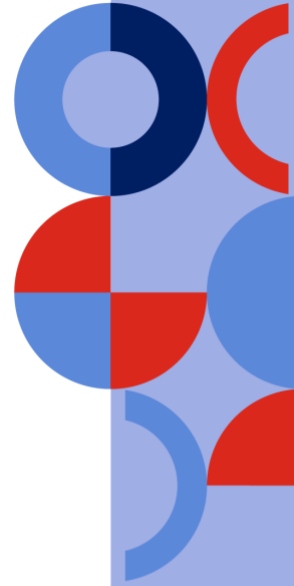


THE SOCIAL PURPOSE PROFESSIONAL

FEBRUARY 17, 2023



Introduction

Has your company adopted a purpose to make the world better¹ and committed to authentically embedding the purpose across its operations? Are you wondering how to support this purpose from your position in the company? Would you like to be a Social Purpose Professional?

This tool, The Social Purpose Professional, suggests six steps business leaders can pursue to equip themselves and their teams to embed their company's purpose into their everyday work – and to mobilize their profession to adopt a social purpose as the reason the profession exists.

What is the Social Purpose Professional?

The Social Purpose Professional is a senior leader who embraces their organization's social purpose and seeks to embed it in their department and functional teams, and across their broader profession. They become a force for good in their organization and beyond. They encourage other businesses in their ecosystem to adopt a social purpose and engage professional peers within and outside the organization to become purpose driven. They role model social purpose decision-making and actively champion social purpose within and beyond their organization and profession.

Functional teams that the Social Purpose Professional may guide and support include finance and accounting, sales and marketing, product development, legal and corporate affairs, governance, operations, procurement, risk, human resources, strategy, information technology, customer service, communications, distribution, etc.

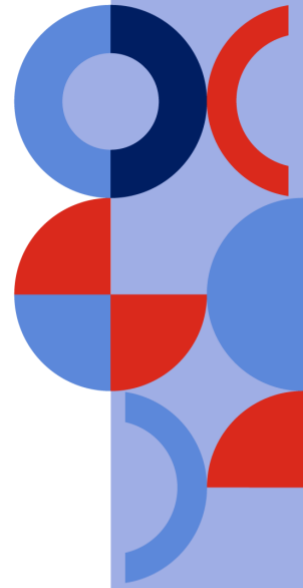
The opportunity ahead is for all functional groups in your company to embed social purpose in their mandates to help your company authentically implement its purpose and increase the positive benefits it creates for society.

Why become a Social Purpose Professional?

These are some reasons why becoming a social purpose professional is valuable:

- Guide your company to authentically implement its purpose
- Avoid the risk that your company will be accused of inauthentic purpose, or “purpose-washing”
- Attract, engage, and motivate values-based employees and teams
- Increase innovation as your organization brings a new lens to its work
- Attract and engage values-based customers and partners
- Build your personal brand, and the brand of your department and company
- Add social purpose to your professional experience and resume
- Bring more meaning to your work
- Enhance your own and your organization's social impact

¹ [Social Purpose Business Definition](#)



Six Steps to becoming a Social Purpose Professional

These are six steps to becoming a social purpose professional:

Learn about Social Purpose

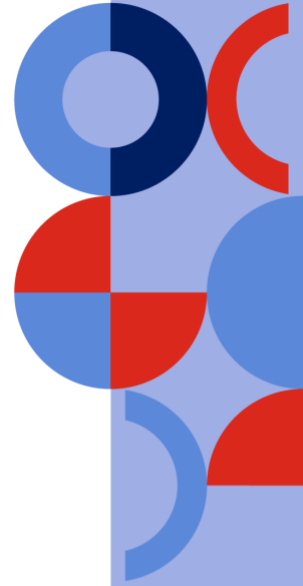
- a) Seek out business articles and follow social purpose thought leaders and influencers. Here is a resource you can use to set yourself up, the [Social Purpose Newsfeed](#).
- b) Sign up for updates about the Purpose Economy issued by the [Canadian Purpose Economy Project](#).
- c) Join the United Way Social Purpose Institute's Canadian Social Purpose Community by [subscribing to their monthly newsletter](#) to receive notice of events, resources, tools, etc.

Establish a peer reference group to share ideas and best practices

- a) Look for companies that have a social purpose in your industry or local market. Reach out to your equivalent in 3 – 4 of these companies to learn how they are embedding social purpose in their function.
- b) Once you have identified 3 – 4 or more other peers embedding social purpose in their function, create a “community of practice” that meets a few times a year to share challenges, successes, and trusted resources and learn from each other.
- c) Share relevant learnings from this network with other Social Purpose Professionals in your organization.

Engage your team to integrate social purpose in their mandate

- a) Develop a social purpose for your department that ladders up to your company's social purpose.
- b) Develop social purpose performance goals for all members of your team and include social purpose in incentives and recognition programs. Include a social purpose performance goal in your own performance objectives.
- c) Support your team members with a range of social purpose education opportunities. Include social purpose education in your department's professional development budget.
- d) Include social purpose responsibilities in all job descriptions and postings, even a generic one that goes into every job description, such as: support implementation of the company's social purpose.
- e) When starting a new project or initiative, determine how your company's social purpose will guide your approach to the scope of work and how the new project or initiative will create benefits for society.
- f) Set a departmental goal every year to embed and deliver on your company's social purpose.
- g) Encourage team members to raise social purpose with other divisions and teams and do so yourself across the company. Role model social purpose in action.
- h) Regularly share social purpose stories with your organization (ideally through an enterprise-wide intranet or company newsletter) and include successes, challenges and lessons learned. This will help others determine what social purpose looks like “in action”.
- i) Start key meetings with a “social purpose moment”, in which you and / or others share an inspiring social purpose experience.



Mobilize your ecosystem to take up social purpose

- a) Ask if your professional association could provide purpose education for members; if you have the resources, offer to sponsor a social purpose webinar series or research paper.
- b) Encourage and support your association to adopt a social purpose and become a force for good. Share this resource with them: [The Social Purpose of Associations: A Call to Action to Serve the Greater Good](#).
- c) Ask your existing suppliers, vendors, and contractors if they have a social purpose and include a question in your Request for Proposal (procurement) documents that asks prospects to state their social purpose if they have one.
- d) Actively share your approach to functional purpose integration with your internal and external peers, seek out public speaking opportunities and encourage your profession to embrace social purpose.
- e) Share this tool with functional leads in your company and with colleagues in your network to encourage them to pursue a purpose-driven career.

Adopt a personal purpose

- a) A personal purpose helps define who you are and reflects your passions and values. Draft a sentence or phrase that summarizes your purpose in life. Recognize that this purpose may change over time, so revisit it periodically.
- b) Share your purpose with your colleagues and encourage them to adopt a personal purpose too.

Update your resume and LinkedIn profile

- a) Now that you have enhanced your understanding of social purpose, embedded it in your job description and helped implement your company's purpose you can update your resume with this new knowledge, skill and experience and reference it when seeking promotions.
- b) Add your social purpose experience to your LinkedIn profile and follow and amplify the work of social purpose leaders and organizations in social media.

Social Purpose Professional Resources

Employee Education: United Way Social Purpose Institute [Professional Development](#) offerings include social purpose 101 and social purpose functional engagement

Purpose Marketing: [Marketing on Purpose: What Marketing Looks Like in The Purpose-Driven Enterprise](#)

Social Purpose Association:

Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Guide for Associations, including professional associations, includes a pathway for becoming a social purpose professional association: [CSA SPE-116:23 ESG/SDG for associations](#)

[The Social Purpose Association Toolkit](#) provides a definition of a social purpose association and includes a continuum and benchmark

[The Social Purpose of Associations: A Call to Action to Serve the Greater Good](#) article provides information on becoming a social purpose association for use by professional associations and others

Social Purpose Procurement: [Toolkit](#) contains best practices and case studies showing how to embed social purpose into procurement

Social Purpose Promotion Toolkit: [Resource](#) provides a list of ideas for promoting social purpose in your business ecosystem

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Social Purpose Professional was written by Coro Strandberg, Chair of the Canadian Purpose Economy Project, and President of Strandberg Consulting. She is one of Canada's social purpose leaders and has advised dozens of social purpose companies on social purpose implementation.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN PURPOSE ECONOMY PROJECT

The Canadian Purpose Economy Project exists to accelerate the transition to the purpose economy. It engages national ecosystem actors to create an enabling environment for social purpose businesses to start, transition, thrive and grow. Subscribe to our updates at: www.purposeeconomy.ca

