Being Human
How Can Individuals Flourish in Business?
All of us have the capacity to be compassionate and passionate, inspired and inspiring, and talented and creative. After all, these are just some of the qualities behind what it means to ‘be human’. Yet we are operating within an economic construct composed of organisations in which people spend perhaps a third of their lives seemingly unable to fully express this humanity.

Moreover, these human qualities are being challenged by the rapid evolution of technology, increasingly efficient, systemised yet remote organisations and the changing nature of personal relationships.

At SustainAbility, our purpose is to help business to lead the transition to a sustainable economy. As George Monbiot points out, there are many reasons for the unsustainable mess in which we find ourselves. But perhaps at the root of it all has been a disconnect between our economy and its components with these intrinsic human qualities. Perhaps only when we figure out what it means to be human in an increasingly systems-driven world – will we find the way forward towards a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Many people are thinking about what it means to create a more people-centric economy. Personally speaking, I have lived with the question of how to bring the fullness of our humanity to work for some 30 years, and I still don’t know if there is an answer. But I do think it is increasingly important to explore this concern. That’s why I am delighted to introduce this issue of Radar on ‘Being Human’ – I hope you enjoy reading it and that it sparks some conversation. Please get in touch via Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook to let us know your thoughts.
Contents:
Spring 2016

- Sustainability’s New Frontier: Being Human
- The 24th Largest Country: The Business Response to Displacement & Migration
- Less Bias, More Bucks: Spotlight on Arabesque Partners
- This is What I Have Learnt: Inge Wallage
- Cultivating Purpose: Sustainability Innovation and Employee Engagement
- Giving Workers a Voice: Well-Being in Supply Chains
- Individuals in Business: Radar Roundtable
The 24th Largest Country: The Business Response to Displacement & Migration

MasterCard's International Development Team works to provide solutions based on the Shared Value model the company adopted several years ago. “There is shared value in being engaged in international development,” Musser explained. With governments and the European Union wrangling with what to do, culminating in governments being likely to rule are economic migrants.”

Only true optimists would say it is the last. Lest we forget, the oldest refugee camp (since 1991) was created from all the displaced people it would be the 24th largest country. According to the World Economic Forum, if a country has a million refugees worldwide. According to the World Economic Forum, if a country had a million refugees, it would be the 24th largest country. In 2014, UNCHR and IKEA have partnered to run the Brighter Lives for Refugees cause-related marketing programme in Turkey, Lebanon and beyond. MasterCard views these efforts as a long-term investment in the future of refugees and refugee communities and begin the path to financial inclusion.

With Mercy Corps in Serbia, Médecins Sans Frontières in Syria and other affected areas. Since 2014, UNCHR and IKEA have also partnered to run the Brighter Lives for Refugees cause-related marketing programme in Turkey, Lebanon and beyond. MasterCard views these efforts as a long-term investment in the future of refugees and refugee communities and begin the path to financial inclusion.

Not only is IKEA's follow through impressive, but IKEA Foundation has a relatively long history of delivering on the humanitarian crisis,” Musser explained. With refugee crisis means for business and what can be done.

Globally, the business and moral case for caring about and acting on the 'crisis' of refugees and migrants*

The repercussions of inaction (i.e. a more unequal, unstable society) are too great for business. The business and moral case for acting on the 'crisis' of refugees and migrants — is particularly stark when combined with the vulnerability of people in forced migration. Governments and the European Union have been wrangling with what to do, culminating in governments being likely to rule are economic migrants.”

The protection of refugee and migrant workers, the majority and most vulnerable, is critical to a sustainable solution. Technology can be an enabler in this area, from providing access to information and resources, to supporting remote work options in the supply chain. Tooling can help companies identify and address potential compliance issues and create a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

But the business case is not just about the right thing to do — it’s also good business. Displacement & migration is a fact of life for many and is expected to become more pronounced in the future. To address this, companies need to be prepared and responsive.

In the face of such challenges, companies need to be prepared and responsive. To address this, companies need to be prepared and responsive.

The United Nations: 

The United Nations (UN) has been supporting refugees and internally displaced people for decades. However, in recent years, the number of refugees has increased significantly, putting a strain on UN resources. The UN has called on companies to support its efforts in various ways, including through financial contributions, donations of goods and services, and partnerships to provide access to technology and information.

The Role of Companies: 

Companies have an important role to play in supporting refugees and internally displaced people. In addition to financial contributions, companies can provide goods and services, such as housing, food, and healthcare, as well as technologies that can support refugees and migrants.

 IKEA: 

IKEA has been a long-time supporter of refugees and internally displaced people. The company has a responsibility/sustainability strategy and has made a commitment to sourcing sustainable materials and reducing its environmental impact. IKEA is also a member of the UN Global Compact, a voluntary initiative that encourages businesses to align their operations and strategies with ten principles on human rights, labor, the environment, and anti-corruption.

IKEA’s response to the refugee crisis: 

IKEA has a long history of working with refugees and internally displaced people. In recent years, IKEA has taken a leading role in supporting refugees in Europe and around the world. IKEA has donated goods and services, such as furniture and household items, to refugees and internally displaced people. The company has also worked with governments and other organizations to provide access to technology and information, such as mobile phones and internet connectivity.

Conclusion: 

The business and moral case for caring about and acting on the 'crisis' of refugees and migrants is strong. Companies have a role to play in supporting refugees and internally displaced people, and there are opportunities to align business strategies with the UN's work in this area. By doing so, companies can contribute to a more sustainable and prosperous future for all.
Less Bias, More Bucks: Spotlight on Arabesque Partners

As Andreas sees it, the discipline of ESG investing sits at the heart of Arabesque, with a focus on delivering sustainable returns.

Andreas is a founding Partner of Arabesque Partners. He chairs the Global Advisory Board and is responsible for Arabesque’s Sustainability Process, which is the basis for all of Arabesque’s flagship products. Andreas is a well-respected and highly sought-after expert on digital investing, environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing, quantitative asset management and the integration of technology into investing.

Spotlight on Arabesque

Less Bias, More Bucks: Spotlight on Arabesque Partners

As Andreas sees it, the discipline of ESG investing sits at the heart of Arabesque, with a focus on delivering sustainable returns.

Andreas is a founding Partner of Arabesque Partners. He chairs the Global Advisory Board and is responsible for Arabesque’s Sustainability Process, which is the basis for all of Arabesque’s flagship products. Andreas is a well-respected and highly sought-after expert on digital investing, environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing, quantitative asset management and the integration of technology into investing.

Given the key role of technology in the company’s approach it may be tempting to think that the human element is largely redundant. However, Arabesque believes that people are critical to its success. Although we use computers to leverage our time and execute our model we are very aware of the human element in our company.

Andreas places emphasis on technology to both reduce costs and to make better investment decisions. However, he also stresses the importance of the human element in the company.

Andreas sees Arabesque’s expertise in combining technology and quantitative methods with human values and behavioral insights.

Arabesque has a clear ambition to support this transition through innovating on approaches to incorporating it and they are not an agenda-setting body. According to Andreas, “The meaning of Arabesque is geometric art derived through the combination of mathematics and a rules-based approach in art that aims to exemplify the beauty of the universe and its colleagues.”

The ESG investing movement – which promotes the factoring in of relevant non-financial data into investment decisions – is gathering momentum, driven by a small but growing number of asset managers who are dedicated to integrating ESG and environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their investment processes.

We need that diversity and difference of thought and in many ways the application of technology can be seen as an expression of human values as well as a way to overcome human limitations. Companies that are more transparent and are willing to factor in ESG and environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors may also be more sustainable businesses, attracting a wider pool of investors. Arabesque believes that technology can be used to amplify the impact of human values.

Andreas is a founding Partner of Arabesque Partners. He chairs the Global Advisory Board and is responsible for Arabesque’s Sustainability Process, which is the basis for all of Arabesque’s flagship products. Andreas is a well-respected and highly sought-after expert on digital investing, environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing, quantitative asset management and the integration of technology into investing.

Given the key role of technology in the company’s approach it may be tempting to think that the human element is largely redundant. However, Arabesque believes that people are critical to its success. Although we use computers to leverage our time and execute our model we are very aware of the human element in our company.

Andreas places emphasis on technology to both reduce costs and to make better investment decisions. However, he also stresses the importance of the human element in the company.

Andreas sees Arabesque’s expertise in combining technology and quantitative methods with human values and behavioral insights.

Arabesque has a clear ambition to support this transition through innovating on approaches to incorporating it and they are not an agenda-setting body. According to Andreas, “The meaning of Arabesque is geometric art derived through the combination of mathematics and a rules-based approach in art that aims to exemplify the beauty of the universe and its colleagues.”

The ESG investing movement – which promotes the factoring in of relevant non-financial data into investment decisions – is gathering momentum, driven by a small but growing number of asset managers who are dedicated to integrating ESG and environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into their investment processes.
Part of being human is the ability to put ourselves in other people’s shoes or, better still, wear them. Inge Wallage, currently communications director at the International Water Association (IWA), is one of an increasing number of professionals who are blurring the lines between business, civil society, public sector and campaigning groups. Her career has spanned roles at Motorola, Statoil, Philips Electronics, Greenpeace and in communications consulting. This is what she has learnt.

What I’ve learned after seven years in civil society and a career in business is that solutions for the future will come about by unusual suspects coming together and sector boundaries blurring – we bring water professionals together across disciplines, across sectors and across the world.

Humans tend to believe in technocratic solutions but the reality is we need to come up with new ideas that might come through different roots such as philosophy. Even though IWA is a registered charity, it is starting to behave like an incubator and/or a social enterprise – you need to be agile to come up with water management solutions. We’re becoming more business process focused for good, not to make money.

My approach is to apply the three A’s to any programme: authenticity, audience and audacity. Another you could add is accountability, which is also crucial.

If you add Mother Earth and future generations into your target audiences it will really challenge your business plan. And, in order to be authentic and take those two audiences into account, and be accountable, we need to be audacious – set yourself a target you can’t meet very easily so you have to be innovative and find peers acting in a similar way to support you.

For authenticity, I always use the example of Unilever. Paul Polman acts from these three A’s. Hopefully being on the B Team also supports him to move ahead. I’ve also been really impressed with Nestlé, what they do in terms of alignment with the SDGs seems very solid and they give me the impression they truly want to contribute.

Most people think they have a societal responsibility. A recent discussion at the European Association of Communication Directors showed that when push comes to shove they are accountable to the people who pay their wage and short termism takes over from the long term. Unfortunately, behaviour doesn’t necessarily correlate with the way people think. None of this is easy and communication is key.
edge, but also may be the most successful at retaining and inspiring their workers to feel they are
innovative efforts to help create the next generations of low-carbon technologies.

improving health for the long term as part of the company’s campaign on obesity. Meanwhile,

thinking, while Tesco has run a number of hack-a-thons including a 48-hour one with the aim of

Many companies, conversely, have experienced much higher levels of engagement and innovation
private location to create an advanced LED bulb. Two years and 20 million bulbs later, Cree is

Sometimes a specialised ‘skunk works’ approach to collaboration reaps more radical innovation,

constructive environment for engaged employees that are inspired to innovate. This can take the

to cultivating the talent and engagement needed to not

by innovating for more sustainable outcomes may be key

environment where employees can work with purpose

with solid ethical and environmental practices that

meaning in daily work. Studies show that younger

Newer generations, however, are not so different from

want to use their “skills for good” and the fact that the future of work lies in empowering

It appears millennials are particularly less likely than other generations to say they “have the

especially be true among millennials, with only 28.9% engagement vs. their traditionalist (born

psychologists and David Pink (author of Drive) believe marks meaningful work. This seems to

within reach, employment tends to lack the trifecta of autonomy, mastery and purpose that

The majority of people are compelled to work not by passion but by practicality – by the

actively disengaged and doing more harm than good at their companies.

Gallup suggests that globally only 13% of employees are engaged in their work and its State of

“There is an ugliness in being paid for work one does not like,” Anaïs Nin penned in 1941 in

员工 engagement and incentives can help inspire and retain employees.

Read More

Model Behavior II: Strategies to Rewire Business

Competition for high performers in the tech sector can drive sustainability

Cultivating Purpose: Sustainability Innovation and Employee Engagement

Engagement Through Sustainability Innovation?

We identified three particular qualities that can

1. Leadership from the top;

2. Comfort with risk; and

3. Cross-collaboration.

These efforts not only bring in new ideas, they bring in new people and new excitement
These are supervised by highly engaged managers are 59% more likely to be engaged.

promote a culture of engagement and innovation. Gallup reiterates this point: employees who

leadership on board and on the same page. She mentioned, “However leadership

Several studies have shown that belief in senior leadership is the strongest engagement driver.

Leadership from the Top

In an interview with HR specialist Megan Moran at Insperity, a provider of human resource

From research and interviews with over 16 innovation experts, these were seen as key aspects,

From its early days, Apple has been a company that is comfortable with risk.

About 5000 employees at Google and Facebook provide a platform to innovate from other tidal

Read More

Guidance to large companies on how to harness the power of business model

Fostering an environment where people can work with purpose

intersections between sustainability,

the ideas and designs that express the

@EarthofFoxes

Rochelle Marsh

that most employees crave, but it also can help contribute to outside-the-box inventions. This

employees who are supervised by highly engaged managers are 59% more likely to be engaged.

leadership on board and on the same page. She mentioned, “However leadership

Several studies have shown that belief in senior leadership is the strongest engagement driver.

Leadership from the Top

In an interview with HR specialist Megan Moran at Insperity, a provider of human resource

From research and interviews with over 16 innovation experts, these were seen as key aspects,
Giving Workers a Voice: Well-Being in Supply Chains

According to a survey of 37,000 workers in China-based factories, key findings include:

- 58% of workers are satisfied with their jobs.
- 68% of workers feel they are fairly compensated.
- 71% of workers are happy with their work environment.

The survey was conducted by Good World Solutions, a Northern California-based non-profit organisation. According to the survey, workers want improvements in dormitories and cafeteria food. When these needs were addressed, job satisfaction jumped by 24%.

Defining Worker Well-being

Worker well-being in supply chains is crucial for both ethical and business outcomes. As advancements in technologies and research enable workers to express their concerns and preferences for more training, education and career advancement opportunities, it becomes essential to incorporate these needs into business strategies.

Engaging with Workers

Involving workers in making decisions about their work environment can lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity. By collaborating with workers, companies can ensure that the well-being of their employees is prioritised, leading to a sustainable future.

Participating companies include:

- Mattel
- Harry's
- Vodafone
- Walmart
- C&A
- M&S
- The Walt Disney Company
- American Eagle Outfitters
- J.Crew
- Levi’s

These companies have collaborated with Good World Solutions to improve the working conditions of their supply chain workers. By working together, they aim to create a better Standard of Living for workers and a competitive issue for some sectors.

Well-being as a Benchmark

Well-being has become a benchmark for companies as they make improvements and continue to track worker satisfaction. By focusing on worker well-being, companies can create a positive work environment that leads to increased productivity and employee satisfaction.

Summary

Worker well-being in supply chains is essential for both ethical and business outcomes. As advancements in technologies and research that enable workers to express their concerns and preferences for more training, education and career advancement opportunities, it becomes crucial to incorporate these needs into business strategies. By engaging with workers and involving them in decision-making processes, companies can ensure that the well-being of their employees is prioritised, leading to a sustainable future.
We recently hosted a roundtable to discuss with some of our network the Radar theme ‘Being Human’ and better understand what it means to be human in an increasingly technological and systemised world.

At SustainAbility, we recognise that making swift progress towards better business and a better world requires inspiration, collaboration and trust, and a stronger emotional connection with our places and each other. Yet such human qualities are increasingly under pressure in the global economy.

“A lot of organisations don’t incentivise us to be our full selves. Often they ask us to bring ourselves to the workplace, but it is only done in a formalistic and inauthentic way.”

Sustainable Finance & Investment Executive

Working from this assumption we asked participants from business, academia, NGOs and social enterprises to think about how human qualities can continue to flourish in business.

The important human qualities identified included creativity, curiosity, and empathy as well as passion and humour. And while these qualities were seen across business to some degree, when we tried to unpick what this all meant for our working lives, the complexities of this topic became apparent.

It was felt that workplaces and the wider economic system focus on efficiency, removing the value of essential human elements and qualities. Organisations are slow to change because they operate within the existing system that, it was argued, is itself a corrupted and dysfunctional model.

As one participant observed, dominant business practices often remove the space we need as humans to create and to connect. A ‘let’s just get through the agenda’ mindset means we skip over or ignore creating the space to meet each other on a human level. Paradoxically, it is when we connect at a deeper and more honest human level that the rest of the ‘agenda items’ can get sorted and progress is made.

“We have a system designed to be efficient in a certain way, which is removing the space we require to create, to connect. There is a culture of ‘let’s just get through the agenda’ and we skip over or ignore creating the space to meet each other on a human level.”

Strategist & Change Agent

Taking all of this into account, one contributor identified a set of three initial system controls that we can start by addressing; specifically, the leadership, structures and incentives that currently drive negative behaviours in the workplace. There was the view that by first focusing on these elements it is possible to positively reinforce the qualities first identified around the room.

“I think we may all have different interpretations of what humanity is. But the question is also, how do you respect the humanity in others? How do you not only respect it but also help it to grow it in others?”

Academic

Fundamentally though, many in the room felt that simplicity is the key – showing up and meeting people as they are and where they are at and creating a space for that, before the agenda takes over. We are often so busy to get things done applying a superficial efficiency that we can miss the valuable meaning found in meeting each other.

Alicia Ayars
Manager at SustainAbility’s London office, activist, reader, connoisseur of information and advocate for climate solutions.

Zoë Arden
@zoearden
Sustainability sleuth, cake maker and director in SustainAbility’s London office.

Individuals in Business: Radar Roundtable
Radar

Issue 10: Spring 2016

Publisher
SustainAbility Ltd.

SustainAbility is a think tank and strategic advisory firm working to inspire transformative business leadership on sustainability.

Established in 1987, SustainAbility delivers illuminating foresight and actionable insight on sustainable development trends and issues.

For more information visit: www.sustainability.com

Radar Team
Frances Buckingham
Zoë Arden
Charlotte Pearson

Image Credits

Cover
iStockphoto

Articles
p3  - iStockphoto
p4  - Press Association
p5  - iStockphoto
p6  - Author’s own
p7  - iStockphoto
p8  - iStockphoto
    - Good World Solutions
p9  - iStockphoto

© All images remain the copyright of their respective owners.

Design
Lucy Player
Chris Wolf

© 2016 SustainAbility Ltd.