

Accelerating Progress

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My new book has been sat on our brand-new website for the past two weeks. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to finally announce that it exists.

The *CORE Playbook* is the product of 15 years of experimental development, refinement, listening, testing, questioning, proving, writing, sharing, yet more questioning, encouragement and collaboration.

In my first book, *CORE: How a Single Organizing Idea Can Change Business for Good*, two-thirds of its pages were dedicated to making the case for change. The case was strong but it would have been even greater if I'd been able to point to Greta Thunberg, Larry Fink and Blue Planet. But when the book was published in 2017, Greta hadn't started her lonely protest outside the Swedish embassy, Larry Fink was only just joining the sustainability and economy dots, and David Attenborough's *Blue Planet Part 1* was still largely seen as a simple BBC nature programme, not a clarion call.

Today, many more people are aware that our world isn't running quite the way it should be. While Joanna and Joe Public may still not know what the SDGs are, or what the Paris Agreement is (despite the involuntary publicity given it by a certain lame-duck president); are still viewing the weather as an inconvenient truth and Extinction Rebellion as an inconvenience in general; one thing is for sure, they certainly know what COVID-19 is. Commercial gain at the expense of nature's resources is a dangerous and unsustainable game. It has dire consequences, as we are all experiencing. Yet despite all the evidence, despite the growing frequency of societal and environmental upheaval, both saddening

and alarming, our response to what is happening to people and our planet remains painfully slow.

Regretfully, despite the efforts of Fink, Thunberg, Attenborough and a host of other lesser-known champions of change, the pace of change has picked up little since I set off on my book tour with *CORE* under my arm three years ago.

I had a very clear objective for my tour. TV, radio and keynote presentations are all well and good (and fun!), but I wanted to question not preach. Specifically, I wanted to get to the heart of what is stopping businesses from changing. To achieve this goal, a posse of friends and partners helped me stage fifteen 'CORE Dinner Debates' in twelve different countries. Specially selected, those invited to attend came from over 80 leading organizations from business, academia, government and non-governmental institutions.* At each dinner I posed one simple question: If business leaders understand that their enterprises are uniquely capable of creating both financial and societal value, AND the positive payback for all is plain to see, why aren't many more pushing for change and cashing in on a sustainable future?

There was lots of debate as you can probably imagine, but when you boil it all down, there are three basic reasons why things aren't changing fast enough:

1. **Total lack of leadership.** There's lots of management going on — just not very much leadership. You know, the sort that comes from being at the front, having the courage to call out the status quo, show empathy, and unleash our collective imaginations.
2. **Total lack of tools.** There are tools of course — but military-inspired, top-down management systems from the 19th Century, that have been ruthlessly capitalised upon in the 20th Century, are totally unfit for the 21st Century. Period.
3. **Greed.** No comment — I'll leave that to Extinction Rebellion.

The *CORE Playbook* is my response to what I heard and what I learned. Unlike my first book, it's not about making the case for change. It's not about convincing leaders, especially the leaders of the 200 or so businesses that dominate the sustainability media space with their massive sponsorship budgets. But rather, it's aimed at the millions of other businesses and the business leaders who also see what is happening, and are ready NOW to plot a new sustainable course but need proven tools to achieve their aims.

With over 40 diagrams and detailed step-by-step explanations, the *CORE Playbook* brings together all the tools necessary to make immediate change possible. From identifying and defining a sustainable Single Organizing Idea (SOI®) to organizing and aligning all the business functions and then measuring the commercial and societal outcomes, the *CORE Playbook* is the most comprehensive resource available for those

who understand that businesses have to change if they are to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond.

Excitingly, the *CORE Playbook* does not stand alone and thankfully, neither does my ambition to help accelerate progress and make real change practically possible. Working with old friends and new partners, over the next 12 months every element of the Single Organizing Idea (SOI®) system is being digitised and automated. Harnessing technology will make accessibility to SOI® even cheaper and easier for businesses, wherever they are. In tandem, we are also actively recruiting and training a small army of SOI® Practitioners around the world.

Accelerating progress is an exciting and rewarding challenge. We would love to hear from you if you can help us make it possible.

** A complete list of all the organizations that took part in the CORE Dinner Debates appears in the Playbook.*