

## CIFFA Member Courtney Agencies' Sustainability Journey



During a strategy session in 2018, Vancouver-based Courtney Agencies brought its attention to building its business in a way that is conscious of its impact on the environment, its contribution to local and global communities, and its responsibility to its people.

“We know that we have a pretty small footprint,” said President Paul Courtney. “But we want to be counted with the companies who truly want to make a difference, and access any point of influence we may have to say that this is important.”

Every decision Courtney makes now runs through its lens of social purpose and social responsibility. To get started, Courtney worked to baseline its carbon impact at the operational level and set goals for reduction of paper use and electricity, earning them Climate Smart certification. That work provided a good launching point for its application to be certified as a B Corporation.

B Corp Certification is a designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials.

Courtney participated in the “Getting to 80” program offered by Decade Impact - a consulting company that educates and supports organizations in advance of making a B Corp application. Eighty is the score that earns B Corp certification; to maintain certification requires the organization’s commitment to continue to make changes and establish programs to increase their scores year over year.

The assessment is divided into six categories: Governance (ethics), Workers (development and security), Community (diversity/inclusion, local purchasing, donations), Environment (facilities and carbon intensity), Customers (stewardship) and Disclosure (openness). Examples of how their commitments have been playing out – in the last two years, Courtney has earned a spot as one

of BC’s Living Wage Employers, established a new RSP program for its staff, purchased offsets for its own operations-level carbon emissions, developed the plan to establish a carbon calculator and offsets for clients and, most recently, made a corporate donation plus matched giving for staff who want to support Ukraine.

Courtney’s data is now under assessment with B Corporation – and they are eager to get their report card. Even if this first application results in information about where they can strengthen the next one, Courtney is eager to learn where it can make positive change.

In addition, Paul is adding his voice to the larger conversation about the environmental impact of the shipping industry as a whole. He uses his blog and social media to amplify messages such as those about the World Trade Organization’s social responsibility and social priorities as articulated by Director-General Dr Okonjo-Iweala.

“This is not being done with a view to make us more competitive -- we wholeheartedly invite others in our industry to join us. There is still a need for educating each other and our customers on how to balance price, planet and people.” Paul added.

There are stories of more and more companies stepping up to reduce their carbon impact -- including what happens at the hands of their suppliers. Moves in this direction are good business practice and have the potential for good growth.

Paul Courtney is a member of the CIFFA Sustainability Committee\* and welcomes the conversation with all members about why and how to think and act like a global citizen.

\*The mandate of the CIFFA Sustainability Committee is to identify best practices in the areas of sustainability and to provide guidance on the development and implementation of sustainability goals to membership. [TF](#)