

WEBVTT

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Kara Snyder: So let's see. It looks like it's recording on my end. Does that work for you?

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00:00:05.050 --> 00:00:22.500

Kara Snyder: Yes, it does. Okay. Here we go, all right. 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.

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00:00:22.510 --> 00:00:38.210

Kara Snyder: Each episode we're sitting down with an alum of the college, and today we have a chance to talk to Kyle Airing. Kyle is an alum of the Department of Agriculture, and currently serves as the Vice President of Quality and operations for link marketing Welcome and thank you for being here one hundred.

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00:00:38.960 --> 00:00:41.069

Kyle Earing: Thank you, Kara. It's a pleasure.

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00:00:41.390 --> 00:00:46.919

Kara Snyder: So let's just start at the beginning. Why did you choose, Isu. What brought you here?

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Kyle Earing: Well, if you was, it was an easy decision for me. When it came right down to it. I grew up in Central Illinois, on a diversified grain and livestock farm. Um attended us

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00:01:01.750 --> 00:01:13.639

Kyle Earing: mit Ctl. And a small height school that had about three hundred and fifty students in the entire high school. So as I made my rounds, visiting other campuses throughout the midwest, one hundred and fifty

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00:01:13.650 --> 00:01:33.000

Kyle Earing: Um! It was a a really big gap for for me to overcome. Coming from a small high school where I knew everyone in the entire High school, not just those in my class um to venturing on to a campus that seemed like a small city. So uh as you when I when I

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00:01:33.420 --> 00:01:36.160

Kyle Earing: was it kind of in our neck of the woods.

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00:01:36.250 --> 00:01:47.729

Kyle Earing: Um! I was familiar with the the programs some of the faculty I had run into at local county fares and in different events um locally, And so

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00:01:47.740 --> 00:02:06.269

Kyle Earing: Isu really just kind of felt more like a continuation of my high school career, and it was just turned out to be a fantastic fit for me, and you know I was able to have a little more of perhaps a personal experience with with many of the faculty, and in one of the

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00:02:06.360 --> 00:02:12.009

you know, could be more to the program than just another student enrolled

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00:02:12.530 --> 00:02:15.240

Kyle Earing: the a particular course path.

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00:02:15.710 --> 00:02:43.289

Kara Snyder: I love that, and I think that's That's so interesting. It's so great to hear, because I think that's one of my issues. Hallmarks is that our students feel like they are more than just a number. They really feel like they have a home here, and it's so nice to hear that from, and a lot that that was, You know the experience that brought you here, and then the experience that you have while you were here, so that that's great to hear. So what made you pick agriculture? How did you end up in that department.

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00:02:44.460 --> 00:02:54.779

Kyle Earing: Yeah. So so agriculture, you know, kind of right from from, You know my my beginning at high school. I was very active both in

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00:02:54.820 --> 00:03:11.190

Kyle Earing: the this Illinois State. Fourth and ffa programs. Uh so, and and growing up, agriculture was very much a part of uh every aspect of my life, as I said, you know, growing up on a diversified grain and livestock farm,

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00:03:11.760 --> 00:03:14.879

you know agriculture was very near and dear to my heart.

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00:03:14.920 --> 00:03:24.580

Um, I initially did consider an agro-business career. I knew that maybe farming wasn't the only

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00:03:24.590 --> 00:03:38.129

mit ctl and aspect of agriculture that I needed to be open to um. I did consider an agribusiness degree. But you know, deep down I I found my true passion lied within the livestock side of agriculture one hundred and fifty

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00:03:38.140 --> 00:03:51.350

um! And so through various courses, through various conversations. Um! While at Illinois State University, I I found the courage, I guess, is probably a good way to say it to one hundred and fifty

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00:03:51.440 --> 00:04:03.780

Kyle Earing: mit ctl, and pursue my true passion and go down the path of animal agriculture while at Isu. So I did change my major from agribusiness to animal science, and one

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00:04:03.790 --> 00:04:24.949

Haven't haven't looked back. Um, but and I i'm sure we'll get into it a little bit more down down our conversation here. But you know my my career path has certainly been a little bit interesting, but you know i'm i'm certainly unique in that, you know animal agriculture has taught me a lot, and has definitely enabled me to to

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00:04:24.960 --> 00:04:27.080

Kyle Earing: get to where I am today.

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00:04:27.260 --> 00:04:41.169

Kara Snyder: Yes, and I can't wait to hear more before we jump to your career, though. Tell me a little bit about your time on campus. Were you in the residence halls? Were you involved in any student organizations. What was that time like for you?

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00:04:42.210 --> 00:04:43.410

Kyle Earing: Yeah, I

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00:04:43.520 --> 00:05:05.280

Kyle Earing: I was. I jump right in um. You know I I was very much involved in a variety of different clubs and organizations. Um, both through the the the college, some of their rsos as well as um was. It was a member of one of the the fraternities uh farmhouse fraternity that you know,

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00:05:05.320 --> 00:05:21.989

Kyle Earing: definitely affiliates itself strongly with the with the the Department and Agricultural roots. Um. But it was, I found it to be more than just. You know a group of folks that, you know came from agricultural backgrounds. There were a variety of majors and a

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00:05:22.000 --> 00:05:35.640

Kyle Earing: mit ctl and variety of individuals that you know I learned a lot from, and helped me grow as a person, you know, interacting with others, and learning to appreciate a multitude of perspectives and backgrounds one hundred and fifty.

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00:05:35.900 --> 00:05:43.420

Kyle Earing: But you know, I think the the value while on campus there, as part of the Rsos and serving on, You know

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00:05:43.550 --> 00:05:47.829

Kyle Earing: the leadership teams of some of those organizations taught me it

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00:05:48.050 --> 00:06:06.539

Kyle Earing: mit cti and a tremendous amount about how to deal with others, how to, you know, set goals and rally around those goals, to to meet objectives and bring folks along; how to compromise, how to overcome adversity. A lot of those life skills, I think we could. We could probably one hundred and fifty

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00:06:07.170 --> 00:06:16.120

Kyle Earing: talk all afternoon about those list of of benefits from being involved with those. Ah, Rfos, but you know, I think the bottom line really is.

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00:06:16.130 --> 00:06:31.900

Kyle Earing: Is Not only did I learn a lot about life that ultimately prepared me for a successful career. But along the way I was able to bank just numerous memories that you know, even today, as I, as I, you know. Sit here talking about it. One hundred and fifty,

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00:06:31.960 --> 00:06:35.680

Kyle Earing: and some memories come to mind, and and those are, you know,

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00:06:35.780 --> 00:06:41.529

Kyle Earing: ideas and memories that you know will be with me for for quite some time. I hope

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00:06:41.890 --> 00:07:11.840

Kara Snyder: I love that, and I think that's what's really special about the Department of Ag, but probably also, I issue as a whole the offering of the student organizations, where, you know, if one is not a good fit, there is one that probably is right for you, and you can really find that home and take advantage of the opportunity to participate in those leadership positions and start to learn those transferable skills that I think really apply to any careers. So i'm glad to hear that was your experience.

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00:07:13.080 --> 00:07:16.000

Kara Snyder: What do you miss the most about that time?

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00:07:18.830 --> 00:07:22.410

Kyle Earing: I think you know, in the moment it seems

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00:07:22.480 --> 00:07:41.550

Kyle Earing: like there was a lot going on right because of my involvement through those organizations, you know, juggling, you know my drive to, to, to achieve and and be successful in my various courses that that I was taking. You know it always seemed like there was a lot going on

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00:07:41.560 --> 00:08:00.499

Kyle Earing: in hindsight, you know. I think you know hindsight, maybe being twenty twenty. The reality was that that was a really good time, and you know where the some of the pressures of the real world didn't quite necessarily come into play yet, and it was an opportunity to learn and to grow

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00:08:00.510 --> 00:08:08.709

Kyle Earing: it, and and I was able to take advantage of so much that if I had to try and be involved in all of the things that I

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00:08:08.820 --> 00:08:16.220

Kyle Earing: used to be while now juggling. You know the demands of of a career as well as

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00:08:16.880 --> 00:08:34.990

Kyle Earing: time with my my family requires it would be near impossible. So I think that that's the part that I I maybe miss the most is just some of that freedom to just, you know, Grow and learn and develop. And and you know, as you in that time of of one's life is

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00:08:35.659 --> 00:08:43.699

really fantastic, and i'm not sure. One can truly appreciate how special it is until it's it's passed by.

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Kara Snyder: I I totally agree that makes perfect sense to me. So tell me about you. Switch from Agri business to animal science. You found your passion. What does that initial job search look like for you?

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00:08:59.590 --> 00:09:12.370

Kyle Earing: Yeah. So So after my time at Illinois State University, I pursued, um work on my master's degree um in roominet nutrition. So I left the the the

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00:09:13.080 --> 00:09:27.829

Kyle Earing: the Glove campus, and ventured to Lexington, Kentucky, to to work on my masters there at the University of Kentucky, and that, and that in itself was was a big jump, but the one that I really,

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00:09:28.390 --> 00:09:45.409



Kyle Earing: you know I am proud of myself for making because it's it. It really kind of started me on my my career path That, you know, was, you know, just taking steps incrementally one thing leading to another um, and and that was one of those. So

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00:09:45.440 --> 00:10:03.639

Kyle Earing: erez agmoni. And getting to the the University of Kentucky to to to work on my master's degree really was was kind of that that next step, and from there, then I've you know, kind of entered the the workforce in looking for a job. I was very fortunate one hundred and one,

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00:10:03.800 --> 00:10:07.340

Kyle Earing: you know, after we're having worked on my masters, and

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00:10:07.360 --> 00:10:15.630

had having been in in as involved in the the R. Sos and the leadership positions, and

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00:10:15.920 --> 00:10:18.279

Kyle Earing: you know, having a good grasp on

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00:10:18.310 --> 00:10:35.729

Kyle Earing: the general ag industry. Um! I found that the search for my first role was relatively easy. Um. I had many connections through my time in four H. And an ffa, and it really was pretty

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00:10:35.740 --> 00:10:54.809

simple. Um, and I would say that you know the networking aspect of you know, meeting folks and letting folks know what your interests are, and having conversations around, You know kind of where your passions might lie, and what your career or job aspirations will

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00:10:54.820 --> 00:11:00.899

like, pay dividends for for me. So after the University of Kentucky,

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00:11:01.130 --> 00:11:17.180

Kyle Earing: I was fortunate to um land a a position with land of Lakes Purina, and so from Lexington, Kentucky, I made the big move to the frozen tundra of Uh Minneapolis and joined

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00:11:17.750 --> 00:11:21.410

the the formulation team at land of lakes.

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00:11:22.520 --> 00:11:49.129

Kara Snyder: Okay, So I want to talk about how you mentioned networking, which I think is so interesting because I do think for students sometimes that word by itself can sound intimidating. So how did you have a confidence at that point Early on in your career, Maybe even as a student, How did you have the confidence to start building your network? Did you have a strategy Where what got that started for you.

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00:11:49.840 --> 00:11:52.610

Kyle Earing: Sure, I I think it's one of those things that

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Kyle Earing: that while we think about it, and looking back it it all made sense. It all kind of came together. I don't know that it's something that you can necessarily force what I for me.

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00:12:05.070 --> 00:12:20.869

Kyle Earing: I If I had to give advice to someone today. It would probably look like. Just see the opportunities that are in front of you. Don't. Let anything pass by, you know, if there's the career fair, make a point to stop by and visit and

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00:12:20.960 --> 00:12:24.660

Kyle Earing: talk to the representative at each of the tables,

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00:12:24.710 --> 00:12:31.279

Kyle Earing: even though it may not necessarily align today. You know the world when it comes down to it, is a

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00:12:31.510 --> 00:12:44.040

a very small place, and you never know where paths might cross, or how someone might interact with with you in the future. So, having those conversations wherever you can.

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Um! It's, it's just great, and and be genuine right. Make friends and be out, you know, sharing what your interests are, and and talking about the things that you're doing, and the things that you would like to do, and and find those those areas of commonality,

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00:12:59.510 --> 00:13:05.490

because those are those are what truly build relationships. And it's through relationships that

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00:13:05.580 --> 00:13:08.139

ultimately the networking kind of happens.

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00:13:08.150 --> 00:13:37.940

Oh, a friend of a friend, hey? I know this person that might be a great fit for the the exact role that you're looking to fill. It may not be a direct relationship that gets you the the opportunity to interview or land a position. But it's it all comes together cohesively as a network, right? And so I think, seizing the moment and not letting anything go past. You is is very important, and it it really doesn't have to

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00:13:38.290 --> 00:14:04.780

Kyle Earing: strenuous, or you know, exhaustive or shouldn't be a daunting task that one approaches, but but rather just, you know, if there, if there's the career fair, go and go and meet people. If there's something, you know an event at the the The farm local farm bureau is putting out a seminar. Go and and spend a few minutes. Learn a little bit and and meet some folks with that are there. And it could that some of those conversations start off

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00:14:04.790 --> 00:14:21.100

Kyle Earing: mit Ctl. And so inconspicuously as hey? What's your name? What are you studying? How's the weather? Right? If that's how those conversations start. But you know the really special relationships. Then, for whatever reason kind of bloom and blossom one hundred and fifty,

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00:14:21.180 --> 00:14:35.049

Kyle Earing: and and can really pay dividends, and you probably won't, necessarily realize the dividends they pay until again you're You're further down your career path. And looking back because hindsight is two thousand and twenty.

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00:14:35.670 --> 00:15:05.209

Kara Snyder: Well, and I love what you said about building relationships, and how important that is, because I think you know, especially for students. At times they hear the word networking. When I think they think they have to have a suit and tie on, and they have to exchange business cards, And it's really not that formal, you know. It is that relationship building that's so valuable. And you're doing that all day every day. It might not be with somebody wearing a suit, it might be with the classmate to your left. So I think that's really important,

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00:15:05.220 --> 00:15:07.479

and I love how you describe that.

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00:15:08.850 --> 00:15:30.360

Kara Snyder: So my next question for you is, you've talked about animal science. You've talked about ruminant nutrition, and when I introduce you I introduce you as the Vice President of Quality and Operations for blink marketing. So tell me how you got from Point A to Point B or C, or however, you would describe your current position

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Kyle Earing: absolutely and with great pleasure. And this is this is one of my my my favorite stories to tell. And you know, if if I think back to you, know the the early two thousands. When when I was was on campus there,

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00:15:48.000 --> 00:16:02.730

Kyle Earing: i'm dating myself a little bit. But um I I could not have been creative enough to map out the the progression, and then path that my career has taken. So I did share that, you know. Obviously, when I left

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00:16:03.510 --> 00:16:12.730

Kyle Earing: the University of Kentucky there in Lexington, Kentucky, I I did um make the move to Minneapolis, St. Paul

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00:16:12.870 --> 00:16:17.399

Kyle Earing: to join the larks in their feed division, which is with

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00:16:17.490 --> 00:16:18.990

is Purina, feeds

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00:16:19.230 --> 00:16:37.379

Kyle Earing: um and enjoying their formulation team. So I I joined. They're leveraging my my animal science and cattle um background, and not an education to develop ration. So while there I was responsible for their custom business

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00:16:37.500 --> 00:16:54.569

Kyle Earing: which entail um helping producers meet. But if specific production challenges um related to their scenarios, so I was putting together special diets that um would would help address mainly um

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00:16:54.580 --> 00:17:02.040

Kyle Earing: Catalan pasture across the country. Maybe they had health concerns. Maybe they had specific growth

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00:17:02.980 --> 00:17:16.299

Kyle Earing: mit ctl and targets that they were looking to achieve. Whatever the case may be if there wasn't an off-the-shelf product that specifically met their needs, I was there to help them build a custom program and a custom product. One hundred and fifty

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00:17:16.859 --> 00:17:19.079

meet those objectives.

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00:17:19.819 --> 00:17:29.219

Kyle Earing: In addition to managing those custom products, I had the opportunity to work with several of the the largest speed yards in the country. So if, while at Purina I was

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00:17:29.440 --> 00:17:45.490

Kyle Earing: erez Agmoni was formulating diets and putting together products to support um, you know some of the the feet yards um scattered across the the Midwest and and North Texas region. Um, and those those those yards that works one hundred and fifty

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00:17:45.500 --> 00:17:54.069

mit ctl, and that I worked with specifically, were ten thousand header graders. So some of the biggest speed yards in the country. I was fortunate to to work with one.

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00:17:55.140 --> 00:18:00.210

Kyle Earing: So in that role I learned a lot definitely. You know. It was one of those things where you

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00:18:00.690 --> 00:18:14.529

Kyle Earing: mit Ctl, and you have to kind of build up your confidence right? There were a lot of things that I had to learn on the fly. I definitely relied on on many of the basics and those foundational principles that I had learned while at Isu, and and one hundred and one

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00:18:14.670 --> 00:18:33.939

Kyle Earing: other places from from an educational aspect. But the reality is that that first job. It's. It's a little scary. It really is because there's no cookbook or way to know everything that you need to know in that role. Um, but you just you kind of, you know, have the perseverance

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00:18:34.180 --> 00:18:36.050

Kyle Earing: you kind of draw on your work,

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00:18:36.300 --> 00:18:51.580

work ethic, and a commitment to to succeed and and survive, and you just take it one day at a time, one step at a time, and and figure out the things that you need to know, and and it all kind of works out. So from that role.

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00:18:51.720 --> 00:18:55.820

Kyle Earing: Um, yeah, there came an opportunity because

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00:18:55.830 --> 00:19:15.740

Kyle Earing: mit Ctl. And because I was developing products because I was familiar with all of the ingredients, because I was familiar with the production side of manufacturing the products that Purina was selling. There was an opportunity to to jump over onto the other. A different aspect of the business, which was on their packaging one hundred and fifty

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00:19:16.350 --> 00:19:26.070

Kyle Earing: erez agmoni, you know. Packaging was, was critical and very important and near and dear to the heart of the marketing team, because that's the first. In many cases

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00:19:26.130 --> 00:19:33.380

Kyle Earing: interface between the consumer and the product that that happens. And so

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00:19:33.410 --> 00:19:39.809

Kyle Earing: in this time Purina land of lakes was was transitioning their packaging materials,

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00:19:39.950 --> 00:19:55.870

Kyle Earing: and because of my knowledge on the the formula formulary side of things, as well as the the manufacturing process. They asked me to to join the the the packaging team and kind of head up the conversion to a new package structure

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00:19:55.880 --> 00:20:10.840

Kyle Earing: Mit.

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00:20:11.020 --> 00:20:17.700

Kyle Earing: So from there there to say, the conversion was was easy, would be a

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00:20:17.710 --> 00:20:36.950

Kyle Earing: mit ctl, and very much an understatement. There were some bumps in the road, and and I learned a lot about, you know, bringing folks along, and how to then, you know, make adjustments, and

make modifications to satisfy not only the efficiency requirements of our of the production plants, but also to one hundred and fifty

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00:20:37.250 --> 00:20:49.539

Kyle Earing: Um! Go ahead, and you know, work with the packaging suppliers to optimize their package because they were learning. At the same time they were accustomed to an alternate style of packaging, and one

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00:20:49.830 --> 00:21:05.329

Kyle Earing: Ted just entered into the market of this new style package so brought them along, so that kind of was my initial foray into quality, and from there I had the opportunity to to to join Mars uh pet care on um

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00:21:05.350 --> 00:21:12.830

Kyle Earing: join their supplier quality assurance team. So after land of lakes, I made the move down to

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00:21:13.220 --> 00:21:14.990

Kyle Earing: Franklin, Tennessee,

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00:21:15.140 --> 00:21:37.140

Kyle Earing: and from from Minneapolis there and joined Mars pet care, and as a supplier quality assurance scientists, I was on the front line, helping them develop new ingredients, working with their suppliers and their supply chain to optimize efficiency and to enhance the quality of the ingredients going into

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00:21:37.150 --> 00:21:39.300

each of their pet food products. The

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00:21:39.810 --> 00:21:46.429

Kyle Earing: so from you know, I spent my time traveling the the country, learning the

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00:21:46.450 --> 00:22:03.519

Kyle Earing: processes. You know all the way from? How is How is chicken processed? How? How are um chickpeas in? You know Canada harvested and processed you? You name it, you know. Just go down the the ingredient list of any of your pet food products.

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00:22:03.720 --> 00:22:14.120

Um! I had the opportunity to to be in those facilities all the way from the farmer producer all the way through to delivery and processing

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00:22:14.190 --> 00:22:15.420

Kyle Earing: at the Mars

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00:22:16.130 --> 00:22:21.179

Kyle Earing: production facility. And so I learned a lot, and it in that

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00:22:21.270 --> 00:22:25.930

we were constantly having conversations around optimizing it.

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00:22:26.040 --> 00:22:37.610

How do we make things different? How do we make things better? And it was always a mutual conversation, So I've really enjoyed the the learning as well as the you know the continuous improvement. Two hundred and fifty,

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00:22:42.520 --> 00:22:53.620

Kyle Earing: so i'll i'll i'll i'll i'll i'll. I'll try to keep a brief um like, I said, there's I try not trying to keep it short here. Um! After after my

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00:22:53.680 --> 00:23:07.920

Kyle Earing: time with Mars uh pet care, I did have them the opportunity to um to join Blink marketing while at Mars. One of the special projects that I worked on was

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00:23:07.930 --> 00:23:15.160

Kyle Earing: how they branded and used promotional marketing material, and and I helped develop and

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00:23:15.570 --> 00:23:18.209

roll out a standard

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00:23:18.670 --> 00:23:21.860

Kyle Earing: at Mars. That was all around brand guidelines,

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00:23:22.170 --> 00:23:36.040

Kyle Earing: ensuring that the the right items were being selected to carry their Logos into the marketplace, and that consumers were, you know, put in any harm, et cetera. Um. So because of that knowledge,

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00:23:36.500 --> 00:23:38.279

Kyle Earing: when I will,

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00:23:38.590 --> 00:23:48.120

Kyle Earing: looking to leave Mars, I was approached by Link marketing to to join their team, to bring the the Mars insights and

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00:23:48.150 --> 00:23:56.160

Kyle Earing: my knowledge of quality, as well as promotional products to to their business and help them

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00:23:56.500 --> 00:24:04.730

Kyle Earing: take their quality program to the next level. Um. And so in that role we we've done a lot in, you know,

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00:24:04.950 --> 00:24:09.430

Kyle Earing: traveling the world working with factories in

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00:24:09.470 --> 00:24:22.959

Kyle Earing: in China and in Europe and across the Us. To outline a a quality standard that is, you know, at the top echelon of the industry uh promotional products really hadn't been under one hundred and fifty

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00:24:24.440 --> 00:24:39.720

Kyle Earing: so guys of uh tremendous regulation, like automotive or medical devices, et cetera. And so it kind of just all fit together. Um! And my role has continued to to grow as I've advanced in the

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00:24:40.180 --> 00:24:43.840

not just from my additional quality,

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00:24:44.250 --> 00:24:47.420

Kyle Earing: requirements, and and obligations. But now to

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00:24:47.450 --> 00:24:49.560

Kyle Earing: leading an operations team that

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00:24:49.940 --> 00:24:51.270

Kyle Earing: this multi-

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00:24:51.660 --> 00:25:00.200

Kyle Earing: so sorry to take so long, Kara, I I apologize for the for the long story, but I promise that was a a bit of an abbreviated version.

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00:25:00.260 --> 00:25:30.250

Kara Snyder: Not at all. No apology necessary. I find it fascinating, and I have to share that. You know. One of my least favorite interview Questions is when people ask, Where do you see yourself in five years, because well, I think it's really good to have goals. I also think that that question has the potential to close you off to opportunities, and I have to imagine that you know when you started at land of lakes you didn't see yourself doing what you're doing now, and I think that's really interesting.

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00:25:30.260 --> 00:25:30.980

Well,

135

00:25:32.130 --> 00:25:51.609

Kyle Earing: so you're you're you're absolutely right. That the five-year question we always have to have. You know a goal and aspiration and be working in a direction all the time. Um, I think that's a key to success. But ultimately you You're exactly right. It truly is a best guess in the moment.

136

00:25:52.230 --> 00:26:00.050

Kara Snyder: So tell me more about, You know, when you were working on the packaging when you're working with all these different teams,

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00:26:00.140 --> 00:26:10.839

Kara Snyder: What did that teach you about? You mentioned bringing people along. What did that teach you about change management? What lessons are you bringing with you into your current role from that experience?

138

00:26:20.020 --> 00:26:21.270

Kyle Earing: So for

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00:26:22.280 --> 00:26:33.869

Kara Snyder: can you repeat the question One more time, Care? I'm: Sorry. Yeah. Yeah. So I I picked up on. You know what you were talking about with working with lots of teams when you were at land of lakes, and Purina

140

00:26:33.880 --> 00:26:48.720

Kara Snyder: to revamp the packaging and the marketing. So tell me what that taught you about change management. And what skills that you've brought with you to your current position, because it sounds like that was a really valuable experience with getting people on board.

141

00:26:51.610 --> 00:26:54.690

Kyle Earing: Yeah, you know, I think the

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00:26:54.900 --> 00:27:01.220

Kyle Earing: bringing teams together, especially when you have competing priorities which

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00:27:01.760 --> 00:27:04.250

you know sometimes very common and

144

00:27:04.950 --> 00:27:06.160

real world or

145



00:27:06.430 --> 00:27:10.650

Kyle Earing: workplace. Um, I I learned kind of how you

146

00:27:11.070 --> 00:27:15.759

Kyle Earing: work through, and to find those commonality. I think we met. We

147

00:27:15.880 --> 00:27:18.439

Kyle Earing: mentioned it when we were talking about networking.

148

00:27:18.740 --> 00:27:21.170

Kyle Earing: You know, finding common ground is

149

00:27:21.360 --> 00:27:26.109

Kyle Earing: the basis for building, you know, working strong relations.

150

00:27:26.710 --> 00:27:29.879

Kyle Earing: And so I think that was probably the number. One principle

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00:27:30.340 --> 00:27:31.690

Kyle Earing: really resonated,

152

00:27:32.780 --> 00:27:33.879

as I would, you know,

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00:27:33.920 --> 00:27:41.569

approach a project, or you know, the next phase or next step, or maybe even just a stumbling block on it in

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00:27:41.760 --> 00:27:50.029

Kyle Earing: our current work was, you know, kind of going between the teams and playing the the middle just to understand. Okay,

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00:27:50.140 --> 00:27:59.330

Kyle Earing: embrace their perspective, Try and learn where they're coming from, and how they're thinking about Xyz

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00:27:59.340 --> 00:28:14.070

Kyle Earing: and doing the same, for you know the for for for myself and for others as well, and then trying to kind of synthesize that to be okay great. Now we know all of the factors,

157

00:28:14.160 --> 00:28:18.810

Kyle Earing: if you will, and so hot, Where? How do we compromise? How do we

158

00:28:19.650 --> 00:28:22.140

Kyle Earing: have a productive conversation.

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00:28:22.640 --> 00:28:34.610

Kyle Earing: Um, okay, what is the true priority? And then what are those night must have? And then you kind of worked down the list to the you know, the secondary grouping, which

160

00:28:34.910 --> 00:28:40.359

be more or less a nice to have, and just being open and honest, and you

161

00:28:40.470 --> 00:28:41.720

Kyle Earing: working

162

00:28:41.760 --> 00:28:43.870

Kyle Earing: really hard to understand

163

00:28:44.230 --> 00:28:46.470

of others. Right? So the

164

00:28:46.510 --> 00:28:48.759

Kyle Earing: you know the relationship is genuine.

165

00:28:49.640 --> 00:28:50.600

Is that feeling?

166

00:28:51.040 --> 00:29:04.519

Kyle Earing: Oh, no, i'm not being told. I have to. I'm not being forced into anything, it really becomes a mutual. Hey? I want to do this. I want to help you. You want to help me, and that approach has helped

167

00:29:04.640 --> 00:29:07.269

Kyle Earing: me be so successful,

168

00:29:07.330 --> 00:29:15.709

Kyle Earing: You know, as I think about traveling the country, you know, auditing and evaluating production facilities.

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00:29:15.810 --> 00:29:24.609

Kyle Earing: You know. Who am I to go into? You know, a large business. And say, maybe you're not doing

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00:29:25.050 --> 00:29:36.040

Kyle Earing: quite right. Have you thought about one, two, three, right? I'm just an outside person. So you kind of have to find a way to

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00:29:36.540 --> 00:29:37.910

Kyle Earing: artfully

172

00:29:38.360 --> 00:29:48.339

Kyle Earing: to deliver that message right in a way that resonates that you can inspire and and drive the the that ultimately your

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00:29:48.390 --> 00:29:56.279

Kyle Earing: for. But the reality is that change won't happen unless you know they kind of want to make that change.

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00:29:56.390 --> 00:30:07.919

Kyle Earing: So How do you kind of. Bring that forward and create the environment that you know they're open to the idea. They listen, and after some consideration,

175

00:30:08.040 --> 00:30:23.580

Kyle Earing: you know, there's there's good dialogue and conversation, and maybe you know the recommendation wouldn't be perfect. Um! But there you could find that some commonality or a compromise that ultimately was still a step forward from

176

00:30:25.910 --> 00:30:42.419

Kara Snyder: that makes perfect sense. And tell me, how do you use some of those principles? Now? You said you oversee the operations team. So what is your leadership philosophy. Are you using some of those same communication principles now in your leadership role?

177

00:30:43.620 --> 00:31:02.090

Kyle Earing: I I do um. So I spend all. I try to spend a lot of time with with my team. Um, more or less. I'm always available as a friend. I'm always available to to lend a year to listen to be a sounding board at, to help them

178

00:31:02.100 --> 00:31:07.210

Kyle Earing: kind of process through and develop their plans, and

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00:31:07.730 --> 00:31:10.789

Kyle Earing: to, you know, find common ground, and you

180

00:31:11.060 --> 00:31:12.570

Kyle Earing: overcome

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00:31:13.420 --> 00:31:17.760

Kyle Earing: challenges that that may exist on their respective desks.

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00:31:18.000 --> 00:31:28.460

Kyle Earing: You know. By no means do I ever try that to micromanage. I truly want to more or less mentor, and give provide a space

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00:31:29.330 --> 00:31:30.290

develop.

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00:31:30.330 --> 00:31:31.170

Kyle Earing: Yes,

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00:31:31.520 --> 00:31:34.829

Kyle Earing: unless you can kind of develop some of those skills and

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00:31:34.870 --> 00:31:39.600

Kyle Earing: and make those skills your own, you never really become proficient.

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00:31:40.420 --> 00:31:43.239

Kyle Earing: I can certainly sit down with individuals

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00:31:43.630 --> 00:31:49.900

Kyle Earing: to tell them. Do one, two, three, xyz. But the reality is, it almost

189

00:31:50.320 --> 00:31:53.330

Kyle Earing: becomes a habit, and it's not ingrained,

190

00:31:53.470 --> 00:32:05.249

Kyle Earing: and who they are, and how they approach things, because, unless the situation is exactly what they were told, they don't know how to apply it, and I think that's one of the big learning.

191

00:32:05.810 --> 00:32:20.900

Kyle Earing: You know. You take some of these skills. You refine different aspects of them. But really you learned how to apply parts and pieces of different things, almost in a puzzle fashion, into a particular scenario

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00:32:21.070 --> 00:32:23.010

you're encountering,

193

00:32:23.360 --> 00:32:25.550

Kyle Earing: because every situation

194

00:32:26.500 --> 00:32:28.829

and so drawing on those past experiences,

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00:32:29.260 --> 00:32:30.410

Kyle Earing: and having

196

00:32:31.370 --> 00:32:33.350

Kyle Earing: toolkit of skills

197

00:32:33.650 --> 00:32:36.829

Kyle Earing: is just invaluable and critical to success in the world.

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00:32:37.930 --> 00:32:53.129

Kara Snyder: Absolutely. So you mentioned travel, You mentioned you, we the operations team. I think you know you have a lot going on. If I ask you to describe a typical day in the life, what would you tell me.



199

00:32:53.830 --> 00:33:10.169

Kyle Earing: Well, a day in the life is me, never being very far from either uh the telephone or or email um, you know. But you know, but I I do try very hard to balance

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00:33:10.230 --> 00:33:15.239

Kyle Earing: personal time as well as business. So you know, during business hours you

201

00:33:15.850 --> 00:33:27.920

Kyle Earing: for for me i'm very much a a more, a morning person, and you know, so I i'm fortunate that I can kind of get a lot of my desk cleared off before the office

202

00:33:28.180 --> 00:33:40.509

Kyle Earing: mit ctl and um comes in and and get their day started, so that i'm available more or less in a support capacity, and many of my my my true obligations for the day have been taken care of one hundred and fifty

203

00:33:40.820 --> 00:33:41.680

Kyle Earing: Um!

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00:33:41.810 --> 00:33:52.000

Kyle Earing: And then but you know i'll spend time in his staff meeting uh being a part of the executive team. Obviously there's a fair number of strategy type conversations,

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00:33:52.190 --> 00:34:01.110

Kyle Earing: the reviews of performance of the business and some of That's that strategy work that that's always going on.

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00:34:01.140 --> 00:34:13.480

Kyle Earing: Um, I'm having, you know, pulled into different supplier conversations, whether it be, you know, negotiating the next contract or talking about. You know, opportunities for growth and and

207

00:34:13.670 --> 00:34:32.419

Kyle Earing: erez agmoni business development, some of those kinds of things um, And then obviously, I've got the quality side that rolls up to me as well, which then you know it's. Hey? There's There's maybe been a little hiccup, or maybe there's an opportunity to do things differently, or do things better. And and how do we two hundred and fifty

208

00:34:32.429 --> 00:34:46.389

Kyle Earing: erez agmoni? It's not necessarily put a band aid on it. Now, how do we truly prevent it from happening and reoccurring in the future? So those are the the types of conversations that really make up my day categorically. Obviously there's, you know, boots one hundred and fifty

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00:34:46.500 --> 00:34:52.869

Kyle Earing: small things here and there that get sprinkled in occasionally. But you know, if I, as I think, about the the

210

00:34:53.800 --> 00:34:57.090

Kyle Earing: normal categories of my day. Those are the types of conversations.

211

00:34:57.910 --> 00:35:03.409

Kyle Earing: Um. And then i'd be remiss if I didn't mention finally, and probably the

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00:35:03.530 --> 00:35:09.629

Kyle Earing: the biggest category where I spend my time is with the people, I said. In. You know, in that measuring rule

213

00:35:09.920 --> 00:35:22.310

Kyle Earing: erez agmoni managing people is a lot of work. It's. It's very rewarding, but it it does take time, and you have to be personally committed to. You know the success of everyone. One hundred and fifty

214

00:35:22.330 --> 00:35:25.290

on your team to to really be a good man,

215

00:35:25.760 --> 00:35:32.739

Kyle Earing: um or people leader, and so I I I take that to to heart and try to make myself as as available

216

00:35:32.950 --> 00:35:36.579

Kyle Earing: possible to support them in their career journey.

217

00:35:36.770 --> 00:35:39.360

Kyle Earing: They grow and develop long, short term

218

00:35:39.510 --> 00:35:40.729

serving

219

00:35:40.960 --> 00:35:42.919

Kyle Earing: for serving the business, and

220

00:35:43.500 --> 00:35:48.719

Kyle Earing: there yet, but ultimately, you know, trying to prepare for their next opportunity.

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00:35:49.370 --> 00:35:50.480

Kyle Earing: That's coming at them now.

222

00:35:51.800 --> 00:36:09.540

Kara Snyder: Oh, I think that's great, and i'm. I'm sure the people on your team feel that, you know. I think that helps create a really impactful, highly functioning work environment. When you have a supervisor that is that committed to your success. So congratulations to you because I'm sure that helps you,

223

00:36:09.550 --> 00:36:13.709

Kara Snyder: creates that great environment for your people to come to work every day.

224

00:36:14.980 --> 00:36:24.839

Kara Snyder: So, listening to you, talk about this now. I'm. Curious. What is your favorite part of your job? You know It's a multi faceted job that you have. What is your favorite part,

225

00:36:25.580 --> 00:36:27.049

Kyle Earing: my favorite part

226

00:36:27.080 --> 00:36:31.739

Kyle Earing: is the is the learning. So I think, from you know,

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00:36:31.900 --> 00:36:34.730

Kyle Earing: back to to my college days,

228

00:36:34.840 --> 00:36:35.729

Kyle Earing: just like

229

00:36:35.840 --> 00:36:45.770

Kyle Earing: when you select that course out of the course Catalog. You kind of have an idea of what it's about, but until you're in it you really don't know, and so I think

230

00:36:46.270 --> 00:36:50.090

Kyle Earing: That's my favorite part of of learning. That

231

00:36:50.790 --> 00:37:02.920

Kyle Earing: of of my job is the learning it's, you know, going into an area that I might know just a little bit about. I know what the title is. I know what the gist might be, but then it's really just

232

00:37:02.960 --> 00:37:05.700

Kyle Earing: to figure out how something works.

233

00:37:06.580 --> 00:37:12.779

Kyle Earing: How can we make it better? Or how could it work for me or the and by me? I

234

00:37:13.250 --> 00:37:14.359

I save the business.

235

00:37:14.570 --> 00:37:19.259

Kyle Earing: Um! But that that is my favorite part. It's the ongoing learning.

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00:37:26.120 --> 00:37:33.260

Kara Snyder: Oh, that's awesome. Well, on the flip side of that, i'm curious. What is the most challenging thing about your job?

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00:37:34.330 --> 00:37:40.059

Kyle Earing: Well, I I probably could have took the easy way out and said, Um! The the

238

00:37:40.190 --> 00:37:51.829

Kyle Earing: the the variety right um could be the the most interesting and the most challenging. Um, but I think that the but that is the the truly, the most challenging part of my role.

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00:37:51.850 --> 00:38:00.319

Kyle Earing: So on the quality side, I head up the the compliance and the regulatory aspect of the products that the

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00:38:00.660 --> 00:38:05.499

Kyle Earing: you know we send into the marketplace, and keeping a breath of all of the regulate,

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00:38:06.040 --> 00:38:08.500

making sure that you know not only

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00:38:09.100 --> 00:38:10.909

Kyle Earing: are the members of my team

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00:38:10.940 --> 00:38:14.719

um up to speed on those, but also our production

244

00:38:15.260 --> 00:38:16.510

Kyle Earing: and production partners

245

00:38:17.380 --> 00:38:28.090

Kyle Earing: fully versed in in those requirements as well. So if that is probably the most challenging part it spends, it takes a lot of time to get through some of the the,

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00:38:28.610 --> 00:38:31.110

Kyle Earing: you know, as Fba

247

00:38:31.380 --> 00:38:33.129

Consumer Product Safety Commission, the

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00:38:33.510 --> 00:38:36.050

as they roll out new guidelines,

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00:38:36.080 --> 00:38:37.950

Kyle Earing: you know, trying to understand

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00:38:38.140 --> 00:38:40.049

Kyle Earing: all of the details.

251

00:38:40.190 --> 00:38:42.879

A fine print of water regulation



252

00:38:43.000 --> 00:38:46.269

Kyle Earing: entails, and how it applies to

253

00:38:47.000 --> 00:38:49.409

Kyle Earing: variety of products that we produce and

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00:38:49.790 --> 00:38:52.640

marketplace is definitely challenging.

255

00:38:52.690 --> 00:38:55.219

Kara Snyder: Oh, I bet I bet

256

00:38:55.230 --> 00:39:12.690

Kara Snyder: So I am curious. If there is a student listening that is interested in blank marketing after hearing you talk about it, how did they get involved with your company. Does your company offer internships? Do they hire, You know, a fair amount of entry level positions? What would that look like

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00:39:13.740 --> 00:39:23.409

Kyle Earing: for? Sure? Yeah. So I mean it's. It's a It's a mid-sized company located just outside of nashville tennessee. We've got a variety of

258

00:39:23.920 --> 00:39:35.040

Kyle Earing: um all of the kind of the gamut from you know the roles that you know roll up under me on my team on the operation side. Whether it be, you know, project management or

259

00:39:35.910 --> 00:39:39.540

Kyle Earing: warehousing logistics to e-commerce and

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00:39:39.670 --> 00:39:47.190

and web store details to you know your traditional sales type roles.

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00:39:47.400 --> 00:39:55.150

Kyle Earing: We've. We've got a variety of positions. We absolutely love to have interns. In. We typically try to have

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00:39:55.190 --> 00:40:00.199

Kyle Earing: an enter or two in the in the mix

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00:40:00.240 --> 00:40:18.490

Kyle Earing: um kind of year round. If if that are available and depending on on what schedules allow. Uh, but for for sure, during the summer we we always have the interns. Um, And then, as far as entry level positions, there are a few um that have those roles become available. You know we love to hire

264

00:40:19.450 --> 00:40:25.180

Kyle Earing: fresh graduates that, you know, are bringing their their college knowledge with them

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00:40:25.700 --> 00:40:27.920

Kyle Earing: and ready to embark on a

266

00:40:28.720 --> 00:40:35.860

Kyle Earing: fresh career journey with Blink. And you know there's There's obviously some foundational principles. You know that you,

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00:40:36.040 --> 00:40:45.359

Kyle Earing: the the strong work ethic, and a positive outlook and attitude can carry you a long way, rather regardless of kind of what your background is.

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00:40:45.400 --> 00:40:47.059

If you have those two things.

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00:40:47.500 --> 00:40:48.590

Kyle Earing: We found it

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00:40:49.110 --> 00:40:51.629

foundational, and we can almost teach

271

00:40:51.790 --> 00:40:52.859

individual

272

00:40:53.410 --> 00:40:54.370

successful in

273

00:40:57.680 --> 00:41:16.759

Kara Snyder: That's great. Thank you so much for sharing. Well, we are going to finish with the speed round, which is, you know, my favorite part. I love to hear what people say when they just go with their first instinct on these questions. Uh. So I did hear you say that you're a morning person, so tell me, do you favor coffee, tea, or something else entirely?

274

00:41:17.750 --> 00:41:20.850

Kyle Earing: Uh, I am a coffee person.

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00:41:21.940 --> 00:41:29.359

Kyle Earing: How do you take it? Black or fancy? Uh, I I drink my coffee black, so I guess

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00:41:29.400 --> 00:41:32.429

I I I acquired never, you know,

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00:41:32.700 --> 00:41:45.730

Kyle Earing: ventured into, you know, flavored creamers, or anything crazy like that. Um, So I just I guess coffee black is, is It's the way it goes fair enough. Tell me. What's your favorite holiday?

278

00:41:46.790 --> 00:41:59.130

Kyle Earing: Um! Christmas is is my favorite holiday. I always enjoy getting gifts and and giving gifts. And now that I have a family, the the excitement and

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00:41:59.200 --> 00:42:05.559

Kyle Earing: anticipation of Christmas with with my younger kids. Um hand found Christmas.

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00:42:06.440 --> 00:42:14.810

Kara Snyder: Yeah, it's a very special time that's for sure. What's the last thing you watched on Tv. Or do you watch Tv? Maybe I should start there.

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00:42:15.000 --> 00:42:30.719

Kyle Earing: Uh, I don't. I rarely watch much Tv. So usually I have uh some some publications that i'll I'll follow. I'll try to catch the the Evening News at time permits, but that's about the extent of of television

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00:42:30.980 --> 00:42:32.260

that that I catch

283

00:42:32.790 --> 00:42:37.960

Kara Snyder: fair enough. You listen to podcasts or music, any any good recommendations,

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00:42:39.090 --> 00:42:48.079

Kyle Earing: you know I I do listen to occasional podcasts here and there. Um, my my favorite go to um, you know, just because

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00:42:48.090 --> 00:43:04.740

Kyle Earing: my my day to day job takes me outside of of the ag industry I I really enjoy listening to successful farming daily. Um, It kind of gives me a a little bit of a a taste of what the current themes and trends are in

286

00:43:04.750 --> 00:43:14.539

Kyle Earing: agriculture from kind of the the news stories to you know the markets et cetera. So that's my favorite. Go-to podcast as as time permits.

287

00:43:14.600 --> 00:43:18.389

Kara Snyder: I love that it kind of brings everything full circle for us.

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00:43:18.980 --> 00:43:21.740

Kara Snyder: What's the best trip you've ever taken

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00:43:23.060 --> 00:43:29.280

Kyle Earing: the best trip that I ever took? I had the opportunity

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00:43:29.310 --> 00:43:40.770

Kyle Earing: to go to Arizona for some scientific meetings, and I paired that with, since I was in the close proximity to a visit to the the Grand Canyon,

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00:43:40.780 --> 00:43:49.890

Kyle Earing: and that was just a fantastic experience. The if you anyone that's seen the Grand Canyon or seen photos, can, you

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00:43:49.910 --> 00:43:58.189

can kind of understand how breathtaking and beautiful it can be to be there in person, for for me was

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00:43:58.340 --> 00:43:59.950

Kyle Earing: definitely

294

00:44:00.100 --> 00:44:01.200

Kyle Earing: top of my list.

295

00:44:01.460 --> 00:44:02.669

Kara Snyder: Nice.

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00:44:02.880 --> 00:44:09.619

So this next one, I think, is hard. If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing. What would it be?

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00:44:12.410 --> 00:44:15.149

Kyle Earing: I think, for me? It would be time,

298

00:44:16.110 --> 00:44:19.250

Kyle Earing: I think that's that's the one thing that

299

00:44:19.450 --> 00:44:22.419

Kyle Earing: I always seem to to come short.

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00:44:23.480 --> 00:44:32.549

Kyle Earing: Come up with is is time, whether it be a few extra minutes to spend with family, whether it be just a few more minutes before the next meeting

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00:44:32.760 --> 00:44:44.450

Kyle Earing: conference. Call. Whether it be, you know, a few more minutes, maybe, before I have to catch my next flight. That that would be the the one thing that I I wish I could carry around in my pocket, and just

302

00:44:45.220 --> 00:44:47.029

sprinkle out from time to time

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00:44:47.440 --> 00:44:49.060

Kara Snyder: Great answer

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00:44:49.160 --> 00:44:54.749

Kara Snyder: well, and the last question is kind of hard, too. Avanti's gondola, or pub cheese walls.



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00:44:55.940 --> 00:45:08.760

Kara Snyder: I love that I love that question so anytime I back uh and have the opportunity I love to. Uh to swing by of these gondola hands down for me.

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00:45:08.770 --> 00:45:29.039

Kara Snyder: That's fantastic. Well, thanks so much for being here, Kyle. It was great to talk to you. I appreciate all the advice you were able to give us and give our students that are listening. Uh, that was Kyle Airing, the Vice President of Quality and Operations for blank marketing, join us next time on the podcast for more stories from our cast alumni.