Net Positive Mindsets

Views from the Better Future Forum

BT

Facilitated by
GLOBESCAN

200+

sustainability experts took part from

22

countries

3x90

minutes of discussions with around

800

unique comments

75%

of participants were very likely to take part in another Better Future Forum.

What we set out to do

BT's Better Future Forum is an online discussion that brings together the world's leading thinkers to share and develop new strategies to help build a more sustainable future for everyone.

On 2 July 2013, hundreds of experts from around the world joined BT and GlobeScan in a Forum to explore how the power of 'net positive' [1] strategies can help businesses play their part in a shared better future.

Discussions included what those at the cutting edge are doing to bring about the circular economy [2] and create value for both society and industry within the constraints of the planet's resources.

The discussions were focussed into three main sessions with a different theme for each. The findings from those sessions are summarised in this document, as well as the three key areas of insights that have emerged from across the expert conversations.

Contents

1. 'Net positive' is about adding greater value to society than you take away. It goes beyond business impacts on society and the environment which are 'less bad' to becoming a net positive contributor.
2. A 'circular economy' refers to a restorative industrial model that moves away from 'take, make and waste'. See www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy

About Better Future

BT's Better Future programme is our commitment to use the power of communication to improve lives and ways of doing business - without it costing the earth. Our three goals for 2020 focus on connecting people digitally, providing skills and technology to support good causes and making sure we do more environmental good than harm.

This Forum is an extension of the unique, open approach to developing the carbon net positive framework that sits behind our Net Good goal. We want to help customers reduce carbon emissions by at least three times the end-to-end carbon impact of our business by 2020.

We're building on what we do best - bringing together our networks and technology with the expertise of our people to build a better future.

Join the conversation

@BTBetterFuture

tinyurl.com/BFLinkedIn

bt.com/betterfuture

Message from BT

We're thrilled to have hosted such a successful first Better Future Forum with GlobeScan.

We used this first BT BF Forum as an extension of the unique, open approach to developing the carbon net positive framework that sits behind BT's own 'Net Good' goal.

The Forum inspired truly dynamic and diverse conversations and reinforced the value of bringing people together to shape delivery and share knowledge-vital to moving the net positive agenda forward.

We were delighted the Forum reached across sectors as well as the globe. The scale of the change needed to achieve the transformational change that we call Net Good, means we need to break down the barriers and find ways to truly collaborate to succeed as a business and, equally importantly, to help today's society thrive without depleting the resources on which our children will depend.

The Forum and the ideas within it showed that technology gives us huge opportunities to share and develop ideas and knowledge and find new solutions to build a better future.

We're committed to continuing the open and shared discussions for everyone's benefit, so please look out for future events and stay in touch through our website, Twitter and LinkedIn. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Kevin Moss
Head of Net Good, BT

BT's next steps to Net Good. We will:

- **Motivate collaborative approaches –** we want to work across sectors to move business as usual forward to help build momentum on net positive leadership.

- **Participate in principles –** we want to work with others to develop and promote common principles and different models of approaching net positive.

- **Influence positive stakeholder behaviours –** we recognise a key challenge is working together with others to achieve the shift of mindsets, especially among consumers and investors, essential to deliver the scale of change.

Message from GlobeScan

The GlobeScan team is excited to have been BT's partner on the Better Future Forum.

We believe that this sort of large-scale, facilitated collaboration between experts and stakeholders around the world is of critical importance to companies addressing some of the key challenges of our time.

Global online stakeholder dialogues, like the BT Better Future Forum, are responses to a host of factors driving change in the way companies engage with their stakeholders. These range from shifting dynamics in the relationship between business and society, to increased numbers and geographic spread of stakeholders, along with opportunities for innovative ways of engaging via new technology. Scaled, structured global engagements can help to identify new ideas, innovations and collaborations needed to achieve ambitious sustainability goals such as those for Net Good.

In our view, this Executive Report attests to the high quality of insights and ideas that can emerge from large-scale online collaboration, and demonstrates the important contribution that the Better Future Forum has made to the overall net positive debate.

Caroline Holme
Director at GlobeScan

Engage consumers

Net positive cannot happen in isolation. The Forum saw a real need to engage wider groups, particularly consumers and investors. This is relevant to ways of delivering net positive, measuring the impact and communicating it.

- **Reach outside the tent**
  Devote more effort to bringing mainstream consumers and investors on the journey – by speaking their language

- **Be positive with consumers**
  Find ways to put net positive into the hands of consumers and explore demand-driven green innovation

- **Stop the 'living to shop' mindset**
  Managing our planet's resources means challenging the consumption mindset

- **Be transparent and lead the way**
  Transparency will build consumer trust, but companies will net to lead them on the road to net positive

- **Speak freely**
  Be transparent, authentic, generous and frank in how you communicate – to build trust and overcome scepticism

- **Talk to personal passions**
  Address the issues consumers and stakeholders really care about and use multi-channel communication

- **Make more friends**
  Collaboration is needed with businesses, with civil society and across the value chain – this is already happening with great results

Insights from the Forum

Big ideas, big energy

Net positive and the circular economy are inspiring and generate both energy and focus. The bold approach encourages disruptive ideas and can engage diverse stakeholders.

- **Business value isn't just in the bank**
  A disruptive shift in mindset is needed to adopt a broader definition of business value, particularly with investors

- **Be bold in ambition**
  Even if you don't know how to achieve your targets, this will drive innovation

- **Be net positive about what really matters**
  You need to align with the core business mission, find quick wins, and show the business case

- **Lead from the top**
  Business leaders need to push medium-term environmental, social and governance indicators with investors to change the terms of the debate

- **Show your social value**
  It's hard to calculate but the statistics need to be simple, consistent and be part of the wider story

Innovate and collaborate

Communications technology has the potential for new collaborative approaches, to stimulate co-creation across sectors of ideas, products, services and 'disruptive' business models for a net positive future.

• Make the most of IT
One sector that can play a unique role in enabling, facilitating and providing feedback on the needed shift is the communications and technology industry

• Make IT exciting
The communications and technology sector can make the shift to net positive and circular economy exciting – a pull, not a push

• New circular business models
Let's break down barriers to making money from leasing and 'collaborative consumption'

• Get value loops aligned
Bring the key players on board to make the circular economy happen - designers, consumers, buyers, local partnerships

Session 1
Living within our planet's natural resources

Special guests

Dame Ellen MacArthur
Founder of the
Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Peter Lacy
Managing Director of
Sustainability Services at
Accenture

Paul Simpson
CEO at Carbon Disclosure
Project

Oliver Dudok van Heel
Director at The Aldersgate
Group

Niall Dunne
Chief Sustainability Officer
at BT

How can we transfer the global stewardship of natural resources?

The first session of the Forum centred on the issue of transforming natural resource management and the role that consumption plays within our society. There was a strong view that the way we define ourselves primarily as consumers is a central problem in natural resource stewardship. As one participant commented, "we cannot consume our way to sustainability" and "living to shop" is not a mindset that can be sustained.

Beyond the fundamental challenges associated with the consumer society, a number of pressing challenges were identified including water use, food security, increase in raw material costs and the on-going emphasis on hydrocarbon-rich fuels as "the norm".

Furthermore, some participants pointed out that these challenges all needed to be addressed at the same time as meeting the critical social needs of the population, particularly in emerging economies in a context of rapid urbanisation.

Some participants argued that consumer engagement was a pre-requisite for driving the necessary change from government and business. The consumer perspective differed from country to country, but the great majority of consumers still refused to pay more for sustainable products at the point of sale. We need to seek to align consumers' moral and financial interests as far as possible, so the sustainable alternative was also cheaper – and also do better in securing consumers' engagement in the debate, perhaps by focusing on an accessible issue of immediate importance to all of us, such as food security.

New business models focused on leasing and renting goods, rather than buying them outright, were thought to be at the heart of an appropriate response – "access to services (is) what's important, versus ownership of physical products". Some pointed out, however, that some pioneers in the field were finding challenges in monetising these leasing-based business models. Full cost accounting was needed in order to ensure that people and companies pay the full cost of material input and waste if these barriers were to be addressed.

Mobile phone contracts that provided for a newly upgraded, leased phone every eighteen months, were cited as a good example of this sort of innovation. Some challenged whether this upgrade cycle should be encouraged under any circumstances, particularly as increased mobile phone usage was associated with greater data centre energy use.

How can we shift to more sustainable models of consumption?

There was broad agreement that circular economy thinking was very promising as a framework for shifting to more sustainable models of consumption. The idea of promoting collaborative consumption - for instance, banning car ownership in cities and moving to a model based on car sharing - was strongly supported. Others put the emphasis more on communicating sustainability and reaching out to the mainstream consumer, even if that means not using "the sustainability word" and instead stressing better performance or value. There was also some degree of consensus that putting the focus on the advantages for business on becoming more resilient would help to achieve stakeholder buy-in beyond the traditional sustainability community - particularly with investors.

It was acknowledged that few of the innovations in sustainable consumption had achieved significant scale, and that more ideas were needed on how government could remove some of the barriers to greater take-up.

"We will not be able to close the loop unless we engage our customers and they see compelling benefits in participating in the value loop, rather than just sitting at the end of the chain consuming. People think that the technical solution is enough... but they're not giving their customers the 'so what'."

Kirsty O'Connell, University of Exeter

"I think the biggest challenge we face - from my vantage point out in Shanghai and focused on Asia – is addressing the 'trilemma' and trade-offs of economic development, resource use / environment, consumption - particularly in the context of rapid urbanisation. The Circular Economy is the only solution that I think stacks up at the macro and micro level of transformation."

Peter Lacy, Accenture

How can business transform its value chains to value loops?

Much discussion again centred around the need for shifting assumptions around the end use of products from ownership to leasing, which was thought to be central. But participants pointed out that this shift required a number of key elements in order to be successful, which are often lacking:

- True, localised supply chain partnerships
- Products that are designed with end of life in mind, able to be repaired, upgraded, disassembled or recycled, so that refurbishment is easy and economically viable
- A mindset among businesses to continually try and place themselves in the shoes of the customer to ensure that their barriers and needs are understood and to address the 'so what?' – what is the benefit to consumers at the end of the chain of participating in the value loop?
- Long-term procurement norms within companies that focus on the whole lifecycle business case and the full range of stakeholders, instead of being focused on an annual budget

The onus was also felt to be on large businesses to do more to secure the active buy-in of their supply chain for a closed-loop system. Focusing on topline was felt to be a major part of this, making sustainability a genuine pre-requisite to winning work for suppliers, with some having seen encouraging signs that this was starting to happen. But training, sharing success and incentivising the right behaviour were also mentioned – an entirely top-down approach by corporations to encouraging sustainability among the supply chain was felt to be problematic and liable to generate supplier resentment.

Conversely, if consumer demand for new services and products can be driven and supported by ongoing engagement, supplier enthusiasm for a value-loop approach was thought likely to follow. And as the market develops and closed loop systems become the norm, there may even be markets developing in the right to use the post-consumer 'waste' for which different stakeholders may compete, and as resources become more constrained, partnerships to create closed value chains and ensure continuity of supply.

Poll
How can ICT improve resource stewardship?

8% - More efficient systems through greater automation of machine communication

16% - Strategies to reduce energy / materials consumption of IT equipment

30% - Increased tansparency on the impacts / benefits of products / services

46% - Measures to improve global efficiency of food chains, argriculture, logistics, and forestry

"I think it's important to consider how we can maximise the 'value retained' in products, so that refurb is easy and likely to be economically viable"
Mark Shackleton, BT

"In some ways it is about asking a fundamental question: Is consumption our primary purpose? Are we consumers or citizens? Do we live to shop, or do we shop to live in order to fulfil our individual purpose?"
Oliver Dudok van Heel, Aldersgate Group

Session summary

- Challenges around resource management strongly linked to the role of consumption in our society – living to shop is not a sustainable mindset and needs to be challenged

- Many pressing challenges need addressing, including water use and food security - all while meeting critical needs of emerging economy populations

- Greater emphasis needed on reaching out to those outside the sustainability tent to engage them more successfully – the mainstream consumer and the investor – by speaking their language

- New circular business models focused on leasing rather than owning goods or collaborative consumption offer a way forward, even if monetising them can be problematic

- Shift to value loops requires many different elements to be aligned including innovation in local partnerships, design, consumer communications and procurement

Session 2
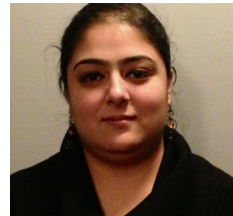# Making business a net positive contributor

Special guests

Gail Klintworth
Chief Sustainability Officer
at Unilever

Tim Mohin
Director of Corporate
Responsibility at AMD

Aman Singh
Editorial Director at CSRWire

Dave Stangis
Vice President of CSR
and Sustainability at
Campbell Soup

Kevin Moss
Head of Net Good at BT

How can business not just reduce its impacts on the environment, but add value back?

As in the first session, there was widespread agreement among Forum participants in the second session that both the circular economy and net positive thinking provided an excellent framework within which business could add value back to society and the environment. However, it was felt that for this to happen, there needed to be a change of mindset to refine the definition of business value – not just equating it to volume but looking at it from an efficiency and wider impact perspective – and then measure it. A significant disruption could be needed in order to drive innovation and net positive changing; shifting from a focus only on preserving the environment to one where the emphasis was on regenerating it.

How to achieve this disruption in large companies? The trend towards flatter organisational structures was thought likely to help. A drive for increased collaboration (explored below) is another. But some cautioned that it was important not to aim for "disruption for disruption's sake", and to ensure that the emphasis remained on creative disruption – "imagining what is possible" in a way that can be justified, and on quantifying the costs and benefits clearly.

Beyond this, participants felt that a number of disparate elements were required in order to make business a net positive contributor, but particularly:

- Identifying opportunities for adding shared value (rather than focusing on mitigating impacts)
- A focus on understanding core competencies of the business and mapping them against the greatest potential societal benefits or business risks. In this way, businesses would then be able to identify their own opportunities to add value in a differentiated way for their brands and customers

What role can the communications and technology sector specifically play? It is felt to have a number of important attributes:

- It is a great enabler – in itself, it is neutral, but its value depends on what use is made of it – from the extension of free knowledge and education to the potential for better crop management
- It can be a facilitator – drawing awareness to a large number of people. It is becoming the glue that connects everything and everybody
- It can provide feedback loops – make behaviour, and its impacts, visible in real time – one example cited was the Nest energy meter that allows energy use to be monitored on an ongoing basis
- It can generate excitement – the transformative potential of cool technology for our daily lives is seen as a very potent engagement tool for the public

Where do companies need to collaborate and innovate to speed up the transition to net positive impacts, and how?

Changing business's ingrained habits and opening up towards the potential for increased collaboration with other organisations of all kinds was seen as critical to making progress – indeed, as increasingly a strategic necessity. Participants also felt collaborations were becoming more complex; they now needed to reach beyond sector and traditional customer/supplier relationships, and become cross-sector and cross-stakeholder. However, it was also pointed out that a great deal could be achieved – and probably faster – by business to business (B2B) collaboration, between those in the driving seat within major businesses.

Media partnerships, particularly those with a social media dimension, were mentioned as particularly important ways to drive progress by spreading awareness of key issues and innovations, generating ideas and bringing key actors together to kick-start future collaborations. These were seen as good ways to challenge traditional thinking within organisations and make them more externally-focused.

Additionally, increased collaboration across the global supply chain was seen as a great opportunity. There is strong mutual interest at stake here, with examples cited of technology being identified as a key driver of sustainability innovation.

"It will take very different thinking to achieve this vision. Many business leaders are driven by key metrics set out by our financial markets. Until societal value is on this list, it will be tough sledding for many companies."

Tim Mohin, AMD

"B2B collaboration has immense potential to drive results and the kind of monumental change we need globally. Of course, working with NGOs, consumers and the government is critical, but a lot can be pushed forward much faster – versus incrementally – when those with the R&D, the marketing budgets, the designers and the innovation dollars agree to solve a problem together. When the business sector takes a stand, things get rolling!"

Aman Singh, CSRwire

Participants felt that there was great opportunity for more collaboration within the value chain, and cited many existing examples of successful collaboration in moving to net positive impacts, within their own organisations or elsewhere. These included:

- The Australian Water Recycling Centre of Excellence – an international collaborative research program promoting partnerships between business, research and government, also doing interesting work in establishing global comparisons on water recycling efficiency. This was described as "a great way to deal with problems in the water sector"
www.australianwaterrecycling.com.au

- At DuPont, the building of a global network of Innovation Centers in different regions focused on key markets where customers, strategic partners, NGOs, governments, and other key stakeholders can come together to discuss solutions
www2.dupont.com/Innovation_Centers/en_US/

- At Holcim, a collaboration with their partner IUCN involving the two organisations working together to improve the sustainability of cement production
www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/business/bbp_work/by_engagement/bbp_holcim/

- The Electronic Industry Citizenship Coalition (EICC)—a good example of industry supply chain collaboration
www.eicc.info

- In June 2013 BT's Net Good methodology was put online to share with the world, allowing others to review and suggest improvements, and to build upon or adapt it for their own use
www.bt.com/netgood

Given the scale of environmental challenges, how ambitious can business be in becoming net positive, and how should these ambitions be defined?

Business's ambition to make a real difference, it was agreed, was a vital component of the transition to net positive. Participants including Unilever and Marks and Spencer with high-profile and respected sustainability programs underlined the importance of businesses setting ambitious goals, even if they did not know exactly how they were going to achieve them yet. This, it was felt, helps drive the innovation and fresh thinking needed - but in any event, there needed to be a climate where failure sometimes to achieve a bold aspiration was permissible.

Some suggested that putting net positive into the hands of consumers would be one such bold aspiration - empowering them to make purchase decisions that might ultimately reduce demand for some products and services, but also create demand for others. In this context, the World Bank's work on demand-driven green innovation was cited, which identifies scalable opportunities at the bottom of the pyramid, and generated lots of interest.

Overall, businesses – and particularly their employees – were not thought to lack ambition in this area. But a major obstacle to the adoption of this sort of big ambition as a primary corporate goal was felt to be the narrow definition of business value propagated by financial markets. It was not that businesses themselves – or even individual investors - necessarily endorsed this perspective, where value creation excludes customer wellbeing, resource depletion, supplier viability or the economic fate of local communities. But participants felt that there was an erroneous assumption at the institutional level among the investment community that a focus on societal value meant higher costs and lower returns. Until societal value makes it onto the list of key metrics against which corporate leaders are judged in the short term, engaging investors successfully would continue to be a challenge.

"So much of the progress we've made has come from setting targets that we had no idea how to achieve – this drove innovation and new ways of thinking! It's important that businesses are not afraid to fail... by setting ambitious targets. Not everything will be delivered!"

Adam Elman, Marks and Spencer

"Cross sector collaboration is key to unlocking a number of the potential ICT enabling drivers – e.g. Smart Buildings (collaboration between ICT and the construction industry; Smart Logistics (collaboration between ICT and the transport industry) etc. Where are the forums and mechanisms to encourage and incentivise this type of collaboration?"

Andie Stevens, Carbon Trust

There was a consensus, therefore, that investors urgently needed to be engaged more successfully, and that the sustainability community had failed so far to make a compelling case why environmental social and governance (ESG) goals needed to be addressed explicitly in investment decisions. There was support for the idea of integrated reporting – including ESG data alongside bottom line data on the balance sheet, but also recognition of the need for better metrics demonstrating the impact of a company's social aspirations and measuring the long-term financial aspect of sustainability. This issue was explored in greater depth in Session 3.

"How much have we put the idea of being 'net positive' into the hands of our clients and consumers? How do they contribute, and how will this focus enable them to make better buying decisions - which may ultimately reduce demand for many products and services"

Simon Goldsmith, Principled Sustainability

Session summary

- Circular economy and net positive offers excellent framework for businesses to add value back

- But disruptive shift in mindset, better understanding of core competencies and broader definition of business value needed to achieve it, particularly in interactions with investors

- ICT sector is well-placed to enable, facilitate, provide feedback loops and generate excitement

- Collaboration is vital - both B2B, with civil society and across the value chain and there are many promising examples of it working in practice

- Important for business to set bold ambitions around going net positive - even if they don't know how they will be achieved, this will generate innovation

- Need to look for ways to put net positive into the hands of consumers and explore potential for demand-driven green innovation

Session 3

From definition to delivery

Special guests

Lord Michael Hastings
International Director of
Corporate Citizenship at KPMG

Mark Kenber
CEO at The Climate Group

Andy Wales
Head of Sustainable
Development at SABMiller

Jasmine Whitbread
CEO at Save the Children
International

Guy Battle
Partner in Sustainability
Services at Deloitte

Richard Tarboton
Director of Energy & Carbon
at BT

How can business choose where to focus its net positive activities?

The participants in the third session focused on how business can prioritise areas of action in looking to go net positive. It was felt that there needed to be close alignment between these and a company's core purpose – the long-term outcomes that the organisation wants to deliver. Companies may need to collaborate both in defining these areas and in delivering on them – though some were keen to stress that this should not be allowed to water down the goals that are set.

In selecting priority areas, a balance also needs to be struck between a number of considerations:

- The need for quick wins to build support
- The external imperatives for action dictated by what the environment needs – to be credible, net positive initiatives need to be seen to address the real problems, rather than just the low-hanging fruit
- The business case (which needs to be made both internally and externally)

What is the role of the consumer in all of this? While participants felt that an overly top-down regulatory-driven approach could stifle creativity, they also doubted how far the setting of the net positive agenda could be a bottom-up process. A number of obstacles were cited to a consumer-driven approach:

- People may need a commercial offer to be made to them before they can engage with it
- They want the difficult decisions and trade-offs to be taken away from them
- They do not always understand carbon impacts
- They are often unaware of how businesses work and where the big impacts can be made

But at the same time, achieving consumer engagement, and prompting actions, was clearly vital. Increased transparency was seen as key here – but would not be enough on its own. Strategies to engage consumers on net positive initiatives by companies (better product labelling was one key area cited) had to be accessible and clear, engaging, and to make use of societal norms – notably, people's desire to compare themselves to others. Net positive strategies also needed to be framed in positive terms, and avoid the dampening effect on consumer enthusiasm that setting out a list of serious and intractable challenges might cause.

Poll

Areas companies should prioritise in order to deliver greatest business value

5% - Reducing costs across the value chain

11% - Making clear links to how reputation drives brand equity

26% - Improving long-term financial viability by reducing environmental risks

58% - Developing less resource-intensive products /services

How can we measure business's success in achieving net positive outcomes?

Once net positive goals have been set, the ability to measure progress against them was agreed to be of critical importance. But participants felt that it was far from clear what environmental and social impacts should be measured, and indeed how natural capital and societal benefits could be valued. Furthermore, should there be a drive to establish a common metric, or should businesses select certain KPIs that they see as particularly relevant in the context of their business? There was some agreement that whichever metrics were chosen needed to be as simple as possible, common to everyone, and underpinned by a clear and compelling narrative. Integrated reporting was seen as a key development that could facilitate this.

Again, investors were at the centre of the debate. It was suggested that a key success indicator might be the extent to which they have identified long-term returns as more valuable than short-term cash benefit. It was also recognised that achieving this shift in mindset required boldness from CEOs—a willingness to stand up to the fund managers and advocate for the credibility of metrics that can only be measured on a medium-term time horizon. The language that businesses use in talking about these goals, it was felt, would be particularly key in winning over investors - ideally, companies need to talk about the social and environmental context in terminology that is familiar to investors and that they already understand - performance, growth, markets and risk mitigation.

There was also a minority view that rather than trying to win over investors, the key challenge was instead to work with those who advocate for society, including NGOs, to agree ways to measure positive improvements.

"To have a lasting impact and resonate with stakeholders [net positive initiatives] must both engage them in what they can do but also be seen to be addressing 'real' problems rather than just the easy pickings."

Mark Kenber, The Climate Group

"Businesses have to be cautious and humble when trying to communicate net-positive outcomes. Businesses have the ability to be catalysts for instrumental change, but cannot claim independent credit. There are just too many other complex variables."

Dave Stangis, Campbell Soup

"A critical indicator will be the extent that investors have identified the long term returns as being more holistically valuable than annual cash benefit."

Lord Michael Hastings, KPMG

How can business communicate its net positive activities?

Many of the challenges identified in measuring progress in going net positive recurred when participants discussed the major considerations when communicating business's activity in this area. Authenticity was felt to be essential. Businesses should be wary of presenting themselves as crusaders, or risk losing credibility if the reality did not live up to claims. Instead, they should be:

- Transparent about how they are focusing what they do
- Generous in sharing the credit with their partners
- Frank in admitting shortcomings

All this would help to build trust, participants felt – although some still asserted that business needed to be ready to tell its own story, and could not rely on journalists to accurately reflect it for them.

As with impact indicators, communications needed to be joined-up and multi-channel. There was a call for integrated reporting to be more widely implemented within organisations. Businesses needed to be able to tell a story, and to make their case understandable to those not already engaged in the resource efficiency debate – but there needed to be substance behind these narratives to counter suspicions of greenwash among investors and others. Others suggested that actions in fact spoke louder than words – if there is true net positive activity going on, people will get to hear about it.

Finally, it was pointed out that business's communications needed, at least in part, to reflect the issues that were of concern to the public and stakeholders. In the case of the communications and technology sector, these tended not to be green issues, but included such concerns as privacy, spying on telephone and email communiations, roaming charges for mobile phones and online pornography. Concerns validated by GlobeScan's regular global public attitudes tracking.

> "The movement towards Integrated Reporting is vital in this respect. It implies an Integrated Strategy."
>
> **Guy Battle, Deloitte**

Poll
Success indictors that will do most to achieve senior buy-in for net positive activities

3% – Improved awareness / engagement / pride from employees

3% – Increased levels of positive media commentary

26% – Improved reputational benefits from key external stakeholders

68% – Reduction in overall costs to the business

Session summary

- Net positive activities need to balance alignment with core mission, need for quick wins, external imperatives for action and the business case

- Increased transparency is critical in achieving greater consumer engagement - but expecting consumers to be able to set the net positive agenda is probably unrealistic

- Measuring social outcomes is challenging, but as far as possible indicators need to be simple, consistent and underpinned by a narrative

- CEOs need to advocate strongly for the relevance of medium-term ESG indicators with investors to change the terms of the debate

- A transparent, authentic, generous and frank approach to communicating progress will help build trust and overcome scepticism

- Communications need to be joined-up, multi-channel and to address the issues that consumers and stakeholders already care about – integrated reporting is the way forward

About BT

BT is one of the world's leading communications services companies, serving the needs of customers in the UK and in more than 170 countries worldwide. Our main activities are the provision of fixed-line services, broadband, mobile and TV products and services as well as networked IT services.

We were one of the first companies in the world to grasp the link between being sustainable and succeeding as a business. Now, we're focusing on integrating sustainability into everything we do. Beyond driving sustainability practices in our own operations, we recognise the broader value we can deliver to society.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com

About GlobeScan

For twenty-five years, GlobeScan has helped clients measure, understand and build valuable relationships with their stakeholders, and to work collaboratively in delivering a sustainable and equitable future.

Uniquely placed at the nexus of reputation, brand and sustainability, GlobeScan partners with clients to build trust, drive engagement and inspire innovation within, around and beyond their organisations.

For more information, visit www.globescan.com