

Making the leap to a sustainable future: Update from Coro Strandberg

Hello Friends:

What did you do with a whole extra day in February? Did you take a brief moment to hail Julius Caesar, who in 46 BCE, created the 365-day calendar and decreed the addition of an extra day every four years to synchronize it with the solar calendar? If he hadn't come up with a plan we might be well into our summer vacation now. What I appreciate is that the Romans, acknowledging they had a faulty calendar, changed the rules rather than fighting with Mother Nature. And isn't that instructive for us now – more than 2,000 years later?

With the prospect of nine billion people co-existing on our planet by 2050, businesses must heed the clarion call to action: improve social and environmental impacts up and downstream of their operations. Many progressive organizations have become game-changers: they are not just rewriting the rules, they're innovating along their value chains and improving their operating context. In so doing, these **transformational companies** are leap years ahead of their competition.

Jumping right into my projects and assignments over the past six months, I'm pleased to share this summary with you. I am actively pursuing two tracks:

- 1 Companies:** Advancing the transformational, social purpose, circular company which is transforming its business model and its operating context in line with a sustainable future for itself and society; *and*
- 2 Associations:** Scaling up sustainable practices through collective action by supporting industry and professional associations to build the sustainability competencies of their members.

Leap to the topic areas of most relevance and interest. Then please pass on the resources to your network to help accelerate business progress. Or [contact me](#) if you are interested in collaborating on these ideas.

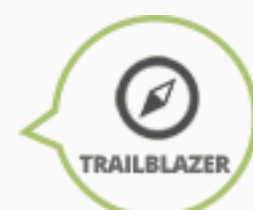
1 Companies

Transformational companies take quantum leaps

In this [Guide to a Transformational Company](#) I profile a new breed of company that transforms its business model internally and collaborates with partners externally to enable a secure future for itself *and* society. The research, commissioned by Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR), is also available via an [interactive website](#).



Next-Gen CSR Institute: I have been hosting a corporate social responsibility webinar series for the Conference Board of Canada for a number of years (visit my [webinar archive](#)). Now I am helping them develop a new Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Institute with a mandate to catalyze next generation CSR practices, following the Transformational Company roadmap. Here is a sneak peek of the [new Institute](#) if you wish to check it out. [Contact me](#) if you would like to be involved.



Conference: If you are in Toronto on March 22-23, join me at The Conference Board's [Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Summit](#) for discussions on how to amplify the Transformational Company in Canada.

Webinar: [International Society of Sustainability Professionals webinar](#) on the Qualities of a Transformational Company, April 21, 11 am PT.

The Bold Approach of Transformational Companies: The title of a [recent article](#) I authored for the Huffington Post in which I reflect on the past and future of corporate responsibility. It's based on my research into the Qualities of a Transformational Company.

Pursuing profit through purpose is not a leap of faith

Adopting a sustainable or social purpose is one of the qualities of a transformational company and profiled in [chapter 1 of the How-To-Guide](#). My research shows that [social purpose companies](#) re-engineer their business models to create profitability and growth via their social purpose quest. I have been helping community investment professionals harness social purpose to activate a “whole company” approach to social value creation. For one organization I created a [social purpose gap assessment checklist](#) so they could benchmark their progress. Feel free to adapt it for your purposes and share your experience.



Community Investment Pivot: I have been collaborating with the United Way of the Lower Mainland to help them leverage this [social purpose continuum](#). The intent is to engage corporate donors in higher impact social benefit through their core business. This social innovation is a possible opportunity for the United Way movement and non-profit organizations to reinvent themselves – and their donor partners – and transform communities for the better.

Conference: I'm delighted to be speaking for the first time at Sustainable Brands 2016: “[Activating Purpose for a Flourishing Future](#)”. San Diego June 6 – 9. Join me at this event if you would like inspiration and ideas about how to catalyze purpose in your business!

Jumpstarting Canada's circular economy

I have been working with the [National Zero Waste Council](#) for the past two years as they invest in measures to stimulate the circular economy in Canada. Read [profiles of eight circular businesses](#) in action and [find out what circular businesses have in common](#). Naturally, [closed loop](#) is one of the qualities of a Transformational Company. Please [contact me](#) if you would like to receive a toolkit I'm developing for the Council's Circular Economy Working Group. The toolkit is an instruction set to help companies start or scale a circular business strategy.



2 Associations

Making the leap to sector-wide sustainability

Transformational companies lead or join industry efforts to create [voluntary sustainability standards](#) so that the whole sector can become sustainable. I have created tips and tools you can use with your industry association to get started on this agenda:

TOOL ➤ **How to Guide:** A [Roadmap](#) to help industry associations develop sustainability programs for their members.

TOOL ➤ **Benchmark Tool:** A checklist you can use to benchmark your industry association's progress towards [sustainability](#).

TIP ➤ **Webinar:** [Next Generation CSR for the Construction and Building Sector](#) event, sponsored by the Canada Green Building Council. May 18, 2016 1:00 – 2:30 pm EST.

TIP ➤ **Webinar:** Packaging Association of Canada sponsored webinar on the Qualities of a Transformational Company with Procter and Gamble, represented by Keith Fanta, Section Head, Packaging Sustainability. [Contact me](#) for free access.

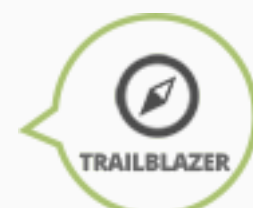
TREND ➤ **Industry Network:** In collaboration with Chris Lindberg in Ottawa, I sponsor a network of industry associations interested in moving their members along the sustainability spectrum. [Let me know](#) if your industry association would like to join this free virtual group.

Jump ahead by honing the sustainability competencies of industry and professional association members

Sustainability Competencies: Since publishing a popular [Sustainability Talent Management report](#) on the new competencies business leaders will need to position their companies for future success, I have been collaborating with The Natural Step on a national project. Called the [Sustainable Professional Association Initiative](#), it engages Canadian professional associations in developing the sustainability competencies of their members. If you know of a professional group who could benefit, [let me know](#)!



Governance Professionals: The role of the Corporate Secretary or Chief Governance Officer is vital to help boards and leadership understand the board's evolving role in providing oversight of their company's sustainability performance. I recently advised the Canadian Society of Corporate Secretaries on their annual member survey and [Sustainability Award](#) to adhere to international best practices in “sustainability governance”. I am also speaking at their [annual conference](#) in Whistler, August 21 – 24 on “The Corporate Secretary's Role in CSR and Sustainability Governance: A New Mandate”. As the board of directors is the last, great sustainability frontier, this is an exciting opportunity to launch a Canadian discussion on the topic.



Wishing you many sustainable leaps forward in the year ahead!

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