

**Patagonia as a Potential Employer:
Recommendation Report**

Alliance University
Business Communications
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Dear Alliance University Career Services,

The intentions of this letter is to discuss the recent research done on a potential employer, Patagonia. Though this company may seem to fit the mold of many overly large organizations, this specific one seemed to stand alone in the way it elevated values outside of simply gross income. As someone who deeply values the environment and loves elevating the importance of nature focused hobbies as apart of my life, I found it an interesting company to evaluate in a deeper way.

This document contains a five page research paper that evaluates the companies actions in a detailed and categorized manor. There will also will be a table of contents, list of illustrations, the research content, a preliminary draft, and my cited sources. As an overview of the detailed combination of research, Patagonia was reviewed as a very high quality potential employer. The research, shocked me to recognize the communal connection and freedoms these employees experience being apart of such a large company.

As a conclusion to this letter, I would highly recommend this company to those who value the nature and outdoors, protecting the environment, a connected community, and want to be challenged in life's many adventures. This company could really benefit many students here at Alliance University. So after a detailed review of this company, I would encourage other students to potentially try and get their foot in the door with Patagonia.

Sincerely,
Emma Todd

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Patagonia: The Potential Employer



Patagonia was established by Yvon Chouinard who was an adventurer many years before he became a businessman. Through efforts to start an equipment company for mountain climbing, he opened the first store located in Ventura California in 1973. Fifty years later, the small store has grown to become a multi-billion dollar company that produces apparel and equipment for countless outdoor enthusiasts. The product goes much further than just mountain climbing and extends to surfing, yoga, and so much more. The success of this company does not stop with the economic endeavors. Patagonia has made it known globally that their culture is key to their success. By encouraging their employees to live life outside of their 9 to 5 through flexible hours, fantastic benefits, encouragement for taking up hobbies, and being involved in different environments, they have become revolutionary. Their mission and impact on the globe is another characteristic that matches the Patagonia name. Through generous contributions and

efforts to inform society on the ecological stakes of our world, Patagonia keeps their word on putting the Earth first. So to truly evaluate the quality this potential employer could be, one must dissect these core characteristics in detail. By reflecting on the global impact, community impact, environmental impact, and company opportunities, one can see if this organization is truly a quality employer.

The community is the most unique aspect of Patagonia. It has been so innovative to the culture of business that it leaves large companies such as Coca Cola and Chick-Fil-A stunned; deeply desiring connections to learn their strategies. The founder of Patagonia, Yvon Chouinard, published an autobiography called *Let My People Go Surfing*, which is at the core of the business's strategy in cultivating the workplace culture¹. Through offering countless intentional fringe benefits that are there to improve the life of their employees. For a short list, Patagonia offers employers extremely flexible work hours to take a two hour surf break or to go on a long bike ride before jumping back into the job. Yet the list doesn't stop there, Patagonia's offices have showers on site, healthy organic food cafes, and free bikes or scooters to use². To promote fifty percent women in their business, they offer maternity leave and paternity leave. Their onsite childcare is also a huge factor in keeping that ratio fifty fifty, by having 100% returning females these jobs through these benefits.³ So through deep trust in their employees and through pouring into their lively-hoods they have ultimately increased the gross of their company altogether. To allow for such trusting relationships in the workplace and to know their benefit investments will

¹Dean, Grace. "Patagonia's Founder Just Gave the Company Away - the Latest Unusual Step in a History of Corporate Innovations, from Being an Early Adopter of Paid Parental Leave to Donating \$145 Million to the Environment." Business Insider, Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/patagonia-yvon-chouinard-environment-staff-benefits-sustainability-childcare-organic-donate-2022-9>.

²Schulte, Brigid. "A Company That Profits as It Pampers Workers." The Washington Post, WP Company, 25 Oct. 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/a-company-that-profits-as-it-pampers-workers/2014/10/22/d3321b34-4818-11e4-b72e-d60a9229cc10_story.html.

³Rose MarcarioRose Marcario is the former President and CEO of Patagonia. "Rose Marcario: Our Company Policies for Families." *Patagonia*, 17 Apr. 2020, <https://www.patagonia.com/stories/family-business-weighing-the-business-case/story-32958.html>.

succeed they create very difficult hiring processes. There are about 9,000 applicants for every internship offered, yet Patagonia is one known for hiring within.⁴ Meaning that instead of hiring the stars of the world to combine the highest caliber of people, they prefer to depend on references and friendship suggestions.



Their culture is not about teaching people to be great through their job, yet teaching great people how to do a job. So Human Resources takes their hiring process extremely seriously to

make sure those they choose are worth the investment. The culture of Patagonia also numerically fits the concept of community. By restricting the number of employees in each location to one hundred improves their connection of communication and trust.⁵ Though this company seems to focus on many attribute to better the success of their community impact, they also hold their employees accountable for being passionate about the same mission. This mission is of course the priority to put the Earth first. Patagonia also is known for supporting their employees to engage in bettering the environment through offering full paid internships with an

⁴Dean, Grace. "Patagonia's Founder Just Gave the Company Away - the Latest Unusual Step in a History of Corporate Innovations, from Being an Early Adopter of Paid Parental Leave to Donating \$145 Million to the Environment." Business Insider, Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/patagonia-yvon-chouinard-environment-staff-benefits-sustainability-childcare-organic-donate-2022-9>.

⁵Schulte, Brigid. "A Company That Profits as It Pampers Workers." The Washington Post, WP Company, 25 Oct. 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/a-company-that-profits-as-it-pampers-workers/2014/10/22/d3321b34-4818-11e4-b72e-d60a9229cc10_story.html.

environmentalist group and by paying their bail if arrested at a peaceful protest.⁶ So after analyzing the benefits, the management decisions, and the desire to inform their employees, Patagonia has proven to uphold a quality community impact.

Yet with Patagonia's desire to improve the lives of their employees, they also desire to improve the environment by putting Earth as the baseline for their efforts. Nevertheless Patagonia still is a business and focuses on making profit off of their apparel and equipment. Yet they have a heart to heal the Earth and give back from the pollution their company causes. Patagonia gives one percent of their sales to bettering the environment.⁷ Whether that is supporting land contributions, giving to environment activist programs, or donating to environmental causes, Patagonia is a well admired company globally. Patagonia has not shun away from addressing difficult issues such as originally using cotton that contained pesticides and defoliants. Once becoming away of this issues, they made a 13 month plan to completely replace their product with organic cotton to better the environment.⁸ Yet the founder, Yvon Chouinard, has shocked the world once more by putting the environment before the gross income of the business. Yvon Chouinard decided to give the 3 billion dollar company to a trust and non-profit to continue supporting the end of climate change.⁹ The global affect this has is seen on an astronomical scale. We see Patagonia continue to put people and the environment as a

⁶Schulte, Brigid. "A Company That Profits as It Pampers Workers." The Washington Post, WP Company, 25 Oct. 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/a-company-that-profits-as-it-pampers-workers/2014/10/22/d3321b34-4818-11e4-b72e-d60a9229cc10_story.html.

⁷Dean, Grace. "Patagonia's Founder Just Gave the Company Away - the Latest Unusual Step in a History of Corporate Innovations, from Being an Early Adopter of Paid Parental Leave to Donating \$145 Million to the Environment." Business Insider, Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/patagonia-yvon-chouinard-environment-staff-benefits-sustainability-childcare-organic-donate-2022-9>.

⁸Carucci, Ron. "How Patagonia's Purpose Is Once Again Raising the Bar on Doing the Right Thing." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 9 Nov. 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roncarucci/2021/04/21/how-patagonias-purpose-is-once-again-raising-the-bar-on-doing-the-right-thing/?sh=570db9bd777c>.

⁹Dean, Grace. "Patagonia's Founder Just Gave the Company Away - the Latest Unusual Step in a History of Corporate Innovations, from Being an Early Adopter of Paid Parental Leave to Donating \$145 Million to the Environment." Business Insider, Business Insider, <https://www.businessinsider.com/patagonia-yvon-chouinard-environment-staff-benefits-sustainability-childcare-organic-donate-2022-9>.

larger priority than the capitalistic desire to grow consistently. So far, this scale of priority has only benefited the growth this company has gone through.



The next pillar that needs to be addressed in order to accurately review this company as a positive employer, you need to evaluate the global impact. This global scale is specifically

referencing how the company has grown and succeeded against the other competition. In order to trust this company as a place to work, you must address how the company is perceived in an economic, political, and demographic trend. The first point to recognize is that Patagonia has been successful enough for many large companies to request training and counseling from them. Due to their global impact Warby Parker wanted to reflect a similar impact on the world by consulting with Patagonia.¹⁰ Patagonia has successfully proven the global audience that your priority can be other things outside of profit and still experience that beyond measure. In 2018, the company received 355.7 million dollars in revenue and with their triple-bottom line system

¹⁰Schulte, Brigid. "A Company That Profits as It Pampers Workers." The Washington Post, WP Company, 25 Oct. 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/a-company-that-profits-as-it-pampers-workers/2014/10/22/d3321b34-4818-11e4-b72e-d60a9229cc10_story.html.

working well has grown twenty-eight times faster than most other companies.¹¹ Globally, society wants to see businesses that put the planet and those living on it first. So once that is recognized, the investment from customers comes naturally after. Since we have dove head first into understanding all the unique ways Patagonia succeeds in those other pillars, it is safe to say that the global impact and economic success has come naturally.

After analyzing the global impact, the community impact, and the environmental impact that Patagonia has had in an effort to evaluate their reputability, the only theme left to address is company opportunities. This differs from the community impact because it goes beyond the psychological benefits this job has and focuses more on the logistics of these positions. So Patagonia has many different levels of opportunity. You can either enter through the minimum wage positions that are focused on running stores. These positions are customer service that require knowledge within the apparel and equipment industry. Many of the benefits discussed do not apply to these positions since it is a different category of positions. This job opportunity is often rather accessible if simply desiring to get your foot in the door since they are also often part time positions. Whether you are working part-time or full time, these positions often expect seasonal and weekend attendance. The next level of opportunities would pertain to the Head Quarters or Corporate positions. These jobs become much more difficult to partake in due to the scarce opportunity they offer. Their offices often only are filled with a max of one hundred employees to keep the communication and trust within a reachable range. These positions are for expertise in information technology, management, advertising, product development, and so on. These positions are relatively difficult to attain yet once achieved, you are prioritized in helping your success. These salary positions often do not experience distinct waves of work and

¹¹ Rimmer, Susan. "Patagonia: Let My People Go Surfing." *Interactive Workshops*, 13 May 2022, <https://interactiveworkshops.com/patagonia-let-my-people-go-surfing/>.

experience more of a balanced work load. A unique quality that Patagonia offers their employers is the training opportunities to not only grow in your position but to also learn new skills in life. Meaning that by partnering with lynda.com, Patagonia offers training programs for Adobe, Illustrator, Microsoft, and Excel.¹² They also offer ‘brain food’ classes that help you learn french culture, sewing, time management, and so much more.¹³ These are very resourceful opportunities that Patagonia employees are able to benefit from. So after depicting the style and levels of job opportunities and experience opportunities at Patagonia, one can evaluate if they fit into any categories they offer.

By evaluating the three different impacts and the unique opportunities that Patagonia offers, I think one can conclude that this is a reliable and trustworthy possible employer. By seeing the intentionality of the community support the company extends through benefits and flexibility proves they desire to see you enjoy life to the fullest. Even in studying their environmental involvement and the cognitive understanding they have about how their actions hold weight is deeply encouraging. The global impact was directly impacted by the focus they had in trying to be successful in everything they did. There is no area that the organization has impacted in a drastically negative way, which is such a success alone. Then to finish the research by understanding the levels of job opportunities that exist at Patagonia really helps the reader evaluate whether this company could reach all the expectations as a potential employer. After the researching of all these different categories and themes, one can conclude that Patagonia is a very quality employer.

¹² *Official Guide to Employee Advocacy - LinkedIn.*
<https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/elevate/Resources/pdf/official-guide-to-employee-advocacy-ebook.pdf>.

¹³ *Official Guide to Employee Advocacy - LinkedIn.*
<https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/elevate/Resources/pdf/official-guide-to-employee-advocacy-ebook.pdf>.

Preliminary Draft:

Evaluating a Potential Employer:

I. What training is available to new employees:

- Patagonia purchased lynda.com which provides a library of training videos for Adobe® Illustrator®, Microsoft® Excel®
- Provides “brain food” classes such as: French culture, Sewing, Time management
- Minimum of 45 hours of training per year
- Provides full-paid internships for environmentalist groups
-

II. How soon is the average entry-level person promoted?

- Average length for most positions across the board are 2 years yet for more salary jobs can be on average of 5 years

III. How much travel and weekend work are expected

- Surf! Allows flexible hours as long as the job gets done and doesn't disrespect coworkers
- Promotes family life
- Employees who are parents are given a stipens to take kids on business trips
- Early adopter of maternity leave
- Has onsite childcare centers
- Encourages parents to engage with kids during work day

IV. Is there a “busy season,” or is the workload consistent year-round?

- Customer service employees experience seasonal rushes (during a large shift in apparel)
- Corporate and HQ workers experience a general steady work for year round

V. What fringe benefits are offered

- Flexible hours to excel in your hobbies
- Free childcare at centers on work premises

- Patagonia pays for caregivers to bring kids on work trips
- 60 day paid internship with an environmental activist group
- Employees arrested during peaceful protests will have their bail paid for.
- Discount on company products
- Healthy organic food cafeterias and showers on site.
- Comprehensive health insurance, even to part-time employees.
- free yoga
- free scooters and skateboards and hiking trails out the back door

VI. What is the corporate culture

- Corporate pays for annual ski trip
- Seminars during camping trips to enforce the environmental values
- Surfing lunch breaks
- Relaxed attire
- “Let my People Go Surfing”

VII. Is the climate nonracist and nonsexist?

- 50% of employment is female
- Implementing change from the impact of racism in climate policy

VIII. How strong is the company economically

- Coca Cola and Chick Fil A have sent in teams to learn of the comradery environment and skills used at Patagonia
- Staff turnover rate is only 4%

IX. How is it likely to be affected by current economic, demographic, and political trends

- Due to culture and benefits they receive 9,000 applicants for every internship opportunity
- Owner selling company
- Best parking spots aren't given to top management, rather those with the most eco friendly cars
- Had a “Don't Buy this Jacket” advertisement to support cutting back on overbuying.

Appendix

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