

OUR COMMITMENT TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



PROOF INC.

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Proof Inc.

Corporate Social Responsibility Report

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO





Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability have been at the core of our business operations since the company's inception in 1994. This report on our recent corporate responsibility activities and commitments shares the pillars of our plan and the results of our actions. It's been a team effort, and I am delighted by the enthusiastic participation and leadership of many people on our team who have embraced this spirit of responsibility.

The concept of the triple bottom line (the success of our company, our team members and our community) has always guided our thinking and the records show our company has done well by doing right. In 2016, for example, we were named the #6 best workplace for women in Canada and #13 workplace overall. In 2014, we also received the *International Association of Business Communicators* (IABC) Toronto's philanthropy award for the firm's numerous charitable initiatives. As is true for any business, we are susceptible to economic cycles, but our values and actions always stay the course.

We have always embraced sustainability as part of our thinking. In the pages of this report, you'll see these concepts come alive. Actions always speak louder than words, and I only wish this report could fully capture our people's energy and enthusiasm in implementing these great programs to help strengthen our communities.

Thank you for your interest in learning about **Proof Inc.**

BRUCE MACLELLAN
CEO

“I am delighted by the enthusiastic participation and leadership of many people on our team who have embraced this spirit of responsibility.”

COMPANY PROFILE

WHO WE ARE

With 250+ awards for client work, over 130 staff and annual fee income of more than \$17 million, Proof Inc. offers modern communications solutions for the trust marketing era. Content champions and brand stewards to some of North America's most respected and well-known brands, Proof Inc.' strategic approach is guided by data-driven research, deep subject expertise and smart creative.

Named IABC Toronto's *Large Agency of the Year* in both 2014 and 2015, ranking #13 on the **Great Place to Work® 2016** list of Canada's 50 Best Workplaces, and carbon neutral since June 2008, the firm has offices in Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa and Washington, DC. Globally, Proof is affiliated with **Waggener Edstrom** and their offices throughout Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Photo:
The Proof team celebrates at a
recent company retreat.



OUR CHARACTER AND PRINCIPLES

Proof and its employees have always operated with the strong belief in doing things the right way. Whether it be our commitment to keep up with the latest in technology and emerging business trends to deliver the best results for our clients, or to create and maintain a thriving and vibrant award-winning workplace, Proof has always followed through.

We believe that happy people help make happy clients. The entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative culture at Proof ensures our teams are all creative, responsive and driven by measurable results. Producing exceptional work while having fun is, in our experience, the best path to success. The “golden rule” of treating others how we would like to be treated is deeply engrained in our culture, including in our performance review system. This is key to building trust, team spirit and the conditions for further success.

We believe that
happy people
help make
happy clients.

WHAT WE THINK ABOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

At Proof we measure our accomplishments against the triple bottom line – achieving success for:

our company
our team members
our community

And regardless of the business context, our commitment to upholding our values and investing in our staff and community always remains a priority. Sustainability is an important part of Proof Inc.’s approach to CSR. We aim to follow the 1987 *Brundtland Commission’s* definition of sustainability, which is: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”¹ As a result of our commitment to this approach, Proof has been carbon neutral since 2008.

We take pride in following best practices in corporate social responsibility. Our offices each support local charitable causes, uphold environmentally conscious business practices and support opportunities for the continued growth of employees – both professionally and personally. We believe that practicing social responsibility is essential to running a successful business.

The Four Pillars of Our Corporate Responsibility Philosophy



¹ Our Common Future, The World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Chair, 1987.

SUPPORTING TEAM MEMBER SUCCESS

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Canada's population is ever-changing and at Proof we offer an open and **inclusive workplace that reflects that growing diversity**. In fact, our team can communicate in over 15 languages beyond English and French. These differences are celebrated because they help bring varied perspectives to our marketing and communication services and they foster a positive office culture where everyone can feel comfortable to express themselves.

"One of our nation's strengths is that we embrace diversity. I am so proud that we share that same strength here at Proof. All employees are accepted for what makes us unique and there is a clear feeling of mutual respect among team members."

NIMA RANAWANA
Consultant

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our company recognizes that personal development is an integral component of employee satisfaction and life success. We pay the cost of successful completion of external educational courses that support skills and knowledge development relevant to client service.

Further to this, we also encourage and cover the cost of courses for other personal development interests that expand our employees' experiences and general knowledge (humanities, sciences, etc.). Whether through beginner Japanese, personal financial planning, kayaking skills or novel writing, **employees are always growing and learning at Proof!**

"From professional development courses like Developing Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace to a cake decorating course that expanded my creativity, I've taken full advantage of our educational program. It feels good to know that my employer encourages every person in the company to develop both professional and personal skill sets."

CARRIE MAKRIGIANNIS
Vice President

Photo:

Proof team members responsible for managing our many community and charitable activities.



“Our mandatory professional development program requires each person to have an annual plan for their personal growth. I’m proud that it asks people to think about both personal and professional growth, and how we can help invest in that plan.”

BRUCE MACLELLAN
CEO

EMPLOYEE FLEXIBLE HOURS

Many of the team members at Proof have families with young children. Some have aging parents. **We take a flexible approach to balancing business needs with family commitments.** Many people on our team work from home one day a week, for example. In other cases, we have granted paid and unpaid leave to allow people to manage family emergencies without feeling pressure from the office.

“I work very hard every day to balance my home and professional life — making sure I prioritize the right thing on the right day. Fortunately, I’m able to create this balance because of Proof’s flexible work arrangements. This type of working environment is invaluable to me.”

VANESSA COHEN
Senior Vice President

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

At Proof, **we recognize the importance of supporting our employees' mental and physical wellbeing.** We do so by offering a comprehensive benefits plan that covers a wide variety of medical services including massage, acupuncture, chiropractic care, dietitian consultations, and holistic medicine. In the unfortunate event where a serious medical issue was to arise, Proof also offers critical illness insurance that provides financial support to help manage any additional medical expenses.

Proof also offers a smoking cessation program to support employees. We provide \$500 towards program costs on top of the coverage from our *Group Insurance Plan*. We also pay an award of \$1,000 to a person who remains tobacco-free at the end of six months. To help ease the stress for young families in finding quality child care, Proof is a corporate member of *Kids & Company*. This means that interested parents are guaranteed a child care spot within a six month period of notice. And for those with aging parents, elder care is offered by *Kids & Company* as well.

"Having a strong benefits plan gives me such piece of mind. I know that I have access to all the services I need to help keep me healthy, and it's a relief to know we are also supported if something serious and unexpected were to come up."

SHEBA ZAIDI
Senior Consultant

Photo:
One of many serene workspaces here at Proof.



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SUCCESS & SUSTAINABILITY

"We've established a green culture that influences how we do business as well as our everyday habits both in the office and in our personal lives. It's a team effort and everyone takes great pride in reducing our environmental impact and maintaining our green practices."

COLLEEN DEVAN
Manager

Operations

CARBON NEUTRAL

Proof believes strongly in environmental stewardship. Upholding this designation involves many different efforts – from large corporate-wide initiatives to small changes in daily processes – that together make a significant and positive difference.

For more than nine years we've worked with the *Pembina Institute's* Corporate Consulting Department to quantify our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Through this collaboration we have implemented conservation and energy efficiency strategies to reduce these emissions. We purchase certified offsets for any emissions that cannot be eliminated, with the commitment to maintaining a net zero GHG emissions status.

For the last fiscal year, we purchased 407 Verified Carbon Units to offset the equivalent amount of emissions created by our combined offices. In recent years the offsets were sourced from The Nature Conservancy of Canada through the *Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project* initiative in British Columbia. The project holds a certification under the Verified Carbon Standard and has been implemented to protect the Darkwoods Forest and surrounding area.

We were the first public relations firm in North America to achieve carbon neutral status, which we've maintained since 2008.

Photo:
Bullfrog Power supplies Proof with electricity from clean, emission-free sources.



We also implement initiatives that help change daily habits and activities and contribute to reducing our overall environmental impact.



Creating commercial and office waste management and recycling programs

Green battery disposal, computer/equipment disposal and donating retired office furniture.



Reducing paper consumption

Double-sided printer default settings and by using 100 per cent post-consumer paper, 100 per cent post-consumer waste paper towels and micro-fibre kitchen cloths.



Creating a Greener Commutes initiative

Offering employees a \$250 bicycle allowance, a \$500 incentive toward a hybrid car and supplying transit passes for travel to local meetings.

Since becoming carbon neutral, we've reduced our GHG emissions from ...



**Electricity
(2%)**



**Paper consumption
(66%)**



**Business travel
(20%)**

... and have maintained practices that ensure consumption levels do not increase. This is an ongoing endeavour supported by a Green Committee that monitors environmental issues.

ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ETHICALLY FRIENDLY SUPPLIERS

Our procurement processes help us get it right from the outset. From our coffee services to our energy supply, each purchase we make and company we choose to do business with must meet our high environmental and ethical standards.

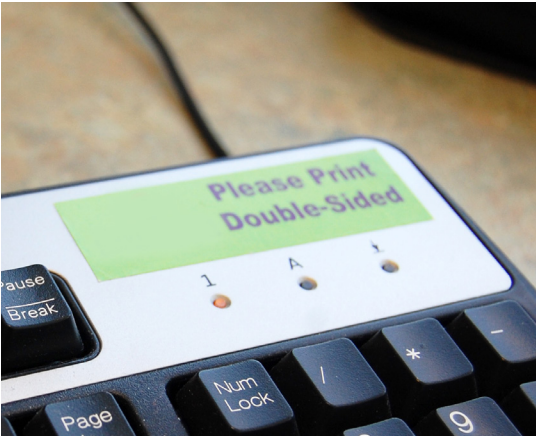
To support our commitment to reduce total electricity consumption in the office, in 2007 we switched to *Bullfrog Power* which provides electricity from clean, emission-free sources like wind and water rather than carbon intensive generators like coal and oil.

For company transportation we interviewed major taxi firms to determine the measures they take to reduce their carbon footprint and selected companies based on their large natural gas vehicle fleet size. We use fair trade and environmentally friendly vendors such as Office Coffee Solutions for our in-house coffee supplies. We also use local green caterers for all our in-office events.

For office supplies, we order environmentally responsible office products that are ethically sound and post-consumer recyclable from *Green Shift*™ and *Grand & Toy*.

Our paper is *Rolland Enviro Copy* which uses 100 per cent post-consumer fibre to manufacture its commercial papers and renewable and local biogas energy. The paper also has reduced chemical content.

Environmentally conscious suppliers, furniture, and building materials were chosen in the design of our Toronto office. That includes quartz countertop and flooring (more environmentally friendly than granite alternatives), recyclable flooring, and office walls made partly from recycled pop bottles. Also, motion-activated lights have been installed throughout the office to reduce energy consumption.



Community & Charitable Activities

TORONTO

Proof's passion for community involvement is evident in the numerous charitable causes we support annually as a company. Staff members are also encouraged to make individual contributions to a community organization or charity of their choice. As the two-time winner of the *Bobbie Resnick Philanthropy Award* from IABC Toronto, we are grateful to have been recognized for these efforts by our industry peers.

Photo:

Proof team members prepare to "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" to raise funds and awareness to end violence against women.



PROOF EMPLOYEE CHARITY DAY

Our **Employee Charity Day** program helps encourage and support staff in making personal contributions to causes that matter to them. The program provides team members with one paid day a year to volunteer with a registered charity. Employees are encouraged to share their experiences internally so colleagues can learn about new charitable initiatives and feel empowered to take a more active role in their community.

As part of the program, we’ve had staff members volunteer their time for worthy causes like: the *Alzheimer Society of Toronto’s* Annual Memory Ball that raises funds and awareness to combat Alzheimer’s disease; *Action Volunteers for Animals*, which organizes veterinarian care and foster homes for stray and feral cats and kittens; and *Holiday Helpers Canada*, which gets holiday gifts to low-income families.



WHITE RIBBON WALK

Proof proudly supports the **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes** event, the White Ribbon campaign to help end violence against women. The event is a playful opportunity for men (and women) to raise awareness in their community about the serious causes, effects and solutions to sexualized violence by participating in a mile walk in high heels. The majority of our male employees participate in the walk every year and many of our female employees are also there to lend support (literally!).

For four years, we also dedicated a team of employees to support the event through one of the things we do best – generating great media attention.

SECOND HARVEST

Second Harvest provides a critical service to thousands of people every day in Toronto by picking up and preparing excess fresh food and delivering it daily to social service agencies. We have supported Second Harvest’s fundraising efforts since 2007, raising over \$24,000 – equivalent to 49,500 meals to-date.

Held in the spring and fall each year, the fundraising event invites employees to contribute to a company-wide potluck-style lunch, with admission at the door going directly to the cause. Raffle ticket draws and snack cart sales in the lead up to the potluck build team excitement as well as donations. Internally-sourced high value raffle prizes include Holt Renfrew gift cards, Toronto Maple Leafs and Blue Jays tickets, and 6-month Netflix subscriptions. We challenge ourselves to raise more funds each year and share our ideas with Second Harvest to help improve results from other companies too.



\$24,000 raised



equivalent to

49,500 meals

“Second Harvest is very grateful to Proof and its employees for their ongoing generosity in time and funds, which allows us to continue rescuing and delivering food for those in need.”

JO-ANNE SOBIE
Executive Director,
Second Harvest

ANNUAL HOLIDAY SEASON CHARITY DRIVE

For the past eight years, Proof Inc. and Proof Experiences have helped make a difference, have helped make a difference for those in need during the holiday season. The annual holiday challenge has teams in the Toronto offices competing to collect the greatest number of donated items, with bonus points each day for in-demand products. It's a chance to give back to the community, and also enjoy a little friendly competition.

Donations go to two great local charities: the Salvation Army Toy Drive, Christmas Assistance Program and the Good Shepherd Ministries which provides food, shelter, clothing, medical care, housing services and pre-and-post addiction services for people struggling with poverty and homelessness.

Over eight years, more than 60 team leaders dedicated 530+ hours towards employee campaigns, generating more than 16,800 items such as toys/gifts, food, and hygiene products and clothing. In 2016 alone, the team donated over \$8,500 worth in goods and over \$11,000 in billable time.



16,800 items

such as toys/gifts, food,
& hygiene products and clothing



“The Salvation Army is grateful to the generous donation of toys made by our friends from Proof. The toys that are donated each year are used to bring a smile to a child on Christmas morning and to help ease the stress of the season for their parent.”

MAJOR JOHN MURRAY
M.A., APR, spokesperson
for the Salvation Army

NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national land conservation organization. NCC partners with individuals, corporations, other non-profit organizations and governments at all levels to protect the natural areas that sustain Canada's plants and wildlife. Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to conserve more than 2.7 million acres (1.1 million hectares) of ecologically significant land from coast to coast.

Through our longstanding relationship with NCC, we have donated thousands of dollars of pro bono work. Proof Inc. Chairman & CEO, Bruce MacLellan, sits on NCC's National Board and serves on NCC's Marketing and Fundraising Advisory Committee. Proof Digital Account Director, Kim Le, also serves on that Committee. More than a decade ago, Proof helped facilitate a strategic relationship for the NCC with *The Globe and Mail* as its national print media partner. This has resulted in advertising cost savings and regular reach to Canada's affluent and business audiences for fundraising support. We have also provided pro bono issues management, government relations and media relations counsel over the years.

For the past three years, Proof has purchased carbon credits from NCC in order to eliminate Proof's corporate carbon emissions. By voluntarily choosing to buy these credits, Proof has publicly demonstrated its commitment to eliminate its carbon footprint. This is not only a positive step to offset carbon, is also a tangible way of supporting conservation in Canada and mitigating the effects of climate change.

NCC's *Darkwoods Forest Carbon Project* ranks as one of North America's premier carbon projects and NCC continues to actively market these high-quality carbon credits to qualified organizations who are similarly interested in reducing or eliminating their carbon footprints, while at the same time supporting important conservation.

Photo:
OH Ranch, Bow Natural Area,
Alberta (Photo by Karol Dabbs)

Community & Charitable Activities

PROOF STRATEGIES - OTTAWA

Photo:
Proof Strategies' Ottawa office team participates
in the Lawn Summer Nights tournament in
support of Cystic Fibrosis Canada.



OXFAM-QUÉBEC

The Proof Strategies office provided pro-bono assistance to **Oxfam-Québec** for their first large-scale government relations campaign. SpProoffically, the team helped organize a parliamentary reception so Oxfam-Québec could get in front of key politicians, shed light on their cause and recruit support. Oxfam is a non-profit organization that aims to mobilize the power of people against poverty globally. For the event, Oxfam brought young people from Canada and other parts of the world to raise awareness of poverty and how youth can be a part of the solution. More than 40 MPs attended their inaugural reception.



JAIMIE ANDERSON PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIP FUNDRAISER

The Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internship Program was created to honour Jaimie Anderson, who lost her life to neuro-endocrine cancer at the age of 23. The annual program supports three internships for young Canadians to work with Members of Parliament during the summer. The Ottawa office donated their time and event organizing skills for the annual live music fundraising event for the program, which included organizing the rehearsal for performers such as Cabinet Minister Scott Brison, Parliamentary Secretary Marco Mendicino, and MPs Rodger Cuzner, Lisa Raitt, and Erin O’Toole, and logistical support the night of the event.

LAWN SUMMER NIGHTS

Lawn Summer Nights is a tournament to raise donations and awareness for *Cystic Fibrosis Canada*. The unique, fun event is also aimed at getting young Ottawa-based professionals, espProoffally those in Canadian politics, engaged in community involvement and outreach. The Proof team donated their time to manage the event logistics and media promotion for the tournament’s first two years. We have also contributed teams and prizes for each of the tournament’s four years of operation – which has seen nearly \$180,000 being raised for the cause.

Community & Charitable Activities

MONTRÉAL

Photo:
Members of the Montréal office, Capital-Image,
gather together at a summer team event.



PUBLIC RELATIONS WITHOUT BORDERS

Public Relations Without Borders (PRWB) provides public relations training and counselling support to NGOs, non-profits and public authorities in developing nations so they can leverage PR to encourage social and economic progress. Capital-Image provides communications support as part of PRWB’s initiatives.

MAISON MONBOURQUETTE

La Maison Monbourquette provides resources and support to people in mourning following the death of a loved one. The organization’s trained medical professionals and volunteers offer bereavement counselling, support groups, a crisis phone line and training for health care professionals. Another part of the Maison Monbourquette’s mandate is to raise public awareness about this issue across the province of Québec and Capital-Image offers much needed communications counsel in support of that goal.

ARTISTRI SUD

Artistri Sud is a Montréal-based charitable organization that launched in 2009. Its mission is to teach entrepreneurial skills to craftswomen in developing countries in order to help them become financially independent. Capital-Image provides communications support to the organization so that it can raise its profile and secure funding.



Community & Charitable Activities

WASHINGTON, D.C.

At Proof, we believe in the power of giving back. That's why the Washington, D.C. office launched a program to donate \$20,000 worth of pro-bono work to two local non-profits. Eligible organizations could come from any sector and would be in need of marketing communications support to help them achieve measurable impact in the community.

Photo:
Inner City-Inner Child, which provides disadvantaged
children with early arts-integrated learning experiences.



INNER CITY-INNER CHILD

One organization to receive pro-bono support from our Washington office is Inner City-
Inner Child (ICIC). They are a D.C.-area nonprofit that provides disadvantaged children
with early arts-integrated learning experiences – guiding them to explore books through
song, dance, African drumming, and the visual arts. Proof helped ICIC create and execute
a “Fill the Shelf” campaign to raise funds on #GivingTuesday. Since people are more likely
to donate when they know exactly where their money is going, we created a bookshelf
graphic to visually represent the number of books being added to classroom shelves as
donations came in. The graphic was updated regularly and promoted via social media
and through ICIC’s email donor list. The campaign exceeded the \$5,000 fundraising goal,
which is enough to fill 10 preschool classrooms with books.

OTHER INITIATIVES

The D.C. office is also working with the *Mathematics Association of America* to create and
market a corporate membership program to increase its revenue, as well as the *Animal
Welfare Institute* in their campaign to save the endangered vaquita. Currently there are
only 30 of these porpoises left in the world and the D.C. office will create a campaign to
educate, influence and persuade nearby spProoffic California communities to take action
to save this spProofes.



Senior Leadership Volunteerism

The strength of our senior leadership at Proof is exceptional and we're proud that our senior leaders share their knowledge and skills outside the company for causes and organizations that are personally important to them.

Our executives have held volunteer roles such as:

- Board Member, Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Social Media Committee Chair, Public Relations without Borders
- Board Member, Communications and Public Relations Foundation
- Acting Secretary and Treasurer, Alliance des Cabinets de Relations Publiques du Québec
- Council Member, St. Andrew's United Church
- Chair, Catholic School Parent Council, Holy Spirit Catholic School
- Communications Committee Member, Appassionata Chamber Music Orchestra
- Co-president, Ovarian Cancer Canada's Walk of Hope
- Organizing Committee Member, Ovarian Cancer Canada's Walk of Hope
- Rejuvenation Committee Member, Ville de Mont-Royal
- Board Member, West Island Community Shares
- VP Marketing, International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)
- Public Relations and Communications Coach, Montréal Inc. Foundation
- Volunteer, Montréal SPCA
- Organizing Committee Member, Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internship Fundraiser
- Organizing Committee Member, Travers Debates
- Board Member, Dumbarton Concerts
- Community Advisory Board Member, WETA TV
- Founder, D.C. Communicators
- Advocate, D.C. Rape Crisis Center
- Communications Advisor, Health Partner International Canada
- Communications Advisor, Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association
- Committee Member, Israel Cancer Research Fund
- Regional APR Examiner for Québec, Canadian Public Relations Society
- Board Member and Communications Officer, Parents Orphelins
- Member of the Media Relations Committee, University of Toronto Libraries
- Community Coach, Social Venture Zone, Ryerson University

SUMMARY



The activities of every company have social consequences. A successful business provides many benefits to society through income taxes, innovation, employment and other contributions. Every community needs successful companies and head offices provide a particular advantage. The concept of the triple bottom line of company success, team member success and community benefit has always guided our thinking. We believe we have done well by doing right. Our accomplishments include being named the #1 workplace in Canada and #1 workplace for women in Canada in different years. We have also received recognition by our industry peers for our work in philanthropy.

Despite economic and business pressures, our commitment to upholding our values and investing in **our staff and community will always remain a priority.**



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