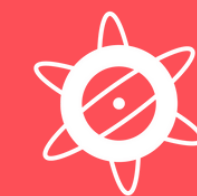# INNOVATING FOR IMPACT

2024 DE&I Impact Report

ATOMIC OBJECT

# INNOVATING FOR IMPACT

—

Atomic Object's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Annual Report is more than a reflection of the year's activities; it's an opportunity to bring transparency to progress on our goals and vision for the future.

Atomic's purpose is to be a source of fulfillment for Atoms and a force for good for our clients and in our communities. The following pages detail the work we have completed in service of that purpose this year.

Atomic is pleased to celebrate the good work accomplished—and humbly acknowledge the work before us—as we narrow the gap between what is and what can be.

This report also serves as an invitation to join us in this work.

If anything you read sparks a new idea or the oomph to deepen your involvement in Atomic's DE&I work, we welcome your contribution.

"

DE&I isn't just about programming, improving awareness, and recognizing implicit bias.
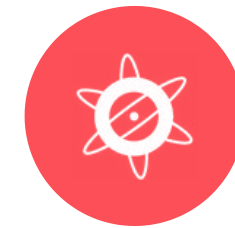
It's about weaving together business practices, process, and communication to support equity and inclusion.

— Shawn Crowley, Co-CEO
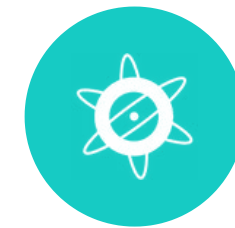
# INSIDE THIS REPORT

Our journey in DE&I at Atomic Object is lived out in four areas of good, which serve as the framing device for our report. Each area encompasses distinct aspects of our DE&I work.
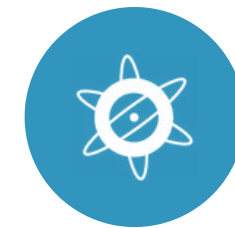
## PEOPLE

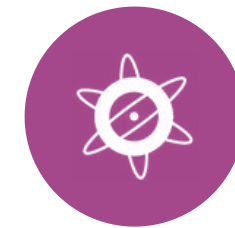Building a community of respect and belonging, where every voice is heard and celebrated.

## PRODUCT

Developing software with a focus on innovation, empathy, and long-term impact.

## PROFIT

Fostering a culture of shared success and responsibility, where every Atom has a stake in our achievements.

## PLACE

Leveraging our business impact for positive community change, aligned with B Corp values.

# DE&I PROGRESS

—

Using Global Bridgebuilders' Inclusion Systems Assessment to guide our DE&I strategy.

Every two years, each Atom completes an Inclusion Systems Assessment (iSA), offering their perspective on Atomic's progress toward DE&I best practices. This feedback helps us understand where we can improve and how we're evolving.

## INCLUSION SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

The iSA contains five sections, each given a value that sum to 1,000 possible points. The iSA score helps us see where resources can be best utilized and to benchmark our progress. In this report, you'll find these labels to indicate work done in a given iSA section:

iSA Leadership    iSA Communication    iSA Systems Tracking

iSA Organizational Processes    iSA External Relationships



# 23%
## IMPROVEMENT

*In 2023, our collective efforts improved our iSA score since the assessment was last performed in 2021. The score increased from 577 to 711, a 134-point improvement.*

Our new score places us in Global Bridgebuilders' "emerging" score range. They say organizations in this range have moved beyond DE&I as a program and understand the necessity of a process orientation.

# OUR APPROACH

—

Atomic Object's dedication to DE&I stems from our drive to cultivate a workplace where people are supported to do their best work.

## OUR COMMITMENT

*We commit to Atomic Object being a place of respect, support, and belonging. A place where every person can be their genuine self. Where hard work, collaboration, and ingenuity are rewarded.*

**iSA Leadership**

## PARTNERING WITH GLOBAL BRIDGEBUILDERS

In the summer of 2021, we partnered with Global Bridgebuilders (GBB) to enhance our DE&I efforts. GBB's process-centric approach and educational programming focus on embedding DE&I into every aspect of our business, providing us with a system that aligns with our vision and values.



## GROWING THE DIVERSITY ACTION COUNCIL

In early 2022, we launched Atomic's Diversity Action Council (DAC), reinforcing our commitment to DE&I. Now six members strong, the DAC propels inclusion, process development, and iSA implementation —led by GBB's roadmap. Atomic's DAC is Patrick Bacon, Elaine Ezekiel, Kaitlin Diemer, Alecia Frederick, Ty Swanson, and Nick Hawn.

## RECERTIFYING B CORP STATUS

In 2022, Atomic underwent a rigorous re-certification process that measured our positive impact across categories like sustainability, clients, suppliers, and employees.

*"B Corp validates that the strategy we put in place 20+ years ago is one that other organizations recognize and value."*

— Mike Marsiglia, Co-CEO

# PEOPLE

—

## BUILDING THE BRAIN TRUST

Atomic is people. Our culture is driven by individual Atoms working together on a path of learning and growth. We don't see diversity as a quota to be met, but as a vital component of our strength and creativity.

# PEOPLE

## CHANGING THE STATUS QUO

We're working to build a diverse team at Atomic Object. We've refined our hiring process with bias-reducing measures like consistent interview scripts; gender-neutral job descriptions; and structured, quantitative candidate assessments.

**iSA Systems Tracking**

*In 2023, we published a new diversity tracking system to understand our team's composition through self-reported identity data.*
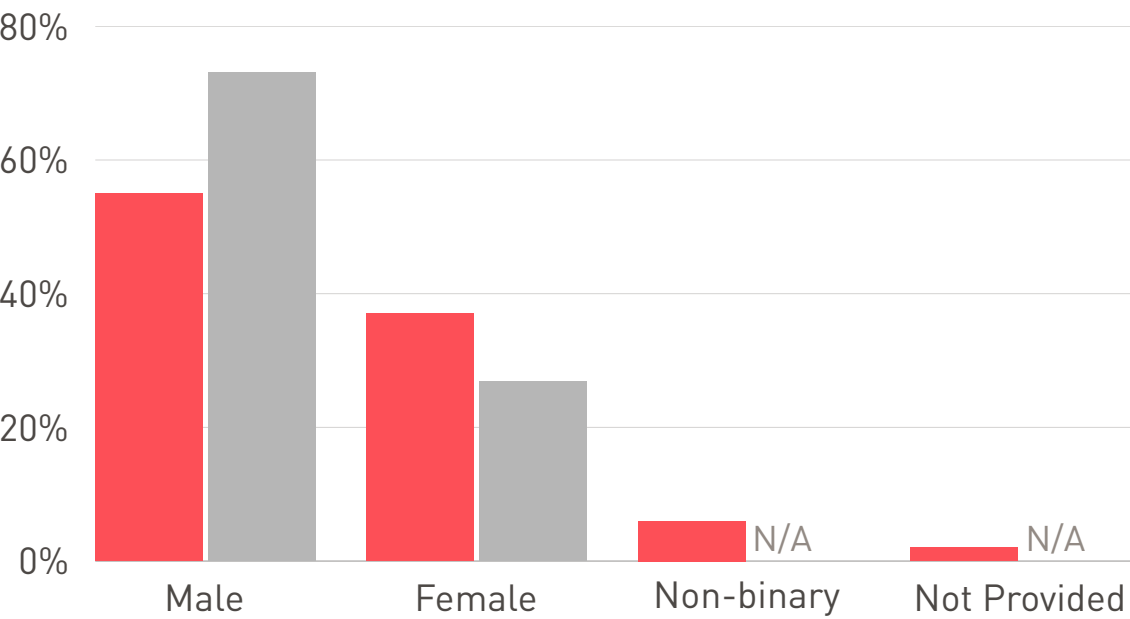
## BY THE NUMBERS

The tech industry is increasingly a place where women build careers. That said—while the percentage of women in the U.S. labor force has gradually climbed to 47 percent over recent decades—it is still significantly lower in the tech sector.*

Between 2005 and 2023, Atomic saw the proportion of women Atoms grow from 8 to 37 percent. Here's how that gender breakdown compares to the current U.S. tech workforce.

**Atoms vs. U.S. Tech Workforce by Gender**

2023 Atoms ●
**2023 U.S. Tech Workforce ●



*Bar chart showing percentages by gender. Male: ~55% (2023 Atoms), ~73% (U.S. Tech Workforce). Female: ~37% (2023 Atoms), ~27% (U.S. Tech Workforce). Non-binary: ~6% (2023 Atoms), N/A. Not Provided: ~2% (2023 Atoms), N/A.*

*Gender distribution in the U.S. tech sector as of 2022, by state Published by Statista Research Department, Aug 10, 2023.

**2023 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Computer and Mathematical Occupations, which did not include "Non-binary" in their reporting on gender in 2023.

## WOMEN LEADING THE WAY

Over the last six years, Taylor Vanden Hoek held various roles at Atomic before becoming a Managing Partner—launching our Raleigh office with Ryan Abel. Taylor's work ethic, broad skillset, and support for our team all model her commitment to fostering a fulfilling work environment for North Carolina-based Atoms.

Taylor's leadership was acknowledged with the 2024 Purpose Jobs Award for her dedication to both Atomic Object and the wider tech community.

READ THE ARTICLE

## BUILDING A MORE DIVERSE CANDIDATE POOL

Our commitment to DE&I shows up in our approach to filling the Atomic Accelerator program's candidate pool. By expanding our recruitment efforts, collecting BIPOC-identity data from applicants, and tracking their progress through the hiring process, we can see if our pipeline is representative of the diverse talent in the market.

> *"We're broadening our recruitment efforts to include a wider geographical area. We're collaborating with GBB to ensure that we're building relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic–Serving Institutions. We're engaging with the Grand Valley State University HBCU/HSI Consortium to proactively reach out to sophomores at these institutions."*

— Joe Chrysler, Grand Rapids Accelerator Manager

In 2023, those involved in tracking pipeline diversity encountered the complexity of collecting and reporting identity data. We're taking lessons learned to improve these processes for improved reporting ability next year.

**iSA Leadership**

## REPRESENTATION BY RACE / ETHNICITY

Though the tech sector is more diverse than it once was, a significant gap in racial and ethnic diversity persists compared to the general workforce. To help bridge this gap and achieve a workplace that benefits from the best contributions, our strategy focuses on broadened recruiting efforts and inclusive interviewing practices guided by iSA initiatives.

**Atoms vs. U.S. Tech Workforce by Race/Ethnicity**



● 2023 Atoms
● *2023 U.S. Tech Workforce
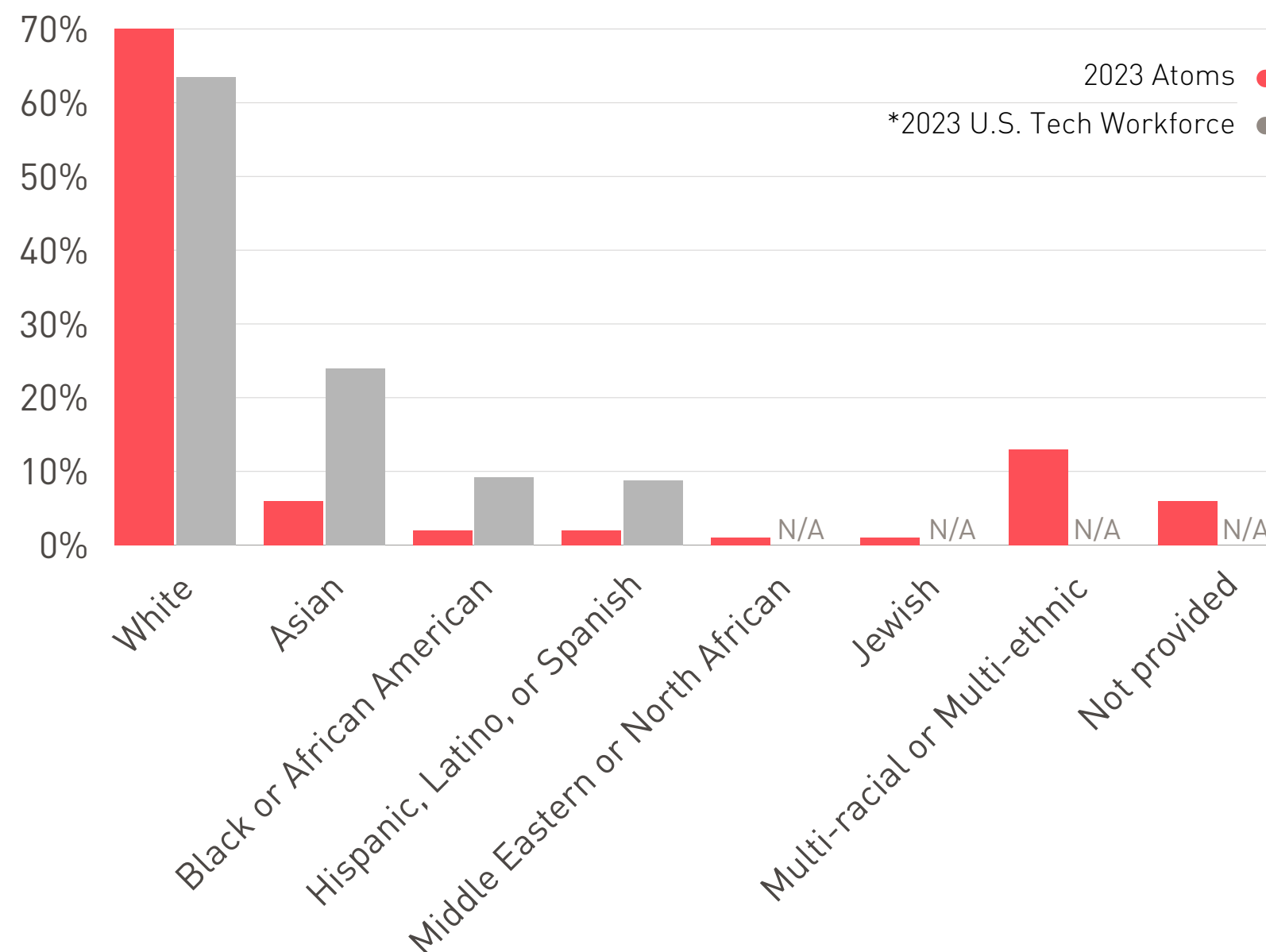
On the chart to the left, some races/ethnicities are listed in gray, but others are not.

While the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics tracks four racial/ethnic categories, our approach encompasses additional identities.

This list of expanded options allows us to better understand and support our Atoms.

*2023 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Computer and Mathematical Occupations.

## LGBTQIA+ REPRESENTATION

In 2022, half of LGBTQIA+ adults in the United States reported an experience of workplace discrimination or harassment.* Recognizing this community is more likely to face workplace discrimination, our DE&I efforts include creating a workplace where all Atoms feel a sense of belonging and show up as their authentic selves.

**Atoms vs. U.S. Tech Workforce by LGBTQIA+ Community Membership**



Legend:
- 2023 Atoms
- U.S. Tech Workforce**

*chart y-axis: 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%*
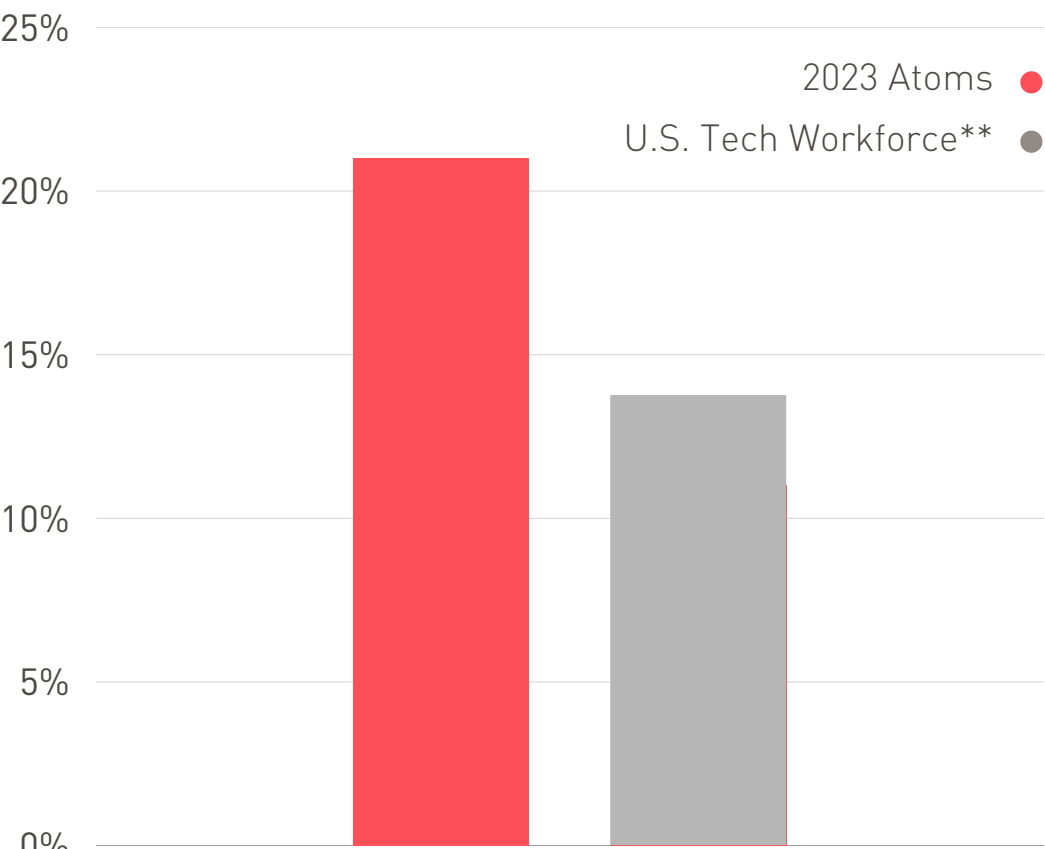
*\* The Center for American Progress, Discrimination and Barriers to Well-Being.*

*\*\*Zippia, Information Technology Professional Demographics And Statistics in the U.S. Accessed January 2023.*



### EMPOWERING AUTHENTICITY: LGBTQIA+ AWARENESS AT WORK

A panel of Atoms took the lead in organizing an LGBTQIA+ lunch-and-learn in Atomic's Ann Arbor office:

*"A community of several Ann Arbor Atoms chose a panel format for our LGBTQIA+ Lunch and Learn. I led the event by starting with a 15-minute introductory presentation to establish a consistent baseline. We covered key definitions like lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, intersex, asexual and aromantic.*

*Additionally, I touched on why LGBTQIA+ education is important and how to use pronouns. We introduced our panelists and answered audience questions as well as questions that were submitted anonymously.*

*The response was overwhelmingly positive. We had a majority of the Ann Arbor office in attendance, and the audience stayed engaged with the panel during the course of the event."*

— Sam Thorne, Organizer
The Atomic Object Ann Arbor Loose Association of LGBTQIA+ People

# PEOPLE

## ELEVATING SKILLS & OPPORTUNITIES

Our commitment to professional development is an investment in a diverse and equitable workplace.

By supporting all Atoms to engage in self-directed learning, we ensure they have opportunities to advance their skills and careers as they follow their curiosities and passions.

Our Atomic Accelerator program deepens this commitment for those getting their foothold in software careers, offering two years of cohort-based mentorship and project-based experience.

In turn, Atoms hired through the Accelerator bring new perspectives, skills, and energy to their project teams.

### 2023 SELECT CONFERENCES ATTENDED

- Ai4 Conference
- All Things Open
- Confluence Festival
- Chain React
- Michigan DevFest
- MERGE & SoftwareGR
- Strange Loop
- SXSW
- TypeScript Congress
- UX Y'all

## $245.3k

*In the last 12 months, Atomic invested nearly $250k in the professional development of our teams through training, education, and conferences.*





## 23

*Atoms attended more than 20 unique conferences and training events in 2023 to grow skills in design, development, and team leadership.*

## UX Y'ALL

Atoms from each of our four offices converged at the UX Y'all Conference in Raleigh, NC.

UX Y'all served as an opportunity for Atoms to learn about new design principles—from trauma-informed design to designing with AI.

The team also got to experience Raleigh's thriving tech community.



# 1,263

*Over the last 12 months, Atomic funded more than one thousand hours of Atoms' time spent learning at conferences and events.*





## ALL THINGS OPEN

Several Atoms attended All Things Open 2023 in Raleigh, NC. This multi-track conference gathered more than 4,500 people, offering a kaleidoscope of sessions on the latest in open-source tech.

Sagar Rathod shared his favorite moments from this year's event on our blog.

**READ THE POST**



## ATOMIC CON 5

Since 2014, Atomic has organized a biennial internal conference. At Atomic Con, we share insights, develop skills, and enjoy lots of karaoke. In off-years, we prepare for our next event, supporting the planning group and contributors as they research, craft, and propose talks and team activities.

In the words of an Atom, "The value of the conference is obvious, but the cultural significance it holds is just as important."

**READ THE POST**

# PEOPLE

## SUPPORTING THE ECOSYSTEM

We know responsibilities don't end at the office exit doors. Atomic strives to build a work environment with flexible arrangements, part-time roles for balancing careers and childcare, and paid time off for new parents.

Our initiatives—including support for babies in the office and dedicated lactation spaces—provide flexibility to Atomic caretakers.

We also promote sustainable working hours and provide an Employee Assistance Program for mental well-being support.

> *"As we grow, we promise to do so smartly, deliberately, and with the well-being of every Atom at heart."*
>
> — Mike Marsiglia on <u>Spin</u>



## ATOMIC'S EXPERIMENT FOR NEW PARENTS

In 2023, Rachael McQuater's 6-month-old son <u>graduated</u> from the Bring Your Atomic Baby to Work Program.

*"Toby and I became the pilot participants in the new program. We're hoping to expand our support for working parents and continue to make Atomic the sort of place where one can carve out a long career, spanning many phases of life."*

**READ THE POST**

# PEOPLE

## FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT

Atomic's flat approach to hierarchy and "Teach and Learn" value mantra encourage Atoms to lead educational initiatives, from organizing lunch-and-learns to sponsoring community events that promote diversity in tech.

**iSA Communication**

*To help broaden awareness of and access to opportunities, in 2023 Atomic's DAC began work on an Internal Communication Toolkit to support employees engaged in fostering dialogue around diversity and inclusion.*

*"Sometime in my early twenties, I realized this: who I am doing things with is more important than what I am doing.*

*The folks I have the privilege of working with at Atomic are thoughtful, collaborative, hilarious, proactive, and creative."*

— Anne Fitzpatrick on Spin

### BRINGING TEAMS TOGETHER

In June 2023, Atoms came together to honor Pride Month.

Grand Rapids got creative with a hands-on session led by Meg Kretz, crafting pride bracelets as symbols of unity.



### WORKING ON & OFF THE FIELD

Atoms unwind after work with Atomic-sponsored kickball, soccer, softball, and other group activities.

Initiated and organized by our teams, Atomic supports activities like these as a way to celebrate diverse interests and promote belonging.

# PRODUCT

—

## CRAFTING WITH CONSCIOUSNESS

We believe in building solutions that deliver value—ones that solve real problems for users. Atoms dedicate themselves to understanding the users of the products we craft. Through design-thinking practices, we work every day to deliver products that benefit those who use them.

# PRODUCT

## DESIGNING FOR DIVERSE NEEDS

In our approach to product design, DE&I is foundational.

Through our blog, Atoms share insights and perspectives on building with diversity in mind. Posts cover topics like cognitive bias in UX design, QA testing for accessibility, empathy in software development, and the importance of using inclusive language with clients.

These internal discussions, shared with our blog's audience of millions, influence how we approach each project.

### HOW MY TEAM IS RETROFITTING A11Y INTO OUR SOFTWARE PROJECT

by Miranda Michalski      Read The Post

### 3 WAYS TO REMOVE GENDER BIAS FROM EARLY UX DESIGN PHASES

by Taylor Vanden Hoek      Read The Post

### NAMES AND IDENTITIES CHANGE – YOU SHOULD DESIGN FOR THAT

by Mattie Behrens      Read The Post

### THE WHATS, HOWS, AND WHOS OF EMPATHY FOR SOFTWARE MAKERS

by Sarah Brockett      Read The Post



*"At Atomic, I have the privilege of working with developers who are extremely aware of user needs—one could say we practice Human-Centered Development as well as Human-Centered Design."*

— Brittany Hunter on Spin

# PROFIT

—

## SHARING IN OUR SUCCESS

As an employee-owned company, our commitment to equity is part of our business model. We've cultivated a culture of shared ownership—where each Atom is empowered to think and make decisions like an owner, steering us towards success.

# PROFIT

## ENJOYING OUR COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

In 2009, we began a transition from a company wholly owned by two co-founders to one that is now wholly owned by 59 Atoms.

Atomic's distributed equity and profit-sharing model foster a culture where we feel shared ownership of our future.

Atomic's hourly compensation model where Atoms see financial benefit from their marginal working time further contributes to an equitable financial environment.

# 64%

of the company is owned by 57 non-CEO Atoms.

*"Hourly compensation ensures fair payment for our work. You're not expected to exceed 40 hours, but the flexibility exists, offering a balance of adequate compensation and clear work hours."*

— Ty Swanson on Spin



## OUR APPROACH TO FAIR & TRANSPARENT COMPENSATION

When adjusting compensation each year, leaders seek to pay every Atom fairly—relative to the current market and their peers, based on their experience and capabilities.

Compensation adjustment decisions include at least three phases of multi-manager review, which help ensure equitable pay for Atoms in the same role across the company.

**READ MORE ABOUT OUR COMPENSATION APPROACH**

# PLACE

—

## BRINGING GOOD INTO OUR COMMUNITIES

Atomic's purpose is to be a source of fulfillment for Atoms and a force for good for our clients and in our communities. Our commitment to community extends beyond Atomic's business operations, as we seek to enrich the places in which we live and work.

# PLACE

## ATOMIC SPONSORSHIP

Through our Atomic Sponsorship program, we support groups like Code for Good and the Midwest Tech Project, focusing on empowering diverse groups in software development.

Our efforts in these areas show our dedication to being a source and a force for good, making a tangible impact.

**iSA External Relationships**

*Starting in 2022, Atomic's Diversity Action Council implemented a system to track our spending with businesses owned by historically underrepresented groups, a practice that aligns with our ongoing commitment to be a force for good.*



## LEAD FOR GOOD 2023 PANEL

In June, Atomic Object hosted Code for Good's "Lead For Good" panel. Practice Lead Brittany Hunter joined local leaders to discuss their experiences as organizers and the role of local business as a catalyst for positive change.

**ABOUT THE EVENT**
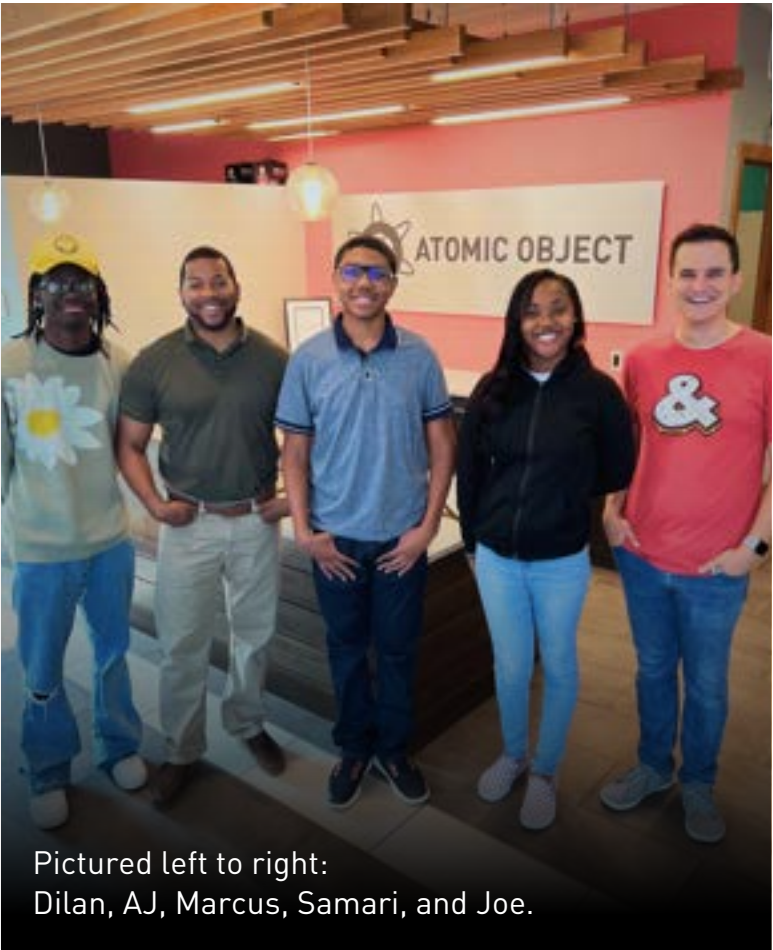


Pictured left to right:
Dilan, AJ, Marcus, Samari, and Joe.

## BAKER AND COOK FELLOWSHIP

The Baker and Cook Fellowship provides multi-year financial, network, and mentor support to graduating BIPOC high school students with a strong interest in tech as a way to individually address broader under-representation in STEM fields.

**ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP**



## HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In collaboration with the Midwest Tech Project, our Grand Rapids office hosted high school interns for the second year. In the summer of 2023, Atomic's Accelerator Manager, Joe Chrysler, worked with Midwest Tech Project coordinators AJ and Dilan to welcome Marcus and Samari as our interns.

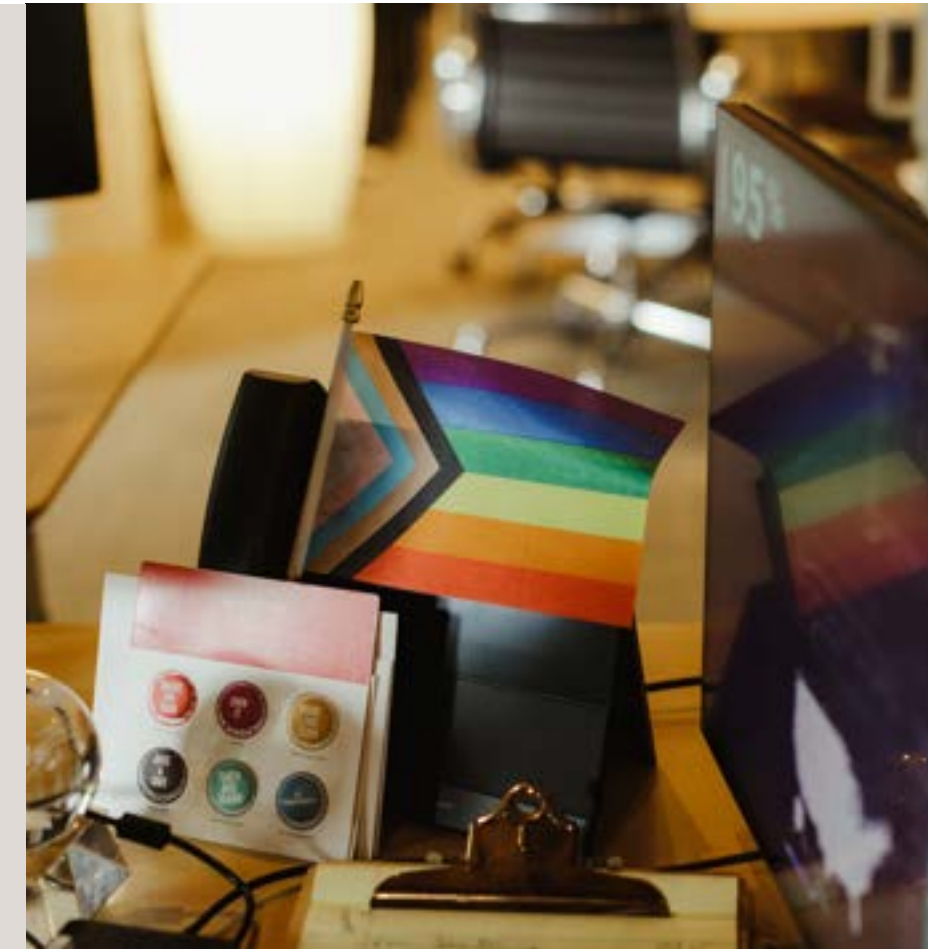**ABOUT THE MIDWEST TECH PROJECT**

## TECHCHICAGO WEEK 2023

Our Chicago team sponsored P33's TechChicago Week, an event celebrating Chicago's diverse and innovative tech culture.

ABOUT P33

# $100k+

*Last year, we tracked over $100k spent by Atomic to support businesses owned by women, BIPOC folks, LGBTQIA+ folks, and veterans.*

# $47k+

*In 2023, Atomic Object donated over $47,000 through grants and sponsorships.*

# 20+

*Atomic supported more than 20 local community organizations in 2023 through volunteer time and funds.*

# LOOKING AHEAD

—

From our founding in 2001 to today, our curiosity, love of learning, and drive for continuous improvement has helped us reach DE&I milestones. As we enter 2024, our timeline is not just a record of what we've accomplished; it's a trajectory of where we're headed.

# OUR DE&I TIMELINE

- **2001** - Founded Atomic Object in Grand Rapids, MI.

- **2004** - Started quarterly profit-sharing and established our 401(k) benefit.

- **2009** - Introduced our first employee shareholders via The Atomic Plan.

- **2013** - Opened our Ann Arbor, MI office, and established our Employee Share Purchase Plan.

- **2015** - Committed to improving gender balance across the company.

- **2017 -** Became a Certified B Corporation. Received a "Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Gold Award."

- **2018** - Sought a partner to help assess and improve our culture in terms of DE&I.

- **2019** - Began work on DE&I education with the Cultural Intelligence Center.

- **2020** - Opened our third office in Chicago, IL. Searched for a partner to co-develop our DE&I management system. Selected Global Bridgebuilders. Added Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

- **2021 -** Formed the Diversity Action Council. Named "Best for the World" by B Lab for employee impact. Sent out our first Inclusion Systems Assessment survey (iSA), receiving a score of 577.

- **2022** - Launched the Bring Your Atomic Baby to Work Program and the Baker & Cook Fellowship.

- **2023** - Grew to 100 employees. Opened our fourth office in Raleigh, NC. Completed the iSA for the second time, with a score of 711. Completed our first-annual DE&I report.



## THINKING LONG TERM: 2024

As we step into 2024, our Diversity Action Council (DAC) is poised for expansion with our second call for new members. We're working towards an ambitious goal: achieving an iSA score of 751, or "best in class," by the end of 2025.

Our journey towards enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) remains a steadfast commitment. Every effort we make is a step towards a more inclusive and diverse future for Atomic Object.

FOLLOW OUR JOURNEY

# AWARDED FOR IMPACT IN 2023



Switch on Business ranked Atomic the #1 B Corp to work for in the United States



Shawn Crowley and Mike Marsiglia named among Top Purpose-Driven CEOs



Named a "Top Workplace for Women" by Purpose Jobs



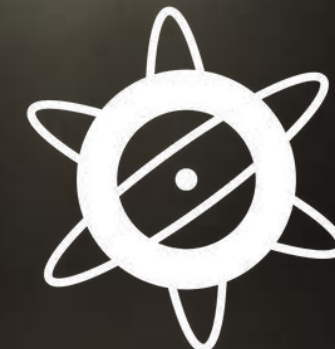Named 2023's #1 B2B Service Provider in the World by Clutch



Atomic Object Recognized as a Diversity-Focused Company by Corp! Magazine



Awarded a "West Michigan Sustainable Business of the Year" by WMSBF for our dedication to advancing racial equity