

Trends, Tips and Tools from Coro Strandberg

Hello friends:

"The future depends on what you do today." (Mahatma Gandhi)

Like most of you, I think about the future a lot. The prospect of nine billion people inhabiting our planet – two billion more middle class consumers in less than 15 years – fuels my fervour for developing sustainable solutions for tomorrow. A sustainable and healthy society depends on our ability to take collective action, transitioning our economy to a fair, low carbon and circular future.

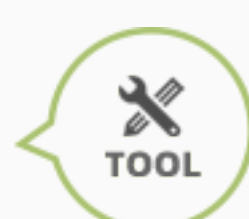
My work focuses on strategies to accelerate this transformation through innovation that embeds sustainability into culture, governance and industry associations, and that scales sustainability through new business models and external collaborations.

I have lots to share in this update: you'll get the scoop on some projects I've been working on over the past six months and find a trove of emerging **tools, tips and trends** to help you and your organization on your sustainability path. Here goes!

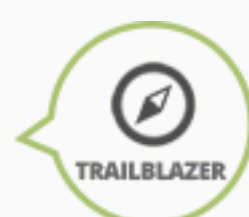
1 Transformational, social and circular companies

Transformational

I'm excited to share that The Conference Board of Canada launched its new [Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability \(CR&S\) Institute](#) in October. I helped the Institute frame its focus and significantly, embed the research I did on the [Qualities of a Transformational Company](#) for Canadian Business for Social Responsibility into its DNA: "The Institute's collaborative program of research, education, information dissemination and engagement accelerates and scales next-generation [transformational] practices in CR&S in Canada." [Check it out](#) and join!



As many of you know, I have been working with The Co-operators over the past ten years - along with The Natural Step - to support their sustainability journey. Recently they engaged me to research the [ambitious sustainability visions](#) of leading companies around the world.



The key finding? Rather than a one-line vision statement, these companies develop a "vision story" or narrative covering these points:



- The sustainability trends that will affect the business and its customers over the medium to long-term, and the risks and opportunities that may arise;
- The ways in which the company seeks to both adapt to and influence the sustainability trends to benefit its business, customers and society; and
- The vision, what the company means by the vision, and why it is important to the company, its customers and society.

If you have an opportunity to set a CSR or sustainability vision for your company, these ideas could put you among the leaders! In 2017 I will be conducting a webinar on the topic of [long-term vision-setting](#) for the new CR&S Institute. [Contact me](#) if you'd like to learn more.

Circular

While we all agree businesses need to become circular – transitioning their business models and supply chains so their materials are kept in constant motion and not sent to landfills – we lack guidance and examples of how this works in practice. For the past few years, I have been developing tools and case studies for the Circular Economy Working Group of the National Zero Waste Council.

If your organization is interested in joining the circular economy revolution, check out the latest [Circular Economy Business Toolkit](#).



Typically, when starting their circular journeys, companies find they have many of these practices already on the go. This was the case with HP: they started pursuing circular objectives more than 20 years ago when they incorporated design for recyclability into their products. I wrote this [case study](#), documenting how HP has increasingly embraced circular principles. Today modularity, turning products into services (i.e. "products as a service"), and 3D printing are promising circular moves for this innovative company.

I'm currently advising on two visionary circular projects:

- City of Vancouver's strategy to become [zero waste by 2040](#)
- [Ontario Circular Economy Innovation Lab](#) to generate circular innovation and collaboration across sectors and supply chains



Both initiatives have the potential to identify breakthrough strategies and partnerships to catalyze Canada's move to zero waste. Check them out to learn more.

Social

With corporate social responsibility losing its lustre, along comes the "social purpose company." Notably, my most [popular blog](#) in 2016 was on this topic.



Greater Vancouver's United Way gets this shift and seeks to mobilize its 700-plus corporate donors to move beyond traditional philanthropy to identify and embed social purpose in their business models. I am leveraging [my social purpose tools](#) to help United Way develop a training institute to build the capacity of Vancouver companies to enhance their social impact and create business value. Here's an [article](#) in BC Business on our first training event.



In 2017 I'll be hosting a webinar on the topic of the "for-good" company. [Contact me](#) to get on the mailing list. I am happy to share my experience advising organizations on the [Social Purpose Company](#) as well if you are interested.

2 Integrating sustainability into governance, culture and industry associations

Board Sustainability Governance

To accelerate and scale sustainability, boards must set the tone from the top. I use my past experience as a director and Chair of Vancity Credit Union to provide guidance to boards and corporate secretaries on how to embed sustainability into their mandates.

Good role models catalyze change: one of my long-term clients, The Co-operators, was recently recognized by Governance Professionals Canada for [outstanding sustainability governance leadership](#). Congratulations to the board for their steadfast commitment to sustainability stewardship.



The United Nations Global Compact engaged me to develop guidelines for corporate secretaries. Check it out [here](#) and share it with your chief governance officer. I'll be providing training for corporate secretaries on how they can support their boards to enhance their sustainability oversight in 2017. [Contact me](#) for more information.



Sustainability Culture

Languish anguish. This is how many sustainability professionals feel after developing their sustainability strategies. Once the arduous process of building and adopting a policy and strategy is done, they stall at the implementation phase. I recently posted an [article](#) and hosted a [webinar](#) on this topic. Please contact me to receive 50% off the webinar fee.

You might also be interested in this short [guide](#) I wrote for the Conference Board of Canada that describes the steps to building a sustainability culture and implementing sustainability plans. Human Resources professionals may benefit from this [overview](#) of the critical role HR managers can play in fostering a sustainability culture.



Sustainable Industry Associations

Most people give up on industry associations when developing strategies to transition to a sustainable future. [I don't](#). I am currently helping the Canadian Construction Association to develop a guide on corporate social responsibility for their 20,000 members across Canada. As part of that project, I am investigating stakeholder interest in several roles an industry association can play to catalyze sustainability among their members. Examples include defining CSR and the business case for the industry, developing metrics members can use to track and compare their performance, and supporting industry collaboration and innovation to overcome CSR barriers and pursue CSR opportunities through collective action.

Does your industry association have a program to help its members become sustainable? If not, here is a [checklist](#) of ideas to get you started or to benchmark your progress.

I hope you find my four T's – tools, tips, trailblazers and trendsetters – helpful in your sustainability journey. I encourage you to use and share them broadly. It's our future.

Coro