



Building Purposeful Businesses

IMPACT REPORT

We believe every organisation makes a contribution to the world we live in, whether through the provision of products or delivery of services. This is our report on how in doing our work we remain conscious of the impact we make as a business on people, on society and on the environment.

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Building Purposeful Businesses

Introduction

For us, 2019 was a time of reflection and consolidation. We kicked off the year with a group purpose session when we stepped back from our daily client work and reflected on who we are, why we exist and what we deeply care about.

During the year we became a B Corp, we hosted a significant Masterclass on navigating profit and purpose and finalised a comprehensive report on the State of Purpose. There was an overwhelming sense of personal and organisational ownership around purpose and the importance of our work.

As businesses struggle just to remain afloat they will need to find strength from their purpose to help guide their next steps.

It was also a year of achievement from a client side. The highlights included the work with BP Upstream around low carbon and playing an exciting role helping to rebrand The Queen's Anniversary Awards, which celebrate the outstanding work of our universities and colleges of further education.

2020 is really the year of COVID-19 and if there was ever a time in our 18-year history as to why we exist as a company, it is now. As businesses struggle just to remain afloat they will need to find strength from their purpose to help guide their next steps.

In our COVID-19 world, scientists are now starting to regain trust. And this will move into other areas such as the climate change crisis and the goals set out by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement for 2030.

We are learning that we need to act together and it is down to the key stakeholders in government, business, investors and civic society to collaborate and rapidly move into action. We believe there will be an increased appetite from employees to work for responsible businesses. And business competitiveness will increasingly come from true 'value' creation and not just financial return.

The next few years could see the world create an exciting new and more sustainable future. For this reason, Pulse itself will move beyond its traditional consulting to, where possible, act as a catalyst to bring key stakeholders together to collaborate on the new future that can be created. We will be looking to launch B-COP Findhorn, an initiative designed to bring the key stakeholders (business, investors, government and civic society) together to explore how to help the UK achieve Net Zero by 2040.

Pulse will stay true to its own North Star and our belief that business is critical to building a better world.

Simon Milton
Founder

Our Vision

We believe that every organisation makes a positive contribution to the world in which we live, be that through the provision of products or the delivery of services. Every organisation can contribute in some way, no matter how small or hidden it may seem, both to protect the planet and deliver economic and social benefits.

Therefore, every organisation has a purpose – it just sometimes needs to be uncovered or nurtured. Understanding this is key to developing a successful organisation – one whose advice, services or products are sought and where employees feel valued and empowered.

We believe that effective leadership, communications and engagement are critical to any business wishing to navigate its way with purpose – and doing so in a profitable way.



Our team and our values

We are proud to be home to a loyal, passionate and inspired team which cares about the work it does, and about the contribution our clients make to the world. We try our hardest to practice what we preach too, with our own purpose being to provide guidance to organisations on how to move from talking about purpose to embedding it within their business.

Our values guide our approach.

KINDNESS
INSPIRING
MEANINGFUL
PRACTICAL

“For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and people like you.”

The United Nations

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We've been looking at how we can help support and deliver the SDGs. We try to align our work with them by using the goals as a business framework to create positive societal impact. Whilst we prioritise some goals over others we remain aware that it is the overall impact, which is important. Success in one goal shouldn't come at the expense of one of the others.

There are 17 in total and we've identified seven goals to work on at Pulse to help us reach our 2020 objectives.

They are:



The structure of our report

At the heart of what we do is to help build purposeful businesses, and for our clients that means supporting them in making a positive and sustainable difference. But we realise that in order to support that work we need to pay attention to our own business too.

How we operate and think about our own employees, environment and community is important. We believe this makes us better and more capable of undertaking the work we do on behalf of our clients. Producing this impact report has helped us to increasingly formalise this model, to help guide action and highlight where we need to do more work.

One year on from becoming a BCorp, this is a first step for us — some areas seem to have a seamless match, others are more challenging. But within this structure we can continue to grow and drive ourselves to do better.



We use this model to guide us as a business.

Driving Purpose

We believe that purpose must be at the heart of how a business operates

The idea of businesses having ‘purpose’ has gained a lot of traction lately – to the point where it seems to be the buzzword of the day, adopted and adapted by many organisations. As an early pioneer we have always felt that purpose must be at the heart of how a business operates. Purpose must guide how a business creates its profit, inspires its workforce and brings real value to the world.

Purpose touches our deepest creative potential and unites us with others who want to ensure that what we do brings meaning. When people come together around a common purpose and put the soul back into business, and themselves, then anything is possible.

Over the last few years, through purposeful leadership masterclasses and workshops, we have worked to bring together business leaders, academia and leadership coaches to think about and discuss organisational purpose.

12 Purposeful Leadership Principles

We have developed 12 Purposeful Leadership Principles which we deploy in our consultancy work. They can help people think about how their organisation can live and develop purposefully.

SERVE OTHERS
BUILDING COALITIONS
AUTHENTICITY • OWNERSHIP
JOURNEY TOWARDS A UNIFYING VISION
OPENNESS • FUN
WORKING ITERATIVELY
COURAGE • HUMILITY
IT STARTS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL
SMALL THINGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Each of the principles helps to:

- Drive positive, purposeful change and inspire others to change
- Establish how to gain commitment and sustain it
- Give insights into how purposefulness is maintained by being integrated into the business process

You can read more about these principles here:

<https://bit.ly/31Jn2Bd>

What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

In 2019/2020

1. In 2019 we held a purposeful leadership masterclass on the twin pillars of profit and purpose.
2. In 2019 and in early 2020 we hosted breakfasts with business leaders to debate how to enable purpose and profit to work alongside each other within their organisations.
3. Early this year we published The State of Purpose, shining a light on current purpose practice across the corporate world.

In 2020/2021 we plan to:

1. Hold our next masterclass on equipping leaders with the tools to lead and operate in a purpose-driven world.
2. Continue our series of business breakfasts.
3. Co-host B-COP Findhorn event in Scotland, bringing together business leaders, investors, government and civic society to help the UK achieve Net Zero emissions by 2040.

Driving Purpose is a cornerstone in the way the business supports:



Two of our big Driving Purpose initiatives

Working with the business community on establishing a mutual benefit model of operation

The Future of Business Masterclass

In May last year, we held a Masterclass, attended by 50 people from the corporate, third sector and academic world, on how to navigate profit and purpose. This was co-hosted by the law firm, Clifford Chance, in aid of the Social Business Trust, a charity which helps social enterprises to scale up. This was the eighth Masterclass run by Pulse over the last four years on the subject of purpose.

In the next year, we plan to host another masterclass on leading and operating in a purpose-driven world with EY and Frontier Economics (date TBD due to COVID-19). Building on our last masterclass, we will explore the leadership qualities required to turn our belief in purpose into action. Moving towards a model of mutual benefit is critical to ensure business remains commercially and socially relevant. With the right mindset we believe this new collaborative approach of reaching out to investors, governments and our wider civic society is critical to solving the great challenges that we all face.

We will also be looking at the pioneering work of the British Academy and its '8 Principles for Purposeful Business' as well as EY's work on 'Long-Term Value'.

Our masterclasses are designed to be a safe space to network with other business leaders exploring the role of profit, purpose and leadership.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/3feluCT>



Sharing insights from business leaders

The State of Purpose – Insights on Navigating Profit and Purpose

Pulse published *“The State of Purpose: Insights on navigating profit and purpose”* to bring together leading thinkers on the role purpose plays in ensuring organisations can thrive.

This report shares a range of insights at a critical time to prove purpose is not another meaningless buzzword. Key leaders present a new way of thinking about how to run organisations. We believe purpose and profit are no longer mutually exclusive but rather interwoven with the foundations of how a business functions.

To download a copy:
<https://bit.ly/2D72Rof>

Creating Impact For Our Clients

We help our clients turn purpose into reality, with visible impacts on performance

Leadership, communication and employee engagement are critical factors for any business looking to operate with both purpose and profit.

Both large corporations and small start-ups are increasingly looking to operate in a way that is recognisably of benefit to society. We work closely with clients from both of these worlds.

Our staff have a wide-ranging and deep expertise in working with leaders, communicating internally and externally and engaging bi-laterally to ensure purpose becomes embedded within the organisation and positively impacts employees, customers and other stakeholders.

Turning purpose into reality

Pulse helps leaders turn ideas into things that the workforce can engage with which can deliver a fundamental business improvement. Like all organisational change it takes a combination of will and effort.



What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

In 2019/2020

Over the course of last year, we helped clients in sectors including energy, mining, social business and private equity embed purpose more strongly in their organisations. This covered a number of areas, including driving low carbon; recognising outstanding achievement in education; and fostering a more effective safety culture.

In 2020/2021

1. We will be helping our clients to continue to leverage and shape their purpose and communicate more effectively. We will also help one of our trade association clients celebrate the last full year of its existence.
2. We plan to introduce a more rigorous client review process which enables Pulse to assess the impact of our work better.

Our focus on **Creating Impact for Our Clients** supports:



A few ways in which we Create Impact For Our Clients

Securing a sustainable future for an education charity

A charity that we work with wished to overhaul its external image to become more relevant and engaging to its external stakeholders. We are supporting the organisation by revitalising its digital assets and we are helping it to embrace social media. This involves a complete redesign of its website, launch of new social media platforms and a change in messaging/positioning to ensure the content of these assets is more engaging.

The work we are now doing for this charity will improve its relevance, increase the number of people and organisations involved in its work and lay the foundations for commercial sustainability in the future.



Embedding low carbon thinking

Our client is rapidly moving to a low carbon future. We help them navigate the issues they face in engaging and energising internal staff. We are helping leaders within the organisation to understand the drivers and barriers to engaging the workforce in the new low carbon space. Part of the role is to bring the voice of the external world — from environmental activists to investors into the organisation.

This work will help this company, already a pioneer in its sector, move into a new phase of its life, allowing it to thrive and the world to benefit.

Another client is a trade association responsible for pioneering research into environmental technologies that can help mitigate climate change through CO₂ emissions reductions. Over the past decade, we have helped them to live their purpose by sharing the results of their work more widely so that these technologies can be adopted across the world.

This has involved a range of activities targeting industry, NGOs and the public — including the production of publications, engagement with the media, attendance at conferences and exhibitions and making use of digital platforms. Our work will help these technologies to become viable options in the challenge of tackling climate change.

Strengthening safety culture

A client in the extraction industries needed help in updating safety communications aimed at workers whose first language was often not English, and who often found the technical language of safety principles difficult to understand.

We helped them to create materials that put the worker at the centre of the safety conversation. We paid careful attention to using language that made sense to them and that resonated, so that they clearly understood what was needed from them to perform in the right way.

This helped to create a change in attitude: where safety practices were recognised as being in place in order to support them and their colleagues, creating a healthier interdependent safety culture.



Ensuring We Are A Sustainable Business

We aim to be an ambitious but sustainable business which balances profit with purpose

It is important to us that we are considerate of all our stakeholders including our staff, community and environment and have put various measures in place to guide us through this process.

We have changed our Articles of Association to reflect this and are proud to be members of organisations such as B Corp and the PRCA. In fast-changing times, we continue to review our conduct as a business and membership of these organisations will help us to keep aligned in the future.

A Certified B Corp

Last year we were proud to become a B Corp. B Corp is a standard that mirrors our values and beliefs in how organisations should operate.

Our B Corp status acts as a helpful benchmark for us vis-a-vis other organisations and it's an important indicator that we are progressing along the right path. It has helped us to think about how we can continuously improve our performance and we'll continue to work towards increasing this score across all categories.

We welcome the addition of an impact management solution which enables businesses to set goals and track progress on their actions toward the SDGs.

Public Relations and Communications Association

The PRCA is the world's largest and most influential trade association for the public relations and communications industry. During 2019 we successfully achieved the PRCA Communications Management Standard for the 3rd time in succession. This is the hallmark of PR excellence which combines elements of 'ISO9001' and 'Investors in People'.



What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

In 2019/2020

1. We changed our Articles of Association to reflect commitment to all stakeholders.
2. We became a B Corp, meeting the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance.
3. We passed the PRCA Communications Management Standard.

In 2020/2021

1. We will publish our B Corp Impact Report for the first time - you are reading it!
2. We will continue to learn from and be engaged in the B Corp community.
3. We will work towards meeting the UN SDGs and complete BCorp's SDG Manager.

In *Ensuring We Are A Sustainable Business* we are guided by:



Encouraging Our People To Thrive

Our people are at the heart of everything we do and we aim to create a supportive environment that allows them to thrive

Our aim is to run a happy and healthy business in which our staff feel at home and can thrive. We like to make sure that they have the support they need to succeed. It's important to us that our staff feel encouraged to manage their health and wellbeing positively while at work. We help them do this through initiatives such as flexible working, mentoring, regular reviews, healthcare package, cycle to work scheme, fun activities and fresh fruit.

We are committed to ensuring that our health and wellbeing policies are effective and tackle the core issues our staff face. Each year, everyone receives internal and external training as well as three off-site days where we have fun and get to know each other away from our desks and computers.

Prompted by our B Corp journey, in 2018 we introduced an annual peer group session so that every member of staff has a voice in shaping the company.



What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

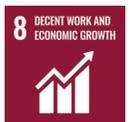
In 2019/2020

1. We introduced a Vitality health plan to promote a balanced lifestyle.
2. Encouraged by our Swedish intern, we introduced Fika, where we take time out to connect over tea and cake.
3. We ran a Purpose Vision session for Pulse staff, where we discussed our approach to purpose and worked on ways to develop our client offer.
4. In 2019 we provided 41 days of training.
5. We held a peer group session – giving staff an opportunity to give collective feedback to management on improving and shaping the company's development.

In 2020/2021

1. We will focus on mental health and wellbeing.
2. Mental health cover to be added to our Vitality Health package.
3. We are developing a comprehensive internal and external training and personal development programme for everyone to benefit from.
4. We've introduced on-site massages and during COVID-19 virtual pilates lessons.

In *Encouraging Our People To Thrive* we are guided by:



A few ways in which we have been Encouraging Our People To Thrive

Giving our staff a voice in improving the company

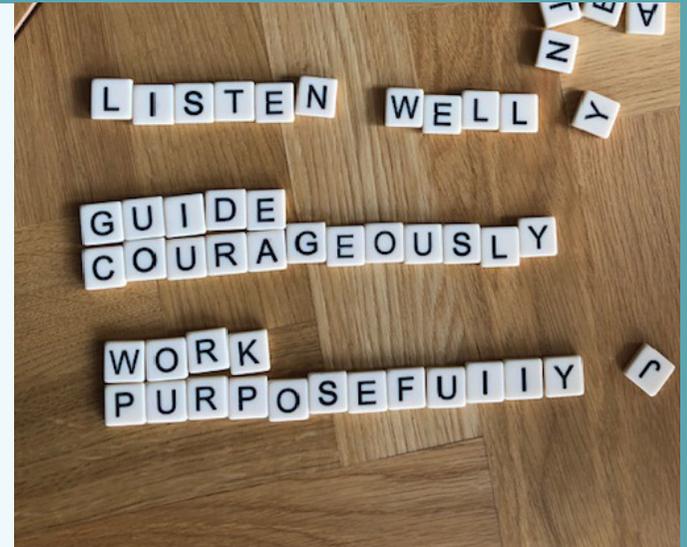
We hold peer group sessions once every year to discuss the areas where Pulse can improve. All staff take part in small group sessions. Topics we touch upon include how we see our role in the company, opportunities for personal development and staff benefits.

The group sessions are held as a 'safe place' where feedback is given back to HR anonymously. Team members are thus empowered to raise issues which can then be addressed by management. Introducing the Vitality health plan was one outcome of the peer group session.

Collaborating on our vision

In 2019 we held a Purpose Vision session for Pulse staff, where we discussed how to re-evaluate Pulse's purpose and align it to all aspects of our work.

The team came away with very positive feelings and an optimism for what they had shared together and what the future has in store. Many expressed how they now realise just how deeply engrained the Pulse philosophy and approach are. There was a shared sense of knowing who we are and what we do. This provided confidence around what purpose meant to the group — a renewed focus and clarity around Pulse as an authority on purpose, what it stands for, what it does, and who it wants to be.



“The vision session was a great way for us to be bolder and more courageous as leaders of purposeful work.”



Protecting Our Environment

We are committed to improving our environmental performance and in supporting our clients to decarbonise and engage with the UN SDGs

We believe in the principle that if everyone carries out the changes they can, then the aggregate effect on our environment can be significant.

Since moving to new premises, we have undertaken a number of measures, including moving to sustainable suppliers and products, minimizing waste and increasing our recycling rate as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging walking/cycling among our staff.

Our next focus will be to make a more concerted effort to reduce emissions, beginning with measuring our greenhouse gas emissions and using offsetting mechanisms.

Our aim is to join other B Corps by committing to net zero by 2030 but we need to find out more about how to achieve this first.

For many years we have been concerned about climate change and have worked with clients in the alternative energy sector and CCS (Carbon Capture and Storage). Most recently, our founder Simon Milton has become a member of a new initiative with Extinction Rebellion Catalysers to reach out and encourage business to act and behave with a level of urgency to address emission reductions.

The work includes building new and more progressive relationships between existing clients and the Extinction Rebellion movement.



We will offset our flights with Trees for Cities



Our aim this year is to increase our recycling rate to 75%

What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

In 2019/2020

1. Our recycling increased from 57% in 2018 to 63% in 2019.
2. We now also recycle our compostable waste.
3. We encouraged staff to walk, cycle or take public transport to meetings. A cycle-to-work incentive is made available to facilitate this.
4. We started the process of changing to sustainable suppliers and products.
5. We have become more active in encouraging action with clients and suppliers around the climate emergency.

In 2020/2021

1. Our aim this year is to increase our recycling rate to 75%.
2. We are going to take action to measure our emissions and monitor, reduce or offset them.
3. Commit to NetZero30.
4. This year we will start offsetting our flights with Trees for Cities.
5. We will continue to scrutinise and source more local and sustainable suppliers.
6. Continue our work in encouraging business to act with a level of urgency in respect to the climate emergency.

By **Protecting the Environment** we are supporting:



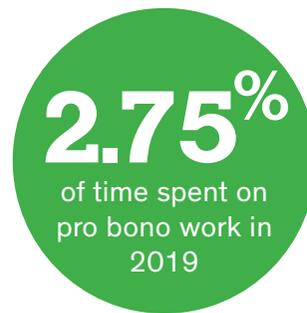
Supporting Our Community

Our aim is to make a positive impact within our local community and help other initiatives that are close to our heart

Two years ago, we introduced a system of volunteering days for our staff but we found that take up wasn't as good as we had hoped – largely due to a difficulty in finding one-day volunteering opportunities. This year we have re-thought our approach and, recognising the increasing number of homeless people in our area of Central London, we made contact with the homeless charity *The Connection* to see how we could support it. 2020 will see the implementation of that idea, with everyone spending time volunteering (COVID-19 permitting) as well as fundraising for the charity.

One of our largest clients is based in Iraq. To recognise this, we provided initial support a number of years ago to help in the re-building of Basra Museum and it is our intention to further this connection by using our skills to support it over the next year.

Finally, Simon Milton, Pulse's founder is a board member of the Social Business Trust, providing his time on a pro-bono basis. We extended this support in 2019 by hosting a masterclass in aid of the Trust, helping to raise over £13,000 from delegate fees. We hope to match this again this year – although the pandemic may delay this.



What have we done in this area and what more do we aim to do? ▼

In 2019/2020

1. We helped to raise over £13,000 for the Social Business Trust by running a Masterclass.
2. We donated just under 1% of our turnover to charity.
3. We initiated contact with The Connection to establish what volunteering and fundraising opportunities are available.
4. In 2019 we spent approximately 61 days - 2.75% of our time on pro bono work.

In 2020/2021

1. We'd like to match the amount we raised for SBT last year.
2. This year our aim is to donate 1% of our turnover to charity.
3. This year we will be partnering *The Connection* – everyone will have an opportunity to volunteer and we'll be fundraising for them.
4. Aim to spend 3% of our time on pro bono projects.
5. Help build a community climate initiative called COPx.

By **Supporting our Community**
we are guided by:



At a glance — Small things make a difference*

The breakfast club

In 2019 and in early 2020 we hosted business breakfasts with 15 business leaders to consider *how to enable purpose* to work alongside profit within their organisations.



Cinnamon buns

Encouraged by our Swedish intern, we introduced Fika, where we take time out over tea and cake to talk baking, football, film, manga or generally put the world to rights.

Horse whispering

There is so much to learn — not just from our fellow human beings — but from horses too! One of our training initiatives in 2019 was an inspiring morning working with horses to learn about the importance of communicating through observation, intent and body language.



Baba Ganoush

Migrateful — participating in a cookery class on Iranian food. Migrateful organises the classes to help refugees improve their skills and build a new life in the UK.



Who gives a crap

We're on a journey to use local and ethical suppliers who manufacture their products in a way that has a minimal impact on the planet. We want to play a role to preserve nature whilst building a resilient supply chain. And, in 2020 we'll be working more closely with companies who already have in place measures to address and reduce their carbon footprint. We have already changed to companies such as Fed, Red Inc, Who Gives a Crap, Ongar Dairies and Park and will continue to seek out other sustainable suppliers.

Grey matter matters

We provided 41 days of training over the year. That's over four days' training per person.

Volunteers

This year we are partnering with *The Connection* — who are just around the corner from our office. As we see homelessness every day, this is a cause that matters to us personally. Volunteering has been suspended due to the pandemic but we aim to fundraise and support them through donations.

“It's an opportunity to learn about the underlying causes for why individuals, who are no different to us, end up on the streets.”

Certified

We passed the PRCA Communications Management Standard for the 3rd time in succession. This is the hallmark of PR excellence, which combines elements of 'ISO9001' and 'Investors in People'.

Health and wellbeing

In 2019 we introduced a Vitality health plan to promote a balanced lifestyle. This year we added mental health cover to our package — supported by training and on-site massages.



Images courtesy of:

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Pulse is now part of the B Corp business community. A B Corp is a new type of business which focuses on purpose with profit.

To learn more about B Corp visit:
<https://B Corporation.uk/>

Pulse report written and published by
Pulse Brands
1-3 Langley Court, London WC2E 9JY
www.pulsebrands.com