**RedZone Podcast Episode #62: An Exponential Organization CIO Who Brings Ideas to Market Fast, Executes and Delivers on Revenue and Customer Service with Prabhash Shrestha, VP of IT, American Gastroenterological Association**

[00:04:30] I want to welcome you to the show, Prabhash.

Prabhash: Thank you.

Bill: One of my biggest mentors was a CIO. She actually become the CIO from a health company up in Rockville and became the head of worldwide at Johnson & Johnson. She was the CIO of 100 CIOs.

Prabhash: Wow.

Bill:

[00:05:00] Johnson & Johnson had 100 subsidiary companies which she was the global CIO. In talking to her time, she would say, "Well, I envision ..." As a point of example, one of her subsidiary companies made these bandages for patients that were burn victims. They came out with a burn and they made these special bandages for burns. I could only imagine. She would envision herself as the CIO of how she can affect not just the business technology, but actually that patient's life.

Prabhash: Wow. Impact.

Bill: Total impact. You can see the power in which she ... Where that put her in the organization with someone with that type of vision. Can you relate to that?

[00:05:30]
Prabhash:

[00:06:00]
Oh, absolutely. I think one of the thing that we absolutely need to focus in as CIOs are beyond the service that we provide to our staff, to our organizations, I think is the impact. At the end of the day, things that we do, how is it helping our constituent? How is it helping in our particular space and being in a GI space, how is helping the medical doctor at the time of practice or at the time of patient care? Are they able to enhance the quality of care? Are we able to demonstrate by the tools that they use, how are the impacting the patients? Extending the care to the patients itself. Things like that. I think we need to be looking beyond the technicality, the technical solutions to the impact that we can create in our space. I think that's what I hear from your story as well.

[00:06:30]
Bill:
What does it mean to you to create that impact? How does that make you a better CIO by actually going into the actual patient and into the experience of the patient/doctor? How does that translate for you?

Prabhash: Okay. I'm going to step back a little bit on that question, if you don't mind.

Bill: Okay.

Prabhash:
[00:07:00] One of the thing that I see as a CIO of AGA is ... Again, this was a newly created position, just so you know. I definitely came in for business process enhancements. I definitely came in for infrastructure enhancements and in all of the cloud, mobile, social. All of the stuff that we talk about right now. Security. We talk about right now. We're working very, very heavily and have made some significant enhancements.

[00:07:30] But at the end of the day, again, bringing back to your question, I think we have to take technology to the patient care and to the physicians/clinicians so that things that we create, products that we create, services that we create, resources that we create, are helping them. We are bringing that value to them. I say that because we live in a world of information right now. If we can't provide these tools and products and services, value and effective services, then the existence of associations like ours long term is going to be in jeopardy.

[00:08:00] That's why we need to really get out there, understand our customers, understand our constituent, understand our ecosystem much better and that's the way we can really get out there and be effective and be valuable.

Bill:

[00:08:30] Who's typically in charge of ... I hate the word innovation at times because I think it's overused, but developing products to serve your members, to serve your customers. Is there someone's job that is that? Or is it a collective whole that has to make that?

Prabhash: I have to say I'm extremely proud. At AGA, it's a teamwork.

Bill: Okay.

Prabhash:

[00:09:00] We have great sets of VPs who have been here for some time and there are a few new VPs including myself. We all are extremely open to these new innovative thoughts and processes. We are continually thinking, "What can we do differently?" We hear a lot about the disruption. We hear a lot about the technological transformation, especially in our space in the medical association and this probably will relate to many of my friends out there who are in medical space. The pace of technological change and advancements and the new innovation thoughts, processes, devices have really, truly changed the world of medicine, the science of medicine as well.

[00:09:30] Bringing it back to your question about who actually is responsible here at AGA, we all are. We feel that we actually believe in a ground up innovation. We actually want to make sure that staff are part of innovation process and it's a intentional innovation. We actually are going for various ideation processes. We're very focused on a theme of innovation. What exactly are we trying to look for.

[00:10:00] A lot of these processes are happening at AGA led by various VPs. Another thing that we are trying to do, we also are working with various folks who are in the space of innovation who can come in help us establish processes of intentional innovation. What can we do, rather than incremental changes, what can we do, how can we learn to think exponentially? It's not an easy task and it's not an overnight task either, but we will get there one day.

[00:10:30]
Bill:
Yeah, it's interesting, the thinking exponential. We're so used to software upgrades and they can pretty much ... We expect that now to get added functionality, but how many of us have gone through a software upgrade in our brain to keep pace with the upgrades of technology?

Prabhash: That's interesting. Yeah, definitely world.

Bill: A different world, for sure. Do you all tend to look at market and products? Do you ask the customer or a member what they are looking for or do you try to think of something that they really don't know that they want?

[00:11:00]
Prabhash:
This makes back to Steve Job's quote on customers really don't know what they want or what they need, right?

Bill: Right, right. Or what Ford said. Did you hear Ford's quote about the car? He goes, "If I had asked customers what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse."

Prabhash:

[00:11:30] That's right. That's exactly right. But we do go out, being an association ecosystem. We all do this. Almost every association, we are very careful, very mindful of what members needs are. Here at AGA we do go through membership needs assessment, membership surveys that really gives us good food for thought, good data on what we need to be focusing on from the membership need standpoint of view.

[00:12:00] The process that I talked about earlier, the innovation process, we actually ... Right now we are establishing three distinct groups based on the membership needs assessment data that we have gotten and this process is going to, again, of course, we're going to go out, get the environmental data, the scan that we do. We also will be looking at the for-profit market, where things are. We will definitely be looking at some revenue aspect, right?

[00:12:30] Again, there are newer things that's happening that may not have been talked about or pointed out in the membership needs assessment data, but we definitely are very mindful of that, Bill, and possibly who knows? We may work with various resource kits. Those are out there. We may work with [natural language 00:12:40] processing from ... It's not in the hardcore plans yet, but we have thoughts about working with Apple, Watson and so on and so forth. Let's see. Hopefully some of these will come true soon for the betterment of quality of the patient care that physicians can provide.

[00:13:00]
Bill:
You've been winning different awards, have gotten a lot of industry recognition over the past couple of years in the D.C. area. Top Association Tech Gurus. Where did this begin? Ever since high school had been achievement oriented and this is a continuation of many successes? Where did this start?

Prabhash: Great question. This takes me back.

Bill: That's okay. That's okay.

Prabhash: I come from Nepal.

Bill: Okay.

[00:13:30]
Prabhash:
Nepal has a country-wide education system very similar to one in Britain.

Bill: Country-wide education system? Okay.

Prabhash: Yeah. The testing happens countrywide, right? When I did my high school education, I was number two amongst about 85,000 students. Academics, I believe it was there. I came to America. In Nepal, if you did not become a medical doctor or an engineer or something along that line, your career is considered almost a failure.

[00:14:00]
Bill:
Oh, interesting, okay. A lot of pressure.

Prabhash:

[00:14:30]

[00:15:00] A lot of pressure. Yes. Sometimes good. Sometimes not really. I came to America. Wanted to go to a medical school. I inquired and found out that probably financially it was not possible for me. The next best choice for me was computers. I went to school. I have done some great projects at my work. I started with the Association of Trial Lawyers of America in Georgetown for about ten years. We did some fantastic phenomenal innovative stuff at that point I would say. When you look back now, really? You look at it, but it worked. We made a lot of new revenue. I did something very similar with the Association of Fundraising Professionals. I was there for about eight years and some projects were definitely revenue driven, but many others were more of the engagement, more of the data, more of how can we better provide services to our chapters and the headquarters and so on and so forth.

[00:15:30] Here at AGL ... I've been here since November of 2014 and we have had some great big wins. The innovative thoughts are in a way you are looking at the newer disruptions on how can we actually look at the ecosystem, what's going on, what can we make minor changes that will have just fantastic outcomes and that's been my focus. Working hard, getting great quick wins will encourage you to think differently. At the Trial Lawyers Association, in ten years that I was there, I got about seven promotions because I was always thinking differently. I would take ideas to my immediate supervisor, to my CFO, to my CEO. They would lend me their ears. We would plan project.

[00:16:00]
Bill:
Let's tear apart thinking differently. What does that mean and how did you have the courage ... What mechanism did you do? Did you just sit on a piece of paper early in the morning and just write ideas and then you would take them ... Walk me through the process of how you take an idea into something that's meaningful to someone.

Prabhash: Sure. I'll walk you through one example.

Bill: Okay, yeah. An example would be great.

Prabhash: A story, I would say.

Bill: Perfect. Perfect.

Prabhash:
[00:16:30]

[00:17:00] In Trial Lawyers Association, fantastic trial lawyers ... We had, I believe they still do ... I've been gone since a department called [inaudible 00:16:34]. One of the things that we did there was we provided service to trial lawyers about the cases and how can we actually help them with the information? There were processes where they would call in facts in email. Staff person will go through the request. Try to help them out. These are not super disruptive, but thing these would take about ... We would charge them a few hundred dollars. Take about eight to nine days for us to return about 300, 400 page printed out on a mail courier out to them.

1997/98, I knew this was wrong. This could be done completely better. We really thought it through on how we could do it. Back at the time ... I still remember this. Those were early days of Internet issue, if you know what I mean.

Bill: Oh my gosh, it just started two years earlier ... The real Internet, right? '95 with the modems.

[00:17:30]
Prabhash:
Exactly right. We planned a complete digitization of every single court document they produced in these legal briefs. Everything that we had.

Bill: Wow. That's a really ...

Prabhash:

[00:18:00] Exactly. I knew we could do things better and different. We completely turned around the processes. Made everything better. We had everything available online for instantaneous access, full text searching. This is 1997/98 with a Windows NT [iao3 00:17:56] server back at the time, but I knew that these technology could make these big huge impact. At that time, it was a huge investment for my association at that time.

Bill: Do you use those platters? Do you use those optical recognition platter systems?

Prabhash: Well, at that time I think we actually had good server systems at the time. Before them I remember the Wang systems with the platters and what have you.

[00:18:30] This really truly changed how we served our trial lawyers. If you look at membership surveys and what have you, you could see what a fantastic job that we were doing and the number just erupted on how many people we were helping, the capacity, the bandwidth completely changed. The revenue. We dropped the price dramatically but the volume and the quantity and the ... It just went up and up and up.

[00:19:00] I believe at that time and if I am not wrong, we created over a million dollars of new revenue back at the time with implementing technology so things like that. You ask how. It's very obvious when things are wrong. We can enhance. We can make it better. You think about it and how can it be done better. You think about the minimum viable product. What is the minimum thing that we can put out there? As you test it out, how can you make it better? We kept on adding additional things to that over the years, but we thought about ...

Bill: But you went out with a minimum viable product first that got ... Tested the market with it.

Prabhash: Of course, absolutely.

[00:19:30]
Bill:
Was the culture ready for you to bring ideas to them or did you have to come up with some special spreadsheet proof of concept? Did you ...

Prabhash: Absolutely. Business plan, proof of concept, how it would work, visualizing how the product is going to be, how it's going to help, working with the CFO to make sure that the financial models will work and it's not going to be the existing revenue stream that's going to go ...

Bill: You forecasted the revenue as well in the early stages?

Prabhash: Yeah, I worked extremely close ... This was fantastic. I had a fantastic CFO to work with at Trial Lawyers of America, Don Walker.

[00:20:00]
Bill:
Oh, that's great.

Prabhash: Had a fantastic CEO who always thought about, "Hey, you know what? These are the things that we could try and see how it works." Tommy Henderson. They listened. They thought about these things. We presented to board very hesitant at first but eventually they said these are the right things to do and we did and it worked out.

Bill: Wow. You do a lot of teaching right now.

Prabhash: I do.

Bill: At Georgetown?

Prabhash: Georgetown. I teach their technology management program in the masters degree and it's a phenomenal ... This is one thing that I absolutely truly love.

Bill: It's a blast?

Prabhash: Yeah.

[00:20:30]
Bill:
If you had to teach a four-week course and it was for CIOs and you were teaching them about how to build new revenue streams into the business, what would be some of the curriculum chapter headings that you would want to cover in four weeks? Could you do it in four weeks? Would you need eight weeks to pull it off?

Prabhash: Yeah. Tough one to answer on the spot, but I'll think about this, right? I think it makes sense though.

[00:21:00]
Bill:

[00:21:30]
Yeah, more just the themes, I think, would be really on the fly. The themes are interesting to me because you're an educator and I know this is a gut-level, intuitive way that you approach ... You and I had coffee a couple weeks ago and you're all about revenue, but you're very disciplined about it. We looked at some of your models here that you developed for some things you're doing with AGA and your presentation of the model is very concise, succinct. You have a way of not making it more complex, but actually distilling a lot of your research into an actual model. There's a way you do it, even though it's innate for you and instinctual.

Prabhash: Okay, let's go back to the course, back to your point. We have to definitely think about auditing the market, right? That's the first thing I would say. What's in the marketplace? Maybe there's a way to identify gap. I think that's going to be one of the first thing I would want to teach in this four weeks course.

[00:22:00]

[00:22:30] The second big theme I would say would be build. Build in the sense that how would you actually think about the gap and how can you actually take the next step of filling that gap? In this build aspect I would also probably talk a lot about the startup mindset, right? The Lean Mean Startup way of doing business with minimal investment with maximum outcome. As part of this I will probably also talk about the same thing that we talked about earlier, the minimum viable product. MVP. Along with this I will also probably touch on a time to market of the product. I think that's going to be extremely, extremely important.

Bill: Time to market. Interesting.

Prabhash: Time to market. How long do you take? If there's a requirement now, is there a way to minimize time to market within ... Into months rather than a year?

Bill: A year.

Prabhash: If it's within a months, can I bring it down to weeks, if possible? Association are different [inaudible 00:22:58] that's not possible, but in a for-profit market, I'm sure that's 100% possible.

[00:23:00] Then the third theme for me would be grow, right? Once you have a product out there, the MVP, what's the opportunity? This is all about being a digital entity, digital organization, right? You continuously are looking at the data. What are you seeing? Are people buying? Is there an opportunity of growth? One quick little example I will share with you again. A quick little story.

Bill: Yeah, love it.

[00:23:30]
Prabhash:
Here at AGA, one of the thing that we started doing by creating this various apps, we looked at the penetration of the audience from various countries and we very easily figured out that in one of the clinical guidelines app that we are using here, which is a phenomenal success, by the way, we had 18% penetration from India into that app, but ...

Bill: Wow. You'd never would have known that.

Prabhash:
[00:24:00] We never knew that, right? But when we look at the other ones, the ones that we have to pay for, there was 0.3% penetration.

Bill: Interesting.

Prabhash: Right? There's a problem. Along with the problem I see there's opportunity of growth. There's opportunity itself. When I talk about growth theme, these are the opportunities that we really need to dissect and why. Is it the price point? Is it a localized? Is it the language? What is it? Is it marketing? Those would be under the third umbrella.

[00:24:30]
Bill:
This would be under the third ... Is examining data under the grow. You put a new app out there, but it was a free app and then you have your for-profit app, but you weren't getting the same data out of both and ...

Prabhash: That's right. Why?

Bill: Why? Okay and asking that question, why.

Prabhash: Let us understand. This is the part of innovation I think. You really truly think about. This could mean, not saying that it will be [inaudible 00:24:48], but just in general sense this could mean that maybe the price point that we're charging for this is so outrageous that people in India cannot pay.

Bill: Yeah, yeah.

Prabhash:
[00:25:00] Right? Is that what it is? Maybe the content or maybe we're just not doing any kind of marketing internationally. This means that even if the association doesn't go into national or global, we can take the product global very easily.

Bill: Right, right.

Prabhash: We could not do that three years, five years ago. Now?

Bill: You can scale that. Right.

Prabhash: Exactly.

Bill:

[00:25:30] I was just reading a book ... Eric Ries's book on Lean Startup, which I'm sure you've read and he talked about that data piece and really looking at the data behind the scenes and picking those key indicators and not getting overwhelmed by the data but picking the key ones. It sounds like you picked the ones here you want to see differences between your paid and your new ...

Prabhash: Yeah. There could be 50 other data points like that. If you really truly think about the growth ... I focus on two things, the growth of the product itself. How can we enhance the product itself so that people become attached to it and they're a better audience, bigger audience. Then I look at market growth.

Bill: Market growth. Got it.

Prabhash: How do you get into the newer market that we were not there before?

Bill: That's a complete mind shift.

Prabhash: Isn't it?

Bill:
[00:26:00] Because who would've thought that AGA ... Who would've thought that any association, but just in this particular example could ... Talk about thinking outside the box, thinking outside of geographic boundaries and emerging markets that need the advanced data analytics capabilities that you've been providing to members for years and years and years.

Prabhash: Exactly. This is how we need to think when we think about the innovation thing.

Bill: Right, right.

Prabhash: Ultimately the fourth theme, and I will end it at that, would be the evolution.

Bill: The evolution?

[00:26:30]
Prabhash:
The evolution of what's next. Where does this particular product that we talk about will take us? There has to be on all four of these phases two things that we need to absolutely focus on, never lose sight of is the design and the customer.

Bill: The design and the customer.

Prabhash:

[00:27:00] Right. It has to be simple. It has to be something that they can very easily use. You have to provide that simplicity. One thing that I always talk about which I mentioned earlier as well and another thing as we talk about all these four phases, we have to have customer service and revenue in mind.

Bill: Yeah, that seems to be a major theme for you. Would you agree with that?

Prabhash:

[00:27:30] I think so. I've been told by many that there is a huge focus on customer service, member service and money, yeah. This is my core belief: in order for associations to grow, we have to provide bigger and better service that can compete with here's where I'm going to be trashed your audience with Google or others, right? Otherwise they can get everything that they need other places.

Bill: To remain relevant, the membership service revenue growth, otherwise you're going to be looking at some of the bigger ...

Prabhash:

[00:28:00] That's right. You cannot put out a bigger better product than service if you don't have revenue, right? If you don't think about that now, it'll be too late down the road. You use the word 'relevant'. For me, word 'relevant' is already too late. You have to be ahead of relevancy. Too late. Relevant is ... If you start thinking about relevancy or start talking about being relevant, that means you are already behind.

Bill:

[00:28:30] Relevancy is too late. Where do you see the biggest mistake CIOs make? If you were a fly on a wall of your peers, where do you see people making ... If there's a hundred CIOs in the room and the top 10, 20% clearly generally outperform the rest, that would be the reason that you see now and moving forward the top three pitfalls that if we're not careful a CIO can get sucked into and it's hard to get out of?

Prabhash:

[00:29:00] I'm going to start with something very basic. We're in 2016 now. I still find and many CIOs are talking a lot about technical solution and I think we all have to grow beyond from that. We have to transform ourselves from technical solution provider to business and strategy. I think that's the one biggest thing that I feel that we really need to start talking about that we really start needing to focus on strategy and the solutions to the strategies.

Another thing that I will talk about is the value that you bring to the table and communicating that. I can talk about associations ecosystem a little bit more because I've been in this space for 20 years.

[00:29:30]
Bill:
Oh, that's fine. I think it's transferable. Yeah, the digital leaders are going to be able to understand and relate to their own industry.

Prabhash:

[00:30:00] This is not only the CIOs but also the rest of the staff and the board also. Generally what I see, Bill, is I see that technology is not considered or adopted in an association ecosystem as the game changer. I think within the last three to five years, CEOs and boards are slowly start to think differently, but overall it is still considered a technology service provider shop. That mentality has to change.

[00:30:30] While CEOs and other VPs who are not technical as the board needs to start thinking like that, I think the CIOs themselves also need to do a lot of selling job. We also need to show them how to bring the value. Show them the quick wins and establishing that by doing X, Y, and Z differently, we can really make an impact to the constituents, to the customers, to the members, and the whole ecosystem.

Bill:

[00:31:00] By showing a quick win ... If you were the CEO of an association and you had a CIO working for you that came up that was basically your protégé. You didn't know it. They just showed up, but you quickly understood that they were a mini-you. What would that person need to demonstrate? What's a 'quick win' mean? Does that mean revenue within 60 days? Revenue on the idea within six months?

Prabhash:

[00:31:30] In association space, it's more of the latter. It's not only the revenue. I have to trace back a little bit here. The core of the services that we provide, we would have to be good at that. I'm not saying that we don't have to provide the existing infrastructure, business operational technical services. Please don't take me wrong. We still have to do that. We have to show that we can do that fantastically well. That stays there. That's not going away.

Bill: That job's not leaving.

Prabhash: It's not leaving.

Bill: Right.

Prabhash:

[00:32:00] What I'm trying to say is the additional services. Let's say we think about a new product line, a new service line, a new resource line in the association ecosystem and we have to be able to demonstrate that by creating this new product line or service line, this is the impact. This is the increased retention rate or growth in revenue or some kind of quantifiable ... It's not a wishy-washy number, but something that you can provide to say, "Hey, this is the difference that we have made. We feel there's a little needle is moved here."

[00:32:30] If you can show that within a short window and I say that for window because the quick wins ... To tie it back to the quick wins. Within six/eight months of being a CIO in an association, I think that's a good growth. Being able to create partnerships. Being able to look beyond the internal IT operation and bringing partnership, bringing revenue, bringing ideas of new product services, establishing a relationship with the board, and these are the things in my point of view will be considered as quick wins that you can actually demonstrate and that will make things easier for other things that you would do afterwards.

Bill:

[00:33:00] Clearly not losing the eye in the ball. Keeping your eye on the core services delivery. You also, I just want to make the point, you're not necessarily saying innovate on the core service that's currently generating the revenue. Are you saying that I'm going to push out to the edge on new products that are additive in nature?

Prabhash: Yeah, that's been my thing. I have always thought about new products, new resources, new services, new revenue.

Bill:

[00:33:30] Okay. That might actually help because then you're not necessarily threatening a bunch of key stake holders whose careers and ... They may have been the person 20 years ago that suggested that product line and they build up a whole time around it. It might need to go away, but you're saying, "I'm not going to challenge that. I'm going to additively add to that." Is that been your ...?

Prabhash: Yeah. Makes a lot of sense, but I will also say to that point is there has to be focus and priority as well. If we can become that catalyst or change agents to talk about more and more of those things that we do in associations. Associations have a tendency and I'm sure your audience will 100% agree with me, that we like to do 22 things inch deep.

[00:34:00]

[00:34:30] Somehow, some way if we can start talking about the focus and priority and there are many books that you know that have been written out there or even in association space, fantastic space, which actually help associations to focus and prioritize getting not only the staff, not only the VPs within the staff, not only the CEOs, but also board strategizing and thinking about focus. When you do things like that, the syndrome of 22 things slowly starts to go away and the mindset change happen and then you can focus better on things that you should be doing. That'll also be congruent with the changing timeline or the changing environment.

Bill: That makes sense. What percentage of your time do you think you spend on strategy versus the core operations of infrastructure, security, the necessary keeping the trains running? What percentage of your time do you spend there versus on the strategy on average throughout the year?

[00:35:00]
Prabhash:
I would say half and half. I don't exactly have a number. I have a great team here who are fantastic at making sure that infrastructure and everything else is running well. What also helped is we were able to move everything to cloud within the last two years, including our video conferencing and all of the phone calls and everything else. We have literally, other than domain controllers, nothing else in the building anymore. That also alleviates those responsibilities if you know what I mean.

[00:35:30] Not only myself. I just wanted to add to your question that we also are elevating the responsibilities of each one of the IT staff to the business end strategy. Yeah, I think half and half. Maybe a little more on the strategy side now because we actually are thinking about a lot of futuristic stuff, a lot of thought innovation, new product lines, what else could we do. A lot of fun times.

Bill:
[00:36:00] Is it possible to delegate cool ideas, interesting new ideas? Is your thinking, "I'm going to clear my decks as much as possible so that that 50% stays at 50," potentially goes north so you have more and more time or is your thought, "I'm going to actually delegate some idea generation"?

Prabhash:

[00:36:30] We actually do that ... I think we do that very well here at AGA as a team. Going back to, we came back with an IT retreat and we focused about four hours of ideation and it was fantastic. We came up with 84 ideas. Not game-changing ideas, but something that we can do better, something we can get better at and on the AGA wide, as I mentioned to you earlier, just a quick little example of membership assessment data that we have and taking it down to the grass root to every staff to see how can they get involved with idea generation. That talks about that as well. Yeah, I think we can definitely delegate idea generation as well as execution of the ideas that have been generated.

Bill: Did you run that session? Did you have an outside company come in to facilitate that?

[00:37:00]
Prabhash:
No, the IT one we did on our own. We are planning for the other ones and let's see how it goes. I'll let you know.

Bill: Now the 86, did you ...

Prabhash: 84.

Bill: 84. So the 84 and I actually wrote down 84. So the 84, how does that become from an idea to something that is actionable?

Prabhash:
[00:37:30] It works very well. Right now we like to do those idea generation sessions ... We like to do it more than once per year and hopefully it becomes that way ongoing process. Right now we are going through a budget cycle, a budget process right now so we are trying to look at the priority list of ... I'm working with my senior director and we're looking at what are the kinds of things that we should be doing and what are the things that can be done without major budget impact. Some of the ones that will have budget impact and what have you we'll roll that into the process and put it to the finance committee and go from there.

[00:38:00]
Bill:
Are there any books or any learning programs that you can recommend for people listening that have made a big impact for yourself as you've gone through this journey.

Prabhash:

[00:38:30] Yeah, the one thing that really, truly helped me and I talk about this quite a lot. When I went to MIT, I went through their executive session education and that program is phenomenally helpful to me. Another thing that was very helpful and I don't know how if we can do this or not. Somebody may not have passion for this, teaching has been phenomenal because you have to be ready to teach the smartest students from all around the world who come to Georgetown. I don't want to be embarrassed. Yeah, seriously. That has really, truly helped me as well.

[00:39:00] I used to be avid management and leadership book reader. What I noticed in the last three to five years, three years probably, is that I am reading more articles now than books. I'm quite out there on the LinkedIn and people who I follow ... They're just fantastic quick reads now rather than having to go through a book in three days, four days I feel like within my lunchtime or whenever, in the evening or whatever time that I have. I can go through these things very easily and that has really, truly helped me with many of these.

Bill: That's great. So teaching has made the big impact. Going to MIT executive ...

Prabhash: Education.

Bill: ... education program and then reading the snippets. I know you follow some people on LinkedIn. Do you read MIT's published material?

[00:39:30]
Prabhash:
I do.

Bill: Harvard's?

Prabhash:

[00:40:00] Absolutely. All of the regular stuff that many of us do. Again, fantastic stuff. I read a lot of stuff on Forbes, Wall Street. I do a lot of CIO.com stuff. There are a lot of strategies and business, they have some fantastic things that they put out. From the course standpoint of view and more and more online learning now, so I'm looking into this [workman's 00:40:16] course. It's not that expensive. I think we can on our own pay for that as well. They actually have a course on Lean Mean Startup Business and it's on Coursera. I'm planning to take that soon. When we talk next time, Bill, I'll probably will be done by that course.

Bill: That's excellent.

Prabhash: Things like this.

Bill: Coursera is a ... I think Udacity, CreativeLive.com is another great one. I think that these mini-education programs are massively important.

[00:40:30]
Prabhash:
Yeah, they're fantastic.

Bill: I know. The same thing myself. If I need to learn something? I can buy it for $60 to $1,000. Boom. I'm in.

Prabhash: Just go out there.

Bill: Otherwise, how else am I going to get the knowledge?

Prabhash: That's exactly right. One other thing, I speak a lot and I talk about this quite a lot as well that I think we have to keep up with this new knowledge, I would call it. I think there's great things out there. Great things.

[00:41:00]
Bill:
My CTO came to me the other day and he goes, "I'd like to this course through MIT on some deep learning visualization." I don't know. I can't even remember. It has absolutely no relevance, however I know the market will be there in three to five years and we better be ready.

Prabhash: That's right. Yes.

Bill: But also I think that forming those new connections sometimes, even if someone took an art course, the ability for that set of knowledge to bleed in to what you're currently doing is outstanding.

[00:41:30]
Prabhash:
Yes. 100%, 100% agree. Especially I am a big data guy. I've always been. To your point, especially around the visualization as well as the analytics, this thing is going to grow. It's just going to grow and when we come to that prescriptive analysis aspect, I think, that's where I would really truly believe that the IT departments and IT companies have really, truly matured. In my space, I feel like with the association, we need to take association there.

[00:42:00]
Bill:
As far as understanding the large data sets and how to make decisions from large data sets?

Prabhash: Yes. Yeah, that plus again, how else we can use that data for the impact that we talked about and another thing that I will again add another time that how else can we monetize that.

Bill:

[00:42:30] It's fascinating. I've found two ... It's hard to find them now, but I've found two deep learning and machine learning guys to come in and talk to ... We put a group together on the street for the RedZone SUDC event and it's crickets from executives so far. The problem is is that I don't think a lot of executives realize that if you understand, you don't have to be a technical geek on this, but if you understand how to apply, how to solve problems using some of these advanced tools ... All it is is it's just big data out of control and now those data sets are available so what tools do we need to extract that so we can actually make and solve problems?

Prabhash: Absolutely.

[00:43:00]
Bill:
I think it's huge. It's interesting in the association world, my gosh, that the data and understanding data is ... That's almost the Holy Grail.

Prabhash: Isn't it? Oh my God, yes. There's so many. I just believe that with a better use of data there are so many opportunities that associations have, no matter what kind of trade that they're in and I think we just need to become better at that.

Bill: I really appreciate you for your time and sharing your wisdom with my audience.

[00:43:30]
Prabhash:
Thank you, Bill. This is a lot of fun and if there are any questions, anybody would like to get back to me, please ... I think you're going to ...

Bill: We're definitely going to have show notes so I'll put the show notes here.

Prabhash: Great. Thank you.

Bill: Anything we've talked about, companies, and yourself. Would you prefer people to, if they're going to say hello to you on LinkedIn? Would you prefer ...

Prabhash: Absolutely, I would love that. I would love to learn.

Bill: Any final comments or anything that you ... Any message that you think would be important for listeners to hear as we wrap up?

[00:44:00]
Prabhash:
Sure. Again, I'm going to talk about the association ecosystem a little bit, if that's okay, Bill, because that's been my 20 years of career here.

Bill: Sure. Totally.

Prabhash:

[00:44:30] I think as a whole, no matter who we are, whether we're staff or board members or executives, I think we really need to accept and adopt the new technology innovations and we really need to think through on processes of how to make that happen within an association. These things won't happen on its own. We have to take those first few baby steps towards that.

[00:45:00] The danger of not doing this ... There's a cost of doing this, yes. I understand. In some cases, it's not going to be cheap. What I worry about is the cost of not doing it. If we were not to do this, and especially in our ecosystem, association ecosystem, you use the word 'relevancy' earlier and I would say the same. That we would be irrelevant in no time. I'm not trying to create a scare there, but I think in near future with all of this technological transformation/innovation that's happening, it is going to be very hard for us to compete.

[00:45:30] Our strength in in network. Our strength is in engagement. Our strength is in providing knowledge, education, training, certification, and I think we need to focus on these things. How can we provide, how can we do these things better in 2016's technology? Let's get at it.

Bill:

[00:46:00] I think earlier just to tie this up, when you were talking about really having that firm grounding in the needs of your member that you were actually going a bit deeper than that. What is the real grounding of that doctor's experience, that the patient's experience with in, your area, gastroenterological, but what is actually going on from a health point of view at that level? Is that part of this?

Prabhash: Absolutely, especially in the medical society space. I think the point that you were trying to make was know thy customer, right? Jim Collins also said it. Not only your customers. Know your customer's customers as well, right? Let's get there. Let's be there.

[00:46:30] To put all that in perspective, there are so many medical innovations that's happening. There's a lot of talk about the connected health, mobile health, population health. All of these to me are opportunities and how can we get into each one of these and how can we help our ecosystem?

Bill:

[00:47:00] Yeah, absolutely. It's fascinating and just having a conversation with one of your peers and the person said, "I don't really need to know about medical devices. I don't really need to know about these other areas with the medicine. I just need to know about my area." I thought as I was walking out, I said, "I'm not sure that you can have this in isolation. I think you have to understand the impact of the entire ecosystem. It's impacting your customer. Not just that one specific doctor, but that doctor has to use a lot of different other expertise."

Prabhash: Exactly. I 100% agree, yes.

Bill: Interesting. This is great. Hopefully we can do a Round Two at some point in the future.

Prabhash: There you go. Thank you so much, Bill.

Bill: You're welcome. It's been a pleasure.

Prabhash: Thank you.

[00:47:30]
Bill:
Thank you, everybody for listening. I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Prabhash. That was a fun conversation and one of several that I'm going to bring to you with CIOs that are local to me that I have deep respect for that are really getting the job done and that I think that you can learn from and help better yourself both personally and professionally.

If you've enjoyed this program, this episode today, please go to the iTunes and leave a review through your podcast app on either Stitcher or iTunes or SoundCloud.

[00:48:00] With that, I want to thank you again very much for listening, for taking your time which is the most precious asset that we all have and this is Bill Murphy signing out. Thank you.