

CASE STUDY

Mast Reforestation's Retirement Plan Success: Aligning Company Values with Employee Investments

Employer

Through an ESG-focused 401(k) plan offered by Vestwell and Carbon Collective, Mast Reforestation prioritizes their employees' financial security while supporting their environmental mission.

According to a survey by the investment management group Natixis, [73% of workers](#) with access to a retirement plan would increase or begin making contributions “if their plan offered investments in companies with good ESG practices.”

For Mast Reforestation, a group of companies committed to faster and more resilient forest restoration, establishing a company retirement plan that allows for responsible environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing was a natural choice.

The Challenge: Starting a Company Retirement Plan with Environmental Values

With a mission statement to “make reforestation scalable to mitigate the worst effects of climate change,” **Mast Reforestation wanted a retirement solution that aligned with the values they brought to work every day.** However, the Plan Sponsor Council of America reported in 2019 that just [3% of 401\(k\) plans](#) have an ESG option in their plan menu.

Mast Reforestation set out in search of a retirement plan that would demonstrate to future and current employees how the company prioritized their financial security and supported their environmental mission.

After connecting with Tavis Boise of [Carbon Collective](#), Mast found what they were looking for. Carbon Collective is an advisory practice that focuses their investments on companies that are building climate solutions, as well as environmentally-neutral companies that can achieve a return for their clients. Carbon Collective worked with Vestwell to create a 401(k) option that allows for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing.

“If a company is our partner and they also believe what we believe in, it makes it easier. Carbon Collective has a portfolio lineup that’s specific to ESG, so that was really attractive and appealing to us.”

[Katherine Wong-Velasco](#), Director of Talent, Mast Reforestation

The Solution: A Flexible Retirement Plan With ESG Investment Options

Mast Reforestation looked at several retirement plan providers before encountering Carbon Collective, who recommended Vestwell. Katherine Wong-Velasco, Director of Talent at Mast Reforestation, explained the importance of Carbon Collective and Vestwell’s willingness to learn about their company and align with their values. “We did talk to other recordkeepers, but I don’t think they listened that well to who we are and what we do,” Katherine said.

One of Vestwell’s key strengths is the flexibility it provides in plan design. **No two companies are exactly alike, so the platform gives employers and advisors the ability to build an offering that’s right for their team.** Mast Reforestation welcomed this abundance of choice, and Carbon Collective was able to provide a custom, sustainability-focused ESG investment lineup, helping their employees save in a way that aligned with the company’s values.

Additionally, working with their third-party administrator, [EGPS](#), Mast Reforestation has been able to further streamline the administration of their plan. EGPS helps them update deferral amounts with their payroll provider, as well as submit contribution files for the Mast team.

Plus, to encourage employees to start saving, Mast Reforestation opened an auto-enrollment 401(k) with a 6% initial contribution, automatically increasing by 1% each year, capping out at 10%.

The Impact: Alignment Between Company Benefits and Employee Values Enhances Team Morale

Mast Reforestation's ESG-focused 401(k) plan with Vestwell enabled them to provide workplace benefits that matched their values. The company, deeply committed to environmental causes, appreciates the authenticity of the ESG investment options and the avoidance of "greenwashing."

"The plan aligns with our mission, and that was important for us when deciding to work with Carbon Collective and Vestwell," Katherine explained. This alignment is a key factor in Mast Reforestation's satisfaction with their retirement plan. It also reinforces the team's overall morale and dedication to their work.

"The customer service is a big part. It will tick off a major thing for HR. If they are on the fence between vendors, I would say Vestwell is better because of the dedicated attention you'll receive."

Katherine Wong-Velasco, Director of Talent, Mast Reforestation

When asked what she would tell another small business deciding whether or not to partner with Vestwell, Katherine said: "The customer service is a big part. It will tick off a major thing for HR. If they are on the fence between vendors, **I would say Vestwell is better because of the dedicated attention you'll receive.**"

Conclusion: Consider a 401(k) That Aligns with Your Values

Vestwell was founded with small businesses top of mind. As a result, we offer retirement solutions that are flexible to the needs and values of businesses of all sizes.

Vestwell's digital retirement plan platform can make it easy to offer and administer the right company-sponsored 401(k) or 403(b) for your business. By combining technology with user-first design and offering [3\(16\) plan administration services](#), Vestwell can help you take the hassle out of setting up and administering a 401(k) plan.



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