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TRANSCRIPT

# Neil Morgan on Defining the Digital Workplace

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

employee, digital workplace, community, intranet, tools, working, experience, challenges, team, understanding, neil, refer, role, company, glencore, people, faced, give, approach, areas

**SPEAKERS**

Neil Morgan, Anne Mbugua

**Anne Mbugua** 00:01

This meeting is being recorded. Hi, Neil. That's right. So, hi, Neil, if you could introduce yourself, what you do? And how many years have worked in community?

00:21

Okay, sure. So, my name is Neil Morgan, working for Glencore as the head of the digital employee experience team. And our role as a team is to deploy and develop a digital workplace platform for the group, primarily the intranet communication channel, that allows us to reach our employees both at the office, but also at the frontline, on our asset sites. Obviously, some of the challenges that we face, there are the different channels of communication, as well as some employees who are connected and some employees who are referred to as non networked, meaning they don't have email address, or they're not able to authenticate into some of our environments.

**Anne Mbugua** 01:11

Right? And how many years have you worked in the community?

01:16

So I've been working with digital workplaces and communities for over 1215 years now.

**Anne Mbugua** 01:24

Wow. That's, that's fantastic. So you've had quite a bit of experience with community and also seeing, you know, the new changes in the community management industry.

01:38

So certainly, especially the, you know, the harmonization if you wish to have a lot of the products on the market.

**Anne Mbugua** 01:46

Yeah. Yeah. Briefly describe, you know, specific experience with, obviously, digital workplace, maybe where we should go here is probably defining what it is for, for those who may be wondering, specifically, what really are we talking about when we say, you know, the digital workplace. So if you can start with a definition there and head into sort of like an experience that you have had, and then we can talk about some of the challenges and some of the lessons?

02:26

Yeah, sure. So to define the digital workplace is always, you know, quite difficult. I like to refer to it more as a concept and an approach than a product. Because it's really bringing together the experiences that the employees have on a day to day, and how the company decides to introduce those solutions to the employee make them available, depending on where they're working from. And also understanding that when it comes to modern day collaboration, you know, the approach will vary based on the tools that people haven't had. In that light for our company, the way we've introduced, the digital workplace concept is really around, saying that it's to ensure employees have access to the content, tools and services that they need, right. So be that coming from the group level, the global, you know, kind of headquarters team, and functions, or coming at the local level. To support that, obviously, is where the employee can reach out to find more information about who can help them in accessing that content, tools or services, and staying up to date with what's happening both around the company, but also areas or topics that are of interest to the employee. So really redefining the role of internal communications and intranet, and looking at how IT and HR and other teams can ensure that the tools that they need their employees to use are well understood in terms of why they should use them, and how they get access to them.

**Anne Mbugua** 04:16

So what have been some of the challenges that you have faced at Glencore? You know, having to around digital, you know, around the digital workplace? What are some of these challenges that you that you've faced?

04:31

So I think the first one is always the role of the intranet. Many companies have several intranet. So you know, that could range from one global intranet to several local intranet to Team internet's department intranet. And obviously, it just that term of Internet being thrown around quickly gets confusing as to what are you referring to and where the other side of that obviously is that they are either They're not used very well, or they're overused, and things are hard to find. So those are some of the challenges that we faced here at Glencore, but also just being able to access it from any device as well. So they weren't really made for viewing on a mobile device, they weren't accessible outside of the office, or not accessible on a personal mobile phone or on a corporate mobile phone. So those were the first areas that we wanted to address and making sure that we could develop a new experience that was addressing some of the gaps that we had.

**Anne Mbugua** 05:39

So how did you go about explaining what the internet is? So that there isn't any confusion around the definition of what it actually is?

05:48

Yeah, that's a good question. So we initiated a survey across the employees to look at how they define the intranet, what they use the internet for. So using it as a way to agree on certain tasks that employees need to achieve through the intranet. And with that concept in mind, that allows us then to move into understanding what it is that we need to deliver to the employee, as well as how, and through which channels, they expect to receive that information.

**Anne Mbugua** 06:23

So does this leave employee sometimes feeling like, Wow, there's so many different tools out there? You know, and which are which other tools that we we can use in order to sort of communicate with each other? Because, you know, let's, let's talk about things like Facebook, for instance, right? Were there any negative reactions around the use of Facebook?

06:53

Well, obviously, I think as things become, you know, more like what we use in our day to day, you expect a sense of people will just use it, right? I think the other side of that is, what you use in your day to day may not be what I use in my day to day, right, making that assumption that everybody works the same way is usually where teams can quickly get it wrong. I think, from our experience, you know, what we aim to do was to say, it's not so much of us as a small group, selecting a product and establishing a strategy to tell the employee this is how you do it. It's more understanding from the employee, what they expect to do and where. So that's one of the challenges. I think that when we introduce this, you know, new way of introducing communities across the organization, having a kind of central feed of the activity coming from those communities into the intranet homepage. Obviously, some people reacted to say, Oh, this looks too much like Facebook, I don't like it. Right. Yeah. But on the other side, when you talk about, you know, giving visibility to all the tools that are available across the organization, right, for us, that gives reassurance that the employee at no point during their workday has to, you know, look up to somebody and say, Oh, I didn't know, we were supposed to be using that tool for this purpose, right. So just make sure that we have a clear view of the full catalog of tools available to the employee, and ensuring that from day one, they know which tools they should be using, and for what purpose.

**Anne Mbugua** 08:31

I like that, you know, because you're really trying to find out what they would want to use, as you know, as employees, right. And that's what's important. It's not deciding for them what they need to use, right? Correct. Yeah. And that's really part of community, asking your community, you know, when it comes to platforms and tools, and not assuming that, you know, this would be the best fit tool or platform for them. So which brings me to this question, what were some of the lessons that you, you learned in this process?

09:06

So I think the obviously, as I said, you know, be ready for that resistance. So that's definitely one of the areas where, you know, people will try to look at ways to say, Oh, this just isn't the way we work, or this isn't our type of company. You know, and I think that's usually a lot of people who've been at the company probably too long, but also have a kind of ingrained vision of the way they work is the way that everybody else works. I think to counter that we also, you know, intentionally said, Well, we know this was a long journey. So take it slow. Don't try to get ahead of ourselves. Focus on the benefits to the business. How these, you know, teams exist already. Right? There was this concept of Oh, but we don't have communities here. Whereas in real ality there are communities people were just trying to use different solutions to achieve a way of collaborating and communicating with each other.

**Anne Mbugua** 10:09

Right? So looking back to what would you do differently? Looking back at your challenges and the lessons that you learned? If you were to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

10:22

So I think the first thing I would do differently is probably hire somebody to manage this part of the initiative much closer. I think because we said, Okay, well, we're gonna start small anyways, we just started well, we can manage it within the team. Right. But I think once you start, you quickly get a lot of questions and enquiries and you know, people wanting more, if they see it's, you know, showing value. That's where if you're not ready for that support, you could quickly be overwhelmed. Fortunately, for us, it's still going a little bit slow. So we're able to manage, but that is, you know, one area where I think just in terms of finding someone who has that experience of managing global communities across a number of different topical areas, working with community managers to help them understand how to foster and keep the community alive, as well, as you know, monitoring and reporting on the activity across those communities.

**Anne Mbugua** 11:20

Yeah, I really do like that outlook, because, you know, it can be a lot of work, right, for a team of one to do all this right? Oh, absolutely. So what would you tell a community manager? What would be one of the pro tips that you would give them when they're thinking about, you know, how they should establish a digital workplace? What would be some of the tips that you would give them?

11:49

Yeah, so I think the first one for me would be to identify those early adopters, or the people who are, you know, excited about this type of change across the business, okay, and working close with them to establish a group that can demonstrate how you know, this approach can bring success to the company?

**Anne Mbugua** 12:10

Yeah, I think it's important, it's important to do that. So Neil, thank you so much for sharing with us about the digital workplace, I really appreciate you sharing the challenges, and the lessons learned and what what could be done differently. So I like to usually end on this note, what inspires you about your community?

12:34

For me, that's really learning from the employees, because I think we hire a lot of smart people. And, you know, seeing and hearing how they work and understanding the challenges that they face in either communicating or collaborating and just trying to identify where we can help them. So really, you know, playing that role of service provider, right, for lack of a better term for communications and collaboration are really, you know, getting a deep understanding of the what are they trying to do question and using that as a way to see how common that is across the organization or not, and what are the best approaches for helping them achieve what they need to

**Anne Mbugua** 13:18

do. Okay, well, thank you so much. I'm going to stop the recording now.