

An Initiative of



The YGL Circular Economy Taskforce

Inspiring leaders to innovate circular economy business models to drive competitive advantage

The Circular Economy Taskforce is a group of around 50 Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum, who have come together to catalyse transformation towards a circular economy.

The Issue



Today's global production and consumption model has barely changed since the Industrial Revolution, having the overriding goal of quick and cheap product development and delivery. In today's consumer society, more than 90% of products end up as waste within six months of manufacture, and the majority of discarded materials find no further productive use. This wastes both the raw materials in the product as well as the energy embodied in the product during its creation. The historical lock-in of technology, policy and patterns of consumption are driving this "cradle-to-grave" economic model and eroding our ability for continued economic value creation.

Our Vision



"A socially and environmentally prosperous world where profitable businesses provide smart goods and services within the resource limits of the planet". In setting this vision, we recognize that traditional business models have an inherent design problem and need to change; goods can be manufactured in a way where resource inputs are kept in continuous useful cycles with zero waste; the transition should be disruptive in every part of the value chain; and that the transition is already underway but has yet to reach scale.

Our Mission



To inspire leaders to embrace the Circular Economy business philosophy for their organizations and provide tangible examples of successful business models and means of implementation. By advancing this mission the taskforce helps create universal awareness amongst business leaders and other stakeholders of the inherent problem of unsustainable – linear – production methods; the case for and possibility of change; the business opportunities; and means of transitioning to a sustainable global economy.

Taskforce Achievements

Since its inception, the Circular Economy taskforce has made considerable progress towards achieving its vision. It has raised awareness through its publications, speaker series, and sessions at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. This year, the taskforce will also launch The **Circular Economy Awards** ("The Circulars") to raise the profile of companies and individuals that have successfully adopted the circular business philosophy.

With the support of:



Publications



The Taskforce has published four pieces of thought leadership that explore the business models of the circular economy, linking them to business value, and arguing the case for their widespread adoption.

The publications include:

- **Sharing Economy Paper** (June 2013)- Deep dive on the Sharing business model, produced by the Sharing Economy working group.
- **Fast Company Article** (April 2013) – A look at the 5 generic business models of the circular economy
- **Rocking the Cradle** (2012) – Circular Economy thinking needs to be incorporated into core business value creation
- **Davos Position Paper** (2011) – A call to action setting out the arguments to transition to a circular economy.

Speaker Series



In addition to its publications, the Taskforce has hosted a speaker series to raise awareness, disseminate ideas, and share best practices related to the Circular Economy. The series has reached a live global audience of business leaders and recordings are available through YGL YouTube channel. We have heard from 18 speakers to date, including:

Dame Ellen MacArthur

Founder, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

In 2010, she founded the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which has a goal of accelerating the transition to a regenerative, circular economy.

Adam Werbach

Founder, Yerdle

Co-Founder of yerdle, a new social marketplace that makes it easy to share goods with friends.

Bill McDonough

Co-author, Cradle to Cradle

Bill McDonough is an American designer, advisor, author, and thought leader. He is the co-author of Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things and The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability—Designing for Abundance.

Marc Bolland

CEO, Marks & Spencer Group plc

Marc's leadership career has spanned some of the world's best known FMCG brands, including Heineken NV, Manpower Inc and Morrisons.

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting



Davos 2013 saw the Circular Economy come to the centre stage with a joint WEF, YGL and Global Shaper event on circular business models. This private session brought 70 leaders on sustainable growth including CEOs and government ministers together with Forum Young Global Leaders, Forum Foundation Members, Forum Global Growth Company Leaders and Forum Technology Pioneers who were all seeking to innovate business models and scale sustainability – collectively the potential “Circular Economy Champions” of tomorrow.

Three of the exciting outcomes from the session were:

- To connect industry champions willing to commit seriously (“we will go circular by 2020”) with solution providers (chemists, designers, recyclers, etc.)
- To map where revenues are costs are generated in a circular value chain to improve transparency
- To support establishment of infrastructure or ecosystem (“Circular Economy-bay” / material banks / “free-trade-zones” / reverse logistics network / ...)

The Circulars



The Circular Economy Awards will be an annual event, which will recognise individuals and enterprises from commerce, civil society and academia that have made a notable contribution to driving Circular Economy principles through innovation, new business models, and leadership.

Award Categories:

The Award for Circular Economy Leadership



Award to honour an organization or individual who has demonstrated inspirational leadership in the journey towards a circular economy.

The Award for Circular Economy Entrepreneurship



Award to honour an early-stage organization at the vanguard of the circular economy demonstrating innovation and market disruption

The Award for the Circular Economy Pioneer



Award for an established organization demonstrating innovation in their existing business

The Award for Circular Economy Cities / Regions



Award for the city or region which best enables an environment for the circular economy to develop and flourish

Taskforce Co-Chairs

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Managing Director, Strategy & Sustainability APAC, Accenture

David Rosenberg

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, AeroFarms

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