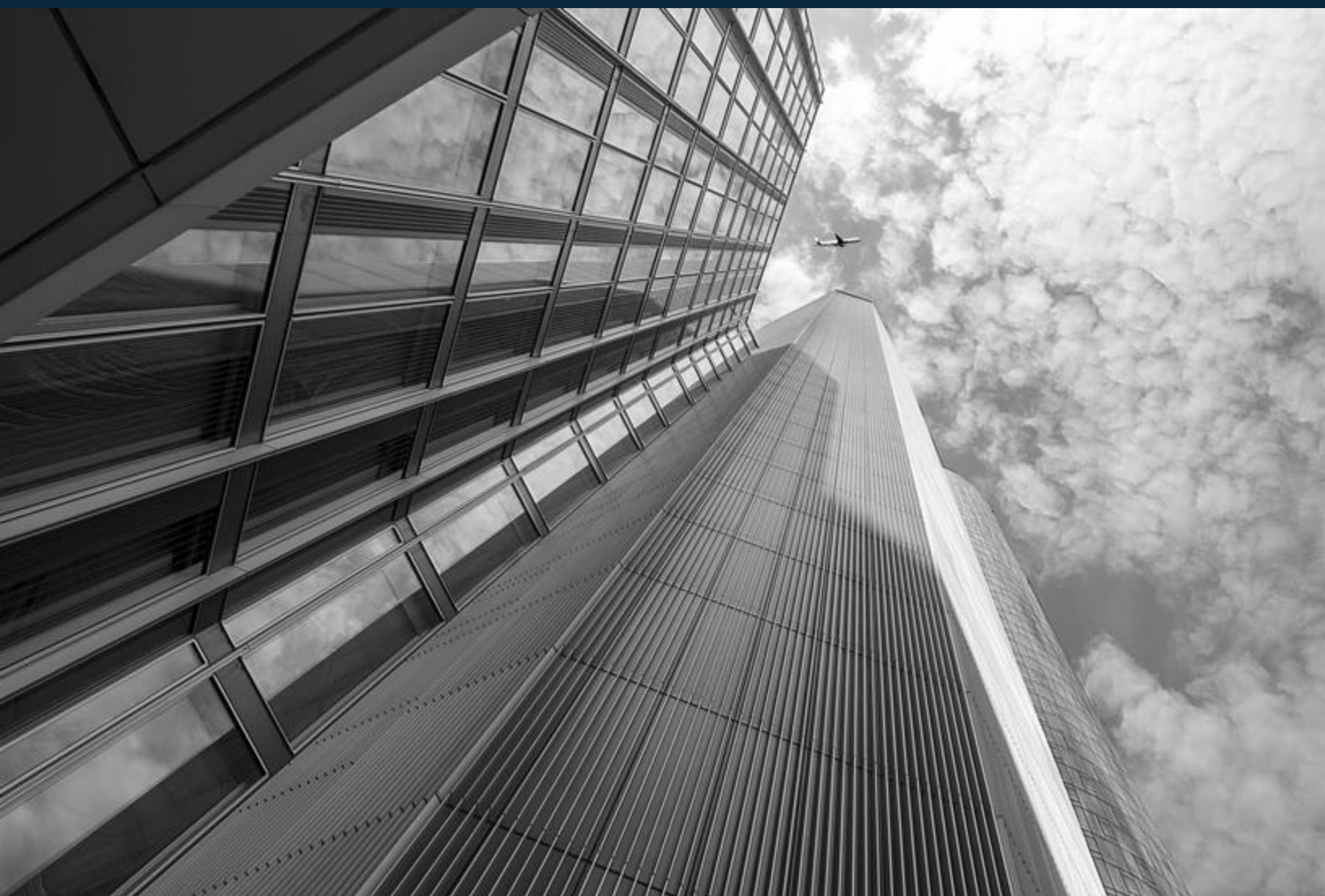


# PURPOSE TRENDS REPORT

A selection of what has been published about Purpose in February 2025



February 2025

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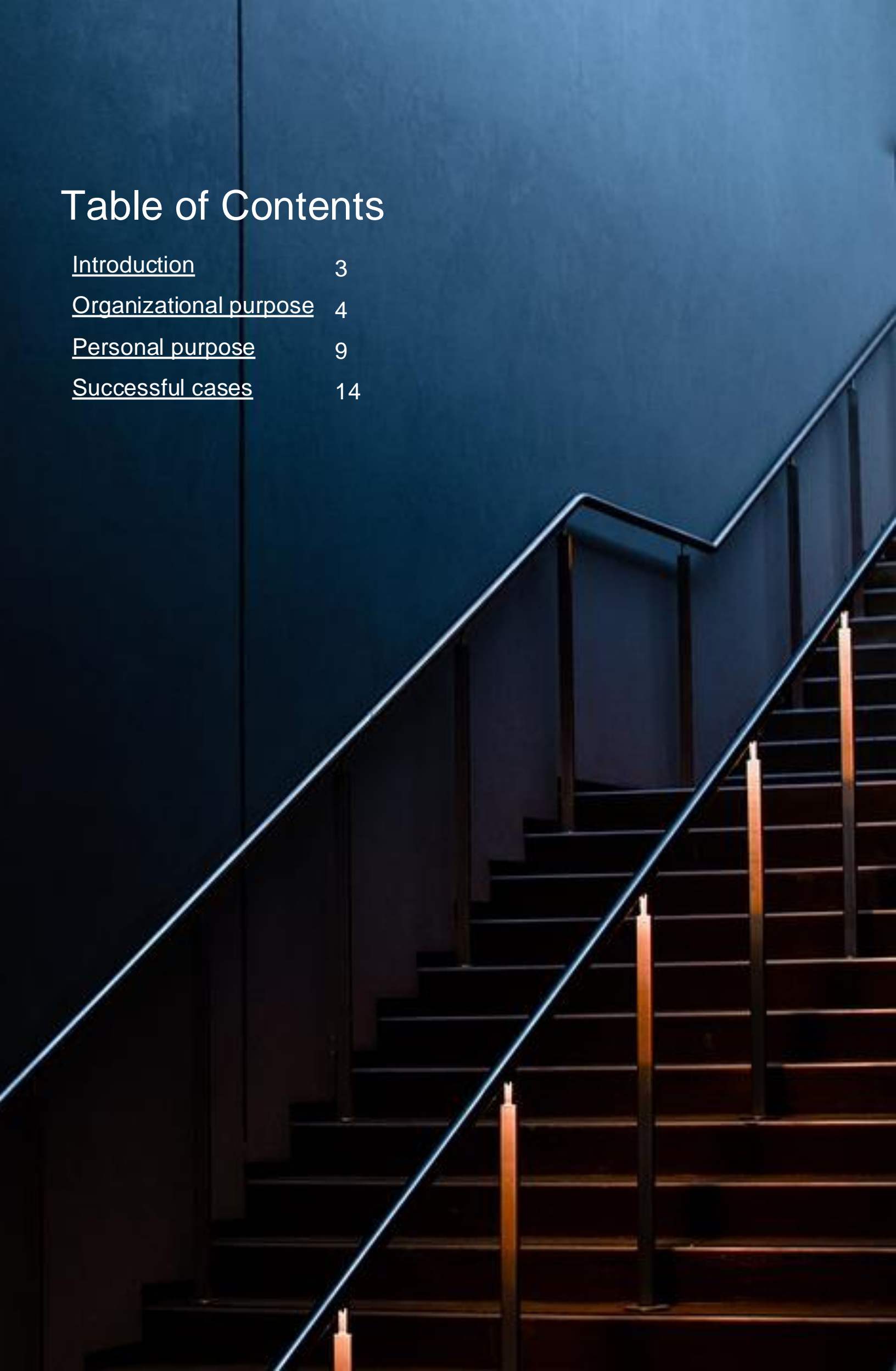
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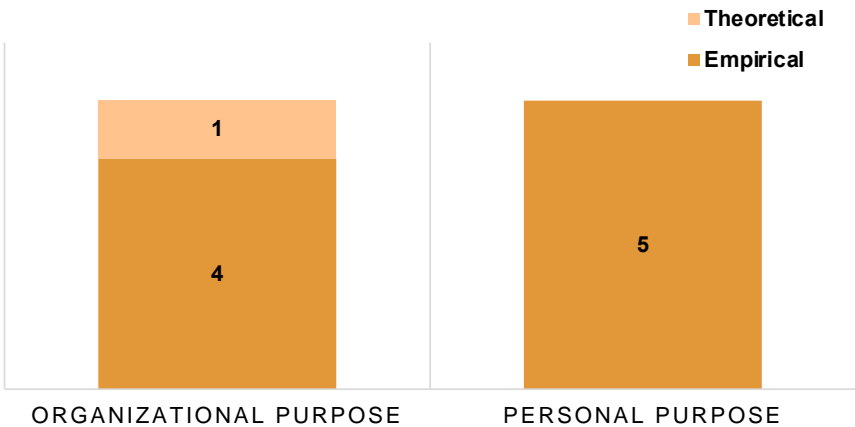
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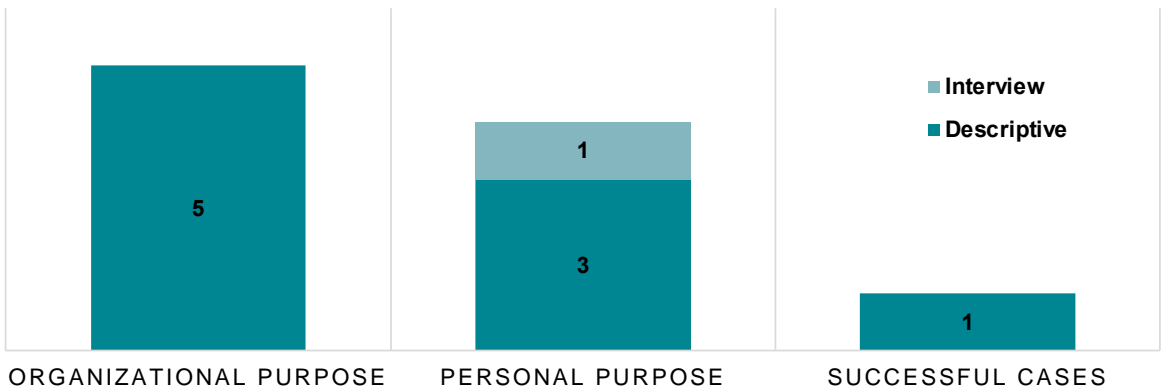
# INTRODUCTION

*In this report, we want to synthesize the most relevant about corporate purpose published in February 2025. For this aim, we did a content search (using selected keywords) in Scopus and Google Scholar for academic publications; and diffusion magazines and other trusted sites for articles and reports. We selected relevant publications about organizational purpose and personal purpose. Also, we include successful cases that show how corporate purpose has been implemented. Bellow, we present statistics about the selected literature.*

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS - FEBRUARY 2025



ARTICLES AND REPORTS - FEBRUARY 2025



*Academic literature on organizational purpose highlights its role in sustainability and business innovation. Recent research emphasizes that purpose serves as a strategic axis for managing goal conflicts and strengthening corporate identity, aligning with frameworks that balance business value, stakeholder influence, and technological advancements. Likewise, some articles reinforce this perspective, arguing that the genuine integration of purpose at all organizational levels not only enhances resilience but also drives performance and alignment with global challenges.*

*Regarding personal purpose, scientific literature underscores its connection to well-being, showing that factors such as supervisor support and the perception of meaningful work reduce stress symptoms and increase job satisfaction. Recent studies explore the dynamic nature of purpose, demonstrating how it varies according to context and activity. Similarly, articles emphasize the importance of authenticity and aligning personal values with work, suggesting that building a strong sense of purpose depends more on internal reflection than on external validation.*

*Finally, successful cases illustrate how businesses integrate profit and purpose to achieve sustainable impact. Companies like Seventh Generation and Unilever exemplify holistic decision-making, prioritizing stakeholder value and environmental responsibility. Interface Carpet demonstrates the benefits of long-term sustainability planning, while Nespresso showcases the effectiveness of aligning corporate strategies with nature-inspired practices. These examples affirm that businesses that embed purpose into their operations not only enhance their brand and stakeholder trust but also drive long-term profitability and resilience.*



## Academic publications (5)

### Effect of organizational change on employee innovation performance: A dual mediation model

PLoS ONE, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the international development pattern, the international environment has undergone profound changes. Enterprises, as the main body of activities on the front line of production and operation and the main battlefield of market competition, are facing various risk challenges. In both domestic and international markets, these challenges are becoming increasingly complex for businesses to navigate. For theoretical research, the impact of organizational change on employee innovation performance has become a key issue in organizational behavior and human resource management research. However, the influence mechanism of organizational change on employee innovation performance is still unclear. In this study, we examine whether, how, and when organizational change increases employee innovation performance in accordance with job demands-resource theory, as well as the effect of work pressure and work engagement on employee innovation performance. Data from 289 employees at three time points are examined. The results show that: (1) Organizational change negatively affects employee innovation performance through work pressure, i.e., work pressure mediates the impact of organizational change on employee innovation performance. (2) Organizational change positively affects employee innovation performance through work engagement, i.e., work engagement mediates the impact of organizational change on employee innovation performance. (3) Organizational identity plays a moderating role between organizational change and work pressure and work engagement, respectively, and there is a moderating effect in the process of mediation of work pressure and work engagement. The findings of this study provide important insights into how and when organizational change influences employee innovation performance.

### Networks with a social purpose: how social enterprises manage paradoxical tensions

International Journal of Operations and Production Management, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Purpose: This study explores how companies' operations and supply networks can induce social impacts such as enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The study focuses on social enterprises' supply networks and examines the effects of supply network characteristics on the creation and resolution of social-commercial objectives tension. Design/methodology/approach: A supply network that is divided into five embedded cases, where each case is the supply network of a social enterprise, was studied. Forty-eight interviews at social enterprises, corporate customers, distributors, suppliers, non-governmental organizations and charities were conducted. Findings: The study highlights how social enterprises use their supply networks to help disadvantaged people gain employment, truly balance DEI and efficiency objectives and manage paradoxical tensions. The results reveal three types of social purpose supply networks, dichotomized, paired and blended, that hybrid and for-profit organizations can adopt to jointly pursue multiple, potentially competing, objectives and resolve the paradoxical tensions in their supply networks. The creation and resolution of tension are also clarified by considering dyadic, triadic and tetradic tie structures. Originality/value: The study contributes to the literature by extending the analysis of paradoxical tension between commercial and social welfare objectives such as DEI to the supply network level and revealing three social purpose supply network structures that depict social enterprises' different ways to resolve paradoxical tensions. The study contributes to social network theory by describing the dynamic interaction between strong and weak ties in multi-tie structures.

## Framing Entrepreneurial Ideas for Sustainability: How Do Purpose-Driven Startups Include the Sustainable Development Goals in Their Pitches?

Business Strategy and the Environment, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** This paper investigates how entrepreneurs frame the sustainability of their business ventures when pitching their business prospects and sustainability approaches to investors. Drawing on framing theory, this research explores the classification and application of sustainability-related frames employed in business pitches. A qualitative multiple case study methodology is applied to collect and analyze data from startup pitches presented at the startup event Slush, which is held annually in Finland. The sample consists of active startups and those that did not survive following the pitching event. The Need–Approach–Benefit–Competition (NABC) pitching model and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals serve as frameworks for systematically analyzing the content of the verbal pitch presentations. We disentangle how entrepreneurs formulate business ideas within frames related to sustainability themes on the micro, meso, and macro levels using cognitive, strategic, technological, and institutional frames. The resulting model distinguishes between different combinations of sustainability framing elements applied in startup pitches.

“ If a startup is purpose driven, the purpose and mission are aspects that entrepreneurs bring up as important elements in sustainable business model innovation and as part of a novel sustainable value creation logic. ”



## Marketing with a social conscience: strategic windows for aligning societal marketing with corporate identity

Strategy and Leadership, SJR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Purpose: This study proposes a conceptual framework for strategically integrating societal marketing (SM) into corporate identity to effectively represent a firm's SM programs to stakeholders. The framework is crucial for firms to align their SM efforts with their identity in a manner that minimizes, if not eliminating, the accusations of dishonesty, such as greenwashing, brownwashing, or greenhushing. Design/methodology/approach: Drawing on corporate identity theory and synthesizing the literature on SM, the study identifies three levels of corporate identity (strategic, operational, and functional) and three dimensions of SM's alignment with business objectives (direct, indirect, and remote). Subsequently, the study develops a conceptual framework based on an interaction between corporate identity levels (strategic, operational, and functional) and dimensions of SM's alignment with business objectives (direct, indirect, and remote) to identify strategic windows to represent SM to stakeholders. Findings: The study identifies nine strategic windows at the strategic, operational, and functional levels of corporate identity to represent a firm's SM programs to stakeholders. At the strategic level, CSR, corporate citizenship, and sustainability programs may be utilized to represent SM programs to stakeholders when SM respectively aligns with business objectives remotely, indirectly, and directly. At the operational level, environmental safety, stakeholder marketing, and business/marketing ethics programs serve this role. At the functional level, philanthropy, cause-related marketing, and green marketing are identified to represent SM to stakeholders, depending on the respective alignment of SM with business objectives remotely, indirectly, and directly. Research limitations/implications: The study implies that firms can minimize corporate misrepresentation of SM programs, especially when diverse stakeholder expectations demand varied representation of SM across levels of corporate identity. Additionally, firms can mitigate stakeholder confusion and misinterpretation by highlighting the differing degrees of alignment between SM and their economic goals when competing firms promote SM programs in the same context. Practical implications: The study implies that firms can selectively prioritize different SM programs at different contexts depending on how stakeholders' expectations are satisfied by the interaction between levels of corporate identity and dimensions of SM. Originality/value: This paper advances corporate marketing research on corporate identity by proposing strategic windows to integrate SM into corporate identity for effective representation of SM programs to stakeholders.

## Employee empowerment and job satisfaction in the evolving digital banking workplace

International Journal of Economics and Business Research, SJR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** This study explores the interplay between employee empowerment and job satisfaction within the evolving context of the digitalised workplace. By analysing data collected from a representative sample of banking professionals, the study identifies four empowerment dimensions found to significantly enhance job satisfaction: 1) a compelling organisational mission combined with performance-based rewards; 2) autonomy in decision-making; 3) effective delegation of managerial responsibilities; 4) robust inter-departmental communication. On the other hand, excessive standardisation was found to negatively impact job satisfaction as it constrains employee initiative and career growth opportunities. The findings advocate for job enrichment strategies emphasising decentralisation, team-based collaboration, as well as leveraging digital technologies to facilitate communication and agile performance management tactics. The emerging role of digitalisation, and the evolving immersive Metaverse call for enhanced empowerment practices responding to the needs of the modern work environment.



**How to Embed Purpose at Every Level**

Stuart L. Hart, MIT Sloan Management Review [see online](#)

The article emphasizes the necessity of integrating societal purpose into a company's core strategy. Hart argues that to address global challenges, businesses must shift from prioritizing short-term profits to using profits as a means to solve existential issues. He introduces the "House of Transformational Sustainability" framework, which outlines how organizations can authentically embed societal purpose by involving all levels of the organization, from senior leadership to frontline employees, ensuring alignment with long-term corporate strategies and operations.

**Will Corporate Purpose Go The Way Of DEI?**

John Almandoz, Forbes [see online](#)

The article examines the challenges of integrating corporate purpose into business strategies. It contrasts two approaches: the "outside-in" method, which positions corporate purpose as a tool to address global challenges like climate change and social justice, and the "inside-out" approach, focusing on aligning a company's internal values with its operations to serve customers. The article warns that the outside-in approach can become coercive and politically charged, potentially leading to internal and external disagreements. It suggests that, in democratic societies, companies should engage in transparent deliberation to ensure their purpose initiatives resonate authentically with both employees and the broader community.





## The Power of Strategic Fit

Darrell Rigby & Zach First, HBR [see online](#)

Companies that don't align the essential elements of their strategy won't be able to create sufficient value for their firms and their stakeholders to sustain long-term success. Too many leaders, facing heavy pressure to increase the worth of their company, use simplistic "spreadsheet strategies": They set financial goals that will meet analysts' expectations and find ways to back into them. They don't address the essential elements of strategy or improve the fit and synergies among them. Drawing on the example of Self Esteem Brands—a fitness, health, and wellness company—the authors, partners at Bain & Company, show how to create a cohesive strategy that unleashes the power of strategic fit. They identify seven strategic factors: the mental model, purpose and ambitions, stakeholder value creation, macro forces, markets and products, competitive advantages, and the operating model. And they explain how aligning them generates beneficial multiplier effects.

## The Importance Of Purpose In Building Great Teams And Companies

Vivek Bhaskaran, Forbes [see online](#)

The article emphasizes that purpose-driven companies outperform competitors by fostering engaged, productive teams. It cites EY research indicating that such businesses are more successful in transformation and innovation. Additionally, 68% of executives believe that a clear purpose enhances agility during disruptions. The article asserts that leaders should articulate a compelling purpose, aligning team efforts with organizational goals. It also highlights that employees who find meaning in their work are more committed and satisfied. The article concludes that embedding purpose at all levels cultivates resilience, drives performance, and attracts top talent.

“ Purpose-driven companies are more resilient in times of crisis, as they can rally employees, customers and stakeholders around a common cause, inspiring collective action and driving positive change. ”

## The Purposeful Entrepreneur: Building A Business That Inspires Others

Cody Bjugan, Forbes [see online](#)

The article emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurs sharing their "why" with employees and customers to cultivate a shared vision and drive. It references a McKinsey study indicating that while 82% of participants recognize the significance of purpose, only 42% feel their company's stated purpose has substantial impact. The author advocates for purposeful entrepreneurship, which involves prioritizing integrity and balancing purpose with profits to build a lasting legacy. By aligning business practices with core values, entrepreneurs can inspire their teams, foster a strong organizational culture, and achieve sustainable success.



Academic publications (5)

Securing Meaningfulness in Corporate Social Responsibility: Exploring meaning-making mechanisms via economies of worth

Organization Studies, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** The current literature on meaningful work has attempted to capture the dynamic interplay between individuals' subjective perception of the meaningfulness of their work and the broader societal and cultural context, employing tensional and temporal approaches. Yet, understanding of how individuals develop their justifications for the worthiness of their work by transcending subjective and social accounts of meaningful work remains limited. To enrich the justification approach to individuals' tensional and dynamic experiences of meaningful work, we rely on the economies of worth (EW) framework to explore how individuals engage in meaning-making within their work when its worthiness is challenged. Focusing on the experiences and meaning-making of 46 practitioners working in the corporate social responsibility (CSR) field in Vietnam, we identified three meaning-making mechanisms (prospective deferring, localizing and diverging) enacted in three morally challenging situations experienced by CSR practitioners (self vs belonging, self vs societal perceptions, and self vs external stakeholders' changing interests). The study makes three contributions: (1) it enriches the meaning-making literature by advancing a justification approach via the EW framework; (2) it clarifies the micro-dynamics of compromise-building mechanisms at different career stages within organizational studies of the EW framework; and (3) it expands micro-CSR research by unpacking the relational tensions and meaning-making experiences of CSR practitioners.

“ The worth of work is neither inherent to the nature of the task one performs nor predetermined, known or easily accounted for. It is an outcome of complex and constant negotiations between subjective perceptions and others' and social evaluations. ”

Person, temporal, and contextual predictors of momentary purpose in everyday life

Personality and Individual Differences, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Recent theoretical and empirical advances in purpose in life indicate a state component to feeling purposeful. This study used a micro-longitudinal study to identify person (age, sex, race, education), temporal (day in study, time of day, weekend), and broad (at work, with others) and specific (e.g., eating/drinking, shopping) contextual factors associated with momentary feelings of purpose. Participants (N = 303; age range 40–70) reported their momentary purpose three times a day for eight days and what they were doing at the time of the alert for the survey. Relatively older participants ( $b = 0.36$ ,  $SE = 0.13$ ,  $p = .007$ ) reported more momentary purpose compared to relatively younger participants. Participants reported more purpose in the afternoon ( $b = 2.18$ ,  $SE = 0.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and less purpose on weekends ( $b = -1.37$ ,  $SE = 0.62$ ,  $p = .027$ ). The broad contextual factors were associated with purpose: Participants reported being more purpose-driven at work ( $b = 9.30$ ,  $SE = 0.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ) or with others ( $b = 2.15$ ,  $SE = 0.57$ ,  $p < .001$ ) compared to not at work or alone, respectively. Specific contextual factors were associated with feeling more purpose-driven (e.g., caregiving  $b = 14.17$ ,  $SE = 1.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ; exercising  $b = 15.59$ ,  $SE = 1.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ), except leisure activities, which were associated with less purpose ( $b = -4.76$ ,  $SE = 0.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Feeling purposeful varies across moments and is sensitive to time of day, location, and activities engaged in.

**Unlocking the power of meaningful work: elevating engagement and satisfaction in the realm of decent jobs**

International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior, SJR Q2  
[see online](#)

**Abstract:** Purpose: Sustainable development must address the challenge of ensuring decent work for all (SDG 8) and promoting good health and well-being (SDG 3). This study aims to assess the relationship between decent and meaningful work and their impact on work engagement and job satisfaction among adult workers. Decent work goes beyond mere employment, encompassing standards for a fulfilling life, including fair compensation and workplace security, while fostering personal development and social integration. Following the psychology of working theory (PWT), decent work is a prerequisite to the attainment of meaningful work, viewed as a positive belief system about one’s work and its potential positive impact on life and the world. Design/methodology/approach: A sample of 276 adult workers, aged 21–70 years ( $M = 43.55$ ,  $SD = 11.76$ ), was surveyed to explore the association between decent and meaningful work and the following impact on work engagement and job satisfaction. Structural equation modelling was employed. Findings: The study identified meaningful work as a crucial mediator between decent work and the outcomes of work engagement and job satisfaction. Practical implications: The findings highlight the importance of cultivating meaningful work experiences to enhance workplace well-being. Organisations should prioritize interventions to promote both decent and meaningful work to align with sustainable development goals and improve employee satisfaction and engagement. Originality/value: Our findings emphasize the pivotal role of decent work and, consequently, meaningful work in shaping employees’ well-being.

“ Teacher meaningful work can promote positive work attitudes and outcomes for a person (teacher), such as work motivation, work involvement, job satisfaction, empowerment, work identity, organizational commitment, career development, and life satisfaction. ”

**The mediating role of self-efficacy and the moderating impact of organizational climate: a case study for improving teacher wellbeing through leadership and meaningful work**

Retos, JCR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Objective: This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership and meaningful work on teacher well-being and examine the role of teacher self-efficacy as a mediator and organizational climate support as a moderator. Methodology: This study used a quantitative research approach with an exploratory design. The subject was 210 teachers taken from six residencies in Central Java using random cluster sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling technique based on variance, namely Partial Least Square. Results: The results of this study reveal several significant findings. First, teacher-leaders, teacher-meaningful work, and self-efficacy positively and significantly influence honorary teachers’ well-being. Second, teacher-leaders and teachers’ meaningful work positively and substantially influences self-efficacy. Third, teacher-leaders and teachers’ meaningful work positively and significantly influence honorary teachers’ well-being through teacher self-efficacy. Fourth, the supportive organization climate does not mediate teacher-leader and teacher-meaningful work on honorary teacher well-being. Discussion: The discussion are: First, the change in teacher-leader, teacher-meaningful work, and self-efficacy is directly proportional to honorary teachers’ well-being. Second, the change in teacher-leader and teacher-meaningful work is directly proportional to the self-efficacy of honorary teachers. Third, increasing teacher-leader and teacher-meaningful work will be more effective in improving teachers’ well-being if they strengthen teachers’ self-efficacy. Fourth, interventions or changes designed to enhance teacher leadership will have the same effect on teacher well-being regardless of the variation of the supportive organizational climate. Conclusions: The implication is that no single variable determines the well-being of honorary teachers without involving other variables as a practical, non-financial approach.



## Meaningful work, organizational commitment and administrative burden among attending neurosurgeons

Neurochirurgie, JCR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Objective: Neurosurgery is regarded as a meaningful career. However, there is no assessment of how many neurosurgeons hold this belief, factors that affect it, or the consequences that follow when neurosurgeons cannot practice in ways they find meaningful. We sought to quantify the neurosurgical experience of meaningful work, evaluate the impact of administrative burden, and relate meaningful work to physician attrition. Methods: An online survey investigating meaningful work, administrative burden, organizational commitment, and practice patterns was emailed to attending neurosurgeon members of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons. Results: 308 neurosurgeons completed the survey. 85.1% of neurosurgeons reported that they found their career to be meaningful; however, most also reported their administrative burden as excessive (59.4%). Over the past 10 years, 17.2% of neurosurgeons left a position due to excessive administrative burden. On multivariable analysis, increased burnout score correlated with increases in administrative hours outside of work ( $p = 0.0042$ ), perception of excessive administrative burden ( $p = 0.0267$ ), and willingness to leave a current position of employment ( $p = 0.0006$ ). Rising administrative burden trended towards reduced experience of meaningful work ( $p = 0.062$ ). A positive working relationship with their neurosurgical department enhanced meaningful work ( $p < 0.0017$ ) and willingness to remain at place of employment ( $p = 0.0027$ ). Conclusion: The majority of neurosurgeons find neurosurgery to be a meaningful career. Critical to meaningful work is maintaining a good departmental working relationship and reducing administrative tasks. When neurosurgeons cannot practice their work meaningfully, they risk burnout. Organizations that do not invest in reducing their neurosurgical administrative burdens are at high risk for neurosurgeon attrition.





Articles (4)

**“I’m Afraid We Are Automating This Work Without Really Understanding It”**

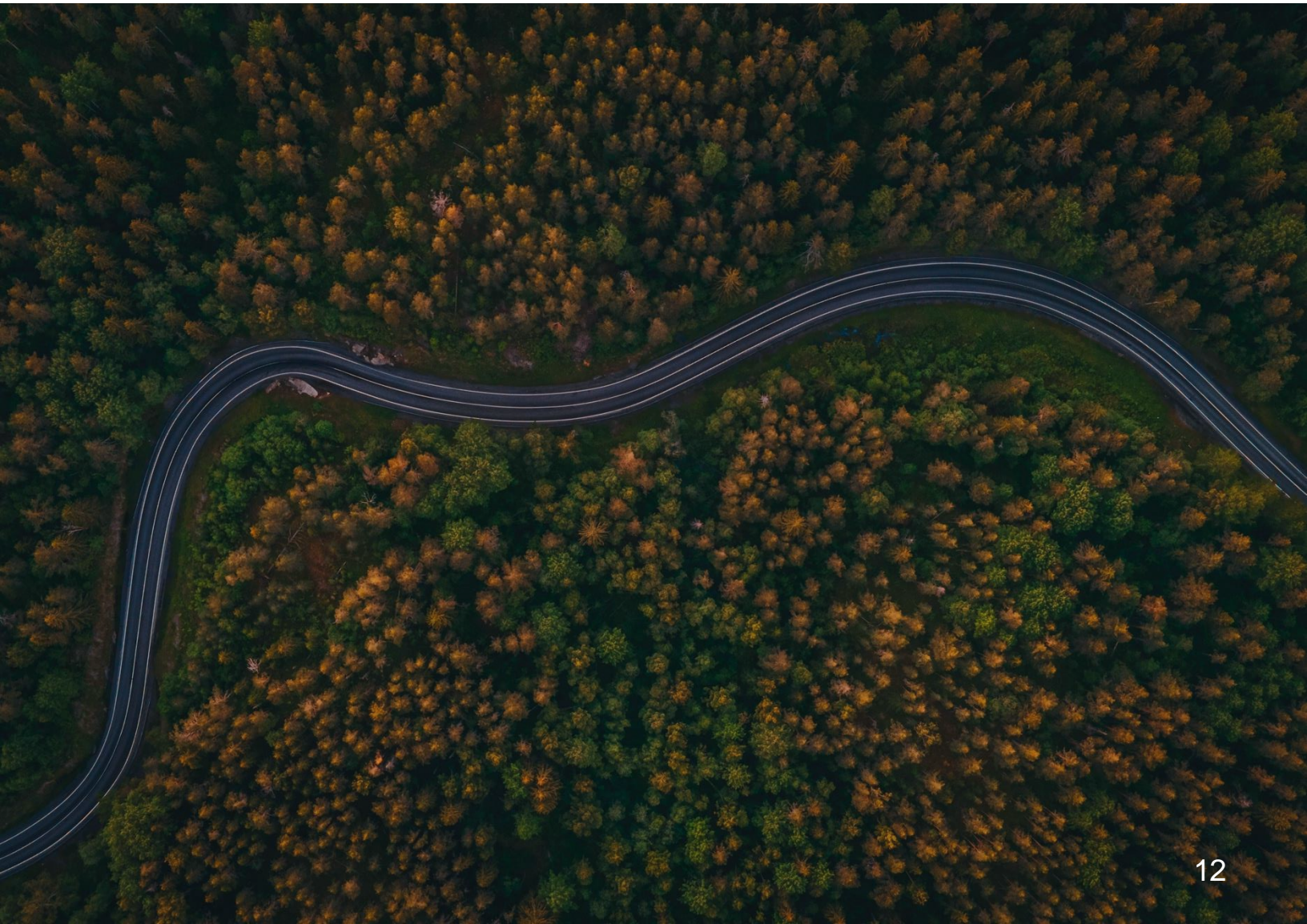
Gretchen Gavett, HBR [see online](#)

AI is often touted as a way to handle busy work to free people up for tasks that matter. But in the race to add automation to pretty much every job, it’s rare that people question what, exactly, people are being freed from, and which tasks actually matter. This interview with sociologist Allison J. Pugh explores what she calls “connective labor,” why it’s under threat from automation, who will be most affected, and what we’ll lose as humans if it disappears.

**3 Steps To Staying Committed To Your Purpose, No Matter What**

Jim Dunn, Forbes [see online](#)

The article emphasizes the importance of maintaining commitment to one's purpose, even when facing challenges. It outlines three key steps. First, be intentional. The article advises individuals to actively choose roles and tasks that align with their core values, ensuring their daily actions reflect their overarching mission. Second, stay committed. It suggests that commitment to purpose requires consistent effort and dedication, even when immediate results are not visible. Third, key perspective. The article recommends maintaining a broader view to recognize the significance of one's work, helping to stay connected to the underlying purpose. By following these steps, individuals can navigate obstacles and remain aligned with their purpose, leading to a more fulfilling professional journey.





## Exploring Purpose And Passion: Why Retirement Doesn't Always Mean The End Of Work

Sara Ellis Conant, Forbes [see online](#)

The article emphasizes that retirement doesn't necessarily signify the end of work, but rather a transition into roles that align with one's passions and purpose. It suggests that individuals often seek meaningful engagement post-retirement, which can lead to greater fulfillment, longevity, and a renewed sense of identity. The article also highlights that retirees may pursue new careers, volunteer opportunities, or hobbies that provide a sense of contribution, purpose, and community connection. By redefining retirement as a phase for personal growth and exploration, the article advocates for a more dynamic, rewarding, and satisfying post-career life.

“ Whether driven by financial necessity or the desire for meaningful contribution, the key to unretirement is intentionality. ”

## What's Robbing You Of Your Purpose?

John Baldoni, Forbes [see online](#)

The article discusses Davin Salvagno's book, "Thieves of Purpose: Overcoming the 12 Mindsets Robbing You of Your Potential," which identifies mindsets hindering personal growth. Salvagno emphasizes that comparison is a prevalent obstacle, stating that societal influences perpetuate this behavior. He asserts that making excuses drains energy needed to focus on important goals. Salvagno advocates for resilience, highlighting its role in overcoming challenges. He advises reviewing time and energy expenditures to ensure alignment with priorities and encourages recognizing the impact of one's problem-solving efforts. Salvagno differentiates between success and significance, suggesting that true fulfillment arises from positively impacting others.

“ How many learning moments and purpose points have we missed in our lives because our natural response was to make an excuse or to blame others? ”

Articles (1)

Three Golden Rules For Integrating Profit And Purpose

Nell Derick Debevoise, Forbes [see online](#)

The article outlines strategies for aligning business success with societal and environmental impact. It emphasizes three key principles. First, zoom out. Adopt a holistic perspective by considering all stakeholders—employees, customers, communities, and the environment—in decision-making processes. Companies like Seventh Generation and Unilever exemplify this approach by integrating environmental health and social responsibility into their core strategies, leading to sustainable growth and resilience. Second, slow down. Prioritize long-term vision over immediate gains. Interface Carpet's deliberate transformation towards sustainability showcases how investing time in thoughtful planning can revitalize a brand and reduce ecological impact. Third, look to nature. Draw inspiration from natural systems that operate sustainably. Nespresso's sustainable sourcing and recycling initiatives demonstrate how aligning business practices with nature's principles can satisfy consumer demand while preserving the planet. By implementing these principles, businesses can achieve profitability while contributing positively to society and the environment.





