

From Making Sandwiches to Making the CX Journey Better: An Interview with Customer Experience Expert, Nate Brown

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Today we have with us Nate Brown, the Senior Director of CX at Arise and Co-Founder of CX Accelerator. Nate is a perpetual student of the world's greatest experiences and the people who create them. After authoring The CX Primer, he was dubbed the "CX Influencer of the Year" by CloudCherry in 2019, and a top global CX thought leader by ICMI, Exceeders, Netomi, Martech and many more.

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Do I have your permission to record this call for quality assurance?

I don't know Hailey. I'm not sure I can trust you. I've heard your other guests. I guess I'll let you this time. We'll go forward.

Okay, all right. Just this time. Great, so to start us off, can you give our readers and our listeners some insights into your background where you started and how you got to where you are today?

Sure. Well, hello everybody. Thank you so much for having me on today, Hailey. I've been looking forward to this greatly. Yeah, I came out of a customer service environment, was working inside of a major safety science company and was managing a complex team, trying to figure out how to do customer service at the time, and just felt a little stuck because we were solving the same problems again and again, and was like, "There's got to be something here where we could actually solve them for real on a macro level." The word I was looking for at that time was customer experience. Let's look at the larger customer journey and reduce the friction upstream and set better expectations to equip customer service for success.

But winding the clock back a little bit before that, I graduated from Falls College in Northeast Georgia. I was hunting and fishing and just enjoying the woods there and married Crystal Brown that year. I was actually working at Subway on Anastasia Island in Florida and then got a job selling postage meters on the streets of Jacksonville. It was a very, very odd job. That was a strange year but did learn in those moments that I loved serving the clients that already had a postage meter, just unfolding that relationship and making them especially happy. That is what led me into customer service and then ultimately customer experience. I just love this work. I think it's fascinating what we get to do in terms of improving customers' lives, reducing the stress for them, and ultimately, as has been made so clear in recent history, it is the way that we grow our businesses. It's what unlocks that capability for acquisition and reputation that drives loyalty within our customers. It's just the best work in the world, in my opinion.

I love that answer. I love that a lot of people say that they come into customer experience, that realm and they love it because it's constantly changing, and it's also a really personal industry where we're a caring industry. We're always trying to see how we can make people's lives easier and take away that friction, like you were talking about, so that's just such a great answer.

Thank you.

Can you share a little bit more about your day-to-day role and responsibilities as the Senior Director of CX at Arise?

Sure. Well, I'm a couple of weeks into the job. I've been working for Officium Labs for the past two years and have loved being a part of this extremely fun startup. Jonathan Shroyer and Scott McCabe started this thing up two and a half years ago just to create better customer experiences and to do that through an amazing network, through a mesh network

type of capability, the Uber of on-demand customer service capabilities, really, and then also having CX consulting and training, which is the division that I've really gotten to run. Then just a few weeks ago, we actually got acquired by Arise.

So very, very big news there. I'm thrilled to be part of this Arise family. What a legendary brand to, to come and sweep us up. And they've just been awesome. The whole team has been incredible there, just infusing us with new capability and new energy.

As far as what the day-to-day's going to look like, I don't know. The world is our oyster. The CX world is ours for the taking, I feel like in terms of just being able to do some amazing things in 2022. I know a big part of what I'm going to be doing is building up a training division and doing consulting for a lot of amazing clients, including many gaming clients that I work with currently that I love doing player journey type work. It's been fascinating this year, getting to serve several gaming clients at a high level. I think that's going to be what I'm going to be jumping into, but of course, doing some of the marketing still in terms of the thought leadership, speaking and writing. I love doing that and I'll get to continue to do that as well.

That's so exciting when you said the gaming aspect of it. Are you a big gamer yourself?

I'm a Nintendo gamer. I love the family games. I've got two little kiddos at home, so I'm really into the entire Mario series, Mario Tennis, Mario Golf, Mario Party, all the classic Mario games. We play a lot of those, but I'll occasionally dabble into some other more, I guess, edgy gaming categories, but I definitely am a family gamer.

That's great. I can't say, I think I played Sonic the Hedgehog once when I was me eight or nine and that's about it, but it's cool to get to work in such an interesting field, with some really interesting clients, like gamers, so that's great.

Well, Hailey, they're just about to come up with a beautiful, new, open world Sonic game. That's going to release pretty soon. You've got to jump back in and come back to your roots there. This is the time.

Well, that's great! Moving on to another unique thing about you, there are so many unique things about you, Nate, if you go in and look at you online, can you share with our listeners about your unique passion project, CX Accelerator, a little bit about why you started it and what it aims to do?

Oh, sure. I thought you'd never ask. I love getting to talk about CX Accelerator. It did definitely start as a passion project back in 2017. I was struggling as a young CX professional. I didn't know what I was doing. There's so many amazing resources that are out there, which you can go and read, as we'll talk about in a moment, but as somebody that just doesn't know what, like, I just needed a context. I needed a 20,000-foot view of what CX is and what it looks like to implement it inside of an organization. I didn't have the network

around me yet to really facilitate that, so as I struggled and made some things happen, I wanted to pave the way for other young CX professionals coming into this space to have a head start. So, I wrote the CX Primer, created this online community within Slack called CX Accelerator. We're rocking. We got 2,800 people in there. It's just helping. It's just admonishing and encouraging one another, giving answers to really tough questions around the hurdles that we all get stuck in in this work. CX work is hard. You're going to get stuck. You're going to have to wrestle through some big challenges, and there's no need to do that alone. I mean, so that was the point. That's definitely what's happening today.

When you are talking specifically about this network that you've created, is it predominantly individuals that are in the trenches? We're talking about those people who are the directors of CX down to maybe even the managers of contact center floors. Do you have any vendors that are in this network, consultants that are in this network? What is the base of the network? What is the profile of the people that are involved look like?

Yeah, it takes all of us to make the CX world go around. I mean, there's so much great technology and other capabilities on the vendor side, and they're absolutely a huge part of the community. I'd probably say 15%, 10%. There's a lot of contact center folks in there. That's how we got started because it really started off my network and I had a contact center network, so we probably have a good 25%, 30% contact center folks that are in there at every single level.

I mean, it really is meant to be frontline all the way up to the executive level. You're going to learn something from everybody. If you're an executive, you need to know the reality of your frontline people and the things that they're wrestling, the challenges that they're facing, the questions that they're asking. It doesn't really matter what's being posted in there. There's something to be learned from anybody. Then there's, I guess you could call the hardcore CX professionals that have a true CX title and that are doing that work of CX strategy and voice of customer programs and experienced engineering and things of that nature, and then of course we have a large customer service population as well.

That's really interesting. I think coming from, I came from a background where I worked with a membership organization that was in procurement and supply chain management and those connections that were made with both the buy-side and the sell-side have been invaluable in advice in CX, in just career advice in general. And really, I think being a part of network organizations like yours is an invaluable thing. In a time where we really went through a big struggle with how do we deliver great CX where during the pan-, well, we're still in this pandemic, unfortunately, that the customers, our customers are expecting more out of us, more than ever, and so to have a network to go to, to bounce those ideas off of, to see what strategies people are looking for, what new software people are looking for is really amazing. And so

when I read about you and got to know you, Nate, I thought that was just the coolest thing that you had set up, this great network. So, moving into those hard-hitting questions ...

Let's go!

In your, all righty, in your opinion, what is the key to delivering excellent customer service and how do we aid agents in doing so? How do we set them up for success?

Well, I believe that knowledge is the lifeblood of any good customer service environment. I mean, if you look at what we're doing, and I love "StoryBrand" here. A customer service worker, they're like an efficient of a mini marriage. The customer has a need. It could be clearly spoken. It might be, they don't even know really how to describe their need, but they've got a need. They have a definition of success. They are the hero of this story, this mini journey that we get to go on with this customer service ticket. We are the guide. We're marrying them together with the knowledge and the tools that they need to accomplish their definition of success.

Well, as a customer service professional, I can't do that until I really understand what their definition of is, so I need to have a good picture of that customer and way too often, the customer service agent is flying in blind. We don't have any history. We don't have any context for who this customer is. That's a failure because we should have that history, we should have that context.

Then also, so often, the customer's been navigating through a complex journey with our company and the customer service agent doesn't have that context of that journey, even with our own company, because that information has been trapped in different areas, different touchpoints inside of the journey. And so they're having to go through and find stuff and hunt and gather instead of just moving the customer on quickly and efficiently. When we bring knowledge together, that's what makes us a very confident and effective guide as a customer service worker.

Yeah, I think that's so interesting. In our last podcast that we released with Matt Beckwith, he talks about, yeah, Matt's great. He talks about the omnichannel experience and that everyone wants to interact with your company in a different way, whether that be through chat, getting to an actual agent, email, a lot of different ways, and that you need to let your customer choose that journey. But then also taking that information out of the silos, so when it gets to your agent, your customer isn't having to repeat all of this information that they've already given into those different omnichannels. I think that that's such an important thing that we should be focusing on in CX, especially in the contact center world, when they get to the agent that the agent has background of what their journey has looked like before that. I love that you brought that up. Such a great point.

I believe 90% of everything that you just stated, especially at the end of that, but I'm going to push back on, on that first little part, just a hair, this idea that we should offer every channel to every customer and that the customer should just dictate how they want to engage with us. I'm a huge believer in we should guide the customer to the best resolution path, straight from the effortless experience. Not every issue is going to be quality, it's not going to be conducive to be handled over every channel. If you need to talk to somebody, if it's a complex, creative dynamic issue, don't guide the customer to a social media triage, don't guide them to an email ticket. If you know that it's going to end in a phone call, guide the customer, right to that phone call quickly. I mean, that's preventing channel switching. I think that there's a lot of validity in going through that process of what is the issue that the customer's likely to experience here and how can we accelerate their path to the right channel?

I like that. I love that the theme of this podcast is seeming like reducing friction.

Yeah.

Yeah, that's what we want to do with our clients. We want to make it as easy as possible to get them their answers as quickly as possible. And so that kind of brings me to my next question. What are the main pain points you have seen regarding contact center tech technology, specifically the technology used by the contact center agent? Is technology even what we should be putting most of our focus on?

Yeah. I mean, yes. I mean, if we want to equip our agents for success, the tools that they're interfacing with are such a critical part of that. What I've been seeing is that our toolsets are broken. I mean, that's a direct quote from Justin Robbins who has worked inside of a lot of these toolsets and he knows. He's been in so many contact centers and has seen this happen. But I've been seeing it too, just in terms of the way over complex toolsets that make it impossible for the agent to move forward with their jobs effectively.

I mean, the Cloud Security Alliance Report came out not too long ago saying that the average enterprise organization has 464 custom applications inside of their organization. That's insane. That's way too many and upwards of 40% of those are client-facing. I mean, we've invited the customer into our own chaos without any idea of truly what we're doing there. So bringing harmony, bringing simplification to this, to where yeah, the agent can come in, know where they need to go to find the information that they need to, to feel confident, it's that confidence issue. You know when you call if the agent is overwhelmed and if they're struggling, if they're grasping at hairs, or if they're able to truly help you and to guide you towards success. You feel that very quickly in the call. When the tools are there and the agents are being empowered to work effectively, you can feel that immediately as a customer.

You're speaking our language. You're speaking the Vistio language as we're always talking about that, always talking about simplifying the process, making the agent's life easier and making it that they can find that information, and actually not find the information, not going to this, these huge knowledge bases and searching and having to interpret it on the call, that we're giving our agents the answers just at the click of a button. Like I said, speaking our language.

I mean, there's a lot of different tools, right? I mean, there's the knowledge base. There's the learning management system. There's the CRM there. There are different types of interfaces that integrate in to pull data in from other custom applications in the product management area, the sales environment, so critical there, they might very likely have their own independent CRM. The finance area, did we pay this invoice, what's going on with this whole thing, that's going to be a different system. I mean, there has to be the capability to pull this stuff in, to have it there for the agent to be that effective guide. It sounds like that's exactly what you're doing, which as somebody who did that role as an agent for 10, 12 years and did a lot of that hunting and pecking to figure out what was what, it's refreshing to me to know that the new generation of contact center professionals might have a bit of an easier time.

When we were talking about the experience of when the customer actually gets the agent, that we've taken a lot of this siloed information and we give it to the agent, but in that same way, when the agent is on the phone with the customer, that we've taken the information out of the silos, so that accounting information, just basic account information, that all of these different things that the customer may need are at the fingertip of the agent so that it doesn't have to be running up, we are seeing our escalations go up, we're seeing things having to go to different departments and our customers being bounced around a bunch and that they can just sit with that one agent and get their issue fixed quickly, efficiently and correctly, every time.

I mean, the best organizations have a level of transparency that's unusual. Because if we think about what the contact center ends up becoming so often, and this isn't right, I'm just saying this is the reality. It often becomes the janitor service for the organization. Whenever another department makes a mistake, it's just damage control, it's just scrambling to try to communicate to customers as effectively as possible, "Here's what's happened. Here's what you can do to get on with your life." So often the contact center is not equipped to be able to do that. They don't even know what's going on because the department that made an error had an assumption that nothing would go wrong and that they didn't need to proactively involve contact center or communicate anything about the new marketing campaign, the new product launch, that new system that just came out that was supposed to be just internal facing, but then broke that link into a customer-facing enterprise.

I mean, there are just so many things that can go wrong. Let's just assume that the contact center should know these things that are happening that could potentially, even remotely be customer-facing, and let's at least have tools that can make that reality present to the contact

center so that they can effectively address these issues and not feel like they're having to just scramble and clean up the messes of every department inside of the organization. It shouldn't be that way.

I like that. Again, I think we're seeing the theme of the podcast, breaking down the silos. Now we're moving it to that down to the front, down to the agents, up to the executives of our organizations so that there is transparency, and everybody knows, everybody's on the same page, everybody feels like they're empowered with knowledge and of what is going on. I think when we talk about the employee experience and how that affects the customer experience, when we give our agents more information, we give our agents the ability to not escalate those calls to, let's say, accounting when they want to set up payment plans for say something like utilities, that we're giving them the ability to do that. We then are showing our agents we trust them, we believe in them, we're giving them that confidence, and like you said, that confidence shows on the call and your customer is feeling secure and well-handled and in good hands.

1000%. I feel like when I'm calling a contact center, I almost put agents and again, I'm not saying this is right, this is just what happens to me from being in this work, maybe too long. I've become grizzled. But you have the agent that is just completely disengaged. They have the ability to do the job, but they don't care anymore. They're just dead in their chair. You have the agent that wants to do a good job and does not have the tools and resources they need to be able to do a good job. They're so frustrated. They're so overwhelmed. They just want to help and they can't. They're not free to serve well. Then you have the agent that wants to help, and that actually can.

I feel like I know which of those three, I just got within the first 10 seconds of every call. We're smart as customers. We know just intrinsically what's going on very quickly, just based on the tone of voice, the mannerisms, the path in which we arrived at that agent, you can learn so much based on the friction of that path to actually get to that person. I mean, we know. We want it to be that third category. Let's find people that want to do this work well, and then get out of their way and let them do the work well.

Love that, getting out of their way. As we're talking more about these CX technologies, in regard to what we put in front of the agent, in your opinion, what are the critical CX technologies that must be solid and in place in order to truly deliver excellent customer service?

This is more on the CX hat, so let's adventure a little bit beyond the customer service area to larger CX, which is the thoughts and perceptions that customer have of the big brand, to use the Forester definition. I mean, to me, it's the voice of customer capability. But let's learn who these customers really are and what they need before we try to guide them to what we think they're to definition of success is. If we haven't earned that, if we don't know that yet beyond assumptions, then it's time to listen. It's time to learn. A good voice of customer platform, a

good customer experience management tool does that for you. I feel like that's still such a gap for most organizations, that centralized voice of customer or capability. That would be one.

Then moving back more into that customer service realm, you got to have a really good CRM. I mean, that's going to be the linchpin of most of this. I mean, it's got to come into a really good and effective CRM. Then, and not just saying this, because I'm talking to Hailey here, having good agent assist is critical. I mean, there's just too much information out there for you to expect your agents to be able to spider out and hunt and peck and find it all. You've got to tee it up for them. You've got to equip them for success.

Love that. Right now, we are talking out about, you don't use physical maps anymore. You are using a GPS system. It's the same way that we should be thinking about what we're giving to our agents, that they don't need all of the information put in front of them. They need the right information at the right time. I think that's important. I also love that you talked about having an excellent CRM system. I think it's also the connection of how frictionless, again, the CRM system is working with the other tools that you're putting in front of your agents. You and I had talked about this on a previous call, but that less is more. We don't need to be throwing a ton of technology at our agents. We just need to be giving them the right technology. They need to be involved in that process of decision-making of what's right for them, so we need to be talking to our agents.

Yeah, I mean an iconic one that I still see so often, if you have separated your knowledge base out away from the CRM and there's not effective integration there to where the same place that the agent is handling the ticket is the same place that they can get knowledge about how to handle that ticket, if you've put it way over here, the agent's not going to use the knowledge base. It just won't happen. It just doesn't happen. That same philosophy, that same process of thought applies to most of this. We need to centralize. We need to simplify that's how the tools are going to get used. That's how they're going to bring value to the customer service agent and then indirectly and ultimately to the customer.

You're speaking my language. I realized that I forgot to ask you a question that you had such a unique view on the other day when you and I had talked previously. You have a unique view on contact center metrics. Can you delve into what contact center metrics you think organizations should be focusing on and maybe the ones that they're focusing on that aren't the correct ones?

Yeah, I mean, it's hard to say that a metric is wrong. I mean, a metric is right if it gives you truth about what's going on inside your business and with the lives of your customers. If you get truth from that and start to fill in that picture, then it's an effective metric. But if it's not bringing you truth, if it's not illuminating a reality, if it's just confusing, if it's just a number that that should represent the reality of the lives of your customers, but the correlation has been lost maybe years ago and nobody even noticed.

I mean, NPS is a classic one where that can happen. NPS is oftentimes a very ineffective metric if it's not being used inside the larger Net Promoter Score system, which is a very complex and quite frankly, brilliant philosophy, but almost everybody skips over that and they just start measuring NPS, which then without the system becomes just a number. I worked in an organization forever where, I mean, they had a whole CX team that their, their lives were centered around improving the NPS score. One day I just asked, "Okay, the score went up two points last year. What does that mean? What did that do for our customers? What does that number represent?" There's no answer to that. They had lost the reality of what the metric was supposed to do and illuminate.

I love customer effort score, of course, as you can tell, I'm a huge fan of it, Matt Dixon and Rick DeLisi and the other author of "The Effortless Experience" here. But there's just relevance and a beauty to that question, especially in a customer service environment, did we resolve your issue quickly and easily? What a brilliant question. I mean, that's what matters the most. If I'm trying to be an effective guide, if I'm in the customer service area of the customer journey, which is where I'm trying to get an issue resolved, what matters most? Well, what matters most in that area is my time. I just want to get this fixed so that I can move on and start to enjoy the larger customer journey again in the format that it was supposed to be enjoyed.

I mean, it's a brilliant question and that customer effort score represents a reality that is tangible. We have effort inside this journey. I know where I can go to try and fix that based on the qualitative data that we've collected. CSAT, if done well, it can either just be a number or it can be a representative of a really good illuminating reality.

Things like average handle time and, and volume per hour, those things, they can tell a story, but I mean, it almost feels like what we try to do as contact center professionals with those metrics is just make our agents handle calls faster. That's not better. That doesn't mean that anything better is happening. The next issue avoidance is good. It takes a little bit longer to do that, but ultimately you save the customer time, you save the business time, you saved everybody money, but the call took another 30 seconds.

I mean, we can oftentimes lose sight of the reality we're trying to create, which is enhanced, let's better the lives of our customers, let's better the lives of our agents. Let's find the numbers that represent those realities. I mean, if we want to move back to the CX layer again, these are things like customer lifetime value. These are things like customer growth or customer engagement score, which is a customer success metric that is gaining steam, just to ask the question, "Hey, how are we engaging this client over the entirety of their journey with us?" It's a complicated, but wonderful composite metric. Customer sentiment is brilliant. It's amazing what tools can do in terms of the collection of customer sentiment now. Just with text responses or recorded phone calls, we can get that customer sentiment it without having to ask the customer for it in a survey. I think we all know what those survey response rates are like now. They're not good. Somewhere between three and 5%. For most of us. We're not getting a good depiction of the customer's reality through those survey-based questions.

Customer sentiment has come in and provided a new great way to understand how our customers feel about our interactions with them. I mean, there's a lot of new, modern metrics that are out there that can be very helpful for us.

Further Reading: QA and CSAT Scores: The Whack-a-Mole Game of Contact Center Metrics

I thought the other day when we had that conversation and you brought up some metrics that, I mean, embarrassingly enough, I had never even really delved into, and so it was an enlightening conversation to me. I was so excited to talk about it today on the podcast.

Switching modes, as we wrap up, we're going to dive into what I think are fun questions. You might think they're boring. Our listeners might think they're boring, but I think that they're really fun. What resources, Nate, podcasts, publications, blogs, LinkedIn groups, things like that, do you regularly reference to stay on top of industry trends and news? I'm realizing this is almost kind of a funny question, because you've created an environment where people can go and reference and stay on top of industry trends and news, but outside of your own, an organization that you've started, what are those resources?

I mean, CX Accelerator is a great place to start on that, but there's so much great things that are out there. I mean, I've got to give a shout-out to Clare who started Women in CX, an incredible community, great resources that they have over there. Definitely check out that community.

As far as my favorite authors and I published, I don't know if you saw it, Hailey, I put out the Nate Brown CX Pyramid of Greatness, which is a blatant spoof of Ron Swanson's Pyramid of Greatness from Parks and Recreation. But I put some of my favorite CX resources on the Pyramid of Greatness, so you'll have to check that out and maybe share that out with the folks, because I think you'll get a chuckle out of it.

But Jean Bliss is certainly a phenomenal author. She got me started with "Chief Customer Officer 2.0". In that moment of truth that I had as a CX professional getting started, just needed that roadmap. Her authorship provided a lot of that. **Certainly Denise Lee Yohn, I mean, if you want to talk about the overlap between marketing culture, the employees experience, and then CX, ultimately the brand promise that we're making, how can we do something different in terms of a unique and compelling brand promise that we're putting out to the world as a business, the culture that supports that, the ambassadors that represent that brand promise internally, and then our ability to deliver on that authentically through our customer experience engine. Nobody writes better about that than Denise Lee Yohn, so you definitely have to check that out.** Of course, Arise and Officium got some great resources,

many of which I'm helping to write. I would love for you to check those out, so officiumlabs.io there. We got a podcast called Experience Matters and some other things that I would love for you to check out. So yeah, those are my go-to resources.

Love it. Who are a few standout leaders in the industry, or maybe even outside of the industry that you look to for advice or would like to collaborate with? I know you have one that you're a big fan of and we share that. We share that fan.

Oh, [Matt Beckwith](#)! I was like, "Who are you talking about?" Yeah, he's phenomenal. He's been such a great mentor of mine. If you want to find somebody that is just looking to make lives better and is one of the most effective team leaders and team builders that I have ever seen in action, it is Matt Beckwith. Brilliant person to follow and to learn from. Contact center geek, love that blog as well, so there's definitely a person.

Jeff Toister has been a phenomenal mentor of mine. He's written great books on "The Guaranteed Customer Experience", "The Service Culture Handbook", so a lot, a lot of great books to check out from Jeff Toister. Leslie O'Flahavan has been a wonderful mentor of mine as well as an ICMI and on the speaker circuit. If you want to look at just quality of writing and how to build an amazing knowledge base, how to effectively write apologies to customers as an example, so much of our customer experiences in the written form. There's nobody better than Leslie to develop folks on that topic. Those would definitely be a few people.

Jeremy Watkin and Jenny Dempsey have been dear friends of mine and mentors of mine, really pulled me into the blogosphere and encouraged me, and gave me that confidence to start to contribute outward as somebody that was learning in the CX space and just consuming/ they helped to challenge me of, "Hey, you've got something to give. You're learning something. As you learn from us, apply it to your own context, make it your own. You have something new." It's great for the community to be able to share that back out in terms of, "Hey, I learned this concept from this person. Here's how I used it. Here's how it went well. Here's how it didn't go well." Sometimes we missed that vulnerability aspect of this didn't work well for me, but it might for you. I think people really want to hear that. And so Jenny and Jeremy have been just great mentors in terms of that authentic brand-building voice that I'm still looking to find, but have been able to find at least to some degree over these past few years, so definitely some folks to follow.

Yeah, I love that you mentioned Jeremy. As I'm sure you know, we all should be following Jeremy on Twitter. He does a CX question of the day. I love going every day looking at that question and even if I don't respond to it on Twitter, having a good think about it myself, having a good think about how it relates to the organization that I specifically work with. That's a really cool thing that he's been recently doing, so I'm so glad you mentioned Jeremy.

He's been so faithful to do that every day. I'm so happy with him for doing that. Very, very proud of him. It's been cool.

Yeah, whether he is in the car, walking the dog, he does it every day. It's really pretty cool.

I love it.

We'll round out the podcast with this question, "What career or practical advice do you have for people looking to grow their skills and impact, specifically the technology used in contact center management?"

Hmm. Yeah, if we're going to go down that technology route, I love how empowering it is to do the voice of customer work and to have the tools in place to where you, as a contact center professional, can represent the voice of the customer very effectively. "Here's what our customer base is thinking and feeling. Here's how we know that. Here's the percentage that are experiencing this problem. Here's the percentage that value this over this here. Here's the main friction point that we had in January of 2022. If we fix this, here's the impact that would have long term on our financial capabilities as a business."

When you can speak that type of language, you are so powerful. It's not about you being powerful, but you're powerful because you represent the customer, which should be the most powerful voice in the room. Somebody needs to be able to represent that well. Why should it not be you, so have the technology, have the ownership, the knowledge that is required in order to really be able to speak that language of your customer and to understand their reality.

I mean, that, that will give you the ability to drive your strategic initiatives, give you the ability to enhance the lives of your people inside of the organization from an employee experience standpoint. I mean, it just unlocks so many things. I would encourage anybody to really go deep into that voice of customer and customer experience management type of technology there, because that'll just be the key to so many doors for you.

As far as just general career advice, just serve people. I mean, that's it for me, right? I love the Simon Sinek, the idea that circle of psychological safety, that we get to create around the people that we serve. There's so much junk happening right now. Our circle of safety has been compromised at so many different levels, personally and professionally and beyond, and so everything that we can do to restore that circle of safety around the people that are in our care and extend that even outward towards our customers, find ways to do that and just keep that at the forefront of your mind of how can I insulate people in a really good, safe way? How can I help them? How can I improve their lives? That will make your career meaningful, that will make your career very successful as you find ways to do that. There's just no better way to keep that in mentality at the forefront, that way the behaviors, the specific day to day actions that you perform, they will stay anchored in that root, which will be so good for you, that will serve you for yours to come.

I think the last bit of advice you gave, speaking directly to Simon Sinek, is that that advice not only speaks to your professional life, but can be applied to our personal lives as well, which I really love.

100%.

Yeah. Well, Nate, thank you so much for taking the time to be on the podcast. Also, thank you so much for the effort you took to wear this incredible Christmas suit as we are recording just a couple of days before Christmas. The podcast will probably be coming out in the new year.

Oh curse. Oh, well, it's a winter suit.

It is. It's a winter suit, but I really appreciate the effort. I appreciate all your great insight. I look forward to talking to you again. I can't wait to get this podcast out to our listeners. Have a great, happy, happy holidays and a happy New Year. We'll talk soon.

Thank you, Hailey. Thank you everybody. Have a great holiday.

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