



Friends.

Hope. Hope is my drumbeat. While the social and environmental indicators are spiraling out of control, I have been steadfast in my conviction that humanity has the compassion, ingenuity, and know-how to put society on a sustainable footing. I am particularly encouraged by efforts to centre Indigenous knowledge and diverse perspectives into our social and economic systems. We crossed the Rubicon during the pandemic with the death of George Floyd and the discovery of the unmarked graves of Indigenous children in Kamloops, B.C. Those two epochal events are reverberating and transforming organizations.

I am also encouraged by my young adult children shown here, and their generation. Trained as climate leaders, they and their cohort are being equipped to take an intersectional perspective in their work. Thankfully, young people are teaching us to question the formerly accepted narrative as they are not invested in it and do not benefit from it.

So let me introduce you to Mireta Strandberg-Salmon, who is a circular economy analyst for Environment and Climate Change Canada, and her brother Brennan, whose summer job is to help design the Canadian government's climate lens. Their education and work experience have given me a front row seat to witness the new crop of leaders soon to be running our institutions. And what I see inspires me. Brennan's initiative (BC Council for International Cooperation [BCCIC] Climate Change Youth Empowerment Program) is a finalist for the David Suzuki Foundation's Future Ground prize. You can learn about Brennan's project as a finalist [here](#) and place your vote. Public voting ends June 13.

I hope you have inspiration and young people in your life to energize you for the work that lies ahead.

Read on to see what I've been up to these past months and to find out about a free webinar on social purpose business.

You will see I keep drilling into the role of business in society, the role of industry in society and the role of boards in society—as we join forces with our children to upend the status quo and foster flourishing futures for all.

Coro

Free Social Purpose Webinar

Take the Purpose Plunge: How Social Purpose Companies Embed their Purpose into their DNA

[Join me](#) as I moderate this panel with three game-changing social purpose companies.

Wednesday, June 22
1-2 pm PST

[more information](#)

Role of Business in Society

These days I help businesses develop and implement a [social purpose](#) as the reason they exist. I no longer help companies develop corporate social responsibility strategies as those don't enable organizations to reach their full potential. My mission hasn't changed: to unlock the power of business as a force for good. However, I am now focused on the main lever: the company's superordinate goal to create a better world that fuels its impact and growth. Here is what I've been up to in propelling purpose the past few months.

- Purpose grows:** Graduated another 10 companies from the [Social Purpose Implementers program](#) I designed for the United Way Social Purpose Institute (UW SPI). There are now 40 companies that have defined their social purpose and are on the path to authentic implementation and impact.


- Purpose deepens:** Designed the world's first [social purpose rating system](#) with Corporate Knights, separating the purpose leaders from the purpose laggards. I'm proud that five of the companies I helped through the Implementers program received Platinum status.


- Purpose scales:** Wrote a roadmap to accelerate social purpose in business in Canada, [Propelling the Canadian Purpose Economy](#), summarizing insights from Canada's first social purpose summit.


- Purpose expands:** Published a report covering 250 policy options governments at all levels can pursue to create an enabling environment to help social purpose business start, transition, thrive and grow: [Promoting Purpose in Canadian Public Policy](#).


- Purpose rallies:** Updated the [Social Purpose Self-Assessment Tool](#) offered by the UW SPI which sets out 25 practices to guide companies in implementing their purpose across their operations, value chains and communities. Share it with the companies you know.



Role of Industry in Society

If social purpose goes deep into the heart of business, then mobilizing industries to become a force for good unleashes entire sectors to address society's challenges. That's why I am mobilizing industry, trade and professional associations with tools and resources to accelerate their positive impact. Here's what I've been up to recently on that front.

- Association ESG guidance:** I am co-designing guidelines with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) for associations to help their members improve their social and environmental performance and impacts. Called "ESG and SDGs for Associations" (ESG refers to environmental, social, governance and SDGs refers to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals), it covers 19 practices drawn from my [association ESG tool](#). It will be published in the fall. Stay tuned.


- Association ESG roadmap:** I updated the tool I developed for associations to help them create an ESG strategy for their members. Check out the [Association ESG Roadmap here](#).


- US Association ESG practices:** I surveyed 13 US associations to learn about American best practices in Association ESG, the results of which are published in this article "[Transitioning to an inclusive, low-carbon and circular economy: how associations can help](#)". Share it with the associations you know.



Role of Boards in Society

Beginning when I was Chair of the Board of Vancity Credit Union in the late 1990s, I have been convinced of the central role boards can and must play to serve society, not just their organizations. I wrote the [first global study](#) on the topic in 2008 for the Conference Board of Canada, and with Canadian Business for Social Responsibility I drafted [CSR Governance Guidelines](#). Over a decade later and so far this year I have helped about 300 directors and 100 corporate secretaries understand the role of the board as a force for good. Once boards embrace their moral and fiduciary responsibility to steer fundamental improvements in their organization's environmental and social impacts, their organizations will follow.

- Purpose governance:** I published the world's first [Purpose Governance Playbook](#) to provide guidance to boards and their advisors on how to holistically oversee execution of the company's purpose. This is necessary as the Corporate Knights report referred to [above](#) found that board governance of purpose is currently a weak practice. Share it with the boards you know.



Role of Universities in Society

All organizations, not just companies, are starting to examine what they stand for in a world of fundamental transformation. For five years, I have been working with the McConnell Foundation and a group of 30 presidents of Canadian universities to unlock the potential of academic institutions as a greater force for good beyond their fundamental roles of teaching and research.

- Social purpose of universities:** Here's a [list of the resources I developed](#) for post-secondary institutions to mobilize all of their assets to create a better world. Notably, last fall the university presidents endorsed this vision paper on [The Role of Canadian Universities in Society](#) which I helped write. Share it with the university leaders you know.

