

Finding Purpose

A guide for companies to drive value,
improve lives, and restore nature.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1-3
Steps to Finding Your Purpose:	
1 Identify Your Passion	4-5
2 Identify Your Proficiencies	6-8
3 Identify a Relevant Societal Problem	9-13
Summarize Key Themes	14
Action Plan	15
Next Steps & Reminders	16-19
Closing Thoughts	20

Find Your Purpose, Grow Your Impact

Are you in business simply to drive returns to shareholders? Or do you take a wider view of success? To embrace social purpose in business is to turn the power of enterprise toward humanity's great challenges.

Inequality and exclusion are pervasive in every part of the world, to varying degrees. Too many struggle to put food on the table, or achieve a basic standard of employment, housing, health or well-being.

The International Panel on Climate Change has issued urgent warnings to make radical changes in the next few years, or we will face a rapid escalation of environmental degradation and human suffering.

Changing course will take an unprecedented level of effort, which is why we need every sector—public, private and civil society—to get involved. We all have our roles to play.

What's your role? Whether you are a new or established business, this guide is meant to help you find it.

By defining your purpose and becoming a purpose-driven business, you will be joining thousands of business leaders who are modernizing and transforming the role of business in society to become what it always should have been—a force for good.



**Do your little bit of good where you are;
it's those little bits of good put together
that overwhelm the world.**

– DESMOND TUTU

To make a meaningful impact on society, you must be purposeful.

If you're reading this, you've likely been doing your best to make a positive impact on the world, but you want to take it to the next level.

To do this, you must know your company's purpose.

A clear purpose points you and your staff toward your role in addressing a serious societal problem through the very act of running your business.

But here's where it gets interesting...

Pursuing that purpose also creates significant value for your company. Purpose-driven businesses have been shown to attract and retain top talent, achieve greater customer loyalty, be more innovative, and perform better in public markets.

Purpose vs Sustainability vs ESG

The jargon around purpose can seem endless, but the differences between these terms are meaningful.

Purpose-driven: A purpose-driven business exists to make an optimal, strategic contribution to the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet. The focus of this guide is to help your company identify where you are best positioned to make your 'optimal, strategic contribution.'

Sustainability: Sustainability in business considers a company's impact on three pillars: environmental, economic and social. Unfortunately, as a result of the climate crisis, sustainability doesn't go far enough. We need companies to be creating a net positive impact on the world, rather than simply reducing negative impacts. This is why we need companies to be purpose-driven *and* sustainable.

ESG: Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risk factors are widely acknowledged to be important considerations for fiduciaries in business. While the phrase 'ESG' emerged from the investment and finance sector, it's become a management mantra, and a framework to assess the material E, S, and G issues that will affect companies' performance. ESG helps make explicit the complexities all companies must manage, but it often stops at risk identification and mitigation. We need companies to see the potential for creating meaningful positive impact, not just understand how the world around them affects their bottom line.

Find Your Purpose

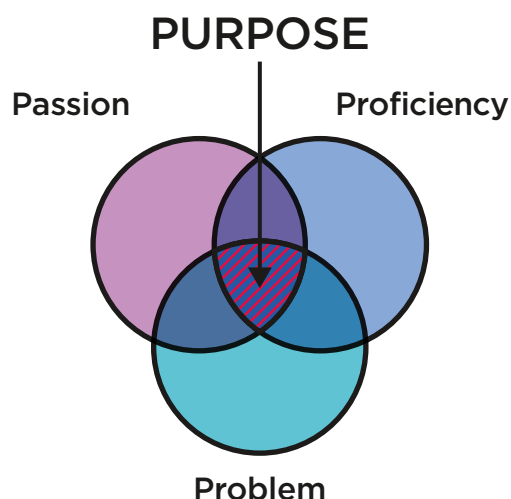
Many companies make authentic efforts to deliver benefits to society—and there's nothing wrong with the company accruing benefits to itself from solving societal problems.

If society wins, your business wins, and that is an incredibly powerful motivator to be persistent, to listen deeply to those affected by the problem, and generate the greatest impact possible.

But how do you find a purpose that makes the most sense for your business to pursue? This guide is meant to help you find exactly that.

The purpose that is most likely to bring you and society meaningful results lies at the intersection of what you are passionate about, your business's proficiencies (strengths), and a relevant societal problem.

In other words, where your passion, your proficiencies and the problem overlap, you'll find your purpose. Read more on [page 11](#).



Use the Worksheet on [page 15](#) to build an Action Plan for working through this guide with your team.

We heed Thomas Kolter's warning from his book *The Hero Trap*, in which he argues that companies should avoid positioning themselves as the hero. Rather, companies' purpose should enable their audiences to become the heroes. Companies using this approach are more likely to be successful.

Unlock Your Purpose

If you would prefer external guidance, it would be Junxion's pleasure to walk you through the process. Read more at the link below and reach out to set up a call with us.



Junxion.com/services/strategy-planning

Uncover Your Passion

The first step to finding your purpose is to uncover what your organization is most passionate about. There are different starting points for doing so....

One starting point is your company's Vision. We aren't referring to your vision of the organization you are striving to become. Rather, what is your vision of a world made better by your work? To achieve this vision, what social or environmental challenges would need to be addressed?

Secondly, what are the values underlying this vision of an ideal world? Your company's values and guiding principles may be a helpful reference point for this exercise. Some of them will be necessary precursors to how you engage with customers, or your approach to productivity while others will be a necessary precursor for achieving your vision of an ideal world. These latter values may offer insight into what you are passionate about as an organization.

Whether or not you start with one of those approaches, take a look at the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Are there two or three issues that have your staff most worried? For now, don't worry about their relevance to your business.

Finally, it may also help to consider the way you would want your company to 'show up' when participating in social and environmental change efforts. Take a look at the Building Movement Project's Social Change Ecosystem Map and consider the 10 different roles it describes. Which one of these roles resonates with your company, and how you want to show up in the world?

Bring a representative group of your staff together to discuss and agree on the common themes that emerge after a review of these areas. See the Worksheets on [page 5](#) and [page 14](#).

Tip: To engage a larger pool of your staff in the process, conduct an all-staff survey in advance and bring the results to the Workshop.

STEP 1 | IDENTIFY YOUR PASSION

Passion

What is your company's vision of a better world?

What are the most important values underlying this vision of an ideal world?

What societal issues are you most passionate about, or most worried about? Try to refer to them in terms of the areas laid out by the UN Sustainable Development Goals or UNDRIP.

Which role best represents your organization according to the Building Movement Project's social change map?

Tap Into Your Proficiencies

The second step to finding your purpose is to determine what sets your business apart from your competitors.

Why? When a company's purpose is connected to what they're good at, they can leverage these strengths in pursuit of it. When they do so, they're much more likely to see positive outcomes.

At least one of your strengths will likely include the products or services you sell. Challenge your team to think beyond your products and services. For example, consider your strengths in the following areas:

- Public influence
- Capital
- Market share
- Facility / space
- Staff
- Supply chain
- Marketing & communications
- Networks & relationships
- Reputation

Explore these with your team, write them down using the worksheets below, and we'll come back to them later in the process.

STEP 2 | IDENTIFY YOUR PROFICIENCIES

Proficiency

What are your business's core strengths, or superpowers?

STEP 2 | IDENTIFY YOUR PROFICIENCIES

Did you struggle to come up with more than one or two strengths?

Either way, it can sometimes be helpful to identify the areas where you need to improve as well.

In other words, what are the biggest areas holding you back, or limiting your growth and reach as a business?

Once you've identified your pain points, what areas of your business are left? Are the remaining areas in fact strengths you hadn't originally noticed?

Narrow in on the most relevant societal problem

A critical step in finding your purpose is identifying which societal problem you want to focus on. There are many options. But which societal problem overlaps with what your company is most passionate about, and your business's unique superpowers?

By focusing on where these three intersect, you are more likely to achieve a greater impact with your company.

Let's turn back to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They outline the most pressing challenges threatening the survival and wellbeing of our planet and its people.

By focusing on a problem referred to in the SDGs, you can feel confident you are contributing to universally agreed-upon challenges, goals and targets. For others, sections of UNDRIP may be more relevant.

In Step 1, you identified the societal problems that you and your team are most passionate about.

Now, consider which of these areas your company is passionate about are most relevant to your business or industry. If it's relevant to your industry, and you're passionate about it, you are more likely to be able to sustain your company's focus on it.

The following pages provide a few additional prompts to help you think through which problem(s) to narrow in on.



Problem

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development

Many of the SDGs relate to the production side of the items we buy and consume. Thinking about your own supply chain, which of the SDGs or UNDRIP are most relevant to your business?

Alternatively, what human or planetary need is the product or service you provide helping to fulfill? How is that need connected to one or more of the SDGs or UNDRIP?

You may need to dig into each of the SDGs or sections of UNDRIP to find something that is really relevant to your particular business. For example, SDG #3 relates to health and well-being, but perhaps maternal mortality, one of the sub-issues referred to under this Goal, is most relevant to your business and should therefore be the focus of your purpose.



The Purpose Sweetspot

As you narrow in on a societal problem most relevant to your business, remember to consider your business's core proficiencies (strengths), which you identified in Step 2.

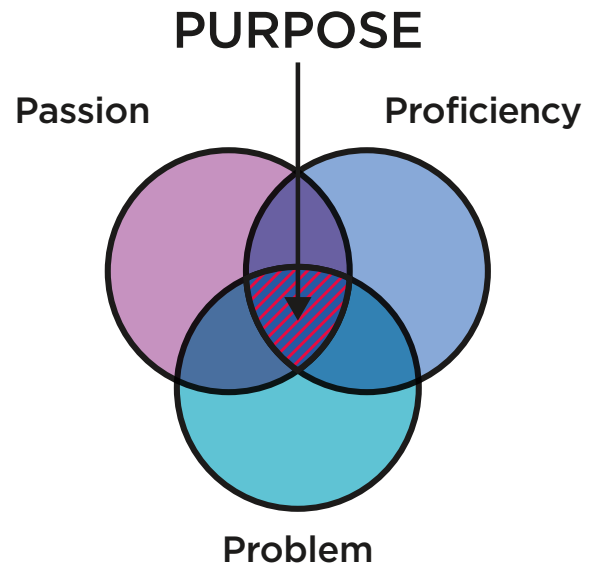
If you can leverage your strengths and expertise to address the problem, you are much more likely to create a meaningful impact.

By using your business's strengths, you can create solutions that also bring value to your business.

This creates a strong incentive—and possibly a direct revenue source—to find even better solutions.

And again, if you're passionate about the problem (see Step 1), it is more likely to be an authentic pursuit, rather than something you're doing to improve your reputation, which would eventually surface to your detriment.

Remember, we are looking for the overlap between your passion, your proficiencies, and a relevant problem.



**An adaptation of the Venn diagram illustrated in the book 'Ikigai' by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles about finding your personal sense of purpose.*

Prepare for Continuous Progress

Once you've narrowed in on a problem (or problems, but ideally not more than three), do some further research.

- If it relates to your supply, what are the particular challenges it presents in the source country or region from which you purchase?
- If it relates more to the customers or community you serve, what are the particular issues in your business's geographic context?

A key ongoing project will be to continuously build your understanding of this problem from the perspective of those most affected by it. This understanding will be critical to finding the most impactful solutions.

It's important to note that your purpose is not meant to be a perfect reflection of what your business is today. Pursuing this purpose is going to guide you as you evolve into an even more successful business with even greater impact on the world.

Finally, your purpose should feel ambitious and aspirational. This is what drives engagement, evolution, growth, and meaningful, long-term impact.

**Is it ambitious
and aspirational?**



STEP 3 | NARROW IN ON THE MOST RELEVANT SOCIETAL PROBLEM

Problem

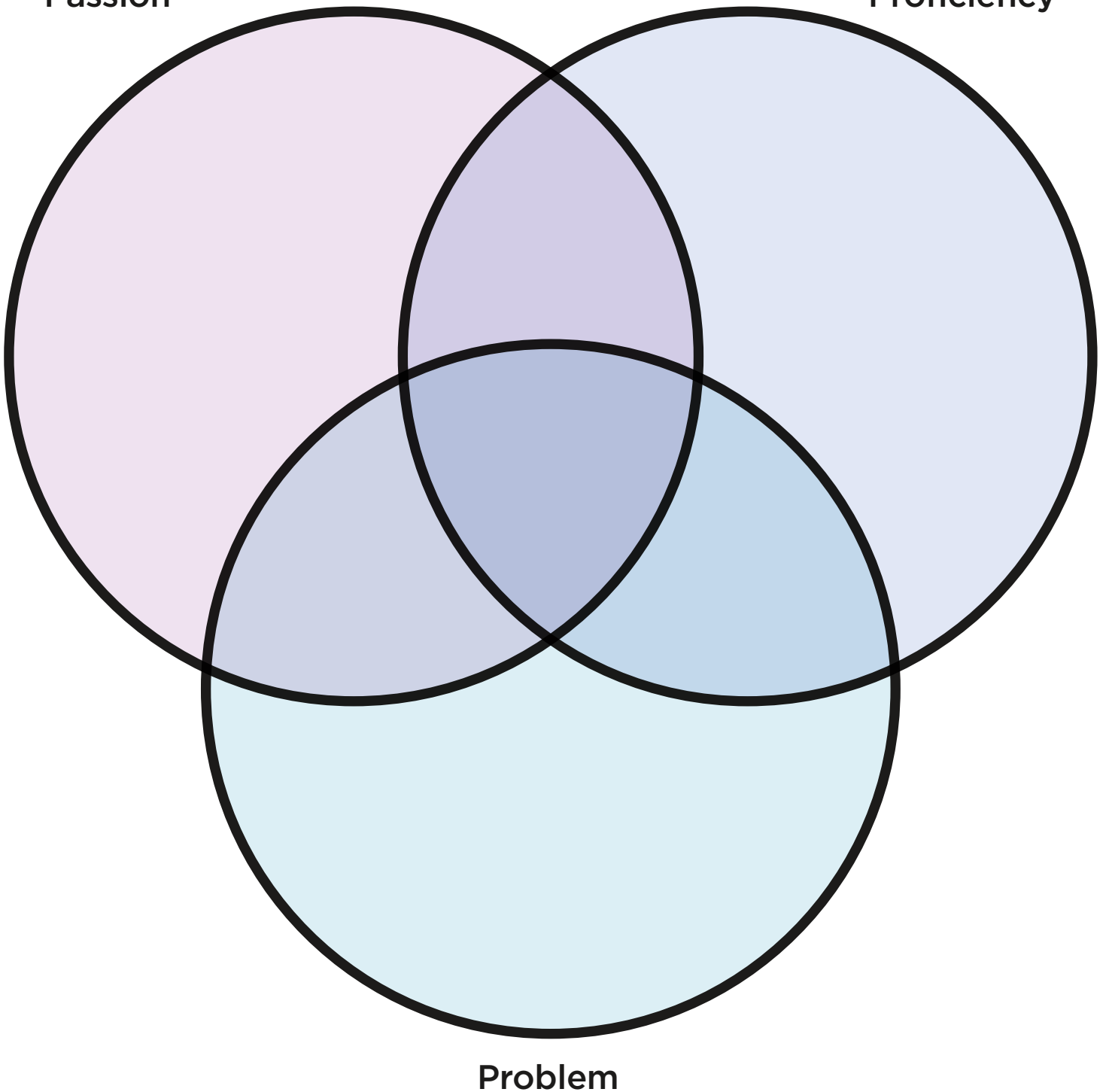
What societal problems are most relevant to your business, your proficiencies, and your passion? Explain the overlap.

Putting It All Together

In a few words, summarize the themes that emerged from walking through these exercises in the Venn diagram below.

Passion

Proficiency



Find Your Company's Purpose

TEAM

Identify who will lead the process and who will make the final decisions:

Set a TIMELINE and BUDGET

Completion Date:
Budget:

Step 1 Workshop IDENTIFY YOUR PASSION

Date & Location:
Participants:

Step 2 Workshop IDENTIFY YOUR PROFICIENCIES

Date & Location:
Participants:

Step 3 Workshop IDENTIFY A RELEVANT SOCIETAL PROBLEM

Date & Location:
Participants:

REVIEW WITH STAFF & CELEBRATE

Date & Location:
Participants:

QUESTIONS

NEXT STEPS

”

Profit for a company is like oxygen for a person. If you don't have enough of it, you're out of the game. But if you think your life is about breathing, you're really missing something.

- PETER DRUCKER



Craft a Purpose Statement

If you have found the overlap between your passion, your proficiencies, and a relevant problem, you have found your company's purpose.

This clarity is necessary to work towards a common goal and generate the greatest impact.

However, to communicate your purpose to others, you need to articulate it with a purpose statement.

Essentially, your purpose statement describes the aspirational goal your company exists to achieve.

It should be clear and easy to understand, but not so precise that it locks you into a specific activity or action.

Most importantly, it should be a true reflection of the thoughtful process you and your team engaged in to identify it.

Write a Purpose Statement

Need more help with this part? Our article 'How to Write a Purpose Statement' lays out the exact grammatical steps to write a purpose statement, plus the five characteristics that make a purpose statement truly powerful.



[Junxion.com/insights/
write-a-purpose-statement](https://Junxion.com/insights/write-a-purpose-statement)

Involve Your Employees

It might be easiest to go through this process on your own, or with one or two others on your leadership team. But you'll soon realize that the biggest challenge will be bringing your purpose to life. You'll need your staff's buy-in and enthusiasm to do this. For that reason, it's critical to engage them in the process of finding your purpose. By doing so, you'll build a workforce made up of purpose champions who will be critical to maintaining authenticity and success.

Embed Your Purpose

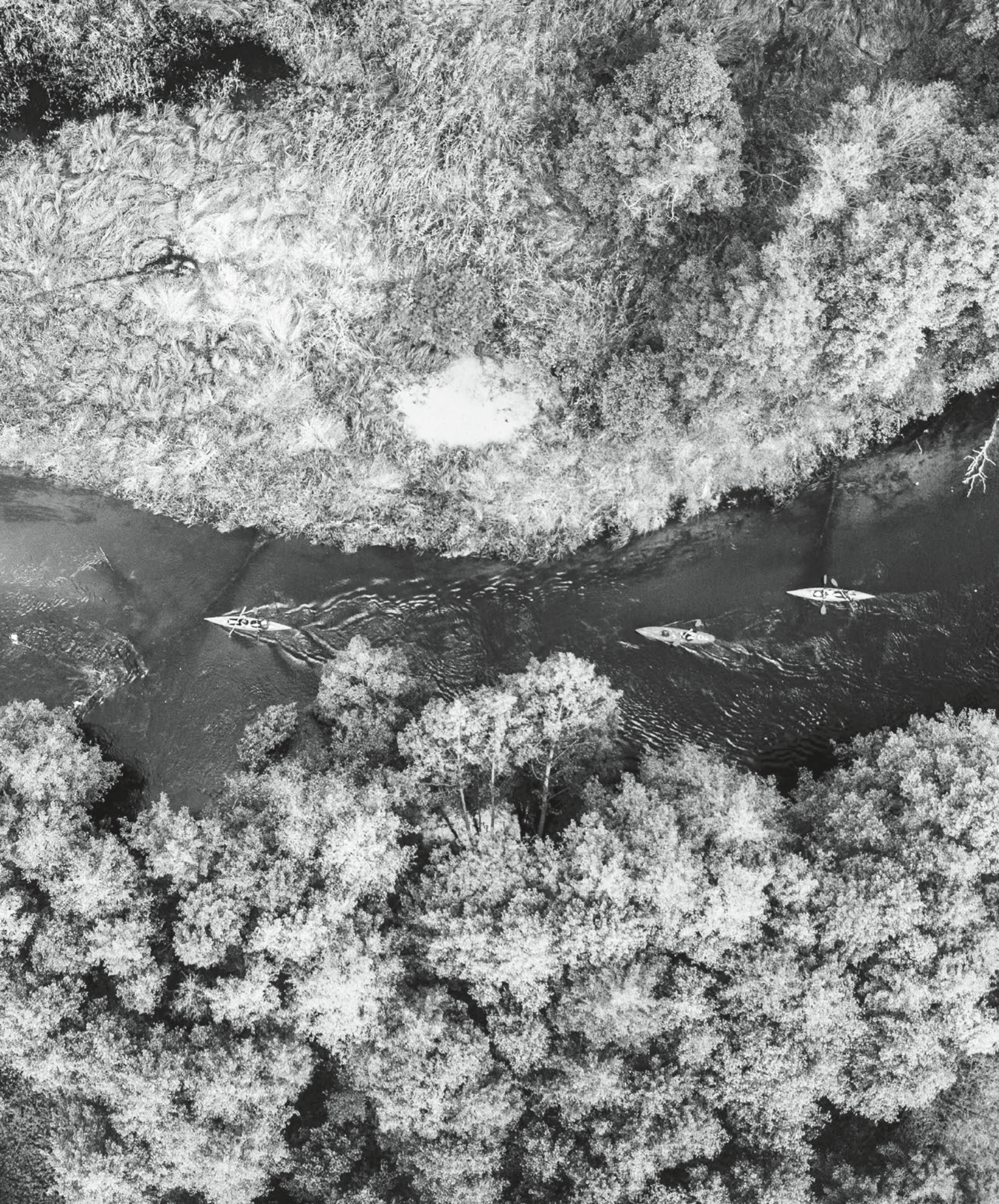
A final word of caution: Identifying your purpose is a major milestone worth celebrating, but the hard work is yet to come. Knowing your purpose does not automatically make you a purpose-driven company.

Being purpose-driven means purpose is a part of everything you do, as opposed to a marketing statement or stand-alone corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Becoming purpose-driven is a continuous journey that takes commitment, patience, and a thoughtful strategy that outlines your goals, priorities, targets, and a timeline.

Junxion Strategy helps companies weave purpose into the core fabric of the organization, helping them build their legacy, attract and retain talent, stand out from their competitors, and grow their businesses.





Let's Be Audacious, Together...

We can't wait to see you make your mark on the world!

If you made it this far, congratulations! We'd love to know about your progress and how you found this guide.

We will happily provide you with feedback on your purpose and purpose statement. Send us an email and we'll arrange a call, at no charge.

Your purpose is going to take your business into a realm of impact you never imagined. And we all benefit when there are more businesses pursuing a purpose.

With that in mind, be sure to share this guide with other business leaders in your network.

Share this guide:



[Guide to Finding Your Purpose](#)

Stay connected with us:



[Junxion LinkedIn](#)



[Subscribe to our Newsletter](#)

About Junxion

Junxion is an international consultancy with offices in Vancouver and Toronto, Canada, and London, UK. For over 25 years, we've been helping organizations define their purpose, plan their impact, tell their stories and embrace accountability.

The transition to a greener, fairer economy has been emerging for decades. Consumers are looking for greener brands, employees are looking for fairer, more inclusive workplaces, and investors are seeking net positive returns.

No matter what point you are at on your journey, we're comfortable meeting you there and helping you thrive in the purpose economy—one powered by the pursuit of long-term well-being for all, in which business, regulatory, and financial systems deliver an equitable, flourishing, resilient future.





This work is licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International.
To view a copy of this license, visit
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>



VANCOUVER & TORONTO

1 888 681 8308

LONDON

+44 (0)20 3475 2157

JUNXION.COM



**CANADIAN
PURPOSE
ECONOMY
PROJECT**



MEMBER
of the
**WELLBEING
ECONOMY
ALLIANCE**

