

SOCIAL PURPOSE VIGNETTES

AUGUST 2023

Introduction

Here are seven vignettes of social purpose companies, as follows:

COMPANY	VIGNETTE FOCUS
Coast Capital	Income inequality
Hemlock Printers	Forest conservation
Maple Leaf Foods	Food insecurity
Unilever	Health and well-being
ABC Recycling	Indigenous reconciliation
Monarch Structures	Vulnerable people
Deep Cove Kayak	Social connections



Coast Capital

Coast Capital is a national financial cooperative and Certified B Corp based in Surrey, B.C. It has over 1,800 employees.

Its purpose is **to build better futures together by unlocking financial opportunities that positively impact people and communities.**

It went through the UWBC SPI Implementers Program, collaborating with 9 other companies to learn and apply strategies to implement their purpose across their operations and relationships.

It received a “Platinum Level” rating by Corporate Knights in its 2022 study of Canadian Social Purpose Companies, which it earned because of its high scores implementing its social purpose.

All Coast staff are trained on the social purpose. The company holds regular lunch and learn sessions on social purpose and are embedding it across its operations and products. The company’s corporate strategy threads social purpose throughout its goals, and includes one focused explicitly on social purpose.

It is currently developing long-term social purpose goals and targets that will be confirmed at the end of this year. In the meantime, these are some of its social purpose initiatives.

FOCUS: ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION:

Helping people and businesses have future-fit skills and knowledge for meaningful work.

- Credentials for Newcomer women. Coast partnered with DIVERSECity Community Resources Society to co-develop the Coast Capital Credentialing Program for Newcomer Women. Having educational and professional qualifications recognized in Canada can be a complex and costly process. This program supports newcomer women to have their foreign education credentials recognized in Canada and ultimately unlock financial opportunities for themselves and their families. Instead of a tumultuous career transition in Canada, participants receive the support they need to quickly get back to work in their pre-arrival career.

FOCUS: EQUITABLE EMPLOYMENT:

Helping people and businesses have decent and equitable work and workplaces.

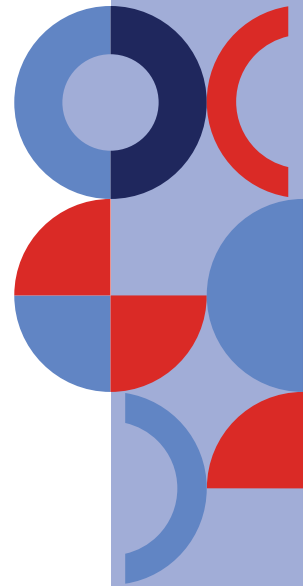
- Red Seal trade qualification. Coast partnered with the Construction Foundation of British Columbia to create The Coast Capital Savings Road to Red Seal Program for apprentices unable to achieve their red seal certification due to undisclosed learning disabilities and skill gaps (only 41% of students in BC who begin red seal training complete the red seal certification process). This program provides supports to apprentices to assist their progression through to trade qualification and Red Seal certification, best positioning them to maximize their lifetime earning potential. Supports may include tutoring, the use of assistive technology, customized learning material, essential skills work, interpretive services, exam analysis and exam accommodations as needed.

FOCUS: INCLUSIVE FINANCE:

Helping people and businesses have access to affordable financial services, manage their financial obligations, and have confidence in their financial future.

- Financial goal attainment. Coast Capital offers “Money Chat”, a free online tool with resources to help people reach their financial goals. Drawing on the financial health methodology developed by the Financial Health Network, Money Chat provides a unique approach to understanding peoples’ current financial health, what they want to achieve and how to get there. The Money Chat is available to customers and non-customers via a digital tool accessed through the company’s website and can also be accessed face to face through one of Coast Capital’s trusted advisors.

Coast is also the lead sponsor of the Canadian Purpose Economy Project, an initiative to increase the number of social purpose businesses in Canada. www.purposeeconomy.ca.





Hemlock Printers Ltd.

Hemlock Printers is a family-owned printing company with over 170 employees serving North America. It is based in Burnaby, B.C.

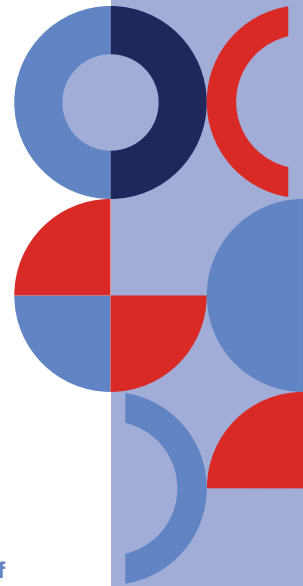
Its purpose is **to create connections, build community, and inspire actions that safeguard the health of the world's forests.**

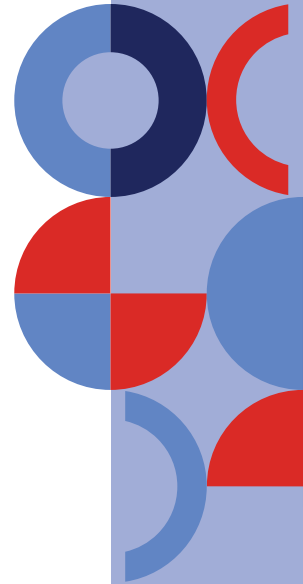
It went through the UWBC SPI Innovators and Implementers Programs, collaborating with 9 other companies to first adopt a social purpose and then learn and apply strategies to implement their purpose across their operations and relationships.

It received a "Platinum Level" rating by Corporate Knights in its 2022 study of Canadian Social Purpose Companies, which it earned because of its high scores implementing its social purpose.

Hemlock created a ZERO Carbon Neutral Printing Program that enables customers to print carbon neutral. For a small fee, clients can neutralize emissions from forest to mill, to recycling, while Hemlock neutralizes its operations through carbon offsets. Clients are encouraged to choose papers that are not from virgin forest, but made from post-consumer waste, which enhances forest conservation and reduces carbon emissions. The carbon offset funding is directed at forest conservation projects such as the Great Bear Rainforest Carbon Project.

Hemlock is now creating ZERO 2.0, which is an industry-wide version of the program. The aim is for the printing industry to adopt something similar by replicating Hemlock's process. In 2023 Hemlock will make its intellectual property freely available to other printers. Through its involvement with the Canadian Printing Industries Association and the US equivalent, Printing United, Hemlock plans to roll out ZERO 2.0 in North America and beyond. This way it can expand the impact well beyond its own printing purchases, clients, and company overall. Now Hemlock's focus is to engage the industry at a deeper level to become a force for good.





Maple Leaf Foods

Maple Leaf Foods is a Canadian consumer packaged meats and protein company based in Mississauga, Ontario with about 14,000 employees.

It received a “Gold Level” rating by Corporate Knights in its 2022 study of Canadian Social Purpose Companies, which it earned because of its high scores implementing its social purpose. It has not gone through the UWBC SPI programs.

Its purpose is **to raise the good in food**. Its vision is **to be the most sustainable protein company on earth**. The company’s corporate strategy includes goals to implement its purpose and vision.

It states that it is “a carbon neutral food company on a purposeful journey to Raise the Good in Food through better nutrition, safer food and workplaces, more humane animal care, and sustainability efforts that protect our planet”.

A key corporate goal is to expand its leadership in sustainable meats and alternative proteins. To achieve this, the company established a new meat brand with a purpose, Greenfield Natural Meat Co., and set up the Plant Protein Group brands, including plant-based and vegan products.

It is committed to reducing food insecurity in Canada. Food insecurity is a critical social issue that impacts health, academic and economic potential, and disproportionately affects racialized communities. It is collaborating with organizations to reduce food insecurity and raise the profile of this pressing social issue, advocating for critical policies and investing in programs required to drive sustainable change.

The company created and funds the Maple Leaf Centre for Food Security in 2016, a registered charity governed by an independent Board of Directors, which is chaired by a Senior VP at Maple Leaf Foods. The Centre is committed to working collaboratively across sectors with the goal of seeing food insecurity in Canada reduced by 50% by 2030.

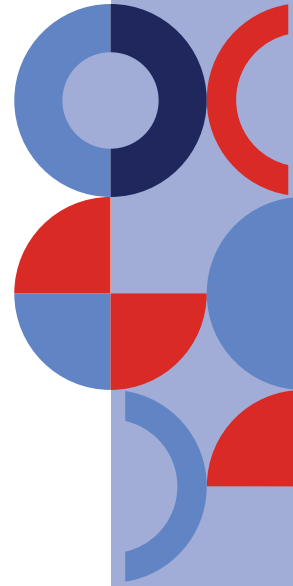
The Centre runs national awareness campaigns, and in 2021 it ran the #SpeakUpForFoodSecurity campaign, to showcase the impossible trade-offs people experiencing food insecurity make every day in choosing between food and necessities. More than 1,000 letters were sent to MPs asking the federal government to set a target to cut food insecurity in half by 2030.

Context: Maple Leaf Foods suffered a listeria outbreak which killed 23 people in 2008. This tragedy changed the company, and some believe it’s pivot to purpose has its roots in that event.

[More information here](#)



Unilever



Unilever

Unilever is a multinational consumer goods company with headquarters in London, England with about 148,000 employees.

It received a “Gold Level” rating by Corporate Knights in its 2022 study of Canadian Social Purpose Companies (it has Canadian operations), which it earned because of its high scores implementing its social purpose. It has not gone through the UWBC SPI programs.

Its purpose is **to make sustainable living commonplace**. Its vision is **to be the global leader in sustainable business**. The company’s corporate strategy includes goals to implement its purpose and vision. One of their top strategic goals is: “Win with our brands as a force for good, powered by purpose and innovation”. These are their product categories and what they stand for:

1) Beauty & Personal Care (skin care, hair care, deodorants):

- What we stand for: To be the most positive beauty business in the world for people and the planet

2) Foods & Refreshment (ice cream, dressings, savoury, tea)

- What we stand for: To be a world-class force for good in food

3) Home Care (fabric solutions, hygiene)

- What we stand for: Making people’s homes a better world, and our world a better home

Its top-performing brands routinely are those with the most clearly defined commitment to purpose.

Some of the company’s purpose targets include:

- Take action through our brands to improve health and wellbeing and advance equity and inclusion, reaching 1 billion people per year by 2030, focusing on:
 - Gender equity
 - Race and ethnicity equity
 - Body confidence and self esteem
 - Mental wellbeing
 - Hand hygiene
 - Sanitation
 - Oral health
 - Skin health and healing
- Double the number of products sold that deliver positive nutrition by 2025
 - 63% of its portfolio meet WHO-aligned nutrition standards. Fortifying foods with micronutrients is another long-standing priority, including impactful amounts of vegetables, fruits, protein, and fibre as well as micronutrients. It ranked number two in the global Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI) Index in 2021, which ranks the nutrition programmes of the top 25 global food and beverage manufacturers.
- Ensure that everyone who directly supplies Unilever will earn at least a living wage or income by 2030
 - It pays its own employees a living wage, and in 2021 was awarded its first global independent accreditation as a living wage employer from the Fair Wage Network
- Spend 2 billion euro annually with diverse suppliers worldwide by 2025
- Help 5 million small and medium-sized enterprises grow their business by 2050
- Help equip 10 million young people with essential skills by 2030
- Halve the GHG impact of their products across the lifecycle by 2030
- Help protect and regenerate 1.5 million hectares of land, forests, and oceans by 2030

Context: The original purpose of Unilever was to make washing with soap commonplace. Back in 1883 Sunlight Soap was launched by the Lever Brothers. They sought to popularise cleanliness and bring it within reach of ordinary people. This connects to the company’s current purpose today.



ABC Recycling

ABC Recycling is Western Canada's largest scrap metal recycling company based in Burnaby, B.C. with about 230 employees. A family business, it recovers, processes, and recycles scrap metal in ten locations across B.C., Alberta and Washington State.

Its purpose is **to preserve the world's resources, building thriving communities by accelerating metal recycling.**

It went through the UWBC SPI Innovators and Implementers Programs, collaborating with 9 other companies to first adopt a social purpose and then learn and apply strategies to implement their purpose across their operations and relationships.

One of its priorities to bring its purpose to life is to contribute to Indigenous equity through land scrap clean-ups and profit-sharing. It is partnering with Indigenous communities in BC, Alberta and the Pacific Northwest with a goal to help them clean up their lands and dispose of their scrap metals, sharing in the profits. In collaboration with Indigenous communities, governments, and the Indigenous Zero Waste Technical Advisory Group it provides crews and decommissioning and disposal equipment and services along with education and resources on land clean up and scrap metal disposal. It does this through creating MOUs with local First Nations focused on business development, shared economic prosperity, resource recycling and land stewardship.



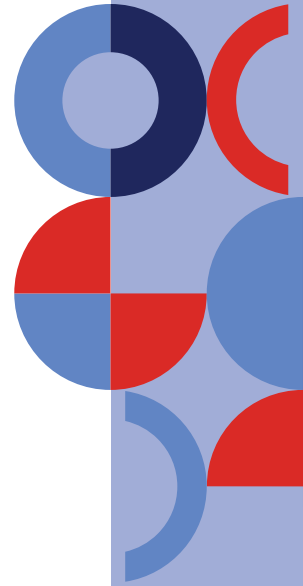
Monarch Structures

Monarch Structures is an outdoor structure and street furniture company based in Richmond, B.C. with 48 employees.

Its purpose is **to shelter communities and spark connections in shared spaces.**

It went through the UWBC SPI Innovators and Implementers Programs, collaborating with 9 other companies to first adopt a social purpose and then learn and apply strategies to implement their purpose across their operations and relationships.

In addition to offering products that minimize negative environmental impacts and introducing recycling programs for end-of-life repurposing and upcycled products, it is using its customer and vendor relationships to find solutions to help shelter communities and spark connections. Its vision is to use street level shelters as a force for good and is prototyping with customers, non-profits and vendors on products to bring this to life. Current priorities are transit, cycling and underprivileged communities as they innovate street level amenities and turn single use public spaces into multiuse social infrastructure.





Deep Cove Kayak

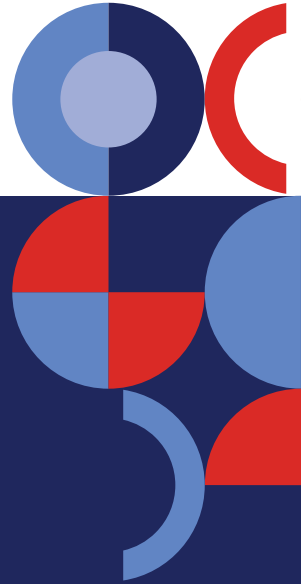
Deep Cove Kayak is a kayak, standup paddleboard and surfski sales, rental, lesson, and tour company based in North Vancouver, B.C. Cates Park Paddling Centre, Jericho Beach Kayak Centre, Deep Cove Collective and Coast Outdoors are under its umbrella. Across the group the company has 24 year-round staff and over 200 seasonal staff in the summer.

Its purpose is **to inspire deeper connection to the outdoors and one another.**

It went through the UWBC SPI Innovators and Implementers Program, collaborating with 9 other companies to first adopt a social purpose and then learn and apply strategies to implement their purpose across their operations and relationships.

To advance its purpose the company educates its customers about paddling safety, caring for the environment, biodiversity, and First Nations, in settings where customers can connect and have fun. To connect people to each other and nature it hosts many events, often with a post-event social, such as weekly “Women on Water” evenings, Tuesday Night Races, Friday Social Paddles, Monthly BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) Paddles and Pride Paddles, and the occasional outdoor athlete speaker series. It hosts a number of annual races and the Deep Cove Penguin Plunge which brings together the Deep Cove Community with a band, bonfire and BBQ. It’s the company’s way to celebrate the New Year and inspire people to connect and be outside and is typically attended by about 2,000 community members and 300 brave “Plungers”. The company also provides group paddling for schools and community groups and offers low- to- no cost programs for youth groups and underrepresented groups.

These events and activities touch the lives of thousands of people every year, increase accessibility to the outdoors, provide learning about safety, environmental stewardship and Indigenous reconciliation and build friendships and a sense of community. By leveraging its products and platform the company hopes to support people to become lifelong Outdoor Recreation Community Ambassadors (ORCAs). Deep Cove Kayak has a long-term goal to be an aspirational leader for a worldwide gold standard in stewardship and community building in the outdoor industry.



About the Canadian Purpose Economy Project

The Canadian Purpose Economy Project exists to accelerate the transition to the purpose economy. It engages national ecosystem actors to create an enabling environment for social purpose businesses to start, transition, thrive and grow. This paper is one in a series of reports exploring the roles of key actors to advance social purpose in business including accountants, boards, investors, associations, business schools and others. Subscribe to our updates at www.purposeeconomy.ca