

Industry Weekly Digest

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management



What does it take to be B Corp?

Back in Issue 1 of this current volume, we noted the **Exclusive Collection's** recent B Corp certification. In the last few weeks, restaurant group **Hawksmoor** and hotel club **Mr and Mrs Smith** have joined Exclusive and a small group of other UK hospitality firms to attain this coveted status.

In this digest, **Mark Ashton** explores what it takes to become a B Corp and begins to breakdown the commonalities of those hospitality firms which have.

Have a great Weekend!



A small but growing number of UK hospitality businesses have so far become B Corps - is this the start of a trend?

Mark Ashton

The **UK B Corp community** is growing faster than ever. There are now over 800 B Corps in the UK, across 57 industries with over 46,400 employees. With **recent news** of further UK hospitality companies becoming B corps and several claims from these companies to be the 'first' in the UK in their respective sub-sectors to achieve this accolade, this digest begins by clarifying what it takes to be a B corp.

Certified B Corporations, or B Corps, are companies verified by B Lab, a not-for-profit organisation, to ensure they meet high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability. They believe the most challenging global problems cannot be solved by governments and non-profits alone. By harnessing the power of their businesses, B Corps commit to have a positive impact on all stakeholders – workers, communities, customers, and the planet. Once accredited, companies are subsequently required to re-certify every three years.



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The small but growing group of UK hospitality businesses to have achieved B Corp status include the **Hawksmoor** restaurant group, hotel club **Mr and Mrs Smith**, **Exclusive Collection** hotel group, contract caterer **Houston & Hawkes**, the **Big Mamma** restaurant group, and the bar chain and brewer, **BrewDog**. Brief analysis of the commonalities between these companies suggests they are all small but growing businesses, with founder/C level commitment to this certification and a real acknowledgment that they are on a journey of continuous improvement to do more in the audited areas. Many also express optimism and encouragement that other companies will join in this journey, such as **Blacklock** who recently confirmed they were aiming for this status.

Attention has also been paid to the B Corp movement in the academic literature, although not yet in relation to hospitality companies. In their **systematic literature review**, Diez-Busto et al (2021) confirm the potential of this field of investigation. Research to date has focused on the motivations of companies to be certificated and the economic and social effects post certification. They also propose future research directions, which hospitality scholars may want to address in the future.

Further information on the B Corp movement and a tracker of all certified companies is available [here](#)