

Welcome to The Event Tech Podcast, where we explore the ever-evolving world of event technology every week. This show is brought to you by Endless Events, the event AV company that doesn't suck. Now, let's talk tech.

Will Curran:

Hey everyone, it's Will Curran from Endless Events, and welcome back to the Event Tech podcast, where I am joined by the toothsome Brandt Krueger. Brandt, thanks for joining us.

Brandt Krueger:

All right, I'm going to need a definition on that. What does "toothsome"-

Will Curran:

Oh, "toothsome". Wow, I'm not prepared-

Brandt Krueger:

Like, just big teeth, because I don't have that big of ... I have a big mouth, I'm not going to lie about that.

Will Curran:

Let's see here, "toothsome" is "temptingly tasty", usually referred to food.

Brandt Krueger:

Okay.

Will Curran:

However, of a person, it means that you're good looking and attractive.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, in that case, that is-

Will Curran:

I'm not going to lie.

Brandt Krueger:

That is a fantastic adjective for the day, nice.

Will Curran:

It does say it's informal, so, but this is pretty informal.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, nice. Okay, sounds good. Well hey, today we're going to be talking about something that I've been kind of mulling around a little bit, especially coming on the heels of the event icons show that we did in Germany. Thinking a lot about technology and how we as an industry have

a tendency to lag behind. It's something that's come up in actually a lot of our shows, whether on this show, or in EventIcons, this idea of how the events industry seems to lag behind technology in general. Now, it works out great for people like me, because I'm keeping an eye on the greater technology picture. So in a way, I can kind of see things coming a lot further off. But you know, so we just want to take today and parse through some of the possibilities of why we think this is. So let's start at the beginning Will, and just talk about a little bit ... First of all I guess, do you think ... I feel like I know the answer to this, but do you think we do lag behind this in industry compared to a lot of them?

Will Curran:

Yeah, I mean, I think it's really interesting that we brought this topic up, but I believe, yeah, definitely, I think that there are ways that we lag behind. I think there are some ways where some technologies will jump forward and be simultaneously as they're happening, but then for the most part, a lot of it is really, really far behind. You see things in other industries that have already been implemented, already solidified, been doing for years, and then boom, it finally hits the events industry mainstream. So I definitely agree.

Brandt Krueger:

I think there's some elements of there's certain things that we'll allow to come in faster than others. So on the audiovisual side, I think people are more open to the latest and greatest when it comes to lights, or intelligent lighting, or LED bars, or things along those lines, where we're taking kind of next-generation technologies and bringing them to the AV side. But then, somewhere along the line, there's a divide, right? We think about how long it took us to go from the first mobile apps to where we are today. Really, that's a solid five to eight years of growth in that area, where people were very scared of the first mobile apps that were coming out. Not scared, "scared" isn't the right word. I don't want to imply that we're-

Will Curran:

Worried?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, I think "worried" is a better way of putting it, of like, "Oh, I don't know about that," because paper, you know, paper works. Paper is ... And I remember people saying things like, "Well hey, I never have to replace the batteries on my paper programs. I'm never going to have to ... I don't have to worry about whether or not I have wifi for my paper programs." But somewhere along the line, as we started to get more comfortable with that technology and more comfortable with relatively ubiquitous wifi for our attendees, now basically, every event that I'm working on has an event app associated with it. Gone are the days, pretty much, of printed schedules. So it's weird, because I look at this like, "That's not that long ago," right? Five to eight years. But at the same time, that's forever in technology terms. So I guess my ... There was a question there I was working my way towards.

Will Curran:

I was like, "Uh, he's gone-"

Brandt Krueger:

"What's he doing?"

Will Curran:

"Where's he going, where he going?"

Brandt Krueger:

"He just went, where's he going with this?" So what do you think as far as where is that line? Why is it that there's some technology that we're pretty reliably accepting and moving forward with, and then, for some reason, there's this other line somewhere along the line that we start to go, "Oh, I don't know about that"?

Will Curran:

Yeah, I mean, one thing I've noticed with technology is that when there's an obvious benefit beyond just efficiency or the cool factor, that's when it usually starts to get implemented. So for example, you brought up the AV side of things, so I'll circle back to that, it's like LED technology, right? There were so many benefits to it, beyond just it being the cooler, newer thing, and all the features it can do. Because LED, one of the great things about them is that they can change color instantly, right, like conventional lights couldn't really do that, all that sort of stuff.

Will Curran:

But where LEDs really came in helpful was two part: A, you had the cost savings. There's less electricity use, so planners were really excited about implementing it because, "Hey, less electrical, maybe if it's the same cost in light, I can end up saving money." But also, the other thing is the sustainability factor, and I think that was one of the reasons why mobile apps sometimes moved pretty quick too, is that like, "Hey, we can get rid of paper," and that's still an argument today, is that there's a lot of technologies coming out now. "Hey, how can we be more sustainable?" And I think that's when we start to see it.

Will Curran:

But what's interesting is, compared to we've talked about CES on this show a bunch of times, and kind of the consumer side of things, even the 5G side of things for internet, is that with that sort of stuff, a lot of it's just the cool factor of, "Whoa, I want the bleeding edge," and I consider myself definitely on the innova ... Or on the very early edges of the diffusion curve of technology, but a lot of it's just like, "I want to have the newest thing to have the newest thing, to be able to experiment with it." Whereas, planners seems to move more towards having more reasons beyond it just being cool.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and I think there's very few events that you can truly justify just getting the coolest, latest and greatest, and if it works, it works, and if it doesn't, it doesn't, that kind of thing. Because

when you've got really high-end technology show, maybe they can then, A, afford, and then B, also they have to look like they're cutting edge. So you do tend to see those when the client is technology based. You see a little bit more experimentation, you see a little bit more, "Let's take a chance on some new technology." But for the vast majority of the rest of our meetings and events, where it's an Association of Motorcycle Parts dealers, it's not necessarily the kind of thing where you're going to be experimenting and going way out on the edge of technology. Not that there's anything wrong with the Association of Motorcycle Parts. I literally just made that up. I'm sure there is one-

Will Curran:

I love that association name.

Brandt Krueger:

I'm sure there is one. My point being that there are a few events where you can truly justify the "let's go crazy, let's go bleeding edge", but for the majority of events that are out there, there's this caution. There's this, "Oh well, we want to make sure that it's bulletproof, we want to make sure that it's safe. We want to maybe let other people be on the cutting edge, let other people try it out for a couple of years so that we can see that it's in action, and we can see that it works before we want to try and implement it on our events.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I agree.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. I mean-

Will Curran:

I agree, definitely. I was going to say, I definitely, I think, I agree with that, "Let's let someone else deal with it first." I mean, that's a big part of lack of adoption of technology, is the, "Hey, why doesn't someone else be the beta tester, the alpha tester, the guinea pig?"

Brandt Krueger:

Right, and that's, I think, one of the frustrations that I would bump into when I was working for a production company, is they always wanted to know what was new, and what was the latest and greatest, and, "That's the new, cool-fangled thing." But then, if they even remotely got a whiff that it was not 100% bulletproof, then they would back off from it. And so it was frustrating, because the only way that you can do that stuff is to do it, right? So if you want to do cutting-edge stuff and you want to try new things, somebody's got to be first. And that's something that I think we could possibly do help our industry get out of this rut a little bit.

Brandt Krueger:

Maybe "rut" is not the right word, but having a way to test these things at scale is an important thing. So when we're talking about new technology, whether it's virtual reality technology, or AR

technology, or even just new ways to interact, new audience engagement technology, being able to test those things at scale, and not just with 30 people in a conference room trying it out is something that I think we need to be better at in the industry, so that we're not having to test it live. Does that make sense?

Will Curran:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

So this is something that's been kind of rolling around in the back of my head for a long time as well, that back in the day, "Back in my day, when we were just little event guys ... Get off my lawn, you crazy kids," there was a series of events called Eventcamp, and they were un-conferences. And these were probably pushing 10 years ago now that they were doing them, and it was one of those things where they were just maybe too many, too fast, and people kind of got burned out on them, and we stopped doing them. But what I liked about it was it was an internal industry event, right? So it was four planners, four people in the industry, to get together and try out new things. So try out new configurations.

Brandt Krueger:

It was there that I first saw people experimenting with putting bouncy balls in the breakout rooms, so that you can sit on bouncy balls instead of boring old banquet chairs, and alternative room setups. And very early on was one of the first events to be doing live streaming, right? So they were using Sonic Foundry technology to do live streaming, at a time where that was really rare and strange, to be having remote attendees. And navigating those waters of what not to do, by making mistakes and doing it wrong, and going, "Oh, that didn't work," and then Will, you'll know, this is jargon jail full on, right, is doing things like mix-minus on the sound board.

Will Curran:

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally, jargon jail.

Brandt Krueger:

We had to try them out, so for what that means is that that's how the audio is being routed to the people in the remote location, so that they're able to, especially if they're going to be responding in some way, not creating some kind of a feedback loop, where they're hearing themselves, hearing themselves, hearing them talking, and that kind of thing. So you have to really think through the inputs and outputs in the audio board to make sure that that's going to work. And I'll be honest with you, we didn't really think it all through when we were figuring this all out 10 years ago.

Brandt Krueger:

So to kind of bring that around, what I'm trying to say is what was great about that series was that we were trying really bleeding edge event technology, and trying to find a way to make it go in a safe space. Now, ultimately, a couple of things happened: One, like I said, maybe we did

too many, too fast and people just kind of got burned out. But then, I think we tried maybe too many new bleeding-edge technologies, and if enough of them go wrong, people feel like they're having a bad experience. SO you have to be a little careful, but I loved that idea of having a safe space where you could test things at scale. And so I think that's something that we need to look into and come back around to somehow.

Will Curran:

Yeah, and I want to give shoutouts to Elizabeth Glow, who's watching the livestream right now as we're recording this, and she mentioned that basically, that was a big reason why Eventcamp was created, like you said, was because there was this lack of innovation. And she brings up a really good point, that in our industry, our association events that we're all going to, should be the testing grounds for this stuff. But far too often, we're trying to have too polished, I think, of shows, instead of showing people the bleeding edge. I feel like a lot of them are showing more innovative stuff. I wouldn't consider them necessarily lagging, but they should be a chance to be a playground, like you said, for Eventcamp, and I definitely agree with that. We have to be willing to risk it internally before we bring it to our clients externally.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, exactly, and I can think of some examples of ... I don't remember exactly what, but an MBI, WEC or something like that, where they tried something new and it didn't work, and they just got torn in social media and things like that by the planners that were there, going, "Well, they really shouldn't have done that, and they really ..." It's like, "Well, yeah, but they tried something new and it didn't work, and as I recall, they were pretty honest about that."

Brandt Krueger:

Like, "Yeah, we tried something new, it didn't work, and now you know better. So now you know ..." That's where, I think, the really valuable learning experience is, right? So they tried something new, it didn't work, and now all of those planners that were there know that that doesn't work. So if somebody in their group comes up and says, "Hey, I got an idea, let's do it this way," then you're able to say, "Yeah, I went to a show like that, and here's how it worked and why it didn't work."

Will Curran:

Yeah, I can't agree any more. I had a point and an idea that I had, but I'm definitely losing it now. So I think we'll move on.

Brandt Krueger:

I'm just ,what is it, toothy? What was that?

Will Curran:

Yeah, you're a toothsome.

Will Curran:

Can that also be described in the facts and knowledge that you're sharing as well, that was toothsome knowledge?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah. Sure, we'll go with that. So I want to ask another question on this topic, and that is to, as gentle and carefully as possible, navigate this idea ... Because I think sometimes the initial reaction when we have this conversation is to assume that it's older planners that are resistant to change and resistant to things, and I don't think that's necessarily the case. But I wanted to throw that out as the next topic, of in general, we look at folks with a stereotype, especially older planners with a stereotype, that they're not going to be open to technology, they're resistant to change.

Brandt Krueger:

We think about helping our parents get online and things like that, and sometimes when you've got people that have been in this industry for 20, 30, 40 years, I think that's the stereotype. But Will, we've had some conversations recently about this, where I think really, it's more about the industry and less about the age of the industry. We're just risk averse as an industry, and it doesn't matter whether it's 10 years in or 40 years in.

Will Curran:

I can definitely agree to that. As the token Millennial I think.

Brandt Krueger:

Token Millennial, Willennial.

Will Curran:

Willennial, like Willennium, you know, the Will Smith album? Cue that music right there.

Will Curran:

You're welcome for bringing back to the '90s, but-

Brandt Krueger:

Nice.

Will Curran:

No, as a token Millennial, I think that I can definitely agree to that. People will sometimes feel like that it what it is, but I feel like it's more so a mindset than anything, and I know that's been said a lot in our industry before. But there's definitely people I know my age who can't figure out how to use apps, who are opposed to smart home technologies, and I would consider more on the lagging side of technology. I've had people who are just like, "I don't understand how my phone works, that's why I have an iPhone. That's it." They don't care about bleeding edge, and I think there is definitely a stereotype that younger people are definitely embedded more in technology.

Will Curran:

I will agree that we have every opportunity to be involved in it, but now there's ... Even, as weird as it sounds, even me getting to the ripe age of 30, I'm getting the point where, and I'm so ancient now, that I sometimes am worried, "What does the next 20 years look like for me?" Am I going to somehow fall behind the technology curve, even though I consider myself pretty far on it as well? But I think definitely, it's one of those mindset things for sure. I think that if you think that you don't like technology, and that you're not going to be on the bleeding edge, then you're definitely going to fall into that, for sure, mindset all the way.

Brandt Krueger:

I think it's being open to things too, right? Being open to change, and being open to learning new things. Definitely, as I've gotten older, I get more locked into, "Well, that's what works," you know? And so, "That's what works, and that's the way I'm going to do it." But I think being open and honest about trying new things ... I was resistant to getting on Slack for a while, and even when I first got on it, I'm still like, "Ah, ah." And I still don't love it, I'll be honest with you about that. It's like, I don't love Slack. I think there's things that work better in email than Slack. But there's also understanding that different people have different ways of communicating that's better for them.

Will Curran:

For sure.

Brandt Krueger:

And then there's some people that prefer text over email, and there's some people that prefer Slack over email. But also, so I see the benefits of Slack. I'm able to go in there and use it, but then I also see, from time to time, where the same question gets asked over, and over, and over again, because it's been scrolled away.

Will Curran:

No one uses the search function.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, well, search function, or it scrolls. I actually don't like the search function, it isn't really good on Slack. I don't know why, for me at least.

Will Curran:

We'll sidebar about that.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, that's another thing. So I'm with you there, that as I get older, I start to get locked into what works, and being more resistant to change. So I think some of that comes with age, but there's definitely a mindset. You talk to the David Adlers of the world, from BizBash, and he



always refers to himself as being "Millennial minded". And I try to be that way as well, I try to be open to new technologies, and trying new things, and always learning about what's new, what's next, and those kinds of things. But, like you say, there's also an equal number of people across all age points that are like, "Ah, I don't know about that. I just need it to work and I don't care." What's funny to me is that I think we're actually starting to see a return to the spreadsheet in a way. I don't know if you've noticed this, but I've been seeing more and more people using things like Smartsheets and other things.

Will Curran:  
Airtable.

Brandt Krueger:

And as much as companies like Shoflo or trying to bus people out of those things, there is something to be said for, "It's just a spread sheet that I can share, and I can print, and it works, and it's there, and it's ..." There is something to be said for that. As much as I enjoy using products like Shoflo, I think it's interesting that ... And I think you could potentially see a Gen Z return to ... As Microsoft continues, like we talked about in the episode where we were talking about build and IO, as Microsoft and Google continue to develop these collaboration softwares based on Excel, but now not locked into Excel, I think you could see people returning to these kind of Smartsheets, to use their own terminology against them, where I can have this sheet in a Word document, and that sheet in an Excel document, and we're able to collaborate on them in real time.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I think you bring up a super, super duper good point, that not only that reason why technology might not be adopted is not only just the ... We'll talk about it probably in a sec, is the risk aversion, and the worry that something could go wrong, but cost. That before, as technologies were kind of coming out, things were free, things were freemium, and now that they're starting to solidify, now you have tools, yeah, like Shoflo, and some people look at it and go, "Well, why would I spend \$1,000 on that software when I can just build this out in Excel? And yeah, it might not be as pretty, it might not work properly, it might break a couple of times, but am I willing to pay this money?" And I think that's where also people are coming in and there's some aversion to tech, is the cost, right?

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly, and I don't know if you've used Smartsheets, but I've been pretty impressed. One of my clients uses that pretty much extensively for distributing on-site schedules, and Shoflos, and, "By the way, here's the wifi code," and all that kind of stuff. And it's essentially an overblown group share of spread sheets, right? It's called literally "Smartsheets", and it actually works surprisingly well, to be able to distribute things that way. And it's got permissions, so you can say, "Okay, only the AV have access to this, this, and this, the planners have access to this, this, and this." Really super way of organizing things that I've actually been pretty impressed with.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I definitely think there are some really cool tools around Smartsheets, like especially the Gantt chart stuff is really, really nice as well. Anyways, we're going off track. So another reason why I think that technology ... I have a couple of ideas and thoughts around this is, and Daniel Picock in the livestream audience brought this up as well, is the risk aversion as well, is that events are naturally extremely risky, right?

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly.

Will Curran:

So I think, as much as we are the most stressful job in the world, and tons of times we take big risks, and especially if you're an entrepreneur, you have a ton more risk as well, but I think what happens with the events industry is we are trying to minimize that risk as much as possible, through things like ... Yeah, yeah, we could leave a cable going across the walkway. Chances are, no one's going to trip on it, right? But there's that one chance someone could fall. Extremely risk averse, is our industry. So I think that that adds on to a ton into the technology, because technology, in a sense, is risky, no matter even if it's the most established technology out there.

Will Curran:

I'm trying to think of tons of established technologies that I use all the time, that just every once ... It's okay, let's take Windows, right before we were filming this podcast, right, we had this issue with a piece of software: I'd booted up the computer, did the normal thing. It works every single time, this one time it didn't work. I rebooted the computer, it worked fine. Like, such an established piece of technology just decided not to work. And if you think that that most technology and you're risk averse, chances are you're not going to adopt it.

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly, and the thing about ... So I came from the theater world originally, and the thing about the theater world is that you usually have a run, right? You've got a run of X number of shows. And so if something doesn't go right for one show, yes, it's bad. But you have six other shows that you can straighten it out, and fix it, and make sure it never happens again. If you're lucky enough to have a series of events that are basically the same event, then you've got that opportunity. But the vast majority of our meetings and events, you only get one shot at it. And it's, I think that's a part of it, right? That's a part of that risk aversion, is, "Oh man, it has got to be bulletproof, because we only get one shot at it."

Brandt Krueger:

And that's why you see such extreme frustration when something happens with microphone feedback or something like that, that it's like, "Ah, we only had the one shot." You can't go back and un-feedback your keynote speaker or your CEO during ... Or a teleprompter fail with Michael Bay, something along those lines. This is the big shot, you've got this one shot. And if

something goes south, there's no ... I think that's honestly why we keep seeing that most stressful statistic coming up, because it's one of those professions where it has to be perfect the first time, especially if you're on the special events side, where you're doing weddings, or birthdays, or bar mitzvahs, or something along those lines, where you literally only get one shot, because the person's only getting married ...

Brandt Krueger:

Most likely, having that wedding once, you know what I mean? You don't get to have that wedding twice. Maybe you get married twice, but you wouldn't have that one twice. You know what I mean, or the kid only turns that age once, so those types of events. That's, I think, where that stress comes from, or why that statistic keeps popping up, is because of that. And I think that's probably the core of a lot of what we're talking about today, is this idea that, "Man, it has to be as bulletproof as possible," and I think that's where ... And we've talked about this on this show, where the fear of live streaming comes from, that there's one of a thousand things that can go wrong to mess up your livestream.

Brandt Krueger:

And we're always pretty clear when we talk to people about live streaming, to say, "There's always going to be somebody that can't access the feed," and to not panic about that, and to not freak out about that. That there's always going to be somebody that calls in and says, "The feed is dead," and then usually it's a matter of rebooting or something along those lines. And so having someone available to field those questions and to help guide them through that situation, but also just understanding it's going to happen.

Will Curran:

Yep, totally. If it's okay for a second, I want to pivot away ... I think, unless there's other ones, I think we've talked a lot about how either the people who want to adopt the technology or the people ... the people who want to adopt the technology, planners, we've been talking about how there's been a lot of issues with them not wanting to adopt technologies. But I wanted to take a second and talk about something that I think the industry as a whole is doing wrong and hasn't really done that is also contributing to this problem.

Brandt Krueger:

All right. Yeah, bring it.

Will Curran:

All right, all right, so in consumer technology, when a new product comes out for example that's bleeding edge, or whatever it is, chances are, by the end of the week that that product comes out, there's unboxing videos, there's first impression videos, then there's usually six months after ... There's this whole YouTube channel called Six Months After I think it's called, and it's all about what the product is like six months after you own it, right? And there's so many reviews. If you just search 'technology reviews', there's sites, on sites, on sites on this stuff. But I think in

our industry there hasn't been a truly honest review site where you can go in and get a truly unbiased, brutal opinion of the technology, of someone who has used it as well.

Will Curran:

Because obviously, yeah, you have to, A, be willing to adopt all these different technology. A lot of times, they're expensive, so it's not as easy as picking up a \$300 pair of headphones, using them for a week, and then saying, "Okay, let me return these," or maybe the company hasn't been willing to give it free for an event. But there isn't really a place ... And maybe this is an opportunity for Endless at some point, but is to review these technologies and give them the brutal, honest opinion. And for planners to have that resource to go to it and say, "Oh my gosh, here's a really great example of someone who uses it."

Will Curran:

Because yeah, there's case studies, right? Every technologies has these cases studies like, "Oh my God, I love this technology. It's so great," right? Case studies are naturally biased, because you're never going to put a bad case study up and say, "This is why the person didn't like it." But that doesn't really exist in our industry, where there's no brutal, honest opinion if something went wrong. And I think that is a major problem with our industry that we are currently missing when it comes to the event technologies being implemented.

Brandt Krueger:

I think you're absolutely right, and it's something that I've thought about for years as well. And so I'll throw out some of the things that I've thought about as far as the challenges to that: Now, I think there's some opportunity here, so there's some opportunity here where we can talk about technology in an honest way here on the show, like, "Hey, I used this thing and it was amazing," or, "Hey, I used this thing and, eh, it didn't work so well." So we've got some opportunity here. The problem, as I see it again, kind of going back to what I was talking about before, is everything works great in a demo. And so the number of times that I've been shown event technology in a demo, and it looks fantastic, is 100%. It's never like, "Oh, oops, sorry, I guess this kind of sucks."

Brandt Krueger:

It always looks great in a demo, and it looks great in an office, and it looks great when it's only one person hitting the app on a fiber connection, as opposed to on a crappy hotel wifi. So that, for me, is the biggest problem, the biggest hurdle to something like that, establishing some kind of repository of reviews, is that because the environments are so different from event to event, that someone could have a terrible experience with a product on one event that wasn't necessarily that product's fault. But, there's still things you can learn from that, right? So how an event app handles when it drops off the wifi is an important thing to know.

Brandt Krueger:

How does it handle it? Does it pop up an alert that says, "Just so you know, you're offline," or does it just stop working? So there's good things to know, so that's one of the biggest hurdles

again, is testing things at scale, seeing things work at scale. And something that I have asked of technology companies in the past and never been invited to do was, "Can I come see your product live?" So you know, "Are you going to be at a show nearby? Great, I would love to come see it live." "Um, uh, okay ..." They um and ah, and it's like, "I don't know, it's a private event, and I don't know how they'd feel about having somebody random there," that kind of thing. So those are some of the problems that surround what is a really good idea, Will, is having that kind of repository.

Brandt Krueger:

And I think we just do what we can with the mouthpieces that we have as far as ... I'll throw one more thing at you, and that is when I've seen new technology, and I've approached those companies, and even said, "Hey, I've got this new podcast, and all the downloads, and all the people that are listening, and I think it would be great to review your technology. Can you send me a review unit?" the answer's been, "No." And it's like-

Will Curran:

Yeah, wild.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, I'll go spend a couple grand on a product that could suck, because then I'm really going to lay into you, and that's what I wish I would say to them is like, "Okay, I guess, if you want me to buy this product and it's awful, I'm going to lay into that review even heavier, whereas at least if you send me a review unit, you're probably going to be a little kinder."

Will Curran:

Yeah, no, I definitely agree with that too.

Brandt Krueger:

Open call, by the way. Anybody that wants us to test something, an open call. Definitely let us know, reach out, Event Tech podcast on Twitter, or the [eventtechpodcast@helloendless](mailto:eventtechpodcast@helloendless) for our email. So if there's something cool, cool technology that you want us to try out, reach out and let us know.

Will Curran:

Definitely, definitely, and yeah, obviously I hinted at it, but maybe there's an opportunity for us to definitely so that, I think, in the future.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah.

Will Curran:

But I think, yeah, it's a two-way street for sure. Look at these consumer tech companies: They know that they want to get their product in the hands of as many YouTubers as possible,

because I'm subscribing to them, I'm bleeding edge, and if I see someone say, "Hey, this is really, really good, this is an amazing product. I'm probably going to buy it." I mean, I'm literally looking.

Brandt Krueger:

That's exactly what I was just thinking.

Will Curran:

My video right now, and I'm literally like, "Look at all these things." Look, I just got a new slider for the camera. I bought this based on two YouTube videos I saw that were reviewing it and giving feedback on it, and that doesn't exist in the events industry in any sort ... I mean, not a really heavy way. Maybe one product here, one product there, but yeah, definitely, that's the reason why I think we're lagging, is the public information available, sharing about that product.

Brandt Krueger:

And I think that's why it's important, when we are at industry gatherings, to have those conversations with each other and say, "Oh man, I was trying this and it was amazing." And some of those campfire sessions that you get at are perfect opportunities for those kind of things.

Will Curran:

Totally, and I think one of the things that you can do too is just also, being willing to ask a question, and this maybe starts to lean into another topic we could do on how to evaluate technologies. But just make sure too that you also ask about the bad things too: "Can you give me an example of someone that wasn't really happy? Can I talk to them, and can you explain why?" Because, to be honest, I'm happy to sit down, if someone said, "Hey, I really didn't like ...". Most people were saying good things, right, and then talked to one person, it's like, "What are you bad at?" I love that hardcore feedback, and I've done that when I've implemented big systems and softwares within our companies. "Hey, what are you not good at? What's missing? What am I missing at this point?"

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and as someone who's met with a lot of event tech app companies and things like that, if you ask them the same five questions, they're all going to tell you, "Oh yeah, we can do that," and, "Oh yeah, we can do this," and, "Oh yeah, we can do that." But if you really press, you can usually find that one thing that they're really good at, or kind of their core business, and you can maybe even find the things that they're not so good at.

Will Curran:

Totally. So well, I think it starts to wrap up a little bit about why our industry is so lagging behind in technology. Is there anything else that you wanted to add, Brandt?

Brandt Krueger:

No, I mean, so it's just kind of summarize, there's an inherent risk aversion, right, due to the fact that we only get one shot at things. So that's going to make us a little more skittish and a little more nervous to try new things. I think there's a mindset possibility, that some people are just more risk averse than others, some people are more willing to try new things than others. And then, there's looking for opportunity-

Will Curran:

No good ... Yeah, I was going to say no good place for testing, no test bed for trying out new technologies.

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly, and then maybe not being so critical when we do, right? So when we do see someone who's testing and trying something new, I think some of that is being open with your audience and saying, "Hey, we're trying something new," and being very open about that, rather than, I think sometimes there's a tendency to try and, "Oh, don't say we've never done this before." That's definitely something that's bothered me in the past, where, for whatever reason, people were really resistant to ever admitting that they'd never done something before.

Brandt Krueger:

I think we need to be open about those things, and be honest about those things, and say, "Yeah, we've never done this before, but we're really excited to try it," and then you be open with your audience and say, "Yeah, we've never tried this before. We want to know what you think." That's where you're going to get honest feedback from your audience. But yeah, looking for test beds, looking for safe ways to test technology in a way that's not going to be torn apart because we're all hyper critical of each other's events. So using those industry association events to try new things. Not just new seating configurations, but actual new technology and new things.

Will Curran:

I can't agree more, and then probably the last thing is just lack of information on these products to be able to know whether they're good or not, right? Beyond the company-provided case studies and testimonials, being able to really, really have a source to be able to get honest feedback and reviews on stuff.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, and sharing that information with each other at these industry conferences again. "Oh man, I had a fantastic experience with such and such a product." "Oh man, I had a terrible experience with such and such a product." But then, also digging into the 'why?' You know, "Well, why didn't it work? Was it because of the hotel wifi? Was it because there was some other issue? Was it a matter of not setting it up to succeed with adoption rates or things like that? Did nobody push it?" So looking at the whys of why it failed could be just as useful as why something succeeded.

Brandt Krueger:

And you know, Will, it occurred to me, one of the other things that we've talked about in the AV side is not being afraid to ask for references on things. And so, to your point of what do you do badly, I would love to have a ... "Can you provide references?" Not just a client list on a webpage that says, "We did it for Microsoft." Okay, well, that's a pretty big company, and you may have done one event for one division in some random place that doesn't necessarily mean that that's an endorsement, right? So let's be asking our technology companies, asking our AV companies, "Okay, if you have used that technology before, I would really like to speak to someone who was there and find out how it went."

Will Curran:

Totally, and I think one of the things too, now I think about this as well, is one of our issues as well is not always is the person who's purchasing the product the end user of it.

Brandt Krueger:

Yes.

Will Curran:

So that's another issue why I think that we have this feedback loop, this feedback issue, is that we're also worried that, "Hey, I'm going to adopt this technology but I'm never even getting a chance to ... I may use the backend to get set up, but ultimately, it's going to be my attendees." So almost, we need to start pushing also as well is for more attendee-related feedback on technologies as well, to see if it works beyond just the, "Hey, did the planner or the company say it was awesome?" Just an idea.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and that's another perfect opportunity for implementing these things at our industry events, right? So then we are the attendee, we are the ones that get to experience it. And then have the people, the organizers of the industry events maybe come up and talk about what was it like on the backend. So you know, "Yeah, we're trying out this new technology, here's the challenges we faced as we implemented it," and then, "What did you think of it? What did you like and dislike as an attendee as opposed to someone on the backend?" It really is the best way to get to know a technology, is to be on all sides of it.

Will Curran:

Definitely, definitely. Immersive technology reviews.

Brandt Krueger:

That's right. We'll start doing reviews in VR so that we can make it as super immersive as possible.

Will Curran:

I like it.



Brandt Krueger:

All right, well yeah, I think that about wraps it for this topic, unless you have anything else you want to add in?

Will Curran:

No, I think we definitely beat this one with a dead horse.

Brandt Krueger:

Fantastic, well, we want to know, "Did we beat this dead horse enough or is there more that we missed?" Reach out to us using #eventtechpodcast on Twitter, or send us an email at eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com. We want to know what do you think about this conversation? Were there aspects of it that we missed? Are we absolutely crazy and this is always the way it's going to be, or is this something that we can work on as an industry? We want to thank you so much for tuning in and remind you that you can find all of these episodes of Event Tech Podcast at eventtechpodcast.com, of course.

Brandt Krueger:

There, you're going to have access to the show notes, the links to all the resources that are shared from all of our amazing guests that we have on, the transcripts, so you can find out exactly what the adjective of the day means there, and you can look them up for your reference and use later on in your own life. You can find the links to subscribe in your favorite podcast app, like iTunes, or Pocket Casts, or Google Play, and we want to be where you want to listen, so let us know if there's a platform that we're not on. And be sure and give us a rating there in those platforms. I'm told it helps with discoverability when we have lots of positive reviews there. Then we'll get to find out-

Will Curran:

Yeah, give us the reviews.

Brandt Krueger:

If we can move up to like the 170th slot on marketing and business events in Macedonia.

Will Curran:

In Estonia.

Brandt Krueger:

Right, some of those reports are pretty interesting. So thank you so much for joining us. Will, thank you for joining me.

Will Curran:

Thank you, Brandt.

Brandt Krueger:

What's new and exciting at Endless over there?

Will Curran:

You know, just doing the same thing. We got events all over the place. We're in our high season right now, so keeping very, very busy over the next coming weeks. So super duper exciting events coming up, what about you?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, we're hopping as well, so yeah, it's a busy, busy summer between work and vacations, and things like that, trying to get the family out to Orlando for our first Disney experience, and I'm somewhere in between terrified and excited as we approach that as well. And then we've got work events bookending that, so it's definitely a busy early summer for us as well. Yeah, so hopefully you guys are all out there having great summers, and we look forward to seeing you next time on the Event Tech Podcast.

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