

2023 IMPACT REPORT

# SABAI



# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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# 1. LETTER FROM OUR CEO

“Sabai” is a Thai word that means “comfortable,” “relaxed,” and “easy.”

My goal is for us at Sabai to make sustainable living as easy and comfortable for our customers as possible. Sustainability has been at the heart of Sabai and all the decisions we make since day one (we launched in 2019!). However, we’ve been heads down, building products and programs that push the envelope in the furniture industry, and this is the very first year that we are putting forth an impact report.

Since launching, we’ve been fearless in our goal of pushing the furniture industry towards a more sustainable future. Launching programs as a young company that others had been talking about but never acted upon, incorporating innovative materials that broke the status quo, and putting resources towards certifying ourselves as a B Corp.

## THE SABAI STANDARD

In 2021, we launched The Sabai Standard, an initiative to take responsibility for our products even after they’ve left our hands. This initiative was honored Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas Awards, and included two initial programs – Repair Don’t Replace and Sabai Revive.

## B CORP CERTIFICATION

Sabai became a B Corp Certified company in 2022. As a young company, this was a resource intensive process that we decided to undergo to demonstrate our commitment to stakeholders beyond our shareholders. We amended our Articles of Incorporations to formally declare Sabai’s commitment to prioritizing sustainable and ethical practices, as opposed to the standard being profit.

## MATERIALS INNOVATION

Since our inception, we have pushed the boundaries when it comes to materials and production processes to lower our impact. This past year, I am particularly proud of our incorporation of natural materials such as rubberized coconut fiber, hemp, and muslin fabric.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

I personally understand the overwhelming nature of the climate crisis, and how daunting it can feel to try to lower one’s impact. While individuals not responsible for the vast majority of forces driving this crisis, we believe that coming together to share resources creates a positive force that drives collective change.

Thank you for being a part of Sabai’s journey. We hope you stay involved!





## **2. WHAT WE CARE ABOUT**

# OUR MISSION

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Sabai's mission is to furnish a greater future.

Through our products, programs, and practices, we strive to move the furniture industry towards a more sustainable and ethical standard.

## FOUNDING GOAL

Sabai was founded in 2019 with the goal of creating solutions to the very problems we ourselves faced. We were young professionals from a generation that grew up acutely aware of climate crisis and was spending more time working from home. This meant that we wanted to be able to outfit our own homes in a way that minimized our impact on the planet, that prioritized our health, that made us happy and comfortable, and that we could afford. As we looked around at our options, it felt like we were always being asked, or forced, to sacrifice on one thing or another.

We were two young women with no experience in the industry, but the more we learned, the more we felt there was a need for a different type of furniture company. Every year, the U.S. alone generates over 12 million tons of furniture waste. Flame retardants and toxic chemicals are used in furniture products that off-gas into our bloodstreams, and furniture produced and shipped in bulk from abroad have massive freight and waste implications.

Our solution was to create our own solution – a furniture company that considers the planet, our health, our budgets, and our comfort from the onset.



# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

At Sabai, we recognize that our decisions have implications on a multitude of stakeholders and it is our job to balance the interests of these stakeholders.

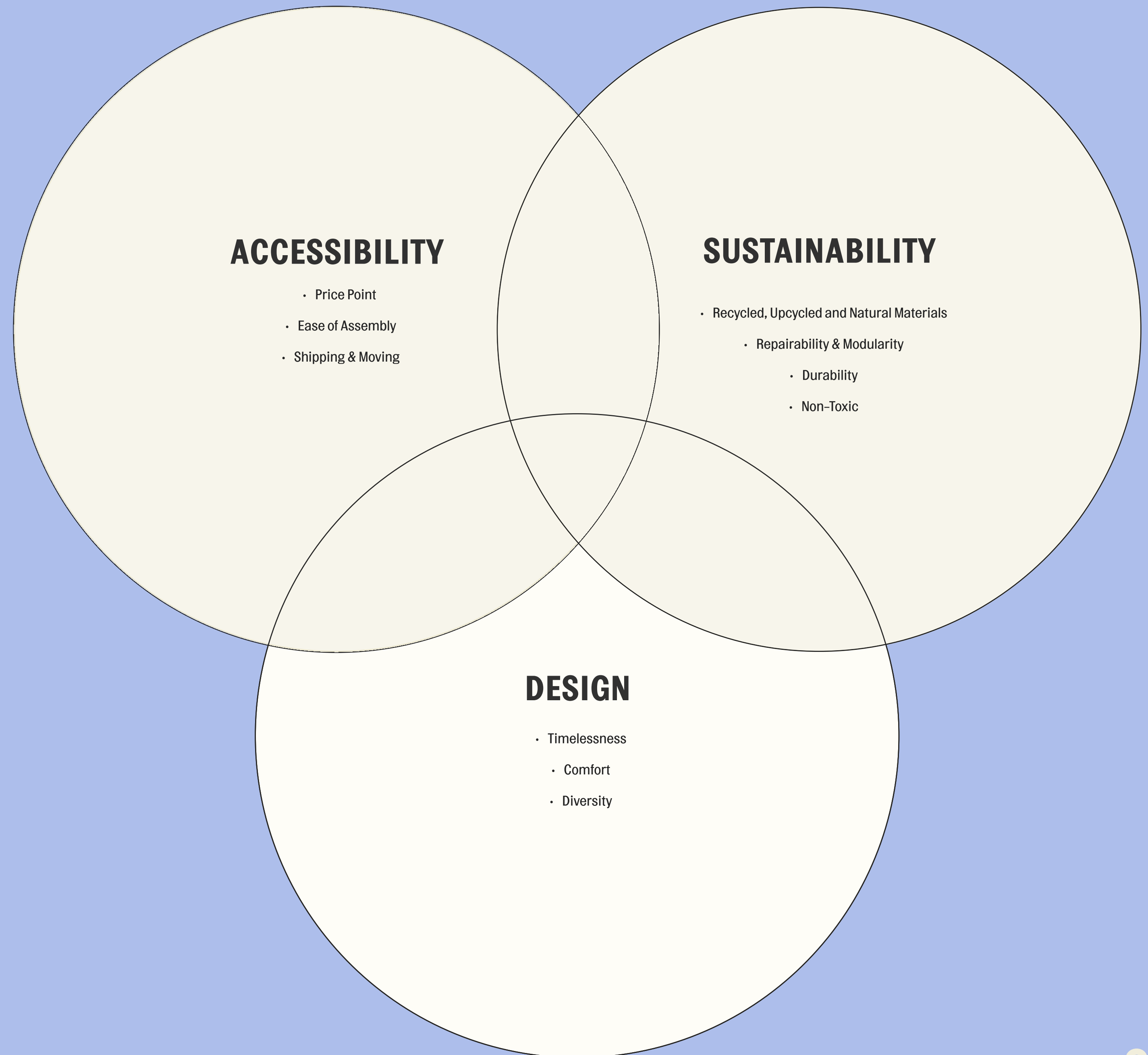
As a Certified B Corp, we have declared in our Articles of Incorporation our commitment to creating a positive impact on the environment and society. This wheel lays out Sabai's key stakeholders and how we take them into account.



# OUR DESIGN TENETS

When designing our products, the three primary tenets that we begin with and continually refer back to are – Sustainability, Accessibility, and Design. The specific elements and practices, more often than not, fit into more than one bucket as these tenets are highly interconnected.

- **MODULARITY:** The modularity of our products allows our products to ship directly from our manufacturing partners via ground shipping and be easily brought into our customers’ homes and assembled. Down the line, if a customer moves into a different space, they can easily transport their piece and change the size or configuration of their existing piece without having to purchase an entirely new sofa.
- **MATERIALS & PRICING:** The selection of materials requires the constant balancing of sustainability and accessibility. Sometimes, sustainable materials are not more expensive or the increased cost can be offset through designing for efficient production or transportation. Sabai is committed to making our products accessible at multiple price points through our product assortment.
- **DURABILITY:** All Sabai seating products have undergone BIFMA 5.4 commercial lounge seating tests, which ensure they withstand at least 10 years of regular use by a \_\_\_\_ adult.
- **DESIGN:** Trend cycles have only gotten shorter, often leading to waste as consumers ditch the old and hop onto the next new trend. At Sabai, we aim to create designs that are timeless while still offering a range of perspectives that allow our customers to showcase their personality and provide a sense of comfort.



# OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an incredibly vague term, in large part because there are so many different ways that we as people and companies impact the environment and its ability to sustain itself. As we set out to create a “sustainable” company and “sustainable” furniture, these were some of the broader perspectives and mandates that we established for ourselves.



## BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE.

It's the very first law of motion that the more mass an object has, the greater its inertia and the more force it takes to change its state of motion. The saying “it's like trying to put toothpaste back in a tube” captures a similar concept. Both speak to the idea that it's more difficult to change or fix something at a larger scale or after the fact. That's what got us into this mess in the first place! With that in mind, at Sabai, we always try to consider the effects of our actions and decisions down the line from the onset.

## PROGRESS (AND TRANSPARENCY) OVER PERFECTION.

Balancing sustainability, accessibility, and design is no easy task. One that is pretty much impossible to achieve perfectly. While we push ourselves everyday to do better, we also don't let this get in the way of action. We're transparent with our customers about our materials and practices, and are celebrate the improvements and innovations as they come.

## LOOK FORWARDS, AND BACKWARDS.

There are so many incredible and exciting developments in the sustainable materials space that both excite us and give us hope for the future. At Sabai, we are constantly keeping our eye on, testing, and incorporating new materials into our products. At the same time, new is not always better. The art of furniture-making has been around for a very, very long time (we're talking B.C. here), and there is plenty to learn from how things used to be done.



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a white face mask, stands on the left side of a wooden workbench. She is looking towards a man on the right. The man is wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt, a black face mask, and silver work gloves. He is gesturing with his right hand while looking at the woman. The workbench is covered with large pieces of dark blue fabric. In the background, there is a sewing machine and other industrial equipment in a dimly lit factory setting.

### 3. WHAT WE'RE DOING

# OUR MATERIALS

When sourcing new materials, we look at the impact the materials will have on the production and functionality of the piece. We prioritize natural solutions first, then solutions that come from recycled or repurposed beginnings.

## THINGS WE AVOID

### HARMFUL CHEMICALS

Sabai avoids the use of the following chemicals: (developed in accordance with the Green Science Policy Institute's list of harmful chemicals)

- Antimicrobials
- Halogenated Flame Retardants
- Heavy Metals & Heavy Metal Compounds
- Organic Solvents: Formaldehyde and Methylene Chloride
- Organotins
- Perfluorinated Compounds
- Phthalate Plasticizers
- Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)

### SYNTHETIC & NATURAL BLENDS

We do not utilize any fabrics or materials that are a blend of natural and synthetic materials, given that these have different end-of-life considerations and require different recycling processes.

## UPHOLSTERY MATERIALS

### COCOLOK

This past year our Elevate and Evergreen seating lines introduced a new material for us – Cocolok. Cocolok is made from coconut fibers and latex rubber, creating a sheet product that is strong, protective, and has surface flexibility. In both seating collections, we replaced areas on the frames that would normally use polyurethane foam with a natural solution of Cocolok.

### QUALUX FOAM

We use CertiPUR-US Certified Qualux foam in our seat cushions. It is a non-toxic material that is also one of the highest quality upholstery foams on the market, known for its comfort and durability.

### RECYCLED POLYESTER FIBER

In order to get a plush surface on our pillows and seats we use recycled polyester fiber as a fill material. The recycled poly fiber is made from reclaimed plastic bottles, and takes 59% less energy to produce compared to virgin polyester.

### UPHOLSTERING WITHOUT GLUE

All of our products are upholstered without the use of glue, which avoids the unnecessary use of off-gassing chemicals and allows material separation at the end-of-life stage.



# TEXTILES

## HEMP



359,505  
gallons of water  
saved in 2023 by  
choosing hemp  
over cotton

New in 2023 to Sabai’s offering our Hemp fabric is our first all natural upholstery option. Hemp comes from the cannabis plant and requires less water and pesticides than farming cotton for textiles (cotton requires 2.5 times more water to grow than hemp). Hemp is an ideal solution for a natural upholstery fiber because of its strength, longevity, and natural antimicrobial properties preventing odors and bacteria growth.

## UPCYCLED POLY



Our Upcycled Poly fabric is made in the US out of a family owned textile mill in North Carolina. The Poly Weave fabric is made from post industrial polypropylene waste. The fabric contains no harmful additives and is PFAs free. The fabric is certified the **Gold Standard of Greenguard** compliance, meaning the fabric has low chemical emissions making it safe for indoors, children, and those with compromised immune systems.

## RECYCLED VELVET



Equivalent of  
373,601  
plastic bottles  
recycled through  
our velvet fabric  
since 2019

Our Recycled Velvet fabric is made from 100% post consumer polyester waste. Our Essential Sofa in the Recycled Velvet saves 400 water bottles from landfill! The fabric adds to a circular economy, meeting the **Global Recycled Standard**, where the entire supply chain is traceable and meets environmental principles and social requirements. The fabric is **OEKO-TEX** compliant, a benchmark certification for testing the fabrics for harmful substances as well as PFAS free.

## MUSLIN



Muslin is a 100% natural fiber fabric that we utilize in our upholstery process as layer added to smooth out texture of the Cocolok.  
In early 2024 we started to phase out the use of “black bottom” in our seating collection. Black bottom is a nonwoven polypropylene fabric commonly used in upholstered furniture. We decided to stop using the ubiquitous material due to the fact that it is a virgin-petroleum based material. In its place we are using a natural fiber solution; both natural muslin and black muslin.



## WOOD

### INTERIOR FRAMES

Our upholstered pieces are made with Southern Veneer Plywood frames. We choose plywood for our internal frames because of its durability and material stability, allowing for a strong internal structure that will not move or degrade over time. The plywood is manufactured here in the US and holds either SFI or FSC certification.

**SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative)** is an American organization that certifies that the wood comes from responsibly managed forests, meaning the forest uses planting and harvesting methods that support a diversity of species and conservation of the local water quality.

### TABLES

All of our coffee tables and sidetables use solid FSC-certified or Carbon Smart wood.

**FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)** is a global organization that ensures the sustainability and traceability of the wood. In addition to requiring all FSC to originate from responsibly managed forests, the FSC certification also requires that the profit from selling the timber goes back into local communities.

**Carbon Smart Wood** comes from “urban trees” that have either fallen or been removed by the city and would otherwise go to the landfill or be incinerated.

### WOOD STAINS

All of our exposed wood elements are stained with water-based zero VOC stains. We are proud to have worked with our manufacturing partners to develop these stains to be able to provide our customers with non-toxic, solid wood pieces.

# OUR PARTNERS

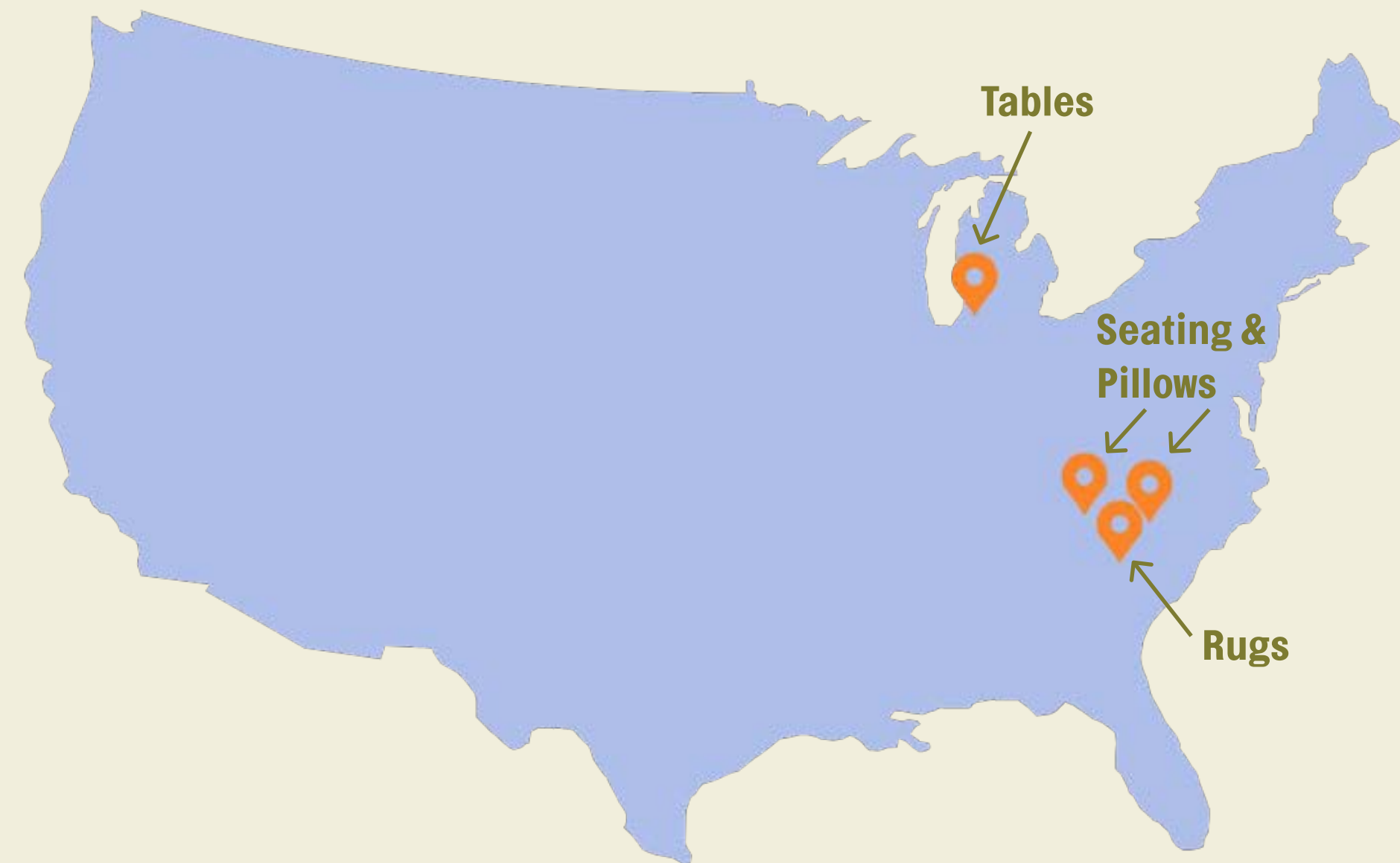
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We are incredibly proud of and would not be here today without our manufacturing partners and suppliers.

## MADE IN THE U.S.

100% of Sabai products are produced in the U.S. by our trusted manufacturing partners. Our two primary partners are minority- and women-owned factories that take a great deal of pride in their craft and supporting the upholstery industry in the U.S.

As a certified B-Corp, we work with all of our vendors to promote and ensure ethical and sustainable manufacturing practices - meaning living wages, health insurance, waste reduction efforts, local material sourcing, and many more!



# OUR END OF LIFE PROGRAMS

In January 2021, we launched two programs that work to limit any opportunity for our products to end up in a landfill. Both these programs were honored by Fast Company’s World Changing Ideas awards.

## REPAIR DON’T REPLACE

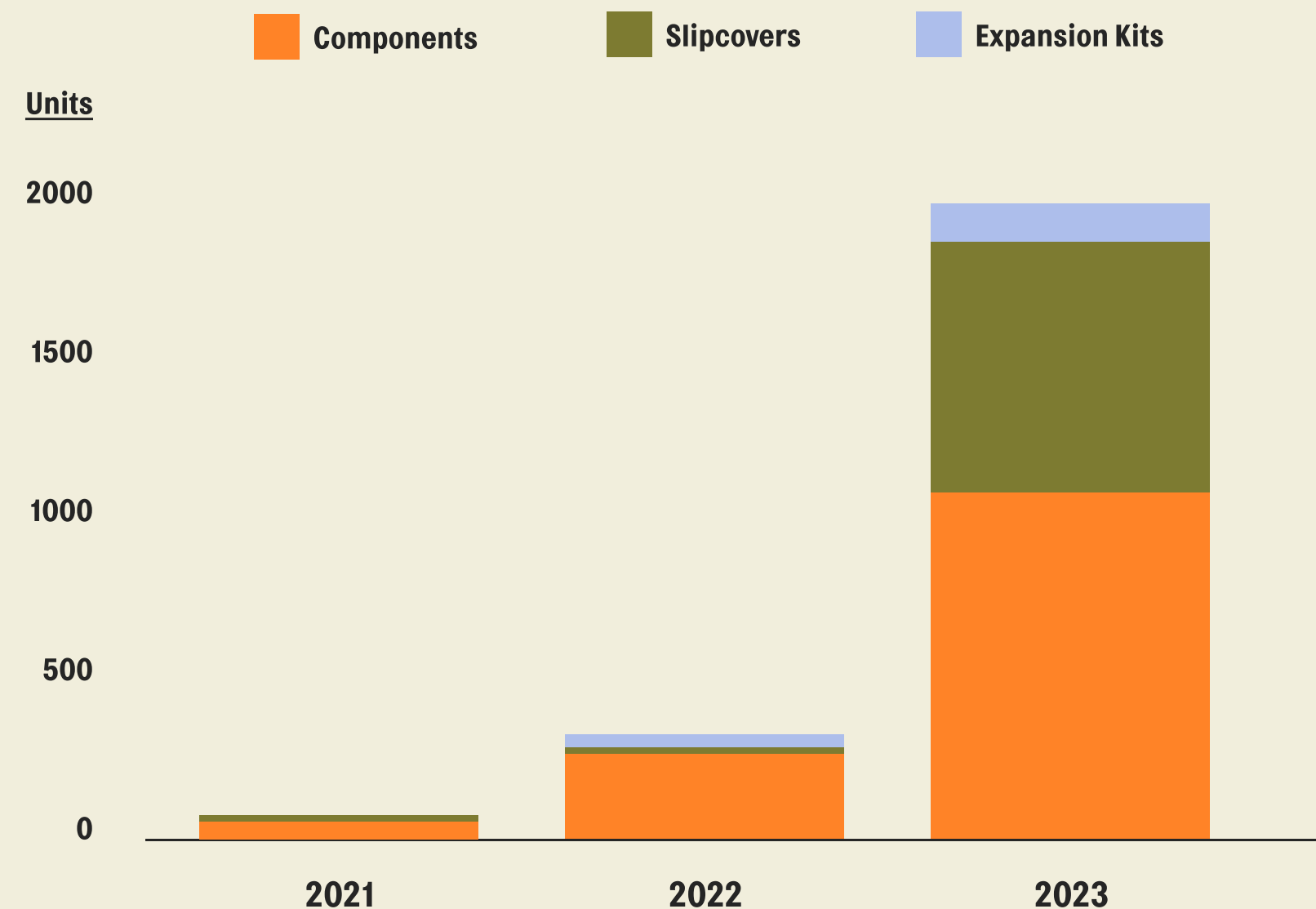
Sabai products are designed with repairability in mind to ensure that our pieces are not unnecessarily going to waste. Life happens, and with the exception of our rugs, each piece is designed so that component parts can be purchased and replaced to extend the life of our products. If your dog decides to chew up a cushion or even a sofa arm, don’t you worry, you can get a new one!

1,393

replacement parts  
sold since 2021

814

slipcovers sold  
since 2021



## SLIPCOVERS & EXPANSION KITS

While technically a part of our Repair Don’t Replace program, we think these two product categories deserve their own air time!

We are acutely aware of the fact that overconsumption and consumerism are part of the problem, and being a company that creates new products can oftentimes feel at odds with our mission of reducing the industry’s impact on the environment. Slipcovers and expansion kits allow us to continue providing value to our customers while minimizing the amount of “new” that is created with each purchase. If, down the line, someone wants a brown sofa instead of a white one, or a hemp fabric over a velvet one, recovering a sofa is a more economical and lower impact way of achieving that change. Similarly, if someone moves to a larger space and wants a corner sectional, instead of having to replace their sofa, an expansion kit allows them to achieve that simply by adding parts to their existing piece.

## SABAI REVIVE

Sabai Revive was created to ensure that if someone needs to return or move on from their Sabai piece, we are limiting any opportunity for that piece to end up in a landfill. A customer can, of course, resell the piece on their own. However, life gets away from us, logistics get the better of us, and moving day always comes sooner than expected.

Through Sabai Revive, customers can send in a request to ship their Sabai piece to the nearest of Sabai’s network of warehousing partners in the country, where the piece will be photographed and listed for resale on Sabai’s website. Once the piece has sold, the customer will receive a commission on the resale price.

To reduce the freight impact of reselling pieces even further, we began testing out resales that are shipped directly from one customer to another. This has been an promising program that our community has been incredibly receptive to. While it is more difficult to control the customer experience through this process, the freight impact is halved, and we are fortunate that our community is values-aligned and understands the benefit of this.

125

pieces resold since  
2021

# OUR OPERATIONS

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## MADE-TO-ORDER MODEL

As the title suggests, our made-to-order model ensures that our pieces are being made to demand, and there is never any leftover Sabai inventory that is at risk of being wasted. Once a customer places an order, the piece is produced at our domestic manufacturing partners within 3-5 weeks, and ships directly to our customers' homes without any added freight or warehousing in between.

## NO PLASTIC PACKAGING

Our packaging does not contain any plastic. We ship our product in recycled cardboard boxes, using unbleached paper to protect the product inside. In some cases, hardware and small components are packaged in a drawstring muslin bag, which is intended to be repurposed by the customers after assembling the pieces.

## EASY ASSEMBLY & MODULARITY

- Sabai products are made to be easily assembled with universal tools. When designing each piece we take into consideration the ease and accessibility of the assembly process as well as the size and weight of the packaging required to ship the components.
- Producing flat-packed designs is beneficial in many ways, it saves space in shipping while also allowing for the components to be modular and replaceable, meaning you can repair a single piece instead of needing an entirely new product.

## CONSOLIDATED SHIPPING

At the end of 2023, Sabai formalized our plan for consolidating shipments to the West Coast to reduce our freight impact even further. By maintaining a 2 week window for our stated lead time, we are able to group shipments together in a single truck that goes directly to a West Coast hub, where orders are then delivered by a regional carrier. We have begun implementing this strategy in 2024 and are monitoring its impact.



# OUR COMMUNITY

In 2023, we strove to engage with our community to share resources, promote education, collaborate with like-minded partners, and organize collective action. The effort to live more thoughtfully and sustainably can be an overwhelming one that we believe vastly more digestible and surmountable as a collective.

We are energized by our past community efforts and, as we look ahead, are deeply excited to continue our active involvement in these significant conversations and efforts.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Sabai is committed to using our platform to provide educational resources to our community. In 2023, this ranged from sharing news regarding legislation to combat climate change, to raising awareness regarding forever chemicals that are found in everything from our tap water to furniture, to tips on composting, to a conversation around the intersectionality of racism and the climate crisis.

Sabai's blog, The Green House, is a resource for sustainable tips and news that is shared both through our website as well as our newsletter.



## EVENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

### PICNIC & PARK CLEAN UP

In partnership with @BLACKGIRLENVIRONMENTALIST

The Sustainable Picnic in the park brought together Sabai and @blackgirlenvironmentalist's community members to spend the afternoon removing litter and waste from Prospect Park in NYC. The focus of this event was to both foster an appreciation for natural spaces and a commitment to preserving them, as we engaged not only the individuals we brought to the park, but also those that had come on their own.

Furthermore, our collaboration with @blackgirlenvironmentalist was focused on highlighting and amplifying Black voices in environmental advocacy. We facilitated conversations regarding the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color, and what actions we can take as a community and as individuals to ensure our own health and safety when creating our homes and spaces.

### SUSTAINABLE POETRY READING

In partnership with DIANDRA MARIZET, Co-Founder of the Intersectional Environmentalist

The Sustainable Poetry Reading event held during Climate Week in September served as a dynamic convergence of artistic expression, advocacy, and sustainability. Set against the charming backdrop of the Scholes Street Children's Garden, the gathering fostered an atmosphere of warmth and inclusivity, inviting guests to delve into meaningful discussions surrounding environmental awareness. As the featured poet, Diandra Marizet, Co-Founder of Intersectional Environmentalist, shared verses speaking to her experience

### NON-TOXIC CANDLE MAKING WORKSHOP

Led by Ani & Co.

We invited members of our community to bring old or unused vessels from their home to create candles using non-toxic wax and fragrances. This event was led by Britt, the founder of Ani & Co., and brought awareness to the presence of toxic chemicals in the products in our homes, and provided a fun way to make use of something that may have otherwise been thrown away.



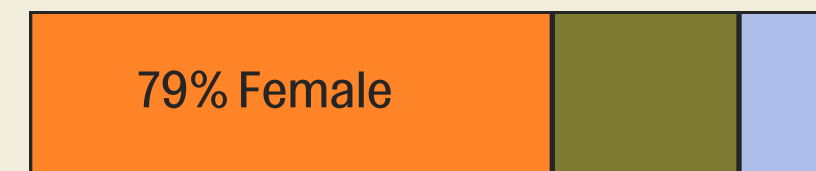


# OUR TEAM

## SABAI EMPLOYEES

Sabai is an Asian- and Black-Women founded company. Diversity and inclusion are core to who we are and how we operate, as we recognize the value that comes with a multitude of perspectives, especially when it comes to creating a sustainable, ethical organization.

### GENDER

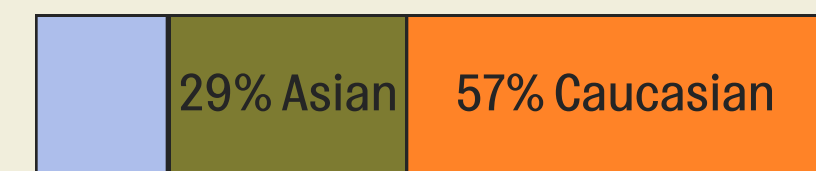


14% Male 7% Trans/NB

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION

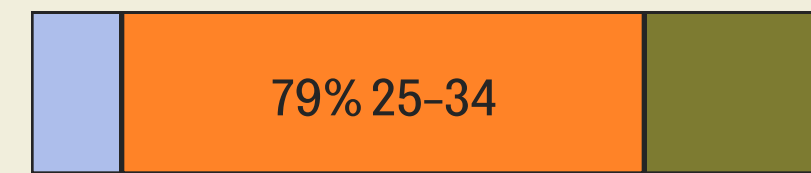


### RACE



14% Black/Bi-Racial

### AGE



7% 18-24

14% 35-44

Our brand has been built by people who have been exactly where our audience is, and we want to continue to reflect that. Our differences are meant to be celebrated - including but not limited to gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability status and age.

Over the last 5 years, we've made conscious efforts to be inclusive, from removing barriers in our hiring process to seeking diverse inputs in product development to platforming marginalized communities in our marketing.

Diversity, equity and inclusion is a continual journey, and we still have so much room to grow. We take our responsibility towards our community and our employees seriously, and will always strive to better understand how to serve our stakeholders.



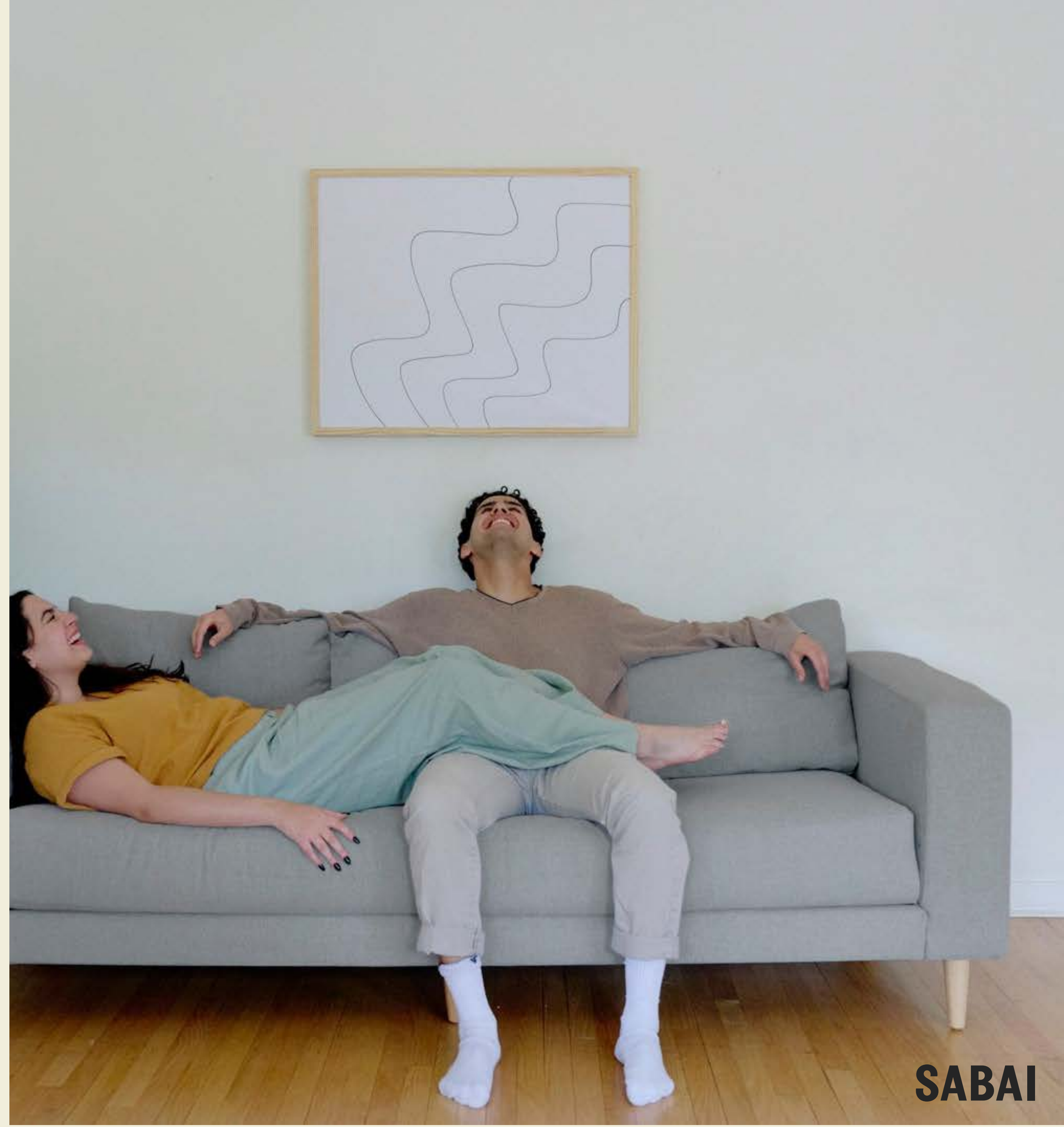
## BENEFITS & CULTURE

At Sabai, the well-being, development and happiness of our team continue to be our top priority. We have maintained our commitment to competitive and sustainable compensation, ensuring that all our employees can live comfortably. Our comprehensive benefits package, including medical and dental insurance, and we work with each team member to build creative solutions that their benefits work for their diverse needs. At Sabai, our team members come first – and we realize the need to take a person-first approach rather than build a “one size fits all” benefits program. Recognizing the importance of long-term financial security, we continue to match retirement savings contributions.

In an ongoing effort to support work-life balance and flexibility, though we are headquartered at our office in New York, Sabai Design remains a remote-friendly company. Employees can work from abroad for several weeks a year as desired, affording them the opportunity to experience new forms of beauty in the world and connect with the real communities and places we hope will continue to have a bright future if we all commit ourselves to more sustainable practices.

As a privately owned company, our commitment to a unified compensation structure remains unchanged. All full-time employees, regardless of their position or geographic location, receive a base salary and are eligible for the same bonus plan, reinforcing our commitment to fairness and inclusivity.

We conduct annual employee surveys to gather detailed feedback, ensuring that we consistently listen to and evolve with our team’s needs and suggestions. These efforts are a testament to Sabai’s dedication to creating an empowering, supportive, and nurturing work environment, aligning with our core values and commitment to being a responsible, forward-thinking employer. We also encourage employees to seek continuing education on sustainability and role related topics so they can continue to improve themselves and bring back that curiosity and learnings to Sabai. An innate understanding that we aspire to always be growing and iterating our programs underscores the culture at Sabai from top to bo.



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