

# 2024 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

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THE BERNARD GROUP  
SMARTPRESS



## THE BERNARD GROUP INDEX

03 CEO's letter

### 04 THE BERNARD GROUP

05 Our group

06 Corporate bodies

07 How we partner

08 Where we are

08 Facilities

10 Our mission and purpose

10 Core values

### 11 ESG

12 Overview of achievements

13 Approach to CSR

14 Focus areas

15 ESG achievements

#### 16 Environment

17 Environmental policy

17 EMS objectives (2024)

18 Business operations

20 Greenhouse gas emissions

20 Renewable energy certificates (RECs)

20 Carbon offset

22 Our products

23 Product innovation

25 Product development to production and fulfillment

29 Miro

29 TBG online marketing on demand

30 Value chain

#### 31 Social

32 Workplace

32 Inspiring growth

33 Leadership development

33 Employee health and wellbeing

34 Human rights

35 Community relations

#### 38 Governance

39 Responsibility through leadership

39 Third party oversight

40 Cyber security

41 Whistleblowing

41 Our customers

41 Sustainable procurement

42 Environmental partners

43 Sustainable development goals (SDGs)

### 44 2024 KPIS

*As a privately-held company, we do not disclose financial information in this report due to privacy considerations.*





It is my pleasure to share with you The Bernard Group's 2024 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) progress. We made significant progress in 2024 through company-wide efforts.

#### **Sustainable Practices in Action**

You'll see our commitment to minimizing our environmental footprint firsthand when walking our facilities. Our teams actively maintain recycling lanes, demonstrating their dedication to these crucial initiatives. We've also made significant changes to our packaging:

- Transitioned our corrugated boxes to include more recycled content
- Replaced bubble wrap with recycled crinkle paper in most cases
- Consolidated more than 20 different bags into one recycled plastic content bag
- Incorporated tapes with recycled content

These changes have reduced waste and often streamlined our processes. For example, we now use recycled tapes that work with our auto tape machines, and our crinkle machines create consistent, precisely-cut crinkle paper. This has allowed us to reduce labor costs while improving our environmental impact.

#### **Forest Stewardship Certification Chain of Custody (FSC COC)**

This year, we became FSC COC certified. This initiative helps us reduce our impact on the environment by addressing our supply chain and ensuring responsible sourcing of paper and other forest products.

#### **Charitable Giving**

As part of our charitable giving strategy, we support multiple nonprofit organizations that mirror our core values. I'm thrilled to announce that we raised a record \$261,000 at our annual Golf Open. This will allow us to further support these important causes and make a real difference in our community.

#### **Smartpress South Carolina (SPSC)**

2024 marked the launch of Smartpress South Carolina. This ambitious project required extensive financial and operational planning, software development, IT services, HR recruiting, facilities management, training, purchasing, inventory, vendor coordination, website enhancements,

customer service coordination and new operating models. It also involved a real estate process and construction management that we'd never undertaken before. We overcame the challenges and learned valuable lessons, and SPSC is now online and operational. The SPSC team is creating something truly great.

#### **TBG Academy**

Our TBG Academy blossomed in 2024. What began as a humble initiative to invest in our employees' personal and professional development through in-person and online training has expanded significantly. In 2024, the training curriculum grew in both breadth and depth. Participation increased, and we launched a learning management system to support our efforts. Continuous learning and self-directed development have become ingrained in our culture.

#### **Looking Forward**

It was satisfying to make significant strides in our CSR efforts in 2024. This year is a new opportunity to build upon all our previous accomplishments as we continue under the mission to lead our industry in minimizing our environmental impacts.

Sincerely,



Matthew Hanson  
CEO, The Bernard Group





# THE BERNARD GROUP

## OUR GROUP

The Bernard Group (TBG) is a full-service visual merchandising company specializing in innovative design and high-quality production. Our expertise lies in creating impactful visual displays that elevate brands and drive sales. We offer a wide range of services, including:

- **Brilliant Digital Graphics:** TBG utilizes cutting-edge printing technology to produce vibrant, eye-catching digital graphics on a variety of media, ensuring maximum impact and versatility.
- **Custom Display Design & Fabrication:** Our team of skilled designers and craftsmen collaborate to create displays that showcase products in the most effective and engaging way possible. We work closely with clients to understand their unique needs and develop solutions that align with their brand identity and marketing objectives.
- **Comprehensive Visual Merchandising Solutions:** From concept to installation, TBG provides end-to-end visual merchandising solutions that transform retail spaces and enhance the customer experience. Our services include:
  - **Project Management:** Dedicated project managers oversee every aspect of the process, ensuring seamless execution and timely delivery.
  - **Logistics & Installation:** Our experienced logistics team handles all aspects of shipping and installation, ensuring that displays are set up correctly and on schedule.
  - **Ongoing Support & Maintenance:** TBG offers ongoing support and maintenance services to keep displays looking their best and maximizing their impact.

By combining creative vision with technical expertise, TBG delivers visual merchandising solutions that capture attention, tell stories and drive results. Our commitment to quality, innovation and customer satisfaction has made us a trusted partner for leading brands across a wide range of industries.



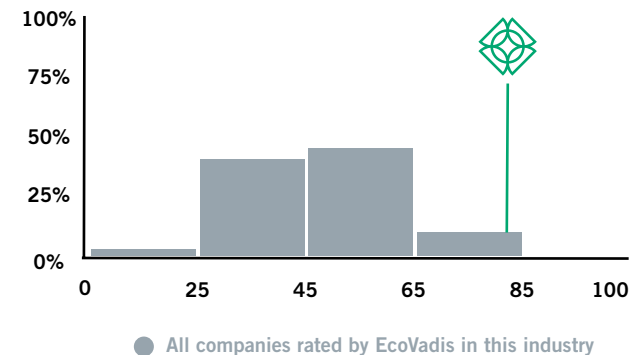
**Employee-Owned**  
Over 950 employee-owners



**Established in 1999**  
Five production facilities in the Minneapolis metro area



**Responsible Manufacturing**  
EcoVadis Platinum, ISO 14001



**We strive to provide our clients with a world-class product, and more importantly, world-class service. We have a creative, driven, entrepreneurial culture that's leading the way for the print and display industry.**



The Bernard Group is the parent company of their online division Smartpress, along with Smartpress Managed Services and Smartpress' Marketing on Demand Platform™.



## CORPORATE BODIES

### Board of Directors



**Philip Hazel**  
Founder,  
Chairman of  
the Board



**Matt Hanson**  
CEO,  
Board Member



**John Rosendahl**  
CFO,  
Board Member



**Scott Anderson**  
Board Member



**Patty Jones**  
Board Member



**Mark Schumacher**  
Board Member



## HOW WE PARTNER

### Process



### Team



- account management
- project management

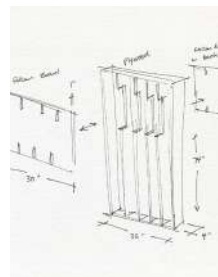
- visual merchandising
- environmental design
- 3D design
- graphic design
- space optimization
- structural engineering
- software development

- project planning
- site surveys
- fixture development
- sourcing-domestic and international
- estimating
- online portal development
- color work

- visual engineering
- unique product development
- prototype creation
- finish, texture and treatment definition / development
- technology integration
- testing

- large format print
- small format print
- sewing and finishing
- plastic fabrication
- wood and metal fabrication
- online ordering

- assembly, kitting and finishing
- installation
- reporting



## WHERE WE ARE

**We take pride in our production facilities and ensure the health and wellbeing of all of our employees.**

The Bernard Group is located in Chanhassen, MN. We have over 664,376 square feet in six facilities



### Locations

- Minnesota
- New York
- Duncan, SC
- Atlanta, GA
- Seattle, WA
- Portland, OR
- Mexico
- China

## FACILITIES

The Bernard Group's U.S.-based fabrication facilities are located in the Minneapolis metro area. Our state-of-the-art facilities house small/large format printing, plastic/wood/metal fabrication, graphic/fixture design, engineering, warehousing, fixture assembly, knitting and logistics.

Additionally, we have global partners to meet your timing, budget or quantity needs.







JETI TAURO H3300 UHS LED

AGFA Agfa

FRESH SCRATCH-MADE  
HAND-CRAFT  
SWEET SHOP



## OUR MISSION & PURPOSE

We exist to wow our clients with service and products that are the best in the world. Period. Providing this level of service to our clients must be met with an equal amount of passion for collaborating and serving our teammates. We operate in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.

**Our purpose as a company is to build inclusive and diverse teams of stars that can serve their individual clients inside a culture that allows them to realize these great motivators. In doing so, we're able to sustain the passion that's required to wow our clients and each other on each and every project.**

**We believe we are all inherently hardwired to:**

- Work for something bigger than ourselves
- Be in relationship with each other
- Take ownership of work
- Have the freedom to make decisions



## CORE VALUES



### Wow

Wow is our first company value by intention. Webster's Dictionary defines wow as: To overwhelm with delight and amazement. WE AGREE.



### Ownership

Ownership of our company makes each co-owner 100% accountable. An ownership culture and the freedom associated with it brings top talent to TBG.

We have proven that top talent on the front lines, given the ability to make decisions, will consistently trump a top-down management style.



### Passion for Excellence

It is quickly realized by new hires who have prior experience in our industry that this value is indeed central to our culture. We often hear from them how our quality is superior and the speed in which we do it is breathtaking.

It's a demanding industry but very satisfying to those with the right DNA.



### The Art of Teams

We believe teams of top talent with clear objectives will consistently outperform centralized control. We put a great amount of energy into building skilled and diverse teams to handle our most challenging pursuits.

It's the difference between being average and being great.



# ENVIRONMENT SOCIAL GOVERNANCE



## OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS

	Environment	Social	Governance
<b>WOW</b>	Green Energy Partner- Environmental Protection Agency	Raised over \$261,000 for three local charities by hosting our fifth annual charity Golf Open	Increased our EcoVadis sustainability rating to 83
<b>Ownership</b>	Offset 100% of our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions	Donated 365 backpacks filled with school supplies to a local elementary school	Became FSC COC Certified
<b>Passion for Excellence</b>	Partnered with Trees, Water, People and planted 10,400 trees in Indigenous lands	Employees spent 4,100+ hours focused on professional development	Signatory of the United Nations Global Compact and align with their 10 Principles
<b>The Art of Teams</b>	Maintained ISO 14001 Environmental Certification	Conducted an annual Gal- lup Employee Survey with 82% participation	99% of our workforce com- pleted Anti-Bribery/ Anti-Corruption Training



## APPROACH TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Bernard Group is committed to operating in a responsible and sustainable manner and creating positive social change in our community.

We are dedicated to understanding, integrating and monitoring our social, environmental and economic impact to enable us to actively contribute to society's broader goal of sustainable development. This commitment is deeply embedded in our core values, and we strive to demonstrate these responsibilities through our actions and within our corporate policies.



### Commitment & Vision

- **Providing High-Quality, Socially Responsible Solutions:** We are dedicated to offering our clients solutions that not only meet their needs, but also align with the principles of social responsibility and ethical business practices. This includes considering the long-term impacts of our work and ensuring that it benefits both our clients and the wider community.
- **Partnering for Sustainability:** We believe in collaboration and actively seek to partner with our customers and suppliers to create a shared vision of sustainability. By working together, we can leverage our collective strengths and expertise to develop innovative solutions that address environmental and social challenges.
- **Managing and Reducing Environmental Impact:** We recognize the impact our operations can have on the environment and are committed to managing and minimizing this impact. This includes implementing sustainable practices, reducing waste and conserving resources.
- **Giving Back to Our Communities:** We believe in supporting the communities in which we operate and actively seek ways to give back. This includes volunteering our time and expertise, supporting local initiatives and investing in community development projects.
- **Continuous Improvement and Innovation:** We are committed to staying at the forefront of sustainability practices and continually update our policies, procedures, training and offerings to reflect the most current information, technologies and programs best suited for the customers we serve. We invest in research and development to explore new and innovative ways to improve our sustainability performance and create long-term value for our stakeholders.

## FOCUS AREAS

The impacts of our business operations fall into multiple categories and affect different stakeholders. TBG has developed a multidimensional approach to achieve our vision. This commitment has become ingrained in our core values, and we aim to demonstrate these responsibilities through our actions and within our corporate policies.

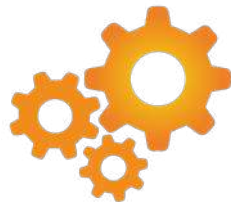
The three categories shown below represent our areas of CSR and the performance highlights associated with them:



**Environment**



**Social**



**Governance**





**ESG ACHIEVEMENTS**

	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>Performance Highlights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverted 1,976 tons of waste from landfills</li> <li>• Maintained the ISO 14001 Environmental Certification</li> <li>• Publicly reported our Scope 1,2,3 emissions to the CDP</li> <li>• Supported the Indigenous Lands Program in the planting of 10,240 trees through Trees, Water, People</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued to fight hunger and meet the needs of at-risk women and children in the local community</li> <li>• Raised over \$261,000 for three of our charity partners at our fifth annual Golf Open</li> <li>• Launched our new e-learning platform, TBG Learning Academy, to support employee growth and development</li> <li>• 89% of our workforce participated in the employee engagement survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attained FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) COC (Chain of Custody) Certification</li> <li>• Increased our EcoVadis score to 83, maintaining Platinum level, top 1% of businesses rated by EcoVadis</li> <li>• Expanded the business operations of our online division to South Carolina</li> <li>• 99% of our workforce completed Anti-Bribery/ Anti-Corruption Training &amp; Code of Conduct Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Future Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Conservation Program: Implement effective water stewardship practices across operations with the goal of reducing overall water consumption by 3%</li> <li>• Enhance the recycling program throughout our facilities</li> <li>• Expand Scope 3 Emissions methodology and measurement capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support local community projects that meet the needs of disadvantaged people</li> <li>• Expand our charitable giving beneficiaries</li> <li>• Provide meaningful work to people in our communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The successful completion of the 400,000 sq ft building project. This new facility will allow us to consolidate four of our current locations onto a single campus, streamlining our operations and enhancing collaboration</li> <li>• Increased ESOP share value</li> <li>• Maintain EcoVadis Platinum status</li> </ul>





# ENVIRONMENT



## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

TBG is committed to leading the industry in minimizing the impact of its activities on the environment.



### The key points of our strategy to achieve this are:

- Maintain a commitment to the protection of the environment, including the prevention of pollution, recycle/reuse as much as possible and minimize our overall consumption of natural resources
- Promote environmental awareness among our employees and encourage them to work in an environmentally responsible manner
- Ensure compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations
- Continuously improve the performance of our Environmental Management System (EMS)

## 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS) OBJECTIVES

### Objective #1: Water Conservation Program

Goal: Implement effective water stewardship practices across operations with the goal of reducing water consumption within the next year. This will be achieved through a combination of resource efficiency measures, employee engagement and ensuring sustainable water management while maintaining operational performance.

### Objective #2: Distribution Center (DC) Recycling Program

Goal: Enhance the recycling program at the Distribution Center with initiatives with the goal of hitting our 2023 numbers of 72.03 tons since it dropped in 2024 to 58.61 tons. This will be achieved through improved waste segregation, investment in recycling infrastructure and employee education.

### Objective #3: Scope 3 Methodology & Measurement

Goal: Establish a comprehensive measurement and tracking system to identify eight out of the 15 Scope 3 emissions categories. This initiative will help the organization better understand its value chain emissions, identify key reduction opportunities, align with global sustainability and carbon reduction goals and ensure that our Scope 3 emissions are reported properly to the CDP, EPA and key clients' emission disclosure platforms.





## BUSINESS OPERATIONS

As our business continues to grow, we strive to improve the environmental performance of our operations. The environmental metrics that we track fall into the following categories:



### Waste Program

Waste of all types is sorted meticulously so that all 21 different wastes reach their intended destinations.



### Water Conservation

We minimize water consumption daily and have a No Exposure policy.



### Energy Conservation

We conduct annual comprehensive energy audits that identify potential energy saving projects.



### Performance Monitoring

We continuously monitor these and all activities through our Environmental Management System.

### Waste Program

TBG uses a Waste Stream Register to track all materials. We handle over 21 different wastes that must be sorted for compliant disposal and consider which impacts are most positive and least harmful. For items currently listed as trash, we work with our recycling partners and manufacturers to find additional streams as part of our commitment to reducing waste.

We recycle as much waste as possible in all areas and recycle even when it isn't profitable. We train all staff on correct sorting and bin locations of all recycling streams, promote environmental awareness among all employees and provide sales teams with tools and samples to help clients partner with us on in-store take-back recycling programs whenever possible.

### Closed-Loop Program

**Our Commitment to Sustainability:** We are constantly exploring new ways to reduce our environmental impact and promote responsible resource management. Our commitment to sustainability and minimizing waste is exemplified by our closed-loop recycling program.

This closed-loop program has several benefits:

- **Minimizes waste:** By recycling, we can reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfills.
- **Reduces reliance on virgin materials:** By using recycled materials, we can reduce our reliance on virgin materials, which can help to conserve natural resources.
- **Lowers environmental impact:** Recycling helps to lower our environmental impact by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

### EPVC Recycling

All excess EPVC material is sent to the vendor for recycling. The vendor grinds the material into small pieces and then uses it to manufacture new sheets of EPVC. These new sheets are then supplied back into production.

### Magnet Recycling

We've established a partnership with our magnet vendor to facilitate the return of used magnets. These magnets are then reprocessed into new sheets and rolls that can be incorporated back into our manufacturing process. This initiative not only reduces the consumption of raw materials but also ensures that our magnets remain both recycled and recyclable, contributing to a circular economy.

### Wood Recycling Process

Our wood recycling program exemplifies our commitment to sustainability and resource conservation. We have established a partnership with a specialized vendor that repurposes unused wood, transforming it into valuable animal bedding. This process significantly reduces waste and landfill burden while providing a comfortable and sustainable product for animal care.

### **Take-Back Program**

When it's not possible for our clients to recycle materials at the end of a project, TBG offers a "take-back" program, where shipping containers are provided and sent with the project for the client to ship the materials back to our facilities to be recycled properly.

### **Product End-Of-Life**

When possible, projects are designed with the project end-of-life, circular design and recyclability in mind, with the goal of implementing a closed-loop methodology so that our products have a longer life and avoid becoming waste.

### **Water Conservation**

TBG is a Minnesota-based company, and we're especially conscious of protecting our waterways. Our printing processes are waterless, neither consuming freshwater nor producing waste water.

- In fact, ALL of our liquid waste is disposed of properly and shipped compliantly to be incinerated.
- We do not discharge chemical waste or effluent into the environment or public water system.

### **Energy Conservation Program**

As an industrial manufacturer, we prioritize energy efficiency. Annual energy audits identify and drive implementation of cost-saving projects. Our proven methodology and technology ensure continuous improvement in energy management.

- **Energy Efficient Print Equipment** - High-transmission efficiency 480V power is specified for all new production equipment wherever possible. LED curing is used on a wide variety of current generation print assets in large format.
- **Programmable Thermostats** - Programmable thermostats continue to be specified for all new HVAC equipment installs, as well as on any remedial projects for current installations. TBG continues the practice of installing locking covers on thermostats in controlled areas to prevent tampering.

- **High-Efficiency RTUs** - When rooftop HVAC equipment is added or replaced, TBG always specifies an AHRA certified high-efficiency unit, as this provides numerous benefits. Lower emissions, less fossil fuel consumption and a rebate incentive are all positive impacts and come at a very small increase to the project cost.
- **Occupancy Sensors** - Occupancy sensors continue to be specified for new breakroom, office and conference room build-outs, as well as added wherever feasible as a remedial project for our contract electrician.
- **LED Lamps Installation** - LED lamps are more efficient, have a longer life than alternatives and are a critical component of our energy-saving efforts.

TBG continues to make energy improvements and holds new installation and construction projects to a high standard of energy efficiency.

### **Performance Monitoring**

Data drives all of our environmental action at TBG, so performance monitoring is a major component of our programs. Performance is continually monitored for waste, recycling, emissions and numerous other categories.

Using this data, we've set a goal for ourselves of working toward being 100% carbon neutral.

### **Environmental Services and Advocacy**

TBG supports the Minnesota Nature Conservancy and is a signatory of the "Climate Action Now" pledge to call on U.S. leaders to stand strong on climate change and demand climate action. TBG continually strives to reduce our operational impacts on the environment but also believes that we can have an broader impact on public policy to safeguard our lands and waters from climate's biggest impacts.

## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS- CARBON NEUTRAL PROGRAM

TBG has significantly reduced our carbon footprint by purchasing renewable energy certificates (RECs) and carbon offsets.

- Our Carbon Neutral Program is comprised of:  
Green-e Certified US/CAN Wind/Solar/Biomass RECs
- Afforestation of degraded grasslands in Vichada, Colombia
- Bundled Solar Power Project - Generates clean form of electricity through renewal solar energy source in India

## RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATES (RECs)

RECs account for and encourage the use, expansion and maintenance of renewable energy sources. They also channel funds directly to renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction projects.

We use these certificates to match all of the electricity used in our offices and facilities, thus reducing our electricity-based carbon footprint.

The renewable energy generation we support has a positive environmental impact. Green-e Certified renewable energy meets the highest standards in North America. To qualify, they must be generated from new facilities that meet rigorous standards for environmental quality, transparency and accuracy.

## CARBON OFFSETS

TBG invested in two projects to offset our carbon emissions. The first is an afforestation project of degraded grasslands in Vichada, Colombia, and the second is a solar power project in India. Offsetting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions enables organizations like ours to reduce our environmental impact by supporting projects that actively reduce, absorb or prevent carbon and other emissions from entering the atmosphere.

Carbon dioxide emissions are broken down into three Scopes:

- Scope 1: Emissions made directly by our five primary facilities and company vehicles in Minnesota.
- Scope 2: Emissions generated by the electricity we purchase from local energy partners.
- Scope 3: Emissions made by our supply and distribution chain, employees commuting, business travel, purchased goods and waste disposal.

As of January 2020, TBG has offset 100% of greenhouse gas emissions generated from our facilities (Scope 1) and 100% of the emissions made by our energy partners to power our facilities (Scope 2). We've also begun mapping out how to measure Scope 3, with the end goal to offset all of our carbon.

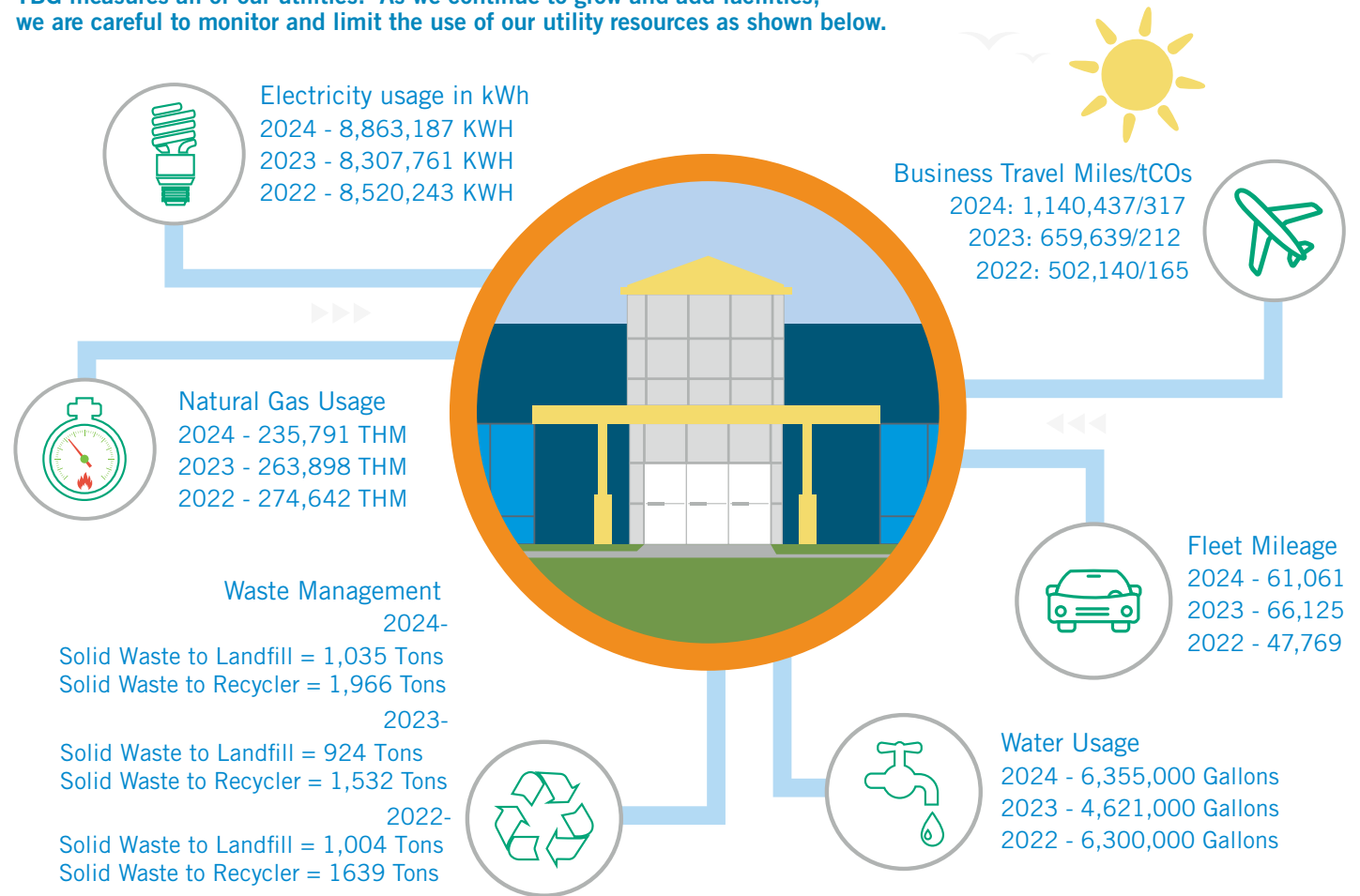


TBG Scope 1	TBG Scope 2	TBG Scope 3
2024- 1,278 Tons CO2	2024- 4,124 Tons CO2	2024- 26,496 Tons CO2
2023- 1,429 Tons CO2	2023- 3,900 Tons CO2	2023- 19,536 Tons CO2
2022- 1,479 Tons CO2	2022- 3,999 Tons CO2	2022- 23,533 Tons CO2



**Utility Measurement**

TBG measures all of our utilities. As we continue to grow and add facilities, we are careful to monitor and limit the use of our utility resources as shown below.



## OUR PRODUCTS

### Materials and Resources

TBG remains committed to providing our clients with eco-friendly options.

- We rigorously research how performance, quality, process, scale, cost, availability and life cycle affect the success of our products.
- We offer several resources for our customers to explore our range of options, including sample material books, a library of data sheets and sourcing trackers.
- We explore emerging raw materials to be the first in the industry to drive new material development and production.



### Materials: New Emerging and Testing

Inspiration and viability:

We are constantly on the hunt for healthier material options that are viable and perform to quality and aesthetic excellence. We find, test, validate and source multiple options when possible to provide solutions at the ready.



Recycled/alternative plastics



Living moss panels for wall and display applications



Recycled content, plastics, paper-based, non-vinyl wraps



FSC-sourced wood, eco-friendly MDF w/ low-VOC finishes



Recycled or renewable content solid surfaces

## PRODUCT INNOVATION

### Materials Reuse and Research



Pallets used for merchandising system material were repurposed and reused as backwall decor.

### Testing and Prototyping



100% recycled acrylic and recyclable graphics.



Digitally-printed realistic texture.

### New Thinking and New Methods



Stain color and finish study on the wheat board.



Sculpting paper for temporary seasonal displays.



Designing and building strength and structure with renewable and recyclable materials.



### Sustainability in Packaging

In Fall of 2022, we reviewed all our standard packaging supplies in our facilities. We documented usage, spend, versions, performance, availability and supplier partnerships. After that we searched for healthier options in each category until we had enough to begin comparisons and evaluations to vet out the weaker options and determine testing plans.

To date, we've landed on the below healthier options, either as complete swap-outs or in addition to our packaging products:

- **Polybags**- 20+ versions made from 100% recycled content.
- **Cartons**- Made with at least 60% recycled content.
- **Packing Tapes**- All 3" clear plastic tapes have 10% recycled content. Paper-based Water Activated Tape (WAT) with application machines implemented.
- **Bubblewrap**- Minimum 30% recycled content in 12"W rolls. Larger widths coming soon to test.
- **Krinkle Paper**- Paper-based, 100% recycled content and application machines brought in to be used as another option to bubble/void fill.
- **Foam Slip Sheets/Void Fill**- Non-abrasive, multi-layered, 100% recycled content tissue paper in multiple sizes.

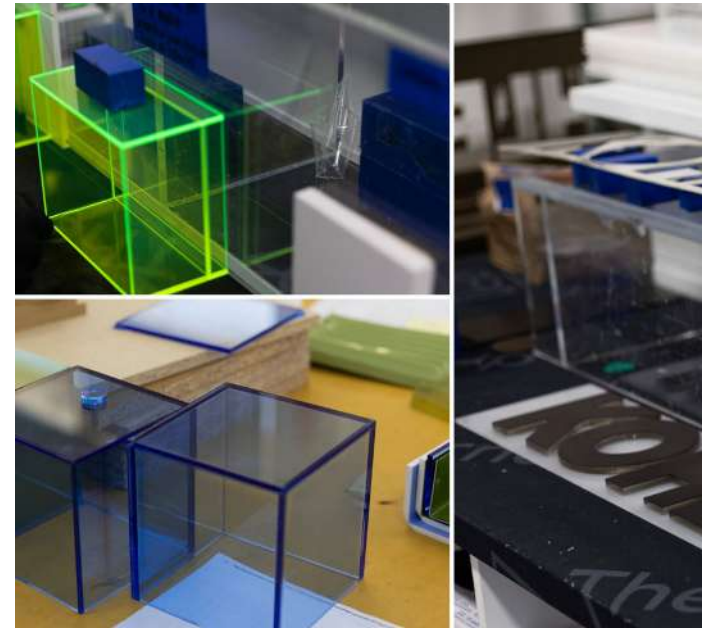


## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TO PRODUCTION AND FULFILLMENT

### Temporary Point-of-Purchase (T-Pop)

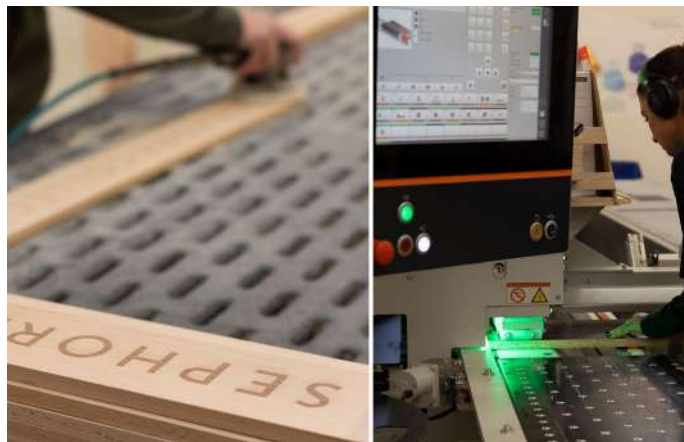


### Acrylic Production





**Millwork**



**Metal Fabrication**





### Small and Large Format Printing



### Fabric and Finishing

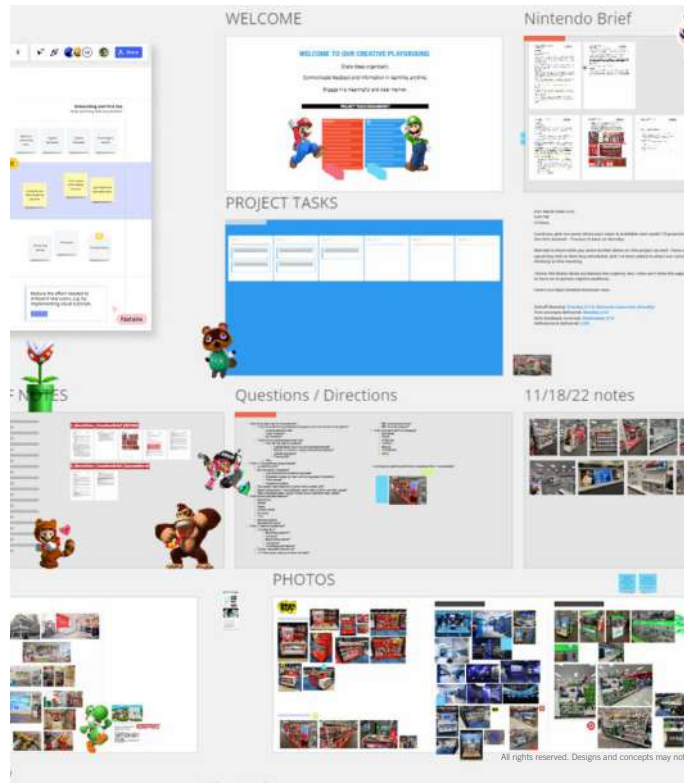






## MIRO

Collaborate with our creative process. Miro empowers remote, in-office and hybrid teams to communicate and collaborate across formats, tools, channels and timezones—without constraints of physical location, meeting space or whiteboards.



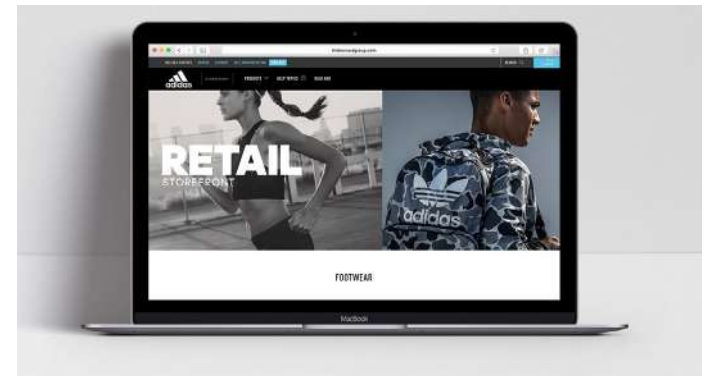
## TBG ONLINE MARKETING ON DEMAND

Empower your service lines.



Create or order high-quality, brand-compliant marketing materials in minutes, without having to rely on multiple vendors or design agencies.

Our platform is easy to use and supported by a robust team of experts, so you can focus on growing your business, not managing your marketing assets.



## OUR VALUE CHAIN

### Sustainable Projects

Many clients come to us for eco-friendly design solutions. We have been able to offer a wide range of options and tools to assist them in producing sustainable projects. One way we do this is by using an eco-design checklist.

### Must-Haves:

- Optimize the weight of materials used
- Use only certified materials
- Minimum of 30% recycled or renewable materials used
- No batteries, electrical, magnets or lights other than LED
- Maximum of three plastic resins

### Suggested:

- 100% renewable, recycled or certified packaging and protections
- Design reusable elements whenever possible
- Favor mono- or single-type material whenever possible
- No lamination or other decorative finishings that limit the recycling processes
- Favor sustainable printing processes (label or digital)
- Optimize palletization at conception stage
- Optimize shipment with flat delivery
- Promote recycling with disassembly instructions
- Identify plastics with their international packaging codes for easy recycling







# SOCIAL

## WORKPLACE

**We strive to attract the best talent. Our people are the heart of The Bernard Group, and our accomplishments are a direct result of the talented professionals who work here.**

We continue to look for ways to be an excellent workplace and empower our employees by providing safe, healthy working conditions, fair labor practices, an inclusive work environment free from discrimination, intimidation and harassment and equal opportunities for growth and advancement so they can achieve significant results for our customers.

## INSPIRING GROWTH

We believe that where there is learning and development, there is innovation and performance. Therefore we encourage employees to take time for their personal development and provide effective learning paths for employees that represent a range of skills and abilities.



To support this, we offer the TBG Academy, which includes a learning and development focus in the following areas:



**Ownership Academy**



**Leadership Academy**



**Functional Academy**



**Wellbeing Academy**

In 2024, we launched our new e-learning platform, TBG Learning Academy, to support employee growth and development. Within the platform, employees have access to online training and professional development courses that they can complete anytime, anywhere. The Learning Academy hub offers:

A centralized hub for online internal training (including required training from Human Resources, IT, Information Security, Safety, etc.)

Personalized space in which employees can access on-demand online training courses to complete at their convenience. Collaborative learning, allowing employees to communicate with other TBGers about training content in the platform forums.

Our Core Values are the building blocks of our organizational culture - they create direction on why we do what we do. They provide guidance for decision-making for TBG. By adding clarity to how each person can live and work these core values, we will continue to strengthen our TBG culture.

How We Work is a compilation of behaviors that are meaningful and represent the mindset necessary for all employees to contribute to TBG's success, regardless of job title or role within the company.

It provides clear expectations that align with our core values of WOW, Ownership, Passion for Excellence and Art of Teams. The competencies and behaviors identified in this document were chosen by TBG employees. A sampling of employees and managers from throughout the company provided input via a survey on the most important behaviors needed for success at TBG.

We also provide all employees with Clifton Strengths Assessments. Our goal is to help everyone realize what they are naturally good at and how that can be applied both personally and professionally. When we tap into our natural talents, we improve our personal engagement and enhance our quality of life. We encourage our managers to share each team member's individual strengths, how they complement others on the team and how each team member can contribute based on their natural talents.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

TBG is dedicated to developing strong leaders to drive our organization's success. We believe that having strong leaders can reduce employee turnover, promote accountability, improve problem-solving and clarify job roles, all of which have a huge impact on our overall success. To initiate our leadership development program, we've implemented the following:

- How We Lead - A training that ensures leadership competencies and behaviors align with the core values that define what a successful leader looks like
- Fundamentals of Leadership - A training program for people leaders covering essential skills such as effective communication, coaching and leading change
- What Do Leaders Do - An advanced training building on the fundamentals
- Effective Coaching & Feedback - Training to empower people leaders to deliver constructive feedback
- Mastering Crucial Conversations - Learning to navigate tough talks and turn challenges into opportunities
- Hiring Process and Interview Skills - Training to strengthen talent acquisition
- Continuous Improvement Training - To drive operational excellence

### Employee Engagement

We believe that increased engagement levels lead to happier employees, higher productivity, lower absenteeism and lower turnover. We have a Human Resources team that is dedicated to creating an environment that encourages engagement and results in even more valuable experiences for our customers and prospects. We conduct annual Gallup engagement surveys to gain insight from employees on how satisfied they are with their jobs, if they know what's expected of them, if they have the tools they need to do their job, what improvement they would like to see and what management could do better. We then have our managers lead sessions with their employees to create action plans to focus on for the year. Every year, we conduct a Gallup employee engagement survey, and in 2024, 89% of employees participated in the survey.



## EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLBEING

**At TBG, we invest in our employees' health and wellness because we know they are our greatest asset. That's why we offer benefits to enhance our employees' quality of life with packages that include major medical, dental, vision and life insurance. Through the TBG Academy, our Well-being Academy offers employee assistance and wellness programs, and we support a healthy work-life balance by providing paid holidays and paid time off.**

### Total Rewards

Providing Total Rewards that are important to our employees is a major focus of our senior leaders, managers and HR team. The value of working for a company goes beyond pay and insurance, and TBG is committed to continuing to evaluate and elevate our Total Rewards to provide meaningful and competitive total compensation for employees.

Periodically, we conduct Employee Total Rewards Surveys and analyze responses to ensure future Total Rewards meet the needs of the majority of our employees. We also formed a benefits committee made up of cross-functional leaders to help evaluate health insurance and other benefits.

### Employee Assistance Program

TBG established an all-employee assistance program offering employees and their families personal counseling, family and caregiving guidance, safety and crisis planning resources, self-improvement tools, life-learning opportunities and chronic-conditions support. TBG is committed to providing our employees with tools, information and services that help manage everyday challenges and their wellness for life.

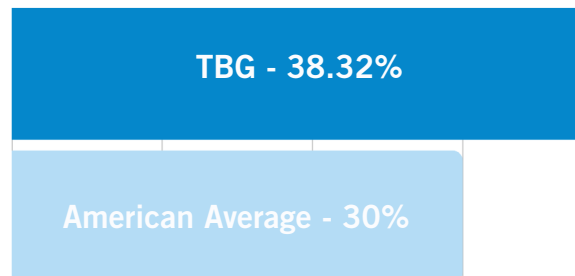


## HUMAN RIGHTS

We support and respect the promotion and protection of human rights within our operations, value chains and communities where we operate. We also comply with the employment laws in every location in which we do business. It's essential that our business partners (suppliers, vendors, contractors, consultants and other providers of goods and services) uphold these same standards. We will not knowingly do business with those who do not comply with local employment laws.

### **Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE)**

The amount of TBG co-owners who are women is 26% higher than the overall American manufacturing workforce. Women work in all areas of our company, from production to executive leadership!



Percentage of women who work in the manufacturing workforce.



**COMMUNITY RELATIONS: TBG GIVES BACK**

Charitable contributions, in-kind donations and volunteerism directly correlate with improving quality of life and making the world a better place. As part of our charitable giving initiative, we support multiple nonprofit organizations that mirror our core values. The following are some of the contributions we make to the communities in which we operate, as well as the contributions of our employees and their families:

**Annual Golf Open**

TBG hosted its fifth annual charity golf tournament benefiting three local charities: People Serving People, Open Hands Foundation and PROP.



**Dress For Success**

TBG hosted a clothing drive for Dress For Success, a nonprofit charity. Employees donated over 40 bags of clothing, shoes, handbags and accessories to disadvantaged women to help them achieve career advancement, career stability and economic sustainability.



**Feed My Starving Children**

TBG hosted a food packing event where nearly 100 of our employees participated in packing 35,856 meals for children in Haiti. These meals will feed 98 children for one year.



**People Serving People- St. Anne's Place**

TBG donated funds to this women's homeless shelter that offers a safe environment where women can stabilize, heal and work to overcome histories of abuse, chemical dependency, homelessness, incarceration, etc.



### **Kids In Need Foundation**

TBG hosted a backpack build event for our employees. We packed 350 backpacks full of school supplies and donated them to a local elementary school.



### **Launch Ministry**

TBG donated funds to this youth crisis center that provides a safe space, tools and resources for youth ages 18-29 in crisis to transition successfully into adulthood.

### **Neighbors, Inc.**

TBG employees formed teams and purchased and wrapped gifts for several families in need so they could provide Christmas gifts for their children. Neighbors, Inc. supports low-income households by providing food, clothes and toiletry items.



### **Open Hands Foundation/Hope House**

TBG donated funds to this local shelter. Hope House is a six-bed emergency shelter for youth ages 14-19 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Southwest Twin Cities metro area. Hope House turns young people's lives around by nurturing self-sufficiency and independence, with a goal of reconciliation and family unification.



### **Operation Christmas Child/Samaritan's Purse**

TBG employees participated in this holiday event by packing dozens of shoe boxes with items for children in impoverished countries. Samaritan's Purse is a non-denominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Since 1970, Samaritan's Purse has helped meet needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease and famine.





### People Reaching Out To People (PROP)

Employees donated food items to this local food shelf. Their mission is “to compassionately provide food and comprehensive support to our neighbors in need that creates a path toward self-sufficiency.”



### Sail Transition Work Program

The Bernard Group partners with two local schools in our community to provide work to people with disabilities.

Programs:

SAIL - Students Achieving Independent Life

STAR - Steps Toward Adult Responsibility

Both transition programs offer young people ages 18-21 with special needs, skill building, career training and guidance. The Bernard Group employs graduated students who have participated in these programs. The schools provide job coaches to work alongside the employees to ensure they are building skills and receiving the training they need to perform their job duties. This beneficial partnership provides The Bernard Group with much-needed workers in a competitive labor market and provides the employees with opportunities for growth in independence in living, working and acquiring new skills.

### Toys For Tots

Employees donated toys to children in need throughout the Minneapolis area.





# GOVERNANCE

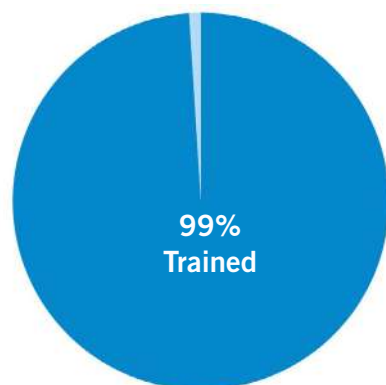
## RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH LEADERSHIP

**We respect the interests of our external stakeholders, customers, prospects, suppliers, partners and the wider community, and we demonstrate our marketplace responsibility through leadership in quality, ethics and transparency.**

### Ethics and Integrity

We are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in everything we do. Our dedication to integrity and ethical business practices permeates all levels of our company.

Annual compliance training on Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery policies is required of all relevant employees.



99 % of eligible employees trained on corruption and bribery in 2024.

### Visual Compliance Screening

To ensure an ethical supply chain free from corruption and bribery, we conduct daily restricted third-party screening of all suppliers.

## THIRD-PARTY OVERSIGHT

Third-party oversight provides critical safeguards for The Bernard Group's Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) through three key roles:

### ESOP Trustee Benefits

The Bernard Group's ESOP trustee acts as a fiduciary who must make decisions solely in the best interest of plan participants, providing objective evaluation of the company's performance without internal biases. They monitor and question The Bernard Group's management decisions that could negatively impact ESOP value, creating accountability by requiring leadership to justify strategic decisions. The trustee checks against potential conflicts of interest in The Bernard Group's leadership while ensuring ERISA compliance and helping shield the ESOP from regulatory issues.

### Independent Valuation Expert Benefits

The independent valuation expert delivers an unbiased, market-based assessment of The Bernard Group's value by applying rigorous financial analysis and industry benchmarking specific to the printing and visual communications sector. They use specialized expertise to value The Bernard Group's private company shares and prevent inflated valuations that could harm retiring employees. These experts document valuation methodologies that can withstand Department of Labor scrutiny, provide consistency in valuation approaches year-over-year and help identify operational improvements that could enhance The Bernard Group's value.

### Legal Compliance Safeguards

The Bernard Group's ESOP trustee verifies that prohibited transactions are avoided, preventing penalties and disqualification, while valuation experts ensure that transaction prices meet the Department of Labor's "adequate consideration" standards. Both parties maintain documentation needed for IRS and DOL audits specific to The Bernard Group's ESOP. The trustee reviews annual required disclosures to participants, ensuring transparency requirements are met, while independent experts confirm compliance with diversification requirements for eligible Bernard Group employees. Trustee monitoring of contribution limits and vesting schedules helps maintain tax qualification. These third parties identify and correct potential compliance issues before they trigger regulatory scrutiny, and valuation experts ensure proper handling of repurchase obligations, supporting the long-term sustainability of The Bernard Group's ESOP.



## CYBER SECURITY

In an era where digital threats are ever-evolving, cybersecurity is paramount. Our company, like all organizations navigating the digital landscape, faces significant cybersecurity risks. Responding to the escalating complexity and frequency of cyberattacks, including a notable surge in ransomware incidents, we have intensified our focus on safeguarding our data and systems. Since 2019, we have implemented a robust cybersecurity policy with the aims of:

- Cultivating organization-wide cybersecurity awareness
- Identifying critical intervention areas and mitigation strategies
- Pinpointing key cybersecurity risks
- Evaluating the maturity of our cybersecurity control system

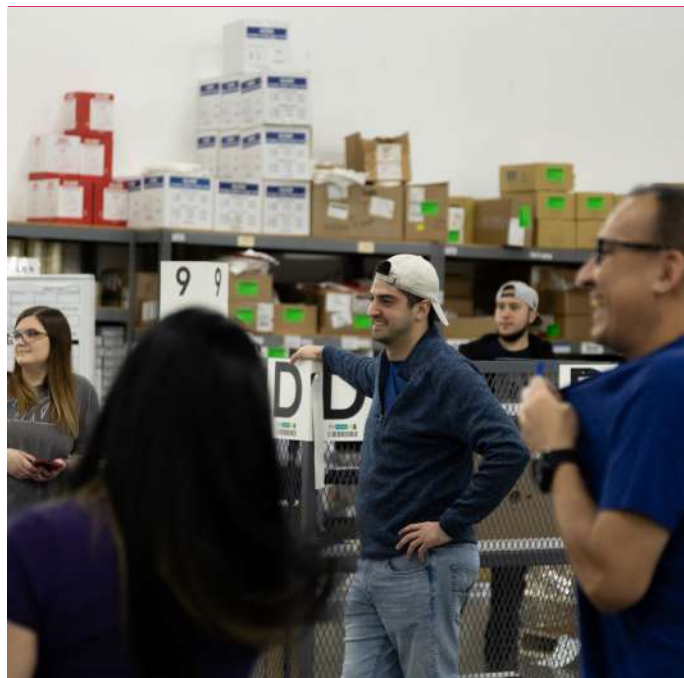
To effectively counter these ever-increasing cyber risks and protect our stakeholders, our cybersecurity reinforcement program is reviewed and adapted annually, focusing on four key areas of action:

- **Awareness:** Improving the threat awareness of our employees through education and alerting them to current persistent threats
- **Tooling:** Implementing industry-leading tools to detect and mitigate threats such as phishing, credential compromise, ransomware and impersonation
- **Monitoring:** Expanding our ability to detect unusual system access and activity
- **Incident Response and Recovery:** Developing and refining comprehensive plans to minimize the impact of cyberattacks and ensure swift restoration of critical systems and data



## WHISTEBLOWING

We proactively attract world-class talent because we recognize our employees' contributions to our success and position as an industry leader. We value each of our employees, as illustrated by our long-standing commitment to fairness and equity in the workplace and our efforts to foster an atmosphere of inclusion. However, even productive and skilled employees might encounter work-related concerns. For those employees, our 24-hour anonymous Ethics Helpline offers the opportunity to report work-related problems confidentially and without fear of retaliation. These programs support the consistent and fair treatment of employees, improve communications and encourage a positive workplace. Although some reports require no action, we investigate and resolve employee suggestions, questions and concerns to help us maintain our commitment to ethics and integrity in all that we do. Area managers and human resources business partners typically serve as facilitators to resolve employee concerns. This provides employees the opportunity to bring employment issues and concerns to the attention of management and/or human resources, ensures communication between the parties involved and facilitates the prompt resolution of workplace problems and disputes.



## OUR CUSTOMERS

We strive to provide our clients with a world-class product, and more importantly, world-class service. We aim to provide the most innovative customer solutions, including sustainable production processes, materials and an ethical supply chain.

Partnering with EcoVadis helps to improve the way we integrate the principles of CSR into our daily business initiatives to positively affect our communities and supply chain. This year we maintained a Platinum rating, which puts us in the top 1% of businesses in our industry.



## SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

As stated in our environmental policy, we are committed to leading the industry in minimizing the impact of our activities on the environment.

We aim to continually improve the sustainability level of our supply chain by incorporating environmental and social clauses into our supplier contracts.

We utilize the EcoVadis platform to track and monitor our suppliers' activities and progress toward environmental and social programs with the goal of demonstrating continuous year-over-year improvements.

This program provides our suppliers with a sustainability scorecard and tools for benchmarking to improve their sustainability practices.

We believe that this methodology increases transparency, encourages collaboration and facilitates ongoing improvement.



## ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS



**British Standards Institution (BSI):  
ISO 14001 Certification**  
BSI is the author of and certifying body for ISO 14001, an internationally recognized environmental standard.



**FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)**  
In 2024, we became FSC COC certified. The Forest Stewardship Council promotes responsible management of the world's forests via timber certification.



**Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)**  
We publicly disclose our emissions data to CDP to promote transparency and accountability with our stakeholders.



**The Nature Conservancy**  
We are members of The Nature Conservancy, an environmental nonprofit that impacts conservation in 81 countries.



**Ellen MacArthur Foundation**  
We are members of Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to accelerate the transition to a circular economy.



**Sustainability Trading Exchange**  
In an effort to further reduce our environmental impact, we partnered with STX to purchase Green-e Certified Renewable Energy Certificates and U.S. Landfill Gas Capture Offset.



**Environmental Protection Agency  
Green Power Partner**  
By partnering with the EPA, we joined other organizations that are leading the way toward a more sustainable energy future.



**Trees, Water & People**  
TBG plants trees each year on a Native American Reservation located in South Dakota. Reforesting this land combats climate change through carbon sequestration and develops income opportunities for the local natives.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We have aligned our operations and strategies with United Nations Global Compact's 10 principles and Sustainable Development Goals on the environment, business ethics, labor and human rights. This partnership not only benefits our company internally, but also our work toward internationally recognized goals.

### Our Goals and How We're Contributing:



See pages 12,15,35-37



See pages 12,15,35-37



See pages 12, 15, 32-37



See pages 12, 15, 32-33,36-37



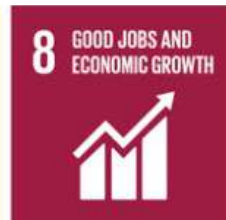
See pages 10, 32,33-37



See pages 17-21



See pages 17-21



See pages 32-35,37



See pages 18-19,22-30



See pages 32,34-37



See pages 12-15,19-20,22-27



See pages 17-30



See pages 17-30



See pages 17-30



See pages 17-30



See pages 10,12-13, 15,33-34,39,41



See pages 12-13, 15, 43

## 2024 KPI INDEX

### Workplace

	Indicators	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	Percentage of employees who voluntarily participated in the employee engagement survey	84% (646/765)	82% (698/850)	89% (768/866)	90%
	Overall Score	4.11	4.22	4.21	4.25
<b>Benefits</b>	% of employees covered by benefits	69.7% (577)	70.6% (636)	72.9% (694)	N/A*
	% of employees participated in 401K	62.7% (521)	67.2% (604)	71.6% (679)	75%
	% of Employee Shareholders	82% (679/827)	86% (774/901)	79% (864/1088)	N/A*
<b>Voluntary Employee Attrition</b>	Rolling 12 month average turnover	11.48%	10.30%	14.4%	13%
<b>Career Management &amp; Training</b>	Number of interal promotions/career change opportunities	171	150	125	N/A
	Number of training hours employees received to improve professional and personal skills	2,795	4,196.5	4,769	4,900



## Labor and Human Rights

	Indicators	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	LTI Frequency Rate	4.68	4.84	3.14	0
	LTI Severity Rate	56.84	121.09	191.6	0
	Number of training hours eligible employees received on Health & Safety Procedures	817	203	0	850
	Number of hours worked	NA	1,803,271	1,904,964	NA
	Number of days lost to work-related injuries, fatalities and ill health	NA	200	365	0
	Number of work-related accidents	NA	21	25	0
	Ratio of the annual total compensation for the highest paid individual, to the median annual total compensation for all employees	NA	2%	1.6%	0
<b>Women</b>	Women as percentage of total employees	38.21%	37.51%	38.32%	40%
	% Women in executive positions (excluding board members)	22% (2/9)	20% (2/10)	22% (2/9)	20%
	% Women within the organization's board	20% (1/5)	20% (1/5)	20% (1/5)	20%
<b>Minorities/ Vulnerable People</b>	Minorities	23% (192)	25% (227)	23.89% (227)	25%
	Disabled Employees	1.8%	1.44%	1.05%	2%
	Protected Veterans	1%	0.78%	0.42%	1%
	Number of people in executive positions	0	0	0	NA
<b>Child Labor, Forced Labor &amp; Human Trafficking</b>	Number of cases	0	0	0	0
<b>Diversity, Discrimination &amp; Harassment</b>	% of employees trained on Discrimination & Harassment	91%	98%	98%	100%
	% of employees trained on Inclusion & Diversity	91%	98%	98%	100%
	% of employees hired in 2024 that attended Respectful Workplace Training	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Social Dialogue</b>	Collective Agreements	0	0	0	0

**Business Ethics**

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Anti-Corruption/ Anti-Bribery</b>	Percentage of eligible employees trained on corruption and bribery	94%	96%	99%	100%
	Number of reported cases of business ethics related violations through whistleblower procedure	0	0	0	0
	Number of confirmed information security incidents	0	0	0	0
	Number of lawsuits against the company on business ethics related violations	0	0	0	0

## Environmental Management

	Indicators	2022	2023	2024	2025
	Number of sites with ISO 14001 EMS Certification	5/5	5/5	5/5	Reduction Target 5/5
<b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b> <b>GHG Emissions</b>	Total gross GHG emissions: Scope 1 (Tonnes CO2)	1,479	1,429	1,278	Reduction Target -4%
	Total gross GHG emissions: Scope 2 (Tonnes CO2)	3,999	3,900	4,160	Reduction Target -4%
	GHG emissions: Scope 3 (Tonnes CO2)	23,533	19,536	26,496	Reduction Target -4%
<b>Energy and Electrical Usage</b>	Gas usage (THM)	274,642	263,898	235,791	-4%
	Electricity usage (KWH)	8,520,243	8,307,761	8,863,187	-4%
	Energy Savings Projects \$\$	375,884	0	0	100,000
	Renewable Energy Usage	0	0	0%	10%
<b>Materials, Chemicals, Waste and Recycling</b>	Total Landfill (Tons)	1,003.69	924	1035	-4%
	Total Recycled (Tons)	1,639.27	1,532	1,966	-4%
	Total Waste (Tons)	2,642.96	2,455	3,001	-4%
	% Recycled	62.02%	62.4%	65.5%	-70%
	Total Weight of Waste Recovered (Tons)	NA	1,532	1,976	4%
	Average Disposal Costs (per ton)	\$29.86	\$51.08	0	-4%
	Waste Lamps (Bulbs)	1,085	987	950	NA
	Batteries (lbs)	45	0	150	NA
	Hazardous Waste Liquid (Gallons)	543	1,090	1,340	-4%
	Hazardous Waste Solid (Pounds)	220	0	0	-4%
	Non-Hazardous Waste Liquid (Gallons)	4,679	3,355	3,410	-4%
	Non-Hazardous Waste Solid (Pounds)	12,695	3,657	4,410	-4%
	E-Waste (Pounds)	-	4,836	2,816	2,500
<b>Water Consumption</b>	Total Water Consumption (Gallons)	6,300,000	4,621,000	6,355,000	-4%
	Weight of Pollutants Emitted to Water	0	0	0	0
	Total Amount of Water Recycled and Reused	0	0	0	0



	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Air Pollution</b>	NOX (Tons)	3.12	3.04	3.93	3
	SO2 (Tons)	3.56	3.47	3.35	3.4
	Total Weight of Air Polutants	6.68	6.51	7.28	6
<b>Product Use</b>	Energy Savings (New energy efficient equipment fleet)	\$20,442	0	0	\$21,000
<b>Product End-Of-Life</b>	Program - Product Recovery Weight, Quantity	0	0	0%	30%
<b>Customer Health &amp; Safety</b>	Number of product recalls	0	0	0	0
	Customer Health & Safety Incidents	0	0	0	0
<b>Environmental Advocacy</b>	Climate Action Public Policy Petitions	0	0	1	2
<b>Fleet Miles</b>	Gas Miles	19,854	23,362	31,507	-4%
	Diesel Miles	27,915	42,763	29,554	-4%
	Total Miles	47,769	66,125	61,061	-4%
<b>Business Travel Miles/ tCO2</b>	Flight Miles/tCO2	502,140/165	659,639/212	1,140,437/317	-4%
	Hotel Nights Domestic	NA	NA	1,678	-4%
	Hotel Nights International	NA	NA	0	0
	Rental Car Days	NA	NA	682	-4%
<b>Wood</b>	Certification of wood and wood product traceability	0	0	1	1
	% Recycled wood or wood based products/materials	NA	0	4%	20%
	% Certified wood or wood based products/materials	11%	11%	11%	20%

## Sustainable Procurement

Indicators	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of targeted suppliers who have signed the supplier code of conduct	0%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of targeted suppliers with contracts that include clauses on environmental, labor, and human rights requirements	0%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of number of targeted suppliers covered by a CSR assessment	50%	49%	49%	75%
Percentage of Suppliers covered by a CSR on-site audit	0%	0%	0%	20%
Percentage or number of all buyers who received training on sustainable procurement	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of audited/assessed suppliers engaged in corrective actions or capacity building	13%	12%	90%	40%

## Supplier Diversity

Indicators	2022	2023	2024	2025
Percentage of diverse suppliers	1%	1%	1%	20%
Percentage of New diverse suppliers onboarded	NA	1%	1%	10%
Percentage of Diverse suppliers spend	11%	9%	8%	15%



**THE BERNARD GROUP**

+

**SMARTPRESS**

**THANK YOU**

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