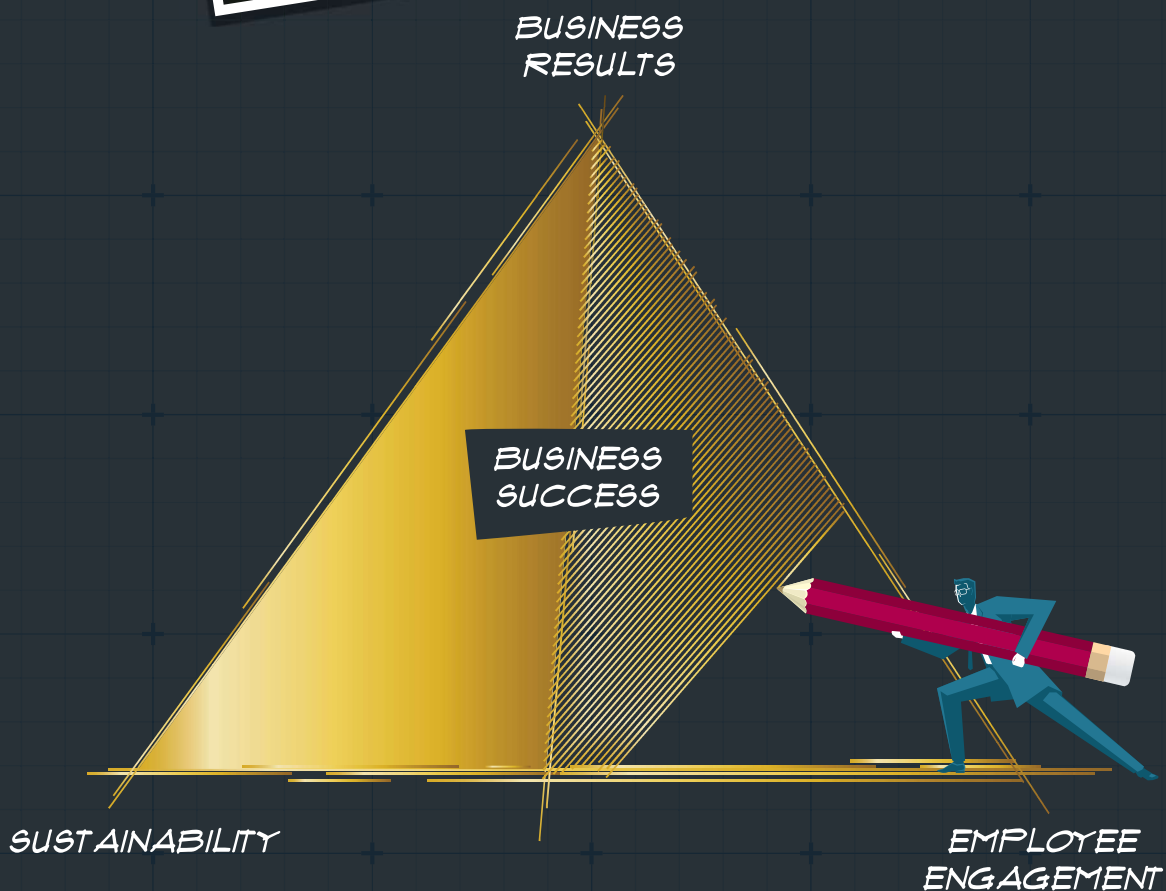


THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

SUSTAINABILITY, EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT & BUSINESS RESULTS



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"The companies that survive longest are the ones that work out what they uniquely can give to the world—not just growth or money but their excellence, their respect for others, or their ability to make people happy. Some call those things a soul."

CHARLES HANDY

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE STATES THAT business results, employee engagement and sustainability are as critical as each other for business success; and that they need to be interrelated and given equal attention.

Today, an increasing number of organisations are identifying sustainability as a key differentiator for competitive advantage, acknowledging its role in building brand value and reputation; ensuring public and stakeholder trust; attracting capital; increasing competitiveness; driving innovation; and attracting and retaining talent.

Without employees viewing sustainability as a key and significant part of their role this vision cannot ever be attained. In fact, Donna Williams, General Manager Customer Experience and Marketing for NZI, principal partner of the Sustainable Business Network says, "Being a sustainable business is a lot more than having green initiatives. It's about creating a business model that is resilient and endures the test of time. It means taking responsibility for the people it employs and the communities and environment it operates in."

A SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION WON'T EXIST WITHOUT PEOPLE

A sustainable organisation is one that simultaneously delivers on social, economic and environmental factors to ensure long term betterment for society and for organisations. Historically, sustainability practices were not a core component of business strategy. However, increasing customer and societal demands for economic, environmental and social responsibility have brought sustainability issues to the surface.

Millennials entering the workforce expect their employers to be socially responsible and are increasingly conscious of the impact of organisations on the environment and society at large. Involving employees in sustainable initiatives is vital to the achievement of goals and has a ripple effect on their multiple daily interactions with internal and external stakeholders. Without everyone being part of achieving them, these goals simply won't be met.

WHY BOTHER WITH SUSTAINABILITY?

There are some serious messages internationally. In January all CEOs of the world's largest public companies received a communication from D. Fink of the investment firm BlackRock, one of the world's most influential investors. He said that to receive the support of BlackRock they needed to demonstrate that their businesses were about more than making profit, they must be contributing to society. His comment in fact was "to prosper over time, every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society."

Within New Zealand, the latest research by Colmar Brunton states that 83% of Kiwis would stop buying a company's products if they heard about them being irresponsible

or unethical and 73% want to work in companies that are sustainable. Therefore, having a sustainable business not only ensures a good revenue stream, but also a higher number of possible recruits, meaning a better chance of hiring talent and retaining staff.

The benefits to following a sustainable business model include:

1. *Brand and reputation* — increased visibility and social responsibility
2. *Improved access to capital* — viability of their business
3. *Better financial performance* — enhancing operational performance
4. *Innovation and efficiency* — process streamlining
5. *Enhanced ability to attract and retain talent* — people want to belong
6. *Social benefits* — impact on climate change and energy use
7. *Greater relationships with key stakeholders* — creation of trustworthiness

SUCCESS THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY: NZ POST

In 2017 New Zealand's oldest state-owned company, NZ Post, took out the top sustainability award. The company has chosen to use sustainability as a driver for change and it is paying dividends. Using NZ Post services has now become the first choice for businesses that are sustainability minded. Not only do they focus on ensuring business results, but when disaster strikes and the NZ Red Cross responds, NZ Post makes support available, including logistics, postal, banking services and volunteer mobilisation.

It doesn't matter how big or small the organisation is, whether it is a corporate or a not-for-profit, all types and size of businesses can make a success out of sustainability. In fact, the smaller the business and the earlier this approach is adopted, the easier it is to implement a sustainable practice.

ACTIONS TO TAKE TO ENSURE ALIGNMENT

1. Align sustainability to your vision, values and guiding principles;
2. Clearly communicate the sustainability agenda to your people;
3. Create and communicate the employer brand;
4. Create work that engages and motivates employees;
5. Seek input on employees' perspectives on sustainability;
6. Create a work environment to improve performance; and
7. Intentionally foster a culture that integrates with its strategic objectives.

Business leaders would have to have their head firmly in the sand not to see that today's consumers are increasingly voting with their wallets, and choosing where possible to support brands operating with a higher purpose.

Just remember, the earth does not belong to us, we belong to the earth.