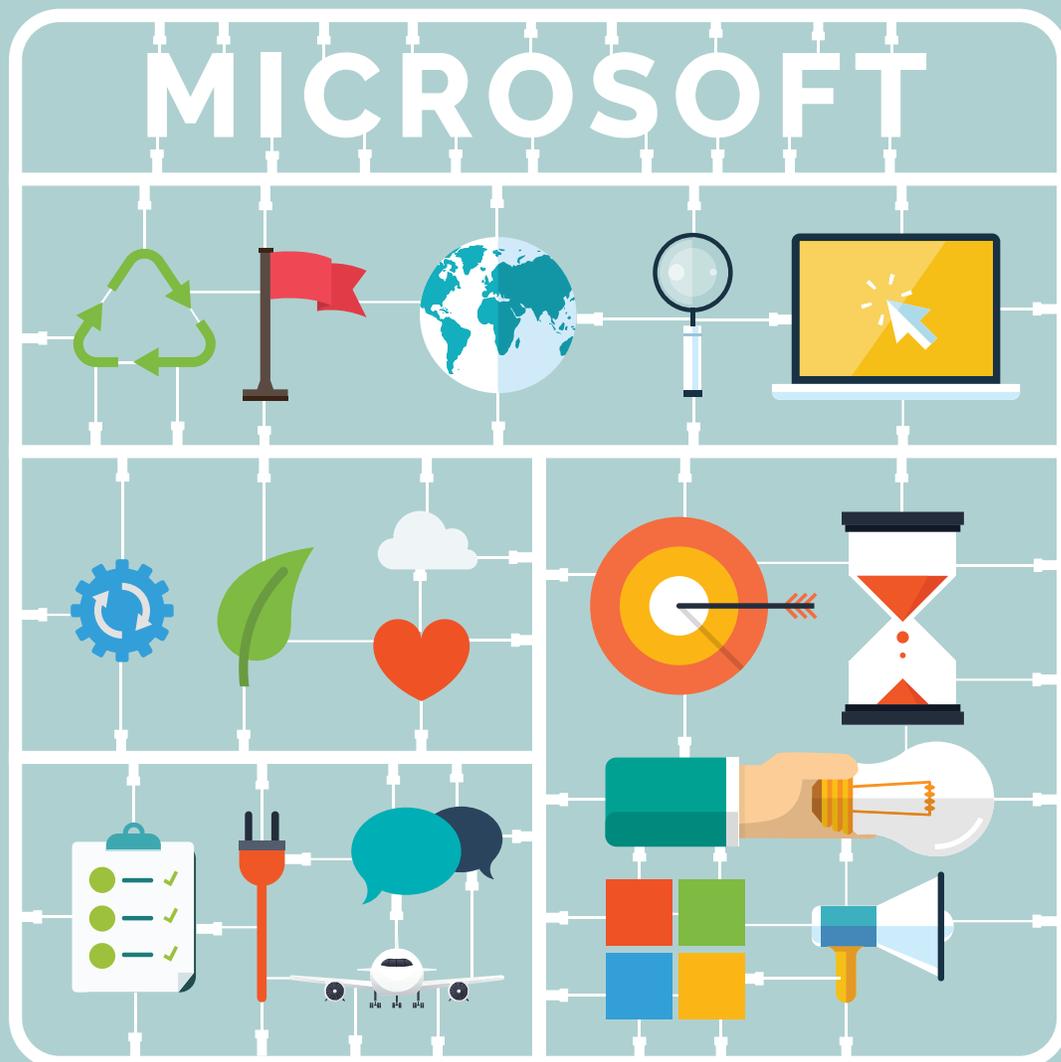


A MODEL OF BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY



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Technology has long driven reductions in our environmental footprint. It has created renewable energy such as wind turbines, hydro and solar power. It is because of technology that we can adapt our lives to encourage a sustainable future.

WHEN WE LOOK AT TECHNOLOGY in relation to business sustainability, it seems apt to discuss one of the largest companies in the world, Microsoft. The technology giant has built its whole business model around Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and a huge part of its efforts go towards leveraging technology to solve some of the world's most urgent environmental issues.

However, this isn't just because Microsoft's founder is a strong environmental advocate. They understand that over the long term, businesses that are socially responsible outperform those that are not. Companies that survive the longest are usually the ones that have realised their ability to give back, as Winston Churchill said: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." Not only does Microsoft consider the environment in the products they produce, but more importantly in the actions they take. In fact, CEO Satya Nadella states in his interview on CNN Money* that it is not the product that drives the business forward, but the culture.

Microsoft's culture centres on and embraces the opportunity to help people and organizations around the world to improve the environment, and has also recognised that its responsibility begins from within. Effective July 2012, they made a company-wide commitment to carbon neutrality. To help them reach this goal, they established an internal carbon fee model that holds their business groups financially responsible for the cost of reducing and compensating for their carbon emissions. With the funds collected through the carbon fee, they have:

- purchased more than 10 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power
- reduced their emissions by 7.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (mtCO₂e)
- had an impact on more than 3.2 million people in emerging nations through carbon offset community projects
- saved more than \$10 million per year

Since Nadella came on board as Microsoft's CEO in 2014, the company has gone from strength to strength. Its stock price has been at its highest ever, it is worth more than \$650 billion and Nadella was named Fortune's 2017 business person of the year. We can gain great insight into his leader-

ship by reading his book 'Hit Refresh'. Nadella states: "At the core, Hit Refresh is about us humans and the unique quality we call empathy, which will become ever more valuable in a world where the torrent of technology will disrupt the status quo like never before".

It is no surprise that Microsoft was named Forbes 2017 2nd best CSR company based on an analysis of 170,000 company ratings. The study compiled by Reputation Institute tracks social responsibility reputations based on consumer' perceptions of company governance, positive influence on society and treatment of employees.

As part of their campaign to have a positive influence on society, Microsoft are actively seeking to mitigate their carbon footprint, water usage, energy purchases and product recycling. They are also encouraging others to do the same and even if this happens to have a positive influence on selling their cloud based products, it is true that data centre energy consumption continues to climb globally so promoting the use of the cloud can only be a good thing. Microsoft President, Brad Smith said, "Across the tech sector we need to recognise that data centres will rank by the middle of the next decade among the large users of electrical power on the planet." Therefore, utilising cloud based technology is a huge step forward and by moving to the cloud, all businesses can minimise the impact their operation has on the environment.

Recently Staples Rodway made a move to cloud-based email and most of our offices are now using Office365. Not only does this allow us to enjoy reduced capital investment at a local level, simpler administration of our data services, automated updates, enhanced security (all benefits associated with the cloud), we can also be comfortable in the knowledge that we are working toward a reduced environmental footprint as we migrate services to shared data centres, supporting and partnering with a company that shares similar sustainability initiatives. It is great knowing that the company we have partnered with takes its responsibility as a good corporate citizen as seriously as we do.

*money.cnn.com/2017/12/11/investing/microsoft-trillion-dollar-market-value
The energy footprint of the IT sector is already estimated to consume approximately 7% of global electricity.