



CULTURE

REPORT 2021

Overview

While the last two years have proven challenging for both individuals and businesses across the globe, SSI has continued to grow and strengthen its core foundation. Our leadership highlights the culture that has been cultivated as a driving factor for continued success. In 2021, we continued to be laser-focused on taking care of our clients and each other.

SSI's history serves as the foundation from which our core values have taken shape. Recognition and promotion of individual strengths are paramount to our continued success, as is our emphasis on innovation through the intersection of diverse viewpoints. Driving mutually favorable outcomes internally and externally is key to the culture we've established. This year, SSI formalized our Core Values based on feedback from across our business to ensure these values truly reflect both who we are and who we want to be. These values help to drive decision-making for the future of the business.

SSI was a small pharmacovigilance organization in 2011 when Acquis Consulting began its incubation of the company and assumed leadership of the go-to-market direction of the firm. The vision was, and still is, that there is a way to pair business rigor, differentiated cultural tenets, and medical expertise to bring a unique offering to the market. Throughout the early years, SSI relied on Acquis' award-winning, people-first culture which has permeated and defined the culture within SSI.





When we recapitalized in 2020, it was critical to leadership to leverage this growth to expand opportunities for our people. This year has been the first opportunity to demonstrate that SSI strategy, could further cultivate the collegial, people-focused culture while growing the business and continuing to collaborate with our partners in multi-faceted and productive ways. In its first year as an independent organization, SSI earned a spot on Consulting Magazine's 'Best Small Firms to Work For' list. This is a testament to what our team has built.

Core Values

SSI's core values reflect our evolution, and help set our company's defining characteristics. Our core values act as the critical lens for business decision making.

Care About People. SSI embraces a people-centric approach that values transparency and the free flow of information. We're feedback-oriented, and we actively seek opportunities to improve the company to better enable people, both ours and our clients'. Hence, our first core value is 'Care About People.'

Entrepreneurship is in our DNA. SSI started as an idea that we could do something different in the medical office through partnering diverse skillsets that otherwise wouldn't collaborate. At the time, as we broke the status quo, many were skeptical, but we've proven that we can change traditional ways of working in consulting and the life sciences industry. We're committed to continuing to innovate.

Strive for Win-Win. We believe that shared success is the only path to personal success. When our primary goal is to optimize for all parties involved, we find our people are more engaged and our partnerships are more creative, robust, and fruitful in the long run.

Success is Not Achieved Alone. The diverse array of experiences and perspectives across our employees fosters greater results and stronger morale. Our model is to staff collaborative teams designed to harness the best of our business consultants and medical team to deliver differentiated outcomes. No matter the project or circumstance, the SSI team provides robust thought partnership behind the scenes to support our people.

These tenets of our philosophy are promoted through the ideas and actions of our employees, and the cultural imperatives they embrace and embody as members of the SSI team.



Cultural Imperatives

Our Cultural Imperatives are the individual characteristics that promote our core values. As the name suggests, they are vital to a proactive, productive work atmosphere, and they underscore what distinguishes SSI from other firms. We ensure that good work and dedication are recognized and rewarded across all roles and levels in the organization. These imperatives include:

Integrity, Authenticity, and Collegiality: being good people matters, and we cultivate what makes our people unique. We're in this together, we support and build up those around us, and lend a helping hand, always.

Entrepreneurial: we run toward white space, take risks, learn, and grow. We prefer to let the market, not the conference room, tell us if a service or support concept is valuable.



Adaptability: things move quickly at SSI and in our client environments. We thrive in ambiguity and change. We consider ourselves 'athletes' for a reason. We're flexible!

Curious, Ambitious, and Knowledgeable: our people are hungry for knowledge. We rely on our different backgrounds, education, and experiences; we intentionally curate diverse teams which can learn from each other and build each other up.

Excellence & Value-driven: our client's success is our success. Our delivery teams are laser-focused on impact, results, and outcomes.

With these traits at the forefront, we work continuously to enable a familial environment across the firm. In 2021, we deployed our first company-wide surveys, which assessed how the firm is doing in our commitments to our core values, enabling our team to realize our cultural imperatives.

Employee Engagement

Conducted via CultureAmp, we administered one engagement survey and two quarterly pulse surveys in 2021 to benchmark and trend how we're doing as a firm and leadership team.

For three successive quarters, the firm landed an 86% engagement score, which is 12 percentage points higher than benchmarks in the boutique consulting and pharmaceutical industries.

Another important measure that we are tracking is our employee net promoter score (eNPS), which measures how likely an individual is to recommend SSI to a friend or colleague – which landed at 97% at year-end 2021.



Focus on
Innovation

Service and
Quality Focus

Diversity

01

02

03

04

05

Company
Confidence

Strong
Leadership

During our mid-year engagement survey, the firm rated our top five strengths as 1) Focus on Innovation, 2) Company Confidence, 3) Service and Quality Focus, 4) Strong Leadership, and 5) Diversity. In the first three of these areas, we've rated over 20 percentage points higher than competitive industries, which tells us that we're continuing to cultivate a unique organization that our people are proud to be part of.

The leadership team has learned a great deal from survey comments where our people have offered praise for communication on company financials and strategy, while providing constructive feedback on how to improve, such as expanded training and mentorship. These feedback areas have guided our internal strategies for the first half of 2022.

Further, we sought input from employees on how we can continue to improve our overall culture and connectivity. We then leveraged this feedback for company-wide activities to further bring our people together.

Satisfaction and Engaging our People

Despite external challenges driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, we've balanced a focus on our employees' health and wellbeing with building an engaged community by providing opportunities for collaboration, socialization, and giving back.

We've brought our remote workforce together in 2021 in a variety of different ways including monthly in-office collaboration days, a well-attended happy hour with our clients in the Boston area, an all-company cruise on a Lake Hopatcong, and small local gatherings for dinners and activities. Ultimately, we've created a low-pressure environment for employees to start coming back together after so much time apart.

Additionally, we've made efforts to engage our people where they are— at home or other remote locations. This year we've offered mental health breaks with some extra time off, sent holiday care packages, and hosted virtual activities for the team.

Our team has been working incredibly hard, and we've found the greatest area for improvement was workload across the team. To address these concerns, which we had been tracking through robust utilization monitoring, our team has invested heavily in our recruiting process to further grow SSI in 2022 and provide much-needed bandwidth relief for our team.

We've found that small gestures of outreach like highlighting an employee for a job well done, or a personal milestone, can have a tangible impact on our team. As such, we've expanded these efforts by deploying a dedicated "Kudos" channel in Slack, expanding our recognition and



rewards program to overtly thank those going above and beyond for our people and clients, and spotlighting personal milestones across our team at company meetings.

Beyond the social attributes of culture, we have also placed a concerted focus on three core pillars: Social Responsibility, Health and Wellness, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Social Responsibility:

This year, SSI has focused on identifying and establishing partnerships with organizations that closely align with causes our people and clients care about where we can offer our skills to enable the mission. The first of such partnerships that has been established is with the American Cancer Society (ACS). Our first engagement in 2021 was in support of the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer campaign in October, where we supported walks across the United States and raised funds to support the cause. In 2022, we're excited to expand this partnership to support the ACS's research programming. Additionally, the team has explored partnerships with organizations focused on pediatric neurodevelopment and is looking forward to expanding our social impact in 2022.



Health and Wellness:

In addition to our monthly fitness stipend program for employees, we've recognized the need to focus on supporting the mental wellbeing of our people. As such, we've provided mental health breaks and collective time off for the team, in addition to hosting a mindfulness seminar late in the year to reset before the holidays. We've also partnered with our PEO provider to highlight ancillary mental and physical health benefits offered to our employee base. In 2022, we are looking forward to further enabling holistic wellness across the team.



Diversity Equity and Inclusion

SSI is incredibly proud of the diversity across our team and has proven to be a welcoming workplace for people of all backgrounds and orientations. By design, we have different educational and professional backgrounds which also largely translates to traditional diversity measures. It is worth noting that our leadership team is roughly 50% female, more than 50%

of the firm is female, and 63% of 2021 year-end promotions were among female colleagues. In terms of ethnic diversity, SSI is roughly 40% non-white/Hispanic and represents a rich array of cultures that we're proud to celebrate. These various factors are part of the reason why diversity is one of the greatest areas of strength that the team highlighted in our mid-year engagement survey.

In addition, our culture was designed to promote inclusivity. Individuals across all levels are invited to contribute to strategic growth initiatives and careers are cultivated based on personal interests and skills. To further enable this, personalized training, coaching, career pathing, and staffing occurs for every single SSI employee, demonstrating our dedication to a truly equitable environment. Our culture survey results support our understanding that we're doing this well, but we'll continue to listen to the team and progress our approach along with their needs.

While the firm is fulfilled by its innate diversity and what it's helped us accomplish, we can and will do more to ensure that all people feel welcome, supported, and heard by promoting inclusivity and further evaluating outcomes to ensure equitable treatment across the team. The Leadership Team is initiating programs to ensure that we maintain or accelerate this momentum as we grow.

Growth and Opportunities for 2022

Overall, our team feels engaged, fulfilled, and takes pride in our work. We continue to see the core values and cultural imperatives we've cultivated permeate not just our organization but our clients' as well. As we move into 2022, we have a vision for building on this strong foundation to ensure SSI continues to be a 'Best Firm to Work For' and thank everyone involved for their contributions to our success. ■



We Listen. We Advise. We Execute.

Our teams focus on understanding the unique goals, strategies, and needs of our clients. We customize our approach to our client's specific needs and culture and act as an extension of their team. We approach every engagement in a collaborative manner and help our client team members build new capabilities and grow their knowledge and experience base.

There are many great competencies and capabilities in the firm ranging from new offerings to market tested methodologies. We speak with business leaders every day that understand the differentiated value we bring to market. Our goal is to extend the reach of our firm in a manner consistent with our Cultural Values that will enhance Employee Engagement, improve client outcomes, and support the patient communities we collectively serve.

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