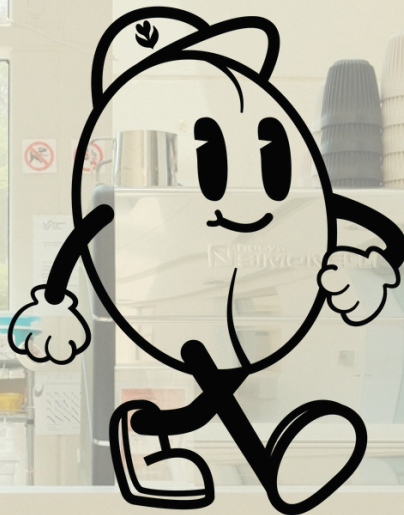


**foreword**  
COFFEE

# Impact Report

2024 // For All Walks



**foreword**  
COFFEE

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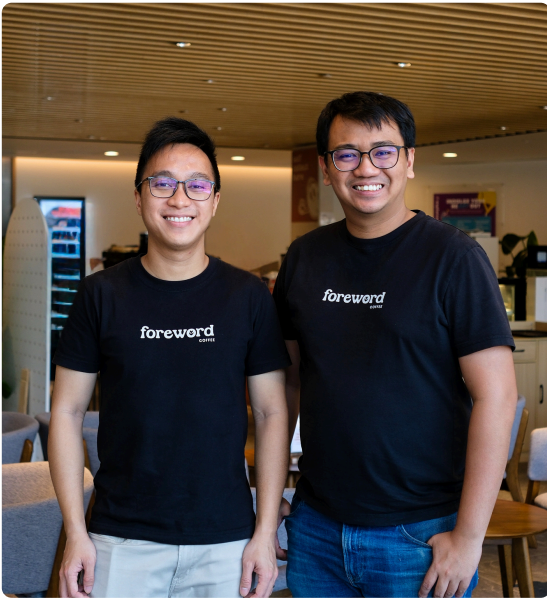
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# Foreword

by Nadi Chan & Lim Wei Jie  
Co-Founders & Directors, Foreword Coffee



We have always looked upon ourselves as a swan; while appearing calm and in control on the outside, the team is paddling hard underneath to keep ourselves staying afloat. 2024 was a year of heightened stress and burn out for some of our team members, even though it was also a year of continued recognition for our social entrepreneurial efforts.

Foreword Coffee received the Company of Good (Champion) recognition, the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards (Small and Medium Enterprise category), and the Xero's Beautiful Business fund. We received the Enabling Mark (Platinum) Award for the second time in 2024, renewing our commitment towards disability hiring and an inclusive workplace culture.

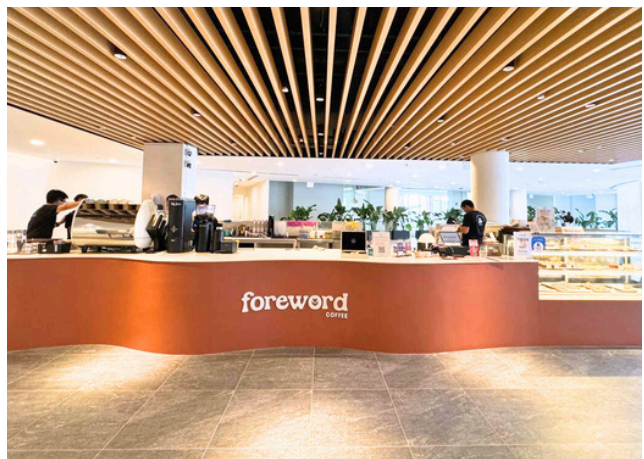
These awards were by no means easy to achieve and they speak volume for the work that we do, encouraging our team that what we do is being recognised as being exemplary and commendable – which sometimes we failed to recognise our own good work.

The highlights of the year were not just the awards and accolades.

We opened a new café within the beautiful Esplanade Mall, where the library used to be. This café became our new flagship as it boasts a 1,500 square feet space which allows us to host events and sharing sessions. We conducted a total of 32 sharing sessions, reaching out to 1,400 people who learnt more about our journey towards social inclusion and social entrepreneurship. We launched our new Holistic Café Skills Training programme, supported by the SG Enable training grant, for persons with disabilities. We managed to train 10 persons with disabilities in 2024.

Finally, we also implemented our brand refresh, creating a new logo and brand identity that better reflects our youthful vibes. Along with the brand refresh was an internal reflection and working on discovering our corporate purpose and why we continue doing what we do.

Overall, 2024 was an inflection point for us to assess what really matters to us and how we can build ourselves to become more emotionally resilient and forge a stronger team to realise the company's mission, to mainstream disability and normalise inclusion.





# About Foreword Coffee

Foreword Coffee is a locally-grown specialty coffee company established in 2017 with the mission to mainstream disability and normalise inclusion. We are a social enterprise comprising people from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities and mental health needs, providing meaningful coffee experiences.

Foreword Coffee is committed towards building an ecosystem of impact-driven partners for a more inclusive Singapore. On top of operating our cafes which provide training and employment opportunities, we partner with corporates and establish in-house cafes bringing awareness on inclusivity into their spaces. We also provide mobile coffee cart services for corporate events and weddings, coffee workshops, pantry supplies, and other custom coffee projects.

To encourage conscious consumption, Foreword Coffee supports the “bring your own” (BYO) movement by providing incentives to our customers and clients. We are mindful of supplies used in our operations: plastic bottles are upcycled, glass bottles used for coffee are collected and reused for future events, and product packaging are carefully chosen to prevent excessive materials being used.

# Our awards and recognitions

In recognition of our disability-inclusive practices, Foreword Coffee was awarded with the Enabling Mark (Platinum) Award in 2021 and 2024, showing our continuous commitment and effort towards maintaining our inclusive company culture.

In 2023, Foreword Coffee was recognised as Social Enterprise of the Year in the biennial President's Challenge Social Enterprise Award (PCSEA). This award is a prestigious accolade conferred by the President's Office which honours and recognises exceptional Social Enterprises and stakeholders for their contributions made to Singapore's communities.

In 2024, Foreword Coffee was recognised as a "Champion of Good" under the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre's (NVPC) expanded Company of Good Recognition System. We were also awarded with the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award (PVPA) in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) category.

Every cup served at Foreword Coffee narrates a story of impact, inclusion and environmental stewardship. It showcases how coffee goes beyond just flavour to create a positive impact in our community.

# Our awards and recognitions

PRESIDENT'S  
VOLUNTEERISM &  
PHILANTHROPY  
*awards*



# Our refreshed company compact

In 2024, Foreword Coffee underwent a brand refresh from the inside out. Having been in business for the past 7 years, we reviewed what we stood for and assessed the relevance of our work now and in the future.

We embedded the “Self” at the core of our company compact as we felt that it is important for our personal values and purpose to be aligned with the organisation’s overall purpose. When we are personally aligned with our organisation’s purpose, it is easier to truly bring ourselves to work and to embody the company’s values. Our company’s strategies help us to set the directions and boundary of what we should and should not take up, contributing to the company’s vision and mission.

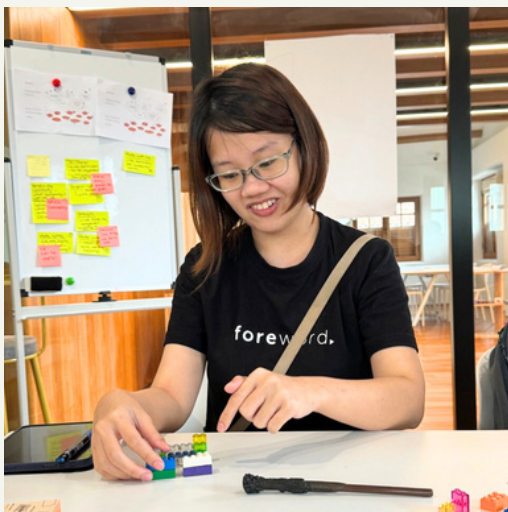


Our refreshed Company Compact was structured based on [NVPC's Corporate Purpose framework](#) as we felt it would be relevant in guiding us into the years to come.

This impact report would be organised according to the impact areas as guided by the purpose framework.

# Our corporate purpose

Our Purpose Statement was crafted with the help of [The Purpose Business](#) (TPB) and it provides reasons for our existence while communicating to our team on why we do what we do. Through workshops, meetings and interviews with both internal and external stakeholders that have engaged Foreword Coffee in their own way, The Purpose Business guided us through the process of discovering our purpose and crafting a statement that truly resonates with our team.



# Our corporate purpose

Our Purpose serves as an internal guide for our company. Our company's purpose is not a destination to arrive at but a guiding star to help us know where we are heading towards. Every word in our purpose statement is chosen specifically to represent how we conduct ourselves.

The idea of **creating** - processes, employment, spaces, products - is what we constantly do.

**Meaningful opportunities** are moments that leave lasting impressions on people or partnerships.

**Create meaningful opportunities that bring people together and uplift all.**

**People** includes individuals, communities, companies, government organisations and other groups in our society.

**Uplifting** - inclusive growth - can happen as a direct outcome of our work, or indirectly through bringing people together.

# Mission & vision



## Mission

To mainstream disability and normalise inclusion



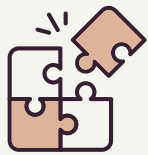
## Vision

To build an ecosystem of impact-driven partners that work towards uplifting the lives of everyone

From an organisation that seeks to discover the potential of our people, we now look to mainstream disability and normalise inclusion, signalling a more outward looking perspective and placing advocacy at the forefront of our mission.

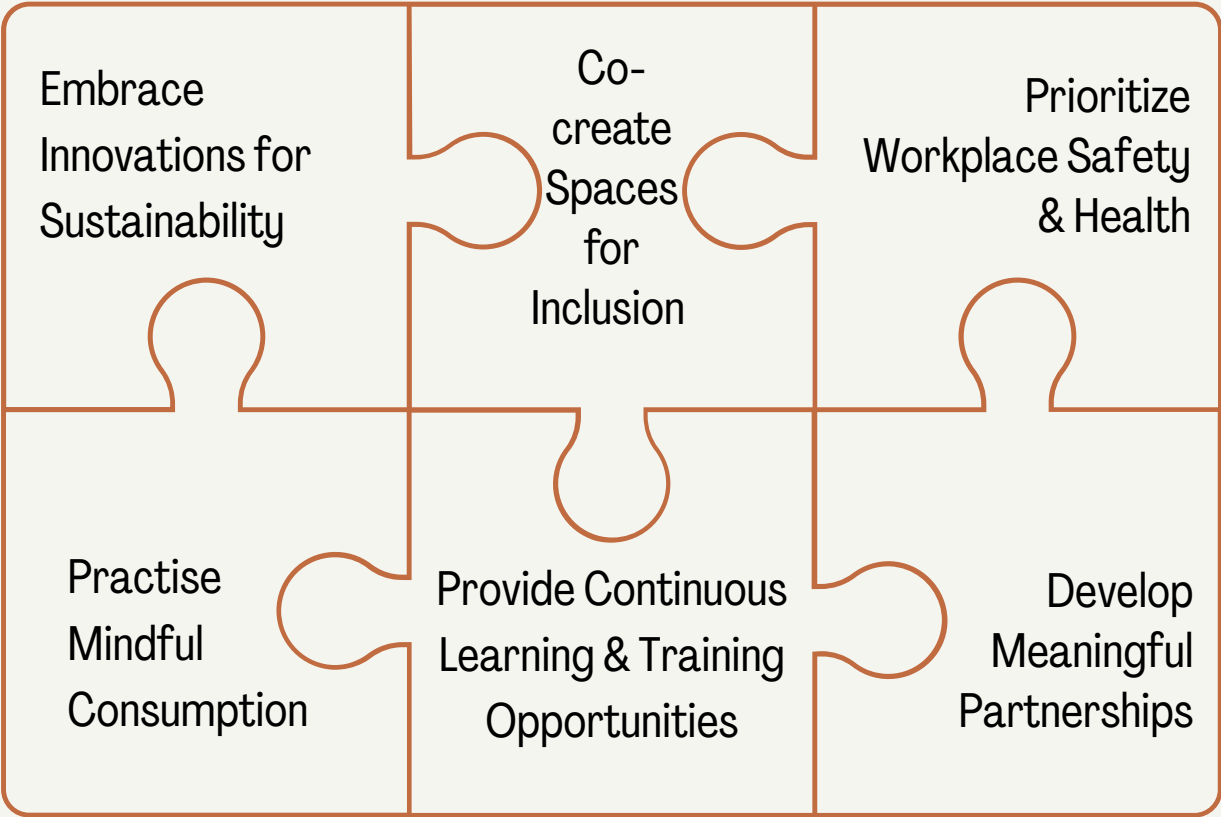


# Our strategies



## Strategies

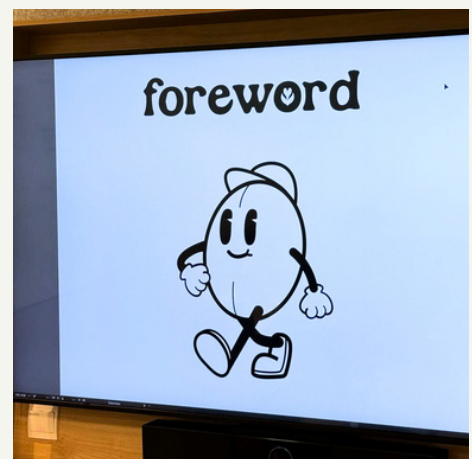
Our six company strategies help to guide our organisation’s directions when working with external partners and determine how we allocate resources.



# Brand refresh

At the start of 2024, we worked with Evye to review our brand and came up with a brand refresh to improve brand positioning and communication.

Evye's [Brand Pilot](#) programme helped us to review and design our brand identity and its application, and followed up with their brand guardianship programme to implement our rebranded Foreword Coffee across multiple channels: website, cafes, and social media marketing.





## community & people first.



Foreword Coffee works with responsible coffee partners in Asia that support their local communities, working towards a more sustainable coffee value chain with people at their cores.







## Hiring

As of 31 December 2024, we had a total of 26 employees, of which 21 of us identify as a person with disability or having mental health needs, bringing the ratio of beneficiaries in our company to 81%. There were 10 new hires, of which 9 were beneficiaries. Out of these 10, seven employees were still working with us as of 31 December 2024.

**26**

Employees as of  
31 Dec 2024

**21**

Identify as a person with  
disability or having  
mental health needs

**81%**

Ratio of  
beneficiaries in  
our company

**10**

New hires

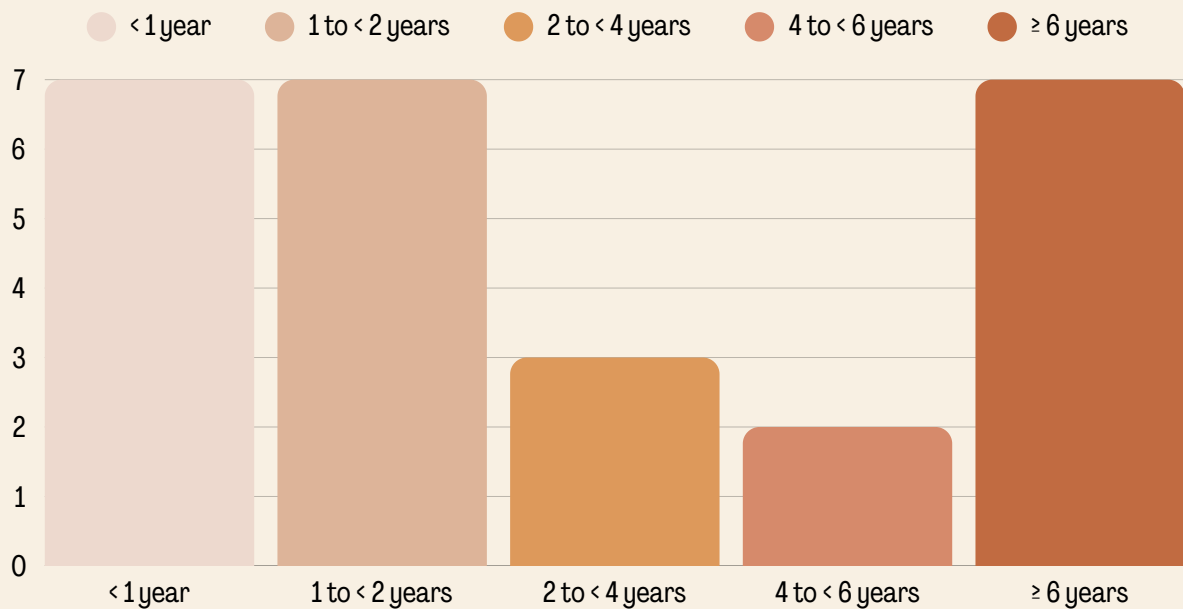
**90%**

Of new hires are  
beneficiaries

**70%**

Of new hires  
stayed on

# Employment duration



More than a third of our employees have worked at least 4 years in the company. Although a majority of our company (54%) have less than 2 years of experience in the company, they provide a pipeline of up and coming, experienced staff members who can support the company's operations for the years ahead.



# Internship

Foreword Coffee remains committed to provide work experiences to those who face barriers getting internships, as a platform to increase their confidence to step into work upon graduation. Increasingly, we are also receiving internship applications from students in mainstream schools who are keen to experience working in a disability-inclusive work environment. In 2024, we provided a total of 25 internship and attachment opportunities across 13 organisations from special education (SPED) schools, mainstream secondary schools, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and the National Kidney Foundation.



# Internship

25

**Total no. of internship  
& attachment positions**



19.3

**Months: total time provided to interns  
to experience work in Foreword Coffee**



**Minimum 4 hours: a half-day experience**

**Maximum 5 months: full-time internship**

# Train-and-Place Programme

We launched our Holistic Cafe Skills Training Programme, supported by the training grant from SG Enable, to support persons with disabilities (PWDs) gain essential skills and confidence to work in the F&B industry.

Trainees of our programme experienced a variety of hands-on tasks. This allowed trainees to try new things, figure out their strengths and weaknesses, and for us to assess how best to adapt the environment so as to enable them to fit into the workplace better.



# Train-and-Place Programme

Between August to December 2024, we conducted two rounds of training, and we have 10 PWDs who completed our programme.

In 2025, we look forward to a new space within Enabling Village which will be fully dedicated for F&B training. We hope to work with more F&B employers who are looking into inclusive hiring to partner Foreword Coffee as your training partner.



# Professional development

Between August 2023 to July 2024, the founders of Foreword Coffee, Nadi and Wei Jie, participated in the Bettr Fellowship which brought together leaders from various social impact organisations with the goal of creating better workplaces through capacity development training and collective meetings.

The Bettr Fellowship intake 2 consists of us (Foreword Coffee), Blended Concepts, Hey Chips, Push Pull Give, and Social Gifting. The fellowship culminated with a 3D2N retreat to Hanoi, where the highlights were visiting non-governmental organisation, Blue Dragon Children's Foundation, and the social enterprise, KOTO Van Mieu.



# Professional development

Over two weekends in September 2024, Wei Jie participated in the Our Singapore Leadership Programme (OSLP) organised by the National Youth Council (NYC) curated with the intention of building up national perspectives of Singaporean young working adults and to develop them into more effective leaders.

“I was overwhelmed by the diversity of the youths I met, coming from various backgrounds and wearing many hats. Many of them have a day job and actively participating in grassroots activities or doing their side project or startup. I entered this programme with little to no expectations, and am thankful to have been part of this OSLP, which has broadened my perspectives on national issues” - Wei Jie



# Learning points

We went into overdrive mode and took in too many interns in 2024. This has led to negative outcomes such as stress and burnout in some of our employees, as we are dealing with too many new people coming in and out of the company, and these were not our employees.

The cafe staff were tired from teaching interns who would leave after a few weeks or months, and then re-teaching new people again when the next batch of interns come in. This is especially tiring for them when the cafe outlet is busy. For the office staff, poor judgement in hiring interns led to reduced morale and increased stress when our interns do not show up for work, or have poor work ethics.

We reflected on our experience and thought to ourselves, why are we placing such high priority on transient workers rather than investing the effort on supporting our permanent staff? The balance between providing opportunities to interns and maintaining our workplace well-being was off.

2024 also saw the highest attrition for experienced full-time employees. A total of 8 such employees left the company between August and December, with an average of 4.1 years of work experience in Foreword Coffee.

# Learning points

The reasons for leaving vary between people: being offered better opportunities from other companies, no further career progression within the company, poor job-fit and unable to manage tasks comfortably after the change in job scope, tiredness and stress from making mistakes and not able to teach new staff properly.

The company was not functioning as healthily as we would like it to be, but not all was lost. We have the new and youthful cafe staff who were gaining experience and skills to help anchor the cafe outlets. The office team became leaner and we transit into using automation to help with mundane matters. Although people left the company, we did not need to rehire immediately as we have been operating on spare capacity over the months due to cafe closures or cafes operating at suboptimal levels. The company became more cost-effective with a leaner workforce.

Wei Jie made it a point that 2025 will be a year to make Foreword Coffee more 'sustainable', in terms of cost-management and staff morale. We need to intentionally take measures to pick ourselves up again.



# social

## chapter 3

# Community engagements

As part of raising awareness for disability inclusion and social entrepreneurship, Foreword Coffee conducts paid and low-bono community engagements in the forms of learning journeys, sharing sessions, invited panel speaker sessions, CSR workshops with social service agencies, and special projects.

**32** Total community engagement sessions

**47** No. of hours spent

**1402** No. of people we reached out to during our sessions



# Community engagements



February: we hosted students from a SMU-X module looking at the financial inclusion of persons with disabilities. This project is sponsored by DBS Foundation and we are one of the partners for their fieldwork. More information in this [link](#).

June: Wei Jie was part of a speaker panel for Singapore Polytechnic's Diploma in Media, Arts and Design (MAD) kick-off event. During that session, he was accompanied by two other entrepreneurs who shared their experiences to inspire the next wave of youth entrepreneurship.



August: we hosted a sharing session with the fellows of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre's (NVPC) Company of Good Fellowship programme. Business leaders and Human Resource (HR) practitioners from various organisations learnt how we embed purpose into our company's DNA.

# Community engagements

November: as part of the fringe activities of the Zero Project Asia Pacific Symposium, we hosted delegates for a sharing session to learn about our disability-inclusive workplace culture. Thank you SG Enable for this opportunity to share!



November: co-organised with Airbnb, we held a coffee brewing workshop where Airbnb's staff got to interact with youth with special needs. These youths also got to learn more about coffee making and the work we do at the cafe. Thank you Airbnb for this collaboration!

December: at raISE's flagship event, The PurpoSE Agenda, Wei Jie shared about his social entrepreneurship journey as a speaker in the fireside chat and the Ask-Me-Anything Circle. It was an energising session to share about the power of social enterprises with players in the impact investment space!



# Enabling Lives Festival

Foreword Coffee participated in the Enabling Lives Festival for the first time with some of our partners in the social enterprise and social services space. We like to thank SG Enable for the publicity support and these six organisations for being our event partners:



Special thanks also to Lily Goh, from ExtraOrdinary Horizons, for co-hosting a session to share about the lived experiences of deaf people.



# Awards & recognitions

We are thankful for the awards and recognitions in 2024:

- Enabling Mark Award - Platinum (2024-2027)
- Company of Good Recognition - Champion (2024-2027)
- President's Volunteerism and Philanthropy Award (SME Category, 2024 - 2027)
- Xero's Beautiful Business Fund, Winner - Strengthening Community Connection



# Mindful consumption

In 2024, we successfully upcycled 244 kg of Meiji milk bottles, equivalent to 3,754 plastic bottles.

These bottles were collected from our cafes and upcycled as part of our waste reduction efforts. Instead of ending up in landfills, they were cleaned and repurposed or responsibly recycled. Many of these bottles were transformed into functional cafe furniture, including tables and stools, giving new life to what would have been discarded plastic.

This initiative not only helps to reduce plastic waste, but also encourages sustainable habits and sparks conversations around circular design and conscious consumption within our community.





# New outlet opening

In 2024, we opened our cafe within the Esplanade Mall, which makes it our largest public cafe to date, boasting a 1,500 sqft space with 70 seats and can hold up to 100 people (standing). This cafe has become our new flagship cafe as it is where we started our brand refresh - new logo, new colours, and new vibes.

We like to thank The Esplanade Co. Ltd. for giving us this opportunity and having trust in us to run a social enterprise cafe within their premises. We look forward to a meaningful tenant-partnership in the years ahead.



# Events & corporate services

We saw an uptick in event enquiries in 2024. In total we had 129 mobile coffee cart sessions and corporates are increasingly engaging us for recurring events. One example of a recurring collaboration that we had was with Singapore Land Group Limited.

“From May to July, we partnered with Foreword Coffee ☕ to give out freshly brewed hot beverages to tenants at The Gateway who brought their own cup or tumbler. A social enterprise that employs persons with disabilities, we are proud to be a long-term partner of Foreword...” - Singapore Land Group Limited’s [LinkedIn post](#).

More than just one-off coffee cart services, we also provide barista services for corporates with in-house cafes to serve their staff as part of our “Barista-as-a-Service”. As of December 2024, we are operating in four corporate offices to provide their daily caffeine needs.



# Refreshed POS system

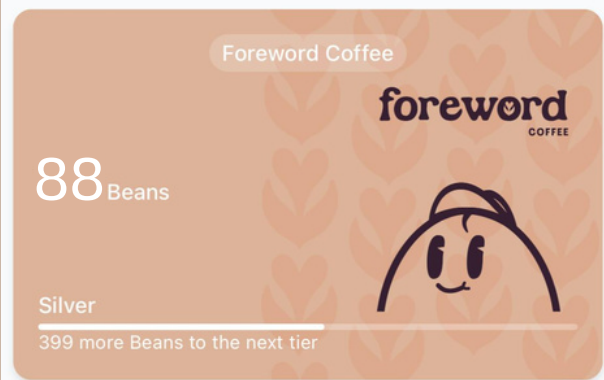
As part of our technological system refresh to enhance our cafe staff's work experience as well as to build our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) at the cafes, Foreword Coffee underwent a migration to the Waffle Point-of-Sale (POS) system between June 2024 to March 2025.

Why [Waffle](#)? Thanks to the relentless nudging by Auston, Co-founder of Waffle POS, we were convinced that Waffle is here for the long-run, building scalable solutions for the F&B sector. For the first time since we started Foreword Coffee, we are finally able to implement a loyalty rewards programme for our cafe customers across our public cafe outlets!

The Waffle POS is easy to use, both for the cafe staff at the front-of-house and for our administrative staff to manage the backend. The Waffle team was also very responsive to our queries and supporting the downtime in the initial days of implementation at every outlet. For our dearest customers, we hope that you get to enjoy the loyalty perks that come with signing up for our Foreword Coffee rewards programme. From time to time, we will also launch members-exclusive promotions to reward our loyal customers!



## Rewards



# Our Coffee

In 2024, we launched our 4<sup>th</sup> series of coffee brew bags, featuring three blends and one single-origin coffee. We celebrated the opening of our Esplanade Mall outlet with the creation of the Resonance Blend, adding on to our existing two blends: Hello Neighbour and Diversity.

We imported coffee beans from [China](#) and [India](#), featuring 7 single-origin coffees in our lineup of coffee for 2024-2025. We started to purchase coffee from local coffee importer, [ofi](#), to help widen our coffee offerings and to diversify our supply chain.

Foreword Coffee no longer only serve Asian specialty coffee. We have included African and South American coffee beans into our range, and with a wider range of coffee available, we can create blends to suit our clients' preferences. Hello Neighbour is our most popular blend and favourite coffee of all times, for guests who seek a more balanced and nutty profile .



# Learning points

What is “sustainable” coffee? For years, we have the idealised view that we are practising sustainable sourcing by importing green coffee beans ourselves. By cutting out the “middleman” and purchasing beans from responsible coffee companies that give back to the communities they work with for these coffee beans, we are giving back to the producers.

However, the quantity of coffee beans that we import each year is still considered tiny in the grand scheme of things. The impact that we seek to make at the source of the coffee value chain is negligible. Importing directly requires us to pay a substantial amount of money upfront for coffee beans to last us for a year, and we also incur additional costs by arranging our own freight forwarding.

Coffee purchased from importers are not necessarily less sustainable. These coffee importers, or the “middlemen”, would purchase coffee in bulk, which reduces the cost of administration and freight forwarding per unit of coffee exported by the producers. Such large companies like ofi has built relationships with the coffee producers and are committed to yearly purchase and investments to improve coffee quality, which helps with local community development. These procurement practices are part of being sustainable, isn't it?





# gratitude

## chapter 5

# Practising gratitude

At the point of this impact report's publication, we're more than halfway through 2025. The team composition has changed, we have closed First Story cafe (Serangoon North), and we have also new projects lined up.

Change is indeed a constant and we can never get fully comfortable as the company seems to be always in a state of transition.

We are thankful for the people who joined us and the partners who continued to support us over the years. Our long-term employees who stayed on with us have been adapting well and thriving with the changes in the company. "2025 feels better than 2023-2024", quipped one of our staff members during a company gathering. Most of us can agree with that.

Here's looking forward to the rest of the year 2025!



# Notable media mentions

