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Daniel Newman: Hey, everybody, welcome back to The Main Scoop. I'm one of your hosts, Daniel Newman, and we are back. Greg Lotko, my co-host in crime, how are you doing today?

Greg Lotko: Doing great. Pleasure to be here. Happy to have you all joining us again for this month's edition of The Main Scoop.

Daniel Newman: Yeah, I sometimes forget about that. It is once a month, but it's a can't miss show, especially for everybody that loves technology, people that are in and around the mainframe industry, but yeah, it's a lot of-

Greg Lotko: Especially us. If we miss it, there's no show.

Daniel Newman: We watch it, right?

Greg Lotko: Yeah. But yeah, we do it.

Daniel Newman: You watch yourself back a lot?

Greg Lotko: No.

Daniel Newman: Okay. You got to wonder about that sometimes, but-

Greg Lotko: As little as possible.

Daniel Newman: We got a fun episode today.

Greg Lotko: We do.

Daniel Newman: We're talking a little bit about technology's impact in driving growth, in driving innovation, and how products and services are delivered and brought to the market more rapidly, and we've got a really great guest today.

Greg Lotko: Absolutely.

Daniel Newman: So are you ready? We have April Hickel joining us from BMC.

So April, welcome to the show. Why don't you tell everybody just a little bit about yourself and the work that you do at BMC?

April Hickel: Sure. So my name is April Hickel, and I have responsibility for the mainframe strategy at BMC. And I think the most exciting part of my job is that our portfolio, like many others in the ecosystem, crosses a whole bunch of areas of technology on the mainframe. So we talk to customers about how to secure the

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mainframe, we talk to customers about how to manage the data on the mainframe, we talk to customers about how to operate on the mainframe and how to develop, so a lot of work with customers, a lot of new technology and what more could you want in a job?

Greg Lotko: Yeah. And a lot of folks are doing things with technology in general, bringing it into their business, coming up with new and creative ways to drive business. You think about all over the air updates we get for our cars, for maintenance of elevators, for every interaction we have. Businesses are enabling, interact, different interactions with their customers or awareness of what's going on. We think about insurance companies that have those little things that they can plug into your car, and they can see your driving style. But it's all about this pervasiveness of technology in our lives and the new business opportunities it's driving for them, and that's really driving the interaction with all of us in the ecosystem, right?

April Hickel: It is. And I think about every time I go to the airport, there's some new experience that you have.

Greg Lotko: Or flight delay.

April Hickel: Yeah. Or flight delay. But honestly I had a delayed flight out of Denver, and it was interesting because it used to be that you would stand in line, right? You'd stand in line, and then they would issue a voucher, a paper voucher, and then you would get a hotel, and then you'd get re-booked. At the same time that my flight was announced delayed, on my phone came a selection of hotels. Once I selected a hotel, it knew there wasn't a shuttle, so it gave me a Lyft voucher. So I mean that's really customer centricity. And if you think about airlines, many of them dependent on the mainframe to manage their customer records, you know that all that customer centricity was enabled by technology connection to the mainframe.

Daniel Newman: Okay now, hold on. I got to go back there. What airline was this? Can you share that?

Greg Lotko: He was delayed.

Daniel Newman: I just came back-

Greg Lotko: Here for this too.

Daniel Newman: I just came back from overseas, and I was on the tarmac in Newark trying to connect here to Columbus to get here to this event, and I had a cancellation, which I didn't get a notification on. I actually logged in and found out I was

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canceled, didn't get a hotel update, didn't get a new flight book, and I'm not going to call out the airline here, but all I'm going to say is that I totally believe you. I just want to know which airline it was because I'm going to switch to that one.

April Hickel: So I'm going to tell you this, I am based in Minneapolis.

Daniel Newman: Okay. I know. I know who you're on.

Greg Lotko: I don't. I'm based in New York.

Daniel Newman: That doesn't mean that. You never been to Minneapolis? We can't say anything.

Greg Lotko: I've been to Minneapolis, but it was not in a few years actually.

Daniel Newman: All right, well that was a fun story, but let me just tell you that I'd love what you talked about as I'd call the art of possible, and I think the differentiation between some companies is they're literally delivering those kinds of next generation experiences, and then you have those that still have sort of fragmented and disaggregated experiences that haven't quite met, and I think that's going to be the difference between people selecting company A, company B, and company C. So you kind of leaned into this, but let's more broadly talk about it. In your work, on your day to day basis, April, kind of what are some of the macro factors that you're seeing that are driving IT innovation?

April Hickel: Well, I think it comes back to customer centricity, right? That was an example of an airline who said, "We need to be more customer centric." And I can remember talking to the same airline earlier, and they said, "You're actually not our newest demographic. You're digitally competent, but you're not a digital native, so we're looking to build experience for our next generation of travelers who are digitally native." And the same example is in banking. Think about banking. When I bank, I use the website, or now I use the app. My kids have never ever used anything but an app and digital payment platforms.

Greg Lotko: They don't even realize there's a building there.

April Hickel: No.

Greg Lotko: Somewhere.

April Hickel: They expect to text the bank and get a response about their balance.

Greg Lotko: Yep.

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- April Hickel: And banks support that now. So, I just think that there's this evolution, so we use the word customer centricity, but it's the new experience that people are expecting, and it's driven by people's desire to self-serve, right? You go to the airline, you go to the bank, you do a food delivery service, you have groceries delivered, it's the self-service. And to keep up and differentiate yourself competitively in the market, you have to be able to deliver these type of customer experiences.
- Greg Lotko: It's that self-service tied to the what if. The reality that consumers are imagining what they would want and what they would want the experience to be like, and those businesses that take advantage of the data and the technology to tie that together and make it reality. The younger folks that are growing up that have never gone to a fast food restaurant, they think fast food is, I click on my phone, and it shows up fast at my house, right? But I would think, I know what we're seeing in the marketplace, I kind of want to hear your experience as well. I see a lot of the mainframe customers really leveraging that platform and the data that's there and then connecting it into those broad processes, so what are you seeing?
- April Hickel: The same thing. I mean, nobody thinks of themselves as a mainframe data center.
- Greg Lotko: Right.
- April Hickel: Nobody thinks of themselves as a distributed data center. People think of themselves as hybrid infrastructure, right? Fit for purpose. How do we take advantage of whatever type of technology we need? Whether it's calling AWS functions, whether it's putting something in the cloud, whether it's using a new type of storage, whether it's accessing information on the mainframe. People are looking at connecting things together, building out of what they have, taking advantage of where the different fit for purpose capabilities reside.
- I mean if you look at the mainframe, there have been a lot of advancements around, can you do real-time fraud detection? There've been advancements in storage, the way that you connect over ZOS Connect or the other technologies, the API economy. I mean you talk a lot about that as well. And I think the way companies who happen to have a mainframe, as well as everything else, are going to differentiate and win in the market is by connecting it in and not letting anything about its unique capabilities slow them down.
- Greg Lotko: Right. So it starts with the business model, what capability you're trying to bring to bear from a functionality to the customer, the interaction, the service, the product, and then looking across your estate and saying, "How do I make that

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happen?" It's not starting from, "Oh, this is a cool technology, what the heck could we do with it?"

April Hickel: Exactly. Exactly.

Daniel Newman: Well, we know this from all of the transformative technologies out there. You don't buy technology to solve technology problems, you buy it to solve business problems.

Greg Lotko: You shouldn't.

Daniel Newman: No, I mean if you're a technologist, that kind of goes back to our theme in this show, the tinkering and geeking out, right? You got your turbos in your car, but most people just want to go faster, so it's kind of the same thing with the agility of your technology as you're investing it because you want that experience. So if you're doing the online banking is, like you said, fit for purpose. I like fit for purpose with tech, but I like fit for purpose with experience. How do you say, "Hey, Greg, you're a what? 35? You're 35 years old, you're a digital native."

Greg Lotko: What a guy.

Daniel Newman: What a guy. "And you do 90% of your interactions with the bank online with text. You don't want to call." How do you create a fit for purpose experience for that purpose? Same thing across the other industries you mentioned with the airlines, with anything. And so in the end, let's talk about those specific business outcomes. I'm hearing hybrid, and I'm hearing APIs. These are the technologies. As you're working with customers, what are they coming to you asking for? Are we on the right track? Is that what they're asking for? Are those sort of experiences?

April Hickel: Speed. I'd say they're asking for speed, flexibility, agility.

Greg Lotko: Security.

April Hickel: Security. So they're thinking about how, if I have a business who is going to ask me for a new experience, and those new experience, the longevity of them is different. It's not 15 years. We build an app, 15 years people use it, we make some incremental modifications. They're building new apps all the time, new experiences. The market is moving faster, consumers are demanding different things more quickly. So they're asking for agility. How can we respond faster? How can we build software faster? Every company is a software company now. How can we build software faster?

Greg Lotko: Cross platforms, tie it together, bring that capability out there.

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April Hickel: Yeah.

Daniel Newman: Something that's open maybe.

Greg Lotko: Yeah, absolutely it has to do with being open. It has to be to do with doing it quick with security, stability, but being able to tie it together with open APIs. Absolutely.

April Hickel: Absolutely.

Daniel Newman: So what about risk? Let's kind of end there. Of course, we talked about security, which brings risk, but we also talk sometimes about, I always say most people's biggest competition is don't know and do nothing. We like to talk about the other companies we compete with, but companies that don't take action. What are you seeing there? Is there a big, massive risk to not creating that open ecosystem, that fast agile? I think I'm leading the witness, but I'm saying as you're talking to customers, how are they managing that risk?

April Hickel: Well, think about yourself as a consumer. Are you going to want to go to the restaurant where you can't get an online view of their menu ahead of time?

Daniel Newman: Are they two star Michelin?

April Hickel: Are your kids going to bank with somebody that doesn't have a digital payment platform? I pay my kids' rent over a digital payment platform.

Greg Lotko: Can you pay my kids' rent?

April Hickel: Yeah. I wish. No.

Greg Lotko: Oh, well it's worth a shot.

April Hickel: I was trying to be polite, but no, I have rent in California, so I'm lucky I can pay my own mortgage.

Greg Lotko: Really polite would be paying my kids' rent.

April Hickel: So I mean if you don't change, you're going to die.

Greg Lotko: Yeah.

April Hickel: Right? I mean, how many, the cemetery of companies who said, "We're the leader in our market, people are going to act this way forever," is all behind us.

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- Daniel Newman: The Kodaks, the Blockbusters.
- Greg Lotko: It's all about continuous innovation and capability. And actually, I was thinking about your example back to the airline industry. I look at how technology is morphing, and I didn't even realize they're morphing our interaction, and it was in what you said that they said, "You're not the demographic. You're not a digital native." I actually have preferred for a long time to go to the website to do my banking, and I realize with security and multifactor authentication, if I go to the website, I actually have to accept a text code on my phone. But if I do it all on my phone, my face, my visual identification, it's much less steps, so they're actually training me to be more efficient interacting with them and more secure. So businesses are leading the way in driving where technology is going, and we have to be the ones to provide that middleware, that capability to tie it all together as partners in the ecosystem, being open.
- April Hickel: Absolutely.
- Greg Lotko: And allowing them to choose the tools they want to use.
- April Hickel: Absolutely.
- Daniel Newman: So as we sort of wrap up, and by the way, it's been a lot of fun having you here. See we're smiling, we're laughing, and she said wasn't funny. I think she's pretty funny.
- Greg Lotko: She's still not paying my kids' rent, though.
- Daniel Newman: That would've been an awesome take from this though, if you actually pulled that off. Contract, video contract. So going forward, what are some of the big actions that you're talking to customers about in terms of mitigating their risk?
- April Hickel: Well, I think the first thing we talk about is when we look at what customers tell us about their biggest concern, it is security, right? That almost trumps everything. And so I think that people can't be complacent in security, and you really have to think about how security has changed, and I don't mean how somebody logs onto a computer, but the entire end to end security profile and how you're managing that, so that is really important. And then I think following that, the biggest conversation we have with customers is their ability to change, enabling them to change, helping them understand and respond to change more fastly and in the mainframe world where changing quickly hasn't been a historic part of the culture.
- Greg Lotko: But the ability is there today. They just got to take advantage of it.

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April Hickel: They do. They do. So really helping people see the outcomes that they can achieve by change.

Daniel Newman: Well, April, it's been a lot of fun having you here on The Main Scoop.

Greg Lotko: Pleasure.

April Hickel: Thank you for having me.

Daniel Newman: Great to chat to you.

Greg Lotko: All right. Covered a lot of ground again.

Daniel Newman: It did. And we did, I guess we, and it was a lot of fun to actually, to kind of hit on that. See, what I like about when we are able to create practical examples, this conversation about the banking, the conversation about-

Greg Lotko: Flights being rescheduled, canceled.

Daniel Newman: Flights. I mean, talk about hitting home.

Greg Lotko: I mean, it's our every day.

Daniel Newman: Just getting here to be here. This was one of those great experiences where you are getting omni-channeled, but is it right? And one of the things I said in the end, and I'll kind of put this as a theme out there to everybody, is it's about the right interactions and the right channel for every individual. And that's sort that fit for purpose part of the conversation is you can build the most advanced and the most capable, but you got to understand that user demographic. And in most cases, in all these industries, there's these broad user demographics. Everyone needs security.

Greg Lotko: Right.

Daniel Newman: Everybody needs flexibility. But the way someone's going to want to interact, whether one person wants to go to a ticket counter and get their problem solved or go to the bank teller and another person, like I said, wants to use a completely deregulated FinTech experience. Totally different. And you have to be able to build technology that works for everyone.

Greg Lotko: Yeah, it's about providing those new capabilities, but we also talked about not just the business interacting with the consumer, it's us in the ecosystem working with the developers and the IT shops in our customers. There is an amazing amount of capability available today across this ecosystem, whether it be to



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deploy modern DevOps practices and roll out capabilities fast, opening up the platform and having it tie into different technologies out there, to the security. But you don't get the benefit of any of that unless you learn about it, take advantage of it, and deploy it, and that's what this is really all about.

Daniel Newman: Well, there was a lot of great nuggets here.

Greg Lotko: Yeah.

Daniel Newman: It's time to wrap up this episode of The Main Scoop. But thanks for everybody for tuning in. Daniel Newman.

Greg Lotko: Greg Lotko. Thanks for joining us.

Daniel Newman: We'll see you later.