Season 2. Episode 6. Driving Operational Efficiency in Live Broadcast: A Conversation with Britni Bates

Summary of Episode:
What are the biggest challenges facing broadcasters today?

In this episode, Marcus Schioler, Haivision's VP of Marketing, speaks with Britni Bates, VP of Broadcast Sales at Haivision, about the rapid evolution of the live broadcast landscape. Listen as Britni shares insights into the most difficult challenges facing broadcasters, the operational impact of emerging technologies like private 5G and LEO connectivity, and the leadership principles essential for achieving success in the industry.

Intro
Welcome to The Haivision Podcast where we take a deep dive into the innovations and challenges shaping video technology. In each episode, we'll bring you insights from experts behind cutting-edge video networking, visual collaboration, and video wall solutions. So whether you're a professional navigating the complexities of video wall technology, working in live production, or someone who's simply curious about new tech, this podcast is for you.

Join us as we explore the latest trends, share success stories, and discuss the technologies shaping the future of mission-critical video environments.

Marcus
Welcome to The Haivision Podcast. I'm Marcus Schioler, VP of Marketing at Haivision. In this episode, I speak with Haivision's VP of Sales, Britni Bates, about her journey in the broadcast industry, the changing demands of live production teams, the technologies transforming the market, and her insights on leadership, building relationships, and the future of live content. Before we dive into the industry side of things, tell us a bit about your journey to being here today. Was there a specific moment or opportunity that drew you into broadcast technology?

Britni
It's actually kind of funny. I joke with people a lot that I accidentally stumbled into broadcast and never left. And, you know, fun fact about me, I actually got started in sales selling drywall when I was 19. And then, you know, through going to college for broadcast journalism and really wanting to be on the front side of the camera, I learned about the technology side of it and I absolutely loved it. So when the opportunity was presented to me to join a technology company and like working behind the scenes and helping people

deliver, you know, priceless moments across the world, like it hooked me and here I am and I'm here to stay.

Marcus
You found your calling, basically.

Britni
I did.

Marcus
And you didn't exactly plan it from the beginning, but here we are.

Britni
No, here we are. And I absolutely love it. I live, breathe, and bleed broadcast now, so I'm stuck.

Marcus
So yeah, I mean, you spend a lot of time working with broadcasters and production teams. What keeps you excited about working with the industry?

Britni
Simply put, the people, right? The broadcast industry is, I'm going to say, a very niche group, right? We're all really special in our different fields and being able to work with the incredibly talented customers, colleagues, and partners that I get to work with every day, like that's the key part of this role for me.

Marcus
So, I mean, people are a constant. Dealing with people, not a constant in that it's always the same people, but dealing with people is dealing with people. But from a technology standpoint, what do you think has changed since you first started in broadcast?

Britni
Everything. It's funny because I tell people all the time, like every day I'm learning something new. I have to stay on my toes with the technology advancements, the people moving around, right? One person that you're working with at one company one day, they could be at another company the next day, right? And with the technology evolving constantly, I regularly have to learn and stay up to speed on all these things that are going

on. Yeah.

Marcus
I mean, obviously relationships are important, but keeping up with the technology is it's certainly a challenge in this world.

Britni
Yeah. Thankfully for me, the relationships that I have helped me keep up with the technology.

Marcus
So in those conversations that you're having with customers every day, what do you see them coming to you with as their biggest challenges now?

Britni
The biggest challenge, and it continues to evolve, is needing to produce more content with less resources, right? That's really the key part of what we do at Haivision, right? A lot of our customers, they want their A-team to be at home eating dinner with their families at night, right? But they still have the challenge of creating exponentially more content every day, right? So our solutions help bring that home.

Marcus
Yeah. We've definitely seen ever since the pandemic how remote production became a thing.

Britni
Yeah. And it's interesting that you bring up the pandemic because while it was a very hard time for us, it kept us busy, right? People needed to be able to go live from their homes, you know, sitting in their basements. And we helped make that happen.

Marcus
It's a really great, great story to tell. The story of the SRT protocol.

Britni
Exactly.

Marcus
Yeah. It's certainly interesting to see how we went from that being a Haivision technology

to being something that's entirely everywhere. We're talking about broadcast in general, but how do you see the difference between sports, news? I mean, your team handles all of, you know, all sorts of different broadcast use cases. You know, what do you see the difference between the sports news and live events, for instance?

Britni
They're very different, right? They have their different challenges, you know, where a news organization needs to go live right now and have incredibly low latency, right? That's their key thing. They need to be able to get on air as soon as possible, right? Whereas with our sports broadcasters and the teams in League 2, their events are planned, right? We know years in advance when these, you know, huge events are happening or when a game is happening, right? And they have a lot more time to plan. And so very low latency is key, right? And then also the video quality, you know, sports, they require HDR a lot more than the news organizations do, right? And then as far as live production goes, it's kind of a mix, right? It depends on who their customer is.

Marcus
Yeah. Actually, we're getting a lot of different types of people that are involved in Haivision workflows from the major broadcasters to event production companies, to teams, to like all sorts of, there's a lot, there's kind of an evolution there, isn't there? In terms of who's actually doing the production now as well.

Britni
Yeah. And it's funny because there's a lot of like resource sharing there too, right? And, you know, my point earlier about how people hop around in this industry, you know, you could work for a news organization one day and then a sports organization the next day, and you take your, your skills from one to the other. And it really helps drive the video quality home, I think.

Marcus
It's interesting. Yeah. That's true. The people that were doing like live broadcast or that we see them going to enterprises and kind of spinning on media groups. We hear a lot about remote production, 5G, IP workflows, and now LEO connectivity, which technologies are generating the most interest from customers and why?

Britni
By far private 5G and 5G in general, really. And then, you know, the LEO technology, right? It's funny because it's almost a fad word at this point, when you talk about LEOs, but it's

growing in popularity so much so because customers want, you know, redundancy, right? For the most part, they've always wanted redundancy, but now they want diversity too, right? So if they can have, you know, 5G, Starlink, and IP all roll them to the same solution, like that is like super important for them.

Marcus
Can you share an example of a customer challenge that stands out for you and how you were able to help them solve it?

Britni
Sure. We do a lot with different golf organizations and, you know, the different courses that they go to, they're not allowed to have cell towers there, right? Like golfers tend to think that these are big, ugly eyesores and they don't want them on the course, right? So a lot of times, you know, whether it's 4G or 5G connectivity, it's not available everywhere on the course, but they have to be able to go live and everywhere on the course on every hole, right? So implementing a private 5G solution to help cover the gaps has been really, really cool with these customers, right? It's eye-opening for them to see, like they can stay on air and not have to worry about video dropping because they have a redundant backup solution in private 5G if they need it, right?

Marcus
So what would you say is a misconception that people have about live production technology today?

Britni
That it's simple, right? So to the viewer at home, they have no idea how many people, how much technology, how much innovation goes into giving them a good show, right? And truthfully, the simpler it appears on screen, the better the production went, right? If customers aren't seeing drops in video or hearing audio hits, then they're not drawn to the production behind it, right? So it's a very big misconception. I know, you know too, Marcus, right? You're sitting at home watching a live news production or a baseball game with your family, and they think they're just watching a baseball game, right? They may think the graphics are cool or something new, right? But at the end of the day, the picture quality really is what keeps them engaged, right?

Marcus
Yeah, you only notice when there's a problem, right? I mean, that's kind of what happens nowadays. And I guess our expectation is different because if we're watching a major

sporting event, we would be very surprised to see an image problem. Where as maybe in the news, you're kind of used to it because everybody understands that what was important was getting that content on air more so than if the picture is pristine, right? Because it's breaking news. Yeah, it's interesting how different it is. So let's talk about your career.

Marcus
So here we are, you're VP of Broadcast Sales. Looking back on your career, what are some of the most important lessons you've learned?

Britni
You know, it's really interesting. The biggest lesson for me is take chances, right? Don't be afraid to let things happen to you, I think is the right way to say it. There's been a lot of times in my career where I had leadership that took huge bets on me, and I wasn't even sure I could do it, right? But they believed in me, they boosted my confidence, and I'm here today, right? So the leadership part of it, I've learned listening is such a key skill, right? And it helps on the customer side, too. Both it's an internal thing and an external thing. When you can sit and really listen to someone and understand what they're going through, right, that makes you a good leader at the end of the day.

Marcus
Were there experiences that helped shape your leadership style?

Britni
You know, I have been fortunate enough to work with leaders who trusted me with challenges before I completely felt ready for them. And that's what I've tried to do with my team, right? Something really important to me, and maybe this is more on my leadership style, I like to roll up my sleeves and get my hands dirty. I like to be in the trenches with my team, I like helping them solve problems, whether it's with a specific customer or a specific internal problem, right? Like, it's about being engaged, being there and leading by example, right? I want my people to want to get their hands dirty. So I show them that I like to get my hands dirty.

Marcus
Yeah, leading by example is, I think that's, I mean, we certainly see that working with you. If somebody were asking you for advice on, you know, what they should do to build their career, what might you say?

Britni
Build relationships. There's nothing that's going to help you more in growing your career in this industry than having a strong network to lean on. And the relationships within your network are what really drives that. I know there are people that I have been working with for 15, 20 years. There are people that I went to college with that are now in the industry that we, you know, stay connected and we lean on each other, right? And really, you know, clinging to those relationships, trust is really important when it comes to working with people, whether it's a colleague or a customer or a partner, it's important for them to trust what you tell them and making sure that you're doing the right thing to make sure that your credibility and your integrity stay intact.

Marcus
So, okay, let's look into the future a little bit. So think about the next three to five years. What changes do you think are going to have the biggest impact on live production?

Britni
That's, that's a loaded question, right? It's like, if I, if I look at the past three to five years, right, five years ago, I had no idea where we were going to be today. So if I have to look from today forward, I have no idea what's coming, right? There's so much technology out there and different things that are coming up with, you know, innovation that I'm, like I said earlier, I'm staying on my toes. I'm trying to keep up with this stuff. I'm relying on other people to help me keep up with it, right? But when it comes down to it, the biggest thing in the future that I see is greater flexibility, right? Every day, there's somebody that comes to us that needs greater flexibility. They need to be able to go on air faster. They need to be able to scale bigger, right? So being able to, to really stay fluid, I guess, with these things, being able to pivot, you know, wherever you need to and being flexible, that's the key.

Marcus
It's interesting how, when it comes to live events, like live sports and news, there's just going to be more of that, like more and more, because it's so important for getting people to want to watch, isn't it?

Britni
Yeah. And I will tell you, operational efficiency is huge.

Marcus
You did say do more with less at the beginning, and I think that theme will always be

important and maybe even more so in the next several years.

Britni
Yeah. And despite all of the changes, the demand for live content is strong, and it's going to remain strong forever, right? In no world is there a chance that people are going to need less content in the future.

Marcus
For sure. Yeah, for sure. So what are customers telling you today that, I mean, okay, the need for live content, obviously, but what are they telling you in terms of what gives you optimism, confidence about the future of the industry?

Britni
So customers are still investing. They're still innovating. And, you know, at Haivision, we let our customers drive our innovation, right? We take their challenges to our teams, and we help solve those problems, right? They're still looking for ways to engage audiences more. When I talk to customers, the conversations aren't about whether live production has a future. They're more about how to expand what they're currently capable of doing, right?

Marcus
So they want to expand, you know, that gives you confidence about the future from their standpoint. What about from the Haivision standpoint? What makes you excited about the future as the VP of Broadcast Sales at Haivision?

Britni
I'll tell you, and I tell people this all the time, I bleed black and blue, right? It's in my DNA at this point. And the culture at Haivision, and the fact that we are so open to working with customers and solving their problems on a day-to-day basis, that keeps me excited, right? There's never a time when I talk to a customer, they're trying to solve a problem, and, you know, we can make XYZ happen if we implement this in our technology, right? I know that I can take that to my leadership, my product teams, and they'll do everything they possibly can to make it happen for my customer.

Marcus
So you were recently shortlisted for a RISE Award, which is an award that recognizes the important contribution of women in broadcast technology. So congratulations on that. And I just wanted to get your thoughts about it.

Britni
Yeah, I was. And it was very humbling, to say the least, right? Because Haivision nominated me. And, you know, I've worked here for eight and a half years now, and to have the support of the company that you work for behind you is incredibly humbling and exciting all at the same time.

Marcus
If you could go back and talk to your younger self about your career trajectory and everything, what advice would you give yourself?

Britni
Do it exactly how you did it. No, it's, I would tell myself, don't spend too much time worrying about whether you're ready or not. Take the chances, raise your hand, speak up. It's been a learning curve for me, right, over the past 15-20 years. And if I could tell myself when I was younger, yeah, take the chances, open the doors, keep on moving.

Marcus
Whatever you've been doing, it's been working. So I just wanted to thank you very much. It's been really nice having this conversation with you. I'm sure everybody now is going to be reaching out to you because you've just made yourself the most exciting person in broadcast technology.

Britni
Well, I don't know about that, but I hope that I hear from a lot of people. Again, it's my favorite part of the job, is the people part, right?

Marcus
Thanks very much.

Britni
Thank you so much, Marcus.

Outro
Thank you for tuning in to the Haivision Podcast. Make sure to subscribe for more exciting discussions with our experts.