

Episode 6: Measuring End User Experience with Saurabh Sharma

Aman: Hi, I'm Aman. And in this episode, we're going to talk about the importance and quantification of end-user experience and uncover how they bring value to businesses in today's diverse workforce. To help us unravel the end-user experience world, we have Saurabh who has around fifteen years of experience in strategizing enterprise by the workplace transformations and spearheading innovative product development. Saurabh leads Product Management Group in HCL's Digital Workplace Business and has been instrumental in envisioning and subsequently delivering modern workplaces to some of the most eminent organizations. Hi Saurabh.

Saurabh: Hi Aman.

Aman: Thank you for joining us today. We really appreciate you taking our time to talk to us.

Saurabh: Thank you for having me. I always look forward to such discussions.

Aman: So, Saurabh, end-user experience is the matter of the moment and organizations are giving user-experience paramount importance and most of them have even started including it in their digital journey. So, is this move, in your view, a critical factor for IT's success?

Saurabh: Yes, absolutely. End-user experience monitoring is actually an ecosystem. It should be looked in its entirety be it application device, networking Infra processes anything that impacts the user or business to employ value chain. And you'd be surprised the tools to monitor these individual elements have been there for decades and decades in IT but still there was a vacuum that has been filled by technology as we speak. In fact, user-experience has become so critical that as of today, 15% of organizations are supposed to report on digital user experience. This number as per Gartner will go up to 60 percent by 2023. So, in fact, you know, **measuring user- experience**, impacting, improving user-experience will become a success criteria for all IT service providers.

Aman: Wow that is gripping and need some absorbing. But help me understand, isn't something that's intangible varies from user to user. So, is it still a good approach to standardize end-user experience? Or is there something else that is budding?

Saurabh: So, Aman in my view is that it's good that organizations have started measuring it and they're trying to standardize it. But it's also an era of nano personalization, individualization, even if you use any commerce, commercial application, any application, basically they also aim at delivering individualized experience. You get suggestions which are per your usage patterns. The simple principles will get imported into the enterprises where the user experience has to be contextual based on your location, your role, your persona. But then there are certain challenges that organizations are facing today. For example, millennials will constitute a major chunk of workforce. In fact, they'll be 50 percent of the workforce by 2025.

So, consumerization of IT is inevitable. As they would expect consumer grade experience even in an enterprise stack and that becomes difficult to standardize, benchmark and measure. Also, organizations are not aware of hardware/software requirements. The user experience is a black box to them. They've just started measuring this. So, the de facto approach becomes let's go for standardization, which results in uneven resource allocation and users are not typically happy with the kind of workplace that's delivered to them. But thanks to big data analytics on the workplace side, I think it's possible even today with the technologies which are there in the market where we can actually give the cuts of user experience as per user profile, persona, location. All of that can be insight backed, data driven. All of this is possible today.

Aman: Amazing. Since end-user experience has always held high importance why only now analysts and customers are talking about enhancing all the importance of end-user experience?

Saurabh: So, it's two reasons so you know why it's become very important trend in enterprises right now. One is that the tools and technologies which were needed to actually report on user-experience quantified were not there. They become available at scale now for all enterprises. The second reason is that all enterprises have realized that the greatest assets they have is not hardware not software is not the datacenter, the cloud movement. It's actually their employees. So, if you can actually measure their experience, improve their experience, give them a contextual slice of their workplace, which makes them more productive and more motivated to work that delivers the greatest benefit to all enterprises.

Aman: So, what you're saying is that end-user experience is the steppingstone for

organizations to transcend on digital journey. But currently, where do organizations stand in getting a holistic view of their user experience?

Saurabh: So, they are starting to measure user-experience. That's one part. That's the journey that most enterprises have embarked upon, which is, I would say inside out view from the user perspective, what's happening on the device with their applications, with the network connectivity, with the change that has been delivered to them that's an employee centric view. That's something that just started happening, I would say in last 24 months. It's become very important.

There's an older part to knowing about user experience that is application performance monitoring. **That was data center out into the workplace world or user world, right.** How is an application behaving in its entirety? I think the real view of this end-user experience would be when you actually amalgamate both these measurements. If you can tell them how the application is behaving at the data center, you can do synthetic monitoring and then you're also monitoring the experience at the user site. If you're able to marry that and I think lot of enterprises are striving towards that, that's when you'll have a complete view to the experience in its entirety.

Aman: This sounds good. And we understand that measuring end-user experience would cater to all users wants and deliver a consumer grade experience to them. But from a CIO standpoint, how will this impact organizations?

Saurabh: So, from a CIO standpoint, what's important is that you know that what is your overall experience in your enterprise. Let's say for example the experience is eight out of 10 at a CIO's level. He should be able to click on that eight and see what regions are doing at six and what regions are doing five.

Maybe the regions which are doing fives because few locations are in a poor network. And what are the steps you need to take to actually bring them up to the to the average experience in the enterprise? So that becomes one. Second is to flip the entire IT support model from a reactive model to a preemptive model where even before issue impacts the user, you can go ahead, and you can actually eliminate issue. So, it's less about ticket production. It's more about ensuring that the user downtime is kept as minimal as possible.

So, you are trying to deliver workplace IT, which is completely business aligned. So that's extremely crucial for all CIOs because workplace is increasingly seen as a business enabler.

It's just not a technology initiative. So, this initiative actually helps align workplaces to the business. The second thing, is to incorporate this word that I think all of us would have heard about, XLAs, which is experience level agreements. How do you move from service level agreements to experience level agreements? I think the kind of analytics was available today will help you come up with the parameters that you can actually measure as part of XLA construct.

Aman: Great. So, are you saying that organizations are ready for XLAs as of today?

Saurabh: So, Aman, I would say yes or no. There are some organizations which are ready, and some organizations would just want to measure XLAs as KPIs. The organizations which are ready would want to incorporate elements of XLAs even as contractual commitment with both rewards and penalties. Right. What is the difference between these two organizations? I will just try to briefly cover. I think the organizations which are ready, they take a top down push approach where the decision makers are the workplace leaders at their end are pretty convinced that if you have to change the way you deliver workplace services to the employees, you have to incorporate XLAs today.

And I'm not saying that the hundred percent penalties rewards are just on XLAs. It's a mix of XLAs and SLAs. Where the greatest percentages are allocated to SLAs and a smaller percentage to XLAs. But as we move forward in the engagement, it's committed that the greatest percentage of the rewards penalties will be based on XLAs and less will be based on SLAs. So, the equation gets flipped. So, it is a behavior change management program at the org level, at the customer org level where the executives have to push it down to the service owners that just don't be bothered about the CSAT, FCRs, MTTRs it's important, but think about parameters like user assumption time, service assumption time, user expense index so that behavior change management is something that we are helping our enterprises. We are consulting with them to build that consensus internally to incorporate XLAs.

Aman: Thank you very much Saurabh for sharing your views on simplifying such a complex subject for our listeners. And when we come back after a short break, we'll ask Saurabh on this takes on some trending consumer tech. So, stay tuned.

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Aman: Welcome back. In this segment, we ask our guests to summarize their opinion about some exciting consumer tech. So, are you ready Saurabh?

Saurabh: Sure. Bring it on.

Aman: What's up for business?

Saurabh: I'd say a great trend, everybody's on WhatsApp. So, if you can engage your employees, your customers using WhatsApp. **You don't even need to deliver any behavior change management, push a separate client it's already there.** I think the only caution is that this entire Facebook privacy issue, if that can be handled, particularly in the enterprise domain, I think it's a great tool.

Aman: Interactive TV

Saurabh: What's better than giving people an illusion of free choices with predefined choices, but jokes apart, this could redefine business model as they can work closely with content creators and marketing geniuses. Today the paradigm shift in the way advertising is developed, conducted and analyzed.

Aman: Ring fit adventure by Nintendo

Saurabh: Masking exercise game that is fun to play and a good workout shows how combination of technology, gaming, gamification, entertainment. With fitness at its core will break the challenges that people face in their monotonous fitness to gym.

Aman: Folding phones

Saurabh: I would say nostalgia. When they were the first-generation phones, I wanted to buy one but couldn't ever afford one. But that's the only reason I ever planned to buy one now.

Aman: It was wonderful having you here today. Now we have much better understanding of the significance of end user experience and how organizations are going about measuring this intangible component. Thank you again for your time. And we hope for an opportunity to host you again.

Saurabh: Well, thank you. It was a delight talking to you.

Aman: I thank our listeners for joining in. We want to hear from you. We need your feedback. The contact information is available in the description. So, comment, share like and subscribe. See you all in the next one.

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