The Futures of Value:

Strategic Pathways for Integrating Profit and Purpose

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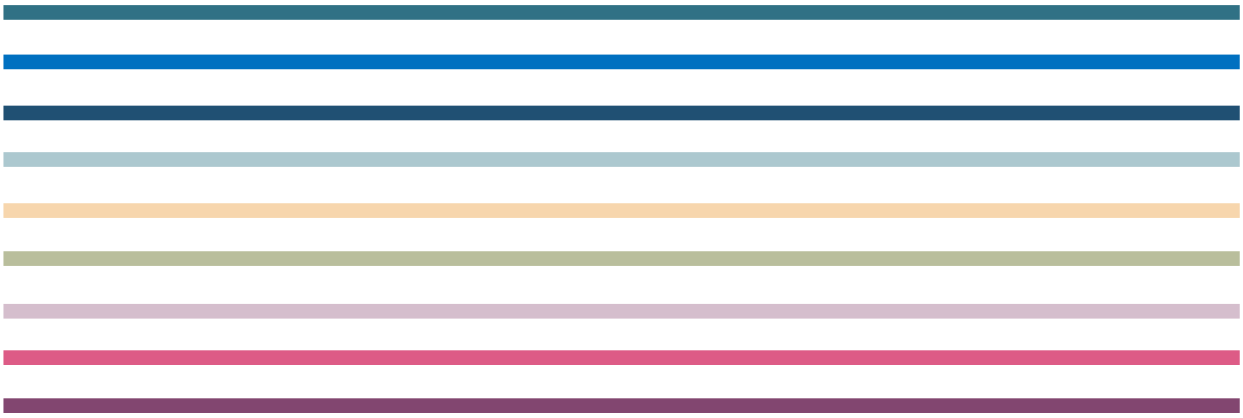

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Abstract

This project investigates **how the concept of value in business is shifting** and **how this shift is influencing the integration of profit and purpose**. The research establishes an understanding of the concept of value in business within the contemporary context by synthesizing findings from a literature review, qualitative interviews, and systems analysis. These methods uncover the structural, relational, and ideological forces shaping the concept of value, as well as the interdependencies, power dynamics, and feedback loops within the current system.

To address the research objective of **identifying strategic pathways supporting businesses navigating toward sustainable success and meaningful impact,** the exploration of the concept of value and its relationship to the integration of profit and purpose was extended into future contexts by employing strategic foresight methods. Horizon scanning and historical analysis identified drivers of change, laying the groundwork for scenario construction. The Cone of Plausibility technique provided a structured approach to explore how altering assumptions about drivers' behaviour might shape different futures. Analysis of the resulting scenarios revealed eight insights, which then informed the development of foundational capacities and strategic pathways to support businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose. Additionally, a set of guiding questions was developed to support strategy and design teams in thinking systemically and reflexively when working with value propositions.

Welcome Reader!

This Major Research Project is the final component of a Master of Design (MDes) graduate degree in OCAD University's Strategic Foresight and Innovation (SFI) program. It is a strategic foresight exploration of the **futures of value.** The word ***"futures"*** is plural because the future is not singular; it is a spectrum of possibilities shaped by societal priorities, complex systems, and our collective choices. In exploring ***futures***, this project acknowledges the diversity of potential pathways ahead, some may align with current trends and others may challenge existing assumptions. Strategic foresight provides a framework to explore these possibilities systematically, and helps us to navigate uncertainty, anticipate change, and develop strategies that are adaptive, proactive, and potentially, transformational.

Ways to Read This Report

If you are interested in **methodology**:

- Start with the research objectives, question, and methods in the Introduction.
- Part 1 includes systems analysis tools, with additional details in Appendices A and B.
- The "Constructing Scenarios" section in Part 2 explains how the Cone of Plausibility technique was applied.
- See the beginning of Part 3 for details on the process used to develop the project outputs.

If you are interested in **analysis and insights**:

- Part 1 explores the current day context of businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose.
- The "Evolution of Value" section in Part 2 details findings from a historical analysis of economic eras from Mercantilism to today's Digital Platform Era.
- The "Scenario Insights" section in Part 2 outlines eight insights that informed the development of the project outputs.

To explore the **"futures of value" in 2035** you will find the four scenarios: "Business as Usual" (Baseline Scenario), "The Wellness Market" (Scenario 1) "The Green Divide" (Scenario 2), and "Canadian Mission Economy" (Preferred Scenario) in Part 2.

If you prefer **to jump right to the findings:**

- Part 3 details the project outputs: Foundational Capacities, Strategic Pathways, and Companion Questions to Support Value Propositions.
- Detailed strategies for each Strategic Pathway are included in Appendix E
- Learnings and areas of future areas of research and inquiry are included in the Conclusion.

This report is offered as a means of stretching our thinking beyond the present, of questioning our assumptions of the future, and imagining possibilities.

Acknowledgments and Dedication

This project would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many people.

First, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my faculty advisor, Zan Chandler, for her insight, patience, and encouragement to embrace the journey of this work. Your expertise and support have been invaluable.

I am also immensely grateful to my cohort at OCAD University's Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation program. Your thoughtful discussions and collaborative spirit enriched made this experience deeply rewarding.

To the subject matter experts and interview participants who generously shared their time, experiences, and insights, thank you for contributing your knowledge to this project. Your perspectives were instrumental in shaping the findings and outputs of this research.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their patience, encouragement, and unwavering support throughout this process. I am deeply grateful for your generosity and understanding.

This project is a culmination of collective effort, and I am profoundly thankful for the contributions of all those who helped bring it to life.

For Bill, Judith, Brenda, Mark, Cecilia, and Ian—my Three Horizons.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

INTRODUCTION

> **"If we cannot dream of a better future and try to make it happen, there is no real reason why we should care about value."**
>
> **– Marianna Mazzucato**

Context

The long-standing, dominant business strategy paradigm prioritizes profit maximization and shareholder returns. This view has shaped business school curricula, corporate strategies, and boardroom decisions for decades (Freeman et al., 2020,) (Martin & Haidt 2020). However, mounting social, economic, and environmental challenges have revealed the limitations of this profit-centric model. The singular pursuit of profits overlooks broader impacts on communities, ecosystems, and long-term societal well-being and this narrow focus has contributed to a range of systemic issues, including stagnant productivity, rising inequality, the financialization of the economy, vulnerability to financial crises, and the accelerating climate crisis (Foroohar, 2016) (Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016) (Gerstle, 2023). These interconnected challenges reveal the inherent fragility of a model that prioritizes short-term financial gains over broader societal resilience and long-term sustainability. Understanding the roots of these systemic issues requires a critical examination of the economic system that sustains and perpetuates them.

A key issue is the **stagnation of productivity**. Productivity growth, the increase in the efficiency with which goods and services are produced, has historically been understood as a key driver of economic expansion and rising living standards. (Gordon, 2017) Higher productivity has the potential to allow businesses to generate more output with the same or fewer resources, creating opportunities to support higher wages, innovation, and economic resilience. However, the extent to which productivity growth benefits the broader economy depends on how businesses choose to use these gains. When companies reinvest their productivity gains into workforce development, wage increases, and innovation, the resulting benefits can lead to shared economic progress and improved living standards (Gordon, 2017).

Economist Robert J. Gordon, in *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*, highlights how the exceptional productivity gains achieved between 1870 and 1970—fueled by transformative innovations like electricity, automobiles, and sanitation systems—enabled significant societal progress. During this "special century," businesses often reinvested their gains in ways that supported long-term growth and prosperity, helping to spread the benefits more broadly across society. However, since the 1970s, productivity growth has slowed, despite advancements in digital technology. Gordon suggests that the current profit-maximization model's emphasis on short-term financial gains over long-term investments has limited the economy's capacity for transformative advancements. By prioritizing immediate shareholder returns, many businesses have shifted away from reinvestment in productive assets, innovation, and wages, contributing to **stagnant productivity** growth and undermining the potential for economic progress and resilience. This shift further highlights the inadequacy of a profit-centric approach to driving sustainable growth.

Building on the limitations of the profit-maximization model, the **financialization of the economy** represents a systemic shift in business priorities toward financial markets and short-term gains. Emerging in the late 1970s and accelerating during the 1980s, financialization coincided with the rise of neoliberal economic policies, deregulation, and the growing dominance of shareholder primacy in corporate governance (Foroohar, 2016). Deregulation refers to the loosening or removal of government rules and oversight over financial markets and institutions, which allowed for more speculative and profit-driven activities. Financialization refers to the increasing dominance of financial motives, markets, and institutions in economic decision-making, where the primary goal becomes maximizing shareholder returns rather than reinvesting in productive activities. Economist Rana Foroohar describes how this shift has led companies to prioritize financial strategies—such as stock buybacks, dividend payouts, and speculative market activities—over investments in goods, services, and infrastructure that drive long-term growth (Foroohar,2016).

The 2008 global financial crisis starkly illustrated the dangers of financialization. Decades of prioritizing speculative activities and complex financial products, such as mortgage-backed securities and derivatives, created systemic vulnerabilities that culminated in the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression (Beinhocker, 2019). The crisis exposed how financialization diverts resources from productive uses, destabilizes the global economy, and imposes significant costs on households and communities. Over recent decades, financialization has transformed businesses from producers and innovators into entities primarily focused on value extraction through stock performance and market speculation. This orientation not only diverts resources away from the "real economy," where goods and services are produced, but also exacerbates economic inequality by concentrating wealth among shareholders and executives (Beinhocker, 2019). As financialization has taken precedence, it has weakened the focus on sustainable growth, further entrenching the economy in practices that prioritize short-term financial gains over long-term resilience.

Economic inequality, encompassing disparities in income and wealth distribution, has become a defining feature of the contemporary economy. These disparities illustrate systemic flaws in the dominant economic model, which prioritizes profit maximization and shareholder returns over equitable wealth distribution and long-term societal well-being. Economic inequality refers to the growing gap in income and wealth distribution between different groups in society, resulting in unequal access to opportunities, resources, and financial security. Since the 1970s, average weekly earnings for most workers have largely decoupled from GDP growth, meaning that while the economy has continued to expand, the benefits of this growth have not translated into higher living standards for the majority of the population (Gordon, 2017). This decoupling reflects a persistent decline in the labour share of national income—wages and salaries—as a proportion of the economy, relative to the share going to corporate profits (Beinhocker, 2019). As a result, the benefits of economic growth have become increasingly concentrated among capital holders, such as shareholders and executives, while leaving much of the workforce behind.

Roger Martin argues in *When More Is Not Better* that this growing inequality is rooted in an overemphasis on economic efficiency, which prioritizes short-term cost-cutting over long-term investments in people, innovation, and resilience (Martin, 2020). While efficiency can drive short-term productivity gains, excessive focus on minimizing costs often leads to wage suppression, reduced workforce development, and underinvestment in innovation—practices that exacerbate inequality and undermine sustained productivity growth. This dynamic reinforces a system where the rewards of growth are concentrated among the few, while the majority of workers experience stagnating wages and declining economic security (Martin, 2020).

By privileging the interests of capital holders over broader societal well-being, these dynamics challenge the assumption that market-driven economies naturally produce shared prosperity. Instead, they have exacerbated wealth disparities, undermining social cohesion and economic resilience (Martin, 2020.). Martin's call for a balance between efficiency and resilience underscores the need to rethink economic models to promote equitable growth and distribute prosperity more fairly.

The **vulnerability of the economic system to financial crises** constitutes a fourth, interconnected issue, revealing the fundamental instability of the current economic framework. This framework is built on the premise that markets are rational and self-correcting, capable of delivering predictable and stable outcomes. However, financial crises consistently arise in ways that defy these expectations, exposing deep structural weaknesses. Over the past decades, events such as the Savings and Loan Crisis of the 1980s, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, the Dot-Com Bubble of the early 2000s, and the 2008 Global Financial Crisis have underscored the recurring nature of these systemic failures (Beinhocker, 2019). These crises highlight fundamental flaws in the way economic actors prioritize short-term financial gains over long-term economic resilience.

A key factor driving this vulnerability is the growing reliance on speculative financial practices, where profits are increasingly derived from high-risk market activities rather than productive investments. Deregulation has further exacerbated this fragility, removing safeguards designed to curb excessive risk-taking and protect against systemic shocks (Foroohar, 2016). While these practices are often justified as promoting efficiency and growth, they instead amplify volatility, increase systemic risks, and undermine trust in financial institutions and the broader economy.

The implications of this systemic vulnerability extend far beyond financial markets, disproportionately impacting individuals and households. As corporations move away from stable, long-term employment toward contract work and gig economy roles, financial risk has been shifted onto workers (Kibisi, 2019). These jobs often lack benefits, job security, and protections, leaving workers increasingly exposed to the ripple effects of financial instability (Kibisi, 2019). For many, the fallout from crises manifests in the loss of savings, reduced access to credit, and heightened economic insecurity, further entrenching inequality and precarity. This redistribution of risk from corporations to households poses threats to both economic stability and individual well-being, underscoring the precarious nature of today's economy (Kibisi, 2019).

Finally, climate change represents an existential challenge that current economic models are ill-equipped to address. A singular focus on profit maximization has frequently disregarded environmental consequences, driving significant ecological degradation and accelerating the climate crisis. (Charlton, 2023). Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss underscore the urgency of rethinking how businesses approach environmental sustainability (Henderson, 2020). As climate-related challenges intensify, it is clear that the traditional economic framework fails to account for the long-term impacts of corporate activity on ecosystems and planetary health (Henderson, 2020).

Together, these systemic issues reveal that the traditional economic system, focused on profit maximization and shareholder primacy, fails to deliver rising living standards or societal resilience. Growing public pressure for corporations to acknowledge and address their adverse impacts—including environmental degradation, social inequities, and economic instability—reflects a shift in expectations for corporate responsibility. Yet, within the prevailing framework, such impacts are labeled as "externalities" and excluded from financial calculations. In this model, value is determined strictly by the difference between a company's costs and the price that consumers are

willing to pay for its goods or services (Anderson & Narus, 1998). This calculation inflates perceived value by disregarding the societal and environmental costs borne by communities and ecosystems.

It's critical to distinguish between value creation and value extraction in this context. Value creation refers to the generation of products, services, and economic activities that improve societal well-being and enable sustainable growth (Mazzucato, 2020). In contrast, value extraction involves the capture of financial gains through speculative or rent-seeking behavior, often without contributing equivalent value to the broader economy (Mazzucato, 2020). The traditional business model has prioritized value extraction over value creation, a dynamic that has contributed to rising inequality, economic instability, and environmental degradation (Mazzucato, 2020).

Within the corporate mainstream, there have been signals of change. In 2019, the Business Roundtable (BRT) an American association of CEOs representing ~$9 trillion in revenue, signaled a significant departure from the traditional view by redefining the purpose of the corporation to serve all stakeholders—customers, employees, suppliers, communities, and shareholders—thereby challenging the primacy of shareholder profit (BRT, 2019) Although the BRT's statement garnered widespread attention, the absence of strategic tools, methodologies, or metrics to support the shift has left many businesses without a clear pathway for operationalizing these principles. (BRT, 2019). Although the BRT's statement garnered widespread attention, the absence of strategic tools, methodologies, or metrics to support the shift has left many businesses without a clear pathway for operationalizing these principles. Efforts by consultancies, such as McKinsey & Company have sought to address this gap by promoting frameworks to "make stakeholder capitalism work" (Hunt et al., 2021). However, many of these strategies remain within a traditional value extraction paradigm, focusing on enhancing brand identity and consumer appeal rather than fundamentally redefining how value is created and distributed.

The current cost-of-living crisis further complicates this landscape. A range of factors—including inflation, wage stagnation, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 recovery—have increased financial strain on consumers, prompting many to prioritize essential purchases and reduce discretionary spending. (PWC, 2022). Although consumers value products aligned with social and environmental causes, recent studies indicate that this willingness to pay a "purpose premium" fluctuates under economic pressure. For example, a 2023 PwC survey found that 69% of global consumers are now holding back on non-essential spending, with 90% adopting strategies to cut costs (PWC, 2023). This heightened price sensitivity poses a challenge for businesses relying on consumer support for purpose-driven products, emphasizing the need for purpose-oriented models that balance value with affordability.

As these pressures intensify, the concept of value in business is undergoing a profound transformation. No longer a simple calculation of financial returns, value is now being explored as a multidimensional construct that incorporates economic, social, and environmental dimensions. A holistic understanding of value offers new pathways for organizations to integrate profit with purpose, fostering equitable growth and long-term sustainability. This context provides the foundation for exploring critical questions that arise as businesses begin to navigate this transition.

Researcher Positioning

Positionality is a foundational concept in qualitative research, reflecting the researcher's stance in relation to their research topic, participants, and methods. This concept acknowledges that a researcher's identity, experiences,

and assumptions shape every stage of the research process, from the formulation of research questions to the interpretation of data. In this project, positionality is explored not only to ensure transparency but also to critically examine the lens through which this study's insights are generated.

This section integrates three interconnected elements: **identity**, **positionality**, and **reflexivity**. These elements are essential for understanding how the researcher's context and assumptions interact with the research process. Building on the framework illustrated by Wilson et al. (2022), (see Figure 1) **identity** encompasses the dynamic aspects of who the researcher is, **reflexivity** involves questioning and addressing underlying assumptions, and **positionality** situates the researcher within the research environment. Together, these concepts aim to produce a trustworthy and nuanced account of the study, ensuring that the influence of the researcher's perspective is made explicit.

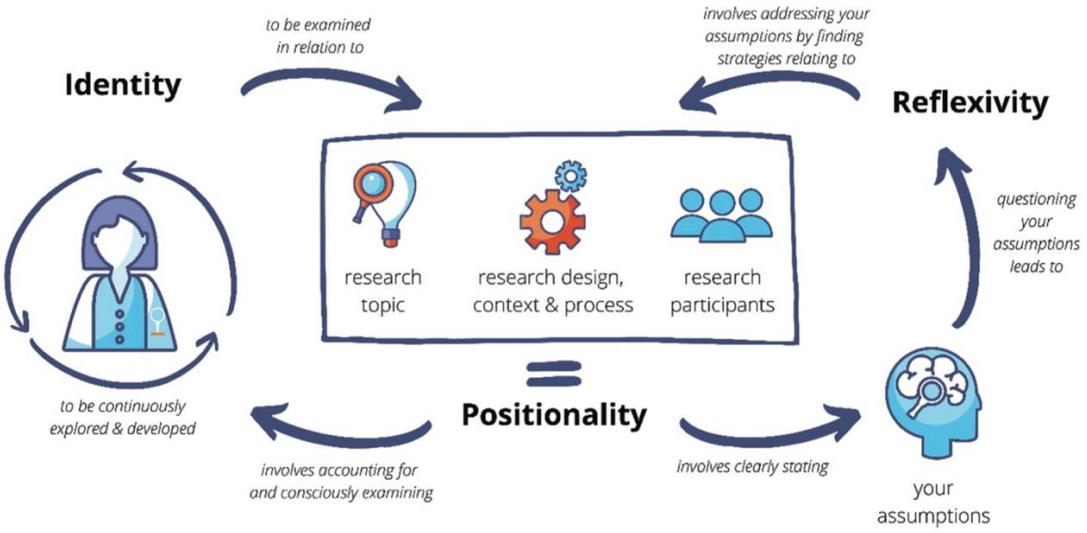

Figure 1:*The interconnected concepts of identity, positionality, and reflexivity (Wilson et. al., 2022,) I**dentity** encompasses the dynamic aspects of who the researcher is, **reflexivity** involves questioning and addressing underlying assumptions, and **positionality** situates the researcher within the research environment*.

The purpose of this section is to outline my identity and positionality in relation to this project while demonstrating reflexivity in addressing biases and assumptions. By doing so, I aim to provide transparency for readers and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Identity

My identity as a researcher is shaped by the interplay of personal, academic, and professional experiences, positioning me at the intersection of multiple roles that inform my approach to this study. Professionally, I bring over a decade of experience in business strategy and design, enriched by academic training in Strategic Foresight and Innovation. These experiences shape my perspective on the shifting concept of value in business, particularly the integration of profit and purpose.

On a personal level, my lived experiences and intersecting privileges, as outlined in the *Academic Wheel of Privilege*, significantly influence my research lens. My access to formal education and professional networks situates me within a privileged group, providing opportunities for collaboration and inquiry. At the same time, navigating health challenges has instilled a reflective, human-centred perspective that informs my work.

These intersections create an evolving identity, offering both advantages and responsibilities. While my access to resources strengthens my capacity for analysis, I remain conscious of how my position shapes the framing of this study and its implications for broader communities.

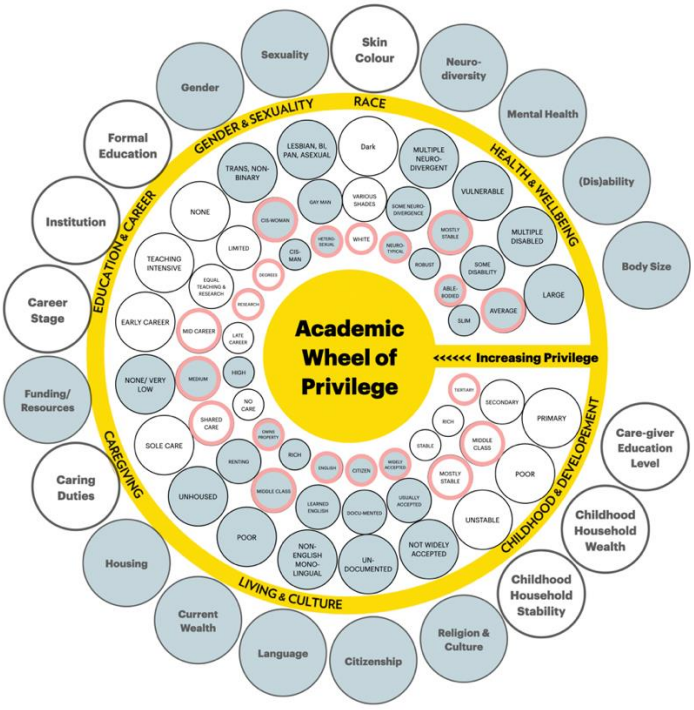

Figure 2: "Academic Wheel of Privilege" illustrates the intersection of my social positionings. (Elsherif, 2022 as cited in the UK Research Integrity Office, 2024). Appreciation is extended to Allison Campbell-Rogers for highlighting this resource.

Positionality

In my final year of high school, I excelled in economics, captivated by Keynesian principles of public benefit and systemic government intervention. The following year, in my university introduction to economics course, I earned an "E." The difference? Guns and butter. While Keynesian economics resonated with my understanding of value, the neoclassical focus on trade-offs and equilibrium models felt abstract and disconnected from lived realities. Its rigid view of value as determined by scarcity relative to demand clashed with my beliefs, sparking an early skepticism of dominant economic frameworks.

At the time, I declared I wanted nothing to do with sales or business, rejecting the values of Reaganomics, Thatcherism, and the 1980s era glorification of greed. Yet, my professional journey took me into the heart of those

systems. As a senior leader in marketing and advertising, I witnessed firsthand how businesses prioritize short-term growth and profit, often at the expense of worker protections and sustainability. These experiences reinforced my critique of neoclassical assumptions while offering a nuanced view of the constraints businesses face.

A turning point came when I pursued executive training in Business Design at Rotman University, followed by Strategic Foresight and Innovation at OCAD University. These programs introduced me to human-centred design and systemic thinking, allowing me to explore alternative approaches to value that integrate profit with public benefit. These tools have shaped my current research, enabling me to critically examine the ideological foundations of value in business and to envision pathways for aligning purpose with sustainability and long-term impact.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a critical component of this research, ensuring transparency in how my positionality influences the study and fostering ethical rigor throughout the process. As a researcher whose professional journey has included both insider and outsider perspectives on business systems, I have employed reflexivity to continuously question and address the assumptions I bring to this work. This practice has allowed me to navigate the complexity of the subject matter while remaining attentive to potential biases.

Strategies for Reflexivity
To address personal and professional biases, I employed several reflexivity strategies:

- **Research Journaling**: I journaled key decisions, tensions, and reflections, using this process to surface and challenge assumptions.
- **Peer Feedback**: Regular discussions with colleagues and mentors provided critical perspectives, helping to identify blind spots and refine interpretations.
- **Iterative Design**: Adaptive methods like Iterative Inquiry and Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) allowed me to respond to emerging insights and uncover hidden assumptions.
- **Triangulation**: I validated findings by combining multiple data sources and tools, such as systems mapping and archetypal scenarios, ensuring balanced conclusions.

Challenges and Insights
Balancing my insider knowledge of business systems with critical analysis has been challenging. My professional background often framed decisions through operational constraints, requiring deliberate efforts to revisit assumptions and seek external input. Similarly, my early skepticism of traditional economic frameworks risked narrowing my perspective. Reflexive practices, such as returning to raw data and consulting broader literature, helped me balance critique with openness, deepening my understanding of value creation's complexity and the need for systemic and practical solutions.

Connection to the Research Topic
Reflexivity has shaped my approach to the shifting concept of value in business. By interrogating my assumptions, I have critiqued the ideological underpinnings of neoclassical economics while remaining receptive to alternative

frameworks. This process has enhanced the integrity of my research, enabling me to propose pathways for businesses to align profit with sustainability and meaningful impact.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are to explore the evolving concept of value in business and to identify strategic pathways that may support businesses in their efforts to integrate profit with purpose.

Research Questions

The primary question this major research project aims to answer is:

> How is the concept of value in business shifting, how is this shift influencing the integration of profit and purpose, and what strategic pathways might businesses craft to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact?

Secondary research questions:

> What are the systemic dynamics relating to the shift in the concept of value in business?
> What is economic value and how has it shifted over time?
> How does economic value relate to the concept of value in business?
> How might economic value continue to shift in the future and how might that impact the concept of value in business?

Research Methodology

To answer the primary research question, a combination of methods and tools from the disciplines of systems thinking and strategic foresight were employed within the structure of a design-thinking process that follows the following phases: [1] Discover, [2] Define, [3] Develop, and [4] Deliver. Each project phase addresses secondary research questions that break down and support the primary research question.

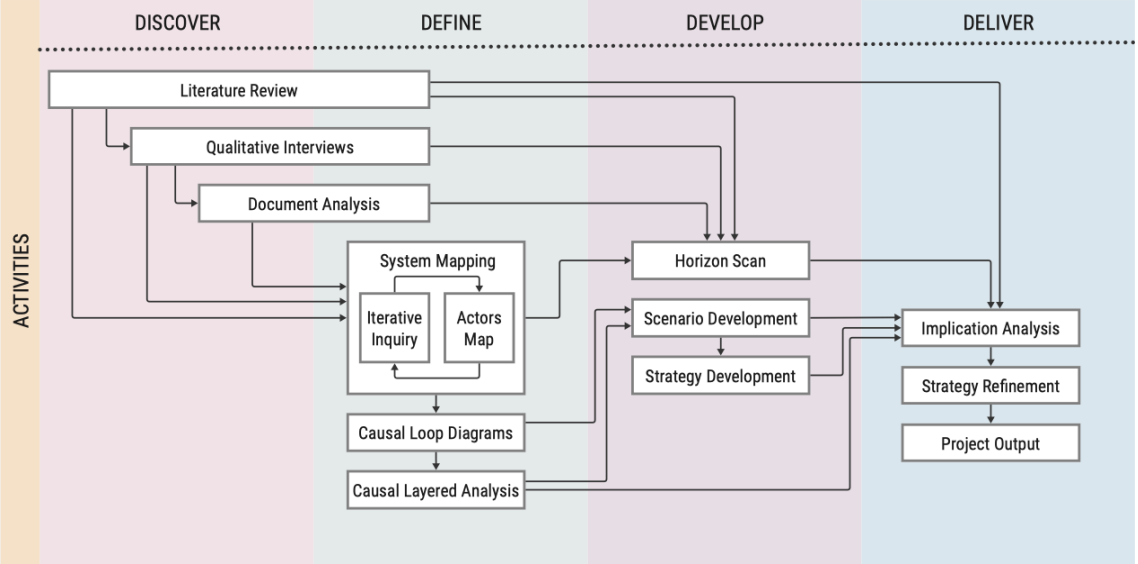

Figure 3: Project Research Methodology.

Research Methods

Data for this project has been gathered from primary and secondary resources as follows:

Primary Research

The primary research for this project consisted of qualitative interviews with 12 subject matter experts from diverse professional backgrounds, offering a broad spectrum of insights into the concept of value in business and the strategies and challenges businesses face in navigating the shifting concept of value. The interviewees included authors, business strategists, podcast hosts, business management professors, and business leaders, consultants in innovation, and experts in the purpose economy. The cohort also included non-profit specialists, community organizers, and individuals whose work directly supports businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose.

The interviews were designed to cover broad topics initially, then pivot to more specific questions, integrating insights from the literature review and previous interview data. This iterative approach allowed the project to delve progressively deeper into specific themes around the evolving concept of value in business and to explore possible avenues for future value-oriented strategies.

Secondary Research

Secondary data sources include academic articles, journals, books, podcasts, interviews, recorded workshops and lectures, presentations, industry reports, company documents, and public statements.

> **Literature Review**: An in-depth review of existing literature was conducted to establish a foundation for understanding the evolving concept of value, the role of purpose in business strategy, and the interplay between these two elements. The review includes an examination of the economic theory of value to provide a foundational understanding of how value has been historically constructed within both business and economic theory, as well as an exploration of emerging economic frameworks. This theoretical base

supports an analysis of value in a business context, emphasizing how economic perspectives shape organizational models and purpose-driven strategies.

Additionally, the literature review investigates key business strategy tools, such as the Value Proposition Canvas (Osterwalder, 2015) and the Value Stick (Oberholzer-Gee, 2021), which are instrumental in defining and capturing value within business models. These tools highlight practical approaches that businesses employ to align value creation with evolving market expectations, customer needs, and societal demands. Together, these explorations frame a nuanced understanding of how businesses can navigate the integration of profit and purpose within complex economic and social landscapes.

Document Analysis: Document analysis involved reviewing company reports, media coverage, and other sources to understand how businesses are currently responding to the shift in the concept of value, allowing for comparisons with the insights drawn from primary research.

Data Analysis Methods

The analysis employed several qualitative methods and systemic tools to explore the data collected:

- **Qualitative Content Analysis**: This method was used to systematically code and classify themes and patterns in the interview data. The analysis focused on uncovering insights about the shift in value concepts in business, relational systems, and effective strategies for embedding purpose into business models.

- **Systems Mapping and Analysis**: This holistic approach mapped interrelationships among components that influence business value, identifying systemic barriers and opportunities. Tools such as Iterative Inquiry, Actor's Map, System Archetype Diagrams, (Jones and Van Ael, 2022) and Causal Layered Analysis (Inayatullah, 2019) helped to visualize and clarify complex systems of interactions, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping the current system and its influence on the future evolution of business value.

- **Horizon Scanning**: A horizon scan was conducted to identify signals, emerging trends and drivers that may impact the concept of value in the future. This forward-looking approach aimed to anticipate possible shifts in business practices, supporting strategy development for purpose-driven adaptation.

- **Driver Identification:** Fundamental drivers shaping the future evolution of the concept of value in business were identified by applying Sharpe's Three Horizons Framework (Sharpe, 2020) to a historical analysis of economic eras from the Mercantile period to the present Platform era.

- **Scenario Development and Implication Analysis:** Using insights from the systems analysis, horizon scan, and three horizon analysis of historic economic eras, future scenarios were developed using the Cone of Plausibility technique (Voros, 2023). A baseline "business as usual" scenario based on current knowledge and trends was created. Two alternative exploratory scenarios and an alternative preferred scenario were created by altering assumptions about the behaviours of selected drivers. Scenario insights were analyzed to inform strategies for businesses integrating purpose and to envision adaptive pathways for navigating potential futures.

- **Strategy Development and Refinement**: Drawing on insights from interviews, literature, and systemic analyses, and scenario insights, foundational capacities were identified, and strategic pathways were developed to guide businesses in navigating the shifting concept of value. These strategies were refined based on findings from the research.

PART 1

> **"Purpose is a company's understanding and articulation of the greater good it wants to create in the world, using its business as a mechanism for delivering a regenerative planet and an equitable society. True purpose looks beyond the company, beyond the industry, and looks at the whole—at the commons."**
>
> ***Sandy Skees***

Part 1 of the report aims to establish a foundation for understanding the concept of value in business within its contemporary context. It addresses the questions, **"how is the concept of value in business shifting?"** and **"how is this shift influencing the integration of profit and purpose"** by synthesizing findings from the project literature review, qualitative interviews, and systems analysis. These activities uncover the structural, relational, and ideological forces influencing the concept of value and highlight systems interdependencies, power dynamics, and feedback loops. The understanding gained provides essential context for Part 2 of the project which extends the exploration of the concept of value into future contexts for Part 3 which identifies strategic pathways businesses might craft to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact.

Why Value?

The concept of value in business has traditionally centered around financial metrics, primarily defined by profit margins and shareholder returns. This perspective, famously articulated by Milton Friedman's assertion that "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits" (Friedman, 1970), has guided corporate strategy for decades. However, as global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and economic instability intensify, this narrow definition of value proves insufficient for addressing the complexities and interdependencies that characterize the contemporary business landscape—where companies must navigate interconnected social, environmental, and economic pressures. These pressures include rising consumer expectations for ethical practices, increased regulatory scrutiny on sustainability, and the risks associated with economic volatility (Serafeim, 2022). Together, these factors demand that businesses consider not only financial returns but also their impact on communities and ecosystems, as they play a growing role in shaping a sustainable and equitable future. Businesses are increasingly recognizing the need for a broader, multidimensional understanding of value—one that encompasses social, environmental, and ethical dimensions alongside financial performance (Freeman et al., 2020).

Historically, economic theory has played a central role in shaping how businesses understand and pursue value creation. Neo-classical economics, with its emphasis on competition, efficiency, and market-driven pricing, has reinforced the idea that value is primarily a financial construct, revealed through price in a competitive market (Gerstle, 2023). This perspective has informed the development of widely used strategy tools, such as the value chain, which focuses on optimizing each step in a company's operations to enhance efficiency and reduce costs (Porter, 1985). This efficiency-driven approach aims to maximize shareholder returns by aligning products with

customer needs and minimizing waste. While effective in achieving financial goals, these tools often overlook broader social and environmental impacts, reinforcing a view of value that prioritizes economic objectives over holistic considerations. By narrowly focusing on financial metrics and operational efficiencies, this traditional model inadvertently excludes factors critical to long-term sustainability, such as social equity and ecological responsibility.

In recent years, frameworks like John Elkington's "Triple Bottom Line" have expanded the view of value to include "people, planet, and profit," emphasizing that business resilience and societal well-being are integral to value creation (Elkington, 1994). This model has influenced both corporate practices and academic perspectives, encouraging companies to integrate social and environmental considerations into their core strategies. Expanding on this perspective, Michael Porter and Mark Kramer's Creating Shared Value (CSV) model suggests that businesses can drive economic success by addressing societal needs, fostering a synergy between profit and societal impact (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This approach aligns with the rise of conscious consumerism, as individuals increasingly support brands that reflect their values, highlighting the strategic potential of integrating broader societal considerations into business strategy.

Ed Freeman's Stakeholder Theory further reinforces this multidimensional approach to value by arguing that businesses succeed by addressing the needs of all their stakeholders, not just shareholders. Freeman's model encourages companies to recognize their interconnectedness with customers, employees, communities, suppliers, and shareholders, suggesting that creating value for each group contributes to overall business resilience and sustainability. This approach builds on the idea that social and environmental responsibilities are not separate from business success but central to it. (Freeman et al, 2020).

However, integrating stakeholder interests often requires navigating complex trade-offs, a challenge that Sarah Kaplan explores. In her book, The 360° Corporation: From Stakeholder Trade-offs to Transformation, Kaplan argues that trade-offs between stakeholder interests are often unavoidable in the short term but can be transformed through innovation and systemic change, allowing businesses to reconcile competing priorities (Kaplan, 2019). Kaplan's work suggests that by confronting and addressing trade-offs, companies can develop strategies that move beyond compromise to create more holistic value, ultimately fostering transformation within the business and the broader system.

Kate Raworth's "Doughnut Economics" provides yet another dimension, advocating for economic health that balances human prosperity with ecological sustainability (Raworth, 2017). This framework challenges traditional growth paradigms, urging businesses to operate within planetary boundaries and integrate environmental stewardship with social equity. Together, these perspectives illustrate an evolving concept of value that not only seeks profit but also aligns with broader social, environmental, and systemic responsibilities.

These frameworks illustrate an expanding concept of value, yet translating these ideas into business practices presents challenges. Commonly used tools like the Value Proposition Canvas and the Value Stick model offer useful insights into how businesses traditionally conceptualize and deliver value to customers. The Value Proposition Canvas, for instance, focuses on defining customer needs and aligning products and services to meet those needs, emphasizing the exchange of value that benefits both the customer and the business (Osterwalder, 2015). Meanwhile, the Value Stick model, as discussed by Harvard Business School professor Felix Oberholzer-Gee, provides an approach to understanding how businesses can create value by expanding customer willingness to pay and reducing costs (Oberholzer-Gee, 2021).

However, these traditional strategy tools often prioritize economic returns without fully accounting for the broader societal and environmental impacts businesses must now consider. As businesses increasingly seek to balance profit with purpose, there is a growing need to adapt these frameworks to reflect a more holistic understanding of value. By exploring value in a broader context, companies can better align their strategies with evolving societal expectations, creating value propositions that incorporate ethical, environmental, and community-centered dimensions. This expanded view of value serves as a foundation for examining the role of business as a catalyst for positive change.

Why Business?

In recent years, the role of business in society has come under increasing scrutiny as expectations around corporate responsibility evolve. While businesses have long been recognized as essential drivers of economic stability and growth, providing jobs, stimulating investments, and contributing to national GDP, some argue that their responsibilities extend beyond economic metrics (OECD, 2020). Traditionally, companies operated primarily to maximize shareholder returns, driven by financial imperatives. However, the growing complexities of global issues—such as climate change, social inequality, and economic volatility—are prompting a re-evaluation of how businesses impact broader societal and environmental systems（George et al, 2015). In this context, businesses are understood to be powerful social actors, with a unique capacity and obligation to contribute to systemic change. This expanded role challenges companies to redefine their contributions, balancing financial performance with responsibility toward people and the planet, though this view is not universally held or practiced across the corporate landscape.

As major resource consumers, businesses also play a critical role as environmental stewards. Although not all companies prioritize sustainability equally, many are recognizing that responsible resource management and environmental practices align not only with stakeholder expectations but also with long-term resilience (WE Forum, 2020). By adopting sustainable approaches, businesses address pressing environmental concerns, from reducing carbon footprints to promoting circular economies, all of which contribute to their reputation and market position. This emphasis on sustainability aligns with the growing body of evidence suggesting that eco-conscious practices can drive innovation and reduce operational costs (Porter et al., 1995). The increasing prominence of environmental stewardship thus underscores the potential for businesses to balance profitability with ecological integrity, even as this remains an emerging area for many companies.

Businesses also drive societal innovation, advancing technologies and models that reshape industries and improve quality of life. Historically, companies have led the way in developing products and services that have transformed society, and this capacity for innovation positions them as key players in addressing contemporary challenges. Economist Robert J. Gordon, in *The Rise and Fall of American Growth,* highlights the role of private-sector innovation in shaping economic and social progress. In a similar vein, businesses today are positioned to address societal needs through advancements in renewable energy, healthcare, and sustainable food production (Gordon, 2017). This innovative potential can align well with societal expectations, enabling companies to generate both financial returns and broader social value. However, the commitment to such initiatives varies widely, and the challenge of aligning innovation with societal needs remains complex and multifaceted.

The influence of businesses extends beyond the marketplace; it permeates regulatory frameworks, public policy, and social norms. Companies have significant sway in shaping regulatory landscapes and industry standards, with

some actively engaging policymakers to influence societal priorities. Mariana Mazzucato emphasizes the reciprocal nature of this relationship, where businesses do not simply operate within existing markets but actively help shape them (Mazzucato, 2020). However, this influence comes with expectations that companies will use their power responsibly, aligning lobbying efforts and public stances with ethical considerations. While some stakeholders view businesses as trusted institutions with the capability to support societal goals, others remain cautious, concerned about the potential for power imbalances and self-interest to undermine public good.

The *Edelman Trust Barometer* highlights the growing trust placed in businesses, positioning them as among the most trusted institutions globally. This trust, however, is predicated on companies acting competently and ethically—expectations that are not always met (Edelman, 2023). Businesses that demonstrate responsibility and integrity in their operations can cultivate trust with stakeholders, including consumers, employees, and communities. Yet, this trust is delicate, and any misalignment with stakeholder expectations can lead to reputational damage (Bowen et al., 2014). This dynamic reflects both the heightened societal expectations of business, and the unique challenges companies face in sustaining trust across diverse groups.

As businesses navigate these expanding responsibilities, some are beginning to rethink the notion of value creation. Rather than focusing exclusively on financial returns, companies increasingly recognize the benefits of inclusive growth models that consider their impacts on people, communities, and ecosystems. This evolving view of value, articulated by scholars like Mazzucato, encourages businesses to redefine success in ways that contribute to sustainable and equitable economic systems (Mazzucato, 2019). Nonetheless, the commitment to inclusive growth varies, with some companies driven by a long-term vision for shared value, while others remain anchored to more traditional, profit-focused metrics (Henderson, 2019). This contrast within the corporate landscape reflects both the challenges and opportunities inherent in aligning business success with societal progress.

The complexity and nuance of these shifting expectations underscore the need for a balanced and adaptive approach to business strategy. As companies grapple with the dual imperatives of profit and purpose, they must consider their roles within the broader systems they impact. In the following section, we explore this intersection in more depth, examining how businesses can authentically integrate profit motives with purpose-driven objectives, aligning with both financial imperatives and societal expectations to foster resilience and long-term growth.

Why Profit and Purpose?

In an era of heightened social awareness and environmental urgency, businesses are increasingly called upon to integrate purpose beyond financial gain into their core strategies. This shift reflects a growing recognition that businesses play a crucial role in addressing complex global issues, positioning them as contributors to societal well-being alongside their traditional role as economic engines. Historically, corporate purpose was often sidelined within corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives—separate from a company's strategic priorities. However, evidence now suggests that authentically integrating purpose into core strategies can drive profitability, resilience, and long-term growth by building enduring trust with stakeholders and enhancing competitive advantage (McKinsey, 2020).

Purpose-driven companies often attract consumers willing to pay a premium for products that align with their values—a phenomenon branding strategist David Aaker describes as the "purpose premium." In what Aaker calls

the “purpose era,” brands gain competitive advantage by authentically embracing values that resonate with consumers (Aaker, 2022). This competitive advantage extends beyond consumer loyalty; integrating purpose also fosters resilience by aligning businesses with broader trends in conscious consumerism and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) standards. Research by George Serafeim suggests that companies with strong ESG performance frequently achieve better financial outcomes, demonstrating the strategic value of aligning purpose with business practices (Serafeim, 2022).

Purpose can also drive innovation, encouraging businesses to rethink their approaches to supply chains, employee welfare, and resource use (Rigby et al., 2023). Companies adopting purpose-driven strategies often explore sustainable practices, ethical labour standards, and inclusive policies, fostering innovations that benefit both society and operational efficiency. Through this approach, purpose not only enhances brand loyalty but also opens new avenues for long-term competitive advantage (Aaker, 2022).

However, achieving a deep integration of purpose poses unique challenges. Economist Mariana Mazzucato contends that to create true stakeholder value, purpose must be central to a firm’s value creation rather than a superficial add-on or branding tool (Mazzucato, 2022). For purpose to have meaningful impact, it must inform key business decisions, from resource allocation to strategic priorities, creating a synergy where societal impact and financial success reinforce one another. The rise of “purpose-washing”—where companies claim purpose superficially without genuine commitment—highlights the importance of measurable and accountable purpose-driven practices (Etter, & AlSalim, 2023). To address this, frameworks like the B Impact Assessment and ESG metrics provide standardized methods to assess purpose-driven impact, helping build stakeholder trust and ensuring that purpose translates into tangible, measurable outcomes (B Lab, 2025).

While purpose is essential, a balanced focus on profit remains equally crucial in a profit-and-purpose model. Profitability provides the financial stability necessary for a business to pursue its purpose sustainably and withstand economic challenges. Profitability enables businesses to invest in innovation, improve products, expand their impact, and support their purpose in a self-sustaining cycle (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Additionally, profitability benefits a range of stakeholders—employees, shareholders, and communities—by enabling fair compensation, contributing to public goods through taxes, and stimulating economic activity. A profitable company is also better positioned to attract investors who can provide capital for growth, helping to fuel purpose-driven initiatives over the long term. Balancing profit with social and environmental impact, writes Rebecca Henderson, positions businesses for resilience in a shifting economy. Her work suggests that a dual focus on profit and purpose enables companies to adapt to evolving societal expectations while building long-term value (Henderson, 2020). Research by George Serafeim further underscores that companies with strong ESG performance often experience better financial outcomes, as they align with consumer and investor expectations for ethical and responsible practices. This alignment not only supports resilience, particularly in volatile markets, but also reinforces stakeholder trust and loyalty (Serafeim, 2022).

In a competitive landscape, however, profitability is not guaranteed and requires strategic balancing. While profit supports a business’s ability to pursue purpose, focusing solely on profit risks undermining long-term sustainability and consumer trust. The most successful companies actively balance these priorities, using profit to support purpose (Serafeim, 2022). Profit, when aligned with purpose, reinforces the mission, creating a sustainable model that meets the expectations of a purpose-driven economy (Skees, 2023).

The integration of profit and purpose represents a reimagining of value in business—a shift from a narrow focus on financial returns to a multidimensional approach encompassing social, environmental, and economic impact. When profit and purpose are aligned, they create a reinforcing cycle: financial success enables further investment in purpose-driven initiatives, while purpose strengthens the brand, attracts consumers, and builds resilience in the face of societal and market shifts. This alignment of purpose and profit addresses the expectations of a more conscious consumer base and positions businesses as stewards of positive societal change.

This evolving concept of value calls for a more holistic understanding, one that acknowledges both tangible and intangible impacts. Traditionally, value in business was defined by quantifiable metrics—revenues, profits, and market share. However, as businesses embrace purpose, they are beginning to view value as a blend of financial performance and broader contributions to society. This expanded view recognizes that a company's worth is measured not only by financial returns but also by the trust it earns, the societal challenges it addresses, and the positive legacy it creates.

By broadening the scope of value, purpose-driven businesses are enhancing their long-term viability and playing a critical role in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future. Ultimately, the integration of profit and purpose redefines value as a multifaceted construct, capable of meeting both shareholder expectations and societal needs. Achieving this alignment requires an understanding of the broader systems in which businesses operate—where social, environmental, and economic factors intersect and influence one another. This systemic perspective, essential for realizing the potential of profit-purpose integration, is explored in greater depth in the Systems Analysis section.

Navigating the Integration of Profit and Purpose

The primary research for this project consisted of qualitative interviews with 12 subject matter experts from diverse professional backgrounds, offering a broad spectrum of insights into the concept of value in business and the strategies and challenges businesses face in navigating the shifting concept of value. The interviewees included authors, business strategists, podcast hosts, business management professors, and business leaders, consultants in innovation, and experts in the purpose economy. The cohort also included non-profit specialists, community organizers, and individuals whose work directly supports businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose.

The interviews were designed to begin with broad topics before pivoting to more specific questions that incorporated insights from the literature review and previous interviews. This iterative approach allowed the project to delve progressively deeper into specific themes around the evolving concept of value in business and to explore possible avenues for future value-oriented strategies.

Transcripts of the interviews were processed using qualitative content analysis. This method systematically codes and classifies themes and patterns in the interview data. Six themes emerged: **shifts in the concept of value, leadership dynamics, operationalization challenges, metrics, innovation, and collaboration.**

1. Shifting Value Businesses are increasingly challenged to redefine value beyond profit maximization, recognizing its social, environmental, and cultural dimensions. The traditional economic model, which excludes negative externalities such as environmental harm and inequality, is proving inadequate in addressing contemporary challenges and meeting stakeholder demands for long-term accountability. One interviewee explained, "The

concept of value doesn't include negative externalities… Purpose needs to be part of the calculation." Younger consumers are driving this shift, placing greater emphasis on ethical and sustainable value propositions. Another participant observed, "Younger people seem willing to pay more for something they believe in, like hyper-local goods or sustainability." Adding further complexity, value must also reflect diverse cultural perspectives. One expert explained, "Modernization isn't Westernization… values manifest differently across contexts." These perspectives highlight the need for businesses to embrace multidimensional definitions of value that account for externalities, cultural nuance, and evolving social priorities.

2. Leadership as a Catalyst and Barrier Leadership serves as both a catalyst and a barrier to embedding purpose into an organization. Effective leaders act as cultural architects, fostering alignment, trust and accountability—three essential elements for purpose integration. Alignment ensures that everyone within the organization understands and works toward a shared purpose, connecting individual contributions to broader organizational goals. As one participant emphasized, "Leadership must inspire and ensure a strong vision. Everything flows from that." Trust creates the psychological safety necessary for employees to fully engage with purpose-driven initiatives. Empathy-driven leaders foster this trust by building environments where employees feel valued and supported. As one expert explained, "You have to bring empathy into the business context. It's about creating spaces where people feel their work matters." Accountability ensures that purpose does not remain aspirational but is instead implemented through actionable strategies and measurable outcomes. Without it, purpose risks becoming superficial rhetoric. Another participant remarked, "Without clear accountability, purpose becomes rhetoric—it doesn't translate into outcomes."

Conversely, Leadership failures, marked by ego-driven decision-making, poor decision-making and internal politics create obstruct progress. As one expert observed, "Corporate culture can feel like a kindergarten playground—egos get in the way of real change." For leadership to act as a genuine catalyst, it must balance vision with action, fostering alignment, trust, and accountability across the organization.

3. Turning Purpose into Action One of the most significant challenges businesses face is operationalizing purpose and bridging the gap between strategic intent and day-to-day execution. Without clear workflows, systems and processes, purpose remains an abstract aspiration. As one participant asked pointedly, "If strategy isn't operationalized, does it even exist?" Embedding purpose into an organization often demands extensive redesign of internal systems, job roles, and performance measures which can be particularly daunting for legacy organizations. Another expert noted, "Retrofitting purpose into an existing business is far harder than designing for it from the outset," noted another expert. Effective change management is essential to navigating these complexities. This requires structured support, clear communication, and accountability at every level. One participant emphasized, "Change management is the linchpin—clarity on what's changing and how teams adapt is critical." However, competing priorities often dilute purpose initiatives, leaving employees unclear about how their roles in achieving strategic goals. Another participant observed, "There are 11 initiatives—way too many. People don't know how their jobs are impacted," observed another participant. For purpose to move beyond aspiration, businesses must align strategy with systems, processes, and accountability frameworks, ensuring integration across all operational levels.

4. Evolving Metrics to Drive Purpose Metrics play a crucial role in driving behaviour, measuring outcomes, and ensuring purpose-driven initiatives remain aligned with strategic goals. However, traditional performance measures often fall short, failing to capture the multidimensional nature of purpose-driven outcomes. One participant explained, "Quantitative data is too raw… there's no insight into why that data exists." Purpose-driven

organizations must evolve their key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure societal and environmental success alongside financial results. Another expert remarked, “Metrics drive behaviour, but we need frameworks to observe the value we’re creating.” Equally important are accountability mechanisms that translate aspirational goals into measurable outcomes. Without accountability initiatives risk stagnation. As one participant noted, “If you’re not measuring it, it won’t be prioritized.” Balancing quantitative data with qualitative insights in performance measurement will help businesses better capture the full spectrum of their value creation.

5. Purpose-driven Innovation Innovation serves as a pathway for embedding purpose into products, services, and systems. Purpose-driven innovation reimagines entire business models and value chains to align financial goals with societal outcomes. One participant explained, “Circular supply chains designed from inception enable sustainability.” Innovation must address externalities and balance financial and societal needs. Another expert noted, “Creating customer value beyond profit requires addressing externalities.” Decision-making tools are critical for aligning innovation efforts with purpose. As one participant noted, “Frameworks for decisions must shift priorities to align with purpose.” By integrating systemic design principles, businesses can align innovation with purpose and create solutions that are financially sustainable and socially impactful.

6. Building Coalition Systemic collaboration is essential for addressing complex societal challenges such as climate change and inequality, which exceed the capacity of any single organization to resolve. Cross-sector partnerships between businesses, governments, and communities amplify impact and enhance credibility. As one participant noted, “Coalitions of the willing bring credibility and avoid purpose-washing.” However, these partnerships often face challenges including misaligned goals and power imbalances. A participant observed, “Resistance from entrenched systems makes purposeful partnerships challenging.” When goals and incentives are aligned, systemic partnerships can transcend traditional organizational boundaries. One interviewee emphasized, “Aligning goals and incentives is critical to achieving real impact.” Effective collaboration depends on strategic alignment and accountability enabling businesses to collectively address societal challenges.

The insights from interviews reveal the interdependent systems at play in the effort to integrate profit and purpose. Shifts in the concept of value, leadership dynamics, operational barriers, metrics, innovation, and collaboration highlight cultural and structural barriers while pointing to transformative opportunities. The following Systems Analysis section will build on these insights, mapping the processes, structures, and feedback loops that shape how businesses navigate the integration of profit and purpose.

System Analysis

To more deeply understand a system, it must be explored from multiple perspectives, with each perspective building layers of insight over time. This approach involves looking at the system from many angles, much like untangling a complex knot, to uncover the connections and dynamics or “threads” that hold it together. By layering insights, hypotheses, and supporting research, this process enables the identification of key leverage points within the system. In this section of the report, a diverse set of systems methods and tools are employed to examine the dynamics driving the shift in the concept of value.

Iterative Inquiry, adapted from Jamshid Gharajedaghi’s systems inquiry by Jones and van Ael (2022), provides a framework for mapping the structures, processes, and functions of the current system, emphasizing relationships and interactions among actors. The **Actors Map** reveals patterns of influence and power dynamics by positioning

key actors according to their relative power and knowledge. Systems archetypes such as *Success to the Successful* and *Limits to Growth*, are explored to illuminate forces driving or constraining transformation. Finally, **Causal Layered Analysis** (CLA) (Inayatullah, 2019) broadens the lens, examining the cultural, ideological, and systemic assumptions that sustain current dynamics.

Iterative Inquiry

The Iterative Inquiry tool offers a structured approach to exploring a system's boundaries, subsystems, and core functions. By identifying the structures, processes, and purposes that shape the system, this method establishes a foundation for comprehensive analysis. Developed by Jones and Van Ael (2022) as an adaptation of Jamshid Gharajedaghi's systems inquiry, Iterative Inquiry maps systems across multiple levels—micro, meso, exo, and macro—revealing their hierarchies, interdependencies, and dynamic feedback loops. This approach highlights how businesses interact with consumers, respond to external pressures, and navigate broader societal and regulatory frameworks, emphasizing the role of interconnected processes in systemic transformation.

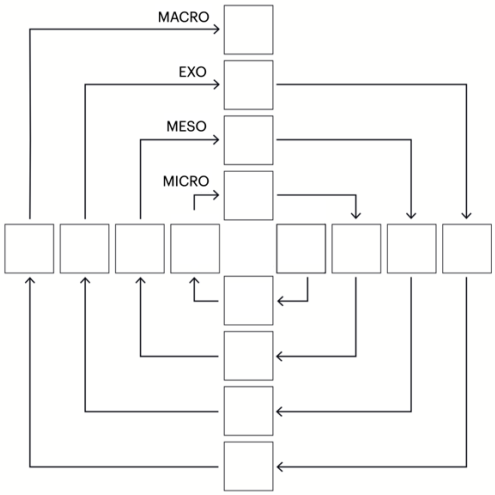

Figure 4: Figure 4: The Iterative Inquiry highlights how businesses interact by examining micro, meso, exo, and macro levels. Analysis is below. See appendix A for details of the tool in process.

At the **micro level,** the focus is on customer-to-business interactions and worker experiences. Businesses attempt to meet individual customer needs and preferences, which are often shaped by personal values, such as sustainability or ethical sourcing. Through touchpoints like digital platforms, customer service interactions, and product interfaces, businesses aim to build trust, enhance satisfaction, and foster brand loyalty. These relationships provide the foundation for competitive advantage and long-term success.

The micro level also encompasses worker dynamics, where organizational policies translate into daily realities. Factors such as job security, working conditions, and career development opportunities influence worker engagement and productivity, directly impacting the quality of products and services. Additionally, the ability of workers to voice concerns and participate in decision-making affects both individual well-being and overall organizational performance. These worker-centric elements create ripples that extend beyond the micro level, shaping meso-level strategies and internal processes.

At the **meso level,** businesses attempt to translate insights from the micro level into strategies and operations. Internal processes—such as product development, supply chain management, and leadership initiatives—are designed to align offerings with consumer trends and societal values. For instance, sustainability-focused product innovations enhance brand loyalty and market differentiation. However, businesses often prioritize actions that align with broader organizational goals and operational constraints, reflecting the balance between immediate consumer demands and sustainable growth.

Labour-management dynamics also feature prominently at the meso level. Workforce policies, compensation structures, and professional development opportunities determine how workers share in business success. These internal decisions influence not only operational effectiveness but also the broader social impact of the business. This level underscores the importance of fostering inclusive practices that align with both organizational priorities and societal expectations.

The **exo level** introduces external influences such as media, cultural norms, and technology platforms. These forces act as amplifiers, shaping public opinion and societal expectations while pressuring businesses to adopt socially responsible practices. For example, media coverage of labour rights and sustainability issues drives awareness, which, in turn, influences both consumer behaviour and business decision-making. External pressures drive public awareness and shift consumer expectations, motivating businesses to adapt to avoid reputational risk. Here we see the power of cultural and media influences in setting societal norms and expectations, which businesses must navigate to maintain public trust and alignment with consumer values, even in the absence of direct regulatory requirements. The exo level bridges societal demands and organizational responses, serving as a catalyst for systemic shifts.

At the **macro level,** regulatory and policy frameworks establish the boundaries of business operations. Government regulations set accountability mechanisms, establish baseline standards, and encourage long-term planning. However, these policies may lag behind public expectations, particularly in areas like sustainability and social responsibility. Labour laws, minimum wage policies, and collective bargaining frameworks provide foundational protections, though their effectiveness often depends on enforcement capacity and worker representation. This level highlights the interplay between policy enforcement and voluntary corporate initiatives, illustrating how they coexist to shape systemic outcomes.

Across these levels, Iterative Inquiry reveals **dynamic interactions and feedback loops** that shape business behaviour and consumer experiences. For instance, a single purchasing decision at the micro level can spark broader organizational adjustments at the meso level, which may then be amplified by media and cultural shifts at the exo level and reinforced by macro-level policies. These interdependencies underscore the recursive nature of systemic transformation, where changes at one level resonate throughout the system.

Notably, the analysis underscores that while businesses are responsive to consumer and external pressures, their actions are selectively aligned with strategic goals, competitive positioning, and operational feasibility. The result is a nuanced approach where businesses seek to balance profit motives with the demand for purpose, responding to both immediate market conditions and long-term societal expectations. These feedback loops underscore that systemic transformation does not rely on a single starting point but rather emerges from multiple interconnected points of influence, revealing the potential for both consumer-driven and policy-driven change.

The iterative inquiry also reveals a layered **adaptation to societal expectations**, with each system level responding to changing consumer values in unique ways. At the micro level, businesses increasingly tailor their interactions to align with customers' ethical and sustainability preferences. Meanwhile, at the meso level, internal strategies evolve to incorporate socially responsible practices. The exo level acts as an amplifier, with media and cultural influencers promoting societal trends that pressure businesses to adopt practices aligned with social and environmental goals. At the macro level, regulatory frameworks further institutionalize these shifts, creating an enabling environment for businesses that prioritize responsible practices. This layering effect demonstrates a gradual, system-wide realignment toward a holistic business purpose that balances economic, social, and environmental goals.

The inquiry illustrates **structural tensions** that businesses encounter as they navigate between traditional profit-driven goals and emerging purpose-driven models. Following the example used in this exploration, at the micro level, organizations must balance consumer demand for affordable, ethically produced goods with the costs associated with sustainable production. Within organizations, at the meso level, decision-makers often encounter competing pressures to meet short-term financial goals while investing in long-term, socially responsible practices. At the macro level, regulatory frameworks may both support and constrain businesses in adopting sustainable models, as policies aimed at promoting social responsibility may lack adequate enforcement mechanisms. Recognizing these structural tensions underscores the areas where policy innovation, business model adaptation, or collaborative efforts may be needed to harmonize financial and societal objectives.

Possible **leverage points for systemic change** emerge from the analysis. Collaborative networks between businesses and government agencies can address challenges that surpass the capacity of individual actors. Consumer empowerment initiatives, such as ethical certifications and transparent communication, enable consumers to guide business practices toward socially responsible outcomes. Media and cultural influencers act as amplifiers, driving public awareness and encouraging both businesses and consumers to adopt sustainability-focused practices. These leverage points emphasize the potential for coordinated, multi-level actions to align the system with evolving societal expectations.

Finally, the chart defines a boundary for the system, encompassing both direct relationships—such as those between businesses and consumers—and indirect influences from cultural and regulatory actors. By establishing this boundary, Iterative Inquiry clarifies the scope of analysis, ensuring that the focus remains on the actors, relationships, and forces central to balancing profit and purpose. This boundary serves as a guiding framework for understanding the dynamic interactions that shape businesses and their capacity to adapt to societal expectations.

Actor's Map: Systemic Relationships and Power Dynamics

The Actor's Map provides a framework to identify and understand key participants and relationships that shape the shift toward purpose-driven business practices. This tool, as described by Jones and van Ael, (2022) facilitates a systems-level perspective, revealing the influence and interconnected roles of various actors—business leaders, workers, investors, governance actors, customers, community members, advocates, and government policy decision-makers. By examining these actors through the lenses of knowledge and power, the Actor's Map highlights relational dynamics and power structures that either support or impede the transition toward integrated social, environmental, and financial goals.

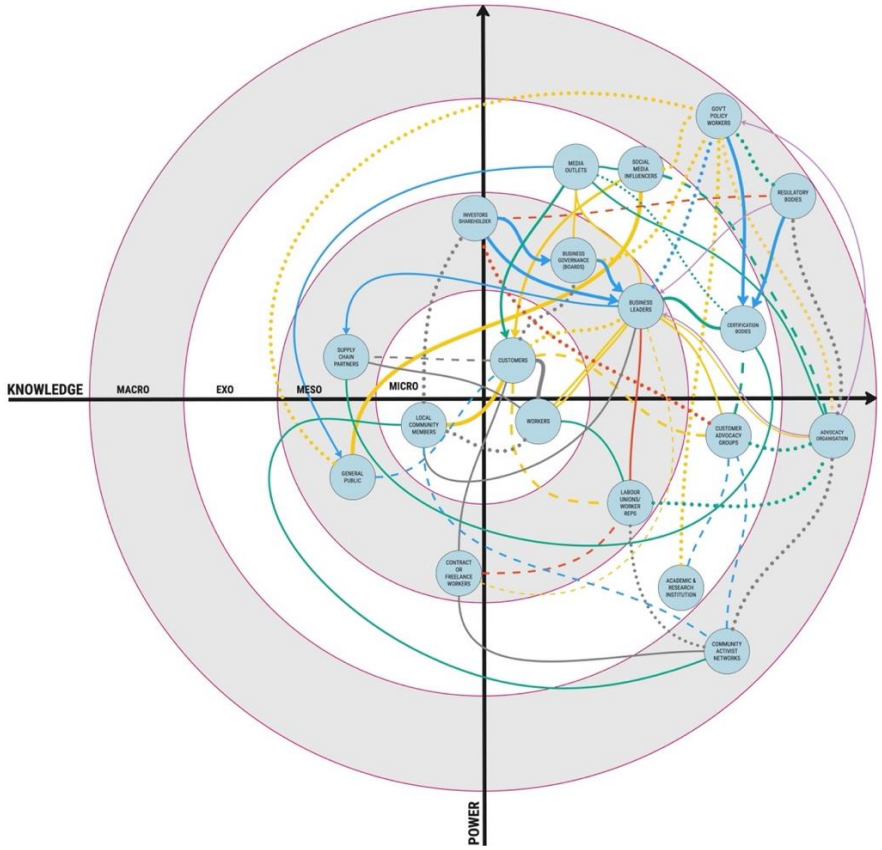

Figure 5: The Actor's Map reveals insights about the systemic dynamics influencing the shift toward purpose-driven business practices, emphasizing the interaction of power, knowledge, and influence across multiple levels. Key to this system are actors with high power and knowledge—such as business leaders, investors, and government senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians —whose decisions shape organizational strategies, regulatory frameworks, and industry standard. See appendix B for a full-size image.

Drawing from the Iterative Inquiry, actors are positioned across four concentric circles representing levels of influence: micro (individuals and direct interactions), meso (organizational strategies), exo (external amplifiers), and macro (policy and systemic forces). Placing actors in quadrants based on their relative knowledge and power illustrates their leverage within the system, revealing both points of alignment and areas of tension in the movement toward sustainable, purpose-aligned business practices.

Relational Dynamics Across Levels:

- At the **micro level**, interactions between customers, workers, and business leaders form the foundation of systemic dynamics. Customers act as catalysts for change through their purchasing decisions, while workers contribute operational knowledge essential for business success. However, both groups often lack structural power, limiting their influence on strategic decision-making.

- The **meso level** encompasses organizational strategies, supply chain management, and certification processes. Business leaders play a central role in aligning organizational practices with purpose-driven goals, yet their relationships with supply partners and governance actors often reflect power imbalances that prioritize profitability over broader societal benefits.

- At the **exo level**, external amplifiers such as media outlets, social influencers, and advocacy groups translate societal expectations into pressure on businesses and policymakers. These actors demonstrate the power of informal and emergent relationships in shaping public opinion and driving systemic adaptation.

- The **macro level** illustrates how government policy decision makers (senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians), and regulatory bodies establish the boundaries within which businesses operate. While these actors provide stability, their effectiveness often depends on collaboration with industry leaders and advocates.

The Actor's Map reveals insights about the systemic dynamics influencing the shift toward purpose-driven business practices, emphasizing the interplay of power, knowledge, and influence across multiple levels. Key to this system are actors with high power and knowledge—such as business leaders, investors, and government senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians —whose decisions shape organizational strategies, regulatory frameworks, and industry standards. These actors hold a unique capacity to either propel or hinder progress toward integrated social, environmental, and financial objectives, underscoring the pivotal role of power and knowledge in driving purpose-led change.

The map further illustrates how purpose-driven goals are deeply interconnected across micro, meso, exo, and macro levels, with cascading effects that reinforce alignment with social and environmental values. For instance, shifts in customer expectations at the micro level can influence strategic adaptations at the meso level, which in turn may impact policy considerations at the macro level. This interconnectedness demonstrates the ripple effects that purposeful values can have throughout the system.

Moreover, the Actor's Map reveals tensions between traditional profit-focused objectives and emerging purpose-driven priorities, particularly among actors with competing interests, such as investors seeking financial returns and advocates focused on societal impact. These tensions highlight areas where balancing or negotiating interests is crucial to support sustainable business models.

External amplifiers, such as media and cultural influencers, also play a substantial role by shaping public perceptions and societal expectations, adding pressure on businesses to adopt more responsible practices. This underscores the importance of external voices in fostering accountability and aligning business behaviors with evolving social norms.

The map also indicates varying degrees of alignment among actors regarding purpose-driven goals. While governance bodies and advocacy organizations may share a natural alignment with sustainable practices, other actors, such as investors and regulatory agencies, may face competing priorities. Recognizing these alignment gaps helps identify potential areas for collaboration or intervention, promoting convergence on shared objectives. In this context, collaborative networks emerge as leverage points that can accelerate progress, with partnerships between business leaders, advocacy organizations, and government policy decision makers (senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians), offering the potential to strengthen regulatory frameworks and industry standards.

Furthermore, the Actor's Map suggests that achieving purpose-driven goals requires adaptive, multi-level strategies that account for diverse actor perspectives and influences across system levels. Since rigid, top-down approaches may fail to accommodate the complexities of stakeholder needs, a flexible, responsive approach may better support systemic change. Finally, the map highlights the emergence of "value integration" as a guiding principle, wherein social, environmental, and financial goals are collaboratively pursued across system levels. This

integration reflects a shift in the concept of value, extending beyond profit alone to include multidimensional benefits co-created by various actors. Overall, these insights emphasize the necessity of collaborative, adaptive strategies that harness the collective strengths of multiple actors to foster a sustainable, purpose-aligned business ecosystem.

Systems Archetypes

System archetypes provide a systems-thinking approach to understanding the reinforcing and balancing feedback loops within the network of actors striving to integrate purpose into business models. Visualizing the dynamic relationships between key actors and their influence on business practices through causal loop diagrams offers insights into the underlying forces that support or inhibit purpose-driven transformation. Here, the **Success to the Successful** and **Limits to Growth** archetypes illustrate the complex interaction between profit-driven priorities and purpose-led ambitions.

Success to the Successful: Power Concentration in Profit-Driven Practices

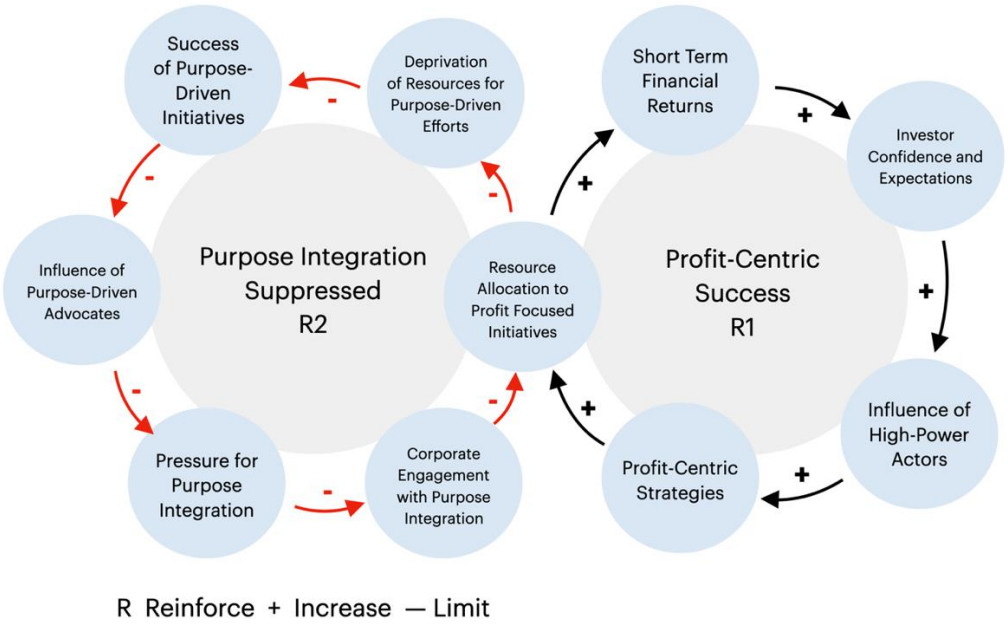

Figure 6: The Success to the Successful System archetype, Power Concentration in Profit-Driven Practices, illustrates how profit-centric success reinforces resource allocation to profit-focused initiatives while suppressing purpose-driven efforts.

This reinforcing loop illustrates how resource allocation within a system can perpetuate profit-driven priorities, consolidating the influence of high-power actors while marginalizing purpose-driven efforts. Governance bodies, business leaders, and high-level investors shape strategies and resource flows toward initiatives promising high financial returns. Investor expectations for short-term profits amplify this dynamic, reinforcing organizational focus on profit-centric outcomes.

As resources are concentrated on profit-focused initiatives, financial returns validate investor priorities, further strengthening the influence of high-power actors. This cycle entrenches structural inertia by embedding profit-

driven goals at the core of decision-making. Purpose-driven efforts—lacking resources—struggle to succeed, further reinforcing their marginalization. Over time, this loop prioritizes financial metrics as the dominant measure of success, limiting opportunities for integrating social and environmental goals.

However, the **Success to the Successful** system archetype represents just one possible system outcome. External pressures, such as evolving consumer values, regulatory interventions, or shifts in investor priorities, can disrupt this reinforcing cycle. Advocacy by purpose-driven actors, the emergence of innovative business models, or heightened societal demand for sustainability may create counterbalancing feedback loops, enabling purpose-driven efforts to gain traction. These dynamics introduce the possibility of systemic shifts, where purpose and profit are more equitably balanced.

Systemic Insight: The **Success to the Successful** system archetype reveals how resource concentration and power dynamics stabilize profit-driven systems while creating barriers to purpose integration. Yet, this outcome is not inevitable. Systemic disruptions—whether through advocacy, changing societal expectations, or regulatory shifts—offer opportunities to challenge entrenched patterns. By understanding the reinforcing nature of this loop, stakeholders can identify leverage points to foster alternative outcomes, such as greater integration of purpose-driven goals alongside financial priorities.

Limit to Growth: Sensitivity to Market Constraints in Purpose-Driven Practices

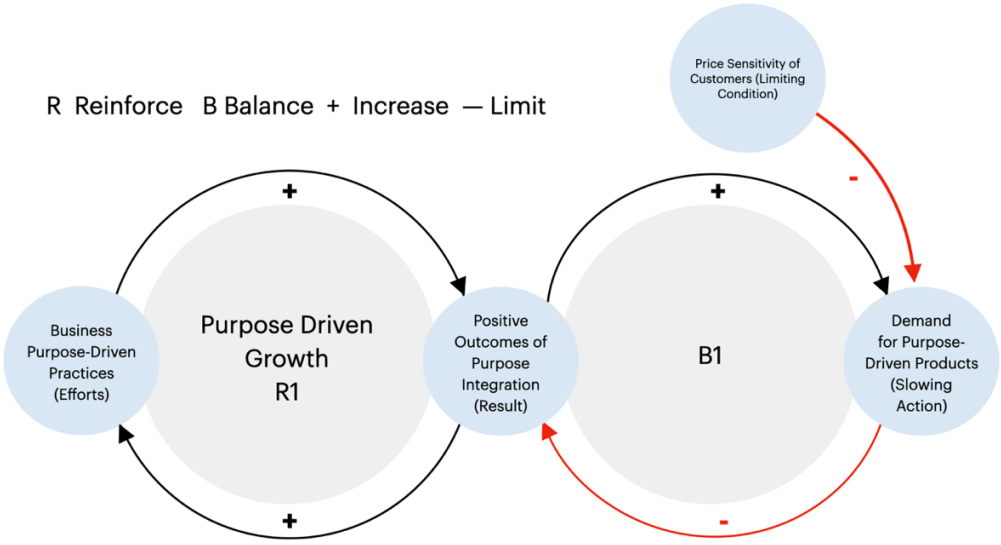

Figure 7: This "Limits to Growth: Sensitivity to Market Constraints in Purpose-Driven Practices," system archetype illustrates how market constraints limit the success of purpose-driven initiatives by balancing their reinforcing growth dynamics.

This causal loop diagram explores the dynamic interaction between purpose-driven business practices and external market constraints, illustrating how reinforcing growth in purpose-driven efforts encounters systemic limits over time. At the centre of the system is the **Purpose-Driven Growth** loop (R1), a reinforcing feedback mechanism that reflects the positive relationship between business efforts and outcomes. Investments in **Business Purpose-Driven Practices**, such as sustainability initiatives or ethical sourcing, generate **Positive Outcomes of Purpose Integration**.

These outcomes, which may include enhanced brand reputation, customer loyalty, or increased market share, encourage businesses to continue investing in purpose-driven practices, perpetuating the cycle of growth.

However, the reinforcing growth in R1 is constrained by the balancing feedback introduced by the **Price Sensitivity of Customers** loop (B1). As economic conditions shift—such as through inflation or broader economic downturns—customer price sensitivity increases, leading to a reduction in **Demand for Purpose-Driven Products**. This diminished demand negatively affects the **Positive Outcomes of Purpose Integration**, weakening the reinforcing dynamic of R1 and slowing further investments in purpose-driven practices. Over time, the balancing influence of B1 introduces a natural limit to the growth potential of the system.

The interaction between these two loops highlights the underlying tension between purpose-driven growth and its sensitivity to external economic constraints. While businesses may initially experience significant positive feedback from their purpose-driven efforts, rising customer price sensitivity acts as a **slowing mechanism**. This dynamic creates a structural threshold within the system, where external factors progressively diminish the capacity for purpose-driven practices to sustain growth.

Systemic Insight: This analysis of the **Limit to Growth** system archetype reveals the dual forces at work within purpose-driven business systems. The reinforcing feedback of R1 showcases the potential for growth, driven by the mutually reinforcing relationship between purpose-driven practices and their positive outcomes. However, this growth is inherently fragile and dependent on favourable market conditions. The balancing feedback of B1 illustrates how external factors, such as price sensitivity, disrupt this reinforcing cycle by constraining demand. The system's behaviour demonstrates the limits of purpose-driven growth when external constraints overshadow internal feedback mechanisms.

By examining this dynamic, it becomes clear that the system's trajectory is not purely determined by the ambitions or strategies of individual businesses. Instead, the interplay between internal growth dynamics and external constraints shapes how far purpose-driven efforts can succeed within current market realities.

Causal Layered Analysis

The Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) presented in this section provides a structured exploration of the narratives, worldviews, and systemic forces shaping today's business landscape, with a particular focus on understanding the deeper influences that impact purpose-driven practices. Developed by futurist Sohail Inayatullah, CLA offers a method for analyzing complex issues across four distinct layers: Litany, Social Causes and Structural Forces, Worldview, and Myth/Metaphor (Inayatullah, 2019). This layered approach allows us to move beyond surface-level trends to reveal the deeper beliefs, assumptions, and cultural narratives that uphold and reinforce the existing system.

Applying CLA at this point in the analysis builds on the insights gathered from the iterative inquiry, actors map, and system archetypes' causal loop diagramming, to uncover hidden assumptions, contextualize the current system, and identify key leverage points for transformation. While the iterative inquiry, actors map, and system archetype diagrams have illuminated the operational aspects of the business system—its actors, power dynamics, and feedback loops—CLA extends this understanding to include the ideological and cultural layers that sustain these dynamics. This addition enables a fuller understanding of why certain behaviors, relationships, and structures remain embedded in the system despite pressures for change. Applying the CLA at this stage also ensures that the

analysis aligns with a holistic, systemic perspective, including social and cultural dimensions that are often overlooked in traditional business frameworks. This approach prepares the groundwork for exploring strategic pathways that not only integrate profit and purpose but also reflect the complexities and interdependencies of real-world contexts.

Litany Layer: Surface-Level Issues and Trends

The Litany layer examines the observable, surface-level issues and trends that characterize the current state of the business landscape through the lens of shifting concepts of value. These trends are widely discussed in public discourse and highlight tensions between consumer expectations, economic realities, and systemic critiques.

To capture the surface-level issues visually, Figure 7 presents a collection of headlines that reflect dominant narratives in the media. These headlines illustrate public perceptions and concerns about business practices, societal expectations, and the challenges of aligning purpose with profit.

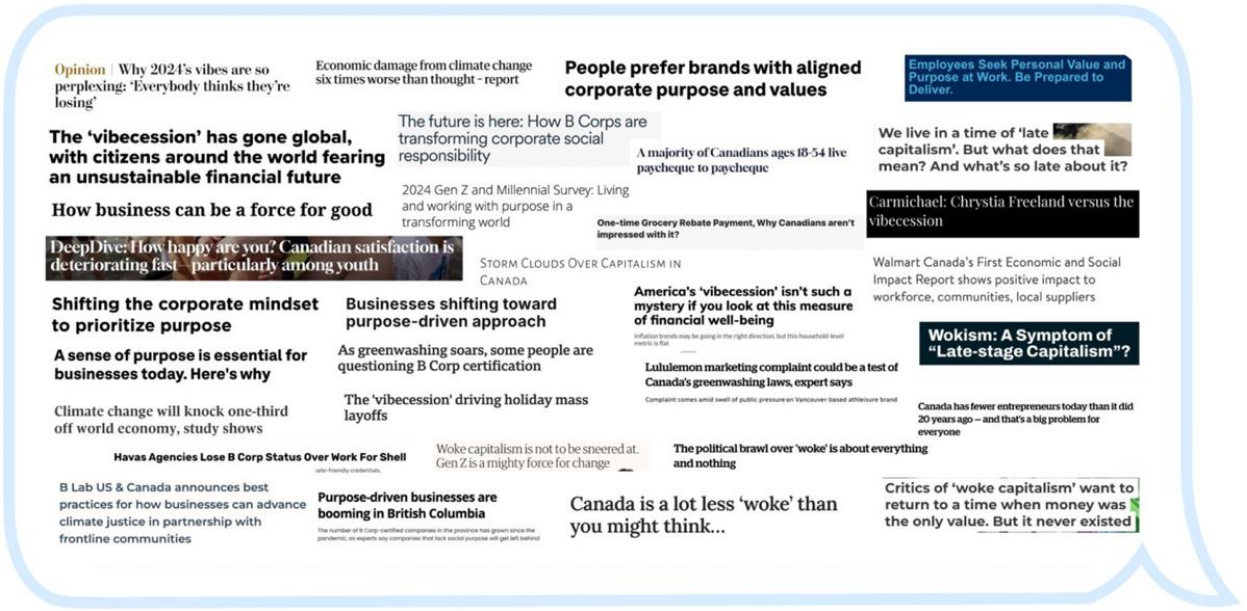

Figure 8**:** A collection of headlines illustrating observable trends in the Litany layer.

A recurring theme found in the litany is **the fragile trust between consumers and corporations**, particularly as skepticism around greenwashing continues to rise. Headlines like *"As greenwashing soars, some people are questioning B Corp certification"* reflect public doubts about the authenticity of purpose-driven claims, challenging businesses to prove their ethical commitments (Bennet, 2024). At the same time, consumers express a strong preference for brands that align with their values, as seen in *"People prefer brands with aligned corporate purpose and values."* (Willige, 2021). This demand underscores **the importance of authenticity** but also creates **heightened scrutiny in a competitive marketplace.**

Economic pressures add another layer of complexity. **The cost-of-living crisis**, marked by inflation and wage stagnation, has forced many consumers to prioritize affordability over sustainability. Headlines like *"The 'Vibecession' driving holiday mass layoffs"* (Benveniste, 2023) and *"A majority of Canadians ages 18-54 live*

paycheque to paycheque" (Muscovitch, 2024) illustrate this tension. While younger generations, such as Millennials and Gen Z, express aspirations to live and work with purpose—as seen in *"2024 Gen Z and Millennial Survey: Living and working with purpose in a transforming world"*(Deloitte, 2024)—they often face **financial constraints that hinder their ability to make purpose-driven choices.**

Systemic critiques of capitalism further complicate this landscape. Public dissatisfaction with traditional economic models, highlighted in *"We live in a time of 'late capitalism,'"* (Aviles, 2022) questions the capacity of profit-driven systems to address societal challenges such as climate change and inequality. Yet, there is also a counter-narrative that frames **business as a potential force for good.** Headlines like *"How business can be a force for good"* (MacKay & Redfern, 2024) and *"Shifting the corporate mindset to prioritize purpose"* (CPA Canada, 2024). Suggest an **emerging expectation for businesses to redefine their role in creating societal value.**

Finally, **cultural and ideological divides** shape the discourse around purpose-driven practices. The polarized debate on "woke capitalism," as reflected in headlines like *"Critics of 'woke capitalism' want to return to a time when money was the only value. But it never existed,"* (Rhodes, 2024) underscores the contested nature of integrating social values into business strategies. These divides reveal broader cultural tensions that complicate the alignment of profit and purpose in today's economy.

Together, these surface-level trends illustrate a fragmented system where businesses must navigate conflicting signals from consumers, economic realities, and ideological debates. On one hand, rising demand for purpose-driven practices reflects a shift in societal values. On the other hand, economic constraints and public skepticism create significant barriers to meaningful transformation. These dynamics provide a foundation for exploring the deeper structural, ideological, and cultural layers that sustain the system as it exists today.

Social Causes and Structural Forces Layer: Institutional Drivers and Constraints

The Social Causes and Structural Forces layer examines the institutional frameworks and structural influences that underpin the dominant economic system, shedding light on how these forces drive or constrain purpose-driven practices. On the one hand, **institutional drivers such as regulatory momentum, media influence, and corporate advocacy** are encouraging businesses to align with societal expectations (Hoffman, 2018). Governments and regulatory bodies are increasingly mandating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards, promoting greater corporate accountability (Lombard, 2024). These frameworks, coupled with growing consumer demand for ethical practices and public narratives amplified by media coverage, are pushing businesses to embrace purpose-driven goals (Aaker, 2022). Additionally, certifications like B Corp status have emerged as signals of corporate responsibility, creating benchmarks for businesses seeking to align profit with social impact. However, as skepticism over greenwashing grows, these signals risk being dismissed as superficial without the structural changes needed to embed purpose authentically within business models (Bennett, 2024).

Despite these drivers, significant structural constraints limit the capacity for businesses to make meaningful transformations. The dominance of profit-centric economic models, rooted in neoclassical principles, reinforces a focus on efficiency, competition, and short-term returns, leaving little room for investments in long-term societal or environmental goals (Henderson, 2020). Governance structures further constrain progress, as boards and executives face intense pressure from shareholders to prioritize short-term financial returns over broader, purpose-driven strategies. Adding to these challenges is a fragmented policy landscape; inconsistencies across regions and industries create barriers to the seamless integration of ethical practices, often leading global

corporations to adopt superficial or uneven approaches (OECD, 2024).). These constraints highlight the systemic inertia of the dominant economic system, which often privileges profit maximization over holistic and sustainable value creation.

These institutional drivers and constraints frequently interact in contradictory ways, exposing systemic tensions. For example, while ESG regulations push businesses toward accountability, they also impose significant compliance costs, which smaller companies often struggle to absorb (Tu, 2020). This dynamic risks exacerbating inequality between large corporations with abundant resources and smaller, purpose-driven enterprises. Similarly, the emphasis on short-term financial performance often undermines the ability of businesses to pursue transformative goals, leading to superficial adaptations such as greenwashing rather than substantive systemic change.

Together, the Social Causes and Structural Forces layer highlights the dual forces shaping today's business landscape. While institutional drivers provide pathways for purpose-driven practices to gain traction, deeply embedded structural constraints, such as profit-centric models and governance frameworks, impede the realization of meaningful change. This tension underscores the complex interplay between incremental adaptations to societal and regulatory pressures and the systemic resistance that maintains the status quo.

Worldview Layer: Competing Ideologies and Economic Assumptions

The Worldview layer explores the foundational beliefs and ideologies shaping the concept of value within the dominant economic system. Central to this layer is the dominance of neoclassical economics, which frames competition, individualism, and profit maximization as the primary indicators of success (Beinhocker, 2019) (Foroohar, 2016) This worldview assumes that market forces naturally produce efficient outcomes, relegating social and environmental considerations to secondary roles. Within this framework, businesses are structured around the belief that growth is synonymous with prosperity, with profit serving as the ultimate measure of value (Jacobs, & Mazzucato, 2016). These deeply embedded assumptions influence governance, strategy, and consumer behavior, reinforcing the notion that value is transactional and measurable primarily through financial metrics.

Central to neoclassical economics is the view of individuals as rational actors who make decisions based on self-interest to maximize utility. This perspective assumes that individuals—whether as consumers, employees, or investors—are motivated by personal gains, such as cost savings, convenience, or financial returns and make decisions free from systemic constraints (Gerstle, 2023). However, the Litany layer highlights rising economic vulnerability, including inflation, wage stagnation, and the cost-of-living crisis, which expose the limitations of these assumptions. Structural forces undermine individuals' capacity to act autonomously or rationally in ways the theory assumes, revealing the disconnect between economic models and lived realities (Beinhocker, 2020). In this worldview, businesses succeed by appealing to these rational actors, offering products, services, or investments that align with their preferences. This framework oversimplifies human behavior, ignoring the social, cultural, and emotional dimensions of decision-making. Furthermore, the emphasis on individualism often undermines collective action and systemic solutions, reducing value creation to a series of discrete transactions rather than a shared or relational process (Martin, 2020).

The neoclassical worldview also positions the government's role as primarily that of a regulator and enabler of markets. Governments are seen as responsible for creating a stable environment—through property rights, enforcement of contracts, and minimal interventions—to allow markets to function efficiently (Mazzucato, 2020). This "market-fixing" approach assumes that markets are inherently efficient, requiring government involvement

only to correct failures, such as monopolies or externalities. In contrast, the concept of market shaping challenges this assumption by positioning governments as proactive agents in driving innovation and creating new markets. Economist Mariana Mazzucato's work reframes the government's role as collaborative and forward-looking, steering economic activity toward public benefit by fostering industries that address challenges such as climate change or inequality. This contrast highlights a key ideological tension: while the neoclassical view emphasizes reactive governance, market shaping advocates for a collaborative, forward-looking role for governments in defining and delivering value (Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016).

The dominance of the neoclassical worldview is further reinforced by neoliberalism, an economic and political ideology that extends neoclassical principles into governance systems. Neoliberalism emphasizes free markets, deregulation, and privatization, asserting that minimal government intervention ensures the most efficient allocation of resources (Gerstle, 2023). This paradigm incentivizes businesses to prioritize shareholder returns above other considerations, reinforcing short-term profit motives at the expense of long-term societal or environmental goals. Neoliberalism also contributes to the erosion of collective action, framing economic activity as a competition among autonomous actors rather than a collaborative process (Stiglitz, 2024). Critics argue that this ideology has entrenched systemic inequalities and environmental degradation, as market mechanisms often fail to account for externalities or address the needs of marginalized groups (Di Duca, 2021). The emphasis on competition and deregulation contrasts sharply with emerging frameworks that advocate for a more inclusive and balanced understanding of value.

These competing worldviews reflect an ideological tension between traditional profit-driven models, rooted in neoclassical and neoliberal assumptions, and evolving calls for purpose-driven practices. For businesses operating within the current system, this tension creates both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the dominance of neoliberal paradigms—emphasizing shareholder primacy, deregulation, and competition—constrains the adoption of alternative approaches, as the prevailing definition of success leaves little room for multi-dimensional metrics of value. On the other hand, the rise of stakeholder and regenerative ideologies signals shifting societal expectations, encouraging businesses to experiment with purpose-driven frameworks that align profit with broader social and environmental goals.

At its core, the Worldview layer reveals the contested nature of value in business. While traditional economic assumptions, such as individual rationality, profit maximization, and market supremacy, continue to dominate decision-making and organizational priorities, alternative ideologies are gaining traction. Stakeholder capitalism, for example, emphasizes balancing the needs of customers, employees, communities, and shareholders, rather than prioritizing financial returns alone. Regenerative economics advocates for restoring and sustaining environmental and social systems, embedding economic activity within ecological boundaries (Freeman et al., 2020). Complexity economics reframes the economy as a dynamic, interconnected system, emphasizing adaptation, collaboration, and innovation. These emerging frameworks offer a vision of value that is more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable (Beinhocker, 2019).

The ideological shift represented by these alternative perspectives remains a work in progress, reflecting both the enduring influence of neoclassical and neoliberal frameworks and the growing momentum for systemic change. By challenging the limitations of dominant paradigms, these frameworks reframe value creation as relational rather than transactional, prioritizing societal well-being and ecological health alongside profit. For businesses, they create an opportunity to redefine success within a broader, purpose-driven understanding of value, offering pathways toward resilience and long-term impact.

Myth and Metaphor Layer: Foundational Narratives of the Dominant Economic System

At the deepest level of the dominant economic system lie myths and metaphors that shape how value is understood, created, and exchanged. These narratives act as cultural anchors, legitimizing current practices and making alternative approaches to value creation seem impractical or unattainable. One of the most pervasive myths is the idea of **"no free lunch"**, which encapsulates the belief that value is inherently transactional, requiring a trade-off for every gain. This myth positions profit and purpose as competing priorities, fostering skepticism toward purpose-driven practices and framing social or environmental benefits as inherently costly or impractical within a profit-centric system.

This myth is deeply connected to the definition of value found in neoclassical economics: **"Value is determined by scarcity relative to demand."** By tying value to scarcity, this definition reinforces the idea that value creation is a zero-sum game, where resources are limited, and benefits must come at a cost. It aligns with the "no free lunch" narrative by framing value as something that must be earned or paid for, positioning scarcity and competition as the natural order of economic activity. Within this worldview, purpose-driven goals—such as sustainability or social equity—are often seen as luxuries that businesses cannot afford without sacrificing profitability. This framing discourages systemic transformations, promoting short-term thinking and reinforcing the status quo.

The myth of **"growth is good"** further sustains this transactional understanding of value by equating economic growth with prosperity. Growth is celebrated as a universal solution to societal challenges, with little attention paid to whether it is inclusive or sustainable. Together with the "no free lunch" myth, this narrative suggests that continuous growth is necessary to create the conditions under which societal or environmental benefits might eventually be addressed—if at all. This prioritization of growth often masks systemic inequalities and ecological degradation, perpetuating the belief that expansion is an unquestioned good.

Similarly, the **"invisible hand"** metaphor, rooted in classical economics, underpins the assumption that markets are self-regulating mechanisms capable of allocating value efficiently. This narrative downplays the structural constraints and systemic imbalances that undermine market efficiency, reinforcing the belief that economic challenges—such as inequality or climate change—are best addressed through market-based solutions. It aligns with the scarcity-driven framing of value, assuming that markets will naturally balance trade-offs and optimize outcomes without the need for intentional intervention or collective action.

These dominant myths marginalize alternative narratives that challenge the transactional, scarcity-based understanding of value. For example, emerging metaphors like **"value as an ecosystem"** reframe value as relational, interconnected, and regenerative, emphasizing collaboration and sustainability over competition and scarcity. Similarly, the metaphor of **"shared prosperity"** highlights the potential for economic systems to prioritize collective well-being and equitable distribution rather than treating value as a finite resource to be allocated through competition.

By uncovering these foundational myths, we can better understand the cultural and ideological barriers that sustain the dominant economic system and constrain transformative change. The definition of value as scarcity relative to demand, and its connection to the "no free lunch" myth, illustrates how deeply embedded narratives perpetuate the status quo while obscuring alternative ways of imagining value creation. To disrupt these myths, it is essential to explore metaphors and models that challenge transactional assumptions, making space for relational, inclusive, and regenerative approaches to value.

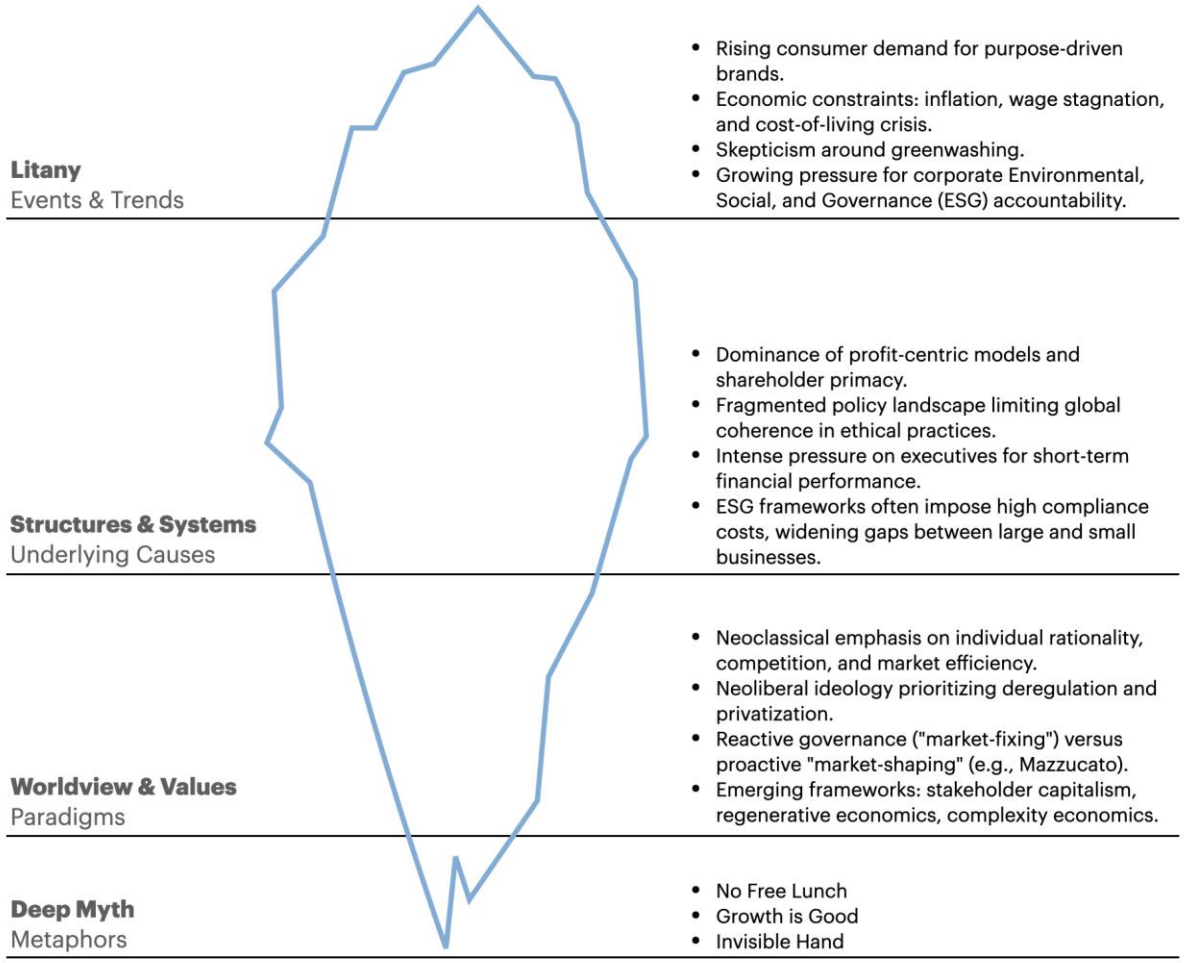

Figure 9: Causal Layered Analysis, Summary. The definition of value as scarcity relative to demand, and its connection to the "no free lunch" myth, illustrates how deeply embedded narratives perpetuate the status quo while obscuring alternative ways of imagining value creation.

PART 2

Part 1 of the report addressed the questions **"how is the concept of Value in business shifting?"** and **"how is this shift influencing the integration of profit and purpose?"** by examining the structural, relational, and ideological dynamics shaping the contemporary understanding of value in business. The analysis mapped interdependencies, actor relationships, and feedback loops, revealing how systemic forces sustain current paradigms of the concept of value. While this provided essential context for understanding present day dynamics, it did not account for the uncertainty of how these dynamics may evolve over time. To address the research objective of "identifying strategic pathways businesses might craft to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact." Part 2 of the report extends the exploration of the evolving concept of value in business into future contexts. Systems analysis sought to understand ***how things are and why they operate the way they do*** now, employing strategic foresight methodologies the research explores ***how things might change in the future*.**

Strategic foresight methods enable researchers, strategists, and decision-makers to anticipate possible futures, identify opportunities, and craft resilient strategies. Unlike traditional strategic planning, which often assumes a predictable future based on historical data and stable systems, strategic foresight recognizes uncertainty as a fundamental condition of the future (Voros, 2003). While planning focuses on setting clear goals and defining measurable milestones, foresight emphasizes exploration over prediction, acknowledging multiple plausible outcomes. As Maree Conway explains: "Using foresight allows organisations to systematically explore their possible futures and begin to understand how external imperatives and challenges might require changing their strategy today. The intention is to craft strategies that are relevant and robust for longer periods of time and that provide a longer-term context for decision making today" (Conway, 2017). In this research, strategic foresight serves as both a methodology and a lens for exploration. Building on the systems analysis conducted in Part 1, foresight methodologies extend the analysis into future contexts, exploring how today's signals and drivers might evolve. This approach enables an exploration of multiple potential pathways, highlighting areas of risk, opportunity, and transformative potential.

Strategic foresight relies on abductive reasoning, reflective analysis, and sense-making, all of which are shaped by the positionality of the researcher. Just as identity and reflexivity play a critical role in academic research, they are equally important in foresight methodologies. The researcher's perspective influences how patterns are interpreted and how scenarios are constructed. While these approaches introduce inherent risks such as cognitive bias, subjective interpretation, or over-reliance on individual perspectives, these risks are mitigated through methodological transparency, iterative reflection, and structured frameworks. Transparency ensures assumptions, choices, and logic are clearly documented, allowing for accountability and clarity. Reflection provides opportunities to revisit assumptions and refine insights throughout the process, preventing premature conclusions. Structured frameworks, such as the Cone of Plausibility and the Three Horizons Framework, act as guardrails to maintain analytical consistency and coherence. Together, these strategies support the integrity and robustness of the foresight process, ensuring that scenario narratives remain grounded and methodologically sound

With this methodological foundation established, Part 2 transitions into the foresight process, beginning with horizon scanning to identify signals and emerging trends, followed by an exploration of historical patterns and systemic drivers. These elements lay the groundwork for scenario construction using the Cone of Plausibility which

offers a structured approach to envisioning how shifts in key drivers might shape divergent pathways for the future of value in business.

Horizon Scan

A horizon scan was conducted to synthesize signals of change to identify trends across social, technological, economic, environmental, political, and values-driven (STEEP+V) domains. Each trend was evaluated using two key criteria:

> **Impact**: How significantly the trend influences strategic, operational, and systemic outcomes for purpose-driven businesses.
>
> **Certainty**: The degree of confidence that the trend will continue or escalate within the next decade, based on current evidence and trajectory.

A summary chart of the identified trends follows below, offering a high-level overview. More detailed descriptions, including trend implications and signal references, can be found in Appendix C.

Table 1 A summary of the identified trends offering a high-level overview. Detailed descriptions, including trend implications and signal references, can be found in Appendix C

Trend	Description	Implications
Balancing Profit and Purpose Amid Financial Fragility STEEP+V: Economic, Values	Businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose face increasing tension between short-term financial stability and investing in long-term purpose-driven initiatives as financial fragility persists.	- Organizations may scale back purpose investments to prioritize immediate financial survival. - Financially resilient businesses could strengthen purpose commitments and emerge as long-term industry leaders.
Gen Z & Gen Alpha's Purpose-Driven Expectations STEEP+V: Social, Economic	Younger generations expectations are reshaping markets and workplaces due to their digital advocacy demanding transparency, measurable purpose outcomes, and alignment between brand message and actions.	- Businesses may face growing pressure to validate purpose claims through measurable outcomes. - Corporate governance, compliance, and investment priorities may shift due to generational influence.

Trend	Description	Implications
Geopolitical and Economic Fragmentation STEEP+V: Economic, Political	Geopolitical tensions and protectionist policies are fragmenting global markets, disrupting supply chains, and driving a shift towards regional resilience.	- Businesses may encounter rising costs and challenging operational complexity. - Opportunities for localized purpose-driven initiatives and regional specialization could emerge.
Climate Policy as Industrial Strategy STEEP+V: Environmental, Economic, Political	Climate policy is becoming a central pillar of industrial strategies, blending environmental objectives with economic growth and geopolitical positioning.	- Uneven resource distribution and shifting political priorities may slow environmental progress. - Economies aligned with green industrial policies could gain a competitive edge.
Supply Chain Resilience in the Era of Energy Transition STEEP+V: Economic, Environmental	Resilience, transparency, and sustainability are emerging as key priorities for supply chains in response to geopolitical risks, resource scarcity, and climate disruption.	- Localization and AI-driven logistics may become standard practice. - Financial barriers and uneven adoption could limit widespread implementation.
Stakeholder Capitalism and Governance Scrutiny STEEP+V: Values	Businesses are under growing scrutiny to deliver measurable progress on purpose-driven goals, alongside financial performance, and rising transparency expectations.	- ESG standards could become globally regulated, embedding stakeholder alignment into corporate practices. - Organizations failing to demonstrate progress may face regulatory or reputational risks.
Human-AI Workplace Collaboration STEEP+V: Technological, Economic, Values	AI integration is reshaping workforce dynamics, where human roles are augmented or replaced by AI systems.	- Workforce training gaps and ethical concerns may slow AI adoption. - Companies balancing AI autonomy with human oversight.

Trend	Description	Implications
Economic Inequality and the Middle-Class Squeeze STEEP+V: Economic, Values	Cost of living crisis and stagnant wages are intensifying pressures on middle-class households. Simultaneously, wealth concentration among top income earners is deepening systemic inequalities.	- Governments may face mounting calls for redistributive policies. - Businesses addressing equity could build stakeholder trust and long-term resilience.
Green Finance and Investment STEEP+V: Economic, Environmental	Financial markets are increasingly channelling capital towards green technologies, but inconsistent standards and greenwashing concerns risk undermining credibility.	- Improved accountability mechanisms could make green finance a cornerstone of global strategy. - Fragmentation and trust erosion may stall progress.
Cross-Sector Collaboration as a Strategic Imperative STEEP+V: Political, Economic	Addressing systemic challenges like climate change and inequality requires collaborative partnerships across businesses, governments, and civil society.	- Effective governance frameworks and long-term trust-building may drive partnership success. - Poorly managed collaborations may fail to deliver meaningful results.
Wellness as an Embodiment of Purpose STEEP+V: Social	Wellness has evolved into a strategic benchmark for purpose alignment, influencing corporate culture, product design, and customer engagement.	- Businesses authentically integrating wellness may build long-term trust. - Superficial initiatives risk accusations of opportunism and reputational damage.
AI Supporting Human Well-Being STEEP+V: Technological, Social	AI is expanding healthcare, mental health, and emotional support systems but remains constrained by unequal access, privacy concerns, and ethical dilemmas.	- Addressing privacy and equity concerns could revolutionize healthcare delivery. - Unequal access and ethical missteps may deepen societal divides.

Trend	Description	Implications
Corporate Dominance and Monopolistic Corporations STEEP+V: Political, Economic	Increasing corporate dominance in sectors such as technology, healthcare, finance and supply chains risks suppressing competition, stifling innovation, and amplifying systemic vulnerabilities.	- Regulatory scrutiny and antitrust measures may intensify. - Unchecked corporate power could deepen systemic inequalities and governance risks.
Labour Union Resurgence and Collective Bargaining Movements STEEP+V: Social, Economic, Political	Worker activism and collective bargaining are resurging in response to rising economic inequality, AI displacement, poor working conditions, and labour protection erosion.	- Adoption of collective bargaining rights may reshape labour dynamics. - Entrenched corporate resistance could create operational tensions.
Purpose as a Luxury STEEP+V: Social, Economic	Rising living costs are creating a divide in purpose-driven consumption, positioning purpose as a luxury for affluent consumers while affordability dominates mass markets.	- Companies may need to balance purpose narratives with affordability strategies. - Without affordability solutions, purpose-driven offerings may remain premium-exclusive.
Technology as a Catalyst for Purpose STEEP+V: Technological, Values	Digital technologies, including AI, blockchain, and green tech, are driving measurable purpose outcomes and improving transparency.	- Unequal technological access and workforce skill gaps may limit adoption. - Well-integrated technologies could set new industry benchmarks.
Uneven Climate Adaptation Efforts STEEP+V: Environmental, Political, Economic	Wealthier nations are advancing in climate adaptation, while developing economies face funding shortages, resource constraints, and higher vulnerabilities.	- Global funding initiatives and knowledge-sharing platforms could narrow the adaptation gap. - Persistent disparities may drive migration, geopolitical tensions, and humanitarian crises.

A striking observation across the trends is the emergence of new and evolving forms of value. Traditional financial metrics are increasingly complemented by measures of social, environmental, and emotional well-being. Value is

being defined not just in terms of shareholder returns but also in terms of stakeholder impact, long-term resilience, and societal contribution. This shift manifests in multiple ways: wellness becoming an embodiment of purpose, green finance reflecting environmental accountability, and stakeholder capitalism introducing frameworks based on transparency and shared responsibility. While the examination of trends reveals contemporary shifts in how value is conceived and created, these changes are part of a longer historical pattern. Throughout history, the definition of value has been continuously reshaped by systemic forces, power structures, and societal evolution.

The Evolution of Value

The definition of economic value is not fixed; it is neither a scientific principle nor a physical law. It is a social construct ever evolving through the interaction of systemic forces—such as technological innovation, societal shifts, and political change—challenges to existing systems, and shifts in power structures. By examining economic eras from Mercantilism in the 1500s through the Industrial Revolution, the Gilded Age, the New Deal, Neoliberalism to present day's Platform era, we can see how the concept of economic value has continually been shaped and reshaped. In each era, value theories emerge to reflect the dominant forces of change, redefining the source of value, how it is created, captured, measured, and distributed. The concept of value is shaped by the context of its time, and this evolving understanding influences business practices and the broader economic systems in which they operate.

Economic value refers to the systemic understanding of what is valuable within an economy—including public goods, environmental resources, and societal contributions—it shapes and is shaped by societal priorities and dominant forces of change. The **concept of value in business** focuses more narrowly on how organizations define, create, and capture value within the specific economic contexts of their time. This is also a social construct that evolves nested within economic systems, shifting from the accumulation of tangible resources in the Mercantile Era to labour productivity during industrialization, and more recently to data monetization and stakeholder engagement in the Platform Era. Despite its narrower focus, the concept of value in business is deeply interconnected with economic value: broader shifts in what societies deem valuable, influenced, and reinforced by prevailing power structures, redefine the priorities and practices of businesses. The relationship between the evolving concept of economic value informs how businesses align their practices with societal and environmental demands. The relationship is reciprocal: how businesses adapt and operate within the context of their time shapes the broader concept of economic value.

Understanding value as a social construct that evolves through the interaction of driving forces provides us with a crucial analytical lens. By examining specific historical eras and their transitions, we can trace how these forces have repeatedly redefined value creation and distribution. This historical analysis reveals patterns that illuminate not just where we've been, but where current shifts in value conception might lead us.

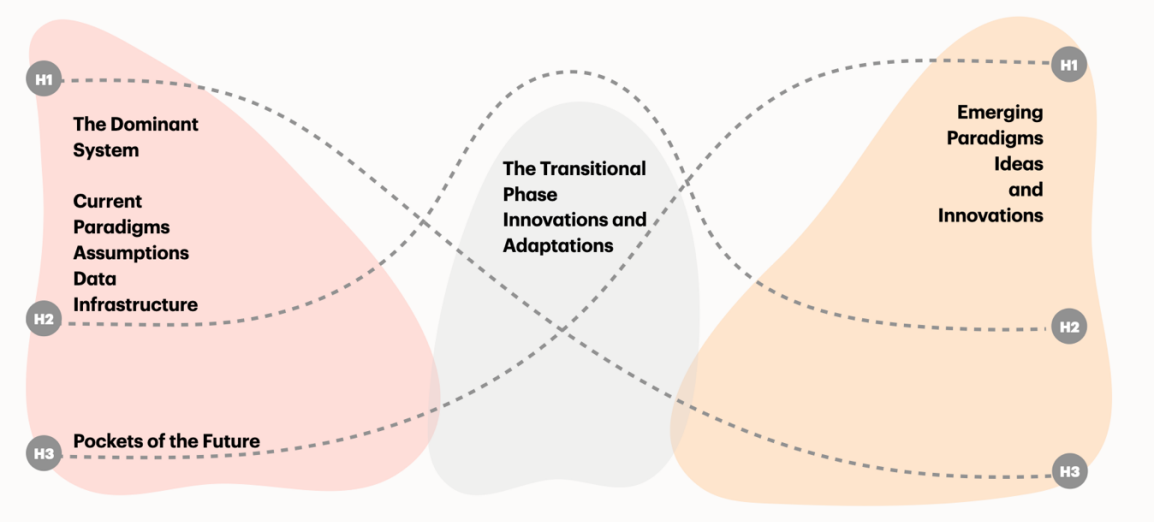

Figure 10: Three Horizons Framework illustrates three overlapping curves representing different stages of innovation and change over time: **Horizon 1** (H1) represents the dominant, current system or practice that is declining as it becomes less fit for the future; **Horizon 2** (H2) represents emerging innovations, experiments, and disruptions that challenge the status quo and may transition into future systems; and **Horizon 3** (H3) represents the long-term vision for transformational systems or practices that address future needs and aspirations. The framework emphasizes the dynamic interplay between horizons, highlighting opportunities for innovation and the tensions between maintaining the present and building the future.

The analysis of economic eras and their transitions emerged through an analysis of significant shifts in how value has been understood, created, measured, and distributed, framed within a Three Horizons Framework. The framework, developed by Bill Sharpe as a strategic foresight tool for thinking about transformation and future planning offers a way to understand systemic change over time by examining the interaction of declining and emerging patterns (Sharpe, 2020).

Three Horizons has been applied to analyze historical economic eras. Horizon 1 (H1) represents the dominant system, Horizon 3 (H3) represents emerging future patterns, and Horizon 2 (H2) represents the turbulent transition space where these patterns interact and transform. This analysis highlights both distinct economic eras and the dynamic spaces between them. Each era reflects a period when specific patterns of value creation, measurement, and distribution dominated (H1). As these patterns reached their limits or faced significant challenges, new forms of value creation(H3) began to emerge. Transitions between eras unfolded through turbulent periods (H2) where old and new patterns coexisted, competed, and often combined into hybrid forms that bridged the established and the emergent. This perspective highlighted not only distinct historical eras but also the dynamic transition spaces between them.

The Mercantile Era (1500s–1750s) represents a relatively stable pattern (H1) where value was defined through precious metals, such as gold and silver, and trade balances (Heckscher, 2013). This era was characterized by state-chartered trading companies, guild-controlled production, and colonial expansion involving the violent displacement and exploitation of Indigenous peoples (Coulter et al., 2022). Value creation depended on multiple forms of extraction: resources from colonized territories, labour from enslaved peoples, and the systematic appropriation of Indigenous lands and destruction of existing economic systems. Institutions such as the British East India Company operated as instruments of trade and colonial control, while the transatlantic slave trade

provided direct economic returns and underpinned plantation-based value extraction (Brunton,2013). Guild production in European centers relied heavily on raw materials obtained through these exploitative systems.

The foundational assumptions of this era—tying value to precious metals, trade surpluses, and colonial systems—shaped distinct patterns of economic organization and entrenched power dynamics (Magnusson, 2015). However, resistance from colonized territories, resource constraints, and social upheaval signaled the limits of this system. The transition to industrialization emerged in this turbulent (H2) space, where experimental forms like putting-out systems (a form of home-based production where rural workers processed materials provided by merchants) and merchant-manufacturers bridged the decline of mercantile structures and the rise of industrial approaches (Heckscher, 2013).

The Industrial Revolution (1750s–1800s) marked a fundamental shift, with **value redefined through production and labour.** This transformation extended beyond technological innovation, encompassing a comprehensive reimagining of how value was created, measured, and captured (Perez, & Leach 2020). The emergence of the factory system, wage labour, and mechanized production introduced entirely new economic structures, even as they built upon colonial wealth and perpetuated patterns of exploitation (DeLong, 2023).

The Industrial Revolution's factory system emerged as the dominant form (H1) through a turbulent transition that transformed social and economic relations. Agricultural crisis, urban poverty, and labour unrest characterized this H2 period (Perez, 2019). The transition toward the Gilded Age introduced corporate structures and financial innovations that bridged the industrial and corporate economies.

The Gilded Age (1870s–1890s) emerged as corporations and financial markets transformed economic organization. The illustrative name of the era was coined by Mark Twain as a critique of the surface-level prosperity masking deep social issues of the time (Orser, 2012). This era saw **value increasingly understood through market prices and financial metrics**, with new forms of organization like trusts and holding companies enabling unprecedented market control and value capture (Mazzucato, 2016). National markets and hierarchical corporate structures shaped the era's dominant patterns of economic organization (Gordon, 2017).

However, this system's contradictions—exemplified by labour struggles, political corruption, and prolonged economic instability during the Long Depression (1873–1896)—created a turbulent transition space (H2) (Colt, 2018). The Progressive Era reforms, new labour movements, and experimental responses to the challenges of corporate capitalism culminated in significant system transformations. World War I (1914-1918) accelerated these changes through large-scale economic mobilization and state-corporate coordination. (DeLong, 2023). This extended H2 space saw multiple competing forms and power struggles before the emergence of New Deal structures following the catalytic crisis of the Great Depression.

The New Deal/Post-War Era (1930s–1970s) represented a significant shift toward **institutional and social understandings of value.** This period established stable patterns (H1) of regulated capitalism, characterized by mixed economy frameworks, a labour-capital compromise, and the development of welfare state institutions such as Social Security, the National Labour Relations Board, and the Federal Housing Administration (Wallis, 2010). Public-private partnerships and institutional regulation created distinct patterns of economic organization. The New Deal/Post-War Era (1930s-1970s) established regulated capitalism, significantly shaped by the economic mobilization of World II and Cold War competition (McCloskey, 2023).

The 1970s marked the beginning of another turbulent transition (H2), driven by stagflation, oil shocks, and shifting social dynamics Bei These disruptions created the conditions for the emergence of the Neoliberal Era, as regulatory frameworks gave way to market-driven approaches and financialization (Gerstle, 2023).

The Neoliberal Era (1970s–2008) marked a transformative shift toward **financialized conceptions of value** and global market integration. Shareholder returns and financial metrics became the dominant measures of economic success, while global supply chains and financial engineering introduced new patterns of activity (Mazzucato, 2020). The 2008 financial crisis marked a significant disruption, initiating the transition toward platform capitalism. Emerging forms, such as fintech and digital platforms, bridged the financial and digital economies (Foroohar, 2016).

The Platform Era (2008–Present) represents the current H1 horizon, where **value is increasingly understood through network effects and data**. Digital platforms, algorithmic governance (decision-making and resource allocation guided by algorithms and automated systems), and network organization define this era's distinct economic structures (Perez & Leach, 2020). However, converging crises—including the climate emergency, pandemic disruptions, technological transformation, democratic instability, and rising social inequality—signal a potential systemic transition. Emerging hybrid forms, such as stakeholder capitalism (a model prioritizing the interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment, alongside shareholders), platform cooperatives (digital platforms owned and governed by their users, fostering equitable wealth distribution and decision-making), and regenerative business models (approaches designed to restore and renew natural and social systems rather than deplete them), suggest pathways to new economic patterns (Freeman et al., 2020). These experimental bridge forms offer glimpses of potential futures, though the ultimate direction of transformation remains uncertain.

Drivers Shaping the Evolution of the Concept of Value in Business

The identification of **key drivers shaping the evolution of the concept of value in business** emerged through an analysis of economic eras from the Mercantile period to the present Platform era. This historical analysis revealed how value theory, business practices, and economic systems have evolved through the interaction of multiple forces over time. Rather than seeing each era as a discrete period, the analysis focused on understanding the dynamics of transition between eras, revealing patterns in how economic systems transform and adapt.

The historical progression showed consistent patterns in how value theories evolve, notably that:

(1) each era adds new forms of value without fully displacing previous ones,
(2) measurement systems evolve to legitimize these new value forms,
(3) business models adapt to capture multiple forms of value,
(4) extraction methods become more sophisticated while maintaining earlier forms, and
(5) power relations shape which value forms gain prominence and how they're distributed.

Through examining how these patterns manifested across different transitions, fundamental forces driving system change became apparent.

This analysis was enriched by examining current system dynamics, where multiple pressures are creating conditions for potential transformation. The combination of historical pattern recognition and current system

analysis led to the identification of five fundamental drivers: **Value Theory Transformation, Technological Disruption, Ecological Limits, Wealth Consolidation, and Institutional Legitimacy and Adaptation.** These drivers represent deep forces that have historically shaped how economic systems evolve and continue to influence current transitions. Understanding them provides crucial context for exploring how the concept of value in business might evolve and what strategic pathways might enable organizations to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact.

Understanding how **Value Theory Transformation** functions as a driver becomes crucial for organizations attempting to navigate current transitions and develop sustainable approaches to value creation. It suggests that successful adaptation requires not just responding to new value forms but developing capabilities to understand and integrate multiple forms of value simultaneously.

Technological Disruption emerged as a fundamental driver through analysis of how technological innovation has consistently catalyzed transitions between economic eras. The historical analysis revealed that while technology enables change it also actively participates in transforming how value is created, measured, and distributed (Perez, 2019). This pattern of technology-enabled transformation appears consistently across era transitions, though its nature and impact have evolved significantly over time (Perez & Leach 2020).

Throughout economic history, technological advances have created conditions for fundamental system change. During the Industrial Revolution, steam power and mechanization transformed production systems and labour relations (Gordon, 2017). The Gilded Age saw railroad networks and communication technologies enable national markets and corporate organization (Colt, 2018). The post-war period's mass production technologies enabled new consumption patterns, while the Neoliberal era's computerization and telecommunications facilitated global financial markets (Perez, 2019). Most recently, digital platforms and networks have created entirely new forms of value creation and capture (Miklos et al., 2020). In each case, technological innovation did more than improve efficiency—it enabled new forms of economic organization and value creation while disrupting existing power structures and business models (Lazonik, 2019).

The analysis reveals that **technological disruption operates through multiple, interconnected mechanisms.** New technologies enable novel forms of value creation, often making previous approaches obsolete. They reshape power relations by enabling new forms of control and coordination. They create opportunities for new business models while undermining existing ones. Perhaps most significantly, they often reveal or create system limitations that drive transformation to new economic arrangements. This multi-faceted nature of technological disruption helps explain why its impacts tend to be profound and far-reaching rather than merely incremental.

Current conditions demonstrate technological disruption's continuing force through developments in artificial intelligence, blockchain, platform technologies, and automation. These technologies create new capabilities and are actively reshaping how value is created and captured, how work is organized, how resources are allocated, and how power is exercised. The convergence of multiple technological innovations appears to be creating conditions for fundamental system transformation, similar to patterns observed in previous era transitions.

Understanding Technological Disruption as a driver suggests that technological change will continue to play a crucial role in shaping economic transitions. However, the analysis also reveals **that technology's impacts are not predetermined but are shaped by how societies choose to develop and deploy new capabilities.** This

understanding becomes particularly important as organizations attempt to navigate current technological transitions and their implications for value creation and business strategy.

Ecological Limits emerged as a fundamental driver through analysis of how environmental constraints, energy requirements, and resource demands have increasingly shaped economic system evolution. While environmental considerations were often externalized in earlier eras, the historical analysis reveals a progressive intensification of ecological constraints that has become impossible to ignore. This pattern suggests that ecological limits are not simply external constraints but active forces shaping how economic systems can operate and evolve (Barnosky, 2014).

The historical analysis shows a shifting relationship between economic systems and ecological limits across eras. The Mercantile era's colonial expansion treated natural resources as infinite, while the Industrial Revolution began to reveal local environmental constraints through urban pollution and resource depletion. The Gilded Age's national markets increased the scale of environmental impact, while the post-war period's mass consumption model created unprecedented resource demands. The Neoliberal era's global supply chains further expanded environmental impacts while attempting to externalize their costs (Foroohar 2016). Now, in the Platform era, we see a complex convergence of ecological constraints operating at multiple levels.

The Platform era presents a paradoxical relationship with ecological limits. While characterized by seemingly intangible digital value creation, it drives intense demand for physical resources and energy. The computational infrastructure underlying digital systems requires massive energy consumption, particularly for AI development and data processing (Luccioni, 2024). Simultaneously, the transition to renewable energy creates additional resource pressures. The era's technologies demand specific minerals and metals - from lithium and cobalt for energy storage to rare earth elements for electronic components and renewable energy systems. These resource demands create new scarcities and tensions, including geopolitical competition for critical minerals, environmental impacts of mining, and supply chain vulnerabilities (Bingoto et al., 2023).

Ecological limits operate as a driver through multiple, interconnected mechanisms. They create physical constraints on economic activity, force internalization of previously externalized costs, drive innovation in response to resource limitations, shape the viability of business models, and influence how value can be created and captured (Sengupta, 2013). The interaction between traditional environmental impacts, energy requirements, and resource demands creates complex challenges that affect technological development pathways, influence institutional adaptation, shape value theory evolution, and impact wealth distribution patterns (Sengupta, 2013). Current conditions demonstrate the increasing force of ecological limits through climate change impacts, energy system transformation challenges, and critical resource constraints (Valkhof, May 22). These environmental issues are actively shaping economic possibilities through their effects on infrastructure, supply chains, resource availability, and system stability. The convergence of multiple ecological constraints appears to be creating conditions for fundamental system transformation, challenging basic assumptions about economic growth and value creation that have persisted across previous eras (Hein et. Al, 2020).

The identification of Ecological Limits as a driver suggests that environmental constraints, energy requirements, and resource demands will play an increasingly crucial role in shaping economic transitions. However, the analysis also reveals that **how these limits affect economic systems depends significantly on how societies choose to recognize and adapt to them**. This understanding becomes particularly important as organizations attempt to

develop sustainable approaches to value creation while navigating intensifying ecological constraints across multiple dimensions.

Wealth Consolidation emerged as a fundamental driver through analysis of how patterns of economic concentration have shaped system evolution across eras. The historical analysis reveals that wealth consolidation is an outcome of economic activity as well as an active force that influences how value is created, captured, and distributed (Piketty, 2014). This pattern of increasing concentration, despite taking different forms across eras, consistently shapes system dynamics and transitions (Gordon, 2017).

The historical progression shows evolving patterns of wealth consolidation across eras. The Mercantile era saw wealth concentrate through state-granted monopolies and colonial trade networks. The Industrial Revolution created new patterns of concentration through factory ownership and production control. The Gilded Age marked an intensification through corporate trusts and financial integration. The post-war period briefly moderated consolidation through regulatory frameworks and labour-capital compromise, but the Neoliberal era saw renewed concentration through financial markets and global operations (Beinhocker, 2019). The Platform era has introduced new forms of consolidation through network effects and digital monopolies, while maintaining previous patterns of financial and corporate concentration (Lazonick, 2019).

The analysis reveals that wealth consolidation operates through multiple mechanisms to shape system evolution. It influences power relations and institutional development, affects how value is measured and distributed, shapes technological development pathways, and influences business model evolution (Mazzucato, 2016). Particularly significant is how **consolidated wealth creates self-reinforcing patterns - accumulated resources enable further accumulation through new technologies, market control, or political influence** (Alvaredo, 2018). This dynamic helps explain why concentration tends to intensify over time unless actively counterbalanced by other forces.

Current conditions demonstrate wealth consolidation's continuing influence through unprecedented levels of inequality, platform monopolies, financial market concentration, and corporate consolidation (Martin, 2020). These distributional issues actively shape economic possibilities through their effects on innovation, competition, institutional legitimacy, and system stability (Beinhocker, 2019). The convergence of multiple forms of concentration - financial, corporate, digital, and technological - appears to be creating conditions for significant system tension (Lykketoft, 2024).

Understanding Wealth Consolidation as a driver suggests its crucial role in shaping future economic transitions. However, the analysis also reveals that concentration patterns aren't inevitable but are shaped by institutional frameworks, technological capabilities, and social responses. This understanding becomes particularly important as societies grapple with questions of economic organization, democratic governance, and system sustainability in an era of increasing concentration.

Institutional Legitimacy and Adaptation emerged as a fundamental driver through analysis of how institutions both shape and are shaped by transitions between economic eras. The historical analysis reveals that while institutional evolution is a response to change it is also an active force in determining how economic systems develop, maintain legitimacy, and transform. This pattern of institutional adaptation and legitimacy-building appears consistently across era transitions, though its nature and challenges have evolved significantly over time.

The historical progression shows how institutions have faced recurring legitimacy challenges while adapting to new economic realities. During the Mercantile era, state-chartered trading companies and guild systems provided legitimacy for economic organization. The Industrial Revolution required new institutional forms to manage factory production and labour relations. The Gilded Age saw the emergence of corporate forms and regulatory institutions to govern national markets. The post-war period developed institutional frameworks for managing the relationship between state, business, and labour. The Neoliberal era created institutions for global market governance while weakening national regulatory frameworks. Now, the Platform era challenges existing institutions' capacity to govern digital networks, manage technological change, and maintain social legitimacy.

The analysis reveals that institutional legitimacy and adaptation operate through multiple mechanisms. Institutions provide frameworks for value creation and measurement, establish rules for economic activity, mediate power relations, and enable or constrain system transformation. **Particularly significant is how institutions must balance stability and change - maintaining enough consistency to provide reliable frameworks while adapting to new economic realities.** This tension helps explain why institutional adaptation often lags behind technological and economic changes, creating periods of misalignment during transitions.

Current conditions demonstrate unprecedented challenges to institutional legitimacy and adaptation. Institutions struggle to govern platform economies, manage ecological transitions, address wealth concentration, and maintain social trust. These challenges raise fundamental questions about institutional forms and legitimacy in an era of rapid change and complex global challenges. The convergence of multiple pressures - technological, ecological, social, and economic - appears to be creating conditions for significant institutional transformation.

Institutional Legitimacy and Adaptation is a crucial driver in shaping how economic systems evolve. However, the analysis also reveals that **institutional development is shaped by social choices, power relations, and system needs**. This understanding becomes particularly important as societies attempt to develop institutional frameworks capable of governing emerging economic forms while maintaining democratic legitimacy and system stability.

Demographic Dynamics refer to the patterns and interactions that arise from changes in population composition, distribution, and priorities. These dynamics are driven by aging populations, migration flows, urbanization patterns, and generational transitions, which collectively influence societal, economic, and institutional systems. They are not isolated trends but ongoing structural forces that shape how societies allocate resources, organize labour markets, respond to healthcare demands, and adapt cultural and institutional norms. Through their interconnected mechanisms, demographic dynamics embed deep and lasting impacts into the functioning and resilience of systems.

At the core of demographic dynamics are mechanisms that drive systemic pressures and opportunities. Aging populations are increasing demands on healthcare systems, pension frameworks, and social safety nets while creating workforce shortages (Scheijgrond, 2024). Migration, shaped by economic opportunity, geopolitical instability, and climate displacement, is reshaping regional demographics, labour markets, and cultural identities (Fema, 2024). Urbanization concentrates populations into cities, amplifying infrastructure demands, housing pressures, and the need for innovative resource management (*UN DESA, 2020*). These mechanisms interact, creating feedback loops that magnify their impacts and shape societal priorities over time.

Generational dynamics are emerging as one of the most significant mechanisms driving demographic change. **Millennials** (1981 – 1996), now occupying leadership roles across industries, continue to embed purpose-driven strategies, digital fluency, and sustainability into organizational cultures (Pallozzi, 2023). **Generation X** (1965 – 80) provides a stabilizing influence, bridging legacy systems with evolving workplace and cultural norms (Michaelides, 2024). **Baby Boomers** (1946 – 64), though transitioning out of the workforce, maintain substantial financial power, influencing investment patterns and resource allocation (Mae, 2023). Emerging generations, **Gen Z** (1997 – 2012) and **Gen Alpha** (2022 – 24), are reshaping expectations around work, cultural values, and institutional accountability. Gen Z is driving shifts in workplace priorities, emphasizing transparency, equity, and flexibility, while Gen Alpha is poised to introduce new norms around technology collaboration, digital identity, and value creation (What is Gen Z, 2024) (Rubin, 2024). **The interaction between these generations creates cascading cultural effects, where younger values subtly influence older cohorts through shared digital spaces and evolving cultural narratives** (McCrindle, 2022,). Understanding these intergenerational dynamics is essential for anticipating cultural change, workforce transformation, and societal adaptation.

The impacts of demographic dynamics are profound, affecting workforce availability, healthcare systems, urban resilience, and cultural cohesion. Workforce shortages driven by aging populations necessitate automation, upskilling initiatives, and flexible labour policies (Soldani, et al., 2022). Healthcare systems face rising costs, increasing demands for eldercare infrastructure, and the integration of precision healthcare technologies (Care Economy, 2024). Urban centers, as focal points of demographic concentration, face mounting pressures for housing, transportation, and sustainable infrastructure solutions (*UN DESA, 2020*). Generational dynamics further influence cultural narratives, workplace cultures, and consumer behaviours, embedding evolving expectations into institutional and organizational frameworks. These impacts are structural transformations that redefine societal resilience, adaptability, and cohesion.

Addressing demographic dynamics requires strategic adaptability, sustainable infrastructure investments, and policy frameworks capable of accommodating long-term demographic trends. Societies and institutions must actively engage with these dynamics, building pathways for inclusive labour policies, resilient healthcare systems, and innovative urban infrastructure. Demographic Dynamics are about the structural evolution of societies, economies, and institutions, shaping the foundations of long-term sustainability and systemic resilience.

Social and Political Polarization refers to deepening divisions within societies, characterized by ideological, economic, and cultural fractures that disrupt shared narratives, erode trust in institutions, and fragment collective decision-making processes (Sensemaking, 2023)). Far from being a transient societal trend, polarization influences how systems behave, adapt, and respond to change. It undermines societal cohesion, destabilizes governance structures, and introduces systemic rigidity, making it a persistent and adaptive driver of change within a complex system.

Polarization is driven by a set of interconnected and self-reinforcing mechanisms. Ideological divides create entrenched conflicts around policy, governance, and cultural identity, while fragmented media ecosystems amplify echo chambers, misinformation, and narrative bias (Rostbøll, 2024). Economic inequality fuels resentment and obstructs redistributive policies, further deepening societal divides (Gu, 2022). Cultural tensions rooted in race, gender, and religion become politicized battlegrounds, and geopolitical pressures—such as migration crises and resource competition—add external stressors that exacerbate internal divisions (Fema, 2023). These mechanisms interact across domains, creating feedback loops that intensify polarization's structural effects.

At a systemic level, polarization disrupts how governance systems operate, how economic priorities are set, and how social trust is maintained. Institutional trust deteriorates as decision-making becomes reactive and gridlocked, weakening the resilience of governance systems (Rostbøll, 2024). Economic structures fragment along ideological lines, leading to uneven regulatory environments and stalled policy reforms (Human Development, 2024). Technology systems become amplifiers of division, with social media algorithms and digital platforms reinforcing biases, distorting public perception, and eroding trust in digital systems (Edelman, 2023). Social systems experience cultural fragmentation, declining community cohesion, and the retreat of marginalized groups into parallel support structures (Human Development, 2024). These impacts are interwoven into the structure of societal interaction, creating barriers to resilience, adaptability, and collaborative innovation.

While Demographic Shifts focus on who is in the system and Institutional Legitimacy and Adaptation focus on how authority functions within the system, Social and Political Polarization focuses on whether systems can function collectively at all. It disrupts shared spaces of collaboration, distorts institutional priorities, and obstructs pathways to systemic resilience. Polarization is an embedded condition that amplifies the effects of other systemic drivers, distorting responses to ecological, technological, and demographic challenges. It shapes the foundations of trust, consensus, and shared purpose across systems, making it a defining force in how societies and institutions respond to future challenges.

The following list of drivers summarizes the assumptions of the drivers' current behaviours. These assumptions will inform the baseline scenario and serve as a reference point for exploring how altering the assumptions about these behaviours creates ripple effects through the system during scenario construction.

Assumptions About Drivers' Behaviours

- **Value Theory Transformation:** Data remains the dominant source of value. Emerging forms such as environmental metrics and biodigital insights grow in importance but are tied to data ecosystems controlled by monopolistic actors, limiting access in underserved regions.
- **Technological Disruption:** Monopolistic corporations control advanced technologies like AI and biodigital personalized healthcare systems, extracting value from data to deepen inequities in access and benefits.
- **Ecological Limits:** Resource scarcity and climate crises shape economic possibilities. Wealthy regions leverage data-driven sustainability solutions, while poorer regions struggle to adapt.
- **Wealth Consolidation:** Economic power continues to concentrate among corporations, creating "resource hierarchies" where access to data-driven systems becomes a privilege of affluence.
- **Institutional Legitimacy:** Governments struggle to regulate emerging technologies and data ecosystems, ceding influence to private actors. Participatory governance experiments remain localized exceptions.
- **Social and Political Polarization:** Ideological and economic divides deepen, creating tensions between thriving urban hubs and stagnating rural regions.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Aging populations drive demand for innovations in eldercare and healthcare, while climate migration reshapes urban economies, straining infrastructure and fostering cultural renewal.

Constructing Scenarios

Scenarios, or narratives of the future, are outputs of foresight techniques. Scenarios are not predictions of the future; they are tools for reflection and strategic exploration, designed to help individuals and organizations think differently about the future. As Maree Conway explains, the value of scenarios lies not in their accuracy but in their ability to trigger new thinking, challenge assumptions, and reveal blind spots (Conway, 2017). Scenarios create a reflective space to explore the implications of shifting assumptions and consider a broader range of strategic options. Scenarios allow researchers and decision-makers to navigate uncertainty by exploring the intersections between evidence and imagination by framing critical questions: What if drivers shift direction? What systemic impacts might follow? How do our choices today influence these pathways? (Conway, 2017). These reflective exercises highlight the agency of human choice, reminding us that the future is not predetermined but actively shaped by present decisions and actions.

Voros emphasizes that, “The creation of scenarios should come at the end of a careful and detailed process of wide information gathering, careful analysis, and critical interpretation” (Voros, 2017). The process of scenario construction in this research began with horizon scanning, identifying emerging signals and trends across social, technological, economic, environmental, political, and values-driven (STEEP+V) domains. This scanning surfaced signals of change and emerging dynamics that could significantly influence the future evolution of value. Building on these insights, a historical analysis of economic eras was conducted. Using Sharpe’s Three Horizons Framework the analysis examined transitions between dominant (Horizon 1), emergent (Horizon 3), and transitional (Horizon 2) patterns of value creation from the Mercantilism Era to the current Data Platform era. This process revealed recurring dynamics in how economic value is defined, measured, and distributed, and highlighted systemic forces driving these transformations. From the intersection of horizon scanning and historical analysis, drivers of change were identified as the most influential forces shaping the future evolution of value.

These drivers served as core building blocks for constructing scenarios, offering a foundation for exploring how shifts in their directionality might produce divergent pathways. Using the Cone of Plausibility, scenarios were constructed to reflect a range of plausible futures. **The Cone of Plausibility** is a foresight technique designed to explore a spectrum of possible futures by examining how shifts in the directionality of drivers and their underlying assumptions might create divergent pathways (Rhyddarch, 2009). Initially conceptualized by Charles Taylor (1990) and later refined by Hancock and Bezold (1994), the Cone was further adapted and popularized by Joseph Voros for use in strategic foresight analysis (Voros, 2003). The Cone of Plausibility supports exploration across a spectrum of potential futures from those considered probable and plausible to those deemed preposterous or wildly imaginative. Its structured approach balances systematic analysis with imaginative exploration, enabling scenarios that are both logically consistent and creatively open-ended.

The year 2035, was selected because a 10-year time horizon strikes a balance between long-term strategic foresight and practical relevance for decision-making. Traditional strategic development planning cycles often focus on shorter timeframes, such as 3–5 years, which can constrain the ability to identify and respond to deep systemic shifts. A 10-year horizon offers sufficient space for transformative changes to emerge, while remaining connected to current trends and drivers (Conway, 2017). This timeframe is also relevant given the accelerating pace of change in domains in focus such as artificial intelligence, climate change, and global economic fragility. These forces are evolving rapidly and are also highly interconnected, with the potential to create impacts across social, economic, and environmental systems. A 10-year horizon allows for the exploration of both short-term

disruptions and mid-term transformations, capturing the momentum of fast-moving factors while still providing space for reflective, strategic responses.

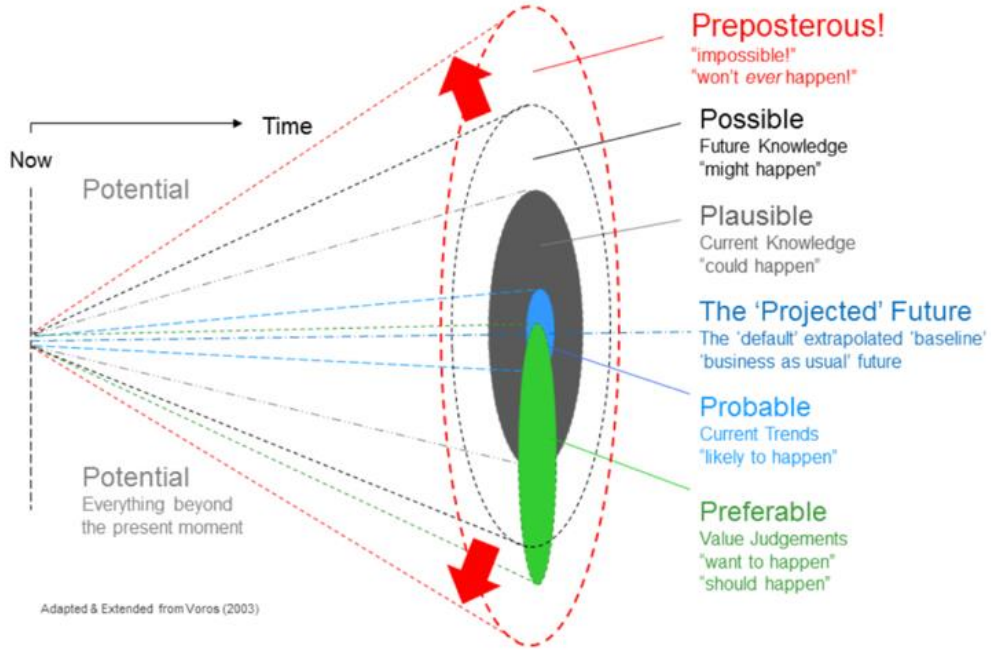

Figure 11: The Cone of Plausibility illustrates the range of potential futures, categorized as Preposterous, Possible, Plausible, Projected, Probable, and Preferable. Each category representing different levels of likelihood or desirability based on current knowledge, trends, and value judgments.

The Cone of Plausibility technique was selected for this research because of its focus on exploring how changes in the directionality of key drivers generate distinct pathways and outcomes, its suitability for working with a limited set of drivers, and the 10-year time horizon (Rhyddarch, 2009).

Employing the Cone of Plausibility technique, four scenarios have been created:

- **Baseline Scenario – "Business as Usual"**: This scenario represents a continuation of current trends and assumptions about driver behaviour, projecting how the future might unfold if drivers maintain their existing directionality and behaviour. It serves as a reference point, providing a foundation against which alternative futures can be compared.

- **Alternative Exploratory Scenarios:**
    - **"The Wellness Market":** This scenario explores the question "what 'could' happen if we enter a new economic era?" It differs from the baseline scenario in that the directionality of the Value Theory Transformation driver has shifted from the assumption that data remains the dominant source of value and explores what might happen if a new economic source of value emerged. While the remaining drivers retain their baseline directionality, their appearance and interactions are adjusted to reflect ecosystemic ripple effects as a result of the shifted driver and to ensure coherence within the revised conditions.

- **"The Green Divide":** This scenario explores the question "what 'could' happen if the risk of climate breakdown was mitigated but all other drivers maintain their current directionality?" It differs from the baseline scenario in that the directionality of the Ecological Limits driver challenges the assumption that the climate crises shape economic possibilities and explores how green technologies mitigate ecological constraints. As in "The Wellness Market", the remaining drivers also retain their baseline directionality, but how they appear and interact is adjusted to reflect the ripple effects of the shifted driver and ensure coherence within the revised conditions.

- **Alternative, Preferred Scenario – "Canadian Mission Economy"**: It is important to note that preferred scenarios are not predictions; they are aspirational narratives designed to highlight strategic opportunities and inspire action toward a purposeful outcome. This scenario explores the question "what 'ought' to happen to create the most promising conditions of success for businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose. This scenario represents a desirable future, shaped by shifting the directionality and assumptions of two drivers to envision a transformative pathway:
  - First, the assumed behaviour of the Institutional Legitimacy driver has shifted from the Governments struggling to regulate emerging technologies and data ecosystems, ceding influence to private actors, to investigating how democratic institutions might regain legitimacy through mission-driven governance.
  - Second, the assumed behaviour of the Wealth Consolidation driver has shifted from the assumption that economic power concentrates among corporations to demonstrate how monopolistic power may be weakened by institutional reforms redistributing power and labour movements.

Overview of Constructed Scenarios

A high-level overview of the four constructed scenarios is below, followed by comparison tables detailing the differentiators, stakeholder implications, and driver directionality and assumptions of each. Descriptions in full, including a summary, narrative, timeline, and implications, are included in the final section of Part 2 in the report.

Baseline Scenario – "Business as Usual"

In 2035, the Data Platform Era remains dominant, with data serving as the foundational source of value, driving innovation in renewable energy, biodigital healthcare, and environmental metrics. Corporate monopolies have consolidated control over data ecosystems and critical technologies, shaping markets and decision-making processes to prioritize profitability over equity. Governments, weakened by fragmented regulatory capacity and dependency on corporate platforms, have struggled to provide equitable oversight and public services. As a result, affluent urban hubs now thrive through exclusive access to advanced technological and ecological systems, while underserved regions face stagnation and exclusion, lacking the infrastructure and institutional support needed to benefit from data-driven innovations.

Alternative Exploratory Scenario 1 – "The Wellness Market"

In 2035, emotional engagement and well-being have emerged as dominant sources of economic value, reshaping markets and societal priorities. Emotional engagement became quantifiable and tradeable through emotional credit systems, exchangeable for services, education, or career advancement. Well-being indices now track physical, mental, and ecological health, driving hyper-personalized ecosystems enabled by AI-powered biodigital tools. However, access to these systems remains highly stratified—monopolistic corporations control the infrastructure and data ecosystems required for advanced emotional and well-being services. The resource-intensive nature of these systems has exacerbated ecological pressures, intensifying the divide between affluent regions and underserved populations.

Alternative Exploratory Scenario 2 – "The Green Divide"

In 2035, advancements in green technologies and ecosystems have now mitigated environmental pressures but are controlled by monopolistic corporations. In wealthy urban hubs, Luxury Eco-Cities have emerged as showcases of environmental resilience, powered by exclusive data-driven green systems. In contrast, underserved regions remain tethered to outdated infrastructure and face escalating climate risks and systemic exclusion. Governments, constrained by fragmented regulatory capacity and dependency on corporate platforms, have failed to ensure equitable distribution of green innovations. Grassroots movements and youth-led initiatives offer alternative models through decentralized solutions, but so far, they have struggled to scale against corporate dominance and systemic barriers. As sustainability becomes a luxury commodity, the divide between ecological privilege and systemic vulnerability is deepening, reinforcing global inequities.

Alternative (Preferred) Scenario – "Canadian Mission Economy"

In 2035, Canada is actively transforming its economic and social systems through mission-driven governance, prioritizing public well-being, equity, and ecological resilience as core measures of progress. Systemic crises in the 2020s—climate disasters, labour unrest, and supply chain failures—acted as catalysts, prompting governments to collaborate with businesses, unions, and citizens to align markets with societal goals. Public-private investment funds, participatory governance platforms, and restructured supply chains became key mechanisms for collaboration, driving innovation while embedding equity into market systems. Businesses, previously driven solely by profit metrics, are incentivized, and regulated to align their strategies with stakeholder-driven priorities, balancing market efficiency with social outcomes. Labour movements and grassroots coalitions now act as corrective forces, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized voices and equitable power redistribution. While resistance from entrenched monopolistic interests and regional disparities continues to persist, Canada's proactive approach is demonstrating momentum toward embedding systemic resilience, institutional legitimacy, and shared prosperity into its economic foundation.

Drivers Across Scenarios

The following table compares the behaviour of each driver across the scenarios, highlighting systemic interactions and ripple effects. ***A&D** indicate drivers whose assumptions and directionality have been altered and ***CiE** represent drivers that retain their original assumptions but exhibit changes in expression in response to the behaviours of other drivers.

Table 2: Driver behaviours across scenarios.

Driver	Business as Usual	The Wellness Market	The Green Divide	Canadian Mission Economy
Value Theory Transformation	Data remains the dominant source of value; new forms evolve slowly and unevenly.	New sources of value emerge, become quantifiable, tradeable resources, creating a new Economic Era, ***A&D**	Data remains the dominant source of value, with green systems leveraging data for optimization and profitability, ***CiE**	Data remains the dominant source of value but is redirected to support societal priorities like equity and sustainability. ***CiE**
Technological Disruption	Advanced AI and automation drive innovation but remain concentrated in monopolistic corporations.	Advanced AI and biodigital systems enable emotional credit markets and curated well-being ecosystems that monopolistic corporations control	Advanced AI, green technologies and ecosystems mitigate risk of climate breakdown but remain controlled by monopolistic corporations.	Advanced AI and technological platforms enable participatory governance. ***CiE**
Ecological Limits	Affluent regions build ecological resilience, while underserved areas face worsening climate risks.	Sustainability becomes commodified and aligned with new value systems in wealthy regions. ***CiE**	Advanced green technology infrastructure mitigates climate risks for wealthy regions but worsens global inequities. ***A&D**	Climate reforms strengthen resilience and equity, contributing to increased systemic stability. ***CiE**
Wealth Consolidation	Corporations consolidate wealth and power, deepening inequities and dominating markets.	Corporations entrench their power by controlling new value ecosystems.	Monopolies dominate green technologies, deepening resource divides and systemic inequities.	Strengthened governments enact wealth redistribution policies and reduce monopolistic control

Driver	Business as Usual	The Wellness Market	The Green Divide	Canadian Mission Economy
				through mission-driven economic platforms. ***A&D**
Institutional Legitimacy	Governments struggle to regulate corporations, relying on private actors for innovation, which weakens public trust.	Governments remain fragmented, enabling corporations to dominate new value systems.	Governments align with monopolies to stabilize green technologies but weaken equity. ***CiE**	Democratic institutions lead systemic reforms, rebuilding trust and equity. ***A&D**
Social Polarization	Divides deepen as affluent markets thrive and underserved regions stagnate.	Hyper-personalized systems widen societal divides between those with access and those without.	Generational and regional divides deepen as wealthier regions privatize green systems.	Participatory government platforms build widespread support and reduce polarization. ***CiE**
Demographic Shifts	Aging populations drive demand for eldercare and while migration reshapes labour markets.	Generational divides grow as younger cohorts prioritize equity and emotional well-being. ***CiE**	Youth-led grassroots movements create local solutions but struggle to access resources and scale. ***CiE**	Cross-generational advocacy strengthens collaboration and builds stability. ***CiE**

Differentiating Factors Within Each Scenario

Table 3: A comparison of the differentiating factors within each scenario, highlighting the key elements that distinguish one future pathway from another

Scenario	Differentiating Factors
Business as Usual	Data ecosystems remain monopolized by corporate actors and entrenching systemic inequities by controlling critical technologies and decision-making systems.

Scenario	Differentiating Factors
	Affluent regions enjoy environmental resilience through exclusive access to technological, ecological, and AI-driven infrastructure due to corporate prioritization of high-profit markets, while underserved regions lack access to these resources, deepening systemic vulnerabilities. Public governance, fragmented and reactive, weakened by dependency on corporate systems and fragmented regulatory capacity, struggles to provide oversight and equitable public services Corporate actors exploit this opportunity and assume critical decision-making roles.
The Wellness Market	Emotional engagement and well-being are dominant sources of economic value, driven by the commodification of relational skills, mental health, and physical well-being into measurable and tradeable assets. These new value systems emerge as affluent markets demand hyper-personalized experiences and emotional optimization technologies. Agentic AI and biodigital systems enable advanced emotional coaching and well-being tools, creating hyper-personalized ecosystems. However, monopolistic corporations maintain control over these systems, limiting access to affluent populations and excluding underserved regions. Well-being indices are integrated into urban governance experiments, shaping housing, healthcare, and public service policies in localized initiatives. However, these efforts remain fragmented and underfunded, preventing meaningful scale and equitable impact. Resource-intensive biodigital and AI systems worsen ecological pressures, as sustainability remains secondary to profit optimization.
The Green Divide	Green technologies successfully mitigate environmental pressures but are commodified as premium services. These advancements prioritize affluent markets, where profit margins are highest, leaving underserved regions excluded. Luxury Eco-Cities emerge as hubs of environmental resilience, showcasing privatized and AI-optimized green infrastructures. Governments align with monopolistic corporations to secure access to advanced green systems but lack the capacity to enforce equitable distribution. Dependency on corporate actors undermines institutional oversight and perpetuates systemic inequities.

Scenario	Differentiating Factors
	Grassroots movements and youth-led initiatives advocate for decentralized ecological solutions but remain limited in scale and scope. Structural barriers, lack of funding, and corporate dominance constrain their ability to drive meaningful systemic change.
Canadian Mission Economy	Governments and businesses co-design market-shaping policies, aligning economic incentives with societal priorities such as equity, ecological resilience, and public well-being. Collaborative frameworks ensure that private-sector innovation serves public goals. Participatory governance platforms empower diverse stakeholders, including citizens, labour movements, and businesses, to collaboratively design policies and drive localized initiatives. Businesses operate within stakeholder-driven accountability systems, where government-set metrics guide incentives and regulatory frameworks, creating a balance between profitability, equity, and ecological responsibility. Despite significant progress, entrenched monopolistic interests resist systemic transformation, creating ongoing barriers to equitable outcomes and slowing the pace of reform. These tensions highlight the fragility of progress and the need for sustained collaborative effort.

Stakeholder Implications For Each Scenario

Table 4: A comparison of stakeholder implications across each scenario.

Scenario	Implications for Stakeholders
Business as Usual	**Corporate Leaders:** • Gain: Control over data ecosystems and emerging technologies enables hyper-personalized services, market dominance, and influence over public systems. • Risk: Growing public backlash, regulatory scrutiny, and systemic vulnerabilities from over-reliance on exclusionary practices. **Governments Struggle With**: Fragmented regulatory capacity and dependency on corporate systems erode public trust and institutional legitimacy.

	Grassroots Communities and Underserved Regions Face: Limited access to critical infrastructure, institutional support, and advanced analytics constrains their ability to scale local solutions.
The Wellness Market	**Platform Owners and Monopolistic Corporations:** • Gain: Dominance over emotional credit markets, biodigital tools, and well-being indices ensures control over emerging value ecosystems and sustained profitability through tiered access models. • Risk: Over-reliance on premium markets risks market saturation, while resource-intensive systems drive ecological strain and societal backlash against emotional commodification. **For Governments and Localized Governance Actors Struggle With**: Fragmented capacity, limited regulatory oversight, and reliance on corporate systems prevent governments from ensuring equitable access to emotional and well-being ecosystems. Weak regulatory structures and fragmented governance models erode public trust and institutional legitimacy, leaving governments reactive rather than proactive in managing emerging value systems. **Grassroots Communities and Underserved Populations Face:** Exclusion from emotional credit markets and well-being ecosystems due to infrastructural gaps, technological barriers, and systemic neglect.
The Green Divide	**Monopolistic Corporations, Platform Owners, and Affluent Consumers:** • Gain: Control over premium ecological technologies and exclusive access to green infrastructures ensures continued dominance and sustained profitability. Affluent consumers benefit from shielded, AI-managed environments and stable ecosystems. • Risk: Market saturation limits growth potential, and widening inequities fuel societal unrest, threatening system stability. **Governments and Local Governance Initiatives Struggle With**: Alignment with monopolistic actors undermines institutional legitimacy and limits governments' ability to enforce redistributive policies or reduce dependency on global green supply chains. **Grassroots Organizations, Labour Movements, and Underserved Populations Face:** Exclusion from privatized green technologies leaves underserved communities vulnerable to escalating climate crises and infrastructural neglect.
Canadian Mission Economy	**Governments, Labour Movements, and Participatory Platforms:** • **Gain:** Restored public trust, increased transparency, and a balanced approach to market efficiency and societal well-being.

	• **Risk:** Resistance from entrenched monopolistic interests, ecological constraints limiting scalability, and vulnerabilities to global market dependencies. **For Businesses and Local Governance Initiatives Struggle With:** Adapting to mission-aligned practices requires substantial investment, retraining, and compliance with evolving stakeholder-driven metrics. **Grassroots Organizations and Underserved Populations Face:** Limited access to funding, technology, and policymaking influence constrains their ability to scale localized solutions. Systemic disparities and dependency on institutional and corporate actors for legitimacy and support perpetuate exclusion from mission-driven opportunities.

“Business as Usual” (Baseline Scenario)

Scenario Summary: In 2035, the Data Platform Era remains dominant, with data serving as the foundational source of value, driving innovation in renewable energy, biodigital healthcare, and environmental metrics. Corporate monopolies have consolidated control over data ecosystems and critical technologies, shaping markets and decision-making processes to prioritize profitability over equity. Governments, weakened by fragmented regulatory capacity and dependency on corporate platforms, have struggled to provide equitable oversight and public services. As a result, affluent urban hubs now thrive through exclusive access to advanced technological and ecological systems, while underserved regions face stagnation and exclusion, lacking the infrastructure and institutional support needed to benefit from data-driven innovations.

Baseline Scenario Assumptions About Drivers’ Behaviours

- **Value Theory Transformation**: Data remains the dominant source of value. Emerging forms such as environmental metrics and biodigital insights grow in importance but are tied to data ecosystems controlled by monopolistic actors, limiting access in underserved regions.
- **Technological Disruption:** Monopolistic corporations control advanced technologies like AI and biodigital personalized healthcare systems, extracting value from data to deepen inequities in access and benefits.
- **Ecological Limits:** Resource scarcity and climate crises shape economic possibilities. Wealthy regions leverage data-driven sustainability solutions, while poorer regions struggle to adapt.
- **Wealth Consolidation:** Economic power continues to concentrate among corporations, creating "resource hierarchies" where access to data-driven systems becomes a privilege of affluence.
- **Institutional Legitimacy:** Governments struggle to regulate emerging technologies and data ecosystems, ceding influence to private actors. Participatory governance experiments remain localized exceptions.
- **Social and Political Polarization:** Ideological and economic divides deepen, creating tensions between thriving urban hubs and stagnating rural regions.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Aging populations drive demand for innovations in eldercare and healthcare, while climate migration reshapes urban economies, straining infrastructure and fostering cultural renewal.

“Business as Usual” Narrative

By the late 2020s, the Data Platform Era had firmly established itself as the dominant paradigm, with data continuously extracted, monetized, and analyzed as the foundational source of value across economic and societal systems. The integration of AI-driven infrastructure and advanced analytics reshaped sectors such as renewable energy, biodigital healthcare, and environmental metrics. During this period, beginning in the late 2020s and intensifying into the early 2030s, governments increasingly relied on corporate platforms to manage critical systems, while monopolistic tech conglomerates solidified their dominance over essential services. The divide between affluent urban hubs with access to ecological and technological resilience and those without deepened, setting the stage for systemic inequities to become entrenched. In 2035, this fragmented world persists, marked by the coexistence of innovation and exclusion, where systemic inequities remain deeply rooted.

In the early 2030s, significant advancements in AI-driven energy optimization systems and modular energy technologies enabled affluent regions to make measurable progress toward renewable energy independence. These advancements improved ecological resilience and stabilized energy grids in areas with sufficient infrastructure and investment. Meanwhile, grassroots renewable energy initiatives began to emerge in underserved regions, demonstrating the potential for localized, community-driven solutions. However, these initiatives faced significant challenges, including limited institutional support, insufficient access to advanced analytics, and systemic financial barriers. By 2035, advanced energy systems continue to drive localized resilience in wealthier regions, while underserved areas remain locked into aging infrastructure and ongoing vulnerabilities.

Throughout the late 2020s and early 2030s, monopolistic corporations consolidated their influence across critical sectors, including healthcare, renewable energy, and synthetic fuel production. These corporations built extensive datasets from ecological, behavioural, and biodigital sources, driving hyper-personalized solutions and predictive resource management systems. While these innovations created transformative benefits in affluent areas—such as personalized healthcare treatments and predictive disaster resilience tools—access remained concentrated among economically privileged groups. By 2035, these innovations continue to reinforce systemic inequities, as marginalized regions and communities remain excluded from systems that could have significantly reduced their risks and vulnerabilities.

Public institutions experienced growing fragility throughout the late 2020’s and early 2030s as they struggled to regulate rapidly advancing technologies and maintain oversight of critical societal systems. In response to escalating crises, governments increasingly turned to corporate platforms to manage essential services, ceding regulatory power in exchange for operational efficiency. At the same time, participatory governance experiments emerged as pilot projects, leveraging digital tools to enable localized decision-making and foster citizen engagement. While these experiments demonstrated promise in improving trust and transparency, they remained fragmented and failed to counterbalance the dominance of private actors in shaping societal development.

During the early 2030s, grassroots movements advocating for equity and sustainability gained momentum in response to systemic inequities and climate-driven disruptions. **Community-led renewable energy cooperatives** and localized sustainability initiatives began to demonstrate the potential for resilient, decentralized solutions. However, these initiatives faced significant barriers, including limited institutional backing, resource constraints, and dependence on volunteer-driven efforts. Despite their promise, without the data-driven systems of corporate platforms these movements struggled to scale beyond local contexts. In 2035, these grassroots efforts continue to demonstrate resilience and innovation, but their broader impact remains constrained by structural barriers and systemic inequalities.

Demographic and societal shifts that accelerated during the 2020s have shaped the economic and cultural fabric of mid 2030’s. Aging populations in developed regions drive demand for biodigital healthcare innovations, creating lucrative markets for data-driven healthcare platforms. At the same time, rising rates of climate migration reshaped urban economies, introducing cultural diversity and revitalizing labour markets in receiving regions. However, resource constraints limited the integration of these populations into advanced technological systems and resilient urban infrastructures. By 2035, these demographic patterns continue to create both opportunities for renewal and persistent pressures on infrastructure, equity, and social cohesion.

By the early 2030s, the integration of AI-driven systems across healthcare, disaster resilience, and energy sectors delivered localized benefits to regions with sufficient infrastructure and financial capacity. These advancements

also widened the gap between privileged and marginalized populations. In 2035, data continues to underpin every facet of economic and societal organization, serving as both a driver of innovation and a mechanism for exclusion. While affluent hubs thrive under ecological and technological stability, underserved regions remain vulnerable to escalating systemic risks and entrenched inequalities. This fragmented landscape reflects the consequences of decisions made throughout the past decade and highlights the ongoing challenges of balancing innovation, equity, and resilience.

“Business as Usual” Timeline (2025-2035)

2025 *"Tech Titans Deepen Control Over Renewable Energy and Healthcare Systems Across North America,"*– Wired Magazine

2026 *Severe climate disasters, including wildfires and floods, overwhelm emergency response systems in North America*

2027: *AI-driven energy optimization pilots are launched in affluent urban centers across Canada and the United States.*

2028: *"Miami Becomes a Testbed for AI-Driven Disaster Resilience Systems,"*– Washington Post

2030: *“AI Grid Revolution: Smart Renewable Energy Systems Achieve Energy Independence in Urban Hubs,”* – Google News

2031: *California implements a state-wide AI disaster resilience network.*

2032: *"Healthcare or Data Harvesting? Amazon’s BioQuantis Faces Scrutiny Over Biodigital Healthcare Platforms," – The Atlantic*

2035*: Community-driven renewable energy cooperatives in Ontario successfully provide sustainable energy access.*

"Business as Usual” Audio Artifact of the Future

Link to “Business as Usual” Audio Artifact of the Future[1]

Earnings Call, Boardroom Tensions in 2035: This audio scene captures a key moment in the “*Business as Usual*” scenario: the opening of an earnings call in 2035. It dramatizes the tensions faced by a CEO navigating record-breaking profits alongside growing criticism of inequitable access to data-driven technologies. As you listen, consider how the systemic forces of monopolization, wealth consolidation, and social polarization shape the decisions and challenges described in this future. Please see Appendix D for the Audio script. Please note the URL if required, is available in the footnote below.

[1] Link to “Business as Usual” Audio Artifact of the Future: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LOFOOqXz4g3eNUYt5pY53Tb8bpDWwZu1/view?usp=sharing

Implications of the Baseline Scenario, “Business as Usual”

In this scenario, power is concentrated among corporate executives, shareholders, and affluent regions, while governments and grassroots actors hold fragmented or limited influence. This reinforces inequities in a 'success to the successful' system archetype: those with power benefit from innovation and localized resilience, while those without power face escalating exclusion and systemic risks. However, as seen in a 'limits to growth' system archetype, this concentration of power creates systemic risks: monopolistic control leads to diminishing returns as exclusionary practices limit market expansion, strain ecological resources, and heighten the risk of societal backlash.

Monopolistic corporate leaders and shareholders hold the most power. These actors control the data ecosystems, AI-driven tools, and renewable technologies that underpin critical systems like healthcare, sustainability, and energy. Their power stems from deregulation and the ability to extract and monetize data, granting them dominance over economic and societal systems.

How They Benefit:

- Access to data allows corporations to develop hyper-personalized services for affluent markets (e.g., AI-driven healthcare and disaster resilience platforms).
- They consolidate economic power by shaping sustainability markets (e.g., carbon credit trading) and monopolizing infrastructure solutions (e.g., modular energy grids).
- Their dominance enables them to fill governance voids, extending influence over societal development.

How They Are at Risk:

- Reputational Risks due to exclusionary practices and profit-driven priorities amplify societal and regulatory backlash.
- Regulatory Vulnerability due to governments or grassroots movements that challenge monopolistic power through calls for anti-trust regulation or demands for equitable access.
- Over-concentration of power creates dependency risks; disruptions (e.g., climate crises or political unrest) could destabilize systems.

Governments are reactive actors. Public institutions lack the regulatory capacity to govern monopolistic corporations effectively. Fragmented policies and resource scarcity weaken their ability to act advocate for equitable development.

How They Are at Risk:

- Loss of Legitimacy due to reliance on corporate governance erodes public trust and government credibility.
- Governments relying on corporate systems for energy, healthcare, or climate resilience risk ceding long-term control over public goods.
- Governments in underserved regions face barriers to participation, further marginalizing their influence.

Opportunities to Reclaim Power:

- Collaborative governance experiments and regulatory innovations to redistribute data access through public data trusts could help rebuild institutional influence.

Excluded low power actors in society: Grassroots Communities (e.g., small-scale renewable energy cooperatives, marginalized workers) lack access to critical infrastructure, advanced analytics, and institutional support, limiting their ability to influence systemic outcomes. **Underserved Regions and Climate Migrants** face exclusion from data-driven systems due to economic barriers, resource constraints, and systemic neglect.

How They Are at Risk:

- Without access to advanced solutions, underserved regions face heightened exposure to climate risks, energy poverty, and healthcare inequities.
- Structural exclusion prevents grassroots movements from scaling localized solutions, despite their potential to address systemic inequities.
- Disparities between thriving urban hubs and stagnating rural regions heighten societal divides and prevent collective action.

Pathways to Strengthen Agency:

- Form coalitions and mutual aid networks to pool resources, share knowledge, and develop localized solutions (e.g., small-scale renewable energy cooperatives or community healthcare initiatives).

“The Wellness Market” (Scenario 1)

Scenario Summary: In 2035, emotional engagement and well-being have emerged as dominant sources of economic value, reshaping markets and societal priorities. Emotional engagement became quantifiable and tradeable through emotional credit systems, exchangeable for services, education, or career advancement. Well-being indices now track physical, mental, and ecological health, driving hyper-personalized ecosystems enabled by AI-powered biodigital tools. However, access to these systems remains highly stratified—monopolistic corporations control the infrastructure and data ecosystems required for advanced emotional and well-being services. The resource-intensive nature of these systems has exacerbated ecological pressures, intensifying the divide between affluent regions and underserved populations.

The Wellness Market: Assumptions About Drivers' Behaviours

- **Value Theory Transformation:** Emotional engagement and well-being emerge as dominant economic sources of value in affluent markets. These new forms of value coexist with traditional ones in underserved areas, where access to emerging systems remains limited.
- **Technological Disruption:** Agentic AI, biodigital systems, and hyper-personalized platforms enable the measurement and commodification of emotional engagement and well-being. These technologies remain concentrated in monopolistic corporations, deepening inequities in access and value creation.
- **Ecological Limits:** Sustainability metrics are incorporated into well-being indices and emerging value systems. However, resource demands for biodigital systems and hyper-personalized technologies intensify ecological pressures, creating tensions between innovation and environmental stability.
- **Wealth Consolidation:** Monopolistic corporations maintain dominance by leveraging behavioural and biometric data to control emotional engagement and well-being ecosystems. This consolidation further stratifies access, creating novel hierarchies of value.
- **Institutional Legitimacy:** Governments struggle to regulate emerging value systems like emotional credit markets and well-being indices, leaving systemic inequities unaddressed. Localized governance experiments and grassroots initiatives attempt to counterbalance corporate dominance but lack scalability.
- **Social and Political Polarization**: Societal divides deepen as affluent populations benefit from emotional engagement and well-being ecosystems, while underserved populations remain tethered to outdated systems. Emotional credit platforms amplify stratification by privileging high-value relational behaviours over basic needs.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Aging populations drive demand for AI-enhanced well-being tools, including longevity services and mental health programs. Younger generations prioritize emotional engagement and relational autonomy, reshaping value systems through demand for empathy-driven ecosystems.

“The Wellness Market” Narrative

In the late 2020s, emotional engagement and well-being began to emerge as measurable and tradeable economic resources, building on the data-centric systems established during the Data Platform Era. In 2027 a handful of dominant corporations, already leading in agentic AI services and data-driven technologies, expanded their influence by launching emotional credit platforms and well-being indices to affluent customer segments. These systems quantified relational value, rewarding connection, caregiving, mentoring, and workplace collaboration with emotional credits that could be exchanged for career opportunities, education vouchers, or lifestyle upgrades. By 2030, these emotional metrics had become deeply embedded in corporate strategies, influencing hiring decisions, team dynamics, and consumer segmentation. Platforms such as BioSync gained prominence, offering curated well-being ecosystems powered by advanced biodigital tools and AI analytics. These systems incentivized physical and mental wellness behaviors through well-being credits, which could be redeemed for preventative healthcare, longevity services, or even tax incentives.

Affluent users gained comprehensive tools to optimize their emotional, relational, physical, mental health, and productivity capital, further consolidating their access to opportunities and advantages. To expand the user base tiered access models were introduced. Underserved populations accessed basic well-being services through extractive systems, contributing emotional and relational data—through caregiving, workplace interactions, or community engagement—in exchange for benefits or services. This data was monetized to enhance premium offerings. This dynamic commodified emotional engagement as a resource to be harvested and embedded exploitative practices into the fabric of the new economic era. Elite users enjoyed hyper-personalized ecosystems, while underserved communities remained tethered to fragmented systems, exacerbating health and opportunity inequalities.

In 2032, Vancouver, Copenhagen, Auckland, and Dubai piloted programs integrating localized governance systems with well-being metrics, reshaping public policy frameworks. These urban centers adopted collective health indices alongside traditional economic measures, incentivizing residents to engage in volunteer activities, community fitness programs, sustainable consumption, and stress reduction initiatives. Residents could earn well-being tokens, redeemable for childcare services, public transportation, or tax benefits. These programs demonstrated the potential for democratizing access to emotional and well-being systems. In 2035, these urban initiatives are gradually expanding into developed affluent communities with developed platform infrastructure while underserved areas remain unable to participate in these transformative efforts.

In 2032 grassroots movements and community-led initiatives began to push back against corporate control. Open-source emotional equity platforms emerged, offering low-cost AI tools for relational coaching and emotional resilience training. While these efforts highlighted the potential for decentralized solutions, they faced significant challenges, including limited access to advanced biodigital technologies, scarce funding, and corporate interference. By 2035, grassroots initiatives persist as localized efforts to democratize access to well-being tools, but their scalability remains constrained by systemic barriers.

Generational dynamics also shaped the development of the Wellness Marketing during the early 2030s. Affluent aging customer segments supported corporate-driven solutions that prioritized stability, comfort, and security. AI-driven systems tailored to their preferences created insulated ecosystems, where personalized emotional and well-being tools catered to their specific needs. In contrast, youth-led movements emerged, advocating for

decentralized and community-driven alternatives to the dominant market systems. In 2032, initiatives like Youth Resilience Labs and Emotional Equity Hubs gained traction, focusing on accessible relational tools, community well-being programs, and collaborative governance models. While these movements demonstrated innovation and resilience, they struggled to expand beyond localized contexts due to limited institutional support and fragmented infrastructure. By 2035, youth-driven efforts remain critical voices advocating for inclusivity and equity in the emotional economy, but their broader influence is tempered by structural challenges.

In 2033, cross-sector collaborations launched as potential solutions to systemic inequities within the Wellness Market. Public-private partnerships funded through mechanisms like Equity-First Ventures aimed to extend emotional credit platforms and well-being ecosystems into underserved populations. In some cases, these initiatives delivered measurable improvements, such as localized emotional resilience programs and subsidized access to basic well-being tools. As of 2035, cross-sector partnerships are still evolving, representing a fragile but promising framework for addressing inequities. While some regions have seen progress in expanding access, others continue to face barriers stemming from resource constraints, competing priorities, and inconsistent political support. These collaborations underscore both the potential and limitations of market-based approaches to solving systemic challenges in the emotional economy.

In 2035, the Wellness Market reflects a fragmented reality. Affluent populations thrive within hyper-personalized ecosystems, where emotional credits and well-being indices fuel economic activity and drive innovation. Underserved populations remain tethered to extractive participation models, excluded from the full benefits of this emerging economic era. Grassroots initiatives and youth-driven movements persist as critical forces for change, offering glimpses of alternative pathways through decentralized and community-led solutions. Yet, systemic barriers rooted in corporate dominance, fragmented governance, and inequitable infrastructure continue to constrain their impact. Whether this new economic era evolves toward greater inclusivity or entrenches existing inequalities will depend on the ability of institutional actors, grassroots coalitions, and generational movements to disrupt entrenched systems. The next decade will determine whether the promise of the Wellness Market can be realized or remains an elusive ideal.

“The Wellness Market” Timeline (2025–2035)

2026: *“Big Tech Capitalizes on Personal Insights: What Emerging Markets Mean for Wellness Data”* – Wired Magazine

2027: Emotional credit markets and well-being indices gain traction among affluent consumers.

2029: *“The Future of Leadership: How Emotional Credits Fast-track Promotions and Access to Leadership Opportunities”* – *The Harvard Business Review*

2030: ***“****BioSync now has over 500 million active users”* – The Verge

2032: *"Vancouver’s City-Wide Wellness Market Pilot. Will Vancouverites Trade Volunteering for Access to Childcare?”* – CBC News

2033: ***“****Youth Activists Launch Emotional Equity Now Campaign, Demanding Open Access to Well-Being Platforms"* – The Guardian

2035: The United Nations releases World Economic Situation and Prospects report for 2034 calling for global standards on emotional well-being access and urging governments to regulate the Wellness Market

"The Wellness Market" Audio Artifact of the Future

Link to "The Wellness Market Audio Artifact of the Future."[2]

This audio scene captures a news report from the *Wellness Market* scenario in 2035. It highlights the launch of an innovative well-being platform by a profit-and-purpose business attempting to democratize access to emotional credit systems. As you listen, consider how the systemic forces of wealth consolidation, technological disruption, and inequitable access to emerging value systems shape the actions and strategies in this future. Please see Appendix D for the Audio Scene script. Please note the URL, if required, is available in the footnote below.

Implications of "The Wellness Market"

In this scenario platform owners, monopolistic corporations and their shareholders hold the greatest power by controlling access to newly emerged value ecosystems. Affluent populations benefit disproportionately, leveraging their elevated well-being as a tradable resource for economic and social advancement in a 'success to the successful' system archetype, where their advantage further reinforces their access to these systems. This dynamic contains a 'limits to growth' system archetype: resource-intensive technologies worsen ecological strain, undermining long-term sustainability. Meanwhile, governments remain reactive, struggling to regulate these systems or scale equitable access, and grassroots organizations and underserved populations face systemic exclusion. These reinforcing conditions amplify stratification, ecological pressures, and market stagnation, creating tensions that threaten the long-term growth and stability of the emotional economy.

Platform owners, monopolistic corporations, shareholders, hold the most power. These actors control the agentic AI systems, biodigital tools, and emotional credit markets that enable the emerging source of value - emotional engagement and well-being. Affluent users enjoy elevated power status.

How They Benefit:

- Corporations enjoy market control and maximise profit through tiered access models that reserve comprehensive emotional tools for elite users and extract value from user groups to further entrench their dominance.
- Affluent populations use emotional credits and well-being indices as tradable assets for career mobility, exclusive services, and access to curated experiences.

How They Are at Risk:

- Over-reliance on premium systems for affluent users excludes large segments of the population, risking market saturation.
- The resource demands of biodigital tools, technologies, and curated ecosystems worsen environmental pressures, undermining long-term stability.

[2] Link to "The Wellness Market Audio Artifact of the Future: https://drive.google.com/file/d/11SPAV1Tf4iPDYxj-bLIc60IFjHbyGN8O/view?usp=drive_link

- Growing inequalities and cultural resistance to emotional commodification may destabilize the emotional economy and provoke societal resistance.

Governments and Localized Governance are middle power actors. Governments efforts to address inequities are fragmented, underfunded, and limited in scale. Without strong regulatory capacity or coordinated policies, governments are unable to challenge corporate dominance or scale equitable alternatives.

How They Are at Risk:

- Weak oversight and reliance on corporate-led systems erodes public trust.
- Ineffective interventions fail to address systemic inequities or ecological limits.

Opportunities to Reclaim Power:

- Introduce policies to tax emotional credit markets and luxury well-being systems, using revenue to fund universal access for underserved populations.
- Develop publicly governed emotional and well-being systems that prioritize collective and equitable outcomes.
- Implement regulations to balance innovation with sustainability, reducing the ecological strain of biodigital systems.
- Support and scale effective emotional equity programs to ensure broader societal impact and reduce fragmentation.

Low power actors in society: customers with limited basic access to well-being tools face barriers to leveraging emotional credits for economic or social mobility. Underserved populations are excluded from emotional credit systems and well-being ecosystems due to infrastructural neglect. Grassroots organizations develop localized, low-cost solutions but lack the resources, funding, and systemic support needed to scale

How They Are at Risk:

- Marginalized populations are locked out of opportunities tied to housing, healthcare, and employment, deepening inequalities.
- Emotional systems amplify existing inequities as affluent users advance economically and socially, widening the gap.
- Grassroots solutions struggle to scale due to limited access to advanced biodigital tools, data systems, and institutional funding.

Pathways to Strengthen Agency:

- Form alliances to advocate for universal well-being infrastructure and challenge exclusionary systems.
- Push governments for redistributive policies that expand access to emotional and well-being systems.
- Promote diverse emotional norms and relational practices to challenge elite standards embedded in emotional credit systems.

“The Green Divide” (Scenario 2)

Scenario Summary: In 2035, advancements in green technologies and ecosystems successfully have now mitigated environmental pressures but are controlled by monopolistic corporations. In wealthy urban hubs, Luxury Eco-Cities have emerged as showcases of environmental resilience, powered by exclusive data-driven green systems. In contrast, underserved regions remain tethered to outdated infrastructure and face escalating climate risks and systemic exclusion. Governments, constrained by fragmented regulatory capacity and dependency on corporate platforms, have failed to ensure equitable distribution of green innovations. Grassroots movements and youth-led initiatives offer alternative models through decentralized solutions, but so far, they have struggled to scale against corporate dominance and systemic barriers. As sustainability becomes a luxury commodity, the divide between ecological privilege and systemic vulnerability is deepening, reinforcing global inequities.

The Green Divide: Assumptions About Drivers' Behaviours

- **Value Theory Transformation**: Sustainability is embedded within data-driven systems, where ecological performance becomes quantifiable and monetized. These advancements are commodified as premium services, reinforcing their exclusivity in affluent markets.
- **Technological Disruption:** Monopolistic corporations own and control green technologies, leveraging AI and data platforms to optimize resource management and profitability. Access is determined by market value rather than public need.
- **Ecological Limits:** Advanced ecological systems, powered data networks, mitigate environmental pressures in affluent regions but exacerbate global disparities. Underserved regions lack access to scalable green solutions, deepening climate vulnerabilities.
- **Wealth Consolidation:** Monopolistic corporations consolidate control over green technology systems, data flows, and supply chains, sidelining grassroots and regional governance efforts. Wealth concentration ensures that ecological innovation serves high-value markets.
- **Institutional Legitimacy:** Governments align with monopolistic platforms to ensure access to green innovations, relinquishing control over ecological systems and undermining equity. Public trust erodes as governance prioritizes stability over inclusivity.
- **Social and Political Polarization:** Fragmented adoption of green technologies deepens divides between affluent and underserved populations. Political unrest grows as systemic inequities worsen.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Aging populations reinforce monopolistic systems to sustain clean, stable living environments while youth-led movements in underserved regions develop localized, community-driven solutions but struggle to scale against systemic barriers.

“The Green Divide” Narrative

In 2027 and 2028 a wave of green technological breakthroughs reshaped environmental resilience and resource management. Innovations in modular energy grids, AI-driven scalable carbon capture systems, and solid-state batteries came to market as transformative solutions for energy storage, carbon sequestration, and sustainable infrastructure. However, these advancements were concentrated under corporate ownership that limited access

to markets willing to pay premium prices. In 2029 through 2031, AI-driven resilience platforms and predictive analytics were integrated into the risk management systems of affluent regions while underserved regions remained tethered to aging, climate-vulnerable infrastructure, unable to access or afford advanced ecological solutions.

Governments, weakened by fragmented regulatory power, struggled to ensure equitable distribution and green progress remained stratified, reflecting the same inequities seen in other forms of technological innovation in the Data Platform Era. Throughout the early 2030s, green technologies continued to be deployed in affluent regions as privatized solutions and in exclusive Eco-Cities, where autonomous energy systems, vertical farms, and AI-optimized resource platforms promised unparalleled environmental resilience and quality of life.

In the late 2020s, corporations marketed Just Value Chains as a premium feature for conscious consumers and sustainability was rebranded as a luxury commodity. These initiatives often served as branding strategies rather than systemic solutions and left global inequities unaddressed. For instance, autonomous food systems provide personalized dietary solutions for elite markets, while food insecurity persisted in underserved regions. Green Justice Cooperatives emerged in 2031 and 2032 as grassroots efforts to democratize access to green solutions. Initiatives like solar microgrids and community wind farms demonstrated local resilience but struggled to scale due to limited funding and corporate interference. In 2033, youth-led movements launched sustainability hubs and localized food systems with biowaste energy solutions to demonstrate the potential for localized innovation and address resource scarcity. As of 2035, these efforts persist as localized pockets of resilience, showing potential but unable to disrupt entrenched corporate systems.

As of 2035, the advances achieved through green technological innovations, AI-driven ecological systems, and cross-sector collaborations showcase the potential for transformative change. However, the persistent systemic inequities rooted in corporate dominance, fragmented governance, and profit-driven deployment strategies leave vast swathes of the global population excluded from advanced ecological solutions. Grassroots movements advocating for green justice and decentralized hubs provide glimpses of alternative pathways, but the dominance of corporate systems ensures that the green divide persists. As of 2035, affluent regions and Eco-City enclaves stand as showcases of green innovation that represent the promise of cutting edge of environmental technology, but only for those who can afford it.

“The Green Divide” Timeline (2025–2035)

2027 “Green Breakthroughs: Modular Grids, AI Carbon Capture, and Solid-State Batteries Promise a Sustainable Future" — MIT Tech Review Special Issue

2028 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Report: Green Technologies Poised to Reshape Global Resilience, but Access Remains Uneven — UNFCCC Annual Climate Outlook

2029 "Green for the Few: UN Climate Assembly Debates Ethical Limits of Premium Sustainability Markets" — UN Climate Equity Briefing

2030 "Governments Partner with Corporate Innovators to Accelerate Green Infrastructure Projects" — The Wall Street Journal

2030 "Green Rebellion: Youth Activists Occupy AI Energy Hubs Demanding Equitable Access to Green Technologies" — The Guardian

2031 “Governance in Crisis: Global Institutions Warn of Corporate Capture in Green Infrastructure Projects" — CBC News

2033 "Greener Horizons: Youth Movements Launch the Green Justice Manifesto Calling for Global Climate Equity" — Al Jazeera

2034 "The Great Climate Walkout: Students Worldwide Strike Against Monopolistic Control Over Green Technologies" — BBC News

2035 "Inside the Green Dream: A Tour of Eco-City Beacons of Technological and Environmental Achievement" — Architectural Digest.

“The Green Divide” Audio Artifact of the future

Link to “The Green Divide” Audio Artifact of the Future[3]

This audio scene captures an internal town hall meeting in the Green Divide scenario of 2035. A team leader addresses employees about the cancellation of a renewable energy project, reflecting the systemic challenges of scaling green innovations in underserved regions. As you listen, consider how the systemic forces of wealth concentration, ecological limits, and uneven access to green technologies shape the decisions and emotions of those in this future. Please see Appendix D for the Audio Scene script. Please note the URL, if required, is available in the footnote below.

Implications of “The Green Divide”

In this scenario, monopolistic corporations, platform owners, and affluent consumers dominate access to advanced green technologies, including modular energy grids, scalable carbon capture systems, and AI-optimized resource management tools. These actors have successfully commodified sustainability, turning ecological resilience into an exclusive, privatized resource. Affluent consumers leverage financial power to secure environmental stability and social mobility, reinforcing a success-to-the-successful system archetype that amplifies systemic inequities. Governments align with corporate actors to stabilize access to green systems but remain reactive and structurally limited, undermining their ability to enforce equitable distribution or regulatory oversight. Grassroots organizations and underserved populations advocate for decentralized and community-driven ecological solutions but face systemic exclusion, resource scarcity, and global economic constraints. A limits to growth system archetype emerges, where economic, ecological, and social constraints reinforce systemic fragility. Additionally, global economic dependencies—including reliance on international trade, investor priorities, and external supply chains—create vulnerabilities that limit Canada’s ability to fully own and control its green systems.

Monopolistic Corporations, Platform Owners, and Affluent Consumers hold the power. Monopolistic corporations and platform owners control access to green technologies and ecological infrastructure, dictating distribution and

[3] Link to “The Green Divide” Audio Artifact of the Future: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kOq5TQK4jfTjxDdD3WeOa3bHjPKyX_zO/view?usp=sharing

pricing through exclusive, premium-tier systems. Affluent consumers leverage their purchasing power to secure access to green enclaves, AI-optimized environmental resilience, and advanced ecological systems.

How They Benefit:

- By prioritizing profitability over equity, corporations extract sustained returns from affluent markets, locking underserved populations out of green advancements.
- Affluent consumers are shielding from climate risks through gated eco-cities, stable energy grids, and AI-driven environmental management.

How They Are at Risk:

- The resource demands of green technologies (e.g., rare materials, energy use) strain environmental stability, creating long-term fragility.
- Exclusion of middle-income and underserved markets creates a ceiling for growth, limiting long-term profitability.
- Growing inequities and environmental injustices fuel political unrest, threatening affluent systems' stability.

Governments and Local Governance Initiatives are middle power actors: Governments align with monopolistic actors to maintain stability and secure access to green technologies and lack the structural power to enforce equitable regulations. Local governance initiatives, such as Green Justice Cooperatives and Community Climate Councils, demonstrate localized innovation but lack the funding and structural support to scale nationally.

How They Are at Risk:

- Alignment with corporate actors undermines governments' ability to enforce redistributive policies or challenge monopolistic control.
- Regional inequities and fragmented policies limit the scalability of successful local ecological projects.
- Reliance on international green supply chains leaves governments vulnerable to global economic pressures.

Pathways for Middle-Power Actors:

- Implement antitrust regulations to counter monopolistic control over ecological resources and technologies.
- Scale regional governance initiatives with targeted investments in underfunded areas.
- Use tax mechanisms on luxury ecological services to fund public green infrastructure in underserved regions.
- Develop trade policies and national green investment strategies to reduce reliance on global supply chains.

Grassroots Organizations, Labour Movements, and Underserved Populations are low power actors. Grassroots organizations innovate localized ecological solutions (e.g., community-owned microgrids, decentralized wind farms) but face barriers to funding, scaling, and institutional recognition. Labour movements advocate for fair working conditions and ethical environmental practices but remain constrained by monopolistic dominance over green technologies. Underserved populations are locked out of green systems due to financial barriers, infrastructure neglect, and structural inequities.

How They Are at Risk:

- Underserved communities remain vulnerable to climate crises without access to privatized green technologies.
- Local and grassroots resilience programs rely heavily on government funding and corporate partnerships, limiting their independence.

- Workers in ecological industries remain vulnerable to exploitative conditions under monopolistic control.

Pathways for Low-Power Actors:

- Strengthen alliances among grassroots actors, labour movements, and progressive policymakers to advocate for equitable reforms.
- Develop open-source ecological tools and community-driven solutions tailored to regional needs.
- Amplify voices in participatory platforms to secure long-term policy commitments and equitable resource distribution.
- Labour movements can advocate for labour equity policies in green industries to ensure workforce sustainability and fair wages.

“Canadian Mission Economy” (Scenario 3 – Preferred)

This scenario explores the question **“what ‘ought’ to happen to create the most promising conditions of success for businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose?”** It envisions a future that supports businesses’ efforts to innovate, scale purpose-driven models, and contribute meaningfully to societal and environmental goals while maintaining financial sustainability. The scenario is not a prediction; it is offered as an aspirational narrative to highlight strategic opportunities and challenge assumptions.

In the baseline scenario, the assumed behaviours of the Institutional Legitimacy and Wealth Consolidation drives create barriers for businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose. Fragmented regulatory oversight, power imbalances, monopolistic corporate control, and resource concentration act as blockers—forces that prevent or slow progress—and sources of friction that complicate or delay change (Gordon, 2008).

In the *Canadian Mission Economy*, these dynamics shift because the assumptions of the drivers' behaviours have been changed. Institutional legitimacy is buoyed through mission-driven governance, providing clarity, stability, and collaborative platforms for strategic alignment. At the same time, wealth consolidation is actively addressed through redistribution mechanisms, labour protections, and antitrust policies, creating fairer conditions for purpose-driven businesses to thrive. These changes transform blockers and friction into enabling forces that accelerate transformation, fostering an ecosystem where profit and purpose reinforce one another rather than exist in tension. As Conway suggests, preferred scenarios are not static endpoints but reflective tools, inviting stakeholders to engage in ongoing dialogue and iterative strategy development (Conway, 2017). This preferred scenario serves as a strategic invitation, challenging stakeholders to consider how today’s choices might contribute to shaping a desirable future.

Scenario Summary: In 2035, Canada is actively transforming its economic and social systems through mission-driven governance, prioritizing public well-being, equity, and ecological resilience as core measures of progress. Systemic crises in the 2020s—climate disasters, labour unrest, and supply chain failures—acted as catalysts, prompting governments to collaborate with businesses, unions, and citizens to align markets with societal goals. Public-private investment funds, participatory governance platforms, and restructured supply chains became key mechanisms for collaboration, driving innovation while embedding equity into market systems. Businesses, previously driven solely by profit metrics, are incentivized, and regulated to align their strategies with stakeholder-driven priorities, balancing market efficiency with social outcomes. Labour movements and grassroots coalitions now act as corrective forces, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized voices and equitable power redistribution. While resistance from entrenched monopolistic interests and regional disparities continues to persist, Canada’s proactive approach is demonstrating momentum toward embedding systemic resilience, institutional legitimacy, and shared prosperity into its economic foundation.

Canadian Mission Economy: Assumptions About Drivers' Behaviours

- **Value Theory Transformation:** Public well-being, ecological health, and equity are institutionalized as the primary measures of progress, guiding policy and market alignment.

- **Technological Disruption:** Participatory governance platforms empower citizens to co-design policies, raising citizen engagement, increasing transparency, and reshaping decision-making processes.
- **Ecological Limits:** Climate disasters reveal systemic vulnerabilities, catalyzing investments in renewable energy, adaptive infrastructure, resilience planning, and renewable energy.
- **Wealth Consolidation:** Labour movements and institutional reforms redistribute power, weakening monopolistic practices in favor of ethical, mission-aligned systems.
- **Institutional Legitimacy:** Democratic institutions regain public trust by aligning economic and societal goals, transitioning from reactive governance to proactive market shaping.
- **Social and Political Polarization:** Generational collaboration fosters societal cohesion, uniting diverse stakeholders across divides to pursue equitable reforms.
- **Demographic Shifts:** Aging populations and youth-led movements collaborate to drive long-term systemic stability and shared advocacy for equitable reforms.

“Canadian Mission Economy” Narrative

By the early 2030s, Canada had begun redefining its economic and social systems through mission-driven governance, a transformation catalyzed by the prolonged systemic crises of the mid-2020s. In 2025 and 2026, catastrophic climate disasters, widespread labour unrest, and paralyzing supply chain disruptions exposed the fragility of traditional governance and economic systems. These crises eroded public trust, deepened existing inequities, and intensified calls for reform. Rather than resorting to short-term fixes, Canada’s democratic institutions laid the groundwork for systemic transformation, focusing on aligning markets with societal and ecological priorities while fostering transparency and accountability.

Between 2026 and 2029, participatory governance experiments were launched as localized pilot programs. Citizen assemblies, policy labs, and community-based councils integrated public input into housing policy and climate adaptation initiatives. These pilots resulted in projects such as flood-resistant infrastructure and wildfire prevention systems, while National Housing Missions prioritized affordable, climate-resilient housing solutions. However, these efforts remained fragmented, constrained by funding gaps and regional disparities. By 2030, the lessons from these experiments began to influence broader policy frameworks, contributing to stakeholder-driven reforms at national and provincial levels. In 2035, participatory governance continues to serve as a critical mechanism for inclusive policy development. While disparities in implementation persist across regions, these platforms represent a meaningful shift toward transparent, collaborative decision-making within Canada’s governance systems.

A pivotal shift occurred in 2030, when stakeholder-driven metrics—prioritizing well-being, ecological resilience, and equity—were introduced as augments to GDP. Supported by programs like Equity-First Ventures, a mission-aligned public-private investment fund, these metrics reshaped economic priorities, fostering green technology, affordable housing, and mental health services. In 2035, these metrics continue to guide policies. Public well-being indices track collective health outcomes, ecological stability, and social equity, providing policymakers and businesses with clear benchmarks for progress. Despite ongoing challenges from entrenched corporate interests, this stakeholder-focused approach remains central to Canada’s economic strategy.

Labour movements played a critical role in driving systemic reforms in the late 2020s and early 2030s. Prolonged strikes across logistics, retail, and manufacturing sectors in 2025 and 2026 exposed deep inequities in wages,

working conditions, and corporate dominance over essential infrastructure. In response to mounting pressure from unions and public advocacy groups, governments collaborated with labour leaders and businesses between 2028 and 2030 to establish the Fair Supply Chains Canada program. This initiative aimed to ensure ethical labour practices, equitable resource distribution, and reduced corporate control over logistics. By 2032, the program had begun to reshape labour standards across key sectors, balancing market efficiency with societal well-being. In 2035, Fair Supply Chains Canada is on its way to become a cornerstone of Canada’s mission-driven economy, serving as a framework for addressing systemic inequities. Ethical labour standards have been introduced as a core benchmark for both public procurement contracts and private-sector accountability. However, the transformation remains ongoing and uneven, with regional disparities, entrenched corporate resistance, and logistical challenges continuing to pose barriers to full implementation. While tensions between corporate stakeholders and labour advocates persist, Fair Supply Chains Canada represents a significant step forward in aligning economic systems with societal goals.

Between 2028 and 2031, generational movements began shaping Canada’s mission-driven transition. Youth-led platforms like NextGen Policy Labs advocated for workforce sustainability, climate resilience, and equity-focused policies. Initiatives such as Green Transition Skills retrained workers for renewable energy sectors, easing economic disruptions caused by decarbonization. By 2033, intergenerational collaborations began influencing national workforce policies. In 2035, NextGen Policy Labs is a recently launched initiative, providing a space for youth engagement and policy experimentation, with early signs pointing to long-term systemic influence.

By 2030, cross-sector partnerships began addressing challenges in housing, renewable energy, and healthcare. Supported by Equity-First Ventures, these partnerships combined public-sector goals with private-sector innovation. However, the scale and consistency of these initiatives varied, with many projects limited to specific regions or industries. Throughout 2032 and 2033, these partnerships demonstrated early successes in aligning public-sector priorities with private-sector innovation. However, these efforts remain experimental frameworks, showing promise but requiring sustained support and refinement to achieve systemic impact.

In 2035, Canada’s Mission Economy represents a significant shift in how economic and societal systems can align with collective well-being, equity, and ecological resilience. Programs like Equity-First Ventures and Fair Supply Chains Canada demonstrate the potential for markets to integrate societal priorities, while participatory governance platforms and NextGen Policy Labs offer models for transparent, citizen-driven innovation. However, these developments remain works in progress, with outcomes still unfolding unevenly across regions and sectors. Despite challenges such as regional disparities, corporate resistance, and ecological strain, Canada’s experience highlights both the promise and fragility of systemic transformation. In 2035, Canada stands at a critical juncture, with the potential for either continued innovation or stagnation if systemic barriers remain unaddressed.

“Canadian Mission Economy” Timeline (2025–2035)

2025: "Supply Chains Fracture as Climate Disasters Expose Systemic Vulnerabilities from Vancouver to Halifax" – The Globe and Mail
2025: "Labour Unrest Peaks as Nationwide Strikes Demand Ethical Supply Chains," – Canadian Labour Review
2026: The federal government launches Task Force Canada, an emergency commission to address systemic vulnerabilities in climate resilience, labour standards, and supply chain stability.

2028: "National Housing Missions Pilot Affordable, Climate-Resilient Housing Solutions Across Canada," – Google News
2030: "Green Transition Skills Program Retrains Thousands for Renewable Energy Jobs," – The Globe and Mail
2031: "Equity-First Ventures Fund Launched to Accelerate Social and Environmental Innovation," – Bloomberg Canada
2033: "Localized Success Stories Emerge from Cross-Sector Collaboration in Housing and Energy," – The National Observer
2035: “Canada's Mission Economy: Progress, Fragility, and the Road Ahead“– CBC Special Report

“Canadian Mission Economy” Audio Artifact of the Future

Link to the Canadian Mission Economy Audio Artifact of the Future[4]

This audio scene captures a podcast introduction set in the Canadian Mission Economy scenario of 2035. The host introduces a discussion with a Chief Purpose Officer and a government minister, highlighting the successes of mission-driven governance and public-private collaboration. As you listen, consider how the systemic forces of institutional legitimacy, wealth redistribution, and participatory governance enable businesses to integrate profit and purpose in this preferred future. Please see Appendix D for the Audio Scene script. Please note the URL, if required, is available in the footnote below.

Implications of “Canadian Mission Economy”

In this scenario, Canada has made significant progress toward developing a mission-driven economy, where democratic institutions, labour movements, and participatory governance platforms proactively shape markets to prioritize public well-being, ecological health, and equity. Systemic reforms demonstrate early success but remain fragile and incomplete due to entrenched monopolistic resistance, regional inequities, and ecological constraints.

While meaningful advances are visible through stakeholder-driven metrics, labour advocacy, and participatory policymaking these reforms are still vulnerable to global economic pressures, including investor priorities, international trade dependencies, and geopolitical shifts. The limits to growth system archetype underscores these dynamics, highlighting that systemic progress depends on balancing ecological sustainability, inclusive governance, and economic stability against persistent constraints.

Democratic institutions, labour movements, and participatory platforms hold the most power in this scenario. These actors drive systemic reforms by institutionalizing stakeholder-driven metrics, aligning economic activity with societal priorities like equity, sustainability, and public well-being and empowering citizens, workers, and businesses to collaboratively co-design policies, fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making processes.

How They Benefit:

- Public trust in government institutions is restored through proactive and inclusive policymaking.
- Labour reforms and participatory governance balance market efficiency with societal well-being.

[4] Link to the Canadian Mission Economy Audio Artifact of the Future:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FMSQS1srGw7U1FcfW4IlQDBccO2K7_hw/view?usp=sharing

- Youth-led initiatives and cross-generational collaboration strengthen workforce adaptability and sustainable economic planning.

How They Are at Risk:

- Monopolistic actors and entrenched economic powers resist policies that challenge their influence, delaying systemic reforms.
- Canada's ability to maintain sovereignty over its mission economy remains vulnerable to global market forces, including trade dependencies and investor priorities.
- Investments in renewable infrastructure, resilience planning, and participatory systems face ecological and financial limits that challenge long-term scalability.

Businesses and Local Governance Initiatives are middle power actors. Businesses align with mission-driven priorities to remain economically viable but face constraints in adapting to stakeholder-driven metrics and ethical mandates. Local governance initiatives, such as *Community Climate Councils* and *National Housing Missions*, demonstrate localized success but struggle with scaling challenges and regional inequities.

How They Are at Risk:

- Transitioning to mission-aligned practices requires substantial investment in retraining, infrastructure, and compliance.
- Uneven policy implementation across provinces exacerbates systemic inequities, limiting the broader societal impact of local successes.

Pathways for Middle-Power Actors:

- Identify and replicate effective local initiatives nationally, addressing resource disparities across regions.
- Foster partnerships with governments, labour movements, and grassroots organizations to share knowledge, resources, and capacity.
- Advocate for government incentives to ease the financial and operational burdens of transitioning to mission-aligned business models.

Low Power actors: Grassroots organizations innovate localized solutions but lack access to funding, technology, and policymaking influence to scale their impact. **Underserved populations** remain disproportionately affected by regional disparities, economic barriers, and resource scarcity, leaving them unable to meaningfully participate in the mission economy.

How They Are at Risk:

- Without targeted policy interventions, marginalized communities risk being left out of mission-driven opportunities.
- Grassroots solutions depend on public and private institutions for funding, legitimacy, and scalability.
- Participatory systems risk reinforcing elite perspectives and undervaluing community-specific emotional and well-being norms.

Pathways for Low-Power Actors:

- Amplify grassroots voices in participatory governance to address systemic disparities.
- Develop community-owned platforms for housing, emotional well-being, and workforce development.
- Push for region-specific policies that address systemic barriers and prioritize local resilience.
- Collaborate with labour movements and progressive businesses to scale successful grassroots program

Scenario Analysis and Insights

Analysis of the four scenarios: *"Business as Usual," "The Wellness Market," "The Green Divide"*, and *"Canadian Mission Economy"* offered comparative insights to inform the development of strategic pathways for businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact. These insights were developed through a reflective synthesis of the entire research process, integrating findings from stakeholder interviews, systems analysis, horizon scanning, historical exploration, and scenario analysis. Patterns and dynamics observed across the scenarios were analyzed in light of the broader understanding gained through the research. This cumulative approach revealed recurring themes and critical factors. The following eight insights are highlighted because they consistently appeared across scenarios and align with key observations from the overall research.

1. Value is Relational and Contextual; the concept of value extends beyond financial metrics. It is shaped by relationships—with customers, communities, suppliers, and ecosystems—and is deeply influenced by cultural and societal contexts.

- In Business as Usual, value remains narrowly defined as financial returns, dominated by data monetization, which reinforces economic inequities.
- In The Wellness Market, value expands to include emotional engagement and well-being but remains commodified and exclusionary.
- In The Green Divide, sustainability becomes a monetized resource available primarily to affluent regions.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, value is redefined through stakeholder-driven metrics prioritizing public well-being, ecological health, and equity.

Significance: Value is not a fixed or neutral concept—it is shaped by relationships, and it evolves with societal, cultural, and environmental contexts. In systems where value remains narrowly defined (e.g., profit or data monetization), inequities deepen, and resilience is compromised. Conversely, when value accounts for broader societal and ecological dimensions, it can drive systemic alignment and long-term stability. Strategies could embrace flexible, relational approaches to value creation, recognizing that value shifts based on evolving societal priorities and relationships.

2. Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems; Businesses are not passive participants in economic value systems; they are active agents influencing and reinforcing societal priorities.

- In Business as Usual, businesses reinforce profit-driven systems, influencing governance, resource distribution, and societal outcomes around short-term financial priorities while being constrained by these same systemic dynamics.
- In The Wellness Market, businesses shape new value ecosystems, but these systems remain exclusionary, reinforcing societal inequities and limiting transformative change.
- In The Green Divide, businesses drive ecological innovation and sustainability but through monopolistic controls of green technologies, their profit-driven focus prioritizes affluent markets and perpetuates systemic disparities.
- In the Canadian Mission Economy, businesses actively participate in mission-aligned governance, collaborating with governments and civil society to co-design policies and contribute to systemic transformation that balances profit with societal well-being.

Significance: Businesses actively shape societal priorities while simultaneously being shaped by the systems they operate within. This reciprocal relationship creates both opportunities and responsibilities for businesses to influence structural change. Strategies and strategic tools could account for businesses' dual role as both shapers and products of value systems, balancing adaptation to external forces with proactive advocacy for systemic change.

3. Collaboration is a Strategic Imperative; Systemic challenges like climate change, inequality, and monopolistic dominance cannot be solved in isolation. Collaboration across sectors, industries, and geographies is essential.

- In Business as Usual, collaboration is fragmented, and monopolistic corporations dominate resource management and governance.
- In The Wellness Market, collaboration remains surface-level, mediated by transactional emotional credit systems.
- In The Green Divide, collaboration emerges in localized governance initiatives but struggles to scale.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, collaboration thrives through mission-aligned partnerships between governments, businesses, and civil society.

Significance: Systemic challenges, whether climate crises, governance failures, or economic inequities, cannot be solved by isolated actors. Fragmented collaboration often reinforces inequities and systemic fragility, while aligned, multi-stakeholder collaboration creates pathways for collective resilience and innovation. Strategies could prioritize meaningful, long-term collaboration across sectors, geographies, and institutions to address deeply embedded systemic barriers.

4. Systemic Barriers Require Systemic Strategies; Businesses operate within larger systems shaped by policy, market forces, and societal norms. Addressing systemic barriers requires strategies that engage with these broader forces.

- In Business as Usual, fragmented governance and monopolistic corporate dominance prevent meaningful systemic change.
- In The Wellness Market, inequities persist as advanced emotional and wellness systems remain inaccessible to underserved populations.
- In The Green Divide, monopolistic control of green technologies sidelines systemic equity concerns.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, systemic reforms address root causes, redistributing power and resources to enable long-term change.

Significance: Addressing systemic barriers requires more than isolated initiatives or surface-level interventions. Fragmented or reactive approaches often reinforce the status quo, while systemic strategies tackle root causes, redistribute power, and unlock long-term transformation. Strategies could engage with broader governance, policy, and institutional systems to create structural changes rather than addressing symptoms in isolation.

5. Resilience is Built Through Localization and Adaptation; Localized solutions could provide the agility and relevance needed to address specific community challenges and build resilience from the ground up.

- In Business as Usual, affluent regions achieve localized resilience through exclusive technological systems.
- In The Wellness Market, emotional ecosystems are concentrated in affluent hubs, leaving underserved regions behind.

- In The Green Divide, grassroots cooperatives foster localized resilience but struggle to scale their impact.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, participatory governance supports scalable, community-led adaptation.

Significance: Localization is a powerful driver of resilience because it allows for context-specific solutions that address regional needs. However, when localization is driven by exclusivity (affluent enclaves) or lacks scalability (grassroots efforts), its impact remains limited. Strategies could balance local adaptability with scalable frameworks to ensure localized solutions contribute to broader systemic resilience.

6. Purpose Must Be Operationalized, Not Just Articulated; Many businesses struggle to translate purpose into day-to-day operations, workflows, and decision-making processes. Purpose remains aspirational without structural and cultural alignment.

- In Business as Usual, purpose remains secondary to profit and lacks structural alignment.
- In The Wellness Market, emotional credit systems focus on surface-level transactional value.
- In The Green Divide, sustainability initiatives remain extractive rather than embedded.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, purpose is embedded into governance systems, policies, and economic incentives.

Significance: Articulating purpose without embedding it structurally creates a gap between intent and impact. Surface-level approaches fail to drive meaningful change, while purpose integrated into governance systems and operational workflows ensures alignment across all activities. Strategies could ensure purpose is structurally embedded, with accountability frameworks and operational mechanisms to sustain alignment.

7. Leadership is the Catalyst for Purpose Integration; Leadership plays a critical role in aligning organizational culture, driving purpose-driven transformation, and addressing internal resistance to change.

- In Business as Usual, leadership prioritizes profit-driven motives.
- In The Wellness Market, leadership focuses on optimizing emotional ecosystems for high-value users.
- In The Green Divide, leadership prioritizes profit-driven ecological technologies.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, leadership fosters alignment, trust, and systemic collaboration.

Significance: Leadership is not neutral, it actively shapes organizational priorities, cultural norms, and systemic outcomes. Leaders who prioritize short-term profit reinforce fragility, while mission-driven leaders foster collaboration, trust, and long-term stability. Leadership strategies could emphasize transparency, empathy, and mission alignment to create durable cultural and systemic change.

8. Metrics Need to Balance Quantitative and Qualitative Insights; To capture the holistic impact of purpose-driven strategies metrics of success need to include environmental, social, and relational dimensions of value.

- In Business as Usual, metrics focus on financial returns.
- In The Wellness Market, emotional credit systems reinforce exclusionary practices.
- In The Green Divide, ecological metrics remain profit-driven and inequitable.
- In Canadian Mission Economy, metrics balance equity, well-being, and ecological resilience.

Significance: What is measured drives behaviour. Metrics that narrowly focus on financial outcomes or exclusionary measures perpetuate inequities. Holistic metrics enable systems to align around shared societal and

ecological goals. Strategies could adopt multidimensional measurement systems that capture qualitative and quantitative dimensions of value.

These insights provide a foundation for the development of strategies explored in Part 3 of the report which outlines strategic pathways and recommendations.

PART 3

This section of the report aims to answer the question **"what strategic pathways might businesses craft to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact?"** The foundational capacities and strategic pathways detailed below were developed through an iterative and reflective process that synthesized findings from all phases of the research process: from stakeholder interviews, systems analysis, horizon scanning, and historical analysis. Analysis of the four possible futures narratives: *"Business as Usual," "The Wellness Market," "The Green Divide"*, and *"Canadian Mission Economy"* resulted in eight insights that informed the development of strategic pathways (see Part 2, Scenario Analysis and Insight for complete details):

1. Value is Relational and Contextual
2. Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems
3. Collaboration is a Strategic Imperative
4. Systemic Barriers Require Systemic Strategies
5. Resilience is Built Through Localization and Adaptation
6. Purpose Must Be Operationalized, Not Just Articulated
7. Leadership is the Catalyst for Purpose Integration
8. Metrics Need to Balance Quantitative and Qualitative Insights

The following process was used to develop the recommended foundational capacities and strategic pathways:

- Scenario insights provided a comparative lens for understanding potential future conditions and their implications businesses attempting to integrate profit-and-purpose.
- Initial strategies were developed based on the unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities identified within each scenario.
- Strategies underwent a wind-tunnelling assessment (Rhydderch, 2009) to evaluate:
    - Robustness: The strategy's feasibility and adaptability across different scenarios.
    - Strategic Importance: The relevance and potential impact of the strategy within specific future conditions.
- The most resilient and strategically significant options were prioritized.
- Prioritized strategies were developed and categorized into two flexible frameworks:

A. Foundational Capacities for Integrating Profit and Purpose

- Adaptive Monitoring and Contextual Awareness
- Purpose-Driven Leadership at All Levels
- Operational Alignment and Purpose Integration
- Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making
- Culture of Innovation for Purpose-Driven Impact
- Collaboration Building

B. Strategic Pathways for Profit & Purpose Businesses

- **Pathway 1: Systemic Resilience:** Strengthening governance systems, trust and advocacy, to support societal and environmental stability.

- **Pathway 2: Inclusive Innovation:** Removing barriers to participation, advancing equitable access to technology, to co-design ethical, purpose-driven solutions.
- See Appendix E for detailed strategies.

C. Companion Questions to Support Value Propositions

Foundational Capacities

For businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose, external-facing strategies cannot succeed without strong internal alignment, operational readiness, and cultural coherence. The following foundational capacities act as the organizational 'root system,' supporting businesses as they navigate complex external environments, ensuring their purpose is embedded authentically across all layers of decision-making and action.

1. Adaptive Monitoring and Contextual Awareness

Rationale: Value is not static, it evolves with cultural, social, political, and technological shifts. For Businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose, staying responsive requires an ongoing process of observation, interpretation, and adjustment. Static strategies anchored in outdated assumptions about value risk becoming misaligned with changing stakeholder expectations and systemic dynamics.

Description: Adaptive monitoring and contextual awareness involve building capabilities to continuously observe, interpret, and respond to signals of change. These signals include emerging societal expectations, cultural shifts, regulatory developments, and weak signals of disruption. Developing and integrating foresight practices, horizon scanning, and real-time feedback loops into strategic workflows ensures businesses can adjust proactively to evolving value paradigms.

Examples of Application:

- Implementing regular horizon scanning to identify emerging weak signals and societal shifts.
- Embedding feedback loops from customers, employees, and external partners into ongoing strategy refinement.
- Establishing internal foresight capabilities to assess long-term trends and their strategic implications.

2. Purpose-Driven Leadership at All Levels

Rationale: Leadership plays a critical role in translating purpose into action. Leaders set vision, model values, and drive operational transformation. Without purpose-driven leadership, strategies risk misalignment, inertia, or internal resistance, undermining long-term success.

Description: Purpose-driven leadership emphasizes clarity of vision, accountability, and emotional intelligence. Leaders at all levels must model purpose-aligned behaviors, foster inclusion, and ensure alignment across teams. Purpose can be embedded in performance incentives, decision-making structures, and cultural norms to drive authentic transformation.

Examples of Application:

- Purpose-aligned leadership training programs focused on fostering cultural and operational alignment.
- Leadership incentives tied to purpose-driven metrics alongside financial performance.
- Transparent communication practices that reinforce trust and alignment across the organization.
- Integrating purpose into decision-making structures, accountability processes, and governance frameworks.

3. Operational Alignment and Purpose Integration

Rationale: Purpose cannot remain aspirational; it must translate into daily operations. Misalignment between purpose-driven strategies and operational systems creates friction, weakens effectiveness, and risks accusations of purpose-washing.

Description: Operational alignment embeds purpose into workflows, performance metrics, and decision-making protocols. Systems and processes, from supply chains to customer experiences, need to consistently reinforce purpose outcomes. This requires cross-departmental collaboration, adaptive performance metrics, and purpose-aligned accountability structures.

Examples of Application:

- Cross-departmental purpose alignment committees to oversee integration efforts.
- Purpose-driven Key Performance Indicators integrated into performance management systems.
- Change management frameworks tailored to purpose integration challenges.

4. Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making

Rationale: Value is relational, not purely transactional. Businesses integrating profit and purpose need to engage stakeholders: customers, employees, communities, suppliers, investors, and ecosystems, in trust-based relationships to ensure alignment with purpose-driven goals.

Description: Stakeholder-centric decision-making prioritizes ongoing engagement, participation, and transparency. Businesses need to balance diverse stakeholder priorities with long-term strategic goals, ensuring alignment without compromising purpose integrity.

Examples of Application:

- Establishing stakeholder advisory boards to provide regular feedback on business practices.
- Co-creating initiatives with community partners to address shared challenges.
- Transparent reporting on stakeholder outcomes and shared value creation.

5. Culture of Innovation for Purpose-Driven Impact

Rationale: Innovation is essential for addressing complex societal and environmental challenges. However, innovation needs to be purpose-driven to ensure it delivers sustained impact rather than short-term gains.

Description: A culture of innovation fosters experimentation, openness, and collaboration, while maintaining accountability to long-term impact goals. Innovation frameworks need to integrate purpose as a core design

principle, ensuring that experimentation is guided by strategic priorities rather than pursued in isolation. Businesses need to establish systems where purpose-driven innovation is intentionally resourced, measured against clear impact metrics, and aligned with long-term strategic goals. This includes embedding purpose across product development, service design, and operational processes to ensure consistent and meaningful outcomes.

Examples of Application:

- Integrating long-term purpose-driven objectives with innovation evaluation metrics.
- Purpose-Embedded experimentation frameworks include clear principles and accountability mechanisms, guiding innovative efforts that contribute to organizational purpose.
- Experimentation spaces where employees can test purpose-aligned ideas without fear of failure.

6. Collaboration Building

Rationale: Collaboration is essential for addressing complex, interconnected challenges that no single organization can address alone. Businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose need to build partnerships across sectors, industries, geographies, and communities to address interconnected societal and environmental challenges. Fragmented efforts risk perpetuating inequalities or worsening negative externalities. Intentional collaboration creates pathways for collective systemic impact.

Description: Collaboration building involves designing, sustaining, and scaling partnerships that align diverse actors around common goals. This capacity emphasizes trust, mutual accountability, and equitable power-sharing among collaborations. Effective collaboration integrates shared decision-making, transparent communication and a clear understanding of mutual needs and benefits.

Examples of Application:

- Establishing cross-sector coalitions to address shared challenges, such as climate resilience, workforce resilience, supply chain transparency, or community well-being.
- Developing partnership frameworks with civil society, government agencies, and industry peers to drive aligned objectives.
- Creating shared platforms for resource-sharing, joint research, knowledge exchange, and collective advocacy to address systemic barriers.

Summary of Foundational Capacities

The foundational capacities operate across every level of a business attempting to integrate profit and purpose, from strategic vision and leadership to day-to-day operations and stakeholder interactions. They offer an internal compass to ensure that purpose remains embedded in every decision, partnership, and innovation.

- **Without Adaptive Monitoring**, strategies risk becoming misaligned with rapidly changing contexts.
- **Without Purpose-Driven Leadership,** strategies can lose momentum in the face of resistance or competing priorities.
- **Without Operational Alignment**, purpose becomes fragmented across silos, undermining its systemic impact.
- **Without Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making,** businesses risk losing trust and credibility.

- **Without a Culture of Innovation,** strategies may fall short of addressing the complexity of societal and environmental challenges.
- **Without Collaboration Building,** fragmented efforts and isolated initiatives limit the potential for systemic change and collective impact.

These core internal capacities form the backbone of the outward-facing strategies across the strategic pathways: **Systemic Resilience and Inclusive Innovation** detailed in the next section.

Strategic Pathways for Profit & Purpose Businesses

The following two strategic pathways offer a structured framework for businesses seeking to integrate profit and purpose while navigating complex, dynamic environments. Each pathway serves a distinct function while reinforcing the other:

1. **Systemic Resilience** focuses on governance, trust, and advocacy to build resilience at both organizational and institutional levels.
2. **Inclusive Innovation** drives equitable access, ethical supply chains, and collaboration, to foster sustainable and inclusive growth.

While the strategic pathways are outward-facing, their successful implementation relies on the foundational capacities identified above: adaptive monitoring, purpose-driven leadership, operational alignment, stakeholder-centric decision-making, and a culture of innovation.

Each pathway details distinct, yet interconnected strategies to address social, economic, and environmental systems. Not every strategy will be equally relevant or feasible for every organization. The pathways are modular. Businesses can approach the strategies as building blocks, selecting, and combining them to address their unique context, goals, and operational capacities while considering how different strategies might complement or support one another.

Pathway 1: Systemic Resilience

Systemic resilience is a business's capacity to withstand disruptions while actively contributing to the stability, adaptability, and sustainability of the broader systems it operates within and depends on. These systems—economic, social, and environmental—are deeply interconnected and require businesses to act as both participants and contributors to their long-term health.

Unlike traditional resilience, which focuses on organizational survival and recovery, systemic resilience recognizes that businesses are embedded in larger ecosystems. This approach emphasizes both the responsibility and opportunity businesses have to shape these systems for long-term collective benefit.

In this pathway, businesses are not passive observers of change; they are active contributors to building resilient, adaptive, and equitable systems.

Underpinned by Adaptive Monitoring, Purpose-Driven Leadership, and Operational Alignment, this program ensures businesses remain responsive to systemic challenges and capable of embracing emerging opportunities.

Insight: Systemic resilience is not about maintaining the status quo, it's about helping businesses adapt to change, strengthen the systems they depend on, and align their strategies with long-term societal and environmental goals.

Key Aspects of Systemic Resilience

- Businesses exist within and are shaped by regulatory frameworks, societal expectations, and ecological limits and also have the power to influence these systems positively.
- Trust operates as a shared resource, enabling collaboration, policy innovation, and long-term partnerships.
- Resilient systems require fair policies, adaptive regulations, and collaborative governance models.
- Resilient systems require fair policies, adaptive regulations, and collaborative governance models.
- Systemic resilience relies on cross-sector partnerships and collective action.
- Systemic issues require durable, long-term solutions**.**

Systemic Resilience in Action Through Strategies

(See Appendix D for Strategy Details)

1.1Purpose-Driven Governance and Legitimacy

- Objective: Align decision-making and internal systems with societal and environmental goals**.**
- Approach: Build trust through transparency and accountability in governance structures.
- Outcome: Businesses become credible contributors to long-term societal stability.

1.2 Advocacy for Systemic Change

- Objective: Influence policies and regulations that address root causes of systemic challenges.
- Approach: Advocate for fairer governance and structural reforms.
- Outcome: Policy landscapes become better aligned with sustainable societal goals.

1.3 Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Objective: Build partnerships across sectors (i.e. governments, industry peers, and civil society) to tackle large-scale challenges collectively.
- Approach: Share resources, knowledge, and infrastructure to drive collective impact.
- Outcome: Partnerships create shared systemic benefits and measurable outcomes.

Pathway 2: Inclusive Innovation

This strategic pathway recognizes that innovation efforts can do more than drive efficiency and growth, they can also prioritize fairness, accessibility, and adaptability across global and local systems. Inclusive Innovation aims to breaks down barriers to participation and opportunity, whether those barriers are technological, cultural, economic, or systemic. It emphasizes the role of businesses as enablers of inclusion, ensuring that innovation solutions serve both business and societal needs.

Enabled by Operational Alignment, A Culture of Innovation, and Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making, these pathway positions businesses as enablers of inclusion and transformation across economic, technological, and social systems.

Insight: Innovation goes beyond advancing technology and efficiency to create solutions that are fair, adaptable, and inclusive, ensuring benefits are shared equitably across societies, generations, and geographies.

Key Aspects of Inclusive Innovation

- Supply networks align with ethical and sustainable principles and prioritize fairness, transparency, and environmental responsibility in sourcing and distribution.
- Solutions are tailored to local contexts and empower community ownership and participatory governance to address regional aspects of societal and environmental challenges.
- Access to transformative technologies and data systems is fair, affordable, and transparent, to break down systemic barriers.
- Cross-generational collaboration harnesses diverse strengths, knowledge, and cultural perspectives.
- Businesses with aligned goals achieve greater impact through collaboration, resource-sharing, and joint initiatives**.**

Inclusive Innovation in Action Through Strategies

(See Appendix D for Strategy Details)

2.1 Invest in Ethical Supply Chains

- Objective: Build fair, transparent, and sustainable supply chains that prioritize ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility.
- Approach: Create partnerships with suppliers that ensure fair wages, environmental compliance, and transparency.
- Outcome: Supply chains become resilient, transparent, and aligned with societal values.

2.2 Localized, Decentralized Resilience

- Objective: Develop context-specific, community-driven solutions for resilience and sustainability.
- Approach: Support locally-owned infrastructure and region-specific innovation hubs.
- Outcome: Communities gain ownership, adaptability, and long-term resilience.

2.3 Equitable Access to Technology and Data

- Objective: Ensure affordable access to transformative technologies and promote transparent, collaborative data-sharing ecosystems.
- Approach: Provide open-access tools and data platforms that support diverse communities and stakeholders.
- Outcome: Barriers to technology and data access are reduced, enabling equitable participation.

2.4 Bridge Generational Divides

- Objective: Facilitate cross-generational collaboration to align organizational culture and drive purpose-driven goals.
- Approach: Implement mentorship programs, intergenerational knowledge-sharing platforms, and inclusive decision-making structures.
- Outcome: Organizational culture becomes cohesive, adaptive, and purpose-aligned across generations.

2.5 Intra-Business Alliances & Shared Resources

- Objective: Foster collaboration, resource-sharing, and knowledge exchange among purpose-aligned businesses.
- Approach: Establish platforms for joint resource use, logistics optimization, and shared innovation projects.
- Outcome: Businesses achieve efficiency, collective resilience, and greater systemic impact through collaboration.

Companion Questions to Support Value Propositions

As businesses design product, service, and experience offerings tools like the Value Proposition Canvas are frequently used to align customer needs (jobs-to-be-done, gains, pains) with business offerings (products and services, gain creators, pain relievers) (Osterwalder, 2014). However, traditional uses of these tools often focus on transactional value, overlooking the broader relational and contextual dynamics that shape and are shaped by value systems.

Over time, there have been adaptations of the Value Proposition Canvas aimed at aligning the tool with social impact goals (Osterwalder, 2016). These adaptations often emphasize stakeholder inclusion, purpose-driven objectives, or measuring social outcomes. While useful, these adapted versions primarily focus on embedding social purpose into the tool's existing structure.

The companion questions below take a different approach. Rather than altering the structure of the Value Proposition Canvas, these are a set of guiding questions offered to strategy and design teams prompting them to explore relational and contextual dynamics as well as the shaping and shaped nature of value propositions.

Grounded in the scenario insights: **Value is Relational and Contextual** and **Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems,** (see Part for insight details) these guiding questions invite design teams to think systemically and reflexively about:

- How their value proposition interacts with and influences its broader ecosystem.
- How relationships, context, and systemic feedback loops affect the creation and perception of value.

While not a fully developed tool, the companion questions can be used to deepen strategic reflections without disrupting existing design workflows.

Insight 1: Value is Relational and Contextual

The concept of value is not neutral; it is shaped by power dynamics, cultural norms, societal priorities, and historical contexts. Far from being an objective or static principle, the concept of value reflects the systems and structures in which it is embedded and the perspectives of those who hold influence within them. Power dynamics often determine who controls, measures, and extracts value, while cultural and societal contexts shape what is considered valuable in a given time or place. This means that definitions of value can either reinforce existing inequities or serve as a tool for transformation. For example, due to the pressures of providing returns to investors and shareholders, financial returns as a dominant measure of value often overshadow social and ecological well-being, perpetuating systemic imbalances. At the same time, societal and environmental pressures can challenge dominant narratives, prompting shifts in how value is defined and measured. Recognizing the non-neutral nature of the concept of value invites businesses and design teams to reflect critically on the assumptions underpinning their value propositions, asking who benefits, who is excluded, and what alternative forms of value might be overlooked. This reflection is not just theoretical; it has practical implications for how businesses define, create, and measure value in their strategies, products, and relationships.

Relevance to Value Propositions

Value is often framed as a static exchange: a business provides a product or service, and a customer assigns it worth. Tools like the Value Proposition Canvas help articulate this dynamic by mapping how a business offering satisfies customer needs. However, the insight that value is relational and contextual challenges this framing, urging us to consider how value emerges from and influences broader, interconnected systems. By incorporating relational and contextual considerations, tools making use of Value Propositions can be enriched to reflect the evolving, interconnected nature of value. This approach pushes beyond immediate customer satisfaction, enabling businesses to explore how their value proposition aligns with societal and ecological priorities, how it impacts relationships among diverse stakeholders, and how it shapes—and is shaped by—the context in which it exists.

Design Team Questions, Insight 1, Value is Relational and Contextual

1. Who are the people, systems, or ecosystems connected to this offering/solution, and how are those relationships shaping—and being shaped by—this offering/solution?
2. Does this offering/solution create or affect relationships between people or groups, in addition to individual stakeholders? If so, how might these relationships evolve over time in response to the design of this offering/solution?
3. Are there hidden relationships (e.g., regulations, supply chains, ecosystems) that our offering/solution impacts or depends on? How can we uncover and address them?
4. How does the specific environment or situation in which our offering/solution exists affect it, and how might our offering change that environment over time?
5. If we look ahead 5, 10, or 20 years, how might societal or environmental changes influence our offering/solution? How might our offering/solution shape those changes?

Insight 2: Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems

This insight recognizes that businesses are not passive participants in the value systems they operate within; instead, they actively shape and are shaped by these systems. Businesses are influenced by the broader societal, economic, and environmental contexts, such as regulatory frameworks, market dynamics, and cultural values. At the same time, businesses also have the capacity to influence these systems through their strategies, practices, products, and innovations. By introducing new practices, technologies, and business models, businesses redefine the practices of creating, measuring, and extracting value and contribute to the evolution of value systems. This reciprocal relationship creates opportunities for change but also risks reinforcing existing power imbalances or systemic inequalities. This insight encourages businesses to view themselves not just as participants in established economic systems but as active agents capable of driving systemic change. By acknowledging their dual role as both products and shapers of value, businesses can better understand the larger dynamics they operate within and the impacts their strategies can have on these systems.

Relevance to Value Propositions

When considering this insight in relation to tools like the Value Proposition Canvas, design teams can recognize that their value propositions do not exist in isolation. The products or services they design are influenced by, and influence, the systems they are part of, such as supply chains, regulatory environments, cultural shifts, or broader economic trends. This expanded awareness helps teams design with a long-term vision in mind, aligning their strategies with larger societal goals and avoiding reinforcing negative or inequitable systems.

Design Team Questions, Insight 2, Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems

1. How does our offering/solution interact with societal, economic, and environmental systems, and how might those systems change or influence our offering over time? How might our offering/solution change or influence societal, economic, or environmental systems over time?
2. What barriers or opportunities in the broader context (e.g., regulations, cultural trends, economic shifts) might impact our offering/solution, and how can we contribute to addressing them?
3. How do the choices we make when designing our offering/solution affect the people it impacts, and how might those people, in turn, change how we approach the offering based on their needs and experiences?
4. How does our offering/solution change the way people interact with each other within our business or community? Does our offering/solution create stronger connections, or could it unintentionally disrupt relationships?
5. How might our offering/solution act as a catalyst for change within our organization or industry, either reinforcing or disrupting existing practices?

These questions offer a reflective approach for design teams to consider relational and contextual impacts throughout the design and strategy development process. By addressing these questions, teams might explore the broader systems and implications of their offerings and solutions.

CONCLUSION

This project sought to answer the primary research question:

> **How is the concept of value in business shifting, how is this shift influencing the integration of profit and purpose, and what strategic pathways might businesses craft to navigate toward sustainable success and meaningful impact?**

The dominant paradigm of profit maximization and shareholder primacy has long influenced business strategies and boardroom decisions. However, mounting challenges, including economic inequality, systemic financial instability, stagnant productivity, and the escalating climate crisis, have revealed the negative impacts of this model. These interconnected issues underscore the need to rethink the concept of value in business, moving beyond a narrow focus on short-term financial gains to embrace broader societal and environmental considerations.

Throughout the research activities and analysis Sandy Skees' definition of purpose has provided a foundational lens, emphasizing the role of businesses in contributing to societal well-being and environmental responsibility. Skees highlights that:

> **"Purpose is a company's understanding and articulation of the greater good it wants to create in the world, using its business as a mechanism for delivering a regenerative planet and an equitable society. True purpose looks beyond the company, beyond the industry, and looks at the whole—at the commons." (Skees, 2023)**

To address the research questions, this study employed a combination of systems thinking and strategic foresight methods within the framework of a design-thinking process. The methodology followed four iterative phases:

- **Discover:** Activities included a literature review, qualitative interviews, and document analysis, providing a foundation for understanding the shifting concept of value in business.
- **Define:** Systemic tools such as System Mapping, Iterative Inquiry, Actor's Maps, Causal Loop Diagrams, and Causal Layered Analysis were used to analyze and clarify systemic relationships.
- **Develop:** Insights from the Define phase informed Horizon Scanning, Driver Identification, Scenario Development, and Strategy Development to explore potential futures and identify scenario insights.
- **Deliver:** The final phase involved Implication Analysis, refining strategies, and creating the project outputs.

Learnings

An iterative and reflective process synthesized the findings from all phases of the research process including stakeholder interviews, systems analysis, horizon scanning, historical analysis, as inputs to scenario construction which was completed using the Cone of Plausibility technique. Analysis of the resulting four scenarios: *"Business as Usual," "The Wellness Market," "The Green Divide"*, and *"Canadian Mission Economy"* resulted in eight insights

that were then used to development the Foundational Capacities, Strategic Pathways, and Value Proposition Companion Questions detailed in Part 3 of the report.

Summary of Scenario Insights:

- Value is Relational and Contextual: the concept of value extends beyond financial metrics. It is shaped by relationships—with customers, communities, suppliers, and ecosystems—and is deeply influenced by cultural and societal contexts.
- Businesses Are Both Shapers and Products of Value Systems; Businesses are not passive participants in economic value systems; they are active agents influencing and reinforcing societal priorities.
- Collaboration is a Strategic Imperative; Systemic challenges like climate change, inequality, and monopolistic dominance cannot be solved in isolation. Collaboration across sectors, industries, and geographies is essential.
- Systemic Barriers Require Systemic Strategies; Businesses operate within larger systems shaped by policy, market forces, and societal norms. Addressing systemic barriers requires strategies that engage with these broader forces.
- Resilience is Built Through Localization and Adaptation; Localized solutions could provide the agility and relevance needed to address specific community challenges and build resilience from the ground up.
- Purpose Must Be Operationalized, Not Just Articulated; Many businesses struggle to translate purpose into day-to-day operations, workflows, and decision-making processes. Purpose remains aspirational without structural and cultural alignment.
- Leadership is the Catalyst for Purpose Integration; Leadership plays a critical role in aligning organizational culture, driving purpose-driven transformation, and addressing internal resistance to change.
- Metrics Need to Balance Quantitative and Qualitative Insights; To capture the holistic impact of purpose-driven strategies metrics of success need to include environmental, social, and relational dimensions of value.

Working with the Cone of Plausibility revealed additional insights:

- **Agency in Shaping the Future**: Constructing scenarios by altering the assumptions of drivers' behaviours and identifying the resulting ripple effects of systemic change underscored the degree to which the future is shaped by the choices and actions of stakeholders today and the potential for transformative outcomes.
- **Systemic Interdependencies**: The complexity of systemic dynamics was evident in the interactions between drivers, for example, the relationship between Institutional Legitimacy and Wealth Consolidation emerged as a critical determinant of business conditions, influencing both barriers and opportunities for purpose-driven strategies.
- **Reflective and Strategic Thinking**: The scenarios provided a reflective space for considering how businesses might navigate uncertainty and complexity. They emphasized the importance of flexible, adaptive strategies that balance immediate needs with long-term goals.

Project Outputs

This research designed three outputs to support businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose: Foundational Capacities, Strategic Pathways, and Reflective Companion Questions. These outputs were informed by insights uncovered during the research, which revealed the complexities of the systems businesses operate

within and the challenges they face in aligning profit with purpose. A detailed exploration of these insights can be found in Part 2, Scenario Insights, in the main body of this report.

1. The Foundational Capacities are inward-facing capabilities that operate across every level of a business from strategic vision and leadership to day-to-day operations and stakeholder interactions:

- Adaptive Monitoring
- Purpose-Driven Leadership
- Operational Alignment
- Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making
- Culture of Innovation
- Collaboration Building

By developing these foundational capacities, businesses can build internal systems that are resilient, aligned with purpose, and adaptable to evolving challenges. Although these capacities are oriented toward businesses integrating profit and purpose, they offer value to any organization seeking to navigate complex systems. These core internal capacities form the backbone of the outward-facing strategic pathways.

2. Strategic Pathways Two strategic pathways were developed. Each pathway serves a separate function while reinforcing the other:

- **Systemic Resilience** focuses on governance, trust, and advocacy to build resilience at both organizational and institutional levels.
- **Inclusive Innovation** drives equitable access, ethical supply chains, and collaboration, to foster sustainable and inclusive growth.

Each pathway includes strategies to address social, economic, and environmental systems. Not every strategy will be equally relevant or feasible for every organization. The pathways are modular. Businesses can approach the strategies as building blocks, selecting and combining them to address their unique context, goals, and operational capacities while considering how different strategies might complement or support one another. Complete details of the strategic pathways are included in Appendix E

A key emphasis of the pathways is recognizing businesses as active participants in shaping systems of value. For instance, the Canadian Mission Economy scenario highlighted the importance of partnerships with market-shaping institutions and limits on monopolistic practices. These pathways address the current context's constraints, such as wealth consolidation and institutional legitimacy, while fostering elements of the preferred future.

3. Companion Questions to Value Propositions are a set of guiding questions offered to strategy and design teams prompting them to explore relational and contextual dynamics as well as the shaping and shaped nature of value propositions.

These questions were shaped by research insights into the evolving concept of value and the systemic interdependencies businesses navigate. By engaging with these questions, businesses can align their strategies with their purpose and better understand their role as both products of and contributors to broader systems of value.

Limits of the Research

While this research provided insights into the evolving concept of value in business and its implications for integrating profit and purpose, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One significant limitation was the exclusion of in-depth case studies and interviews with practitioners actively working within businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose. Recruitment efforts revealed practical challenges in engaging practitioners, given their demanding schedules and competing business responsibilities. To address this gap, the research relied on qualitative interviews with subject matter experts and secondary data, including existing case studies, industry reports, and academic literature. This approach ensured the research remained grounded in both practical and theoretical perspectives.

Despite this limitation, the chosen methods enabled a robust exploration of the research question. Insights from subject matter experts offered a broad, systemic perspective on the challenges and opportunities businesses face, while secondary data provided practical examples to contextualize the findings. Together, these methods balanced systemic analysis with real-world applicability.

Future research could address this limitation by employing alternative methods, such as surveys or shorter, focused interviews, to better engage practitioners. These approaches would allow researchers to capture the lived experiences and operational challenges of businesses attempting to integrate profit and purpose, deepening the understanding of how theoretical frameworks translate into practice. By acknowledging these limitations, this research underscores the importance of balancing academic inquiry with practical feasibility, ensuring the findings remain both rigorous and applicable.

Further Academic Research and Inquiry

This research has highlighted three opportunities for further academic exploration:

1. **Case Studies of Purpose-Driven Businesses** Future research could focus on longitudinal or comparative analyses of businesses actively integrating profit and purpose. Such studies could uncover operational challenges, successes, and systemic impacts, providing a richer understanding of how theoretical models translate into practice. They would also shed light on the practical strategies businesses use to overcome barriers and drive systemic change.

2. **Exploring the Role of Value Propositions in Business Strategy** Building on insights from this research, future projects could employ a design process to examine how businesses conceptualize and operationalize value propositions while attempting to align profit with purpose. This may involve adapting widely used tools, such as the Value Proposition Canvas, or creating alternative frameworks that better reflect multidimensional value creation. Research could provide actionable guidance for businesses seeking to navigate the shifting concept of value.

3. **Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the Concept of Value** This research has primarily focused on the concept of value as it is defined and activated within democratic markets of European and Western heritage. Future studies could explore the concept of economic value and its relationship to business practices in other cultural and economic contexts, including East Asia, South Asia, South America, Indigenous economies, and other non-dominant cultures.

Research in this direction must prioritize reciprocal exchange and mutual respect and avoiding any approach that extracts knowledge solely for the benefit of Western frameworks. Future research efforts could seek to understand how diverse perspectives on value contribute to a broader systemic understanding, fostering shared learning and meaningful engagement and acknowledging that businesses are interconnected within a wider system of actors whose conceptual understandings of value may differ. By approaching this work with sensitivity and humility and engaging with the experiences and insights of non-dominant cultures—who persist despite the continued dominance of Western systems—businesses and researchers can embrace the opportunity to be shaped by diverse approaches to value. This direction for future inquiry would not only enrich the understanding of global value systems but also contribute to building equitable frameworks that respect cultural diversity, encouraging businesses to engage in practices that are inclusive, collaborative, and genuinely transformative.

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Appendix A: Iterative Inquiry Tool Details

This appendix provides an in-depth look at the *Iterative Inquiry* tool used in this project to analyze the structures, processes, and functions across multiple levels of the system. Iterative Inquiry examines the dynamic interactions at the **Micro, Meso, Exo, and Macro** levels, illuminating how each level contributes to and is influenced by the system's shift in the concept of value. This tool's detailed breakdown enhances understanding of how different actors and activities co-create value within an interconnected framework. Each level includes examples illustrating the practical application of these concepts.

The details provided here support the main insights from the *System Analysis* section, showing how each level contributes uniquely to the dynamics of value creation within the system. By examining Function, Structure, Process, and Context/Purpose at each level, Iterative Inquiry enables a comprehensive understanding of the interactions shaping business responses to shifting societal values.

Micro Level: 1:1 Customer-to-Business Interaction

At this level, the focus is on the personal experiences and relationships between the business and individual customers. This interaction serves as the core function of the system, triggering actions that impact meso and macro levels.

Function: The primary driver is the consumer's need or desire for a product or service that aligns with their individual values and preferences.

> *Example: "A customer seeks a product that emphasizes sustainability and ethical sourcing."*

Structure: The individuals, digital interfaces, and physical touchpoints that enable this interaction.

> *Example: Retail staff, customer service representatives, e-commerce websites, mobile apps, and customer communities.*

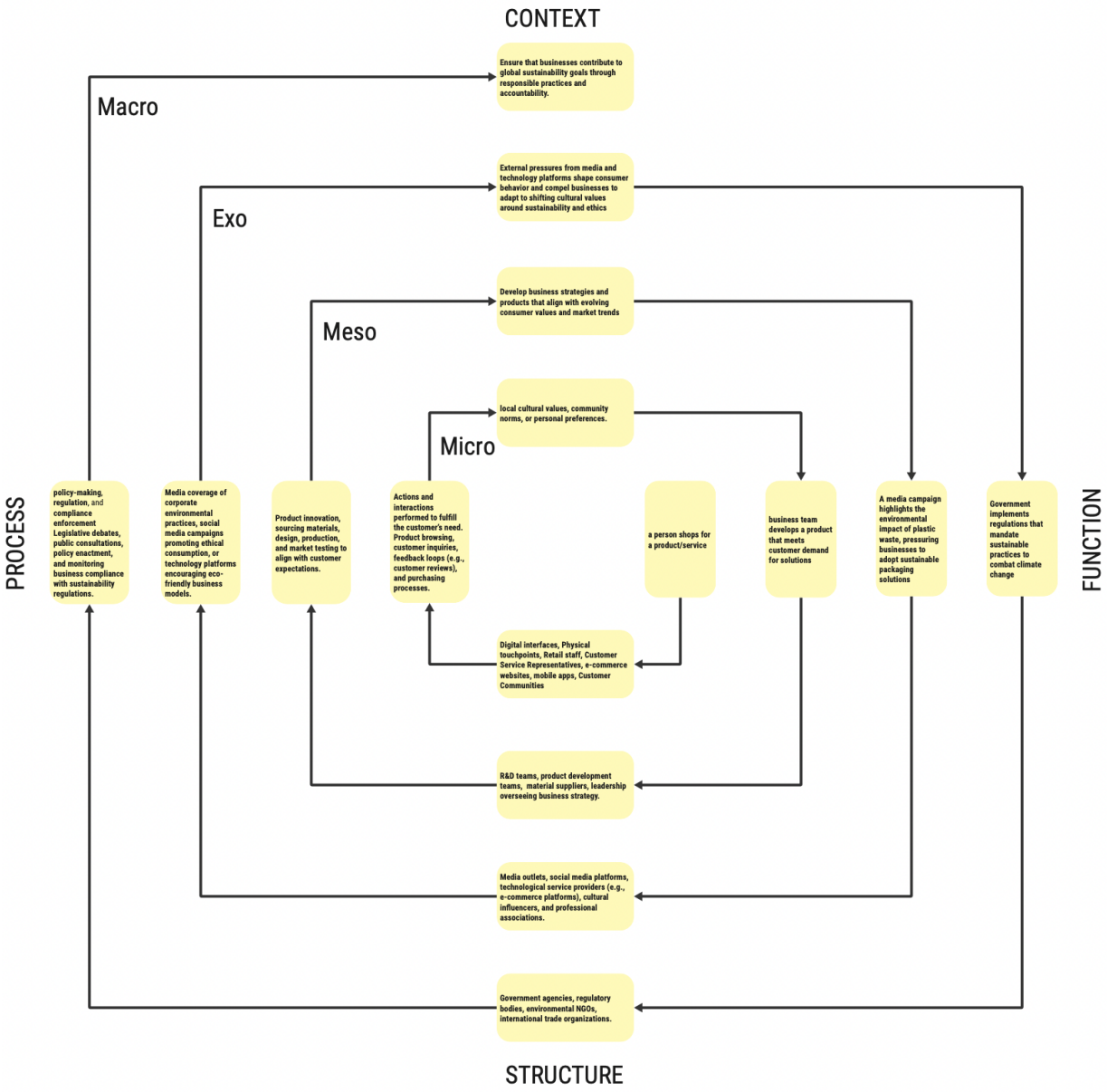
Process: Actions taken by both the customer and the business to fulfill the customer's needs.

> *Example: Product browsing, customer inquiries, feedback loops (such as reviews), and the purchasing process.*

Context/Purpose: Personal values and cultural expectations that influence customer behavior.

> *Example: "To meet customers' individual needs by providing products and experiences that resonate with their values, such as sustainability and ethical sourcing."*

Benefit: An enhanced customer experience that fulfills personal preferences and builds trust, leading to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and stronger relationships with the brand.



Meso Level: Business Strategy and Product Development

At the meso level, focus shifts to the internal organization and strategy that enable the business to respond effectively to micro-level needs and feedback. The function here is driven by the business's aim to meet consumer expectations that align with its operational goals and competitive positioning.

Function: The business seeks to adapt its product development and strategic goals to meet customer values and preferences identified at the micro level.

Example: "The business develops a product that responds to customer demand for sustainability."

Structure: R&D teams, supply chains, and leadership, guide strategic and operational decisions.

Example: Product development teams, sustainable material suppliers, and leadership overseeing sustainable business strategies.

Process: Internal business activities at this level focus on aligning product offerings with market expectations and trends.

Example: Product innovation, sourcing of sustainable materials, design, production processes, and market testing to meet customer expectations.

Context/Purpose: This context encompasses the organizational environment, including competitive pressures, market trends, and corporate goals related to social responsibility.

Example: "Develop strategies and offerings that reflect consumer expectations and support the business's competitive positioning."

Benefit: The business's improved ability to adapt to market demands, strengthening brand loyalty, increasing customer retention, and achieving competitive differentiation in alignment with its core mission.

Exo Level: External Influences and Amplifiers

The exo level represents external forces and intermediaries that indirectly shape both business strategies and consumer interactions. Actors at this level, including media, technology platforms, and cultural influencers, amplify societal trends and indirectly guide business responses to align with shifting values.

Function: External forces, such as public opinion and technological advancements, shape how businesses and consumers respond to broader cultural shifts.

Example: "A media campaign raises awareness about plastic waste, creating public pressure for businesses to adopt sustainable packaging."

Structure: Organizations and entities that, while not directly controlled by businesses, exert substantial influence on public perceptions and business practices.

Example: Media outlets, social media platforms, cultural influencers, and professional associations.

Process: Shaping public opinion, encouraging technological adoption, and setting cultural expectations that affect both businesses and consumers.

Example: Media coverage of corporate sustainability efforts, social media campaigns promoting ethical consumption, and influencers advocating for eco-friendly practices.

Context/Purpose: The broader societal and cultural environment influences how value is perceived, setting expectations for responsible behavior from both consumers and businesses.

Example: "External pressures from media and cultural influencers encourage consumers to make ethical choices and push businesses to adopt sustainable practices."

Benefit: Increased public awareness and alignment of consumer expectations with societal values, which encourages businesses to innovate and adapt to meet these expectations without direct regulatory pressure.

Macro Level: Government Policy, Regulation, and Systemic Forces

The macro level examines the role of policy, regulation, and systemic forces in shaping the environment in which businesses operate. This level defines the overarching boundaries that guide meso-level business strategies and influence micro-level interactions.

Function: Government or regulatory bodies recognize the need to set standards that promote sustainable practices and ensure corporate accountability for societal goals.

Example: "The government implements regulations that mandate sustainable business practices to address climate change."

Structure: Government agencies, regulatory bodies, environmental organizations, and trade institutions responsible for creating and enforcing regulations.

Example: Government agencies, environmental advocacy groups, and international regulatory organizations.

Process: Focus on policy-making, regulation, and enforcement, shaping the rules within which businesses operate.

Example: Legislative debates, public consultations, enactment of policies, and compliance monitoring for sustainability regulations.

Context/Purpose: The macroeconomic, environmental, and political landscape defines the purpose of these policies, establishing societal expectations for responsible business practices.

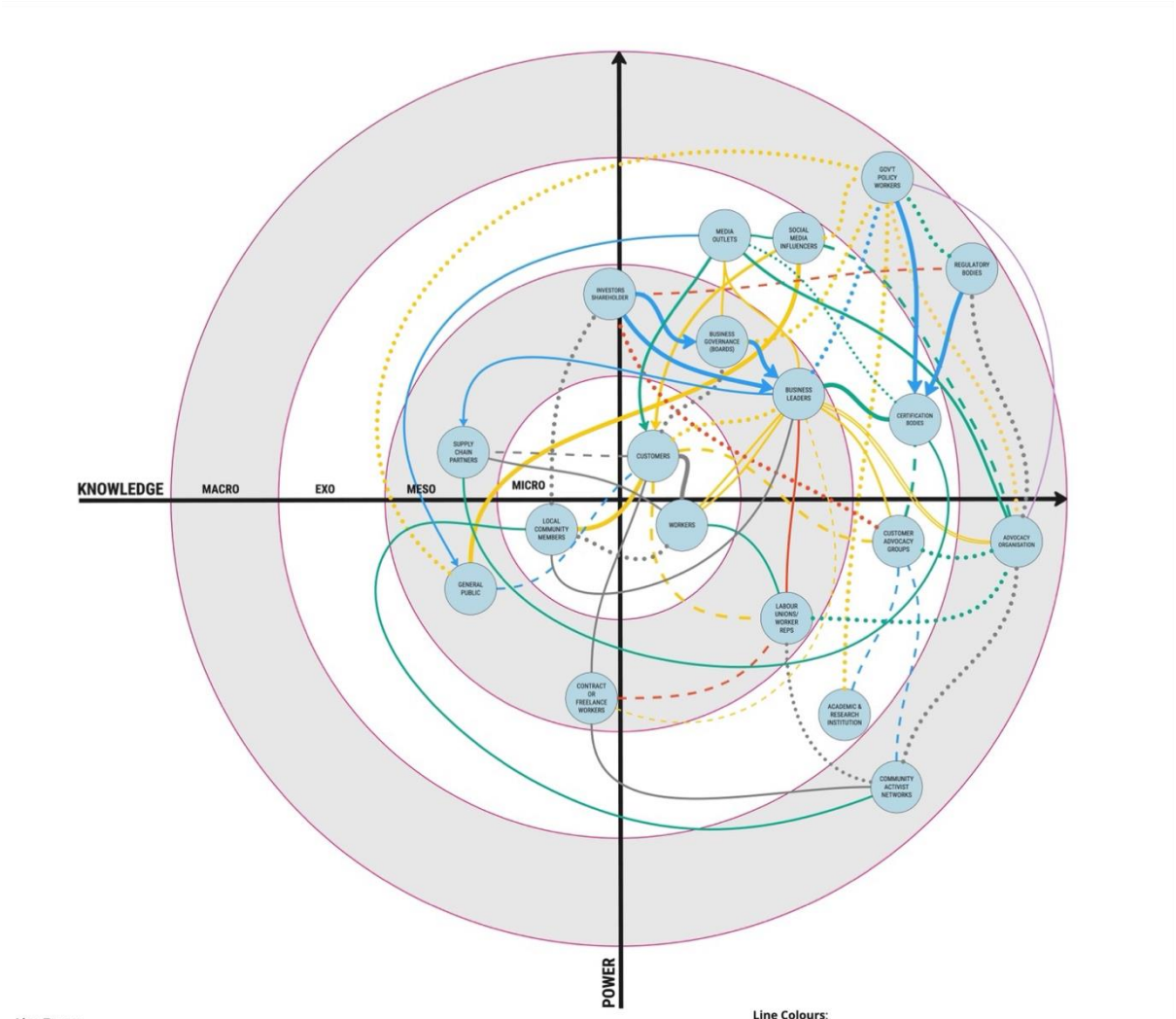
Example: "Ensure that businesses contribute to global sustainability objectives and operate within frameworks that protect societal and environmental well-being."

Benefit: A regulatory environment that promotes responsible business practices and mitigates risks.

for both society and businesses, providing a foundation for long-term, sustainable growth

Appendix B: Actor's Map Methodology and Analysis

Full Page Size of the Actor's Map



Line Types:
Solid Line: Strong, balanced, and formalized relationship with consistent outcomes.
Thick Solid Line: High-intensity, frequent interaction in a formalized partnership.
Dashed Line: Episodic or weak relationship, with minimal influence or impact.
Dotted Line: Informal or emergent relationship, still exploratory but with potential.
Double Line: Mixed dynamics, combining supportive and conflicting elements.

Arrows:
Unidirectional Arrow: Influence flows in one direction.
No Arrow: Reciprocal influence and feedback loops.

Line Colours:
Green: Functional and supportive relationship, mutual benefit.
Red: Dysfunctional or conflicting relationship, with potential friction.
Yellow: Oscillating or unbalanced relationship, with risks of conflict.
Blue: Collaborative but unbalanced, where one actor has more control.
Gray: Passive or indirect influence, limited active engagement.
Purple: Transformational or latent potential relationship, where alignment could drive systemic change.

x

Appendix C: Horizon Scan

This appendix provides an expanded view of the trends identified through the horizon scan conducted in this research. Each trend is presented with a detailed description, analysis of its implications, and references to key signals that informed its identification. These trends span social, technological, economic, environmental, political, and values-driven (STEEP+V) domains and were selected based on their impact on strategic and systemic outcomes for purpose-driven businesses and the certainty of their continued relevance over the next decade.

1. Balancing Profit and Purpose Amid Financial Fragility

Inflation, debt burdens, volatile interest rates, and geopolitical uncertainty, pose unique challenges for businesses committed to balancing profit and purpose. Long-term purpose-driven investments in areas require significant upfront costs and deliver delayed financial returns running counter to stabilizing immediate financial performance. At the same time, stakeholders—including investors, consumers, and regulators—are increasing their expectations for businesses to deliver on their commitments. Failing to meet these expectations risks eroding stakeholder trust, damaging brand integrity, and weakening long-term resilience. In an era of constrained financial flexibility, this tension becomes a defining strategic challenge for profit-and-purpose businesses.

IMPLICATIONS: Financially fragile organizations may scale back purpose-driven investments, prioritizing liquidity, and operational stability. Prolonged financial fragility could stall progress on large projects such as decarbonization infrastructure or equity-driven workforce programs. However, financially resilient businesses may deepen their purpose commitments as a market differentiator creating a divide between companies that sustained purpose-driven strategies and those that sacrificed them for short-term gains. Purpose-aligned organizations who stay the course may become industry leaders, having won stakeholder trust, and built adaptive cultures. Companies that deprioritized purpose to survive financial crisis face reputational damage, diminished stakeholder confidence, and challenges in attracting and retaining talent.

SIGNALS:

- As CEOs attempt meaningful changes to their companies' business models, they are even more concerned about their long-term viability 45% of CEO respondents are not confident that their companies would survive more than a decade on their current path. Source PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2024, January 15). *Annual Global CEO Survey* PwC. https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/ceo-survey.html
- The case for decarbonising arises because a sustainable economy is more valuable than one heading for collapse. Barker, R. (2024, October 9). The business case for the planet. *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/1509adce-6733-41b2-9431-7e7de70f0bc4
- Consumer Cynicism for brands and advertising has never been higher. Cynicism comes from when a brand says they going to do one thing and then they don't do it. Ken, B. (n.d.). Defending Values with Conviction [Broadcast]. Retrieved December 5, 2023, from https://www.ana.net/miccontent/show/id/pod-2023-12-bp-defending-values-okeefe

2. Gen Z & Gen Alpha's Purpose-Driven Expectations

Gen Z and Gen Alpha are set to inherit unprecedented wealth from their parents and grandparents, particularly in regions like North America and Europe. Their consumer influence is already reshaping how businesses demonstrate value, create meaningful engagement, and build trust and loyalty. These younger generations expect transparency, measurable purpose outcomes, and alignment between corporate values and actions and demand accountability through advocacy voiced on digital platforms. Within workplaces, younger employees' expectations of alignment between corporate and personal values, influences talent attraction, retention, and engagement. Misalignment on equity, environmental responsibility, or mental health support risks turnover and reduced morale. Investors increasingly focus on purpose metrics, while policymakers explore frameworks integrating social and environmental standards.

IMPLICATIONS: Pressure to validate purpose claims through measurable outcomes, third-party certifications, and transparent reporting may push purpose-driven narratives into baseline expectations rather than differentiators, with digital platforms amplifying both accountability and missteps. Younger generations' expectations and demands may shape corporate governance, compliance, and investment priorities as they move into leadership roles. Emotional well-being, sustainability, and equity could become core business imperatives. Companies that fail to adapt could risk market exclusion, talent attrition, and reputational decline, while those embedding purpose strategically could amplify stakeholder trust, secure cultural relevance, and strengthen long-term resilience.

SIGNALS:

- Gen Z are particularly vocal in their expectations that brands must act on their purpose and not just pay lip service to it. Etter, M., & AlSalim, F. (2023, July). Purpose-washing What is it and how to avoid it. King's College London, King's Business School.
- Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) will soon become the wealthiest generation ever, The NielsonIQ projects that Gen Z will have the fastest growth in spending power, reaching an estimated $12 trillion by 2030 and overtaking baby boomer spending by 2029. Bowles, M. C., & Fengler, W. (2024). *Global Gen Z Spend Report*. NielsonIQ World Data Lab.
- By 2025, there will be ~ 2 billion Alphas alive, surpassing all previous generations. By 2030, Alphas will account for 11% of the global workforce. Their focus on environmental and social issues may drive significant changes in corporate social responsibility and sustainability practices, potentially affecting global economic trends. Source: McCrindle. (2022, October 31). *Everything you need to know about Generation Alpha*. https://mccrindle.com.au/article/topic/generation-alpha/everything-you-need-to-know-about-generation-alpha/

3. Geopolitical and Economic Fragmentation

Escalating geopolitical tensions, protectionist policies, and economic nationalism is contributing to a division of global markets, supply chains, and trade networks, particularly between the U.S. and China. A push for regional self-sufficiency is reshaping globalization models. While regional trade blocs and reshoring efforts create localized growth opportunities, they also introduce higher costs, operational inefficiencies, and regulatory complexity. Businesses are increasingly prioritizing resilience over cost-efficiency, requiring investments in diversified supply chains, advanced technologies, and geopolitical risk management.

IMPLICATIONS: Businesses may struggle to absorb rising costs due to reshoring, regional trade realignments, investing in supply chain resilience, and technological infrastructure. Profit-and-purpose businesses may have the

opportunity to deepen impact through localized purpose initiatives, and robust cross-sector collaboration. Regional economic blocs could dominate global trade, defined by shared standards and semi-autonomous networks. While technology may enhance connectivity across these fragmented networks, inefficiencies will likely persist. Geopolitical tensions may remain unpredictable, posing ongoing risks. Companies that invest in resilience, transparency, and adaptive strategies could be better positioned to thrive.

SIGNALS:

- "We live in a world now where geopolitics trumps capital markets." Source: Haider, Z., & Grant, A. (March, 2023). *Geopolitical risk: Navigating a world in flux | McKinsey* [Broadcast]. https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/risk-and-resilience/our-insights/geopolitical-risk-navigating-a-world-in-flux
- Further increases in global trade restrictions would add to import prices, raise production costs for businesses and reduce living standards for consumers. OECD. (2024). *OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2024 Issue 2: Preliminary version* (Vol. 2024). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/d8814e8b-en

4. Climate Policy as Industrial Strategy

Climate policy is increasingly integrated into national industrial strategies to align environmental goals with economic resilience, job creation, and geopolitical strength. Policies like the Canada's 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the U.S. position clean energy, decarbonization technologies, and green infrastructure as economic imperatives. However, reliance on subsidies creates long-term sustainability risks, particularly if political priorities shift. Unequal distribution of green investments risks exacerbating regional disparities. Advancements in green hydrogen, carbon capture, and battery technologies are accelerating, but dependence on international supply chains for critical minerals introduces geopolitical vulnerabilities. Companies that align their strategies with this shift could enhance resilience and competitiveness in a decarbonized global economy.

IMPLICATIONS: If the integration of climate policy and industrial strategy continues, it may reshape economies and global power dynamics. Governments may increase investments in clean energy infrastructure, supported by subsidies and tax incentives. Green technology adoption might then accelerate, but uneven distribution of resources and political pushback could slow progress. Countries that align industrial strategy with climate goals may achieve sustained economic growth and geopolitical resilience. Clean energy hubs might anchor national economies, but regional disparities and geopolitical competition could fragment global progress.

SIGNALS:

- UK Launches 10-year roadmap industrial strategy to drive green growth highlights significant investments in renewable energy and carbon capture and storage, emphasizing decarbonization as both an environmental priority and an economic opportunity. *UK Government Publishes 2035 Industrial Strategy to Drive Green Growth and Innovation*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 14, 2025, from https://www.lw.com/en/insights/uk-government-publishes-2035-industrial-strategy-to-drive-green-growth-and-innovation
- China's unrivaled production of solar panels and electric vehicles and is in the position today to flood rival countries with low-cost solar cells and lithium batteries, as consumers across the wealthy world are increasingly turning to green tech. Cohen, P., Bradsher, K., & Tankersley, J. (2024, May 27). How China Pulled

So Far Ahead on Industrial Policy. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/27/business/economy/china-us-tariffs.html

- Governments are increasingly using industrial policy to develop low-carbon economic sectors and catalyse the energy transition. Green, J. F. (2024). Explaining green industrial policy in an age of globalization. *Nature Climate Change*, *14*(8), 783–784. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-02072-5

5. Supply Chain Resilience in the Era of Energy Transition

Geopolitical tensions, climate-related risks, resource scarcity, and global economic volatility have made supply chain resilience a strategic imperative. Beyond simply securing supply chains, resilience now encompasses adaptability, transparency, and sustainability. Investments in local supply chains create new opportunities for domestic manufacturing hubs, job creation, and innovation ecosystems centered on green technologies. However, the upfront costs of reshoring critical supply chains remain substantial, raising financial barriers for both governments and private investors. Environmentally, localizing supply chains reduces carbon footprints associated with long-distance transportation and enables stricter enforcement of environmental standards during resource extraction and processing. From a governance perspective, the trend strengthens national security by reducing exposure to geopolitical risks and supply disruptions while also fostering cross-sector collaboration between governments and industries. However, successful execution requires robust policy frameworks, strategic public-private partnerships, and workforce development initiatives.

IMPLICATIONS: Businesses may prioritize investments in AI-driven logistics, blockchain-enabled transparency tools, and predictive analytics to enhance supply chain visibility and responsiveness. We may see growth in localization initiatives for critical resources like lithium, graphite, and renewable energy components. However, uneven regional adoption and high costs could limit widespread implementation. If supply chain localization continues, we could see regional specialization in critical mineral extraction, processing, and clean technology manufacturing. Supply chain resilience could become a foundational pillar of global economic security, with environmental sustainability deeply embedded in resilience frameworks. Countries and businesses that successfully align resilience with green objectives might be better equipped to navigate geopolitical instability, climate-related disruptions, and resource scarcity.

SIGNALS:

- Factors such as supply chain resiliency, sustainability, and geopolitical stability are a few of the reasons companies are reshoring manufacturing operations. Source: Peterson, E. M. and D. M. (2023, November 2). *A Reshoring Renaissance Is Underway*. MIT Sloan Management Review. https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/a-reshoring-renaissance-is-underway/
- Events like the Russia-Ukraine conflict and disruptions in critical shipping lanes, such as the Red Sea and Panama Canal, have amplified the importance of diversifying supply chain routes. Source: Johansen, M. (2025, January 9.). Forbes *Council Post: The Shifting Inter-Americas Trade Landscape: Opportunities In Supply Chain Diversification*. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2025/01/09/the-shifting-inter-americas-trade-landscape-opportunities-in-supply-chain-diversification/
- Resilient supply chains are needed to manufacture clean energy technologies. Source: Schnippering, M. (2023, December 11). *Why supply chain resilience is key to the energy transition*. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/12/supply-chain-resilience-key-to-energy-transition/

6. Stakeholder Capitalism and Governance Scrutiny

Businesses are increasingly expected to balance profit-making with corporate responsibilities to employees, customers, communities, and the environment. This shift is driven by regulatory pressures, rising transparency expectations, and heightened societal awareness of corporate impacts. Governance scrutiny has intensified, with stakeholders demanding ethical leadership, accountability, and measurable progress on corporate goals. Gender equity and women's rights have also emerged as governance considerations with the potential to shape boardroom representation, workforce policies, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Companies are increasingly evaluated on their commitments to equity, in addition to financial performance. Superficial commitments to purpose efforts risk reputational damage and stakeholder backlash. Companies without clear benchmarks or measurable progress on purpose-driven initiatives may face increased regulatory scrutiny and diminished investor confidence.

IMPLICATIONS: Reporting standards and rising shareholder activism may drive greater corporate accountability, favoring businesses with transparent governance practices. ESG standards may become globally regulated, embedding stakeholder alignment into executive compensation and corporate valuations. Gender equity could become a standard governance benchmark across industries, embedded into compliance frameworks. Businesses failing to demonstrate progress could face exclusion from preferred investment opportunities or experience reputational decline.

SIGNALS:

- 2024 Global Investor survey: 50% of respondents say it is crucial for companies to change how they create value in response to climate change and 71% believe companies should integrate ESG/sustainability directly into their strategies, even at the cost of short-term profitability. Source: Bricker, W., Picard, N., & Islam, K. (2024, December 4). PwC's Global Investor Survey 2024. PwC. https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/global-investor-survey.html.
- The ESG reporting software market projected to Surge to USD 3.3 Billion by 2032 driven by increasing regulatory demands and focus on corporate transparency. Source: SNS Insider. (2024, October 9). *ESG Reporting Software Market to Surge| Research By SNS Insider*. GlobeNewswire News Room.
- California takes legal action claiming ExxonMobil intentionally mislead consumers; 90 percent of plastic waste processed by ExxonMobil allegedly becomes fuel instead of recycled plastic. Source: Chiu, A. (2024, September 23). California accuses ExxonMobil of lying about plastics being recyclable. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2024/09/23/california-sues-exxonmobil-plastics-recycling/

7. Human-AI Workplace Collaboration

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across industries is transforming workflows and influencing how humans collaborate with AI systems. AI adoption creates a dual labour dynamic: augmenting some jobs while displacing others. Routine and low-skill tasks are increasingly automated, reducing demand for certain roles and intensifying job insecurity. In contrast, AI-savvy workers with digital skills and adaptability are commanding wage premiums, exacerbating income inequalities. Agentic AI services capable of autonomous decision-making and adaptive behaviour shifts AI use cases from automation-focused replacement to augmentation-focused collaboration. AI integration into workforce structures may increase productivity, innovation, and increase job

satisfaction but also risks worsening income inequality if reskilling and upskilling programs equipping employees with AI literacy, digital collaboration skill remains unequal. Businesses that successfully integrate agentic AI while maintaining transparency and human oversight may gain a competitive edge in innovation, resilience, and adaptability.

IMPLICATIONS: If AI augmentation continues to accelerate, hybrid workforces will likely emerge, with AI deeply integrated into daily tasks across sectors. Roles like AI-enabled analysts, AI-assisted designers, and AI-augmented educators may become common, alongside new professions such as "AI Collaboration Strategist." Industries reliant on repetitive cognitive tasks, like finance, legal services, and marketing, could see significant shifts. However, workforce training gaps, ethical AI concerns, and cultural resistance could hinder adoption. In response to a widening socioeconomic divide, governments may pilot initiatives to mitigate job displacement risks, rethink social safety nets, taxation, and incentivize reskilling programs. Companies balancing AI autonomy, human oversight, and ethical safeguards could lead in innovation and resilience, while those neglecting workforce impacts may face backlash, talent shortages, and reputational risks.

SIGNALS:

- Companies are using AI in more parts of their businesses. Half of respondents in this McKinsey 2024 survey say their organizations have adopted AI in two or more business functions, up from less than a third of respondents in 2023. Source: Singla, A., Sukharevsky, A., Chui, M., Hal, B., & Yee, L. (2024, May 30). The state of AI in early 2024: Gen AI adoption spikes and starts to generate value. https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai
- AI systems are evolving to assist in various tasks, including complex activities like coding, enabling more efficient workflows, particularly in engineering and scientific fields. Source: Google DeepMind C.E.O. Demis Hassabis on the Path From Chatbots to A.G.I._ episode transcripts, sponsors, audience info, episodes, content rating.pdf. (2024, February 23). New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/23/podcasts/google-deepmind-demis-hassabis.html
- Globally, 59% of occupations have a “high to moderate” exposure to GenAI, with 67% in advanced economies and 57% in emerging markets. Source: Daco, G. (2024, April 16). How global business leaders can harness the power of GenAI [EY.com]. https://www.ey.com/en_us/insights/ai/power-of-gen-ai

8. Economic Inequality and the Middle-Class Squeeze

Stagnant wages, rising costs of living, and limited access to affordable housing, healthcare, and education are intensifying pressures on middle-class households, undermining social cohesion, and fueling political polarization. Simultaneously, wealth concentration among top income earners is deepening systemic inequalities. Technological disruption, globalization, financialization, and policy choices are driving these trends, creating structural barriers to social mobility. Rising inequality poses significant risks for businesses, including weakened consumer purchasing power, heightened political instability, and increased scrutiny of corporate practices. For companies, adopting fair wages, equitable hiring, and meaningful social responsibility initiatives is becoming a strategic necessity. From a societal perspective, inequality erodes institutional trust, amplifies populist movements, and fosters political gridlock, creating challenging operational environments for businesses. Governments face mounting pressure to address inequality through redistributive policies and social welfare programs, but polarized political landscapes often impede decisive action. Companies failing to respond to these challenges risk reputational damage and

declining stakeholder trust, while those proactively addressing inequality can build stronger relationships with customers, employees, and policymakers.

IMPLICATIONS: If the trend of rising economic inequality and middle-class pressure continues, we may see societal and economic shifts. Continued stagnant real wage growth and rising living costs, particularly in housing, healthcare, and education will likely drive increased political and social instability, populist rhetoric, and calls for wealth redistribution. Sustained economic inequality may lead to more severe societal fractures, including higher rates of unemployment, reduced access to essential services, and declining life expectancy in affected regions. Economic stagnation could become entrenched in countries unable to address systemic inequality, while nations with effective policies promoting economic inclusion may gain a competitive edge. Global corporations may face greater regulatory scrutiny and be required to adopt more robust frameworks for equitable wealth distribution within their organizations. Failure to address this trend could result in long-term political and economic instability, while proactive measures may create more sustainable and resilient economies with opportunities for inclusive growth.

SIGNALS:

- With labour wages stagnating and cost of houses or flats going up, wealth has increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer and older people, contributing to the generational wealth gap and erosion of the middle class. Source: Credit Suisse, Global Wealth Report 2023; US Federal Reserve, Survey of Consumer Finances
- Middle-income consumers are feeling the squeeze and worrying about inflation. Source: Adams, C., Alldredge, K., & Kohli, S. (2024, June.). *State of the Consumer 2024: What's now and what's next*.

9. Green Finance and Investment

Green finance and investment is reshaping global financial markets by directing capital towards renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, low-carbon and decarbonization technologies, and climate action through tools like green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and ESG funds. For businesses, access to green financing enables alignment with long-term environmental goals while attracting investor confidence. Socially, these financial mechanisms can fund projects addressing vulnerabilities in underserved regions and support equitable industrial transitions. However, challenges such as inconsistent ESG frameworks, limited accountability, and greenwashing risks threaten trust and effectiveness.

IMPLICATIONS: If green finance continues to grow without addressing its structural challenges, we may see short-term financial flows increase but with limited measurable environmental impact. More corporations and governments may issue green bonds and sustainable loans, and private investment in ESG funds could continue to rise. If accountability mechanisms are improved and standardized reporting becomes widespread, green finance could become a cornerstone of global economic strategy, driving systemic decarbonization and resource efficiency. However, if greenwashing concerns remain unresolved, investor confidence may erode and limit the capacity of financial markets to deliver on environmental goals. Without global alignment on regulatory standards, green finance risks becoming fragmented, slowing progress toward shared climate objectives.

SIGNALS:

- The concept of stresses from climate change and resource scarcity interacts with economic systems, pushing investments toward green technologies as part of the solution to these systemic crises. Lawrence, M., Homer-Dixon, T., Janzwood, S., Rockstöm, J., Renn, O., & Donges, J. F. (2024). Global polycrisis: The causal mechanisms of crisis entanglement. Global Sustainability, 7, e6. https://doi.org/10.1017/sus.2024.1
- 41% of CEOs, including over half of those at chemical companies, say their companies have set lower hurdle rates for climate-friendly investments than for other investments. Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2024, January 15). Annual Global CEO Survey: Thriving in an age of continuous reinvention. PwC. https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/ceo-survey.html

10. Cross-Sector Collaboration as a Strategic Imperative

Cross-sector collaboration between businesses, governments, civil society, and international bodies is becoming essential to address complex global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, technological governance, and public health crises. Partnerships leverage the strengths of each sector: regulatory frameworks, policy direction, scale, capital, and innovation, grassroots engagement, advocacy, and accountability. For businesses, success increasingly depends on operating within collaborative ecosystems rather than traditional industry silos. Effective partnerships require new governance structures, cultural adaptability, and skill sets focused on trust-building, transparency, and shared accountability. Governments are also evolving their approach, recognizing that partnerships with the private sector are essential for scaling public policy initiatives. Civil society remains a crucial watchdog, ensuring accountability and alignment with societal goals.

IMPLICATIONS: Cross-sector collaboration could become standard practice, with permanent coalitions emerging to address global systemic challenges such as biodiversity loss, ethical AI deployment, and equitable resource distribution. Partnerships focused on community resilience could emerge as pilot models, demonstrating tangible outcomes, building public trust, and investor confidence. These coalitions may drive policy harmonization, attract significant funding, and establish global governance frameworks for emerging risks. However, if collaboration remains poorly managed or driven by short-term incentives, its potential will likely remain largely unrealized, exacerbating public skepticism and systemic fragility.

SIGNALS:

- Cross-sector collaboration is needed to manage systemic risks, including the interdependencies between global systems that make isolated action insufficient. Source: International Crisis Group [ICG], 2024. “CrisisWatch: Tracking Conflict Worldwide”
- Cross-sector partnerships enable us to scale impact and leverage the issue-expertise, financial resources, broad buy-in, efficiency, and on-the-ground relationships associated with individual sectors. Source: Williams, A. (2024, January 10). *Why cross-sector collaboration is key to building more resilient communities*. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/01/collaboration-key-resilient-communities-davos/

11. Wellness as an Embodiment of Purpose

Wellness has evolved beyond a product category to a strategic benchmark for purpose alignment and serves as a proxy for a brand’s values, influencing purchasing decisions, employee expectations, and public perception. For Gen-Z and Gen Alpha, wellness encompasses physical health, mental well-being, emotional resilience,

environmental responsibility, and social equity and they expect wellness to be accessible, affordable, and inclusive. These younger generations hold businesses accountable across supply chains, HR policies, and environmental practices. Businesses that authentically integrate wellness into their strategies can build trust, cultural relevance, and long-term resilience. Authenticity and transparency are essential to avoid accusations of opportunism as wellness shapes product design, corporate culture, and sustainability strategies. Companies that succeed in integrating wellness stand to benefit from the $1.8 trillion global wellness economy, while those that fail risk reputational damage and diminished trust.

IMPLICATIONS: Wellness may dominate brand narratives, with increased focus on mental health campaigns, mindfulness products, and transparent workplace well-being practices and shift from a differentiator to a baseline expectation, with regulatory standards likely enforcing wellness claims and workplace mental health policies. Collaborative "Wellness Ecosystems" may emerge, where businesses, governments, and NGOs address systemic wellness challenges together. Companies that fail to align with these expectations may risk exclusion from influential markets, as purpose-driven consumers prioritize brands authentically committed to holistic well-being.

SIGNALS:

- Like Gen Z, Gen Alpha will likely not want to work for companies that don't align with their values. Source: *Nestr blog - Gen Z and Gen Alpha: What motivates them in the workforce?* (2023, July 04). https://nestr.io/blog/gen-z-and-gen-alpha-what-motivates-them-in-the-workforce
- Gen Z is driving the movement towards ethical supply chains, advocating for fair labuor practices, environmental conservation, and ethical sourcing. Source: Kudic, A. (2024, August 26). *Sustainability Beyond Buzzwords: How Gen Z is Driving Ethical Supply Chains*. GrECo Risk and Insurance Management. https://greco.services/sustainability-beyond-buzzwords-how-gen-z-is-driving-ethical-supply-chains/
- Gen Z and Millennials are particularly vocal in their expectations that brands must act on their purpose and not just pay lip service to it Source: Etter, M., & AlSalim, F. (2023, July). Purpose-washing What is it and how to avoid it. King's College London, King's Business School.

12. AI Supporting Human Well-Being

The integration of AI into well-being solutions is reshaping societal expectations of healthcare and emotional support systems. Driven by advancements in natural language processing and personalized analytics, AI-powered apps, personalized monitoring systems, and AI coaching platforms address the global shortage of mental health professionals while offering scalable and cost-effective alternatives. In healthcare, AI systems enable early disease detection, personalized medicine, and continuous health monitoring with the potential to revolutionize patient outcomes. However, unequal access, privacy concerns, and ethical dilemmas regarding algorithmic biases and AI's role in intimate human experiences remain ongoing challenges.

IMPLICATIONS: AI tools for health and wellness will likely become more mainstream, offering support for stress management, anxiety, and depression. Healthcare systems could increasingly rely on AI diagnostics and personalized treatment plans, improving efficiency and accessibility. AI may become an embedded part of daily well-being routines, with wearable devices offering real-time emotional and physical health insights, and virtual AI companions becoming socially accepted sources of emotional support. However, disparities in access to AI technologies and risks of over-reliance on non-human support systems could exacerbate inequalities and create unintended psychological effects.

SIGNALS:

- Mainstay's employee wellness solution uses an AI-powered chatbot to communicate directly with workers over text message 24/7 — ensuring they have instant, easy access to the valuable resources they need. Source: Fife, J. (2023, April 13). *How to integrate '8 dimensions of wellness' into your HR strategy*. Mainstay. https://mainstay.com/blog/the-future-of-workplace-wellbeing-integrating-8-dimensions-of-wellness-into-your-hr-strategy/
- Large language model-based agentic systems opens up a wealth of opportunities within medicine and healthcare, ranging from clinical workflow automation to multi-agent-aided diagnosis. Source: Qiu, J., Lam, K., Li, G., Acharya, A., Wong, T. Y., Darzi, A., Yuan, W., & Topol, E. J. (2024). LLM-based agentic systems in medicine and healthcare. *Nature Machine Intelligence*, *6*(12), 1418–1420. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-024-00944-1

13. Corporate Dominance and Monopolistic Corporations

Monopolistic corporate dominance is intensifying across multiple sectors such as technology, healthcare, finance, and supply chains. Monopolies suppress competitors, reduce innovation, and drive wealth consolidation by channelling profits to executives and shareholders rather than workers or broader stakeholders. Regulatory frameworks struggle to keep pace with the rapidly evolving nature of monopolistic practices, particularly in areas such as AI, digital platforms, and cross-border supply chains. The excessive influence of corporations in policymaking distorts democratic processes, erodes trust in institutions, and heightens public backlash. Widespread business, government, and consumer dependence on corporate-controlled infrastructure, digital platforms, and data-driven services introduces systemic and ethical risks including supply chain disruption, algorithmic bias, privacy breaches.

IMPLICATIONS: If corporate dominance continues, we could see a global economy increasingly shaped by a handful of monopolistic corporations with control over digital infrastructure, data, supply chains, and innovation pathways. This could result in rising regulatory scrutiny, increased antitrust litigation, and sporadic public backlash. Unchecked corporate power risks entrenching systemic inequalities, stifling market dynamism, and weakening democratic accountability. In extreme circumstances, economic resilience could erode as economies become overly dependent on a few corporate entities, making them vulnerable to systemic shocks, governance failures, and geopolitical manipulation.

SIGNALS:

- The Antitrust Division proposed a comprehensive solution to Google's monopoly, including pushing Apple into search. Source: Stoller, M. (2023, September 13). *The Proposal to Break Up Google Is Finally Here*. https://www.bigtechontrial.com/p/the-proposal-to-break-up-google-is
- No explicit regulatory framework is currently in place, and organizations are making decisions about the use of AI based on their assessment of the potential risks involved. Source: LeapXpert. (2023, August 31). *Is AI Progress Outpacing Regulatory Controls?* LeapXpert. https://www.leapxpert.com/is-artificial-intelligence-progress-outpacing-regulatory-measures/
- Businesses can't be sure they're part of the solution unless they examine their political activities. Source: Doty, T. L., Elizabeth. (2023, June 7). How Can Companies Use Their Political Influence Responsibly? *Network for Business Sustainability (NBS)*. https://nbs.net/how-can-companies-use-their-political-influence-responsibly/

14. Labour Union Resurgence and Collective Bargaining Movements

Union resurgence and collective bargaining efforts are gaining momentum across various industries, including tech, education, and healthcare, in response to rising economic inequality, poor working conditions, and the erosion of labour protections. This trend reflects a broader societal shift toward worker empowerment and the recognition of labour as a critical stakeholder in sustainable and equitable economic systems. Companies that approach this trend proactively stand to build more resilient, purpose-driven organizations capable of navigating a volatile economic and social environment. Companies that fail to address worker concerns face strikes, reduced productivity, and reputational damage.

IMPLICATIONS: If the resurgence of unions continues, we may witness a broader institutionalization of collective bargaining rights across industries traditionally resistant to unionization, such as tech and logistics. This could manifest in higher-profile labour strikes, increased media attention on labour issues, and corporate concessions on wages, benefits, and working conditions. Collective bargaining may extend into new forms of employment, including gig and remote work, challenging outdated regulatory frameworks, and requiring more flexible labour policies. Governments may also face mounting pressure to pass pro-union legislation, potentially reversing decades of labour deregulation. Union resurgence may reduce income inequality and improve workforce well-being, and it could also lead to clashes with entrenched corporate cultures resistant to collective organizing, and result in higher costs for consumers.

SIGNALS:

- The United Auto Workers (UAW) automotive union has succeeded for the first time in unionizing a foreign manufacturer's plant. Source: Leparmentier, A. (2024, April 22). United Auto Workers union achieves historic breakthrough. *Le Monde*. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/economy/article/2024/04/22/united-auto-workers-union-achieves-historic-breakthrough_6669132_19.html
- After decades of decline, strike activity in Canada is rising. Source: Savage, L. (2025, January 4). Sick of unfair wages and corporate greed, workers are finally fighting back. Toronto Star. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/sick-of-unfair-wages-and-corporate-greed-workers-are-finally-fighting-back/article_c08b69ea-64af-11ef-8182-2fe216e863c3.html

15. Purpose as a Luxury

While consumers express strong support for purpose-driven brands, rising inflation, cost-of-living pressures, and economic uncertainty are shifting purchasing priorities toward affordability and driving a divide in purpose-driven consumption. Affluent consumers view sustainability, ethical sourcing, and wellness as lifestyle markers and social signals, sustaining demand for premium purpose-aligned brands. In contrast, price-sensitive consumers often prioritize affordability, limiting their participation in purpose-driven markets. This divide creates strategic dilemmas for businesses. Premium offerings generate higher margins but risk excluding broader markets, while affordable models often struggle with purpose integration due to cost constraints. Without scalable solutions, brands may inadvertently reinforce economic inequalities, framing purpose as a luxury rather than a universal value.

IMPLICATIONS: Businesses may rely on loyalty programs, transparent value communication, and discount-driven campaigns to maintain purpose narratives while addressing affordability concerns. Government incentives,

technological advancements, and economies of scale could reduce the cost of purpose-driven products and improve accessibility. However, without price relief, purpose-driven offerings may remain concentrated in premium markets. This segmentation could solidify purpose as a premium marker while affordability dominates mass consumption. Companies that successfully integrate cost-efficiency with authentic purpose strategies could secure both market resilience and societal impact.

SIGNALS:

- Higher price points of products that align with shopper's values may deter price-sensitive consumers. In fact, 87% of consumers have changed how they shop in order to manage expenses. Source: Fernandez, L. (2024, February 6). Consumer Outlook 2024. *NIQ*. https://nielseniq.com/global/en/insights/report/2024/consumer-outlook-2024-6-consumer-sentiment-driven-strategies-to-drive-growth-and-capture-spending/
- Luxury brands are now embracing innovative, sustainable alternatives. Source: Admin. (2024, September 9). *The New Luxury: How Sustainable Fashion is Redefining High-End Style*. MOVER MAGAZINE - INTERNATIONAL PRINT&DIGITAL MAGAZINE | Fashion | People| Culture | Events. https://mover-magazine.com/fashion/the-new-luxury-how-sustainable-fashion-is-redefining-high-end-style/
- 41% of consumers cited cost as a major concern for not making sustainable purchases. Source: Anand, V. (2024, September 24). *The Price Dilemma in Sustainable Products: A Barrier to Adoption | Analytics Magazine*. https://pubsonline.informs.org/do/10.1287/LYTX.2024.04.03/full/

16. Technology as a Catalyst for Purpose

Businesses face growing pressure to validate purpose claims with measurable outcomes and are integrating technologies like AI, blockchain, data analytics, and green tech to drive transparency, efficiency, and measurable impact across operations and supply chains. Data enables businesses to identify patterns, predict risk, and validate their social and environmental contributions with precision. Companies capable of leveraging data effectively are better positioned to align operational decisions with strategic goals while building stakeholder trust. However, these technologies require significant investments in reskilling programs and digital infrastructure. Uneven access, workforce readiness gaps, and ethical concerns around privacy, cybersecurity, and algorithmic fairness present ongoing challenges.

IMPLICATIONS: Digital tools that enhance sustainability reporting, supply chain transparency, and stakeholder engagement could become integral for real-time monitoring and decision-making in purpose-related initiatives making data literacy essential across organizational roles. AI systems may automate sustainability audits, while green technologies like carbon capture and hydrogen energy could reshape high-emission sectors. Businesses will likely face heightened expectations around ethical data governance, algorithmic transparency, and privacy protection. Companies proficient in aligning technological infrastructure with measurable purpose outcomes may set industry benchmarks for accountability and innovation. Persistent inequalities in technological access may continue unless addressed through systemic public-private initiatives focused on digital equity.

SIGNALS:

- Technological advances, particularly AI, are key to navigating global crises, and can be used to drive meaningful purpose by mitigating various global stresses. Source: Baylon, C., & Robele, S. (2022). *UNDP RBAP Foresight Brief: Polycrisis and Long-term Thinking*. UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.
- Digital transformation is an enabling and fostering factor for sustainability and open innovation. Source: Robertsone, G., & Lapiņa, I. (2023). Digital transformation as a catalyst for sustainability and open innovation. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *9*(1), 100017. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2023.100017
- A host of new technologies – across areas as diverse as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, energy storage, DNA sequencing, synthetic biology, blockchain technology, and materials sciences – are approaching tipping points over the next five to ten years. Source: Satell, G. (Dec 2018). *Materials Science May Be the Most Important Technology of the Next Decade. Here's Why*. Inc.Com. https://www.inc.com/greg-satell/materials-science-may-be-most-important-technology-of-next-decade-heres-why.html

17. Uneven Climate Adaptation Efforts

Climate adaptation efforts are emerging as a global focus, but significant disparities exist between wealthier nations and developing economies in their capacity to respond. Wealthier nations benefit from investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, agricultural innovations, and early warning systems, creating a buffer against economic disruptions caused by climate impacts. In contrast, many developing nations face funding shortages, and resource limitations leaving them more vulnerable to economic shocks, food insecurity, and displacement caused by extreme weather. These imbalances worsen existing global inequalities and disproportionate vulnerability to climate impacts, including extreme weather events, rising sea levels, resource scarcity, and climate-driven migration patterns. Uneven adaptation efforts challenge international cooperation, as wealthier nations face growing pressure to provide financial and technological assistance to vulnerable countries.

IMPLICATIONS: If uneven climate adaptation efforts continue over the next decade, we are likely to see increasingly stark disparities between climate-resilient regions and those left behind. These disparities may drive increased climate migration, geopolitical tensions over resource access, and humanitarian crises in regions most affected by climate impacts. Conversely, coordinated global funding initiatives, knowledge-sharing platforms, and cross-border partnerships could help narrow the adaptation gap, fostering greater resilience in vulnerable regions.

SIGNALS:

- Countries of the global south are experiencing a new wave of debt caused by climate finance Source: Casado Sanchez, I., & Botts, J. (2024, May 22). Rich nations are earning billions from a pledge to help fix climate. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/climate-change-loans/
- Developing nations have asked for $1.3 trillion (€1.25 trillion) to help them adapt to the immediate consequences of climate change, such as droughts, floods, rising sea levels and extreme heat. Source Volcovici, V., Dickie, G., Volcovici, V., & Dickie, G. (2024, November 22). COP29 climate summit overruns as $250 billion draft deal stalls. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/cop29-host-urges-collaboration-deal-negotiations-enter-final-stage-2024-11-22/

Appendix D: Audio Artifacts of the Future

1. "Business as Usual" Earnings Call Introduction

Link to "Business as Usual" Audio Artifact of the Future[5]

CEO: Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining our Q4 earnings call. I'm Gary Newell, CEO of Vital Net, and I'm pleased to share yet another record-breaking quarter of growth driven by our biodigital healthcare platforms, AI-powered eldercare solutions, and advanced environmental metrics.

This quarter our net income rose by 12%, driven by strong adoption in affluent urban hubs leveraging our hyper-personalized healthcare solutions and predictive eldercare platforms. These systems continue to demonstrate their transformative potential for those able to access them.

At the same time, we're aware of the growing dialogue around equitable access to these critical innovations. While our systems have driven remarkable advancements in care, connectivity, and efficiency, we also recognize the challenges faced by underserved regions in accessing these solutions.

We remain committed to engaging with governments, non-profits, and community organizations to explore opportunities for broader inclusion. That said, our focus remains on delivering exceptional value to our shareholders and driving innovation within markets where infrastructure supports optimal performance.

As we look ahead, the integration of AI-driven personalization and biodigital analytics will continue to lead the way in reshaping industries. With our unmatched access to data and advanced analytics, we are well-positioned to remain the leader in this space.

Now, I'll hand it over to our CFO, Cynthia Garland, to walk us through the financial details and key highlights of this quarter. Thank you.

[5]Link to "Business as Usual" Audio Artifact of the Future:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LOFOOqXz4g3eNUYt5pY53Tb8bpDWwZu1/view?usp=sharing

2. "The Green Divide" Internal Town Hall Meeting

Link to "The Green Divide" Audio Artifact of the Future[6]

[Sound effects: Applause of a gathering audience fade out signaling the start of the meeting.]

Team Lead (empathetic, addressing the room): Good afternoon, everyone. Before we dive into today's agenda, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the news that many of you may have already heard. After careful consideration, we've made the difficult decision to discontinue the Carbon Bridge initiative.

I know this isn't the outcome we hoped for. Carbon Bridge represented our commitment to delivering affordable, data-driven green technology solutions to underserved regions. The passion, creativity, and dedication that each of you poured into this project have been nothing short of inspiring.

Unfortunately, challenges beyond our control, including limited access to critical supply chains and monopolistic pricing pressures, created insurmountable barriers. These obstacles reflect the broader inequities in how green technologies are distributed—a reality that continues to drive the divide between ecological privilege and vulnerability.

That said, this decision doesn't diminish the incredible progress we've made or the valuable lessons we've learned along the way. Thanks to your efforts, we've developed partnerships and insights that will shape our future initiatives. In fact, several of the ideas from Carbon Bridge are already being adapted into new proposals, including a collaboration with us at Fair Energy Partners to scale localized renewable energy solutions.

As a company dedicated to balancing profit with purpose, these challenges reaffirm why our mission is so important. While this setback is disappointing, it also serves as a reminder of the work that still needs to be done and the role, we can play in driving change.

I want to thank each of you for your unwavering commitment to our vision. Together, we'll take these lessons and channel them into new opportunities. I believe in what we're building here, and I know that our best work is still ahead of us. Let's move forward, together.

[6] Link to "The Green Divide" Audio Artifact of the Future:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kOq5TQK4jfTjxDdD3WeOa3bHjPKyX_zO/view?usp=sharing

3. “The Wellness Market” News Report

Link to “The Wellness Market Audio Artifact of the Future.[7]

[Sound effects: Upbeat news theme music fades in.]

News Anchor/Reporter: Good evening. In a significant development for the wellness industry, EmpathAi Systems, a leading profit-and-purpose business, has just unveiled a revolutionary platform called *EquiCare Connect*. This ground-breaking innovation is designed to make emotional credit systems more accessible and inclusive, addressing a critical gap in the rapidly growing Wellness Market."

EquiCare Connect leverages cutting-edge technologies, including agentic AI and biodigital tools, to deliver hyper-personalized well-being solutions. But what sets it apart is its innovative tiered pricing model. underserved communities can access essential well-being support at a significantly reduced cost. Early pilots in GTA are already showing promise, with local governments partnering to subsidize access.

This launch comes at a pivotal moment. Emotional credits—once a niche concept—have become a cornerstone of economic mobility, allowing individuals to trade credits earned through caregiving, collaboration, or self-improvement for career advancement or essential services. Yet, until now, access to these systems has been largely monopolized by a handful of dominant players, leaving many without a way to participate.

Of course, the road ahead isn’t without its challenges. Scaling an equitable platform like *EquiCare Connect* will require navigating significant barriers, including resource-intensive infrastructure and competition from entrenched corporate giants. Critics have also raised concerns about whether tiered access models can truly address systemic inequities or if they risk reinforcing existing divides.

Still, the potential here is undeniable. With its bold vision and commitment to purpose, EmpathAi is demonstrating that innovation can go hand in hand with inclusivity. By combining technology with a mission to democratize well-being, they’re challenging the status quo of the Wellness Market."

Whether *EquiCare Connect* can scale effectively and deliver on its promise remains to be seen, but one thing is certain—it’s a step in the right direction. For now, all eyes are on EmpthAi as they take on the challenge of redefining what it means to thrive in this new era of well-being.

[7] Link to “The Wellness Market Audio Artifact of the Future: https://drive.google.com/file/d/11SPAV1Tf4iPDYxj-bLIc60IFjHbyGN8O/view?usp=drive_link

4. "Canadian Mission Economy" Podcast Introduction

Link to the Canadian Mission Economy Audio Artifact of the Future[8]

[Sound effects: Instrumental music fades in.]

Host: Welcome to The Future We Create, the podcast where we explore bold ideas and transformative collaborations shaping the world of tomorrow. I'm your host, Jordan Lee, and today, we're diving into an inspiring story of what's possible when profit and purpose work hand in hand.

In this episode, we're joined by two incredible changemakers driving Canada's Mission Economy forward Justin Ridley, the Chief Purpose Officer of Purpose Lab, and Amara Okafor, Canada's Minister of Public Innovation. Together, they've championed ground-breaking collaborations that have redefined what it means to do business in the 2030s.

Canada's Mission Economy is not just a vision—it's a reality. From equitable housing initiatives to renewable energy projects and labour reforms, this model has transformed markets by aligning them with societal goals. But let's be real—the journey hasn't been without its challenges. Resistance from entrenched powers, uneven regional progress, and the constant push to balance innovation with inclusion—these are hurdles our guests know all too well.

Today, we'll hear how PurposeLab Solutions partnered with the federal government to scale the Equity-First Ventures Fund. This ground-breaking initiative has provided mission-driven businesses with the resources they need to innovate and grow, from funding NetZero housing solutions in underserved regions to supporting AI-powered energy optimization tools that bridge gaps between rural and urban communities.

We'll also explore how the fund expanded its reach through collaborative ecosystems, combining government programs, community voices, and private innovation to deliver solutions that prioritize equity and sustainability. From its pilot phase in Toronto and Vancouver to its rollout across Canada's rural and Indigenous regions, this fund demonstrates the power of aligning purpose with profit.

So grab your coffee, get comfortable, and join us as we unpack what it takes to build an economy where markets serve people and the planet—not the other way around. Let's get started!

[8] Link to the Canadian Mission Economy Audio Artifact of the Future: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FMSQS1srGw7U1FcfW4IlQDBccO2K7_hw/view?usp=sharing

Appendix E: Strategic Pathways and Strategy Details

Pathway 1: Systemic Resilience

Systemic resilience is a business's capacity to withstand disruptions while actively contributing to the stability, adaptability, and sustainability of the broader systems it operates within and depends on. These systems—economic, social, and environmental—are deeply interconnected and require businesses to act as both participants and contributors to their long-term health.

Unlike traditional resilience, which focuses on organizational survival and recovery, systemic resilience recognizes that businesses are embedded in larger ecosystems. This approach emphasizes both the responsibility and opportunity businesses have to shape these systems for long-term collective benefit.

In this pathway, businesses are not passive observers of change; they are active contributors to building resilient, adaptive, and equitable systems.

Underpinned by Adaptive Monitoring, Purpose-Driven Leadership, and Operational Alignment, this program ensures businesses remain responsive to systemic challenges and capable of embracing emerging opportunities.

Insight: Systemic resilience is not about maintaining the status quo, it's about helping businesses adapt to change, strengthen the systems they depend on, and align their strategies with long-term societal and environmental goals.

1.1 Strategy: Purpose-Driven Governance and Legitimacy

Purpose	Align decision-making, accountability, and transparency with societal and environmental goals to build long-term trust and credibility.
Description	Embed purpose into governance structures and align internal systems with external societal priorities through: • Developing governance frameworks that integrate societal and environmental metrics. • Ensuring leadership accountability through purpose-aligned incentives. • Building transparent mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and participation. • Actively participating in governance networks and regulatory dialogues.

Signals to Monitor	• Adoption of purpose-driven governance frameworks in industries and sectors. • Policy changes promoting participatory governance and accountability. • Growth in stakeholder demand for corporate transparency and ethical governance. • Increasing collaboration with external governance and policy actors.
Risks	• Misalignment between governance priorities and stakeholder expectations. • Resistance from leadership accustomed to traditional governance models. • Governance becoming performative rather than deeply embedded.
Success Measures	• Emerging governance frameworks that prioritize societal and environmental goals. • Increased public demand for corporate accountability and transparency. • Growth in multi-stakeholder initiatives promoting shared governance practices. • New policy frameworks requiring purpose-aligned reporting and accountability.

1.2 Strategy: Advocacy for Systemic Change

Purpose	Mobilize collective influence to drive policy reforms and structural changes addressing root causes of systemic challenges.
Description	Play an active role in shaping systemic change through policy advocacy, regulatory engagement, and multi-stakeholder coalitions: • Identify key policy barriers and advocating for systemic reforms. • Collaborate with industry peers, policymakers, and advocacy groups. • Align advocacy efforts with organizational purpose and societal goals. • Amplify shared priorities through coalitions and public platforms.
Signposts to Monitor	• Changes in regulatory or policy landscapes that support sustainable business practices. • Growth of coalitions advocating for structural and policy reforms. • Increased government and civil society alignment on sustainability priorities. • Introduction of incentives for purpose-aligned business practices.
Risks	• Advocacy misalignment with business goals or stakeholder expectations. • Reputational risks from polarizing policy stances. • Resource and time constraints in long-term advocacy efforts.
Success Measures	• Tangible policy or regulatory advancements aligned with advocacy goals. • Increased participation in cross-sector coalitions and networks. • Stakeholder recognition for advocacy leadership. • Measurable contributions to systemic policy reforms.

1.3 Strategy: Cross-Sector Collaboration

Purpose	Build partnerships across industries, governments, and civil society to address large-scale societal and environmental challenges collectively.
Description	Build multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborative initiatives by: • Forming alliances with public institutions, civil society, and industry peers. • Sharing knowledge, resources, and infrastructure for collective goals. • Facilitating cross-sector platforms for ongoing dialogue and collaboration. • Developing joint initiatives to address shared challenges like climate resilience and resource equity.
Signals to Monitor	• Growth in cross-sector alliances addressing societal and environmental challenges. • Increased investment in joint initiatives across industries and geographies. • Emergence of collaborative platforms for shared resources and innovation. • Shifts in public funding priorities toward cross-sector partnerships.
Risks	• Misaligned priorities between stakeholders in collaborative projects. • Resource constraints impacting the sustainability of partnerships. • Operational complexity in managing multi-stakeholder initiatives.
Success Measures	• Number and effectiveness of cross-sector partnerships established. • Demonstrated outcomes from collaborative initiatives. • Evidence of shared resources and systemic benefits. • Positive stakeholder feedback on collaboration efforts.

Pathway 2: Inclusive Innovation

This strategic pathway recognizes that innovation efforts can do more than drive efficiency and growth, they can also prioritize fairness, accessibility, and adaptability across global and local systems. Inclusive Innovation aims to breaks down barriers to participation and opportunity, whether those barriers are technological, cultural, economic, or systemic. It emphasizes the role of businesses as enablers of inclusion, ensuring that innovation solutions serve both business and societal needs.

Enabled by Operational Alignment, A Culture of Innovation, and Stakeholder-Centric Decision-Making, these pathway positions businesses as enablers of inclusion and transformation across economic, technological, and social systems.

Insight: Innovation goes beyond advancing technology and efficiency to create solutions that are fair, adaptable, and inclusive, ensuring benefits are shared equitably across societies, generations, and geographies.

2.1 Strategy: Invest in Ethical Supply Chains

Purpose	Design supply networks to prioritize transparency, sustainability, and equitable relationships with suppliers and communities.
Description	Align business sourcing practices with environmental and social responsibility goals by: • Implementing transparent procurement and sourcing practices. • Partnering with suppliers committed to fair wages, ethical labour standards, and sustainable practices. • Investing in technologies for traceability and supply chain accountability. • Strengthening relationships with regional and local supplier networks.
Signals to Monitor	• Rising consumer demand for ethical and transparent sourcing practices. • Changes in supply chain regulations prioritizing environmental and social standards. • Adoption of technologies (e.g., blockchain) for supply chain traceability. • Emerging supplier partnerships centered on long-term sustainability goals.
Risks	• Higher upfront costs associated with ethical sourcing transitions. • Difficulty verifying compliance across complex supply chains. • Resistance from suppliers unprepared to meet higher standards.
Success Measures	• Percentage of suppliers meeting ethical sourcing benchmarks. • Documented improvements in supplier community well-being. • Enhanced transparency across supply networks. • Positive stakeholder feedback on supply chain integrity.

2.2 Strategy: Localized, Decentralized, Resilience

Purpose	Enable community-driven, context-specific solutions to address social and environmental challenges.
Description	Empowering communities with adaptive, place-based solutions through: • Supporting locally-owned infrastructure projects. • Collaborating with regional stakeholders to co-design community-led initiatives. • Investing in capacity-building programs tailored to local contexts. • Developing decentralized systems to reduce dependency on centralized structures.

Signals to Monitor	• Growth of community-led innovation and resilience projects. • Adoption of decentralized infrastructure solutions in underserved regions. • Policy incentives supporting regional and local sustainability initiatives. • Increased community participation in business-led resilience programs.
Risks	• Challenges scaling local initiatives beyond specific regions. • Dependency on local leadership capacity and long-term governance structures. • Resource-intensive nature of decentralized systems.
Success Measures	• Number of community-led projects successfully implemented. • Improvements in local resilience and well-being indicators. • Evidence of sustained partnerships with local actors. • Demonstrated reduction in reliance on centralized systems.

2.3 Strategy: Equitable Access to Technology and Data

Purpose	Ensure fair, transparent, and affordable access to transformative technologies and shared data ecosystems.
Description	Enable broader participation in innovation-driven solutions through: • Developing affordable, community-accessible technological tools and platforms. • Promoting open-source technologies to encourage adaptability and shared ownership. • Creating transparent data-sharing systems that support collective problem-solving. • Building digital literacy programs to empower underrepresented communities.
Signals to Monitor	• Increased adoption of open-source technologies in underserved regions. • Policy initiatives supporting digital inclusion and data transparency. • Evidence of community-driven data platforms. • Growth in digital literacy training programs.
Risks	• Fragmentation of data ecosystems without interoperability standards. • Barriers to adoption due to digital literacy gaps. • Risk of inequitable technology deployment in marginalized areas
Success Measures	• Increased access to purpose-driven technologies in underserved regions. • Documented improvements in digital literacy and data access. • Growth in community-led technology initiatives. • Measurable benefits from transparent data-sharing systems.

2.4 Strategy: Bridge Generational Divides

Purpose	Align values, knowledge, and collaboration across generations to build cohesive and adaptive organizational cultures.
Description	Enable collaboration between older and younger generations through: • Implementing cross-generational mentorship programs. • Creating knowledge-sharing platforms to bridge generational gaps. • Aligning communication and storytelling across generational values. • Ensuring diverse age representation in decision-making structures.
Signals to Monitor	• Growth of intergenerational mentorship and collaboration programs. • Increased representation of younger and older voices in governance structures. • Rising cross-generational participation in purpose-driven initiatives. • Shifts in workplace culture prioritizing inclusivity across age groups.
Risks	• Fragmentation of data ecosystems without interoperability standards. • Barriers to adoption due to digital literacy gaps. • Risk of inequitable technology deployment in marginalized areas
Success Measures	• Increased access to purpose-driven technologies in underserved regions. • Documented improvements in digital literacy and data access. • Growth in community-led technology initiatives. • Measurable benefits from transparent data-sharing systems.

2.5 Strategy: Collaborative Alliances & Shared Resources

Purpose	Enable collaboration, resource-sharing, and knowledge exchange among purpose-aligned businesses to drive collective innovation, improve operational efficiency, and address shared challenges.
Description	Create collaborative alliances to create efficiencies and collective resilience by: • Developing joint initiatives with aligned businesses. • Sharing access to supply chain networks, logistics infrastructure, and technological tools. • Building collaborative innovation initiatives for shared problem-solving. • Co-designing strategic projects that benefit multiple stakeholders.

Signals to Monitor	• Emergence of resource-sharing platforms among purpose-aligned businesses. • Increased adoption of collaborative logistics and operational models. • Growth of industry-wide initiatives focused on shared innovation and infrastructure. • Strategic alliances addressing systemic supply chain and technological challenges.
Risks	• Misalignment of priorities between business partners. • Resource constraints limiting the scalability of joint initiatives. • Operational complexity in managing shared resources.
Success Measures	• Number and effectiveness of shared resource initiatives. • Demonstrated outcomes from collaborative projects. • Improved operational efficiencies through partnerships. • Evidence of sustained resource-sharing networks.