

# Sustainability in Action



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## Quote of the month



“ Leadership has nothing to do with titles, positions, let alone organization charts. It is a person's ability to use his or her life to influence other lives. ” John C. Maxwell

## Spotlight of the month

# Leading with Influence



A few days ago, I asked the following question in a LinkedIn poll:

**“What is the level of integration of sustainability in your business strategy?”**

Results are quite telling:

- 25% of respondents replied sustainability is 100% integrated
- 19% of respondents replied it was partly integrated
- 56% of respondents replied sustainability is considered a “nice to have”

I am not surprised as I faced the same challenge as a chief sustainability officer. For many, sustainability was considered “nice to have” and tolerated for as long as it was not spending any budget nor time.

I know first-hand this is a reality many professionals are still facing. My clients often reach out to me to find help with it. They try to find strategies and arguments to help move the needle and to convince internally.

With small teams, limited budgets, always more urgent priorities to address, and some level of skepticism towards sustainability and its benefits, the need to develop political abilities, to inspire and convince is a must if you want to succeed.

To build a more sustainable future despite current headwinds, you need to demonstrate courage, resilience and leadership. I am not talking about traditional top-down leadership. I am referring to the ability to lead with influence and mobilize others towards a shared and compelling vision.

Convincing senior leaders and managers that sustainability should be embedded at the core of their strategy and business practices is no “walk in the park”. Along the way, you will overcome push back. There are various ways you can remove roadblocks and make it a success.

### **Converting skeptics into allies**

Sustainability initiatives are often perceived as resource and time-consuming. This is often caused by a lack of experience and knowledge in this field. And when a CEO is under pressure of increasing revenues or reducing costs, sustainability is seen as a distraction he or she is not interested to delve into.

However, to remain resilient, attractive and trustworthy partners, companies must take action as they face increasing climate risks and growing demands by customers and investors, end-consumers and employees expecting them to reduce their impact on the environment and society.

To convert those who are not naturally driven to sustainability, you need to speak their language, develop strong arguments and deconstruct what they believe to be true.

You also need to build allyship and leverage internal and external stakeholders. You will not succeed alone. Think of the power of the crowds!

### **Tips and actions to lead sustainability in your organization**

If you are looking to drive and accelerate sustainability efforts in your company, here is a checklist for you:

**1. Start with data:** Build your case with data. Show how sustainability can reduce costs, improve operational efficiencies, and create new revenue streams.

If you do not have data available, start the process of collecting and launch pilot projects with some internal allies. You can also gather evidence from external studies or from industry best practices through benchmarking.

**2. Align sustainability with business objectives:** Tie your sustainability goals to broader business objectives. Whether it is through cost reduction, revenue generation, or risk management, show how sustainability can drive growth, innovation and operational performance.

**3. Educate your CEO, your Executive team and your Board:** It is important to build some sustainability knowledge in the higher ranks. Share trends, industry best practices and provide data-driven information that demonstrate the financial benefits of sustainability, whether it is through cost savings in energy and waste management or new revenue streams from sustainable product offerings.

**4. Engage Employees:** Encouraging employees to be part of the solution not only improves morale but also fosters innovation. You can launch initiatives that empower employees to propose and test new sustainable practices and educate them on sustainability as well, turning them into champions of change.

**5. Leverage External Stakeholders:** Engage with customers, investors, and industry partners across the value chain. Their support can lend credibility to your initiatives and drive buy-in from leadership.

Customers, especially in today's climate-conscious market, are increasingly demanding more sustainable products. Investors, too, are paying close attention to ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) factors. By aligning with these interests, you can strengthen your competitive advantage and attract the right partners.

**6. Build external alliances:** Other companies in your industry face the same challenges. Engage with your supply chain and see how you can join forces and start working collaboratively towards new solutions. You will scale faster rather than if you work in isolation.

**7. Be Patient, but Persistent:** Changing mindsets takes time. Do not expect immediate results. But if you stay persistent and keep the conversation alive, the tide will turn! And when this happens, reward yourself for this big achievement, because you were right from day one. I call it: "keep a bottle of Champagne in the fridge to celebrate big wins!"

### **Demonstrating value: How sustainability drives profits**

For skeptics, it is often about "showing the money". Here are some concrete ways sustainability can drive value:

- **Waste reduction:** By implementing circular practices, you can reduce waste disposal costs and optimize resource use, leading to significant savings.
- **Energy savings:** Energy-efficient practices not only lower operational costs but also contribute to a positive brand image and reduce your environmental footprint
- **New business opportunities:** Sustainability can open doors to new clients looking for eco-friendly solutions. It can also lead to higher retention and increased loyalty from existing clients.
- **Revenue growth:** Offering sustainable products or services can differentiate your company in a competitive market, opening new premium product segments and new revenue streams.

If like my clients, you need support with gathering best practices and building your arguments, contact me to make an appointment here:

[Contact | Magali Depras Consulting Services](#)

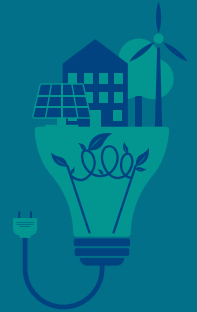
Incorporating sustainability into your business model is not just the right thing to do, it is a strategic move that can unlock new opportunities and ensure long-term business success.

By leading with influence, educating stakeholders, and demonstrating the business case for sustainability, you can make a meaningful difference in your organization.

I look forward to hearing how you lead sustainability initiatives within your companies and industries.

## Useful tips

# Recent Articles & Events



## Useful readings

To understand more about how sustainability is transforming businesses and creating value, I recommend exploring the following studies:

- [The Comprehensive Business Case for Sustainability](#), Harvard Business School
- [Profits with Purpose.ashx](#), McKinsey

## Events to mark on your agenda

[Canadian Circular Economy Summit 2025](#), April 15-17 in Montreal

Co-hosted by Circular Innovation Council and Circular Economy Leadership Canada, the Canadian Circular Economy Summit is the first of its kind in Canada, tailored specifically to convene thought-leaders and change-makers from industry and the public sector to actively advance projects, investments, collaborations, and to inform policies that will reshape our current linear economic model into a circular one.

## Sustainable Finance Summit | Home Sustainable Finance Summit, May 13-14-15 in Montreal

The Sustainable Finance Summit is a large-scale event organized by Finance Montréal, which brings together renowned leaders and aims to establish a constructive dialogue on the relationship between economic development, environmental protection and sustainable development, and on how the finance meets these challenges.



### **Sustainability in Action**

Your monthly newsletter with latest ESG trends and Sustainable business solutions



[contact@magalidepras.com](mailto:contact@magalidepras.com)



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