



## **SHELDEN ARCHITECTURE, INC.**

### **NO. 6, SMALL COMPANY CATEGORY**

**What makes your company the best place to work?** We are providing what some might consider a “life-changing” service and we take it very seriously, so this career gives a true sense of meaning and value (a just cause). But that being said, we try to have FUN while doing it. While we’re striving to provide excellence to our clients and their communities, we think it’s just as important that our employees feel valued and appreciated, making coming in the office worth it.

**Does having a great place to work lead to company success?** Businesses are ultimately people and if the people are thriving it is a natural progression for the company to thrive.

**Describe your company culture in five words.** Caring, collaborative, creative, compassionate, challenging.

**How would you describe your company in 30 seconds?** Our firm is one of the most creative architectural firms in the region, where we care deeply about providing our clients the best solutions and our people an environment to thrive. We are all about designing spaces, both public and private, that give the end user a sense of belonging and comfort; as well as being very aware of every dollar the owner is spending on their project, wanting to help them to truly get the best bang for their buck.

**How does your company help grow the careers of employees?** We encourage continuing education through lunch and learn opportunities, as well as encourage licensure by providing specialized study programs, paid study materials and paid testing fees and paid time off to take the exams. We regularly conduct site visits to ongoing projects to explain the real-world application of our designs to the younger designers. We provide paid trips to conventions and industry events on a regular basis.

**How do you help employees reach a healthy work/life balance?** We strongly encourage everyone to use all their PTO (which is a very generous plan and quickly grows as employees accumulate time with the firm). We also give all employees 10 paid holidays

when the office is closed including the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, so they don't have to feel like they need to save their PTO for that time that's usually spent with family and friends. We are flexible with work from home procedures and have the tools available so when the employee has the need, they can easily transition. We have brought in therapists to give us instruction on how to handle stress in our lives, provide phenomenal health coverage with low deductibles so an employee can see a doctor without worrying about how much it's going cost. We also have periodic company gatherings outside of the office to encourage and promote a sense of belonging as a group.

**How do you promote diversity and inclusion within your company?** It is pretty simple to Stan: do unto others as you'd have them do to you. We are sensitive that each person has a unique perspective of life and are open and inviting to all people. We work very hard to make our employees feel valued, safe and like they belong. This firm is very horizontal in its orientation. Not one person has an office including Stan and everyone's voice is appreciated. Sometimes it is a bit noisy in here.

**What is your best reward for a job well done or employee achievement?** That might be defined by each person differently. Some may prefer extra days off as a reward, some may prefer a financial bonus, and some may just want to be acknowledged publicly for their contribution. We've done all of that.

**What's the most popular out-of-office activity your company hosts for employees?** We all really enjoyed the ax throwing night! But the night we took everyone and their spouses to Elderslie Farm for dinner was also a big hit.

**What is the best way for your leaders to communicate with employees?** Face to face, hands-down.