

Practitioner Tips
and Tools

Regenerative Business by Design

Jodie Goulden
Bernard Mohr

March 12, 2025

Welcome

Jodie... From Corporate Life to Independent Consultant

In my work I'm a witness to the incredible potential within organizations - filled with smart, talented people with a shared motivation to make a positive impact. Frustratingly, this potential sometimes collides with organizational barriers. That's where organization design comes in ...

Bernard...40 years consulting with focus on the "inside" of organizations. Then 2 years ago ..

...what might we accomplish by shifting our focus from "winning in the world we have" to one of "winning by creating a Better World"?



Context For Our Work as OD Practitioners

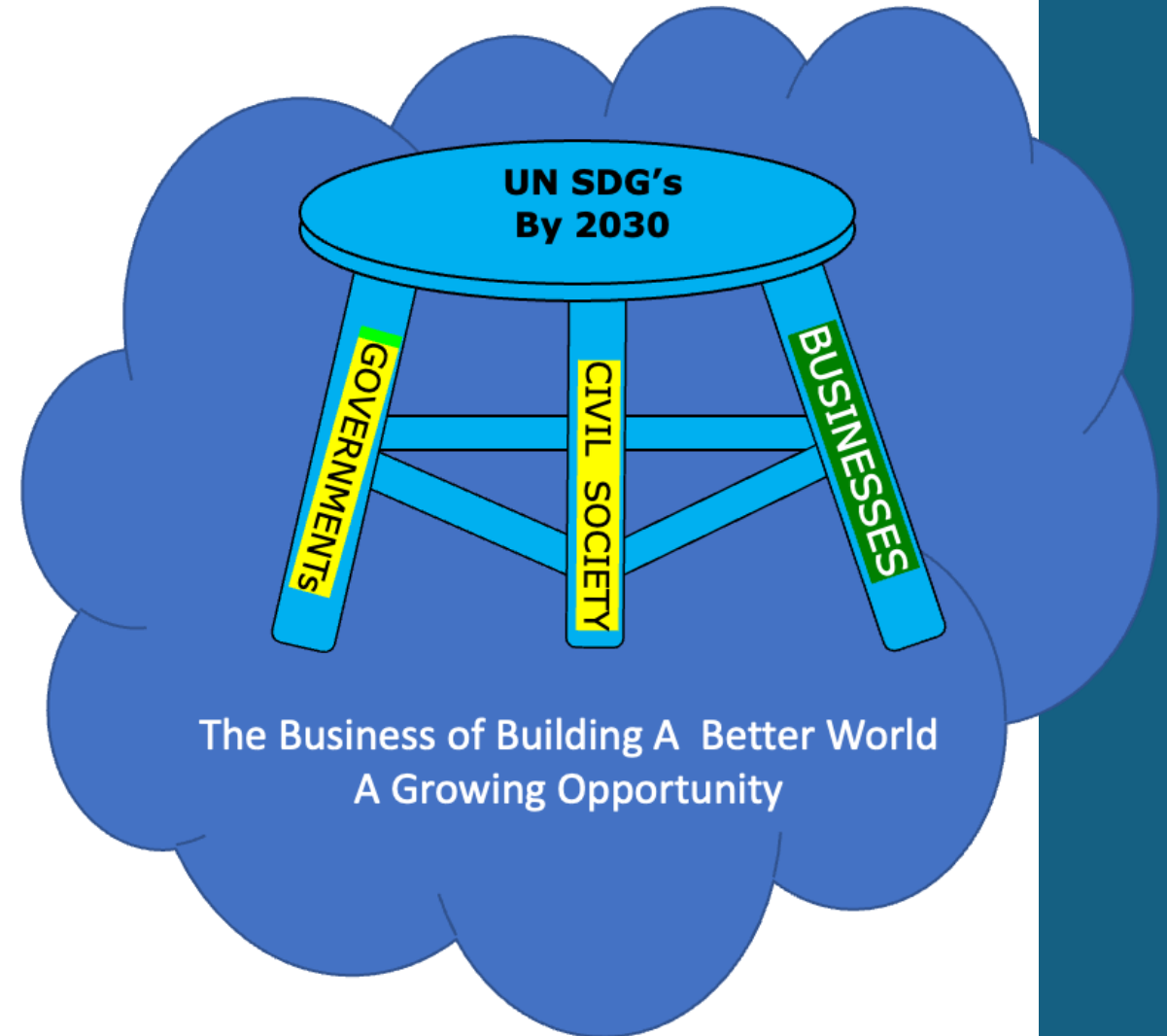
→2023 Progress Report on UN SDG's

→Newly shifting narratives on :

- ◆Climate Response
- ◆Social Good (DEI, SS, Medicare, Medicaid)
- ◆Free markets (Tariffs)
- ◆Immigration (Lost Resources)
- ◆Traditional alliances (Europe,Canada, Mexico)
- ◆Foreign Aid up in the air

→BUT,

- ◆ Business has history of Regeneration
- ◆ Consumers, investors still value ESG
- ◆ Business opportunities at intersection of Purpose AND Profit becoming more visible



What is “Regenerative Business” ?

- **Observation** that **both the enterprise and society benefit** when a business shifts
 - **from** *net zero* impact (harm reduction)
 - **to** *net positive* impact
 - through active repair, restoration, revitalization of the communities and environment the business operates within
 - in ways that also create value for the enterprise
- An example
- **Regenerative Business involves**
 - ◆ Developing **profitable, new services/products** that address social or environmental problems in its ecosystem
 - ◆ Changing **internal or external value chain operations** to increase efficiencies in ways that address social or environmental problems in its ecosystem

Org Design Implications

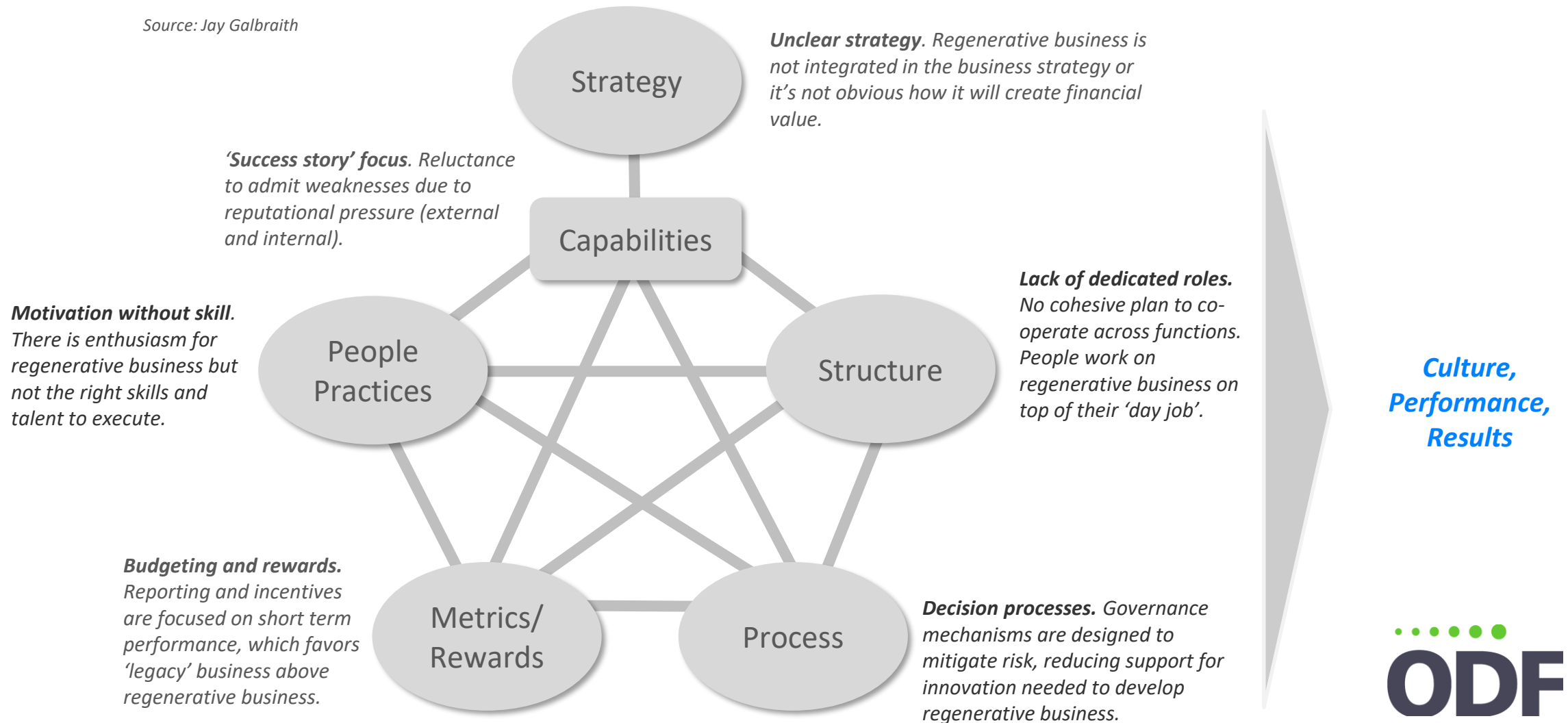
- strategic clarity for building competitive advantage through Profit from Purpose
- sharper execution - structures, systems and processes aligned for opportunity seeking, ecosystem engagement, innovation, testing-learning-scaling

Common Barriers to Succeeding as a Regenerative Business

- **Unclear strategy.** Regenerative business is not integrated in the business strategy or it's not obvious how it will create financial value.
- **Lack of dedicated roles.** No cohesive plan to co-operate across functions. People work on regenerative business on top of their 'day job'.
- **'Success story' focus.** Reluctance to admit weaknesses due to reputational pressure (external and internal).
- **Decision processes.** Governance mechanisms are designed to mitigate risk, reducing support for innovation needed to develop regenerative business.
- **Budgeting and rewards.** Reporting and incentives are focused on short term performance, which favors 'legacy' business above regenerative business.
- **Missing competencies.** There is enthusiasm for regenerative business but not the right skills and talent to execute.

Using STAR Model to Diagnose the Situation

Source: Jay Galbraith



Poll: Which of these Resonates most with your Experience?

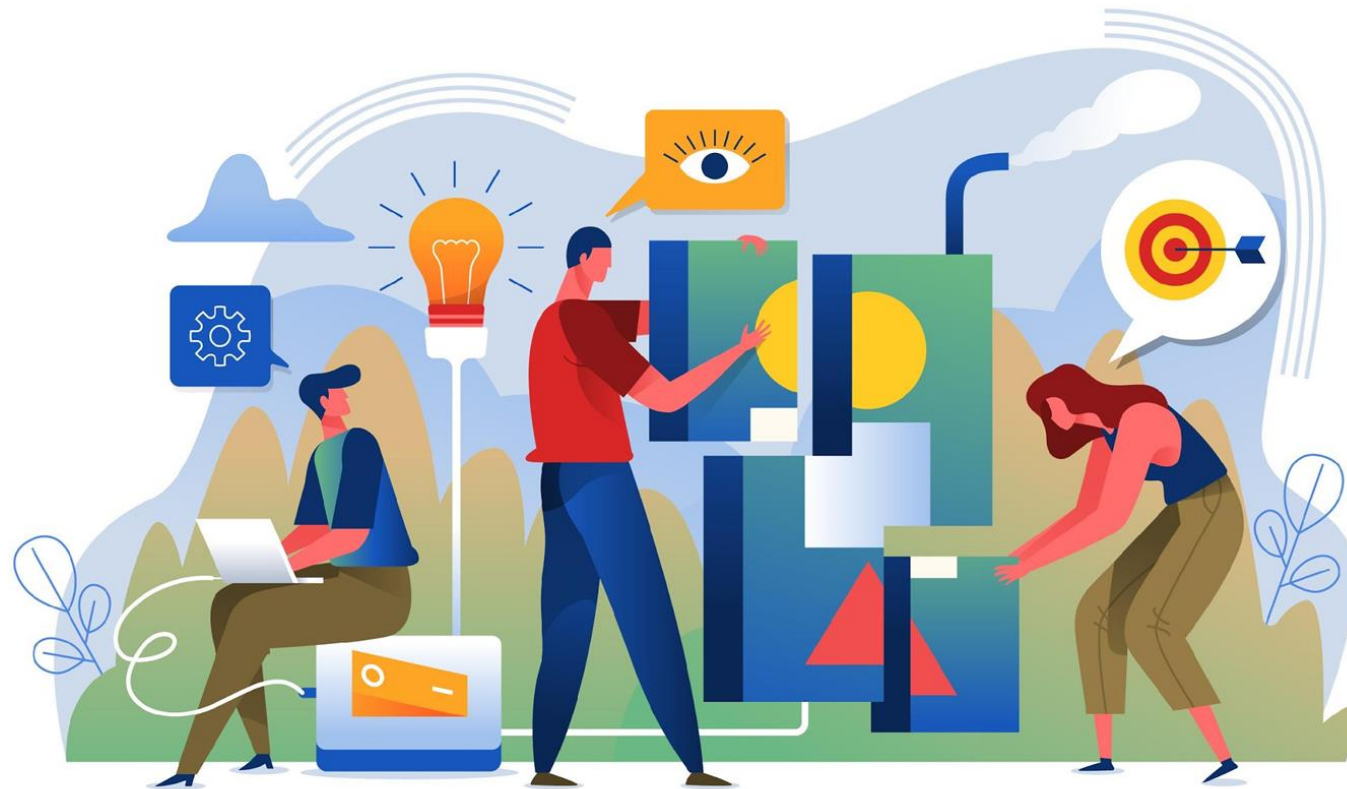
- **Unclear strategy.** Regenerative business is not integrated in the business strategy or it's not obvious how it will create financial value.
- **Lack of dedicated roles.** No cohesive plan to co-operate across functions. People work on regenerative business on top of their 'day job'.
- **'Success story' focus.** Reluctance to admit weaknesses due to reputational pressure (external and internal).
- **Decision processes.** Governance mechanisms are designed to mitigate risk, reducing support for innovation needed to develop regenerative business.
- **Budgeting and rewards.** Reporting and incentives are focused on short term performance, which favors 'legacy' business above regenerative business.
- **Missing competencies.** There is enthusiasm for regenerative business but not the right skills and talent to execute.

Chat Question: What are other Barriers to Succeeding as a Regenerative Business?

Write in the chat – In your experience, what are the barriers to succeeding as a regenerative business?



How can Org Design Practitioners Support?



The Org Design ‘Secret Sauce’

What services (methods, tools, frameworks, offers) can we as org design practitioners provide to help regenerative businesses be successful?

Challenge	Example Org Design Services
Integrate regenerative business in the business strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy alignment workshop• STAR model organization diagnosis
Set up the organization to execute the strategy – where to start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define critical capabilities• Create design criteria
Get the org structure right to deliver the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose the best org structure based on design criteria
Translate regenerative business aspiration into action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop decision processes, collaboration mechanisms, governance
Build engagement and motivation across the organization, create impactful change that ‘sticks’	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole Scale Change• Appreciative Inquiry
Accelerate change, develop agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design Thinking• Prototyping

How Org Design Interventions Overcome Barriers to Regenerative Business



EXAMPLES

The situation: *Regenerative business is not profitable today but will eventually replace our current 'cash cow' business.*

“Our salespeople have to act against their own interests to sell our regenerative products & services”

→ Solution: Modify incentive scheme to link rewards to selling regenerative products & services

The situation: *Regenerative business requires new and different innovation, but we stick to 'safe bets'*

→ Solution: Decision process for research budget allocation includes regenerative business criteria

→ Solution: Regenerative business innovation has a dedicated budget

Breakout - More Secret Sauces

- Quick Self Introductions
- Share your own 'Secret Sauce' practitioner tips and services you could offer
- In the big group, report back ideas worth sharing



Path Forward

As Org Design Practitioners , we can:

- **Build this field together** -i.e. - evolve design practices that create
 - ◆ strategic clarity for growing a business through Profit from Purpose
 - ◆ structures, systems and processes for opportunity seeking, ecosystem engagement, innovation, testing-learning-scaling
- **Build a better world** by helping our business clients prosper through Regeneration

Read:

- *Net Positive* by Polman & Winston
- *The Business of Building a Better World* by Cooperrider and Selian
- *Purpose and Profit* by Serafim
- *Putting Purpose into Practice* by Mayer and Roche

Participate:

- ODF Pre-Conf Workshop. **“Introduction to the Practice of Organization Design”**
- **Become a Practice Leader (contact Bernard)**
 - ◆ **Call for Articles** on Regenerative Business - proposals due March 19
 - ◆ **Cases for upcoming book - [Regenerative Business Growth: How To Prosper by Building a Better World](#)**