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PLAN B | BUSINESS UNUSUAL PRESENTS

WE NEED A

GRAND PLAN

...THIS IS IT!



MARK CUDDIGAN
CEO of Ella's Kitchen

EARLIER THIS YEAR I ATTENDED A B CORP RETREAT WHERE AN ATTENDEE STOOD UP AND DECLARED THAT, "NOT ONLY IS IT THE RIGHT THING TO DO BUT IT'S ALSO THE SMART THING TO DO".

They were right. If you took away the moral and ethical reasons to certify as a B Corp, the reasons to save the planet and the many benefits it will have to your services and employees, becoming a B Corp will in fact make you more money.

We've seen this ourselves with the profit of the company massively increasing since we became a B Corp. While not exclusively dependent on our certification, it certainly did help and there are plenty more companies that have benefited commercially from certifying.

It was five years ago that Ella's Kitchen was certified as a B Corp and in doing so we joined over 1,600 other companies. Something we're incredibly proud of is the fact that we were only the second company ever to certify whilst being part of a PLC, after Ben

and Jerry's with Unilever. There are now over 3,500 certified B Corps.

Becoming a B Corp certainly didn't happen overnight. Myself and my team spent many hours, days and weeks persuading shareholders and our bosses to support us with the move, often being quizzed on the benefits it would have on the business, our people and profits.

After speaking to a number of other business leaders, who have or are looking to certify, it's a similar story. In a world heavily focused on financial gains and commercial benefits, asking a business to turn this model on its head, to balance the profit of a business with the people and planet it impacts, seems like a huge step or "trade off" in the seemingly wrong direction. I can assure you, it's not.





BRIGHT IDEA

Ensure that not only you, but your supply chain, partners and competitors are doing more to create a new model that actually works for people and planet.

From a personal point of view, it means everything. A few years ago, I saw an astronaut speak and he explained what he and many astronauts feel when looking back at earth. The first thought, naturally, is how beautiful it was. The second, believe it or not, is an overwhelming sadness and realisation that nobody is coming to save us, that there is no grand plan for our home.

We need a grand plan.

Every single CEO I meet tells me that they're running an amazing company that is fixing the planet and achieving the Global Goals, but something just doesn't add up! If everyone is apparently saving the world, why hasn't the effects of climate change, poverty, and inequality drastically improved and why are we living through one of the biggest existential crises many of us have ever seen?

This is where B Corp comes in. By ensuring that businesses meet the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability, they instead begin to compete to be

the best for the world – not the best in the world – through tangible, impactful and assessed practices.

The assessment itself offers a brilliant lens to view your company and make it better. It's essentially a free sustainability plan which encourages us to push and adapt ourselves to make better decisions, question the business further and never fall into the norm.

Take the recent period of isolation – our air, car and travel miles have been zero yet it's still been business as usual. As a business we're now discussing how we can cut our travel by half next year. Arguably, we are only having these conversations because of the B Corp mentality intrinsically linked to our business.

For us, another main focus is the internal benefit that being a B Corp brings. There's a focus on the team, the culture, and importantly our ability to influence the suppliers, partners and companies we come into contact with.

Fundamentally, this brings greater pride, better

work and a stronger connection with our product for both our immediate team of 85 employees and the one million people working in our supply chain across the world, from the farmers to the PR agencies. If we can empower all of those companies

FACT BOX

NAME Ella's Kitchen

BUSINESS Organic baby and toddler food

MISSION To improve children's lives through developing healthy relationships with food

FOUNDED 2006

FOUNDER Paul Lindley

EMPLOYEES 85

TURNOVER £98,058,400 per annum



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MARK CUDDIGAN CEO, Ella's Kitchen

to become B Corps, the impact they will have on the planet will be an amazing thing.

For example, our Spanish manufacturer are going to certify this year because of us. They've completely transformed their business over two years, from creating an on-site creche for working parents to changing the diversity and gender make up of their board and leadership teams.

We know that it's not good enough for a company to just say they're doing good. They need to not only show it through legitimate assessment and measurement, but to inspire other companies to follow suit.

It's time to stand up and turn the old model on its head by ensuring that not only you, but your supply chain, partners and competitors are doing more to create a new model that actually works for people and planet – so much so that there won't be a need for B Corp certification in the future.

This is the start of the grand plan – will you join us?



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