

**Family Businesses on a Mission:  
Attaining the 2030 Sustainable  
Development Goal of Decent Work and  
Economic Growth**

# **FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION**



## **Series Editors:**

Naomi Birdthistle

Rob Hales

The Family Businesses on Mission series examines how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) can be applied in family businesses around the world, providing insights into cultural and societal differences and displaying innovative approaches to complex environmental and societal issues.

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# **Family Businesses on a Mission: Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Decent Work and Economic Growth**

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

Editorial matter and selection © 2022 Naomi Birdthistle and Rob Hales.

Individual chapters © 2022 The authors.

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80382-490-1 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80382-487-1 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80382-489-5 (Epub)



ISOQAR certified  
Management System,  
awarded to Emerald  
for adherence to  
Environmental  
standard  
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985  
ISO 14001



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## About the Editors

**Dr Naomi Birdthistle** is an Associate Professor who has entrepreneurship in her blood. She worked in her family business for over 20 years, which is the largest indoor funfair in Europe. On leaving the family business she ran her own consulting business, where she consulted family businesses on management issues. Naomi's passion for family business management and entrepreneurship is evident by her research outputs. She wrote the first ever PhD on family businesses in Ireland which won the Family Firm Institute's 'Best Doctoral Dissertation Award'. She has published 32 peer-reviewed papers, four books, 18 book chapters, 63 conference papers and an abundance of national and European reports. Naomi's research covers many areas within the entrepreneurship and family business discipline including the following: entrepreneurship education, minority groups and entrepreneurship; women owned and led businesses; succession planning in family businesses; divorce and family business and the role women play in family businesses. Naomi supervises PhDs around women entrepreneurship, family business management issues and high growth firms.

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## About the Contributors

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**Elisa Balabram, MBA**, is an entrepreneurship lecturer, co-owner of her family's business, a business coach, writer and the author of *Ask Others, Trust Yourself: The Entrepreneurial Woman's Key to Success* and *Mending a Broken Heart: Lili's Magic Journey*. She blogs about business, self-love and trust on her website [AskOthersTrustYourself.com](http://AskOthersTrustYourself.com). Originally from Brazil, Elisa moved to the United States to pursue an MBA in Entrepreneurship Management. Upon graduation, she launched her own business, pursued a career in non-profit economic development organisations and in higher education, with a focus on entrepreneurship and business development.

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**Sara Brennan**, Pentland Brands Limited, is Positive Business Director where she is tasked in looking at how Pentland and its portfolio of sports, outdoor and lifestyle brands can accelerate its positive business strategy to deliver on its commitment to take action for people and our planet. Sara started her career in regulatory affairs and later moved into sustainability and CSR, whilst working in the petrochemical industry and studying for her master's. Her work caused her to grow more conscious of existing sustainability issues and opportunities and the role of businesses in addressing those issues. As a PhD candidate Sara is also interested in organisational change, especially in relation to developing beyond conventional leadership and discovering new ways of contributing to the wider environment in which organisations operate.

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**Dr Ken Moores** is Emeritus Professor and was Founding Director of the Australian Centre for Family Business at Bond University where he previously held positions of Vice-Chancellor and President, Dean of Business, and Professor of Accounting. His research in accounting, education, management and family business has been published internationally across these disciplines.

# Foreword

*Professor Walter Leal Filho*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 provide a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

They also entail elements of importance towards a strategic business engagement with sustainability issues. These offer a framework which provides businesses with a systematic approach to identify new business opportunities while contributing to the solution of the grand sustainability challenges facing the world today, including climate change. Each SDG, if achieved, will have a direct and significant positive impact on millions of people's lives around the world and the environment in which they live. Businesses have an opportunity to widen the purpose of business through adopting the SDGs as targets for their operations. Thus, they can make a meaningful contribution to the greater good through achieving their operational objectives.

Family businesses are uniquely placed to contribute to SDGs for many reasons. Firstly, because family business models have longer time perspectives, and this allows the family business to link with the longer-term SDG time frame – 2030. Secondly, family businesses often focus on aspects of business operation which do not have an immediate return on investment such as relationship building with stakeholder groups. Thirdly, family businesses tend to rate the importance of ethics higher than standard businesses and thus align well with the social dimensions of the SDGs. Lastly, family businesses have intergenerational perspectives which is a core principle of sustainability.

This book provides insights into how family business operationalises SDG#8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. The book uses a rigorous case study approach for family businesses to detail aspects of their business which help to advance decent work and economic growth. The cases provided here are living proof that family businesses that operate for the greater good actually work! Non-family businesses can take a leaf out of the family businesses portrayed in this book as they can provide different perspectives on how businesses can successfully align SDGs and business strategy.

Despite many businesses having adopted environmental social governance strategies and environmental management systems, the effect of this activity has not been reflected in a healthier planet. Many 'state of the environment' reports

indicate that planetary health is decreasing, and planetary boundaries are being crossed or are about to be crossed. Whilst the cause of this decline is not entirely the fault of business, there still needs to be a greater effort to address the decline. The challenge for family businesses is to use their unique characteristics and set ambitious programmes of work that make a meaningful contribution to achieving global goals. This book provides insights into how family businesses can achieve such a mission and how non-family businesses can be inspired to do the same.

# Acknowledgements

The Editors would like to thank the contributors of the book for providing insights and sharing the learnings from their business practice. We acknowledge that writing up cases in the format required considerable time and effort. The quality of the cases presented is a testament to their efforts.

The Editors would also like to thank Emerald Publishing for supporting the publication of this book and the mission for deeper sustainability through utilising the SDGs.