A lululemon Counsel’s Flexible Work-Life Balance

Interviews and Profiles



On a crisp, idyllic afternoon, you might find Cameron Clark jogging along the seawall, which hugs Stanley Park for 10 kilometers along Vancouver Harbor. He may be heading to a spin, yoga, or CrossFit class with his coworkers. Then there are times when he's hiking Grouse Mountain, which the locals call "nature's stair climber," for a business meeting.

He's not a personal trainer or park ranger. He's an in-house attorney at lululemon, a Vancouver-based athletic wear corporation. There, and in Vancouver in general, they take their health and wellness seriously. All lululemon employees are encouraged to spend approximately an hour a day working out. "It's a part of my job," he explains, "and it's something I personally enjoy."

Which is the perfect mindset for a lululemon ambassador. That's not Clark's official title — it's actually legal counsel — but that's what lululemon calls any employee. These aren't to be confused with the "big-A 'Ambassadors,' who are influencers in their local communities that embody lululemon's values but aren't employees," Clark clarifies. But whether they're an in-store employee or a big-name athlete, embracing the company's brand is essential to lululemon's culture, from its sustainability mission to its active lifestyle.

It's fitting, then, that lululemon's motto is the "SweatLife," which is not limited to just their marketing collateral, on-site circuit training, or Beyoncé-themed dance classes. Their motto is also apparent on their ever-popular lightweight athletic gear. As a lululemon ambassador, Clark makes sure to wear his lululemon pride on his sleeves.

So much so, he tries to sport at least one lululemon item a day. His favorite? It's a tough call, but he prefers the breathable, sweat-wicking Oxford shirts. The business casual silhouette, made with athletic wear fabric, seamlessly blends into his on-the-go workday. If lululemon counsel had a uniform, this would be it.

His love of lululemon began with his Canadian pride. In fact, it's what led him to leave his previous jobs at Canadian branches at multinational corporations to work at an office that's Canadian through and through.

Originally, he's from the picturesque, seaside town of Victoria, British Columbia on Vancouver Island. There, he was raised by his dad, a civil servant who worked for the British Columbia provincial government, and his mother, a high school counselor.

As an undergrad, he majored in political science, which seems like the ideal trajectory for a law career, but he wasn't always on path to become an attorney. In fact, he only had a "vague notion" of pursing law. During his final years of undergrad, however, he realized that he didn't want to earn a PhD or become a professor, but instead decided on law school because it provided a wider range of interests while still touching on law.

He then enrolled in Queen's University, where his wife was attending medical school. After earning his law degree from their Faculty of Law program, he articled in litigation at a large firm on Bay Street in Toronto. This specialty, of course, is far from what Clark is doing now at lululemon, but the decision was conducive for his personal life; his wife had two more years of medical school nearby in Kingston.

Though he continued to look for jobs at boutique firms in Kingston, he hit a wall. "It became clear that small firms weren't impressed with my big firm articling experience, and they weren't interested in investing in someone who wasn't going to stick around."

Clark then looked for jobs at larger firms in Toronto. Unfortunately, around this time the recession of 2008 hit and the economy plummeted, limiting his job prospects. Soon he found an opening for a recent JD graduate at Kellogg's. From there he joined the legal counsel team at MasterCard, where he continued to approve advertising materials and manage litigation portfolios.

Though his decision to work in larger, corporate firms was initially done for what he refers to as "practicality," it luckily transpired into the perfect fit, both professionally and personally.

"In my experience, in-house is very collegial, which suits my personality really well," he reveals. "Frankly, I enjoy the process of working with people from all sorts of different parts of businesses, as opposed to working exclusively with lawyers."

His affability certainly helps in his day-to-day as he fosters relationships with his coworkers from all departments at lululemon's headquarters. "It always pays to be reasonable and approachable," he says. This mentality, he believes, helps to find compromise with coworkers, thus strengthening credibility.

The tight-knit camaraderie is necessary for the 10 member legal team, which shares an open concept office. They typically arrive to the office bright and early around 8:30 or 9 a.m., since lululemon headquarters is based in the West Coast. Clark, his boss, and a paralegal are commercially focused, so the bulk of the work is "contract review, drafting, and negotiating."

Then there's compliance and risk. The majority of risk he faces is with production, and if their materials don't live up to specs. "That's our biggest risk for sure because so much of our brand promises in the quality of what we give."

Not all risks are so standard-issue, however. Occasionally he has to procure insurance for beer carts and axe-throwing at sponsored events. Compared to his previous jobs at Kellogg's and MasterCard, he has a much more diverse workload. "You never know what's going to cross your desk, which keeps it interesting," he says.

One second he might be supporting procurement in running an RFP, but then at a moment's notice he might get a call from the marketing department and branding community about sponsoring a half-marathon in Vancouver. From there he liaises with the insurance department to secure insurance for different activities, such as free yoga, a postrace festival, bands playing at different stages during the run, and even a beer garden.

In fact, lululemon has a beer they make with local brewery Stanley Park Brewery. "You know, I didn't take beer law in law school or anything," he jokes. He did say he is developing his professional life with ACC events. "I'm looking at either going to the San Francisco Annual Conference in October or the mini MBA in Boston."

When he's not advancing his career or juggling a unique and often exciting workload, he's taking advantage of the work-life benefits that lululemon offers. The highlight, of course, is the proximity to the seawall, his favorite place in both Vancouver and Canada. "The seawall is at the foot of the street where our office is. Running along there is a real privilege."

Getting To Know… Cameron Clark

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY?

Going to the playground with my children, two boys who are four and two. We're always running around, and I actually sustained some injuries once, so that counts as a workout.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN LAW SCHOOL THAT YOU STILL USE TODAY?

The most practical thing that I learned from law school that I still use is the notion of critical thinking to approach problems.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

I am really in love with barbecue, so Texas-style brisket would be my favorite food right now. It's never far from my mind.

Karmen Fox



Web Content Editor

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