

Episode 114 | What's Up with Totogi: The Ontology of BSS Magic
Marc Breslow, Totogi
Released April 29, 2025

DR: [00:01] If I had to describe BSS Magic in a couple of words, I would say it's almost a telco-specific Palantir platform. We start by building a digital twin. It is the ability to digitally represent your telco and then be able to change it, modify it, model it, and apply AI to it. And I think at the heart, that's really what BSS Magic is.

Announcer: [00:30] This is "Telco in 20," a podcast that helps Telco execs achieve a competitive advantage with AI and the public cloud. It is hosted by Danielle Rios, also known as DR. Today we're talking to Marc Breslow, Field CTO at Totogi.

DR: [00:45] Hey guys. It's time for another, "What's Up with Totogi?"

Announcer: [00:50] What's up with that? What's up with that? What's up with Totogi?

DR: [00:58] What's up? So here's the fundamental problem I see with telco BSS and AI today. Everyone's slapping AI onto their old workflow engines and wasting all that AI goodness because their underlying system can't handle it. It's like giving a Ferrari engine to a horse and buggy. This is a bad approach because workflows are predetermined paths. They can't adapt to new situations or learn from experiences. When something changes, they break and a human has to step in and make a decision. But over at Totogi, we're completely rethinking the relationship between AI and BSS systems. We've built a telco-specific knowledge foundation and ontology that creates a digital twin of your entire business. We call this product BSS Magic. What makes this approach different is that our ontology maps not just your data, but the meaning behind it, giving the AI the context it needs to understand your business.

[01:57] Without an ontology, AI is just pattern matching, but with an ontology, AI understands that a subscriber isn't just a number, but a person who owns devices, uses services, and generates revenue. With an ontology AI can reason adapt and make intelligent decisions across your entire organization. This shared understanding across all systems is what lets BSS Magic dynamically identify gaps between your current state and your desired state, and can take intelligent action to close those gaps, all without custom code or endless integration projects. Today I'm talking with Totogi Field CTO, Marc Breslow. We're going to explore how BSS Magic is putting telcos on the path to

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becoming AI-first, how this new product is like a Telco-specific Palantir platform that allows you to build a digital twin of your business and how real telcos are already experiencing how easy it is to deploy valuable use cases with BSS Magic. So let's take 20. Marc Breslow is Field CTO at Totogi. Hi Marc. Welcome to "Telco in 20."

Marc Breslow: [03:05] Hey, DR. It's great to be here.

DR: [03:06] Awesome. We're going to do a "What's Up with Totogi," which is my favorite podcast to do, mostly because of the music. We are going to talk about this super cool product that's really starting to take off. And so for those who may not be familiar with it, what exactly is BSS Magic and what problem is it solving for Telcos?

Marc Breslow: [03:24] Yeah. BSS Magic is a platform that enables telcos to start to realize the benefits of AI today without upgrading their systems or deploying something new. Telcos are really struggling because they've got these large BSS estates with hundreds of systems. Those systems are highly customized, very expensive, usually really old, and they're hard to change. So, BSS Magic gives them the ability to, on top of their existing BSS, launch new targeted applications, automate tasks with intelligent agents, create helpful chatbots, all leveraging what they already have in place without waiting years for a massive overhaul.

DR: [04:06] Yeah, and what do you think the biggest misconception or confusion is about BSS Magic?

Marc Breslow: [04:11] The biggest misconception about BSS Magic is that people think it's a replacement BSS system. It's something that requires a massive amount of change to adopt and risk. And then when they see the examples of what we can do with BSS Magic, they kind of have trouble wrapping their head around the concept that we can actually do this on top of their existing systems.

DR: [04:33] I think really what it is this layer that goes across your entire estate and it's really powered by a telco specific ontology, that allows you to, as you say, build whatever you want with AI. It could be a simple chat query, "What's my forecast for Q4 in terms of revenue?" but it could also be code, it could be anything.

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- Marc Breslow: [04:54] Yes.
- DR: [04:56] So we just got back from MWC a few months ago, and one thing we see people doing is adding AI just to their own system. I call this silo AI. Why do you think siloed AI added to one single vendor system is not the right way to approach AI for an enterprise?
- Marc Breslow: [05:14] Well, the core issue with silo AI is that it's limited in terms of the context of what it has access to, and that's inadequate for most of the work that needs to be done within a telco. We actually started off with a siloed AI in our charging platform. We added Plan Sidekick, I think we demoed that two years ago at MWC. And the marketers love it. They love being able to quickly create a new plan. They love being able to generate the assets to support that plan in terms of marketing, legal and SMS. But it stopped short of being connected to the rest of the BSS estate.
- DR: [05:52] Yeah, I mean, we realized when you're talking about Plan Sidekick, it was really cool because it was generating all these additional assets that go around the creation of a plan in a charging system. And we were like, "How do we share this with the legal guy? How do we send it to the right system for review and approval that probably exists within the telco?" And that's really where we started to get this idea of something that goes across multiple systems. And so that's the beginning when we started thinking about BSS Magic, what it was going to need to do.
- Marc Breslow: [06:22] Oh, a hundred percent. If our goal is to help telcos make their people more effective, then the AI needs to work the way those people work, which is across systems.
- DR: [06:32] For sure. So we think the siloed approach is a little bit short sighted, and I think BSS Magic and our ontology is the better approach. So Marc, tell me a little bit about why we think that's really a game changer for AI and telcos.
- Marc Breslow: [06:48] So we're able to come in with a view of all the different business relationships that exist within the Telco and across all these systems. And we have an opinionated ontology that's rooted in standards like TM Forum. And when we come in and start to model your telco, we're not starting from scratch and saying, "How does a telco work? What are the different entities

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that we need to model?" Right? We know that we have a digital twin for a subscriber and a digital twin for a product.

DR: [07:20] And again, if I had to describe BSS Magic in a couple of words, I would say it's almost a telco-specific Palantir platform. The way we start is by building a digital twin, we start with a couple of processes, and then by being able to add AI to that process, you can start to see the inefficiencies. What are the different pieces of information from different systems you'd like to pull in to make a particular step more impactful? And that's really the difference. It is the ability to digitally represent your telco and then be able to change it, modify it, model it, and apply AI to it. And I think at the heart, that's really what BSS Magic is.

Marc Breslow: [08:02] It's true. It is similar to Palantir. What's different is Palantir is designed to support any industry and BSS Magic is designed for the telco industry.

DR: [08:15] Exactly.

Marc Breslow: [08:16] And the ontology that BSS Magic brings into your telco is already representative of these concepts that apply across 80% of all of the telcos.

DR: [08:27] I don't even think it's 80%. I think it's 90% of telcos. They may have different thresholds for approval levels or different lines of business, but in general, telcos are largely the same. And so telcos are like, "Why can't I just build this myself?" And I'm like, "You totally can, except for you have to build everything. You have to do all the model picking, the model optimization, train it about your telco." And I think with BSS Magic now you can just start building and modeling. And I think that's what telcos really want to focus on. And so we're really excited to start working with telcos and do that.

Marc Breslow: [09:00] Yes.

DR: [09:02] And so we are working with some telcos. Let's talk about the results that they're starting to see with their product. And so there's an Asian telco, a CloudSense customer, and I bought CloudSense and said, "I'm going to add AI to this product." And they were super skeptical. I'm sure vendors are hitting them left and right with their AI stories. We went to them and said, "Yeah, we totally think we can help you." So tell

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me the story about this customer that we worked with, with BSS Magic.

Marc Breslow:

[09:27] Yeah, absolutely. It's a great story. They were highly skeptical at first, and honestly, I think that's a pretty standard reaction in this industry. I get it. Everyone's seen flashy demos and quite often those demos just don't deliver. We showed them a demo of BSS Magic that was streamlining the ordering process for an enterprise product called SD-WAN. And they were just so impressed that they challenged us because their enterprise sales team, it takes them 18, 25 different clicks to go and navigate all the screens in order to just capture the customer information, populate the records and drive their business process.

[10:07] And they were like, "Can you reduce the time that we spent on task by 50%?" We took that challenge. A couple of weeks later, we delivered. BSS Magic cut the time on task by more than 50%. So their process before was taking them over five minutes and now it's like a two-minute thing for them, and now their minds are blown.

DR:

[10:28] And what's great is that they set the bar low for us. They're like, "Here's this task, it's five minutes. Can you do it?" And we did. And the comments and the quotes that we got from the customer, they were like, "Oh my God, you guys are the real deal. We've struck gold, and what else can we do?" And that really is our experience with BSS Magic, which is you do a small project or proof of concept and it's successful and the ideation around the AI just takes off.

Marc Breslow:

[10:57] Yeah. They're like, "We just want to have a constant stream of these AI agents to automate all of our processes." They're like, "How do we make that easy so that we just get this constant stream?"

DR:

[11:06] And they're just like, "Let's go and take off." And so again, we always get those skeptics that are challenging us and they're like, "That's easy. CloudSense, that's your product. What about one of the more famously difficult ones like an Ericsson or an Amdocs or Huawei, famously closed system, notoriously difficult to migrate off of. Can you do that?" And so why don't you tell me a story about another customer that we're working with that has one of the more famously difficult systems to connect to?

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Marc Breslow:

[11:35] Yeah, I'm super excited about this one. And you're right, it's notoriously difficult to move off of systems like Amdocs, Ericsson and Huawei. It's expensive, complex. Here's how BSS Magic makes that possible, two to three times faster than normally. The first thing that we do is we use AI to slash the data mapping time. If you think about it, LLMs are really good at matching concepts together and finding similarities between concepts.

[12:06] So we're able to suck in all of this cryptic information that they have on their existing system and generate mappings to our telco ontology. We do the same thing mapping the ontology that we have to the target system. So once you have both systems mapping to this common place, it's easy for BSS Magic to automate the creation of the migration tools that extract the data from the original system, do all the transformations and data massaging and data cleansings that are required and then load it into the new system. It's only possible because of the ontology that we created.

DR:

[12:40] Yeah, this is the problem, at least on the BSS side of the world for telcos, this vendor interoperability problem. It was the vision of TM Forum back in 2012 and 2013. Lester Thomas and all these guys said it was so hard to switch out one component out of this hundred-plus application chain. The semantical differences between what's actually stored in the data of these different databases. If we are able to do this and start to shorten the swap off times off of these notoriously difficult systems, it's a game-changing idea for the telco industry. No longer do you need three to five years to swap off of Amdocs or \$15 million. I'm sure Amdocs isn't psyched about that, but I think telcos are really excited to be able to get rid of these shackles and get out from the burden of their technical debt.

Marc Breslow:

[13:35] Totally. By using AI to first crack the data mapping puzzle and then generating the migration software, BSS Magic can compress a 14 month high cost headache into an easy four-month project.

DR:

[13:47] Yeah, it's super awesome. And so migrations are a big pain. It's probably one of the biggest pains in the industry. And so since acquiring CloudSense, I have a big customer who's been trying to migrate off of my own system for at least two years, and I told them, I know this is crazy as a CEO to do. "Not only will I help you migrate off of our product, I'll do it in a matter of

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months and I'll use BSS Magic. You're going to see BSS Magic. You're going to fall in love with it, and I predict you'll end up spending even more with us when you're done." And so for me as CEO, I know that sounds crazy, I'm like, "Let me help you move off of our product, but I'm going to do it by selling another product that you're going to love even more."

Marc Breslow:

[14:27] I actually love your lead on this one. It's very bold, but it makes perfect sense because when they see BSS Magic working, they're just going to be completely wowed like the other customers have been. And they're a huge telco, one of the oldest in the world actually. So they've got hundreds of BSS applications in there that they'll want to connect to. And once they connect all of those applications, they're going to unlock all of these really complex and valuable AI use cases just by having BSS Magic there. So sure, this migration will be an easy project for us for BSS Magic, and we're super confident in that, but I'm even more confident in the stickiness of the platform and they're going to end up being a big BSS Magic customer for Totogi.

DR:

[15:08] Yeah, I think so too. Their BSS estate is massive. The CloudSense portion of it was tiny. And so I see this project as an opportunity to showcase BSS Magic to get a much bigger footprint with them. And so for me, it's worth the risk.

Marc Breslow:

[15:25] Yep.

DR:

[15:27] One thing that's been really interesting about our approach with BSS Magic and AI in general is when you go out on Twitter and you go look on Reddit, you see all these people vibe coding, building in public, showing off what they've built, bragging how it took them hours or took them a few days, or "I completely rewrote Salesforce over the weekend," or whatever it might be. And so we thought you, as leading our Field CTO group, let's do that too. Let's build in public. And so every week we're putting out new videos and new concepts on how to use BSS Magic to extend any BSS application. And so what's been the feedback on that? What do people say about our little videos?

Marc Breslow:

[16:07] They love it. My team's incredibly passionate about doing this. It's a really fun time to be a technologist and get to play with all these toys and BSS Magic.

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DR: [16:17] Yeah, totally.

Marc Breslow: [16:19] We love diving into new AI patterns, leveraging new models, finding clever ways to connect APIs, and then turning these experiments into practical video demos that show how BSS Magic can automate things. So the response has been phenomenal. It's very validating. Instead of just relying on traditional sales pitches, potential customers are just seeing proof. So they're giving us immediate direct feedback. I get DMs with questions, suggestions, challenges, and I'm able to feed all of that back into our development. It helps us decide what we're going to build as the next demo. And I think we're also building community at the same time. So it's great to see BSS Magic in action. They can see how it works, not just what it is.

DR: [17:04] Yeah, it's super awesome. I like watching the videos because it almost always gives me an idea of, couldn't we do it like this? Couldn't we make it easier? Couldn't we make it faster? We put them mostly on LinkedIn. We also put them on YouTube, and I see the questions and the challenges people give us, and I love it. I think our ontology is being built out. Every day it's being extended. More and more applications are connecting to it, and more and more customers are testing it out. And so I think we have a hit product. And Marc, I really want to thank you for coming onto the podcast and sharing what's up with Totogi.

Marc Breslow: [17:39] It's been an honor and a pleasure, DR.

DR: [17:40] Awesome.

Marc Breslow: [17:41] Anytime.

DR: [17:42] Thanks. Stick around. We end each podcast with a "Telco in 20" takeaway. I've got two minutes to tell you something you need to know.

[17:58] Marc just shared how BSS Magic is helping telcos leverage AI without having to swap out vendors. This isn't just talk. We were sharing our real results with real telcos who were initially skeptical about AI. That Asian telco that challenged us to reduce the time its sales team spent in CloudSense, we did it. And those notoriously difficult migration projects from legacy billing systems that usually take years, BSS Magic made it a four-month project. It's clear that Totogi is changing the game in

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telco. You no longer need three to five years and \$15 million to leave an Amdoc system. You can finally have the nimbleness of a tech company and break free from the shackles of technical debt. Here's how we do it.

[18:41] We start by scoping a small project, something that we can deliver in about a month. We ask that you, the customer, commit to two meetings per week to review progress and give us feedback. The next step is we get to work and you start to see BSS Magic in action, working on your own data with your own eyes. Once we're done, the usual response is that our customers get inspired by the possibilities and excited about new ways to use AI to change their work.

[19:07] If this is what you want for your telco, give us a call. We already have dozens of projects in the early stages of planning, and we're prioritizing people who are serious about AI. So don't wait. DM me on LinkedIn or on X @TelcoDR, and we'll set up a time to talk. Until then, tune into more "Telco in 20" episodes, like and follow, and leave us a five-star review. Don't forget to sign up for my awesome email newsletter on TelcoDR.com and check out our killer YouTube channel where you can find new BSS Magic demos dropping every week. Later, nerds.