

Benefit Report

Fiscal Year 2015 | January 1–December 31



State of Incorporation: Illinois



Letter from the President

Welcome to our newly formatted Benefit Corp report! In many ways, it reflects the way we operate, by creating a vision for the future and then developing goals that get us there. This happens sooner by continually speaking frankly about where we are in the process.

Being a certified Benefit Corp in the manufacturing sector has been both challenging and rewarding. There are a lot of moving parts in a manufacturing environment that naturally bring competing priorities and agendas even for a company that is pretty well aligned as we are. We know where we want to go, why we exist, and who we want to be. Getting there is the challenge, and it will take a concerted effort to make it happen. As you will read, we have made some great improvements that have significant impact.

This is why being a B Corp is so important. It is helping us expose our shortcomings and determine what's important to us. We aspire to be in the "Best for the World" categories knowing it will make us a better company overall for our customers, our suppliers, our neighbors, and us as a people.

Since this is a first attempt, we welcome comments and feedback so that we can better report our progress in the coming years!

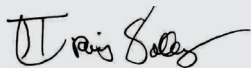
All the best,



Tor Solberg, President
Solberg Manufacturing, Inc.

Statement from the Benefits Director

Throughout 2015, Solberg Manufacturing, Inc. (SMI) complied with all mandates and provisions of maintaining Benefits Corporation status. No obstacles, board of directors' decisions, or other stakeholder actions affected the company's ability to achieve our intended public benefit.



Travis Solberg, Benefits Director
October 1, 2016
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B Lab Third-Party Certification

Bringing positive benefit to our customers and communities is at the core of SMI's philosophy. In recent years, we sought to make our actions verifiable, attaining B Lab's prestigious B Corp certification in May 2011, which validates our role as a responsible supplier.

B Lab was particularly attractive because of its reputation and rigor in reviewing candidates. B Lab is selective, holding candidates to stringent criteria. Thus, our B Corp certification puts us amongst an elite group of manufacturers.

Benefit Corporation Status in Illinois

Taking our B Corp certification a step further, in 2013, we restructured our company status to become a Benefit Corporation LLC in Illinois. A Benefit Corporation is a for-profit enterprise that adopts higher standards of corporate purpose, accountability, and transparency — initiatives in which we take great pride in achieving.

To maintain this designation, it is required to both enact socially responsible strategies and report on their public value and benefit every year. This report will provide specifics on how SMI's actions benefit our communities and our world.

Ownership Facts

A privately held enterprise, Solberg Manufacturing, Inc. is 100% owned by the Solberg family. Such interests are divided among two directors, Tor Solberg and Charlie Solberg, both of whom hold active operational roles within the company.

Our Seven P's

A Measurable Approach to Positive Benefit

Across our operations, we strive to create positive benefit to our workers, communities, and environment. We report our activities based on our key focus areas we call our Seven P's: People, Planet, Product, Property, Power, Prosperity, and Philanthropy. This allows us to organize our accomplishments each year into seven categories, signifying where impact is being made. Throughout this report, we will call out this impact with the following icons.



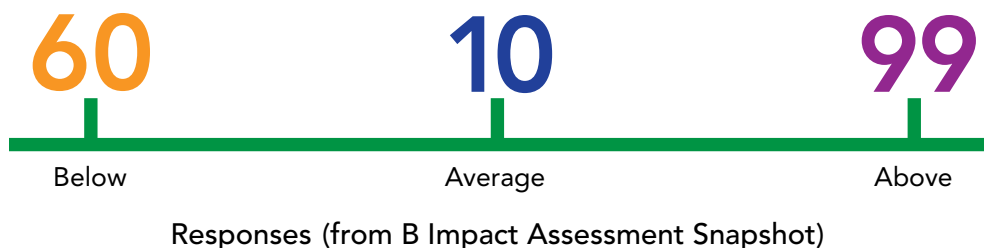
In 2015, we delivered benefit in a number of ways in each category. The following pages cover 73 total specific instances of measured benefit, with 18 in People, 9 in Planet, 9 in Product, 6 in Power, 13 in Property, 12 in Prosperity, and 6 in Philanthropy.

Our Efforts to Create Public Benefit

Since our modest beginnings nearly 50 years ago, SMI has been dedicated to delivering dependable filtration and separation products produced to exacting manufacturing and environmental standards. Significant time and resources are committed to being a responsible steward. We strive to provide products and systems that protect mission-critical machinery while safeguarding the surrounding environment. We believe these commitments help customers succeed, encourage employee achievement, and enhance communities.

B Corp public benefits fall into five main categories: Governance, Workers, Customers, Environment, and Community. This report will describe our achievements and shortcomings in these five categories, and explain how we are addressing these challenges.

In 2015, we achieved a B Corp score of 113 out of 200 possible points. We understand this gives us great opportunity for improvement. Each year, our score will change based on what we accomplished in that year. We are working hard on initiatives that will improve our score and better ourselves as a company.



B Corp's Best for the World Results

Overall: 132/178 (Minimum/Best)

Best for the World honorees are recognized for creating the most positive social and environmental impact, earning an overall score in the top 10% of all Certified B Corporations. For this year's rankings, a 132 minimum score was required to be included. The best score achieved was 178.

See: <http://bestfortheworld.bcorporation.net>

SMI's Mission Statement

We partner with our customers, colleagues, and suppliers to help them innovate and discover new possibilities.

SMI's Guiding Principles

WE SUCCEED AS A FAMILY — We are committed and accountable to our business family. Our ability to connect and care for each other ensures our well-being.

WE DO THE RIGHT THING — We can be trusted to keep our promises and treat others as we would like to be treated.

WE ENDEAVOR TO BE THE BEST — We attract, develop, and empower great people. We continually seek ways to improve everything we do.

WE TAKE CARE OF THE CUSTOMER — We partner with our customers by innovating and responding to their needs. We do whatever it takes to ensure their satisfaction.

WE PLAY HARD TO WIN — We rise to every challenge. Our strong work ethic and desire to succeed drive us to outperform the competition.

WE LOVE OUR PLANET — Every day we all do our part to lessen the environmental impact of our business. We actively seek ways to protect and preserve our environment.

To this end, we apply these Guiding Principles to everything we do, ensuring we operate a safe manufacturing environment while promoting a conscious culture.

Governance

This section evaluates our accountability and transparency, focusing on our Mission and Guiding Principles, stakeholder engagement, and overall transparency of company practices and policies.

Overview



A privately held family business, SMI is guided by a small leadership team. We have established a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) on environmental and social performance, and adhere to them by completing the B Lab assessment. Our Chief Sustainability Steward, a third-generation Solberg, is in charge of leading environmental and social relationships. In his efforts, he reviews these annually to assess accomplishments and set goals for each coming year.

B Corp Score	
SMI Score	14
Median Score	6*
Best for the World Results	N/A **

*Of all businesses that completed the B Impact Assessment.

**There was no Best for World category for Governance.



For our company to not only survive but to succeed, our entire workforce is counted upon to act according to the Guiding Principles and is encouraged to participate in decisions, big and small. It's critical to keep the organization as flat as possible with respect to hierarchy. Doing so gives more people more meaning and responsibility in their jobs and secures them for a stable and sustainable future.

Highlights



There is legal protection for whistle blowers, and employees are able to communicate concerns with our third-party human resources vendor. Any employee is able to communicate directly with the CEO and President. All of these measures help prevent anti-corruption and enhance prosperity.

Stakeholder Engagement



SMI's internal stakeholders — namely the production and production planning teams — were very active in improving operations this year. This included reducing overall process times, which reduced our environmental impact and ensured on-time delivery.



All standard component inventory was moved to the new manufacturing facility (listed as 1025 throughout this report), which enabled production to pull parts locally and upon need. Production also initiated programs to complete work orders in their entirety, a process that was previously split between buildings. These activities reduced emissions by eliminating supply transfers between buildings and saved us \$41,163 in transportation costs. Also, the inventory move created much-needed space at our distribution facility (listed as 1151 throughout this report).



Production planners redesigned, relocated, and increased working space for most work areas at 1151. These property enhancements streamlined workflow and reduced order fulfillment time. Plus, increased space for container filling, injection molding, and large assembly led to fewer order fulfillment errors.



These improvements resulted in the least amount of hours worked on average since we began recording this metric in 2009. In addition to reducing worker strain, SMI greatly reduced overtime. Going from two shifts to one shift streamlined our supply chain, expediting shipping of end products. SMI's on-time delivery performance for 2015 increased to 98%+.

Challenges



With fluctuations in business volumes, it can be challenging to maintain full adherence to our social and environmental policies.



There are times throughout the year when we can have as many as five new employees and 10+ temporary workers. Since these individuals come from staffing agencies, their training with us is limited to safety and other critical functions. Thus, they are unfamiliar with our Mission and Guiding Principles.

We need to focus on continuously giving more people a voice in what goes on in their sphere of influence, improve our abilities in self-directed teams, and build on our quest to work in a culture of helpfulness.

Goals for 2016



Our biggest concern within Governance is that we no longer have a Board of Directors (BOD). We had a BOD previously, but when directors retired, they were not replaced. To fill this gap, we need to create a new BOD that meets at least bi-annually and has at least one independent, non-family member. Currently, the company and its committees handle all SMI's matters. An opportunity also exists to place more emphasis on people's annual commitment to social and environmental participation by making these activities a clear part of their job descriptions.

Workers

This section measures how SMI treats its workers through compensation, benefits, training, and ownership opportunities, as well as overall work environment. It includes management/worker communication, job flexibility, corporate culture, and worker health & safety practices.

Overview



While we sincerely believe our people are our most valuable asset, our B Corp score shows that we have plenty of opportunities to improve. We are constantly examining practices to ensure a workplace where health & wellness is a priority, safety is a core focus, and personal meaning and significance among workers is commonplace. Getting to this level is challenging as many workplace rules were established decades ago. We are reviewing and updating our policies and rules to produce a more progressive organization.

B Corp Score	
SMI Score	23
Median Score	18*
Best for the World Results	32/63 **

**Of all businesses that completed the B Impact Assessment.*

***Minimum score to achieve Best for the World status was 32, with the highest score recorded being 63. SMI was 9 points short of inclusion.*

Highlights

The Itasca USA facilities increased its headcount by four employees, all of whom were production workers.



SMI provides full-time employees (and temporary employees who have worked for two consecutive years) with the following benefits: Company pays 80% of individual health care premium, offers 50% match to employees' 401k contribution (up to 3%), and provides a minimum of 17 days paid time off. Employees whose work can be completed anywhere on less crucial deadlines may work flextime. A handful of employees work offsite as territory sales people.



Safety is a major theme at SMI. In 2015, we focused on preventing injury, while maintaining high standards for product quality. This was accomplished by coupling safety and quality together through new technologies, worker safety training, and the full realization of 2014 facility improvements. Because of these efforts, we repeated zero days lost to incidents. Injuries that did occur were minor cuts requiring only bandages.

Year	Production Employees	OSHA Recordable Incidents	Days of Restriction	Days Lost Due to Incident
2015	79	8	9	0
2014	72	5	8	0
2013	69	8	32	0
2012	61	7	0	18
2011	58	4	13	0



SMI purchased a number of safety-related items, including a portable crane for lifting heavy parts, an OSHA-approved protective cage to prevent accidents by rotating chemical drums, plasma welding and grinding spray protection, protective arm gear, and spill kits for each building. These additions have all improved working conditions. Workers are better shielded from manufacturing elements, with better personal protective equipment to ease strain on backs, feet, and hands. We also collaborated with a supplier to design an exhaust fan to capture smoke created in spot-welding applications. The system is energy-efficient and has produced notable air quality improvements, leading to two additional units being built for the remaining spot welding locations.



To reinforce safety measures, we enacted department-specific training (such as machine guarding for engineers and drafters) and weekly safety meetings. We also provided paid time off for 10 employees to become CPR-certified. This enabled us to have at least four people per building who are certified to administer CPR during an emergency.

Wellness Initiatives



SMI's Fitness Club Program and exercise room are also helping staff live healthier. We provide a variety of weight training and cardiovascular equipment for use before and after work. We also added a bike rack for those who wish to bike to work. In addition to encouraging fitness, these activities and amenities help build camaraderie.

Challenges



Adopting new processes can be difficult, especially in an organization like ours that has numerous employees with 20+ years of experience. We met some resistance to new protocols as these longtime staffers felt the new protocols were excessive. This resistance, however, was beneficial in that it helped us refine ideas for even greater benefit. We spent more than \$40K for new safety equipment, protective materials, and means for quality tracking. Our focus on recording each and every incident is also why we returned to just eight recordable OSHA incidents. Instead of self-treating small injuries, workers can now get treatment at our newly created first aid sites.

Goals for 2016



We will continue to identify practices and equipment to further promote safety and workplace quality. We are also adopting practices to improve compensation on the production floor where wages are the lowest. In the coming months, we are working to have all employees on the “living wage.” This will be effective once they have passed their preliminary phase of employment or internship.



SMI International, Korea, supplied a couple of new accounts that tested our internal safety program and production capabilities.



After researching and cure-testing the required fireproof potting compound on hot plates, we learned that the smoke generated would make it uncomfortable for employees to breathe freely. Replacing the 500° half-hour hot plate curing to four-day natural open-air curing was a paradigm shift that led to better parts produced and better protection for our people and environment.

Customers

This section measures our impact on customers. It covers how our products promote public benefit. It also spans our efforts in creating products that solve environmental issues or reduce negative effect. Categories include: health improvement, environmental preservation, economic opportunity, arts/sciences, and capital support to purpose-driven enterprises.

Overview

Even though we scored an "N/A," we are reporting on our efforts in this area in hopes that our initiatives get recognized in the future. Perhaps B Corp's measurement did not apply to our specific processes. We indeed offer product to solve customers' environmental issues, as outlined below.

B Corp Score	
SMI Score	N/A
Median Score	N/A
Best for the World Results	42/60 **

***Minimum score to achieve Best for the World status was 42, with the highest score recorded being 60.*

Highlights



A very important public benefit of one SMI line of products is capturing oil mist from engine crankcases — usually in power generation. Our products reduce 99.97% of emissions to 0.3 micron, essentially indicating that no oil is being emitted into the atmosphere. This is especially important in operations where such products can have significant environmental impact, such as on ships and oil rigs. Furthermore, that oil is cleaned and can be recirculated back into the crankcase, saving tremendous amounts of oil.



A notable 11% of our sales classified as products that directly reduced pollution.

Challenges



We have other products that filter out harmful material; however, it benefits the actual equipment more than people or the environment.



There is a bag-in, bag-out line that helps assist maintenance personnel with reducing exposure to harmful material.



SMI sells a lot of noise-reduction products meant to protect workers at worksites; however, we do not receive points for this category. Without noise reduction, our factories would be much louder and less productive. Physicians and educators have found numerous side effects of noise other than just hearing loss.



Goals for 2016



According to [Psychology Today](#), side effects of noise can include coronary artery disease; high blood pressure; stress-related health conditions such as migraines, colitis, and ulcers; and decreased sleep and sleep quality. Excessive noise can also lead to emotional problems such as mental fatigue, anxiety, and aggression.

We are working with B Lab to have noise-reduction products count for points in this category in the future.

Environment

This section explains our environmental performance throughout our facilities; materials, resource, and energy use; and emissions. It also shows our efforts to reduce environmental impact throughout our supply chain. Finally, it covers how our products solve environmental issues, such as preventing toxic/hazardous substances or pollution from entering the atmosphere.

Overview



As a B Corp manufacturer, SMI implements practices and protocols that help protect our planet. Our two primary focuses are reducing waste and power consumption, followed by reusing materials when possible and then recycling the rest. These practices are ingrained into our everyday lives and have proven to be more than just good habits. They are part of our culture of continuous improvement, where we track our waste and tie it back to the manufacturing process to further improve our processes.

B Corp Score	
SMI Score	54
Median Score	7*
Best for the World Results	43/67**

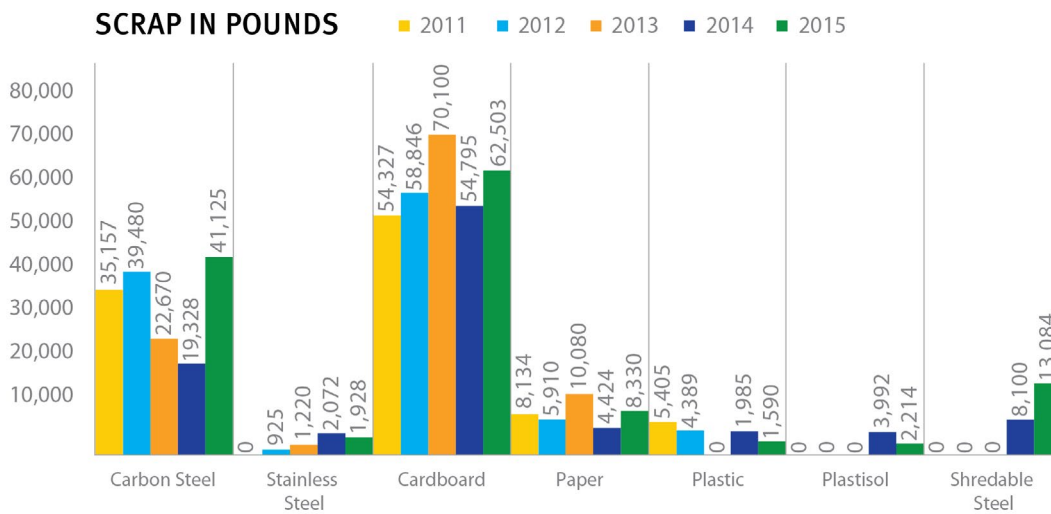
**Of all businesses that completed the B Impact Assessment.*

***SMI actually scored 54 in 2015. Unfortunately, SMI was not aware of the reassessment date, therefore our 2014 (last assessment date) was used. Minimum score to achieve Best for the World status was 43, with the highest score recorded being 67.*

Highlights



Our efforts in 2015 resulted in positive benefits to both our employees and our environment. We maintained our near 90% diversion of waste from landfills, a figure we have achieved consistently over the last three years. We also built on our 2014 reuse milestone, recapturing \$4,693 across our seven tracked categories.



Our property saw some nice improvements, with 1025 planting four serviceberry shrubs that produced fruit for all to eat. Two native Illinois Burr Oak trees were also planted. The prairie patch that we added at our old production building also is now blooming with some healthy flowers, including black-eyed Susans. In addition to ecological improvements, these places are providing new homes to the struggling honeybee population.



Packaging of international container shipments continues to be a focus, as international sales grow each year. In 2015, we saw a 2% reduction in per-capita freight cost even though there is very little opportunity left to reduce costs further without significant sales increases. On the domestic front, another key objective of our environmental/logistics effort is reducing packaging damage. In incidents of damage, we must reship finished materials, doubling our environmental effect. Adding increased shipping protection decreases efficiencies and can require the use of non-recyclable materials (such as packing peanuts), negating environmental benefits. In 2015, we increased shipments from 130 to 131 per day and increased sales in 8 of our 63 product categories.

Percentage Reduction in Per-Capita Freight Cost from Previous Year for Containers Sent to SMI Belgium	
2015	2% less charges than 2014
2014	8.9% less charges than 2013
2013	9.7% less charges than 2012
2012	12.7% less charges than 2011
2011	15.4% less charges than 2010
2010	Base Year



Power is a significant factor in our operations, and we strive to manage it sustainably by utilizing gas, electric, and solar energy where they are best suited. In 2015, we benefited from lower natural gas prices, saving more than \$17K. We have also rebalanced our percentage of index vs. fixed costs. This includes adding a natural gas generator capable of producing 175kw of electricity to keep our computer systems and other important building functions running in case of a power outage.

Year	Gas	Electricity	Total Energy Cost
2015	\$29,735	\$70,643	\$100,387*
2014	\$48,087	\$69,430	\$117,517*
2013	\$27,212	\$66,993	\$94,205
2012	\$25,789	\$59,790	\$85,579
2011	\$24,822	\$63,854	\$88,676

*Includes total energy costs of new manufacturing facility that we relocated to in August 2014. Our space is now three times the size of our previous facility.

1025 Building		
Year	Natural Gas Therms	Electricity (kWh)
2015	47,372**	492,413*
2014	38,540	416,141*
2013	33,378	384,960
2012	25,836	359,750
2011	27,912	363,999

*Represents new manufacturing facility that is three times the size of our previous facility.

**Includes full year with double the number of curing ovens.

1151 Building			
Year	Natural Gas Therms	Electricity (kWh)	Actual Energy Used without Solar (kWh)
2015	15,148	269,493	353,527
2014	16,546	259,029	339,423
2013	14,440	254,893	340,304
2012	9,505	274,544	340,277
2011	12,940	284,311	343,574



In 2015, SMI found novel solutions to some energy challenges. For example, we added a thermal sleeve to help contain heat and reduce energy usage of our old hydraulic injection molders. Air compressors also pose some issues, as they generate quite a bit of humidity by nature of compressing air, which can clog production if water travels through the metal lines. We have resolved this by integrating air compressor dryers that remove condensation before entering compressed air pipes and away from equipment operations.



Our investment in solar technologies has helped offset electricity usage in our 1151 building by roughly 22%, saving 28% on our electric bill. In 2015, positive dynamics in Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs) increased our return on investment. Additionally, we captured roughly \$3K in tax incentives. Six years into our investment in solar, we have reached 74% ROI, which is far ahead of our 17-year breakeven point.

Year	Return (excluding tax)
2015	\$41,945
2014	\$28,696
2013	\$28,421
2012	\$20,565
2011	\$12,698

Challenges



We continue to create scrap hockey-puck-style elements of the 04-11 element part numbers. A plastic recycler will take the clean polyolefin, but will not take any scrap that has the paper or polyester media. This means that we end up with a gaylord full of scrap every three months. We have yet to find a way to easily extract the media for better recycling.



We also have some challenges in recycling. Handling so many types of scrap, we run into difficulties in ensuring their proper disposition. Staff are working on several different products and processes at any given point, and recycling efforts have the potential to be compromised for efficiency. We also need to find recycling vendors for special materials, such as our scrap hockey-puck-shaped elements. This scrap will remain on our floor until we do.



Despite many discussions with UPS, FedEx, and our trucking freight providers, their protocols do not provide for full protection. With more shipments, our packaging damage reports increased to 58 damaged product shipments versus 47 damaged in 2014 out of about 33,000 orders shipped.

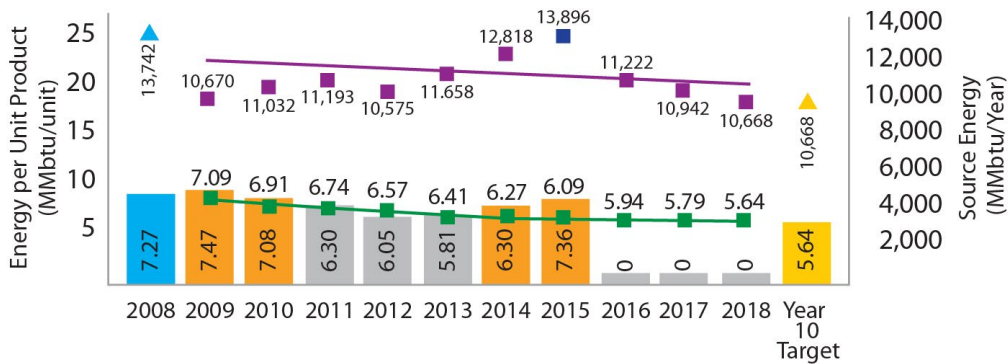


Reducing our energy intensity remains a critical focus of SMI's pledge to achieve 25% reduction in energy intensity; and we use software of the Department of Energy's "Better Buildings, Better Plants" initiative to measure our performance. Despite our energy reduction efforts, our electricity consumption rose at both buildings. We will focus on reducing these in future years.



Clearly, increased power consumption is a challenge. Though we did not add any major new equipment in 2015, we added many smaller pieces of machinery and now simply have a lot in operation relative to a year ago. We struggle with balancing the environmental consciousness of disposing older equipment against gaining the efficiencies of new technologies.

**PEITS TOOL
PLANT'S ENERGY INTENSITY TRACKING SCORECARD**
(Adjusted for Weather & Production Variations)



Goals for 2016



Reducing our energy intensity is our primary initiative. While we remain prudent in our investments, our leadership and Chief Sustainability Steward are looking into ways to trim down, including new technologies to improve our energy usage of our equipment or eliminate unneeded steps in production. We will review possible expansion of solar energy at our 1025 facility and we are also evaluating software that monitors energy usage in real time, so we can better assess our power needs.

2015 Recognitions & Awards



Sustainability Leadership — SMI was highlighted in *Environmental Leader's* "2015 Insider Knowledge" for our exemplary practices in environmental, sustainability, and energy management.



Global Efforts & Recognition — Italian magazine *La Repubblica* gave kudos to SMI for our eco-friendly custom filter and silencer offerings, along with our work in the U.S. Department of Energy's "Better Plants" program. Through this program, we have committed to reducing our energy intensity by 25% over ten years.

Community

This section articulates SMI's supplier relations, diversity, and involvement in the local community. It also showcases our practices and policies around community service and charitable giving.

Overview



SMI's relationships with its suppliers is solid, and the diversity of the workplace is strong. The area in which we would like to better ourselves is community service. There is much more we can do to be a good neighbor who gives back generously. We already sponsor a number of philanthropic events and programs throughout the year, but are looking to extend our reach in coming years.

B Corp Score	
SMI Score	22
Median Score	17 *
Best for the World Results	51/96 **

**Of all businesses that completed the B Impact Assessment.*

***Minimum score to achieve Best for the World status was 51, with the highest score recorded being 96. SMI was 29 points short of inclusion.*

Highlights



We believe that giving back is essential. As part of our commitment as a Benefits Corporation, SMI donates 1% of our pre-tax sales to charity. In 2015, this totaled over \$300,000, which we directed to our current categories of Environment, Humanities, Disasters, and Sports. Environment comprises 50% of our giving, whereas humanities makes up approximately 40%. The remaining 10% goes to Disasters and Sports. At least 25% of all donations are given to local groups. Matching gifts are encouraged when possible. When determining potential recipients, operational efficiencies are reviewed by choosing charities with low indirect expense ratios. A separate category, Disaster Relief, is activated when calamities occur. A portion of available funds is set aside each year to support organizations in their efforts to relieve catastrophic events. The SMI family continues to volunteer for and donate substantially to the Alliance of the Great Lakes, which works to conserve and protect the Great Lakes for generations to come.



We also give back through our actions. This year, four employees received a special tour at Nachusa Grassland with the Nature Conservancy to learn about implanted bison. For our annual spring litter pickup, 62 SMI participants picked up trash from our industrial park, filling 48 full trash bags. This is a great team-building event that helps our community.



On our own grounds, we conduct a fair amount of planting and harvesting. In 2015, SMI's five-person Garden Club used our 1,200-square-foot garden to grow more than 20 types of vegetables to share with employees and their friends and families. To go along with this effort, we ran a healthy grocery-shopping seminar, helping staff make better food choices and learn how to manage allergy issues. We also donated approximately 80 pounds of apples from our trees to our local Itasca Food Bank.



We continued to encourage healthy life habits. On National Walk Day, our entire company received paid time off for 30 minutes to walk one mile. Since a half-mile is the distance between our two buildings, staff was able to wave and say hello to colleagues they see only occasionally.



SMI has a summer and Christmas party every year to express gratitude to employees while supporting different venues. In 2015, the summer picnic was located at Busse Woods forest preserve in Schaumburg, IL. In addition to supporting the forest preserve, we had a caterer, refreshments, and a small group of entertainers. The Christmas party repeated at Dave & Busters in Addison, IL.



In 2015, the Chief Sustainability Steward and Operations Manager started a program to audit significant suppliers on environmental and social topics similar to this report. Through this initiative, we visited seven key suppliers. These visits were collaborative, as we each shared ways to grow and improve safety. Moreover, they produced ideas to improve our own system.

Challenges



Due to delivery cycles and time constraints, we were unable to host our annual blood drive or some of our other fun, philanthropic events. We will be revisiting these in 2016.

Goals for 2016



In the coming year, we are striving to increase volunteerism for community service. We are evaluating ways to make it easier for our staff to find time to devote during work hours. We are also looking at including staff's families in efforts to get more people involved so we can make an even greater impact across our communities.

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