

Michael J. Mahony

The world we live in today is dominated

by digital products. Listen to this episode, and learn how one company

helps a whole host of other companies

execute their digital transformation.

Welcome back to another episode of the technology Alchemist. Our sponsor is your virtual CTO. Your virtual CTO is a technology services company specializing in increasing your revenue and profit. Through a close examination of your technology engine. Your virtual CTO offers exclusive coaching for business leaders. That is the only business coaching program that includes technology as part of the program. If you want to learn how you can make more money by tuning up your technology engine, you can learn more at [get your virtual cto.com](http://getyourvirtualcto.com) now today I'm joined by Paul Lima of Lima consulting Paul is a trusted adviser to the visionaries and change agents of today charged with creating the digital futures of tomorrow. In 2004, polymath founded Lima Consulting Group, a multinational consultancy with offices throughout the Americas. Paul's personal mission is to apply innovation to help organizations transform their digital futures. He is the author of the firm's flagship offering the digital transformation maturity model used by Fortune 100 companies and mid sized businesses alike in strategically applying digital innovations to deliver world class customer service. And he's also a good friend of mine. Welcome to the show, Paul.

Paul Lima

It's a real pleasure to be on. Thanks for having me, Mike.

Michael J. Mahony

Mike. Glad to have you. So, so let's start out with let's talk a little bit about what Lima consulting does.

Paul Lima

Well, we have a mission to really help transform the digital futures of tomorrow. And that manifests in a lot of different ways and digital transformation means a lot of things. things to people. But it's really being able to apply innovation today as it relates to customer experiences.

Michael J. Mahony

Nice. So when you say, digital transformation, a lot of people don't know what that means Can you kind of give a brief explanation of what a digital transformation is?

Paul Lima

It's a, it means a lot of different things to a lot of different folks, depending on where you sit in the world, right. So if you're a technology provider, or your service provider, you're providing cloud infrastructure, it's going to mean something different. But the way we think about it is really being able to deploy the people, the processes, the platforms, and all to attain a desired financial performance. Right. So those that's the expanse of it. So it covers people process

platforms and performance. And being able to do that in a way that you're able to leverage your existing models, your business model. So how you make money today, and to be able to envision the future business models and all that With the eye towards improving the customer experience. So that's a long winded way, we have a little definition. And I kind of, you know, gave you the long winded answer of it. But, you know, when you look at companies that have been doing things for a long time, take Volvo, for example, they've been making engines and cars for an awfully long time. And they've been doing it with, you know, selling a product. And eventually, you know, it got to the point now, where, you know, they really evaluated what are some new business models? How are some new ways that we can encourage different types of customer experiences. And now you've probably heard, you can rent your Volvo. You can subscribe, you can, it's different than a lease. So you know, you can subscribe to your mobile. So there's a great example of you think about, oh, how do we get from selling engines to subscribing to a Volvo? And what does that mean for the people process platforms and performance? That's the kind of work that we do with organizations to help them reimagine their digital futures.

Michael J. Mahony

And what's the biggest challenge you generally face When trying to help an organization do that,

Paul Lima

well, you know, digital transformation, and really imagining customer journeys and new experiences that you can provide your customers. It's not really a technical problem. It's a it's a strategy problem. And I think a lot of organizations, what will happen is the CEO will come downstairs and say, Hey, give me a new website, or, hey, I found a new, shiny object at a conference I was recently attending. And being able to put that in a model and context and build a business case and really understand in a methodical and disciplined way. How are we going to do this? How are we going to get how are we going to think big and really take a website redesign or the insistence of a senior leader to deploy a marketing automation tool? How are we going to take that say, Okay, got it, boss, we're going to do that. But to begin thinking bigger, and I think a lot of organizations are almost scared to say customer journey, or digital transformation, like it's gonna happen there because it is a big hairy thing. So getting started and really using the methodology can help organizations overcome that inertia and that phrase overcoming the inertia. I can't tell you how many times that's been the biggest challenge the companies that ever approached us. They've used that phrase more often than not

Michael J. Mahony

make sense. So, you you founded Lehman Consulting Group in 2004. What was on your path leading up to that? Like, what kind of technology background have you got?

Paul Lima

Well, that's a good question. I fell into it for different different times in my life. So in 1989, I started West Point, and in June of 1989, and we were the second College in America to be wired. And so that semester, I was turning in my English Papers, and MS DOS that I've been writing

through the internet

to my teachers.

When I graduated and I minor in systems engineering and majored in economics and then I went into the military where we were using the concept of digital transformation and the cavalry. I was a cavalry officer in Fort Lewis and Korea. Little time in Germany, and, and we really had a new situational awareness in our tanks with the satellites. And I remember in 1995, getting my pluggger, which today we would call that a GPS, the size of a shoe box, and everybody had them and we were able to see what we call on the battlefield situational awareness with little digital blue and red icons of where everybody was. That's digital transformation. Later, I went to SDI investments, and I was involved in kind of stumbling on problems around just the way that we did our business and the way that we process things and I started writing macros and was doing the work that took everybody else Eight, nine hours to do in 30 minutes using some Excel macros and then they said, hey, go do that with other people, here's a budget go figure out how to become a business analyst. And over the six years I was there, I wound up developing and launching six products that were customer facing products. And that's when I said I, at that point, I had gone to the Executive MBA program at Wharton. It was a mass management of technology kind of hybrid degree. And I said, you know, maybe I can do this for a living. And so I went to my boss, my wife and I collaborated with with Tunisia and we said, you know, let's give this has shot for a year. And here we are, we're going on what is it? 1516 years. That's crazy. I mean,

Michael J. Mahony

getting to know you, you're it doesn't sit, none of that surprises me because you're you're one of those people who seems to think of the most of the eventualities in a situation and I had a conversation with someone the other day about people involved with running technology companies usually don't have that skill. They tend to Well, it's like the show Silicon Valley. They're, you know, great coders, they come up with a great product ideas, but the reason they never make it any worse because they have zero management experience, and they're not getting any better at it either as they go along so they keep doing this and then this and then this and then this. And so it's no surprise to me, you know, your business has has grown and lasted this long, just based off of your analytical abilities. So what would you say is like your, currently like your biggest challenge with your business?

Paul Lima

Ah, wow, I would say allocating constrained resources. I served when I was in the FCI, the firm that I was in when I moved to Pennsylvania, and got out of the active army. I also was a reservist and at a certain point I was interested in in continuing to work in cybersecurity. And that was In 2001, I got an opportunity to be part of the I was the deputy commander for the first cyber warfare unit that we had in the Pentagon, it was a reserve unit. And, and so I got my first opportunity to go to a meeting, where there were general officers, and I was just at the time a captain, so I wasn't even worthy to bring coffee to anybody. And I remember my very, very first meeting and kind of saying, whoa, well, what's the general officers gonna do? Where's the fire and brimstone or smoke? It's gonna be, you

know, breathe out of their, their mouth. And really, that was really, really boring. And what I noticed is, most of the time that the general officers were in the meetings, and generally for what we call a decision brief to make a decision. There's a way that we do that in military. And I recognize that the higher up I go in my career, the more time I'm going to spend allocating constrained resources. That degree of focus. And that's what that's what general officers do. That's why they call them generalists. That's why the term general is what it is. And I think as I grow, it's really working with my teams and evaluating opportunities and understanding. Where do we want to put our chips?

Michael J. Mahony

That totally makes sense as well, the important decisions to make. So you had mentioned to me on one one day recently that you're you guys put out an E book. Can you tell me about that?

Paul Lima

Absolutely. Yeah. It's that problem about overcoming inertia. And the same problem that I talked about around allocating constrained resources is got to be the same challenge. And we know that from our market surveys that we do with those visionaries that are leading companies today that want to get started with a digital transformation that that is more than, let's just read do our website, right. And so the E book It's got a long title, but the gist of it is around helping a digital transformation leader get started to initiate their project and what they need to know in the first 90 days. And they can find an ebook at Nima consulting COMM And it's the center banner or hero image of our website.

Michael J. Mahony

Awesome. Awesome. Yeah, you sent me a copy of it, and I reviewed it and it's really well done. Then they Another question I have for you is, you know, where do you you know, you seem to continually have a stream of projects. Where do you tend to find those projects like what's usually the, the process you go through to, to land and engagement?

Paul Lima

Yeah, a lot of it's just the content that we produce. One of our five values here at Lima is around continuous learning. And we love to be able to collaborate with other organizations and part what we're doing with with you Mike and and do research and be able to do webinars and what we try to do is give away a lot of our learnings or a lot of our insights templates. We just published another blog entry on how to create a persona, and what that template ought to look like if you're just starting out, or when we did a few weeks before that was a, how to use a digital balanced scorecard and what that looks like. And we gave a template away for that. And really, it's, I guess, in a nutshell is content marketing and webinars and being able to demonstrate a little bit of value and hope that folks see that value and give us a call and give us give us a chance to be their trusted advisor.

Michael J. Mahony

That's awesome. So you're within your corporate structure, you know, you you, you have Lima Consulting Group Do you have is your approach to managing that business

more formal or more relaxed and laid back?

Paul Lima

You know, it's different times and it's all situational dependent, but I think it's an extension of my personality as well. And so there are times where I need to be a little bit more formal. I have a Brazilian In entity, Lima Consulting Group in Brazil, and they're just the way that business is conducted. It's it's much more disciplined in the way that we need to communicate with me living here and my team there. I have a subsidiary in Uruguay, we have resources in different countries in Latin America. And so it's a couple of dimensions there. One is understanding the market that you're in and responding with the culture of those markets without passing any judgment. Right. And then the other is just using the leadership style that works for you. And and I think for me, I'm really enjoy the, the pushback that a lot of my staff will give me when we have an idea or an initiative and anybody's able to come in if we had an open door policy in our virtual context today. I think that's used and invoked pretty frequently, where folks are able to back channel and say, Hey, I'd love to be able to try this initiative. I had one person just reached out to me the other day and say, Hey, they wanted to start a blog on the training program that they're starting. And, you know, absolutely. So what that allows us to do is just be a lot more agile and respond to the interests that our staff has and our contractors have, and really invest in their growth in a way that makes sense for them.

Michael J. Mahony

Yeah, that's something I've noticed about your company is, you're you're very supportive of the growth of the people that work with you. I mean, for me, you know, in our business, we have 15 employees. And what we what we try to do is at the management level, we we keep things pretty formal, we have a monthly meeting, where we go over all of our what we call our vital factors, and they basically tell us, you know, as our business going in the direction we expect it to go and, but also when we make decisions about things we look and see how does that affect our vital factors because They've been chosen for a reason. And if they're going to negatively affect the vital factors, clearly, we don't want to do that. But on the other hand, like you say, we have an open door policy, we let our people make any suggestions that they want to make. And sometimes we're against it for whatever reason, sometimes 100% for it. And other times, we'll say, hey, let's try it and see what happens. can always, you know, do something different later if we have to. So, I love I love that attitude that you have, and your your willingness to listen to what other people have to say, because I personally think, in most technology companies, they get so focused on the next project or whatever product they're going to build, that they forget that other people might have a better way of doing things. And it doesn't hurt to listen doesn't mean you have to do what they said. But at least you listen, you know, and that's, I think that's a key to success. And that's one of the things we try to explore on the technology Alchemist is you know, how are you becoming successful. So one of the things I wanted to ask you is, you know, right now obviously, we're both on somewhat of a lockdown situation because of this Coronavirus pandemic. Do you have any advice for people on how to deal with their business during the pandemic? And then, you know, I guess we can term after the lockdown is over after the pandemic?

Paul Lima

Yeah, I think I have three thoughts, right, solve problems, create values, and invest in yourself. So, you know, it's one thing to say, we build websites, or we do digital analytics, it's another to say, and in solving problems, we can help get a restaurant to get on Uber Eats in 90 minutes. Right. And well, that's a website. Well, yeah, it's actually taking what's on your menu from your website and dropping it into your eat. So you know that problem, as opposed to a capability where it's about me and my company, versus going into an organization solve a problem, creating value and creating value, it means I understand your problem, I feel your pain, I have empathy, I have an understanding of what you're going through, and then being able to create the first part of solving a problem in the context of the pain that your customer is experiencing. And then the third one is a for a lot of organizations, Paul, that's great. We can't do that. We're, we don't have we don't have a way to solve a problem or create value based on what we do. If you're a moving company, what are you going to do you know, so in that case, invest in yourself Did you need when this comes out, or when we when we start leaving our homes again and going back to work and resuming them I hesitate to call it normal life but You know, afterwards, you know, are you working on your marketing and tuning up your positioning? And is there is there a training that you can do? So one of the things that we have been looking at, and I've been getting a lot of phone calls from my friends and just other organizations that are laying off folks in my industry, and people calling up asking for advice, asking if I've got positions. And you know, we're very well staffed right now. But we're always looking for folks that are interested in investing in themselves. And one of the things that we're doing at Lima is through our relationship with Adobe word gold partners. And what that means is that anybody who's affiliated with Lima, even on a small contract that just says that they're willing to work training, not to get paid, but just that they're one of our affiliates that wants to get trained. We'll give them a small contract. And one of the things I wanted to open up to your to your listeners, Mike, was anybody that would like to get trained on any Adobe marketing products, we would,

we can provide that training to them for free.

Michael J. Mahony

It's such a nice thing. That's a very nice thing. But again, doesn't surprise me The more I get, the more I've gotten to know you over the years, the less things like that surprise me. It's one of the reasons why I think we get along so well, because I'm very much I've been preaching to my coaching clients that, you know, like you said, it's funny, because I would have said the exact same three things that you said. And I think that the main thing is helping other people being willing to help other people. And I think the only thing that people can learn from this thing and the situation they're in now, it's kind of like you can't cry over spilt milk. Well, most of us don't do a good job of building and maintaining a network of connections. And it's in a time like this like like you I heard you say, you know, you have people calling you and saying listen if you have positions available, that's because they've got A network with you in it, and they can reach out to you. But if they hadn't maintained that friendship and that, you know, that connection, that who do they reach out to in a time like this, everybody seems to think everyone's hurting. But that's not really true, right? Like, there's

businesses that are doing just okay. And there's others that are actually flourishing. And then there's those that are floundering. And I think that being willing to keep those connections going is probably the fourth thing I would add is just make sure that you, if you haven't done it already, start fostering those connections. I mean, one of the things I started doing a few months ago, was just, it's kind of an interesting concept. Like you take your phone and you open up your text message app, is scroll all the way to the bottom, and then find the bottom four people and send them a message and say, Hey, I haven't talked to you a long time. How's it going? Because by doing that, you're reminding them that you're thinking about them, but also you're keeping that connection alive. And, you know, yeah, you'll have a conversation and it's the typical thing that drops off after a week and then eventually They're gonna wind it back at the bottom of your list. And if you do this every day, eventually you're going to, you know, connect to them again. So I love that, you know, especially the, the moving company example, because training is something that we all complain all the time that we don't have time to do. And I don't personally believe that I think if someone were to cut back on like television watching or whatever, they'd find, they'd find an hour somewhere to train, right. But now, now a lot of people are at home doing nothing, literally doing nothing. I read something yesterday that said, during this pandemic, Americans are averaging eight hours of streaming a day, take like, a quarter of that every day and study something and you'll be amazed on the other side, what you're what you're going to have. Right. And I know that's a foundation that you have is I mean, it's how we ended up meeting face to face this training. You know, it's a big, it's a big thing. You really believe in that. So what have you found it are like the three essential things that you look for in somebody in order to say, hey, I want to send that person to a to a training class to help them out a little bit.

Paul Lima

Oh, yeah. Well, I, I do have the three things that we generally look at here at at Lima in terms of the consultants that we know that are going to be successful in our, in our culture. The first is that just really hard working and and and no ego with relate related to that work, right. So we don't know what work is going to come to us once we get on site. I mean, we generally know it's going to be in a box but you know, hard working and and willing to really you know, when when the test comes out and open up Microsoft Word or Excel or get on the phone and, and dig up the answers or do the research. So no ego and hard work. So that's the first The second is really entrepreneurial thinking right? So in the way that they solve problems. There's this mindset that says it's a growth mindset that we can solve the problem. Sometimes that's a detriment to because sometimes there are problems that shouldn't be solved, right, you need to walk away from it. But for the most part, it's an engineering orientation that says, I can do this, we can figure this out. We're optimistic we're going to eat this elephant one bite at a time. So that's the entrepreneurial mindset, the growth mindset. And the third one is just really smart. And I don't mean where you went to school. And I don't mean what your GPA was, or what your LSAT score was. I mean, if you're, you're smart, because the questions you ask, Are you really curious? Are you always looking for in your spare time are you reading blogs and reading books and, and looking at materials and sharing that in a collaborative way that demonstrates to yourself into your customers into the team hear that you're invested in your growth right and in If

you do that, you will be smart. Right? And many times, being smart doesn't mean that you're asking the best questions. But what it means is that you have this relentless curiosity. And with that curiosity, just given the pace of innovation and the accelerating nature of the data collecting and how many new technologies are becoming exponential and the breadth and scope of the speed of accelerating technologies, you're going to stay current. And if you do that in a disciplined way, you'll be a great consultant.

Michael J. Mahony

Makes sense. Makes sense. Well, I really appreciate all of your insight. And thanks for being on the show. Why don't you tell people where they can find you? Whatever contact information, want to give out? Go for it.

Paul Lima

You bet. Yeah. So start out with Lima consulting Comm. On our website, we've got a blog. We've got some of the ebooks and some of the materials I've mentioned earlier. You can certainly write me at p Lima at Lima consulting calm. My name is Paul Lima, subpoena Lima Lima. consulting.com and if you have an interest in getting certified in any of the Adobe products, um, you know, we can make that happen for you and just sign you up for the on demand video training. And you can go become a Adobe analytics, business practitioner Marketo developer or whatever in the Adobe Marketing Cloud in that particular category of software.

Michael J. Mahony

Awesome. Well, thanks again for being on the show. For those of you listening. Thanks for listening to the technology Alchemist. You can find the audio version of this at Yogi's Podcast Network comm forward slash TTA show. Or you can look it up on YouTube, the channels your virtual CTO, feel free to subscribe because there's gonna be lots more like this. It's a weekly show and so we'll see you again next week.