

00:01 Kara Snyder:

Hello and welcome to the podcast, a podcast produced by the College of Applied Science and Technology at Illinois State University. I'm your host, Kara Snyder, and I serve as the Assistant Dean of Marketing, communications and constituent relations for the college. Each episode, we're sitting down with an alum of the college, and today we have a chance to talk to Michelle Kirk. Michelle is a recreation and park administration alum from the School of Kinesiology and Recreation, and currently serves as the senior director of integrated marketing for the Country Music Association.

00:30 Kara Snyder:

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

00:33 Michelle Kirk:

Thanks for having me.

00:35 Kara Snyder:

Well, this is gonna be fun. Let's start at the beginning. Why did you choose ISU?

00:40 Michelle Kirk:

Oh boy. I chose ISU, so originally I'm from southern Illinois, so I wanted to stay in state. I actually grew up in Carbondale, which is where Southern Illinois is based, so I knew I didn't wanna go there. I, you know, was somewhat familiar with Illinois State. I didn't have anyone from my high school attending, but in, you know, looking at state schools in Illinois, it rose to the top for me. So that's where I landed, and I'm glad that I did.

01:10 Kara Snyder:

And tell us how you found your major, because I know for a lot of people, they might not necessarily arrive on campus as a recreation and park administration major <affirmative>. So what did that look like for you?

01:23 Michelle Kirk:

That looked very all over the place, if I'm being honest. You're exactly right. That was not in the back of my mind whatsoever. When I came on site as a freshman, I actually started as a molecular biology major and wanted to go to dental school. Actually, I wanted to be an orthodontist, and some days I still wanna do it, I'll be honest. But after a few semesters, I think I was actually a junior when I changed majors, so I

was really in the thick of it with biology classes and chem classes and oh my gosh, like calculus, I, I, I got weeded out about junior year, I wanna say maybe halfway through.

02:06 Michelle Kirk:

So I came pretty pretty far until I switched. I, I went through some internal brainstorming sessions, spoke with, you know, my mom, who worked at a university with a guidance counselor a couple of times. And really it was kind of trial and error. I did some internships that really piqued my interest, and I landed in this sweet spot where I actually really enjoyed the professors and the classes were actually interesting. I didn't feel, you know, I felt challenged, but not to the point of burnout.

02:41 Michelle Kirk:

So, again, it, it, it was pretty far along in my tenure, I guess you could say it, ISU that I figured it out, but I'm glad that I did.

02:50 Kara Snyder:

Oh, I love that story. What appears to be such, you know, a hard right turn and a different switch for you. That's awesome. I, I love that story. So tell me, I, I'm curious, when you started on campus, you know, freshman, sophomore year, you're spending all these times in, in a lab with biology and chemistry, you know, you finish in recreation park administration. What did your time outside of the classroom look like on campus? What sorts of things were you involved in?

03:18 Michelle Kirk:

Yeah, I really enjoyed my time at ISU. I joined a sorority. I was a Gamma Phi Beta, and met some of my best friends through that organization. Actually, still some of my closest friends, some, you know, were in our wedding. So I spent a lot of time with my sorority sisters. I was on the exec board there. I traveled quite a bit. I actually picked up a minor in tourism and I enjoyed traveling.

03:51 Michelle Kirk:

And I, I liked the, the business side of, you know, booking and booking trips and traveling. So that's what I spent a lot of time doing. Some of that travel was with my mom, some I, you know, I planned trips for my friends, even for my sorority for spring break, things like that. So that actually, like, looking back, that probably was a great factor in me, you know, narrowing in on my career interests. But my time outside of the classroom was spent with friends. I liked to go to football games and sporting events.

04:26 Michelle Kirk:

I played a little bit of tennis, not competitively. But yeah, I, I really enjoyed my, my social time with my friends. So what would you

04:34 Kara Snyder:

Say that you miss the most about your time on campus?

04:38 Michelle Kirk:

I think that's it. I think, you know, living with my best friends, studying at the library, as nerdy as that sounds, I loved, you know, going to get a coffee and spending the day and, you know, into the night with buddies. And I do miss that. I, you know, it seems like, and I know we'll probably get into this in a little bit, but, you know, moving to Nashville was somewhat isolating, and I really missed the closeness of, you know, my community that I built at ISU. But thankfully, you know, I feel that here now.

05:11 Michelle Kirk:

But I do still miss, you know, waking up together, doing life together, you know, it was, it was a very sweet time.

05:20 Kara Snyder:

And, you know, it's funny, I, I am also an alum and I never thought I would miss Milner, but I remember

05:28 Michelle Kirk:

That, right? We called it Club Milner.

05:31 Kara Snyder:

Yes, yes, yes. The first year after graduation, thinking like, oh my gosh, I really do miss studying with my friends there. And at the time, I never thought that would be so high list of memories, ,

05:43 Michelle Kirk:

Truly. Absolutely.

05:45 Kara Snyder:

So, yeah, you brought it up. I mean, McCormick Hall where you would've spent time studying <affirmative> really feels far away from Nashville. So tell us about the job search process and how did you end up there?

05:58 Michelle Kirk:

Sure. So again, I grew up in southern Illinois, so looking back, Nashville was closer to my hometown than Bloomington Normal was. I did not frequent Nashville. I had only been actually one time prior to moving here. And that was, again, a fun little girls trip that I planned for some of my sorority sisters. When we were, I think it must have been our senior year, we came down and did the live music thing and had a blast. But it wasn't really on my radar, to be honest.

06:32 Michelle Kirk:

I was looking for an internship, a full-time internship where I would not spend time in the classroom, but rather full-time in, you know, an office or work environment. And that really took me to Chicago and St. Louis and Indy, you know, those, those quick markets from normal. And for some reason I was like, you know what?

06:56 Michelle Kirk:

I really enjoyed my time in Nashville, and I love live music, and I love the culture. So I started poking around down here, and I landed an internship at the Country Music Hall of Fame. And quite honestly, I didn't think that I would stay. I thought, you know, okay, this will be a semester long internship. I'll get a lot of, you know, quality time down there, build some great, you know, relationships and learn a lot. And then probably moved to Chicago.

07:26 Michelle Kirk:

But that's how I ended up here. I really enjoyed my internship and my time and built some great relationships, which have honestly carried me through to where I am now.

07:37 Kara Snyder:

So tell me, then you start as an intern, and now today we're here with the title of Senior Director of Integrated Marketing. What does that path look like? <affirmative>,

07:49 Michelle Kirk:

It's a very interesting path, kind of, I should say unlike, not unlike my time at ISU where it was kind of, you know, walking in the dark a little bit. I took the internship here, I'm sorry, not here, but at the Country Music Hall of Fame, which is just for a little bit of context. Our, our sister company, if you will, the CMA actually is, you know, sis I call them sisters with the Country Music Hall of Fame. So when, when I first started at the Hall of Fame, I was doing sales and service, I think was the department that I was working in.

08:25 Michelle Kirk:

And again, it was, you know, leaning into the tourism studies and focusing on, you know, large tour groups and bringing them to Nashville. And, you know, I really just wanted to soak up all of that knowledge. I had done a couple of internships in, in Bloomington and in normal really leaning into convention planning and how our state government plans things and where does the money go, and how do we bring, you know, big events into our city to boost commerce and revenue for small businesses and things of that nature.

08:58 Michelle Kirk:

So I really wanted to soak all of that up here in a different city, and I really did, I made some great relationships. One of those individuals, one my internship was coming to an end, actually recommended me for a job at Hard Rock here in Nashville. There was a, an opening for a sales and marketing position, and he threw my name in the hat and gave me a great recommendation, and I got that job. So I went from, you know, tour and guest services and that sort of thing to working in sales and marketing for a large brand.

09:38 Michelle Kirk:

So while I was, you know, working in the Nashville Cafe, I quickly learned how big of a company Hard Rock is. And, you know, it's a brand that I was familiar with and I knew that they had, you know, restaurants and hotels and casinos. But once I, you know, landed that role, I really, I really liked the community there.

10:01 Michelle Kirk:

And, you know, being able to learn from some of these heavy hitters that are, you know, marketing massive events all over the world and having some exposure to that while sitting here in sweet little Nashville and working on sales and marketing campaigns in my own cafe. It was really, it was really great perspective. And then quickly, you know, I won't spin our wheels too much, but my boss at the time at Hard Rock actually ended up taking a position here at CMA and running the live events team over here and panic kind of set in.

10:38 Michelle Kirk:

I was like, oh no, you're, you've been my favorite boss ever. I can't do this without you. And I spent some time, you know, doing my job without her. I, I, you know, as she came over to CMA. But as soon as something opened up over here, history repeated itself, and she threw my name in the hat and put out a good recommendation for me.

10:58 Michelle Kirk:

And I interviewed well and took a job in strategic partnerships, which I was like, don't know what that is. Again, kind of blindly following people that I trusted and absolutely fell in love with the role. It kind of encompassed everything that I had enjoyed thus far. It was a little bit of sales, a little bit of marketing, a lot of relationship building. You know, I was trying to build new business for a company that I actually really cared about, and the core role was promoting and pitching country music to corporate America ultimately.

11:35 Michelle Kirk:

And so I really, really enjoyed that. And I'm, I'm giving you my like, quick life story here, I guess, but, I, I hope that's okay. That's what we're here for. That's perfect. . So I, I loved that role, and I had a couple of promotions, I believe, and one, one day I remember we were working with a brand, I believe it was at and t and we were bringing them into CMA Fest, which is our large, you know, music festival in the middle of the summer, largest music festival in the World, country Music Festival, excuse me.

12:11 Michelle Kirk:

And at and t wanted to launch a new product at our event. And at the time, I think, I think it was called Country Deep, and it was a platform where fans could, you know, experience country music in a new and improved way. Anyway, I loved it. I was excited, I was, you know, really excited that they wanted to launch a product and talk about it at our event, and really have that exposure to our fan base. And one of the things that I always encourage brands to do is partner with an artist.

12:44 Michelle Kirk:

And, you know, fans trust artists. They, you know, lean into their art and, you know, now especially they have this exposure to artists that may or may not be healthy . But I, at CMA didn't have the opportunity really to broker any talent deals because of how our company works.

13:08 Michelle Kirk:

We're a trade organization. So really what that meant was I took at and t this partner that I, you know, had been fostering and courting for a while, and took this opportunity to a few agencies in town, had, you know, some artist opportunities that they were able to extend to their rosters, and they were able to broker some deals on site and have their fans, I'm sorry, their artists interact with our fans on our footprint while engaging in this new at and t product.

13:39 Michelle Kirk:

Anyway, it was beautiful. I loved it, but I really wanted to lean into the talent side of things. So I made the ultimate decision at the time to leave my job at CMA and go be an agent for a while. So I was a brand partnership talent agent at William Morris here in Nashville, and I was overseeing our country roster, a little bit of our Christian roster, some influencers.

14:08 Michelle Kirk:

This was when, you know, social and digital influencers were really starting to see a lot of revenue potential with endorsements. So I did a lot of that and I really, really enjoyed it. My contract was actually coming up for renewal, and I wasn't sure if it was gonna be a long-term thing for me. So I was engaging in some conversations with the folks here at CMA about a new position, which is where I am now in integrated marketing. And really that was going to allow me to do some marketing partnerships, which I loved, while also selling brand campaigns within our televised properties, which was the sales side of things that I loved, and ultimately interacting with talent in a capacity that made me not miss being an agent anymore.

15:02 Michelle Kirk:

So it's kind of a nice little trifecta of where I've landed, like I said, sorry, that's long-winded, but it was a very interesting path to get here and, and ultimately into a role that didn't exist for the company before. So I wasn't really, you know, looking for it, it just kind of appeared and we were able to mold it into something that the both the company needed and that I was comfortable with as well.

15:27 Kara Snyder:

I love your story, and I have a couple of follow up questions Yeah. To you, things that stand out to me. One being that, you know, we always tell our students about the importance of relationship building, and I think your career is a perfect example of how helpful that was to you. So I'm curious, what do you look for when you look for those role models or mentors in your life? How do you, do you trust your gut? What are you looking for,

15:53 Michelle Kirk:

<affirmative>, all of that? Yes, I, I know we will probably get to this as well, but one of my biggest tips and things that I live by is, you know, never burning a bridge and really leaning into offering to help, offering to sit in on a meeting and just almost by osmosis, start learning in terms of looking for mentors and people that I can trust both for, you know, opportunities in the future, but, but also in present learning from them.

16:32 Michelle Kirk:

I have a few here at CMA, I have a few at the agency that I left. I have a few, you know, in the city that have nothing to do with what I'm doing on a daily basis. I really look for great humans at the core, right? Like someone that's going to ask you how you're doing before, what you're doing, . I think that's something that I've learned in the music industry, I'm sure, and this is because my only experience has really been in the music industry.

17:02 Michelle Kirk:

I'm sure other industries are like this, but it feels like a lot of times it can be transactional. A lot of times I'm meeting with you because you want something from me, that sort of thing. So I'm always very aware of, I don't wanna waste anyone's time, but I also wanna be a good human in whatever I'm doing. So in terms of mentors, I, I really look for that. I look for people that see the good in others solutions driven people, someone that's not afraid to say no, but at the same time, let's figure something out.

17:40 Michelle Kirk:

Because I do also feel like in our industry, we're hit with a lot of nos, whether you're on the artist side of things or on the business side of things, there's a tendency to just put walls up and not try new things. I do think there's a shift in our industry now where people are more open, probably because they have to be, just the way that revenue models are changing, streaming models, consumption, you know, everything is changing on a daily basis almost. So I really try and surround myself with people that are solutions minded and ultimately just kind humans.

18:20 Michelle Kirk:

Easier said than not,

18:21 Kara Snyder:

Right? Right. But I love that, and I love the concept of someone who will ask you how you're doing before what you're doing. And that's, that's a piece of advice I think everybody can take away.



18:32 Michelle Kirk:

Totally.

18:34 Kara Snyder:

So the other question I had for you then is you're in this role, it's brand new, there's no footprint for you. So tell us what it was like to build something from scratch. <affirmative>.

18:45 Michelle Kirk:

It was a little bit scary, I'll be honest, leaving a very fast paced, exciting environment and workplace to come back to what I call, you know, a, a comfortable family here. I truly feel like the culture at CMA is family oriented, family driven, which I absolutely love. Not to say where, where I was prior didn't have those facets, but I really feel, I call it comfy.

19:19 Michelle Kirk:

I'm really comfy here, . But I wanted something that was going to challenge me while at the same time allow me to, you know, lean into, I was newly married, I wa I wanted to start our family. So allowing me some work life balance, being passionate about something that's keeping me up at night for good reasons, not scary reasons. You know, the, we've talked about the Sunday scaries before. We've all heard that term.

19:50 Michelle Kirk:

I totally had that in a number of other positions, and I didn't, I was ready to not have that, you know, I wanna season in my life where I'm, you know, not totally driven by anxiety and pressure, but on the flip side, I wanted to be challenged to the point of, you know, let's build something new that's positive for the company.

20:15 Michelle Kirk:

What we came into, and I shouldn't say this was all on me, because there were, there was a framework there, there had to be. So I, I had a couple of meetings with who ended up being my boss, actually, I, I had a couple of meetings with the leadership team, and we had a framework for a job description. You know, we really needed someone to oversee brand integrations in our television properties. And really what that looks like is, you know, taking brands that are buying media with our network partner right now, our network partner is a BC media dollars are being spent there.

20:52 Michelle Kirk:

And at the same time they're interested in investing in country music. We pitch our shows to them, we integrate a brand into our show in some capacity, whether that's, you know, custom content, bringing talent in, doing sponsored performances, things of that nature.

21:09 Michelle Kirk:

So we knew that that part of our business needed a home and someone to oversee it, while at the same time we needed someone to oversee these marketing partners. So these are partners that aren't necessarily bringing in hard dollars or, you know, revenue that's hitting our bottom line. Instead, these are brand partners, media partners, digital partners that are helping us to promote our initiatives. Mainly that's our television shows.

21:39 Michelle Kirk:

So they're providing tune in campaigns for tune into the CMA awards or the CMA fest just happened, tune in to watch the special on a, b, c, that sort of thing. So we're, we're getting promotional value from them rather than they're cutting us a check. So this kind of role was straddling between sales and marketing, which is again, my sweet spot. I absolutely love turning on my creative brain, but I also love, you know, working with numbers.

22:11 Michelle Kirk:

So knowing that this person was going to need to, to kind of dual path some initiatives for CMA, I actually really liked that. And so we were able to lean into some of my strengths and some of the things that the company needed. And quite honestly, you know, there were some rough patches where we were trying to figure out where this role was going to sit in the company organizationally. So was it a partnership's role? Was it a marketing role? Ultimately now we've realized that this, my role in particular just needs its own department.

22:45 Michelle Kirk:

So, you know, over the past few years, honestly, the role has, has changed a little bit. The support team has changed a little bit. We've had to evolve based on, you know, what's needed by the company and how our partners are changing as well. So it was a little bit scary in the beginning, but I was also really excited to kind of have the ability to make it my own. So on one hand it was like, okay, I have to deliver on this new shiny opportunity, but also there was a lot of gray area, which selfishly made it a little easier to, to swallow because I wasn't being held to standards that already existed, if that makes sense.

23:31 Kara Snyder:

Yeah, absolutely. And so now that you've built this and, you know, reflecting back on that, at this point, are you able to describe a day in the life? Do you have a typical day in the life? What does that look like for you?

23:47 Michelle Kirk:

Yes and no. So we have, we have three tent pole events that happen. And I say tent pole because they're televised and they might be the most, you know, well-known, I should say, among consumers. So we have the CMA Music festival, which happens in June, typically almost always, it's like the first or second week in June. We have the CMA awards, which happens in November. Typically I am saying typically because A, B, C gives us air dates, but historically we've landed in June for the festival, November for the awards.

24:22 Michelle Kirk:

And then we have a Christmas show that we typically act. We actually tape it earlier in the fall, but it airs sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. So those are our three tent pole events. And depending on, you know, a typical day, we could be in a very fast, fast-paced, deadline driven season where we are closing campaign windows.

24:46 Michelle Kirk:

We are, you know, coming up on a large event or a promo window, or we could be in a heavy sales pitching hustle season where we are doing outreach, we are combing through proposals, we are negotiating and taking zooms and phone calls. So it, it kind of varies based on the, where we are in the year. I would say right now, for instance, we're, you know, in very early, I shouldn't say very early, we're in, we're in planning stage four fest for CMA fest.

25:21 Michelle Kirk:

So today it looks like, okay, we're coming in, I'm meeting with the team to talk about status updates on where partners are landing, we're meeting with our network partners on how we're pitching to media because upfronts are happening at a, b, C in the spring, things like that. So it's kind of right now a planning stage. So a lot of update conversations and a lot of planning, planning meetings with our live events team and our PR team to make sure that we're covered on an announced plan for releasing lineups for the festival and things like that.

25:56 Michelle Kirk:

So a typical day will vary based on, you know, what, where we are in terms of nearing a 10 pole event.

26:05 Kara Snyder:

So I'm curious, one, if you have a favorite part of your job, but also after listening to you describe that, I'm curious also if you have a favorite event. Mm,

26:15 Michelle Kirk:

<affirmative>, yep. Yes, and yes. So I will say my favorite event, let's start there, is the CMA awards. I have always loved this event, even prior to working on it. It is in my mind the crown jewel of our industry. It's a night where we honor and celebrate our industry. And our industry of course includes artists and includes, you know, the work that they have done over the past year.

26:49 Michelle Kirk:

It includes musicians that are, you know, pouring their heart and soul into projects. It includes, you know, the management teams and the publicist teams and the publishers that are, you know, working hard with songwriters on a daily basis. It, it's really a night that we can put our industry on display right now, like I said, we have a wonderful partnership with abc, so we're able to shine a light on primetime television, which is wonderful.

27:24 Michelle Kirk:

The evening itself is fast paced and a little bit nerve wracking because it's live television, but I absolutely love that. I love seeing the excitement on, you know, nominees faces, the anticipation of the red carpet opening, just the buzz around the event and in the city is one of my favorite times of year, even that would be my favorite event. The fa my favorite part about the job itself is similar.

27:56 Michelle Kirk:

It's a lot of hard work paying off the first night of CMA fest when everyone's at the stadium and we're working out kinks with production and making sure talent is taken care of and making sure that our, you know, our guests have what they need in their suites and their seats are where they want them to be, and walking out onto the floor. So coming out from backstage at the stadium. And so our festival takes place at Nissan Stadium, which is where the Tennessee Titans play.

28:28 Michelle Kirk:

So it's, you know, a large football stadium. We fill it, we sell it out. So the moment that you kind of walk out and fans are making their way to their seats and the lights go down and that first applause hits, and I, it's the, there's really nothing like it. Similarly with the awards, when the live countdown starts and

everyone's kind of, you know, hearts are beating really fast and we're finally there and, you know, our stage manager is counting down till till we're rolling.

29:00 Michelle Kirk:

Those moments are my favorite part about the job. And they're few and far between, I'll be honest. You know, we, we work really hard throughout the year and have those big payoffs, but truly it's, it's working with a team that I enjoy and respect, and then seeing the looks on their faces and seeing, feeling the energy of, of that final moment when all of our hard work pays off is, is my favorite part for sure.

29:25 Kara Snyder:

And then I have to ask on the flip side, what do you consider to be the most challenging thing about your job?

29:31 Michelle Kirk:

<affirmative> most challenging is for sure working with a ton of different personalities. And this might be the same across other, you know, roles and industries, but, you know, on a daily basis I'm working with A CMO at a corporate brand, and then I'm working with an artist manager or an artist directly who has a completely different personality and perspective. And then I'm sitting down in a room full of CMA staff and we're working together on coming up with a solution.

30:05 Michelle Kirk:

There's a lot of nuances with, you know, working for a trade organization. I think probably that's the hardest part is everyone has an agenda and a priority. And again, I go back to really trying to be a solutions minded individual, but sometimes that's hard, right? Like sometimes you're dealing with a lot of personalities that, you know, may clash. But being in this role and, and sitting in this position, part of my job is to be a liaison and to, you know, make sure every side is happy with what we're working on and coming to a solution that makes everybody happy.

30:43 Michelle Kirk:

But it's challenging. So in a good way, . Sure.

30:47 Kara Snyder:

And when you're thinking about working with these different types of personalities and you're thinking about working then with your team on these events, and obviously the stakes are high, right? I mean,

the CMA awards, people know what that is. It's a really big deal when you think about how you approach those situations. I'm curious, how would you describe your leadership style?

31:07 Michelle Kirk:

<affirmative>? I would say my leadership style is very arms length, length, lead by exposure. I would say I, like I said, I have always been the type to ask, to be in the room, to ask, to sit at the table. I, you know, I don't need to speak up, I just kind of wanna listen in having those moments. And I always wanna make sure that anyone on my team, anyone touching, you know, what we're working on, has that exposure. Leading by exposure has been really helpful for me.

31:39 Michelle Kirk:

And I wanna always be that, that kind of leader, I say arm's length, I also really feel like let them fail. , I had a boss at my agency that I worked with that was like, you need to screw up, you need to go out there, mess up, you know, have a little bit of regret, learn from your mistakes.

32:02 Michelle Kirk:

And at the end of the day, we're not surgeons. You know, my, my boss here always, when she's doing interviews with, you know, artists or executives in our industry, she asks them, you know, what's a good day? What's a bad day? And a good day for us is going to look very different. A bad day is gonna look very different than, you know, a surgeon who, you know, unfortunately lost a patient or something. You know, at the end of the day, we're not surgeons. We're, we're doing really fun work. Tensions can get high, but I will always be that leader that's like, if you mess up, I got your back.

32:39 Michelle Kirk:

We are gonna learn together. I will be arm's length if you need me. My door is always open. So full exposure, if you wanna come on in and jump on a call with me and listen in, I'm all about that. But at the end of the day, if you mess up, we're all learning from it. So I've never been afraid to mess up. I think, well, I shouldn't say that. Nobody likes to mess up, right? Failure isn't always fun. But I think in any big mistake that I've made, I've been able to look back and be like, okay, won't do that again.

33:11 Michelle Kirk:

Here's how I will do that differently. And it's super constructive. So that's my leadership style and I think that's honestly what I look for in leaders and mentors as well.

33:21 Kara Snyder:

I think that's great perspective to have, to know that it's okay to fail, but to have a leader that's vocal enough to support that I think is really special and can even be hard to find. So kudos to you for that. Alright, Michelle, we are going to finish with a speed round. So just go with your first instinct on these questions. Okay. Dine in or delivery.

33:44 Michelle Kirk:

Ooh, dine in.

33:47 Kara Snyder:

Love it. Vacation to do lots of things or vacation to do nothing.

33:53 Michelle Kirk:

Both. If I'm with my children, lots of things. We need all the activities. If it's just me or my husband or a friend trip, I would love to do nothing. .

34:06 Kara Snyder:

Fair enough. I hear that. , do you consider yourself a morning person or a night owl?

34:11 Michelle Kirk:

I have become such a morning person.

34:15 Kara Snyder:

Read the book or watch the movie.

34:18 Michelle Kirk:

Book every day.

34:20 Kara Snyder:

Favorite thing to have for breakfast.

34:23 Michelle Kirk:

Caffeine.

34:27 Kara Snyder:

And I ask everyone that comes on the podcast. Avantis Gondola or pub Two cheese balls.

34:33 Michelle Kirk:

I was an avantis girl for sure.

34:37 Kara Snyder:

And one last question for you, If you could give one piece of advice to a college student, what would you say?

34:44 Michelle Kirk:

Oh gosh, I think I said it earlier. Don't burn any bridges as well as you can. Lean into your contacts and your relationships and always offer to help. That's a few things, but there you have it, .