

The Wellbeing Farm, Edgworth hopes to become one of the first hospitality venues in the UK to be a Certified B Corporation

From starting her business 8 years ago with a focus on wellbeing, sustainability and fun, little did Celia Gaze, Founder and Managing Director realise that this focus would set herself up well for the future. Having spent 14 years working in the NHS, she couldn't just become a pure profit making business, so she aimed to design a business with a bigger purpose.

Sustainability, wellbeing and fun are the huge trends post lockdown and so when earlier in the year when Celia came across the B Corp concept, she knew that this was the association she had yearned for.

Recognising the major challenges facing hospitality in the recruitment and retention of staff, Celia sees B Corp playing a massive role in the future. There is so much emphasis via the assessment process on staff involvement, benefits, compensation, training and professional development, job flexibility, communication, company culture, working conditions, employee satisfaction and engagement and work—life balance that this can be challenging for hospitality which is traditionally known as an industry where employees work long hours, with low pay and work-life balance is just a dream. Celia sees B Corp as the vehicle to challenge and change the industry, which is why she is so enthusiastic about the concept and betternotstop, a sustainable impact agency based in Manchester are supporting The Wellbeing Farm with their application. The team at The Wellbeing Farm worked on their B Corp impact assessment throughout lockdown and this was submitted last month. They have also developed their own dedicated carbon pledge website which highlights the work they are doing to reduce their carbon footprint: <https://wellbeingcorporate.co.uk/carbon-pledge/>

B Corp's ethos is using business as a force for good, using business as a vehicle to improve the planet, staff conditions of employment and the local economy. Organisations who are certified as B Corp have to meet rigorous social and environmental standards which represent its commitment to goals outside of shareholder profit.

As Celia says, my team are involved in setting the budget, we have full transparency in the business and the team play a critical role in helping me grow my business. So often, the financial reporting in business remains a closed shop where only a critical few are given access to financial information, for a B Corp transparency is essential. 73% of people in the UK want to commit to being more sustainable in 2021 and young people are seeking to want to work for companies with purpose and to pursue meaningful careers. B Corp certification is a way to signal to employees that you actually walk your talk. Engaged employees lead to happier and healthier lives and are more likely to stay with a company than seek a job elsewhere.

Celia sees one of the huge benefits of becoming a B Corp is that you join an exciting community of forward-looking business leaders who share a common dedication to responsible business. Well liked brands like BrewDog, Graze, Guardian Newspapers, The Body Shop, Ben & Jerry's, Patagonia, Tridos Bank, Cafedirect, Riverford Organic Farmers, Toast Ale, CoGo, Innocent Drinks are all B Corp Certified. Each B Corp has a 'B Impact Report' that can be viewed online and companies becoming B Corp are part of a movement for change.

By becoming B Corp certified, it isn't just the latest fad or a PR stunt; it's validation of business commitment towards corporate social responsibility. The certification process looks at 5 key areas within each business: Environment, Community, Customers, Governance and Workers. Half of millennials seek out socially conscious brands; investors look for organisations that impact environmental and social change. 66% of global consumers will pay more for sustainable products and practices and potential employees seek out employers that reflect their values

Celia is hoping that being one of the first hospitality venues to submit its B Corp application, she can help persuade other hospitality businesses to join this incredible cause. Lockdown has caused the hospitality industry to awaken and realise that they can't expect staff to continue doing long hours with zero work-life balance with low pay. B Corp could be the vehicle to raise standards across the industry by providing a framework and independent oversight to help the industry do better.

Further details on B Corp can be found at <https://bcorporation.uk/>