| DR: | 00:00 | I am Danielle Royston, and this is Telco in 20. |
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| DR: | 00:14 | According to McKinsey & Company, 70% of big transformation projects fail. Womp, womp. Failing on a big project can be a career killer for any senior executive. This fear of failure stops Telco leaders dead in their tracks from taking the leap into the Public Cloud. |
| DR: | 00:32 | But why, oh why do big transformation projects fail? It's not like the management team has an RFP planned, demoed, and piloted the new technology they plan to switch to, 10 ways to Sunday. The reason for failure is not because of the tech they've selected. It's because senior management doesn't do a good job of explaining to individual workers why they should give a shit about their big project. |
| DR: | 00:56 | I mean, look at it from the workers' eyes. They've toiled and busted their butts to get things working the way they are today, and now you want to spoil it and make them change, just because you want to move to the Public Cloud? This is the reason transformation projects fail. Leaders need to do a better job of exciting and motivating their teams to do it. |
| DR: | 01:18 | Today on the podcast, we have Teena Piccione, a change management expert at Google, who works with organizations to make sure their Cloud transformation projects stay on track. We're going to talk about how it's all about the people in your organization. So let's take 20. |
| DR: | 01:36 | Teena Piccione is a global transformation and operations executive at Google. Hi, Tina. Welcome to Telco in 20. |
| Teena: | 01:42 | Thank you so much. I am thrilled to be here. |
| DR: | 01:45 | I'm so excited to have you on the podcast. I think we're going to have a great conversation about change management and digital transformation. So to start, I wanted to ask you: What does that mean? Do you sit in an office all day, thinking about projects, or are you on the ground, sent in to help teams with their big change management plans? |

| Teena: | 02:05 | So I am the one that goes in and says, "What's wrong? How do we fix it?" And kind of inspire them to a different track, because I think a lot of times, when people think through transformation, they forget the change management piece of it. And they forget: When you transform, it's a people, it's a process, and it's tools, all combined. And if you're not taking care of all of those aspects, it's never going to work. |
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| Teena: | 02:31 | So by the time I'm called in, it's actually a lot of fun for me, because I think of myself as a firefighter. I'm dropped in to figure out how to make sure that we can recover. |
| DR: | 02:41 | No, I know, and I totally agree with you. I've seen so many projects get kicked off, and people really focus on the tech. It's all about this change in a tool or change in a system, or what I talk about all the time: a move to the Public Cloud. |
| DR: | 02:54 | But like you said, it's so much more than that. It's processes and people, and I think one of the reasons people are really afraid to take on big projects that involve a lot of change is because, at least according to McKinsey, 70% of big transformation projects actually fail. And so that's got to be a really tough job for you, Teena, where odds are stacked against you from the get-go. And so what are your thoughts on why things fail? |
| Teena: | 03:19 | Great question. People again forget about the change piece of it and the people piece of it. It's hard for people to change. I love when I come in and people say, "But this is the way we've always done it," and I'm like, "Well, we can do something different." And you've got to go in and start telling: We need to upskill the people. And it's being able to get also people in a room and collaborating and just talking to each other. And so it's bringing everybody together in order to make that decision. |
| DR: | 03:47 | Yeah, what's really interesting about change is there's two kinds of changes. There's change that you decide. You're the decider. You're enacting change and impacting other people, and usually, that change is easy to deal with, |

because you're excited about it. You made the decision; you're moving forward.

DR:     04:04     But the change that makes it really hard is change that's happening to you. It wasn't your decision; it was out of your control. And I think that's really where the people, the organization, come in. Because management comes in, they talk about why it's so great for the organization, and they forget to connect it to the change that's happening to those people.

Teena:     04:22     Exactly. You've got to get people so excited that they're going to learn a new skill and give them that technology training to be able to do it, that they're going to want to be able to do something different. And I always laugh. I tell people, "Listen, if you don't like it, at least look at it this way: Your resume will look so much better when we're through."

Teena:     04:44     Because they're getting a new skill, and you've got to hit people where they are and figure out what's going to be that key that unlocks them to want to do it. And it's different for different people, and I think at times, we forget that.

DR:     04:59     Yeah, you're totally right. That whole thing around: It's different for different people, I think, is really key. Executives come in. They have their big meeting of, "Hey, we're moving to the Cloud," and they don't connect it to the individual. And what you said, there's different messages for different groups. Some people are financially motivated. There's people who are achievement-oriented. There's going to be people who are like, "I want to understand the skills." But there's a large group of people that are worried about the security, like, "Is my job going to be impacted?"

DR:     05:29     And especially when you talk about Cloud, where the workloads move off and no longer data centers, that's a real concern, not just for the individual worker, but the manager. They're like, "I'm managing this huge swath of hardware or whatever it is. What does that mean for me?" And so that ends up being a big elephant in the room that

no one ever wants to talk about, and it's a blocker for transformation success.

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| Teena: | 05:53 | Absolutely, and if you address it up front, your transformation has a bigger chance of being a huge success. But if you tell people, "We're going to upskill you. We're going to transfer you to a different type of role. Here's what we're going to do," And talk to them, they're typically going to be engaged and want to learn more. |
| Teena: | 06:14 | This is a chance where they can transfer their skills to cybersecurity. They can transfer their skills to being program managers. They can transfer to all types of different skill sets, but without that opportunity and without the conversation, you're going to have people that build up walls, versus helping you tear them down to be able to be successful. |
| DR: | 06:33 | Again, we're geeking out a little bit, because I have an HR background, so I'm super authentically passionate about this. But I think a lot of times, where managers fail in change management is number one, making sure that the organization feels like, "This is inevitable. This is the direction we're going, and we're not changing our mind." And then I think the other thing is connecting to each individual individually, having one-on-ones, like, "How do you feel about the change?" |
| DR: | 06:58 | Because everyone's going to be on a little bit of a different journey and a different tempo, in terms of them embracing this new world. And so I always tell leaders, "It's mind-numbing repetition. You have to have a conversation with every last person in your organization, until every last person's convinced that this is the right thing to do, that it's good for them, it's good for the company, and we're moving in that direction." |
| Teena: | 07:23 | Exactly. You're absolutely spot-on. Without those conversations, you're not going to have the opportunity to understand where everybody is. But a lot of times, people are trying to go fast, and they just forget they've got to bring people with them. |

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| Teena: | 07:39 | And so that's typically when I come in. I'm like, "Have you talked to everybody?" And they look at me like I have five heads. "Well we had two town halls." |
| DR: | 07:46 | Exactly, exactly. I mean, that brings me into my next question, which is, I'm imagining when they're 1-800-TEENA, they're not calling you at the beginning; they're calling you when they're having troubles. |
| Teena: | 07:58 | That's correct. |
| DR: | 07:59 | What are the telltale signs that people can assess their current project and say, "Am I on-track or off-track?" And then what are the first couple things you do to get it back on track? |
| Teena: | 08:08 | Yeah, great question. There are so many key indicators. Are you spending more money than you thought? Has the timeline gone longer? Do you just feel there is a freezing of the process? |
| Teena: | 08:19 | And what do I mean by that? People have analysis paralysis. They just keep analyzing, and nothing is getting done. The funniest one I walked into was when they said, "Okay, we've decided to do it for the last six months, but we can't figure out what day one should look like." And I'm like, "Oh, okay, y'all haven't done anything?" |
| Teena: | 08:36 | And it's like they think there's magic. Well, there's no magic wand; it's called hard work. So I have groups of teams that come in, and I interview them and ask the very question: Where do you think you are, and where do you want to be? And it's that simplistic, and after asking those two questions, I go back to leadership, and typically, it's the same answer. Not everybody's with you. Nobody knows what you're doing, and you have forgotten the exact thing you were trying to do. |
| DR: | 09:01 | Yeah, yeah. You lose your way. |
| Teena: | 09:03 | Exactly, and you have to keep people extremely focused. When I come in, by then, they're like, "Can it be fixed?" |

Well, nothing's ever fatal. You've got to be able to go back and fix, absolutely. Yeah, it's still going to take hard work, and you have to have those conversations. And it's getting people to understand how to turn it around to where you can be relentlessly focused on what the actual goal was to be.

Teena:          09:28          I was doing a data center take-out one time, and I said, "Have you understood what happens upstream and downstream if you turned this off?" And they're like, "What does that mean?" I'm like, "If you pull that out, you could break things." And when I got down to that, the president looked at me and went, "Yeah, we need her back in there, because I think we're going to break things." And I started laughing. It's just simplistic questions that people just forget because they're behind. We're in a hurry.

DR:          09:55          When I'm working with teams, I like to set really tactical, simple goals that show progress, that are easy to hit. And again, don't go after the hardest thing, like what you were talking about: "We don't know what this thing does," or "This is our crown jewels. This is the center of our monetization or the way that we make money."

DR:          10:17          Don't touch that first, especially with Cloud. "You guys don't know anything about how the Cloud works. Why don't you start with a very simple project, an internal thing, something that doesn't have a lot of revenue impact or process impact?" Let's just move that, because in that move, it's going to open up all these questions: What's our governance process? How are we going to manage the financials of this? And from there, you get people excited, because you're like, "Wow, we did it. We set a goal. We did it."

DR:          10:47          Andy Jassy from AWS told a story about Jamie Miller from GE, and she was like, "Guys, we're moving into the Public Cloud." And grousing and "We can't do it, and what about data privacy? Blah, blah, blah." And she was like, "We're going to move 50 applications in one month. Just try. Just start. Let's go do it."

DR: 11:12 And they did it, and they learned so much more. They got ideas, and it built momentum, and it got the organization excited. And now, people are working in the Cloud, and they're starting to learn, and they're starting to realize that this is happening. And now, they've moved thousands of applications to the Cloud, but it starts with one.

Teena: 11:27 Exactly. You've got to break it down in small chunks to be able to be successful, and once people do see that success, they get on board. They get excited. They tell others, "Look what I did," and that gets that momentum, to your point, extremely, from a bit of one or two all the way up to 90%. And that's what you need, because when people see progress, they get excited. It's just like if you're painting a wall at your house. If you're half done, you think, "Oh, you know, that wasn't so bad." It's the same concept.

DR: 11:59 Absolutely, and people want to be part of successful organizations and start to tout and show your progress, and you share it with the organization and just starts to build that little flywheel of success. And I think, circling back on what you said earlier, I think a big part of this is the people side, getting them over that inertia. You think about objects at rest, and at rest in this world is doing things the old way, the way that we've been doing them. And now, you're trying to get them to move into this new way of doing things. Sometimes you can't get someone over the change hump. Do you actually recommend to managers: Maybe that's time for that person to leave?

Teena: 12:34 Absolutely, and it's a hard decision, but we have to look at the reality. If they're the ones blocking the way, where can we either move them to a different part of the organization? Or perhaps it's time to help them find a new path somewhere else, to where they can utilize the skills they have. And it's that conversation with the individual, to say, "This is where we're headed. I realize it is not going to be your cup of tea, so how do we get you to a different place that you're going to be better suited?" And put it back on them to understand: "If you're not in the boat, rowing in the same direction, you need to find a different boat." I know it's a hard thing.

DR:        13:14        Yeah, but it's absolutely true, because the water cooler talk at a company, when you have that Negative Nellies, they pool. And they're saying, "It's never going to work. This is stupid." They start that whole festering negativity, and it really brings down the team, and so you got to talk to the individual. You got to make it feel like the change is inevitable. You got to do whatever you can to excite them, figure out what their motivations are. But then the last one is, "Okay, dude, we tried everything to get you on board. We've told you why it's great for the company and why it's great for you. We told you in groups. We told you individually. We've moved you around, and if you're not getting it. Yeah, you need to leave the boat." I totally agree with you.

Teena:        13:53        Exactly, and it's just a choice. It's almost like the stages of grief. You go from shock to anger to bargaining to depression, to, "You know, I can make this work." Or you get stuck, and that's where, to your point, the water cooler becomes toxic. And so you've got to be able to recognize that quickly, before it is unrecoverable, and I think there are times when it becomes unrecoverable, if you do not address it quickly.

DR:        14:21        Totally agree. You got to nip it in the bud as much as you can.

DR:        14:24        And so I hear you're going to Alaska on a summer vacation, but in The United States, it's known as The Land of the Midnight Sun, and so for those of you who don't know this, between the months of April and August, the sun does not set. And so are you going to be there during that time? I think the answer is yes. And how do you plan to sleep?

Teena:        14:45        Yeah, great question. So it is my 50th state, and my final state parks and national parks. So I've been to all of the 49 and the commonwealths, so this is it, and it's funny.

DR:        14:57        Check mark.

Teena:          14:57          I've traveled before, when it is light all the time, and for me, I always just get right to bed.

DR:             15:05          You can do it.

Teena:          15:05          Go to sleep and get right back up at the same time every day. So when I travel, that's the one negative, is I'm still on the East Coast time zone, and there are times when I'm like, "It is three in the morning in California, and I'm awake."

DR:             15:16          Yeah, well it sounds like you're finishing a big project yourself, visiting all 50 states. So congratulations, and I hope you have an awesome time in Alaska. Maybe see a bear or catch some salmon.

Teena:          15:28          Thank you. I plan on fly fishing, hiking mountains, and doing everything in between. And I disconnect, so I tell everybody. This is my advice: Take your phones and put them away at least one week a year, and you've got to take that time to really recharge, because if you're not, you're not going to bring that same energy and excitement and passion to everything you do. And that's why I do it.

DR:             15:51          Well, awesome, Teena. This is a great conversation about change and how to be successful, and so I really appreciate you coming on the podcast. Thank you.

Teena:          15:58          Thank you so much. This has again been a true pleasure, and I just can't wait to connect with you again soon.

DR:             16:04          Awesome. 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.

DR:             16:15          We spent this episode talking about transformation. Teena was clear: Setting goals and staying on track is critical to success, but it can be super daunting to get started. How do you do it? By setting great goals.

DR:             16:30          There are four qualities you need to have in a great goal. They need to be meaningful, achievable, measurable, and

visible, and you've got to hit them. Hitting the first goal in your transformation project is super important. It needs to be a quick win that everyone can see. Sends a strong message that you've started your journey of change, that you're not going to back down, and you're going to be successful. When you hit it, promote the hell out of it across the organization, and then repeat it with the rest of the goals until you're done. That's how you build the drumbeat of change.

DR:          17:08          And speaking of journeys, I'm off to India. I can't wait to talk to you about using the Totogi Charging System on your shiny new 5G Spectrum. I'll be in Delhi, India for Voice and Data's 5G Conference on September 13th.

DR:          17:24          Want me to visit you when out that way? Shoot me a DM on Twitter at TelcoDR, or message me on LinkedIn. You can also give me a call or whatsapp me at 925 TelcoDR.

DR:          17:35          And if you love this award-winning podcast, subscribe on Apple Podcast and follow us on Spotify. Don't forget to sign up for our totally awesome email newsletter at TelcoDR.com, and visit our amazing TelcoDR YouTube channel.

DR:          17:49          Later, nerds.