THE ECONOMIC TIMES

SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONS

2023

From the Editor's Desk

"Businesses have a profound opportunity to help build a more sustainable future, one born of our common concern for the planet we share." - ***Tim Cook, CEO of Apple***

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be seen as climate math equations that can help accelerate the transition towards reaching net zero. Today, taking bold and proactive steps towards achieving net-zero opportunities will determine future outcomes and the characteristics of tomorrow's leaders. However, in recent times, societies, businesses, and even the planet itself have faced disruptions more frequently and severely than ever before since the beginning of the 21st century. Each disruption has different effects, although many of them have overlapping consequences that may last for a while and are not fully understood when they first occur. Society has developed sophisticated methods of regulating disruptions, using institutions to maintain stability in the face of extraordinary catastrophes.

Environmental, social, and governance concerns are finally turning into commercial objectives across industries, and they are far from being a luxury or a cutting-edge management innovation notion. Sustainable and inclusive strategies are no longer difficult to implement on a growth path as businesses set realistic goals for a sustainable future. For India in particular, this will be the first of many crucial decades.

India is well-positioned to become a powerful economic growth engine thanks to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the third-largest startup environment, and industries like manufacturing, digital, and IT services that are on the verge of becoming world leaders. Along with fulfilling its goals, the country must simultaneously cope with the pandemic's effects and the critical challenge of employing the 90 million people who will join the workforce by 2030.

The following pages are an ode to these business organizations who answered the clarion call to action for setting sail for sustainability. These businesses skilfully altered their operating procedures and used the SDGs as the cornerstone for a sustainable future.

In the pages that follow, resilient businesses exhibited their business decisions while recognizing the effects of their contribution to the global green economy. These inspiring companies emphasized their net zero objectives, carbon footprint reduction plans, and internal ESG evolution.

The Economic Times Sustainable Organisations 2023 Coffee Table Book contains basic tenets supported by ET-Edge to embed sustainability across the organisation on the social, cultural, strategic, and operational levels. After reading this book, we genuinely hope that you will have more prospects to adopt sustainable practices and discover solutions to your challenges towards reaching net zero.

Yours sincerely,
Editor-in-Chief
ET Edge

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About The Economic Times Sustainable Organisations 2023

The term 'sustainability' is derived from the Latin word 'sustinere', which means 'to hold'. The concept of sustainability has existed since ancient times, as people have always been concerned about how long their environment can support them. Over time, the term has mainly been used in the United Nations to discuss environmental issues and has gradually made its way to corporate boardrooms.

The idea has evolved beyond being primarily concerned with environmental sustainability and conserving the environment to become one of corporate survival. One of the key components of global sustainability, and one of the three dimensions of sustainability, is economic development.

For the world to decarbonize, every sector of the economy must adapt, upending pre-existing markets and fostering the emergence of new ones. Organizations and economies need growth to exist and prosper, and growth in the future must be both inclusive and sustainable. Even though getting there will be difficult, it is doable. Firms are doing their best trying to find the quickest path to accomplish this. To find solutions, organisations will need to innovate and collaborate. This will require accelerating growth through improvements in technology and capabilities, fostering innovation without harming the environment, and advancing people in equitable, inclusive ways. India declared its intent to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070 at COP26, marking a crucial turning point in the fight against climate change, per recent statistics on McKinsey. Going by pre-COVID figures, India was the third-largest emitter globally while having low per-person emissions (1.8 tonnes CO2), emitting a net 2.9 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO2e) on an annual basis, according to a statistic in 2019. Key sectors such as power, steel, automotive, aviation, cement, and agriculture—are responsible for the majority (about 70%) of these emissions.

Throughout the chapters of The Economic Times Sustainable Organisations 2023 Coffee Table Book which is a part of a series, we bring actual stories of firms that have reorganized their business model towards achieving net zero. We have gathered unique stories as they chart their course towards a sustainable future. Each firm shares the opportunities and challenges while adopting green strategies towards sustainability with visible results.

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UFLEX
'A part of your daily life'

BEST PAPER AWARD

In recognition of his work and presentation at the
Davos RECYCLE'95 Forum
May 15-19, 1995
Davos, Switzerland

on the subject of:

"Recycling of Mixed Plastic Waste Comprising of Laminated Films of Metalized PET / LDPE / BOPP and Printed with Inks"

Mr. Vipin Mital
FLEX INDUSTRIES LTD.
INDIA

has been awarded with the BEST PAPER HONORS in the section on Plastic Films and Source Reduction

For the Organizing Committee:

Mr. Horst Maack, Chairman

NET ZERO Goals

At UFlex, sustainability is embedded in our corporate strategy and all our business decisions are aligned with our sustainability vision and goals. We aim to be a net-zero company by 2035 and we have been at the forefront of sustainability since the early 1990s. A few noteworthy achievements (FY23) include:

- A 35.41% increase in recycled or reused raw materials/inputs in our production processes as compared to the previous year.
- A reduction of 55.95% in scope 1 emissions from the previous year.
- A reduction of 14.99% in total waste generated from the previous year.
- An allocation of INR 5 crores p.a. for the next 10 years toward R&D for improving the environmental and social impacts of our products.

STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE Net Zero

We are driven by our purpose to shift to a circular plastics economy by 'keeping plastic in the economy and out of the environment'. One of our focus areas is to substitute virgin plastic with recycled content in our packaging applications. We recycle post-consumer MLP mixed plastic waste into granules, upcycle recycled resins into PCR PET films and create sustainable packaging solutions to reduce the use of virgin plastic at source. Our portfolio includes low carbon footprint films, mono-PE-based structures that are easy to recycle, proposed biodegradable polymers and water-based inks.

INNOVATIONS IMPLEMENTED/ CONTRIBUTED to Achieving Net Zero

Our sustainability strategy focuses on 4 R's: Reduce: We offer PCR films with up to 100% post-consumer recycled PET content and a 75% reduction in carbon footprint. Recycle: We recycle close to 30,000 MT of plastic waste in Poland, Mexico, and India. Our goal is to reach 1,00,000 MT of recycling by building additional global recycling capacities. Reuse: We convert plastic waste material into liquid fuel, hydrocarbon gas, and carbon black. Return: We are at an advanced stage of developing enzyme-based biodegradable polymers that will convert into biomass in the soil under ambient conditions.

MAJOR CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING Net Zero

Most plastics are made from fossil fuels, which is a major cause of increasing the carbon footprint in the environment. This, if not properly managed at the end of life, can accumulate in the environment and contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. The industry needs to find a way to use agro-based plastics, biodegradable or compostable plastics and/or develop solutions wherein the usage of fossil plastics remains restricted in a narrow band. Till we successfully make this transition, we will continue to face challenges in reducing our carbon footprint.

RECOMMENDED SHIFTS TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY MEETS ITS net zero goals

Hundreds of companies have made commitments to reach net zero by 2050 and although decarbonization is possible, businesses need help from consumers to achieve it. A few recommendations include:

1. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to fuel circularity by obligating brand owners & producers to collect, recycle, use recycled content, and reuse wherever possible.
2. Building traceability into supply chains
3. Guiding citizens, legislators, businesses, and consumers in their policy or purchasing decisions 4. Move in the direction of using more biobased plastics rather than fossil raw materials.


Mr. Ashok Chaturvedi, CMD, UFlex Limited, releases a report on Recyclability of Multi-Layer mixed Plastics (MLP)

MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN the last five years

We were the first company, back in 1994, to establish a recycling plant where multi-layer (MLP) plastics, considered difficult to recycle, could be treated and were recognized by the "Davos Recycling Forum" and the Government of India for our pioneering efforts in this direction. In FY23, we have been conferred several awards and accolades including:

1. Outstanding Work in Circularity Award by the Indian Circularity Forum
2. Best Employer Brand Award by the World HRD Forum
3. Best Organization in HR Practices by the Top Rankers Management Club
4. Silver Award for Technical Innovation by the Flexible Packaging Association, USA
5. FICCI Chemicals & Petrochemicals Award for Efficiency in Water Use

MESSAGE from **LEADERSHIP**

At UFlex, our sustainability vision includes adopting sustainable business practices that deliver on our 'people', 'planet', and 'profit' goals while promoting a world of coexistence. We are committed to becoming net zero by 2035 or earlier.

ASHOK CHATURVEDI
Chairman and Managing Director
UFlex Limited

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INNOVATIONS IMPLEMENTED/ CONTRIBUTED to Achieving Net Zero

Flex Films offers an entire range of post-consumer grade PCR films having up to 100% post-consumer recycled PET content under the brand name Asclepius™ . This film's technology is a family of plain, treated, coated, high barrier, and heat-sealable BOPET films based on 100% PCR polymer content. With Flex's pioneering technology, an extremely high level of PCR content in the film is being met to accelerate the greening demand of the global economy. Over the years, we have been conferred several global industry awards by the Flexible Packaging Association, USA, and AIMCAL for technical excellence and sustainability.

MAJOR CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING Net Zero

There's a lot of talk and discussion on plastic recycling and the world is still debating a practical solution to address the plastic crisis. The biggest challenge to solving the plastic crisis is capital allocation. The stakeholders are waiting to see whether that comes via the government and regulations or if consumers, through their buying patterns and habits, force the industry to change and spend that capital.

NET ZERO Goals

At Flex Films, we have a global sustainability program called 'Project Plastic Fix', the most holistic solution to resolve the Stock & Flow issue of plastics. UFlex's unique method of reusing any kind of multi-layer plastic or laminate waste and making new products (10,000+ unique products) ensures that waste exits the environment & re-enters people's lives. The second method, Pyrolysis, converts plastic waste back into fuel that can be incinerated to produce energy. UFlex employs an anaerobic system that does not produce any emissions. The third method is Asclepius films composed of 100% PCR content that have similar properties as their standard fossil fuel-based substrate twins. These films create an endless loop of polymer that is used and reused to make the same new product every time.

STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE Net Zero

Our strategy to achieve net zero is based on four principles

1. REDUCE | ASCLEPIUS™: Up to 100% post-consumer recycled content (PCR) BOPET barrier film to reduce the use of virgin plastic at source and replace it with recycled content.
2. RECYCLE | MLP WASTE INTO GRANULES - Flex established recycling units in its plants three decades ago that convert multi-layer mixed plastic waste into granules that are used to manufacture industrial & household products.
3. REUSE | PYROLYSIS PLANT: Converting its waste plastic into fuel
4. RETURN | 100% super earth friendly biodegradable packaging that breaks down under ambient conditions.

RECOMMENDED SHIFTS TO ENSURE THE INDUSTRY MEETS ITS net zero goals

Despite most of the technology that exists today, the real issue of the problem of the 'flow' of polymers that are spit out by large scale manufacturers is that global waste collection and sorting systems are the exact opposite of their manufacturing brethren. This leads to the inevitable issue that some plastic waste will end up on the curbs of city streets, parks and mountain reserves, and as marine waste. The only way to change this is by changing human habits and behaviors, but that is an insurmountable task. Thus, Flex went in the opposite direction to solve this flow issue. We made our solution human-proof: The world's first fully biodegradable laminate that converts into biomass upon degradation.

MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN the last five years

We were the first company, back in 1994, to establish recycling plants where multi-layer (MLP) plastics, considered difficult to recycle, could be treated and were recognized by the "Davos Recycling Forum" and the Government of India for our pioneering efforts in this direction. UFlex won the Packaging Gateway Excellence Awards 2020 in 'Environmental Impact' for driving the circular economy with its path-breaking technology to recycle MLP packaging waste homogeneously. In FY23, we have been conferred several awards including the Outstanding Work in Circularity Award and the FPA silver award.

FLEX

MESSAGE from LEADERSHIP

We at Flex believe that plastic is a problem that can be solved and as a plastic manufacturer, we are trying to get to the goal of creating a world where you don't see plastic where it isn't supposed to be. Project Plastic Fix advocates the message that the problem of plastic is fixable and achievable.

ANANTSHREE CHATURVEDI
Vice Chairman and CEO
Flex Films International