

# LAUREN PYLE '04

## *Social Media Manager*

Two years ago, Lauren Pyle—a self-proclaimed foodie—landed her dream job as Social Media Manager for Whole Food Markets. “In college, my friend and I would go to Whole Foods every weekend, and from there I fell in love with the brand and their mission,” she said. “As someone who is passionate about food and the environment, I made it my goal to work there.”

After double majoring in Communications & Anthropology/Sociology at Denison University, Lauren began her career in social media by spending four years at a tech start-up that offered social media support to local businesses. “I was an early adopter of social media (all those days on MySpace paid off, Mom!), but I never considered it as a potential career until I took that role and ended up really enjoying social media management,” she said. Never forgetting her goal, she continued to pursue a career with Whole Foods—and eventually ended up getting her dream gig!

Based out of Austin, Texas, Lauren spends her days on social media content creation, strategy, and moderation. “I like the variety that working in social media management gives me. It gives me the chance to flex in public relations, copy writing, analytics, and strategy. It’s also unlike traditional marketing in so many ways, which is equal parts challenging and exciting. There’s a lot you have to learn

about how each channel can work for you...especially since the rules pretty much change on a weekly basis.”

It’s her continued love for learning that has helped her be successful in an ever-evolving career path, which goes all the way back to her Benchmark days. Lauren, who first came to Benchmark at the age of 8, said it was her time at the school that helps her continue to grow. “Everyone learns differently, right?” she said. “I came to Benchmark because it catered to my unique learning style; other places couldn’t do that for me which stifled my ability to grow. Benchmark took the time to understand how I was different then gave me the tools to be successful.”

It was the fact that Lauren learned how she learns while at Benchmark that has stayed with her all this time. “Helping me understand my learning style made me love learning even more (so much so that I won a “Love of Learning” award in college) and sparked my curiosity,” she said. “Having a toolkit that’s customized to my learning style has given me confidence throughout my academic and professional career. Even if it doesn’t always seem like it, everyone really does learn differently. You have to have confidence in your unique style and trust in the tools you’re given.”

Besides her love of learning, becoming a self-advocate has stuck with Lauren all these years.



“Benchmark taught me what it means to advocate for yourself – to take charge of your own experience and ask for what you need,” she said. “Advocating for yourself is the biggest lesson I learned, and I can’t stress enough how much it’s helped me professionally and personally. Speak up for yourself!”

Today, Lauren says that she not only enjoys what she does, but that she also loves the people she works with. “Everyone is on the same wavelength,” she said. “We’re all driven, hardworking folks who really like food and really like to have fun.” Professionally, she would love to continue to build her expertise in the field—not just in marketing, but in food and drink as well. “It’s what makes me happy, so I’ll see where it takes me!” she said.

Outside of work, Lauren and her husband, Sam, enjoy cooking and trying out new restaurants in Austin, as well as spending time with their two dogs, Riley and Butter. She also loves exercise and regularly runs and practices yoga and barre, and even aspires to become a yoga instructor one day. “It’s given me so much, and I would love to offer that gift to someone else,” she said.

Her advice to Benchmark students is “Trust in yourself and the skills you’re learning! I used to feel insecure about having a different learning style, and I’d compare myself to others; don’t do that. Being different is a good thing. Embrace it and focus on yourself.”

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—Lauren Pyle '04