



going green  
**werks**

2024 RESPONSIBILITY REPORT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## 02 OUR BUSINESS

02	From Our Founder
03	About creative werks
04	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
05	Reshaping the Report
06	Highlights of the Report
07	Key Performance Indicators

## 08 PEOPLE

09	People KPI Progress
10	People By the Numbers
11	People Unpacked

## 16 PLANET

17	Planet KPI Progress
18	Planet By the Numbers
19	Planet Unpacked

## 23 PROSPERITY

24	Prosperity KPI Progress
25	Prosperity By the Numbers
26	Prosperity Unpacked

## 30 APPENDIX

31	Supplier Code of Conduct
33	Greenhouse Gases Data
34	Materiality Assessment
35	Cultural Group Charters
37	Ethical Risk Assessment
38	Daily Management System (DMS) Structure
39	Code of Ethics
42	Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bereavement</li><li>• Environmental</li><li>• Equal Employment Opportunity</li><li>• Flex Werk</li><li>• Nepotism</li><li>• Paid Time Off (PTO)</li><li>• Parental Leave</li><li>• Reasonable Accommodation</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Volunteer Time Off (VTO)</li></ul>

# FROM OUR Founder



2024 was a milestone year for creative werks. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the day I purchased the small packaging division of a larger company and set out to create our own family business. While there have been many headwinds over the years, the team has met each challenge and opportunity head on. What began in 1999 as a 10,000 square foot operation in Chicago has grown beyond my wildest expectations. We continue to reinvent ourselves, pivot, change, and grow - all while listening closely to our clients and fulfilling their needs. Today we operate in over 1 million square feet of space, designing, manufacturing, and packaging food products for the largest brands in the world.

Most importantly, we have never lost sight of our purpose to positively impact the lives of our associates, their families, and our community - including our country and our planet - while helping our clients innovate, grow, and prosper. We drive our business with empathy and a strong focus on human and ecological sustainability. We strive to be good citizens and strong business partners. This report will show how we are progressing as a business. There is no finish line; year after year we strive to get better.

Operating responsibly is not a new mindset for us. We have been an EPA Green Power Partner since 2010, when we began to offset our electricity use by acquiring renewable energy credits. Not many manufacturing companies can make that claim. And while energy costs have become more expensive, our team has challenged itself to save elsewhere because we believe in doing whatever we can to help keep our planet clean.

What else will you see in this 2024 report that we are proud of?

- creative werks has robust recycling practices, including investments in alternative uses for food waste. We strive every day to further reduce waste and landfill usage.
- As proud members of AIM Progress, F4SS, and the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, we collaborate to ideate and identify better packaging solutions with clients.
- The business elects to participate in ISO 14001, EcoVadis and SMETA audits to help us be more aware and better corporate citizens.
- We provide time off for our associates to give back to the community through our Volunteer Time Off Program. Our team logged many hours of volunteer activity last year.
- We care about safety and are diligent in year-over-year safety improvement. By achieving a 1.36 TRIR safety score, world class for our industry, we have shown our commitment to getting that number to zero.
- We care about our team and strive to make creative werks the best place to work on planet Earth.

Enjoy reading this report. Know that it was completed through hard work by an amazing group of professionals that continue to lead us to get better and better, year-in and year-out.



**Steve Schroeder**  
President & CEO



# ABOUT

## creative werks



Since opening its doors in 1999, creative werks has operated with a focus on ethics. Whether purchasing renewable wind energy credits to offset our energy consumption or providing paid volunteer hours, our business operates to support the community and minimize our impact on the planet.

### Our Purpose Statement

creative werks' purpose is to positively impact the lives of our associates, their families, and our community while helping our clients grow, innovate, and prosper.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to be your ultimate packaging partner, to deliver the highest quality products that wins the hearts of consumers.

### Our Values

creative werks has nine core values that drive the way we operate: passion, resilience, performance, creativity, accuracy, balance, collaboration, flexibility, and innovation. There are four values we harness in our corporate sustainability work: resilience, accuracy, flexibility, and innovation.





# THE UNITED NATIONS

## Sustainable Development Goals



Our report reflects accurate, measured data with ambition to improve overall reporting transparency in future years through investment in Report Assurance and deeper data development. We utilized the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(UNSDGs\)](#) as guidance and framework.

Environmental programs driven by:

- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land

Social programs are driven by:

- Goal 1: No Poverty
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions



# RESHAPING the Report



Historically, our report has focused heavily on the environment as that resonates with consumers. However, in 2024 we reframed our approach to sustainability initiatives to give a more authentic view of our business. Moving forward, our responsibility report will focus on three pillars: People, Planet, and Prosperity. By focusing on the social, environmental, and economic factors of our business operations, we can provide a more holistic view of our sustainability journey and better summarize the approach we are taking to improve our business, as well as acknowledge our full impact.

These categories, as most of our readers will know, are not chosen at random. By positioning our efforts under the pillars of People, Planet, and Prosperity we are fully aligning ourselves with industry standards. The graphic below provides more detail on what you can expect to see within these categories in the report.



**1,458**  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS



**120%**  
JOB GROWTH  
IN LAST 5 YEARS



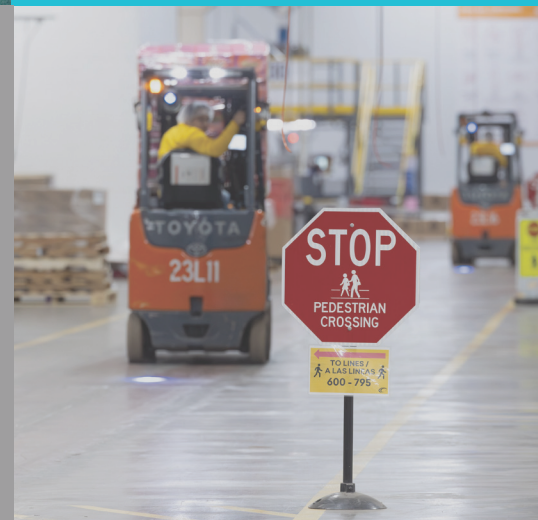
**81%**  
OF ALL MATERIAL  
RECYCLED



**100% WIND  
POWER  
FOR 14 YEARS**  
THROUGH PURCHASE  
OF RENEWABLE ENERGY  
CREDIT (RECS)



**1.36**  
OSHA TRIR  
(TOTAL RECORDABLE  
INCIDENT RATE)



**98%**  
ATTAINMENT  
AND  
**95%**  
RETENTION



**458**  
HOURS OF  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING



CERTIFIED TO  
**ISO 14001**  
**ECOVADIS**  
BRONZE  
**SMETA**  
4-PILLAR



# KPIs

## Key Performance Indicators



We have identified the following goals, based on both their measurability and the impact they have cross-functionally on our business. These goals illustrate the work we are doing in the pillars of People, Planet, and Prosperity but are by no means a comprehensive view of the projects and efforts being made at creative werks. For further detail on these goals, view the KPI Progress page for each pillar.

	GOAL YEAR	GOAL	2024 RESULT	2025 PLAN	STATUS
PEOPLE	2025	Host a total of 24 volunteer events	Result: 29	Goal: 30	ON TRACK
	2025	Consistently achieve a TRIR* goal of less than 2.0 (*TRIR: Total Recordable Incident Rate)	Result: 1.36	Goal: < 1.4	ON TRACK
PLANET	2026	Achieve APR Design Guide Preferred Status for manufactured packaging components	Result: 70% complete toward 2026 goal	Goal: 85% toward 2026 goal	ON TRACK
	2026	Establish improvement plan for top 3 highest areas of electricity usage at each facility	Result: 30% complete toward 2026 goal	Goal: 70% toward 2026 goal	ON TRACK
	2026	Establish improvement plan for highest area of water consumption at each facility	Result: 30% complete toward 2026 goal	Goal: 70% toward 2026 goal	ON TRACK
PROSPERITY	2025	Consistently achieve a temporary workforce attainment goal of at least 98%	Result: 98.3%	Goal: 98%	ON TRACK
	2025	Consistently achieve a temporary workforce retention goal of 95%	Result: 95.0%	Goal: 95%	ON TRACK
	2025	Achieve a CW direct hire employee voluntary turnover rate of 10%	Result: 11.1%	Goal: 10%	ON TRACK



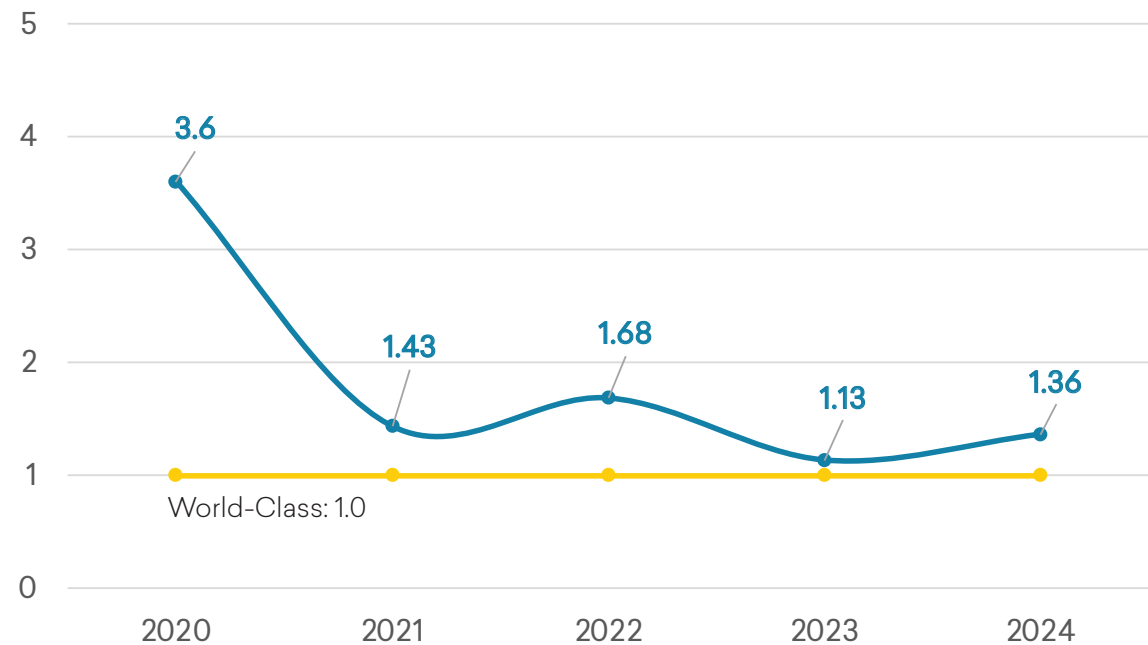
# PEOPLE

# PEOPLE

## KPI Progress

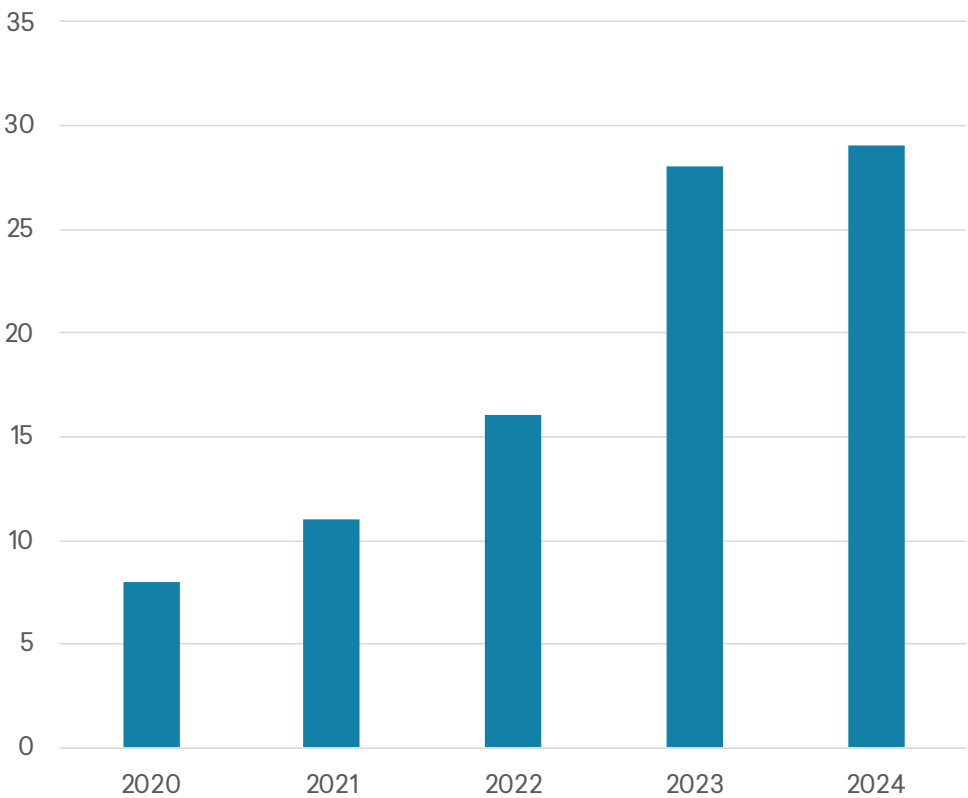


TOTAL RECORDABLE INCIDENT RATE (TRIR)



2025 Goal: < 1.4  
2024: 1.36  
2023: 1.13  
2022: 1.68  
2021: 1.43  
2020: 3.60

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER EVENTS



2025 Goal: 30  
2024: 29  
2023: 28  
2022: 16\*  
2021: 11\*  
2020: 8\*

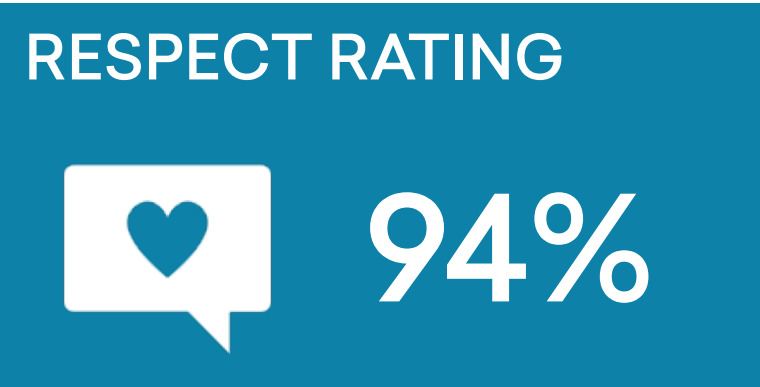
\*creative werks did not begin formally tracking volunteer events until 2023.

# PEOPLE

## By the Numbers

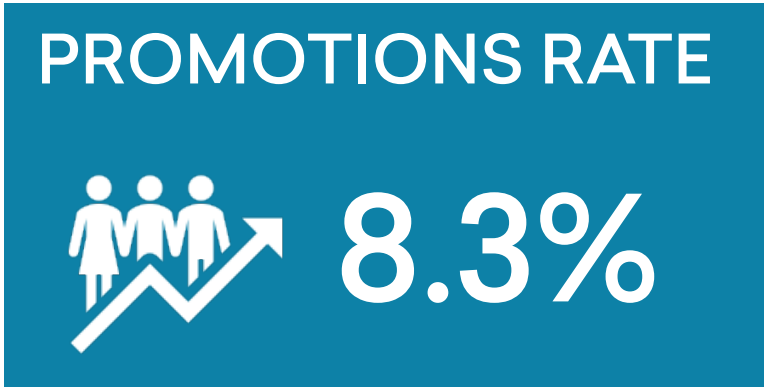


People is another of the three pillars of how we operate a sustainable business. The People pillar focuses on the well-being of people and communities, both in and outside the organization. Here are a few items that give insight into the work we do in our People pillar. Our number of associates increased by 119.6% since 2020, which we feel has a direct impact on these data points.



We ask our associates if they feel they are treated with respect by their colleagues. Beginning in 2023, we expanded this survey to include our hourly associates.

2024: 94%  
2023: 94%  
2022: 100%  
2021: 99%  
2020: 100%



According to [SHRM's Human Capital Report](#), the average promotion rate in the manufacturing industry is 6%.

2024: 8.3%  
2023: 9.2%  
2022: 15.6%  
2021: 10.2%  
2020: 5.4%



Volunteer hours captures the time associates spend supporting their preferred causes, both on and off the clock. These hours are self-reported and may not account for all hours spent volunteering.

2024: 1,458  
2023: 1,955  
2022: 1,366  
2021: 894  
2020: 510



# PEOPLE

## Unpacked



We are committed to being an employer of choice in the Chicagoland area and do this by investing in our facilities, our training, and our workplace experiences. creative werks has an on-site gym, provides fresh food and beverages in its corporate offices, and supports and invests in young professionals and women through our cultural groups, May 4th and Women @ Werk. You can view [charters for both groups](#) in the appendix.

Within our facilities, we pride ourselves on our comfortable, safe working environment and maintaining food-grade production areas with the highest levels of cleanliness possible. This is validated by our annual employee engagement survey results, which shows that 96% of associates agree that they feel safe at work.

### Fair Treatment:

creative werks works hard to foster an environment where all employees are respected, treated fairly, and enjoy an equitable workplace for all. We complete [Verité training](#) through AIM Progress, which ensures our team understands indicators of forced labor, child labor, and human trafficking as well as how and where to report any risks of these labor rights issues. Additionally, we embrace and adhere to all aspects of the [Ethical Trade Initiative \(ETI\) Basecode](#). We study market data to ensure we pay a fair wage to all associates. View our appendix for our [full ethical risk assessment](#) on these categories.

In addition to labor rights trainings and practices, all associates receive training on bribery and corruption on an annual basis to ensure that all members of our team are committed to operating the business ethically.

UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs



# PEOPLE

## Unpacked



### Work-Life Balance:

Employee welfare is critical to who we are. To benefit our associates, creative werks instituted a Flex Werk policy in 2019, allowing eligible roles to work remotely with flexible working hours up to two days per week. Given the nature of our business, not all roles qualify for the Flex Werk policy. To keep things equitable, any roles that are not eligible are given additional Paid Time Off (PTO) days to compensate.

creative werks provides equal parental leave for new parents. In 2024, we increased our Parental Leave policy; new parents of any gender now receive six weeks of paid leave after an adoption or birth event. We offer an additional six weeks of short-term disability coverage for birth recovery.

### Human Health & Safety:

We live by the motto that we want employees to return home in the same condition that they arrived for work that day. That holds true for both their physical and emotional wellbeing. We have a rigorous safety program to ensure that the team is consistently educated on safe practices and that our environment is monitored for safety incidents. We have built a culture of safety to ensure that everyone at the company understands the importance of safety in the workplace.

UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs



# PEOPLE

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

### Human Health & Safety (cont.):

This is evident in our continual demonstration of an above industry standard OSHA TRIR score. The only exception to this in recent years was in 2020; COVID-19 created higher turnover in our agency associates, a significant driver in accident probability. Our 2024 OSHA TRIR was 1.36, well below industry standards. Part of that success is due to the investment we have made in continuous improvement. Safety is part of our Operation team's [Daily Management System](#) (DMS), a program comprised of tiered cross-functional teams that manage a wide array of components of our overall operations.

creative werks partners with [AllOne Health EAP](#) to provide mental health support as needed. Over the years we have hosted wellness fairs, vaccine drives, and offered quality health insurance policies for our associates.

### Education:

We consider ourselves to be lifelong learners. We value growth and education and, as such, offer a student loan repayment assistance program where associates receive assistance from creative werks. Our teams are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities inside and outside of the company. With a dedicated Learning & Development team, we rolled out a people management training course called LEAD - Leader Enrichment and Development. In 2024, over 80% of all people managers hired within the year and 95% of all supervisors were trained as part of this program. In addition to supporting the education of our team, we support community education through: partnerships with [After School Matters](#), a formalized internship program that was developed in 2024, and donations to support local community students.

# PEOPLE

## Unpacked



### Community Impact:

We acknowledge the impact our operations and products have on consumers, at large. creative werks remains committed to providing quality, safe products. We do this by maintaining rigorous quality standards and mitigating environmental risks that have the potential to physically harm our associates and the community.

We choose to invest in the community by organizing local volunteer opportunities. Some examples of local volunteerism in 2024 include:

- Harvesting native seeds for the [Forest Preserves of Cook County](#)
- Supplying our hourly and temporary associates with backpacks and school supplies for the return to school
- Providing winter coats to hourly and temporary associates and their families
- Making blankets for [Project Linus](#), a local charity that serves ill and traumatized children
- Sorting consumer goods at [GiveNKind](#), to be donated to Chicagoland nonprofits
- Donating to local youth sports groups and [Strides for Peace](#), a nonprofit that works to end gun violence
- Providing strollers to refugee families in Chicago
- Sorting donated clothes through [WINGS](#), which benefits victims of domestic violence

### Social Initiatives:

In addition to supporting the community, we support a wide range of causes beyond Chicagoland that strike a chord with our corporate values. We have donated time and funds to national and international programs like [Feed My Starving Children](#), [Human Rights Campaign](#), and [World Central Kitchen](#). Over the years we have supported humanitarian efforts such as natural disaster relief funds and funds for Ukrainian victims of war.

UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs



# PEOPLE

## Unpacked



### Volunteerism:

To encourage this spirit of philanthropy, we offer 24 hours of volunteer time off (VTO) per year to all creative werks associates. Associates are encouraged to report in their volunteer time, both VTO and personal time, which we use to select an annual winner of our Friedman Award. The Friedman Award, named after a retired member of our team who was passionate about giving back, celebrates the philanthropic efforts made by our team. First, second, and third place winners are selected each year, and creative werks donates in their name to the charitable organization of their choice.

### Areas of Growth / Opportunity:

We believe we can enhance individual and company-sponsored volunteerism by expanding the offerings available, which would increase the impact we have on our community. In 2025 we will continue to prioritize associate health and safety through investments in equipment, systems and good manufacturing practices. Looking forward, we have also identified an opportunity to improve our recognition programs for associates.

In addition to the above initiatives, we are proud to maintain good standing with the following auditing bodies:  
[Sedex](#) and Safe Quality Food [\(SQF\) certification](#).

UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs





# PLANET

## KPI Progress



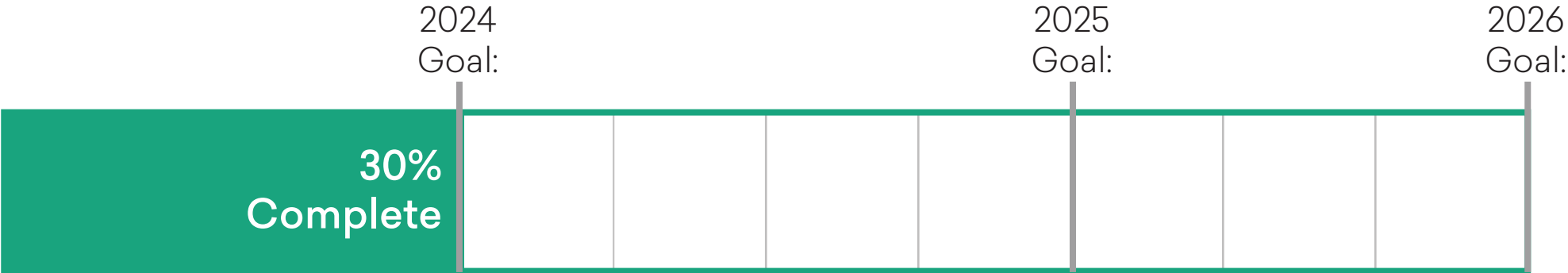
Achieve APR Design  
Guide Preferred Status  
Certification:

2024: 70%  
Goal Completion Year: 2026



Improvement Plan for  
Three Highest Areas of  
Electricity Usage:

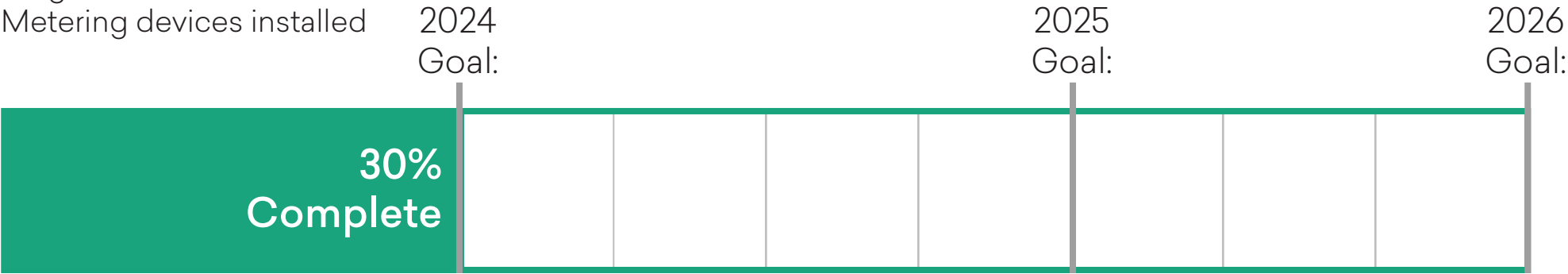
2024: 30%  
Goal Completion Year: 2026



Progress Details:  
Metering devices installed

Improvement Plan for  
Highest Area of Water  
Consumption:

2024: 30%  
Goal Completion Year: 2026



Progress Details:  
Metering devices installed

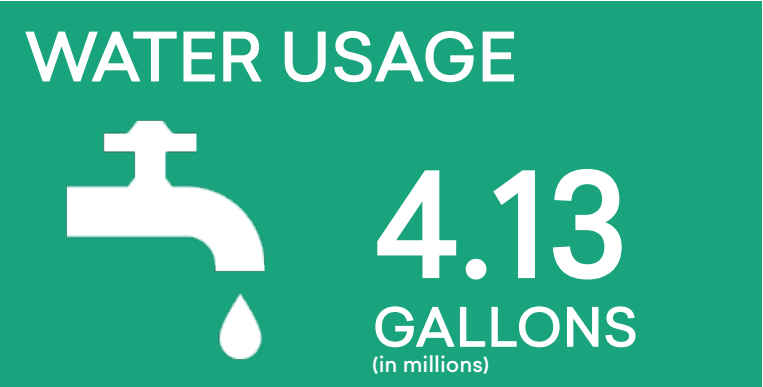


# PLANET

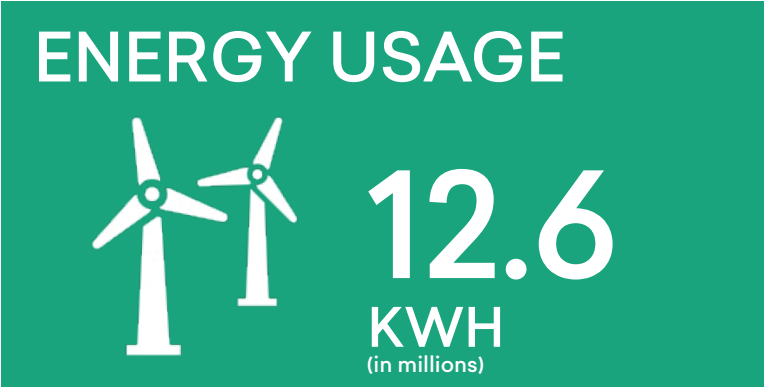
## By the Numbers



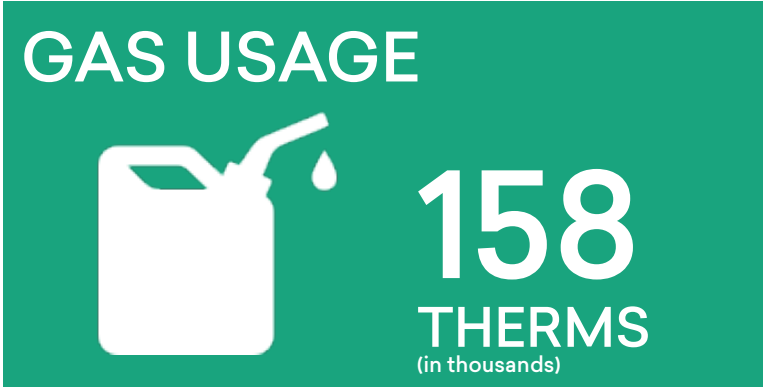
Given that our industry deals in consumer packaged goods, we find it critical to acknowledge the potential impact that our processes and products have on the environment. At creative werks, we prioritize Planet as a pillar by focusing on commitments to protect our natural ecosystem.



**2024: 4,126,000**  
2023: 3,409,444  
2022: 3,233,054  
2021: 3,369,393  
2020: 3,591,379



**2024: 12,635,379**  
2023: 11,216,105  
2022: 11,127,048  
2021: 11,522,294  
2020: 9,696,761



**2024: 158,435**  
2023: 168,184  
2022: 173,065  
2021: 155,265  
2020: 176,070

# PLANET

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

### Facility Improvements:

As of 2024 we have replaced 90% of the lighting in our two facilities to LEDs, including the lighting in our parking lots. We have plans to convert the remaining 10% by 2026. Last year we also replaced our rooftop HVAC units with updated, energy efficient units which should provide continued energy efficiencies.

### Alternative Energy Sourcing:

Our commitment to alternative energy is long and predates the industry trend. Since 2010 we have been an [EPA Green Power Partner](#) and have offset 100% of our electricity use, across all facilities, through the purchase of renewable energy credits (RECs).



### Chemical and Water Usage:

In 2024, we conducted a [Six Sigma Green Belt project](#) to identify reduction opportunities for our chemical and water usage. Beginning in 2025, we expect to save about 75,000 gallons of water and 2,250 gallons of soap year over year.

### Recyclable and Reusable Supplies:

For several years, we have offered reusable flatware and dishes in our corporate breakrooms. In 2024, we invested in our stock of plates, silverware, and drinkware to further encourage the reduction of single use dishes. This is part of an ongoing campaign, which will finalize in 2025. In 2025 we will significantly reduce the amount of paper products in our offices.

# PLANET

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs



### Waste Recycling and Circularity:

In 2024, 19% of our disposal was sent to landfill, compared to 58% recycled materials, and 23% repurposed food waste. Because of the nature of our business, the materials we receive change frequently, which challenges our recycling processes. However, in our manufacturing processes, 100% of reusable scrap is reintroduced directly into the system as post-industrial recycled content (PIR). Broadly, our goal is to continually identify new ways to reduce our waste to landfill.

In addition to the existing corrugated baler at our Bartlett facility, we purchased a new baler for our Elk Grove Village facility in Q4 2024, a capital investment that will markedly improve recycling efforts in that facility. We train our full-time and contract associates on proper sortation of waste to ensure that associates understand which of the materials they handle are recyclable, repurposed for animal feed, or landfill waste.

### Electric Vehicle Charging:

creative werks has long embraced the adoption of alternative energy. Since 2017, we have provided complementary EV charging to our associates at our Elk Grove Village facility. We added charging stations to Bartlett shortly thereafter. This commitment will be expanded in 2025, as we add additional EV charging stations to our lots.

# PLANET

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

### Sustainable Packaging Research & Development:

Our in-house Design R&D team, better known as Workshop Design Group (WDG), stays current on sustainable packaging materials and helps clients source, test, and commercialize more responsible alternatives to traditional substrates, driving progress across the industry.

### Areas of Growth and Opportunity:

As we progress toward our goals, we are putting more focus on utility monitoring. Metering devices were installed in 2024, which will allow us to gather critical data surrounding the use of our utilities.

We also see an opportunity to create better processes for waste control, particularly around participation in our office recycling. Looking forward, an area we are passionate about is striving for Zero Waste to Landfill. We believe we can achieve this in the future by improving our waste streams system and adjusting the office culture and behaviors as it relates to waste.

We also see room for improvement on our machine use protocols, particularly surrounding equipment shut downs. We believe there is an opportunity to audit our machine operations to ensure that equipment is properly powered down between use, which would improve energy consumption.

# PLANET

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

Lastly, we believe we can improve the [tracking of our Greenhouse Gases](#) (GHGs). We have gathered the proper data to report on our output, but would like to produce a formal strategy on GHG improvements at creative werks.

In addition to the above initiatives, we are proud members of the following organizations:  
[EPA Green Power Partner](#), [ISO14001 Certification](#), [EcoVadis](#), and the [Sustainable Packaging Coalition](#).





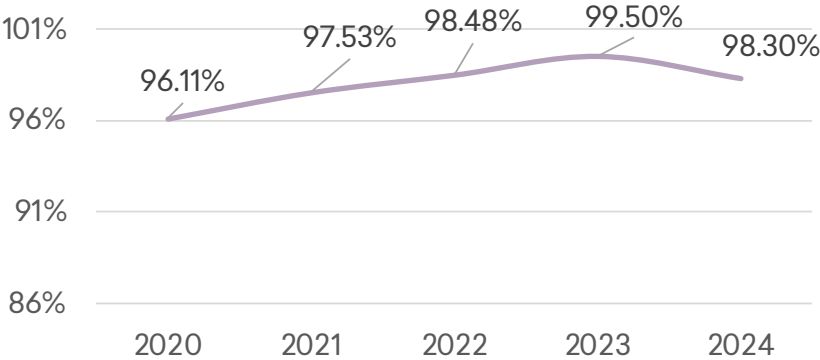
# PROSPERITY

# PROSPERITY

## KPI Progress



### ATTAINMENT

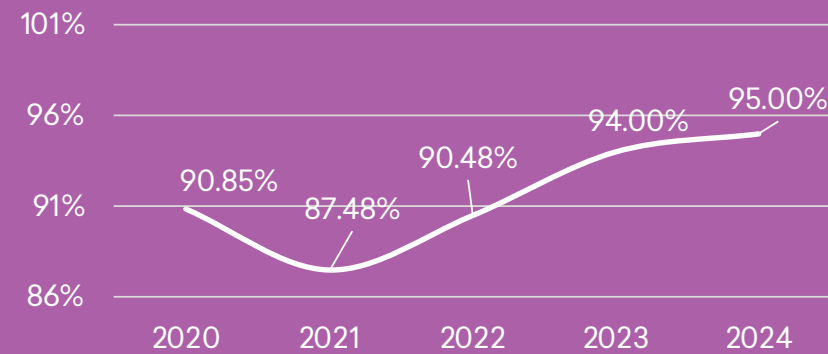


**Attainment:** the measurement of a company's ability to bring in individuals to fill open positions and perform required tasks to meet their business needs.

**Temporary Labor Attainment:**  
**2025 Goal: 98%**

2024: 98.30%  
2023: 99.50%  
2022: 98.48%  
2021: 97.53%  
2020: 96.11%

### RETENTION

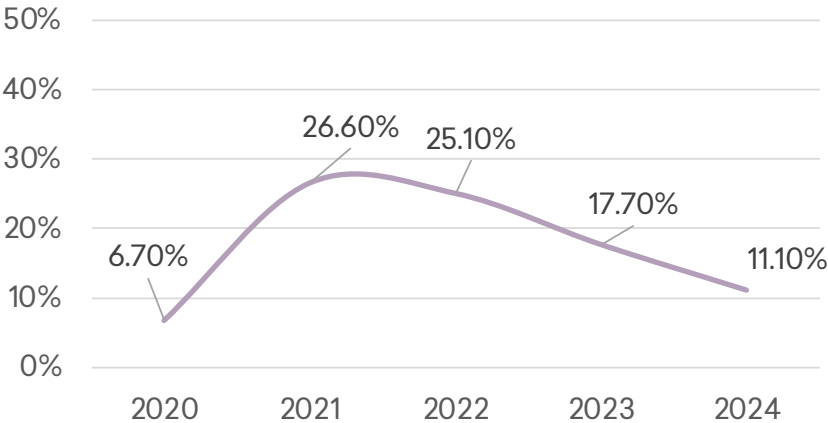


**Retention:** the measurement of a company's ability to keep its associates over a specific period, maintaining a stable and consistent workforce.

**Temporary Labor Retention:**  
**2025 Goal: 95%**

2024: 95.00%  
2023: 94.00%  
2022: 90.48%  
2021: 87.48%  
2020: 90.85%

### VOLUNTARY TURNOVER



**Voluntary Turnover:** a measurement of how often associates leave the company of their own volition and are replaced by new associates.

**Voluntary Turnover:**  
**2025 Goal: 10%**

2024: 11.10%  
2023: 17.70%  
2022: 25.10%  
2021: 26.60%  
2020: 6.7%



# PROSPERITY

## By the Numbers



At creative werks, Prosperity is a core pillar of our sustainable business strategy. We consider our economic growth as a component of sustainability by balancing our own success with a mindful impact on society and the environment. Here are a few items that give a wider view of our Prosperity efforts.

ASSOCIATES



325

2024: 325  
2023: 283  
2022: 262  
2021: 225  
2020: 148

NEW CLIENTS



8

2024: 8  
2023: 1  
2022: 2  
2021: 6  
2020: 4

CAPEX\* PROJECTS



48

\*Capital Expenditure

2024: 48  
2023: 56  
2022: 50  
2021: 36  
2020: 23

# PROSPERITY

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

Our team invested significant time and resources in 2024 to grow the business responsibly. Here is a brief overview of some of our achievements for the year.

### Resource Use:

2024 saw an increase in our square footage with the expansion of our Elk Grove Village operation, as part of an overall focus on resource efficiency. Operational space increased by an additional 250,000 sq ft at our headquarters, putting our overall square footage in Elk Grove Village to 500,000 sq ft. This is part of a multi-year project to optimize logistics across our sites.

### Cost Management:

Part of our corporate strategy involves investing in automation to optimize our operations. This supports our Prosperity goals by eliminating roles that have inconsistent schedules, providing us with roles that oversee automation equipment functionality and has more consistent hours.

In 2023 our team developed and executed a new Procurement strategy. This strategy has cost reduction programs for packaging and materials, a plan to further diversify our suppliers, and a robust vendor management and optimization program. Results of this procurement strategy were immediate: we ended 2023 with improved variance planning, to ensure we were not ordering unnecessary material when client demand changed, and through 2024 we have seen over \$1 million in cost savings.



# PROSPERITY

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs



### Innovation and R&D:

We value research and development of new, innovative, and responsible products for our clients. We invest in R&D to create these new products as well as services and processes that bring competitive advantages to our sustainability efforts. Our Design R&D team maintains a proprietary knowledge base to help us identify and refine cost efficiencies through intelligent design.

### Ethical Sourcing:

creative werks is committed to partnering with suppliers who model our ethical standards in order to bolster industry growth. We partner selectively, choosing suppliers that provide fair pricing, use ethical business practices, and source material responsibly. Our [Supplier Code of Conduct](#) can be found in the appendix.

creative werks is committed to ethically sourcing minerals and expects its suppliers to share in that commitment. It is rare that our industry handles conflict minerals, but in the instances where they are present in our supply chain, we do our part to ensure ethical sourcing.

# PROSPERITY

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

### Market Development:

In an effort to increase our business revenue and growth potential and, as a result, strengthen the livelihoods of our employees, creative werks spent considerable time in 2024 exploring new product segments and markets to offer co-packing services. A few key markets have been identified that demand sustainable product and service development, and creative werks is committed to exploring these options further in the future.

### Corporate Governance:

In order to ensure sustainability is prioritized at every level, we engage our executive team and advisory board to validate their alignment. We have a [materiality matrix](#) that identifies the priorities of both our stakeholders and leaders, which can be referenced in our appendix.

### Employee Engagement and Retention:

We strive to maintain a positive and inclusive workplace that attracts and retains talent, reducing turnover costs and increasing productivity. Much of this effort comes from our commitment to converting our temporary workforce, providing an opportunity for our teams to work for creative werks directly and giving them access to our company benefits. In the last five years we have heavily invested in our associates, resulting in a 119.6% increase in the number of associates in our employ.

# PROSPERITY

## Unpacked



UNSDG ALIGNMENT\*:



\*See appendix for info on the UNSDGs

### Client Engagement:

The value we provide to clients is our ability to offer high quality products in a timely and efficient manner, focusing on our clients' peace of mind. Our team focuses on fostering strong relationships with our clients through sustainable growth initiatives, transparent communication, and best-in-class service.

### Areas of Growth / Opportunity:

We continue to manage costs of automation through strategic planning and optimized equipment use. Additionally, creative werks invests in more everyday business that has potential for exponential growth.

Lastly, we have an initiative to put more attention on upskilling our workforce; this will ultimately lead to increased wages and more growth opportunity for our associates.

In addition to the above initiatives, we are proud members of the following organizations:

[F4SS](#), [AIM Progress](#), and the [National Confectioners Association](#).



**AIM**progress



# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX

## Supplier Code of Conduct



As a company committed to high ethical standards, creative werks practices corporate stewardship and responsible sourcing, and believes in the equal and fair treatment of our suppliers and all partners throughout our supply chain. Likewise, we expect our suppliers to adhere and insist upon safety, fairness, and the equal rights of all people. Our Supplier Code of Conduct (SCoC) follows industry-recognized standards, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nation's Global Compact, and the conventions outlined in the International Labour Organization. In this document, the term "supplier" refers to any vendor or company from which creative werks procures goods or services.

### Compliance with the Law

At creative werks, we insist that all our employees and suppliers comply with local, state, and federal laws in the country where they operate.

### Health & Safety

Keeping a safe workplace and ensuring the safety of our food products are two of creative werks' highest priorities. We expect our employees and suppliers to comply with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and all food safety regulations.



### Forced Labor & Child Labor

Suppliers are prohibited from using forced labor of any kind including indentured servitude, imprisonment or debt servitude. In addition, supplier will not employ child labor of any kind as outlined by the International Labor Organization's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

### Conflicts of Interest

Suppliers of creative werks should act in the best interest of creative werks. Therefore, suppliers and employees must avoid situations where their personal interests may conflict.

### Conflict Minerals

creative werks is committed to ethically sourcing minerals and expects its suppliers to share in that commitment. It is imperative that the procurement of any minerals including tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold (3TG) does not directly or indirectly contribute to conflict, human rights abuses, or environmental harm. Suppliers must conduct due diligence, aligned with international standards such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidance, to provide transparency as to the origin of minerals to ensure they meet creative werks' standard. Failure to meet creative werks' expectation may result in reduction or termination of business with the supplier.



# APPENDIX

## Supplier Code of Conduct



### Environmental Responsibility

creative werks expects our suppliers to act in environmentally responsible ways and respect creative werks' Environmental Policy, attached in Appendix A. creative werks strives to minimize its environmental impact and is required to submit environmental metrics to their clients. creative werks may request environmental emission information from vendors for reporting purposes.

### Business & Financial Records

Both the supplier and creative werks must keep accurate financial records of all transactions involving creative werks and the supplier. This includes invoices and expense reports. Suppliers should send invoices in a timely manner.

### Working Hours & Overtime

Suppliers must obey local and federal laws in accordance to overtime and overtime pay, including the allotment of 24 hours of consecutive rest during every 7-day working period. Furthermore, supplier must not force any associate to work overtime, and associates may not be punished for refusing to work overtime.

### Bribery

Employees and suppliers acting on behalf of creative werks are forbidden from offering or accepting bribery of any kind to any government official or stakeholder. This includes gifts, contracts, or favors.

### Confidentiality

Suppliers and vendors are required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement upon entering contract with creative werks. In addition to suppliers, employees are prohibited from sharing confidential information, trade secrets and knowledge with anyone, unless instructed to do so by creative werks. If information was sent to or received by an employee in error, the employee should notify creative werks' Human Resources immediately.

### Gifts, Meals, & Entertainment

Employees of creative werks are prohibited from accepting gifts from suppliers, stakeholders, or clients. All gifts (i.e.: tickets, merchandise, food, gift certificates or cash equivalents) must be turned over to creative werks' Human Resources or Executive Management.

### Reporting Misconduct

Associates who believe any creative werks employee has engaged in illegal or unethical activity should notify creative werks' Executive Management immediately. The employee's disclosure will not negatively affect their relationship with creative werks in any way.



# APPENDIX

## Greenhouse Gases Data



### Summary of creative werks' Emissions - 2024

<b>Organization Name:</b>	creative werks			
<b>Organization Address(es):</b>	1470 Brummel Ave. Elk Grove Village, IL 60007			
	222 Sievert Ct. Bensenville, IL 60106			
	1350 Munger Rd. Bartlett, IL 60103			
<b>Inventory Reporting Period:</b>	Calendar Year 2024			
	<b>Start:</b>	1/1/24	<b>End:</b>	12/31/24
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	1/17/25			

Scope 1 Emissions				
	CO <sub>2</sub> -e (metric tons)			
Stationary Combustion	842			
Mobile Sources	2			
Refrigeration / AC Equipment Use	391			
Fire Suppression	0			
Purchased Gases	0			
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Offsets</b>	<b>Net</b>	
<b>Scope 1 Summary:</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,235</b>	

Scope 2 Emissions				
<b>Location-Based Scope 2 Emissions</b>		CO <sub>2</sub> -e (metric tons)		
Purchased and Consumed Electricity		5,764		
Purchased and Consumed Steam		0		
		<b>Gross</b>	<b>Offsets</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Location-Based Scope 2 Summary:</b>		<b>5,764</b>	<b>5,764</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Market-Based Scope 2 Emissions</b>		CO <sub>2</sub> -e (metric tons)		
Purchased and Consumed Electricity		5,764		
Purchased and Consumed Steam		0		
		<b>Gross</b>	<b>Offsets</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Market-Based Scope 2 Summary:</b>		<b>5,764</b>	<b>5,764</b>	<b>0</b>

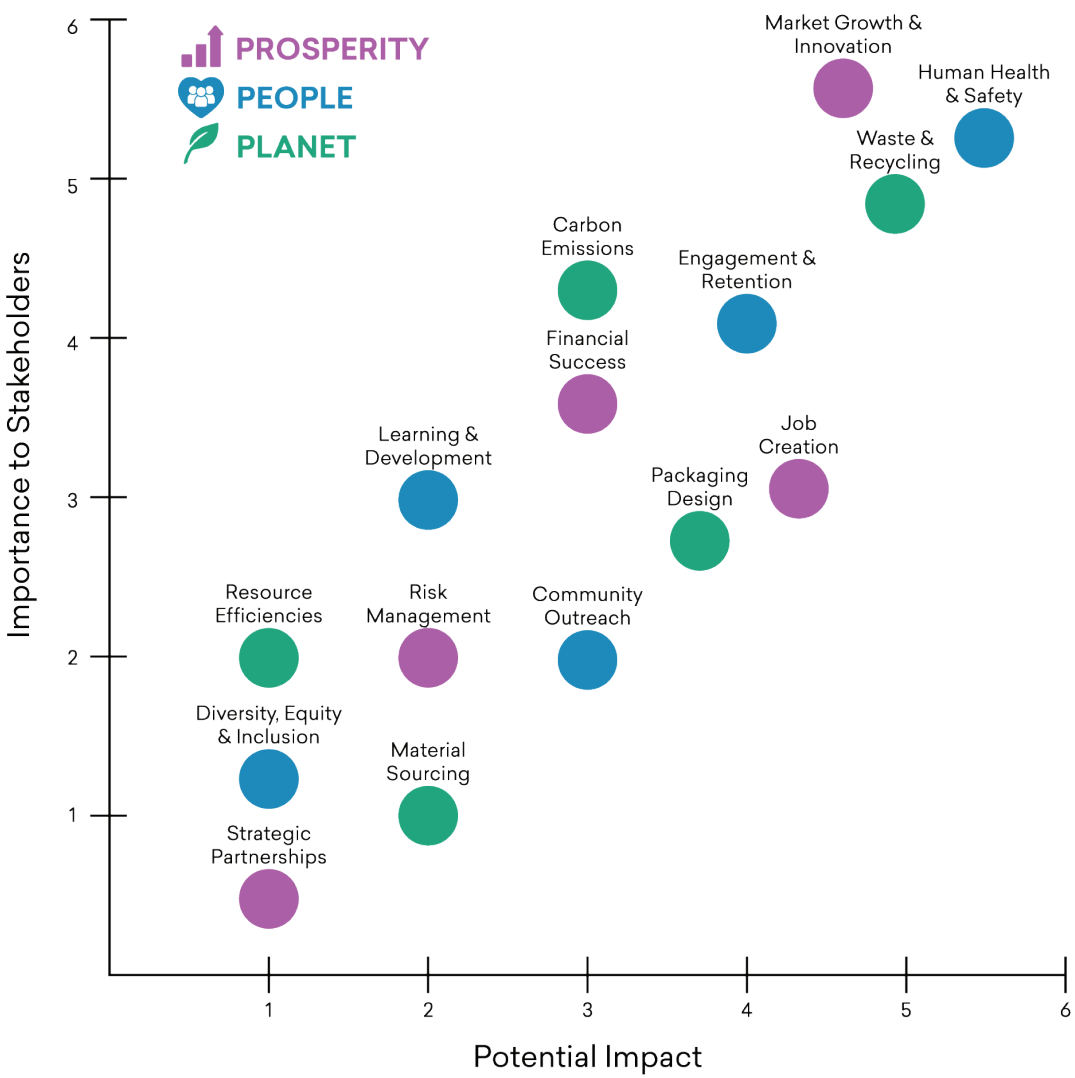
Scope 1 & 2 Summary		
	CO <sub>2</sub> -e (metric tons)	
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Total Scope 1 &amp; Location-Based Scope 2:</b>	<b>6,999</b>	<b>1,235</b>
<b>Total Scope 1 &amp; Market-Based Scope 2:</b>	<b>6,999</b>	<b>1,235</b>

# APPENDIX

## Materiality Assessment



This assessment organizes creative werks’ top priorities pertaining to the Prosperity, People, and Planet pillars of our sustainability program. The X axis creates a hierarchy of the potential positive impact the company could have on each topic. The Y axis arranges the topics by importance to stakeholders. The result is a graph that identifies, of all the company's top priorities, which ones are most productive to prioritize first, given their potential positive impact.



# APPENDIX

## Cultural Group Charters – Women at Werk



### Objectives:

Women @ Werk aims to create a network where the women of CW have a space to engage, share, and evolve using these five pillars to drive session content and initiatives:

- Supporting Women
- Connection Building
- Wellness & Balance
- Career Development
- Acts of Service

### Purpose Statement:

Women at Werk wants to help creative werks foster an environment wherein women can develop and pursue career goals without bias or other barriers holding them back. An environment where women in the company can build confidence, leadership experience, and ultimately improve and maintain a positive, enduring corporate culture.

### Annual Schedule:

Onsite Member Events:	Quarterly
Offsite Member Events:	Annually
VTO Opportunities:	Quarterly
Member Retreat:	Biennially
All-Company PD Event:	Biennially
Member Connection Building Events:	Bi-Monthly
All Company Wellness Events:	Quarterly

### Key Stakeholders:

This group is open to all eligible, creative werks associates who identify as women. Interested members may submit their name for consideration to become an Ambassador, a role that is responsible for planning and executing events and initiatives that support the group’s objectives. You can view creative werks’ cultural group eligibility list [here](#).

Women @ Werk is sponsored by a member of creative werks’ Executive Leadership Team. Jürgen Peters is Women @ Werk’s sponsor and advocate, supporting the group and ensuring its goals are aligned with CW’s corporate strategy.

# APPENDIX

## Cultural Group Charters - May 4th



### Objectives:

May 4th aims to create a network where the young professionals of CW have a space to engage, share, and evolve using these four pillars to drive session content and initiatives:

- Professional Development
- Community Engagement
- Social Connection
- Well-Being and Balance

### Purpose Statement:

May 4th is a group of young professionals that develops future leaders by fostering their growth and providing opportunities to make a tangible impact on both the community and company culture. We provide tools for personal and professional growth by giving members access to outreach programs, team building activities, and educational opportunities.

### Annual Schedule:

Annual Meeting:	Annually
Holiday Party/Member Graduation:	Annually
Lunch & Learn:	Quarterly
Offsite Member Events - Social:	Monthly
VTO Opportunities:	Bi-Monthly
Member Overnight Retreat:	Biennially
Member Day Retreat:	Biennially
Sponsored Company-Wide Events:	Quarterly
All Company Wellness Events:	Bi-Monthly

### Key Stakeholders:

This group is open to eligible positions decided by CW’s ELT and HR Department. You should be informed of your eligibility to join upon the start of your employment at CW. Current members who are interested may submit their name for consideration to become a board member at the annual meeting. The board member role is responsible for planning and executing events and initiatives that support the group’s objectives.

May 4th is sponsored by a member of creative werks’ Executive Leadership Team. Patrick Woodward is May 4th's current sponsor and advocate, supporting the group and ensuring its goals are aligned with CW’s corporate strategy.

# APPENDIX

## Ethical Risk Assessment



Instructions:

(Physical Location of Risk)

(Risk Types may include physical, emotional, psychological, etc.)

(List the potential impact of activity/ product/ service/ output)

(List potential impacted parties)

(Overseer of the activity)

(Control = Activity that can be reduced or eliminated. Influence = Engage with to improve.)

(Risk Review Answer Y or N)

(Impact Review Answer Y or N)

(FREQUENCY: Rate the Frequency from 1 (seldom to never occurring) to 3 (frequently occurring). RISK: Add together the number of "yes" answers in the risk column to the left) RISK: Add together the number of "yes" answers in the impact column to the left)

(Rating = Frequency x (Risk + Impact))

(All ratings greater or equal to 9 are considered significant and require a corresponding action to review or mitigate.)

(If an activity is considered significant, then an action is **required**. Actions must be documented and cited.)

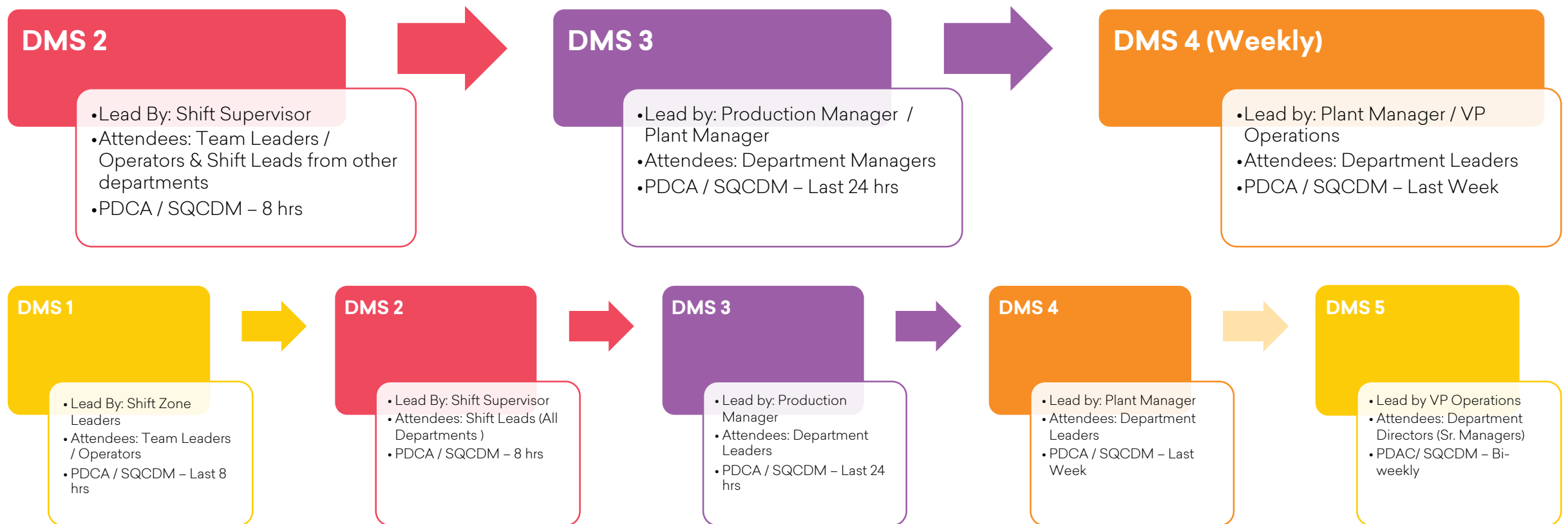
SEQ	Topic	Location	Risk Type	Ethical Impact	Impacted Party	Department or Process	Is this a risk that creative werks can "Control" or one it can "Influence" ?	Legal Exposure	Requires special PPE	Event could contaminate the facility or its grounds	Event could have adverse effect on neighboring individuals	Event could have adverse effect on individuals at this site	Frequency	Risk	Impact	Rating	Significance	Action
1	Freely Chosen Employment	All Locations	Physical	People could be forced to work in positions that they are not qualified for	All Employees	HR	Control	Y	N	N	N	Y	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
2	Freedom of Association	All Locations	Physical and Emotional	Employees cannot work together to improve working conditions if they so desire	All Employees	HR	Control	Y	N	N	N	Y	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
3	Safe & Hygienic Working Conditions	All Locations	Physical	Potential Endangerment of Employees' Health & Safety	All Employees	Health & Safety	Control	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	1	2	2	4	Not Significant	
4	Child Labor	All Locations	Physical	Children could be harmed by working in an environment that is not safe for them	Children	HR	Control	Y	N	N	N	Y	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
5	Living Wages	All Locations	Financial	Employees could be stuck living in poverty	All Employees	HR	Control	N	N	N	N	Y	1	0	1	1	Not Significant	
6	Excessive Working Hours	All Locations	Physical and Emotional	Employees well being could be compromised by working when they are physically and mentally tired	All Employees	Operations	Influence	N	N	N	N	Y	1	0	1	1	Not Significant	
7	Discrimination	All Locations	Psychological and Financial	Employees could suffer from psychological impacts if they are the victim of discrimination. They could also suffer financial impacts if they are not given promotions they deserve.	All Employees	HR	Control	Y	N	N	N	Y	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
8	Regular Employment Provided	All Locations	Financial	Employees could struggle with economic security if they do not have consistent work	All Employees	HR	Influence	N	N	N	N	Y	1	0	1	1	Not Significant	
9	Harsh/Inhumane Treatment	All Locations	Physical	Employee well being could be compromised	All Employees	Operations	Control	Y	N	N	N	Y	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
10	Information Security (IT)	All Locations	Emotional and Financial	Safety of private personal and company information or data may be threatened	All Employees	IT	Control	Y	N	N	Y	Y	1	2	3	5	Not Significant	
11	Supplier Ethical Labor Practices	All Locations	Physical and Emotional	Laborers amongst upstream supply chain processes could be either physically or emotionally impacted by their working conditions.	All People	Procurement	Control	Y	N	N	Y	N	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
12	Conflict Minerals	All Locations	Physical and Emotional	The sourcing of conflict minerals may unknowingly support violent conflict, namely in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and may have significant negative physical and emotional impact on effected communities.	All People / Democratic Republic of the Congo	Procurement	Control	Y	N	N	Y	N	1	1	1	2	Not Significant	
13	GHG Emissions	All Locations	Physical	Exposure to GHGs has a direct, negative impact on human health, and contribute to the longer-term adverse health impacts of Global Warming and Climate Change	All People	Health & Safety	Control	Y	N	N	Y	Y	1	1	2	3	Not Significant	



# APPENDIX

## Daily Management System Structure

The below graphic demonstrates the structure of our Daily Management System (DMS) - a program designed with a tiered cross-functional team to manage a wide array of components of our overall operations.



# APPENDIX

## Code of Ethics



As a company committed to high ethical standards, creative werks practices corporate stewardship and responsible sourcing, and believes in the equal and fair treatment of our suppliers and all business partners throughout our supply chain. Likewise, we expect you to insist upon working safely; to treat all associates, vendors, and clients with respect and fairness; and to avoid doing harm to our environment. creative werks intends to reference accredited bodies such as the Ethical Trade Initiative (ETI) Base Code, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), Sustainability and Accounting Standards Board (SASB) and UN Guiding Principles as a framework for our social and environmental programs.

We recognize that each of us is responsible for knowing and adhering to the standards set forth in this Code and in conjunction with our Company's Core Values and Guiding Principles. Although CW's code cannot address every issue or provide answers to every dilemma, they can define the spirit in which we intend to do business and should guide us in our daily conduct.

### **Compliance with the Law**

At CW, we insist that all associates and business partners comply with local, state and federal laws in the country where they operate.

### **Health & Safety**

Keeping a safe workplace and ensuring the safety of our food products are CW's highest priorities. We expect you and business partners to comply with our Health & Safety Program, SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing & SQF Quality Code food safety standards and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), which is in accordance with the FDA and Global Food Safety Institute.

### **Forced Labor & Child Labor**

At CW, employment is freely chosen. Associates, and contractors, are prohibited from using forced labor of any kind including indentured servitude, imprisonment or debt servitude. In addition, CW and its Temporary Staffing suppliers will not employ child labor of any kind including anyone under the age of 18 years old (for manufacturing/warehouse positions). Internships and administrative roles must remain at 16 years of age or older.

# APPENDIX

## Code of Ethics



### **Freedom of Association**

CW abides by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) which gives all associates the right to organize and bargain collectively. Please refer to the NLRA posting on our Associate Posting Boards for more details.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

As an associate of CW you should always act in the best interest of the company. Therefore, you, suppliers, and other business partners should avoid situations where your personal interests may conflict with the company. We must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair, our ability to make objective and fair decisions. We must never use creative works property or information for personal gain. Should a new hire or an existing associate feel that there may be a potential conflict of interest, they are to report the situation to HR or the company President immediately.

Examples of Conflict of Interest include but are not limited to:

- Being employed (you or a close family member) by, or acting as a consultant to, a
- competitor or potential competitor, supplier, or contractor, regardless of the nature of
- the employment
- Hiring or supervising family members or closely related persons
- Having a personal interest, financial interest or potential gain in any CW transaction
- Accepting gifts, discounts, favors, or services from a potential customer/supplier/
- business partner, without the permission and approval of the company President

# APPENDIX

## Code of Ethics



### **Bribery / Gifts, Meals, and Entertainment**

CW is committed to competing solely on the merit of our products and services. We will never give nor accept business courtesies that constitute, or could reasonably be perceived as constituting, unfair business inducements that would violate the law, regulation or policies of the company or its customers. You are prohibited from accepting gifts from suppliers, business associates, or clients. All gifts (i.e. food, gift certificates, merchandise, sports tickets, or cash equivalents) must be turned over to Human Resources or the President of the company.

### **Environmental Responsibility**

CW expects you to act in environmentally responsible ways. CW strives to minimize its environmental impact and is required to submit environmental metrics to its clients. The company may solicit environmental information from suppliers and partners.

You can view our Environmental Policy in our Policies Library.

### **Business & Financial Records**

CW creates, retains, and disposes of company records as part of our normal course of business in compliance with all regulatory and legal requirements. All corporate records must be true, accurate, and complete; company data must be promptly entered in our books in accordance with CW policy and other applicable accounting practices. CW will make certain that all disclosures made in financial reports are made in full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable. This obligation applies to all associates who may also have responsibility for the preparation of such matters including drafting, reviewing, and signing or certifying the information contained therein. This may include but is not limited to contracts, purchase orders, time sheets, expense reports, financial reporting, and any other company record.

### **Reporting Misconduct**

If you believe there has been an abuse of this Code or illegal activity, you should notify HR or the company President immediately. Your disclosure will not negatively affect your relationship with the company in any way.

# APPENDIX

## Bereavement Policy



In accordance with the Illinois Family Bereavement Leave Act, all permanent full-time associates are entitled to use a maximum of 10 working days of unpaid Bereavement Leave; with up to 3 days of this Bereavement Leave paid; upon any of the following:

- i. death of an immediate family member (for this purpose, immediate family is defined as a spouse/domestic partner, child, step-child, parent (including in-law and step-parent), sibling, step-sibling, grandparent, or grandchild; or
- ii. an absence resulting from a pregnancy loss; an unsuccessful round of intrauterine insemination or of an assisted reproductive technology procedure; a failed adoption match or an adoption that is not finalized because it is contested by another party; a failed surrogacy arrangement; a diagnosis or event that impacts pregnancy or fertility; or a stillbirth; or
- iii. an absence to care for a spouse or domestic partner who experiences a circumstance described in item (ii)

In addition to the family members noted in (i) above, CW will provide up to 3 days of paid Bereavement Leave (any additional unpaid leave would not fall under the Illinois Family Bereavement law) upon the death of any sibling-in-law, grandparent-in-law, niece, or nephew.

Bereavement Leave is to be taken within 60 days of the qualifying event. Associates should make their supervisor aware of their situation. In turn, the supervisor should notify Human Resources of the reason and length of the associate's absence. Reasonable documentation may be required. In the event of the death of more than one covered family member in a 12 month period, an associate is entitled to up to 6 weeks of unpaid Bereavement Leave. This policy does not create the right for an employee to take unpaid leave that exceeds the unpaid leave time allowed under, or in addition to the unpaid leave time permitted by the federal FMLA.

# APPENDIX

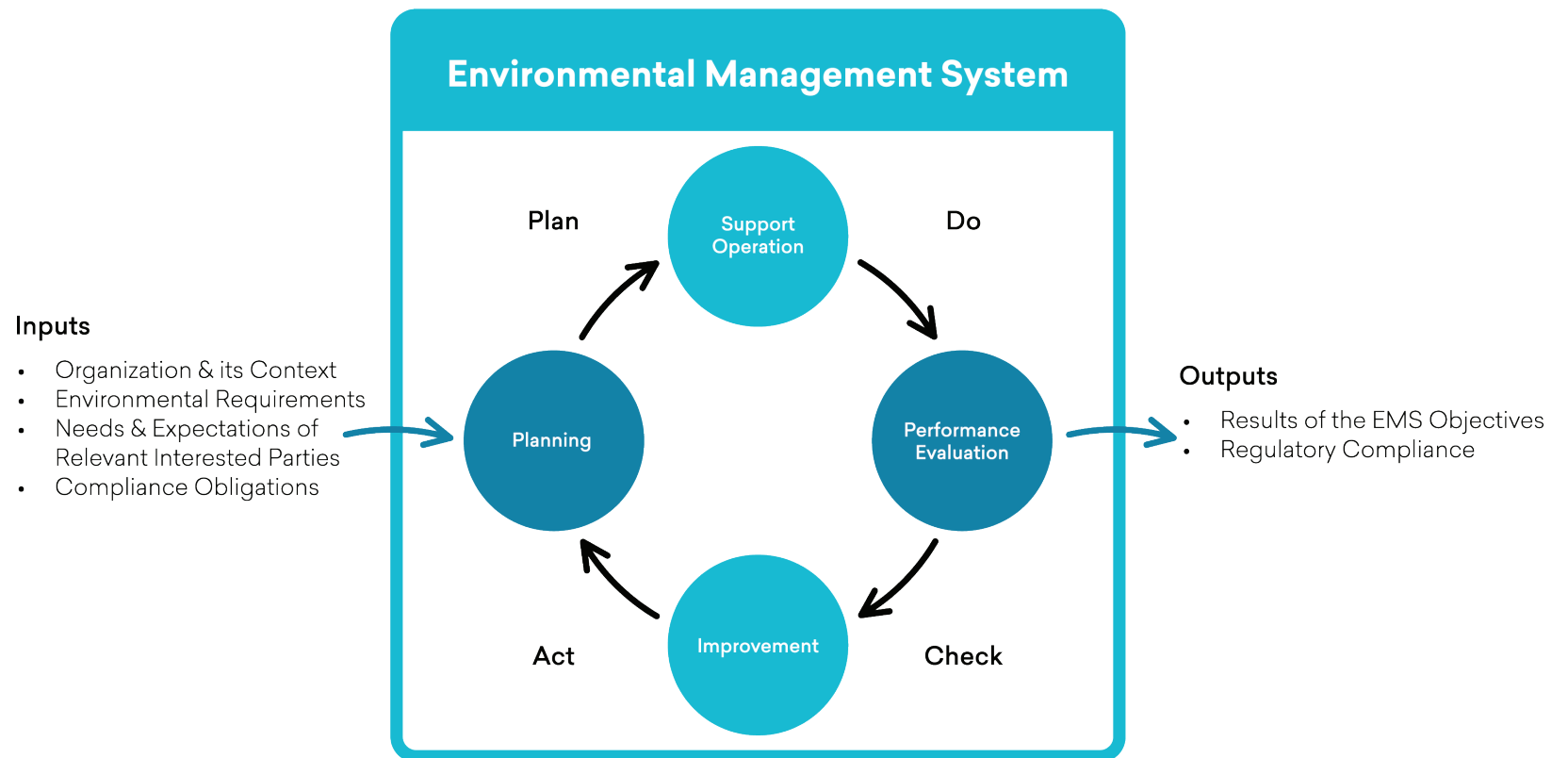
## Environmental Policy



creative werks is committed to protecting the environment and complying with all our environmental obligations, either legal or voluntary.

This will be accomplished through continually improving our services and internal processes and fulfilling our Environmental Objectives, as defined in our Environmental Management System Manual.

Our approach to our environmental management system is based on the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle (PDCA). The basis of our business beliefs is represented in three pillars: Environmental Focus, Process Approach, and Risk-Based Thinking.





# APPENDIX

## Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy



In our continuing efforts to maintain a workplace free from discrimination, creative werks has established a policy for Equal Employment Opportunity. This update is intended to supersede any previously documented Equal Employment Opportunity policy distributed by creative werks. The below policy will go into effect on January 1, 2025. Any exceptions to this policy should be confirmed in writing by creative werks’ management.

It is creative werks’ policy to hire, train, promote, compensate, and administer all employment practices without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital status, certain family responsibilities, or any other characteristic protected by law. The company will not tolerate any such discrimination.

The EEO policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, transfer, performance evaluation, compensation, benefits and termination.

# APPENDIX

## Flex Werk Policy



### What is Flex Werk?

Flex Werk is a work alternative that is available to certain eligible associates with the aim of improving performance and providing more flexibility and quality of life for our team members. Eligible approved employees will have the ability to Flex Werk up to two days per week.

### Work-Life Balance & Flexibility

Flex Werk is not unlimited. Flex Werk is an understanding that fosters our associate's ability to have more control over when ("time flexibility") and where ("location flexibility") work gets done without compromise to organizational performance or productivity. Flex Werk allows creative werks to provide flexibility to associates; however, the business of the creative werks demands flexibility from associates as well. The Flex Werk program is designed to allow "up to" two days per week. If an associate is approved for up to two days per week it is important to note that there will be weeks where business activities mean that they are able to only flex werk for 1 day or perhaps not at all. These "missed" flex werk days do not accumulate or rollover to the next week.

### Trust & Eligibility

The Flex Werk program is based on Trust. We trust our associates to always have creative werks' and our clients' best interests in mind while taking advantage of Flex Werk options. Trust is earned. New employees are not eligible for a Flex Werk option until they have been employed by creative werks for at least 3 months. Flex Werk eligibility is position specific. Managers, along with HR, have the authority to determine which positions are eligible based off job duties and performance.

### Equity – Not Equality

Not all Flex Werk arrangements will be exactly the same and our Flex Werk program may differ from person to person based on many factors such as an individual's role, normal office location, client schedules, cw production schedules, and personal circumstances. In the spirit of equity, salaried employees whose position is deemed ineligible for Flex Werk will be granted 3 (three) extra PTO days which will be pro-rated based on your hire date. These Flex Werk days will NOT be eligible for PTO payout at the time of termination or carryover should such a program apply.

# APPENDIX

## Nepotism Policy



creative werks is committed to maintaining a fair and equitable workplace environment where decisions regarding employment, promotion, and other employment-related matters are based on merit, qualifications, and performance. This policy is established to ensure that relationships between associates do not create conflicts of interest, give rise to perceptions of favoritism or unfair treatment, or interfere with internal investigations.

### Prohibited Actions:

- a. Employment Decisions: No associate may be involved in the hiring, promotion, transfer, or other employment decisions involving a family member or close associate.
- b. Supervision: Associates may not directly supervise, manage, or evaluate a family member or close associate.
- c. Favoritism: Associates must avoid any actions or behaviors that could give rise to perceptions of favoritism, bias, or unfair treatment towards family members or close associates.
- d. Interference in Investigations: No associate shall interfere with or obstruct internal investigations conducted by creative werks. This includes, but is not limited to, attempting to influence witnesses, tampering with evidence, or providing false information.

### Disclosure:

Associates are required to disclose any familial or close personal relationships that may create a conflict of interest or the perception thereof to Human Resources. Failure to disclose such relationships may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### Enforcement:

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity and circumstances of the violation.

# APPENDIX

## Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy Summary



At creative werks we encourage a culture of work-life balance. We truly want our associates to take time to recharge and to spend time with their friends and families. Time away from work to relax and pursue special interests is important to everyone. All creative werks associates are eligible for paid vacation days, paid sick days, and personal days - all combined into one category of “Paid Time Off” (PTO).

Associates may not take unpaid time off until they have exhausted all of their PTO. If an associate has unused PTO that has been prescheduled, they must release the prescheduled PTO to account for any unscheduled time off. If an associate exhausts his or her PTO, any unscheduled absence will be unpaid and must be approved by the supervisor. The associate must continue to pay the required portion of their benefits, which will be submitted to the HR Department each pay period unless other arrangements have been made; payment may be made by payroll deductions (when applicable) or by check.

In an effort to accommodate associates who would like to take time off early in the year, associates will be permitted to “borrow” against the PTO they expect to accrue over the course of the year. If an associate has used all their Annual PTO and wishes to take additional time off, they may take additional days off with Supervisor/Manager approval, however, it will be unpaid.

The Company understands that associates may need last minute or unexpected PTO due to illness or taking care of household concerns. You must notify your supervisor immediately if you will be taking an unexpected PTO day. If you are out sick or injured for three (3) or more days, you must provide a doctor’s release upon return.

If the illness or injury lasts longer than seven (7) days, you may be eligible to receive Short Term Disability benefits. No time off will be accrued while an associate is on any type of leave, including disability and workers compensation.

\*If you are eligible for Flex Werk and you work within the City of Chicago when you are remote, we are required by Chicago Ordinance to place you into a leave policy that meets Chicago’s legal requirements. If you flex work within Chicago city limits, you must notify the HR Department and the following policy will be applied.

# APPENDIX

## Parental Leave Policy



We recognize the importance of supporting our associates during significant life events, including the birth or adoption of a child. Our Parental Leave Policy aims to provide new parents with the time and flexibility needed to bond with their new child and adjust to their new family dynamics.

Associates with at least one year of continuous service are entitled to up to six (6) weeks of parental leave for the birth or adoption of their child within the first six months of the child's arrival. This leave must be taken in increments of 40 hours (equivalent of one workweek) at a time.

The associate must also meet one of the following criteria:

1. Be a birth mother, father, or domestic partner.
2. Have adopted a child who is 17 years old or younger. Please note this provision does not apply to the adoption of a stepchild by a stepparent.

An associate who has given birth is also eligible for a maximum of six (6) weeks paid maternity leave (eight (8) weeks for a cesarean delivery) in order to recover from the birth. This paid leave must be used in conjunction with Short Term Disability Benefits. Other types of leave (such as PTO or FMLA) can be taken with maternity leave upon approval and within legal limits.

# APPENDIX

## Reasonable Accommodation Policy



It is the policy of creative werks to make reasonable accommodation for qualified associates, interns, or applicants who have a disability or religion-based need; who need an accommodation due to pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition; or who have been subject to domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking and have made those needs known to the company. In such cases, the company will review and grant the accommodation as long as the accommodation is reasonable and does not impose an undue hardship on the company.

In addition, federal and state laws provide working moms the right to express breast milk in the workplace. creative werks will provide as needed break time and a private room for this accommodation.

Included in this policy is the company's commitment to fulfilling its obligation under the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and all other applicable state and federal statutes governing the workplace. Furthermore, it is the company's policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

creative werks will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to creative werks. All associates are required to comply with the company's safety standards and regulations.

Any associate who believes he/she may require a reasonable accommodation should contact Human Resources for an Accommodation Request Form. To the extent possible, the company will maintain as confidential all accommodation requests.



# APPENDIX

## Reasonable Accommodation Policy (cont.)



### Accommodations for Disabilities

creative werks welcomes associates and applicants with disabilities and recognizes that to provide equal access and opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities, reasonable accommodations may be needed. A reasonable accommodation refers to a change in the job or environment that allows a qualified associate with a disability to perform the essential functions of his or her job. Some examples of accommodations include:

- Redesigning work areas and equipment or acquiring new equipment
- Ensuring facility accessibility to those with physical disabilities
- Modifying work schedules or providing unpaid leave

Accommodations are made on a case by case basis, taking into account the type and severity of the disability and the specific job requirements involved. creative werks partners with eligible associates to identify the most appropriate accommodation in a given situation.

### Accommodation Process

If you require accommodations to perform your job duties properly and safely, you should advise the Human Resources Department of your need and submit a completed Accommodation Request Form.

Once creative werks is aware of an associate's disability and request for accommodation, Human Resources will enter into an interactive process with the associate to gather any required medical information and determine what reasonable accommodations are necessary. The information gathered during this process includes the nature of the associate's condition and limitations related to the associate's job, and possible accommodations that would allow the associate to perform the essential functions of his or her job. During the interactive process, creative werks will also determine whether it can provide accommodations without undue hardship.

Once accommodations have been identified and agreed to, these accommodations will be documented by Human Resources and implemented as soon as reasonably possible. If at any time the associate believes the accommodations being provided are not effective, need modification, or are no longer required, the associate should contact Human Resources.

# APPENDIX

## Safety Policy



1. **No Smoking and No Use of Illegal Drugs, Marijuana, Alcohol:** Smoking, using illegal drugs or marijuana, and/or drinking alcohol is prohibited on company premises. The possession of illegal drugs on company premises is also strictly prohibited. This includes the parking lots. Consumption of alcohol may be allowed at company sponsored events where authorized by the Executive Team and Human Resources.
2. **Horseplay/Bullying:** Fooling around or "horseplay" is dangerous and a poor excuse for fun. It will not be tolerated on company property. Horseplay includes any willful act which may startle or distract other associates. Bullying (verbal, cyber, or physical) will not be tolerated as it can negatively impact safety in the workplace. Report any form of horseplay or bullying to your supervisor or HR.
3. **Personal Protective Equipment:** Personal protective equipment (safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, face shields, respirators, etc.) is required for certain jobs for your personal safety and must be worn when specified.
4. **Walking Surfaces and Heights:** All working areas, walkways, entrance and exits should be kept clean. If a spill occurs, please clean it up and alert your supervisor. Use caution when walking or working at any height such as on a mezzanine. Distracted walking is just as dangerous as distracted driving. For your safety pay attention to your surroundings at all times. Please do not read or use your phone while moving about the plant.
5. **Safety Signs and Tags:** Safety signs and danger tags are used to warn associates and visitors of accident hazards and walking surfaces/ heights. Disregard of safety signs, tags or operation of equipment that has been "locked" or "tagged" out is a serious offense and will not be tolerated.
6. **Safety Devices and Guards:** Associates are required to use the safety devices and guards installed on machines and equipment they operate. They must not be removed or made inoperative except by authorized personnel. Any guarding or safety devices found to be removed or defective must immediately be reported to your supervisor. Never put your hand or another object past a machine guard or safety device.

# APPENDIX

## Safety Policy (cont.)



7. **Do Not Operate Equipment Unless Authorized:** Only authorized persons are permitted to operate, repair, or adjust production machinery and equipment, In regards to motorized vehicles, only creative werks certified and trained operators are permitted to operate powered industrial vehicles in any CW facility. Please refer to the Equipment Operator Safety Rules for a complete description.
8. **Riding Lift Trucks:** Associates are not permitted to ride on, or be raised up on forklift trucks unless a special safety platform attachment has been provided.
9. **Reporting of Injuries:** Every injury no matter how "minor", including near misses, must be reported promptly. Prompt treatment by trained personnel may prevent injury. It will also enable supervision to investigate and take immediate corrective action to prevent a similar accident. In addition, it is required that a formal accident report be filled out for any accident/injury no matter how slight. Eligibility for Worker's Compensation insurance could be lost if notice is not given immediately.
10. **Reporting of Hazards:** Any unsafe conditions or unsafe practices of fellow associates must be reported immediately to a supervisor. Every associate must take safety seriously and report concerns to management. The proper documentation must be filled out in the case of an accident or a near-miss.
11. **Proper Work Clothing/Apparel:**
  - Office Attire: Casual business attire is required.
  - Production Attire: Loose fitting or torn clothes must not be worn around machinery. Open-toed shoes, high heels, capri pants, canvas shoes or slippers are not permitted. The wearing of jewelry can cause serious injury and is prohibited. Hair must be covered with a hairnet while in the plant. Shorts, skirts and sleeveless shirts are prohibited.
12. **Housekeeping:** Associates are required to keep their machines, equipment, and work areas clean at all times. Aisles, exits, and fire equipment must never be blocked. Spills are to be cleaned-up immediately.

# APPENDIX

## Safety Policy (cont.)



- 13. **Proper Lifting Techniques:** Always use the proper lifting technique. Never attempt to lift or push an object which is too heavy. Contact supervisor when help is needed.
- 14. **Compressed Air:** Only authorized, trained personnel can use compressed air hoses. Improper use of defective equipment (such as using the air hose to clean off clothes or using a hose that has a missing or defective nozzle) is strictly prohibited. Report any broken or missing equipment parts to your supervisor immediately. Safety glasses/goggles should always be worn whenever using compressed air.
- 15. **Chemicals and Hazardous Substances:** Only authorized, trained personnel can use chemicals. Do not use any new chemical material without reading the label or consulting the SDS to see if there are any health or physical safety hazards. All chemicals in secondary containers must have proper labeling. Chemicals when not in use must be stored in an approved, locked cabinet. If you have any concerns or questions about a chemical and its use/storage please contact your supervisor.
- 16. **First Aid:** Associates should not administer first aid to fellow associates unless they have received First Aid, CPR, AED and Bloodborne Pathogens training. Contact your supervisor immediately in case of emergency. Associates that have witnessed an accident may be asked questions and to provide an account of the accident to help prevent future incidences.
- 17. **Emergency Evacuation Procedures:** Associates should become familiar with all general emergency evacuation processes for each facility. This includes understanding the general layouts of each building, familiarizing themselves with exit doors, and understanding the “gathering point” for each specific location. These are listed on/near each First Aid Station. When a fire alarm is heard (3 beat alarm with strobe), associates must exit immediately. Do NOT go into other areas of the building to gather personal belongings. Exit using the nearest emergency exit. Associates are instructed to meet up according to their assigned department/production line. A supervisor or appointed person will conduct a “roll-call”. Under no circumstance should any associate be let back into a building until the “All Clear” signal is given by the Fire Department or by Management.

# APPENDIX

## Safety Policy (cont.)



- 18. Severe Weather Procedures:** In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, an Air Horn will sound, alerting all to take shelter. The secure weather rooms are marked with Tornado Shelter signs. Associates should familiarize themselves with the location of designated secure rooms. All associates should remain calm and wait for further instruction until an “All Clear” is given by Management.
- 19. Cell Phone/Headphone Guidelines:** The use of cell phones and headphones on the production/warehouse floor is prohibited. There may be an occasion for certain personnel (supervisory/quality) to use their cellphones but they must do so away from the production lines. Cell phones/Headphones should not be used while driving vehicles or while operating machinery/production line. Phones can distract the operator and potentially cause accidents.
- 20. Mandatory Stretching:** All associates must follow the daily ergonomic stretching program. Ergonomic stretching is intended to prevent injury. If an associate requires a medical accommodation to the program, they should reach out to HR to complete the appropriate process. Refusal to participate in the daily ergonomic stretching program will result in disciplinary action.
- 21. Parking lot Safety:** When driving in the parking lot you must:
- Reduce speeds to under 10mph
  - Yield to pedestrians at any time/area in parking lot
  - Yield to vehicles leaving parking spaces
  - Not park in visitor spots on 1st shift unless authorized to do so
  - Report any accident to security
- 22. Dangerous Weapons:** Firearms, explosives, knives or other objects that could cause harm are strictly prohibited on company premises, including parking lots.

# APPENDIX

## Volunteer Time Off (VTO) Policy



In support of our Guiding Principles, creative werks believes firmly that success comes from the collaboration of caring professionals. We want to create a culture that promotes and inspires associates to do their very best work in alignment with company values and a broader sense of community. By allowing associates time off to volunteer, creative werks considers this an investment in its future by impacting the world around us one community at a time.

Beginning January 1, 2020, CW's VTO program is to support activities that enhance and serve communities in which we live and work and the issues that impact quality of life. We want to encourage associates from across the business to take part in volunteer activities with recognized charities and community organizations. To enable this, we will offer all regular, fulltime associates, time off with pay for up to three days or 24 hours per calendar year.

### Guidelines:

- Volunteering during normal business hours will require approval from your manager and will be subject to the needs of the business. Please speak with your manager prior to committing to an event.
- If approved, please complete the VTO form on Sharepoint. You will be paid at your normal salary/rate for the approved volunteer hours taken up to the maximum per year allotment (24 hours). If you are an hourly associate, please have your manager note your hours as VTO on your timecard.
- We would also like to encourage people to volunteer during non-working hours as well. This may also include company-sponsored charitable events or activities you are doing on your own. These types of activities do not require VTO approval nor are they applicable to paid time off, however, we still encourage you to participate. Should you volunteer outside of work, we kindly ask that you still submit your hours in order to contribute to our corporate goal.

This policy applies to CW recognized charities and community organizations that are registered as a charity or not-for-profit or tax exempt organization.



creative werks, LLC  
Responsibility Report published in 2025

This Responsibility Report reviews fiscal year January – December 2024.

