



GEAR FOR GOOD
cotopaxi

Vice President of Design
Recruitment Profile
cotopaxi.com

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Cotopaxi (kōtōpā'ksē) is an active stratovolcano in the Ecuadorian region of the Andes. The volcano is an important part of the local culture and is held sacred by nearby Andean indigenous communities. It's also the brand's namesake.

Founder, Davis Smith, grew up in Latin America and lived for several years in Ecuador. When he wasn't in school, Davis was exploring and camping in Cotopaxi National Park. It was here that he developed a lifelong reverence for the strong, hard-working people of the Andes. His time in Latin America also showed him the plight of those in abject poverty.

Davis later moved to the United States, where he pursued advanced degrees in business and international studies. He started several successful e-commerce businesses, two of which took him to Brazil, where he lived from 2010 to 2013. Despite his success, he wanted to do more to make a difference in the world. For his next venture, he decided to merge his love of travel with a poverty-fighting business model. Each customer's purchase would give to those living in the world's poorest regions. He named the company Cotopaxi to represent the spirit of adventure, optimism, and determination that he'd experienced during his time in Ecuador.

The “Do Good” Mission

“The mission behind this business is of course building something that can change the world and can make the world a better place. So our vision is that: to truly build a business that authentically does good. We want to prove that businesses can do well and do good at the same time.” –Davis Smith

Utilizing business as a force for good is the ultimate goal for Cotopaxi. Davis and his talented team have set out to bring quality product to market through sustainable and fair working conditions in their factories. They turn their profits into a meaningful force for extreme poverty alleviation around the world while also communicating their mission to do good to fans of their brand in innovative and interactive ways. It is important to Cotopaxi that the people who follow their brand and its mission are not only aware of these issues but also have a hand in their solutions.

Cotopaxi is a B Corp /Benefit Corporation. As a Benefit Corporation, they self-report performance standards and as a B Corp they are assessed and scored by the nonprofit B Lab.

Cotopaxi funds solutions that address the most persistent needs of those living in extreme poverty. Giving is core to their model. As a Delaware Public Benefit Corporation, Cotopaxi has made a commitment to creating positive social impact. They focus their efforts on global poverty alleviation & give targeted grants to advance health, education, and livelihoods initiatives around the world.

Grant making represents Cotopaxi's belief in the power of holistic development. They focus on three pillars which they believe are inextricably linked and crucial to creating a sustainable pathway out of poverty. Within each pillar, they have identified specific poverty indicators against which they track outcomes and success.

Cotopaxi's Three Pillars:

HEALTH

Reduce preventable disease & under-five mortality rates

EDUCATION

Improve primary literacy rates & access to quality education

LIVELIHOODS

Create opportunity for entrepreneurial training & job skills development

Cotopaxi selects high-impact organizations that build sustainable solutions in collaboration with local communities. Active collaboration with nonprofit partners enables them to identify and target key needs. They research and invest in organizations that have demonstrated success and measure impact. Cotopaxi then shares their impact with the Cotopaxi community to ensure transparency and accountability. Cotopaxi doesn't accept proposals but actively sources organizations.

Each year, Cotopaxi earmarks 2% of their revenue to provide targeted grants to nonprofits that have demonstrated outstanding impact, agility, and persistence. The grantees selected execute with excellence, have the capacity to scale, and continue to implement sustainable solutions that are generating positive results within their respective communities.

Some of the organizations Cotopaxi works with are the International Rescue Committee, Educate Girls, and Proximity Designs. Escuela Nueva, has a presence in Ecuador, and Cotopaxi is working to expand their impact throughout the Andes.

Not only does Cotopaxi work with organizations abroad, they also partner with organizations in their own communities. A few examples of local organizations they work with are welcoming new international neighbors through programs like Refugee Card Writing and the Refugee Coding Project.

The Product; Gear For Good

Cotopaxi is going to shake things up. They already are. They are not afraid of the crazy. Whether it's sending a brightly colored product line utilizing a patchwork of scrap fabric to market or trying to figure out how to solve some of the industry's and the world's biggest social justice issues--they don't shy away from the tough challenges.

This now skyrocketing investor funded start-up brand offers a selection of day packs, bags, luggage and adventure lifestyle apparel to consumers who are looking for stories and experiences, not things; customers who want businesses to offer products that ultimately have a positive impact on the world and find a balance between profit and philanthropy.

DESIGN MATTERS

The design philosophy at Cotopaxi is summed up in the following 8 words:

Elegance, Innovation, Timelessness, Honesty, Fun, Thoroughness, Ethics, Simplicity

Consistently pushing themselves to design better, the team at Cotopaxi looks to sound design practices to improve everything from early concepts, third round prototypes or even the packaging the product arrives in to fans of the brand. The team doesn't shy away from obsessing over the details because they know that's what their customers expect. It's what they expect themselves as outdoor and active lifestyle gear enthusiasts as well.

The materials used to construct Cotopaxi gear and apparel are also extremely important. The belief that the end product is only as good as its parts drives the team to make sure to source only the most top quality materials. They take the time to research the materials and processes that go into making a product. A few of the ways they insure quality while also standing out from the rest is partnering with industry leaders such as Polartec® and using remnant fabrics to construct certain lines of their products in order to reduce factory floor waste while also incorporating traditional natural fibers like their llama fleece insulation; the latter being totally untraditional in the market today. The use of llama fibers sets Cotopaxi apart from their counterparts in the industry in terms of creatively sourcing materials and doing it for a good cause.

Cotopaxi is also driven to build lasting relationships with the people making their gear in the factories. They are committed to fair and sustainable working conditions and ways to increase the quality of life inside and outside of these facilities by empowering the people who work there. Changing the supply chain for the better being the main goal.

Questival; Make Space For Good & Explore Beyond

There is a big drive today among customers, especially young customers, to interact with a brand and participate with a product rather than own a bunch of "stuff". The more authentic the story attached to a brand or product line, the more passion and inclusion felt from the experience of a product, the better. The bigger the impact the customer can have along with the mission of the brand, the more connected they feel. This is something the team at Cotopaxi gets wholeheartedly and they continue to look for interesting ways build their tribe and ask nothing more than to "Make Space for Good".

The team at Cotopaxi came up with a radical way to reach out to younger customers and engage them in the outdoors and with each other when they started Questival. With a similar vibe to an outdoor music festival, they put together an adventure race for teams of 2-6 to complete through an app. Challenges can range from walking a slack line to donating items to a local non-profit or community group. The more challenges completed, the better odds of winning cool prizes and gear.

Questival is set up as a 24-hour adventure that invites anyone to build friendships, push personal limits, experience surroundings, and have a whole bunch of fun. Oh, and there's also food and music for participants to enjoy as well. The festival moves from city to city for single day events across the nation

and is an example of another innovative way that Cotopaxi does good, brings the fun and opens up opportunities for people to not only be physically active but also potentially active in social justice as well.

The Culture

The mission of the company truly informs and supports a culture of transparency, inclusiveness and fun. Everyone takes their jobs seriously and themselves less so. As a result Cotopaxi has created an environment where product ideas, creativity and sustainability can thrive for both the company and the employees. Cotopaxi lives at the intersection of business and philanthropy and as a result they hold themselves accountable with rigor and a culturally embodied commitment to grow not only for themselves and investors but for the communities they can influence and help. Imagine working at an organization that defines the compelling ideal of "a mission bigger than ourselves" everyday. Imagine as the key product architect the influence you could have in the future of this social enterprise for-profit brand. If you are smiling right about now then we want to talk to you.

Cotopaxi, unlike many brands in the outdoor industry, has created a product offering and design sensibility to do one thing...increase the number of people who enjoy the outdoors and do not define their outdoor experiences with only hardcore adventures. The Cotopaxi customer's adventure begins the moment they step outside their door and continues whether they are in a foreign landscape or on their way to work. Their Cotopaxi gear and apparel will support them with style...however they define adventure.

Cotopaxi HQ

The corporate offices are directly above the first Cotopaxi store at 74 Main Street in Salt Lake City, Utah. We love how the direct relationship to the Cotopaxi customer is literally right downstairs from where the day to day execution and long term strategy are created. For this role in particular you will have an easily accessible laboratory where the product creation team can receive critical retail feedback on new product launches, collaborations and brand initiatives. The second retail store is located at Fashion Place in Murray, Utah.

Utah is an extraordinary place to live and work. With affordable housing and access to the arts it has proven to be a strong attraction for young professionals and families who crave access to a remarkable natural landscape and outdoor activities. Park City is within a commutable distance and the Wasatch Range provides a playground for all manner of fun.

The Opportunity; Vice President of Design

"Don't be afraid of the crazy!" -Karyn McKenna/VP of Merchandising, Cotopaxi

Cotopaxi has a distinctive look and feel as a brand and the design language is wholly unique. We are seeking an experienced design leader who can evolve the product offering that continues to attract the young urban athlete while leading the creative direction of the company. Mentoring, design innovation, market-trend analysis and product segmentation are in your DNA...along with fun, courage and deep appreciation for the promise that is Cotopaxi-change the world.

You can lead a cross-functional team in product design and development and inspire an entire organization for your vision of the product offering moving into the future. You will have expertise in material innovation that supports a sustainable future and understand deeply how beautiful product can inspire positive change *and* revenue growth. Someone wise once said "There is no mission without margin" and to that end you will bring process, accountability and calendar management to clearly define success and motivate a team to reach beyond themselves to perform.

The Details

The Vice President of Design is responsible for leading and inspiring Cotopaxi's product design efforts so as to provide original concepts and relevant designs across all product categories. The Vice President of Design will lay the strategic and creative foundation for the company's products. They will identify key trends and opportunities, and determine the best way for Cotopaxi to address business strategies and creative opportunities. Such concepts and designs should be ones that move the meter in innovation and are of the highest quality, function, fit and with all fabrication done in the most environmentally friendly manner. The VP of Design will assume a leadership role in representing the product team to the Company at large and the Industry.

Essential Job Functions

- Responsible for the design language and will be the key design influencer of all product categories in a way that creates cohesion and purpose across the whole brand.
- Work with the Design and Merchandising Team members to ensure feasibility of designs that meet price points, merchandising needs and product creation timelines.
- Responsible for the creation and management of Design standards, schedules, calendars and output in an effort to achieve maximum efficiency and great product.
- Effectively create and communicate design concepts and presentations seasonally.
- Maintain knowledge of current trends, color, technology, and sports related products through travel, research, and product usage.
- Responsible for staying abreast of the latest technologies in fabric, construction, trims, manufacturing, sewing, etc. Responsible for ensuring this information is disseminated and utilized in relevant design concepts.
- Effectively build and manage the department's budget.

- Plan and facilitate design off-sites or other design related extracurricular activities that inspire and motivate team members.
- Participation in testing of products and fabrics in the field.

Management Responsibilities

- Inspire, mentor and motivate a team of creative individuals; foster the growth and continued development of all team members.
- Responsible for the day-to-day management of designers and developers to ensure that their design concepts and ideas are in alignment and support category, Company and strategic goals.
- Review and offer constructive feedback to teams and individuals on sketches and product concepts.
- Provide tools to foster the greatest assets of each person, and the team as a whole.
- Responsible for ensuring that all work done by the group is timely, accurate and complete.
- Responsible for the identification and management of contract designers.
- Maintain pulse on market and design trends, color directions.
- Ensure a cohesive product/color offering across all categories.

Minimum Job Qualifications

- BA, BFA or BS in Design required.
- 10+ years relevant experience.
- Demonstrated leadership experience with the ability to mentor others and lead design creation.
- Strong track record of success in design or design management.
- Keen understanding of line planning and product costing required.
- Thorough understanding of and proven experience in fabric development and sourcing required.
- Knowledge of garment construction, patterns and textiles required.
- Extreme attention to detail required.
- Proven ability to establish and maintain schedules.
- Ability to apply, perform and manage design skills such as drawing/sketching, concept ideation, color theory, use of texture, spacing and scale, visual presentation development and layout.
- Strong presentation and public speaking skills.
- Excellent customer service skills, in person, on the phone and in writing.
- Able to work well under pressure and deadlines.
- Ability to gather appropriate input and make clear, well-reasoned decisions.
- Comfortable with team-based work structure; ability to remain flexible to change within the work environment and scope of responsibility.
- Demonstrates initiative, is conscientious and provides complete follow-through on areas of responsibility.

Employee Conduct

It is the responsibility of every employee to contribute to a positive work environment through cooperative and professional interactions with co-workers, customers and vendors.

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