

# Transcending Organizational Models

*Chasing examples and Identifying attributes*

**Independent Study: Strategy 750**

**Final Report: Fall 2021**

**Author: Dimitri E. Alejo Giraldo**

**Supervisor: Felipe Csaszar**

***“Seeing is not believing; believing is seeing”***

- Eric Butterworth

## **1. Abstract**

The most popular and used —unconscious and conscious— business paradigm is that the “only” business of business is business. From Milton Friedman to Adam Smith, capitalism has been built under principles of self-interest, profits maximization, and well-known “recipes for success”. Any act beyond these established and proven business models is simpering folly (Friedman, 1970).

This paradigm has created a lot of pain, tiredness and disbelief, as well as serious economic, social and environmental consequences (Little, 2009; Kristol, 1978). However, due to this harsh, unstoppable and uncaring business mean and purpose certain companies have decided to go beyond this prevalent business model. There are some firms —few but still— that have crystallized the idea of a new way of doing business because they truly believe in a higher paradigm.

For 4 months, during this Academic Research Project, I provided some answers to the question **“What are those companies and attributes that are transcending the ordinary organizational model paradigm towards a more disruptive way and intention of doing business?”**

This written report plus the attached sheet ([also here](#)) presents 26 different companies identified as firms transcending the traditional business boundaries while changing their industry game rules by creating new paradigms and thriving within the old system. These companies were classified under a Holistic Business Framework which mirrors the organization as an organism (self) through 4 layers —called dimensions— (spirit, aura, body and arena) each one with its own components — called attributes—. An analysis and description of the companies and attributes that are disrupting the conventional way we do business are presented and explained.

These and many more examples are exhibiting different characteristics towards a more purposeful and conscious organizational model. There is a change in the business world, a social transformation of capitalism is underway. Certain companies are triggering it, multiple research has been done to understand what is happening and how. **And I'm part of this wave, of this co-creation.**

## **2. Introduction & Motivation**

### The main tenet of Capitalism

For decades, unconsciously and consciously, the business orthodoxy has been predominantly in agreement with Milton Friedman's statement: "there is one and only one social responsibility of business: to conduct the business to increase its profits so long that it stays in the rules of the game" (Friedman, 1970). Capitalism has been mainly built under the theory –again unconsciously– that people do business to pursue their personal self-interest. (Benkler, 2011; Ostrom & Ahn, 2003; Bowles, Edwards, & Roosevelt, 2005). "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest" as the "father and mother" of economics Adam Smith once said (Smith, 1776).

As the "only" business of business is business, this has led to our firms, frameworks and the ecosystem as itself to be largely under the principles of greed, selfishness, coercion, and exploitation, everything to maximize profits (Mackey and Sisodia, 2012). At the same time, this has set a well-known and proven method of "success". Clear KPIs, authority-responsibility relationship, mix of carrots and sticks, well established budgets –and many more– together with management functions such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling, will make the firm accomplish its mission, vision and objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2018). The "recipe for success" is well tested and used by hundreds of "winning" companies such as Amazon, Google, or Walmart (Popiela, 2020). Successful businesses are operated somewhere in the broad range between break-even and absolute-maximum profitability. Therefore, any virtuous act by businesses beyond what the law requires is simpering folly (Friedman, 1970).

### A need for change

This paradigm has created a lot of frustration, pain, tiredness and disbelief. The discontent has been around how capitalism just works for those who are aligned with that harsh, unstoppable and uncaring spirit. Serious unintended consequences around environmental degradation, economic and social inequality, legal and moral corruption, and even calamities and disgraces, have been correlated with the current business model (Little, 2009; Kristol, 1978).

Stakeholders are increasingly demanding more socially aware management. Customers close their wallets to companies that don't comply. Communities make it tougher for companies that place shareholders high above all. Society is requesting for a more consciousness model (Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2014). A need to transcend the current paradigm is not only asked but also required if companies want to survive and humanity wants a long-term lifespan.

The best example of the understanding of this issue, done by companies, was in 2019 with the Business Roundtable Statement on the purpose of a Corporation from top firms such as Apple, Amazon and Walmart (Andersen, 2020). "Rather than focusing on profits for shareholders there is a fundamental commitment to all our stakeholders. Not just shareholders but also employees, suppliers, customers, and communities" (Business Roundtable Statement on the purpose of a Corporation, 2019).

One first good step and intention but still a lot of work to do. Two years after hundreds of CEOs signed this statement there haven't been fundamental shifts and tangible actions. Even more, only one out of the 184 companies have approved this decision with its board of directors. The statement has been largely a rhetorical public relations move rather than the harbinger of meaningful change (Bebchuk & Tallarita, 2020).

### Hope in certain companies

Even though the huge majority of firms haven't realized this problem or several have accepted it but just as an exercise for feeling good rather than in doing good —empty words—, there are some companies —few but still some— that have started to make a true and deep change. Certain organizations have decided to crystallize the idea of a new way of doing business. Evidence of a series of actions proving that is possible to go beyond the traditional company purpose and framework. Firms that are transcending themselves not because it is a defensive move but because they truly believe in a higher paradigm.

Instead of trading off the interests of stakeholders or just prioritizing stockholders, they are actively aligning all stakeholder groups' interests so they can be met simultaneously (Mackey and Sisodia, 2013). Default full transparency on their salaries, price, finance and even roadmaps as a principle of authenticity and honesty (Richman, 2016). Wage gaps no bigger than a 5x CEO-to-Employee pay ratio to create a culture of fairness (Taylor, 2020). Pay what you want pricing practices to seek value-based and customer-first relationships (Reisman, 2016). Commons-based projects relying on intrinsic motivations of peer production without financial compensation to create a common benefit and impact (Benkler, 2006).

These and other examples are exhibiting different changes towards a more purposeful and conscious organizational model. Companies that can do well (e.g. be profitable, sustainable, grow) by doing good (e.g. be fair, transparent, integral) (The Economist, 2019). Some firms, no matter its industry or sector, product or service, for-profit or non-profit, small or big, or anything else, are in a search for a better organizational version (Laloux, 2014). There is a change in the business world, a social transformation of capitalism is underway (Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2014). Certain companies are triggering it, multiple research has been done to understand what is happening and how. **And I'm part of this wave.**

### Unlocking my purpose

In 2011, when I began doing my Business Administration bachelor degree, an indefinable connection with the organizations and management topic emerged. My first interaction with the book "Administración" —Management— of Hitt, Black & Porter, could be described as tapping into part of my truest self. A powerful feeling of fulfillment and bliss covered my soul. A sense of belonging and purpose arised.

Since then, I started not only learning more and more about this beautiful topic but also digging down into what is new, what is different, what is disrupting this paradigm that I was learning about. That passion went so strong that for my dissertation I wrote "**Revaluating Capitalism: Rethinking the Capitalism Organizational Model**" ([LINK](#)). In this research, based on data and evidence —and

my perspective— I presented the roots of capitalism, its advantages and downsides, explained why it was distorted based on the fact that the human being by nature is not selfish but rather benevolent, and finally shared my first business model draft that is seeking to reframe the traditional organizational structure and purpose.

That eagerness just grew even more during the following years when I co-founded and worked on my own startup “Academical” ([LINK](#)) and later while working at Uber in different roles. During those 6 years of work and personal experience, I continue —now experientially— learning about business practices, principles, examples and much more. Every time that I saw something that was disruptive with the traditional business model I rapidly took note and saved it on a doc so I could not only remember but also potentially use it in a future.

To do my MBA at Ross seemed to be that perfect next step to pause and revisit my experience so I could rethink and manifest —again— that deep feeling of continuing building and proposing a new business paradigm. I’m currently doing my second and last year of the MBA and this first Independent Study is part of the research and proposal that I choose to create.

### **3. Goal & Methodology**

#### Setting the intention

In order to continue learning and drafting that next business model, I decided to use the Independent Study Project to work on an academic research that aimed to identify those companies and attributes that are exhibiting different practices and traits compared to the conventional organizational model. Therefore, the goal of the Independent Study for this Fall 2021 was to solve the following question:

**What are those company examples (i.e. firms, experiences or cases) and attributes (i.e. principles, practices, structures or purposes) that are transcending the ordinary organizational model paradigm (i.e. conventional firm mechanisms and objectives) towards a more disruptive way and intention of doing business?**

In other words, the objectives of this Academic Research Project were:

1. Spot and list those real companies experiences or cases that are disrupting the traditional business model
2. Identify and classify the different practices, principles, structures or purposes (i.e. attributes) that are associated with those novel and disruptive ways of doing business
3. Analyze and outline a synopsis of the examples collected and attributes identified and their connections

By doing this I could recognize what are those patterns, characteristics and commonalities among the examples collected and the attributes identified that are unlocking a higher paradigm for business. I was able to learn more about that most innovative —and potentially next— organizational model generation that is tapping the real potential of the businesses.

## The process of creation

In order to achieve this goal, the project was completed in three phases:

### **Phase 1: Exploration**

#### **Goal 1: Collect companies/cases examples**

- Steps:
  - a. Define what is a “disruptive” company and a “novel practice”
  - b. Search those examples by describing its practice and why it is disruptive
- Resources:
  - a. Magazines: [Inc.](#), [Fast Company](#), [Wired](#), [Entrepreneur](#), [TechCrunch](#)
  - b. Institutions: [B Lab](#), [Global Purpose Movement](#), [Economy for the Common Good](#)
  - c. Research: [Harvard Business R.](#), [Business Model Navigator](#), [Corporate Rebels](#)
- Deadline: Week 7th to 8th (developed simultaneously with goal 2)
- Deliverable: List of 30 examples with its own description, analysis and categorization

#### **Goal 2: Identify a framework and list of attributes**

- Steps:
  - a. Search frameworks and attributes proposed by different authors
  - b. Define a list of attributes to categorize the different companies disruptions
- Resources:
  - a. [Reinventing Organizations](#) by Frederic Laloux, 2014
  - b. [Conscious Capitalism Org](#) and [book](#) by John Mackey and Rajendra Sisodia, 2013
  - c. [Conscious Business Center](#) and [book](#) by Fred Kofman, 2013
  - d. [Firms of Endearment](#) by Sisodia, Wolfe and Sheth, 2007
  - e. [Business Model Generation](#) by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, 2010
- Deadline: Week 7th to 8th (developed simultaneously with goal 1)
- Deliverable: Framework and list of attributes with description and categorization

### **Phase 2: Integration**

#### **Goal: Associate the companies/cases with the framework and attributes**

- Steps:
  - a. Classify the examples under the framework
  - b. Link the companies with the attributes
  - c. Identify and explain the patterns and findings among the connections formed
- Timeframe: Week 9th to 11th
- Deliverable: Sheet with the companies, their disruptions and its analysis

### **Phase 3: Manifestation**

#### **Goal: Prepare and write the final report**

- Steps:
  - a. Define the sections of the written report
  - b. Write and articulate the report with its findings, learnings and conclusions
- Timeframe: Week 12th to 13th
- Deliverable: Written report with the academic paper style

To successfully accomplish these three phases, Felipe A. Csaszar, Associate Professor of Strategy, supervised the project as faculty advisor. Recurrent meetings happened as check-points of the progress, deliverables and the learning objectives.

## 4. Delivery & Outcomes

### Chasing examples

In order to spot and list those real cases or companies that are disrupting the traditional business model, it was necessary to define what is a “disrupting company”. A company that is disruptive could be defined as a firm that fulfills the following characteristics (Christensen, 2001; Laloux, 2014; Sisodia, Wolfe & Sheth, 2014):

- **Transcending traditional boundaries:** Against long odds the company challenge the 'status quo', by broking and surpassing the conventional rules or ways of doing something
- **Game changer in its industry:** Compared to its industry peers the company is a pioneer and revolutionary displacing long term established market leaders
- **New paradigm creators:** The existing paradigm is overturned by creating a new market and/or value proposition to better play the game with a new paradigm
- **Thriving within the old system:** Even though the company exhibit differences, it is indeed flourishing and succeeding in the longstanding scheme by being profitable and sustainable

The disruption(s) that the company has and presents could be around: processes, strategies, structure, functions, principles, culture, revenue model, stakeholders interest and/or purpose.

Based on this criteria and the different references, a research of 6 weeks was conducted in order to locate those examples and cases. At the end 26 companies were identified as “disruptive”. More companies could have been recognized and placed but due to time constraint these were the only ones diagnosed.

For each firm spotted a summary of its nature and type of company was pulled and presented so it could be easily categorized within an organization's spectrum: name, industry, type of organization, age and size. Also the impact of the company was described: disruptions (i.e. most important innovations), holistic results (i.e. most likely results due to those disruptions) and financial results (i.e. financial performance). Below the list of the disruptive companies identified.

## Disruptive Companies

Company					Impact		
#	Name	Industry & Sector	Type	Age & Size	Disruptions	Holistic Results	Financial Results
1	Threadless	Retail, e-commerce Apparel/prints	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2000 Employees: 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design: no team, just crowdsource</li> <li>- Decision making: CommunitySource</li> <li>- Incentives: share profits with designers</li> <li>- Marketing: No marketing, just WOM</li> </ul>	<p>3M users</p> <p>2 decades of customers trust</p> <p>130k submitted designs</p> <p>1st disrupted design process</p>	<p>\$85M USD revenue 2020</p> <p>25% profit margins</p>
2	Beyond Meat	Food Meat, plant-based	For-profit Public	Founded: 2009 Employees: 470	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Reduce livestock, rise options</li> <li>- Product: Plant based, Vegan, nonGMO</li> <li>- Innovation: beef, chicken, sausage...</li> </ul>	<p>90% fewer greenhouse gas ems.</p> <p>99% less water vs beef burger</p> <p>Best vegan burger awards</p> <p>118k outlets, 80 countries</p> <p>Highest Brand Award. Millennials</p>	<p>400M revenue 2020</p> <p>40% growth rate per year</p> <p>Best-performing IPO</p>
3	Ecosia	Software Search engine	For-profit Steward-ownership	Founded: 2009 Employees: 111	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Plant trees with search engine</li> <li>- Transparency: Open financial reports</li> <li>- Ownership: No share sold or profit out</li> <li>- Culture: no-meeting days, remote work</li> <li>- Innovation: Hotel search, debit card</li> <li>- Philanthropy: 80%profits to reforestation</li> </ul>	<p>20M users</p> <p>\$3M for 136 million trees planted</p> <p>0.4% European search requests</p> <p>1st B Corporation in Germany</p>	<p>2.5M EUR Sep. revenue</p> <p>80% profits to reforest.</p>
4	Space X	Aerospace Manufacturer and transp.	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2009 Employees: 9.500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Improve access to space</li> <li>- Innovation: Internet, interplanet satellite</li> <li>- Service: Astronaut &amp; citizen spaceflight</li> </ul>	<p>1st launch and reuse spacecraft</p> <p>1st send astronauts &amp; citizens</p> <p>Disrupted the aerospace industry</p> <p>100th rocket launch</p>	<p>\$1.2B USD revenue 2020</p> <p>\$100B valuation</p> <p>45% global market share</p>
5	Wikipedia	Education Free online encyclopedia	Non-profit Foundation	Founded: 2001 Employees: 250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Democratize knowledge</li> <li>- Operations: Content crowdsource</li> <li>- Revenue model: Non-profit, donations</li> <li>- Gov: Community rules and structure</li> </ul>	<p>Largest and most-read encycl.</p> <p>55m articles in 300 languages</p> <p>By-passed investors need</p> <p>42M accounts, 250k volunteers</p>	<p>\$127M in donations 2020</p> <p>\$12M USD surplus 2020</p>
6	Jaipur Rugs	Manufacturing Carpets /Rugs	For-profit Private single owners	Founded: 1978 Employees: 700 + 40K artisans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: No middlemen, fair wages</li> <li>- Recruiting: Purpose no background</li> <li>- Roles: Employ. formulate job description</li> <li>- Training: Self learning &amp; prof. programs</li> </ul>	<p>700 employees</p> <p>40k+ artisans, 600 rural villages</p> <p>Exam. Bottom Pyramid Business</p>	<p>\$23M USD revenue 2019</p> <p>35% gross margin</p>
7	Headsets	E-commerce Wireless office headsets	For-profit Private single owner	Founded: 1997 Employees: 250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WorkStyle: Special trainings +benefits</li> <li>- Pricing: Pay what you want products</li> <li>- Support: No scripts, genuine talks</li> </ul>	<p>15% turnover vs. 50% industry</p> <p>100 Best companies to work</p> <p>PWYW: 90% paid full price</p> <p>Best Customer Service Award</p>	<p>\$3M USD revenue 2000</p> <p>300% few years growth</p>

8	Panera	Restaurant Cafe Bakery	For-profit Private held JAB Holding	Founded: 1980 Employees: 140.000	- Purpose: "100% clean" food - Pricing: Few stores Pay what you want - Operations: Tech implementations	No. 1 by Health magazine PWYW: 80% normal revenue \$100M food donated annually 40M on loyalty program	\$6B USD revenue 2019 4% annual growth 9% net profit margin
9	Humble Bundle	Entertainment Games marketplace	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2010 Employees: 60	- Marketplace: developers + customers - Pricing: Pay what you want - Revenue: User choose where \$ go to - Philanthropy: Charity payment option	12M users, thousands develop. 47M bundles sold \$200M raised for 34K charities	\$44M USD revenue 2019 \$200M total for charity
10	Dollar Shave Club	Fashion & Beauty Razors	For-profit Private held Unilever	Founded: 2012 Employees: 900	- Product: Affordable solution problem - ValueChain: No middleman (D2C) - Revenue Model: Subscription - Marketing: 1 ad reached 20M views	48% online razor market 4M subscribers 1st D2C revolutioner 12K orders in 2 days Won multiple innovative awards	80x growth in 4 years \$240M revenue 2016 \$1B acquisition value
11	Patagonia	Retail Outdoor apparel	For-profit Private single owner	Founded: 1974 Employees: 2.300	- Purpose: products and environment - Supply chain: integrity and fair trade - Product: Sust. lifecycle + material - Marketing: <1% of revenue spend - Culture: No traditional + high perks - Work Space: Energy and enviro. efficient - Philanthropy: 1% revenue to environ.	CSR worldwide leader 415K repairs +150 tons recycled 87% products recycled materials 5% turnover - best places to work 100% renewable electricity use 140M cash donations	1B revenue per year 52% gross margins 8% operating margin 6% annual growth
12	Radiohead	Entertainment Music Rock Band	For-profit Private + Warner Music rights	Founded: 1985 Members: <10	- Pricing: Pay what you want Rainbows - Operations: Unconventional sounds - Environmental activism	High customers' trust + loyalty PWYW: Unaffected sales Hit albums, one of best bands	\$5M USD net worth Revenue \$2M USD year
13	Whole Foods (initial times)	Grocery store Natural and organic food store	For-profit Private held Amazon	Founded: 1980 Employees: 91.000	- Purpose: natural food mainstream - Operation: Animal, ingredient norms - Philanthropy: donates 5% profits	Top 20 Most Admired Company \$29M of donations per year Top most reputable CSR in US	\$16B USD revenue 2017 33% gross margin \$14B market value 2017
14	Buurtzorg	Healthcare Nursing /Care	Non-profit Private	Founded: 2006 Employees: 10.000	- Purpose: Humanity over bureaucracy - Marketing: No marketing, just WOM - Team: No leader; self-management - Decision: No consensus, facilitator - Comm: Nonviolent Communication - Learning: Internal social network	Highest healthcare satisf. rates 50% less care hrs vs. other orgs 40% savings health care system 10k nurses, 850 self-manage team Model scaled to 24 countries	427M € revenue 2019 15% growth yearly
15	Linux Foundation	Software Development	Non-profit Foundation	Founded: 1991 Employees: 150	- Purpose: Open source for tech develop. - Open-source: Free right use & distribute - CrowdSource: Any can participate - Governance: Open Gov. Network - Innovation: 100+ software projects	700K contributing developers 19K contributing companies \$54B total shared value created \$5B value projects estimated	\$125M revenue in 2019 \$13M of net income 17% revenue year growth



16	Buffer	Software Manage social networks	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2010 Employees: 85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Culture: Positivity, gratitude, reflection</li> <li>- Transparency: Roadmap, finance, price</li> <li>- Salary: Self-set salary &amp; transp.</li> <li>- Working life: Remote, 4-day workweek</li> <li>- Team: Task forces no teams &amp; manager</li> <li>- Open Source: Code free &amp; no restrictive</li> <li>- Profits: Part shared all team members</li> <li>- Philant: 20% team bonus to charitable</li> </ul>	4.5M users & 70K customers 2M social media followers 85 remote work in 15 countries \$800K profit shared to employees \$200k profit shared to charity Almost all equal among genders Awards Practices & Workplace	\$20M annual revenue 15%-20% annual growth
17	Oatly	Food Dairy oat products	For-profit Public	Founded: 1994 Employees: 790	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Product: Oat: kosher, vegan, gluten free</li> <li>- Marketing: Aggressive, funny, direct</li> <li>- Law: Established new regulations</li> </ul>	Top sold and innovative products Lawsuits, petitions European Parl. High consumers loyalty Positive environmental impact	\$421M revenue 2020 14% annual grow \$10B market value
18	Grameen Bank	Banking Microfinance	For-profit Private 90% owned by rural poor	Founded: 1983 Employees: 790	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Help poorest with microcredits</li> <li>- Social Capital: self-organized borrowers</li> <li>- Loans: Small, training, meeting, women</li> <li>- Prosocial behavior: Trust, empowerm.</li> <li>- Ownership: 90% of borrowers owns it</li> <li>- Services: Comms, education, internet..</li> </ul>	\$20B USD in loans, \$19B repaid 200M people served 50M risen out acute poverty 97% recovery rate 43 countries replicated program Only business won Nobel Prize	\$204M revenue 2016 \$7.4B enterprise worth
19	Be my Eyes	Healthcare Services	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2012 Employees: 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Accessibility blind + low vision</li> <li>- Marketplace blind and volunteers</li> <li>- Prosocial behavior: No \$, intrinsic motiv</li> </ul>	5M volunteers, 350K blind 150 countries Top best social impact app	\$5.3M of funding 4 top paying top partners
20	Bitcoin	Banking Cryptocurrency	Network Nobody owns it	Founded: 2012 Employees: 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Decentralized digital currency</li> <li>- Peer-to-peer network without authority</li> <li>- Ownership: Nobody but everyone</li> <li>- Open source license with contributors</li> </ul>	100M owners (1% of population) 270K daily transactions Created new market (blockchain) Most lucrative investment	CAGR of 11% Project 10x grow 7years
21	Uber (initial times)	Tech & Transportation Ride-hailing app	For-profit Public	Founded: 2009 Employees: 27.000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketplace drivers and riders</li> <li>- Innovations: Pool, Self Driving, Elevate</li> <li>- Laws: Established new regulations</li> <li>- Pricing: Dynamic real time</li> </ul>	93M users and 4M drivers Disrupted markets/countries	\$13B USD revenue 2019 Around 8% year growth \$82B market value 2019
22	Nubank	Banking Fintech	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 2013 Employees: 3.700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Democratize financial service</li> <li>- Product: Credit card with app, no fee</li> <li>- Support: No limited office hours</li> <li>- Culture: Learn, diversity, break beliefs</li> </ul>	50M active customers 110% CAGR customer rise \$2B customers fees saved Highest financial NPS in the world Disrupted banking concept	\$30B valuation \$1B USD revenue 2020 48% gross margin Customer LTV 30X
23	Happy	Consulting & Education	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 1990 Employees: 840	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Create trust &amp; empower orgs</li> <li>- Decision: CEO don't decide, framework</li> <li>- Leader: Multiplier and Mentor system</li> <li>- Roles: Team descrip. emplo choose role</li> <li>- Work Life: Results not time spend</li> <li>- Salary: Annually by each person</li> <li>- Feelings: Exercises to express feelings</li> </ul>	4.6/5 independ. service rating Awards Great Place to Work	£165k profit 2018 24% year sales increase

24	Morning Star	Food Tomato Products	For-profit Private single owner	Founded: 1970 Employees: 400	- Principles: Cascaded missions - Role: No job descrip, personal mission - Leader: No manager, self-management - Problem Solving: Commu. & Agreement - Salaries: Self-initiated, calibrated	400 employees Global leader tomato processing Employees autonomy & empow. Supply 40% U.S. production	\$700M revenue annually
25	Netflix	Entertainment Video Stream	For-profit Public	Founded: 1997 Employees: 12.100	- Innovations: From DVD to video stream - Operations: 1st produce own movies - Rules: Avoid rules, context no control - Decision-making: freedom & responsab.	Disrupted entertainment industry 112 Emmy nominations 40% is in-house content 214M subscribers 190 countries 8th most trusted brand globally	\$24.9B revenue 2020 24% revenue rise \$4.5B operating profit 17% net margin \$289B valuation #1 decade stock 3,693%
26	Ikea	Retail Furniture	For-profit Private with investors	Founded: 1943 Employees: 225.000	- Product: Cheap, easy & beauty furniture - Eco-friendly: Sustainable materials - Innovation: Augmented-reality app - Philanthropy: Climate programs	Largest furniture retailer 422 stores in 50 countries 3K new products every year €200M year for philanthropy	\$45B USD revenue 2021 6% global sales growth 18% gross margin 7% operation margin

### Identifying a framework and attributes

During the process of spotting the companies and their disruptions a framework was needed in order to classify, identify and analyze the attributes (i.e. principles, practices, structures or purposes) that are transcending the ordinary organizational model paradigm. Multiple frameworks proposed by different authors were checked and tested, specifically the followings:

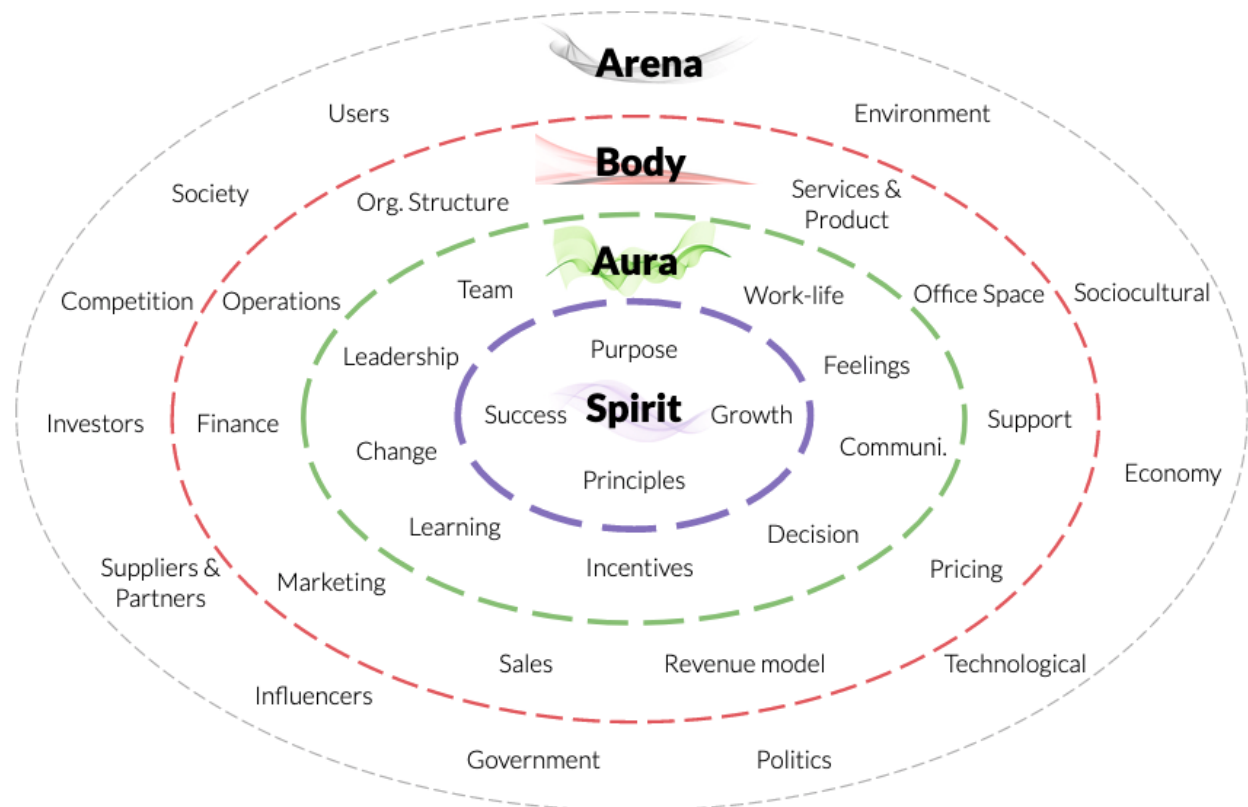
- **Business Model Canvas:** Strategic management template that helps to develop new business models or document existing ones by describing the rationale of how different firm's elements create, deliver and capture value (Osterwalder, 2005).
- **Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model:** Change management process model that examines the performance and operations of an organization based on the idea that a company will only be successful if its components are aligned and work together as a system (Nadler & Tushman, 1980).
- **Porter's Value Chain:** Business model that describes the full range of activities needed to create a product or service by outlining the primary and support activities that determine costs and affect profits (Porter, 2008).
- **Galbraith Star Model:** Framework of five areas that connected and aligned successfully shape the decisions and behaviors of an organization (Galbraith, 1977).

Even though these frameworks are well recognized and used, none of them were helpful for the task of describing the different disruptions of a company. The first reason is because they structure an organization in a silos or linear dependency manner. In other words, some present the business elements as blocks without connections, and in case of connections, the firm's elements and their dependencies are shown in a transactional, linear direction. Second, the frameworks are performance and process oriented. As the models' goal is towards analyzing and improving a company's execution and logic the elements presented are only around the company's tangible aspects such as functions, actions, strategies and practices.

## Conceiving a holistic business framework

The frameworks shown fall short to describe and observe a company as a whole, in a holistic approach. Organizations are much more than a plain and squared model of lines and blocks. They are not a cold and lifeless item. They are an organism, a “self” that has conceived a purpose, personality, behaviors and outside relationships as a projection of the other organisms (human-beings) that are manifesting that reality. They are a dynamic aspect of our lives, they think, feel and act, not because they can do it by themselves, but rather because they broadcast and expand our thoughts, feelings and actions.

As there wasn't any business framework that could help to carry out the task of properly break down and assess the company in an integrative and comprehensive method, therefore I decided to conceive one.



This business framework looks to represent the organization as an organism, in a self-based way. It unifies and expresses the wholeness of an organization by showing all the holistic aspects that constitute an individual. This integrity is shown in 4 layers –called dimensions– (spirit, aura, body and arena) that starts from the most inside level (spirit) and ends with the most outside one (arena). For each dimension there are multiple components –called attributes– that represent those features or characteristics inherent to that dimension. Those attributes could be functions, processes, strategies, norms, meanings, actors and much more that the organization owns or is related with. The 4 dimensions and its attributes with their meanings are:

- **Spirit:** The most inner layer that represents the **WHY** of a firm. It is the company's essence, the most pure substance, its truest self. It possesses the purpose of the company: why it exists, what is its meaning, what is its north-start. It has the principles, not the rules but the values: what are the premises that grounds the company, what is the compass to navigate, which are the foundations to guide the journey. Also it considers what is the significance of success: what is designated as achievement, when we say it is successful, what is our driver. And finally it includes the meaning of growth: what progress means, what is the metric of advancement, what is the end –if there is one–.
- **Aura:** The second inner layer that represents the **HOW** of a firm. It is the company's personality. It considers the intangible forms and means the company has to accomplish its why. Those unconscious norms the company unconsciously set to “be” –including what we know as “company culture”–. Is everything regarding: how we team and work together, how we lead and define “leadership”, how we make decisions, how we communicate among ourselves, how we embrace change, how we learn, how we incentivize us, how we embrace feelings and how is work-life.
- **Body:** The third inner layer or the second outer layer that represents the **WHAT** of a firm. It is the company's actions. It explains what are those functions and processes the company has in order to achieve its why and how. These are the tangible strategies and business units that can be structured, measured and executed. It considers: what are the services and products served, what is the organizational structure, what are the operations, what is the marketing and sales strategy, what is the finance frame used, what is the revenue and pricing model, what are the support processes, what is the office space.
- **Arena:** The most outer layer that represents the **WHERE** of a firm. It is the company's ecosystem. It constitutes the forces where it operates its “what” and the stakeholders it influences and is related with. It includes the connections and relations the company has with different actors: users, society, competition, investors, suppliers, partners, influencers, and government. Also it considers the external forces the company depends on, affects and is affected by: politics, technological, economy, sociocultural and environment.

As this framework is designed on a self-based principle it gives more completeness, color, detail and dynamism to the analysis and understanding of an organization. Also, as it is structured on layers it helps to observe an organization from different perspectives and comprehend its interdependencies and waves effects.

At the same time, beyond helping to examine and break down an organization, it is potentially useful for designing, structuring and/or modifying a company from inside-out. As the nucleus of the organization is the Spirit, it's Why, and the outer dimensions are wave effects of this core, a coherent, purposeful, harmonious and conscious organization could be created. In order words, the characteristics of the framework help to design, create, heal and transform organizations towards a more elevated level of business model –a coherent, purposeful, harmonious and conscious organization–.

## Connecting the Disruptive Companies with the Holistic Business Framework

Having these two elements –Disruptive companies list and Holistic Business Framework– that were developed in parallel and not in series, an analysis of the type of disruptions and its attributes that are transcending the ordinary organizational model paradigm was accomplished. The procedure was to match each of the specific disruptions of a company to one or more of the attributes and dimensions of the Holistic Business Framework.

For example, the first disruption identified at Threadless “Design: no team, just crowdsource”, that means that the company doesn’t have any in house design team but rather users that create, select and buy designs, was identified as a disruption on the following dimensions and attributes: Spirit (purpose, principle), Aura (team, decisions), Body (org. structure, operations and sales), Arena (suppliers, user, competitors).

This procedure was done for every company and its disruptions. To easily classify, see and analyze this matching, a grid sheet was built by having the organizations and their disruptions as rows and all the different dimensions and attributes as columns. The final sheet is attached ([and also here](#)). As seen, there is an (X) marking the match between (i) the company’s disruption and (ii) the attributes and dimensions. When a disruption is related to a specific attribute it means that the disruption either has come from that attribute or it is impacting it. A disruption can apply to more than one attribute or dimension as shown in the previous example.

After this detailed step a higher level of analysis was performed. Now for each company as overall (not per disruption) a rating of its relationship and influence per dimension was established. This characterization was done by classifying the company into 3 levels (Low, Medium or High) for each dimension. If the company scored low in a dimension, it means that it had a small relationship/ impact with that dimension, medium means a moderate influence and high a strong one.

To illustrate, Threadless as a company as overall was classified as Medium on Spirit, High on Aura, High on Body and Medium on Arena. Meaning that the entire disruptions of this company were classified as having a strong relationships/impact on the Aura and Body dimensions but a modest one for the Spirit and Arena dimensions. This higher level of analysis was also done for all the companies, finishing on the following result.

Companies and ratings per dimensions

Company				Type of Disruption			
#	Name	Industry & Sector	Type	Spirit	Aura	Body	Arena
1	Threadless	Retail, e-commerce Apparel/prints	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	High	High	Medium
2	Beyond Meat	Food Meat, plant-based	For-profit Public	High	Low	Low	High
3	Ecosia	Software Search engine	For-profit Steward-ownership	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
4	Space X	Aerospace Manufacturer and transp.	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	Low	Medium	High
5	Wikipedia	Education Free online encyclopedia	Non-profit Foundation	High	Medium	High	High
6	Jaipur Rugs	Manufacturing Carpets /Rugs	For-profit Private single owners	High	Medium	Low	Medium
7	Headsets	E-commerce Wireless office headsets	For-profit Private single owner	Low	Medium	Low	Low
8	Panera	Restaurant Cafe Bakery	For-profit Private held JAB Holding	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
9	Humble Bundle	Entertainment Games marketplace	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	Low	High	Medium
10	Dollar Shave Club	Fashion & Beauty Razors	For-profit Private held Unilever	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
11	Patagonia	Retail Outdoor apparel	For-profit Private single owner	High	Medium	High	High
12	Radiohead	Entertainment Music Rock Band	For-profit Private + Warner Music rights	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
13	Whole Foods (initial times)	Grocery store Natural and organic food store	For-profit Private held Amazon	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
14	Buurtzorg	Healthcare Nursing /Care	Non-profit Private	High	High	Medium	Medium

15	Linux Foundation	Software Development	Non-profit Foundation	High	Medium	High	High
16	Buffer	Software Manage social networks	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	High	High	Medium
17	Oatly	Food Dairy oat products	For-profit Public	High	Medium	Medium	High
18	Grameen Bank	Banking Microfinance	For-profit Private 90% rural poor	High	Low	High	High
19	Be my Eyes	Healthcare Services	For-profit Private with investors	High	Low	Medium	Medium
20	Bitcoin	Banking Cryptocurrency	Network Nobody owns it	High	Medium	High	High
21	Uber (initial times)	Tech & Transportation Ride-hailing app	For-profit Public	Low	Low	Medium	High
22	Nubank	Banking Fintech	For-profit Private with investors	High	Medium	Medium	High
23	Happy	Consulting & Education	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	High	Low	Low
24	Morning Star	Food Tomato Products	For-profit Private single owner	Medium	High	Low	Low
25	Netflix	Entertainment Video Stream	For-profit Public	Low	Medium	Medium	High
26	Ikea	Retail Furniture	For-profit Private with investors	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium

## 5. Analysis & Findings

After the whole process of identifying the companies, structuring the framework and associating the disruptions with certain attributes, an analysis of the results was performed.

### General Findings

The first general finding is that a disruptive company is disruptive no matter certain organizational variables or business characteristics. In other words, a company can accomplish the criteria of (1) Transcending traditional boundaries, (2) Game changer in its industry, (3) New paradigm creators and (4) Thriving within the old system, independent of:

- **Industry/sector:** From software, banking and fashion to retail, healthcare and education.
- **Size:** From small (e.g. 10 employees for RadioHead) to large (e.g. 225K employees for Ikea)
- **Legal structure:** From for-profit and nonprofit to Foundations and Networks
- **Country:** From USA and Germany to India and Brazil. Even no country (e.g. Bitcoin)
- **Year established:** From old (e.g. 1943 for Ikea) to new ones (e.g. 2015 for Be my Eyes)

This finding has been already identified and discussed by different authors and the literature (Sisodia, Wolfe & Sheth, 2014; Laloux, 2014; Kofman, 2006). In the end, the nature of a disruptive business model does not rely so much on the type of organization —even though it might help—, but rather on the principles and traits that are decided to be set and work on.

The second finding, which was unexpected, was that a disruptive company is by nature borned to revolutionize. In other words, a company that is label “disruptive” has the following characteristics:

- **Serial Impact:** A single disruption affects numerous company’s attributes and dimensions
- **Multiple Innovations:** Not just one disruption but rather multiple (3 to 5 in average)
- **Challenge the status quo:** Society thought it was impossible, but they proved the opposite

In other words, a company is disruptive not because it had a single innovation on a unique dimension, but rather because it had several disruptions that impacted multiple dimensions and attributes that changed diverse paradigms. This finding is comprehensive due to two reasons. First, if a disrupter (CEO or leader of a company) is already testing and using an innovative attribute then it is very likely that this person is open-minded, risk seeker and willing to test new disruptions. Second, when one element of the business model is changed, organically and automatically other business model elements are affected, creating the need to make more company transformations.

### Findings per Dimensions for companies that ranked High

For each of the dimensions of the Holistic Business Framework (i.e. Arena, Body, Aura and Spirit), the companies were bundled under the level of relationship/impact they were classified to. To illustrate, for the Arena dimension, those companies that ranked Low were clustered in one group, then the ones that ranked Medium in another group and finally the companies that ranked High under a third and final group. After, for each of the dimensions, an analysis of the attributes and characteristics of the companies that ranked High was made in order to identify the patterns and aspects that they have in common. Some findings do not apply to all the companies but rather to certain firms, for that reason and for an easy understanding some examples were provided. The clusters and findings, per dimension, are the following.



## Arena



### Society + SocioCultural

- Democratization of resources and/or access of exclusive & private goods/services  
E.g. Wikipedia: knowledge, SpaceX: spaceflight, NuBank and Grameen: financial access
- Society synergies are harnessed by connecting needs, resources and practices  
E.g. Uber: peer drivers and riders, Linux and Wikipedia: contributors to build platform
- Sustainable (long term) practices and efficient process/systems  
E.g. Bitcoin: decentralized currency, Patagonia: eco-friendly products, Uber: transportation
- People's life quality improvement, society welfare increase and/or society gaps close  
E.g. Beyond Meat & Oatly: reduce livestock, NuBank and Grameen: financial opportunities

### Users

- Different way to think, feel and act compared to the status quo  
E.g. Patagonia: repair & recycle program, Bitcoin: digital currency, Oatly: drink oat milk
- User is closer to the value creation and decision making  
E.g. Wikipedia: content creation, Uber: driving for others, Patagonia: design and materials
- Open and/or free access to see, use, edit and build  
E.g. Linux: operating systems, Bitcoin: buy, sell and mine, Wikipedia: knowledge

### Government + Politics

- Need to set new legislations and regulations  
E.g. Grameen: loans, SpaceX: space travel, Uber: transportation, Oatly: dairy regulations
- Hazy or ambiguous legal definition of the organization type  
E.g. Bitcoin: currency+bank, Uber: transportation+tech, Oatly: milk+oat

### Economy

- New markets are opened and/or markets are more efficient  
E.g. Netflix: video streaming, Uber: transportation, Grameen: loans for poors
- Monopolies or oligopolies are broke up  
E.g. Uber: taxi monopolies, Nubank: corporate banks, Oatly: dairy companies

### **Technology**

- Technology is leveraged to build, connect, optimize and/or provide the solution  
E.g. Beyond Meat: vegan protein, Netflix: streaming, Wikipedia and Linux: create content

### **Competitors**

- Business model differs to its competitors making their peers look outdated  
E.g. Wikipedia: encyclopedia, NuBank: financial options, Netflix: video platform, Oatly: oat milk
- Way to play the industry game and rules is changed  
E.g. SpaceX: spaceflight, Uber: ridesharing, Beyond Meat: vegan protein, Bitcoin: currency

### **Suppliers / Partners**

- Supply is crowdsourced and/or volunteering input is used  
E.g. Linux and Wikipedia: contributors to build platform, Uber: peer drivers and riders
- Fair trade and sustainable practices to develop and offer better supply conditions  
E.g. Patagonia: supply fair trade, Oatly: oat producers agreements

### **Investors**

- Need for investors is by-passed by using donations, bootstrapping or no money  
E.g. Wikipedia and Linux: donations, Grameen: bootstrapping, Bitcoin: no money

## Body



### Org. Structure + Ownership

- Organizational structure is based on the community/network and/or users  
E.g. Threadless: users are the designers, Wikipedia: contributors, Bitcoin: users
- Ownership is unclear and/or is owned by the society/network  
E.g. Bitcoin: owned by no one and/or society, Grameen: owned by rural poor borrowers

### Operations

- Crowdsourcing plays a significant role in the operations  
E.g. Humble Bundle: users submit games, Linux: people build code, Bitcoin: users mine
- Platforms-based to connect the supply and demand  
E.g. Threadless: designers with buyers, Wikipedia: contributors with readers

### Marketing & Sales

- No marketing, rather rely on word of mouth, free PR and product/service quality  
E.g. Threadless, Wikipedia, Linux, Bitcoin, Grameen: no marketing just WOM and quality

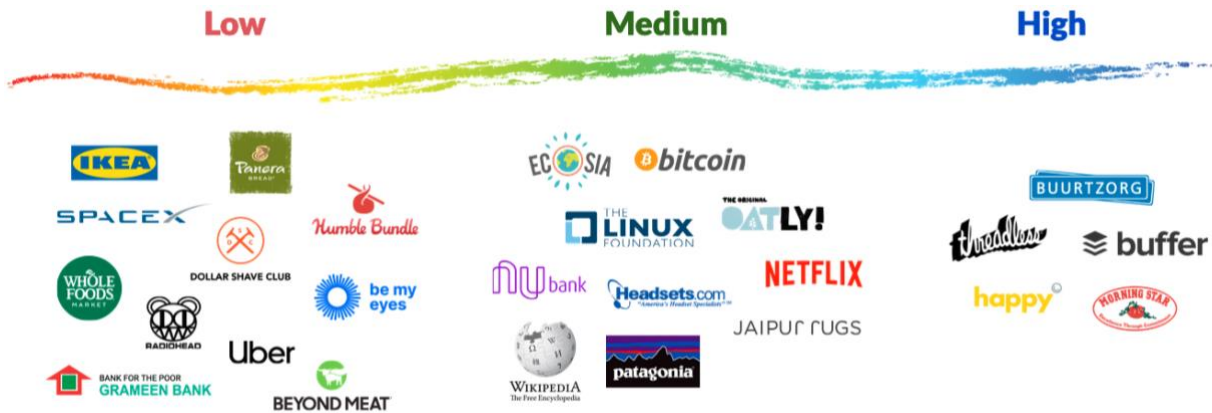
### Pricing

- Pay what you want pricing strategies and/or free  
E.g. Humble Bundle: PWYW, Wikipedia: free + donations, Linux: free

### Transparency

- Full transparency on salaries, roadmap, price, decisions, revenue, finance, fundraising  
E.g. Buffer: full transparency company, Bitcoin: transactions and owners, Patagonia: supply

# Aura



## Leadership

- No leadership/manager, just facilitators, provide context, frameworks and/or north star  
E.g. Netflix: context, Buurtzorg: facilitator, Buffer: principles, Happy: mentor & frameworks

## Teams & Roles

- No individual roles and/or descriptions, just task forces and team's tasks to complete  
E.g. Buurtzorg and Morning Star: self-management teams, Happy: employee chooses tasks
- Cascaded and aligned company-employee mission  
E.g. Morning Star: cascaded missions, Buurtzorg: team's mission

## Incentives

- Salaries are self-set and calibrated/checked by the committee/peers  
E.g. Buffer, Happy and Morning Star: Self-set salary approved by panel
- Intrinsic motivators rather than extrinsic  
E.g. Jaipur Rugs: company mission, Threadless: design passion, Buurtzorg: patients wellbeing

## Learning

- Inner-self and professional learning programs  
E.g. Jaipur Rugs: self programs, Buffer: choose your education, Buurtzorg: team's programs
- Mentors & Multipliers programs and systems  
E.g. Happy: all employees on M&M program, Buurtzorg: facilitators and team's mentorship

## Decision Making

- No majority or consensus, rather other methods to achieve no major objections  
E.g. Buurtzorg: facilitator with Q&As, Happy: framework & metrics, Netflix: indep. decision

## Communication & Feeling

- Non violent communication, authenticity and vulnerability to allow inner truth  
E.g. Morning Star: direct and agreements, Buurtzorg: nonviolent comm, Happy: feelings

## Work-life

- Remote work and/or days with remote work, no meetings days, 4-days work week  
E.g. Ecosia: 2-days no meeting, Happy: no office hours, Buffer: 4 days week, remote work
- Multiple perks and freedom to define agenda and vacations  
E.g. Buffer: minimum vacation, Headsets: sabbatical all paid, Patagonia: subsidies for hybrid car

# Spirit



## Purpose

- Socio-economic model, balance between impact and profits  
E.g. Jaipur Rugs: artisans & business, Beyond Meat: vegan options and revenue
- Money as a tool (mean) to achieve higher goal but not the goal  
E.g. Ecosia: profits to plant trees, Be my Eyes: sponsor to help blind, Patagonia: enviro. develop.
- Democratize goods/services, create accessibility or improve life quality  
E.g. Wikipedia: knowledge, Bitcoin: decentralized currency, Grameen: bank service access
- Philanthropy actions, donations and/or charity programs  
E.g. Patagonia: 1% revenue to env., Ecosia: 80% profits to plant, Buffer: 20% bonus to charity

## Success

- Humanity and/or environmental results over revenue or profits  
E.g. Ecosia: # trees planted, Wikipedia: # content and users, Be my Eyes: # blinds helped
- Change or improve people's lives  
E.g. Grammen: risen out poverty, Beyond Meat: food consump., Buurtzorg: patients wellbeing
- Disruption of status quo and creation of new paradigms  
E.g. Buurtzorg: humanity over bureaucracy, Bitcoin: disrupt financial market

## Growth

- Increase or depth of impact on people and/or environment  
E.g. Jaipur Rugs: artisans growth, Grammen: people out of poverty, Ecosia: trees planted
- Break conventional rules and/or offer new opportunities  
E.g. NuBank: people with bank service, Oatly: new regulations and markets
- Learning curve and evolution of the company  
E.g. Patagonia: clothing program, Grameen: opportunities access, Wikipedia: business model

## Principles

- Values and principles as foundations and northstars  
E.g. Buffer: main principles, Jaipur Rugs: 5 foundations, Patagonia: values, Oatly: drivers
- Be a fulfilling workplace so employees can thrive  
E.g. Oatly: creativity and fun, Jaipur Rugs: employees opportunities, Buurtzorg: empowerment
- Sustainable and eco-friendly practices  
E.g. Ecosia: eco-friendly building, Patagonia: sustainable products, Beyond Meat: plant based

## 6. Conclusions & Reflection

### The research in a nutshell

The learning objectives of the Academic Research Project were achieved successfully and the initial question was answered throughout the project “What are those company examples and attributes that are transcending the ordinary organizational model paradigm towards a more disruptive way and intention of doing business?”.

26 different companies were identified as disruptive companies that share the characteristics of (1) transcending traditional boundaries, (2) game changers in its industry, (3) new paradigm creators and (4) thriving within the old system. A summary of company type, disruptions, holistic results and financial results were pulled and presented for each firm so they could be easily identified and categorized. The first general finding is that a company is disruptive no matter the type of organization (e.g. industry, size, legal structure, country or age) –even though it might help– but rather on the principles and traits that it sets and works on. The second, is that every company has several disruptions –not just one– that impact multiple dimensions and attributes.

Multiple frameworks were checked and tested in order to describe the companies and to classify and analyze their innovations (e.g. Business Model Canvas, Nadler-Tushman Congruence Model, Porter’s Value Chain, Galbraith Star Model). However, they fell short to describe and observe a company as a whole, in a holistic approach. Therefore, a Holistic Business Framework was conceived which mirrors the organization as an organism, in a self-based way. It unifies and expresses the wholeness of an organization through 4 layers –called dimensions– (Spirit, Aura, Body and Arena) and multiple components for each dimension –called attributes– that can represent functions, processes, strategies, norms, meanings, actors or more, that the organization owns or is related with. This new framework helped to give more completeness, color, detail and dynamism to the analysis and understanding of the organizations examined.

With these two elements –Disruptive companies list and Holistic Business Framework– a match of the specific disruptions of a company to one or more of the attributes and dimensions of the framework was developed. The final grid sheet is attached ([and also here](#)). Then, for each company as overall (not per disruption) a rating of its relationship and influence per dimension was established into 3 levels (Low, Medium or High). After, for each of the dimensions, an analysis of the attributes and characteristics of the companies that ranked High was made in order to identify the patterns and aspects that they have in common. Main and specific findings for each dimension with some examples were provided in order to understand how the disruptive companies are transcending the way we currently do and see business.

## Creating Who I Am

The book “Administración” of Hitt, Black & Porter, my dissertation “Revaluating Capitalism: Rethinking the Capitalism Organizational Model”, my 6 years of work experience on my own company and at Uber, my current MBA at Ross, and now this Research Project “Chasing examples and Identifying attributes” have been the dots on my journey to unlock and create my highest self.

Next semester I'll continue creating who I Am by working on another Independent Study which has the goal to precisely manifest that business model that will help to transcend the current capitalism—at least from my perspective—. Based on the Holistic Business Framework, I'll express and detail the (i) foundations per dimension (ii) options and examples for each attribute (iii) interdependencies and factors to consider and (iv) process and steps to follow, necessary to create a *disruptive, conscious, holistic, harmonious* and *united* business model—Self-based—.

This is just half of my expression, part of my experimentation and the beginning of my integration. There is more that I've seen. There is an existence that I've been. There is a Self and Creation that I've connected to. There is a reality that I already created, that I am helping to co-create and that I will re-create. For that reason, I decide—again—to continue being Who I Am.

***“You never change things by fighting the existing reality.  
To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”***

- Richard Buckminster Fuller

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