

- The extinction crisis
- Deforestation
- Loss of marine ecosystems
- Electric/ Hybrid cars

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

- So what is Biodiversity? 2
- Where have we gone wrong? 3
- What are we changing? 5
- What does this all mean for the business world? 5
- My Conclusion 7

Business Today

VOLUME 1, ISSUE

OCTOBER 2019

Biodiversity...

An ignorance to the problem?

my eyes have been opened...

Up until this week I had heard of the term Biodiversity but never properly understood what it meant. I have spent the whole weekend researching the term Biodiversity and what I had managed to discover has really disheartened me. I have come to the conclusion that our planet is in a quite a poor state.

Society tends to talk about climate change and the effects of greenhouse gases; some pay attention and some don't. I am, or I was someone who knew only slightly about climate change. Naively, I was of the belief it wouldn't affect me or my loved ones in our lifetime.

How wrong I was...

We are a family of 5 in my household. Myself, my husband and our 3 children. We have al-



**My children and me
May 2019
Disneyland Paris.**

ways tried our best to be 'green'. We recycle as much as we possibly can and all of our food waste is recycled in the correct bin using eco-friendly food bin liners. Luckily my two eldest children (10 & 6) are both on the Eco Committee in school, they're both very Eco conscious and understand why we have certain measures in place

with regards to waste and how to properly dispose of it.

Most people are guilty of not doing more to help with the environment where they can. For me, when my children were babies I could of used reusable nappies instead of disposable ones. The reason I didn't I suppose was purely down to convenience. With 3 young children, the added pressure of more washing on top of all the baby clothes and general load was just too much to bare (at the time).

In part, that was my ignorance to the problem...

So What Is Biodiversity?

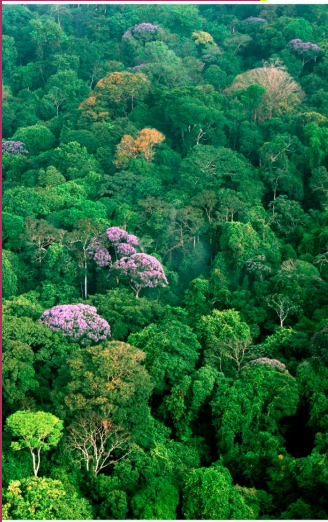


Photo credit: Christian Ziegler [3]

'Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive: food, clean water, medicine, and shelter.' [1]

Basically we are talking about the structure which forms this planet. All of the different ecosystems whether it be terrestrial, marine or inter alia. Every living organism has its own part to play in making this planet habitable. Every part of this world has a unique

job and purpose in keeping us all alive. We're not just talking about keeping us humans alive but also the untold varieties of species which also reside on this Earth. Species which are predominately our food source whether it be meat, fish and likewise. Without these different organisms the planet would most definitely fail and it would lead to the extinction of us all.

'Sadly, the Earth's biodiversity is in decline due to activities such as deforestation, land-use change, agricultural intensification, overconsumption of natural resources, pollution and climate change.' [2]

The loss of Biodiversity and the effects of

human consumption and domination have started to come to light on a global scale. Humans are effectively wiping out certain species, the damage will be devastating and irreversible! I am of the belief that some people's attitudes tend to be; there will always be more or they can be remade using Science. Unfortunately, however brilliant science is there are just some things that can't be brought back. Think about the Dinosaurs for an example.

THE EXTINCTION CRISIS

'It's frightening but true: Our planet is now in the midst of its sixth mass extinction of plants and animals — the sixth wave of extinctions in the past half-billion years. We're currently experiencing the worst spate of species die-offs since the loss of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Although extinction is a natural phenomenon, it occurs at a natural "background" rate of

about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we're now losing species at up to 1,000 times the background rate, with literally dozens going extinct every day.' [4]

Those figures are extremely alarming! Unfortunately it isn't possible to fully determine how many species actually reside on this planet, but to be informed that we are already driving the

number we do know about into extinction is a very sobering thought, basically being caused by human error, greed or laziness.



Photo credit: Herald Democrat

'Lacy Harber with his hunting crew and the rhino he killed.' [5]

Where have we gone wrong?

Us humans have the tendency to take things for granted, with the thought process 'there's always tomorrow' (I know I can be guilty of this). The sad reality of it is, **we won't have a tomorrow if we don't change today.** Biodiversity is the key to our whole existence, it's the air we breathe, the waters we drink, our medicines we make from all of the natural sources around us and the foods we need to consume. The list is endless that's how diverse it is...

We have effectively altered this planet potentially past the point of reconciliation. Our territories have been extended through over population and companies greed.



Recent clear cutting and burning inside Asia Pulp and Paper's PT Wira Karya Sakit pulpwood forest license. Jambi Province, Sumatra, Indonesia. Photo: David Gilbert/RAN [6]

Marine ecosystems are another resource which are being destroyed. One example of this is through companies drilling in our oceans for oil. Essentially they are slowly being driven into extinction. Where their natural habitats would normally protect them from predators and the elements, they are now being forced away from their natural food source.

Gas pipelines are also being embedded into our oceans; which again is quite a major disturbance to the marine ecosystem. Unlike the terrestrial ecosystem, the marine ecosystem if left alone could potentially recover and species could thrive once again.

'according to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 20% of coral reefs have been destroyed in the last few decades and an additional 20% or more are severely degraded, particularly in the Caribbean Sea and parts of Southeast Asia, and revenue from tourism associated with coral reefs has been estimated to be US \$30 billion annually.' [7]

Coral reef beds are a natural food source for many marine species. Without them marine life such as Sea Turtles would eventually die out. Touching briefly on another problem:

single use plastics, sea life are being endangered due to our over use and improper disposal of them. There has been several cases which have hit the media platforms as of late after sea life such as the sea turtles, dolphins and seals have been either found dead having digested or choked on plastic or having to be saved while entangled. Again, this is a man made problem!

Its not just the marine life that is being affected by Biodiversity. Humans are predominantly carnivores, although in this day and age veganism and vegetarians are quickly gaining in numbers. In one aspect that is a good thing as the demand on the meat trade will start to decrease but on the other hand veganism is also a

contributing factor to the deforestation issues, as forests are being demolished for the Palm Oil the trees produce, which is then being sold in foods, to be marketed to the vegan community as 'healthy foods'.

Countries which suffer with high levels of poverty don't have much choice but to eat what they're able to catch for themselves. The majority of the time hunting and killing animals for their meat or their furs which they can then use for clothing or for furniture and likewise.



(Photo : InformOverload/ You Tube Screenshot) After years of suffering the Great Barrier Reef has begun to die at an advanced rate and scientists fear that the damage is now irreversible and that this wonder of the world may be a thing of the past. [8]

What are we changing?

Over the past few years, the government and various organisations have begun to acknowledge and voice the dangers that are being made to the environment through the use of: single use plastics, fossil fueled cars, the way we are supplied our energy to homes and businesses.

Gradually things are beginning to change for the good of the planet. There has been an influx of the use of solar panels, solar farms and

wind turbines, all to generate electricity without the need of fossil fuels. We are now able to buy electric or hybrid cars. Unfortunately in line with the conventional petrol or diesel equivalents the electric/ hybrid cars are rather expensive so they're far and inbetween especially in rural or poorer communities.

'Diesel vehicles produce the overwhelming majority of nitrogen oxide gases coming from roadside sources.'[9]

The view is to eventually phase out fossil fuel cars beginning

with older model diesel cars which don't meet the acceptable emission criteria. It's going to be a hard and lengthy transition from fossil fuel cars to electric but the end result will benefit everyone and everything on this planet. Making products more sustainable should be the main goal if we want our planet to survive.

What does this all mean for the business world?

It's no secret that businesses are one of the main contributing factors to the loss of Biodiversity. They make profit from using up the resources we have available whether they are sustainable or not. However, that's not to say all businesses are the same. For the good of Biodiversity and climate change some companies have begun to change their procedures with the view to be more sustainable in business. Whether that be changing suppliers to a reputable supplier which is eco-friendly when sourcing or delivering their products. Not

supplying products which are a result of deforestation or contributing to the depletion of the marine ecosystem.

With this change however, businesses are hit with an increase in costs due to supply and demand. To supply products which meet the 'eco-friendly' criteria it generally costs more to make or source. Which means the business would have to sell that product on at a greater cost which could affect their sales and income.

There are several other ways that businesses can reduce their carbon footprint. Where possible

Switching to energy saving light bulbs or using natural light source instead of the conventional light bulb. Installing solar panels with the view to becoming self sufficient would be a considerable step in the right direction.



Image credit: Romolo Tavani/123RF



Image sourced:
<https://wallpapersafari.com/w/LrxlKZ> [11]

I also think in both large and small companies a carpool system would be a great way to start reducing unnecessary carbon emissions and boost staff relations at the same time.

The game of Business is basically one big race or competition to finish first and win with the highest score (most money). In the competition, if businesses can see other companies doing well and receiving good publicity for adapting and becoming more sustainable, this may lead to an encouraging 'domino effect' for the other organisations to follow. The businesses that I think would struggle to meet these demands would be smaller independent organisations. The cost of living has risen so much in the past decade that more and

more smaller businesses are shutting up shop due to the rise in inflation: increase in rents, increase in price of supplies, increase to the national minimum wage making it harder to employ staff if your income is a minimum. If smaller businesses had to choose to source products which were more sustainable and eco-friendly this would only add to their already rising costs and potentially running the risk of making their business unsustainable.

Society is very public in this day and age, with many different lines of communication open such as, social media sights; Facebook, Instagram and Twitter... People have become more bold and openly opinionated, being able to voice their opinions, thoughts and feelings through the medium of social media.

Groups and organisations are quickly adapting to change and will protest and boycott certain issues that they stand up for and believe in. If businesses don't show the willingness to adapt and change for the greater good eventually especially with larger companies, they are more often than not subjected to bad publicity whether it be in the news or social media.

Businesses need to work together to a certain extent if we have ever got a chance of sustaining and maintaining this planet before simultaneously causing the final extinction this planet will see...US...

My Conclusion

In conclusion to the problems that are facing us with the loss of Biodiversity, I feel that unless WE unite on a global scale, sooner or later we will start feeling the effects of this diminishing planet.

Together we have the chance to change for the greater good. After researching for this article it has definitely made me rethink everything I thought I knew in regards to life and how long this planet will be here after I've gone. To anyone reading this article, I implore you to take 5 minutes and do some research to see the devastating affects which are happening all around us on a daily basis.

With some more thought and care we could sustain this planet and keep it habitable for all. To a certain extent I feel businesses should all be made to comply with any

regulations that can be put into place to ensure companies can only source and sell products which originate from sustainable practices.

Competition between businesses shouldn't coincide with the depletion and destruction of this planet...the place that we all call home. Once all of our resources have been consumed there will be no rectifying the problem.

In my opinion more publicity is drastically needed on the subject of Biodiversity and Climate Change. Making these topics part of the curriculum from an early age would make all of the difference in bringing up the next generation with the mindset of being sustainable and eco-friendly. Hopefully in doing so, we would be able to begin to reverse the effects of Climate Change. It could only ever become a reality if

globally we all worked together.

As I like to remind my husband

"Teamwork makes the dream work."

I still believe this statement to be true and empowering.

References

[1]. World Wild Life (2019) ***What is Biodiversity?***

Retrieved from: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/what-is-biodiversity> [sourced on 7/10/2019]

[2]. Pierce, S. (2019) ***What is Biodiversity?***

Retrieved from: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/what-is-biodiversity> [sourced on 7/10/2019]

[3]. Columbia (2011) ***What is Biodiversity?***

Retrieved from: <https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2011/04/30/what-can-you-do-to-protect-biodiversity/> [sourced on 7/10/2019]

[4]. Chivian, E. Bernstein, A. (2008) ***Sustaining Life: how human health depends on biodiversity***. Oxford University Press, New York

[5]. Deron, B. (2018) ***Lacy Harber Rhino Trophy***

Retrieved from: <https://www.allthatsinteresting.com/lacy-harber-rhino-trophy> [sourced on 9/1/2019]

[6]. RAN (2019) ***Indonesian Rainforests***

Retrieved from: <https://www.ran.org/indonesian-rainforests> [sourced on 9/10/2019]

[7]. Widecast (2019) ***Loss of Coral reefs***

Retrieved from: <https://www.widecast.org/conservation/threats-and-solutions/loss-of-coral-reefs> [sourced on 7/10/2019]

[8]. Alternative learning (2019) ***Alternative Learning***

Retrieved from: <https://www.alternative-learning.org/nl/wordpress/?p=26880> [sourced on 9/10/2019]

[9]. BBC (2019) ***News***

Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40726868> [sourced on 9/10/2019]

[10]. Sowetan Live (2018) ***Protect environmental defenders***

Retrieved from: <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2018-03-07-un-plan-to-protect-environmental-defenders> [sourced on 7/10/2019]

[11]. Wallpaper Safari (2019) ***wallpaper safari***

Retrieved from: <https://wallpapersafari.com/w/LrxLKZ> [sourced on 9/10/2019]