

CLOUD REALITIES

CR030

Phygital customer experience in fashion retail with Manyana Schmitz, PVH

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[00:00:00] Although I've just had an idea that they'd like give them air horns and when you start to say something unpopular, they can just set the air horn off and drown out the noise. Exactly.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan. And this week we're gonna be taking a view on the changing nature of the consumer experience in the fashion industry and what organizations need to do to respond to that and what are the underlying.

Digital transformation implications of it.

Joining us this week, I'm delighted to say, is [00:01:00] Manyana Schmitz, senior Director of Digital optimization and transformation at PVH, a fashion company in Europe that owns Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein Manyana. Welcome. It's great to see you, do you wanna tell us a little bit about yourself? Yes, and thank you for having me.

First of all, my name is Manyana. I am Dutch. I've lived and worked in several different other companies, companies, countries, either by myself as a student or together with my husband, Michel, we don't have any children. By choice. A lot of people don't dare ask. It's a personal question, I do love children though.

It just, yeah, didn't, didn't fit because we both travel a lot professionally. There's a mouthful of my title, but basically, I drive digital transformation, from a tech point of view at PVH Europe. Brilliant. So, Manyana, tell us a little bit about PVH. You [00:02:00] know, what does it stand for and what organization is it?

What does it do? Yeah, it's a, it, it's an interesting question that nine out of 10 people ask me because hardly anyone knows about PVH, stands for Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation and that still doesn't make any sense to most people. No. Right. It's a mother organization and we own brands. Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger.

Our corporate organization head office is in the US, in New York and they own more brands, but in Europe it's really Kelvin Klein and on Hilfiger. Right. And broadly, how does it operate? Are the individual brands, do they run themselves or does PVH sort of operate as a corporate organization? It's a bit of both.

And actually, come to think of it, yesterday I was at, no, it was the day before I was at, the Women in Tech conference in ra, here in am Amsterdam, another topic that I'm very passionate about. Mm. And we actually had, so everybody asked, what is PVH? And interestingly enough, there were quite a few [00:03:00] people who thought PVH was a tech company.

And Kelvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger were two of our customers because people were thinking, what is a fashion brand doing at a tech company? So I'm sure we're going to talk about that way more in this podcast. But going back to your questions, so the design part of things, and really the brand side of thing is done by the brand.

What PVH then does is it's more or less like a platform taking care of all the primary or. Well, depending on how you look at it, all the supporting processes, so you know, controlling logistics, tech, all of that stuff. And that's very much corporate. We are part of PVH Corp, but we, are quite autonomous here in Europe and, you know, organizing everything ourselves.

Well, let's maybe come at it from a customer perspective. So a customer of Tommy Hilfiger, or a customer of Kelvin Klein, the fashion industry, of course, has been. Radically impacted by the rise of digital over the course, probably since the very beginning of the.com boom. Like,



you know, fashion and retail.

Were one of the first industries to start to respond to what was going on in the world of digital. So what's your read on that journey to now and then we'll talk a little bit about what you guys are actually doing at the moment. Yeah, actually I believe that. The fashion industry is a very traditional industry, and it hasn't changed that much over, you know, hundreds of years.

If you look at the primary process of how we design and make and sell clothes, so even [00:05:00] with the.com. Era. I think we still remained relatively the same. Also, another interesting thing is that part of why we stay the same is that we, we continue to hire people from the industry, so it's difficult to get people from the outside in who bring a new perspective.

So we keep everything as is. If you will, would that be in the supply and manufacturing and design aspect of it versus, say the customer experience aspect of it? Yes, definitely. That's where it's most prevalent. But even on the, on the customer experience side, obviously there have been some huge changes and especially.

I would say yes.com. You know, we have our website, we have our app shop, we're we're selling digitally, but what really, really accelerated that change was obviously as in many organizations and many industries, [00:06:00] was that whole covid Yes. Period. Because we could not sell in any other way than through our wrap shops.

And then what you saw that, especially in Europe, W already had a great operation on you know, the digital side, and that is what really pulled us through that whole covid situation. Even to the degree that, and I don't think we are specific in that, but from, from a fashion point of view, there has been a lot of talk, you know, what is the future of retail going to be and do we even need, you know, stores anymore because people want to shop online and I think.

Now where we are, we've realized, and we've experienced that we definitely need store still physical experiences. Yeah, exactly. And that's really, you know, when you talk about customer experience that yeah, I want to shop online because it's easy, it's, you know, quick things like that. I, can do everything for my.

My chair here, but I [00:07:00] also want to have that experience and I want to feel the product. I want to, you know, get the vibe in the store. I want somebody to talk to me and, and share, you know, the latest strengths, things like that, and maybe have a coffee in, in the store and, and things like that. So yeah, there's, there's that, that side really has changed now, but I think it's, It's still relatively recent that, the consumer experience has changed a lot in the industry and we still have a long way to go for the other areas.

So it seems like to me that there is something about the pandemic and the experience, and I'll just, You know, speak as a consumer myself, I guess, is that, you know what I'm looking for. And, and you could see a notable improvement in pretty much all online retailing over the pandemic period, cuz as you say, it was a massive accelerant.

And, and that to me feels about, you know, fast fulfillment, accurate fulfillment. Really good ways to be able to sort of return your goods so you can like buy two sizes and just, and check [00:08:00] out whether that works or not. And that to me feels like an element of almost baseline convenience now for retailers versus as you, as you were saying, that the more kind of.

Holistic brand experience that you might want to get, which, which absolutely would come



through the digital experience, but also it extends much more into the physical world and then the blending of those two things. So where are you guys at the moment? And, and, and if you can share what sort of experiences are you, are you trying to enable?

Yeah, so we are really starting to talk about a Phygital experience, right? Where you have both the physical world and the digital work world combined, and it is much more about that omnichannel experience. Doesn't matter where I am, how I buy, you know, or you know, hopefully not, but if I want to return something, then you know, that should also be easier and I should have different ways of doing that.

So that's really where we're, where we are [00:09:00] going. And I, again, I don't think we're special in the industry. We talk a lot about. You know, when I joined PVH six years ago, it was very much about our product. We have two super strong brands, and that is what we try to leverage as much as possible. Product is king, and now there's this big shift to customer is king and customer centricity.

So everything we do, everything we build in tech is really around that customer experience and, where we are going with that is really looking at the, the different sales channels and from an experience point of view, want to make it as flawless as possible. And I think that was a very first step to make that experience flawless.

But before we were there, and maybe if we can go back to history a bit, because I think it's a very interesting part of our journey. When I joined, we just had [00:10:00] launched our first. What we call digital showroom, and that was really the start of digitalizing our whole end-to-end value chain. And if you think of how fashion works from a traditional point of view, I'm a designer.

I design something. Thank goodness that was already digital, I send an image across to factory, they create a sample. It's shipped across halfway the world, and that happens eight to nine times for each item in a collection. And we have at least four collections and then maybe some smaller as small ones as well.

So just, you know, thinking from a sustainability point of view, that's absolutely mind blowing and ridiculous what's happening there. Right? So some very smart people in our organization thought. That, you know, we have to do that better. So they started thinking about how can we digitalize that now without going into the details we did.

And now, you know, instead of having to ship samples [00:11:00] eight, nine times across the world, we now only put something in production once the, the 3D design is complete. So we reduced. 80% of our sample production, which is huge. So, you know, again, from a consumer experience, this is, this is pre-consumer even. But that was really the journey that we went through as an organization and as a tech organization to make that experience.

Flawless. So from right there we saw the, the success and that is then what kickstarted a lot of other things. So now we have, you know, digital solutions in store where. Ideally where we want to go is that there is no checkout till, you know, I just walk out and maybe we completely frictionless, maybe run into somebody with an iPad and I, check out there or I just walk out the door and it's checked off immediately.

So yeah, that's still a bit futuristic, but that's [00:12:00] really where we want to go. And then obviously the experience online, and if I may, I talk a little bit. It is, you know, I'm so enthusiastic about the topic and there's so much to share. That's an amazing topic that. What I found an amazing example during the Pandemic is not our our own, but it's an example from Lululemon and so they sell sports clothes, right?



That's probably, you know, they're selling an experience now, but that is how I know them and nobody could go to the gym anymore during the pandemic. So people started, you know, training. At home. And what Lululemon did is they bought this startup company. They called the mirror, and the mirror was an interactive mirror.

So what happened is I was at home wearing my Lululemon gear and the mirror was a mirror. If I didn't do anything, and if I was. Exercising. I switched it on and I would [00:13:00] see all this personal data about how I was progressing. Oh, amazing. You know, how I was improving, but also, you know, hey, you are wearing this, g we, we got a new, we got a new top.

And you know, maybe that's something. So that really brought the experience into your house. So it was a digital experience that was brought into, so I think that is really that whole omnichannel concept that wherever you are, you have that same experience. It's not only do I have the digital tools, but also do I have the digital experience.

And that's also very much where we are looking at, at PVH to make sure that we have that omnichannel experience wherever you are. It's a big thing around experience, isn't it? Once the bar's been set that an organization has you as a single identity. Many sectors have this issue where when you approach that organization, they know you, they know all your context, they serve you very quickly.

Those organizations that still have that fragmented [00:14:00] experience, people will exit. Their ecosystem quite quickly to move to the one where it's much more convenient and it's like the, the bars being set higher and higher, and I think Covid accelerated that. And now we've got a lot of innovation coming through that says, wherever you are, absolutely you can interact with this organization.

And it's a, it's a consistent experience. And for me that. Yeah. And for many that, that keeps you in the ecosystem and wanting to interact with that organization because it's, it's the, the lower friction you can get, the better it is for the consumer and they'll stay. Yeah. You make a very good point. Yeah.

And those who don't, might find themselves struggling in the future and those who embrace this type of approach will Absolutely. Yeah, gain. Yeah. I wonder, I I what occurred to me Manyana when you were, describing that journey and the, and the omnichannel experience and, and the blended experience. I wonder, just very briefly, have you, are you doing anything with Metaverse?

I'm just kind of interested because a couple of years ago that was gonna be a thing and we were, we, you know, we were chatting about that the other day. Off air and [00:15:00] have a bit of a joke about how it's sort of gone. But I'm not sure it is. I think it's just one of those things that's gone through its hype cycle and being developed or what?

What do you think? Yes. Yeah, yeah. So yes, we are doing quite a bit, and I had the same experience. I'm having conversations about it, or maybe not daily, but at least weekly. I think it's so interesting that until. I think it was even still three, four months ago that everybody was talking about, you know, the Metaverse rep three.

Right. And you know, in our case, digital fashion and you know mm-hmm. What can we do with it? And now silence, you know, you don't really hear that much about it anymore. Everything is ai, which I also believe is, oh my gosh. You know, just the opportunities and, and, what it can bring. At the same time, I also see that there's, definitely a lot of risks and, and dangers there, but it's a whole different topic.



Maybe we can talk a bit about that as well, but metaverse [00:16:00] definitely. So what, what specifically what we did is we already, a few years ago, we, we introduced, for Tommy, the See Now Buy Now concept. And what I mean is, you know, Straight from the fashion shows. So you have these fashion shows, you know, a few times a year they, they, there's a whole circus that travels around the globe and talking about sustainability, by the way. not so good. But anyway, so, so we have fashion weeks, but it's always for a very, very small privileged. Group of visitors, and typically what happens, you have a fashion show now, but it's only for, two collections in future. So you have to wait for it to end up in a stall. What seen now by now is, is that.

You. So you know, yes, [00:17:00] there was still a privileged few who could attend it, but you could actually then online buy our product immediately after the fashion show show. So that was hugely successful, really great, really disruptive in in the industry. What we added now with the whole Metaverse is that we have a fashion, a digital fashion show.

, and where the figi component comes into place is that we then have, digital, Versions of our physical new product. Yeah. Cool. On, on the catwalk. And then you can buy them online. We have an online shop in the Metaverse. Have you guys also thought about selling the digital versions for, avatars and things like Fortnite?

Yeah, that's exactly what we, what we are doing. We partnered with amazing, Rob Roblox and Lala Land [00:18:00] and yeah, it's very, Successful in a way. And I think this is also where the conversation or the discussion is, is going to now successful in a way that it, it gave us a lot of brand awareness. Sure. You know, and this is so cool, and, and there are a few other, you know, Gucci is a front runner for instance as well.

So it gives you a lot of brand awareness. So from a marketing point of view, I think is super strong, where we are still figuring out, where this is going is what is it really doing to our sales numbers? I think there's a generational aspect in that, that would be my observation, which is, you know, maybe for, you know, gen X and older, there's a bit of a raised eyebrow.

Mm. I'm not, you know, that sort of doesn't, it doesn't feel material to me, but to my kids. They are just as interested in what they're buying in Fortnite and Roblox as they are in, in the physical world. You know, they don't make a distinction [00:19:00] necessarily in the way that perhaps I would as a Gen X. Yeah, totally.

And I think it's the perception you set to the consumer, there's a good example with like. Red Bull drinks manufacturer. Yeah. And they went and had a space program and they have a very successful Formula One team. And then that sets a perception in your head that then when you approach the product to actually purchase it, it's, it's a better perception.

It's that, that there's, that you have to be in all these places setting, you know, your vision of. What you think the consumer should see, and then they're much more integrated with you as a thing, and then they're more likely to embrace your ecosystem. And I think more traditional organizations don't see it that way.

And they're like, well, we just sell X, Y or Zs, and why would we need to do that? But it's a bit like that's what society expects and they enjoy seeing a product being exactly different domains all the time, isn't it? I think those who are embracing it and that. Merging of the digital and the, the real will, again, be around for a long time to come.

Yeah. Because if you, if you think of that, and again, from a [00:20:00] consumer experience point of view, you know, it's so cool. I enter a physical store, but then through my phone and artificial reality, you know, I can build, I can then also enter this whole virtual, space as well



where maybe I could buy different, different product.

But I think, you know, the, the comment you make about different generations, it's, it's so true. And it is also a challenge because yes, the younger generation, they think it's totally normal, but then it's their parents who have the money. At least in theory. At least in theory. At least in theory. Well, and there's, you know, we have all these new millionaires, you know, these toddlers who, you know exactly do some videos on TikTok and then the million YouTube.

I, still remember the day I found myself watching somebody playing Fortnite on YouTube and then, realized they were an internet millionaire and they were only 19 years old. And I thought to myself, Where did I go wrong? [00:21:00] So you play computer games all day, put a few videos out, and somehow you've monetized it to a point where, to a point where you've made me feel irrelevant.

Oh, you know, it's, I think something that I ask myself every day is, is, you know, What did I do wrong? You know, it's like, how does this, and I also, honestly, I think I'm a pretty smart person, but I, really don't get it, you know, you know, just shooting some videos of, you know, putting my makeup on or, you know, and then people watch it and not, we we're not talking about, you know, few hundred people.

No, it's bigger than broadcast television. Yeah. Bigger than broadcast television. Yeah. It's, yeah. Yeah. But my, and, and again, it's a generational thing, depending on, you know, the concept of somebody beaming a program into your house and you having to sit down at that time has basically gone, hasn't it?

And now it's, I elect what I want to watch when I do, and the, the [00:22:00] amount of content you can get your hands on, the democratization of the entertainment industry has occurred. It's like TikTok, YouTube, all those channels that just. Absolutely have been embraced and nobody expected it. You know, they all turned up and they went, that'll never work.

And then suddenly it's absolutely everywhere. Explosion in, in That's right. Usually just because the all generations understand it potentially. But Rob, it's not, not too late for, you can, you can still make the switch. I can go and become an internet millionaire. Yeah. Are you gonna room rinating on that for the rest of.

The show now, I I, I'm just gonna drop me headset set now and I'm off. I'll start playing Call of Duty. It'll be fine. Well, let's, let's bring the subject back to the world of fashion and, and the fashion experience and really good articulation of, of the journey to it and some of the challenges around it, and obviously the levels of sophistication that are needing to be delivered, to consumer.

So, let's go into the covers and talk a bit about your day job Manyana, which is in the digital transformation world. So, How on earth are you [00:23:00] responding to all of the pressures we've just been talking about? I don't mean to do your head in with that question by the way. Like we've now talked about how the world has like massively changed.

It's really difficult now what are you doing about that? Yeah, exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. As if the pressure is not, not, yeah, yeah. Sorry about that. Yeah. Yeah. I need to go out and, you know, get. Some pills here too. Yeah. If you need to, if you need to take a moment. If you need to take a moment. Exactly, well, you know, I, don't feel like that at all actually because I love what I do.

, I tell everybody that this is my best job ever, it's amazing, exciting that, you know, the, just



the, just the, just the sheer pace and complexity of it's amazing. Exactly. And I started in, in it quite some time ago, and it was a very, very different playing field then. And I can really, honestly only say that my job has become way more interesting, way more exciting, way more thrilling, and [00:24:00] rewarding over the years and especially these, these recent years.

So it has been, A true journey though I started out as I, as I mentioned, six years ago, and yes, we did have a wrap shop then, but we were still quite traditionally, also from a technology point of view, there was a lot of legacy in our environment. Just to visualize it. So your IT organization at that point was like a, like an IT organization sort of structure?

Yes. Like everybody else's with, with sort of legacy ERP and Yeah. You know, sort of client server technologies. Yeah. Yeah, so when I say traditional, that's exactly what I mean. Very much, demand supply, organized, we had demand managers very much. I also always compare it to utilities provider. You know, there was a, an ask.

For, from somebody in the [00:25:00] organization. They asked for a solution. I said, can you implement system so and so? And that is what happened or what also happened, a lot was a system was already implemented by a third party. Nobody knew about it. And then, you know, all of a. Sudden we started getting calls or incidents from people with this system that nobody knew about.

And then, you know, we still had to onboard it in our landscape. So basically to paint the picture a bit, when I joined both people and systems were falling over people because there was so much pressure, to. Always go for the next best new thing. So people did not really have the time to take a step back and see, you know, where are we going with this?

You know, where do we have legacy systems where we have a way better product out there in , in the world already? , oh, you know, this is running outta support. How do we do that? You know, cloud, we couldn't even think about cloud yet. Everything was on prem, but there was, you know, we were always running [00:26:00] basically.

And , then because there was so much pressure, people also started falling over and we actually thought back then that. If we would professionalize project management, then that would be the big savior and that would, you know, normalize everything. And, we quickly realized that that was not gonna change anything and that we really had to rethink everything that we did.

That is a terrific observation because I think, I've never really quite thought about it like that, but I, think when I. If I reflect on the IT organizations I've worked in, there is a constant pursuit of thinking that change delivery. If we just got better at change delivery, it would be great, wouldn't it?

Yeah. And of course you never are, you're like, you're constantly chasing your tail the whole time. You're constantly don't have enough money. You're constantly don't have enough time. You're constantly, frankly, delivering not the quality you would ideally want. What was the realization [00:27:00] there then, and how did you cut through it?

So well, the realization was, you know, that that professionalizing project management or building a PMO was not going to solve that problem. So we had to completely rethink it. And the way we did it is we, we completely pivoted the whole organization and rethought our ways of working. So from that ideal project focused organization, we went to a much more product.

Oriented organization. And it's kind of the, I, the way I look at it is, is it was kind of the birth



of our, agile transformation, right? And we did have the digital showroom, but that was really like a, a very small experiment, but, but everywhere else in the organization, also in tech, it was, you know, very much old school delivery execution.

So, We, we did two things [00:28:00] basically. Well, we did a lot of things, but in two areas. One was in that way of working area where it, it was much more about product model and agile mindset. But then we obviously also had to do something about our infrastructure because it was. This monolithic thing, you know, that, that it, it was not flexible at all.

It wasn't very responsive at all. And in this crazy world that we live in today, you know, it's changing at the speed of light. You have to be able to, to, to, you know, switch and adapt and adopt and, you know, really, really quickly. So, yeah. Right, right, we, we kind of, so. Well, one of the first things we did was actually hire, an enterprise architect.

We didn't have an architecture function yet, so that is something that, that is, that is music to Rob's, Rob's been waiting for that to hear that his entire life. That's right. We're just gonna branch out and talk for architecture for an hour or two, if you don't mind. Now that's a whole [00:29:00] other, that's a whole other different podcast, Rob.

No, I'll be quiet now. I need to, yeah, I was actually, I was gonna say, I need to call my, my, my colleague Sner, because, then the two of you can talk for the whole day. Vo I, get, yeah. Yeah. So what difference did that make? A huge difference because, you know, I think it was the other day that somebody made the comment about what we, what we were doing and had to do was open heart surgery while running a marathon.

That was really what, because you can't stop, your business. You know, you can't say, okay guys, you know, we have to reinvent our system landscape. We have to move to cloud. We have to, you know, sunset certain old systems. We want to put new things in. We want to, you know, move to microservices. Start building API that is, you know, already you're talking about a [00:30:00] year, one and a half years, if not longer.

You can't just shut down your. Business. So you have to continue doing that and, and supporting your business and, and, you know, driving or, or accelerating reaching your strategic goals. But at the same time, you also want to do the things that I just mentioned. You know, there was so much legacy in our organization that, we had to fix that.

And how do you know? I think my, one of my takeaways from a lot of people ask, you know, what, what would you tell either your younger self or what, what would you love to have known at the start of your, of a journey? This is one thing, it's a H endeavor. And it's scary because you have no idea where to start.

Mm-hmm. So the best thing to do is start, you know, close your eyes and just take that first step [00:31:00] and then you'll figure out is it the right step? Where do I need to change? And I think that is really something that we all learn together and , that is what we continue to do. So. So that whole experimentation mentality and just.

Trying things and doing things and seeing, but that is where it helps if you have that architecture architectural view because then you know that function is still looking across the whole ecosystem and, and at leasing, okay guys, this is the north star. This is where we have to go. These are all the things that we need to do, and you know how we do them.

You know, we'll figure out in which sequence that's something that we have to, to try and fail. So yeah. I'm interested in going back to the operating model shift that you described from traditional itil demand supply, client server, it into the world of, of product and product stacks. [00:32:00] And if you can just give us an, give us a bit of insight into.



What your product stack looks like. And by that I mean, is that within it or do you, have you got to a point now where the product owners and maybe some of the product designers are all sitting up in the business and you, and you are getting rid of that frustrating air gap that exists between, in the basement IT organization and the rest of the business?

Yeah, so in that more traditional setup, A team, it was very hierarchical. Teams were organized by systems. So we had an SAP system, we had a window sit on multiple SAP teams, multiple, Microsoft teams, multiple, so very much. Functionally oriented. When we pivoted, we really built it according to the rest of our business organization, if, if you will.

So, [00:33:00] marketing, omnichannel, e-comm, you know, those, those types of things. The, the very first. Step. So this was, again, we had no idea where to start, but, but we thought, okay, if we change the operating model, at least as clear, it's visible, it's tangible, you know, people can understand it. So the teams that we started building based on the business areas in the rest of our organization, were build up from.

Engineers and business analysts that previously sat in the business. So it was really this multidisciplinary team. Mm-hmm. And if I fast forward now, there's. A big difference in teams. So we have some areas where we are very mature in that setup, where we have product owner, product managers on the business side, product owners on the business side.

They understand what their role is. We [00:34:00] have agile teams really build up on, you know, several technology roles, several business roles. It works really, really well. And then we also have teams still that. Tend to lean towards waterfall approach still. Yeah. But they realize, you know, that's not, maybe not the right way to do, by the way, I don't have anything against, waterfall.

And I think there, there are still. Yeah, it's the right tool for the right job, isn't it? Exactly, exactly. Yeah, so, so that's totally fine. So for me, also, what I like to talk about when I talk about Agile is really more about the philosophy behind it, rather than, oh, you have to build Scrum teams and you have to do standups, and you know, there's, you know, how, how you do that I, think is less.

Or maybe less than what my Agile coaches would go like, oh my Anna, what are you, what are you saying? You're absolutely bang on. Agile is a [00:35:00] way to develop software. The ethos of products aligned to the business is where the magic is. Agile is a mechanism to get software out the door. It's very important.

It's much better. We, we like it best delivered with products, but it's the product structure that creates the magic within an organization. Yeah. Cause that's the fusion of business and it together. So you're actually right. It's very refreshing to hear you talk about that. Cause a lot of people embrace the, this is about application life cycle.

Management. You go, no, it's not, it's something so much bigger than that about connecting technology with business and fusing it together. Yeah. And it's that when organizations get that, that's where the, the, you know, you get the real power of technology driving, yeah. Change, don't conflate it with the, the software lifecycle thing.

That's, and a good thing, but it's not the, you know, the main thing. And you also see companies that are not really holding onto that structure are much more productive, much more successful. Just using the philosophy, but not really the methodology. Yeah, and I still remember, thanks for bringing, bringing this up because, you know, all these things start popping up [00:36:00] back in, in my mind when we started with the Agile transformation, we also, had a lot of help from, from other people, you know, who had experiences with this.



And I still remember that somebody back then said, you know, project management is dead. And I had nine project managers in my team who freaked out because they thought, oh my God, absolutely I'm losing my job. You know, what is happening here? So, you know, we, we had a lot of conversation about that also because, We also started talking about the Spotify model, for instance, you know, oh, we have to implement the Spotify model.

I mean, already, you know, how you say that is, is, is is crazy, but those are conversations that I actually had and from the beginning and we said, no, no, no. It's, it should really be about that, philosophy behind it. Why do we want to do that Is, you know, Customer centricity. Everything you do, you do from [00:37:00] the customer's point of view and for the customer, but also we want, you know, in this crazy world, we have to be quick, we have to be responsive, so, Learn and experiment.

You know, that is a mindset shift. That was huge in our organization because we tend to, you know, somebody has an idea and even though I have to say at pre, at P vh, we have very entrepreneurial culture. If you have a good idea, you run with it. At the same time, we are also quite hierarchical, so people.

Back then really felt that, okay, if I have an idea, I still need to get approval from approval from approval and then go back and then, you know, you are two months, you're two months further ahead and you know the opportunity has passed already if, if you're not careful. So it's about those concepts. Like, no, if you have a good idea, just try it out.

But Oh my God, the risk. And you don't wanna put the the business as risk. No. [00:38:00] That's why you start small, you know, you define that is, you know, the digital showroom, I think is an amazing example of that. We didn't implement the digital showroom in every part of the organization. No. We started with one division, a small division.

Like a light, like a lighthouse. Yeah. Start with a lighthouse. Let everybody see it. Exactly. And that is also something that works really well if you're trying to transform form. A, a, a big corporation is the, what I call the show and tell principle, you know, because you can't convince people, you know, I can do a gazillion podcasts about how amazing it is and agile and you know, things like that.

But unless people see it, feel it, experience it, they're not. Jping on board. So, so I think that's a very powerful thing. I, wonder if just to maybe bring today's conversation to a bit of a conclusion, you wouldn't mind reflecting on your personal leadership journey. So what it feels like to me is [00:39:00] you've got this.

Like enormous set of market opportunities and challenges that are driving pace and complexity into what you're doing. You've, you've made a really good start by the sounds of it, in terms of your digital and IT transformation that's sort of underpinning and supporting and, you know, provoking that and, and creating the right pace of response, but, There is a million different leadership decisions and some of them quite hard.

I'm sure. Cuz you're dealing with culture and you're dealing with legacy and you're dealing with finance and some very complex stuff that goes on in a, in a journey like you've just described this morning, you made it sound very elegant, but you know, the, there's a lot of muck and bullets going on, like on the battlefield when you're actually trying to make, make those decisions.

So how do you feel like you as a leader have changed during that journey and what would you leave other leaders that are going through a similar journey with. Yeah, and I can't believe we already ran out of time because there's still so much that I think barely got started. I know, I



know. Do [00:40:00] share. Yeah, exactly.

There, there is. If I may, I just want to share one, one thing that isn't relating directly to the question you're asking me, but maybe it's it, it's. Leads into my leadership style. One of the things that I love about my job, I said, you know, this is really the best job I ever had is because, first of all, I created it myself because, you know, I came in with a different assignment and then we realized it's not working.

So we have to com do completely something different and it's constantly evolving. I'm learning something new every day. It's super exciting, dynamic, And it's in an industry that I love. I love fashion. At the same time, fashion is a really nasty industry because of all the child labor, chemicals being used over consption, overproduction, I mean, it's, let's be honest, it's not [00:41:00] a a, a nice industry.

I truly believe that with technology we can change that industry for the better. To go back to the earlier example of the digital showroom. We reduce sample production and just, you know, if you think about the nbers there, that is huge. So we're really changing it for the better. And that brings me back to my leadership style.

So I, a lot of organizations and people are talking about purpose, lately and, you know, if, if you've ever seen Simon Sinek talk about purpose, you know, I,think, a lot of real companies and people want to go there. It's massively, massively important to allow empowerment and entrepreneurialism and, you know, kinda independence of thought.

Yeah, and I've been, you know, just by who I am, I need to, to love [00:42:00] what I do because otherwise I just go to work nine to five. It's energy draining for me. It's terrible. So I need to love what I do, so that's, you know, it's a very specific, decision I took to start working in, in fashion, to give an example.

Hmm. So this whole concept of, of purpose though, was relatively new to me. What we do now in all of my teams, we, we really start from that what is, what is the vision? And I have a vision that I share, but I think it's equally important. That is their vision as well. So we, we build a vision, a team vision.

Together we, we find a purpose. And the purpose is not, you know, building a great e-comm site. That's also, you know, I, dunno about you, but I,just don't [00:43:00] be the best IT department in the world. Oh my gosh. You know, that doesn't get me out of bed. Doesn't. But when you tell me, you know, with what you are doing, you're contributing to making the world a better place.

My God, you know how I think that's amazing or, you know, we allow people to be more self-confident, you know, because that's also what fashion does or can do. So I think that's much more, powerful. So I think that's one thing that that has, change in my leadership style. The other thing, and, and this is something that I learned the hard way, I.

I am by nature, I think, more of a servant leader. I have that servant leadership style. I feel that I have to make sure that my teams can do the best work possible, and for that I need to be a shit brella. And this is not my works. This is, ah, I love [00:44:00] that phrase. Yeah. It's a good way to describe, I, I,can't take the credits.

The name, that's the name of the episode. Yeah, yeah. Shit umbrella how to shit. Yeah. Yeah, but again, I can't take the credits. It's, it's a colleague of mine who, who came up with this, but I think, you know, it visualizes. Exactly how I, how I see my role. You know, my team is under the umbrella and I just have to make sure that they can do whatever they need to do.

That also means that I feel that is what I need to do, so I don't bother. So much with how



they do their work. I'm not controlling at all. You know, if we have that vision, if we have that purpose, and then we collectively we come up with objectives that will then, you know, bring us closer to the vision, then, you know, they, they do whatever they think is necessary to do.

If your team is [00:45:00] not ready for that or you have, you know, very inexperienced people, still everybody needs something different. And if you are not clear about the framework that comes with that, then you run the risk that people just go off and do whatever they like best and it's all great stuff. But the impact.

Is not as big as it can be. So that's one of my learnings that I really, you know, with that style, I have to be very specific about the framework they get with it. So these are the borders within, you can do whatever you want and then, Check in, and especially that last bit, because I don't want to be that leader who goes into every week and say, you know, tell me what you've been doing.

What have you been working on? How close I, don't want to do that, but sometimes you do need to check in just to make sure that they're on the, on the same track or on the right track.[00:46:00]

What you been looking at this week Sjoukje?

So each week I will do some research on what's trending in tech, and this week I want to focus on the top five retail technology trends for this year. So the economic outlook for retailers remain uncertain, and this is because of the rising inflation. Which causes the pricess to increase, and also because of supply chain disruption, which is also negatively impacting stores.

So both online and offline retailers are turning to technology to find new methods of delivering customer journeys for both offline and online shopping. So what are then the five top retail trends? And we already covered a couple of them. First one is [00:47:00] hybrid and omnichannel customer journeys. Second, conscience, consumers are also continuing to define the retail habits.

Third, personalization throughout the customer journey and what we already mentioned, ar, vr, and the metaverse drive immersing shopping as well. And lastly, cashless. Contactless and autonomous shopping and delivery is also a big trend. So a question to you, Manyana, you already covered a couple of them, but are there more important trends that are also affecting your business in this list?

Yeah, that's, wow, you already mentioned quite a few and all of them are very, very relevant for us our supply chain to make sure that at least that is that flawless experience for our sourcing partners, our divisions, those types of things.

I think you raise a good point there about the power of the algorithm over things like demand sensing and efficiency of manufacturing [00:49:00] is a big move where a lot of optimization can be applied right down to warehouse efficiency and the onward logistics. A lot of manufacturing organizations are waking up to attaching more advanced algorithms, AI and ML, across the top of their data.

Can drive efficiency, which then allows you to alter price points, improve internal cost margins and things like this, and we'll start to see a big move towards that. There's a, there's a lot of potential there, underpinned a lot by modern operating models and new technology patterns and things available in cloud.

You can apply them very quickly, I think, and post pandemic. There's a lot of that going



on. I think there's a lot more to do, but it's a big change that's occurring in that sort of, from demand sensing right through to logistics in these areas. Fantastic. What a great conversation today. So Manyana, thank you so much for your, your time today and your insight.

What a, what an incredible journey. Thank you for having me. We end every episode of the show by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. And that could be, I've got an [00:50:00] amazing restaurant booked at the weekend, or I'm looking forward to my favorite record coming out, or, Indiana Jones and the dial of destiny's coming out the other end of the spectr.

At the other end of the spectrum, it could be what you're excited about in your work life. So Manyana, what you excited about doing next. Two things, maybe. One is, I love my friends. I have many friends, and this weekend is a very special weekend. We do it once a year and, it's a group of, seven, families.

Oh, the children's. Still come along. So they're between, I don't know, the youngest is probably 10, and the oldest is, 22, so it's a whole weekend filled with friends, fun eating, drinking, crazy, crazy games. So really looking forward to that. And then from a, professional point of view, I think this whole AI thing, It is so mesmerizing.

I did [00:51:00] a, a program on m i t last year, six month program, and there was a lot about emerging technologies there, right? , and I'm really trying to get my head out around like, you know, what opportunities does it bring, but also what are the risks and what can I do to mitigate those risks and, and contribute to.

You know, making this into another great tool instead of something that's going to be misused and, do a lot of, horrible things. And, and where's your current, where's your current perspective on that? Cause I think we're all, you know, I think anybody, not necessarily even involved in our industry, but I think everybody, in society needs to be at least aware if not working out what their role in this is.

So, yeah. What, what's your current thinking? Cause I know I'm a bit lost with it. Yeah, it's, as I said, I'm still trying to get my head around it, I,think it comes back [00:52:00] to, what we were talking about before, you know, rules and regulations. Actually, one thing, my, my team was at, this Women in Tech conference, which is another topic that I'm, I'm really passionate about, and she opened her talk with good girls, follow the rules.

Smart girls create their own, and I think that is, is something that, so it's not so much about what are those rules, but. How can you be ethical and, and how can you, you stay sincere and true to yourself in all this, this new stuff. So yeah, we need, we need guidelines, but let's not make, you know, a gazillion rules that people have to abide by because rules will be broken.

But it's really about, you know, and I think it starts with awareness because if people are afraid, Of the unknown that that's, you know, that that's a scientific thing [00:53:00] in our brain. So if we help. Each other to understand better what it is, what the risks are, those kinds of things. Then you can apply. Apply your own ethics and morality.

That was the word I was looking for earlier, to then say, okay, so then how do I want to use it and what makes sense? Well, what a lovely philosophical note to end on. So thank you so much for sharing that Manyana. That's. So a huge thanks to our guest this week, Manyana. Thank you so much for being on the show to our sound and editing wizard, Ben, and of course to all of our listeners,

We're on LinkedIn and Twitter, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to



follow or connect with us and let us know if you have any ideas for the show.

And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast. See you in another reality next week.[00:54:00]

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