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# **FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION**

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# **ATTAINING THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL OF DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

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**EDITED BY**

**NAOMI | ROB  
BIRDTHISTLE | HALES**

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**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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*Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Climate Action*

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

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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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**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.

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# Chapter 1

## The Sustainable Development Goals – SDG#8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

*Rob Hales and Naomi Birdthistle*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, is a shared blueprint for people and the planet, with the aim to achieve peace and prosperity for all. Within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a call to action for all countries to address 'the global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. These challenges are identified by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as depicted in Fig. 1 and within the SDGs are a total of 169 targets. These 17 SDGs acknowledge that ending poverty and other global challenges need strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur



Fig. 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals.  
*Source:* United Nations 2021.<sup>1</sup>

economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests (United Nations, 2021a). The global pandemic of Covid-19 has presented challenges to those working towards achieving the goals. The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are predicted to increase the divide between people living in rich and poor countries (UNEP, 2020). However, if there can be concerted action using the blueprint of the SDGs then human development can exceed pre-COVID development trajectories (UNEP, 2021). What is needed is a combination of political commitment from all levels of government, investment in green economy initiatives, socially oriented innovation, and a (re)focus on the purpose of business to align with the SDGs.

This book focuses on SDG number 8 (SDG#8) which has a broad focus on decent work and economic growth. SDG#8 aims to promote decent work, increase employment whilst promoting social protection and improving employees' rights. Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has disrupted all lives on the planet and has negatively impacted every economy in the world. Evidence has indicated that COVID-19 has led to the loss of 255 million full-time jobs (United Nations, 2021b). COVID-19 also has a knock-on effect onto those who are in the minority groups such as youth and women. Evidence from the United Nations has indicated that the rate of youth not in education or training has already been impacted. They found that 8.7% of youth lost their jobs in 2020 compared with 3.7% of adults, and 5% of women lost their jobs compared with 3.9% of men (United Nations, 2021b). Also affected are those in the informal economy, which the United Nations (2021b) estimates to be about 1.6 billion people globally. This is a sector in which women are over-represented and again this sector has been greatly hit by the pandemic.

When designing the SDGs, each SDG was given targets and indicators. For SDG#8 there are 12 targets to achieve and each of these targets has their own set of indicators which are used to measure progress towards reaching the target. Within the 12 targets of SDG#8, there are 10 outcome targets, which are circumstances to be attained and are identified as Target 8.1 through to Target 8.10, and two 'means of implementation targets', which are labelled as Target 8.A and Target 8.B. The two 'means of implementation' targets were developed post the development of the outcome targets and were designed to address the concerns of some member states about how to achieve the SDGs. Eleven of the SDG#8 targets are to be achieved by the 2030 timeline that has been set (United Nations, n.d.) with Target 8.B having a 2020 timeline applied to it. Fig. 2 highlights the targets contained within SDG#8.

The first outcome target – Target 8.1 – aims to maintain economic growth per capita with the expectation of growth, in the least developed countries, of at least 7% gross domestic product per annum. Outcome Target 8.2 is tailored towards the achievement of higher levels of economic productivity. This productivity would be achieved through diversification, technological upgrading and through innovation, with a particular focus on labour intensive and high value-added sectors. Development-oriented policies is the focus of Target 8.3. These policies focus on supporting the formalisation and growth of the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise through enabling access to financial services. Overall, the

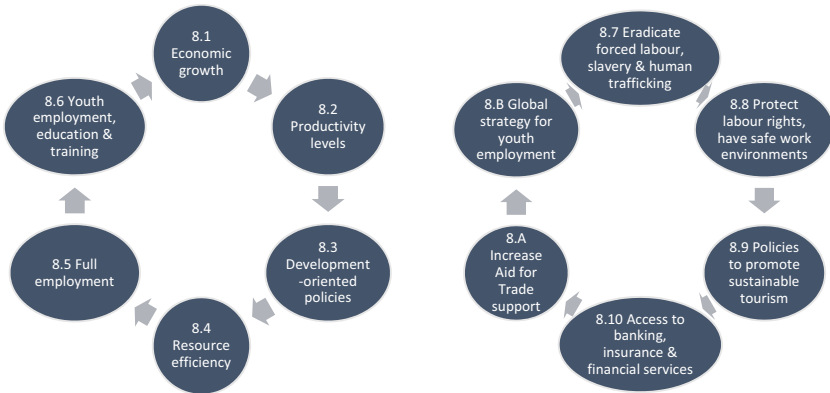


Fig. 2. Outcome Targets and Means of Implementation Targets for SDG#8.

policies developed to achieve Target 8.3 aim to support productive activities, creativity and innovation, decent job creation, and self-employment through entrepreneurship. Target 8.4 requires developed countries to lead on the achievement of this outcome target. Target 8.4 focuses on global resource efficiency in both consumption and production. The target is aligned with a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production and endeavours to uncouple economic growth from environmental degradation. Target 8.5 is human centred and aims to enable all people (men, women, youth, people with disabilities etc) to achieve full and productive employment and have equal pay for work of equal value across all genders.

Target 8.6 aims to reduce youth unemployment and enable them to be in education or training. In today's world people do encounter slavery and human trafficking and Target 8.7 aims to eradicate both these and implement measures to also eradicate forced labour. Target 8.7 has an added lens to it and that is to focus on child labour. Target 8.7 seeks to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2025 and to eliminate the recruitment of, and use of, child soldiers. Target 8.8 relates to all workers including migrant workers, with a specific mention of women migrants and those in unstable employment. The Target aims to protect all workers in terms of their labour rights and to promote safe and secure working environments for them all. The penultimate outcome target is Target 8.9, and this is sector based i.e., focusing on sustainable tourism. It aims to devise policies and implement them so that jobs are created, and local culture and products are promoted. The last outcome target is Target 8.10 and has the goal of strengthening domestic financial institutions which would then lead to the encouragement of, and access to, banking, insurance, and financial services for all citizens. The first of the two means of implementation targets is Target 8.A, which seeks to increase 'Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhance Integrated Framework for

Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries’ (United Nations, 2021a). Target 8.B focuses on youth employment and the development and operationalisation of a global strategy targeting the youth and the implementation of the ‘Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization’ (United Nations, 2021a). Target 8.B has a milestone of 2020 to achieve this Target and it remains to be seen whether this has been achieved.

As previously mentioned, this book focuses solely on SDG#8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. SDG#8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (ibid) and this book provides insights into how businesses take action on the SDG through the work of their business. Family business plays an important role in achieving this. Businesses that have decent work and economic growth at the core of their business model, facilitate sustainable development through more inclusive and just practices. Much research has been directed towards family business, but little attention has been directed to how a family business can advance sustainability and social impact using SDGs. This book provides case studies of family businesses that advance SDG#8 through their work.

Furthermore, the SDGs are a call to action, to develop innovative solutions to some of the world’s most complex, societal, and environmental challenges. Businesses play a crucial role in forging this path and since family-businesses account for more than two-thirds of businesses worldwide and contribute to 70–90% of the world’s GDP, we believe it is important to showcase the role they play in facilitating the achievement of these SDGs. Furthermore, a key feature of this book series is to highlight the role of gender diversity in achieving a better, sustainable world. Thus, we incorporate throughout the series, certain notions, and examples of how women in family firms influence specific, well-grounded efforts to enhance the world we live in. By including examples of women who champion SDGs within their family business it will provide readers with examples of role models.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many family businesses have shown to be more resilient and operate more sustainably than standard businesses (such as the shareholder approach). The reason for this lies in family businesses generally taking a long-term perspective on stakeholder relationships and the real need for long term continuity planning to sustain the people within their businesses. The people in their business are most likely to be family members. However, like all businesses, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed financial pressures on family businesses. One needs to ask the question: *How then can family businesses extend their capacity to operate more sustainably and with more social impact during times of business stress?* Well, family businesses can offer unique insights into how sustainability and social impact can be part of the regenerative response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea for the book came from two observations. The first observation was that family businesses that had sustainability at their core were performing well despite the impacts of the pandemic. The second observation was that the SDGs were being used as a framework for regeneration after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## SDG#8 Book Series Focus

The chapters in this book focus on businesses that promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and attempt to provide productive employment and decent work for all as a key component(s) of their business model. The first case examines the family business of Pentland Brands, which owns a range of sports, outdoor and activewear brands. A central feature of the business model of Pentland Brands is that each brand takes action for people and our planet. The family business owns Speedo, Berghaus, Canterbury of New Zealand, Endura, Mitre, ellesse, SeaVees, KangaROOS and Red or Dead. Pentland Brands is also the UK licensee for Kickers, and it has a joint venture with Lacoste footwear. Pentland Brands achieves its mission of taking action for people and planet by focussing on several strategies. The first is to focus on positive outcomes for consumers to have active and sustainable lifestyle. The second is to improve the lives of the 1 million people within its stakeholder community. The third strategy is a strategy of net zero emissions on climate action aligning with the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, a strategy to reduce and eliminate modern slavery has been adopted by Pentland Brands. It aims to address the risks of modern slavery through a combination of long-term supplier partnerships, the implementation of social audits, and effective due diligence processes. Pentland Brands has had a long history of commitment to ethical work practices as they have been a signatory of the UN Global Compact since 2001 and have supported its 10 principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. Andy Rubin, Deputy Chair of Pentland Group outlines their philosophy that guides their work on SDG#8 -*As a family business we are just the custodians for the next generation. That's why we can and do think about the long term and we understand the importance of our role in protecting people and planet for future generations.*

The next family business profiled in this book is called Fany Bombons from Brazil. The company was established in September 1983 and makes exquisite dessert products. The company contributes to economic growth, and productive labour-intensive employment through a focus on economic growth and fairness in treating employees. After the business started to grow employees were hired and the strong family values were translated to positive employee processes and equitable culture. Fany Bombons exceed national standards on employee conditions and benefits. Since the late 1990s, the company gave employees food coupons, and then later provided employees with a monthly basic food basket. They also provide full-time employees with health insurance beyond the country's universal health care system, and an opportunity to purchase life insurance. As a positive cultural activity, the family business provides fresh bread for employees each day in every store. Importantly the company focusses on Target 8.2 within SDG#8 (Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including a focus on high value-added and labour-intensive practices) by focussing on value adding through its products being handmade since 1983. Finally, during the beginning of the pandemic, the business took out a loan, and when combined with a government program,

ensured that no employees were laid off. The owners have a long-term view of investment in its staff.

The next case is Outland Denim from Australia. The family business was created as a social enterprise in response to becoming aware of human trafficking of vulnerable women in unjust and inhumane workplaces. The founders of the business developed the company to directly create a practical solution to combat what was a widespread practice in 2011. The family business had to balance financial viability and the creation of an avenue for training, employment, and career progression for women who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, human trafficking. To this end they opted to create a manufacturing enterprise that would provide not only employment but more importantly training opportunities for their female employees. Determining appropriate compensation levels for Outland Denim's employees in Cambodia was a challenge in the early years. In the development phase and out of compassion, Outland Denim initially overpaid its Cambodian employees and a local anti-trafficking organisation advised that this kind of model can cause inflation in local markets. On this advice, James revised his compensation levels to be a living wage at minimum, but with the opportunity for employees to develop skills and increase incomes accordingly over time. Additionally, the family business developed a better production process for Outland Denim jeans. Outland Denim uses only organic cotton, which according to Textile Exchange, uses 91% less blue water (fresh surface or groundwater sources) than conventional cotton. During the COVID-19 pandemic the production of Outland Denim's garments was stopped. However, the company raised over 1.32 million Australian dollars through crowdfunding to expand its workforce in Australia and Cambodia. This allowed the business to keep paying employees and to expand their employee base.

The final case is the Amor Benamor Group operating in the Algerian agriculture sector, mostly involved in food processing and distribution. The family business has invested considerable resources in developing agriculture by offering decent jobs to farmers in the region through training, modern techniques, and technology. What is unique about the Benamor family business is its crucial role in the creation of a favourable entrepreneurial and agricultural ecosystem in its region of North-East Algeria. The business has focussed on SDG#8 through seeking to achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation. Promoting practices and strategies aiming to stimulate entrepreneurship, innovation, and decent jobs in agriculture. It also engages in quality training both externally (supporting local universities and research centres) as well as internally (implementing world-class training programs), to enable young people to develop their skills and find a position in the job market. It has a particular interest in developing the people in its supply chain by improving the productivity and the conditions of the farmers who supply the agricultural products to the family businesses. As is outlined in the case, the Benamor family business undertakes a range of charitable activities with its stakeholders.

## Methodological Approach Adopted for the Book

The book used a case study method to gain insights into the practices of businesses using the SDGs. The summary outline of the case study template is shown in [Table 1](#). The Editors approached a range of potential authors to develop the case studies. They approached early career researchers, PhD students, family business academics, family business consultants, managers of family businesses centres and family business practitioners to consider submitting a case for the book. For interested authors, they were asked to choose the SDGs that best matched the family business of their choice and use a case study template provided by the Editors of the book series to craft a case study on how the family business advanced the particular SDG. A truly global response was received for the book series with participants from all over the globe.

Table 1. Key Aspects of the Case Study Template Used by Authors in This Book.

Vision and mission, services offered by the organisation	How do the vision mission and background of the organisation relate to the particular SDG?
Background to the company	
Historical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When did the SDG become important to the organisation?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founding date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a person who championed the SDG?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Founder details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the SDGs explicitly talked about by staff?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human interest angle of founder</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotes from the founder or key people</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size of organisation</li> </ul>	
How do key stakeholders relate to the SDG championed by the organisation?	Outline the business model of organisation and add how SDG is important.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stakeholders influence the organisation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline key elements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the adoption of the SDG in the organisation had an impact on stakeholders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline structure of organisation is needed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have stakeholders influenced the actions of the organisation related to the SDG?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a diagram of business model</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key activities and return on investment</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the SDG relate to return on investment?</li> </ul>
What are the challenges facing the organisation in implementing the SDGs?	How does the organisation see itself in relation to providing benefits outside the organisation? What next for the organisation?

## **Contribution of the Book**

This book makes an important contribution to research on family business by highlighting how businesses actually promote particular SDGs through their work. There are several streams of research emerging in the literature on family business and sustainability that are relevant to this book. [Ferreira, Fernandes, Schiavone, and Mahto \(2021\)](#) identify four streams of research in family business and sustainability: family business capital, family business strategy, family business social responsibility, and family business succession. The case study approach of this book provides insights into how SDGs can be used to advance the family business's sustainability strategy and social responsibility. How a family's trans-generational sustainability intentions positively influence the strategy of the business and the family's concern for its reputation has been identified as a driver of sustainability in family businesses. Additionally, family businesses routinely combine innovation and tradition to achieve and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage.

Additionally, the book series aims to contribute towards positively portraying the role of family businesses and/or women in family businesses, in effectively achieving SDGs on a global basis. The case studies of family businesses contained within this book display supports and embodies the principles of an SDG in their operations, culture and/or business philosophy.

## **Identifying the Readership**

This book is one of 17 vignette books series in which each book will be comprised of a set of short, easy to read family business cases related to the unique SDG being discussed in the book. The format of the book series allows the works to be accessible to those working in the field beyond academia such as family business practitioners, family business owners, family business advisors, government and business policymakers, members of NGOs, business associations and philanthropic centres, as well as to those who have a general interest in entrepreneurship and business. This book will be useful for those wanting to know how business use SDGs to make an impact in the world and incorporating this with a deepening of strategic commitment to sustainability. Despite SDGs now being recognised as an important framework for assisting businesses in bouncing back from the pandemic there are very few businesses that used SDGs for developing deeper strategic approaches to sustainability. Most of the large business that have been identified in surveys ([Harvard Business Review, 2019](#)) had simply relabelled their existing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and did not do anything new or different from advancing the goals.

This book will be useful for small businesses, groups such as chambers of commerce, consulting organisations and sustainability accreditation bodies who want practical examples of how the SDG business model can deepen sustainability operations. At the time of writing there is still eight years left before the SDGs need to be achieved. Education about how to achieve the goals is critical during this time period. The book will have practical use for teaching and learning in universities, technical institutions, and high schools.