



The Business Case for Social Sustainability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2023, **NTT commissioned a study** to examine the relationship between various aspects of social sustainability and corporate performance, alongside key economic indicators. The 250 firms surveyed as part of the analysis have a combined revenue of **\$2.2 trillion**. These companies varied in terms of their progress on the social sustainability maturity curve: **22% were classified as beginners, 56% as intermediates, and 22% as leaders.**

By constructing an economic model, we estimated the influence of each firm's sustainability initiatives on their revenue and productivity.

3 Key findings uncovered in the report

As a result of their social sustainability initiatives, the 250 firms surveyed **unlocked a total of more than \$177 billion in additional revenue** (an average \$710 million per firm). If all the companies were to become sustainability leaders, **they could generate another \$22.5 billion in revenue** in total.



Raises productivity

The leading companies in social sustainability reported a **11.4% increase** in productivity



Increases revenue

Companies who invest the most in social sustainability report a **9.6% increase** in revenue



Boosts GDP

Social sustainability initiatives unlocked nearly **\$675 billion in GDP** across those included in the survey

Businesses that invest the most in social sustainability report an **increase in revenue of up to 9.6%** and an **increase in employee productivity ranging from 9.4% to 11.4%**.

+9.6%

\$115 billion in GDP

If all firms in these five industries were to become leaders in social sustainability, it could **unlock an additional \$115 billion in GDP** across the eight countries included in the analysis.

\$675 billion

We estimate **that social sustainability initiatives have unlocked nearly \$675 billion** in value across all firms surveyed in the eight countries and five industries.



\$78.0 billion
in US

At the country level if all firms in the five industries were to become leaders the impacts would range from **\$4.5 billion in Mexico to \$78 billion in the United States in terms of raised GDP.**



\$4.5 billion
in Mexico

On average, firms have unlocked **\$710 million** in revenue as a result of their social sustainability initiatives.

Industry analysis

Which digital technologies will your company start to use / continue with in the next two years?



Financial Services

72% of all financial services organizations surveyed will invest in **data security and digital chatbots** as customers turn away from instore banking to online channels



Automotive / Manufacturing

78% of all companies surveyed in automotive & manufacturing will invest in **data security** and privacy as autonomous driving makes security more critical than ever



Healthcare

Among healthcare institutions surveyed **68%** listed **cloud adoption as** a key technology enabler for achieving improved efficiency and data sharing



Telecoms

Customer focus is the priority for telecoms companies surveyed with **70%** listing investment in **digital chatbots** and **customer interaction tools** as key

40%



More than 40% of the global companies surveyed stated that social **sustainability is a top priority for both the C-suite and the Board of Directors.**

Achieving leadership status in social sustainability can significantly boost productivity. Social sustainability initiatives have a positive impact on labor productivity, with beginners achieving a **9.4% increase, intermediates 9.7%, and leaders an impressive 11.4% improvement.**

The business case for social sustainability leadership is becoming increasingly clear. Leaders can drive top-line and bottom-line growth of their businesses, resulting in a stronger reputation, and improved shareholder value.

This paper explores how forward-thinking enterprises establish shared social and business values, providing a valuable roadmap for companies aiming to become social sustainability leaders. It describes the benefits, challenges, and unique best practices of sustainability leaders while emphasizing the role of digital innovation in maximizing social sustainability outcomes.

The study was completed by ThoughtLab who surveyed 250 senior executives during the month of February 2023. The surveys were focused on companies of \$1 billion - \$100 billion plus in revenue, located in one of the following eight regions (U.S., Canada, Mexico, Germany, UK, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore) and five industries (Manufacturing, Telecoms & Tech, Retail & CPG, Financial Services, Healthcare & Life Sciences).