

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What is most critical in building enduring, resilient businesses?

Thrive and survive

Cheung Pui Yuen
Chief executive officer
Deloitte Singapore

During a time rocked by uncertainties brought on by the pandemic and with the world fighting climate change, the core principles of good governance – agency, accountability, and stewardship – continue to anchor resilient businesses.

As corporations begin to make responsible climate choices and position themselves for long-term sustainable value creation, environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are taking centre stage in organisations' purpose. Boards need to drive this notion from the top and steer their organisations to focus on these key sustainability pillars.

Communication, transparency and disclosures are also imperative in bridging the gap between shareholder and stakeholder interests. And finally, the leadership of the chairperson to effectively challenge management on sustainability issues will contribute to long-term sustainable success for the organisation.

Stephen McNulty
President, Asia Pacific and Japan
Micro Focus

What the past 18 months have taught us is that no business leader is fully prepared to face crisis. However, that should not stop us from doing our best in ensuring that our organisation thrives and adapts as it faces global challenges. Our role as business leaders is to champion the mindset of resilience – one that prioritises the ability to run today, but also encourages transformation for tomorrow's opportunities. Whether it's the information technology (IT) team creating a more sustainable operations for future of work, or sales team trying to build meaningful connections with clients virtually, each stakeholder should be equipped and have the confidence to develop a plan B that will include preparation, response, and a recovery plan when the crisis hits. The ultimate goal is to be able to address strategic, financial, operational, and information risks – in a manner that will drive business growth and sustained reinvention – during global ups and downs.

Arthur Fernandez
Chief growth officer
Jcurve Solutions

A strong, growth-oriented culture is needed to achieve true business resilience in today's saturated marketplace, providing a key differentiator to foster internal and external cohesion and trust. When growth is deeply embedded in the DNA of a business, it is a reflection of how efficiently innovation is being adopted, how adaptable its staff are to overcome adverse conditions, and the diversification of capabilities offered to address evolving needs and demands. Every business is only as great as its employees, and only then can businesses truly reach new levels of success by learning from the past and taking ownership of the future.

Lawrence Loh
Director, Centre for Governance and Sustainability
NUS Business School

To build an enduring, resilient business, we have to abandon the notion that it is a business which is a commercial activity to earn profit. We are still stuck in the era of shareholder primacy where decisions are vested in shareholders. Yet, these so-called 'owners' reap benefits through costs imposed on society such as environmental degradation – corporate taxes do not cover for these.

A fundamental intervention is needed. Having shareholders electing the whole board is the crux of the problem. In a real stakeholder-centric model, the board has to carry other stakeholders. This is a major fix and may affect the legal conceptualisation of the company. But then we can also have a legal solution.

David Gerald
Founder, president & CEO
SIAS

Resilience is the ability of a company to prepare for threats, absorb impacts, recover and adapt following persistent stress or a disruptive event. Covid-19 has highlighted the need for companies to not only adopt ESG practices, but to have sustainable resilient practices to ensure that their organisation is adaptable in any environment. With ESG investing growing considerably and fast becoming mainstream, companies across the board are missing the relevant, comparable data. They need to make informed decisions, manage risks, measure outcomes, and align investments with sustainable, long-term value.

Victor Mills
Chief executive
Singapore International Chamber of Commerce

Culture eats strategy for lunch. It determines behaviour, policies, outcomes and every company's sustained success. Culture begins with the values a company decides to uphold. Next are the behaviours, demonstrating those values in the relevant, comparable data. They need to make informed decisions, manage risks, measure outcomes, and align investments with sustainable, long-term value.

David Kuo
Co-founder
The Smart Investor

The issue of sustainability can leave many companies confused about what should be material to the business from a reporting standpoint and what should be prioritised in terms of its corporate strategy. Building an enduring and sustainable business should never be seen as a box-ticking exercise. Instead, it should be about identifying what is most material to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders. They will include its employees, its suppliers, and its customers. If done properly, it should lead to a materiality matrix that answers questions about what the biggest impacts on the business are, and how it can control them to build an enduring and resilient business.



BT ILLUSTRATION:
SIMON ANG

Ulrike Wieduwilt
Managing director
Russell Reynolds Associates

As companies move forward in this pandemic, they can no longer afford to let the valuable potential of their employees idle. Business leaders need to empower their workforce, clients, and the community with the ability to enter and thrive in the new norm. In building enduring, resilient businesses today, supervisory boards are prioritising diversity, equity and inclusion, making these qualities essential to business sustainability. Boards need to plan to ensure there are successors to the current chief executive officer (CEO) – not just a single one, but preferably a little squad that will help the business grow.

David Sandison
Singapore practice leader
Grant Thornton

Everything changes nowadays at an alarming rate. It is increasingly difficult to pick out the important signals from the cacophonous background shrill. But some philosophies stand the test of time. The Ancient Greeks had a saying – "meden agan", or "nothing to excess". The successful enduring business will be one whose leaders can think clearly for themselves, are not prone to hand-wagon jumping on the one side, or swayed by mass hysterical knee-jerking on the other. They will pick out their landmark and steer towards it in a calm, fair and balanced manner. But they will also recognise when the wind is about to change – and work it to their advantage.

Max Loh
Managing partner, Singapore and Brunei
Ernst & Young LLP

In building enduring and resilient businesses, the notion of having a clear purpose underpinned by shared values to guide decision-making is not new – but remains vital in helping organisations stay focused on their raison d'être and doing the right things amid sustained disruptions. Increasingly, there are growing expectations by stakeholders, especially customers, employers and investors, around a more inclusive, human-centred and societally-engaged concept of purpose and sustainability.

Capital and talent will follow organisations that anchor their culture and strategies to such a purpose and demonstrate the sustainable impact and long-term value they are creating, which in turn will fortify them against ever-present winds of change.

Tonny Loh
Partner
Heidrick & Struggles Singapore

Covid has brought resilience to the forefront for companies and countries. At Heidrick & Struggles, we constantly measure the resilient muscle of companies, which is a key driver for agility, on top of the ability to learn, adapt and anticipate challenges. Companies with leaders who constantly scan the environment for threats and opportunities, and promote a culture of failing and recovering fast, tend to do better in responding to external shocks. In the process, the ability of leaders to mobilise and communicate is hugely important. Often, when the macro environment is uncertain, what's most needed is clarity of purpose, strategy, and communications, with the will to execute. We also find that companies that embrace technologies and invest ahead in digitalising their business often display a higher degree of resilience.

Joanne Flinn
Chair, Sustainability Peer Group
CGN Singapore

Challenges, turbulence and uncertainty bring down many apparently successful businesses, even ones that pay attention to their purpose, their culture and their cash flow. In my work with sustainability leadership in Singapore for over 20 years and globally, I've found that businesses that endure have moved past simply wanting to win the profits game. It is like winning Olympics gold, and having no life after the medal – it is a shallow win.

Instead, enduring businesses commit to win deep through their impact across community, employees and the future – the ESG issues in today's distributed global value chains. This creates resilience and, in turn, businesses that prosper and last.

Motohiko Uno
President
Fujitsu Asia

Taking a purpose-driven approach to align employees and management alike is key for companies to achieve resilience together. It defines the reason for the company's existence and should never change, even in the face of adversity. As a leading digital transformation player, our purpose is to make the world's systems more sustainable by building trust in society through innovation, and we ensure that this is shared with employees and stakeholders. When challenges arise, employees meet them and stand behind the company's purpose – which reinforces our ability to stay agile and in tune with global society, and create value.

Jeffery Tan
Group general counsel
Chief sustainability officer
Jardine Cycle & Carriage

We are all familiar with the triple bottom line or the three P's of sustainability: people, planet and profit. There is probably a fourth P that needs to be emphasised, which ties it all together – purpose.

A helpful perspective to adopt in building enduring, resilient businesses is that of a parent. Where the responsibility of providing for one's children requires parents (in this case, corporations) to look beyond just the here and now. There is a need to adopt a long-term perspective of embracing and passing on time-tested values and principles to prepare the next generation to meet the challenges of the future.

Equally important is the obligation to leave a legacy of a better planet with its climate intact, and not adopt a self-centred attitude focused on me and myself and I – but rather what will benefit the larger global community, which we are all a part of.

Wendy Johnstone
SVP & COO APAC
Zendesk

The ongoing pandemic has made businesses more familiar with navigating unforeseen change and adversity. During this time, we have learned that resilience comes from having a strong core purpose and values that can be aligned as needed to new norms – and that is when a strong foundation needs to support the agility that enables recalibration. We saw this in the companies we support, who had to revisit their customer experience during this period, but also in how we support our employees during a time of extreme uncertainty. These are learnings that will outlive the current crisis – that a strong core will always support the shifts needed to see through challenges.

Uantchem Loh
Chief executive officer
Black Sun PLC

"A Diamond is Forever" was an advertising campaign launched in 1947 that changed the diamond industry forever. A subsequent campaign – "How else could two months' salary last forever?" – provided men with guidance on how much they should spend on a diamond engagement ring. The four C's – colour, clarity, cut and carat – help you assess if the quality of a diamond is worth two months' salary and bring everlasting love.

What makes a business last forever? Being colour-blind (diversity), having clarity of purpose, nurturing people cut to brilliance and understanding that carat (size) by itself means little.

Chia Tek Yew
Vice-chairman of Singapore
Oliver Wyman

I believe that corporate purpose, which guides the culture of the company and is embedded into its strategy, is most critical in building enduring resilient businesses. In essence, all three components are important as they collectively serve to ensure that the corporate purpose or promise is actually delivered. For example, a company that believes that its purpose is to create shared value with all its stakeholders over a prolonged period of time will have to develop a culture of collaboration with its clients, suppliers, staff and even competitors, and have a strategy that measures the value created for all instead of only the value derived for itself. This would include value created for the environment and society, and with timelines that stretch beyond the finan-

cial reporting cycles or the tenure of current senior management.

Callum Laing
Chief executive officer
MBH Corporation PLC

I recently published the 100-year vision for MBH Corporation. Doing so involved researching those rare companies that have managed to last 100, 500, or even more than 1,000 years. The secret sauce was not leadership, culture, innovation, or any of the other things you might assume. The critical ingredient to endure is the absence of failure. Today's business thinking is all focused on growth; we take risks for growth that we would not take if the focus is longevity. Instead of asking "How can we grow 10 times?", ask "How can we be around in 100 years?" You will get very different answers.

Colin Brookes
SVP, Sales & Services
Citrix Asia Pacific & Japan

While there is no secret sauce in building a resilient business, the key to allowing businesses to thrive in a fast-evolving climate is to become part of the wider solution. That can mean empowering equal opportunities in hiring, or developing technology that is more sustainable. Regardless of the industry, every company can play their part in being the answer that the world needs now.

Today's challenges will go beyond just meeting the numbers, which is why as a company, we believe in empowering people to do their very best work, with a work-space experience that is agile, productive and secure. As the workplace experiences evolve to help "anywhere, anytime" productivity, the positive impact on work life will ripple outwards to our lives and the greater community.

Sujith Sivaram
Managing director
ESCO

All businesses exist to serve their stakeholders, be they customers, owners, or employees. Sticking to this core and identifying and building around the question of "What jobs are they doing?" for their customers helps to build barriers of entry around the company and helps them skate towards key performance-defining components or systems. With this value strongly embedded across the organisation, leaders should build empowered teams that embrace rapid decision-making and learning cycles. Such teams are dynamic and passionate about getting the jobs done for their stakeholders and will seek out enabling technologies or solutions that help them deliver value. It is the unwavering interaction of these elements – values around stakeholder fulfilment, leaders, teams, processes, structures, and enablers such as technology – that is critical to building resilient, enduring businesses.

Takehiko Ryu
Managing director
Panasonic Asia Pacific Pte Ltd

Building resilient businesses in these uncertain times requires leaders to go beyond enhancing business competitiveness. With the adverse effects of climate change posing threats to businesses, along with the widespread call for social responsibility and corporate governance, business leaders now need to look at imbuing sustainability from an ESG perspective to put their businesses on a firm foundation for the future. At Panasonic, we have a mission to enable a better life and a better world for everyone on the planet by ensuring all our business activities are sustainable and in line with our Environment Vision 2050 goals. By enabling more efficient utilisation of resources, promoting reuse and recycling, and contributing to the decarbonisation of society through the adoption of renewable energy sources, every step we take is done in a calibrated way with our environment, communities and stakeholders in mind.

Tang Kok Thy
President
Singapore Green Building Council

We are living in an environment of constant change; interweaving environmental sustainability directly into the business model will serve as an anchor to weather the challenging times. A sustainability strategy for addressing environmental impacts will not only help to future-proof the business, but is also useful to govern day-to-day operations such as goal-setting, reporting processes, strengthening of stakeholder relations, ensuring overall accountability and minimising environmental impact. Making sustainability the DNA of an organisation can help to save costs in the long run. It also reinforces the image of the organisation to be one that is forward-thinking and deeply rooted in sustainability.

Pierre-Jean Chalou
Senior vice president, APAC
Poly

In the past, building a resilient business was about profitability, having adequate manpower, and being operationally sound. Today as we collectively confront issues such as the Great Resignation, I see the employee playing a critical role in building a resilient future workplace. The face of increasing employee burnout, employers need to show employees that their work has deeper meaning, and better understand the role that work plays in their lives. Employers should take the opportunity to learn what drives their employees, as well as learn how these individuals can best be productive; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. If the workforce is built to be resilient, and employers pay more attention to their well-being of their staff, that same trait will naturally extend to the business.

Dharmesh Arora
Regional CEO (APAC)
Schaeffler

Having strong foundational values is key in building a resilient business. This includes assuming responsibility and having a strong awareness of the social and environmental impact across business processes. At Schaeffler, our management structures and processes ensure that we maintain a long-term view in meeting our strategic priorities. This ensures that business activities along our entire value chain are legally compliant and meet the highest ethical standards. By creating the necessary transparency both within and outside the organisation, we look to foster trust and responsibility in building a business that can withstand the test of time.

Nick Merritt
Project finance and sustainability partner, Singapore
Norton Rose Fulbright (Asia) LLP

Business needs to define its purpose. By aligning its strategy to a low-carbon future with its consumption of natural capital set within planetary boundaries, business will ensure it is inter-generationally fair. Business needs a solid social foundation: be aware of who it can support and those to whom it should do no harm. Firms which align executive pay with the creation of long-term value that focuses on people, planet and prosperity (for all) will be the real winners.

Ng Tian Chong
Managing director, Greater Asia
HP Inc

As a global technology company, we have a clear role in improving digital equity. As a manufacturing company we are very conscious of our impact on the environment. At HP, we look at these issues through the entire ecosystem of our business. So while we focus on Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, we also look throughout our supply chain and create programmes that encourage partners to reach common climate goals. We work with non-governmental organisations to gather ocean-bound plastics to recycle and reuse for our products. We work with governments to explore opportunities in broadening education. To be resilient, a company needs to look beyond its borders and consider each aspect of its potential impact. This is no longer an option – it is a business necessity.

Kong Wan Sing
Founder and CEO
JustCo

A strong company culture is the glue which holds organisations together. Culture is critical to building an enduring and resilient business. Covid-19 has disrupted how we work and will have a huge impact on the cultures of organisations. On one hand, the increased adoption of remote work and work-from-home can be a good thing for some businesses and workers; on the other, we must not overlook the importance of physical interaction and in-person teamwork when it comes to building strong bonds between colleagues.

Karen Clarke
Managing director, Asia-Pacific
Anaplan

The pace of change seen over the last 18 months has shown that adaptability and agility are the building blocks of organisational resilience. Integrating these qualities into a company's operating rhythm, purpose and culture transitions it from a state of annual, inefficient planning to always-on, sustainable approaches to achieving its goals and objectives.

At the heart of this resilience is the talent that an organisation attracts, nurtures and retains. As we witness the overhauling of how workplaces look, feel and operate, it is important for organisations to have robust, data-driven capabilities to interpret evolving workforce patterns and account for unexpected talent contingencies; these things will be transformative for sustained competitiveness.

Andy Thompson
Managing director
Go-Ahead Singapore

Being a public transport operator with international presence, our vision is to create a world where every journey is taken care of. Staying intuitive to the needs of commuters, societies and the environment keeps us going, and strengthens our resilience and relevance in this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. Initiatives such as "Helping Hand" – which allows commuters with disabilities to get the help they desire – enhance the commuting experience. The use of solar panels on our buses helps green the environment. These are some of the innovative touches that bring an extra value to the larger ecosystem we operate in. And we believe innovation can only thrive with a diverse workforce, which brings together different strengths and breadth of knowledge.

Joanne Wong
VP, International Markets
LogRhythm

The world has seen an unprecedented shift to all things digital over the past year. Many businesses have had to pivot to a digital-first strategy to keep pace with this ever-evolving landscape and meet emerging needs, or risk being left behind. With the pace of transformation only getting faster from here on, embracing technological innovation is now a business imperative for long-term success.

However, implementing new technology in isolation is not enough. Businesses will need to invest in a holistic strategy – encompassing people, processes and infrastructure – to push the limits of digital and drive competitive advantage. At the same time, it is pivotal that they take an active approach to cybersecurity and build cyber resilience. Only then can they safeguard their operations and thrive in today's digital era.

Abel Ariza
President, Malaysia & Singapore
Sodexo

Driving responsible, sustainable growth is key to building resilient businesses. At Sodexo, we are committed to doing good business in a good way – investing in our people and reducing our environmental impact. Cultivating diverse and inclusive workplaces where each person feels safe to bring their whole selves to work must sit on the business agenda. Aligned with United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, we are also committed to reducing our carbon footprint by sourcing sustainably, reducing food waste and promoting plant-based food options. We have embarked on these actions to embed purpose into daily operations and build a business that can weather the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Naveen Menon
President ASEAN
Cisco Foundation

As businesses build greater resilience in the post-pandemic era, more are recognising that sustainability governance is an integral business strategy that creates long-term, collective value for all stakeholders in the ecosystem. Building enduring, resilient businesses starts at the top. CEOs need to lead by example, from setting ambitious ESG targets and ensuring this is cascaded to all levels in the organisation.

That said, there is no standard, successful framework for business; rather, organisations need to tailor their approach based on their business model to positively impact their ESG goals. Importantly, profit-making organisations can deliver much-needed environmental and socio-economic outcomes; however, some inequali-

ties are only addressed by non-profits which should also be embraced through a donor-led approach.

In early 2020, Cisco announced a new purpose to power an inclusive future for all. Cisco will help bridge gaps of inequity and exclusion worldwide through the technology we build: our scale and extended ecosystem; our commitment to corporate social responsibility and social justice, our teams, and the support we bring to our communities.

Ronnie Lee
General manager
Lenovo Singapore

Over the past year, businesses in Singapore have had to adapt and pivot at an unbelievable speed to adopt technology and new work environments merely to survive. With the consistent myriad of economic and social challenges due to pandemic waves, simply taking a reactive stance to weather the persistent storm is no longer sufficient. Instead, businesses need to be nimble and forward-thinking to see beyond the horizon. Besides being able to make rapid tactical business shifts, businesses also need to inculcate a strong collaborative culture internally so that every employee feels confident in being part of the ride and making sense of uncertain business landscapes. In addition, businesses need to leverage smart and predictive technology to ensure that they remain abreast of all challenges and are provided with full assessments of risks before taking action. Technology has been and will continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring businesses remain buoyant and resilient for the long term.

Alex Teo
Managing director and VP
Siemens Digital Industries Software, SE Asia

The manufacturing industry is one of the largest sectors in the world economy, so there is definitely room for improvement when it comes to reducing carbon emissions. With advanced technology solutions such as additive manufacturing, digitalisation can be a driver of sustainable change. Businesses need to take bigger strides towards investing in new technologies – such as digital twin and simulation – to build resilience with continued and sustainable progress. In the long run, embracing digitalisation will be a major pillar, not only for streamlining operations and lowering costs, but also for creating a greener and more sustainable future.

Mario Singh
Chief executive officer
Fullerton Markets

The single, most important thing in building enduring, resilient businesses is culture. In our organisation, we define culture as the combination of values and behaviour. Simply put, values are what pulls us on the inside. Behaviour is what pushes us on the outside. Our four values are passion, excellence, commitment and sustainability while our two behaviours are speed and service. Together, these six traits make up our company culture.

The benefits of developing a strong, healthy culture are enormous. Firstly, it gives everyone a sense of corporate identity and belonging. This is important for alignment because almost everyone has different personal values. Secondly, it boosts productivity and gives everyone a sense of meaning. This ultimately strengthens the social fabric of the organisation and increases loyalty in the long term. That is why management consultant Peter Drucker said: "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

Andrew Yeo
Chief executive officer
NTUC Income

Cultivating a growth mindset and a desire to create a positive impact within our organisation culture is key. Employee empowerment and engagement are very powerful both in driving the company forward even amid adversity and to effectively manage our business for more sustainable outcomes vis-a-vis improving our service to our customers. The magic happens when our employees' beliefs and attitudes are aligned with our corporate goals for growth and sustainability. Personal conviction about the good we do as an organisation will drive action and initiative beyond just targets to effect real change and keep us relevant to the economic and social needs of society.

Tripti Lochan
Co-CEO
VNLV&R Asia

To build resilience in a company, we have to build the resilience muscle of her most valuable asset: her employees. This means inspiring them to be part of something bigger than themselves, that not only impacts the business in terms of financial value but has a positive impact on the planet and the communities we operate in. It means not accepting "not bad" as good enough, but at every level, trying, failing, re-trying, failing, and re-trying till the business is "net good". Resilience is a function of confidence of a self-learning organisation that has a vision that aspires for positive impact.

Kevin Loh
Managing director and CEO
IHH Healthcare

Organisations need to have a true north to guide the decisions made by every single employee across all touchpoints in every level of operation, in every country. For IHH, that comes from empowering our people to live our purpose of touching lives and transforming care. Fulfilling this purpose means our patients' needs will always remain at the centre. Even as we embrace disruptive innovations including digitalisation, we do so insofar as it makes our patient's experience with us better, more convenient and more cost effective. If we take care of this, the business will take care of itself.

Chia Wee Luen
MD and area VP, Asia
ServiceNow

Enduring and resilient businesses need to have a clear purpose that is relevant to society and people, and be able to cascade the "why" to every employee in the organisation. Businesses also need to sustain hybrid work models into the future. Not only do corporate goals need to be defined and communicated, the supporting processes and workflows need to be digitally embedded into employees' everyday work to avoid having yet another silo process or tracking system. Businesses will need to leverage leading technologies to better plan, govern and report on investments towards sustainable, ethical and equitable growth.

Eileen Chua
Managing director
SAP Singapore

Purpose and sustainability have always been part of SAP's DNA – to create value for the long term, improve

Sebastian Mueller
COO & co-founder
MING Labs

Resilient organisations are, first and foremost, learning organisations. Adaptability is key to surviving trying times. The only way to strategically adapt in the right way is to continuously learn as an organisation, just like any organism would as it adapts.

This implies having a flat organisational structure, where signals can flow from the edges to the centre. It also implies a willingness to continuously challenge oneself and not settle into one way of doing things.

Finally, it also implies having an agile organisation that can implement adaptations as the need arises. Effective learning is the key to survive as an organisation.



people's lives and manage our business in a sustainable way. To achieve that, having strong corporate governance by recognising the importance of diverse voices across the board in building resilient businesses is paramount.

Moving forward, businesses must continue to demonstrate long-term profitability and sustainability by challenging historical definitions of business success. Profit maximisation and increasing shareholder value alone will no longer suffice. The concept of shared value presents an alternative way to define success to drive societal change.

Jessie Xia
MD, Southeast Asia
ThoughtWorks

Living with the pandemic has spotlighted sustainability and social issues that were long overlooked. Moving forward, organisations that purposefully understand and address the scale and dimensions of complex challenges – such as climate change and deep-rooted inequalities – will be those that endure and thrive. Being able to incorporate multiple perspectives, and having an unwavering pursuit to ensuring sustainable goals will be required for resilience.

We believe as technology moves towards the core of society, it offers powerful solutions to address these issues if supported by an inclusive, diverse workforce of technology professionals. A diverse, passionate tech community that extends opportunities to people from all backgrounds and is committed to applying expertise for positive social impact, will enable a more equitable future.

Nicholas Lee
Chief executive officer
EZ-Link Pte Ltd

In times of competition or crisis, the key is sustainable and responsible entrepreneurship. A sustainable business model is one that takes into consideration long-term operational viability instead of focusing on short-term gains. Responsible entrepreneurship is about ensuring your customers have continued access to promised services at reasonable value without exploiting their loyalty or dependency.

Responsible innovation is also critical in maintaining the trust of customers. Companies need to show their purpose, which is to serve the needs of their customers. We continuously seek out new solutions that deliver value to our customers, from cradle to silver, to ensure that nobody is left behind even amid a shift towards a digital-first society.

John Ng
Chief executive officer
YTL PowerSeraya

As a major power company, we are conscious about energy and water usage and started our sustainability journey about 20 years ago. Through tracking and disclosing our ESG performance, our pursuit for cleaner fuels and higher energy efficiency technologies has paid off. With today's climate change crisis, we have a 60-30 vision to achieve 60 per cent reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions by 2030 (from 2010 levels).

Moving to a low-carbon business model requires managing transitional risks, which in turn helps strengthen business resilience. To ensure business growth, organising ourselves and creating the conditions for innovation and collaboration to thrive are just as important to galvanise our people into climate action.

Murli Ravi
Co-founder
Tin Men Capital

Looking at the list of the world's 10 biggest public companies today and two decades ago, only one company – Microsoft – is on both lists. One of today's top companies, Facebook, did not even exist 20 years ago. Staying on top is by far the exception than the norm. Change is the only constant.

We can learn from the natural world. Living beings do not operate in a static world. Not only does their environment change, so too do the strategies of the creatures around them. In the business context, there is constant evolution in customers' needs, technologies, market dynamics, the competitive landscape and, yes, regulatory and sustainability considerations – and they are all changing faster than ever before.

So what is the answer? Your company definitely needs a North Star – but more importantly, do not assume what worked last year will continue to work this year or the next. Adaptability is the one thing that will keep you alive.

Tony Frey
VP & general manager
Informatica APJ

If there is one key takeaway for businesses from the pandemic, it is that the future of resilience is built on adopting the right technologies for sustainability. As our global economy continues to become more digital-first, data has become the most valuable asset for businesses.

How businesses manage their data will define their future. At Informatica, we empower businesses with an artificial intelligence-powered, cloud-native end-to-end data management platform called the Intelligent Data Management Cloud which helps organisations derive actionable insights from data at scale, while enabling them to innovate and operate in a sustainable environment of trust, compliance and agility. It is data in the cloud that has played a major role in keeping businesses running during this pandemic.

Tan Mui Huat
President and CEO, Asia
International SOS

The pandemic demonstrated the importance of employee health on business continuity and productivity.

Businesses that prioritise workforce health and well-being will thrive.

Our strategies in building business resilience for our clients and our organisation emphasise preparing employees for layered health and security threat environments and ensuring they feel supported and productive. This includes providing timely information and insights to aid decision-making, supporting and assisting employees with their concerns, and developing robust and flexible business continuity plans and holistic health and well-being programmes.

In doing so, we have helped organisations fulfil their duty of care responsibilities, build resilience and achieve their sustainability goals. Having a common goal of sustainability, towards which employees are educated and galvanised, also ensures an enduring and resilient business.

Geoff Soon
Managing director, South Asia
Snowflake

Information is power, while data-driven decision-making navigates a business towards endurance and resilience. Scalable data can bring forth insights that provide competitive edge and bring value to the business, driving continuity and longevity.

In today's unpredictable world, harnessing data not only drives innovation for organisations but also enables them to develop solutions and reach common goals. When working with regulators, customers and investors, they must ensure that data governance always acts on transparency and accountability. As data rises exponentially every day, organisations must realise that through this collected information, they have the power to make meaningful changes both for their business and the industries they serve.

Donald Han
Chief executive officer
Sabana Real Estate Investment Management Pte. Ltd.

As an owner of industrial properties, the most critical factor to us in building for the long term is to embrace more holistic sustainability strategies. At Sabana Reit, we are cognisant of how we can make a meaningful difference by providing a safe and healthy environment for all stakeholders and considering sustainable solutions in our operational and business decisions. Our new lifestyle mall, NTP+ located at New Tech Park, is a prime testament to our sustainability approach in integrating environmental strategies such as energy efficiency and water conservation. Beyond pure financial returns, the mall enables us to provide added convenience to the community nearby. The evolving stakeholder demands will continue to shape the way we deliver real estate solutions.

Ku Geok Boon
Chief executive officer
SG Enable

A diverse, inclusive workforce is key in building enduring, resilient businesses. Tapping on a wider talent pool that includes persons with disabilities makes good business sense as it brings about different perspectives and ideas crucial for business sustainability. We can see this from the experiences of organisations accredited with the Enabling Mark. These disability-inclusive organisations have built a work culture that is empowering, innovative and collaborative, and have also reaped benefits such as greater innovation, strong employee engagement, increased productivity, and lower staff turnover. Companies that value diversity will not only have a stable and engaged workforce, but they will also be able to solve business problems more creatively, innovate faster and improve customer satisfaction. This will create the runway to build enduring enterprises.

Lee Siang
Chief executive officer
Dyslexia Association of Singapore

While good corporate governance is a significant factor in building an enduring and resilient business, a strong commitment to nurture people within an organisation is also critical. The Dyslexia Association of Singapore continually provides opportunities for career progression and skills upgrading for our employees so that together, we can help more students with dyslexia achieve their potential. This commitment must be supported by long-term efforts to align key stakeholders including our board and staff to a common mission. Thorough succession planning also has to be put in place to ensure the transferring of shared goals to the next generation, regardless of emerging disruptions.

Kannan Chettiar
Managing director
Avanz

Accepting change as a default is the key in building sustainable high performance in business. Since Avanz was established in 2016, we have seen waves of changes, disruptive technologies and Covid-triggered new norms which have led to business closures around us. We have continuously bulldozed our way through the changes by capitalising on these technologies and adapting to these changes. It is like a video game nowadays with new obstacles popping up every other day that we have to navigate to reach our vision. We have tried to be nimble to pivot to certain paths that we never envisioned five years ago. This makes the entire game challenging but fun.

This is Part 1 of the responses.

The full (Part 1) list can be found at <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/Views-from-the-top>.

Part 2 will be published on Oct 18.