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Pulse

# Building Purposeful Businesses

IMPACT REPORT 2021-2022

Certified



Corporation

# Re-setting in the wake of the pandemic

In last year's B Corp Impact Report, we looked at how Pulse was drawing upon its heritage in helping leaders build purposeful businesses to embark upon a number of initiatives that would be lived both throughout our organisation and through our clients. In this Impact Report for 2021/22, we are proud to be able to report back on those initiatives and reflect upon our evolving work model as we strive to become an even better B Corp.

The period 2021/22 marked a gradual change back to more normal working patterns as society began to come to terms with living with COVID-19. For Pulse, that has also meant a re-setting of some of our work and working practices. More people have returned to a 5-day working week and we have moved to more of a hybrid model of home/office working.

With the return of face-to-face time among colleagues and clients, we have been able to pick up on and deliver against most of the initiatives we set ourselves in the last report – from driving purpose to recording environmental performance; contributing to local and national charities to ensuring the Pulse team is fully up to date with inclusivity awareness. We successfully co-hosted our first MovingBeyond event in Scotland and are planning a second this year. And last but not least, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of Pulse.

The world is going through a period of significant change as society faces up to several generational crises happening seemingly all at once – global pandemic, regional conflict here in Europe leading to major rises in energy poverty

and inflation. At the same time, the world continues to fail to go after climate change. Solving these complex issues will require diplomacy and collaboration at all levels. High-performing, purposeful businesses have their part to play. Yet although businesses may have the resources and skills to effect positive change they can't do it alone. The State will have a critical role. And if civic society feels excluded nothing of any great significance will happen.

This is where Pulse steps in. For over 20 years, we have helped organisations to use purpose as a catalyst for change to overcome this inherent resistance. We help business leaders use purpose, backed by integrated communications support, to reinvigorate belief in their organisation and step out into society and help convene change. That work has taken us to areas as diverse as: low carbon and socially progressive initiatives; the energy industry and the net zero transition; and finance and professional services, as they aim to effect positive social change.

But we also recognise that we must practice what we preach. In terms of our own purpose and the way we conduct ourselves as part of our community, society and wider environment. This report highlights what we have done on both fronts in the past year and looks ahead to what will hopefully be a brighter future.

We can't help our clients build healthy cultures if we don't have one ourselves. We can't expect our clients to step out into wider society in more collaborative ways if we don't reach out and support our local community.

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## The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

There are 17 in total and we've identified seven goals to work towards at Pulse to help us reach our objectives.





# Our Impact Model



# Impact

## 2021-2022

### Ensuring We Are A Sustainable Business

- Took account of people, planet and profit when making decisions about our business
- Held an internal workshop to look at our vision, values, and aspirations
- Received the PRCA Gold CMS award
- Signed up to the UN Global Compact
- Published our annual impact report

### Encouraging Our People To Thrive

- Focus on diversity and inclusion with new policy and training
- Focus on wellbeing including mindfulness sessions and monthly massages
- Resumed our annual away days
- Our staff spent approx. 85 days on training and developing their learning edge in 2021
- Our staff have 360° annual reviews
- Our staff participated in annual peer group sessions providing them with the opportunity to shape the company

### Driving Purpose

- Co-hosted the first MovingBeyond event in Findhorn, Scotland to bring together corporates and civil society to accelerate action towards the energy transition
- Supported the Better Business Act and got in touch with our local MP
- Scoped out a new Pulse Purpose Report to be published later in the year
- Donated 1% of our fees to charitable and good causes

### Creating Impact for Our Clients

- Continued supporting three multinational companies on the energy transition and building a more sustainable way of life
- Helped develop branding to increase awareness of women's community centres in Iraq
- Supported a client in rewarding excellence in education and in sharing their results with the wider world
- Helped a carbon mitigation client prepare a legacy of its 20 years of work, as its programme comes to an end

### Protecting Our Environment

- Committed to B Corp's NetZero 2030
- Continued to measure our emissions annually, including commuting and working from home
- Reduced our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 31% in 2021
- Donated to environmental charities
- Ensured none of our waste goes to landfill

### Supporting Our Community

- Spent 5.5% of our time volunteering and on pro bono work in 2021
- Volunteered at The Connection at St Martin's, a homeless charity in Westminster
- Mentored a young entrepreneur with Five One Labs, Iraq
- Partnered with Luminary Bakery and provided work experience to one of their trainees
- Supported the Social Business Trust on a pro-bono basis in a strategy refresh
- Donated to charities working in communities



# Driving Purpose

## Focus on MovingBeyond



### What we're doing:

Now into its second year, Pulse will be co-hosting MovingBeyond which is a not-for-profit initiative set up by Simon Milton (Pulse) and Jamie Anley (Beautiful Corporations) with the mission of helping to bring together businesses, investors, policy makers and those in civic society who are committed to driving change and developing solutions which address climate change, whilst ensuring a fairer stake in the future for all sections of society. MovingBeyond is focused on what we can do in our own backyard, here in the UK.

### Why it's important:

The MovingBeyond initiative is about convening and inspiring a more inclusive leadership demanded by the current critical juncture in human and planetary history. If the system we operate in is failing people and the planet, it is MovingBeyond's aim to catalyse the change we want to see and need.

### How we're doing it:

This year's event is built on a similar format to 2021, bringing together existing and future leaders from our four key audiences to share, learn and focus on those areas in the transition that need attention. In particular, we have taken the decision to expand the MovingBeyond initiative to different parts of the UK. This year we step into Wales with its recent history of leading in many areas of sustainability and its old industrial areas struggling with intergenerational unemployment.

Each corporate will choose three representatives who are or will lead the change within their own organisations and their wider community.

### Our impact:

The MovingBeyond initiative is looking to accelerate how:

- businesses can step into the changes required at a system level
- civic society is both heard and able to lead the change in their own communities
- the UK financial sector can deploy capital to back new sustainable business models that enable the change
- policy makers work collaboratively with business, investors and civic society
- low-carbon business, circular and regenerative approaches, large and small, can scale with sufficient pace



MovingBeyond 2021



MovingBeyond 2021



*"Standing in a circle of 60 people in a remote but beautiful part of Scotland last year is, for me, the beating heart of Pulse. We helped to set up a not-for profit MovingBeyond initiative that brings together business, investors, policy makers and civic society to accelerate the energy transition and build a more sustainable way of life. And this year we move to Wales and next year the North East. What else would you be wanting to do!"*

Simon Milton

# Creating impact for our clients



## What we're doing:

We work with clients from across a range of sectors and at different stages of development, helping them utilise purpose as a lever to improve reputation and ultimately, performance. We believe that an organisation's reputation is built (or destroyed) by the individual actions and behaviours of every leader and employee – no matter where they sit in an organisation or what they do.

## Why it's important:

Through their resources and skills, businesses can play a major role in helping tackle the complex challenges now facing humankind. Yet trust in business is often hard to build, with the wider world habitually unimpressed by corporate greed, malpractice and corruption. Utilising purpose to build high-performance organisations can change all that.

## How we're doing it:

We help our clients do this through an iterative approach of uncovering views, values, aspirations and fears. We identify these through the leadership, through the workforce and through the wider network of stakeholders. We foster a safe environment in which everyone's view is encouraged and valued.

## Our impact:

In the past year our work has included: helping women's centres in Iraq come together to forge a new identity and sense of purpose; supporting the leadership of a major asset manager develop a purpose built around a sustainable future; and supporting a multi-national corporation navigate the energy transition.



We take an iterative approach



Everyone's views are encouraged



*"Right from the outset of a client relationship, our focus is on agreeing a programme that will have a real impact on the business. Something that we can measure and be proud of having achieved."*

Simon Taylor

# Protecting our Environment



## What we're doing:

Last year we committed to Net Zero 2030 and began taking relevant steps in measuring our emissions, reviewing our processes and ways of operating.

One of the main things that we did was to work with [compareyourfootprint.com](https://www.compareyourfootprint.com) to measure our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. This included office impact (such as emissions from computer purchases and how we recycled them) as well as working-from-home and commuting emissions.

We offset our 2021 carbon footprint by 200% with ClimateHero. And, we introduced an initiative last year where each member of staff nominated an environmental charity to which we gave £100 on their behalf.

## Why it's important:

We are a small business with a small carbon footprint but by taking these steps, it means that we are increasingly aware of the impact that our decision-making and our actions have on the environment.

This year, for the first time, we can make an annual comparison and are able to see where changes have made a difference to our carbon footprint.

## How we're doing it:

Working with First Mile and Reconome, we ensure that nothing goes to landfill and that as much as possible is recycled, using specialist services where necessary. We separate our general recycling, organic waste, cartridges, flexible plastic and IT waste.

During our away days in 2021, we visited My Little Farm in West Sussex to learn about regenerative farming. Also, through the environmental charities we support we are learning more about the challenges the natural world is facing and about how these charities are tackling climate change.

## Our impact:

In real terms, the impact of Pulse on the world's environment may be small. However, the impact on how we think about the planet and the outcome of our actions is significant. Our new awareness is taking a much more central role in how we manage our business, think about climate and what we can do to help mitigate climate change.



Planting trees on our 2021 away days



My Little Farm, W. Sussex



*"Knowing that we take our impact on the environment seriously is really important to me. The fact that over the last two years we have taken active steps to commit to net zero, understand our impact, reduce emissions, offset and donate to environmental causes is personally very rewarding."*

Jacqueline Milton

# Supporting our community



## What we're doing:

We have identified a number of charities in the UK and in Iraq which we support through donations and volunteering. Over the last year, these include Luminary Bakery, The Connection, Five One Labs and the Amar Foundation.

We also support local communities through an initiative where we donate to charities selected by each of our staff.

## Why it's important:

We believe that every business has a role to play in their community. For many years, we have offered an annual paid volunteering day. And, since becoming a B Corp three years ago, we recognised that there was a lot more that we could do as a business.

Aside from helping the charities, we have found that the experience gives our staff an opportunity to gain a better understanding and insight into other people's lives. It is an enriching experience which helps us be more understanding of others and more purposeful in our own work.

## How we're doing it:

When we became a B Corp, we pledged 1% of our fee income to charitable causes. It has given us the impetus and commitment to seek out charities close to us and in other communities in London and Iraq which we want to support.

We also recognise that our staff have many different experiences and interests and we wanted them to have a more specific voice in identifying how our charitable fund is spent. So, we have introduced a new scheme where each employee names a community or social cause to which we donate £100 on their behalf.

## Our impact:

Our commitment to the community broadens our awareness of others and it gives us insights into the challenges that many people face whether due to circumstances, poverty, beliefs, sexuality, age or race.

Our involvement has encouraged us all to think about other communities and what we as both a business and as individuals can continue to do to support them.



*"Volunteering is at the very core of being human. The opportunity to get out into the local community and lend a helping hand at The Connection is something that I don't take for granted. The work that they do is invaluable and the team there do it with such grace, compassion, unselfish caring and patience. It is an honour to be a part of it. Each time, I leave with a fresh perspective on life and newly forged connections with other human beings."*

Carolyn Potter



Volunteering at The Connection



Supporting Luminary Bakery



# Ensuring we are a sustainable business



## What we're doing:

Sustainability for us means building a lasting, flourishing business that embraces people, the environment, our community and business performance. Our strongest evidence of that commitment is Pulse reaching the milestone of 20 years operating as a successful business.

## How we're doing it:

Our staff are key to keeping Pulse sustainable. We strive to provide careers that suit the ambitions of each one of our team members. Our values guide how we work and our staff are encouraged to live by them. We aim to create a working environment in which everyone can unlock their potential and enjoy themselves while doing it.



Staff Away Day - Barn the Spoon

## Why it's important:

Pulse was founded on the basis of helping our clients understand and leverage purpose to improve business performance. The last 20 years have seen significant change in the corporate and communications worlds, but the importance of that original aim has remained true. It is vital that Pulse continues to thrive in this environment, helping both our clients and the staff who work with us to develop and prosper.

## Our impact:

Over the course of two decades our thinking has developed and matured, and it is reassuring to now see purpose valued as part of mainstream corporate thinking. We have also developed as a business in our own right and are proud to be a BCorp as well as a member of the UN Global Compact and the PRCA.



Pulse is a Certified B Corp



*"Being a B Corp deepens our understanding of what it can mean to be an organisation that is fair in its approach to people and planet. I appreciate the learning from other B Corps on what and how we can do more."*

Andrew Leith

# Encouraging our People to Thrive



## LEARNING EDGE

*"Through our Learning Edge, we're encouraged to pursue areas of learning that will help us support our clients, but that also align with our personal passions. I like that this approach recognises each of us for who we are and the magic that our uniqueness can bring."*

Laura Watcham



## INDUCTION

*"It has been fantastic joining the Pulse team as from the start everyone has been supportive and available to help me. I particularly appreciate the collaborative spirit of every single person and feel well looked after. It is a joy to be here."*

Laura Fogar



## TRAINING DAYS

*"Being encouraged by your employer to take part in regular training courses is incredibly valuable. It helps you to develop both personally and professionally, whilst giving you a chance to step back from client work and reflect."*

Chris Mella



## MINDFULNESS SESSIONS

*"With the hustle and bustle of a busy office, it's important to take some time out to focus on our wellbeing. We've introduced mindfulness sessions which encourage us to reconnect with our mind and body. These sessions have had a positive impact on my mood and focus, which helps improve the quality of my work!"*

Emily Palmer



## PODCAST CLUB

*"Our Lunchtime Podcast Club is such a unique and fun initiative. The sessions help us connect with each other on a very human level, by listening to and discussing topics that matter to each of us and expanding our mindsets."*

Guillermina Correa



## INTERNSHIP

*"Having the opportunity to be an intern has given me an incredibly in-depth insight into the communications industry especially as I have been given such a variety of tasks to do, each differing in skills needed which has helped push me to learn new things. I am grateful to be working in an environment where I am encouraged to develop and grow."*

Ada Liu

# Looking Ahead

Donate at least **1%** of our fee income to charity



Co-host 2nd **MovingBeyond** event in Wales



Donate **£100** for each employee

to an environmental charity of their choice



Continue **diversity & inclusion** training and awareness



Hold workshop to **review our vision, values and purpose**

Publish next edition of the



Develop **Learning Edge** initiative



Continue monthly workplace **massages**



Aim to give 5% of our time to **volunteering or pro bono initiatives**



**B Corp** recertification



Continue to **support clients in accelerating the energy transition**



Publish plan to achieve **NetZero 2030 goal**





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[www.pulsebrands.com](http://www.pulsebrands.com)