

Sustainable Business: A Declaration of Leadership

Because:

- The well-being of our economy fundamentally depends on the services from nature that support it;
- Business activity has a profound impact on the ability of nature to sustainably provide those services;
- We are committed, as business and community leaders, to the well-being of both economic and ecological systems, of both humans and other living things;
- We believe that these goals are compatible (and where they seem to be incompatible, we are committed to finding better ways to do business that make them compatible);

We envision our company, suppliers and customers, and our communities, doing business in ways that:

- Preserve, protect and ultimately enhance the living systems – of this region, and the planet – that sustain our business and the larger human economy;
- Provide ever greater value in meeting the real needs of our customers, suppliers and communities;
- Meet human needs in the most efficient and economical means possible, in order to include the greatest percentage of humanity.

To do this we will:

- Consider the requirements of the earth's living systems in all design and operating decisions;
- Not take more from the earth than it can sustainably provide;
- Not provide to the earth more than it can sustainably absorb;
- Analyze the life cycle operating costs and impacts of our facilities, operations and products/services, as well as their initial costs;
- Work to eliminate “waste” of all kinds from our operations, and to find safe, productive uses for any “non-product” that we are not yet able to eliminate;
- Treat employees, customers, suppliers and stakeholders fairly, honestly and respectfully;
- Take responsibility for the safety of our products/services in their intended use;
- Take responsibility for the safety of our activities for employees and communities;
- Take responsibility for the safe “end of life” recovery and reuse or recycling of our products;
- Design our facilities, operations and products/services to be ever more efficient, ever less dependent on materials and activities that poison, degrade or encroach on living systems, and ever more supportive of these design approaches;
- Do all these in a way that supports our economic well-being, and the economic well-being of those who depend on us.

We will measure our progress by the trends of our:

- Resource productivity [unit of benefit provided per unit of resource used];
- “Non-product” output [amounts & toxicity of “unsaleable” materials and chemicals];
- Net carbon emissions [production of climate changing greenhouse gasses];
- Ecological footprint [demand on earth's regenerative capacity];
- Profit, both near and long term.

We will pursue these steps with a commitment to:

- Future generations;
- Continuous improvement;
- Open dialogue with our customers, stockholders, suppliers, and communities.

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The purpose of this document: to challenge already good companies, developers, designers and public authorities to an even higher level of thinking, aspiration and performance.¹

The sustainable business phenomenon is taking deeper root. But many who've been laboring in the vineyards for the past few decades have been wondering whether there's a fundamental problem remaining: all too much of the effort from business, government and NGOs has focused on mitigating the problem, making things less bad, slowing the rate of decline of the regenerative capacity of the living systems that sustain human culture and economy.

Bill McDonough offers the simple and compelling metaphor of merely slowing down a car that's going in the wrong direction, instead of turning it around. Frank Dixon of Innovest Strategic Value Advisors has called for raising the bar from "corporate social responsibility" to "total corporate responsibility – focused on promoting system changes that hold firms fully responsible."² John Ehrenfeld, MIT professor and industrial ecology leader, questions the conventional approach to sustainable development: "Creating true sustainability," he argues in a recent Society for Organizational Learning (SoL) Journal article, "requires radical solutions, not quick fixes, [beginning] by examining our own behaviors and assumptions regarding consumption, personal satisfaction, and technology."³

This Declaration is my contribution to that discussion – my stake in the ground. Commissioned by StopWaste.Org, and guided by the new California Sustainable Business Council, it's intentionally both spare and provocative. Every phrase in it could be further explained, justified, specified, documented and exemplified – but those details are not what we've lacked. We've lacked the will to face reality, tell the truth about what we see, and do what we know needs to be done.

So consider: how does this Declaration compare with your organization's vision – and its reality – in these key dimensions of business and sustainability:

- Are you just putting band-aids on environmental and social problems, or are you making substantive contributions to solving them?
- Are you leaving money on the table, or are you systematically building value for your company and its stakeholders?

I hope you'll use this Declaration to stimulate fruitful discussions about whether your company is taking the challenge and the opportunity seriously – and creatively – enough.⁴

Please send me your comments and suggestions, at leadership@natlogic.com – and invite me to engage your organization in a powerful conversation about aspiration, innovation and profitable implementation.

Thank you,

Gil Friend
CEO, Natural Logic Inc.

1. See also: "How High the Moon: The challenge of 'sufficient' goals," at <http://www.NatLogic.com/resources/nbl/v13/n03.html>

2. See http://www.greenbiz.com/news/columns_third.cfm?NewsID=26612

3. See <http://www.solonline.org/reflections/browse/>

4. You can read this Declaration on line at <http://www.natlogic.com/news/events/commonwealth.html>

Who we are

Natural Logic helps companies and communities prosper – by embedding the laws of nature at the heart of enterprise.

We apply our Ecological Lens™ – the nearly four billion years experience of nature's ecosystems in developing efficient, adaptive, resilient, sustainable systems – to identify and

guide strategy, assessment, design and information services that build profit, competitive advantage and quality of life through exceptional environmental performance.

After all, why reinvent the wheel, when the R&D – for companies, communities, buildings and land use – has already been done?

What we do

Compelling goals. Effective measures. Sustainable performance you can take to the bank™

STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT

Natural Logic adds business value by making "sustainability" a strategic driver of business performance.

Offerings include: Strategic Sustainability™ consulting and executive coaching; Strategic Supply Chain Partnerships; market and product development; CSR Reporting as a strategic business tool; sustainable economic development; life cycle thinking.

DESIGN & INNOVATION

Natural Logic's Integrative Design services help design firms, developers and institutions build high performance ("green") buildings that enhance the environment, cost less to operate – and cost no more to build. Our experts serve as coaches and resources, training and guiding these firms on material, technical and process issues. We don't design the projects or "stamp" documents; we focus on helping client and stakeholder teams better understand and utilize an effective whole-system design process.

Offerings include: Integrative design processes & charrettes; "Green" high performance buildings; LEED training and process management; Green materials research / specification development; Permaculture "design with nature" systems; Building / Site / Natural system integration.

OPERATIONS & EFFICIENCY

Natural Logic identifies resource efficiency strategies that reduce costs and environmental impact, improve quality – and increase profits. We'll help implement them too, with training and management systems that help clients profitably embed those opportunities into daily operating practice.

Offerings include: Integrated EcoAudits: process efficiency; Environmental Management Systems; Evaluation & implementation; Green building operation protocols; Profit Discovery processes.

METRICS & REPORTING

Everyone knows that "what gets measured gets done." Natural Logic helps overcome the critical challenge of deciding what to measure. And we get the "measures that matter" to the decision makers that need them, to support decisions that meet goals, build share value, and power careers. Business is tough enough; why fly blind?

Offerings include: Business Metabolics™ benchmarking software; Key Performance Indicators development; CSR Reporting Power Tools; EcoAudit Toolkit (facility assessment software); EQE Checklist (self-assessment software).