

INTERESTED



It's March, which means it's B Corp month. A time when all 6,000 and counting B Corps around the world get together to celebrate the movement and encourage other businesses to join them.

Since joining Bates Wells in 2019 it's incredible to see how the community in the UK has grown and to see the spread of brands and organisations who have now taken the leap to become a B Corp and therefore use their position and business as a force for good. It's so inspiring to know that in the UK there are now 1,200 B Corps across 58 industries with a combined workforce of over 55,000 people. Despite some challenging recent press coverage, I think the B Corp movement is a positive energy looking to drive real, lasting and positive change for the good of people and planet and that can really only be a good thing. I'm excited to see how the new B Corp standards challenge all of us who have joined to be better and work even harder to make our society fairer, more equitable and more resilient in the face of climate change.

Over the last couple of years we've been working really hard here at Bates Wells to embed B Corp across not only our operations but also the way that we advise our clients and the services that we want to be able to offer. Highlights for me have been getting to know even more people in the community, learning from them and sharing resources and knowledge. And it's great to see more of my favourite brands certifying (yes I do mean you **Camper, Wild, Fill!**)! We know

we still have a way to go but it's great to hear from the likes of Jon and Martin (see page 3) how as businesses we can get more radical and encourage even greater positive impacts. Adam and Sally (page 2) give great insights into how to really get to grips with embedding purpose into organisations while Destiny and Scott (page 4) have done a great job of shining a light on ways that we focus on EDI and the environment.

This year the theme is We Go Beyond, so instead of promoting our usual resources and social media posts we're going even further by putting together a fanzine to give insight into the how and why our B Corp community goes against the grain.

So, dive in to hear from radical leaders, find out about a day in the life of a B Corp law firm, and pick up tried-and-tested tips on how to kick off your own B Corp journey.



ANGELA MONAGHAN
Purpose & Impact Manager
at Bates Wells and *B Interested*
Zine Editor

How do B Corps really go beyond?

Q&A

This year B Lab are asking B Corps to talk about How and Why B Corps go beyond the B. We thought we'd ask some people internally and at other inspiring B Corps who have been through the certification process for their personal insights into this question.

In the first of this series of Q&As we talk to **Adam Garfunkel**, Co-Owner and Managing Director of **Junxion Strategy** and **Sally Procopis**, Chief Operating Officer at Bates Wells to tell us how B Corps go beyond. Take a read below for some tried-and-tested tips on how to embed purpose and get going on the B Corp journey.



ADAM GARFUNKEL
Co-Owner and Managing Director
of Junxion Strategy



SALLY PROCOPIS
Chief Operating Officer at
Bates Wells

In hindsight, if you could give yourself one piece of advice about the B Corp journey, what would that be?

Adam: Don't forget that it's more important to embed the thinking that all stakeholders matter than it is to answer the questions in the assessment and certify.

Sally: I haven't been at Bates Wells for the whole journey, and I do wish that I had been around to be part of the team that had the insight back in 2013/14 to make the decision to try and become a B Corp. I would advise organisations becoming B Corps to be really systematic about the certification process and to keep spreadsheets of all of your answers, along with your scores, and to use this as the basis for an ongoing project of continuous organisational improvement. The by-products of this are that your organisation will improve with each accreditation; and more importantly, a B Corp that genuinely wants to keep getting better is the kind of organisation that people will want to work in and will enjoy working in.

With this in mind, how should my business start its journey?

Adam: Have a frank discussion with the leadership team about what being a B Corp will really mean to the business, looking at both your governance and your operations.

Sally: There's no point starting the B Corp journey unless and until the organisation's leadership is 100% enthusiastic about becoming a B Corp and recognises that being a B Corp will absorb time and investment that the business would otherwise focus entirely on making a higher profit. Once that commitment is clear, I would create a "Certification project", led by a team that includes people from across your business. The project team should report

regularly to the leadership team and should also communicate progress regularly and transparently across the entire business so that everyone understands what becoming a B Corp entails and how they can get involved. Avoid just giving one person the job of "filling in the form" because it will become just that – a form-filling exercise – and your business will miss the whole point of becoming a B Corp.

What would you say is the best way to engage and empower your people to go beyond?

Adam: Be crystal clear about the vision of the business and my expectations of our people, and then give them all the support they need to be their best selves at work.

Sally: The best way to engage and empower your people to go beyond is to be as transparent as you can about everything going on in the business and to offer your people opportunities to participate in and to influence the direction of the business. For example all of the work we do to tackle the climate crisis stems from ideas and suggestions made by our people, who participate in our Climate Programme. We communicate regularly about the programme and create and publicise opportunities for people to take part in e.g., litter-picks and hackathons and they make stretching suggestions about what we should do next. And our Diversity & Inclusion Forum ('DIF'), whose strategy and plans are driven by our people rather than by the firm's leadership (who are hugely supportive of DIF), is the source of the best new ideas to make our team more diverse and our workplace more inclusive.



Why start to go beyond?

In the second of this series of Q&As we hear from **Jon Alexander**, co-founder of **New Citizenship Project** and author of *Citizens*, and **Martin Bunch**, Managing Partner at Bates Wells.

Jon and Martin delve deeper into why businesses might want to become B Corps and explore how to go beyond the basics of business to start to unpick the social and environmental challenges that as a species we now face.

Why do you think so many companies are interested in becoming B Corps now?

Jon: Frankly, because it's very obvious how screwed the world is, and that business has played a significant role in getting us to that point – and the B Corp community offers a space where companies are at least holding the question of how to flip that round and figure out how business can actually become a force for good.

Martin: There has been a shift in many people's perspectives on the world and particularly on how we do business in recent years. B Corp certification gives them a way to put that change of perspective into practice and use their business to create a positive impact and do better for their people and the planet. There has also been a push from employees and prospective employees for their employer to have more of a purpose that just making money without regard for people or the climate emergency, and those companies with a clear purpose who take account of the current issues are finding they can more easily attract top talent.

What would you say are the main social and environmental challenges and how do we as businesses work to fix them?

Jon: We're facing geopolitical crisis, ecological crisis, a crisis of inequality and a crisis of loneliness and mental health, to name but a few – but most fundamentally, and at the root of all these and more, we're facing a crisis of story. All these crises are caused by the idea that humans are inherently and narrowly self-interested, and that the best we can do is try to harness self-interest and make it miraculously add up to the collective interest. That can't and won't work anymore, if it ever did. Businesses need

to start by thinking of people differently, as citizens who can and want to participate in meaningful work in the world, not just as consumers of products and services – and involve them. That approach will be at the heart of the next generation of successful businesses, on any meaningful definition of success.

Martin: Business can have a massive impact on both society and the environment. Just worrying about the shareholders or shareholder value has produced a hugely selfish and short-sighted form of capitalism. By starting to address issues such as carbon emissions, how to get to net zero, more social mobility, equality and diversity in the workforce, business can be a real catalyst for a change for the better. Part of that has to involve listening to and involving your key stakeholders (people, clients, suppliers etc) in how to sustainably go about that. Business can and should be more vocal about the need to change, and that good business can be both good for the planet and people and still be sustainable and profitable in the long term.

Beyond becoming a B Corp, what else can businesses do to have a lasting positive impact?

Jon: It all begins with purpose – ask yourself, what is my organisation actually trying to do in the world? Then ask, who might want to participate in that, and how might we involve them? The insight we need in this time is that all of us are smarter than any of us, and that the only strategy that is commensurate with the scale of the challenges we face is to tap into the ideas, energy and resources of everyone.

Martin: Not all businesses need to become B Corps, but they do need to think how they can use their business as a force for good and implement many of the B Corps ideals. I think if they understand that unless they do change and take account of the social and environmental challenges we all face, they are unlikely to be around in the future.



JON ALEXANDER
Co-founder of New Citizenship Project author of *Citizens*



MARTIN BUNCH
Managing Partner at Bates Wells



Driving organisations to go beyond

Scott Sullivan, HR Director, and **Destiny Haastrup**, Facilities Apprentice at Bates Wells explain how working for a B Corp is different to working in a standard organisation, and give us a glimpse into how they stay on top in a constantly evolving space to play a part in driving Bates Wells to go beyond.



SCOTT SULLIVAN
HR Director at
Bates Wells



DESTINY HAASTRUP
Facilities Apprentice at
Bates Wells

How do you think your daily workday differs because you work for a B Corp?

Scott: There is a great sense of shared purpose at Bates Wells. The importance of decision making which aligns with our values is incredibly strong. We're much more transparent on why we have decided certain courses of action and their outcomes, particularly regarding financial information, than I have seen in other organisations.

Our people really do help guide our decision making. We have an active employee forum who help shape policy and procedure, as well as give feedback. Decision making which is focused around creating positive impact is genuinely part of the everyday here, from how we select our suppliers to what benefits we offer. There is also a great sense of collaboration across the B Corp community and a feeling of creating change together.

Destiny: Since starting at Bates Wells I take a lot of time to consider my actions more than I usually would. I'm very careful with my waste in the office as well as at home. I'll finish my lunch and be very thoughtful about how I'll recycle and dispose of any waste. Working for a B Corp helps me to know more about the positive impact these actions can make.

What environmental/social justice actions are you and your team most proud of?

Scott: We are one of very few firms who partnered with the Law Society's Lawyers with Disabilities Divisions to offer part time training contracts to broaden access to our profession. We now bring returners back to the workplace with the **Reignite Academy**. We became signatories of the Mindful Business Charter and a corporate

partner of the Black Solicitors network. It has been great to see the impact here: 70% of our hires last year were women, and 47% were to those from a minority ethnic background.

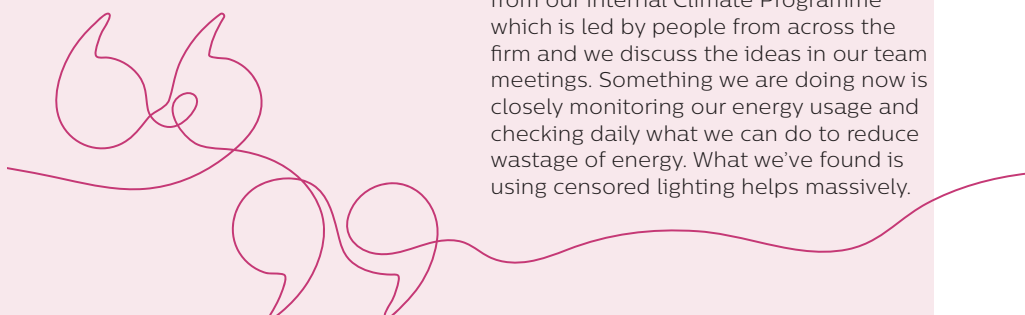
We've also made big steps with supporting our people with their financial wellbeing. Resources from places like **Business in the Community** helped us develop a strategy, particularly because those from marginalised communities have been hit the hardest by the crisis.

Destiny: I'm most proud about how much effort my team puts into our working day to keep up the reputation of being a B Corp. We do this by creating innovative recycling schemes within the office by finding ways to motivate other colleagues to gather household items like batteries, medicine blister packs and crisp packets, and bring them into the office so we can add to our different recycling donations for the firm. We also invest in B Corp products mainly to support other B Corp businesses for our events and office supplies. Some of our favourites are from **Beauty Kitchen** and **Ohne**.

In a constantly evolving space like environmental action/social justice, how do you and your team keep on top of what action to take?

Scott: If it's a space that you are interested in, then it doesn't feel like a job keeping on top of what's happening. We like podcasts in our team, and regularly share things which we are hearing. We're good at tapping into our networks too – I'm part of the HRD in law network, the B Corp People and Culture Group and the Corporate Responsibility legal network.

Destiny: There are loads of ways we keep on top. We find going to webinars by the **Legal Sustainability Alliance** and expos like the Facilities Show 2023 really useful. We also get a lot of information from our internal Climate Programme which is led by people from across the firm and we discuss the ideas in our team meetings. Something we are doing now is closely monitoring our energy usage and checking daily what we can do to reduce wastage of energy. What we've found is using censored lighting helps massively.



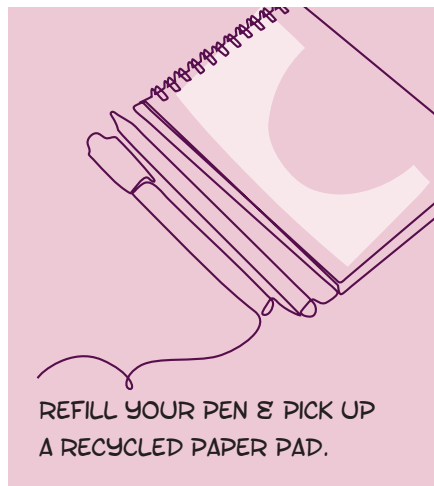
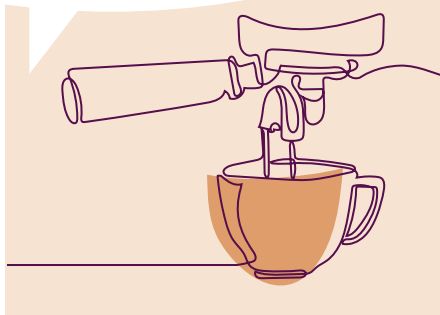
ALL IN A DAYS WORK

AS WELL AS WORKING AT OUR DESKS TO USE THE LAW AS A FORCE FOR GOOD. AS A B CORP, THERE'S AN UNDERCURRENT OF ACTIVITY AT BATES WELLS THAT HELPS OUR LAWYERS AND BUSINESS TEAMS TO CREATE POSITIVE IMPACT.

CYCLE IN ON THE BIKE THAT YOU GOT VIA THE CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME.

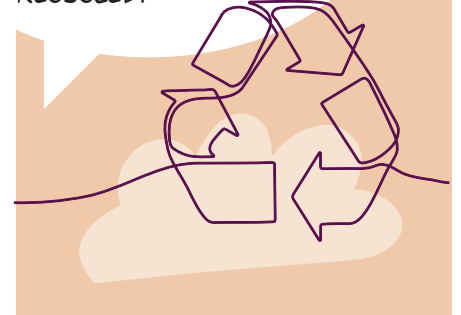


GRAB A COFFEE FROM OUR BARISTA MACHINES USING BEANS FROM A B CORP AND MILK IN GLASS BOTTLES.

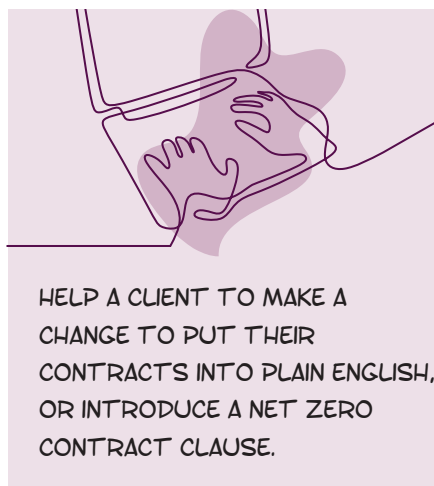
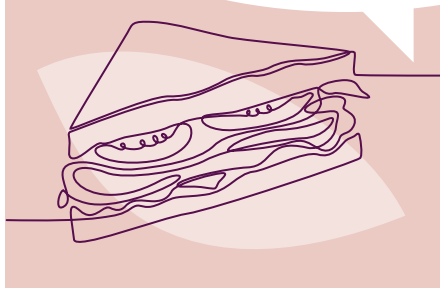


REFILL YOUR PEN & PICK UP A RECYCLED PAPER PAD.

DROP OFF YOUR CONTACT LENSES, MEDICINE BLISTER PACKS & CRISP PACKETS FROM HOME TO BE RECYCLED.



ATTEND A LUNCHTIME EVENT ABOUT EDI AND PICK UP A VEGGIE SANDWICH ORDERED FROM A LOCAL B CORP CAFÉ.



HELP A CLIENT TO MAKE A CHANGE TO PUT THEIR CONTRACTS INTO PLAIN ENGLISH, OR INTRODUCE A NET ZERO CONTRACT CLAUSE.

BEAT THE AFTERNOON SLUMP WITH FRUIT FROM A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR SUSTAINABLE PENSION & PAYROLL GIVING.



YOU'LL ONLY FIND B CORP WIPES, TOILET ROLL, NAPKINS AND FEMINE HYGIENE PRODUCTS IN OUR LOOS!

TIME TO GO! HEAD TO A B CORP SOCIAL FOR AN EVENING OF FUN WITH FELLOW B CORPS.



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Handy guides

- Achieve your ESG goals – make your supply chains sustainable
- B Corps – Recruiting and retaining your people
- B Corps: what should you be asking your banks?
- Impact governance: 7 essentials for governing a purpose-driven business
- The Operations Team's guide to becoming a B Corp
- Stepping stones to sustainability

How Bates Wells can help

- B Corp supplier contracts & agreements
- Introducing plain English contracts
- Legal advice for certifying as a B Corp
- People-friendly employment services for B Corps
- Real estate services for B Corps
- Setting up a charity/ foundation: advice for B Corps
- Strategic litigation
- Updating your B Corp articles & governance

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