

THE BUSINESS
OF BUILDING A
BETTER
WORLD

The Leadership Revolution That Is Changing Everything

Edited by

DAVID COOPERRIDER
and AUDREY SELIAN

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FOREWORD

Jesper Brodin (CEO, Ikea) and Halla Tómasdóttir (CEO, the B Team)

FOR ALL THAT HUMANITY HAS lost and endured in the recent past, climate change remains the biggest challenge of our time. It threatens our way of life, our resilience, and our safety. And while words can inspire, it is action that sparks change and creates hope for the future. Seeing as this book is already in your hands, you just might feel the same.

We are in a critical decade, maybe the most important one for humankind. History will remember us for the actions we take or fail to take.

The question to ask yourself: How will I choose to lead during this decade?

We choose to lead with purpose and values. Our values animate our core humanity. They compel us to take a stand for people, to take responsibility for a more green and just world, to protect and sustain the planet—a home we all share, the only home we have—for our families, communities, and generations to come. Our values guide us as individuals and as business leaders, for there is no business beyond our planetary boundaries and only fading opportunity in a world with a broken social contract.

Values-based leadership is needed now more than ever as climate change has accelerated and converged with multiple global crises: a once-in-a-century pandemic, widespread economic turmoil, a reckoning on race, democratic backsliding, mass migration, the crisis of social media, and rising inequality alongside diminishing trust in public institutions.

But a crisis of conformity still plagues boardrooms and leadership ranks around the world. Nearly 90 percent of *Fortune* 500 CEOs are white men. Only two are Black women. Globally, women occupy a mere one in five seats in the boardroom. With rare exception, senior leadership in business and

government falls far short of fairly reflecting the diversity of our workforces and customers, of our communities and constituencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse, disproportionately imperiling the economic security of people of color and setting back gender equality 25 years. The crisis of conformity also extends to leaders, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, or ability, who continue values-deficient incentive structures, often through inaction. When we change who is in leadership, we change how we do business.

To be sure, well-intentioned leaders in business, government, and civil society are creating opportunities and impacting positive change every day. We are humbled to know and work with so many of them. But when we take a big step back and focus our gaze at the systems level, we see an economic model that is truly broken. Ours is a system ill-prepared to mitigate—and surely not built to solve—today’s interdependent crises. Indeed, the view is commonly held that our economic model bears meaningful responsibility for the inequality and despair tearing at our social contract.

Along with staggering hardship and human loss, the COVID-19 pandemic brought us a narrow window of opportunity to reimagine and redesign the systems in which we live, prosper, and pursue our purpose. This moment demands an ambitious reset of our economy. It calls for bold leadership and radical collaboration across industries and sectors. Let’s create a new economic paradigm, with humanity as its beating heart. Let’s “right the rules” in time to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and deliver on our promise to the Paris Climate Agreement.

With much on our minds, forgive us for burying our introduction. In 2013, Richard Branson and Jochen Zeitz cofounded the B Team to work across business and government and help solve some of the world’s most intractable challenges. Today, as a global collective of CEOs and civil society leaders, we have a clearer sense of what future generations need from us. We are advocates for a better way of doing business, with a focus on bringing the global economy in line with Earth’s boundaries, cultivating equitable representation in leadership and achieving transparency in corporate governance. Our agenda ladders up to one overarching goal: to build, by 2030, an inclusive economy that works for all people and communities while safeguarding our natural environment.

In our pursuits, we convene leaders across business, labor, civil society, and government. We collaborate deeply with partners and across our networks. We amplify the stories of mission-aligned leaders around the world, and we

reflect with candor on our struggles and setbacks. We are transparent in our ambition: engaging in public and corporate policy-making processes and driving adoption of new norms and incentives that can orient business toward a broader bottom line. Mindful of our privilege while embracing the benefits of our platform, we strive to uplift tomorrow's leaders as vigorously as we catalyze change today.

Our bold vision is of a world where global inequality gaps are closed. Where gender balance and equitable representation at all levels of leadership are the norm. Where businesses thrive with accountability and integrity at their core. Where our economy is regenerative, and we've delivered a just transition for the world's workforce.

Thankfully we are not short on guides to light our path. In this volume, *The Business of Building a Better World: The Leadership Revolution That Is Changing Everything*, David Cooperrider and Audrey Selian bring together a treasure trove of thought leaders and some of the most path-breaking CEOs of our time. The book is imaginative, empirically researched, and actionable. What is more, this book is not just about the future. In prompting leaders to aspire to something greater, it can help shape the future. As Paul Polman, B Team leader and former CEO of Unilever (as well as a chapter coauthor in this volume), writes in the book's early pages:

What we are witnessing is a shift that is all-embracing, rapid, irreversible, extending to the far corners of the planet and involving practically every aspect of business life. What we are witnessing is a world increasingly divided by companies that are known as part of the problem and those that are leading the solution revolution.

Taken together, this international group of authors affirms that the journey toward an inclusive economy is possible only with bold leadership from business—and that those who take the lead will benefit enormously. Whether you are a titan of industry or a budding entrepreneur, you'll find wisdom and inspiration in the chapters ahead.

We hope, too, that you see this volume for what it truly is: a call to action of historic urgency. The world's crises are interdependent. The socioeconomic challenges we face are intergenerational. Our economic model is broken, but we can build a better world if leaders everywhere commit to brave, collaborative action today. A new leadership playbook can deliver change in this decade—provided we summon the courage and elevate our leadership to meet this moment.

Twenty-first-century leaders accelerate innovation while reducing risk. They follow the science. They see diversity in leadership for the competitive advantage it is and the bottom-line benefit it brings. They understand that the clock is ticking, future generations are counting on us, and that “history has its eyes on us.”

How will you choose to lead? How will history remember you?

PREFACE

THIS BOOK WAS PREPARED as a gift for the tens of thousands of participants—executives, students of management and young future leaders, societal entrepreneurs, change agents, sustainable design thinkers, management educators, and thought leaders—who will attend the fifth Global Forum for Business as an Agent of World Benefit in the fall of 2021.

The Global Forum series was launched and hosted on October 14, 2006, at Case Western Reserve University’s Weatherhead School of Management and was founded in partnership with the United Nations Global Compact, now the largest corporate sustainability network in the world with 12,000 corporations, together with the Academy of Management, the preeminent professional association for management and organization scholars with a community of over 20,000 management scholars spanning 130 countries. Designed to unite the creative power of good theory with leading-edge practice, bringing executives and leaders together with the finest business researchers—the Global Forum was described by its first keynote speaker, one of the century’s great strategy thinkers Dr. C. K. Prahalad, as “a leadership institute for tomorrow.” The series mission: the realization of a generative economy in the service of life, whose ultimate aim is a world of “full spectrum flourishing,” defined as:

a world where businesses can excel, all persons can thrive, and nature can flourish, now and across the generations.

This book, *The Business of Building a Better World: The Leadership Revolution That Is Changing Everything*, was made possible by three sources.

First, this book has its roots and home in a center at Case Western Reserve University’s Weatherhead School of Management. It is a center that was catalyzed when we were invited by then-secretary general of the United Nations,

Kofi Annan, to facilitate the largest meeting in history between the UN and business leaders. The summit catalyzed the greatest growth years of the UN Global Compact. This work and its vast potential also inspired Chuck Fowler, the cofounder and former CEO of Fairmount Minerals and later chairman of the board of Case Western Reserve University. Chuck is one of the finest human beings and CEOs we have ever had the privilege to know. Chuck and his family foundation stepped forward. The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation are dedicated to improving people's lives, and it was their transformational gift to the university that built the Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit. This book, as well as our global forum series, would not have been possible without this foundation, which today is splendidly led in part by Chann Fowler-Spellman and Holley Fowler Martens. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Chuck Fowler. Moreover, we can only hope to do our small bit to extend his living legacy as a humanitarian and hopeful believer in our young leaders. "There is so much power in great education," said Chuck, "especially the kind of education that empowers our students and future leaders *to lead with values*, to lead purpose-driven lives, and to *do good, do well* for all of humankind and our earth."

Second, we want to celebrate the "better business and better world" vision of Harry Halloran and the catalytic gift of Halloran Philanthropies for this book and what has become perhaps the largest data bank in the world for studying innovations at the intersection of business and society. It contains student-led interviews of pathbreaking leaders from all parts of the world, housing nearly 4,000 "business for good" interviews and over 3,000 published cases (see www.aim2flourish.com). Harry has been and is a courageous and values-led leader in the business for good movement. In addition, one of the inspirations behind this project is the former president of Halloran Philanthropies. His name is Tony Carr, and he is truly a visionary and our tireless thought partner. Tony has handed off his president role to Brian Halloran, who is a futurist and who resonates with this volume, helping to advance corporations that are future fit and future forming. We also would like to recognize the research funding making this *New Theory of Business* Project a reality; it came in the form of a grant, generously given, by the University of St. Thomas, a long-standing leader in corporate responsibility, ethics and leadership studies.

Third, we want to thank our partners. Our publishing partner and Fifth Global Forum cohost and coproducer is Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Their mission—connecting people and ideas to create a world that works for all—aligns perfectly with this book. They believe that the solutions to the world's

greatest challenges will come from all of us, and that when we are motivated by love, caring, and a desire to contribute, we can accomplish more than people who are scrambling to win. Here we wish to thank the founder of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Steve Piersanti, for his encouragement to dream big and better. The people at Berrett-Koehler have been truly awesome to work with; they are real pros, including the president and CEO David Marshall, our dedicated editor Anna Leinberger, and the core BK digital summit team with Kylie Johnston and Zoe Mackey. We especially recognize the work of the exceptional team at Fowler Center; everyone on our advisory board, all of our faculty colleagues—and specifically Megan Buchter, the director of the Fowler Center and Joseph Bianchini, the center’s coordinator. Moreover, the dean of the Weatherhead School, Manoj Maholtra, has always been an advocate of the idea of business of building a better world and his support for our work, as always, is appreciated. But perhaps most important, sometimes we feel we were born under a lucky star to work amid such people and organizations. The authors of this book are some of the greatest thought leaders of our time and they form a treasure trove of insight, inspiration, and grounded hope for *The Business of Building a Better World*.

Finally, we wish to dedicate this book. Few have “walked the talk” the way Harry Halloran has through his lifetime of building and investing in businesses that serve community. This volume is dedicated to Harry Halloran and Joseph “Tony” Carr, whose deep commitment to positive values in business through practice and altruism has inspired so many, including ourselves.

Harry is the earliest, most positive source of inspiration for this project, which originated from his vision and heart as a respected business leader, philanthropist, and impact investor. In preparation for this project, Harry helped set the stage by funding a world-class empirical research effort documenting the history of human well-being. In many ways, this project is a sequel that now specifically focuses on realizing the potentials of good business as a force for well-being. Harry’s belief in the dignity of work, in human community and solidarity, in moral and stakeholder capitalism, and in the positive goodness that can be propelled through purpose-driven innovation and entrepreneurship—constitutes the cornerstone callings that fuel the research questions, inspiration, and values of this volume. He has been and is a courageous and values-led leader in the “business for good” movement.



This extraordinary compilation is also dedicated to our families, and notably our children and our grandchildren. For Audrey Selian, this is dedicated

to her husband Mardit Matian; her children, Raphael Masis and Maya Alessandra Gayané; as well as to her parents, Alexander and Ani. It is also dedicated to the Singh Family, and notably Tom Singh, thanks to whom so much opportunity and learning about the practical power of positive business has been inspired. For David Cooperrider, this is dedicated to David and Nancy Cooperrider's first two grandchildren, Hugo David Lyons and Reverie Burkey Cooperrider—both were born reminding us of the miracle of life on this planet during the writing of this book.

*David Cooperrider and Audrey Selian
Case Western Reserve University, 2021*



Introduction

A Moonshot Moment for Business and the Great Economic Opportunities of Our Time

DAVID COOPERRIDER AND AUDREY SELIAN

ONE OF HUMANITY'S GREATEST GIFTS is that in times of profound shock and disruption, new perspectives are forged. Such moments tend to be historical ones—moments when new possibilities for humanity can be established and new eras born. Could it be that we are standing at the threshold of the next episode in business history?

The quest in this book is ultimately to explore the profound new enterprise logic propelling the “business of building a better world”—ways that the field of business is increasingly becoming an *agent of change* and a *partnership power* for building a better world—together with all of this serving as a catalyst for the “betterment of your business.” Moreover, this includes all the new ways that *The Business of Building a Better World* can lead inside the enterprise to bold new waves of innovation, business outperformance, and what we call full-spectrum flourishing. Flourishing enterprise is something every industry leader increasingly wants. Flourishing enterprise, as we shall discover, is about people being inspired every day and bringing their whole and best selves into their businesses; it's about innovation arising from everywhere; and most important, it is about realizing sustainable value with all stakeholders. These include customers, communities, shareholders, and societies, all coexisting ultimately within a thriving, not dying, biosphere.

SOMETHING REMARKABLE IS UNDERWAY

The relationship of business and society—and the unprecedented search for mutual advances between industry and the world’s profound upheavals—has become one of the decisive quests of the twenty-first century. As we stand now in what scientists are calling the “decade of determination,” the stakes could not be higher for humanity and planet Earth. Like dials on a seismograph, we have stood stunned as the decade of the 2020s has arrived with *unprecedented* disruptive preludes: megafires in January; a global pandemic in March; an economic crash in April with bankruptcies putting millions out of work; and protests across the planet for racial justice and inclusive systemic change in June and beyond. Only just a few months earlier, we listened to the rising voices of millions of millennials and Gen-Z young leaders, including *Time* magazine’s Person of the Year Greta Thunberg and over 7 million strikers from six continents. For them, the entire era of climate gradualism “is over.” As our youth stepped onto podiums in a series of high-level venues with world leaders—from the Assembly Hall of the United Nations to Davos in Switzerland, where thousands of business leaders gathered at the World Economic Forum—young people cried out for a war-time mobilization commensurate with the state of “climate emergency,” urging everyone to embrace the empirical evidence, pointing to articles such as the one in *Bioscience* signed by tens of thousands of scientists stating: “We’re asking for a transformative change for humanity” (Ripple et al. 2020).

To be sure, these voices are scarcely alone. Many executives too are seeing a world where society is being irreversibly mobilized. BlackRock’s CEO Larry Fink, for example, declared in front of Wall Street that climate action has now put us “on the edge of a fundamental reshaping of finance” (Fink 2021). These are not the words of a scientist or activist but the conclusions of the head of the largest investment company in the world, managing over \$7 trillion in assets. Perhaps most important, however, is that trajectories like this are advancing significantly beyond words on a piece of paper. The past decade saw, for example, sustainably directed assets under management triple to more than \$40 trillion globally so that they now represent \$1 of every \$4 invested (Lang 2020).

Indeed, positive disruptions across the business landscape are booming, and in many cases, they are propelling companies to outperform—not incrementally but significantly. Companies such as Toyota are, right now, building net-positive cities that give back more clean energy to the world than they use while leveraging artificial intelligence and biotechnologies to reinvent and

individualize medicine, turn waste into wealth, propel zero-emissions mobility, and even purify the air that people breathe. Corporations such as Unilever, Danone, Westpac, Grameen Bank, Nedbank, and Greystone Bakeries have turned theory into reality with base-of-the pyramid innovation and social business strategies demonstrating how the enterprising spirit can eradicate human poverty and inequality through inclusive prosperity, profit, and dignified work. Thousands of entrepreneurial initiatives have been launched, as smaller companies like Frontier Markets in Rajasthan, Aakar Innovations in Mumbai, or Springhealth in Orissa emerge against the odds to serve the underserved and to tackle the proverbial “last mile” with a passion that many giants have struggled to emulate. Growing companies like Mela Artisans work to generate sustainable livelihoods for artisanal communities under a purposeful brand, while hundreds of for-profit health-tech innovators, like those found under the Baraka Impact umbrella, drive at top speed toward a world in which affordable access and health systems strengthening are a unifying mission. Companies such as Terra Cycle, Nothing New, Nike, and Interface are designing the future of circular economy modalities that leave behind zero waste—only “foods or nutrients” that create truer wealth through symbiotic *economies of cycle* while leveraging digital technologies that serve to dematerialize and decouple growth from harm. Likewise, revolutionary enterprises such as Solar Foods signal the potential of Schumpeter’s great “gale of creative destruction.” Their remarkable and, as yet, largely unknown, story of industry reinvention, has been sighted as one of the “biggest economic transformations of any kind” heralding the possibility of making food 20,000 times more land-efficient than it is today while propelling a future where everyone on earth can be handsomely fed, using only a tiny fraction of its surface (Monbiot 2020).

The biggest new management story of our time thus is not only about the individual business responses alone but about the rapid rise in collective impact. It’s about what scholars and leaders are calling business “megacommunities.” Consider the Global Investors for Sustainable Development. Taken together, they manage over \$16 trillion in assets—and they are strategically prioritizing SDG investments across every sector and region of the world (GISD n.d.). Likewise, 2021 heralded the accelerated mobilization of over 200 companies such as Apple, Orsted, Woolworths South Africa, Salesforce, Patagonia, Tesla, Unilever, Schneider, Tata, Google, Levi Strauss, Microsoft, and Ikea, each one galvanizing their enterprises to be 100 percent renewable-energy leaders. In addition, this year also grew another worldwide partnership called Business Ambition 1.5°C, where hundreds more companies are rallying their 5.8 million employees, with headquarters in 36 countries, to reach net-zero

emissions by 2050 via what's called the "ambition loop" (United Nations Global Compact n.d.). In the last few months, we've seen the number of net-zero commitments rise to more than 1,500 corporations worldwide (Lubber 2021). And we all know that somewhere in the world, it's already tomorrow. Microsoft, Interface, Unilever, and Natura—all and more are aiming higher, far beyond the sustainability agendas of "less bad."

These are examples of trends and megatrends, almost overnight turning into transformative trajectories. Indeed, while researching this book, we were privileged to sit down with many of the vanguard CEOs leading the revolution. The 6,000 interviews now in the Fowler Center's large and growing database involve not just the stuff of dreamers. They are the case studies of the bold, brave, and successful *savvy of doers*. Paul Polman, the former CEO of Unilever and chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, for example, spoke during a personal interview (Paul Polman and David Cooperrider, pers. comm., March 7, 2019) with penetrating purpose and urgent optimism, drawing on years of delivering industry-leading outperformance. He referred to the "shifting of the tectonic plates"—not a small step but a giant leap from our industrial age paradigm of business to its successor. He asserted:

What we are witnessing is a shift that is all-embracing, rapid, irreversible, extending to the far corners of the planet and involving practically every aspect of business life. What we are witnessing is a world increasingly divided by companies that are known as part of the problem and those that are leading the solution revolution in this, the era of massive mobilization. What we are witnessing is the birth of a comprehensive new enterprise logic, one that can not only create better value and truer wealth but can also be a platform for building the twenty-first-century company, the kind of enterprise that will be loved by its customers and stakeholder communities, emulated by its peers, and prized by all those who care about the next *decisive decades* of our planet.

The future, whether we are ready for it or not, is imminent. Some call what we are witnessing the worldwide solution revolution. Others call it the rise of a new mission economy. Whatever our age comes to be called, there will be winners and losers. Deep enterprise transformation will arrive, of course, in sputtering fits and starts. It will be sparked here and there by seemingly minor innovations. But then, as in every revolution, it will be set ablaze by adjacent embers, until the flames become something of a new Olympic standard, altering conceptions of business and society *excellence* forever.

We invite you into our journey, the call of our times, and the exciting, bold, and innovation-inspiring chapters written by the foremost thought leaders and successful CEOs in the field of management—and *the business of betterment*.

OUR JOURNEY

This book has been written to help leaders, entrepreneurs, change agents, executives, practical scholars, and young future managers join with and lead what Paul Polman referred to as the “solution revolution.” In this book, we serve as a guide to the emerging new enterprise logic—future-fit, future-ready, and future-forming—while helping to uncover the potentials for higher peaks of *better* prosperity, built on shared and regenerative value, with intergenerational concern and world-changing actualization. As we speak to each of the three parts of this volume and each chapter, we refer to figure 1.1 as the synthesis of our concept, as it relates to its meaning—and how—to elicit business *outperformance* together with business *outbehavior*.

Taken altogether, the chapters in this book form a natural union in their combined conviction that the fundamental purpose of business *is* building a better world and that there are multiplier opportunities before us—to *outperform* in *competitive excellence* terms and to *outbehave* the field in *collaborative advantage* terms. Moreover, the perspective offered here is new in its conception of how being a *platform for world change* “out there” is rapidly and paradoxically becoming one of the most inspiring *and* repeatable ways for bringing the “in here” of the enterprise powerfully alive.

As seen on the right side in figure 1.1, there is a largely underrecognized, underanalyzed, and underdeveloped new continent of leadership, a wide new axis of management potential, to be appreciated.

Of course, there are many facets to the framework. Each chapter will illuminate one or more of them in detail through major examples, data sets and trends, and the surfacing of deeper enterprise logics combined. In the spirit of foreshadowing the more precise threads woven through this book, there are three big lenses or ideas that make the positive loops between all the elements reverberate together even more powerfully. These cornerstones include: (1) the exciting new research on *mission economy* dynamism; (2) the idea of organizations as *positive institutions or strengths-attracting platforms* for “outbehavior”; and (3) the advanced leadership frontier of *outside-of-the-building* systems thinking that may be the most powerful way to bring “the inside of enterprise” to life. Let’s start with the idea of mission economics.

The Betterment of Business + The Business of Betterment

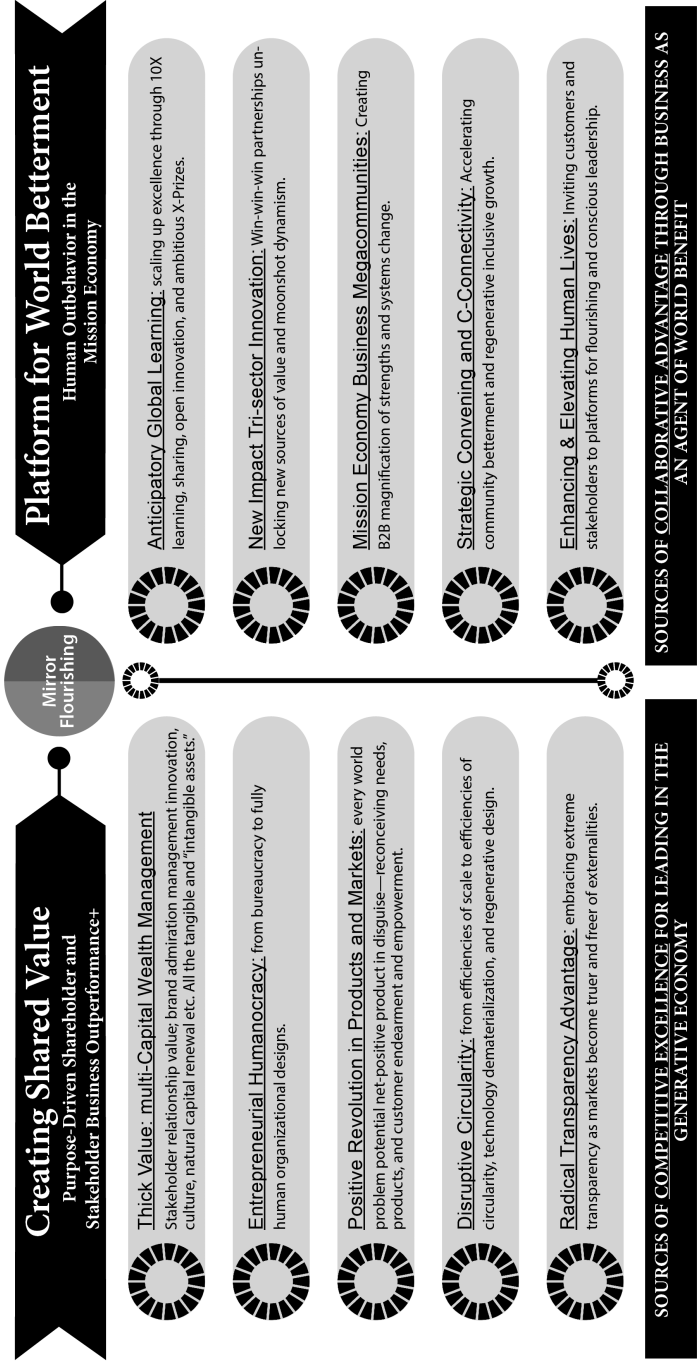


FIGURE 1.1 The mirror-flourishing two-axis model of *The Business of Building a Better World*

1. *Mission economics: Why so dynamic?*

We know from economic history that epochal shifts in the logic of business have typically begun in response to underlying changes like what we call “the envelope of enterprise.” This includes tectonic shifts in society’s expectations, ecosystem and economic disruptions, and world system dynamics. The record of the last century shows that business organizations do not change easily from within, whereby changes outside the organization are most likely to be a trigger of fundamental transformations in the purpose, organizational designs, and leadership priorities of the firm (see Zuboff and Maxim 2004; Hamel and Breen 2007). We tend to think of these fundamental shifts in negative terms, for example, as devastating pandemics, world wars, and so on. These are of course powerful, often black swan events, and they are well-known change catalysts. But what’s also true and not as commonly appreciated is that fundamental shifts also come not only when society changes its mind but also when there is an enormous *elevation* of aspiration. This is where the research on mission economics becomes telling. Mission economies, just as negative macroevents often do, can propel mighty shifts.

Moreover, and according to the data of one of the economic theory’s rising stars (Mazzucato 2021; Mazzucato and Penna 2015), economic systems are most dynamically alive, technologically innovative, adaptive, prosperous, more fully human, and apt to *propel betterment* for all when they unleash an economy’s entrepreneurial spirit in a trisector way *in the service of mission*. How do we know? Mazzucato and her colleagues have studied over 100 examples across countries, cultures, and virtually every continent. The Kennedy-era moonshot is a notable example in the work of Mazzucato (2020; 2021). We still thrill to John F. Kennedy’s mission economy when he said, “We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone.” The word *moonshot* originally meant a “long shot” and is increasingly used to describe a monumental effort and lofty goal; in other words, “a giant leap” for humankind. What then, for example, have the studies of moonshot or mission economics discovered?

For one thing, missions create alignment of a society’s economic engine, entrepreneurial spirit, and symbiotic coalitions and partnerships, while becoming organizationally and technologically transformative. Landing a person on the moon propelled and produced unprecedented payoffs and large numbers of unpredictable spinoffs, creating entirely new markets and industries. It

lifted a nation's sense of hope and fueled inspiration, success, purpose, significance, and a desire to cooperate. And the record abounds of the economic productivity and vast benefits for all of humankind. In *Apollo's* success, we experienced the birth and growth of the internet; small computers, nanotechnology; clean energy; X-rays; and the lists go on. Just the internet itself, as a public good and business catalyst, has enabled humanity to create thousands upon thousands of new businesses and millions of new jobs.

It is in this spirit that many of the chapters in this book see too, that to an extent unimaginable a decade ago, a macroworld project with a shared agenda calling upon all of humankind and unprecedented in scope and scale, is taking on form and substance. The original moonshot model offers insights and inspiration for pursuing global goals and “earthshots” today. To avoid some of the worst outcomes of climate change, the world must cut carbon emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and achieve net-zero by 2050. An achievement like that will, among other things, call upon investments and innovation in areas as different as building smart cities, transforming vast mobility industries, propelling the renewable energy economy, creating circular and regenerative approaches to manufacturing, turning waste into wealth, and building out regenerative agriculture and new food systems. That is the signature marker of what mission economies do.

Today's earthshot, propose the authors, includes the example of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that is fast emerging and accelerating as the largest macroproject in recorded history. The scope and need dwarf the collaborations to heal the ozone layer or the global eradication of smallpox and the COVID-19 pandemic. It has dwarfed initiatives like the Marshall Plan, and it is ultimately even dwarfing humankind's leap to the moon.

As one looks at figure 1.1, the idea of an emerging mission economy is both a megatrend and a valuable lens for making sense of advanced leadership (right axis) of the new theory of business, as well as a megatrend propelling and helping to explain the surge in the left “Creating Shared Value” side, depicting the rise in sustainable enterprise and regenerative business. Many things in this volume will make better sense as we appreciate mission economy dynamism.

2. Why is the Shared Value business paradigm—itself a relatively new enterprise logic—suddenly bursting out together with this largely undefined new emerging axis of management, where institutions show up as powerful platforms not just for outperformance, but for outbehavior?

For us, the concept of outbehavior is a good place to start and has several significant meanings. First, we draw attention to the work of Dov Seidman

(2007) who wrote what he called a “how” book, not a “how-to” book *recognizing that in our hyperconnected world of extreme transparency, there is no longer such a thing as private organizational behavior*. In this internetworked economy, it is becoming increasingly difficult for organizations to succeed just based on what they make or do. It’s not long before someone else is making the product or service, better. It’s not long before others are doing it cheaper. People instantly compare price, features, and services effectively making the *what* into a commodity, where differentiation becomes blurred or blotted out, and distinctiveness itself is not long-lasting. How long is it before Costco has matched the price of a Walmart? Certainly not long.

Yet there is one area where tremendous variation exists, and it is not so much in outperformance as in *outbehavior*. In a world that’s yearning for trust and hope, it’s increasingly about the “how”—the outbehavior of bringing character strengths into the world, like honesty and integrity, hope and inspiration, or more humanity, fairness, courage, and wisdom into our communities. It doesn’t hurt that everything organizations do today can live online forever. Wherever organizations show up, their reputations arrive before they get there.

So while it’s true that the term *outbehave* is not to be found in dictionaries as are words like *outperform*, *outfox*, and *outproduce*, we posit that this kind of language truly matters. The idea that organizations can excel in the *how* of outbehavior needs such a word. Indeed, words make worlds. Seidman (2007, 17–18) is clear: “We know how to outspend and outsmart our rivals, but we know relatively little about how to outbehave them. . . . Show me a venture capitalist that asks entrepreneurs, ‘How do you plan to scale your values?’ and I’ll be interested in investing in their fund.” Could it be that in the twenty-first century, outbehavior is the strongest and higher-quality path to success and significance?

The second meaning of *outbehavior* is even more important. Harvard’s Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s newest leadership book *Think Outside the Building: How Advanced Leaders Can Change the World One Smart Innovation at a Time* (2020) indeed takes leadership to a new place. The days of viewing the corporation as a fortress or castle are gone, and what we are seeing emerge is “outside of the building thinking to improve the world.” For Kanter (who also has a chapter in this book) the next frontier for business leaders is to innovate *outside of the building*, at the interface of business and society, as an agent of world betterment. Still underanalyzed and underappreciated as a form of economic and human value, this kind of outbehavior is also a new kind of outperformance. For, according to Kanter, good companies can promote diversity in their ranks while making little difference in systemic racism outside of their walls.

The opportunity truly is to deploy a new leadership force for the world. The creativity of outside-the-building skills and sensibilities—activating allies; linking business communities; finding trisectoral assets in unexpected places; working to align complex and competing interests; opening minds; starting movements; harnessing tools for awakening enthusiasm for change; spanning professions of many disciplines; harnessing the renewable power of a positive purpose; creating big enough tents to unite and multiply siloed strengths—all of these are part of what Kanter calls “societal entrepreneurship” and what we refer to as the platform model of business as an agent of world benefit. Platforms are not programs for change; they are bigger than that.

Platform business models—for example Wikipedia, or Patagonia’s new activation platform that connects thousands of customers to one another and to hundreds of causes they can join—serve to harness and create large, scalable networks of users, human strength combinations, and resources that become ecosystems of cocreation. These produce scaled-up action and turn action into an effective antidote to despair while augmenting impact and driving human well-being. Platforms create communities and markets with network effects that allow users to interact, learn, enliven—and collaborate. Instead of being the means of production, platforms are the means to connection.

More academically, Cooperrider and Godwin (2011) in the *Oxford University Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship* talk about change making, with its usual focus on change management on the inside of the building, where *the enterprise* is the object of organization development and change. But then they pose a question, a thought experiment. What if we conceived of institutions not as the clients of change but as *the* change agents for attracting resources, partners, persons, communities, customers, coalitions, investors, and mission-aligned change makers of every kind? The larger concept involves the discovery and design of positive institutions:

Positive institutions are organizations and structured practices in culture or society that serve to elevate and develop our highest human strengths, combine and magnify those strengths, and *refract our highest strengths outward in world-benefiting ways* leading, ultimately, to a world of full-spectrum flourishing. (Cooperrider and Godwin 2011, 737)

The world is the ultimate context for *the business of business is betterment*. And because of this, every organization’s future will be of larger scope and greater purpose than it has been in the past. Every part of the field of management will indeed speak more fully to the destiny of humanity and nature.

So why—beyond being a force for good—will such platforms for world-changing as a new axis of advanced leadership matter in high-performance business terms? The answer, illustrated from the chapters and other recent research, revolves around what unites the right and left sides of figure 1.1. It's called the “mirror flourishing” effect, and it proposes one radical message: *building a better world is the most potent force on the planet—for generating on the inside of the firm the most engaged, empowered, and innovation-inspired enterprise every leader wants.*

3. What if every business aspired to become a positive institution and platform for building a better world?

This is the question we want every reader to consider in the rich tapestry of chapters to follow. Could it be that as we as human beings doing good flourish and come more alive on the “in-here,” inside ourselves? Beyond the sustainability literature, there are now more than 500 scientific studies on this “doing good and doing well” dynamic. Steven Post and J. Neimark (2008) summarize many of them in a book titled *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*, whereupon they argue that this reverse flourishing, or mirror flourishing effect, is the most potent force on the planet. The possibilities are vast. For one thing, the reversal of so much of the active disengagement in the workplace, as well as the depression and heartsickness in our culture at large, might well be reversed and easier to accomplish than we think. There are more than 200 million businesses, literally countless numbers, operating across and around our blue planet. Imagine the positive mirror flourishing effect of millions of enterprise initiatives reverberating, scaling up, amplifying, and engaging—us.

OUR THREE-PART VOLUME

Our exploration begins in part 1, entitled “The Business of Business Is Betterment,” with a set of chapters that offer a new theoretical perspective for understanding how and why the business of building a better world is not only taking a quantum leap through the multistakeholder logic of “shared value creation” (see Porter and Kramer’s 2011 HBR classic and Kramer’s chapter in this book) but how this towering and expanding conceptual breakthrough of shared value is only the beginning.

Part 1 opens with a contribution by Marga Hoek in chapter 2, ranked by Thinkers50 as one of the top new management thinkers in the world. For Hoek, there is, as we previewed the concept, a powerful *mission economy* dynamic at

work—a driving force and unstoppable force; “a new era in which there is every reason for businesses to want to save the world.”

Chapter 3, by Harvard’s courageous leadership theorist Rosabeth Moss Kanter, speaks to the new axis or next frontier of what she calls advanced leadership “outside of the building.” She writes: “It’s not enough to be good within their own operations and capabilities.” Advanced leadership changes the underlying institutions that shape systems. Moreover, “the gaps, the cracks between institutional walls, are the places that produce innovation opportunities.”

Mark R. Kramer follows, in chapter 4, with a short contemporary commentary on the classic article that he wrote with Michael Porter called “Creating Shared Value: How to Reinvent Capitalism—and Unleash a Wave of Innovation and Growth” (2011). Kramer expands the idea that competitive advantage can be found in providing market-driven solutions to the world’s greatest social, ecological, and human challenges. The research, he concludes, is clear: “There is no reversing the fundamental recognition that managing business as a force for good is a winning strategy.”

In the next chapter (5) the originator of the concept of “triple bottom line” John Elkington and his colleagues Roberts and Kjellerup Roper write a fascinating contribution called “Green Swans: The Coming Boom in Regenerative Capitalism.” The title tells it all. “A Green Swan,” the authors write, “delivers exponential progress in the form of economic, social, and environmental wealth creation.” If we are indeed entering the dynamism of perhaps the world’s most unprecedented mission economy—for which the authors provide evidence from all over the world—then we could be heading toward some sort of positive breakthrough future. Is it a certainty? Absolutely not. Is it a choice? Absolutely yes.

Finally, in the closing chapter (chapter 6) of part 1, CEO Naveen Jain, one of the world’s most imaginative entrepreneurs and exponential technology visionaries who helped found Singularity University and the X-Prize, articulates the power of the moonshot mindset with his coauthor John Schroeter. For them, the essence of moonshot thinking is *thinking big*. It’s what every business today needs to do. The authors share business examples, one after another, and conclude: “Now, in thinking big, what is the best way to create a \$100 billion company? Answer: help a billion people live better lives.”

Part 2 of this book raises the stakes involved. It’s called “Net Positive = Innovation’s New Frontier,” and is composed of a set of chapters that together embrace the “best of the best,” vitally raising the bar with a great sense of urgency, impatience, and brutal honesty regarding the stakes involved. It begins with one of the world’s most respected CEOs, Paul Polman, former head of

Unilever as well the International Chamber of Commerce, together with Andrew Winston, a strategic advisor to many leading companies including 3M, Marriott, DuPont, and others. The title of chapter 7 sets the stage: “Net-Positive Business and the Elephants in the Room.” The new horizon is a north star, not a short-term plan; there is no company today that can claim to be net positive. “Business has no choice but to play an active role,” say the authors and, “when we face the systemic hurdles head on, we can create net-positive businesses that serve the world.”

Next, in chapter 8, Bart Houlahan and Andrew Kassoy, cofounders of the B-Corporation movement, trace the historic shift happening in business toward true markets, extreme transparency, real accountability, and the toppling of the statue of Milton Friedman; that is, the view that the only business is business. By the start of 2021, there were 3,800+ certified B Corporations in more than 70 countries.

Raj Sisodia, the cofounder of the conscious capitalism movement, follows next in chapter 9 and speaks to the kind of mirror flourishing that can happen when we achieve a Copernican revolution, where the business of betterment is at the center of the business universe: “We need to put the life-affirming essentials—human and planetary flourishing—at the center. Everything else, including profits, must revolve around and serve those transcendent goals.”

Chapter 10 by R. Edward Freeman, often called the academic father of the stakeholder theory of the firm, along with coauthors Joey Burton and Ben Freeman, presents the data sets and the proposal that stakeholder capitalism is here to stay, and that we are on the cusp of the new story of business. And unlike others that say it’s purely being driven by the younger generations (which is true), the larger reality is that what we are witnessing is “three generations, one voice.” Thus: “We must be the generations that create a better world for those to follow us.”

In chapter 11, Gillian M. Marcelle and Jed Emerson—two of the great thinkers in the arena of blended capital and multidimensional capital—ask us to be inspired by and to “incorporate the alternative understandings of value and stewardship” that emanate from ancient African, Asian, indigenous, and feminine traditions. One aspect is a return to the reality and quality of relational being, where we see and acknowledge the deepest qualities that make us human.

Finally in chapter 12, Roger Martin, a prolific researcher and business school dean, provides a remarkable history lesson—the story of how business models stripped humanity out of management theory. He argues that any business guided by these models “will be doomed to failure” as the humans involved will come to understand the missing humanity and feel its counterproductive

impacts. They will fail “because humanity will eventually undermine systems devoid of humanity.” High on the agenda of the business of building a better world is a fully human design, not as an afterthought but a centrally embedded reality.

In part 3 (called “The Ultimate Advantage: A Leadership Revolution That Is Changing Everything”), the authors agree that the human dimension and shift from sustainability-as-less-harm to the quest for full-spectrum flourishing is a *driving force* for all the hope and promise of this moment of leadership reset. In management, Peter Drucker spoke to us (David Cooperrider and Peter Drucker, pers. comm., 2003) in common sense terms when he said: “Just as a vital organ such as one’s heart cannot thrive in a body overcome by cancer, a business resides in, our societies, the biosphere, and the earth.” Indeed, world-views of bifurcation or separation no longer serve us. There is no long-term business case at all for destroying the envelope of enterprise. Can we acknowledge the interdependence of business and society, that one cannot flourish without the other, the concomitant systems logic of mirror flourishing?

To do this, argue the authors, we must essentially elevate our view of what it means to be human. They turn to the crossroads of state-of-the-art human science, the biology of enlivenment, and the field of neuroscience (some of it made possible by technology advances like MRI) that all show that altruism is real and that impulses to goodness and caring (for newborns, for example) reside in our genes. We see increasing validation of the fact that emotions of love and kindness are precious and vital to every one of us in life; that rich meaning and activation of moral purpose raises our happiness and our immune systems; that extreme isolation and loneliness kills; that when a friend living less than a mile away becomes happy, it will increase the probability that you are happy by 25 percent (Fowler and Christakis 2008), whereby our states of well-being, even dimensions of our physical health flow through networks, and more.

In chapter 13, Kim Cameron, one of the founders of the field of positive organizational scholarship (POS), shares his insights on the back of the study of hundreds of organizations that have faced major crises. In an overwhelming number of these, unprecedented levels of crisis were followed by deteriorations in productivity, quality, trust and ethics, and customer and stakeholder loyalty. Yet a select few organizations flourished and bounced back higher. What was the difference that made all the difference? In every exceptional case, it had to do with outbehavior where leaders were described in virtuous terms or descriptors: compassion, dignity, forgiveness, kindness, trustworthiness, and higher sense of purpose in their cultures. Cameron concludes: “In

considering how business can be a better contributor to world benefit, prioritizing virtuousness, may be among the very best strategies to pursue.”

If that sounds radical, then chapter 14 by Michele Hunt, former EVP of Herman Miller and now researcher and writer, may push the envelope. Can a company be powered by love? How can a great leader *not* be in love with their bold dreams, with authentic and mighty purpose, with unleashing the human excellence that people are endowed with, and indeed with serving? She argues that love is the most powerful, transcendent, and energetic force in the lives of real leaders. Under Hunt’s leadership at Herman Miller, the company became *Fortune*’s “Most Admired Company,” the best company for women and working mothers, the most environmentally responsible in the United States, and named the “Best Managed Company in the World.” This was love in action.

In chapter 15 Chris Laszlo (lead author of an emerging Stanford University business classic, *Flourishing Enterprise: The New Spirit of Business*) and Ignacio Pavez from Chile share that we are in the midst of a consciousness revolution and one that’s changing everything. Based on their studies of “positive-impact corporations” committed to going beyond the Hippocratic oath, where doing less harm is no longer an industry-leading leadership ideal, they define success by positive impact value. Their aim is “to increase economic prosperity, contribute to a regenerative natural environment, and improve human well-being.” This chapter brought us to reflect on many wisdom traditions and great adages, for example, the words of Thomas Aquinas when he said: “To live well is to work well”—where good living and good working are inseparable.

Chapter 16, by Udayan Dhar and Ronald Fry, is based on a grounded theory study drawn from perhaps the largest innovation bank in the world on the topic of the business of world betterment. Housed at the Fowler Center for Business as an agent of world benefit at Case Western Reserve University, the AIM2Flourish database holds more than 3,000 interviews with businesses from over 130 countries whose mission is to advance both the UN SDGs and create economic value for investors. Dhar and Fry rigorously draw a randomized subset of 36 business and society innovations from this dataset and uncover a series of clear success factors of nearly every element of our dual-axis model. Their analysis uncovers “recognizing the enterprise [itself] as a change agent,” the platform model of positive institutions, as well as the success factors of social and ecological embeddedness; long-term orientations to value creation; incorporation of circular value chains; and the convening power of collaborative boundary spanning.

The final chapter in this volume is about the thrill of putting all of this—notably the elements from figure 1.1—together and in practice. Chapter 17 is

written by Nadya Zhexembayeva, known for creating a new discipline beyond change management called reinvention, and David Cooperrider, thought leader and originator of the theory of appreciative inquiry. Together they share the skills and sensibilities of the reinvention mindset and how it counters the *Titanic* syndrome, where patchwork never succeeds. They distill key lessons with their own experiences of reinvention, through helping companies bring hundreds and sometimes thousands of internal and external stakeholders “into the room” as collaborating partners. Nadya, David, and their colleagues have helped lead Appreciative Inquiry Reinvention summits with companies such as Apple, Interface, Clarke Industries, Walmart, Whole Foods, and with business megacommunities such as the UN Global Compact, which now involves some 10,000 corporations and regional networks of companies in every region of the world.

Their number-one conclusion after years of reinvention design on a vast array of management topics? The business of betterment is the most potent force on the planet for generating—both on the inside and outside of the firm—the most engaged, empowered, and innovation-inspired enterprise every leader wants. And what the world needs.

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