

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: A NEW CURRENCY IN CIRCULATION



Sebastiano Zanolli

Manager, speaker and inspirational writer

It was the 1970s when the need for economic growth that was respectful of the environment was perceived for the first time. The epiphany came when a collapse of the global ecosystem, caused by the traditional development model, became a less remote possibility than we might previously have thought. It was 2020 when, with the arrival of the virus, we had the opportunity to reflect on the quality of our life, highlighting the imbalance in our habits and toxic approach compared to our well-being, in now way geared towards safeguarding the place in which we live. And we turned it upside down, adopting new daily habits that headed in the direction of this collective awakening. There is a common feature in contemporary global society, perhaps about to be disproved by the next generations, which concerns our inherent inability to enact prevention. It could be said – without wishing to generalize, and bearing in mind the percentage of forward-looking people in every sector slow down the escalation of certain dynamics – that human beings are mostly involved in adjusting the everyday rather than moving to act in perspective. And this occurs in every area of human intervention: from health to relationships and, of course, to work. Companies represent a unit of measurement in which ill-advised human activity and its direct or latent consequences are laid bare. Although some virtuous compa-

panies try to make changes well before they become necessary and urgent, just as in other types of organisations of people, not all of them always act on time. The evolution of the working methods we have witnessed in recent months has been emblematic, for example. Both in form (hybrid work) and concept (productivity to performance). Long before the pandemic, companies had all the elements required to revolutionise their workflow, by introducing remote working. They had enough information to realise that the myth of work as sacrifice had started to become outdated and unpopular with their staff, especially the younger generations, and that individual and professional well-being had started to become a priority over everything else. Yet, instead of devoting resources to responding to a growing feeling of discontent, disaffection and distrust, companies waited for an external factor to initiate the first move and for the consequences to directly affect them. The same thing happened with the issue of social and environmental responsibility. In 1992, after the UN Conference on environment and development, it became clear to companies that sustainable and conscious growth was no longer a benefit in their production experience. But it was about to become a prerequisite for operating and prospering in the market. It took years for a series of instruments to transform the message of protection for people, the planet and the next generations into action programmes. These undoubtedly include the United Nations 2030 Agenda Goals, as part of a more comprehensive programme of action, consisting in total of one hundred and sixty-nine associated goals, to be achieved in the environmental, economic, social and institutional fields by 2030, which have contributed to speeding up the process. The Agenda's SDGs have also existed for years, but they only made their way into the corporate world when production on a global scale for the first time stopped and asked itself who was going to lose out. For the first time, the answer fell not only on the environment, or on a less developed part of the hemisphere, but on any entity – even local – that is involved upstream or downstream of the production process, even indirectly. It basically fell on everyone. What is needed in the labour market today, more than in the past, is a new heartfelt human pact that goes beyond the contractual aspects and individualism. A virtuous strategy that works daily on a shared plan, opening up to new values such as mutual support, the championing of common causes, availability. To elements that are connected to the ability to relate to each other and the environment. In the era we are preparing to live in – more social media than social – everything is destined to be viewed from a different perspective than the one adopted in previous decades. It is an era that places itself in a dynamic relationship both with the needs of society and business opportunities. It is only through their balanced merger that the ways in which companies can achieve results and, above all, thrive consciously take shape.

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