

## Amazing working conditions Working from the office, your home... or the Mediaclip Cottage



PHOTO EDOUARD PLANTE-FRÉCHETTE, LA PRESSE

*Mediaclip lodge, in the forestry sector of Saint-Gérard-des-Laurentides in Shawinigan, is accessible to all employees, for telecommuting or weekends with the family.*

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**It's not easy to attract programmers to a city where Ubisoft, Electronic Arts, Warner Bros. Games and other video game heavyweights rub shoulders. The photo processing software company Mediaclip cannot compete with these multinationals in terms of salaries. So, it's trying to set itself apart with a unique feature: a large lakeside cottage, available for telecommuting or family weekends.**

*"We're competing against big software players. In terms of salary, we're not even close," says Marion Duchesne, founder and CEO of Mediaclip.*

The Montreal-based company is housed in a converted industrial building in the Mile-Ex district, close to many Ai and Gaming software firms (Ubisoft and the likes). To attract talent, the company is trying to compete on a different level than compensation: benefits.



PHOTO EDOUARD PLANTE-FRÉCHETTE, LA PRESSE  
***Marion Duchesne, inside the Médiaclip Lodge***

***Everyone has foosball tables. Some have put up climbing walls, but they make all their employees work overtime!*** Marion Duchesne, CEO of Mediaclip.

#### **Fresh Air for programmers**

For her part, Marion wanted to show that in her company, work-life balance (or simply life-life) is important.

During the pandemic, she noticed that many employees spent their workdays alone in their apartments. Or worse: stuck with two or three roommates in undersized units.

"Some workers who already had access to a cottage took advantage of it. Others went to work down south, in British Columbia... Everyone was kind of spread out. I thought it was sad."

Marion Duchesne came up with the idea of providing them with a little piece of nature to work in herself. But the search for the perfect property proved arduous. *"We were during the COVID, so everyone was looking at cottages,"* she says. *I had looked at one at Lac des Piles, and it was really too expensive for what it was."*

The real estate agent then showed her an unloved property in the Saint-Gérard-des-Laurentides area of Shawinigan. The sellers had neglected the staging of the property (home staging).

*He had shown us pictures and it was really ugly. The walls were beige, there were beaver heads everywhere...* But Marion Duchesne pictured what it could look like.

When she got there, Mediaclip's CEO knew she had found the perfect place for her employees. *"When I went there, my search was done, and I got a little crazy!"* says Marion Duchesne, laughing. *"We're on the edge of an ecological lake, Lac à la Perchaude..."*

Purchased for \$675,000 in October, there was nothing particularly amazing about the large home. But it had almost everything Mediaclip needed: size, location, interior, and exterior design opportunities...

Mediaclip had the basement redone with space for telecommuting and an additional family room. *"This same cottage in the Laurentians north of Montreal is worth over \$1 million,"* says Marion Duchesne.

### **A cottage to work, play and be outdoors**

For her part, Marion Duchesne wanted to show that in her company, work-life balance (or simply life-family) was serious business.

Since then, employees have been coming to work there at will. Five rooms have been set up to accommodate them. They can also take turns booking the chalet on weekends. *"I went by seniority: choose your dates,"* explains Marion. For the Quebec National holiday, there was a special arrangement: everyone was welcome. *"So they had a little party."*

### **A considerable asset**

The reputation of the new "Mediaclip chalet" our cottage, now even precedes it during job interviews. "I've had candidates ask me, 'Where's the chalet?'" It really gets people interested."

*"The chalet stands out clearly in the employee satisfaction surveys Mediaclip conducts."* and it had a ripple effect. People say, *'This is cool, but if we worked four days a week, we'd enjoy it more!'* laughs Marion Duchesne. *"Not crazy"* This summer, for the first time, Mediaclip is testing the four-and-a-half-day schedule. *"Arranging the same number of hours over four days, that can be possible as well."*

**Notice to those interested.** These days, Mediaclip, which has 35 employees in total, is looking for nine new developers, says Marion Duchesne. *"The lack of employees is the main obstacle to our growth."*

A cottage to work, play and be outdoors

