

Episode 16
#SaveMWC
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Speaker 0 00:00:02 We have breaking news from TelcoDR. I'm Danielle Royston and this is Telco in 20.

Speaker 0 00:00:21 As you all know, I'm super excited about MWC in Barcelona. I've been talking for months now about how I'm going to go big. We have a little more than a hundred days before opening day on June 28th, and I'm going to be my bold self and say, it's totally going to happen. COVID cases are down almost 50% worldwide since peaking in January of this year. And every day we're setting new records on vaccination rollouts. We're turning the corner on this thing and life, as we used to know it, is making a comeback.

So you can imagine my shock and disappointment when I heard the news that one of the old dinosaurs pulled out of MWC. You know who I'm talking about – Ericsson. I mean, how lame is that? My take is they're leaving because they have nothing new to say. I believe this is an awesome opportunity to move in the new guard as we pivot to the conversation that matters – moving to the public cloud.

When I heard that Ericsson was baling, I immediately got in touch with John Hoffman, the CEO of GSMA to see if we could put a deal together. And in a couple of hours, we had a virtual high-five. I'm grabbing the Ericsson space, baby. The Ericsson booth is one of the biggest booths at MWC at more than 6,000 square meters or 65,000 square feet. We're talking bigger than an American football field. What is TelcoDR going to do with all that space? Maybe we set up a tennis court or maybe we get my hero, Elon Musk, to put a rocket in our stand. I'm actually serious. I've already asked him.

Speaker 0 00:01:56 Whatever we decide, I do know it's going to be the public cloud destination at MWC. So my prediction is MWC is going to happen. Let's save MWC and make it awesome. We're going to shake things up on the podcast today. Here's the deal. Oprah has been a little busy dealing with the Royal family. So I've grabbed a great friend of mine, David Hazelwood. And he's going to interview me. We're turning the tables, I guess you could say, on just about every level right now. This is my side of the story. How my deal got set up, what we're going to do with the space. How are we going to change the conversation from all those lame-o legacy losers hogging up all the airways to the new public cloud players that are disrupting the industry. The roaring twenties are here and we're going to make it happen. So let's take 20. I mean, let's take 65,000 square feet of space at MWC.

Speaker 0 00:02:54 Alright guys, I bet you're wondering what I'm doing. Today we're going to change it up and do something a little bit different on the podcast. I invited my friend David Hazelwood to chat what I'm doing to the telco industry. So, hi, David.

Speaker 2 00:03:09 Hey DR, how are you?

Speaker 0 00:03:10 I'm awesome. I'm making waves, I guess is a good way to put it.

Speaker 2 00:03:13 Yeah, I would say that based upon my feed, TelcoDR had a pretty interesting week.

Speaker 0 00:03:19 A couple of things happened this week. I had this really amazing talk that I did for TelecomTV. It's a 20-minute talk. We worked super hard on it. And so I was really gearing up to promote that talk and make that a big thing. But something happened on Tuesday morning, and that was Ericsson bailed on MWC Barcelona. And I decided to step into their space at 65,000 square feet or 6,000 square meters. And so yeah, I'm taking over their space.

Speaker 2 00:3:50 So this is the part that I couldn't believe. So what you're saying is that you already were going to do a booth there, but it was going to be something small. Is that right?

Speaker 0 00:03:57 Yeah. We were planning to go, right. We had a pretty good sized booth, but this was just like an amazing opportunity. And I think this is what people don't understand. I think they look at it and, like, Oh, it's a publicity stunt. Or like, she doesn't have the money, like, it's a true fricking story, true story. So I see the news from Ericsson post on Twitter and I had been busy in the morning. And so it's like lunch, and I'm checking my Twitter feed, and I see that they've bailed. And I'm like, this is such a super awesome opportunity to get access to Ericsson's customers. Right? And so, yes, it's 65,000 square feet. I think a lot of people thought it was a joke. I tweeted to the GSMA saying, I'll take their space. I reached out to a couple of journalists, like, I want to do an interview about this. No one wrote me back. No one liked my tweet. I mean, I have like 900 followers on there, I'm not the most followed person on Twitter. But like, no one wrote back to me.

And so then I went onto LinkedIn and I randomly had been connected to the CEO of the GSMA a couple of weeks ago. And so I tagged him and I was like, John Hoffman, I will buy that space. And he responded back, let's do it. And I responded back, great. Who do I talk to? And he was like, we'll be in touch. And then he took it offline, which is whatever. I'm sure he was like, who the fuck are you? And is this serious? Right? They're like, are you serious?

Speaker 2 00:05:25 Yeah, no, that's exactly what I wanted to know. I saw the LinkedIn thing and I think I speak for everybody that knows you, or is familiar with you, that it sounds absolutely crazy. And is that even true? So why are you doing with this?

Speaker 0 00:05:38 So we put the deal together pretty quickly and it's done. I'm in the space, super psyched. It's a ton of space, just for context. I mean, 65,000 square feet, 6,000 square meters. That's like a football field and a half of a space. And so on Twitter, I was like, I'm a big tennis player, I could put like a tennis court in there, but I'm like, Hey, Elon Musk has this whole Starlink thing. Why don't we get like a fricking rocket? Like he was blowing up rockets, surely he has rocket parts.

Speaker 2 00:06:08 Right. Yeah.

Speaker 0 00:06:10 He can send it to me. So, I think on a more serious note, really what I want to do with this space is change the conversation from what it's been for like ever, which is the big guys dictating the old messages. You know, the same old, same old. And what I'm all about is public cloud disruption. I've been talking about it for years. I was planning to have a small booth and, like, basically stand in the aisle and wave and try to flag people down to get people to come. I'm now in the Ericsson space, everyone knows exactly what I'm talking about. And those Ericsson customers know exactly where it is. And so, they're just going to walk right through my front door. And this is an opportunity. It would have taken like tens of millions of dollars and years and years to do. And the ROI on this, right? I'm going to build a stand and change the conversation. I'm going to invite the startups and companies that are trying to drive the future of telco into the booth. We're going to try to make it fun, but yeah, I'm going to turn it into this public cloud city. All about how telco can be about the future. And change the conversation from those legacy guys that literally have nothing new to say. And so, let's do it.

Speaker 2 00:07:24 You mean Erickson wasn't going to talk about 5g again? The people that were ready for that message.

Speaker 0 00:07:30 I mean, are you going to talk about how you're, like, not doing Open RAN? Right? Like what are you guys going to talk about? So, I mean, for those guys, I think it's really easy for them to bail and use COVID as an excuse because they don't have anything exciting to say. And I'm not like that. I have a lot of things to say. I think the time is now. I'm a forward-looking girl. I look forward 90 days and I'm an American. Our president just announced that vaccines will be available for all adults over 18, starting no later than May 1st. We'll have a supply for all the adults that want to be vaccinated by the end of the month. And so that gives us a whole month before Barcelona. It's totally going to happen. And the people that have something to say are going to be there. I think people are ready to be together and I'm super pumped to travel again, meet people and talk about the future. So yeah, let's do it.

Speaker 2 00:08:23 So this morning in the midst of reading the press release, I thought the title of it was really cool saying that they're welcoming you as a major vendor, but you know the TelcoDR website, if you just go to that, your offerings are podcasts, newsletter and blog. Uh, that does not exactly, in my mind, and maybe everyone else's mind, really take up 65,000 feet. So there must be more to this story. And that's, I think, what myself and everybody else wants to know – what else are you going to have?

Speaker 0 00:08:50 I think it is confusing. I get it all the time. You know, who are you and what are you doing? And so I call myself a telco evangelist. I have plenty of private equity funding and really my purpose is to accelerate the adoption of public cloud.

And so I guess the first part is, I got a team and there are parts of my organization that talk to all the telcos, really trying to provide a counterbalance to all that, like, legacy messaging, that

quote “public cloud won't happen here” kind of thing. You know, IBM's fake cloud, all Amdocs, you know, fud, they're constantly doing. Those guys that don't want public cloud to happen because it's not good for them. And so I'm out there talking to telcos about public cloud and how transformative it is to their business. And so I think that's, like, one part. The second part that I'm trying to do is, I'm out there looking for all the great public cloud startups.

And so in my talk, I talked about this great little company called Totogi. There's a video out that I did for TelecomTV. We'll link it in the show notes for this talk. It's a 20 minute video and it gives you, like, everything about my position, right? That in every industry there's a Siebel versus Salesforce fight going on. And in our industry, Amdocs is the Siebel and Totogi is a new Salesforce. And I think it's super exciting. Salesforce obviously won that fight. I think Totogi is going to win this fight. And I think it's, you know, it's not going to happen overnight. It's going to take some time, but I think it's fresh. It's new. And Telco's this weird Island where, like, people don't believe public cloud is going to win. And it's won in every single industry. And so I get to be a visionary when I'm really just reporting historical facts from other industries that are going to going to happen over here.

And I think the third part of my strategy that I haven't really shared super broadly, but now's a really good time to start talking about it, is I'm putting together a fund to go acquire lots of telco software companies and have them aggressively repositioned for the public cloud. So kind of three parts of the strategy. I'm really excited. I'm talking to lots of people about this fund I'm raising, but I expect to get at least a billion dollars. And I think this is the public cloud year for telco, and I'm leading the charge, and I get to do it in my super awesome 65,000 square feet.

Speaker 2 00:11:04 It sounds like you're going to be supporting other companies that are aligned with you as well, it sounds like.

Speaker 0 00:11:09 Yeah, I'm going to ban the words on-premise and private cloud in my, in my booth, right? I'm going to be like, Get out, like, literally leave. Like, we don't speak that here. But yeah, I think there's a group of software vendors that are really excited for this innovative future. They're ready to adopt the new technology. It's not new. It's 20 years old and we're dragging telco, kicking and screaming. And once they get to the new land, they love it. They're like, Oh my God, I had no idea it could be such a joy to manage software this way. And I'm like, duh, duh.

Speaker 2 00:11:51 So DR, what are you going to do if more companies, other than Ericsson, decided to bail on MWC?

Speaker 0 00:11:56 I don't think that's going to happen. If you project forward, I think it's pretty obvious. A lot of people will be going, I hope Amdocs bales because I'd love a shot at their customers, too. So like open arms, go to MWC, get your vaccination. Of course we want to be safe. I think it was 65,000 square feet, there's enough room for social distancing in my booth. Right? I can put little stickers on the ground, six feet away, blah, blah, blah. But, um, yeah, I think it's going to happen. I think COVID has to end eventually. And it's obviously ended

in Asia, and I think finally the rest of the world, you know? The vaccines are out. The cases are down. It'll be nothing better than the end of June to be perfect timing, to go back to seeing people and having meetings.

Speaker 2 00:12:39 I did get third place in the Northern California Science Olympiad for metric estimation. So I know that 65,000 square feet is pretty big, but I also know that in addition, the conference is, like, what three months away? End of June, beginning of July? And you just made this commitment this week? So what, what are you going to do with all this space? We talked about the initiatives you have there.

Speaker 0 00:13:05 It was funny. Cause we were like, it's kind of the hangover of the decision is kind of setting in. And I'm kind of like, um, I think I need to hire a hundred people. Like now. We should call Ericsson. Like you probably already had hotel rooms book. Can we just take over your hotel block? Right. And so it's everything from people to like the message and recruiting all the companies. And I've met a couple of them. I've been talking to, I don't know, I've talked to 50 different companies over the last six or eight months. And so it's like recruiting all those guys and making sure that their demos are great and high, high standards. We're talking about the future. We're educating people, we're showing them how it works and we're getting them ready to embrace it. And I think it's perfect timing for the telco industry. I'm pumped.

Speaker 2 00:13:51 So we might be able to get the Barcelona soccer club to play?

Speaker 0 00:13:56 That would be awesome. Penalty shootout with like Messi and like Ronaldo. Nadal is Spanish. Maybe we can like make a little clay for it.

Speaker 2 00:14:04 Well, if you want, if you want to return one of his serves, though, we probably should not go in a clay direction.

Speaker 0 00:14:09 You know what I want to do with Nadal, is a series of top spin forehands. Cause he like fricking buggy whips the shit out of that ball and I'm short. And so, literally would not be able to, like, reach it. It'd be, it would be comical. Or, like, a super lefty serve. I mean, this is going to get a little geeky, a super lefty serve to the ad side. I am also lefty. I'm exactly like Nadal. I'm both handed. So both handedness, just to kind of digress, both handedness is when you can use two hands for different things. It's not ambidextrous. Ambidextrous is you can use both hands equally. I write right-handed and I play tennis left, as does Nadal. He is both handed and left. Lefties are famous for their crazy ads serves that, like, send you into the fence. And so I want to take his craziest ad serve. It'll be so awesome.

Speaker 2 00:14:57 Well, I'm equally as bad with both of my hands in tennis. Does that make me ambidextrous? They are equal, they're just equally bad. Well, I guess if you're going to have Barcelona soccer or tennis, you'll need to put up some protection from the crowd, because balls would be whipping around out there. What about like, what about entertainment? Keep people entertained down there.

Speaker 0 00:15:15 So we were already planning to do some sort of concert or event outdoors. You know, again, I think people will be super excited. And so I've been, like, looking at different acts to recruit, you know, some of them are like very Texas rock – ZZ top is available. I'm like, I don't know how that go to the European audience. And then Billy idol, like, I sorta feel like Rebel Yell really goes with my theme, but you sort of can't do like 10 Rebel Yells in a row, though. I did once, listen to Rebel Yell a hundred times. That is true. That is super true. And then I was like, maybe like a dance band that everyone knows, like Duran Duran. That'd be awesome. They have that song called Planet Earth, but we can like rename it Planet Cloud. I was listening to it yesterday. I was like Planet Cloud. And then my maiden name is Rios. I'm actually Mexican, and people don't know that. With a name like Royston, it's kind of hard to tell, but it is my married name. But my maiden name is Rios and they have a famous song called Rio. And I would love to listen to that song live. So maybe Duran Duran, I don't know.

Speaker 2 00:16:21 Maybe they can take you up on stage with them. That would be pretty fitting.

Speaker 0 00:16:24 But no, again, like I said, it's not just a PR stunt. I mean, if you told me, even when I was CEO of Optiv that I would get access to the Ericsson customers, that they would walk through my door at my booth, I'm right there. The ROI is instant. This isn't like a multi-year thing. It's an instant thing. And I think there's a lot of people talking about it on LinkedIn and Twitter right now that are, like, recognizing this, like, fricking master marketing move. And I'm super psyched. I'm thinking I should, uh, probably send a case of wine over to the head of BSS of Ericsson, because it probably was not his decision to bail on this.

Speaker 2 00:17:01 I was going to ask you about that. How do you think they're feeling this morning?

Speaker 0 00:17:04 Yeah. I mean, I'm sure. Well, I know they called over to the GMA and they're like, wait, what? They're like, you gave away our space? And I think the GSMA reaction is like, well, you guys bailed, right? Like we're an organization, we're trying to make this work. We need the big players. And you guys are like, we're going to stay home. This person showed up. She has money to spend. She's excited about this. And so I'm excited to have a shot at Ericsson customers. It's billions, billions of dollars of revenue. And I get to pitch my vision. The Totogi team has an opportunity to get mindshare with those guys. And so I should send that guy a case of wine. So yeah, that's the plan we wanted to put together a quick podcast, kind of telling the story. I'm super excited and super jazzed.

And I can't wait to see everyone at the show. Come see me, double bonus points if you're an Ericsson customer. We'll do special stuff for you. Maybe VIP tickets for the concert we throw. And frankly, I can't wait to get on a plane and see everyone in Barcelona in the sun in the summer. It's a unique opportunity. MWC is always in February where it sometimes can be cold. I mean, in June, it's going to be fabulous. And so see you there.

Speaker 1 00:18:34 Thanks for having me today.

Speaker 0 00:18:37 This was awesome. Thanks for being my little chat buddy. Stick around because we're ending each podcast with a Telco in 20 takeaway. I have 20 seconds to tell you something you need to know.

People keep asking me, can you afford this? Fuck yeah, I can afford it. Here's my calculus: Ericsson has billions and billions of customer revenue that comes to the show every year. These customers know exactly how to find the stand, but this year when they wander over to the old space, they're going to see me and my awesome, public cloud message, and walk right through my door. And I get the chance to speak with each and every one of them about the future of telco.

If you want a taste of what I'm talking about, just check out my awesome TelecomTV talk about that new startup Totogi. For me, and for vendors like Totogi, when you think about the time and money required to get the opportunity to speak to every Ericsson customer, this is easy math. It's a no brainer. So if you're an Ericsson customer out there, and you're sick of the same old lame message from Ericsson, and you're ready for the new hotness that is public cloud, and you're ready to pivot to be a truly digital telco, then you'll know where to find me.

I'm sure I'll be able to swing some sweet concert tickets for you. And if you're not an Ericsson customer and you want to be part of this new movement in telco, then text me or WhatsApp me at 925-TelcoDR. Don't forget to hit that subscribe button and share our podcast with your colleagues. Let's connect on LinkedIn and on Twitter @TelcoDR. Please sign up for our email newsletter at TelcoDR.com. We'll see you at MWC in Barcelona. I've said it before, and I'm going to say it again. Adios, COVID! Hola, Barcelona.

Later, Nerds!