

Business for Good is Good Business:

B Corp and the role of Sustainable Business Travel in the certification

B Corp is short for Benefit Corporation, an international certification which ensures that besides making a profit, your company is also engaged in having a positive impact on the environment and society. It is a way to publicly claim an identity as a company focused on shareholder value as well as on stakeholder success. It helps your firm to communicate its values to the market and is an excellent step to distinguish from your competitors!

To become a certified B Corp, your company is assessed and given an impact score on five areas: Governance, Workers, Environment, Customers & Community. Your company is not only tested on internal procedures, choices and processes, but you also receive a score for how you select and treat your external stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and the wider community.

The choice to apply for a B Corp certification is sometimes driven by mission-driven **individual leaders** who want to broaden their company purpose beyond the maximisation of shareholder value, and sometimes by interest groups such as customers, employees and, in general, the public opinion.

Research found that there are at least two major underlying reasons why firms decide to apply for the B Corp certification

Firstly, conventional profit-driven companies want to be seen as **'green' and 'good'** in their industry. Secondly, the qualitative evidence revealed that certifying firms believed "the major crises of our time are a result of the way we conduct business". They became a B Corp to **"join the movement of creating a new economy with a new set of rules"** and **"redefine the way people perceive success in the business world."**

The B Corp certification is also a useful asset for your company when it comes to recruitment (the new generations are more keen than ever to work for organisations with a mission and/or responsible business practices) and funding (given the recent boom in impact investing, the B Corp label can help you attract investors).

The number of B Corp companies in the Netherlands is still very low. Now is the time to take the next steps towards sustainability. If you don't, your competitor will, and many of your stakeholders such as customers and workers will start asking for it soon.

Business Travel is also included in the impact score!

B Corp and Sustainable Business Travel

In the B Corp assessment, companies must report on their CO₂ emissions, also from Business Travel (the so-called "Scope 3 emissions") and they must promote Sustainable ways of transportation via their Global Corporate Travel Policy. This is due to the increasing impact of Global Travel on Global CO₂ emissions. Whereas many companies find it challenging to change their current travel habits, improving their Travel Policy can help them reach very ambitious emission reduction goals as well as some significant cost savings.

Educating to Sustainable Travel

For employees to take a Sustainable Travel Policy seriously, a company must formalize it in HR manuals and team handbooks, as recommended by B Corp, as well as verbally communicate with its employees about it (for example, while onboarding of new team members, as well as during team events, periodical meetings, and coaching sessions).

Companies should also train managers and team leads regularly about the importance of Sustainable Travel, as they must set a good example to their team members as well as validate their travel choices through expense approval.

Some examples of this are switching more meetings to videoconferences (including those of key importance such as shareholder and board meetings, especially when they would require international travel), or refusing to approve expenses when team members opt for short-haul flights between cities which are connected by high-speed, direct trains.

Bringing a Travel Policy to life throughout a Nudge

We've touched the topics of making a Travel Policy more Sustainable, as well as how to train employees and managers to understand it. That said, a policy is not enough.

A company cannot always expect employees to remember every detail of your Travel Policy when making bookings. Imagine when a business opportunity arises and you need to jump on a train or a plane the day after to close the deal in time. Or imagine when a travel plan gets changed last minute due to some agenda reshuffling. Business Travel must be booked fast, often with very short-term notice, and sometimes you have the pressure of booking that last seat available on a plane or train so you don't have time to open your employee handbook and check whether the trip which you're about to book is compliant with your company policy.

A successful Travel Policy needs to be integrated into Business Travel software, to nudge employees to make the right choice at the moment of the booking. Think of a booking tool which scores your search results in terms of CO2 emissions, or a command that automatically redirects you to a rail search page when you search for a flight between 2 cities connected by direct, high-speed rail such as Amsterdam and Paris, Frankfurt or London, or a default flight search which excludes transfer flights from search results (as their environmental impact is significantly higher than that of direct flights) www.atmosfair.de. Opting for a platform like Raphide (born to integrate sustainability in Business Travel booking) or, where this is not possible, pushing your TMC (Travel Management Company) to customize their software to your Sustainable Travel Policy, is the most scalable solution to automate your policy-proof travel bookings in an employee-friendly, efficient manner.

Yet, even if you do not have a license for TMC software (for example, if you are a start-up with a low budget and limited volume of travel), you can still support Sustainable Travel ambitions with some costless workarounds.

For example nominate one of your colleagues “travel admin” for them to take care of all travel bookings and they will take care of screening travel options for the most sustainable option and making relevant bookings (direct high-speed train connections, direct flights rather than transfer flights for long haul travel, purchasing offsets for those flights which you couldn’t avoid, and so on). In this way, your travel admin can be your sustainability ambassador for Business Travel and can help you ensure that responsible travelling is embedded in your company practices.

Conclusion

The B Corp certification indicates that a company meets high standards of social and environmental performance, helping to differentiate your business from its competitors. There is no contradiction between sustainable and profitable growth. If your company wants to step up and start taking steps towards social and environmental leadership, **get in touch with us**. We can help you make your Business Travel more sustainable as well as assisting you with the overall B Corp certification process.

Follow your peers

B Corp’s: Danone - Ben & Jerry’s, Wessanen, Tony Chocolonely
<https://bcorporation.net/directory>

Your identity

Does your company strive to be a leader in environmental sustainability, undertaking initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of its business activities in line with the Companies Global Environmental Policy? Are you fully committed to minimizing the environmental footprint of your business operations? Get in touch with via: sustainable.trip@raphide.com or give us a call: +31 (0) 6 40 92 35 82