



# 2022 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

AVENUE TWO®  
TRAVEL

# CONTENTS

Letter from the CEO .....	3
Industry Stats & Obstacles .....	4
2022 Highlights & Timeline .....	6
Executive Summary .....	8
Internal Redesign & Long-Term Objectives .....	10
<i>Sustainability Management System (Long Term Plan)</i> .....	10
<i>Mission Statement Redesign</i> .....	10
<i>B Corp Impact Assessment</i> .....	11
<i>Sustainability Impact Report</i> .....	12
<i>Marketing</i> .....	12
Advisor Education .....	13
Preferred Partner Program .....	14
Emissions Calculation and Reduction .....	15
Future Plans .....	16
Conclusion.....	16



# LETTER FROM THE CEO Joshua Bush



When my mother, Debbie Bush, founded this company 35 years ago, her mission was simple: to create memorable travel experiences. At that time, traveling internationally, especially to remote destinations, was less frequent than it is today. She would spend

months – even years – planning each step of the trip alongside her clients. As she showed her clients glossy brochures and maps, their excitement about experiencing these beautiful destinations with unique cultures was palpable.

Fast forward to today, where hard-to-reach destinations are more accessible than ever, and people's desire to see the world is at an all-time high. Combine that with our culture of instant gratification, and you have travelers who can, on the spur of the moment, plan a long weekend to Europe. From a business perspective, this is great and the industry is booming; from a sustainability perspective, this can cause lasting, harmful impacts on our beautiful planet and global communities.

We know that it is our earth's incredible beauty and dynamic cultures that draw people to travel. However, rarely do we consider the effect travel has on our planet. The pandemic afforded us the opportunity to slow down and evaluate the total impact – both good and bad – of tourism. As planes stopped flying and cruise ships docked indefinitely, we saw a decrease (albeit temporary) in worldwide CO2 emissions, a reprieve from smog and noise pollution and promising signs of ecosystem regeneration across the world. On the other hand, as tourism dollars dried up, we were reminded

of the critical role they play in supporting global communities and supporting conservation.

With our responsibility to take action never clearer, we partnered with Sustainable Wanderlust in January 2022 to create a comprehensive sustainability strategy for Avenue Two. Over the past year, we have introduced several initiatives to support our mission including: launching a new mission statement, applying for BCorp certification, creating an advisor sustainability training program, revamping many of our company policies, reviewing our marketing efforts, and more. We are thrilled that these efforts have been met with excitement from the team, and they are eager for more, more, more! This is the kind of instant gratification we want to fill!

This is just the beginning of our journey. In 2022, we focused on building a sustainable foundation for our business. We are proud of what we have accomplished and look forward to accomplishing much more. This year, we will prioritize launching our training program, a preferred partner program and developing a more robust carbon emissions reduction plan. We are eager to share what we have learned with our travel industry friends and partners and will continue our sustainability journey with a spirit of collaboration and gratitude.

Responsible travel can be the easy and obvious choice. However, lasting, positive and sustainable change will require a commitment from the entire industry - agencies and suppliers alike. Together we can ensure that future generations will experience the same joy and excitement from traveling as we do today.

# INDUSTRY STATS & OBSTACLES

Our sustainability integration began with the understanding that sustainability is vital to the health and longevity of our industry. Traveler demand for sustainable travel is growing and it is incumbent upon us to respond. Travel agencies will play a vital role in the industry's shift towards better travel.



## Sustainable Tourism Defined

UNWTO definition:

*"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities."*

## Three Pillars of Sustainable Tourism:



### **Cultural Heritage**

Respects and preserves the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities.



### **Environmental**

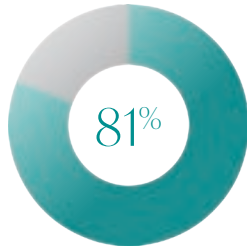
Conserves natural heritage and biodiversity.



### **Economic**

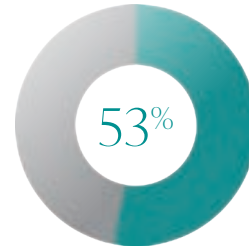
Ensures the economic benefits of tourism are fairly and equally distributed.

## Industry-Wide Data



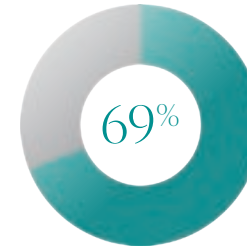
81% of respondents agree they want the money they spend while traveling to go back to the local community

- [Amex: Global Travel Trends Report 2022](#)



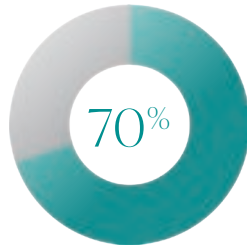
53% of global travelers want to travel more sustainably in the future

- [Booking.com: Smarter, Kinder, Safer: Nine Predictions For The Future of Travel](#)



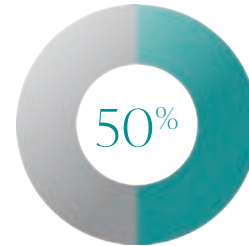
69% expect the travel industry to offer more sustainable travel options

- [Booking.com: Smarter, Kinder, Safer: Nine Predictions For The Future of Travel](#)



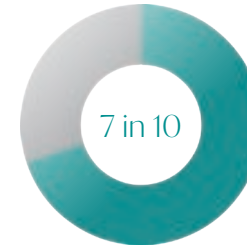
70% Survey respondents agreed that traveling sustainably enhances their vacation experience.

- [Virtuoso White Paper: Conscious Comeback](#)



50% of respondents indicated that it is “very important” to choose a hotel, cruise line, or travel company that has a strong sustainability policy.

- [Virtuoso White Paper: Conscious Comeback](#)



7 in 10 consumers feel overwhelmed by starting the process of being a more sustainable traveler

- [Expedia: Traveler Insights Report 2022](#)



The sustainable tourism market share is expected to increase by USD 235.21 billion from 2020 to 2025, and the market's growth momentum will accelerate at a CAGR of 9.72%.

- [Technavio: Sustainable Tourism Market Growth, Size, Trends, Analysis Report](#)

# Sustainability Initiatives by the Numbers

## 2022 Highlights Timeline

January 2022: Engage with Sustainable Wanderlust



March 2022: Conduct a thorough materiality assessment to better understand our most pressing sustainability challenges



April 2022: Re-establish the company's mission statement



theCOLLECTIVE



May 2022: Launch sustainability initiatives to company at The Collective

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE



January 2022: Initiate B Corp Impact Assessment



April 2022: Initiate scope 3 emissions calculations



June 2022: Submit B Corp Impact Assessment



July 2022: Legally  
file for Benefit  
Corporation status.

July 2022:  
Initiate advisor  
education with  
Sustainable  
Travel 101  
Training Primer



August 2022:  
Nomination for  
Virtuoso's Protecting  
the Planet Award

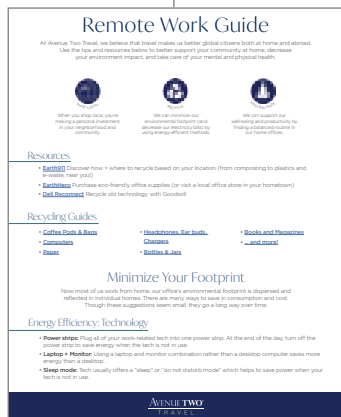


November 2022:  
Create sustainability  
webpage



November 2022: Initiate  
development of long term  
emissions reduction strategy

JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER



July 2022: Develop  
and share a  
sustainability-focused  
remote work guide

## On the Horizon, 2023

- Q 1-2: Roll out a Sustainable Agent Training, the first of its kind, aimed at enhancing our offerings and educating our staff.
- Q 2: Develop the Preferred Partner Program to prioritize value-aligned partnerships.
- Q 1-3: Continue to improve the HR manual and benefits to optimize the company culture, including:
  - Revamp 401k and healthcare package
  - Wage budgeting - amplifying pay grades to meet current market needs
  - Improving diversity
- Q 1-4: Expand and improve our emissions reduction and mitigation strategy.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Vision for Avenue Two Travel

Become the sustainability leader among US travel agencies by placing social and environmental responsibility at the core of our organizational culture.

## Vision for Travel Agencies

Advisors have the unique opportunity to affect dramatic, positive change by influencing both business supply and traveler demand.

## Sustainability Benefits

Travel has the power to do good for people and the planet. Below is a list of a few benefits from sustainable action in tourism:



Cultural Heritage: stakeholder inclusivity, cultural integrity, cultural preservation and rights, gender equality



Environment: ecosystem stewardship, conservation and ecosystem restoration, environmental regeneration



Economic: poverty alleviation, economic revitalization, local empowerment

## Internal Evaluation

Sustainability is not only how we act externally, but how we treat one another internally at Avenue Two. The company strives to create a culture that benefits its employees both in their work life and personal life and thus is committed to expanding and fine-tuning company benefits, wages, and culture.





## Sustainability Obstacles and Learnings

The reality is that travel can never be entirely sustainable because the core of the industry requires mobility, which, with today's infrastructure, is dependent on carbon. The goal is to reduce the harmful impacts of travel while amplifying the positive ones. This cannot be achieved without full industry collaboration and contribution.

Change takes time and patience. It will not happen overnight. It is a long term and continuous objective.

## Introduction to 4 Actions

As an agency, we asked ourselves, "How can we transform our business to improve both our individual and industry impact?" With that in mind, the overarching goal was created: Avenue Two Travel will strive to place social and environmental responsibility at the core of the company's organizational culture.

To achieve this goal, we developed four major action projects:

- 1. Internal Redesign & Long-Term Objectives:** It was clear that we needed to discover and gauge the company's current sustainability efforts. To do so, we employed the B Corp framework as a roadmap and action plan for further adoption of sustainable initiatives. We began by redefining the company's mission statement to serve as a guiding light for all future initiatives. Next, we developed a Sustainability Management Plan that outlined a series of strategic short- and long-term objectives which are outlined in this report.
- 2. Advisor Education:** Travel advisors are the core of our business, and they are vital to the success of our sustainability goals. Thus, we began developing a Sustainable Travel Advisor Education program with the aim of training all Avenue Two advisors and independent affiliates on the importance and application of responsible travel. This training program will equip advisors with the tools and resources necessary to incorporate sustainability into their businesses, and to both to meet and shift traveler demand.
- 3. Preferred Partner Program:** We are only as sustainable as our supply chain. We want to enhance our relationships with partners who share our values and are actively working to improve their sustainability efforts, while also offering support to suppliers with an honest desire to start their sustainability journey. Our plan is to create meaningful but achievable tiered sustainability standards for our partners and to influence industry-wide standards by supporting companies that align with a sustainable mission.
- 4. Emissions Calculation and Reduction:** Carbon remains our industry's most urgent and hard-to-solve problem. While offsets and carbon capture technology should play a role in the solution, more needs to be done to reduce travel-related emissions. Our aim is to set intensity-based reduction targets and to educate our advisors on carbon-efficient itinerary design.

*In the following slides, the process and outcomes of each action plan will be explained.*

# 1 | INTERNAL REDESIGN & LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

## **Sustainability Management System (Long Term Plan)**

**PURPOSE:** Develop a short- and long-term strategic plan to monitor and measure sustainability-focused KPIs with the aim of establishing Avenue Two as an industry leader in sustainability efforts and achievements, and to attract new clients through responding to shifting consumer demands.

**GOAL:** Hold the greater team accountable for the company's commitment to being an industry sustainability leader and establish the structure to incorporate sustainability into all facets of the business.

**METHODOLOGY:** In partnership with Sustainable Wanderlust, create an action plan with challenging but achievable key performance indicators (KPIs) to establish initiatives within the short (2-3 years) and long term (5-10 years).

**CURRENT STATUS:** Developed a short-term road map to set the foundation for sustainability integration, committed to the B Corp roadmap for long term sustainable development, published the first sustainability report to ensure transparency and accountability.

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** Integrating a new methodology into all facets of the business requires patience, teamwork, and dedication. However, the positive response from the staff has proved to be worth the continuous investment.

**NEXT STEPS:** Continue to advance short- and long-term action items (as detailed within this report).

## **Mission Statement Redesign**

**PURPOSE:** Integrate sustainability into the heart of the Avenue Two's brand and operations.

**GOAL:** Rewrite the company mission statement to reflect Avenue Two's commitment to sustainable, responsible travel.

**METHODOLOGY:** Review past mission statements and discuss the company's founding mission with the leadership team. Incorporate responsible travel into the original company goals so they ring true to the company's beginnings while also focusing on the future.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Complete

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** We were committed to striking a balance between adding a new focus on sustainability without forgetting Avenue Two's original vision and why clients trust us with their travels. In doing so, we learned that changing the mission statement was not a seismic shift in our vision, but rather a dovetail into what we were already doing.

**NEXT STEPS:** None



### **B Corp Impact Assessment** *\*pending certification*

The B Impact Assessment is designed to help measure and manage a company's positive impact by evaluating their day-to-day operations and business model. This rigorous assessment determines your current position in the sustainability process while indicating areas of opportunity to improve.

**PURPOSE:** By completing the B Impact Assessment, Avenue Two discovered the current sustainability efforts that were already in place and developed a roadmap and action plan for further adoption of sustainable initiatives.

**GOAL:** Work with a certification that is widely recognized across all industries to hold the company accountable to its commitments and provide a foundation for newly developed sustainability actions.

**METHODOLOGY:** Partner with Sustainable Wanderlust for timely guidance and support in completing the B Impact Assessment. This was executed through bi-weekly meetings to review and answer all 214 questions about the company's internal and external services, which required support from other department leaders. Actions varied from legally amending the company to a Benefit Corporation to improving the employee handbook, enhancing employee health benefits, establishing a GHG baseline, and more.

**CURRENT STATUS:** B Impact Assessment achieved score of 87 (against the minimum requirement of 80) and is pending evaluation from the B Corp team.

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** The company discovered new initiatives across all departments and recognized how easy it was to make small changes. By gaining awareness about where changes could be made and the impact these changes could have, the team was able to move the needle and improve the company.

**NEXT STEPS:** Pending update from B Corp Evaluation Team to review the B Impact Assessment results and evidence to either continue improving the company or proceed into the verification stage.





## Sustainability Impact Report

**PURPOSE:** Commit to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement against personal and industry wide goals.

**GOAL:** Develop an annual impact report to showcase Avenue Two's sustainability efforts and their statuses.

**METHODOLOGY:** Partner with Sustainable Wanderlust for timely guidance and support in collecting the status of all action items. Work with the company's marketing team to create a polished and easily readable final product. Once the report is published, the company will hold quarterly sustainability meetings using the report as a reference for company-wide updates.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Complete

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** The report serves to share a status update on the company's sustainability initiatives while allowing the team to pause and reflect on the variety of achievements, challenges, and efforts executed throughout the year. It is not only a reminder of what we have and hope to accomplish, but also of the hard work on the horizon.

**NEXT STEPS:** Continue annual reporting and create a sustainability team to oversee and engage employees on sustainability initiatives.

## Marketing

**PURPOSE:** Incorporate sustainable and responsible travel into the core of all A2T's consumer- and advisor-facing marketing.

**GOAL:** Align Avenue Two's outgoing messaging with the new mission statement, whether it is internally to the team or externally to potential new travelers, supplier partners, and clients.

**METHODOLOGY:** Understand how our team, supplier partners, and clients receive communications and what are the most effective channels. Create a marketing plan that incorporates regular communications around sustainable travel for all audiences. This will include a sustainable travel section on the website, responsible travel features in our 2023 editorial calendar, and regular communications via email marketing and internal messaging.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Sustainable section on the website complete; email marketing and internal communication in progress

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** Challenges included starting from scratch with a completely new website as well as redesigning social media branding and email marketing templates to ensure the company's aesthetic and existing messaging complemented our commitment to sustainable travel. We learned that while it is easy to tell the market that you're being responsible, it takes time and perseverance to build a foundation that ensures what you are saying is backed by facts and initiatives.

**NEXT STEPS:** Launch sustainability sections on the internal newsletter and external newsletters (one to supplier partners and one to clients); Launch the sustainability channel on our Teams.



## 2 | ADVISOR EDUCATION

**PURPOSE:** Empower and support advisors - the core of business - to incorporate sustainability into their businesses.

**GOAL:** Educate and train all Avenue Two advisors and independent contractors on the importance of responsible travel.

**METHODOLOGY:** In partnership with Sustainable Wanderlust, launch a Sustainable Advisor Training. Starting with a 101 deck which explains sustainable travel in an approachable way and introduces the concept; Develop an engaging and educational online training session to support advisors in improving their businesses.

**CURRENT STATUS:** 101 toolkit complete and published; training program has been developed and will launch in March of 2023.

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** We have learned that advisors are eager to learn more and are excited to be a part of a company offering this growth opportunity. As the pilot training is commencing in the new year, we will have many learnings to share in the future.

**NEXT STEPS:** Continue to fine tune the training and execute the pilot training sessions in Q2 of 2023.





### 3 | PREFERRED PARTNER PROGRAM

**PURPOSE:** Create meaningful but achievable tiered sustainability standards for Avenue Two partners.

**GOAL:** Develop a preferred partner program with sustainably focused suppliers to improve the company's supply chain and be an instrumental voice in the sustainable travel conversation.

**METHODOLOGY:** In partnership with Sustainable Wanderlust, develop tiers within the program that categorizes partners by their current sustainability efforts (social, environmental, economic), develop the criteria for each tier, assist and advise suppliers looking to achieve these standards (in partnership with Sustainable Wanderlust), and develop a vetting program for future partners to ensure we are building relationships that align with our mission

**CURRENT STATUS:** To be developed in 2023.

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** We were eager to start this project but recognized we did not have the time to initiate it in the first year. As quality is of utmost importance and our partnerships are vital to the business, we decided to push the implementation of this project to 2023.

**NEXT STEPS:** Design the tiered system and implement the program.

*Splendido, A Belmond Hotel - Visit a sustainable farm, pick up your favorite vegetables*



## 4 | EMISSIONS CALCULATION AND REDUCTION

**PURPOSE:** Demonstrate a commitment to carbon reduction.

**GOAL:** Discover our current emissions baseline, create intensity-based reduction targets, utilize quality carbon offsets and capture technology.

**METHODOLOGY:** Collecting 2019, 2021, 2022 data for Scope 1, 2, and top Scope 3 categories, discover reduction opportunities (internal travel, industry event participation, itinerary design), establish reduction guidelines (questions for advisors to consider when planning personal or client travel), discover lower-emissions flight opportunities with the Air Desk.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Developed guidelines for agents to consider when planning personal or client travel, initiated partnership with Tomorrow's Air for capture and offsetting.

**OBSTACLES/LEARNINGS:** Tourism is a carbon intensive industry. While offsets and carbon capture offer some mitigation value, we believe that itineraries should be designed with an aim of emitting lower amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>e. This informs much of the content of our forthcoming advisor training program.

**NEXT STEPS:** Develop a way to measure the impact of a trip/event, set intensity-based targets, create incentive strategies for advisors to create lower emissions itineraries, develop the business/corporate travel targets and reductions.



### EMISSIONS DATA:

We conducted a baseline GHG assessment using 2022 emissions data. Our offices have utilized entirely renewable energy since the start of 2021, bringing our Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions to zero. Our focus going forward will be establishing intensity-based reduction targets for our largest Scope 3 category: Use of Sold Products (air travel).

Scope 3 emissions for 2022 - Category 6: Business Travel and Category 11: Use of Sold Products

8,531.93 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e



# FUTURE PLANS

After building a foundation in 2022, we are focused on implementing new programs and improving existing initiatives in 2023. These include:

- Q1: Launch the Avenue Two Sustainable Advisor Education program
- Q2: Develop and roll out the Preferred Partner Program
- Q2: Deep dive into a diligent Emissions Reduction Strategy
- Q3: Train the agency's Sustainability Core Team
- Q1-4: Continue to enhance employee benefits and wages

We look forward to continued improvement and benchmarking our achievements against the previous year. It is our sincerest hope that all travel companies, including agencies, hotels, cruise lines, tour operators, and airlines, come together to make travel better for both the planet and its people.

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