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How ModCloth's Company Culture Helped One Employee Climb The Ranks To Career Happiness



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Beginning with an internship at Chanel, [Aire Plichta Reese](#)'s fascinating career trajectory landed her at ModCloth, a digitally native brand of indie and vintage-inspired women's clothing, way back in 2009. Eight years later, we sat down with Aire to discuss how ModCloth's unique culture has helped shape her career. She talks female empowerment, charity, career advice, and her own successful career journey at ModCloth. Aire is now the Associate Manager of Fashion Media and Public Relations at ModCloth, and is also a freelance personal stylist.

Good&Co: You started out with ModCloth in 2009 as a blog outreach specialist and have worked your way up to being the Associate Manager Fashion Media & Public Relations— wow! What about ModCloth's culture has made you want to stay with them for so long? Do you think the opportunities for upward mobility within the company helped prevent burnout for you?

Aire: I think the fact that ModCloth really cares about their customers and being inclusive helps keep us all working hard. When Susan, our co-founder, signed the anti-photoshop pledge, knowing that we were making a difference so that young girls did not have to have unrealistic expectations about their bodies when looking at our site, was so empowering. Not to mention going from a company like Macy's (where I started my career) to a small startup where I literally knew everyone's names— it made me realize that fashion doesn't have to be boring or cookie cutter. And yes, starting at a startup as early as I did really allowed me to work hard and set my goals knowing I could achieve them!

Employees at @ModCloth are inspired by the company's #antiphotoshop pledge

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G&C: How has ModCloth's culture enabled you to pursue other career opportunities outside of the company?

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G&C: Can you give some examples of ways in which ModCloth creates a workplace culture that promotes employee retention?

Aire: I have to say one of my favorite things that they offer to us as employees is an incredible employee discount, and unlimited vacation days. Oh, not to mention, very fair costs on our health care. It really makes you think twice when you're looking at other companies knowing that so much of your paycheck can go to those costs, as well as having to wait so long to even work up to say 2 weeks of PTO.

G&C: How have your goals changed throughout your career, and how has ModCloth helped you achieve those goals?

They have, and probably not in the typical ways. So I hope this answer is not disappointing. After being away from Pittsburgh for a long time, I moved back and started my job with ModCloth and fell head over heels for this city. I went on to meet my future husband here, have my parents 2 miles down the road and have made so many wonderful connections that I can't imagine a life outside of PGH. So I have to say how grateful I am to ModCloth to allow me to work/live in a city that I love, doing a job that I adore and wrote about as my dream job as a sophomore in high school!

G&C: What are some of the biggest challenges you have faced in your career?

To be honest, I have to say when my team first moved to our San Francisco office and I stayed here in PGH, it was a HUGE adjustment and very challenging. But thanks to technology and wonderful colleagues, I sometimes can't imagine having it any other way!

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G&C: What are some of the things you are most proud of in your career?

Aire: I am most proud of the wonderful charitable work I have been able to do and accomplish through ModCloth. We may just be one little clothing company, but knowing how much we mean to customers and knowing we can help them back up when they feel down, or connecting with a charity that just really needs clothes to put on people's backs and helping them do that, is such a fulfilling part of my job. I am also very proud of the relationships I have made with many well known fashion editors, costume designers, and even some celebrities.

G&C: Anything else you'd like to share with us?

Aire: A word of advice would be to anyone looking for their first job or maybe a career change to remember hard work, like true hard work and dedication, can get you far. And to keep in mind that no one in this world owes you anything, you have to learn to open your own doors. A little harsh, but so very true! And oh yes, a favorite quote I made up. "You can lead a person to sequins, but you can't make them shine!"

"You can lead a person to sequins, but you can't make them shine!"-
@AireMODCLOTH

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Elaina is a writer/editor and the proud owner of Good&Co's office pug, Yuki.

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