



Message House

The Case for Purpose

By David Power

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Foreword

“We live in what seem like troubling times – the rise of national populism and hate crime, the ever-increasing ravages of climate change, the breaking of the social safety net through austerity, and an alarming increase in inequality. Fortunately, these major challenges are also significant opportunities for us to step forward and demonstrate our ingenuity and compassion – as individuals, communities and organisations.



This excellent report from Message House on the Case for Purpose demonstrates that colleagues, customers, investors and the public want us to step forward in this way. It shows us how we might do that – by defining, living, evaluating and letting people know about our purpose. Most importantly, it also suggests that all of this should be grounded in a genuine hankering for purpose.

This seems so smart and natural to me. Every day, through UnLtd, I am lucky enough to meet people – nurses, teachers, technologists, neighbours, cooks, activists, builders – who have clocked this. They are setting up businesses and projects that will make money and do good. This is just a natural extension of who we are – our capacity for laughter, care, kindness, our desire to learn, contribute and progress, our search for meaning. These are the human qualities that define us. It is therefore no surprise that the human organisations and economic system we together create should also reflect these qualities.

That is all purpose is. Simple really. But powerful and enduring if you see it through and are authentic. It can attract fantastic talent and lifetime customers. It can make you distinctive and attractive to investors and markets. The good news is that it's getting easier to embed purpose in your business. So all you really need to ask yourself is: what's stopping me?"

Mark Norbury.

Chief Executive, UnLtd, the foundation for social entrepreneurs

Executive summary

Many businesses are now pursuing a purpose beyond making a profit. Businesses, big and small, are waking up to the array of benefits that purpose can bring – such as attracting the best talent and new customers – and are taking their impact on society more seriously. Despite this increase in interest, the meaning of the concept remains unclear and many businesses need help to pursue their purpose authentically.

This report defines purpose as a company's core 'reason for being.' It answers the question about why a company is in business and helps provide focus for a business strategy that extends beyond financial gain. To be considered authentic, the purpose must provide a reason to exist aside from making money, provide some good to society, and be actively pursued by the organisation. Purposeful businesses can take any form, whether corporate or social, and can be found across any number of sectors. The key to unlocking the benefits is to find and enact a purpose that is distinct and credible to the individual business.

The central takeaways of this report are:

The marketplace

- Purpose-led business are increasingly seeking and gaining recognition in legal form and accreditation. The flexibility exists in English law to embed purpose into company articles to ensure that it is protected. Additionally, businesses that meet rigorous social and environmental standards can seek accreditation from B Lab to be certified as B Corps (Benefit Corporations). Both options are becoming better known to businesses and have the backing of powerful advocates.
- In the UK, as of September 2017, there are now 471,000 social enterprises that employ 1.44 million people. These businesses are fulfilling vital services in disadvantaged areas and their numbers are expected to grow.
- Globally, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals could open 60 new markets worth an estimated \$12 trillion by 2030. This presents a massive opportunity to innovative and purpose-led businesses.

The commercial case

- Consumers are increasingly looking to engage with purpose-led businesses. Message House research clearly points to higher engagement and the reputational benefits that purpose can bring, particularly amongst younger generations.
- Focusing on long-term goals as opposed to quarterly results can lead to greater innovation and resilience during difficult economic periods.
- Ernst & Young has conducted research that shows investors are increasingly looking to long-term value and purpose-led businesses as a safer bet and as an opportunity to make a positive difference through their capital. We could potentially be seeing a fundamental shift in how shareholders and directors evaluate success and change their behaviours accordingly. This rise in interest could see billions of pounds released into the 'impact economy' in the coming years.
- Purpose can foster a strong internal culture that boosts employee satisfaction and performance. It also helps attract and retain the best talent as younger generations seek more meaning in their work.



The social case

- Businesses have a responsibility to take their impact on society seriously. They also have the power to make a serious impact through sustainable business practices. By taking steps to improve supply chains, waste management and human resources, businesses can make a huge difference to the communities in which they operate.
- The social case for purpose is also a persuasive commercial case. In light of rising inequality, diminishing resources and climate change it is imperative that businesses act to mitigate the negative consequences of their actions. Failure to innovate products and services or directly address these issues could see businesses become less relevant and certain markets may decrease in value.

Authenticity

- A business needs to be serious about its purpose. It should set strategy that aids the pursuit of purpose and audit every aspect of how it works to ensure that its purpose is not undermined. In particular, a business needs to consider how its culture and leadership are aligned with the purpose.
- It is vital that purpose is embedded in a business' DNA and does not simply become an easily dismissed gimmick. Many businesses find themselves in trouble when their external communications on purpose don't align with the reality of how they operate.

Over the last few years, purpose has been gaining in influence as an economic and social force. I believe we have now reached a tipping point where the concept has become mainstream. The momentum and value of the concept is becoming too big to ignore. As new businesses emerge and existing businesses attempt to embed purpose into their strategy, it is vital that authenticity does not become lost in a race to establish brand positioning. The aim of this report is to shine a light on the growing interest in purpose, the commercial opportunities and the social benefits that it brings, but also to set out practical steps and watch-outs for businesses trying to pursue their purpose.



What is purpose?

Purpose is difficult. It is difficult to define, it is difficult to know exactly what your purpose should be, and it is difficult to operate and communicate your purpose authentically. For many businesses (and consumers) the difficulty stems from the very definition of the concept – what does it mean and how should a business go about realising it? Furthermore, the task of crafting a purpose statement that is authoritative, credible and ambitious leads many businesses to publish statements that hold little weight. At Message House, we have conducted research and set out recommendations that can help demystify the concept.

Defining purpose

Nowadays, we are seeing more and more businesses talking about their purpose, with many going as far as publishing statements on their website and in their marketing. Businesses are certainly catching on to the potential value of the concept but there is still a lack of familiarity with the term amongst the public. In some cases, it would appear this lack of understanding extends to what the term should mean even to the businesses themselves.

There is a tendency for profit-led businesses to overstate their role in society by using purpose statements to bridge a perceived reputational gap. It is often taken for granted that the public will understand the concept and accept a business' purpose as authentic. At best, this leaves the public confused, at worst it leaves them cold to the concept and the business itself.

In a poll conducted by Message House in April 2017, only 12% of the public said they were very familiar with the term 'corporate purpose' and, when asked, were largely unable to name purposeful businesses.ⁱ For the public, 'purpose' is not a widely used term and when placed in a corporate context is often seen as jargon or met with cynicism. Or, as one of our focus group participants succinctly put it:

“

Business speak for making as much money as possible

”

This is not to say that having a purpose lacks value or is a concept that is widely derided by the public. In research conducted by Message House, 75% of the public said it was important for a company to have a clearly defined purpose. Furthermore, when applied to an individual's own business or employer, the term was well understood and considered key to motivation and success. Furthermore, in focus groups we held on the topic of corporate culture (a term which is widely understood, [see section on culture](#)), purpose was again seen as important for motivation and as an attractive trait in a would-be employer. It would appear that when purpose is internalised or linked to a business' culture the concept is seen as more authentic, whereas a 'corporate' purpose is challenging to most people's assumptions of large for-profit business.

The research would suggest that the concept needs disentangling from our assumptions on how we act on a personal level vs how we view corporations. A more tangible definition of what purpose is and how it should be carried out would help demystify the concept.

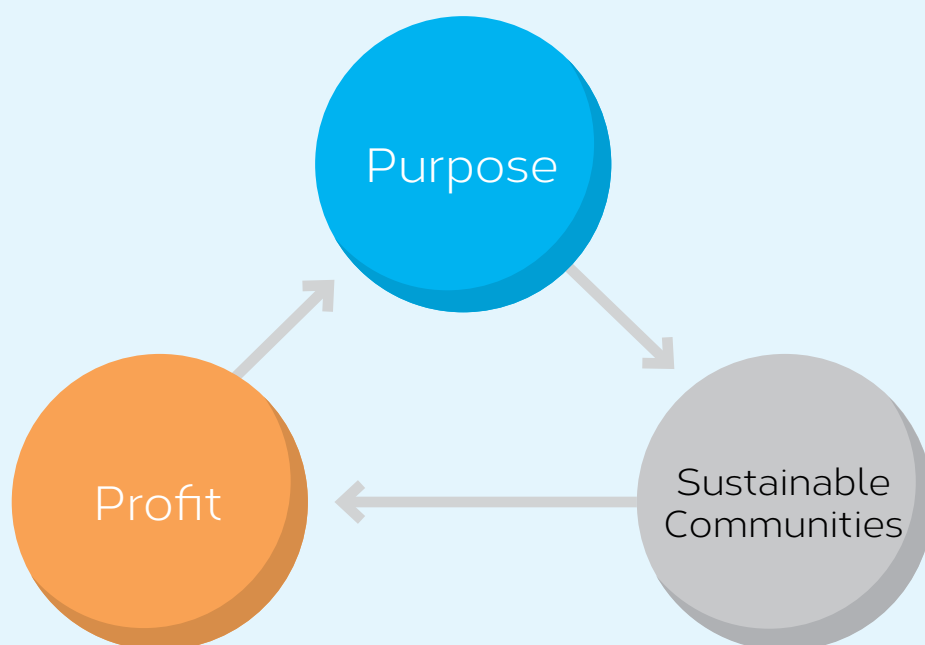
The power of the concept is that it encompasses both corporate and social goals and is not necessarily exclusive to either. Whilst some may maintain that these are distinct propositions, this report argues it is perfectly possible to drive social good through what might appear to be overtly commercial actions. The challenge (and opportunity) in defining purpose is that it is a catch all term that can be adopted by all types of businesses and organisations which can lead to confusion as to what purpose should mean to different organisations.

Whether a business defines its purpose as a social good, to create innovative products or to provide a bespoke service, this report argues that each should share a common thread: to [provide a reason to exist beyond simply making a profit](#), to provide some form of [societal good](#) and to be [actively pursued](#). For a business to be considered purposeful, purpose must not be an afterthought or seen as a nice add-on – it must be at the core of all business activity in terms of what you do and how you do it. Purpose provides the focus and the long-term ambition that will ultimately deliver success for a business and for society.

In research conducted by Message House, 75% of the public said it was important for a company to have a clearly defined purpose.

In my view, we need to reconcile the relationship between purpose and profit. Rather than sitting in conflict with each other we need to recognise that purpose and profit can be mutually reinforcing. Without profit, purpose cannot thrive; but equally, purpose has the potential to drive profits and sustainability.

Purpose, Sustainable Communities and Profit:
A mutually reinforcing relationship



For this report, purpose will be defined as:

A company's core 'reason for being.' It answers the question about why a company is in business and helps provide focus for a business strategy that extends beyond financial gain.

Our definition, adapted from one set out by Burson-Marsteller, places a greater emphasis on 'beyond financial gain'.ⁱⁱ This is a recognition that purpose stands apart and above other business interests and that a business should exist to contribute to society as a whole. However, the phrase 'beyond financial gain' is not intended to eschew profit or exclude businesses that work in finance or related sectors. On the contrary, a purpose that includes helping clients make good decisions, providing financial security or providing the capital to allow the economy to grow are all valid and valuable.

What makes a good purpose

The opportunity to explicitly state that your business follows a purpose should not be restricted to those addressing solely social issues – innovation and customer service are equally valuable purposes. However, on reading some corporate purpose statements (or Mission Statements, as they are often referred to), one would be forgiven for thinking that certain corporations are trying position themselves as global philanthropists. Ambition and a social conscience are of course important, but with a Message House survey showing 75% of the public believe a corporate purpose should be customer focused compared to 25% who believe it should be socially focused, defining purpose in such a way that the core of the business is lost poses reputational and strategic risks.

As we dug deeper into the concept of purpose, we wanted to gain a better understanding of what makes a good purpose. We asked the public what they thought of purpose statements from six high profile companies – Tesco, HSBC, BT, Barclays, The Coca-Cola Company and Microsoft. We found that for a purpose statement to be compelling, it needs to meet the following criteria:

1. **Appeal** – it needs to be a purpose that attracts and engages people
2. **Distinctiveness** – it has to speak to something distinctive in the organisation that makes it identifiably their purpose
3. **Good fit** – it must reflect what the brand does and how it works
4. **Experience** – it must be lived and experienced by people in their everyday interactions with the organisation

Our research showed that while some companies are getting it right, many aren't going far enough, producing purpose statements that are either too generic or in conflict with their brand or customer experience.

Models of purposeful business

With interest in purposeful business growing, there is a need for the concept to be defined more definitively in a legal and regulatory sense and to raise awareness of existing opportunities. The barriers for business leaders pursuing purposeful business are often cultural rather than structural. The assumption is frequently made that directors are obliged by law to maximise profits for shareholders or that profit is the only metric of success. However, there are alternative legal and structural models that a purposeful business can take. For example, purposeful businesses that deliver exceptional standards of environmental and societal good can now be officially certified as B Corps by the independent organisation B Lab (also see industry specific accreditations, e.g. Fairtrade). Benefits include boost to the brand, influence and the ability to measure success against metrics other than profit.

This is perhaps the most widely known method of becoming a purposeful business. Less well known is the existing flexibility within English company law that allows businesses to define purpose within their company articles by setting out asset, performance and mission locks. The effect is to protect the execution of the purpose by legally binding stakeholders to specific responsibilities and performance indicators. UnLtd, in partnership with the legal firm Bates Wells Braithwaite, are leading a campaign to increase awareness of purpose – and specifically this flexibility in the law – and through the tool [Purposely](#) have developed model company articles that can be used for a range of different types of purposeful business (all within the 'Company limited by Shares' legal form). The models they have identified provide a useful guide for the forms a purposeful business can take:*

The barriers for business leaders pursuing purposeful business are often cultural rather than structural.

B Corporations

B Corporation certification is issued to for-profit companies by B Lab, a global non-profit organisation launched in 2006, for businesses that meet rigorous standards in environmental and social impact, transparency and accountability. The aim is to redefine success in business.

Today there are over 2,000 B Corporations operating in more than 50 countries across 130 sectors.

Model 1	Model 2
A business that places shareholder value above other objectives, but has a stated purpose related to its commercial goals (e.g. to be the most innovative company in its sector). Commits to a set of responsible business principles (self-defined) which define how it operates.	A business that seeks to generate shareholder value in a way that also improves society. It measures success in financial performance alongside social and environmental impact, and commits to having an overall positive impact on society. It may also commit to particular social or environmental outcomes/impact.
Model 3	Model 4
A business with a particular social or environmental purpose, which it places above other objectives including shareholder value. It seeks to tackle a societal problem through its business model or by how it uses its profits. It may seek investment in order to grow its operations and impact, and may generate profit for private shareholders and investors, but this is of secondary importance.	A business with a particular social or environmental purpose, which it places above other objectives including shareholder value. It seeks to tackle a societal problem through its business model or by how it uses its profits. It has self-imposed limits on the proportion of profits that can be distributed to private shareholders and investors (>50% over time), and on the use of company assets for anything other than the social purpose, if the business closes down (sometimes known as an asset lock).

* Model typology developed for Purposely tool. At time of writing the tool and models are still in Beta mode.

Example of purposeful business:

B Corp: Bates Wells Braithwaite

Bates Wells Braithwaite (BWB) was the first law firm in the UK to become a certified B Corporation. A commitment to making a positive social contribution in the public interest is incorporated into the BWB founding principles, with specific reference to environmental responsibility, engagement in civil society, and placing a high value on working with and advising businesses which create social value. BWB ensures that commercial goals do not come before its social principles, which is evidenced by the fact that pro bono work in the third sector ranks amongst its top category of clients. As an employer, the company has also committed to paying its workforce the living wage, promoting diversity and meritocracy, and cultivating a transparent, trusting, and loyal relationship with its employees. As an early advocate of B Corporations and a pioneer of socially responsible enterprise, BWB now offers advice on how more businesses can become purpose-led B Corps, ensuring that profit does not come at the expense of principles.



The current landscape

The concept of purpose has seen a growing wave of momentum over the last few years with more leaders seeing value in purpose and the number of purpose-led businesses increasing at a rapid rate. From a fringe element of the economy, we now see a situation in which purpose-led business is entering the mainstream. The movement is not solely restricted to small, agile businesses who are seeking to make a difference in their community. Corporations are more willing to talk about their purpose and there are several examples of global businesses adapting to build sustainability into their business models.

SMEs

In a Message House survey of 113 small business owners, 63% of our sample stated that their business had a purpose beyond profit, suggesting that the concept is widely adopted by commercial and social businesses alike.ⁱⁱⁱ Of course, this is a small sample and is only a stated position rather than an independent assessment of each of these businesses. The true number of purpose-led businesses is impossible to quantify accurately as there is no official measurement for purpose or category into which these businesses can easily fit into, particularly commercial businesses. Still, this figure of 63% of small businesses led by purpose is very encouraging.

When looking at purpose-led business from a social perspective, we are able to gain some insight into the recent growth of the purpose-led economy. In 2015, the B Corp movement arrived in the UK with 62 founding members, today there are over 150 members with a combined revenue in excess of £800m.

This is just the companies that have applied for and met the rigorous standards of B Lab. A 2017 joint report from The Departments for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy illustrates the size of the purpose-led economy in the UK^{iv} –

- There are an estimated 471,000 social enterprises
- 22% of UK SMEs are identified as socially oriented
- Roughly 1.44 million people are employed by social enterprises. This is expected to grow by 22% by September 2018

The report also highlights the different and valuable role that these types of companies fulfil in the economy. Compared with other SMEs, social enterprises are almost four times more likely to provide social services such as education, health or artistic activities. They are also far more likely to provide accommodation and food services. Furthermore, social enterprises are significantly more likely to be located in the most deprived areas of the country and the research also suggests that they have more equal gender representation in leadership positions.

It is clear from this research that purpose-led businesses are playing a vital role in providing employment, key services and investment in deprived areas.

But what of actual business performance? Again, the data is encouraging. Over the last year, 93% of social enterprises generated a surplus of profit (compared to 76% of other SMEs) and are more likely to report a positive long-term outlook in terms of growth prospects.

Significantly, social enterprises are much more likely to report innovations in products, services and processes than other SMEs. The upshot of this is that when we look to long-term success and drivers of the economy, it will be those who can continually innovate and improve their output that lead the future.

Vi-Ability

Founded by former Liverpool, Arsenal and Welsh international ladies footballer Kelly Davis, Vi-Ability works to give young people involved in sports business and employability skills, in order to turn struggling sports clubs into viable businesses.

In 2017 they were able to support 216 individuals in England and Wales, 65% of whom went on to volunteering, education, employment or training.

Any profit Vi-Ability makes is reinvested into the organisation so they can continue their work.

This evidence (based on social enterprises) leads to the conclusion that purpose-led businesses are playing an important role in driving innovation in the economy and in turn providing quality jobs in areas that need them.

Corporations

It is not only small business and social enterprises who understand the value of purpose. Many large corporations are strongly rooted in their purpose – with IKEA being a notable example of the benefits purpose can bring. It has a long-held purpose ‘**To create a better everyday life for the many people**’, starting with the aim to provide quality furniture at affordable prices and the recognition that material and economic sustainability are key to their long-term success – these concepts exist in every part of the business: design, sourcing, packaging, distribution and human resources. For IKEA, this insistence on purpose has been key in the creation of a globally known brand and has been an important driver of their huge growth over the last three decades.

IKEA has understood this for decades but it would appear that many other corporations are also waking up to the power of purpose and are making efforts to remodel their strategy to focus on long term goals and to deliver societal good. Unilever, Mars, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s and Diageo are just some of the corporations which have stated a renewed focus on their purpose and to operate more responsibly. It is easy to paint this as CSR or merely window dressing on the part of these corporations, however there have been signs of a shift in approach that would go against this assertion. Whilst the majority of B Corporations are still SMEs, there are some large corporates that are now willing to take the rigorous measures required to become certified. Ben & Jerry’s are a certified B Corp, as are Patagonia, and Danone has announced its intention to apply to B Lab, a highly significant move which would make it the first Fortune 500 company to do so.

It is not only small business and social enterprises who understand the value of purpose.

An [open letter](#), sent in January 2018, from BlackRock CEO Larry Fink has been making waves in the corporate world, focusing on the importance of purpose for long term survival. Addressed to CEOs, he writes:

“

Without a sense of purpose, no company, either public or private, can achieve its full potential. It will ultimately lose the license to operate from key stakeholders. It will succumb to short-term pressures to distribute earnings, and, in the process, sacrifice investments in employee development, innovation, and capital expenditures that are necessary for long-term growth...

And ultimately, that company will provide subpar returns to the investors who depend on it to finance their retirement, home purchases, or higher education.

”

With significant influence over investment markets and \$1.7 trillion worth of funds directly under BlackRock's management, it would be foolhardy not to heed this advice.

A global market

Globally, the potential market-place for purpose-led businesses is huge, particularly those with a focus on innovation and sustainability. The Business & Sustainable Development Commission has estimated that the pursuit of sustainable business goals ([see section on UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)) could open up markets worth \$12 trillion dollars by 2030, with knock on effects in the wider economy potentially 2-3 times greater still.^v Their report identifies 60 market opportunities across four economic systems: Food and Agriculture, Cities, Energy and Materials and Health and Wellbeing. Businesses which focus on a purpose beyond immediate financial gain should be better placed to recognise the long-term opportunities in these emerging markets and will have a competitive advantage as they grow.

This focus on long-term sustainability means that businesses understand more than ever that purpose and profit are deeply intertwined. To stay

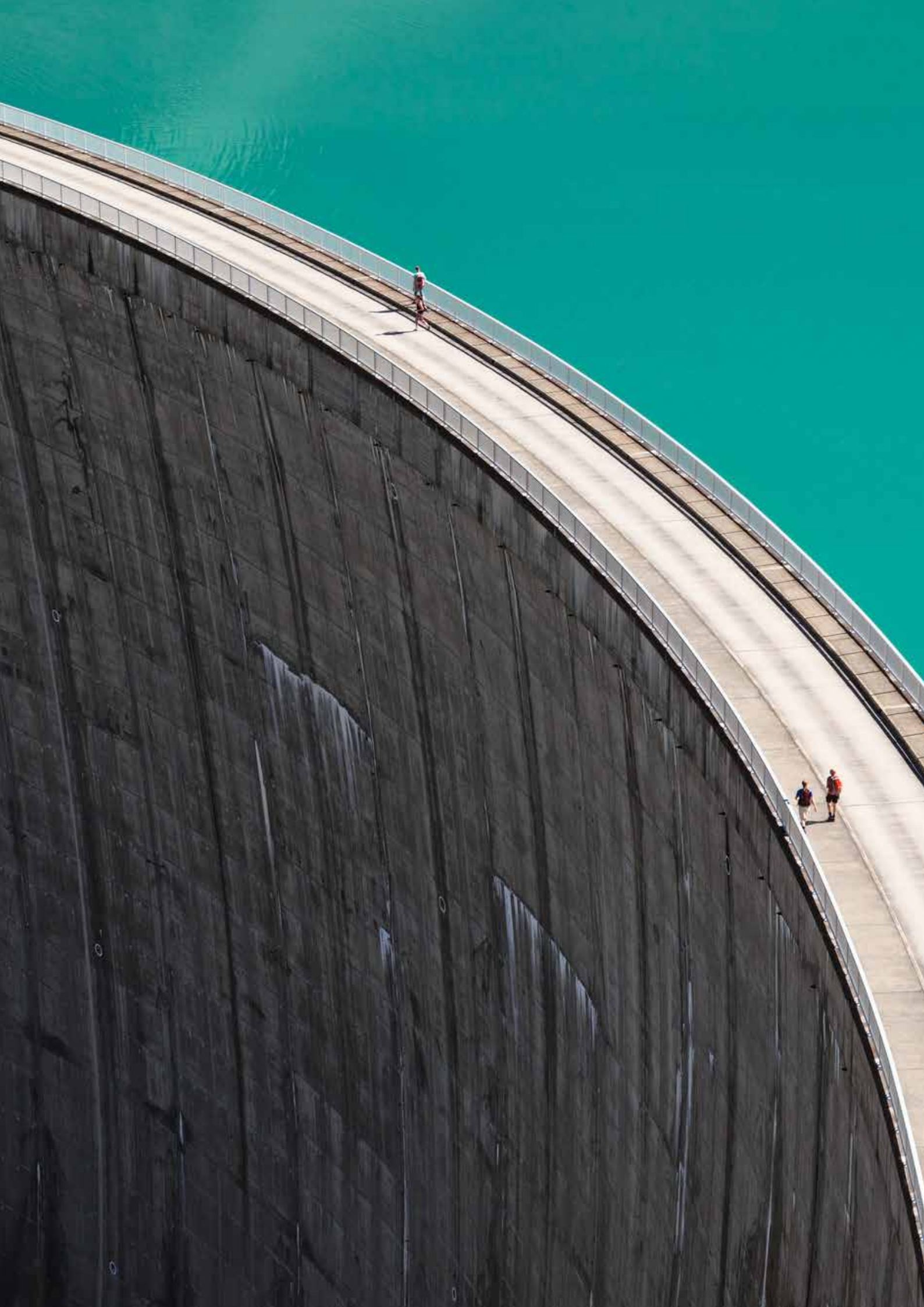
The SDGs could open up markets worth \$12 trillion.

competitive and reap the commercial benefits, the new challenge for business will be in realising authenticity of purpose.

Advocates of purpose

There are a growing number of organisations which offer their support and guidance for start-ups and established businesses alike who want to become more purpose-driven. Organisations championing and advising on purpose include Business in the Community, Business Fights Poverty, UnLtd and B Lab, to name a few. Additionally, the concept has become more mainstream in academia, with institutions including the University of Cambridge publishing reports on the long-term benefits for businesses of pursuing a sustainability agenda. With this wave of economic and social forces, it now appears that the future of business lies with purpose.





Making the case for purpose

The case for purpose-led business can be neatly summed up by the maxim 'doing well by doing good'. Clearly this is an over-simplified approach but, as this section will explore, there is serious weight behind this basic concept. The commercial opportunities that open themselves to purpose-led businesses alongside the ability to make a positive impact on the world make a compelling case that is too big to ignore.

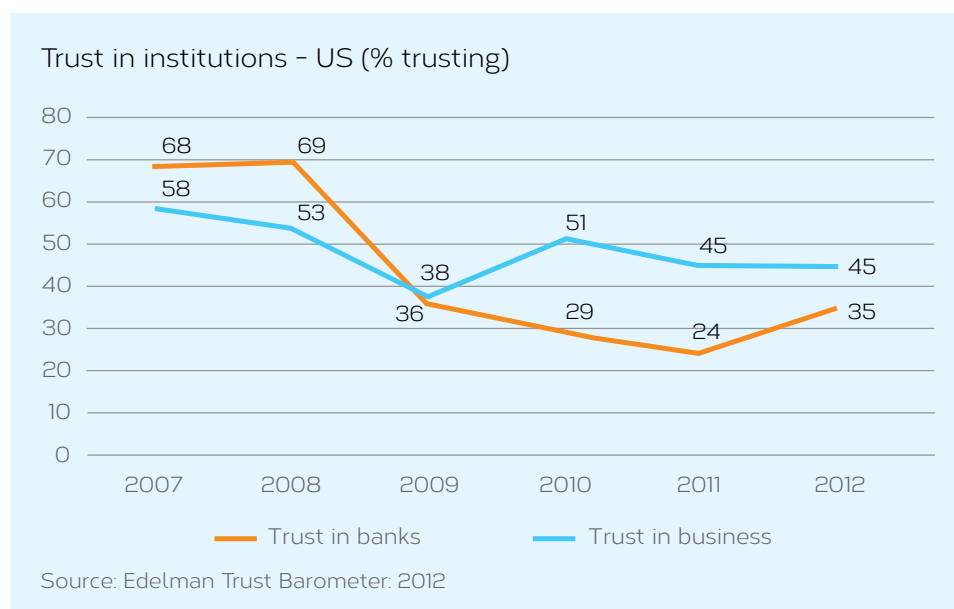
The commercial case

There is a strong strategic case for purposeful business. Evidence shows that businesses with a well-defined purpose are better able to meet changing consumer expectations, position themselves effectively, weather a disruptive marketplace and attract talent. And with a global market related to the SDGs worth an estimated \$12 trillion by 2030 the potential rewards are massive.

Changing expectations

Over the last 10 years, consumer attitudes have shifted and the ability to communicate authenticity of purpose has become a valuable tool in appealing to customers. It is also equally valuable in helping businesses navigate volatile economic and political times.

Following the financial crisis of 2008, trust in banking and business took a massive hit and failed to bounce back significantly.^{vi} Since 2012, Edelman has tracked a steady increase in trust in business in the US, with trust in 2017 as high as pre-crash levels at 58%. However, this has proved a brittle recovery as trust in business again took a big hit in 2018, falling to 48%, less than half the US population.^{vii}

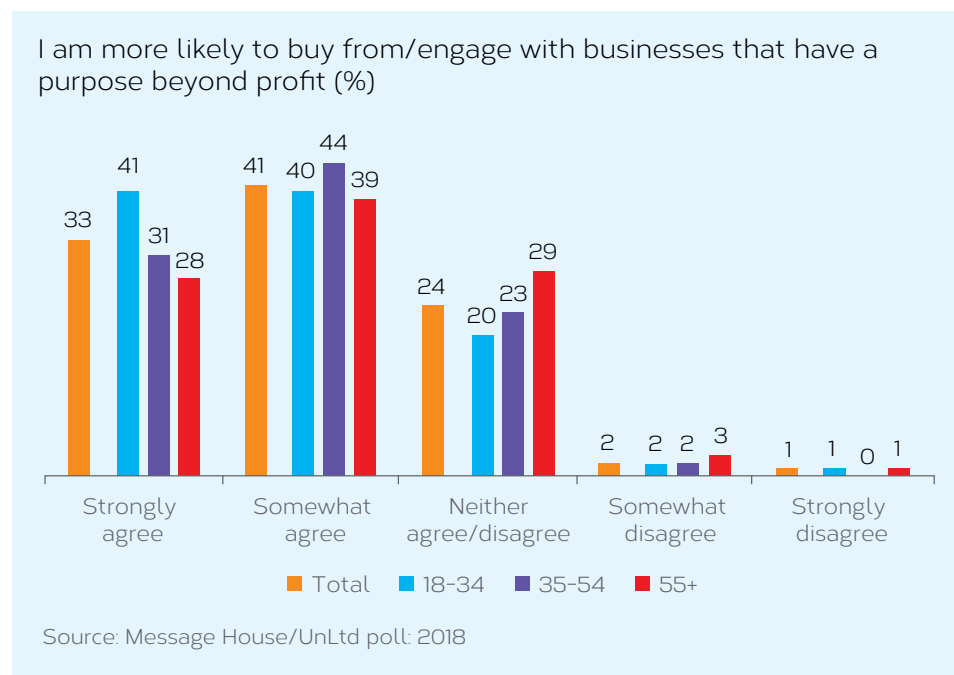


It would appear that the social contract between business and society has transformed. It is no longer acceptable for businesses to view themselves as benign actors, detached from the communities in which they operate. It is now the norm for businesses to be called upon by consumers and politicians to take their responsibilities to society seriously. The enduring reputational hit for traditional banks and business presents an opportunity for purpose-led business with desire for more meaningful and responsible models of business emerging. Instead of being part of the problem, purpose-led business can be an important part of the solution in addressing the crisis in trust.

It is not only social enterprises which can fill this role; all purpose-led businesses can do this. By their nature, they are geared towards planning for the future and achieving long-term targets rather than focussing on quarter-by-quarter growth. They are therefore less likely to lose focus, cause harm or face the same reputational and legal risks as other businesses. By authentically focussing on purpose, a business, whether social or commercial, can legitimise its position in society as a positive force.

It is no longer acceptable for businesses to view themselves as benign actors, detached from the communities in which they operate.

There are immediate commercial benefits too. Consumer attitudes reveal the huge opportunity for purposeful business, with a majority of the public saying they are more likely to consider buying from an ethical business and are more likely to recommend an ethical business. Message House research backs this up, with people far more likely to engage with businesses that they believe to have a purpose.^{viii} Significantly, when considering future purchasing power and marketing opportunities, these sentiments are even stronger amongst millennials.



Purpose gives a business a strong brand identity and consumers feel good about engaging with these businesses. In terms of organic marketing, the power is clear – simply by existing to serve a purpose, businesses can visibly differentiate themselves and hold a competitive advantage. The knock-on effect is that opportunities for partnerships and endorsements are more common, which in turn can help reduce the spend on paid marketing. For many purpose-led businesses, ‘truth’ is the only marketing tool they need.

Elvis & Kresse

First established in 2005 and a certified Social Enterprise since 2007, Elvis and Kresse repurpose raw materials and transform them into luxury accessories, all while donating 50% of their profits to charities. They work with fire brigades to reclaim and reimagine decommissioned fire-hoses, saving them from landfill and turning them into handbags, wallets and belts.

As well as providing the business with focus, their purpose provides an incredibly powerful marketing and partnership platform that requires minimal input in terms of capital. For example, in 2009, an Elvis & Kresse belt was worn by Cameron Diaz on the front cover of Vogue – normally this sort of exposure would be unthinkable for such a young fashion brand.

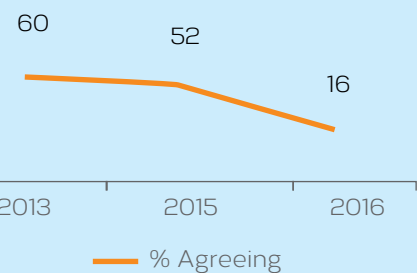
The real monetary benefit of purpose can be seen at Unilever, with the CEO, Paul Polman, stating that brands that meet the highest standards of environmental and social impact are growing **40% faster** than other brands.^{ix} One of Unilever's marquee brands is **Ben and Jerry's**, who are early pioneers of purposeful business. They have built a highly successful global brand based around three pillars of purpose that hold equal importance within the business – Product Mission: To make fantastic ice cream, for its own sake; Economic Mission: to operate on a sustainable financial basis and expand opportunities for employees; Social Mission: to actively recognise the central role that business plays in society. Ben and Jerry's are authentic in their pursuit of purpose, evaluating against each of these goals each year as a business and including them in employee's performance reports. They are an example of a business that uses its purpose to build a brand, produce quality products and to motivate their employees – ultimately delivering huge growth.

Impact investment

It is not only consumers who are seeing the appeal of purpose. There is a growing number of investors who are advocating the benefits of backing purpose-driven businesses. The basic premise of 'impact investment' is that investors seek to make a positive societal or environmental impact whilst also generating a financial return. It is not only the philanthropic benefit that draws investors towards impact investing; it is seen as a vital response to the expanding influence of purpose in the economy, to changing societal expectations and is seen as a safer long-term bet.

Ernst & Young has conducted research that shows investors' attitudes towards impact and 'nonfinancial' performance indicators are changing and are moving to a mindset of long-term value. Financial indicators remain pivotal in decision-making but it is no longer the sole metric used. The percentage of investors in their study agreeing with the statement: "Nonfinancial disclosures are seldom material or have financial impact" has seen a rapid decline in recent years, from 60% agreement in 2013 to only 16% agreement in 2016. As investors look for a long-term return it is becoming more normal to ask the difficult questions on labour issues, risk mitigation and sustainable supply chains.

Nonfinancial disclosures are seldom material or have financial impact (%)



Source: Ernst & Young; 2017

So far, organisations such as Big Society Capital, Bridges Fund Management and the more traditional BlackRock has led the way in impact investment, but the trend is rapidly growing, and many are predicting that a tipping point will soon be reached for entering the mainstream. With more than half of the public wanting their investments to make a positive contribution, it is becoming more common for funds to develop their own impact strategies to meet this demand.^{xi} The potential impact of this growing movement is huge, as it could see vast sums of private capital being invested in businesses which are focussed on a purpose.

With more capital being released into the 'impact economy', the logical outcome is an increase in the number of purpose-driven businesses and greater demands upon established businesses seeking investment to incorporate purpose into their business model.

Talent and performance

The case for purpose is equally compelling from an internal perspective. Once an employee is receiving a decent base salary, the idea that extra money is a sufficient motivator for employees holds little weight. Management theorists have long stated the importance of other motivational factors, including purpose, that contribute to increased productivity, employee satisfaction and retention.

To recruit and retain the best talent it is imperative that businesses can authentically communicate their purpose. In our survey, 54% of people strongly agreed with the statement 'I am more likely to consider working for a company with a clearly defined corporate purpose' – this figure is significantly higher for millennials. We also found that 68% think it is important for their employers to reflect their social and environmental values. Additionally, research has shown that 50% of millennial entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to have a positive impact. For younger generations, expectations around work have changed and pursuing goals which fit more closely with their values is just as important as financial remuneration. With the number of purpose-led businesses set to increase, the choices open to millennials will also increase. As millennials take up more senior positions and with Generation Z about to enter the workforce, it is more important than ever for businesses to offer purpose as part of their proposition.

For productivity and innovation, purpose provides an invaluable motivation for employees. When employees feel they are working towards a shared goal they will put more in and get more back through a stronger sense of achievement.



In the words of our focus group participants:^{xii}

“

I guess, if you all know that you're striving for the same thing, then even if there are problems along the way you can, sort of, maybe overcome them if you know that the end goal is to do whatever you need to do.

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“

Where I work, the people are so committed to what they do, that's what I really like about it. A lot of people have taken a pay cut to be there, because it's their specialism, it's what they want to do. They take things on, without thinking, 'Have we actually got the capability', somehow, we pull together, that's what I really like about it. I've never felt so quickly, kind of, part of a team.

”

As we have seen in [the Current Landscape section](#) of this report, there is evidence that purpose-led businesses are more likely to operate inclusive employment practices. Research from McKinsey & Co would suggest that they are reaping the benefits of this – they found that businesses that have a strong record in terms of gender and ethnic diversity are far more likely to return profits than those that perform poorly on these metrics.^{xiii}

The internal case for purpose is clear – by operating an inclusive policy and offering a purpose, businesses can attract, retain and bring the best out of talented employees.

Innovation

The nature of transformational innovation is that it takes time, is difficult and doesn't immediately deliver profits. By shifting the focus from short-term profit to long-term sustainability, businesses are much better placed to innovate their products, services and organisation.

Short-termism discourages risk-taking and investment in unfamiliar territory. It also discourages businesses from diversifying their portfolios and employment practices – assuming the same formula that worked in the previous quarter will work again in the next. For long-term success, a business needs to imagine how the market will look in 10 years time and prepare now, or better yet, try and disrupt the market so that they will be the leaders in a market they have shaped. Purpose gives a business the vision to understand the innovation needed and the motivation to pursue that.

Of course, short-term profit is important and fuels pursuit of purpose, but when time horizons only extend from this quarter to the next, transformative innovation is stifled. Purpose gives the impetus to accept short-term sacrifices and gives greater freedom to experiment. It also gives a clearer sense of where the business is going, resulting in a competitive edge in the future.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is perhaps the most famous innovator of recent times and provides a prime example of relentless pursuit of purpose at the expense of short term profit. Amazon are known for their obsession, above all else, with their purpose to become the 'earth's most customer centric company'. In 1997 Bezos wrote a letter to shareholders in which he states:

“

But this is Day 1 for the Internet and, if we execute well, for Amazon.com. Today, online commerce saves customers money and precious time. Tomorrow, through personalization, online commerce will accelerate the very process of discovery.

We will continue to focus relentlessly on our customers.

We will continue to make investment decisions in light of long-term market leadership considerations rather than short-term profitability considerations or short-term Wall Street reactions.

”

Short-termism discourages risk-taking and investment in unfamiliar territory.

This bold declaration of purpose over 20 years ago may have worried some shareholders at the time and it was not until 2003 that Amazon returned their first profit. Since then, Amazon's relentless focus on the customer has revolutionised the way we shop, seen them overtake Walmart in terms of value, return extremely healthy profits over a sustained period and has seen Jeff Bezos become the richest person in the world. Not bad for what was once a loss-making tech start-up.

Take electric cars as another example of major purposeful innovation and long-term thinking. Zero-emission automobiles have been a serious ambition in environmental circles since the early 90s. Back then, the technology was nowhere near advanced enough to make it a realistic proposition and there was no demand from the market. It was not until 2004 that Tesla started development, eventually releasing the Tesla Roadster in 2008 as the culmination of 4 years of major investment without any significant return on investment. Tesla were quickly followed by Nissan with the Leaf, as one of the first affordable options of electric car. 10 years on, many would say we have reached a tipping-point where the electric car is now seen as the future of the industry. Tesla are recording huge sales and the Nissan Leaf (first launched in 2010) is the biggest selling electric car with over 300,000 units worldwide. Infrastructure is rapidly being built up to accommodate this shift and all the major manufacturers are developing their own models of electric car in preparation. This has been 25 years in the making and the businesses that have reaped the benefits are those that got in on the act early and made short-term sacrifices. Competitors who failed to react to the shift and focussed only on prevailing market conditions are now playing catch-up.



Social impact

As well as the commercial benefits, purpose-led businesses that take their societal responsibilities seriously have the potential to make significant positive impact at both a local and a global level. As referenced in the [previous section](#), social enterprises are increasing their share of the economy and are actively making a difference in their communities. On a larger scale, corporates like IKEA have used their purpose as a cornerstone of growth and have built sustainable practices into their business strategy. All purpose-led businesses have the potential to contribute, whether it is through what they do, how they do it or how they use their profits.

The first step for a business is to have an in-depth understanding of the world in which it operates and to take responsibility for its impact on the social, economic and ecological environment. By rooting their impact within the communities in which they have a presence, businesses can deliver a great deal of social good for those who are most impacted by their presence whilst also delivering profit in the long run by supporting a sustainable economy.

Corporates like IKEA have used their purpose as a cornerstone of growth and have built sustainable practices into their business strategy.

Social Bite

Set up as a sandwich shop in 2012, Social Bite is on a mission to end homelessness in Scotland. As a business, it aims to deliver a profit, but its charitable arm is centred around the employment and training of vulnerable people from backgrounds of homelessness.

Over the years, Social Bite has expanded to multiple cafés, a high-end restaurant, and supports the building of villages for homeless people.

Social Bite has benefitted from widespread media coverage with visits from George Clooney and more recently from Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. These celebrity endorsements not only display that purposeful business is a worthwhile cause but is supported widely in the most high-profile circles, garnering a huge amount of media coverage for the business and the cause.

Sustainable Development Goals

It is vital for businesses to take their impact seriously, not just in the name of philanthropy, but to prosper in the long term. With inequality threatening economic stability, declining trust in business and political institutions, climate change and dwindling natural resources, the case for purposeful business is a vital response to these issues.

The UN has signalled the importance of business playing a leading role in addressing major social and environmental issues. On September 25th 2015, the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly signed up to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) that set targets for 2030. The 17 goals are underpinned by 169 targets. For example, one of the targets listed for Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure is – Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.

With targets such as this, the commercial and social benefits are clear – by increasing investments in under-developed areas and focussing on innovation there is the opportunity to create new markets and reduce inequalities. The aim of these goals is to develop global cooperation between business, government and NGOs which can fuel the economic growth needed to eradicate hunger, socio-economic inequalities and to tackle climate change.

The UN has signalled the importance of business playing a leading role in addressing major social and environmental issues.



These goals may seem very ambitious, but the emphasis is on every individual playing a small part so that, through widespread participation and cooperation, there can be a significant difference. Businesses, especially those that tackle these issues as part of their core offering and in their working practices, will have a highly significant role to play.

Take for example Goal Number 5: Gender Equality. As we have seen in the [previous section](#), purpose-led businesses are leading the way in the UK on employing women in leadership positions. Or Goal Number 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; again purpose-led businesses are returning a profit and providing employment in deprived areas. And as we also saw in the previous section, purpose-led businesses are far more likely to address the higher-level social and environmental issues identified in the SDGs, such as education and environmentalism.

It is becoming more common for large multinational businesses to sign up to the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, Mars have undergone a radical rethink of their approach to sustainability and plan to invest \$1 billion over the next few years to address these challenges. Actions they are taking include targets to source 100% of their cocoa and tea from certified sources and to redesign all packaging so that it is 100% recyclable.

When considering the world in which they operate – a world that spans borders, employs thousands globally, has long supply chains, high emissions and waste – it becomes apparent the huge power these businesses have in delivering a sustainable global economy.

Businesses which take a long-term view can focus on and adapt to the different issues they face in assessing their impact. They are therefore far better at delivering impact and taking advantage of this opportunity for sustainable growth than those which exist to make a short-term profit. By focussing on purpose and impact, businesses will ultimately deliver profit, not alongside or in spite of purpose, but as a **consequence** of their purpose.

Purpose-led businesses are returning a profit and providing employment in deprived areas.

By focussing on purpose and impact, businesses will ultimately deliver profit, not alongside or in spite of purpose, but as a consequence of their purpose.

With the growing focus on initiatives such as the SDGs, it is plain that business and wider society has recognised the need to move to a sustainable economy. The operating environment for all business activity is changing and many businesses will need to undergo significant changes to adapt. The SDGs has provided new metrics to measure success and a framework for global cooperation that will help achieve the ambition of a sustainable economy. We are already seeing a shift to this form of economy and it is likely this will continue. Businesses that can adapt will survive and deliver impact, whereas those which do not are likely to struggle.

Mars – Sustainable in a Generation

As part of their 'Sustainable in a Generation' plan, Mars have committed \$1 billion of investment over the next few years to tackle urgent threats facing the business and the society in which they operate in – threats like climate change, poverty in the value chain and a scarcity of resources. The plan focuses on three interconnected ambitions they believe are essential drivers of sustainable growth: Healthy Planet, Thriving People, Nourishing Wellbeing.





Living your purpose

Purpose is a precious concept, one that can give a business focus and a connection with consumers; but it is also a very fragile concept. It is tempting for businesses to state they have a purpose or to write up their values, only to then sit back, feel good, but change very little. Our research suggests that consumers aren't fooled by this and are generally sceptical about purpose. The importance of building a culture that embeds purpose into every business function cannot be overstated.

Authenticity

A Message House poll conducted in January 2018 showed that 40% of the public think that purpose has more to do with spin and marketing than with strategy and decision making, and that 61% agree with the statement: "Claims about business purpose are often not backed up with any substance".

What can a business do to convince people that it takes its purpose seriously? It is not enough to simply talk about purpose – marketing around purpose can be effective but will not convince everybody. Purpose must be authentic, it must be seen to be lived and to be experienced in interactions with the business. The most convincing actions are substantive, such as publishing a report or putting the legal framework in place, whereas marketing is less convincing.

61% agree with the statement: "Claims about business purpose are often not backed up with any substance".

Which of the following would convince you that a business is taking its purpose seriously? (%)



Source: Message House/UnLtd poll: 2018

Who 'owns' purpose?

For purpose to have significant impact it needs to feel credible and lived throughout the entirety of the business. But where does the purpose come from? And who should be responsible for ensuring that purpose remains at the core of the business?

Message House ran focus groups with employees from large corporate businesses with the aim of understanding the reality of how purpose and corporate culture is lived. The answer to both questions posed above is clear – purpose is set from the top.

Strong leadership is key.

On the first question, 'where does purpose come from?', the answer is straightforward. The direction of a business is set by the founders and it is their responsibility to communicate the purpose in the early stages of growth. As the figurehead of the business, leadership needs to be comfortable in pursuing the purpose and communicating it to a wider audience. To succeed, leadership needs to be aligned on what the purpose is, and the strategic importance placed upon it.

Employees intuitively look up the hierarchy when seeking models of behaviour. If they see a culture that does not reflect or is openly contradictory to the stated purpose they will inevitably feel a disconnect. In these instances, employees are just as likely as consumers to see purpose as a marketing gimmick. This is a sentiment we often hear in our focus groups:

“

I mean at the end of the day, especially if you're a, you know, shareholder in a company, you're going to be working towards money. I think there's an element, just go out and do the good things, and then people are going to see the positive effect, but when it's all this, 'Oh we feed into the community', yes, do you really?

”

For most people in large corporations this is the unfortunate reality of where they work, and it has a negative impact on motivation, autonomy and communication as teams and individuals are caught in silos.

Whilst it is true that purpose stems from the top, the key point is that ownership needs to be felt throughout a business. Top-down management can result in a sense of powerlessness to make an impact – employees feel like they are being dictated to or that the purpose is lost through layers of poor management. On the other hand, effective leadership creates an atmosphere in which people feel empowered to affect their surroundings and pursue purpose.

To stand any chance of being more than a marketing gimmick, purpose needs to be at the core of all business activities and leaders must display the associated behaviours and motivation. When a good example is set, and management is encouraged to empower, it is much easier for those further down the hierarchy to buy into the value of purpose as a unifying force.

Leadership: Indra K. Nooyi, PepsiCo CEO 2006–2018

Under Indra Nooyi's leadership, PepsiCo committed to an ambitious programme, named [Performance with Purpose](#), that aims to deliver sustained growth by making more nutritional products, protecting the planet and empowering people in the communities they serve.

She is also a vocal champion of purpose and commands a global platform – consistently being named in Forbes's 100 Most Powerful Women and recognised as a '[Hero of Conscious Capitalism](#)' in 2017:

“

When I became CEO in 2006, one of the fundamental beliefs I brought to the role was that corporations don't exist in a vacuum – we are a part of every community where we do business. And I wanted to make sure that PepsiCo was not only delivering top-tier financial returns, but doing so in a way that was responsive to the needs of the world around us. That's the idea at the heart of Performance with Purpose. In the beginning, a number of people were sceptical about it. But today, Performance with Purpose is in our DNA, it's a big part of what attracts so many talented people to the company, and it's helping fuel our success.

”

In [Forbes](#), November 2017

For Nooyi, business success and delivering societal good are intimately connected. The result was to create an environment at PepsiCo in which all employees can look to the leader and see a positive example of how purpose can drive a business forward.

Culture

Purpose can't exist without an associated culture that helps drive it.

Our research with corporate employees shows that not only do people **want** a positive and purposeful culture, they have now come to **expect** it and see a new benchmark for what constitutes purpose. Companies such as Facebook and Google have moved the goalposts in what we view as a good work environment and have brought ideas of fostering a strong corporate culture into the mainstream. Often, analysis of tech company culture focuses on the 'gimmicky' elements like quirky office furniture, free breakfasts and games machines. However, our participants saw in the gimmicks something more than just fun. They could see the environment was designed to support a higher purpose and was conducive to higher levels of satisfaction and personal development:

“

I work in the recruitment industry, for the directors who recruit into these fun, tech companies, and when they go on client visits they just think it's really chilled out, it's young, and not corporate, and not rigid. That makes for a good company culture, I think.

”

Tech companies have led a fundamental shift in how businesses and employees view workplace culture.

Of course, most businesses cannot, and should not, simply emulate the tech companies by bulk buying bean bags and smoothie machines. Culture needs to start with an internal evaluation and be in close alignment with the purpose. This way you can understand more clearly the behaviours you want to encourage and work methodically through the steps of how to achieve that. Any evaluation of how culture aids purpose needs to take a holistic approach – consider in what ways recruitment, training, management, physical environment and incentives all have an impact on culture.

Spotify

Spotify have stated that their mission is to 'give people access to all the music they want all the time – in a completely legal and accessible way'. An ambition there can be no doubt they have made huge strides in realising.

To do this Spotify have thought carefully about how their culture can bring the best out of their employees to drive growth and innovation. It starts with their people and trying to help them develop a 'growth mindset' – one that encourages them to embrace challenges, learn from criticism and promote creativity. They do this through constant opportunities to train and learn new skills, as well as creating an environment where people feel that it's safe to fail.

In a practical sense, this is not just about quality training and supportive managers, Spotify have developed their entire internal structure around nurturing this growth mindset. They work in 'Squads' – small autonomous teams with full responsibility to tackle specific challenges – and 'Tribes' – a collection of squads within a business area. This creates incredible agility when it comes to product development as well as allowing scalability. Each squad is set up to encourage collaboration, peer-to-peer learning, independence of process and are unencumbered by a large bureaucratic system.

Spotify also give employees ownership over the direction of the company by offering every single employee share options, meaning that their personal success and business success are intrinsically linked.

Purposeful decision making

Purpose comes into its own when a business is faced with a difficult decision where a standard profit/loss analysis does not clearly lead in one direction over another. The key to purpose is that it forces businesses to consider the question: 'Is this consistent with our purpose?'

Consider **The Body Shop** as a prominent example of a successful business where the power of purpose is apparent. The Body Shop was founded by Dame Anita Roddick in 1976 in Brighton with a single store selling ethical cosmetic and beauty products. Today, the Body Shop has 3,000 stores in 66 countries and employs over 22,000 people.

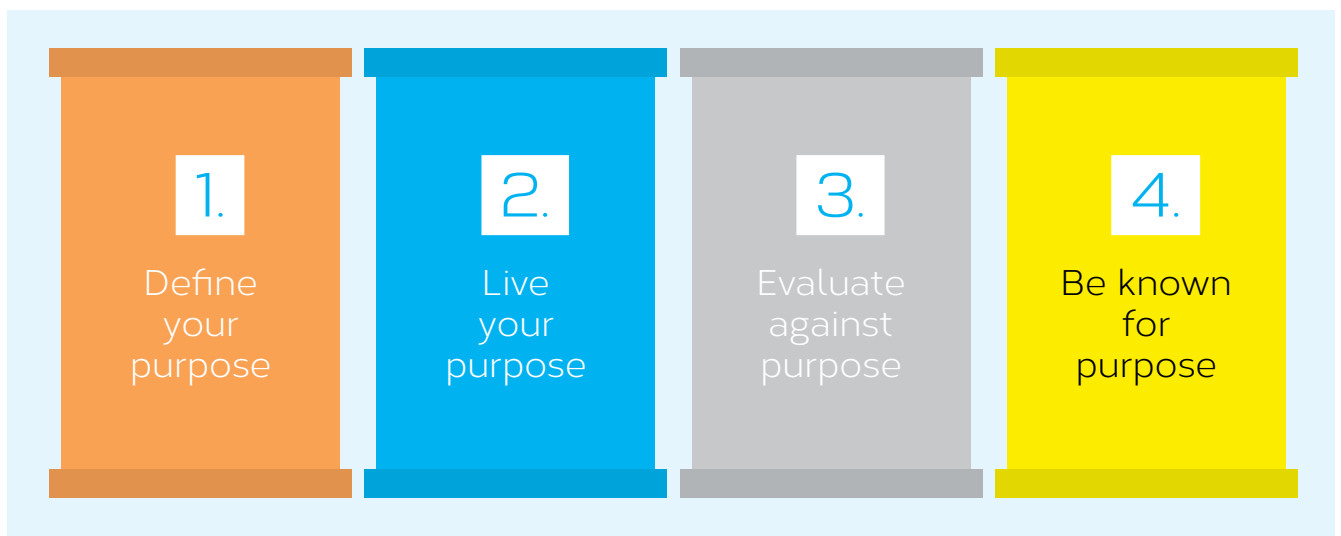
The business runs on the seemingly straightforward commitment to **Enrich Not Exploit** – “to enrich our planet, our products and our people” – and the belief that business could be a force for good. Far from being just a good marketing tagline, for over 40 years The Body Shop have been applying this purpose to every business decision, from products and procurement to brand partnerships. In practical terms, this means that they are 100% vegetarian, firmly opposed to animal testing, work fairly with farmers and suppliers and are socially active, for example through a global partnership with Greenpeace and activism with community based organisations.

Purpose has not hindered The Body Shop in any way. The purpose to Enrich Not Exploit gives the business confidence, focus and guidance, as well as an additional metric with which to measure success. Commercially, it gives The Body Shop a well-defined position on which to market and a loyal base of customers who appreciate their authenticity. Purposeful businesses are not immune to market conditions and difficult decisions will always have to be made, causing headaches and even short-term profit loss along the way. But what purpose has provided is far more valuable than short-term goals. It has given them the long-term vision and motivation to build a major international business from humble beginnings.



Four pillars of purpose-driven business

At Message House, we believe that there are four key pillars to success for a purpose-driven business:



1. Define your purpose

Purpose must be defined by something that chimes with the core proposition of your business but must also be aspirational in setting out some form of societal good. Take the time to really understand what it is that the business wants to achieve - engage with your stakeholders and commit to a well-defined purpose statement that motivates and carries authority.

It is vital that purpose does not become undermined by ambiguous wording or lacks enthusiasm from its inception due to lack of consultation or leadership. By defining your purpose, you are effectively setting the tone for all business activities to come, so it is imperative that it is well thought through at the earliest stage.

2. Live your purpose

Purpose is not solely a marketing tool; purpose needs to be embedded in the DNA of the company. Consider the following steps to embed purpose:

- **Legal form** – the flexibility exists in English law to allow a business to define its purpose within its company articles. Consider creating or altering your company articles so that they include clauses that set out expectations and responsibilities in delivering purpose.
- **Corporate culture** – employees of a business need to buy into the purpose and be supported in trying to pursue the purpose. A business needs to proactively foster this environment so should review its HR approach, specifically addressing:
 - Recruitment – are the right individuals being brought on board?
 - Training – is purpose embedded into training and employee reviews?
 - Organisation – do individual teams and hierarchies enable purpose-driven behaviour?
 - Incentives – is purpose-driven behaviour rewarded?
- **Leadership** – is the leadership making the decisions and displaying the purpose-driven behaviours necessary to set an example for the whole organisation? Top managers and board members should be the most invested in delivering purpose in order for it cascade throughout a business.
- **Business strategy** – your core business proposition should aid the attainment of your purpose. Reputation can be put at risk if the business' focus is solely on profit and ignores negative consequences. Focus on how products and services fit into the purpose whilst also delivering profit.
- **Strategic partnerships** – apply the same level of scrutiny upon business partners and clients as you would upon yourself. Do not partner with, or procure from, an organisation which could potentially undermine the purpose through their actions.

3. Evaluate against your purpose

Without regular progress checks, purpose is likely to become a dormant concept that nobody claims ownership over. To combat this, a business should develop and make stakeholders aware of KPIs that relate to the purpose and set specific goals which purpose can be measured against and reported on over time. Simply evaluating these metrics could transform the way a business operates, forcing stakeholders to be accountable for their actions relating to purpose. Depending on the [model](#) of the business, the legal framework and reporting mechanisms can then be put in place that enforces this and formalises the importance of purpose in relation to profit.

Pay attention to the small details. In any business there is always a danger that an unforeseen problem could arise that undermines the purpose. To avoid this, all business activities should be audited periodically to ensure that all practices are aligned with the purpose. Any areas that do not meet the required standard should be addressed as a priority.

Undergo an external facing evaluation of purpose in the form of a report or as part of business results. The report should be accessible, transparent and easily understood by the public so that proper accountability for the purpose can be attained.

A business should develop KPIs that relate to the purpose and set specific goals which purpose can be measured against.

4. Be known for your purpose

Reap the commercial benefits of your purpose by promoting it through everyday actions and by making clear its importance to your business. Our research tells us that a key driver of brand reputation is the lived experience of interacting with the brand. Simply put, a positive or meaningful interaction will establish a positive impression of the brand. Purpose should form the basis of all relations with consumers. By conveying the importance of purpose in interactions with consumers, a business is more likely to develop meaningful brand recognition and loyalty.

The same logic extends to employees, it is vital that they also believe in and feel the benefits of the purpose. As the face and engine of a business, they need to experience the purpose through concrete actions and interactions with their employer – this will improve staff morale and come through in their interactions with the consumer.

Once achieved, purpose should be indistinguishable from brand and the lived experience of stakeholders.

This report has been clear on the importance of authenticity ahead of marketing, as well as the scepticism with which many people view the concept. However, once purpose is embedded it is important that external corporate communications should consistently reflect the purpose. Speaking openly and often about what your business is trying to achieve can contribute to brand reputation, create momentum towards the purpose and foster a strong internal culture.

Recognition of purpose via third party accreditation can provide a prestigious platform around which a business can build a brand. B Lab and Fairtrade are perhaps the best-known examples but there are numerous other independent accreditation bodies that operate within specific sectors. As well as this, there are various other recognised standards of practice for purposeful business, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, that a business can sign up to. To achieve accreditation, businesses need to meet and maintain very high standards of practice, the effect of which is an iron clad commitment to purpose by those who achieve the status.

Once achieved, purpose should be indistinguishable from brand and the lived experience of stakeholders.

Summary

The key challenge to business and to the concept in general is in finding an authentic expression of what it actually means. Whilst the term is regularly used in corporate circles, it is often dismissed by the very consumers they are trying to appeal to as marketing or as a CSR add on. More often than not, it is only seen as applicable in a personal or social capacity. This report maintains that purpose is applicable to all business, whether social or commercial, so long as they follow the same three principles: to provide a reason to exist beyond simply making a profit, to provide some form of societal good and to be actively pursued.

There is no easy answer as to what a business' purpose should be and no one size fits all solution as to how to go about achieving it. A business needs to have a deep understanding of who it exists to serve and the long-term goal it wishes to pursue. Once these fundamental questions have been answered, a business needs to internalise its purpose and work through the steps in how it operates and serves stakeholders to achieve it. It is vital that a business does not lose sight of its purpose or views it as a burden. Rather, it should be viewed as the North Star that guides all decision making and as the primary motivation for when times are tough.

Purpose represents a fantastic opportunity for businesses to connect with what makes them unique and motivates them to make a difference. If done authentically, purpose has the power to greatly improve outcomes for both business and society in a mutually reinforcing bond. The commercial benefits in building trust, standing out from the competition and fostering an attractive and innovative internal culture mean all businesses should be taking notice. The social good that can come from responsible business practices and innovative solutions will help sustain an economy that works in the best interests of everyone.

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About Message House

Message House was established in 2013 by Dr Matt Carter. We are a research and communications consultancy whose mission is to use smart insights to develop compelling narratives, improve brand perception and to advise on best messaging for corporate, third sector and political campaigns. Part of our work is to help clients define their purpose and embed it into their organisation.

Contact details

Email: info@message-house.co.uk

Tel: 01442 862365

Website: message-house.co.uk

Twitter: [@message_house](https://twitter.com/message_house)



Message House

message-house.co.uk

Message House,
254 High Street,
Berkhamsted
HP4 1AQ,
UK

01442862365