

We started our B Corp journey because we really believe that *business can be a force for good*. For us that means a continual effort to balance purpose with profit, to minimise our footprint on the earth, to lend our voices, hands, brains and resources to those who need them, and to create work that makes people healthier and happier. B Corp helps us stay accountable on that journey.

2023 was our first year as an accredited B Corp and brought plenty of new challenges to us: setting Triple Bottomline targets, 360 business improvement plans, publicly sharing our progress, getting serious on Net Zero... In fact, the agency turns 40 this year and this is our first ever annual report — *so no pressure*. It's fair to say it's been a year of learning, trialling, erroring and trying again, and I'm so proud of what we've achieved.



We hope you enjoy this brief overview of 2023, written with a spirit of honesty and optimism, and we can't wait to make an even bigger, better impact for our team, community and planet in 2024, with your support.

*Rachel Cook,
Managing Director,
December 2023*

Two years of:

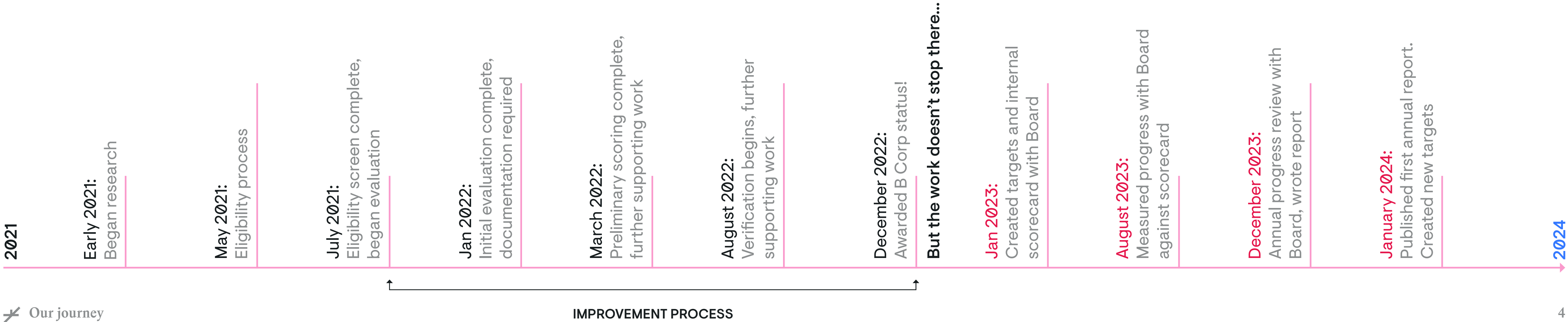


LOOKING
Listening
Gathering
CHANGING
UPSKILLING
Training
WRITING
Creating
TALKING
Challenging
IMPROVING

Journey to certification

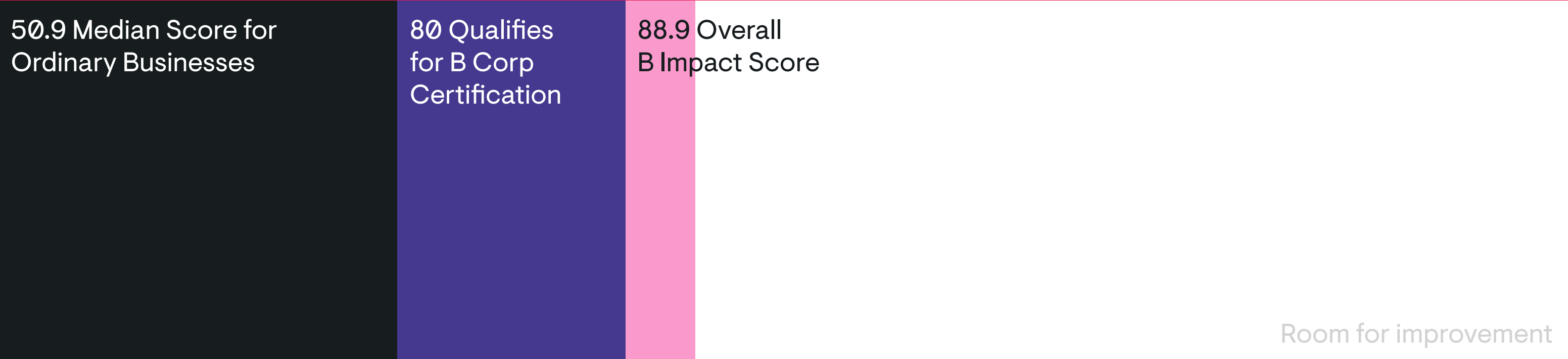
Our B Corp certification process took the best part of two years. The process forced us to take a hard look at all aspects of our business and to ask tough questions about where we could do better. When we started, like many ethically-minded business owners we thought we were doing a solid job already, but it was scoring ourselves against the B Corp criteria that gave us real clarity. We saw in black and white what good could look like, and what we'd need to do to get there.

So if you're wondering why it took us so long, it's because during our two years we were doing: looking, listening, gathering data, changing suppliers, upskilling, training, writing policies, creating new processes, talking, challenging, getting better — and doing business at the same time. We're still not perfect but to us it's the direction of travel that matters.



December 2022

VERIFIED SCORE



For B Corp you’re assessed against five key areas. How well you can do in each area depends not just on your commitment, but also on the type of business you are in. For example, as a brand consultancy our environmental impact is actually pretty low – we physically produce very little, our geographic footprint is small, travel is minimal all things considered. Any improvements we make here against the norm are small fry compared to, say, a manufacturing business, for whom tweaking one process could save countless amounts of CO₂.

Where we’ve got more scope to have an impact is on Workers and Community. There’s no end to the ways employers like us can improve conditions for our team, and to increase the positive impact we have on the communities we work within and serve.

Year in review

Abstract geometric shapes in the background, including a large blue rectangle, a yellow parallelogram, and a green rectangle, all outlined in white.

Highlights

£992	Money raised for charity via Openhouse: Refuge, Kidney Research UK, OSCAR's Paediatric Brain Tumour Charity, St Nicholas Hospice Care, Bury St Edmonds and St George's Crypt, Leeds.
£500	Money raised for Mind, our team's charity of choice, through merch sales.
155	Hours of placements / internships provided at Real Living Wage.
50%+	Sales from purpose-led brands.
11	Sections revamped and added to our new employee handbook, inc. environmental principles, our inclusion approach and more.
6	Number of mental health clients.
5	DBA DEI Steering Group sessions championed and attended.
5	Employee Board meetings completed and actioned.
2	High school assemblies and careers talks delivered.
2	Types of training completed, inc. Leadership coaching with the DBA, internal sales and presentation training and Marketing and Digital Strategy at MMU.

Our impact in 2023

Impact areas

- 01 Governance
- 02 Workers
- 03 Customers
- 04 Environment
- 05 Community

Highlight

£992 raised for charity via Openhouse

Openhouse is our creative event series, designed to fill peoples' heads with new ideas, points of view and inspiration. It was set up around 7 years ago and we've welcomed speakers as diverse as astrophysicists, brewers, musicians, researchers and innovators. All ticket profits are donated to charities nominated by each of our speakers.



© St. Georges Crypt

2023 nominated charities:
Refuge, Kidney Research UK, OSCAR's Paediatric Brain Tumour Charity, St Nicholas Hospice Care, Bury St Edmonds and St George's Crypt, Leeds.

01 Governance

Target

Launch new website with a clear mission statement about better business

Progress:
Launched website in August '23. Enhance with new Ethics section in '24

Target:
Incorporate B Corp into briefs to improve decision-making on projects

Progress:
Done, need to continually promote this as vital tool in our process

Target:
Publicly report on environmental and social performance

Progress:
Done

Target:
Incorporate expectations around B Corp standards into reviews

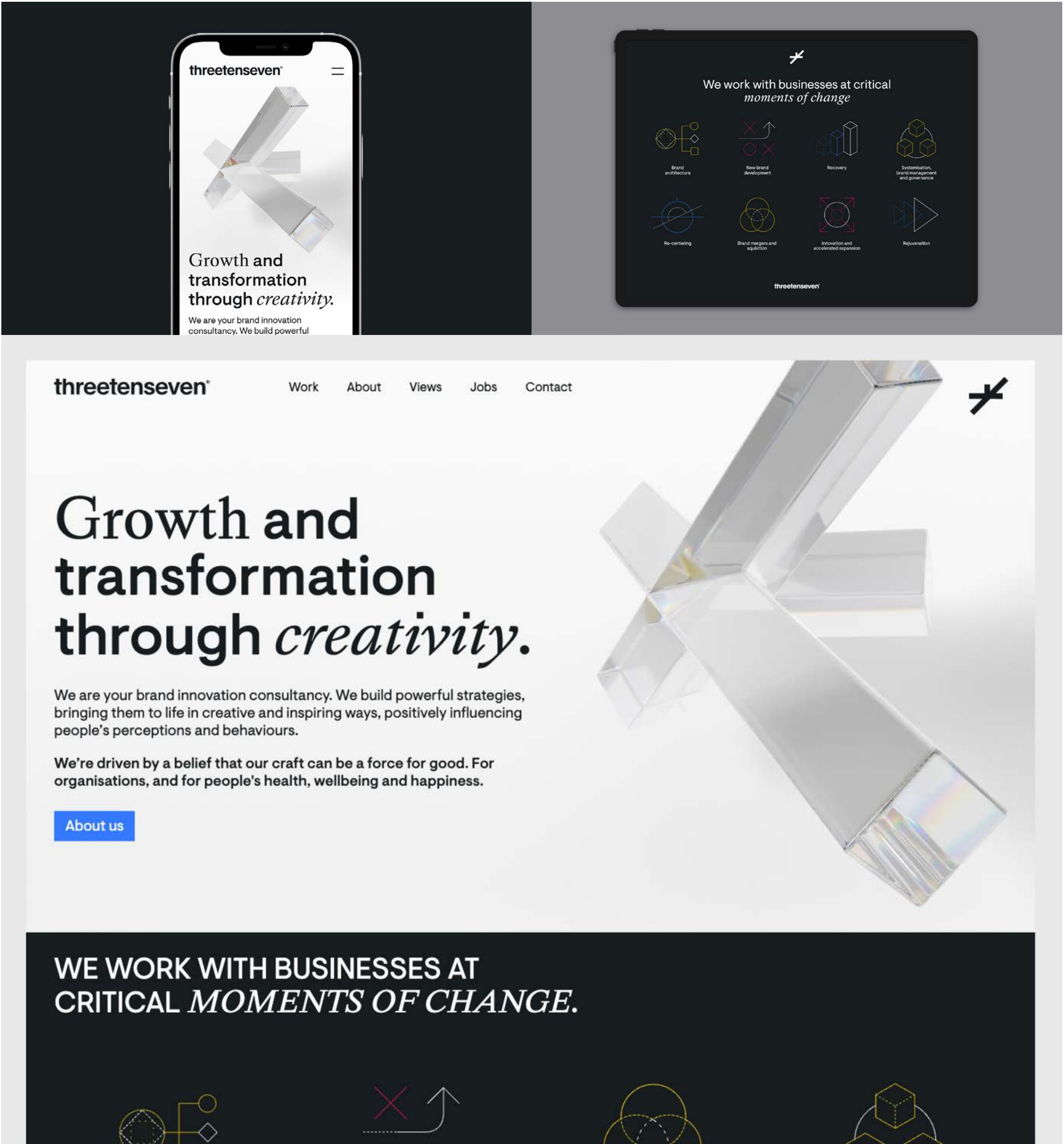
Progress:
In template but not adopted in every review

Learning:
Talk to team about how this can be more relevant and easier

Target:
Update all job descriptions with expectations around B Corp standards

Progress:
50% done, needs completing and briefing into team

Learning:
Better delegation needed to ensure completion



02 Workers

Target

25%+ of colleagues to complete training relevant to their role/professional development

Progress:
100% internal training and 20% external training completed. Library and book prescriptions launched

Learning:
Leadership encourage uptake by all team members

Target:
Improve uptake of EAP and other wellness initiatives

Progress:
Target met but not the right target – people use the EAP when they’re struggling, not as a tool to manage good health

Learning:
Consult staff. Set better target for next year

Target:
At least 50% of management roles held by women/ those from marginalised backgrounds

Progress:
Some progress made. 1 promotion into line management with progression plans for 2 further colleagues

Target:
Introduce new bonus or profit-sharing programme

Progress:
New scheme agreed by Board and communicated to team. Currently performing behind plan so scheme being reviewed for next year.

Target:
Baseline employee satisfaction

Progress:
Survey written but not implemented

Learning:
Run survey sooner in year so studio work doesn’t get in the way

Target:
At least 10% of colleagues achieving internal promotions

Progress:
10% target met

Target:
Minimum 1 intern p/a

Progress:
3 internships across varied roles, in conversation with Unis for next year and local authority regarding partially funded placements

Target:
Job growth (10% new roles)

Progress:
Not achieved due to slower summer than expected and difficulties recruiting



03 Customers

Target

Over 50% of our work for purpose-led clients, which we define as non profit, third-sector, public sector and/or education

Progress:
Achieved 59.8%, exceeding the target we set, thanks to clients in the NHS, charity and education sectors.

Target:
Track beneficiaries and/or social outcomes over time, namely number of people benefiting from our work, creating 3 case studies with enhanced data

Progress:
3 enhanced case studies complete, improved KPI tracking introduced

Target:
Client satisfaction measurement: establish benchmark, one survey complete

Progress:
6 key client interviews, availability issues for 3 others. Benchmarking still to be done

Learning:
Keep interviews but run quant study to track performance



Target

Increase recycling when in the office

(note that waste is minimal on site)

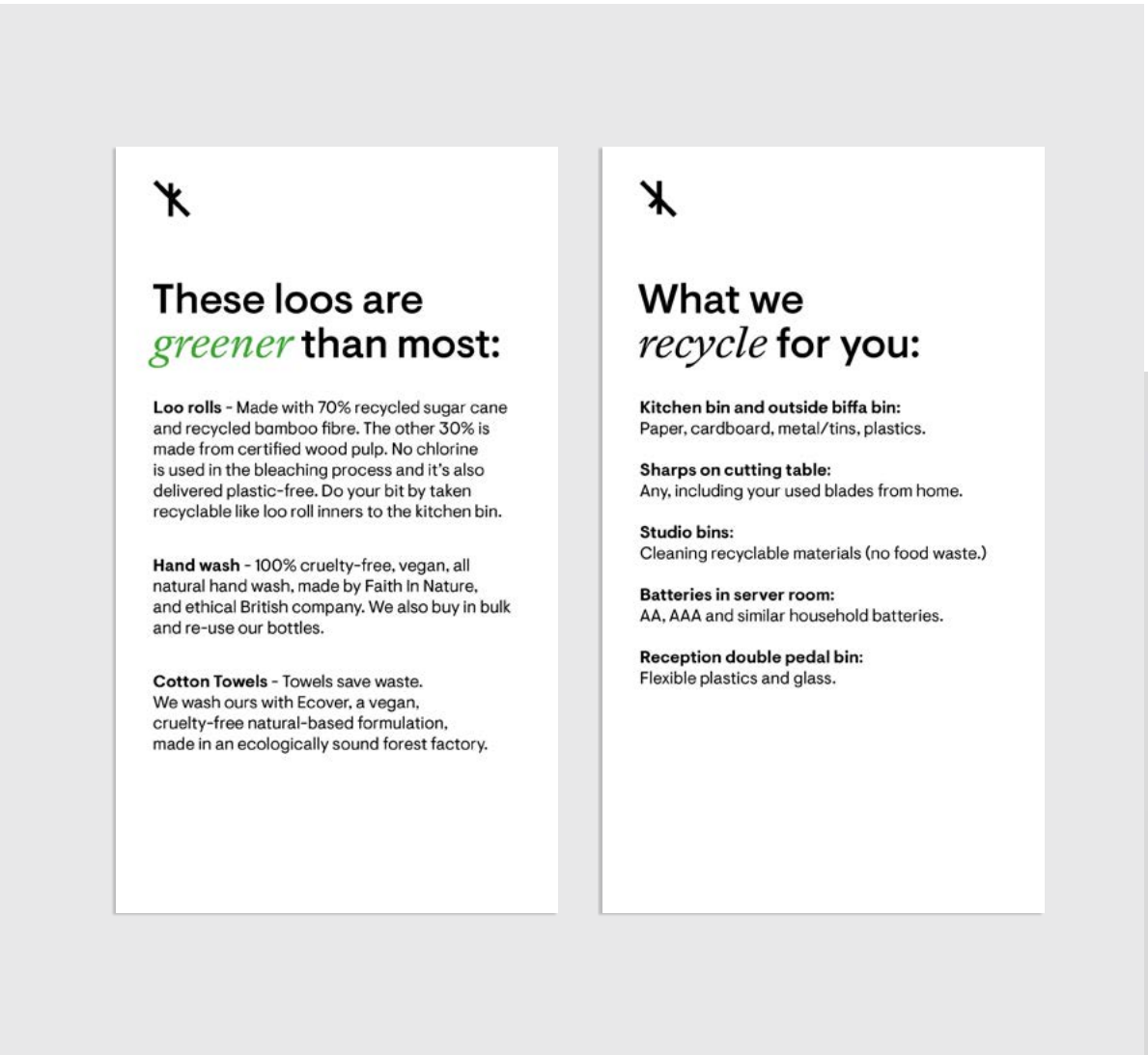
Progress:
Changed waste removal company, put improved signs up to nudge behaviours, phased out single-use hand towels, investigated new recycling facilities

Target:
Reduce water waste

Progress:
Water saving measures implemented — cistern hippos and improved taps

Target:
Introduce incentives for staff to use public or active travel

Progress:
Researched and proposal created by Employee Board for Board consideration



Target

Team to choose where we donate charitable funds

Progress:
Mind was chosen to receive proceeds from our merch sales. However bigger donations are made from our Openhouse talks, so from 2024 the team can choose charity for all donations, inc. Openhouse.



Target:
Introduce and use supplier/purchasing scorecard

Progress:
Created, introduced but not very widely promoted

Learning:
Better incorporate into our processes, consider sharing on our website as helpful resource

Target:
Complete at least one all-company service day

Progress:
Did not introduce. Squeezed out by too many initiatives needing attention

Learning:
Set achievable goals. Introduce in 2024.

Target:
Employees taking paid volunteer time

Progress:
Did not introduce. Squeezed out by too many initiatives needing attention

Learning:
Set achievable goals. Board agreed all employees to be given 1 paid day off per year for volunteering from 2024



© Mind

The background features several thin, light-colored geometric outlines. There is a large rectangle in the top left, a vertical rectangle in the top center, a parallelogram in the top right, and a large diamond shape in the bottom left and center.

Case studies

We aim to work with over 50% ‘purpose-led’ clients (non-profits, third-sector, public and education sectors) and we’re pleased to have met this target in 2023. Here are some such projects that we’re really proud of:

Case studies

Kent County Council:
Drug and Alcohol Service
Feb – Aug 2023



Kent’s Drug and Alcohol service wasn’t reaching as many people as it needed to, despite the growing need for its support. We were brought in to evaluate need and the provision landscape, create a brand for the offer, and content to maximise its reach.

Our research found that poor uptake was due to simple factors such as a lack of awareness and understanding of what was on offer, and other, more complex barriers, too, including concerns about the police getting involved, children being at risk, or confusion around geography. Messaging and communications such as videos, written content and UX design across Kent County Council and partner websites tackled these perceptions sensitively but without beating around the bush, to increase clarity and drive engagement. Implementation is still underway, with some of the content we produced yet to go live, but early indications and test feedback suggest the impact will be as intended – increasing awareness, improving trust and driving engagement with the service.

How it's helped us grow as a B Corp

This project required us to face some of our inherent privileges and biases, with hands-on consultation with Kent’s service providers and Leeds charities, too, helping us to learn how addiction affects people from every walk of life, and to understand inequalities, too. We’ll take these experiences forward to help improve equity in health and wellbeing through our work.

Case studies

MindForward Alliance: Brand strategy

Jul – Dec 2023



MindForward Alliance was growing, finding global demand for its services. But amid rapid growth, brand clarity and consistency suffered, with different names, identities, messaging and positioning present. We were approached to revisit the brand story and develop an evidence-based brand architecture to return clarity and cohesion.

Our research showed the group was not leveraging the strengths of being a global brand — particularly given that membership includes many multinational organisations. Cohesion and collaboration were at risk of being affected.

Our solution positioned them as one organisation and brand — MindForward Alliance — with one mission and story to tell. We haven't erased local nuance though, ensuring chapters can communicate differently about mental health in their cultures.

Stakeholders in each country are now more aligned — on a path to greater cohesion that will aid growth. Member organisations can more easily understand the benefits of being part of a global community, and deeper, more strategic partnerships, operating at the highest levels of cutting-edge research and strategy have formed.

How it's helped us grow as a B Corp

This project expanded our knowledge of mental health across the globe, including local perceptions and risk factors.

Case studies

NHS England:
Brand strategy and identity
2022 – Mar 2023

Windrush
Leadership
Programme

Open for applications

Applications close
20th of January



The NHS continues to evolve, and we continue our longstanding record of supporting it.

We produced the previous national NHS brand policy and guidelines in 2016, so when the next major structural change came around at the end of 2022, we were ready to help.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, informed by the Wade-Gery Review, concluded that NHS Digital, NHSX, Health Education England and a number of smaller bodies should be merged into NHS England, to bring education and technology priorities closer to the heart of strategic decision-making in health and social care. We were brought in to support this from a brand perspective.

These were big changes, affecting thousands of employees, as well as the wider health and social care system. Time, effort and money had been invested in the merging brands recently – not least NHS Digital, whom we’d only just repositioned – and that equity and investment needed to be protected.

We led a consultative process to create a refreshed brand strategy and identity for NHS England, making the most of the equity in the merging brands by incorporating some of their most valuable assets.

The complex merger went as smoothly as it could, our work ensuring the strategy and narrative around the changes were clear, as well as providing a refreshed identity for the organisation.

How it's helped us grow as a B Corp
This was an opportunity to consolidate various aspects of our long history of consulting for the NHS, building on our work of 2016 and the brand we created for NHS Digital. The inclusion of NHSX and Health Education England afforded us much deeper learnings about technological innovation and skills and education strategy in health too.



Moving forward

Our B Corp targets for 2024 include doing more against fewer targets, so we can concentrate our efforts where it matters.

TAR—

1. GOVERNANCE

Launch ethics and environment section on our website

1. GOVERNANCE

Publish report on our performance

2. WORKERS

25%+ colleagues to complete external development/training

2. WORKERS

Promote and encourage uptake of health benefits

4. ENVIRONMENT

Undertake environmental audit through the WYCA

20

3. CUSTOMERS

50%+ work for purpose-led clients

2. WORKERS

Run colleague satisfaction survey

3. CUSTOMERS

Run client satisfaction survey

GETS

4. ENVIRONMENT

Measure carbon footprint

4. ENVIRONMENT

Create Net Zero plan

3. CUSTOMERS

Formalise tracking of beneficiaries

5. COMMUNITY

Install Little Library for the community

5. COMMUNITY

Raise money for charity chosen by employees

5. COMMUNITY

Introduce company-wide community service day

5. COMMUNITY

Introduce paid volunteering days

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Thank you

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