The Measure Pod: #25 Dan and Dara’s analytics journey

[00:00:00] **Dara:** Hello, and thanks for joining us in The Measure Pod, a podcast for people in the analytics world like us. I'm Dara, I'm MD at Measurelab, I'm joined as always by Dan, an Analytics Consultant also here at Measurelab.

[00:00:30] **Dara:** Hey Dan, how are you?

[00:00:31] **Daniel:** Yeah good thank you. How are you doing?

[00:00:32] **Dara:** I'm doing good. I'm doing good. I'm looking forward to this week.

[00:00:35] **Dara:** So our theme or our topic this week. We were talking about IRL in real life on Friday, you casually mentioned, I think it was a not so subtle hint that you're approaching your six year measure-versary anniversary. I started saying that ironically and now I can't not say it.

[00:00:54] **Daniel:** Oh, everything's a measure pun at Measurelab. Sorry I apologize on Dara's behalf. Yeah, I did. It wasn't that subtle at all. So we were doing our one-to-one, which we do every month. And I was like, next month Dara is my six year anniversary kind of expecting a, you know, a balloon and some candles and a cake.

[00:01:11] **Dara:** Oh yeah. I'm sure I can stretch to that, but it got us talking, so what we've asked the last couple of guests we've had on is how they, we like to say, fell into the analytics world, because that seems to be the way in. So we've started making that a thing that we ask our guests how they got into the weird and wacky world of analytics, but you and I started talking a little bit about our own journeys and we thought it might actually make a good episode if we expanded that conversation, dig in a little bit and take a little walk down memory lane, and maybe talk about some of the good and bad turns that have led us to where we are today and how we first got into the analytics industry, but maybe some of the changes that we've made along the way as well.

[00:01:50] **Daniel:** Yeah I think it would be a great conversation, a great chat overall. And you know, there was a point in time, a very long time ago, where our paths did cross pre-Measurelab as well. So we ended up talking about that and then figuring out how we ended up there right? And how our paths eventually crossed again later in life when I joined Measurelab.

[00:02:06] **Dara:** And of course one of us has very fond memories of that meeting. And the other one of us doesn't remember it at all and we'll leave our listeners to guess which one's which.

[00:02:17] **Daniel:** Yeah I'm sure it's so cryptic though, you're so cryptic.

[00:02:20] **Dara:** Yeah and it probably will come up as well. So I suppose I should start because my history probably goes back a bit further being a little bit older than you.

[00:02:29] **Daniel:** Yeah go for it.

[00:02:31] **Dara:** So I definitely fit into the category of falling into analytics, and I don't know if this is just creatively backfilling the story, but I do feel like my kind of starting point is somewhat vaguely relevant. So I studied electronics, although please don't ask me any questions whatsoever about electronics. I think everything I learned went in one ear and out the other, but I'm partly joking about that. So I think what it did give me was an understanding of technology and kind of problem solving. So it gave me some kind of core components I think that have been useful to me as I've worked my way through my career, but the actual course material itself, maybe wasn't quite what I was expecting when I signed up for it.

[00:03:13] **Dara:** So it did get me a job at a university. So when I graduated, I worked for a company that supplied laboratory equipment. So I worked effectively, a service engineer for them fixing lab equipment, and then moved on to Intel, which I'm quite proud of. I always say I worked for Intel before I moved over to the UK. I wasn't there for very long, and I was one very small cog in a very big machine. It was fascinating to be honest, it was in a big fabrication facility, just outside my hometown. So, I mean, they employed, I don't know thousands of people I think, and it's probably still growing to this day.

[00:03:48] **Dara:** But when I moved over to the UK, the kind of jobs I had worked in Ireland, they weren't really available in the Southeast of England. So I needed to basically go back to square one. So I somehow, I don't actually know what exactly prompted me to do this. I think I had just started dabbling in little bits of web design, just tinkering with bits of HTML and I decided to do a web design course in Brighton, the city college in Brighton. That kind of got me really interested in, it spun out into learning bits about SEO, bits about PPC, even email marketing, just generally just trying to market a business online.

[00:04:27] **Dara:** So I started tinkering around a little bit with websites, never really got that into it, and I knew pretty early on that I wasn't destined to be a web developer or definitely not a designer anyway, that's for sure. But it gave me that kind of interest and understanding a bit more about how websites work and how to actually promote websites, and here's where we start to link into analytics. I started using Google Analytics. I was putting Google Analytics onto websites. Should I guess when it was, I don't know, I'm going to say like 2006 or 2007. So from when I was just building websites for friends or just for my own kind of personal projects, I heard of this thing called Google Analytics. I would put it on those websites and I got really interested in it. I was like, this is amazing. You can actually see and quantify what people are doing on these websites. So I'd say I became a kind of a heavy user of GA (Google Analytics) long before I was working in an actual dedicated analytics job.

[00:05:22] **Daniel:** That's really interesting. I was going to ask when your first exposure to Google Analytics was, and it sounds like a very long time ago. Do you remember what version you were using?

[00:05:30] **Dara:** It would have been classic. It was post Urchin so what it was GA (Google Analytics) it would have been classic GA (Google Analytics) and obviously because of the type of sites I was working on, it was a very, it would have been a very basic implementation, but as I say, I just loved it. I loved the fact that you could actually monitor the traffic on the websites that you're, you know, and these were websites with very little traffic, but even still, it was quite exciting to be able to just see how many people are actually coming on the website, what they're looking at, where they're from, what marketing channels they use to find it, and that then pushed me a little bit more into learning more about the different digital marketing channels and how it all connects together. That got me into a job. So that got me into a job with a, more of a traditional marketing agency, but they were starting to do more work in digital.

[00:06:17] **Dara:** This is a family run agency in Hove and I kind of managed their digital projects. And I learned loads, you know when you look back and you think, what was it that kind of really got me going in my career. And I think back to that job, because it was a small company and I was one of only two people working on the digital side. So I had no option but to try and figure things out. So there were a lot of late nights, there was a lot of Googling, there was a lot of trying things. There was a lot of hoping things were going to work out as well, and a lot of mistakes made, but I learned about everything from project management, to sales, to email marketing, even social media was still a little bit new-ish then.

[00:06:58] **Dara:** I got really interested in that and again, taking the kind of measurement angle, I was quite interested in the companies in Brighton, like Brandwatch that were up and coming at that time. So I got quite interested in them in terms of the kind of tech and the measurement of social media and brand engagement and all these things.

[00:07:12] **Dara:** So it really cut my teeth, got me fired up, got me interested about digital marketing. Again, with this kind of underlying theme of how to measure it, how to optimize it, how to improve performance whether of the website or the campaigns that were driving people to us.

[00:07:28] **Daniel:** So did you ever manage campaigns at this place or were you purely looking at the kind of the project side, the measurement side, or the delivery or the building of these things, did you ever join those dots between marketing analytics and marketing itself?

[00:07:42] **Dara:** Yeah, but it was all hands on deck. Maybe that's the wrong phrase. It was my hands on lots of decks or something like that. I had to get stuck in, basically. That company didn't manage paid search campaigns or anything like that on any kind of great scale. The area they focused on was building websites. So my kind of core job was project managing or account managing design and development of new websites and also some display ads as well. So doing the creative side of this was using flash back then. So there were flash banners, basically. So again, this is what I mean, I got into everything and email marketing and it was a kind of job where you didn't really say no to your clients that they asked you for help, you are the expert. So if you didn't know about it, you had to pretty quickly become an expert, which I loved because I was really ambitious and really enthusiastic. So I just threw myself into it. And I learned as much as I could about as many different things as I could, but it was all very generalist at that point. So I didn't really have a particular area that I felt was mine that I could really become a proper kind of expert in.

[00:08:42] **Daniel:** So you weren't the analytics guy at this point in your life?

[00:08:45] **Dara:** Well, I was in a way, but it wasn't at that time, for that company, the analytics guy, wasn't really a thing. Again, I was using GA (Google Analytics) all my clients at the time were using GA (Google Analytics) and I love to use it even to try and support any proposals we were doing for any kind of new projects. I would always go straight into GA (Google Analytics) and think this is the place to get the information to try and make the business case.

[00:09:06] **Daniel:** That's really interesting how you gravitated towards it. You found this thing that kind of took your fancy and it became part of your vocabulary. It sounds like you used it in those pitches, probably not asking you to do that. You're using it as an aid to do other things and supporting ideas and tests and proposals that you're making.

[00:09:23] **Daniel:** So I can almost see it happening from the story you're telling it's starting to sow that seed of becoming quote unquote, the analytics guy. Well, I assume you moved into and found a little niche to carve out.

[00:09:36] **Dara:** Yeah so I moved on from that role, great company and I really liked working there. As I mentioned I learned a lot but I think I just got to the point where I needed that next challenge and I needed to move on. So I got a role in a more digitally focused agency, but I initially went in there because I had been working in account management. I actually went in there on the sales side, so to try and use that experience of managing client accounts to try and sell in services to new clients. I thought I'd give it a go, it wasn't for me. It wasn't cold calling, but it was calling people that you didn't know who had inquired and trying to develop that. And it just wasn't for me, I missed being more involved in the work itself. I felt a little bit too removed for me personally.

[00:10:20] **Dara:** So I was really close to looking to move on again, and then an opportunity came up. The commercial director there actually thought of me when the position came up to lead the analytics team. It was a bit of an off the wall idea because I hadn't been working in an analytics role, even though I had been using GA (Google Analytics) for a good number of years at that point, but she just thought, you know what you're analytical, you've got the GA (Google Analytics) experience, you might need to up your game, but your hardworking, you're ambitious, so I think you can do this. So she put me forward for that role and I thought, well you know what it might as well give it a go. The rest is history as they say, I haven't really looked back from there.

[00:11:01] **Dara:** That's brushing over the frantic trying to figure out to go from a kind of keen GA (Google Analytics) user to really knowing the ins and outs of it. But that was really exciting, like taking something that you already liked and absolutely drilling into it and learning as much as you possibly can about it was really exciting. I feel like it was a, well it definitely was a huge turning point in my career.

[00:11:23] **Daniel:** I mean I can relate to that feeling of missing the work, right. When you get pulled away from something that you really enjoy for good or for bad, I suppose, and you always miss or have that addiction to delivering good work and to getting involved in the data and working directly with clients, I completely get that.

[00:11:39] **Daniel:** Was this your first role in leadership or management within an organization, is this the first time you had to manage somebody? Or does that come later? Or did it come before actually?

[00:11:48] **Dara:** So previously I had managed one direct report and also I'd managed external contractors as well. Which is a bit different, I had one line report previously, so I did have some management experience, but yeah, it was completely new to it, really. So this was the first time actually having a full in-house team that I was responsible, with all the joys and on the less good days, the stress that comes with that too. Back then it was difficult to find people. So recruitment was always a challenge because it was a up and coming area. There weren't too many people out there with that level of web analytics experience. So a bit like how they spotted me and thought I might be good to lead the team. We had to apply the same logic to try and find people who were either working already within that business in a different team or people who are working for another company, but not with the direct analytic skills, but with kind of transferable skills that then could get trained up.

[00:12:39] **Dara:** So it wasn't my first experience with management, but it was my first experience of trying to build and maintain a team. And again, huge learning experience and something that I'm very grateful for, because I think it gave me that opportunity to make the mistakes I needed to make and also to learn what I needed to learn about trying to grow an analytics team.

[00:13:00] **Daniel:** Yeah I bet and all very useful, even today I can imagine. So the question is how did you go from leading a team in a digital marketing agency to starting your own thing up?

[00:13:10] **Dara:** Oh yeah, that's a good question. I always felt, so I think you hear people say this. I always felt that I was going to end up at least wanting to whether what I was going to be successful or not, but I always knew I would want to have my own company. I think it was something that I've always felt drawn to. So I think I was getting to the point a bit like why I wanted to move on from the previous company, I felt like I was itching for more itching to specialise and itching to have some elements of control over it and feel like I could shape it up and, you know, have my own kind of vision and direction for things.

[00:13:42] **Dara:** When you're working within a team within a bigger company who has other services, I felt like I wanted to just have that you know, be really good at that one thing, and be part of a business that just focuses on that one thing and does it really well. So when Mark and I set up Measurelab that was one of the founding reasons was that we wanted to do analytics, we wanted to do it really well. And we weren't going to bolt on any extra services that weren't directly related to that. So I felt like that was always going to happen sooner or later, it was just a case of waiting for the right opportunity.

[00:14:12] **Dara:** I don't want to take up the whole episode here, so I'll wrap up my parts. Hopefully that was a reasonably whistle stop tour of my history, but we need to go over to you in a sec Dan, but the last thing I'll probably say is I've been reflecting on where I'm at recently and my journey a little bit, even before we started talking about what we do in this episode. I think something else that I've found interesting is I've gotten used to that transition from being in the work, because even up until about a year ago and I think it probably was around about this time last year, I was still very involved with client work. So working directly with clients and I've loved that. I've loved that for the last 10, 15 years, however long I've been doing it, and I was probably a bit reluctant to step away from it.

[00:14:59] **Dara:** Especially as we're growing a really good team. There was a need there for me to take a broader role, and that brings with it new challenges. So even though I'm not working directly with clients anymore, I'm still getting to work with a really great team, and I'm still going to see the output of that work. So maybe the challenges have just shifted from solving the client's problems to solving the company's problems. So instead of doing analytics work, it's focusing on running an analytics company. So even though the challenges are different there, they're still exciting, and without sounding too cliche. So the challenges are different, but they're equally exciting and to be honest, I am genuinely loving every minute of it.

[00:15:38] **Dara:** So on that gushy note let's hand over to you. So how did it all start for you Dan?

[00:15:43] **Daniel:** Well, I'm going to use the whole I fell into analytics analogy again, because I do think it applies. I never knew of digital web analytics from when I went to university, it was never a thing. It was not on my radar. It was not something I was aware of. I was at college and the natural next step was to go to university and to move out of my parents house and to move somewhere and do that thing, and I never questioned that. It was always just, I went to uni because I went to college and I went to college because I was at school, I never really had a plan for my life. It was always just, oh, this was the next thing, and it delays that decision so yeah, of course I'll do that.

[00:16:19] **Daniel:** We got grants and bursaries and loans to go do these things, and I was like hell yeah, I don't have to worry about this until I'm old. I went to Sussex University and that's what got me into Brighton, and I studied maths and I chose maths because I had a liking to it and I had a kind of natural ability to do maths. I did a double maths A-Level, and I thought, you know what, I'm going to go to uni it gets me out of the house. So I'll pick a subject that I can already do. I mean, how hard can it really be? I've never eaten my own words as quickly until I started that maths degree. But when I moved down to Brighton, I was at Sussex uni studying maths. That was a couple of years of just delaying a decision to get a job really and to move into the real world. I ended up doing a master's degree, a four year course. I was still up until the point where I had my last exam doing my dissertation, handing that in, I had no idea what that next step was. I was just winging everything, but that last week at university, the week before I handed in my dissertation, we had two emails coming through the entire year.

[00:17:13] **Daniel:** And at this point during the four year course, I think it was about twenty of us. And it was two companies local, and they were looking for maths grads to come join their companies. One was some plastics testing company where you had to do all sorts of crazy maths stuff to test the durability of plastics and other things that I'm probably misremembering a great deal by now. And the other place was a company that's actually me and Tom Woods, who was on the show a couple of weeks ago, that's where we met. So I ended up going into an analytics and attribution platform. And my interview, there was a bit of research to explain what attribution was. And God, I don't think I did a good job at all.

[00:17:47] **Daniel:** I had to on the spot learn what attribution was and you know what it's like even the best marketer in the world still struggles to explain attribution. And I had to do this as a uni grad to get a six week internship.

[00:17:58] **Dara:** I was going to ask if you know what it means now.

[00:18:00] **Daniel:** I don't think I can remember. I'm sorry, but I ended up doing the six week internship at this analytics and attribution company, and that was my first exposure to that world at all. I completely lucked upon the opportunity I got had the interview, got the internship and was working through my six weeks, working through all sorts of different aspects of that. It was really hard, because you know, brand spanking new, I think I even wore a tie and shoes to my first day, got laughed at instantly, because anyone in this industry realizes that it's a very casual industry.

[00:18:30] **Dara:** Yeah, I've felt that shame too. Don't worry, you're not alone.

[00:18:33] **Daniel:** I was told, you know, by any parent, it's like oh, you've got a job, wear a suit or shoes, and I was like I'm not gonna wear a suit but I'll put a shirt and a tie on. You know what it was? I went to a charity shop the day before my interview and got a pair of charity shop leather shoes because I didn't own any, I gave them back the day after I started because it's shorts and t-shirt kind of vibe. I ended up staying there for a number of years, and just to tie it back to Google Analytics and web analytics in general, it was actually a direct competitor to Google Analytics. We ended up building a full analytics solution, a web analytics solution. We even had an app version an SDK that we built for a client well before it became mainstream, which looking back was a really interesting place and time to be.

[00:19:16] **Dara:** Sorry, just to stop you there. That's really interesting to me because it was always such an easy, well it wasn't even really a sell in because you'd never, you never really had to sell GA (Google Analytics) into anyone. Usually they were using it already. So it would just be a case of, are you good enough to help me with it? It was never a case of is GA (Google Analytics) good enough. So what was it like working, basically working at a company where your competition was, at least included Google Analytics.

[00:19:44] **Daniel:** Obviously at the time I had no context. I didn't know any different. The skew or the angle that we put on this is that the web analytics, the page view tracking, the visitor tracking was always a byproduct of the core product offering, which was attribution. So it was all about tracking the inbound leads to a website, you know, the inbound traffic, measuring what they did on the website, and then working out a multichannel attribution approach, and we had very clever people and very big servers to do things like data-driven attribution. Again, a long time before, before it became mainstream. So yeah, before it was kind of mainstream, people were buying that from us and it was to get a full view of their marketing activity, and it wasn't people that were just using Google Analytics to track how many pages did we have last month?

[00:20:24] **Daniel:** It was more like we're spending ten, twenty, one hundred grand a month on marketing and we need to know, you know, if we can shift 1% of this, we make a hell of a lot of money, and actually that justifies an expense or something like this. Most of our clients did have Google Analytics and I suppose that was always the nightmare is that everything's always compared to Google.

[00:20:41] **Daniel:** Google has this I like to think of this halo effect where, because it's got the word Google in it, it must be correct. It's like, it's so big and so powerful that it can't be wrong. We were always comparing this solution, the tool, the data that we were tracking, comparing that to Google Analytics, and nine times out of ten, it turns out that Google analytics was not set up right. So we had the correct data, but it was always validate against GA (Google Analytics) because we trust GA (Google Analytics) over your platform, even though that one could be completely broken. We have no idea. So it was a lot of my job was validating against Google Analytics, for sure.

[00:21:13] **Daniel:** So throughout my tenure there, I started as an account manager. I started as an intern, I did my internship and then I got the job which was awesome. I started out as an account manager, but very quickly I gravitated towards the more technical aspect of it. So for me personally, to understand anything or to be able to talk about it, and if you want to use anything, I have to really understand it. I have to lift that hood and understand the nuts and bolts, how it all works. If I understand how it's all put together, then I can extrapolate out and use that in context with clients. And that's just a bit about how my brain works, and I think going back to what you said about what you studied electronics, studying maths gives you that as a good tool. I couldn't tell you a single thing that I learned about maths at university, but what I have learnt or what I feel like I've got from that experience is that problem solving, that logical thinking, critical thinking, those kinds of aspects of my approach to things are actually taken from studying something like maths, and I can imagine electronics.

[00:22:06] **Daniel:** So what I ended up doing is I ended up transitioning out of the account management team because I'm not knocking account managers at all, it's just the account management skills are quite different. They're quite often focused on the softer skills and there's less of a need or even want to explore the more technical aspects. So it's more about managing projects and managing clients and managing relationships more so than delivering that work, and I think this is why I was thinking about what you said about you know, missing doing the work. I think as we were growing as an agency or as a platform, I was getting to do less and less of it as an account manager.

[00:22:37] **Daniel:** So where I ended up transitioning to is becoming naturally gravitating towards the sales team, and I was a technical person that they would bring in because I understood how it works, I understood how to apply it to put it into practice and I could talk to people. So I was quite often the guy that the sales team brought into pitches and meetings just because I'm the meat to the bones, they're going to do the slides and do the talky talk, and then I can do the walk, right. But then I ended up because I didn't want to be a sales person and I'm not going to go into the sales side, I was just the kind of guy that they pull into these pitches. I ended up starting my own team within the company and focused on support desk. So supporting all the kind of technical questions and clarifications and validations against normally Google Analytics around the platform but also onboarding. So any new business that the sales team did win I was wanting to get them set up and running on our platform. That was really exciting because it was always talking to lots of new, different, exciting people and getting them set up with new technologies.

[00:23:34] **Daniel:** I did the training, we did little kind of programs to get them up running on our tools and built them dashboards and this was, this was Excel, all Excel based and you had this automated system on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. You could email out an Excel spreadsheet pre-formatted with data and to be honest, I just got completely absorbed into Excel and creating all these amazing, crazy templates of dashboards and reports for all sorts of different clients. I really enjoyed that aspect of the role maybe more than I should have done.

[00:24:04] **Daniel:** We also had our own tag management platform, it was a really interesting time to be in the tag management game because this is when Google rolled out Google Tag Manager for free and for us and other people that were selling tag management service, not just the service, but the tech, the solution as well it was a really interesting time to be upended by Google, and I think that was the first in a very long line of Google taking over and undercutting, the classic Google thing where they find technology, they buy it up and they release it for free, or they give it out on mass, which is very much at the other end of the stick as I am now.

[00:24:35] **Dara:** So is that what got you out of that role? Were you starting to worry that Google was coming in and taking over, or was it a different reason for moving on?

[00:24:45] **Daniel:** I don't think it was at that point really. At this point, Google Analytics were still struggling with things like attribution modeling and they weren't able to integrate a lot of channels, display impressions, and things like that into the mix. I know they had their version of it, which they still do of course, but this was, you know, where we integrated or what we did in terms of attribution was pretty agnostic, right. And that's a theme very much of where I like to sit. I like to be not dependent to a media agency or have some kind of context to the work that I'm doing.

[00:25:14] **Daniel:** I started to feel the ship sinking a little bit for me personally, not necessarily for the business is when the acquisition happened. So the company that I was working for got bought by a big marketing agency that had their own paid search guys, they had affiliate marketing and they had a display network as well. So when that happens, it didn't affect us day-to-day the operation of the analytics and attribution tool stayed exactly independent, but over time it became a tool that all of the display clients got for free, and it became very tainted at least from my very high and mighty morals as an analyst, I felt like it was tainted. I really enjoyed the approach of being agnostic and the data's the data. I'm not going to try and con you into thinking a certain way. It's just, this is what's happening, here's the caveats and make your own decisions off the back of it. I felt that starting to be degraded or diminished in some way. And I think that's when I started to decide that was my natural endpoint and started to look for a different approach.

[00:26:12] **Daniel:** That's when I did a little Google for independent analytics places, you know, I really enjoy the analysis, the tech, the stuff that I was doing, but I wanted to do that without that layer of media agency vibe on top of that and that's where I found Measurelab and I just reached out, I think, to Mark on LinkedIn as a direct message, not as a job application, just as a, hey how's it going? I'm interested, but don't tell anyone we've got mutual connections. I'm just putting my toe in the water here. How's it going? And yeah, it actually went pretty fast I think. We grabbed a coffee before work one morning and we just had a chat and it ended up working out pretty well.

[00:26:49] **Daniel:** Then not too long after that, I joined, I worked out my, I think, months notice and joined you guys. We were a merry band of five people at the time, everyone's an all-rounder doing everything for everyone. We just had a couple of clients that we were the go to email contact. But other than that, we were in a shared office with another company up in an old converted factory in Lewes somewhere, very beautiful place, and I was over the moon, really, just a bunch of people, all doing analytics.

[00:27:13] **Dara:** We were all, it was all hands on deck. We were all stuck in all the time really, figuring things out.

[00:27:19] **Daniel:** Yeah, exactly. That kind of, that all hands on deck vibe was, is a perfect description of it. And as we've grown, that's evolved and we've gone specialists and we've moved on to different areas, you know, but we're all still analytics people and that's the really exciting thing is we've grown organically. We've got a bunch of great people and it's still the same vibe actually, whether it was the five people in the shared office or the twenty people we are now distributed all over the UK. We're still just a bunch of analytics people talking about analytic stuff every day, working with some awesome companies with their analytics. So yeah, I've definitely made a right choice and it’s coming up to six years and I still don't have those itchy feet, which I'm sure you're glad to hear.

[00:27:56] **Dara:** The big question on my mind is do you ever regret not going and working for the plastic testing company? Think how different your life could have been.

[00:28:03] **Daniel:** Yeah I was like, one of them, I had to actually use my maths degree for something and I was like, you know what I'm so glad I got the job because I couldn't tell you a single thing. Literally, as soon as I walked out of that university, as soon as I finished the degree, I was just like, my brain was like, thank god I can let go of all this information now. And I just did. I don't think I remembered anything, but yeah, it's a really similar path to, I think what you took at least sort of studying some kind of stem subject, you know, some kind of technical subject or sciency, mathy kind of subjects that kind of set you up for the future without us even realising it. Even if we don't remember a single thing and don't ask either of us about our degrees at all.

[00:28:41] **Daniel:** Whether you went to university or not, it doesn't really matter. It's about an approach to problem solving and logical thinking. And that kind of critical thinking is way more important. Just having an appetite to solve puzzles really and fix problems. That is what analytics is all about. It has no impact on what you studied or if you studied or whatever.

[00:28:59] **Dara:** Well, we've crossed over with this on at least a couple of previous episodes. We did our one, you and me talking about what makes a good analytics consultant and it came up again. We were talking about this idea that where we've gone through the process of having to work with problems. So even the nature of the work we do, it's often working with incomplete or incorrect data, and we've had to get down and dirty and work our way around problems. So there's a couple of themes here that we've gone into before and it really is more about, I think having a mindset where you're excited by problems rather than being overly. I mean a bit of fear is okay sometimes too, but you don't want to be, you don't want to be paralyzed by that. You want to see a problem and think, okay, I want to, the exciting thing here is solving this problem and it's that mindset and that ability to break things down and to, yeah pull your sleeves up and accept that things aren't going to always go your way and that's okay, and that's the way it goes. And you just need to find a way around these problems.

[00:29:54] **Daniel:** Yeah, exactly. I'm grateful for what I studied, I just can't tell you anything about it. I'll tell you something we didn't get around to Dara is it is telling everyone how we or where we met for the first time, even if one of us, which will remain unnamed, forgot.

[00:30:11] **Dara:** Well I should tell the story because I remember, it's not a particularly exciting story. So we shared a client and we were in a meeting together with that client I was representing the agency I was working for, and you were representing your company that you're working for.

[00:30:26] **Dara:** I remember I was having a discussion about what you mentioned earlier, which is those differences between GA (Google Analytics) and DC Storm. I remember that conversation vividly. And when you started, I said, oh yeah, we met, of course, at that meeting and you just said, I don't remember that at all.

[00:30:41] **Daniel:** In my defense, you've had a big orange beard for as long as I've ever remembered you, at least. And this meeting, you didn't have one. So it was a pre-beard, I couldn't tell, I couldn't recognize you.

[00:30:53] **Dara:** Yeah you looked exactly the same as you do in my memory.

[00:30:57] **Daniel:** Just slightly more tired eyes.

[00:30:58] **Dara:** Yeah, but we did. I felt we bonded over the differences between GA (Google Analytics) and DC Storm and explaining differences in general to clients, but between the two different systems. So I was heartbroken when you told me that you had no memory of it whatsoever.

[00:31:11] **Daniel:** I've done my time. Six years paying that debt.

[00:31:15] **Dara:** I can forgive you now, I think finally. Well I'm sure this is something that's going to come again. We are going to stick to this idea of asking guests when they come in. They won't go into quite as much detail as we just have done now, but it is always interesting. There's so many different stories about how people end up working in analytics and sadly that'll probably change because now there are courses available that probably it's going to reach a point where you ask somebody, they're going to say, well, I studied, I did a masters in analytics, and then I got a job and now I'm here and the stories will be less, less windy, but definitely for anyone that's been working in the game for a while, it tends to be these kind of meandering routes in.

[00:31:51] **Dara:** So I'm going to put you on the spot now Dan. We promised last week we would have a wind down that didn't involve sitting in front of the TV. So have you been true to your word? Have you got out in the brave world and done something outdoors?

[00:32:05] **Daniel:** Yes, but it's not very exciting. I will say what I did, and that was, I went to a pub and I spent the day out in Hastings, which is a seaside town down on the south coast with my wife on Saturday. So I spent the day out and I went to the pub the night before. So again, not crazy, but that is what I did, but doesn't involve being indoors while I suppose the pub does, but there was no Netflix on so I think it counts.

[00:32:30] **Dara:** I'm a bit worried because we've gone from sitting in front of the TV watching Netflix to sitting in pubs. I also went to the pub and so we had friends down over the weekend and we went out for a nice walk to be fair. There was some healthy activity, but that walk did end up in a local pub for a couple of drinks, which was really nice as well because it was nice weather but a bit chilly so we finished it in the local pub, which was really nice.

[00:32:54] **Dara:** So it has been nice to get outside and not just watch Netflix, but maybe we'll build up maybe next week it will be even more wholesome and more healthy. But I feel like this is a good, it's a good stepping stone, I think.

[00:33:05] **Daniel:** Oh yeah. The thing is there, we're just not very interesting people, right? I mean, we're trying to make it sound really sexy and exciting and glamorous, but we go to work, we talk about analytics, and then we might go to the pub and you run and I skate and we do it all again.

[00:33:18] **Dara:** That's true, simple creatures. That's us for this week. As always, you can find out more about us over at measurelab.co.uk. You can get in touch via email at podcast@measurelab.co.uk or look us up on LinkedIn.

[00:33:30] **Dara:** As always we're looking for topics or guests if you want to come on the show and talk about something with us, please let us know. But also given what we've talked about today, if you want to share your story of how you got into analytics, please let us know. And if there's any really interesting stories out there, we'll probably read them out on a future episode.

[00:33:48] **Dara:** Otherwise, join us next time for more analytics chit chat, I've been Dara joined by Dan. So it's bye for me.

[00:33:54] **Daniel:** And bye for me.

[00:33:55] **Dara:** See you next time.