

Impact Report

2023/24



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Introduction

As an independent business operating in the service industry, ours is not a business that attracts huge external investment to grow rapidly. Since start up in 2012, Conscious Communications has grown steadily and organically, despite being faced with a global pandemic. We are proud that 90% of our new business comes through referrals from existing clients or based on our reputation for delivering exceptional results. Our growth is totally dependent upon the hard work, expertise and dedication of our team. Our intention is to continue to invest all of our profit into our people, our charitable activities, and into the local community, while also giving our most valuable commodity – our time – to charitable causes and working in the community with disadvantaged people.

In May 2023, the long-awaited email landed: we were B Corp certified. I am evangelical about being a B Corp organisation and I strongly believe in its value. It is a big deal for our company. B Corp accreditation is validation that our business has been, is and will continue to do well by doing good. We didn't alter any of our working practices or approaches to 'fit' the B Impact Assessment and score the benchmark 80 points to move through the certification process (we scored 101.2!). The assessment is rigorous and sought out evidence across the entirety of our business operations, there is nowhere to hide, so to speak.

Gaining B Corp certification was a huge accomplishment for Conscious Communications, but what it stands for is so deeply embedded in our company, and has been from the outset, that the day we received our B Corp status was icing on the cake.

In the 12 months since we were certified we have welcomed the opportunity to be part of the B Corp community, have conversations with like-minded businesses, share ideas and get our team involved. As a company we rarely stand still, we are always thinking about what's next, what can we do better, what more can we do to have greater impact. Whether it's through pro bono work or reflecting on the clients we work with and who the end-beneficiaries are, we'll never stop looking for new ways to grow our positive impact.

Our commitment to our people, our agency culture and local community is core to our business and to be externally recognised for our approach fills us with the greatest pride. From the day we started Conscious Communications, we wanted to create an agency that is different and driven by values; thinking about the impact our work will have on others and creating a culture that empowers its employees over our own bottom line.

Zoë Scorer
Managing Director



About Conscious Communications



Conscious Communications is a public relations agency that creates highly effective communications strategies that establish distinct and powerful brands, raise awareness, build and protect reputations, drive engagement and support clients in achieving their commercial goals.

Profile raising

We use our industry knowledge and contacts to position clients at the forefront of their markets, crafting compelling stories and leveraging communications channels and media to reach the right audiences, at the right time, with messaging that resonates and changes behaviour.

We work with thought leaders across multiple sectors, including education, construction, technology, health, food and nutrition, green energy, agriculture, social housing, the environment and sustainability, and are experienced in translating complex information into compelling messaging and content.

Crisis communications

We have decades of crisis communications experience and work as an extension of our clients' teams to manage issues, solve problems and protect reputations. From implementing effective communications protocols and testing procedure responses, to guiding our clients through periods of reputational risk, we provide resilient and experienced support to successfully navigate challenging times.

Internal communications

Our team works with large multi-site organisations to provide structure and efficiency to communications. We provide a valuable external perspective and work with our clients to create an internal communications strategy that fosters collaboration and builds culture that attracts and retains talent.

Our approach

Our ambition is to do well by doing good, and to influence others to do the same. What makes us different is that we think first about the impact our work will have on others; and second about the impact on our own bottom line. We combine strategic expertise and great creativity with ethics and principles that make us proud and our clients proud to work with us.

Measurement

We believe in setting stretching targets that challenge our teams to use all of their creativity and expertise to achieve exceptional results. We have developed our own transparent and datacentric evaluation tool – CC Insight – which is focused on identifying uplifts in awareness, affinity and action, across all channels and audiences. We use the data generated to inform strategic direction for our clients' public relations and marketing programmes, ensuring we remain responsive and flexible to changing audience and market demands.

Our purpose

We believe that having a positive impact is not only a good thing to do – but the best way to do business, too.

So, we put corporate social responsibility at the heart of our business; it is part and parcel of what we do, not just a page on the website, because customers are demanding it; talented employees are attracted by it; and an authentic focus on corporate social responsibility and sustainability improves the bottom line.

5% (min.) of our time to pro bono services

Each year we commit a minimum 5% of our time and resources to **pro bono services** and a further 5% to **voluntary activity** – this activity is measured for positive impact on the causes and communities it supports and on our team's culture, morale and motivation.

We became a certified B Corporation (B Corp) in May 2023, reinforcing our commitment to the highest standards of business and aligning with our mission to be a force for good.

To become a B Corp we completed a rigorous evaluation of our whole business including our social and environmental performance. The accreditation is a testament to our unwavering commitment to ethical and sustainable business practices. We actively seek out opportunities to support local communities, and champion equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our B Corp certification recognises our commitment to accountability, transparency, and valuing purpose, people and the planet, above profit, and commits us to long term consideration of stakeholder impact by building this into our company's legal structure.

Gaining B Corp certification has opened up conversations with like-minded businesses across the UK, involved our team in continuing our journey of growth via an internal B Corp Ambassadors Group and influenced our talent pipeline as more applicants are attracted to companies which are certified.

5% (min.) of our time to voluntary activity

Our purpose

In addition, we are accredited against the following Impact Business Models:



DESIGNED TO GIVE

Applicable to companies that have a formal standing commitment to donate significant portions of company profits, revenue, equity, or time to charitable causes



SUPPORT FOR UNDERSERVED/ PURPOSE DRIVEN ENTERPRISES

Applicable if a company's products/services enable the financial or operational success of businesses that are purpose driven or underserved



SERVING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS DIRECT

Applicable if a company can verify that its positive product/service impact benefits organisations that serve low income or traditionally underserved populations

Our B Corp journey



2018

B Corp movement first discovered by the team and how it aligns with our purpose and values

2021

Areas for growth and improvement identified

2023

Became B Corp certified – scoring 101.2 in the process (well above the score of 80 needed to become a B Corp!)

2020

First B Impact Assessment completed but not submitted

2022

Completed and submitted our full B Impact Assessment (and waited nervously)

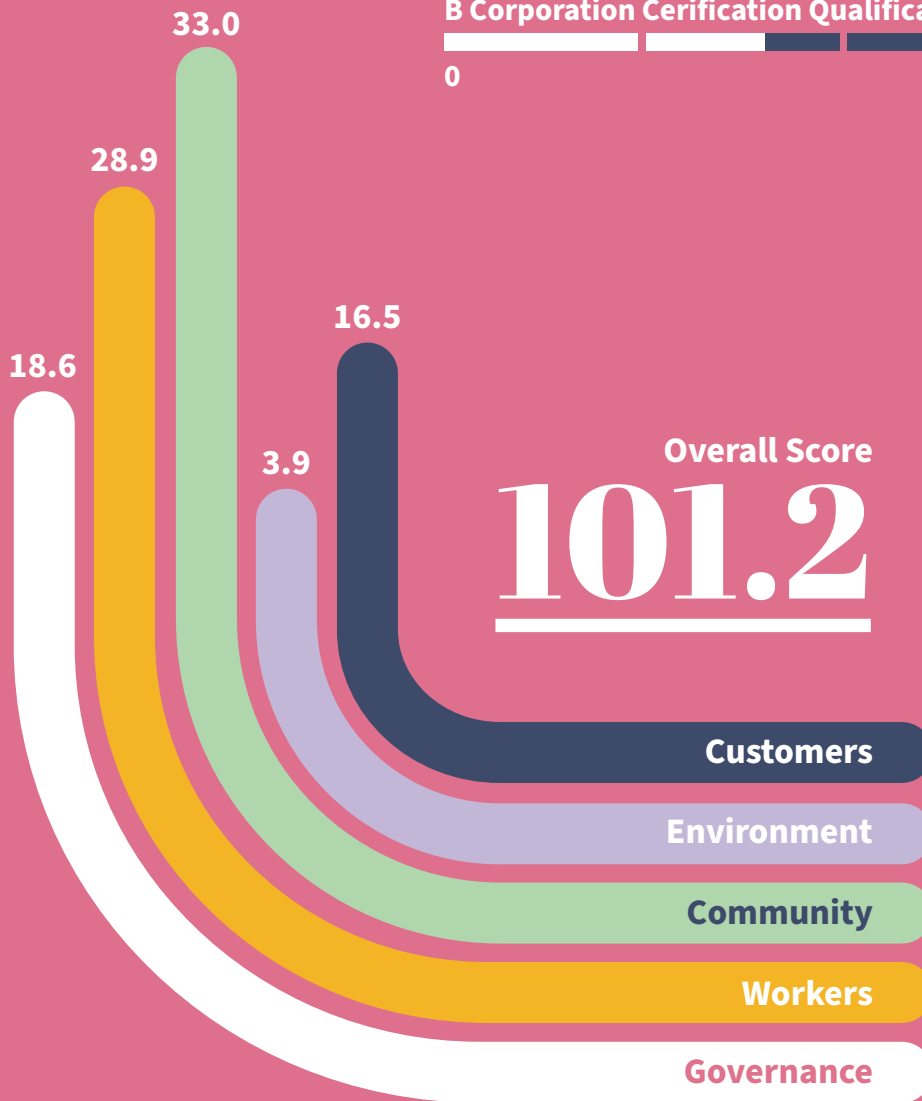
2024

One year anniversary and delivery of the first CC Impact Report

2024 and beyond
Continuing on our journey of growth, adaptation, and improvement...

Our impact

In 2026 we will aim for a B Impact Score of 110 or more.



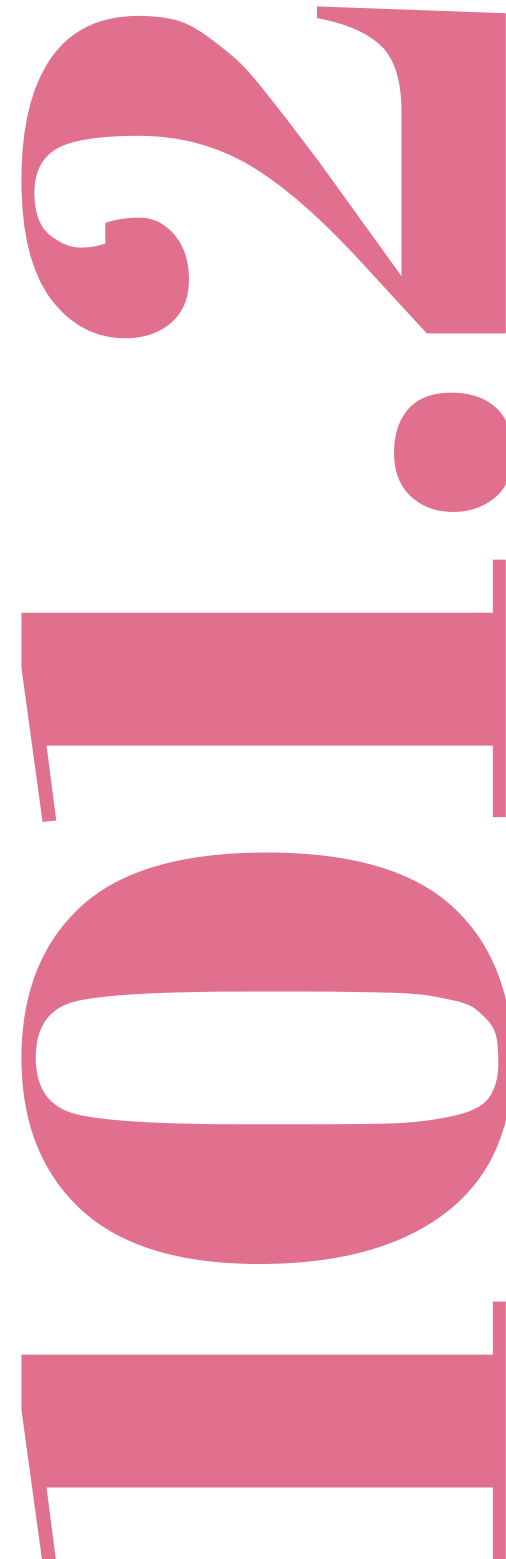
Conscious Communications



B Corporation Certification Qualification



0 200



Our approach

Our ambition is to do well by doing good, and to influence others to do the same.

What makes us different is that we think first about the impact our work will have on others; and second about the impact on our own bottom line. We combine strategic expertise and great creativity with ethics and principles that make us proud and reflect our sense of social responsibility.

Founded in 2012, we are an award-winning team of change-makers, committed to using our public relations and marketing expertise as a force for good, for the benefit of our clients, ourselves, our stakeholders, the environment and the wider community.

To ensure that we focus on building our capability and deliver continuous improvement, our people plan prioritises activities that invest in a work environment in which everyone can thrive. Our THRIVE model reflects this commitment.

In practice, these steps solidify our commitment to practical progress, ensuring that every action, strategy, and innovation is firmly rooted in our purpose and dedicated to the betterment of our organisation and the wider community.





Our approach

What we said we'd do

- Restructure our Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the company is well positioned to continue its trajectory
- Implement a more sophisticated recruitment process
- Continue to develop our team's skillsets and grow the team from the bottom up

What we did

- Implemented the new structure in October 2023, enabling our CEO to concentrate on strategy and business development while the MD leads the team in delivering its services
- Hired our first HR Manager to support our growing team and implement processes to support our talent pipeline
- Created a bespoke Introduction to Line Management Training Programme, tailored to our internal culture at Conscious Communications
- To date three of our managers have been through the programme and two are now line managers

What's next

- Roll out Introduction to Line Management Training Programme to additional team members who are ready to take on the responsibility of line management
- Evolve our annual feedback and priorities process and job descriptions to integrate social and environmental goals for all team members
- Explore integrating additional qualifiers for new business prospects to ensure they are fully aligned with our values
- Share business successes through powerful strategic storytelling to better highlight our impact

Our people

At our core lies a steadfast commitment to our vision and purpose, which is ingrained deeply within our team's culture and values.

In January 2024, we were awarded **Platinum** by Investors in People, the highest level of accreditation granted by the UK's leading accreditor for business improvement through people management in the UK.

We sought assessment against the Investors in People standards after achieving Gold accreditation for the second time in 2021. The accreditation means that policies and practices around supporting our team are embedded in every corner of the agency, so much so that **we scored 836** in our survey as part of the accreditation, well above the Investors in People average of 730.

To achieve Investors in People accreditation, organisations are assessed against particular indicators and, dependent on how highly an organisation scores against each indicator, Investors in People awards the appropriate level. The levels represent the organisation's level of "maturity", from a fundamental "developed" level to a "high performing" level. The agency is ranked as high performing in 24/27 indicator themes, and scored as advanced in the remaining.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®

We invest in people Platinum

Investors in People Specialist, Lindsey Waters, commenting on her assessment of Conscious Communications, said:

“

You have a profound understanding and unwavering dedication to your conscious purpose and values. It's the lifeblood that fuels your existence. You've never been anything but a conscious business, and it's truly incredible to see the depth of appreciation and alignment of these principles amongst your team, and is undoubtedly their most powerful source of motivation and inspiration.

Your people are incredibly motivated by their ability to make a difference to the world through their work, and this gives them a higher sense of purpose and achievement. Your commitment to your consciousness is one of your incredible stand-out characteristics and where you really shine.

”

We joined the top 7% of businesses accredited Platinum by Investors in People globally.



Our people



What our team says:

It's an organisation with a genuine wish to do good and this shows through the attitude and commitment of the team.

I feel extremely proud to work for a company that practices what it preaches - we genuinely are a force for good.

Each and every staff member at Conscious Communications is encouraged to voice their opinions and trusted to get on and do a good job. We are given the tools to do this too and regular training.

The quality of work we as an agency produce makes me feel proud. The opportunity for career development I have as a junior member of the team add to the pride I take in my work, as I feel like a valued team member.

As part of our leadership team we thrive on robust discussion and all members of the team are encouraged to contribute constructive criticism and creative ideas to ensure our work and culture are the very best they can be.

The encouragement to get involved in new projects is excellent and I feel I can approach management if there is anything specific I would like to try. As a new staff member I was reassured and impressed with the training in my first few weeks.

We're sustainability conscious in everything we do. From the work we complete with impactful clients to ensuring that we're sustainable in all aspects of the office.

"I am extremely proud that we deliver not just excellent results for our clients but also positive social and environmental impact above and beyond that of other agencies I have worked within."





Our people

What we said we'd do

- Achieve Investors in People Platinum accreditation for the first time
- Ensure all policies promote equality
- Introduce a health and wellbeing scheme for our team
- Offer regular upskilling opportunities to build confidence and knowledge
- Improve the new starter induction process

What we did

- Achieved Investors in People Platinum accreditation by a unanimous panel decision
- Our HR Manager has reviewed all of our policies and created a new breast feeding policy
- Our health and wellbeing scheme was introduced in January 2024 which includes: a cash-back healthcare scheme, employee assistance programme, access to counselling and gym discounts and rewards
- Hold monthly Lunch & Learn sessions on topics requested by the team – for example, AI tools, strategy, Substack, press regulations and more
- Reviewed the process and enhanced it by adding additional layers to training, HR policies and practices and setting levels of expectation

What's next

- Over the last year we have benefitted from the Alliance of Independent Agencies quarterly employee pulse surveys; we will now look to develop our own internal employee pulse surveys to continue to seek feedback from our team
- Empower our team members to become thought leaders in the industry via external exposure, networking opportunities and telling their own inspiring stories
- Formalise how we recognise higher performance and accommodate the team's different motivations

Our community

From the moment of start-up in 2012, we were determined to prove that a company with a conscience that puts people before profit can thrive commercially. We have built a growing business that provides clients with value for money, invests in its staff and generates sufficient income to be able to invest time and money in developing community initiatives – such as FXP Festival and Cambridge 2030 – as well as supporting established charities.

The whole team supports Cambridge 2030 – from developing a new website to media relations support – and FXP Festival, for which we received the “Force for Good” award from PRWeek.

Conscious Communications founded community interest company, Cambridge 2030, to bring public and private sectors together with charity and community interest organisations, in collaborative action to bridge gaps in provision and resources, increase local progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and deliver a more equal and inclusive city.

Primary School Transition

In 2023, Cambridge 2030 worked with The King's Men, the choir of King's College, Cambridge, in a pilot project designed to inspire a love of singing in children and help ease the stress of transitioning to secondary school. The project involved students from four primary schools – Shirley Community Primary School, Kings Hedges School, The Grove Primary School, and Chesterton Primary School, as well as students from local secondary school, North Cambridge Academy, in a series of interactive musical workshops.

The pilot used acapella and choral singing to help students combat anxiety, break down barriers, and build confidence and resilience, all while having fun.

Digital Drive

In February 2024, Cambridge 2030, in partnership with Cambridge City Council, called on Cambridgeshire businesses, non-profit organisations and charities to recycle their laptops when they are upgraded or replaced, by donating them to the Digital Drive. All suitable donated devices are refurbished and distributed to local schools for students to use at home and in the classroom.

This Digital Drive follows the hugely successful campaign during the pandemic, where hundreds of laptops and PCs, as well as funds to provide internet access, were donated to help students and their parents to work from home.

IN NUMBERS:



Our community

Each year Cambridge 2030 hosts events for supporters and partners from public and private sectors, charities and community organisations, to learn about successful collaborations, network and discuss opportunities for new projects that will help to address inequalities in Cambridge.

On 19 September 2023 and again on 15 April 2024, Power of Purpose & Partnership events took place, bringing together individuals committed to facilitating positive change in Cambridgeshire. Over 100 delegates attend the events and speakers have included:

- Marie Lee, Cambridge Commodities
- Sophie Costello, Costello Medical
- Phil Priestley, Cambs Youth Panel
- Nicholas Bewes, Howard Group/Future In
- Robert Pollock, Cambridge City Council
- Sara Allen, Greater Cambridge Impact Fund
- Dan Thorp, Cambridge Ahead
- Nicky Shepard, Abbey People
- Steve Clay, Cambridge City Foodbank
- Heidi Mulvey, Cambridge University Press & Assessment

Every year, two paid days are available to each team member to use on voluntary activities. In 2023/2024, the team has supported the following charities drawing on their expertise to deliver video content, copywriting, event management and communications strategy work:

- Jimmy's Cambridge
- Haslingfield Primary School PTFA
- Cambridge Acorn Project
- The Edge Café
- Cambridge Community Arts
- North Cambridge Academy
- Planetari



Our community

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Jimmy's are incredibly grateful to Abbie for offering her time and expertise to create a video showcasing a recent project to increase the availability of support for those experiencing homelessness in Cambridge. Abbie was friendly, professional and dedicated and created a brilliant piece of film. She made everyone feel comfortable, answered any queries about the editing as well as making professional recommendations. We would be delighted to work with Abbie and Conscious Communications again in the future.

Cat Strawbridge, Communications Manager from Jimmy's Cambridge

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What we said we'd do

- Provide opportunities for the team to get involved in pro bono projects
- Commit to supporting our local communities and economies while maintaining responsible and sustainable business practices

What we did

- The team has been involved in a number of pro bono projects over the past year from supporting at fringe events to developing communications strategies
- Created a local procurement policy which outlines our commitment to sourcing goods and services from local suppliers whenever possible

What's next

- Consider removing the two day volunteering limit to empower our team members to decide how they balance delivering their work to a high standard and giving back to our community
- Ensure each team member takes advantage of a minimum two days' volunteering each year



Our clients

We provide our unique style of high impact public relations, marketing communications, event and design services to clients in industries including education, technology, energy and housing, as well as to non-profit organisations and charities.

What our clients say:

“

During our time working with the team at Conscious Communications we have found them to be knowledgeable and professional. They have taken the time required to learn our business and our market. This builds confidence with our internal team and helps the quality of our output which is helping us to achieve our commercial goals.

- Kelvin Bathe, Echion Technologies Ltd.

The team at Conscious Communications are an extension of our organisation who we trust and rely on completely for all our communication, design and marketing requirements. Can't recommend them enough.

- Kristina Cairns, CHS Group

Firstly, I wanted to extend my thanks to the CC team for all that you have done. You have been an absolute pleasure to work with. As Tess often says, "opening a college is not for the faint-hearted", and your support and professionalism throughout these past months has been absolute. We have big boots to fill in terms of taking over the reins of our social media, and we have all been inspired by you.

- Joanna Clarke, Oxford International College, Brighton

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Our clients

What we said we'd do

- Formalise our internal and external on-boarding process
- Re-introduce regular client feedback check-ins and surveys
- Review our reporting processes for CC Insight (our measurement tool)

What we did

- Created a framework and timeline for on-boarding each new client which is now adhered to by all team members
- Between May and September 2023 we conducted feedback calls with all current retained clients
- In April 2024 we ran a client survey with all current retained clients
- Created monthly snapshot versions for those clients who prefer quick reference results while still offering longer form reports to those who want them

What's next

- At our next planning day in June 2024 we will feed back client survey results to the team
- Learn and evolve from the feedback to ensure our clients are receiving the best possible service
- Continue to seek regular feedback from clients every six months

Our environment

We are committed to:

- Adopting responsible business practices that minimise the negative environmental impact of our corporate activities
- Embarking on projects outside the working week, throughout the year, to reaffirm our genuine corporate social responsibility credentials
- Meeting or exceeding compliance levels for all appropriate environmental legislation relating to our company activities
- Maximising the efficient use of sustainable materials and eliminating or minimising waste generation through reducing, re-using and recycling materials
- Managing energy use efficiently and employing energy efficient products
- Sharing and supporting best environmental practice in our business sector
- Making a contribution to the local community

In October 2023, we ran a month-long company-wide travel survey to gain a more accurate picture of weekly car mileage and the use of non-polluting forms of transport.

On average, a third of our team used non-polluting forms of transport to get to work (cycle, walk, e-scooter, electric car)

33% of our regular car drivers spent at least one day per week working from home, reducing overall car mileage

26 electric journeys were made by the team to and from work

Bike was the second most popular form of transport after car



The team clocked a total of 136 bike journeys getting to and from work in one month



Our environment

What we said we'd do

- Run a travel survey to better understand our impact on the environment
- Improve recycling levels in the office

What we did

- See results above. We pledged a commitment to maintain the level of non-polluting forms of transport to/from work in 2023/2024
- Removed individual bins at desks to ensure the recycling bins are being used

What's next

- Re-run our travel survey in October 2024 and use a CO2 calculator to translate in real terms what our impact means
- Continue to advocate with our landlord to consider green energy supplier switches and better infrastructure for electric cars
- Highlight to clients the impact of a website's carbon footprint and make recommendations for improvements when we are involved in website development projects

