

## KAITLYN MONTAGNA

### Charles River Apparel

*Get ready to be inspired! Our latest NEPPA MVP Spotlight features the incredibly talented Kaitlyn Montagna, Corporate Project Manager at Charles River Apparel. Kaitlyn recently orchestrated the highly successful Charles River Factory tour, an event that perfectly showcased her impressive organizational prowess and ability to bring projects to life. Her contributions are invaluable to her company and our community, and we can't wait for you to learn more about her superstar career and personal achievements. She can help us all build sand castles in the sky (maybe even a little AI inspired).*

*What is your title/role at Charles River Apparel?*

Corporate Project Manager at Charles River Apparel

*How long have you been in the industry?*

This fall will make 8 years in the Promo Industry.

*What do you like best about your company?*

Definitely the people. I'm fortunate to be in a role that allows me to collaborate with teams across all departments. It's given me the chance to learn so much from my colleagues and appreciate the diverse strengths everyone brings to the table.

*How do you describe what you do for work to non-promo people?*

As a project manager, my role is pretty relatable across industries, which helps. When I explain what Charles River Apparel does, I usually mention that we make custom-branded clothing—like jackets or pullovers with company or team logos. A lot of people have something like that in their closet already, and there's actually a decent chance it could be one of ours. I often joke that they should go home and check the label!

*What is your favorite promo product that you own and use?*

I may be biased, but I own so much of our apparel. A year round favorite of mine is the Atlantic Rain Shell Jacket. I wear it even on sunny days when I need a lightweight jacket.

*Do you have any words of wisdom for people who are just starting out in the industry?*

Learn as much as you can. You never know when a small piece of information you learned months or years ago will come in handy!

*Do you have any words of wisdom for people who have been in the industry for a long time?*

Stay open to change. Technology is evolving rapidly, and it's important to be adaptable. Embracing new tools, processes, and perspectives can make a big difference—what worked yesterday might not be the best solution today.

*As sustainability becomes a driving factor in how we all do business, what are some ways you and your company are making changes to the status quo?*

A big focus for us is incorporating eco-friendly materials into our new products. What's exciting is that these sustainable fabrics don't just meet environmental standards—they also look and feel amazing. It's not about checking a box or adding a label; it's about a real commitment to creating high-quality garments that make a positive impact.

*Would you like to give a shout out to someone in the industry who has made a difference in your career?*

Absolutely. I wouldn't be in this industry today if it weren't for my friend Noel Nickerson. She recognized how my skills could benefit Charles River Apparel and invited me to join her team. Her belief in me opened the door to an incredible opportunity, and I'm truly grateful for that.

*Tell us something about you that most people may not know.*

I have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to sand sculpting! For a number of years I worked in producing events that featured Master Sculptors from around the world. My favorite part was always getting muddy in the sand and water mixing it up to create the base for the artists to sculpt their works.

*What is your favorite quote (movie/literary/personal)?*

Teamwork makes the dreamwork!

Do you have any fun hobbies or meaningful volunteer work?

In my free time, I love crocheting blankets and selling them at local markets—my coworkers might just be my biggest fans! I also enjoy giving back to the community through my work on the Leominster Cultural Council, where I help allocate state funds to support local arts and cultural initiatives.

*What meme describes you best?*

For context, I enjoy celebrating birthdays and successful projects with cake!

