



Hours of Reality

COUNTDOWN TO THE FUTURE

Countdown to the Future: BUSINESS

BUSINESS CAN LEAD THE WAY TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Business might be *the* single most critical sector in the fight for the sustainable future we want. Transform how we do business around the world and we're on the way to the net-zero economy we need by 2050.

Why?

The answer starts with two words: Emissions and attitudes.

EMISSIONS: BUSINESS-AS-USUAL IS KILLING THE PLANET

First, the bad news. Business-as-usual, powered by fossil fuels, is one of the prime drivers of the climate crisis. According to CDP's 2017 [Carbon Majors](#) report, just 100 fossil fuel companies are responsible for a staggering 71 percent of global emissions since 1988.

Yes, these are fossil fuel companies, and slashing that number means fundamentally changing their core business. But the problem doesn't stop with energy companies. The world's largest companies — with a combined market capitalization of \$35 trillion, [nearly twice the GDP of the US in 2015](#) — together produce 31 gigatonnes of global warming pollution each year. That's the annual equivalent of over 8,100 coal-fired power stations.

The bottom line: The opportunities for emissions reduction in the business sector are enormous. Planet-sized, even.

ATTITUDES: CREATING VIRTUOUS CYCLES

Companies have another essential role to play by helping shift beliefs and behaviors in mainstream culture. When companies whose products help shape our identities (think of your favorite clothing or shoe brand) or make daily life possible (think kitchen or bathroom products) commit to real sustainability and reducing emissions in their operations, it not only tells their competitors that the industry is changing, it tells their customers that culture is changing.

In both cases, the examples forward-looking and pro-climate companies set have the power to trigger larger shifts in behavior and attitudes, slowly creating expectations among customers that companies deliver great products and do it in ways that don't harm the planet. The result: culture changes and climate action becomes more and more a part of everyday life.

THE SHIFT IS ON

So here's the good news. Many companies *are* seeing the threat of climate change to their planet and their bottom line and changing course.

Multinational giants from Ikea to Apple are



going all-in on clean energy. Japan's largest homebuilder, Daiwa House Industry, is committed to [doubling energy efficiency](#) in its buildings. [Amazon is betting big on electric vehicles for its massive delivery fleet](#). The list goes on.

The result is that change is happening fast, both in corporate offices and the markets they serve. Today, growing numbers of consumers concerned about what's happening to the planet choose companies that choose real sustainability, making climate action not just the right choice, but the smart one too. In fact, [recent polling shows 81 percent of consumers worldwide](#) want companies to improve the environment.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you're at a position to influence change at a company, either as an employee or executive decision-maker, start the conversation about embracing practical solutions like clean energy and supply chain sustainability. Below are some key points to consider in conversations with others in your company.

BUSINESS HAS TO CHANGE

- **Business as usual is creating a global climate crisis.** Fossil fuel emissions mean stronger storms [disrupting supply chains](#), longer droughts turning farms into dust fields, and lethal heatwaves stealing lives and workdays.
- **We have a decade to act and avoid the worst.** Scientists warn that unless we [halve fossil fuel emissions by 2030](#), we'll reach a tipping point triggering catastrophic and irreversible climate impacts across the planet.
- **What's bad for the planet is terrible for business.** Imagine marketing snow gear when winters rarely freeze. Imagine seeing your farms wiped out by once-a-century floods every few years. Imagine running online businesses when routine typhoons mean you can't guarantee delivery. *For many business owners and employees, it's already happening.*

BUSINESS CAN CHANGE

- **With renewables like wind and solar, we can power our companies without destroying our planet.** Clean energy is affordable and abundant. [More energy from the sun's rays strikes](#)

[the earth every hour than humanity uses in an entire year. Globally, wind could supply the Earth's electricity needs 40 times over.](#)

- **Clean energy isn't just the right choice for the planet — it's the smart one for your bottom line.** Already, renewables [are cheaper than fossil fuels for two-thirds of the planet](#) and [experts project that costs will keep falling](#).
- **Consumers choose green businesses.** A 2017 report by Unilever showed [one-third of consumers prefer sustainable brands, creating a €966 billion \(\\$1 trillion\) opportunity](#) for companies that prove their pro-planet credentials.

BUSINESS WILL CHANGE

- **Global businesses are committing to 100 percent renewable energy.** The companies committed to powering their operations with 100 percent clean energy is a global Who's Who: [3M, Barclay's, Citi, Johnson & Johnson, Mars, and more](#). Apple, Microsoft, LEGO Group, and others are already there.
- **Companies are reducing emissions in every area.** [Over 1,300 companies worldwide are working to reach net-zero emissions](#), adopting science-based targets and transforming their business along the way. [Walmart has launched Project Gigaton](#), working with suppliers to prevent 1 billion metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in its global supply chain by 2030.
- **Climate action goes beyond clean energy.** [Today, growing numbers of companies are working to electrify their fleet and accelerate the shift to electric transit](#). Meanwhile, [major companies are also working to make their work more efficient](#) and do more with less energy to reduce emissions.

LEARN MORE

Request a digital presentation and discussion on climate solutions for your business as part of [24 Hours of Reality: Countdown to the Future](#) on October 10–11. Presentations are free and a great place to start the conversation on what our changing climate means for your business and what you can do.