

# B CORP SPECIAL



# BOSS

BEST OVERALL SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION



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# CEO'S MESSAGE

**This is our fourth ESG Charter; each one sharing our progress and the challenges we face in creating a sustainable business based on the triple bottom line of 'People, Planet, Profit'. This Charter is particularly special as it coincides with our business now being B Corp™ Certified.**

Our 16-year journey has seen us embed People, Planet, Profit into our business model and, as a result, we've taken enormous strides forward. **DRPG** is recognised as one of the leading agencies when it comes to sustainability, but the truth is, the more we do, the more we learn, the more we realise how much there is still to do!

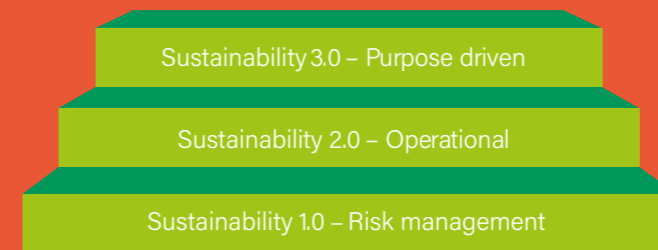


For me, there is too much confusion around what this essential area of management is called: CSR, Sustainability, ESG, Social Value. My concern is that this causes a barrier to change, because people don't know what to do next, or what to focus on. Continuing to develop and implement a Sustainability Management System has been the key to understanding what our material issues and opportunities are, which enables us to take targeted action and communicate our progress with clarity, transparency and authenticity. What we call it is secondary to this. We tend to keep it simple and call it sustainability; the outcome of embedding the Three Ps into our business model.

Another term that can be misconstrued is governance. This is not about who or what is 'forcing' us to change. It is about strong leadership and ensuring that our business practices are ethical, transparent and accountable. I have collaborated with the team, and with Syntiro Associates, to ensure that our purpose is clear and that everyone knows the part they play. It is hugely important. Without effective governance, there is a disorientating lack of direction.

Our purpose is 'to drive positive change and create a sustainable future for our clients, colleagues and community'. It represents taking targeted action across one, risk, two, operational impacts, and three, purpose-driven change. We cannot jump to step three without addressing one and two, and we cannot do this without having a robust strategy in place. Our purpose and strategy define what we want to build and why, the tools we need, and how to use them. It is by doing this that we have kept it simple. And let's not get wrapped up in thinking profit is a bad thing. In the context of our strategy, profit is not about making more money for shareholders but about prosperity for everyone who may be affected by our business activities. It is about considering others and doing what we can to leave a positive legacy.

## STAKEHOLDER



## SHAREHOLDER



I believe creative engagement is needed now more than ever. How else are we going to amplify the positive change needed to deal with some of humanity's greatest challenges, whether this is staying within 1.5°C global heating or challenging the very real issues that prevent a truly inclusive society? This is one of the reasons why we are using Syntiro's Potential for Positive Change (PFPC) metric and helping to develop and pilot this tool that allows us to measure the PFPC and all material impacts across People, Planet, Profit, including actions related to carbon and inclusivity. We are looking forward to developing a focused peer group with others who will be trialling it and learning from each other.

The other complexity is the acceptance that there is no perfect sustainable solution, it is always moving and shifting as we learn more and technologies change. There is inescapable tension between the often-conflicting demands of People, Planet, Profit that need to be navigated if we are to find the Best Overall Sustainable Solution, 'the BOSS'. We are in what Syntiro calls the 'Messy Middle... an acceptance that sustainability is about feeling comfortable about being uncomfortable'. It is a mindset change and a cultural shift in the way we perceive, think and act. Walking into this arena of nuance requires courage, openness, gritty determination, and an acceptance that we will get bruised along the way! But the rewards are great, and I look forward to seeing you there.

Anyone who knows me knows that I like to get practical. A good example of the Messy Middle involves who we choose to work with. Creative agencies are being singled out and publicly blamed for working with companies producing products or delivering services with a detrimental environmental or social impact. While there are some industry sectors and clients that we would not work with under any circumstances, most fall into the Messy Middle. Syntiro has helped us create our own Responsible Client Decision Tree, a practical tool that supports our strategy and enables us to have difficult conversations internally and with prospective clients, so we know what we need to do next. It means we can share 'why' and 'how' we have come to certain decisions, enabling us to be transparent and accountable for the actions that we take. We should ensure we are basing all our decisions around sustainability on the facts and data, rather than emotions, which sometimes can lead us to making the wrong choice.

In 2022, we were awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development, a huge accolade for our work. We have maintained our ISO standards at the highest level and have recently attained our B Corp Certification. These standards are a testament to the **DRPG** team and the work they do to support our triple bottom line. But the standards mean nothing if we're not brave and do more than just shout about what we do. One of our strategic priorities is to Collaborate for Positive Change and our Charter is one of the ways we live up to this commitment. We hope you find it useful.

B Corp in its simplest form is just a questionnaire. What our integrated sustainability management system, now in its 11th year of maturity, has enabled us to do is authentically put People, Planet and Profit at the very heart of our business model. Strategically, we've integrated ISO, B Corp, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals into one plan. This is how we have been able to achieve the awards we have and be awarded with Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development. We're the only creative agency to have done so.

At the rear of this Charter, we have given an overview of how we achieved B Corp, sharing our scores based on the six key B Corp pillars. In January 2024 we will release our 2023 results, comparing the last three years and also sharing the KPIs for 2024 and beyond.



# TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

# LINE

Sustainability

People

Planet

Profit

## A BRIEF EXPLANATION

We adopted the triple bottom line approach a few years ago, and once you get your head around the three Ps and why each area needs to be brought into all decision-making, you start to see the enormous benefits it brings to any organisation.

In simple terms, we look at the three Ps as a three-legged stool, with each leg representing one of the Ps. As with any three-legged stool, if one of the legs is shorter than the others, the stool will not be stable. If one leg is missing altogether, the stool will fall over. If we look at the seat of the stool as sustainability, then it's easy to see how the three Ps support wider goals.

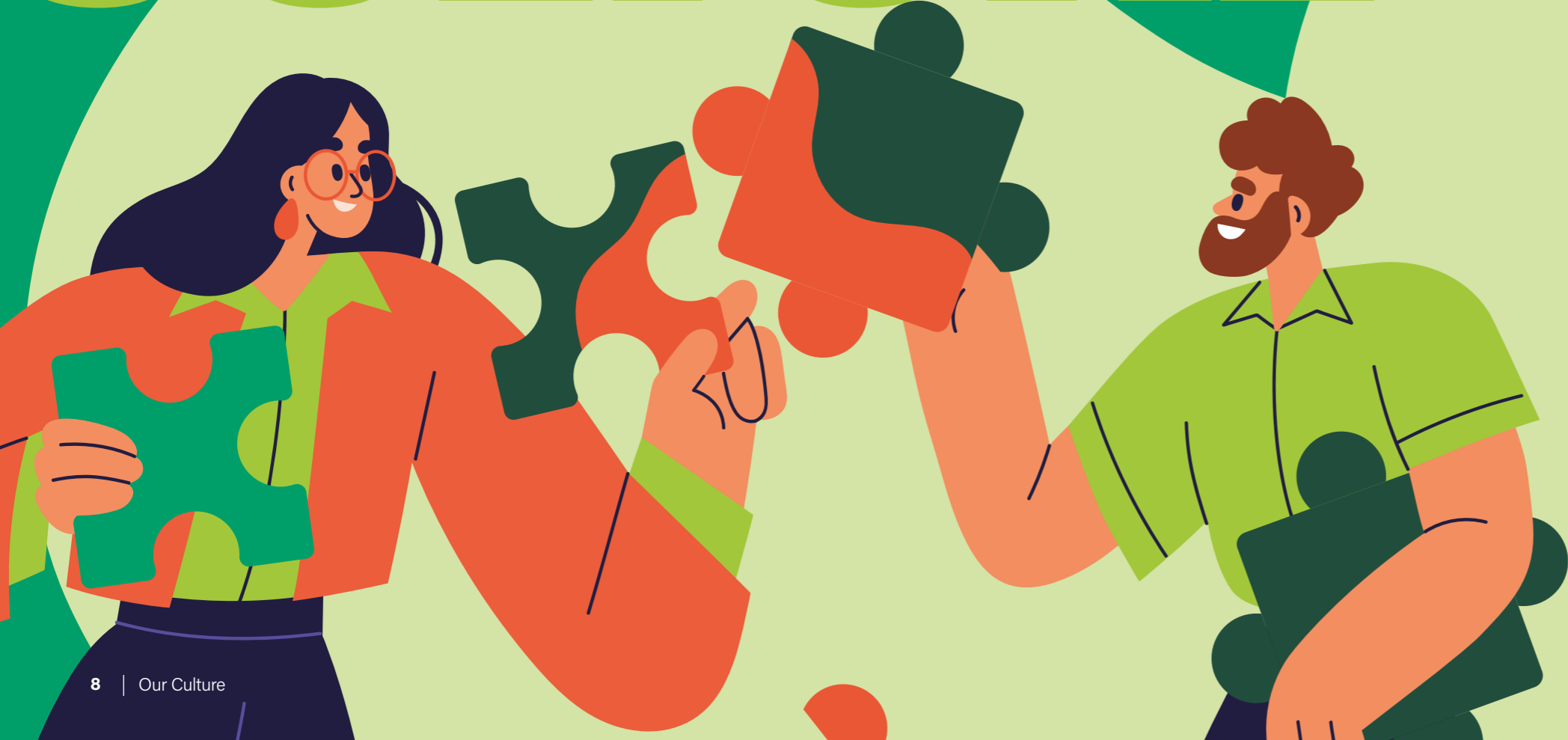
What's not so easy to see is how one activity can have cross-cutting impacts. This is where both tension and opportunity exist. Planetary health, social health and economic health are all dependent on one another.

For example, if we purchase local services and products, we are boosting the local economy and sense of wellbeing,

reducing localised air pollution and associated health issues, and minimising travel-related emissions that contribute to climate change. However, we need to ensure we have fully carried out due diligence on our supply chain to ensure local, really is local. We call this 'triple bottom line thinking' in order to establish the BOSS, the Best Overall Sustainable Solution. Sometimes we need to collate granular data to understand what the BOSS is, but many times it's simply a case of rethinking, looking through the lens of the triple bottom line, and using this to inform our decision-making and direct our actions.

It is important to note that the BOSS completely depends on your purpose. If you're a company whose purpose only requires measuring risk and making money for your stakeholders, your BOSS will look a lot different to ours! We are purpose-driven and stakeholder-driven, meaning our BOSS needs to be all-encompassing.

# OUR CULTURE



## OUR VALUES

**Our values** underpin all we do at **DRPG**. They're presented at our first-day induction right through to our performance reviews and how we measure our business in line with the wider industry. We recently introduced our fifth value, 'Ownership'. Accountability and independence in our work is something team members constantly strive towards at **DRPG**, so 'Ownership' perfectly encompasses this.



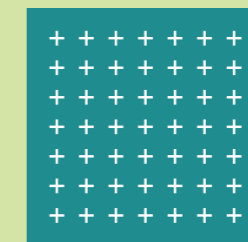
Understanding



Trust



Passion



Belief



Ownership

## THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The **four governing principles of sustainable development** run alongside our company values. These governing principles act as a barometer, otherwise called our Maturity Matrix – measuring us from 'minimal' engagement to 'full' engagement on each of our underpinning values. Where we feel there is an opportunity for more engagement, we will set an objective, target and key performance indicators to achieve on that, meaning that we tangibly and measurably improve across all four principles. Taking something that is conceptual to real and evidenced, living and breathing within **DRPG's** day-to-day.



**Inclusivity**



**Transparency**



**Integrity**



**Stewardship**

Culturally, our team members have always had trust in each other and a passion to work towards our common goals and purpose. Knowing there isn't the rigid hierarchical structure here that is otherwise apparent in a lot of agencies, we all have a shared responsibility to work towards our sustainability goals and targets, with each department setting their own individual sustainability targets each year.



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# OUR PURPOSE



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DRIVE POSITIVE  
CHANGE AND  
**CREATE**  
A SUSTAINABLE  
**FUTURE**  
FOR OUR CLIENTS,  
COLLEAGUES AND  
COMMUNITY.

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# OUR PARTNER IN SUCCESS

# GETTING THAT EXPERT HELP

When we first set out on our sustainability journey, we knew we'd need a little expert help. We're strong believers that even the biggest and best need to become the students from time to time. That's where Sam from Syntiro came in. With her expert knowledge and enthusiasm, she's helped shape our path by supporting us to create and embed new practices, as well as helping us conduct this review every single year. The partnership is central to our success, and long may it continue.

it is always focusing on the things that matter most and proactively meeting increasing stakeholder needs and expectations. DRPG's Charter is the annual output of all this hard work: a bold summary of "how we are performing against our set objectives and targets, and where we are going next".

This year, our objectives include trialling the BOSS, which is a dynamic planning and performance tool that manages and measures sustainability risk, operational impacts and purpose-driven change. We are also using the Responsible Client Decision Tree to manage association risk and opportunity in line with B Corp Criteria.

There is always something new to focus on as things change – and, goodness, how they have changed since 2007!

Working with Dale and the DRPG team to ensure strategy and actions are fully aligned involves deep expertise, experience, and a brilliant relationship. It is an honour and a privilege to be its sustainability partner, to get in the arena with the Messy Middle and courageously face whatever is necessary to deal with some of the toughest but most rewarding challenges the industry and world is facing today.

16 years ago, I found myself on a 'green panel' at the Event 100 Awards, where Dale Parmenter was winning a leadership award. Dale and I started chatting at the after-show party and his values and sustainability ambitions for DRPG were immediately apparent. At that time, DRPG comprised 67 team members (it now has over 370 around the world) and the first international event sustainability standard, BS 8901 (now ISO 20121) had just been issued in draft. I spoke with Dale about the importance of a Sustainability Management System to ensure the development of a clear ambition and strategy combined with a bespoke operational toolkit to drive targeted meaningful change.

Dale jumped in with both feet and DRPG became the first agency to achieve the powerful combination of BS 8901 and ISO 14001 (the renowned International Standard for Environmental Management). The system has become the divining rod that tells DRPG where to go next to ensure

Diving into the Messy Middle is not for the faint-hearted, there are difficult decisions that leaders need to make. What is our purpose? How important is sustainability to us? What are our material issues? Where are our hard no's? How brave are we going to be? We have not gone into this alone, we have needed some expert hand-holding.

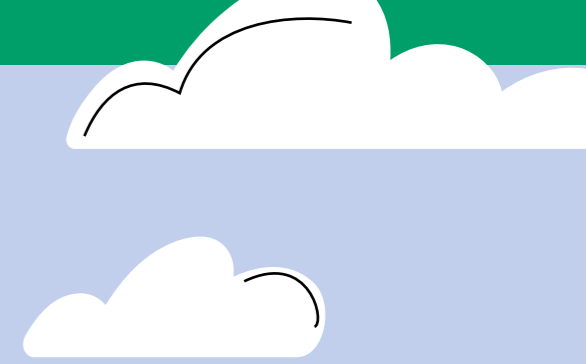
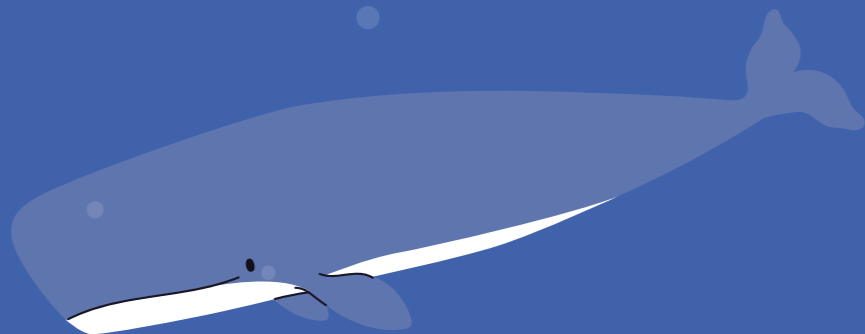
*Samantha Wilson*



# THE NOT-SO-HIDDEN POWER OF

# MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

SYNTIRO  
Associates



## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS:

- Positive engagement, service, and loyalty
- Meeting of needs and expectations
- Lasting business equity
- Increased customer reach and engagement
- Amplifying powerful word of mouth



## EMBEDDED SUSTAINABILITY

- Ensuring sustainability drives decision-making
- Know where you want to go:
  - In specific terms
  - With a clear focus
  - With meaningful and achievable targets
- Know how to get where you want to be
- Be able to communicate your approach clearly and consistently inside and outside the business



# 'DO WE NEED A POLICY FOR THAT, REALLY?'

I became familiar with management systems 27 years ago. The number of times I have heard, during those years, 'Do we need this ISO standard?' 'It costs how much!' Or even, 'Do we need a policy for that, really?'

I have come to understand the power of management systems and why they are so important. Done well, they are the foundations for your purpose, strategy, and operational toolkit, telling you what to measure and why. They are a business enabler, not the straitjacket they are stereotyped as being by some in our industry. Whether or not a company chooses to achieve certification, a management system is really the only way to ensure that sustainability is baked-in and not bolted-on.

Implementing a Sustainability Management System (SMS) based on the 'plan, do, check, act' (PDCA) model will ensure you align with the International Standards framework and enable you to seamlessly bring in other ambitions such as B Corp, engagement with the UN SDGs and GRI Standards.

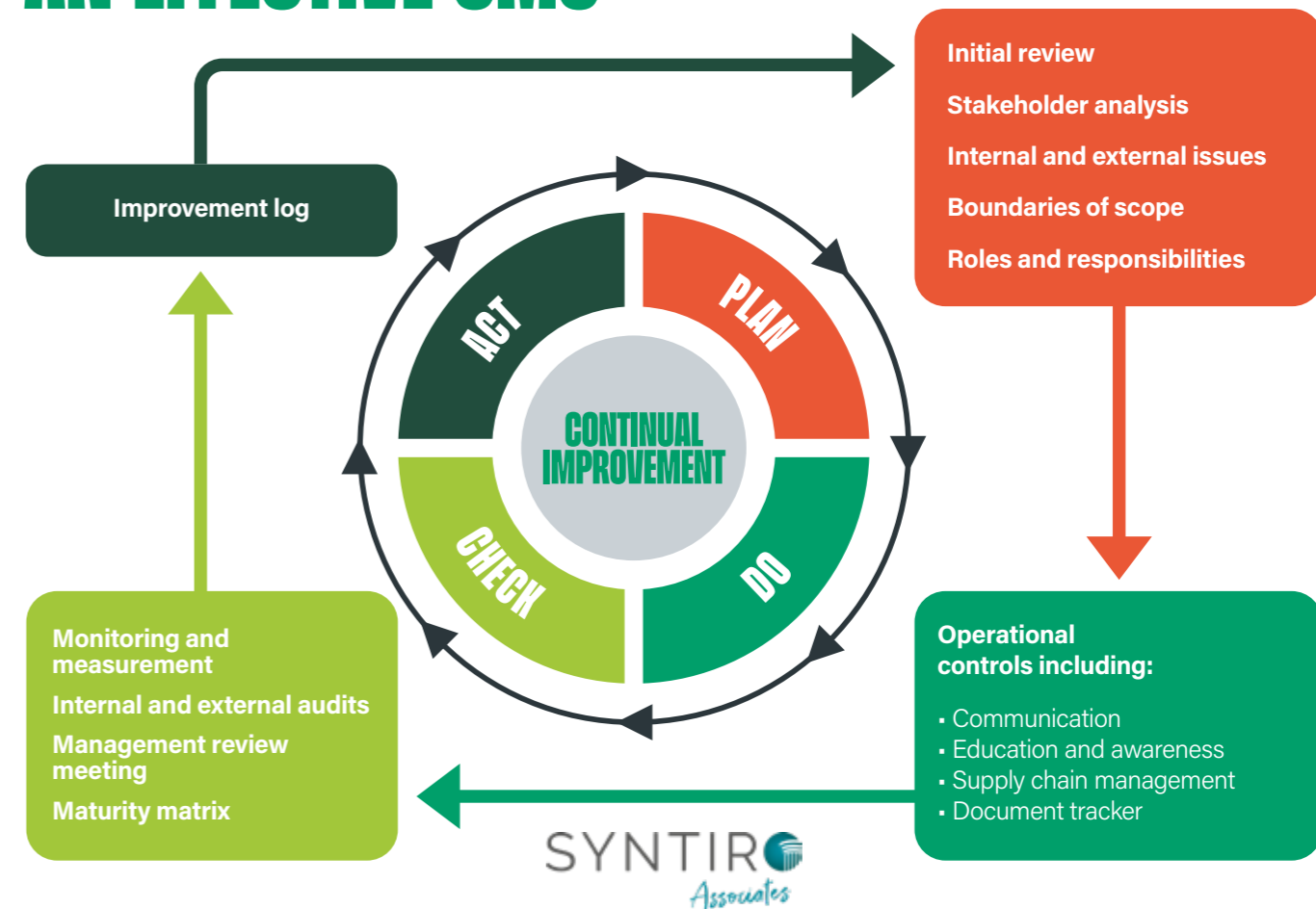
An effective SMS will help build stable foundations based on integrity, consistency, and transparency. A robust SMS will build credibility and authenticity, from which you can build sustainable success.

There is no quick route to lasting success, foundations need to be built.

Getting your team together to define your purpose as a business is powerful. Documenting your strategy and driving your ambition through a unique policy, meaningful objectives and a targeted operational toolkit makes that purpose a reality. Achievement of the objectives will require tangible, measurable actions by your team members. This is how the dreaded greenwashing is avoided; by addressing all your material issues, doing what you say you will do, providing evidence of your actions, and demonstrating how you have met the requirements of the Green Claims Code.



# UNDERSTANDING AN EFFECTIVE SMS



The SMS ensures that everyone in the team from the CEO and the board right the way through to new apprentices know what part they play and how to play it. This can then be integrated into job descriptions, training plans, annual reviews, and reward and recognition programmes.

An effective SMS will ensure you focus on the things that matter most, driving improvement and measurable progress. Monitoring throughout the year means that you know when you start to veer off-track so you can take immediate action. Checking via an annual Internal Audit and communicating progress through purposeful Management Reviews means your system is always taking you to where you want to be.

I love management systems. I usually don't tell people; they tend to not talk to me much after that, but I hope the above gets you at least a little bit excited! I also love audits, in my career, I have completed 79 external audits - external auditors are such nice people, full of sound business knowledge. I get to talk to them about management systems, how cool is that?

All the Management Systems I have seen, and that's about 25 I think, are just simple, good rules for business. Here at DRPG, our Management System covers ISO 27001, ISO 14001 and ISO 20121, that's Information Security, Environmental Management and Event Sustainability.

At DRPG we have achieved the prestigious Queen's Award for Sustainable Development and our business is now B Corp Certified.



If you want to talk to DRPG about our Management System and how it's helping us, have a chat with me.

Hi, I am Andrew, DRPG's Head of sustainability and Integrity.

[andrew.davies@drpgroup.com](mailto:andrew.davies@drpgroup.com)



# CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE: BEING AN INDUSTRY ROLE MODEL



Although we are in a competitive market, and in many cases wouldn't entertain sharing ideas or ways of working with competitors, when it comes to sustainability it's a different game entirely. The importance of getting everyone on board and working towards common goals far outweighs any threats around competition. Larger agencies have a moral commitment to support the whole industry and drive collaboration and sharing of best practices. For example, **DRPG** is one of the founders of ISLA, a recognised body supporting people to get together and collaborate to reduce carbon.



## THE WORK WE DO IN THE INDUSTRY

We support EVCOM and ICE, two trade bodies, and through them, we are able to help with education and promotion of sustainable events and communication. Examples include sponsoring EVCOM's Clarion awards (which was the pioneer event in celebrating the very best of sustainability communication) and ICE sharing the work we do with their members. We also attend events such as COP26 in Glasgow, where we were one of the first agencies globally to sign up for the global Net Zero events initiative.

## 'DOING OUR BIT' AS A CORPORATE CITIZEN

We have a philosophy that business cannot sit separate to the local community; it has to integrate and be a part of it. This is the only way to achieve sustainable growth. Whether that's supporting organisations like the Chamber of Commerce, which gives a great connection with other local businesses or linking with local educational establishments to promote the creative industries through talks, mentoring, and work experience programmes, gaining great insight into the next generation. Also, to support charities and local organisations through sharing resource or helping with awareness and fundraising. All of this brings a loyalty and cooperation between the local community and businesses.

## THE SPEAKER SLOTS WE ATTEND

Throughout the year, we are asked to attend many different types of events and forums to share our knowledge on a range of subjects, and hopefully challenge and inspire others to take action. Two subjects high on the agenda are sustainability and people experience. This is something we are more than happy to support, again to share knowledge, experiences and innovation.



# CLIMATE CHANGE AND NET ZERO



We're supporting biodiversity at our HQ with wild areas and recently planted deciduous trees



There is a 'no single-use plastic' rule for our buildings and events



Our buildings are being powered in part by our 780 PV solar panels and also by renewable energy guaranteed of origin (REGO) backed renewable electricity



Many of our construction event sets are made from repurposed materials



We are now six months into our decarbonisation programme



We are reducing our event carbon through the implementation of targeted actions via our Carbon Action Indicator in our BOSS App



# A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

There is a lot of talk about carbon, and it appears to be the current focus in the industry, but we must be careful. If we just focused on carbon, we would be contravening the Green Claims Code as it states we must manage all our material issues and opportunities.

That said, carbon is extremely important, so let's get up to speed with the climate emergency...

It was in 2015 when official representatives from practically every country in the world gathered in Paris and agreed to work to keep the world's average temperature rise well below 2°C; above what it had been before the industrial revolution – and preferably to keep it below 1.5°C.



Fast-forward to July 2023 and UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, is on BBC News saying the planet is entering an "era of global boiling".

He is not joking. We had the hottest July ever recorded; tourists were fleeing fires on the beaches of Greece. More than 113 million Americans were under extreme heat alerts as relentless temperatures continued. Nearer to home, fires burnt across Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Croatia and France. Ocean heat records were broken, with grim implications for the planet. Sky News reported tourists were "flocking to Britain to enjoy the cooler, wetter climate". Who would have believed that headline five years ago? So now we all know what 1.2°C warming looks like, and it's scary.

The UN warns that the pace and scale of climate action is insufficient to tackle climate change. Extremes will become more widespread and pronounced with every increment of warming.

So, there it is. The world has changed and now we MUST act. The question is how?

This has caused us a challenge at **DRPG**, and we've had to get into the Messy Middle with it! Regarding our corporate carbon footprint, we have measured scopes one, two and elements of scope three (business operations) since 2020. From this, we have been able to take action on our current identified hotspots. We won't list all here but some of these hotspots include water supply, waste disposal, business travel, homeworking and material use.

We started by switching to renewable electricity and carbon-neutral gas. We have a Carbon Neutral Gas Certificate that states we are 10% backed by Renewable Gas Guarantee of Origin certificates and 90% backed by carbon credits from qualified and registered projects for the period. We installed 780 PV solar panels, and we made it a rule to repurpose all the equipment and materials we have, reducing our waste, and making our events as sustainable as possible.

Our 2023 plans include the installation of a 15,000-litre water harvesting tank and a similar level of investment in PV solar panels, doubling the energy generated.

We are now working with specialists to undertake a robust scope three screen that includes measuring carbon across a representative sample of our events, but we haven't waited to do this before taking measurable action on event carbon. Our Event Sustainability Dashboard is designed so that the

more actions we take on carbon, the more the Carbon Action Indicator changes from red to amber to green. As we open our corporate scope three footprint to include events, we will be able to fine-tune our Carbon Action Indicator, meaning we can focus on targeted action without having to obtain a separate footprint for every event we do.

Carbon footprinting is always about increasing data quality and data completeness. We are committed to undertaking a footprint that is representative of our whole business and taking action to achieve realistic, and achievable net-zero targets.

Back to the Messy Middle, the space between where we are now and the achievement of our climate-based goals.

Many organisations have little experience tackling the climate emergency, operating low-carbon business models, or tracking and reducing carbon emissions. It's no surprise that many governments, companies and individuals have climate anxiety.

The scale and the speed of the actions and investments we need to make to tackle climate change are ambitious, and deadlines are looming!

The world is looking at responsible, sustainable companies and asking, "When will you achieve net zero?", "Where is your decarbonisation plan?", "Show me evidence you are reducing carbon across all three scopes".

The drive for net zero and the need to operate a low-carbon business model, have changed what a sustainable business is. I can imagine the conversations, CEOs turning to their Sustainability or Environmental Manager (if they have one) and saying, "What are our carbon emissions across all three scopes? Are we using renewable energy? Do you know the carbon output from our events? When are we going to become net-zero compliant? How much will it cost? And when can you get that done by?".



# CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

Let's continue our dive into the Messy Middle. What do we do about clients or work that involves association risk? Some clients might operate in high-carbon industries due to the nature of their products or services. Others may be in high-risk industries such as gambling or mining or they may have been involved in modern slavery allegations. What if the claim that a client is asking us to promote does not comply with the Green Claims Code? And show me a creative company that does not work with a client from the alcohol industry!

How do we even begin to start thinking about this? It inevitably causes huge discomfort in the board room, but we cannot ignore it. If we do, we could inadvertently cause harm, whether this be from the promotion of environmentally and socially damaging products, loss of reputation, or unhappy team members who choose to work elsewhere.

We are starting to use one of Syntiro's tools called the Responsible Client Decision Tree (RCDT) which enables us to assess risk and opportunity associated with the clients we work with and the work we do. We are adapting it to ensure it supports our purpose and addresses our material risks. Each decision node asks questions that are meaningful to us and inform the next step to be taken.

## 7 THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- 1 What are our hard no's?
- 2 Is the client genuine about making positive change?
- 3 Does our team agree we should do the work?
- 4 Does the client have a credible sustainability report or verified science-based target?
- 5 Have they publicly shown accountability for any issue and is there evidence they have taken demonstrable action to deal with the root cause?
- 6 If they are asking us to promote a green claim, is this compliant with the Green Claims Code?
- 7 Will we have influence over decisions?

The ultimate output is GO or NO GO, but following the RCDT means that we have a repeatable process and can explain why certain decisions have been made to the prospective client and any other stakeholders. We can also revisit the decision periodically or if things change.

Negotiating the Messy Middle in this way allows us to have courageous conversations and take direct action. And yes, there will be times when you choose to walk away from a potential new client. It happened to us in August this year, but it was the right thing to do.

And it does not stop there! If the answer is GO, we need a mechanism to deliver on the opportunities. The following section is all about how we do this.





# MEASURING POSITIVE CHANGE



## BEST OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTION

To us, there's no value in token gestures or 'tick box exercises'; they don't achieve any meaningful change. Instead, we're committed to minimising the negative environmental and social impacts of our events and harnessing our power to create positive change. How do we do that? By integrating sustainability into the entire event management cycle, from design to delivery to debrief, and operationalising our strategy through our app, which is aptly called the 'BOSS'.

The BOSS is the key to our event sustainability success. It is a planning and performance tool to aid in every decision we make. It allows us to minimise risk, reduce operational impacts and create the potential for purpose-driven change across people, planet, profit. It provides a way of collaborating with clients and suppliers so that everyone feels accountable for their part and experiences a valuable sense of collaboration and achievement.

Every project we start with a client always has the BOSS included in the budget, meaning all our clients have the opportunity to track their own scores and watch as they improve from project to project. By tracking measures relating to location, transport, energy, waste, materials, water, and inclusivity, we get a full picture of each event's impact. Clients can then report that back to seniors or delegates, proving cost-effectiveness, commitment to sustainability and so much more.

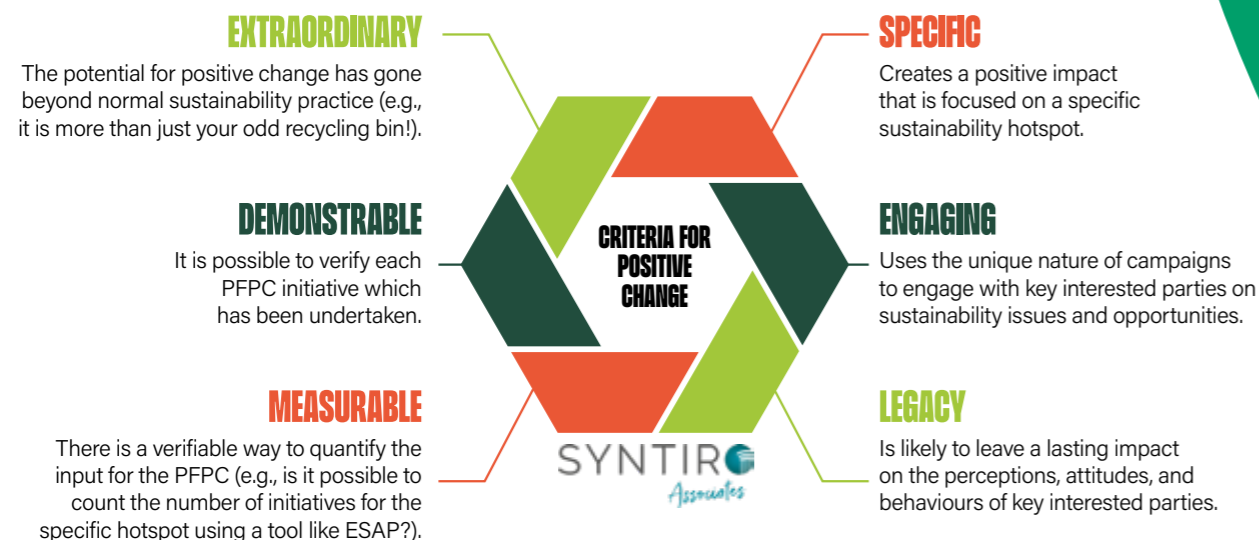
The BOSS dashboard tells us where we need to take more action to achieve a higher score and the UN Sustainable Development Goal icon does not light up until we have achieved over 60% in that topic area. The Carbon Action Indicator visibly shows us where we are in terms of taking action related to carbon and we can monitor how we are performing in relation to any event-related KPIs in our strategy.

## POTENTIAL FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

If we want to be truly purpose-driven, we need to be able to measure this. This is why we're using Syntiro's Potential For Positive Change (PFPC) metric so that our performance can be verified. It is really about where we can use our unique ability as creatives to innovate the event experience and bring to life our clients' brand values in a way that will amplify attendee engagement, grow positive sentiment, and deliver attitudinal shifts.

The Potential For Positive Change (PFPC) criteria is inspired by B Corp Impact Business Models (IBMs), which look at where businesses move beyond managing operational impacts to be purpose-driven organisations with 'good' built into their DNA. In the words of B-Lab™, "Impact Business Models (IBMs) are the ways that a business is designed to create a specific positive benefit/outcome for one of its stakeholders." To align with this, the PFPC metric is bound by a robust set of criteria that we measure against to calculate our potential impact on an event, campaign, or project.

These criteria for positive change can help accelerate the positive impact of your event in the planning stages, expanding the scope of the event, and building a credible and authentic brand.



**"The BOSS keeps sustainability on our minds throughout the whole lifecycle of the project, allowing us to track every area from waste to travel to inclusivity. Once you start thinking about it, it's a challenge to stop; constantly making you reconsider your decisions as an event planner and also ensuring the clients are making the most responsible decisions for their delegates and internal stakeholders. From a personal point of view, it benefits us as much as it benefits the clients".**

**KATE HALPIN**

Deputy Team Leader, Project Management



Our challenge is to get everyone using the BOSS to its maximum potential and we will be doing more workshops this year to bring our teams and our clients fully onboard.



# GROWING TALENT

Growing talent within our organisation is paramount to achieving our sustainability goals. Talent development empowers our workforce to innovate, adapt, and drive sustainable practices. It ensures that people, who are central to our operations, are equipped with the skills and mindset to prioritise environmental and social responsibility. For us, growing talent isn't achieved through a single initiative, but through many, spread across our business:

## THE ACADEMY

Our internal training hub, The Academy, is another place where we're investing in our people. With the introduction of Thrive, a learning experience platform, we're putting focus on the end-to-end experience every user has while they're learning. As well as supplying more resources, Thrive gives our team a fuller experience. Team members can now access learning whenever and wherever suits. By being in the driver's seat, they also have the opportunity to create user-generated content. We understand they are the experts in their field, so to help upskill each other, we're encouraging proper collaboration and it's already delivering results. The most popular content on our old system was seen by 156 people, now we have 317 active users (and that's just since our launch in May). A pleasing 81% of our workforce has accessed Thrive and they've now created over 100 pieces of user-generated content too.

## INDUCTIONS

To reach all our people in the right way, we've totally revamped the induction process this year. With bespoke pathways, we address individual needs more than ever before, plus we've curated a new range of workshops. These include a company overview, an introduction to our guiding principle of 'anything's possible', run-throughs from every department, a session on our values, a deep dive into how we approach sustainability and much more. We lay out everything we're committed to on day one, so new hires are driving towards the same goals from the start.

## LUNCH AND LEARN

To encourage learning and development across our whole team, and provide opportunities for people from across the business to come together, we regularly host 'Lunch and Learn' sessions. Our aim is to run at least six per year, and topics are largely driven by our teams. So far, we've covered neurodiversity, menopause, wellbeing, local charity Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven, craft and creativity, mindfulness, and even GA4 training.

## HORIZONS

We recognise that people managers are a vital part of any high-performing and happy team. To make sure all our current people managers and aspiring managers are constantly developing, we launched the Horizons programme this year. Over 70 team members quickly joined the course and have now completed six key modules: Communication Masterclass, Emotional Intelligence, Building Trust, Productivity Masterclass, Managing Performance, and Leading Inclusively. As we continue to run the course, the understanding and skills across **DRPG** will only continue to grow.

## LEADERSHIP EVOLVED

People work for teams, real teams, and that's where the magic happens. The job of leaders is to create a local team climate that cultivates psychological safety, trust, and accountable freedom. That's why we launched 'Leadership Evolved', a training programme specifically designed for our Senior Leadership team. Through it, they were able to layer additional skills, behaviours and mindsets, and grow their strength as leaders. By taking that time to focus on development and listen to other people's ideas, we've seen a trickle down of positive behaviours. That means happier colleagues and more mind-blowing work.

## APPRENTICESHIPS

We're really committed to nurturing the next generation of talent, and apprenticeships are just one of the ways we do that. This year, we've linked up with the BBC Apprentice Hub to increase the amount of talent entering the creative industries here in the Midlands. As one of the first employers to join the programme, we've taken on five apprentices through the BBC who act like any other member of the team.

Beyond that, we're continuing our own thriving apprenticeship programme. In our Carpentry team, two new apprentices are helping to shape the growing service. Plus, there are more dotted throughout our business; one in our large Live division, one in Tech services, and another in Campaign. Our existing team is even getting in on the action with our Head of Learning and Development starting a Level 7 apprenticeship, then Masters in HR Management, and a member of the HR team working through a Level 5 apprenticeship in HR.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

We have significantly revamped our approach to work experience, introducing a more structured framework that provides more opportunity for young people hoping to find a career in creative services. To keep that strong flow of beneficial work placements going, we've cultivated strong partnerships with both the University of Worcester and Wolverhampton University. This collaboration exposes students to the corporate environment, providing them with valuable insights and feedback on their academic work. Additionally, we conduct campus tours, enabling us to identify and nurture potential talent at an early stage. This year, we've successfully hired three individuals from work placements at Wolverhampton University and given another six, who joined us for an experience day, full work experience placements. All of this helps to enrich not just these students' learning experiences, but our own teams and skillsets.



Sustainability means more than improving the experience of our team. It means listening to everyone in it too. That's why we recently set up our Next Gen Board, to get insight from some of our youngest team members, which is then shared directly with some of our longest serving. The board's focus is broad, but it's made plenty of progress when it comes to improving team member experience.

With fresh eyes and plenty of bright ideas, our group of 18 to 24-year-olds have now launched a brand-new benefit scheme packed with customised offers, all accessible in one place. This includes lots of useful discounts, salary sacrifice options for electronics and cars, and plenty more to help with the cost-of-living crisis we're currently facing.

Along with reviving our benefit scheme, the Next Gen board came to the agreement that our current reward and recognition scheme didn't quite go the extra mile that our team deserves. The solution is Vivup highfive, a comprehensive recognition and rewards app that makes it easy to deliver peer-to-peer acknowledgement based on our core values. Managers are able to distribute vouchers and gifts through this platform, and everyone is able to see all the praise shared across teams in one place.

Another area we've been looking at is how we can make our team feel more comfortable and confident to work in the office. Work here is just beginning, and there are many ideas yet to be explored, but so far, we're about to launch a quiet, private space ideal for prayer, breastfeeding, administering medication, or just taking a quiet moment to yourself. Once we can measure the success and popularity of this room, we'll begin to look at implementing more quiet spaces in our offices across the globe.

Environmentally, we still have a way to go, but we are looking at how we can incorporate more sustainable choices into our everyday. This is why we're now expensing railcards for those regularly using the train to travel to work.

Next Gen are helping to make plenty of changes, but we recognise that it's not just up to a select few to make real change. With that in mind, we've also launched the Big Ideas Generator, giving everyone in the company a platform to submit their ideas on how to make **DRPG** better, no matter how big or small the idea. The team's work is only just beginning, but we're already making big changes.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Investors in People is a unique standard for people management, offering a rigorous assessment against the Investors in People framework, and reflecting the very latest workplace trends to help our organisation achieve high performance through people. **DRPG** was first awarded with an IIP award in 2003 and in 2019 advanced to Platinum. The IIP Platinum accreditation is the highest accolade that can be achieved against the Investors in People Standard and is currently held by only 1% of IIP accredited organisations.

# NEXT GENERATION

# LOOKING AFTER YOUR TEAM

**At DRPG, we know that our team is one of our greatest assets. To make sure we're supporting the 'People' element of our sustainability mission, we prioritise the happiness and wellbeing of our team members through a comprehensive range of initiatives.**

Our commitment to a positive workplace culture is reflected in our robust policies addressing harassment, bullying, disciplinary matters, grievances, and equal opportunities, all outlined in our handbook. We promote internal growth and opportunities, and it's not uncommon for our team members to start in one area of our organisation, develop an interest, and move to the other side of the business. Our inclusive recruitment policy underscores our dedication to diversity and inclusion too. In response to the changing work landscape, we've introduced hybrid working. This gives our people the flexibility to work from home, the office, or a split between the two.

Our wellbeing initiatives include unique benefits such as birthdays off and a 'you day' for personal time or those little life events you just don't want to miss. Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), increased maternity allowance, and an open feedback culture all support our team's wellbeing at various points in their careers with us. We also prioritise mental health – we even have our own team of Mental Health First Aiders – and maintain an open-door policy for HR concerns. To further enhance our team's experience, we shut down operations over the Christmas period, reimburse travel expenses, and provide access to preferential hotel rates, extending these perks to our team members for their personal travel.

In short, we're committed to fostering a happy, healthy, and supportive environment for our team. And we're always adding to our list of benefits to do just that.

## HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE NEURODIVERSE & USING TECHNOLOGY TO AID D&I

**One in seven of us are neurodiverse (ND). That term covers a range of conditions including attention deficit disorders, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and more.**

Though some might see ND as a limitation, we know neurodiversity can come with remarkable work strengths. Up to 80% of employers report hyperfocus, 78% creativity, 75% innovative thinking, 71% detail processing and 64% being authentic at work among their ND workforces. As American journalist Harvey Blume wrote back in 1998, "Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general. Who can say what form of wiring will be best at any given moment?"

ND team members have a range of fresh perspectives. While some ND team members find some elements of work difficult, they often possess highly desirable skills and attributes, such as reliability, conscientiousness, persistence, detailed and in-depth factual knowledge, strong technical abilities, plus the ability to look at the bigger picture and to think laterally.

To embrace all those skills, here at DRPG we started by creating a work environment that's fully inclusive. We found our ND team members started to disclose their conditions and began to engage with us more readily, providing insights into how we could help them achieve more here. Changes to our workplace included providing dedicated desks (rather than hot desks), noise-cancellation headphones, flexible working times, and a quiet space available to anyone who needs it. Even simple changes such as encouraging more literal language has improved communication and eased anxiety in some team members.

If you want to harness the power of your ND team members, be open, honest, caring, gentle and understanding, and the appreciation will be reciprocated. Maybe even consider registering as a Disability Confident Committed employer to make your commitment clear. It will have incredible benefits.

### Sources

- *The Local Government Association - Neurodiversity*
- *McDowall, Almuth and Doyle, Nancy and Kiseleva, Meg (2023) Neurodiversity at work: demand, supply and a gap analysis. Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK.*
- *The Law Society from access to inclusion: neurodiversity at work*





# LET'S GET

Accessibility testing plays a crucial role in ensuring that websites and digital platforms are usable for as many people as possible. This testing process involves evaluating the design, functionality, and content of a website to identify and address any barriers that might prevent people with disabilities from accessing and using the website effectively. At DRPG, we aim to build websites that meet at least AA standard, one level above the accepted baseline for accessible sites. Plus, as we move towards cloud migration, the energy costs and green credentials of the providers are criteria we're using to qualify technical solutions and vendors. We're even exploring AI options for inclusive language and sentiment analysis.

Here's how accessibility testing benefits both customers and websites:

**Inclusivity:** Accessibility testing ensures all individuals have equal access to information and services.

**Equal opportunities:** People with disabilities should have the same opportunities to browse, shop, learn, and interact online as anyone else.

**Improved user experience:** Many accessibility features, such as clear navigation, concise content, and structured layouts enhance the experience for all users.

**Legal and ethical compliance:** Many countries have laws and regulations that mandate digital accessibility, such as the global Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

**Longevity of solutions:** Creating digital products that are accessible from the start reduces the likelihood of costly retrofits and redevelopments.

**Efficient resource utilisation:** Accessible design often emphasises simplicity, and therefore reduced data usage, shorter loading times, and lower energy consumption.

**Futureproofing:** Investing in accessibility testing today ensures that digital products remain compliant in the face of changing regulations.

**Cost savings:** We've built our own accessibility checker, saving money on annual membership fees to public tools.

## Automation in testing

We have built a team of automation testers experienced in building and creating automation regression packs using freeware tools such as Selenium and Cypress. And we've done all this with the goal of automating our workstreams. This allows us to provide a more rounded and extensive offering to our clients and enhance the quality of our testing.

Traditional manual testing procedures often involve repetitive tasks that demand human intervention. These processes can be time-consuming, error-prone, and resource-intensive, ultimately contributing to increased energy consumption and carbon emissions. Automated web testing, on the other hand, presents myriad benefits that align with sustainable practices.

**Energy efficiency:** Automated testing can run 24/7 without breaks, allowing for the efficient utilisation of server resources.

**Lower carbon footprint:** By optimising resource usage, shortening development cycles, and improving website performance, automated web testing contributes to a greener digital ecosystem.

**Remote collaboration:** Automated testing allows distributed teams to collaborate seamlessly, reducing the need for frequent travel.

**Data-driven optimisation:** Data generated by automated testing can be analysed to make informed decisions about resource allocation, energy efficiency enhancements, and code optimisation.

## New technology for accessibility

### Beamforming audio for neurodiverse individuals:

Audio beamforming and directional sound are exciting technologies that can be used to focus sound in a specific direction. As well as providing endless opportunities for unforgettable experiences, the tech can help neurodiverse individuals. For instance, some people with autism (ASD) have difficulty processing sound from multiple directions, so beamformed sound could simplify and improve their experience. The technology can even be used to create a 'virtual sound bubble' around individuals, reducing background noise and thus improving focus.

It's not just ASD, though. Audio beamforming and directional sound can help individuals with a wide range of neurodiversity. Those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), for example, often have difficulty paying attention and staying focused. Audio beamforming and directional sound can help to improve focus and concentration, making it easier for people with ADHD to participate in school, work, and social activities. For people with dyslexia, the tech can help to improve auditory processing. This makes it easier to understand speech and participate in conversations.

Audio beamforming and directional sound can also be used to help people with a visual impairment. Audio description is common, but beamformed sound means audio description can be directed to the right person, wherever they are in a space, without the need for headphones.

Directional sound can also be used to reduce background noise, making it easier for listeners to hear audio description. This can be helpful for people with visual impairments who may be in noisy environments. The tech can also improve the quality of audio description by reducing echo and reverberation.

Overall, audio beamforming and directional sound are promising technologies that have the potential to help people with a wide range of conditions enjoy experiences that consider their needs. Applied subtly, yet with tremendous effect, the tech allows for more equitable experiences where those who need more support aren't visually singled out or offered the trade-off of a more comfortable but less full experience. The opportunities here are nothing short of life changing.

### How we use beamform audio

This technology is something we've been using for a little while at DRPG and it now has a role in a lot of the events we produce. The opportunities it presents are endless, and the experiences we can create using the tech, unforgettable. That's why we've partnered with HOLOPLOT, the leading name in beamform audio, to help more people experience all the benefits that come with the ability to direct sound like light. We even hosted the world's first demonstration of Ghost Frame, a specialised LED screen that layers content to be visible to different audiences at once, and HOLOPLOT in harmony. Our aim is simple: to use, pioneer and promote tech that will make events of every scale more accessible now, and for the future.



# DIGITAL

# COMMUNITY

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT US

In December 2017, when Birmingham won the bid to host the Commonwealth Games, one of its pillar objectives was to host the most sustainable Games possible. Supporting underprivileged communities in the West Midlands was a huge part of that. To achieve this, they sought local expertise, and **DRPG's** track record in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives, educational collaborations, and community engagement in the West Midlands and Worcestershire made us stand out from the rest.

During the Games, we sponsored Delicious Orie, a Team GB Boxer, in a promotional video aligned with our 'Own The Moment' ethos. Additionally, we contributed to the Queen's Baton Relay and provided volunteers. Our team also assisted the Ceremonies team pro-bono in planning and rehearsals. Post-Games, we collaborated on 'To The Streets!', a musical production, and raised money for charity through a physical activity initiative. We are now working with United by 2022 to offer hands-on experiences to young people interested in the creative industries, leveraging our Studio 212 and facilities in Hartlebury to provide educational and career guidance. Our goal is to ensure equal opportunities and support for those in need in our local communities.



## TEAM SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

We live in an age where there are many people and communities in need, and we feel, as a purpose-driven business, one of our responsibilities is to help where we can. It is just another way we integrate social and environmental considerations into our business operations, contributing to the greater good.

That help can take many forms, from fundraising, helping people into work, supporting those in education, sharing expertise across the industry and with educational establishments or even promoting inclusion and equity. We completed 58 community projects during 2022 and helped raised over £200k for good causes.

We call these activities our Team Sustainability Initiatives. Our team members completed 58 of them in 2022 and it looks like we are going to exceed that record in 2023. Our team members are driven by their passion and belief, as a business we find ways to support our team to help them achieve their initiatives.

We let charities use our buildings, studios, and teams to hold charity events, sometimes our Creative and Film teams produce promotional material such as films that a charity can use to help promote their cause.

It may be an individual team member or a group, fundraising for a charity or even leading a litter pick. We use our social media power to help them gain more support and hopefully more funding.

As much fun as the activities are, there is a story, a personal story, behind many of the team initiatives. It may be that a team member has lost a close relative to cancer, or maybe they are from a lower economic background themselves. Whatever the reason, we welcome all suggestions of support, first and foremost those ideas that stem from our own people.

Doing the right thing always has benefits. Our Team Sustainability Initiatives don't just positively impact communities and the environment, they have an impact on those team members involved. It impacts how they feel, how they view the business, and how participating has a positive effect on their wellbeing.

The support given to the team for Team Sustainability Initiatives may even help prospective team members choose our company as the company they want to work with.





# CERTIFIED B CORPORATION™

Certified B Corporations, or B Corps, are companies verified by B Lab™ to meet high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

We are now a Certified B Corporation, and as such, we measure our impact through many different measurement tools shown throughout this document. We are also measured against B Corporation's Impact Area Pillars: Workers, Environment, Customers, Community and Governance.



"B stands for Benefit for all. The B Global Network mobilises the B Corp movement to change our economic system to positively impact all stakeholders — workers, communities, customers, and our planet."  
-B Corporation

Certified



This company meets high standards of social and environmental impact.

Corporation



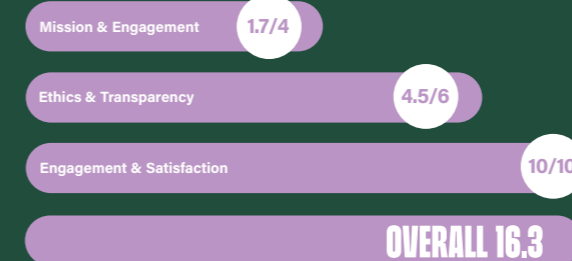
Below, you can look at our first year's scoring. It is important to note that we still have a way to go and the B Corporation will re-assess our impact areas every three years to ensure we're meeting the highest standard of reporting and governance for our people, planet and profit.

DRPG

88.2

OVERALL B IMPACT SCORE

## GOVERNANCE



## WORKERS



## CUSTOMERS



## ENVIRONMENT



## COMMUNITY



# MEET THE TEAM

Every member of our team contributes to our sustainable development, however there are some team members that help lead sustainability in the company.

Let's say hello to Dale Parmenter, Andrew Davies, Sam Wilson, Abbie Brain, Zac Goodman, Alex Cottom, Kate Halpin and Mark Betson.



## DALE PARMENTER

Dale is our CEO. He started **DRPG** 43 years ago and the business is essentially a reflection of Dale's belief. Dale is **DRPG's** visionary. He believes business should be profitable and a power for good. Through good business he believes we protect the planet and support communities, social health, and wellbeing.



## KATE HALPIN

Kate is a leader in the Live Events team. She supports those in her team by helping them understand and consider sustainability and the UN SDGs when planning events. Her knowledge of sustainability, and extensive experience of live events and clients, coupled with her amazing communications skills, makes her the ideal team member to drive low-carbon event planning through our ESAP. She does it brilliantly.



## ANDREW DAVIES

Andrew is our Head of Sustainability and Integrity. He has worked in environmental and social sustainability for nearly 30 years. He loves sustainability and believes in the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), effective risk management and positive climate action. Andrew is one of our neurodiverse senior leaders.



## SAM WILSON

Sam is the Managing Director at Syntiro Associates. Sam has been working with and advising **DRPG** for over 10 years on all sustainable development. She helped develop our original Sustainability Charter and continues to support **DRPG** in sustainability, delivering speciality sustainability support in events and communications. She works with Dale, Andrew, Alex and Kate.



## ZAC GOODMAN & ALEX COTTOM

Alex and Zac lead from within the PR & Marketing team. The passion for change is seen in the promotion of **DRPG's** sustainability messages across our channels through social media, press and digital marketing. They help bridge the gap between other agencies, suppliers and clients by forging meaningful relationships with trade associations and governing bodies that collectively bring about wider progression.



## ABBIE BRAIN

Abbie is a Sustainability Consultant for Syntiro Associates and has been working for the company for over six years. With a background in event management, Abbie started working in sustainability after undertaking a university module in the subject taught by Sam Wilson.



## MARK BETSON

Mark is the Head of Property Services. His team works on the decarbonisation of our buildings. From solar energy to rainwater harvesting, effective waste management, equipment maintenance, fire safety management and pollution prevention, Mark and his team are working hard to reduce the carbon associated with our workplace; their work is helping **DRPG** properties become carbon neutral.





## ESG Charter **2023**

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