Rob: Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the Automation nation podcast, we're back for another great automation conversation. I have another guest, and listen it doesn't matter the industry that these experts are talking about that they serve. A lot of times you can learn from other industries and how they are winning.

Allen Cooper is the co-founder and CEO of ReadyList inc. It's a mobile friendly software that transforms how hospital service teams operate. Now because he has a deep passion to help those behind the scenes, he helps those workers that help us, and the more that we can help those who help us the better off we'll be.

Allen: From my standpoint everyone is in it to win it, and no matter what part you play in it everyone is important.

Rob: Everyone is important and so are you, thank you for sharing this important message and thank you for being here. We ask all our guests this first important question:

If you could simply automate anything in your personal life, what would it be?

Allen: I would try to automate the ability to have my kids clean their rooms. Trying to coach your kids to do what you want them to do doesn't always happen. So automating them to pick up on those procedures would be a big thing as a parent.

Rob: Great answer there, we haven't had that one before I don't think! I think Alexa 3.0 might have something for us haha. Now Allen, what inspired you to co-found this ReadyList, and maybe share a bit about you?

Allen: Yeah so as a co-founder, one of the other co-founders with us came to us with a problem. So our firm created software, and we then integrated it with the problem that my fo-founder had in his hospital. They were basically unable to track and manage the turnover in their rooms. They wanted to get away from paper and start something more systematic, something that kind of plays in the same field as an EHR would for a provider. They just don't have those kinds of tools readily available for the teams turning over rooms, service the rooms or the hospital as a whole. So we kind of created a platform to help that side of the world support their staff, create some accountability, and even train them. This increases the learning curve of how to actually service the hospital, whether it be turning over the room or addressing areas in a given area. We built a platform to help support what they need to do more efficiently and repetitively. Some of the things that they do need to be done consistently and objectively every time to avoid infections that go around. When you don't have a system that does that it's really hard to pinpoint those issues and those gaps that are

out there when you don't even have any information since it isn't being tracked. You're just "doing", is it done? Yeah, I'll go inspect it. But the problem is that your hospital has 100 to maybe even 500 beds, so how are you supposed to be able to manage all of that in any given day?

Rob: Right, that's big. That's important, the efficiency and the tracking. What do you do every day, but how are you managing and tracking it? Because if you can understand the data you can benefit from it because you can better from it.

Allen: And that's kind of how we started evolving that, because data is key. Action behind the data is even better though, but you can't start the action without the data behind it. That's where some of the automations come from our tool by getting that enriched data to help understand how are the workflows?, where are the opportunities? Without it you're just guessing which is difficult in this case.

Rob: How do you believe automation helps enhance teams working together more efficiently from your experience?

Allen: Let's use the platform we have as an example, it brings together the team and has them all on the same playing field. The expectations are always the same, it isn't highlighting one individual not doing their share vs. the other, it helps create more transparency. Everyone is seeing it, which in some ways brings together the team to say like we are a team, and to accomplish everything that needs to be done in a given day we need a system to bring that to light and create some of this objectivity. This helps stop from finger pointing by holding the team more accountable, while also creating a higher level of trust and integrity. Because now I trust you're going to do it because in some ways you're highlighting that I should while also raising your game.

Rob: You become more aware, and that level of awareness allows you to make better decisions yourself. There's this thing called the 1% rule, where at the end of the day you reflect on your day, and just by that simple reflection your next day will be at least 1% better because of that introspection. Now obviously if you take action like you said, that percentage increases. So let's talk about those breakthroughs you've seen or case studies where someone has really benefited from implementing this kind of automation.

Allen: What's kind of funny is that we just released a new module about a month ago that stemmed from one of our clients wanting to help keep their restrooms for the patients or visitors clean. They were constantly struggling to keep those areas to a level expected of them while doing everything else, so they wanted a way to empower the patient or visitor to kind of tell them when there's an issue. Maybe the faucet is broken, maybe they're out of

toilet paper, maybe it's really dirty for some reason. So we kind of established a module that empowered the patient to communicate to the staff, and instead of going through the supervisor, it uses the intelligence of the data to say oh there's a cleaner nearby and they get auto assigned to get there right away to address the situation. They're then able to address the issue within 5-10 minutes rather than an hour. The goal as I look at it is that the requests will hopefully get lower and lower by having the data tell them the routes have to be adjusted, like maybe this particular restroom needs to be addressed more than 3 times as much. You don't want the visitor telling you there's a problem, but we also want to make awareness that there is a problem so that the next visitor doesn't have a problem. So we're excited to really help our client this way, and it's really been helping them which we've been happy to hear.

Rob: That's phenomenal, again it comes down to understanding your data, and when you have automation set up you don't have to think about it. This apologies to all industries, it allows your team to focus on things of more value, higher-value. Instead of trying to figure out the day to day details that happen consecutively. Again though cleaning happens consecutively, same stain different mess!

Allen: We like to manage by exception, and if you're a manager or supervisor trying to manage 20-25 people, you can't do that effectively by micromanaging every person. And it also destroys some of the team collaboration too, I look at it as individuals in that role want to have a job they care about, but they also want a job where they care about the person they're working for. If you enable them with the tools to be better and push down some decision making to them it makes them feel valued and makes them want to work harder for you. They're like wow they trust me, and some people don't give that trust which ends up turning the job into something they don't care about, and then turnover can stem as a result.

Rob: Done effectively and efficiently your turnover decreases because the people that come on board feel valued which makes them stay. When they feel valued they feel empowered, and the stats show that empowered people perform better.

Allen: 100%, and it goes back to your earlier point. Each industry can learn from each other. The automotive industry has been doing this forever, they're been empowering their people on the front line. They didn't used to do that but I'm fairly sure they do now. So learning from what's being done in other industries, there's nothing to say it can't be done in healthcare. There's a lot of people who grow in healthcare who don't have to have a high degree to have a job that inspires them.

Rob: Let's talk about how automation impacts workflow. It's about impacting workflow, everyone's individual taks. The more cohesive the better. The more unity the better the community, hence why the word unit is in the word community haha.

Allen: So from an automation perspective for workflows, it's about making sure you're doing the right thing at the right time without any unnecessary overlap where you find individuals that they thought they were doing one thing and you create confusion, or maybe you have someone do something without realizing they shouldn't have done it in the first place. So having that automation to understand how our schedules are and your workflows, and in some ways educating the supervisors to help them understand what's going on. I view automation as eliminating unnecessary overhead, that's number 1 for me, and opening the doors to focus on what really matters, and then being there for your staff and the exceptions. Automation of having the tools to help guide them through certain things or provide them information they wouldn't have had in the first place or even predictive information, then they can predict that it most likely will happen again. That then prepares the staff and the workflow to adjust to prevent a negative outcome to happen by making that adjustment.

Rob: That's good, and that kind of moves onto our next question of how do you ensure that a hospital flows in alignment and you were speaking to that just now.

Allen: Well to go even deeper on that, we talk a lot about the service staff since that's our primary client, but the beneficiaries are the nurses. Having some synergy there and the trust between the two, our systems kind of display and create visibility to the nurses of what is going on so that they feel more equipped to do their job and don't have to do someone else's job. Frankly I don't think the service team wants the nurses doing their job, and I don't think they want to be doing that job. They want to treat the patients, that's their job, they do not want to be replacing equipment, or finding supplies that are missing, or calling down and saying that the room wasn't clean. With these departments I don't think that department wants that to happen either, because they want to feel trusted and like their job is important. If other people are doing their job it kind of belittles them a bit. So I think having a tool to create that visibility across the board between departments creates more unity, transformation happens there, and trust is elevated.

Rob: Back to that word again, unity! Now let's talk about the gloom and doom, because what we hear a lot about today are the negatives, how the jobs are being taken and it's taking over society. Some of these are true to a point, but maybe you can speak to how you can handle speaking to individuals to open their minds to what's possible?

Allen: I kind of look at what's going on with AI and automation with what happened when we started to leverage having other countries build products for us as an example. That

particular perspective was not positively looked at as well as it takes away jobs from individuals which is important. What people started to understand though is that it elevated people here. So for those normally doing this job, it forced them to learn other things that they didn't even think they could do in the first place. So I think a lot of what's going on with that is similar to automation, you know there's a lot of things happening like the government for example, they make you do certain things because it's required of the hospitals. There's zero value for a hospital to do it, but it's required now. So finding an opportunity to automate certain things that don't add value to them but still have the same outcome for what has to be delivered, it allows that resource to do something almost more important. They can go home and think wow I added a lot of value to this hospital or patient. It opens different doors to them and can help evolve them almost as a human. To me I think automation helps bring that to the table, otherwise if you don;t have something similar to that, like if you don't evolve in general then you become static. From my personal view, I wouldn't be happy doing the same thing over and over again, I'd want to elevate myself and try something new.

Rob: You're right, we are made for more than that. Back when jobs first started and we were putting candy in the wrapper then someone put it in the cart you know if it was the first time, we've evolved from that. Now we have to learn how to take the technology available to us and use AI + HI which equals EI, Artificial Intelligence + Human Intelligence = Enhanced Intelligence. If we do it this way then we have hospitals that are working cohesively and are able to service the most amount of people with the most efficiency. I think with an outcome with that across the board, if we could snap our fingers and implement this ideology across every hospital and medical center across the world, I know it's pretty ambitious but let's just do it, I think we would have a nice looking space here you know!

Allen: I agree, and Rob you've seen this and everyone watching, hospital staff in general are overworked. There's a shortage everywhere in the hospital, providers to nurses to service staff. And guess what, patients are higher because there's more people. So how do you fix that problem? You can't address that by increasing headcount. Put money aside, there's just not enough labor to support the needs of the patients and do it correctly. At the end of the day we're here to save people's lives and better their lives, and if we can do that by leveraging automation to do the things that have to be done, why not leverage it? I do think you have to control it though, that's my only thing with automation. Don't think it's a turn key and walk away from it, no there needs to be some checks and balances. They don't always work, but they work more often than they don't like the 80/20 rule. There needs to be some kind of control in place to make sure that it's working effectively or needs to be adjusted.

Rob: Yep super important, that 1% rule again. You're reflecting on what you're doing, and of course it'll get better just by the nation of what you're doing. Now coming in for landing on our last few questions, what we're talking about today is how automation helps teams work

more cohesively inside hospitals and medical centers and help them serve better. They can work better because they have more time and are more aligned. That's another thing automation does, it allows departments to be in alignment. Like how you were saying earlier you know Sally has to do John's job and John has to do Eric's and he just wants to do his own thing, it can get really confusing. If everyone can come in locked in and empowered with what they're doing then that alone is enough.

Allen: That's the one thing with automation, it's not gonna fix the personality of individuals. People are who they are. What automation does bring to the table as you just referenced Rob is that there's an explicit understanding. You can't deny what's in front of you, you can try to but when it's there in your face and everyone agrees upon it then it comes back to you. People prefer that to pointing fingers or second guessing.

Rob: Let's avoid it! Allen now give me your best piece of business advice and your favorite quote.

Allen: Best piece of advice I would say is learn from those that work with you or for you, and trust them. I think everyone on the ground and around you has a lot to bring to the table. People should embrace that, especially as a leader I have opinions, but everyone else around me has them too, and I want to hear them. I think it just helps everyone collaborate better and evolve. So that's my advice if you're a leader, listen to what's around you and don't ignore that.

For best quote I don't, I should've been more prepared for that one! I think there's a lot of good famous ones from athletes, like "Just Do It".

Rob: I love off the cuff! They're stunned and don't have one but the first one is always sharp. "Just Do It", and I want you guys to just connect with Allen too! Also, "Just Do IT", get educated about automation in your industry and your department, that's what you do. If you're in the hospital space or medical space you definitely need to connect with Allen, the worst thing you can do is learn something that could benefit you, that's what I always tell people. So what's the best way our folks can get in contact with you and any last things you want to share?

Allen: Yeah so if you go to readylist.com you can go there to connect with me, and we have another website called evsnavigator.com and the intention of that is to help the managers and supervisors and directors of the service area that want to learn if they need either call it an audit of their leadership styles, or just have some challenges they're not sure how to deal with in working with people in automation. I encourage you to reach out, I give two 30 minute sessions for free, it's on me, just here to help and get everyone in a good spot.

Rob: I like that, two free thirty minute sessions, that means he wants you to become knowledgeable and learn what your upside is. That's the same thing we do, we talk first and share and make diagrams to people so they can get a good visual, because it's not rocket science or hard but you don't know what you don't know. You have to investigate ladies and gentlemen, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be answered, some great quotes right there haha. Allen, thanks for being here man!

Allen: Appreciate your time Rob and thanks for the invite!

Rob: And thank you for tuning in, remember, you don't know what you don't know, so get around some folks that know more than you and you'll learn something!