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DESIGN NERDS ANONYMOUS

Navigating what's next in design.

In Their Words: Decision-Maker Insights on Opportunities for the Built Environment

(Please excuse any grammatical errors in this transcript as it was auto-generated from an audio file.)

Amanda Schneider: Welcome to Design Nerds Anonymous, the podcast that sparks curiosity at the intersection of business and design. I'm your host, Amanda Schneider, founder and president at ThinkLab. This season, we're turning our focus to a crucial topic, the B2B decision making process within the built environment. For the past six months, we've been researching decision makers responsible for shaping spaces like corporate offices, healthcare facilities, hospitality venues, educational environments, and beyond.

We've immersed ourselves into the evolving dynamics between end users, architects, designers, and developers. And other key decision makers to understand just how complex and layered those choices can be. This season, we're unpacking how decisions are made today, what influences them, how they've evolved, and how [00:01:00] product and service providers can better meet the needs of their customers.

Think of it as group therapy for everyone navigating this intricate and sometimes overwhelming world. In this episode, we're exploring the pain points decision makers face across different sectors of the built environment. And in true DNA fashion, we'll hear directly from decision makers in the corporate, hospitality, and healthcare sectors and discover how these challenges open doors for innovation.

We'll also introduce ThinkLabs PainMap, a tool designed to visualize. Where in the decision making process the most friction occurs. The darker the red, the more intense the pain. And more pain means more opportunity to address it. This presents an opportunity for you to step in as a problem solver, bringing relief and solutions to the critical challenges in the decision making process.

You can download this pain map from the link in our show [00:02:00] notes. Together, we'll unravel the unique pain points within each sector and reveal how these challenges shape their journeys and decisions in unexpected ways. But before we dive in to today's discussion, I want to highlight a few key episodes from our mini season that you may have missed.

We featured perspectives from our anonymous confessionals. Recorded live at the Think Lab events, where much of this research took place. For those interested in the corporate sector, make sure to check out the episode. Understanding analysis paralysis in workplace decisions. It's where you'll hear words like slow and confusing often come up.

Today we'll build on that perspective with Tape Sadiku, who has experience at Kraft Heinz and now brings fresh insights from her role at McDonald's. If hospitality is your focus, we'd encourage you to go back and listen to the episode titled why this bad word became a must have. There, [00:03:00] you'll hear the decision making process described as hurried and chaotic.

Today, Stacey Patton from Hilton will help us dig deeper into the challenges and opportunities in the hospitality world, and for those of you curious about health care, don't miss our episode, The Paradox of an Unrushable Process in Fast Times. This one delves into the unique pace and complexities of health care decisions.

Andrew Navarro from H PLEX will expand on these themes and provide more insights. Let's get started with today's episode, recorded live at NEACON 2024 in The Mart. Our panelists will introduce themselves and share what surprised them most about our pain map findings. I'm excited for you to meet them.

Let's start with Staci.

Staci Patton: I am a senior director of design for North America at Hilton. Overseeing what we call our premium and curated collections brands. Before I joined Hilton, I had the lovely stint as creative director at Davidson Hospitality. [00:04:00] And then I also led a design studio at DLR Group for about 15 years.

So, yeah, interesting, the pain map. Great choice of red. On pain. Up front. Up front. But it is interesting to see how each sector does have different pain points and so excited to talk about it today. Good. And that hurried and

Amanda Schneider: Good. And that hurried and chaotic feels accurate for you.

Tope Sadiku: Oh, yeah,

Amanda Schneider: for sure. Okay. Tope.

Tope Sadiku: Hi, everybody. Tope Sadiku.

Maybe you've heard me before. Sometimes people ask me, are you from New Zealand? Are you from Australia? No. England. And I have to ground it in that. So I do not want to lose my accent. But I'm super excited to be here. Amanda, you know, I love you. I think you're awesome.

I love your research. So me, I actually used to work for the Kraft Heinz company. I was with them for about seven years. Moved to Chicago back in 2019 to be the global head of employee digital experience, really looking at how we use technology to solve the problems of work. How do we create opportunities for efficiency, productivity?

And eventually give employees back time to be creative and inspired, really [00:05:00] looking at like the physical, the virtual spaces, the tools in those spaces and the way people interact and collaborate together. And in certain circles, I would say, I'm like a corporate doctor, patient steps into my office, patient says, doctor, look, my knee hurts, you need to operate on my knee and like a good doctor, I say, okay, let me watch, let me see how you move.

Maybe it's not an operation, actually, maybe if we figure the placement of your foot through some physio. We can actually help this feeling in your knee, and it's not as invasive as an, as an operation

would be. Maybe it's not even the fact that we need to bring in any new medication, but it is just through physio.

And I think of technology and behavioral science as like my medical toolkit. And every now and again, I can dip into one of those and I can pick an intervention that's required. What I love about this map is that internal planning is like deep red, especially in the corporate environment. And I get it because Amanda, you mentioned consensus.

I feel like in general, one can say, I want to be healthier and we can all get behind that. But health means different things to different people. Sometimes it's about the [00:06:00] food you consume. It may even be about the relationships you have, it might be about how you sleep, how you exercise, how that manifests for individuals.

When you think about it in the workplace, what does that look like? Where do we want to invest resources, whether they be people or financial resources? So I can really understand that. And once you get that internal consensus, it's smooth sailing from then onwards because everyone has decided this is what we are going to do over this period of time.

And also sometimes when things shift and change, that can cause a bit of friction as well. So. This makes a lot of sense to me.

[00:06:29] **Amanda Schneider:** It does. It does. Everyone laughs when they see that corporate red because the red in our map is very loud. So that didn't surprise you. No, no. I don't know. Wonderful. Andrew.

[00:06:37] **Andrew Navarro:** Okay.

I'm Andrew Navarro. I'm from Columbus, Ohio. I'm with H Plex Solutions. We are an owner rep for healthcare systems. We do real estate development, owner representation, and property management. My background is an architect by trade. So I learned working in healthcare architecture, developing medical office buildings, hospital renovation projects.

And working with them taught me a lot about change [00:07:00] management and working through decision making processes from the architect side. So now that I work for healthcare systems as their owner representative for capital construction management, my key focus is driving consensus among the disparate groups within the healthcare system.

Piece of cake.

[00:07:17] **Amanda Schneider:** We'll be right back after this brief message from one of our sponsors.

[00:07:24] **Byron:** I came out in the account 2024, more excited about the future of the Mart. I think that I've been in years, we've had quite a shift. We've really been moving in lockstep with that shift, adjusting our focus to really serve not only the largest manufacturers, but also small to medium sized companies. One of the things that's always excited me about my job more than anything is helping small companies become medium sized companies.

Medium sized companies become large companies and providing a platform that has [00:08:00] become an integral part of growth. To expose them to as many as 50, 000 attendees during the three days of Neocon in June and also providing longer and more meaningful interactions. With the showrooms and companies in the mart.

I think 2025 is going to be a really exciting year for Neocon. Hey, I'm Byron Morton. I'm responsible for showroom leasing and Neocon sales at the mart in Chicago. The mart, the 4. 2 million square foot building. is proud to host over a dozen events per year culminating in neocon for more than 50 years the mart and neocon have served the leading manufacturers in the commercial furnishings industry designs and innovations for workplace health care hospitality education and public environments check us out at themart.

com and neocon. com or on social the mart Chicago And NeoCon shows.[00:09:00]

[00:09:01] **Amanda Schneider:** Alright, welcome back.

[00:09:05] **Andrew Navarro:** I do really try and leverage my expertise with the design and construction business and bring that knowledge to medical practitioners, the physicians, the nurses, to really help them see the project, as it were. And so for the pain map, I'm most surprised there is very little pain in move in implementation.

Mm-Hmm, I find that to be surprising mostly because that is where people move in and find out it's not what they wanted. So there's a lot of pain I find when. We visualized in our mind or otherwise and we come back in and it's not what we wanted.

[00:09:30] **Amanda Schneider:** And that's interesting because healthcare is the one that does have a little bit of red in that area and that was the exact reason, was because they just couldn't visualize that.

So I love that you're communicating between those doctors and nurses as well. So, We have represented corporate, hospitality, healthcare here, and our overarching theme was same pain, felt differently. And you can see with these aggregated maps, again, most of them really felt the pain up front. As we look specifically around getting to consensus for the built [00:10:00] environment, as you all represent your individual sectors here.

What struck you or where do you see the most opportunity for our industry?

[00:10:09] **Tope Sadiku:** I actually like this distinction between friction and pain. One is what I expect and one is novel and new and I Maybe on a macro level. I know at some point this is not going to kill me But I probably don't know exactly how I'm gonna fix it But it's indicating

[00:10:22] **Amanda Schneider:** a need for something your body has pain when you need to

[00:10:25] **Tope Sadiku:** X Y.

Yes, whatever that is. Exactly Yeah

[00:10:28] **Staci Patton:** I mean, in hospitality, the friction comes from the nature of how these projects are really designed. conceptualized. For example, hospitality, the development world has loved to have a separate architect, a separate interior designer, a separate lighting designer, a separate art curator, and you end up having all of these varied consultants where The creative friction is by design.

It's meant to elicit that [00:11:00] no one entity is getting too comfortable, and yet through that framework, there has been some really great moments, and especially I was proud of some moments in my prior roles that we were able to offer an integrated design delivery with one firm, with one creative team, and we were able to show those clients how, you know, the friction that you're so used to.

Maybe that is painful. Through this integrated design process, we can really take that friction away and take that pain away and utilize that process to be all informing for multiple different levels, rather than the finger pointing that sometimes happens through consultants. So it is difficult. It's interesting to see hospitality evolve towards this integrated delivery, finding that right consultant that has a multidisciplinary practice, has um, in house lighting design, art curatorial, branding, et cetera.

Um, so it'll be interesting to see how that kind of alleviates [00:12:00] even some of the schedule impact that um, you guys point out in this graph.

[00:12:03] **Amanda Schneider:** Mm hmm.

[00:12:04] **Staci Patton:** And you guys are using more of that IP as your, Yeah, I think with Hilton, we are very much continue to look at talent out there. And assess, is this the right consultant for the scale of the project, the complexity of the project, luxury, upscale, or full service?

There's a variety of different needs within hospitality that sort of tie into these levels of service that, again, might be different from the corporate or healthcare world. Because then it ties into labor models and staffing and activations and sort of a lot going on. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:12:37] **Amanda Schneider:** I love that you brought that up because actually in our final presentation, one of the stories we told was the parable of the blind man and the elephant.

I don't know if you guys have heard this story. He's like feeling it

[00:12:46] **Tope Sadiku:** from different.

[00:12:46] **Amanda Schneider:** Yeah. It's a blind man and his blind team that are trying to understand this elephant and one's feeling the trunk and one's feeling the foot and one's feeling the tail and they're all describing it as different. And this blind man, does someone lying to me?

And they actually start to fight. And I think that could be the [00:13:00] way that our project teams, you mentioned the design team and all the consultants to the design team, but there's also the furniture partners. There's the commercial real estate experts. If you're looking for properties, there's the GC. And I think to a lot of our clients or a lot of project leaders, it can feel like that sometimes.

And somebody's got to be lying to me.

[00:13:16] **Staci Patton:** Yeah. Which is probably why on this map, like the initial planning phase, it seems to be the

Gosh, yeah, those early phases are incredibly layered.

[00:13:32] **Tope Sadiku:** Stacey, just to your point, uh, you're making me think that when you're trying to build a plan and you say, hey, this is the direction, and then you have all of these different stakeholders that will take your planning, run with it. And, What I enjoy about Agile is that it says you ideate and iterate as you build.

It gives you the grace to change your mind. It gives you the grace to figure things out. It gives you the grace to play around with that gray. But it's not necessarily a very comfortable place. I think there's an opportunity here, especially in this internal planning space where There's got to be that [00:14:00] grace of bringing, bring in this agile mindset where you're able to ideate, iterate, move forward without being so specific and also move forward without things needing to be a hundred percent.

If I think of some of the big transformations that I was part of within Kraft Heinz, they were great when we said, it's going to look like this, but let's try and figure it out. And it was a bit more painful. I would even say maybe wasted time, really trying to have things a hundred percent aligned without even testing, without having any.

Proof of concept that this initiative could actually work.

[00:14:31] **Andrew Navarro:** I think it's two parts, right? You really have to have a clarity of vision at the top of a project, right? When Capital was released, you want to have a clear idea of what we're after, but also you have to have confidence in the iterative design process, right?

If you're giving it away and you're saying, this is what we're doing, you give the same picture to 50 people, they have 50 different ideas of that same picture. If you can get a clear vision out in the beginning, but also have confidence in that iterative design process as you go, um, and for our design partners who might be listening, I think the key from an owner side of the house is to understand this, at [00:15:00] least from a healthcare perspective, that organizations are not a unified vision, right?

They are individuals and they'll have different departments and I liken them to nation states versus a unified country, right? So everyone is, is vying for their influence, whether it's capital dollars, whether it's department growth, whether it's service line that they're trying to develop. All those things really are what push people into seeing what they want to see out of a capital vision project.

I think if you can understand that you're working with a lot of disparate groups and how to marry them together, you'll find more success.

[00:15:28] **Amanda Schneider:** It's really well said. And I think as we look at the reasons why we're hearing things like the number of decision makers has doubled in the past three years in terms of decision making teams, and that varies a little across different vertical markets and different sectors.

We're hearing things like old benchmarks for workplace no longer apply. You think of those double decision makers and also this is not new, but maybe augmented by the number of them. Sometimes they're Goals are a little bit conflicting, but I really want to make sure that we get to some ideas about what to do about some of this friction.

[00:16:00] And you all work for amazing organizations that have done amazing things. One of the ideas that came up, it was bringing project partners on, and I think that everyone listening from the design ecosystem. Uh, the product ecosystem, the dealer distributors would love to be brought in earlier, but they have to add value because otherwise you're now double decision making team and more people.

What would you say to these audiences? What adds value to your projects that makes you want to bring them in earlier?

[00:16:27] **Andrew Navarro:** I think the most important thing when you bring a design partner or a trade partner or anybody on early on a project, you have to have actual metrics for their deliverables, right? So if it's someone who's bringing budgeting to the table, we need budgeting at all.

Certain intervals at decision making. We need true live market data to make sure that we understand. The decisions we're making, the impacts they have. I think that would be a key step for anyone who's coming into a design team or a project early is that you need to have true metrics of what you're delivering, I find at least.

And in some capital projects, you bring people on just because that's matter of course, right? And we're bringing everyone on early and then you pay a lot of money in fee and you don't get a lot [00:17:00] of back. So I think if you can really focus on what they're delivering, whether it's design deliverables, budgets, actual product data, constructability, reviews, those sorts of things that can really.

Make sure your project stays on the rails early really is what would help.

[00:17:15] **Tope Sadiku:** I would love to be able to move from being like transactional to being like trusted advisors where it is just this relationship and there's no real fear of cost because we know it will work out. Maybe I'm thinking of this Eden.

I don't really know, but it would be great if we could have that relationship where we're going to figure it out together. I'm not fearful of being billed by the hour. I'm not fearful of, I'm going to burn all of my budget upfront. And I think everybody has the opportunity to shine. If I think back to some examples of different project teams that I've worked with, I think the greatest ones are when they've just been like idea partners and they said, you know what, here's an idea, you guys can run with it, you can do it yourself or we can help you.

Or if you do that, it's not really going to work because the terrain isn't particularly designed for this. And they've really understood [00:18:00] the environment, not giving us like a 10x the budget that we have just because it's gold. Really what's achievable knowing the company that is on ground today?

[00:18:10] **Staci Patton:** Yeah.

Just there's a sense of vulnerability in that that you described that I think if anyone's listening. would be to try and bring more vulnerability to your interactions and those planning phases. And I think so often in this a little tightened economy that we have, there's so much, yes, we can do that.

Absolutely. Yes, we can do that. And you miss the opportunity to really say, I love your idea. We are not set up to deliver on that right now. But if we can be your partner, like you're describing, we can work on that together. And that's one of the things I've tried to do in my leadership is just be vulnerable.

I think I have a great idea, but I want you to hear it to your point, Topé, and let me know where are those weak links. I'm cool with you telling me that. I would [00:19:00] rather know that sooner than later. So often I think people are losing that moment to be vulnerable and understand that through that, just laying down that foundation.

Will it will result in something much more meaningful and sometimes if they

[00:19:15] **Amanda Schneider:** tell you what you need not what you're asking for It's better. I

[00:19:18] **Andrew Navarro:** love the idea of the Eden. Yeah, it's unfortunately there In a world where all design professionals for the most part where fee by hour bill by hour rates Everyone's protecting their fee yet.

We don't tend to operate that way, but it's just the way the business is built But nonetheless, I think the, the real key piece of the vulnerability is that when you let your guard down, you open yourself up to the subject matter experts. And I think a lot of people, and I'm not going to call it ego or dogma, but

[00:19:45] **Tope Sadiku:** I was actually thinking ego.

Tope is going to take us there.

[00:19:49] **Andrew Navarro:** Dogma is very dangerous. You have sometimes large organizations that have operated a certain way. They have certain solutions for certain problems, and it's probably based on facts, probably based on science. But If you can open [00:20:00] yourself up to alternative solutions and make sure that you really focus on what's best for the project.

And that's the ego piece, right? Because a lot of times it's the last voice or the loudest voice that was heard that drives the direction. And I think if we can As a collective whole, meaning the owners, the designers, everyone involved, focused on the success of the project, what's right for the work, I think we'll be a little bit better off.

[00:20:21] **Amanda Schneider:** I want to come back to this idea of trust because vulnerability builds trust for sure. But I want to talk specifically to the product side of the industry as well because I feel like one of the biggest challenges is Pricing and the way that we do it, and I was telling a few of you

before we get started here, we played a little game of would you rather as part of our recent hackathon events.

And one of the would you rather questions was, would you rather know pricing was going to double in the next year? Or would you rather have hope that it could fall, but that means it could also rise. And it won't shock you all that the vast majority said that they would rather know pricing was going to [00:21:00] double than have hope it was going to fall.

And the reason was, Risk aversion and the rework that this industry requires. So let's talk a little bit about what that trust looks like, especially in this volatile economy with lots of inflation happening and an inherent process that makes rework when we have to change one little tiny thing that can have real ripple effects.

[00:21:23] **Staci Patton:** Yeah. Which is where I was right before I came to Hilton. We started to implement more of an RFQ process rather than the RFP. We started to say, okay, of these five to seven amazing designers, let's understand their capabilities. Let's get to know them on a chemistry level. Let's meet with them one on one to understand their business objectives.

What it allowed us to do is to present our owners and our co developers. These are your three out of all of these five or seven that really are rising to the level to meet the challenges. [00:22:00] Let's look at the opportunity for this RFP or interview phase to, to suggest a range on fee. Because if you're going to bring on the right partner that you feel is emphatically correct, they're going to lean into their expertise in that early planning phase.

They may be able to give us an understanding of stuff we don't need to do. Hey, I think this beautiful XYZ in the space is great. It's performing well. I don't think you really need to renovate it. Let's put all of our dollars into creating. Stronger F and B experiences. Therefore, we're not asking them to design something that we're never actually going to renovate.

So look at that sort of chemistry early building phase is a way to then set yourself up for a range of fees that you know are commensurable with the actual scope. And you love this team, you know you want to work with them. So leave that little leeway to be able to refine whether it's your fee pricing or even your early [00:23:00] estimating on the construction cost.

So that's just one little small example of how to change that dynamic.

[00:23:05] **Tope Sadiku:** Mm hmm. Funnily enough, I was having a conversation with somebody about something slightly similar this morning and I said, I don't want to worry about the things that I don't need to worry about. Yeah. Like I don't want to have to turn on my tap.

And wonder, is water gonna come out of this? Is it clean? Can I drink every single time? Not, imagine how many times you like, turn on a tap, whether it be it's like water plants, wash your hands, cook something. Imagine if every single time you did that, you thought, what temperature? Is this, can I drink this?

Can I actually touch it? Is it clean? That is exhausting. I actually want to worry about the big things and really, actually, I don't want to worry. I don't want to spend any time worrying about anything. That's actually what I really love about this. Yeah, like you want to

[00:23:44] **Staci Patton:** build your team of people that you know that every interaction that you go into it, it's vulnerable, it's open, it's all about the ideation and where we're going rather than, oh, here's an ad service or oh, we can't meet you that day or that doesn't, like you just need to know, like you're building your [00:24:00] community.

Going back to your point on the products and the manufacturers who are supporting. Whether it's through tech data or the physical space, just don't mislead us. Just be very honest about the manufacturing capabilities and the pricing, even though it may shift a little range because if they can't follow through.

You've spent a year or more working on this project and for it to not come through in the end. That is incredibly devastating on multiple different levels.

[00:24:30] **Tope Sadiku:** And by the way, I mean if something has changed, that's great. And I can go on that journey with you, but I guess I would just say it's not about hiding bad news or hiding negative or things that change and shift.

It's, there's like a way and a time to deliver those messages too.

[00:24:46] **Amanda Schneider:** And sometimes it's how your partners handle those negative situations, right?

[00:24:51] **Andrew Navarro:** I don't mean to be a contrarian, but I guess I will.

[00:24:55] **Byron (2):** Maybe

[00:24:55] **Andrew Navarro:** we operate as a mercenary, right? We're outside hires, we're outside guns and we come in and it's [00:25:00] really important to have market data to back up whatever fee, whatever you're proposing.

And I think when you develop a group of trusted advisors, complacency can be a killer, right? If people become comfortable with who you are, they know your triggers, they know your plugs, they're going to cater to who you are as a person more than what the project may need. And I think there's always beauty in trust, but it can be manipulated, like you said, and you have to vet that out from the people that you're on board.

Uh, for our furniture people or the product folks that are bringing things, I think service is everything, right? All manufacturers, at some way down the supply chain, it gets to the same widget, same piece, same part that everyone's putting into their finished products. If we can really focus on the service, making things right, everything goes wrong in design and construction.

I think that's why it takes so much work.

[00:25:41] **Staci Patton:** You're even touching on like the experience. And it's, for example, we all know in most of the United States, there's like Actually, only four companies that deliver food. So all these grocery stores that have different names and different experiences, they're all getting their food from about four sources.

And so the, the [00:26:00] reason why you choose to go to a certain place is that experience. And like you said, that's your vetting process.

[00:26:06] **Andrew Navarro:** And your perception is your reality, right? So the service you're getting, the product you're getting, how it sits, how it feels, how it looks, that's all very important, and I think that's what differentiates one company from the other.

[00:26:16] **Amanda Schneider:** I love that. We'll be right back after this brief message.

Welcome back to DNA.

So let's go back to pain because that's so fun to talk about. Any proactive ideas that we can start with to say, how do we help this ecosystem that surrounds all of you? How do we make this easier on you?

[00:26:48] **Andrew Navarro:** I'll start with a borrowed phrase of cash is king. I think contingency is king. In a volatile pricing environment, you can always be more conservative on the upfront budgeting and make sure that you've got your bases covered.

If you've got [00:27:00] savings, you've got savings, and you can maybe add some additional scope, but. And talking about what you end up spending the money on, I think healthcare is a little bit easier in that regard versus hospitality or other business models, but it's patient first, right? No matter what happens, whatever project scope we were looking at, whatever affects the patient is the one that gets greenlit.

If there's something that was nice to have, a staff amenity or a public amenity, those will be looked at more aggressively because you've got to deliver the patient experience first, and that's most important.

[00:27:27] **Tope Sadiku:** There's a few things that felt like they fell under one umbrella, which was really about like, help me tell the story internally, whether it's up or whether it's to the people this will impact.

Give me soundbites to tell the story. And I think of a particular example, it was probably in like 2021. We worked with an organization and I want to call them out because they were awesome. They're called Carpool and they're led by a guy called Jerome Reed. This particular engagement, it was when we were moving towards Microsoft Teams, which now it's everybody knows how to use it.

But in those days, My goodness, it was wild. We had so many different [00:28:00] solutions. If you want to video call someone in Middle East or if you want to call someone in the US, you have to go to this room, you have to do it this way. IT has to help you. We were not set up for people to be able to do it from their device in a universal way.

Um, so there was this whole tech transformation that needed to happen. Articulating the story for our employees to make it real for them in their day to day life and helping them see the art of the possible. And what I loved about what Carpool did is that they helped us with the tech side. We partnered with Microsoft.

Don't call out the guy from Microsoft Sauce, he was awesome. Matt Mahlstrom. So Microsoft were helping us with the tech side. Carpool were helping us with the communication, the articulation of the story. Because like I said, everybody else is going through this Teams transformation. But really, what was the pain points that we were trying to solve?

We could tell a very articulate story. We had a whole change management program. And when I think about that one example, then being able to articulate the message of why teams to our senior stakeholders, it felt so natural because we did the research. We knew it. We knew the tech side. We knew the people side.

We were able to tell an articulate story and then pivot as new things came about, get feedback from our population, [00:29:00] particular questions people were asking. And then we were able to adjust and shift and change.

[00:29:03] **Andrew Navarro:** I think you highlighted a really important part there that when you're doing change management, where you're doing a project that you're in the nuts and bolts.

Most people are focused on the what, the how, the why sort of gets lost. And if you can get the why out to staff, stakeholders, they get to believe in the project and feel part of it. So it's important that if you can get the why, it captures the heart.

[00:29:23] **Amanda Schneider:** I love that. Any coaching on storytelling techniques?

This is something probably ecosystem wide, whether we're talking to our product people or our design people, trying to share concepts that doesn't always only have to happen live in a meeting. Any other communication tools that you've seen be really effective? Oh, Tape's ready. So,

[00:29:41] **Tope Sadiku:** because I just spoke about this actually at a communications conference, and I was talking about the power of a simile, that a simile can be used like a Trojan horse.

In the sense that you say, it is like this, it's not this, it is like this, and it can be like something that we all know, that it just makes sense. And that was very successful for us [00:30:00] because we would say, okay, we recognize that employees, you don't want to be told how to do work, but it's like being at the water cooler.

Actually, if you do this one particular action, it is like this one thing that you're very familiar with. And we called it the simile as like a Trojan horse. It was so successful for us. It's so powerful.

[00:30:19] **Amanda Schneider:** That's a great one.

[00:30:20] **Staci Patton:** Well, you touched on a number of great things in terms of that why, and I think at Hilton, everyone's, Oh, the biggest, one of the biggest hotel companies in the world, but really they're a hospitality company.

And I've seen in just the short amount of time I've been there, such a influence in all of the level of communications through the lens of hospitality. It's everything from onboarding to occasionally we get messages from the CEO that are videos. It's not just an email. It's a video of him. One of them

was that he was returning back from overseas and his travels and he was just so struck by the warmth of the team and he just wanted to share that to the entire organization.

And I was like, wow, that is so [00:31:00] freaking cool. Like that he took the time to say, it's not necessarily about stats today and this message and this touch point to you, but it's just a reminder of our core value, which is through the lens of hospitality. So I think you guys are touching on really understanding the story and the why of your organization and just continue to.

Keep that top of mind and all your touch points.

[00:31:23] **Amanda Schneider:** And I think that's an opportunity, again, not just in this live event or this live meeting for even the vendors that serve you on the product or service side to maybe adopt that too. Yeah, absolutely. Good. We knew time was going to go fast. Yeah. And it has.

But I have one final closeout question. As we look ahead, what What is one word to describe what most excites you about the future? I have mine. Okay.

[00:31:46] **Tope Sadiku:** Curiosity.

[00:31:47] **Amanda Schneider:** Curiosity. And why?

[00:31:48] **Tope Sadiku:** Because I'm just incurably curious. I wonder a lot. I think a lot. And I think that curiosity is exciting. In fact, it helps me navigate ambiguity because I just wonder and I think, okay, this [00:32:00] happened.

I wonder, oh, this didn't happen. Okay. So I wonder if. That curiosity is what, it's like a great reframe of anything, whether it be positive, neutral, negative. Curiosity, for me at least, as it seems to be true in my life today, seems to help me navigate those waters. Yeah.

[00:32:18] **Andrew Navarro:** I'm gonna carry on the sea, uh, idea.

I'm gonna go with compassion.

[00:32:22] **Amanda Schneider:** Okay.

[00:32:23] **Andrew Navarro:** I'm going to avoid saying the two letter technology word that's taken over our planet. I think a lot of people maybe need some compassion in life and understanding that everyone's just human. I don't think anybody wakes up trying to be wrong. We're all just trying to make decisions every day, whether it's for a project, whether it's for your personal life.

If you can carry some compassion and maybe rebuff some of the technological advances of our world, we'd find ourselves in a better place.

[00:32:44] **Staci Patton:** Yeah, you and I are in a similar wavelength. I was going to say either human or soul.

[00:32:49] **Andrew Navarro:** Yeah.

[00:32:50] **Staci Patton:** Because technology is such a helpful tool now, but we really have to remember that AI doesn't have a soul.

And that's going to [00:33:00] root itself out. It's going to show itself that really, we as humans are what makes this whole experience so amazing. So just the compassion, the curiosity, and just having a sense of soul. You're breaking the sea theme here,

[00:33:15] **Amanda Schneider:** but I love how all of your words really had that human element.

I think that's going to be a resounding theme. We think we want to fix a lot of things with technology, but it's really about the humans. It's about the partnerships. It's about the trust and people ultimately want to do business with people. Thank you guys so much for your time. Today's episode revealed that while the decision making pains are indeed universal, the way they're felt and addressed can be vastly different across sectors.

From Stacey's insights into the intricacies of hospitality projects, to Andrew's emphasis on consensus in health care, and Tape's perspective on the corporate sector's need for flexibility. It's clear that there isn't a [00:34:00] one size fits all approach. What connects all of these stories is the is a deeper need for trust, transparency, and as our panelists emphasize, a genuine human connection.

It's a reminder that amidst all the data processes and technologies, at the heart of every decision are the people making them. So for more on today's topic, download the think lab pain point map, which can be linked in the episode landing page, or you can just subscribe to future episodes that will also offer Supporting downloads to work with.

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We'll be back next week to spark new ideas at the crossroads of business and design with our episode on managing up. Stay tuned.