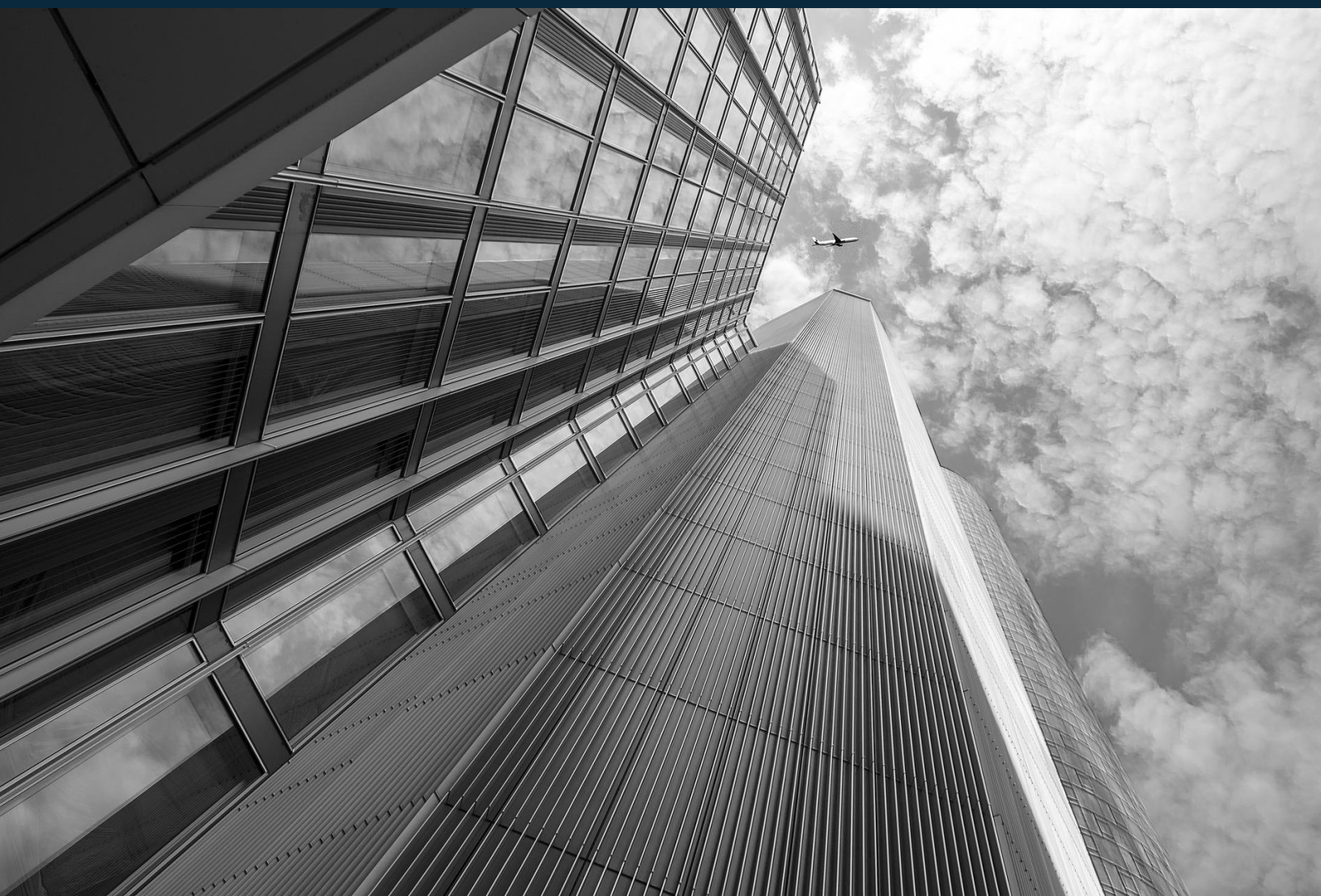


PURPOSE TRENDS REPORT

A selection of what has been published about Purpose in April 2023



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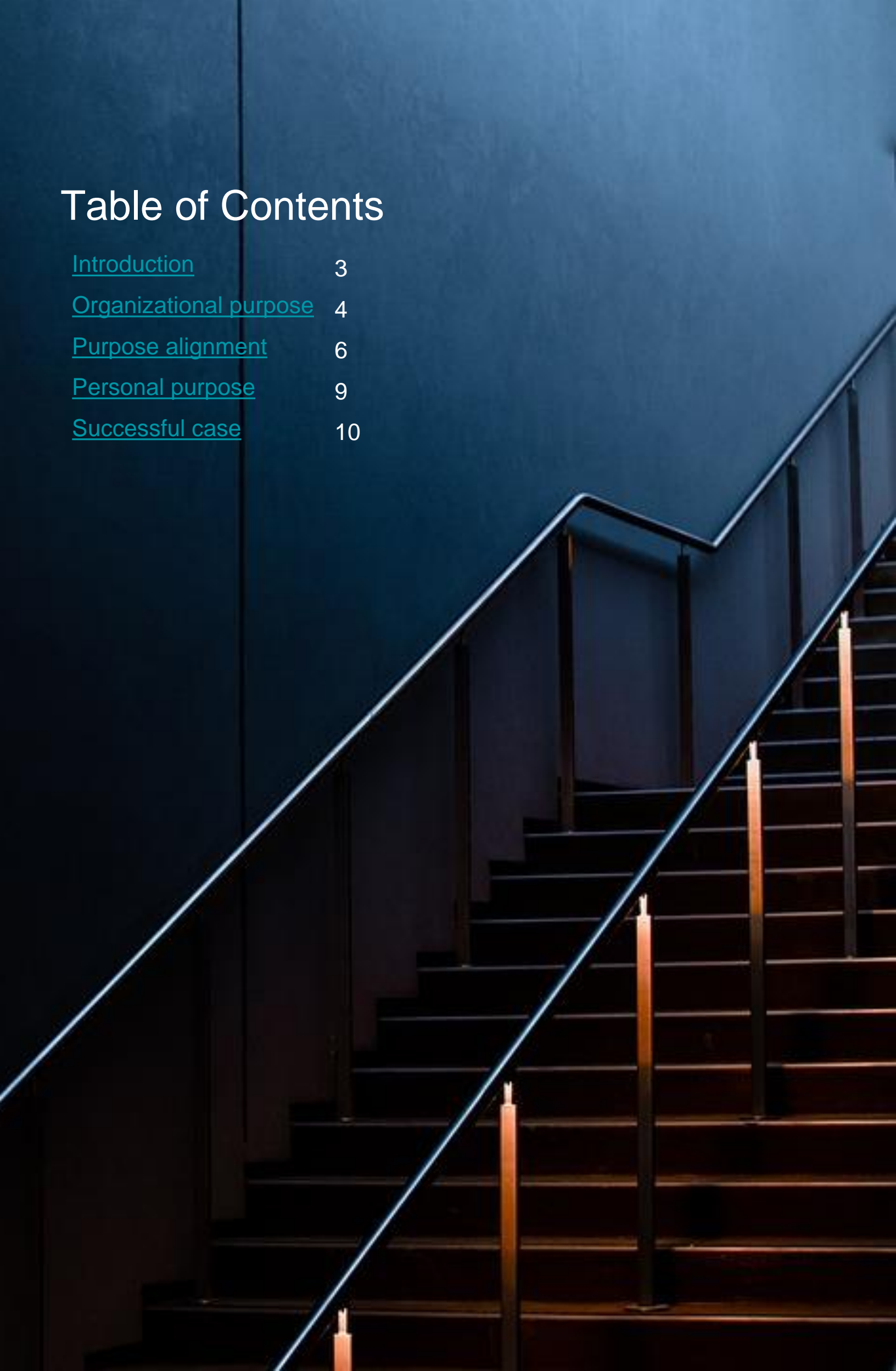
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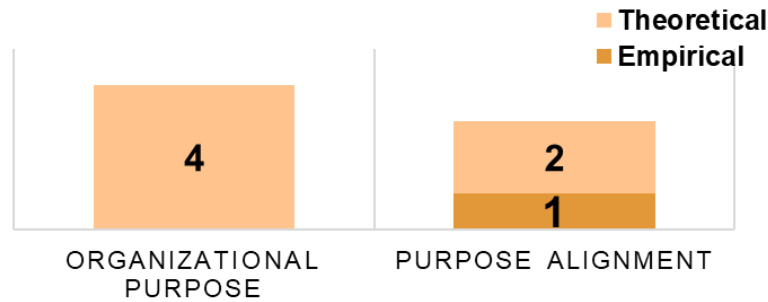
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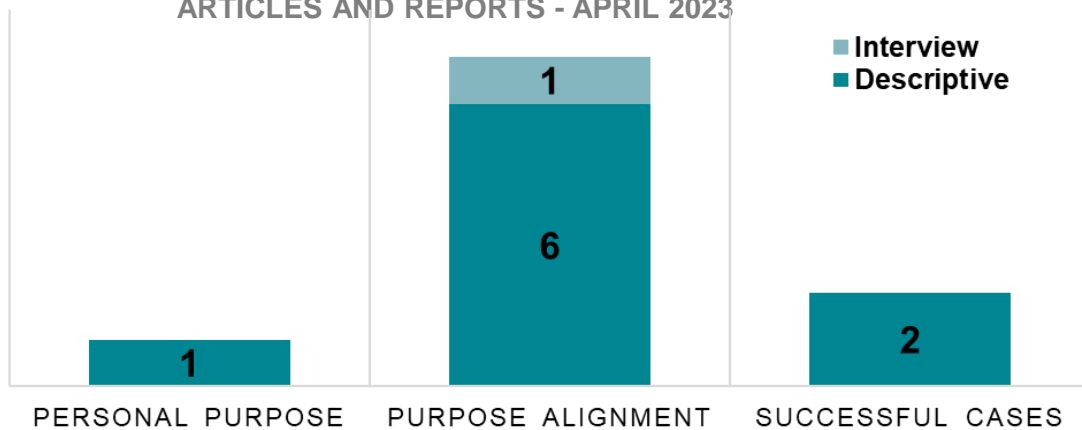
INTRODUCTION

In this report, we want to synthesize the most relevant about corporate purpose published in April 2023. 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, purpose alignment, 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 - APRIL 2023



ARTICLES AND REPORTS - APRIL 2023



Academic publications sustain that some practitioners and scholars present purpose as an organization's reason for being, which is conveyed to organizational stakeholders. Others focus on how purpose is an alternative to profit maximization, forming part of a stakeholder rather than shareholder orientation for the firm. Others highlight that purpose can catalyze systems change, impacting well beyond the firm's boundaries.

Some articles assert that in a purpose-driven business, the purpose is part of the organization's DNA that the business lives by. The above is important since the articles sustain that one of the main attributes today's talents seek in a job is the purpose, not just in terms of marketing speech but truly societal involvement. For the above, employers should practice purpose at every touch point of their employee journey.

Some articles assert that creating an environment focused on purpose and values will help people understand why their actions matter and feel more connected to their work, be excited about going to work, increase confidence, create robust relationships, and make meaningful and productive contributions. Other articles affirm that purpose-driven leadership has the potential to solve your most pressing business challenges by building resilience, minimizing risks, and identifying opportunities. Other articles affirm that purpose-driven leadership has the potential to solve your most pressing business challenges by building resilience, minimizing risks, and identifying opportunities.

Finally, this report presents the cases of ISS and Colsubsidio, two organizations that have implemented corporate purposes.

Academic publications (4)

A Theory of Organizational Purpose

Academy of Management Review, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: This article presents a theory of organizational purpose that is normatively neutral and, hence, can be deployed to study firms without prejudging their role in society. The argument employs two philosophical concepts: intentionality and speech acts. The first is used to conceptualize the corporate mind, which is a set of long-lived beliefs about the world as it is and intentions about the world as it will be that drives organizational activity. Corporate minds allow for complex and valuable forms of social cooperation and, hence, the article argues that the purpose of any organization is to sustain a corporate mind. Five core attributes enable organizations to fulfill this purpose: authorization, property rights, the ability to contract, the capacity to deliberate, and conversability. Conversability allows organizations to perform speech acts; that is, to make statements about the corporate mind that are referred to in this article as meta-contractual avowals. The article provides a value-neutral account of corporate governance as the set of devices that ensures the consistency of an organization's corporate mind, meta-contractual avowals, and authorized actions. This theory sheds light upon the structure of purpose discourse and the relationship between different theories of the firm.

Corporate Personhood and Fiduciary Duties as Critical Constructs in Developing Stakeholder Management Theory and Corporate Purpose

Strategy Science, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: This article considers the complex process of economic value creation in joint production in which a corporation is viewed as more than a nexus of contracts for four reasons related to the interdependent functions of the corporate personhood concept of the corporation as a separate legal entity. Corporate personhood facilitates stewardship and stakeholder management, which can encourage firm-specific investments, reduce shirking, and attenuate rent seeking to provide economic value. The corporate personhood approach illuminates multidimensional constructs for the governance of a corporation at the board level to embody fiduciary duties and corporate purpose, which is much richer than the nexus of contract view.

Corporate Purpose: A Social Judgement Perspective

Strategy Science, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: We apply the lens of social judgement theory to understand the causes and consequences of the growing debate about the purpose of the corporation. Our historical analysis suggests that the debate about corporate purpose is not new and that it tends to arise during periods of growing economic inequality. Our analysis also suggests that the discursive shift from shareholder to stakeholder capitalism will trigger a new standard of social evaluation of corporations in which we no longer judge corporate behavior based on standards of legitimacy but rather on standards of authenticity. We explore what this change in social evaluation will mean for corporate competition.

The Multiple Facets of Corporate Purpose: An Analytical Typology

Strategy Science, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: As firms increasingly adopt a corporate purpose, there is substantial variation in what this turn to purpose actually entails and divergent views about whether and how firms can realize their purpose aspirations. To capture this variation and analyze its implications for enacting purpose, we leverage three existing bodies of research in organization and management theory: Early organization theory illuminates uses of purpose to convey an organization's overarching reason for being, organizational hybridity sheds light on purpose as an alternative organizational objective to profit maximization, and systems perspectives offer tools for explaining purpose as a catalyst of systemic change beyond the boundaries of the firm. The typology that we develop based on these three bodies of research provides analytical clarity about distinct facets of the corporate purpose phenomenon and surfaces complementary insights into challenges and opportunities associated with purpose enactment. In doing so, it illuminates the value of drawing on existing organization and management theories for advancing corporate purpose scholarship and provides a springboard for future research.

“

Purpose can be a catalyst of broader systems change, with the potential for having impact well beyond the boundaries of the firm.

”



Academic publications (2)

The relationship between corporate purpose and the sustainable development goals in large Japanese companies

Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, JCR Q1, [see online](#)

Abstract: Society increasingly expects large companies to broaden their corporate purpose beyond profit maximization, and play a greater role in addressing the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs). This article poses the research question: What is the relationship between corporate purpose and the SDGs?, and develops a model to explain this relationship drawing upon semistructured interviews with managers of Fortune Global 500 companies in Japan. The findings suggest two perspectives of corporate purpose, goal-based and duty-based, influence the relationship. Two-thirds of the companies implemented both perspectives and integrated the SDGs at multiple levels in their organizations whereas one-third only implemented duty-based purpose and integrated the SDGs at the operational level. The paper contributes to theorizing the relationship between corporate purpose and corporate engagement with the SDGs drawing upon empirical evidence. The model provides guidance to managers on how to use the purpose to help drive their contributions to the SDGs.

“

The SDGs serve as information sources to implement the broader corporate purpose.

”

Systemic Symbolic Management, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Corporate Purpose: A Cautionary Tale

Strategy Science, JCR Q2, [see online](#)

Abstract: In this paper I describe the multilevel and systemic nature of symbolic management and decoupling as it applies to corporate social responsibility (CSR), and consider the implications for the corporate purpose movement. I explain how and why the symbolic management system, including the various forms of decoupling that have compromised CSR, could be readily extended to corporate purpose. I further suggest why (i) the symbolic management of purpose would extend a historical pattern of decoupling that has penetrated into ever more fundamental arenas of corporate governance, and (ii) at least some characteristics of corporate purpose may render it even more vulnerable to symbolic management and decoupling than CSR. I conclude that although the corporate purpose movement carries a substantial, downside risk of symbolic management and decoupling, it nonetheless has upside potential to improve corporate social performance, and that academic researchers have a key role to play in realizing that potential. I suggest several research strategies for detecting the presence and extent of symbolic decoupling of corporate purpose.

Articles (7)

5 Ways to Recession-Proof Your Brand with Purpose

Jen Mazi, Sustainable Brands [see online](#)

It sustains that purpose-driven leadership has the potential to solve your most pressing business challenges by building resilience, minimizing risks, and identifying opportunities. It sightlines that purpose is why a brand matters and sustainability is how it gets there. Additionally, it suggests five ideas about how organizations can lean into sustainability initiatives with purpose and recession-proof.

How Passion And Purpose Are Driving Forces Within Successful Collaborations

Kate Vitasek, Forbes [see online](#)

It explains that beginning a partnership with a passion for the work and a sense of purpose that provides direction for what partners do can help prevent future miscommunications and ensure that partners are truly aligned. It affirms that collaborative effort is potentialized when passion and purpose come into play.

How To Become A Purpose-Driven Business Consumers Trust

Max Firsau, Forbes [see online](#)

It asserts that a purpose-driven business isn't just a trend or strategy deployed to woo customers; it is part of the organization's DNA that your business lives by. It proposes that purpose in business operations can take on different forms, e.g., adopting sustainable practices to supporting social causes such as community building, inclusivity or accessibility, etc.

Know Your Mission Statement: Three Tips Leaders Can Use To Instill Purpose

Mary Mason, Forbes [see online](#)

It affirms that employees need to understand the purpose of their work and how it fits into their company's overall mission to be excited about going to work and making meaningful contributions. It suggests three ways to make the mission statement more top of mind for employees in their everyday work.

“ You need to understand the purpose of your work and how it fits into your company's overall mission to be excited about coming to work every day and making meaningful contributions. ”

New MindSet Creates New Results

Cindy Gordon, Sustainable Brands [see online](#)

It proposes purpose as a distinctive of the higher performing organizations from the average performers. It sightlines that the first leadership behavior to cultivate is purpose. It argues that caring about the community's social context, the environment, and the health and well-being of the people are all top of mind in attracting talent.

No Matter The Market, There's Always A Demand For Great Talent: Here's How To Cultivate And Keep It

René Janssen, Forbes [see online](#)

It sustains that one of the main attributes today's talent seeks in a job is the purpose, not just in terms of marketing speech but truly societal involvement. They want to understand how their efforts contribute to the company's overall success and, thus, betters the world. For the above, they propose that employers should practice purpose at every touch point of their employee journey.

The Purpose-Driven Work Culture

Teresa Hopke, Forbes [see online](#)

It asserts that creating an environment focused on purpose and values will help people understand why their actions matter and feel more connected to their work. It proposes that this sense of purpose can increase confidence, robust relationships between coworkers, and improve organizational productivity. It also supports the importance that people can truly belong and live their purpose even at work. It explains that there is a north star where everyone aligns around the organization's purpose, but also, everyone individually brings their own purpose to create the organization's culture collectively.



Articles (1)

Finding A Sense Of Purpose At Work Amid Crisis

Giorgio Genaus, Forbes [see online](#)

It proposes that purposeful living means finding purpose in the small moments and becoming aware of how to make a difference in your own life and those of others. It asserts that finding purpose is essential for maintaining control over own life. Nevertheless, it sustains that finding meaning is a process that requires awareness and a willingness to explore.

“ Whether that's a personal goal that you're working toward or a greater mission, having something to strive for will give your work more meaning and help you stay focused. ”



Articles (2)

La Universidad de Navarra crea la Cátedra de Empresa ISS

CompromisoRSE [see online](#)

The University of Navarra, together with the ISS company, has launched the ISS Business Chair, which has three main objectives: teaching collaborations so that students learn about the experiences of companies with organizational models focused on people; research through doctoral theses on the corporate purpose as a lever to promote business sustainability; and the organization of professional events on the development of sustainable organizations. ISS sustains that this alliance materializes its commitment to research and development of the corporate purpose as a fundamental element to favor the construction of a more sustainable future.

“Conectamos personas y lugares para contribuir a un mundo mejor”



Los colombianos quieren trabajar en empresas con propósito social

Portafolio [see online](#)

Colsubsidio is the seventh employer in Colombia. Colsubsidio's employment value proposition entails various extralegal benefits for workers seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Additionally, members of Consulbisio maintain that it is a company in which people want to stay because it has the necessary conditions to grow and have a better future and because they work in a company with a social purpose like Colsubsidio.

“Generar oportunidades para el cierre de brechas sociales, para proyectarnos como la empresa social de los colombianos”



