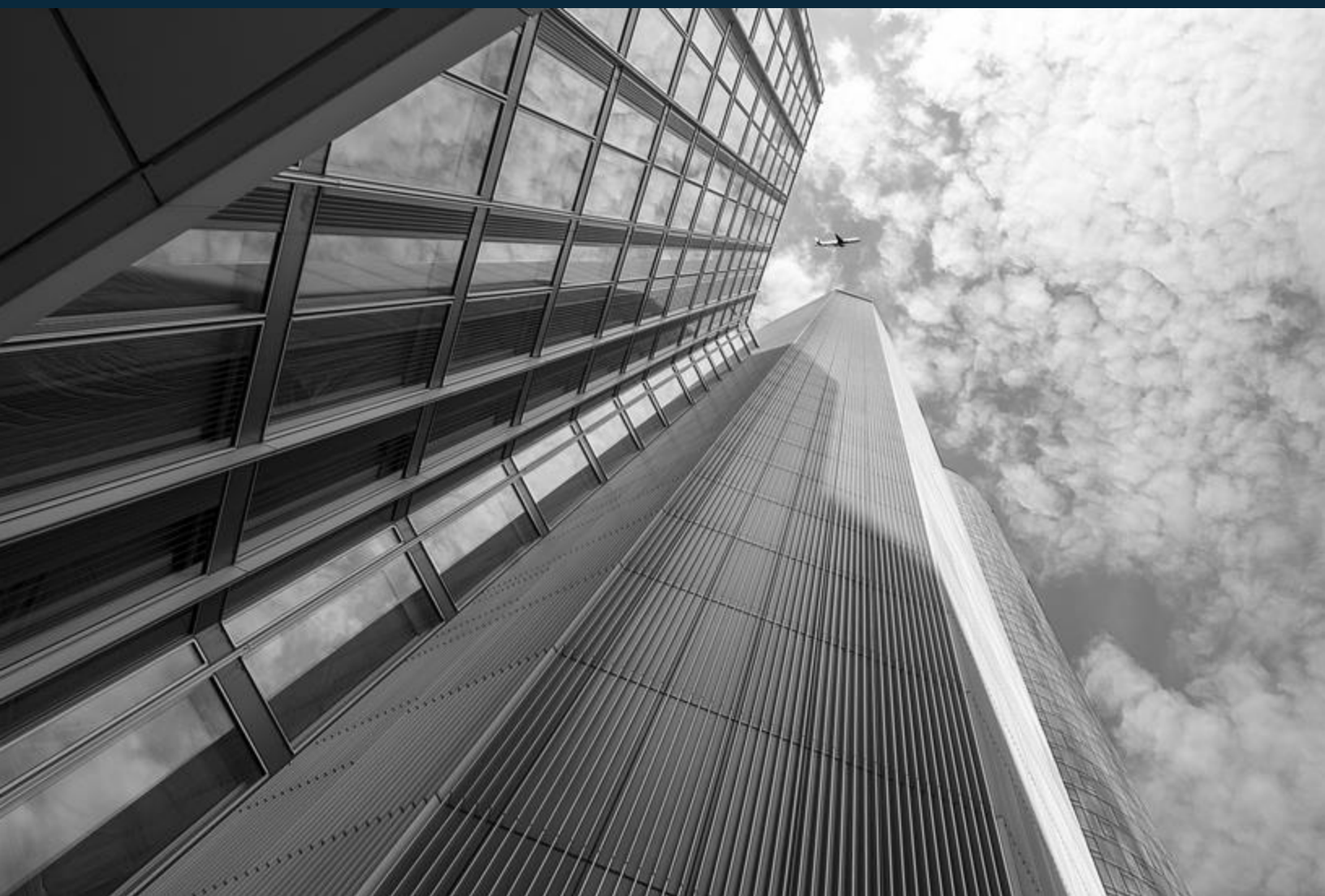


PURPOSE TRENDS REPORT

A selection of what has been published about Purpose in July 2024



July 2024

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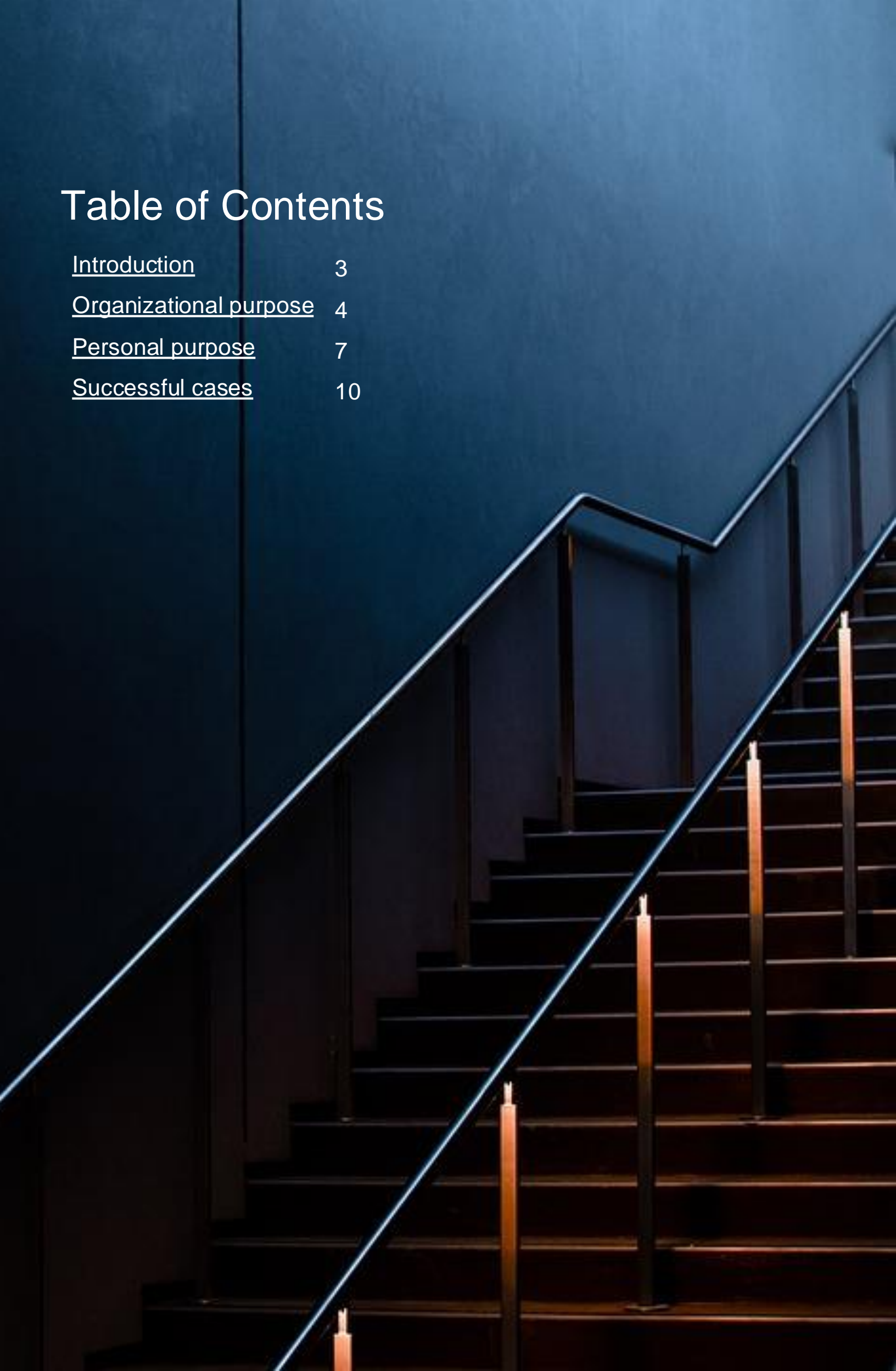
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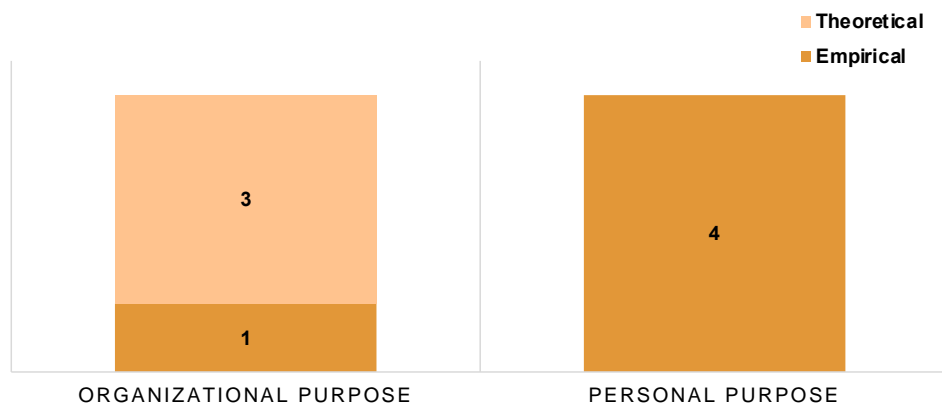
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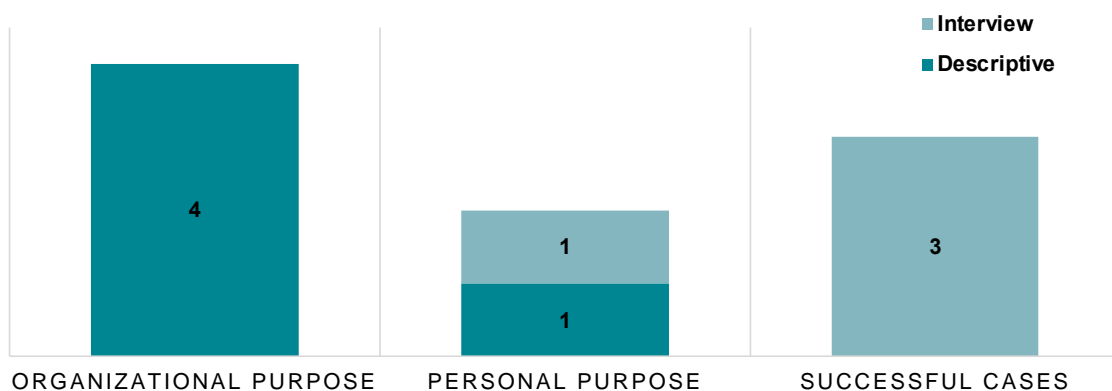
INTRODUCTION

In this report, we want to synthesize the most relevant about corporate purpose published in July 2024. For this aim, we did a content search (using selected keywords) in Scopus and Google Scholar for academic publications; and diffusion magazines and other trusted sites for articles and reports. We selected relevant publications about organizational purpose and personal purpose. Also, we include successful cases that show how corporate purpose has been implemented. Below, we present statistics about the selected literature.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS - JULY 2024



ARTICLES AND REPORTS - JULY 2024



Recent research emphasizes the importance of organizational purpose in leadership and branding. Purpose-Driven Leadership, which aligns individual and organizational goals, enhances employee engagement, performance, and overall success. Studies also distinguish genuine social purpose branding (SPB) from superficial efforts, stressing the need for purpose to be integrated into both operations and communication. Articles reinforce this, showing how businesses are incorporating purpose into governance and daily actions, though challenges like the "Purpose Gap" persist.

Academic studies on personal purpose highlight how meaningful work and personal fulfillment enhance job satisfaction and performance. Research shows that activities like leisure crafting can boost creativity and provide a sense of purpose, especially for those with low work engagement. Other studies emphasize that meaningful relationships at work are more important than salary in motivating employees. Articles further support these findings, suggesting that integrating family and personal growth into work can inspire greater motivation and engagement, leading to long-term success.

Finally, real-world cases demonstrate the value of purpose-driven business strategies. Companies like Mars Inc. show how purpose can be translated into measurable impact across markets, while businesses like The Housing Network and Cotswold Fayre prove that prioritizing social and environmental goals fosters innovation, trust, and employee engagement. Purpose activation, as seen in data-driven approaches by Contexis, leads to improved employee ownership and commercial success, highlighting purpose as both a moral and strategic advantage.

Academic publications (4)

Exploring Purpose-Driven Leadership: Theoretical Foundations, Mechanisms, and Impacts in Organizational Context

Administrative Sciences, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: Leadership has been extensively studied in organizational contexts, with numerous theories examining how leaders influence success and employee engagement. Most recently, integrating organizational purpose—the core reason for an organization’s existence—into leadership has garnered substantial interest, resulting in the underdeveloped concept of Purpose-Driven Leadership. This paper presents a systematic review of Purpose-Driven Leadership in organizations. We employed the PRISMA guidelines and searched WoS and SCOPUS, identifying 58 relevant research papers for inclusion in our review. The success of Purpose-Driven Leadership, as a nexus of individual and organizational purposes, hinges on defining and implementing an organizational purpose that resonates at all levels, based on the inverted pyramid of purpose, from overarching organization to individual roles. Our review suggests several positive outcomes associated with Purpose-Driven Leadership. These include increased work engagement, where employees are more invested in their roles; enhanced organizational commitment, reflecting stronger loyalty to the organization; improved employee performance, demonstrating higher productivity and effectiveness; and overall organizational performance. Additionally, this leadership approach promotes a cohesive and motivated workforce by aligning individual goals with the broader organizational purpose, fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation. Several moderators were also identified, including effective purpose communication, impact perception, autonomy, and balance of work–life.

“ Rather than solely focusing on short-term goals, purpose-driven leadership places importance on a long-term purpose aligned with the organization’s values, ethical guidelines, and societal impact. ”

Social purpose branding approaches: a typology of how brands engage with a social purpose

European Journal of Marketing, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

Abstract: Purpose: As brands progressively become instruments for consumers to advocate for social change, many feel pressure to engage in social purpose branding (SPB) through addressing social issues. In a rush to remain socially relevant, brands have approached SPB differently; some genuinely intend to advance the social issue, while some intend to capitalise on social movements to mobilise the brand. This paper aims to explain these differences by theoretically outlining various approaches to SPB. Design/methodology/approach: This mixed method paper draws on theory, interviews with marketing practitioners, and practical exemplars to present a typology of SPB approaches. Findings: Using institutional logics theory, SPB is categorised into four approaches: social purpose-driving, social purpose-driven, social purpose-aligning and social purpose-washing. Research limitations/implications: The typological framework for SPB advances this domain to outline effective and ineffective ways for brands to engage with social issues. A detailed agenda for further research is provided to guide ongoing SPB research. Practical implications: The typology presented reduces complexity and helps marketers understand the different approaches to engaging with a social issue. Given the growing intertwinement of brands and social issues, this research is essential for brands seeking to advance a social issue and remain relevant. Originality/value: This paper offers a novel conceptualisation of SPB by defining it, identifying a framework of its characteristics, and detailing four SPB approaches.

The Organizational Purpose

Springer, [see online](#)

Abstract: As the considerations of the previous chapter show, the organizational Ikigai represents the blueprint of the individual Ikigai. In this context, the first lever, the purpose or, in relation to the economic context, the organizational purpose, is of great importance at the normative management level. This can explain the existence of the organization and embed it in the larger context of its environment in a comprehensible way. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to the examination of the organizational purpose and connects it with the organizational Ikigai (see Fig. 6.1). First, it will be discussed what is meant by purpose in the organizational context. Subsequently, four dimensions of the organizational purpose are described, which result from the fact that it is directed at the external environment of the organization on the one hand, and at the employees on the other hand, as well as the fact that it includes a collective and an individual perspective. Finally, the most important effects and the risks of a misunderstood organizational purpose are summarized. Overall, this leads to a better understanding of the facets of this purpose, which it must fulfill in order to serve as the anchor and starting point of the organizational Ikigai. If an organization succeeds in adequately considering all perspectives, the organizational purpose can unfold its positive effects and lead to a purpose commitment.

Corporate Purpose and Sustainability Due Diligence

Palgrave Macmillan Cham, [see online](#)

Abstract: In this chapter, I argue that corporate purpose is an old concept, which has been variously defined in different jurisdictions without determining great variations in practice. Continental European laws often consider the company's interest rather than corporate purpose, i.e. the interest that a company should pursue which may pertain either to the company as such or to its shareholders. Corporate purpose is mostly identified with the pursuit of corporate profits, albeit with variations concerning the relevance of given stakeholders and of social values in general. On policy grounds, I ask whether EU company law should be reformed to reflect sustainability goals, or national laws should be left to decide whether corporate purpose and/or director duties need to explicitly refer to sustainability. Moreover, I analyse the proposed Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDD) and try to assess its impact on corporate governance and corporate purpose. I conclude by highlighting the mounting role of regulatory and ethical constraints to business activities which derive from sustainability concerns.

Articles (4)

Purpose Gap Report 2024

Ben Hayman, Given [see online](#)

For the past three years, Given has been researching the Purpose Gap – the difference between what organisations communicate and what they deliver when it comes to purpose. In the third year of this research, they have found that while the Purpose Gap is closing, there is still plenty of work to do. At over 50%, the proportion of people who think there is misalignment between what their organisation says and does on purpose, is still too high. But the research suggests that businesses are becoming better at aligning their activities with their purpose ambitions. Businesses are seeing purpose as a professional agenda. It is written into job roles and governance structures, incentive schemes, and KPIs. Leaders across categories are working harder to ensure it becomes something that is done, not just said.

How To Reboot The Purpose Disconnect In Global Business

Dean DeBiase, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that "Purpose" has become central to American business, evolving since the Business Roundtable's 2019 statement to prioritize all stakeholders over just shareholders. It explains that while the pandemic accelerated corporate responsibility, implementing Purpose in large organizations remains complex. The text defends the idea that Purpose should emerge organically, not be forced, and highlights companies like Globality, which exemplify purpose-driven ventures. It suggests that AI could help smaller firms compete globally and states that empowering employees with purpose-driven work is essential for both personal and business success.

Best Purpose Statement Examples From the Fortune 500

Purpose Brand [see online](#)

The article explains the distinction between mission and purpose statements in companies, stating that while most Fortune 500 companies have a mission, fewer have defined a clear purpose. It argues that companies with a strong purpose integrate it into their core operations and measure its impact. It defends the idea that consumers care about purpose-driven initiatives, stating that companies can benefit from aligning purpose with governance. The article also presents examples from various Fortune 500 companies to show how purpose statements express a commitment to improving lives and contributing to society.

How to build a purpose-driven company

Gil Mandelzis, Fast Company [see online](#)

The article explains the growing demand for businesses to have a clear, purpose-driven mission that connects daily work to broader societal impacts. It argues that companies like Patagonia show how aligning purpose with operations enhances engagement and long-term financial performance. It states that today's workforce, particularly millennials and Gen Z, value social responsibility. The article defends the need for leaders to articulate purpose authentically and ensure alignment with company values and actions. It argues that embracing a purpose-driven model leads to positive societal impact and can become a competitive advantage.

Academic publications (4)

Unraveling the power of leisure crafting for unengaged employees: Implications for creativity and meaning at work

Journal of Organizational Behavior, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: Drawing on enrichment theory and the identity-based integrative crafting model, the present paper explores the impact of leisure crafting on creativity and meaning at work using both the compensation and the spillover perspectives. We hypothesized that leisure crafting relates to employee creativity, particularly when employees experience low work engagement; and that leisure crafting predicts meaning at work via employee creativity, particularly for employees with low work engagement. We also expected that cognitive developmental and affective leisure-to-work enrichment acts as the mediator in the link between leisure crafting and creativity. Study 1, a three-wave survey study with 1-week time intervals among 191 employees confirmed that the indirect effect of leisure crafting on meaning at work via creativity is stronger among employees reporting low work engagement. Study 2, a follow-up study of a similar design among 421 employees revealed that leisure crafting leads to creativity via cognitive developmental resources and that leisure crafting leads to creativity via affective resources for employees who report low levels of work engagement. Our findings highlight that leisure crafting possesses the inherent capacity to enhance meaning at work through employee creativity (spillover), especially for those employees who experience a lack of fulfillment at work (compensation). We also refine work-life enrichment theories by uncovering that leisure crafting may enrich work via different pathways for different employees.

“ While work has historically been a central aspect of individuals’ lives, an important lesson that many workers are learning in the face of this transformation is that one’s sense of purpose is not only built around work. ”

Love over gold and mind over matter? Identifying capabilities that preserve medical assistants’ sustainable employability

Human Resources for Health, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: Background: Medical assistants (MAs) are crucial for affordable, high-quality primary care, but what motivates this low-wage occupational group to stay in their job remains underexplored. This paper identifies the work aspects that MAs value (“capabilities”), and how they affect sustainable employability, which refers to employees’ long-term ability to function and remain in their job. Methods: We used structural equation modelling to assess how capabilities relate to four outcomes among MAs: burnout, job satisfaction, intention to quit, and experiencing work as meaningful. Results: We find that earning a good income, developing knowledge and skills, and having meaningful relationships at work relate to the outcomes. Meaningful relationships represent a stronger predictor than salary for one’s intention to quit. Conclusions: Competitive salaries are necessary but not sufficient to motivate low-wage health care workers like MAs to stay in their job. Health care leaders and managers should also structure work so that MAs can foster meaningful relationships with others as well as develop competencies.

Experiencing meaningful work through worthwhile contributions: A critical discourse analysis

Human Relations, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

Abstract: Why do individuals find their work meaningful and what is the role of worthwhile contributions in this experience? We undertake an analysis of accounts related by individuals working as nurses, creative artists and lawyers in which they explain why they find their work meaningful. Drawing on the traditions of critical discourse and narrative analysis, and informed by French pragmatic sociology, we move beyond a focus on what is said to consider how accounts are structured in explanations of meaningfulness. We find meaningfulness to be discursively constituted in the judgement that work makes a worthwhile contribution to others or wider society. We add theoretically to the literature on meaningful work, first, by revealing worthwhile contributions to be a complex, three-fold evaluation comprising the value attached by the individual to their contribution, validation from others that aligns with the individual's own evaluation concerning the worth of the contribution and the individual's self-efficacy belief that they are able to make the contribution. Second, we build bridges between hitherto disconnected branches of the meaningful work literature grounded in positive psychology on the one hand and moral worth on the other by showing how judgements of worth are fundamental to the experience of meaningfulness.

What makes a workday meaningful? Evidence on the role of task significance, competence and subjective meaningful work

Evidence-based HRM, SJR Q3 [see online](#)

Abstract: Purpose: The construct of meaningful work is a relevant topic for the managerial literature interested in job design, employees' motivation, and job performance. The current research seeks to improve our knowledge on meaningful work by exploring the processes by which a workday is experienced as meaningful. Design/methodology/approach: Adopting the lens of the Job Demands-Resources model and Self-Determination theory, we argue that work conditions and psychological conditions are associated with the experience of meaningful work on a daily basis. Moreover, we propose that the experience of meaningful work on a long-term basis (i.e. the evaluation of one's own work as holding significance per se) intensifies the associations between daily conditions and the experience of meaningful work. We collected data via an event-based longitudinal diary study for a total sample of N = 114 employees from six organizations and N = 545 observations. Findings: Results of the multilevel analysis showed that competence and task significance led to the experience of meaningful work during working days. Moreover, cross-level analyses revealed that these associations are stronger for employees who experience their work to be meaningful in the long-term. Originality/value: The novelty of the present study lies in highlighting the role of specific factors contributing to the experience of meaningful work during a workday. These findings help specify targets and organizational and individual dimensions to be addressed by managerial interventions to ensure employees' meaningful work experience.

“

Research has shown these small set of basic psychological needs, autonomy, relatedness and competence, constitutes a species-typical feature of the human experience of meaningful work which could be considered universal across individuals and occupations.

”

Articles (2)

Research: How Family Motivates People to Do Their Best Work

Lauren C. Howe & Jochen I. Menges, HBR [see online](#)

Family is one of the most important things in most people's lives, across cultures and geographies. Yet, the idea that family can be motivational at work has been overlooked. Instead, in the past, family has been mostly seen as competing with work for an employee's finite resources, like their time and energy. A large body of research on work-family conflict drew on this notion and illustrated how work and family domains create conflicting demands and interfere with one another. And yet, there's another growing body of research that finds that family can play a role in motivation at work, boosting employees' performance and inspiring them to do their best. This article focuses on that body of research, and discusses how organizations that embrace family at work stand to benefit from attracting and retaining employees who are highly motivated and engaged.

Embracing Change and Finding Purpose with Andrea Mein DeWitt



Robin L. Owens, The Leadership Purpose Podcast [listen online](#)

In this episode, Dr. Robin interviews Andrea Mein DeWitt, author of Name, Claim, and Reframe. She encourages taking small leaps of faith, saying and signaling commitment. Andrea's book, featured on NBC's Today Show, urges readers to shed their metaphorical armor and embrace their truth. As a leadership coach, she teaches her system to help people navigate life changes. In this episode, Andrea discusses her career pivot in her 50s, the power of inner wisdom, and the importance of embracing change step by step.



Articles (3)

How to measure meaningful brand impact with Mitch Oliver



Becky Willan, Given [listen online](#)

The idea of brand purpose is pretty contested within marketing. Critics are claiming that we've reached 'peak purpose' and are calling for people in advertising to stop trying to save the world and get back to selling stuff. But is this true, or have we actually reached another level of maturity when it comes to purpose? With consumers more switched on to social change than ever, marketers have a responsibility to create meaningful impact as well as driving sales. But how do you measure meaningful brand impact? In this episode, Becky Willan is joined by Mitch Oliver, Global VP of Brand and Purpose at Mars Inc - a multinational manufacturer of confectionery, pet food, and other food products and the fourth-largest privately held company in the United States. In this conversation, they discuss how to translate a business's purpose into meaningful and measurable brand impact - across different markets, categories and products.

MARS

Putting purpose before profit: the key to lasting success and impact

Independent [see online](#)

The article explains that prioritizing purpose over profit is essential for long-term business success. It states that companies focused on social and environmental impact build trust, loyalty, and strong brand reputation. It argues that businesses like The Housing Network and Cotswold Fayre, winners of purpose-driven awards, demonstrate how ethical values foster employee satisfaction, innovation, and collaboration. It defends the idea that leaders should model vulnerability and foster a safe environment for creativity. Ultimately, it concludes that purpose-driven businesses attract dedicated employees and customers, leading to sustainable growth.

COTSWOLD
FAYRE

The Housing Network

How Contexis Helps Companies Use Data To Prove The Power Of Purpose To Drive Performance

Afdhel Aziz, Forbes [see online](#)

The article explains how purpose drives business performance, with insights from John Rosling, CEO of Contexis. It states that successful businesses deeply understand their purpose, fostering a culture of context, trust, and ownership. Rosling argues that purpose must be activated to influence decisions, creating a safe space for employees to innovate and take responsibility. He defends the idea that organizations with a strong purpose see better employee engagement and commercial results. The article highlights Contexis' data-driven process to help companies measure and improve cultural performance through purpose activation.



