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SPEAKERS

Mark Agostinelli, Megan Evangelista



Mark Agostinelli 00:03

Welcome back Beers and Careers family. Interesting podcast for you today with Megan Evangelista. Megan works in University Relations for Dell Technologies Corp, and shares a number of insights. I think employers in particular will find very interesting about what college students are graduating with, and what their hopes and desires for the modern workplace to look like. And I promise you, it's not as futuristic as maybe those hoping to stay at home would like it to be really interesting information. For employers, again, taking you know what, what's going to happen in the next couple of years, based on what new talent is demanding out of employers. So, as always, our podcast is brought to you by the DAVIS Companies www.daviscos.com. That's D A V I S c o s.com. Check out their website for tons of information if you're an employer, or if you're a candidate for a new role, tons of information there to help you get started in your job search or finding your next best employee. Check it out. And I hope you enjoy the podcast today with Meghan. So Megan, thank you for coming on beers and careers. Appreciate your time.



Megan Evangelista 01:17

Thank you. I'm excited to be here.



Mark Agostinelli 01:19

Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Well, we usually start off with a quick rapid fire just to get people familiar with you as a guest. And so if you don't mind this little lightning round, what would Megan's favorite cocktail or drink be?



Megan Evangelista 01:35

I'm currently a big fan of kombucha, which I know it's a wildcard move, but I've been getting into it recently.



Mark Agostinelli 01:45

I love it. What What? What started that?



Megan Evangelista 01:48

So I do a lot of 10 mile races, half marathons. And you know, the long runs on Saturday morning. We're feeling a little extra long, after some, some late Friday evenings and so decided to change it up and it's been a good alternative so far.



Mark Agostinelli 02:06

I like it. I like it a lot of very cool. Um, do you have a favorite curse word?



Megan Evangelista 02:12

Not particularly, I'm that cheesy person who will usually sub in a word like bonkers or something like that. Which sometimes can be even more effective because people are expecting you to come in with the sledgehammer. You just throw a curveball.



Mark Agostinelli 02:28

I love it. I love it. Any favorite guilty pleasure.



Megan Evangelista 02:34

I'm a big fan of waffles.



Mark Agostinelli 02:37

Oh, talk to me. Like a dinner item or breakfast?



Megan Evangelista 02:41

I mean, I could do all three meals. No problem because you could go savory you sweet I've got I splurged I got a little mini waffle maker. So now they're snack form. All the variations ready?



Mark Agostinelli 02:56

I have there has been a waffle maker request in the household for quite some time. So I think

I have there has been a waffle maker request in the household for quite some time. So I think we're trending in that direction. So ironic and hilarious that that was your your go to somewhere. They could dress him up or dress them down. I'm all into waffles.

M Megan Evangelista 03:11

That's the thing little it's the little black dress of snacking it is.

M Mark Agostinelli 03:17

It's awesome. Are you in a quote? Do you have any favorite quotes that you'd like to share me with the audience?

M Megan Evangelista 03:24

I'm one that I tend to bring up. Again, a little corny. I think over the course of the podcast, we'll all get pretty familiar with a little bit of that. But one that always has stuck with me is the magic begins with you. And of course it's a it's a Walt Disney quote. But I think it really speaks to your attitude, your outlook, and really going into any situation or relationship just reminding yourself that it's not always about what others can do for you. Right? What are you bringing to the table? How are you adding that little extra pizzazz sparkle? Sort of cherry on top, so to speak to whatever you're doing and making the most of it.

M Mark Agostinelli 04:07

I love it. I love it. It's simple. And to the point. Yeah, so I definitely take it to you. What was your first job growing up? This is beers and careers.

M Megan Evangelista 04:18

First Job was a babysitter. Yes, classic. I mean, it's an oldie but a goodie. And you know it's nice because you can really progress with it. So started back in middle school. You know, helping out different families and did that all through through college and grad school.

M Mark Agostinelli 04:36

Very cool. Now I we've never really formally got to spend time together. That's the one negative of the COVID style beers and careers. Usually there's like a lunch and hang out and get to know the person but or that was how we were doing it. But can you share with me kind of the evolution of your career and how it ended up to where you are today. Maybe The, in the short form sense, so to speak,

M Megan Evangelista 05:03

Cheryl, I'll give you the SparkNotes. Essentially, I like to say that I am a university relations professional by way of higher education. So you can kind of translate that into thinking the thread throughout my career has been serving students and working with college students, whether that's while they're in their undergraduate careers, getting ready to graduate and sort of that anticipation for the job search, or welcoming them onboard into an organization after they, they walk across the stage and are ready to begin their career. Okay. It's been a journey, there's been some some twists and turns working with nonprofits, institutions. I'm currently in an organization on the corporate side. So there's been a lot of different ways, but that's always been the key piece.

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Mark Agostinelli 05:55

So it doesn't sound like you knew you were gonna get into this, if that's fair, or was just always the goal.

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Megan Evangelista 06:01

That is a fair statement, no idea. So really, I went to undergrad thinking that I was going to be a high school history teacher. And so joke's on me. Right? gone pretty much as far away as as you can get from that career path. So it's all about

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Mark Agostinelli 06:20

what led you there, though. Talk to me about that, like what led you down the path? And what were some of the aha moments along the way? That was like, man, maybe I shouldn't be a history teacher.

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Megan Evangelista 06:29

Yeah, I think for me, it's always been about relationships, and having really solid mentors and folks who have helped me along my way and the path because I'm one of I'm the sort of personality as I mentioned before, I didn't have a specific job title, a specific salary mark, that I felt, hey, this is my calling. I need to pursue this. It's always been opening doors and pursuing pathways of what I'm curious about the things that I don't know, areas that Hey, that sounds really cool and interesting. And I had no idea existed before connecting with someone about. And so I think that's always been having that willingness, that open mindset to what could be and learning more that's served me well.

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Mark Agostinelli 07:20

That's really interesting to hear, too, because it's, it's the opposite of probably what many of the students are expecting, you know, maybe you to share with them when when you're interacting with them, I guess. I mean, that was the whole impetus between starting the podcast was like, I was shocked at how nonlinear how most people had nonlinear career paths. But then, you know, every organization is spending a tremendous amount of time and energy

and resources working on their career. pathing. You know, it seems counterintuitive to a degree. So what's that? Like? You've got a front row seat to that and have for years now, what's that been? Like?

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Megan Evangelista 07:57

Yeah, it's it's been incredibly rewarding in a lot of the work that I do in my current role. Within the University Relations organization has been almost being that career coach for students. There's some really interesting stats out there that talk about what the future of workforce looks like. And I think it's as high as 60 70% of jobs in the future haven't been created yet. And so it's really taking your interest. And I think your skills and figuring out what it is that excites you about the work that you're doing, not necessarily the work itself, to better prepare you for what that next step could be. And so that's a lot of the conversations I have with students, as they get ready to leave undergrad and enter into that dreaded real world of, hey, what am I really good at, and I have a role, I supported sales for a few years, sales positions. And again, that was an area that having conversations with students, you could just see the light bulb go off when they would make that connection of, hey, I love talking to people, I love being an advisor and advocate. I'm super competitive. That's, that's a strength of mine. And so helping students make those connections about what their strengths are and how they could put them in a role that maybe they had no idea was interesting to them before.

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Mark Agostinelli 09:24

Do you lean on any particular methodology or skills finder type book to help them with the self awareness component of this conversation?

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Megan Evangelista 09:37

Yeah, I'm personally I am, I'm all about the strength and all about the the assessments, the awareness and some of what I would do when I'm working with students is that awareness piece, right. So we're really fortunate today that we have the internet and there's so many different evaluations and assessments, you can go online and everything from the strengths assessment to MBTI to true colors, all these different inventories. And what I always say is, they're not meant to put you in a box, right? It's not to say, Hey, you are compassionate and empathetic, therefore you could never be strong and dominant in a conversation. And I think keeping that in mind is, is always helpful. Because a lot of times when we think about assessments and evaluations, it's so easy to say, well, this is all I could be, this is all I could do. And so instead, it's challenging yourself to think about, alright, what are my natural tendencies, things that when push comes to shove, when my backs up against the wall, or when I'm stressing out before that next interview for a job, that's what I'm going to default to that's going to be my, my safety net. But how do I push and challenge myself to work on some of those other skills that aren't as natural to me. And so it's kind of this balance in the way that you think about your work and flexing different muscles in different situations.

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Mark Agostinelli 11:08

I think that makes a ton of sense, because you can feel pigeon holed, and it almost works

I think that makes a ton of sense, because you can feel pigeon holed, and it almost works against you, as opposed to feeling empowered and more clear on where your strengths are. I think that's one of the you mentioned mentors, and you having some great mentors, I think that's a really valuable part about a good mentor is just, you know, curating what those strengths and weaknesses are, from their perspective, because they've worked with you generally.

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Megan Evangelista 11:32

Absolutely. And sometimes, I've noticed things that come so naturally to me, I take for granted. And I think a lot of folks, I've seen it happen time and time again, where it's like, well, doesn't everyone do that? Anyone could do that. That's not special. That's not. That's, that's standard. And sometimes it's having that mentor to reflect back to you and say, No, that's not standard. That's, that's your unique talent. And because you're so good at it, it feels really natural and really obvious for you, but it doesn't for others.

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Mark Agostinelli 12:10

That's really interesting. Do you find that it's a daunting conversation when you're talking about skills and strengths and what they need to capitalize on to get a job, but at the same time, also talking to people that might end up in a job in 20 3040 years that doesn't exist yet? Like is that a mind bending conversation?

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Megan Evangelista 12:33

A little bit, a little bit? In some ways, you're trying to prepare yourself and your end coach someone else for something that you have no idea? I mean, I think that the overused cliché, but I'll bring it up anyway, would be COVID. Yeah, right. In my work as a as a campus recruiter, for so many years, was jump on a plane, spend 12 weeks out on the road, run around the country go meet different students at institutions. And so as of you know, last July, my team sat down, and we sort of have this Oh, moment of what's next? How do we, how do we bench ourselves effectively? And so it's those sorts of unexpected moments, too, that you can go back to your strengths and say, Okay, what are the basics? What am I trying to accomplish? How do I get from point A to point B, even if there are some unexpected roadblocks?

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Mark Agostinelli 13:33

Okay, interesting. What, what fascinates you or excites you? Or do you find the most interesting about the future of where workers going? It sounds like you consume yourself in more of this thought process than like, I guess I should think about it. But I probably think about it more like three to seven year stints as opposed to like, maybe in the large macro, like mine is like avoid the robots taking your job right now, which I think is probably a very ignorant viewpoint, but like, how do you think about it? And what fascinates you about the future?

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Megan Evangelista 14:06

Yeah, I think, I think that potential of what could be is always, for me, a really great motivator. So again, to connect to the strengths, I'm futuristic, through and through. So today is great. I'm really happy to be where I am today. But man, I am thinking way down the pipe about what could be and I think what we've seen, particularly over the course of the last 18 months or so, is that a lot of things we took for granted or assumed had to be a certain way, don't and I think that that is really exciting. And especially the team dynamic in terms of geography has become even less of a concern, and less of a priority. And so I've been able to expand my network and just think really differently. Around the strategies we've held, and my team has held at work for so long, because these barriers are now being taken down. And so I don't have to be as beholden to well, this is how things were, or this is how we've always done it sort of thinking. And so if I can then have a clean slate, a clean playing field, Will, how would I redraw the boundaries of what could be?

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Mark Agostinelli 15:26

Yes, it's a it's a it's liberating as an employee and someone in the workforce. And I think it's extra daunting as a leader, because now you have more. I don't know, it was so interesting. I saw shared an anecdote I was I'm, I'm not a work from home person through and through, but I have changed my tune on it. Like, I like it more now. Like, you know, I enjoy being able to, like, have lunch with my kids, and then be done and walk down the stairs and be home. Like there's like, a ton of those benefits and thrown a load of laundry in between a meeting, right? Like I like I love all that. But I'm also like a person of routine. So I've enjoyed coming in. We had a town hall here last week, we do these quarterly town halls just to share where we're doing how we're doing as a company. And afterwards, someone's like, you want to go grab a drink, and there was about 11 people gonna go grab a drink couple tables. And I was like, Yeah, sure. Like I want I didn't want to because I was, you know, I'm at that point in my career where like, it's less exciting not to go. I mean, that might make me old. But that's where I'm trending, right? Like. And I sat there had a blast while I was there, got home. And then I remember like laying in bed at night being like, man, like, that was a lot of fun. And there were a few people who had only spent about six months in our business that were there. And for them, you could tell they were learning so much about it, and the team was getting stronger. And it was kind of one of those things that just pause me to be like, Yeah, we could go completely remote. And in our organization, through the pandemic, we've hired people that physically can't commute to our office, like we've we've erased the geography boundaries to a degree. But man was that impactful. And so it's like, there is no black and white, there really aren't rules, it's going to be gray. It's gonna be how you live in and deal with it. And I think, you know, for people who want to get into leadership, that was already a difficult jump. And now I think it's going to be more, more complicated to your point, because it's like, how do you corral all of those different needs and wants and desires? And I guess you could even say timing in life, right?

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Megan Evangelista 17:36

Absolutely. I mean, one of the biggest pieces I miss is just being able to pop my head into someone else's, you know, office cube, or whatever. And just, hey, like, Hey, did you did you see that call? Or did you get that email or the novelty of getting to leave your desk to go for a coffee run with a couple peers? That was such a daymaker. Now, again, I've got my coffee maker, right next to me. So that, right, but it's a different dynamic? And so I think that's definitely an impact. And then the networking piece, as well, I can't imagine and I have such

empathy for folks who have started a new role in the midst of this, because how do you grow your network? How do you have those, you know, hallway bump conversations where you run into someone, and have that introduction. So there's a lot of complexity there. And I think there's definitely a missing element for a lot of us who are working at home.

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Mark Agostinelli 18:41

So sad. Like, we're kind of fortunate, we had years under our belt, so to speak, before it hits. So there was a, something to lean on. But I mean, one of the best teachers is generally people around you that do things that you don't want to do. Right, those things go unsaid, right, but you can witness them when you're in the actual office. And I know you said you support sales team, it's like, as a sales professional growing up, I used to listen to you on the phone, like, Well, I'm not going to do that. But that's good to hear. Like, at least I know not to do that. Or I really love that I'm stealing that. And I think your learning curve goes down tremendously because you're absorbing that information that really you have to reinvent that wheel yourself. So I think those will be some of the modern challenges. I think we're gonna have to get through for these geographic barriers, so to speak.

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Megan Evangelista 19:29

Yeah, and the last piece I'll say, too, that I was reflecting with some coworkers just just this morning, but um, we talked so much now, especially being virtual, but talking about hey, I'm in back to back calls today. And I'm structured and I'm using my time here and there. And I made the comment to one of my co workers. I have no idea how I handled back to back meetings in person prior to going remote Because the travel time to walk down the hall the travel time to grab coffee with a friend before the conversation or spending a few minutes of overtime in the conference room after that entire dynamic has gone. And it was really baffling to me to think about. Well, I mean, I log on, I logged on for, for today's conversation, right? 1259 clicks I'm in, right? And so how do we go back to a point where we can't, you know, we're back to back but having that dynamic?

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Mark Agostinelli 20:35

It's really an I think, if you'd asked me three months ago, right, three months ago would have been likely, yeah. Even like maybe around the Christmas break time, I would have said, I think the world of work is changed forever. And we're gonna go back to the office. And now that I've like Batman a little bit more had that townhall I referenced, I will not be shocked if we're sitting here in the year 2023. And we generally operate like we did pre pandemic, like most people are in the office, there probably is more flexibility. Like, I'm very fortunate. I've always worked at a company where it's kind of like, take care of your adult life. So if you leave, you leave, you have doctor's appointments, you have kids stuff like like we we were early adopters in tech and video conferencing. So it wasn't like we were actually very prepared for but I kind of feel like, for the most, there's always going to be people that are like, No, I just wanna work in my house. And fine, good. That's totally cool at your gym. But I think that I think the vast majority of folks will get back into, let's call it 85% 80% will be more normal. And I didn't think that way three months ago. I didn't I just it seems like we're trending in a direction like that.

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Megan Evangelista 21:48

I would agree. And it's interesting. My team runs on data that is the lifeblood, like organization. And we do a lot of benchmarking and surveys with students at the college level and asking, of course, what's your sentiment? Do you feel comfortable coming into an office for interviews? Do you feel comfortable relocating for a job that you know, these days? And do you want to go into an office? And do you have any guesses of what the sentiment might be?

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Mark Agostinelli 22:20

Oh, man, I was going to actually ask you what those data points are. But I guess I will guess that college kids are probably Okay, coming in to interview for the most part, but less than before, but I think probably the vast majority are okay. I'd say relocation I wouldn't say relocation is probably the same. If not, maybe more, maybe people are like I'm down to leave more actually. And then work in an office. I think it's probably the same if I had to guess

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Megan Evangelista 22:50

you are your two for three. Okay, two for three. Not bad. So So yes, the overwhelming response is students are like, get me out of here. I want to go into an office I want to relocate. And we've seen an increase of students who want to come work in an office because you know, the sentiment and you look through all the open response feedback, but they they want to come into an environment because a lot of them for one two ish years now have not had that college collegiate experience on a campus. They're not many of them aren't in an in person, classroom environment. And so they're coming now to employers and saying, Hey, I'm missing out on this year. I really hope you don't expect me to stay home. Net once I begin my career.

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Mark Agostinelli 23:39

I think it makes so much sense. Did you have an athletics background and school? No. Okay. I did only ask as you run a lot. I was like, damn, as those are some impressive mileage and they're putting up so I didn't know but like, like, the reason I asked that is just kind of dawned on me hearing you say that what is better than living in a dorm, like, like that whole period of your life. I mean, it kicks ass like, and I think I played a little lacrosse in college. And for me, it was like, I live next to my teammates. It was almost like lacrosse was our job. And no school should have been but like lacrosse was more than a thing that you were like, it couldn't stop talking about all the time with your friends. And it's like, it's kind of like work. It's like when you're doing something you enjoy. And you know, Andrea's the next office over and I just get to pop in and talk to her. It's like, that's fun. And I can see why people leave in college or like, no, the dorm was way better than the virtual. I definitely want to be back in the office as opposed to sitting in my home office that isn't that luxurious, because I have no money. I just got to school so that I can see the human behavior of that gigantic it's gonna be interesting to see how long it lasts, though, right?

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Megan Evangelista 24:54

Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, I, we talk a lot when we're interviewing about the idea that you have to like the people you're working with, right your co workers as man, you are setting yourself up for a long,

M Mark Agostinelli 25:09
long river,

M Megan Evangelista 25:10
if you don't love that, and it's it's really similar to, I think there's a lot of parallels to the college experience and coming into work and you have to enjoy your environment, you have to trust your leaders, your mentors, your advisors. And then you have to have peers that are going to have your back and support you and challenge you. And so I think that dynamic is sort of where that sentiments pulling from,

M Mark Agostinelli 25:34
do you do you? I'm guessing you may do you have data that breaks down? Like the relocation statistic, I if I had to further break that data down, I would guess that your northern North American contingent, was probably more apt to relocate than ever before, if I had to guess like just because the south opened up earlier than us. I am personally someone who loves winter, like I like to go skiing. I like both. I love the balance of the four seasons, but never in my life. Have I felt the urge to get the hell out of here for more than ever, you know. So I was like, I could definitely see myself leaving college town like I will 100% relocate, have those numbers gone up significantly in a certain sector? Or is it kind of just been uniform? It's been

M Megan Evangelista 26:28
it's been relatively uniform, what it has been is polarizing. So the students who maybe were somewhere on the fence of life, I could move if it's worth it, maybe not. We're now seeing a really big divide of Heck no, I'm sticking close to home friends, family, you couldn't pay me enough to leave. Or we're seeing folks who say, I don't really care what the job is. Just get me the hell out of here.

M Mark Agostinelli 26:54
Interesting, interesting. So as polarized. Wow, that, I guess that makes sense, though, right? Because stress is going to make you if you look at the pandemic as a stressor, it's really going to give you clarity as to what's important right now, to what's going on. Oh, that's interesting. Any other data points from, like, what's going on in that world that are just very different now, or something that's maybe counterintuitive, that you think is worth sharing?

M Megan Evangelista 27:22

Megan Evangelista 27:22

I think the relocation piece is the one that has surprised me the most. And then just that sentiment of I want to be back in an office, please don't make me work remotely, please don't make me stick to five days remote. So those are the two biggest ones.

M Mark Agostinelli 27:38

I'm kind of excited to hear that. Reason college grads or people entering the workforce do want to get an office because I think that means they they know that others are the key to their success. You know, and I think that's probably a healthy way for us to move on as a civilization. Nevermind. You know, nevermind the working world. So that's actually that's actually really cool to hear. So awesome. Awesome. So how about, like you like I'm interested in Magen and your path? Like? You're clearly leading teams and moving in the right direction. And then I'm gonna say highly motivated, because no one's going out for 10 mile runs and running half marathons. Without being motivated, like, where's that come from? Are you have you always been this type of person pushing for the future and motivated? Or is it? Is it? Is it something that you gained along the way?

M Megan Evangelista 28:35

Yeah, that that I think is just built into my DNA. I am just sitting still, for too long. I have a hard time with it. And so I think that curiosity piece we talked about earlier in the conversation has always been there for me and so challenging myself to see what could that next new thing be? What would happen? If I ran half a marathon? Can I run half a marathon? You know, it's sort of these question and answer games that I play with myself.

M Mark Agostinelli 29:05

Okay, so you're kind of obsessed about seeing how far you can push it. Apparently,

M Megan Evangelista 29:09

yeah. thought of it that way.

M Mark Agostinelli 29:13

Well, that's, that's really cool. And you and you're gonna, you're you chalk that up more to like, nature versus nurture, like, you think it's more of a product of your environment? Or was it like the way your parents raised you or however you were raised? Do you think or

M Megan Evangelista 29:28

I think my parents were great, and that they let me explore different things. So if I went to archery camp one summer and like, you know, had never picked up a bow a day in my life didn't want and it was great and haven't done it since. So it's just always, you know, pursuing

didn't want and it was great and haven't done it since. So, it's just always, you know, pursuing these different pathways of seeing like, oh, what what is this new thing and sometimes it sticks again, like running I think for me was was one of those personal challenges. I started right after grad school just to see? What what all the fuss was about? And pursued it from there?

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Mark Agostinelli 30:05

Okay, no, very, very cool. Do you? Do you feel like the corporate world is well designed? I know now you're in it, but still that common thread of students? Do you feel like the corporate world from your vantage point is well designed to accommodate that curiosity early on in a student and kind of nurture that from from their own out? Or do you think we've got room to grow?

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Megan Evangelista 30:28

I think I think if you play your cards, right, you, you can certainly make a lot from your experience. And again, that goes back to if you come in maybe with a learning and development program, if you have a sponsor, a mentor, someone who's willing to kind of show you the ropes, and sometimes I've found in the corporate world, there's always that that sub meeting or right the subtext behind hey, here's what we're going to talk about on the call. And when this person doesn't come off, mute this is, you know, this is why and this is what's really being said. So, there there is that corporate reading between the lines almost as a second language, a second skill that you build over time. And I think for me coming from that higher ed background where it was very much academic focused very much, I always joke and say, let's have a committee about this committee on whether we want to create a committee right, like, higher, it's just not known for its speed. And I say that very lovingly. True. But I think one of the great things in reasons I love corporate is that you you don't see something that you want, you go make it happen, you go build it, you go create it. And that's been another theme with all three roles that I've held at Dell, is they have been either new positions, or re structured positions. And so I've been able to come on board, and kind of put my twist and my flavor on Okay, here's what I'm seeing, here's the direction, I'm thinking, you know, talk to my leaders and other folks and say, Does this sound right? But by and large, I'm gonna go do my thing, and see what sticks and sort of have this space, the autonomy, to go create structures, programs, opportunities, as it makes sense,

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Mark Agostinelli 32:29

which ultimately leads to you being more engaged in your role satisfied with the work, you're doing better at the work you're doing, because you're learning. Yeah, I mean, that's that sounds Oh, what a great opportunity. That is that must. That's really cool. You're the second person I've talked to, or had on the podcast, actually, from Dell. Lar. Thompson was another she was there for the EMC days. I don't know if you know, Lara at all, she's no longer with us in HR, but spoke at the same level of appreciation and gratitude for like the autonomy and the flexibility because like, from the outside, you'd think down. I mean, I live in Hopkinton. So like, Thank you for paying your taxes. But like, you just think big corporate company, right? Like, like rules and procedures and red tape. And it's funny to hear you speaking so energetically about the opposite of that is the vibe I'm getting, is that correct?

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Megan Evangelista 33:29

Yeah, absolutely. And that, honestly, full transparency, I almost didn't take the job because of that. Because I didn't know what that looked like. And again, I had so many preconceived notions of, you know, corporate America, you wear a suit, and you have to work from 830 until five and you go you and you know, all of those different associations. And fortunately, I've found that you can build that community, you can have the autonomy and at a company with 150,000 employees globally, I still feel like I have a name for myself, I have a brand. And I have a community and network of supporters and resources, even within this huge organization.

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Mark Agostinelli 34:16

Right, because you still have a community within the community. Exactly. Yeah. It's really cool. When you talk to the people in marketing, let them know if they want to sponsor the podcast. I'll give them a shout out early. We're clearly Republican doubt, which is no, that's awesome. Because I think as a you know, I mentioned to you we started the podcast, a document nonlinear career paths, but it was really for recent college grads of people trying to make a career transition that didn't really know what to do. And I think ultimately, what I was trying to say was, let's rip off the preconceived notions of what corporate America is like, because it's really quite a fun place to be. It's just a bunch of people, organized as a group doing a mission. It's not suit suits, suits all A time. So I think that's inspiring. If you're 22 Thinking about man, I was having a blast, and I gotta go do this every day. And it's like, no, no, you get to do that. And you get to choose the people you're doing it with. And it's fun. If you get into the right situation to your point, you have mentors helping you out along the way.

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Megan Evangelista 35:19

So, and that's, I've heard some really good advice recently about making that career transition. And if you are looking to make that jump, call it out. Great. So what could someone from a higher education background have to offer a corporate environment setting? And that was one of the really one of the turning points in my career in my journey to be able to articulate, hey, I can bring something different. I'm not going to think about structure, strategy, etc. In that linear path than if I had a business degree business background business experience. And so did it mean I had an uphill battle to learn some of that business acumen? I have an entire PDF of acronyms. For my company, trying to remember, you know, the first time I heard m&a for mergers and acquisitions, I was like m&ms, like what are we?

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Mark Agostinelli 36:18

What are we talking about? I haven't received that candy at Halloween. Yeah,

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Megan Evangelista 36:23

exactly. Right. I'm like, I'm more of a Snickers fan? I don't know. So I think that, being able to call that out, but you know, it's so cliché, but it's what's different, that makes you more unique and valuable. Because you're coming into a conversation with a different lens.

M**Mark Agostinelli 36:41**

So how did you how did you get? I mean, that had to be a fairly stressful or not. Yeah, I think stressful on organized and kind of wild point in your life, when you're making the transition from higher ed to corporate like a, was that always the plan after you were like, I'm getting out of here every like, I need to go corporate? Or did you know where to go? Like, who helped you along that path? Like, how was that because I think oftentimes I talk to people who want to make a jump, and they don't even know where to start. And my advice is go talk to people, but like you lived it. So you have actual advice you can give people I'd love to hear.

M**Megan Evangelista 37:22**

Yes. So my advice is the exact same as yours. So I didn't consciously know that I wanted to leave higher ed, I knew I was looking for a change. And that was really what sparked a lot of those informational conversations, the networking. And so how that came about for me was I sat down with at the time, our Director of University Relations, and I thought she was going to help connect me with higher ed contacts that she had through her network. And so everyone listening, please don't do this. Because this was such a rookie. Rookie mistake on my side. I went into that conversation, we met at a Starbucks, I was in jeans I had on a baseball hat because I was thinking, you know, this is an informal conversation, right? I'm just networking. It's all good. My Saturday morning, and through that conversation, the questions became more and more pointed of, well, what's your experience? What are you looking to do? That question always comes up and having a good answer ready to go is one of the best things you can keep in your back pocket of what you're passionate about. And so I started to talk about I love serving students, I love program management, I'm really looking to challenge myself and grow. And I think we can probably all figure out that this conversation ended up resulting in an opportunity to go intern with this director for the organization. And that was my foothold into corporate and I went in I interned for her and ran our summer intern program started working with the college students who were coming from higher ed into their professional experience, and really serving is that bridge for them. And the rest, I'll say is history from there. But I think that's one of those stories that just really highlights the power of networking and not wearing jeans to informational interviews when when you think that they're just informational. It turns out they weren't. But again, I think that networking piece and then having folks along the way who can connect you so always asking after one conversation, who who's someone in your network I should talk to because, you know, it's great to have one conversation it's even better to have five

M**Mark Agostinelli 39:52**

and then they generally will point you to other people to connect with as well. And I think you got to go into those conversations not expecting to get a thing How can you do your point earlier? How can I help this person? What can I give to this person because it kind of keeps just paying itself forward over time. But man, the other thing I take from your, your story there was interning, like, it's too often overlooked. And I remember in college being like, I don't want to do this internship, like, I don't want to, I don't have to leave campus, I have to get out of my sweatpants. And like, I gotta become a real human being for like, one or two days a week. And however, looking back on it incredibly invaluable experience, just understanding how team

dynamics work in a corporate setting, but also what you do and don't like. And I think, you know, if you have the opportunity to take an internship paid or unpaid to give yourself a chance, man, is that probably the best vehicle to get in? You know, I think that's probably the best way to go about it. But I don't know there's something about him on college campuses that people aren't, I mean, some groups, like if you talk to CPAs, they can't wait to get internships, because they know that's the path. But like, I'd say the layman, the sales professional, right, that doesn't know exactly what they want to do. They know they like to talk to people. I don't think we as a group, but at some speaking for all salespeople now, which is a bad idea, but I don't think we as a group were like, Yeah, I can't wait to get my internship in college. So, you know, that's one thing I definitely take is like, get an internship. It clearly was valuable for you it was yours paid or unpaid. Mine was paid. Cool, or even better? And better probably be too.

 Megan Evangelista 41:38

They absolutely should all be and should be.

 Mark Agostinelli 41:42

Do you have any like insights as to what we now that you've sat on both sides of like the higher ed and corporate like, and so I'm eager as a employer? Like, what? What are we missing about higher ed that can help get students engaged in our businesses more quickly, or tap into different students are just like, what are honestly in the macro? Like, just what are we missing that maybe we have too many preconceived notions about?

 Megan Evangelista 42:14

Um, I think the piece that I have spent a lot of my time on with, with college students, is that professional development, right? Because so much of their classroom experience is giving them the tactical knowledge, right? So if you're a CPA, you're you're getting the numbers, you're, you're crunching it, you're learning that the processes, but maybe what you're not learning is how to write an email professionally. Right. So don't don't spell later. L, the number eight with an AR, right? I'm not you're texting friend. Yes. The importance of following up. So again, I would do an average, I do over 300 interviews a year with college students, and I could tell you, less than 50 will send me a thank you email or a thank you note.

 Mark Agostinelli 43:07

Wow, that's that low.

 Megan Evangelista 43:10

It's really low. And so sometimes I think it's those little things that maybe we take for granted, or we assume it's not that big of a deal, right? I'll learn how to write a professional email. It's fine. If I don't send the Thank you. She gets him every day, she's not going to remember mine.

Right. But going that extra mile, I think, is something that that students, some do really naturally and they're, they're fantastic at it. I think that there's an opportunity for us as employers, to to meet students in that space and say, Hey, here's what's going to give you the advantage. Here's what's going to make you memorable, here's what's going to make me want to go to bat for you to join my team over someone else.

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Mark Agostinelli 43:55

Right. And ultimately, being memorable as a candidate for a role or really, even once you're in your role is just so incredibly important. Like, that's, that's how you don't become a number. Exactly. So that makes that's, that's really interesting and really good feedback. It's funny you say that, I guess. I'm a little disappointed to hear that you only get 50 out of 300. But those 50

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Megan Evangelista 44:23

Man, I could tell you, I can well, not everyone but fine.

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Mark Agostinelli 44:29

They're memorable to you. Right? You see their name again, you're like, face to name. I remember that person. Right? It's just, they're in a different folder for you.

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Megan Evangelista 44:38

Yes. And it's the same with networking and having a mentor. Right. So I think, again, it's so easy, and I'm not picking on just students. I'll pick on everyone. But it's so easy to sit with a mentor to sit with someone who you're sort of in awe in right we all have those leaders that you're like, Oh man, they would they would meet me for coffee. Amazing. And we go, and we expect them to just bring us things. Right. So like, what advice do you have for me? Tell me, right? We sort of sit there and think, Alright, what are you? What are you going to give me from this conversation? And don't think about what can I offer this person? Right? Mentoring is a two way street interviewing is a two way street. And I think that that is another key piece that I've learned. Sometimes the easy way, sometimes the hard way, in my professional experience is you have to come into conversations about development opportunities, everywhere you go, and be ready to give and not just take from others.

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Mark Agostinelli 45:44

I think I remember myself in the shoes of like, I interviewed at EMC back in the day, and I bombed it. I remember bombing it. And I remember having like, very little self confidence in like leaning forward, because I was like, Well, what do I have to offer? And I think that, you know, if I could tell myself anything 10 years ago, like you do have something to offer, just don't believe your opinions aren't correct. Because you can always keep learning. I think when you have that, like humbled self awareness, you're so much more willing to lean forward to a

degree visually, like, if I'm wrong, I'm wrong. I'm gonna I'm just gonna correct myself and keep moving. But there's like a weird pride as an 1822 year old that you've, you think you need to have it really is. It's really an illusion to a degree.

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Megan Evangelista 46:34

Absolutely. And that's something I remember going through this phase, because I was such a type a go getter, ambitious, I need to have the right answers, sort of, sort of person. And I remember having this sort of transformative experience after graduation and realizing there's not always a right answer. There's a lot more gray space, right after graduation, and honestly, during it, but there's so much that we don't know. And it's not a matter of submitting the right answer first and having it's sometimes better to ask questions and say, I have no idea where I'm going.

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Mark Agostinelli 47:17

Right? Well, I think you get to a point in your career. And I, you know, I don't know when it was for me, but I remember I was listening, and I don't remember exactly who it was. And I won't butcher it just in case I get the person wrong, but a CEO of a high profile, fortune 500 company sharing a crisis they went through and how they didn't know what was going on. And I remember getting in my car, and I'm probably not going four years into the business world at this point and driving home being like, so nobody knows what's going on. Like, legitimately. This is like a high powered professional with tons of backing. And we're all kind of I don't want to say we're winging it. But we're all figuring out as we go using the resources as best available to us. I remember like, getting home being like, man, well, that's confidence inspiring, because that doesn't mean I need all the answers kind of thing. And just, that's a hard thing to get to, though, organically.

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Megan Evangelista 48:07

Absolutely. And it's interesting. I've been teaching an HR course, for the first time this past spring. And it's exactly that it's trying to inspire that and students to say, there's no right answer here. There's a whole bunch of guesses. And what I've found is its students are inclined to say, well, I don't know this, I need more information about that. Tell me more about this. I can't make a decision. And the takeaway I think you just hit it perfectly is. There might never be a full picture. There's never gonna be a moment where it's like okay, now you have the entire picture. Now you can see it all now make your choices,

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Mark Agostinelli 48:50

right? Like 70% of the information is generally a lot and there's plenty that go on but you don't you're right you're so used to doing math where everything's completely perfect. You want you aspire to have the same criteria. And you're just I mean you're living it now you're you just said your team runs on data all day and I bet you you're constantly like we need more.

M Megan Evangelista 49:12

Oh wait. Oh yeah.

M Mark Agostinelli 49:15

And so on up there's like you got plenty

M Megan Evangelista 49:20

Exactly. That's how it always goes.

M Mark Agostinelli 49:22

That is too funny. Well, is there anything you send your teaching HR class now which is super cool and good awesome for like, getting back to it right like you you're probably a perfect person to be sharing that journey. And connecting the dots between what is higher ed and and if they want to go the corporate route. What would you share to folks maybe for one thing, you chair other than we've shared so much with people I think this is a really educational podcast for for the recent college grad in particular, is there anything we maybe missed that you think we should do? You want to fit in before our time kind of expires?

M Megan Evangelista 50:03

I don't think so I think the biggest pieces for me are just staying curious and staying flexible. If you can do that you're you're going to be okay.

M Mark Agostinelli 50:13

I think that's I think it's a really that's profound. I think it's funny the curiosity thing as a as a parent, I've got a six and a four year old. It's the one the one thing I'm constantly considering, like, am I stifling curiosity? Or am I creating it? Because, because it's, it's an incredible skill to have. And I think you got to be aware of it. As someone leading, you know, my little wolf pack at home, so to speak, you know, but I think it's, and the flexibility these have been you, college grads or people early in their career, they don't understand how flexible they are, to a degree. So that's it sounds like the pandemic is changing people's focus on relocation that way, though.

M Megan Evangelista 50:59

Yes, yes. It's, we're all outside our comfort zones.

M Mark Agostinelli 51:04

Well, Meghan, I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much. For coming on the podcast. I

well, Megan, I really appreciate your time. Thank you so much. For coming on the podcast, I think we're gonna have to make this some kind of a cadence because I'm sure as the data changes over time, you'll have great information for the listening group. And, and then like, when these whole restrictions are lifted, we can grab a computer together and hang out so



Megan Evangelista 51:25

fantastic. Thank you so much. This is great. I'm leaving. I'm energized. I'm excited. I'm gonna go into my calls the rest of the day feeling good. So



Mark Agostinelli 51:33

love it. Love it. Love it. Thank you so much and take care and be well we'll talk soon. Thank you. You too.