

# Building Better Brands Together

Our commitment to sustainability and growing our positive impact on associates, customers and communities.



# Brand Love, Built Better, Together.<sup>TM</sup>

**Brands are presented in advertising, but they live and evolve in experiences.**

Many of the world's most iconic brands have trusted us for decades to help them build brand love through custom merchandise experiences that align with their brand values.

This report outlines how our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy aligns with client values just as authentically.

It explains how our proprietary Green Light Responsible Sourcing platform creates sustainability improvement far beyond the direct impact of our own operations.

It showcases the passion of the best people in promo for supporting each other, the communities we live in, and the client missions we serve.

In total, it demonstrates how our holistic, full-value chain approach to CSR makes Staples Promo a more authentic brand and business fit for enterprises that share our core commitment to sustainability.



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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Daron Hines*

I'm proud to share with you our third annual Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report – a reflection of the progress we've made over the past year in support of our vision to advance the industry toward a more sustainable future.

This past year, we've made bold strides that reflect not only our values, but our unwavering commitment to progress. **Throughout this report, you'll discover meaningful achievements from the past year—driven by the passion and commitment of our associates who bring our purpose to life each day.**

I'm delighted to share that **all of our North American facilities are now powered by 100% renewable electricity** through the purchase of renewable energy certificates (RECs). This milestone is a testament to our aggressive climate actions and dedication to reducing environmental impact.

We're also continuing to deepen the impact of our Green Light Responsible Sourcing program. **Today, 73% of our total U.S. spend flows through this initiative**, supporting suppliers who align with our sustainability standards and ethical practices. This is a powerful reflection of what's possible when we work together toward shared goals.

In addition, we've expanded our focus globally. Our UK-based offices, who operate under the name Marke Creative, have established sustainable baseline metrics and launched local initiatives to drive measurable sustainability outcomes. This marks an exciting new chapter in our global sustainability journey.

Across every corner of our business, we continue to align people, partnerships, and purpose to deliver meaningful change. These achievements didn't happen overnight—they are the result of the incredible collaboration between our customers, our supply chain partners, and our passionate associates.

**As we look ahead, we remain energized and optimistic. We will continue to invest in the initiatives that matter most: those that reduce our impact, uplift our communities, and strengthen our ability to build better brands—together.**

Thank you for being part of our journey.

# Staples Promotional Products Highlights



# Marke Creative Highlights

Staples Promotional Products operates as Marke Creative in the United Kingdom.



Sedex<sup>2</sup> | Member



# Staples Highlights

**11**  
Business  
Resource  
Groups

**\$ Matching  
401K &  
RRSP**

  
**\$7,600,000+**  
Cause for  
Caring Matching  
Donations

 SCIENCE  
BASED  
TARGETS  
DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

Annual  
**Wellness  
Reimbursement**  
Program

**Believe & Achieve!**  
LIVING OUR VALUES AWARDS

**HSA + FSA**  
Programs

 Junior  
Achievement™

 **Social Justice**  
Resource Center

  
**Subsidized  
Healthcare  
Plan Options**

# Company Overview

We create custom merchandise experiences that grow brand love in hearts and markets around the world.



# We are the Brand Love, Built Better Together™ company.

We help clients grow brand love in hearts and markets worldwide with elevated custom merchandise experiences.

The industry's most strategic experts, supply chain and logistics network enable us to deliver more powerful, authentic, and sustainable brand impact.

75+

Years in business.

500+

Custom online branded merchandise stores.

100+

Client relationships exceeding a decade.

30+

Years ASI Central top 5 sales ranking based on organic growth.

40+

Global programs.

38

Fortune 100 contract clients.

100%

North American facilities powered by Green-e certified renewable electricity.

40+

Global locations.



Earned Nike's highest rating for embroidery and screen-printing quality.



Global online stores & fulfillment.

Power 50

President, Daron Hines ranked most influential executives by ASI Central.



Global SaaS-based incentive & recognition solutions.

# We're dedicated to delivering the **results** you need.

**Our passionate brand experience experts put strategy over stuff. We ideate and execute beyond the merch to help you achieve the mission behind your investment.**

## SOLUTIONS

Culture, rewards & recognition programs  
Custom merchandise design  
Custom manufactured apparel & merchandise  
Online branded merchandise eStores  
Online "pop-up" event & gifting sites  
Licensing support  
Kitting & packaging

## RESULTS

Boost employee engagement, retention, and productivity.  
More heartfelt recognition of associate tenure and achievements.  
Enhance brand visibility for events and sponsorships.  
Create more immersive and integrated marketing experiences.  
Defeat digital fatigue with impactful, tangible impressions.  
More brand personal interactions with customers, and associates.  
Achieve better communication outcomes.  
Implement more effective affinity marketing strategies.  
Maximize ROI for key initiatives.



# We create **moving experiences** for those who move your business forward.

We elevate employee engagement and brand connection in the most meaningful career moments...from recruitment to retirement and all the accomplishments and events in between.

Each solution is designed around client-objectives, branding and messaging.

We leverage our SaaS platform to issue points and allow recipients to select awards they personally value, increasing satisfaction and reducing logistics costs.



# Our solutions are **borderless.**

The world's most loved brands count on us for multi-national merchandise experiences, online stores, tenure awards and points programs.

We pair agile regional merchandise sourcing, fulfillment and account services with centralized assortment planning, brand guardianship and dashboard reporting.

Our global sourcing and compliance experts ensure every merchandise experience is ethically sourced and brand correct wherever you are.



# We help small businesses **find brand love** with StaplesPromo.com.

## FIND

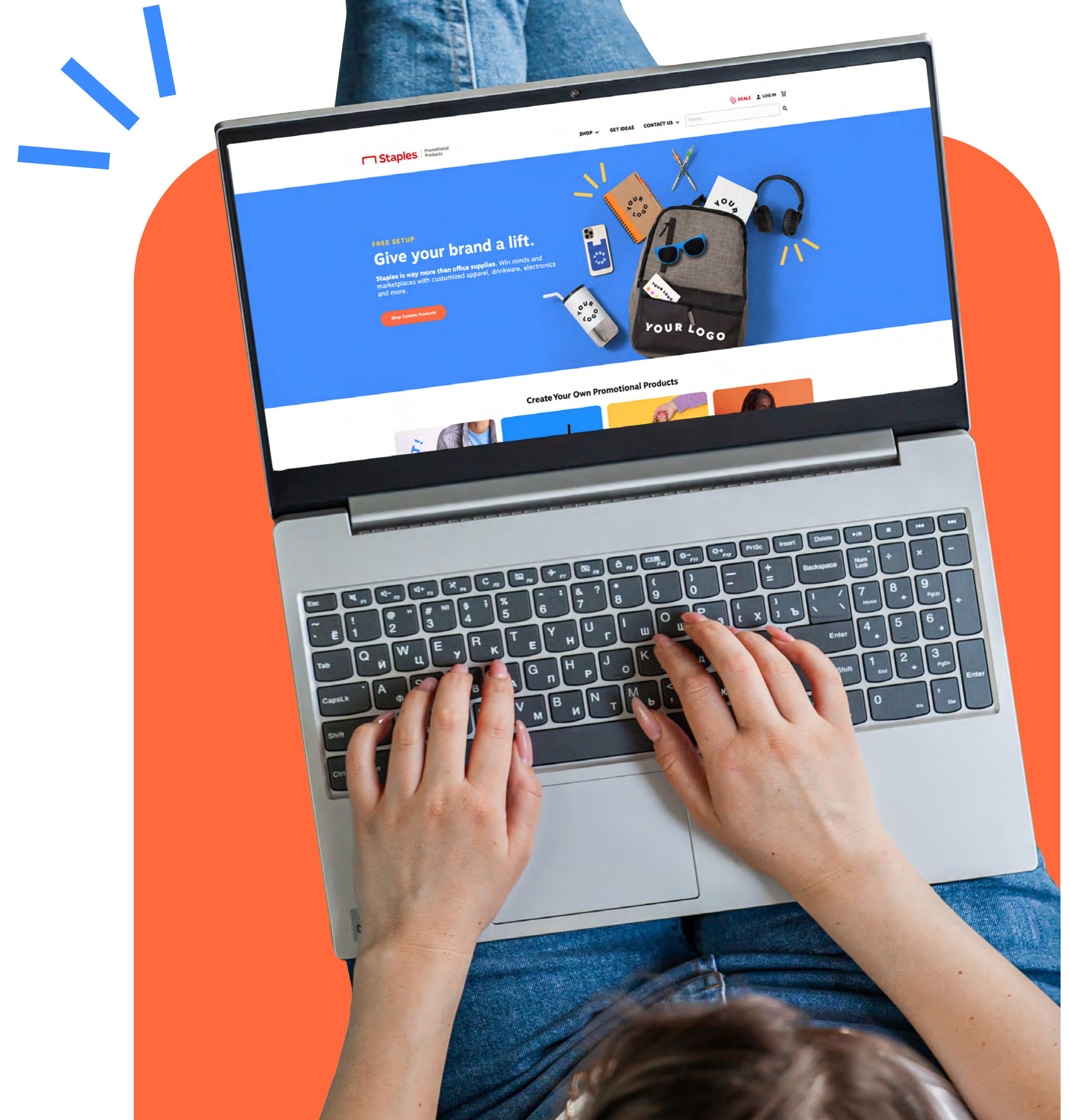
Discover new and exciting products perfect for your brand, audience and message.

## BRAND

Upload your logo or design and preview the brand experience.

## LOVE

Give people engaging merchandise experiences that help them love your brand as much as you do.



# We're living our values.



## **Deliver for Customers**

We strive to deeply understand and create real solutions for customers. We continually innovate, execute and make it easy to choose us.



## **Keep it Simple**

We focus on what is most important. We eliminate complexity and are not distracted by things that do not matter.



## **Get it Done**

We give it our all and push ourselves to be our best. We continuously learn and stretch to achieve our goals and believe in accountability.



## **Win Together**

We play as an inclusive and diverse team. We collaborate to break down internal barriers to deliver results. We always play to win.





# Sustainability

Our holistic strategy provides full value chain transparency and metrics.

# The most impactful journeys are holistic.

According to an article from McKinsey & Company over 90% of the adverse environmental impacts of brand merchandising occur in supply chain. The most impactful sustainability improvement journeys therefore require strategies to improve both operations and supply chain.

This report outlines our holistic, global approach.

## WE DEMONSTRATE:

- Year-over-year sustainability improvement metrics for our own operations.
- Year-over-year sustainability improvement metrics for our supply chain partners.

**Anne-Titia Bové and Steven Swartz**

*Starting at the source: Sustainability in Supply Chains: McKinsey*

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/starting-at-the-source-sustainability-in-supply-chains#/>



# Staples Promo Corporate Social Responsibility Team

Our CSR journey is guided by a multidisciplinary team with over 160 years of collective branded merchandising experience. Each member has expertise in different areas of the business. Multiple perspectives enrich our more holistic strategy for improving sustainability, engagement and community support. The team continuously monitors progress and advises Senior Leadership on how our CSR strategies, tactics and investments should evolve.



**Larry Sanson**  
Director, Facility Operations



**Tom Goddard**  
Director, Procurement & Supply Chains



**Jason Hisey**  
Manager, Supply Chain & Sustainability Strategy



**Ruiping Ramboldt**  
Manager, Global Projects & Solutions



**Heather Wunderlich**  
Manager, Global Compliance



**Candi Vink**  
Executive Assistant



**Cathy Ward**  
Director, Strategic Project Management



**Melisa Courtney**  
Manager, Brand Marketing



**Bill Gossman**  
VP Customer Experience



**Amitesh Patro**  
Business Development Executive, Canada



**Sam Krause**  
Content Strategy



**Starr Plowman**  
Project Manager



**Maura Swanson**  
Sr. Marketing Manager



**Sarah Schlosser**  
Manager, Brand Creative



**Colin Adams**  
Art Director



**Donna Murphy**  
Sourcing & Compliance Director - Marke Creative Merchandise

# Our Staples Advantage

**Staples is committed to giving every business an advantage, including ours.**

**Staples is keenly focused on progressively improving the sustainability of all business consumables.** They also recognize how important it is that brands have full and specific value chain transparency for the products that broadcast their brands into hearts and marketplaces around the world.

Accordingly, Staples Promo is the only line of business to separately control and report sustainability content. We've leveraged this independence to create unmatched branded merchandise value chain transparency. At the same time, we also contribute to Staples-wide goals such as Science Based Target initiatives (SBTi) approved greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals.

Even though our people, technology, operations and sustainability controls are singularly dedicated to branded merchandise, the leadership and shared resources of Staples provides industry-exclusive advantages.

For example, membership in the Staples Sustainability Advisory Council brings synergies to our respective sustainability planning and investments. Staples also provides shared services, such as benefits administration and our business resource groups,, which enable us to attract the industry's best and most diverse talent.

In sum, the collective Staples advantage and support enables us to concentrate more on the client brand missions and sustainability leadership while spending less time and resources on administrative functions.

[VIEW STAPLES CSR REPORT](#)

## Staples Sustainability Team

The sustainability department provides strategic direction and subject matter expertise, establishes goals and KPIs, measures and reports on progress, and supports the business and our customers.

**Jake Swenson**  
Director, Sustainability

**Eamon Devlin**  
Manager, Sustainability

## Staples Sustainability Advisory Council

The advisory council provides input and advice to the Staples senior leadership team and sustainability department regarding our sustainability strategy and goals and supports business alignment.

**Cristina Gonzalez**  
Chief Legal Officer

**Jeffrey Mason**  
Sr. Director PD, Quality Reg Comp

**Andrew Freedman**  
VP, Customer Success

**Dan Pina**  
Director, Trans 3rd Party Operations

**Carly Kearnan**  
VP Merchandise Operations & Vendor Management

**Stacy L Gilmore**  
Director, Customer Development Staples Advantage

**Jason Hisey**  
Manager, Supply Chain & Sustainability Strategy



# We build better brands with sustainability transparency.

## PURPOSE

We build better brands while caring for people and planet.

## MISSION

Deliver best-in-class brand experiences with full value chain transparency via enhanced supply chain oversight and aggregated supplier sustainability ratings.

## VISION

Advance the industry toward a more sustainable future through focus on internal operations and sustainable procurement practices.

# Our Strategy

1

Collaborate with Staples to achieve our SBTi approved goal of reducing operational emissions 35% by 2028; annually measure GHG emissions; and implement reduction opportunities.

2

Use EcoVadis Carbon Action Module to assess carbon strategy maturity for supply chain partners; provide coaching and incentives to improve; and encourage each to adopt science-based targets.

3

Measure supply chain and internal operations annually with EcoVadis Assessment Ratings while driving continuous improvement across the value chain.

4

Educate internal buyers, as well as suppliers, on sustainability initiatives and best practices.

5

Develop purchasing reports specific to client merchandise consumption of products that meet elevated standards for sustainability while partnering with suppliers to widen assortments of such products.

# United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are our shared blueprint for more responsible advertising.

The United Nations has objectively defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals provide a “shared blueprint” to tackle climate change and preserve our oceans and forests.

Shared SDG alignment is an opportunity to build better brands together. It makes branded merchandising with Staples Promo a deeper investment in your own sustainability goals and brand promises.





# Our SDG-Aligned Commitments

## GOAL 13

### CLIMATE ACTION

SBTi has approved Staples goal of carbon emissions reduction.

All facilities in North America are powered by 100% renewable electricity.

93% of all shipments were carbon neutral in 2024 via third party programs.

## GOAL 12

### RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Green Light Responsible Sourcing measures suppliers.

Focus on continuous improvement with waste diversion from landfills and incineration.

Outline standards for sustainable products.

## GOAL 6

### CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

Use of water-soluble inks certified to be free of harmful pollutants.

Biannual wastewater testing.

In 2024, our decoration and fulfillment facility in Orange City, IA used 1.4M gallons of water.

# We're leading the industry towards more holistic, objective and transparent sustainability improvement.

## ECOVADIS SILVER RATING

### **Annual EcoVadis assessment for own operations.**

Staples Promo operations are annually assessed and scored for sustainability by EcoVadis. Independent, objective sustainability assessment and reporting stop here for most all distributors — but not for Staples Promo!

## STAPLES PROMO LEADERSHIP

### **Annual EcoVadis assessment for each supplier partner's operations.**

In 2022, Staples Promo became the only brand merchandiser to require its supplier partners to annually undergo the same 4-theme, 21-criteria EcoVadis sustainability assessments for their respective operations.

## STAPLES PROMO LEADERSHIP

### **Exclusive EcoVadis supplier sustainability dashboard.**

Supplier partner EcoVadis assessments for all themes and criteria populate our exclusive dashboard, enabling us to more effectively plan and drive sustainability improvement with each partner. The dashboard informs exactly where and how to partner for year over year score improvement.

## STAPLES PROMO LEADERSHIP

### **Global Green Light Responsible Sourcing standard.**

In 2022, Staples Promo became the only distributor uniting domestic and global supplier partners under the same independent and objective EcoVadis-powered sustainable procurement and reporting platform.

## STAPLES PROMO LEADERSHIP

### **Annual reporting of aggregate supply chain score and ratio of assessed procurement dollars by region.**

Staples Promo is the only distributor that reports a separate aggregate EcoVadis score based on the overall performance of assessed suppliers, for each country. We are equally transparent about the ratio of our total procurement dollars that are EcoVadis-assessed.

## WHAT'S NEXT

### **Reporting for client-specific purchasing of products that satisfy elevated standards for sustainability.**

Participating clients will receive reporting which details their enterprise's purchases of merchandise with verified eco attributes. Originally planned for late 2024 release, this enhanced sustainability reporting is being refined for later release.

A man with a beard, wearing a green and blue plaid shirt, is shown from the chest up, looking down at a plant in a field. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green foliage and a clear sky. The overall tone is natural and sustainable.

# Carbon Strategy

Taking action to mitigate climate change.

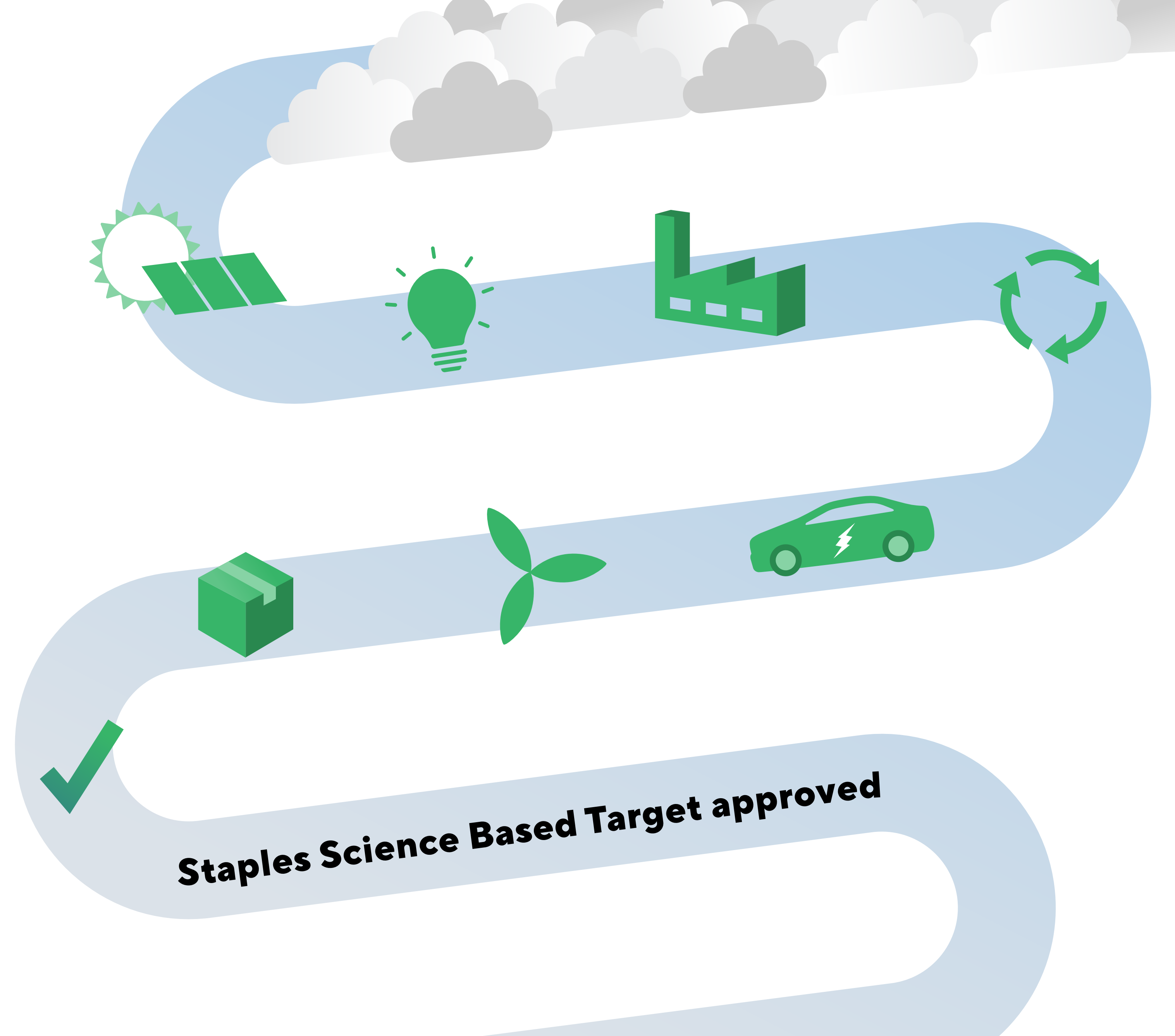


## SCIENCE BASED TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION



Staples Reports to  
CDP on behalf of  
requesting clients.



# Emissions Overview

Carbon emissions (GHG Emissions) includes seven gases. All of these are combined and reported as CO<sub>2</sub>-e.

SULFUR HEXAFLUORIDE SF <sub>4</sub>	HYDROFLUOROCARBONS HFCs	
METHANE CH <sub>4</sub>	NITROUS OXIDE N <sub>2</sub>	CARBON DIOXIDE CO <sub>2</sub>
PERFLUOROCARBONS PFCs	NITROGEN TRIFLUORIDE NF <sub>3</sub>	

Reducing carbon / GHG emissions is a key objective for combatting climate change. That’s why Staples participates in the SBTi. Our carbon reduction performance rolls up to the approved SBTi goal.

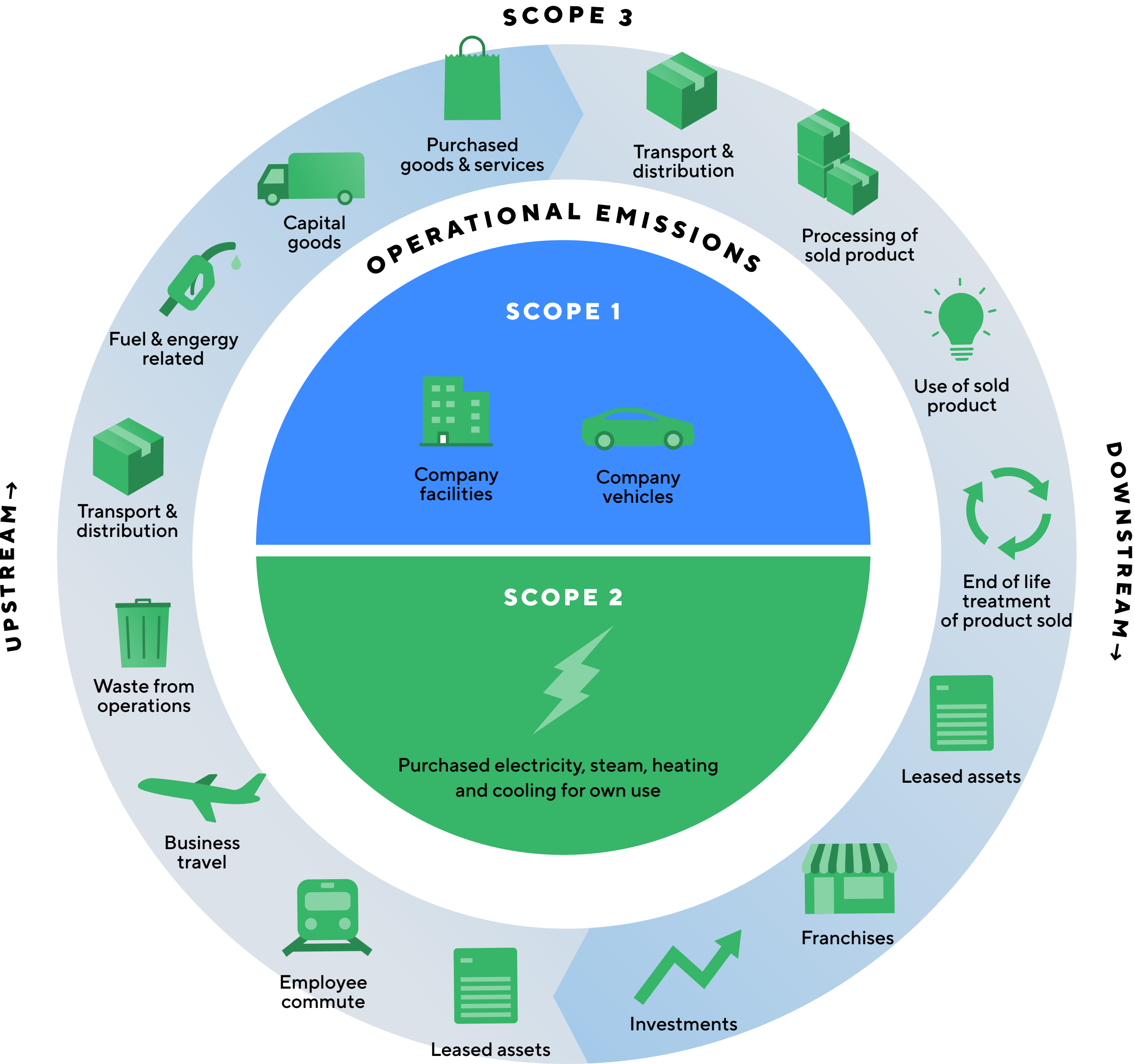
Staples Promo prepares an annual emissions inventory classifies emissions by scope in accordance with The GHG Protocol.

According to The GHG Protocol, emissions fall into three categories:

**Scope 1**  
Direct emissions from sources that are owned or managed by an enterprise, such as a company-owned delivery fleet, or boilers for heating.

**Scope 2**  
Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased power, including electricity consumed in our operations.

**Scope 3**  
Indirect emissions occur both upstream and downstream within the value chain, such as the goods we purchase, capital equipment and freight.



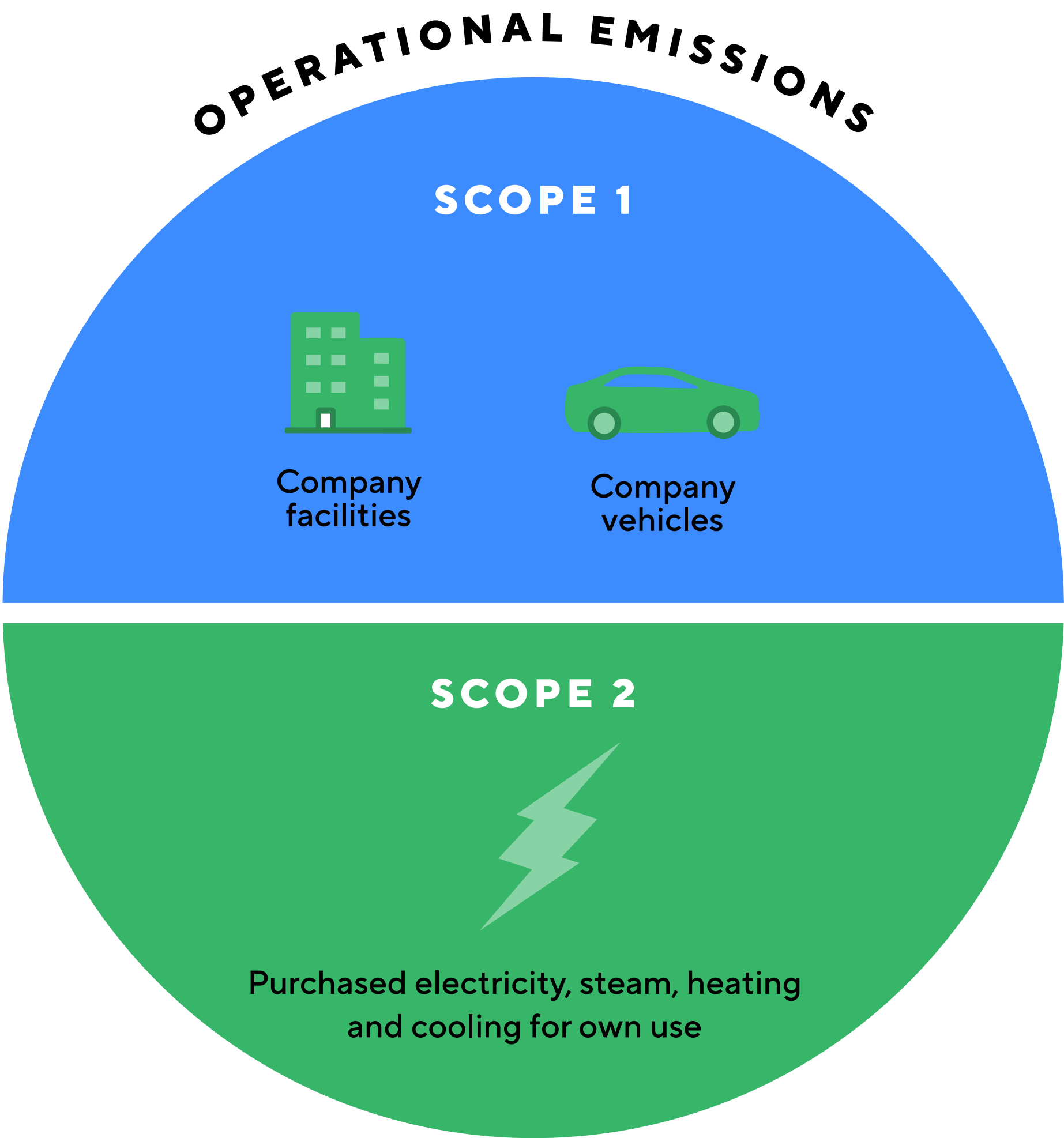
# Scopes 1 and 2

Scope 1 and 2 emissions are less than **0.5%** of our total emissions.

Most of this energy is expended in our primary decoration and distribution center, located in Orange City, Iowa.\* This facility is 100% powered by renewable electricity.

In 2024, the entirety of our business was powered by renewable electricity through the purchase of \*Green-E Certified renewable energy certificates.

\*Staples conducts an annual carbon inventory in which it finalizes its carbon emissions for the past fiscal year. The inventory’s methodology follows that of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. The annual inventories serve as the basis for Staples Inc.’s approved science-based targets, including claims regarding carbon reductions. Staples Inc. does not purchase voluntary carbon offsets at this time. Annual inventories have not been verified by an independent third party at this time.

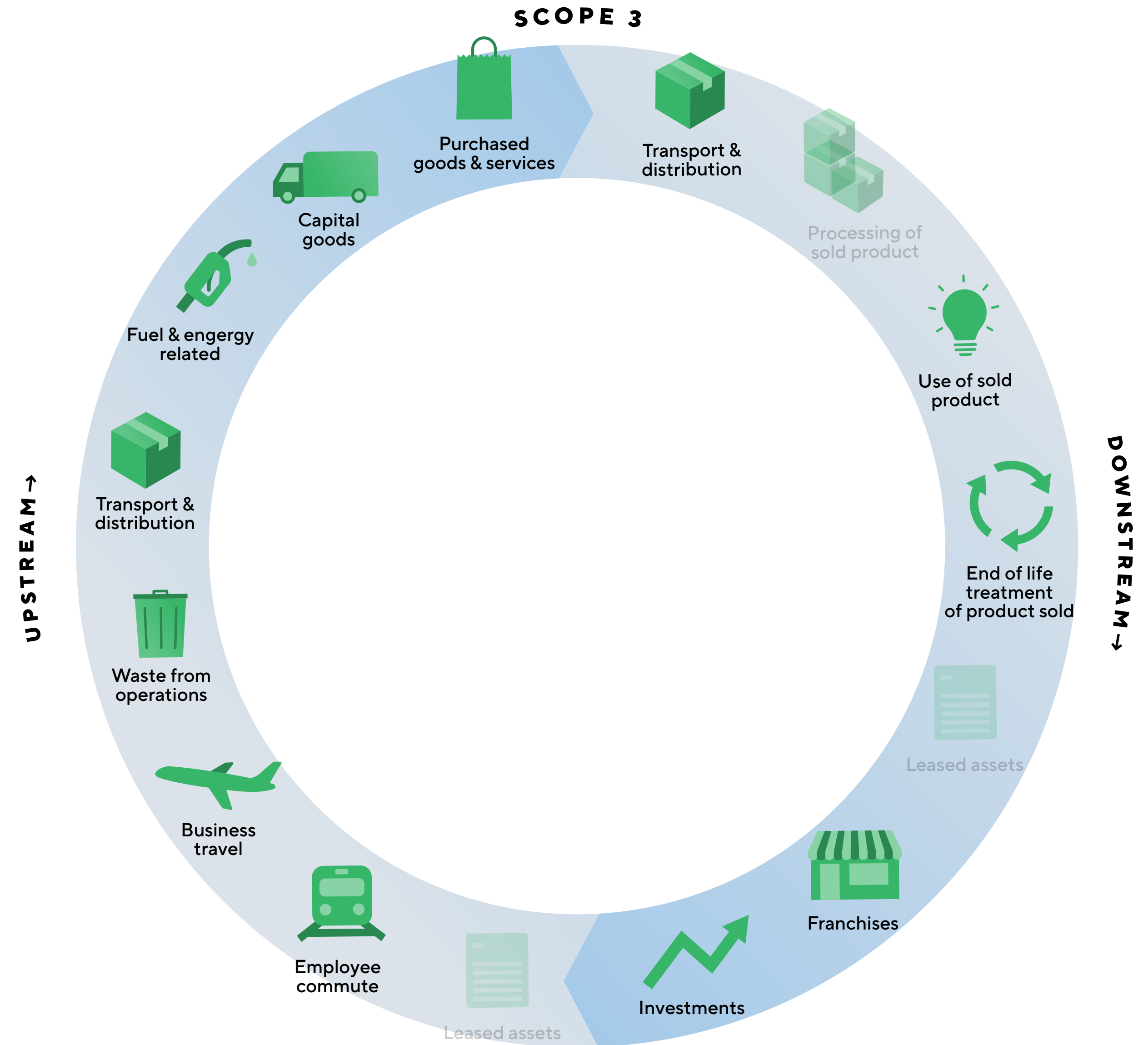


# Scope 3

## WHERE OUR IMPACT OCCURS

For most industries and businesses, nearly all emissions are Scope 3. This is particularly true for our business. Over **99.5%** of our emissions are Scope 3.

Scope 3 emissions are comprised of 15 different categories of emissions, occurring both upstream and downstream in the value chain. These are the most laborious to calculate and typically the most difficult to influence.



# Emissions Report

We annually calculate and report emissions by scope in accordance with the GHG Protocol. This calculation and reporting occurs on a fiscal vs. calendar year schedule.

Data included is for Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023. We will update to include 2024 emissions by August of this year.

Starting with our 2024 emissions, Scope 1 and 2 emissions will be verified by an independent third-party organization.

## Scope 1

2022 EMISSIONS	3.3% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
1046 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	
2023 EMISSIONS	1.7% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
524.67 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	

## Scope 2

2022 EMISSIONS	2.1% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
697 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	
2023 EMISSIONS	0% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
0 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	

## Scope 3

2022 EMISSIONS	7.2% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
445,695 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	
2023 EMISSIONS	3.3% of Staples, Inc. total Scope 1 emissions
128,773 mtCO <sub>2</sub> -e	

# Carbon Emissions Strategy for Supply Chain

Reducing carbon throughout the supply chain is critical. Aggregating carbon emissions data across our supply chain into a single view allows us to support a comprehensive reduction strategy, while also monitoring maturation across our suppliers over time.

EcoVadis' Carbon Action Module helps us understand the maturity of our supply chain as it relates to Carbon Emissions Strategy.

- EcoVadis' Carbon Scorecard gives us visibility of the maturity level across our participating suppliers. Currently, 24% of our suppliers (by spend) have a scorecard.
- Our view of maturity level will widen to align with overall Green Light spend thresholds as additional suppliers have Carbon Scorecards included in their EcoVadis assessments.
- Through this process, we are able to identify suppliers who currently have no carbon management system in place. We support and encourage these suppliers to measure their GHG emissions and adopt a strategy for reduction.

## EcoVadis Carbon Action Module Guide

### Insufficient

Partners with no GHG management system

### Beginner

Partners with basic elements of GHG management or reporting

### Intermediate

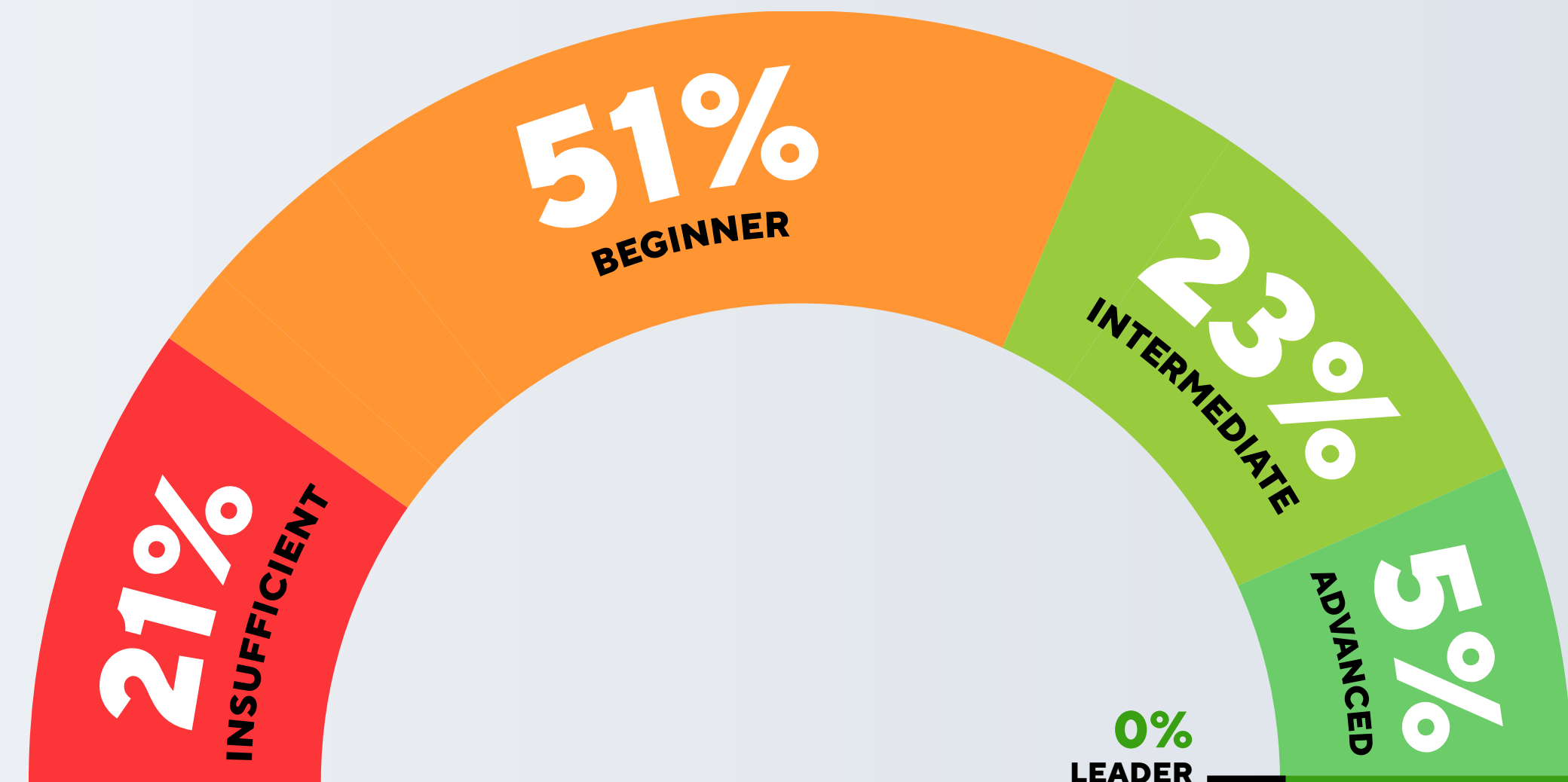
Partners with core elements of a GHG management system and intermediate decarbonization commitment, actions and reporting capabilities

### Advanced

Partners with comprehensive elements of a GHG management system and advanced decarbonization commitment, actions and reporting capabilities

### Leader

Partners with a strong GHG management system and best-in-class decarbonization commitments, actions and reporting capabilities



# Carbon Emissions Strategy for Our Operations

One can only improve that which is measured. That's why our EcoVadis engagement also includes their Carbon Action Module, which assesses the carbon generated by our operations and supply chain. EcoVadis scorecard rates our operations as intermediate.

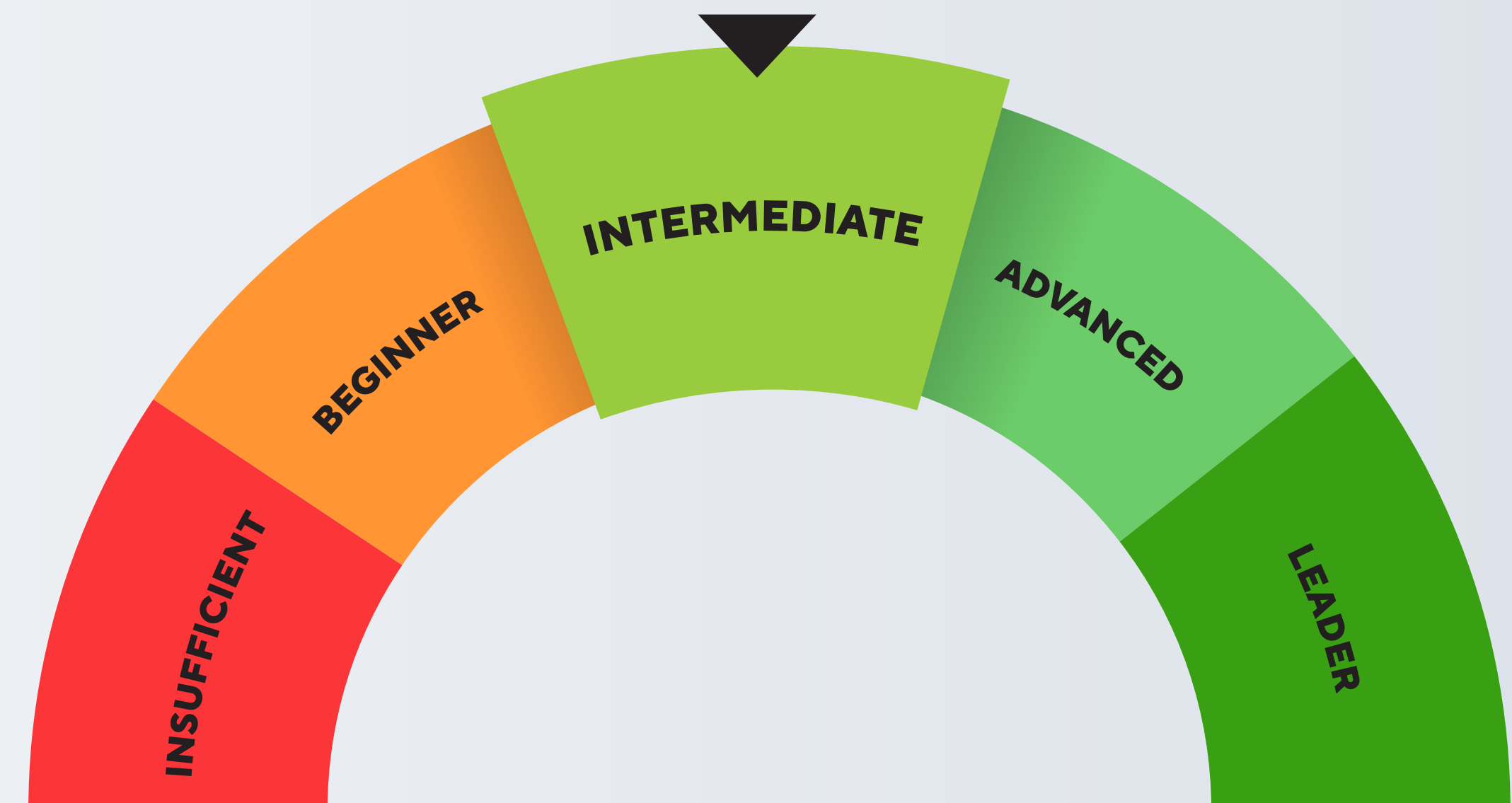
## Result

Company with core elements of a GHG management system and intermediate decarbonization commitment, actions and reporting capabilities.

## Opportunity

Implement actions in line with your GHG management system's objectives and enhance your reporting practices.

We are continually evaluating investments to further reduce our operational carbon footprint. The most recent such investment is our adoption of carbon neutral shipping to mitigate a primary source of Scope 3 emissions. **Over 93% of U.S. packages shipped were carbon neutral!**





# Internal Operations

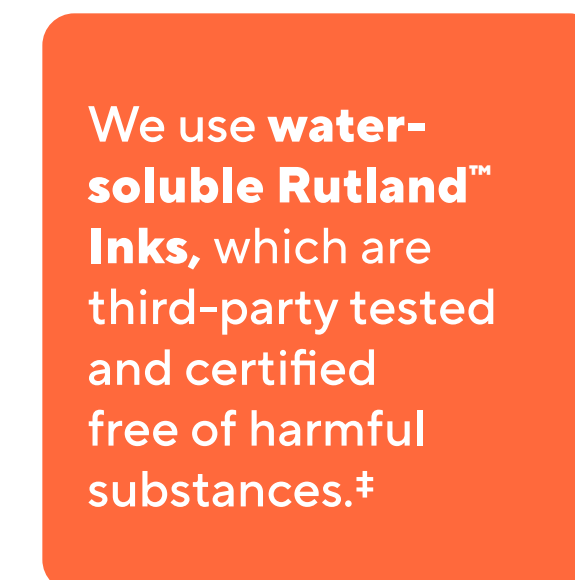
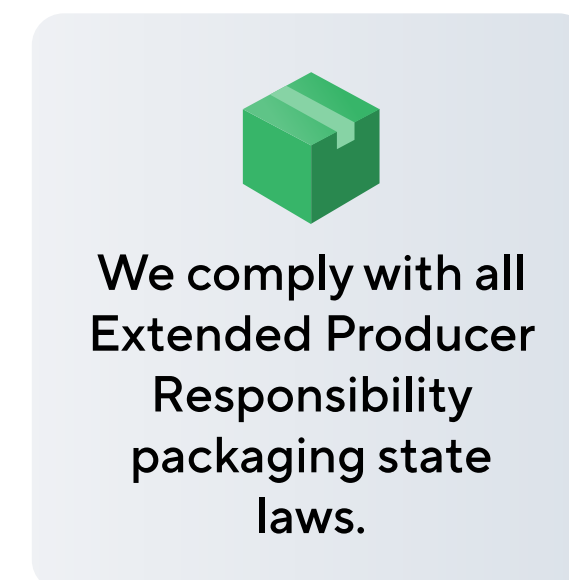
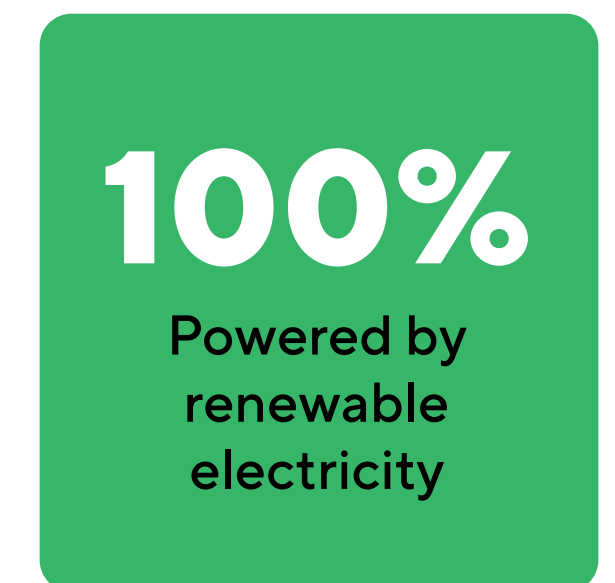
Premium-quality, sustainable decoration and distribution ensure merchandise experiences live up to your brand.

# Our EcoVadis-medaled, Nike-certified operations honor your **brand values.**

Most brand merchandisers subcontract 100% of product decoration. Not us. We're one of the largest apparel decorators in North America.

To lead by example, our promo-dedicated operations are optimized for sustainable, premium-quality decoration and order fulfillment. 25% of our annual volume and most in-stock eStore products are decorated and warehoused in this 500,000 square foot facility in Orange City, IA.

Our embroidery and screenprint quality is so meticulous, we earned Nike's highest quality rating. In fact, Staples Promo is one of the very few decorators Nike has authorized to reproduce its iconic "swoosh" trademark on apparel!



\* Complies with all extended producer responsibility packaging laws by state

† Nonylphenol (NPEO); Octylphenol Ethoxylates (OPEO'S); Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon (PAK), TBBPA, DecaBDE, or HBCDD Organizations; Latex; Ozone depleting chemicals according to CONEG

# Our operations earned a Silver Medal from EcoVadis.

Our EcoVadis rating is a weighted combination of scores across four pillars of sustainability.

	Year 1 2022	Year 2 2023	Year 3 2024
Overall	56	66	71
Environment	60	70	80
Labor & Human Rights	50	60	60
Ethics	60	70	70
Sustainable Procurement	60	70	80



# Waste Diversion

Below are metrics reported by waste stream from our decoration and distribution facility.

Mixed Plastic Recycling	57,330 lbs
-------------------------	------------

Corrugate Recycling	550,668 lbs
---------------------	-------------

Paper Recycling	19,710 lbs
-----------------	------------

Waste to Energy	161,840 lbs
-----------------	-------------

Beneficial Reuse*	4,000 lbs
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\*We partner with a trusted third-party supplier to distribute usable goods to charities efficiently.



# Carbon Offset Shipping

**In 2024, the carbon from 93% of our U.S. shipments was offset via participation in the UPS Carbon Neutral Shipping Program and the FedEx Carbon Offset Program.** This included shipments from supplier partners that used our freight accounts.

Carbon emissions were offset through UPS projects that removed an equal amount of carbon from the atmosphere. Some of the projects included reforestation, landfill gas destruction, wastewater treatment and methane destruction. Their program is independently verified by Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS).

The FedEx® Carbon Offset Program has achieved CarbonNeutral® Shipping certification in accordance with The CarbonNeutral Protocol.



# Green Light Responsible Sourcing

Green Light is our proprietary sustainable procurement platform. It provides sustainability performance transparency for supply chain, which comprises over 90% of the branded merchandise value chain.



**Green Light  
exclusively  
provides full  
value chain  
transparency.**



**10% value chain sustainability transparency is not good enough.**

It's easy to find distributors publicizing EcoVadis medals for their own operations. But they don't extend the same objective EcoVadis transparency to their overall supply chain performance. They provide far less than 10% value chain transparency.

Over 90% of adverse environmental impacts originate in supply chain.\*



**Green Light gives you 100% value chain sustainability transparency.**

Green Light requires participating suppliers to annually undergo EcoVadis assessment, too.

2025 marks our third year of publicly reporting objective sustainability performance metrics for the 90% of value chain no other brand merchandiser has ever disclosed.

Anne-Titia Bové and Steven Swartz

*Starting at the source: Sustainability in Supply Chains: McKinsey*

<https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/starting-at-the-source-sustainability-in-supply-chains#/>

# Green Light provides objective and quantitative supply chain sustainability performance data.

## EcoVadis Credibility

EcoVadis independently assesses and reports 21 different individual supplier sustainability scores, assuring more data objectivity, consistency & integrity.

## Dashboard Visibility & Actionability

Objective dashboard views of aggregate and individual supplier sustainability performance across 21 criteria align our improvement targets where the most impact is achievable with each supplier, (or group of suppliers with the same sustainability challenge).



## More Quantitative Sustainability Performance Metrics

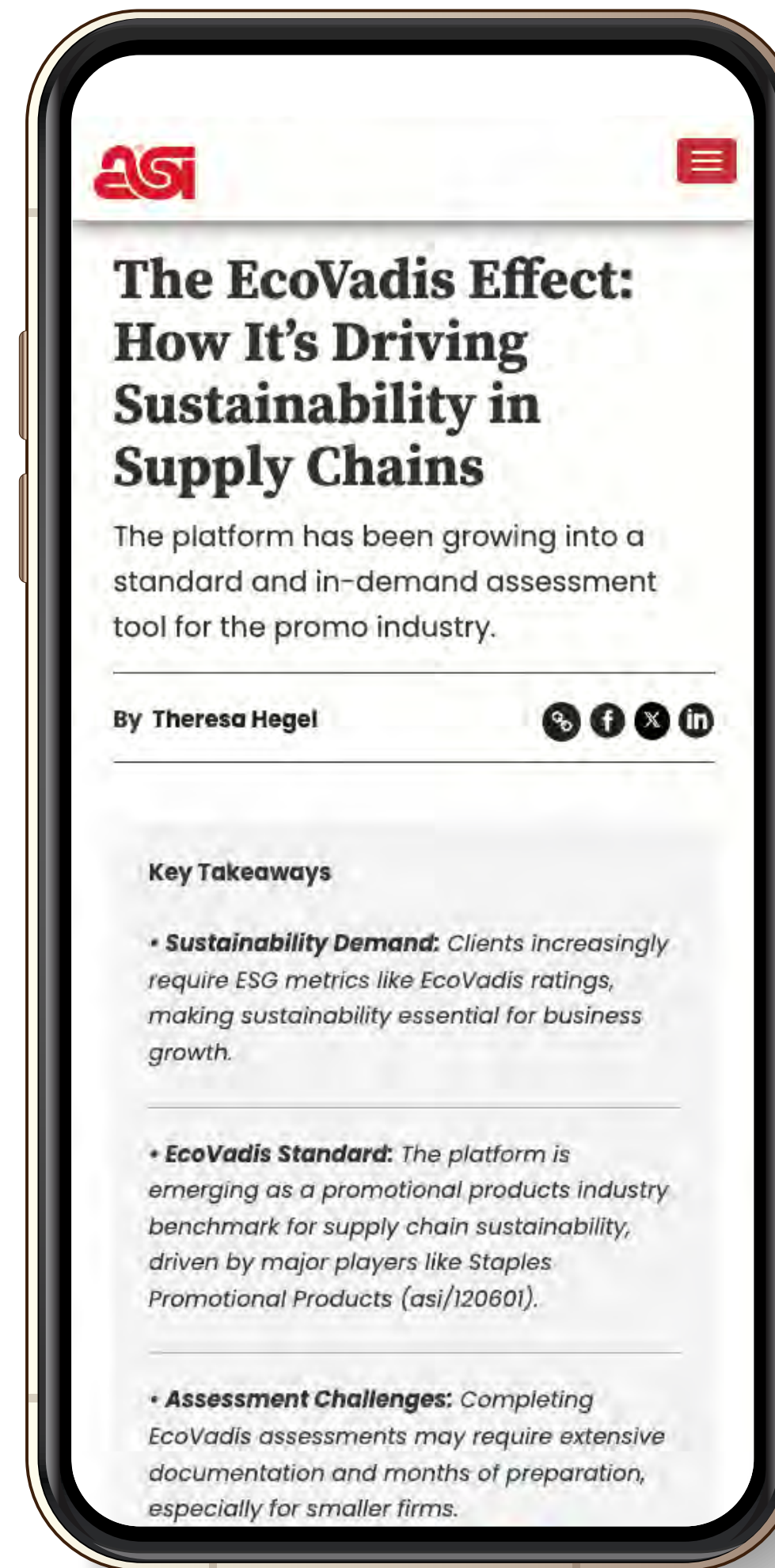
EcoVadis assessment scores provide a precise, quantitative comparison of supplier sustainability performance and improvement, year over year.

## Supply Chain Integration

Green Light powers our sustainable procurement ethos, making Staples Promo a more strategic and authentic brand fit for sustainability-focused enterprises.

# We're driving sustainability improvement industry wide.

The entire promotional products industry is taking notice of Green Light! A 2024 ASI Central article names Staples Promo as a primary driver behind promo's burgeoning EcoVadis adoption. Green Light is the driving force.



(Jing) "Rong...can boil down the rise of EcoVadis to one simple word: **Staples. To be honest, because EcoVadis was able to sign up Staples, and Staples made this a requirement..., it basically became the standard,** Rong says."

"Daron Hines, SPP president and a member of Counselor's Power 50 list of the most influential people in promo, says that partnering with EcoVadis aligns with the distributor's vision **"to elevate sustainability transparency for every stakeholder in the branded merchandise value chain."**

"Hines believes a tipping point is imminent when it comes to supply chain sustainability data reporting. "As more suppliers and distributors adopt our model and undergo assessments," he says, "a flywheel will develop, and the industry will begin converging around **a single rating system to create the deeper sustainability documentation customers increasingly require."**

# Green Light Criteria

Green Light supplier assessments are independently conducted by **EcoVadis**, the world's most trusted sustainability ratings agency.

Each comprehensive assessment covers **21 criteria across four themes**. EcoVadis blends the scores for each theme into a composite score which considers each respective supplier's size, industry and country of operations.

## Environment

- Energy consumption and GHGs
- Water
- Biodiversity
- Local & accidental pollution
- Materials, chemicals and waste
- Product use
- Product end-of-life
- Customer health and safety
- Environmental services and advocacy

## Sustainable Procurement

- Supplier environmental practices
- Supplier social practices

## Ethics

- Corruption
- Anticompetitive practices
- Responsible information management

## Labor and Human Rights

- Employee health and safety
- Working conditions
- Social dialogue
- Career management and training
- Child labor, forced labor and human trafficking
- Diversity, discrimination and harassment
- External stakeholder human rights

# Green Light Scoring Scale

Each supplier's annual composite score indicates how much they've progressed in their sustainability improvement journey.

We monitor each supplier's respective theme and composite scores in a dashboard that enables more effective planning and partnerships to improve supplier performance.

We also aggregate the scores of all assessed suppliers so we can report our annual supply chain sustainability performance with the same objective scale.

## EcoVadis Scoring Scale Guide

### Insufficient

No engagements or tangible actions regarding sustainability. Evidence in certain cases of misconduct (e.g., pollution, corruption).

### Partial

No structured sustainability approach. Few engagements or tangible actions on selected issues. Partial reporting on Key Performance Indicators. Partial certification or occasional labeled product.

### Good

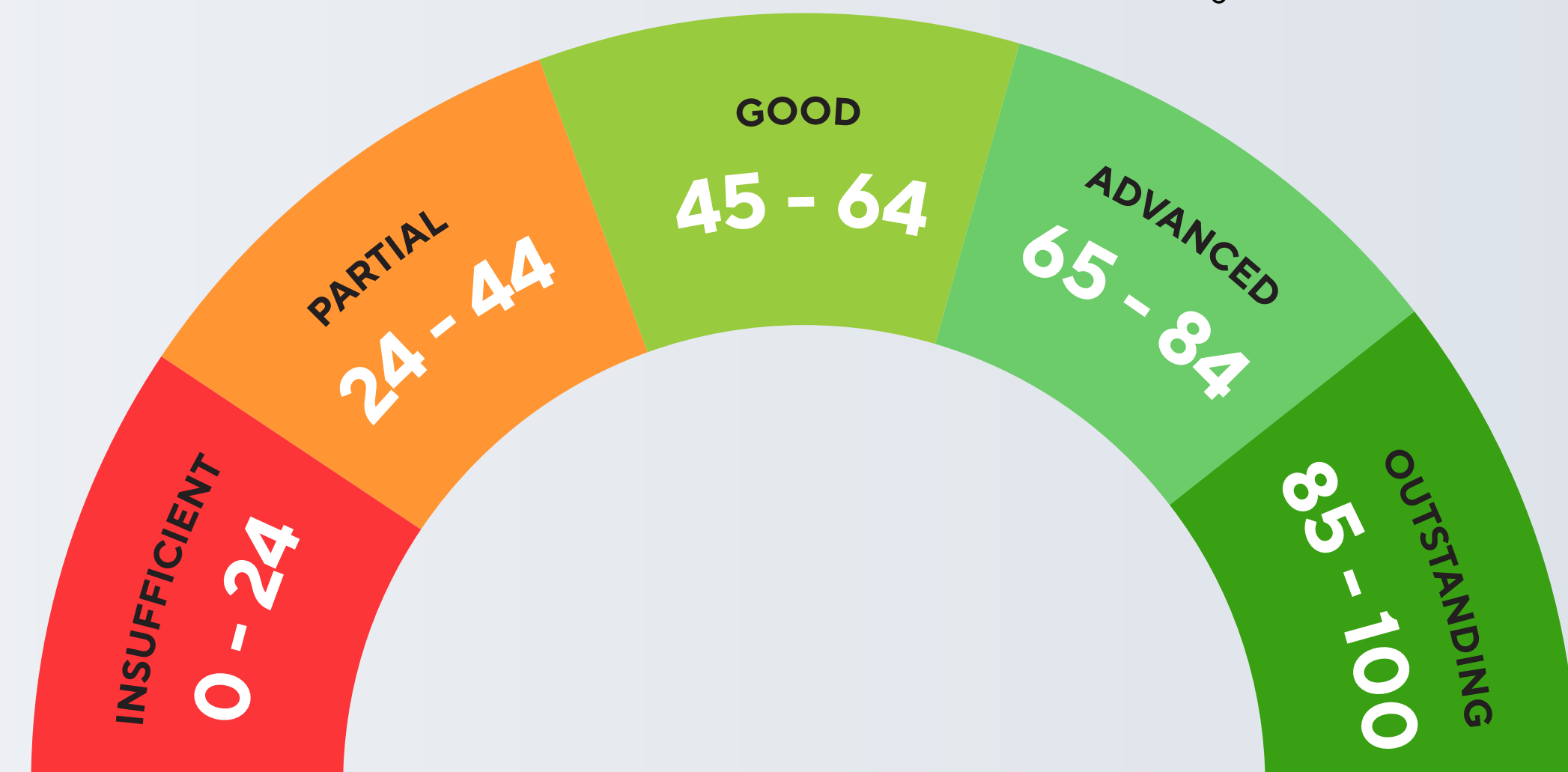
Structured and proactive sustainability approach. Engagements/policies and tangible actions on major issues. Basic reporting on actions or Key Performance Indicators.

### Advanced

Structured and proactive sustainability approach. Engagements/policies and tangible actions on major issues with detailed implementation information. Significant sustainability reporting on actions and Key Performance Indicators.

### Outstanding

Structured and proactive sustainability approach. Engagements/policies and tangible actions on all issues with detailed implementation information. Comprehensive sustainability reporting on actions and Key Performance Indicators. Innovative practices and external recognition.



# Green Light Regional Performance Summary

Staples Promo utilizes separate supply chains to optimize service and assortment for three regions: U.S., Canada and Global (excluding North America).

This chart summarizes overall 2024 sustainability performance scores for each regional supply chain. We also highlight the higher performance of those suppliers with multiple years of Green Light participation.

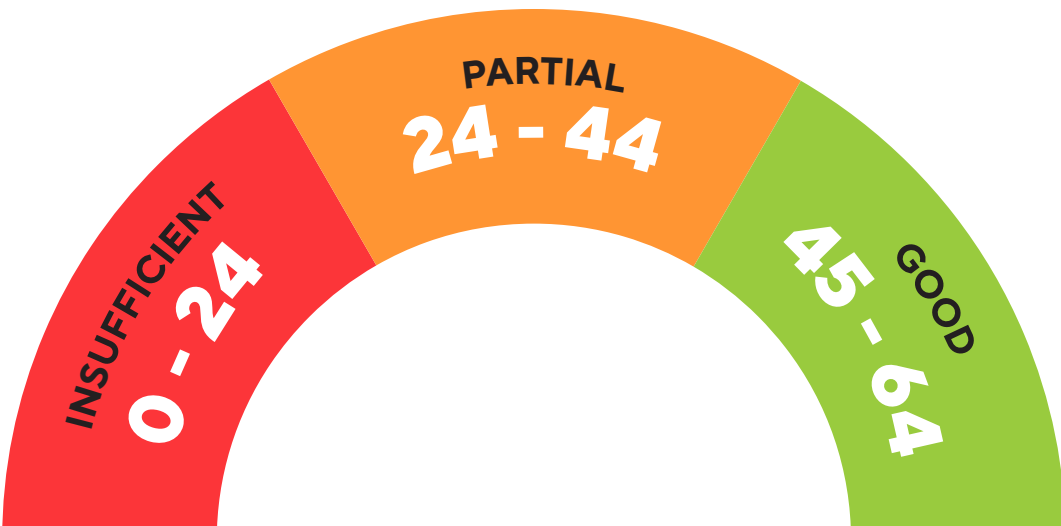
The subsequent pages provide deeper detail for each region.



All Green Light suppliers including those with first time assessments.



Highlights the higher performance of Green Light suppliers with multiple assessments.

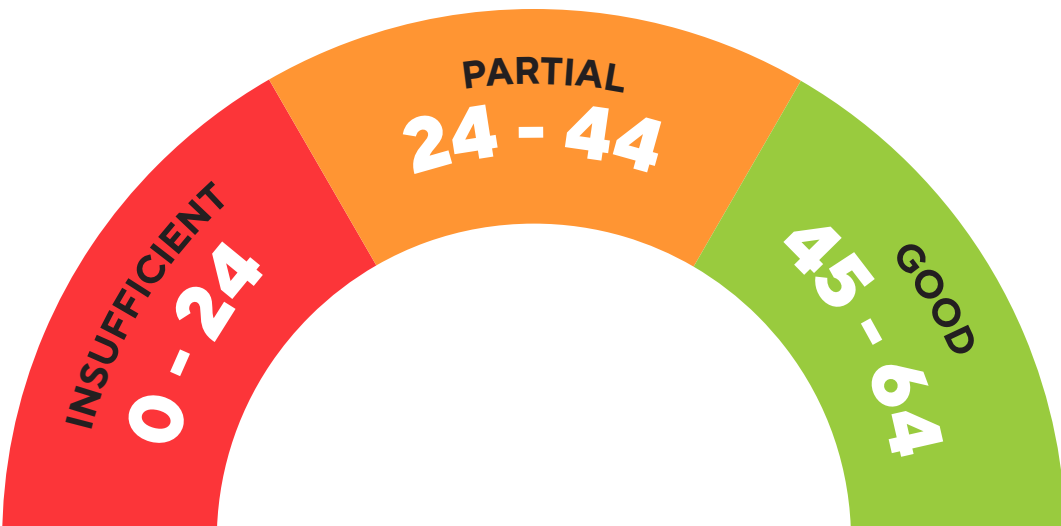


EcoVadis Scoring Scale

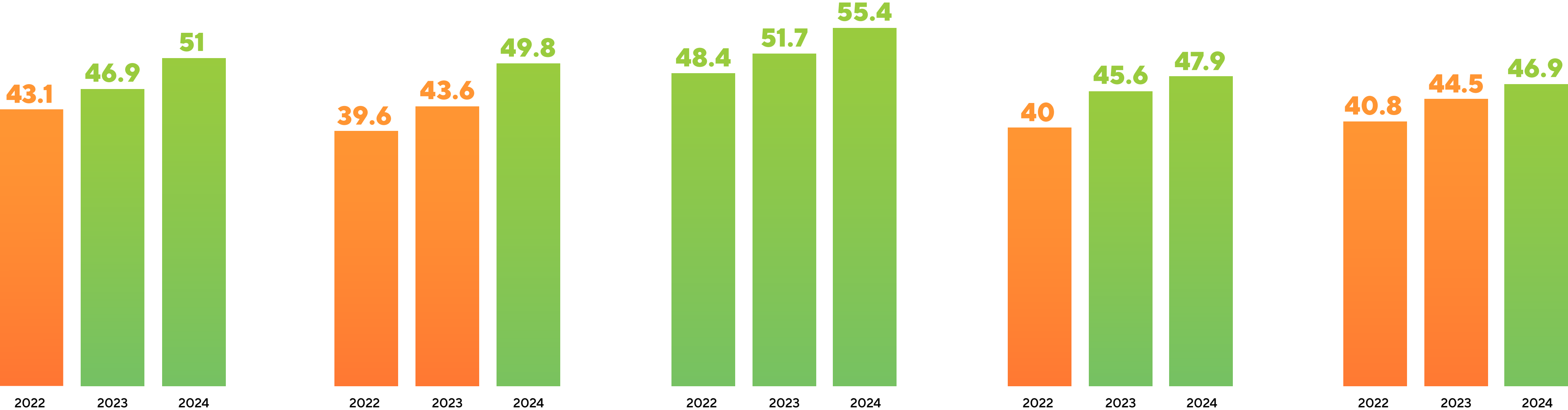
# U.S. Suppliers

Last year, our U.S. Green Light supplier base grew by 20%. Despite the influx of beginner EcoVadis assessments, our composite score improved across all four pillars to 51—an **18% improvement over 2022's baseline composite score!**

We will continue to invest more in suppliers that drive objective sustainability improvement through our exclusive Green Light program. In turn, this will enable our supplier partners to invest more in sustainability improvement than would otherwise be possible.



EcoVadis Scoring Scale



Overall

Environment

Labor & Human Rights

Ethics

Sustainable Procurement

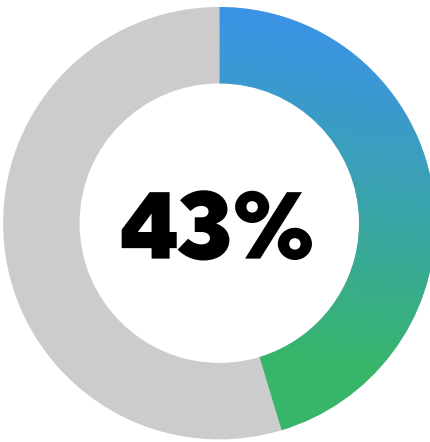
# U.S. Green Light Spend

In 2024, **73% of our U.S. procurement spend** was through suppliers that submit annual EcoVadis assessment data to participate in Green Light Responsible Sourcing.

This performance is a **12% year-over-year improvement** and **3 percentage points over the 70% goal** published in last year’s report.

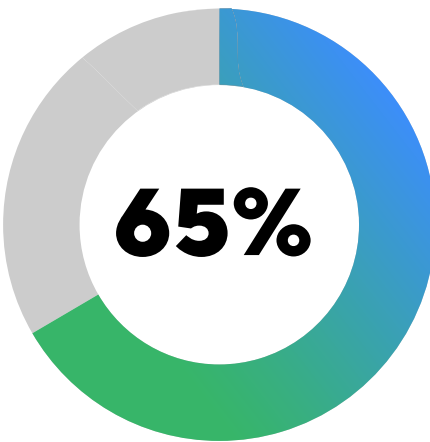
Every Green Light procurement dollar:

- Progressively increases the sustainability transparency of client merchandise investment.
- Increases the ability of Green Light suppliers to invest in improved sustainability performance as independently assessed by EcoVadis.



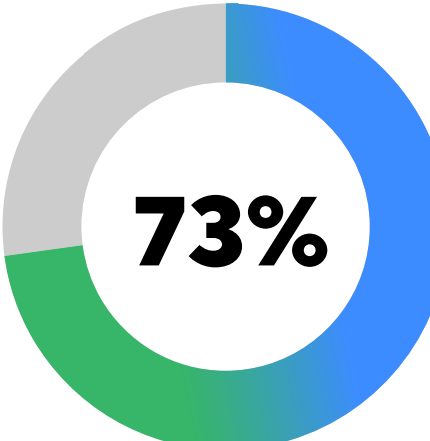
### 2022 Baseline

**43%** of our spend was with Green Light suppliers.



### 2023 Performance

Spend with Green Light suppliers grew to 65%– a 51% year over year improvement and 5 percentage points over the 60% goal published in our inaugural report.



### 2024 Performance

Spend with Green Light suppliers grew to 73%–a 12% year over year improvement and 3 percentage points over the 70% goal published in last year’s report.



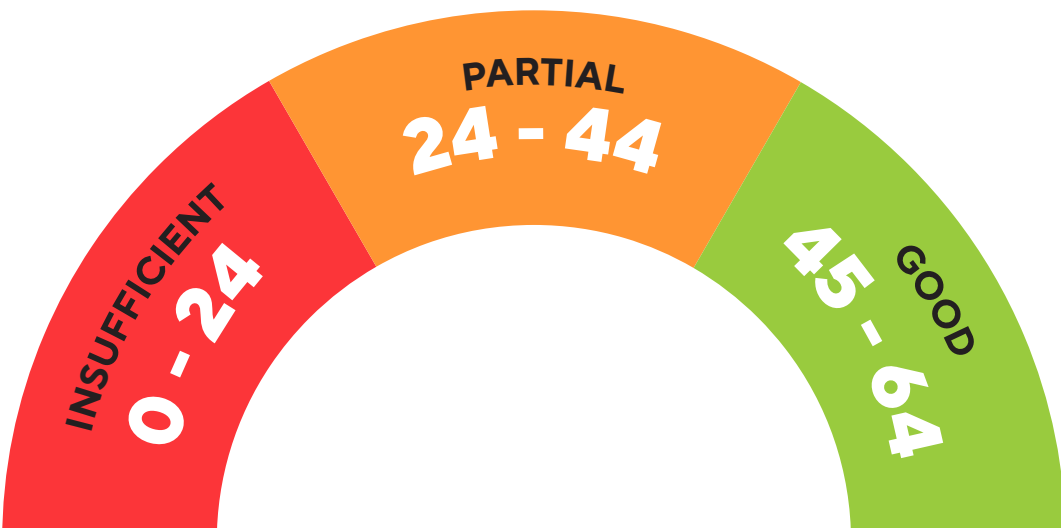
### 2025 Goal

Our goal is to conduct at least 78% of our 2025 procurement dollars with Green Light suppliers.

# Canadian Suppliers

In 2024, we worked with Green Light supplier partners to improve performance across all four pillars to 55.5—a **10% improvement over the 2023 baseline**.

We also increased the percentage of EcoVadis-assessed procurement spend to 53% in 2024—a 51% improvement over the 2023 baseline. Our goal is 55% for 2025.



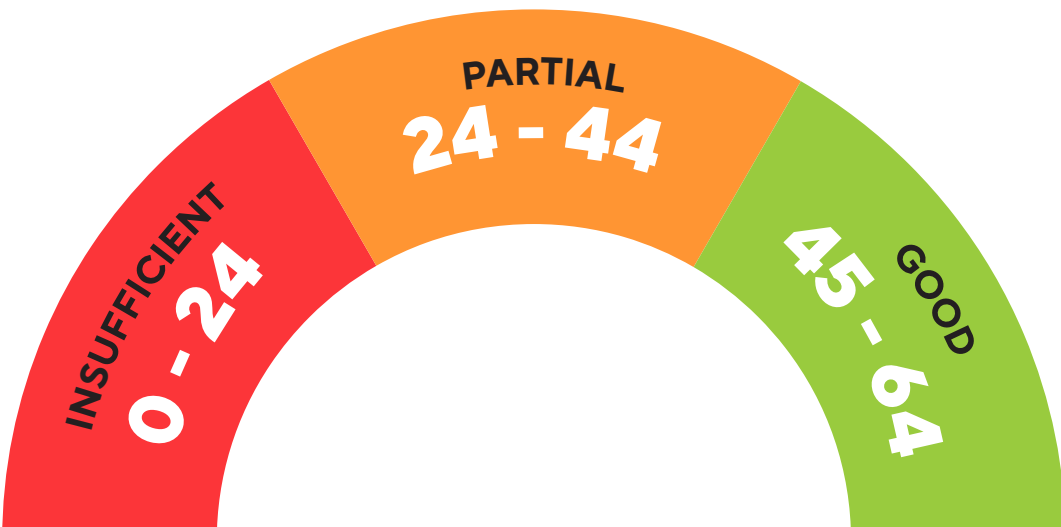
EcoVadis Scoring Scale



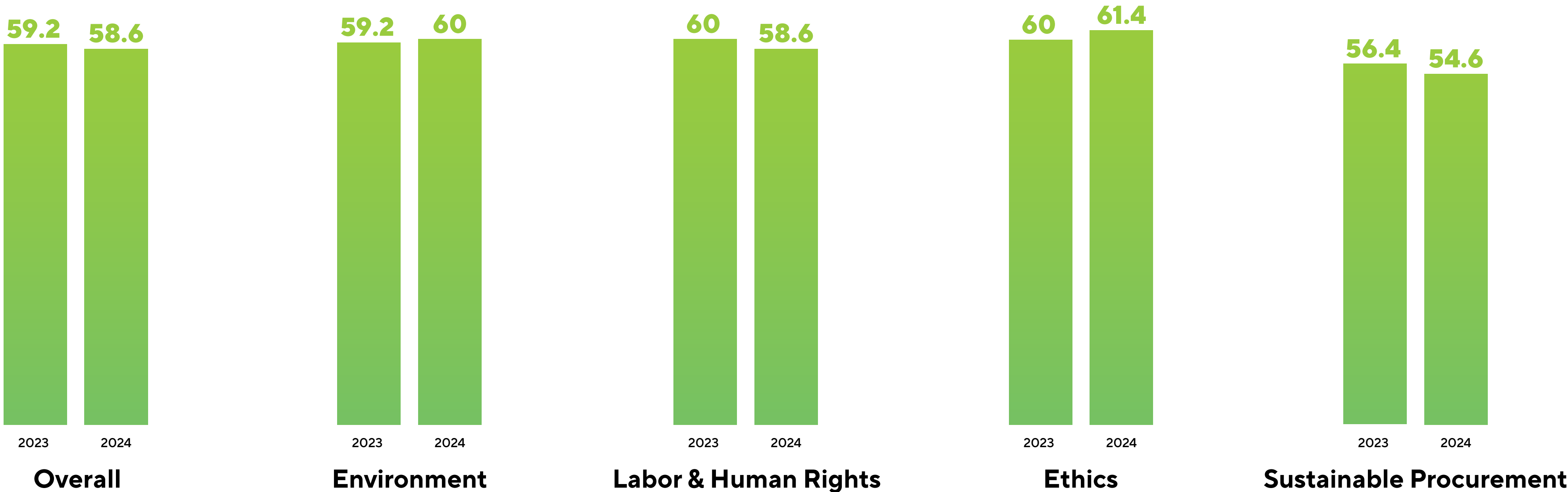
# Global Suppliers

Aggregate global Green Light suppliers sustainability decreased 0.6% relative to the 2023 baseline due to the addition of new suppliers with first time assessments.

In 2024, 77% of our Global procurement spend was with Green Light suppliers, which exceeded our 75% goal.



EcoVadis Scoring Scale



# Green Light helps small business suppliers drive big sustainability gains.

The branded merchandise industry is served by many suppliers that are small businesses. **Over a third** of our Green Light supplier base (by number) is comprised of such enterprises.

Green Light has been particularly effective progressing sustainability with these suppliers. By distinguishing themselves as more sustainable businesses using objective EcoVadis metrics, small suppliers open new growth opportunities not only with Staples Promo, but with other brand merchandisers as well.



## SMALL BUSINESSES

**Extra Small Businesses** Improved year over year assessment scores by an average of **9 points**.

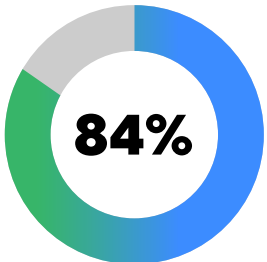


**Medium-Sized Small Businesses** improved year over year assessment scores by an average of **8.8 points**.

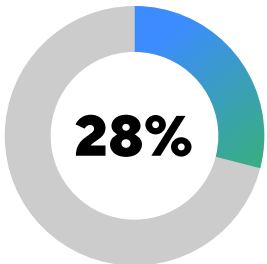


**Small Businesses** Improved year over year assessment scores by an average of **9.3 points**.

## GREEN LIGHT SUPPLIER PARTNERS



**84%** improved year over year assessment scores.



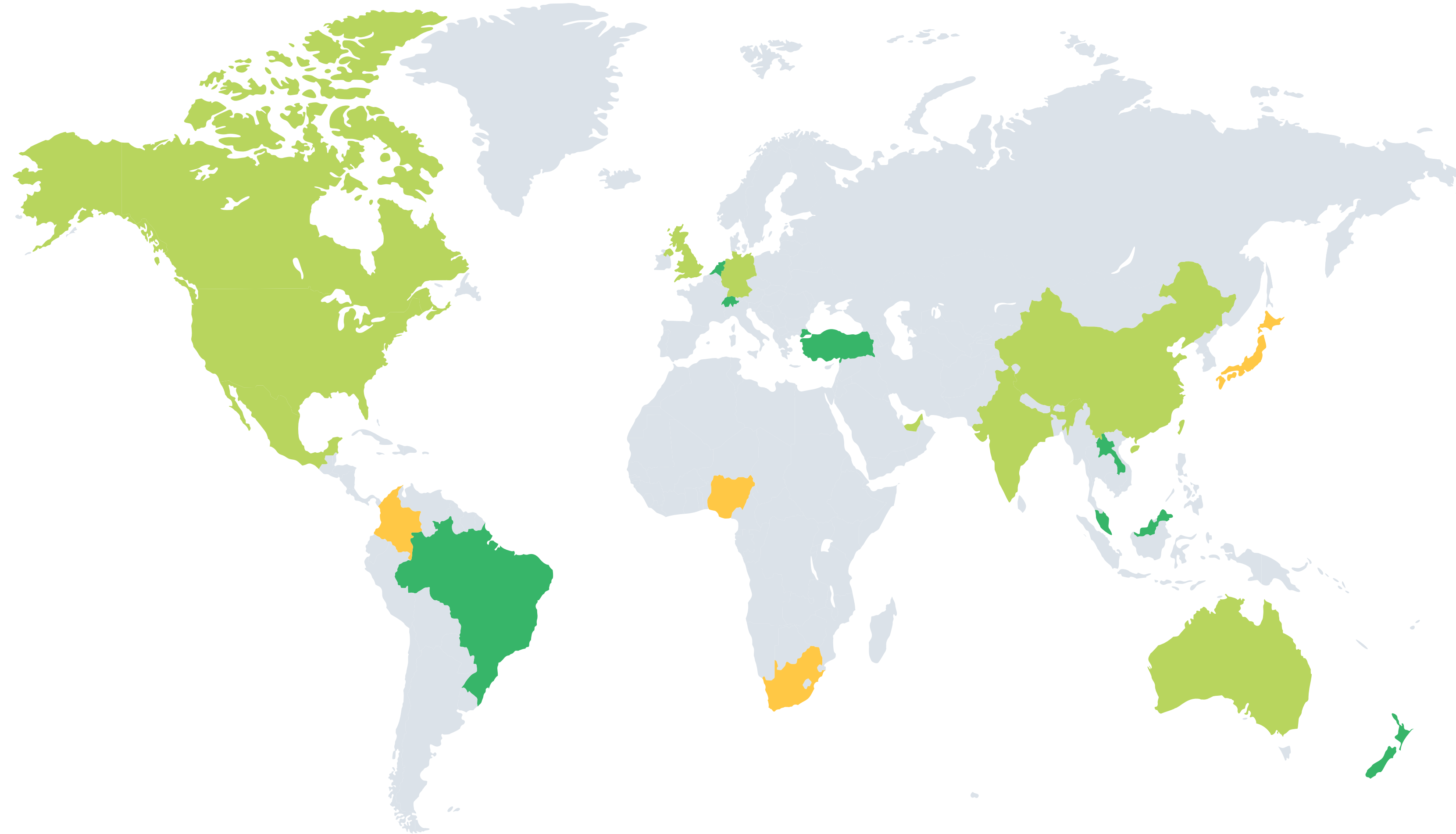
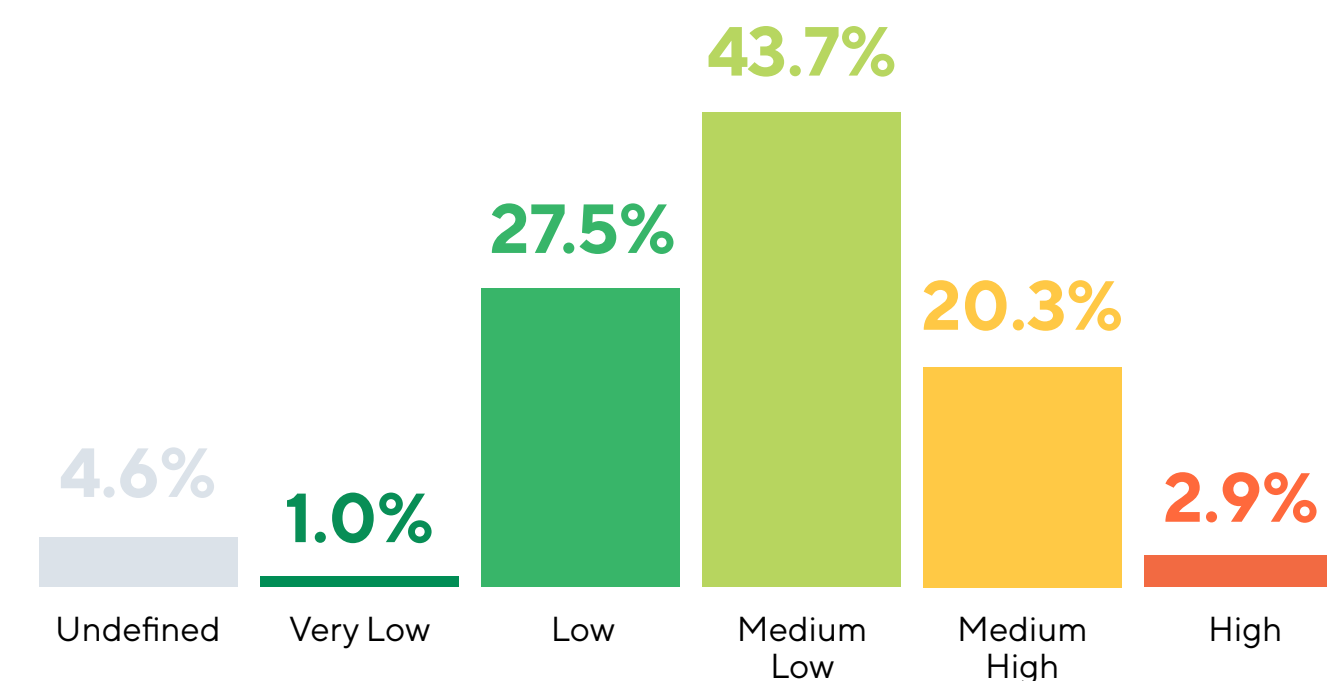
**28%** increased their scores by over 10 points!

# Mapping supply chains to inform risk-reduction strategies.

In 2024, Staples Promo launched a new initiative for comprehensive supply chain mapping across the U.S., Canada, and global regions.

We have now identified risks in our Tier 1 supply chain within the four pillars of sustainability using EcoVadis' IQ tool.

**Our focus for 2025 is lowering risk within the Tier 1 supply chain and mapping Tier 2 suppliers.**





We operate under the name Marke Creative in the U.K.  
Our approach to sustainability is customized to our  
European operations and clients.



# Marke Creative’s operations earned a **Bronze Medal** from EcoVadis.

Our EcoVadis rating is a weighted combination of scores across four pillars of sustainability.

	Year 1 2023	Year 2 2024	Year 3 2025
Overall	61	64	
Environment	60	60	
Labor & Human Rights	70	70	
Ethics	70	60	
Sustainable Procurement	50	60	





# Our sustainability approach is optimized for the European market.



Our UK-based operations are certified to the ISO14001 standard for environmental management systems.



In 2023, we integrated the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact into our business, covering Human Rights, Labor, Environment, and Anti-Corruption.



We have been an AB Member of SEDEX since 2011. This partnership advances our supply chain practices, promotes sustainability, and ensures ethical operations across our organization.



We've signed onto the British Promotional Merchandise Association's Step Forward Pledge. This aligns us to 13 commitments under the sections of Products, People, and Planet. An annual assessment (additional to EcoVadis) corroborates adherence to the commitments while highlighting tactics to progressively improve the sustainability of our operations and practices.

# SEDEX Supply Chain Risk Mapping improves value chain integrity and performance.

We've been an AB Member of SEDEX since 2011. Our supply chain practices meet the ETI Base Code, upon which SMETA audits are based.

SEDEX analytics are perpetually monitored to mitigate risks and enable data-driven decisions. Using Radar Risk Assessment tools, we identify and mitigate key social, environmental, and governance risks to protect our reputation and comply with applicable sustainability legislation.

SEDEX's platform ensures transparency in our supply chain, allowing us to participate in supplier audits. It also integrates our production sites with client systems, giving them unhindered visibility into product origins.

Additionally, SEDEX's multilingual E-Learning modules are leveraged to enhance internal and external training.

In total, this partnership advances our supply chain practices, promotes sustainability, and ensures ethical operations across our organization.



# Employee Wellbeing

We take a holistic approach to employee wellness by providing stress management, associate recognition, employee assistance and more.



**Staples Promo proudly celebrates repeated recognition as **PPAI's Greatest Large Company to Work For.****



- “Empowers growth and fosters success.”
- “Highly diverse and inclusive workplace.”
- “Fun products. Fun people.”
- “Offers harmonious balance between professional and personal life.”
- “Rewarding and flexible.”
- “Coworkers become lifelong friends.”
- “Great culture.”

# We support the **Best People in Promo** with the best benefits in promo.

Our associates are creative catalysts, trusted by the world's most recognized brands to enhance marketing strategies. Not just anyone can do it. For those who can, our compensation and benefits are designed to ensure they find a home with Staples Promo... and stay for a long time!

## Total Rewards

Independent market studies and twice-yearly engagement surveys empower our Human Resources team with the perspective to compete for and win top talent. They combine wages, benefits and work life balance in a total rewards package that makes us a destination employer for the branded merchandise industry.

All full-time associates and their immediate families have access to subsidized insurance and benefits. They can choose from several insurance options depending on what's best for their families.

Group  
Medical,  
Dental, &  
Vision

Paid  
Holidays &  
Time Off

Adoption &  
Surrogacy  
Assistance

**Insurance Discounts**

Legal, Auto, Home, Life, Identity & Pet

 **Staples**  
perks at work

Travel  
Discounts

**HSA + FSA**  
Programs

Hybrid/  
Remote Work/  
Flex Time

**Paid  
Bereavement  
Leave**

\$ **Matching  
401K &  
RRSP**

% **Staples  
Discounts**

**Short-Term  
& Long-Term  
Disability**

**Bonding  
Leave**  
(includes adoption)

Annual  
**Wellness  
Reimbursement**  
Program

Discounts on:

**GMC**

  
**SUBARU**

Premium  
designated  
**EV parking  
spots**

**Summer  
Fridays**

# Physical, Mental and Fiscal Wellbeing

Our benefits are designed to enhance physical, mental and fiscal wellness for our diverse employee base and their families.



Canadian leader in mental health and addiction services.\*



Digital physical therapy employees can take from home.

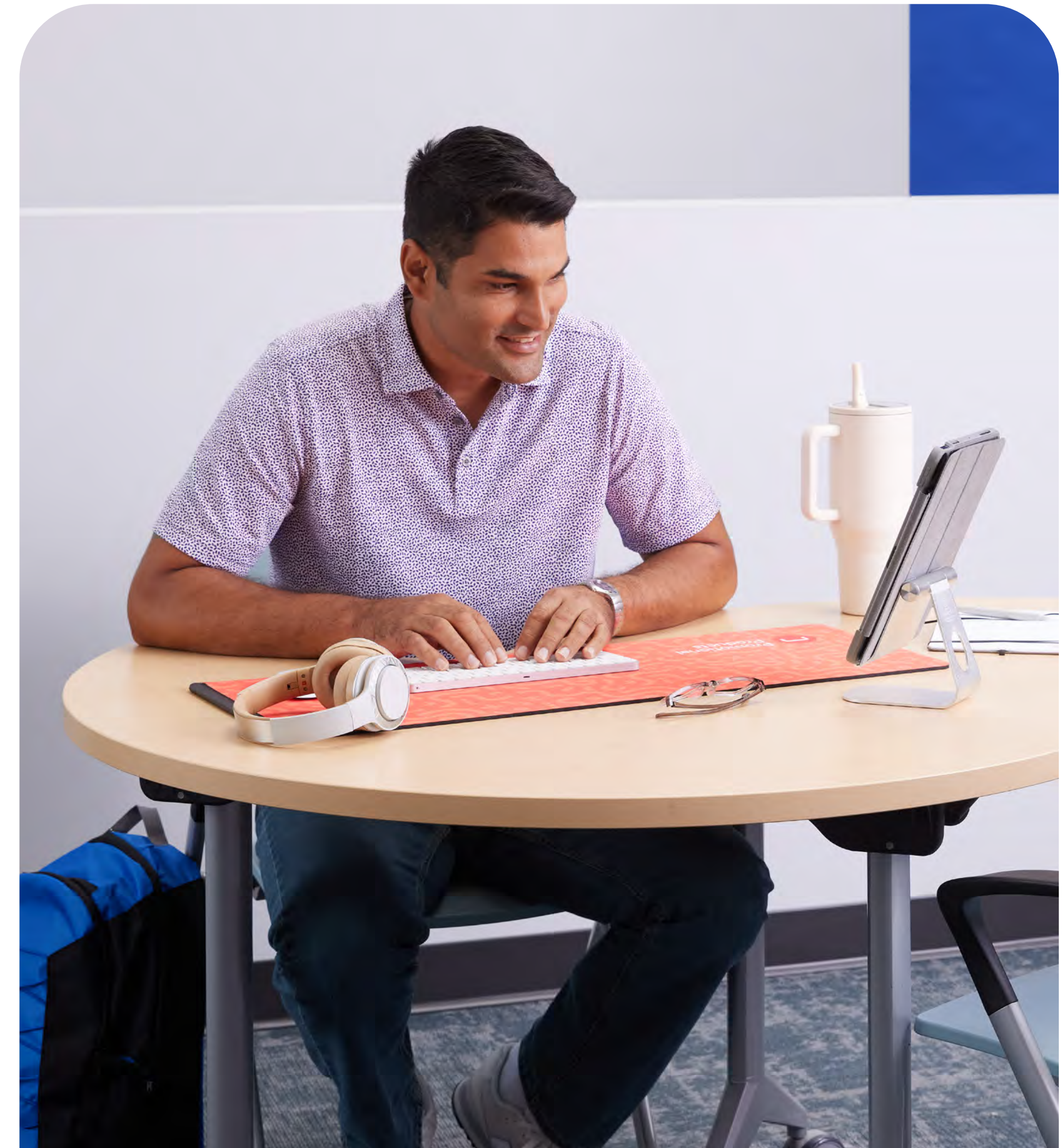


Cariloop is an inclusive caregiving benefit with digital tools, a care provider network, and 1:1 coaching for every stage of caregiving.



Staples Life Services (EAP), powered by ComPsych Guidance Resources, offers free, confidential counseling and referral support for life's work and personal challenges.

\*Available for Canadian associates only



# We enhance employee engagement and values alignment with two associate recognition programs.

Our talented associates thrive on creating experiences that help clients celebrate their people, culture and brand. We do the same for them. Associates who exemplify our values are eligible for recognition and rewards from two unique programs: The **PROPS** program and the **Believe & Achieve!** program. Both allow employees to receive recognition from management and to share recognition with one another. Both also utilize the very same software and global awards assortment we use to create client recognition programs.



“People Recognizing Other People’s Success” is a manager to associate and peer to peer recognition program just for Staples Promo.

**Believe & Achieve!**

LIVING OUR VALUES AWARDS

The Believe & Achieve program recognizes employees across all Staples lines of business.

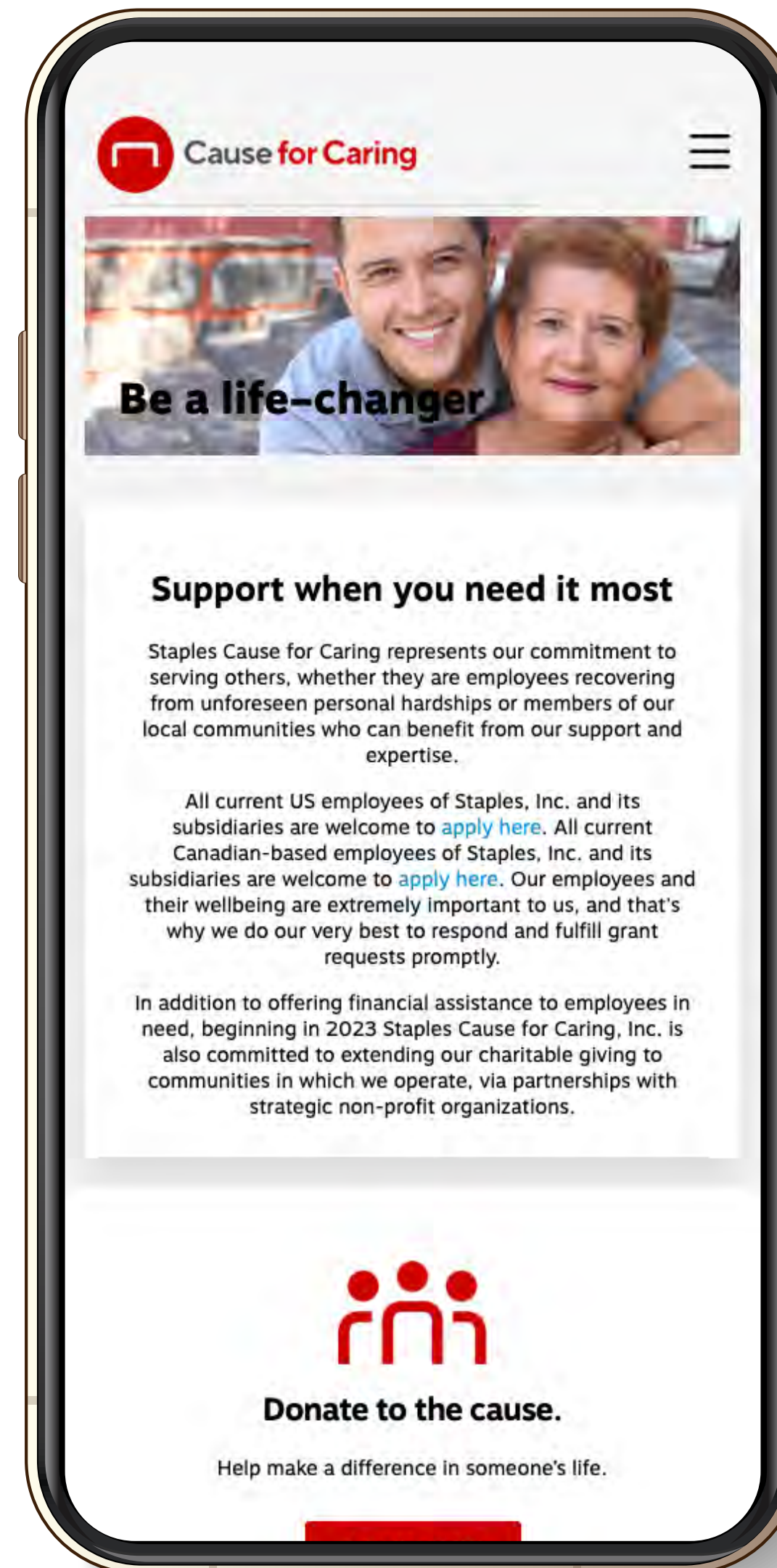


# Cause for Caring

We founded Cause for Caring to support fellow associates facing extraordinary obstacles or tragedies.

Funded by employee donations and matching contributions, the program enables us to send financial assistance immediately without having to separately fundraise for each misfortune.

Over 200 Staples Promo associates contribute to the fund weekly. Cause for Caring directly benefited multiple Staples Promo associates, helping them navigate challenging life events.



## \$7,600,000+ and counting...

We're proud that our culture of care has led to over \$7 million in grants, transforming the lives of more than 5,700 employees since 2013.

**Cause for Caring supported me during one of the most challenging periods of my life when I was homeless. Just as I was losing hope, I received a grant from them.”**

**– Cause for Caring Grant Recipient**



Staples Cause for Caring, Inc. also partners with Junior Achievement USA (JA) to support career readiness initiatives in the United States and Canada.

Last year, Staples Promo invited students into our Iowa offices to showcase how their classroom learning connects to real-world careers in sales, marketing, and merchandising.

Attendees learned how branded merchandise improves sales, marketing and communication outcomes. They also created merchandising displays, made their own bags and even learned what goes into marketing value propositions.

“Thank you all for your time and dedication – you’re helping shape our future workforce!”

– JA Associate

“Really enjoyed the tour and learning all that goes on at Staples Promo.”

– JA Student

“Seeing “possible” future colleagues engage passionately within each segment of what the Staples Promo team offered was priceless!”

– Staples Promo Associate





# Volunteerism

Whether building better brands or better communities,  
we achieve more together.

# We put people first.

The communities surrounding our offices and operations can always count on Staples Promo associates to help enrich lives and professional opportunities. Over the last three years alone, we've volunteered nearly 5,000 hours to nonprofits.

## HOW WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Helping associates recover from Iowa floods.

Giving comfort, nourishment, and rest to families whose children are confined to hospitals.

Supporting the Special Olympics.

Purchasing and assembling furniture for needy families.

Supporting the American Diabetes Association by participating in the Tour de Cure biking fundraiser.

Demonstrating to students how vital their education is to future careers through mentorship.

Creating comforting presents and messages to support those battling illness.

Donating labor and food to local food banks.

Giving disadvantaged elementary & high school students clean clothes and hygiene items.

Supporting animal rescues.

Mentoring children who need more role models.

Supporting aspiring professionals with workplace apparel so they look as good as the qualifications on their resumes.

Adopting disadvantaged families to ensure their holidays are more abundant and nourishing.

Donating newborn supplies to diaper banks.



# Inclusion and Engagement

We harness the power of diverse perspectives to build better brand experiences and business results.



# Our mission is to integrate inclusion and engagement into **everything we do.**

Whether it's attracting and retaining top talent, enhancing customer and supplier relationships or increasing innovation, our diverse workforce drives higher performance. Our work ensures our company reflects the populations we serve and better supports diverse talent so we can all succeed together.

**Business Resource Groups (BRGs)** are an integral part of our associate experience and are open to all. They enable us to tap into the collective perspective of all associates. BRGs drive engagement, foster inclusion, and amplify the benefits of diverse perspectives across all Staples lines of business.

Members support and mentor one another and assist with talent recruitment. They share their experiences and perspectives with fellow associates via company-wide broadcasts and help optimize merchandise assortments for wider appeal.

Further, BRGs actively support various charities and advance causes such as food security and domestic violence reduction. Each BRG has an executive sponsor, so all voices have continuous access to the highest levels of management. Although comprising just 18% of the total associate base of Staples, Inc., Staples Promo associates chair or co-chair half the BRGs!

## OUR BRGs





# At Staples, inclusion is a **verb**.

It is what we do to ensure that all employees feel valued and supported to contribute to their fullest potential.

We gain better perspective to help serve our customers and employees' needs.

That is why we work hard to maintain a dynamic workforce that reflects the customers we serve – and we seek employees with unique input and perspectives

# Our branded merchandise operations support neurodivergent inclusion.

Neurodivergent adults face significant obstacles to independence and employment due to intellectual disabilities, autism or brain injuries.

Village Northwest Unlimited (VNU) – a 501(c)(3) nonprofit located in Sheldon, IA. – provides a full range of support for neurodivergent citizens to help them acquire life skills and lead fulfilling, community-integrated lives with purpose and dignity. Their mission is to provide purpose, privacy and dignity for all people.



We engage VNU to bring neurodivergent talent into our operations, so their mission is supported by your brand merchandising. On any given day, 10 to 15 neurodivergent teammates support client brands by:

- Assembling kitting projects
- Applying labels, stickers and hang tags
- Gathering and sorting distribution waste from bins at end of warehouse aisles and consolidating into large containers for recycling

VNU makes it possible for us to employ a wider spectrum of neurodivergent talent by providing:

- **Transportation** to and from work (widening the radius of our neurodivergent talent base)
- **Coaches** to help less independent neurodivergent staff (expanding the number of candidates we can work with)
- VNU can quickly supply **variable labor** when needed (expanding the situational utilization of these teammates)



# Our Supplier Diversity Program creates more choices for our customers.

Our U.S. and Canadian procurement teams constantly seek relationships with new suppliers to meet the needs of values-based customers.

We take special care to consider small and medium-sized businesses local to the communities in which we operate.

We leverage this network to create seamless Tier-1 and Tier-2 diversity purchasing solutions that help clients further align spending with values.

We can track and report spend with these suppliers to our clients on an overall basis, and for their specific programs.

## Tier 1 Solutions

For Tier 1 solutions, our diversity alliance partners are part of the service contract and provide overall program management, warehousing, picking, packing, kitting, printing, distribution, customer service and invoicing.

## Tier 2 Solutions

Tier 2 solutions leverage our growing network of over 95 U.S. and Canadian Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) suppliers. We strive to optimize purchases of merchandise and maximize decoration and kitting services with this network.



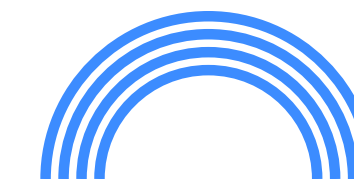
Small Business



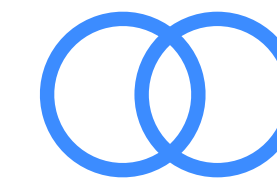
Women Owned



Minority Owned



LGBTQ+ Owned



Disability Owned

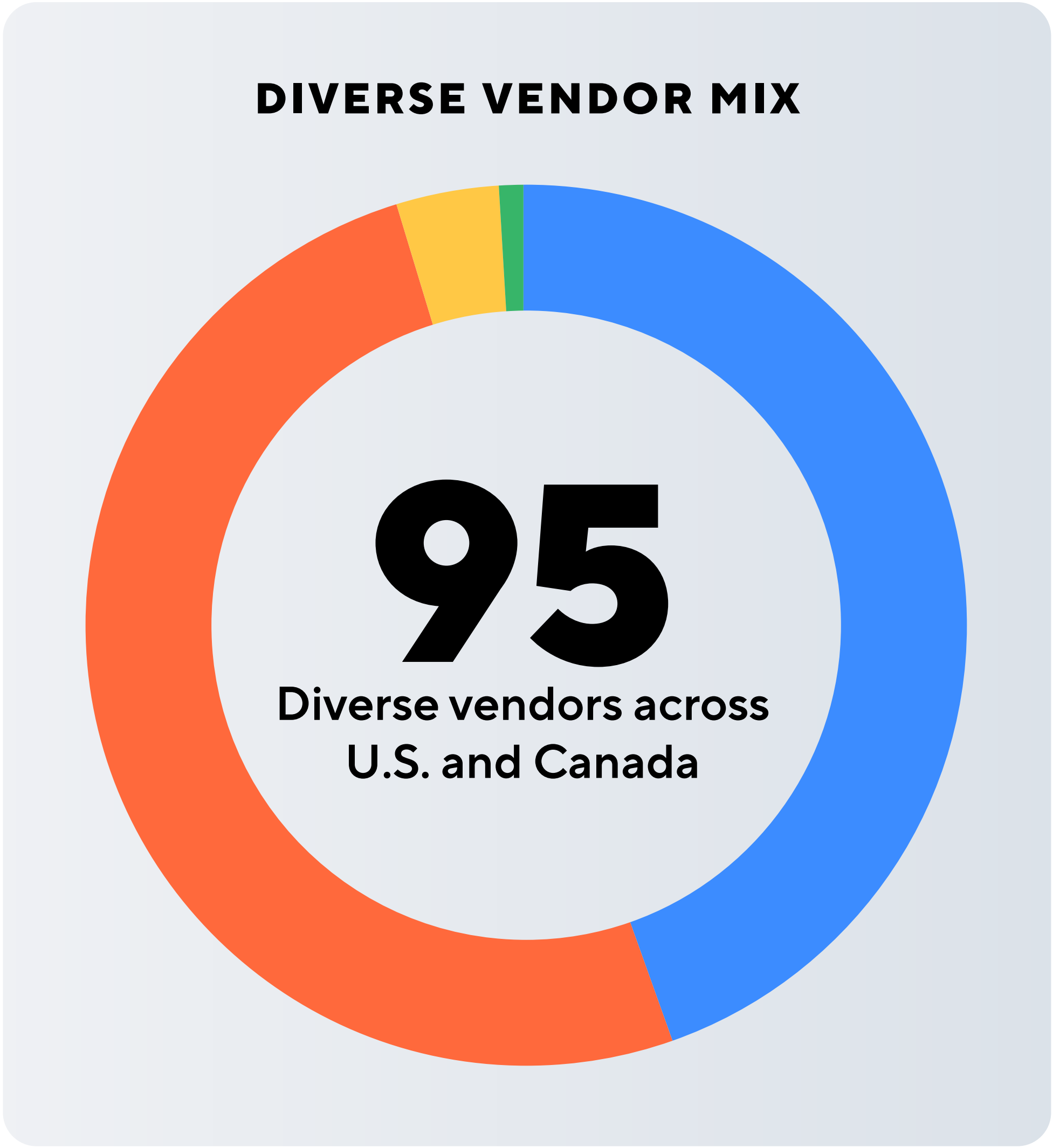


Veteran Owned



# Supply Chain Partnerships

Proud partners, corporate members and recognized councils:



MINORITY OWNED

**43%**

WOMEN OWNED

**52%**

LGBTQ+ OWNED

**4%**

VETERAN OWNED

**1%**

# Code of Ethics and Conduct

Our culture is built on transparent standards and expectations.



# Employee Code of Conduct

Our work culture is built on transparent expectations. We are honest, fair and trustworthy.

Our Employee Code of Conduct precisely outlines the standards that govern how we work together with clients and supplier partners.

Explicit instructions explain how behaviors that contradict ethics, codes or values, can be formally or anonymously reported.



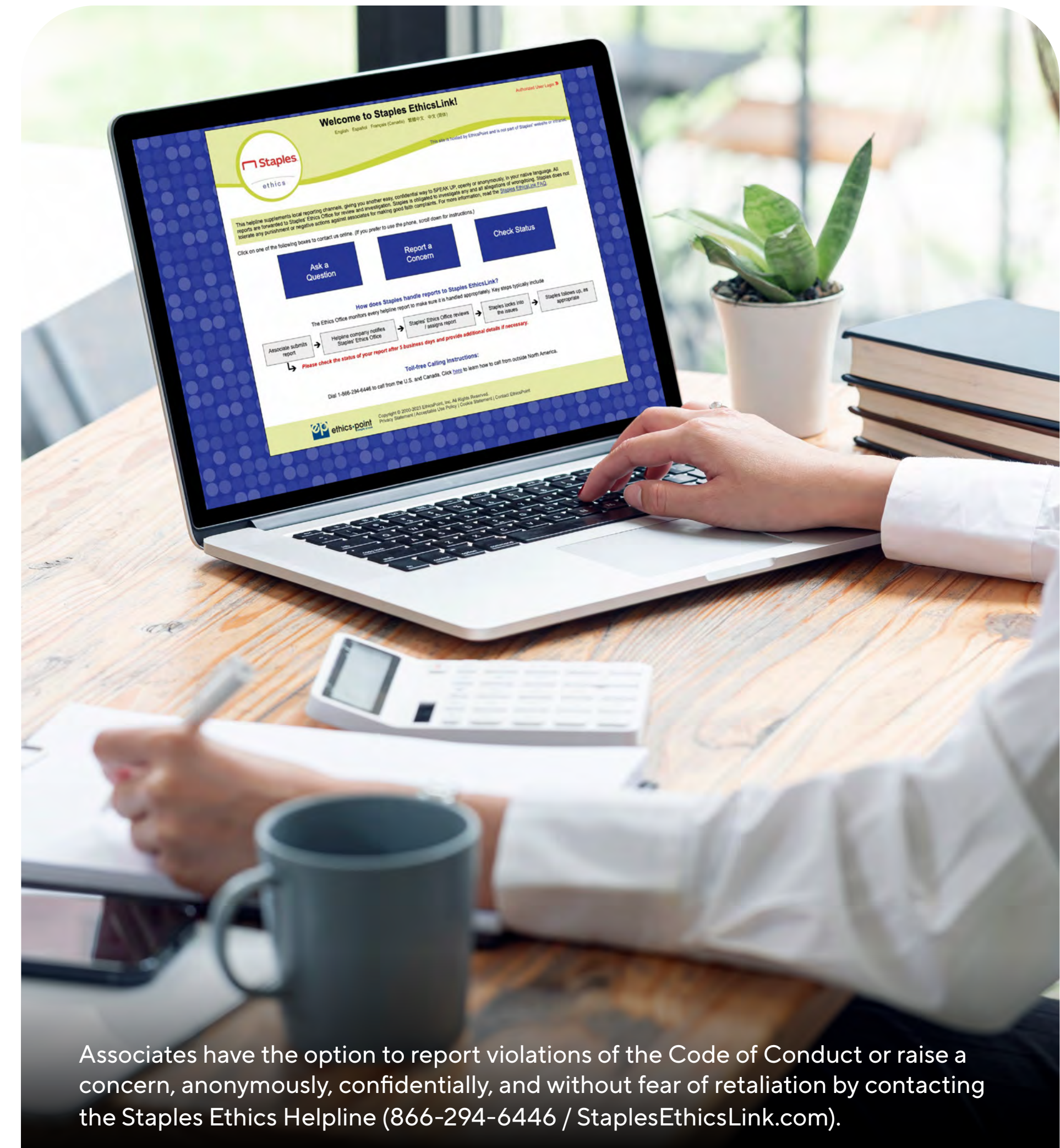
## REQUIRES

- Compliance with laws, rules and regulations
- Compliance with record keeping, reporting and financial integrity requirements
- Avoiding conflicts of interest in fact or appearance
- Gifts disclosure
- Health and safety requirements
- Anti-retaliation policies



## PROHIBITS

- Illegal drug use
- Violence
- Bribery and payments to government personnel
- Discrimination and harassment
- Price fixing



Associates have the option to report violations of the Code of Conduct or raise a concern, anonymously, confidentially, and without fear of retaliation by contacting the Staples Ethics Helpline (866-294-6446 / StaplesEthicsLink.com).

# Supplier Code of Conduct

Our suppliers are mutual partners in building better, more sustainable brands. All of them are required to sign and follow our Supplier Code of Conduct.

It requires that they manage their operations and treat their employees in a way that honors our respective brands.

We also expect them to mandate that their suppliers adhere to the same code of conduct.

## ✓ REQUIRES

- Healthy and safe labor environment
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Wages that adhere to all applicable laws
- All legally mandated benefits
- No more than 60 hours of work or the maximum number of hours allowed by law, whichever is lower
- Compensation for all hours worked and at rate of compensation that adheres to all applicable overtime laws
- The rights of Staples personnel and/or our contracted parties to monitor and audit compliance

## ✗ PROHIBITS

- Forced labor
- Child labor
- Harassment and abuse
- Discrimination





# Data Privacy and Security

We safeguard information with integrity.

# Staples, Inc. implements significant safeguards to secure and protect customer data and the privacy of customer transactions.

Our Global Information Security policy is modeled after the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cyber Security Framework (CSF), the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) and best practices from active participation in security collaboration organizations such as the Retail & Hospitality Information Sharing and Analysis Center (RH-ISAC). These collective frameworks provide a model for establishing, implementing, operating, monitoring, reviewing, maintaining and improving our enterprise information security management ecosystem. Policies are managed by the Governance, Risk and Compliance Team working with appropriate levels of management to review and approve all new policies and updates to existing policies annually, or more often as necessary, to adapt to an ever-changing threat environment.

Our policies are continuously updated to comply with applicable privacy laws and regulations. The publicly available Privacy Notice is updated at least once a year and describes our handling of personal information in connection with activities at our locations, on our websites and mobile applications, or with the services we provide.





## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Our data centers are equipped with redundant HVAC, fire suppression systems, flood detection systems and environmental sensors, plus multiple UPS, backup generators, power feeds and network connections. Their siting takes physical security considerations into account.

Security includes remotely monitored building management systems, 24/7 monitoring and guards, scheduled maintenance, and maintenance contracts.



## SECURITY EVENT MONITORING

System and security events are logged and aggregated in a centralized Security Information and Event Management (SIEM). The SIEM platform is monitored by Staples' Security Operations Center (SOC) plus a third-party partner providing 24/7 coverage.



## ROLES, ACCESS AND EDUCATION

Managing the security of roles and access to data is crucial for safeguarding sensitive information. Sensitive role assignments go through regularly scheduled formal reviews to verify active role authorization. Remote access requires Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). Annual Security and Privacy Awareness training is mandatory and supplemented with events, simulations, signage, videos and cultural programs highlighting data privacy and security best practices across the organization.



## CREDIT CARD SECURITY

Staples, Inc. complies with the latest version of the Payment Card Industry's Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). Our applications and networks are scanned, monitored and assessed annually by a third-party Qualified Security Assessor (QSA) as part of Merchant Level 1 requirements.



## BUSINESS CONTINUITY

All Staples, Inc. fulfillment centers maintain an emergency response plan, and our corporate offices have business continuity plans to ensure continued operations should a disaster strike. These plans integrate business risk management, operational risk management and business continuity, and are formally reviewed and updated annually. Key Components Include:

- Development and testing of well-structured and coherent plans enabling all locations to recover quickly and effectively from an unforeseen disaster or emergency
- Cohesive emergency response and crisis management plans
- Internal communication plans to notify teams, enact the plans, assemble personnel, assess damages and declare a disaster
- Plans to recover and restore our technical infrastructure
- Crisis communication plans to notify customers, associates and all key stakeholders of a disaster and planned response

# Securing a Better Future Together

Thank you for taking time to learn how we are putting sustainability at the heart of branded merchandise.

[LEARN MORE](#)

