



Creating  
Timeless Style



**Rivers Agency**  
An Introduction

Presented to:  
Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation  
04/13/2021

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DREAM TEAM

# Objective

Let's create a dream team to leverage RL Corporate Foundation dollars to work with farmers and increase the adoption of regenerative soil health practices for a sustainable future for US-grown cotton.

## Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation

NEW YORK

Committed to 'Design the Change' program and universal sustainability principles



## Soil Health Institute

MORRISVILLE, NC

Committed to safeguarding and enhancing the vitality and productivity of soil through scientific research and advancement



## Rivers Agency

CHAPEL HILL, NC

Inspiring brands to life through strategic communications and nearly 30 years of experience delivering meaningful change

### Supporting Partner

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Create Timeless Style

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Protect the Environment

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Champion Better Lives

### Convening Partner

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Soil Scientists and Researchers

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Champions for Regenerative Agriculture

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Educators

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Soil Health Influencers

### Agency Partner

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Communications Experts

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Design Specialists

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Digital Engineers

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SHI Agency of Record

# Wait, Who is Rivers Agency?

## Small and mighty.

Rivers Agency is an idea-centric, culture-driven creative firm with world-class creativity and an in-depth understanding about what it takes to connect brands and ideas to consumers.

We create brand experiences that enrich lives by combining a variety of specialized skills to tackle complex challenges and deliver superior results.

In our specialties we draw on our expertise in strategy, brand, design, and digital to reframe and solve high-stakes problems.

## AGENCY

# Stats

Est. 1993

Headquartered in NC

Woman-founded

Woman-led

50+ talented specialists

All in-house team

Award-winning work

## AGENCY

# Clients

Agriculture

Fashion & Beauty

Not-for-profit

Arts & Culture

Civic & Public

Education

Manufacturing

Retail

Real Estate

Technology

Health Care

## SERVICES

# We're Specialists

RESEARCH

STRATEGY

NAMING

BRANDING

PUBLIC RELATIONS

ADVERTISING

ACTIVATION

DIGITAL

ENGINEERING

CREATIVE PRODUCTION

CONTENT

WE'RE WELL DUG IN

# As SHI's agency of record, Rivers Agency is uniquely positioned to partner with Ralph Lauren.

## SHI SUPPORT

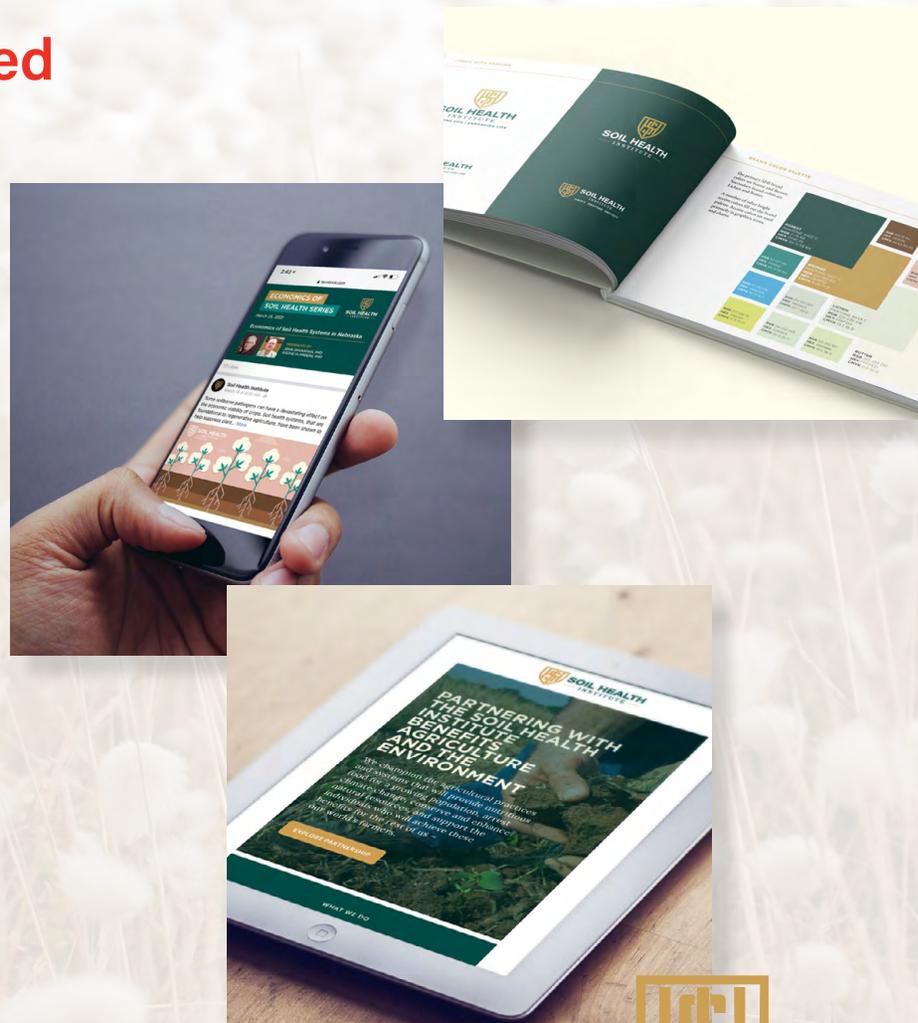
- Brand Positioning
- Marketing Strategy
- Fundraising Support
- Comms Strategy
- Content Strategy & Creation
- Public Relations
- Digital Comms
- Partner Comms
- Analytics & ROI Reporting

Cotton Showcase with Walmart, VF Foundation, Wrangler

Cargill Economics of Soil Health

NACD / NCRS Economics Fact Sheets

FFAR Dairy Project (Carbon Sequestration)



**SOIL HEALTH**  
— INSTITUTE —

ENRICHING SOIL | ENHANCING LIFE

WE'RE INVOLVED

# Partner Marketing Experience



WE GET IT

# Reference Points

There is growing momentum among manufacturing and retail brands to invest meaningfully in circular systems that implement more regenerative practices.



BEHIND THE LABEL



EILEEN FISHER



Chipotle's Real Foodprint calculates an average sustainability impact across each of its 53 real ingredients based on leading sourcing standards as compared to conventional ingredients.

Eileen Fisher is making strides toward sourcing from regenerative farms — the brand is a Frontier Founder with the Savory Institute's Land to Market program, which is the world's first verified regenerative sourcing solution for meat, dairy, wool, and leather.

H&M brand launched a Conscious Exclusive collection using Circulose®, an MMC fiber made from recycled cotton waste. Building on this success, H&M Group agreed to a five-year partnership to increase use of Circulose® across their brands.

WE HEARD

# Your Goals

Ralph Lauren's renewed citizenship and sustainability strategy, Design the Change, is built on the values and purpose that have defined its business for more than half a century. The Foundation has identified an opportunity to lean into a program to deliver sustainable US cotton that plugs into the brand's history of "preserving America's treasures."

## Ultimate Goals

- Leverage RL Corporate Foundation dollars to work with farmers and increase the adoption of regenerative soil health practices in the US
- 100% sustainable cotton materials by 2025
- Create a sustainable and successful farming future
- Minimize the environmental impacts of the business
- Continue to thoughtfully engage stakeholder groups on GC&S and progress made
- Meet rapidly evolving stakeholder expectations and stand out in a highly competitive peer landscape
- Lead a program to deliver sustainable US cotton
- Drive a sustainable future for US-grown cotton

100%

"Our Company is built on not what we did yesterday or even today, but what we dream of for tomorrow."  
*Ralph Lauren*

Protecting the Environment

Creating Timeless Style

**DESIGN THE CHANGE**  
RALPH LAUREN

"I would love the legacy of this company to be not only the beautiful products we made but the way we thought about the world and tried to make it a better place."  
*Ralph Lauren*

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT  
We are working to minimize our impact on the environment, focusing on renewable energy, waste management, water stewardship, and more.

WHY NOW, WHY US

# Agency Insights

**We know cotton.**

Cotton is the primary natural fiber used in many Ralph Lauren products — from polos and jeans to bedding and towels. It is highly susceptible to the negative effects of extreme weather events and extended periods of drought. However, cotton grown using soil health systems has been shown to be more resilient, more bountiful, and profitable — directly impacting farmer livelihoods. Cotton grown in this way reduces the environmental impact, helps restore ecosystems, and positively impacts downstream communities. Our long-term ambition is to ensure that all the cotton used in American supply chains is sustainably sourced.

**We know the landscape and the scientists carrying out the work.**

We intimately know soil health and how soil health management systems are the foundation for regenerative agriculture. Leveraging the NRCS, affinity groups, local soil health and conservation district groups, farming communities of practice, and other existing relationships, we will expand the reach of the Soil Health Institute's science-led research and get this valuable information into the hands of farmers.

**We know the audience.**

Through our partnership with the SHI and other agriculture clients, we understand how farmers consume media (radio is still their #1 channel and they love Twitter!) and who they trust. Farmers are businessmen and women. Like any other business owner, they are risk-averse and need to understand the business case, economics, and benefits to adopt something new. But the biggest influence over their decisions ultimately comes from the input and opinions of their fellow farmers. Through our network of soil health advocates and influencers, we will leverage their influence to champion the adoption of soil health systems and amplify their successes to other growers.

69%

69% of millennials say they look into claims of sustainability and eco-friendliness when researching clothing purchases

74%

74% of all cotton is now genetically modified and farmed using industrial quantities of pesticides and fertilizers.

1/3

More than a third of consumers report they have already switched from their preferred brand to another because it credibly stands for positive environmental and/or social practices.

93%

93% of consumers demand that brands be purpose-led or values-driven

1%

less than 1% of the cotton grown worldwide is organic

# Agency Insights

American Farm Bureau found 88% of Americans trust farmers.

## PEOPLE TRUST FARMERS. FARMERS TRUST FARMERS.

### How We'll Connect with Farmers

- Develop a **regenerative agriculture tool kit**

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- Distribute through USDA NRCS field offices and NACD

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- Recruit **farmer advocates** to champion these practices

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- Foster an **online community for farmers** to connect and support one another

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- **Highlight results** and share the stories of farmers who have adopted soil health management systems

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- Create a **portal of resources** to assist farmers

### How We'll Win Farmers' Hearts and Minds

- **Economics** — provide proof of costs savings and revenue enhancements through soil health management systems

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- **Education** — on soil health practices and benefits

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- **Measurement** — provide standardized measurements so farmers can track progress

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- **Environmental benefits** — reduce greenhouse gas emissions and nutrient loss, increase carbon sequestration and drought resilience, enhance yield stability, etc.

# Our Approach

Rivers Agency will build on the strength of Ralph Lauren's industry-leading strive toward sustainable materials, highlighting its commitment to preserving America's treasures and repairing and restoring American cotton to ensure a better future for all. We will create a brand strategy, visual identity, and messaging platform that will be compelling enough to unite growers, producers, innovators, funders, and consumers around that shared ambition — and that would be sharp enough to inspire them to act.

①

Brand the initiative and position farmers as the hero

②

Optimize the farmer recruitment process

③

Create and distribute farmer and partner training materials

④

Capture farmer stories

⑤

Amplify cotton sustainability stories online and in the media

⑥

Position Ralph Lauren as a leader in GC&S

# Example Marketing Tactics

Based on what we know thus far, we'd propose the following marketing activities. To position this work as a larger national movement that can help farmers implement soil health management systems, and achieve soil health targets and enhanced sustainability at scale, it will be important to **effectively communicate with farmers** and convince them to transition to regenerative ag systems, and then build on those successes and measurable outcomes to compel other corporate partners and/or foundations to join us.

## Audience & Industry Research

- Landscape analysis to map key issues, identify conversations online, and clear themes
- Brand health survey to establish a brand awareness baseline
- Target definition
- Stakeholder mapping to identify regen ag thought leaders, advocates, and influencers
- Research on farmers, crop consultants, and extensions to uncover their media consumption habits, communications needs, pain points, etc.

## Build a Communications Platform

- Discovery sessions with the Ralph Lauren Foundation, and farmers/crop consultants/advisors
- Strategic planning
- Messaging framework development
- Communications plan that includes owned-, earned-, and paid-media opportunities, as well as recommendations for in-person and virtual events, conferences, etc.

## Marketing & Communications Materials Development

- Branded look and feel for the campaign (most likely building off of the Healthy Soils for Sustainable Cotton brand)
- Email templates
- Branded social media tiles
- Video production (scripting/storyboarding, producing, filming, and editing)
- Data visualizations
- Infographics
- One-pagers/handouts

## Online Experience

- Assess current site
- Identify users' needs
- UX, design, and development
- Content development

## Social Media Campaign

- Branded campaign development
- Production of social media content (social tiles, graphics, videos, etc.)
- Social listening, monitoring, and tracking
- Influencer outreach

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

# PR Tactics

### Thought Leadership

Over the course of the engagement, we would work with you to sustain impact and engagement both nationally and regionally with commentary byline articles and Op-Ed submissions on behalf of SHI Chief Scientific Officer, Cristine Morgan and Sustainability Specialist Byron Rath. Articles would be ghostwritten by our highly skilled writing team and pitched by our media experts. Media interviews and opportunities for these experts and other designated spokespeople from SHI and the Ralph Lauren leadership team would be a priority from launch throughout the campaign, with the goal of placing articles and broadcast interviews that raise awareness of soil health and sustainably sourced fiber and engage stakeholders on national, regional, and hyper-local levels.

### Media

We recommend and will provide counsel for an integrated media relations campaign that includes consistent and ongoing social media engagement aligned with the campaign goals. Our team uses the best media relations databases and monitoring tools to stay ahead of news trends, and we work regularly with the top vendors for media release distribution.

### Activations

Our events team is available to work collaboratively with you to strategically plan regional press events and community gatherings designed to engage constituents from targeted geographic areas and environmental advocacy groups. All in-person events are pandemic compliant, and we work with top webinar and streaming vendors to produce a range of large- and small-scale interactive events and webinars.

### Government Affairs

We have worked closely with the government affairs teams of several of our clients to develop strategic approaches and support their efforts on the ground (Hill Days, etc.) and in media. For clients without dedicated Government Affairs or Advocacy teams, we have been closely involved in communications and press statements related to regulatory changes.



City Harvest, one of the largest emergency food distributors in New York, recorded nearly 12 million visits to the pantries in its network from March through August — about three million more than in the same period last year.

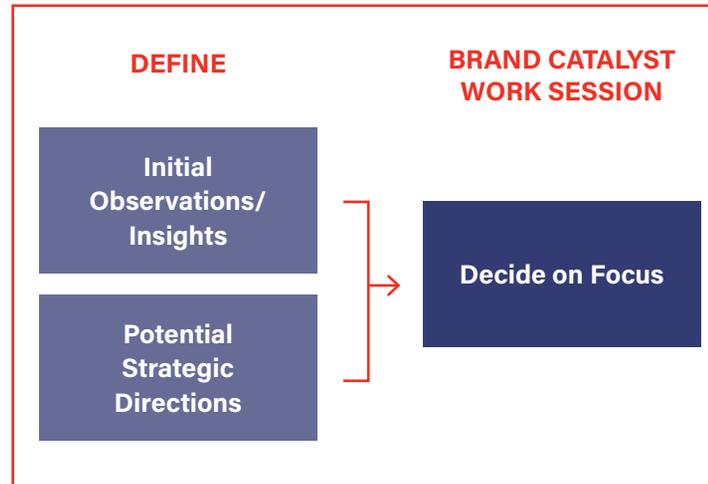


Many pantries are overwhelmed by both supply and demand. Holding Hands Ministries in Brooklyn now depends on heavy equipment to move and distribute food. Ahmed Cohen for The New York Times

# Next Steps

## EXPLORE

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Listening Session                 | Collection/<br>Curation Existing<br>Research |
| Interview<br>Partners             | Internal<br>Stakeholder<br>Survey            |
| Interview Cultural<br>Influencers | Digital<br>Ecosystem Audit                   |
| Competitive<br>Trends             | Secondary<br>Research                        |
| Media Audit                       | PR Audit                                     |



## ARTICULATE

- Target Mindset
- Ralph Lauren  
Foundation  
Point of View
- Creative Brief
- Connection Plan

Questions?

# Appendix

THE TEAM

# Soil Health Institute + RL Corporate Foundation Leadership Team



**LAUREN RIVERS**  
CEO



**SARAH OWENS**  
Executive Creative Director



**KATY PATTON**  
Copy Director



**CHRIS HICKS**  
Strategist and Copywriter

AGENCY CLIENTS



## CLIENT RECOMMENDATIONS



**Rivers Agency is a significant partner for us.**

We depend on Rivers 100% day and night. For a public company that does all of our business online, that is a big statement and well deserved, Lauren! You and your team are rock stars!!"

**SUZANNE MIGLUCCI**

President & CEO, Charles & Colvard



**Rivers is the type of agency you trust in any circumstance.**

Be it an urgent project need, a shot of creative energy or intricate web design, they deliver. That is what we all want out of our agencies; to deliver on-time, high quality, valuable work."

**HUNTER YOUNG**

SVP of Marketing & Analytics,  
First Bank



**It is always such a pleasure to work with the talented staff at Rivers Agency.**

Lauren and her entire team listened carefully to our needs, quickly and clearly demonstrated that they understood our vision, and worked hard to help us launch a very successful website. They are quick to identify opportunities for improvement and are fast to implement their solutions, applying themselves equally to both large and small tasks."

**SARAH WELNA**

Cree

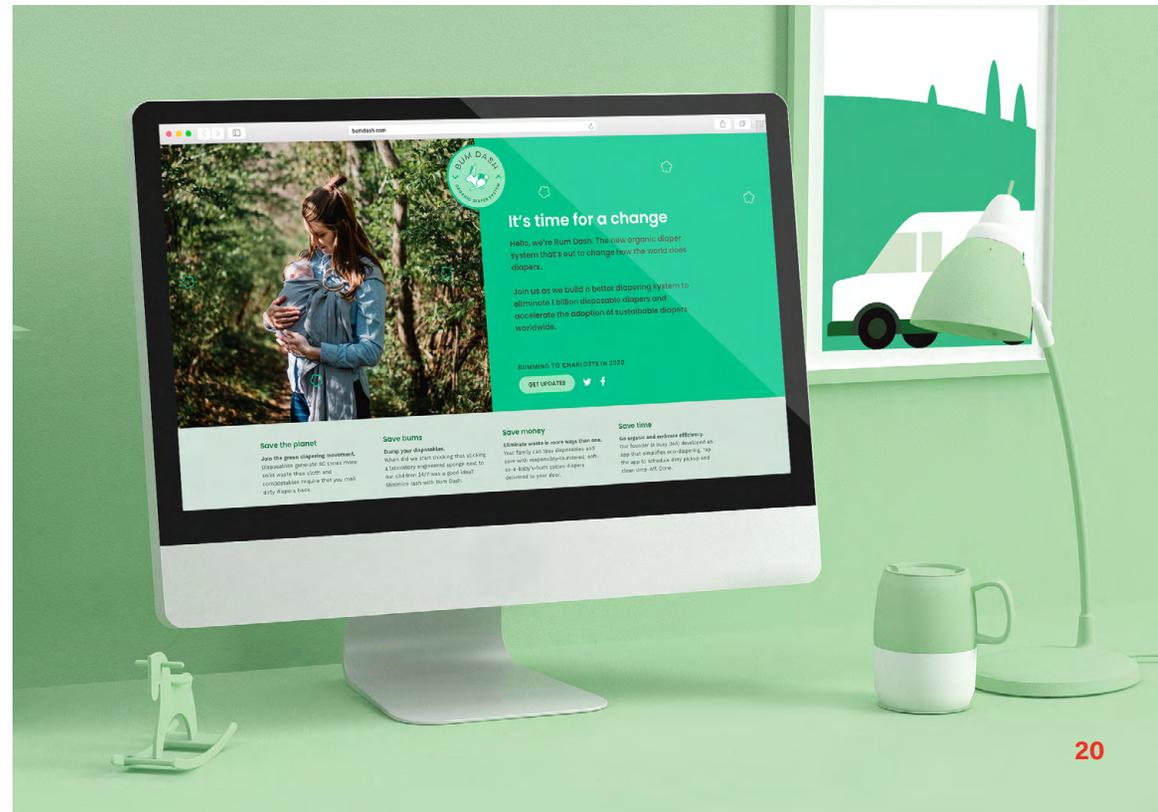
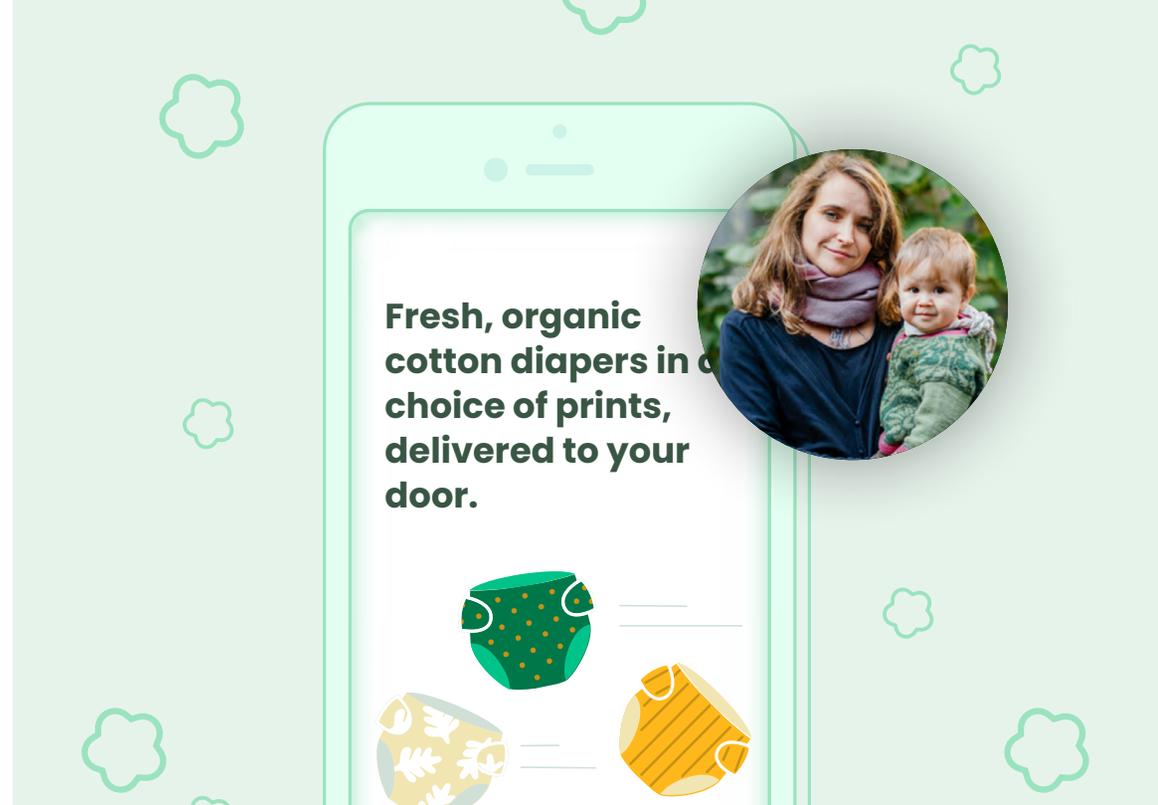
CASE STUDIES

# Bum Dash App

## It's Time for a Change

Bum Dash is a sustainable, organic diaper delivery system deeply invested in changing how the world “does diapers” by deleting disposable diapers, saving the planet and saving parents money. Our key message, “It’s time for a change,” created a brand that felt cheeky, approachable and purpose-led. This soft approach to a really hard environmental problem carried through in our natural palette, a friendly font and graphic elements such as bunny rabbits and cotton tails.

[VIEW MORE](#) 



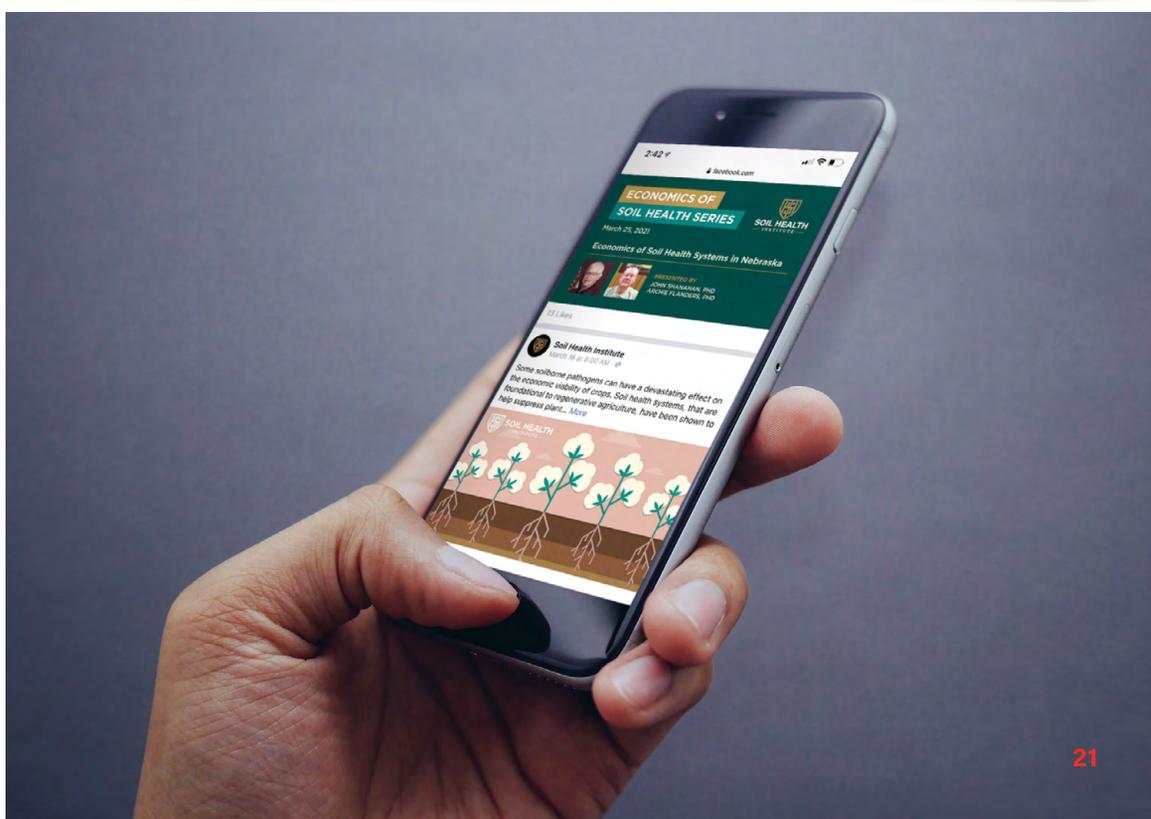
## CASE STUDIES

# Soil Health Institute

## Enhancing Soil, Enriching Life

Following deep-dive discovery sessions with SHI board and staff as well as category and peer research, Rivers created a detailed strategic marketing and communications plan for SHI that included a new tagline: *Enhancing Soil, Enriching Life*, and new key messaging. Next, the design team refreshed the entire SHI brand, rolling out a more inspirational look and feel with updated fonts, colors and illustrations styles. The new brand is quickly and progressively revamping all marketing materials such as social media properties and soon website, training and outreach materials. To raise the profile of SHI among its stakeholders, Rivers has been conducting public relations activities, including pitching around events, major announcements and working on all corporate and farmer communications.

[VIEW MORE](#) 



CASE STUDIES

# Hampton Farms

## Cultivate Good

Rivers was thrilled to work with the #1 in-shell peanut brand in the country to develop a brand platform that would enable the company's story to be told and its strong, sincere mission to be heard. In the ever-crowded CPG market, it was essential for Rivers to build on Hampton Farms' grower legacy while acknowledging the company's modern commitment to addressing pressing issues from climate change to nutrition and food insecurity. The brand framework we created, "Cultivate Good," allowed for a strong tagline and a brand call to action empowering others to take up the charge in their own communities.

[VIEW MORE](#) 



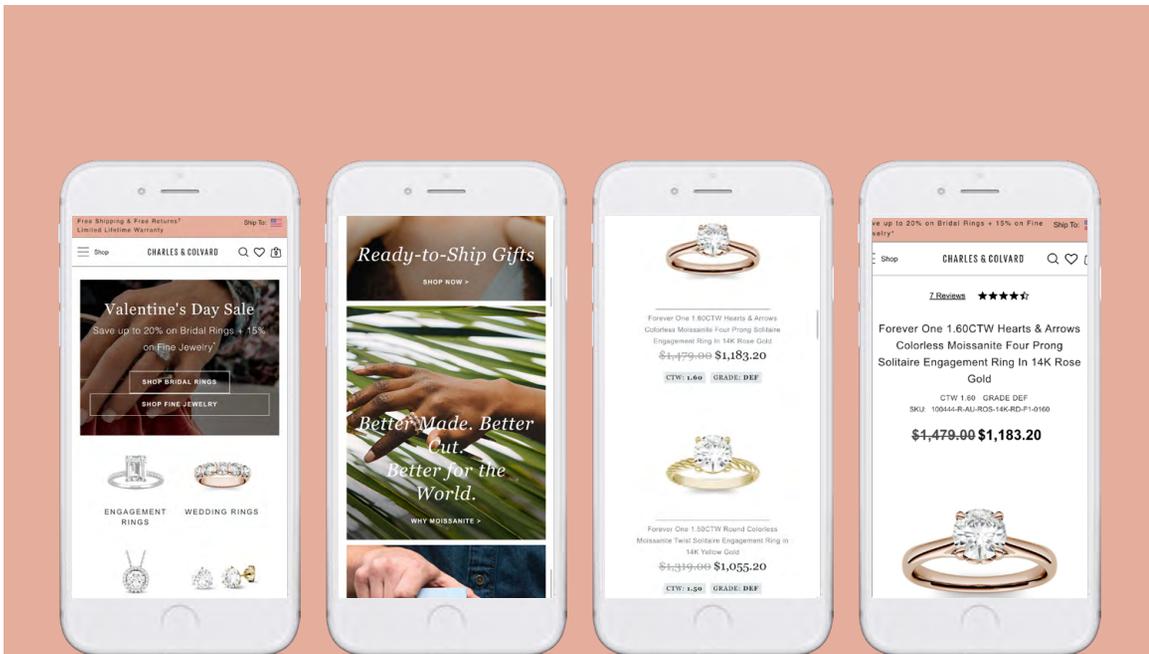
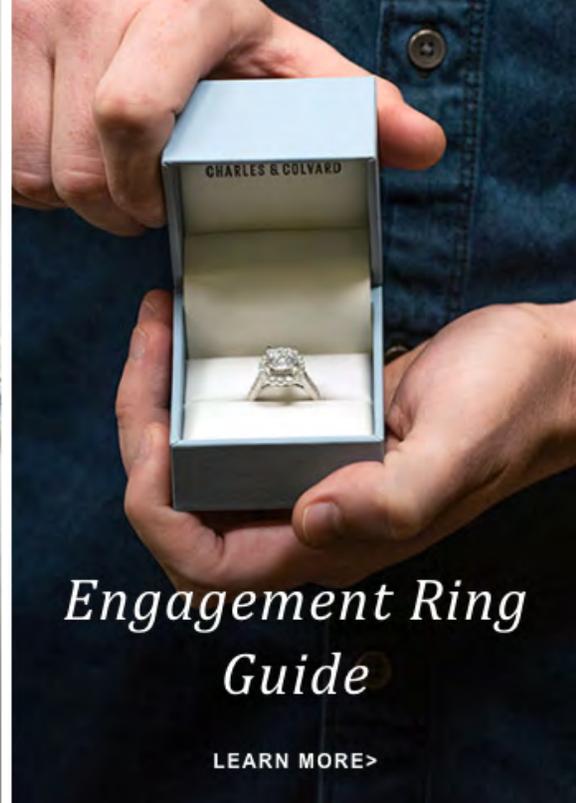
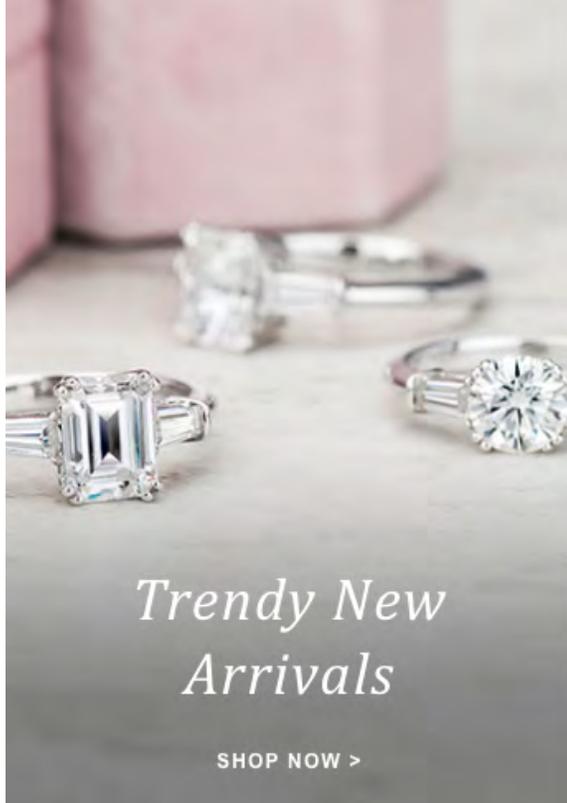
CASE STUDIES

# Charles & Colvard

## Cut with a Conscious

Despite their rich sustainable story, Moissanite gems stones were little-known or understood in the public imagination. We helped Charles & Colvard redefine the category, their brand and their product line with an environmentally conscious point-of-view. Rivers worked to develop a new Charles & Colvard brand: photography style, font architecture and colors to align with the company's new direction, price point and product line, translated to create a dynamic and consumer-focused ecommerce experience. Next we developed the photography, educational and inspirational content, and the current state-of-the-art checkout system to empower superior and smooth shopping from start to finish. In the first year following the launch, revenue increased 83 percent and conversion rates are over 70 percent; now in the second year transactions are up 102.91 percent, and revenue is three times that of year one. This is a success story for Charles & Colvard and its stockholders any way you cut it.

[VIEW MORE](#) 



## CASE STUDIES

# Carolina Performing Arts

## Arts Engagement App

With more than 20 UNC departments, units and student organizations hosting events, Rivers built the Arts Everywhere app to serve as a hub that compiled all the arts happening around campus. From initial concepts through wireframes, design and development, the team created a full-featured content management system that enables hosts throughout the campus to create and update their events. The app's seamless user experience makes it easy to navigate and invite others to events, add performances to your calendar, and explore new artists with videos, images and other rich content. Rivers also designed a campaign to promote the launch of the Arts Everywhere app, including print and online advertisements to encourage downloads.

[VIEW MORE](#) 

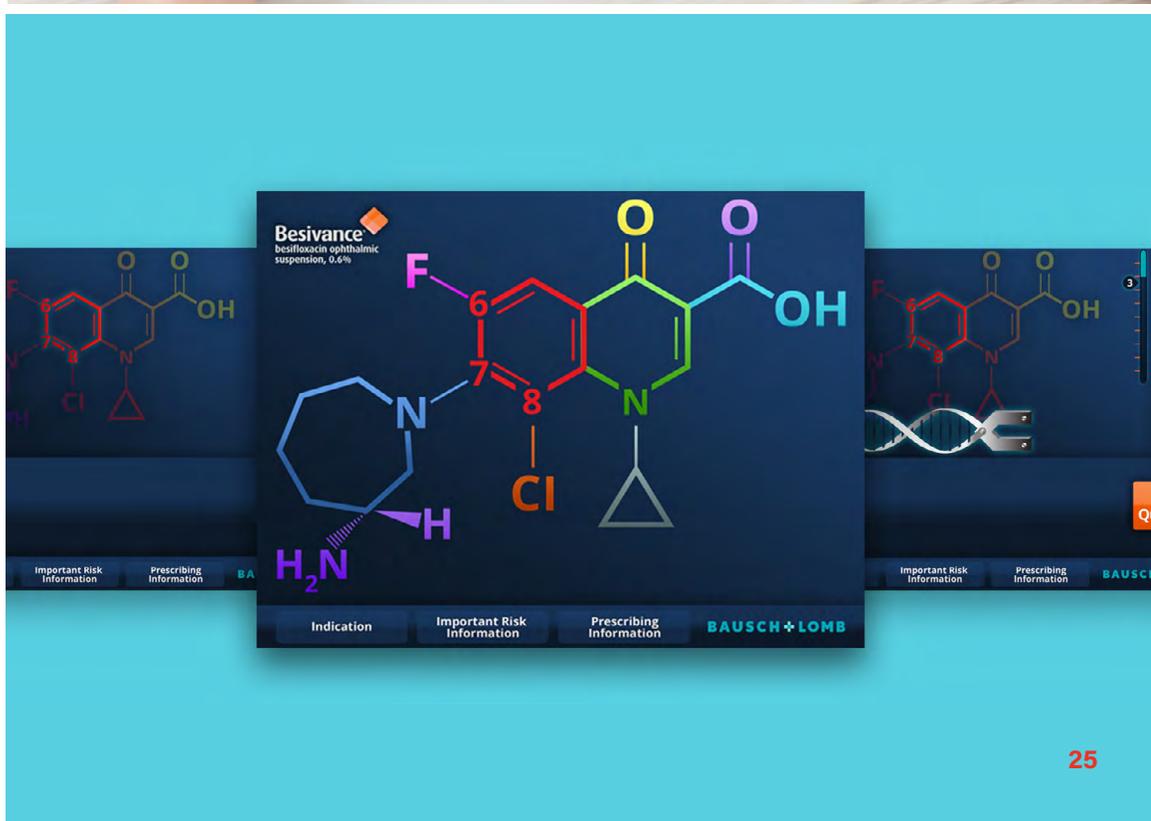
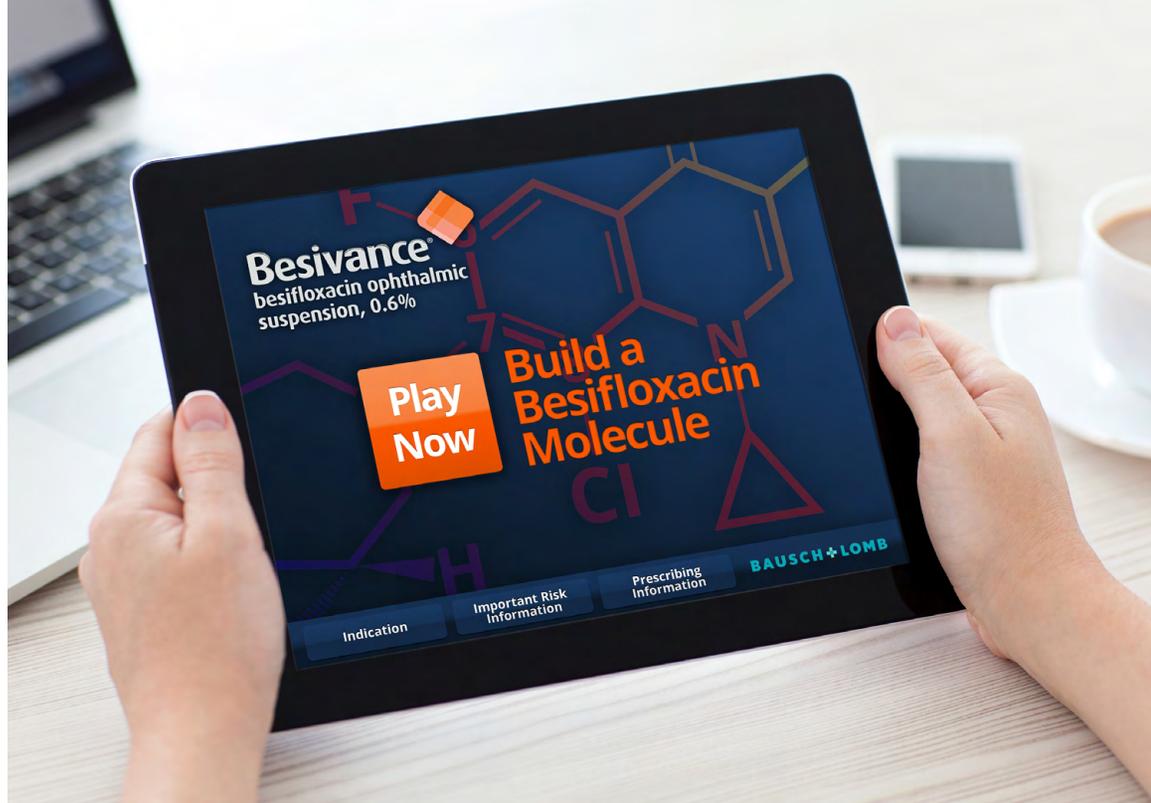


## CASE STUDIES

# Bausch + Lomb

## Can Pink-eye Possibly Be Fun?

That was the question we asked ourselves when Bausch & Lomb commissioned us to design an interactive app to send with sales reps on calls for Besivance, a topical antibiotic used to treat conjunctivitis. Our solution was to develop the tablet app "Build a Besivance Molecule" based on the drug's unique molecular composition. Ophthalmologists answer 10 multiple-choice questions to build the molecule, one prong at a time. The faster they answer, the higher they score. The app features nostalgic video game sound effects and an animated robotic arm that reaches across the screen to retrieve a piece of the molecule each time a question is answered correctly.





**Thank you.**