



Podcast Transcript

Risk Never Sleeps

Episode 56

Sherri Douville

Ed Gaudet: Welcome to the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, in which we learn about the people that are on the front lines, delivering and protecting patient care. I'm Ed Gaudet, the host of our program, and today, I'm pleased to have Sherri Douville, CEO of Medigram, on the show with us. Welcome, Sherri.

Sherri Douville: Thank you, Ed. I'm honored to be here.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, my pleasure. So we've got a lot to unpack. You have a stellar background. So this will be hopefully very interesting to to our listeners. And of course, I'm really interested in learning more. I recently joined your advisory group. Obviously, you've been starting to work directly with your team and your mission there, which is exciting. But let's start with first, take us through Medigram and your role there, as in terms of the work, you're obviously leading there, as well as the Taylor & Francis Group and the role as a series editor for the Trustworthy Technology and Innovation in Healthcare series.

Sherri Douville: Well, thank you so much. The two roles go together. As you said, I'm honored to be CEO at Medigram, and thank you for your kind introduction. So we are the mobile medicine company, and our business is to drive safety, efficiency, and profitability for health systems with data and AI-informed virtual mobile clinical programs.

Sherri Douville (cont'd): Now, we've been very fortunate because we've had a lot of coaching from the industry, from top leaders that we both know, and they've really emphasized the criticality of cybersecurity. And so the fact that it's the largest attack surface and really wanting to see new types of companies with new DNA that are authentically looking at how they can, you know, contribute to the constant, you know, evolution of that part of technical development. So I think, you know, software is very interesting to me. My background is actually a scientist. And so I look at things in very discrete sort of first principles terms. And so the idea of what medicine requires, like a medical grade software, is really what drives, because that's the only thing that stakeholders will accept and will ultimately line around. So it's a little bit about me.

Ed Gaudet: This transcend propaganda and misinformation and technology. I love, what does that mean to you? I love that, by the way.

Sherri Douville: Thank you so much. I think one of my formative experiences, I spent a long time working at Johnson & Johnson, a little over a decade company, fabulous experience, and over a dozen disease states. And part of what made it great wasn't just the, you know, company itself and, you know, the incredible amount of money that they invest in training. And, but I would say I made very close friends and even married one of them amongst the physicians that I interact with in those dozen disease states. And it's interesting how, you know, the type of person that's attracted to medicine. And as a leader, the types of sort of governance and principles that they propagate in their leadership positions are sort of tried and true and really won't change in our lifetimes. And so that's what the transcending propaganda, through our book series, is about. Now, Taylor & Francis is, I'm very honored to be series editor, and they are the number one healthcare IT publisher. They're number three for all of academia behind Oxford and Cambridge. And so I think the thing I learned at Johnson & Johnson is that doctors don't respond to propaganda, and so that's what makes it a really unique market. It makes it really appealing because it does have a logical pathway to work to partnering with them effectively. But it's, you know, a lot of organizations have trouble with it just because, you know, it's a frequent, you know, business tactic, but it just doesn't work ...



Ed Gaudet: Yeah. And it should have that rigor and that precision that obviously the medical profession is used to, as well as that evidence to back it up. So the true scientific method, if you will, of publishing, I love that.

Sherri Douville: Exactly, yeah. Because you want them to trust it. Otherwise, they won't engage with it and contribute to it. And so we've been honored to have some of the best physician leaders. I'm not going to embarrass them now, but, you know, international award-winning medical educators that have, you know, really stepped outside their comfort zone to help us, you know, with this series, because it doesn't, there isn't really a home for it in academic medicine or in just in general. So they extended themselves to provide leadership to this series, and I'm very honored by that. And I know all of my technical counterparts that work on the work are also honored. I should also call out IEEE as another hugely formative experience. I get to be co-chair of trust for really the industry-defining standard for clinical IoT with some amazing people that I'm sure you know, Mitch Parker.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Sherri Douville: And they also, they, together with the physician leaders, provided like the core initial founding leadership of the book series. So that was just the person she orchestrated, but they really made it.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent. Excellent. How did you get into healthcare?

Sherri Douville: Yeah, that's a great question. I was, I didn't get into it. I was magnetized to healthcare. But, and so what happened was that I grew up and my mom had a disability, and I spent a lot of time in and around healthcare, a lot of time sort of taking care of her. And so, just the work that I do is also a reflection of the challenges that have stood the test of time that I think really can be solved. I think we really are in an inflection point in terms of talent, technology, and just awareness of systems engineering to really be able to have make dramatic transformations, and so I'm excited about that. But yeah, I grew up, you know, this whole uncoordinated care challenge is something I'm sure a lot of people can relate to.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Sherri Douville: So I'm also lucky to, I think I mentioned that I did marry a physician who's also chief medical officer, not a regular doctor. He has a lot of experience with clinical transformation programs as health system chief medical officer a few times. And we also have a nursing executive who has 200 project experiences, Jeff, in 40 health systems. I think that it's the right time to think about how do we leverage technology to really transform the health system.

Ed Gaudet: Does feel like we are at that inflection point. And I was reading on your LinkedIn page a recent post about the ghost and why people ghost or flake out. I love that. Let's maybe unpack that a little bit. What were you, you know, what were you going for there?

Sherri Douville: Thank you. Well, I'm a person that I think you can't solve a problem unless you diagnose a problem. In addition to all the hard sciences that I've studied, I we science for everything. We even use science in our marriage. I won't get into that here, but what I am blessed with, a credible organizational psychologist, one of, you know, one of the top ones of our time. And so what we work on together is really how do you operate? Because cybersecurity, as you know, is more of a general management job than it is a technical job where the technical details are very important. Would you agree with that?

Ed Gaudet: Oh, absolutely. It's the business of cybersecurity is business.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, exactly. And so I think, oversimplified, it's really collaboration between different functions that makes it hard. It makes it really rewarding and stimulating, and interesting. But that's what makes it really hard. The ghosting thing is because I believe that, you know, we, even in our lifetimes, there have been decades where people could be successful doing simple things. I just don't think that exists anymore. I mean, there's maybe some certain simple things where people have success. I don't want to name things because I think everything, you know has gotten exponentially more complicated, but especially healthcare technology, it's just, it's a lot of complexity.

Sherri Douville (cont'd): And so the thing about ghosting, so Doctor Felix Ankel, who was International Medical Educator of the Year recently and a co-author at one of our last chapters in Advanced Health Technology, he wrote the article about ghosting. And my response to it was that, and this is ghosting in medical education. And my response to it is that I think a lot of times, you know, people, they don't know how to assess what the scope of work is going to be, especially when they're working with large groups of people. And as a consequence, they just end up, you know, not wanting to get into a conflict, so they just ghost. That was basically the gist of the post.

Ed Gaudet: There's a lot of courage that's required to transform something. And typically, it's never incremental. Transformation is a step function. And right, there's a safety in numbers. And people tend to hide within the context and construct of the committee, if you will. And transformation really takes that leadership, someone to step out in front and drive the change, become that change agent or change the the catalyst for that change. So that's a great, I loved your article, by the way. That was great.

Sherri Douville: Oh, thank you...

Ed Gaudet: We know we don't talk, we don't talk enough about it, I think, and I think if we talk more about it, we might be able to do more of it.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, in terms of having courage to transform things.

Ed Gaudet: Exactly, exactly.

Sherri Douville: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: So as you look at your next 12, 24 months, what are some of your top priorities, 3 to 5 priorities that you have in your sight?



Sherri Douville: For your audience being, you know, really a very strong cybersecurity leader audience, and many of them that I'm very fond of and look forward to continuing to see them succeed and what we're working on together and just focusing on making technology and the cybersecurity part of it. So the way that I see cybersecurity is, I think I mentioned the word quality and the importance of quality and medicine. So that should extend to technology; you should have high-quality technology that's medical grade or medicine, and the biggest contributor to that is having, you know, sound cybersecurity principles. And so just making sure that people have the confidence, you know, to shoot for that, to contribute to that, to continue developing that is, you know, the biggest problem that your audience cares about. And we do that through a variety of ways, you know, co-chaired by ..., the publications are to help CISOs and CIOs to, with their, you know, cognitive clarity so that they can go after things with confidence. And then, you know, other modalities like continuing medical education. We co-chair a first-of-its-kind, multidisciplinary technical CME program that is accredited to for medical standards. So just pushing my friends, you know, into thinking about and behaving within a range of standards that works for medicine is what I'm aggressively doing this year, in case you're wondering.

Ed Gaudet: Excellent, excellent. And I noticed the two books behind you. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about those books?

Sherri Douville: Oh, thank you so much. So we have built a consortium, most of whom, you know, 100 of the top people in the field, you know, across IT, cybersecurity, medicine, informatics, regulatory law. And like I said, we had IEEE and physician leaders really be the heart, the foundational, you know, founding team for mobile medicine. So Mobile Medicine launched number one in medical technology and medical informatics, long-time bestseller. And what it does is just help the CXO or the investor sort of quickly understand what needs to be in place for success for mobile mobility. But really, it applies to sort of all advanced technologies in medicine. So it walks them through different elements of change management, project planning, team building culture. Because I think what a lot of people don't understand, I'm grateful to have learned that culture is a foundational aspect. Culture and values is the foundational aspect of high-quality technology. It's not the technical elements. So that's medicine, and Advanced Health Technology is a different book. It's sort of not, it's not an evolution because it's not the same, it's very different content.

Sherri Douville (cont'd): But what we did was that we radically expanded the technical team. And so mobile medicine is foundationally core IEEE for the technical side and then a lot of regulatory law. Alicia Savage and Peter McLauchlan were the legal leads on that; physician leads, you know, made up the core leadership team, together with William Harding, who's the CTO of the book series. But then we picked up additional sort of technical talent because of the challenge with technology and medicine is that we, when I talk about, and I do believe it's important that things be medical grade, we also have to bring people from outside medicine have key skills. One of my favorite places to go is Construction for talent because they have really incredible project management acumen. So it is critical for success in this field. So we do have to bring people, and so I try to lead by example by doing that in the book series. So we brought people that are essential in implementation and customer success and project management and product marketing that you would have to have. I think, in the simplest terms, one of the things that everybody talks about is data blocking. And the biggest thing that holds, it holds that back is actually a lack of product management in the health system. So that's just kind of a simple example. We just don't have people that can product manage in a healthcare context. So it's just one example of how all of us who are leading in this field have to work together to identify and build people that can do the work.

Ed Gaudet: I love that and understand the why and connect the dots for the customer effectively, which is great. And I love how you connected culture and values which most people forget about. So important.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, it doesn't work. It's like the oil in the engine, ...

Ed Gaudet: Didn't someone say culture eats strategy all day long? I think Peter Drucker said that.

Sherri Douville: I'm also passionate about strategy. Once you get to work with me more, you'll see that.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, very cool. So tough couple of years for folks with the pandemic, how do you think we're doing post-pandemic as an industry?



Sherri Douville: I think we're at an inflection point. And what my, the reason why, you know, as an entrepreneur, I'm sure you can relate to, I've worked in those days and nights for several years because I feel that it's just a kind of a small window of time. We have to make sure that things go in the right direction. And so I, it's too soon to celebrate, and it's too soon to declare victory. But I do believe, which is one of the reasons why I put that star-studded advisory board together, that if the right people get their heads together, that we can leverage, you know, this challenging time into a transformational opportunity and that.

Ed Gaudet: That's sad, absolutely. When you look back over the last couple of years, what are you most personally or professionally proud of?

Sherri Douville: The thing that I'm probably most proud of is what, there's a quality qualitative element and the quantitative element. So the qualitative element is just the messages of people of every different type of gender, ethnicity role. You know, saying that I, that they got a job because of me or they got a speaking opportunity, that's one thing. And so I'm most proud of that, having been able to help so many people get promotions and be successful. It's just, there's it's just a high. I can't explain it.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, I know, I love that when it comes back around. Isn't it great?

Sherri Douville: But that's the qualitative part. And a quantitative part is that, you know, as an entrepreneur, you know there's so many, like the elephant problem we have that there's so many different things that we have to do, and someone's always mad because you clip the toenail or something, like, you got the Q-Tip and that white part behind the ear, even like his on the elephant. And so I decided to set this goal that no one could judge that was for me, and I did reach it, and it was 50 building 50 readers. I'm not 50 yet, but I'm ahead of schedule. I got I've got some time to go, but I just, I think it was catchy, easy to remember. So I set that, and what it did was it really helped me because, it's just, people really don't like innovation. So there's a whole Wall Street Journal article about how it makes them sick, and.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Sherri Douville: And I think my husband says is that he is convinced that I was born to innovate and that I can't help myself, and there was just like, that I just have to be allowed to do that, or else I won't live. But he just, I'm so lucky and grateful that he understands that about me, but I'm sure you've experienced this at some point in your career, and I'm sure you're past that now, but at one point, you know, you probably did experience, you know, people, you know, aversion to innovation, and that can be pretty challenging.

Ed Gaudet: I think most people are, you know.

Sherri Douville: Averse.

Ed Gaudet: Afraid of it. I mean, it scares them. It's visceral.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, it's visceral, exactly. So the thing about my 50 by 50 is it was something for me and something that so much could come out of that in terms of meeting milestones, so it didn't take away from my job. It's definitely part of my job. And so that's why, for me, it was transformational because it's kind of like a duck, you know, you're going, but you've got to get let the water.

Ed Gaudet: Let it roll down the back, yeah.

Sherri Douville: I'm sorry you relate more than probably more than I even know, right?

Ed Gaudet: I do relate. So yeah. No, you're speaking my language. So outside of your, your day job, what are you most passionate about? What would you be doing if you weren't doing this?

Sherri Douville: Oh, wow. What, it's, that's interesting. So I integrate life and works, and I really think of myself, like, as working or not working. I'm kind of working all the time.

Ed Gaudet: I'm the same way.

Sherri Douville: But the things I'm, what did you say?

Ed Gaudet: I said I'm the same way. I do have another love, though. I love poetry, so I tend to write poetry when I can, but I've got to really squeeze it in. I got to find time for it, but.

Sherri Douville: It's amazing. Yeah, so I love people and I'm sort of an ambivert. I'm not really an extrovert, I'm not really introvert. But I think the thing that the people notice about me, and I've always been like this ever since high school, is that I have multiple different groups that I'm a part of that, and then sometimes if it's necessary or useful, that I'll bridge them. And that's how I spend a lot of my social time as well, which is, tends to also be productive for work, is that I'm bridging people that seem like they don't belong together. Art has been called the Peaceable Kingdom. Yes.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no, it's so interesting. We're very similar on on another level with that, I tell my kids, because my kids are like, you know, you have a lot of friends. I'm like, I'm a connector and I'm a flow. I'm a floater. So I connect people and then I float across groups. I don't like cliques. I like to, you know, I like to be fluid, I guess, so to speak.

Sherri Douville: Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: It sounds very similar.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, I relate to that. Yeah. I just defy being pinned down to like.

Ed Gaudet: No Labels, wow. This is starting to be weird, in a good way.

Sherri Douville: Well, I'm glad. Yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Oh, this is actually.

Sherri Douville: I didn't really answer your question, but I'm always just authentic, right? Like.



Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no, it's good. Listen, we, I think people like us are wired to be all in, and I can't be half in something. So when I'm working, you're right, I'm integrating it with life. I'm integrating it with, I can't, it's so hard to separate the two or the folks that will bring a different persona into the office. I could never figure that out. Like, why would you be somebody different than your authentic self?

Sherri Douville: And that's really important, actually, with young people as well. So people like us, that's why young people are attracted to working with us is because they they want authenticity.

Ed Gaudet: That's right, yeah, yeah. Or as my wife likes to say, when are you going to grow up? That's great. If you could go back in time, what would you tell your 20-year-old self?

Sherri Douville: So I think what I would tell her, a couple of things. First is that just embrace who you are, you know, and just try to let other people put things on you, you know, because I think that's something that, you know, we all have to grow through, you know, different phases of that. And now I'm an expert in not letting people put things on me, but, you know, took, would have been, you know, handy if it could have happened sooner. And then what I would love to just reinforce, which is, again, something I've learned over time, is I have a three-part method that I ask all the leaders that I work with to adopt. And it's about, you know, being optimistic, being curious, and solving problems. Using three steps, and the three steps are, number one, identifying the root cause of the issue. And number two, including assistance with an issue and identifying components of that system, sociotechnical systems, and people-processed technology. Number two is accepting what's unchangeable. Very important that you understand especially economics what economic drivers are driving and different parties, different policies, different decisions. And the third thing is, you know, do it yourself. Like this 50 by 50 thing, right? It also has an equity component. So one of the things that I'm sort of known for, and I'm not, I've never been one of those extreme people and I've never been one of those issue people. But the one thing that's interesting is that equity was ... 747 times in the recent physician fee schedule, and that's something that most people in technology don't, simply can't understand or don't understand. And honestly, they won't believe it unless they, you know, see it or explain it to them.

Sherri Douville (cont'd): And so that's one element, you know, that I just kind of part of my 50 by 50 was sort of just contributing to that myself. I don't wait for someone else or wait for some sort of policy, you know, environment or something else. You know, just do it, yeah.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, no, I agree absolutely. It's too important not to. This is the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast, so I have to ask you this question now, what's the riskiest thing you've ever done?

Sherri Douville: This job.

Ed Gaudet: Amen.

Sherri Douville: Yeah, the reason why I decided to do this was that I actually tried to get other companies and other people to take a look at the opportunity and to sort of tackle the opportunity. But so I have met my mentor, and he's been the board chair for a long time, ..., one of the most brilliant people in the world, you know, ... multiple, you know, billion-dollar businesses and bet his career on, and I believe standard, you know, in a different context in a different time. But he and I both, you know, looked at the market and for various reasons, you know, that it goes back to propaganda, too, about why companies or industries don't tackle problems because it does not fit into the dominant narrative. You know, like right now, we have a dominant narrative around LMS. You know, there's been a long-term, dominant narrative around, you know, web apps, even though they don't work in hospitals. We just said, we, I just had to do this because a leading cause of preventable death is still a delay in information. And remember, I'm married to the problem, so I had to live with it and have to watch him struggling all the time because I think.

Ed Gaudet: Too many clicks.

Sherri Douville: Well, and also, it doesn't work most of the time, because the needs that have a heritage of being on a desktop don't, to them, that mobile part is an afterthought where we're really, you know, from this CISO, CIO perspective and the physician's perspective from a usability standpoint, that mobile application has to be purpose-built, which is what we focus on it. Again, it can't just be like an afterthought, add-on the desktop thing.

Ed Gaudet: I'm so glad you brought that up. Especially in healthcare, it has to be purpose-built. If it's not, it doesn't work. And most entrepreneurs that are trying to provide a solution to healthcare, they don't get that.

Sherri Douville: They can acquire something.

Ed Gaudet: We did it in finance, I can do it here. And that's not that way at all.

Sherri Douville: You wish them well, but.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah, yeah.

Sherri Douville: Great for them.

Ed Gaudet: You pray for them, exactly. The hardest lesson in your career.

Sherri Douville: That's a good question. I think because I was trained in the scientific method, you know, as a stubborn person, and I also do work really hard to see things as a business person. And so it's like literally taking off different hats because it is, had the scientific, you know, paradigm that has gotten access that I do have to this market, right? If I didn't have that, I wouldn't have access, and I wouldn't have partnership, right? But then you also there's the business part and business is very, you know, non-scientific. And, you know, I think the challenge that I'm always challenging myself is, you know, how to, like, when's the right time for me to become a Forbes contributor? Because in medicine, Forbes is not really respected as like a journal. You know, that would give me credibility and like an academic medical environment.

Ed Gaudet: Yeah.

Sherri Douville: Do you think getting ..., Taylor & Francis is very helpful in an academic medical environment, so I think, you know, the biggest, you know, sort of challenge has to do with finding the balance that works for such misaligned, diverse range of stakeholders.



Ed Gaudet: Yeah, excellent. Any last advice to folks that are thinking about getting into the cyber profession or in healthcare?

Sherri Douville: So I, people looking to, I think, looking to excel is probably where I can provide, you know, the best advice in terms of people who are in cybersecurity and healthcare, and just being, I think, being true to yourself and looking for your tribe as not necessarily being exclusionary, being tribal, but making sure that you have the core people that have your back, you know, you have their back and that you're growing and learning together. And going back to the thing I would tell my 25-year-old self, like putting together a practice around excellence, you know, for your core group, you know. And how do you identify the root cause of the issues that you're facing and making explicit that you're accepting the unchangeable and then making a decision to do things yourself because you only live one time, right? And so I repeat these three steps again, because you can do it in a few days. It's not some sort of overwhelming thing. You just need to start talking to picking up the phone and calling, you know, the smartest, most powerful people you know, and asking them how you can improve or what you need to know that it seems like you don't know, and you just need to develop practices with people that you trust and respect so that you can grow together. That's what my advice would be.

Ed Gaudet: That's excellent. That's a great way to end the program. Thank you, Sherri. This is Ed Gaudet from the Risk Never Sleeps Podcast. We've been speaking with Sherri Douville, the Medigram CEO. If you are on the front lines protecting patient safety, remember to stay vigilant, because Risk Never Sleeps.



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