

Research What Your Company Brings to the World and the Societal Issues It Can Meaningfully Impact

Background

This worksheet was designed to support organizations in the “Research Step” of developing their social purpose. It is a component of the BC Chamber of Commerce 5-part webinar series: [Unlock the Power of Social Purpose for your Business](#)¹.

Task 1: Social Purpose Statement Scan

Search for 8 – 10 Social Purpose statements from companies within or adjacent to your industry, for example your suppliers, or in your community. Document these examples, and:

- 1) Analyze what resonates for you (and does not).
- 2) Identify gaps or areas for differentiation.
- 3) Note words / verbs / outcomes that you like.

Task 2: Company Background Research

Research and document answers to the following questions:

1. What does your company do?
2. Why was it started in the first place (its origin story)?
3. Current Vision, Mission, Values? Have these changed over time; if so, what were the past versions?
4. How does it operate today – departments/functions, processes, procedures, employees, governance, etc.
5. How do you acquire and retain clients / customers?
6. Who are your competitors? How are you differentiated?
7. Are there industry/sector factors that you anticipate will accelerate your growth in the future? Any known or anticipated risks that may affect your company?
8. What is the societal benefit of your current mandate? i.e. how does your current mandate benefit humanity/the world/your jurisdiction?

Task 3: Strengths to Leverage

Review the following list of core competences and assets and identify those most relevant to your company, including anything that is missing from the below. Create a summary of what you bring to the world, your superpowers, and the unique strengths you can leverage to identify your purpose and bring it to life.

¹ This worksheet was designed by Mary Ellen Schaafsma, Founder and Purpose Advisor, Purpose Pathways Consulting and Coro Strandberg, Co-founder and Chair, Canadian Purpose Economy Project.

Core Competencies and Assets	
Products and Services	Employee Time, Skills and Expertise
Convening Power and Influence	Retail Outlets
Community Relationships	Buying Power and Supplier Relationships
Customer Relationships	Donations / Sponsorships
Business Partnerships	Facilities and Physical Plants
IT Systems, Data and Platforms	Distribution Channels
Marketing Channels	Hiring and Training Process
Physical Assets and Equipment	Industry Relationships
Government Relationships	Investments
Intellectual Property	Research Capacity
Land Assets & Streetscapes	Infrastructure



Task 4: Stakeholder Consultation

Consult internal and external stakeholders on the following. Document their responses.

First identify the stakeholders you wish to consult based on this list or others in your ecosystem.

- Board
- Senior executive
- Employees
- Trusted customers / clients
- Suppliers, vendors, contractors, business partners
- Financial partners (banks, investors, insurers, etc.)
- Community groups / non-governmental organizations (NGOs) / advocacy groups
- Experts and thought leaders
- Academics and research institutions
- Regulators and government agencies
- Industry and professional associations
- Peers and competitors
- Friends and family

Second, determine your consultation methods, for example:

Internal Stakeholders

- Team meetings
- Town halls
- Surveys, polls
- Workshops

External stakeholders

- Interviews
- Focus groups

- Surveys
- Workshop
- Casual conversations

Note: It is important to educate stakeholders about your social purpose project before consulting them.

These are sample questions you can use in your stakeholder consultation.

All Stakeholders (internal / external stakeholders):

1. Broadly, what social or environmental issues come to mind when you think about the role this company's sector plays in business and in society?
2. What social or environmental issues come to mind when you think about the role <this company> currently plays in the broader community/country/world?
3. How is the world a better place because of <company name>? What would be lost if they disappeared tomorrow?
4. Are there any areas you can see where <this company> might have even more societal impact? What greater role could they play in the world?

Add: B2C (consumer specific question)

- 1) What stands out for you when you buy from <company name>? How do they align with your values?
- 2) Were there any factors you considered when deciding on <company name>, beyond product quality, price and service?

Add: B2B (supplier, vendor, retailer, financier, etc.):

- 1) What makes <company name> unique from other similar businesses you have worked with?
- 2) Have you found an alignment of values between you? What are they?

Employees (internal stakeholders):

In addition to the questions for all stakeholders, add these for this group:

- 1) Why did you join <company name>? Besides pay, benefits, job description – did anything stand out to make you want to work with them?
- 2) Is there anything about <company name> that aligns with your personal values? What is it?

Task 5: Priority Societal Issues

Prioritize the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) (plus 3) your company can contribute to in a meaningful way, perhaps 2 – 5 of them.



Plus 3

- Aging Society
- Indigenous Equity
- Sense of Belonging

Task 6: Research Synthesis

Create a Venn Diagram, like the one below, and add the most relevant core competencies from Task 3 Strengths to Leverage on the right – for what you bring to the world, and the Societal Issues you believe your company can have the most impact upon, on the left from Task 4 and 5. Present it to your Social Purpose Steering Committee for feedback and refinement.

