

30

CLAIRE  
MENZIESCHAIRWOMAN: **ISTORIA GROUP**

istoriagroup.com

WHAT ACHIEVING  
**B CORP CERTIFICATION**  
REALLY MEANS

**I**storia Group achieved B Corp certification in October 2022, just prior to B Corp UK's announcement that the 1000th British company had passed its rigorous levels of auditing. The accreditation was a great moment for us, joining our ISO standards and The Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development as shorthand signifiers to clients that we are a purpose-driven organisation and, as B Corp themselves say, committed to 'using business as a force for good'.

What else do we hope to gain? Well, on a practical level, to cut out procurement environmental sustainability deep dives during pitches by the Group - or by our exhibitions/events company Ignition or interiors/branding company Phoenix Wharf. We can now jump straight to it; B Corp accreditation promises: 'We don't greenwash - we walk the walk'.

As for the process, best to expect surprises! We scored less well, for example, in areas we felt confident in than in ones we didn't. Lesson number one is that being audited will make you feel uncomfortable, though that's no bad thing. Companies should be works in progress. We're now becoming more pro-actively

inclusive as employers, as well as redefining what staff prosperity really means, with the help of a B Corp HR company.

It took a lot to achieve the accreditation, but it aligns perfectly with - and vindicates - our founding sustainable principle: balancing profit with people and planet. The wider business environment wasn't always as welcoming as it is now, however. I clearly remember when our insistence on doing business with like-minded companies (clients and suppliers alike), and having longer-term contracts to enable our culture of continuous improvement, made us quite isolated. To achieve anything good, perhaps you always have to weather tougher days?

B Corp networking looks promising too. We're certainly finding a great spirit of knowledge-sharing within our regional B Corp group. As for our supply chain, we always seek out suppliers with like-minded values. Now, if we offer to help them become more sustainable and they don't change, I suspect we shall be reading the shorthand too and selecting B Corp alternatives.

B Corp accreditation is a constant reporting process, so the rigour will continue. Again, no bad thing. We welcome the interrelation of

“

**B CORP ACCREDITATION IS A CONSTANT REPORTING PROCESS, SO THE RIGOUR WILL CONTINUE. AGAIN, NO BAD THING.**

our KPIs with this audit, as well as with our internal targets, ISOs, the SME Climate Hub pledge and SBTi reporting. It will all help us grow and will certainly prevent complacency. From evaluation to evolution! ■

istoriagroup.com



**CLAIRE MENZIES**  
ISTORIA GROUP

Claire Menzies is the Chairwoman of Istoria Group, a creative collective of companies based in Bristol and Indianapolis. A passionate business leader and entrepreneur, Claire is a Fellow of the RSA and a long-time advocate of sustainable business practice.