



Interview__DK

Richard: [0:00:02] Hi everyone! Richard Tubb here with another interview. Today I'm speaking with DK. Yes, just a D and a K. Originally from Wales now residing in New Zealand. What we're going to be talking about going beyond social media marketing. Now, I know DK doesn't believe in social media experts but he's been doing this for a good 12 years or so. So he definitely knows a thing or two. DK, how are you doing my friend?

DK: Very, well. Really pleased to be here. Thank you.

Richard: [0:00:28] Well, thanks for joining us. Before we kick things up actually, I know you recently organized TEDx Wellington. So I'm really grateful for you joining us when you must be exhausted from putting an event of that magnitude. I know many of my listeners are familiar with the TEDx events. Tell us how did TEDx Wellington go?

DK: Yeah, we nailed it which is a really nice thing to say, to be able to say. It was 400 people. We sold out in 3 hours flat a couple of weeks before when the tickets went on sale. We had 12 speakers. It was the first city licensed event. Some of your listeners will be aware that TED runs a license format should you go apply and run a seminar style event which is called a TEDx event. Same format, no speakers longer than 18 minutes. But you run it locally. That's where the names come from TEDx, whatever.

I run two when I arrived in Wellington two and half years ago. I ran two smaller ones and that enabled to graduate, grow up into the city license. That lifted the 100 limit threshold that's why we're up to 400 this year. We had some really good speakers, sponsors and partners. The whole event was just fascinating and wonderful to just sit back because all your work is done at that point and you just sit back and watch it all happen. But it was intense couple of months but fantastic. Really enjoyed it. Thank you.

Richard: [0:01:55] I'm really glad it went well. I know here in my local area, I've been to TEDx Warwick a couple of times and I'm always blown away by the levels of organizations, the quality of the speakers and how much it inspires and motivates. Anyone listening who hasn't attended a TEDx event, definitely worthwhile doing that.

Let's change topic a little bit. Let's talk about social media which is a topic very, very close to your heart. I've seen you speak on a number of occasions about social media and always come away really – you really give the audience pause for thoughts and to consider your words. I'd like to kick off by asking, when most people think about social media, what do you think the assumptions are that they make? What is social media to them?

DK: Most people think it's Facebook and Twitter and they're not wrong. They're right, maybe LinkedIn. For most people, lean towards when it comes to social is using it as a marketing channel. That's when I get involved and say, "No, you're missing the point if you just use it for that." You probably can recall me on the stage shouting how much more social media can be for them as an organization, as an individual, as a group of

people, as a collective, as a department, not just using it to show about themselves which is the biggest crime that you can commit on social, anyway.

But a lot of people get it wrong, that one wrong reason. It's not about the channels really. It's a suite of tools. Social media is just a suite of tools whether it be online or even on your phone. It's just a way of being social thru different media outlets, channels or forms. And that's why it's called social media.

Richard: [0:03:45] I heard you refer to different types of personalities online before. You categorized people in different ways. Can you explain a bit about that?

DK: Yeah, that came about for a couple of reasons. I'm trying to remember. I think someone actually asked me like a couple of different things like, "Where would you use social differently, what platforms and stuff and what types of people use it as well?"

I wrote a couple of blog posts about this and I'll probably send you some notes and links you can put in show notes. But the different types of social media users, I think one of my blog posts came up with six different types and this is just my brain kind of figuring this stuff out and I'm sure there's huge amount more. But we all like to tidy things up and compartmentalize. But there's a lot of people obviously using it to converse and connect with like-minded individuals. That's the majority of people I would say as using it to converse. That's where Facebook and Twitter come into work.

Then, there's a lot of people just using it to learn, to connect with people or their peers or they're using it to develop skills or deeper understanding just very much using it as a platform to develop their sense of self or their skill level or capabilities in a specific area.

There's people – and I would probably put myself in this one - who are aggregators or curators as they now call them. People who use it heavily to as a resource to put stuff together and you're starting to see that heavily in the last couple of years, things like Tumblr and Pinterest and things like that. These are aggregates or curation points.

Then you get the marketers who only use it to show about their products or services which is not wrong. It's just not the best way and it's not right for me anyway. But they just see social as a root to market.

And the last two is like researchers who are simply like the lurkers who are using it to just hunt down numbers and ideas or even the data scrapers of this world.

And last one but not the least is a small group of just the lurkers. They really use this and they lurk around it but they're not active in any way. And I only did that because someone asked me to do it but it's kind of fun and it sharpens your mind to think about well, which are the ones I'm missing out. I'm sure your readers or your listeners will get in touch and say, "What about x, y, z?" It challenges me. I'm always open that I don't have the answers. I think I just got some cool questions.

Richard: [0:06:20] So you believe in earning permission from a community before trying to extract value from it. I heard you mention that before now. What are some of the classic mistakes you see people make when they take to social media?

DK: Classic mistakes are just talking too much. I remember doing a hell lot of podcasting back in the days just like this and I still do a few bits here and then nowadays. But I remember we were like the head of marketing for Kodak and head of marketing for McDonald's. I think like back to back in a couple of weeks or something. But they both said the same things independently of each other which I was fascinated by it at that time. This was like back in 2009 or 2010, something like that. And they said they spent a year listening to social media channels or their customers or clients having called them.

I think that's the classic mistake. People jump on and just there's cacophony of noise. That's why most people don't like it as well because they hear people talking about their cats and kittens and everything else, let's be honest.

What I found with social media and I love it for is you connect. When you get really good at it, you can actually come through that silt. You can move the silt downstream and you can really get the good stuff whether they use like less on Twitter or rarely have some thumb with RSS feeds and start to filter the noise.

Signal versus noise ratio is the biggest problem online. And curation is one of the ways, a skill set. I think Clay Shirky said, "Curation is the answer to filter failure." Because we have to filter failure online.

You're right. I do believe in adding value to any type of community before you start to extract from it. And that's just a simple idea of real life scenario stuff that I think needs to be echoed and played out online. But most people see this

social media stuff as an opportunity to just talk about themselves, their products, their services. And you wouldn't do that in real life.

The best example or the number one golden rule which I talked about and I know you and I have talked about is just like imagine it's a real life room with real people and you're talking in real time face to face. What wouldn't you do in that room? If you stood in front of someone, you just wouldn't talk at them constantly and show them pictures of your food or you're service you're trying to tell them and just barrage them with information that you hope will convert them into a buyer or an audience or a market.

When we meet people in real life, the best people are those listen twice as much. They talk and they connect you to ideas, connect you to books, to films, to blogs or even people in that space with you. "I need to connect you with Dave over there because he's doing a great thing. I just listened to the way you said." Those connectors add value into the system. That's the simplest way to approach social. It's like, "I can listen a lot and then connect and be connected to someone who just had a nice blog post and I know something a little bit about that or I know a YouTube video they might like. Maybe I'd put that into the blog post." Not just a, "Hey, that was good." It's like, "Hey, that was good. Have you seen this episode or this web seminar thing?" That's how to do it.

Richard: [0:09:50] There's going to be a lot of IT business partners listening to this podcast and that what you just said makes sense and I had conversation with people and said, "Hey, you got to add value." You know what I'm going to say but the thing they always say back to me is, "There's a really interesting one, I've got to say." What have you got to say to people who will say that to you?

DK: They're right. Nobody is interesting more I got to say. But it's not about that. It's about trying to explain to people your valued proposition. You used that word rightly. When you use social, it challenges you to think of all the different ways you can explain that. Not just like one to one I got to tell you, hopefully I might have something on my phone or some pictures I'm going to show you or a software. I can open up my laptop and show you. You do that in real life scenario.

Online, you can do a lot more as well. You can just webcast and podcast. You can link people together. You can aggregate similar types of things to show that you have value or expertise in this area. Nobody is going to care in that first instance. But if you keep on adding value, if you keep on cultivating your voice or fostering your voice whatever that might be. For many people, the barrier is just that, "I don't have enough time to

write. I'm not a good writer. I don't have enough time to even write a to-do list let alone a blog post every week." And I say to those people, "Well, don't write. You probably catching a bus in the morning or driving in your car. Could you do an audio podcast?" That's very easy to do with all these apps out there and towards to make it to your go to your blog. May it be like a little video podcast, you might not do it but someone else on your team because they're the ones with the passion and energy. You may not be the one to actually communicate the value of your business. Or maybe you're not the trying to do that anyway. You're just out there adding value in different ways whether it be on a community forum. It just so happen to be selling products or services to help people out.

But in the first instance, your added value first. Again, not extracting from the community, adding value first.

Richard: [0:12:06] And how much information or how much value would people offer online? One of the common pieces of feedback I hear especially from my own stuff, my own blog. I blog as an IT business seminar, I blog as someone who works with IT business owners now and people say, "Hey, Rick. Why do you give away your trade secrets?" What would you say to people who worry about giving away too much value online?

DK: I think it's a good point. You have to think about what is your valued proposition. Is it the fact that you have a piece of knowledge that by knowing and owning this piece of knowledge, that's the differentiator from the guy next door? So, yeah if you're posting that one bit of knowledge, yeah you're scarpering yourself maybe for a deal. But I guarantee that's not why you exist for that one piece of knowledge or even that couple or even that 10 or 100 blog posts that you just shared your knowledge. You're not. It's the accumulative impact of all that knowledge or wisdom. And it's the deliverables as well.

You don't pay someone a lot of money. You don't pay a plumber to turn-up to your house and to train and work it out with a manual. You pay him because you've been there for 20 years and he knows what taps to turn on or not or which screw to tighten or not. That's what you do in learning. Even if that plumber posted how to fix your sink, there's plenty of people who don't even want to try to fix their sink. They want someone to come and do it for them.

You know as well as I do the culture and the economy is shifting anyway. It's not about knowledge residing in the hands of few and only be delivered that way. It's a very diluted market out there for everything nowadays. The rise in the last 10 years of pro-am's, and not just Golf!

These professional amateurs who are just doing their time. And now there are coders and people who actually code for a living for example. They give away all their stuff. Where is the differentiator there?

I differentiate. I still think comes back to personality, connectivity, language, how we use it and how we add value to what we do and connect those dots or even become a translator in this world.

Richard: [0:14:31] Absolutely makes a lot of sense. Now, I've seen you. When we talk about personalities, I've seen you on stage talk about some very notable personalities from the past, very famous people – Einstein, Jimmy Hendrix. For people listening today, perhaps you can relay what you think Einstein, Jimmy Hendrix and other people of that notable personality. How would they use social media if they were alive?

DK: Yeah, this is a fun little thing that I did. Again, someone asked me, was asking me about the commercializing aspect of social media. How can we commercialize? I was like, there are ways definitely. I get paid and I still do because I learned how to commercialize it. But my point was, think about all the greats in the world and if they access to this technology, how would they commercialize? They probably wouldn't.

Jimmy Hendrix, imagine if he had Sound Cloud or imagine if Emilia Earhart had a geotag or GPS to make the voyage across the Pacific. Imagine if Gandhi twitted or things like that.

All I did was just throw a few people together and makes people go, "Okay, they're notable." And yeah, imagine if Einstein Googled Doc his notes. They were open and accessible. I'm sure you will have dug that. I'm sure he will really embrace the idea of this fact that we can have a global voice instantly and his ideas weren't his own. He spoke openly about that; that he wanted to share and learn from other people. He wanted critics. If someone criticize them, a thousand people found his theories wrong, he was like, "What one would have done? I'm alright being criticized."

Which comes back to great quote and I'm trying to find it for you which is a quote by one of the original Facebook guys by Jeff Hammerbacher and he says, "The best minds of my generation are thinking about how to make people click ads and that sucks." And that's what really most people are trying to do in social media. Your posts, your social media marketing posts ads to try to get you into a sales funnel or back to your site. That's fine into a certain

degree but what if you give them just a valuable piece of whatever and it just so happens to sell this stuff as well.

Richard: [0:16:57] Very interesting, very interesting. Let's change topic just a minute. Let's talk about offline networking. You were just at the TEDx Wellington event which is essentially getting some of the best people in your area together in one roof to meet another. What role or does offline networking still has a role?

DK: It's the ultimate. You still – real life has more bandwidth. It's what I'm saying, what I throw about a lot. You can't replace the idea of press in the palms and looking someone's eyes and having a laugh as a small group and stuff. It will predominantly not always trump but it will always be the lead in terms of just having that connection with people.

I got to say though, I must admit I've got friends who started out online and it developed over the last 10 years and now I go and see in San Francisco or whatever. But it started very much as peripheral players but they started whether they be just because they blogged about something and I left a comment or they something on my blog and things developed over time.

But offline, yeah, it still rules. You still got to be polite. The real room scenario still works because you're offline as well. Majority invest on active trade could be nice people. They kind of know what it means to be nice. If you need to be trained, well you probably got some other issues going on and you shouldn't be on social media maybe. But most of us know how to act normally and to be polite and listen be attentive and try to help folks. That's all we need to do.

Richard: [0:18:38] Yeah, I think it goes back to something I said earlier. If you put yourself out there, you're going to attract like-minded people. The best way to continue that conversation is probably offline as well as online. The two are not exclusive.

DK: Exactly. Especially if you meet people because we are global citizens now. We travel a lot. We can keep relationships going and when you're passing through again, reconnect and there's always that third and fourth meeting that something good happens. It's never the first two. It's usually the third or fourth that you finally suddenly find a way to work together or really connect someone deeper.

Richard: [0:19:15]. Yeah, now let's talk blogging for a minute. You mentioned blogs. I've got blogs that serve me really, really well over the past 8

years or so. I know you got more than one blog, don't you? What do you get out from blogging?

DK: You know, it really challenges me to find my voice. I haven't found it yet. I tried so many alterations. I do have more than one blog. I think I got about seven undergoing at the moment but you won't see them all. Some are under the radar, some are with clients, some are collaborative because you and I – again this is the idea that most people think it's an outward tool to tell the world about what you got to offer whereas you and I both know we can start a blog together collaboratively like Tumblr, WordPress. And it can be private for anybody in the world with the ones only access and has rights. We use it to develop ideas or develop deeper understanding of maybe an industry and sector we're trying to get our markets ready for or something.

Departments can use them. There are schools that use them to collaborate with their students and stuff like that. There are so many ways.

Blogging to me is still one of the ways, one of the essential social media pieces of kit. We talked about it as tools and as a kit. Within blogs itself you have all these graduation levels whether you start at the most simplest which is something like a blog, very, very simple. Or if you want to split hairs, Twitter is a micro blogging platform although I don't like to put it in that camp because it's just a status update. Platform, it's fantastic. I love it. I may be wrong but it's not really blogging. Blogging asks probably a little bit more of you.

And then yeah, I think you can graduate up to the WordPress self-installed stuff if you want to get a lot geeky, be able to muck around. It's still a wonderful tool to challenge to find your voice. As I said, it doesn't have to be written. It can be images with text with overlay. It could be audio like we're doing now. It could be video. It can be some hybrid of them all. You can play around with kinetic typography which I really love online at the moment. It's a growing trend.

There's so many things you can do here.

Richard: [0:21:34] It's really interesting. I speak to IT business owners and I try to encourage them to get their own blog. Again, going back to something I said earlier on. A lot of people are automatically saying, "Well, nobody reads what I put out there." Well, it doesn't really matter in the first instance. I think I heard Tom Peters talk about blogging the one time. He said it doesn't matter. It may have been Seth Godin,

forgive me, he said, "It doesn't matter if anybody reads it. You're going to carry on writing. You're going to get good at it. When you get good at it, people are going to start reading it." I think it helps you to clarify your own voice as you've said, that type of thing.

DK:

And also, it should help you to reach out professionally. If you're starting a blog as an IT manager, please don't blog about what you're doing. At a nice day out, you are as a team. Forget that. Think about it as a space to develop relationship with people that you want relationship with whether it be literally your heroes in your space, in your industry, your sector leaders. Why aren't you covering their black box? They're probably on Twitter. They probably got blogs themselves. You link to them. They'll find you track back links. They'll start a conversation with you.

Why aren't you interviewing people like you are and feature them on your blog? And in doing that people build relationships.

You know I was getting at one point, 70 to 80,000 uniques on my side because I did this simple scenario of featuring interesting industry development stuff which is I was learning from whilst I was doing that. I was also interviewing people like you are just doing now. While you do that, you develop relationship with them deeper than just an email. You learn from them because they're asking them questions. And thirdly, you're stealing their audience in a sense because when you post that online, they're going to go and say, "Go and check out so-and-so, he just interviewed me."

So you got all these reciprocal gains from the idea of having a blog space to develop a voice. But in doing so, you develop an audience and a character and a relationship within your sector.

Richard:

[0:23:34] I got to ask you some questions. You talked about writing a topic of conversation. But when most of us think about social media, it's hard to ignore one name. I'm really intrigued 'open-ended' question for you. How do you see Facebook as part of the social media mix?

DK:

It's a behemoth. It's a big elephant in the room for most organizations. For me, it's an elephant in the room that should be shooed away. I think it's broken. Until a few years ago, the metaphor we were using, probably four years ago shifted my metaphor. Three or four years ago it was like Facebook has got half a billion people on it because it was like four years ago. How many people are on it? How many are divorced at that time?

It was wonderful. If it was a physical street with all these people loitering and chilling out and having fun, you'll want a physical shop there so you can sell stuff, be there and engage with them and all that stuff.

The metaphor has changed into – it's still a street but people usually use Facebook nowadays because it's a carnival. They hang out with their friends and it's still a party. They share ideas and share rarely photos of their kids and what they're up to and stuff. That's cool and credible. As a platform, it serves a social utility which is what it exists for.

As a space to sell stuff or promote stuff, it's broken because the algorithm are now definitely weighted against you unless you want to throw some bucks a day and it does get much, much better and people have had a huge amount of success. The point is people are there, as I said not connect with you. They're there to connect with friends they already have relationships with.

There's a caveat to that though. Unless you're an established brand or a name and a I mean name in a widest possible sense like you're the All Blacks or Black IPs or whatever. You're already have an audience, then beyond it, it's already a win-win for you. You're not really going to miss out because people are going to be interested. They are going to be trying to engage with you and stuff there. You're going to have a lot of fun.

If you're trying to start to start business today in any business form, it's really hard to crack it. There are better things you can do like Twitter, like blogs, like Pinterest and Tumblr and other places. Even traditional forum sights. They still kind of work a lot or email pre-tell. But it still wins if you can get some great contents and build relationships up slow. Take the idea trees. Grow slow, grow strong, up or down roots. Don't be silly. Be honest. All the things you read in the paper about accelerated growth and all that stuff. They exist but they're the example to prove the rule. The rule is you're going to have to put the hours in. You're going to have a great product and service. You are going to have to talk to people and you're going to have to add value.

So, you have Facebook. I came off Facebook a couple of years ago and I really don't miss it.

Richard: [0:26:43] You talked about value. You've shared incredible value with the listeners to the podcast there, very respectful of your time. I really

appreciate it. As we begin to wrap up our chat, I know you just finished TEDx Wellington for this year. What are you working on next?

DK: I'm about to head over to the States again in a couple weeks' time to do a little bit of R and R there with a conference called Hatch Festival. Check it out. It's in Montana. A mate of mine runs that and it's just compelling to say the least.

I'm also doing some work out there with a couple of clients, designing clients, urban designers and stuff like that. I'm still keeping up with my mentorship and coaching. I've got a few clients to do that now which is kind of fun. I like it because it's one on one. I still do a little bit of strategy work here and there with clients and I really enjoy that. So, yeah that's kind of my focus. I'm trying to figure out what I'm going to be when I grow up. So if any of your listeners have any ideas, please get in touch because I'm still working out all of these stuff. I enjoy it. I love social media. I think it's brilliant but I'm looking for my next challenge wherever that may be.

Richard: [0:27:54] Well, if anybody wants to find you online and you talked about the one on one mentoring, do you have slots open for anybody listening to this podcast? IT business owners maybe want to speak to an expert?

DK: Yeah, I always have a couple open. The Skype is a great medium like we're doing now. I use Skype and Google docs and email as my mode of choice there to mentor people. It's very one to one. It's very creative. It's very strategic in terms of 'I won't do it for you but I'll lead you to the water. I'll show you the benefits and values you can get out of these platforms.' I think I'll ask better questions off you. That's the kind of take out, the approach that I take to people. It's been quite successful and I still, like I said got a few from the UK, a couple in America, one in Canada and a couple out here in Wellington, New Zealand as well at the moment. But yeah, always open for anybody who thinks they need a little bit of guidance for that stuff.

Richard: [0:28:51] And where can people find you online?

DK: Couple of places. Probably best is my website which is justaDandK.com. So when you say it it's 'Just a D and K' dot com and you'll find links to my LinkedIn on there and Twitter and my blog and all the other information related to what I do in this world.

Richard: [0:29:21] Fantastic. Well, I think you got the best domain name that anybody could have. It's been an absolute joy to speak to you and I hope we can do it again soon. It's been a lot of fun.

DK: Definitely Richard. Thanks for doing these podcasts as well. Just from my perspective, it's always great to see someone doing stuff like this and example are really of what we just been talking about adding value to the world with no other reason that you can are perfect manifest of what we've just been discussing. Thank you Richard.

Richard: [0:29:49] I appreciate it. Thanks a lot DK.