

The Crow's Nest Forum: A discussion with Melissa Clark-Reynolds



This week we talk with Melissa Clark-Reynolds ONZM. We first met Melissa when she was speaking - and soundly applauded - at the International Precision Agriculture Conference managed by ForumPoint2 in 2017.

She is a digital strategist and professional director with 25 years' experience as an entrepreneur. Melissa has been CEO of several technology companies, is deputy chair of Radio NZ, and sits on the boards of Beef and Lamb NZ and Jasmex.

Her creative mind loves to find solutions to problems - she has always been at the cutting edge of finding new ways of doing things.

She was interviewed by experienced CEO, Graham Smith, in late April 2020.

[How do you think the COVID-19 experience is going to force business models to change?](#)

There are quite a lot of business that are still run like automated 19th century businesses. We are really entering the digital economy at high speed now. We are entering the knowledge economy at high speed. We are entering the subscription business economy at high speed. So, in the old days you wanted stuff on your balance sheet – you wanted bricks and mortar - nowadays we want everything off balance sheet, and we want a subscription model. That separation of ownership and use is a 21st century approach to business.

[What do you think a world-class conference will look like post COVID-19?](#)

I've been thinking about that a lot in terms of what works better online, and what doesn't. There is a whole pile of collaboration that is better online, there is also a whole lot of Q and A that is better online. What's better face to face is meeting new people and deepening your relationships with people you already know. I was thinking about what conferences I want to go to next year and actually it would be the conferences where I met really interesting people and had really interesting conversations.

I also think we are going to design our conference a lot differently in the future, so there's a lot more "hanging out" time. I don't mean just eating and visiting the trade shows, I mean slightly structured "hanging out". For example, people could get into groups to work on issues together. Imagine if you got your whole agricultural conference to talk about food security over dinner. Or a whole room of intelligent people to talk about solving social violence issues. At conferences, I feel like we sometimes waste the wisdom of the people that are there. They spend all their time listening, when really, they are ready to pop with ideas, and we don't catch them.

[What have you learned about yourself during the lockdown?](#)

I've been surprised how much I've loved it! I guess it helps if you like the person, you're in a bubble with! One of the things I have really loved is having some time to study and learn. I've been able to hone my craft in a new way. I feel really confident about running online workshops now, whereas it used to be something I was terrified of.

[*To hear more from Melissa, including her ideas on thought-provoking, memorable networking events, download the podcast here.*](#)