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Context to the nugget conversation

Dorie speaks about how we can experiment in adjacent spaces with 20% of our time like they encourage in Google.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): In your journey, Dorie, how have you thought about, you know, you talk about modalities, how have you thought about the architectural choice? Is it one or two things or a portfolio of things in the way you have approached your journey? I find that is often a, before we decide what we want to do, figuring out the architecture. Is it one thing, is it 10 things or two things is often a choice, how have you thought about that?

Dorie Clark (DC): Yeah, this is a really good point. I am a big believer. One of the drums that I like to beat in 20% time, which is a concept I have borrowed from Google. They have made it famous. The idea is that their employees are allowed, sometimes even encouraged, to spend up to 20% of their time working on discretionary, kind of experimental projects outside the scope of their job. And this is something that I heartily believe that everyone should do. Now the trick is no one is going to hand it to you. It is always easier to just, you know, oh, well, just answer those extra emails or something like that, but we need to carve it out, we need to be decisive about doing it. But if we do, I think it is incredibly powerful exercise because you do not want to diversify so much so that you are not making progress on anything that you are moving a million things an inch, that is not very helpful. But, also, you put yourself at strategic risk if all you are doing is one thing, if all you know about is one thing. And so, I think 20% time is actually a really powerful balance because if your 20% time project for some reason blows up, it does not go anywhere, it is a big failure. Well, it is unfortunate, but you are not going to go bankrupt, your life is not going to be ruined because you wasted 20% of your time. It is not that big of a deal. Whereas, if you actually invest that time, and let us say it is a positive outcome, if it actually turns into something, 20% of your time, if you spend it, you know, enough months or enough years working on it, you can actually, legitimately, really get somewhere with that, it is enough of a bet that you can make progress. And so I think that it is a very good compromise as a way to think about exploring new possibilities.

DJ: Hmm. And you work with people from different fields in your recognized expert community and otherwise, any examples to bring this to life, the kinds of things people have done in the 20%, just to provoke a reflection?

DC: Yeah, absolutely. Well, in terms of 20% time, one that I will selfishly highlight, there is a great woman in the community named Marie Incontrera, who is a social media consultant and she books people for TEDx talks and things like that, but her original training, and this is in fact what she was

doing when I first met her, was as a jazz musician and so I have recruited her into the world of musical theater, which is an interest of mine. She had never done musical theater, she had only done jazz and opera and classical, but I bullied her getting into musical theater essentially, and we are now working together on several musical theater projects and proud to say we, a couple of weeks ago, got accepted into a new fellowship program by the Prospect Theater Company in New York and in mid-November, there is going to be a showcase at Symphony Space in New York and a 10-minute musical that we are writing will be produced there.

DJ: Wow, congratulations.

DC: Thank you. It is very fun and I am pleased to be spending my 20% time doing that.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This podcast is a living example of something that started as a 20% project. It has slowly developed an identity of its own and has become an integral part of my work. While I started this as an L&D function for myself, it has slowly turned into a vehicle that has slowly helped build trust in the ecosystem I operate in, whether it is the clients I work with or the professionals I partner with. Now, the 20% project that I am working on is to create some freemium version of playtopotential.com where I can offer some elements free and some premium customized content where I connect the dots across the various elements of the podcast archives. The other piece I am trying to experiment with is to see if I could write consistently for a publication of sorts. Towards the end of 2021, I put out a series of 10 articles on LinkedIn building on some of the insights from the podcast. You can check those out on my LinkedIn profile.

End of nugget transcription

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Dorie Clark - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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