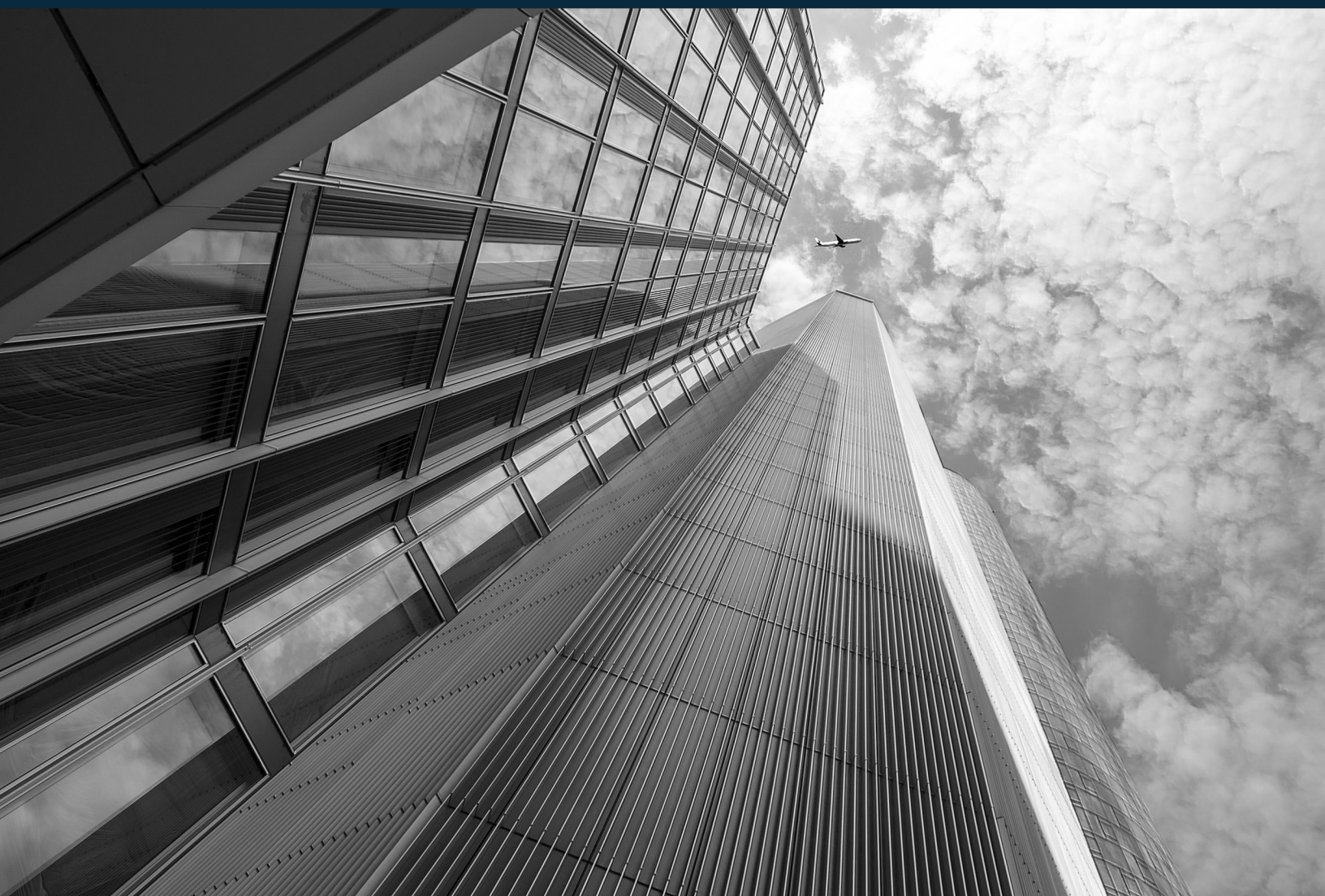


# PURPOSE TRENDS REPORT

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



May 2024

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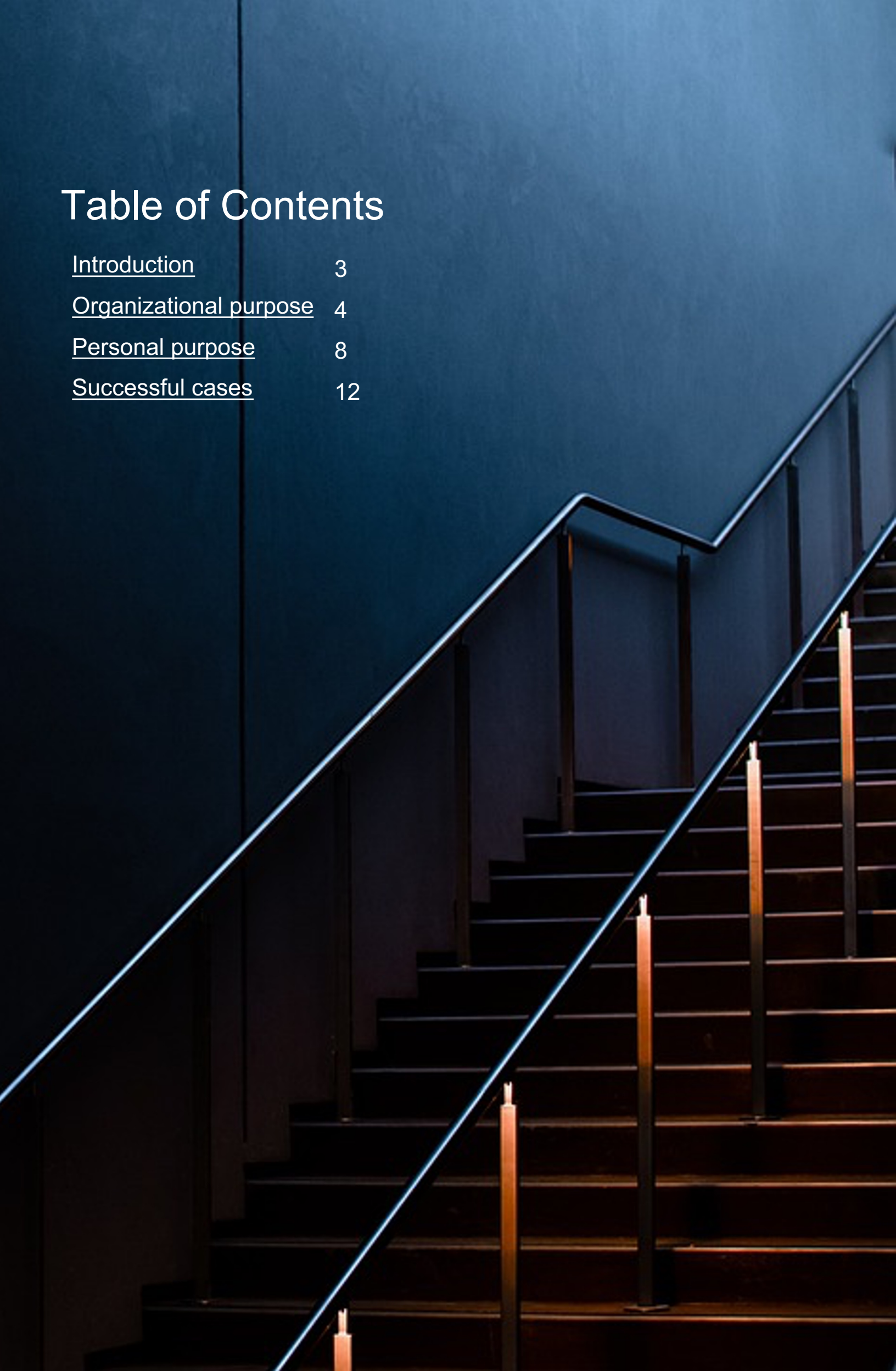
Purpose Trends Report ISSN 2952-1157  
<https://doi.org/10.15581/025.2024.005>



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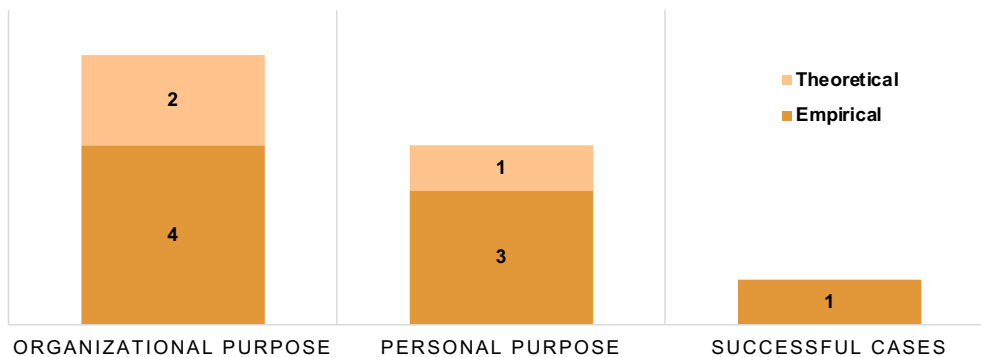
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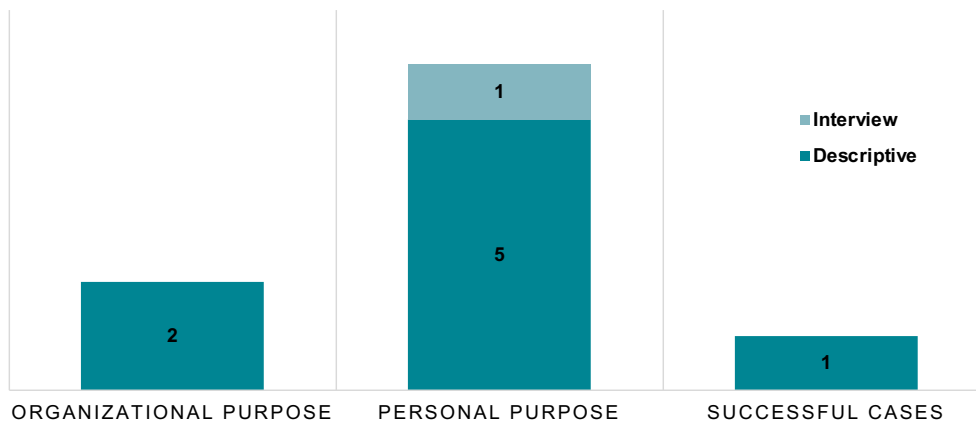
# INTRODUCTION

In this report, we want to synthesize the most relevant about corporate purpose published in May 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. From January's 2024 report onwards, the "purpose alignment" category will be discontinued and incorporated into the "organizational purpose" category, as the differentiation is minimal. Also, we include successful cases that show how corporate purpose has been implemented. Below, we present statistics about the selected literature.

## ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS - MAY 2024



## ARTICLES AND REPORTS - MAY 2024



Academic publications on organizational purpose emphasize the crucial role of boards of directors in integrating sustainability. Recommendations include focusing on internal composition, stakeholder interests, and mission alignment. Nonprofit staff with systems thinking integrate complex problems more effectively into their mission. Aligning with specific SDGs boosts economic performance. Studies comparing healthcare firms in India and Singapore highlight differences in affordability and innovation. Articles suggest leaders clarify strategy for employees and maintain genuine, purpose-driven marketing to foster commitment. Further, scholarly investigations on personal purpose show its impact on well-being and job satisfaction. Telework during COVID-19 revealed gender-related health differences, highlighting the importance of meaningful work. In high-stress fields like palliative care, meaning at work is crucial for mental health, with burnout linked to personality traits. Daily meaningful work enhances daily life meaning. Articles stress the importance of spiritual health and purpose, suggesting techniques like the DEAR process to regain motivation and connect work to life satisfaction.

Finally, purpose-driven branding builds trust among stakeholders, as seen with Too Good To Go, where purpose enhances perceived ethicality despite challenges in competence perception. The academic study suggests purpose-based branding enhances trust but requires balancing competence. Further, one article advocates aligning personal and organizational purpose to boost engagement and performance. Cases like Vitamix show that integrating personal purpose into company culture reduces turnover and increases profitability, highlighting the benefits of a purpose-driven approach.

## *Academic publications (6)*

### **Sustainability in the boardroom: A systematic review**

Journal of Cleaner Production, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Boards of directors play a crucial role in integrating sustainability measures within organizations. The literature on the contributions of boards of directors to sustainability agendas and practices has been rapidly growing over the last decades. However, existing literature reviews analyze either the impact of boards' composition on sustainability performance or the consequences of the boards' decisions on environmental or social outcomes, while overlooking the importance of the actual practices of boards of directors. The purpose of this systematic literature review is to identify and analyze recommendations that can help boards of directors to account for sustainability more efficiently in their practices. The analysis of 47 academic articles and 13 documents produced by third parties (consultants, experts, think tanks, governmental agencies) led to the identification of 14 types of recommendations that address various facets of board members' practices. These include internal composition, stakeholders' interests, legally bounding requirements, awareness of sustainability issues, individual responsibility, internal control mechanisms, the modification of remuneration mechanisms, the flow of regular meetings, organizational mission or culture, the scope of financial projections, middle management's involvement in resolving identified issues, the prioritization of problems, creating a different governance structure, and modifying routine risk management practices. This analysis will be beneficial for practitioners, as it provides an encompassing overview of the literature on the subject. It will also be extremely useful for scholars working on the topic, as it identifies several limitations of the academic studies, notably in terms of quantity and clarity of information, and discusses them in depth.

### **Impacts of Systems Thinking on Mission When Environmental Nonprofit Organizations Encounter the Complex Systems Problem of Homelessness**

Voluntas, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** The article examines how nonprofit organization staff navigate organizational mission as they encounter complex systems problems outside their area of expertise, focusing on environmental organizations encountering homelessness in river watersheds. Drawing on surveys from seventy-three individuals from forty-three organizations and interviews with seventeen nonprofit staff, I find that staff who demonstrate systems thinking are more likely to describe integrating complex systems problems into their mission and activities in meaningful ways. Not interacting with systems issues due to lack of skill is most often explained with language of mission adherence and avoiding mission drift.

### **Less is more? Communicating SDG orientation and enterprises' economic performance**

Journal of Business Venturing Insights, SJR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** As the interest in sustainable development increases, businesses can benefit from aligning their orientation with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It remains unclear, however, how focusing on a broader or narrower set of SDGs affects enterprises' economic performance. This study examines the impact of a communicated SDG orientation on the economic performance of social enterprises and traditional commercial businesses. Using natural language processing (NLP) techniques to analyse textual content from 661 enterprises' websites, we found a positive relationship between the communication of a narrow set of SDGs and enterprises' economic performance. The extent of this effect is similar between social and traditional commercial enterprises. Therefore, stakeholders may value an enterprise's SDG orientation strategy that focuses on a narrow set of SDGs in distinct purpose-driven institutional contexts.

## Organizational mission statement components: a comparative study between Indian and Singaporean mission statements in the healthcare sector via Python analysis

Corporate Communications: An International Journal, JCR Q3  
[see online](#)

**Abstract:** Purpose: This paper aims to compare the mission statements of Indian and Singaporean firms in the healthcare sector, and define the main components of Indian and Singaporean mission statements. Design/methodology/approach: The study was based on a network analytic approach and content analysis. The research was performed on 200 companies (100 Indian companies and 100 Singaporean companies). For each company, we searched for a mission statement published in the company website. Nonnegative Matrix Factorization (NMF) in Python programming language was utilized to obtain the differences in the components of mission statements between Indian and Singaporean firms. Findings: The study results indicate a similarity and variation between Indian and Singaporean mission statements. Both countries are more concerned about patients, service, community, quality, and healthcare in their mission statements, but Indian mission statements emphasize quality, affordable price, and technology more than Singaporean firms. In contrast, Singaporean mission statements tend to highlight innovation and company value. This research will assist strategic managers in identifying the mission statement components and choosing the right strategy for the organization. Originality/value: This study contributes to the literature and ethos theory by identifying and distinguishing the paramount differences between the Indian and Singaporean mission statement components in the healthcare sector.

“ The purpose of the mission statement concentrates on an organizational social objective and clarifies the company’s value for the client, stakeholders, and the community at large. ”



## **Stronger together: Building nonprofit resilience through a network with a shared Mission and organizational humility**

Nonprofit Management and Leadership, JCR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Nonprofit organizations increasingly face surprising and disruptive shocks, beyond financial setbacks, that challenge an organization's operations, long-term survival, and success. To continue to execute their mission, nonprofits must be resilient. Despite the importance of resilience in nonprofits, more research is needed to understand the factors that build organizational resilience and how leaders can help promote resilience. We conducted a qualitative case study, consisting of 23 interviews with organizational members and key partners, fieldwork, and archival information, of a documented resilient nonprofit organization. Our findings suggest that leaders can enhance resilience by gaining access to resources through collaboration, which is in line with previous theorizing. Our results add to previous research by providing a more nuanced understanding of how collaboration can facilitate resilience. Specifically, our findings suggest that resilience may be enhanced when organizational humility drives leaders to strategically constrain their network primarily to partners that share a common mission. Our research contributes predominantly to the organizational resilience literature, while offering more auxiliary contributions to the organizational humility literature. Further, our research offers practical guidance for how leaders of nonprofits can develop resilience in their organizations.

“

The alignment in purpose and, consequently in thought can help leaders to identify threats, analyze surprising events and develop transformative responses to them.

”

## **Teaching Subsidiarity Through Purpose: A Classical-Experience-Based Curriculum Development**

Springer Cham [see online](#)

**Abstract:** The idea that the purpose of business defines a benevolent and pluralistic approach to its stakeholders beyond its focus on shareholders has grown dramatically in recent years. But this is still far from mainstream teaching. This chapter advances the idea that the purpose of business is an important trigger for promoting subsidiarity and freedom and presents a classical-experience-based curriculum to develop the necessary attitudes and talents for realizing them within organizations. This course creates a reflective and transformative space for executives to explore what is necessary for businesses to become more purpose-led centered in human flourishing, and how it is always both a personal and organizational challenge. This chapter summarizes the intellectual and practical roots of the initiative, the teaching approach, the embeddedness of subsidiarity into the class dynamics, the testimonials from the participants, and concluding comments.

## Articles (2)

### 3 Ways to Clearly Communicate Your Company's Strategy

Constantinos C. Markides & Andrew McLennan, HBR [see online](#)

For all the communication around strategy, we know that leaders at many companies don't provide the necessary context for employees to understand what the words and sentences in a strategy statement actually mean. What can leaders do to help employees understand enough context to understand a strategy? In this article, the authors offer three recommendations: 1) Present the alternatives considered and explain why they were not adopted. 2) Explain how each choice is linked to the organization's purpose. 3) Involve employees in strategy development.

### 'Good intentions lead to bad marketing': Why purpose is missing the mark

Nick Asbury, Marketing Week [see online](#)

The article argues that corporate purpose often results in ineffective marketing, despite good intentions. It explains that companies face pressure for short-term gains, leading to insincere and superficial campaigns. The author, a longtime critic of corporate purpose, states that this concept has become deeply institutionalized but often results in generic and weak claims. It defends the potential for businesses to contribute positively to society but criticizes the co-opting of social issues for marketing purposes. The article also highlights the contradiction in consumer behavior and the gap between stated ethical preferences and actual purchasing decisions. It concludes by advocating for genuine, effective, and respectful marketing that honors the social contract with consumers, suggesting that marketers should focus on meaningful contributions rather than superficial purpose-driven campaigns.



## *Academic publications (4)*

### **Telework, working conditions, health and wellbeing during the Covid crisis: A gendered analysis**

Social Science and Medicine, JCR Q1 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Telework was massively adopted during the COVID-19 crisis. Related changes in working conditions may have affected women's and men's health differently due to the gendered division of work. Our study aimed to assess the gendered association of telework with physical and mental health outcomes one year after the onset of the pandemic and to determine whether the pathways of working conditions underlying these associations are gender-related. We compared pre-pandemic and Covid-crisis work contexts using a large representative sample of French employees surveyed in early 2021. We identified potential work-related mediators of the relationship between telework and well-being, i.e., change in autonomy, low support, work overload, digital issues, atypical working time, meaning at work, and work-life balance, and used multiple-matching and adjusting for confounders. Results: All things being equal, the health and well-being of teleworkers were, on average, less favourable than that of on-site workers, with little gender differences. The selected working conditions mediated a substantial part of the relationship, indicating that important pathways were captured, such as meaning at work. These pathways partly differed between women and men. In particular, in new teleworkers, the largest contributions came from digital issues for women, and from low support at work and work overload for men. People who teleworked during the pandemic were at higher odds of deterioration of health and well-being than onsite workers. Health patterns were similar among male and female teleworkers; however, the pathways differed. These negative effects may yet have been absorbed once the government pandemic response became less stringent.

### **Impact of confrontation to patient suffering and death on wellbeing and burnout in professionals: a cross-sectional study**

BMC Palliative Care, JCR Q2 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** Palliative care and oncology generate a risk of burnout and psychological distress in professionals. The purpose of this study is to identify both psychopathological and positive factors related to mental health at work. It aims (i) to explore the extent to which these professionals are confronted with suffering, illness, and death; and to explore the prevalence of psychological distress and/or burnout, (ii) to identify potential determinants of burnout and psychological wellbeing at work, (iii) to develop an integrative model of mental health; and to identify frequency and impact of confrontations with death, and (iv) to identify profiles of professionals at risk of developing a mental health disorder or, conversely, characterized by wellbeing. A cross-sectional questionnaire study was conducted in palliative care and oncology evaluating confrontations with death, coping, burnout, psychological distress, personality, self-esteem, well-being and meaning at work. Regressions, clustering, and structural equation modeling analyses were performed. 109 professionals participated (58% from oncology and 42% from palliative care), of which 79% were female, and 65% were between 30 and 49 years old. Aim i: 30% witnessed an intolerable suffering at least 9 times a month, 45% reported moderate to high levels of burnout, 39% suffered from anxiety and 11% from depression. Aim ii: the determinants of burnout were the personality traits conscientiousness and neuroticism, low meaning of work, and low wellbeing ( $R^2 = 0.44$ ). The determinants of wellbeing were work meaning, depersonalization, self-esteem, fulfillment and low emotional exhaustion ( $R^2 = 0.71$ ). Aim iii: the integrative model included both well-being (self-esteem, conscientiousness) and psychopathology (neuroticism, anxiety) parameters, and strongly satisfied the standard SEM goodness of fit indices (e.g., CFI, IFI, and TLI  $\geq 0.95$ ). Aim iv: three profiles were identified: (a) a "distressed profile" with a majority of professionals at the patient's bedside, (b) a "disengaged profile" with professionals working as second-line consultants, (c) a "wellbeing profile" contains profiles of caregivers insensitive to psychological distress and with a high level of positive impact of confrontation on different areas of their lives. An integrative approach is essential to understand the full range of mental health issues for professionals. Meaning of work is a key factor in professional interventions that should primarily affect front-line professionals with limited experience.



## **Meaningfulness is a luxury? How daily meaningful work activities and financial resources influence daily meaning and purpose in life**

International Journal of Human Resource Management, JCR Q2  
[see online](#)

**Abstract:** Experiences in the workplace undoubtedly affect people's lives, yet we know little about the role that financial resources play in the relationship between meaningful work and meaning in life. Furthermore, we do not know if daily fluctuations of work meaningfulness correspond to daily perceptions of meaning in life. In a study of married couples employing a daily experience sampling approach, we explore the role of prosocial and personal growth job characteristics in daily meaningful work and, by extension, in producing daily perceptions of meaning in life. We also examine the effect of financial resources on the relationship between meaningful work and meaning in life. Results illustrate that daily work meaningfulness facilitates greater daily life meaning but that having low financial resources attenuates the relationship between daily meaningful work and daily meaning in life. A post-hoc analysis examining the moderating influence of gender on the daily relationship between meaningful work and meaning in life was significant, suggesting that men derive more meaning in life from their work.

## **Meaning-centred workplace interventions**

Central European Business Review, JCR Q3 [see online](#)

**Abstract:** A total of 2,532 records were extracted from three databases, leading to the identification of fifteen studies for closer analysis. The overview comprehensively evaluated participants, types of intervention, activities, relevant measures and outcomes. Based on the findings, meaning-centred interventions are utilized in various workplaces, including healthcare, white-collar companies and universities. Despite insufficient quality and randomization in the studies, preventing definitive conclusions, meaning-centred interventions exhibit promising results in addressing well-being, perceived meaningfulness and other facets of living. In the future, special emphasis should be placed on factors contributing to intervention success, such as intervention frequency, type of activities and a solid framework. Additionally, randomized control trials are necessary to support these preliminary findings. Implications for Central European audience: Meaning-centred interventions show promise for improving job satisfaction and a sense of purpose at work in Central Europe, suggesting a need for well-designed studies to confirm their benefits.

## **Articles (6)**

### **In search of self and something bigger: A spiritual health exploration**

Erica Coe, Kana Enomoto, Jacqueline Brassey & Victoria Bennett,  
McKinsey & Company [see online](#)

The article highlights that spiritual health encompasses having meaning in one's life, a sense of connection to something larger than oneself, and a sense of purpose. Finding this meaning is associated with strong mental, social, and physical health. Also, it states that while assessment of spiritual health ranges widely across ages and locations, McKinsey Health Institute's Global Gen Z Survey in 26 countries found that across generational cohorts the vast majority of respondents said spiritual health is "somewhat" to "extremely" important to them. Finally, it explains how social, public, and private stakeholders can explore ways to help people find purpose and space to reflect on their lives. This includes employers seeking to help individuals find meaning in their work.

## Advice for the Unmotivated

Robin Abrahams & Boris Groysberg, HBR [see online](#)

Employee disengagement is widespread in the workplace, affecting both customers and colleagues. This article explains how individuals can maintain or regain motivation, even in unfulfilling jobs, using a process called DEAR. The first step is to detach and analyze your situation objectively, avoiding a fight-or-flight response. Review your day positively and disconnect mentally, using meditation and exercise to improve mood and cognition. Show empathy by practicing self-care, making friends, recognizing others' achievements, and helping them, which combats burnout. Take action by achieving small wins, engaging in rewarding activities, and redefining tasks. Lastly, reframe your thinking by focusing on enjoyable informal roles, your job's higher purpose, and its benefits to others. These techniques enhance mental health and job energy.

“ Helping others is one of the best ways to feel empowered and make work more meaningful. Interestingly, it has been shown to lessen burnout more than receiving help does. ”

## Craft Your Legacy, Live Your Purpose

Martha Jeifetz, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that a lasting legacy involves living a life of purpose and impact. It explains that true impact comes from everyday actions that reflect one's values and vision for a better world. The author defends that purpose is not something to be found but created through choices and experiences. It states that purpose is multifaceted and evolves over time. The article emphasizes the importance of connecting impact, meaning, and purpose to lead a fulfilling life, urging readers to reflect on their passions and contributions to leave a meaningful legacy.

## Purpose, Self-Awareness, Willingness To Change, & Tenacity

Nell Derick Debevoise, Forbes [see online](#)

The article explains that purposeful leadership requires self-awareness, willingness to change, tenacity, and a clear purpose. It states that self-awareness is foundational for understanding one's strengths and values. It argues that leaders must embrace change and engage with new ideas and people. It defends the necessity of tenacity, emphasizing that working with purpose is a marathon requiring sustained effort. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of a clear purpose, illustrating how purpose can motivate and drive actions, even if it takes time to fully articulate and commit to it.

## **Time Management Or Time Agility: How To Find The Flow**

Kathy Miller Perkins, Forbes [see online](#)

The article explains that professional drivers' time management strategies offer valuable lessons for leaders. It states that drivers focus on immediate tasks while planning for future variables, arguing that leaders must also balance short-term demands with long-term goals. It defends the idea that time should be viewed as both a resource to manage and a dynamic backdrop for creativity. The article promotes adopting flexible, adaptable approaches, integrating mindfulness, and connecting daily actions to a broader vision. By balancing structure and creativity, leaders can navigate complexities and achieve sustainable success.

## **Leading With Purpose: Cultivating A Culture Of Giving Back**

John Abusaid, Forbes [see online](#)

The article explains that community engagement and volunteering are crucial for companies, highlighting their positive impact on employees and company culture. It states that volunteering enriches employees' professional and personal lives, enhancing leadership skills and fostering gratitude. The author defends that establishing a giving-back culture starts with senior leadership and should be integrated into the company's core values. It argues that significant impact can be achieved through dedicated time and skills. The article emphasizes offering choices to employees to boost engagement and participation in volunteer activities.



## Academic publication (1)

### **The challenges of balancing ethics and competence for purpose-driven brands: an exploratory case study on social impact company Too Good To Go**

Journal of Brand Management, JCR Q3 [see online](#)



**Too Good To Go**

**Abstract:** Recent years have seen a considerable increase in companies following a purpose-based brand strategy. Pursuing purpose instead of solely profit has been pointed out as a means to reposition corporations in society and especially to counter growing skepticism toward corporations from society and stakeholders. Consequently, incorporating purpose in brand building can establish the much-desired brand trust, and as such purpose could be the answer to the prayers of many brand managers: a brand strategy capable of creating trust among both internal and external stakeholders. The question is whether working with purpose in branding is indeed a fix-all solution, or if it also comes with challenges? In order to explore this, this paper first develops a theoretical conceptualization of brand trust in the most consistent and exhaustive purpose strategy, the purpose-driven brand. This conceptualization of trust is afterward applied to the illustrative case of the purpose-driven, social impact company, Too Good To Go. The qualitative case study combines an external stakeholder perspective with an internal company perspective and demonstrates that while purpose easily translates into trust based on perceived ethicality of the brand, the brand trust component of perceived competence is more challenging. The study contributes with knowledge for both brand theory and practice and suggests implications for brand managers following a purpose-driven brand strategy.

## Article (1)

### **A Leaders Quick Start Guide To Clarifying Personal And Team Purpose As A Path To Stronger Performance**

Laurel Donnellan, Forbes [see online](#)

The article argues that leaders should help team members define and express their personal purpose to improve performance. It explains that aligning personal and organizational purpose boosts employee engagement and retention. It cites Gallup research showing a 10% increase in mission connection reduces turnover by 8.1% and increases profitability by 4.4%. It states that a study by Deloitte found employees value meaningful work. It defends using personal purpose statements, sharing the example of Dr. Jodi Berg, who enhanced engagement at Vitamix by integrating personal purpose into the company culture.



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Companies can increase engagement and commitment by not only creating and sharing a company's higher purpose but by helping employees identify their personal purpose.

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