

EDITORIAL by FABRIZIO PERRETTI*

The Nature of Change

Facing change is a constant condition for businesses. Not only because the world around us is constantly changing, and businesses must decide how to respond to new external conditions. But also because we ourselves change, and the inevitable life cycle of individuals modifies businesses internally. New people join the company, others leave, and the people who remain, even simply due to aging, change over time as well. It is this incessant rhythm that determines changes in our society: the constant influx of new individuals and thus new experiences, new ideas, and new perspectives. Businesses change because people change.

Change itself is not up for debate. The real questions are the direction and speed of change. Some entities are sources of change, others follow it, while still others hinder it. It is the combination and interaction of these entities that determine both aspects. Even more important, however, is understanding where we stand: whether to decide to change when no one else has yet, to change after others have already embraced the change, or to decide to continue as before and resist external pressure. As with social movements, in the face of changes in general, we can choose to act and participate (in favor or against) or simply be spectators waiting to understand the outcome, and if necessary, adapt to it.

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There is a change whose direction and speed are unfortunately already known: it is climate change. Global warming is a fact, and we know that only humans, besides being the source of the problem, can be the solution. In this case, there are those who deny it and those who acknowledge it and try to do something substantial. However, there are also those who simply watch it as spectators. Some argue that this passive attitude is the result of feeling paralyzed and impotent. Faced with forces immensely greater than us, which we believe we cannot stop or cannot do so in time, we think that we can only watch and hope to be among those who will somehow escape the most catastrophic consequences.

There is a whole collective imagination that has already accustomed us to this perspective. Over the decades, books, movies, TV series, and video games have familiarized us with apocalyptic scenarios of destruction and the living dead, in which the protagonists try to survive. The state is absent, and violence is the primary form of interaction. In all these portrayals, catastrophe is taken for granted, as is the struggle for survival conducted by individuals or small groups or communities. The focus is not on actions to prevent collapse but on how to survive once it has happened. The implicit invitation is to concentrate efforts on this second goal, when instead we should mobilize for the first.

To counter and slow down climate change, a paradigm shift is necessary. As Rebecca Solnit reminds us,¹ it is necessary not to succumb to pessimism but to cultivate hope. This means recognizing the uncertainty of the future and committing to trying to participate in its creation, knowing that we must act without knowing the outcome of these actions. It is in this sense that playwright Václav Havel speaks of it: “Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.”

In our society, however, this change cannot be left to individual people alone, and businesses should not only react to changes in their customers/consumers or their competitors. This indeed takes too much time, and it is not guaranteed that such stimuli will be sufficient. If businesses change because people change, it is also true that in the capitalist system, society often changes because businesses change. But if hope is “the courage to persevere when winning seems difficult [...] and when success seems inconceivable,” we must ask ourselves whether businesses are actually capable of fulfilling this task. We hope so. But ultimately, we may need to ask ourselves if it is right to hope for it. The crucial point is to understand if, as a society, as individuals, we can entrust our hopes to businesses.

The dossier of this issue is dedicated to the automotive sector, an industry that has profoundly changed our society - the “machine that changed the world”² - and that is now, more than others, facing the challenge of climate change (and more). A challenge that requires a profound change in products, technologies, supply chains, and infrastructure. And it is precisely the central role that this sector has always played - defined by Peter Drucker as “the industry of industries”³ - that makes it equally inter-



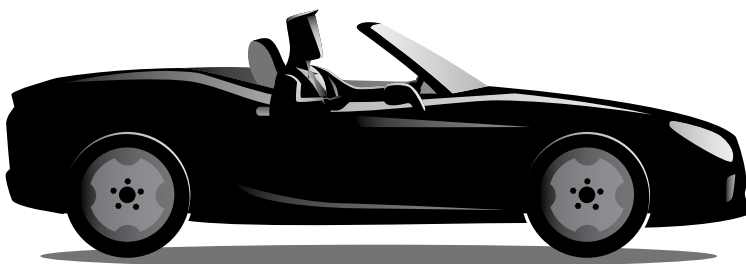
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esting to understand if businesses are truly up to the task and responsibilities required. Connected to climate change, but from the perspective of the conservation and sustainability of natural resources, there is a focus on agribusiness and the resilience of agri-food sector supply chains. The issue is completed with an extensive focus on sports, where society and culture, economy and business intersect, in a relationship that, once again, has undergone profound changes. Enjoy reading!

Continuing on the topic of change, this is my final editorial that you are reading. With this issue, my tenure as the editor-in-chief of the magazine comes to an end. It has been six intense and interesting years, and I hope I have remained true to the goals and direction I set for myself: to analyze and disseminate business culture, avoiding - as Claudio Dematté taught us - celebratory or triumphalist tones, but always with a critical look at the world of business because - as the writer Luciano Bianciardi reminds us in one of his works - “culture has no meaning if it doesn’t help us understand others, assist others, and avoid evil.”⁴

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the School of Business Administration, the colleagues on the Editorial Committee, the publisher Egea, and above all, all the authors of articles and columns who have contributed with their content. Finally, a special thanks to my colleague Zenia Simonella, who has assisted me in editorial decisions and operational activities throughout these years.

It has been a long journey. It has been an intense journey. And like all important journeys, it has been a journey that has changed us. According to Proust, the only true journey is not in seeking new landscapes but in having different eyes to see what surrounds us. We hope that ours has been a “true” journey for our readers as well. We are getting off here, but the magazine continues. *Buon viaggio!*



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¹ R. Solnit, (2023), “Difficult is not the same as impossible,” in R. Solnit, T. Young-Lutunatabua (eds.), Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility, Haymarket Books.

² J.P. Womack, D.T. Jones, T. Roos (1993), La macchina che ha cambiato il mondo, Milan, Rizzoli.

³ P.F. Drucker (1946), The Concept of the Corporation, John Day.

⁴ L. Bianciardi (1964), Il lavoro culturale, Milan, Feltrinelli.