

2020



2020

IMPACT REPORT

The first annual impact report: a brief look at our commitments, progress, and goals for the next year.

Our business is built on purpose – to spread creativity. As we fulfill that purpose, we aim to honor commitments to 4 key groups: our team, our members, our communities, and our planet. In this report, you’ll find the steps we’ve taken this year toward building those commitments into our structure, and the goals we’ve set for ourselves for the next year.

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A Year of Dramatic Change

2020 Impact Report

No one was left unscathed by the unexpected in 2020. We used that destructive power to rethink and rebuild the way that we operate.

This was a challenging, stressful year for just about everyone. Few people have escaped the turmoil.

At the same time, it's that very stress that has led many of us to completely rethink our lives and make changes we didn't know we needed.

For our team, the most meaningful adaptation we've made is a renewed focus on our purpose and impact as a business.

In their book *The Power of Full Engagement*, Jim Loehr and Tony Swartz write that it is the artful combination of stress and recovery that allows us to grow while maintaining our energy long term. Stress is necessary to change, but so is rest. They write, "Most of us are undertrained physically and spiritually (not enough stress) and overtrained mentally and emotionally (not enough recovery)."

The spiritual energy they are talking about is not religious, but a connection to a greater purpose. As we've dealt with the pandemic in the last year, many of us have noticed that we need new and stronger mental and emotional recovery skills. At the same time, we've found a need for a stronger spiritual connection to the work we do each day.

Purpose has always been fundamental to how our company runs. Spreading creativity is built into all that we do. But how could we better manage all of the impacts that our company has on the world? How could we make sure that we're questioning ourselves, striving to improve, and being transparent about our efforts?

This brought us to identify four main commitments: to our team, to our members, to our communities, and to our planet. These are the ways that we make a positive impact on the world, and the profit we make enables us to do that – not the other way around.

This way of thinking is rooted in the philosophy of Conscious Capitalism – the idea that businesses can be fundamentally reimagined to prioritize all stakeholders and not just shareholders. It rejects the idea that the sole purpose of a business is to make money. Instead, the business makes money in order to have a greater positive effect on everyone it touches.

Our philosophy now goes beyond adding a philanthropy, volunteering, or sustainability program, all of which are still valuable and are all things we are striving to build. But it also means carefully examining our business in light of these commitments, and making that a regular part of our planning and decision-making. This report is one of our first steps to creating that accountability.

While this framework is new to us this year, in these pages you'll learn about the efforts that we've made to institutionalize these commitments into the way we operate. You'll also learn about the targets that we've set for ourselves for the next year, and how we hope to achieve them.

2020 didn't turn out like any of us expected. Many of the plans we put in place had to be put on hold or thrown out entirely. Like everyone else, we were forced to adapt and change. It's in times like these, when plans are thrown out the window, that we have to rely on something more foundational. That's when we turn to our values and our purpose in order to make the right choices.

We don't know what will come in 2021, but we know that we can always return to our commitments. We're committed to being a force for good in the world, while taking the time we need to rest and practice creativity every day. Thank you for joining us on this path!



Our Team

Building a Culture of Ownership

In 2019, we embarked on a journey to begin practicing open book management. In 2020, we extended this spirit of ownership to create new programs that build the culture our teammates want.

At the beginning of 2019, we made a dramatic shift in how we run our company. We made the decision to begin practicing open book management.

As a company, we had always valued open feedback and transparency. That usually meant asking for ideas, soliciting input from everyone, and trying our best to communicate the reason behind the decisions that were made each day.

But something was missing. How

could everyone at the company truly understand the reasons for decisions if they didn't have access to the data behind them? How could they reasonably question these decisions without really knowing what went into them? And how could they share their best ideas if they didn't have access to all the facts?

So, we began to implement a system known as The Great Game of Business. One of the core tenets of the Great Game is that it isn't enough to simply give people

more information. We must also help people to make sense of it, so that they can actually use it. Giving people numbers after the fact is one thing. Working together

to understand the numbers each week and make decisions together based on them is quite another.

Today, we forecast the numbers on our P&L together as a team every single week. We look ahead together and see where our money is coming from, and where it's going. We all have access to the same information, and we can openly discuss where our money should go.

In addition to teaching the numbers, we also believe in giving our team what Great Game practitioners refer to as A Stake in the Outcome. Our team is vital to creating the profit that sustains our small business, and they should be able to share in those profits. When we make our goals, our quarterly gain-sharing program gives a portion of those profits right back to our team.

Finally, we plan our future together. We use a system of High-Involvement Planning to

'WE TREAT EACH OTHER LIKE ADULTS.'

create our annual plan each year. We solicit ideas and feedback from everyone on the team, then create a plan for the coming year together. We use that plan throughout the year to work towards goals everyone can believe in and fully understand.

In other words, we treat each other like adults. Even though we are a purpose-driven business, we don't pretend that money doesn't exist or that it shouldn't be discussed. We know that it's the oxygen that keeps our company moving, and it's especially vital in order to pay back our team for their work and help them reach their own goals in life.

2021 Goal

New Training Program

By June of 2021, each employee will have an individualized training plan that covers a combination of technical, team, and leadership skills. Managers will be trained on how to help create these plans.

2021 Goal

Engagement

We believe in measuring what's most important. This year, we'll begin a system of measuring employee engagement using comprehensive, anonymous surveys. This data will help us to see if and when we're falling short in areas such as inclusion, leadership, and growth.



PHOTO Meg helping build our new video set, which was seldom used after the pandemic began in March.

Over the course of 2020, we've continued to improve and refine our open-book management system to better serve our team and help them make better decisions. We created new and improved scoreboards, so that we could better communicate around our numbers while working remotely. These include more information on bonus status, so that everyone can see at a glance what sort of bonus they're on track to receive, and how much money is currently estimated to be in our bonus pool.

In the last year, we've paid \$59,703 in employee gain-sharing bonuses, an increase of 411% over the previous year.

Another tool we use to help our team make an impact is our quarterly mini-game program. Each quarter, we create small games around an improvement that needs to be made, or an opportunity we see. Like any game, these have scoreboards and rewards, and they help us to work on smaller issues and bottlenecks.

In the last year, we've worked to put these games directly in the hands of our teams, so that they can design them themselves. Teams can now decide when they might want to use one, what issues they want to address, how it should be designed, and what the rewards will be for winning.

We've continued to bring the practices of open-book management to all parts of our company through education and training. This year, six of our team members attended the Gathering of Games conference (virtually) to learn more about best practices for creating an open culture of ownership.

For us, ownership goes beyond the numbers. It's also about building the sort of culture that we want as a team. For us, that means finding new ways to define, discuss, and live our values at work.

This year, teammates initiated a new monthly discussion on

issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These discussions center on monthly readings and videos that bring diverse perspectives and give us a chance to regularly stop and reflect on our actions.

We've also redesigned our Culture Club committee, to create roles to specifically help us live up to our commitments to our team, members, communities, and planet. This voluntary group will help guide us in the coming year to carry out our goals for 2021 and stay focused on our purpose.

We're proud to work with a team of people who truly care about what's best for the people around them. That culture of trust, when given the right tools and information, creates amazing things. This year, we're focused on building more of those tools, through structured training and learning opportunities.

WORDS FROM OUR TEAM

We aim to create work that has purpose, uses our strengths, and allows room for the rest of life.



CHELSEA MILLER

Technical Illustrator

I love working at Seamwork because instead of feeling like work, it's like I'm coming to my favorite creative class to problem solve, share, and play with some of the most creative people I've ever met. It's been amazing to really work as a team to bring exciting projects to life and work together to bring such a special sewing journey to our members.



TAYLOR PRUITT

Product Manager

Working at Seamwork has taught me so much and I love how I'm encouraged to learn and explore not only within my expertise, but also outside of it. Being a small company we have the ability to shift and morph to what we think we need in the moment. Our opinions are sought out and listened to, which helps everyone's different perspectives to be heard.



Our Members





The Seamwork Ambassadors

New Program

Our new ambassador program brought new and stronger relationships with our members. We'll continue building on this in 2021 with a new, even more intimate advisory panel.

We work closely with key members of our community through our Ambassador Program. Each year, we invite members of the Seamwork community to apply to join our small group of ambassadors. We had hundreds of applicants in 2020. Members are chosen for their involvement and participation in the community rather than social media following; they represent our most enthusiastic Seamworkers.

Ambassadors provide us with feedback about what's going on at Seamwork, and how we can better help our members. When we need an opinion, we can turn to them to hear their thoughts and ideas. Whether it's one-on-one conversations, slack chats, or discussions in our community forums, our ambassadors give us insight and new perspectives.

While we use a variety of methods to better understand our members' needs, few avenues can provide the depth of understanding of these conversations. We want to thank our ambassadors for their input over the last year, as we work to expand these conversations even further in 2021.

2021 Goal

Advisory Panel

In 2021, we will create an advisory panel of members to give input on key decisions and actions. These will include selecting non-profit organizations to partner with, volunteer efforts and initiatives, and accountability towards our impact goals. This advisory panel will represent a diverse cross-section of our community, and will provide an outside perspective beyond our product.

2021 Goal

Voice-of-Customer

In the last year, every person at Seamwork has participated in our customer experience process, from answering sewing questions in our community to responding to email to sharing our favorite member projects. This year, we will create a Voice-of-Customer program, capturing all of this information systematically in order to constantly improve. The mission of this program is to give the customer a seat at the table in every conversation we have.

Sewing For The Body I have Right Now, with Maggie

Seamwork

EPIISODE 20

OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF SEWING STORIES

Seamwork Radio

Our long-dormant podcast was revived in 2020, creating a new way to tell stories from within the Seamwork community.

In 2020, one of our major goals was the relaunch of our former podcast, Seamwork Radio.

Seamwork Radio was created to tell stories from the sewing community about the power of making your own clothing. You can feel this viscerally when you hear the stories of people who sew, told in their own words. In past seasons, we've heard from people who have used sewing to cope with mental health issues; we've talked to a sewist who learned that her partner was trans; we've talked about what it's like to be a male sewist.

After a long hiatus, Seamwork Radio returned in 2020 with the explicit aim of bringing forth more stories from those who are often left out. Our aim is to provide a platform for a diverse range of sewing stories, to help fully express the range of experiences and impacts that sewing has on our community's lives.

In 2020, we heard from Ashley, a sewist who connected with her mother over sewing, in spite of her mom's issues of tragic addiction. We heard from Michael Gardner about what it's like to sew for his little girl, Ava. We heard about Maggie's challenge of sewing for a body that is ever-changing due to illness. And we heard the epic story of Folkwear, a pattern company that has changed hands over multiple generations.

We also began creating shorter "mini episodes" centered on our community. On these episodes, we hear shorter anecdotes and thoughts from Seamworkers, and the hosts discuss their own experiences. These short episodes create connection among the whole community, by continuing the tradition of skills passed from one sewist to another.



Daddy Dressed Me with Michael and Ava



EPISODE 18

40,966

Number of downloads of Seamwork Radio episodes in 2020.

Sewing a Legacy, the Story of Folkwear



EPISODE 22

8

New episodes released in the first season in 2020. Our goal is to release 4 times the number of episodes in 2021.



PHOTO
Guests Michael and Ava

In 2021, we plan to expand our podcast to produce more of these short episodes, building them around questions that arise amongst our members. We'll continue to tell the stories that matter through the monthly longer-format stories, while centering shorter episodes on tips and ideas that can help sewists day-to-day.

Our podcast has been an incredible way of reaching out to our members and having conversations that matter. It advances our mission of not only educating and inspiring, but deepening the connections that exist in this worldwide community.

A Bright Spot in the Dark with Ashley



EPISODE 16

An illustration of several hands of different skin tones (red, brown, purple, black, pink, orange, yellow) stacked together in a supportive gesture. The hands are rendered in a flat, stylized manner against a light cream background. The text 'Our Communities' is centered over the hands.

Our Communities

The Seamwork Fund

New in 2020

This new charitable fund will receive a portion of net profit each quarter, providing a vehicle for ongoing charitable giving.

While we've contributed to causes that are important to us throughout the years, including animal welfare, marriage equality, breast cancer research, and others, the unfortunate fact is that most of these donations have been sporadic. Giving mattered to us, but with only one exception, most of this giving was not part of a formal program or commitment.

In 2020, we realized that we needed to do more. We needed to give money not just when it suited us or when a particular issue seemed urgent, but as a regular part of doing business. We needed a system for giving back to the community organizations that are doing good in the world. We needed a way to partner with these organizations on an ongoing basis.

Creating The Seamwork Fund was the first step in this process. The Seamwork Fund is a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) that we contribute a percentage of our profits to



regularly. After the end of each quarter, we choose an organization to contribute to.

Our first donation went to The Social Justice Sewing Academy for their new incubator program. The SJSA Business Incubator is a 6-month virtual program aimed at developing and supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs. This program aligns perfectly with our belief in access to entrepreneurial resources. We look forward to supporting this and many other worthwhile organizations in the years to come through The Seamwork Fund.

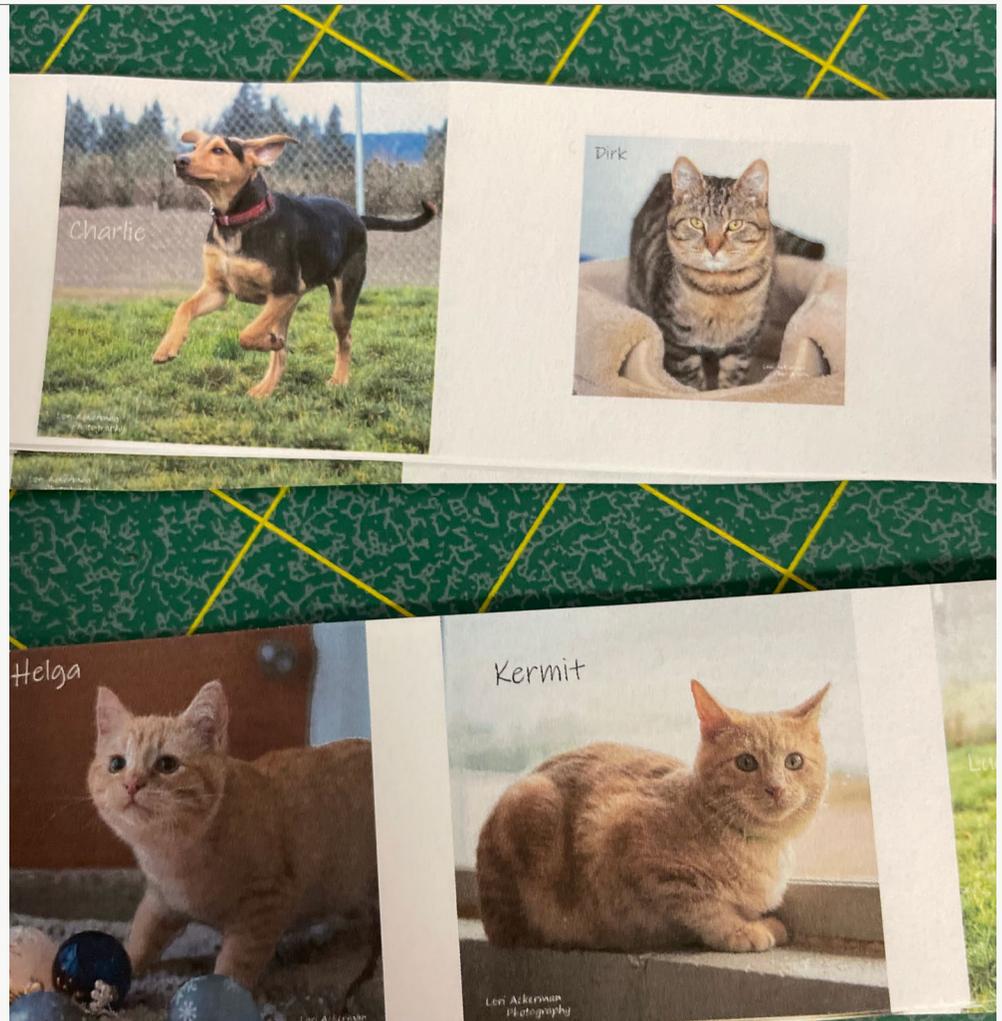


PHOTO
One way we volunteered remotely in 2020 was by sewing ornaments for the Newberg Animal Shelter's giving tree.

2021 Goal

Give 1% Time

In addition to donations through The Seamwork Fund, we commit to donating 1% of paid staff time to causes beginning in 2021. In 2020, we took time to organize letter-writing to get out the vote before the election. This year, we'll look for more virtual opportunities to donate time to our local and global communities.

2021 Goal

Give 3% Profit

Now that The Seamwork Fund is established, we commit to donating 3% of our Net Profit to this fund. Money from this fund will be used to make donations to non-profit organizations that benefit our communities. These organizations will be chosen by our team members, with input directly from our member advisory panel.



Our Planet

Measuring Our Impact

This year, we're committed to further reducing waste from our sewing room. Creating a system to measure waste was the first step on that path.

In some ways, it seemed that our direct environmental impact as a company was limited by the necessity of working from home. In reality, the environmental costs of office work such as energy use or physical waste were shifted to peoples' homes.

Nevertheless, we recognized that there were opportunities to reduce waste and its impact on the environment. Specifically, we believed that there was a great deal we could do to reduce fabric waste in our sewing room. Each month, we create many prototype garments from our patterns in order to test fit and fabric. Most of these were going to waste after being sewn, along with the scraps leftover from cutting.

Our Pattern Development Manager began a program to donate high-quality prototypes to Rose Haven, a local organization serving homeless women and children. We began ordering quality fabric in appealing colors, so that these garments could have life beyond a single fit session.

At the same time, we realized that we didn't have enough information to make meaningful changes into the future. How could we continue

to reduce our fabric waste in the sewing room, for example, if we had no idea how much we were actually throwing out?

And beyond fabric waste, how could we make sure that our energy usage, water usage, and paper waste stay low, especially as the company grows?

We realized that we needed to begin simply by measuring these things. We began tracking our energy usage and our fabric waste, so that we can create better benchmarks for continuing to lower our environmental impact on the planet. Our first focus in 2021, given the continued work-from-home environment, will be on reducing fabric waste.

2021 Goal

Cut Fabric Waste

In 2021, our goal is to reduce our existing fabric waste by 50%. Although we donate many of our prototype garments, there is still a sizable volume of fabric that is wasted. This includes sewn prototypes and scraps from cutting. This year, we will establish a fabric recycling program along with finding opportunities for reuse in order to cut our fabric waste in half.



**2020 WAS THE BEGINNING OF OUR JOURNEY
TO BRING FOCUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE
IMPACT WE MAKE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO FINDING
MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT THE
COMMUNITIES THAT WE'RE A PART OF.**

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Jobs: seamwork.com/company/careers

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