
FAMILY BUSINESSES ON A MISSION

ATTAINING THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL OF GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

EDITED BY

**NAOMI
BIRDTHISTLE**

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Attaining the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal of Good Health and Well-Being

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 Good Health and Well-Being

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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About the Editors

Professor Naomi Birdthistle has entrepreneurship and family business running through her veins. She tried to work in her family business when she was four but was told she was too small. She came back year after year asking to work and eventually her grandmother capitulated and left her work in the family business when she was seven. After years of working in the family business part-time and having completed her studies at Stirling University, Babson College, Harvard University and the University of Limerick, Naomi established her own consulting business, consulting family businesses in her hometown. She is now a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation at Griffith University, teaching future family business leaders and researching family business issues as well. Naomi is an award-winning academic having received numerous awards for her teaching and her research.

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Foreword

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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. Second, 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 perspective which is a core principle of sustainability.

This book provides insights into how family business operationalises SDG#3: Good Health and Well-Being. This book uses a rigorous case study approach for family businesses to detail aspects of their business which help to advance the health and well-being of members of society. The cases provided here are living proof that the family business 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 programs 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.

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Chapter 1

The Sustainable Development Goal – SDG#3 Good Health and Well-Being

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Introduction

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, intending to achieve peace and prosperity for all. The Sustainable Development Goals (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 gross domestic product (GDP), we believe it is important to showcase the role they play in facilitating the achievement of these SDGs.

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 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 economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests ([United Nations, 2021](#)).

This book makes an important contribution to research on family businesses by highlighting how businesses can make valuable contributions towards sustainable development. There are several streams of research emerging in the literature on family business and sustainability that are relevant to this book.

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Fig. 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals. *Source: United Nations (2021).*¹

Ferreira et al. (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.

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.

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 SDGs.

The importance of family businesses in their contribution to SDGs can be envisaged in several ways. Firstly, many family business owners emphasise that the SDGs align with their core values and legacy-building efforts. They use the goals as a chance to align their business activities with a greater purpose and create a positive impact in their communities. Because of the nature of family businesses, they adopt a business purpose that provides a legacy for future generations. This results in a long-term perspective on business development and strategy. Family businesses also recognise that addressing the SDGs can enhance relationships with stakeholders, including customers, employees and local communities. Contributing to the achievement of the SDGs can foster goodwill and strengthen their reputation because of the external focus on global goals as opposed to just their own business goals (Barrett, 2017).

For family business owners who seek to transform their business models, the SDGs are a source of inspiration for innovation. The integration of sustainability into their business strategies can lead to the development of innovative products, services and business models that contribute to the greater good as well as create business value. Family business owners also use SDGs to identify and mitigate risks associated with environmental, social and governance issues. By addressing these challenges as a future-oriented strategy, they aim to ensure the resilience and long-term success of their businesses (Bauweraerts et al., 2022; Muhmad & Muhamad, 2021). Family businesses that are aligned with the SDGs are more likely to have a positive impact on their financial performance (Muhmad & Muhamad, 2021). Consumers and investors increasingly favour companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. Lastly, many family businesses see themselves as ethical leaders and their commitment to ethical decision-making and responsible business conduct is enacted through business alignment and contribution to SDGs.

Book Series Focus – SDG#3

This book focuses on SDG#3, which focuses on good health and well-being. The main targets for SDG#3 are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Sustainable Development Goal 3. Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages.

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- 3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all
- 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in

Table 1. (Continued)

	developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states
3.d	Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Source: United Nations (n.d.).

Family Business Contributing to SDG#3

Family businesses can make a significant contribution to SDG#3 through specific actions that align with SDG#3 targets. Family businesses can harness their influence and resources to advance the agenda of SDG#3, contributing not only to their organisational success but also to the broader societal well-being. Some of the ways family business can do this are:

Health and Safety in the Workplace

A pivotal arena of impact lies in the realm of workplace health and safety. Family businesses, driven by their commitment to employee welfare, can proactively cultivate an environment conducive to well-being. Implementing stringent safety measures, offering thorough training programmes and nurturing a culture of health can yield reduced occupational hazards and foster the overall health of the workforce (Bari et al., 2023).

Enhancing Access to Healthcare

Family businesses can serve as catalysts in enhancing access to healthcare by providing comprehensive health insurance coverage and collaborating with healthcare providers to ensure that quality medical services are readily accessible. Such endeavours extend not only to employees but also to their families, thereby improving the foundation of community health.

Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles

Championing healthy lifestyles among employees is another important avenue for family businesses. Leading initiatives that encourage physical activity, better nutrition and mental wellness, these businesses can have a ripple effect of positive behaviours, transcending the workplace and resonating within the broader community (Stier, 1993).

Community Engagement and Local Empowerment

Family businesses possess a unique vantage point to bolster community health initiatives because they are often deeply intertwined with their local communities. By sponsoring health-focused events, supporting local healthcare infrastructure and nurturing collaborations with health organisations, family businesses can have an impact on the health profiles of their local communities (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2022).

Ethical Supply Chain Management and Philanthropy

The pursuit of health and well-being extends beyond the confines of individual enterprises. Family businesses can exercise ethical stewardship by ensuring that their supply chains adhere to sustainable practices, particularly in industries with health implications (Alwadani & Ndubisi, 2022). Concurrently, philanthropic endeavours can channel resources towards advancing healthcare infrastructure, fostering medical research and reducing health disparities (Rivo-López et al., 2021).

Innovation, Education and Awareness

Innovation lies at the heart of health advancement. Family businesses can channel investments into research endeavours, technological innovations and pharmaceutical advancements, leading to improved healthcare delivery. Additionally, family businesses can leverage their networks to provide health education and raise awareness, promoting a health conscious society (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2022).

Long-Term Planning and Legacy

Family businesses are ideally poised to inculcate health and well-being values into their succession planning because they have intergenerational continuity at the heart of their business models. By nurturing a legacy that prioritises employee and community health, these businesses ensure an enduring impact on SDG#3 and its attainment (Gilding et al., 2015).

By embracing the diverse strategies involving health and well-being, family businesses can weave their operations into the fabric of SDG#3's targets. The interplay of sustainable business practices and societal welfare serves to position these businesses ideally as leaders of health advancement. Through a commitment to workplace safety, accessible healthcare, healthy lifestyles, community engagement, ethical stewardship, innovation and education, family businesses can create a legacy of health and well-being that advances the SDGs. The chapters in this book highlight the relationship between family business activities and the broader aims of societal health, thus advancing a healthier and more prosperous world.

Challenges Facing Businesses in the Achievement of SDG#3

Family businesses are well-positioned to contribute to SDG#3 by promoting health and well-being, but they face various challenges in their efforts. Overcoming these challenges will ensure a larger contribution to SDG#3. Many of the following challenges are noted by the family businesses showcased in this book.

The first challenge is about resources. Resource constraints pose a significant challenge for many family businesses due to their relatively modest scale compared to larger corporations. These businesses often contend with limited financial means and a smaller workforce, which can hinder their capacity to invest comprehensively in initiatives centred on employee and community health and well-being. Striking a balance between these aspirations and other pressing demands becomes difficult, given the myriad competing priorities that family businesses must navigate. While pursuing profitability, growth and generational succession, achieving health and well-being objectives necessitates careful planning to harmonise the priorities and multiple objectives (Gilding et al., 2015).

Lack of expertise further compounds the challenge, as the implementation of effective health and wellness programmes often requires specialised knowledge that might be beyond the reach of family businesses. Constraints on resources can hinder the hiring of experts or the development of in-house capabilities to adeptly design and manage such initiatives. Furthermore, resistance to change emerges as a notable hurdle, particularly for family businesses with long-term established operational traditions. Introducing new health-related policies, practices or cultural shifts may meet resistance from both employees and family members, impeding the integration of health and well-being measures.

Family businesses, in contrast to larger corporations, often encounter limited access to networks that could otherwise assist with their sustainability activities. The broader collaborations and partnerships that large companies can establish might not be as readily accessible for family businesses, affecting their ability to achieve health and well-being objectives. Despite their long-term perspective, these businesses also face the pressure to demonstrate short-term results. This leads to the reduced prioritisation of health and well-being initiatives that are not going to bring immediate financial returns.

The distinctive dynamics inherent in family-owned enterprises, particularly concerning family members as employees and potential successors, can influence the implementation of health initiatives. Managing relationships, addressing expectations and mitigating potential conflicts among family members can impact the introduction of effective health measures. Additionally, regulations pose a formidable hurdle, especially in industries with stringent health and safety regulations. Family businesses, often constrained by limited legal and compliance resources, are challenged by adhering to complex regulatory frameworks.

Engaging with external stakeholders for health-related initiatives requires concerted effort, time and proficient communication. Despite their strong community ties, family businesses must devote considerable resources to effectively engage with their communities in endeavours to promote health and well-being. Finally, the measurement of impact emerges as a challenging endeavour, one that

family businesses might find particularly difficult due to limitations in tools and expertise.

Despite these challenges, family businesses can overcome them by focusing on their strengths, values and commitment to long-term sustainability. Engaging in partnerships and aligning health initiatives with core business values can help family businesses make meaningful contributions to SDG#3 while addressing the challenges they may encounter.

The Book Chapters

The book series aims to contribute positively to providing evidence of the role of family businesses in effectively contributing to all SDGs. The book is one of 17 vignette book series in which each book is 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 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business associations and philanthropic centres as well as to those who have a general interest in entrepreneurship and business.

The chapters in this book focus on businesses that have prioritised SDG#3. Four businesses have been profiled in the book and the first case profiles a company from Germany. The Inselkammer family owns and operates the *Platzl Hotel* located in Munich's city centre 'Am Platzl'. The family members behind the *Platzl Hotels* see themselves as pioneers in sustainability. Many sustainability initiatives have been implemented by the family business. In addition to general sustainability initiatives, employee healthcare plays a central role. The promotion of health and well-being applies to all employees and thus is an important objective of the family business. The family realises that they have many opportunities to improve the health and well-being of their employees and thus can realise business opportunities. Personal proximity to the employees – unlike in large businesses, for example – is considered a major advantage. The introduction of a business health management system in the family business aims to support the well-being of the business's employees.

The second chapter profiles a family business called Noble Care from Malaysia. Noble Care Malaysia has been a family business since 2005 and provides complete care and quality services to aged and ailing community members. They specialise in providing care to the elderly suffering from severe illnesses related to age and terminal diseases like cancer. The leadership of the family business is shared by Dr Ejaz Ahmed Chaudhry and his wife, and their sons and daughters share the position of manager and director. The 'Ageing for All' mission underpinning Noble Care is directly aligned with the SDG Good Health and Well-being (SDG#3). The family business's core values revolve around basic living, medical facilities and love and attention for the elderly in their golden years. An ageing population is a challenge for Malaysia which has limited