

European Management Review

Special Issue Call for Papers

Purpose-Driven Strategies

Guest Editors:

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The purpose is the fundamental reason for the being of an organization and an overarching commitment to the firm's stakeholders that combines financial performance with broader aims: functional excellence, social contribution, inspirational experience or groundbreaking innovation (Gartenberg & Serafeim, 2022, Morrison & Mota, 2021, Henderson, 2021). Academic and practice-oriented literatures are increasingly documenting the rise of purpose and its positive effects, for example in strengthening innovation capabilities, fostering stakeholder relationships in a hybrid environment, and designing resilient organizations (Bhattacharya et al., 2022, Henderson, 2021). But the link between purpose and strategy remains a largely understudied phenomenon. In this special issue, we are looking for scholarly contributions that advance existing knowledge regarding "Purpose-driven Strategies" and their impact on organizational development and performance.

Organizations with a purpose-driven strategic orientation achieve higher productivity and growth rates. They can leverage authentic purpose as a way to add value for stakeholders (Rodríguez-Vilá & Bharadwaj, 2017), or an opportunity to unlock new sources of innovation (Henderson, 2021). Introducing a new management strategy based on a holistic corporate purpose can have long-term and large-scale effects (Collins and Porras, 1991). During the last two years, attention to the concept of purpose has shifted to the question of how purposefulness can be systematically implemented and achieved in the business environment. As a result, the need to understand what it takes to define and implement a strong purpose is essential.

Purpose-driven organizations typically pursue multiple objectives simultaneously, including for example financial and social ones (Battilana, Obloj, Pache & Sengul, 2022). By nature, the co-existence of social and business logic increases the institutional complexity and the likelihood of tensions being experienced (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Organizations can adopt various strategies to mitigate normative tensions from divergent logics (Ramus, Vaccaro & Brusoni, 2017). However, few academic contributions explore how ethical strategies could help purpose-driven organizations to address these tensions (Hollensbe, Wookey, Hickey, George & Nichols, 2014).

When defining their purpose, organizations often aim to connect it to their values and to the building of a purpose-driven culture in order to enable the achievement of the strategic goals. While there are frameworks and evidence relating to the importance of organizational culture, for example for innovation and sustainability management

(Engert & Baumgartner, 2016, Henderson, 2021, Baumgartner, 2009), the questions of how organizations can achieve long-term success by aligning their sustainability efforts and business model innovation with their core values and purpose, are just beginning to be explored (Breuer, Lüdeke-Freund & Bessant 2022, Globocnik, Rauter, & Baumgartner, 2020).

Purpose and governance are closely interconnected. Purpose can influence how firms fill their governance and leadership positions and construct their compensation contracts. We know already that organizations appoint managers and directors with a novel portfolio of expertise, now also including environmental expertise (e.g., Homroy & Slechten, 2019). For example, value-related compensation criteria can shape managerial behavior (Oehmichen, Jacobey, & Wolff, 2020) with the potential to lead to more sustainable outcomes (McGuire, Oehmichen, Wolff, & Hilgers, 2019). Governance can also affect purpose: Internal drivers of purpose can come from executives and CEOs (Georgakakis, Heyden, Oehmichen, & Ekanayake, 2022) as well as boards of directors (e.g., Heyden, Oehmichen, Nichting, & Volberda, 2015), while most prominent external drivers are owners (Steinberg, Hennig, Oehmichen, & Heigermoser, 2022) and analysts.

Aim and Scope of the Special Issue

This special aims to examine: 1) the way purpose is translated and implemented, thereby affecting individuals, teams, organizations, and ecosystems; 2) the multidimensional nature of purpose drawing from strategic, innovation, governance, business ethics, organizational perspectives; 3) present relevant managerial and policy implications, in different types of organizations (for profit, B, NGOs, start-ups, incumbents) and industries. We invite conceptual and empirical contributions. In doing so and firmly in line with the aims and objectives of *European Management Review*, we call for submissions that draw from a wide range of contexts, themes, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives.

An indicative but not exhaustive list of questions that we are interested in addressing through submissions for this special issue includes:

- How does purpose emerge? What is the relationship between purpose, mission, and vision – a hierarchical, conflicting or complementary one?
- How do purpose-driven strategies contribute to mitigating conflicting tensions between commercial, social or emotional logic within organisations?
- What are different categories of purpose (for example performance, quality and/or socially oriented), and how do they shape the different forms of purpose-driven strategies?
- How is purpose implemented on the different levels of strategy – corporate, business, functional, and network? What is the impact of the purpose on the strategic orientation?
- How does purpose drive the innovation capability and the different types of innovation (incremental, radical)?
- What type of strategic leadership does enable and accelerate a purpose-driven strategy? What implications can be drawn for the composition, compensation, and management practices of boards?
- How can organizations define and build purpose-driven businesses that are perceived by external and internal stakeholders as authentic and legitimate?

What type of corporate culture enables purpose-driven strategy implementation?

- What impact has the purpose on the strategic controlling and governance? How can a purpose-driven strategy be tracked and measured?
- Which factors influence the emergence of purpose supporting a sustainability-oriented change process? Are purpose-driven organizations contributing to a strong sustainable development and who is benefiting from these outcomes?

Supporting activities for authors – SI Workshops and Editor Contact

Two paper development workshops will be held at ZHAW School of Management and Law and Amsterdam Business School to support promising papers that have the potential to be included in this special issue:

- **Pre-Submission:** In the period 24.-31. January 2024, the guest editors will organize a SI paper development workshop at ZHAW School of Management and Law in Switzerland (exact date and times TBA). The workshop will be designed to provide developmental guidance to prospective submitters. Participation in this workshop is not a precondition for submission to, nor does it guarantee acceptance in the SI. The workshop will be organized in the form of paper development roundtables that bring together paper authors with senior scholars for in-depth feedback and advice. To be considered for the workshop, please send a proposal or extended abstract (up to 3,000 words) to bjoe@zhaw.ch. Further details will be announced in due course.
- **Post-Submission:** The guest editors will organize a SI revision workshop in 2024 at ZHAW School of Management and Law or Amsterdam Business School (exact location, dates and times TBA). Authors who receive a “revise and resubmit” (R&R) decision on their manuscript will be invited to attend this workshop. Participation in the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of the paper in the SI and attendance is not a prerequisite for publication.

Submission instructions

All submissions for this Special Issue must be submitted electronically to European Management Review according to the journal’s editorial guidelines (max 9,000 words where references, tables/figures, footnotes, and appendices count towards this total). All submissions will be screened by the Special Issue Guest Editors in order to determine which should subsequently be entered into the double-blind peer-review process.

The system will open for submissions to the Special Issue on January 24th, 2024 and close on March 31st, 2024.

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