

AT WHAT COST?

CONSIDERING A NEW CLIENT, SUPPLIER OR PARTNER

Wondering if a potential new client or partner is the right fit for your agency? Use this handy tool to check whether they care about people and the planet in the same way that you do.

The tool provides you with guidance on what kinds of questions to ask, whilst the simple scoring system will help you get an idea of whether the organisation leads with purpose, how sustainably they manage to function and what impact they have on the world.

The best way to use the tool is in conversation with whoever you're thinking of working with. While talking, use the questions as your guide to seek out which answer most accurately describes your potential client or partner, and then score them accordingly. It might take more than one conversation with different people in the organisation to get a genuine understanding, and it's always worth doing a bit of background research to see if the evidence supports what they're saying.

You'll end up with two scores – one which reflects how good for the world the organisation is, and the other which tells you if their existence is coming at a high cost to our planet.

This allows you to make a more balanced judgement on whether your potential partnership would be the stuff of purpose-led dreams or an ecological (and potentially PR) nightmare. Handy, right?

*Remember, this is a guiding tool rather than a prescriptive one - it can't give you absolute certainty that an organisation you're looking at is smashing it in sustainable development but it can help you start asking the right questions.

Understanding the scores...

The 'why' score

Less than 6 points

We shouldn't be working with these guys

6-9 points

It's worth a deeper conversation

10+ points

Let's do some great work together!

The 'at what cost' score

Less than 7 points

We shouldn't be working with these guys

7-11 points

It's worth a deeper conversation

12+ points

Let's do some great work together!



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The 'Why' Score

Score

Why does your organisation exist?	For profit or commercial goals	[1]	
	As a more sustainable/purposeful alternative	[2]	
	To influence or educate	[3]	
	To support charities, purpose-led organisations or individuals	[4]	
	To accelerate sustainable development or purpose	[5]	
What do you do?	Sell luxury products/services	[1]	
	Sell products/services that aren't essential to life	[2]	
	Sell essential products	[3]	
	Deliver essential services	[4]	
	Take action against climate, ecological or purpose issues as a primary function	[5]	
How do you benefit the world?	Commercial goals and economic contribution	[1]	
	As a more sustainable alternative	[2]	
	Financially support organisations, or charities (e.g. 1% For The Planet etc)	[3]	
	Have a Foundation, charity arm, or are directly involved in change for the better	[4]	
	Are a charity, CIC, social enterprise or similar	[5]	

The 'At What Cost' Score

What costs are associated with your work? *it's likely this will require a bit of additional research to check the evidence	Any evidence of exploitation, hazardous waste or deforestation	[-5]	
	Evidence of unsustainable materials or outputs that aren't being actively addressed (this includes plastics, non-biodegradable and recyclable materials, emissions, high power/resource use, social inequity or imbalance)	[1]	
	Some unsustainable materials or outputs (as above) but there's evidence they are being reviewed to reduce them.	[2]	
	Some unsustainable materials or outputs but solutions are already in place to minimise and counteract the negative impact of them.	[3]	
	Mostly sustainable materials or outputs, less than 20% are unsustainable and solutions are in place to minimise the impact of these.	[4]	
	We source everything sustainably, have minimised our waste and ecological impact and have a fully equitable business model.	[5]	
Do you have independent purpose accreditations?	No	[1]	
	Public-facing awards but no meaningful accreditations	[2]	
	Meaningful measures/monitoring in place but not seeking accreditation	[3]	
	In progress, working towards B-Corp/ISO / GRI or similar (applications are in!)	[4]	
	Yes, B-Corp, ISOs or similar	[5]	
Which sector are you in? *If talking to an organisation that works with clients, make sure you take their client base into account when answering this one.	Oil, Gas, Tobacco, Arms (production or distribution)	[-5]	
	Finance, consumer goods, energy, transport, manufacturing or hospitality	[1]	
	One of the above, but a challenger brand providing a more sustainable approach	[2]	
	Business support, marketing, comms, PR	[3]	
	Health and social care, sustainability, music and arts, education	[4]	
	Charitable or non-profit to accelerate sustainability or purpose	[5]	
Are you well represented through diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI)?	No diversity, no evidence of DEI policies	[1]	
	Minimal diversity at junior levels, some DEI policies/practices	[2]	
	Some diversity at senior levels, active DEI policies/practices	[3]	
	Some diversity at all levels, salary transparency, clear DEI policies/practices	[4]	
	Balanced representation of people at all levels of seniority, with clear DEI policies and full transparency	[5]	

THE 'WHY' SCORE

[TOTAL]

THE 'AT WHAT COST' SCORE

[TOTAL]



environmental