

template for designing triple bottom line business models

<p>key partners key partners: who do you work with to deliver your value proposition? do not forget to list your partners in your social impact mission – e.g., charities, community groups, and so on ecological impact mission – e.g., eco-certification agencies, closed-loop partners, reforestation initiatives</p>	<p>key activities key activities: what do you do yourself to deliver your customer value proposition?</p>	<p>customer value proposition value proposition: what jobs do you perform for your customers? what pains do you alleviate? what gains do you contribute? also list what makes your value proposition distinctive relative to others! see link for further detail</p>	<p>customer relationships what kind of relationship do you maintain with your different customers? see link for examples</p>	<p>customer groups which customer groups do you service? note that multi-sided business models may have many different customers! also distinguish between 'users' (e.g., facebook users – who would also be their key resource) and paying customers (e.g., advertisers)</p>
	<p>key resources what resources you draw on to deliver your value proposition? consider physical, human, and financial resources. specifically consider your intellectual assets: ip plus intellectual capital!</p>	<p>social impact mission describe here your social impact mission. how do you demonstrate good citizenship? how do you contribute to your local community? how do you improve people's lives and the general societal well-being beyond your core business mission?</p>	<p>customer channels how do you reach your customers? how do you integrate with their routines? also describe your multi-channel strategy, if any!</p>	
<p>ecosystem services here list the natural ecosystem services your operation uses: biomass, minerals, water, air, soil, forests, non-renewable energy. we are interested in your environmental footprint</p>	<p>governance how do you ensure you do not lose sight on your social and environmental missions? list the governance structures and procedures that ensure that these impact propositions are incorporated in your corporate decision making!</p>	<p>ecological impact mission how are you going to deliver a positive impact on your natural environment? e.g., how do you minimise your ecosystem footprint, deliver a specific ecosystem impact beyond your business mission (e.g., reforestation projects), or, for example, eliminate resource-consuming activities from your business model? how do you make your business and the natural environment more ecologically sustainable?</p>	<p>community relationships what relationships do you maintain with the local communities where you are present? how do you engage these communities?</p>	<p>community stakeholders who are the beneficiaries of your social impact mission? note that your business may have direct beneficiaries (those directly targeted) and secondary ones (those experiencing secondary benefits such as greater prosperity, lower unemployment, reduced crime rate)</p>
			<p>social channels what are the specific channels and activities through which you deliver on your social impact mission?</p>	
<p>cost structure what is the cost structure of your business? indicate both direct costs generated by your internal activities as well as costs generated through outsourcing, license agreements, and similar. also elaborate costs associated with your social and ecological impact missions</p>	<p>surplus streams and mission integration does your business generate specific surpluses to support your social and ecological impact missions? these might be financial (e.g., donations by customers, share of profit) or material (e.g., collected materials for recycling). also describe here how your business, social, and ecological missions integrate and reinforce one another!</p>	<p>ecosystem channels what are the specific channels and mechanisms through which you deliver your impact on the natural ecosystem? these might be internal (e.g., recycling, repairing, rematerialisation) and external (e.g., participation in specific ecosystem initiatives)</p>		
		<p>ecosystem beneficiaries who are your ecosystem beneficiaries? these may be living things (inhabitants of the ecosystem) and non-living ones (ecosystem resources such as air, water, minerals)</p>		
<p>revenue streams how does your business generate revenue? indicate both primary sources of revenue (from primary interactions within the business model) and secondary sources (e.g., monetisation of data resources and additional ip generated by the primary interactions)</p>				



why this canvas?

Today, managers are increasingly aware that making money at any cost is not the sole purpose of business. Yes, you have to make a profit to ensure long-term financial viability, but you have to make that profit *responsibly*, without causing undue harm to the natural environment or society. Far too many businesses today generate profit at the expense of the natural environment or society, for example, by over-exploiting natural resources, by not cleaning up their waste, or by employing business practices that undermine local communities. Although such businesses may make money for their owners, the overall balance will be negative if you factor in the harm caused to the environment and society. That kind of 'profit' is not cool nor honorable.

Although managers increasingly recognise the need for triple bottom line thinking when managing their businesses, far too often the social and ecological missions are treated as a profit drag – as something that is accomplished at the expense of the primary business mission. This is reflected in, e.g., the widespread budgeting of Corporate Social Responsibility activities as marketing expenditure. We still lack frameworks to think through the social and ecological missions of the business as a core, integral element of the mainstream operations and not as an afterthought, an add-on distraction that is primarily undertaken for PR purposes.

I designed the Triple Bottom Line Business Canvas to address this gap. Business model design provides the most effective way to achieve triple bottom line sustainability because it builds those missions into the business' activity system, customer and community relationships, and its value and revenue logics. Triple bottom line business model design is the art of translating the three value missions of your business into a coherent, logical sequence of organisational design decisions: it is the art of designing the organisational vehicle that actualises and delivers the three missions.

The key purpose of the Triple Bottom Line Business Canvas is to support the definition and operationalisation of the social and ecological impact missions of your business right at the beginning, thus ensuring that these missions are built straight into the activity system of your business. By building the social and ecological impact missions into your business model from the outset, you will be better able to build synergies with your primary business mission, such that the three become mutually reinforcing. There is no law of nature stating that your social and ecological missions will always have to act as profit drags. Used correctly, the Triple Bottom Line Business Canvas should also help you discover how you can harness your social and ecological missions to *drive* your profits.

You do not have to become an environmental crusader or a social campaigner in order to advance a social or ecological mission. The goals can be more modest: simply defining a clear objective and actions to minimise your CO2 footprint will do, as will the articulation of good citizenship principles that the business will adhere to, combined with governance mechanisms that ensure their consistent application. The key is building these principles into the business model from the outset for seamless integration and maximal synergies.

Much of your ecological impact mission is likely to be operationalised in the way you configure your physical activities, such as manufacturing, logistics, energy use, and so on. These may involve, e.g., the application of closed-loop principles in your supply chain design and the adoption of 'R' principles: Renewable use, Recycling, Regeneration, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, and Rematerialisation. You can also incorporate ecological missions into your revenue and cost models by, e.g., committing 1% of your profits for donations to environmental causes.

Much of your social impact mission is likely to operate in the social communities where your business is present. Possible models could include, e.g., 'buy one, give one' models, inclusive sourcing of labour and materials, and other constructive forms of participation in the local communities.

The Triple Bottom Line Business Canvas builds on Strategyzer AG's [business model canvas template](#) and extends it to support the systematic incorporation of social and environmental impact missions into the firm's business model. Also Anthony Upward's [academic work](#) and his [Flourishing Business Canvas](#) provided inspiration.

For those boxes that are compatible with Strategyzer's canvas, links are provided back to Strategyzer's support page for helpful elaborations and explanations. For the boxes I have added, explanations have been inserted straight into the box.

