

Enhancing Productivity for Sustainable Growth: Businesses in Different Industries are Starting Their Own Revolution



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Starting in the late 1900s was the Third Industrial Revolution, also known as the Digital Revolution. The spread of automation and digitization through the use of electronics and computers, empowered by the introduction of the Internet, continues to transform the commercial, political, and social landscapes; and, as a result, generating significant gains in productivity, among others.

The Internet highway continues to enable different industries to thrive. Automation, when first came about, threatened jobs of many. However, automation in manufacturing, for example, created leaner and more efficient operations, resulting in new opportunities and business growth, and thus new job creation.

Globalization brings challenges and opportunities; the world continues to transform.

Innovation can lead to higher productivity – contributing to economic growth. Product, Process and Business Model innovation travel much faster and go deeper and wider in today's technology-empowered flattened world.

The rise of e-Commerce makes possible the development of large and small businesses. Innovations in different degrees can bring about business growth and better the life of people, making the world more equitable.

In this paper, I am sharing a few cases where business operators are enhancing productivity to target sustainable business growth, while also bettering the life of people.

Capacity building of all men and women across Nations through “ Right To Skills “ strategy by all

member countries would help in achieving UN mission of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity.

I. Making You the Benefiter of Your Own Data

Big tech companies collect huge amounts of user data and benefit from it, while consumers' privacy is invaded — spam messages may be the minimal disturbance to our daily life, while identity theft can create long-lasting negative effect in our physical, mental, and financial wellbeing.

Today, there are over five billion mobile phone users worldwide, and this number is growing by the minute. Over 22 billion calls are made each day. Ninety-nine percent of call-connection audio is unexploited.

A U.K.-based company is quietly starting a media revolution – shaping the future of audio advertising. Consumers are finally rewarded for the use of their personal data.

Business Model Innovation

Enabled by technology and with deep understanding of the advertising industry, the U.K. company is disrupting the existing advertising protocol.

Users choose what advertising they want and when they want it delivered, all during the previously unused call-connection time (instead of hearing the ring tone, they now hear an advertisement of their choosing during the ring time before the call is picked up). They have full control of their data and they get paid — a majority of the advertising revenue — for listening to the advertisements.

Mobile-Phone Operators offer this as a new service which users can voluntarily opt in and out of; this service can be a part of the operators' royalty program to retain their existing subscribers or gain new subscribers.

Advertisers get highly-focused listeners as

users receive ads based on their preferences, and are therefore very receptive to the information. The advertisers get better return for their investment.

Multiple Win that Enhances Productivity and Thus Sustainable Business Growth

Subscribers no longer need to pay operators to play music to incoming callers during call-connection time; instead, callers get paid by listening to advertising information of their choice. Mobile-Phone Operators open up new business revenues to sell products and services to users using the rewards/points that they gain from listening to advertisements. Advertisers are guaranteed that their ads will be delivered to their target audience at a very competitive rate; the delivery is transparent versus the “guess work” that fills the industry today.

This business model innovation opens up a literally untapped market, a blue ocean. It delivers benefits to all parties involved, where growth can be enormous – putting money back to the pocket of consumers, creating new jobs and related business opportunities.

II. Eco-friendly Waste-to-Energy System

Waste-to-energy (WtE) is the process of generating energy using waste as a fuel source.

By 2050, worldwide municipal solid waste generation is expected to have increased by roughly 70 percent to 3.4 billion metric tons – suggested in mid-July 2023 by Bruna Alves, Research Lead at Statista. With such immense volumes of waste arising, the need for authorities to provide adequate waste treatment and disposal services has become ever more important. Alves pointed out, however, that less than 20 percent of waste is recycled each year, with huge quantities still sent to landfill sites (<https://www.statista.com/topics/4983/waste-generation-worldwide/#topicOverview>).

A Japan-based company has diligently worked on using modern bio-technology in waste management, which is publicly endorsed by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on its website.

Product Innovation

Enabled by technology and with a key drive to solve the deepening environmental issue that is faced by the entire world, the Japanese company started an eco-friendly trend in waste management.

It brought forward a Waste-to-Energy bio-technology system that can treat all kinds of household and industrial wastes, operate with no CO2 emission, and generate fermentation biogas that supports the system’s own operation and, at the same time, with excess that can be uploaded to the power grid for power distribution. The system can scale in size to fit the needs of different communities.

The country, the government, the community, and the people all benefit from improved waste management, and, in this case, with the added benefit of gaining eco-friendly power source.

The Win Does Not Stop At Home but Brings Value Across Border

Japan has emerged as a world leader in waste management by overcoming vast industrial waste challenges since the 1960s. A UNEP report pointed out that the Japanese success was partly the result of its stimulating stakeholder involvement and raising environmental awareness, and partly for its introduction of relevant rules and policies — Japan managed to achieve sustainable development amid its rapid industrialization. The success is far and wide, the previously mercury-contaminated city of Minamata is today remodeled into an eco-city receiving international recognition for its wide range of recycling and environmental programs (<https://waste-management-world.com/artikel/unep-report-industrial-waste-management-lessons-from-japan>).

This new bio-technology to treat waste is more advanced than carbonization technology, and can be achieved at a lower cost, which prompted a great deal of interest in other governments. Currently, five World-Bank-classified Lower-Middle-Income economies in Asia are exploring the possibility of installing the system in their countries – to attend to the waste-management issue and alleviate the power

shortage/cost issue which can bring to their people better living environment and condition.

III. Bettering One's Life with a Healthier Earth

Climate change and global warming are no longer a future phenomenon but an immediate reality. This year's Northern Hemisphere summer heat is testing the limits of human survival. In mid-July, China set an all-time temperature high of nearly 126°F; and in the U.S., Death Valley hit 128°F while Phoenix experienced a record-breaking 19th consecutive day at or above 110°F. In the Middle East, the heat index reached 152°F, nearing — or surpassing — levels thought to be the most intense the human body can withstand.

Dated back to 2018, an American humanitarian, the late Peter Magurean III, started raising awareness of human beings damaging the Earth, and promoting a fundamental goal to change habits and ideas that contravene the future of our planet due to the wear and tear that human beings have generated. The foundation he was working to establish in Mexico officially came into being only after he passed away.

As a naturalist, a mentor, and an information hub, Peter Magurean III made a mark in many people's life around the world where he lived, studied, and worked for 80+ years. Seven people from Mexico, the United States, and China came together to bring the vision of the foundation to reality.

Business Process Innovation

Enabled by technology, farm-to-table is not a novel concept. The foundation, even before it was officially founded, promoted the concept as an enabler and knowledge hub.

While financial donation is important, the foundation puts similar emphasis on knowledge sharing. No good deed is too small; one can do good deeds based on one's capacity.

While promoting organic farming by bringing in experts in the field to teach farmers the concept and help them practice, the farmers are also sharing with the experts such challenges and opportunities that may be unique to the region.

While the restaurants are getting local supplies of organic products, they are setting up standards and requirements for the food quality and delivery timing so that chefs can serve their patrons the best seasonal food with excellent taste and the highest nutritious value.

Diners, while enjoying the delicious cuisine can also learn more about the food, its nutritious value, and effects to their body.

A Concept that is Applicable Across the Board to Enhance Productivity All things have their own rules, and thus food too has its own seasons. Confucius once said: "don't eat (the food) if it is not the right time." It means what one eats should be in accordance with the season — when to eat and what to eat. We first pay attention to the season and locale to make sure that the time and place of production are in line with the growth cycle and characteristics of the food — when the food is ripe or is at its most suitable time to be eaten.

The farm-to-table example is just to illustrate what the foundation is doing. It is currently involved in afforestation, carbon farming, sustainable living and more. The activities are about adhering to its fundamental goal on contributing to the repair of the environment, researching, disseminating, and acting in such a way that we people transform the educational, cultural, economic, and spiritual processes that allow us to complete the ecological cycle of life on the planet.

"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." The foundation is an enabler. The environmental-protection public-welfare organization that focuses on completing the ecological cycle of life on the planet — by identifying relevant environmental topics and providing respective knowledge base, raising public awareness of environmental protection, calling on the public to participate in an organic dialogue and take joint actions to make our planet a better place and a more sustainable and livable planet.

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Productivity is a very well-respected word by governments, and they all want to find a way to unlock that productivity opportunity. We productivity professionals put a very high value on productivity, and we all want to incorporate productivity in what we do. What does productivity mean to an everyday person? Is it just about measuring the efficiency of inputs transforming into outputs?

If everyone is given more information and knowledge, many will choose to do “the right

thing” based on their self-interest which, as indicated by the three cases mentioned above, can lead to sustainable business growth. Adam Smith’s “Invisible Hand” came to mind.

I am a believer in the mission of the World Academy of Productivity Science — promote productivity development to achieve world peace and prosperity. I put that into practice.

