

Forbes *IGNITE*

Sustainable Transformation

The Successor to Digital Transformation

It's time to tell a new story about sustainable transformation. One that's been hiding in plain sight.

IN COLLABORATION WITH



accenture

For the first time in history, technology makes it possible for companies to be more profitable by becoming more sustainable.

This is not just a possibility, but an imperative.

Today the very innovations essential for saving the planet are also those that can usher in a new era of business self-reliance in energy, materials, and resilience in the face of a sputtering global supply chain. More than this, digital transformation has given companies a decade-long dry run of the processes to create value from these technologies.

We are entering an era of sustainable transformation, the successor to digital transformation.

This report, which is a synthesis of roundtable discussions held in collaboration with Salesforce and Accenture, combines the insights of over 50 leaders in sustainability, science and technology. Our mission is to put C-level leaders and board directors on notice that there's a new business case for sustainability and tried-and-true roadmaps to take bolder climate action.

We believe a better future isn't just possible — it's also highly probable. It's now up to us to forge a new path that leads from probability into reality.



Sustainable Transformation: Digital Transformation's Successor

Sustainable transformation is about taking the lessons we've learned over the last several years dealing with disruption, data, speed, and agility, and applying them to sustainability.

The solutions companies must pursue to reach net-zero are the same as the ones they'd have to implement anyway to adapt to **three major challenges** shaping the most uncertain decade for business in living memory.



Challenge 01.

Fossil fuels have high, unpredictable costs and endanger the planet.



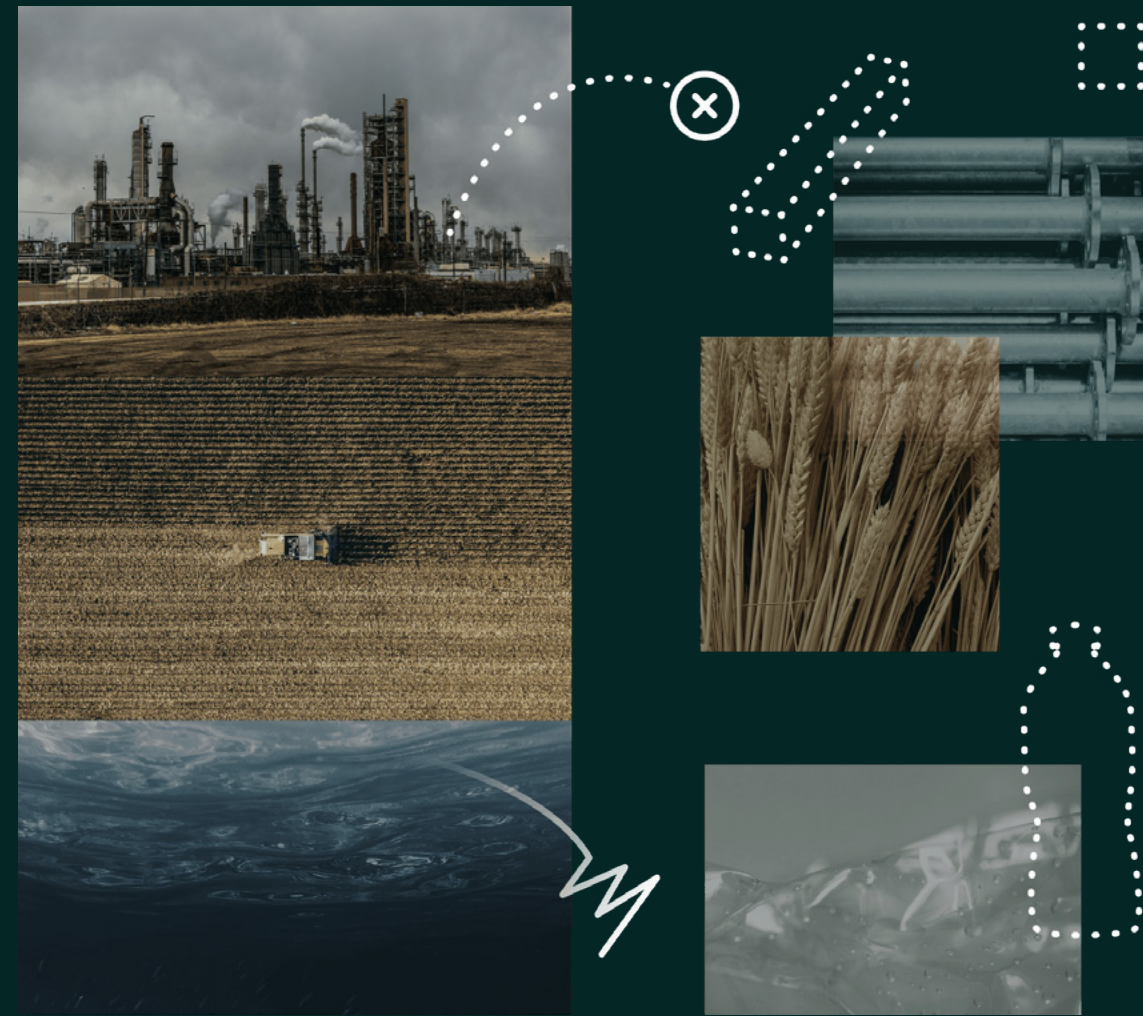
Solution

A race to decarbonize through **clean energy independence** – cleaner, cheaper, “ownable” power supplies produced closer to the point of use.



Challenge 02.

We can't count on just-in-time supply chains and cheap materials.



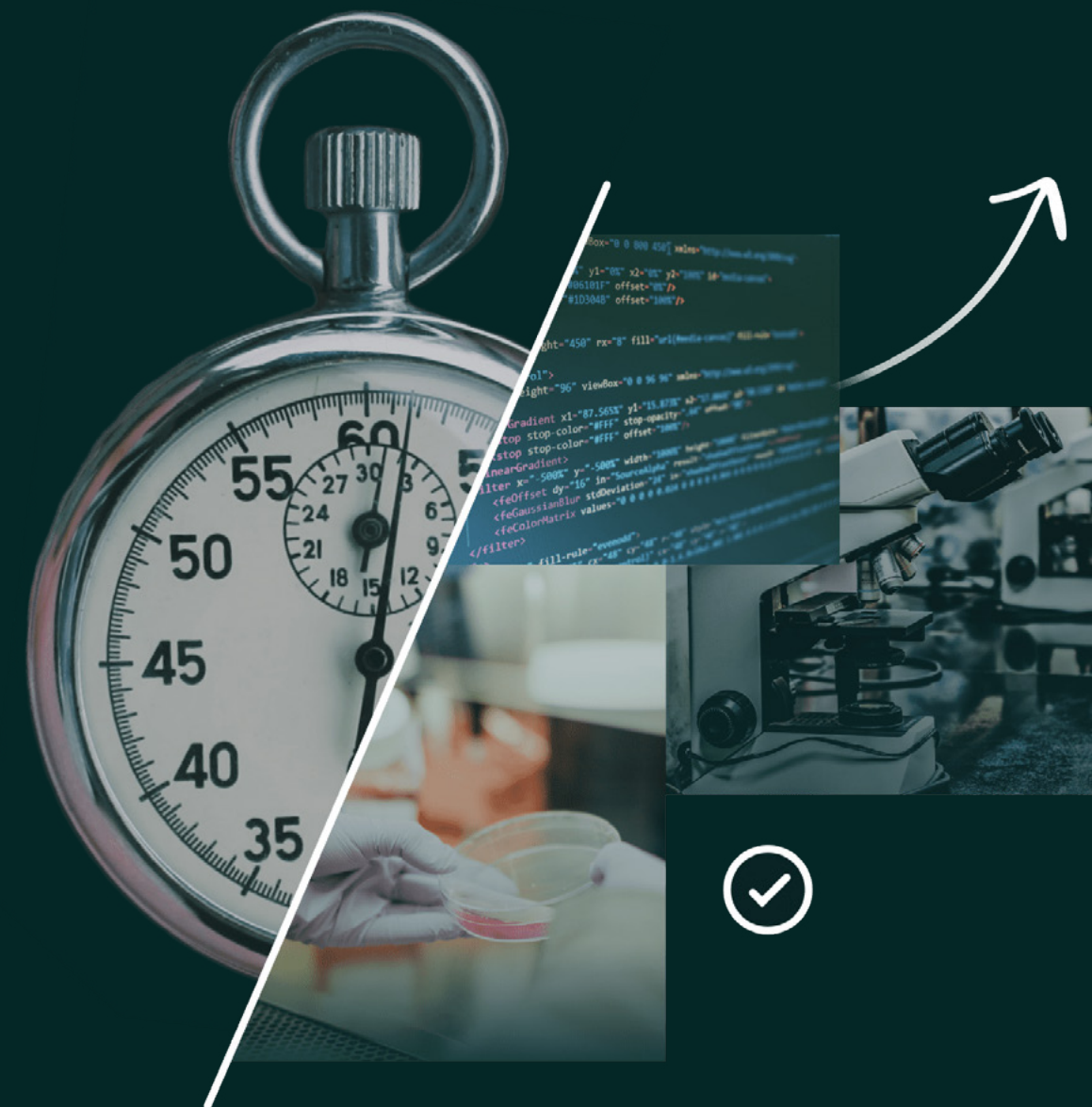
Solution

A transition to circularity through resource independence shields companies from rising materials and supply chain costs and minimizes unnecessary dependence on third parties.



Challenge 03.

The benefits of net-zero are long term, but investments are needed now.



Solution

Digital long-term value business models have greater certainty around future cash flow and give companies more control of the full product lifecycle, using that new power to create efficiencies through data and technology.



Sustainability is not just about future generations. It's about future-proofing businesses today — not just for the next 50 years, but the next 5-10.



“

We don't have sustainability costs, we have sustainability investments. We invest in sustainability to future-proof our business—the same way we do for employee training, factory or office development. Consumer demand, regulatory requirements, and weather patterns are all shifting and will make this a good investment.

Jonathan Gill

Global Sustainability Strategy Director, Unilever

“

the race to net-zero brings the prospect of a historic round of global investment that would be just the shot in the arm the economy needs

We should view investments in sustainable transformation as an unprecedented business opportunity for the entire world, not an insurance check we must begrudgingly sign.

The trillions of dollars per year analysts predict will be necessary for a rapid, clean transition won't just disappear. They will be paid by companies and governments to other firms who will spend them back into the economy. Basic economics teaches us that every liability is someone else's asset. This means the race to net-zero brings the prospect of a historic round of global investment that would be just the shot in the arm the economy needs.



Digital Drives Sustainability

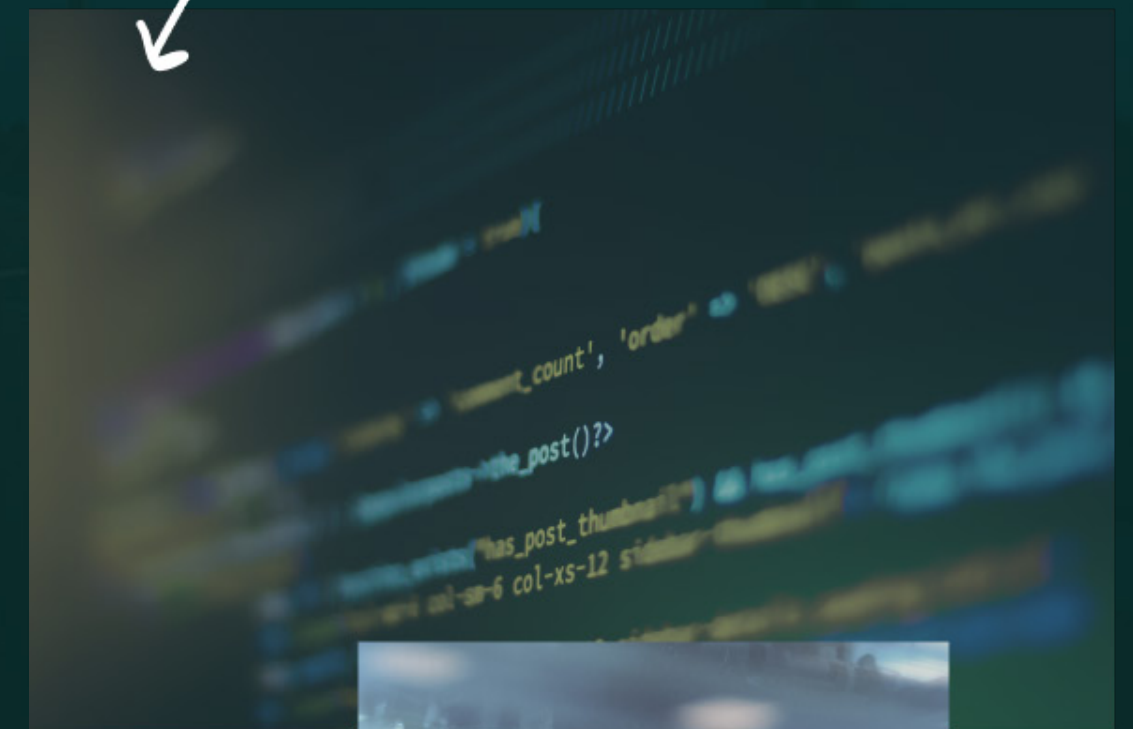
The sustainability era brings a host of new challenges, but it's not uncharted territory. The last decade of digital transformation provides a problem-solving blueprint to profitably address planetary woes while fixing business pain points. We call this approach sustainable transformation, the successor to digital transformation.



Sustainable transformation is about using new technologies to compete in a way that also mitigates existential business risks like climate change. It's about fusing purpose and profit in every product or service.

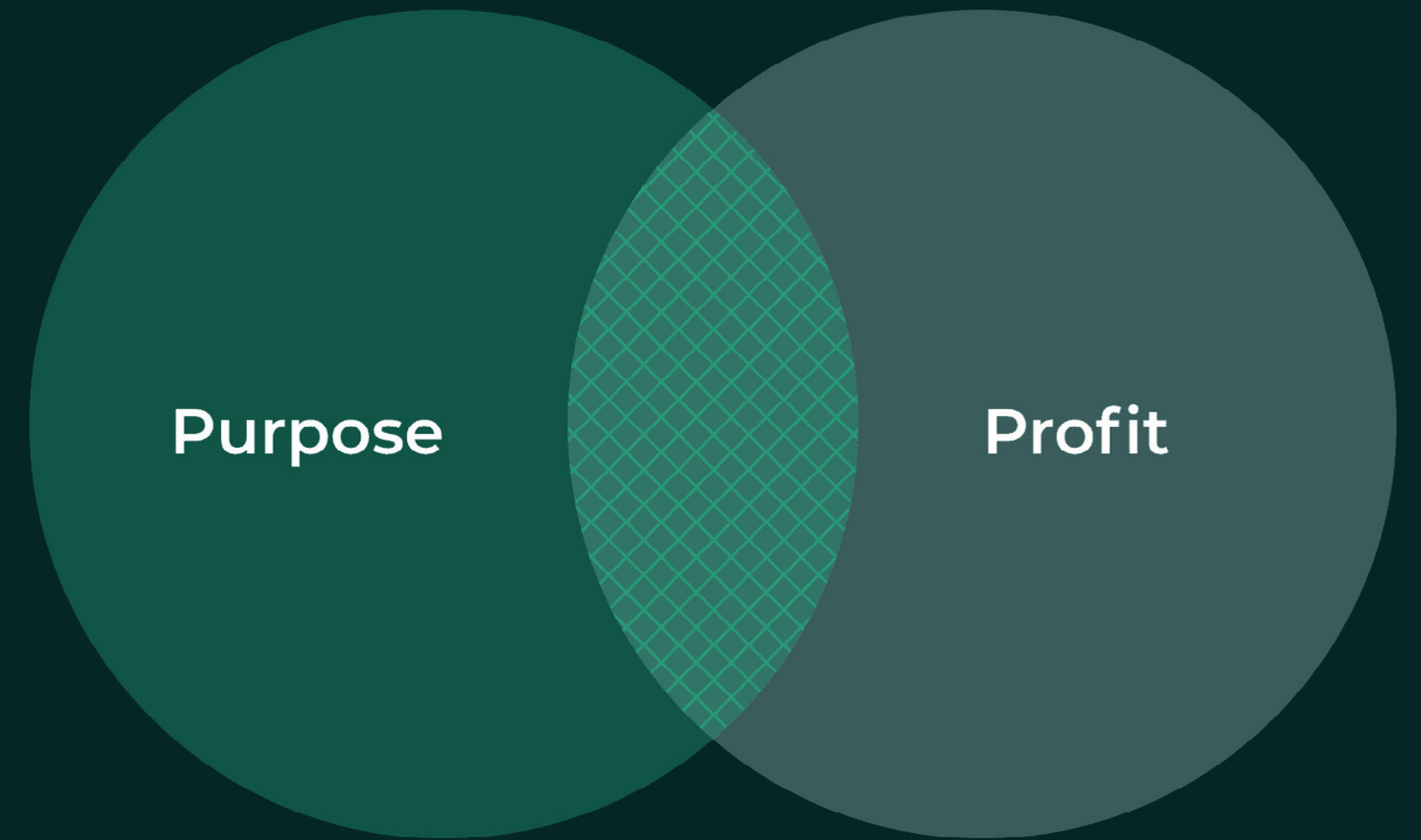
The challenge is, under the market's current rules, purpose and profit don't naturally overlap in all places or over all time frames. Policy changes are needed to address this, and businesses should aggressively advocate for them. But in the meantime, strong business cases exist for sustainable transformation goals in the places where they already converge.

To harness the untapped possibilities of clean technology, we must go beyond digital-transformation-as-usual, which author John Hagel likens to "just helping caterpillars walk faster," not transforming them into an "unrecognizable butterfly." Tectonic business model shifts and product overhauls are the main goals of sustainable transformation, not merely an aspiration.



The largest profit-purpose overlaps that companies can act on today include:

- ✓ Decarbonization through clean energy independence.
- ✓ Supply chain reliability and waste reduction through resource independence.
- ✓ Resilience that future-proofs businesses and adapts to climate impacts.

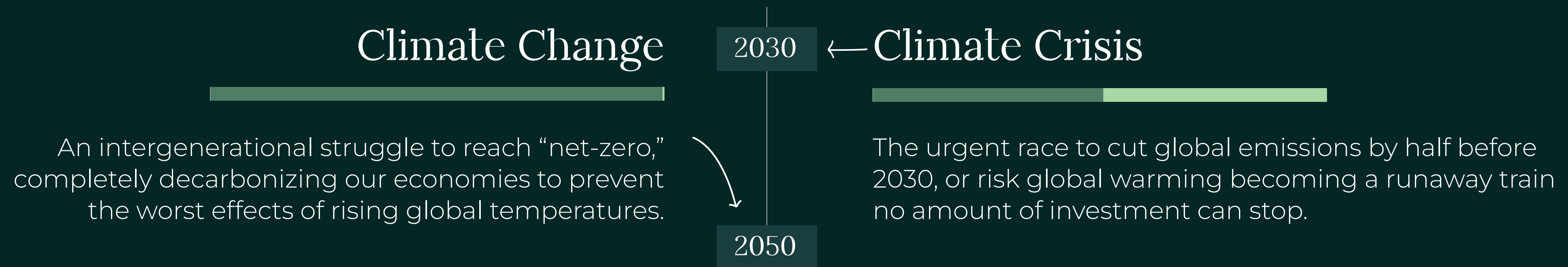


Access the Full Report

Download

Sustainable Transformation: The Successor to Digital Transformation. Understand the new business case for sustainability and the technologies and strategies which will enable business to thrive in an increasingly uncertain world.

As the world's leading organizations plan for 2050, there's one way most of them are missing the mark. They fail to differentiate between climate change and the climate crisis, and in doing so forget that there are targets we must hit much sooner in order to have a chance of getting to 2050.



“

Sustainability is truly the most all-encompassing, all-pervasive issue that we humans will face in our lifetimes. It's truly a test of our humanity. Are we able to prove ourselves as sacrificing and giving people? Do we know what it means to love and care for living beings beyond our own time?

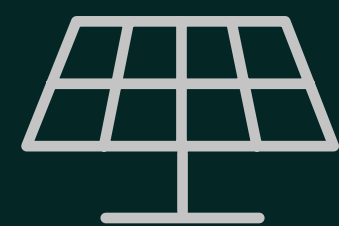
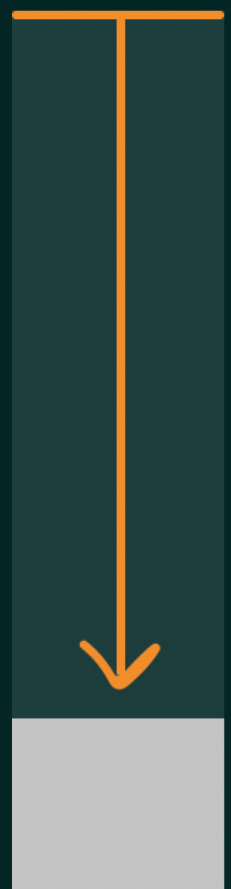
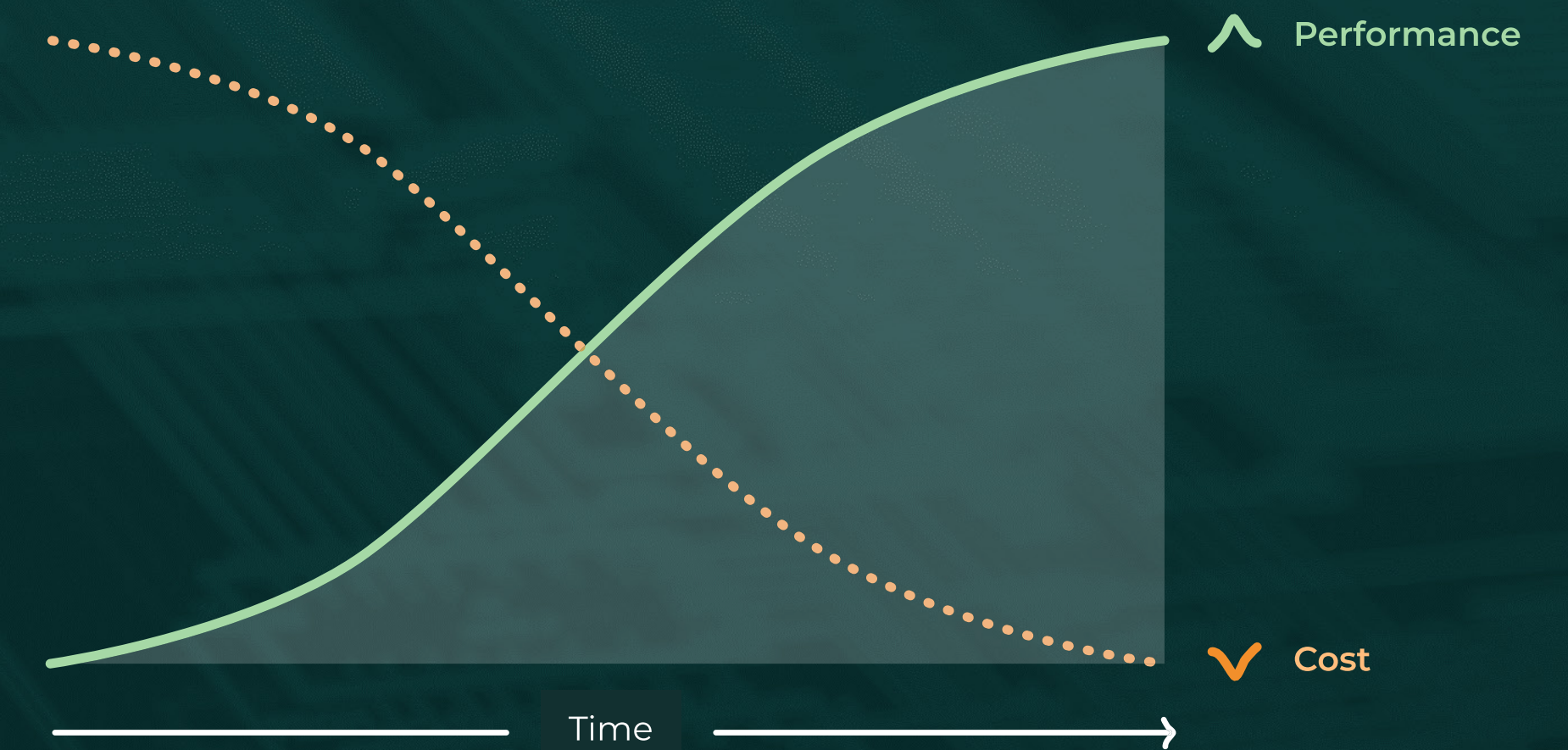
Apricot Tang

Sustainability Tech GTM Lead, Salesforce Business Group at Accenture

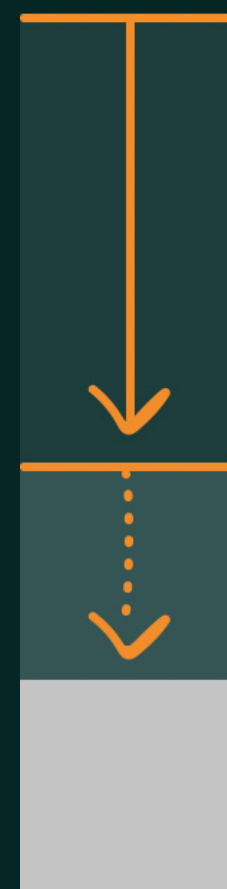
Disrupting Sustainability

Consider that Moore's Law – the idea that computer chips will double their performance for half the cost every two years – is “contagious” and spreads to other technologies.

Now, many of the core tools of our modern world follow similar “S-curves” of adoption and growth that drove the information revolution.



By most estimates, the cost of solar panels has fallen by **over 80%** in the last two decades.



Wind power costs have dropped **more than 50%** in the last ten years and are expected to decline by an additional **37 – 49%** by 2050.



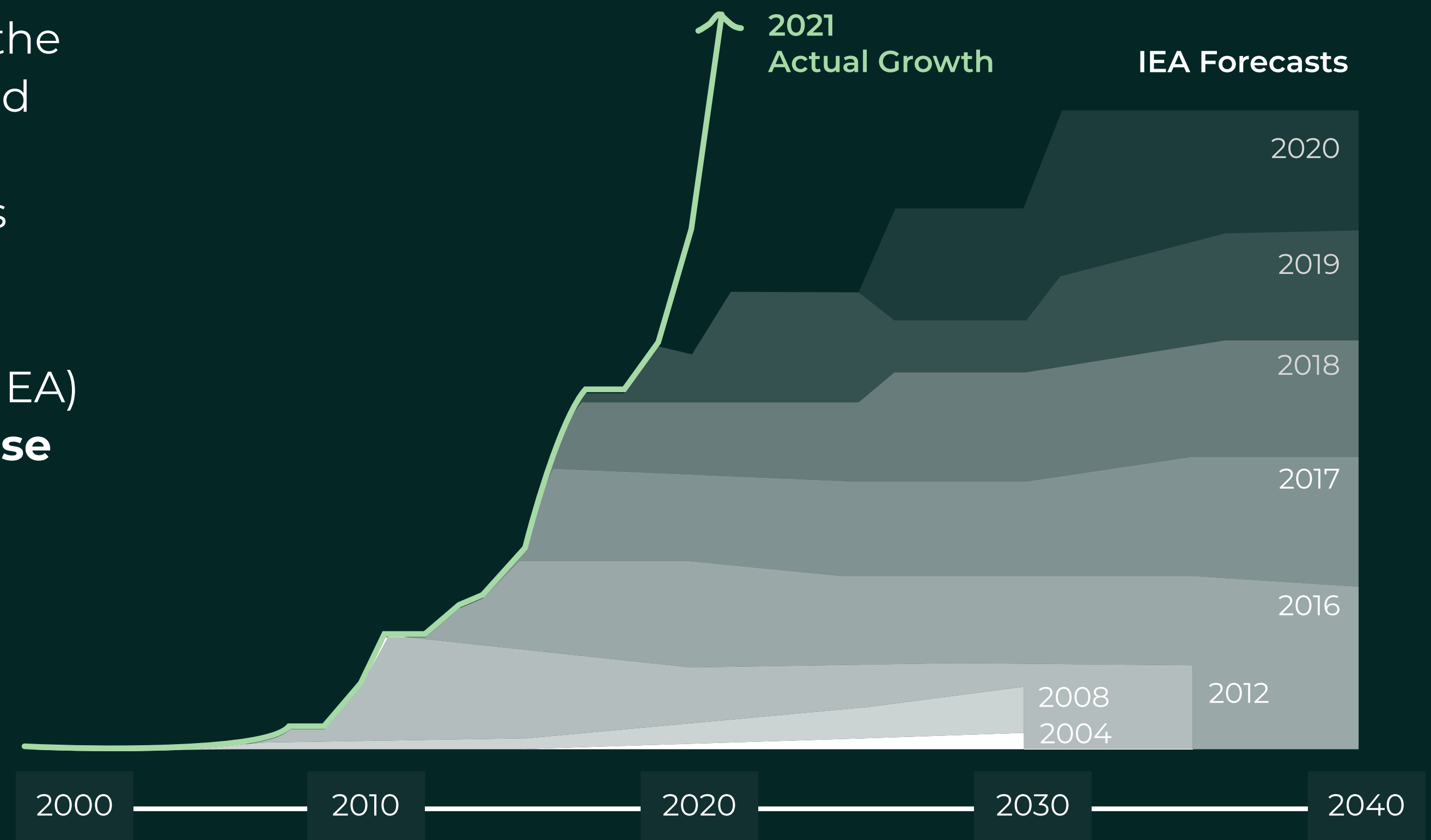
According to Nature, lithium-ion battery prices have plunged by **97%** since 1991.



In most places, renewable power is already much cheaper than coal or natural gas.

One reason more investment hasn't poured into the renewables sector is because most businesses and traditional forecasters didn't see this coming. They continued to project linear, gradual changes to the cost and quality of technologies.

Year after year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) predictions have **severely underestimated the rise of global solar panel installations.**



Source: Ramez Naam, Chief Futurist at Prime Movers Lab & Climate Tech Investor

Wherever you look, exponential technologies, which by definition improve at least 10% a year in cost and quality, are **replacing legacy technologies that can't keep up.**



“

80% of the technologies we need to keep the planet under global warming targets are already invented, or someone is working on them today. The question is how quickly will they be adopted? Will the incumbents and otherwise well-meaning regulators try to slow them down, which is what they always do in a disruption?

Emmanuel Lagarrigue

Managing Director, BeyondNetZero at General Atlantic

Nine Sustainable Transformation Technologies

01.

Autonomous Vehicles

Along with ride-hailing services, autonomous vehicles will provide mobility with fewer vehicles on the road, consuming less energy.

02.

Batteries

Battery technology has improved exponentially in recent years, making electric vehicles and renewable energy storage affordable and practical.

03.

Cellular Agriculture

Cellular agriculture is the production of animal-sourced foods from cell culture using organic molecules, according to New Harvest

04.

Electric Vehicles

EVs are becoming much more economical and energy-efficient than gas-powered cars, with zero emissions at the tailpipe.

05.

Green Chemistry

Green chemistry will usher in an era of made-to-order medicines and replacements for petroleum-derived products.

06.

Solar Tech

Solar has grown rapidly in recent years and is expected to grow 20% in 2022, with sector investment reaching \$170 billion.

07.

Precision Fermentation

The next generation of fermentation, powered by synthetic biology, could provide the world with sustainable foods at lower costs.

08.

Wind

2022 is expected to be a record-level year for wind power and battery installations to replace fossil-fuel-powered plants.

09.

Carbon Technologies

Tools that measure, permanently capture and/or reuse atmospheric carbon in valuable products, like cement and jet fuel.

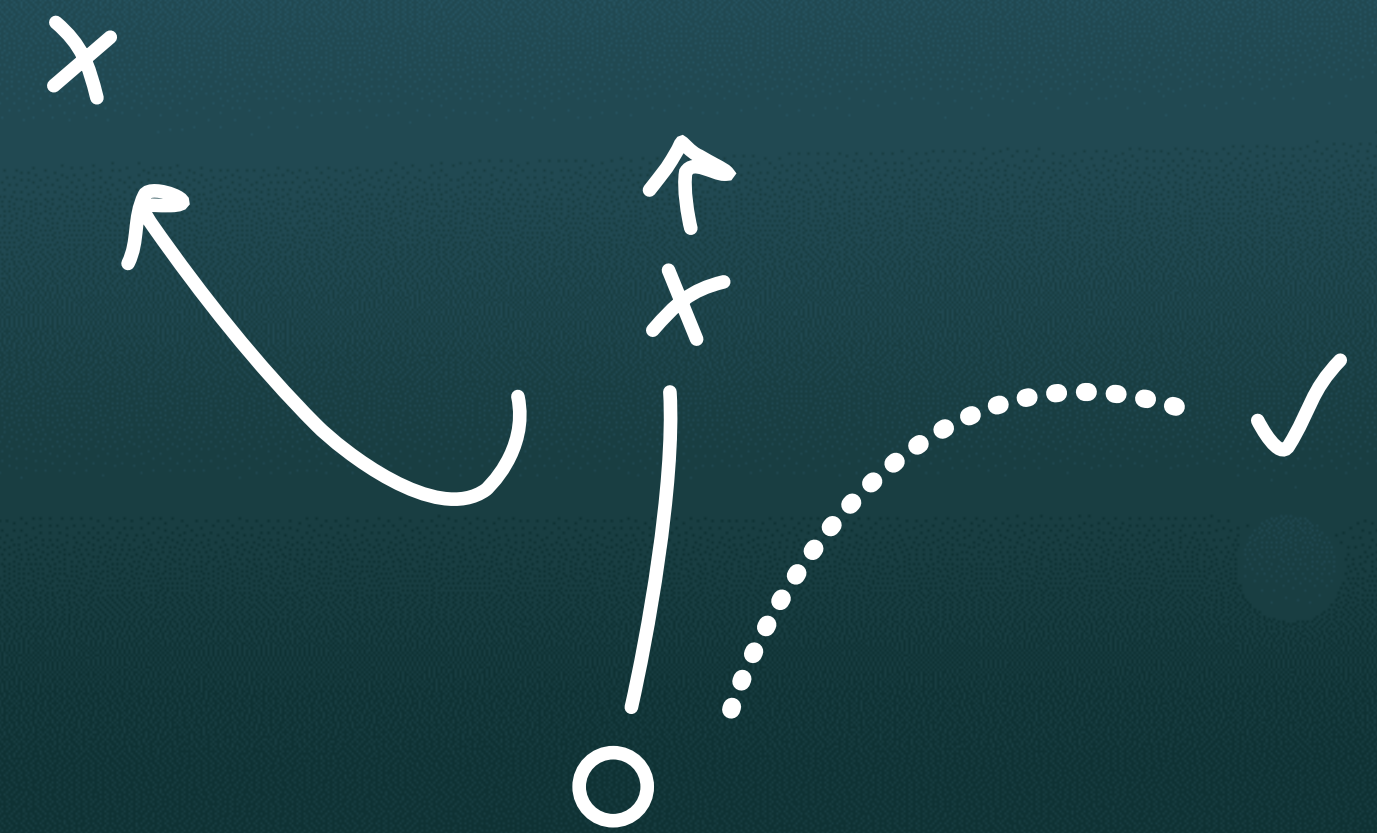
What's Your Sustainable Transformation Strategy?

Our research and sessions with more than 50 executives and science and technology experts from the world's leading organizations have identified six key strategic shifts that are common to nearly every organization's sustainable transformation strategy.

Think of them like a checklist for evaluating investment decisions. The more boxes ticked, the more impactful the approach.



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Products & Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Servitized" Products, Outcomes & Experiences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting Waste & Carbon | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Energy & Resource Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exponential Growth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher, Predictable Growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Value Chains | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Value Networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Centralization | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Localization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Co-opetition" |



More Than Enough Reason to Hope

As dire as the prognosis for our environment and society may be, this is no time for fatalism. If technology follows its historical adoption curves, if the forces of consumer opinion, financial markets, and regulatory action pile on to push the curves further and faster,

it's possible that humanity will achieve net-zero even earlier than we can imagine.

The foundation of a new net-zero economy is already under construction. **But since every revolution is market-driven, it's time for us to act, innovate and build the infrastructure, marketplace, and global community we need to take us there.**

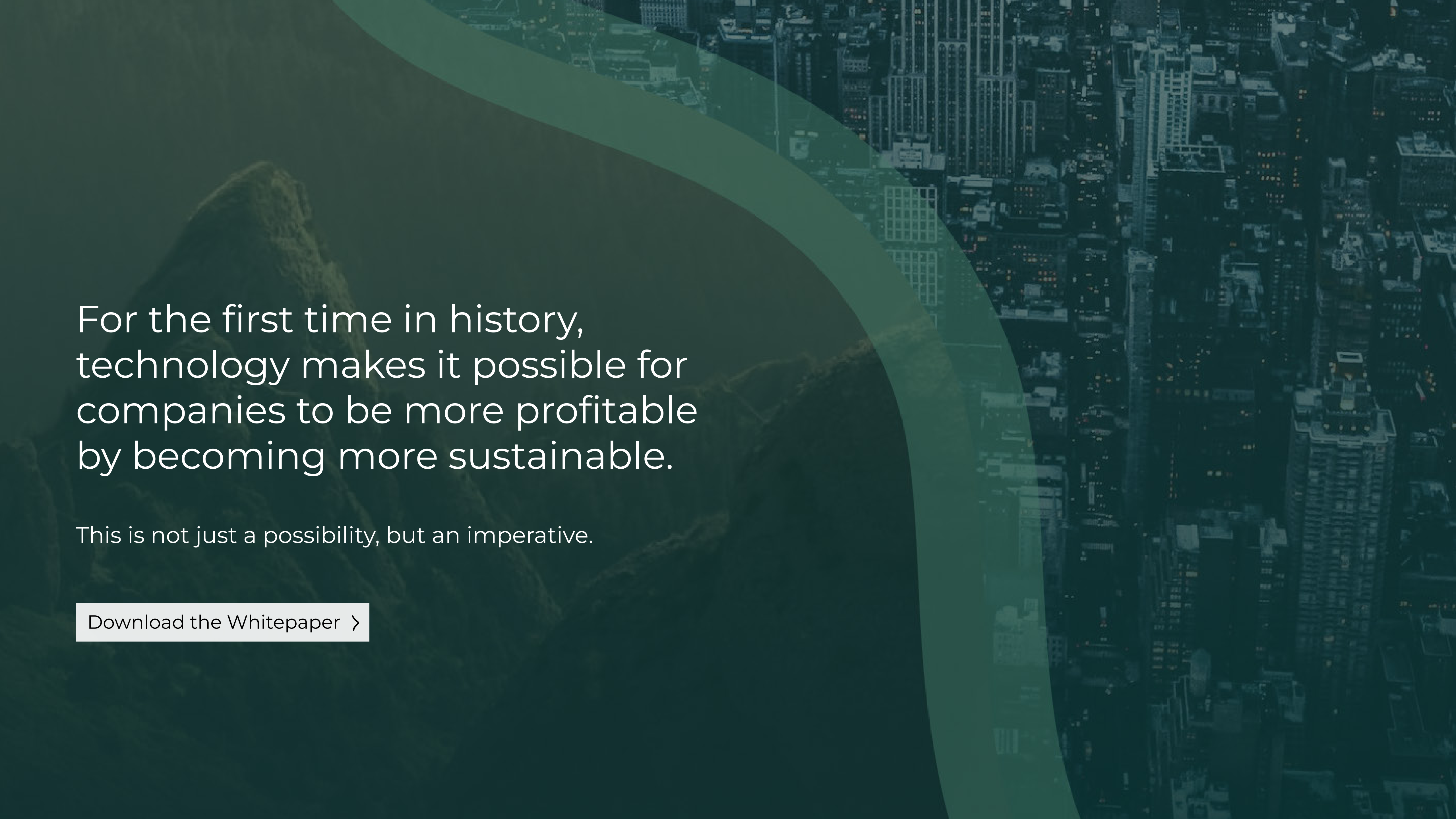


“

A sense of optimism is required to succeed in sustainable transformation. Sustainability is making sure we're lifting up the quality of life in an equitable way for all people, globally. That includes healthcare, access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy, and the ability to travel to connect with family and friends and economic opportunities.

Roger Martella

Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer, GE

An aerial night view of a city with many lit-up buildings. A large, semi-transparent green curved shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, framing the text.

For the first time in history,
technology makes it possible for
companies to be more profitable
by becoming more sustainable.

This is not just a possibility, but an imperative.

[Download the Whitepaper >](#)

Participants

Sustainable Business Transformation Roundtable

Aashna Mehra

Investment Associate | New Energy Capital
Forbes 30 under 30

Adam Muellerweiss

Chief Sustainability Officer | Clarios

Alexis Haas

Chief Sustainability Officer | Arcadis

Allen Kramer

Co-Founder, Forbes 30 Under 30 | Mobilize

Amelia Celia

Chief Sustainability Officer | ASTM Group

Andrew Witherspoon

Industry Go to Market Vice President | Salesforce

Andy Brandman

SVP, Strategic Customer Advisor | Salesforce

Aniket Shah

Global Head of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Sustainable Finance Research | Jefferies

Ann Tracy

Chief Sustainability Officer | Colgate-Palmolive

Apoorv Sinha

CEO and Co-Founder | Carbon Upcycling Technologies
Forbes 30 under 30

Apricot Tang

Management Consulting Manager, Sustainability Tech GTM Lead | Accenture

Ashish Jandial

Managing Director, Retail & Consumer Goods | Accenture

Ashley Allen

Chief Sustainability Officer | Oatly

Avery Schlicher

Director, Sustainability Solutions | Salesforce

Brian Luciani

Head of Rise NY + VP, Fintech Platform Lead | Barclays

Bruce Pon

CEO and Co-Founder | Ocean Protocol

Christian Zimmerman

Co-Founder | Qoins
Forbes 30 under 30

Christopher Chiappa

Managing Director, Salesforce Business Group | Accenture

Clinton Moloney

North America Sustainability Services & Strategy Lead | Accenture

Daniela Blanco

Co-Founder | Sunthetics
Forbes 30 under 30

Deanna Zhang

Director | Tudor, Pickering, and Holt
Forbes 30 under 30

Emmanuel Lagarrigue

Managing Director | BeyondNetZero at General Atlantic

Eric Adamson

CEO and Co-Founder | Tortuga AgTech

Evan Harvey

Global Head of Sustainability | Nasdaq

Evan van Hook

Chief Sustainability Officer | Honeywell

Farshad Family

Managing Director, Global Sustainability Lead for Accenture-Salesforce | Accenture

Francesca DeBiase

Chief Supply Chain Officer | McDonald's

Francesco Ferrero

Interim Director, IT for Innovative Services Department | Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST)

Haley Marie Keith

CEO and Co-Founder | Mito Material Solutions
Forbes 30 under 30

Ignacio Lopez Francos

Senior Research Engineer | National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Jitendra Kavathekar

Global Vice President - Accenture Partnership | Salesforce

Jonathan Gill

Global Sustainability Director | Unilever

Karen van Bergen

Chief Environmental Sustainability Officer & Executive VP & Dean of Omnicom University | Omnicom Group

Kelly James

VP & GM, Energy & Utilities | Salesforce

Konrad Dobschuetz

Head of Digital Innovation, Customer Solutions and BIOME Lead UK | Novartis

Kristen Siemen

Chief Sustainability Officer | General Motors

Leonard Robinson

Engineering Team Lead | Cytiva
Forbes 30 under 30

Lisa Morden

VP, Safety and Sustainability | Kimberly-Clark

Maddie Hall

Co-Founder | Living Carbon
Forbes 30 under 30

Matt Marcotte

SVP, Industry Advisor – RCG | Salesforce

Meghna Tare

Chief Sustainability Officer | University of Texas at Arlington

Michael Mcguire

Head of Global Technology Strategy & Product | Walmart

Mushtaq Gaffar

Managing Director | Accenture

Neil Hardwick

CEO | RethinkX

Pablo Vidarte Gordillo

CEO | Bioo and Arkyne Technologies

Phil De Luna

Adjunct Professor | University of Toronto
Forbes 30 under 30

Randy Burns

Chief Sustainability Officer | O-I Glass

Roger Martella

Chief Sustainability Officer | General Electric (GE)

Sahir Zaveri

CEO and Co-Founder | King Children
Forbes 30 under 30

Simon See

Global Head of AI | NVIDIA

Solange Dive-Chamberlain

Chief Operating Officer, Commercial Bank | NatWest

Sunya Norman

VP, ESG Strategy and Engagement | Salesforce

Tara Hemmer

Chief Sustainability Officer | Waste Management (WM)

Todd Olson

CEO | dClimate

Winona Quigley

CEO and Co-Founder | Green Matters Natural Dye Company
Forbes 30 under 30