

Tech in healthcare reimagined with Michael Archuleta and Lorand Gabos - Part 2

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BRADLEY HOWARD (BH): Welcome back to the Tech Reimagined podcast with me, Bradley Howard, and my guests, Michael Archuleta and Larond Gabos. In part one, we had an insightful discussion around the future of the healthcare industry. Now I want to get more personal with my guests and get to know them a little better. Michael, how did you get started in the industry and how did you become a CIO?

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MICHAEL ARCHULETA (MA): So, in the industry, I've always been fascinated with technology. I remember during my high school days that our school gave us our very first workstation. So, then again, I wanted to learn the bits and pieces of that actual workstation. How does it work? How can I tear it apart and then build it back together? And then really started getting fascinated with technology initiatives. Networking. You know, started to design a network at home, having things communicate back and forth. It was really a field that truly fascinated me. So, moving forward, I went to college for IT, for information technology, for network management, really learned how to design a network. Started doing Cisco boot camps really on a network standpoint. So, it was really a field that really fascinated. And again, healthcare was one of those things that I never would have thought that I would basically be involved, because I even remember as a kid, I was so afraid of doctors because of needles. And I always used to say, "I hate the hospital, I hate the clinics", because of that, because of fear on that. But I never thought I would be in a healthcare area. So, again, you know, there was a time where they were looking for a network administrator, and I finished college, and I got the job and then really started to progress from there. And again, on how the healthcare CIO has really gone from crawling to walking upright to carrying the organisation, I mean, it's been a massive transformation. When you saw how the overall technology job started as an actual tech manager to now a driver role. From an advisor role to a driver role, from the tech manager to the CIO 2.0. I went from a network engineer to the director of IT, then to the first Chief Information Officer, continuing to basically be that overall business leader to incorporate technology in business as one. Because at the end of the day, if we're just focusing on technology, we're always going to be basically siloed. We're not going to continue to progress. So, we need to incorporate, how does a business operate? How does a business create revenue? How does a business basically run on a standpoint? And the evolution of the CIO has really come in. And it's been one of those items and I am a business leader, but I'm also a technology leader as well. So, it's been an amazing journey.

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BH: Wow. And you also sit on several other boards. So, how did those opportunities arise, and can you talk about any of them today?

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MA: Yeah, absolutely. So, I've been involved in many initiatives. You know, I've really started to— you build your own brand. And that's what I always tell every individual to build your own brand. Build yourself as an actual expert in the field. Learn. Be a learner, you know, really try to be teachable. Learn from these different initiatives. And again, you know, being part of different in terms, different groups, allows you to basically be more creative, have that understanding. And you get that exposure towards on, "Okay, Mike Archuleta understands start-ups. He understands cybersecurity. He understands digital transformation. And then he also understands the way the business basically operates at the end of the day." We are business leaders. We are also

technologists. And it's been one of those initiatives that have allowed me to basically be mouldable, to go into different areas. It has allowed me to be a teachable person, which allows me to sit on a board, which is beneficial because I could bring my perspectives on what I've learned in the healthcare industry, what I've seen, the pros and cons. You know, I took an industry and I took an organisation that had a 59 percent uptime to a 99 percent uptime. I came into an organisation by adding virtualisation efforts that really reduce costs by 56 percent and improved uptime again from 59 percent to 99 percent, which increase business productivity, operating efficiencies and enhanced services while reducing operating expenses. And I always say that there's two types of individuals. There's people that are talking and there's also the GSD'ers. And people tell me, "Well, what are the GSDs? You always talk about hashtag GSD because you're very active on social media." I said, "Those are the individuals that I basically roll with. Those are the people that are getting shit done." And that's basically the bottom line. There's talkers and there's GSD'ers. And those are the individuals that you truly want to be. And that's what I teach everyone that continue to be progressive. Continue to lead the way. Continue to be in that driver's role, that innovator, that project advisor, that political visionary, that economist, that risk manager, that venture capitalist, that customer service focus. Be the individual, the CIO 2.0. Don't ever go backwards. Continue to lead. Yes, talk, but also walk the walk, too. Less talk and more walk. And that's basically the most way of success. And again, be part of the GSD community. We need to continue to get shit done in order for us to be progressive in everything that we basically do. And again, as an outspoken individual and as an individual getting shit done and truly showing results has allowed me to be very unique, which different groups would allow an individual to sit on a board to basically help advise. So, it's been a great progression, a very humbling experience, but it's been a lot of hard work and dedication as well.

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BH: Wow. That's very inspiring. And Lorand, how did you become a CTO?

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LORAND GABOS-SZOVERDI (LGS): There was nobody else available.

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BH: [LAUGHTER] You were the one person who got shit done.

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LGS: Yeah. So, there are different types of CTOs. There are CTOs that are internal facing, taking care of the organisation, the capabilities of an organisation. There are CTOs who are more on the CIO role taking care of also internal IT and costs. But there is also the type of CTO that I was, and that was the external facing one. And what does that mean? It is a CTO that looks to the outside world, understands the world, and tries to create new things that satisfy the needs of consumers, of people around the world. And that was the type of CTO that I was. And how did I become one? I had a track record of always trying to innovate and always trying to create new things and something that others didn't really have—I'm not sure if you know very much Eastern Europe—Eastern Europe is not really a risk-taking area, yeah? Unless you talk about military. But in IT, it's not really risk-taking, I was a risk taker. I said, "Let's try", and we introduced this or embraced the fail fast mentality. Let's try things out. If we fail, we fail, but we learn something from it, and we improve not only the lives of people, but we improve the company as well. And that's the main reason that I was seeing the trends and I was anticipating them and I could, let's say, invent new things. But those were the ideas and then the organisation itself that actually implemented them.

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BH: And today, what type of projects do you enjoy working on?

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LGS: So, it's still around the strategy and long-term thinking. But 20 years ago, long term was much longer term than nowadays, so the actual rate of change in the way things are evolving is much, much faster. So, when you're thinking long term, it's not longer than five years. That used to be midterm. And I like talking to users, to people, understanding their needs still, and come up with strategies for companies to satisfy those needs.

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BH: And Michael, on your LinkedIn profile, you've listed 17 industry awards, including 100 Hospital and Health System CIOs to Know in 2020. And another, which is my favourite piece pieces, it's called such a Terminator-style title, the 2019 Healthcare's Most Wired Award. So, well done. But can you tell us about some of them and how you were nominated for those?

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MA: The Top 100 Hospitals and Health System CIOs to Know of 2020, this is basically the executives are featured on this list that lead technology and health IT initiatives for hospitals and healthcare systems across the US. They oversee EHI installation, cybersecurity, data management, telemedicine services. And these individuals have received like recognition from the Healthcare Information Management System Society and the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives in many cases. So, again, you know, these organisations basically continue to promote and state, you know, the amazing things that these individuals are doing. So, I was really humbled to be on the Top 100 Hospitals and Health CIOs to Know of 2020. And then again, Most Wired is one of those items that the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives is hosting. So, this is a huge survey that requires audit verifications on how specific hospitals are progressing. There's a list of questions on an infrastructure and administration standpoint, on a cybersecurity standpoint, on interoperability standpoint. And all of these initiatives are coming together and you're really answering them and you're providing proof of verification for this group where then they get hundreds, thousands from nationally, internationally, and they come together and they do an overall ranking and a verification on how hospitals are basically standing. How are hospitals utilising health IT? How are hospitals using interoperability? How are they utilising cybersecurity? So, then again, CHIME, the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives, you know, there's a score system that then allows you to validate to determine if you are considered a Most Wired facility, which again, is a nationally recognised health care IT award given to the top facilities making the most progress of health IT. And then on top of that, we were nominated as best overall organisation. So, because we were a stage nine, which they went up to stage 10, which is the most progression when it comes to technology. So, it's been one of those incorporations. It's been one of those nomination processes. It's been a humbling experience. It's been individuals knowing who you are, you know, really promoting yourself, because at the end of the day, technology, I love technology. I love the people in technology. I love my staff. I love individuals getting involved in technology. I think we need more women in technology. I'm one of those advocates that continue to basically promote the importance of technology. And I try to utilise tools like social media, like speaking platforms to really sell on those initiatives.

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BH: It's so lovely to hear the passion about technology from such a leader. So, have you had mentors along the way?

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MA: I've had many mentors and I've been honoured to have some phenomenal mentors in my life. One of my mentors, his name is Guillermo Diaz. So, they call him "G" in Silicon Valley. And Guillermo, he was the prior chief information officer for Cisco Systems and actually he was one of the first Hispanics to ever become the CIO of such a massive networking company. I mean, we all know Cisco. Its international worldwide. He became the global CIO. So, really learning from him, talking to him, you know, obtaining good knowledge from him has been such a critical element to my overall success. And then a great mentor as well was Ed Marx. Ed Marx was a phenomenal CIO in the healthcare industry. He became the CIO of Cleveland Clinic, which is a world-renowned facility. You know, just for the massive amount of innovation and technology initiatives that they're doing. Really learning from Ed on a healthcare standpoint in really incorporating strong initiatives. And what I love too, to really tell the public, is I got involved in the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives groups, also known as CHIME. And CHIME is one of those groups that promote you, grow you, create mentorship opportunities for you. And they're really strong advocates in the healthcare IT sector. These individuals continue to basically validate how is healthcare working? How is healthcare progressing even on a overall policy level? They're in Washington. They're on cybersecurity boards. They're focusing on interoperability. They bring strong bootcamps in play. They really bring these initiatives because I did a CIO bootcamp with CHIME. You know, how to become a successful CIO from an actual tech manager to CIO 2.0. So, again, these are items that we need to continue to basically utilise. These tools evolve because you need those mentors. You need those positive, inspirational individuals on your side to continue to grow, to continue to basically allow you to be innovative, allow you to bring these ideas in place, because honestly, having mentors in place and having strong groups and associations like CHIME, like the College of Healthcare Information Management executives have allowed me to be successful, have allowed me to share the information that's very important, which is a love of technology and the love of patients. So, again, bringing this all together creates a very successful process.

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BH: And can you tell us more about the CIO bootcamp that you mentioned?

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MA: So, I did the CIO bootcamp, and this was many years ago. So, I did the healthcare CIO bootcamp, which was, I believe it was October of 2013. So, the College of Healthcare for Management Executives creates an overall boot camp. So, they bring these individuals that are eventually wanting to become an actual healthcare CIO. You know, they teach him about the different lessons that they've learned from an innovation standpoint, digital transformation standpoint, continuing to focus as an actual business leader, not just a technologist, from crawling to walking upright, to truly carrying the organisation, seeing the evolution of the actual CIO come into place and bringing strong strategic initiatives that allow you to be successful. CHIME also has an overall certification process that allows you to take a certification test that makes you a certified healthcare CIO that's basically accredited through the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives. So, again, this is a highly recommended thing, especially on a healthcare standpoint. If you just want another tool to continue to progress you, continue to inspire you, continue to basically utilise different strategic initiatives that create better successful processes, these are strong initiatives to really incorporate into your overall professional life moving forward.

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BH: Lorand, have you had mentors in your career?

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LGS: Yes, quite different ones. The first and the one who influenced me I think the most was a Dutch guy called Peter Delamont. He influenced me a lot. He was a friend of Edgar Vivar Dykstra, famous for his Kobold paper if you can remember. He taught me ways of how to think about systems and software and how to think about building things. But I also have Don Gilb as mentor, one of the fathers of agile working in agile methodologies already in the 60s at IBM. He actually still reviews free of charge the strategies I develop from his standpoint, his point of view. But I also have a psychologist as a mentor. He used to be the minister of education in Romania and he introduced cognitive psychology in Romania. And that's very interesting to understand because he helps me understand people. I'm coming back a lot on this because if you understand your users, if you really understand them, then you can create the right products and services to serve them. And to see it from a psychologist's point of view, it's very, very interesting. Even when we are discussing, even this COVID-19 period, we are discussing the conspiracy theories and how do they influence people and what do they consume and why do they consume it? That's very interesting to have all these inputs and guiding hands in my career.

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BH: Maybe some of those theories are going to be good for outside of this podcast, then. So, Larond, what were the key opportunities or lucky breaks that helped your career?

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LGS: Being in the right place at the right time. Key opportunities? Definitely, one of them was in the dot com boom when I just said, "Okay, I want to leave Eastern Europe." I could go wherever I wanted to because the dot com boom was in bloom and I ended up working in Spain for a telco giant, and I learned a lot there as well. Other areas, when I became a CTO, that gave me also another angle on how to run things and how to develop IT. Those were quite important.

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BH: Michael, your lucky breaks?

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MA: One of my lucky breaks has really been just getting involved in healthcare. I mean, it was one of those items in my life that there was a networking job available that happened to be at a healthcare organisation, you know, really learning from it. And I got really lucky during the Affordable Care Act when President Obama initiated that specific item, which mandated facilities to implement an electronic medical record system. So, I really had the opportunity to see the progression of technology and the progression of the CIO really evolve from a massive transformational CIO to a digital company that happens to deliver healthcare services. So, really got lucky during that specific time frame of my career to really get involved.

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BH: It's very interesting that's the common thread with speaking to CIOs on these podcasts is that something happened in the wider economy and people were in a position where they made the most of that, and that gave them the opportunity to then prove themselves and prove their value. It's interesting how that comes through in so many different industries. So, onto the COVID-19 environment that we live in at the moment. What does your daily routine look like nowadays to both of you? Let's start with Michael.

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MA: You know, my daily routine basically continues to innovate and allow us to see different ways to create better acceleration of digital transformation. How are we doing more with less? How are we basically re-strategizing different projects in place? Continuing to keep our overall remote

employees secure and safe as possible? Continuing to have those strong telecommunicating applications in place, and again, continuing to really focus on strong cybersecurity initiatives to make sure that our information is secure as possible moving forward? So, there's a lot of things that IT continues to basically do on a standpoint. COVID-19 did not stop the progress of IT. It accelerated IT. It showed stronger value of IT moving forward. There's a lot of industries that are currently hurting right now due to COVID-19. And there's a lot of, you know, pros and cons really coming out of this overall scenario. We're continuing to monitor. We're continuing to be very responsible on the different initiatives and strategies that we basically execute. But again, IT right now during COVID-19—very busy, continuing to be very progressive, continuing to be very innovative on all the different initiatives that we do.

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BH: And Larond?

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LGS: It changed a lot for me, but we adapted quite easily because I was visiting customers quite a lot. So, we went from physical visits to online discussions, online workshops. But it actually is not that bad. So, it opens up different types. And you have to think about different things and how to prepare discussions, how to work with people, and how to collaborate in a different way. It's very interesting.

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BH: Well, thank you to both of you, Michael and Larond, for spending some time with us to reimagine the relationship between people and technology in the healthcare industry. I hope you will join us next time for another interesting discussion on the Tech Reimagined podcast. Please remember to like this podcast and hit the subscribe button.