

2022

# MISSION NORTH

*IMPACT REPORT*

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## *Our mission*

Is to make a positive impact through our work, culture and community investments. To measure progress against our social impact commitments and establish benchmarks for our evolution, we've created Mission North's first annual Social Impact Report. The report highlights our core programs and the milestones we achieved in 2021.

Our goals for documenting this work and publishing the report are three-fold:

- to hold ourselves accountable for fostering a culture of belonging, corporate philanthropy and volunteerism at Mission North;
- to attract and retain people committed to making a positive impact within our industry and the communities in which we live; and
- to inform and inspire the social impact work led by our industry peers and clients.

Among the new social impact initiatives we launched and the milestones we accomplished last year, we're proudest of the following:

- We surpassed \$1 million in support for community-based nonprofits via employee-directed grants and pro bono services since launching E3thos, our corporate social responsibility program, five years ago. We developed [The Future Is... Fellowship](#), an annual fellowship and scholarship program. This year we focus on BIPOC women in college interested in technology and science communications, providing mentorship, a \$15,000 scholarship, a four-week remote internship and a \$5,000 stipend.
- We committed more than 600 paid volunteer hours to organizations in our local communities, including the San Francisco Education Fund and Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City.
- We delivered more than \$100,000 in pro bono services to Technovation, the Fintech Equality Coalition and Kiva.
- We continued our deep work to make Mission North a more diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace through internal initiatives and training led by outside experts. While this will always be work in progress, we're encouraged that the vast majority of our team—90%—believe Mission North welcomes diversity.
- Finally, we made a positive impact through our work advising and telling stories for clients like Gusto, Upside Foods, Enko Chem, Ecovative, Google Sustainability and UKG.

These examples represent a fraction of our journey to always be learning, experimenting and improving when it comes to making a positive social impact. We're encouraged by our progress but also recognize this is just the beginning.

*Tyler + Bill*  
*CO-CEOs*

# **About Mission North**

**Mission North is the communications agency for the companies shaping our future with science and technology.**

**We help these future-shaping organizations navigate the moments shaping their own.**

## We believe storytelling can advance solutions to the biggest challenges of our time.

We're ignited by telling stories that will make a lasting impact, and we partner with visionary companies to help them drive positive change within their industries.

## We make a positive impact beyond the bottom line through our work, culture and community investments.

Our values, clients and progressive culture allow us to attract and retain an exceptionally talented team of storytellers who understand the impact that our words and actions have on the world around us.

We give back 2% of profits, 2% of our time, and 2% of partner equity through our E3thos program and have invested more than \$1 million through employee-directed grants and pro bono services.

## Move with a purpose

*We strive to make a positive impact  
with our work and in our communities.*

## Test yourself

*Big thinking leads to big things.  
We are always pushing to experiment,  
learn and achieve the unexpected.*

## Do the right thing

*Above all else, our commitment to  
doing the right thing guides every  
decision.*

## Invest in team first

*To make the biggest impact,  
we first invest in our people.*

## Words have power

*Words have the power to move hearts,  
minds and markets. We use them carefully.*

## Come as you are

*Different perspectives make for great  
ideas. We encourage everyone to bring  
their whole selves to work.*



**MOVE WITH  
A PURPOSE**

**TEST  
YOURSELF**



**DO THE  
RIGHT THING**



**INVEST IN  
TEAM FIRST**

**WORDS HAVE  
POWER**



**COME AS  
YOU ARE**



# Our People

## Our Commitment to Invest in Team First

We strive to bring our best selves to work while living our values. We hire people who are motivated by making an impact, collaborating with others and advancing equity.

We're dedicated to building a culture of belonging at Mission North that welcomes individuality and celebrates diverse abilities and perspectives. We're taking action to increase the diversity of our team and create pathways for a diverse group of leaders within our industry.

We foster a workplace where every employee can voice their ideas, share feedback and advocate for positive change. Our leadership team partners with Mission North's Employee Advisory Group to make decisions about the clients we work with, the benefits we offer, the policies we introduce and other investments that impact our team.

# Our People Team

Mission North's People Team is committed to creating an environment where every employee has the ability to thrive. Here's what our Head of People and Head of Employee Experience have to say about their work in 2021:

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## What is unique about Mission North's approach to People Operations?

I've been lucky to work in some great organizations prior to Mission North. I've tried to bring the best of those places here and discard what was outdated or didn't fit. Mission North differentiates itself by taking a holistic approach to People—for example, by investing in our Communities (ERGs), regular learning opportunities and monthly points of connection, and by offering opportunities to switch career paths within the agency. We're always trying to improve as a team and make Mission North an exceptional place to work.



## What new People initiatives are you most proud of introducing in 2021?

I'm thrilled to have had the support of the leadership team to uplevel our investment in employee experience in 2021. We hired Janessa Mondestin, a dedicated professional with eyes and ears on all things related to employee relations, social impact and culture. For an agency our size to have invested in that level of support and guidance is tremendous.

## What are you most looking forward to implementing in 2022?

I'm excited to introduce company-wide compensation training this year. We already have strong compensation practices in place and now everyone will have more information about what those practices mean, both for employees and for the business. I'm also proud that Mission North will be tying compensation for senior employees (directors and above) to their social impact contributions.



## What does employee experience at Mission North mean to you?

Employee experience is ensuring we're aligned between who we say we are and how those values show up. If we find through check-ins or surveys that we're misaligned, we need to course-correct in a feasible and acceptable time period.

One thing that holds me accountable is this quote from Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Employee experience is about how you feel at the end of the day when you say, "I work for Mission North."



Janessa Mondestin,  
Head of Employee Experience



## How does Mission North think about measuring employee experience?

Broadly speaking, a mix of annual engagement surveys and pulse check-ins is great. When I joined Mission North, I talked to everyone (then 86 employees) over 3.5 weeks and identified common threads across those one-on-one interviews.

However, measuring employee experience is deeper than just looking at the numbers. It's important to ask questions like, "What do we mean by inclusion, and how do we show up to be inclusive?" "How did an individual leave the organization? Were they upset, or did they describe a positive experience?"



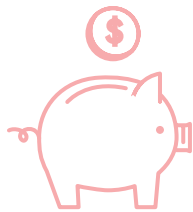
## What's next in employee experience for 2022?

I think we'll see an ever-developing and nuanced language about managing people and leading change in companies. All of this work is about diversity, equity and inclusion.

It comes down to how we include more people, figure out which values matter most to our employees, and help them show up and do their best work. It sounds simple, but it's incredibly intricate. And I think all of it will continue to evolve as the world evolves.

## Our Benefits

Armed with feedback from our people, we've continued to invest in our team's growth and happiness through mentorship and professional development, flexible work policies and world-class benefits, including profit-sharing, unlimited PTO, sabbatical leave and paid volunteer time.



*PROFIT-SHARING*



*UNLIMITED PTO*



*FULL HEALTH*



*FLEXIBLE WORK POLICY*



*STIPENDS*



*SABBATICAL*

In 2021, Mission North increased our monthly wellness stipend from \$40 to \$55, offering additional support for employees to take care of themselves in whatever ways best meets their needs. Here's some of what we spent it on:



**Therapy**



**Facials**



**Plants**



**Virtual dance**



**Yoga**



**Office equipment**



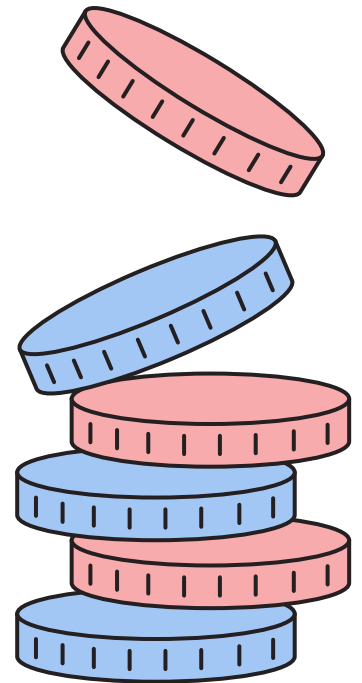
**Nail services**

## Commitment to Pay Equity

In 2021, Mission North maintained 100% pay equity across every level and team at the company.

Our annual audit helps ensure we compensate every employee equitably for their role, regardless of race, gender and age.

The study also helps us evolve our compensation practices so that we are leading the industry among similarly sized and focused agencies while remaining competitive with in-house careers. We've invested in Payscale, a third-party data provider, to support this effort; we also draw on salary data from PRWEEK and the PR Council.



### Professional Development

We are dedicated to helping our team grow and develop in the areas they care about both at work and beyond. Everyone at Mission North gets an annual \$500 stipend to take a course, attend an industry conference or advance their skills so they can grow in ways that support their interests and career goals. Here are a few ways our team used our stipends in 2021:

- Business writing courses
- Spanish lessons
- Business of Cannabis course
- Attending the virtual Gotham Writers Conference
- Grammarly and Lucidchart subscriptions

In response to employees' interest in additional training, Mission North has also invested in LinkedIn Learning, which offers expert-led courses in the form of micro-learning sessions and self-directed learning paths.

# Diversity, Belonging & Equity

Diversity, belonging and equity (DB&E) are woven into our business and our culture, and we continue to evolve our policies, norms, practices and investments to build a more progressive future for our organization and industry.

Living up to our values requires that we advance equity within our organization, through our work and in our communities. It requires sustained focus and action—as a company and as individuals, starting with our most senior leadership and extending to every person at Mission North.

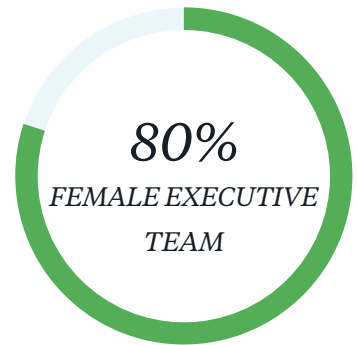
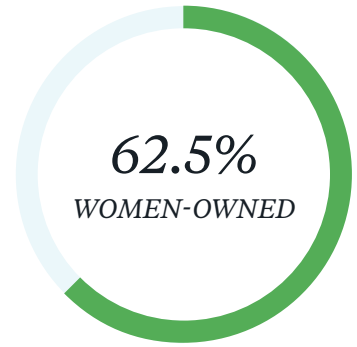
## We do this work by:

- Hiring, recruiting and retaining a diverse team
- Fostering a culture of belonging
- Encouraging supportive conversation, connection and community
- Partnering with companies and people who share our commitments
- Investing time and resources in causes that advance equity
- Activating our networks to join us in this work
- Building pathways for the next generation of talent in our industry
- Holding ourselves accountable to our goals and communicating our progress

## How We Identify

We believe the best way to meet the unique needs of our clients and colleagues is to bring together sharp thinkers from a wide range of backgrounds and take action to make every team member feel welcomed and celebrated.

Here's a snapshot of the diversity of perspectives we bring to the table:



### Racial and ethnic diversity:

The racial and ethnic diversity of our team spans the globe, with Mission Northerners hailing from Sub-Saharan African, Middle Eastern, Asian, Caribbean and Indigenous American communities. One quarter of our team identifies as people of color.

**25%**

of employees identify  
as People of Color

**25%**

of employees identify  
as neurodivergent

**18%**

of employees identify  
as living with a disability



### Geographic footprint

Before the pandemic, we never thought it was possible to build such a geographically distributed team beyond our offices in San Francisco, Brooklyn and Portland. Today, our team lives and works from more than 25 cities and towns around the country.

## Connecting Through Communities

Formerly known as employee resource groups (ERGs), our Communities are employee-led groups for connecting with others about the intersecting identities and causes we care about.



### LGBTQ+:

Our LGBTQ+ community is a safe space for members of the community to come together to share ideas, celebrations, concerns and solutions.



### Mental Health:

The mental health community exists to facilitate open conversation and identify ways to support mental health for everyone at Mission North.



### People of Color:

The People of Color (PoC) community brings together team members who identify as PoC for casual coworker connections, discussion of current events, and education for the broader Mission North community on issues impacting PoC.



### Sustainability:

The sustainability community brings together members who are passionate about sustainability and environmentalism through discussions, volunteer opportunities and company initiatives.



## Measuring Belonging

In 2021, we introduced an annual belonging survey, *Measuring What Matters*, focused on our work in inclusion, equity and belonging. The goal is to move beyond diversity stats and better understand the impact of our efforts over the past year.

We found:

**80%**

of employees feel connected to Mission North, our purpose and practice

**77/100**

Belonging Score

**85%**

of employees feel Mission North's values mirror their personal values

**91%**

of employees feel respected and treated as human beings first, not just units of productivity

**90%**

of employees believe Mission North welcomes diversity

**85%**

of employees believe Mission North is an inclusive workplace

## Key Initiatives

In 2021, Mission North's DB&E committee partnered with Mosaic Consulting to help our company deepen our work in fostering a diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace.

As a result of that partnership, Mission North has implemented the following initiatives:

### Employee Advisory Group (EAG)

Made up of 10 employees at all levels, this peer-nominated group helps ensure that Mission North is managing the company's growth with an eye toward creating a world-class experience for every employee. The EAG advises our executive team on critical planning activities to guide our most important agency initiatives and investments.

### Fellowship

In partnership with the PRSA Foundation, Mission North launched [The Future Is... Fellowship](#), a unique opportunity for BIPOC women in college interested in technology and science communications. Developed in 2021 and announced in early 2022, the annual fellowship program awards one student a \$15,000 scholarship and a \$5,000 stipend for a paid, one-month internship at Mission North. The program is designed to create pathways for the next generation of leaders, specifically those who have historically been excluded from the industry.

### Leadership Intensive

Our commitment to becoming an anti-racist company means that DB&E work is ongoing and starts at the leadership level. In 2021, Mission North's executive leadership team began a six-month intensive with The Adaway Group focused on learning and unlearning the ways white supremacy manifests in every organization's norms, policies and practices.

# E<sup>3</sup>thos

E<sup>3</sup>thos is Mission North's corporate social responsibility program, launched in 2016 as an extension of our core values. Inspired by the 1-1-1 movement created by Salesforce, E<sup>3</sup>thos pledges 2% of Mission North's profits, 2% of our time and 2% of our partner equity to support nonprofits in our communities with a focus on advancing Equity, Empowerment and Environment.

Since 2016, Mission North has committed more than \$1 million toward these causes through employee-directed grants, pro bono services for nonprofit organizations, and paid volunteer hours for all employees.



Bill Bourdon  
Co-CEO

*“Prioritizing purpose over profit has allowed us to hire and retain the best people in our industry, and has played a powerful role in attracting world-class clients who share our ethos.”*

**2021 E<sup>3</sup>thos commitments in 2021:**

\$70,000

in grants +  
donations  
including:



Canal Alliance exists to break the generational cycle of poverty for Latino immigrants and their families by lifting barriers to their success.



Casa Ruby is the only LGBTQ bilingual and multicultural organization in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area that provides social services and programs for the community's most vulnerable.



“[Mission North’s] Impact Grant will provide invaluable support for Summer on the Hill’s enrichment programs for low-income students from the Bronx and northern Manhattan, including academic classes, counseling, and placement. You will be helping the gifted young people we serve realize their potential as students, as individuals, and as valued members of their communities.”

*Markell Parker, Executive Director, Summer on the Hill*

**Employee donation matching**



\$100,000

in pro bono  
services for the  
following clients:

**FINTECH  
EQUALITY  
COALITION**

**kiva**

**TECHNOVATION**



**Tate R.**  
Account Coordinator at  
Mission North

“Giving back and working towards a bigger purpose has always been something important to me. Working on [pro bono account] Kiva has allowed me to engage, amplify and uplift the stories of inspiring entrepreneurs who are breaking barriers and challenging the status quo in their communities. I have immense admiration for MN and the integration of pro bono clients into our portfolio; it has filled my days with gratifying and enriching work, and for that, I am forever grateful!”

“Mission North is an incredibly strategic partner and from the very beginning asked the right questions to understand Kiva’s goals. They built our team from a deep bench and draw on wide expertise when needed. Their flexibility and investment in the partnership is helping drive Kiva’s global social impact.”



**Doug Seckinger**  
VP, Communications at Kiva

# 622 paid volunteer hours



We organize opportunities for our team to volunteer directly with young people in partnership with organizations serving our communities in New York and San Francisco.

Every employee at Mission North receives 40 paid volunteer hours per year so they can support the causes and organizations that matter to them, whether by serving on nonprofit boards, fostering puppies or mentoring kids and adults. Here's what a few of our most prolific volunteers had to say about using their paid volunteer hours:



**Mithila S.,  
Associate**

“Over the past few years, I’ve developed a passion for teaching English as a second language. Since Washington, D.C., is such a diverse and vibrant city, it made sense to start volunteering at the [Washington English Center](#). I tutor English conversation on a weekly basis, focusing on everything from grammar to workplace behavior. I feel very fortunate that Mission North provides paid volunteer hours so I can stay involved in my community!”



**Sydney P.,  
Senior Associate**

“I’ve been using my volunteer hours to foster pups with [Dog Gone Seattle](#), a rescue organization that brings dogs from high-kill states to the Pacific Northwest through their foster-to-adopt program. Rescues need so much time, love and care when they are first brought home and Mission North’s flexibility and encouragement has made the journeys easy.”



**Melinda B.,  
Vice President**

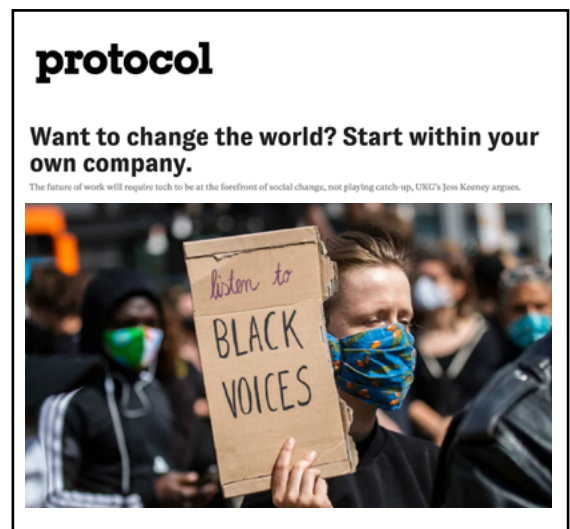
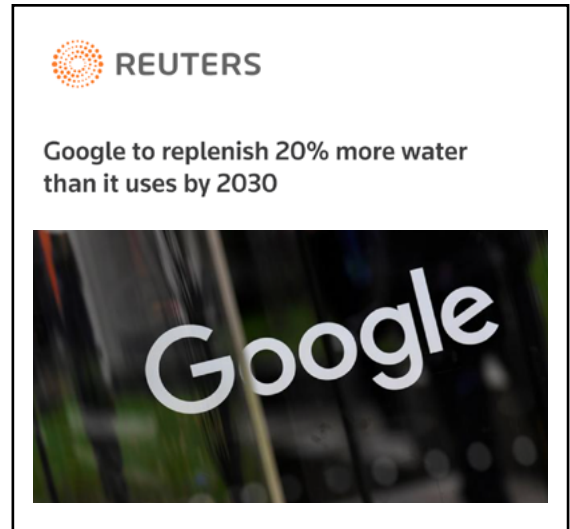
“Part of what drew me to Mission North was the partners’ dedication to creating an agency that values giving back and that allows its staff to truly take on efforts that are meaningful to them. As a [CASA](#) volunteer, I’m able to take meetings and attend important events on behalf of the youth we work with. This not only fills my cup in my personal life, but is also encouraged and celebrated by my MN community. We inspire each other to find ways of bringing this spirit to all the work we do.”

# Client Impact

## Client Impact

The clients we work with are making an impact on a global scale. They are combating disinformation, unlocking capital for the unbanked and powering autonomous flight. They are making workplaces more equitable, reimagining the food system and advocating for a better world for all.

In 2021, we helped our clients tell countless stories about technology- and science-driven solutions to global challenges. Here are a few:





# Looking Ahead

After a memorable 2021, we're excited about the impact our work will have in 2022 and beyond. We'll continue investing in our team through new mentorship and sponsorship frameworks, strive for 4,000 hours of agency volunteer work, and partner with more organizations developing solutions for a better world.

We're also tying compensation for our senior leaders at Mission North to their contributions making a positive impact inside Mission North and within their local communities.

We invite you to join us on our journey. Visit us at [missionnorth.com](https://missionnorth.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).