

Kelly Savoie ([00:00](#)):

Hello, Clear Skies Ahead listeners. This is Kelly Savoie, and I'm hoping you can take a moment of your time to rate and review our show wherever you listen to podcasts. We have produced over 100 episodes and you can help us reach even more individuals that will benefit from the diverse experiences shared by our guests. Thanks so much for listening, and I hope you enjoy this new episode.

Welcome to the American Meteorological Society's podcast series, Clear Skies Ahead: Conversations About Careers in Meteorology and Beyond. I'm Kelly Savoie, and I'm here with Emma Collins, and we'll be your hosts. We're excited to give you the opportunity to step into the shoes of an expert working in weather, water, and climate sciences.

Emma Collins ([00:53](#)):

We're happy to introduce today's guest, Susie Martin, President and Meteorologist of Praedictix in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Welcome, Susie. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Susie Martin ([01:03](#)):

Thank you for having me.

Kelly Savoie ([01:04](#)):

Susie, could you tell us a little bit about what sparked your interest in meteorology and how it influenced your educational path?

Susie Martin ([01:09](#)):

Sure. Ever since I was a little girl, I loved science. I remember my parents had a science textbook, and I would always flip to the Earth Science section. I love learning about volcanoes and weather, and I would just read and reread it over and over again. And oceans, all that stuff fascinated me. So when it came time to pick a major in college, it was between geology and meteorology, and I thought maybe the weather would pay the bills a little better than studying rocks, if I'm honest. I didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do with that in the beginning, but so I chose meteorology and I went to the University of Miami, which is a great, a great experience.

Emma Collins ([01:54](#)):

So what opportunities did you pursue that you knew would be beneficial to securing a job in your profession?

Susie Martin ([01:59](#)):

Well, like I said in the beginning, I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do. I did know that initially my thought was maybe leaning towards research and academia, but my second year of college, we actually toured the local NBC6 station in Miami and the chief meteorologist, Roland Steadham, who was there at the time, gave us a wonderful tour and I thought it was the coolest thing. And by the way, rest in peace, Roland, because he did die tragically just a few weeks ago, actually. So I was very sad to hear that news, but it was a great experience and I thought it was really, really interesting. It's not a career that I would've chosen initially, especially because I was usually kind of more of a shy kid, not really much of a public speaker type, so it was kind of shocking for everyone that that's what I wanted to do.

[\(02:52\)](#):

So from then on, I right away tried to secure internships. So I did a total of three during my college years in broadcasting, and that really opened a lot of doors, A, because I was able to access technology that you don't get from home and less than now, because before versus now, because the times have changed so much, there's so much more technology available at home. But at the time, especially having access to that and a green screen and cameras was really helpful to build a resume tape, and then also networking with other people in the broadcasting industry. And that actually followed me through my career. There's people that I even recently connect with that I interned with them a long time ago and somehow our paths are crossing again. So I'd say those internships were really key and the networking part of it, just getting to know as many people as you can really opened a lot of doors for me over time.

[\(03:52\)](#):

Kelly Savoie ([03:53](#)):

And so how did you get over that fear? Like you said, you were kind of shy. I mean, I cannot stand public speaking. It's horrifying to me. So were you just surprised that it didn't bother you when you were in front of the green screen?

Susie Martin ([04:07](#)):

It definitely was shocking to me that I didn't find the camera as scary as it is in front of a crowd. In fact, even to this day, even though I do quite a bit of public speaking, even now I still get more nervous in front of people than I would. I could probably do - in front of a camera - in front of...no matter what the network is, I wouldn't even get that nervous. But when you're talking about people in front of me, yeah, that's a little scarier. But over time, you just build that confidence and it's all about knowing what you're talking about. So I think I just was able to push through. In fact, one thing that I did do proactively, which is actually something I would probably recommend, anybody who's probably on the shyer side, I put myself out there and I took an acting class in college.

Emma Collins ([04:58](#)):

Oh, fun.

Susie Martin ([04:59](#)):

Yeah. I was like, I need to push through this fear. I need to be able to just put myself in an uncomfortable position. So that was a scary class to take, but it was actually a lot of fun and it helped. It did help a lot, push through some of that fear and face it head on. It gets less scary the more you do it.

Kelly Savoie ([05:19](#)):

So what was your first job in the field and how did you end up at Praedictix?

Susie Martin ([05:24](#)):

Yeah. My first job was with a Fox affiliate in Iowa as a meteorologist, broadcast meteorologist. And so I moved from warm, sunny South Florida to Iowa in November.

Emma Collins ([05:40](#)):

Oh, wow.

Kelly Savoie ([05:41](#)):

And culture shock.

Susie Martin ([05:42](#)):

Culture shock. And I had never really seen snow in ... I mean, I did when I was a baby, but I had not really experienced that in any memories or anything. So that was really my true first winter. And I remember the first time snowflakes were falling and I was like a little kid. I was like, "This is so cool." And here I am like a meteorologist. I'm supposed to forecast for it and talk about something I really didn't even experience in my life fully. That was a fun experience. It was interesting because they were a Fox affiliate, but then they also had newscasts that they hosted for other areas in the country.

([06:20](#)):

So early on, I was able to experience forecasting for different parts of the country. And then from there, after I was there three years, and then that's when I moved on to Praedictix after getting a phone call and asking if I'd be interested to join this crazy adventure that we've been on.

Emma Collins ([06:42](#)):

So what is this crazy adventure you've been on? What is Praedictix? And could you describe a typical day on the job?

Susie Martin ([06:48](#)):

Yeah. Boy, we have a long history. So Praedictix launched in 2008 and I've been here since day one. So we're going on almost 20 years.

Kelly Savoie ([06:57](#)):

Oh, wow.

Susie Martin ([06:58](#)):

Yeah. I was hired as a meteorologist to join the team of meteorologists by Paul Douglas, who's the founder. He is an entrepreneur and also was a chief meteorologist in these markets in the Twin Cities and then also in Chicago. He had a stint there. So he's very well known, especially in Minnesota. I didn't know who he was. So when I got an email from him, I'm like, who's this guy? And he's starting this new business. And it sounded really risky because it wasn't anything like traditional TV. And I was like, well, this is interesting. I'm not sure how real this is. But I went to tour the facility and it was beautiful. It was a multimillion dollar studio. It was really innovative technology, top of the line everything. And it was like touch screens before touch screens were even a thing. iPads didn't exist. It was really, really cool.

([07:48](#)):

And I was like, okay, I'm going to try this. It's interesting and new and different. And I joined the team. So the original thought for Praedictix was to outsource broadcast weather, basically. The rationale being you don't need, you can just produce weather segments now from anywhere really, if you have webcams. And that's more so true now than it was back then. I feel like we were a little bit ahead of the game, but in a nutshell, Praedictix is a Minnesota-based weather communications company. So along with broadcast, this is where we started at, organically we began to grow consulting, the consulting side of the business as well, and then eventually forensic weather analysis. So that's why, and as broadcasters, the team here, I'd like to consider us masters of communications really. So that really translated beautifully to the consulting world. And that's where we're at now. We focus on client briefings, corporate risk management, construction firms.

([08:53](#)):

We work with renewable energy. And then like I said, forensic weather analysis, so attorneys and public adjusters, as well as the broadcast side. And we produce weather

segments for markets all over the country, but also outside the US, Caribbean, Central America, and Europe.

Kelly Savoie ([09:10](#)):

So speaking of forensic meteorology, you've served as a meteorological expert in over 100 weather related disputes. How did you get involved in forensic meteorology? And is there a particular case that was very memorable to you?

Susie Martin ([09:26](#)):

That is an interesting story, how that began because I'd never done it before, but Paul Douglas, and I think anybody who's served as a longtime meteorologist in any market for broadcasting occasionally has been inquired about this, serving as a weather expert. Sometimes attorneys reach out to the local meteorologists to see if they can help. And that certainly was the case with Paul. So Paul took on a couple of cases and a couple of more would come in and he just honestly was so busy and he didn't ... He eventually was looking for help on the cases. So I started to help him out. And then there was this one case that was very involved and he just honestly could not ... didn't have the time. There was a lot of time commitment. So he handed it off to me and that was how I started.

([10:17](#)):

And then it just snowballed from there. It started out with a couple of reports a year, to doubling that, and then doubling that, and then it just continued to grow. Yeah. It's hard to believe that I've done so many, but from where I started too, I really was very green and didn't really know what I was doing at first, but boy, you learn very fast. And in terms of a memorable case, I'd say, and this is actually the one that was handed to me as one of my first cases that I did almost exclusively on my own, which was to this day, one of the most intimidating ones I've ever been on. And it was a defamation suit. So I'm not even sure how it ended, which is kind of...anybody who does forensic meteorology will know that you rarely hear about what the outcome was.

([11:08](#)):

You just hope for the best. Hopefully you helped the folks involved in sharing the truth and bringing forth objective meteorological information. But this case was a defamation case because somebody was making weather claims to support their business and there was an article or something in the media that did not, that basically called them out. So there was a lawsuit and the amount of intensity that was involved in the case was, to this day, like I said, one of the top ones, because there was a table full of attorneys and a lot of angry people. I mean, I wasn't the target of it, but boy, it was really, really intense. And yeah, a defamation suit of all things, that's a unique one because most of them are insurance disputes, personal injury, lots of bouncy houses. Bouncy houses are often ... Yeah, I've done several of those.

([12:12](#)):

Personal injury, mainly slip and falls, but yeah, the bouncy houses come to mind too. We've done a good handful of those.

Kelly Savoie ([12:19](#)):

I guess having the most intimidating and horrible one right from the beginning is good and bad. Bad because you, probably horrified you, but good. Everything after that probably seemed not so bad, a little easier.

Susie Martin ([12:35](#)):

Yeah. Those experiences really shape you. If you can handle some of the heat, being cross-examined is really scary. It can be very intimidating. And when you're working with lawyers, they play different - some of them can play different tricks on you. Some of them are just asking questions, but others try to play psychology tricks and pick apart how you said that, this, that, or the other. And it's easy to get defensive when you're answering questions and you have to keep it short. You have to keep it sweet to the point and stick to your facts and not deviate because once you start to kind of babble or get nervous and get defensive, then they'll start to pick you apart.

Kelly Savoie ([13:21](#)):

Yeah. That must be difficult though if they're trying to undermine your credibility or your expertise, it must be difficult not to get a little defensive.

Susie Martin ([13:32](#)):

A hundred percent. I have to hold my tongue a lot of the time because sometimes they try to make you mad intentionally. So they'll say something that hurts. They try to attack your credibility, but they're doing that on purpose. They're not doing that because they really think that. So those are just tactics that are played at times that you have to learn how to navigate. And that's really the only way to do that is obviously with training, but just experience, you learn as you go.

Emma Collins ([14:06](#)):

So not only are you an effective communicator who holds her ground, you are also a bilingual meteorologist fluent in both English and Spanish. Have you found this to be a huge advantage in your career? And do you think organizations are seeking out job seekers with this skill?

Susie Martin ([14:20](#)):

Yes. I wouldn't be where I was today if I weren't bilingual because my first job, I was hired as a bilingual meteorologist because they were producing newscasts for Telemundo, TV Azteca and Univision. And so they hired me to do weather in Spanish also, as well as English. Same thing with Praedictix, which at the time, we started out as Weather Nation. We're not affiliated with WeatherNation that currently runs, but we did launch that channel back in 2010. But at the time, there was interest in pursuing Spanish broadcasting weather as well. So I was hired because of that skill in both instances. And being bilingual is always an asset, I feel like. Even if companies don't explicitly need it for the role or say it's required, it's never a negative thing. It's always a positive thing. So I feel like, yes, it helped a lot. It helped shape my career, for sure.

Kelly Savoie ([15:22](#)):

You're also the general manager and climate analyst for Climatrends, and that's a firm focused on climate scenario analysis. Could you tell our listeners a bit about your role there?

Susie Martin ([15:34](#)):

Yes. So that is ... We partnered with an expert in sustainability where he wanted to try to nose into this industry of what they call TCFD reporting, which is for financial disclosures and producing climate scenario analysis reports. So this is mandated in Europe. I don't believe it is in the United States, but a lot of people are doing it. A lot of corporations are doing it for ethical reasons, if you will, or for, I guess some can argue to appease the investors because climate is of course affecting everybody. So when we launched this, it was to try to hone in on new, better technology to produce these more in- depth climate scenario analyses because they were very vague and very large scale as climate modeling often is, but there's use of statistical downscaling that can be used now to kind of hone in on some more key markets of specific businesses that can give some more insight into the impact of climate change on their business.

([16:47](#)):

So that's what Climatrends focused on. And my role specifically was, I guess you could call it project manager. So these reports would take six plus months to do. So it's just making sure things go along. I would write the majority of them, but also it's connecting with experts, climate scientists, because I'm not a climate scientist, but I was able to connect with experts in climate science and specific industries and trying to bring that information to these enterprises. So kind of that liaison, if you will, and put that all together in a report for customers.

Kelly Savoie ([17:27](#)):

And do you think that there's an increase of organizations wanting this type of service?

Susie Martin ([17:34](#)):

Yeah. I'd say, well, now there's a whole bunch of players and I feel like a lot of the larger corporations have their team, they have their sustainability team now that tackles a lot of these issues. And you've got the big companies like Deloitte's, for example, that do a very comprehensive climate analysis that goes beyond just weather, which is the physical risk side that we specialize in, but also of course, economic impacts and change in laws and policy. So yeah, it's really grown the last 10 years especially. It's become a big part in the business world for sure.

Emma Collins ([18:12](#)):

So Susie, you have earned both the AMS Certified Broadcast Meteorologist and Certified Consulting Meteorologist designation. Congrats, by the way.

Susie Martin ([18:22](#)):

Thank you.

Emma Collins ([18:23](#)):

Do you find that holding these certifications has benefited you in your career?

Susie Martin ([18:27](#)):

Oh, tremendously. I think the CBM was great. I don't even remember. I got that a while ago, but I was so proud of myself. That was not an easy test.

Kelly Savoie ([18:36](#)):

It's a big deal.

Susie Martin ([18:37](#)):

It's a big deal. And it's nice to have that. I feel like as somebody now that hires people, it's something that I don't necessarily require it, but when I see somebody has it, I feel really good about it. I'm like, "This is a huge plus." It basically tells me that you've passed the sniff test, you can tell stories. So it's kind of makes me relax a little bit more when I'm watching their videos and everything, or if it's a broadcast on the broadcasting side, because that's a huge thing. Can this person communicate effectively on air? And I think that's been greatly beneficial to have. And then the CCM, which I recently got, and I'm so proud of it, because let me tell you, studying with two small kids is not as easy as it used to be when you didn't have kids.

([19:34](#)):

It was immediately beneficial, especially my forensic work and consulting work. In forensics, for example, when I'm working on these cases, a lot of times there are opposing...opposing counsel will have their own expert meteorologist, and a lot of times they are PhDs, they're CCMs as well. So it's just I'm able to ... There's that equal playing field. When you're working with public adjusters, for example, there's an umpire that is the ultimate person that decides the outcome and he's listening to both sides of the argument. It could be something that boils down to looking on paper, which meteorologist is more credible. And it might come down to this person has this special certification, this one doesn't, so maybe I'm going to believe this person more. Because sometimes there are differing opinions and oftentimes that's kind of the crux of everything. So it's tricky because weather's not black and white, especially when you're looking back and there's limited data.

([20:36](#)):

It's not like we have weather sensors every square mile in the country. So yeah, it's been immediately beneficial to me in my line of work. So I'm very proud to have it and very honored to have both. It's great.

Kelly Savoie ([20:48](#)):

And you had mentioned that you do hiring occasionally or maybe more often than occasionally. So do you have any advice for meteorology students looking to secure positions in the field? Are there good opportunities in the private sector for new graduates?

Susie Martin ([21:05](#)):

I think so. I think the challenge inherently with meteorologies, it's interesting because I feel like there should be many more of us and lots of opportunities, but because weather affects everything and everyone, but it is very competitive. It's a very competitive space and very niche-y field. So I feel like the landscape is inherently very competitive and you need to stand out. So I would say you need to be able to communicate. That is number one. This is not just for broadcasting, this is for most meteorological roles, unless you're like a model scientist that's just literally working on the modeling side and you don't really have to talk to anybody. But most of these are, you are asked to communicate the weather. So that means you need to be able to present, you need to know how to communicate weather to a variety of different audiences that may not know what you're talking about, have no idea about meteorology.

([22:07](#)):

So you need to be able to convey more complex concepts effectively. You need to know also how to ... So that's all spoken, right? But then there's also the written side of that.

So what I see a lot is, are people that might communicate very well verbally, but written not so much. And I really push that now when we have interns, it's like, "You guys need to learn how to write. You got to learn how to write well and learn how to write briefings. Can you write weather analysis?" And basically those research papers that you're writing at school, that's literally what I do every day now. In my job, I'm writing research papers and it's a skillset that is, I think, huge for meteorology. You may not be writing 40 page reports, but you will at some point have to explain the weather to somebody.

([23:00](#)):

And it may not be in person, it may not be a presentation. It may just have to be an email or something. And you need to be able to write well and communicate the weather well in all different ways, so I say focus on that.

Kelly Savoie ([23:16](#)):

So if they have courses that are offered on technical writing, research, public speaking, anything like that would probably benefit them. And do you think it's better for students to have graduate degrees or does it not matter so much as long as they have the skills you're looking for?

Susie Martin ([23:41](#)):

That's interesting. So in my specific area, I can't, I don't, when I hire people I don't really require a master's or doctorate, but there's certainly other aspects of meteorology where that is wanted. So it really all depends on the field that they want to get into. So I'd say for most jobs that I'm seeing out there, an undergraduate is enough. And if you want a more specialized field, yes, you probably need to look into furthering your education. But yeah, I think really the big thing is getting work and getting that experience and that will just hopefully set you on that path and you'll have that natural momentum with the experience that you're gaining because that's really where the number one ... All those skills gained when you're actually working and doing, and getting paid to do something, that's really the big thing.

Kelly Savoie ([24:43](#)):

So all you students out there, there's opportunities to have poster presentations.

Susie Martin ([24:48](#)):

Yes!

Kelly Savoie ([24:49](#)):

...and talks at the AMS annual meeting. No, seriously, I'm sure if you see a resume where you have students who've already presented at a professional conference, that would be a huge leg up.

Susie Martin ([25:02](#)):

I would look at that and think, yes, that's amazing. And networking, never ... People say this about anything, right? Networking is everything and that's so true. Get to know people, those internships, whatever's out there, definitely worth it, worth it, worth trying to get in there and meet people.

Emma Collins ([25:22](#)):

Well, Susie, we're so grateful for everything you've told us about your career. However, before you go, we always ask our guests one last fun question at the end of the show. So what is your favorite hobby?

Susie Martin ([25:34](#)):

I love taking pictures. I don't call myself a photographer. I'm not like a professional one, but I'm amateur. I've loved taking photos since I was very little. I would steal my dad's. I'm dating myself, but it's still my dad's camera and it was film back then and they didn't like ... I remember explicitly getting scolded because I was wasting the film, but I feel like I see things in pictures. And now that I have a family, very much love to capture those memories. And then I also scrapbook those photos digitally actually. So I love doing something with the pictures and making crafts and stuff. So yeah, that's my big hobby. I spend a lot of time doing that.

Kelly Savoie ([26:18](#)):

Yeah. I'm just a terrible photographer. I look at some people's ... They just use their cell phone and their pictures come out so fantastic. And I'm dating myself too, but I remember the cameras where you had to add the flash and it's so old-fashioned. And now I'm sure there's so much great technology to help you just take the best photograph ever. And of course, now we have Photoshop and all that good stuff.

Susie Martin ([26:50](#)):

Well, the smartphones are ... Those cameras are getting amazing, quite amazing.

Kelly Savoie ([26:54](#)):

Yeah. And the scrapbooking is ... I find that hard to organize my photos.

Susie Martin ([26:59](#)):

Yes. Oh, that takes up so much time. Yeah, that's not fun either. And if you let too much time go, especially when you're taking as many pictures as I do, it's so overwhelming because then you have thousands to organize and it's not fun. So I try to be disciplined and keep up with it.

Emma Collins ([27:17](#)):

When you say digital scrapbooking, is that like Instagram or is it like an actual digital program that you use?

Susie Martin ([27:24](#)):

It's a digital program. Yeah. And you can make photo books basically. So I make these memory books. Yeah. It's great. I think it's forever.com. I'm not a sponsor or anything, but they're wonderful. They have a great platform there, great software program for it. So I love it.

Kelly Savoie ([27:43](#)):

Yeah. I'm one of those people who just waits. I literally have probably 15 vacations with photos just sitting there that I've forgotten about and I probably don't even remember what I took.

Susie Martin ([27:55](#)):

Yeah.

Kelly Savoie ([27:55](#)):

I really need to get on that. But what was the site again, Forever?

Susie Martin ([28:00](#)):

Oh, forever.com. Yeah. They have a program called Artisan and it's fantastic. You even pay for artwork in there. So it's like having little stickers and little frames and stuff.

Kelly Savoie ([28:12](#)):

Oh, wow. Cool.

Susie Martin ([28:13](#)):

Yeah. So you can ... It's nice because you don't have to worry about wasting paper like, "Oh, I messed this up by cutting it. "

Kelly Savoie ([28:19](#)):

True.

Susie Martin ([28:20](#)):

"Not quite right" and gluing, you don't have to deal with any of that. It's all on your computer. And then it prints out beautiful books. Highly recommend.

Kelly Savoie ([28:27](#)):

Well, thanks so much for joining us, Susie, and sharing your work experiences with us.

Susie Martin ([28:28](#))

Thank you. Thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

Emma Collins ([28:34](#)):

Well, that's our show for today. Please join us next time, Rain or Shine.

Kelly Savoie ([28:38](#)):

Clear Skies Ahead. Conversations about Careers in Meteorology and Beyond is a podcast by the American Meteorological Society. Our show is edited by Johnny Lay. Technical Direction is provided by Peter Killelea. Our theme music is composed and performed by Steve Savoie, and the show is hosted by Emma Collins and Kelly Savoie. You can learn more about the show online at www.ametsoc.org/clearskies, and you can contact us at skypodcast@ametsoc.org. If you have any feedback, or would like to become a future guest.