

Speaker 1: Welcome to Pay Talk, the podcast for payroll professionals with your host, Nina Talley. In the podcast, we explore the human side of payroll by speaking with global industry leaders who provide their unique insights to help listeners better understand the issues important to them and their careers.

Nina Talley: Hey everyone, thanks for joining us for Pay Talk, the podcast that brings you payroll's human side. I'm your host, Nina Talley, and today we're joined once again by Richard Limpkin, a Chief Innovation Officer at Immedis and an HCM and payroll technology evangelist. Today we're going to take a look at how more and more businesses are waking up to the significance that global payroll technologies have on their bottom line. And this explosion and remote work since the pandemic began has been a major factor, and it's really showing businesses how crucial it is to get payroll processes right, and that businesses need to cater to the next generation of working norms as well as deal with more and more complicated payroll data. And I think that during this time, the technology underpinning global payroll has been evolving and there are more options than ever before. And as the work itself is getting more flexible, so is the payroll industry. And employees are demanding to be treated differently and with greater personalization and flexibility. And the way that payroll was run is gone.

New payroll innovations are taking their place. So many organizations are achieving business success by updating payroll systems to meet the modern needs of payroll today. But complete visibility into global payroll data is becoming increasingly important as businesses look to get a better understanding of their largest cost, their payroll. And I'm so excited for Richard Limpkin to join us once again. He was such a wonderful guest and I know he has some incredibly in-depth expertise on global payroll technologies. Before we get started, I would love if you could introduce yourself, Richard, and tell our listeners, who maybe didn't listen to your last episode, who you are and a bit about your background.

Richard Limpkin: Hi Nina. Thanks every so much for having me back on today. Really looking forward to talking to you. A bit about me. I spent my whole career in HR and payroll technology, I guess from very early stage realizing that physics was not where I wanted to spend the rest of my life. Having spent, I guess, my school career studying science, and university through quantum mechanics, I liked complicated things, but it was significantly missing the human element as well. So that's why I transitioned into the HR space, but always with aslants on the intersection of HR, payroll and workforce management. The piece in the middle that kind of fits everything together, which even at domestic level can be complicated, but at a global level gets really, really interesting.

That's the stuff I really enjoy doing. My last six years have been with Immedis as part of the global payroll operating environment. And we really focus on giving holistic solutions to our customers across truly global estates with some of the biggest challenges in payroll, and finding ways forward for them to be able to

continue to scale without barriers that are internal to their business. So yeah, that's the really fun stuff. The last time I spoke to you, I was on the East Coast of the US, at the moment, I'm back at home in Ireland, so it does involve a lot of moving around, but that's part of the fun.

Nina Talley: It for sure is. I do really love the idea of using technology to treat endemic issues in payroll holistically. I think a lot of times we don't necessarily think that technology can treat things holistically or treat things from a sort of larger perspective, but also with empathy. I think that's a wonderful perspective that a lot of people should really get behind. I think it'll really help with the adoption of these types of emerging technologies.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, absolutely. And I think bearing in mind at simplest level, you can distill things down and you can make them make sense and you can get coherence. You've got a process which is typically a highly repeatable process. It has inputs, and it has a way of running, and it has outputs, and you can manage at that level. But when you delve further and further into what those inputs are and what's specific to an industry or a customer, that's where things start to get less coherent and where things are relevant in one jurisdiction but maybe not another. And yet you've got a workforce and a population within your organization that are moving across those. That's where some of the challenging stuff happens. And then when you layer in that human element, ultimately payroll really does impact people. It's one of those base hierarchy need items that if it's incorrect, it's a massive, massive de-motivator for any organization or individual. So it's really personal. It's got that personal element and should always have that respect.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that. And so let's start at the top level. What are the biggest challenges facing the modern payroll industry today and what technologies are helping payroll professionals overcome those challenges?

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, it's a great question to start out with. I think some of the challenges come onto more specific things more recently, but probably the most fundamental one has always been there in payroll. But by definition, by nature, it's quite averse to change as a working environment from a technology perspective, from a process, and also a cultural perspective. The whole definition of running controlled, scalable payroll is you have a repeatable process and outcome and you keep that locked down and you don't let macro factors blow it up and cause problems. So part of the challenge in payroll now is that as we come through to what is arguably the third or fourth generation of particularly global payroll, actually enabling change in an environment that is change averse, that can be a real balance for any professional or organization within payroll, you've got all of your controls and measures to keep things static and stable and repeatable and not have a negative impact on your workforce.

And yet you've got a drive to automate and modernize and also all the factors at a economic level around jurisdictional change and introduction of new concepts

around realtime information and compliance aspects that you have to adhere to. Getting that healthy balance in your business where you can actually enable change and you are ready for it and you're geared to actually enact it, I think that's probably still the fundamentally biggest challenge in payroll as a profession.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that, and I think it's one of those things where when you stop to consider all the factors in, it makes a lot of sense that payroll is so slow to change. Because truly, like you said, those processes, if the process is working, you don't want to touch it. It's working. It's scary to touch it. But that is constantly something that you have to remember that if your processes are static and they're just running and everything is good there, it's important to remember that the culture of payroll, the landscape of payroll is constantly changing. Your processes have to be updated and you have to look at new technologies. Just because it's working for you right now doesn't mean it will in six months.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, totally. And what you tend to find, particularly with technology in the finance and payroll space, is because of the repeatability, you're not often seeing it stretched in terms of the boundaries it's capable of or exploring or experimenting with new ways of operating. So if you don't keep the technology platform and infrastructure modernized, what you tend to see is actually catastrophic failure as opposed to incremental degradation.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: That's the one to watch out for. It's the platform that becomes de-supported and you get short term notice for end of life, or it's things that, even from a code level perspective, I remember having a payroll engine years ago that was based on COBOL, and COBOL was out of support. And it had been out of support for a very long time. It needed to be migrated and it got pushed and pushed out because the business value was, well, it'll still do the same things once it's migrated, there's nothing we can really sell here that's particularly different. But they're the kinds of things historically that haven't always been addressed in time. So moving to a modern infrastructure that will never put you in that type of position is really important to be able to scale globally.

Nina Talley: Isn't it so odd how it's not the incremental degradation, it's the catastrophic failure that gets our attention?

Richard Limpkin: Oh, it definitely is. And that's not the position that any payroll professional wants to be in. They're the really challenging ones. But we're much more exposed to those as well. They're not always internal failure points. There's so much more exposure now at a global scale in terms of things, for example, hacking and external threats and threat management, as we're having to open up platforms and systems to operate more globally, being able to manage the safety, security and infrastructure around that, is just critically important.

Payroll used to be, decades ago when I first started my career there, it was on standalone instances of software that were not connected to anything, and it was physically impossible to get to them. It's a different environment now. So having the right skills in your organization to be able to understand that and having the right working relationship with other parts of your business as well, to provide the right technical support into the payroll organization, whether that's from a HRS perspective or IT security perspective, working much more collaboratively with other areas can really safeguard.

Nina Talley: No, I completely agree with that. And I've long pushed here at Pay Talk, build those relationships with your internal IT department, get those stakeholders on your "team", not necessarily your payroll team, but the team that's working to modernize your payroll processes. And making sure that you have those engineers and those IT support professionals who can help you understand how to integrate something into your existing systems, it's so powerful. Make friends with those people, take them out to lunch.

Richard Limpkin: Definitely worth doing. There's so many situations you'll need their help. And payrolls become much more interlinked as a process and an infrastructure, so you can't leave it in isolation anymore. So dependent on what comes into it, so dependent on the working relationships between HR and payroll, benefits management. It's no longer isolated.

Nina Talley: Yes. What are the most valuable insights that can be discovered with consolidated global payroll data?

Richard Limpkin: I've spent my whole life playing with data and information, I guess from a science perspective and experimentation initially through into seeing more and more evolving in payroll and HR for data analytics and access to data. That gets really exciting as you move more and more into the global landscape. You can tell organization and the people within from pure domestic data once you start to link HR and payroll dimensions and fact points together. But once you start to go.

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Richard Limpkin: All dimensions and fact points together, but once you start to go across geographic boundaries and cultural boundaries and you start to correlate things at that level, you get such a deep insight into how an organic business is operating and what the factors are that you've never been exposed to before. Everything historically in siloed geographies has been down to what's relevant to the people running in that geography. It's like anything, if you are close to something all the time, then you actually become slightly immune to some of the factors around it.

So, if you can take a step back and you start looking across those boundaries, you start to see fact points and you start to see correlations that just don't exist

in isolation. But when you see that bigger picture, you really start to get insight into what a business is doing, and it's almost like resetting what your definition of good is. You think you've got fantastic operations in the geography you've been managing, but then you now have the opportunity to look at what's working well in another geography and why and how you can bring those learnings into the wider organization.

What I've certainly seen happen quite consistently is, as that level of insight and access to data is increased in our customer organizations, they've been able to lift the lowest level operations up to those higher levels. It's redefined what the definition of good is and it's meant that there's a consistency in the operating environment, and everybody's benefiting from that.

Nina Talley: I really love that point, redefining your definition of good. Because you're right. I think that, with anything, it's not just payroll, it's life. If you live in a house that smells bad, you don't know that it smells bad, it just smells like your house to you. The same thing could be with data processes and payroll is that, if it's working for you and you're happy and there's no rocking of the boat, that can seem good and you've been in it for so long and it seems good, but this shifting of the redefinition of good for a more global perspective. I love that point. It's so important. One of the biggest pushes for evolution is understanding that while things are good, they can always be better.

Richard Limpkin: That's actually a lovely way of saying it. We look at these things in terms of fitter, faster, stronger. If you can take all of those pieces in, then you start to build organizational resilience and you get capacity that wasn't there in isolation, but in the bigger environment, is. It's an exciting place to bring a business and to be able to thrive in that environment, to have the flexibility horizontally between moving people around and having actionable insights that go across those silos, it's really exciting.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that. I think that we've talked a bit about this, but in your opinion, what is the most important shift that you're seeing in the landscape of global payroll right now?

Richard Limpkin: I guess almost flippantly, I think the biggest shift is the true shift to global itself. Obviously, global payroll industries existed for some time now, but I'd feel very strongly that we're in the next generation of that. We've moved out of point-to-point scenarios where customers are having to manage vendor relationships or mass disparate geographies to early aggregator models, which had some success but just weren't geared around scalable process and proper integration and all those components, into what we look at now, as we see ourselves as the consolidator model, which is very different in terms of truly automated end-to-end business process using leading edge technology, tier one provision within the HR space, and that really tight coupling of HR and workforce management into payroll. Payroll, ultimately, is just the byproduct of the instructions it receives.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: It's down to calculating repeatedly, correctly, and compliantly, but the instruction comes from elsewhere in the business. As you said earlier, that really tight partnering with other areas of the business, that's been a significant shift. Seeing global payroll as a much more HR-led process end-to-end, that's been really, really key.

That's really elevated the delivery of global payroll from those same silo process as we were talking about to standard operating procedures at a global scale. Of course, each jurisdiction has its little nuances and quirks that are relevant to it and maybe not others, but that doesn't mean that you can't have standard behaviors, procedures, controls, and have everything aligned to be able to move your organization into shared service center operating models, for example, and get the efficiency and scale that comes with that. So I think that true shift into what I would really consider a proper global operating model is the biggest shift I've seen.

Nina Talley: That's a really wonderful point, and I think our next question sort of ties in with that nicely. How do you see these integrations between different systems changing the landscape of the industry? We know that they're there, but let's look forward a little bit. In five years, how do you see that shift happening?

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, I think the biggest thing we'll see coming in, I think that four or five-year window is exactly right. It will be the move away from what currently would be seen as two different systems.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah. I think that integration of a process end-to-end and blurring the boundary of where one system begins and ends to the other, I think that's critical in getting a coherent user experience, whether that's an employee experience or a centralized user experience, a line manager experience, they're all important, and you'd argue they're all equally important in terms of part of delivering that end-to-end payroll process. But that blurring of the boundaries and the deeper coupling of systems is just crucial to doing that. Even starting with the onboarding experience for a new joiner in whatever geography it is, that might be initiated in an African tracking system, which that's evolved massively and is well integrated now with CORE HCM, but then what you need to collect for that individual to compliantly get them onto payroll with no friction when they hit the ground. That first experience they have is the one they will remember.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: So having that as a really nice onboarding experience where it's very much self-service enabled and the platform, for example, the immediate self-service component to mobile applications and allow that onboarding experience to be a

lot more seamless, but also specifically tailored to the geography the person's in. And that means that you are using the power of components of your infrastructure that are specific to geography combined really tightly with components that are core and critically important around CORE, HCM and letting them coexist and actually complement each other rather than stop-start.

That's where I definitely see the next four to five years going in terms of almost embedding one application within another. That's going to be game changing in terms of that end-to-end experience for everybody involved in payroll.

Nina Talley: I completely agree. What you just said about the stop-start nature of it, that is something that can be resolved today. You can resolve that today. I do think it's one of those things that if you are not making the changes into your own processes now, or at least doing the research into it, in five years, you could find yourself obsolete. It's not to say that you won't be able to find a payroll job or something where there's not a lot of data integration into it, there's not a lot of systems working together to elevate the employee experience, but those jobs will be fewer and further between. This is the shift, it's happening right now, and if you don't stay up to date on these sorts of things, it's going to really limit your job pool in the future.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, I think that's a critical point for any payroll professional that is just core to really everything they do. It should be that continual learning component, is one thing, and then stretching the boundaries of the art of the possible within your profession. I think that that's not just a payroll thing, that goes for anyone who's looking to progress in what they do.

Nina Talley: For sure.

Richard Limpkin: They should be trying to stretch themselves. I think there's so much change in HR and payroll technology and there's so much change in the macro environment, that there's no better time than now to embrace that and to certainly push your own capabilities. That would certainly be my advice to anyone in this profession.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that. I really think that, we touched on it earlier, but sometimes the set it and forget it nature of payroll is not necessarily the most inviting to learning evolution and pushing yourself. But I really think that if you look larger scale, if you look at the impact that you can have on the employees at the business that you're at, or if you even want to zoom out a little bit further, making sure that the next position that you land is the position that you want, not just the position that you get. I think it's so important.

Richard Limpkin: Definitely is. Yeah, absolutely agree.

Nina Talley: We talked a little bit about self-service options in payroll, but I think that ties in really nicely with, how do we see the generational shift in the workforce

changing employees expectations and what they think payroll should be doing for them and how can payroll professionals sort of prepare themselves for that shift?

Richard Limpkin: There's been a huge change in people's expectations from HR, from their employer, from payroll as part of that, and that's continuing to evolve at an ever increasing rate. So being able to recognize that being able to adapt and adjust to it has never been more important. And there's even diversity in that globally, in terms of how you need to respond and react to the demand from the talent that's out there, in terms of traction, retention. Payroll is absolutely to that.

I've always looked at payroll as having two key functions. You could argue the same thing, but I don't think they are. You've got the preventive aspect where it just has to be right. It's an expectation that there'll be speed, accuracy, and certainty within payroll, certainty of outcomes, certainly, and that prevention of that being a detractor from employee experience, it's a baseline given. It's the thing we talked about before, that you don't ever get thanked for, it's just expectation.

Nina Talley: No.

Richard Limpkin: But it's also a huge enabler, and that's not just the opposite of not being attractive. There's so much that payroll is central to in employee experience, in the provision of information. I do think that there's a significant role for HR and payroll to play in the future workforce and enabling them in terms of things like financial wellbeing and being able to be really critically important to that. My sense is that there's less and less focus on the future at a personal level as generations move through the workforce, and there's a lot less certainty about what the future is. So, financial wellbeing is a significant stress and pressure point for many, and there's a huge capability within our profession, in terms of people who understand the finance aspects, understand-

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Richard Limpkin: ... in terms of people who understand the finance aspects, understand the longer term impact of that, the role it plays, the ability to plan ahead, all of those components. So I think there's a huge enablement piece there. And that's both from a support structure point of view, but also from a technology point of view.

I certainly see that the pay slip as a concept has moved so far from the piece of paper you get in the pigeonhole. It's so central to delivering information and delivering impactful information that has insight and things like being able to prompt people who have the capacity and the ability to put more into longer term savings, 401k and pensions and those types of things that has a marginal impact on the now, but a profound impact over compound periods. All of that kind of stuff is really important.

So focusing on that part of the shift in the workforce and both their demands, but also the things they're not asking for that we know they need, and being able to provide both of those in abundance is really important.

But also that money's not the only driver in the workforce. It's the hygiene factor without it being right, nothing else will really have any kind of effect. But there are so many other factors around benefit provision and expectation around that. And again, payroll is always central to the correct execution of that, and that's a really important linkage with HR and benefit provision that payroll is really the place where the knowledge resides to do that in a scalable, effective way.

Nina Talley:

Immedis is the leader in consolidated payroll solutions, delivering secure, compliant, zero defect, touchless payroll for global organizations. Through a combination of innovative technology, knowledgeable employees, and their network of in-country expertise, Immedis provides managed payroll services across 150 plus countries worldwide, supporting the complete end-to-end payroll cycle and providing access to advanced reporting and real-time data analytics.

Ultimately, they understand that delivering an accurate, compliant and on-time payroll is the number one goal for their customers, which is why they have built an extensive payroll ecosystem, ensuring that they have the right people on the ground to meet local payroll needs.

This is further backed by the functionality they have developed into the Immedis platform, ensuring that their technology can meet both global and local payroll needs. In addition, their customer-centric approach to the continuous development of the Immedis platform means customers directly influence the features they deploy. Combining all of this with deep integration capabilities with HCM and finance software, Immedis transforms payroll from manual administration to a secure streamlined process. Visit www.immedis.com today. Again, that website is www.immedis.com.

Many people sort of believe that we have a little bit of time before Gen Z enters the workforce. And I have to tell you, you are incorrect. They are among us right now. They're in your workforce. And the thing is that I have noticed through some of my colleagues who are Gen Z is there is so much gumption. They really take pride in their work. They really want to do well. But if you don't meet them in that same place of taking pride and care in what you are providing for them, they will not work well for you at all. It's something we all need to be prepared for. They are the next generation of workers and they're here.

Richard Limpkin:

Yeah, 100%. I think the other thing that comes with that is back to that same point around speed. We've probably all at points in our careers felt pressured to get things done quickly. That again, is only increasing. The expectation and the demand for immediate gratification and expectation around that is exponential

as time progresses. So payroll cannot stay in a static position where it just operates a certain way and that's just the way it always has been. There is an expectation in the workforce as it evolves that that will improve and speed will increase.

That's something that we have to be prepared for in terms of payroll as a profession, but technology and infrastructure at a global scale that will allow that visibility of things in real-time access to your total payroll process with proper insight to be able to meaningfully know where every moving part of it is across 60 geographies. That's critically important to our customers.

Nina Talley: Completely. And it's also so difficult. And I think that for maybe some of our listeners who haven't had to consolidate or bring together different payroll technologies or processes from across the globe, I want to dive into that. So how can companies bring together all of this if they're using multiple different payroll providers on a global scale? What does that look like?

Richard Limpkin: It's probably the most fundamentally important thing. If you can't see everything, you can't control it. If you don't know it's happening, then you can't take action. And that sounds simple, but when it's across potentially 50 or 60 different components of infrastructure, technology, geographies, personas, and actors within your organization, getting that consistency is just fundamentally important. And that's where for ourselves, for example, within the Immedis platform and products like One View, is that ability to see across everything you have, the entire global state of what you're operating, where you're operating is, what stage it's at and what's the key next step and when is that due by. That's really where technology is the only answer at scale.

Of course, you could with infinite time and resource build manual tools around managing that, but let's see that sustainably and in a way that you're not going to lose your mind trying to manage.

It's got to be technology based solutions that are using that upstream information in HCM platforms, using the natural business processes which you operate to then get payroll as a natural byproduct without friction and the deep tightly ingrained and integrated components of that. That's how that will scale, and that's really the most fundamental part, having the technology in play in your organization that then lets you scale, both scale up in terms of number of people that you're dealing with in the particular geography, but scale horizontally in terms of the geographies you're operating in and having way more freedom around that.

We're seeing, obviously trying to caveat things by not constantly talking about the last two years, which have been relatively unique in terms of the impact they've had, but in some ways the last two years have only brought forward what would've happened naturally over five to 10 years anyway, and globalization was already occurring. It's just been accelerated.

So it's really meant that the demand is higher now than ever in terms of having the capability and scale to deal with that. And I think that's a really exciting thing for all of us. It means that, as we were talking about earlier, Nina, being able to move around the globe and being able to actually do that is a really important part of the workforce now.

It's been there. There's been lots of barriers to it being done easily historically. The friction is going down and it's just becoming a more common practice. So being able to deal with that and deal with that in automated way, that's really exciting and that's where some of the really cool stuff is happening in terms of innovation and payroll and being able to drive that as the natural process rather than the outlier process that's really difficult. That's fun.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that and I think it's something that payroll departments really need to be thinking about. In the last, we'll say four months alone, I've had three friends who have moved out of the country for varying reasons. There's a big push right now happening to sort of have this globally distributed life to be able to choose the life, choose the culture that you want to be in, and then having an employer who can back you up as you sort of make those huge upsets in your own life. That's such a powerful retention tool in particular.

Richard Limpkin: Oh, it definitely is. Myself here it's been cold and wet for a long time now over the winter in Ireland. We had the wettest October in recorded history and it was literally raining the entire month. If I do the same thing from elsewhere, then why wouldn't you? What's the barrier to that? And if actually by moving, it's more convenient for what I'm doing right now in terms of time zone coverage or a project I'm on or whatever that factor is, having the organizational flexibility to enable that, there's benefits for everybody. And it's always any scenario or kind of interaction should always be about creating the win-wins. And I think there are win-wins there for the employee population as well as the employer. Identifying those, getting them and enacting them is key.

Nina Talley: And so now is the time in our podcast for something that we like to call payroll nightmares. Richard has joined us before, and if you have not heard the nightmare he shared with us last time, I highly recommend you take a moment to go back to episode 25 and give it a listen. It is a doozy, but Richard, I just wanted to ask, do you have another payroll nightmare and a lesson learned that you can share with our listeners?

Richard Limpkin: I have plenty. I'm trying to think of what's [inaudible 00:31:26] I'd be willing to share. I can think of a weird one actually. It took a long time to figure out, but it was more so in the world of global payment execution and money movement as a result of payroll. This is going back about a decade ago now, but it was quite frustrating at the time.

We had a process in place for executing funds into developing world country, and it had been running for years without issue. People would come and go

from the payroll, they would still be paid, no issue with new joiners, no issue with leavers, all working fine. And then just suddenly people stopped getting paid. And it started with a technology component and tracing every aspect of the payments and the international routing of the payments and intermediary banks and everything else. And everything was green, everything was absolutely as it should have been, and everything was moving correctly, and even the recipient bank was landing acknowledging receipt. Ultimately where we traced it to, and bear in mind this was developing world, there was a compliance process that required tractor-fed paper in the recipient bank and they had run out of paper.

Nina Talley: Oh my gosh.

Richard Limpkin: That was the bottleneck. That was the break point.

Nina Talley: Oh my gosh.

Richard Limpkin: There's probably a couple of things that I learned from that time, like banking infrastructure is archaic.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: In many jurisdictions and even in developed world, significantly archaic. So having resilient process around that is really critical. And having feedback loops and validation at every stage of a process is just so important. And obviously technology has moved significantly since then, but it does show that most automated processes are still susceptible to some component of ...

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Richard Limpkin: ... processes are still susceptible to some component of intervention [inaudible 00:33:05] so understanding your end-to-end process and having a view of every breakable piece of that is really important. So, yeah, that was one I learned lesson from a long time ago.

Nina Talley: Wow. Yeah. I think that is yet another example of how printed paper is just the bane of payroll's existence. If we can stop printing. And I think that what you said about knowing the process, knowing each node that your payroll process has to connect into, that's one of those situations where tracing it back, taking a step back, and then, just going each step of the way until you find that pain point. Oh my goodness, what an upset for you, and what a good story to share.

Richard Limpkin: I think it's something that's peculiar to within finance, even to people who have spent a long time working in payroll. The ability to cope in a potentially critical situation and to be able to manage the burden of the stress, of the impact that's had on individual people, which we all take massively personally. If you're diligent, you care about what you're doing. And you work in payroll, it's not

cause you pick the easy option. It's because you do care about the delivery of what impact you have on other people. But being able to deal with that calmly and logically rather than panicking is really important in those scenarios. And I'm sure anyone who's worked in payroll long enough has had something similar where something that has always worked and nothing has changed, suddenly there's an issue. It's at that point, it's kind of like when there's the power outage, you don't want to be looking for your torch.

Nina Talley: Yes.

Richard Limpkin: You know where it is.

Nina Talley: And I think that unfortunately, infrastructure failure does happen. Process failure does happen. And I think it's a really important lesson to take with you. And this is certainly true for payroll professionals, but almost any other professional as well. You need to be the calm in the storm. You need to be the calm in the storm. If things are going wrong and you are panicking, that looks terrible. But if you're the calm in the storm, people will trust you. It's not a get out of jail free card where suddenly, you're the calm in the storm, and it's all right. But if you are not panicking, if you are the steady hand, it will resolve the issue faster, and it will also cause a little bit of respect to just grow in that even when something went wrong, you knew how to fix it, and you were calm about it. That's so important.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, I think you're dead right. I think it's the piece people remember, and you don't necessarily get remembered for the hundreds of pay slips they got without issue. But when there was problem, when you handled it carefully, calmly, kept them informed, and dealt with it professionally, that does get remembered. And it is important because no process, however resilient, is immune to everything. Something will happen at some point for everybody in the most developed and most stable infrastructure. So, having the right procedures, people around to deal with that is critical.

Nina Talley: Do you want to hear how our expert guests would've handled the payroll nightmare that you are familiar with? Send an email to podcasts@americanpayroll.org or leave us a comment on the APA's Facebook page to get involved in the conversation. So, you all know that we don't like to leave things on a negative note here at Pay Talk. And my last question is always a positive one. And Richard, once again, this is your second time here. So, you've given us this answer before, but I would love to see if you have another one. What is the best piece of payroll advice you have ever been given? Or what's the piece of advice that you wish somebody had given you?

Richard Limpkin: I would definitely go with, as we were talking about earlier, it is just don't ever think that you know it all. There is always something else out there, and there are some incredible people around you wherever you are, whatever you're doing. I would tell anyone to be eyes wide open, and it is very much open for

what you can learn from other people. Whatever stage of career you're at, however successful you've been, there are incredible people out there doing some stuff you've never heard of. And I think that's really important. I think that's more important, as we were saying, that's more important now than ever in this profession.

Payroll is evolving. It's evolving more quickly than ever, and I think the ability for everyone involved in it, in every role that touches it, to be able to be aware of what's changing and embrace that. I think that's the best advice I would certainly give. And I think it never diminishes. I think that's with you your whole career. There's always something more that you can pick up and you can put to use in a really practical way that will have a massive impact. And just remember how many people in payroll you impact on a daily basis, that can have a big impact.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that. And staying curious. If there's somebody who you think is doing an interesting job or even just that, somebody who's doing a similar job to you, make friends, find out what they're doing. Are they doing things similar to you? Are they doing things different from you? I think that that's one of those things that the APA Congress is so good for is that you can really meet all of these people, and you know that everybody has a shared interest, and you can talk with them about their processes, their nightmares, their headaches, their wins, and see how that can fit in with you. Just staying curious, I think, is such a big gain for anyone, not just in payroll, but anybody even outside of your professional life. Stay curious, constantly want to learn things from new people or even old people, people that you've known a long time that you've always respected. There's always a little morsel that you can find if you take the time to dig into somebody's experience with them.

Richard Limpkin: Yeah, I think it's a lovely way of saying it. And for me, that comes to life in things like our customer advisory board, where things that are shared there, I think in hindsight, some people shared them might have thought, well, maybe they're only relevant to my industry, or maybe they're only relevant because I use a particular infrastructure and other people aren't using it. But actually, when you see how the points they make resonate across all industries, regardless of the platforms you're using, I think that's really important. There's so much we can learn from places we just don't see it coming from, and I think that's really key.

Nina Talley: I completely agree with that. And Richard, I just want to say thank you so much for joining us once again. Your experience and your expertise is just always so fun to dive into, and I know that our listeners are walking away from this episode with some really valuable information to think on.

Richard Limpkin: Thanks so much, Nina. It's always pleasure.

Nina Talley: I also want to take a moment to thank all of our loyal listeners out there. Without you, Pay Talk would not be possible, so make sure you rate, review,

and subscribe on your preferred podcast streaming service. That is the best way to support this podcast and to ensure that we can continue to bring you the human stories that make payroll so personal. Until next time, folks, this has been your host Nina Tally with Pay Talk.

Speaker 1:

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PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [00:40:57]