One Knight in Product - E177 - Erika Klics

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SPEAKERS

Erika Klics, Jason Knight

Jason Knight 00:00

Hello, and welcome to the show. I'm your host, Jason Knight. And on each episode of this podcast, I'll be having inspiring conversations with passionate people in and around the wonderful world of Product Management. If that sounds, that sort of thing that you can get behind, why not come and join me and some of the finest thought leaders and practitioners in the world on https://www.oneknightinproduct.com, where you can sign up to the newsletter, subscribe on your favourite podcast app or follow the podcast on social media, and guarantee you never miss another episode again, make sure you tell your friends while you're at it. On tonight's episode, we talk about a relevant topic in today's economic climate... that search for your next big career move. We talk about how to approach our job searches, the sorts of things we should prioritise and how we can leverage our inevitable edge. We talk about some of the pitfalls, obvious mistakes that people make, and how to avoid falling victim to the biggest reason that product leaders don't get the job. For this and much more. Please join us on One Knight in Product.

Jason Knight 01:04

So my guest tonight is Erika Klics. Erica is a longtime talent acquisition leader who's helped companies like Zapier and Snap Inc land the right people, presumably in the latter case through excellent use of filters. But one of our first jobs was dressing up as Cha Cha the Tree Frog at the Rainforest Cafe. She's now hopped off the recruitment lily pad and has set up her own consultancy to help jobseekers find their inevitable edge is helping to empower senior tech leaders to drive their own careers. Well, I've got to say, if I'm a senior tech leader, surely I deserve a chauffeur by now. Hi, Erika, how are you doing tonight?

Erika Klics 01:34

I'm doing fantastic. And I think I also deserve a chauffeur. That was an exciting introduction. Thank you.

Jason Knight 01:45

I do my best. Alright, so first things first, you've gone out on your own. You're the founder of your own firm ErikaKlics.com. But what problem you specifically solving for the world with your own consultancy?

Erika Klics 01:56

Yeah, so I don't know about you. But for me, and for most of the people that I speak with in the tech world, there's not necessarily a playbook for how to build a career that you actually want. There is tonnes and tonnes of advice about entry level entering the job market. And you know the how to as you go through the job market. But what I have seen is that all of that advice really helps jobseekers slot into the market and play into exactly what the industry wants. And so my whole goal is to empower job seekers, particularly as they get later on in their careers. And they've seen what's possible out there in the market to actually figure out what they want to do next, where they want to guide their careers to go and to find those jobs and figure out how to be the right person for those jobs. That is what I'm passionate about. It's what I get excited to help jobseekers do. And that is why ErikaKlics.com exists.

Jason Knight 03:03

Oh, there you go. There's your origin story. But you spent a long time on the receiving end of recruitment as in actually trying to get people to come and work for the companies that you were working with. So what was it that made you sort of switch around and decide to attack it from the other angle and try and get people into companies? Was it just that you saw the same problems time and time again? Or was there some other thing that sort of kicked that off in your thought process?
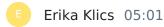
Erika Klics 03:25

Yeah, I mean, I started in recruiting in 2010. And I would make hundreds of cold calls every single day to companies trying to hire and two candidates. But as you know, as I moved on in my career, I got lots and lots of feedback from those candidates in the interview process. And over time, I really started to realise like all of this feedback is the same. They're either they're not quite strong enough, or you know, there's just like this little something missing. Or maybe there's somebody a little bit better, like all this very generic feedback that hiring teams would never want to admit that that's how they're making decisions. But there is there's like something missing. And I really made it my mission to figure out piece of what is that thing that companies are listening for the hiring teams are listening for? Where are people falling short, what are they expecting to hear. And once I started seeing the patterns, I couldn't unsee them I had to go after I had to figure out what it was. And then once I got to that point, I really wanted to figure out how to help jobseekers actually solve for that. It was hard for me to get up in the morning and get excited about helping companies sell their roles. I wanted to help the people on the other side,

Jason Knight 04:36

Ah, it's all about the people. As far as I understand. It's more than just product managers that you're helping obviously the crowd probably could be most listened to this, but this is more of a general tech play. Like you're helping people from the I guess engineering side. I don't know if you do product designers as well, product managers. I know also on a leadership level too. But like is it fair to say that your offering is very optimised across the board and maybe even outside of tech or does it play very strongly in techspace

Erika Klics 05:01

So I help folks who primarily are leaders, I work with senior folks as well who have career vision, but across the board, product design, go to market, people, people, business people, you know, because what I have found is that it's not necessarily about the role itself, although I understand not that I've worked with hire to every single role in the tech industry. But...

Jason Knight 05:26

Not yet!

Erika Klics 05:27

Not yet! But the more important piece is actually how they play together, how they communicate how they collaborate. And that is the biggest differentiator between jobseekers candidates who are successful in the in the process and those that feel like they struggle. And as long as you can figure out how you slot into the interplay of all of those different roles, I can help in some way.

Jason Knight 05:51

Well, speaking of interplaying of roles, and obviously leadership as well, and tech and product, one of the things that I've been chatting to friends about in the product space recently, is the rise of the chief product and technology officer, you know, like a kind of almost like a twofer for the C suite where you can get two for the price of one. And apparently that's a good idea. Now, there's obviously varying different opinions about that. But is that something that you're seeing a lot more out there more people trying to go for that combined role? Or are you still seeing quite a lot of play in the individual sort of separated roles?

Erika Klics 06:22

Yeah, it's interesting, because I think that that role has always existed, but nobody ever called it out. At least for where I played a lot in the startups in earlier stage companies. And that Chief Product Officer was always somebody who had to have an advanced technical degree and had to have started out as an engineer, or the other way around, because what happens particularly early stage, most of the time that one of the co founders is the product person, and

they are the product person for a very long time. And too long so so that CTO plays a bit of the that product role along the way. So now we're just seeing it called out for what it is, which I don't necessarily still think it's the like an ultimate solution for for what companies are trying to do. But they're just they're just naming it a little bit differently.

Jason Knight 07:14

Yeah, and that's fair enough. And I'm always a big fan of people naming things, what they actually are, I guess, one of my concerns about the role and again, interested in your take with all the people that you see is that it's like you're either gonna get someone that's really productive, or you're gonna get someone who's really technology II, but that it's almost like a unicorn role to go and find someone who's absolutely amazing at both of those things. Do you think I'm just being a little bit too suspicious? Or do you think there's something there?

Erika Klics 07:39

No, that's there's definitely something there. I mean, it is a pattern in product, and it's a pattern in every other function in tech, is that companies want to find this person who can do all of the things and lead all of the people that those people don't exist, what I think the best thing that they can find is somebody who is, you know, one or the other and excited to guide a team or is a fantastic leader in the sense that they can hire the right people to fill in the holes. That's the best that a company can do.

Jason Knight 08:13

There you go, Well, if anyone's listening, try and do that. But some people might be sitting there thinking, Well, I'm not a leader. Maybe not a leader yet. Can Erika help me and you've touched on the fact that you maybe support people that are career focused, have a vision, and not just solely focused on leadership. So does that then mean that you're kind of optimising as well as the Leadership Progression to actually help get people into leadership roles sort of first time? Like, is that part of your strategy for people?

Erika Klics 08:39

Yeah, I mean, that's definitely something where I've worked with a lot of folks who have a vision to step into leadership level roles, they want to manage people, they want to manage bigger projects. The people that I work with are folks who wants to do more, they get excited about working on a great product, they get excited about working with a fantastic team, and they know that they can do more than where they're currently working. That tends to be at the leadership level. And I tend to attract folks at the leadership level, because they've gotten to that point in their career, a lot of people in product have fallen into leadership in products. So, so yes, people tend to come to me when they've accidentally found their way into this, this path. And they've hit a certain point in their career where they cannot no longer accidentally move forward. There needs to be more intention with where they're going next.

Jason Knight 09:36

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And it's definitely something I've chatted to people about before this idea that you kind of get promoted into being some form of leader like the head of product or director of product or whatever role you actually get. It's called, of course, the names of these jobs, kind of all over the place as well, because one company's director is probably another company's CPO. But also again, yeah, you get to this point where they kind of accidentally fall into it because they're an individual distributed, it's really good. They get put into that role, they don't get given any support. And of course, in a startup, they're sort of sitting there, not even with anyone to really tell them what's right or wrong, because, you know, there's no one there to help. So I do think it's a really interesting pattern. And yeah, hopefully, your approach can help some of those people, maybe not in the current roles, but get that next one and land properly. But let's talk about that approach. Because on your website, you've got an approach, or you call out as, as I said, in the intro, this idea of helping people find their inevitable edge, which is sounds almost like poker or something like, you know, we're trying to beat the odds. So I guess the first question is how you specifically defining someone's inevitable edge.

Erika Klics 10:46

So I focused when I, when I work with job seekers, I really think about their strengths, the things that make them so uniquely you that nobody else has, that is somebody's inevitable edge. That is the thing where, you know, if you are able to lean into those strengths, if you are able to find the language, to share those strings, and to get somebody else excited about what you do, and how you can help them solve their problems, that it's inevitable, that's how I see it, it is inevitable, you will find a fit a great fitting company, and you'll be able to do the work that you really crave to do and that that stretch that you want to give yourself. So it's funny, because you mentioned, you know, like the competition and trying to beat up and getting that edge. I think everybody's got an edge. But I don't actually really think of it in terms of competition. Because once you find that inevitable edge, you're not really competing with anybody, you're really only figuring out how to make yourself better at what you do.

Jason Knight 11:43

That sounds fantastic. But I guess the obvious flipside of that inevitable edge concept could be that their inevitable age could be not product or tech at all right? Like maybe they've got a super high leverage skill, or just talent or whatever it is that makes them them. That actually means that they go into a completely different direction, you know, go into teaching or something like that, like, is that something that kind of comes up in your discussions that you're speaking to somebody like that, actually, you shouldn't really be doing any of these jobs? Or can you always find an angle for these people?

Erika Klics 12:14

Oh, that is fascinating. So I have had clients in the past where ultimately they did decide that, in fact, their edge is not in tech at all, there was a content strategist who was working in tech B2B. And she wound up going into marketing in the higher education space. That is not something where we get to that point, I don't necessarily work with folks outside of tech. But if

the work that we do uncovers a space that where they will be happier, I'm excited for them, I want them to find that edge. Most of the time, when somebody comes to me, it's really clear that tech is their path forward. And we just have to figure out which facet of their product management their you know, when I work with marketers, or whoever, their product management or their their people management skills, or you know, their collaboration, like where is that? And where can we lean into that more to find the right role for them. And a lot of time that shows up in, oh, well, you're working at this like giant corporation right now. But in fact, you want to build zero to one and you want to innovate, we should go earlier stage, I had a recent client who is leading product at a pretty well known company, and she's putting the point that act to the point where we looked at a lot of different types of companies where she could go and fintech and she ultimately decided, wow, the stuff that's out there, none of this is going to light me up. I'm gonna go start my own company. It's that time.

Jason Knight 13:50

That's the inevitable final form of any product leader. I like to think so anyway, but let's talk a little bit about then the details of that approach. And I understand that there's an inevitable edge method. I also understand that that's kind of under review at the moment, as we were chatting about earlier, but I think that the primary or the principal steps remain broadly the same. It's like a three step plan to create a targeted roadmap, build industry optimised positioning, and use the human hiring advantage. So it sounds pretty structured. But when it comes to details, when you're talking about target roadmap, or creating a target roadmap, you say, it's important to stop scrolling the job boards for any matching title, to really understand the features of a role that reporting to you, which I definitely agree with. But how do we do that? Exactly.

Erika Klics 14:40

So this is where a little bit of my framework is shifting. So a lot of folks start with scrolling through the job boards and you know, say you're a director of product management, and well, okay, I know I want to go work for another B2B company, because that's where all my experiences like Okay, great. Yeah. So as narrow as you get, or what I frequently hear with product managers is, actually I want a whole new product space, I don't, I want to do something totally different, because I'm sick of solving this particular type of problem. Now, what most folks do is they go and explore all kinds of different jobs, they, you know, I'll take a look at somebody's sourcing list, as I'll call it, they've gone to the job boards, and they have 20 jobs on that. And they're wildly different from director of product at a tiny, you know, 20 person company, where the Director of Product means that they are the first product manager, and they are building everything completely from scratch or...

Jason Knight 15:44

"Director of Product" in air quotes.

Erika Klics 15:45

Yes, exactly, exactly. Or they are looking at a, you know, a 300 person company, and they

Yes, exactly, exactly. Or they are looking at a, you know, a 300 person company, and they would be director of product. And that's, that's a very clearly a, I wouldn't call it middle management role. But it's, it's, it's managing folks. And it's not the head of product, there's maybe some mix of strategy. But in fact, that's all optimising products and nothing in you know, maybe building a couple of new features, but it's a completely different part of a company's trajectory. And so those are different roles. They require wildly different skills, and they require different language. So how can you possibly be the perfect person that you know when you're up against and well, we won't talk too much about competition, but currently in this market? If there are 300 Other people applying? Yes, even for director level roles? How are you going to be the top candidate for both that 20 person startup and also this late stage growth company? It doesn't make any sense. So anyway, I went on a little bit of a rant. But...

Jason Knight 16:53

No, absolutely, I'm here for the rants!

Erika Klics 16:55

If you start if you if you start on the job boards, and you start just taking a look at what is interesting, what you wind up doing is like slotting yourself into the market and trying to figure out where you could possibly fit into the market. And what you're not thinking about when you start that way, is, what am I going to be really good at what do I actually want to do next? What do I want to work on? Do I want to grow this area of my my skill set? Do I do this now and hate doing this now? Like, there are certain you know, like really that introspective step. So that's why I say stops rolling the job boards and just dumping every director of product job onto a spreadsheet and saying this is it, this is what we're doing?

Jason Knight 17:40

Yeah, sort by date posted and off you go. But after that, then we're talking about industry optimised positioning, and making sure that you describe yourself in ways that resonate with your target audience, which, you know, just like product positioning, right. So hopefully, that should be something that we're pretty good at, although I've certainly spoken to people in the past, talking to them about their job plans. And would maybe say that not everyone is good at that. But you know, this is something that people can develop. So what are some of the ways that we can nail it nail that positioning so that we don't just walk in? Once we've got an interview, for example, with a generic resume, and some kind of copypasta covering letter that doesn't really satisfy anyone.

Erika Klics 18:16

So it's funny that you talked about product managers being good at positioning, I have seen this with product managers, and with marketers...

Jason Knight 18:25

Marketers have no excuse, no excuse at all!

Erika Klics 18:28

Is that it's hard to see the big picture of what you do and why you were good at what you do. So we actually spend a lot of time in that first step of the framework and figuring out what you are truly good at what those strengths are. And then the second part of the framework is about amplifying them. And when I talk about industry optimised positioning, it's really about positioning your experience in terms of scope, scale, and impact. That is like the love language of the tech industry. The tech companies want to understand that you understand how to grow from where they are to where they need to grow, that you can own an area of the business or an area of the company that they need you to own the certain gap. They have gaps that needed to fit into it. So if you can articulate that, that is ultimately what is going to get you not just in the door, but get you all the way through that interview process is being able to paint that picture of skill for a company.

Jason Knight 19:33

Yeah, that painting a picture thing is really interesting and something that when I chat to people, I always have this kind of thing in my head. And this is again, something that product people should be especially marketers should be kind of good at is this whole idea of storytelling, and not just walking in there with a generic cut and paste like I say, or just you know, Mad Libs type thing where I've put a bunch of stuff in but actually crafting a narrative that supports why people should even bother to look at you, which maybe sounds a little bit harsh, but like you People get a lot of CVs, right. So like you need to stick out in some way. So anything you can do to do that surely, is going to move you along a little bit further, even if it doesn't get you the job, or at least gets you fair hearing for the job, right?

Erika Klics 20:12

Well, one of the things you talk about, you know, product managers should be good at the narrative. But one of the things that I have found, and this is true, when when I start to practice interview answers with folks, they will dive right into the narrative without setting the context as to what the product is, tell me what the product is. Tell me what the company does, they'll go right into the details. And and I think that is potentially the playing of the product manager is that you are so wrapped up in the product, and you know, the product inside and out and sometimes forget that other people do not know those details about the product.

Jason Knight 20:51

Got to zoom out. But let's talk about the human hiring advantage, then where you say that likability can increase your chances of getting a job by up to 90%. Now, that's terrible news for someone as unlikable as me, but what are some of the ways you recommend leveraging that human factor to land your next big role? Is it just about reaching out to the hiring manager on LinkedIn? Are there other ways that you can double down on that human side?

Erika Klics 21:13

Yeah, so this is a great question, because it is something I don't think folks think about. But companies do not hire people, people hire people. And so when we started this conversation, and I talked about, oh, you know, there was just that something that was missing, they didn't quite hit the mark. That's what the human hiring advantage is. This is this is that building connection with every person that you meet through the process. And what I think folks get hung up on is that particularly in cross functional interviews, and interviews that aren't with the hiring manager is like, Oh, they have questions, and I need to be have the perfect answer for those questions. That's not what you need to do. What you need to do is actually listen, listen between the lines and figure out why, why are they asking those questions in the first place? What are these people curious about? What do they care about, and actually connect with them about the things that they care about through the process? That is the human hiring advantage. There's lots of other steps and tips that we can talk about. But if you get that your interviews will go well.

Jason Knight 22:22

Yeah, again, there's just so much there around sort of building empathy and doing basically discovery on your interviewers to some extent, and this is where I started. And I've chatted to people, or the product managers about this as well, this idea that basically product principles, product management, thinking product discovery, is everywhere, like we should be using these approaches and techniques, and often sort of challenged people to use their kind of empathy skills, not just with their users, which everyone's talking about, but also to use them with their colleagues to understand what their motivations are. So it's taking that on to potentially use that to understand potential colleagues as well, rather than just going in there with one message and just rattling off as quickly as you can definitely agree with all that. But we talked before this, also about the five product management interview pitfalls, which I'm assuming are things that you've seen again, and again and again, with your clients. Now, I don't know if you want to go over them all one by one or just kind of group them together. We'll talk about macro level trends. But what are some of the worst things that people can do to stymie their chances of landing that next big role?

Erika Klics 23:26

Let me talk about I think we've hit on a few of them. One of them is that idea of glossing over the context, there is the idea of like, what does the product do even something as simple as like, oh, you know, it's Uber for whatever, or do you know, this other competitor in the market, we're like that. It's that tiny little bit of connection that helps somebody so that they're not spending their time in their brain trying to figure out what you're talking about, and actually listening to what you're talking about. That's a that is a big one, skipping the scope, the scale and the impact. And when I talk about impact, usually that means results, but it's not always result. It's not always something quantifiable. Sometimes it's about figuring out that we were building the wrong thing. Sometimes it's, you know, like, whatever that that impact is, it's getting really specific with the impact and your direct impact and not just the general, we speaking to the wrong level of the role. This is something that we hit on as well as the idea of this often comes up when folks are looking, they're coming from a startup and they're going to look at a later stage more mature company they have it's harder to contextualise the role of

the product manager because a at an early stage company that product manager is the person who is building the process in they're setting the vision and the strategy and they are actually doing the day to day of the process. That same role, same title, same amount of experience at a much larger, much bigger company is very different. And what I often see is that candidates don't realise that they need to edit out the stories that aren't going to be the most relevant to the company. So they'll tell a story that they're excited about because it was a big win for them. But it doesn't make any sense. Because like, oh, well, you know, you're talking about a single product. And we have a eight product line. Like, yeah, and that's not about what we're doing here. So, that would be that'd be one. Let's see, ah, tipping the scale and focusing between customer centricity and business centricity. So this shows up on scorecards and hiring manager feedback with folks saying, like, oh, well, they weren't necessarily very strategic, or they and that strategy is really saying, well, they weren't really talking to our business needs, they would they didn't really understand our business model. Versus on the other side, there are companies who are obsessed with customers, and that customer centricity piece, and if all you do is tell stories about top down initiatives and things that were important, because this is what the business was trying to do, that's a mismatch. And so really sussing out that where they lie on the spectrum. Ideally, companies, their business objectives, and their customer objectives are aligned. However, that's you never know. And so, really being able to listen to where the businesses priorities are, and be able to speak to those are really important.

Jason Knight 26:34

Absolutely, well, plenty of mistakes I can think of in interviews I've gone for in the past, which probably fall into some of those buckets. But you also talked before this, about the single biggest reason that product leaders don't get the job. Now, hopefully, we're gonna put a stake through the heart of that reason tonight, put it to bed once and for all. But I do have to ask, what is the single biggest reason that product leaders don't get the job?

Erika Klics 26:57

It's a two parter.

Jason Knight 26:58

Oh, we love two parters.

Erika Klics 26:59

Oh, yeah, it's believing that the role that you want is out there, and believing that you are the right person to actually fill that role. So having real clarity on what you want, and particularly, I would say, in this market, I'm seeing a lot of folks who, even at very high levels, and folks who have been doing this career for a very long time, who are saying, well, you know, I don't know if this job that I want even exists. And then even if they do believe it exists, thinking like, okay, like, I deserve that role, I'm going to be the person to get it. And what I see happen, what I see play out with that, is that folks, they still need that role. They certainly have the job. However,

they lower the bar, they start settling, and I see this happen. There's a chief product officer that I was working with, and she was on the job search for six months. I wasn't working with her for six months, she came to me after six months.

Jason Knight 28:03

Yeah and you sorted them out in a couple of weeks?!

Erika Klics 28:07

And she came to me after six months. And I was asking her Okay, so like, Where have you been applying? What have you been seeing? And she's like, Well, I've been getting into process for all of these for all of these roles at different levels, Director levels, Head of Product levels, and these senior product manager roles. And I asked her like, why are you applying for those? What is yes, you're definitely getting into the loop for those because they're fascinated by you, you have all of this amazing experience. They want to talk to you, they're intrigued, but they're, they're never going to hire you for that role. Because you're not the right fit. That's not where your skill set lies. It's you're basically spinning your wheels, you're wasting your time. And when you're doing that, you're also chipping away at your confidence. Because every time you go after a role, whether or not you think it's the right role for you, when somebody tells you know, makes you feel like shit. So what like all you're doing is bringing your you're dragging yourself down by going after those things that aren't the right thing for you. And ultimately, if you did get that job, what we're going to do?

Jason Knight 29:10

Be unhappy and probably leave eventually anyway, because it's I mean, it's not beneath you as such, but it's just, that's presumably not where your passions lie, unless you strategically want to go and be an Icee. Again, for example, then I'm sure that you can get a lot of love out of that. But yeah, if you're just going to sit there doing loads of work that you don't want to do, and not doing the work that you do want to do, then you're just going to get unhappy and frustrated and presumably just leave. But I have pondered the idea of the concept of like a, what I call a career death spiral where you're at a job like your current job, you hate that job, for whatever reason. Maybe you've been there too long. Maybe it's not going well. Maybe there's some personality clashes or politics or whatever. Let's just assume that it's not a great job for you. But you start to get really negative about that job. But because you've got some kind of level of professional pride, or you don't want to be seen as too flighty or anything like that, that you kind of let things get worse and worse and worse, and then you eventually get a new job. Because you know, that snaps eventually. But part of the settling problem seems to me that people stick to their not very good jobs for quite a while until it's so late that they take just about anything. Have you seen that?

Erika Klics 30:22

Yes, over and over and over again. It's true, it's, what happens is, first off a job search is hard. I don't want to say it's hard. job searching is not fun. It's not something that it has even in the best market is not that fun. It's a lot of work. It's a lot of introspection, what sometimes people

best market is not that fun. It's a lot of work. It's a lot of introspection, what sometimes people don't really want to do and a lot of preparation a lot of time. So they put it off, or they potentially get lured back by whatever their company is currently offering. They just a new new project, new team new responsibility, and they get kind of reeled back in, but it doesn't. The thought of finding the new job is it's more work than just kind of staying where you are. And so I work with a lot of folks who are those high achievers, they are the people who are excited to move forward and do the next thing. But they've been heads down for however long they have been heads down, doing their work. And they're just now coming up for air and realising Oh, I'm actually maybe behind the ball because I've been so heads down. So wrapped up in what my company has been doing that I haven't really thought about how to present myself how to go after what I actually want. There was a head of product that I worked with fairly recently who he grew from, from a design background, any grew up through the product or and he was at the same company for seven years. And he ended as the Chief Product Officer at that company. And then he realised, how do I tell the story? This is how like, what skills are even valuable in the market? Where do I go from here. And that's what we focus on. That's what we worked on by seal, I see that over and over and over again.

Jason Knight 32:14

I guess it's probably too simplistic to say that there's some kind of formula that you can use to try and work out the perfect time to, you know, effectively jump ship and move on before you settle. But are there any principles or, or any kind of advice that you might suggest based on the people that you have worked with, like the the types of people that come across your desk and some of the patterns that you see that maybe you could identify certain characteristics of a role, or maybe even certain emotions that people find themselves wrapped up in that maybe indicate that it's time to go, even before they think it's time to go?

Erika Klics 32:48

Yeah, there's definitely a few different ways to think about it. There's a this is not answering the question directly. But I will say that, you know, in this market right now, there are a lot of folks who are finding themselves on the market unexpectedly. And for those folks, I know, the impulse is I need a job right now I need to go find the next thing, whatever the next thing is, and I've actually seen the most success with people who take a break, to take even three weeks or a month to take a step back. Because the further you away you are from where you came from, the more perspective you can have about what you did, why it was good, and maybe what you don't want to do going forward. And without that space, I think people get really wrapped up. And I understand not everyone has the financial ability to be able to do this. But if you can, it's absolutely worth taking that, that little bit of time to do it. I had a client who she had, she went to I think 12 national parks in the course of like a month and a half. And she had this amazing experience. And she came back she was like, Okay, I'm ready now. And she jumped in. And she had given her that space and made it a lot easier for her to find her next thing. But so that's you know, if you don't currently have a job and find yourself finding yourself needing to look for one, but I do think that a lot of people get the itch or get the thoughts and they suppress it. And what I would say is start exploring that thought even if it doesn't mean going and sending out applications, because there's another pattern I've heard recently of folks rage applying where they're sick of their job, or that they're past storms in and does something that they don't like and they get right on the job boards and start applying that's useless. You're not nothing is going to come from that. So don't do that. But instead take that setback

really examine, what do you want? What don't you want? I have a questionnaire actually on my website. I'll share the link with you. But it just helps. Think about okay, this is what I like about my job. This is what I don't like about my job. If I could do anything, this is what I would want. These are the things that are and these are the things that aren't that important to me and I can take it or leave it. Not everybody really spends that little bit of time to, to think through that before they put themselves out on the market.

Jason Knight 35:12

Some sobering thoughts there. But one other thing that you said before, this is the in this market, I don't know if it's just this market or in all markets, it's not enough to have just great product sense. Now, you don't have to look too far to see people struggling to come up with a standardised definition of product sense. So how are you specifically defining product sense in a nutshell?

Erika Klics 35:33

Well, I'm not the product specialist. But when I think of product sense, I think of somebody who is, you know, a good listener, somebody who can read between the lines and somebody who can come up with creative solutions to problems, they focus on the problem, as opposed to the stuff around the problem. That's what I think of when I think of product sense.

Jason Knight 35:54

Well, I would agree with that. And you could probably find that in a few books as well. But the obvious follow up question to that is, if it's not enough for people to have product sense, what do they need instead?

Erika Klics 36:02

They need to figure out how to how to bring people along with them. That's that that third part of the framework, that human hiring advantage, it absolutely makes sense, or, you know, is applicable to the job itself. And I would say that all three steps of the framework, yes, I talked about them in context of the job search, but they are absolutely applicable to the job and to your life, and to all other areas of what you do.

Jason Knight 36:29

Well, everything's product management. But hopefully, that'll inspire some people in a way to think about themselves, what they want, what they're getting, and what they're not getting. And maybe they can think a little bit differently and about how they get that next gig. But where can people find you after this, if they want to chat about finding their inevitable edge, have a chat about job seeking in general or see if they can get you to revive your Cha Cha the Tree Frog persona?

Erika Klics 36:54

Ha ha! I don't know where that costume is, I hope it never comes out again. But you can find me generally in two places around the internet at https://www.erikaklics.com, or I am the only Erika Klics on LinkedIn. So you can find me there if you spell it right, k l i c s.

Jason Knight 37:11

There you go. Well, hopefully some people will go and type that in. But obviously I'll also link it into the show notes just to make sure just in case they spell it wrong or something like that. But hopefully that will get a few people hop hop hopping in your direction. Well, that's been a fantastic chat. So obviously really happy we could spend some time talking about some deep and meaningful things around super topical, super helpful, job related issues in this market. Hopefully we can stay in touch but yeah, that's for now. Thanks for taking the time.

Jason Knight 37:42

As always, thanks for listening. I hope you found the episode inspiring and insightful. If you did again, I can only encourage you to hop over to https://www.oneknightinproduct.com. Check out some of my other fantastic guests sign up to the misters Skype on your favourite podcast app and make sure you share your friends so you and they can never miss another episode again. I'll be back soon with another inspiring guest but as for now, thanks and good night.