at times we have fallen prey to, 'maybe we're not as automated as the technologies that we sell'. But, you know, we have done a good job of migrating things to the cloud. You know, we were ready for hybrid work before COVID hit. So the fact that we had the majority of our technology allow people to work from multiple places has been beneficial. We have some professional service and managed service employees that are extremely technical and have high volumes of work coming at them. So we've been able to build them custom PCs, and we have multiple employees running three or four monitors for efficiency and so the ability to leverage technology to help people get stuff done, you know, as me being that person that really believes in efficiency. You know, you don't want somebody running on an i3 processor with one screen. When, geez, if we just invest a little bit more money in technology for them, like, you know, we eliminate 20% of waste of just boot time on their computer. And man, I forget what the numbers are, but I think you're 25% to 30% more efficient by having just a second screen. So now everybody in our company, for the most part, runs at least two, and some are running three or four. So I am a big believer in removing obstacles and setting people up for success, and having the right technology and applications and bandwidth. And all of those things are vital to success, because no one wants to have that frustration of running a 486 processor, you know, 10 years ago and like, man, it takes me 10 minutes for the spreadsheet just to run, versus having them have the right tools.

A Aaron Bock 10:46

Yeah, it's interesting, like what you said, right? We see this with our customers all the time, you have your dedicated IT people, but what you just described is really in every function, every different part of your business, there's an IT component, that is part of it. And so you know it, whether it's finance, processing a spreadsheet, or whether it's customer service, supporting a customer and communicating with them, even though they might not be dedicated to supporting QDS's internal IT systems, they're dealing with IT in technology that is making their life easier or more complicated if it's not working. And so that's where we get into and say, okay, how are organizations adapting? So, before we move on to the next topic, one other question on QDS. So you operate in 20+ states, how do you communicate with and maybe during COVID was a good test, you said, you guys were already set up for hybrid. How do you guys communicate with your employees? And how do you make sure that you have that same experience of working in the office or being able to work hybrid?

S Sean Farrell 11:48

I honestly can't quite take credit for 20. We're in we're in 12 states today, which is still okay.

A Aaron Bock 11:55

12. ok. I'm just giving you extra credit

12, OK, I'm just giving you extra credit.

S

Sean Farrell 11:57

Still plenty. We may be in 20 soon enough, we'll see. You know, we are an Office 365 shop. So as Teams has continued to evolve, you know, I think we did the same kinds of things that everyone else did through COVID, it was just really setting frequency around, all right, we were doing, you know, maybe leadership communication three times a week, whether it was Zoom or Teams. So just keep those communication things live, we do a lot of video conferences, still, Teams is primarily our internal platform, frankly, I like Zoom from a presenting environment a little bit better. So we do have one or two Zoom licenses. Same with recruiting like, Teams can be a little bit clunky if someone doesn't have that environment. So Zoom is a little more consumer friendly. You know, we try the virtual happy hours, we have weekly team meetings that are all run virtual. So I think everyone used COVID to get comfortable with that environment, we just happen to already have the platform ready with Office 365. So that really allowed us to migrate quickly. Now we learn best practices through that of what was working, what can fall back to in person meetings. But you know, we're probably still running as a company 30 to 50 video team meetings a week, no doubt.

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Aaron Bock 13:18

Yeah, we're seeing that across the board. And you mentioned Zoom and Teams. We obviously work with a lot more than that. But the Zoom, Teams, which meeting platform are you on next bingo game of how many meeting platforms can I be on in a day? That seems to be the norm during COVID. Just curious, was there any outside the box, you said virtual happy hours, that was kind of outside the box. Any other kind of cool ways people connected via technology through COVID?

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Sean Farrell 13:45

One of my favorite tools, which we purchased more for the sales side of our house, is Vidyard.

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Aaron Bock 13:51

I will put this in the show notes too, for those listening. So yeah, great technology.

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Sean Farrell 13:57

It's a Canadian company. If you want a great person to follow, Tyler Lessard, who's their SVP of marketing, he's one of the best creative people I know. But that is a tool that I use often to communicate everything internally. So I will record a lot of 5 to 10-minute company update videos. So whether we have new hires or policy changes, or we're celebrating some wins on the sales side, I typically communicate that out to all employees. So again, they get to see my face, we're talking about certain things, you know, it makes it a little more personal than just, hey, here's a bulleted email that you're probably going to ignore and not read. So we have really

leveraged that we use it a lot on our sales side, for one to one, you know, video interaction, we can also record things. So from a tool set, we are, I believe, the only one in our industry that uses that. I believe Bom Bom is a similar competitor to them, but I really have loved Vidyard as a platform.

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Aaron Bock 15:00

Yeah, I was gonna say for all sales folks listening out there, pay attention to Vidyard and BombBomb. Both are great tools to communicate with prospects as well.

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Sean Farrell 15:10

I do not have affiliation with either of those, just throwing that out there haha.

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Aaron Bock 15:13

Yeah, well, we're just sharing what we're using. So, no, I mean, I think that's great. And it's cool, we've seen all over the map, like from virtual yoga classes that people were doing, to someone the other day was talking about a system called Bonusly, where they're doing like a point-sharing system among employees to virtually reward each other. So it's cool to see what technology is doing for people to collaborate and communicate. Alright, so let's switch gears. So QDS is working, we'll call it the finance industry, with local community banks, credit unions, probably others that are missing, you deal with automating cash management via ATMs, traditional cash machines, etc. You're a managed service company to help support that, you do professional services. So you do sort of work in a technology portion of these organizations. So from your perspective, maybe let's start with the struggles. Where are local community banks, credit unions, where are they struggling to adopt technology? Or where do they struggle with like, why to use new technology? What are the kind of like, maybe objections you guys get and overcome?

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Sean Farrell 16:28

I think a lot of the true technology struggle is resource bandwidth and talent. So not every community bank in rural America can recruit the IT talent that they need, when you start looking at it, it's a highly regulated industry with very, you know, secure data, and you're dealing with people's finances. So how am I managing user access? And all of these things that tie into, how do I keep my customer's information safe, without having to hire you know, 50 IT people if I'm a 10 branch community bank, you know, those have been some of the struggles. So now, as we start to look at, well, how do we keep their network safe, but offer more functionality for a customer? You know, that's where that IT and kind of retail collide of, hey, we want to offer better digital transactions, we want to offer a great online banking experience, we want our people to be able to do more at ATM machines, maybe we want to have a teller or pop up on the screen and help somebody execute a transaction. Well, a lot of that has server components on the back end. And you know, are they running in a cloud environment? So all of those things of taking a, what used to be a very on premise, highly tight controlled AS 400 environment to new cores that are coming with cloud based architecture and all these API's,

and what are we going to be able to connect to? That's a different talent set than just, hey, can I make sure my network is secure? Am I using multi factor authentication? You know, those are legitimate challenges on the IT side for financial institutions to protect and safeguard very important data, and then manage that against how do we tie better customer experience by implementing new technology without breaking stuff?

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Aaron Bock 18:28

I assume you all are, I mean, you mentioned customer experience, you all are very much a part of the customer experience, though, like if I drive through a community bank I'm probably using an ATM at some point. So I have to imagine that you are dealing with more than just IT in an organization too. So who's typically getting involved, and where do you get maybe the most objections to automation? Is it in IT? Is it in, you know, from a C-Suite level? Was it someone that just doesn't understand it?

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Sean Farrell 18:59

No, I mean, typically, we engage with the C-Suite, or we'll call it retail. So retail is a banking term, member experience is a credit union term. So who owns like, if someone goes to a branch? What can they do? And what what are they able to accomplish through technology or the people at those locations? So normally, you have visionaries that are going, 'We want to be able to offer these services'. And that's typically who we're working with. And then IT has to be the one that says, "Okay, well, we're running, do we run a VDI environment? Do we run an on-premise server? Do we outsource our IT today to a third party provider?" So depending on the size and complexity of the organization, there are still plenty of smaller community banks and credit unions that do use managed service providers or you know, they outsource a lot of that IT responsibility. So, you know, we're typically on their network, and if they would like us to be able to remote into their ATM, which is one of the services that we offer, and they're like, "Great, we would love for you to be able to do that." Well, now we're talking firewall settings. And "Hey, is your ATM traffic separate from your main traffic?" Well, whoo, I don't know that answer. So, you know, we have really, really sharp IT people that know their environment, and they're going to put very strict guide rails up on 'This is what we're going to allow you to do and this is not,' and then there's some people, they're like, "I don't know how this stuff works. Let me get the answers on how we can set up the subnet and all that stuff", that it's kind of a wide range of experience that's out there for sure.

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Aaron Bock 20:38

And I'm sure you guys come across varying levels of technology, if you will, within the branches. So some probably very manual, still some pretty innovative. I follow you on LinkedIn, I see some of the branches and they look like spaceships compared to some of the other ones. So I guess in your guys' experience, and this is not just you, but your organization, QDS, when you are helping someone, when you see a local branch or retail branch of whatever, a credit union or local bank, that seems to do, we'll call it IT, well, or customer experience well, or technology well, what do you see that they're doing different than maybe the one the the folks that are a little bit behind or not adopting? Or it's very clear that their technology's not as as advanced as others.

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Sean Farrell 21:25

I would say probably up even into COVID, right, the financial industry was known as kind of the laggard, right, like you watched retail press forward, and a number of other industries that were a lot more digital transformation ahead of the finance market. So I think those who understand and have understood the change of the consumer behavior over the last two to four years, they have invested and are typically some of them are even willing to be bleeding edge on, 'we know, we need this from an experience standpoint, we know there may be some gaps in the process or things we don't understand'. But they have invested in technology and are willing to take some risks on new branch formats and new ways to deliver technology versus we still do run into the people that, you know, hey, this is worked for 20 years, like, our processes are pretty good, I don't know if our customer base is really going to, you know, adopt to this. And I think those are the people that really struggled through COVID, they had to close locations. And now it's like, well, gee, we have forced our consumer base to maybe an outdated online banking system, maybe they're doing transactions, you know, through the drive thru tube system that wasn't designed to do the types of transactions they have to do, because the branches closed versus the people that were on the front end of that curve, invested in technology. It was a fairly simple migration for, hey, you know, you can use our ITM machines or, hey, we've got a great online banking app that we can direct you to and, you know, their adoption skyrocketed, but that that investment had been made prior with some vision. So we do run into those that are ahead of the curve and tend to be more successful, and then those that are struggling to keep up and don't have a great plan to get there.

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Aaron Bock 23:25

For those of us who don't know what ITM versus an ATM is? What's the difference?

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Sean Farrell 23:30

Great question, so ITM truly stands for Interactive Teller Machine, which typically is associated with the ability to have a live teller come up on the screen and help you execute a transaction. We also use that in terms of connecting to the bank's core software platform so that you can do a lot of the things a teller would do and self service. So kind of an ATM on steroids, if you will, not just cash withdrawal and deposit, but loan payments and large withdrawals and having access to all of your accounts not just your primary checking. So yes, good pause to ask that question. Interactive teller machine.

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Aaron Bock 24:08

Yeah, and I have not come across them very often, but I'm tired of punching the ATM when it doesn't do what I need. So maybe I need to interact with ITMs a little bit more often.

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Sean Farrell 24:17

Maybe you need more money in your account.

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Aaron Bock 24:18

Yeah, well see, that's the thing. I've never needed a cash counter because we just don't have that around here. So I think I can answer this question for a lot of the banking industry but I'm going to ask it anyways and I want to hear your thoughts. So, QDS, obviously supporting the financial industry, big on automation. But you you support a finance industry that I mean, everyone right now is concerned with security. Obviously, everyone's concerned about what they see in the news. But from your perspective, what are some of the trends that you at QDS are watching that you think you need to pay attention to that will affect you in the next couple of years. And same with your customers? What is the local rural branch looking at, the credit unions ... what trends do they do they need to be paying attention to?

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Sean Farrell 25:08

Going back to resources, I think one of the huge trends is to do more managed services with people. So we have benefited from that have, most of our clients are happy that we can do A, B, C, D, and E for them. And they're willing to pay us a small fee to execute that. So their internal resources can focus on other priorities.

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Aaron Bock 25:31

Is that because of instability and being able to keep people retained and get people in the offices, is that what's driving that?

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Sean Farrell 25:39

And just so as more and more technology is coming into, you know, a financial institution, if I had 10 projects before, I've got 25 now. So if I'm able to take a task list, and if my vendor on my behalf can handle 5, 6, 8 things for me, and I don't have to hire three more people to handle those tasks, manage those tasks, balance those tasks - that is where a lot of people are having success. A lot of people have looked at outsourcing ATMs all together, where the institution is just going to pay a monthly fee. We own the terminal, we are managing all of the processes. So "Hey, now I don't have to have three people in the back office in my ATM department." I just have my name on the terminal and someone else is functionally running and operating the terminals.

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Aaron Bock 26:33

Would that probably I guess, would that increase the compliance for you all that you wouldn't have to maintain? And requirements? I assume.

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Sean Farrell 26:42

Well yes, it does. We have invested heavily in our due diligence market to make sure that we

well yes, it does. we have invested heavily in our due diligence packet to make sure that we are utmost in compliance and staying up with regulations, etc. The other key trend is, you know, what is going to happen with the Bitcoin and cryptocurrency and blockchain.

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Aaron Bock 26:58

Weird for you to bring that up.

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Sean Farrell 26:59

It's not an area of strength for me. I have tried. I've sat through a couple of webinars. I normally get about 5 to 10 minutes in like, okay, this is starting to make sense. And by about 15 to 20 minutes, by the time they get into NFTs and other stuff like, I'm lost. And, you know, for something that was supposed to be unhackable, we've now seen multiple hacking attacks on blockchain environments. I think, like, there was like a \$150 million loss on one of the gaming things in the last week or two. So, you know, all of this stuff around "unpenetrable security", and "this is the beauty of blockchain", and we're already seeing that failing. But we are seeing a lot more of the financial institutions react stronger. It was kind of like a, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, Bitcoin, you know, whatever." And now, it's like, you're starting to see financial planners involved in it. We have a couple ATM clients that are offering Bitcoin on their ATMs. We do not offer that service today. But there are a lot more conversations going on around 'how is crypto going to change what's going on'? And so I think that's just an interesting trend to watch. And do we continue to see challenges with security that will scare people away from that? Or do people continue to have less trust in our government or governments around the world and see that there is a lot of value in a blockchain environment that's, you know, decentralized, if you will?

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Aaron Bock 28:27

Yeah, I was waiting for you to bring up crypto because I think every bank is trying to figure out how to deal with crypto and NFT, the whole movement and where it goes. And I agree, I don't think anyone knows the answer. But I'm assuming you guys are getting this question in every conversation. We're hearing it on our side - securing digital wallets. How do you maintain security around that? So I definitely think more to come over the next couple years. What about on QDS's side? So you kind of answered from the bank side, you know, focusing on managed service, focusing on maybe what's happening with crypto. I assume that second one also affects you all and how you address crypto in the future. But what do you see as a tech trend or something in the future, predict like, where will QDS be in five years using technology? And how will it be different than today?

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Sean Farrell 29:16

Yeah, it's a great question. And I think that's one of the challenges as a leader. And through my lifetime, we have seen the technology curve shorten and shorten and shorten. So what used to be a 10 year curve is now 5, what used to be a 5 year curve is now 2. So I have a lot of trouble, which is why, you know, it's always nice to have people in other verticals to ask what's going on

in your industry. Like am I completely blind? I pay a lot of attention since we are a service company at our heart. You know, I watch people like Morris Jenkins and other people that are delivering services and like, "Hey, they got the cool technician on the app thing," and you know, a lot more people are building out app infrastructure. So, you know, could I see us investing in a mobile app or offering more of a customer facing portal environment? Probably. Our company is very big on transparency, so is technology a way for us to again, be more transparent with our clients? We use a lot of software as a service tool, so we're working in the similar workspace with our clients. So those would be some trends that I think about as a company - is how do we make ourselves more transparent to our clients, share more data, but also have a good comfort and security, making sure our vendors have multi-factor authentication? Obviously, we're evaluating phone systems and this whole UCaaS platform environment. So man, it is really hard to know, 3 to 4 years in advance, like, where is technology going to move? And am I set up for that move? Or am I just gonna miss it? And you can become a laggard very quickly. And that's always a concern at my level is, "Man, I feel like in a lot of areas we're progressive and, if I'm not paying attention in 2 years, we could be, you know, 5 years behind." So that's a challenge for leaders.

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Aaron Bock 31:13

The cycle has definitely shortened. And I think, to your point, you know, we don't really know what's going to happen with a lot of technology in the future. For some, you hear about the term for years, and it's just a buzzword, and some takes off immediately. But the customer experience that you talked about, you know, the mobile app, or whatever it may be, we're hearing that across the board. We have a customer who they make the metal brands for, like automotive parts for the stamping and the forming of it. You wouldn't think that's a super innovative consumer tech. But just like Domino's shows you how the pizza's being made, when it's in the oven, when it came out, who is taking your pizza, when it's going to arrive - a lot of people are kind of reaching for that and saying, "We want that in our organization," to give more visibility and transparency, like you said. So I think you're gonna see a lot more of that over the next couple of years. But, in a couple of years, we'll probably be talking about even more invasive technology on how things are being done.

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Sean Farrell 32:13

I think through COVID, just to tack on to that, we've seen the backside of that, right. So there is a ton of frustration with supply chain. So, you know, people who have not invested in that technology, like, "Gee, I ordered my couch, you know, two months ago. I have no idea if you've made it. Is it in shipping?" So I'm constantly having call to the store, like, "Where's my stuff?" Same with cars. You know, my dad had gotten on the list to buy a new car. And yet, it'll be it was due out in April. And he called like, you know, late March. And they're like, "Yeah, I don't even think they've made it yet in Japan." So it's like, there is this big chasm developing from the people that do that well, and are transparent versus those that haven't. And customers get very frustrated in the unknown. And as that process has really drawn out, due to supply chain, that makes it even more frustrating of, "Gee, I had to pay you a bunch of money up front. I have no idea when my stuff's gonna come in." And "Gee, I hope it's right when it gets here."

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Aaron Bock 33:15

Yeah we're gonna see it continue. And it's gonna get more and more important to organizations. So couple, two more questions. Before I let you go, Sean. One is I want to know, so you mentioned a couple things you use personally - what is your favorite technology used day to day? Personally, it could be in your personal life, it could be it at work. What do you use that you would recommend to others?

S

Sean Farrell 33:41

I am not a big fan of Apple the company, but I use their stuff often. I mean, I think about what a difference to be able to use a technology like FaceTime, how many iMessages do I send in a day? So if I think about how efficient the iOS environment and applications in that environment have made me, how great the pictures are you can take now, I mean, if you think about everything that you can do with that phone in your pocket, that is essentially my operating environment, right? And then if you do multichannel or omnichannel, well, if I had an iPad, it would be the same experience. So you know, I cannot function - I don't know that my phone is ever like more than six feet away from me. So if I think about a technology that I live and breathe on, it's, you know, audio, phone, video phone, whether it's Zoom or FaceTime, or you name it, you know, if someone took away my phone for a week, I would be in trouble. No doubt about it.

A

Aaron Bock 34:43

All right, we won't we won't make you go live out in the woods for a week. But if you ever do, let me know. So last question for you, Sean, before we wrap up. So if you are speaking, you're giving the Sean Farrell State of the Union in front of a million people and and you can leave them with a piece of advice about technology in your industry and what we've talked about today, what would it be? What would you tell someone to pay attention to and adopt? It could be internal, it could be with your customers, etc.

S

Sean Farrell 35:15

You know, I think the best thing, the best advice I would give - make sure your people understand why. Technology is going to be a bigger and bigger part of our overall environment, so educating them on why multi-factor authentication is important, why, you know, all of this information security reports to me, so I don't care how much how many, and we have invested six figures a year in information security tools, the number one phishing attack is human error. So if you can educate people on why you have processes, why these things are important, I think that will help make you successful. "Why are we using these tools the way we're using them?" "Why is this important?" I think the job of any good leader and any advice I can say is, "Don't just tell them what, but tell them why." And I think they will better understand and it will resonate versus "Yeah, this is the process, just follow what we say". So I guess that's my two cents, if you will, on making sure people understand the why.

A

Aaron Bock 36:24

I think that could be the title for your future book you write: "Don't Just Tell Them What, Tell Them Why." So I'm starting your author page now. Okay, thank you for joining us. If you want

I nem why." So I'm starting your author career now. Sean, thank you for joining us. If you guys want to check out Sean and his company qualitydatasystems.com, we'll put show notes in here with some of the technologies that we talked about. Sean, any parting thoughts for folks?

S

Sean Farrell 36:48

No, just technology is a big part of our daily lives. I would encourage anyone out there thinking about IT. I mean, there are so many paths and so many things you can do, especially on the security side of the house. So I continue to say that there are paths that don't have to involve a four year degree that can make you very valuable in today's business economy. So if you're someone out there, and I'm getting on my soapbox, that doesn't have the four year college degree and thinks you can't amount to anything without that piece of paper. I'm here to tell you, like, you can do it. You can be a valuable part of any organization. And you can do a lot of that learning in the real world, so to speak, so don't put too much countenance in that, I guess.

A

Aaron Bock 37:33

Yeah, I couldn't agree with you more. So, Sean, thanks for joining us today. For all you listeners out there, thank you guys for listening in. Subscribe on Apple Podcast, Spotify. We're also running this on YouTube if you're not watching this, so thank you for joining. I hope you guys have an awesome rest of the week.

S

Sean Farrell 37:50

Sounds good man. Take care.

A

Aaron Bock 37:52

Thanks, Sean.

N

Narrator 37:54

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